THE BODY IN CALVIN'S THEOLOGY

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First of all, I want to express appreciation for the invitation to me last spring to present a paper on "The Body in Calvin's Theology" at this fifth Calvin Studies Colloquium. It is more than a little fearful for me, as a country preacher, to appear on this program with so many distinguished Calvin scholars. I am especially grateful for the privilege of being allowed to go first instead of having to attempt to follow any of the others. Now, on to the matter at hand.

The understanding of the body in the theology of John Calvin has been a topic of increasing interest and some disagreement in recent years. Studies such as Wilhelm Niesel's *The Theology of Calvin* (1938) and T. F. Torrance's *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (1952) contain helpful expositions of the relationship of the body to the soul. In the late 1940s, John H. Leith pointed out that Calvin's writings exhibit an "inconsistency . . . in the confusion between Hebraic and Platonic interpretations of the relationship of soul and body." Charles Partee, in *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (1977), acknowledges Calvin's indebtedness to "the philosophers" and even his adoption of "the soul-body dualism," but he goes on to argue that Calvin's criticism of and differences from the philosophers, especially in his teaching of the resurrection of the body, render any Platonic influence "weak" at best.[1]

One article which focuses directly upon today's topic is by Margaret R. Miles: "Theology, Anthropology, and the Human Body in Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*" (1981). Other recent related works include William J. Bouwsma's *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (1988), Charles L. Cooke's "Calvin's Illnesses and Their Relation to Christian Vocation" (1888), and Mary Potter Engel's *John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology* (1988).[2]

Now I want to turn to the sources to see what Calvin says about the body and what part that plays in his theology. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, there are two main clusters of texts about the body which shall inform this study. The first is in Book One and has to do with the body created. The second is in Book Three and has to do with the body resurrected. We might expect to find a similar cluster of texts near the beginning of Book Two about the body fallen, but most of the references there are instead to "the flesh," a Pauline distinction to which we shall return. There is a group of texts about the body in Book Four which primarily refer to the body of Christ and have to do with the Lord's supper.

First, then, we shall turn to Book One. Early references to the body show a high appreciation for the beauty and wonders of the body created, particularly as indicators of the wisdom of God the Creator.

> In regard to the structure of the human body, one must have the greatest keenness in order to weigh . . . its articulation, symmetry, beauty, and use. But yet, as all acknowledge, the human body shows itself to be a composition so ingenious that its Artificer is rightly judged a wonder-worker.[3]

Calvin adds to this a comment on Psalm 8:2: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast established strength," that the Psalmist "not only declares that a clear mirror of God's works is in humankind, but that infants, while they nurse at their mothers' breasts, have tongues so eloquent to preach his glory that there is no need at all of other orators." He also understands the mouth, eyes, and even toenails to be "exquisite workmanship." Of course, we have to admit that three sentences later Calvin makes reference to the human being as "a five-foot worm"! Nevertheless, the first word on the topic, and one we must not forget, is one of great appreciation for the beauty and intricacy of the human body, such wonder that requires a wonder-worker for its Maker.[4]

This having been established, the second step is to distinguish the soul from the body. Calvin understands such powers of the mind as memory, imagination, meditation, and the ability to do astronomy as "unfailing signs of divinity," which is to say that the soul is something more than, and different from, the body.[5] Calvin insists that this should be obvious, but he proceeds to argue for it.

> . . . that man consists of a soul and body ought to be beyond controversy. Now I understand by the term "soul" an immortal yet created essence, which is his nobler part. . . . when the soul is freed from the prison house of the body, God is its perpetual guardian.[6]

Several important and yet potentially misleading points are made. These have to do, of course, with the nature of the soul, the nature of the body, and the relationship between the two. Calvin writes that the soul is "immortal yet created." The immortality of the soul will continue as an important theme throughout the *Institutes*. The qualification inserted here, the creatureliness of the soul, is equally important. Without it, the expression "the immortality of the soul" could carry connotations of coeternity with God or of some self-contained power of continuing existence. These sorts of ideas would be totally alien to Calvin's thought. His emphasis upon the creatureliness of the soul guards against these. To say that the soul is created means that it had a beginning in time, that it could, potentially, come to an end in time, and that it exists from moment to moment by the sheer grace of God. The significance of this is that the soul shares with the body in the creatureliness of human beings. It is not the case, for Calvin's understanding, that some eternal soul has been momentarily linked with all the finitude of some poor body. Instead, both the soul and the body are created. This shared characteristic may prove to be more important than the characteristics that distinguish them.

The next thing to note is Calvin's depiction of the body. The terms he applies to it include "earth," "dust," earthen vessel,"[7] "houses of clay," "tabernacle of the flesh," "what is corruptible,"[8] "house,"[9] "hut," "tent," and "earthly house."[10] These do not need to be discussed separately. Suffice it to say that Calvin understands the soul to reside in the body.

