

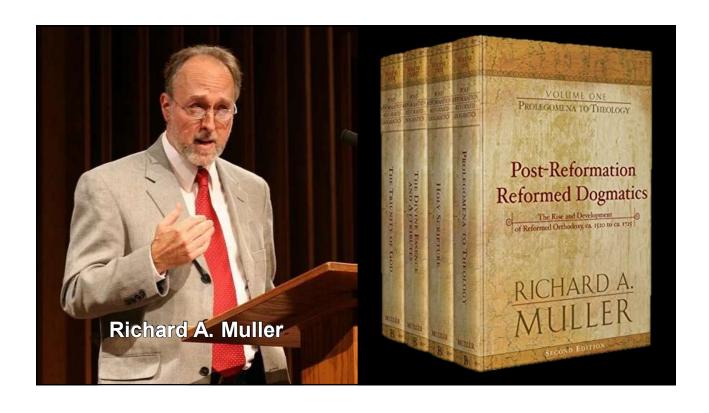
A Strong Stance on the Authority of Scripture

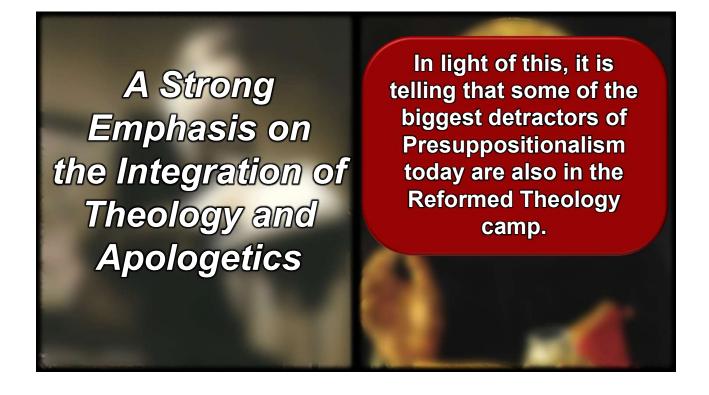
A Strong View of the Inerrancy of Scripture

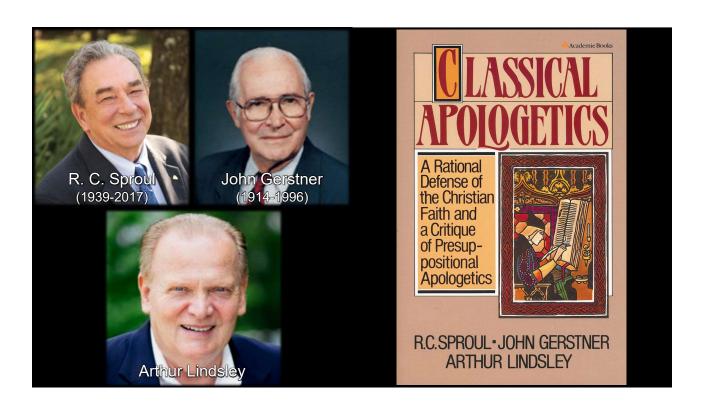
A Strong Emphasis on the Integration of Theology and Apologetics

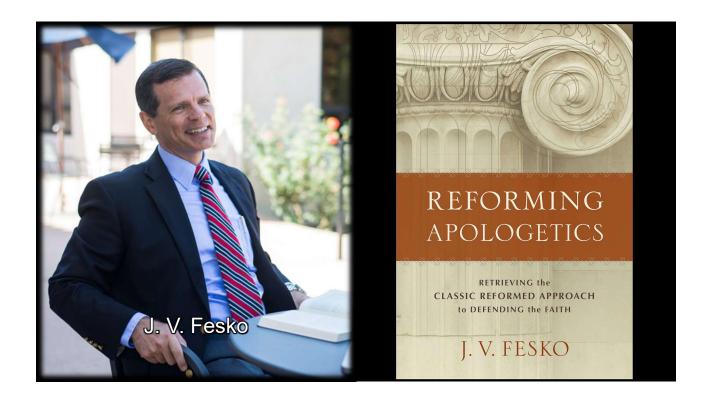
A Strong
Emphasis on
the Integration of
Theology and
Apologetics

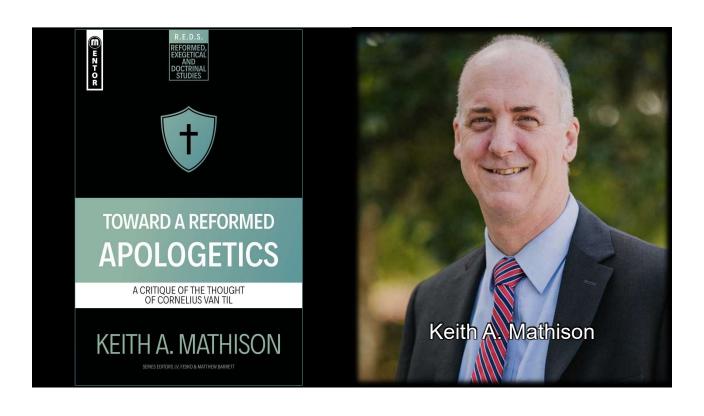
The role the
Presuppositionalist's
Reformed Theology (i.e.,
Calvinism, as they
understand it) plays in
formulating and
defending their
Presuppositional
Apologetics cannot be
overemphasized.

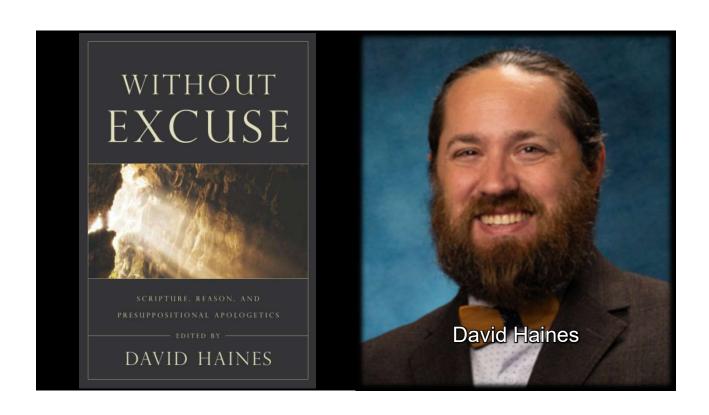












Travis James Campbell (PhD, Westminster Theological Seminary)

Winfried Corduan (PhD, Rice University)

John DePoe (PhD, University of Iowa)

John R. Gilhooly (PhD, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

Nathan Greeley (PhD, Claremont Graduate University)

David Haines (PhD, Université Laval)

Kurt Jaros (PhD in progress, University of Aberdeen)

M. Dan Kemp (PhD in progress, Baylor University)

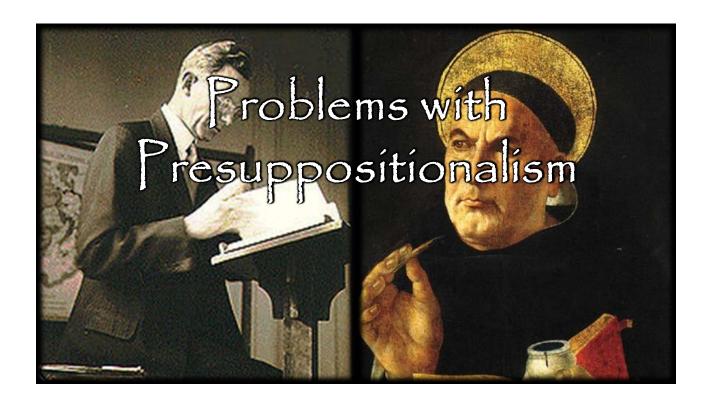
Bernard James Mauser (PhD, Marquette University)

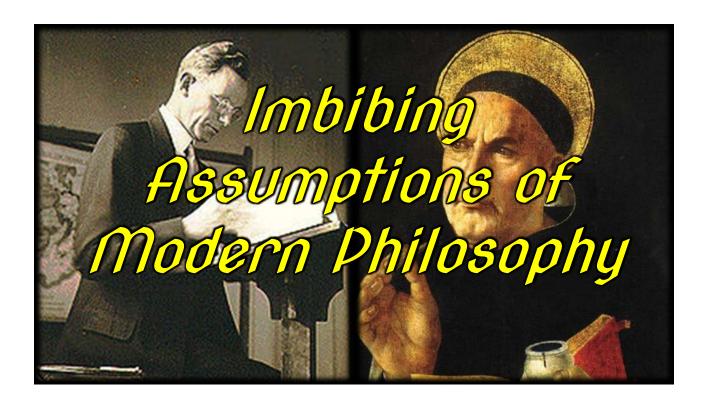
Joseph Minich (PhD, The University of Texas at Dallas)

Andrew Payne (PhD in progress, Southern Evangelical Seminary)

Thomas Schultz (PhD ABD, Saint Louis University)

Manfred Svensson (PhD, University of Munich)





Much of modern philosophy frames human knowing along the categories of:

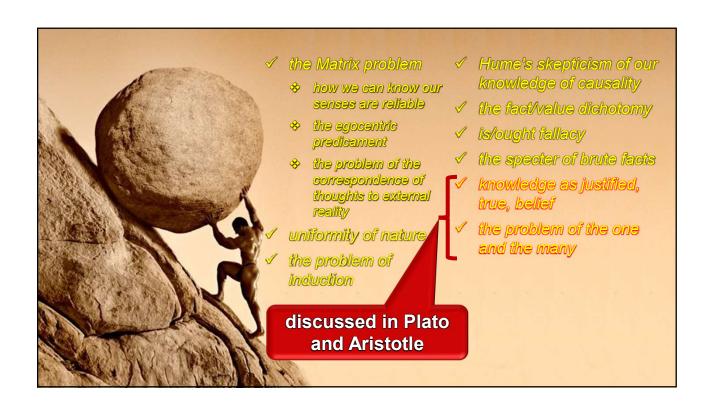
*"qualities" or "properties" (Locke), or

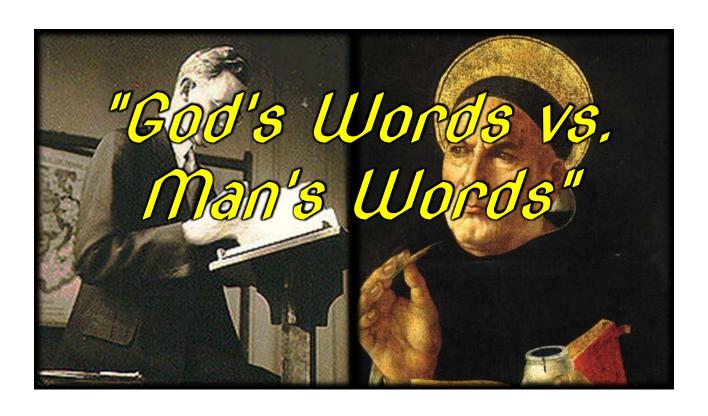
*"ideas" and "perceiving" (Berkeley), or

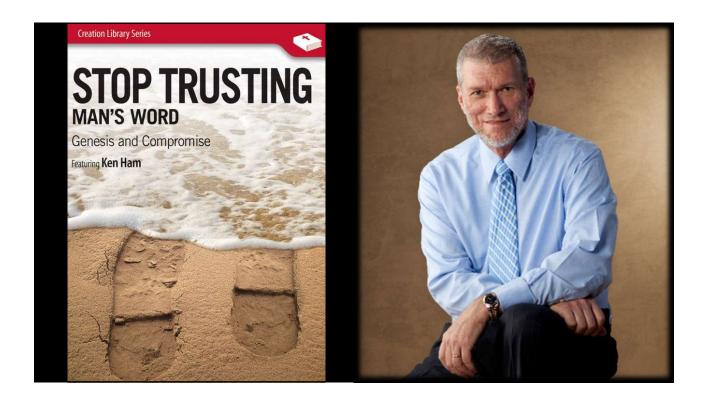
*"sensations" or "phenomena" (Hume).

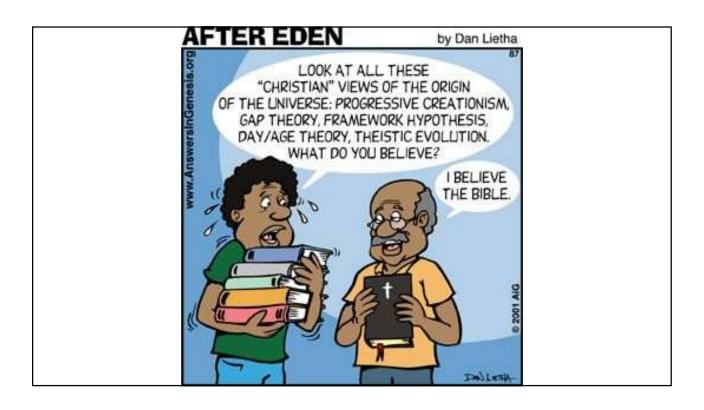
Presuppositionalists offer their apologetic system as the only solution to various philosophical problems.

By offering their Presuppositionalism as the "answer" to these problems, they show their unwitting commitment to the assumptions of the very philosophies that created the problems in the first place.

