

- (2) Christ's Peccability or Impeccability (ability or inability to sin)
- (a) The practical relevance of the issue

Was Christ able to sin (*posse peccare*) or was He not able to sin (*non posse peccare*) That is, did He have the ability to sin?

Was Christ not able to sin (*non posse peccare*) or was He able not to sin (*posse non peccare*) That is, was He unable to sin or able to keep from sinning?

If Christ was totally, absolutely unable to sin (*non posse peccare*) then were His temptations genuine?

Consider the following:

- [1] If a person is blind, can he or she be enticed to look at a pornographic picture?
- [2] If a security guard at the Pentagon has absolutely no access to military secrets, can he be enticed by an agent of a foreign power to sell such secrets?
- [3] If a person has a very strong dislike of a particular food (e.g., Brussels sprouts, or bitter chocolate, or buttermilk, or liver), can he or she be enticed to eat or drink that food?
- [4] If a person has gone to a smorgasbord restaurant and eaten so much that he or she is bursting and can't even look at another item of food, can he or she be enticed to eat yet another plateful of salads or hors d'oeuvres or meats or vegetables or desserts?

If in an absolute sense Christ was unable to sin, then when we are severely enticed to sin, how can Christ's victories over temptation be an example to us? And what then does scriptures mean when it says that "He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin?"

- (b) Answer to the question: Did Christ have the genuine ability to sin with respect to His human nature only?

[1] Note that we are not asking whether Christ had the ability to sin (*posse peccare*) with respect to His divine nature. He did not. God cannot be enticed to evil nor can He sin. Nor are we asking whether He had the ability to sin with respect to God's Plan and Purpose. He did not. It was certain that the Plan formulated by the Trinity before the foundation of the world would be executed and that the godhead's Purpose regarding redemption would be fulfilled. We are asking whether Christ had the ability to sin with respect to His human nature only.

[2] The answer to the question, Did Christ have the genuine ability to sin with respect to His human nature only, would seem to be yes. That is, if the temptations were to be genuine, and if they involved real struggle (and not merely the appearance of