

A SOLID EXPERIENCE OF GOD

By Titus Chu

Many people may boast of this or that experience of God. It is difficult to judge what is or what is not a genuine experience of God. However, the real test is to discern whether our experience of Him has been according to His principle of operation: have we experienced God as light? Has His enlightenment caused a separation in our life? We should ask ourselves, has our experience of the Lord turned us further from sin and the world? Are we more inclined towards the things of God, or do we still remain engulfed by the pleasures and concerns of this life? Our response strongly indicates whether or not we have actually experienced God.

To know God means that God as light enters into our fallen situation, exposing who we are and what we've done. The result of His enlightenment is a separation. This is the principle of His operation.

Experiencing God as light is further portrayed in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, Genesis. The principles of seeing God operate as light are seen in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

On the first day of Creation, after God said, "Let there be light," there was a spontaneous separation; light was separated from darkness. Similarly, on the second day, the waters were separated. These two days of Creation reveal the principle of God's operation; light shines and separates. This principle observed in Creation also operates in our Christian experience.

Our experience of the first and second days' light and separation leads us into a more substantial experience of God as the "land". Unlike the light and the atmosphere created on the first two days, the land created on the third day was concrete and solid. "And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth" (Genesis 1:9-10a). This indicates that God's work, in addition to being light, is always concrete.

Correspondingly, our experience of God must also be concrete. We should know God not only through His separating work, but even more we should know Him through a solid, substantial experience. This is to know God as the "land".

If we know God only by His actions, our contact with Him will be superficial. However, if we realize Him as the "land", we possess something substantial of God Himself. We gain the knowledge of a living Person. We discover not only the things He does, but the One who is behind all of His work.

Let me illustrate what I mean. A young man may know the interests, likes and dislikes, and something of the temperament of the young woman he is beginning to date. However, his knowledge is superficial. It is related only to what she does, or how she appears. It is not actually according to who she really is. Perhaps after several years of marriage, he would come to know his wife in a very concrete and substantial way through the intimate relationship of marriage. He would know not only what his wife does or can do, but much more, who it is that is behind all of her actions. His knowledge of and love for her would be based on who she actually is.

Let us apply this concept to our experience of God. Suppose you have a headache. According to your knowledge of God, how would you approach Him? I am afraid that you would approach God according to what He does and not according to who He is. Perhaps you would pray, "Lord, I have a headache. I seek Your healing hand."

I believe many of us have approached God in this way, and have even experienced God's healing hand. But let me ask you, if your headache is healed, is anything concrete and substantial produced? Do you know the Lord's Person more, and do you subsequently love Him more? Or did this experience simply give you occasion to boast of God's miraculous works? From our experience we have learned that often miracles fade from the Christian's memory, whereas the experience of God as a Person, as the "land", is concrete and substantial. It has an everlasting value.

By now you might be offended by me and ask, "Then, how should I reach out toward God if I have a headache or any other problem?" The answer is simple. Just desire Him alone. Let us take the same example of the headache. Now, instead of seeking only a healing for your headache, turn your heart to Christ Himself. Seek not a healing, but a deeper knowledge of Him. Perhaps at that moment, the Lord can enlighten you and you may realize you have been negligent in caring for your physical health. Or perhaps He is using this opportunity to let you know that you've been living apart from Him lately. Now your prayer will change. He Himself, not what He can do, becomes your goal.

"Lord, I am sorry I was negligent of my health. My body is Your temple. Lord Jesus, forgive me. I need Your grace to take care of this physical body. Lord, I do not care for my headache; I just love You. I want to be in You and in Your light. My desire is to love you much more and abide in You moment-by-moment."

Isn't this a wonderful response to the Lord? Now you can see that by coming to the Lord in this way, something concrete is produced in your experience of God. In this latter response, there is a substantial experience of the Lord which causes you to have a further longing and pursuit of Him. Instead of looking to God for material blessings, you possess a living Person.