

The West End Herald

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



SOLI DEO GLORIA

by R. C. Sproul



continued on page 2

Vol. CXXXII, Edition 42

October 27, 2024

In This Issue

- 1** What Does *Soli Deo Gloria* Mean?
- 3** RTS
- 4** Weekly Catechism
- 5** Corner of River/Rhett
- 6** Birthdays
- 7** Calendar
- 10** Announcements
- 12** The Intercessor

WHAT DOES SOLI DEO GLORIA MEAN?

Soli Deo Gloria is the motto that grew out of the Protestant Reformation and was used on every composition by Johann Sebastian Bach. He affixed the initials SDG at the bottom of each manuscript to communicate the idea that it is God and God alone who is to receive the glory for the wonders of His work of creation and of redemption. At the heart of the sixteenth century controversy over salvation was the issue of grace.

It was not a question of man's need for grace. It was a question as to the extent of that need. The church had already condemned Pelagius, who had taught that grace facilitates salvation but is not absolutely necessary for it. Semi-Pelagianism since that time has always taught that without grace there is no salvation. But the grace that is considered in all semi-Pelagian and Arminian theories of salvation is not an efficacious grace. It is a grace that makes salvation possible, but not a grace that makes salvation certain.

GOD IS THE SOWER

In the parable of the sower we see that regarding salvation, God is the one who takes the initiative to bring salvation to pass. He is the sower. The seed that is sown is His seed, corresponding to His Word, and the harvest that results is His harvest. He harvests what He purposed to harvest when He initiated the whole process. God doesn't leave the harvest up to the vagaries of thorns and stones in the pathway. It is God and God alone who makes certain that a portion of His Word falls upon good ground. A critical error in interpreting this parable would be to assume that the good ground is the good disposition of fallen sinners, those sinners who make the right choice, responding positively to God's prevenient grace. The classical Reformed understanding of the good ground is that if the ground is receptive to the seed that is sown by God, it is God alone who prepares the ground for the germination of the seed.

continued on page 9

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Missionary of the Week

MISSION

The mission of Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) is to serve the Church by preparing its leaders, through a program of graduate theological education, based upon the authority of the inerrant Word of God, and committed to the Reformed Faith.

VISION

Reformed Theological Seminary exists to glorify the Triune God and to serve His Church in all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially Presbyterian and Reformed churches, by providing Reformed graduate theological education that is globally accessible. RTS equips its students for ministry, primarily through pastoral preparation, to be servant leaders marked by “A Mind for Truth, A Heart for God.”

CORE VALUES

Biblical Integrity
Christian Nurture
Faithfulness in All Things
Missional Commitment

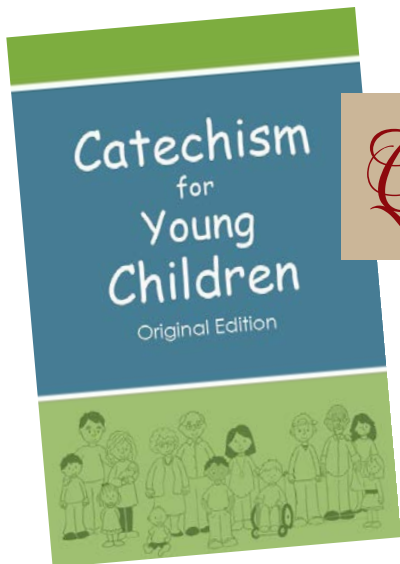


REFORMED THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY



CAMPUSES

RTS has campuses in
Jackson, Orlando, Charlotte,
Washington D.C., Atlanta,
Houston, New York City,
Dallas, and Global. ♦



Question 103:

Can any man keep these ten commandments perfectly?

Answer:

No mere man, since the fall of Adam, ever did or can keep the ten commandments perfectly.

Whoever does [these commandments] and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5: 19

Jesus has kept the law perfectly in our place. We could never keep God's commandments perfectly. But should we stop trying? Are Christians free to live however they like?

Absolutely not!

