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The Just War and the Horizon of Martyrdom

In the previous chapter we saw how the Anabaptist tradition—as poignantly underscored by its traumatic experiences of martyrdom at the swords and stakes of other Christians—presents a theological and practical challenge to the broader Christian church’s conception of the life of discipleship and its relationship to violence. *Martyrs’ Mirror* insists upon a stance of consistent nonviolence as a criterion for Christian martyrdom because this tradition sees nonviolence as a distinguishing characteristic of the Christian life itself. “Martyrs” are so lauded in this tradition because they exemplify, in extreme circumstances, the call placed on *all* Christians to live out the Sermon on the Mount’s command to turn the other cheek through the difficult love of our enemies. Martyrdom casts light on the demand for peaceable nonresistance (or peaceful resistance, in more recent expressions) because it reflects the way of Jesus himself. This remains a relevant and pointed challenge because, both historically and today, it is not the view held by most Christian churches in the world—the churches that I have broadly labeled “magisterial.” This chapter will examine the relationship between the theology of martyrdom and the just war thinking endorsed by magisterial Christianity, which admits the possibility of a circumscribed use of violence by people of faith.

In the previous chapter we encountered an early church martyrology that tells the story of the soldier Marinus, who chose the gospel over the sword at the cost of his life. As we saw, the story does not make it entirely clear whether he rejected the “sword” because of the violence involved in its use or because of the religious behavior that would often have accompanied it in the context of the Roman military, or perhaps both reasons.

Similar questions appear in another story from a slightly later period, the account of Julius the Veteran, whose death likely took place in the spring of 304, toward the beginning of the “Great Persecution” under Diocletian and Galerius.¹ The narrative begins with the arrest of Julius and his interrogation before a prefect named Maximus. During his interrogation, Julius readily

admits that he is a Christian. When asked whether he is aware of the imperial orders to sacrifice to the gods, he responds: "I must not lose sight of my living and true God."² Maximus asks Julius why he doesn't just perform the seemingly insignificant trifle of "offering some incense and going away." Julius gives a multifaceted reply. On the one hand, like many a martyr throughout the ages, he says that he cannot break the commandments of God. But then he appeals, on the other hand, to his strong, even faultless, record of service in the Roman military as evidence of his faithful character, while admitting that he perhaps should not have chosen to serve in the army.³ He is quite plain about the fact that he had been a Christian, a follower of the true Creator God, during his time in the army: "I was in the army . . . and when I had served my term I re-enlisted as a veteran. All of this time I worshipped in fear the God who made heaven and earth, and even to this day I show him my service."⁴ We see here Julius's sense of dual citizenship, albeit an asymmetrical one.

The story's death scene begins with Julius receiving a kiss, likely an allusion to Judas's betrayal of Jesus as suggested by Julius's sardonic comment about it. After being encouraged by another Christian soldier, who was also imprisoned, Julius commends his spirit to Christ, asking to join the company of martyrs. He is then beheaded, ending his life "in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁵ Regardless of whether the text mainly reflects the historical Julius's mentality or the attitudes of the narrator, it is clear that military service and Christianity, including martyrdom, are not regarded as totally and obviously incommensurate with one another. At the same time, there are hints of mis-giving about the intersection of these two callings.

We have here a situation in which it was possible for a Christian to be a soldier for Rome, or at least for a soldier to become a Christian, apparently unobtrusively, but with the ordinarily endurable tension of loyalties eventually breaking out into insuperable conflict. With the advent of Emperor Constantine, and the legalization and eventual privileging of Christianity, however, what appears to have been an emerging possibility earlier on rather quickly becomes a new status quo. In a Christianized empire, the church comes to terms with its members serving the state as soldiers, and simultaneously serving God in the process. This coming to terms is reflected in the just war mindset that emerged in Christianity, which required what James Turner Johnson calls a "synthesis between Christian ideals and the moral relativity of the world of history."⁶ While this just war mindset is sometimes characterized as a specifically Christian contribution to the Western tradition, its roots are actually much older than the Christian church.

A case can be made that some features of just war thinking are anticipated by aspects of the holy war waged in the Old Testament. (Throughout the remainder of this book we will frequently encounter the importance and yet difficulty of the just war/holy war distinction.) While acknowledging strong similarities between Israel (and even Yahweh's) attitudes toward war and those of surrounding ancient Near Eastern peoples, John Wood notes that Israel was less prone to glorify war and employed methods that were comparatively mild (even if they understandably horrify us today).⁷ While most Old Testament warfare falls into today's "holy war" category and includes instances of vengeful divine sanction of total war (which present no small theological challenge in view of the New Testament),⁸ the Old Testament also includes the sense that war is never intrinsically valuable—when righteous, war has the end purpose of peace, justice, and even reconciliation with bitter enemies and the salvation of the world.⁹ Wood notes the presence, even amid the war of the Old Testament, of many creative examples of peacemaking in the face of conflict, as well as Israel's compelling vision of eschatological peace and calls to peacebuilding.¹⁰ (He calls this "pacifism," probably not the most precise term given the broader martial context in which they are found.) The main "just war" motifs that Wood finds in the Old Testament are instances where war is waged not due to a command of God but "on the basis of a universal sense of justice," one that is especially concerned for the vulnerable, as in Joel 3.¹¹ Similarly, he contends, the Deuteronomic laws of war acknowledge "the necessity of conflict," but "impose severe restraints on warmaking," even if those restraints look somewhat meager to us today.¹² Such restraint appears even in other strands of the Old Testament. For example, in 2 Chronicles 28, the nation of Israel is chastised by the prophet Oded for planning to enslave the people of Judah, whom they had defeated in battle. Yahweh had given Judah up to the Israelites as a form of discipline, but did not intend for them to be severely mistreated. Here we perhaps see a shade of how the later just war tradition understood the proper treatment of prisoners of war, albeit in the context of quasi-civil war with divine sanction.

Seeing the Old Testament as an antecedent of just war thinking is of course problematized by the wholesale slaughter commanded by God at some points of the Old Testament.¹³ Thus, while there may be some Old Testament precedents, the more fundamental roots of the just war mentality lie in the ancient Greek and Roman world into which Christianity was born.

The Rise of the “Just War” in Christian Ethics

Plato occasionally reflected on the place of war in human life and how it relates to the more desirable condition of peace. For example, his *Laws* dialogue includes a remark from the Athenian that the “true statesman” and “finished legislator” will regulate “war as a means to peace,” and not the other way around.¹⁴ And in *The Republic*, amid book 5’s discussion of the proper ordering of society, the question arises whether children should accompany parents to war, because they, as “future soldiers,” will be enabled to learn the ways of their future vocation.¹⁵ While agreeing on the benefits of such an arrangement, Socrates and Glaucon also recognize the need to guard children from the violence and inherent uncertainties of war: “The dangers of war cannot be always foreseen; there is a good deal of chance about them.”¹⁶ As the conversation continues, it becomes clear that the discussants presuppose the inevitability of war, and even its permissibility; their concern is how to mitigate its effects. One such consideration is the need to remember that other Greeks or Hellenes should not be enslaved, and that when battles are fought between groups of Hellenes, such conflict ought to be regarded as a temporary condition, since the various groups of Hellenes are “by nature friends.”¹⁷ Because of their inherent friendship, and thus the deeper goal of peace on the far side of war, Hellenic peoples should not intentionally kill civilians or utterly destroy one another when fighting, since “the guilt of war is always confined to a few persons,” and “the many are their friends.”¹⁸ Roland Bainton suggests that Plato’s reflections represent the first articulation of what became the “just war” code of behavior.¹⁹ We must, of course, bear in mind the implication that war with non-Hellenes need not involve such restraint.²⁰

