

## AN UNORTHODOX DEFENCE OF ORTHODOXY\*

IN the new religion of science God is supposed to have had the goodness to invite man to profiteer upon the universe.' When Daedalus found he could fly he got too far above himself—and the vanquished world: his wings melted in the sun's heat and, being dust, he unto dust returned.

The science of the world, it would seem, is in fair way to conquering the world. Having measured the world, it cannot but think it has measured the master of the world. It re-edits its theology to suit the newer enlightenment, and 'the God of Mr. Pupin,'<sup>1</sup> we are given to understand, is a God who serves.'

Mr. Ransom sketches the religious history of East and West in terms of an Eternal Triangle. There was the bearded, inscrutable God of Thunder: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. There was the Logos: Reason, the Patron of Science. There was the Pnuma, the Paraclete, the Ghost. There came a day, says Mr. Ransom, when the Logos, the Demigod, was substituted for 'the Pnuma, the Holy Ghost, the Tetragram, the God of Israel.' 'And this was the very beginning of Occidentalism.' We cast out the thunder: we could make our own. We wanted something sane yet soothingly sentimental. And so we chose the Logos. We cultivated him: we evolved him from a myth to a Principle, from a principle to a

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Michael Pupin, physicist and inventor, is the author of *The New Reformation.*

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homely, serviceable scientist like ourselves. We fashioned the 'soft modern version of Christ.' We had been left with too remote a Reason : we said : ' Not on bread alone doth man live ' (We neglected to add ' Nor on butter ').

Pneuma is a Greek name, but an Oriental idea. We would not have the Pneuma more important than our Logos. And so : ' perhaps the most critical moment in our history—if we had to fix precisely upon one—was just such a moment as that : *the moment when the Roman Church sanctioned the doctrine of Filioque.* In that moment Occidentalism emerged as a definitive historical polity which was to glorify the rational principle and deny the irrational principle . . . . Western empire has developed out of that choice, and Western science, and Western business.' Now, I wonder !

History is one thing and common-sense argument another. Whether Mr. Ransom's history be right or wrong, is it our best possible plan to recall the God of Thunder, to readjust the Logos in proper status : ' the Demigod who knew he was a demigod and refused to be set up as a God ' ?

A God who is measurable is a miniature and mimic God. Let us leave him certainly to Mr. Pupin. We may have the Semitic God of Thunder—if we accent the inscrutability : the thunder itself is surely an unessential appanage. But what of the Pneuma and the Logos, the Comforter and Christ ? We do not want a God whom our heads can worship while our hearts go after the fleshpots. We do not want a God our hearts can rejoice in while our heads incubate in a laboratory. If we are not to be slit in two after the manner of the quaint old torture of the saplings, we cannot make between heart and head a dichotomy. The only God worth worshipping must be a jealous God. Not a Principle nor a Sentiment nor a Moral Code, but a Person

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to be known and loved and wholly served. Man needs in other words, a religion which is humanist : which is concerned with and perfects the whole personality and every power. It is only natural for our God to be supernatural ; it is only reasonable that He should be supra-rational ; it is quite clear that His life must be a mystery. And what Theology (the science—shall we say it arrogantly, in the teeth of contradictory concepts?—which is supreme), can and does tell us of God must be made to answer the fundamental question from our side : is this God you find sufficient to engage a man wholly ? Will your religion be both humanist and super-human ? If so, we may rest satisfied that here at least science has not failed ; that the revelation on which it rests is sound.

May one make yet another arrogant assertion—all Credos are arrogant—and say that just as there is no complete Christianity where there is no real humanism, so there is no complete humanism where there is no real Christianity ? They are each other's sanctions. The only religion which would seem to be wholly humanist is the Catholic religion, just as the only philosophy which is wholly humanist is Thomism. There is a perfect balance in these things which must bear fruit in the perfect equipoise of man. The saint is one who is or heroically strives to be perfectly man. Some saints have been canonized because they became as far as possible perfectly man. They are to be admired and imitated. Others have been canonized because, though misjudging they failed, they failed heroically. They are to be admired. It is the Catholic privilege and the Catholic responsibility to be able to become more perfectly and completely human, for the perfectly human is, through God's mercy, by participation, divine. The Catholic concept of grace is of a supernatural power which may bring nature to an absolute and final perfection.

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The God of Thunder is, in Himself, out of reach of reason, yet not out of reach of hope. The Logos is Wisdom : not science, nor ratiocination, nor concepts, but the higher synthesis of intuition.

Mr. Ransom is with us in decrying the autocracy of reason. But at that point we again part company. ' Mr. More,'<sup>2</sup> he says, ' considers that Christ's function in our religious history was to represent the Logos as supreme. It is my feeling, quite to the contrary, that this was the function of Satan. The function of Christ was to represent the Logos as partial and subordinate within the greatness of God.' One is irresistibly reminded of Carducci's *Hymn to Satan*.

' Salute, O Satana,  
O ribellione,  
O forza vindice  
Della ragione !  
  
Sacri a te salgano  
Gl' incensi e i voti !  
Hai vinto il Geova  
De i sacerdoti.'

If the Logos were indeed no more than mere ratiocination, Mr. Ransom's position would be the only tenable one. But a God who is ratiocination is a contradiction in terms. The only intellectual life compatible with the Infinite is intuition, and

*' In principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud  
Deum et Deus erat Verbum.'*

The intuition of Himself which is the Logos is precisely the ' greatness of God ' to which reason is subordinate.

Intuition of the good, the true, the beautiful, begets love. The *Filioque* expresses that truth in its

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Paul Elmer More is the author of a book entitled *Christ the Word*.

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eternal context. The Father—*Principium Inprincipiatum*, in the sounding phrase of philosophy—is the source of life, who demands the service of life. The Son, called by appropriation Wisdom, demands by that title the allegiance of the mind. The Holy Ghost *Amor*, demands the perfect service, the perfect sacrifice, of love. Yet it is not a question merely of demanding. For St. Thomas the whole universe, the vast procession of creatures, marches in circular course through the ages from God, its source and principle, back to God its end. And as the coming forth of creatures from the Principle was by the Son and the Holy Ghost—Wisdom and Love—so their return to Him must be by the Son and the Spirit also: the inscrutability of the Creator is brought near to us by the Love of the Spirit and the Wisdom of the Son.

We cannot hold, any more than does Mr. Ransom, with the 'soft modern version of Christ.' It is curious (or rather it is not at all curious, but only to be expected) that the only people who hold rigidly to the boundaries of human nature in Christ as man are those who proclaim him dogmatically equal to the Father as God. And let us by all means scrap the scientist God of Service. But let us, while we are about it, be complete. Science, metaphysic, are a means not a substitute. (Let us quote, in passing, of Christian Science, that it is 'the philosophy of the ostrich.') A scientist God, a rational God, a capricious God, a sentimental God—we cannot be satisfied with these. To be completely natural, rational, human, man must have an outlook which is supernatural, supra-rational, superhuman. We cannot be whole and undivided men without the whole and undivided Trinity.

And to console ourselves in our humanity, not with a sentimental narcotic, but with a rational ground for hope, let us remember that the Word was made Flesh.

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