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The mystery of Christ's incarnation is great. We are cautioned to "Avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood." 9BC 1128.

But an understanding of Christ's temptation (within or without) is directly related to His human nature. What is written is for our understanding.

Which Nature Did Christ Accept – Sinless or Sinful?

DA 117 "If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succour us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took **the nature of man**, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured."

The primary dilemma appears to relate to qualifying the term "sinful". If we consider the sinful act, sinful mind, sinful character, sure, Jesus had none of these. But the moment "sinful flesh" is stated, various interpretations arise in conflict. Sinful, Fallen, Carnel are the same term referring to a "condition". Put the adverb "sinful" with an adjective "sinful" and we have an active sinner in a passive sinful state.

Sinfulness = quality, or state of being.

Sinful as an Adverb describes the Verb.

Sinful as an Adjective describes the Noun.

"**Natural fallen nature**" is the same as ... "natural sinful nature".

"**Natural fallen nature**" is not necessarily the same as "sinful fallen nature".

"**Sinful fallen nature**" is the same as ... "sinful sinful nature".

"Sinful" nature could refer to either "the act of doing sin by conscious or unconscious decision", **or** "the result of receiving sin by heredity". One is the character, the second the result in the flesh through degeneracy.

"Sinful" nature is (character, mind) is the result of falling into a sinful thought or act.

"Sinful" nature in this instance (Christ's human nature) refers to the "**result of sin**" through inherited degeneracy. Sinful in this case is an adjective qualifying the noun (flesh). The flesh is a "state of being" not an "act of doing".

R&H Dec 15, 1896 "Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our **sinful nature** ." (BC p656-7)

Propensities and inclinations are not sin until acted upon with selfish motive. Satan pursues his temptations through any avenue of supposed or real weakness. Through the weakness of humanity, Christ was tempted. Through the flesh or through the mind? Through the needs or weakness of the flesh Satan desired to reach the consent of the mind. Only through those natural (not sinful, but weakened) propensities and inclinations could Satan entice, that Christ might satisfy basic impulse before duty.

ST Oct 17, 1900 "... Adam was as faultless as the angels ... no tendencies to evil ... But when Christ came He bore

the likeness of sinful flesh.”

DA 117 “For **four thousand years** the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ **took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity**.”

ST Oct 29, 1894 “Jesus Christ is our example in all things. He began life, passed through its experiences, and ended its record, with a sanctified human will. **He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet because He kept His will surrendered and sanctified, He never bent in the slightest degree toward the doing of evil, or toward manifesting rebellion against God. Have men and women who profess to be followers of Christ, been simply gratifying their own tastes, been confirming themselves in selfishness, in obstinacy, simply living to gratify their carnal propensities?**“

Christ accepted the “fallen” or “sinful” human nature from natural birth, but He never developed a “fallen human nature” sold, or given to sin. The “fallen nature” He accepted was only the result of 4000 years of degeneracy, that flesh resulting from 4000 years of sin. “... *he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.*” Isa 53:2. (Christ’s “unfallen” nature was of beautiful symmetry, 20 feet tall and majestic. It is evident that Christ did accept our “fallen” human nature.)

The Temptation of Our Saviour

Temptation is to draw a response. Temptation is not sin. Temptation (as related to Christ) **did not** draw the least “sinful” response. But He adopted “sinful”, degenerated, human flesh.

ST 17 Jun 1897 “**Every temptation** that could be brought against fallen humanity, **He met and overcame**. Had He not been fully human He could not have been our substitute. Christ did nothing that human nature may not do if it partakes of the divine nature.”

ST Oct 10, 1892 “Christ was actually tempted, not only by Satan in the wilderness, but all through His life, from childhood to manhood. **In all points He was tempted** as we are; and because **He successfully resisted temptation under every form**, He gave man a perfect example, and through the ample provisions Christ has made, we may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

MH 130 “Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the **temptations that assail us from within and from without**.”

9T 222 “A man may be trying to serve God, but **temptations from within and from without assail him**. Satan and his angels urge and coax him to transgress.”

Satan uses our fallen human nature as a channel for his evil temptations. However, this does not suggest that the temptation comes from an evil heart. The statement clearly says it is from Satan and his angels.

If Jesus was “*tempted in all points like as we are*” then temptations did press upon Jesus from “within and without”, “in every form”. If man is tempted from within and without, so must Christ have been tempted, to be our perfect Saviour. Having been tempted “in all points” qualifies our Saviour to become our High Priest.

What is meant by temptations “from within”? It is temptation experienced through the weakness of the human flesh, as in: weariness, delay, hunger, thirst, hurt, humiliation (MH 422-423) which may cause a conscious decision to place self interest before duty. A man of sorrows, a heart breaking under the burden and curse of sin. Jesus was physically yearning for relief from the heat of conquest. Jesus took real human nature, born of a woman, made flesh, real flesh, just like you and I. Real pain, humiliation, loneliness, weariness, hunger – needs coming from within. The flesh desires to see the end of torment and hurt, but **He placed duty first**. He was a man of sorrows, yearning for relief from the conquest and the heat of battle, but **not before His mission was fulfilled**. As in the garden of Gethsemane, “*if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.*” Luke 22:42.”

(refer to study “Our Pattern – God Revealed in Humanity”)

Drawings, Leanings, Propensities, Inclination to: ?

