A Model of Jesus Christ's Two Wills in View of Theology Proper and Anthropology

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INTRODUCTION

Among the many sticky questions about the Incarnation, the question of Jesus' two wills can seem nitpicky and arcane to most Christians. The question seems to be one for the theologians, those who care to parse details that are practically irrelevant to daily life, much like debating how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Further cause to dismiss consideration is the shadow of political intrigues and failed ecumenical strategies that surrounded the ancient discussion of Christ's wills in 680-81. Nevertheless, few questions in early theology received such focused attention as this one when the Sixth Ecumenical Council weighed arguments and rendered a verdict at Constantinople in 681. Brilliant theologians of that time understood the great importance to theology that Jesus possesses two wills, one divine and one human, since he is truly God and truly human. All branches of Christianity have embraced this doctrine as important and orthodox theology.

Questions related to the topic of Jesus' two wills are important for under-standing the incarnation and salvation that Jesus accomplished. First, is Jesus fully human like we are? Possession of a created human will seems necessary for true human life, including temptation and obedience for righteousness as a man. This leads to a second question: Was Jesus able to sin when he was tempted? A quick answer is to say no; his divine will overruled his human will so that he could not sin. If that is right, then does Jesus possess a real human will with the capacity of free choice? Further, do free choice and temptation entail the ability to sin? It seems that we must affirm that Jesus possesses a true human will since God cannot be tempted (Jas 1:13) and Jesus was truly tempted (Heb 4:15). Accordingly, if Jesus truly possesses a human will, then could he disagree with himself (his divine will)?

Against the prospect of a conflict in one person with two wills, some theologians (ancient and contemporary) have sought to ground the unity of the incarnation in a single will of the Son of God. If right, then the ancient one-will view (Monothelitism) means the will is part of being a person, not as a capacity of one's nature. The definition of the will as personal or natural, more than the number of wills in Christ, is the real issue of disagreement. The label of "Monothelitism" may be a misnomer, since the statements of "one will in Christ" often meant a unity of his human will with his divine will.[1] Thus, in Monothelitism, the Son of God is one person, exercising his one will for all his divine actions and his human actions (Jesus of Nazareth). This formulation of the one-will view leads to another question about the Trinity: since the Son of God possesses a will because he is a person, then so do the Father and the Holy Spirit. If they are persons with distinct wills, then could they choose against each other? To preserve the unity of the incarnation by locating the will in the person, Monothelitism entails the problem of conflict in the triune God.

Opposite to Monothelitism, I will argue that the two-wills model (Dyo-thelitism) is more accurate to the biblical and theological evidence for the incarnation, and the model elucidates a consistent meaning of the will for God and for human beings. I see two reasons for considering the topic of Jesus' two wills in connection with God and human beings. First, the incar-nation provides the clearest revelation of divine and human existence, so whatever clarity or obscurity we have about Jesus is magnified in our thinking about God and humanity. Second, whatever we think about Jesus' two wills,

everyone agrees that we are talking about a divine will and a human will, so we should consider what these wills are. The concept of the will is not clearly revealed in the Bible, and science has not yet discerned the will empirically (actually, some neuroscientists deny the capacity for free choice as a trick of the human mind[2]). When we understand what the will may be for God and human beings, we can apply that to Jesus and see how this theological model works. For these reasons, I will proceed by considering the faculty of will that God possesses, what the will is for human beings, and then apply these conclusions to a model of Jesus' two wills. In preparation, some definitions, biblical theology, and historical theology can set the context of the discussion of Jesus' two wills.

Definitions

I offer working definitions for three terms that are relevant in the discussion: person, nature, and will. First, the term *person* used throughout refers to someone, an agent who relates with other persons with unique existence as some sort of natural kind (whether God, angel, or human). A person possesses unique identity and self-consciousness as the subject of one's actions (including mental, emotional, and volitional processes). A person exercises freedom of choice, to act or not to act. Donald Fairbairn helpfully observes that the patristic idea of personhood developed "to see a person as an active subject who *does* things and *to whom things happen.*"[3] The idea of person answers the question of *who* as an identity, a distinguishable self that is more than merely a thing. This definition of person has more psychological depth than ancient and pre-modern definitions.[4] I think the developments of psychology and philosophy are rightly reflected in a contemporary definition of person that refers to the same reality intended by patristic theology.

The meaning of *person* is best applied to God and human beings in an analogical way (instead of univocal or equivocal), so that the likenesses and differences are acknowledged. The analogy of divine and human personhood must be close enough for a divine person to personalize the human existence that he creates to live in. The Son of God is a divine person who also lives as a true human person, since he is a person living in a human nature that is uniquely his own.[5] All persons possess a nature (or, essence) as their mode of existence. In the case of the incarnation, God the Son is one person who

possesses two natures, having added a human nature while continuing to possess his divine nature (hypostatic union of each nature to the person who is owner).

