

## **Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy**

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### **Foreword**

#### **Location 244**

How could the “church of Luther,” that great teacher of the gospel, have ever come to such a place? The answer is that the true gospel, summed up by Bonhoeffer as costly grace, had been lost. On the one hand, the church had become marked by formalism. That meant going to church and hearing that God just loves and forgives everyone, so it doesn't really matter much how you live. Bonhoeffer called this cheap grace.

#### **Location 257**

Costly grace changes you from the inside out. Neither law nor cheap grace can do that.

### **Chapter 1: Family and Childhood**

#### **Page 14 · Location 506**

“There was no place for false piety or any kind of bogus religiosity in our home,” Sabine said.

#### **Page 14 · Location 507**

Mere churchgoing held little charm for her.

#### **Page 14 · Location 509**

faith without works is not faith at all, but a simple lack of obedience to God.

#### **Page 15 · Location 513**

“Without any doubt the mother ruled the house, its spirit and its affairs, but she would never have arranged or organized anything which the father would not have wanted her to do, and which would not have pleased him.

#### **Page 15 · Location 519**

He had too firm a grip upon his own emotions to allow himself ever to speak a word to us which was not wholly suitable.

#### **Page 15 · Location 523**

Karl Bonhoeffer taught his children to speak only when they had something to say. He did not tolerate sloppiness of expression any more than he tolerated self-pity or selfishness or boastful pride.

**Page 15 · Location 528**

Emotionalism, like sloppy communication, was thought to be self-indulgent.

**Page 19 · Location 603**

German culture was inescapably Christian. This was a result of the legacy of Martin Luther, the Catholic monk who invented Protestantism. Looming over the German culture and nation like both a father and a mother, Luther was to Germany something like what Moses was to Israel; in his lusty, cranky person were the German nation and the Lutheran faith wonderfully and terribly combined. Luther's influence cannot be overestimated. His translation of the Bible into German was cataclysmic. Like a medieval John Bunyan, Luther in a single blow shattered the edifice of European Catholicism and in the bargain created the modern German language, which in turn effectively created the German people. Christendom was cleft in twain, and out of the earth beside it sprang the Deutsche Volk.

**Chapter 3: Roman Holiday, 1924****Page 53 · Location 1249**

This idea of a church defined by racial identity and blood—which the Nazis would violently push and so many Germans tragically embrace—was anathema to the idea of the universal church.

**Chapter 4: Student in Berlin, 1924–27****Page 60 · Location 1374**

Barth absorbed the regnant liberal theology of his time, but he grew to reject it, quickly becoming its most formidable opponent. His groundbreaking 1922 commentary, *The Epistle to the Romans*, fell like a smart bomb into the ivory tower of scholars like Adolf von Harnack, who could hardly believe their historical-critical fortress pregnable, and who were scandalized by Barth's approach to the Bible, which came to be called neo-orthodoxy, and which asserted the idea, particularly controversial in German theological circles, that God actually exists, and that all theology and biblical scholarship must be undergirded by this basic assumption, and that's that.

**Page 60 · Location 1380**

Barth stressed the transcendence of God, describing him as “wholly other,” and therefore completely unknowable by man, except via revelation.

**Page 60 · Location 1381**

he believed in revelation, which was further scandalous to theological liberals like Harnack.

**Page 61 · Location 1384**

Harnack's theology was something like Archilochus's proverbial fox, knowing many little things, while Barth's theology was like a hedgehog, knowing one big thing.

#### **Page 61 · Location 1387**

As a result of his intellectual openness, Bonhoeffer learned how to think like a fox and respect the way foxes thought, even though he was in the camp of the hedgehogs.

#### **Page 61 · Location 1395**

Theological liberals like Harnack felt it was "unscientific" to speculate on who God was; the theologian must simply study what is here, which is to say the texts and the history of those texts. But the Barthians said no: the God on the other side of the fence had revealed himself through these texts, and the only reason for these texts was to know him.

#### **Page 62 · Location 1404**

He respected that field, as he demonstrated by mastering it, to Harnack's delight, but he disagreed with Harnack that one must stop there. He believed that picking over the texts as they did, and going no further, left behind "rubble and fragments." It was the God beyond the texts, the God who was their author and who spoke to mankind through them, that fired his interest.

