

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. PAUL

IN THE SUPERSCRIPION OF HIS EPISTLE TO THE
ROMANS.—NO. 3.

VERSE 4.—Τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιοσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.—KING JAMES'S VERSION.

Who was, in virtue of the resurrection of the dead, determined to be God's Son in power, in respect to the Spirit of holiness.—THE WRITER'S REVISED VERSION.

This clause or verse is the antithetic correlate of the preceding verse or clause, in which it is declared that *our Lord, in respect of his flesh, or human nature, sprang from the lineage of David. He was David's Son.* But now the Apostle brings into view his higher filiation. There is a climax as well as an antithesis. Jesus Christ, besides being *David's Son*, is *David's Lord*, for He is emphatically *God's Son*.

He was, says the Apostle, *demonstrated*, or, more literally, *determined to be God's Son in power*. The participle, which we translate *determined* (ὀρισθέντος), has occasioned perplexity to many expositors. The verb, as is evident from its etymology, means *to bound, to limit*. Its active participle constitutes our English word *horizon*—the visual boundary-line between the surface of the earth and the concave of the sky. This idea of *bounding* or *limiting* is never eliminated from the word. Even when the word is transferred from things outward and visible to things invisible and mental, it still preserves its radical import at the base

of all its developments. It means *to mark off by boundaries, to separate, to part, to pass between, to limit, to mark off* (by or to the eye of the intelligence), *to determine* (either intellectually or volitionally), *to come to a determinate conclusion, to settle* (with one's self), *to fix, to ordain, to appoint, to define*. In some of these significations the primary idea is sufficiently prominent, and in the others it is so essentially inherent, that if, in the use of analogical terms employed in translation, the idea of *bounding, limiting, determining* be completely lost sight of, and thus the mind be allowed to wander at its own sweet will over the entire area of import analogically suggested, a notion will be formed that is inconsistent with the essential nature of the word. When the word may be translated *to mark off, to determine, to define*, its native force is conspicuous. But when it is desirable or convenient to render the term *to settle* (with one's self), *to fix, to ordain, to appoint*, these phrases must be regarded as involving some legitimate development of the idea of *bounding* or *determining*; otherwise justice will not be done to the original conception.

Such being the idiosyncrasy of the word which is employed by the Apostle, there is unlikelihood attaching to that interpretation of the phrase which represents it as meaning, "who was *constituted* God's Son." Crell gives the interpretation, making doctrinal capital out of it. So do Schlichting and Limborch. The same interpretation has been revived by some modern expositors: by Meyer, for instance, who, however, modifies the apparent obnoxiousness of its doctrinal import by representing it as meaning, *who was, for the knowledge and conviction of men, instated and*

legitimated, installed and enthroned as God's Son. Fritzsche's interpretation is nearly coincident.¹ So is Tholuck's—that into which, in antithesis to his former opinion, he settled in his fourth and fifth editions. He distinguishes between our Lord's *ideal* and his *real* Sonship, that is, his Sonship as independent of the categories of time and space, and his Sonship as under these categories; and he supposes, of course, that the latter is referred to. De Wette draws a similar distinction, though not with the same doctrinal significance; and other expositors besides. But it is a most infelicitous representation and rendering; not only pregnant with doctrinal perplexities, but, when strictly pressed, philologically inconsistent with the distinctive nature of the word. It shuts the door upon the idea of *demarcation*, inherent and prominent in the essence of the word. And besides, it diverges far and wide from the import which is actually attached to the word in the other passages in which it occurs in the New Testament.²

The translation of Felbinger, "who was *ordained* a son of God," is almost equally objectionable, whether the *ordination* be regarded as something equivalent to *appointment* or as something equivalent to *investiture*. The Greek word has nothing in its nature that naturally suggests a *putting in order*—the fundamental idea of *ordination*.

It is true that the term may, in some of its applications, be freely translated *ordain*. It is thus rendered in King James's Version, as well as by Felbinger, in Acts x. 42, "He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was *ordained*

¹ "Constitutum, nimirum inter homines."

