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I.

CHRIST'S MIRACLES IN RELATION TO HIS  
PERSONALITY.

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THE person of our Lord conditions the peculiar elements of His ministry. Identified with the Adamic race suffering the miseries of sin, He is distinguished by love to the race, a love which characterizes His personal history from the beginning to the end. Righteous love is active in two ways: in what He does, and in what He says.

His doings and His sayings correspond to His personality. Jesus was what no man ever had been, He became what no man ever had become; therefore He did what no man had ever done, and He spake as no man had ever spoken.

Contrasted with the works done by other mighty men, His deeds were 'miracles;' contrasted with the doctrines taught by other great teachers, His words were 'spirit' and 'life.' His words and His deeds fit the Son of Man.

The conquests of Alexander answer to his military genius, the resources of his country and the bravery of his troops. So the conquests of Jesus over diseases, demoniacal possessions,

## II.

### CALVIN AT HOME.

BY REV. PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., LL.D.

CALVIN expresses his views on marriage in his comments on Ephesians 5 : 28-33. "It is a thing against nature," he remarks, "that any one should not love his wife, for God has ordained marriage in order that two may be made one person—a result which, certainly, no other alliance can bring about. When Moses says that a man shall leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, he shows that a man ought to prefer marriage to every other union, as being the holiest of all."

He himself was in no hurry to get married, and put it off till he was over thirty. He rather boasted that people could not charge him with having assailed Rome, as the Greeks besieged Troy, for the sake of a woman. What led him first to think of it, was the sense of loneliness and the need of proper care, that he might be able the better to serve the Church. While living at Strassburg, between 1539 and 1541, he had a housekeeper, with her son, a woman of violent temper who sorely tried his patience. At one time she abused his brother so violently that he left the house, and then she ran away, leaving her son behind. The disturbance made him sick.

He was often urged by his friend Farel (who himself found no time to think of marrying till his old age,) and by Bucer at Strassburg, to take a wife that he might enjoy the comforts of a well-ordered home. He first mentions the subject in a letter to Farel, from Strassburg, May 19, 1539, in which he says: "I am none of those insane lovers who, when once smitten with the fine figure of a woman, embrace also her faults. This only is

the beauty which allures me, if she is chaste, obliging, not fastidious, economical, patient, and careful for my health. Therefore, if you think well of it, set out immediately, lest some one else [Bucer?] gets the start of you. But if you think otherwise, we will let it pass." It seems Farel could not find a person that combined all these qualities, and the matter was dropped for several months.

In Feb. 6, 1540, Calvin, in a letter to the same friend, touched again upon the subject of matrimony, but only incidentally, as if it were a subordinate matter. After informing him about his trouble with Caroli, his discussion with Hermann, the Anabaptist, the good understanding of Charles V. and Francis I., and the alarm of the Protestant princes of Germany, he goes on to say: "Nevertheless, in the midst of such commotions as these, I am so much at my ease as to have the audacity to think of taking a wife. A certain damsel of noble rank has been proposed to me, and with a fortune above my condition. Two considerations deterred me from that connection—because she did not understand our language, and because I feared she might be too mindful of her family and education." \*

He sent his brother for another lady, who was highly recommended to him. He expected to get married March 10, and invited Farel to celebrate the wedding. But this project also failed, and he thought of abandoning all further attempts.

At last he married a member of his congregation, at Strassburg, Idelette de Bure, the widow of Jean Stordeur (or Storder) of Liège, a prominent Anabaptist whom he had converted to the orthodox faith, and who had died of the pestilence in the previous February. She was probably the daughter of Lambert de Bure who, with his fellow-citizens, had been deprived of his property and banished forever, after having been legally convicted of heresy in 1533. She was the mother of several children, poor, and in feeble health. She lived in retirement, devoted to the education of her children, and enjoyed the esteem of her friends, for her good qualities of head and heart. Calvin visited her frequently

\* Herminjard, VI. 167 sq.

as pastor, and was attracted by her quiet, modest, gentle character. He found in her what he desired—firm faith, devoted love and domestic helpfulness. He calls her “the excellent companion of my life,” “the ever-faithful assistant of my ministry,” and a “rare woman.” Beza calls her “a grave and honorable lady.”

