

## **Knowing the Mystery of God's Son Incarnation in the Spiritual Experience within the Writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor (II)**

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### **Abstract:**

The study deepens detailed analysis of the conditions and relations of divine and human natures' union in sole Hypostasis of Savior Christ, emphasizing, against representatives of the old heretical thought - Severus of Antioch and Nestorius and also against Monothelitism, that the two natures, divine and human have two proper works and wills harmonized in the unity of the unique hypostasis of the incarnate Logos through the power of Holy Spirit. St. Cyril of Alexandria's expression - one nature of God the Word incarnate, is explained in context of its historical and doctrinal subtleties and depths, meaning to confirm dyophysite and diotelite theology of St. Maximus the Confessor, thus making argument - against "formal union" or "simple formal distinction" of the natures under these heresiarchs - "union and real distinction" of the natures united in the hypostasis of the Logos as the basis of man's salvation in Christ. Subtle logical argument of this ineffable union of natures in Christ, may be a possible anthropological and soteriological actual speech in the more astounding condition of postmodernity that imagine new horizons and future living conditions of man.

### **Keywords:**

Christology, hypostatic union, communion of natures, communication of traits, affects, Maximus the Confessor, Cyril of Alexandria, Dyophysitism, diotelism, salvation.

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### **The Hypostatic Union of Both Divine and Human Natures in the Person of the Word Incarnate Involves Two Wills and Two Works**

Man, as we have seen above, breaking the commandment of God with absolute will and freedom, was enslaved by death and decay. For his raising in was needed the healing and straightening of his nature from someone above him. Because no man was able to fulfil this work, remained that God, Creator of heaven and earth, to make Himself man in order to heal us in His own humanity and then through it all mankind that *“is alike assuming what is alike”*.<sup>1</sup> To do this, assuming our nature in His person, the Son of God took its rational and vital work for, *“by thinking and working through it before, we needed its salvation”*. So because man needed healing, the people loving humbled Himself to the cross to redeem us. He was conceived in the womb of His righteous Mother, thus deifying through the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection our entire human nature. Since He created us and endowed us with free will and positive work, the Word, in His oikonomia, taking our nature, united it with Himself by hypostasis, as He created from the beginning, able to will and to work through nature.<sup>2</sup> Salvation in such case is not a cancellation of creation or a change in human nature, because precisely this the Son of God assumed our nature in His hypostasis, so that He could raise it to deification, without transforming it into something else than it is really and authentically.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, He strengthened our nature that He made into the Blessed Virgin as to will the salvation, strengthening so necessary to His

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<sup>1</sup> The emphasis of Saint Maximus is obvious: The Son of God coming down and becoming man united with Himself the whole human nature, by hypostasis, except for the fall, which resulted in crushing and punishment. So, says Saint Maximus, the Logos, *“taking the understanding and rational soul with the body of a nature with Him (συμφωνη αυτου σεματοι) - that is, the whole human being, without any sin -, and uniting it to himself after hypostasis, the very God beyond nature, taking also the natural will of the soul, had the will entirely free”*.

<sup>2</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor said that first our Savior restored our nature from the Adamic suffering, then raised it to the height at which it was supposed to be. So, Savior went from the Last Supper, from the paschal lamb, as prefiguration, to himself as the Lamb that represents really the humanity. He raised the people's sins through His sacrifice, and His resurrection deified human nature. Obeying the Law while He was high above it as God, establishing the new covenant in His own blood. In the Old Law God requires from man a lamb as sacrifice, of free conscience and will, of which, after it was blessed through its receipt by Him, man ate to sanctify. Now God asks Him Who is His Son as man sacrificed, that by His sacrifice to share also His brothers the fruits of the cross and resurrection.

<sup>3</sup> So, becoming man in His oikonomia, the Son of God showed a consistency between Him and our nature, He created. This means that the Holy Trinity desires the Son to become man and unite with Himself the willing humanity, precisely because man was made by God able to receive God inside him and God be present in man as in his loved being.

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incarnation.<sup>4</sup> This shows that God the Son, making Himself man, does not reduce man to the status of object, nor His Most Pure Mother to the simple instrument of His will, because He did not create man as an object. So under this saving act He presents us with both natures, from which and in which He consists, as being by nature willing and worker of our salvation.<sup>5</sup> So when the Lord Jesus Christ healed the leper He came close to his body flowable and in corruption and He healed him, and with the soul He willed that through both natures: the Godhead to drive away the illness and the man to be cured.<sup>6</sup>

Both natures of the Lord, divine and human, in the hypostasis of the Lord communicate with each other perihoretically. This communion is a dedication to one another through reciprocity. Thus the specific to the one communicates naturally to every part of Christ the Saviour, through their unspeakable union without transformation and natural mixing of any party to the other.<sup>7</sup> To better decipher this communication of traits, Saint Maximus, at Pyrrhus's question about how the

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<sup>4</sup> In this act of incarnation we emphasize that His very Holy Mother is the most willing of people to gain this redemption.

<sup>5</sup> We must not forget the essence as the Son of the Father, for our salvation, humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. So, *"The Fathers of the Universal Church, says Saint Maximus, taught both natures of God, the divine and the human; and not only these ones, but both wills and both works"*. (*Ibidem*, p. 398).

<sup>6</sup> On the reality of the two natures and two wills, Saint Maximus says *"See how the deity is made known accompanied by both: the body that works and the will innate in the soul"*. So, *"the Lord reconciling the world to Himself, divided the kindness given by Him through soul and body, desiring through soul and touching through body"*, as said by Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Also, *"Because one is human will and another the divine, says that from man what's appropriate to human weakness Him who has made His own our passions, but adds the second word, wanting to be fulfilled over the human one, the high and divine will for the salvation of the world. For He that said: "Not Mine" revealed by this word the human will. But by adding: "Your", revealed the union of His deity with the Father, Whose will does not differ in nothing from His because of the common nature"*, added the Holy Hierarch. (*Ibidem*, p. 399).

<sup>7</sup> Based on human research, Saint Maximus comes to say about nature and will the following: *"The natural is not taught. That was said, not only by those who stood by reason and were distinguished from the crowd, but also by the custom of those lower. And if the natural is not taught and between them is also wanting, for no one ever learns to will, it follows that by nature man is willing. And again, if man is rational by nature, and he who is rational by nature is also free by nature, and freedom according to the Fathers means will, it follows that by nature man is willing. And again, if in those irrational the nature leads, but it is run freely in the man moving willfully, it follows that by nature man is willing. And again, if man was created in the image of the happy Godhead and above all being, and the divine nature is free by nature, it follows that man, being truly after its likeness, by nature is free. And if man is free by nature, it follows that by nature man is willing. For it has been said that Fathers have defined freedom as will. And again, if to will is specific to all human beings and it is not is specific to some and to others not and what is seen common in all characterize the nature in the individuals in which is seen, it follows that by nature man is willing"*. (*Ibidem*, p. 497).

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body moves on the approval of the Word, answers: *“The Word above any being, substantiating Himself (taking being) humanly, had also the power of persistence in the existence of His humanity, whose start and hiding is shown willing through work. Namely, His start in using both natural and flawless, as not to be considered as God by unbelievers; and the staying away in the time of the passions so much, as to voluntarily acquire the fear of death”*.<sup>8</sup> Indeed everything that God created and placed in man He took also in His human nature conceived by Him into the womb of the Virgin Mary, including her will and fear of death. As for the fear of death, the Lord appropriated the one by nature, not the one contrary to nature that is born *“from the betrayal of thinking”*, as says blessed Maximus. The fear that no longer takes into account the thinking is an irrational fear. Even more, *“in the Lord do not precede those natural to the will, as in us”*. If in man nature is understood together with the will, however, it is not the will that produces the fleshly, but will appears for those of the nature. So, Christ the Saviour firstly wanted for those of the flesh, especially since the human nature is the creation of His divine will. This does not mean that those of the flesh, incurred due to the will are not lived in a real manner, for the Saviour did not want first and then got hungry, but the will and the starving came along. So, *“hungering and thirsting truly, He did not hungered and thirsted in our way, but in a way beyond us, ie willfully*, emphasizes Saint Maximus. *La fel și înfricoșându-Se, nu Se înfricoșă ca noi, ci mai presus de noi”*. So everything that’s by nature in Christ the Savior *“has joined with his natural reason the way above nature, to testify also the nature through reason, as well as oikonomia through deed”*.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, like Saint Maximus the Fathers spoke of the divine will of Christ the Savior that does not differ from the human one only by way of its application, but also through its reason, through its meaning. They are not two wills because the human one would be just another way of implementing the will of God, but there are two in that each belongs to another self. The fact that the Savior was fully God with humanity and the Same whole man with divinity, results also that *“the Same as human, in Himself and through Himself subjected the humanity of God the Father, by giving Himself to us as image and perfect example to imitate, like us, looking as to the Captain of our salvation, to give what is ours to God, lest we want something other than what He wills”*.<sup>10</sup> This shows clearly that Christ took our humanity as we have

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<sup>8</sup> After this answer, immediately the Blessed asks Pyrrhus for the Church: *“What wrong did the Church of God confessing being in Him, along with His human and created nature, and the reasons embedded in it from the beginning through creation, reasons without which it is impossible for the nature to exist?”*. (*Ibidem*, p. 493).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 493.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 500.

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it, in His own person and that we will reach deification through His sacrifice and resurrection from the dead.<sup>11</sup>

To exemplify this hypostatic union and the communion of natures in the hypostasis of Jesus Christ Saint Maximus sees the reality of human nature of God and its participation in the oikonomia of salvation through the sacrifice of the cross and the victory of the resurrection. From this perspective Saint Maximus stresses that the body can not be denied the feeling of not wanting to die, because it is specific to its nature, but neither to deity that it was not united with the human nature in suffering, though it did not suffer not directly. About this St. Cyril of Alexandria said that when “*when the Lord was shown fearing death, saying: “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me”, it meant that the body, which feared death, was borne by God the Word Who did not live this fear. For He said to the Father: “Not as I wish, but as thou wilt”.* Undoubtedly, Father’s Word was not afraid of death, rather He hurried to finish the oikonomia of our salvation through His experiencing death on the cross. Therefore only the human nature fears death, it feared and trembled at the thought of it, this experience being specific to it.<sup>12</sup> Then, “*Christ our Savior spoke about this, learning that dying for all is something willed, because it was the counsel of the divine nature; but it is also something that is not wanted, because of the sufferings from the cross, and He said that about the body, which feared death*”.

So, because the human nature was united with the divine nature, Jesus Christ bears the consequences of the original sin for us, without Him being a sinner. He suffers so that through His divinity to strengthen His humanity in the struggle for the liberation of affects, or sufferings and death. Thus, if the Lord of glory suffers on the cross and dies for us, because He endures the pains of the body, printed with the affects of our nature’s sin, it follows that the union given to the two natures by

<sup>11</sup> On the wisdom and the gift of the Holy Spirit through which spoke the Holy Fathers, Saint Maximus the Confessor says they learned the truth about the Savior Christ with love of people not from them, but learning from Him. They did not speak from them, but the grace of God that filled them completely, perihoretically, through mutual interiority.

<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that Saint Maximus makes the difference between life and death, but not of contrast, but of opposition, or demolishing, assertion of one means dissolution of the other, or the existence one is the cause of non-existence of the other. Man, in such case, is a unit of contrasts, but not of contradictions. It is a unity of soul and body, between concern for the self and for another, but not fighting each other, as meditated in the Hegelian philosophy, that sustains the fight between thesis and antithesis is the engine of life. All are to harmony, to convergence, not to fight for mutual elimination. It should be noted, however, that while there may be only contrasts between great beings, in the same person may be contradictions that abolish life through death. But they do not abolish the very being, for they are only “*around the being*”. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Ale aceluiași definiții ale deosebirilor (Of the Same Definitions of Differences)*, *op.cit.* p. 439).

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His unique hypostasis does not merge them, but causes God to acquire the passion of the body, and the body to deify itself through God, Who becomes its subject.<sup>13</sup> As such, Jesus Christ, although He did not suffer as having to make a penalty payment, yet He had by nature all of the nature, except for the sin.<sup>14</sup> Although we profess Him transgressor and un-transgressor, uncreated and created, earthly and heavenly, seen and pondered, fit and limited by nature, however He did not suffer unwillingly those human, out of necessity, the way we suffer them, but with the freedom of infinite power.<sup>15</sup> Saint Maximus even said that *“the one Who is both God and man by nature we do not know other than from the attributes that characterize His own natures as God and as man, that is, from the divine will and deed and from the human ones, with which and through which He sealed what He was and what was done, God working wonders above us willingly and suffering also willingly as a man for us. So, in Christ the Savior the divine work is fulfilled through the human one, to have an unique effect, the deification of His human nature and the salvation of the world through His sacrifice and resurrection. Thus, as in man the work of soul and body are not contrary, but complete each other, so the human from the hypostasis of the Word was not made contrary to the divine, but as a means of its expression and its actual fulfillment”*.<sup>16</sup>

But although there are two natures, divine and human united in one hypostasis, in Jesus Christ we can not speak of a single work, but two works specific to these two natures. This proves that the Son of God made man is a unique person,

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<sup>13</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către catolicii care locuiesc în Sicilia, părinților egumeni și monahi și mirenilor dreptcredincioși care locuiesc în această insulă iubitoare de Hristos (Epistle to the Catholics living in Sicily, parents abbots and monks and lay believers who live in this island loving of Christ)*, *op.cit.* p. 368, note 521.

<sup>14</sup> Saint Maximus says that the Savior Christ *“did not have the sin from the mind, of which Adam suffered the first time, nor the evil deed and work that comes from him through flesh”*. He could not even think that He can sin, the way Adam did, because the hypostasis of His humanity was the very Son of God, which means that He could not think that He could work against Him.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted and emphasized that Jesus Christ bear the consequences of original sin, not because the divine nature was united with the human nature, but, rather, for the Son of God, willingly, as godly person, embodied and accepted the consequences of the original sin, only as regards the compatibility of the body which ends in death, as well as the immaculate affects of the human nature.

<sup>16</sup> Saint Maximus highlights this when, referring to the human nature, says that man, having the two parts soul and body, fulfills two kinds of activities, neither distinguishing it in two persons nor the single person who commits them to compress the activities in one. Although we had this work, we can not talk about a pure activity of the soul or body without thinking that they belong to the entire person. Thus, the unity of the person involve at the same time both two natures, and two works, these two being of one and only person. It is clear that to some extent there is a specific work of the soul and body without speaking of two natures in man. Therefore, the work of the soul is performed through the one of the body as through a body.

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and in Him His natures and works are united, as it is a union that goes beyond the imposition of species.<sup>17</sup> So the two works of Jesus Christ correspond to the two natures, divine and human united in one person. Each of these natures perihoretically communicates with each other by means of the hypostasis. Thus, The Lord gives His human nature the opportunity to express its free will in his hypostasis and suffer to remove the affects from within by sacrifice and resurrection. When the Savior says: *"Not as I wish, but as thou wilt"* He wanted to show that He put on our really fearing death nature, because only to the body is specific to fear death, to protect from it and to grieve to death. But, although the Lord seemed to be lacking and emptied of his work, testifying the weakness of his nature in the front of suffering and death, yet He did not hide His divine power, thus showing that He was not mere man. Obviously, if He had only shown through everything only those human, he would have been considered only man. And again, if He had always fulfilled solely those of the Godhead, there would have not been true the doctrine of the incarnation, sacrifice and salvation of the world. So, the Savior Christ, says Saint Maximus: *"being by nature God and man, the Same wanted as God and man, that is double and not unique, He wanted so being One. If He is nothing more than the natures from which and in which He exists, it is obvious that He willed and worked according to His natures, or according to each, if neither of them was free of will, or non-working. And if He willed and worked according to His natures or according to each, and His natures were two, undoubtedly there were also two His natural wills and their existential works were equal in number. For as the number of natures of the Same Unique Christ, meditated and expressed in godly form, does not divide Christ, but presents maintained even in union the difference of the natures, so does the number of wills and works that belong existentially to His natures. So, by both His nature He was, as it was said, the Same willing and worker of our salvation"*.<sup>18</sup>

To be sure, the hypostatic union of the two natures Jesus Christ has acquired also the affects introduced by sin and assumed by Him through His human nature. Thus He wanted to endure death in order to bring mankind to original condition.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> It is worth mentioning that Saint Maximus says that the Person of God is a unity that does not cancel in it the distinct natures and movements, actions specific only to Him. Thus the Savior Christ assuming the human nature, lives those human through His body imprinting it the divine energy of His eternal Hypostasis.