² See Luke xxii. 22; Acts ii. 23; x. 42; xvii. 26, 31; Heb. iv. 7.

of God to be the judge of quick and dead." Here the translation is admissible ; and yet it is imperfect ; for the real idea of Peter is that Christ has been *determinately marked off*, namely, from all other beings, to be the Judge of quick and dead. It was in the way of being thus *determinately marked off* for the office, that He was *ordained* or *appointed* to it. The word receives the same translation in Acts xvii. 31, "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath *ordained* ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." The Father *marked off*, from all others, for the office the Man whom He raised from the dead. *Ordained* is here admissible only as a free translation. But, as such, it is good ; and so is *appointed*—the translation of Tyndale, the Geneva, Mace, Worsley, Wakefield. The idea of *demarcation*, however, should never be lost sight of. There are no other passages in the New Testament in which the word is translated *ordain*. In all the other instances of its occurrence it is rendered, in harmony with its native import, either *to determine* (Luke xxii. 22 ; Acts ii. 23 ; xi. 29 ; xvii. 26), or *to limit* (Heb. iv. 7).

The Vulgate translation of the word intensifies the idea of *ordination* or *appointment* : it is "*predestinated*." It does not seem to have arisen from any tampering with the original text, but from the translator's imperfect conception of the Apostle's idea. He had supposed that the term meant *ordained* in the sense of *fore-ordained*. The translation has occasioned almost infinite annoyance to such expositors as either could not or would not make use of the Greek text. Thomas

Aquinas in particular, in his long *Lectio* on the verse, twists himself writhingly hither and thither to reconcile the idea involved with the doctrine that our Lord was from eternity God's Son. After multitudinous distinctions he lands himself in the conclusion *that although the person of Christ was always the Son of God, yet, since He was not always the Son of God in human nature, He might and must, as viewed in connection with this adjunct, be regarded as a manifestation of ineffable grace, and hence as a fitting object of predestination.* Augustine long before Aquinas, and Este long after him, were both of them greatly perplexed. Yet Basil Cooper renders the clause, "the predestinate Son of God in authority," and explains the passage as meaning, "predestinated before the world began to be the Judge of the whole earth, upon the resurrection of the dead, as the Son of God in authority." Moses Stuart, too, convinced, as Bengel had been before him, that he had found in Psalm ii. 7 the Apostle's own key to the expression, renders it, "the decreed Son of God with power." He did not notice that the *decree* which the Messiah declares in the Psalm has not, so far as its object is concerned, a particle of reference to his Sonship. The words, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," are only *the preamble of this statute or decree.* The thing decreed is expressed in Verses 8 and 9.

But why rush into mazes of exegetical, philological, and doctrinal perplexity? The word has manifestly just its natural meaning in the passage before us, who was *marked off as God's Son in power, who was determined to be God's Son in power*—thus marked off and determined, *to* the observation or intellectual perception

of all who choose to give heed to the facts of the case. This, the natural and native meaning of the word, was seized with singular unanimity by the Greek expositors, though freely expressed. Chrysostom asks the question, "What is this participle? What does it mean?" And then he answers his own query thus: It is *demonstrated, manifested, determined, confessed by the judgment and decision of you all.*¹ The beginning, in particular, of his answer is admirable. It excellently explains, in a free and easy manner, and on other, though parallel, lines, the Apostle's word. But in the end he rather runs off his own lines, and confounds what ought to be with what is. Theodoret judiciously confines his explanation to one parallel word, "he was determined *and demonstrated*² to be the Son of God." Œcumenius gives two words on two parallel lines, "*demonstrated and manifested.*"³ Theophylact explains the word on three parallel lines, "*demonstrated, confirmed, determined.*"⁴ Photius gives his explanation still more freely, thus: "who was made known, who came to the knowledge of men;"⁵ running unconsciously into the representation of the Syriac Peshito, "was known." Our English Version, got from Tyndale through the Geneva, "*declared to be the Son of God,*" is too free, though lying in the right direction. It was Beza's Version; and he got it from Erasmus. Luther's Version is preferable, though still too free, and though marred by the juxtaposition of an unfortunate indefinite article, "and *shewn to be a Son of God.*"⁶

Some, such as Sadolet, Castellio, Colenso, render the

¹ δειχθέντος, ἀποφανθέντος, κριθέντος, ὁμολογηθέντος παρὰ τῆς ἀπάντων γνώμης καὶ ψήφου. ² ἀποδείχθη. ³ ἀποδειχθέντος καὶ ἀποφανθέντος.

⁴ ἀποδειχθέντος, βεβαιωθέντος, κριθέντος.

⁵ ἐπιγνωσθέντος, εἰς γνώσιν ἀνθρώπων ἐλθόντος.

⁶ Und erweist ein Sohn Gottes.

word *defined*—an admirable translation, etymologically viewed. But conventional usage will not admit of it. Belsham renders it *distinguished*; Umbreit, *separated, sundered off*—a strained interpretation, losing sight of the intended objectivity of aim, in relation to man's convictions, which is embedded in the Apostle's word. Stolz translates it *verified*—a good idea, but far too free. Van Ess renders it *confirmed*—also too free; Taylor, *ascertained*—also too free.