> . . . we have already taught that the soul is an incorporeal substance; now we must add that, although properly it is not spatially limited, still, set in the body, it dwells there as in a house; not only that it may animate all its parts and render its organs fit and useful for their actions, but also that it may hold the first place in ruling man's life, not alone with respect to the duties of his earthly life, but at the same time to arouse him to honor God.[11]

There is one additional and most striking term in this category which does warrant more attention. That is, Calvin writes of "the prison house of the body," as if the soul were incarcerated there. He uses this full phrase "prison house of the body" at least five times,[12]

as well as the related expressions of "prison,"[13] "prison of our body,"[14] "earthly prison of the body,"[15] "narrow prison of an earthly body,"[16] "fetters of an earthly body,"[17] "bonds of the body,"[18] and the related terms of "prison of the flesh,"[19] and, at least two times, "prison house of the flesh."[20] Clearly, the expression is a favorite one. It has been established that the idea of the body as a prison of the soul comes from Plato. The questions are: What freight does this phrase carry? What does it mean? What does it contribute to the discussion? At the very weakest, it indicates that the soul is attached to the body during this earthly life. Beyond this, it would seem to indicate that the relationship between the soul and body is temporary and hostile. But these conclusions would be problematic. Although death frees the soul from the body, the resurrection reunites them, as we shall see. Although there are discontinuities as well as continuities in the relationship between the body created and the body resurrected, if the ultimate destiny of body and soul is to be together, it hardly seems appropriate to think of the relationship as temporary. Moreover, the element of hostility seems to be a characteristic more of the struggle between spirit and flesh than of the relationship between soul and body. For these reasons, the expression "prison house of the body" seems to be a common phrase that is not helpful in expressing what Calvin finally says. At best, it is an infelicity. At worst, if taken literally, it indicates an inconsistency.

Another word needs to be said about the distinction between the body and soul. Calvin writes, "when the soul is freed from the prison house of the body, God is its perpetual guardian."[21] What, exactly, does this word "perpetual" mean? The most immediate meaning of the sentence is that when the body dies, the soul is cared for and sustained in its continuing existence by the grace of God. This seems to be an answer to the question, What happens to the soul when it no longer has the body to sustain it? But the question is not quite right, and the answer is misleading. It is not the body which sustains the soul during this life, but the soul which animates the body. Still, it is God who sustains them both, from their beginning, so it is incorrect to suggest that only at death does the soul pass into God's care. Moreover, we have to ask whether the word perpetual means "everlasting," as in forever, or "continual," as in from moment to moment, without interruption. The former makes sense for an immortal soul, except that again, as with the expression "prison house of the body," we run into problems with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. If God takes special care of the soul while it is outside the body, and this care is everlasting, it would deny the resurrection of the body. Calvin does use the word "perpetual" in other places in ways that suggest that it means "continual." For instance, in his commentary on Genesis 1:6-9, he writes that God restrains the waters of the seas from overflowing the dry land not by barriers of mere sand but by command, by "perpetual ordinance."[22] Since eventually the earth will come to an end, this perpetual ordinance is not everlasting but is continual, remaining in constant effect from moment to moment, without interruption. This would express better the care God provides for a soul without a body, except that, again, we do not want to imply that the soul is without God's care when it is in a body! We shall return to this when we take up the discussion of the "intermediate state" between death and resurrection.

One problem which arises with this stress upon the distinction of body and soul is the possibility of separating them, conceptually, with a tendency toward understanding the body as animal and the soul as the seat of what is human. Calvin does not permit this. While he understands the soul to be the "nobler part," he nevertheless states clearly that "the soul is not man."[23] A special aspect of the creaturely unity of body and soul is that human beings were created in the image of God, which image Calvin perceives to extend to both component parts of the human being.

> . . . the likeness of God extends to the whole excellence by which man's nature towers over all the kinds of living creatures. . . . And although the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its powers, yet there was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow.[24]

The understanding of "the image of God" in human beings is a whole other topic.[25] For our purposes, it is enough to say that the presence of the image of God in both body and soul, for Calvin, provides a safeguard against overstating their distinction or supposing that their distinction leads to any separation. The fundamental unity of human being is stressed again, when Calvin uses it as an analogy for the unity of the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ.

> If anything like this great mystery can be found in human affairs, the most apposite parallel seems to be that of man, whom we see to consist of two substances. Yet neither is so mingled with the other as not to retain its own distinctive nature. for the soul is not the body, and the body is not the soul. Therefore, some things are said exclusively of the soul that can in no wise apply to the body; and of the body, again, that in no way fit the soul; of the whole man, that cannot refer—except inappropriately—to either soul or body separately. Finally, the characteristics of the mind are [sometimes] transferred to the body, and those of the body to the soul. Yet he who consists of these parts is one man, not many. Such expressions signify both that there is one person in man composed of two elements joined together, and that there are two diverse underlying natures that make up this person. Thus, also, the Scriptures speak of Christ.[26]

Having dealt with Calvin's appreciation for the beauty and intricacy of the human body, and having explored the relationship of distinction from, yet unity with, the soul, we need to take note of Calvin's awareness of the fragility of the body, the vicissitudes of life, and the constant closeness of death.

