

Christensen may well be right to the extent that there is at least a definite analogy between "the Platonic idea of reality" and Maurice's. But it is arguable, it seems to me, that Maurice's idea of reality is not really Platonic after all.

Thus, for example, the Platonist presumably holds that it is the office of reason to penetrate the external visible shapes of things in order to discover their eternal laws and principles. But while Maurice often speaks as though the Christian holds the very same thing, it can be argued that he understands the Christian really to hold something different—namely, that it is the office of reason (i.e., of the human being *qua* spirit or as "voluntary") to perceive in the historical events to which the Bible bears witness their existential meaning, i.e., their significance for our self-understanding as spiritual beings. On this interpretation, "reason," for Maurice, is not the organ for intuiting eternal ideas or the most universal abstractions, but rather the organ of existential, including existential-historical, understanding, while "understanding," in his sense, covers the remainder of our competences as cognitive beings, not unlike the way that "objectifying thinking," etc. does for Bultmann.

As for the parallel Maurice draws between faith and theology, on the one hand, and science, on the other, it need not be taken to contradict or qualify this interpretation, any more than Bultmann's view that even science has its starting point in existential encounter contradicts or qualifies his parallel or, possibly, convergent position.

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