<sup>18</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Disputa cu Pyrrhus (Dispute with Pyrrhus)*, *op.cit.*, p. 485.

<sup>19</sup> When we talk about the original condition we do not mean the state up to the moment it was raised our nature in the hypostasis of Jesus Christ through deification. It should be noted that we have come through deification in the Holy Trinity, where was raised our Savior and Lord on God's right hand. So, our Savior Jesus Christ, through His saving acts, raised man above his original condi-

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Since He wanted to overcome death in our place, the One Who loves people, raised by the will over these affects, incurred them and then overcame them. If His body had not had the fear of death, says Saint Maximus, it wouldn't have been a real body and He couldn't have accomplished our salvation by taking it.<sup>20</sup> In such case, neither His death would have been real, nor its overcoming through cross and resurrection. So, the Father's will to save us through His Son incarnate was linked also to the fact that His body be scared of death, be afraid of it naturally and then overcome it through His death. Therefore, Christ the Savior, by His death, printed in Himself a real fear of death as being something specific to us, for a little time, and then released us from it. He testified through this suffering the reality of His human nature, who feared death naturally, and then by its victory, to work the salvation of all cleaned of fantasies, fears and terrors. Moreover, He portrayed by His death the greatest fight against death and the climactic union of the human will from Him with His will and of the Father, thus strengthening the hypostatic union through the word: "*Let not my will, but Thine*".<sup>21</sup> Thus, "*Every nature of His worked, with the participation of the other; what had as its*", because "*in some is special the work of the humanity and in others is special the work of the divinity... For example, regarding mercy, in it are both works...*"<sup>22</sup>

Saint Maximus the Confessor believes therefore that the hypostatic union can be highlighted also by the expression "*in two natures*" equivalent to the formula of St. Cyril: "*A nature of God the Word incarnate*". This expression, St. Cyril used it against the evil thoughts of Nestorius, who said that the union of the two natures was done only through relation.<sup>23</sup> Then, the expression undivided in such case, has

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tion or paradisiacal from the beginning. Thus, the human nature reached the Holy Trinity, keeping his human characteristics.

<sup>20</sup> It is true that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ is not subject and can not be said to suffer or that he is afraid of death. For only the Person of the Son of God incarnate suffers in body or flesh, is already known. This means that the body was real human flesh, that the human nature of the Lord had a natural will and not a gnostic will, that suffering in body or through body aimed the existential transformation of human nature enhypostasized by the Word of God through incarnation and that under the consubstantiality of the human nature all these reflect realistically and objectively on the entire human race.

<sup>21</sup> From here Saint Maximus concludes with certainty that it can not be "*one work where the being is distinct*", but the Lord of glory "*suffered as man, but working also as God*".

<sup>22</sup> Precisely for this reality of the hypostatic union between the two natures of the Lord, emphasizes Saint Maximus, Church will not admit that it is "*one the natural work of God and that of the creature*". (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Despre cele două voințe ale lui Hristos cel unul, Dumnezeuul nostru (On the Two Wills of Christ the One, Our God)*, op.cit., p. 427).

<sup>23</sup> Saint Cyril at the end of the Epistle to Succens, emphasized that: "*undivided addition seems to us that expresses the true faith, and those do not consider like that. For the expression undivided means to them otherwise, according to the renewals of Nestorius. They say that undivided means*



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a double meaning: the union by hypostasis as meaning of the true faith and the bond of relationship which rejects as heretical venom bearing. If someone uses the expression “*undivided*”, according to Nestorios, makes it suspicious whereas it is understood that the union was only done by a bond of relation. Parents of Chalcedon definitely found that the union by hypostasis is the meeting of those of another nature, ie the divine nature with human nature, within a hypostasis, Each of the two that were composed in it keeping its natural unaltered and undivided property to each other.<sup>24</sup> So by confessing the union by the hypostasis, even if it is said two natures after the union, joined undividedly, namely in the the union of by the hypostasis, does not deviate from the truth, says Saint Maximus. Rather, it shows that those which make up our Lord Jesus Christ, the divine nature and the human nature, remain unmixed precisely because of the distinction kept after union. More precisely, “*The One by the hypostasis can not do those special together by the reason of their nature be apart from Him and be known without Him in some way*”.<sup>25</sup> In conclusion Saint Cyril of Alexandria was absolutely right when he said that we can talk about two natures united undividedly after the union, rejecting those who use the meaning expressed by this phrase in the bad sense.<sup>26</sup>

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*equal honesty, the identity of will and authority that man has with God the Word, living in him. So he does not express simple words, but with some cunning and malicious intent”. (Ibidem, p. 119-120).*

<sup>24</sup> As we know Nestorios considered that the union through relationship is an equal movement of the will of those that distinctly subsist in personal unitary units, in the unchanged identity of free-will. In this context the expression “*undivided*” is understood to mean that man remains inseparable from God through free will, Who lives in him. This makes dependent the union of the individual human with God through the will of this, remaining distinct from the Logos.

<sup>25</sup> The Nestorians, testifying the union through relationship, even if emphasize the phrase „in undivided way”, their teaching is wrong. Saying the natures united by some loving co-disposition and that the indicated ones have in them the un-separation, they still can not say that God the Word is a hypostasis with his own body animated and imprinted by mind, taken from us This proves that it is impossible that from two specific hypostases, separated by their own reason in individuals of different nature, to make a hypostasis. The true teaching of the Church is that Jesus Christ is a hypostasis that does not have with himself a category of hypostases, like Him, but has, like Him as God, the divine hypostases and as man, those human. So through his hypostasis He unites with Himself both the divine hypostases and those human.

<sup>26</sup> Lars Thunberg, in *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Lund, 1965, observes that Saint Maximus does not dwell too much on the expression “*of two natures*”, as he wanted to affirm that the two natures were preserved in Jesus Christ united perfectly. Obviously, for Saint Maximus the formula from Chalcedon, completed by the Fifth Ecumenic Council, that the Savior is a composed hypostasis, or consisting in or of two natures, is more preferable than the expression of Leontius about receiving the human nature in the hypostasis of the Word. Therefore, Christ the Savior maintains united and unchanged the natures and their reasons in His hypostasis. More, Saint Maximus sees both a similarity between how is composed the hypostasis of our Lord Christ from the divine nature and the human one, and the human one, from body and

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As for the relationship between the human hypostases, which are many and of the same species, and the unique hypostasis of Jesus Christ, exists of course a clear distinction. People are not only from one single species, but there are many hypostases, without that this species unity to contradict the multitude of people. Different from these, our Savior Jesus Christ does not have the meaning of a hypostasis in many other more, nor of a unique being, but He is “*the hypostasis of the Word*” who assumes the human nature in His eternal hypostasis by uniting it with His divine nature. In this union is involved the idea of enhypostasis of the human nature in the hypostasis of the Word. Because of this, our Lord and Saviour is not a composed nature, as claimed by Severus of Antioch, for only those created are composed as man consists of body and soul, parts coming into existence from which is not by the will and work of God. Thus, if people exist only as composed persons, because they all have a composite nature, living in a concrete existence with distinctive characteristics, our Savior Jesus Christ is a composed hypostasis, having two natures, but not two hypostases, because the natures that are united in Him exist separately before union. But, once the Word unites in His own hypostasis the divine nature with the human nature He gives a new existence to human nature in Himself, different from the existence which He has in the others. So that only in Him and through His incarnation, man as a person enjoys freedom within his species.

From the foregoing we keep in mind that two distinct things enable the divine Word to make Himself an unique man and raise His human nature to the highest level that can be reached by the human nature, freedom and ability to be able to receive the Son of God within itself. That freedom makes man unique in human nature and that he was created by God, not entirely standardized by its common nature and requiring that through communion with others to achieve happiness has enabled Christ the Saviour, that in His human nature to bring humanity to its ultimate fulfillment in Him. Also, the fact that man has in him from the beginning freedom, and uniqueness, and that his soul does not come in the flesh as something ready composed,<sup>27</sup> being able to associate with whatever body, shows us that it

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soul, and the difference in which the two human components form not only one hypostasis, but also a human “*being*”, although in the Savior Christ the divine and the individual do not form a single being. Obviously, the human person, being a copy of the human being or of the species, appearing through the natural act of birth, differs from Christ Who is unique, being born as a man above nature from the Blessed Virgin Mary. This of course implies a distinction between the two natures in him as compared to that between soul and body in man. So, in the Savior Christ is united the Creator with the creation, while in ordinary people are united two parts of the created, body with soul. It is true, however, that the unity of hypostasis makes the Savior Christ be one person, like man, Who he lives both parts as His own just like man.

<sup>27</sup> According to Saint Maximus “*Greeks invent that the soul pre-exists the body or, ideas on how it comes into existence after its own body, and others, the Origenists, assume that the soul has*

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has some potential and exclusive form of its own and adequate only to Him.<sup>28</sup> Of course that in such case it is possible that the soul be closed also in other bodies, in the Origenistic sense or the Buddhist reincarnations. We add to this, the idea of St. Maximus that the soul brings also the strength to participate in the pain of the body and to partake in its joys and sufferings.<sup>29</sup>

Returning to the union of the two natures of Jesus Christ we find that if the human nature is composed, as emphasized by Saint Maximus, none “*from those who know how to faithfully meditate*” can not say that He “*is one composed nature*”.<sup>30</sup> Those who would say such words obviously would reach the conclusion whether God is whole created from things which are not, circumscribed, sinner,

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*got a good start and pleasing to God before the creation of those visible. All these statements, says Blessed Maximus, are contrary to Church's teaching". (Saint Maximus the Confessor, Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus), p. 129).*

<sup>28</sup> We can not speak of addiction within the Person of Christ because dependence means necessity. By assuming the human nature with its natural reason and its natural will, The Son of God makes it free in its union with the divine nature within his divine Hypostasis. Therefore nothing is dependent in the person of Christ and nothing is dependent in the relationship between the two natures, but unity in freedom through the work of the Hypostasis of the Logos also by the natural wills of the natures. So, the divine nature offers life and divine power to the human nature, and the human nature in full natural freedom and in the freedom of its subjectivity in and through hypostasis, receives them.

<sup>29</sup> Father Stăniloae emphasizes a very important fact in this commentary, that Saint Maximus says that the soul is so united to the body that feels in his way the blows to the body. This relationship carries the mind to the fact that the very Word incarnate, feeling the pains of the body in His human soul, He feels himself as divine hypostasis of the soul. Of course, this feeling of suffering pain of the soul comes from the fact that the whole man suffers the consequences of falling in which the soul has some guilt. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 129, note 154).

<sup>30</sup> Obviously, only Jesus Christ has two natures in His Hypostasis, not a single nature composed, in Him being united the divine nature with the human nature, creation with the Creator, without either of them to swallow the other. In such case, the Lord of glory is the only one that lives an absolute I, but as I addicted to Himself as absolute Self. He is not closed in the law of created, but unites in His own Person the created and uncreated, unmistakable and unmixed, undivided and inseparable. Thus, He, as God, lives Himself as existing forever also as the One Who has produced himself a human nature in time, united with the human nature of all people, as He Who is un-sufferer but also as one who has appropriated the pain experienced by his soul, originating in the flesh. Therefore, the Son is one, united with the Father and with us, as He Who is mediator between God and men, has two kinds of feelings joined in an I, inter-penetrating the variety of concrete human experiences and His divine living, radically different from that of man, as stated by Father Stăniloae. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 130, note 155).

and not consubstantial with the Father, or that His body is co-eternal with the Word, or that he is the same age as the body, these being in the mind of any composed nature. Then, if the Savior Christ had only one nature, composed of divinity and humanity, as claimed by the Monophysites, He should be created or He added something subsequently to His composed nature, His humanity being the same age as the deity. All these considerations lead inevitably to the reasoning that there is no other reality than that of this world, in pantheistic sense, so all are ultimately composed natures. The conclusion is clear, by Saint Maximus: *“the one who is of a composed nature, is obvious that is composed also by nature, and the one who is composed by nature will never be of a nature and a being with the simple One”*.<sup>31</sup> This statement is based on the obvious fact that the Savior Himself *“has not been shown saying this ever; but rather he was turned out to be a hypostasis composed of two natures, to be known and of one nature with the Father, by god, and the Same and of one being and of one nature with us in the flesh”*.<sup>32</sup>

Saint Maximus states his teachings on the hypostatic union and on the two works of our Savior Jesus Christ more clearly in his dialogue with Pyrrhus, who misinterpreted the words of St. Cyril that our Savior Christ *“manifested in both natures a unique work of the same kind”*. Here’s what Blessed Maximus said: *“This expression does not oppose the two works. On the contrary, it supports them, for he never said a single natural work of Christ’s divinity and of His humanity - because in this case, he would have not said “someone would not recognize a single work of the Creator and of the creature” -, but he wanted to show that the work of the Godhead is one, whether it is disembodied or in body. Just as someone wanting to show that it’s a single work of the fire, say whether it’s through matter, or without matter, so the Father did not say that the work of the two natures is one, but he said that one is the divine and parental work (of the Father), being existentially in the Incarnate Word, due to which He did not do divine deeds only by commandment, unbodily (as He himself says, given that after the Incarnation is co-worker with His Birthgiver, Who works bodiless), but He shows these also physically, by touching of his body. This is what He says when he says “by both”. He means they were of the same kind according to nature the resurrection of the child, or giving sight to the blind, or the blessing the bread, or the cleansing of the lepers, He performs by word and command, with the deeds committed by bodily touching. This is to show that His body is life-giving, as one that was His own and*

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<sup>31</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 130.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p.130.

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*not of another, by full union with Him. For in both of these, ie the command and touch, was known God's work by the works themselves, unharmed in any way the human body work, natural and sinner just like ours; on the contrary, keeping it in its own manifestation, as well as the soul manifests through the body and natural work, as in a body, those which are its own and its natural work. For holding the hand and reaching and grasping and mixing with it the mud and the breaking of the bread and, simply, all done by hand, or by another member or part of the body, was specific to the natural work of the humanity of Christ, through which, as man, the Same worked, Who was God by nature and worked naturally the divine, to be verified through both by nature, showing Himself as perfect God and perfect man, except the sin.*

*So the Father did not ignore any property of any inclusive nature of any other property, for the creative power and the work that comes to the body through the soul and sustains its life, which God the Incarnate Word, keeping them in Himself showed them unbroken and unconfused: the creative power, in the fact of being created the substance and the quality and the portion from and in which is and is seen the existence of the creatures – for though the Greeks philosophers have divided those existing in ten reasons (categories), in the three is contained and included everything. He showed that He created the substance, giving the eyes of the blind what they lacked; the quality, transforming the water into wine, the portion, multiplying the bread. And the life-sustaining work was revealed in breathing, in speaking, in sight, in hearing, in touch, in smell, in the act of eating and drinking, in hand movements, in walking, in sleeping and in the others that are shown unchanged in the nature of the natural work”.<sup>33</sup>*

From those shown by Saint Maximus results that: “*the union between the divine Logos and the human nature, His creation, can not be achieved under a law of the species, unintentionally, but through the will of God exclusively and only in Him alone, but without dispensing altogether from the human law*”. So without the two natures of Him becoming a single nature, such as the human, they remain two, “*as to be shown the great difference between the created and the uncreated natures*”.<sup>34</sup> In such case, as our Savior the Christ is not one after the union, according to all reason and manner, the same He is not according to all reason and manner, two after the union. And if He is not, according to all reason and manner, two after the union, of course He is one according to some reason and manner, because of the hypostatic identity, that is, according to the one hypostasis, that can not have any difference. Therefore, “*The Same is one and two according to another and another reason and according*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 529-531.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 154.

