

The Divine Will and the Human Will of Jesus Christ

The answer of St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Thomas Aquinas
to *Monothelitism*

By *Leonard Tony Farauanu*

INTRODUCTION

“We likewise proclaim in Him, according to the teaching of the holy Fathers, two natural volitions or wills and two natural actions, without division, without change, without separation, without confusion.”¹ This dogmatic definition of the Third Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (681) was the conclusion of long debates, which involved both the Greek and the Latin world. It was the answer of the Catholic Church to those who called themselves “Monothelites” or “Monoenergists”, who confessed just one will and just one operation in Christ. The holy men involved in this dispute, Saint Sophronius (Patriarch of Jerusalem) and Saint Maximus the Confessor, had to fight even the writings of some Patriarchs of Constantinople: Sergius, Macarius and Pyrrhus. Even the papacy got very much involved in the controversy, from pope Honorius who failed to act rightly against the heretics to pope Agatho and Leo II, who proclaimed and defended the orthodoxy.

In this essay we will try to expose the answer to the *three main principles of Monothelitism*, as it appears in the most significant writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor and Saint Thomas Aquinas, more precisely, in Saint Maximus’ “*Disputation with Pyrrhus*” and in Saint Thomas’ *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa (adding some articles from Ia and Ia IIae). We think that the two authors fit very well together, because of their common and strong Aristotelian philosophical background. Also, their explanations of the doctrine complete each other, and we will try to emphasize what is common to both and what is proper to each one. We will consecrate one chapter to each principle of Monothelitism and the reply given to it by the two saints.

¹ J. Neuner, S.J. – J. Dupuis, S.J., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, sixth edition (Theological Publications in India: Bangalore, 1996), §635.

I. FIRST PRINCIPLE OF MONOTHELITISM: THE WILL IS HYPOSTATIC

“If Christ be one Person, then He willed as one person. And if He willed as one person, then doubtless He hath one will, and not two.”² This statement of Pyrrhus summarizes the first principle of Monothelism: the will is hypostatic. There is for Monothelites a necessary equality between the number of the hypostasis and the number of wills, as Pyrrhus says again: “it is impossible not to imply some ‘willer’ along with the will itself.”³

Saint Thomas quotes a similar objection in q. 18, a. 1 (fourth objection), but the reply is quite short and not exhaustive. However, in the same q. 18 (the body of article one), Saint Thomas sends back to his treatise on man, especially to those questions that treat of the appetitive powers of the human soul (79-83). He shows there that an "*inclination* follows every form,"⁴ and that, since "forms exist in those things that have knowledge in a *higher manner* and above the manner of natural forms", there must be in them "an inclination surpassing the natural inclination,"⁵ which enables them to desire what they apprehend, and this inclination is called "appetite". Furthermore, the appetitive power is a passive power naturally moved by the thing apprehended (the appetible). But, since "the motive must be proportionate to the movable"⁶ and since what is apprehended by the intellect is generically different from what is apprehended by sense, it follows that the intellectual appetite must be *different* from the sensitive. This intellectual appetite is called *will*, and it is a *natural power* of the human soul. Likewise, Saint Maximus uses mostly the same kind of argument when he speaks about the *specific difference* between animal nature and human nature: if the self-determinative motion is proper by nature to rational creatures, then every rational creature is by nature a creature that wills. He uses in this

² Pyrrhus, in *Disputation with Pyrrhus of Our Father Among the Saints Maximus the Confessor*, translated by Joseph P. Farrell (St Tikhons Seminary Press: 1990), p. 4 – the page numbers that we refer to do not correspond to the page numbers of this edition (we used a copy in which the numbering of pages was different), but we wanted nevertheless to provide these relative page numbers (according to our copy) in order to make easier to locate the passages in the book.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁴ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 80, a. 1, corpus.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*, a. 2, corpus.

argument the definition of Diadochus of Photike, who understands the will as self-determination.⁷ Therefore the will is proper to the human nature and not to the hypostasis.