It is difficult to find a perfect translation, so varied are the relationships that get attached to corresponding terms in different languages. But the word *determined* is, perhaps, as good a rendering as our language can supply—"who was *determined* to be God's Son." The only objection to its use is the possible equivocation, as if there might be a reference to Christ's own volitional self-determination, instead of that determinate marking-off that is realized *in* the minds and *to* the minds of others.

Our Lord *was determined to be, not a son of God, but God's Son*. We do not require to say, in our English idiom, *the Son of God*, for we can reproduce to a nicety the anarthrous and yet definite idea of the original.

He *was determined to be God's Son "in power."* The expression, *in power*, seems to be an adjunct to the designation, *God's Son*, and involves a tacit antithesis to the infirmity that was characteristic of our Lord, in so far as He was *David's Son*.

A considerable number of expositors regard the phrase as connected adverbially with the participle *determined*; and hence they translate it *powerfully*. Reiche incorrectly says that Theodoret took this view. But it was the view in which Luther ultimately landed.¹ And it was Beza's too²—the view which, on the whole,

¹ Kräftiglich erweist.

² Declarato potenter.

he preferred. It was adopted in the Geneva Version ;¹ and in the Dutch, old, new, and newest. It is taken by Zinzendorf, Bolten, Koppe, Terrot, Naebe, Meyer, Bising, Ewbank. Taylor takes substantially the same view, explaining the phrase as meaning, "in a glorious and convincing manner." So Turretin—"modo potentissimo." So Macknight—"with great power of evidence ;" Winzer—"ita ut ejus rei plenissima et certissima fides ;" Oltramare—"de manière à ne laisser aucun doute là-dessus." It is, however, an interpretation which derives its chief plausibility from a mistaken view of the precise import of the participle. If the participle had, in virtue of its idiosyncrasy, literally meant *proved, evidenced, or demonstrated*, then it would have been natural to have represented our Lord as *powerfully demonstrated to be God's Son*, or as *proved in a powerful manner to be God's Son*. But since the idiosyncrasy of the participle is different, we cannot accept this adverbially qualitative interpretation of the adjunct phrase. Our Lord was *distinctly and clearly*, but not *mightily* marked off as God's Son. He was *distinctly and clearly and convincingly*, but not *mightily* determined to be God's Son. We do not *mightily determine or define*, any more than we *mightily appoint*.

Other interpreters connect the phrase with the participle, not qualitatively, but instrumentally, so as to denote the means employed to effect the specified demarcation and consequent demonstration—*determined in an element of power, or by means of an exertion of Divine power, to be God's Son*. The power referred to is that which was exerted in our Lord's resurrection. This is the interpretation of Calvin, Locke, De Dieu, Böhme, Reiche, Tholuck ultimately, Olshausen, Um-

¹ "Declared mightily."

breit, Vaughan, &c. Chrysostom, too, followed by Œcumenius and Theophylact, understood the expression instrumentally; only he and his followers did not suppose that it refers to the Divine power exerted in our Lord's resurrection. They supposed that it refers to the miracles which He wrought. "*In power*," says Theophylact; "that is, by the power of the miracles which He performed." Theodoret likewise understood the phrase instrumentally, but in a method somewhat different. Interlacing the phrase with the immediately succeeding expression, he thought that the Apostle meant that our Lord was demonstrated to be God's Son *by means of the power exerted by the Holy Spirit after his resurrection from the dead*. But all these interpretations, and others kindred to them, so far as the idea of the instrumentality of power is concerned, are objectionable in consequence of the peculiar inter-relation of the clauses of the verse. That of Theodoret and that of Chrysostom proceed on the assumption that the following expression, *according to the Spirit of holiness*, is not antithetic to the expression in Verse 3, *according to the flesh*, but refers to the third Person of the Godhead. And that of those who admit the antithesis referred to, or whose interpretation, at all events, does not postulate the denial of the antithesis, but who nevertheless suppose that the power spoken of is the power that was exerted in the resurrection of our Lord, is objectionable because of the sundering of the two clauses, (1) *in power* and (2) *by the resurrection of the dead*—a sundering effected by the interjection of the clause, *according to the Spirit of holiness*. The clause, *in power*, we should have expected to find after this interjected clause, instead of before it, had the Apostle intended the expression to denote *the power*

which was exerted in effecting the resurrection. There are other reasons still, which will become apparent as we proceed, why we should lay aside all the phases of interpretation which assume that this expression, *in power*, denotes the means whereby our Lord was determined to be God's Son.