> Innumerable are the evils that beset human life; innumerable, too, the deaths that threaten it. We need not go beyond ourselves: since our body is the receptacle of a thousand diseases—in fact holds within itself and fosters the causes of diseases—a man cannot go about unburdened by many forms of his own destruction, and without drawing out a life enveloped, as it were, with death. For what else would you call it, when he neither freezes nor sweats without danger? Now, wherever you turn, all things around you not only are hardly to be trusted but almost openly menace, and seem to threaten immediate death. Embark on a ship, you are one step away from death. Mount a horse, if one foot slips, your life is imperiled. Go through the city streets, you are subject to as many dangers as there are tiles on the roofs. If there is a weapon in your hand or a friend's, harm awaits. All the fierce animals you see are armed for your destruction. But if you try to shut yourself up in a walled garden, seemingly delightful, there a serpent sometimes lies hidden. Your house, continually in danger of fire, threatens in the daytime to impoverish you, at night even to collapse upon you. Your field, since it is exposed to hail, frost, drought, and other calamities, threatens you with barrenness, and hence, famine. I pass over poisonings, ambushes, robberies, open violence, which in part besiege us at home, in part dog us abroad. Amid these tribulations must not man be most miserable, since, but

> half alive in life, he weakly draws his anxious and languid breath, as if he has a sword perpetually hanging over his neck?[27]

While our topic has to do with the body in Calvin's theology, we do well to note that Calvin knew of what he spoke and that he had firsthand knowledge of the affliction of the body by many diseases. Charles Cooke has given us an excellent account of these diseases: chronic tophaceous gout, chronic pulmonary tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, hemorrhoids, spastic bowel syndrome, and migraine headaches.[28]

> These illnesses have several things in common. All are capable of causing severe pain or severe difficulty in breathing. All are capable of producing severe weight loss, anemia, and weakness.[29]

Calvin probably died of septicemia, brought about either by renal failure or uremia.[30] In his own life, in his own body, Calvin had every reason to be acutely aware of the fragility of the body. At the same time, Calvin exhibited the tenacity of human purpose to overcome adversity, hardship, and disease, continuing to work tremendously productively. He wrote to Madame Coligny, "It seems that illnesses must serve as medicines for us, to purge us of attachment to the world and to cut off what is superfluous in us."[31]

Of course, the eventual outcome of bodily disease is death, and Calvin was familiar with that, too. As Bouwsma has brought to our attention from one of Calvin's sermons, "Well, it is true that I see my body decaying. If any strength remains, it declines from day to day, and I contemplate death without having to seek it ten leagues away."[32] In the *Institutes*, Calvin expands upon the sixth commandment to say not only that we should not kill but that we are commanded to act so as to prevent death, harm, and injury.

> To sum up, then, all violence, injury, and any harmful thing at all that may injure our neighbor's body are forbidden to us. We are accordingly commanded, if we find anything of use to us in saving our neighbors' lives, faithfully to employ it; if there is anything that makes for their peace, to see to it; if anything harmful, to ward it off; if they are in any danger, to lend a helping hand.[33]

All of these things show that Calvin, in his theology, appreciated the beauty of the body, portrayed its relationship to the soul, and was fully aware of the contingencies of human life, the susceptibility of the body, as an earthen vessel, to disease, death, and decay.

Having reviewed the first major cluster of texts on the body created, we need to examine briefly some texts about fallen humanity and the relationship of the body to the flesh. These occur near the beginning of Book Two. The problem began when Adam did not believe the word of God. This originated what we know as original sin, which has three critical characteristics: It is universal as to its extent throughout humanity, it is total in its taint of the whole human being, and it is continual in its effect of producing particular sins.[34] Original sin does not originate from the human body but instead has to do with the fallenness of humanity. Total depravity means that human being, as a unity, is involved in sin. And "so long as we dwell in the prison house of our body we must continually contend with the defects of our corrupt nature."[35] The overall effect of the doctrine of original sin upon our understanding of the body in Calvin's theology is to emphasize the unity of body and soul in the wholeness of human being.

Once these characteristics of original sin have been explicated, Calvin turns to a discussion of fallen human nature. While the terms "body" and "soul" were helpful in

discussing the body as created, now the terms "flesh" and "spirit" are brought into play. Calvin can use the word "flesh" simply to mean "body," but here it is used in a Pauline sense to designate the attitude of human opposition to God.[36] To develop a full understanding of what he means by "flesh" would require a separate study. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that when "flesh" is being used in contrast to "spirit" and to indicate the sinfulness of humanity, it does not refer simply to the body as such but to the fallen condition of humanity which involves both body and soul.

