

God's Morphic Gospel

By Harry Conn

The word "**morphic**" is being used in the sense that it indicates possession by God of a specified form of continuity of thought and action that has been and will be used by God to reconcile man to Himself. The Gospel as preached by Christ Jesus is a continuation of the government of God, a reconciliation of the relationship between God and man as God had always presented it - through covenants or conditions.

A person interested in truth and the Bible should know that the Bible is propositional truth. Propositional truth means it is a non-exhaustive treatment of the incidents, principles, practices, changes, developments and realm transfers which are being taught, explained and formulated. God does not tell us everything in the Bible about everything that did or did not come to pass. He only conveys to us what is necessary. If he had recorded everything that had happened in Bible incidents or that is taught therein, we would have a book at least twenty-five feet thick. But God has difficulty getting us to read a 2"-3" thick Bible completely.

The Bible has many noumenal concepts which are principles, incidents and objects of purely intellectual intuition, as opposed to objects of sensuous perception. Immanuel Kant gave us the word "noumenal" to indicate the opposite of the "phenomenal". A noumenal concept may be defined as something that is conceived by reason and is consequently thinkable; it is the perception of those things which transcend what can be measured by our physical senses alone. Acknowledging the noumenal gives us a great tool in helping us to get our a prioris correct, which certainly isn't easy, but is very important.

The foundation of all knowledge and experience of God is the acceptance of all the evidence that our minds have been confronted with in our natural observations of both ourselves and our surroundings. although known as the "law of necessity" in the 18th and 19th centuries, the idea of cause and effect has always been deeply ingrained in every moral being. In every task performed, we instinctively recognize that the result is the product of what we have thought and done. We observe endless profound objects and arrangements, intricacies of design which neither we nor other beings like ourselves could know or, intricacies that do not happen by mere chance. We are driven to the conclusions that there is a creator and Sustainer of all the profound and great things that we observe.

The Bible greatly enlarges our comprehension of the great Being of God. God was under no obligation to reveal even all that He has of the Divine secrets, but He has done so to inspire confidence that He is a God of intelligence and truth. By revealing His moral character and inner reactions to man's sin, God is seeking to persuade man to forsake his rebellion and experience His great loving compassion in redemption.

When God says in Genesis "Let us make man in our image," the true meaning of that statement is not only profound but also very far reaching. An easy way to begin to describe the extent of that simple statement would be to show that what is meant by "image" is not a physical image. Included in that word are endowments of attitude and disposition of heart, of personality and of character.

Man's image consists of an intellect, sensibilities (such as our five senses), a will, a conscience, the spirit and the ability to perceive various relationships (such as spiritual, family, civil, social, and business), the great gift of creativeness, and the incipency of the will. This remarkable endowment - the incipency of the human will - is perhaps one of our greatest mysteries. It means man has the ability to originate his own choices or actions apart from any inside or outside influences; he cannot be caused to make a moral choice, either good or bad. If you could cause a man to make a moral choice it would no longer be moral, but the result of coercion or force, and could be neither rewarded nor condemned. People sometimes make choices for which there is no logical reason, but they are accountable for the choice. We can choose between several alternatives submitted to our intellect, but we cannot choose the consequences.

Our exigency for a moral governor necessitates one who has both the ability and the disposition to govern. These requirements are found in our loving God, giving Him the right to govern for our good.

It has been rightfully said, millions of times, that Jehovah-God is, and always will be, a covenant-keeping God. His covenants begin in Genesis 4:3-7 and continue through Malachi 3:6. The fourth chapter of Genesis starts a process to produce obedience that He fulfills in the New Covenant, or the Kingdom of God, in the New Testament through Jesus. See Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:17-20; 26:19-20; and Revelation 3:3-5-19. "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." (Genesis 4:3-7)¹ This incident should be sufficient to convince an unprejudiced mind that acceptance with God is conditional, for here God clearly stated His "if-condition" to Cain. Cain's offering, the "fruit of the ground", was rejected by God. Abel's offering, the "firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof", was accepted. When God "had respect" unto Abel and his offering, but did not have respect unto Cain and his offering, Cain became angry and his countenance fell.