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*to another and another manner; we need to look according to what and what reason the Same is one and two.*<sup>35</sup> Also, admitting that the Savior Christ is simply one nature, means that He is neither true God nor true man, neither absolute creature nor Creator.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, God the Word, Who exists before all ages, the Creator of ages made His descent to the people, by free willing and judgment. He came to us in unpeakable manner, through oikonomia, not by the law of nature.<sup>37</sup> In such case, God, as Creator, made humanity able to be united with Him in a Person. No sentient being, so nor the human one, exists only in personal separate units, ie in centers that move freely and aware of themselves, emphasizes Father Stăniloae. The human nature may have such a center only in Son of God incarnate, both to be saved from death and corruption, and to be deified.<sup>38</sup> This correction can be made through the personal center of the Son of God, Who makes Himself the human nature center and from His human nature we are flooded with the work of the grace that sanctifies and deifies us. So from ineffable love for us, the Father's Word becomes hypostasis of human nature, He being its subject and Savior of all mankind.<sup>39</sup> By this union the Man God has given us the opportunity, in a correspondence between the divine valences and the human forms, to overcome the separation between the uncreated divinity and the

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 155.

<sup>36</sup> It is understood from here that the indeterminate plan of the Monophysites that attributed only one nature to Jesus Christ is placed clearly outside any created and uncreated reality.

<sup>37</sup> Saint Maximus He stresses that the Son of God is not a composed nature and can not be composed for several reasons: for He is eternal and maker of human nature; because He was united with His human nature not of necessity of His divine nature, but freely; because He did not unite His divine nature with the human nature to complete the human nature or the world or Himself, but to renew it.

<sup>38</sup> We must emphasize that the two natures, the divine and human, are not identical, hence their union does not produce one nature. When the Monophysites and Nestorians felt that God was not able to show Himself through our real body, the first declared it a mere appearance, and the second separated it from God. Both heresies denied the secret nature of the real union of the two natures. So, if the soul is present in the material body and manifests through it, raising it to a higher level of mere matter, why could not do this also the Son of God, the Creator of all. Furthermore, since when is it not possible that the Lord of heaven and earth to achieve a unit unmixed with our human nature, when the human soul itself can make this unity in degrees and smaller dimensions, asks father Stăniloae. Therefore the eternal God performed the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures, without absorbing the human nature in the divine nature. Obviously, if that person had been united with another human being, it would have remained in the plan of the unions from earlier, as He did unto the prophets or a special union with one man.

<sup>39</sup> To allow the expression "*a nature incarnate of God the Word*" without union we would say dividing the two natures. Certainly not the divine nature itself is incarnate but the Hypostasis of the Son of God, that does not exist without the divine nature. As bearer of the divine Logos He has the possibility to make Himself man, uniting in Himself the divine nature with the human nature. By this hypostatic union the Word expresses His divine valences through the human nature, the Hypostasis uniting in itself the human nature with the divine nature.

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created nature, the two natures uniting unmixed and undivided in His Person forever. So, as regards the expression, “*a nature incarnate of God the Word*” it does not refer at all to one nature in Christ the Savior, as claimed by the Monophysites. For if St. Cyril used these words he has used them after those said by Nestorius that he recognized “*with us two natures in Christ, but he no longer recognizes their union with us*”. The emphasis of St. Maximus clearly strengthens the testimony of the Alexandrian bishop, stating the existence of the two natures in Christ after the union, both from the fact that he did not prevent to say two natures after the union, and from fact that he did not state the dissolution of the differences after the union.<sup>40</sup> What Saint Maximus wants to show is that there it is not the same the difference and the union, for: “*although they are said about the Same and are of the Same, each of these has an expression different from the other. Because it can not show the entire mystery, not having the other together expressed with itself, that is why is shown each in it suspicious: one of division, because of Nestorius who denied the union according to hypostasis and did not receive to confess that He the uncircumcised condescended to fit in the flesh for us, and the other, of mixing, because of Apollinarius and Eutyches, who disbelieved the difference of those that gathered together, after the union, being ashamed themselves to admit that the Unseen could fall under our feeling because of the natural property of His holy body taken from us*”.<sup>41</sup>

### **A Thorough Study and the Explanation of Saint Cyril's Formula “*a Nature of God the Word Incarnate*”**

Having outlined above some explanations of St. Maximus on the formula of St. Cyril we consider it necessary to resume those mentioned and see the profound

<sup>40</sup> Lars Thunberg says that in the formula of St. Cyril “*a nature incarnate of God the Word*” was stated the existence of the two natures in Christ the Savior. The fact that Saint Maximus discusses this expression of St. Cyril, states clearly that human nature is seen by St. Cyril as intact and perfect after union (*Epistle 12, PG 91, 498 C*). Furthermore, through the expression “*incarnate*” St. Cyril actually showed the entire human nature, for man consists of intelligible body and soul. Thus, in accordance with St. Cyril, Saint Maximus argues that the incarnation is the union between the Logos and a body that bears a rational and understanding soul and thus the expression “*the incarnate Word*” proves, in a simple formula, “*the substance of our nature*”. (*Epistle 13, PG 91, 525 A*). “*The non-Chalcedonian interest to keep the expression of St. Cyril as an alternative formula gets here, in a typically manner of Saint Maximus, a precise interpretation that is at once strict Chalcedonian. And at the same time one (mia) related to the nature (fisis) seems to be identified at the Blessed Maximus, in a way that is reminiscent of the expression of St. Cyril, (mia fisis) one hypostasis*”. Therefore the mystery of Jesus Christ is the hypostatic “*union*” of the two natures in one person without their confusion.

<sup>41</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus*, p. 118.

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meaning of these words: “*a nature of God the Word incarnate*”. First and foremost, St. Cyril teaches us that the Logos assumed the human nature composed of body and rational and understanding soul, thing that is understood by the word “*incarnate*”.<sup>42</sup> The phrase is a comprehensive phrase, says Saint Maximus, that shows by a name and a definition that the two natures are united. So, “*a nature of the Word*” expresses the common nature together with the hypostasis, and by definition, the human nature. So, that who says “*a nature of God the Word incarnate*” shows that God the Word is animated together with the flesh. In this context, the humanity is not altered by the divine after it was united with it, but it is raised to the fullest fulfillment and union with it, being made to fulfill and be penetrated through union with the divine. For as man is one person in soul and body, undivided in the living of the soul and body, so the Savior Christ is one Person in divinity and humanity, uncanceled in His experience the divine and the humanness.<sup>43</sup> As for the union according to hypostasis, says Saint Maximus, “*we understand and testify that the union of the natures was made in one hypostasis, since no one is or is understood in itself, but along with the one with which is composed or coexistent; nor, again, mixed according to the existential reason with the other; or suffering in any way a decrease in its natural fullness because of the union*”.<sup>44</sup> So continues the Blessed Saint, “*we confess the two natures of One and the Same Savior Jesus Christ, one before the ages by the Father and the one made for us in the latter times from the Holy Virgin Mary and we believe that His are both the miracles and passions. We confess also the Blessed, the Glorious Virgin in a proper meaning and truly Mother of God, as one who did not make herself Mother of a simple man, that would have been shaped even in a blink of an eye before and outside the union with the Word and would have been*

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<sup>42</sup> Through the Incarnation, though the divinity can not manifest itself as whole through humanity, nevertheless God the Word made that in the human nature to be an increase of humanity that it should reach the ability of medium of manifestation of the divinity, without the humanity to get out of its nature. On the other hand, humanity did not decrease as humanity thereby but showed increasing updated potencies, through the work of the Logos. So, humanity was formed by the hypostasis of the Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary as His own, being “*enhypositized*” in Him. The fact that the human nature has a beginning is understood that not for a moment the humanity of Jesus Christ stayed for itself, as its own hypostasis, but it was from the beginning created and united with His divine nature. So it was made in God’s Word, showing that the human can find the personal existence even in the Person of God the Word. God also showed us that the human nature can be raised to unique personal life together with Him. Thus the Logos proved that it lives a divine and human personal life, and the humanity is raised to this unitary personal life in Him.

<sup>43</sup> From this union any of natures did not lose its characteristic qualities, because it goes without saying that the body is different according to being than God the Word. So both natures in the Hypostasis of the Son of the Most High shall remain forever undivided and inseparable, unmixed and unchanged, as described in the dogma of the fathers from Chalcedon.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143.



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*deified from advancement in deed and in climactic virtue, but truly the Word of God Himself, the One of the Trinity, Who was incarnate of her through an unspeakable conception and was made fully man*".<sup>45</sup>

As we see from the words of Saint Maximus through "*incarnate*" is understood that the Logos received the being of our nature. He had thus two births: the unbodily one, before ages, from the Father, and the one in time, committed bodily from His Mother the Virgin Mary for us. That's why rightly and truly we confess her as Mother of God, as one giving birth to God the Word, Who was born from the Father before all ages, and in latter times was incarnate of her. In this case, stresses Saint Maximus, "*Our Savior Christ is not a natural unit (of nature) through composition, as stated by Apollinaris and Severus, once it keeps after the union, untouched and unmixed, the diversity of the natures of which He is. There's neither a hypostatic union, as claimed by Nestorios – once those united do not subsist in themselves and are distinct among themselves, and once God the Word incarnate is One also after the incarnation and He took the body rationally and mentally animated united with Him, the One Who pre-exists (hypostatically) through the reason of His own nature –, but He is, according to the Holy Fathers, a composed hypostasis, whereas the Same is fully God and One of the Holy and Glorious Trinity in His humanity, because of the Godhead, and the Same whole man and One of the people in His divinity, for humanity*".<sup>46</sup> As such, the Logos is made man freely, neither fulfilling His deity, nor completing His humanity through incarnation.<sup>47</sup>

With regards to the incarnation of the Son of God, in Saint Maximus, this is a unique and free personal act, it is not an application that remains in the flesh.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143.

<sup>46</sup> From those presented by Saint Maximus follows that Christ the Savior is one of the Trinity, although He has the humanity united with his divine nature in His Hypostasis. Again, although his humanity is united to the divinity, He is one of the people by the fact that the Same is and true man. Being true man like us, The Savior did not suffer any reduction as God and because He is God that does not diminish the quality of human, He being the Same that works through His deity and the Same that works through His humanity. (*Ibidem*, pp. 164-165).

<sup>47</sup> The emphasis of St. Maximus makes it clear that the Logos does not have a "*composed nature*", as claimed by the Monophysites, for a composed nature is a whole only with all its parts. If the divinity would complete the humanity or the world, He would not have created the world or the humanity as a whole, because He could not have done it. He would not be able to complete it to Incarnation either, says Saint Maximus because He would need it to complete Himself. Of course, above all, it is true that He created all "*very good*" that the human nature to be able to reach full union with God, helping with its will. But by not following the path of union with God, it got weakened through its own will, so that the Creator had come to renew it and to bring it to full union with Him. Therefore, the incarnation of the Logos was actually made as a freely chosen act of the Holy Trinity, not a general law which would have forced in any way His Incarnation.

<sup>48</sup> According to Severus of Antioch, if the Savior Christ were a composed nature, this would be, surely, either or general or singular, other in the middle would be impossible. In such case, if Christ

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The Lord does not come into existence as man subjected to the species and He is not born according to the human nature. His divine and the human natures do not form suddenly, with mutual conditionality, but the Lord of Glory brings Himself into existence as man freely in His Mother's womb, remaining in full accord with the divine will of the Father through the grace that He receives from

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is a general nature, it is obvious that He will be in many individuals as number and distinct, subjected to its category. Then, this general nature would be known only by thought in those in which they would have their existence. Obviously, this will not be known in itself in any personal hypostasis, without accidents seen in individuals who are under it, which would lead to a lot of Christs instead of One, having in no way any identification with God or with people. Also, if the Savior Christ were a composed nature, He would be the specimen of a species which repeats according to a law, not a unique person, complementing in each copy the human nature with the divine one. Moreover, a lot of Christs with a composed nature in the same way, so neither purely divine nor purely human, but mixed, would be a new species, which is not identical either to the human species, or with God, Who has a purely divine nature. These Christs would not have, therefore, any mediator role, ie redeemer for people, having nothing in common either with God or with people. In their mixed nature the very divine nature would prove itself altered by the union to the human, and needing the human one to complete their insufficiency. In equal measure we ask ourselves, concludes Father Stăniloae, if the Savior Christ is not a composed nature, but two natures, how can they give a composed hypostasis? As we have seen, Saint Maximus admits the composed hypostasis of Christ, because the hypostasis, in its uniqueness, is not subject to the laws of repetition. But a composed nature has to be of several hypostases which would fall under the law of repetition. Therefore, the Hypostasis of Jesus Christ is unique in Himself, as presented by the Holy Evangelists, even if it is a composition desired by He himself and therefore unique. The conclusion of St. Maximus is that Severus, through his word bringer of doubts achieves both theology and oikonomia. For if by nature and works shall be deducted the wills, and in the wills are involved the persons, is obvious that is given a will because to every person. More specifically Saint Maximus says that *"because what is said simply has many meanings, if the wills that are assigned to the persons reciprocally are natural, the happy Trinity will be, according to Severus, a Trinity of natures. And if they are gnomic (determined as own discernments), Trinity will be torn in Itself, not in full agreement through wills specific to the individuals; or if the Trinity above being has one will, the Godhead will be a single person with three names. And again, if from work results, according to Severus' opinion, the will, and in this is involved the person, necessarily along with the denial of work is deniable also the will resulting from it, and the person involved in it. And if by denying the work is denied also the will, and by denying the will is denied the person, it follows that, according to Severus, Christ the Savior is un-hypostatical. And again, if from the works result, according to Him, the wills, and the wills are involved the persons, from the One and the Same Word of God incarnate comes all the work, divine and human; and, according to him, all the will (that is, the divine and the human) results from works that have involved in them an equal number of persons who will come out from the One and the Same Word Incarnate – no words could ever deny this conclusion. So, by abolishing the natural works, Christ will be, according to Severus, without being; whereas, through accepting a single one, will be without will and un-hypostatical. And understanding it as the whole work, divine and human, he will be multi-willing and multi-personal, or, speaking more specifically, an endless number of people"*. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola a aceleiași către același. Din aceeași scrisoare, cap 51. Părinții, spunând două voințe în Hristos, au indicat legile naturale, nu două socotințe proprii (Epistle of the Same to the Same. The Same Letter; chap 51. Parents saying two wills in Christ, showed natural laws, not two specific discernments)*, op.cit., p. 310).

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Himself as God.<sup>49</sup> If in Our Savior Christ had been only one nature, as claimed by the Monophysites, He would not be either one substance with the Father or with us, the humans. Since there is no composed nature either divine or human, He, whom is awarded such a nature, does not exist, actually. So he must be believed and confessed as One according to the reason of His hypostatic identity, according to which He does not receive in any way any difference, or split in Himself as a whole because of the difference of the divine and human natures. Thus, confesses Saint Maximus: *"He's one as a whole, not taking Himself by any reason, in His characteristic feature, those extreme, feature which distinguishes Him from them. And by those extreme we understand God and the Father, of Whom was divinely born the Son before the ages, and the Blessed Virgin and Mother, of Whom the Same was born humanly for us, keeping through the unit of His parts with both extremes, unreduced, the identity with them according to being"*.<sup>50</sup>

As we see, the Hypostasis of our Saviour Jesus Christ is one and has something of his own, being the Same before the incarnation and after the incarnation. He is not divided by natures, although they are preserved in Him and they fall within His unity without confusing them. The natures united are not confused, because the Person is the One that keeps both natures united as an unitary ego. Then the Hypostasis of the Word is not only unique among many unique hypostases of the same nature, but unique in the sense that not only has a common nature with others, but also the divine nature united with it, like no other ever existing hypostasis. As such, the two natures from the Person of the Word keep the unique identity, undivided, of the whole specific, through which they keep, in themselves, the reason according to hypostasis completely undivided. Therefore, referring indirectly to the words of St. Cyril, the Saint Confessor says: *"we confess our Savior Christ in two natures, keeping the reason of natures of which is Him also after their union in Him, as in One that is the Same God and man, after the union"*.<sup>51</sup>

### **Our Savior Jesus Christ Is a Hypostasis composed of Two Natures and not the Hypostasis of a Composed Nature**

The composed hypostasis of our Savior Jesus Christ, as we have seen above, is not one and the same with the composed nature, in the thought and confession

<sup>49</sup> He is a composed hypostasis, highlights Saint Maximus, without a composed nature subjected to its category. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către Petru ilustul. Scurt cuvânt împotriva dogmelor lui Sever (Epistle to Peter the Illustrious. Short Word against Severus' Dogmas)*, p. 158).