Calvin lived in happy wedlock, but only for nine years. His wife was taken from him at Geneva, after a protracted illness, early in April, 1549. He felt the loss very deeply, and found comfort only in his work. He turned from the coffin to his study-table, and resumed the duties of his office with quiet resignation and conscientious fidelity as if nothing had happened. He remained a widower the remaining fifteen years of his life.

We know much less of Calvin's domestic life than of Luther's. He was always reticent concerning himself and his private affairs, while Luther was very frank and demonstrative. In selecting their wives neither of the Reformers had any regard to the charms of beauty and wealth which attract most lovers, nor even to intellectual endowment; they looked only to moral worth and domestic virtue. Luther married at the age of forty-one, Calvin at the age of thirty-one. Luther married a Catholic ex-nun, after having vainly recommended her to his friend Amsdorf, whom she proudly refused, looking to higher distinction. He married her under a sudden impulse in the midst of the disturbances of the Peasants' War, to the consternation of his friends, that he might please his father, tease the pope, and vex the devil. Calvin married, like Zwingli, a Protestant widow with several children; he married from esteem rather than impulse, after due reflection and the solicitation of friends.

Kathe Luther cuts a prominent figure in her husband's personal history and correspondence, and survived him several years, which she spent in poverty and affliction.

Idelette de Bure lived in modest retirement, and died in peace fifteen years before Calvin. Luther submitted as “a willing servant” to the rule of his “Lord Kathe,” but loved

her dearly, played with his children in childlike simplicity, addressed to her his last letters, and expressed his estimate of domestic happiness in the beautiful sentence: "The greatest gift of God to man is a pious, kindly, God-fearing, domestic wife."

Luther's domestic life was enlivened by quaint humor, poetry, and song; Calvin's was sober, quiet, controlled by the fear of God, and regulated by a sense of duty, but none the less happy. Nothing can be more unjust than the charge that Calvin was cold and unsympathetic. His whole correspondence proves the reverse. His letters on the death of his wife to his dearest friends reveal a deep fountain of tenderness and affection.

To Farel he wrote, April 2, 1549:—

"Intelligence of my wife's death has perhaps reached you before now. I do what I can to keep myself from being overwhelmed with grief. My friends also leave nothing undone that may administer relief to my mental suffering. When your brother left, her life was all but despaired of. When the brethren were assembled on Tuesday, they thought it best that we should join together in prayer. This was done. When Abel, in the name of the rest, exhorted her to faith and patience, she briefly (for she was now greatly worn) stated her frame of mind. I afterwards added an exhortation, which seemed to me appropriate to the occasion. And then, as she had made no allusion to her children, I, fearing that, restrained by modesty, she might be feeling an anxiety concerning them, which would cause her greater suffering than the disease itself, declared in the presence of the brethren that I should henceforth care for them as if they were my own. She replied, 'I have already committed them to the Lord.' When I replied that that was not to hinder me from doing my duty, she immediately answered, 'If the Lord shall care for them, I know they will be commended to you.' Her magnanimity was so great, that she seemed to have already left the world. About the sixth hour of the day on which she yielded up her soul to the Lord, our brother Bourgouin addressed some pious words to her, and while he was doing so, she spoke aloud, so that all saw that her heart was raised far above the world. For these were her words: 'O glorious resurrection! O God of Abraham and of all our fathers, in thee have the faithful trusted during so many past ages, and none of them have trusted in vain. I also will hope.' These short sentences were rather ejaculated than distinctly spoken. This did not come from the suggestion of others, but from her own reflections, so that she made it obvious in few words what were her own meditations. I had to go out at six o'clock. Having been removed to another apartment after seven, she immediately began to decline.

When she felt her voice suddenly failing her, she said, 'Let us pray; let us pray. All pray for me.' I had now returned. She was unable to speak, and her mind seemed to be troubled. I, having spoken a few words about the love of Christ, the hope of eternal life, concerning our married life, and her departure, engaged in prayer. In full possession of her mind, she both heard the prayer and attended to it. Before eight she expired, so calmly that those present could scarcely distinguish between her life and her death. I at present control my sorrow, so that my duties may not be interfered with. But in the meanwhile the Lord has sent other trials upon me. Adieu, brother and very excellent friend. May the Lord Jesus strengthen you by His Spirit; and may He support me also under this heavy affliction, which would certainly have overcome me, had not He, who raises up the prostrate, strengthens the weak, and refreshes the weary, stretched forth His hand from heaven to me. Salute all the brethren and your whole family."