God tried to reason with angry Cain, explaining that He did not have an unconditional preference for Abel. God's acceptance of Abel was due to his "more excellent sacrifice" (Hebrews 11:4). Cain could have done as Abel did, and if he would have satisfied the conditional requirement for offerings, he would have been accepted. The Apostle John wrote: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore

slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." The Apostle told us why Cain killed Abel. Cain was of "that wicked one".

His works were evil, while Abel's works were righteous. Cain's offering exhibited evil works, Abel's offering exhibited faith works. The world's first murder was occasioned by one man's hatred of righteous worship. Cain's unbelief was revealed in his evil "works". Abel's faith was revealed in his righteous works.

Cain, the world's first apostate, rejected God's "if". Evil Cain worshipped God, but not "by faith" as Abel did. And all the religions in the world today are, as they always have been, divided into "unbelief worship" and "faith worship".

Abel's offering satisfied God's "if", Cain's did not. That is the whole story. The faith and worth of Abel's offering pleased God; the unbelief and cheapness of Cain's offering did not. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." (Hebrews 11:4) God testified to Abel's "gifts" and it was His "faith-gifts" that God bore witness to. The faith-gifts was the fact on which the witness was based.

" Faith without works is dead." (James 2:20) Paul described "unbelief worship" to Titus when he wrote, "They profess that they know God but in works they deny him." (Titus 1:16)

The Cain-spirit of worship continues to our day. Jude said, "Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain." (Jude 11)

The "way of Cain" is a system of religion. It can always be identified and marked by the fact that it has no part with God's "if-conditions" for acceptable worship. It is Cain-worship; and it hates Abel-like worship. "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." (Galatians 4:27) As Cain rejected God's "if- condition" so also the way-of-Cain religion rejects those conditions today. Beware of any religion that rejects God's "ifs".

With these facts before us, can any reader agree with the Calvinists who say that if you do anything other than believe you have a religion of works? Yet Jesus, in Acts 9 told Paul what he must do. Even with these works, the Calvinists say, "Those who are saved are not saved because of their faith or repentance or for any other reason. The calling of God is then the carrying out of His own purpose independent of the saved one's efforts or works." But this isn't correct. If the previous statement is true, why did God give us all three calls found in Romans 1:1-7? The three calls are: (1) we are called to belong to Christ; (2) we are called to be saints, and (3) we are called to be sent across the street or across the sea. We are either missionaries wherever we are or we are a mission field.

If Abel had offered the same kind of sacrifice as Cain, would he have been declared "righteous" by God?

Would Cain have been rejected if he had obeyed God's "if" and had offered faith-gifts, like Abel?

Is not a man righteous if his "works" are righteous? And is he not evil if his works are evil?

Is not the same "if" - condition for acceptable worship required of us as for Cain and Abel?

Covenants=Conditions²

Some would argue that covenants are not the same as conditions. According to very well-respected dictionaries, they are the same thing. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines a covenant as a binding agreement made by two or more persons or parties: a compact; or contract. Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition, defines a condition as "anything called for as a requirement before the performance, completion or effectiveness of something else; provision or stipulation."

The following statements are taken from the Bible; some of them are severe while others are gentle, good and necessary admonitions. all are profitable and there are hundreds more that could be listed. First I have compiled verses, words and phrases which define man's part of the covenant or conditions. These do not all apply to one covenant, but will surely attest that these conditions are not easy; they do not suggest a "bed of roses" or an "all this, and heaven, too!" syndrome. Following the first list are those references which show the part of God, or His side of the covenant or conditions.

Here are many of the serious admonitions found in the Scriptures for all who want to get in a right relationship with God or who want to maintain a right relationship with God and their fellow man: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength. (Deut. 6:5) Except you repent... (Lk. 13:5) If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant... (Ex. 19:5) Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecc. 12:13) Walk in My ways... (Deut. 5:33) Walk in My statutes and ... keep My judgments and do them (Ezek. 36:27) Observe and perform all its laws and all its ordinances. (Ezek. 43:11) Fear not, neither be dismayed. (Deut. 31:8) Give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted. Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. (Isa. 1:17) Really learn My ways... Take the precious from the vile...(Jer. 15:19) ...let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. (Matt. 16:24) And those with God's promises: "seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:6,7) "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. 57:20,21) (But grace will come to the)"...man to whom I will look (have something to do with), even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Isa 66:2) The sad, but true, fact is that in most places where theology is taught, the word "trembleth" has been removed

from the effect of our services. Most people are like some in Isaiah's day who said, "Prophecy unto us smooth things...", and this to our own hurt.