<sup>50</sup> So, to that extent Christ the Savior must be believed and confessed as one hypostasis of the Word both before incarnation and after incarnation. (*Ibidem*, p. 160).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 162.

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of Saint Maximus. This statement has several reasons, primarily as the composed hypostasis does not have the parts of the same age, by coming together to existence. Then, the Hypostasis is not only the general nature or being, existing concretely, but the nature with the specific properties of each Hypostasis. If we look at ourselves and from this point we come to the conclusion that everyone in general is composed through his species to which is added his own distinct personality traits. Moreover the Lord the glory, He was united with our human nature, wanting this from eternity according to the loving people counsel of the Holy Trinity. Existing from eternity as God, The Son of the Father joins His divine nature with the human one, making Himself in time, through incarnation, a composed hypostasis by His will. Because of the fact that His composed Hypostasis is the work of His freedom proves that his hypostatic composition is of other than ours. Through this hypostatic union He does not complete Himself, but makes Himself subject entirely free and the only man made by Himself with His will and work. Thus, the Word composed Himself unspeakably, by assuming the body, not receiving its existence by birth with the body, to compose and to complete a whole of a species. So when we say that He was made man by assuming the flesh taken from the Holy Theotokos, we confess at the same time the eternal existence of God's Word and His incarnation as deliberate and freely decided by the Holy Trinity. This way "*we keep both the unmixed difference of the Word that assumes and of the humanity assumed after the union*",<sup>52</sup> says Saint Maximus.

No doubt, if we're talking about taking human nature by the Father's Son we confess directly the pre-existence of Him Who assumed it emphasizes the holy Confessor. For He who exists from eternity and is also consubstantial with the Father and was made man in His own free will, is not made man as other people are made. This assuming of the human nature, or the union of the Word with our human nature was made unspeakably in the womb of the Blessed Mother of God. This incarnation means that there is a line between God the Word, Creator of man in His image, and this humanity that He was united with. Of course that this union of the human with the divine in the hypostasis of Christ surpasses all natural compositions of creation, because the Creator is not necessarily subjected to the union in a Person with those created. Therefore, assuming human nature by God

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<sup>52</sup> So, as all people come into existence without their consent, implying the need of a perfect source of freedom, on which our existence depends fundamentally, we conclude that only the Son of God could give us a free existence, through His incarnation from Blessed Virgin Mary. Becoming man like us, the Son of God took upon Himself willingly our infirmities and weaknesses, without sin, to unite us again with the Father and to deify us. He was not made man after the law and order of our composed nature, but in other way than ours, beyond nature, from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.

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the Word is an act of His freedom, involving naturally also His eternal existence and His unspeakable love for people. Saint Maximus explains this oikonomia, starting from the question: *“if the Logos had not pre-existed without beginning, how would have He assumed through will the body different according to the being, where, to my knowledge, it is said to have been committed the unity through assuming with what is of other being? To which the Blessed replies that: “only He took uniquely, without passivity and truly, which is of other being and kept Himself unchanged in all meaning and the manner and also un-multiplicable, and what He assumed also kept unchanged”*.<sup>53</sup>

How we see, Saint Maximus the Confessor, teaching about the composed hypostasis of our Savior Jesus Christ, stresses that while sitting in a species he is not composed because of him, but for the nature which, being composed, includes the species of a certain category under which he is. Our Savior Jesus Christ is different from us, who are one nature composed, because He is one Hypostasis composed of two natures and not the hypostasis of a composed nature as man is. Then, the composed unit of the Savior is not one of the natural units of a composed species, as man is, but the unique unity always willfully of two natures, which are not united generally and naturally, but hypostatically, unmixed and unchanged, undivided and inseparable. Due to this the composed unity of Christ is a unit composed of His divine power, beyond nature, comprising in His Hypostasis the human nature united to His divine nature, created by Him in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as one who has her model in Him alone. So we confess that the Logos of the Father unites in the Holy Theotokos the human nature with the divine nature in His hypostasis, that is He is achieved as composed hypostasis, taking only Himself as cause. He works thus freely His human nature in the womb of the Virgin from her human nature and with her consent. Thus the Son of God surpassing the human law, which simplifies and circumscribes those inside flesh, makes Himself man above the human law, but falls in the order of this law established by Him. Saint Maximus highlights this, when he says: *“In Him no one could find gender; or species, which to submit Him to any general categorizations. Because the divine Word did not come to us through body due to the reason of nature, but, uniting by the way of oikonomia with Himself our nature according to Hypostasis, without missing anything, renewing it”*. Therefore, the Son of God was made man unforced by his divine nature, but by the act of the Incarnation, freely chosen by Him, without changing that into something else or by absorbing it in the divine nature. As such, through the incarnation, our nature was united to

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<sup>53</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către Petru ilustul. Scurt cuvânt împotriva dogmelor lui Sever (Epistle to Peter the Illustrious. Short Word against Severus' Dogmas)*, p. 171.

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the Son of the Almighty “by Hypostasis” or in a Hypostasis, not by nature, So without mixing our nature with His divine nature in a single nature, but renewing ours, without changing it.<sup>54</sup>

Of course in the hypostasis of the Word, is manifested the mystery of the whole in two natures, shows convincingly Saint Maximus.<sup>55</sup> The natures in the Lord of glory do not remain separate, but they are linked into a whole, without being altered and transformed into something else, which would give rise to another new Hypostasis.<sup>56</sup> Thus says the holy Blessed Saint we profess that our Savior “li-

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<sup>54</sup> We would like to present the thinking of Severus of Antioch to see the cunningness and subtlety of his Monophysitism: “Deity and humanity were kept unmixed and unchanged in Christ. But they still can not be called two, namely two natures. But if there are not two the things which are united in Christ, it means that his unity was narrowed, reducing its content as those that were lost through mixing from their plenitude. In this case the Savior Christ himself is reduced both in His divinity and in His humanity. Therefore He is alien to us and God, He is neither perfect God, nor man in the fullness and authenticity of His divinity or humanity. As for what we are concerned, He can not enrich and strengthen us in the fullness of His divinity and he can not rise us to it, as well as He can not really reveal it to us”. Severus also widespread the error on to the expression “in two natures”, saying that it is derision to say that from the union of two natures resulted again two. Saint Maximus, asking him and his followers, asked: “whom have they heard from those scholars who knew the divine dogmas of the Church that the union from two natures constituted two natures?” And he argued the Orthodox doctrine: “we say that from two natures resulted the union, but from them was composed that One Hypostasis composed of Christ the Savior, that preserves and keeps those natures, of which He was composed without missing anything, its parts as a whole with their natural qualities, and which are preserved and kept in them as a whole into parts”. Father Stăniloae, commenting on this passage explains: “a Christ meditated in a Monophysite manner makes neither known nor communicative to us God, nor makes us find in Him the humanity as exemplary for us”. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 134, note 163).

<sup>55</sup> The Monophysites did not speak about hypostasis as different from the nature. Ignoring the mystery of the person they were replacing the Hypostasis with the composed nature, thus disregarding the difference between the being divine and its hypostases. Reducing all to essence, in a pantheistic way, they canceled the mystery of the person, thus returning to the pre-Christian Greek philosophy. Therefore, if there were two hypostases or persons in Christ, He would not be God the Word, That raises humanity as His own, from death and That communicate to us, as a man among us, the divine, but also the power to raise us by body. Only in the One person of Jesus Christ, both divine and human, our salvation lies. In This are contained both natures and the Lord manifests through both. The incarnate Son of God is present with us eternally in relationship with us as man and in us. Therefore, for Nestorians, God the Word can not exist in direct relationship with us as man, and for the Monophysites, He no longer has the common human nature with us, and also with the Father He no longer has the divine.

<sup>56</sup> We make it clear that the person of Jesus Christ is the complete and comprehensive unity, and the natures are the parts that do not exist separately, but into one another, each of them filled with the content of the other and preserving the distinct characteristics of each nature.

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ves the humanity divinely, and the humanity is experienced divinely, but humanly". Obviously the one who organizes this unit is the very eternal Hypostasis of the Logos that makes up since conception in the Virgin Mary a body animated of his own, according to our likeness without sin. From here we understand that the Savior's body and soul begin to exist when the human nature was united with the eternal divine nature from the hypostasis of Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Obviously, the hypostasis of the Word existed from eternity and had in Himself the powers of the growth of His human nature and of every man according to the models from Himself. This proves that the Savior Christ is a Hypostasis composed of two natures, that includes in Himself as parts of His which communicate to each other and are known as natures of His. So, "saying about the Same he's one and two natures, states the Saint Confessor, we do not say it about both natures in one and the same sense, but in different ways, according to each nature. Thus, we say two with the meaning of natures, of which is composed the union, for not by nature we know God the Word as the Same with the body of his own. This means that according to the reason of the hypostasis we say the One, knowing God the Word the Same according to Hypostasis with His own body".<sup>57</sup> Of course, through this hypostatic union the natures do not merge into a single nature nor is abolished their natural difference, by introducing an alteration of the Word and man.<sup>58</sup> Saint Gregory the Theologian said that: "One of both and through One both". The formula is strict and should be discussed, says Saint Maximus: "As there is one of two, namely in two natures One, as One formed of parts according to the reason of the hypostasis, the same through One by Hypostasis, as a whole, are both sides according to the reason of the flesh, that is the two natures". Another word of Saint Gregory, reproduced by Saint Maximus, is even clearer: "For both are One, but not by nature but by adding together". As Saint Gregory also the blessed Cyril of Alexandria, relying on the human example, quoted by Saint Maximus, says: "So the two are no longer two, but through both those in which the composition is made – in the man like us from soul and body, and in the mystery of Christ, of divinity and humanity – does not cease to be two according to the existential reason, although they no longer remain separated beings. For faithful teaching does not accept in any way that they are independent in one unit and into another, so as not to divide the one man or dweller in two men or dwellers, and the One Christ in two

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 135.

<sup>58</sup> Apollinaris, says Saint Maximus, did not know the natural difference (from natures) in Christ the Savior. Nestorius added to this the personal difference (of persons). And we, confesses the Holy Blessed, knowing how to merge into the unity by hypostasis the natural properties unchanged, we avoid mixing as those that have not known the difference, nor the difference in division (separation) – as those that know those different as standing divided.

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*Christs or two sons*". St. Maximus conclusion is that if Cyril had not been able to understand the hypostatic union, to meditate and to teach it, "he would have not said you do not have to abolish the distinction of natures because of the union and he would have never learned that the One Christ is something and something else, and other and another, and this and that and both, and that the natures remained unmixed. He would not have learned that the Word did not pass into the nature of body or the body did not turn into the nature of the Word. He would not have known the evangelical and apostolic expressions about the Lord and the divine preachers considering them as common, as of a person, others dividing between two natures. He would not have stopped from saying that the whole Christ is one nature, if he had known that this corresponds to the true faith. He would not have stated that the human nature is nothing more than flesh animated mentally, thereby confirming that Christ is the complete nature of humanity. He would not have used the addition "incarnate", to show the being just like ours. He would not have used as an indication of the true faith the saying "two natures undividedly united", in order to not utter the word deceitfully, as wanted Nestorios. And not only these, but also tens of thousands of other expressions were shown saying, As it is obvious to those who search his writings".<sup>59</sup> Therefore the divine Logos is not divided into two self-subsistent natures nor is contradicted their hypostatic union in His person.

### **The Problem of the Number in the Hypostatic Union of the Two Natures of Christ the Savior**

The mystery of the two natures in the hypostasis of the incarnate Logos is the hardest thing to understand with the rational mind. To have an analogy of this reality Saint Maximus presents the union of the soul with the body in the human person. Thus, the body in union with the soul reflects in it, with every person, the features of its own soul. The soul is a kind of base from which as from a strain, the body receives its general human form, and specific personal. This is because the soul has the ability to organize the matter in the body, ie a body specifically suitable to him. As for the Son of God incarnate and His divine Hypostasis, as the soul for the body, He has the ability to form and join with Himself the humanity and extend His powers in it, namely His features as son. Thus, returning to the soul, as this prints its characteristics and feelings, unrepeatable, in the body, but also the body, kept alive by the soul as an unrepeatable body, prints in the

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<sup>59</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 137.



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soul its feelings, the same way things happen by reciprocity also in our Savior Christ, He being the Person who unites in Himself the human nature with the divine one. So, Saint Maximus to the interpellation of Pyrrhus that “*there are two works for the differentiation of natures in Christ and I do not say it is one for the unity of the Person, there might be two for the works of man, for the distinction by being of the soul and body, and if so, His works will be three and not two*”, answers: “*The ones you bring for the destruction of natures (of those natural), those are brought against the natures also those who fight against them. For this alone is your pleasure: to agree in all with those. Therefore we, bringing against those the arguments of the Fathers, we bring those against you too, who suffer from the same disease as those. If because of the difference of natures in Christ, with us you acknowledge also two natures in Him and do not state one for the unity of the Person we will agree. But if from here you deduct two natures of man, because of the distinction by being of the soul and body, it must result there will be three and not two natures in Christ. But if, because of the difference of natures, saying with us two natures, you do not say three natures in Christ, how do you deduct that we saying two natures, we should say three works? For those that you say, along with us, towards those who favor three natures, they will reach out to us to say towards you about works. And this word will embarrass you equally showing the absurdity of your judgment. In addition, we say that it is not the same to say that man is one by species and that the soul and body are one by being. For man's unit by species indicates the identity unchanged of all individuals of the same nature. That is why we never say this unlimitedly, but with the addition: of man. But to say that the soul and body are one by being corrupts their existence, leading to their own inexistence. And if it's not the same the unity of man by species and the unity by being of the soul and body, we are forced, considering the work by species one, to call thereon hypostatic or to say three works, as long as the work refers to nature*”.<sup>60</sup>

It follows from those presented by Saint Maximus that in our Savior Jesus Christ the unity of human nature is rooted in the divine and the divine supports the human in its movement, without canceling it. The divine Hypostasis of the Word is the Subject of human work because is the Creator of His human nature. Then, the work is also a relationship, but a relationship between two things without it to

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 521. Saint Maximus concludes that the natures are united in the one hypostasis of God the Word and each has its work coordinated by hypostasis. A likeness of this union and work from the person of the Savior is given through “*the spoken word in which we see also the meaning of the spoken word, but also the spoken word subordinated to the meaning, as well as the full reciprocal interiority (perichoresis) between them*”. (*Ibidem*, p. 524).

