

Knowing the Mystery of God's Son Incarnation in the Spiritual Experience within the Writings of Saint Maximus the Confessor

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Abstract:

This study provides a thorough analysis of conditions and relations of the divine and human natures' union in the unique Hypostasis of Christ the Saviour. Theology of St. Maximus the Confessor is invoked in its subtleties and depths, realizing, by evoking, too, of other Church Fathers founders of Christology and inspirers of St. Maximus - St. Athanasius and St. Cyril of Alexandria - a complex and detailed picture of the consequences of the incarnation of the Son of God, Christological perichoresis of the two natures - divine and human - basing their cooperation on the mutual agreement between the two wills perfectly expressing these two natures. Countless modern sources interpreting the maximian theology complement and deepen the description of the mystery of the Son of God embodiment in history.

Keywords:

hypostatic union, Maxim the Confessor, perihoresis of physis, salvation.

Saint Maximus the Confessor is the deepest spiritual personality involved in the Christological disputes, came to a polemical climax towards the end of the first half of the seventh century. He is also the most able mind of the most subtle conceptual distinctions, who solved the issues of great spiritual theological subtlety and valued creatively many of the ancient philosophical categories.¹ Sometimes

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¹ Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Scrieri și Epistole hristologice și duhovnicești (Christological and Spiritual Writings and Epistles)*, translated from ancient Greek, introduction and notes by

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the saint was so radical in confessing the true faith,² that his discourse, so complex and modern, so much infuriated his enemies that they resorted to horrific actions against him, reaching the point of cutting his tongue and his right hand from its armpit in order to not be able to confess the truth with his speech or in writing.³

As regarding His Christological doctrine, Saint Maximus exceeds the polemics and the syllogistic, his speech being imbued with the grace of the Holy Spirit, gained through struggles and the contemplation of divine reason, imprinted in creation. From history we know that the most burning issues of his time were linked to the Nestorian and Monophysite heresies, as well as their derivatives, the Monothelitism and the Monergism. These errors from the true faith were in part supported by some Byzantine emperors, who brought big troubles upon the Church of Christ the Saviour. To combat and respond to these challenges, Saint Maximus acquired the dogmatic teaching from the Fathers and then developed a personal analytical patristic theology. In his Christology with great exactness he deepened the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, especially the act of assuming the human nature in His eternal Hypostasis, without This suffering any alteration or any curtailment due to the union with the human nature. In this context, the Saint's approach proved to be virtuous, especially for the admirable and anthropological vision of his thinking in terms of traditional Christology. That is why the Holy Confessor focuses not only on keeping the human nature after the incarnation, but also underlines the full willingness and work in the Person of our Saviour. His intervention was welcomed and the anthropological argument was helpful to the Church, precisely because it emphasized the declared role of Theology to prove the concrete reality of the union between the human flesh with the divine nature in the Person of the Logos, without any merger or decrease.⁴ Actu-

Fr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Publishing House of the Mission and Bible Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 2012, p. 4.

² Saint Maximus the Confessor, *Răspunsuri către Talasie* (original title – *Questions to Thalassius*), in *Philokalia III*, translated by Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Humanitas Publishing, Bucharest, 1999, p. 12.

³ *Idem*, *Philokalia II*, translated by Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Humanitas Publishing, Bucharest, 1999, p. 9.

⁴ St. Maximus the Confessor removed, thus, the heretical views overcoming them on their own battlefield. As it is known Monothelitism and Monergism claimed a swallowing of the human nature in the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact the heretics desire was to put implicitly into question both the reality of the Person of Jesus Christ, and our salvation accomplished by the sacrifice and resurrection. From this perspective, we see clearly how the whole patristic research agrees that each writing of Saint Maximus is a testimony of his faith and his active participation to the Christological struggles of his time. (Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Lund, 1963, pp. 1-7).

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ally, the Holy Confessor, stating in clear formulas the Orthodox doctrine, shown himself a great defender of the revealed truth and lived forever, being a prominent follower of the great saints theologians of the Mystical Body of the Lord. Thus the Saint theologian gathered the split because *“no one is by any means separated from what is common, but each is of each and everyone of all and rather of God than some of the others”*. This thorough reflection on the history and life of the Orthodox Church, as it was carried out in the course of time under the direction of the Holy Spirit, can not pass unnoticed and unstudied by someone thirsty of true knowledge. The desirous for right thinking, in the space of those possible to be known, acquires a rich spiritual experience in the mystery of the Church. Obviously, the true life, that is the life of the Kingdom of Heaven, is the saving knowledge of the Holy Trinity and Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, sent into the world for our salvation.⁵

As for the Incarnation of the Son of the Almighty, Saint Maximus the Confessor showed that He was made man like us and that His human nature is the same as ours, through being, and unchanged. It was by the Son of God made from the righteous flesh and blood of the Theotokos, with the power and work of the Holy Spirit. With this being He was united and was made flesh, not stopping to be God after being. Being sinless by nature, as One that is not a simple man, but God made man, He kept our nature righteous and totally pure as He himself said: *“Now comes the prince of this world and does not find anything in Me”*.⁶ Also, He was *“by nature”* free from sin, because He was the Subject of the human nature and the Subject of divine nature. In this capacity the Savior Jesus Christ is *“by nature”* free of the capacity of deciding through His will against Himself, as He was the same Subject for both wills divine and human. So, being through His divine nature within the infinite and all-encompassing plenitude of good, He could not decide Himself through His human nature for what was contrary to Him, as the bearer of the divine nature and will, but He renewed His human will as discernment in full accordance with His divine will. This way, the Lord of glory remains bound to our humanity, that was not fully released by the possible opposition to sin. Of course, that moment of our liberation from what pulls us down would be completely revealed when the Lord would reveal Himself fully subjected to the Father along with us, at the end of time. Of course, states Saint Maximus, the Saviour Christ *“did not show our being as being a liar, nor any of its qualities as flawless and natural, although He deified it together to all those, making it ardent like the iron and showing it*

⁵ John 17:3.

⁶ John 14:30.

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as organ of the divine work, as One Who penetrated it completely and by union with it, unconfusedly, in one and the same unique hypostasis".⁷

The human nature of the Saviour differs however from ours not for the reason of the nature, but for the new way of birth, the Lord being the same as us, but not being the same for the birth without seed. Thus, His humanity is not a simple one, but one truly of the One Who made Himself man for us. For this very same reason His ability of wanting, although it was truly natural as ours, yet it was divinely etched into an image beyond us, His righteous birth and our birth not cutting His nature from ours. Saying that the Son of God came within our nature with His divinity, St. Maximus showed that He entered with His humanity into a perichoresis with His human nature and with us, dwelling into it and into us, and it dwelling into Him and revealing Him permanently.⁸ To this is added the unbegottenness and the birth which are not the same, and that are neither God's nature, nor ours. Thus, as in God the unbegottenness of the Father and the birth of the Son do not break the common nature, but they belong to the same nature, so also our birth with seed and the birth without seed of the Son, as human, do not separate His human nature from ours. This is done so because the Son is God and consubstantial with the Father, as we are related and of the same lineage and consubstantial with Adam and Eve and with God Himself incarnate for us. Of course the human nature of the Saviour is His, not as one that would belong to a nature different from ours, but as one that was done for the One and the Same hypostasis of the Word, because it was not brought into existence in and for itself, like ours. Precisely for this it had the Word Himself as seed, which renewed the way of delivery, receiving along with the existence also the divine existence in His hypostasis.⁹

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 316.

⁸ The term "*perichoresis*" is used by Saint Maximus also for the relationship between the Persons of the Holy Trinity, which means that as the three divine persons move into one another without confusion, so it is with the two natures in Christ the Saviour. Each nature shall be communicated perichoretically through the hypostasis. So that the divine nature shares the human nature the divine grace, and the human nature gives to the Son of God its sufferings and weaknesses, the joys and its specific feelings. So through the incarnation the divine nature is not diminished, nor poorer, but neither enriches being absolute. The divine nature is *impassive*, it can not be subjected to agents related to the created order. The One Who receives, the One Who experiences, the One Who humbles Himself is the divine subject, is the incarnate Son of God.

⁹ It goes without saying that Jesus Christ was free from sin, primarily because He was, He is and remains the subject of divine nature. Secondly, because He took through enhypostasis the human nature, both before sin, and the one after sin. His natural human nature kept in itself immaculate affects of the human nature, but not the inclination to sin called concupiscence. Although the human nature wounded by sin, in its quality of content of a human hypostasis, can pass through its natural will, to a state of opposition against its hypostasis or subject, However the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ did not have a gnomic freedom or will, but a natural will. Being hypostasized

Also related to this, Saint Maximus notes that, in addition to the ways that stand in our human power to use freely, was shown a manner that is independent of man, as God reserved it for Himself. This kind of supernatural birth without seed of God's Son, as human, of a Virgin bestowed totally to God, is entirely reserved to God alone. Obviously, by virtue of this, the Word of the Father formed His humanity from the Blessed Virgin Mary, above human laws and in a way beyond human nature. But, though God himself was made Himself man, without obeying the birth as human by male seed, according to the law of nature, yet the One Who was born of the Virgin Mother, is at the same time true man, formed from the blood of the existing humanity.

To better understand the thinking of Saint Maximus, we have to see how he links the Christology to the creation of man, on the image and likeness of God. So, God the Son created the human nature out of love and preserves it in union with His divine nature in His hypostasis. If, through the act of creation, He gave man all the qualities that make him free and able to express himself, it follows that His humanity is shown to be in accordance with the mystery of the Holy Trinity for the salvation of the world. By virtue of this, when we talk about the faith in changeless God, also affirm also the changelessness of the human being, which implies the clear relationship between God and the world. So, *"a God who should remove or change something in man when He unites with him, emphasizes Father Stăniloae, he too would be a defective god, and the imperfect man is just the testimony of an imperfect god"*.¹⁰ Precisely because of this is confirmed that God the Creator, on one hand, is perfect, as He can unite with man, created for the union with Him, and on the other, to transform or lose something from Him. In his turn, man, being created as a being able to be deified, comes by grace to all of God in Christ the Savior. Doubtless, if the Son of the Father had lost something through the incarnation and had not kept intact and united His natures, He would have made from parts an insignificant whole and, both the two existential wills and the two natural works, would have melted and would have become, through composition, one will and work, as claimed by the Monophysites. And, again, if the alteration had extended from parts to the whole Savior Jesus Christ, it would have become *"something mythical (imaginary), as says the Saint Confessor, totally foreign to the communion with the Father and with us, having no will or work composed by*

by the Unique Subject of the two natures, divine and human, the human nature incessantly tended for its fulfillment and perfection towards the divine nature, the divine nature representing a filter of un-sinning for it. Thus, Jesus Christ is not free from His ability to decide through His will against Himself, but He is free of any bias towards opposition, since He is the subject of the divine nature first, the nature offering or giving, and of the human nature, the one that receives and fulfills itself.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 329, note 466.

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nature". "Because, summarizes logically the Saint Confessor, "there is no composition (synthesis) of those which are in a holder; but neither are they seen as existing in themselves and apart from their being-holder". So, added the blessed, "it is absurd to think that a single will is divided and cut up into something more and something less; this requires natural kinship with both, to distinguish into two halves the undivided unity according to the hypostasis".

The mystery of the unchanged descent of the Son of God, for us, at the fullness of time, is the creed through which we confess at the same time the Saviour Christ as true God and true man, like us, but without sin. We confess the Word of God the One Who is causelessly for Himself, but Who was made Himself man for us afterward. He never left the bosom of the Father, that is, what He was for what He became, for He is unchanged in nature and will; nor did He deny what He became for what He was, for He loves the people. Alone He was able to become man, without change, unconfusedly, ie what He was not, and remain what He was.¹¹ So, the Word of God, becoming man without changing, showed in His depletion His abundance of power, of love and divine grace. More precisely, we could say that He became man for us out of ineffable love and was reduced for the little ones, that they may bear His nearness and feel His love, and then be able to exalt through it to the Father in Heaven.¹²

The Son of God becoming man brings something new within Him and this is the "way" in which the two natures and the two wills activate within His own hypostasis. If the work refers to the One Who works, and the nature, to the One that subsists, it results that "the works are kept in the Incarnate Word and that the first shows the divine in the manifestation of the body, and the other is shown in the free experience of those divine. This is to confess with them also the natures whose existential works are".¹³ This relationship and affirmation of natures and wills leads to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is a composed hypostasis, as we shall see

¹¹ The Son, as true God is uncaused for Himself, His birth of the Father is not caused by someone. The Father is with the Son and the Holy Spirit since eternity. The existence from the eternity of the Father means the existence from the eternity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Since their existence never ever started, says father Stăniloae, the eternal existence can only be perfect, plenary, being the same with the Trinitarian love of a Person to the Others.

¹² St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola aceluiași către același* (*The Epistle of the Same to the Same*), *op.cit.*, p. 217.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 431. The Monothelites taught that the one work of the one hypostasis of the Savior Christ was also human, but they did not see the human nature as being the same. Against them Saint Maximus claimed that the Divine hypostasis could not have in Itself a work of some sort (human), if it weren't specific also to the nature which He has hypostasis to. Furthermore the human work was shown itself obvious through the free experience (εξουσιαστικός) of those human, for it was not brought into existence as a human being and it did not stay in it without His will as God. Thus, the Savior lived it in the fullness of its weaknesses and sorrows, without doing anything to

further, identifying in Himself to the extreme, the natural difference of those extremes and making them to be one by joining His parts. For this the human nature is enhypostatical in His Person, being seen not only by reflection (as an accident), but genuinely (as a species). It is understood from here that “*if the hypostasis is not without being, it does not make it a being*, emphasizes the Saint Confessor, but ‘*into being*’ (ενουσιον), so that us not to know him as a mere appropriation, but along with the one (the being) whose attribute it is”. So, “*as there the enhypostatical indicates the fact of being in the existing one (ενυπαρκτον), and in the existing one it is what is shared by the existential and natural existence, so also here the one that is capable of work (ενεργον ενεργηθηκον) means literally what is in power (ενδυναμον). And in power is what has the existential and natural power*”.¹⁴ As such, the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ are not unhypostatized or non-working, but are united “*in the hypostasis of Him Who is from them, and in them and according to them*”, having their existential and natural works.¹⁵ Hence the confession that our Savior Jesus Christ has a natural will and a natural and innate will to not want the body to die, because it is a condemnation of the nature.¹⁶

Regarding the human will of our Savior Jesus Christ, Saint Maximus claims that, not even according to human thinking, there can not be a will and a work composed by nature, neither in God nor in man. To abolish, into the Incarnate Word, His nature and His natural will, along with the work that belongs existentially to

ease the pain and suffering. On the contrary, He overcame them by patience and mercy till the end, so that we too can overcome and defeat them with His power and be rewarded for this asceticism.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 435.

¹⁵ To strengthen our faith St. Maximus perseveres that we should keep “*the faithful teaching of the Holy Fathers who taught it to the God’s Holy Universal Church. They have taught us not to deny anything that was from the beginning and have been done for us and by all the attributes that characterize them naturally. For they dogmatized Him perfectly in both and through both natures, and keeping free from voids the natural property of the two of which He consists, and as being in all of humanity like us but without sin*”. (*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 436).

¹⁶ St. Maximus asks rhetorically the Monothelites on the two wills in the hypostasis of Christ the Saviour: “*How would we say the will is common to both? Or how would be shown the distinction of natures in one will? For it is quite necessary for the will to work together with the nature and the nature not to will to die and be deprived of the present life. And as the hunger and thirst are not bad, so to wish to remain in the present life is neither. And it’s planted in the nature the love for the present ones. In other words, it keeps to the body that the Word took with all its natural faculties to beware of death. What greater proof than this testimony can be brought about the natural wills, what and who might oppose to assert them, when there is nothing doubtful in them and nothing unclear? Therefore from the expressions and teachings of the Fathers is seen the true profession of their faith, emphasizes Saint Maximus, which he, the Confessor, in all his works he presented faithfully, as they were understood by the Church and said by them*”. (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Of the same St. Maximus – Unravelling the Second Absurd Allegation*, *op.cit.*, p. 448).