The remainder of Book Two deals with the knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, as disclosed both under the law and in the gospel. There are a few references made to the body in Calvin's discussion of the law. While human laws can bind only the outward behavior of the body and not "search out secret thoughts," God's law applies to both body and soul.[37] As created, the body not only has beauty and intricacy but also provides opportunity for disease, death, and decay. As part of the fallen human being, the body provides opportunity for the sinful inclinations of the flesh. And as addressed by the gospel—for surely the law is an instrument of the gospel—the body provides opportunity for obedience.

Under the explication of particular laws, we have already seen that the sixth commandment, the prohibition of killing, forbids any bodily injury and commands all efforts in saving life. Of course, the law goes beyond outward behavior to speak to the mind, also, but our point here is that the body as addressed by the law can participate in obedience to the law or, for that matter, disobedience. It is also of note that the commandment against killing involves an appreciation of the body and life of the neighbor. This appreciation has a twofold basis in the awareness of the image of God in human being and the awareness of the neighbor being "our flesh." This cannot mean flesh as the sinful orientation of the self—although that would be shared also—but means instead our human, bodily kinship. Of course, refraining from murder does not entirely fulfill the law. But refraining from murder is important both because God expressly prohibits murder and because God created the human body and it is good.[38]

The seventh commandment, "You shall not commit adultery," also lends itself to consideration of bodily obedience and disobedience.

> . . . the Lord sufficiently provided for us in this matter when he established marriage, the fellowship of which, begun on his authority, he also sanctified with his blessing. From this it is clear that any other union apart from marriage is accursed in his sight; and that the companionship of marriage has been ordained as a necessary remedy to keep us from plunging into unbridled lust.[39]

Bouwsma has gleaned from Calvin's commentaries, sermons, and letters a number of additional texts about marriage, sex, adultery, lasciviousness, reproduction, bodily pleasure, love, the attractiveness of the shapeliness of a fine female figure, and a mother's breast and bosom.[40] Altogether, we must say again that the body, including its sexual aspects, has been created good. The fall has involved it in disorientation away from God, away from good, and toward evil. The gospel, speaking even through the law, means that there are possibilities of obedience and of lawful enjoyment of bodily pleasure. On the other hand, there are dangers of bodily disobedience even in actions that fall short of physical adultery, such as seducing "the modesty of another with wanton dress and obscene gestures and foul speech."[41]

> . . . if you aspire to obedience let neither your heart burn with wicked lust within, nor your eyes wantonly run into corrupt desires, nor your body be decked with bawdy ornaments, nor your tongue seduce your mind to like thoughts with filthy words, nor your appetite inflame it with intemperance. For all vices of this sort are like blemishes, which besmirch the purity of chastity.[42]

To review, Book Two begins with less discussion of the body than of the flesh, a sinful orientation of the self that involves both body and soul. Under a discussion of divine law, Calvin presents the body, along with the soul, as the occasion for either obedience or disobedience. In both his treatment of fallen humanity before redemption and his presentation of gospel and law, Calvin maintains the distinction between body and soul that we found in Book One, but also, in both books, places this within a larger unity of human being.

Now we can turn to Book Three, which contains a number of references to the body, including that second major cluster of texts which is about the body resurrected. We have already consulted several of these references in regard to the image of the body as a prison for the soul. One of these, having to do with both the difficulty and yet the progress of the Christian life, provides an appropriate lead-in to the discussion of death and resurrection.

> . . . no one in this earthly prison of the body has sufficient strength to press on with due eagerness, and weakness so weighs down the greater number that, with wavering and limping and even creeping along the ground, they move at a feeble rate. . . . Only let us look toward our mark with sincere simplicity and aspire to our goal; not fondly flattering ourselves, nor excusing our own evil deeds, but with continuous effort striving toward this end: that we may surpass ourselves in goodness until we attain to goodness itself. . . . But we shall attain it only when we have cast off the weakness of the body, and are received into full fellowship with him.[43]

Obviously, the body is weak. But lethargy in the Christian life is properly assigned not to the body but to the crippling influence of the flesh. Moreover, a question is raised about the timing of the attainment of goodness and our reception into "full fellowship" with God: Does this occur immediately after death and before the final resurrection, or only during the final resurrection? This is related to our earlier question about the strength of the image of the body as a prison and the meaning of God's "perpetual" guardianship of the soul after it is freed from its prison by death. Does "perpetual" mean forever—which would tend to deny the resurrection of the body—or does it mean only until the resurrection, or does it perhaps mean something else?