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perform the work in them, but vice versa.<sup>61</sup> For such as the sword and the fire, says Saint Maximus, although “*are joined together by the work of the fire and iron, we see that the effect of fire is burning and of iron the cutting, although they are not separated from one another in the burning cutting or in the cutting burning*”. From this analysis the Holy Confessor infer that the unique facts, in their distinction, do not produce works, but the unitary work produces the actions in which is the energy that is connected to nature.<sup>62</sup>

Also concerning this subject, Pyrrhus asked Saint Maximus what is the meaning of the words of Saint Dionysius about the theandric work of Jesus Christ. To this challenge the Blessed responds that the new work refers to “*the new and ineffable way of manifestation of the natural works of Christ, according to the unspeakable way of mutual interiority (of the perichoresis) of the natures among themselves and His existence as human, foreign and wonderful (paradoxical) and unknown to the nature of those created, and the way of mutual communication based on the unspeakable union*”.<sup>63</sup> As far as the theandric expression of St. Dionysius is concerned, the Blessed Maximus said that the work of our Savior is of the nature, being the supporting feature of nature and its innate. Thus, the human nature imbued with the divine nature is not lost but fully updated in the hypostasis of the Logos. This is because the Son of God is not against human, nor the human against the divine, once He created and dressed it in His incarnation. So, in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the divine nature penetrates the human nature with divine grace, without getting it out of its created character. Moreover, the natures are intermingled perihoretically without merging or separating from one another, both being one. It is true, however, that in this communication of qualities can be said that there is something new, that all are new or that all are one. But if the theandric work would be one, of course it would require a theandric nature, in which case the human nature would be canceled, which would lead to the impossibility of Jesus Christ to be true God and true man, consubstantial with the Father by divinity and consubstantial with us as by His humanity. Therefore, “*those that have the same being have also the same work, and those that have the*

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<sup>61</sup> We find from the words of Saint Maximus that the meaning of and the word are in an extreme unity and yet remain distinct. This example emphasizes the unity of the person who thinks the meaning and speaks it through word. Man unites them both, without involving a duality of the person and without confusing the two, soul and body.

<sup>62</sup> Blessed Maximus shows that in Christ the human nature has its work (energy), even if it manifests itself in His human works more outstanding than of other people. Naturally, a unique work would do from our Savior something else than an incarnate God, like the Father by divinity and like us according to humanity.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 531.

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same work have also the same being, and those that are distinguished by being, differ also by work, and those that are distinguished by work, differ also by being",<sup>64</sup> concludes Saint Blessed Maximus.<sup>65</sup>

Deepening this mystery of the hypostatic union Saint Maximus has in mind, of course, the relationship of the two natures in the hypostasis of the Son of God incarnate. According to the great theologian number two in natures neither shares, nor is shared, neither introduces through its reason any division into those to which is applied, nor is used to express a separated duality, but only to show that both natures are real.<sup>66</sup> Between the two natures of Christ the Savior is not a separation, because the natures are of the one Person of the incarnate Logos,<sup>67</sup> and the number shows how many natures are in this, but not their division or separation. We add thereof also that is specific only to the subsisting being to be able to do anything about something else, while the number, emphasizes Saint Maximus, can neither divide nor separate and can not be divided (separated) according to its reason.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, number two in natures in Jesus Christ does not mean separation of natures, or their changing or merging, the number itself having nothing to do with the natures, which still has to express, it only indicates their parts.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, by

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 532.

<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that through the unmistakable hypostatic union of the divine work and human work is performed the life-giving work of our salvation in the sense of the words of St. Gregory the Theologian: "which was not taken remained incurable and which was united with God, that is, is saved". (Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 101 to Cledoniu*).

<sup>66</sup> We must emphasize that the two natures, which formed the plural number, do not necessarily indicate a division of what it indicates, but only one differentiation from another. In such case, the number does not indicate different supports, but different qualities of the same support. Even when indicating different supports, it does not indicate a separation of them, those can be linked from another point of view: for example, the two natures in Christ the Savior. It should be noted that the pre-Chalcedonians in this argument did not allow in any way to use the number when it came to Jesus Christ, or to speak of two natures in Him, because it would mean a division (or separation) of them.

<sup>67</sup> Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, before Saint Maximus, said that the number is the indicator of the portions of the supports, but not of the division or separation of natures. But, Saint Maximus, by following St. Cyril of Alexandria, uses the term "undivided" also in the sense of "inseparable", words inserted in the definition of Chalcedon. What is clear that for Saint Maximus is that the natures in the Person of Christ are so united, that we can talk not only about a un-separation of them, but even of an un-division, just as of the soul and body can be said not only that the two elements can not be separated, but that their unity may be considered even undivided.

<sup>68</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular: On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus*, p. 111.

<sup>69</sup> Saint Maximus brings as an example in his support a bi-colored stone or quintuple colored. Here's how the Saint solves this problem: "We do not split the one stone into two or five stones, nor we cut colors of it, but we indicate them as being many connected with it, or in it, not producing or

specifying the parts, it is not introduced the division (separation of), but shown the part and indicated the difference. They are so because the number is the index of distinction and not of division (separation) as confesses Saint Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>70</sup>

Also on the two natures, Saint Maximus adds that is using only the number, in theory, and when specifying the unspokenness of the union, we say: “*a nature of God the Word incarnate*”. This proves that “*by uniting these, we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord and thus a nature of the Word incarnate*”. Thus teaching about the union of natures and explaining the way of this union, says the Blessed Saint, we do not use the word in the sense of “*difference*” to show the union, but, we properly assert both the union and the difference, thus keeping the meaning “*unchanged*” of those indicated.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, by the words: “*One Christ, one Son,*

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*being unable to arise in stone any cutting or division from the counting of the continuous portion of its colors*”. So, continues the Blessed, “*there is no or confusion of the colors belonging to the stone, as a single support, but the unit that the stone has as support indicates also the undivided portion the stone has in it*”. “*So the same with the colors of the same stone, adds Saint Maximus, as distinguished from one another, having the multiple portion, related to a single stone, have an unmixed unity, although the stone is the same*”. Thus concludes the great theologian confessor, “*neither the stone is divided through the portion of colors, nor the colors are confused through the unity of the support*”. Therefore, “*the existence of the stone having different reasons, according to one of them receives the number (plural), according to another, does not receive it, which shows that any number does not indicate the relationship itself of things, that is, division and continuity, but the portion of those referred to, showing the reason for that portions not its way*”. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 112).

<sup>70</sup> Saint Maximus says that Nestorius, though speaking of two natures, “*indicating the distinction of the body and of God the Word, no longer confessed their union together*”. But we: “*uniting these we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord and therefore a nature of the Word incarnate*”. (St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle to Evloghie*, apud Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 114).

<sup>71</sup> From those explained by Saint Maximus, St. Cyril had in common with Nestorius only the affirmation of the two natures, knowing their distinction, but there was no union: “*one Christ, one Son, one Lord and therefore a nature of the Word incarnate*”. Nestorius, though speaking of two natures, indicating the distinction of the body and of God the Word, did not confess the union of these two natures. So, justifying the expression of St. Cyril, Saint Maximus said: “*a nature of the Word incarnate*”, affirming that the expression “*two natures*” is used only to show that it has maintained the distinction between them in the Savior Christ after the union. Obviously the union of the two natures in the Hypostasis of the Word is so great, that the natures can not be seen separately as being two, although they remain two in the Savior Christ forever, even after the resurrection and ascension. Later Severus of Antioch raised the issue of the two natures in terms of “*number*”, he affirmed the divine and the human in the Logos incarnate, but refused the number “*two natures*”. For this reason the two natures in Christ the Savior were no longer seen as separate after the union, but rather designed as two. Specifically, the Monophysites taught that the human nature in the person of the Savior was so imbued with the divine nature that has lost its identity and distinction as nature. Therefore, our

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one Lord and thus a nature of the Word incarnate" Saint Cyril of Alexandria did not want to separate the natures after the union, or to abolish the difference of those united after the union, explains Saint Maximus.<sup>72</sup>

From this analysis it is clear that: both the union remained eternal and the united remained eternally unchanged and unmixed. Therefore, concludes Saint Maximus, "avoiding the expression indicating suitably the difference, we give the possibility to assert the mixing, and not affirming the expression indicating the union, we do not see how to remove the division (separation)". So, "in the same Christ are and are said those created, but also between them and God or especially between God and humanity, something that makes their union possible".<sup>73</sup>

But not only the union of natures in the hypostasis of the Son of God incarnate is important but also the confession of two wills and two works of the same Person, as shown above, that like natures are not subject to the number. After the Son of God was made partaker of us by blood and flesh, says Saint Maximus, "He had two works, as two natures: on the divine and parental and the humans. Through them He was human and was thought God, because He had the natures whose natural works had. For healing and giving life through the voice and touching of his Holy body, He showed Himself as God, but the Same made Himself known as an existential man through the same touch of the hand."<sup>74</sup> And the same when He took

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Orthodox confession is that the natures in the person of Jesus Christ are not only distinct, but they are rather truly united. They are united hypostatically "unmixed" and unchanged, undivided and inseparable. (Fr. Prof. D. Stăniloae, *Posibilitatea reconcilierii dogmatice între Biserica Ortodoxă și Vechile Biserici orientale (Possibility of Dogmatic Reconciliation between the Orthodox Church and Old Oriental Churches)*, **Ortodoxia (Orthodoxy)**, 1, 1965, pp. 5-28).

<sup>72</sup> Saint Maximus, in one of his writings, presented have several definitions of the unions, as follows: "The union into being is of the hypostases or individuals. The union in hypostasis is of the beings, ie soul and body. The union through relationship is of the calculations in one will. The union through joining is of the plates, the planks. The union through harmony is of the stones. The union by mixing is of the wine and water and similar liquids. The union through spraying is of those dried and liquid, of flour and water. The union through merger is between the wax and resin and between the similar. The union through congestion is of the wheat and barley and of those similar. The union through fusion is of those that split and regather, as is between the candle and fire. The union after being is of the distinct hypostases. The union in hypostasis is of the special beings". (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Definiții ale uniriilor (Definitions of Unions)*, *op.cit.*, p. 440).

<sup>73</sup> Saint Maximus stresses that keeping the difference of those united, "it is a further reason to show that the number was used by the Fathers to be said in faithful way also two natures to indicate those united, and again to confess " a nature of God the Word incarnate" for the manifestation of the union according to hypostasis, since none of these expressions is abolished by the other, as seems to some that make from unwisdom argument of the wisdom". (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 117).

<sup>74</sup> Matthew 26:38.

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*the towel and washed his disciples' feet and broke the bread and shared it with them and when He dipped His food into the bowl;*<sup>75</sup> *And again, through the voice that announced the sadness found in Himself: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death";*<sup>76</sup> *And: "Now is my soul troubled";*<sup>77</sup> *And: "What, could you not watch with me one hour?";*<sup>78</sup> *And He did many like these, without disband those which were specific to each nature, from which and in which was He himself, but testifying the natures through the natural works".* In such case, the arguments of the Blessed Saint are meant to show that Jesus Christ has two natures and two works which He worked through the two corresponding natures from His person. The presence of the natures and works is proof that the body did not have a single work by nature with the Word, as there was no single nature, although it became related to Him through the deification due to the union. And Saint Cyril, explained by Blessed Maximus, clarifies this teaching when he says: *"That is why it is said that our Savior works in God's Spirit. In fact not the natural working of the body and the power of humanity destroys Satan and overcomes Beelzebub. For whosoever will teach you casually, if you want, what hinders those who wish to acquire power against spiritual uncleanness. See if the body works this by its own nature. We are all in body and one is the reason of humanity in all. But there is no work of the body individually, nor of humanity to conquer spirits, since not all overcome them, but this rather looks like a result of the work of the Spirit"*.

From those shown by Saint Maximus we clearly discern that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Through the Incarnation, He never lost any of the characteristics of the two natures of His or any of their works and wills. Since the human nature is reflected as man, says Saint Maximus, it goes without saying that the victory over demons was a work of the Spirit, no of the body or humanity. This emphasis shows beyond doubt that the Lord's body was sacred and had all power against all disease: *"not because it is simply meditated body, funder only in His reasons, but because it is the temple of God the Word, Who lives in it and sanctifies His body through His Spirit"*.<sup>79</sup> This is meant when we refer to the Holy

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<sup>75</sup> John 13:2-10.

<sup>76</sup> Matthew 26:38.

<sup>77</sup> John 12:27.

<sup>78</sup> Matthew 26:40.

<sup>79</sup> The emphasis of St. Maximus is thoroughfare and of great importance for Christology, it being a synthesis of the thought of St. Cyril: *"So as says this divine man really not the natural working of the body and the power of human will destroy Satan, nor is worked by the nature of the body, for then all men, being in body and being one according to His human reason, if they decided to work, they would have power over the spirits. He teaches this clearly, by becoming the interpreter of His own words, when he shows that his body is sacred and life-giving, having power against all disease by dwelling in him (the Word), which means that he was united by hypostasis with him, but*

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Communion, when we eat not only the deity but the life-giving body that is united hypostatically with the deity of the Logos.

Viewed from another angle, the number of which spoke the Monophysites can neither produce nor suffer, nor introduce any division, but it simply shows the parts, and their relationships, regardless of them, no one touches, says Saint Maximus. In a word, the number shows entities, but does not express relationships or different kinds of connections between them. This shows clearly that in Christ the Savior the difference necessarily introduces through it the parts, and the part inserts the number it indicates. Therefore *“if preserved after the union those of which was made the union, must be confessed at once that those that have been preserved are two. This is because those gathered in an undivided unit do not get from the union any change or reduction or mixing or any contract or any transformation of one into another”* concludes Saint Maximus.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore considers the Holy Blessed that there must be taken into account that there is no property without substance and can not be known the difference without the part, as erroneously claimed Severus of Antioch.<sup>81</sup> So Jesus Christ is a person living not only the divine but the human also. In His hypostasis is present not only a human I, but an I that feels both human and divine at the same time.<sup>82</sup> Also, the human nature

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*not in that he was a body in his own reasons”*. The perseverance of St. Maximus is of course based mainly on the fact that the heretical Monophysites based their claims on the works of this great Alexandrian Father. (*Ibidem*, p. 258).

<sup>80</sup> Saint Maximus The Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular: On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus*, p. 124.

<sup>81</sup> The Monophysites can't say any simple particular difference in Christ the Savior, nor composed, un-relying on these natures. Severus and his followers claimed more curious that in the Lord of glory are divine and human qualities and feelings, but they do not have as basis two natures (a portion), but one mixed one, but manifesting itself in both divine and human qualities and feelings. For example, the Savior was hungry, but He had no special human nature from the divine. By this statement they slipped towards identifying the human with the divine in the pantheistic sense, ie to an essence which has in it both the strong and the weak, showing them alternatively. Saint Maximus, indicating that the Savior Christ has maintained unaltered the human nature, he affirmed, in fact, the firm maintaining of the creature of God, who created it, although of course the distinction is both in natures and qualities.

<sup>82</sup> We say “I” in Jesus Christ not in terms of human subject or human being. Savior's human nature has a natural reason, a natural will and natural aspiration or natural impulse toward the divine nature, but it does not have an “I” or a subject. The human nature of God does not have an “I” because He has no gnomic will or free choice. Leontius of Byzantium explained best the hypostatic union by the term “enhypostasis”. The term “enhypostasis” prevents meditation, from a dogmatic point of view, from the temptation to equalize the natures inside the hypostasis and has the advantage that expresses the free work of the divine hypostasis bearer of the eternal divine nature, that of assuming the one human nature and not an “I” or a human subject.

