

## CHAPTER 7

## Knowledge of the Mystery: A Study of Pauline Epistemology

Mary Healy

The theme of knowledge has not generally been considered a prominent subject of Paul's attention. Indeed, one is hard pressed to find a thorough and systematic treatment of the topic in contemporary biblical studies.<sup>1</sup> Observing that the word *gnōsis* itself (like *sophia* and other related terms) is relatively infrequent outside the Corinthian correspondence, where it occurs in polemical contexts,<sup>2</sup> exegetes have usually concluded that the term reflects the slogans of his opponents, which Paul takes up as the occasion demands but then drops as having little significance in its own right.<sup>3</sup> However, this dismissal of *gnōsis* as a distinctively Pauline concept neglects its place within a whole network of themes treating of the cognitive dimension of salvation in Christ. One indication that knowledge is not a peripheral matter for the Apostle but rather an object of intense theological reflection and pastoral concern is the fact that the Pauline correspondence contains well over half of the New Testament occurrences of an array of cognition-related terms, including knowledge (*gnōsis* and *epignōsis*), wisdom (*sophia*), mind (*nous*), conscience (*syneidēsis*), revelation (*apokalypsis*), thought (*noēma*), understanding (*synesis*),

mindset (*phronēma*), disclosure (*phanerōsis*), thinking (*phrēn*), to think (*phroneō*), to make known (*gnōrizō*), and to be ignorant (*agnoeō*).<sup>4</sup> Knowledge of God and of Christ plays an important role not only in the Corinthian correspondence but also in Romans and Philippians, and receives an even more developed treatment in the later letters. In fact, the basic vocabulary of knowledge, *gnōsis*, *ginōskō* and *oida*, appears more often in Paul than that of faith, *pistis* and *pisteuō*.<sup>5</sup> While numbers never tell the whole story, this fact at least challenges the assumption that knowledge is a relatively insignificant concern for the Apostle.

In light of this evidence, it is not only valid but vital to bring epistemological questions to the study of the Pauline correspondence. What does Paul have to say about the knowledge of God and how it is attained? In what way, if at all, does he see knowledge of God as different from ordinary knowing? How does knowledge relate to faith, one of his principal themes? Paul himself, of course, never addressed these questions in a systematic philosophical manner. Nevertheless, by carefully probing his writings, we can obtain some insight into the underlying assumptions and conceptual framework that shape his thought.<sup>6</sup> For instance, even if Paul never consciously thought about the question of whether there are different 'modes' of knowing, his statements may logically presuppose a particular answer to that question. The contention of this essay is that Paul's writings, *ad hoc* and contingent as they are in addressing diverse pastoral situations, are theologically and philosophically robust: that is, subjecting them to penetrating questions does not cause them to dissolve into a morass of inconsistencies or ambiguities. Of course, this presupposes that due attention is paid to the context, the setting in life, and the particular purposes of a given letter. But once this is done, then the most significant and provocative interpretive questions can be raised.

One of the key texts where Paul directly addresses the human epistemic situation is 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. Much of his cognitive terminology converges in this passage, which describes a hidden wisdom imparted to believers by the Spirit, and

<sup>1</sup> I.W. Scott's excellent monograph, *Implicit Epistemology in the Letters of Paul: Story, Experience and the Spirit*, WUNT 2, 205 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), is a welcome exception, being the first book-length study of knowledge in Paul since Jacques Dupont's *Gnōsis. La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, published a half century ago (Louvain: Gabalda, 1949). J.D.G. Dunn's monumental *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), illustrates the lacuna in contemporary scholarship in that it provides no section or chapter explicitly treating Paul's notions of knowledge or revelation.

<sup>2</sup> *Gnōsis* appears 16 times in 1-2 Corinthians; 7 elsewhere in Paul; *sophia* (wisdom) 18 times in 1-2 Corinthians; 10 elsewhere in Paul; *sophos* (wise) 11 times in 1 Corinthians; 5 elsewhere in Paul.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit. A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 217; G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 11, 100; H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia, J.W. Leitch (tr.) (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 57-59. To contest this explanation is not to deny that Paul, on occasion, noticed and took advantage of his interlocutors' favorite catchwords and adages, as is apparently the case, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 6:12f; 8:1, 4; 10:23.

<sup>4</sup> There are also several cognitive verbs with strong but somewhat less disproportionate representation in Paul, including know (*oida*, *ginōskō* and *epiginōskō*), understand (*noeō*), reveal (*apocalypō*), and manifest (*phaneroō*).

<sup>5</sup> This is the case if one excludes the Pastoral Letters, which characteristically speak of faith in the sense of the content of Christian doctrine rather than the act of believing or trusting God.

<sup>6</sup> Such an inquiry rests on the assumption that in the most important sense of the term, Paul's thought is consistent. That is, although he may have used words or images in very different senses in various contexts, and although in many respects his thought is inchoate relative to later systematic theology, his work is not fraught with logical or ontological contradictions. Recent scholarship has emphasized the contingency of Pauline thought; see Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 6-12; J.A. Fitzmyer, 'Pauline Theology', *NJBC*, 1382-416, §§24-30. However, the fact that Paul was writing letters to particular churches, occasioned by particular pastoral situations, does not in itself imply that his overall theological vision is incoherent. Apparent contradictions in Paul can often be resolved by appreciating the analogous use of terms or by distinguishing different contexts in which given statements apply.

goes on to draw a contrast between those who do and do not understand the Spirit's revelation.<sup>7</sup> Appreciation of this passage has been compromised by the early twentieth-century tendency to suspect 'Gnostic' influence,<sup>8</sup> and the more recent view of the unit as polemical irony rather than a straightforward statement of Paul's own thought.<sup>9</sup> Recovered from these interpretive dead ends, the passage has much to contribute to our understanding of Pauline epistemology. This study will probe the epistemological claims of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, using it as a springboard to explore the views of knowledge underlying the entire Pauline corpus.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Knowledge and revelation are treated in a dynamic rather than a conceptual manner in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; the nouns *gnōsis* and *apocalupsis* do not occur. However, in their verbal form these terms are central to the passage. *Gnōsis* does appear later as keyword in Paul's dialogue with the Corinthians: 1 Cor 8:1-11; 12:8; 13:2, 8; 14:6; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:6; 6:6; 8:7; 10:5; 11:6. *Apocalupsis* occurs in the discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 14:6, 26.

<sup>8</sup> The Gnostic hypothesis first gained prominence through R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance*, PTM 15, J.E. Steely (tr.) (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978), 432; and R. Bultmann, 'ginōskō', *TDNT*, I, 689-719; *ibid.*, *Faith and Understanding*, L. Smith (tr.) (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 70-72; and was further developed by W. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letter to the Corinthians*, J. Steely (tr.) (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 141-55; and U. Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit: Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1 Kor 1 und 2*, BHT 26 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1959). But as several studies have shown, the alleged evidence for a developed form of pre-Pauline Gnosticism is scant and anachronistic. See W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1948), esp. 191-200; Dupont, *Gnosis*; Pearson, *Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology*; R. McL. Wilson, 'Gnosis at Corinth', in M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (eds.), *Paul and Paulinism. Fs. C.K. Barrett* (London: SPCK, 1982), 102-14.

<sup>9</sup> For this widespread view, see R.W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and the Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper, 1966), 303; B.A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians*, SBLDS 12 (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 32; R.A. Horsley, 'Wisdom of Word and Words of Wisdom in Corinth', *CBQ* 39 (1977), 224-39; J. Davis, *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1 Corinthians 1.18-3.20 against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 125; and Fee, *First Corinthians*, 98-99. J. Murphy-O'Connor characterizes the entire passage as 'mental gymnastics intended to bemuse the Corinthians' ('The First Letter to the Corinthians', *NJBC*, 802). See the critique, however, by R. Scroggs, 'Paul: ΣΟΦΟΣ and ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ', *NTS* 14 (1967), 33-55; and P. Stuhlmacher, 'The Hermeneutical Significance of 1 Cor 2:6-16', C. Brown (tr.), in G. Hawthorne and O. Betz (eds.), *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Fs. E. Earl Ellis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 328-47, esp. 334.

<sup>10</sup> Because of space limitations, this study will focus primarily on the seven 'undisputed' letters. However, passages in Colossians and Ephesians (whether written by Paul himself, by a scribe assisting him, or by a later disciple) confirm and develop the epistemological insights of the earlier letters. Cf. esp. Col 1:25-2:3; Eph 1:17f; 3:16-19.