#### **Page 62 · Location 1413**

Bonhoeffer expressed the Barthian idea that in order to know anything at all about God, one had to rely on revelation from God. In other words, God could speak into this world, but man could not reach out of this world to examine God.

### **Chapter 5: Barcelona, 1928**

#### **Page 85 · Location 1819**

"Christianity preaches the infinite worth of that which is seemingly worthless and the infinite worthlessness of that which is seemingly so valued."

### **Chapter 6: Berlin, 1929**

#### **Page 88 · Location 1865**

If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian.  
—MARTIN LUTHER

#### **Page 94 · Location 1974**

The Nazis were anti-Christian, but they would pretend to be Christians as

#### **Page 94 · Location 1975**

long as it served their purposes of getting theologically ignorant Germans on their side against the Jews.

## **Chapter 9: The Führer Principle, 1933**

### **Page 140 · Location 2808**

understand the history of the Führer Principle. Its profoundly misguided concept of leadership is dramatically different from more modern concepts of leadership. It enabled Hitler's rise to power and led to the horrors of the death camps.

### **Page 140 · Location 2810**

This Führer Principle was at the heart of Bonhoeffer's objection to Hitler.

### **Page 141 · Location 2814**

The German notion of the Führer arose out of this generation and its search for meaning and guidance out of its troubles. The difference between real leadership and the false leadership of the Leader was this: real leadership derived its authority from God, the source of all goodness. Thus parents have legitimate authority because they are submitted to the legitimate authority of a good God. But the authority of the Führer was submitted to nothing. It was self-derived and autocratic, and therefore had a messianic aspect.

### **Page 141 · Location 2818**

Bonhoeffer stated, "Whereas earlier leadership was expressed in the form of the teacher, the statesman, the father . . . now the Leader has become an independent figure. The Leader is completely divorced from any office; he is essentially and only 'the Leader.'" A true leader must know the limitations of his authority.

### **Page 141 · Location 2821**

tell his followers quite clearly of the limited nature of his task and of their own responsibility, if he allows himself to surrender to the wishes of his followers, who would always make him their idol—then the image of the Leader will pass over into the image of the mis-leader, and he will be acting in a criminal way not only towards those he leads, but also towards himself.

### **Page 141 · Location 2826**

He must radically refuse to become the appeal, the idol, i.e. the ultimate authority of those whom he leads. . . . He serves the order of the state, of the community, and his service can be of incomparable value. But only so long as he keeps strictly in his place.

### **Page 142 · Location 2830**

The good leader serves others and leads others to maturity. He puts them above himself, as a good parent does a child, wishing to lead that child to someday be a good parent. Another word for this is discipleship. He continued:

**Note - Page 142 · Location 2831**

Definition and description of discipleship.

**Page 142 · Location 2834**

And this solitude of man's position before God, this subjection to an ultimate authority, is destroyed when the authority of the Leader or of the office is seen as ultimate authority. . . . Alone before God, man becomes what he is, free and committed in responsibility at the same time.

**Page 142 · Location 2843**

According to Bonhoeffer, the God of the Bible stood behind true authority and benevolent leadership, but opposed the Führer Principle and its advocate Adolf Hitler.

**Page 142 · Location 2847**

one must at least give lip service to that God, else one would not last very long. Hitler was ultimately a practical man, and as all truly practical men, he was a cynical man.

**Page 143 · Location 2852**

"We are determined, as leaders of the nation, to fulfill as a national government the task which has been given to us, swearing fidelity only to God, our conscience, and our Volk." If his conscience was not already a corpse, it might have felt a twinge as he spoke. Hitler then declared that his government would make Christianity "the basis of our collective morality." This statement, which was a lie, instantly annulled itself. He ended with another appeal to the God he did not believe in, but whose Jewish and Christian followers he would thenceforward persecute and kill: "May God Almighty take our work into his grace, give true form to our will, bless our insight, and endow us with the trust of our Volk!"

**Page 143 · Location 2860**

I disliked and mistrusted Hitler because of his demagogic propagandistic speeches . . . his habit of driving about the country carrying a riding crop, his choice of colleagues—with whose qualities, incidentally, we in Berlin were better acquainted than people elsewhere—and finally because of what I heard from professional colleagues about his psychopathic symptoms.

