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philosophical presuppositions which are unexamined and unjustified. The best response philosophers can make to Brown's excellent and learned book is to take up his invitation to a dialogue with biblical critics. In that dialogue philosophers will undoubtedly have a great deal to learn; but they also will have much to teach, and what they have to teach should make a significant difference to biblical scholarship.

Understanding Identity Statements, by **Thomas V. Morris**. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984. Pp. xv and 152. \$23.75, (paper \$16.25).

Reviewed by PHILIP L. QUINN, University of Notre Dame.

This book, the fifth in the series of Scots Philosophical Monographs, discusses the analysis of identity statements in its first five chapters and the epistemic assessment of identity statements in its last four chapters. Identity statements are statements which can be expressed in English by such sentences as the following:

- (1) Phosphorus is Phosphorus
- (2) Hesperus is Phosphorus
- (3) That pain is that neural event

and

- (4) Jesus of Nazareth is God the Son.

What is it that identity statements state? Under what conditions are identity statements warrantably assertable? The chapters devoted to the analysis of identity statements are intended to propose an answer to the first question, and those which concern the assessment of identity statements return an answer to the second. In this brief review, I shall give sketches of both answers, indicate why I find the first answer unsatisfactory, and discuss the application Morris makes of the second answer to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation.

Morris prepares the ground for his own analysis of identity statements by trying to undermine two of its prominent rivals; they are the objectual analysis and the metalinguistic analysis. According to the objectual analysis, identity statements state that a certain reflexive relation, self-identity, holds of a single object. Hence, on this analysis, (1) and (2) are standardly used to make the same identity statement. But this renders the proposed analysis very counterintuitive. Because it appears that (1) and (2) differ in informational content and epistemic status, it seems that they are used to make different identity statements. According to the metalinguistic analysis, identity statements state that two actually referring

expressions of one or two semantic types refer to the same thing. But this proposal too has counterintuitive consequences. It seems clear that one can have a propositional attitude such as belief directed toward the statement expressed by (2) without having any beliefs about the English names 'Phosphorus' and 'Hesperus'. As Morris amiably admits, these counterintuitive consequences do not amount to conclusive disproofs of the two analyses. But he concludes that they do render both problematic enough to justify his efforts to formulate a third alternative.

Morris characterizes his own proposal as a functional analysis. Its stated purpose is "to account for the informative import of identity statements as they are used in ordinary language by offering an account of them in terms of their cognitive *function*" (p. 55). That function is to collate or connect different bits and bodies of information about the world. Morris explicates this idea with the aid of a couple of 'pictures' or 'models' borrowed from Strawson. Here is a simplified sketch of one of them. If ancient astronomers had kept all their information about the evening star in a file labeled 'Hesperus' and all their information about the morning star in a separate file labeled 'Phosphorus', then the identity statement expressed by (2) would function for them to warrant merging those two files, once they came to know it.

I find pictures of this kind helpful in thinking about some of the epistemic functions of the statement expressed by (2). But I doubt that a description of these epistemic functions of that statement tells us what it is that it states. Morris carefully does not claim, and it is surely counterintuitive to suppose, that the statement expressed by (2) actually states something about collating information, merging files, or the like. But what, then, does it state? As far as I can tell, Morris gives no answer to this question. So I doubt that his functional account is an analysis in the same sense as and, hence, is a genuine rival of the objectual and metalinguistic analyses.

Morris makes an explicit attempt to ward off this sort of criticism by endorsing a doctrine, inspired by Wittgenstein, about the relation between function and meaning. Speaking of identity statements, he says:

It is the informational or epistemic function of these statements which is the key to their proper analysis. When we have explicated this, we have given an account of their meaning (pp. 69-70).

But, even if it be granted that epistemic function is the key to analysis, it does not follow that an account of epistemic function is the same as (identical to) an analysis of meaning. Moreover, even if it turns out that a justification-theoretic semantics provides the best analysis of the statement expressed by (2), it seems plausible to suppose that such an analysis will involve the justification-conditions for that statement and not just an account of its role in justifying other things such as information collation. And, finally, the way in which Morris applies his

own analysis to sentences like (1) appears to create a rather severe problem for his view. At one point (p. 80), he says that the analysis implies that such sentences do not express statements or propositions at all, or at least that there is no reason to think so. But, if this really is a consequence of the functional analysis, as it may well be, it renders that analysis every bit as counterintuitive and, hence, problematic as its objectual and metalinguistic competitors.