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of the Lord is organized and lived in its complexity not only by the human soul, but also by the divine Word, Who otherwise in a lesser degree, is present also in the work of the soul of organizing the matter in the body of a simple man.<sup>83</sup> Thus, “*the word of truth*, says Saint Maximus, *has never defined that Christ is One by nature or a single nature, in a simple way or composed nature*. Neither the name of Christ is an indicator of the being or of nature as a species, which takes the character of many individuals, as hypostases differently categorized. So “*neither man is understood as a single nature consisting of soul and body, meaning that the body would be of the same substance with the soul, but rather as one of a species, separated from other species through the distinction which constitutes it, but whi-*

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<sup>83</sup> According to Saint Maximus the soul and body make up a being in the common man, and in Christ the Savior the divine and human nature compose a hypostasis. The fact that Saint Maximus acknowledges that in man the soul and body make up the hypostasis of, led to a discussion between Sherwood and Lars Thunberg. The first saw in this thought of St. Maximus an inconsistency, while the second a more neutral sense. Saint Maximus, as we said earlier, does not nonetheless agree with Leontius of Byzantium. This assigning in the unit of the hypostasis of man a leading role to the soul, which takes the body just like the Word takes our body, slips somehow towards Origenism. (Thunberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 108-110). Father Stăniloae thinks that in this equalization by the Western theology, of the soul with the body in man, and therefore of the divinity with the humanity in Christ the Savior, would manifest a kind of nestorianism of the Western Christianity, akin to Origenist dualism. The fact that the body is assumed by the soul does not, according to Father, towards Origenism because the soul are powers that organize the matter in the body. The human soul cannot be without a body organized as the unique identity of each soul. Thunberg states that Saint Maximus would declare the body “*co-hypostasized*” with the body and not “*enhypostasized*” in the soul (*op.cit.*, p. 111). The text from Saint Maximus referred to by Thunberg does not contain this term, but (shows) only that the soul and body are united by the hypostasis. (*op.theol.*, PG 91, 152 A). Therefore, although the matter has in it the virtuality of being made body by the soul, the active possibilities for this are in the soul, not in the matter. In this context the soul ascends the matter to the rank of body with conscious functions, and not the soul is materialized by the matter. Therefore, the soul makes a body out of the matter, as a tool of the his freely decided acts, and not the matter subjects the soul to the complete repetition of its laws. So the body is “*animated by the rational and understanding soul*”, the soul is not materialized, according to Saint Maximus. Therefore, it is not the body that feels the life of the soul, but rather the soul feels those of the body. In the case of Christ the Savior we could say that also the divine feels the body through the soul. So, in what Thunberg is concerned, he recognizes that man as person can not be isolated from the fact that the human nature has, in the view of St. Maximus, its hypostasis in the Logos, being enhypostasized in Him. (*op.cit.*, p. 112). Of course, this thinking is justified by the fact that the reasons of all things or beings, having his models in God the Word, remain ne un-abolished in the hypostases in which they have their concrete and multiple existence. Atually, the human persons, where the human being has concrete existence, remain eternal as expressions of it. In such case the Savior Christ, Who is made man, the two natures – the divine as fundamental essence and the human as main essence and most comprehensive of the creation (spirit and matter) – are gathered in a unique hypostasis. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular: On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus*, p. 125, note 147).



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ch is equally categorized in the individuals under the same species, included in it. And by the fact that the soul and body are as soul and body, following the existential reason, two, and each is another following the reason of existence, were not passed over in silence those of which and in which is man",<sup>84</sup> says Saint Maximus.

In conclusion the unfaithful, speaking only about the number of natures from God's hypostasis, suffer under the weight of evil because they don't know that a number neither divides, according to its reason, nor is divided, being neither the doer of division, nor of the union. It is understood from this that being neither being nor accident, the number does not have in himself the property to do or to suffer. In fact it is only an indicator of the portion of things which are supports, no matter what their relationship is, either united or separate. Moreover the name indicative of a portion without the implied relationship, does not necessarily produce either the natural distinction of things or their portion, nor accomplishes through itself the connection of those united in the same species. All these are done only through the wisdom and power of God, and Who founded everything and keeps each nature in His Person unmixed through the distinctions specific to each. By virtue of this, Saint Maximus concludes that the number only indicates the simple portion and not how its specimens are,<sup>85</sup> which means that the number, not having ontological character, adds nothing to the existing ones, but only shows the portion of those which are, whatever relationship they have with each other. Then the number in the plural shows how many people are without producing their portion. In the singular the number may indicate the individual that is distinguished from others of the same species or the species itself. We can say, in this case, that the number in singular implies the number in plural, and vice versa, as the reality is multiple and unitary also. In this context we can say that the plural maintains unity through the bond between the parts and the unity maintains plurality, ie it indicates only the name of a portion, but does not indicate every portion as it is particularly. So, if according to the Holy Fathers, says Saint Maximus, "*the number is the indicator of the portion of things, but not of the relation, and the portion is seen in all its natural diversity, it is necessarily linked to a difference. About a natural distinction in our Savior Christ after the union speak also those who fight against the truth... So saying that in Christ it is a distinction after the union, they can not say that He is after the union one by all reason and manner. And if He is not after the union one by all reason and manner, being clear that our Savior Christ*

<sup>84</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Către Ioan Cubicularul. Despre dreptele dogme ale lui Dumnezeu și împotriva ereticului Sever (To John the Cubicular. On the Right Dogmas of God and against the Heretic Severus)*, p. 127.

<sup>85</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către Petru ilustul. Scurt cuvânt împotriva dogmelor lui Sever (Epistle to Peter the Illustrious. Short Word against Severus' Dogmas)*, p. 152.

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*is two after the union, following a certain reason and manner, for the difference of the natures in which and from which is evident they are in a deviation from the faith those who claim, after the union, the difference of the natures from which is Christ, but clearly abolish through silence, after the union, the natures whose difference they recognize. For denying those which are and are preserved is really a dissolution of them”.*<sup>86</sup> Therefore, number “two” in natures shows, on the one hand, “the portion” but, on the other hand, the ontological distinction between the divine nature and the human one. Saint Maximus the Confessor teaches that, by virtue of the hypostatic union in the One Divine Hypostasis the unity of the natures becomes non-numeric.

### **Our Lord Jesus Christ Has Two Wills corresponding to the Two Natures, Divine and Human, Each with Its Characteristic Features**

Saint Maximus understands by the concept of faculty of the general desire to belong to the being,<sup>87</sup> which makes the choice based on a counsel of man with himself, or of deliberation (βουλευσις) or of deliberation on those depending on him. The human being is not a simple existence, but an existence that wants to exist and be itself, having in it a tension and a rationality. It fulfills its general desire, each time according to given circumstances and according to possibilities always changed. Thus, the will of the nature takes different forms and until decision it goes through different stages or steps. This is done because the nature was made by God as one that wills itself and everything related to its constitution, being connected as desire by reason for the existence after which it was made.<sup>88</sup> So, “*the will is not a choice (προαιρεσις), if it is a simple vital and rational desire, and the choice, the union of desire, deliberation and judgment. For, wishing, first of all we deliberate and, after having deliberated, we judge what can be chosen; and, after having judged, we choose what is shown from the judgment the best from what is the worst*”,<sup>89</sup> emphasizes Saint Maximus.<sup>90</sup> Our Savior Christ in His human will,

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 154.

<sup>87</sup> Lars Thunberg. *Microcosm and Mediator; The theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Lund, 1965, p. 220.

<sup>88</sup> In a brief definition, according to Saint Maximus, the natural will is a rational and vital will, and the choice is a deliberate will (ορεξις βουλευτικη) of those depending on us.

<sup>89</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către precuviosul presbiter Marin. Despre cele două voințe în Hristos. op.cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>90</sup> Ontologically speaking, man never ceases to desire God and be more full into He who is the source of eternal existence, but according to his choice, he can choose evil and pervert the will for good. Because of this the choice is not one with the will: the will depends on the nature and the choice is related to those dependent on us and can be made by us. By virtue of this fact every human

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does not oppose the divine will, but He lives the will of His human nature as will through which the human nature wants to extend and enhance its existence by the divine one. The divine one Our Savior lives as will that wants the human nature to be more united with it and in full agreement with it,<sup>91</sup> and through His human will

being desires after the One who is really by nature and has the thirst for eternity, but may choose also evil and die in sin against his will.

<sup>91</sup> Saint Maximus says that *"the Holy Fathers attributed to Jesus Christ along with the will also the ignorance, recognizing them the same reason"*. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Întrebări ale monotelitului Teodor din Bizanț și rezolvările lui Maxim (Questions of the Monothelite Teodor of Byzantium and the Solutions of Maximus)*, op. cit., p. 441). Obviously the Monothelites will not allow the human will of Jesus Christ, but they rather will say that the ignorance is related to His divinity, not accepting those human. To say that the Fathers have made an identity between will and ignorance is absurd, according to Saint Maximus. *"Who could reconcile themselves, says the Blessed, as can not be reconciled with each other the possession and the lack. Not even the divine Gregory asserted the identity of ignorance with the will, as proposed by the Aryans. He doesn't even mention the will when he speaks as follows: "You are for me, my God and our God", then the words "bigger", "to create", "to sanctify" and the following". "Moreover, continues the Saint Blessed, if the meaning of ignorance and will is the same, either those that desire by nature are also ignorant, or those who are ignorant are also willing, and God wanting by nature, succumbed to ignorance; and all those inanimate being ignorant by nature, move through the natural will"*. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Prima rezolvare a întrebărilor de mai sus ale diaconului și retorului Teodor, trimise presbiterului Marin (The First Resolution of the Above Questions of the Deacon and Rhetor Theodore, sent to Presbyter Marin)*, op.cit., p. 441). Therefore, the blessed Maximus added, *"the well-known and God-bearing teacher tells these about ignorance, specifying them as by a rule and norm: "Be evident to all that God knows as God, but He says he does not know as man, if anyone separates what is seen of what is meant"*. Thus, Saint Maximus recognizes an ignorance of man, but not specific to nature as created by God, but rather entered into it after sin. But our nature restored in Christ the Lord no longer has this total ignorance, especially because it is carried by divine hypostasis. So, the Savior Christ as God knew towards what he wanted as man to lead His human nature: towards liberation from affects and death from sin. In this will of His as a man manifestes the will itself of His human nature, which did not feel the state in which it was as a final state, although ethically was continually perfected. Obviously, those we meditate on as related to the human nature in separation from the divine are not of Christ. These are entered into nature after sin and have sinful character. So the ignorance of our nature after sin can not be attributed to the Savior as the only hypostasis, for in Him the ignorance of our nature is defeated by His knowledge as a whole. Although his knowledge as man is distinguished from his knowledge as God, nevertheless remains a knowledge of the nature raised from sinfulness, by being united with the divine in His One hypostasis. Thus, says the Father Stăniloae, *"to ponder on the human nature outside of natures, if we can speak everywhere about these, fully separated from God is to ponder it printed by sin and its consequences (ignorance, disobedience, etc.). Pondered in Christ means ponder it sinless and only with the blameless consequences of sin, so being hungry, fearing death, the possibility of dying, but not totally ignorant and disobedient to God, for they are inseparable from sin"*. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, *A aceluiași Sfânt Maxim Dezlegarea celei de a doua afirmații absurde (Of the same Holy Maximus Unraveling the Second Absurd Statement)*, op.cit., p. 448, note 622). So the Monothelites claiming the identity between will and ignorance, deliberately confused not having a deliberate will with not knowing in any way. But Christ the Savior had in His deity everything, but wanted that His

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He wills both what His human nature wills in accordance with the divine one and what His divine nature wants to acquire through His human nature will.<sup>92</sup>

But, even if our Lord Jesus Christ has two wills and two works in his human nature there is no *human discernment*, because He had no deliberation for the better, His human nature united with the divine nature wanted only the good. The concrete good was known by the hypostasis of this nature which was divine and which, of course, was related to the will for the good, specific to His human nature. This proves that “*in our Lord’s humanity, which does not subsist as hypostasis in a simple way like us, but divinely – because it was God, Who showed Himself for us in the flesh from us –, can not be stated the discernment. For by His very existence, or by having to subsist (of being in the hypostasis) divinely, our Lord had naturally the good as characteristic (την προς το καλον εικειωσιν) and the bad was a stranger for Him*”.<sup>93</sup> Blessed Saint Maximus strengthens these statements by the words of Saint Basil, who, explaining the words of the prophet Isaiah, said: “*Before knowing or choosing the bad the child will always choose the good*”.<sup>94</sup> The word “*before*”, stresses blessed Maximus, “*shows that not researching and deliberating like us, but because he subsists (γνομη) divinely, by its very existence, had by nature the good*”.<sup>95</sup> More specifically, the nature taken by God the Word

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humanity to get from the state of ignorance, pain and death, in which man fell through sin, to the state of true knowledge, incorruptibility and resurrection. Thus he made that the man, built by Him for eternity and perfection, to reach perfect union with the Source of true knowledge of good and His eternal experimentation.

<sup>92</sup> Saint Maximus, using the example taken from our world, says that man, as a specimen of the species, is a unity, without the soul and body of which is made to be able to merge. In this unity, the soul does not have a separate work from the body and vice versa, so that every act of man is both of the soul and of the body. In such case, the body can not be without soul nor the soul without a body. Because of this we have naturally by nature the simple desire for good and the experience of the good we have it through research and deliberation. For this is spoken in proper way, regarding us, in terms of discernment, which is the way of usage, not the reason of nature. For even nature was changed infinitely after sin, man no longer feeling clearly the quality for good. Because of this humanity weakened and even perverted in part, keeping in general the will for good, although this was actually very worn. So it stands to reason that in God, unlike us humans the being and will are together from eternity, undivided. It turns out that the Persons of the Holy Trinity have common will and being, unseparated, God never ceasing to be and to want at the same time. Also, we mention that when in a particular situation we want to find the good we have to find it out through research and deliberation, which give rise to a true or false discernment of good. Thus the work of free will is shown on a discernment that takes a decision towards the better or worse. Of course deliberation and discernment imply ignorance and doubt about the right thing to do or be avoided. Thus only our discernment is the way in which is specified concretely the will of nature for good.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 501.

<sup>94</sup> Isaiah 7:16.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, p.

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in His divine hypostasis did not have inclination toward good mixed with the inclination toward evil, for He was without sin, but He had a weakness from the original sin which made difficult the bearing of sufferings: fatigue, hunger, etc. So, the human nature from the hypostasis of the Word did not need deliberation to determine what is right, nor was it very light the bearing of difficulties, as a fulfillment of what was in certain circumstances the same with the good. In this way was needed a clear strengthening of it in the divine hypostasis for it to subsist divinely and remain in good and its concrete practice.

So, Jesus Christ, having the human nature enhypostasized in Himself as God, together with it, He had also its will, returned in the good implanted in it as being characteristic to it. Thus He took into consideration the good will connected to it, but He did not need deliberation as to know it and to reach a discernment about it and then to the free will.<sup>96</sup> For this reason, the decisional choice, according to Blessed Maximus, is not a determined will of those depending on us, but a fanciful wish characteristic to the thoughtful faculty, without the rationale which deliberates those possible. But the choice is the desire based on deliberation on those that we have to make from deliberate desire.<sup>97</sup> Thus the determined will refers to both the possible and the impossible, while the choice relates only to the possible and potential to fulfill through us. Also, the determined will relates to the target, and the choice to those that lead to the target.<sup>98</sup>

From the above context Saint Maximus concludes that man before deciding goes through four moments:

<sup>96</sup> The discernment (*γνωμη*) has in the Scripture and at the Fathers several meanings. Sometimes discernment is an encouragement and an advice, as the Apostle Paul says: "*And about chastity, I have no commandment of the Lord. But I give an opinion (γνωμη)*". Other times discernment is used to mean deception, as we see at the blessed David: "*They have taken crafty discernment against Your people*". (Psalms 82:3) Another time discernment is used for judgment, when the prophet Daniel says: "*The impudent decision (γνωμη) came in the name of King*". (Daniel 2:15) Also St. Gregory the Theologian says about discernment: "*To rebuke is no big deal, it's easy for everyone who wishes; but is specific to the faithful and good man to show instead discernment*". In conclusion, Saint Maximus finds that in the Holy Scripture and at the Holy Fathers the word discernment (*γνωμη*) has 28 meanings. (*Ibidem*, pp. 503-504).

<sup>97</sup> Saint Maximus considers that man counseling with himself or the deliberation is the desire which investigates those that can be done by us, and the thing chosen (decided) is that based on the judgment resulting from counseling with the self. Hence the deliberation refers to those who are still investigational and choosing the those over which was judged before.

<sup>98</sup> Saint Maximus states that is wanted is the target, for example health and what is deliberated is what leads to the target, for example how to reach health. Some say that between what is willed determined and deliberately is the same ratio as between determined will and choice, if we do not choose (not decide) but for those we feel that can be made by us, but we determined want also those that are not done through us. It was shown consequently that the choice is not the determined will nor deliberation or counsel of man with himself (*βουλευσις βουλη*). (*Ibidem*, p. 272).