Second, the term *nature* refers to *what* a person possesses as a particular mode of existence, what kind of a thing it is (also true for creatures that are not persons, such as animals and insects). A *nature* is all the properties (or, substances) that are necessary for membership in a natural kind (for example, one must possess a human body and soul to count as a human being). Normally, a single person instantiates a single nature, as in "Tim is a human being, since Tim possesses a human nature." Uniquely, the three of the Trinity co-possess one nature (the divine essence, or, all the properties necessary for being God) so that these divine persons are numerically just one God. Also uniquely, one of the Trinity assumed a second mode of existence, a human nature, and so the Son of God lives a dual life as God and as a man simultaneously. As a Dyothelite model, I will follow the definition of nature as the collection of properties that includes the will (by contrast to Monothelitism that denied this, claiming the will is a personal property, *hypostatic will*).

Third, the term *will* as I intend it refers both to the desires (or, inclinations) of attraction to particular actions, states of affairs, or objects, and the capacity to deliberate and select a desire and move the nature in action (i.e., choice). The capacity of agent causation is the person's operation of a nature's properties by means of the will. The will is embedded in the nature, just as with the intellect, as a spiritual organ (or, capacity) for the person to perceive desires and choose among them. As a patristic witness, Maximus quotes Clement of Alexandria: "The natural will is 'the power that longs for what is natural' and contains all the properties that are essentially attached to the nature."[6] The process of willing (or, deciding) involves one's desires interrelated with the intellect and emotion, so that, for example, fear, anger, or perceived goods and evils can be strong influences on how a person wills. Hovorun observes that while the Greek tradition had been to link volition as an aspect of intellect, Christian theologians began distinguishing the will and mind for God in the fourth century (countering Arius).[7]

Desires of the will are related to beliefs, what is known to be good and evil, so some correlation to the mind (or, intellect) is operative for the will. Scholastic theologians disagreed about the relation of the intellect and the

will: Thomists thought the intellect informed the will concerning the good to be desired; Scotists countered that the desires led the intellect in perception of the good.[8] The process of willing is mysterious. Freedom of choice, agency, intention, inclination, wish, deliberation, judging, consideration, inquiry, self-determination, and desire are all facets of what persons do through the will of a rational nature.[9] The will is a way to label the depths of decision-making and the many processes related to agent causation.

By analogy, the will is like the steering wheel for a car. Just as a driver "feels" the road and enacts choices for the direction of the car by means of the steering wheel, so also a person "feels" desires and enacts choices by means of the will in coordination with particular beliefs. The distorting effect of sin on both desires and beliefs (intellect) hinders the ability of a creature that is sundered from God to know and choose the good in harmony with God. Our understanding of the will has limitations because of the dysfunction we experience in willing.

Whatever the will is, damaged volition is central to the problem of humanity; renewed willing is central to the solution (salvation).[10] Since the human will is ravaged by sin, then the Son of God must have taken up a human will to restore human nature for salvation. For this reason, ancient proponents of Dyothelitism repeated the axiom stated famously by Gregory of Nazianzus: "That which has not been assumed has not been healed; but that which is united to God is also being saved."[11] Misuse of the will separated Adam and Eve from God; renewal of the will in repentance and faith is the Christian's reconciliation with God. Perhaps it is best to recognize that we can only have a faint understanding of volition and mind as distinct operations that we use to understand the very operations in abstract.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE WILL

The OT and NT use a variety of terms to present the concepts related to the will for God, angels, and human beings. Biblical writers present the parallel of God's will (expressed in purposes, choices, and desires) to creaturely freedom of choice and moral responsibility. God holds people accountable for choices that are nonetheless planned, shaped, and rewarded or punished by God (e.g., Gen 50:20). God repeatedly tolerates the resistance of creatures who violate his commands. God does not need to overrule creaturely willing

that opposes him; mysteriously God can uphold his creatures' freedom and fulfill his own purposes by means of creaturely choices. "God's will or desire is perfect, but it is large enough to incorporate and circumvent human will where necessary (Acts 2:23)."[12]

Clear in Scripture is the reality of the will in connection with agency, desires, intellect, and emotion (often collected as the *heart*, the inner being of a person, e.g., Mark 7:21-22). Cognition and volition are closely related and overlapped in biblical theology, philosophy, and colloquial usage because *will* has two senses of (1) personal causal action or decision and (2) desire, intention, or inclination.[13] Unclear is evidence that shows if the will is a natural property or personal property, as in the dispute over Monothelitism. Regarding the main NT terms for volition, Schrenk observes the development of theological formulation beyond Scripture's pragmatic focus on outcomes of the process of willing:

> The psychological presuppositions [in the Monothelite controversy] are that the *nous* [mind] is active in the *thelema* [will] and that what is willed is then expressed in words and acts… The NT itself has no interest in this type of psychology, which is Greek in source. The Monothelite and Dyothelite discussion always regards *thelema* as an organ of volition, whereas in the NT *thelema* is what is willed, and the whole emphasis falls on the content of volition.[14]

The difference noted by Schrenk between the developing theology of volition and the NT presentation of the will should not trouble us. As with many questions that develop as implications from the Bible, Scripture holds back from providing evidence that we might want to find there, requiring the theological task. An ancient debate was necessary to expand upon the biblical starting points that are given. Scripture reveals that God chooses in some way similar to humans, with enough correspondence that we can imagine models of the will in God and the will(s) in Jesus Christ. Based on this analogy, theology must systematically work with Scripture and experience to formulate a model of the will. Scripture informs the model, and the model elucidates the interpretation of Scripture, as in the question of Jesus' will(s) when he prays to God the Father in Gethsemane. Is Jesus' "not my will" his human will or his divine will? Is the "your will be done" the Father's will alone, or is it the identical divine will possessed by the Son and the Spirit?