It meets all the requirements of the case, if—on the model of such expressions as “a man *in Christ*” (2 Cor. xii. 2), “a man *under authority*” (Matt. viii. 9), “a son *in faith*” (1 Tim. i. 2), “a faithful minister *in the Lord*” (Eph. vi. 21)—we regard the phrase as a qualitative adjunct of the expression, *God's Son*—“God's Son in power;” that is, *God's Son existing in the element of power, God's Son in the possession of power, God's Son in that state of things which is power.*

Our Saviour, when viewed on the inferior side of his being, that side on which He was genealogically allied to David, was characterized by manifold infirmity. He hungered; He thirsted; He became wearied; He fainted. He was capable of dying. He died. He was crucified from weakness (*ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας*). And when his body was buried, it was, like all other exanimated bodies, “sown in weakness” (1 Cor. xv. 43). Indeed, it was a matter of high moment that we should not have a high priest “who could not be (sympathetically) touched with *the feeling of our infirmities*” (Heb. iv. 15). Hence our Saviour “took part of flesh and blood” (Heb. ii. 14). Nevertheless, it was only on the one side of his complex being—his *theanthropic* being—that there was any scope for weakness. On the other He was ever *in power*. He was “the mighty God” (Isa. ix. 6). He was “the Almighty” (Rev. i. 8). He was and is “the power of God” (1 Cor. i. 24). He was made our great High

Priest "after the *power* of an endless life" (Heb. vii. 16). And hence He is "*able* to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him" (Heb. vii. 25). Even while He was on earth, He manifested, very gloriously, his Divine power. Thence emanated his miracles. "Virtue," that is, *power* (δύναμις), "went out of him" (Mark v. 30). *With power* (δύναμει), as well as with authority (ἐξουσία), He "commanded the unclean spirits, and they came out" of their victims (Luke iv. 36). He also communicated of his power to his disciples. He gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases (Luke ix. 1). And, after he ascended, his power had still wider and more unfettered scope. His sceptre is "a rod of *strength*" (δυνάμεως : see Psa. cx. 2). If need be, it can be "a rod of iron" (Psa. ii. 9). His power was exerted through his disciples in the working of miracles (Acts iii. 12-16). It was experienced within them, in ethical results, which were akin to moral miracles. He said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength—my δύναμις—is made perfect in weakness." "Most gladly, therefore," continues the Apostle, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that *the power of Christ* may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 9). He says again, in language that exhibits a glorious reflex in miniature of the Saviour's omnipotence, "I can do all things"—all things which it beseems me to do—"through Christ who *strengtheneth* me" (ἐνδυναμοῦντι : see Phil. iv. 13). He sought likewise to know more and more the "*power* of Christ's resurrection," which is just *the power of Christ as risen* (Phil. iii. 10). And hence both in terrestrial and in celestial ascriptions of praise, the words are befitting, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive [the acknowledgment of] *power*," as well as "riches, and wisdom, and

strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12). It is added, in Verse 13, "and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and *power*, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." It is manifest then that, in a very emphatic sense, *power belongeth to our Saviour*. He is, in the higher element of his complex being, *God's Son in power*.

The phrase, *God's Son in power*, is not exactly equivalent to *God's powerful Son*; for the expression *in power* is not an adjective. But those expositors, nevertheless, such as Melancthon, Paulus, Baumgarten-Crusius, who have interpreted the phrase as meaning *God's powerful Son*, have hit the Apostle's idea so far. Luther, though afterwards settling on the adverbial import of the phrase, took originally Melancthon's idea, and translated thus, *shewn to be the almighty Son of God*. Hunnius followed Melancthon; and Pareus, and Sebastian Schmidt. Not a few others, while refraining from casting the phrase into a mere adjectival form, have held that it must be connected adjunctively with the expression, *God's Son*. So Sadolet, Wettstein, Moses Stuart, Haldane, Philippi, Mehring, &c.

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NOTE ON Υἱὸς AND ΤΕΚΝΟΝ.—A slight inaccuracy of detail has crept into my article on Υἱὸς and ΤΕΚΝΟΝ, which appeared in the January number of this Magazine. The latter word is used of Jesus in a single passage: Luke ii. 48, "*Son (τέκνον)*, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" And, in the same narrative, παῖς also is applied to our Lord in simple reference to his boyhood. It will be seen at once that these exceptional instances (more particularly the former), strengthen the main conclusions of the article.—J. MASSIE.