In the Roman world, under the influence of Stoicism, these Greek beginnings of “just war” restraints on military activity were further developed by thinkers such as Cicero.²¹ Drawing upon the concept of a single natural law, authored by God, that would “be valid for all nations and all times,” Cicero (probably through his figure Laelius, although this section is fragmentary) argues that the “ideal State” will undertake war only for defensive or *responsive* reasons: “Those wars are unjust which are undertaken without provocation. For only a war waged for revenge or defense can actually be just.”²² Not only is aggression forbidden, but similar to Plato’s view, the goal of defensive war should be the restoration of peace—and not just any peace, but a “peace that shall not admit of guile.”²³ Moreover, a clear declaration of

war preceded by requests for reparations is necessary for a war to be deemed “just.”²⁴ Cicero also suggests that the state has a *responsibility* to oppose injustice, by military force if necessary: “He who does not prevent or oppose wrong, if he can, is just as guilty of wrong as if he deserted his parents or his friends or his country.” This responsibility is rooted in the affection toward one’s children and kin that is implanted in us by nature, which leads us to band together with others in the public life of the state “and thus by our skill, our industry, and our talents to cement human society more closely together, man to man.”²⁵ Cicero insists, however, that this responsibility toward one’s own family and state should always be tempered by a responsibility even to the enemy. Since humans are rational beings, resolving a dispute “by discussion” should be the first resort; only when that fails or is impossible is the use of force appropriate. Finally, during fighting, enemy soldiers who give up their weapons are to be protected. And in victory, “We should spare those who have not been blood-thirsty and barbarous in their warfare.”²⁶

What we have here in Cicero is a Stoic expression of what later just war teaching systematizes as the principles of just cause, right intention, last resort, and immunity from attack for prisoners of war, considerations that need to be met if a military action is to accord with the “claims of justice.”²⁷ Regardless of whether Rome prosecuted its wars in accordance with these principles (and Cicero thought that it did, at least most of the time),²⁸ such an approach to war was held up as an important ideal in the ancient world.

While many early Christian theologians were likely aware of this moral tradition, it exerted rather little actual influence in the very early Christian world because the church was such a small part of the population, often scorned by majority society, and eventually declared illegal, in addition to various theological reasons why the early church emphasized its separation from the “world.” At the same time, recent historical scholarship has recognized a strand in the early church of growing willingness to serve in the military—as with Julius the veteran.²⁹ As we saw in Chapter 2, however, most Christians during the church’s first two centuries followed an ethic that we can broadly label “pacifist,” partly because of biblical teaching such as the Sermon on the Mount, partly because of the pagan religious obligations required by the Roman military, and partly because of a perceived mandate to remain separate from the world. George Kalantzis ventures that an even deeper reason was that the earliest Christians saw their faith as a reversal of the imperial power dynamics of Rome.³⁰

With the growth of the church's numbers, a developing sense of the church's responsibilities for the good of life in the *world*, and the rise of Constantine as the first Christian emperor, however, there eventually occurred a merging of key Christian ideals with the classical world's reflections on how war can and should be waged in harmony with justice. Bainton aptly describes the *prima facie* ironies that attended this shift, including its expression in Constantine's choice of the Christian chi-rho symbol as an emblem of military might:

One cannot but marvel that neither the emperor nor the Church felt an impropriety in placing the cross upon the military *labarum*. Constantine tacitly ranged himself in the succession of the martyrs in that he was the first emperor to bestow upon himself the title Victor. This designation, which the pagans only gave to the gods and the Christians only to the martyrs, was assumed by the Christian emperor on the ground that what the martyrs had commenced with their blood, he had completed with his sword.³¹

On the other hand, Johnson points out that the majority of Christians—including those in the army—reflect a rather seamless transition.³² While the pacifist leanings of the earlier church were followed by some in the new situation, particularly in the fledgling monastic world,³³ the majority of ecclesiastical leaders and theologians reconciled themselves to the altered shape of Christian responsibilities in a situation of legality and increasing political power.³⁴ It did not take long (415 CE) until *only* Christians were allowed in the Roman army.³⁵ The result was a Christian borrowing and reshaping of classical just war principles.

Christian Just War Teaching

Drawing upon his teacher Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo had an especially formative role in the West, such that Paul Ramsey can characterize him as the “first great formulator of the theory that war might be ‘just,’ which thereafter has mainly directed the course of Western Christian thinking about the problem of war.”³⁶ Though Augustine does not develop a sustained systematic theory of war and its possible justification and justice, his occasional reflections were historically influential as “they underscored the idea that a Christian’s life in the world in history implies responsibility for assisting in creating and maintaining public order for the sake of justice and peace.”³⁷

Augustine's earlier reflections on Christian participation in war are present in his treatises against various heresies present in the early fifth century CE, including Donatism. He struggled with the question of how to squelch this long-standing North African Christian perfectionist movement that claimed its own succession of bishops as the true church, and in turn regarded the Catholic Church (including Bishop Augustine) as usurper. Catholic attempts to suppress the Donatist church, even by means of Roman military force, began before Augustine was even born, giving rise to martyr accounts from the Donatist pen that are remarkable both for their affinities with earlier church martyrologies and for their moments of acid criticism of Catholic Christians and their leaders.³⁸ Of course, some Donatists used rather violent means of their own in their struggle against Catholic Christianity.³⁹ On the Catholic side, Augustine came to regard the use of force as a legitimate way to stop the Donatists.⁴⁰ While this situation only partly qualifies as consideration of "just war" (by today's usual definitional standards), since it centered on religious and theological controversy, Augustine's treatise concerning *The Correction of the Donatists* (c. 417) is instructive for the way in which it brings biblical and theological themes to bear on the question of appropriate use of violence.

First, Augustine strives to show his reader, Boniface, a Christian tribune responsible for some actions to be taken against the Donatists, that the Donatists are at fault; it is *they* who "maintain rebellious hostility against the unity of Christ."⁴¹ *They* were "disturbing the peace of the innocent for one reason or another in the spirit of the most reckless madness,"⁴² committing violent acts that compromised public safety and the ability of the true church to proclaim the gospel.⁴³ It is because of these aggressive and dangerous actions of the Donatists that Augustine approves of the use of coercive violence against them. He appeals to the call of the church to save sinners/heretics "from the path of destruction," interpreting such work as an expression of Christian charity.⁴⁴ What happens when a Christian government uses force against heresy is simply the opposite of what is done to the church when its righteousness is persecuted out of enmity—namely, persecuting *un-righteousness* out of a "spirit of love," giving "proper discipline" so that those disciplined will be corrected, recalled from error, and shown the truth.⁴⁵ According to Augustine, this may have to take the form of violence and punishment, but it is at bottom a work of mercy, because the Donatists will be rescued from false teaching and given the opportunity of being "made whole in the Catholic Church."⁴⁶ Yes, he admits, some may be killed. But that is for

the greater good: “What then is the function of brotherly love? Does it, because it fears the shortlived fires of the furnace for a few, therefore abandon all to the eternal fires of hell?”⁴⁷ Rehearsing the same basic argument later in the treatise, Augustine argues that it would in fact be “the extreme of cruelty” to simply let heretics have their way.⁴⁸ It would uncharitably leave them, and those who fall under their sway, to destruction for heresy. Technically, Augustine’s analysis fits under what today’s discussions usually label the “holy war” category because of the transcendent end involved—preserving true doctrine against dangerous heresy. Yet the discussion is not entirely devoid of what we today think of as just war elements because the cause must be defensive and violence aimed at rescue.⁴⁹