We turn to theological categories to test and explore the Dyothelite model of the will as a natural property. The theology of two wills in Jesus did not come easily. As in the case of some other important topics, disputes led to clarity and the establishment of orthodoxy. Strangely, the disputes in this case did not originate with the church, but with the Byzantine Emperors.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY OF THE WILL

Serious controversy about Dyothelitism and Monothelitism developed throughout the seventh century. The debate culminated in the Sixth Ecumenical Council that met at Constantinople for nearly a year 680-81. This council was the conclusion to a five-decade political project to preserve the Roman Empire through inventing an ecumenical theology of unified actions and will of Jesus Christ.[15] The project proved to be a failure for the Empire, but the debate provided for clarification about Jesus and the will, primarily through the work of Maximus the Confessor.

Emperor Heraclius (reigned 610-41) suffered Visigoth conquest of Spain in the West, and Persian and Arab conquests encroaching in the East, to which losses he responded by an ecumenical theology for imperial solidarity.[16] The fifth column against Heraclius in the East was the Monophysite population of Christians that had been condemned by the Council of Chalcedon (451) as heretics in line with Eutychianism (two natures before the union, one nature after the union). These non-Chalcedonian Christians in Armenia and Syria welcomed Persian conquest as the "…passing of the Chalcedonian night" since they had been oppressed by Byzantine Chalcedonian orthodoxy.[17] Heraclius and Cyrus of Alexandria managed a compromise in 633 to regain the allegiance of Egyptian Monophysites: there are two natures in Christ but only one mode of activity (*monenergism*).[18] This new term for the unified activity of Jesus (*energeia*) was developed further in the idea of one mode of willing (Monothelitism). Heraclius issued the *Ecthesis* in 638 (written by Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople) as an imperial document ratified by five patriarchs, the main point being to forbid theological discussion about the numbers of activity in Christ. The *Ecthesis* also shifted advocacy for monenergism to assert that there was a single will in Christ (and denounced two wills as going beyond even Nestorianism).[19] Pyrrhus, the patriarch of Constantinople (638-41, 654) further asserted Monothelitism in 641 through

writing an encyclical and a letter of defense to Pope John IV.[20]

Reactions that formed Dyothelite and Monothelite arguments seemed to have followed different concerns in Christology and soteriology. Monothelites resisted the idea of two wills since they assumed a human will in Christ would mean a will that could be contrary to God and liable to sin, hence a conflict.[21] Maximus responded that only a sinful will was opposed to God, so Jesus' human will should be affirmed as moved and shaped by the divine will (what he termed deification by union with God).[22] Despite the clear assertions of Monothelites that Jesus exercised a single will only, what this meant for some proponents was a complete submission of the human will to the divine will, so that the "one will in Christ" was his divine will unopposed by conflict from his human will. For example, Galot explains the troublesome statement of Pope Honorius (for which the Pope was anathematized by the Sixth Council): "We confess one single will in our Lord Jesus Christ," by saying, "What [Honorius] meant by this was that Christ's human will is one through its conformity with the divine will which it has never contradicted."[23] Perhaps some Monothelites were misunderstood when they actually affirmed a human will in Christ in union with his divine will, but the dislocation of the will from the nature to be a personal property follows the Apollinarian heresy and seems a bad fit for theology proper. For Christology, even the most modest formulation that told a divine will overriding of the human will in Christ seemed to Dyothelites as going too far and diminishing the human obedience of Jesus, so the debating continued.

The imperial mandate of Monothelitism as orthodoxy did not achieve the political gains desired for Heraclius (d. 641) or his successors. Emperor Constans II issued a ban on all discussion of Christ's wills in 648 (the *Typos*), but this only provoked greater opposition in the West when Pope Martin I convened the Lateran synod at Rome to condemn the *Typos* and Monothelitism in 649.[24] The imperial reaction to the leaders of the Lateran synod was to arrest Martin and Maximus for treason, and then punish both with exile after making them to stand trial in Constantinople in 653. Maximus was recalled from exile and tried a second time in 661 to be condemned for upholding Dyothelitism, suffering the removal of his right hand and his tongue (to prevent writing or teaching the anti-imperial doctrine), and then he was returned to exile where he died that same year (at age 81).[25] Despite the attempt to silence Maximus (and Martin), he was vindicated after his

death in exile as having articulated the more accurate theology.

Political expedience that earlier launched Monothelitism became less attractive when the plan failed, so Emperor Constantine IV (668-85) now sought union with Rome in the West by calling the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680 to resolve the question of the will(s) in Jesus Christ. Having endured imperial intrusion into matters of doctrine, church leaders at the council declared the orthodoxy that had been articulated chiefly by Maximus the Confessor. In an odd turn of history, this doctrine "became a pillar of union rather than a source of division between churches of East and West."[26]

The two parties at the Sixth Council located the will differently within human and divine existence. Monothelites argued that the will is a capacity of the person, not the nature, so one person means one will. To say there are two wills in Jesus Christ means there are two persons (the heresy of Nestorianism). A representative statement is Macarius of Antioch: "I confess… one hypostatic [personal] will in our Lord Jesus Christ."[27] Opposite the one-will view, Dyothelites located the will as a property (or, capacity) of the nature, which corresponds to two wills in Jesus Christ and one will in the Trinity (as in the definition of the will given above). Writing to the Sixth Council from Rome, Pope Agatho charged that the claim of a single *personal* will in Christ implied three *personal* wills in the Trinity.[28] Thus the proponents for both positions had to reach beyond the limited array of biblical passages that speak on the will(s) of Jesus to consider the theological connections to theology proper and anthropology.