**Page 143 · Location 2866**

What led Germany to this strange pass was itself strange. After the war, many were happy to wipe away the old order and rid themselves of the kaiser. But when the old monarch at last left the palace, the people who had clamored for his exit were suddenly lost. They found themselves in the absurd position of the dog who, having caught the car he was so frantically chasing, has no idea what to do with it—so he looks about guiltily and then slinks away. Germany had no history of democracy and no idea how it worked, so the country broke apart into a riot of factions, with each faction blaming the others for everything that went wrong. This much they knew: under the kaiser there had been law and order and structure; now there was chaos. The kaiser had been the symbol of the nation; now there were only petty politicians.

**Page 144 · Location 2872**

So the German people clamored for order and leadership. But it was as though in the babble of their clamoring, they had summoned the devil himself, for there now rose up from the deep wound in the national psyche something strange and terrible and compelling. The Führer was no mere man or mere politician. He was something terrifying and authoritarian, self-contained and self-justifying, his own father and his own god. He was a symbol who symbolized himself, who had traded his soul for the zeitgeist.

**Page 145 · Location 2891**

On February 3, Goebbels wrote in his diary: “Now it will be easy to carry on the fight, for we can call on all the resources of the State. Radio and press are at our disposal. We shall stage a masterpiece of propaganda. And this time, naturally, there is no lack of money.”

**Page 145 · Location 2896**

do away with the German constitution and give Hitler the rights of a dictator.

**Page 145 · Location 2899**

few liberties to preserve the German nation against the Communist devils.

**Page 147 · Location 2924**

Karl Bonhoeffer visited Van der Lubbe twice in March and six times that fall. His official report, later published in *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie*, stated: [Van der Lubbe] was violently ambitious, at the same time modest and friendly; a scatterbrain, without any demand for intellectual clarity, but nevertheless capable of unwavering determination, incorrigibly closed to contradictory arguments. He was good-natured and not resentful, but he resisted all authority. This fundamentally rebellious tendency was probably his most questionable characteristic, and the one most likely to set him upon the disastrous road which he took. The early conversion to Communistic ideas certainly contributed to the same effect; but the undisciplined elements in his

temperament made it unlikely in any case, that he would follow a quiet and orderly pattern through life. Something which was unusual in one way or another was to be expected from him. But he was not for that reason to be regarded as mentally ill.

**Page 148 · Location 2958**

he pressed the eighty-five-year-old Hindenburg to sign the Reichstag Fire Edict, a decree officially suspending those sections of the German constitution that guaranteed individual liberties and civil rights.

**Page 149 · Location 2974**

With the tools of democracy, democracy was murdered and lawlessness made “legal.”

## **Chapter 10: The Church and the Jewish Question**

**Page 150 · Location 2989**

Under what was called the Gleichschaltung (synchronization), the country would be thoroughly reordered along National Socialist lines. No one dreamed how quickly and dramatically things would change.

**Page 151 · Location 2996**

The pressure to get in line with the National Socialist wave sweeping the country was intense.

**Page 151 · Location 3007**

There was at this time a group that stood solidly behind Hitler’s rise to power and blithely tossed two millennia of Christian orthodoxy overboard. They wanted a strong, unified Reichskirche and a “Christianity” that was strong and masculine, that would stand up to and defeat the godless and degenerate forces of Bolshevism. They boldly called themselves the Deutsche Christen (German Christians) and referred to their brand of Christianity as “positive Christianity.” The German Christians became very aggressive in attacking those who didn’t agree with them and generally caused much confusion and division in the church.\*

**Page 153 · Location 3038**

Then he moved on to clarify that the church does, nonetheless, play a vital role for the state. What is that role? The church must “continually ask the state whether its action can be justified as legitimate action of the state, i.e., as action which leads to law and order, and not to lawlessness and disorder.” In other words, it is the church’s role to help the state be the state. If the state is not creating an atmosphere of law and order, as Scripture says it must, then it is the job of the church to draw the state’s attention to this failing. And if on the

other hand, the state is creating an atmosphere of “excessive law and order,” it is the church’s job to draw the state’s attention to that too.

**Page 153 · Location 3047**

The state which endangers the Christian proclamation negates itself.”

**Page 154 · Location 3058**

It is sometimes not enough to help those crushed by the evil actions of a state; at some point the church must directly take action against the state to stop it from perpetrating evil. This, he said, is permitted only when the church sees its very existence threatened by the state, and when the state ceases to be the state as defined by God.