The questions are intensified as we go along. For instance:

> . . . if heaven is our homeland, what else is the earth but our place of exile? If departure from the world is entry into life, what else is the world but a sepulcher? And what else is it for us to remain in life but to be immersed in death? If to be freed from the body is to be released into perfect freedom, what else is the body but a prison? If to enjoy the presence of God is the summit of happiness, is not to be without this, misery? But until we leave the world "we are away from the Lord." Therefore, if the earthly life be compared with the heavenly, it is doubtless to be at once despised and trampled under foot.[44]

It would seem that "heaven," "life," "perfect freedom," and "the summit of happiness" all have to do with a final release of the soul from the body and with the immortality of the soul. What, then, of the resurrection, of the ultimate disposition of the body, and therefore of its relation to human being? Calvin continues along these lines with an encouragement for "zeal for death" and a strong reprimand for any Christian "fear of death."[45] He justifies this by an appeal to the resurrection:

> For if we deem this unstable, defective, corruptible, fleeting, wasting, rotting tabernacle of our body to be so dissolved that it is soon renewed unto a firm, perfect, incorruptible, and finally, heavenly glory, will not faith compel us ardently to seek what nature dreads? If we should think that through death we are recalled from exile to dwell in the fatherland, in the heavenly fatherland, would we get no comfort from this fact?
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> Let us, however, consider this settled: that no one has made progress in the school of Christ who does not joyfully await the day of death and final resurrection.[46]

In a single breath, Calvin turns from release from the body by death to full renewal of the body in resurrection. The two are not incompatible, if the understandings of earthly body and resurrected body are sufficiently qualified. But then problems arise about the relationships of continuity and discontinuity between the two kinds of body—if that is a proper expression of distinction.

This tension is heightened in the chapter on prayer. There Calvin tells us that our "bodies" are—or at least, "ought to be"—God's "temples," and that "the glory of God" shines in the tongue, which part of the body has been "assigned and destined" for the task of keeping the "unstable and variable" mind attentive to God, through singing, proclaiming the praise of God, and public prayer.[47] Note that here strength is assigned to the body and weakness to the mind. Moreover, the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "give us this day our daily bread," teaches us that God cares for our bodies and for our bodily lives.[48] The nature of this care provides us with a striking insight into the lack of independence bodily life has from God.

> . . . not even an abundance of bread would benefit us in the slightest unless it were divinely turned into nourishment. Accordingly, this generosity of God is necessary no less for the rich man than for the poor; for with full cellars and storehouses, men would faint with thirst and hunger unless they enjoyed their bread through his grace.
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> . . . what is in our hand is not even ours except in so far as he bestows each little potion upon us hour by hour, and allows us to use it. . . . By this he shows it is by his power alone that life and strength are sustained.[49]

After these references to the body, which heighten the contrast between confidence in God's care for the body and apparent disdain for it as a prison, we are prepared to turn to what Calvin has to say on death and resurrection.

Calvin states the problem clearly: "It is difficult to believe that bodies, when consumed with rottenness, will at length be raised up in their season." He understands Scripture to provide two helps to overcoming this obstacle. One is the example of the resurrection of Christ, who "will come on the Last Day as judge to conform our lowly,

inglorious body to his glorious body." The other is the omnipotence of God, for "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."[50] By way of setting aside various teachings on the resurrection which he considers delusions, Calvin sets forth his own thought on the subject.

The first such error is the notion that the whole person dies, so that both body and soul are resurrected together. This violates, obviously, what Calvin has already taught on the immortality of the soul which occupies the body as if it were a house. Of course, by teaching that the soul survives the death of the body, he has to account for the state of affairs between the days of individual deaths and the day of final resurrection. This is the time of God's perpetual guardianship of the soul, which Calvin now terms "our soul's intermediate state." What does he have to say about this? Virtually nothing, which is what he understands Scripture to say. He warns against asking too many questions, and offers mainly the biblical teaching of fellowship with Christ in paradise. In summary: "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."[51]

The second error which Calvin rejects teaches that on the day of resurrection the immortal souls receive new bodies instead of the same ones they have now. Those who advance such notions object to the uncleanness of the flesh but have failed to perceive —through lack of a proper doctrine of total depravity—the uncleanness of souls. Calvin finds this error "monstrous."

> For it would be utterly absurd that the bodies which God has dedicated to himself as temples should fall away into filth without hope of resurrection! What of the fact that they are also members of Christ? Or that God commands all their parts to be sanctified to him? Or that it is his will that his name be praised with men's tongues, that pure hands be lifted to himself, that sacrifices be offered? What madness is it for that part of man, deemed by the Heavenly Judge worthy of such shining honor, to be by mortal man reduced to dust beyond the hope of restoration?[52]

At this point Calvin interjects an important note about death: Since the origin of death is in the fall and not in creation, which is to say that death is accidental to human being and not essential, "the restoration which Christ has brought belongs to that self-same body which began to be mortal."[53] Of course, by stating as strongly as possible the continuity of the body created and the body resurrected, Calvin has also to account for the discontinuities, or at least the differences.