THEOLOGY PROPER AND THE WILL

The Sixth Council found a major weakness of Monothelitism in the inability of the model to work in the case of the triune God, whereas the Dyothelite model worked better for the Trinity. If the Dyothelite model is true, then we should be able to demonstrate a consistent explanation of volition in God as a property of the divine nature, a single will of the three persons.

God is a person who makes choices as a unified agent, being just one God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit enjoy total harmony and absence of conflict that might be supposed were they to possess distinct wills (as in Monothelitism). According to Dyothelitism, the unity of the three persons is expressive of the single divine will exercised by three agents. If the will is a property

of God's nature (a natural will), then we can imagine that God's desires are the set of known goods held in common by all three triune persons. This set of desires is coordinate with God's unified knowledge that is also held in common as the single divine nature. In this sense, the desires of the Father are identical to the desires of the Son and the Spirit. Each person knows and desires the same goods that the other two persons know and desire (just as all three are omniscient, etc.). None can choose independently of the other two, since the will of one person is also the will of all three.

By analogy, divine properties are like a single bank account held in common by three owners. Given that the entire amount of funds is co-possessed by three owners, no person may spend from the account independently, since the money does not belong to one alone. All three owners must co-sign for any expenditure. Similarly, for God, no one or two persons may form any choice apart from the full agreement of all three agents. For God and the will as a property of the their nature, like a bank account held in common by three agents, the deep unity of the triune persons comes from their common will. Thus, the meaning of the will as a natural property co-possessed by the triune persons is consistent with the unity of God. What then of their genuine agent causation as distinct persons?

The three persons possess the same will, and each personally exercises choice in relation to one another (*ad intra*, the immanent trinity). The importance of distinctions in the choices of three triune persons is immense; as the basis of their relationships and actions, choices may be the very ground of trinitarian diversity of persons (otherwise, God's reality would be a lonely and loveless Unitarian existence). While the Monothelites sought to distinguish trinitarian willing as distinct wills of each person, Dyothelitism views the single natural will of three agents as a co-possession for diverse agent causation. The *will* is of the nature; will*ing* is activity of the persons. For example, the Father shows distinction as a personal agent by choosing to send the Holy Spirit (e.g., Matt 10:40; Luke 11:13) and the Son on missions for salvation (thirty-nine times Jesus speaks of having been *sent*). The repeated statement that the Father loves the Son also entails distinct personal exercise of will in relationship (e.g., John 3:35). The Son is distinct as an active, choosing agent by repeated obedience to his Father's commands as the Word sent into the world, which is expressive of his love for his Father (John 14:31). The Son also freely chooses with the Father to send the Holy

Spirit to indwell individual Christians (two persons willing jointly in relation to the third person's willing action—John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). The Spirit is voluntarily responsive to the Son's authority for what the Spirit reveals to Christians, and he freely chooses to honor the Son through the church, per the Son's authority (John 16:13-14). Thus, the distinct volition of the triune persons in eternal relationship is consistent with the meaning of will as agent causation and desires. Possessing the same desires, triune persons always will distinctly and conjointly with one another.

The three of the Godhead also exercise choice distinctly from each other by the different actions they will in relation to creatures (*ad extra*, God's works in creation). The triune persons know and desire the same goods, so they may choose those same goods, fulfilling distinct aspects in united action (as in a team). For example, the NT frequently identifies divine election and the plan of salvation as exercise of will by the Father (Eph 1:11, 14, 15; 1 Pet 1:1-2). The Father's agency of will shows in the emphasis on his responsiveness to prayer, his readiness to reward acts of obedience and mercy, and his willingness to grant forgiveness, the Spirit, and other goods to people who ask him (e.g., Luke 11:2-13). The Spirit engulfs the Son in his human life so that he can be the Messiah, and renews the Messiah's dead body in resurrection (Rom 8:11). The Spirit is also noted as distributing ministries in the church according to his will (1 Cor 12:11). Many choices of the Spirit are implied in acts of healing, exorcism, prophecy, and other works of God within creation that are attributed to the Spirit as the agent of them all (e.g., Matt 12:28; 2 Pet 1:21).

There is some ambiguity about the Son's acts of will since the incarnation involves him in two kinds of willing as God (divine) and as a man. The Son reveals this by speaking as a man at times with reference to both wills, so the interpretation of Jesus' statements about willing are not equally clear to all interpreters (hence the ancient dispute: a single hypostatic will, or two natural wills? his divine will or his human will?). What is clear is that the Son exercises personal divine volition to become a man and give himself and the Spirit for the benefit of those he saves (e.g., Mark 10:45; John 15:26). Therefore, the three persons possess and exercise a single will held in common, a property of their single divine nature, to express their unique identities through continuing works in the creation they brought forth. The Dyothelite model of the will as a natural property of agent causation and

desires is a satisfactory explanation for the will in God.

