

RECANTING GALILEO

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The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church hasn't stayed put for a long time. Established by the Son of God on Earth, it is forced, alas, to adhere by gravity to this relatively unimportant planet which not only whirls compulsively on its own axis every 24 hours, but careens madly around the sun every year in the company of similar balls of matter doing pretty much the same thing. The universe of this Universal Church is furthermore an on-going system itself, one of myriads forming part of countless galaxies hovering or flying who knows where in a sky that has no limit.

This moving experience, now accepted as fact by virtually all the faithful, was not even suspected before the Protestant Revolt began liberating science, for until then both Scripture and Catholic Tradition had steadfastly maintained quite the opposite. Anyone scanning the heavens was free to ascertain by his own observation that the Earth on which his Church stood, far from being a negligible speck in the cosmos, was in fact the unique and immovable center of everything God had created. It was Galileo, the faithful will now tell you, who showed us how wrong the Church could be. By looking through the new telescope he invented, and by dropping things off the Leaning Tower in his home town of Pisa, Galileo finally proved the Earth moves and revolves around the sun, and not the other way round.

If Scripture naively persists in depicting an immovable Earth around which the heavens revolve, it needs updating, or at least proper interpretation, for unfortunately the sacred authors -- and the Fathers who commented on them -- had only the primitive scientific knowledge of their day to work with and couldn't be expected to know any better. For several generations now modernist popularizers like Fr. Bruce Vawter, in *A Path through Genesis*, have explained that the Bible, although quite possibly inspired in the main, contains many incidental errors, and that only what the author intended to teach by means of such errors need be taken seriously. Apologizing for the obviously pathetic notion of the universe God's Word makes use of, he maintains that *this erroneous conception of the universe . . . is no more part of the author's teaching than is the faulty science included in the "sunset", "celestial sphere" or "four winds" of our every-day speech.*

Really? Well, the crushing truth is, Galileo proved absolutely nothing about the motion of Earth, any more than he invented the telescope, which came into his hands from Holland. And if he ever dropped anything off that Tower, it was not on purpose. He himself knew he had no hard evidence, but he indulgently allowed the gullible to believe he had actually observed heliocentricity through his new lenses. To this day no conclusive proof has been found for this hoary old Pythagorean theory, re-issued at the time of the Renaissance as a working hypothesis by Nicolaus Copernicus in *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*. Published by the Protestant theologian Osiander almost from the astronomer's deathbed in 1543, it appeared strategically just two years before the opening of the *Council of Trent*.

It cannot be proved experimentally. Unfortunately, where the movements of the heavens are concerned, mankind occupies the position of a man on a train passing another train. Aware of motion, but lacking some fixed point of reference beyond the trains, he has no way of knowing whether his train or the other is the one moving, or both. He only knows their relative positions are shifting. The deepest space probe cannot take us outside creation, any more than Galileo's telescope, to view objectively what goes on there. There is no natural, therefore no scientific way

of knowing whether Earth is revolving around the sun or the sun is revolving around it. The most powerful instruments detect only movement, and this is necessarily relative.

Every experiment mounted to prove heliocentricity therefore proves geocentricity equally well, depending on how data are interpreted or what the experimenter's bias is. The Foucault pendulum, for instance, demonstrates equally well that the earth is rotating, or that the universe is rotating around it, or that other motions are taking place. It is the same with gyroscopes, synchronous satellites, parallax, coriolis effects, or whatever. About all that can be said with certainty about the Copernican theory is that it shows us how the universe would look to us if we were standing on the sun. From what we see, it could be true₁ but is it? Speaking of the limitations of the experimental method in arriving at certainty, Pierre Duhem, the eminent French physicist, wrote back in **1908**:

Suppose the hypothesis of Copernicus were able to explain all known appearances. What can be concluded is that they may be true, not that they are necessarily true, for in order to legitimate this last conclusion, it would have to be proved that no other system of hypotheses could possibly be imagined which could explain the appearances just as well.

