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transformed in such a profound way that there develops with in the depths of our rational being a *theological instinct* in virtue of which we are able to make true theological judgments. Without such a theological instinct we have little more than people with secular minds loosely clothed with a Christian profession. A genuine theological instinct of the kind St. Paul has in view cannot be gained apart from a constant self-offering in rational worship to God, for it is through that inner relation between prayer and the transforming renewal of our minds, that we may be so tuned into God that we fulfil our service in the rational way acceptable to him.

In his scientific autobiography, Werner Heisenberg tells us that again and again when the mathematics of quantum theory proved to be as difficult as they were intricate, he would go

away for three or four weeks at a time to play the piano or the violin in order, as he put it, to tune in to the "Central Order"—the name he used in that context for God. When his whole being was tuned into that Central Order, he would come back to find his mathematical equations working out more easily. It is something similar that happens in theological activity. Through study of the Holy Scriptures, meditation and prayer we tune in to the mind of God incarnate in Jesus Christ, the Source of all rationality, until our minds, healed, renewed, and sanctified in him, are instinct with his Truth—then it is that we may preach and teach the Gospel, and find it transforming the lives and minds of people and the society to which they belong.

## Romans 13 (Actually Romans 12:14-13:8) Reexamined

by Vernard Eller

We need to give more detailed attention to Romans 13—in that I have come to realize how firmly we are in the grip of the passage's traditional "legitimizing" interpretation. The support for this reading falls into a most interesting alignment. Of course, the Christian Right (along with conservative evangelicalism in general) welcomes this theological view of Romans 13 as confirmation of its own *politically* conservative predilection that is committed to political establishment of being God's chosen means for governing the world.

Yet curiously enough, the Christian Left also accepts, if not welcomes, the legitimizing interpretation—although under an entirely different rationale and for a totally different purpose. In some cases the argument runs: Mark 12 shows *Jesus* to be strongly *illegitimizing* of Caesar. Romans 13 has *Paul* coming out just the other way. In this showdown, then, *Jesus* obviously should take precedence over *Paul*. Therefore, we aren't obligated to give particular weight or attention to *Paul's* counsel about paying taxes and honoring the authorities. Alternatively, the argument runs: Yes, *Paul* does legitimize established government; yet certainly he must intend this regarding only "good" governments. Accordingly, his counsel about paying taxes must apply only to governments worthy of our tax dollars; when he says to pay taxes to those to whom they "are due," he must mean to those who, in our opinion, are morally deserving. Thus, it would follow that *Paul* had in mind paying them only to the "good" Roman Empire of his day and not the "Evil Empire" of ours (namely, the one Ronald Reagan was *representing*, not the one of which he spoke).

Now, however, as a way out of the political sophistries of both the Right and the Left, I propose an anarchical reading of Romans 13 that has *Paul illegitimizing* the political world as a whole—and thus entirely bypassing the dispute about his legitimizing *anything*, whether of the Left or of the Right, whether judged to be politically good, bad, or indifferent. If I may, I will call mine: "A Reading of Romans 13 Under the Premise that Its Author Was a Student of the Old Testament" (I disdain to argue this premise, because anyone undertaking

to challenge it is manifestly belated, bewildered, and benighted).

(1) If we respect *Paul's* context by examining the total passage of Romans 12:14-13:8, it is plain that his purpose in introducing "the governing authorities" is in no sense to argue their "legitimacy." His main topic is the Christian obligation to love *any person whatsoever* and live peaceably *with all*. Check it out; he opens this inning by placing his hit: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them" (Romans 12:14). He extends that run to second base (13:1), at which point he introduces his "governing authorities" illustration. This he closes off neatly at third (13:7). He then proceeds to make his home-plate score by ending up where he started: "Owe no one anything except to love one another" (13:8). Pretty slick, I would say.

The "governing authorities," then, are brought in as *Paul's* example of those to whom it will be most difficult to make the obligation apply—but whom God nevertheless commands us to love, even when our natural propensity most strongly urges us to hate, resist, and fight them. As he elsewhere states the offense even more pointedly, "Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?"—which, of course, is not the easiest thing in the world for human beings to do.