## Revelation in Paul

A close examination of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 shows a two-way dynamic, where *knowing* is the human act that follows, and corresponds to, God's act of *revealing*. Paul's affirmation that God 'has revealed [these things] to us through the Spirit' (v. 10) is parallel to 'We have received the Spirit from God, that we might know the things bestowed on us by God' (v. 12). For Paul (as for the New Testament in general, deriving from the Old Testament), in human knowledge of God, it is always God who takes the initiative by revealing himself. Thus to investigate Paul's epistemology we will begin with his view of the 'downward' divine act of revelation, then proceed to the 'upward' human act of knowing.

### Revelation as God's Self-disclosure

In 1 Corinthians 2:7-10a, Paul identifies the content of God's revelation as his eternal plan, 'decreed before the ages for our glory' and accomplished through the crucifixion of 'the Lord of glory'. Paul thereby indicates that divine revelation is fundamentally rooted in an historical event – the incarnation and redemptive death of Christ.<sup>11</sup> In v. 10b he further identifies that content with the 'depths of God', implying that revelation is the disclosure within the world not only of particular truths but of the inmost divine mystery. For Paul, revelation in its most fundamental sense is thus God's definitive communication of *himself* through the person and life of Jesus Christ.

This conclusion accords with other Pauline texts. As the Apostle emphasizes particularly in Galatians, the self-revelatory intervention of God in history has given rise to a distinct 'before' and 'after' which can be demarcated by various phrases: 'before faith came', 'until faith should be revealed', 'until Christ came' (Gal 3:23f), 'at the right time God sent forth his Son' (Gal 4:4), 'now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God' (Gal 4:9). These statements, taken together, suggest that God's revelation is simultaneously both a self-disclosure and a self-gift through his Son.<sup>12</sup> It is historically particular, yet universal in scope: through Christ, God's love and covenant righteousness have been irrevocably manifested in the world, inaugurating a new dispensation (cf. Rom 3:21; 2 Cor 3:7-9). The Christ-event has manifested in history the ineffable divine attributes: God's love (Rom 5:8);

<sup>11</sup> Scott argues persuasively that 'there is a narrative structure to the Apostle's knowledge' (*Implicit Epistemology*, 5, 95-118). That is, 'Paul's theological knowledge is structured as a grand unified story, an epic narrative of the relationship between human and its creator which stretches from creation to the final eschatological fulfillment' (108), with the Christ event as its pivotal moment.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Rom 8:32; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25.

righteousness (Rom 1:17; cf. 3:21f, 25); glory (Rom 9:23); and faithfulness to his promises (Rom 15:8).<sup>13</sup>

Paul's preferred term for expressing the content of divine revelation is *mystērion* (1 Cor 2:1, 7), a term that acquires increasing prominence throughout his writing career.<sup>14</sup> Besides accenting the veiled and hidden character of what is revealed, this word has the advantage of uniting all the various dimensions of God's salvific design in a comprehensive unity. By designating the object of revelation as mystery, Paul indicates that it remains permanently subject to God's free initiative and beyond the controlling grasp of the human intellect. As mystery, it cannot be confined to determinate doctrinal formulations, though it can require them for its correct preservation (cf. 2 Thes 2:15; 1 Cor 11:2; 15:1-8).

#### *Revelation as Personal Encounter*

A further characteristic of revelation emerges from the fact that Paul associates it with the event of the Corinthians' own conversion in 1 Corinthians 2:10-12: God 'revealed' the mystery when they 'received' the Spirit (both verbs are in the aorist). Thus divine 'revelation' took place for the Corinthians at the moment when the good news of Christ was preached to them. This notion too finds expression throughout the epistles. In Romans 16:25, the cosmic 'revelation of the mystery' is parallel to 'the preaching of Jesus Christ'. Paul describes his own work of evangelization with a wealth of revelatory vocabulary, using terms like 'manifest' (*phaneroō*), 'make known' (*gnōrizō*), 'enlighten' (*phōtizō*), 'reveal' (*apocalyptō*), and 'fulfill the word of God' (*plēroō ton logon tou theou*).<sup>15</sup> The apostles are 'stewards of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor 4:1), through whom God 'spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere' (2 Cor 2:14). Not only the words of the Christian missionaries but their lives, marked by sacrificial love and willingness to suffer for the gospel, contribute to the revelation of the mystery, as they 'carry in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies' (2 Cor 4:10f). For the Apostle, God's self-revelation in Christ is essentially linked with, and carried forward in, the apostolic proclamation of the gospel.

The premise throughout, however, is that the apostles are not initiators but mediators in an undertaking in which Christ himself remains the primary agent: 'we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us' (2 Cor 5:20). This assumption has two significant implications. First, each act of preaching and hearing the gospel in faith involves an encounter between Christ himself and the hearer (cf. 1 Thes 2:13; 2 Cor 5:20; 13:3). Second, God's revealing activity is not confined to the

<sup>13</sup> Similar affirmations can also be made of God's power and his wrath against sin: 'God, desiring to show (*endeiknymi*) his wrath and make known (*gnōrizō*) his power ...' (Rom 9:22; cf. 1:18).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Rom 16:25f; Col 1:25f; 2:2; 4:3; Eph 1:9; 3:5, 9f; 6:19.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Rom 1:16f; 3:21; 15:19; 1 Cor 2:1f; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:4-6; Col 1:25-28; 4:4; Eph 3:7-10; 6:19.

irretrievable past of the Christ-event but continues in the Church as the good news is proclaimed and human hearts open to it in faith.<sup>16</sup> 'For Paul the act of revelation takes place wherever Christ manifests and makes himself known.'<sup>17</sup> In other words, an interior divine work takes place in the listeners coincident with the exterior preaching of the gospel. Paul describes his own paradigmatic experience on the Damascus road as 'a revelation of Jesus Christ' (Gal 1:12); that is, his conversion involved Christ making himself known to Paul and being recognized in his living presence and divine sonship.<sup>18</sup> In another phrase laden with meaning, the Apostle declares that God 'was pleased to reveal his Son in me (*en emoi*)' (Gal 1:16), suggesting that God illuminated Paul's mind from within, bringing about a compelling recognition of the lordship of Jesus. Although Paul's own experience was unique in that it took place without a human intermediary, his consistent use of revelation language indicates that he regards the conversion of others in essentially the same terms.<sup>19</sup> Those who receive the gospel encounter not only a cogent preacher but Christ himself, making himself known through the human intermediary.

Paul assumes that his Corinthian readers will well remember the initial opening of their minds to revelation and recognize it as a foundation for the increasing knowledge of God to which he is urging them (1 Cor 2:10; cf. 1 Thes 1:5; 2:13; Gal 3:2). This in turn presupposes that the Spirit's work of revelation within them continues and grows to the degree they are open to it. Revelation thus involves an ongoing activity of the Spirit within each believer, beyond the initial proclamation and acceptance of the gospel. Whenever the gospel is announced, the Spirit is present, imparting understanding and bringing the truth to life. Following the initial act of conversion, the Spirit brings about a progressively more profound interior enlightenment, within both the individual and the community, as to the reality of the risen Lord and the love of the Father revealed through him (cf. 2 Cor 3:18; Col 1:27-2:3; Eph 1:15-19).

#### *Revelation as Realization of the Plan*

Paul further suggests in 1 Corinthians 2:9-12 that the hidden salvific plan of God, 'what God has prepared for those who love him', is *revealed* to believers by being *given to* or realized within them. Implicit in this affirmation is Paul's view that the Spirit completes the work of redemption by imparting to the individual believer the divine life and love poured out on the cross (cf. Rom 5:5). The Spirit does not merely bestow knowledge of God's secret plans, but empowers the believer to personally assimilate the redemptive grace released by Christ's passion and resurrection. The past event of Christ's self-gift on Calvary becomes a present,

<sup>16</sup> Dunn analyzes this feature of Paul's teaching in *Jesus and the Spirit*, 212-25.

<sup>17</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 213.

<sup>18</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 213.

<sup>19</sup> In support of this thesis Dunn notes Paul's use of 'our' rather than 'my' in 2 Corinthians 4:6 (*Jesus and the Spirit*, 413 fn. 74).

experienced reality bringing a person into deliverance from sin and fellowship with God. This personalization of redemption is the specific role of the Spirit in Pauline soteriology. In other contexts, Paul expresses this idea by associating the Spirit with the work of sanctification<sup>20</sup> and by declaring that the Spirit 'bears witness' to believers regarding the reality of their adoptive sonship acquired through the cross (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6).

