

available in 1543. What might he say? He might first stress that the line-of-sight data of positional astronomy are nicely accommodated on the heliocentric model. You already know that. But then, if he is astute, he might go on to show that the Copernican system is genuinely a *system* whereas Ptolemaic astronomy is not. The latter is a collection of ad hoc mathematical recipes for solving problems of heavenly movement one by one (add epicycles as needed). He would invite you to see the heavens—the wandering planetary lights among the stationary stellar background—as a *single* system within which location at any point could be calculated! That ought to get your attention.

Finally, what our Copernican will *not* do is attempt a defense of his model by a metaphysical characterization of knowledge in general. The Van Tillian might nevertheless say, "So what? I grant that my presuppositionalism offers no epistemological advantage for discrete epistemic tasks like locating children and deciding between Ptolemaic and Copernican astronomy; but God's existence is quite a different matter."

But is it? The foregoing admission, were a Van Tillian to make it, strikes me as more of a concession than Van Til's theory can bear. The reason is that Van Til's theory is a *general theory of knowledge*. The problem can be made clear, I think, by our final case—a case where Van Til's leading principles ought to find their most obvious application. By means of a general principle from Isaiah, we consider Moses at the burning bush.

(3) Isaiah and Moses on Identifying the Living God

After some four hundred years of slavery in Egypt, God is about to provide deliverance for the Israelites through the leadership of Moses. After gaining Moses's attention by means of a burning bush that is not consumed by the flames engulfing it, Moses is instructed to declare to the Israelites that the God of their fathers—Yahweh, by name—has sent him to lead them out of Egypt. (I scant the details, but the full account is in Exodus 3:1-4:17.)

Moses feels very inadequate to his task and one of his fears is that he will not be believed. Suppose that neither the elders of Israel nor the Egyptian ruler take him seriously. His message is that the God of