To Viret he wrote a few days later, April 7, 1549, as follows:

"Although the death of my wife has been exceedingly painful to me, yet I subdue my grief as well as I can. Friends also are earnest in their duty to me. It might be wished, indeed, that they could profit me and themselves more; yet one can scarcely say how much I am supported by their attentions. But you know well enough how tender, or rather soft, my mind is. Had not a powerful self-control, therefore, been vouchsafed to me, I could not have borne up so long. And truly mine is no common source of grief. I have been bereaved of *the best companion of my life*, of one who, had it been so ordered, would not only have been the willing sharer of my indigence, but even of my death. During her life she was *the faithful helper of my ministry*. From her I never experienced the slightest hindrance. She was never troublesome to me throughout the entire course of her illness; she was more anxious about her children than about herself. As I feared these private cares might annoy her to no purpose, I took occasion, on the third day before her death, to mention that I would not fail in discharging my duty to her children. Taking up the matter immediately, she said, 'I have already committed them to God.' When I said that that was not to prevent me from caring for them, she replied, 'I know you will not neglect what you know has been committed to God.' Lately, also, when a certain woman insisted that she should talk with me regarding these matters, I, for the first time, heard her give the following brief answer: 'Assuredly the principal thing is that they live a pious and holy life. My husband is not to be urged to instruct them in religious knowledge and in the fear of God. If they be pious, I am sure he will gladly be a father to them; but if not, they do not deserve that I should ask for aught in their behalf.' This nobleness of mind will weigh more with me than a hundred recommendations. Many thanks for your friendly consolation. Adieu, most excellent and honest brother. May the Lord Jesus watch over and direct yourself and your wife. Present my best wishes to her and to the brethren."

In reply to this letter, Viret wrote to Calvin, April 10, 1549:

"Wonderfully and incredibly have I been refreshed, not by empty rumors alone, but especially by numerous messengers who have informed me how you, with a heart so broken and lacerated, have attended to all your duties even better than hitherto, . . . and that, above all, at a time when grief was so fresh, and on that account all the more severe, might have prostrated your mind. Go on then as you have begun, . . . and I pray God most earnestly that you may be enabled to do so, and that you may receive daily greater comfort, and be strengthened more and more."

Calvin's character shines in the same favorable light at the loss of his son, who died in infancy (1542). He thanked Viret and his wife (he always sends greetings to Viret's wife and daughter) for their tender sympathy with him in this bereavement, stating that Idelette would write herself also, but for her grief. "The Lord," he says, "has dealt us a severe blow in taking from us our son; but it is our Father who knows what is best for His children."\* He found compensation for his want of offspring in the multitude of his spiritual children. "God has given me a little son, and taken him away, but I have myriads of children in the whole Christian world."

How deeply Calvin sympathized with his friends in domestic affliction, we have a most striking testimony in a private letter which was never intended for publication. It is the best proof of his extraordinary fidelity as a pastor. While he was in attendance at the Colloquy and Diet in Ratisbon, as a delegate from Strassbourg, the pestilence carried away, among other friends, Louis de Richebourg, who, together with his older brother, Claude, lived in his house at Strassburg as a student and *pensionnaire*, under the tutorship of Claude Féray, Calvin's dearly beloved assistant. On hearing the sad intelligence, early in April, 1541, he wrote to his father—a gentleman from Normandy, probably the lord of the village de Richebourg, between Rouen and Beauvais, but otherwise un-

\* Aug. 19, 1542, at the close. *Opera*, XI., 430.

known to us—a long letter of condolence and comfort, from which we give the following extracts : \* —

“RATISBON, (Month of April.) 1541.