For Paul, those who accept the Spirit's revelation do not merely acknowledge that Christ is Lord and Savior, but come to know him *as* Lord and Savior by entering into a relationship with him and experiencing his power at work in their lives (cf. 2 Cor 4:5f; Phil 3:8). Likewise, believers do not merely assent to the doctrine that God is Father but experience a new relationship with him *as* Father through the Spirit's interior testimony (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6). They are not merely informed that their sins are forgiven and the power of sin conquered, but experience that forgiveness and freedom.<sup>21</sup> As Paul attests of his own experience in Philippians 3:4-11, the self-revelation of the living God is inherently transformative, involving a reorientation of one's whole 'self-understanding, world-view and life-style', placing everything in an entirely new perspective.<sup>22</sup> The world comes to be seen in its true status as created by God in Christ, graciously redeemed by him, and destined for a transfigured existence in heaven. Since even those who have received the grace of Christ still have minds in need of purification from the intellectual and moral outlook imbibed from the world, this mental reorientation is a gradual process requiring active cooperation (cf. Rom 12:2; Col 2:8; Eph 4:22-24). Paul refers to this process as 'renewal of the mind' (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23) or having 'the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16; Phil 2:5).<sup>23</sup> This process can, however, be obstructed, which Paul identifies as the cause of the defects in the Corinthians' communal life (1 Cor 2:14). The Corinthians have not adequately appropriated the Spirit's revelation; that is, they have failed to interiorize fully the mystery of salvation, mediated by the Spirit, as a consciously experienced reality.

For Paul, revelation in the senses described above always remains subordinate and anticipatory to the ultimate revelation that will take place at the parousia, 'when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire' (1 Thes 1:7). Paul can even refer to the second coming as simply 'the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor 1:7).<sup>24</sup> He thereby indicates that revelation in this world retains an obscure and provisional character, which will eventually give way to the

<sup>20</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:5; Rom 7:6; 8:1-14; 15:16; Gal 5:16-25; Eph 3:16f; 2 Thes 2:13; Tit 3:5.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Rom 5:1; 6:5-23; Gal 5:1; 6:22-25.

<sup>22</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 213.

<sup>23</sup> As Dunn describes it, 'renewal of the mind' signifies for Paul 'that fundamental reshaping and transformation of inner motivations and moral consciousness (*nous*) which he elsewhere thinks of as the writing of the law in the heart, and as the work of the eschatological Spirit (2 Cor 3:3)' (*Jesus and the Spirit*, 223).

<sup>24</sup> The parousia is referred to with the related terminology of 'appearing' in the Pastoral Letters (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13), and of 'manifesting' in Hebrews 9:28.

clarity of direct vision (1 Cor 13:9-12). At the eschaton not only will the person of Christ be fully manifested, but also the glory of all those who are inseparably united with him (Rom 8:18f; Col 3:4).<sup>25</sup>

### Knowledge in Paul

As noted above, Paul identifies knowledge as the human response to God's revelation.<sup>26</sup> Knowledge appears in verbal form seven times in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, where its object is, respectively, 'the wisdom of God' (twice), 'the things of man', 'the things of God', 'the things bestowed on us by God', 'the things of the Spirit of God', and 'the mind of the Lord'. Apart from 'the things of man' in v. 11, all these are expressions for the one all-encompassing mystery of God's plan for salvation in Christ. These statements are the correlate on the human side to the assertion that the mystery is 'revealed by the Spirit' (v. 10). The knowledge in view is thus a revelatory knowledge, a knowledge that proceeds from revelation. Some questions to pursue are: What are the characteristics of this knowledge? How does it relate to revelation? What, if anything, is distinct about it other than its supernatural content? Finally, what does it have to do with what is usually regarded as the Pauline correlate to revelation, faith?

Before addressing these questions, a word is in order on the Old Testament as the most significant source of Paul's epistemic vocabulary and concepts. Paul's use of *ginōskō* and *oida* reflects the Hebrew verb *yāda'*, which in the Septuagint is normally rendered with one of these two Greek verbs. In contrast to the Greek emphasis on knowledge as theoretical comprehension of reality, or discovery through observation, *yāda'* connotes concrete personal experience. To 'know' can be applied to such widely varied experiences as childlessness, sickness, sin, divine retribution, war, peace, good and evil, and sexual intercourse.<sup>27</sup> To know an

<sup>25</sup> The terminology of revelation also is used in certain more narrow and specific senses, which will not be treated here. For instance, a revelation can be an inspired utterance (1 Cor 14:6, 26, 30), or interior guidance regarding a particular course of action (Gal 2:2; 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 3:15), or a mystical communication (2 Cor 12:1, 7).

<sup>26</sup> As with 'revelation', Paul also uses 'knowledge' in certain extended, almost technical senses, which are secondary to and dependent on the primary sense described below. In 1 Corinthians 8, *gnōsis* has a specific sense obviously defined by the Corinthians' own particular concerns, and reflecting a Greek background. In their claim that 'all of us possess knowledge' (8:1), knowledge refers to a theoretical grasp of a particular theological truth and its ethical application – in this case, the fact that idols have no real existence, and that therefore it is permissible to eat food consecrated to them. While not disputing their theoretical claim, Paul challenges their ethical application. Such 'knowledge' merely 'puffs up', in contrast to the knowledge animated by *agapē* which alone builds up the church (1 Cor 8:1). In 1 Corinthians 12-14, knowledge has yet another meaning as a Spirit-inspired utterance in the church assembly, imparting insight into the practical consequences of revealed truth (1 Cor 12:8; possibly 1 Cor 1:5; 13:2; 14:6; 2 Cor 8:7).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gen 2:9; 4:1; Num 31:18; Jdg 3:1; Is 47:8; 53:3; 59:8; Jer 16:21; Wis 3:13.

individual, in particular, means 'to participate in a personal relationship admitting a variety of form, embracing many stages.'<sup>28</sup> More significantly, *yāda*<sup>c</sup> is one of the principal ways of expressing God's covenant relationship with his people. God sovereignly chooses (*yāda*<sup>c</sup>) human beings (Gen 18:19; Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2), giving rise to a concomitant human responsibility to acknowledge (*yāda*<sup>c</sup>) God and serve him alone (Hos 13:4). To know the Lord, or to be known by him, involves both understanding his will and acting accordingly.<sup>29</sup> This theme becomes interwoven with that of spousal union, particularly in Hosea (Hos 2:20; 6:6; 13:4).<sup>30</sup> God's people are, however, characterized more often by ignorance than by knowledge of him, which ultimately becomes a cause of their ruin (Hos 4:6).

The historical experience of persistent failure to know the Lord eventually led to the notion in the prophetic tradition that only a conversion of heart, effected by YHWH himself, will make possible the true knowledge that he requires.<sup>31</sup> This notion is central to Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy (Jer 31:31-34), and is further developed by Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah, who foretell that both God's punishments and his mighty deeds of salvation will bring about a new and definitive knowledge of him through the interior presence of his spirit (Ezek 37:13f; cf. 35:9; 39:29), which will extend not only to Israel but to all nations.<sup>32</sup> The prophetic writings express the increasing conviction that God and his transcendent ways remain opaque to human beings without an interior principle of understanding provided by God himself. The promise of a new, perfected form of knowledge of God becomes a central aspect of messianic and eschatological hope. This promise, and its fulfillment in Christ, forms the backdrop to all Paul's statements about knowledge.

### *Knowledge as Relationship*

In 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, Paul conflates two Old Testament texts in his quotation: 'As it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him", God has revealed to us through the Spirit.' These texts are Isaiah 64:4, part of a plea for a divine epiphany; and Deuteronomy 29:4, a reproach for spiritual obtuseness. By affirming that God has now revealed these previously unperceived things through the Spirit, Paul indicates that the desired epiphany of Isaiah 64:4 has occurred and, simultaneously, the obtuseness of Deuteronomy 29:4 has been healed, in Christ crucified, risen, and revealed to the Church through the Spirit. The knowledge bestowed by the Spirit has overcome the spiritual blindness of the old covenant, in which the people could not penetrate through God's deeds to an understanding of God himself. This new

<sup>28</sup> J. Corbon and A. Vanhoye, 'Know', *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1973<sup>2</sup>), 296-298.

<sup>29</sup> Jer 22:16; cf. Ex 33:17; Ps 147:19f.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Job 18:21; Is 1:3; 5:13; Hos 4:6; 5:4; Mal 2:7f.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Jer 24:7; Ezek 36:26f; Deut 29:4; 30:6.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Ezek 36:23; 37:28; Is 11:9; 43:10; 49:26.

revelatory knowledge culminates in our having a share in the 'mind of Christ', giving us a way of access to the previously inaccessible thoughts of God (1 Cor 2:16, citing Is 40:13). Paul is hereby indicating that through the eschatological gift of the Spirit, the interior principle of understanding promised by Jeremiah has at last been given, leading to a knowledge of God that was formerly impossible. This is an elaboration of his earlier declaration that 'since ... the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe' (1 Cor 1:21). Here Paul places 'not knowing God' in opposition to 'being saved', so that knowing God is equated with being saved. This does not mean that 'to know God' exhausts the meaning of 'to be saved' or that salvation is essentially a noetic reality, but simply that knowledge of God is an intrinsic dimension of salvation.<sup>33</sup> Paul is announcing that as foretold by the prophets, God has come to be recognized for who he is through his mighty act of deliverance, now understood to be forgiveness of sin and new life in Christ.