Instructive also are Augustine’s earlier reflections on war in a book, written around the year 400, against the views of a Manichaean named Faustus—albeit largely with Old Testament military actions in mind. Augustine distinguishes between what we might call the collateral evils of war and the *real* evil of war. The fact that there is violence and killing in war may be undesirable, but Augustine thinks that what is truly evil about war is “the desire to do harm, cruelty in taking vengeance, a mind incapable of peace, fierceness in rebellion, and a lust for domination”—in short, wrong intentions, a malicious spirit, and unchecked violence.⁵⁰ In his view, these very things are what good and just people will fight *against* in order to resist and punish them. This general framework enables Augustine to interpret the Sermon on the Mount’s “Do not resist an evildoer” line as a “disposition [that] lies not in the body but in the heart.”⁵¹ It is a matter of a peace-directed state of mind and heart that is possible even in the midst of physical actions involving violence. He interprets Jesus’ admonition to his disciples to “give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” (Matt. 22:21) as an implicit sanction of the vocation of the soldier, since Caesar’s taxes were used to pay his soldiers.⁵²

Similarly, as we return to his later letter to Boniface, Augustine makes clear that he believes the use of violent force to restrain heresy is lamentable. It would be better, he states, “that men should be led to worship God by teaching, than that they should be driven to it by fear of punishment or pain.” But when efforts at persuasion don’t work, it is necessary to resort to coercion precisely so that such people, having been coerced, may be taught.⁵³ It is here that Augustine finds warrant for such coercion in the actions of Jesus himself, whose conversion of the apostle Paul did not begin with teaching, but rather “dashed him to the earth with His power; and that He might forcibly bring one who was raging amid the darkness of infidelity to desire the

light of the heart, He first struck him with physical blindness of the eyes. . . . Let them recognize in [the case of Paul] Christ first compelling, and afterward teaching; first striking, and afterwards consoling.”⁵⁴ This is, to be sure, a strikingly different application of the *imitatio Christi* motif than we saw in the previous chapter.

In sum, what we have here in Augustine, in the context of a struggle against heresy in a Christianized empire, is a preliminary theological sketch of a “just war” approach to the use of violence. Christian discipleship and the deployment of (some) violence are now seen as consistent. Underpinning Augustine’s biblical interpretation is a magisterial political theology—the conviction that the use of force is legitimate when the ruler is Christian, an option that wasn’t on the table for the apostles and earlier theologians such as Tertullian who lived under pagan rule.⁵⁵ In fact, Augustine can tell Boniface, the tribune, that “it is clear that in you it is actually a part of your military valor to serve in truth the faith which is in Christ.”⁵⁶ By implication, Augustine is also saying that it is part of Boniface’s faith to serve with a right-minded military valor and leadership. Whereas Marinus’s bishop required him to choose between gospel and sword, Bishop Augustine encourages Boniface to serve the gospel by means of the sword.

Augustine develops a broader and more famous rendition of these themes in *The City of God*. In this his magnum opus, Augustine offers a theological explanation of the shape of history through the metaphor of two “cities” that represent contrary impulses and driving forces in the world.⁵⁷ The “earthly city” is the world as enslaved by sin and love of self, expressing “lust for domination,” which is one of the central earthly goods that govern human actions and the trends of history.⁵⁸ The “heavenly city,” on the other hand, represents both God’s heavenly dominion and our world as it is created and reclaimed by God. The church, the society of human beings who strive to orient themselves according to love and service of God, is a pivotal means by which the city of God exerts its influence in the world. The contrast between the two cities provides significant leverage for the church’s theological critique of the ways of the world—awareness of the true justice of God reveals the cracks in efforts at justice in society.⁵⁹ However, though belonging to the city of God and striving to live for God, the church remains situated in the world, with all of its ambiguity, misdirection, and violence, including war. “The truth is,” Paul Ramsey says in summary of Augustine’s point of view, “that fratricidal love and brotherly love based on love of God are always commingled in human history.”⁶⁰ Augustine can certainly not be accused of being overly

optimistic about the world or naive about war. In book 19, where one of his discussions of war can be found, he laments the obvious evils that accompany war: “all those terrible wars, all that human slaughter, all that human bloodshed!”⁶¹

Augustine’s rhetoric shows that he sees himself rearticulating and extending an existing just war tradition: “The wise man, they say, will wage just wars.”⁶² Accordingly, Augustine emphasizes that this wise man, attempting to act in accord with justice, will only wage war because it is genuinely necessary and will carry an attitude of lament into his waging of war. Following this classical tradition, moreover, Augustine affirms that the demands of justice sometimes *require* the waging of war, since the injustice of the opponent must be resisted in order to preserve society. This point comes through even more clearly in his earlier treatise against Faustus. Augustine affirms that the rightness or wrongness of a war depends significantly on its cause: “It is not permissible . . . to doubt that it is right to undertake a war . . . under God’s authority either to strike terror into, wear down, or subdue the pride of mortals.”⁶³ Even in cases where the cause is unjust or the ruling authority is mistaken or evil in waging war, the soldier who obediently fights is “innocent,” because for him obedience is a duty.⁶⁴

Further in book 19 of *City of God* Augustine insists that some sort of peace is *always* the purpose of war. Even an unjust aggressive war, which may seem to be aimed solely at conquest and gain, is ultimately motivated by the desire for “peace with glory.”⁶⁵ Augustine offers various examples, such as how the aggression of robbers and even the most ferocious beasts seems to be motivated by some kind of peace, simply one more to their liking and benefit than the previous peace. Although this applies even to the tyrant who wages an aggressive war, Augustine claims that because such tyranny rejects the “just peace of God and loves its own unjust peace,” it is barely worthy of the label “peace.”⁶⁶ The right kind of war, in contrast, will be aimed at the right kind of peace—one characterized by justice.

As we survey these dimensions of Augustine’s account of war and the conditions under which it can be appropriate for the Christian to participate, it is fair to say that he adds rather little to the classical tradition’s prior treatment of the justice of war. Even his linking of the just waging of war with Christian charity is anticipated by Cicero’s view that going to war is ultimately rooted in affection for kin in society and by Plato’s view that restraint in war is required by friendship that persists even with one’s enemy. In the context of heresy, of course, Augustine’s view of charity includes concern for the

postmortem destiny of the enemy. What Augustine arguably does add, however, is a more profound account of the phenomenon of war itself that roots it in the sin and finitude of creation *and* includes the Christian insistence that war will not be the final word on human history. This theological account of the world's brokenness informs the stance that Augustine and the magisterial traditions required of the Christian—to wage war for justice when necessary but to do so reluctantly and in a spirit of peace.⁶⁷ According to Paul Ramsey, Augustine's position on just war includes the sober recognition that a unilateral aggressor and absolutely clear just cause will not always characterize justified war. The imperfect justice of the just war, Ramsey suggests, “may tragically be on both sides.”⁶⁸ Later thinkers in the Augustinian tradition, such as Francisco de Vitoria, acknowledged that at very least both sides in a conflict usually *think* they have justice on their side—what Johnson labels “simultaneous ostensible justice.”⁶⁹ Augustine's spirituality of just violence and his appreciation for the ambiguity of sin in history were assimilated by the magisterial traditions in the West as the just war approach became the standard ethic of these traditions.⁷⁰

Beginning in the twelfth century, Christian scholars began to systematize just war thinking, drawing heavily on Augustine's beginnings. Due to the work of thinkers such as Gratian and other canon lawyers, this had become a well-developed tradition by the time of the high scholasticism of the Western Middle Ages.⁷¹ While I am focusing on *theological* contributions, the consolidation of just war thinking into a more robust tradition involved much beyond the theological, with the cultural code of knighthood in the Middle Ages as a major contributor, especially to norms related to fighting morally.⁷²