**Page 154 · Location 3066**

“A state which includes within itself a terrorized church has lost its most faithful servant.”

**Page 155 · Location 3080**

Bonhoeffer’s three conclusions—that the church must question the state, help the state’s victims, and work against the state, if necessary—were too much for almost everyone. But for him they were inescapable. In time, he would do all three.

**Page 156 · Location 3090**

Bonhoeffer knew that a church that did not stand with the Jews was not the church of Jesus Christ, and to evangelize people into a church that was not the church of Jesus Christ was foolishness and heresy.

## **Chapter 11: Nazi Theology**

**Page 165 · Location 3261**

One sometimes hears that Hitler was a Christian. He was certainly not, but neither was he openly anti-Christian, as most of his top lieutenants were. What helped him aggrandize power, he approved of, and what prevented it, he did not. He was utterly pragmatic. In public he often made comments that made him sound pro-church or pro-Christian, but there can be no question that he said these things cynically, for political gain. In private, he possessed an unblemished record of statements against Christianity and Christians.

**Page 166 · Location 3272**

The insanity of the Christian doctrine of redemption really doesn’t fit at all into our time.

**Page 166 · Location 3277**

A church that does not keep step with modern scientific knowledge is doomed.

**Page 166 · Location 3281**

Hitler's attitude toward Christianity was that it was a great heap of mystical out-of-date nonsense.

**Page 168 · Location 3309**

Hitler must be called a Nietzschean,

**Page 168 · Location 3312**

He devoutly believed in what Nietzsche said about the "will to power." Hitler worshiped power, while truth was a phantasm to be ignored; and his sworn enemy was not falsehood but weakness. For Hitler, ruthlessness was a great virtue, and mercy, a great sin. This was Christianity's chief difficulty, that it advocated meekness.

**Page 168 · Location 3314**

Nietzsche called Christianity "the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion . . . the one immortal blemish of mankind."

**Page 168 · Location 3324**

in the end Hitler considered himself the superman of Nietzsche's prophecy can not be doubted."

**Page 168 · Location 3325**

Hitler could hail Nietzsche as great as long as people understood that Nietzsche existed principally to prepare the way for Hitler, to be his John the Baptist, as it were.

**Page 169 · Location 3340**

"the Nazi regime intended eventually to destroy Christianity in Germany, if it could, and substitute the old paganism of the early tribal Germanic gods and the new paganism of the Nazi extremists."

**Page 170 · Location 3345**

Himmler was the head of the SS and was aggressively anti-Christian. Very early on, he barred clergy from serving in the SS. In 1935 he ordered every SS member to resign leadership in religious organizations.

**Page 170 · Location 3348**

Many SS rituals were occultic in nature.

**Page 171 · Location 3367**

The National Church demands immediate cessation of the publishing and dissemination of the Bible in Germany. . . . 14. The National Church declares that to

**Page 171 · Location 3377**

Karl Barth said Christianity was separated “as by an abyss from the inherent godlessness of National Socialism.”

**Page 172 · Location 3386**

“the ‘German Christians’ preached Christianity as the polar opposite of Judaism, Jesus as the arch anti-semite, and the cross as the symbol of war against Jews.”

**Page 172 · Location 3388**

To make Christianity one with Germanness meant purging it of everything Jewish.

**Page 173 · Location 3412**

the written word of Scripture was the problem. “Whereas the Jews were the first to write out their faith,” they said, “Jesus never did so.” True “German” Christianity must therefore move beyond written words. “A demon always resides in the written word,”

**Page 174 · Location 3439**

There’s little question that the liberal theological school of Schleiermacher and Harnack helped push things along in this direction.

**Note - Page 174 · Location 3440**

Liberal theology laid the ground work for the Church to be swallowed up by Nazism.

**Page 174 · Location 3441**

For many Germans, their national identity had become so melted together with whatever Lutheran Christian faith they had that it was impossible to see either clearly. After four hundred years of taking for granted that all Germans were Lutheran Christians, no one really knew what Christianity was anymore.

**Note - Page 174 · Location 3443**

Christianity and nationalism is poison!

## **Chapter 12: The Church Struggle Begins**

**Page 178 · Location 3498**

First, he said that God was using this struggle in the German church to humble it, and no one had the right to be proud and self-justifying. Christians must humble themselves and repent. Perhaps something good would come of the struggle, but having humility and repentance was the only path forward.