While consistency of definitions when applied to God and people is always desirable, we must acknowledge that the reality of the will for God may be analogically compared to the reality of the will for human beings. For a difference, the triune persons co-possess a single will; human persons do not. No matter how closely human beings might agree on shared desires and choices, the decisions remain individually distinguishable movements of the separable wills of the persons involved. For similarity, the Bible uses the same terms for human willing and divine willing. The use of common terms is so close that statements by Jesus are ambiguous as to what sort of willing he refers to by saying, "I am willing; be cleansed" (Matt 8:3 NASB). Is this willing as God or as man? As with most affirmations about the Trinity, we end up with a paradoxical statement: each triune person possesses the same will as the other two persons; each person distinctly chooses by personal and distinct exercise of will in genuine agent causation.

By comparison, were volition for God to be a personal property apart from the divine nature (as in Monothelitism), discord among the triune persons seems unavoidable. Distinct wills entail distinct desires. For example, the Son possesses desires that the Spirit does not, nor the Father. What would prevent three agents with different desires from willing against each other? For this reason, the ancient Dyothelites saw polytheism as an implication of Monothelitism. Three wills in God would be three agents in potential opposition.

In conclusion, the Dyothelite model of the will as a natural property fits with theology proper. The unity of the triune God is confirmed by the single capacity to will that is enjoyed alike by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are persons with authentic agent causation and unique identity, but without any possibility of discord. If the Dyothelite model is right, then we should find consistency between the will in God and the will of human beings.

Anthropology and the Will

Dyothelite arguments against Monothelitism insisted that a true human will is necessary for the Son of God to accomplish salvation; thus, the meaning of the human will bears investigation in terms of this model. We will consider the human will in several modes described by Scripture and explained according to the meaning of the will as a property of the nature. Hovorun

interprets Maximus' grasp of this claim: "[N]obody is taught to will, but by nature knows how to will. In this sense, willing is a feature of nature, because men employ the properties of nature without being taught."[29]

By comparison, the Monothelite model of the will as a personal property can also make sense of the human will.[30] Were anthropology the only focus for explaining human willing, I do not think either model has an edge from Scripture, philosophy, or psychology. The theological concept of the will in anthropology depends on theology proper and Christology. Two Monothelite approaches may be considered. First, it is possible to imagine that the will in God is a property of the nature, and that for humanity the will is a personal property. This move seems unlikely because of the incarnation in which a personal will would have to be added to the eternal person, the Son of God, to function as a human being equipped with a human will. Second, perhaps the personal will of the Son is also used for his human nature. This also seems unlikely because only a created will is subject to temptation (cf. Jas 1:13). Since the nature-will seems to be the best account for the Trinity, and the incarnation requires some consistency for a triune person to live as a man, then it seems most appropriate that human will is a natural property possessed and exercised by the human person. Accordingly, we will explore how the Dyothelite model makes sense of the human will. If this is right, then the model should make sense of the several states of human will.

God created human nature thoroughly good; damage of the will came through misuse. Adam and Eve possessed the ability to obey God and to sin (*posse non peccare, posse peccare*). They knew and desired the good; they could also be deceived. Maximus describes this state of the will as the "desire of things according to nature."[31] The man and woman also desired what was contrary to nature (sin). The desire for independence from God, perhaps to define for themselves what was good and evil, attracted them in the will, so they chose evil, wrongly believing it was a good. The will is the connection between the persons and their actions. Viewing the will as a property of human nature seems to give a clear account of freely chosen sin. What was the effect of sin on the will?

When Adam and Eve sinned, they became enslaved through the ruin of their wills, unable to know and desire the good as before (*non posse non peccare*). To them, evil looked good, and true good no longer appeared to them as good. For example, they now hid from God and blamed others for

their actions. In Maximus' view, sin broke the will's natural harmony with God, twisting the will to desire what is against God's order.[32] This mode of human will is *gnome*, the uncertain and ambiguous struggle of the will about good and evil, being ignorant of the true good and pulled to evil action instead.[33] All people are born into this condition, living as "slaves of sin" (John 8:34; Rom 6:6, 17), "dead in sins" and they are "walking according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:1, 2). This is the condition that Luther called the bondage of the will:

> So man's will is like a beast standing between two riders. If God rides, it wills and goes where God wills... If Satan rides, it wills and goes where Satan wills. Nor may it choose to which rider it will run, or which it will seek; but the riders themselves fight to decide who shall have and hold it... [W]ith regard to God and in all that bears on salvation or damnation, [a person] has no 'free-will', but is a captive, a prisoner and bondslave, either to the will of God, or to the will of Satan.[34]

Luther's intention is not to say that the will chooses automatically in accordance with a "rider," but that the person with a damaged will is either in thrall to God or the devil, and chooses accordingly. This idea is not determinism, since the person chooses sin voluntarily, as Luther says: "We do not sin against our will but rather according to our will."[35] The will is a deformed capacity of the person's nature. The enslaved will limits the person to desires that are unnatural, selfish, and against God, though rationalized as goods. Blind to the good and twisted to desire evil because of the corrupt will, the person can only choose sin. Hence, all choices of the person are voluntary and dislocated from God until the nature of the person is renewed, including restoration of the will containing desires.[36]