People who claim to be Christians claim to belong to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is our King. We must obey the King and keep the commandments of God. Jesus said His people should aim at being perfect, as God is perfect. When Christians sin (and they will), Jesus is the One who comes between them and God's anger because Jesus has already taken that anger on Himself. ♦

from *Training Hearts, Teaching Minds*, Starr Meade



at the corner of

River & Rhett

Lightbringers girls assembling Operation Christmas Child boxes!



October/ November Birthdays

- 27 Shane Benner, Jason Korol, Joe Martin
- 29 Rose Branigin
- 31 Margaret Atwood, Mary Jones
- 1 Ron Babington, Larry Pitts
- 2 Joyce Caulder, Kathy Karr, Barb Owen,
Beth Reach, Katherine Reese

"THE GREATEST GOOD THAT
GOD INTENDS FOR HIS PEOPLE,
HE MANY TIMES WORKS OUT OF
THE GREATEST EVIL."

JEREMIAH BURROUGHS

1600 - 1646



This Week

MORNING SERMON

Dr. Richard D. Phillips

STANDING ON GOD'S WORD

Isaiah 55:10-11

EVENING SERMON

Rev. Jeffrey M. Early

THE PRIDE OF EDMOM

Obadiah 1:1-9

Sunday, October 27

- 8:30 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 9:55 A.M. Children's Chapel (*Sanctuary*)
- 10:00 A.M. Membership Class (*Room C-209*)
- 10:00 A.M. Sunday School
- 11:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 12:30 P.M. Fellowship Class Luncheon (*Gym*)
- 5:30 P.M. Season of Prayer (*Chapel*)
- 6:00 P.M. EVENING WORSHIP
- 7:30 P.M. Evangelism Committee (*Fellowship Hall*)

Monday, October 28

- 6:30 A.M. Men's Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 9:30 A.M. Rafiki Bible Study (*Conference Room*)

Tuesday, October 29

- 10:00 A.M. WIC Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)

Wednesday, October 30

- 5:30 P.M. FAMILY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SUPPER (*Gym*)
- 6:30 P.M. Reformation Party

Thursday, October 31

- 9:30 A.M. Precepts Bible Study (*Conference Room*)
- 4:00 P.M. Media Committee

Friday, November 1

- 9:15 A.M. Raising Up Mothers (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 12:00 P.M. Men's Luncheon and Bible Study (*Gym*)
- 1:30 P.M. Mission to Main
- 6:30 P.M. Friday Night Alive! (*Phillips Home*)

Saturday, November 2

Turn clocks BACK one hour!



Upcoming Events

spcgreenville.org/calendar

- October 26** Masculine Mandate Seminar
- October 30** Reformation Party
- November 3** Daylight Saving Time Ends
- November 4** Diaconate Meeting
- November 10** Baptism Sunday
- November 11** Session Meeting
- November 17** Communion in the Morning Services

continued from page 2

The biggest question any semi-Pelagian or Arminian has to face at the practical level is this: Why did I choose to believe the gospel and commit my life to Christ when my neighbor, who heard the same gospel, chose to reject it? That question has been answered in many ways. We might speculate that the reason why one person chooses to respond positively to the gospel and to Christ, while another one doesn't, is because the person who responded positively was more intelligent than the other one. If that were the case, then God would still be the ultimate provider of salvation because the intelligence is His gift, and it could be explained that God did not give the same intelligence to the neighbor who rejected the gospel. But that explanation is obviously absurd.

The classical Reformed understanding of the good ground is that if the ground is receptive to the seed that is sown by God, it is God alone who prepares the ground for the germination of the seed. The other possibility that one must consider is this: that the reason one person responds positively to the gospel and his neighbor does not is because the one who responded was a better person. That is, that person who made the right choice and the good choice did it because he was more righteous than

continued on page 9

his neighbor. In this case, the flesh not only availed something, it availed everything. This is the view that is held by the majority of evangelical Christians, namely, the reason why they are saved and others are not is that they made the right response to God's grace while the others made the wrong response.