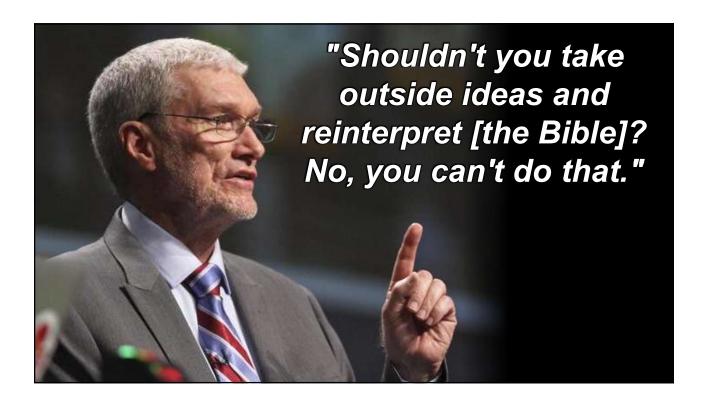


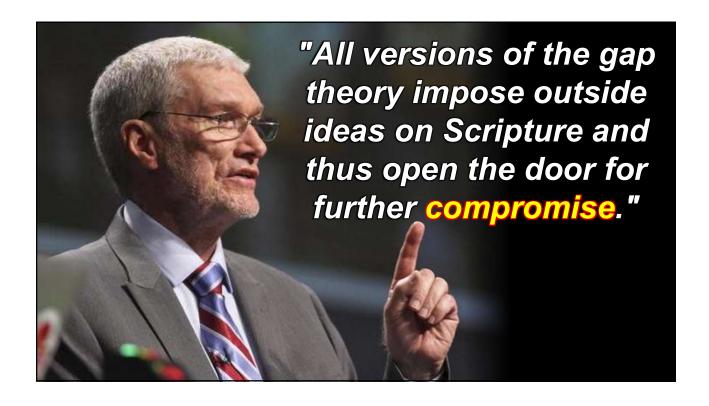




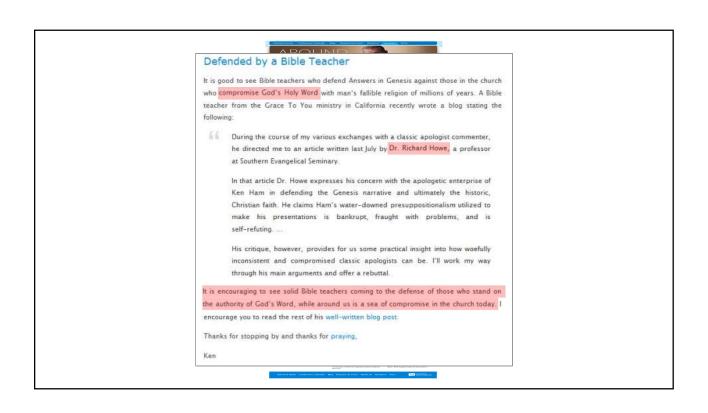


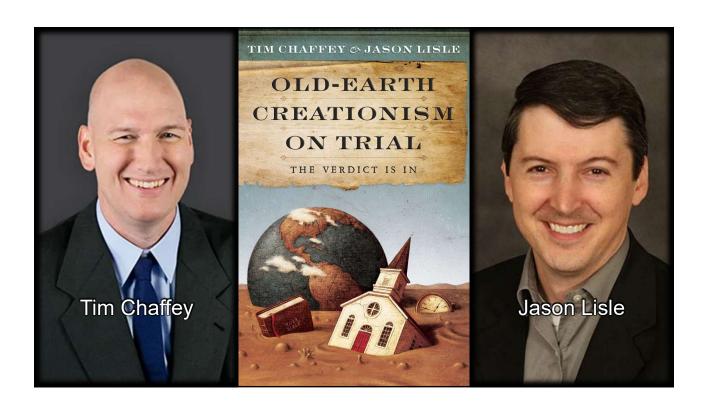


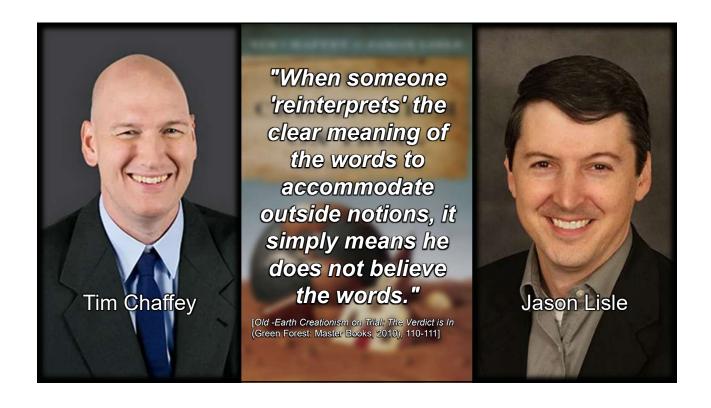


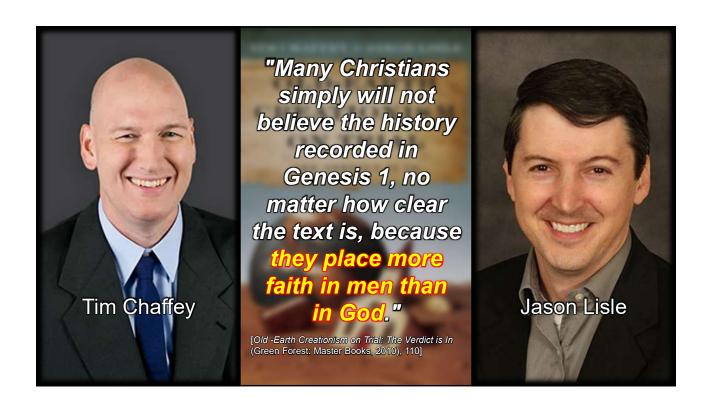


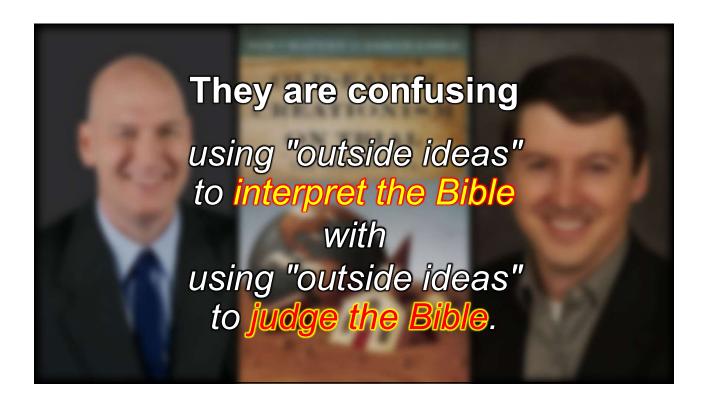








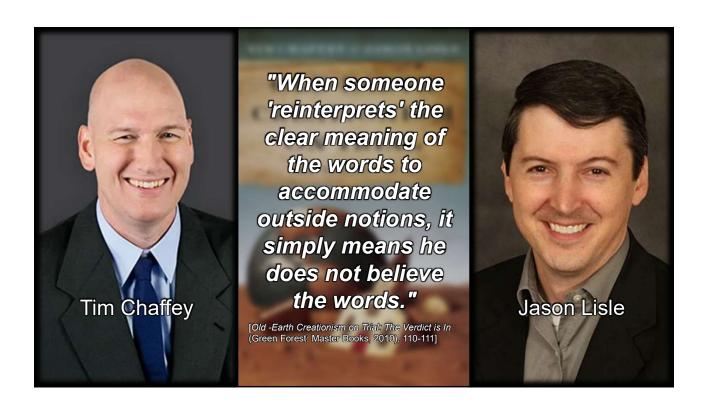


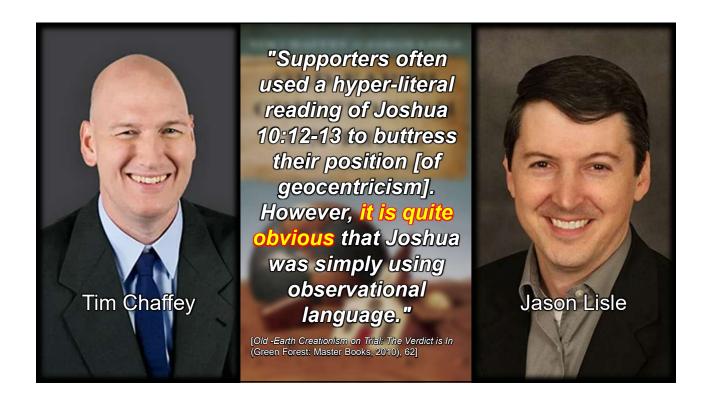




"Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.' So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies."

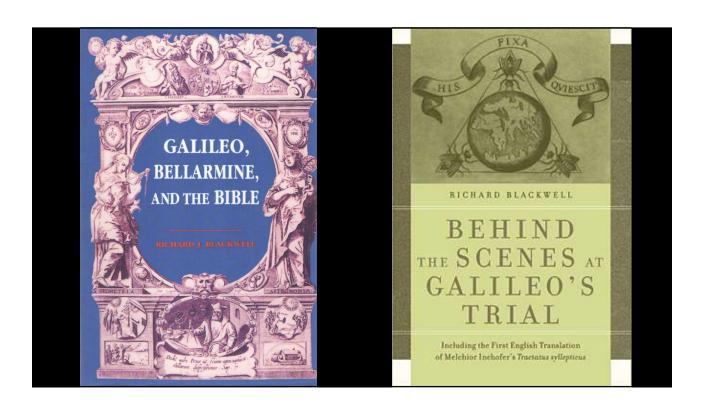
Joshua 10:12-13 NKJV

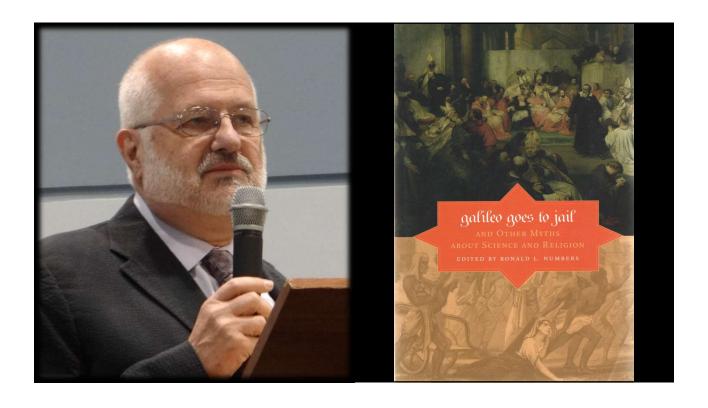












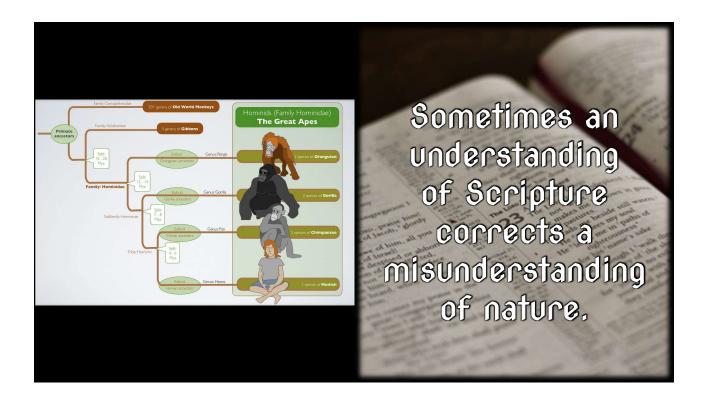
Phenomenological Language a.k.a., Language of Appearance

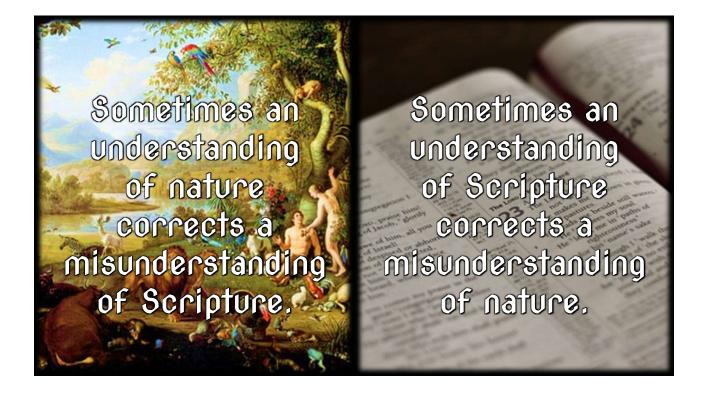


Can you see how astronomy corrected our misunderstanding of Joshua 10:12-13?

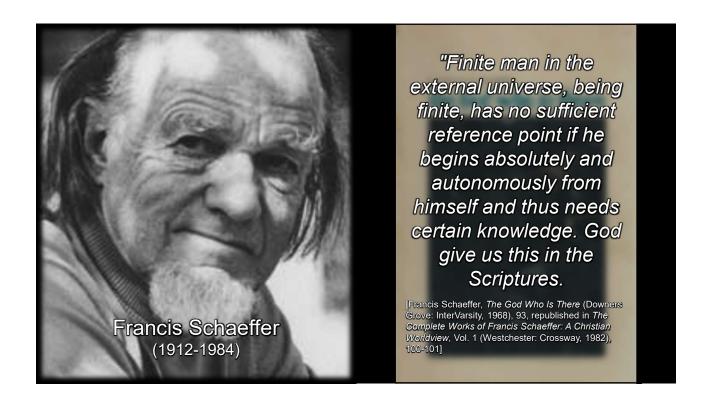
Might there be questions and issues the debate of which involves the discipline of

PHILOSOPHY?









Schaeffer illicitly assumes that human finitude precludes certain knowledge.

"Finite man in the external universe, being finite, has no sufficient reference point if he begins absolutely and autonomously from himself and thus needs certain knowledge. God give us this in the Scriptures.

[Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1968), 93, republished in *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, Vol. 1 (Westchester: Crossway, 1982), 100-101]

Schaeffer commits the fallacy of false dilemma between:

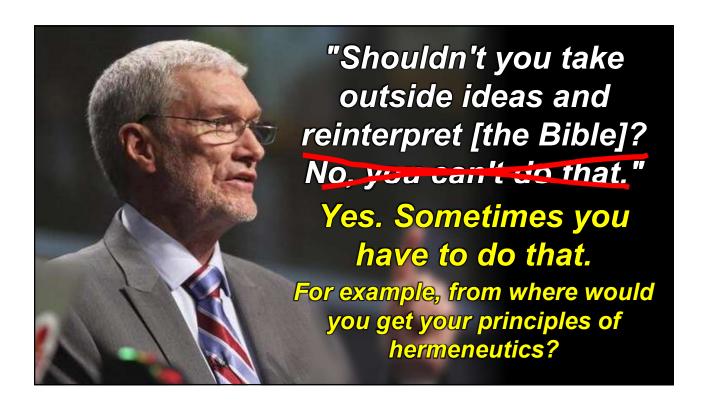
finite man beginning absolutely and autonomously from himself

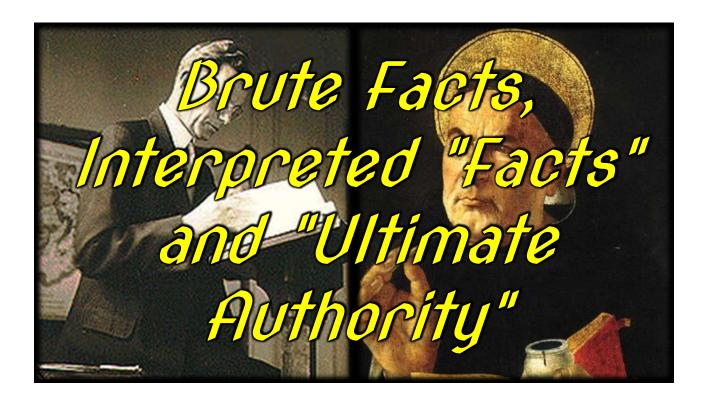
or

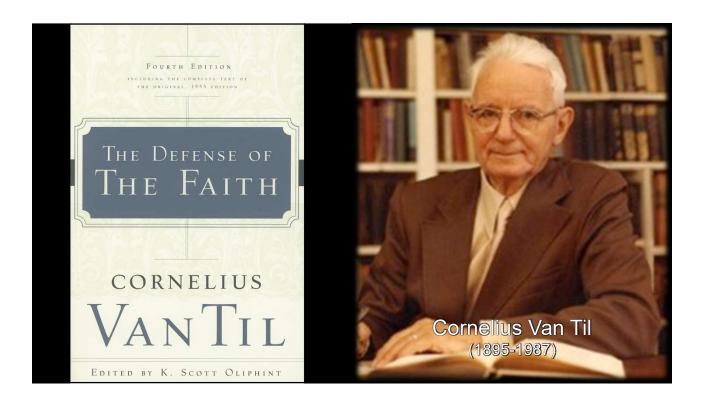
the Scriptures.

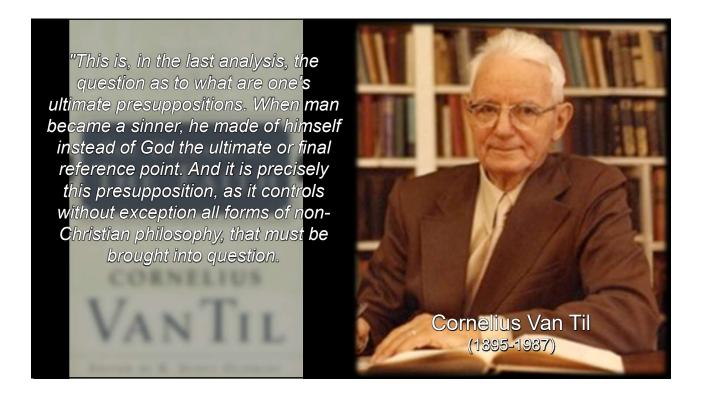
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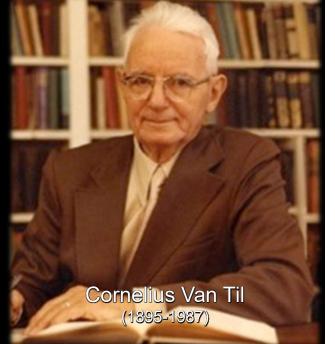
"If this presupposition is left unquestioned in any field, all the facts and arguments presented to the unbeliever will be made over by him according to his pattern. The sinner has cemented colored glasses to his eyes which he cannot remove. And all is yellow to the jaundiced eye. There can be no intelligible reasoning unless those who reason together understand what they mean by their words.

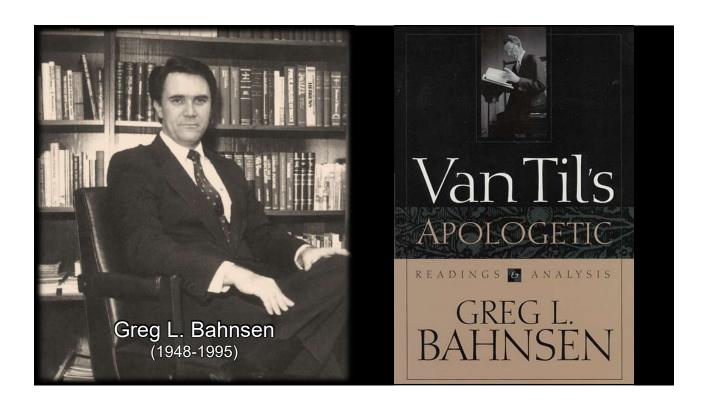
Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987)

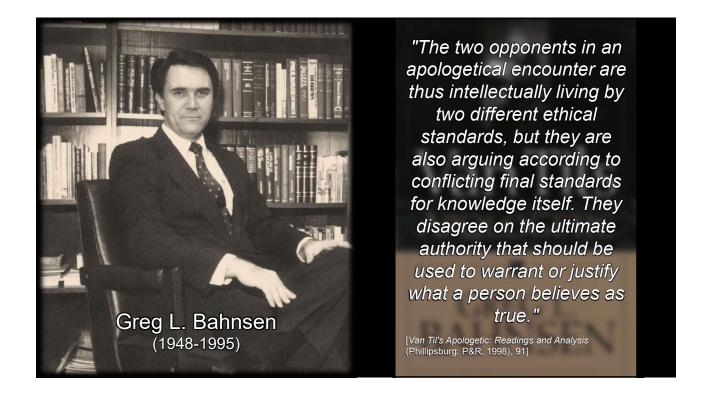
[Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, 4^{th} ed., edited by K. Scott Oliphint (P&R Publishing, 2008), 101]

"In not challenging this basic presupposition with respect to himself as the final reference point in predication, the natural man many accept the 'theistic proofs' as fully valid. He may construct such proofs. he has constructed such proofs. But the God whose existence he proves to himself in this way is always a god who is something other than the self-containted ontological Trinity of Scripture.

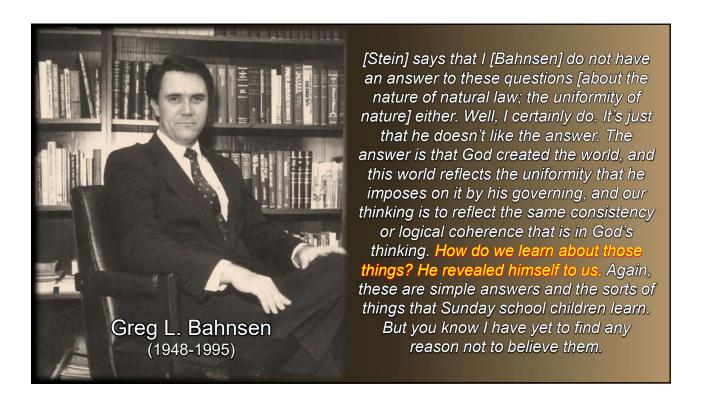
[Cornelius Van Til. The Defense of the Faith, 4th ed., edited by K. Scott Oliphint (P&R Publishing, 2008), 101]

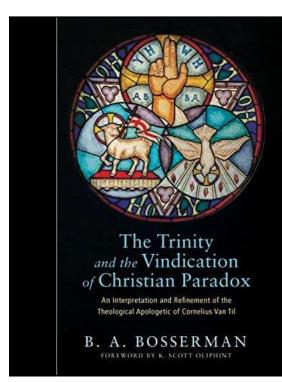














"Van Til held that nothing about reality can be known truly, except as it is understood as an expression of God's eternal plan for the cosmos, and unless it is appreciated as accessible to the human mind through the mediation of the Triune God, the very archetype of harmony in difference."

[The Trinity and the Vindication of Christian

Paradox: An Interpretation and Refinement of the Theological Apologetic of Cornelius Van Til

(Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), xviii]



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I submit that these expressions are code for 'presupposed': hence "Presuppositionalism."

[The Trinity and the Vindication of Christian Paradox: An Interpretation and Refinement of the Theological Apologetic of Cornelius Van Til (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), xviii]

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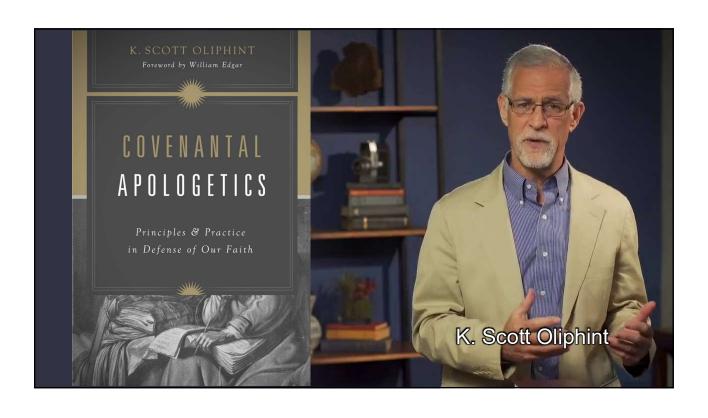
[The Trinity and the Vindication of Christian Paradox: An Interpretation and Refinement of the Theological Apologetic of Cornelius Van Til (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), xviii] This is a reference to the "the problem of the one and the many."

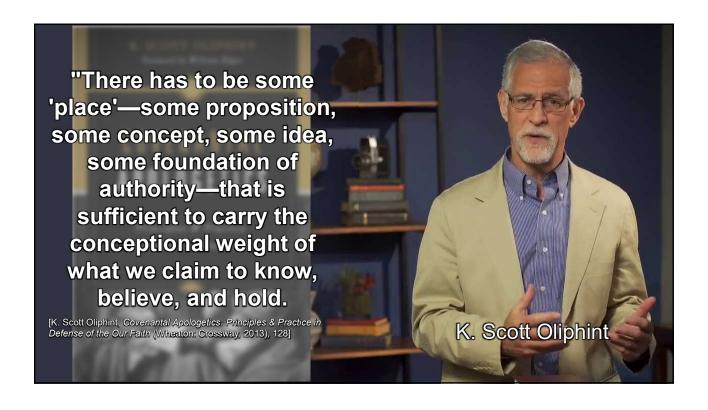
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[The Trinity and the Vindication of Christian Paradox: An Interpretation and Refinement of the Theological Apologetic of Cornelius Van Til (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), xviii] This is a reference to the "the problem of the one and the many."

Presuppositionalists maintain that only their Presuppositionalism can "solve" the problem.

I have yet to find any
Presuppositionalist who can
tell me what they find lacking
in Aristotle's solution.





"There has to be some 'place'—some proposition, some concept, some idea, some foundation of authority—that is sufficient to carry the conceptional weight of what we claim to know, believe, and hold.

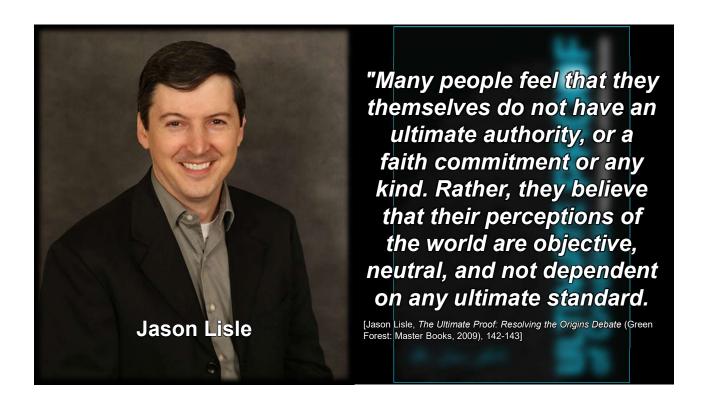
[K. Scott Oliphint, Covenantal Apologetics: Principles & Practice in Defense of the Our Faith (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 128]

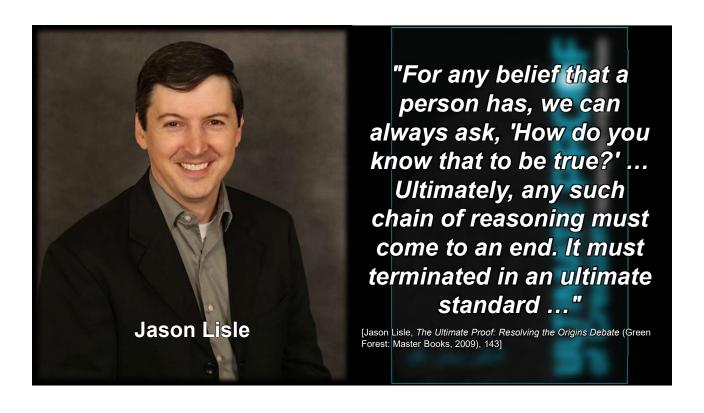
Notice how that the options Oliphint suggests are all categories of cognition (epistemology).