This soteriological perspective is a fundamental point of reference for Paul's teaching on knowledge of God. For Paul, salvation is a release from the ignorance or estrangement from God which is the principal consequence of sin (cf. Gal 4:8f; Rom 8:7; Col 1:21; Eph 2:12); to be saved is thus to enter into a personal relationship with God. To become a Christian can be described simply as to 'come to know God, or rather to be known by God,' whereas the former condition of Jews and pagans alike was that of not knowing God (Gal 4:8f; cf. Rom 10:2; 1 Thes 4:5). Unbelievers can even be defined as 'those who do not know God,' which is equivalent to 'those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus' (2 Thes 1:8). The gentiles are 'darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance (*agnoia*) that is in them, due to their hardness of heart' (Eph 4:18). These statements imply a kind of knowledge very different from the Greek idea of knowledge as theoretical speculation. Rather, it is much closer to the Old Testament idea of personal acquaintance with another.<sup>34</sup> To come to know God is to become personally familiar with him, interacting with him and letting oneself be acted upon by him. It is to recognize God *as* God, again in the dual sense of perception and acknowledgement (cf. Rom 1:28). This personalistic perspective does not imply, however, that doctrinal truth is insignificant where knowledge of God is concerned. On the contrary, Paul emphasizes the inseparability of doctrinal and personal knowledge in the rebuke of 1 Corinthians 15:34, where he charges that the denial of the resurrection by some demonstrates that they 'have no knowledge of God'. Their rejection of a central tenet of the gospel shows that they have scarcely a minimal acquaintance with God and his ways.

The personal character of knowledge of God is accentuated by Paul's use of reciprocal formulae. In a striking turn of logic, he admonishes the Corinthians that

<sup>33</sup> Fee, 'Toward a Theology of 1 Corinthians', in D.M. Hay (ed.), *Pauline Theology*, II: 1 and 2 Corinthians (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 40, aptly comments that for Paul, 'Salvation finally has to do with being known by and knowing God (1 Cor 13:12).'

<sup>34</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 218.

'If any one imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one *is known* by him' (1 Cor 8:2f; emphasis added). In other words, true knowledge of God is not a matter of the philosophical (or theological) erudition boasted by some Corinthians; in fact, to assume that it is already to display one's ignorance. Rather, it is a personal familiarity by which one is moved to reciprocate God's love.<sup>35</sup> Since God obviously 'knows' all his creatures perfectly in an epistemic sense, the special divine 'knowing' reserved for those who love him must refer to a relational intimacy. Human knowledge of God, in turn, can only occur by opening oneself to God and allowing him access to one's inmost self – an act that engages the whole person, including the will and emotions. Later in the letter Paul applies this reciprocity to the perfected knowledge of the eschaton: 'Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known' (1 Cor 13:12). In Galatians, he again equates our knowing God with God's knowing of us: 'Now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God ...' (Gal 4:9).<sup>36</sup> The kind of knowledge to which these statements testify is gained only by entering into some form of communion with the other. Its closest analogy is knowledge of another human being, in which knowing the other is in a certain sense conditional on and proportionate to allowing oneself to be known.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, in personal knowing (*connaître* rather than *savoir*), the object of knowledge always retains something of the mystery of personal interiority, and so can never be reduced to an objective, identifiable content.<sup>38</sup> It involves an element of trust and of self-surrender, committing oneself even while recognizing that one will never be able to mentally 'grasp' or exhaustively comprehend the one who is known. This explains why Paul, echoing Jesus' own teaching (cf. Mt 11:25f), insists that according to God's deliberate intention, 'the world did not know God through wisdom' (1:21). A knowledge founded on autonomous reason evades the risk of self-engagement which is the *sine qua non* of personal knowledge.

<sup>35</sup> The converse movement of this dialectic, where love leads to knowledge, appears in Philippians 1:9: 'it is my prayer that your love [for God and one another] may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment.'

<sup>36</sup> For other New Testament expressions of this reciprocal knowledge see Mt 11:27 par. Lk 10:22; Jn 10:14f; 17:25.

<sup>37</sup> Recent work in personalistic philosophy could contribute much to a better understanding of the interpersonal notion of knowledge which is implicit in Paul. See F.J. van Beeck, 'Divine Revelation: Intervention or Self-Communication?' *TS* 52 (1991), 199–226, for an illuminating phenomenological analysis of human communication as not only the best analogy for divine revelation but its 'indispensable anthropological infrastructure' (208). For a defense of the view that relationship is the most basic order of knowledge, see D.L. Schindler, 'God and the End of Intelligence: Knowledge as Relationship', *Communio* 26 (1999), 510–40.

<sup>38</sup> As van Beeck points out, 'Divine Revelation', 209, even human communication 'involves more than things communicated; communication is not a mere transfer of "matter" between and among people ... what is required on the part of both is an interpersonal context – an awareness of mutual presence, of actively and receptively being with one another.'

### Knowledge as Participatory

As noted above, Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 that those who 'know the gifts bestowed on us by God' (v. 12) know them by existentially 'receiving' them (cf. v. 14). That is, the gift of redemption is progressively realized in believers as they come to a more profound epistemic grasp of God's love as manifested in the sacrifice of his Son.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, the mystery is truly understood to the degree that it has been appropriated through conversion. Thus a further characteristic of knowledge for Paul is that it intrinsically involves existential participation in what is known. Participatory knowledge underlies the realized eschatology of 1 Corinthians 2:6–16. The believer who consciously appropriates the Spirit's revelation begins to experience proleptically 'what God decreed before the ages for our glory'; that is, to have an assurance about, and foretaste of, his eternal inheritance as a child of God.

As in the Old Testament, in many Pauline texts 'experience' could be substituted for 'know' without any distortion of meaning: 'that we might experience (*oida*) the things bestowed on us by God' (1 Cor 2:11); 'experiencing (*oida*) the fear of God' (2 Cor 5:11); 'you heard and experienced (*epiginōskō*) the grace of God' (Col 1:6); 'that you might experience (*ginōskō*) the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge' (Eph 3:19). However, Paul's treatment deepens and interiorizes the Old Testament concept. Knowledge of God is not only an experience of his salvific deeds – whether in the history of Israel or in the circumstances of one's own life – and the response of grateful acknowledgement and worship. It is now an awareness of the power of those acts within one's inmost depths, bringing about an increasingly intimate communion with God (2 Cor 3:18; Gal 2:20; Phil 3:8–10).<sup>40</sup> God's self-disclosure lights up the human heart, as the risen life of Jesus becomes a conscious reality (2 Cor 4:6).<sup>41</sup> The believer experiences not only the efficacy of the cross freeing him from sin, but the interior presence of the crucified and risen Lord. This awareness of Christ within is not limited to the event of conversion but is a permanent conviction; Paul knows existentially that 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God' (Gal 2:20; cf. Col 1:27).

Clearly Paul's experiential statements are rooted in his own personal life, both his initial encounter with Christ on the Damascus road and his subsequent ministry. But as noted above, the Apostle never suggests that such personal knowledge of Christ is

<sup>39</sup> This fundamentally Pauline notion is expressed in a fourth-century Easter homily: 'As far as we are concerned, Christ's immolation on our behalf takes place when we become aware of this grace and we understand the life conferred on us by this sacrifice.' Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Sermo in sanctum pascha*, I, trans. P. Nautin, Sources Chrétiennes 36 (Paris: Cerf, 1953), 1, 7.

<sup>40</sup> There are antecedents to this interiorized notion of experience in the Old Testament, although they are relatively infrequent and inchoate. They occur particularly in the notion of 'beholding' God expressed in the Psalms (Pss 11:7; 27:4; 63:2).

<sup>41</sup> This text alludes to the fulfillment of the prophetic oracle of Isaiah 40:5: 'And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.'

a unique prerogative of himself or of the apostles in general.<sup>42</sup> If such knowledge were not in principle available to every believer, the rebuke and implied challenge in 1 Corinthians 2:13-3:4 would be pointless. As Stuhlmacher remarks, 'Paul applies to the Corinthians the very same cognition that brought illumination to him on the Damascus road.'<sup>43</sup> While such experiential awareness can be greater or lesser, and is certainly meant to increase, its complete absence from a Christian life is the aberrant situation characterized as that of the 'unspiritual person' (1 Cor 2:14). In 2 Corinthians the Apostle again challenges his disciples, relying on the assumption that it is just as possible for them as for him to consciously discern the indwelling of Christ (2 Cor 13:5). The whole point of Philipians 3:7-15, similarly, is to urge his addressees to seek the depth of knowledge that he himself has acquired.