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it, means to abolish His human being and to thus damage the supernatural union and the body endowed with rational and reasoning soul.¹⁷ In this case the nature would no longer need this union by hypostasis, not finding itself at all in Christ and unsaving itself in Him. The consequences of such abnormalities would inevitably lead to the failure to fulfill the deification of human nature and, from here, would irreparably alter people's act of salvation. But the truth of faith is that into Christ the Saviour His qualities and works do not merge, nor have existence in themselves, but have their existence into His hypostasis, That links them without merging them.¹⁸ More over, our Saviour, not only worked on man through His human nature, but He wanted them with human will, having, of course, the divine will include within the human will. Thus He indulged the human nature to will, when appropriate, those its: hunger, thirst, etc, without this being a mere passive instrument of the will of God. Here's what Saint Maximus says about this collaboration between the two natures: *"How would He overcome human weakness if the link between the human and the divine will would not have had any separation between them and any merger. But if He had wanted these only as God and not as man, He himself would have been either body by nature, or, changing Himself according to the being, He would have made Himself flesh through the fall of His divinity, or His body would not have been ensouled rationally, but He would have been in His body completely inanimate and un-rational. And if the body was ensouled rationally, it had also natural will, be-*

¹⁷ Saint Maximus stresses that the work in the person of Jesus Christ is linked, according to its reason, to the nature, but the person decides what is activated and what not. Making this distinction between the reason of a reality and how it manifests itself, the Saint showed that in the Lord Jesus Christ are two works by their reason, According to the two natures activated by only one Unique hypostasis. So the reasons of the works are different, but their subject is unique so that they show themselves special both by nature, and after the unique way of the person who activates them. Therefore, the Son of God made man activates both the human work and the divine one, both being guided by His unique person.

¹⁸ Here is how Saint Maximus through multiple logical reasoning, synthesized the act of incarnation and its fruits brought by the Son of God, He who was made Himself true man for us and for our salvation: *"If therefore the Lord was lacking, through His body, these or any of these qualities, He was neither man everywhere (or those who say these to prove that He is man by nature without them, or human everywhere); and if He was not everywhere man, for there is no man by nature without them or any of them, it is obvious that the Logos was not made man – for how would have He made Himself man, by what reason, once the nature would be deprived of some of them? –, but it is something else entirely foreign to our nature and unknown. In this case, what it said it was made or had essence from the beginning with Him was descended from above with Him, and then what's His descent to us, once we have not met with Him at all through a body, not taken from us and unjoined with Him by hypostasis? Or everything is a hallucination and an image that deceives our senses, and not the essence of the body. In this case it is not the first fruits of our people, or the matter that unites us with God by grace and frees us from all that separate us (from God), the cause of which was made old Adam's disobedience, for which our nature was condemned to death". (Idem, Ibidem, p. 431).*

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cause all that is through nature has also will. And if He had natural will as man, will that Him as God created, He did not ruin any”.

From the words of Saint Maximus it is clear that the Son came to deify entirely the nature which He Himself, with the goodwill of the Father and the co-work of the Spirit, made within the womb of His Most Pure Mother. Thus, *as God He willed the divine and the parental by nature, for He was together-willing with His Bearer. And, as man, the Same again wanted the human by nature, keeping the oikonomia (incarnation) cleansed of any illusion, but in no way un-resisting the will of the Father*¹⁹. Thus, the compliance of our nature was stated clearly, and therefore our own will, with God as the basis of the Incarnation, oikonomia that fully joins the creature to the Creator, deifying it by grace.²⁰

In the act of the Incarnation of God’s Son, Saint Maximus finds that nothing natural is against God, whereas the natural ones were created by Him by creation and none of them has anything reproachable in their existential being.²¹ This is shown also by the Holy Gospel when it speaks about the human nature of our Saviour Jesus Christ: *“Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me”*. The Lord, with these words, really shows us that He is a real man and that His body has the same weaknesses as those of our body and that His human will was entirely deified through consent with the divine.²² So, by agreeing fully with the divine nature,

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 334.

²⁰ Under this thinking the venerable Maxim manifested a great optimism in understanding the human nature. So the human nature wanting what God wants showed us that this human nature is made to open itself by its own nature to its true Creator and to will what it is made for, the perfection in its Creator. Of course in the spiritual life the ascetic absolutely needs to overcome his will to fulfill God’s will, as we say in the prayer *“Our Father”*: *“Thy will be done”*. Only renouncing his will in favor of the divine one he manifests in other way his true will, thereby ensuring the real life, the one in God, instead of a transient life. In fact, the man manifests his will more when he fulfills through it reaches the will of God, than when he looks, through sin, to resist God’s will. So any free expression of the will beyond God leads to death and eternal damnation. Hence we conclude that man without the communion with God remains separated from grace and outside the kingdom of heaven. The Saviour Himself submitted His human will to the divine one, in order to fulfill our salvation and make us worthy to deification and eternal life.

²¹ St. Maximus the Confessor, *“following the divine Fathers, he admitted no reduction: neither of the natural wills, nor of the works, and nor of the natures themselves in the One and the Same Word of God incarnate. But he believes the Same faithfully in all things perfect God and man, because He has and wills and works in the uttermost those divine and human and thus has, in His own way, both the divine will and work and the human will and work. By believing so, he did not dogmatise the reduction of the natures of which He is, or rather their nonexistence”*. (*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 335).

²² Of course, if He had not protected Himself from death, says Saint Maximus, he would not have been a real man and therefore, if He had not been God made man we would not have been saved. Therefore, the Savior on the one hand, moved and imprinted the human nature through the divine nature, perfectly fulfilling the only the judgment of His Father’s will, of which He said as

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the Son of God made man “suffered as God through His nature the passions of the flesh in His being, that was reluctant naturally to death, and had through being other natural will than that of the Father, praying, therefore, and asking Him not to do His will”.²³ In his explanation the blessed Confessor brings as arguments two expressions of the Holy Fathers Dionysius and Cyril: “*theandric work*” and “*the work that looks akin to both*”. The word “*theandric*” shows that the Saviour’s work is doubled by nature and unites the divine and human work together, without having to show through numbers. Through this expression Saint Maximus connects unitary the natural works, which are not harmed by their natural difference, as well as neither the undivided union of the natures is not injured by showing them as different. As for the expression “*the work that looks akin to both*” of the blessed Cyril, through it, does not abolish the existential distinction of those *from* which and *in* which there is one and only Christ and God, but highlights the affirmation of their utmost union.²⁴ Through the same words “*the work that looks akin to both*” are removed the division and the separation of the mystery of Jesus Christ, keeping unharmed the reason and incorrupted, the *oikonomia*.²⁵ The

man: “*Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will*”, and on the other hand He also showed the human will which He subjected to the divine will. (*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 336).

²³ *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 337.

²⁴ St. Maximus brings in the same work other quotations from St. Cyril to explain his formulas and to highlight his Orthodox thinking on the two natures from the Person of Christ our Saviour. St. Cyril bears witness on the Antiochenes Christology, writing by Acacie as follows: “*And the brethren of Antioch do not in any way break the united, but only strongly support the differences said about Christ and that He works some of them through His divinity and others through His humanity. For the Same is God and man. But they say there are others common in the same way and somehow referring to both, ie divinity and humanity. That is some of the phrases relate to the divine, and others, to the human; Finally, others are somewhat in the middle, showing the Son of God as God and man at once*”. These words of the Holy Hierarch clearly show that the expression “*only one nature incarnate of God the Word*” does not refer to only one nature of the Saviour, but to two united hypostatically in the same Person. Therefore, the Son of the Father made man, being a single Hypostasis or Subject, but consisting of two natures, can accomplish some things that meet both in the human and the divine works, without cancel or change according to nature. Father Stăniloae, commenting on the words of St. Maximus affirms that the Saviour felt, for example, hunger, but feeling this did not make Him to lose self-control, as we see Him in Carantania. He healed the sick, manifesting divine power, but using the movement of any bodily organ or associating human compassion. He has committed some works that He only worked humanly, stopping the association of divine power in them; or only divinely, supporting the creation into existence without the association of a human effort. More specifically, there is a dynamic gradation in Savior’s life in committing some works that He lived more with His deity, or more with His humanity. So the Divine Logos, having in Himself the reasons of all creatures, was able to form His human image in the womb of Virgin Mary and in Himself, not as a separate hypostasis, but in His own hypostasis.

²⁵ St. Maximus affirms that “*the theandric work*” of Saint Dionysius and St. Cyril’s wise formula were taught faithfully, not as claimed by the Monophysites designating the union and pen-

importance of these words is obvious in that through the teachings of these two saints Dionysius and Cyril is confessed the truth that our Savior is neither a simple God, nor simple man, nor God working especially through those bodiless, nor man working particularly according to his discernment, but God made perfectly human for us, working at the same time the divine and the human. Of course, this does not happen through his own discernment, but by natural will, inculcated continuously by His deity according to the being and moved towards the fulfillment of the oikonomia of salvation and deified by the union with that, but not by nature.²⁶ Following this reflection we can thus say that the Son of God made man lives with the divine fullness and human fullness assumed, without their confusion. He lives both as One and the Same in those divine and those human of His. This means, on one hand, that there is no opposition between those divine and those human, and on the other, that in those human are those divine and *vice versa*. In such case, the Logos made man wills to pass the cup only through oikonomia, that is to show that, being God, He truly became a man, who is afraid of death, but as God-Man overcomes fear and death in His own human nature. By virtue of this, the Lord of Glory is true God and true man, He is the Same as God and the Same as man. So, being man by nature, He lives freely as human and for us suffers the passions.²⁷ Then, He shows Himself at the same time, also as God, although He is by nature man, working divinely and naturally showing signs of divinity. From these experiences it is known unequivocally that He was God and man, “*with the wills and works of both natures naturally, equals in number, from which and in which He*

etration (συμφωναν) of the natural works of the two natures, which is the same as to preach two works, for the existential difference. The term “*theandric work*” wants to show that it is also a sudden interpenetration of the divine and human works, “*concentrating the double work of Him Who is double by nature*”, As pointed out by the St. Confessor (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle sent to His Grace Bishop Nicandru. On the Two Works in Christ, op.cit.*, p. 352).

²⁶ Of course, as stated by St. Maximus, the deification never meant the exit of our nature out of what it was, nor its transformation into divine nature. The fact that man deifies himself by the action of the divine grace, he feels at the fullest and intact his humanity, ie the union of His human will to the divine will in His act of salvation. This is clearly seen in the full consent of the human will with the divine will. Through this agreement of the human will with the divine, the divinity opens to the humanity and the humanity, to the divinity, our will, the door of our nature, which can close and open to God’s will. It goes without saying that the good will alone is in accord with God’s will, and only through it flows His endless kindness in the human beings. So man, in union with God’s will, lives in communion with the divine grace, without his goodness to be confused with the divine one.

²⁷ The Incarnate Son of God conquers death not solely in his capacity as God. It could have been done without incarnation by virtue of His mighty power. But He conquers death in His capacity as God and Man, the Son of God made man. The whole mystery of salvation of mankind lies in the fact that He overcame death as man, not as God. The victory is all the greater as as a man He was afraid of death, which testifies the reality of His human nature.

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exists, towards the confirmation of the accomplished existence of those who were actually in Him".²⁸

As for the body, or rather the human nature, this, through the Incarnation, belongs to God and its existential work became divine through its union with He Who was God the Word by nature, that is working those above man, without coming off from what He was by nature. By virtue of this, the Word was working the divine ones as God made man, curing blindness, not invisibly, but through the mud brought to the eyes of the blind with His human hand. So, "because He was not a simple God, but He took alongside as a co-worker His holy body and He would raise from death and heal through it and through His touch and His voice, to show it as being able to resurrect, because it was united with Him and by this it is the body of Him Who gives life to all, and not of another. By both, the Lord showed as one and related His work and the one of His holy body, one through union, but related through parts", emphasized the blessed Confessor.²⁹

Saint Maximus said, about the One Who became man for us, that in the unborn nature of the Word, which is the only principle, we can not speak specifically of quality, for deity is not from being or accidents.³⁰ If this were so it should be also created, as one that would be composed and made up of these. We can presume this only with the mind, whereas we imagine those above us from those ours, as those who are not able to receive, but in the dark, the knowledge of those, and to express them to some extent, but not complete. For example, the all-holiness, the omnipotence, the perfection, the supra-perfection, the perfection of the Self, the Self-control, the wisdom of the Self, and whatever naturally and divine, we can say it is a natural quality which is God's alone, as the One Who is above the being. Thus, the hypostatic quality of the Father is the unbegottenness, of the Son, the birth, and of the Holy Spirit, the proceeding.³¹ Then, all qualities have a supra-existential character, just like the divine being, and only belong to the Holy Trinity. Being undistinguished from the divine being, as distinguishable as the attributes of the created existences, these are determined partly by the relationships of each of them with others. More precisely, the qualities belong only to God, naturally or hypostatically, and not to other. That is why, God's Son made man is a composed hypostasis, shows Saint Maximus, from the uncompounded divine nature and

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 339.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 354.

³⁰ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Despre calitate, proprietate și deosebire, către Teodor, presbiterul din Mazara (On Quality, Property and Distinction, to Theodore, Presbyter of Mazara)*, op. cit., p. 453.

³¹ We emphasize that unbegottenness, the birth and the procession are called specific, personal properties or attributes.

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from the compounded human nature, being true God and true man.³² So, Christ the Savior is “*one or the other*”, states Saint Maximus, but not through hypostasis, but by natures. If He were through hypostasis immortal and mortal, there would be two hypostases, or, being the same hypostasis, both mortal and immortal, He could not overcome death. Only because He is, due to the unchanged but united natures, a composed hypostasis, He can in himself overcome death of the body through the divine immortality, or its weakness through the divine almightiness. Also, if He were not a hypostasis composed of two natures and unique, would not take place in Him a communication of His traits and he would not overwhelm those human, but living them at the same time. By virtue of this, Jesus Christ lives human weakness, but also defeats it; He receives death but defeats it, without ceasing to live Himself after death as human. From here we understand that the Holy Trinity made man able to be the temple of his body, fulfilling everything, even the event of death of the body through His going out of contact with Himself. In such case, the Creator not only pondered these, but, making Himself a man, lived them and not as His, but as of a world created by Him out of perfect love, but removed from the connection with Him by the ancestral sin. Thereby the Son of God appropriating along with the human nature, united with the divine nature from His hypostasis, the boundedness of the world created by Him, as it looked after the sin, He took between these weaknesses also death, to which man reached by the trespass of Adam. Naturally, he appropriates these weaknesses and flaws in order to defeat them through His almightiness.³³ There is one thing that our Saviour does not defeat, the boundedness by nature of the world, which is made a limb through communication, to His almightiness and infinity. That is defeated only by

³² St. Maximus the Confessor says that: “*The very name of Christ is not an indicator of nature, but of a composed hypostasis, ie He is whole also Lord and God and Almighty, but has in Himself in undivided and unmixed manner also the body that He bore for us and for our salvation, a sinner body, not omnipotent, created, circumscribed, non-omnipotent by nature, but having an almighty will in Christ. Therefore He is something by nature and something else by hypostasis*”. (St. Maximus, *It is impossible to say that in Christ it is only one will*, *op. cit.*, p. 477).

³³ Each nature has its own will. Saint Maximus is the defender of the natural will of the human nature. our Savior’s human nature enhypostasized through the Incarnation has a will of its own or a free will that “tends” naturally towards the union with the divine nature *in* and *through* the incarnate Son of God or within the interiority of His divine Person. So, the nature does not have and can not have a gnostic freedom (free will), gnostic freedom being specific to the person or subject, but not the nature. Thus, as Subject bearer of the two natures united hypostatically, our Savior Jesus Christ “*lives*” from His position as subject. However the human nature will does not suppress or abolish it substituting it with the divine nature. So the will of the human nature is neither of man nor of Christ the Savior, but it is the natural will of the human nature, that can not be dissolved either in the divine nature or the pre-existing Subject of the Incarnate Son of God. More precisely it is not about our human will or it is not about a will of a person or subject, but the will of the human nature.

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our Lord's death, abolishing it, by introducing fully the assumed humanity in His immortal life.