> . . . we must hold, as I have indicated, that as to substance we shall be raised again in the same flesh we now bear, but that the quality will be different. So it was that, when the same flesh of Christ which had been offered as a sacrifice was raised up, it yet excelled in other gifts as if it had become utterly different. . . . although we shall retain the substance of our bodies, there will be a change, that its condition may be far more excellent. Therefore, that we may be raised, the corruptible body will not perish or vanish, but, having laid aside corruption, will put on incorruption. Since God has all the elements ready at his bidding, no difficulty will hinder his commanding earth, waters, and fire to restore what they seem to have consumed.[54]

Perhaps we could say that the resurrection will be of the same body, but that the resurrection body will not be the same.

One thing remains to be said, which I can nowhere find that Calvin says explicitly. That is, at the time of the resurrection of the body, it is rejoined to the immortal soul. This seems to be everywhere assumed, but nowhere said. Indeed, it would even be more proper to say that the resurrection of the body *is* its being rejoined to the immortal soul, for as we saw in the doctrine of creation, it is the soul which animates the body, and we are certainly given no reason to believe that resurrected bodies would be soulless or that they would have any life apart from the soul. Two texts are very important here. First, when Calvin rejects as an error the teaching that immortal souls "are to be clothed with new bodies,"[55] he makes it clear that the error is contained in the word "new." From this we can deduce that a proper doctrine of the resurrection does teach that souls are "reclothed" with bodies. Second, in a discussion of the circumstance of those found still living at the last day, Calvin teaches that their bodies will be changed from being mortal to being resurrected, without any intervening "severing of body and soul."[56] The point of all this is to say that Calvin's doctrine of the resurrection of the body includes its reunion with the immortal soul. He teaches that ultimate human destiny involves the reestablished unity of body and soul, the ultimate unity—not duality—of human being. Here we find no more carping about the prison house of the body. Here we find no more language about houses at all, though the image of the resurrection body as clothing comes close. Throughout the discussion of creation, fall, and redemption, it has seemed that the soul's highest aspiration has been to escape the body in order to be with God. Now we find, in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, that God rejoins the immortal soul with the same body, as Calvin emphasizes strongly, albeit a body with a different quality and a more excellent condition. Far from denigrating the body, Calvin understands it as an integral part of human being, both now and forever. The soul's freedom from the body is limited to that "intermediate state" about which so little is known. Of course, its lot is improved by the change from the body created to the body resurrected. But there is, finally, no independence of the soul from the body. The soul and the body belong together.

Now I want to make a couple of comments on the article by Margaret Miles, "Theology, Anthropology, and the Human Body in Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*."[57] Miles begins by placing Calvin's ideas and understanding of the body within the larger contexts of his theology in general and his anthropology in particular. First, she asserts that "Calvin had one central interest which strongly organized his theological work: demonstrating, maintaining, and heightening the 'glory of God,' the pervasiveness and finality of God's ubiquitous will and work in the universe and in human affairs."[58] Clearly this is vitally important to Calvin.[59] But there have been many conflicting proposals about what constitutes *the* central, organizing principle in Calvin's work, so that we are given reason to pause when Miles begins with such a strong statement and relates everything else in the article to it.

Next, Miles understands Calvin's theology to describe "a *method* of achieving the consciousness of God's glory," which consciousness she identifies in Calvin's writings as "quickening," or "*vivification*."[60] Calvin himself defines "vivification" as "the desire to live in a holy and devoted manner" and understands vivification of the spirit to accompany mortification of the flesh in constituting repentance.[61] Miles uses some of these terms slightly differently and uses some slightly different terms to say that the combination of "repentance" and "gratitude" makes up a "method" or "lifestyle" of "sanctification" which appropriates the "quickening" or "consciousness of the glory of God."[62] The point is to say that the body shares in this quickening through the sacraments.[63] However, Miles does not

establish, nor is it immediately apparent, that Calvin's use of the word "quickening" in relation to the sacraments is identical with, or related to, his use of the word "vivification" as one of the two component parts of repentance. Moreover, it could be asked whether this whole process of repentance and gratitude can be understood as a "method." Calvin encourages Christian readers toward "applying" their "whole effort to the practice of repentance" and "to practice repentance throughout their lives and know that this warfare will end only at death." But he also teaches that God acts in the human repentance or regeneration that leads to the restoration of the image of God: "God wipes out in his elect the corruption of the flesh, cleanses them of their guilt, consecrates them to himself as temples renewing all their minds to true purity." In short, "repentance is a singular *gift* of God.[64] It would seem that what is given to us by God is far different from that which is accomplished by methodical exercises.

