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The Knowability of God

by Jeremy Cagle

One of my favorite college professors was Dr. Louis Mauldin. He was an older man who had a strong passion for Dr. Pepper, sports, and philosophy. At the time, I loved all three – although I would have to say that my love for the first two was far greater than my love for the last one.

He also loved to write on the walls of his classroom. He would write philosophical phrases such as “being and becoming,” or “what is man.” One writing stuck with me throughout my time in college. In the middle of the front wall of the classroom, he wrote his definition of philosophy: “a search for truth.”

Many people today approach Christianity the same way Dr. Mauldin approached philosophy: *as a search for truth*. They assume that God may be found but they also assume that He may not be known. Because of this mistaken belief, they live their lives on a seemingly endless quest. They spend themselves searching for a God that they fear is unknowable. Many of them actually reside within the assumption that being a Christian means spending your life “searching” for what God and Christianity actually are.

This assumption has come to life in the latest church fad: the emerging church.¹ Consider some quotations from two of its most popular authors.

Brian McLaren, writing in his book, *A New Kind of Christian* states,

I drive my car and listen to the Christian radio station, something my wife always tells me I should stop doing (“because it only gets you upset”). There I hear preacher after preacher be so absolutely sure of his bombproof answers and his foolproof biblical interpretations . . . And the more sure he seems, the less I find myself wanting to be a Christian, because on this side of the microphone, antennas, and speaker, life isn’t that simple, answers aren’t that clear, and nothing is that sure.²

In another work, entitled *The Church on the Other Side*, McLaren writes,

When we “do theology,” we are clay pots pondering the potter, kids pondering their father, ants discussing the elephant. At

some level of profundity and accuracy, we are bound to be inadequate or incomplete all the time, in almost anything we say or think, considering our human limitations, including language, and God’s infinite greatness.³

Donald Miller, in his book *Blue Like Jazz*, claims that Christianity is an ambiguous term, though Miller himself claims to be a Christian.

In a recent radio interview I was sternly asked by the host, who did not consider himself a Christian, to defend Christianity. I told him that I couldn’t do it, and moreover, that I didn’t want to defend the term. He asked me if I was a Christian, and I told him yes. “Then why don’t you want to defend Christianity?” he asked, confused. I told him I no longer knew what the term meant.⁴

Historical–Biblical Christianity, however, has never assumed that it was searching for truth. It has never assumed that it was searching for what it means to be a Christian. It has never assumed that it was searching for a God that may not be knowable. The Bible and the true church throughout its history have always assumed that God can be found and that God can be known. Consider some quotations from four leading theologians of the past and present:

Charles Hodge:

It is the clear doctrine of Scripture that God can be known. Our Lord teaches that eternal life consists in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. The Psalmist says, “In Judah is God known” (Ps. lxxvi. 1). Isaiah predicts, that “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord” (Is. xi. 9). Paul says even of the heathen, that they knew God, but did not like to retain that knowledge (Rom. i. 19, 20, 21, 28).⁵

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Louis Berkhof:

The Christian Church confesses on the one hand that God is the Incomprehensible One, but also on the other hand, that He can be known and that knowledge of Him is an absolute requisite unto salvation . . . The two ideas . . . were always held side by side in the Christian Church.⁶

J. I. Packer:

Christianity from the start has been based on the biblical conviction that in and through words spoken to and by prophets and apostles, and supremely by Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, as well as by the voice heard from heaven (Mark 1:11; 9:7; John 12:28ff; 2 Peter 1:17ff.), God has spoken, *in the precise sense of using language to tell men things* . . . The final proof that human language can speak intelligibly of God is that God has actually spoken intelligibly about Himself in it.⁷

Wayne Grudem:

In the Bible, however, we have clear and definite statements about God's will. God has not revealed all things to us, but he has revealed enough for us to know his will: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but *the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever*, that we may do all the words of this law: (Deut. 29:29). As it was in the time of Moses, so it is now with us: God has revealed his words to us that we might obey his laws and thereby do his will.⁸

While what may be known about God is limited, that does not mean that we can know nothing of God at all. As Charles Hodge writes, "It is the clear doctrine of Scripture that God can be known."⁹ It is not the goal of this article to discuss what can be known about God from Scripture or from other places.¹⁰ Rather, it is the goal of this article to discuss where this knowledge of God can be found and how this knowledge is not limited to man's meager shortcomings.