Talking about the perichoresis of the natures of our Saviour, as we mentioned above, Saint Maximus clearly revealed that our Lord is the Same in both his all-creating command, when commanding, as well as by touching His holy body, when working miracles. By the fact that He gave life also through His body and that His body was made life-giving, Our Savior Jesus Christ was revealed as the fire which by burning iron, shows the burning iron through its union with it. This comparison has the quality to clarify that *"burning is not only of the fire by nature, but also of the iron because of the union, and that the work of the divine Word in miracles is not only His because of the nature, but also of His holy body, for the union with Him by hypostasis"*. So, the Son of God assumed His human nature as co-worker in those divine just as the body takes its own soul to the fulfillment of His actions. Of course, this work *"unique and related shown by both"*, indicates the union of the works by nature, while showing their distinction and union by nature, as well as their theandric work.³⁴ By virtue of this a healing performed by our Savior Jesus Christ is a deed or *unitary work*, but it's also *a work done together with the divine nature*. In such case, each tangible deed of the Lord, being the product of two works, can be called *"a work"*, but also its continuous repetition can be called *"a general work"*. In this way the human work is honorable and raised to the maximum, because the Logos of God does it His work. The very creation of the human nature by God the Word and the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin, gives it this ability to be His ministry. As such, He does not work and suffer those human for our salvation *"as man"* separately from God, but as God made man, who has the human nature united with the divine nature in His hypostasis. Considering this oikonomia, the Son of God remains forever Subject of those divine and of those human, thus uniting the divine with the human nature, without confusing them and without dividing them. He lives those human imbued with the divine and endures *"as a man"* the passion of the cross purely with divine power, without grumbling. Simultaneously, *"He endures insults like a man, but in divine singleness perfectly forgiving. He reaches his hand to the blind eyes, sensing its movement as a man and them feeling it as being the hand of a man, but He communicates through it the divine power. He is weak and strong at the same time, without weakness to*

³⁴ We mention that Saint Maximus through these comparisons he was referring to both natures of the hypostasis of the Logos made man, *"from which the Incarnate Word was known as One and Only and Which was of both, His work being shown through both, that is by the fulfilling command and by touching His Holy Body"*.

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lower the strength nor strength to diminish weakness”,³⁵ as pointed out by father Stăniloae.

Therefore, our Saviour was not a worker only by word and the commandments of God in the resurrection of the dead and the healing people of all disease and infirmity, but taking as a co-worker for these His holy Body. Referring to this cooperation of natures, Saint Maximus said that *“He did this on one hand by His divine commandment, but He was life-giving also by touching (those) with the body united with Him by hypostasis, to show it as being able to give life through His existential work, to which the touch, the voice and all the others served”*.³⁶ So, Christ our God, *“having both natures perfectly preserved, that of His divinity through His all fulfiller command, and that of His humanity, through touch, united completely by the inner bond and through intertwining (perichoresis) until showing His work fulfilled through the union between His Word and His most holy body, but neither natural, nor hypostatic, but because He is akin to both sides, He revealed Himself as human through touch. Touching with one’s hand as human work it is the medium through which it celebrates the divine work of healing the sick or raising the dead”*. Certainly, as father Stăniloae says: *“the two components of the Saviour’s work do not merge, as do not merge to bodily eye with the spiritual understanding of what it sees”*.

Undoubtedly, the Saviour’s work is in some way one and two, as specified by Saint Cyril of Alexandria, when referring to one incarnate nature of God the Word. But being a theandric work of the two natures, on which speaks St. Dionysius, this clearly proves that there is no fusion between the two works of the Saviour nor it can be produced by their carrier hypostasis, so that He would have a single work. Therefore, when speaking about one nature of the Logos made man, Saint Cyril actually presented the two works as one because they were made by the cooperation of the two natures, thus showing that natures are able to join their works: *“showing their kinship”* which produces *“the unity of the works” through kinship (συγγενη)*”,³⁷ as explained by Fr. Stăniloae.³⁸ This conclusion should be

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 453, note 632.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 341.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 342, note 485. Father Stăniloae explains the teaching of St. Maximus in the sense that God did not create the creatures so that by union, to merge them together or with Himself. The way of the union does not alter the reasons for their individuation, or the constituents. The love between people does not abolish their persons. From here, it is concluded that it can be clearly seen the eternal value and duration of the persons, as the irreducible and unreplaceable units.

³⁸ We add to this the explanation of St. Maximus that says: *“So, unless we receive and understand thus faithfully, the singular expressions of the saints, that is “theandric work” and “the one and related work”*, according to the reason of the union, but we will understand this work as natural and as hypostatic, *“we’re going to dogmatise Christ the Saviour necessarily as a single nature, not*

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drawn also if we spoke about a natural work of Jesus Christ, concludes the Saint Confessor, as: *“if we spoke about a single hypostatic work, we would alienate Christ from the Father and the Spirit through work, for He would have nothing in common with the Father and the Spirit”*. The synthesis of the blessed Maxim is clear: *“We do not want in any way to confess one natural or hypostatic work in the Incarnate Word and totally made man. For no one from His divine revelation to us and to the Holy Fathers taught us to confess one natural or hypostatic work in Him; none alone plainly, to my knowledge, only the divine Cyril. But this we receive with all our soul, though it is only his, because of the union. How, then, ought not to receive with joy also the dual expressions of almost all the Fathers, and also his, because the distinction between them? This, lest, by invoking and receiving his expression about a single one, to eliminate and nullify his words and of other saints, as if neither of them but only Cyril, would have been entrusted with the faithful accuracy of the preaching, and this not by other of his words, which show the difference, but only through the expression “an unique and akin work”*.³⁹

Saint Maximus showed in his letters and writings that the Saviour Christ had human nature with His own human will and divine will, both belonging to His own hypostasis. The human will is His and not of the man because it is of the divine person made human, who was born with human nature from the flesh and blood of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Lord did not use His will as we use our will, but He used it for our salvation and deification. If our human will became the will of the Incarnate Word it is clear that it strengthened itself by assuming it in His person, once it was taken from the Holy Theotokos. The Lord of the Law celebrates this *oikonomia* to use with supreme freedom the laws given by Him, to which man subjected through his weaknesses and to which, in part, He is subjected willingly. Thus the Son of God made man, on one hand, obeys the human laws, and, on the other, He overcomes them in His human nature united with the divine nature in His hypostasis. Thus this supreme freedom of God, manifested in the conception from the Pure Virgin Mary, it is both the victory against the laws of nature through His humanity resurrected and deified, and our deliverance from death and corruption.

God, therefore, was made man without change or alteration *“in order to strengthen what belongs to us and make believe what is beyond us”*,⁴⁰ says Saint Maximus. For this the Son of the Father made transparent His deity by His very

being part to any of those consisting from, because Christ is none by nature. Because no nature communicates by nature with another nature, but it is not a part with any, being totally different through being”.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 319.

human nature, on the one hand keeping the assumed human nature in His hypostasis, together with its natural characteristics, without which it would have ceased to be the nature assumed by Him, and on the other preserving the union with the divine nature in His hypostasis. To be sure “*the human nature was preserved in its natural distinction, says Saint Maximus, and the divine nature was known in the hypostatic identity, showing wisely and faithfully the whole reason of the oikonomia, while unmixed and undivided*”.⁴¹ Thus, the Son of God always remained what He was, true God, and preserved also the human nature as it was, also being true man, without sin. His divinity was not changed in anything, as well as His humanity remained the same, without turning itself into something else or be absorbed by the divine nature.

Regarding the relationship of the Son of God with His humanity we must emphasize that Saint Maximus argues that this is neither a technical body, nor His natural body, it is neither a passive tool, without its own work, nor the extension of the divine nature, having the same work as this, but it is united with the divine nature as a living organ, without being fused into a single nature. This oikonomic work proves that God operates through an active humanity, united with His divine nature, with a strong cooperation with Him in the oikonomia of our salvation. No doubt that in this context the union of natures in the divine Subject brings into question the mystery of human nature in which God shows Himself a worker through human work, remaining God in all things and man in all things. He makes of His human nature an intimate body, not an external tool, this showing God as a minister right through it for our salvation.⁴² The relationship between His natures is seen clearly in the words of the Saviour at the crucifixion on the cross: “*Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*”.⁴³ At first sight, the words of the Lord give the impression that the human will does not follow immediately the divine will, attitude that would even induce resistance or opposition to the act of crucifixion. Certainly, these impressions are cleared immediately in the second demand of the crucified One: “*Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will*”. Obviously, Saint Maximus considers that these words “*are not an expression of opposition or fear, but rather of the perfect agreement and assent*”.⁴⁴ So, Christ our Saviour, speaking these words, did not address to anyone, on the contrary He

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 320.

⁴² St. Maximus the Confessor emphasizes that God the Son, uniting man with Himself, without absorbing him in His person, He proved to have a composed work of a composed nature. (*The Epistle of the same to those who say that we should speak of a single work of Christ, for the fact that, being more powerful, the divine one masters the human, must be answered so, op.cit.*, p. 321).

⁴³ *Matthew 26:39*.

⁴⁴ St. Maximus the Confessor, *On the line*: “*Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*”, *op.cit.*, p. 322.

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testified the full consenting of the human will with His divine and parental will. Thus He undoubtedly testified the presence in His person of the two wills and two works by nature.

Certainly, as we shall see in a special chapter from our paper, the spiritual analysis of Saint Maximus, on the subject of the human will of our Saviour Christ, considers the differences between nature and person, between the reason of nature and the manner in which the will is realised and specified through hypostasis or person. Such statements brought to the meaning of the person were unknown by the ancient philosophy before the Incarnation of the Logos, but stated categorically by the Council of Chalcedon, even though insufficiently clarified.⁴⁵ It is obvious that Saint Maximus, a fine *connoisseur* of Greek philosophy, distinguished the reasoning of those created, and especially of human nature, from its using by man, which can be considerably varied, without getting out of their reasoning. By this explanation Saint Maximus wanted to clarify that God made everything by His reasoning and having a steadfast structure, leaving room for human freedom in using these reasonings.

So our Saviour Jesus Christ, the One doubled in nature, has two wills and two works, having none of the two anything against the other, even if it preserves in all the distinction *from* whom and *in* whom and Who He was by nature. He thus expresses his human will in both rejecting the escape from the divine will and rejecting the denial of the suffering cup. If He restrained Himself from a will contrary to the will of the Father, He would restrain also from the refusal of the glass in agreement with the Father. Again, if He avoided the cup, this will would not have been saving, which would have established that Christ our Saviour had only divine will.⁴⁶ But as the Son of God came into the world precisely for this and be-

⁴⁵ In the anti-Monothelite writings Saint Maximus will show that the will takes to the rational nature of man, representing its free movement to perfection in union with God, when it is kept within its consent with the human nature and the will of its Creator. For the will is one with freedom and the incarnate Son of God, does not lead the human nature to salvation as an infirm object. In this way St. Maximus clearly stated that man is not led by an involuntarily impulse, like the animal. So a human nature without will is not a real human nature. Therefore if the Son of God did not "*assume*" something in His divine hypostasis that something was not saved. Of course, the will may take the form of a discernment contrary to nature and to God. But in Christ it never took this form, because He Who manifests through it is the one hypostasis, or the Word of God incarnate, Who keeps it in line with His divine will.

⁴⁶ Of course, Christ the Savior wanted through both wills our redemption. As God, He descends with the Father and the Spirit, and as man He was obedient for us to His Father. Thus He saved our nature in Himself and through it, us, opening the way to the Father. Obviously, this opening, through the human will, effectively means agreeing His divine will with His human will. It is clear that this agreement has been achieved only in Him because He is the person of both natures, divine and human. So, the Son of God made man opened, through His will, our nature to will only

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came a man to save us through the cross and resurrection, these words of the Lord, further says Saint Maximus, “refers to the common will of the Holy Trinity and at the will of human nature. So, “Nevertheless not as I will”, removes the opposition and presents the agreement of the human will of the Saviour with His divine and parental will, as of the Incarnate Word Who gave essence to His human nature and deified it”.⁴⁷ “That is why, continues Saint Maximus, as One Who was made for us like we, said (suitable for humans) to the Father: “Nevertheless not as I will, but as you will”, the One God by nature having also as man the will to do God’s will”. So, our Savior showed Himself by both natures, “from which and in which and whose hypostasis was”,⁴⁸ willing for the people’s salvation: firstly, wishing with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and secondly “He humbled himself, obedient unto death and Became, Even the death of the cross”⁴⁹ and fulfilling through body the great mystery of our salvation. Moreover, through His own sacrifice and by not refusing the cup, the Son of God made man offers His human will in perfect harmony with the divine nature. This confirms that in Him the divine will is shown in unity with the human one, and the human will opens to the will of God.

Saint Maximus states in fighting the heretics that their storm was always against the Holy universal Church of God. But because the Church is founded on the testimony of the Apostles, no cunning movement of the mouths of heretics, open like the gates of hell, could not do any harm to the Mystical Body of the Lord. So that the true witnesses of truth were never afraid of the fake oil of heresy, on the contrary, in the multitude of battles, gained further courage and wisdom, through the Holy Spirit. The heretics, instead, the proud and hypocrites, could not get close to the truth, whereas they locked themselves increasingly in their own hell of loneliness, being possessed by the evil spirit. Of course, highlights the Holy Confessor, only in the the truth of faith and in the divine love, believers are in the free communion with God and with men. But the heretics because of their spiritual wickedness, have always accused the Orthodox, the right faith preachers, of apostasy, not feeling themselves harmed by the lack of grace, as highlights Saint Maximus. They do not enjoy either this age, or the future one, because they separated themselves from the saving truth. They live in fickleness and are quickly changed from bad to worse. Truly, says Saint Maximus, the bad believers are filled

the good, whose Subject was Him. He opened in Himself the deity of the human and the humanity of God, through their wills. He made Himself, as man, obedient to Himself as God and, thereby to the Father, Himself being made also human Subject, full of the same filial love for the Father, emphasizes Father Stăniloae. (*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 325, note 459).

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 324.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 324.

⁴⁹ *Philippians 2:8*.

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with the heavy smell of hell and empty of any grace, not preaching the true doctrine, like the Nestorians and the Monophysites, and denying the whole oikonomia of God on man. These, dividing from the Word of God the animated rational flesh and taken from the Immaculate Virgin and Most Holy Mother of God, even if they seem to confess him with their mouth for the deception of listeners, still they totally deny the Incarnation and union of the two natures in His hypostasis. This way, the heretics clearly deny after the union the entire existence of the natures of which is our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Maximus the Confessor presented the heretics as some *"treacherous people – who, because of bad habits, were taught by Satan to give themselves more to death than to God and to the good things prepared for the saints"*. These are of those who persist in evil and manage to return people to their own vomit like dogs.⁵⁰ Of course, those who wish to remain so unhealed and to continue to reject the grace of Christ unto the end, will get lost.⁵¹ The doom of the heretics results from their own inventions, ascribing to one of the Fathers, deceiving people and valuing strife instead of divine love. They lie against the truth, not stopping in making many to oppose the truth and to separate from it.⁵² The exhortation of Saint Maximus is paternal like the one of Saint Apostle Paul: *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."*⁵³ The heretics, of course, are the servants of Satan, as the same Apostle Paul says, who will be punished according to their works.⁵⁴ The craftiness of the will and their deceptive conduct, empha-

⁵⁰ Proverbs 26:11.

⁵¹ Here is what St. Maximus the Confessor tells some nuns that fell into heresy: *"But if keeping in mind the terrible judgment of Christ, where will be approved my judgment communicated to you about this in the presence of angels and archangels and all the multitude of the heavenly hosts and all the multitude of human, you will repent and you will come again to God Who calls you by grace, I will decide you to hold the properties bestowed to you by me and I will never cease, as long as Providence will give me earthly and transient life, to meditate on other ways to help you even more"*. The zeal of the Holy Father goes very far until martyrdom, saying: *"I will not stop me giving myself a ransom for your souls, if time will bring the need to do it. And I will give myself wholeheartedly, if God calls me by His grace. Only you to give yourself again to Christ the Saviour God and to heal by returning, the fall and separation caused by you to His body"*. (Epistle 18. Of the same, from George, the praised prefect of Africa, to the nuns who broke from the Universal Holy Church from Alexandria, op.cit., p. 229).

⁵² St. Maximus the Confessor, in one of his letters, said that heretics, unable to rely on their reason, by aggression alter the truth. They choose the truth instead of lies and introduce guile against the simple under the guise of alleged dogma.

⁵³ Romans 16:17-18.

⁵⁴ II Corinthians 11:13-15.