Miles next sketches her understanding of Calvin's anthropology, which is understood to be meant to help serve his overall theological program. She notes that he "begins with a familiar statement of the differentiation of body and soul." She goes beyond this to assert that "Calvin is eager to underline the distinction of body and soul."[65] This does not cohere with the deep and abiding sense of the unity of human being which we have found in the *Institutes*, an anthropology which argues against the dualism often found in the tradition. Moreover, it allows Miles to reach such conclusions as saying that Calvin has "a theological problem with the body as the unconscious 'side-kick' of the soul" and was guilty of a "cavalier treatment of physical death."[66] Given Calvin's awareness of the fragility of life and the constant closeness of death, this seems to be an overstatement. Nevertheless, we should credit her with pointing out the contrast between Augustine's perception of the harshness of death as a separation of body and soul and Calvin's more restrained treatment, or lack of treatment, of the painfulness to the body of the experience of death.[67] Still, it is curious that Miles presents Calvin as a serenely confident man blissfully longing for death while Bouwsma portrays Calvin as a profoundly anxiety-ridden individual in an equally anxious century.

Miles ends by saying that while Calvin's understanding of the body serves well his theological agenda of having people come to the consciousness of the glory of God, it is of little or no use to us today because "we," that is, "modern people," find it "well-nigh impossible" to look for the "resurrection of the body."[68] Of course, all of Calvin's understanding of the body does remain inextricably intertwined with his belief in the resurrection. If the reader does not share that, it is difficult to see how Calvin's theology would make any sense or be of any interest. The growing interest in Calvin throughout this century and the growth of gatherings such as this one suggest at the very least that Calvin's theology, including his understanding of the body and his belief in the resurrection, is intelligible and of interest and use to some growing number of people in the modern world. Of course, Calvin's theology can and even must be revised. But as Christian theology, it needs to be revised within the context of Christian faith.[69]

In conclusion, the body in Calvin's theology is understood to be beautiful and intricate in creation, united to the soul in the shared creatureliness of human being, united with it still both in the fallen condition of sinful humanity and also in the possibility of obedience and enjoyment for redeemed human being, and forever reunited with it in the final destiny of resurrection. Only in that intermediate stage between death and resurrection are soul and body severed from one another. This condition seems to be not the norm for the relationship but an anomaly about which we are to ask no questions. Far from being hopelessly dualistic in a way that would denigrate the body, Calvin understands the body to be an integral part of the mysterious unity of human being.

Notes

Personal Note: At his birth, my grandfather was given the initials J. C., so that later he could choose between his father's name, James Camp Goodloe, and his grandfather's name. As a result of his choice, I bear now the initials, but not the name, of my great-great-grandfather, John Calvin Goodloe (1817-1895).

[1]Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. harold Knight, Lutterworth Library, vol. 48 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), 65-70; T. F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*, new ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 26-29; John H. Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*, with a Foreword by Albert C. Outler (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 34-35, this being a publication of Leith's Yale Ph.D. thesis, written in 1947-1949; cf. John H. Leith, "Calvin's Theological Method and the Ambiguity in His Theology," in Franklin H. Littell, ed., *Reformation Studies: Essays in Honor of Roland H. Bainton* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 108—here, instead of an "inconsistency" in Calvin's thought, Leith writes of a "further explanation of diversity in the interpretation of Calvin's theology"; Charles Partee, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, vol. 14 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 51-65.

[2]Margaret R. Miles, "Theology, Anthropology, and the Human Body in Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*," *Harvard Theological Review* 74 (1981): 303-23; William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Charles L. Cooke, "Calvin's Illnesses and Their Relation to Christian Vocation," *Calvin Studies IV*, ed. John H. Leith and W. Stacy Johnson (Richmond, Virginia: n.p., 1988), 41-52; Mary Potter Engel, *John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology*, American Academy of Religion Academy Series, no. 52 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

[3]John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., in *Library of Christian Classics*, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) (cited by book, chapter, and section), 1.5.2.

[4]Ibid., 1.5.3, 1.5.4; cf. Calvin, *Commentary on Psalms* 139:15, cited in *Institutes*, 1.5.3, n. 7; as for the "worm," see Engel for help on such rapidly shifting perspectives.

[5]Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.5.5.

[6]Ibid., 1.15.2.

[7]Ibid.. 1.15.1.

[8]Ibid., 1.15.2.

[9]Ibid., 1.15.6.

[10]Ibid., 3.35.6.

[11]Ibid., 1.15.6.

[12]Ibid., 1.15.2, 1.15.2 reads "of their bodies," 2.7.13 reads "of our body," 3.3.20 reads "of our body," 4.17.30.

[13]Ibid., 3.9.4.

[14]Ibid., 5.15.11.

[15]Ibid., 3.6.5.

[16]Ibid., 2.13.4.

[17]Ibid., 3.2.19.

[18]Ibid., 3.9.4.

[19]Ibid., 4.16.19.

[20]Ibid., 3.25.1, 4.1.1 reads "of our flesh."

[21]Ibid., 1.15.2.

