

In arguing, as I long have, that God is not properly *an* authority, not even the highest, but is rather the primal *source* of authority, I have been following a precedent set not only by Paul Tillich's well-known statement that "God is not *a* being, but being-itself," but also by H. Richard Niebuhr, when he speaks of God as "*principle* of being" and "*principle* of value," rather than as either "highest being" and "highest value" or as "Being" and "the Good" (*Radical Monotheism*: 33, n. 7; italics added).

Adapting Niebuhr's statement that "[t]hat by reference to which all things have their value is not itself a value in the primary [*sic!*] sense," one could equally well say that that by reference to which anything has or is an authority is not itself an authority in the same sense of the word.

On the other hand, if there is good reason to insist against Tillich that God is, in a sense, *a* being—namely, *the* being—as well as being-itself, there may also be good reason to say that God is, in a sense, *an* authority—namely, *the* authority—as well as the primal source of authority. Indeed, if a neoclassical theism that is consistently "dipolar," or accepts the principle of "dual transcendence," is correct, one would have to say something like this. Whereas God in God's essence is not *an* authority, not even *the* authority, but can only be precisely the primal *source* of authority, God in God's actuality must be just as precisely *an* authority, namely, *the* authority. God's *de facto* decisions as God—with respect to both creation and consummation—are authorized by the primal source of authority that is God's own essence as God; but because they are, in this way, authorized, they are properly said to be or to have authority, i.e., *the* authority, the *highest* authority.

July 1996; rev. 29 March 1999