In articulating that consolidation of the just war tradition in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas appeals frequently to the authority of Augustine in the *Summa Theologiae*'s analysis of war. Thomas's defense of the possible justice of war stands alongside contention, schism, and strife in the midst of his lengthy examination of Christian charity. While vices like contention, schism, and strife clearly fall into the category of sin, Aquinas invokes Augustine in order to contend that waging war is not always sinful, as it can be an expression of love for the innocent, the threatened, and the welfare of society. (Its neighbors in his litany of topics, of course, instructively suggest that it sometimes *is* sinful.) In a clear discussion of three central criteria for permissible war, Aquinas argues that if (1) a legitimate authority commands it; if (2) a just cause exists; and if (3) those declaring war intend “the advancement of good, or the avoidance of evil,” then such action can be judged justified.⁷³ In

his replies to various hypothetical objections, Aquinas interprets the “taking of the sword” that Jesus condemns (Matt. 26:52) as a *private* use of violence rather than one commanded by a sovereign for the public benefit. Similarly, he reads Jesus’ command in the Sermon on the Mount not to resist an evil-doer as a prohibition against *self*-defense rather than a demand for the state not to use coercive force to defend the *common* good.⁷⁴

In his presentation Aquinas both assumes and defends three of the central considerations involved in decisions about the justice and responsibilities involved in the decision to go to war. In Latin terminology that has become common since the early twentieth century, these decisions about going to war have been called the *jus ad bellum* facet of the tradition. The sovereign must discern a genuine just cause in order to have the right to go to war (*ad bellum*), thereby suspending the ordinary expectations of life in peacetime (*in pacis*—to add another much less common Latin phrase to the discussion). In recent thinking, to the *ad bellum* category also belongs the demand that war be a last resort and success be reasonably likely.⁷⁵

From the Middle Ages into the early modern period, attention was increasingly given to questions of how to act justly *within* war. This category of *jus in bello* (also modern rather than medieval terminology) is logically secondary and has historically received less consideration even though concerns about using only necessary means, not targeting noncombatants, and the like were present even in the classical tradition (as we saw with Plato and Cicero previously) and were subtly implied or assumed by thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas.⁷⁶

While usually depicted in today’s just war reasoning as a package deal,⁷⁷ there is no small amount of tension between the considerations of these two categories. As Michael Walzer points out, it is possible for a state to go to war with just cause but to prosecute the war by unjust means; and it is possible for a state that went to war unjustly to fight according to the rules. It is most often the former discrepancy that rears its ugly head, as the presence of a just cause to fight (*ad bellum*) unleashes a consequentialist line of reasoning that can overwhelm the *in bello* insistence on the duty to respect noncombatant immunity: victory over the terrors of aggression is such an important end that it may seem to justify whatever terrible means are necessary.⁷⁸

Though not without tension, and not originally with this terminology, this two-pronged approach—*jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*,⁷⁹ with clear priority to the former—became established Catholic teaching, and was also naturally integrated into the magisterial Protestant churches, which like their Catholic

opponents/cousins were generally eager to align themselves closely with the state provided that it advanced their theological platform. It can be seen, for example, in the Augsburg Confession's affirmation (1530) that "it is right for Christians to hold civil office, to sit as judges, to decide matters by the imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers."⁸⁰ Similarly, the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) affirms that the Christian magistrate "may lawfully now, under the new testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion."⁸¹ The Second Helvetic Confession (1566) is even more comprehensive in its treatment of war. The magistrate is called to wage war when "necessary to preserve the safety of the people," "provided he has first sought peace by all means possible." Such actions, the confession states, are a way of serving God.⁸² In its articulation of the responsibilities of the magistrate's subjects, moreover, the document affirms the call to military service: "If the public safety of the country and justice require it, and the magistrate of necessity wages war, let [the people] even lay down their life and pour out their blood for the public safety and that of the magistrate. And let them do this in the name of God willingly, bravely, and cheerfully. For he who opposes the magistrate provokes the severe wrath of God."⁸³ This willingness to inflict violence when called upon is seen as a requirement in a document that also recognizes the possibility of Christians suffering violence as a result of persecution.⁸⁴ It should be no surprise, incidentally, that this confession harshly condemns the Anabaptists, who were only willing to do the latter.⁸⁵

The Logic of Christian Just War Thinking

Its beginnings in the classical world show that the canons and rules of the just war reflect what we might think of as a "natural law" rationale. The defense of the body politic, so long as it is contoured toward future peace and order, was seen as written into the rational patterning of the world. Interestingly, natural law thinking is usually thought to include the right to self-defense; but that is something that many Christian thinkers back away from, often with the Sermon on the Mount in mind (as we saw with Aquinas). At the same time, the shape of the just war tradition within Christianity—as we saw earlier with Augustine—appends to general philosophical reasoning additional biblical and theological considerations.

The Biblical Text

In terms of the Bible, there is the presence of divinely sanctioned warfare in the Old Testament, and God's own righteous violence in the New Testament (e.g., the Ananias and Sapphira episode in Acts and the war of the Lamb in Revelation—the latter, of course, can only tenuously be claimed as any kind of precedent for righteous violence, as the Lamb's chief weapon is to be slain).⁸⁶ Even more importantly, the biblical canon includes the directive for the people of faith to protect the vulnerable and marginalized. One key expression of this in both Old and New Testaments is the motif of the “widow and orphan.” Exodus 22 includes the command: “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry; my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children orphans” (vv. 21–24; cf. Ps. 146:9). This is taken up in the book of James in more positive form: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (1:27). In situations of aggression, when peace is violated by tyranny and injustice, it is the vulnerable members of society who are most at risk. Can Christian individuals and communities participate in the state's efforts to protect the “widow and orphan” through social order and justice? The just war tradition answers in the affirmative, and regards the right kind of warfare as one way of heeding this biblical command, perhaps not the ordinary way, but one that applies in extreme circumstances. It is of course less clear on how such work keeps its Christian participants “unstained by the world.”

The Christian just war ethic also appeals to statements in the New Testament that speak of God's ordaining and sanctioning of the state and its power of the “sword.” The most well-known such passage is Romans 13:1–7. There Paul exhorts his audience to “be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God” (v. 1). That this section forms part of a long exhortation on the proper conduct of Christians is shown in the reminder that “rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good” (vv. 3–4). But, Paul says, those who do

wrong—including Christians—should fear the state: “For the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer” (v. 4).⁸⁷ In rather similar terms, the epistle of 1 Peter, as part of its appeal to Jewish believers to “conduct [themselves] honorably among the Gentiles” (2:12), tells them: “For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and praise those who do right” (vv. 13–14). Indeed, the passage concludes with a telling juxtaposition: “Fear God. Honor the emperor” (v. 17).

For the original audiences of these letters, these passages were not necessarily intended to justify Christians serving in the civil government, with its work of bearing the sword and punishing wrongdoing. They were a reminder that Christ’s superior lordship should not be interpreted as license for Christians to act in disorderly or disobedient ways. Indeed, the verse before 1 Peter’s “Honor the emperor” command reminds its readers: “As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil” (2:16). But as the church grew in numbers, and as people already involved in civil government or the military gravitated toward the faith, new questions arose: If the civil authority and the sword are sanctioned by God, wouldn’t Christians be allowed to serve? When those involved in that work turn to Christ, must they abandon their occupation?⁸⁸ The magisterial traditions that emerged obviously answered the first question affirmatively and the second question in the negative, for otherwise why didn’t Jesus give such counsel to believing soldiers he encountered? The alternative view, which Nigel Biggar calls the “Anabaptist distinction,” wherein God ordains the sword but Christians are forbidden to bear it themselves, leads, he argues, to the “intellectually incoherent position of contradicting in principle what they depend upon in practice, and in the morally inconsistent position of keeping their own hands clean only because others are required to get theirs dirty.”⁸⁹

We must remember, however, that the New Testament’s sanctioning of the state and its sword does not mean an absolute unqualified divine approval of any and all states. It is more of a general rule of thumb that reflects the place of good social order in allowing for human life and flourishing. Other scriptural voices remind us that the state and the sword can go wrong. In the Jewish world around the time of the New Testament, the

