So on all these disputed points in philosophical anthropology the theist will have a strong initial predilection for resolving the dispute in one way rather than another. He will be inclined to reject compatibilism, to hold that event causation (if indeed there is such a thing) is to be explained in terms of agent causation, to reject the idea that if an event isn't caused by other events then its occurrence is a matter of chance, and to reject the idea that events in the physical world can't be caused by an agent's undertaking to do something.

And my point here is this. The Christian philosopher is within his right in holding these positions, whether or not he can convince the rest of the philosophical world and whatever the current philosophical consensus is, if there is a consensus. But isn't such an appeal to God and his properties, in this philosophical context, a shameless appeal to a deus ex machina? Surely not. "Philosophy," as Hegel once exclaimed in a rare fit of lucidity, "is thinking things over." Philosophy is in large part a clarification, systematization, articulation, relating and deepening of pre-philosophical opinion. We come to philosophy with a range of opinions about the world and humankind and the place of the latter in the former; and in philosophy we think about these matters, systematically articulate our views, put together and relate our views on diverse topics, and deepen our views by finding unexpected interconnections and by discovering and answering unanticipated questions. Of course we may come to change our minds by virtue of philosophical endeavor; we may discover incompatibilities or other infelicities. But we come to philosophy with prephilosophical opinions; we can do no other. And the point is: the Christian has as much right to his prephilosophical opinions, as others have to theirs. He needn't try first to 'prove' them from propositions accepted by, say, the bulk of the non-Christian philosophical community; and if they are widely rejected as naive, or pre-scientific, or primitive, or unworthy of "man come of age," that is nothing whatever against them.

Of course if there were genuine and substantial arguments against them from premises that have some legitimate claim on the Christian philosopher, then he would have a problem; he would have to make some kind of change somewhere. But in the absence of such arguments-and the absence of such arguments is evident-the Christian philosophical community, quite properly starts, in philosophy, from what it believes.

But this means that the Christian philosophical community need not devote all of its efforts to attempting to refute opposing claims and or to arguing for its own claims, in each case from premises accepted by the bulk of the philosophical community at large. It ought to do this, indeed, but it ought to do more. For if it does only this, it will neglect a pressing philosophical task: systematizing, deepening, clarifying Christian thought on these topics. So here again: my plea is for the Christian philosopher, the Christian philosophical community, to display, first, more independence and autonomy: we needn't take as our research projects just those projects that currently enjoy widespread popularity; we have our own questions to think about. Secondly, we must display more integrity. We must not automatically assimilate what is current or fashionable or popular by way of philosophical opinion and procedures; for much of it comports ill with Christian ways of thinking. And finally, we must display more Christian self-confidence or courage or boldness. We have a perfect right to our pre-philosophical views: why, therefore, should we be intimidated by what the rest of the philosophical world thinks plausible or implausible?

These, then, are my examples; I could have chosen others. In ethics, for example: perhaps the chief theoretical concern, from the theistic perspective, is the question how are right and wrong, good and bad, duty, permission and obligation related to God and to his will and to his creative activity? This question doesn't arise, naturally enough, from a non-theistic perspective; and so, naturally enough, non-theist ethicists do not address it. But it is perhaps the most important question for a Christian ethicist to tackle.

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