

A Closer Look at "No Identity-No Coincidence"

If the absurdity doesn't quite leap out at you, maybe this will help. For brevity, call the proposition "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" **J**. Now if we know that-**J** truly, which is to say that we know analogically that-**J**, we must also say, in accordance with Van Til's "no identity-no coincidence" doctrine, that **J** cannot express a content that is identical to a content in God's mind. But our commitment to **J** cannot count as knowing truly for Van Til unless there is in God's mind a content that is infinitely qualified by his omniscience, and to which our **J** is related by analogy. So far so good. Let us call the content in God's mind **J'** (**J**-prime); and now to summarize the main point in our symbolism, *there is no identity of content* between **J** and **J'**. Keep in mind that the *only* thing we know about **J'** is that *if* there is a **J'** it is systematically non-coincident *in content* with our **J** (but that our **J** is nevertheless somehow analogical of **J'**).

But now notice the "if". Since we are incapable of ever entertaining **J'** (God's knowledge), we have to say that **J'** is systematically elusive and therefore radically unavailable for helping us to discern that our **J** is analogical of anything at all. **J'** is for the *human* intellect merely a hypothetical place holder expressing we know not what. It is hypothetical because our sole basis for positing it is (1) we find ourselves believing that-**J** and (2) Van Til's speculative *theory* requires that if we truly know that-**J**, **J** must be analogically anchored by **J'**. Were **J** to be false, there would of course be no divine conception "**J'**". And it is a mere place holder because given the two radically different knowledge modalities (divine and human) there is no way in principle that **J'** could ever be rendered as a content that is comprehensible to man. We are confined, that is, to employ **J'** as a mere cipher symbolizing we know not what. But above all, since the content of **J'** is not *conceivable* by the human mind, **J'** cannot help us *to come* to a knowledge of **J** nor is there a way *to enrich* our understanding of **J** by somehow attending to **J'**.

It is perhaps distracting to use the proposition that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, so let me add that Van Til's is a *general* theory of knowledge and we could substitute for 'p' any proposition at all ('This rose is red', for example). And for any proposition at all, analogicity as a