1.Introduction

Christianity, these days, and in our part of the world, is on the move. There are many signs pointing in this direction: the growth of Christian schools, of the serious conservative Christian denominations, the furor over prayer in public schools, the creationism/evolution controversy, and others. There is also powerful evidence for this contention in philosophy. Thirty or thirty-five years ago, the public temper of mainline establishment philosophy in the English speaking world was deeply non-Christian. Few establishment philosophers were Christian; even fewer were willing to admit in public that they were, and still fewer thought of their being Christian as making a real difference to their practice as philosophers. The most popular question of philosophical theology, at that time, was not whether Christianity or theism is true; the question, instead, was whether it even makes sense to say that there is such a person as God. According to the logical positivism then running riot, the sentence "there is such a person as God" literally makes no sense; it is disguised nonsense; it altogether fails to express a thought or a proposition. The central question wasn't whether theism is true; it was whether there is such a thing as theism -a genuine factual claim that is either true or false- at all. But things have changed. There are now many more Christians and many more unabashed Christians in the professional mainstream of American philosophical life.

For example, the foundation of the Society for Christian Philosophers, an organization to promote fellowship and exchange of ideas among Christian philosophers, is both an evidence and a consequence of that fact. Founded some six years ago, it is now a thriving organization with regional meetings in every part of the country; its members are deeply involved in American professional philosophical life. So Christianity is on the move, and on the move in philosophy, as well as in other areas of intellectual life. But even if Christianity is on the move, it has taken only a few brief steps; and it is marching through largely alien territory. For the intellectual culture of our day is for the most part profoundly non- theistic and hence non-Christian- more than that, it is antitheistic.

Most of the so-called human sciences, much of the non-human sciences, most of non-scientific intellectual endeavor and even a good bit of allegedly Christian theology is animated by a spirit wholly foreign to that of Christian theism. I don't have the space here to elaborate and develop this point; but I don't have to, for it is familiar to you all. To return to philosophy: most of the major philosophy departments in America have next to nothing to offer the student intent on coming to see how to be a Christian in philosophy, how to assess and develop the bearing of Christianity on matters of current philosophical concern, and how to think about those philosophical matters of interest to the Christian community. In the typical graduate philosophy department there will be little more, along these lines, than a course in philosophy of religion in which it is suggested that the evidence for the existence of God -the classical theistic proofs, say- is at least counterbalanced by the evidence against the existence of God -the problem of evil, perhaps; and it may then be added that the wisest course, in view of such maxims as Ockham's Razor, is to dispense with the whole idea of God, at least for philosophical purposes.

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