

genuineness and struggle), then it would seem that in some sense Christ had to have the ability to sin. If our focus must be on Christ's human nature, then we can say that Christ, with respect to His human nature, had the ability to sin (*posse peccare*) and the ability to keep from sinning (*posse non peccare*).

- [3] Did Christ, with respect to His Person as the God man, have the ability to sin? To this we must answer no. And this is so because of the dynamics of the two natures in the one Person.

William G. T. Shedd, in chapter 5 of the section on Christology in volume two of his *Dogmatic Theology* offers a very helpful discussion of this issue. Relevant excerpts include the following:

The last Adam differs from the first Adam, by reason of his impeccability. He was characterized not only by the *posse non peccare*, but the *non posse peccare*. He was not only able to overcome temptation, but he was unable to be overcome by it. . . .

Christ's person is constituted of two natures: one divine, and the other human. The divine nature is both intemptable, and impeccable. . . . The human nature, on the contrary, is both temptable and peccable. When these two natures are united in one theanthropic person, as they are in the incarnation, the divine determines and controls the human, not the human the divine.

Consequently, what might be done by the human nature if alone and by itself, cannot be done by it in this union with omnipotent holiness. . . . human nature, whether in a God-man or a mere man, is a temptable and fallible nature. . . . When, therefore, it is asked if the person named Jesus Christ, and constituted of two natures, was peccable, the answer must be in the negative. Consequently, Christ while having a peccable human nature in his constitution, was an Impeccable person. . . .

But it may be asked, if the properties of either nature may be attributed to the person of the God man, why may not both peccability and Impeccability be attributed to the person of the God-man. We say that Jesus Christ is both finite and infinite, passible and impassible, impotent and omnipotent, ignorant and omniscient, why may we not also say that he is both peccable and impeccable? . . .

Because in this latter instance, the divine nature cannot innocently and righteously leave the human nature to its own finiteness without any support from the divine, as it can in the other instances.

If, therefore, the Logos . . . should permit the humanity to yield to it and commit sin, he would be implicated in the apostasy and sin. The guilt would not be confined to the human nature. it would attach to the whole theanthropic person. . . .