

Now we come to a controversial statement in the Scriptures. Controversial only in the sense that people argue about it. Not that the statement itself is controversial. This isn't the only one but this is a typical one. This will be on P. 81 of H.G., found in the Gospel of Matt. 10:34-39: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace but a sword...." etc.

Now this passage contains things that many people consider very puzzling, disturbing and actually irreconcilable. It cries out for a meta-physical interpretation. Otherwise there would be some contradictions within it; paradoxes that are a bit too strong when judged on the totally literal level of meaning. My own feeling is that the big clue in seeking the proper meaning is remembering that Jesus always used two words in a very special sense. The two words are "his own". When Jesus is talking about anything concerning human beings to which he confers the phrase "his own" He is always designating the personal or self-centered state of consciousness -- the old "me and mine" syndrome. "His own household" then would refer to a very limited and self-centered state of personal consciousness. This, of course, is at the very least a risky state and sometimes dangerous state for a person to live in. Self-centered personal consciousness becomes our own worst enemy if we insist on remaining in it and loving its components more than spiritual growth. There are many people who are in that state. They have become so imbedded in the habit of personal, self-centered consciousness and are so enamored by the various components that constitute this state that they love that and they love the status quo justifying that more than they love that which would get them out of it.

Of course, it is the Truth of Jesus Christ that would free them. You see, they're saying, "Solve my problems for me but don't you dare ask me to change my attitude, mind, feelings or opinions. But give me improvement but don't make me change." Well, we can't have it that way. It's just like if you heal me then I'll believe in the Principle of healing. Belief, willingness to change must proceed improvement.

If improvement is forced on you - that is, shoved down your throat - it cannot really be improvement. Improvement must be the result of use of will, freedom of choice.

Now let's look at this statement. Jesus says, "Don't think that I came to send peace on the earth". Here we have an important symbol, "earth". 'Earth' in Bible symbolism simply means "the current state of a person's consciousness and the environment it is manifesting." It is the same meaning for a village, a city, a town, a house or a tent. These all have this similar basic meanings.

Jesus, who knew his human brothers and sisters inside and out, tells us here not to think that His purpose for coming here is to condone your current mode of reality or your current state of consciousness. He's saying He didn't come to give carte blanche for status quo nor did He come to give the kind of peace that the worldly-minded person seeks. "Leave me alone"; this is what the worldly-minded person thinks peace consists of. "Give me my way, hands off, place no demands on me, place no challenges on me except when I don't want to be left alone." But Jesus says he did not come to bring that kind of peace but rather a sword which is the very antithesis of that kind of peace.

Those of you who have already conducted funerals are already familiar with something else Jesus has to say about the peace He came to bring. "Peace I leave with you. My peace give I unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you."

So, it's not a contradiction that Jesus said He did not come to bestow peace on the world, yet in another place say He came to bestow peace. The key is in the kind of peace he's talking about. He doesn't really explain it but he gives a hint. It is different from the worldly bestowed

peace which grants non-interference to status quo or to personal consciousness or to self-centeredness. In contrast to the peace of the world or the peace of inertia, the peace give by Jesus Christ is entirely different. It is an inner peace which actually thrives and grows in the midst of sacrifices and challenges. This peace is permanent and completely durable.

The sword brought by Jesus Christ would be the two-edged sword which is typical of Truth. The word of Truth has a two-fold action comparable to the use of a sword. Denial and affirmation refer to this two-edged, two-fold mode of action; the two-fold kind of effect that the word of Truth produces in a person's life and progress. One of these edges of the sword would point toward your past, the other toward your future. The edge of the sword would be two-fold in its beneficent activity. First, it would cut backward which would free you from any entanglements or clinging to the past. The forward mevement of the sword would carve for you a very narrow pathway into your future. Please don't think of the path that the sword cuts into your future as a pathway of predestination but intead a very narrow pathway of opportunities for choice. Every situation you are in, that you are coming into, no matter how narrow or limited it may appear is always wide enough for a choice to occur.