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sizes Saint Maximus, was revealed even by our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels, saying: *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”*⁵⁵ So as St. John the Evangelist says: *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”*⁵⁶

The words of true faith, says Saint Maximus, have much use for the reconciliation of people with God, therefore they must be remembered wisely. It is also necessary for the personal salvation that man with all the power to reject those who do not receive the faithful and saving dogmas of the Church. To better understand, St. Maximus states that the heretics are preachers of the doctrine of Antichrist, who do not confess Jesus Christ our Lord and God in the flesh. They are at war with the Church of God, denying the nature of the body, in that they do not want to confess that it was preserved and is in Christ, and do not shudder to portray themselves as preachers of the teaching hostile to God. The true believer is the one that drinks from the clean divine water of the ecclesiastical doctrine of the church, having cleansed the beauty of faithfulness. He confesses thus boldly before God and men all the faithful words of the Holy Fathers about the Saviour Christ and His Church, preached by those who made themselves ministers of grace. The confession of the truth must be so, as St. Maximus says: *“We confess the Lord Jesus Christ composed of “two natures”, composed of divinity and humanity; and “two natures”, as those who know Him being in divinity and humanity. For as by saying of two natures, we think He’s from divinity and humanity, so, by saying also in two natures, we show Him properly, existing in divinity and humanity, as inseparable after the union from none of the two natures of which He was constituted, but as existing and being known in them, from which He is forever”. Therefore we confess Him again as “two natures”, united undividedly by hypostasis, as being the Same true God and man, believing that these names are confirmed even through things. For as we believe Him as being called the Son of God by nature and truth, for the identity of the being with God and the Father, we say He is the same and is called the Son of Man and made man by nature and truth for the natural kinship (by nature) with the one who begot Him in flesh. For if we*

⁵⁵ Matthew 7:15-16.

⁵⁶ 1 John 4:1-3.

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do not confess Him as two natures, as God and man at the same time, we will be conspicuous as saying that He was composed of simple rules and not from from realities, and that He is not really what it is indicated by the rules".⁵⁷ Therefore, concludes St. Maximus, "we will not cease to confess, as it was said, the Savior Christ in two natures, as being from divinity and humanity; and two natures, believing the same as being God and at the same time as being man. For He is not only from these, but also these; not only these, but also in these, knowing Him as whole from parts, and a whole in parts, and a whole through parts. For if He, giving the existence to those who are, gave them also the strength of duration, not to interfere species with each other and to transform some in others, but to stay all according to the reason after which they were made by Him – as from all's firmness in their natural identity, the attentive viewers of the divine to see, as much as possible, the Creator of the universe –, the more will bear witness in Himself His infinite power to remain what He was and to do what He was not, being, without lacking anything and unchanged, both". Consequently, the witness of the truth of our faith by Saint Maximus the Confessor is the following: "One of the Holy and consubstantial Trinity, the Begotten Son – being perfect God by nature and taking really the body of the same essence with us, animated rationally and mentally, from the Holy Mother of God, and really uniting it with Him and inseparable by hypostasis – is thus One as before, but not composed by hypostasis (it is simple, for it is the hypostasis of the Word that remained God), but doubted by nature, for it He was made flesh. This is because through the two natures, by being, to be of the same people with the extremes and His parts to keep the natural distinction together, and through the unity of the person, between His parts having His full identity, to have, compared to the extreme ones, also a personal distinction as One Who is the One and Only and, through the natural and existential unflagging identity that He has with both extremes, to be perfect in both: as God and man at the same time".⁵⁸ This confession of faith summarized by the Saint Confessor concerns the fighting of those who betray the true doctrine and historical reality. So, "once God was with us in flesh and the knowledge of His divinity was made for all harder, and more perfect and the truth of His humanity was more openly revealed, including the borders of the world through the powerful preaching of the Fathers who preached it". Of course, the heretics have fallen the Son of God made man from His natural attributes, not keeping the identity of each part. So if the Son of

⁵⁷ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Către John 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)*, pp. 140-141.

⁵⁸ *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 329.

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God “does not keep without flaws the identity of each part – except the sin, Saint Maximus says, as the Holy Fathers of the Church say – with those from which and in which is the Word incarnated after the union, He will be a god with flaws, if there can be everywhere an imperfect god; also, He will be a man with flaws, if there may be somewhere a man that lacks some natural qualities”.⁵⁹

Specifically, as we will see further on, Saint Maximus wrote against Nestorius and Severus of Antioch⁶⁰, against the Nestorians and Apollinarians. Severus of Antioch, confusing the true worshipers of God, says that in Christ the Saviour were preserved the distinctions between the divine and the human qualities, but continued to refuse the existence of two natures in His hypostasis. Severus mixed the divine and human natures, making them one nature, which is neither divine

⁵⁹ *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 329.

⁶⁰ We consider it necessary to make a short presentation of the heretical teachings of Nestorius and Severus of Antioch. Severus of Antioch shrewdly argued that the hypostasis is identical to the nature, to conclude that in the Savior Christ is only one nature. To hide the error he introduces division, speaking of a union of hypostases. Also, the heretic, to fend off the charges of non-recognition of natures, which he replaced with a simple difference of names, made a simple distinction in the natural qualities. Like Nestorius, which allowed a mere formal union, introducing a real division, Severus also, speaking about a simple difference of natures, supports actually a confounding of them. Severus also said that, from the *oikonomia*, the hypostasis is identical to the nature in the incarnation and the difference in the natural qualities, identical to the actual difference according to nature. He was based on the fact that any quality that is called natural also is reckoned that it is shown in work. Saint Maximus showed in this presentation that Severus being exposed with arguments that he clearly teaches the imagination of Manes, the fusion supported by Apollinarianism and the contraction after the union of natures in one person, change the words used by himself, saying that by nature he understood hypostasis. Manes claimed that Christ the Saviour not only took a imaginary nature, for the matter being essentially evil, God was not able to get a real body. Apollinarianism thought that God the Word, replacing the human mind with Himself as Word, combined from His body and from the divine Word only one nature. Eutychios said that after the union, the two natures in Christ became only one nature. The heretic's assertion that the union was made from hypostases or persons, unmask him as one who thinks the division of hypostases taught by Ebion, Paul of Samosata and Nestorius. These statements Severus reckoned the presence and ministry of the Word in Christ by grace like a prophet, stating that by the hypostases he understood the natures. From here Severus went further in his confusion, dogmatizing the nonexistence of the natures united and speaking about qualities, but not of special natures, or difference of beings in Christ after the union. So Severus seek to mask the idea that in Christ are not two natures with the understanding of some differences in the one nature, and then by the idea that the nature is one with the hypostasis. He could defend so when he was accused that he admits only one nature, with the assertion that he admits only one hypostasis. And when he was accused of nestorianism he said that through the two hypostases he understands the natures. He used labilely the terms hypostasis and nature, saying both that they are identical in meaning and that they are different. In fact he did not recognize neither two natures, nor two hypostases and only understood two kinds of qualities, which he called falsely divine and human. He did not see in the special qualities the sign of belonging to special natures. (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle to the same Marin. From the Writing about Works and Wills, chap. 50. op.cit.*, p. 298).

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nor human, but something intermediate between them. So, the Lord could not save men, Whereas the unique nature from Him is both immortal and mortal, strong and weak, glorious and humiliated, stresses the Saint Confessor.⁶¹ against the allegation of the heretic Severus, that Christ has a composed nature, Saint Maximus affirms that there is no “*composed nature*”, but we can talk about a composed hypostasis of God the Word. The hypostasis can be unique and yet complex, but the nature can not be formed without losing its identity. Of course, in humans one can speak of a nature composed of soul and body, because both are part of a species and thus is born. But in the Saviour Christ subsists both the divine nature which belongs to the eternal Logos Person, and the human “*assumed*” nature by Him in a moment of time, freely to deify it. From here it is understood that the humanity of the Lord has the knowledge that it is assumed by the divine hypostasis of the One Who was made man for us.⁶² So compared to Severus, who conceded only one nature, Saint Maximus highlighted the truth that our Savior Christ is “*in two natures, from two natures or two natures*”. Thus, the blessed Confessor considerably widened the formula of Chalcedon, which said about the incarnate Logos that He is only “*in two natures*”.⁶³

⁶¹ This doctrine was rather specific to pantheism. As we know, the pantheism is the philosophical conception which identifies God with nature or the physical universe. Thus God and the surrounding nature are essentially the same – or that everything is of an all-encompassing, immanent and abstract God. Man, being part of the universe is part of God. The term “*panteism*” was invented by the Irish writer John Toland in 1705. Some pantheists accept the idea of free will arguing that people can choose between good and evil, even if they feel that there is a higher being than them to whom they belong. There are some pantheists who believe in a common purpose for nature and man, while others reject the idea of purpose and consider existence as an existence for their own pleasure. Schopenhauer claimed that the pantheism has no moral. The classic pantheism equate the existence with God without trying to redefine or minimize any term. The followers of this philosophy believed in a personal God, conscious and omniscient, and believed that God as uniting all true religions. In many ways, the classic pantheism is similar to the monism, insofar as it considers all things, from energy to matter, thought, time, as all aspects of a personal encompassing God. In addition to this classic pantheism there is a naturalistic pantheism which holds that the universe, though unconscious and unfeeling as a whole, is still a center for meaningful mystical fulfillment. Thus, nature is seen as God only in a non-traditional, impersonal sense. The naturalistic pantheism is based on the relatively recent views of Baruch Spinoza and John Toland.

⁶² On this topic at Saint Maximus, see: Felix Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn als Mensch*, Fribourg, Suisse, 1980.

⁶³ As we see, this formula of St. Maximus includes the phrase of the Monophysites “*from two natures*”, keeping it away from the sense that “*from two natures*” has resulted one single nature. To this we must add immediately the assertion that Christ the Savior is “*two natures*” real, but united so that they have a unique hypostasis of the Logos made man. Of course, Saint Maximus will always highlight in his work that the mystery of the union of the two natures in one hypostasis is a reality beyond our human ability to understand. We add to this that although Saint Maximus saw this hypostatic union apophatically, however, sometimes he tried to base his teaching on union on the

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The Only Begotten of the Father is true God, by being, and true man by oikonomia

The Divine Incarnation generated by Saint Maximus the Confessor, the most subtle dogmas of true faith, highlighting through words and phrases what is common and universal, in terms of being and person, and what is particular and specific, stating clearly the meaning of the hypostatic union of the two natures in the Person of Jesus Christ. This dogmatic presentation, “*does not have anything for granted, says the Confessor, but portrays what he learned from the Holy Fathers, changing none of their teachings*”.⁶⁴ These words preface the doctrine of being and nature, common and universal elements of the Incarnation, and about specific and particular concerning the hypostasis or the person. In mentioning this teaching Saint Maximus formulated arguments both from the Scripture and from the theology of the Holy Fathers. Prominently in the Christology of the Confessor were the Cappadocian Fathers⁶⁵, whose thinking is highlighted by “*the symphony of our*

idea of “*kinship*” or “*conformities*” between human nature and the divine, as a certain conformity exists between matter and the human spirit, that he can make from the matter a body, as an organ for its manifestation. It is worth emphasizing that, in general, Saint Maximus clearly states the value of human nature in front of God, Who created it to save and deify it forever. (See Pierre Peret S.J., *Christologie et théologie trinitaire chez Maxime le Confesseur; d’après sa formule «deux natures desquelles, en lesquelles et laquelle est le Christ»*, in vol. Maxime le Confesseur. Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, 28 sept. 1980, Fribourg, 1981, pp. 215-223).

⁶⁴ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle to Cosma, the Deacon from Alexandria, About What Is Common and Specific, that is about Being and Hypostasis*, p.182.

⁶⁵ St. Maximus, bringing as testimony the words of St. Basil the Great, about hypostasis, says: “*And if we had to say briefly what our opinion, we say that what distinguishes the common from the specific is that differs the being from hypostasis. For each of us participates to both the common reason of being of the being, and the particular properties on it, by which that is that*”. Again, from St. Basil, the Confessor says: “*The difference between being and the hypostasis is the one that the common has towards each of them. For example, the one that an animal has in comparison to a certain man*”. Also the Cappadocian saint wrote, interpreting the meaning of the word “*consubstantial*” that: “*This phrase justifies also the mistake of Sabellius. For it abolishes the identity of the hypostases and introduces the full concept of the person*”. Thus “*the one who does not confess the common of the being falls into polytheism, so that whoever does not admit the specificity of the hypostases falls into Judaism*”. (Saint Basil the Great, *Epistle 500; Epistle 64*).

The term consubstantial indicates the difference of persons and the identity of the being. Put into the dogmatic text these words shows us that the Son is from the Divine Being hypostasized in the Father through unbegottenness. He is born neither from an impersonal divine nature or general, nor from the person of the Father. He not the Son of the will, nor the Son of an un-hypostatical nature. So as St. Maximus states, the Fathers, to explain the dogma of the Holy Trinity, had to clarify the relationship between the separate persons and the common nature. They had to specify two elements of the person: the actual state of the nature and the distinct characteristics of each person. Also the Fathers of the first Ecumenical Councils clarified also the ontological and psychological el-

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dogmas". This soul-saving embodiment is based on the work of the Holy Spirit, who has spoken through the prophets and our Fathers carriers of divine grace.⁶⁶

ements of the Incarnation. As such, stresses Fr. Stăniloae, the human person is largely self-conscious of its unrepeated uniqueness as the source of the works, thoughts and of its multiple feelings, and it is therefore responsible for all its physical and spiritual movements. This conscious responsibility is another distinctive feature of the person. But the person is conscious, however, that it is akin to other people, because it contains a large part essentially common with them and that is largely responsible and conditioned by them. This translates the identity of nature of the different human persons. Within the Trinity, the personal Self is threefold, and between the three Persons is a maximum unity. The human persons can frequently become unsupportive and hostile to each other, stresses Fr. Stăniloae. But trinitarian Persons have a perfect unity in love.

As for the Savior Jesus Christ, He is a divine and human Self at the same time. Referring to the self of man, it is both unified and complex. Man knows himself as the only source of his multiple works, of the flesh and of the soul, inseparable, and sometimes lives the self by forgetting the multiplicity of his actions, but he lives it also specified in each act. Our Saviour lives also His Self as one, but He lives it also specifically: as the existing one from eternity and as the one dependent of that and, generally, from God, the ultimate source of existence, without feeling as independent Self separated from the eternal Self. (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle to Cosma, Deacon of Alexandria, About What Is Common and Specific, that is about Being and Hypostasis*, p. 184, note 233). Like St. Basil and St. Gregory the Theologian, quoted by Saint Maximus, he says: "*When I say middle I tell the truth. Only looking to it is good, rejecting the ugly contracting and the division, which is even more absurd. We do not contract the Trinity into a hypostasis, for fear of polytheism, understanding as simple names the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*". Elsewhere the Holy Hierarch adds: "*Because we need to keep God the One and confess also the three hypostases, that is three Persons, and each of them with what has specific, to say according to my word that it is a God, reducing the Son and the Spirit to only one cause, neither composing them nor contracting. And the three hypostases (we confess) without thinking any of them as merged or separated or mixed, not to abolish everything. For through them the unity is praised even more, or God is showing himself as good. By this we mean that God the One and the Same, to call Him so, has movement and will, and identity as being*". The same Father, in his farewell word says, again: "*We believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit consubstantial and of one glory, in which the baptism finds its perfection. Do you know that you were initiated (you were baptized), that it (the Baptism) is the denial of infidelity and also the confession of the Godhead? And so we perfect ourselves, on the one hand knowing the One in Being and articulating and worshiping the One undivided, and on the other, knowing and articulating us in the three hypostases or Persons*". (*Word XXIX, The First Word on the Son*).

Receiving the Trinity through Baptism, we are all one with our One God, but we appropriate the love of His Three Persons as love between us. Moreover, Saint Gregory repeats this doctrine in the Word from the Festival of Lights: "*When I say God, I lighten myself with a light, but also with three. Three after properties or hypostases, whether someone likes to call them so, or Persons. For we would not fight for words, as long as different words get us to the same meaning. But one for the reason of the being, or of the godhead*". (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle to Cosma, Deacon of Alexandria, About What Is Common and Specific, that is about Being and Hypostasis, op.cit.*, p. 185).