[22]Cited in Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.5.6, n. 23; cf. 1.17.10, where "perpetually" is used in the sense of continually; cf. 2.1.7.

[23]Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.2, 1.15.3.

[24]Ibid., 1.15.3.

[25]David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), chap. 11, "The Image of God in John Calvin," 128-45; B. A. Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), chap. 9, "The Mirror of God's Goodness: A Key Metaphor in Calvin's View of Man," 150-159.

[26]Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.14.1.

[27]Ibid., 1.17.10; cf. 3.7.10.

[28]Cooke, 44-47.

[29]Ibid., 47.

[30]Ibid., 48.

[31]John Calvin, *Letters of John Calvin*, ed. Jules Bonnet, trans. Marcus Robert Gilchrist (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1858; reprint ed., New York: Burt Franklin Reprints), vol. 4, 331, cited in Cooke, 49; this translation from John H. Leith, *The Reformed Imperative: What the Church Has to Say That No One Else Can Say* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988), 85.

[32]Calvin, Sermon No. 72 on Job, 130, cited in Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, 30, 245, n. 138.

[33]Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.39.

[34]Ibid., 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.7, 2.1.8, 2.1.9, 2.1.8.

[35]Ibid., 3.3.20.

[36]Ibid., 2.3.1.

[37]Ibid., 2.6.8.

[38]Ibid., 2.8.40.

[39]Ibid., 2.8.41.

[40]Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, 22-23, 52-53, 136-37, 166.

[41]Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.44.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., 3.6.5.

[44]Ibid., 3.9.4.

[45]Ibid., 3.9.4, 3.9.5.

[46]Ibid., 3.9.5.

[47]Ibid., 3.20.29, 3.20.31.

[48]Ibid., 3.20.44.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., 3.25.3, 3.25.4.

[51]Ibid.3.25.6.

[52]Ibid., 3.25.7.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., 3.25.8.

[55]Ibid., 3.25.6.

[56]Ibid., 3.25.8.

[57]Miles, "Theology, Anthropology, and the Human Body." A word must be said about her references to Calvin's *Institutes*. There are 78 references made to the Ford Lewis Battles translation, 76 of these being in the footnotes and 2 in the text. Of these, 8 do not include a direct quotation. Of the 70 references which do involve quotations, as far as I can tell, only 1 of them is entirely correct (314, n. 54), though 6 others are modified only by usual and acceptable changes of capitalization or punctuation (305, n. 11, 306, n. 15, 313, n. 50; 314, n. 56; 315, n. 61; 317, n. 70). The remaining 63 references involve unnoted and unaccounted for alterations in the quotations from the Battles translation. Some of these involve simply the change of "man" to "human being," which would be fine except that other

places retain the word "man" (e.g., 305, n. 11; 314, n. 54). More troublesome is the realization that some of these quotes attributed to Battles are directly from the Beveridge translation (304, n. 3; 314, n. 55). On the other hand, some of the quotations attributed to the Beveridge translation are also altered (308, n. 26; 313, n. 51; 319, n. 77). The vast majority of the quotations are not from either translation. In a telephone conversation with the author on 10 January 1990, Miles indicated that, as she remembered it, she worked with the French and Latin texts and then corrected the translations available to her, starting with Battles; unfortunately, this is nowhere indicated in her article. Moreover, at least 4 of her references need to be corrected: 308, n. 24, "1.15.1 needs to read "1.15.T"; 313, n. 51, "2.2.11" needs to read "2.1.11"; 315, n. 60, "4.7.9" needs to read "4.17.9"; and 223, n. 93, needs to add "4.17.8." At the very least, these alterations are a nuisance for the reader. Beyond this, they cast an air of pervasive inaccuracy across the entire argument.

[58]Miles, 303.

[59]Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* , 37. See also 37-45 on "The Glory of God." See 224: "No interpretation of the *sola gloria Dei* has been more vivid and dynamic than Calvin's." See 19: "The purpose of theology is to glorify God." See 17-21 on unity, method, and perspectives.

[60]Miles, 304, emphasis original.

[61]Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.3.

[62]Miles, 304, 306, 307.

[63]Ibid., 314-15.

[64]Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.1, 3.3.9, 3.3.21, emphasis added; cf. Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 71, 75; I am aware, however, that divine and human agency cannot be related. See Calvin's exposition of the petition for daily bread: "The fact that we ask that it be given us signifies that it is a simple and free gift of God, however it may come to us, even when it would seem to have been obtained from our own skill and diligence, and supplied by our own hands. For it is by his blessing alone that our labors truly prosper" (*Institutes*, 3.20.45).

[65]Miles, 307. 310.

[66]Ibid., 318.

[67]Ibid., 317, including n. 71. Note that this had been previously pointed out by Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 70, n. 238.

[68]Miles, 321-23.

[69]W. Stacy Johnson, in a letter to the author, 8 February 1990.