

with Respect to Peace, War, and Nonresistance," we find the following, under the heading, "The Problem of the Use of Force in an Evil World":

We recognize that in a world where the evil and the good exist side by side, there is a necessary place, authorized by God Himself, for the use of force by the state in the restraint of evil and the protection of the good, though always under restrictions deriving from the higher laws of God. But we hold that the Christian cannot be the executor of this force, his call being to operate on the basis of love. If he abandons this way, he effectually destroys the only hope for the world, since force can never create righteousness or a Christian society; it can at best only restrain the evil in varying degrees.

These two quoted statements are not necessarily contradictory. In both of them the Christian is not to engage in the use of force, not only as a private citizen but as a participant in government.

This would seem to prevent a Christian from serving as a civil magistrate, a policeman or policewoman, or a member of the armed forces. Even though the second statement recognizes the necessity, in a sinful world, of the use of force in restraining the evil and protecting the good, the Christian is to have no part in that restraint and that protection!

Frankly, this seems to me to be an abdication of responsibility on the part of the pacifist! No human being has the right to simply let other human beings take away human life as they please. Human beings have a God-imposed responsibility to preserve human life! Pacifists simply fail their responsibility!

The responsibility to protect and defend human life may involve some form of defensive action, which in turn may involve the use of physical restraint of persons or things that threaten or attempt to take away human life unlawfully.

Personal use of defensive action or physical restraint may involve locking a threatening person or a vicious animal out of one's home or car, discouraging him (or it) by physical means (such as e.g., the use of MACE), or subduing him (or it) physically (e.g., by tying him up).

Societal use of physical restraint may involve locking a threatening person or a vicious animal away from the rest of society, discouraging him (or it) physically, or subduing him (or it) physically.

10. Punishment of persons who not only threaten and/or attempt, but succeed in taking away human life unlawfully, is not the right and responsibility of individuals, but of society.

The basic principle of Old Testament jurisprudence is that of absolute equity. This principle, sometimes referred to as the Lex