

possible infinity of data. Van Til construes that vast arena of data as all created factuality, and it owes its coherence and meaning to the plan of God. Each datum is comprehensively qualified by that plan. That means that each datum has final and determinate meaning only as semantically integrated with all other data. Thus, in principle, partial (or local) knowledge entails exhaustive knowledge of the whole. Finite human minds, of course, are incapable of grasping the whole. What is a human to do? Van Til's solution: anchor oneself to the Creator and Arranger of all factuality by a suitable act of presupposing.

But here, I repeat, there is confusion in thinking that such presupposing can have any sort of *epistemological* efficacy. What is needed is a *cognitive* link, not a merely speculative *assumptive* link, between human minds and external data. Presupposing, as such, is inherently incapable of supplying such a (cognitive) link. Van Til's "link" between minds and data comes to no more than his own dogmatic assurance (cloaked in plenty of pious but uncashed metaphor) in the midst of an epistemological darkness of his own making. Metaphysical flashlights cast no illumination here, and presupposing in the midst of this darkness has no tendency to create the all-important cognitive access. Our situation, alas, is that we are epistemically isolated from God and his creation, fecklessly whistling in the dark; for dubbing one's believing "analogical" is merely to record a determination that one's believing has a certain metaphysical *status*. Such a dubbing can have nothing to do with the evidential integrity of one's believing, nothing to do with the degree to which that believing is actually *confirmed*. Whistling in the dark, moreover, remains whistling in the dark no matter how philosophically fancy the tune.

Consider now a few real world epistemic tasks that illustrate the complete irrelevance of Van Til's presupposing—i.e., of Van Til's *method*—for the real life *acquisition* of knowledge. (An "epistemic task" is simply the task of *learning some fact* by appropriate investigation.)

### (1) Locating the Children for Dinner

You have prepared a meal for your family and must **now** round them up to eat. Your husband is in the living room with the **paper**, but where are the children? You are reasonably certain that they are either in the backyard with some neighbor children or just across the **street** playing