Wisdom of Solomon reflects, on the one hand, the basic message we found in Romans and 1 Peter:

Listen therefore, O kings, and understand;
learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. . . .
For your dominion was given you from the Lord,
and your sovereignty from the Most High. (6:1, 3)

On the other hand, it appends a warning to those rulers:

He will search out your works and inquire into your plans.
Because as servants of his kingdom you did not rule rightly, . . .
he will come upon you terribly and swiftly,
because severe judgment falls on those in high places. (vv. 3–5)

Similarly, we see that Paul, though generally sanctioning the state and its authority, as in Romans 13, was himself willing to disobey the civil authorities (as seen in 2 Cor. 11:23–33), was imprisoned multiple times, and according to tradition was put to death by the Romans. His willingness to do so is in fact consistent with what we might think of as the subtle unspoken counterpoint of Romans 13 itself: when rulers become a terror to good conduct; when they cease to function as God's servant for good; when the sword becomes a tool for purposes other than punishing grave wrongdoing, then what God has in a general sense ordained has gone astray. Accordingly, the New Testament canon also gives us a vision of the unjust state as tyrant in Revelation 13's symbolic representation of the oppressive Roman Empire of its day as the beast. In short, the biblical canon as a whole generally sanctions the state but recognizes that it can and does go wrong. Obedience to and even participation in the offices of the state may be appropriate for Christians, but may have to be withheld depending on the circumstances. In the words of Peter and the other apostles in Acts 5:29, words that have been echoed on many a Christian martyr's lips, "We must obey God rather than any human authorities." The just war tradition acknowledges precisely this tension when it affirms the possibility of justified violence degenerating into unjustified and purely sinful violence, or a just cause being pursued with unjust means, and so forth.

Sin in the World

An additional theological factor in the logic of the just war tradition is one that we already encountered with Augustine, the nature and reality of sin in the world. The church participates in the city of God, while also being subject to the conditions of the city of the world. Over against the optimism of nineteenth- and twentieth-century liberal Protestantism—which proclaimed pacifism as the solution to aggression and war in the world—Reinhold Niebuhr channeled the vision of Augustine in a famous essay titled “Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist.” There Niebuhr argued that liberal Christian pacifism—to be distinguished, in his view, from traditional Anabaptist forms of pacifism⁹⁰—is heretical in two ways. Its doctrinal problem is its amnesia regarding the doctrine of sin, which produces violence and aggression and threatens order and flourishing in the world. Its related experiential heresy is the fact that it is out of touch with the actual lived realities of the world, which include obvious tyranny that needs to be resisted through the judicious use of force.⁹¹ It is necessary, Niebuhr writes, to make “concessions to the fact that sinful man must achieve tentative harmonies of life with life which are less than the best,” including the waging of war.⁹² For Niebuhr, the waging of war for justice and restored order requires attentiveness to our own failings and complicity. Though in some ways his position differs from that of Niebuhr, Nigel Biggar captures this particular point aptly:

As a Christian the just warrior cannot stand to the unjust perpetrator as clean to unclean, righteous to unrighteous, good to evil. He can only stand as one sinful creature to another. Even the enemy partakes of an equal dignity that deserves respect. According to the Christian view, therefore, cleansing the world of wickedness cannot be the aim of just war, since wickedness lies within as well as without, *here* as well as *there*. Just war is only ever a police action, never a crusade—always proximate, never ultimate.⁹³

Put back into Augustine’s terms, drawing upon some of the lamentable and corrupted ways of the world is occasionally needed, even by Christians, as the church testifies in its limited and provisional way, to the city of God. This shall be a major theme in Chapters 5 through 7.

Christian Love

Finally, as intimated in Augustine, there is the defense of just war based on the command of Christian love. For example, foundational to Paul Ramsey's examination and defense of the just war ethic is the affirmation that just war convictions at their best are an expression of the Christian commitment to love, especially those most vulnerable to aggression and tyranny:

The western theory of the just war originated, not primarily from considerations of abstract or "natural" justice, but from the interior of the ethics of Christian love. . . . While Jesus taught that a disciple in his own case should turn the other cheek, he did not enjoin that his disciples should lift up the face of another oppressed man for *him* to be struck again on *his* other cheek. It is no part of the work of charity to allow this to continue to happen. Instead, it is the work of love and mercy to deliver as many as possible of God's children from tyranny, and to protect from oppression, if one can, as many of those for whom Christ died as it may be possible to save. When choice *must* be made between the perpetrator of injustice and the many victims of it, the latter may and should be preferred—even if effectively to do so would require the use of armed force against some evil power. This is what I mean by saying that the justice of sometimes resorting to armed conflict originated in the interior of the ethics of Christian love.⁹⁴

Ramsey suggests that just war is simply a "change in tactics" for Christian love.⁹⁵ While the previous quotation relates love to *jus ad bellum*, Ramsey also argues that the genesis of noncombatant immunity (as the centerpiece of *jus in bello*) was a "creation of the Christian love ethic . . . and not merely the result of an independent natural-law reason."⁹⁶ To be sure, Ramsey's is a generous read of the distinctively Christian shape and intent of just war principles. Johnson, for example, suggests that Ramsey's approach to the issue "exaggerated" the connection with Augustine's view of Christian love.⁹⁷ In awareness of the incredulity of some to such a claim, Ramsey himself observes that what was originally motivated by Christian love earlier in the tradition was eventually diluted down to natural justice.⁹⁸ For that reason, today the role of Christian love may be considerably less apparent than in the past. While that may be true, Biggar persuasively contends that *Christian* just war reasoning sees justified violence as an expression of love toward the victims of aggression (in seeking to save them) and even the enemy (by

demonstrating restraint in the use of violence). Both are our neighbors, whom we are called to love.⁹⁹

It is here that the concept of “double effect” is crucial. With long roots in just war thinking, the notion suggests that unfortunate evil effects in a course of action are tolerable if they are unintended (even if expected and foreseen) effects of a good end that is intended in that course of action. Violence and killing are not the aim, but a loving defense of the vulnerable and a peaceable and orderly society. In his explanation of this element of just war thinking, Biggar emphasizes that the principle of double effect does not present a blank check for any destructive means to a positive end. The unintended negative effects must not be caused “needlessly,” “in vain,” or “disproportionately.”¹⁰⁰ Attitudinally, *reluctance* should characterize the unfortunate side of the double effect, a reluctance whose deepest well may be Christian love for others, even for a neighbor who is currently also enemy.¹⁰¹

Criticisms of Christian Just War Thinking

The Teachings of Jesus

The most potent argument against the just war approach has already appeared in Chapter 2: the contention that Jesus’ teaching, especially as concentrated in the Sermon on the Mount, and his demeanor in both life and death, especially in his self-sacrificial passion and cross, leave no room for his disciples to employ the sword, baton, gun, or cruise missile. Expressing this criticism, Robert Emmet Meagher states that Ambrose has to “bracket and bypass” the New Testament’s gospel of peace, and that Augustine is forced to allegorize and spiritualize the Sermon on the Mount, reducing it to “right intention” in fighting.¹⁰² It is worth repeating the summary point from Richard Hays that was quoted in the previous chapter: “From Matthew to Revelation we find a consistent witness against violence and a calling to the community to follow the example of Jesus in *accepting* suffering rather than *inflicting* it.”¹⁰³ As the force of this challenge will follow us through the rest of this book (especially in Chapter 5), here it must simply be noted.

