

# *The Purple Pulpit*

Installment #12

August 5, 2018

## **The Two Wills of Christ**

As we have been progressing through our Purple Pulpit writings, we have been following the history of the movements of Christological controversies that have taken shape in the earliest centuries of the church since the resurrection of Christ. Today we come to a question that, having established the unipersonality of Christ in hypostatic union, the early assemblies next encountered, namely the inquiry into whether the incarnate Christ has one or two wills. As the title of our paper reveals, the position that we will seek to defend is that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His inhumanation, has two wills: a divine and a human.

That the Lord Jesus Christ, in His shared Deity with the Father, possesses with Him one and the same will has never been contested. When a believer recognizes that the Son is one Being with the Father, it immediately follows that that one divine Being would have one divine will. Let us also establish what we mean by “will.” The American Heritage Dictionary (fifth edition) gives as its first definition of the word, “the mental faculty by which one deliberately chooses or decides upon a course of action.” As such, it is a synonym for the word that, in our assembly, we usually use to designate this faculty:

volition. Thus, it has always been understood by believers that the Lord Jesus Christ has one and the same volition as the Father, as respects His Deity.

The enquiry of whether the Lord Jesus also possessed a human will was next posed. Those who held that He did not said that the volition of His Godhead was the only volition He ever possessed. These became labeled “Monothelites” from the Greek words for “one will.” At first blush the Monothelite appears to have a strong position. They can point to the established veracity of the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, held and confessed by all true believers. They could point to verses like Jn. 8:29 where we read of the Lord Jesus saying, “I am always doing the things that please Him” (speaking of the Father).

But on the other side, it can be asked, “If the Lord Jesus, in His incarnation, didn’t possess a human will (an essential part of the human soul), was He/is He fully human?”

As good Biblicists, you should be asking, at this point, the crucial question: “What is the Scripture saying?” (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 4:30). I won’t keep you in lack of this Scriptural evidence any longer. In Mt. 26:39; Mk. 14:36; and Lk. 22:42 the three Synoptics record the clearest proof that the humanity of Christ in hypostatic union was, indeed, equipped with its own volition. In Luke’s account we read the words of the Lord in Gethsemane, directed to the Father in prayer: “nevertheless, not My desire, but Yours be bringing about.” This clearly indicates that there was a desire (will, volition) that was that of the Son of Man, and another that was of the Father.

It is vital, as to our subject, for us to understand that, though the human will in Christ existed, in practical considerations it never chose differently from that of the Father. Their wills were two in reference to distinct faculties, but ever one in reference to agreement. This is how the “two-will position” understands verses like the aforementioned Jn. 8:29. The Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5) exclusively chose the Father’s revealed will, only decided in favor of God’s intention, solely willed to obey the Father’s good pleasure. As such, our sinless Saviour was qualified as our sin-bearer (Heb. 5:8,9; Jn. 1:29), a perfect Human, dying in the place of all others, “to Whom is the glory and the might into the ages of the ages. Amen.” (1 Pet. 4:11c)