For the Christian, renewal by regeneration of the Holy Spirit (and Jesus' deliverance from the power of sin) restores the desires of the will in harmony with God (what had been lost through sin). This restoration is part of the meaning of the new heart with new desires from the indwelling Holy Spirit to purify them and "cause you to walk in My statutes" (Ezek 36:25-27 NASB). All people who belong to Jesus Christ are newly enabled to desire and choose according to God's will (*posse non peccare*) and they remain able to choose

sin (*posse peccare*). The will is cluttered with desires for good and sin (the biblical category of *the flesh* as the condition of opposition to the Spirit, e.g., Gal 5:16-26). McFarland interprets this condition of struggle and hope as the shared vision of Augustine and Maximus: "[They] view postlapsarian humanity's struggles with sin as a battle between a will that has, in turning from nature, been cut off from nature and nature's God alike, and a will that, healed by grace, has been reintegrated into nature's order."[37] Whether this reintegration is termed progressive sanctification or deification, both identify the NT call to life in the Spirit and in Christ that is possible for the Christian through God's influence on the will in conjunction with the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2). In this way, the person is at liberty to choose freely in accordance with God because of a will that has been changed. This regeneration for new creation will be completed in resurrection.

Perfected human freedom includes only desires that accord with God, and excludes the ability to sin (*non posse peccare*). Anticipation of this final, glorified state of human life and the will shows in Jesus' earthly sinlessness that Maximus calls a model of deification (more on Jesus below). Since the new creation is described partly by saying "there will no longer be death" (Rev 21:4 NASB), and death is the consequence for sin, then we can expect that everlasting life is freedom like God's, only for the ability to choose good. This perfection of will fits the perfection of the resurrected nature. This state of the human will is an advance beyond Eden in the confirmed and voluntary dependence upon God permanently. Such dependence as a creature is Jesus' exercise of his human will to embrace God's calling instead of his desires to avoid suffering.

Christology and the Will

In correspondence with what we have considered about the will for theology proper and anthropology, we can compare how the Dyothelite model of the will as a natural property works for Christology. First, we have noted in theology proper that God the Son makes choices in coordination with the Father and the Spirit. We have cited biblical examples of the Son's *ad intra* and *ad extra* choices. This exercise of his divine will involves personal agency in relation to desires possessed in common among the three persons. For example, the Son uniquely chose to become incarnate in conjunction with

the Father's choice to send him into the world (John 10:36), and with the Spirit's choice to create his human nature by "overshadowing" Mary (Luke 1:35). The unity of the three persons through co-possession of one nature, including one natural will, coincides with the distinct agency of personal choices. In this sense, the Son possesses a divine will.

Second, theological anthropology and the will showed four states of human willing, one of which corresponds to the Son's human will. What sort of human will does the Son of God live with as Jesus of Nazareth? The idea may be attractive that Jesus lived with a human will that was capable of sin (*posse peccare*), either as in original creation or as corresponding to the states of fallen or regenerate humanity. The Son of God's continuing existence as a divine person when he becomes a man excludes sharing in our capacity to sin (or, our inability to succeed at doing the right, good, and true). Being unchangeably good, God the Son cannot live otherwise even in a second mode of life as a creature. Any capacity for sin as a man would mean that God could sin, which is false (since Scripture is clear that God is immutable and almighty in his goodness).

By comparison to human sin, the common human experiences of ignorance, weakness, and finite presence are all impossible for God, but these experiences accord with the nature of humanity that God created. These aspects of created existence are good, which means they are harmonious with God. Even death and pain that Jesus embraced are consistent with his divine identity since they are the means to salvation and his obedient responses to the Father's calling. By contrast to these common creaturely realities, sin is unnatural to the creation and a contradiction to God, so sin must be excluded even as a capacity for the Son of God in his human exercise of will. He is truly human and impeccable, just as his people will be in the resurrection. Perfected freedom includes the natural desires for only the good in unobstructed relationship with God. Thus, the sort of human will that Jesus lived with must have been the same that will be true of glorified humanity.

This mode of creaturely freedom is consistent with being God and with being vulnerable to temptation, as Jesus surely was (Heb 4:15). More could be said to explain this,[38] but suffice it to say that the Son need only experience the natural desires to avoid pain and seek goods if he is to feel the pull of temptations. In the wilderness temptations, Jesus felt the blameless desire to end his pain of hunger by the wrong means suggested by the devil—to

break from the Father's "provision" and provide bread for himself. The devil also suggested an alternative to the pain of the cross, which route Jesus again considered in Gethsemane—both times sinlessly—as legitimate creaturely desires that he felt as a man and also denied to himself. This self-denial of his desires to avoid pain is a human operation of will that corresponds to Jesus' call to all who follow him (Luke 9:23). His experiences are the basis of his true sympathy with our struggle to follow God despite suffering along the way (Heb 2:17-18; 4:15). Our inspiration and real help is to know of Jesus' human experience that is the pattern for ours (Rom 8:17; 1 Pet 2:21-25). Since Jesus denied himself as a man for us, we may deny ourselves in response to his call to us. The correspondence between his human will and our human will is clear. The Son of God chose as a man by his natural human will. He saved us and modeled for us the life in the Spirit who empowers him and us for a renewed humanity.