“When I first received the intelligence of the death of Claude, and of your son Louis, I was so utterly overpowered (*tout esperdu et confus en mon esprit*) that for many days I was fit for nothing but to weep; and although I was somehow upheld before the Lord by those aids wherewith He sustains our souls in affliction among men, however, I was almost a nonentity; so far at least as regards my discharge of duty, I appeared to myself quite as unfit for it as if I had been half dead (*un homme demi-mort*). On the one hand, I was sadly grieved that a most excellent and faithful friend [Claude Féray] had been snatched away from me—a friend with whom I was so familiar, that none could be more closely united than we were; on the other hand, there arose another cause of grief, when I saw the young man, your son, taken away in the very flower of his age, a youth of most excellent promise, whom I loved as a son, because, on his part, he showed that respectful affection towards me as he would to another father.

“To this grievous sorrow was still added the heavy and distressing anxiety we experienced about those whom the Lord had spared to us. I heard that the whole household were scattered here and there. The danger of Malherbe caused me very great misery, as well as the cause of it, and warned me also as to the rest. I considered that it could not be otherwise but that my wife must be very much dismayed. Your Charles, † I assure you, was continually recurring to my thoughts; for in proportion as he was endowed with that goodness of disposition which had always appeared in him towards his brother, as well as his preceptor, it never occurred to me to doubt but that he would be steeped in sorrow and soaked in tears. One single consideration somewhat relieved me, that he had my brother along with him, who, I hoped, would prove no small comfort in this calamity; even that, however, I could not reckon upon, when, at the same time, I recollected that both were in jeopardy, and neither of them were yet beyond the reach of danger. Thus, until the letter arrived which informed me that Malherbe was out of danger, and that Charles, my brother, wife, and the others were safe, I would have been all but utterly cast down, unless, as I have already mentioned, my heart was refreshed in prayer and private meditations, which are suggested by His Word . . .

“The son whom the Lord had lent you for a season He has taken away.

\*The letter was written in French and translated into Latin by Beza in his edition of *Calvini Epistolæ*, Geneva, 1575, p. 280 (under the wrong date of 1540). See *Opera*, XI. 188 sqq.; Herminjard, VII. 66-73; Bonnet-Constable, I. 222-229. I have used Constable's translation after comparing it with the French original. The concluding part, however, is only extant in Beza's Latin version.

† The older son of M. de Richebourg.



There is no ground, therefore, for those silly and wicked complaints of foolish men: O blind death! O hard fate! O implacable daughters of Destiny! O cruel fortune! The Lord who had lodged him here for a season, at this stage of his career has called him away. What the Lord has done, we must, at the same time, consider has not been done rashly, nor by chance, neither from having been impelled from without, but by that determinate counsel, whereby He not only foresees, decrees, and executes nothing but what is just and upright in itself, but also nothing but what is good and wholesome for us. Where justice and good judgment reign paramount, where it is impious to remonstrate, when, however, our advantage is bound up in that goodness, how great would be the degree of ingratitude not to acquiesce, with a calm and well-ordered temper of mind, in whatever is the wish of our Father . . .

“It is God who has sought back from you your son, whom He had committed to you to be educated, on the condition that he might always be His own. And, therefore, He took him away because it was both of advantage to him to leave this world, and by this bereavement to humble you, or to make trial of your patience. If you do not understand the advantage of this, without delay, first of all, setting aside every other object of consideration, ask of God that He may show you. Should it be His will to exercise you still farther, by concealing it from you, submit to that will, that you may become wiser than the weakness of thine own understanding can ever attain to. In what regards your son, if you bethink yourself how difficult it is, in this most deplorable age, to maintain an upright course through life, you will judge him to be blessed, who, before encountering so many coming dangers which already were hovering over him, and to be encountered in his day and generation, was so early delivered from them all. He is like one who has set sail upon a stormy and tempestuous sea, and before he has been carried out into the deeps, gets in safety to the secure haven. Nor, indeed, is long life to be reckoned so great a benefit of God, that we can lose anything, when separated only for the space of a few years, we are introduced to a life which is far better. Now, certainly, because the Lord Himself, who is the Father of us all, had willed that Louis should be put among the children as a son of His adoption, He bestows this benefit upon you, out of the multitude of His mercies, that you might reap the excellent fruit of your careful education before his death; whence also you might know your interest in the blessings that belonged to you, ‘I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.’

