

*The British Idealists, during the last quarter of the 19th century expounded the doctrine that all would-be assertions of fact are holistically qualified as to their meanings and truth-values by the entirety of reality. Van Til's 'theology of knowledge' is profoundly influenced by this notion. To sum it up in a catch-phrase: **Partial knowledge entails exhaustive knowledge.** Only God (the Idealists referred to the **Absolute**) knows the whole, so only God actually knows the parts—the particulars within the whole. Obviously humans cannot comprehend an infinitely qualifying context by which to be assured of their grasp of particulars. That would take omniscience. The problem of merely partial knowledge is remedied, on Van Til's reckoning, when we suitably presuppose the God and Creator of all particulars.*

*The point we are now enabled to see is of the utmost importance. What does it **mean** to "suitably presuppose?" How does Van Tillian presupposing **help** with the problem of partial knowledge within an infinitely qualifying context? Should Van Til even have been impressed with the problem of knowledge **as posed by the British Idealists?** I don't think so, for accepting the problem of infinity as a problem of **an infinity of predication** locks one into the quest for a **rationalistic solution.** That is because predications, unlike planets orbiting the sun or human anatomy, are **rational and mental** particulars—governed by intentionality and logic. Predications, moreover, are rationalistic because the **sort of system** in which they have a role to play is a **complete rational system of predication** (on Van Til's reckoning), a complete propositional system to which human access may be only marginal. If the system is God's omniscient understanding of all things, and if the object of presupposing is to affirm only those propositions that "replicate" **without duplicating** God's understanding, then there is no hope of knowing anything. What Van Til needs, then, is an **epistemological connection** (a cognitive link) between the finite human perceiver and the infinite **system of predication** known by God alone. The problem is that presupposing is not the **sort of mind activity** that could supply the essential cognitive link. In all empirical learning about the world, productive presupposing **itself requires, and so***