Thus—just as with *Jesus' praying*, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and his teaching about "turning the other cheek," "going the second mile," and the like—*Paul* is using the governing authorities as a test case of our loving the enemy—even when doing so is repugnant to our innate moral sensibilities (which sensibilities we ought never, never, never equate as being the very will of God—but which we regularly do go on to equate so anyhow). And if this "indiscriminating love" reading be correct, then verse 7 (the final word of the "governing authorities" section) ought to agree with *Paul's* overall love theme.

This it most beautifully does if "pay all of them their dues—taxes, revenue, respect, honor" advises against withholding *any* of these items from *whatever* governing authority claims them as due. If, however, the verse is taken to mean that we are to allow these things only to nice governments who are known to be deserving of them—then we have gone from "indiscriminating love" to "highly discriminating love," and *Paul* has undercut his radically Christian argument merely to

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mouth the trivial and obvious.

Yet that absolutist interpretation is made as much as unimpeachable when Paul proceeds to wrap up his entire disquisition on "undiscriminating love" with verse 8. He drops the "governing authorities" illustration and universalizes the principle: "Not just the taxes and honors claimed by the governing authorities, we Christians ought not resist or try to withhold anything justly (or even unjustly) claimed from us. No, the only unpaid claim that dare be found outstanding against us is that we have not given anyone as much love as God would have us give."

(2) We ought not interpret Paul's Romans-13 words without also considering what he has to say about the Roman Empire elsewhere. Elsewhere, of course, he talks about principalities and powers, rulers of the present darkness, and all such. I don't know that any of these is to be understood in

scholar who is talking so, I consider the original institution of Israelite monarchy to be our best help in understanding him. In that paradigm (I Sam. 8:1-22), it is made entirely clear, explicit, and axiomatic that the people's demand for worldly government amounts to a *rejection* of God and his government. (And if even an *Israelite* monarchy signified a rejection of God, how much more so a *Roman* one?) But did God therefore conclude: "That being so, Samuel, what you and I need to do is resist that government with everything we have in us. We should work at subverting Saul's government so that, in its collapse, we can convince the people to give up this crazy idea of worldly government and come back to the true government of my direct rule?"

That, surely, would pass as good *human* logic—and, I think, *is* the essential logic of today's Christian Left. But it is not the *divine* logic. God and Samuel, of course, *helped set up* the very

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direct reference to Rome; yet there is every reason to believe Paul would include Rome in that passel. And if you want the Old Testament angle, it would be this: As a well-educated rabbi, Paul would be entirely cognizant of the scriptural opinion regarding pagan oppressors of Israel from the slavemasters of Egypt through to the Seleucid tyrants of Syria. And I can't imagine anything that would lead him to exempt the current Roman regime from that long-established judgment. This in itself should warn us against a too easily legitimizing reading of Romans 13.

(3) The history of Paul's own relationship to and knowledge of Rome should also warn us against that reading. Paul would have known that Rome's was a pagan domination and military occupation of the Jewish homeland. Under the likelihood that it was as a small child he had come to Jerusalem for rabbinical training (Acts 22:3), Paul would have been fully aware of the growing Jewish restiveness and Rome's cruel, mass deportation-enslavement-crucifixion suppression of the same. Along with the rest of the church, Paul's prime name for Rome would have been "Dealer of Death to the Author of Life" (Acts 3:15). He would have known that, only a few years earlier, the Christians of Rome (to whom he was writing), under the edict of Claudius, had had their congregations broken up and dispersed. And Paul himself, of course, could point to any number of instances in which the Empire had disrupted his ministry and abused his person. Thus, to read Romans 13 as a legitimizing of *that* government should be held off as our last possible alternative of interpretation rather than welcomed as our first.

(4) In the opening line of his "governing authorities" section (13:1a), Paul tells us to "be subject" to them. I found Barth most convincing that "be subject to" has absolutely no overtones of "recognize the legitimacy of," "own allegiance to," "bow down before," or anything of the sort. It is a sheerly neutral and anarchical counsel of "not-doing"—not doing resistance, anger, assault, power play, or anything contrary to the "loving the enemy" which is, of course, Paul's main theme. Then, just as any good writer would do it, Paul's *final* reference to the authorities (verse 7) becomes a simple repetition of his opening one: "Pay all of them their dues" says nothing different from "Be subject to them."

