

Grace OPC Adult Sunday School Class Teaching Notes			
Year:	4 of 4		Date: 09/03/2006
Quarter:	1 of 4	Theology	
Lesson Title:	Recap		
Lesson Purpose:	To review the parts of the Confession already covered before beginning the section on God's Covenant with Man		

1. Introduction

We are back into theology and about to start Chapter 7 of the Confession, on God's Covenant with Man.

Before we do, worth reviewing what we have covered so far.

Reminder to some, brings others up to speed who were not in this class earlier.

2. Chapter 1 – Of the Holy Scripture

- God has revealed Himself to us generally through nature and more explicitly and specifically through His Word.
- Without His Word, we could not have known His will and the way of salvation
- His Word serves several other purposes also
- It comprises 66 books given by inspiration and called the canon (rule) of Scripture
- It does not include the books of the Apocrypha, though the Roman church accepts them.
- The church did not create the canon of Scripture but recognized it with the aid of the Holy Spirit.
- All Scriptures are inspired of God (plenary inspiration)
- The very words used in the original tongues were inspired (verbal inspiration)
- Inspiration does not mean dictation
- The Written Word is a mysterious product of the divine and the human and in this way resembles Christ, the Living Word
- Because Scriptures are fully and verbally inspired, the original manuscripts were also inerrant in all areas upon which they touch – and we have access to remarkably preserved copies of the originals
- Nevertheless, to grant ready access to the Word of God, it is to be translated into the languages of peoples around the world. We have warrant to do this since Christ and the Apostles made free use of a translation (the Septuagint) in their ministries.
- The authority of Scripture does not rest on any man or on any organization but on God alone. He is Truth and cannot lie - He tells us this is His Word and we are to obey it.
- Scripture contains many internal evidences that it is the Word of God and could not be a human production
- Nevertheless, a full assurance of its authority and infallibility come through the witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, as he or she sets the Scriptures to the test of experience.
- God has completed His revelation in His Word; nothing should be added to it
- The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary to a saving understanding of Scripture

- In some areas, where God's Word does not give specific rules, we are to proceed on the basis of general rules in the Bible, the light of nature and Christian prudence.

3. **Chapter 2 – Of God, and of the Holy Trinity**

- God is awesome, beyond our comprehension
 - He is unique; there is no other God.
 - He is infinite and perfect in all His attributes.
 - He is a Spirit and not constrained by a body.
 - He never changes, he is always the same.
- He is merciful and good to those who diligently seek Him. This mercy is possible through the work of Jesus Christ taking His chosen people's sin and giving us His righteousness.
- He is also just and will by no means overlook sin or acquit the guilty.
- God knows everything about everything. He made all things, spoke them into existence. Therefore he completely understands His creation.
- God is totally self sufficient, needing nothing and no-one to complete Him or make Him content
- He rules over all things and disposes of them as He pleases
- We owe God, our Creator and Sustainer, all glory and honor.
- There is but one God (one Essence), who has eternally existed in three distinct Persons.
- These Persons are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding.
 - The Son is eternally begotten of the Father.
 - The Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.
- The Son, in time, took to himself a human body.

4. **Chapter 3 – Of God's Eternal Decree**

- God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.
- He is not the author of sin and does not make anyone do anything they do not want to do.
- God did not have to make His plan and did not need to do so. Neither did He look into the future and see what would happen, then make this His plan. Had any of these situations been true, He would not be the God of the Bible.
- God's decree includes the unchangeable eternal destiny of men and angels, as individuals.
- We know something of God's decree from His Word. We know that anything else is His decree as it comes to pass. He has chosen not to reveal all of His purposes to us but we know they are all holy and wise and good.
- Those God predestined to be His people, He chose in Christ before the world began, that they might inherit heaven.
 - This choice arose only from God's free grace and did not depend at all on anything in the creature.
 - The reason God does this is for the praise of His glorious grace

- God also decreed the means by which His elect would be saved – redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification and keeping by His power through faith
- The remainder of mankind God passes by. They are left to receive the due penalty for their sins as rebels and God haters. Although they may be called to repentance, they do not want God and love their sins too much to leave them.
 - The reason God does this is for the praise of His justice
- We need to be careful in the way we handle this doctrine, since many have misunderstood them and been led into unhelpful extremes. Rightly handled, they bring thrilling, heartwarming comfort and consolation to the child of God.

5. **Chapter 4 – Of Creation**

- God created the heaven and earth, that is, all things visible and invisible, out of nothing by speaking them into existence.
- The world had a beginning. The world is not self-existent (or eternal), and did not evolve or arrive by chance. Further, God and world are not one.
- God created the spiritual realm.
- God created the world in six days of ordinary length.
- God declared that His creation was very good. The material world was not evil.
- God created the world for the manifestation of His own glory. God did not create the world for the happiness of man but created man for Himself.
- God created man, male and female, giving them bodies and reasonable and immortal souls.
- God has made all the nations (whole human race) from the first male & female.
- God created man after His own image (likeness) in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, with dominion over the creatures.
- God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed the breath of life into him and he became a living soul.
- God furnished Adam with enough knowledge for his happiness. Also, God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil under the threat of death.
- Adam, although created holy and capable of obedience, was at the same time capable of falling. This was the moral condition in which both angels and men were created.

6. **Chapter 5 – Of Providence**

- God upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all things, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.
- God is the First Cause, and all things are ordained in His decree, yet He arranges for them to transpire according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently
- In His ordinary Providence, God uses means but is free to work without, above or against them as He pleases
- God's Providence includes the fall and all sins of men and angels – not by mere permission but by wise and powerful binding, ordering and governing to fulfil His purposes. Yet the sinfulness of the actions belongs only to the

creature and not to God, who is most holy and righteous and so cannot be the author or approver of sin

- God often leaves His own children to temptations and the corruption of their own hearts for a season for several just and holy ends, including:
 - to chasten them for their former sins, or
 - to humble them by revealing the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, and then to raise them to a closer and more constant dependence upon Him, more watchful against future occasions of sin.
- From wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, blinds and hardens because of their former sins, He not only withholds His saving grace, but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had, and exposes them to objects that their corruption uses for sin. Along with this, He gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, by which it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under means which God uses for the softening of others.
- The providence of God takes special care of His Church, and disposes all things to her good.

7. **Chapter 6 – Of the Fall of Man, of Sin and of the Punishment Thereof**

- Our first parents were seduced by Satan and sinned by eating the forbidden fruit. God was pleased to permit this, having purposed to order it to His glory.
- By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.
- The guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.
- From this original corruption, by which we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.
- This corruption of nature, during this life, remains in those that are regenerated; and although it is pardoned and mortified through Christ, yet both itself, and all its actions, are truly and properly sin.
- Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, brings guilt upon the sinner, by which he is bound over to God's wrath, and to the curse of the law, and so is made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.