The participatory quality of knowledge of God underlies the close bond between Pauline epistemology and Pauline ethics.<sup>44</sup> In 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, Paul draws a connection between wisdom and power: the true *sophia* of God is the knowledge that brings life-transforming power: it is 'not merely a rational acknowledgment; it includes *experiential participation in that salvation-history*, the actual experience of God's saving power in the here and now – the "demonstration of Spirit and power" (1 Cor 2:4).'<sup>45</sup> Knowledge of the mystery of Christ's death to sin and life to God touches a person's life, communicating a divine energy to be conformed to Christ (cf. Rom 6:10; 8:29). This is why throughout his letters Paul repeatedly prays for or commends a growth in 'knowledge' on the part of his addressees.<sup>46</sup> Often in such contexts the verb has no direct object, but seems to refer to a grasp of the divine mystery revealed in Christ which becomes existentially manifest in the life of the believer.<sup>47</sup> For Paul it is inconceivable that a living contact with Christ would not increasingly shape a person's whole personality, leading to a perceptible effect on one's outward conduct. To be 'full of goodness' is inseparable from being 'filled with all knowledge' of God and his saving work (Rom 15:14).

<sup>42</sup> Although Ephesians 3:2-5 declares that 'the mystery was made known to me [Paul] by revelation' and 'has now been revealed to his [Christ's] holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit', this occurs within the specific context of a discussion of Paul's apostolic mission to the gentiles. It is subsequent to the prayer that all the Ephesians may receive 'a Spirit of wisdom and of revelation' to know Christ and their glorious inheritance in him (1:15-23). In Colossians 1:26 the mystery is said to be 'now made manifest to his saints', i.e., to all believers.

<sup>43</sup> Stuhlmacher, 'Hermeneutical Significance', 338-39.

<sup>44</sup> Scott construes this relationship in a slightly different but not incompatible way: theological knowledge is structured as a grand narrative, and ethical reasoning 'is for Paul a matter of "emplotting" himself or other human beings within this overarching narrative by correlating the events of the story with his mundane knowledge about himself and others' (*Implicit Epistemology*, 278).

<sup>45</sup> Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 220. Italics are in the original.

<sup>46</sup> Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 1:5; Phil 1:9; Col 1:9f; Phm 6.

<sup>47</sup> Knowledge is used in this general theological sense in 1 Cor 13:2, 8; 2 Cor 6:6; 10:5; 11:6; Rom 10:2; Col 2:2f; 3:10; Eph 1:17.

The ethical implications of revelatory knowledge help us to pinpoint the deficiency of the Corinthian community whose behavior Paul castigates. Their supposed 'wisdom' (cf. 3:18; 4:10) and 'knowledge' (8:1) have led not to edification of the church but to discord. This shows that despite their high self-evaluation, they are actually woefully deficient in the revelatory knowledge of God that is accompanied by power.<sup>48</sup> In Paul's equivalent expression, they are 'still carnal' (1 Cor 3:3). This stinging rebuke conveys 'the apostle's reproachful sorrow over the fact that the spiritually richly gifted Corinthians had not yet attained (on account of their strife and divisions) this full knowledge, which is there for all believers by virtue of the Spirit.'<sup>49</sup> The deficiency is illustrated in several of the specific ethical problems discussed in the letter. If the Corinthians had, for instance, grasped with spiritual insight that they are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in them (1 Cor 3:16), they could not possibly have continued to compete jealously and fight with one another, and so desecrate the divine dwelling place. If they had been animated by the pervasive conviction that all things belong to them, and they belong to Christ (1 Cor 3:21-23), their lives would have radiated a profound trust and dependence on God that would have quelled the impulse to boast. If they had understood spiritually what it means that the apostles are 'servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor 4:1) they would have accorded them proper respect for the sake of Christ rather than idolizing or dishonoring them. If they had recognized the presence of the Lord in the Eucharistic supper, they would not have humiliated one another and so profaned his body and blood (1 Cor 11:20-29).<sup>50</sup>

Paul's exhortations persistently express the conviction that revelatory knowledge leads intrinsically to good works; conversely, ignorance leads to sin.<sup>51</sup> This relationship is stated in its strongest form in 1 Corinthians 2:8, where the most heinous sin, crucifixion of the Lord of glory, is attributed precisely those who 'did

<sup>48</sup> As Veronica Koperski points out, Paul's procedure is perfectly tailored to the needs of the church in Corinth. Comparing 1 Corinthians 1-2 with Philipians 3:3-21, she notes that 'in Corinth it appears that the enthusiasm over the power of the resurrection has led to a neglect of awareness of the power of God at work in the midst of apparent weakness and folly. In Philipians the problem seems to be more that the resurrection power does not seem to be experienced at all, with perhaps the exception of the "perfect" in Philipians 3:15. The Corinthians are certain God's power is at work, but they are mistaken as to the situation in which it works; they need to understand that it works precisely in weakness. The Philipians also need to understand that power works in weakness, but apparently the more basic problem is to keep them from giving in to discouragement.' Koperski, 'Knowledge of Christ and Knowledge of God in the Corinthian Correspondence', in R. Bieringer (ed.), *The Corinthian Correspondence*, BETL 125 (Leuven: Leuven University Press/ Peeters 1996), 383.

<sup>49</sup> Stuhlmacher, 'Hermeneutical Significance', 333.

<sup>50</sup> Paul deliberately uses the same word 'body' (*sōma*) for the Eucharist in 11:24-29 and for the Church in 12:12; in 1 Corinthians 10:16f the connection is even more explicit.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. the similar line of reasoning in Romans 1:21-25. Both passages imply that the reverse order also holds true: sin leads to ignorance of God. Otherwise there would be no way to impute culpability to the ignorance.

not know' God and his plan. Conversely, Paul presents the true wisdom of God as resulting in heartfelt worship of God and harmonious ecclesial fellowship. Those who have interiorized the Spirit's revelation lead a life manifesting the mind of Christ through mutual love and service.

### *The Role of the Holy Spirit*

The irreducibly personal nature of knowledge of God accounts for the key role Paul attributes to the Holy Spirit in the interplay of divine and human knowledge.<sup>52</sup> A close examination of his argument in 1 Corinthians 2:9-12 shows that this is not simply a matter of the Spirit's imparting revelation in the 'downward' movement from God to man. The Spirit also empowers the human mind to reach 'upward' to God in an act of knowledge that it could not achieve on its own: 'we have received ... the Spirit from God, *that we might understand*' (1 Cor 2:12).<sup>53</sup> Such divine-human intercommunication is possible only by the Spirit's mediation, without which the human mind is perpetually thwarted in its attempts to attain the mind of God (1 Cor 1:20f). Paul is alluding to the principle, common in the ancient world, that 'like is known by like.' In this case the object of knowledge is infinitely incommensurate with human cognitive powers, but the Spirit who 'searches the depths of God' can allow human beings to participate in his own divine knowledge of God. The Spirit becomes the hermeneutical key enabling the human mind to adequately interpret what is revealed in the crucifixion of Jesus; that is, to look into the depths of divine love through the kenosis of God's Son. Even more, we can infer that since the Spirit dwells in the believer, he searches the depths of God *from within the believer* and thus invites the believer into the intra-Trinitarian communion. Thus understood, the Spirit's communication of divine truth is indistinguishable from his communication of divine life.

The importance Paul ascribes to the Spirit's epistemic role, opening the believer's mind to otherwise inaccessible realities, is evident throughout his correspondence. Just as the Corinthians' initial reception of the good news was made possible by a 'demonstration of Spirit and of power' (1 Cor 2:4), so the evangelization of the Thessalonians was effected by the Spirit bringing 'power' and 'full conviction' (1 Thes 1:5). This implies not merely that the Spirit caused visible miracles or

<sup>52</sup> Scott, *Implicit Epistemology*, 49, notes the importance of the Spirit's epistemic role, but sees this role as essentially remedial; that is, Paul's hearers cannot comprehend the message of the gospel 'unless they first overcome certain moral vices which consistently distort human intellectual standards. It is the Spirit who plays the key role in this epistemic process, by healing the human moral constitution so that the internal coherence and rational implications of the gospel can be recognized.' While this is an important insight, it does not do full justice to the Spirit's mediation in human knowledge of God even apart from moral failings, as argued below.