(5) Romans 13:1b-3 proceeds to speak about government's being "instituted of God." When it is a noted Old Testament

government they so strongly disapproved. No, the word is, rather: "Samuel, if these knuckleheads insist on having a worldly government, we had better get in there with whatever influence we have left and try to limit the amount of damage such an outfit can do, see whether there is anything at all worthwhile we can manage through it."

God and Samuel accept (and honor) Israel's (bad) decision as *accomplished fact* and proceed to live with it rather than try to reverse it. God *accepts* (I didn't say *approves*) worldly government—with its taxation and conscription and all the rest—as being absolutely necessary once humanity has rejected *his* government. If you won't have *him*, you are going to have to have *it*.

And whether that government be seen as comparatively good or bad, God is using it simultaneously as a *punishment* for our having rejected his government and as a *grace*, a garment of skins making possible the continuance of the human enterprise without its falling into utter chaos and death. Of course, the ultimate promise of the kingdom still stands. But that we might stage a political revolution creating a human government which could serve us in place of the one we rejected from God—such simply is not among our options. Indeed, any effort of the kind would be just as serious a usurpation of his power as was our original move *to* worldly government. What God has *accepted* let no man put in *question*—whether by trying to resist the punishment or to deny the grace of instituted government.

So, is Paul correct in saying the fact a government exists shows that it has been instituted of God? Yes—if he be read *dialectically*, as with his Old Testament source. Paul knows that worldly government is an illegitimate usurpation of God's power—knows it as well as God and Samuel did. However, what his well-justified-in-hating-Rome readers need also to know is that God *accepted* his own rejection as accomplished fact and thus proceeded to accept (yet hardly "legitimate") worldly government as a "given," a human necessity through which he just might be able to prevent some damage and perhaps even gain a bit of good. So Paul is warning his Christians against thinking they can go God one better: if God has shown himself willing to put up with a monstrosity like Rome, your *unwillingness* to do so turns out to be, not moral heroism, but an arrogant bucking of what God has instituted (instituted by his *accepting* it, not *approving* it).

(6) In verse 4, then, Paul calls these governing authorities "servants of God." Within his dialectical framework, he can do this with the best sort of biblical precedent. In this regard, the prophet Isaiah has Yahweh say the following about the bloodthirsty Assyrian hordes poised to sack Israel:

I have given my warriors their orders and summoned my fighting men to launch my anger; they are eager for my triumph.

Hark, a tumult in the mountains, the second of a vast multitude;

Hark, the roar of kingdoms, of nations gathering!

Yahweh of Hosts is mustering a host of war, men from a far country, from beyond the horizon.

It is Yahweh with the weapons of his wrath coming to lay the whole land waste.

—Isaiah 13:3-5

Here we have caught Isaiah—in cahoots with Paul—calling the representatives of a pagan conqueror "warriors (and to that extent 'servants') of God." However, in another passage the prophet makes it plain that this carries absolutely no implications of "legitimizing":

The Assyrian! He is the rod that I wield in my anger, and the staff of my wrath is in his hand.

I send him against a godless nation,

I bid him march against a people who rouse my wrath, to spoil and plunder at will and trample them down like mud in the streets.

But this man's [i.e., the Assyrian's] purpose is lawless, lawless are the plans in his mind; for this thought is only to destroy and wipe out nation after nation.

When Yahweh has finished all that he means to do on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will punish the king of Assyria for this fruit of his pride and for his arrogance and vain-glory, because he said: By my own might I have acted and in my own wisdom I have laid my schemes.

—Isaiah 10:5-7, 12-13

Later, with Deutero-Isaiah and the pagan *Persian* conqueror Cyrus, the dialectic contradiction becomes even more extreme:

Tell me, who raised up that one from the east, one greeted by victory wherever he goes?

[or for that matter, the one from the west that Paul knows.]

Who is it that puts nations into his power and makes kings go down before him? . . .

Whose work is this, I ask, who has brought it to pass? . . . It is I, Yahweh.

—Isaiah 41:2-4

Thus says Yahweh to his anointed,

[that's the word "messiah," or "christ"—for crying out loud!]

to *Cyrus*, . . .