“From his earliest boyhood, so far as his years allowed, Louis was grounded in the best studies, and had already made such a competent proficiency and progress, that we entertained great hope of him for the future. His manners and behavior had met with the approval of all good men. If at any time he fell into error, he not only patiently suffered the word of admonition, but also that of reproof, and proved himself teachable and obedient, and willing to hearken to advice . . . That, however, which we rate most highly in him was, that he had imbibed so largely the principles of piety, that he had not merely

a correct and true understanding of religion, but had also been faithfully imbued with the unfeigned fear and reverence of God.

"This exceeding kindness of God toward your offspring ought with good reason to prevail more effectually with you in soothing the bitterness of death, than death itself have power to inflict grief upon you.

"With reference to my own feelings, if your sons had never come hither at all, I should never have been grieved on account of the death of Claude and Louis. Never, however, shall this most crushing sorrow, which I suffer on account of both, so overcome me, as to reflect with grief upon that day on which they were driven hither by the hand of God to us, rather than led by any settled purpose of their own, when that friendship commenced which has not only continued undiminished to the last, but which, from day to day, was rather increased and confirmed. Whatever, therefore, may have been the kind or model of education they were in search of, I rejoice that they lived under the same roof with me. And since it was appointed them to die, I rejoice also that they died under my roof, where they rendered back their souls to God more composedly, and in greater circumstance of quiet, than if they had happened to die in those places where they would have experienced greater annoyance from the importunity of those by whom they ought to have been assisted, than from death itself. On the contrary, it was in the midst of pious exhortations, and while calling upon the name of the Lord, that these sainted spirits fled from the communion of their brethren here to the bosom of Christ. Nor would I desire now to be free from all sorrow at the cost of never having known them. Their memory will ever be sacred to me to the end of my days, and I am persuaded that it will also be sweet and comforting.

"But what advantage, you will say, is it to me to have had a son of so much promise, since he has been torn away from me in the first flower of his youth? As if, forsooth, Christ had not merited, by His death, the supreme dominion over the living and the dead! And if we belong to Him (as we ought), why may He not exercise over us the power of life and of death? However brief, therefore, either in your opinion or in mine, the life of your son may have been, it ought to satisfy us that he has finished the course which the Lord had marked out for him.

"Moreover, we may not reckon him to have perished in the flower of his age, who had grown ripe in the sight of the Lord. For I consider all to have arrived at maturity who are summoned away by death; unless, perhaps, one would contend with Him, as if He can snatch away any one before his time. This, indeed, holds true of every one; but in regard to Louis, it is yet more certain on another and more peculiar ground. For he had arrived at that age, when, by true evidence, he could prove himself a member of the body of Christ: having put forth this fruit, he was taken from us and transplanted. Yes, instead of this transient and vanishing shadow of life, he has regained the real immortality of being.

"Nor can you consider yourself to have lost him, whom you will recover in the blessed resurrection in the kingdom of God. For they had both so lived

and so died, that I cannot doubt but they are now with the Lord. Let us, therefore, press forward toward this goal which they have reached. There can be no doubt but that Christ will bind together both them and us in the same inseparable society, in that incomparable participation of His own glory. Beware, therefore, that you do not lament your son as lost, whom you acknowledge to be preserved by the Lord, that he may remain yours forever, who, at the pleasure of His own will, lent him to you only for a season . . .

“Neither do I insist upon your laying aside all grief. Nor, in the school of Christ, do we learn any such philosophy as requires us to put off that common humanity with which God has endowed us, that, being men, we should be turned into stones. These considerations reach only so far as this, that you do set bounds, and, as it were, temper even your most reasonable sadness; that, having shed those tears which were due to nature and to fatherly affection, you by no means give way to senseless wailing. Nor do I by any means interfere because I am distrustful of your prudence, firmness, or high-mindedness; but only lest I might here be wanting, and come short in my duty to you.

“Moreover, I have requested Melancthon and Bucer that they would also add their letters to mine, because I entertained the hope that it would not be unacceptable that they too should afford some evidence of their good-will toward you.

“Adieu, most distinguished sir, and my much-respected in the Lord. May Christ the Lord keep you and your family, and direct you all with His own Spirit, until you may arrive where Louis and Claude have gone before.”