<sup>53</sup> In the words of P. Gooch, the Spirit bridges the 'epistemic gap' between God and man (*Partial Knowledge*, Philosophical Studies in Paul [Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1987], 36-37).

charismatic phenomena confirming the credibility of the message, but that he brought about an interior conviction disposing the listeners to recognize its truthfulness. Likewise, Paul advises the Corinthians that 'No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor 12:3); that is, only by the Spirit is Christ's sovereignty over all things grasped as a vital truth. The Spirit's illumination is equally indispensable for removing the 'veil' of human incomprehension so that Christ may be recognized in the prefigurations of the old covenant (2 Cor 3:16f). The Spirit bestows a living awareness of our adoptive sonship (Rom 8:15-17; Gal 4:6) and gives the inner 'strength' necessary to comprehend the immeasurable scope of divine love (Eph 3:16-19). In another text that alludes to the 'like by like' principle, Paul explains that the Spirit enables one to interiorly 'see' or become consciously aware of the splendor and truth of God's self-revelation in Christ: 'And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from glory to glory; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit' (2 Cor 3:18).<sup>54</sup> Here 'likeness' to Christ is not only a prerequisite but also a result of knowing him, suggesting that knowledge and likeness increase in a dialectic relationship. All of these assertions confirm in various ways that revelatory knowledge involves an ongoing work of the Spirit, empowering the human mind to transcend its natural capabilities in order to receive and reciprocate the divine self-communication.

### *A Twofold Mode of Knowledge?*

How does this Spirit-bestowed revelatory knowledge relate to ordinary human knowing? In the conflated citation of 1 Corinthians 2:9, Paul refers to that which 'eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived'. By speaking of eye, ear and heart, he sums up in biblical language the sources of knowledge available within the natural sphere, from the highest physical senses to rational intelligence. He does so in order to emphasize that the hidden wisdom of God has not come by these human channels, but only by the Spirit's revelation. That which the human heart has not conceived, and was constitutionally incapable of conceiving, has become the object of revelatory knowledge. Paul thus establishes what Gooch refers to as 'the religious impotence of reason';<sup>55</sup> that is, reason's incapacity to arrive independently at the central content of Christian faith. But based on what was said above regarding the ongoing and personal nature of revelation, we can take this notion a step further. Paul's overarching purpose in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 is to urge his readers to open themselves more deeply to the continuous revelatory work of the Spirit, so that the divine mystery may become a living source of life for them. He is not merely informing them that an understanding of God's plan, which could never

<sup>54</sup> The notion of beholding or 'seeing' the things of God is also expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:12, although the accent there is on the contrast between the relatively obscure mode of vision in this life, 'in a mirror dimly', and that in the life to come, which is 'face to face.'

<sup>55</sup> Gooch, *Partial Knowledge*, 43.



have been generated by human reason, has now been revealed to the apostles, who pass it on to the believers. Rather, he is declaring that the hidden wisdom of God continues to transcend the grasp of reason and to surpass anything that human thought can sustain on its own. Because it involves an irreducible, personal mystery, the object of knowledge is not only previously unknown to sense and intellectual cognition, but *per se* beyond the power of human faculties. It thus requires a permanent disposition of openness to and reliance on the Spirit. This suggests that the revelatory knowledge Paul is referring to is different in kind, not just in origin, from natural knowledge. It is a spiritual perception by which the Spirit, through a gift of grace, elevates the human mind to a share in his own personal 'acquaintance' with God. That which 'the heart of (natural) man has not conceived' still cannot be conceived without the Spirit.

This raises the question as to whether, in knowledge of the divine mystery, there is any room for the natural functioning of the mind. Is Paul referring to a form of charismatic illuminism or a separate spiritual 'track' of knowledge appropriate to divine matters, in which reason and sense perception have no role?<sup>56</sup> An attentive consideration of his statements shows that such is not the case. Although the divine mystery permanently transcends human understanding, Paul nowhere gives any indication that it precludes the need for human understanding. Both his writings and his life testify to the urgency of preaching and teaching the gospel in a form that appeals to human intelligence.<sup>57</sup> Of his own ministry he affirms, 'By the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every person's conscience in the sight of God' (2 Cor 4:2), and he asks rhetorically, 'How are people to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?' (Rom 10:14). The necessity for the active cooperation of the mind is equally apparent in 1 Corinthians 2:13, where Paul indicates that the Spirit's revelatory action takes place precisely through, not apart from, the normal channels of human communication with all their attendant linguistic, intellectual and cultural forms. Moreover, Paul's very act of communicating divine truth by writing a letter, using all the tools of logical and rhetorical persuasion at his disposal, presupposes that the addressees will actively engage their minds in hearing and interpreting it. All this indicates that for Paul, knowledge acquired by ordinary human means is not circumvented but elevated and integrated into the revelatory knowledge bestowed by the Spirit.

As noted above, the central content of divine revelation is the 'mystery,' i.e., God himself as communicated in Christ crucified and risen. Thus, although the content of the knowledge of 'spiritual' Christians may be identical with that of 'immature' Christians (that is, the *kerygma*), it is known in a different way, as is manifested by their lives which either do or do not manifest increasing conformity to Christ. A

<sup>56</sup> For a thorough discussion of this question see Scott, *Implicit Epistemology*, 44-68.

<sup>57</sup> As noted above, Paul's teaching on charismatic phenomena differs from the classical Greek view in that the mind is engaged, not supplanted, in the Spirit's inspirational activity (1 Cor 14:15; cf. 14:6, 19).

mature knowledge, which is more adequate to the deeper dimensions of divine reality,<sup>58</sup> might be called spiritual or mystical as opposed to the merely rational. The use of the adverb 'spiritually' (*pneumatikōs*) in 1 Corinthians 2:14 reaffirms that a spiritual person apprehends the same objects as a natural person, but apprehends them differently.<sup>59</sup> They are only recognized *as* gifts of the Spirit of God through Spirit-inspired knowledge. This principle applies primarily, of course, to the 'foolishness' of a crucified Messiah, but secondarily to other gifts of God which may come in 'distressing disguise,' for instance trials and temptations (2 Cor 12:9f), hardships (2 Cor 4:16f), or weak and troublesome members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:15-24).

The latter observation enables us to answer the question whether revelatory knowledge applies only to the mystery of Christ, that truth undiscoverable by human reason, or whether it extends to other matters. By affirming that the spiritual person 'discerns all things', Paul indicates that the Spirit's illumination, when actively welcomed, sheds its light on everything the mind apprehends. This is not to say that ordinary matters are now known by special revelation, but that the understanding conferred by the Spirit effects a new hermeneutic that influences one's perception of all reality. Paul challenges the Corinthians in this regard by his repeated refrain, 'Do you not know ...?' by which he reminds them that they ought to be aware of the radical implications of their faith in every aspect of life.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, we have to ask where human philosophical inquiry, subject to such a stringent critique in 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, stands in light of revelatory knowledge. This question is best answered by interpreting 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 in juxtaposition with Paul's indictment of pagan ignorance of God in Romans 1:18-32. Whereas in the Corinthians text Paul declares the impossibility of 'knowing God' through human intellectual inquiry (1 Cor 1:21), in Romans he insists that even the most benighted pagans 'knew God' (Rom 1:21). But the inconsistency is only apparent, since the knowledge referred to in Romans is an inferential knowledge limited to 'what can be known about God' (1:19), that is, an awareness of God's invisible power and deity, and of the moral law (Rom 1:20; 1:32). It is attained by reasoning about the things God has created and is thus naturally available to all people 'since the creation of the world' (1:19). It does not reach the mysterious 'depths of God' or his eternally hidden plan for salvation in Christ. From this distinction, we can infer that if philosophy is defined as human inquiry into the meaning of existence and of the cosmos, Paul regards it as a legitimate but ultimately deficient activity. To the degree that it arrogantly ignores its limitations, and thereby closes itself to the Spirit's revelation, the 'wisdom of men' becomes a hindrance to revelatory knowledge and thus reprehensible.

<sup>58</sup> See R. Guardini, 'Sacra Scrittura e scienza della fede', in I. de la Potterie et al. (eds.), *L'esegesi cristiana oggi* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1991), 46-48, for insightful reflections on the principle that knowledge must be adequate to its object.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. the equivalent notion, 'in all spiritual wisdom and understanding' in Colossians 1:9.

<sup>60</sup> 1 Cor 3:16; 5:6; 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:13, 24.