In **1887**, the Michelson-Morley experiment, designed to prove the theory, backfired and actually seemed to indicate geocentricity, or at least an earthly inertia which cannot be overcome. No significant progress has been made since. On the contrary, in **1976** a paper published by Y.P. Varshni of the University of Ottawa entitled "The Red Shift Hypothesis for Quasars: Is the Earth the Center of the Universe?", admitted that on the basis of study, the disturbing possibility had to be seriously entertained that it was: The arrangement of quasars on certain spherical shells is only with respect to the earth. These shells would disappear if viewed from another galaxy or a quasar. This means that the cosmological principle will have to go. Also, it implies that a coordinate system fixed to the earth will be a preferred frame of reference in the universe. Consequently, both the Special and the General Theory of Relativity must be abandoned for cosmological purposes. Such technical studies are beyond the competence of this paper, but this should be sufficient to show that heliocentricity is still unproved and an open question, even among atheist scientists behind the iron curtain.

Long ago Alexander von Humboldt had admitted,

I have already known for a long time that we have no proof for the system of Copernicus... but I do not dare to be the first one to attack it.

In other words, like Darwinian evolution, the idea that the earth revolves around the sun, never proven, must be accepted as an article of faith, a dogma of the Other Religion imposed on thinking persons by the liberated scientific establishment. When confronted with demands for substantiation, its adepts frequently resort to *ad hominem* arguments: the geocentrist is summarily relegated to the fundamentalist snake-handling contingent, the lunatic fringe or gratuitous membership in the Flat Earth Society.

Aware of its precarious credentials, Copernicus never taught his theory as true. Until Galileo adopted it some **80** years later, no serious scholar regarded it as anything but a mathematical device possibly useful for astronomical calculations, but in no way expected to convey reality. The primordial enemy, however, who entered Eden so soon after God opened up scientific inquiry by bringing Adam the animals to see what he would call them (**Gen. 2:19**), was fully aware of heliocentricity's potential for destroying the Faith by attacking the inerrancy of Scripture. Although an indifferent astronomer, Galileo had earned considerable recognition for his work in mechanics, and would prove a ready instrument in the hands of those conspiring to make the sun stand still -- not temporarily as God had done for Josue, but permanently.

Irascible and likeable, an excellent teacher and university lecturer, Galileo seems to have been unhampered by domestic virtues. (Of three children by a concubine who eventually married another man, two daughters became nuns.) Usually in need of money, he was easily inspired and financed by the group of revolutionary spirits who clustered about Cosimo II de Medici in Florence. He had the moral support of several ecclesiastical mathematicians and scientific dabblers like the Benedictine Fr. Castelli, and in fact some of his ideas have recently been traced to certain Jesuits who may have been his original sources of inspiration. Pope Paul V befriended him, and Cardinal Barberini, later Urban VIII, congratulated him in writing for his *Letters on the Sunspots*. This was in **1613**, and marks the first time the Copernican theory was endorsed in print.

That whore, the Renaissance, was already bearing the Reformation in her womb. Appealing to the vanity and curiosity of the common man by publishing in the vernacular, the conspirators quickly carried the revolution to those least equipped intellectually to withstand its errors. In **1614** Galileo formally proclaimed Copernicanism in a famous letter to Cosimo's mother, the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany. Actually a revised version of one he had previously written Castelli, it was ignored by the Magisterium; but when a year later the Carmelite friar, Paolo Foscarini, a provincial of his Order, made bold to support Galileo publicly with an attempt to prove that the new theory was not opposed to Scripture, Cardinal St. Robert Bellarmine, as "Master of Controversial Questions," rose to repel these earth-movers now invading metaphysics, a field where science has no competence. On April 12, **1615** he wrote Fr. Paolo:

I have gladly read the letter in Italian and the treatise which Your Reverence sent me, and I thank you for both. And I confess that both are filled with ingenuity and learning, and since you ask for my opinion, I will give it to you very briefly, as you have little time for reading and I for writing.

First. I say that it seems to me that Your Reverence and Galileo did prudently to content yourself with speaking hypothetically, and not absolutely, as I have always believed that Copernicus spoke. For to say that, assuming the earth moves and the sun stands still, all the appearances are saved better than with eccentrics and epicycles, is to speak well; there is no danger in this, and it is sufficient for mathematicians. But to want to affirm that the sun really is fixed in the center of the heavens and only revolves around itself (turns upon its axis) without traveling from east to west, and that the earth is situated in the third sphere and revolves with great speed around the sun, is a very dangerous thing, not only by irritating all the philosophers and scholastic theologians, but also by injuring our holy faith and rendering the Holy Scriptures false. For Your reverence has demonstrated many ways of explaining Holy Scripture, but you have not applied them in particular, and without a doubt you would have found it most difficult if you had attempted to explain all the passages which you yourself have cited.

