**Calvin’s *Institutes of Christian Religion***

Lesson 29: Final Resurrection (Book 3, Chapter 25)

**Chapter 25:** **The Final Resurrection**

1. Having talked about the ultimate destination of people – election unto salvation and reprobation unto condemnation, Calvin now finishes book 3 with a discussion of the final resurrection.
2. 1 Peter 1:8-9 – “**8**Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, **9**obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”
3. “Our final restoration – including our bodily resurrection – brings about the fulfillment of all God’s promises to us.” --J. Mark Beach
4. “When, therefore, with our eyes fast fixed on Christ we wait upon heaven, and nothing on earth hinders them [our eyes] from bearing us to the promised blessedness, the statement is truly fulfilled “that where our treasure is, our heart is” [Matt. 6: 21].”
5. We need this hope because Calvin says because it is hard for us to climb over numerous obstacles such as our own sin and misery, the jests of profane men, and temptations all around us.
6. “Accordingly, he alone has fully profited in the gospel who has accustomed himself to continual meditation upon the blessed resurrection.”
7. Philippians 3:8 – “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ”
8. Romans 8:19-23 [The Groaning of Creation]
9. Of course, believing that there is a resurrection is difficult. It doesn’t seem natural and none of us have witnessed somebody rise from the dead. So God provides us with hope and assurance in the following ways:
   1. Christ’s example [1 Cor 15.13-26]
   2. God’s omnipotence
10. Philippians 3:20-21 – “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it [heaven] we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21**who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”
11. “Christ rose again that He might have us as companions in the life to come.”
12. Concerning God’s omnipotence, Calvin writes, “let us remember that no one is truly persuaded of the coming resurrection unless he is seized with wonder, and ascribes to the power of God its due glory. Isaiah, lifted up by this assurance, exclaims: “Thy dead men shall live; my body shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and praise” [Isa. 26:19].”
13. Job 19:25-26 – “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. **26** And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God”
14. Ezekiel 37:1-10 [Vision of Dry Bones]

*Objections by those who Deny the Resurrection*

1. Pope John XXII (1316-1334) and perhaps Luther: The soul sleeps when the body sleeps and the soul will be resurrected with the body.
   1. Calvin responds with 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 which says, “We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, **7**for we walk by faith, not by sight. **8**Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord”
   2. “Since Scripture everywhere bids us wait in expectation for Christ’s coming, and defers until then the crown of glory, let us be content with the limits divinely set for us: namely, that the souls of the pious, having ended the toil of their warfare, enter into blessed rest, where in glad expectation they await the enjoyment of promised glory, and so all things are held in suspense until Christ the Redeemer appear.”
   3. Westminster Shorter Catechism #37: “The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, (Heb. 12:23) and do immediately pass into glory; (2 Cor. 5:1,6,8, Phil. 1:23, Luke 23:43) and their bodies, being still united to Christ, (1 Thess. 4:14) do rest in their graves, (Isa. 57:2) till the resurrection. (Job 19:26–27)”
2. Socinus: The soul will be given a completely new body at the resurrection so our current flesh will not be resurrected.
   1. Calvin responds by saying, “as to substance we shall be raised again in the same flesh we now bear, but that the quality will be different." Why? Because of our resurrection being like Christ’s resurrection. The body that was crucified on the cross must be the same body that enters into heaven and remains there. Calvin writes, "He [Jesus] received again the mortal body which he had previously borne. And it would not profit us much if the body which had been offered as an atoning sacrifice had been destroyed and replaced by a new one." Our present union with Christ consists of a union with both Christ's death and resurrection. Then Calvin points to the examples of Enoch and Elijah in the Old Testament. Their bodies were merely taken into heaven - the quality was changed but not the essence of the flesh.
   2. Part of the thinking that lies behind this objection is that the body (material things) are evil and only the soul (spiritual things) are good. This is heresy. God created the material as well as the spiritual and He calls our present bodies the temple of the Holy Spirit. Calvin asks would God give such honor to our present bodies if He intended them to return to dust forever?
   3. “Even our burial rites function to teach us that new life is prepared for the bodies we place in the ground. The Bible reminds us that sleep – which refers to the body – can be a metaphor for death (1 Cor. 15:6, 18; 1 Thess. 4:14-16). The word ‘cemetery,’ Calvin reminds us, means ‘sleeping place.’”

*The Resurrection of the Ungodly*

1. John 5:28-29 – “Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice **29**and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”
2. Just as the wicked share in God’s common grace in this life, so incidentally they too will be resurrected, but it’s not to the same end as the resurrection of believers. We are raised to newness of life; they are raised to eternal condemnation.
3. We will be raised happy and holy and enjoy God’s presence forever. They will be eternally miserable in their separation from God.
4. For the elect, Calvin writes, “If the Lord will share his glory, power, and righteousness with the elect— nay, will give himself to be enjoyed by them and, what is more excellent, will somehow make them to become one with himself, let us remember that every sort of happiness is included under this benefit.”
5. For the wicked, Calvin writes, “Now, because no description can deal adequately with the gravity of God’s vengeance against the wicked, their torments and tortures are figuratively expressed to us by physical things, that is, by darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth [Matt. 8:12; 22:13], unquenchable fire [Matt. 3:12; Mark 9:43; Isa. 66:24], an undying worm gnawing at the heart [Isa. 66:24]. By such expressions the Holy Spirit certainly intended to confound all our senses with dread: as when he speaks of “a deep Gehenna prepared from eternity, fed with fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it” [Isa. 30:33].”
6. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 – “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,”
7. “Unhappy consciences find no rest from being troubled and tossed by a terrible whirlwind, from feeling that they are being torn asunder by a hostile Deity, pierced and lanced by deadly darts, quaking at God’s lightning bolt, and being crushed by the weight of his hand— so that it would be more bearable to go down into any bottomless depths and chasms than to stand for a moment in these terrors.”