Salvation Conditional in Abraham's Covenant³ "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram..." (Gen. 15:18) "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee..." (Gen.17:4) "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generation..." (Gen. 17:7)

It will be helpful to first know what an ancient covenant was. The Hebrew word for "covenant" is berith and the Greek word is diatheke. The definition of covenant in Hebrew and Greek is: "will" - "purpose" - "disposition". These definitions can be checked in some of the leading lexicons such as Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 136 (1889)

A Bible covenant was God's declaration of His "will - purpose - disposition" toward those with whom He entered into the covenant or agreement. In making His gracious proposals to men, God the Covenanter, expressed His will and purpose to His people, the covenantees. He pledged Himself that something is done, or would be done, for the covenantees upon their performance or fulfillment of such conditions as stated in the covenant. WE shall see many proofs of this as we proceed to show that God's covenants were conditional.

There is much nonsense taught in theology with the phrase, "Sovereign will of God". The teachers of "eternal security" use that phrase often and some of them use it without explaining what they mean by it. However, the Bible does not use that phrase, nor was the word "sovereign" used in any Bible translation before this century to my knowledge. If we look up the meaning of the word sovereign you will notice that it is a simple word, like "supreme", "ruler", "chief", "the greatest", etc. The word is not a Bible term, and yet the Calvinists embellish the word with many strange additions. It is a term invented by men and loaded with arbitrary meanings and overtones, especially in regards to predestination, which the Bible does not bear out. There are other doctrines taught by other teachers using words and terms that are not found in the Bible. Examples of such words would include: antinomy, supererogation, supralapsarianism, and anthropopathism. Some of these words describe things which don't exist and there are those who protest the use of such words as "non-words" or as expressions of the noumenal, (which sets off the anti-transcendentalists). But they can be useful, legitimate words.

God's covenant with Abraham imposed a very severe condition from the beginning: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee'...So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him." (Gen. 12:1- 4) The history of Israel begins with Abraham. In Scripture he is called the "father" of the Jewish people. Proud Jews claimed that they were Abraham's children (Matt 3:9). All of God's dealings with Israel - past, present, and future - are founded in the Abrahamic Covenant. Salvation is based on the Abrahamic Covenant; and this was a conditional covenant.

Other Bible covenants have their foundation in the Abrahamic Covenant and they are embodied in and carrier through each succeeding covenant. The New Covenant of the New Testament, which is also called the Kingdom of God, is based upon the Abrahamic Covenant. God's eternal purpose is accomplished through the Abrahamic Covenant. This is why Jesus said, "Salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22)

The Apostle Paul stressed the fact that Christ is the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:26). All redemption is based on the Abrahamic Covenant and it all began with God's call to Abraham: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11:8) This was the first condition of the Abrahamic Covenant. Anyone able to recognize a fact when they see it cannot deny that this was a condition. What God promised to do for Abraham was conditional upon his leaving his own country, home and kindred. He had to forsake all who would not go with him. It sounds very much like what Jesus said in Luke 14:25-25 and again in Luke 18:22-30. If Abraham had not "obeyed" this condition, probably we would never have heard of him.

Doubtless Abraham was fondly attached to his native home; it may not have been easy for him to forsake the family ties and cherished affections. But "by faith" he left all and went out to a life of testing as God's covenant- partner. He was a wanderer in the earth, living in tents in a "strange country". (Heb. 11:9) Had he been mindful of that country "he left", he could have returned. (Heb. 11:5) There was no constraint, nor any coercion. Abraham acted with his own free will and choice. He obeyed God's call, and it is nonsense to speak of obedience without free choice.