I. GOD IS KNOWABLE IN HIS SCRIPTURES

One place where God can be known is in the Bible. It is for this purpose that God inspired human authors to write Scripture.¹¹ Concerning this, Millard J. Erickson writes,

When we speak of the incomprehensibility of God, then, we do not mean that there is an unknown being or essence beyond or behind his attributes. Rather, we mean that we do not know his qualities or his nature completely and exhaustively. We know God only as he has revealed himself.¹²

God can be known to the extent that He has made Himself known in Scripture – to the extent that He has revealed Himself there. Several passages describe the divine origin of the Bible and, correspondingly, demonstrate how God can be known in His Word.

Deuteronomy 29:29 – The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of the law.

Romans 15:4 – For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

2 Timothy 3:16 – All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

2 Peter 1:20-21 – But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God." Because of the divine origin of the Scriptures, they are able to make God known. While there are many mysteries that still belong to God,¹³ He has made Himself known in His Word "that we may observe all the words of this law" (Deut 29:29). Because of this, the Psalmist says the Bible is "a light to my path" (Ps 119:105) and it "makes wise the simple" (Ps 19:7). God's Word has been revealed to man that man may know Him – that man may have a light for his path and that the simple might be made wise.

The Bible also claims that its words are clear.

Psalms 19:7 – The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.¹⁴

Psalm 19:8 – The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.¹⁵

Jesus Himself claimed that God’s Word was clear in its revelation of Who God is and what He wants. In fact, He constantly chastised the Jews of His day for *misunderstanding* their Scriptures because He believed the Scriptures could be understood and any misunderstanding of them was the fault of men, not of God. Consider the following statements of Jesus.

Matthew 12:5 – *Have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?*

Matthew 21:42 – Jesus said to them, *“Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’”*

Mark 12:26 – But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, *have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Issac, and the God of Jacob?’*

Luke 6:3 – And Jesus answering them said, *“Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him.”*

John 5:46-47 – For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

The Bible is written in such a way that it can be understood and it is to be obeyed by all mankind. This was the assumption of the Lord Jesus Christ and the assumption of the authors of the Old and New Testaments. The consequences of the clarity of Scripture’s statements and commandments are tremendous. Since man can know God, he is required to live according to God’s law. If he refuses to do so, he will be punished.

All those who are condemned in the final judgment will be held responsible for rejecting whatever truth was available to them. The fact that a just and righteous God holds both unbelievers and believers alike responsible for obedience to His revelation

is irrefutable proof that He has made the truth sufficiently clear for us. To claim that the Bible is not sufficiently clear is to assault God’s own wisdom and integrity.¹⁶

II. GOD IS KNOWABLE IN HIS CREATION

God can also be known in nature, in His creation. This is what theologians call “general revelation” or “natural revelation.” General revelation can be defined as the “revelation of God in nature.” It is “accessible to all mankind without distinction.”¹⁷ Every human being can see God in His general revelation. Greg L. Bahnsen describes this revelation by saying,

The knowledge (justified, true belief) that all men have of their Creator has a very special feature and importance that do not attach to other, commonplace cases of knowing. Scripture indicates that to know that God exists is, from an epistemological standpoint (not simply from a spiritual, ethical, or eschatological perspective), [is] far more significant than knowing that my shirts are in the closet, that Harry Truman won reelection in 1948, [etc] . . .

Our knowledge of God is not just like the rest of our knowledge . . . The knowledge that all men have of God because of natural revelation provides the framework or foundation for any other knowledge they are able to attain. The knowledge of God is the necessary context for learning anything else . . . Apart from Him, there is only ignorance.¹⁸

Several passages in the Scriptures shed light on God’s general revelation.

Psalm 19:1-4 – The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world.

Here, David is using personification¹⁹ to describe what nature is communicating about God. The heavens are telling His glory, their expanse is declaring His work, day pours forth speech about Him, night reveals knowledge concerning Him, and so on. Charles Spurgeon elegantly summarizes Psalm 19 and these verses in the following sentence:

In his earliest days the Psalmist, while keeping his father’s flock, had devoted himself to the study of God’s two great books – nature and Scripture; and he had so thoroughly entered into

the spirit of these two only volumes in his library, that he was able with a devout criticism to compare and contrast them, magnifying the excellency of the Author as seen in both.²⁰

All men see the heavens and their expanse. All men endure night and day and, because of this, all men know something about God.

Isaiah 6:3 – Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.