⁶⁶ St. Maximus emphasizes a very important thing for the dogmatic as that "*the opinion or dogma, to be believable, should have its truth credible witnesses among the Fathers*". Hence, from the analysis of the history of dogma we find that the teachings of Jesus Christ has always given to the mind enlightened by the Holy Spirit a steadfast in the firmness of the truth revealed in the Holy

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These, claiming the identity between nature and being, stressed what is common with what is universal. Thus, the person is identified with the hypostasis as something specific and particular, without confusing in any way the meaning of what was said by changing and mixing them together.⁶⁷

The Holy Fathers gave us in the Church, therefore, the right confession of faith, and their descendants, in agreement with them, taught on through the grace of the Spirit, “*the faithful word, without deviating in nothing from this agreement*”. Through this apostolic succession, Saint Maximus confirmed that the mystery of faith is a work of the Holy Spirit and is not interrupted ever in the the Mystical Body of the Lord. When we talk about dogmas of revealed truth we therefore regard both the word transmitted by our Fathers as well as by the presence of the Holy Spirit Who leads the Church to the kingdom of heaven.

Saint Maximus, to play as explicit as possible the truths of the Orthodox faith, uses examples from the natural world that clarify the deep teachings so hard to decipher by the human mind. Since none of the creatures is the same with another by being and hypostasis, but the ones identical by being are different by hypostasis, and the ones identical by hypostasis are different by being, it is clear that the ones the same by nature and being are different from each other as hypostases. This shows that none of them is identical to another in both, ie by nature and by hypostasis, because the ones joined together in one and the same being ever will never join in one and the same person, ie will not be able to have the same person or hypostasis. Obviously, the ones united in one and the same hypostasis or person could never unite in one and the same being or nature, that is they could never show as being or as being made of the same substance and nature. As such, “*those united in one and the same nature or being are distinguished as hypostases or persons, as is the case with angels, with humans and all creatures that contemplate by species and gender*”,⁶⁸ underlines Saint Maximus.

Based on these realities from our world, the blessed Maximus says that the unique being and nature of the Godhead exists in three hypostases distinguished

Scriptures and in the definitions of the divine Fathers. However the heresies appeared as innovations that brought to the thinking darkened by the evil one a shift from a view to another, devoid of any security, thus clearing the faith of any trait of truth. Following the heretics God is no longer sure He is really God and whether the world is or not His creation.

⁶⁷ See also: *Iisus Hristos este același ieri, azi și în veac, Formarea vocabularului și a terminologiei hristologice (Jesus Christ Is the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever. Forming the Christological Vocabulary and Terminology)*, Publishing House of the Metropolitan Church of Oltenia, Craiova, 2010, p 162.

⁶⁸ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola către Preaiubitul de Dumnezeu Cosma, diaconul din Alexandria, Despre ceea ce e comun și propriu, adică despre ființă și ipostas (Epistle to Cosma, the Deacon from Alexandria. On What is Common and Specific, that is about Being and Hypostasis)*, op. cit., p. 187.

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from one another through properties and three hypostases in one and the same being and nature of the Godhead. Because of this Trinitarian and eternal reality we worship the unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity. Thus, we confess the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, God, where the Son is not the Father, but He is what is the Father, the Spirit is not the Son, but He is what is the Son. Thus, it shows that everything is the Father is also the Son except the unbegottenness, for the Son is born, also all that is the Son is also the Holy Spirit, apart from birth, for the Spirit is proceeded.⁶⁹ So the Persons of the Holy Trinity, being united by one and the same being, are of one and the same being but different hypostases. Consubstantial, says Saint Maximus, refers to the common reason of the being seen unchanged in the identity of nature in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reason by which one is nothing more than another what it is and is called. Nevertheless, the three Persons are different hypostases, through the reason of the personal diversity which distinguishes them, reason whereupon one differs from another, without coinciding with one another through the hypostatical properties that characterize them. Thus, the Holy Trinity Hypostases bears each of them the very particular reason of his own hypostasis.

So, One of the Trinity comes down to us and unites His divine nature with our human nature in His Hypostasis. To describe this *oikonomia* Saint Maximus takes as a reference point the union between body and soul in man: *“For the qualities – that distinguish one’s body and one’s soul from other bodies and other souls –, flowing through union, characterize and also break from other people the hypostasis filled by them, say that of Peter and Paul, but not the soul of Peter and Paul’s own body”*. In this rationality we find that *“one’s soul and body have an identity through the reason of the one hypostasis, completed by them through union, because none of them has stood by itself separate from the other before their*

⁶⁹ As we know from the Divine Revelation and from the teaching of the Fathers, the unbegottenness, the birth and the procession do not cut the nature and the power of the One Unspoken Godhead in three unequal beings and natures, but characterizes the persons or hypostases in Whom or Whom is the Godhead or the one being and nature. (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle to Cosma, the Deacon from Alexandria, About What Is Common and Specific, that is about Being and Hypostasis*, p. 187) St. Maximus adds that those who are one hypostasis can not be counted as two hypostases of the same nature. As hypostasis the Son is not the Father or the Spirit, but as being He is what the Father and the Spirit are, and that is why they are a God. Father Stăniloae emphasizes that the whole being is lived by the Father from eternity and communicated through birth to the Son and to the Holy Spirit through procession. The Son and Holy Spirit live the being received from the Father: the First, by birth, and the Second, by procession. Father lives the Son and Holy Spirit as Some of same being with Him, received from Him. The Son and Holy Spirit live the Father as One Who communicates them the same being, by birth and procession. All the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity have the same being and live together the same being in a continuous loving communication, each hypostasis with its own specificity and the same devotion. (*Ibidem*, p. 187, note 240).

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composition in the act of bringing to existence (the hypostasis) of the species”.⁷⁰ In such case, the human person is distinguished from other people, “*preserving undivided the unity of the monad of its person completely indistinguishable in itself*”. By virtue of this, being one with others under the same relation, through this

⁷⁰ St. Maximus, talking about the unity of being in the Trinity of Persons, shows us that the souls of two people are separated and form an less identity than the soul of each united with his body. As a person, man is a unique whole, composed of soul and body, both sides being particularly characterized in each and mutually embedded in what they have specific each of them. This irreplaceable unity of each person consists of a soul that prints in the body its specificity and makes each hypostasis irreplaceable. This theory is contrary to the Origenism and the reincarnation theories supporting the migration of souls in the bodies or other forms of existence.

Thus the hypostasis achieves a unit greater than the parts of the same substance between them, distributed in the different people. St. Maximus, highlighting the personal unity that is realized between different substances, explains in a perceivable form for us the humans the hypostatic unity which is achieved between the human and the divine natures in the Person of the Logos made man. Of course, he considers this union a great mystery of the godhead for our salvation. Naturally this personal unity between the human soul and body, where the soul is to hold the matter in his own body, can point out to some extent the relationship between the divine nature and the human nature from the hypostasis of the Word. It is understood that God, as Creator, has the possibility to unite in varying degrees with His creation without absorbing it in Himself or canceling it. By virtue of His omnipotence this is absolutely possible to reach for Him, He is their Creator and the creature the work of His hands. Moreover, to prepare the world for His incarnation, He gave people the opportunity to organize themselves in different hypostases as His divine being is organized for people to work in them the love planted by Him in His image, as emphasizes Fr. Stăniloae. So God has kept an existential difference between soul and body, without changing or transforming the parts or natures of which was composed the hypostasis and without abolishing them. By virtue of this man through the community by nature of its parts is united with other people, because they bear the same nature, according to the species, but remain distinct and separated from other people through the particularities of the parts. Here Saint Maximus sees the great unity between the soul and body of a man, although they are different substances. Of course, the human person can not live normally outside relationship with other people who have the soul and body as parts of the same nature. We add to this the essential fact that as the human unity is not born and does not develop outside the unit and the nature of communication with others, man being created by God as a being in communion with others, precisely for that the Saviour Jesus Christ is the Person in communion of being with God and with men, He uniting through His incarnation those from the above with those from the bottom. Therefore, because He is God, He restored and strengthened in Himself the communion between Him as human with others human beings, unifying the heavenly and the earthly. Then, because He is a divine Hypostasis in communion with other divine Hypostases, He made Himself also Hypostasis of the human nature so we can live in communion with the Father as He is in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. (*John 17*). Therefore, God, the Triune praised, made Himself man to be able, on the one hand, to update personally the humanity in a multiple way, and on the other hand, to update himself in the community of the interpersonal love, having as basis the common nature. We add to this the fact that only He could regathered, firmly, through the community of nature in which He got in touch with us, as divine-human hypostasis, not to cancel us as human persons, but to deify us, encircling us in His love, as Fr. Stăniloae says.

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we are clarified and it is possible to understand the teaching about the incarnation of God the Word. The Son of God uniting Himself with those extreme through the communion by being of His parts, preserved without changing or mixing the distinction between the parts, showing through the particular properties of the parts the communion of the divine nature with the human nature by hypostasis.

So, the divine Logos, being perfect God by nature and being, and after hypostasis is other than the Father and the Spirit, was made flesh, at the fullness of time, from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. He was made perfect man by assuming the human nature, that is He made Himself perfect man, body and understanding and rational soul, which He united with the divine nature in His Hypostasis. Thus those opposite, divinity and humanity, unite in a single Hypostasis of the Son of the Almighty.⁷¹ Thus, says Saint Maximus: *“The One simple by nature and uncompounded was composed by hypostasis, remaining in the persistence of the parts of which He was constituted unchanged, undivided and unmixed, to be by hypostasis mediator between the parts which He was composed from”*.⁷² This, coming and taking human nature has reconciled us with God the Father, His humanity receiving concretely both the existence and subsistence in His hypostasis. Humanity has not only received the existence but also the hypostasis in God the Word, without it to be a different hypostasis from His divine hypostasis, or a state of self apart from His person. Then, receiving the concrete existence in the hypostasis of the Son of God, the human nature which has perfectly in itself the existence of the Self, has in Him also a basis for its existence both sure and steadfast. We add to this the fact that the rationale of the human nature, being in God the Word, The One bearing all with the power of His deity, strengthens in union with the One bearing all through this act of incarnation. Thus, as in God the Word, being the spiritual

⁷¹ Saint Maximus indicates, through this explanation how the Unseen, Who lives within the unapproachable light, made Himself man, coming to those from below and subjected to death and decay. As He has in common with God the Father the Divine Being, now, after the incarnation, He was made like us, taking the human being. By this God showed us His inexpressible love for mankind, emptying Himself from the divine glory and joining our weaknesses. So by what He had as particular imprinted in both natures uniformly, thereby showing that all of Him are common to both, in His quality of hypostasis as a whole. Thus His Person is independent, and the common is His personal Self where both natures combine in a perfect hypostatic communion. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ as independent Person, is the same manifested through both natures, instilling in them the identity of His own unique hypostasis. So, in Christ Our Saviour, the Holy Trinity is *with us* and *in us*. At the same time, through Him is accomplished the mystery of our communion with God, which can not be achieved without joining the special and the extreme, but not contradictory, of which one is able to receive the other, and the other capable of being received and thereby be fully saved and deified.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 193.

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seed of all living creatures⁷³, through His incarnation, these are all again united and strengthened in Him forever.⁷⁴ So the Lord of glory being “*composed*”, but without “*differences*” in Himself, we can not say that in His Hypostasis are two units differently characterized, but has overall the same personal characteristics. This unity is made by God the Word God that exceeds “*in the Self*” the distance between the extremes, between the eternal divine nature and the human nature transitory and powerless. Obviously, this eternal hypostasis of the Lord, this “*Self*”, that unites the parts is different from the parts within Him, without being outside those who concur in Him.⁷⁵ So, the Father’s Word made man is both composed through His parts, divine and human, and above composition in that He forms His, besides the deity that He has, the humanity from Theotokos, thus meeting its ontological desire of being in Him. Saint Apostle Paul, talking about uniting the extremes in the Son of God made man, tells us that the heavenly united in Himself the earthly ones, as one Who is truly God, by being, and He was truly made man by nature, by oikonomia.⁷⁶ By making Himself like us without sin, He did not split through the difference between His parts, as pointed out by Saint Maximus, nor was He mixed through their unit by hypostasis. United by nature with His Father and united to His Mother through the reason of the communion of the parts of which He was composed⁷⁷, the Son of God made man saved the difference of the parts of which He was composed but also their unity in His hypostasis. Also, distinguishing from the Father by hypostasis and from His Mother by nature, He kept the uniqueness of His hypostasis, uniting the parts with each other in His personal identity.

⁷³ We remind you that unlike Saint Maximus, Leontius of Byzantium said that humanity was “*enhypositized*” in the hypostasis of the Word. This enhypositiation shows that humanity did not receive in Christ Our Saviour another hypostasis, but it was included in His own hypostasis without confusion or change. Saint Maximus also noted that, as far as we are concerned, these spiritual seeds *logoi* set in motion when their divine carrier wants, also the birth of human persons in bodies.

⁷⁴ We emphasize that this mystery of the divine hypostasis remains impenetrable to the human mind.

⁷⁵ Of course, the Son of God has in Himself the power by which to form the human nature, nature to which corresponds something of it, because He is its Creator and came to it because it belongs to Him. Therefore, He has the power to become man, so to make Himself a compound, due to the familiarity and virtuality of the human nature He has in Him, as Logos who keeps in Himself the reasons of all creatures, and which He updates through the power of forming from the body of the Virgin His human nature.

⁷⁶ *Ephesians 2:16*.

⁷⁷ Father Stăniloae says that this extreme community of the human nature of our Savior with His Mother and the Divine with His Father has been kept unmerged in the unity of His hypostasis, that the Church did not know them in a Monophysite sense, but through them it met Him in communion with the people and with the Father. Thus, the unity of hypostasis in two natures makes it possible the communion of One and the Same Savior and intercessor with God the Father, into being and with the people, in deification.

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Of course, the central idea of the Christology of Saint Maximus is that the Only Begotten of the Father was shown in two natures after the union as being one hypostasis composed of parts. In His Person the parts are retained, on one hand, undivided and inseparable, unmixed and unchanged after their union in Him and, on the other, because the union of the human nature with the divine in the One hypostasis of Christ is ineffable, true and real, the One and Only hypostasis of the parts has become in an unchanged manner a true compound. In this capacity the one hypostasis of the Word, avoiding the extremes to the Father and to His Mother, remained the same after assuming the human nature. It is clear that only in the hypostasis of the Word the human nature was not separated from the divine nature because upon Him alone she had its real purpose nor could detach itself from the divine nature because he had no another hypostasis of its existence. Therefore, the Word of the Father particularly printed the assumed human nature, sealing it differently from the human nature of people attending the deification of His human nature. Of course, the Son of God, imprinting His human nature with His deity through the birth from the Virgin Mary, was shown in His humanity as the Son of the Father and the Son of Man, appropriating all true human feelings. Of course that the Simple Lord, this assuming of the human nature, did not change and become compound, His quality of a simple hypostasis remaining in the composition He has appropriated by His incarnation. This union was naturally made so that “*the difference of origin of the parts in Him not to abolish the full identity by hypostasis of the parts, opening in a minim of people their union in one hypostasis*”⁷⁸, as specified by Saint Maximus.

But those common to the divine and human natures from the Person of the Lord highlight the whole as compared to the extremes, and those by nature theirs unite Him, existentially, as a whole, with the other extremes.⁷⁹ This proves that, on the one hand, the hypostasis of the Word made man, although He became composed by the union of the divine nature with the human one, however has in itself a unit that forbids it any separation and even inner distinction.⁸⁰ Being a unitary Person and simultaneously composed of divine and human, The Son is distinct from the Father, who is only God and from His Mother, who is only human. He also is a unitary Person who knows Himself eternal and *uncaused*, but also *caused*

⁷⁸ Saint Maximus, when he speaks about the union of the two natures in one hypostasis, unadulterated and unchanged, considers the Nestorian and monophysitic heresies: one united the natures until the abolition of the human nature in the Hypostasis of the Word, and another one separated them, making two distinct persons, united only morally.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 196.

⁸⁰ We emphasize that inside or inward the hypostasis, the two natures, divine and human, are distinguishable only by reflection.