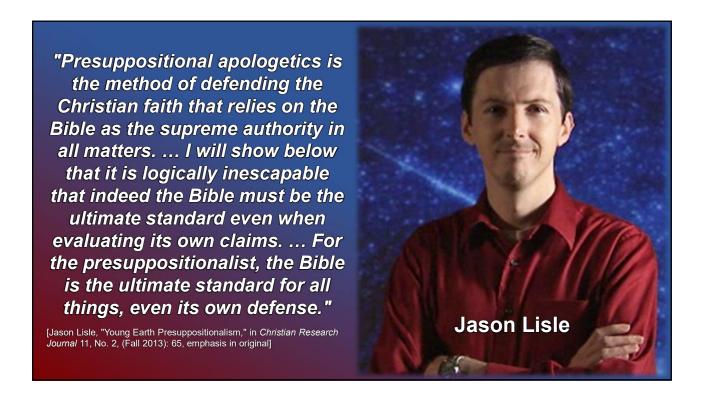
Nowhere does Oliphint seek to ground knowledge in being.











"Presuppositional apologetics is the method of defending the Christian faith that relies on the Bible as the supreme authority in all matters. ... I will show below that it is logically inescapable that indeed the Bible must be the ultimate standard even when evaluating its own claims. ... For the presuppositionalist, the Bible is the ultimate standard for all things, even its own defense."

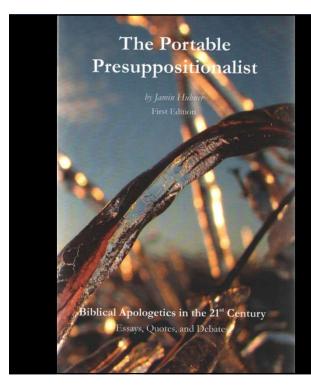
Surely Lisle would not insist that only by consulting the Bible could one decide whether moving one control or another would better insure a safe landing of the airplane.

[Jason Lisle, "Young Earth Presuppositionalism," in *Christian Research Journal* 11, No. 2, (Fall 2013): 65, emphasis in original]

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[Jason Lisle, "Young Earth Presuppositionalism," in *Christian Research Journal* 11, No. 2, (Fall 2013): 65, emphasis in original]

If not, then how is it true that the Bible is the supreme authority IN ALL MATTERS?





"The Christian's justification for induction lies entirely within the Christian's presuppositions. Specifically, the Christian presupposes the infallibility and authority of the entire Bible, wherein lies the answer to this problem. If the One who wrote it can make no mistakes, then it is the nature of God that we presuppose which provides the needed justification."

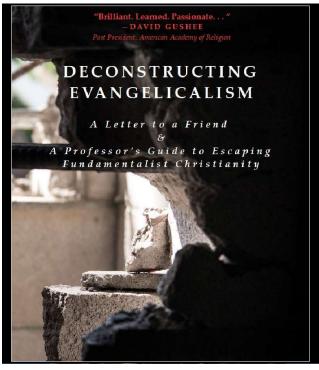
[Jamin Hubner, The Portable Presuppositionalist: Biblical Apologetics in the 21st Century (n.c., RealApologetics.Org Scholarship), 132]

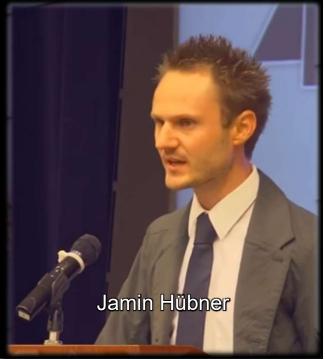


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Here is an example where the Presuppositionalist concedes a philosophical "problem" that arises entirely out of modern philosophy (e.g., Hume's skepticism about induction) and then seeks to show how only Presuppositionalism's appeal to God as the ultimate authority can "solve" the "problem."





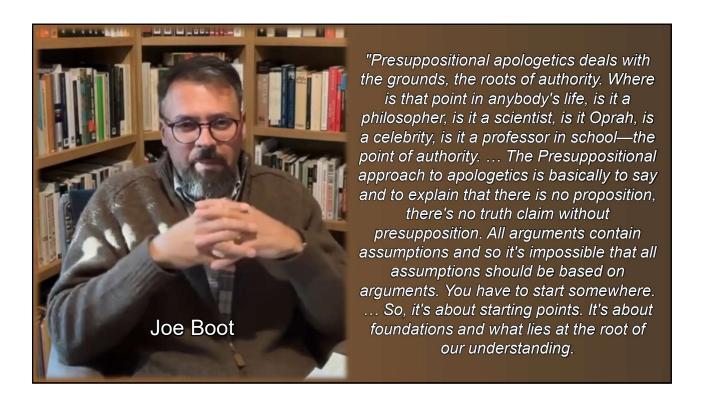




Rev. Dr. Joseph Boot (M.A., Ph.D.) is a Christian thinker and cultural apologist, Founder and President of the Ezra Institute for Contemporary Christianity. He is adjunct instructor for culture and apologetics at Bryan College, Tennessee. He also served as founding pastor of Westminster Chapel, Toronto for 14 years.

Joseph did his undergraduate studies in Theology (Birmingham Christian College, U.K), earned his Master's degree in Mission Theology with a dissertation focused on Christian cultural philosophy and apologetics (University of Manchester U.K), and holds a PhD in Christian Intellectual Thought (Whitefield Theological Seminary, Florida, USA).





I could not agree more that "you have to start somewhere." The questions then will be:

- (1) Where, if anywhere, do we actually start? and (if it's a separate question)
- (2) Where, if anywhere, ought we to start?
- It would seem that we would not be able to ask (much less answer) the second question without already granting the answer to the first.

"Presuppositional apologetics deals with the grounds, the roots of authority. Where is that point in anybody's life, is it a philosopher, is it a scientist, is it Oprah, is a celebrity, is it a professor in school—the point of authority. ... The Presuppositional approach to apologetics is basically to say and to explain that there is no proposition, there's no truth claim without presupposition. All arguments contain assumptions and so it's impossible that all assumptions should be based on arguments. You have to start somewhere. ... So, it's about starting points. It's about foundations and what lies at the root of our understanding.

As we will see in short order. a fundamental mistake that Presuppositionalism makes is that it fails to correctly identify exactly what it is that constitutes that starting point. our understanding.

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"The Presuppositional apologist begins, not with saying 'Well, what are the brute facts or what's the brute data out there' and then trying to add those bits of data together to add up to some sort of indubitable, undoubtable starting point. We recognize from revelation that God is, God has spoken and that is our supra-rational, that is our faith, our religious starting point. So we proceed from the starting point of God's revelation of Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ."

The "specter of 'brute facts' "
was mentioned (but not
explained) at the beginning of
our critique of
Presuppositionalism.

The expression first appeared in G. E. M. Anscombe, "On Brute Facts," *Analysis* 18, no. 3 (Jan. 1958) and underwent several alterations in its usage in the following decades.

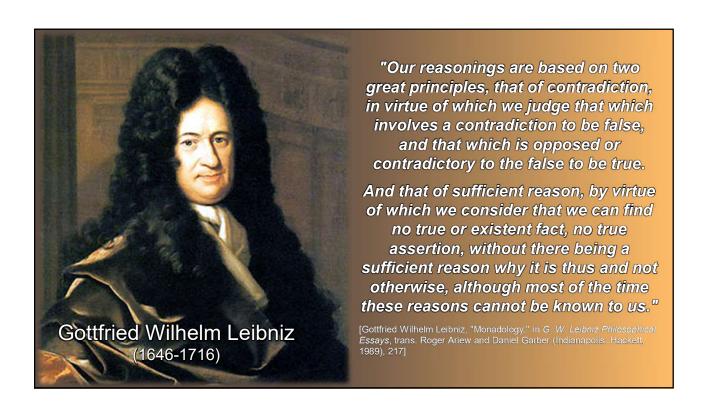
Some use the term to refer to things that are stipulated such as why a certain country drives on the right side of the road.

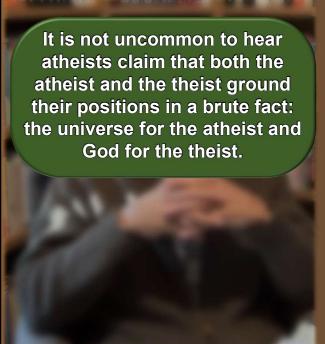
Since there is no state of reality that would cause or be the reason for driving on the right side of the road beyond it just being conventional, it could be called "brute."

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More often, today the expression is used to refer to a fact (or facts) for which there is no, and perhaps could be no, reason or explanation.

It took on this meaning in response to Leibniz and other philosophers who defended the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which maintains that every fact has a cause or a reason for why it is a fact in the way it is rather that not or why it is a fact at all.





"The Presuppositional apologist begins, not with saying 'Well, what are the brute facts or what's the brute data out there' and then trying to add those bits of data together to add up to some sort of indubitable, undoubtable starting point. We recognize from revelation that God is, God has spoken and that is our supra-rational, that is our faith, our religious starting point. So we proceed from the starting point of God's revelation of Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ."

While some theists might grant this characterization and say that God is the ultimate explanation or reason for everything else while God himself has no explanation or reason for his own existence, the Thomist will deny this and argue that God definitely has a reason or explanation for His existence.

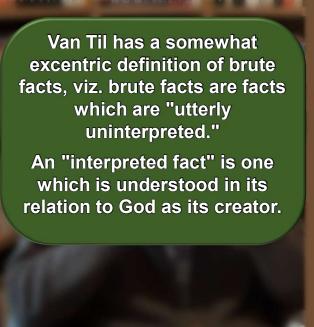
For the Thomist (at least, for the Existential Thomist in the tradition of Etienne Gilson, Joseph Owens, Norman Geisler, et al.) God is *ispum* esse subsistens: subsisting existence itself.

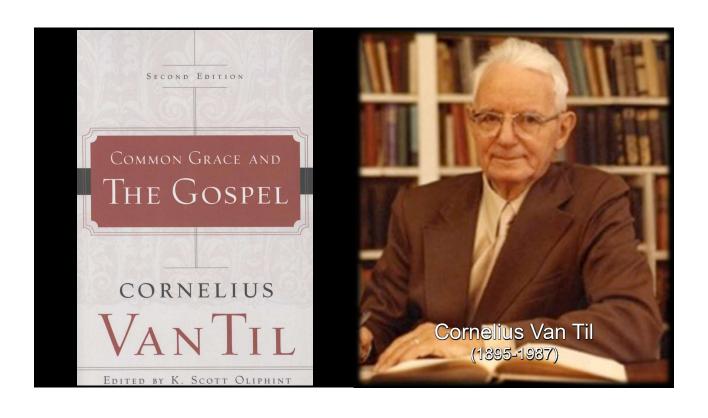
If anything exists, then there must be something whose very nature is to exist.

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Without any details here, a being whose nature is to exist will have all the superlative attributes of Classical Theism.

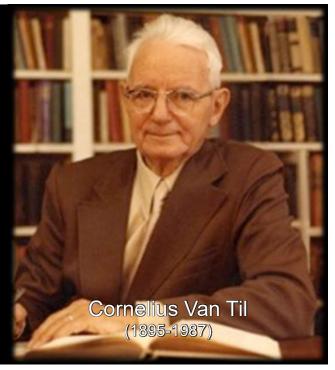
Such a being has the reason or explanation for Himself in Himself.





"The idea of brute, that is utterly uninterpreted, 'fact' is the presupposition to the finding of any fact of scientific standing. A 'fact' does not become a fact, according to the modern scientist's assumptions, till it has been make a fact by the ultimate definitory power of the mind of man. ... According to any consistently Christian position, God, and God only, has ultimate definitory power. God's description or plan of the fact makes the fact what it is."

[Cornelius Van Til, Common Grace and the Gospel, 2nd ed., edited by K. Scott Oliphint (P&R Publishing, 2015), 8-9]



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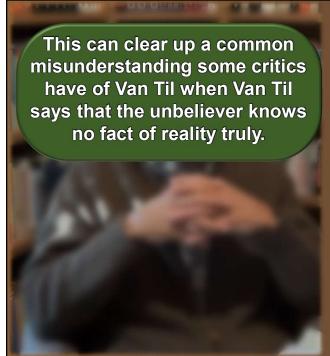
Noumenal distinction might see the parallel here.

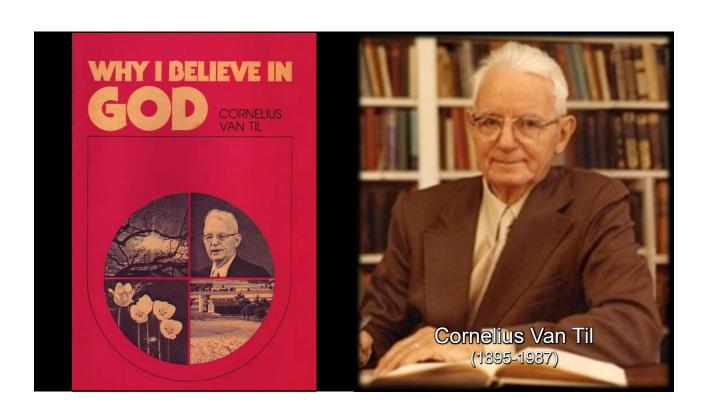
Again, without any details here,

one who is familiar with

Immanuel Kant's epistemology

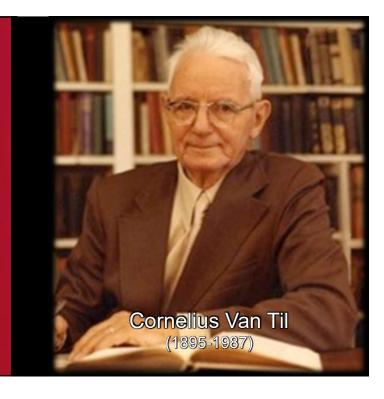
regarding the Phenomenal /





"But we really do not grant that you see any fact in any dimension of life truly. We really think you have colored glasses on your nose when you talk about chickens and cows, as well as when you talk about the life hereafter."

