

If it is correct to say that *x* may be authorized without being simply *an* (even *the*) authority, why can't it be correct to say that *x* may be obedient (faithful, trusting, loyal, loving, etc.) without being simply one believer among others (even "the first and foremost of believers")?

There is no reason, and it can be entirely correct, provided one recognizes that the terms are being used, not in literally the same sense, but in analogically different senses in the two cases. Indeed, in all the places where I have insisted that not all sources of authority either are or can be themselves authorities in the proper sense of the term, I have allowed for the possibility of the term's being used in another, improper, analogical sense (cf., e.g., *PC*: 79 f.: *OT*: 51 f.).

As for the difference between the two senses in which the terms are used when they are used analogically, I can scarcely improve on my characterization of it in "On the 'Obedience' of Christ and of Christians." "The analogy here is not unlike that between truth and truthfulness, the obedience of Christians being to truthfulness somewhat as the obedience of Christ is to truth. Thus, to say that a Christian is obedient is like saying that someone is truthful, while to say that Christ is obedient is like saying that something [or someone] is true."

Of course, this characterization requires to be nuanced by taking account of Bultmann's important point that "obedience and love as such are never evident, but are experienced only insofar as one experiences the service of another, and so experiences it that through such service one knows oneself to be renewed to a new understanding of oneself in obedience and love." Therefore, while one may indeed make clear what it means for a Christian to be obedient, one can never judge whether or not a Christian *is* obedient, even if one certainly *can* experience the service of a Christian to oneself and, in this way, experience her or his obedience—in the same way (and the *only* way) in which one can experience the obedience and love of Christ.

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