The Hebrew word for “glory” here is kavode. It literally means “weight, burden, splendor, magnificence, distinction, respect.”²¹ Isaiah is saying that the God of Heaven has filled the earth with His “splendor, magnificence.” He has filled His creation with His “weight.” God has made His glory known through what He has made. He has made His weight felt in the whole earth.

Romans 1:18-20 – For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

While this article does not attempt to offer an exhaustive explanation of this passage, a few key elements include: 1) God’s wrath is being revealed because men are suppressing the truth that God has made evident to them (vv. 18-19); 2) God’s eternal power and divine nature are clearly seen through His creation (v. 20); and 3) because of this clear revelation, man is without excuse in his rebellion against God (v. 20).

The Greek word for “God made it evident to them” in verse 19 sheds a little light on what Paul is saying here. The word is phanerow, which means “to make visible, clear, manifest, or known.”²² It comes from the noun phaneros, which means “a torch or lantern.”²³ God has revealed Himself to man to such an extent, that His revelation is “clear.” It is a “manifest” or “known” revelation. Man is not completely in the dark concerning his knowledge of God.

To quote Greg L. Bahnsen again,

Perhaps the foundational epistemological insight that is most significant for the practice of Christian apologetics, yet is most often ignored, is that all men already know God – long before the apologist engages them in conversation – and cannot avoid such knowledge . . . Scripture teaches that nobody is ignorant of the living and true God. People lack neither information nor evidence.²⁴

III. GOD IS KNOWABLE IN MAN’S CONSCIENCE

While describing Martin Luther’s famous stand before the Diet of Worms, the church historian Philip Schaff writes,

Conscience is the voice of God in man. It is his most sacred possession. No power can be allowed to stand between the gift and the giver. Even an erring conscience must be respected, and cannot be forced.²⁵

In his book, *The Vanishing Conscience*, John MacArthur says this,

The conscience, Puritan Richard Sibbes wrote in the seventeenth century, is the soul reflecting upon itself. Conscience is at the heart of what distinguishes the human creature. People, unlike animals, can contemplate their own actions and make moral self-evaluations. That is the very function of conscience.²⁶

The conscience functions like a skylight, not a light bulb. It lets light into the soul; it does not produce its own. Its effectiveness is determined by the amount of pure light we expose it to, and by how clean we keep it.²⁷

Man’s conscience reminds him that he has done wrong. It may not always be completely accurate in its assessment, but its reminder of guilt informs every man that he has offended a holy God and is in need of forgiveness.

The conscience is not infallible. Nor is it a source of revelation about right and wrong. Its role is not to teach us moral and ethical ideas, but to hold us accountable to the highest standards of right and wrong . . . When we stand in judgment, every person’s conscience will side with God, the righteous judge. The worst sin-hardened evildoer will discover before the throne of God that he has a conscience which testifies against him.²⁸

Paul describes how the conscience affects those who are not Christians in Romans 2:14-15. Here, this passage states,

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.

In explaining the meaning of Paul's words here, Donald Grey Barnhouse writes,

The fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the second chapter of Romans now set forth that the judgment of God will be according to a process that will manifest the truth of His standards and will destroy all human standards . . . As a matter of Biblical fact, the text is one that so shuts the mouth of man that he will not have a thing to say in the presence of God.²⁹

Why do these verses shut men's mouths and leave them speechless in God's presence? They do so because every human being, Jew or Gentile, saved or unsaved, has been given a conscience to govern them – a "Law written in their hearts" in the words of the Apostle Paul. In the words of one New Testament Commentator, "This [conscience] evidently shows that they have a law, the work of which is written in their hearts, by which they discern the difference between right and wrong – between what is just, and what is unjust."³⁰

While it is clear that unbelievers can wound³¹ or even sear³² their conscience, it is equally clear that a conscience exists in the soul of every man. While human beings can work hard at ignoring their "faculty of discerning between right and wrong,"³³ they cannot ignore the fact that this faculty exists within them. And they cannot ignore the fact that it makes God knowable to them, since it accuses them of their sins against Him.