Another key text where Paul draws a contrast between two forms of knowledge is 2 Corinthians 5:16: 'From now on, therefore, we know (*oida*) no one according to the flesh; even though we once knew (*ginōskō*) Christ according to the flesh, we know (*ginōskō*) him thus no longer.'<sup>61</sup> As in 1 Corinthians, Paul is pointing to a new way of knowing corresponding to a new form of existence, which is specified in the subsequent verse: 'If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come' (2 Cor 5:17). As a persecutor of the Church, Paul previously had a carnal view of Christ, that is, one limited to his own intellectual resources which were still 'veiled' and 'darkened' by sin (cf. 2 Cor 3:15; 4:4). He 'knew' Jesus as merely an itinerant preacher and dangerous messianic pretender; he was blind to Jesus' divine identity and salvific mission. But 'from now on' – a phrase that refers both to Paul's conversion and to the eschatological 'now' inaugurated by the Christ-event – he knows him as Savior and Lord. In the same way, the Corinthians are to put off their 'carnal' understanding of the divine mysteries that belongs to their former life and gain the revelatory knowledge which belongs to the new life in the Spirit. As in 1 Corinthians, Paul emphasizes that such knowledge, though divinely bestowed, fully engages human freedom. To account for the fact that some people refuse to accept the good news, he explains that 'their minds were hardened', 'a veil lies over their heart' (3:14f), and they have been blinded by 'the god of this world' to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel (4:4). These formulations suggest both unintentional deception and willful blindness. Although such people may have heard the gospel proclaimed, they, like the 'rulers of this age' in 1 Corinthians 2:8, fail to recognize the cogency and truth of God's plan. Such understanding can only come about by a 'turning to the Lord'; that is, a free and trusting self-surrender (3:16f). While human beings do not have the power to arrive independently at revelatory knowledge, they do have a choice to allow the Spirit to grant it.

### Knowledge and Faith

How, then, does knowledge relate to that more celebrated and studied Pauline theme, faith? The latter is strikingly absent from 1 and 2 Corinthians relative to the other epistles, especially Romans.<sup>62</sup> In fact, it is fair to say that the place taken by *pistis/pisteuō* in Romans is occupied by *gnōsis/ginōskō* in the Corinthian

<sup>61</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 194–95, has shown that there is no foundation for the claim that this verse is a later Gnostic gloss deprecating the earthly Jesus. See also Koperski, 'Knowledge of Christ', 385. For the Gnostic interpretation see Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, 302–15.

<sup>62</sup> Of the 142 Pauline occurrences of *pistis* (including the Pastorals), only seven are in 1 Corinthians, as compared with 40 in Romans. Of these seven, two refer to a narrower sense of faith as a charismatic gift given only to some for the edification of the body (1 Cor 12:9; 13:2). 2 Corinthians likewise has seven occurrences. The verb *pisteuō* appears nine times in 1 Corinthians (of which two, 9:17 and 11:18, have a non-theological meaning), and twice in 2 Corinthians, as compared with 21 times in Romans and 22 times in the other letters.

correspondence. The approach of scholarship to this disparity has generally been to take faith as the paradigm, and knowledge as a side issue whose prominence in 1 and 2 Corinthians is due to that community's aberrant preoccupations. Such a reluctance to treat *gnōsis* in its own right may be partly owing to the damaging effects of Gnosticism (which claims Paul as one of its chief sources) on Christian life from the earliest centuries of the Church. But we may legitimately ask whether the Gnostic threat has not led to an unwarranted downplaying of certain elements that Paul himself considered important in his theology.

Although faith is not mentioned in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16, it does occur in the immediately preceding unit, where Paul explains that his manner of preaching was such that the Corinthians' faith 'might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God' (2:5). It reoccurs in verbal form in 3:5, where Paul and Apollos are described as 'servants through whom you believed (*episteusate*)'. Earlier, in the wisdom antitheses of Chapter 1, Paul states that since 'the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe (*pisteuontas*)' (1 Cor 1:21). In these texts faith appears with its typical Pauline meaning as the obedient and trusting acceptance of God's gift of grace in Christ, which is the immediate goal of apostolic preaching although it is produced by God and not by the preaching itself. As the proper response to an encounter with Christ through the gospel proclamation, faith is what distinguishes 'those who are perishing' from 'those who are being saved' (1:18).<sup>63</sup> Faith thus seems to be a more basic and fundamental reality than the mature knowledge described in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16.<sup>64</sup> It involves not a plumbing of the depths of God but an acceptance of the divine 'foolishness' of the cross even before its full implications are understood. Whereas knowledge is an indicator of relative maturity among Christians, faith marks the divide between Christians and non-Christians.<sup>65</sup>

But although Paul associates knowledge rather than faith with Christian maturity, he never states or implies that faith is a lesser reality eventually replaced by knowledge. There is no suggestion that the spiritual person, who knows experientially the gifts bestowed by God, need no longer rely on faith. In fact, in an eschatological context Paul asserts the very opposite, declaring that 'knowledge passes away' whereas faith 'remains' (1 Cor 13:8, 13). In other contexts, faith and knowledge are paired as Christian qualities equally expected to grow in the life of

<sup>63</sup> This distinction is also implicit in 1 Corinthians 14:22; 15:11.

<sup>64</sup> For Paul, as for the Bible in general, the very notion of faith already implies at least a minimal degree of knowledge (cf. Rom 10:14). In order to believe one must have at least a rudimentary understanding of the object of belief, i.e., the existence of God and his plan of salvation. But such initial comprehension is not the same as the mature knowledge referred to in 2:6–16.

<sup>65</sup> This helps explain why, for all their deficiencies in knowledge, Paul does not say the Corinthians are lacking in faith. The absence of such statements in Paul is in marked contrast to the sayings of Jesus, for whom his disciples' lack of faith was a frequent subject of reproach: cf. Mt 8:10b; 19:20; Mk 4:40; 9:24; Lk 17:6; Jn 4:48.

the believer.<sup>66</sup> Paul expresses his hope that the Corinthians' faith increase (2 Cor 10:15; cf. Phil 1:25), and exhorts them not to grow out of their faith but to 'stand firm' in it (1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24). How is this paradox to be explained? It can only make sense in light of the irreducibly personal and relational character of Pauline knowledge of God as noted above, to which human relationships are the closest analogy. Even in the case of a human relationship, knowing another can never exhaust the mystery of the other. In fact, as van Beeck observes, interpersonal knowledge paradoxically increases the mystery: 'persons we have come to know really well are often more mysterious to us than others whom we know only superficially.'<sup>67</sup> Knowledge of another person – and preeminently of a divine Person – thus involves a dialectic of mystery and intelligibility, such that increasing knowledge entails an increasing wonder and deference before the mystery of the other. It is a kind of knowledge which proceeds by trust, in which further knowledge always entails a corresponding deepening of trust.<sup>68</sup> Such a description is *a fortiori* true of knowledge of the invisible God, who reveals himself by his saving acts and invites human beings to respond with trusting acceptance. This observation suggests that for Paul *gnōsis* and *pistis* are in fact the same reality considered under different aspects. Knowledge of God is a personal acquaintance with God and his ways considered as experiential contact; faith is that same acquaintance considered in light of its necessary concomitant of obedient trust. As von Balthasar remarks in his illuminating treatment of the subject, faith is united with knowledge 'in one and the same total human act'.<sup>69</sup>

Paul defines the spiritual (*pneumatikos*) or mature Christian, in contrast to the unspiritual (*psychikos*) or infant Christian, as one who 'knows' the things of God because he actively appropriates the Spirit's interior revelation (1 Cor 2:14f). Knowledge of God is presented as a gauge of Christian maturity, not merely as another way of referring to the faith which belongs to all Christians. This suggests that faith, as the foundational act of trusting in God's revelation, is meant to blossom into knowledge, as a deepening familiarity with God and participation in the mystery of salvation. At the same time, the perdurance of mystery guarantees that knowledge does not preclude or even diminish faith. In short, faith and knowledge of God do not stand in an inverse relationship but are directly proportionate to each other. As von Balthasar remarks, for Paul 'The highest Christian experience and *gnōsis* can

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Phm 6; Eph 4:13; Tit 1:1. This pairing also occurs where faith and knowledge are charismatic gifts: 1 Cor 12:8f; 13:2; 2 Cor 8:7.

<sup>67</sup> Van Beeck, 'Divine Revelation', 211.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), §13–14: 'the knowledge proper to faith does not destroy the mystery; it only reveals it the more ... Revelation has set within history a point of reference which cannot be ignored ... Yet this knowledge refers back constantly to the mystery of God which the human mind cannot exhaust but can only receive and embrace in faith. Between these two poles, reason has its own specific field ...'

<sup>69</sup> H.U. von Balthasar, 'Pistis and Gnōsis', in *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, I: *Seeing the Form*, E. Leiva-Merikakis (tr.) (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), 133.

never surpass faith, but only strengthen it and demonstrate its rightness.'<sup>70</sup> This interrelationship is confirmed by other Pauline texts. In Philippians, the Apostle declares that he knows Christ (3:8) and has faith in him (3:9), yet strives toward a deeper participatory knowledge: 'that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death ...' (3:10). In Romans, he develops an interplay of knowing, believing and reckoning, in which knowledge leads to greater faith, and conversely, the act of trust involved in 'reckoning' increases the experiential depth of one's knowledge (6:1–11). Knowledge is the full flowering of faith, without ever supplanting it.<sup>71</sup>

Since faith is the distinctively Christian mode of knowledge of God, as the fundamental disposition that God seeks in response to his self-revelation in Christ, it is not surprising that faith has overall priority in Paul as in the New Testament in general.<sup>72</sup> Why, then, is knowledge more prominent in 1–2 Corinthians? The supposition that knowledge is a Corinthian catchword (cf. 1 Cor 8:1) is a plausible but not entirely satisfying explanation. The only setting where knowledge is treated in an unambiguously polemical sense is in the discussion of idol meat in Chapter 8. Paul's insistence on the futility of knowledge without love (13:2) is matched by an equal insistence on the futility of faith without love (13:2). In virtually every other context, *gnōsis* is commended, exhorted, defended, and praised.<sup>73</sup> A more convincing explanation is that Paul recognizes that although the Corinthians have in certain ways a vibrant faith (as manifested particularly in their exercise of spiritual gifts), their knowledge of God remains at a shallow and superficial level. Their characteristic weakness is not that of seeking justification by works apart from faith

<sup>70</sup> Balthasar, *Glory*, I, 227.

