

*knowledge*. Ironically, perhaps, so do the presuppositionalists of Charlie's persuasion because the core of their apologetics is constituted by a speculative contrast between knowing *above* heaven and knowing *under* heaven. At best, that way leads to a purely vertical characterization of the *status* of our knowledge *if* we should happen to have any. At worst, it may be just speculative incoherence. Apologetics, however, is nothing if not about actual epistemic *access* to items of knowledge, and that's a horizontal *under heaven* affair.

"'Under heaven' is of course a metaphor, so let's consider it in a more fine grained and practical way. Presuppositionalism is not wrong for its bare act of presupposing things, but rather for its gratuitous transcendental flight over all that is epistemologically interesting and important about the human *acquisition* of knowledge *within* the domain 'under heaven.' 'Under heaven' is the created continuum we are designed to be knowers in. 'Heaven' and 'above heaven', I suggest, are designations of an omniscient perspective to which our slim but genuine access is the 'things revealed' of Deuteronomy 29:29. This being so, the most profitable initial assumption we can make in epistemology and apologetics is *that we have been epistemically suited by God to the environment we have been created to inhabit*. Within and for this environment we have been created *competent to learn*. How like philosophy to find this baffling!

"The 'horizontal,' with the help of the 'revealed things,' is the arena in which our epistemic competence is designed to work. That competence is remarkably functional *beneath* the ceiling, which is to say that it works finitely within the constraints and lawlike dynamics of creation. Within this created state-of-affairs, *and precisely because of its lawlike structure*, we can and do know partially without knowing exhaustively."

*[I will add the following note for the more philosophically inclined. Central to Van Til's concerns is the relation of partial knowledge to comprehensive knowledge. In the short space I can give the problem I can do little more than acknowledge this as a historical concern and then, with a brief consideration, come down, contra Van Til, on the side of the integrity of partial knowledge in the absence of its humanly comprehended nesting within ideally exhaustive knowledge. The little bit I have to say is this.*