GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN
OF SALVATION

ETERNITY

OBJECTIVE 3.
WORK OF
CHRIST
FOR US

SUBJECTIVE
APPLICATION
TO US AND
IN US

TIME AND SPACE
The Indiscriminate Gospel Offer

from The Institutes of the Christian Religion

by

John Calvin

"We know that the promises are effectual only when we receive them in faith; but, on the contrary, when faith is made void, the promise is of no effect. If this is the nature of the promises, let us now see whether there be any inconsistency between the two things, viz., (1) that God, by an eternal decree, fixed the number of those whom he is pleased to embrace in love, and on whom he is pleased to display his wrath, and (2) that he offers salvation indiscriminately to all. I hold that they are perfectly consistent, for all that is meant by the promise is, just that his mercy is offered to all who desire and implore it, and this none do, save those whom he has enlightened. Moreover, he enlightens those whom he has predestinated to salvation. Thus the truth of the promises remains firm and unshaken, so that it cannot be said there is any disagreement between the eternal election of God and the testimony of his grace which he offers to believers" (Institutes III, xxiv, 17).

But why does he mention all men? Namely that the consciences of the righteous may rest the more secure when they understand that there is no difference between sinners, provided they have faith, and that the ungodly may not be able to allege that they have not an asylum to which they may retake themselves from the bondage of sin... it is true, that by rejecting the promises generally offered to them, they subject themselves to severer punishment. All the abundance of heavenly blessings, with all his merits, all his righteousness, wisdom, and grace, without exception, Paul bears witness when he says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, [2 Cor. 5:20, 21]" (III,v,5).

"Every promise which God makes is evidence of his good will. This is invariably true, and is not inconsistent with the fact, that the large benefits which the divine liberality is constantly bestowing on the wicked are preparing them for heavier judgment. As they neither think that these proceed from the hand of the Lord, nor acknowledge them as his, or if they do so acknowledge them, never regard them as proofs of his favor, they are in no respect more instructed thereby in his mercy than brute beasts, which, according to their condition, enjoy the same liberality, and yet never look beyond it. Still it is true, that by rejecting the promises generally offered to them, they subject themselves to severer punishment. For though it is only when the promises are received in faith that their efficacy is manifested, still their reality and power are never extinguished by our infidelity or ingratitude" (III,ii,32).

"In regard to the matter in hand, I deny that God cruelly mocks us when he invites us... The promises being offered alike to believers and to the ungodly, have their use in regard to both" (Iv,v,10).

(By word search of the Ages CD entitled: The John Calvin Collection)
CHAPTER X
Of Effectual Calling

I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.
II. There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.
VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them. But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.
II. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.
Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?
A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.
II. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.
The Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

Answer 21:

LATIN: certa fiducia

GERMAN: ein hertzliches vertrauen

DUTCH: een seker vertrouwen

ENGLISH: a deep-rooted assurance [CRC, 1979]

A hearty trust [RCUS]
86. Since then we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?
Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, renews us also by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His blessings,¹ and that He may be glorified through us;² then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits,³ and by our godly walk may win others also to Christ.⁴

¹ Rom 6:13, 12:1-2; ¹ Pt 2:5-10; ² Mt 5:16; ¹ Cor 6:19-20; ³ Mt 7:17-18; Gal 5:22-24; ² Pt 1:10-11; ⁴ Mt 5:14-16; Rom 14:17-19; ¹ Pt 2:12, 3:1-2
“Only he who considers the *simul peccator et Justus* an objective situation of the believers in which there is no place for the *gratia interna*… can consider the *syllogismus practicus* a contradiction of the *sola fide.*”

Berkouwer, Divine Election. P. 302
59. But how does it help you now that you believe all this?
That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.  
1 Hab 2:4; Jn 3:36; Rom 1:17, 5:1-2

60. How are you righteous before God?
Only by true faith in Jesus Christ;  
that is, although my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, have never kept any of them,  
and that I am still inclined always to all evil,  
yet God, without any merit of my own,  
out of mere grace,  
imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ,  
as if I had never had nor committed any sin, and as if I had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me,  
if only I accept this gift with a believing heart.
1 Rom 3:21-28; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9; Php 3:8-11;  
2 Rom 3:9-10;  
3 Rom 7:23;  
4 Deut 9:6; Ezek 36:22; Tit 3:4-5;  
5 Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8;  
6 Rom 4:3-5;  
7 Cor 5:17-19; 1 Jn 2:1-2;  
8 Rom 4:24-25; 2 Cor 5:21;  
9 Jn 3:18; Acts 16:30-31; Rom 3:22

61. Why do you say that you are righteous only by faith?
Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; for only the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God,  
and I can receive this righteousness and make it my own only by faith.
1 1 Cor 1:30-31, 2:2; 2 Rom 10:10; 1 Jn 5:10-12
WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

CHAPTER XI
Of Justification

III. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father’s justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them; and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and both, freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.
ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SACRAMENT

Pierre Marcel

1. Instituted by Christ
2. Perpetual (1 Cor. 11:26)
3. Signs – visible expression of an invisible grace (Lombard)
4. Seals (Rom. 4:11, Eph. 1:13, Eph. 4:30)
III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.
III. Beside this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the new testament.

IV. To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.
THE BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE
SIGNIFIED BY BAPTISM

Murray

1. Union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

2. Union with the three persons of the Trinity

3. Purification from the defilement of sin (regeneration).

4. Purification from the guilt of sin (forgiveness).
CHAPTER XXVIII

Of Baptism

V. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated, or saved, without it; or, that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.
CHAPTER XXVII
Of the Sacraments

II. There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.
DEFINITION OF POSTMILLENNIALISM
Given by Kenneth L. Gentry Jr. in
Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond (Zondervan, 1999)

Postmillennialism expects the proclaiming of the Spirit-blessed gospel of Jesus Christ to win the vast majority of men to salvation in the present age. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history prior to Christ’s return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of men and of nations. After an extensive era of such conditions the Lord will return visibly, bodily, and in great glory, ending history with the general resurrection and the great judgement of all men.