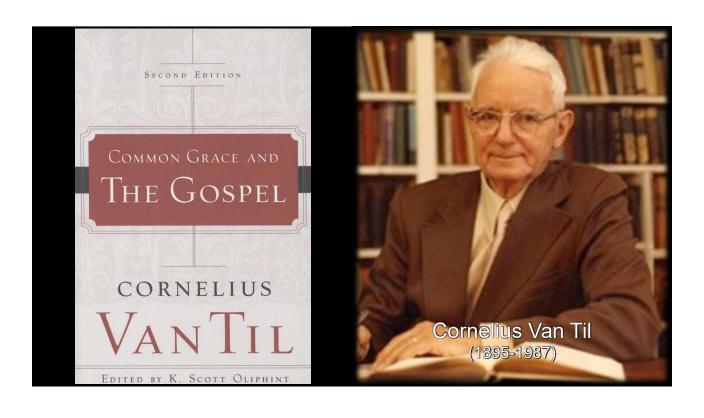
[Why I Believe in God (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, n.d.), 9]

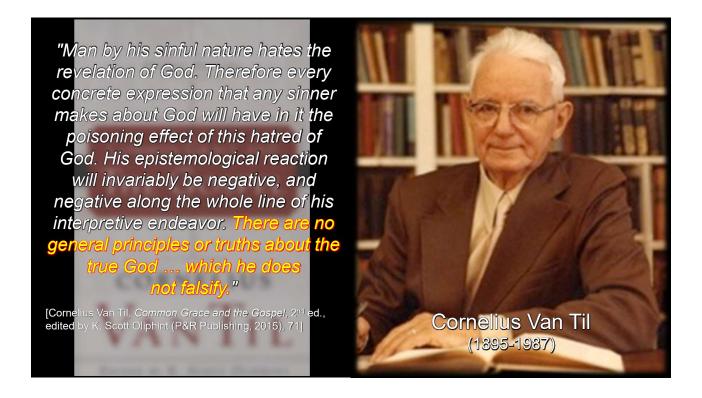


"But we really do not grant that you see any fact in any dimension of life truly. We really think you have colored glasses on your nose when you talk about chickens and cows, as well as when you talk about the life hereafter."

[Why I Believe in God (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, n.d.), 9]

The reason that the lost man fails to see "any fact in any dimension of life truly" is because his rebellion against God prevents him from seeing the relationship of that fact to God.

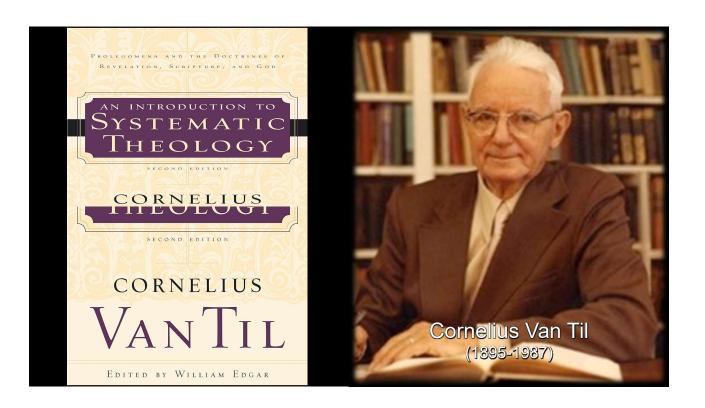




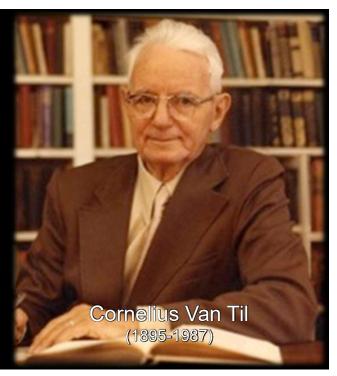
"Man by his sinful nature hates the revelation of God. Therefore every concrete expression that any sinner makes about God will have in it the poisoning effect of this hatred of God. His epistemological reaction will invariably be negative, and negative along the whole line of his interpretive endeavor. There are no general principles or truths about the true God ... which he does not falsify."

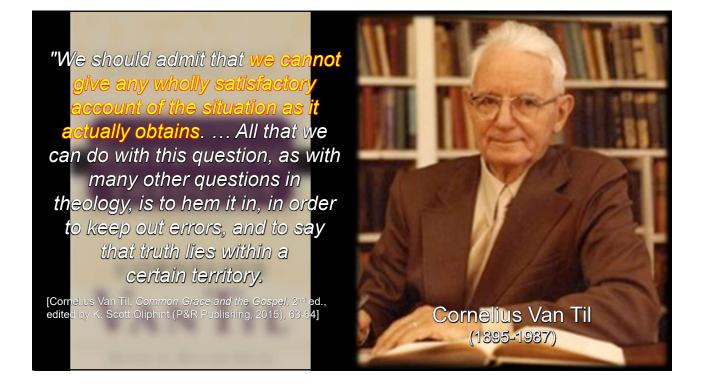
There is nonetheless a tension in Van Til's thinking in as much as he, perhaps reluctantly, acknowledges that the unbeliever has knowledge about the world.

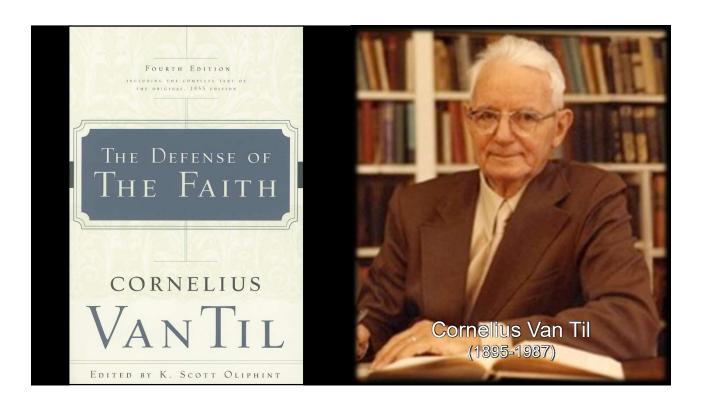
[Cornelius Van Til, Common Grace and the Gospel, 2nd ed., edited by K. Scott Oliphint (P&R Publishing, 2015), 71]



"We are well aware of the fact that non-Christians have a great deal of knowledge about this world that is true as far as it goes. That is, there is a sense in which we can and must allow for the value of knowledge of non-Christians. This has always been a difficult point. It is often the one great source of confusion on the question of faith and its relation to reason.

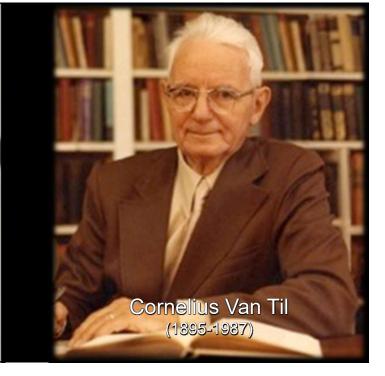






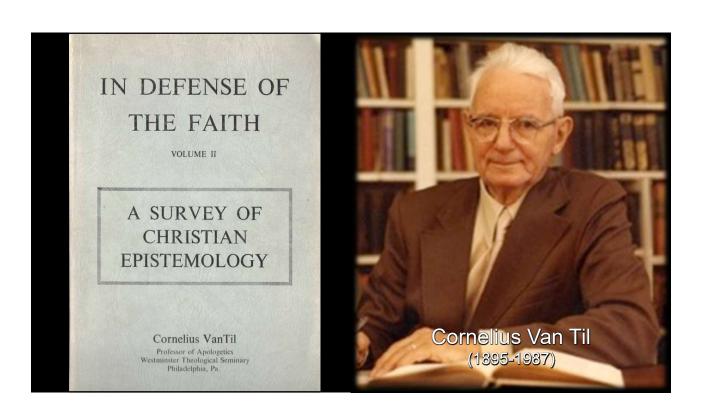
"A Reformed method of apologetics must seek to vindicate the Reformed life and world view as Christianity come to its own. ... This implies a refusal to grant that any area or aspect of reality, any fact or any law of nature or of history can be correctly interpreted except it be seen in the light of the main doctrines of Christianity."

[The Defense of the Faith (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 96]

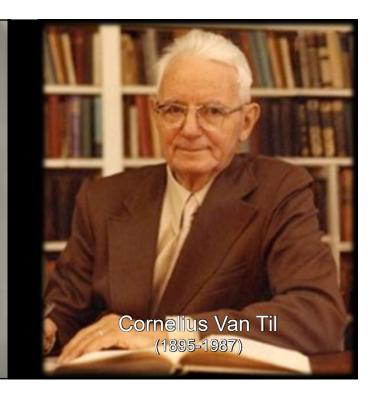


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One must ask: (1) What is it to be "correctly interpreted"? (2) Must this correct interpretation be a presupposition or can it be a conclusion?



"The question is no longer how I may obtain knowledge of some object with which I come in contact. Nor is it only the question of how I may impart that knowledge to my fellow man in general. The guestion is rather how I may impart the knowledge that I have to those who by virtue of their opposition have no true knowledge and yet think that they have." [In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology, p. 200]





What is more, Boot's characterization here that other apologetic methods are in search for an indubitable, undoubtable starting point is manifestly Cartesian philosophy (i.e., the philosophy of René Descartes).

"The Presuppositional apologist begins, not with saying 'Well, what are the brute facts or what's the brute data out there' and then trying to add those bits of data together to add up to some sort of indubitable, undoubtable starting point. We recognize from revelation that God is, God has spoken and that is our supra-rational, that is our faith, our religious starting point. So we proceed from the starting point of God's revelation of Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ."

To be sure, there are contemporary Christian philosophers who might be more or less sympathetic to Descartes' thinking.

Such thinking, however, is quite removed from the philosophical realism of Thomas Aquinas.

Thus, Boot's distinguishing
Presuppositionalism from
Cartesianism says nothing
about Presuppositionalism's
superiority over the Classical
Apologetics of those who
are Thomists.

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My point here is not, if Boot only was aware of how Aquinas's philosophy shapes certain Classical Apologetics, then he would retire his Presuppositionalism.

Rather, I am saying that if he was aware and still rejected Classical apologetics, it would be for entirely different reasons than the ones he gives here.



Nobody proves their [sic] most basic foundational assumptions with something else because the thing you proved your most basic assumption with would in fact be your most basic assumption. So, there's no proposition without presupposition. A Presuppositional apologist says 'My starting point in my reasoning, in my thinking, and in my defense of the faith is the selfattesting revelation of God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and as revealed in Scripture.' "

Note that Boot traces assumptions back to a "thing" that would itself be an assumption.

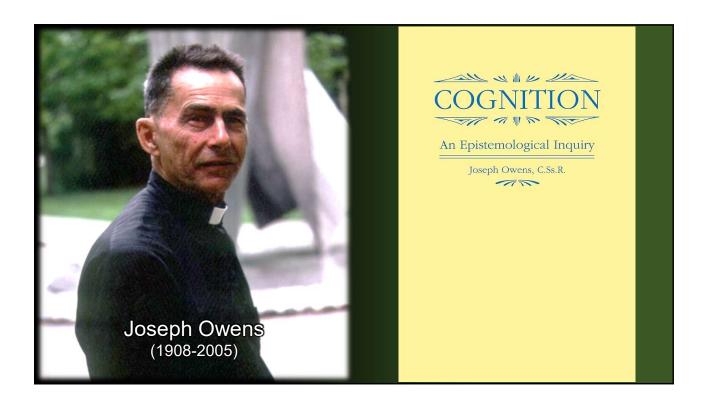
But assumptions are cognitive states of a knower and are "about" things. They are not, strictly speaking, things in and of themselves.

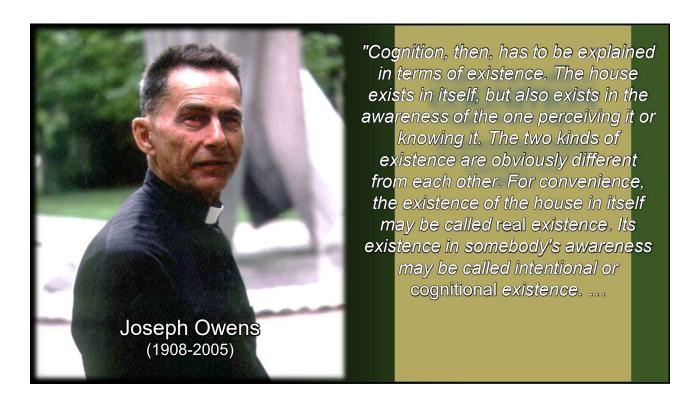
What is happening here is that the Presuppositionalist is "grounding" knowing in the categories of knowing itself rather than grounding it in being or existence.

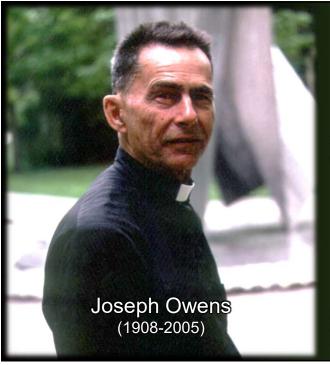
He fails to consider that what it means to know a thing has to do with the connection between what it is to BE a knower and what it is to BE a known.

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In other words, for the Classical Realist, to know is to become the known in the actuality of cognition.







