

careful to keep our footing, for we are about to take on Van Til's problem at a somewhat finer grain. Readers already convinced of my main point and who are likely to get queasy at the sight of yet more painstaking philosophy may wish to skip to section [6]. (Stay where you are, Lucy!)

Very roughly, semantics, within linguistic discourse, is concerned with whatever falls under the general idea of *meaning*—as opposed to syntax, which deals with linguistic structure and rules governing well-formed expressions in a language. Our present interest is to zero in on the exclusively semantic features of the Father's utterance.

(1) Identity of Reference

Contemporary philosophy has distinguished three quite distinct semantic features of linguistic discourse: reference, meaning, and truth. (There is no special order of importance here.) Semantic coincidence between God's mind and human minds for any *one* of these features would instantly falsify Van Til's doctrine of analogy. Take first the semantic feature of reference—that is, the function of the utterance *to be about, to have selective reference to, an intended individual*. In this case it is the visible Jesus standing there with his disciples. Is there identity of reference (as to *this* semantic feature) in the mind of the Father and in the minds of the disciples? To answer "No, there is no univocal reference communicated by the Father" lands us in total absurdity. By the linguistic means of the demonstrative pronoun (as well as by an inescapable implication) the Father *refers* to the Jesus standing with them and that is the referential meaning the disciples took from the utterance. The disciples hardly supposed, for example, that the utterance referred to one of themselves or to no one at all!

I pause here to avoid a possible confusion. Van Til does hold that humans cannot help but occupy a world (the creation) that is a shared domain of reference between God and man. But in this regard Van Til makes only a *metaphysical* point. That is to say, reality itself does not change according to an individual's epistemological standpoint. Humans cannot opt out of the one created reality by their manner of thinking about it. In II Peter 1:17-18, however, we are not presented with the mere co-presence of God and man amidst the same reality; what we have is a literal instance of a *communication* between the mind of God and the mind of