Just War Slippage

In addition to a forthrightly pacifist critique, there is also an important internal and historical critique of the just war tradition—that history gives scant evidence of this moral tradition in practice embodying its own principles and ideals. One of the most potent versions of this critique comes from John Howard Yoder, himself a pacifist who believed that a just war tradition that abided by its own convictions would be a natural ally of Christian pacifists.¹⁰⁴ With regard to *in bello* considerations, Yoder's analysis of the magisterial Christian tradition detects a slippage in just war history, where less and less restraint, more and more destructive weapons, have been allowed. On the *ad bellum* side, he contends that it is difficult to find situations where just war principles have led a Christian state or leader to decide *not* to use military force.¹⁰⁵ Meagher asserts the case even more strongly, that the just war tradition's stated presumption against war quickly became a "formula for enablement, not deterrence."¹⁰⁶ Yoder does not reflect at length upon Christian soldiers electing to do or not do certain things in battle due to their moorings in Christian just war teaching. The phenomenon of "selective conscientious objection," while illegal in many countries, including the United States, shows that it is an important consideration. In Yoder's view, the only way the credibility of the just war tradition can be demonstrated is if it functions to stop and restrain fighting in situations where victory could only be achieved through unjust methods. Furthermore, Yoder argues, the credibility of the "last resort" criterion of just war requires constant, diligent, and proactive work for justice and peace in the world that the magisterial traditions have seldom displayed alongside their readiness for war.¹⁰⁷ We will return to Yoder's challenge—placed under the lens of martyrdom—in the final chapter of this book.

Christian Martyr Intuitions

A third cautionary tale about the just war tradition emerges from what we might think of as some of the intuitions or "instincts" of the martyr theology of the Christian church. We must again ponder the case of Salvadoran priest Father Barrera ("Neto") from Chapter 1, who despite his calling as priest picked up a gun in an attempt to protect and advance the cause of the poor and repressed people of El Salvador. He was killed in the course of fighting,

it appears with right intention, for a just cause,¹⁰⁸ and like any soldier it may be possible to speak of the “sacrifice” he made in risking his life for those in need. Yet even a sympathetic chronicler like Erdozain distinguishes Neto’s death from that of Archbishop Romero, clearly applying the term “martyr” to the latter and only vaguely using some of its imagery for the former. Both Romero and Neto were killed for the same cause—a defense of the poor and vulnerable; both were killed for defending the widow and the orphan; both were maligned by the powers of injustice and oppression that they opposed; both were guided by their Christian commitment. Aside from Romero’s greater fame and publicity due to his office of archbishop, the main difference between the two—admittedly, a significant one—is that Neto used violence to defend the people.¹⁰⁹ He was killed while fighting. *If* that is the principal reason why Romero has been broadly hailed (and eventually canonized) as a martyr and Neto has not, then it poses serious questions regarding the soundness of the just war tradition. If martyrdom is an argument—from extreme circumstances—about what the Christian life should look like, and the deployment of violence removes a Christian from consideration as a martyr, then it becomes difficult to see how even “justified” violence could be defended as consistent with the Christian life.

Admittedly, the complexity of the Neto/Romero comparison is increased by the fact that they were both *priests*, which in Catholic ordination theology means there are certain actions and methods not available to them that may be available to Christians in other walks of life—such as soldier or magistrate. The priest is called to a higher holiness than the layperson.¹¹⁰ And in Catholic saint theology there is usually a sense that saints (of which martyrs are the highest echelon) operate at an even more elevated plane of Christian existence. Perhaps from that angle, the use of violence—drawing, as it does, upon the evil of the world, even for a justifiable end—is inconsistent with the higher level of sanctity, even if such use of violent means is not inherently inconsistent with Christian faith (given just war teaching). Such elements of the traditional Catholic theology of sainthood, however, don’t apply as strongly or in quite the same way when a Protestant perspective is applied to the comparison. From that standpoint, sanctity is possible and expected for all Christians, regardless of their station or occupation, including jobs that require the “sword.” Even though he was a pastor, it is telling that Dietrich Bonhoeffer has been widely lauded as a martyr for his death resulting from an indirect contribution to a plot to kill Hitler.¹¹¹ From a Protestant view of sainthood, declaring a person a martyr is more clearly a way of naming

something about the expectations for *all* Christians by showing how those expectations were met in the drama of one person's life. Conversely, if something like fighting is legitimate for Christians under some circumstances, then it seems like martyrdom should be a possibility there. If not, then perhaps it indicates something Christianly amiss in the magisterial church's just war convictions. We shall return to these tangles in later chapters.

Though not recognized in the Neto situation, some strains of saint and martyr reflection—in both Catholicism and Protestantism—suggest a Christian awareness of the situatedness of the saints in the dynamics and ambiguities of the world, including association with violence. Perhaps, the tradition has sometimes intimated, the soldier and magistrate *can* be martyred while wielding the sword. The next chapter explores some historic examples that show the complexity of this possibility.

100. As with anything in theology, not without disagreement. For a survey of the various critiques of the “imitation of Christ” motif and a measured response, see Kevin Giles, “Imitatio Christi: A Typology of Responses,” *St Mark’s Review*, no. 103 (1980): 4–10.
101. On the very purpose of the Gospels as fostering *imitatio Christi*, see David B. Capes, “Imitatio Christi and the Gospel Genre,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 13, no. 1 (2003): 1–19.
102. Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Ronald Knox and Michael Oakley (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960).
103. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 329.
104. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 334.
105. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 334.
106. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 413–28.
107. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 330.
108. Yoder, for another example, frames the pacifist ethic as an “ethic of imitation.” *Politics of Jesus*, 5; cf. 112–31.
109. Though he is a liberation theologian working from the Reformed tradition who does not entirely distance himself from the just war tradition, Rubén Rosario Rodríguez basically includes nonviolence as a criterion of martyrdom (*Christian Martyrdom*, 196; cf. 121).
110. It is possible that tradition-minded Anabaptists would be an exception to this supposition; see the reflections of Weaver-Zercher, *Martyrs Mirror*, 234–35.

Chapter 3

1. On the possibility of an early third-century date, see J. den Boeft and Jan N. Bremmer, “Notiunculae Martyrologicae II,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 36, no. 4 (1982): 396–97.
2. “The Martyrdom of Julius the Veteran,” in ACM, ch. 1.
3. “Julius the Veteran,” ch. 2.
4. “Julius the Veteran,” ch. 2 (*italics removed*). Part of Acts 4:24, a biblical locus classicus of Christian martyr theology, is embedded in Julius’s statement.
5. “Julius the Veteran,” ch. 4.
6. Johnson, *Quest for Peace*, 52. His broader analysis of this development emphasizes not a sharp change implying a falling away from the earlier church’s pacifist “purity,” but rather continuity in view of shifting contexts (see pp. 3–10, 30–47).
7. Wood, *Perspectives on War*, 13.
8. Wood, *Perspectives on War*, 77–96.
9. Wood, *Perspectives on War*, 97–103.
10. Wood, *Perspectives on War*, 104–20.
11. Wood, *Perspectives on War*, 140. This reflects a rather modern understanding of “just war” in Wood’s effort to connect the dots between modern thinking and the Old Testament. The broader Christian just war tradition (until roughly the later