Third, the harmony of the Son's two natural wills shows in the interpersonal relationship with his Father *ad extra*, which also models our relationship with the Father. When the Son chose as God to become a man, this was *ad intra* harmony between the Father and the Son. When the Son chose as man to obey his human parents (Luke 2:52), this was *ad extra* harmony between the Father and the Son, which means personal harmony among the Son's desires as God and as a man (within the incarnation). As a man, he wants to do what is right, even when he also wants to do other things, such as remain at the temple when he was twelve or avoid the cross. Jesus represents healthy functioning as a creature to desire and choose only the good, even when other apparent goods (such as avoiding pain) are available to him. This functioning anticipates the perfection of human freedom in the resurrection so that people will exercise real choice without any capacity for sin.

How was the Son's human will aligned with his divine will in a way that preserved his real creaturely freedom? Patristic theology developed the concept of deification to explain this elevation of human functioning through union with God (as in 2 Pet 1:2-7). For Jesus, this was union within the incarnation; for others the deification occurs through union with God in Christ by the Spirit.[39] I think the emphasis is right to mark the Spirit's work to elevate human function in harmony with God is life in the Spirit—the filling, leading, shaping, and enlightening the child of God. In this way, the Spirit of God is active in the Messiah and for all people who are in Christ

to enable the freedom of natural concurrence with God. Patristic theology preferred to see deification of Jesus' human will as caused by incarnational union. A more consistent approach is to mark the Spirit's activity in parallel with what occurs for the Christian in regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit. In any case, the model of the will as a natural property explains both Jesus' genuine human struggle with desires in temptation, and his voluntary alignment to embrace the Father's will calling him to suffer as a man.

More specifically, the Dyothelite model explains Jesus' statement of self-denial in Gethsemane "not My will" as expression of a created human will by contrast to "Your will be done," referring to his Father's will. Since Jesus is more than merely a man, being God the Son, the Father's will is simultaneously the Son's will (*ad intra*), sharing the same divine desire that they accomplish salvation through the Son's suffering the cup of wrath. The interaction is genuinely interpersonal between the Father and the Son, though in a created mode *ad extra*; the Son first requests as a man of his Father "to let this cup pass from Me" and then resolves as a man to embrace his Father's will. In this way, God the Son lives by a second mode of relationship as a creature to God the Father (*ad extra*), truly in our place.

We can point to the analogy of a human father and son who work together as boss and employee—they live in two modes of relationship that run parallel in the order of authority and submission. One mode is family, and the other mode is workplace. This human will includes the Son's desires, decision-making process, and choices as a man. Hebrews 12:2 commends Jesus' human resolve to choose the "joy" of accomplishing salvation by means of enduring the cross as humanly motivating for the readers; Jesus is the pinnacle of other human forebears who proved faithful to God's call. In Gethsemane, Jesus fought for and rescued his people, struggling as they struggle, on our behalf, being the last Adam constructing a new humanity. The Son of God embedded himself in a human struggle between obeying God and self-preservation. Jesus also wrestled authentically as our model, demonstrating the painful path for them to follow him (Rom 8:17; 1 Pet 2:21-25). Jesus had to make the choice as a man to deny himself, set aside his desires for self-preservation, and embrace God's call and will that he suffer Hell. This is the same situation for the believer who follows Jesus.

By contrast, these things are impossible for someone who possesses only a divine will as in the Monothelite model of the will as a personal property.

Monothelitism misunderstands the interpersonal, *ad intra* relationship of the Father and Son in the incarnation. By the mistaken model of the will as personal, when Jesus prays "not My will" Monothelitism views him as referring to his divine will that he possesses distinctly from the Father, who wills differently "Your will be done." Jesus' humanity is reduced to being a puppet attached to the *ad intra* relationship of the Father and Son. Such a divine will of the Son could not experience temptation that the NT clearly reports as corresponding to the full array of normal human temptations (Heb 2:17-18; 4:15). Temptation is impossible for God apart from incarnation (Jas 1:13), so the only way the Son could be vulnerable to temptation is through a created human will. Despite the gains of unity for the incarnation and supposing to avoid a conflict between the Son's human and divine wills, the Monothelite model of the will as personal breaks on this important point of temptation to sin. Jesus' human obedience would also be excluded (as required for justification by faith, Rom 10:4).

Conclusion

Instead of the imperial theological formulation that became Monothelitism, the Dyothelite model of the will as a natural property works wherever we look theologically. The process of willing is mysterious for us, but we may see clearly that neither do we choose independently of our natural desires, nor do we lack the capacity to transcend them. Being persons embedded in the array of natural properties we possess, we make choices under the influence of our beliefs, experiences, perceptions, and the Spirit of God. We may imagine that the Son of God experienced something very close to us. Whatever conflicts we struggle against in denying particular desires so as to choose the Father's calling to us, Jesus entered the same struggle for us and for our salvation.

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[1]   Richard Price, "Monothelitism: A Heresy or a Form of Words?" *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 221-32. Even if the label is faulty as a mere "form of words," the Monothelite model of the will is still mistaken.