To the objection that the acts of the will are concrete, *particular*, like the hypostasis, and consequently the will would belong to the hypostasis and not to nature, Saint Thomas answers clearly in IIIa q. 18, a. 1, re. 4: one must make a *distinction* between the will itself and a "determinate mode of willing," which belongs to nature "not considered absolutely, but as it is in the hypostasis." In other words, the hypostasis determines a certain "*mode of willing*", and in Christ the particularity of this mode of willing was that it was *always in accordance with the bidding of the Divine Will*. Saint Maximus the Confessor uses also this distinction, speaking about *three different aspects: the will itself, the mode of willing and the object of the will*, when he faces two objections from Pyrrhus: (1) if the will pertains to nature then we have *one nature with God and the Saints*, since we are supposed to be one will with them (Pyrrhus, p. 8); (2) *changing the will* (willing this or that) would involve *changing nature* - this confusion is due to the presupposition of *the "substantialized hypostasis"* of Monophysitism. To the first of these objections Saint Maximus replies that by "having one will with God and the saints" the Fathers meant willing the same thing, having *the same object of the will*, namely, God Himself and His glory. To the second objection the same Father answers that one should be able to distinguish between the will and the mode of willing. The will as faculty is natural, but *the mode of its usage by a particular hypostasis is always unique*, as the hypostasis is unique. Saint Maximus uses here the classical Cappadocian distinction⁸ between the principle of nature (essence) and the mode of its existence (hypostasis). As he states,

“all things which have an identical nature have identical abilities. But the mode of willing, like the mode of perception . . . (. . .) . . . is only the mode of the use of a power, of the employment of will and of perception.”⁹

Therefore, the change in the acts of the will is not to be confused with a change in the nature of the one willing.

⁷ Saint Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus...*, p. 23.

⁸ Used by the Cappadocian Fathers in the explanation of the Trinitarian doctrine of the Church.

⁹ Saint Maximus, op. cit., p. 10.

Once proven that the will is a natural power, it is to be said that it belongs to the perfection of human nature to have a will. Moreover, since the Son of God assumed a perfect human nature (this was already stated by the Council of Chalcedon, of which authority could not be put into question by the "catholic Monothelites"), then He had also a human will. About the *Divine will* of Christ is even much easier to argue: since, as Saint Thomas says (*Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 19, a.1), His Being is His will - on account of the Divine simplicity, and since His Being cannot be subject to any change, then necessarily Christ had a Divine will, on account of His Divine nature. Therefore, Christ had both a Divine and a human will, inasmuch as He had both a Divine and a perfect human nature. One can see here how close Constantinople III follows Chalcedon.

Saint Maximus has an interesting argument which uses *reductio ad absurdum*, showing that those who consider the will as hypostatic necessarily fall in one of the two main opposed Trinitarian heresies: Sabellianism and Polytheism. As he says, "if one suggests that the 'willer' is implied in the notion of the will, then by the exact inversion of this principle of reasoning, a will is implied in the notion of the 'willer'." Consequently, the Monothelists would have to say either that because of the one will of God there is only one hypostasis, as Sabellius said, or that because there are three hypostasis in God there are also three wills - and because of that three natures as well,¹⁰ which is the position of the polytheists and of the Arians. Therefore, since there is one Divine Nature in three Persons, there is one will of all these three Divine Persons, and not three wills. It was then proven that the will is not hypostatic.

Finally, Pyrrhus tries to speak about the legitimacy of saying that there is one will in Christ - a "*synthetic will*", on account of the supreme union (the hypostatic union) of the two distinct natures and wills. Saint Maximus shows that a synthetic will means a composite will, and a composite will characterizes only a composite nature - a "*tertium quid*". But to speak about a composite nature in Christ was already condemned by the Councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople II, thus it is impossible also to speak about a "*synthetic will*" of Christ.

¹⁰ The canons and the definitions of the Fathers of Ephesus, of Chalcedon and of Constantinople II say that the distinction of wills implies a distinction of natures. This was used as an argument against those who professed just one nature in Christ (the Monophysites), either a divine nature or a "*tertium quid*".

As a conclusion of this chapter, the first principle of Monothelitism - the will is hypostatic and not natural - is wrong because of a serious error with respect to the understanding of nature and hypostasis in general and also because of a Monophysite Christological approach.