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- the will stated theoretically and sometimes fancifully to satisfy its willingness to be;
- the deliberation on what can and should be done from what is offered to the desire;
- the discernment as inner inclination towards something from those deliberate;
- the choice or decision taken on the basis of judgment and discernment after deliberation.<sup>99</sup>

It follows that the the choice of certain facts is made following the judgment on those on which there has been the counseling of man with himself. Obviously, some depend on us and others “*can be done through us*”, because we do not deliberate about everything, nor about all things that depend on us and are made through us.<sup>100</sup> In this context, mastery over others is also the self-control and over things or the carrying out of certain deeds without becoming a slave of necessary things or deeds. Man, choosing what he wants, is kept within reason which rules all and rises to his original freedom, being master through reason over those subjected to reason. In this case Saint Maximus believes that the human will and freedom are related to his human being created by God with the capacity to move freely and rationally justified.<sup>101</sup> As such, based on this analysis we find that in the humanity of Jesus Christ there is a will specific to this nature in accordance with His divine will, without missing anything of His own, but without sin, apart from what is not in accordance with God’s will.<sup>102</sup>

As for the act of choosing, Saint Maximus He says there is no thought with caution, because “*the thought with caution is the desire which contemplates the rational and knowledgeable teachings, or is the deliberate desiring of those depending on us. So the act of thinking is accomplished this way: the first movement of the mind is called understanding, and the result of understanding something is said to be the meaning. This, insisting and imprinting in the soul the image of the understood work, is called the thought of the work understood, and this, remaining the same and examining itself, it is called careful meditation. And this meditation,*

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<sup>99</sup> Under this analysis we find that the thing judged before, based on human exhortation with himself, for its choosing, becomes the chosen thing when the choice appropriated its desiring.

<sup>100</sup> We do not deliberate for example the fact of enriching us, says Saint Maximus, but on how and by what means to get rich.

<sup>101</sup> We understand from this reasoning of Saint Maximus that human freedom is related to the image of God within himself, source of all rational and free movement and the movement target.

<sup>102</sup> It should be noted that freedom is from the beginning in will and that by it are produced the other steps of movement, man himself, as a person, bringing something to what is given as will. This great mystery is of course against what God has given him through will and what gives man to God by deeds.

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extending itself, forms the inner conversation. Describing this, some said it is a movement of the soul that becomes truly fulfilled in the inner conversation, without uttering itself, from which is the spoken word. The product of this contemplation is the knowledge born in mind by thinking carefully on any thing worth meditating”, concludes the Blessed.<sup>103</sup> Obviously, the act of thinking carefully is of course in relation to the meditated work, with the thoughtful mind and the product of thought born in the thoughtful mind.<sup>104</sup> This work goes further and shows that “the choice that appropriates the start towards those depending on us and towards their use, is the end of the rational movement in us, carried by desire. For what is rational by nature has as its natural power the natural desire, which some call the will of the understanding soul”. Of course, the human reason, having in it the dynamism of desire, serves, in this case, the good by which the human nature tends toward its fulfillment. So the reason though is at the service of will, however distinguishes between deliberative thinking, that comes later, and the first movement of reason, which is caused by the undetermined desire or willingness.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, as we see Saint Maximus claims that the natural will is the desired power of what exists by nature and keeps together all attributes that are existentially specific to nature.<sup>106</sup> The Holy Fathers define the will as desire and as the

<sup>103</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către precuviosul presbiter Marin. Despre cele două voințe în Hristos (Epistle to Blessed Presbyter Marin. On the Two Wills in Christ)*, op.cit., p. 277.

<sup>104</sup> It follows that man's will employ all the faculties of his being: desire, meditation, attaching through feeling and freedom, which means that everything is at the service of human being development towards good, or the completion of the inner man in the image and likeness of God.

<sup>105</sup> Saint Maximus means by this idea that man must ask himself first: What does his nature want? Then, after he specifies the subject of his will, intervenes thinking that thinks if the thing desired is good. In this linkage the Blessed sees clearly the distinction between the act of reasoning (λογιζεται) and the work of thinking (σκεπτηται), otherwise known in the philosophy of Kant as the difference between analytical and synthetic judgment. So, the reason reveals, in the desire of being of man, that it is the desire of something, which is the same with analytical judgment. Then, in synthetic judgment, on the contrary, man deliberates considering all the specific things his being needs, but that are not part of it. Of course, unlike Kant, Saint Maximus is much more realistic, showing that the things man needs to fulfill are not outside the relationship with Him, such as the immortality of the soul, as analytic judgment.

<sup>106</sup> Man, as noted by Saint Maximus, “being by nature a rational living creature, is thus willing and reasoning being, willful of something determined and thoughtful and questioning (thoughtfully) and voter and bent to those elected and to their use”. In this direction is included the reason of virtues, as working law of the nature powers, but also the manner of bad usage of the same powers, that give a improper life to the passions contrary to nature. On the one hand, if man is able to choose by nature, he can decide for those good or bad in judgment, standing in his power the movement towards both. When, however, when will no longer be those contrary and we will see clearly “the truth itself subsisting, will no longer be the choice to move toward him through things that are in the middle and are in his power”. (Saint Maximus The Confessor, *Epistola către precuviosul*

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desired object (θεληθεν η θελητον). It is the very nature in its tendency to remain in existence as a whole of all its parts. A human nature without the will to be as a whole could not be conceived. God created the human nature as one that wants itself to exist, once it has been brought into existence. Any conscious step forward in existence is a step of nature that wants to be and, by this, wills what its Creator wills. With reference to this Saint Maximus says that “*although the Fathers call the will also desire, they never indicate through it also the wanted thing. For how could the desire and the desired thing be the same?*”, he asks himself. “*If it were so, towards what would move (the desire), being itself the one towards which it is moving also nothing else by nature than that? For it (the desire) is a middle relationship between extremes, uniting them through it, uncoinciding with the actual existence*”. Witness to these realities is the great Gregory the Theologian, says the Blessed Saint, “*who does not identify what is wanted and born with the desire and birth, but through them as natural relationship, is shown the one that bears and wishes. For if it were not allowed a relationship of what is wanted or born with the desire and birth as something that is in the middle, they would be brought to a unity and be declared as one*”.<sup>107</sup>

Of course, as opposed to man in the divine hypostasis of the Savior Christ was activated the general will of the human nature in a specific way, but this way was no stranger to the general will of being of the human nature. Although he was God, he took into account the desire to be of the human nature, and wanted to remain in his unique way also man. Then, He enabled the human desire in the total and permanent way directed towards His deity, or as the meaning of its true aspiration, towards its source of life. Thus the Son of God “*as soon as he was a body, immediately He became rational animated body*”, having His own will and work, because “*everything tht exists, says Saint Maximus, has as its constitutive distinction the innate movement pertaining to the species. It assigns a definition to the support (the being), by which it is known that this is and what it is, thus having in it both the identity with those of the same species, and the difference against a species or a particular nation. As man our Savior had a real natural work specific to this being, unmixed and unchanged, but united with the work and the will of the divine nature, both coordinated and worked by the Lord*”.<sup>108</sup> Therefore His divine

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presbiter Marin. *Despre cele două voințe în Hristos (Letter to Blessed Presbyter Marin. On the Two Wills of Christ)*, op.cit., pp. 280-281).

<sup>107</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Despre cele două voințe ale lui Hristos cel unul, Dumnezeuul nostru (On the Two Wills of Christ the One, Our God)*, op.cit., p. 419.

<sup>108</sup> Man seen according to the flesh is according to Saint Maximus an individual, following Aristotle. He is a specimen belonging to a species found in multiple copies. According to his soul, though, man does not belong to a species as the one of the animals. Also, having soul, man is not



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hypostasis has in Him a work specific to the divine nature and a work specific to the human nature, both being coordinated by one and the same person of our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

Since there are two wills, the will of God and the will of people, Saint Maximus considers that these do not reach through unity to a single nature, or as he says “*does not suffer the contraction in one being by the one will*”. If this were so, it would mean that we have a single hypostasis of all, of God and the saints, melting all among themselves.<sup>109</sup> So the will is not independent, but is the appropriation of the Hypostasis, which means that if we admit one will in the incarnate Logos, it means that we confuse human nature with the divine in the sense of Nestorius. Saint Maximus, against the Monothelites said: “*us who, following the Holy Fathers, we confess two wills, while that Decree, saying one, declares itself in an accord with Nestorius and Apollinaris and those around them*”. Moreover, calling the will accident of the being, not being, Saint Maximus did not mean by this, that the will would not necessarily and existentially be related to being, but only that the will does not stand, for itself because it thought the will without nature<sup>110</sup>.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has therefore two wills corresponding to the two natures divine and human, as their characteristic feature. If they said that the will of

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only individual evenly with other individuals of his species, as the specimens of other species of animals. He's sort of a copy of the species called *human* whereas the identical body structure makes him have a soul largely identical to others. But through soul, man is at the same time person, not only individual identical to others, for he thinks through soul, feels and leads freely in his life differently from others. Unlike us, Christ the Savior is not even a Person between several persons of the species man. He is as man more Person than any other human person, being able to form entirely as man. He is as man more Person than any other human person, for He has as His nature also the divinity, and no other man has. Thus, he is a unique person and also a person capable of a better relationship with all those of the human species, bringing through His deity a novelty and a real holiness in their existence, as pointed out by Father Stăniloae. (*Ibidem*, p. 433, note 606).

<sup>109</sup> The Monothelites, as we know, spoke of one will in Jesus Christ, which was completely absurd and unfounded Scripturally. So attributing Christ only one will, heretics inevitably come to believe that the divine and human beings of our Savior are only one. They also taught that the Orthodox supporting two wills in Christ the Savior can not but come to the idea that this allows two people that will, so two persons in Christ. So the human could no longer be, according to them, but contrary to God. Therefore, human freedom can not be saved, according to them, but by opposition to God. In conclusion, the Monothelites did not understand freedom in communion, freedom of love, because according to them there is either a pantheism or a contradictory dualism.

<sup>110</sup> As we know, human beings can not produce other beings through volunteer work, which shows that the being is created by God and is destined for eternal existence in God. Also the being remains unaltered precisely because it has its reason in God, its will being able to be used in one way or another, according to its changing mode, both in its reason and in its freedom. Therefore, the term accident, indicates the state of the will of not staying as state of being, unlike the being which shows the state of being and those that are related to those that shows the state of being.

Christ is natural, says Saint Maximus, the Monothelites would turn out to be ill by the madness of Apollinarius,<sup>111</sup> who alienates Jesus Christ according to being from both God the Father and His righteous Mother. “*And if Christ the Savior is only one nature, He is neither real God by nature nor man by nature, unless the Father is by nature truly as His Son, or the Mother by nature truly as the Savior Christ*”,<sup>112</sup> emphasizes Saint Maximus. And again, says the Blessed, “*if I admit in Christ only one will that chooses and which I call gnostic, it will be like according to nature, having the choice of those to be done appropriate in all to the reason of nature, and thus our Savior would not prove Himself un-sinner – but refraining from sin and thus receiving passions and progressing in good according to the nature –, or He will work against nature and, in using those from Him, He will show Himself working the corrupted manner of the reason of nature*”.<sup>113</sup>

From this analysis of St. Maximus it appears that if in Christ our Savior is one single will, having it also the human will, then it will show the existence of a single nature in Him, which will be a mixture from His Father and His Mother, or a different divine nature from Father’s in a polytheistic sense. And if this will it, be it human, shall be updated in the will of choosing freely and arbitrarily, it will appear either as the will of a man who restrains himself, progressing in mercy and the release of passions, or as the will of a man who chooses the bad, obeying more and more the sin and corrupting thus the true reason of nature. If inserted in Christ our Savior another nature, namely a middle nature between the Godhead and the creature, by enabling him through nature to choose between those contrary, as a simple man. And if, admitting a voter will in the Lord, it would indicate that they consider Him as a hypostasis, moveable both by nature, and contrary to nature, so being the choice. Also, believes the Holy Confessor, “*if this will was the characteristic feature of the Hypostasis of Christ, We would part through this will from the Father and from the Spirit, as one of other will and discernment*”. Thus, “*what is seen particularly in the Son, as hypostasis, is not common in any way to Him and His Father and to the Holy Spirit*”.<sup>114</sup> It is true, certifies Saint Maximus, that

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<sup>111</sup> Apollinarius supports the implementation of one being in Christ the Savior, in which one hand is divine and the other human, the latter not being the whole human nature, but being completed by the divine. Arius, before this heretic, thought that only if our Lord Jesus Christ is not consubstantial with the Father could merge what he had with what he took from people. Both therefore built with fancy something they thought it is an intermediary between God and man through being, but in fact it was not intermediate, but a confusion between the human and divine natures, not allowing man a real encounter with God.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 287.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 288.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 289. See also Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Răspunsuri către Talasie (Answers to Thalassius)*, 42, **Philokalia** III, p. 146.

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the Church Fathers have mentioned the voter will of the humanity of Jesus Christ, but they understood thereby the desired power through essence of the nature, that is the human nature will or our voter will, existing in God incarnate through its appropriation by Him. This will to choose has the meaning of “*will undetermined concretely of the human nature*”, as updated will of something or other by the Son Himself. It can not be in any case a will that could choose evil, but only one that “*could choose between two good things*”, as if to go to Jerusalem or not, or go on a road or another.<sup>115</sup>

So, the Creator of people was made man for us, as Creator of unchangingness, making unchanging also our voter will. He received into His hypostasis the human nature with the controlling freedom and the passion from our punishment. So acquiring out of the love for people those of our dishonesty, “*He made Himself for our nation the reason of free un-passioned choice*”, and their search by Him, He gave it as “*reliable bounty for our future incorruptibility*”, says Saint Maximus. Thus, the human nature of Jesus Christ does not move by free choice, like us, to those contrary between them. As such, through the assumed human nature in His person, the Savior received our passions, entered into our nature as punishment for sin. These He received with His will, freely, having the power to rule them, to nail them on the cross and defeat. Without making Himself their slave, He has shown the power of choice of our nature, agreeing to the choice of sufferings, determined by Him.

Of course, the incarnate Logos as divine hypostasis in two natures, has attached to the divine will also our will, that persisted in our suffering endurance, chosen by Him as God for our salvation. Enduring our pains, He was shown so as a man stronger than them, giving our nature the un-passioned power of our free choice for good. Then in His sufferings with the human nature, The Savior was shown conqueror of death and by resurrection, has given us eternal life and incorruptibility. Thus the Lord of glory overcame also the flawless sufferings, received in His humanity, without ever have the urge to choose between good and evil. Saint Maximus, without denying the power of choice in Jesus Christ, explicitly confesses that His human nature was not moving through the free choice between good and bad, for although He knew the bad, there however He did not chose them, as he did not suffer any necessary weakness. This is explained by the fact that the human nature has not ever been outside the Hypostasis of the Word.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>115</sup> John 7:8-10: “*Go you up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.*”.

<sup>116</sup> The Son of God becoming man, took on human nature which He enhypostasized and deified. Thus, He made natural His humanity, not necessary, but without feeling it a stranger in Himself, but familiar to Him and to His human soul.

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Thus God the Word did not set aside the human will, but He brought it back to its movement consistent with the nature, which finds both its satisfaction and fulfillment in God.

By taking its existence at the same time with the union with God the Word *“the human nature had therefore the movement not subjected to doubt, or rather constant, as said by Saint Maximus, according to natural desire or will, or, to say more specific, it had its stability still in Him, according to coming to a complete clean and deified existence in God the Word”*.<sup>117</sup> This is because the Son of the Father imprinted in His humanity the deification and moved it naturally, as one specific and natural to Him and His soul, thus fulfilling in it effectively *“His great mystery of His incarnation for us”*. He did not remove anything that was natural to His human nature, except for the sin, which has no reason sown in it and none of those created. For this purpose we confess that our Savior Jesus Christ had two natures, to whom He is hypostasis, and two natural wills. If He had no human will, as argued by the Monothelites, He would have no soul or mind, His reason being for the movement of the nature towards the fulfillment of the desired as good. As such, into the human nature of His Hypostasis the good opens so bright and convincing, that He no longer needs to think about His choice, and fulfills it immediately.