- seventeenth century), however, typically included wars that God commands as inherently just. See James Turner Johnson, *Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts, 1200–1740* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), *passim*, but summarized at 81.
12. Wood, *Perspectives on War*, 147–49, quotation at 149.
 13. On such difficulties, see Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, Overtures to Biblical Theology 13 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Eric A. Seibert, *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament's Troubling Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012).
 14. Plato, "Laws," in Hamilton and Cairns, *Collected Dialogues of Plato*, I.628. Roland Bainton writes that in the classical world, the object of just war "was the vindication of justice and the restoration of peace; of necessity, therefore, peace had to be esteemed as an ideal, and recourse to war as a very last resort after mediation had failed. The war should be so conducted as not to preclude the restoration of an enduring peace. Hence, the conduct of war would have to be restrained by a code" (*Christian Attitudes*, 33).
 15. Plato, *Republic*, 5.467.
 16. Plato, *Republic*, 5.467. On the ancient world's cognizance of the horrors of war, see Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 22–26.
 17. Plato, *Republic*, 5.469–70.
 18. Plato, *Republic*, 5.471. The conversation in this book of *The Republic* is followed by a debate about whether politics ought to organize itself on the basis of the ideal state, which is never fully actualized, or whether it should instead take into account the inevitable shortcomings that will be part of the life of the real state—a question, as we shall see in Chapters 6 and 7, that resonates intriguingly with Christian debates about pacifism and the propriety of allowing for the possibility of justified violence.
 19. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 37.
 20. This restriction of just war restraint to one side of a cultural divide remains with us today. See Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 69–84.
 21. For a broader summary of Greco-Roman reflections on war and justice, see Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 33–42.
 22. Cicero, *De Re Publica*, trans. Clinton Walker Keyes, Loeb Classical Library 213 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 3.23. One must keep in mind that "revenge" is used here in the sense of addressing a wrong committed against a particular party, not so much with the more emotional connotations of retaliating with vengeful enmity. Cicero also believes in the possibility of a war for "supremacy" and "glory," although he still argues that this should be a defensive action and should involve "less bitterness" than wars against true enemies. *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library 30 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 1.12.
 23. Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.11.
 24. Expressly in *De Re Publica*, 3.23. By implication in *De Officiis*, 1.11.
 25. Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.7.
 26. Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.11.

27. Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.8.
28. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 42.
29. David G. Hunter, "A Decade of Research on Early Christians and Military Service," *Religious Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (April 1992): 93. Accordingly, it is necessary to temper characterizations, such as that of Meagher, that state that "nearly overnight" the Christian church's commitment to peace was "forgotten" with "surprising suddenness" (*Killing from the Inside Out*, 70). Such a characterization portrays the early church as more unanimous than was the case and ignores key nuances in the arguments for pacifism that we find in early church theologians, nuances that I examined in the previous chapter.
30. Kalantzis, *Caesar and the Lamb*, 7.
31. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 86. Cf. Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 71.
32. Johnson, *Quest for Peace*, 41–47.
33. See Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 88–89.
34. Though in my opinion it is too much of a "fall" version of the story, see the account in Kalantzis, *Caesar and the Lamb*, 196–99. Johnson, in contrast, sees this as a natural and understandably gradual process of Christianity figuring out how to live in the world, with a position on appropriate military service emerging parallel to a settled position on marriage. Johnson, *Ethics*, 16.
35. See the relevant edicts of Theodosius II, in J. Stevenson and W. H. C. Frend, ed., *Creeds, Councils, and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church, AD 337–461*, rev. ed. (London: SPCK, 1989), 154.
36. Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1961), 15. For a careful analysis of the paradoxes in Augustine's unsystematic account of war, see William R. Stevenson Jr., *Christian Love and Just War: Moral Paradox and Political Life in St. Augustine and His Modern Interpreters* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987).
37. Johnson, *Ethics*, 16.
38. See the collection in Maureen A. Tilley, ed., *Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa*, Translated Texts for Historians 24 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996).
39. At least the movement's more radical strand. See W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 171–77. For an account of the complexities of the so-called Circumcelliones, a radical strand within the Donatist church, see Bruno Pottier, "Circumcelliones, Rural Society and Communal Violence in Late Antique North Africa," in *The Donatist Schism: Controversy and Contexts*, ed. Richard Miles (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 142–65.
40. On the gradual nature of his move to this position, see Rodríguez, *Christian Martyrdom*, 199–201.
41. Augustine, "The Correction of the Donatists," trans. J. R. King, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, First Series, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 1.1.
42. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 4.15.

43. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 4.18; cf. 7.27.
44. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 2.8, 11; cf. 3.14.
45. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 2.11.
46. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 3.13.
47. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 3.14.
48. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 8.32.
49. We must recognize that a cleaner just war/holy war distinction can only be glimpsed in the Middle Ages, was problematized by the Crusades and wars of religion, and then became possible in a new way in the early modern period and further in the increasingly secularized Enlightenment West, with its separation of church/religion and state/politics. On the parallelism found between just war and religious war in medieval and early modern thinkers, see LeRoy Walters, "The Just War and the Crusade: Antitheses or Analogies?," *The Monist* 57, no. 4 (October 1973): 584–94. Also see the related analysis of Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 231–37.
50. Augustine, *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Roland J. Teske, *The Works of Saint Augustine*, 1.20 (New York: New City Press, 2007), 22.74; also see 22.78.
51. Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, 22.76.
52. Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, 22.74.
53. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 6.21.
54. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 6.22. He also uses the analogy of shepherd and sheep, where it is precisely the care of the shepherd that occasionally requires him to use "fear or even the pain of the whip" when they resist being brought back into the fold (6.23).
55. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 5.19–20, 6.24. Cf. here Leithart, *Defending Constantine*.
56. Augustine, "Correction of the Donatists," 1.1.
57. For some of Augustine's key descriptions and comparisons of this double metaphor, see Augustine, *The City of God*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. William Babcock, *The Works of Saint Augustine*, 1.7 (New York: New City, 2013), 14.28; as well as books 15, 18, and 19, *passim*.
58. Augustine, *City of God*, 14.28.
59. See Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, 23, 26. Jean Bethke Elshtain writes that "a specific strength embedded in [the just war tradition's] ontology of peace is the vantage point it affords with reference to social arrangements, one from which its adherents frequently assess what the world calls peace and finds it wanting." Augustine's critique of Rome is Exhibit A for her argument. Elshtain, "Reflections on War and Political Discourse: Realism, Just War, and Feminism in a Nuclear Age," in *Just War Theory*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Readings in Social and Political Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 265.
60. Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, 30.
61. Augustine, *City of God*, 19.7.
62. Augustine, *City of God*, 19.7.
63. Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, 22.75.

64. Augustine, *Answer to Faustus*, 22.75.
65. Augustine, *City of God*, 19.12. This claim is rooted in his privative conception of evil, according to which evil has no independent reality but exists only as a disfigurement of the good. The good is fundamental reality; evil exists only as a misdirection or perversion of that fundamental reality. In this very context, Augustine argues that “even what is perverted must of necessity be at peace in or from or with some part of the order of things in which it exists or of which it consists” (Augustine, 19.12; cf. 19.13). Augustine borrowed this approach from the Neoplatonists in order to address one of his central disappointments with Manichaeism, namely, its allowing of an independent (and thus potentially unconquerable) reality to evil. On this theme in Augustine’s early thought, see Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (London: Herder and Herder, 1970), 144–45.
66. Augustine, *City of God*, 19.12.
67. Johnson states that Augustine provides “an entirely new condition” for just war considerations—right intention, which negatively means avoiding hatred in fighting and positively means fighting only to achieve a just peace (*Quest for Peace*, 61). Rather than “entirely new,” however, it would be better to say that Augustine Christianizes the negative form and appropriates the positive form from the classical world, as we saw in Plato and Cicero.
68. Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, 28–29, 31, quotation at 29. Cf. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 98–99.
69. Johnson uses this language throughout his writings. E.g., *Ideology*, 185–95; *Just War Tradition*, 97–99.
70. Reflecting the attitudes demanded by just war thinking, Martin Luther tells rulers:

Take my advice. Make the broadest possible distinction between what you want to do and what you ought to do, between desire and necessity, between lust for war and willingness to fight. . . . Wait until the situation compels you to fight when you have no desire to do so. . . . Look at the real soldiers, those who have played the game of war. They are not quick to draw their sword, they are not contentious; they have no desire to fight. But when someone forces them to fight, watch out!

