

Systematic Theology

11 The Knowability of God

The proper study of a Christian is the Godhead—The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity—It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can compass and grapple with—in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go our way with the thought, "Behold I am wise." But when we come to this master-science, finding that our plumb-line cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought, that vain man would be wise, but he is like a wild donkey's colt; and with the solemn exclamation—"I am but of yesterday, and know nothing." No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind, than thoughts of God.

C. H. Spurgeon

1. The P_____ of Knowing God

Romans 11:33-36

1 Corinthians 2:11

Job 11:7

Job 26:14

Psalm 145:3

OBJECTIONS TO INCOMPREHENSIBILITY OF GOD

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

1 Corinthians 13:9-12

Edwards wrote in the End "Because [God] infinitely values his own glory, consisting in the knowledge of himself, love to himself . . . *joy in himself*; he therefore valued the image, communication or participation of these, in the creature. And it is because he values himself, that he delights in the knowledge, and love, and joy of the creature; as being himself the object of this knowledge, love and complacency...[Thus] God's respect to the creature's good, and his respect to himself, is not a divided respect; but both are united in one, as the happiness of the creature aimed at, is happiness in union with himself."

Edwards also says, '*God is glorified not only by His glory's being seen, but by its being rejoiced in.* When those that see it delight in it, God is more glorified than if they only see it. His glory is then received by the whole soul, both by the understanding and by the heart. God made the world that He might communicate, and the creature receive, His glory; and that it might [be] received both by the mind and heart. He that testifies his idea of God's glory [doesn't] glorify God so much as he that testifies also his approbation of it and his delight in it.

2. The P_____ of Knowing God

Jeremiah 9:23-24

John 17:3

Jl Packer reminds us of the way the Gnostic would pursue the knowledge of God,

“Teachers of these beliefs and practices told believers to see their Christian commitment as a somewhat confused first step along the road to “knowledge,” and urged them to take more steps along that road. But these teachers viewed the material order as worthless and the body as a prison for the soul, and they treated illumination as the complete answer to human spiritual need. They denied that sin was any part of the problem, and the “knowledge” they offered had to do only with spells, celestial passwords, and disciplines of mysticism and detachment.”

Matthew 11:20-27

Samuel Storms says, “We must never forget that our *knowledge of God is a gift, not a given*. What I mean by this is that we all too often presume that what we know of God is either something we gained by self-exertion, dedication, and study, or it is something we deserve, perhaps something that is our by right or entitlement. We should never treat the knowledge of God as a given. It is something He gives, and He does not give it universally.”

3. The P _____ of Knowing God

John 1:1-2

John 1:14

John 1:18

John 14:8-10

Hebrews 1:1-3

John 17:3

Herman Bavink says, “It was an auspicious moment in which Christ spoke those words. He stood at the point of crossing the brook Kidron in order to enter the garden of Gethsemane and to suffer the last struggle of His soul there. Before He proceeds to that point, however, He prepares Himself as our High Priest for His passion and death, and He prays the Father that the Father may glorify Him in His suffering and after it, so that the Son in turn may glorify the Father in giving out all those blessings which He is now about to achieve by His obedience unto death. And when the Son prays in this way, He knows of nothing to desire except that which is the Father's own will and good pleasure. The Father has given Him power over all flesh in order that the Son should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. Such eternal life consists of nothing other than the knowledge of the one, true God and of Jesus Christ who was sent to reveal Him (John 17:1-3).”

“I am so little that I shrink into nothingness when I behold the Almightyness of Jehovah- so little, that the difference between the molecule and man dwindles into nothing, when compared with the infinite chasm between God and man. Let your mind rove upon the great doctrines of the Godhead; consider the existence of God from before the foundations of the world; behold Him who is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty. Let your soul comprehend as much as it can of the Infinite, and grasp as much as possible of the Eternal, and I am sure if you have minds at all, they will shrink with awe. The tall archangel bows himself before his Master's throne, and we shall cast ourselves into the lowest dust when we feel what base nothings, what insignificant specks we are when compared with our all-adorable Creator. Labor, O soul, to know your nothingness, and learn it by contemplating God's greatness.

From Spurgeon's Sermon *Fear Not*