[2]   E.g., Sam Harris, *Free Will* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 5. "Free will *is* an illusion. Our wills are simply not of our own making. Thoughts and intentions emerge from background causes of which we are unaware and over which we exert no conscious control. We do not have the freedom we think we have."

3 Donald Fairbairn, "The One Person Who Is Jesus Christ: The Patristic Perspective," in *Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective* (ed., Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler; Nashville: B&H, 2007), 83. Emphasis original.

4 Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), "*persona,*" s.v.

5 The oddity of this idea has background in the patristic concern to affirm that the Son of God assumed his own human nature and was the sole person of it (no human person was pushed out for the Son to become a man, *enhypostatic*). Patristic theologians also rightly denied that the human nature assumed for incarnation had independent existence before or apart from the incarnation (*anhypostatic*).

6 Opuscule 3, 45D, cited and trans. in Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 193.

7 Cyril Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 147-48. He gives the example of Gregory of Nyssa *Life of Moses* 2:34, "Thoughts are the fathers of the will."

8 Muller, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*, "*appetitus,*" s.v.

9 Maximus the Confessor, in his *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, crafted definitions for all these terms associated with willing (following Aristotle). Cited in George C. Berthold, "Aspects of the Will in Maximus the Confessor," *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 66-67.

10 This point that is was the human will that had been guilty of sin, so Christ had to have a human will to redeem humanity's fallen one was urged by Maximus, and voiced later by John of Damascus. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (700-1700)*, vol. 2, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 75.

11 Gr. Naz. *Letter* 101.32. Cited and trans. Christopher A. Beeley, "'Let this cup pass from me' (Matth 26:39): the soul of Christ in Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, and Maximus Confessor," in *Studia Patristica* 63 (2013): 36. An earlier formulation of this idea shows in Origen, *Dialogue with Heracleides 7.*

12 M. William Ury, "Will," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed., Walter Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 819.

13 Biblical word groups for the will match these two senses (Ury, "Will," 819), but the mind is also said to include choosing or decision making, hence the overlap (Philip H. Towner, "Mind/Reason," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 529).

14 G. Schrenk, "*Thelema,*" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. III (ed., Gerhard Kittel; ed., and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 62.

15 Cyril Hovorun, "Controversy on Energies and Wills in Christ: Between Politics and Theology," in *Studia Patristica* 48 (2010): 217-19.

16 "Heraclius," in *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 3rd ed.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 756.

17 John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church 450-680 A.D.* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 333, 341.

18 Joseph C. Ayer, *A Source Book for Ancient Church History: From the Apostolic Age to the Close of the Conciliar Period* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 660.

19 Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom*, 75. Price, "Monothelitism: A Heresy or a Form of Words?" 224.

20 Marek Jankowiak, "The Invention of Dyothelitism," *Studia Patristica* 43 (2013): 339-41.

21 Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom*, 143.

22 Beeley, "Let this cup pass from me," 42.

23 Jean Galot, *Who is Christ?* (trans. M. Angeline Bouchard; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 646.

24 Hovorun, *Will, Action, and Freedom,* 82. An excerpt of the *Typos* translated by Hovorun: "We declare to our Orthodox subjects that, from the present moment, they no longer have permission in any way to contend and to quarrel with one another over one will and one energy, or two energies and two wills."

25 Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom,* 85.

26 Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, eds., and trans., *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 30.

27 Macarius was the main proponent of Monothelitism at the Sixth Council. Cited and trans. in Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom,* 143.

28 Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 14 (A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series; ed., Henry R. Percival; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 332-33. From Pope Agatho's letter to the Sixth Council: "For if anybody should mean a personal will, when in the holy Trinity there are said to be three Persons, it would be necessary that there should be asserted three personal wills, and three personal operations (which is absurd and truly profane). Since, as the truth of the Christian faith holds, the will is natural, where the one nature of the holy and inseparable Trinity is spoken of, it must be consistently understood that there is one natural will, and one natural operation."

[29]   Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom*, 156, commenting on Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, 304BC.

[30]   Garrett J. DeWeese, "One Person, Two Natures: Two Metaphysical Models of the Incarnation," in *Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective*, 138. DeWeese includes consciousness and volition with his definition of person, distinct from nature.

[31]   *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica* 14, cited and trans. in Ian McFarland, "'Naturally and by grace': Maximus the Confessor on the operation of the will," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58/4 (2005): 415.

[32]   McFarland, "'Naturally and by grace,'" 413.

[33]   Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Copenhagen: Lund, 1965), 229.

[34]   Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston; Tarrytown, NY: Revell, 1957), 103-4, 7.

[35]   Luther, *WA* 39, 378, cited and trans. in Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (trans. Robert C. Schultz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 156.

[36]   The Monothelite objection to two wills was by the assumption that a human will in Christ was necessarily opposed to God, *non posse non peccare*. Maximus clarified that the will in Christ was aligned to God, not opposed, because of union for deification.

[37]   McFarland, "Naturally and by grace," 431.

[38]   See John E. McKinley, *Tempted for Us: Theological Models and the Practical Relevance of Christ's Impeccability and Temptation* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009).

[39]   Paul M. Blowers, "Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus on Gnomic Will in Christ: Clarity and Ambiguity," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review,* vol. 63: 3 & 4 (2013): 49.