It should be evident even to the casual reader that God's predestinating purpose in Abraham's life was related to and conditional upon a call to separation and obedience that required the action of faith. Predestination does not stand alone in the Scriptures. It is related to, and is conditional upon other truths. Usually God predestinates the conditions of salvation, such as repentance and faith in Christ, not the "who" of salvation. Those who are saved are then predestined to be conformed to the moral image of Christ, indicating continuing obedience.

" Moreover whom he did predestinate, them He also called: and who He called; them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. 8:30) God also predestinated the means for Abraham's glorification.

We are "called to be saints" (I Cor. 1:2); "God hath called us unto holiness," (I Thess. 4:7). We are "called" to fight the fight of faith - "called" to "lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:12). God has "called us with an holy calling (II Tim. 1:9). "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be you holy" (obey what little we know with a right intention of heart), (I Pet. 1:15).

God called Abraham to forsake all. And Jesus said, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hat, he cannot be my disciple." (Lk. 14:33)

This forsaking all is the acting of faith. It is the work of faith, not the "works of the law". Salvation is God's grace and love and mercy to sinful mankind. It is not for man to boast or glory in the works of his faith. The acts of his faith are the evidence and fulfillment of God's conditions for salvation. Abraham, by his faith, fulfilled the conditions of God's calling in his life, and Paul said that all who have faith will also "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Rom. 4:12). The "forsake-all" conditions were clearly stated by Jesus as a requirement to be His disciple.

Now we will consider the second condition in the Abrahamic Covenant.

" I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect, (complete, without defect, pure and faultless, not devious, mature or lacking nothing essential to the whole). and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abraham fell on his face; and God talked with him saying: As for me behold, by covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations." (Gen. 17:1-4) The first condition required that Abraham leave his country and kindred. The second condition commanded him to "walk" before God. He left Chaldea, by faith, and by a continual act of faith, he satisfied the covenant condition of a continual walk before God. Men talk much about the sovereign will of God in relation to salvation, but divine sovereignty imposed these covenant positions upon Abraham. Not to have obeyed these conditions would have been disobedience, unbelief, and an offense to divine sovereignty.

New Covenant law has the same moral conditions as the Abrahamic Covenant. We must "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham". This truth has frequent emphasis in the New Covenant.

In Romans 6:4, we "walk in newness of life." In Luke 1:6, God's covenant members walk "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Our only security and protection against darkness is to walk in the light.

In Galatians 6:16, Paul gave his blessing to those who "walk according to this rule" of New Testament righteousness. In Ephesians 5:2, 8 we are commanded by the New Covenant apostle "to walk in love" and as "children of light". Colossians 1:10 tells us to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing". From Galatians 5:16, we are told we must "walk in the Spirit". I John 1:6 says that those who profess to be saved and "walk in darkness" are liars. I John 2:6 declares: "He who is saved ought himself also to walk, even as He walked." III John 4 says that the true children of God "walk in truth". Those who are not of the truth walk in "lusts". I Peter 4:3 (Lusts" means to have too strong of a desire for anything but God, or inordinate amount of desire for anything.) Paul gives us a test by which we can determine who is of God and who is not. He said we are to "mark them which walk" and if they walk according to the "ensample" or example Paul gave us, then they obey the new Covenant conditions and are saved. (Phil. 3:17) Those who fail the walk-test are not saved. Is not the New Covenant opposed to the teaching that our salvation does not depend on "anything that we may or may not do? I think this is a fair sample of what God means by a covenant, even though we have not studied the other conditions of the Abrahamic Covenant.

There are two parties in the covenants: God and man. God says, "Do this," or "Obey what I have asked you to do and IF you do, THEN I will do what I promised." They are IF-THEN agreements or covenants, and there are hundreds shown in the Bible, with an excellent example found in Isaiah 1:18-20

God gave Abraham two more conditions to His Abrahamic covenant. One had to do with circumcising all the male babies, the other condition was very difficult: He was asked to offer up his only son, Isaac. But God never gives any of His people things to do that are impossible. If we, like Abraham, who went ahead and did what it was possible for him to do, God will come alongside the believer to help him. If we do the possible, the Holy Spirit of God will do the impossible, as far as we are concerned. Nevertheless, it was an extremely difficult trial or test for Abraham to be willing to do what he did with Isaac.