By saying that Christ was tempted “from within”, is **not** of the understanding that He had any drawings or leanings **toward sin**. This is reserved for the carnal nature “*sold under sin*” (Rom 7:14). Christ was ever repulsed by the least suggestion of sin:-

7BC 927 “Would that we could comprehend the significance of the words, Christ “*suffered being tempted*”. While He was **free from the taint of sin**, the refined sensibilities of His holy nature rendered **contact with evil unspeakably painful** to Him.”

13MR 18 (5BC 1128) “Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the **propensities of sin**. He is the second Adam. **The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him**; he was in the image of God. He could fall, and he did fall through transgressing. Because of sin, his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience. But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. **He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted**. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, **but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity** ...

“Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that **a taint of, or inclination to corruption** rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted, yet He is called that holy thing. **It is a MYSTERY THAT IS LEFT UNEXPLAINED to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet be without sin**. The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain a **mystery**. That which is revealed, is for us and for our children, but let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves: for it cannot be. The exact time when humanity blended with divinity, it is not necessary for us to know. We are to keep our feet on the rock, Christ Jesus, as God revealed in humanity.

“I perceive that there is danger in approaching subjects which dwell on the humanity of the Son of the infinite God. He did humble Himself when He saw He was in fashion as a man, **that He might understand the force of all temptations wherewith man is beset**.”

An “evil” propensity or inclination is totally different from a “natural” propensity or inclination. Therefore a “natural” propensity should not be interpreted as “evil” inclination, propensity or passion in relation to Jesus’ temptation, either within or without.

9BC 904 “The limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery – **the blending** of the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. **Man must wonder and be silent**.”

We do not understand all concerning **the blending** of Jesus’ two natures, but of Jesus Human nature, as in the statements above, God has made some very important facts clear:

1. Jesus was tempted IN EVERY, ALL AND SUNDRY FORM OR WAY in which humanity is tempted. There is not a single temptation which He did not experience, which means both from within and from without.
2. Though tempted, never was there in Him ANY “**evil**” propensity, inclination to, drawing, leaning, or desire toward sin. It is very plainly stated that **Jesus did not have “like sinful passions” as we have**.

But it would be presumptuous to say that Jesus had no “natural” passions, or no “natural” propensities. But in no way or form was there a single “evil” passion or “evil” propensity.

3. It is a mystery how Jesus was tempted in every point, way, form and type of temptation, yet **He remained sinless**, both within and without.

Temptation

Temptation should not be confused with the desires of a fallen heart. Temptation is not sin.

ST Feb 16, 1882 “Let not the weakest be discouraged because they are assailed by temptation. The best men who ever lived have been grievously assaulted by Satan and his agents. **Unless we yield to its power, temptation is not sin.** The armour of truth will prove a sure defence against all the fiery darts of the enemy.”

AA 518:2 “... keep the mind from wandering to forbidden themes or from spending its energies on trifling subjects. ... guard well the avenues of the soul; ... avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest. The heart must be faithfully sentinelled, **or evils without will awaken evils within**, and the soul will wander in darkness.”

Examples of Jesus’ Temptations from Within

DA 690 “Turning away, Jesus sought again His retreat, and fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. He prayed not now for His disciples that their faith might not fail, but for His own tempted, agonized soul. The awful moment had come, – that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. **Christ might even now refuse** to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to My Father. Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, *“O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.”*”

DA 753 “Satan with his fierce temptations wrung **the heart** of Jesus.”

YI July 20, 1899 “**Christ’s heart** was pierced by a far sharper pain than that caused by the nails driven into His hands and feet. He was bearing the sins of the whole world, enduring our punishment, – the wrath of God against transgression. His trial involved **the fierce temptation of thinking that He was forsaken by God.** His soul was tortured by the pressure of great darkness, lest He should swerve from his uprightness during the terrible ordeal. Unless there is a possibility of yielding, temptation is no temptation. **Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action; and, knowing that he can do it, (not wanting to do it) resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed.**”

DA 700 “Christ **suffered** keenly under **abuse and insult.** At the hands of the beings whom He had created, and for whom He was making an infinite sacrifice, He received every indignity. And He suffered in proportion to the perfection of His holiness and His hatred of sin. His trial by men who acted as fiends was to Him a perpetual sacrifice. To be surrounded by human beings under the control of Satan was revolting to Him. And **He knew that in a moment, by the flashing forth of His divine power, He could lay His cruel tormentors in the dust*.** This made the trial the harder to bear.”

*(According to the definition above, Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action; and knowing that he can do it, resists by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. Such are temptations “from within”.)

ST May 27, 1897 “The world’s Redeemer, the second Adam, by His suffering and death worked out a redemption for the human race. He was tempted in all points like as we are. He knew that the enemy would come to every human being, **to take advantage of hereditary weakness**, and to ensnare, by his false insinuations, all whose hope and trust is not in Christ. And **by passing over the ground which man must travel, by showing that, through the divine power granted him, man can overcome every form of temptation, Christ prepared the way for us to gain the victory**

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*Heb 4:15 “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was **in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**”*

DA 826 “In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, “*to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*” The disciples were to **teach what Christ had taught**. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. **Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man’s theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission.** None of these are Christ’s servants to teach.”

Good Way Series No.5 p13 “In order that there may be no misunderstanding we should note that neither Waggoner and Jones ever said that Christ had a sinful nature. They said Christ took our sinful nature, a nature that had in it all the capability of being tempted from within or without, and like our nature bearing all the results of our heredity.”