Second. I say that, as you know, the Council (of Trent) prohibits expounding the Scriptures contrary to the common agreement of the holy Fathers. And if Your Reverence would read not only the Fathers but also the commentaries of modern writers on Genesis, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and Josue, you would find that all agree in explaining literally (*ad litteram*) that the sun is in the heavens and moves swiftly around the earth, and that the earth is far from the heavens and stands immobile in the center of the universe. Now consider whether in all prudence the Church could encourage giving to Scripture a sense contrary to the holy Fathers and all the Latin and Greek commentators. Nor may it be answered that this is not a matter of faith, for if it is not a matter of faith from the point of view of the subject matter, it is on the part of the ones who have spoken. It would be just as heretical to deny that Abraham had two sons and Jacob twelve, as it would be to deny the virgin birth of Christ, for both are declared by the Holy Ghost through the mouths of the prophets and apostles.

Third. I say that if there were a true demonstration that the sun was in the center of the

universe and the earth in the third sphere, and that the sun did not travel around the earth but the earth circled the sun, then it would be necessary to proceed with great caution in explaining the passages of Scripture which seemed contrary, and we would rather have to say that we did not understand them than to say that something was false which has been demonstrated. But I do not believe that there is any such demonstration; none has been shown to me. It is not the same thing to show that the appearances are saved by assuming that the sun is at the center and the earth is in the heavens, as it is to demonstrate that the sun really is in the center and the earth in the heavens. I believe that the first demonstration might exist, but I have grave doubts about the second, and in a case of doubt, one may not depart from the Scriptures as explained by the holy Fathers. I add that the words "the sun also riseth and the sun goeth down, and hasteneth to the place where he ariseth, etc." were those of Solomon, who not only spoke by divine inspiration but was a man wise above all others and most learned in human sciences and in the knowledge of all created things, and his wisdom was from God. Thus it is not too likely that he would affirm something which was contrary to a truth either already demonstrated, or likely to be demonstrated. And if you tell me that Solomon spoke only according to the appearances, and that it seems to us that the sun goes around when actually it is the earth which moves, as it seems to one on a ship that the beach moves away from the ship, I shall answer that one who departs from the beach, though it looks to him as though the beach moves away, he knows that he is in error and corrects it, seeing clearly that the ship moves and not the beach. But with regard to the sun and the earth, no wise man is needed to correct the error, since he clearly experiences that the earth stands still and that his eye is not deceived when it judges that the moon and stars move. And that is enough for the present.

I salute Your Reverence and ask God to grant you every happiness.

Moderate and well-founded, the Cardinal's admonition stated squarely the tradition of the Church. After Aristotle had so ably defended geocentricity with arguments from commonsense, no great mind had seriously questioned it. If tides for instance, are caused by the earth's rotation, as claimed by the earth-shakers, how does it happen that we have two tides daily, and not only one? What keeps seas, lakes and rivers from overflowing their banks, etc.? Using only natural reason, Aristotle had conceived a universe composed of two unequal parts, one celestial, beyond the lunar orbit; and the other below this orbit, consisting of the spherical Earth, fixed and at rest in the center of the whole system. All was enclosed in a *Primum Mobile*, outside which Aristotle concluded there was neither place, nor void, nor time. Hence whatever is there is of such kind as not to occupy space, nor does time affect it. In other words, beyond the celestial heavens was the metaphysical great outdoors, God's "third heaven" of light and love, naturally impenetrable by man, but into which chosen souls like St. Paul may be supernaturally introduced by God's own power.

As later adjusted by Ptolemy (whose armillary sphere is depicted here by Albrecht Durer), this system accorded with both Revelation and visible appearances. The majestic heavens with their mighty cycles revolved in gracious harmony around a stationary Earth as their center, providing it incomparable adornment, nay, glory. The whole is driven by angelic intelligences whose duty it is to sustain the cosmological counterpoint. Although, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, planets can be said to orbit "naturally," this is only in the sense that they have no repugnance to circular motion. Having no active, but only a passive potency for it, they have to be moved by voluntary agents. Throughout history navigators have based their calculations on this geocentric model, and Columbus re-discovered half the world with it. Navigators still use it, and surprising as it may seem, so do NASA and the astronauts in planning space flights.