**Page 180 · Location 3523**

He knew quite well how to deal with these Protestant pastors. “You can do anything you want with them,” he once remarked. “They will submit . . . they

are insignificant little people, submissive as dogs, and they sweat with embarrassment when you talk to them.”

## **Chapter 13: The Bethel Confession**

### **Page 184 · Location 3610**

Nazis’ Nietzschean worldview in which strength was exalted and weakness was crushed and eliminated.

### **Page 184 · Location 3615**

There was no room for the weak and the infirm in the National Socialist state,

### **Page 185 · Location 3630**

he was deeply disappointed in the inability of his fellow Christians to take a definite stand. They always erred on the side of conceding too much, of trying too hard to ingratiate themselves with their opponents. The Bethel Confession had become a magnificent waste of words. The final draft even contained a fawning line about “joyful collaboration” between church and state.

### **Page 187 · Location 3656**

“If you board the wrong train,” he said, “it is no use running along the corridor in the opposite direction.”

### **Page 191 · Location 3733**

That summed up Bonhoeffer’s attitude going forward: he would be fiercely loyal to the church and to Germany, but would not pledge one atom of himself to Müller’s pseudochurch or to the dictatorship that claimed to represent the great country and culture he cherished.

### **Page 192 · Location 3757**

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. And then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

### **Page 193 · Location 3788**

he mocked the symbol of the cross, “a ridiculous, debilitating remnant of Judaism, unacceptable to National Socialists!”

### **Page 193 · Location 3789**

every German pastor must take an oath of personal allegiance to Hitler!

## **Chapter 14: Bonhoeffer in London, 1934–35**

### **Page 195 · Location 3808**

the overemphasis on the cerebral and intellectual side of theological training had produced pastors who didn't know how to live as Christians, but knew only how to think theologically.

**Note - Page 195 · Location 3809**

Too much theology but no authentic Christian practice.

**Page 195 · Location 3812**

Although I am working with all my might for the church opposition, it is perfectly clear to me that this opposition is only a very temporary transition to an opposition of a very different kind, and that very few of those engaged in this preliminary skirmish will be part of the next struggle. And I believe that the whole of Christendom should pray with us that it will be a "resistance unto death," and that the people will be found to suffer it.

**Note - Page 196 · Location 3815**

Defend truth unto death.

**Page 196 · Location 3823**

He was thinking about the deep call of Christ, which was not about winning, but about submission to God, wherever that might lead.

## **Chapter 15: The Church Battle Heats Up**

**Page 213 · Location 4134**

Pfaffen was a combination of the German words Pfarrer (pastor) and Affen (apes). Hitler, too, was known to use the term Pfaffen to refer to the Protestant pastors.

**Page 226 · Location 4374**

To Bonhoeffer, because of the Barmen Declaration, the Confessing Church had become the German church, and he believed that all true Christians would recognize that the Reichskirche of the German Christians was officially excommunicated.

## **Chapter 16: The Conference at Fanø**

**Page 240 · Location 4620**

His thoughts on this would be expressed in his book Discipleship, in which anything short of obedience to God smacked of "cheap grace."

**Page 240 · Location 4621**

Actions must follow what one believed, else one could not claim to believe it.

**Page 240 · Location 4630**

“Freedom to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and to live according to His teaching;

**Page 241 · Location 4641**

There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared, it is itself the great venture and can never be safe. Peace is the opposite of security. To demand guarantees is to want to protect oneself. Peace means giving oneself completely to God’s commandment, wanting no security, but in faith and obedience laying the destiny of the nations in the hand of Almighty God, not trying to direct it for selfish purposes. Battles are won, not with weapons, but with God. They are won when the way leads to the cross.

**Page 241 · Location 4648**

He was telling them that God had given them the power as his church to be a prophetic voice in the midst of the world, and they must take up their God-given authority and behave like the church that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was God’s answer to the problems of the world.

## **Chapter 17: The Road to Zingst and Finkenwalde**

**Page 248 · Location 4755**

Christ must be brought into every square inch of the world and the culture, but one’s faith must be shining and bright and pure and robust.