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by taking on the human in His hypostasis. The fact that the unity of the Hypostasis is not abolished by the diversity of natures nor the natures separated from one another to form two hypostases, further underlines that the Son of the Father and God unites the human being with the divine one in a hypostasis, keeping the peculiarities that distinguish Him from the Father and other men. In other words the Lord Jesus Christ keeps the common hypostatic trait of His existential parts to distinguish Himself from the Person of the Father and His Mother, as well as the community of being with the Father and with His Mother, to unite us with them in a unity of everlasting love. It is through these properties, says Saint Maximus, *“through which He distinguished from what is common to deity, as the Son and the Word, through those He saved the union with the body or the identity by hypostasis with Him also by those through which, as God, He preserved the natural distinction from the body, by those being united with the Father and the Spirit by being, He saved the union by hypostasis and kept His identity”*.⁸¹ Therefore, Christ the Saviour preserved the common and the specific of each nature from which He was composed. The common, in the reasoning of His identity by being of the parts with those extreme, after which He was different and after union of the parts among themselves, and the specific, in the reasoning of the identity by hypostasis of the parts, through which He distinguished from extremes, keeping unmixed the distinction from them. Thus, he understands how the hypostatic identity and the communion with the extremes shows both the distinction of extreme natures, divine and human, and the communion with the extremes, the Father and the Holy Mother of God. Uniting the extremes in His hypostasis, The Son of God made man is both distinct from the extremes, but also intercessor among them, or creator of communion among them, as Saint Apostle Paul tells us.

But as the relations between the natures of Jesus Christ, divine and human, Saint Maximus considers them not to be specific to the being and to the accident, but to the cause and power which makes all and plants in each of those created the constitutive reasoning of their existence and makes them join or remain foreign naturally among them. From this point of view, the number, as we shall see, has no power to work, nor to suffer, since it is no indicator of a relationship, that is of a union or division. As we know the relations are extremely varied and always unique, so they are not abiding realities which can be indicated by fixed numbers, one, two or three. So, Saint Maximus emphasizes that this is specific to the portion, not the relationship, that the number to be indicator only of the simple portion or as it is.⁸² Thus the divinity of

⁸¹ *Idem, Ibidem*, p 196.

⁸² *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 204. Saint Maximus shows that the number says nothing about the qualities of the counted, Mathematics being a science altogether far from the reality of the mysterious hypostatical union. So, *“if the number were substance, says Saint Maximus, it would be self-sub-*

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Jesus Christ remains Godhead by being, not changing into the being of the body, and His humanity remains humanity by being, without a transformation in the nature of the Godhead. So, neither the deity of Christ nor His humanity pass into one another for their union by hypostasis, but the natures united in the same hypostasis remain unmixed and unchanged. “So, never telling that the hypostasis and the nature are actually the same, says Saint Maximus, we preach faithfully in Christ the Savior both the identity and the difference. The first one, for the one hypostasis, for which we confess God the Word the same as His body, not to get the praised Trinity a personal addition, becoming a fourth. And the second one, because of the diversity of being of those from which He is, due to which the parts of Jesus Christ do not pass into one another in the least”.⁸³

Summing up the ideas exposed by Saint Maximus we can say that in the person of the incarnated Logos we are forever united with the Father and heirs of the Kingdom of heaven, He is the one who fills all in all, in the words of Saint Apostle Paul.⁸⁴ If the Lord had not been the begotten Son of the Father,

sisting, without needing anything else to exist. And if it were accident or quality or it produced distinction somehow, would introduce along with the gender also the species involved in it and the definition of what has as basis not only the portion; or it would indicate united to the species also the difference in general; and it would also show the difference between two individuals belonging to the same species; or it would indicate the exact distinction from the multitude of the characteristics present in an individual; and it would no longer indicate only one particularly different from another; but it would show also what the indicated one has different from the other. And if anyone does not include the number in the definitions of things, then the number is neither substance nor quality. And if the number is none of that, it's obvious that neither can work nor suffer. And if the number has no power to do anything, neither to suffer, it follows that neither unites nor divides as one making something, nor can it be partitioned as one suffering, but, indicating only the portions of things, it does not touch their relationship. And if the number only indicates the portion, but not any relationship thought about it, it is rather an expression, so to speak, corresponding to the portion. Hence the one that indicates a difference in Christ after the union thinking along with the distinction and the portion of those different”, concludes Saint Maximus. (Idem, Ibidem, p. 205).

⁸³ Idem, Ibidem, p. 207.

⁸⁴ We emphasize that the Son of God become man, united in Himself the divine nature with the human nature. In this oikonomia He freed us from the burden of separation from God the Father, idea taught by the monotheistic religions, and freed us from the confusion of mixing God with the earthly world, preached by the pantheistic religions. That Nestorianism inclined towards the former, and the Monophysitism for the second, none of these views was not talking about the salvation of the human person. The Church Fathers, however, speaking of the hypostatic union in a Person of the two natures, human and divine, without confusing them, have taught the saving truth that focuses on person and the communion of love of man with the Trinity and the connection between God and men. By this they showed the importance of the person, which is called, the its unity, to include a broader and broader horizon and an increasingly rich complexity. This effectiveness of the person reaches its peak in the divine-human hypostasis of Christ the Savior, highlights Fr. Stăniloae. (Idem, Ibidem, p. 200, note 268).

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by divinity, He could not have been made His Son by humanity, making also those His sons by grace of the Father and sons of His Mother by love. As the begotten Son of the Father from eternity, the printed His quality as son in His humanity, in order for us through the Holy Baptism, when we dress in Him, to become sons and daughters of the Father and children of His Pure Mother in His Mystical Body.⁸⁵ Having thus, the difference and the identity, it is clear that He is one and two. *“He is one, says Saint Maximus, by the reasoning of His undivided monad by hypostasis and He is two by the reasoning of heterogeneity by being of His parts and after union”*. So the two natures that differ in the person of our Saviour Jesus Christ, unite also Him with the Father and with men through the Theotokos. As Son of the Father and as humanity assumed without seed from His Mother, He distinguishes from the Father and from the people, for which His personal contribution to our reconciliation with God the Father, is unique and universal. If He were only God or only man, He could not have united the two natures in His Hypostasis and our salvation would not have occurred. And again, if they were two separate or only morally united Hypostases, as claimed by Nestorius, He could not have united us with the Father, nor we would have been deified.⁸⁶ As such, being the Same and one and two, He could unite the two in Himself, destroying through cross and resurrection the middle wall of hatred. So, concludes the Holy Confessor *“if we recognize a distinction in Christ after the union, and through the entire difference is introduced necessarily, certainly, the portion, whose indicator we say it’s the number; using properly the number to indicate only difference of those that differ after the union, we do not divide (nor*

⁸⁵ Saint Maximus, developing this Christology, concludes that Jesus Christ, being perfect God and perfect man, has what is common and what is particular to those of which He is, through which He appropriates the union with the extremes and the distinction from the extremes. He also had what He had in common with God the Father and what He had in common with humans, as well as what was specific to each of these two natures in Him: the divine, the birth of the Father, the human, the birth without seed and without sin from Holy Theotokos. With those he had common with both extremes had the connection or communion with them; by those who had specific from each He distinguished from both extremes: He distinguished from Father, for He was born from Him, and He distinguished from the people, for He was not designed like them.

⁸⁶ It is worth emphasizing that the unity of the Hypostasis is so strongly achieved, that none of the natures of the Lord can not be seen as sticking out of this unit, or as having something different from what characterizes the hypostasis of the Saviour as a whole. Obviously, the Son of God made man keeps all in the unity of His Hypostasis and all bear His stamp, being made for the benefit of our salvation. One can thus say that in the Savior everything human bears the grace of God and all that is divine is humanly lived, since the natures communicate between them through the hypostasis. Hence we confess that what is divine is kept unchanged, but not separated from what is human, but in the human nature transfigured is shown His deity, without one of the natures to lose some of its power and its identity.

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separate) through number by no means those indicated, but we show preserved the existence of those united"⁸⁷

If the human nature of Christ would be considered self hypostasis, as stated by Nestorios, the Trinity would not be Trinity but fourth, the Saviour adding to His unique hypostasis another hypostasis. Precisely because of this can not be assumed that the human nature of the Lord would be independent from His divine hypostasis. As such, the human nature united with the divine nature in the Person of the Logos is framed in His one hypostasis. So that in His humanity, as in His divine nature, is present the same unique divine hypostasis of the Son of the Father. In this context the unity of the divine Person, Who is in communion of being with the other two distinct Persons, the Father and the Holy Spirit, exceeds the plan of nature's forms of existence scientifically investigated. So any mixing between nature and hypostasis, as claimed by Severus of Antioch, "*makes the union mixing, and the difference, a division. By this he gets to make the Trinity a fourth of people and a minim of divinity and humanity, denying Christ the Saviour with blasphemy, His entire existence. Severus,*⁸⁸ *thus, neither recognizes any unmixed union, even if he pretends to state it, nor the undivided distinction (and inseparable), even if boasts that he supports it. In his folly he turns the union into mixing, like Apollinarianis, and the distinction into alienation, like Nestorios*",⁸⁹ notes Saint Maximus.

Therefore true faith confession envisages the One Christ the Lord or His one hypostasis composed of two natures, ie the divine nature and the human nature.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 203.

⁸⁸ As we know Severus did not admit in the Savior Christ a difference between the two natures, but only between the qualities of the same composed "*nature*". When he was talking about the qualities of the unique "*nature*" of our Saviour Christ it's clear that he made a distinction between His hypostatical qualities, or a difference between the two hypostases which He was supposed to affirm with the two natures in Him. This conclusion, which derives from the idea of unity of being equal with the unity of hypostasis of the human with the divine in our Saviour, is not only pantheistic and cancels the difference between divine and human, but also the reality of people. In such case, if the body and the Word, being a being, form two persons, the Trinity becomes a fourth. Certainly the human nature can constitute with the divine one hypostasis of Christ, only if the natures are distinguished by being, but inseparable, concludes Saint Maximus. (*Idem, Ibidem*, pp. 211-212).

⁸⁹ *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 209.

⁹⁰ St. Maximus states in his confession of faith that: "*The natures remained unmixed and without any division after the union. For this we declare a natural difference in Him – taking into account the parts of which He was composed, because it's not the same the divinity by being with the humanity –, but also a hypostatic identity, for it is obvious that the body is the same by hypostasis with the Word*". So: "*knowing, after the union, the real difference of the natures of which The Saviour Christ was composed of, we do not ignore His identity by hypostasis, if His natures, which naturally differ, do not differ by hypostasis, as some belonging, as of a whole, To Him Who was composed by them*", adds St. Maximus. (*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 212).

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Confessing God in two natures, we know Him at once as God and man, and believing that He is after the union in two natures undivided and unmixed, we proclaim the Same perfect in divinity and the Same perfect in humanity, as a whole into parts, states Saint Maximus. Of course, Christ the Saviour “*is known as a whole after the union in the parts from which was composed, not being only from these, but also in these, and more proper, these*”.⁹¹ Thus, the Logos of the Father updates in His hypostasis the divine nature in order to embrace the finite human nature, thus opening the way to deification.⁹² Thus He joins in His hypostasis the divine nature with the human nature without changing any of them in the other. It is understood that this is done only because the Logos is a person who can embrace human nature without invalidate it. So He lives His hypostasis in both parts as the same or each part is lived inseparable and undivided by that One hypostasis as a whole hypostasis. He is so true God and true man, inseparable from the Father with whom is one and inseparable from us being fully man, but with whom is not confused. This shows that each part of His hypostasis feels the whole in itself and the whole is in every part.⁹³ Although at first sight it is very easy to understand this oikonomia, however remains a mystery how it is possible the whole to be constituted from parts, given that the whole represents the unity of the person and the parts its composition. The

⁹¹ *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 213.

⁹² Through the union with the divine nature, the human nature changes or transforms ontologically or existentially up to its full deification through the Hypostasis of the Son of God and in the Hypostasis of our Savior Jesus Christ, remaining a whole as human nature with its characteristic qualities.

⁹³ An explanation about the two natures from Christ the Saviour hypostasis is given by St. Maximus who comments on more texts from the Gospels. Thus, explaining the words: “*The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee*”, (John 1:43) St. Maximus says that the Lord was not with His humanity there, for with the Godhead never missed from anywhere. He wanted to enter as a man, not as God, though He had a human will. Again, when he says: “*Father, I will that they also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am*” (John 17:24) The Saviour Christ as God is over the place where He is, for He is not in a place as God. But our nature can not be over the place. It thus follows that, as a man, He desires to be and where they are. So he had the same will as a human also. It is said also in another place: “*And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, He said: “I’m thirsty!”. They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.*”. (Matthew 27:34) By which part is it said to have thirsted? If by godhood, then His deity will suffer, lusting drink contrary to His nature. And if by humanity, then He thirsted for that part according to which He did not want to drink what was bad by nature. So he had the same will as a human. In another place again: “*After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.*”. (John 7:1) If the walking is by nature of the body, no of the divinity united with the body by hypostasis, it follows that the Same walked as man in Galilee and did not want to walk in Judea. So he had the same will as a human. And in another place again it is said: “*And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover; that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?*”. (Luke 22:8) If the food of the passover pertained to those under the Law, and the Lord has placed Himself under the Law as a man and not as God, it follows that He wanted to eat the passover as a man, says Saint Maximus.

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parts, of course, are not to be confused, but neither are divided, because of the whole that is in them.⁹⁴ In such case the Saviour Christ as divine-human hypostasis, does not add anything ontologically to the natures, which means that the natures have something which makes possible their union in hypostasis. Because of this, says Saint Maximus, “*we confess the gathering of the natures by the natural union in the hypostasis of the Word and we preach the Blessed Virgin Mother of God in the proper sense and truly, not simply using this word, but contemplating her as the one who conceived Him truly and gave birth to Him ineffably*”.⁹⁵ In other words, we confess that God the Word Himself was born in unspeakable way before all ages from God the Father, and in the very last days was born from the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, above nature. He is God and man, working both the divine and the human: “*the divine, bodily, for He made miracles through His body along with His natural work, and the human, divinely, because He received without the disgust of the flesh, but willingly, the experience of the human passion*”. As such “*His are the death and the grave and the cross and the resurrection and the ascension to heaven, from which descending disembodied did not move changing places He, Who is not fit by those created through any reason – for He is free from any circumscribing –, but He was revealed in the flesh as the One by nature loving people, making Himself fit through true birth from woman, as willed, in those ours*”.⁹⁶

The Divine Logos – “reason” of all things

The divine Logos embraces a multitude of logoi identified with the reason of those created. St. Maximus affirms that the logos of angels preceded their creation:

⁹⁴ The Monophysites affirmed that Christ the Saviour is only “*from these*”, not “*in these*” and even less so “*these*”. The fifth Ecumenical Council received the expression “*from these*” but also kept the expression “*in these*” of the fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. The monophysite opinion clearly led to the conclusion that the natures mingled and exchanged in a pantheist sense. The Holy Parents have guessed this wandering and stressed that the Person of the Logos made man consists of natures which always remain distinct and unchanged. Obviously, these natures hypostatically united in the Word of the Father both bear the seal of the same hypostasis. In this case, the number of natures never completely separates those counted. Even more, When we say about the two natures in the Person of Christ that they are two, we show a link between them.

⁹⁵ *Idem, Ibidem*, p. 214.

⁹⁶ It is understood that the Lord could have not suffer for us, as He could have surpassed the pain in his divinity. But he endured the tortures in all their intensity and for everyone, His human nature having the ability for the pain sensitivity. Above these, the Savior was raised only by the Resurrection, but after He defeated all for us. Therefore says Saint Maximus that “*His are the cross and death*” because all He took with the human nature are His and are experienced by Him in full force. Even more the divine hypostasis felt somehow the sting of the nails from His body. For this, emphasizes the Saint, “*we bring to Him, and as to the Incarnate One, one worship with the Father and with the Holy Spirit*”.