### Conclusion

Saint Maximus had to fought against the Nestorian and Severians heretics. Between Nestorius and Severus of Antioch was not a big difference in terms of Christological doctrine. Severus used the word *“distinction”* to deceive the audience just as Nestorios did with the word *“unity”*. Nestorius, using the formal union, introduced in fact the separation of natures, and Severus, using the simple difference after the union, pondered the existence of those distinct as a great chimera, claiming actually the merge of the natures. If Nestorius had not pondered that was made the union only by simple nomination, he would have acknowledged that

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<sup>H</sup>aving it so close to His Person, He communicated His grace and moved it towards deification, through cross and resurrection, filling it with His presence and divine work. Through this He showed that as far as our nature was deified, *asumată de El*, that much it remained itself as a whole and unity with the whole human race. This union of the human nature with the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Logos also gave the opportunity to the divine to imprint upon the human and to show Himself thus through human and to do His will through it. Through this He showed the compliance of humanity with God and the kinship through creation and grace with Him. As such, By virtue of this people can encounter God in unsuffering, freeing from the dark horizon of the material world and deify, reaching the everlasting light of the Kingdom of heaven.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 291.

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from the union of the two natures resulted a compound hypostasis. And Severus if he had not preached a simple (formal) distinction, he would not have refused to acknowledge in Christ the Savior after the union the uncut and inseparable portion of the particular natures.<sup>118</sup> Therefore neither Nestorius knew a real union of natures into Jesus Christ, nor Severus a real distinction of them, although the first talked about their union, and the second about their difference. Thus, “*the simple union*” of the natures, Nestorius was talking about, was the lowest degree of union. And “*the simple difference*”, Severus was talking about, was also the lowest degree of distinctiveness, as for example between the length and the width of the same body. Then, “*the simple union*” of Nestorius let un-united the natures in one person, and “*the simple difference*” of Severus did not involve two natures in Christ.

As for the will of the Savior, Nestorius thought that it's only a human will, having to always receive the specification with the help of the divine Hypostasis that it is of another hypostasis. In such case, the will of humanity in Jesus in Christ was declared through discernment and decisions in accordance with His own divine will, being of another hypostasis, just like ordinary people. Although the human nature preserved in the Lord its independence and discernment (a gnostic will), His human acts were not acts of human nature His human acts were not acts of the human nature and its natural will conducted by His one hypostasis, but its independent acts, specific to a special hypostasis, acts of a will that put itself in agreement with the divine will of another hypostasis. So, Nestorius, only knew the portion of the natures in Christ the Savior, and the unity of the hypostasis as composition of the two natures he did not know. So he took as covering of the separation the simple (formal) union of the natures, and Severus, preaching only the unity after nature instead of that after the hypostasis, but failing to recognize the portion after the nature, he took as covering of the mixing of the natures the simple (formal) difference of natural qualities. So, Nestorius, preaching the union only in the quality of the will as discernment (gnomic) of natures, denied the unique hypostasis, not wanting us to say that there was a real union (συνουδοῦν) of natures according to the hypostasis. So, the authority, dignity and human will he saw in the union with the divine will are clearly of one's discernment, of the gnostic will, and not of the nature. Severus, in his turn recognizing, after the union, only the simple difference, forms, in their natural qualities, stated clearly the abolition of the natures, denying difference of the natural heterogeneity according to being of those united. Nestorius invented the union of the gnostic qualities for the sepa-

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<sup>118</sup> As we saw above in the whole distinction is involved a portion and every portion is related to a number that indicates it, which means that neither distinction can be counted without portion, nor portion without a number that indicates it.

ration according to nature of the natures, and Severus, on the contrary, invented the distinction of the natural qualities for the mixing or merging of the natures.<sup>119</sup> Nestorius contradicted himself obviously also when he considered that through the incarnation of the Word was achieved only the union of the gnostic wills, once he stated also after the union only their difference, giving up talking about separation of natures considered by him as not united. Moreover, through the difference of the gnostic wills, the heretic introduced also the dissimilarity in discernment, through which was shown not only the difference by nature, but also according to hypostasis. In other words, Nestorius, saying that in our Lord Jesus Christ it was not carried out only a union of will with God's gnostic, denied actually the unity by hypostasis. In such case, after him, the human nature was not united with the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Son of God and therefore the human did not escape from sin and death.<sup>120</sup>

Saint Maximus the Confessor has always emphasized that after the union of the natures in the eternal hypostasis of the Word it can be seen the difference of those united and also after the union is seen the union of those special. The thinking of both heretics being simplistic, saw a contradiction between union and distinction and did not take into account the paradoxical reality of the incarnation of the Son of God, Who assumed the human nature in His hypostasis for our salvation. Moreover, their views, especially Nestorius', were having negative repercussions in terms of human salvation. Since Nestorius, distinguished the gnostic wills, actually showed that the trust in the good or the extension towards Christ the Savior of the people is unreal and even sinful. Due to this the deified man was actually a sinner who did not unite perfectly with God, because his gnostic will is not the same as God's. In such case the difference in the gnostic wills introduced dangerously the dissimilarity in the discernment, and the dissimilarity in discernment introduced the decreasing of the good, which meant ultimately that he who is kept in any certain way under him, he was not yet made sinless in the discernment.<sup>121</sup> Thus the heretics alienated the Savior Christ both from His Father and His Mother, not being united with none according to being. They did not understand that God can unite with the human without altering it, without altering Himself. Furthermore, Christ the Savior, according to them, never sanctified the authentic human wearing it fo-

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<sup>119</sup> The conclusion of Saint Maximus is fair: "*truly they were a pair of wicked people, turned madly into tearing viciously, through those contrary to the truth of the dogmas of our faith*".

<sup>120</sup> Only a human nature not really united with the divine one retains its gnostic will, advancing after Nestorius through independent discernment for good or for some kind of union with God.

<sup>121</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către același Marin. Din scrierea despre lucrări și voințe (Epistle to the same Marin. From the Writing about Works and Wills)*, chap. 50. *op.cit.*, pp. 299-302.

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rever, He never cried as a man, sanctifying our crying for others, never prayed as a man, purifying our prayer and He was never merciful for His fellow men, rising to the ultimate degree the human mercy, as pointed out by Father Stăniloae.

Against these, Saint Maximus confessed that the Savior Christ is true God and true man. The composed hypostasis of Christ is not equivalent to merging the natures and wills, their union in one hypostasis exceeding both the separation and the merging. The Blessed also finds that the heretics did not see God's love expanded through one of the Trinity who was made perfect man for us, and Who makes Himself man forever. Moreover the Sainbt Confessor alleging asserted against them that the: *"as it is not expressed through the same words the difference and the unity in the Holy Trinity, for by telling Three Hypostases is witnessed the difference, and by saying a person is witnessed the unity, the same, concerning the One from the Trinity, by making known the difference of the natures, but announcing a composed Hypostasis, is witnessed the union"*.<sup>122</sup> From this analysis, Saint Maximus clearly stated that there is actually a close link between the relations between the Persons of the Holy Trinity and the hypostatic union of the two natures in the Person of Jesus Christ. For *"as in the Holy Trinity we do not confess the one being by confusing the three hypostases, so any of the three hypostases, at the cost of abolishing of the one being, so in the One of the Trinity we do not confess the one Hypostasis at the cost of confusing His two natures, nor the two natures, at the cost of abolishing the one hypostasis"*.<sup>123</sup> As seen in the Holy Trinity is a distinction according to the hypostasis and not by nature and it is not based on feelings, but it must be understood through thinking, and so in the person of Jesus Christ the natures must be thought that are joined hypostatically and reasoned this way.<sup>124</sup> For this reason the human being is enhypostasized in the person of the Logos, that is fit in the hypostasis and united with the divine nature, different from it according to being, to set up a person and building up (γενεσθν) a hypostasis. So it's specific to the Hypostasis to see itself in itself and to distinguish by number from those of the same species. And specific to the enhypostasized is to know himself united to something different by being in one hypostasis, in an indissoluble connection, or be naturally in individuals with concrete existence.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 385.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 388.

<sup>124</sup> Saint Maximus adds to this: *"as we recognize in the Holy Trinity a single being, and for the Hypostatic distinction three Hypostases, so, the distinction by being of the Word and body, we say two beings, and, for the lack of the Hypostasis specific to the body (ιδιουποστατον), a Hypostasis"*. (*Ibidem*, p. 387).

<sup>125</sup> Church Fathers forever taught that the Trinity is a Oneness in Three Persons. They defended both the unity of being and the three divine Persons, showing thereby that the hypostasis is

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Saint Maximus, analyzing the two wills of Christ the Savior, goes on line of the holy Fathers “*who did not speak about the quality of some gnostic wills (determined wills as specific discernment), but of some natural, the laws and the existential and natural reasons of those united naming them correctly wills*”. Moreover, speaking of this will, *without which there can be no human nature*, they understood clearly that this is “*the natural desire of the mentally animated body, not the gnostic one of a certain man, carried by the movements of the mind, but that which has the natural power of the desire for existence, moved naturally and imprinted (τυπουμενην) by the Word to the fulfillment of oikonomia*”.<sup>126</sup> In this regard Saint Maximus considered that “*the natural will is the power that works by nature to be and supports the attributes that belong naturally to nature, power through which is always in what desires, by nature, the ability to want*”. Of course, “*it is not the same the ability to want and actually wanting, as well as nor the ability to speak and actually speaking*”. From those highlighted by Saint Maximus we can think that the difference between the ability of wanting is natural, while the ability to speak is something that someone has, but doesn’t speak permanently. As we all know the first is specific to the being, being in the reason of nature, while the second is related to human advising with himself, “*being branded by the discernment (τη γνωμη τυπουμενον) of the one who speaks*”. Hence we conclude that to human nature is specific to talk continually, but it depends on a person how he talks, as well as the ability of wanting and actually wanting. As such, the person is not only the state itself or the actual existence of nature, but also the one that inevitably brings nature virtualities into a specific time, through thought, reflection and deeds. In this line of argument Saint Maximus if he had not had as cornerstone the definition of the Christological dogma from Chalcedon, which made a clear distinction between the hypostasis of Jesus Christ, as one, and his

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not one with the being. Thus, the being exists in several hypostases or a hypostasis may represent the actual existence of two natures. Nestorian and Monophysite error lies precisely in the fact that representatives of these heresies came back consciously or unconsciously to the identification of the Hypostasis with the nature. Undoubtedly the hypostasis can not be without nature, but a nature can receive the concrete existence in several hypostases, or more natures can get the existence in one hypostasis. Therefore, there is an inner relationship between nature and hypostasis, truth that leads to the conclusion that human nature of the Logos is not un-hypostatic, but enhypostatical. So the human nature in the hypostasis of God is neither hypostasis nor nonexistent, and the hypostasis can not be without being. He “*is not being*, states Father Stăniloae, *but He is established through being*”. (Saint Maximus The Confessor, *Despre cele două voințe ale lui Hristos cel unul, Dumnezeuul nostru (On the Two Wills of Christ the One, Our God)*, op.cit., p. 435, note 612).

<sup>126</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle of the Same to the Same. The Same Letter, chap 51. Parents saying two wills in Christ, showed natural laws, not two specific discernments*, op.cit., p. 304.



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natures, as two, he couldn't have explained this specific sense of the individual. So, in the light of the teachings of the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod, the Holy Confessor emphatically confirms that in our Lord Jesus Christ the unity of the hypostasis results in the special unity of a single target to the wills of the two natures. Thus the ability of wanting and the will are not the same, because the first is of the being, and the second, of the advising with the self (της βουλις) of the one who wants. So the incarnate Logos has as man the ability to want moved and printed by His divine will, as said also by Saint Gregory the Theologian.<sup>127</sup> Precisely because of this, since the hypostasis of Jesus Christ is formed also by His human nature, to the specific updates of His human nature takes part also His human will, of course only in accordance with the divine will. Then, if the human nature was deified, it was deified by the initiative and leadership of the hypostasis of the incarnate Word. Therefore, the deification of the human nature from the person of the Lord was made by the union of the being *"of the one being deified with the being of Him Who deified"*, as recorded by Saint Maximus. It could not be otherwise because *"what deified and what was deified were undoubtedly two, so they are not the same by nature, if what deified and what was deified were in a relationship together"*. As such, Jesus Christ, wearing the human nature in His hypostasis, willed as man and suffered as man the bodily fear of death, the crucifixion and burial, thus showing that He was made real man and that in this nature He redeemed the nature of the damned for their sin.<sup>128</sup>

Saint Maximus, seeing the *oikonomia* of our salvation, shows us to understand that the human nature from the person of the Word, although it was shaped by God the Word, through the act of creation and again by recreating it in the womb of the Virgin Mary, it was not put into passivity as human will, but rather it wanted also to be deified to reach the authenticity of existence in which it really wanted to work with the divine will.<sup>129</sup> Naturally that the one who wanted to shape

<sup>127</sup> Saint Gregory the Theologian said in one of his speeches that *"His will had nothing contrary to God, being whole deified"*. (*Sermon XXX, The second on the Son*).

<sup>128</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor states by these words that the Savior: *"killing death with His death, saved what was in Him as a man by nature"*. So He fulfills also physically *"the great and unspoken advice of the Father, fulfilled by Him as God"*. (*Epistola a aceluiași către același. Din aceeași scrisoare 51 (Epistle of the Same to the Same. The Same Letter; chap 51). Parents saying two wills in Christ, showed natural laws, not two specific discernments, op.cit., p. 306*).

<sup>129</sup> By the fact that Jesus Christ is afraid of death, Saint Maximus argues that his incarnation is a clear evidence *"of the natural reason of natures united in His person and the way of union by hypostasis, the first testifying the natures, second renewing them without changing and merging them, not being necessary that the same to dissolve and activate through will, it would be absurd, of course, if the will of the Son is by nature of the Father"*. This logic leads to the clear conclusion that the Savior had as man a natural will, imprinted by His divine will, not contrary to Him. *"For nothing natural op-*

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the human will and to deify our nature was primarily God and man. This determines Saint Maximus to take into account on the one hand that the will of the human nature wanted not only to be, but rather it wanted to reach effectively, by transcending, in the fullness of existence, in God. Given this desire and zeal, the Logos of the Father, the One loving people, imprinted in His human nature His divine will, also updating its own potency, planted by Him through the act of creation.

Of course, Saint Maximus highlights like no other that the Son of God, in the *oikonomia* of our redemption, uniting in Himself the two natures, divine and human, in His Hypostasis, He made this hypostatic union to result in the restoration and deification of the human nature in Him and its release from the possibility to choose something contrary to God, contrary to himself and to God's creation. Thus, our Lord has not placed in this work necessarily in the sense of the passion, cross and death but rather towards our deification. This is shown to us by Jesus Christ Himself when He says: "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*"<sup>130</sup> Saint Maximus says these words show that "*along with staying away from the dead is removed also man's will towards fighting dead, due to blending the natural reason of the human will with the way of the oikonomia, by printing it with the divine voice.*"<sup>131</sup> So if the Savior had lacked the natural will, He would not have been perfect man nor man everywhere. At the same time, if He had been denied the work of His human nature, He would have been denied the work of the divine nature, thereby denying His very natures, for there is no nature without natural will.

**Translated in English by Ana-Monica Cojocarescu,**

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*poses God's will when neither the gnostic will (determined as specific discernment), that shows also the personal separation, if so by nature, is not opposed to Him, otherwise it would be regarded as the reason for his contempt as one that had produced what would fight through nature with Himself", says the Blessed Saint Maximus. (Saint Maximus the Confessor, Epistola a aceluiași către același. Din aceeași scrisoare, cap 51 (Epistle of the Same to the Same. The Same Letter, chap 51). Parents saying two wills in Christ, showed natural laws, not two specific discernments, op.cit., p. 307).*

<sup>130</sup> Matthew 26:30; Luke 22:42.

<sup>131</sup> Saint Maximus, *op.cit.*, p. 307.