

EDITOR: Jim Wood, 15 Fenay Crescent, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8XY.
Tel. 01484 537981; e-mail: jawood@talk21.com

Exhortation

"The God of my life"

8. The God of peace

Jim Wood

SEVEREN TIMES in the New Testament God is described as the God of peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20). This phrase verges on a truism, for the very nature of God makes Him a God of peace.

The root meaning of the original word seems to be 'to join'. To join is to make one. Scripture teaches that God is one. He is not divided. He does not change from day to day. There is a harmony between all the different aspects of His plan. There is a uniformity in the application of the principles that govern His dealings with all men. His purpose is that there should be peace throughout His creation amongst all that He has created. In only three of the New Testament epistles (Hebrews, James and 1 John) does the writer not acknowledge in the first chapter (or the first few verses in most cases) that God is the source of peace, and pray that it might be bestowed upon those to whom he writes. Our God is *per se* a God of peace.

In the world we experience, things are very different. There is division, change, disharmony, non-uniformity and enmity. Generally man is not at peace with himself, with other men, with the animal world or with God. The origin of all of this lies in Eve and Adam's disobedience. Their disobedience brought a change in nature. It necessitated a separation. It caused alienation. The solution, the bringing together again, the making of peace, was the work of His Son.

The epistles repeatedly explain, remind and encourage:

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10);

"And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto

us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18,19);
". . . and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself . . . And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled" (Col. 1:20,21);

"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17).

Thus, with the solution prescribed and the remedy dispensed, what remains for us to do? God does not force His peace upon us. A peaceful life does not automatically follow baptism; far from it. In this respect the epistles once again repeatedly exhort us, reminding us that this is an ideal to be sought after, worked at, striven for:

"live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11);

"be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess. 5:13);

"follow . . . peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22);

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14);

"be ye all of one mind . . . For he that will love life, and see good days . . . let him seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Pet. 3:8,10,11).

As we pursue this peace we will find that our minds will be drawn closer to our heavenly Father. We will begin to think more in the way He would have us think, appreciate more the things He appreciates, and find pleasure in the things which bring Him pleasure. His peace will become increasingly ours.

Peter warns us that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace" (2 Pet. 3:10,14).