We can talk here about not only the correct response as opposed to an erroneous response, but we can speak in terms of a good response rather than a bad response. If I am in the kingdom of God because I made the good response rather than the bad response, I have something of which to boast, namely the goodness by which I responded to the grace of God. I have never met an Arminian who would answer the question that I've just posed by saying, "Oh, the reason I'm a believer is because I'm better than my neighbor." They would be loath to say that. However, though they reject this implication, the logic of semi-Pelagianism requires this conclusion. If indeed in the final analysis the reason I'm a Christian and someone else is not is that I made the proper response to God's offer of salvation while somebody else rejected it, then by resistless logic I have indeed made the good response, and my neighbor has made the bad response.

REGENERATION PRECEDES FAITH

What Reformed theology teaches is that it is true the believer makes the right response and the non-believer makes the wrong response. But the reason the believer makes the good response is because God in His sovereign election changes the disposition of the heart of the elect to effect a good response. I can take no credit for the response that I made for Christ. God not only initiated my salvation, He not only sowed the seed, but He made sure that that seed germinated in my heart by regenerating me by the power of the Holy Ghost. That regeneration is a necessary condition for the seed to take root and to flourish. That's why at the heart of

Announcements

Reformation Party—October 30

Join in on this annual family-friendly celebration! Children are encouraged to dress up as Reformation or other wholesome characters. The congregation is asked to provide wrapped candies and small prizes. Items may be dropped off in the designated box in the Gymnasium. If you would like to provide a game/booth, please contact Rev. Early.

There will be no Prayer Meeting or Bible Study that night.

WIC International Dinner

All ladies are invited to the annual International Dinner at the SPC Gymnasium on Friday, November 8, at 6:30 P.M. Please bring a dish of your choice (main dish, vegetable, bread, or dessert) from the country of your choice! Ramona White will be our guest speaker.

Operation Christmas Child

This is a ministry that seeks to share the love of Christ and the gospel in both word and deed with less fortunate children around the world. Look for the red and green shoe boxes on the counter outside the church library and on the table outside the gym. November 20th is the due date for returning your filled boxes to the table outside the Gym. Please contact Attee Leigh with any questions.



SPC MEMBERSHIP CLASS

This no-obligation class meets for eight weeks. It is open to anyone interested in learning more about our beliefs or joining our church. Gather with others and our minister, Dr. Phillips, as we explore together our church distinctives.

Date: Sundays—began September 22 (not too late to attend!)

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Room C-20

Teacher: Dr. Richard Phillips

Register: spcgreenville.org/signup

Masculine Mandate Seminar

All men are invited to the second of these gatherings taught by Dr. Phillips. SPC Ladies are providing breakfast, so plan to arrive at 8:00 A.M. on October 26 in the Gymnasium.



Friday Night Alive

College and 20s will meet at the Phillips home at 6:00 P.M. on November 1. Supper will be provided and will be followed by fellowship and study in Kevin DeYoung's book, *Taking God at His Word*. Please contact Sharon Phillips if you have questions or need a ride.

Daylight Saving Time Ends

Make a note to set your clocks BACK one hour before you go to bed Saturday night, November 2!

continued from page 9

Reformed theology the axiom resounds, namely, that regeneration precedes faith. It's that formula, that order of salvation that all semi-Pelagians reject. They hold to the idea that in their fallen condition of spiritual death, they exercise faith, and then are born again. In their view, they respond to the gospel before the Spirit has changed the disposition of their soul to bring them to faith. When that happens, the glory of God is shared. No semi-Pelagian can ever say with authenticity: "To God alone be the glory." For the semi-Pelagian, God may be gracious, but in addition to God's grace, my work of response is absolutely essential. Here grace is not effectual, and such grace, in the final analysis, is not really saving grace. In fact, salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. Yes, I must believe. Yes, I must respond. Yes, I must receive Christ. But for me to say "yes" to any of those things, my heart must first be changed by the sovereign, effectual power of God the Holy Spirit. Soli Deo Gloria. ♦

Dr. R. C. Sproul was an American Reformed theologian and ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church in America. He was the founder and chairman of Ligonier Ministries

