

It seems clear from Bultmann's writings that he has not carefully worked out the precise identity of and differences between *authority, sole primary authority*, and *primal authorizing source*.

Thus, for example, in explaining why his two ways of defining theology—as translation of the New Testament proclamation and as explication of Christian existence—finally amount to the same thing, he can say: "[S]ince theology speaks (not of existentiality, but) of existence as a historical existence that is qualified by a certain historical fact, it also speaks of the scripture that is this fact precisely as a historical fact qualifying existence" (*Theologische Enzyklopädie*: 169 f.). This identification of the historical fact qualifying the human existence of which theology speaks as "scripture" has parallels in other statements in which Bultmann similarly represents either "scripture," or "the New Testament," or "the apostolic preaching" as though it were the primal authorizing source, rather than simply the sole primary authority (or simply an authority) for Christian existence. So, for instance, he says, "Christian faith is the answer to the word of God proclaimed by the Christian church because it hears this word spoken in the New Testament" ("Protestant Theology and Atheism": 334). Or, again, "[F]aith is the answer to the proclaimed word of God's grace which has its origin and legitimation in the New Testament" (*New Testament and Mythology*: 114). Or, yet again, "The word of God is God's word . . . as one and the same word that began with the apostolic preaching and is fixed in scripture and that continues to be borne by human beings in the proclamation, the word of Christ whose content of ideas can also be formulated in general statements" (121).

In many other statements, however, Bultmann asserts that the primal authorizing source is neither scripture, nor the New Testament, nor the apostolic preaching, but Jesus Christ. Thus he says, "God encounters us in the word, namely, in a specific word, in the proclamation established with Jesus Christ. . . . [T]his living word of God is not a word of human wisdom but a word that encounters us in history, [and whose] origin is a historical event through which speaking it here and now is authorized and legitimated. This event is Jesus Christ" (119). So also, "[U]nlike other historical events [the eschatological event] cannot be made present through 'remembrance.' Rather, it becomes present in the proclamation (or the kerygma), which has

its origin in the event itself and without which the event is not at all what it is. This means that the proclamation itself is eschatological occurrence. In it, as personal address, the event Jesus Christ becomes present ever anew—as an event affecting me in my own unique existence" (163). Or again, "The event that as a fact in time is the transforming (because critical) event for the entire world is the sending of Jesus. . . . [T]he word that is spoken and heard is precisely the word that proclaims this fact. Ever since this fact there has been the possibility of this word, so that this fact divides all history into two halves, two aeons" (*Glauben und Verstehen* 1:143 f.). Or yet again, "[The word] is the authorized word that goes back to the historical fact of Jesus and proclaims this fact. Insofar as the word is proclaimed here and now, the eschatological now stands over every present, and in every such now judging and making alive take place. . . . The presence of the historical Jesus does not lie in his historical effects and in historical reconstruction, . . . but is his presence in the authorized word" (1:147). So, too, "[T]his word, in which judgment and forgiveness, death and life, become event [is] established, authorized and legitimated through the event Jesus" (1:292). And, finally, "[I]n what has occurred in and through Christ, God has decisively revealed Godself to us; and in this occurrence a proclamation is established and legitimated that encounters us as God's word, which does not teach us a new concept of God but, rather, gives us the right to believe in the God in whom we would fain believe" (2: 10).

3 May 1997