II. SECOND PRINCIPLE OF MONOTHELITISM: IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR TWO WILLS TO EXIST IN ONE PERSON WITHOUT OPPOSITION

“It is impossible for two wills to exist in one person without opposition,”¹¹ says Pyrrhus. This is a very strange statement, for the “freedom of the will” is seen intrinsically connected with or manifested by the opposition of the same will to another will. In other words, opposition is the necessary manifestation of a free will. This will lead to the third principle of Monothelitism, but we will not discuss it now; this task will be completed in the next chapter. In this chapter we are content just to see how Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Maximus answer this objection and how they understand the apparent opposition of wills in Christ.

In q. 18 of IIIa Saint Thomas even does not treat of such a problem - the *natural* opposition between the Divine and the human will, since he spoke about similar subjects throughout all the previous parts of the Summa, especially when treating of the Divine Providence, of the government of the world, of the nature of man or of the doctrine of grace. Such a *natural* opposition of wills was unconceivable for him. God, as a first cause of everything, moves everything according to its nature.¹² For example, in the case of the rational creatures, God moves the will (the rational appetite) to move itself. As “by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary.”¹³ This is true about the human will both before and after the fall.¹⁴ However, after the fall, the ontological disharmony introduced in the human nature by sin is manifested also by a disorder in the appetite (the sensitive appetite does not

¹¹ Pyrrhus in *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, p. 7.

¹² See S. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 83, a. 1, ad tertium.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Saint Augustine says: “Since therefore the will is either good or bad, and since of course we have not the bad will from God, it remains that we have from God a good will.” (*On the Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism* 30, in *Writings against Pelagius, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Volume V*, p. 56).

obey promptly the rational appetite, and between them there is often an opposition). Moreover, the human will can arrive in opposition to the Divine will, on account of sin. But this is not a natural opposition, since nothing in the nature as such moves the human will against the Divine will, which is the first cause of the human nature itself.

Saint Maximus however, insofar as he was asked directly about this during the disputation with Pyrrhus, gives a short and clear reply: such a natural opposition of wills could have only two causes: God Himself, who created all natures, or sin. It is easy to show that both causes have no place in Christ: first, God does not create something naturally opposed to His Divine Will (this would mean that good is the author of evil, which is both impossible and a blasphemy); second, in Christ there is no place for sin, since it is written: "there is no sin in Him" (I Jn. 3: 5). Thus, there can be found no cause of such a *natural opposition* of wills in Christ.¹⁵

However, some passages of Scriptures have troubled many people, especially the moment when our Lord seems to hesitate in Gethsemane. This fact led some to say that the Divine Will of Christ "forced" (overwhelmed) His human will, which was inclined to disobey. But neither Saint Maximus, nor Saint Thomas would take this position (for Saint Thomas such a position was totally impossible - as a heretical one, for the Church had defined already in the Sixth Ecumenical Council that between the two wills of Christ there is no opposition¹⁶).

In order to explain the passages from Lk. 22: 42, Mk. 14: 36 and Mt. 26: 39-42, S. Thomas begins with a distinction between the will itself and the sensitive appetite, which can be considered a "will" by participation. The sensitive appetite naturally obeys reason, thus it is said to be "rational by participation", and since "the will is in the reason" the sensitive appetite may equally be said to be "a will by participation."¹⁷ This distinction having been introduced, Saint Thomas continues by saying that Christ, by a certain dispensation before His Passion, "allowed

¹⁵ See Saint Maximus the Confessor, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁶ "The two natural wills are not - by no means - opposed to each other as the impious heretics assert; but the human will is compliant, it does not resist or oppose but rather submits to His divine almighty will." (See the definitions of the Third General Council of Constantinople in J. Neuner, SJ - J. Dupuis, SJ, op. cit., §635)

¹⁷ Saint Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa, q. 18, a. 2, corpus. Here Saint Thomas uses some quotes from Aristotle, *Ethics I*.