God's greatest difficulty with man is to get him to do what he can do. He will then do the impossible - which many times seems to be a moral, physical, or mental impossibility. and often they are - for us, but not with God's assistance and cooperation.

So, there are four conditions to God's Abrahamic covenant: he was to depart from his father's house, not knowing where he was going - forsaking all; he was called to a life of holiness (walk before Me and be thou perfect); he was required to circumcise the young males; and lastly he was to sacrifice Isaac. Stringent, necessary, challenging, arduous, vigilant, and devout seem to be the qualities that God wanted in a man who was to be the human father of the people who would be His namesake. Abraham was to be the leader of God's people and a follower of God. When we see or understand what God needed any how Abraham met the needs, we see why Abraham reached the highest pinnacle of any non-deity, with corresponding rewards.

What our God offers to any person who meets the conditions of saving grace and sonship, who perseveres in the faith, is too great to contemplate or even to imagine! I Corinthians 2:9 says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

The only real difference between a covenant and a condition is that there may be only one person involved in a condition, but it is extremely rare. It could be compared to putting a coin in a vending machine and getting nothing in return. However, even then there is somewhere a truant, absentee owner or owner-operator.

Salvation can be shown to have conditions in all covenants, such as the Abrahamic, the Sinaitic, the Davidic covenants, and they are all based upon the Abrahamic Covenants. Also included with such conditions are the IF-conditions found in the prophets, the teachings of Jesus, the Epistles of Paul in I Corinthians, the Hebrew Epistle, the general epistles of James, II Peter, I John, Jude and also in Revelation.

If God had, and still has conditions even for the New Covenant; if God has conditions yet for answered prayers, I believe it is consistent to list the conditions that must be met before Saving Grace, Illuminating Grace and Winsome Grace are made available to any

person. Of course, if there isn't any Winsome Grace, nor any Illuminating Grace, then there certainly won't be any Saving Grace - in any covenant - old or new. Preventive grace must be seen as that grace which seems to be the incipient source to call upon the Lord for mercy.

GOD'S MORPHIC GOVERNMENT

This book is not dealing with an easy subject. many times in life and in theology we not only need to, but we must back up and start simply to come out with the correct conclusion.

God is the moral and physical governor of this universe and in Isaiah 9:6-7 He begins to give us the overall picture of what had been in effect for many centuries and will continue to be executed for His pleasure and for our good. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of His government, and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with the righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this." Isaiah 9:6,7 RSV "The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens and His kingdom ruleth over all." Psalm 103:19

" Thy faithfulness endures to all generations; thou hast established the earth and it stands fast. By thy appointment they stand this day; for all things are thy servants. Psalm 119:90-91 Non-moral Government⁴

God's government has only two divisions as far as man is concerned: moral and physical. Physical government concerns all physical actions regulated by physics, chemistry, etc, and all of the natural elements both natural and synthetic. The non-moral, or physical, is a government of inanimate creation not endowed with free moral agency but governed by means of internal impulse or tendency. It includes the vast natural creation not possessing the life of growth or self-locomotion by means of dynamic energy or divine omnipotence; the law of cause and effect function in both areas. This is not to say we are not familiar with Heisenberg's principle called "indeterminacy", but God can, and does, control all the variables which therefore guarantees that God's effects are controllable or predictable. Certainty is the law of God's physical operations, the cause being brought into existence, the result always follows. (Psalm 119:90-91)

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1. Inanimate Creation

God's omnipotence holds absolute sway over the vast realm of material creation by producing an adequate cause for every desired effect. God creates by His great omnipotence and intellect and exercises perfect control according to His ever wise

benevolence. "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me." (Isa. 45:5) The sun, moon, stars, ocean and even our own bodies obey cause and effect.

2. Animate Non-Moral Creation

Here the mysterious law of instinct becomes a compelling directive, which must be supplemented by direct divine impulses to stimulate man to God-consciousness, judging from the phenomenal things that are taking place that exhibit more intelligence in certain details than man possesses. (Gen. 9:2-3)

God's Moral Government

A government of free moral agents by motives presented to the mind for the will to make a choice between, except for necessary providential interruptions of this normal moral freedom in order to maintain a tolerable world order and accomplish certain divine plans, all of which were made necessary by the entrance of sin into the world with the impending chaos resulting from selfishness.