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“For we believe that one reason precedes the creation of angels, a reason for each of the beings and powers that make up the world from above, a reason of men, a reason of all who have received the existence from God, not to name them all individually. Strictly speaking it is the same Reason, who by its infinity and transcendence, is in and for itself unspeakable and incomprehensible, being beyond all creation and distinction and variety that exists and meditates in it, showing itself and multiplying out of goodness in all that is in it, on each measure and summarizing all in itself”.⁹⁷ This embracing is also the return of those embraced to the hypostatic Reason. It is not a pre-existence of the beings themselves in God, for all the visible and invisible were created from non-being, but about the existence of these reasons into the Divine Logos, born of the Father before the ages.⁹⁸ This pre-existence must be understood as an attachment into God the Word of all that exists or will exist. By virtue of this, says St. Maximus, the reasons of things are both pre-existences in God, and realities brought by God to their own achievement in the concrete creation. Although these reasons are both transcendent, and immanent, this does not lead us to the conclusion that they should be created. As a principle of each nature and species, the reasons materialize in the order of their creation.⁹⁹ Through these reasons of creation the Creator maintains a direct relationship with the visible and invisible world, being continuously present into creation.¹⁰⁰ By virtue of this, the creation is dynamic, driven by a natural law whose purpose is the work, as a result of the movement towards God and communion

⁹⁷ *Ambigua 7 d*, *PSB (Church Fathers and Writers)* 80, pp. 80-81.

⁹⁸ Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*; Lund, 1965, pp. 79-80.

⁹⁹ Please note that these reasons or logoi are in connection with the creation, but not created, or they are not part of the created order, in the sense of being related to the material appearance or its achievement. According to Lars Thunberg the reasons of things have three major issues. Firstly, these logoi pre-exist in God. Being fixed in God, all these logoi subsist eternally in God's good counsel (*Ambigua 7 e*, *PSB (Church Fathers and Writers)* 80, p. 83) and pre-exist monadically in God. (Responses to Thalassius, 60, *Philokalia III*, p. 332). Secondly, these logoi are held together by the Logos. Saint Maximus thus supports a double statement about the relationship between the Logos and the logoi: more logoi are a Logos, and a Logos is more logoi. (*Ambigua 7 e*, *PSB (Church Fathers and Writers)* 80, p. 84) Thirdly, these logoi of creation are closely linked to the logoi of the oikonomia of salvation and the incarnation of the Son of God. Thunberg's conclusion regarding the act of creation through the Word is that: “*This implies, in the theology of Saint Maximus, not only a positive evaluation of the creation, but also an inclusion of this one in the universal unifying finality, on the basis of the incarnation of the Logos through grace, who gathers in Himself all the logoi of things*”. (Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, p. 82).

¹⁰⁰ Lars Thunberg, *Omul și cosmosul (Original title – Man and the Cosmos)*, p. 128.

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with Him in love.¹⁰¹ In fact, the presence the Logos in the logoi of creation is always seen as a “kind” of incarnation of the Logos in His creatures.¹⁰² Precisely for this reason St. Maximus indicates three incarnations of the Logos, speaking not only of His coming in the flesh, but also about His incarnation in the logoi of the creatures and in the words of the Scripture.¹⁰³ Obviously, in all these incarnations of the Logos is also present the Holy Spirit, which indicates that the target of the coming in the flesh of the Son of God, holds together not only the logoi from the creation, but also the three aspects: creation, revelation and salvation. In a very special way, the Holy Spirit is present in the Incarnation of the Logos, act that constitutes a real “scop” and “purpose” of the deification of man and of the transfiguration of creation. Of course, the incarnation was preordained by God independently of the bad use of freedom by man.¹⁰⁴

So the Logos of the Father, being creator, appears as “beginning” of the creation; and as Incarnate Logos, He is also “ending” of the creation, when all will be not only “through Him”, but also in Him”. To be “in Christ”, the creation had to be assumed by God, had to be impropriated. Therefore, His incarnation is a prerequisite for the final glorification of man, independently of his sinfulness and corruption.¹⁰⁵ In other words, the Logos would have been incarnated even if man had not sinned. This vision clearly proves that the Logos is the center for unifying the reasons of all things visible and invisible, which maintain their cohesion because of the link between Him and the creation. The salvation achieved by the Logos made man has a cosmic dimension, He not only becoming man for a part of the creation, but for the whole world. Thus, His work has acquired the character of a true cosmic Liturgy.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ It is to be pointed out that everything derives its existence from the logos which is in it and which makes it participate in God. The separation from its logos means for the being nonexistence or returning to the nothingness from which it was made. (John MEYENDORFF, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, p. 102).

¹⁰² Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, p. 81.

¹⁰³ St. Maximus presents these incarnations gradually: “*The Incarnation of the Logos in the logoi of the creatures, when creating the world, when the Spirit of God shrouded the waters; The Incarnation of the Logos in the logoi of the Scripture and of the four Gospels, when the Spirit inspired the prophets; The Incarnation of the Logos in our body, in the man “of our kind”, in this humanity of ours, when the Spirit overshadowed the Blessed Virgin Mary*”. (Alain RIOU, *Le monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur*; Beauchesne Publishing, Paris, 1973, pp. 62-63).

¹⁰⁴ It is to be pointed out that this explanation fits exactly with the idea of St. Maximus about the “*nature*” created as a dynamic process oriented towards an eschatological purpose – Our Savior Jesus Christ, the Logos made man.

¹⁰⁵ John Meyendorff, *Teologia bizantină* (Original title – *Byzantine Theology*), p. 216.

¹⁰⁶ Fr. PhD. Dumitru Popescu, *Știință și teologie (Science and Theology)*, XXI, *Eonul dogmatic (The Dogmatic Aeon)*, Bucharest, 2001, p. 296.

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The Son of God, One of the Trinity, Made Himself Man to gather in Himself the Human Nature and to stop It from Its Movement toward Evil

St. Maximus the Confessor, as we have seen above, stated several times that the Logos of God was made man to gather in Himself the human nature, to stop it from its way towards itself, rather to stop it to tear itself apart and to divide against itself because of the uncertain movement of the will towards anything.¹⁰⁷ Being God by nature, He made Himself, through oikonomia, human for us, by taking the body, which has mental and rational soul, of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.¹⁰⁸ Of course the Son of the Father remains “*The same God by nature and the same man by nature, being the same and really this and that, without missing anything, through the mystery of His perfect incarnation, through which He gathered in His unity by hypostasis His natures, none being canceled because of the union, but keeping its reason and its definition, or the natural particularity unmerged and undissembled in the other after the union*”. So, Our Savior Jesus Christ, being one person in two natures, the union of the natures does not abolish the distinction of those gathered in His hypostasis, but removes their separation and division. The fact that He is both God and man unlesened shows that through the incarnate Word is indicated our being, not the denial of the body’s nature because of the union. Thus, The Word made man keeps after the union in His person, the two natures by nature, the unmixed and unaltered, undivided and inseparable, without any reduction.¹⁰⁹ He is truly called God and man after the two natures, having unity and uniqueness from the

¹⁰⁷ Here’s what St. Maximus the Confessor says: “*By making Himself a real man from the people, for the people, with the people, without sin, the Son of the Father did not change His being as God, He did not lessen Himself to be real man, remaining what He was and what He is and what He will be, that is God by nature*”. (*Epistola 17. Către Iulian Scolasticul, Alexandrinul. Despre dogma Bisericească a Întrupării Domnului (Epistle 17. To Julian the Scholastic, the Alexandrian. On the Church's Dogma of the Incarnation of the Lord), op.cit., pp. 222-223*).

¹⁰⁸ God is always God in Himself, but also is God for us for, from eternity, that is from the present of His eternity (there is no time in Him) decided to create the man. On the other hand, Trinity is the source and supreme model of alterity. Each Trinitarian Person “lives” supremely and absolutely the mystery of the perichoresis of the Trinitarian intersubjectivity. Regarding the human nature it exists forever in the mind of God. So when the Son of God was incarnated, He took not only the body but the whole human nature, body and soul.

¹⁰⁹ We mention here that St. Maximus says that after the union, ie after the incarnation, are preserved those from which our Savior Christ is, without denying any of His natures: neither the divine, by which is always both God for Himself and consubstantial with the Father, nor the human, by which He was made the Same, as a lover of people, man for us and consubstantial with us. He was not changed either as God, What *was* and *is* and *will be* forever, or as human, which was made by the indivisible union with body animated by nature, being the Same God and man. (*Idem, Ibidem, p. 224*).

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union by hypostasis, but not by nature.¹¹⁰ In the Nicene Symbol of Faith we say: “Who, for us men, was incarnate”, the Son of God is always God for Himself, He is not God for us. We also point out that the human nature of our Saviour existed neither virtually nor actually before God, but He exists from eternity *in and for* Himself, independent of anything else. If, after the union of the divine and the human natures, it had been a simple single hypostasis by nature, as the Monophysites claim, deity would have merged with humanity. This would mean that the Son of God did not make Himself man out of love for man and man would have no value to God.¹¹¹ This proves that “*The Son of the Father received through oikonomia, for us, out of kindness, to make Himself composed, the One simple by nature, according to which He remains of a nature and consubstantial with the Father, keeping this one intact after the Incarnation, because deity and humanity are not the same*”, as pointed out by Saint Maximus.¹¹²

Going further on the logic of the Incarnation, St. Maximus sees fit to underline that the Logos of the Father was made man by taking the body united to Him by hypostasis inseparably. The reasons why He never changed through the incarnation His deity are two: He was made man voluntarily assuming the humanity, not by human law but being above it; And He was made man uniting mentally the body with Himself by an act of free thinking, yet efficient, by printing His body formed through mind. As for the mind of the body it began to form at the same time with His body in the Blessed Virgin Mary through the work of the Holy Trinity. By virtue of this our Savior Jesus Christ is known as man made by Himself from the immaculate body of His Mother, from the moment of conception, His humanity being in His power.¹¹³ St. Maximus says that this is fulfilled since “*the portion does not mix, because of the hypostatical uniqueness, nor divides, for the unweakened diversity of the natures from which was constituted, reason for which the distinction of the reason is not abolished because of the union*”.¹¹⁴ Thus it is

¹¹⁰ St. Maximus the Confessor, Epistola 18. *A aceluiași, din partea lui Gheorghe, prealăudatul prefect a Africii, către călugărițele ce s-au despărțit de Sfânta Biserică Universală din Alexandria* (Epistle 18. *Of the same, from George, the praised prefect of Africa, to the nuns who broke from the Universal Holy Church from Alexandria*), op.cit., p. 225.

¹¹¹ This statement reinforces the truth that the hypostasis of Christ the Saviour must be composed of two natures and having two wills and two works corresponding to the two natures, as we shall see in a special chapter of this study.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 225.

¹¹³ We emphasize this aspect to demonstrate that the Son of God Himself made man, knows Himself as God Creator identical with His Self as human, created by His Self as God. That is why He is the Same both God and man, as One that is the Same made Himself this, being “*both this and That, without curtailment*”, as pointed out by Saint Maximus.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 226.

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witnessed that in Christ the Saviour “*the union of the natures is followed, logically, by the union of the hypostasis, as the Holy Fathers teach, and the distinction of natures from which is Christ – unconfusedly and undivided (and indivisible) retained after the union – follows the portion*”.¹¹⁵ It follows that the Son of the Father condescended to be made Himself the seed of His incarnation. He was truly made man, so that through the conception without seed and the incorruptible birth from the Blessed Virgin, to show His deity and renewed nature, not having any reduction through the renewal. This mystery is a voluntary descent of God to us men, springing from His love and goodness. So, embracing us in His hypostasis, us the outcasts, He made our nature not to be subject to dissipation and destruction. The Lord, making Himself thus the cause of His conception and birth from the body of Virgin Mary, overwhelmed the human nature from that moment, sanctifying the corruptible way through which our body is conceived and born, but without abolishing this conception, formation and birth of His body from a woman.¹¹⁶ As such, He Who was begotten of the Father from eternity, the eternal Son of the Most High, made Himself what He was not, remaining unchanged in His nature and deity. Of course He received in His hypostasis what was done, that is our human nature, remaining God, what He was. Thus, he was shown by those through which He divinely worked, keeping unchanged what was done. Then, by the human nature included in His hypostasis, He suffered for our sins in human form, showing Himself unchanged as what was as God, as stated by Saint Maximus the Confessor.¹¹⁷ Thus God the Logos, becoming man from the Blessed Virgin Mary, overwhelmed our human nature with His spiritual power through His

¹¹⁵ The difference of natures after the union shows the natural diversity of those from which is Christ, not only the unlikeliness by quality, but also their identity. As we know Severus of Antioch and his followers accepted some human and divine qualities in the nature become one, by mixing. Moreover they were even willing to say that nature is both bounded and unbounded. St. Maximus however strongly argued that only different natures can have different qualities. Obviously, by this the saint was making a real distinction between divinity and humanity, between God and the created world.

¹¹⁶ After His death and crucifixion, Jesus Christ would fully overwhelm through resurrection the corruption of His body, commented father Stăniloae. Then at the end of time, after the resurrection, He will expand this overwhelming upon our bodies. Immediately after this moment the Spirit of the Lord will maintain in our bodies and in general a move fully spiritualized, along with its perfect thinning and transparency.

¹¹⁷ The explanation of St. Maximus that Jesus Christ worked the divine with His body shows us that He worked all for us through the body un-lacking the natural work. Thus the human were worked divinely by Him, because He did them willfully as a ruler, without receiving the experience of human sufferings by any compulsion. By this statement, Saint Maximus abolished the monophy-site pantheism that did not talk about a real love of people, whereas the values of humanity can not exist only in the relationship between the personal God and man as a person. Thus St. Maximus

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conception, the birth of His body and His descent to us. He has made Himself man without ceasing to be true God. Also coming to our world, where He was actually through creation, the Lord also manifested His divine power as true God, but also His unspeakable love as Father of the ages that will be.¹¹⁸ Obviously, embracing us and keeping us in permanently in His person through the human nature taken from the Blessed Virgin Mary, He redeemed us from the slavery of death and made us gods by grace through the cross and resurrection. In this process, the Savior Jesus Christ, because He is the Creator, “*the One through whom all things were made, and without Him nothing was made*”,¹¹⁹ Who loves the world and gives Himself for its life, neither broke the keys of the Most Pure Virgin nor He melted the human nature which He assumed in His hypostasis, but He loved it, healed it and keeps it permanently in Himself for eternity. Suffering in the flesh our infirmities and enduring cross and death for our salvation, “*His miracles were not without passion, says St. Maximus, and the sufferings were not without miracle, but the former were with passions, and the second were wonderful*”.¹²⁰ Naturally, both united the opposites, being paradoxical, because they were both divine and human, coming from One and the Same God, the Incarnate Word. This kind of work testifies clearly according to St. Maximus, that through both the Son of God made man is the author of those *from* and *what* was, true God and true man. He performed miracles because he was both God and man, the Same, He was suffering as only He suffered absolutely free, but real, because He was man and God.¹²¹

affirms clear and undeniable the faith of the Church in the fullness of human nature of the Saviour, against the Monophysite error of Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople.

¹¹⁸ *Isaiah 9:5: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”*

¹¹⁹ *John 1:2.*

¹²⁰ St. Maximus the Confessor, *Epistola 19. A aceluiași către Pyrhus, preacuviosul presbiter și egumen (Epistle 19. Of the Same Pyrhus, Blessed Presbyter and Abbot), op.cit., p. 233.*

¹²¹ St. Maximus emphasizes masterfully that the Son of God by uniting the two natures, divine and human, unmixed and unchanged and by natural convergence a kept unchanged also the natures of which was composed and kept their powers unreduced, to complete a single deed, whether what was doing was suffered, whether it was a miracle corresponding to the mystery of the divine incarnation, ie the parable of the burning sword, whose edge we know as burning and whose combustion we know as cutting. So in the Saviour Christ met the fire and iron in a hypostasis, none of them coming out of the power by nature for the union with the other, nor having this one after the union dissolved and separated from that of the composed one and subsisting together. In other words, He suffered divinely the human, because He was not subjected to them unwillingly, but willingly, being ruler over them. In fact, all were paradoxical in Him, He willingly accepted the sufferings and felt that He could remove them, but still He lived them throughout their intensity. For example, He suffered hunger, when He could not suffer it, for only thus could strengthen the human nature. Obviously, He suffered those human, but He

To better clarify his Christological thinking St. Maximus strengthens his argument bringing in support of his argument the words of St. Athanasius the Great. This Holy Father said explicitly that the Son of God “*was born of a woman, raising for Himself the image of man from the first figment, by the manifestation of the body without fleshly wills and human thoughts, as renewed image. In Him “was achieved the only wish of the divinity”* through whom, fulfilling the birth of the flesh for us, made Himself beyond us, redeeming the mankind and deifying our nature. It goes without saying that this process the Logos did not precede in His human nature the sinful will or the fleshly mind, as it is in our case, because of the lust that reigns us. Only through the one will of His divinity, He Himself has worked His incarnation with His Father’s willingness and with the cooperation of the Most Holy Spirit, renewing in and through Himself the nature of the birth and working His own conception, from the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, without seed. Seeing this unspeakable rationality of his birth, St. Athanasius said that the Savior, as human, did not have, according to the flesh, through His members, any work contrary to nature, not even according to the soul, any movement of the irrational will, like us, “*because He was born above the law of human nature*”.¹²²

So, the foundation of our faith is that Jesus Christ is One of the Trinity Who was made man for us and for our salvation. In this teaching are covered the confession of both His divinity and of the Holy Trinity. If our Savior Jesus Christ is not the Son of God made man, there is no Trinity, and if there is no Trinity, He is the Son of God. And again, if the Lord Jesus Christ is not true God and true man He could not overcome death in His human nature, so the world could not get the eternal life in the full identity of the self. Precisely for this reason the Son of God, properly and truly, united by hypostasis the body taken from the Most Holy Mother of God, consubstantial with us, animated by rational and understanding soul, to redeem us from the slavery of death and free us from corruption. As hypostasis He did not pre-exist as man, not even in a blink of the eye, but He received both the fact of being and of surviving (το υποστηναι) only God’s Word Himself¹²³,

willfully suffered them with His human nature strengthened by the divine one, but only enough to bear them, not to not feel them, as father Stăniloae emphasizes. (*Ibidem*, p. 234).