His flesh to do and suffer what belonged to it.”¹⁸ In other words, since Christ assumed a perfect human nature, He assumed also the sensuality of this nature and He had a human sensitive appetite and a human natural inclination (called sometimes *natural will*, which is by no means the rational appetite). But it is natural for the sensitive appetite (or the will of sensuality) to shrink from sensible pains and bodily hurt. Moreover, the natural inclination (or *the will as nature*) naturally turns from what is against nature or evil in itself, as death, corruption, illness, etc. However, the will as reason (or the rational appetite) may choose something like that (suffering, corruption, death) as means for a different end, for example glory, wealth, life everlasting, etc. Therefore it can be noted that in such a circumstance the will of sensuality and the will as nature can enter in conflict with the will as reason, can be found in opposition to it. Nevertheless, in this conflict the rational will has always the last word, either in opposing the desire of sensuality and the natural inclination or in accepting and carrying on this desire and inclination. Moreover, in Christ the will of sensuality and the natural inclination were always subject to His rational will, and they could not tend in opposition to this will but by a special dispensation of the Lord. Christ allowed this to happen for *three reasons*: in order to satisfy for our sins (1), in order to cause belief in the Incarnation (2) and in order to show us an example of patience (3).¹⁹

Focusing again on the event of Gethsemane, it is to be said that Christ prayed there according to His human sensuality and natural inclination, as laying before the Father what is in His appetite of sensuality and in His will as nature.²⁰ Only in this sense one could say that Christ could will what God did not, namely, inasmuch as His will of sensuality and His will as nature were shrinking from suffering and death. But His rational will was always in perfect agreement with what God willed - thus with His Divine will, as can be seen even in the event of Gethsemane: “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Mt. 26: 39). Therefore, because only the rational will is properly called “human will”, there was no opposition in Christ between His Divine and His human will, even during His prayer in Gethsemane. But, inasmuch as one calls the sensitive

¹⁸ Ibidem, a. 5, corpus. Here Saint Thomas uses a quote from S. Damascene (*De Fide Orthodoxa*), quote used also in IIIa, q. 14, a. 1, ad secundum. Saint Maximus says the same thing in his *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁹ Ibidem, q. 14, a. 1, corpus.

²⁰ Ibidem, q. 21, a. 2, corpus, and a. 3, corpus.

appetite and the natural inclination “a will by participation”, there was in Christ an opposition of wills, namely, an opposition between His sensitive and natural will on one side and His rational will on the other side, opposition which was freely allowed by Christ Himself. Moreover, as Saint Maximus pointed out, this opposition, manifested in Gethsemane as fear, is even something far more than that fear which particularises itself only in a created hypostasis:

Thus, He was truly afraid, not as we are, but in a mode surpassing us. To put it concisely: all things that are natural in Christ have both a rational principle proper to human nature, but a supernatural mode of existence, in order that both the [human] nature, by means of its rational principle, and the Economy, by means of its super-natural mode of existence, might be believed.²¹

As a conclusion of this chapter, to speak about a natural opposition of the Divine and human will in Christ would mean either to make God the author of evil, or to attribute to Christ’s human nature some degree of sin; such conclusions are totally foreign to Christian faith and doctrine. Christ’s prayer in Gethsemane does not manifest an opposition between His Divine and His human rational will, but only an opposition between His will of sensuality and His natural will on one side and His rational will on the other side, opposition which the Savior freely allowed in Himself for our sake.²²

III. THIRD PRINCIPLE OF MONOTHELITISM: WHAT IS NATURAL IS COMPELLED

“If thou sayest that the will is natural, and *if what is natural be compelled*, and if thou sayest that the wills in Christ are natural, thou dost in fact take away all His voluntary motion.”²³ Pyrrhus seems to have a big problem in understanding the nature of the rational beings, and it is not difficult to show that he is wrong.

As we have already shown, when Saint Thomas speaks about the Divine Providence, about the government of the world and also about the nature of man he clearly shows that every created thing is moved by God according to its own nature, so that the human being, though being moved by God, it freely moves itself. In other words, Saint Thomas says that God moves the human beings to freely move themselves, thus the human will is not compelled. Since it is

²¹ Saint Maximus, *op. cit.*, p. 18. Saint Thomas has a similar argument, even much more elaborated, in IIIa, q. 46, a. 6, body.

²² Saint Thomas gives *three reasons*: to show that He had taken a true human nature (1), to show that a man may wish with his natural desire what God does not wish (2) and to show that man should subject his own will to the Divine will (3) -- see IIIa, q. 21, a. 2, corpus.