3. Governmental Providence

The abnormal or unusual operation of God's wisdom in inciting men's wills to actions in various particulars through external events or internal persuasion, temporarily setting aside man's normal moral freedom and accountability under a law of cause and effect by coercing or constraining man's will. Such as when He hardened Pharaoh's heart in Exodus 11:9, after Pharaoh had hardened his own heart. In Ezra 1:1 we read that the Lord "stirred up Cyrus: to enable the Israelites to return to rebuild Jerusalem. Other examples of Governmental Providence are found in Joshua 11:20, Deuteronomy 2:25, Proverbs 21:1, and Romans 13:1

Failing to understand the real and distinct difference between Providential Government and Government of Free Moral Agency is what influences men to believe in Calvinism. When God causes a man to do something to bring about His eternal purposes, such as hardening Pharaoh's heart, he was not free until God lifted His causation upon Pharaoh's heart. Providential Government is not referring to salvation and it never does. I think that about eight percent of the Bible is God moving to bring about His eternal promises and plans, but not just for a given individual. The whole chapter of Romans 9 is just such an example.

4. Free Moral Action

The normal course of accountable, self-influenced action, where man is allowed

to choose between motives presented to the mind to form his own moral character and be the sole author of his destiny. Here God says: "I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded." Man's free will is mentioned or alluded to over 2000 times in the Scriptures, and the phrase "whosoever will" is also given numerous times. In this area of government we understand how God governs man by truth, love, influence and persuasion, but never by force. It explains that, for a sentient being, what is caused cannot be free, and what is free cannot be caused. Nor can any of their actions be predicted with absolute certainty. Civil government governs very much the same way except that legal sanctions against guilty law-breaker are governed by force through incarceration.

All men everywhere are being governed by God, one in a redeemed relationship with Christ through reconciliation and their happy submission. The other are rebels and unbelievers and are kept from fellowship with God because of their rebellion and the selfish purpose of life. Yet the Bible tells us that He is not far from all. (Deuteronomy 30:19, Isaiah 1:19-20, John 5:4, 7:17, Romans 2:5-11 and Revelation 3:20)

Conclusion

" When God calls a man, He bids him come and die," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer during the dark days when the church in Germany was being "Nazified". He knew whereof he spoke. Bonhoeffer followed Christ and at the age of thirty-nine, two weeks before the end of World War II in Germany, he was hung by German soldiers. He was not alone: 2,724 other men of the cloth either starved to death or were put to death by cruel means in Dachau. I know; I looked and found that number in their archives. Dachau was only one of 28 such prisons in Germany and there were others in Poland and Austria. And yet faith, if it is worthy of the word, must rest on a solid theological foundation. Bonhoeffer reminds us that if we can grasp who Christ is and what He demands; if we can see the present in the light of eternity, suffering in this world is not only manageable but is to be expected.

Bonhoeffer excoriated the church of his day: "We Lutherans have gathered like eagles around the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk the poison which has killed the life of following Christ."⁵ The church was weak because it misunderstood grace.

" Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheap jack wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolation of religion are thrown away at cheap prices...

In such a church the world finds a cheap covering for its sins, no CONDITION is required, still less any real desire to be delivered from sin...Cheap grace means the justification of the sin without the justification of the sinner...it is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."⁶ (Emphasis added.)

I am certain Dietrich Bonhoeffer would not say I have been too hard, or even hard enough. I will add that if the preachers and evangelists don't study and teach the conditions of grace, this country has very few years of freedom left to preach anything.

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Endnotes

¹Duty, Guy. *If Ye Continue*. Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, MN 1966. p.24

²Ibid. p. 27

³Ibid. pp.27,28,29,31,32

⁴Olson, Gordon C. *Moral Government of God*. Evangelical Education Ministries, Rochester, IN 46975. 1966. p. 25

⁵Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Cost of Discipleship*. McMillan Publishers, 1949. pp. 45,46

⁶Ibid