

Pacifism

I have not made a study of pacifism, and I have no special knowledge about it. However, I don't believe that our moral choices are always black or white. We are permitted to espouse pacifism because others fought and died in order that we would be free to do so. If a criminal came at your wife and child while you were walking down the street, would you stand by and do nothing to protect them?

Loving your enemies and holding them accountable for their actions are not incompatible. I can love the murderer, rapist, and thief and at the same time, for their benefit and for the benefit of society, I would have them incarcerated. Hopefully, they might be rehabilitated in the process. According to the Scriptures, God disciplines those whom He loves. This discipline does not usually come directly from the hand of God above. Mostly it takes the form of the natural consequences of bad behavior in the very complex society in which we live. Our criminal justice system plays a significant role in this. God acts in society "through" us, not necessarily "for" or "instead" of us.

I'm not sure there is such thing as a completely righteous war. However, sometimes it becomes unavoidable and would be the lesser of two evils. The lesser evil would be to engage in a war on behalf of helpless innocents who are threatened with ruthless subjugation, perhaps even complete annihilation. The greater evil would be to stand by and do nothing about this potential genocide, when you have the means to prevent it.

None of us has the luxury of being able to make pure, unadulterated, clear moral choices in every circumstance. The world we live in is too messy for that. God understands, I am sure, or He would not have permitted this to happen. We are ALL sinners, saved by grace. I once heard a very wise preacher say that in many life circumstances we are called upon to "sin bravely." We make the best decisions we can under very difficult circumstances. Unfortunately many of our moral choices involve choosing what is "most right" and "least harmful," but not necessarily "completely and unambiguously right."