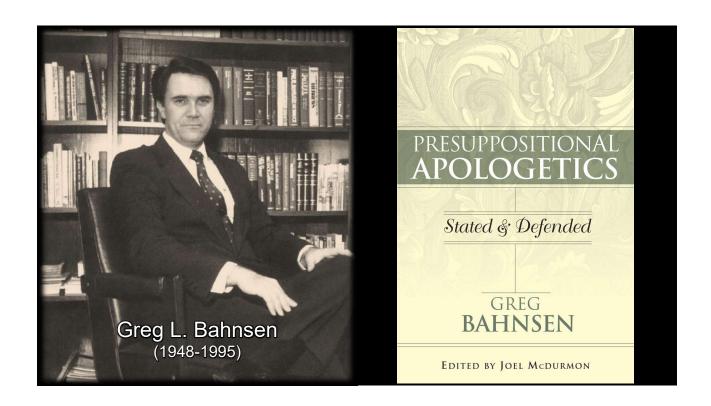
This traditional explanation of cognition as a way of existence is strange at first to those who approach it from a background of modern or postmodern philosophy. But it fits normally into an Aristotelian or Scholastic setting. Adjustment to it may take much careful thought and persevering attention. It is essential, however, for a philosophical understanding of cognition. The effort and time required for grasping it will accordingly be amply repaid."

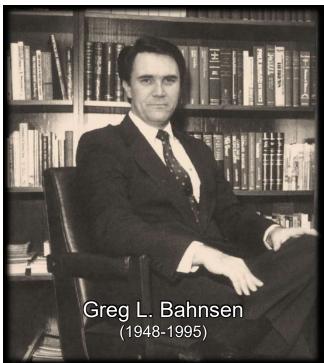
[Joseph Owens, Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992), 39, emphasis in original]



I think Boot is right here. But the question to ask is where do presuppositions come from?

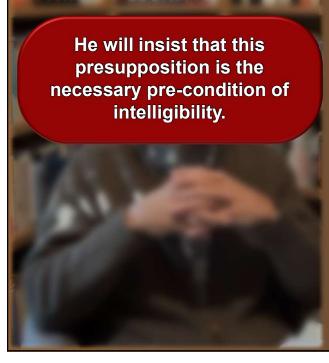
The Presuppositionalist thinks that one must choose the correct presupposition of the existence and authority of the Trinitarian God of the sixty-six books of the Protestant (Reformed) Bible.

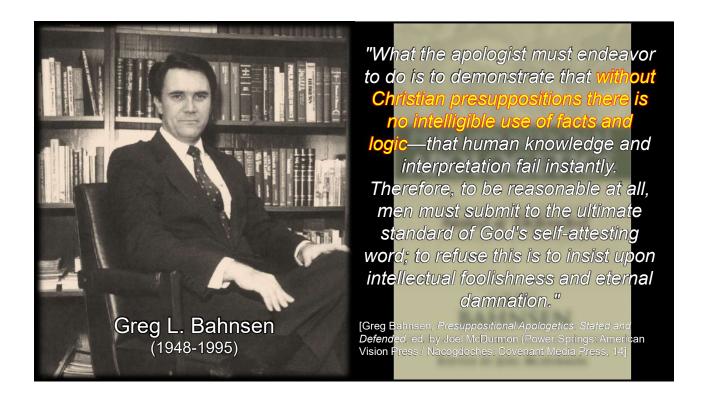




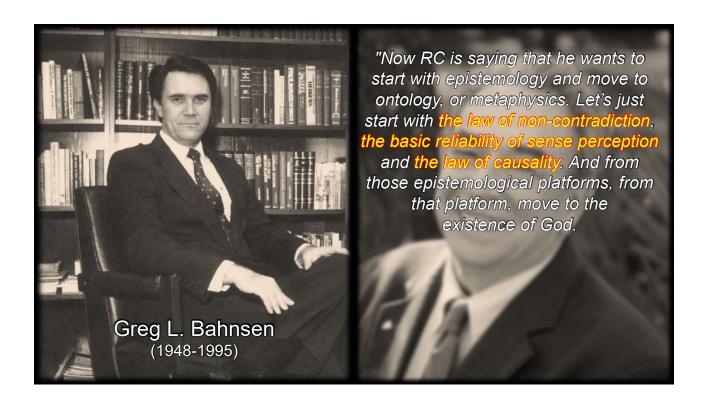
"Resting upon the authority of the living God rather than that of independent human reasoning, the apologist must presuppose the truth of Scripture and lay siege to all apostate presuppositions. This must be his method because the Word of God in the Bible has a unique epistemological status for the Christian: it requires no corroboration and carries its own evidence inherently or self-attestingly."

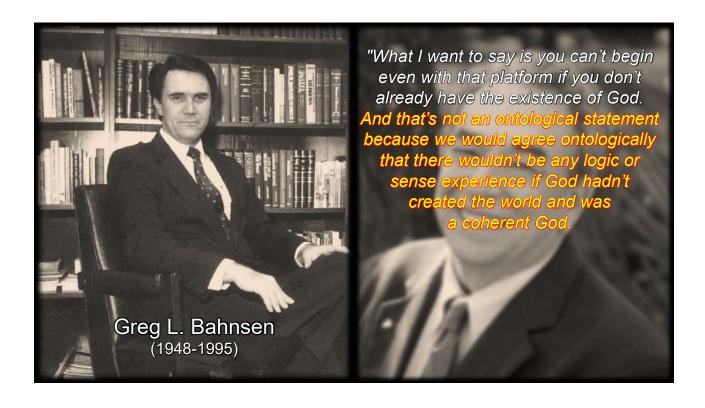
[Greg Bahnsen, Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended, ed. by Joel McDurmon (Power Springs; American Vision Press / Nacogdoches: Covenant Media Press, 4]

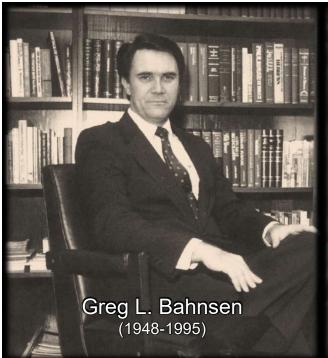




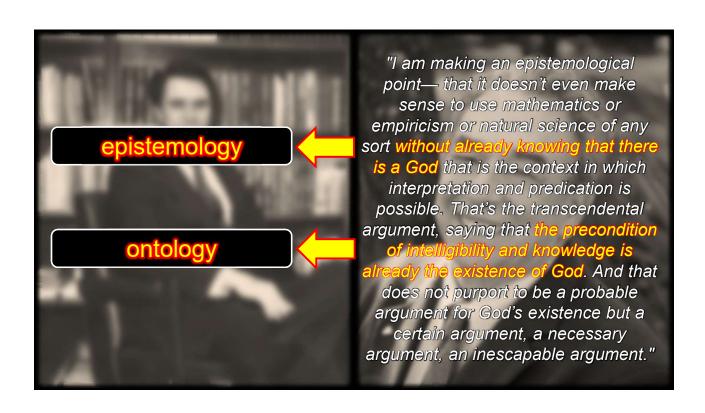








"I am making an epistemological point— that it doesn't even make sense to use mathematics or empiricism or natural science of any sort without already knowing that there is a God that is the context in which interpretation and predication is possible. That's the transcendental argument, saying that the precondition of intelligibility and knowledge is already the existence of God. And that does not purport to be a probable argument for God's existence but a certain argument, a necessary argument, an inescapable argument."

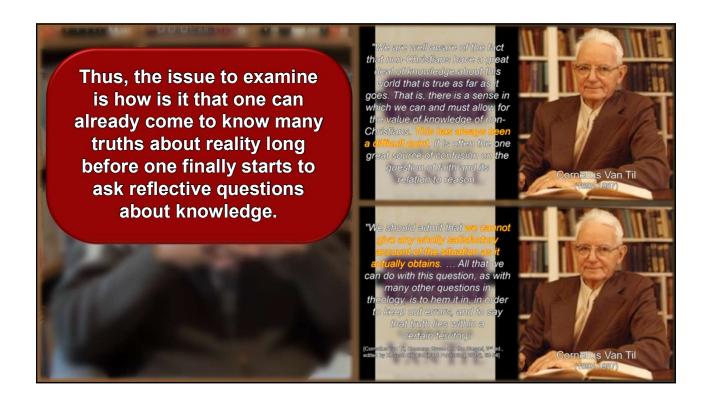


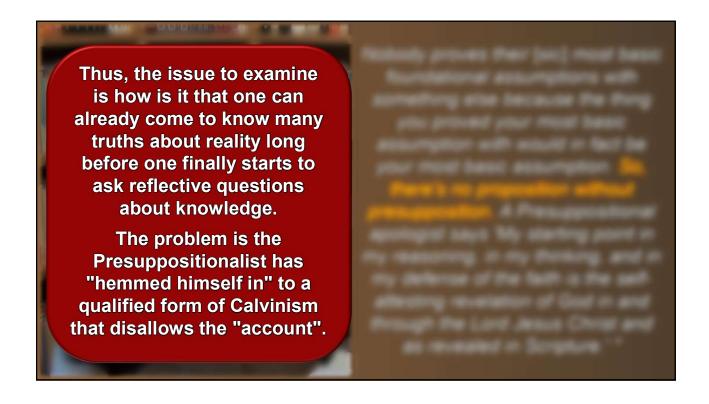
He will insist that this presupposition is the necessary pre-condition of intelligibility.

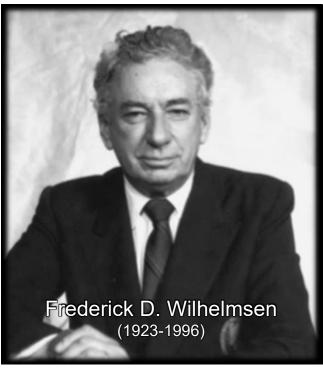
The Classical Realist will argue that one's fundamental presuppositions like, for example, the fundamental laws of thought, arise in our understanding from our encounter with the sensible world around us.

Nobody proves their [sic] most basic foundational assumptions with something else because the thing you proved your most basic assumption with would in fact be your most basic assumption. So, there's no proposition without presupposition. A Presuppositional apologist says 'My starting point in my reasoning, in my thinking, and in my defense of the faith is the selfattesting revelation of God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and as revealed in Scripture.'

I submit that long before the Presuppositionalist considered the issue of "starting points," he had already come to know many things about the world around him.







"The realist is a philosopher who does not forget that he is a man when he begins to philosophize.

As a man, if he be sane, a philosopher has not the faintest shade of a doubt that he exists in a world of things existing in independence of his cognition; even more, the very data of that knowing tell him that knowing is of being and not of knowing."

[Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, foreword to Etienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, trans. Mark A. Wauck (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 15]

Thus is the problem with Presuppositionalism. Because of the (admitted) influence of Immanuel Kant, Van Til sought to focus the issue on human knowing, and argue that God is the deliverer of such knowing.

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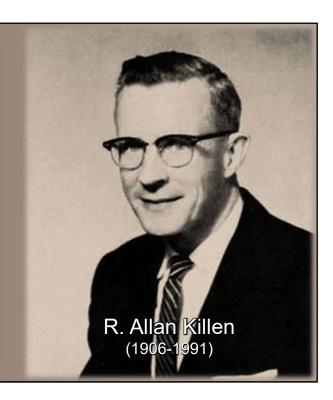
The Classical Apologist of the Thomistic Realism camp realizes that human knowing is first of all a knowing of sensible things and then argues that God is the creator of such things.

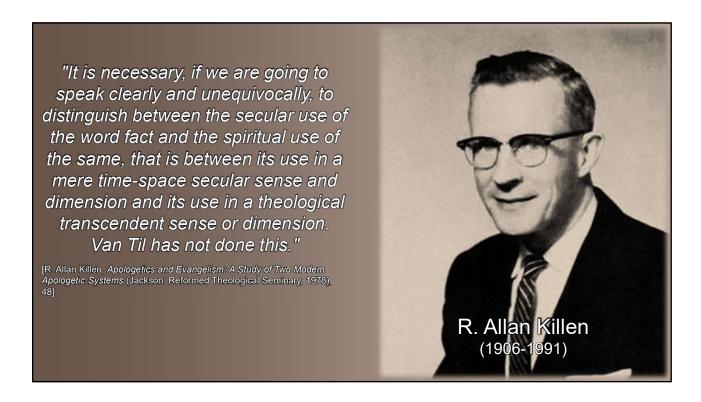
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"The heart of Van Til's argument centers around the word fact. The word has two specific meanings. It can be used to express an event in history or a phenomenon in science ... [or] to express the meaning of an event or phenomenon. For example, the historical event of the Exodus can be seen as a fact in both senses: 1) the Exodus from Egypt 2) ... the freeing of the Children of Israel from the oppression of Pharaoh by the hand of God. ...









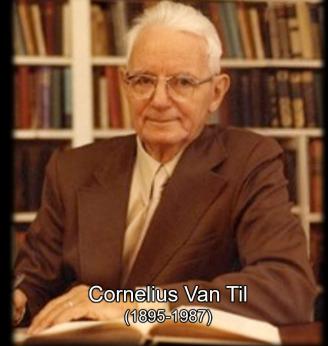
"The tendency with other forms of apologetics is to suggest to the non-believer that in our engagement we stand together in neutral territory. Not in God's creation. Not as creatures of God wholly dependent upon Him. Not in terms of a law for thought that governs both of our reasoning. But as, in a certain sense, neutral persons coming to the 'facts' of experience.