**Page 249 · Location 4773**

One thing was certain: the evil of Hitler could not be defeated with mere religion. He longed to see a church that had an intimate connection with Christ and was dedicated to hearing God’s voice and obeying God’s commands, come what may, including the shedding of blood. But

**Page 249 · Location 4787**

We are the ones to be converted, not Hitler.

**Page 250 · Location 4789**

He seemed to believe that the utter wickedness of Hitler, like that of Sennacherib, would cleanse the church, would blow away the chaff.

## **Chapter 18: Zingst and Finkenwalde**

**Page 269 · Location 5145**

The authority of a servant leader, as opposed to the authoritarianism of the mis-leader, came from God and was a leadership of serving those below oneself. That was Christ’s example to the disciples, and Bonhoeffer strove to lead that way too.

**Note - Page 269 · Location 5147**

Spiritual leadership

**Page 272 · Location 5188**

For him a sermon was nothing less than the very word of God, a place where God would speak to his people. Bonhoeffer wanted to impress this idea on his ordinands, to help them see that preaching was not merely an intellectual exercise. Like prayer or meditation on a scriptural text, it was an opportunity to hear from heaven, and for the preacher, it was a holy privilege to be the vessel through whom God would speak. Like the incarnation, it was a place of revelation, where Christ came into this world from outside it.

**Note - Page 272 · Location 5192**

Bonhoeffer's ideas about preaching.

**Page 272 · Location 5200**

“A truly evangelical sermon must be like offering a child a fine red apple or offering a thirsty man a cool glass of water and then saying: Do you want it?”

**Note - Page 272 · Location 5201**

Ideas on preaching.

**Page 272 · Location 5202**

“We must be able to speak about our faith so that hands will be stretched out toward us faster than we can fill them. . . . Do not try to make the Bible relevant. Its relevance is axiomatic. . . . Do not defend God's Word, but testify to it. . . . Trust to the Word. It is a ship loaded to the very limits of its capacity!”

**Note - Page 272 · Location 5204**

Ideas on preaching.

**Page 272 · Location 5204**

He wished to impress upon his ordinands that when one truly presented the Word of God, it would undo people because it had the innate power to help them see their own need and would give the answer to that need in a way that was not larded over with “religion” or false piety. The grace of God, without filters or explanation, would touch people.

**Note - Page 272 · Location 5207**

Ideas on preaching. The Word has innate powers!

**Page 273 · Location 5209**

The life of prayer and communion with Jesus must be at the center. One's whole ministry arose from it.

**Note - Page 273 · Location 5210**

Ideas on prayer. It is at the core of one's entire ministry!

**Page 273 · Location 5212**

Real faith and love were identical for him.

**Chapter 19: Scylla and Charybdis, 1935–36****Page 278 · Location 5303**

The proclamation of grace has its limits. Grace may not be proclaimed to anyone who does not recognize or distinguish or desire it . . . The world upon whom grace is thrust as a bargain will grow tired of it, and it will not only trample upon the Holy, but also will tear apart those who force it on them.

**Note - Page 278 · Location 5305**

Ideas on Grace.

**Page 279 · Location 5317**

Bonhoeffer strove to see what God wanted to show and then to do what God asked in response. That was the obedient Christian life, the call of the disciple. And it came with a cost, which explained why so many were afraid to open their eyes in the first place.

**Page 280 · Location 5355**

Bonhoeffer believed it was the role of the church to speak for those who could not speak.

**Page 281 · Location 5364**

The willingness of Lutherans to keep the church out of the world reflected an unbiblical overemphasis on Romans 13:

**Page 282 · Location 5375**

Bonhoeffer knew that something of this unwillingness to speak out with boldness had to do with money. The state provided financial security for the pastors of Germany, and even pastors in the Confessing Church would jeopardize their incomes only to a certain point.

**Note - Page 282 · Location 5377**

Pastors paid by the state.

**Page 287 · Location 5484**

Was the “de-Christianization” of the German people official government policy? What did the Nazi Party mean by the term positive Christianity? It also noted that party ideology was forcing German citizens to hate Jews, and as a result, Christian parents faced difficulties with their children since Christians were not supposed to hate anyone.

**Page 294 · Location 5598**

Even when being brutal, the Nazis were canny and careful. They were exceedingly sensitive to public opinion, and their approach to the Confessing Church was mostly one of ever-increasing and ever-tightening regulations. Their methods were “not so much aimed at banning the Confessing Church directly,” Bethge said, “but gradually liquidating it through intimidation and the suppression of individual activities.”

