

THE SERVANT HEIR.

"Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." – Gal. 4:1.

We have heard these words frequently quoted to support the theory that Jesus was in no essential respect different from other men.

That he belonged to the fallen race; that he redeemed himself as well as the rest of mankind; that he was in "all things" (not excepting his moral nature) just like other fallen men. Another text which is used to support the same idea is that "in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17).

We regard these texts as strong as any we know of to support the doctrine, referred to, but that, we reckon, is no support at all, when carefully examined. In the first place the passage under consideration, including the second verse, is a general statement, and by itself alone has no reference to Jesus Christ as an individual, but to the Church of Christ; and in the third verse the Apostle makes an application, saying, "Even so WE, when we were children, [speaking of the Church while under the shadows of the Jewish age] were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his SON, made of a woman, made under law." Now, how did it happen that he was under the law? Was he there in the same way that all Adam's race were? No. All the descendents of the first Adam were under law on account of sin; they were there because they could not help it, they were there by descent, their father was a bondman, and their lives were all forfeited; the law was to teach them that, and their need of a Redeemer and Saviour.

Jesus Christ was "made under law" for a purpose, not of necessity, but of grace, viz., that he might redeem ("buy off"; see

Diaglott, interlineary trans.) those that were under the law, that we being then (afterward) called might, receive the adoption of sons.

The Apostle's argument as he advances to the 9th verse is to show that **[R489 : page 2]** the law is but the rudimentary part of God's redeeming scheme, and that up to the time of the close of the Jewish economy, the plan of God, and all those embraced in it AS SUBJECTS OF REDEMPTION, was immature. He is not speaking of individuals, but of a system (in which individuals are included), which was yet in its childhood, and he uses the text to illustrate the subject.

That the Apostle is referring to the immaturity of the joint-heirship and plan in its unfoldings during the age of shadows, is apparent from the connection between the last clause of the 3d and 9th verses; wherein he speaks of the time when they "were in bondage under the elements (rudiments) of the world," and of their tendency now to "turn again to the weak and beggarly elements."

It is very evident that this statement of the Apostle has no reference to Jesus, for the reason that as an individual he differed in many essential respects from those whom he came to redeem; because he bought them with himself: gave himself; whereas if he had been in all respects, sin included, like them, he too would have been a debtor to the law; and COULD NOT redeem them.

Though a servant, he was not an "unprofitable servant," which he told the disciples to say they were when they had "done all which was their duty to do." Luke 17:10.

But a "righteous servant" who could redeem the rest, would be a very profitable servant, according to our way of thinking.

But it may be asked, how does that harmonize with the sentiment that he was "made in all things like unto his brethren?"

We answer that we think it harmonizes well, when we consider his own statement regarding who his brethren are. "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother," &c. (Matt. 12:50.) "For both he that sanctifieth, and they [notice] who are sanctified, [set apart, consecrated] are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call THEM brethren" (Heb. 2:11).

It is such "as are perfect," i.e., whose will is in perfect accord with the will of "our Father in heaven," who are reckoned sons of God and "brethren" of Jesus. We are reckoned, what he ACTUALLY WAS.

He "did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22), and to the reckoned sons, Jesus' brethren, no sin is imputed. Herein is the blessedness of "the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:8).

In view of the gradual development of the "joint-heirs" during their minority, but who are to become one by virtue of their union with "the heir," how appropriate the illustration made use of by the Apostle in the text quoted.

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