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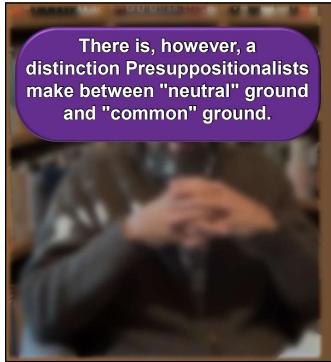
[Cornellus Van TII, Common Grace and the Gospel, 2nd ed., edited by K. Scott Oliphint (P&R Publishing, 2015), 71]



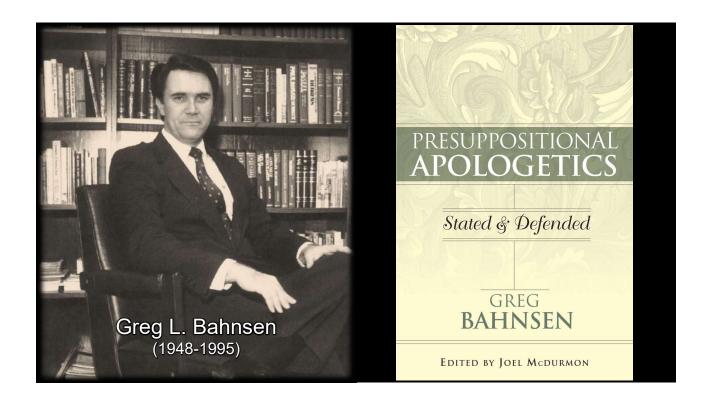
Given what we saw Van Til say earlier about the unbeliever's hatred of God and the impact that has on his knowledge of the world, it should be obvious why Presuppositionalists deny any neutral territory (ground) between the believer

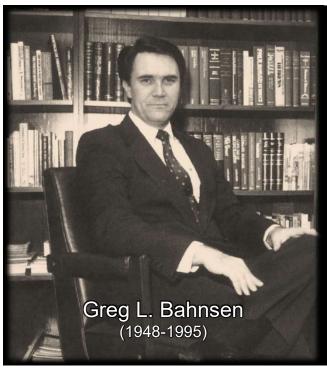
and unbeliever.

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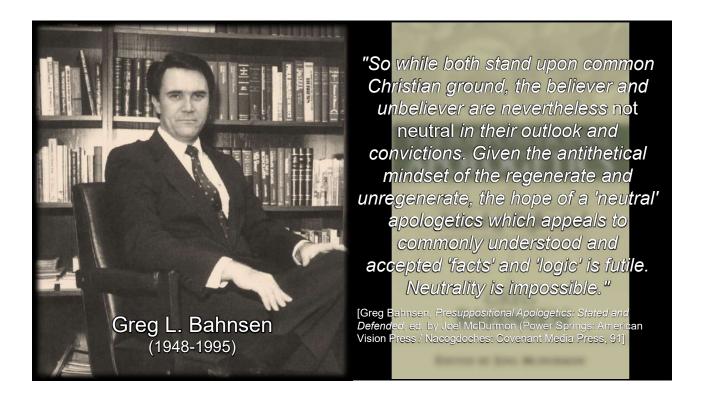


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"There is not one fact or law which is 'neutral' to the Christian and non-Christian.... While both stand on common ground, this common ground is distinctively Christian ground (for all creation is revelatory of God). But the non-Christian refuses to admit this and to build his reasoning and life upon the Word of God.



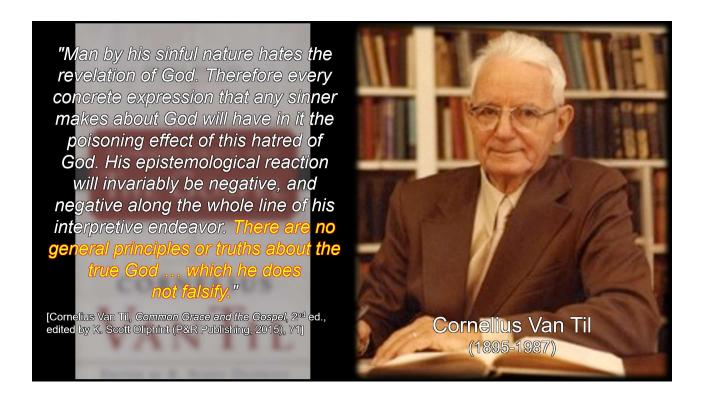


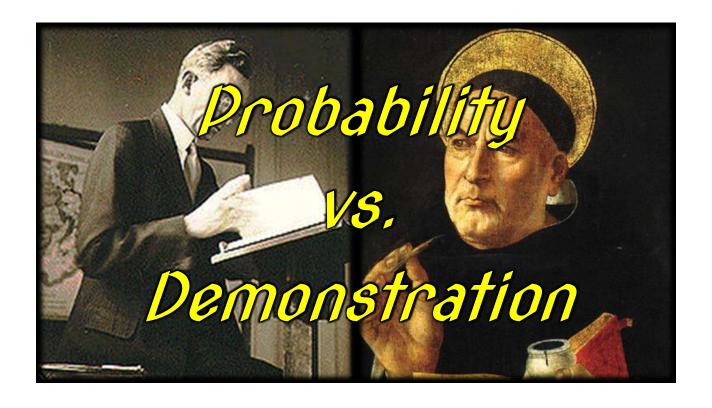
Acts 10:1-2

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.



Acts 17:22-23 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, | perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as | was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, | even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him | proclaim to you:







"And in a sense, sort of like the dot puzzle, and instead of following an order to discover the meaning, we're left actually in a position of the unbeliever which is: well these are just dots on the page. It's just brute facts, it's just brute data and I can join the dots however I like. I can invent the meaning.



The tendency, implicitly or explicitly, with classical or evidential apologetics is the notion that we're neutral, we're looking at bare facts of human experience and we're going to come to those facts and try and add them up so that we see where they lead and, in terms of the balance of probability, decide well what is the hypothesis to the most probable conclusion here; what has the balance of probability or who has the balance of probability on their side; whose position is the most plausible.

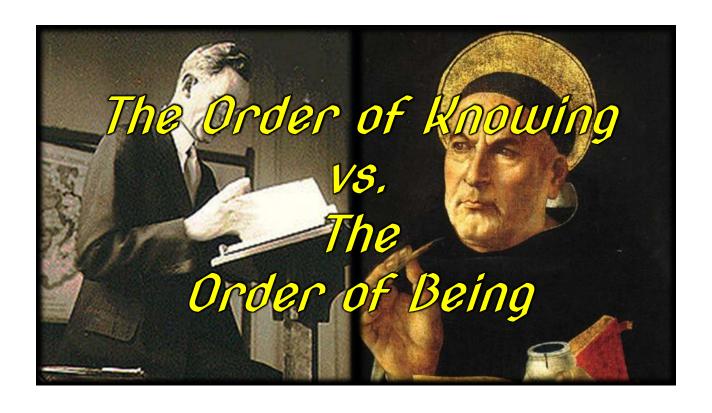


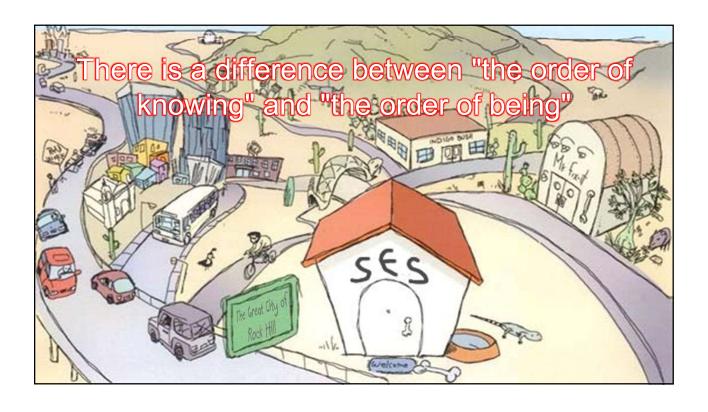
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Most Classical apologists with whom I am familiar do, indeed, argue abductively for both theism and Christianity.

But Thomists will maintain that their arguments for theism which employ the metaphysics are demonstrative, not versions of the "argument to the best explanation."

The tendency, implicitly or explicitly, with classical or evidential apologetics is the notion that we're neutral, we're looking at bare facts of human experience and we're going to come to those facts and try and add them up so that we see where they lead and, in terms of the balance of probability, decide well what is the hypothesis to the most probable conclusion here; what has the balance of probability or who has the balance of probability on their side; whose position is the most plausible.





There is a difference between "the order of knowing" and "the order of being"

The map is first in the order of knowing.

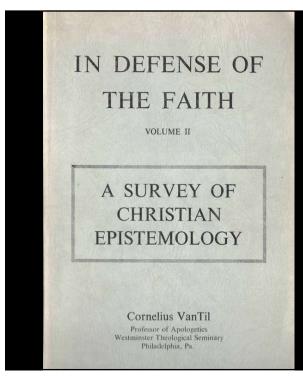
SES is first in the order of being.

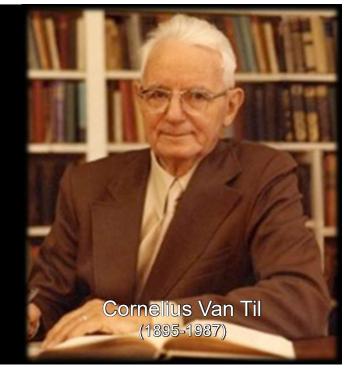
There is a difference between "the order of knowing" and "the order of being"

When it comes to the arguments for God's existence:

The creation is first in the order of knowing.

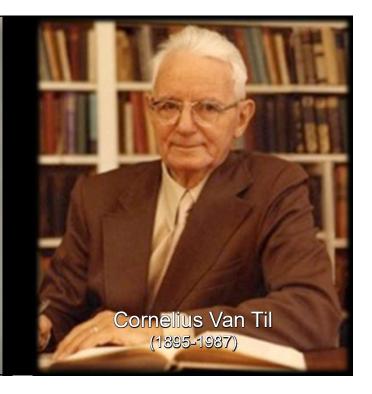
God is first in the order of being.





"We must seek to determine what presuppositions are necessary to any object of knowledge in order that it may be intelligible to us."

[In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology, p. 201]



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[In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian

Epistemology, p. 201]

Taken at face value,
this would be like
saying that we would
have to know how our
sensory faculties
operate before the
physical world could
be "intelligible to us."

"If we begin the course of spiral reasoning at any point in the finite universe, as we must because that is the approximate starting point of all reasoning, we can call the method of implication into the truth of God the transcendental method."

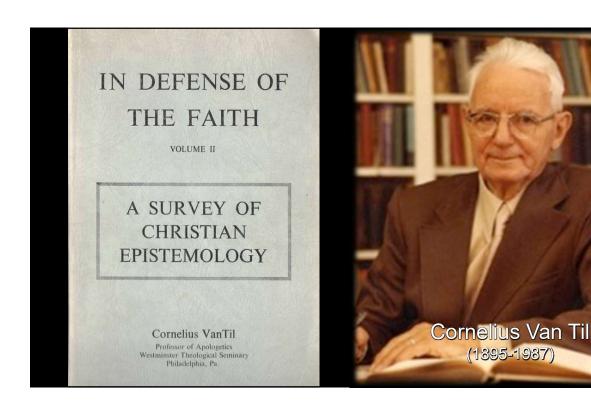
[In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology (n.c., Dulk Christian Foundation), 201]

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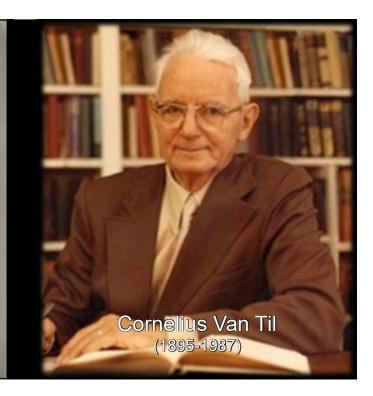
[In Detense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology, p. 201]

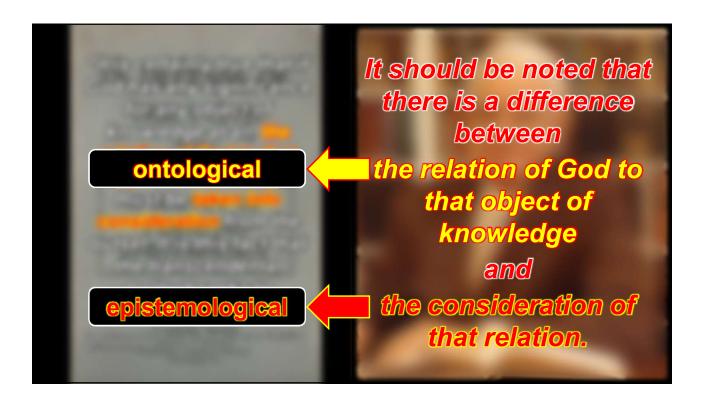
What he goes on to say seemingly indicates that Van Til understands this. However, the very nature of this "transcendental method" will end up overlooking this distinction and its implications for apologetics.

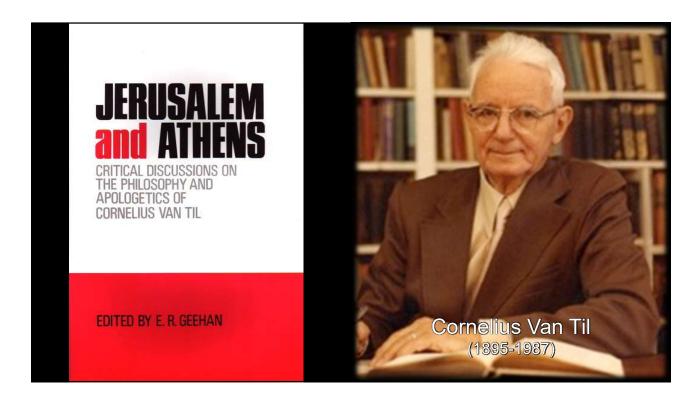


"It is certainly true that if God has any significance for any object of knowledge at all, the relation of God to that object of knowledge must be taken into consideration from the outset. It is this fact that the transcendental method seeks to recognize."