**Page 294 · Location 5606**

The welter of inane regulations and unjust laws overwhelmed the Confessing pastors, who were constantly running afoul of one of them and being arrested.

**Page 296 · Location 5640**

There were always Gestapo officers in the congregation. They meant to intimidate the parishioners and pastors, but at Dahlem they failed consistently. Niemöller teased them from the pulpit, sometimes asking a congregant to “pass a Bible to our policeman friend.”

## **Chapter 20: Mars Ascending, 1938**

**Page 305 · Location 5812**

It must be said that the Nazi leaders, including Hitler, had no moral difficulties with homosexuality. Many of the early figures in the Nazi movement were homosexuals, Ernst Röhm and his strutting cronies chief among them. Hitler has plausibly been connected to such activity.

## **Chapter 21: The Great Decision, 1939**

**Page 321 · Location 6111**

Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization.

**Page 338 · Location 6437**

Reflecting on the American church scene, he was fascinated that tolerance trumped truth.

## **Chapter 22: The End of Germany**

**Page 347 · Location 6580**

he told his generals, “I shall give a propagandist reason for starting the war; never mind whether it is plausible or not. The victor will not be asked afterward whether he told the truth.”

**Page 347 · Location 6589**

It was a coldly deliberate act of terror by intentional mass murder, never before seen in modern times, and it was the Poles' first bitter taste of the Nazi ruthlessness they would come to know so well.

**Page 351 · Location 6664**

Hitler's hour had arrived, and on the first of September, a brutal new Darwinism broke over Europe: the Nietzschean triumph of the strong over the weak could at last begin. The weak who could be useful would be brutally enslaved; all others would be murdered.

**Note - Page 352 · Location 6666**

Hitler, Darwin and Nietzsche.

**Page 352 · Location 6668**

The Poles were to be treated as Untermenschen (sub-humans). Their lands would not merely be occupied; they themselves would be terrorized and broken into utter docility, would be dealt with as beasts.

**Page 352 · Location 6670**

Brutality and mercilessness would be aggressively cultivated as virtues.

**Page 352 · Location 6677**

Hitler boldly told his generals that in the prosecution of the coming war, things would take place that were not to their liking. At other times he referred to the brutality ahead as "devil's work." He once declared, "You can't wage war with Salvation Army methods." He planned these things all along, and in that August 22 meeting, he warned the generals that they "should not interfere in such matters, but restrict themselves to their military duties."

**Page 353 · Location 6691**

General Lemelsen had one SS leader arrested for ordering the shooting death of fifty Jews. But no one would get in any trouble. Hitler saw to it that a blanket amnesty was declared on all such men arrested. But because reports of these monstrous acts began to circulate and be verified, many in the military leadership were finally willing to take a stand and join a coup against Hitler.

**Page 353 · Location 6700**

They must plan another coup. Many of them were Christians and had no qualms about calling what they saw evil, and felt a duty to stop it at all costs. Many felt that to be good Germans and faithful Christians at that time meant turning against the man leading their country.

## **Chapter 23: From Confession to Conspiracy**

**Page 367 · Location 6938**

To be true to God in the deepest way meant having such a relationship with him that one did not live legalistically by “rules” or “principles.” One could never separate one’s actions from one’s relationship to God. It was a more demanding and more mature level of obedience, and Bonhoeffer had come to see that the evil of Hitler was forcing Christians to go deeper in their obedience, to think harder about what God was asking. Legalistic religion was being shown to be utterly inadequate.

**Note - Page 367 · Location 6941**

Legalism and truth.

**Page 368 · Location 6957**

He well knew that all true exegeses and scholarship pointed to the truth, which, for the Nazis, was far worse than a hail of bullets.

**Page 368 · Location 6960**

The incident illustrates Bonhoeffer’s sense of what it meant to “tell the truth.” Obeying God by publishing this pro-Jewish book—and cannily pretending that he had no inkling the National Socialists would object to its contents—was being true.

## **Chapter 24: Plotting Against Hitler**

**Page 385 · Location 7287**

The Gestapo’s treatment of pastors at interrogations was “now in general the same as that of criminals.”

## **Chapter 28: Cell 92 at Tegel Prison**

**Page 446 · Location 8426**

He had theologically redefined the Christian life as something active, not reactive.