And he states that soldiers “should inform their consciences that they do not do this from choice, desire, or ill-will, but that this is God’s work and that it is their duty to their prince and their God.” Luther, “Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved,” in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Robert C. Schultz, vol. 46 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 118–19, 129. The historic Eastern Orthodox viewpoint also falls broadly into the just war category (although with some discomfort with the language of “just” and “justified”), especially as this tradition of Christianity was geographically centered in areas that involved long conflict between Christian states and Islamic forces. See Goodin, “Just-War Theory,” 249–67.
71. See Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, ch. 5.
72. Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 131–50.
73. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1948), 2.2, q. 40, art. 1.

74. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2.2, q. 40, art. 1, reply to objs. 1 and 2.
75. Johnson reminds us that the three main *ad bellum* considerations—those analyzed by Aquinas—are primary; the other considerations, such as last resort, are of a secondary and more prudential nature. See *Morality and Contemporary Warfare* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 36–38; *Ethics*, 19.
76. For example, in his quite serious discussion of whether ambushes (which involve deception) are permissible in war. See Aquinas, 2.2, q. 40, art. 3. For a rather labyrinthine examination of how the principle of noncombatant immunity is rooted in Augustine and Aquinas, see Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, 34–59.
77. LeRoy Walters offers a more fine-tuned analysis of just war reasoning in terms of four questions: the pacifist question (whether war can ever be justified), the authority question, the cause question, and the conduct question. “The Simple Structure of the ‘Just-War’ Theory,” in *Peace, Politics, and the People of God*, ed. Paul Peachey (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 135–48. Walters explores these questions in much greater detail in terms of whether, who, when, and how in “Five Classic Just-War Theories: A Study in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas, Vitoria, Suárez, Gentili, and Grotius” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1971), microfilm.
78. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 21. This is an issue that he analyzes throughout the book, his contention being that *ad bellum* considerations have a primarily consequentialist character (part 2 of the book), while *in bello* considerations are mainly deontological (part 3). The dissonance between the two creates the main “dilemmas” of war (parts 4 and 5). We shall return to this tension in Chapter 7.
79. Some recent thinkers have suggested adding a third category—*jus post bellum*, just actions in the way a war is ended and how the postwar situation is set up. For a pivotal philosophical discussion, see Gary J. Bass, “Jus Post Bellum,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 32, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 384–412. For a more theological approach, see Tobias L. Winright and Mark Allman, “Jus Post Bellum: Extending the Just War Theory,” in *Faith in Public Life*, ed. William J. Collinge, College Theology Society 53 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 241–64.
80. Augsburg Confession, in *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), art. 16, Latin edition.
81. Westminster Confession of Faith, in Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions*, 23.2.
82. Second Helvetic Confession, in Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions*, 30.4.
83. Second Helvetic Confession, 30.5.
84. Second Helvetic Confession, 22.2.
85. Second Helvetic Confession, 30.4.
86. See Harry O. Maier, “The War of the Lamb,” *Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics* 12 (2004): 18–26; and Rosario, *Christian Martyrdom*, 266–67.
87. This is an important *theological* point in response to the claim made by Robert Holmes that philosophical just war reasoning never *justifies* the resort to killing and violence as a legitimate response to aggression, but rather assumes it without

- reason. See Holmes, *On War and Morality*, Studies in Moral, Political, and Legal Philosophy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 181–82. At least in a Christian context (theological or more broadly historical), the Romans 13 passage talking about God's ordaining of the state's sword is a significant warrant.
88. This is another way of putting the question that Peter Leithart asks about Constantine and how else he should have been expected to relate his new faith to the structures of the Roman Empire (see *Defending Constantine*).
 89. Biggar, *In Defence of War*, 42–45, quotation at 43. On the Anabaptist history behind this distinction, see Johnson, *Quest for Peace*, 171; on the moral tension of this stance, see Johnson, *Can Modern War Be Just?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 154–55.
 90. In Niebuhr's distinction between these two kinds of pacifism, we see a twentieth-century version of what James Turner Johnson traces as two longer pacifist threads, a sectarian version and a utopian version, dating back to the Middle Ages. See *Quest for Peace*, esp. chs. 2–4.
 91. In Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), 1–32. For the broader theoretical framework that informs this approach to the questions of violence and war, see Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943); Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Seabury, 1979).
 92. Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics*, 9. For a response to Augustinian/Niebuhrian interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount, see Hays, *Moral Vision*, 320–24.
 93. Biggar, *In Defence of War*, 168.
 94. Paul Ramsey, *The Just War: Force and Political Responsibility* (New York: Scribner, 1968), 142–45, quotation at 142–43. Elsewhere in the book Ramsey borrows Max Kohnstam's description of this as love mediated “through structures” (p. 498).
 95. Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, xvii.
 96. Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, xix; cf. xx, 37, 42, 59. In Ramsey's telling, the relationship is quite indirect, related to the development of “double effect” from consideration of killing the enemy in self-defense to eventually killing civilians (again, see pp. 34–59).
 97. Johnson, *Ethics*, 23.
 98. Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience*, 45–49. Ramsey's contention is supported somewhat by Johnson's own tracing of early modern thinkers moving toward natural law reasoning rather than specifically Christian reasoning in their accounts of the just war. See, e.g., *Just War Tradition*, 172–79.
 99. Biggar, *In Defence of War*, 61; cf. 69–75, 154–60.
 100. Biggar, *In Defence of War*, 96.
 101. E.g., see Biggar, *In Defence of War*, 103–6.
 102. Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 72–75.
 103. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 332.
 104. John Howard Yoder, *When War Is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 5–7.

105. Yoder, *When War Is Unjust*, 50–70.
106. Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 108; cf. 130.
107. Yoder, *When War Is Unjust*, 72–75. Also see Richard J. Mouw, “Christianity and Pacifism,” *Faith and Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (1985): 105–11.
108. There is, of course, much greater complexity related to “sovereign authority” in situations of tyranny or revolution. For a discussion of Archbishop Romero’s own wrestling with this issue, using Catholic just war reasoning, see Rosario, *Christian Martyrdom*, 30–31, 209–10, 216–18.
109. The revolutionary violence of the time came in multiple flavors—that directed against governmental, military, and political officials responsible for creating and enforcing repressive policies, as well as more indiscriminate and terrorizing forms.
110. It was in the priestly vocation that pacifism mainly came to reside in Catholic magisterial Christianity. See Johnson, *Quest for Peace*, 55–56.
111. For a carefully argued case that Bonhoeffer *ought* to be considered a martyr, see Craig J. Slane, *Bonhoeffer as Martyr: Social Responsibility and Modern Christian Commitment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2004).

Chapter 4

1. Colin Morris, “Martyrs on the Field of Battle before and during the First Crusade,” in *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 93–95, 99–103.
2. Quoted in Kalantzis, *Caesar and the Lamb*, 199.
3. Morris, “Martyrs on the Field of Battle,” 98.
4. Morris, “Martyrs on the Field of Battle,” 95–96. Morris is clear that the concept of martyrdom is only *part* of the picture. It was intertwined with the burgeoning concept of indulgences granted to stand in for penance.
5. Morris, “Martyrs on the Field of Battle,” 100–101.
6. Morris, “Martyrs on the Field of Battle,” 101.
7. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood: A Treatise on the Knights Templar and the Holy Places of Jerusalem*, trans. M. Conrad Greenia, Cistercian Fathers 19B (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 34.
8. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Praise of New Knighthood*, 37–39.
9. Morris, “Martyrs on the Field of Battle,” 104, 103.
10. On this mixture, see Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 156–61.
11. Rahner, “Dimensions of Martyrdom,” 10.
12. Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Penguin, 2007). On how significant just war theorizing still took place during this conflict via military manuals mindful of emerging international law, see Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, 281–322.

Christian Martyrdom and Christian Violence

On Suffering and Wielding the Sword

MATTHEW D. LUNDBERG

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