[In Defense of the Fath, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology, p. 201]

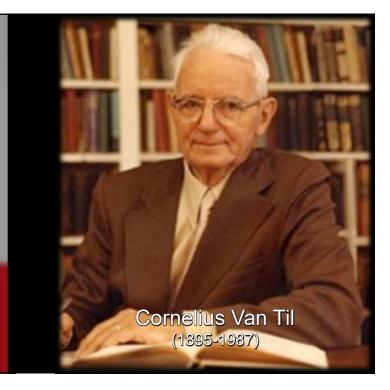


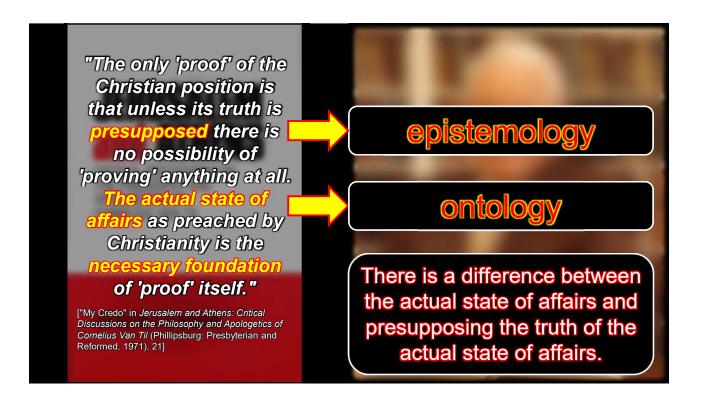


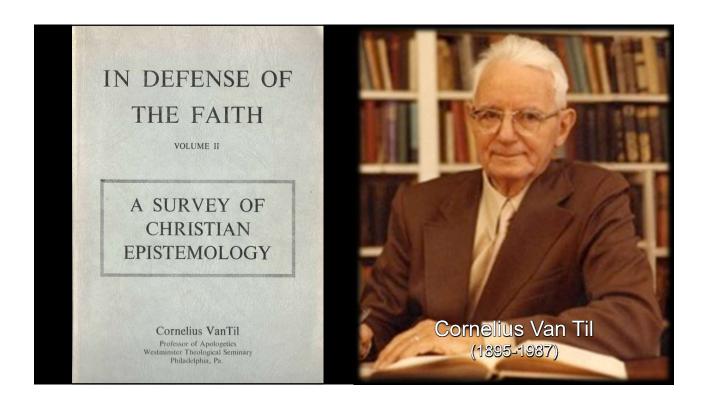


"The only 'proof' of the Christian position is that unless its truth is presupposed there is no possibility of 'proving' anything at all. The actual state of affairs as preached by Christianity is the necessary foundation of 'proof' itself."

["My Credo" in Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Philosophy and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 21]

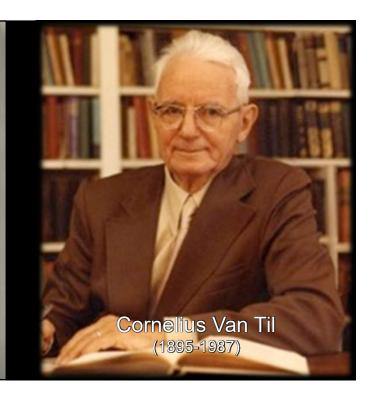






"The charge is made that we engage in circular reasoning. Now if it be called circular reasoning when we hold it necessary to presuppose the existence of God, we are not ashamed of it because we are firmly convinced that all forms of reasoning that leave God out of account will end in ruin."

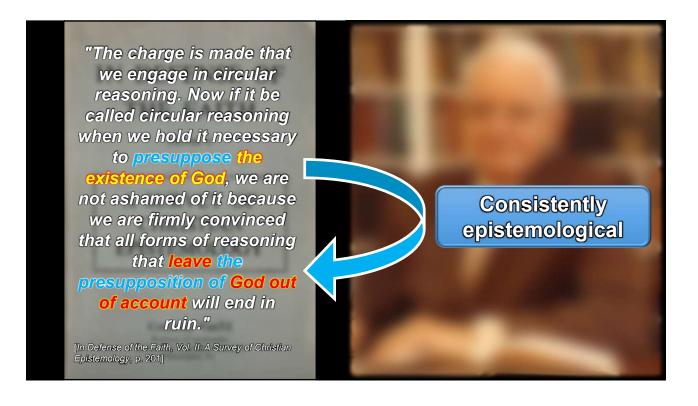
[In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology, p. 201]

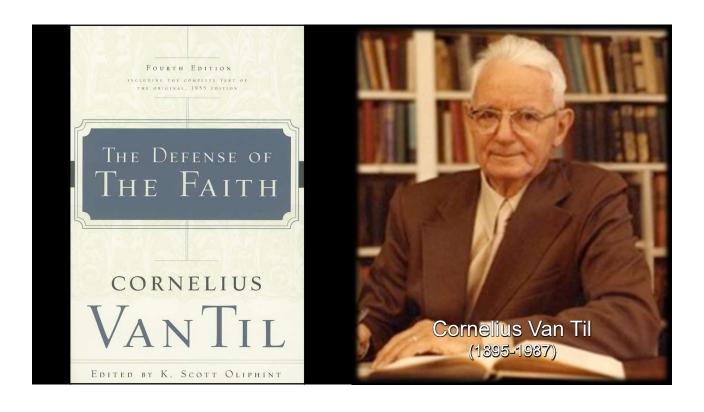


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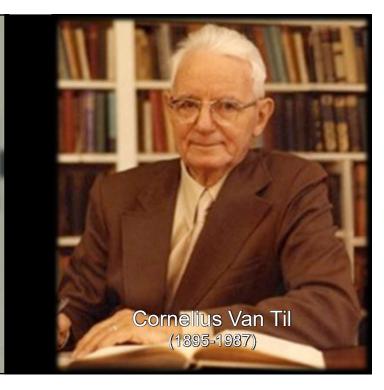
Epistemology, p. 201]



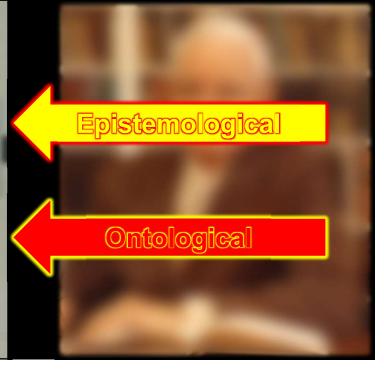


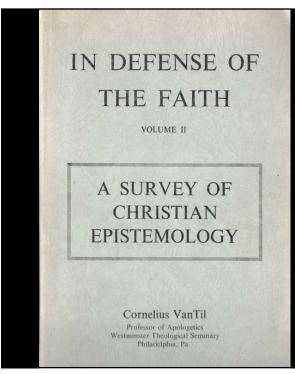


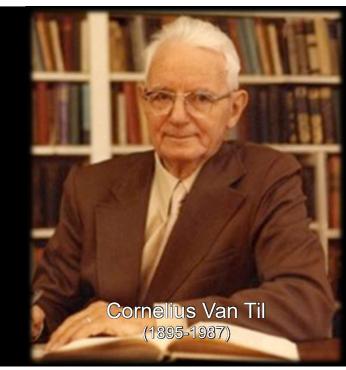
"The existence of the God of Christian theism and the conception of his counsel as controlling all things in the universe is the only presupposition which can account for the uniformity of nature which the scientist needs. But the best and only possible proof for the existence of such a God is that his existence is required for the uniformity of nature and for the coherence of all things in the world." [The Defense of the Faith (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 103]



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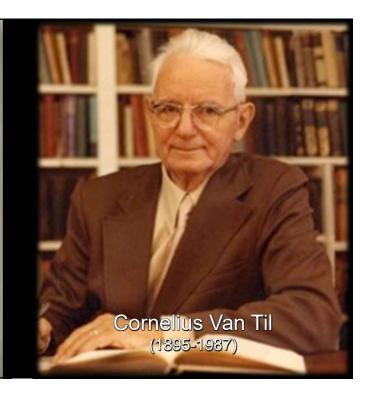






"It is not as though we already know some facts and laws to begin with, irrespective of the existence of God, in order then to reason from such a beginning to further conclusions.."

[In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology, p. 201]



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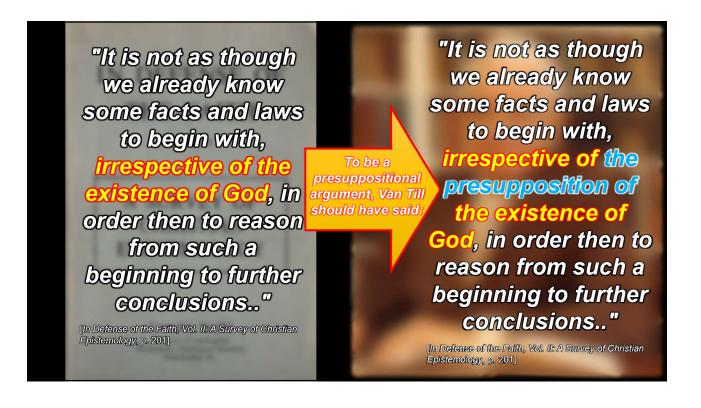
No apologetic system of which I am aware thinks there are facts and laws that are irrespective of the existence of God.

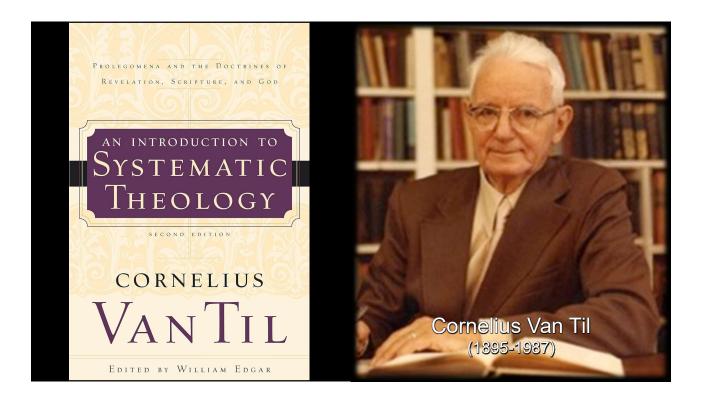
[In Defense of the Faith, Vol. II: A Survey of Christian Epistemology, p. 201]

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Given that the question of the existence of God is a metaphysical (ontological) one, Van Til's statement here is not Presuppositionalism.

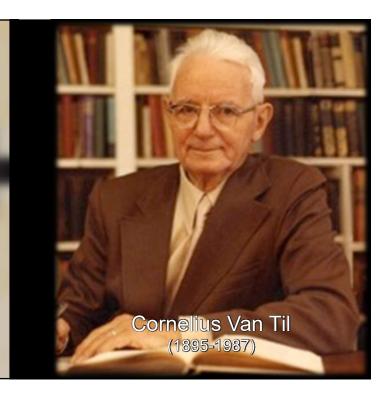




"We must avoid the idea that human reason exists as a known and definable entity apart from God so that we may begin from it as from an ultimate starting point."

[In Defense of the Faith, Vol. V: An Introduction to

Systematic Theology, p. 21]



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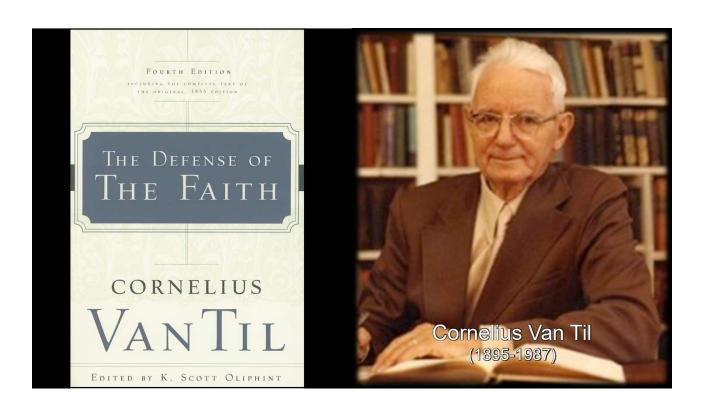
Systematic Theology, p. 21]

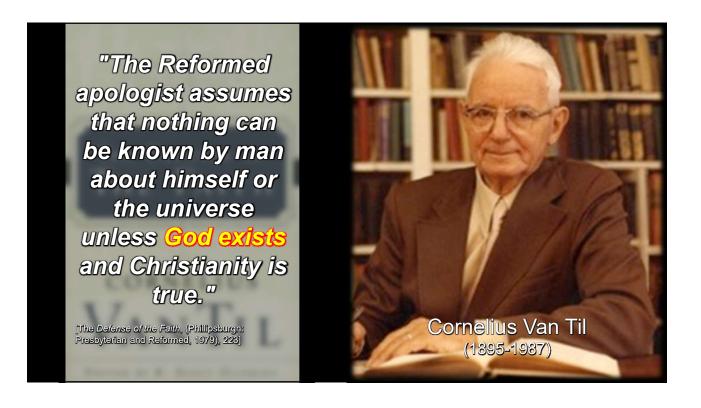
This is an ontological point, not an epistemological one.

It is a point about being not

It is a point about being, not about knowing.

Because of this, Van Til is not making a presuppositional argument at all. Instead, his argument collapses into the classical cosmological argument.





"The Reformed apologist assumes that nothing can be known by man about himself or the universe unless God exists and Christianity is true."

[The *Defense of the Faith*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 223] Again, this is an ontological point, not an epistemological one.

As with the previous examples, because this is an ontological point, Van Til is not making a Presuppositional argument at all, but, instead, is making a classical cosmological argument.

"The Reformed apologist assumes that nothing can be known by man about himself or the universe unless God exists and Christianity is true."

[The Defense of the Faith, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 223]

To be a presuppositional argument, Van Till should have said:

"The Reformed apologist assumes that nothing can be known by man about himself or the universe unless he presupposes that

God exists
and Christianity is
true."

The Defense of the Faith, (Phillipsburgh: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 223]

