

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,  
Message # 12 – “The Knowledge of God”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School  
Class by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016.**

**Chapter 2 – Of God and the Holy Trinity, Paragraph 1 -**

The Lord our God is but (a)one only living and true God; whose (b)subsistence is in and of Himself, (c)infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; (d)a most pure spirit, (e) invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is (f)immutable, (g)immense, (h)eternal, incomprehensible, (i)almighty, every way infinite, (k)most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; (l)working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, (m)for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; (n)the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just (o)and terrible in his judgments, (p)hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the (q)guilty.

a 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8: 4 and 6; Deuteronomy 6: 4; b Jeremiah 10: 10; Isa 48: 12; c Exodus 3: 14; d John 4: 24; e 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1: 17; Deut. 4: 15-16; f Malachi 3:6; g 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8: 27; Jeremiah 23: 23; h Psalm 90: 2; j Genesis 17: 1; k Isa 6: 3; l Psalm 115: 3; Isa 46: 10; m Pro 16: 4; Rom 11: 36; n Exodus 34: 6-7; Hebrews 11:6; o Nehemiah 9: 32-33; p Psalm 5: 5-6; q Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1: 2-3

**The Westminster Shorter Catechism states in Question 4 – “What is God?” “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”**

**God’s Knowledge or His Omnipresence –**

**1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 2: 1-3** – And Hannah prayed and said: ‘My heart rejoices in the Lord, I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation.’ “No one is holy like the Lord, for the none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.” “Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the Lord is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed.”

What Hannah is rejoicing in, in regard to her Lord is the fact that she knew that the Lord had heard her prayers for a child. She knew that the Lord knew all about her; her troubles and grief of heart, and He had taken notice of her vows and answered her cries in relation to having a son. If you will recall, she was one of two wives of a man named Elkanah and although Elkanah loved Hannah, she had borne him no children. In verse 5 of chapter 1 it says that the Lord had closed her womb. And also her rival, Peninnah, would provoke her severely, to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb. All of these actions were weighed by God, and since He was a God of Perfect Knowledge, He knew how to reward her faith and her prayers.

**Stephen Charnock says: “Doctrine:** God hath an infinite knowledge and understanding; all knowledge. Omnipresence, which before we spake of, respects his essence; omniscience respects his understanding, according to our manner of conception. This is clear in Scripture ; hence God is called a God of knowledge: 1<sup>st</sup> Sam. ii. 3, The Lord is a God of knowledge. In the Hebrew it is “knowledges”, in the plural number, of all kind of knowledge. It is spoken there to quell man’s pride in his own reason and parts. What is the knowledge of man but a spark to the whole element of fire, a grain of dust, and worse than nothing, in comparison of the knowledge of God, as his essence is in comparison of the essence of God? All kinds of knowledge. He knows

what angels know, what man knows, and infinitely more; He knows himself, His own operations, all His creatures, the notions and thoughts of them; He is understanding above understanding, mind above mind, the mind of minds, the light of lights; this, the Greek word Θεος, signifies in the etymology of it, of it, of Θεισθαι, (or Θεασθαι, says the Editor) which means – to see, to contemplate; and διαμων, of διαω/ scio. *In other words* – “The names of God signify a nature viewing and piercing all things ; and the attribution of our senses to God in Scripture, as hearing and seeing, which are the senses whereby knowledge enters into us, signifies God's knowledge.

**Psalm 94: 8-11** – “Understand, you senseless among the people; and you fools, when will you be wise?” “He who planted the ear, shall He not hear?” “He who formed the eye, shall He not see?” “he who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge?” “The Lord knows the thoughts of man that they are futile.”

### **I. What kind of understanding or knowledge there is in God.**

“The knowledge of God in Scripture hath various names, according to the various relations or objects of it.”

“In respect of present things, it is called knowledge or sight; in respect of things past, remembrance; in respect of things future, or to come, it is called foreknowledge or prescience.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1: 2** – “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”

### **In regard of the universality of the objects, it is called omniscience:**

**Job 37: 14-16** – “Listen to this, O Job; stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.” “Do you know when God dispatches them, and causes the light of His cloud to shine?” “Do you know how the clouds are balanced, those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?”

### **In regard of the simple understanding of things, it is called knowledge:**

**Proverbs 2: 1-7** – “My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly.”

### **In regard of acting and modelling the ways of acting, it is called wisdom and prudence:**

**Ephesians 1: 8 and 9** – “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purpose in Himself.”

**Charnock says:** “He must have knowledge, otherwise he could not be wise; wisdom is the flower of knowledge, and knowledge is the root of wisdom. As to what this knowledge is, if we know what knowledge is in man, we may apprehend what it is in God, removing all imperfection from it, and ascribing to Him the most eminent way of understanding ; because we cannot

comprehend God, but as He is pleased to condescend to us in His own ways of discovery, that is, under some way of similitude to His perfectest creatures, therefore we have a notion of God by His understanding and will: understanding, whereby He conceives and apprehends things; will, whereby He extends himself in acting, according to His wisdom, and whereby He doth approve or disapprove. Yet, we must not measure His understanding by our own, or think it to be of so gross a temper as a created mind ; that He hath eyes of flesh, or sees or knows as man sees.”

**Job 10: 4** – “Do You have eyes of flesh?” “Or do You see as man sees?”

**Charnock:** “We can no more measure His knowledge by ours, than we can measure His essence by our essence. As He hath an incomprehensible essence, to which ours is but as a drop of a bucket, so he hath an incomprehensible knowledge, to which ours is but as a grain of dust, or mere darkness.”

**Job 21: 22** – “Can anyone teach God knowledge, since He judges those on high?”

**Joseph Caryl says on this verse** – “What knowledge or light soever any man hath, he receives it from God, and shall man teach God with his own knowledge?” “Man hath no knowledge of his own to teach God.” “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” “What gift, or grace, what skill, what endowment hast thou that thou hast not received; and thou hast received it from God, and shall he who receives all his knowledge from God, teach God knowledge?” “He is the Father of lights from whom is every good and perfect gift; and shall we be giving light to Him from whom we receive it?” “David saith, ‘In Thy light we see light’. (Psalm 36: 9) And shall we think that God needs our light to see by?” “The common light of the world is the Sun, will any man offer light, or hold up a candle to the Sun?” “Water comes from the fountain, and from that great feeder of all fountains, the Sea, will any man carry water to the fountain, or make a conduit to supply the Sea?”

**Isaiah 55: 8 and 9** – “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are Your ways My ways, says the Lord.” “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

**Charnock says:** “As to what this knowledge is, if we know what knowledge is in man, we may apprehend what it is in God, removing all imperfection from it, and ascribing to Him the most eminent way of understanding; because we cannot comprehend God, but as He is pleased to condescend to us in His own ways of discovery, that is, under some way of similitude to His perfectest creatures, therefore we have a notion of God by His understanding and will: understanding, whereby He conceives and apprehends things; will, whereby He extends himself in acting, according to His wisdom, and whereby He doth approve or disapprove. Yet, we must not measure his understanding by our own, or think it to be of so gross a temper as a created mind; that He hath eyes of flesh,' or ' sees or knows as man sees,' Job x. 4. We can no more measure his knowledge by ours, than we can measure his essence by our essence. As he hath an incomprehensible essence, to which ours is but as a drop of a bucket, so he hath an incomprehensible knowledge, to which ours is but as a grain of dust, or mere darkness. His thoughts are above our thoughts, as the heavens are above the earth.”