Q. If you just think for a moment about how a sword is shaped and picture yourself being in it you can see how it would put you in a nowness of time. The cutting edge would be cutting your way while the trailing edge would actually be healing up the past and making it nonexistent.

A. Yes, very good analogy because the back edge would converge into a oneness again. But if the sword moved there would still be a cutting activity. But both illustrations are valid. The main point then is that opportunity for choice. Along the way there will be sacrifice and change but that very activity will bring its own kind of indescribable peace. You know, the fact of Truth that your or my consciousness will never entirely grasp all of God is the very thing that guarantees to keep us happy forever. This is because God is Infinite which means it cannot be encompassed. So God in His Infinity cannot be encompassed by anything including man's mentality.

Now why do I say that this will keep us happy? Because wherever we are, wherever we go, whatever becomes of us there's alwa ys more of God in store for us. Think of this. There will always be more of God in store for you. To realize this is to be happy eternally because you've removed the one possibility from your future which would drive you insane - Boredom!

Now, what about this mother-in-law, father and children? Well, we have to be very flexible here to realize that Jesus is talking about personal, self-centered consciousness here. He calls it his own household. Because he uses the symbol of his own household he would extend that symbolism by means of equating the components of that state of consciousness to the members or relationships that make up what we think of as our own household. Do not think that he is saying that you must hate your mother-in-law or your children or parents. But he is saying that if you love them more than Him you are not worthy of Him. Simply translated it means "You're not yet ready for Me, kid." If I say you're not worthy of college I only mean you're not ready for it yet. So at least on one level, Jesus is saying that He knows He stands for spiritual awareness in process of becoming Christ consciousness. Yet this spiritual awareness which leads us into Christ consciousness is all the while proceeding from Christ consciousness or you simply couldn't have the spiritual awareness leading you into it. So, Jesus does stand for Christ consciousness but in His contact with men, He assumes the symbolic role very often of spiritual awareness leading or guiding us into Christ consciousness. This is a process, a growth that requires constant change and sacrifice.

Jesus is saying that if you love these relations in your household more than Him you're not worthy of Him. Now, let's see the metaphysical side of this. If you love the various factors or components of your present state of personal consciousness more than you love the idea of growing into Christ consciousness then you're not ready for growth into Christ consciousness. You're ready for what you really want which in this state is personal consciousness. "I want to love those things which will cause me to sacrifice and grow out of this." Now, as long as one is in that state, the Christ will not violate his freedom. The Christ will not violate your freedom of choice. Your choice is to remain in a certain state of consciousness and to love the components that make up that state of consciousness. That's your prerogative. But this keeps you in an unready category where the Christ mind is concerned. You're not worthy of it or ready for it. This isn't blame but analysis.

Q. Where is the idea of "grace" for the person who really doesn't know any better come in? If they're not ready to grow and they don't know about readiness to grow yet how does the idea of grace come in to move them ahead.

A. Well, they're not ready to grow is a little bit too hard and fast a statement. It gives a connotation of a totally hopeless situation, a tightly shut door and it isn't quite that bad. In spite of remaining in that state of consciousness there is always some rate of growth, slow and painful it need be but never entirely absent.

Another thing is the part or aspect of a person that tempts him to stay in this state is called in Bible symbolism, Satan, the Adversary, the Devil, the Tempter. In metaphysical terminology its called "the sense of separate personal identity". That's what is mainly responsible for keeping a person in that state. I hope you heard me say that even Satan, the Adversary, etc, the false sense of separate identity has its usefulness, its validity in the grander purpose of God. The good purpose that even that aspect of a person has is, it brings to the person opportunities for choice. This is how Satan serves God. We call those opportunities that Satan brings for choice "temptation". Even in this personal consciousness, his own very limited state of believing, the process of opportunities for choice are presented and choices are made. Now, somewhere along the line some right choices are eventually bound to be made by the law of averages. What is the Law of Mind Action? Like attracts like and like begets like. Now after a long series of dreary wrong choices, errors, one right choice is made. It will attract to itself further opportunities. It will attract you into directions where more and more of the rightness of choice will become more and more the activity.