**Page 446 · Location 8435**

Here was the rub: one must be more zealous to please God than to avoid sin. One must sacrifice oneself utterly to God’s purposes, even to the point of possibly making moral mistakes. One’s obedience to God must be forward-oriented and zealous and free, and to be a mere moralist or pietist would make such a life impossible:

**Page 456 · Location 8626**

Bonhoeffer was constantly trying to correct the idea of a false choice between God and humanity, or heaven and earth. God wanted to redeem humanity and to redeem this earth, not to abolish them.

**Page 457 · Location 8635**

Bonhoeffer was trying to reclaim everything for God,

**Page 458 · Location 8653**

Bonhoeffer was trying with all his might to express the almost inexpressible paradox of a proper relation to God. He had a very high view of marriage: it is “more than your love for each other,” and it “has a higher dignity and power, for it is God’s holy ordinance, through which he wills to perpetuate the human race till the end of time.” Perhaps the sermon’s most memorable sentence is this: “It is not your love that sustains the marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love.”

**Page 463 · Location 8754**

To renounce a full life and its real joys in order to avoid pain is neither Christian nor human.

**Page 468 · Location 8832**

Bonhoeffer’s theology had always leaned toward the incarnational view that did not eschew “the world,” but that saw it as God’s good creation to be enjoyed and celebrated, not merely transcended.

**Page 470 · Location 8879**

Such people neither steal, nor murder, nor commit adultery, but do good according to their abilities. But . . . they must close their eyes and ears to the injustice around them. Only at the cost of self-deception can they keep their private blamelessness clean from the stains of responsible action in the world. In all that they do, what they fail to do will not let them rest. They will either be destroyed by this unrest, or they will become the most hypocritical of all Pharisees.

**Note - Page 470 · Location 8882**

Ethics and morality.

**Page 471 · Location 8896**

The solution is to do the will of God, to do it radically and courageously and joyfully. To try to explain “right” and “wrong”—to talk about ethics—outside of God and obedience to his will is impossible: “Principles are only tools in the hands of God; they will soon be thrown away when they are no longer useful.” We must look only at God, and in him we are reconciled to our situation in the world. If we look only to principles and rules, we are in a fallen realm where our reality is divided from God:

**Page 472 · Location 8907**

apart from Jesus Christ, we cannot know what is right or do right. We must look to him in every situation. Only in him can the fathomless evil of the world be dealt a death blow.

**Note - Page 472 · Location 8908**

W/o Christ morals are impossible.

**Chapter 29: Valkyrie and the Stauffenberg Plot****Page 484 · Location 9159**

to use the Christian faith as a means to escape life rather than as a means to live life more fully.

**Page 484 · Location 9161**

it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith.

**Page 486 · Location 9199**

being a Christian is less about cautiously avoiding sin than about courageously and actively doing God's will:

**Page 486 · Location 9202**

"Death is the supreme festival on the road to freedom."

**Page 487 · Location 9209**

The whole world will vilify us now, but I am still totally convinced that we did the right thing. Hitler is the archenemy not only of Germany but of the world. When, in a few hours' time, I go before God to account for what I have done and left undone, I know I will be able to justify in good conscience what I did in the struggle against Hitler. God promised Abraham that He would not destroy Sodom if just ten righteous men could be found in the city, and so I hope that for our sake God will not destroy Germany. None of us can bewail his own death; those who consented to join our circle put on the robe of Nessus. A human being's moral integrity begins when he is prepared to sacrifice his life for his convictions.

**Chapter 30: Buchenwald****Page 512 · Location 9693**

I had put great hopes in that report, because I believed that in this way the difficulties based mainly on religious objections, which oppose Dr. Rascher's experiments—for which I assumed responsibility—could be eliminated. The difficulties are still the same as before. In these "Christian medical circles" the standpoint is being taken that it goes without saying that a young German aviator should be allowed to risk his life but that the life of a criminal—who is not drafted into military service—is too sacred for this purpose and one should not stain oneself with this guilt. . . .

**Page 512 · Location 9699**

We two should not get angry about these difficulties. It will take at least another ten years until we can get such narrow-mindedness out of our people.

**Page 512 · Location 9704**

I suggest that with liaison between you and Wolff a “non-Christian” physician should be charged. . . .