IV. GOD IS KNOWABLE DESPITE MAN'S SINFULNESS

It is very common for professing Christians today to assume that, because they are sinful creatures, God cannot communicate to them. In his book, *Searchlights on Contemporary Theology*, Nels F. S. Ferre sums up the thoughts of Karl Barth and many contemporary Christians:

Back to the Bible for him meant back to man's sinfulness unto death, his need to cry utter woe in the absolute crisis before God. Man is a mess and a mass of sinfulness. He cannot in any way know God. Not through reason, not through experience, not through good works, not through mystic immediacy, not through theology, not through history, not even through the historical Jesus.³⁴

In other words, because man is "a mass of sinfulness," he cannot know the God of Scripture. His depravity keeps him from understanding anything about Who God is and what God does as revealed in the Bible.

D. A. Carson, writing about this line of thought, says,

Above all, postmodernism has insistently demanded that the implications of finitude in all claims of human knowing be recognized . . . Indeed, at one level Christians might well argue that at this juncture postmodernism does not go far enough. Christians assert, not only human finiteness, but human depravity. We get things wrong not only because we are not omniscient, but also because we are corrupt, morally blind, painfully selfish, and given to excuses and self-justification.³⁵

Carson goes on to write,

Many postmoderns channel [this] discussion into a manipulative antithesis. The antithesis is this: Either we human beings can know something absolutely, perfectly, exhaustively . . . or we human beings can at best glimpse some small perspective on something or other . . . precisely because we have no way of knowing what the whole is.³⁶

The Bible, however, does not agree with postmodernists on this point. It teaches that man is sinful and his knowledge is limited, but it also teaches that man is able to know God. He may not be able to know everything about God, but man is able to know enough of God to be saved and to live in a way that pleases his Maker.

This balance between man's sinfulness and his ability to know God is seen in the Old and New Testament commandments to be obedient.³⁷

Deuteronomy 6:1-2 – Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that

you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all his statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Joshua 1:6-8 – Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

1 Samuel 15:22 – Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

Psalms 119:129 – Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul observes them.

Luke 11:27-28 – While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.” But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

John 14:15 – If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 14:23-24 – Jesus answered and said to him, “if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

Acts 5:27-29 – When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, saying, “We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood

upon us.” But Peter and the apostle answered, “We must obey God rather than men.

1 John 3:23-24 – This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

In every epoch of Biblical history, God’s people were commanded to obey the words that had been revealed to them. It would be utter cruelty and utter nonsense for this to be the case unless they could understand what they were commanded to do. This consistent call to obedience is a demonstration that God can be known despite man’s sinfulness.

V. GOD IS KNOWABLE DESPITE MAN’S LIMITATIONS

In the history of philosophical thought, three periods have emerged: premodernism, modernism, and postmodernism. The scope of this article does not allow for an in-depth analysis of each period, so the following quotation is a brief description of the last two and an explanation of the shift from one to the other.

The majority view, however, is that the fundamental issue in the move from modernism to postmodernism is epistemology – i.e., how we know things, or think we know things. Modernism is often pictured as pursuing truth, absolutism, linear thinking, rationalism, certainty, the cerebral as opposed to the affective...

Postmodernism, by contrast, recognizes how much of what we “know” is shaped by the culture in which we live, is controlled by emotions and aesthetics and heritage, and in fact can only be intelligently held as part of a common tradition, without overbearing claims to being true or right.³⁸

One reason for this shift has been a deeper study of man’s ability to understand the world around him. Modernism claims that man can know a great deal about the world around him and he is therefore “pictured as pursuing truth.” Postmodernism recognizes that man is limited in his knowledge by his “emotions and aesthetics and heritage” and by

his limited perspective.³⁹ In the past hundred or so years, scholars have recognized that man cannot know everything that modernism claimed he could and a major shift has occurred, from modernism to postmodernism, from man's ability to know things to his limited ability to know things.

The Bible, however, claims that man is able to know God in spite of his limitations, in spite of his limited cognitive resources. In Scripture, man's perspective does not keep him from his responsibility to know and obey the God of the universe.

Consider the following passages,

Psalms 111:10 – The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

Psalms 119:104 – From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.

Proverbs 2:1-5 – My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God.

Ezekiel 6:10 – Then they will know that I am the Lord; I have not said in vain that I would inflict this disaster on them.

Ephesians 5:15-17 – Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Colossians 1:9 – For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects.⁴⁰

1 John 2:3 – By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1 John 5:20 – And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true.

Scripture makes it clear that man cannot know and will never know everything about God due to man's sin, finitude, and minute knowledge.⁴¹ Scripture, however, is equally clear that God can be known in spite all of man's limitations.