¹²² According to St. Maximus, the incarnation is the oikonomia of the single divine will: the Father willing, the Son working and the Holy Spirit working together, no of bodily movement and human thoughts, or the outcome of marriage. Here is what St. Maximus says: “*Cause He did not renew the reason of nature by making Himself God of all – for otherwise it would have been no man with the reason of the flesh without shortcomings and unchanged in all –, but He renewed the way, ie the conception by seed and the birth by perversion (corruption). Thus our Lord and God Jesus Christ was revealed as willing and worker of our salvation by both natures*”. (*Ibidem*, p. 510).

¹²³ St. 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. 104.

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As pointed out categorically by Saint Maximus. But being perfect God, He was made perfect man, neither lacking His existence as God, as He was made man, nor hindered to do what He was not, that is man, because He remained what He was, that is God. So, being *this* He is made *that* also, says Saint Maximus, certifying both of them together – divinity and humanity – through the divine miracles and human passions. Definitely, He does these things according to the divine being He has together with the Father, confessing Him in an unique way and as only Himself knew how to do, uncreated, invisible, uncircumcised unchanged, unaltered, un-suffering, incorruptible, immortal, creator of all. And according to His body and our nature, He testified them created, suffering, circumscribed, capacious and mortal. Consequently, the Son of God is “*One and the same, but not according to the same, for those from which and in which has the existence, consubstantial with God and the Father by divinity, and consubstantial with us by humanity, double in nature or being*”. It goes without saying that in such case, the Virgin Mary did not conceive in her womb and did not bear as usually, Christ the Lord not being two people or one nature. So the Lord Jesus Christ, being mediator between God and men¹²⁴, had to keep the natural unit with those He mediates, being both God made man. This way he honored the humanity forming it as specific unit from the first moment of its conception in the immaculate womb of the Virgin Mother. He did that, so by truly uniting in Himself and through Himself the earthly with the heavenly, to bring the material nature of people, worn by sin, God and the Father saved, reconciled and deified, not by the identity of the being but by the unspeakable dint of the God made man, to make us partakers of the divine nature¹²⁵, as stated by St Apostle Peter. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ, through His Holy body as the first fruits of our harvest, raised the human nature to supreme honor, placing it at the right hand of the Father in the Holy Trinity. This does not mean that the human nature has come in a self human existence or that it forms a special person different from the divine person, but it is hypostatically united with the divine nature in the Hypostasis of the Son of the Most High. Thus the Lord of glory joined our nature that He forms in the infinite uncreated support, giving it a safe and eternal stability. Then from this own human nature bestowed in all mankind a undamaged and unweakened stability, each one of people receiving a concrete existence as an unit different from others.

Therefore, God's Son made man, is known as being both God and man, in reality and not in name only. He is perfect man, not being a man weakened in His existence like other people, but a man in whom is accomplished through His di-

¹²⁴ *I Timothy 2:5.*

¹²⁵ *II Peter 1:4.*

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vine hypostasis, all human potencies.¹²⁶ He remained one and the same *before* and

¹²⁶ The teaching of St. Maximus contradicts the Monophysitism which claimed that keeping the Son of God as real God would prevent Him to become man and his existence as a real man would prevent Him from being God. Underlying this teaching Saint Maximus puts the teachings about creation and about man as the image of God. So if God created man and created him in His image, surely He loves him so much that He can unite with Him, without cancelling him as creature and as His image, says father Stăniloae. The image is, thus, so loved by God Who created it on His image, that the Creator can go up to full union with him, keeping it evidently as image and as His creature. Of course, this implies without saying that even in the relationship of the Creator with his creature is a certain union with it. Naturally, the creature can not be maintained unless maintained by the Creator, so unless He loves it, especially because it bears His image. The question arises without forbiddance: Why would not then the Creator lead the union with the creature and with His image to the maximum degree without destroying it? One could say that, loving His created image, God loves Himself in a certain sense as its model, that is of the image. He therefore wants to perfect His image, taking it closer to Him. He has Himself, so to speak, in His image, or a projection of His. It is proof and a sign of His power and majesty. Another question one might ask is: Why would not He make a more accomplished mirror of His presence? And again: Why would not He seek to make it as to see himself as completely as possible in it, making himself the personal bearer of human nature and deifying it? This is precisely the mystery of His incarnation and of the deification of man, being a work that agrees and totally applies to the creation. On the other hand, if God and man had remained only one and another, no matter how advanced they would have been in the partnership of the dialogue between them, God would not have gone all the way in celebrating His human face. Also, His dialogue with man would have always remained outside man, God behaving with His loved image as with a foreigner and not as a son. At the same time, even more seriously, man would have not seen God becoming his self, and the Absolute would not have climbed up to the Self. As for God, He would not have succeeded to embrace with all His love His created humanity and would not have raised it up to the highest step of His absolute Person. Finally, if God had not made Himself man like us, identifying man with God by God would have been equal to its contemptuous destruction. And His remaining as a person separate from man would have been disastrous because it would have set a limit to His love for man. Therefore concludes Father Stăniloae, the Son of God incarnated, remains one of the three hypostases of the Holy Trinity, neither increased nor decreased. As one of the three hypostases of the Holy Trinity, He lives at the same time those human, without losing anything from His fullness, or adding something to it, without lowering from His height as hypostasis of the Holy Trinity. Lowering covers only receiving humanity in His hypostasis without the Trinity to add something to Itself and without anything to shrink. Thus one of the Trinity was made man for us, uniting the divine nature with the human nature one, He raised the latter at the highest level beyond which would no longer be human nature. Besides, the Son of God, living those human at the highest level, He experienced them as some potencies of His deity in human form, as emphasized by Father Stăniloae. In this context the thinking of the Scythian monks was shown fully comprehensive and Orthodox. Saying that One of the Trinity suffered in body, they confessed that even sufferings are given as possibilities in human nature, as a means of lifting from lower pleasures, as a renewal of potencies located in God, but that can not be renewed but within the created human nature or through it, as potencies implemented on the created level, where they are activated as human powers corresponding to divine potencies. (St. 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. 105, notes 109-110).

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after the body, His incarnation bringing neither any addition to the Holy Trinity nor any decrease to It. Then the same God and man suffered in body for us, being and remaining forever the Same unimpassioned by divinity, so that our salvation is accomplished by His death as a man. So the Son, only begotten of God, Having the glory and the divine identity of His being – one with the Father and the Holy Spirit – remained un-decreased by being.¹²⁷ By virtue of this, says Saint Maximus, our Church confesses, in agreement with our saint teachers, that there are two natures unrelated according to being which gathered in a union unspeakable, remaining, naturally, unmixed and unchanged after union as confessed by the Fathers of Chalcedon. When we say that the natures remained unmixed does not mean that we introduce some kind of division between them, but we believe that the difference remains unchanged. On the other hand, the distinction is not the same with the division, highlights Saint Maximus, because “*the distinction is the reason after which we distinguished something and it shows how something looks like, ie the body is by nature and being what it is, and God the Word is by nature and being what He is*”. From this point of view, “*the division is full cutting of the supports and putting them to subsist as parts of their own and separated from one another*”. So, if after the union the Word did not change into human nature and the human nature did not come out of the definition by nature, but each of them remained by being what they are by nature, although both nature are united hypostatically, it is right to confess that the distinction of natures which joined together are preserved also after the union.

Saint Maximus, giving strength to his Christological teaching confesses that “*neither the deity was changed into flesh nor the body translated in the godhood*”. This statement shows that in the decision of Chalcedon, that the natures are “*unmixed*”, does not mean that they remain external to each other, but cross each other perihoretically. “*Unmixed*” means in this context that none of them changes from what they are to become something else or one nature. In such case, in the hypostatic union the human nature is penetrated by the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Son of God, without being transformed or swallowed up by this, as claimed by the Monophysites and the divine nature does not change into human nature. A similarity of this relationship may be found in the relation between body and soul, according to St. Maximus and the other Fathers of the Church. The body being full of soul and the soul being everywhere in the body they print each other. From this hypostatic union it appears that the deeds of Jesus Christ are full of divine power even though they are made through the human body. Also, this union

¹²⁷ St. 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. 106.

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shows us that those gathered together, divine and human nature, both concur in one Person, uniting those divided together. So as soon as the reasons and the distinction of natures are kept, it means that each nature from the Person of our Lord and God Jesus Christ remains after the union owned by nature, without confusing or separating from one another. This union shows us that both natures are on the one hand a unique hypostasis of the Son, and on the other that they are different and undivided.¹²⁸

But the two natures of Christ the Saviour, united in one hypostasis, have two wills and two works corresponding to the two natures. This means that Christ the Savior was established in a way that the human will is printed divinely in the culminating union with the deity. Naturally, says St. Maximus it can not be conceived that through the union of natures in the hypostasis of the Logos, each of those lacking this would have been naturally harmonized, even if we admit through the thought that the natures gathered inseparably in a nature that resulted from them. Manhood is not contrary to God by nature, but neither is identical to the deity itself as a source of infinite existence nor the need to stay joined to God, but it's made to want an union more and more intimate with God, says St. Maximus.¹²⁹

So in His work of redemption of the human race, "*the Word was impressed by the human*", as says St. Maximus. This expression shows that in the the Savior Christ is fulfilled the eternal plan of God for the salvation of the world. When the Holy Spirit descended upon the Most Pure Virgin, "*through assumption out of mercy for the human nature Him Who is the head of the whole body and appropriated as Doctor the diseases of the suffering, to free us from them, as God Who was incarnate for us, taking them from us and repealing them with the power of His assumed body*". The reason for this redemptive act is double: "*one is the rebuking, the other dishonesty. The first characterizes our nature, the second one alters it. He got the first as human, for us, willing it existentially, giving evidence about the nature and removing our doom, the second one He took oikonomically*

¹²⁸ St. Maximus indicates through this teaching, following the Scythian monks and Leontius of Byzantium, that the natures of Jesus Christ are in no case two persons nor joined by the acquisition of one by the other, but they are a composed and consistent reality at the same time.

¹²⁹ By making a comparison with the human nature St. Maximus says that our will is simple and sinful because of its slipping here and there, though does not alter the nature, but deviates the movement, or, more properly speaking, does it otherwise. But although it makes many contrary to reason, the being falls not from its innate reasoning. So it's not one the human in us and another one in Christ the Savior, neither the will another by rationality of the nature, although He wills differently and above us. Of course, when man was no longer capable to respond in any way on God's help for the union with him, humanity was received into the divine Hypostasis of the Son, moment that corresponds to the will of God to become man and to unite humanity with the divine nature in His hypostasis.

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(salvific) as a lover of people showing Himself in us and in our unhealed way, as, consuming all that is ours as wax by the fire, or the steam of the earth by the Sun, to transmit to us those His and make us still here unimpassioned and incorruptible according to the promise".¹³⁰ As we see Saint shows that the birth from the Blessed Virgin and bearing the sufferings characterizes on the one hand the weakness of our nature, and on the other they show our state of disgrace. So the impotence of the human nature with which the Son of God united hypostatically was healed by incurring the human birth and by enduring all shame and dishonor. This passion of dishonesty was melted by the Lord through the deification of human nature, making us nepătimitori through His human birth and death on the cross. Specifically, he healed our nature of diseases and passions, as bad habits from the right path of the nature and from its slipping to dissipation. From the first He healed us, and from the second He cleansed us, enabling us that through faith and love to receive the crown of His glory and to receive the tiara of communion with Him by grace. So, by His grace we can have in ourselves the only begotten of the Father in the Holy Spirit, sharing also to others those divine through an outpouring of wisdom full of endless gifts, as a communication of meaning.

Therefore, the union of the two natures in the hypostasis of the Logos is penetrated by the divine grace and as deified as is animated the body by the soul.¹³¹ Speaking against the blasphemies of Nestorius, St. Cyril of Alexandria said: "*Seeing the mystery of Christ, the rationale of the union does not ignore the distinction, but removes the division; does not confuse or mix the natures, but the Word of God sharing the flesh and blood, meditates Himself, understands Himself and still calls Himself the same Son*". The argument is that: "*the body is another by His nature than the Word born from God the Father and another by the flesh, the*

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 459.

¹³¹ It is clear that the soul can not manifest on earth without body, being done for the body and along with the body, for the matter the soul makes a body uniquely accommodated to it. While the divine Hypostasis can exist without the human nature. Furthermore the human nature is not made for the divine Hypostasis to manifest through it, although it is the means by which it manifests. As concerning the movements of matter, they can be used by the movements of the soul that impress the matter, making them body movements of a specific soul. In such case, says father Stăniloae, the movements of the human nature – thinking, feeling, speaking – are used by the divine Logos as a means of manifestation of divine acts, that rises them to this ministry, without cancelling them as movements of the human nature, as pointed out by father Stăniloae. So into the soul are given all potential valences that can branch out into various works which correspond to body movements and with which blend the movements of the soul. Similarly, in the unity of the divine nature are unitary given all the valences of soul and body movements, all creation composition originating in the unity of the divine nature. (St. 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. 108, note 113).

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Only-Begotten. But knowing this does not mean separating the natures after the union". In conclusion, "to prove that there is no injure at all to the rationale of those joined through union, St. Cyril also shows that one does not mix with the other in that both are united by hypostasis, but rather they remain in what is each of them by being". Consequently, the natures "neither mix with each other, by the fact that they constitute a hypostasis of the Son, nor divide (split) between them in that they are and remain and meditate one and the other (obviously by being) after the union".¹³² This shows that each of the natures remains with the property and its natural distinction, so that the Logos of the Father is God, by nature, not body, although He made His own body oikonomically, and the body is not God by nature, although it became of the Word after the union. There is, of course, a difference between things that are different and where there exists a difference, there are those which differ. This leads to the conclusion that in Christ the Savior it is a diversity by being of those from which He is which produces the distinction of natures, as cause, and that the distinction indicates, in its quality as caused, the natural diversity of the united as its cause. So in the hypostasis of the Saviour the natures involve each other and what is said about one is necessarily required to be confessed about the other.¹³³ Precisely for this reason, believes St. Maximus, the two natures must be told, not to say only the simple distinction, for it is easier and truer to be shown the distinction of things by saying them, instead of confessing only by word that things are different.

¹³² St. 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)*, pp. 109-110.

¹³³ At Chalcedon was formulated the teaching that the Savior Christ is "in two natures", following that at the Fifth Ecumenical Council to be added that He is "from two natures", which meant a step towards reconciliation with the Monophysites. St. Maximus uses this expression against the Monophysites that admitted that there is a difference between the human nature and the divine nature in Jesus Christ, but would not admit to infer from this that this distinction implies the existence of two natures. So it was understood that if they stated the distinction in Christ the Savior, they would confess the natures that hold the distinction.