Morris begins the second part of the book with a discussion of various principles which go by the name 'Leibniz's Law'; they are the indiscernibility of identicals, the identity of indiscernibles, and the principle of substitutivity. He construes such principles as spelling out conditions for the warranted assertibility of identity statements. They function as principles of epistemic assessment. Insofar as Leibniz's Law is relevant to the epistemic grounding of ordinary identity statements, Morris supposes it can be adequately expressed by saying that two expressions are co-referential just in case any predicate in logical form which yields a true statement when attached to one also yields a true statement when attached to the other.

As is well known, Leibniz's Law spells trouble for cross-category identity statements such as those standardly expressed by (3) and (4). It seems that they cannot pass the test it poses for co-referentiality. Pains can be throbbing; neural events cannot. God the Son is omnipresent; the man Jesus of Nazareth is not. So it appears that such deviant identity statements cannot be warrantably assertible; indeed, they seem to be necessarily false, if not meaningless.

Morris examines in detail a response to this problem which would weaken Leibniz's Law for the special case of identity statements which bridge logically distinct modes of discourse. He argues that the objections to this response are sufficiently numerous and weighty to render it unacceptable. So he is left with only three alternatives. Either the identity statements expressed by (3) and (4) are merely metaphorical, or they are necessarily false, as they appear to be, or, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, their pairs of referring expressions do satisfy Leibniz's Law.

How, then, are we to assess the identity statement expressed by (4)? There have been those who call themselves Christians who have opted for the first and second alternatives. In his final chapter, Morris takes the more orthodox stand of defending the third. The argument is skeptical. We know very little about which properties are essential to humans; perhaps possibly being conscious at some time is the only property we know *a priori* to be essential to humans. Though we may know that God the Son is essentially omnipresent, we do not know that the man Jesus of Nazareth is essentially non-omnipresent. Indeed, we know of no essential human property which is not co-exemplifiable with the full set of essential divine properties. Hence, we do not know that the two referring expressions in (4) must fail to satisfy Leibniz's Law, and so we do not know

that the identity statement expressed by (4) is necessarily false or is not warrantably assertable.

I am sympathetic to the view that we do not know very much about which are the essential human properties. I am even inclined to agree with Morris when he suggests (pp. 135-36) that it is methodologically permissible, and perhaps even obligatory, for Christian philosophers to use what faith teaches about the Incarnation as a control on their theorizing about human nature. But I do not believe that our knowledge of essential human properties is quite so meager as it would have to be in order to render the position Morris defends unproblematic, and so I think Leibniz's Law still spells trouble for the statement expressed by (4). It seems to me that we do know, on the basis of broadly scientific considerations, that being an organism is a property essential to each human. And it also seems to me that we know that God, being by nature Pure Spirit, has essentially the property of being a non-organism. Of course I could be wrong about one or both of these things. And I do not mean to assert that each human is exactly the same sort of organism whenever he or she exists; our present bodies may differ in biological detail from our glorified bodies after the General Resurrection. But I think I have the appearances with me in suggesting that the little we do know about human nature suffices to show that the two referring expressions in (4) do not pass the test for co-referentiality posed by the formulation of Leibniz's Law Morris has endorsed.

Though I found much to disagree with in *Understanding Identity Statements*, my criticisms are meant as a compliment to the book's power to provoke philosophical thought. It deals with important philosophical problems in a novel and stimulating way. It is written in a style which is clear, concise, and refreshingly free of superfluous technicalities. And it sets forth a theoretical position which merits careful consideration by all Christian philosophers.

Being Human...Becoming Human, by **Helmut Thielicke**. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 475 pages. \$17.95.

Reviewed by T. WILLIAM HALL.

Upon reading Helmut Thielicke's *Being Human...Becoming Human* one is quickly reminded of Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be*, Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death*, and Soren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* in that all focus on the limits and possibilities of being human. They are similar, too, in that all draw upon depth psychologies, on philosophical insights, on literary images, and all deal with moral issues. Thielicke's book stands apart from the others in the explicit and constant use of classical Christian theology as his criterion of