For the sake of Jacob my servant and Israel my chosen

I have called you by name

and given you your title,

though you have not known me.

I alone have roused this man in righteousness,

and I will smooth his path before him;

he shall rebuild my city

and let my exiles go free—

not for a price nor a bribe

[but simply because I commanded my servant],  
says Yahweh of Hosts.

—Isaiah 45:1, 4, 13

When Paul calls the Roman governing authorities "servants of God," it makes no sense at all to take him as meaning that they are good Christians whose deepest desire is to obey and serve God. However, read him along with his Old Testament prophetic mentors and his entire passage makes perfectly good sense. If God can make such use of Assyrian warriors that Isaiah calls them "God's boys"—and if God can make such use of a Persian Emperor that Deutero-Isaiah calls him "God's messiah"—then we better consider that God may be using Roman No-Gods in the very same way.

(7) The Old Testament parallel holds throughout verses 2-5. About as much as Paul can see as a possible godly use for God's Roman "servants" is that (precisely as with the Assyrian warriors) they are quite adept in punishing bad people (come to think about it, if this is Paul's "legitimizing" of Rome, it is a most backhanded compliment). Yes, just as with the Assyrians, the Romans always go overboard on the punishing bit—and God will have to take that little matter up with them, just as he did with the Assyrians. Yet this does not change the fact that God can use Roman punishment in the service of his own justifying of humanity.

Therefore, Christians of Rome, here is what all this means for you: (a) You should take care not to be an evildoer whose governmental punishment represents the just anger of God you have brought upon yourself. That God's "servant of punishment" is himself "bad" is no evidence that you are "good" and your punishment therefore undeserved. That the U.S. Government is divinely-illegitimate is no evidence at all that its punishment of the Berrigans' "civil disobedience" is wrong and outside the will of God. The expose of Assyrian evil does not amount to an argument for Israelite innocence. Rome does punish many innocent people (and God will hold it accountable for that: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord" [Rom. 12:19]). Yet this does not prohibit Rome from being used "in God's service" to punish some who really need it for their own good.

(b) Then consider verses 4-5 in particular. Just because you Christians can see that the Roman Empire is obviously godless and wicked, don't draw the simple, human-minded conclusion that it must be God's will for you to resist, contest, and fight it.

Paul, yes; Isaiah, yes; but Jeremiah is the one most insistent that the pagan oppressor is *not to be resisted*—precisely because that rod of punishment may be acting in the service of God: "Bring your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon [Paul words it 'be subject'], and serve him and his people [Paul words it 'pay whatever they claim as their due'], and live. Why will you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as the Lord has spoken concerning any nation which will not serve the king of Babylon [as actually happened to the Jewish nation that ignored Paul's counsel of nonresistance, fought the Romans, and died]?" (Jer. 27:12-13).

You could find yourself resisting the particular use God has in mind for that Empire; and at the very least, you definitely are trying to take over and do his work for him, pulling up the tares he told you to leave for *his* harvesting. When he wants that Empire overthrown, he is fully capable of doing it on his own.

And if, in your fighting the Empire, you happen to get yourself killed, the fault is not necessarily that of the Evil Empire; it does not automatically follow that yours was a heroic martyr's death in the service of God. It could as likely

represent God's righteous anger against those who are just as guilty of wanting to be "lord of history" as the Romans themselves are.

(8) And so, in verses 5-8, Paul asks us again to "be subject"—always loving; never resisting, contesting, trying to impose our own wisdom and will. And this is why you pay taxes (better: do not resist their being collected), so as not to have Jesus accuse *you* (as Paul got himself accused) of "kicking against the goads" (Acts 26:14)—i.e., trying to obstruct God's Roman servants as Paul had tried to obstruct his *Christian* ones. Never owe anybody—*anybody*—anything except to love them.

Nobody ever said loving Assyrian warriors was going to be easy; but when they are obeying God by loving instead of resisting them, don't let any holy-joes try to make you feel guilty by telling you that you are actually approving and supporting Assyrian evil. There is not one word in Romans 13, or anywhere else in the New Testament, implying that to "not resist one who is evil" (Mt. 5:39) is tantamount to legitimizing him—this no more than Isaiah's nonresistance legitimized Assyrian militarism, Jeremiah's Babylonian, Deutero-Isaiah's

Persian, Paul's Roman, or a modern Christian's nonresistance legitimizes American militarism.

