

When Maurice argues, as he often does, that we want or need a revelation—that God himself must tell us whether we have a ground to stand upon, what that ground is, and so on—he seems to me to be arguing very much as I do, with the difference that he typically speaks only or primarily in the material terms of Christian witness and theology, whereas I tend to speak also and primarily in the formal terms of philosophy. (Not, to be sure, of this, that, or some other philosophy, understood as the *product* of philosophical reflection, but of “doing philosophy,” of philosophical reflection, or analysis, itself, understood as the *process* by which any such philosophy must be produced.) In other words, my appeal to common human experience and reason is, in formal terms, an appeal to what is called, in material terms, “revelation,” in the sense of reality itself disclosing, or unveiling, itself, to us. More exactly, it is an appeal to one of the two necessary aspects of revelation, i.e., its *noetic*, as distinct from its ontic, aspect, although being the subjective and therefore relative aspect, the noetic aspect is also the inclusive one.

Two related thoughts:

1. The content of revelation, as Maurice seems to think of it, is always “facts,” not “opinions,” or “notions.” I would, of course, prefer to say “reality” instead of “facts” to make the same point, the while fully allowing that the realities that are revealed by Christian revelation, at any rate, are indeed, in the strict and proper sense, “facts,” although not only such, because, as Maurice would say, also “laws,” including those that are, more exactly, the “*eternal* laws and principles” which “dwell in [God] Himself and which determine His dealings with us” (italics added).

2. Maurice’s well-known self-description as a “digger,” whose vocation is to dig down to the “ground” of things, simply says, in other terms, that his appeal as a theologian is to revelation, as against all “notions,” “opinions,” “systems,” and so on. Thus he can say, “The original man is fighting for his life; he must know whether he has any ground to stand upon; he must ask God to tell him, because men cannot.”

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