²³ Pyrrhus, in *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, p. 11.

specific to the rational natures to move themselves freely, to consider the natural movement of such a being compelled would mean to deny the identity of that very nature. Saint Maximus insists on this aspect of the argument, directing the same Monothelistic argument into a well known heretical position (Origenism): God, who is by nature good, by nature Creator, would have to be of necessity Creator.²⁴

Saint Thomas takes a more methodological approach and proves systematically that Christ must have a free human will (which is not compelled in any way). First, we would like to stop a little while on the discussion that Saint Thomas has on the free will in the treatise on man and in the treatise on happiness (*Summa Theologiae*, Ia, qq. 81-83 and Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 1). When asking the question whether the will desires something of necessity, the Angelic Doctor makes a *distinction* between three different kinds of necessity: *natural or absolute necessity, necessity of end* and *necessity of coercion*.²⁵

The natural necessity is due to the intrinsic principles of a substance (material or formal principles), and in fact, *logically speaking*, it is expressed through a logical enounce that is either included or logically deduced from the very definition of a thing. Speaking now about the human will, the natural necessity is not repugnant to it. As the intellect *of necessity* (naturally) adheres to the first principles - adhesion without which the intellect would be able to understand nothing, so the human will must of necessity (*naturally*) adhere to the last end (happiness), adhesion without which the will would be able to will nothing. As Saint Thomas says, “the end is in practical matters what the principle is in speculative matters.”²⁶ Furthermore, “whatever is not essential to a thing is reducible to a principle that is essential to a thing.”²⁷ In the case of the will, it is not essential to it to will this or that particular good, but to will this or that particular good is reducible to “willing the last end” (happiness), which is a principle essential to the will. Therefore it is to be said that the will *naturally and necessarily wills the last end*.

²⁴ Saint Maximus the Confessor, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

²⁵ Saint Thomas, op. cit., Ia, q. 82, a. 1, corpus.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Ibidem, Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 1, corpus.

The second kind of necessity is the *necessity of the end*. Once the end is willed, the will wills everything that is understood as a necessary means to attain that end. This kind of necessity is also not repugnant to the will. It is to be noted that there might be some necessary means to attain that end, means that are not willed by the will because they are not yet understood as such (as necessary means). Finally, the *necessity of coercion* is the third kind of necessity, and this is totally repugnant to the will, for one calls coercion what is definitely against the will itself.

After having inquired into the possible connections between will and necessity, let us analyse our main problem. The third Monothelist principle appears as an objection in Saint Thomas' treatise on happiness (*Summa Theologiae*, Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 1, first obj.), objection which says that a natural agent is contradistinguished from a voluntary agent.²⁸ Saint Thomas, in his reply, answers that a natural agent and a voluntary agent are *different as two distinct causes*. There is a way of causing which is proper to the will *as master of its own acts*, and there is another way of causing which is *proper to nature as determined to one*. Since the will is *established in a nature*, it "necessarily shares to some extent in the movement proper to nature, just as a posterior cause shares in what belongs to a prior cause."²⁹ In other words, the will is a natural power, having the principle of its movement rooted in nature, principle which consists in willing of necessity the last end, happiness. This was called "*simple will*", "*will as nature*" or "*thelesis*."³⁰ On the other hand, there is another act of the will following the counsel of reason, act which consists in choosing the means judged necessary to attain the last end. This was called "*free-will*" "*counselling will*", "*will as reason*" or *boulesis*". "Thelesis" corresponds to the intellect as regards natural principles and "boulesis" corresponds to the reason, which extends to opposite things. But, as it belongs to the same power to understand and to reason, in the same way it belongs to the same power to will and to choose; thus "thelesis" and "boulesis" are not two different powers, but two different kinds of acts of the same power, the will. Coming back now to Pyrrhus' words, the will, as a natural power, is compelled (in the sense of being

²⁸ Pyrrhus, by "what is natural be compelled" means "what is natural is necessary or determined to one", thus he speaks about a *natural necessity*.

²⁹ Saint Thomas, op. cit., Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 1, ad primum.

³⁰ Ibidem, IIIa, q. 18, a. 3, corpus. Saint Thomas uses here the terms consecrated by Saint John Damascene in *De Fide Orthodoxa*.

determined to one) only with respect to its first act or principle, namely, willing the last end. However, the will is free and not compelled with respect to the means chosen in order to attain happiness.