End Notes

1 It is difficult to define the emerging church because, by its own admission, it does not seek definition. According to HYPERLINK "http://www.theopedia.com/Emerging_church" www.theopedia.com/Emerging_church, as of 3/1/08,

The Emerging church movement (or the Emergent church movement) is described by its own proponents as "a growing generative friendship among missional Christian leaders seeking to love our world in the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Instead of calling it a movement, those of the Emergent sentiment would rather call it a "conversation" . . . In their own words, they began meeting because many were "disillusioned and disenfranchised by the conventional ecclesiastical institutions of the late 20th century."

A group of Emergent leaders says it this way: "We each find great joy and promise in dialogue and conversation . . . We are radically open to the possibility that our hermeneutic stance will be greatly enriched in conversation with others. In other words, we value dialogue very highly, and we are convinced that open and generous dialogue rather than chilling criticism and censorship offers the greatest hope for the future of the church in the world."

If this sounds confusing, it is because it is confusing. In his book, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), D. A. Carson writes, "Before attempting to outline its emphases, I should stress that not only is the [emerging church] movement amorphous, but its boundaries are ill-defined" (12).

2 *A New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003) 14.

3 *The Church on the Other Side* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 65.

- 4 Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2003) 115. There is a book review of this work in this edition of /jtst/.
- 5 Systematic Theology, Vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003 ed.) 335.
- 6 Systematic Theology (Carlisle, Penn.: Banner of Truth Trust, 2003 ed.) 29.
- 7 J. I. Packer in Inerrancy, ed. by Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980) 206, 214.
- 8 Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 119.
- 9 Hodge, 335.
- 10 That is the goal of other articles in this edition, however.
- 11 2 Pet 1:20–21.
- 12 Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004) 292.
- 13 For a further review of these mysteries, see “The Mystery of God” in this edition.
- 14 F. Delitzsch, Psalms, Volume 5 in Commentary on the Old Testament (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001 ed.). According to Franz Delitzsch, the Hebrew word for “sure” in verse 7 means “raised above all doubt in its declarations” (178-179).
- 15 The Hebrew word for “pure” here is barrack, which means “clear like the light of the sun” (Ibid., 179). The same word is used in Song of Solomon 6:10, which reads, “Who is this that grows like the dawn, as beautiful as the full moon, as pure as the sun” (italics mine). David is saying that nothing is obscuring or blocking “the commandment of the Lord.” It is as clear as the light of the sun and, because of this, it is “enlightening the eyes.”
- 16 The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2007) xxii.
- 17 Alan Cairns, Dictionary of Theological Terms (Greenville, S.C.: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002) 383.
- 18 Greg L. Bahnsen, Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis (Phillipsburg: N. J.: P & R Publishing, 1998)181.
- 19 Webster’s New World Dictionary, ed. by Michael Agnes (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2003). Personification means “to think of or represent as a person” (481).
- 20 The Treasury of David: Classic Reflections on the Wisdom of the Psalms, vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers) 269.
- 21 A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, ed. by William L. Holladay (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988) 150-151.
- 22 G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Lexicon of the New Testament (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001 ed.) 465.
- 23 Ibid., 466.
- 24 Bahnsen, 179-180.
- 25 History of the Christian Church, Vol. 7 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002 ed.) 311-312.
- 26 The Vanishing Conscience (Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson Books, 1994) 36.
- 27 Ibid., 39.
- 28 Ibid., 38.
- 29 Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans as a Point of Departure, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953) 90.
- 30 Robert Haldane, An Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans (Mac Dill, Fl.: MacDonald Publishing Company, 1958) 90.
- 31 1 Cor 8:12.

32 1 Tim 4:2 (quoted above).

33 Alan Cairns, Dictionary of Theological Terms (Greenville, S. C.: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002) 108.

34 Quoted from [HYPERLINK "http://www.religiononline.org/showchapter.asp?title=516&C=514"](http://www.religiononline.org/showchapter.asp?title=516&C=514) <http://www.religiononline.org/showchapter.asp?title=516&C=514> as of 3/1/08.

35 Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church, 104.

36 Ibid.

37 These commands to be obedient imply that the hearers are able to obtain some specific knowledge of God (see footnote 13).

38 Carson, 27.

39 See quotes from footnotes 37 and 38 above.

40 It would be foolish for Paul to pray for the knowledge and understanding of the Colossian church if their human limitations kept them from any.

41 Job 36:26; Is 40:28; Is 55:8-9; Phil 4:7.