Q. I don't think it's so much the right choice eventually as it's the wrong choices that bring dissatisfaction and unnecessary suffering. The organism just naturally gravitates away from those wrong choices and starts to make more correct choices to avoid the suffering.

A. Yes, you have brought out the purpose of even suffering. Everything has its validity. Even your very organism of the same old merry-go-round of useless, unnecessary suffering. Finally it will say, "I've got to find some use for what heretofore has been useless unnecessary suffering. Realize the way useless suffering is changed into something is the realization "I have a choice." I can then begin saying "yea, yea" and "nay, nay", affirmation and denial. Affirmation and denial are simply the usage of the opportunity of choice. Nay to the error, nay to the suffering, nay to the mechanicalness of cause and effect. Yes to the new opportunities that "grace" brings.

Q. Is the sacrifice and change the same thing as the tribulation that Jesus spoke about.

A. No, when the word tribulation is used it usually refers to the type of suffering that often accompanies any creative act; like giving birth to a child. When you are producing something out of the creativity of your

nature, very often there is a kind of useful suffering that accompanies it. One of the most common forms of tribulation we call in slang, "growing pains". But this kind of suffering, as a person goes thru it, is its own compensation. This means it's always something that you can bear and don't get discouraged about. It usually doesn't entail physical pain but does entail a feeling of strangeness, effort and sacrifice which if you are conscious while you're doing it, paradoxically, it is even a kind of a pleasure.

There's a sort of a masochism involved in all this of a very healthy type. The other kind of useless suffering is a degenerating process against which your whole system rebels. You can only take so much of it and then you either "throw in the towel" or you "turn the other cheek". If you throw in the towel, that will work because then God will take over. If you "turn the other cheek" then you realize you have an option and you make your choices.

Let's realize that Jesus is not saying hate or turn against your family. However, in some cases it's possible that that literal type of a situation might come up. That for the sake of spiritual growth we may have to be set at variance against a personal, a biological, karmically formed tie. We decide our own priorities, our own sense of value there. But I much prefer the metaphysical level of this where these various characters represent the component of "his own household" or the then current self-centered personal state of consciousness. We must learn to love spiritual unfoldment more than these. Then we will find, in a certain sense we will have both.

Q. The scripture would tend to support that when the disciples add, "We've given up our wives, children, lands.", Jesus says, "You give up nothing. I'll return to you more when you attain that which you're seeking. And Job was returned his family, his land. The only thing that's being broken there is our relationship to it, how we relate to it.

A. Absolutely. It's where we place our priorities, commitments and our love. You see, Jesus is not stating here something unreasonable or grotesque. He is stating something very valuable in this process of building our kingdom of heaven.

Okay, we'll jump now. Interrupting the life and teachings of Jesus is this very spicy little episode which we're not going to go into. This about Salome, Herod and Herodios. Its about Salome's little dance and her rewards for that little dance. I don't particularly like this as a metaphysical Bible interpretation.

Now we come into one of the gigantic, truly memorable metaphysical teachings of Jesus. This is one of the very few things in the life of Jesus which is dealt with in great detail by all four gospels. It is the Feeding of the 5,000. You will notice on P. 86-87 of H.G. all four gospels give it the full treatment. Since all four gospels give it the full treatment, its meaning is on both literal and metaphysical levels. There is something there of value in the Synoptic sense as an actual historical event in the life of Jesus. But the fact that it is in John means that it has a purely esoteric, metaphysical meaning also. It is only this latter meaning that I am at all interested in and that I wish to deal with in this class. I don't want anyone talking to me about fishes and pieces of bread.

In the bible, bread always means spiritual substance. The number 5 always refers to man's current 5 senses. Fish in the Bible always refers to ideas. If they are fish handled by Jesus Christ then they have to be Divine Ideas. The number 2 in the Bible always stands for polarity, duality. Then we have 5,000 hungry people. 5,000 is a symbolic number. Anytime zero's follow a number in the Bible it means whatever that number stands for is now being referred to in a unlimited or unspecified way. You see, you have 40 days and 40 nights which means you have unlimited balance and sufficiency - a sufficient amount of time.