<sup>71</sup> The notion of *gnōsis* as the perfection of *pistis* was developed by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata*, ET. *Miscellanies*, ANF, II, 7, 55, 5; 3, 41, 1) and Origen (*Commentaria in Evangelium Joannis*, ET. *Commentary on John*, ANF, X, 32, 20–21), following earlier Fathers. See Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, M.P. Ryan (tr.) (New York: Deslee, 1963), 211–36. For these thinkers in the Alexandrian school, Christian maturity entails moving beyond a purely external relationship with the doctrines of faith, received on authority, to an interior actualization of these mysteries so that they unfold before one's inner 'vision'. Knowledge never outgrows faith but rather fulfills it: 'There is no knowledge without faith, and there is no faith without knowledge' (Clement, *Stromata*, 5, 1, 3). See Balthasar, *Glory*, I, 137–138.

<sup>72</sup> This is the case despite the numerical priority of the vocabulary of knowledge (depending on how the words are counted), because terms for knowledge are more often used in an ordinary, non-theological sense than terms for faith.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 1:5; 12:8; 14:6; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:6; 6:6; 8:7; 10:5; 11:6. In 1 Corinthians 13 the limitations of *gnōsis* are noted but not in a polemical tone: although '*gnōsis* passes away' (13:8), in the end 'I shall fully know (*epignōsomai*)' (13:12). Outside the Corinthian correspondence, *gnōsis* appears in a polemical context in Romans 2:20, where self-righteous Jews are chided for thinking they 'have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth', and 1 Tim 6:20, where the young pastor is urged to avoid 'what is falsely called knowledge.' All other instances are unequivocally positive: Rom 11:33; 15:14; Phil 3:8; Col 2:3 and Eph 3:19.

(as is implied, for instance, of the Galatian and Roman Christians). Rather, it is a failure to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ's death to sin and communion with God, due to their self-satisfied complacency.

Perhaps the most obscure of Paul's claims on the relationship of knowledge and faith are the eschatological statements mentioned above, that in the end knowledge 'will pass away' whereas faith 'remains' along with hope and love (1 Cor 13:8, 13).<sup>74</sup> In what sense does faith remain, and how does this square with his distinction between 'faith' as characteristic of the present life and 'sight' as characteristic of the life to come (2 Cor 5:7)? This dilemma is resolved by understanding faith in Paul's terms as the trust and surrender appropriate to personal knowledge. Although such trust is a manifest requirement of discipleship on earth with all its trials and obscurities, it is not necessarily precluded even by the direct vision of heaven. A further question concerns what kind of 'knowledge' is to vanish away. Is Paul referring merely to the charismatic gift of 12:8 and 14:6,<sup>75</sup> or to earthly knowledge in general? His ensuing comments indicate that although he began with a reference to the spiritual gifts, he has moved to a more encompassing consideration. Our present knowledge, though not invalid, is 'partial' or 'imperfect' (vv. 9 and 12), and will in the end give way to 'full knowledge' (*epignōsis*, v. 12).<sup>76</sup> Such a transformation involves the obliteration not of the element of faith, but of the incompleteness and imperfection of earthly knowledge. What we know now through the Spirit's interior revelation will be consummated in a personal knowing as perfect as God's knowledge of us.

### Conclusion

This study has challenged the common assumption that knowledge is a relatively insignificant theme in Pauline theology. A close look at the data has, in fact, led to the opposite conclusion – that for Paul, knowledge of God is an immensely important dimension of salvation and of the Christian life. For Paul, to know God is to respond to his disclosure within the world of the inmost divine mystery through the person and life of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has an essential role in this process, as the hermeneutical key enabling the human mind to apprehend the depths of divine love revealed in the crucifixion of Jesus. Such knowledge is received only through revelation by the Spirit and thus can be termed a *revelatory knowledge*. Through it God's plan of salvation is no longer just a historical fact or doctrinal truth but something one knows consciously and participates in. The believer experiences the efficacy of the cross freeing him from sin, becomes aware of the presence of

<sup>74</sup> The repeated use of the verb *katargeō* (vv. 8, 10, 11) associates knowledge with the structures of 'this age' which have been doomed to inevitable destruction by Christ's victory on the cross (cf. 1:28; 2:6; 6:13; 13:8, 10f; 15:24, 26).

<sup>75</sup> As Fee, for instance, contends in *First Corinthians*, 642–43.

<sup>76</sup> As Gooch has shown in his penetrating study of the passage, Paul describes the incompleteness of the knowledge in three ways, each of which helps to clarify his meaning: it is 'childish', indirect ('in a mirror'), and 'puzzling' (*Partial Knowledge*, 145–54).

Christ within him, and is brought into a living communion with the triune God, in transcendent fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. This knowledge has immediate ethical consequences, since genuine knowledge of God leads to a transformed life (cf. 2 Cor 3:18). It is attended by the power to serve, to repent, to forgive, to love, to edify the body, and to live the new life in the Spirit in all its ramifications, as detailed throughout Paul's letters. Knowledge of God is, so to speak, the flower, of which a communal life of mutual love and unity is the fruit.

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## Part II

### Theological and Philosophical Reflections

Sometimes a book, like this one, fulfils a need that is so clear and obvious one wonders why it has not already been done. But it has not. In all the fine work in epistemology done by contemporary Christian philosophers, there has been little attention paid to what the Bible itself says about epistemological questions, and biblical scholars themselves have barely scratched the surface in these matters. This book gives us a series of essays by biblical scholars who are experts in their own fields while being conversant with contemporary work in epistemology by philosophers and theologians. The questions raised are not always the ones western philosophers since the Enlightenment have raised, and that is all to the good. Let us hope that this book will be the start of a profound conversation between biblical scholars, theologians, and philosophers about knowledge and belief. It is a provocative and worthy beginning, one that points us not merely to important New Testament themes found in Paul, John, and Luke-Acts, but helps us see what the Old Testament has to contribute to an understanding of knowledge.'

**C. Stephen Evans**, University Professor of Philosophy and Humanities, Baylor University, USA

'If it seems unlikely that the Bible offers anything so intellectually refined as an epistemology, this book gives ample evidence to the contrary. Sensitive to both the diversity of the biblical literature and the unity of the canon, these essays show how the interest of the biblical writers in questions about knowledge – above all, naturally, the knowledge of God – is at once pervasive, complex, and coherent. Here biblical scholarship makes a needed and important contribution to closing the gaps, damaging for all, between biblical studies, theology, and philosophy.'

**Bruce D. Marshall**, Professor of Historical Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, USA

'These essays show how the Bible gives understanding to those who read it in faith. The book examines the new meaning that wisdom, knowledge, information, and belief take on when they occur in response to the Word of God, whether in the Old or the New Testament, whether spoken by the Psalmist or the Prophet, by the Evangelist or St. Paul. It shows that God's revelation of himself can be received only by those who are "attentive" under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The epistemology it discusses is not sceptical, distrustful, or anxious but contemplative. The book is a superb expression of both faith and reason.'

**Robert S. Sokolowski**, The Elizabeth Breckenridge Caldwell Professor of Philosophy, Catholic University of America, USA

Robin Parry and Mary Healy are to be commended for providing a welcome, and long overdue, biblical voice to scholarly debates about the nature of Christian belief. In *The Bible and Epistemology* epistemic issues such as the roles played by faith, reason, empirical experience and the Holy Spirit in forming and justifying Christian belief are examined in terms of how they function within specific biblical texts themselves. What emerges is a timely collection of critical essays from a number of top-notch biblical scholars and Christian thinkers from Protestant and Roman Catholic positions that push the debate about the Bible and epistemology back to the text of Scripture, reminding us first to listen to what it is has to say about issues of belief and faith.'

**Myron B. Penner**, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Prairie Bible College, Canada

## The Bible and Epistemology

### Biblical Soundings on the Knowledge of God

Mary Healy and Robin Parry

