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The Knowledge Of God

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When Massillon arose to deliver the funeral oration of Louis XIV, his opening sentence was: "Only God is great." Luther once told Erasmus that his thoughts of God were too human. A Negro criticised a certain preacher by saying that he did not make God big enough. We believe this is a general fault of the ministry in this, our day: we do not make God big enough in our preaching. God is great, incomprehensively great, in every attribute. The Psalmist says that "His understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5).

The knowledge of God is called His omniscience, which means that His knowledge is universal, reaching to all things, to all persons, and to all events. The contrast between God and man is very marked here. Man knows very little; his understanding has been darkened by sin. He begins his earthly career in almost complete ignorance, and after a lifetime of study, knows nothing as he ought to know it (I Cor. 8:2). While in this world the wisest of men can hardly turn over the first page in the book of knowledge. And the smarter the man is, the more he realizes his ignorance. It is the fool who thinks he knows it all. Moreover, the more valuable a truth is, the denser is the ignorance of man concerning it. The truth about God and eternal things is the most valuable of all truth, and yet the ignorance of man is more evident here than on any other subject. Moral and spiritual truths are hid to the eyes of the wise and prudent and revealed to babes (Luke 10:21). God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world with regard to spiritual things (I Cor. 1:20). The world

by its own wisdom cannot know God (I Cor. 1:21). To be wise every man must become a fool, that is, he must renounce his own reasonings and accept God's revelation about eternal things.

Paul preached the gospel to both Jew and Greek alike; to the natural prejudiced Jew it was a scandal, and to the natural, proud Greek, it was foolishness (I Cor. 1:23). Before they could see the wisdom and power of God in the gospel of Christ, they had to be called; by which call their minds were illuminated by the Holy Spirit, so that the Gospel was no longer hid to them (I Cor. 1:24; II Cor. 4:4, 6).

God's understanding is infinite (Ps. 147:5). The original reads, "Of His understanding there is no number." The objects of God's knowledge are beyond computation. The mind of man does not have a line that can fathom the knowledge of God. David wrote concerning the knowledge of God and, after a few lines, said, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 139:6).

"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off" (Ps. 139:2). God observes us when we sit down to meditate, and when we arise to pursue the activities of life. And He knows the thoughts that regulate all our ways. He knows our thoughts before we know them. Before a thought is our own, it is foreknown to God. God said of Israel, "I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear" (Deut. 31:21). God knew what their thoughts and actions would be before

He brought them into Canaan. Christ knew what Peter's thoughts and words would be and predicted that he would deny Him.

"Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." God knows our path and our pallet. He knows us when we awake and when we are asleep. "For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether." God knows our speech. He knows when men take His name in vain, and has declared that He will not hold such a man guiltless (Ex. 20:7). He knows when men deny His word and "Poke fun" at what He has caused to be written. And He hears the lowest whisper as well as the loudest cry. Men whisper when they wish to conceal their words, but God can hear our whispers, yea, even the mutterings of our hearts.

"Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me" (Ps. 139:5). David felt himself hemmed in by God. Truly there is no escape from God! He is behind us, recording our sins; or in grace blotting them out. He is before us, knowing all our deeds, and providing for all our needs. God is a prison house of punishment to the wicked, and a haven of rest to His weary people. Every person has to have dealings with God, therefore, "prepare to meet thy God."

HOW DOES GOD KNOW?

1. God does not have to acquire knowledge. His knowledge is not the result of observation, consultation, or laborious study. It is no effort for God to know. Knowledge with man is attended with much labor; with man lifetime is schooltime.

2. God does not increase in knowledge. He knows no more now than He did centuries ago. His understanding is infinite from all eternity. He has always had perfect knowledge of all things. God does not need to enroll in any man's university. There are no school days with God.

3. God knows naturally. Omniscience belongs to the very nature of God; it is one of His personal perfections. Calvin defines Omniscience as "that attribute whereby God knows Himself and all other things in one eternal and most simple act." God's knowledge is all direct and without any intermediaries. (Rom. 11:34).

THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE

1. God knows Himself. Rational creatures are endowed by God with capacity to know themselves. Even fallen men know something about themselves, of the composition of their bodies, and of the faculties of the soul. And if creatures know something of themselves, then the Creator, whose understanding is infinite, must know Himself perfectly.

Moreover, there is perfect acquaintance among the three persons of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God, and can make intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26,27). Jesus, speaking of God the Father, said, "I know Him, and keep His sayings" (John 8:55).

2. God knows His creation. He knows everything in nature. "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names" (Ps. 147:4). The sparrow does not fall without His knowledge and consent.

God knows everything in the realm of human experience. He knows the thoughts of men, and the ways of men, and the words of men.

God knows the deeds of man. Men can hide their deeds from one another, but they cannot hide them from God. No human eye saw Cain murder Abel, but God witnessed the crime. Achan do doubt thought he had committed the perfect crime when he stole the wedge of gold and hid it in the earth, but God brought his sin to light. David covered up his sin with Bathsheba, but God uncovered it and sent Nathan to say to him, "Thou art the man!" There are no secret sins to God; all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:13).

God knows the sorrows and trials of His people. "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows" (Ex. 3:7). Let us tell our sorrows to our Heavenly Father, for "Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

God knows all events—past, present and future. He knows all the past and never forgets. "When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them: He forgetteth not the cry of the humble" (Ps. 9:12). Here is a verse for Hitler and all other war lords. It is merciful that we can forget some things of the past. Some men brood over the past until they are driven insane. This is not the proper attitude for the believer. He should forget those things which are behind, reach forth unto those things which are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:13,14). There is forgiveness with God through faith in His Son, and when God forgives us He remembers our sins against us no more forever.

God knows the present and the future. He knows the future better than men can know the past. God's perfect knowledge of the future is illustrated in the hundreds of fulfilled prophecies. Prophecy is the recording of events before they come to pass.

THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE

There is no better exercise for the soul than the contemplation of the perfections of God. Here is the secret of all true godliness. He who would live godly must be occupied with thoughts about God.

"The wicked hate the truth of God's knowledge. They wish there might be no Witness of their sins, no Searcher of their hearts, no Judge of their deeds" (A. W. Pink).

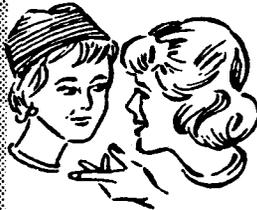
"The wicked fail to remember that God remembers all their wickedness" (Hos. 7:2).

The contemplation of the knowledge of God should fill the soul with adoring wonder. How great must be the One who knows all things! None of us knows what a day may bring forth, but God knows all that will take place in time and in eternity.

The infinite knowledge of God ought to fill men with holy fear. Everything we think, or say, or do, is known to Him to Whom we must give account. Meditation upon this divine perfection will be a mighty check upon the waywardness of the flesh. In times of temptation we need to say as Hagar did, "Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13).

To be occupied with the infinite knowledge of God will fill the child of God with humility, adoration, and praise. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom. 11:33).

The truth before us is an encouragement to prayer. There is no danger that our petitions will not be heard, or that our sighs and tears will escape the notice of God. No danger of the individual saint being overlooked amidst the throng of suppliants. An infinite Mind is capable of paying attention to millions as though only one man was seeking its attention. And we do not jeopardize our prayers by using inappropriate language, because God knows the thoughts and reads the intents of the heart.

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