Although the third principle of Monothelitism was proven to be false, we want to continue our analysis applying the conclusions of our inquiry to the human nature of Christ. There are *two fundamental differences* between the human nature as existing in Christ and the human nature as existing in us: first, Christ's human nature is assumed by His Divine nature, thus it exists in a Divine hypostasis - unlike in us; second (a consequence of the first), Christ's human nature is not touched by sin, while our human nature is. These two fundamental differences must cause also a difference between the mode of willing proper to the human nature of the Savior and the mode of willing proper to our human nature.

The fact that Christ's human nature had a determinate mode because of existing in a Divine hypostasis caused His human will to be always moved in accordance with the bidding of the Divine will. Therefore, Christ could not sin.³¹ But how then can one say that Christ had a free human will? Once one has a limitation, like impossibility to sin in this case, many think that he cannot be considered free. In order to clarify this issue, we must begin with a distinction: though the word "freedom" generally means "capacity to choose", this meaning can acquire two different nuances. First, it can mean "power to say no", or power to sin. This is sometimes called *natural freedom* or *psychological freedom*. The second nuance goes in the opposite direction, meaning "power to say yes", or power to do the good. This is called *moral freedom* or *super-natural freedom*. Therefore, Christ as a wayfarer did not have what we called here "natural freedom,"³² because His human nature was hypostatically united to His Divine nature. Likewise, Christ did not have a "gnomic" will³³ as we have, that is, a will which always implies a hesitation before choosing, hesitation which is caused by doubt - in Christ's reason there was no doubt. But He had in a supreme manner a moral or supernatural freedom for the same reason.

³¹ This could also have been deduced from the fact that Christ's human intellect enjoyed from the first moment of His conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary the beatific vision.

³² If we call "natural freedom" simply "the power to choose", then Christ had a natural freedom, on account of the perfection of His human nature. He could choose between different means which were not necessary for the achievement of His mission (like wearing this or that cloth, sleeping here or there, etc.).

³³ Term used in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*.

The grace of union proper to Him is infinitely more powerful than the grace we receive from God. It is in this sense that Christ is *the model of our freedom*,³⁴ since through grace we receive the power to do the good and to avoid sin, power that we called moral or supernatural freedom, or freedom to do the good. Also, the fact that Christ could not consent to sin does not mean that He had no real temptations; by contrary, this fact made the temptations to be really what they are, since when one sins the temptation to commit that sin ends. Finally, Christ's obedience to the commandment of His Father (Jn. 15: 10, Phil. 2: 6) did not limit His freedom, as our obedience to God does not limit our freedom. God's commandment intrinsically demands a free obedience, thus if this commandment destroyed the freedom, it would destroy itself.³⁵

As a conclusion of this chapter, it can be said that although the human will is a natural power, it is naturally determined to one only in its first act, namely, in willing the last end. But the same will is able to choose freely between different particular goods, because of the human reason which extends to opposite things. As concerns Christ, His human will - totally incapable of sinning - is the most pure image of the uncreated will of God, because of the hypostatic union. Consequently, His human freedom is the perfect image of God's freedom. Moreover, because He suffered temptations but freely obeyed to His Father He is both our brother in trial and our model of freedom.

CONCLUSIONS

After having analysed the main three principles of Monothelitism, we can conclude by saying that all of them are based primarily upon a seriously distorted understanding of human nature (and of nature in general). The answers that Saint Maximus the Confessor and Saint Thomas Aquinas gave to the Monothelist objections were meant primarily to correct this erroneous understanding of human nature and of hypostasis. The principle they always used - *semper distinguere* - casts out the clouds of confusion that the heretics have thrown on these matters. To finish with the words of Saint Maximus himself,

³⁴ This is the freedom we aspire to. *Strictly speaking*, Christ is not the model of our freedom, in the sense that His freedom does not represent completely our freedom, which can say no to God. The word "model" here is used with the meaning of "ideal".

³⁵ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Our Saviour and His love for us* (Saint Benedict Press / Tan Books and Publishers: 1999), ch. XIII, p. 178.

... to state something and not first to distinguish the different meanings of what is being said invites confusion, and ensures that what is under investigation remains obscure, which is foreign to a man of learning.³⁶

³⁶ Saint Maximus the Confessor, *op. cit.*, p. 4.