Finally, notice that, our way, Romans 13 reads as *anarchically* as all get out. It carefully declines to legitimize either Rome or resistance against Rome. It will give neither recognition nor honor to any political entity whatever—nation, party, ideology, or cause group. There is only one Lord of History—and that is God. And he shows no cognizance of our commonly-accepted distinction between the holy arkys he supposedly sponsors and the unholy ones he opposes (though this is not to deny that he acknowledges a degree of relative difference between the moral performance of one arky and another). Yet, after the model of the Israelite original, *every* arky starts out under the sinful illegitimacy of messianic pretension, claiming for itself recognition as world-savior and a true lord of history. Nevertheless, though the arkys all be under judgment (as all of us individuals are, too), God will *use* as "servant" whatever arky he chooses (when he chooses and how he chooses). He will also *punish* these servants the same way—even while *loving* each and every human individual involved the whole time. That's Christian Anarchy.

# Love and War: Augustine And The Problem of Nuclear Weapons

by Bernard T. Adeney

## Introduction

One of the major problems in the history of Christian ethics has been how to reconcile the rigorous requirements of Jesus' teaching on love with the morally ambiguous "necessities" of politics in a fallen world. Reinhold Niebuhr commented, for example, that the greatest problem for ethics is to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real. The purpose of this article is to redefine and explore this question.

The most extreme test of this problem is the test of war. Whatever may be held abstractly about Jesus' command to love your enemy, most Christians throughout history have also believed in national defense. Today many believe that national defense is impossible without nuclear weapons. The contrast between love of enemy and nuclear war could not be more extreme. This article will explore the nature of ethical dualism, first through Augustine's justification of Christian participation in war and then through the unique problems of the nuclear issue. Ethical dualism is the holding of two (or more) methods of moral evaluation for different sets of people or situations.

## Augustine: Justifiable War in Tension

Augustine hated war. Not only was he the first Christian architect of a theory of justifiable war, he was also the first great anti-war writer. Augustine's view of war is especially startling when compared with classical thinkers. Like Plato and Cicero, Augustine saw war as a fact of life. However, unlike them, he never saw it as an honorable, let alone glorious activity. Nor was Augustine's just war theory simply a Christianization of Cicero's natural law thinking. Augustine's thought was born in the crucible of strongly conflicting elements in his mind. Augustine struggled to synthesize the rigorous demands of Christian love with a keen understanding

of political realities and a pessimistic view of human nature.

We do not have space here for an extensive analysis of Augustine's hatred of war, or of his theory of justifiable war, but a brief survey should be sufficient. "God did not intend," Augustine lamented, "that his rational creature, who was made in his image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation—not man over man but man over beasts."<sup>1</sup> To Augustine war enslaved not only the loser but the winner. It is better to be a slave than to be captured by the emotions unleashed by war.<sup>2</sup>

Augustine saw the horror in all war, whether justifiable or not. "But they say, the wise man will wage just wars. As if he would not all the rather lament the necessity of just wars, if he remembers that he is a man."<sup>3</sup> The evil of war could not be over exaggerated, according to Augustine.

Let everyone who thinks with pain on these great evils, so horrible, so ruthless acknowledge that this is misery. And if anyone either endures or thinks of them without mental pain, this is a more miserable plight still, for he thinks himself happy because he has lost human feeling.<sup>4</sup>

The words "glory" and "victory" are evil masks that hide the true character of warfare. Asked Augustine, "Why allege to me the mere names and words of 'glory' and 'victory'? Tear off the disguise of wild delusion, and look at the naked deeds; weigh them naked, judge them naked."<sup>5</sup> Augustine denied that any war could bring lasting peace. Even the noblest and best intentioned victory cannot keep peace for long. "Of this calamitous history we have no small proof, in the fact that no subsequent king has closed the gates of war."<sup>6</sup> The "man of war," said Augustine, is worse than a slave because he is ruled by lust:

What prudence is there in wishing to glory in the greatness and extent of the empire, when you cannot point out that the happiness of men, who are always

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