As we have said, both heliocentricity and geocentricity are naturally unprovable. Geocentricity, however, can be proved theologically, whereas heliocentricity cannot. Galileo and his friends had to confront able polemicists like Lodovico delle Colombe, who based his *Against the*

Motion of the Earth exclusively on heavy arguments from Scripture. Like all theologians of his day, he believed that Scripture did in fact teach science where the constitution and movements of the heavens were concerned, and was not merely indulging in metaphor. To Msgr. Piero Dini, one of Galileo's most fervent supporters, Cardinal Bellarmine quoted **Psalm 18** as evidence that it is the sun, not Earth, that moves. In **verse 6** the sun is pictured as a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber, rejoicing as a giant to run the way: His going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof.

Move not, O sun, toward Gabaon, nor thou, O moon, toward the valley of Ajalon, whereupon, the sun and the moon stood still, till the people revenged themselves of their enemies (**Jos. 10: 12-13**).

And again, as St. Robert Bellarmine pointed out, the Preacher says,

The sun riseth and goeth down and returneth to his place: and there rising again, maketh his round by the south and turneth again to the north (**Eccles. 1:5-6**).

Scripture also specifies that Earth is immovable in the face of these solar and lunar peregrinations, **Psalm 92** stating flatly that God hath established the world which shall not be moved. **Psalm 103** says He has founded the earth upon its own bases; it shall not be moved forever and ever. **Psalm 95** telling us God has corrected the world, which shall not be moved.

Again, in **1 Paralipomenon 16:30**:

He hath founded the earth immovable, notwithstanding that according to Job 26:7, God by His power stretched out the north over the empty space and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

Most significantly, Scripture says God made the morning light and the sun, as two distinct entities in no way identical. That the sun cannot be the center of the universe is clear from Genesis, where we learn what we have no other way of knowing: that both light and the Earth existed days before the sun was even created. The solar function, along with that of the moon and stars, all created on the same day, is that of a subordinate, not a master. These bodies were made to shine upon the earth, to rule the day and the night, and to divide the light and the darkness, besides being for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years. One might call them luminous clocks, albeit indispensable, but still secondary adjuncts.

More important yet, Revelation tells us that the ultimate reason for Earth's creation was not merely to provide man with a natural habitat. Its first purpose was transcendent: Earth was destined to be the absolute ground of the Incarnation. Congruity alone therefore demands that its position be central. On Earth God created man exactly midway between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Midway also between the material and the spiritual creations, man is the sole creature composed of both matter and spirit, even as the Sacred Humanity is the sole creature possessing both a human and a divine nature, by hypostatic union with the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Inasmuch as God from the beginning intended to become man at a specific, absolute moment in the "fullness" of time (**Gal. 4:4**), man is necessarily the central, unique ruler of material creation: Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. (**Gen. 1:26**)

Man was therefore not originally given dominion over the heavens, but he was destined for it. As St. Paul points out in **Hebrews 1:5**, although angels are of a higher order by nature than man, God never became an angel, nor did he ever call an angel *son*. After the Resurrection, at the time of His Ascension, Christ the God-man Jesus declares, "All power is given to me in heaven

and in earth" (**Matt. 28:18**), bequeathing to His Apostles a new dominion in His name. After His departure the angels tell them, "This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven." (**Acts 1:11**)

No Christian need therefore lose his sense of direction in the universe. Down is the center of Earth, the location of Hell and Purgatory, to which the Creed tells us our Lord descended before He arose from the dead. Up is God and His Heaven, with the divine Mediator bridging the impossible gap between the two. "Now that He ascended, what is it?" asks St. Paul, "but because He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." (**Eph. 4: 9-10**).

This divine Son Jesus, Who lived a human life on Earth, continues to abide there mystically but really in the Blessed Sacrament, body, soul, blood and divinity. With the institution of the Mass after the Last Supper, Earth became the constant theater of the Holy Sacrifice about to be offered on Calvary, and the home of the sacramental Christ. The Sacred Heart of the God-man throbbing even now on Earth, is the true spiritual and physical center of the universe. Those who have the temerity to displace the Blessed Sacrament from the main altars of churches to side chapels or remote corners, betray the same perversity as those who wish to displace the Son of Man from His central position in Creation by making of Earth, His predestined seat, some obscure outpost in a second rate galaxy. Woe to them when He returns as He promised!

Thus it is clear that the structure of the universe is properly an object of faith. God had to reveal that He made Earth its center, because although, like Aristotle, we might believe so from observation, on purely human faith, we could never be certain in view of the impossibility of scientific proof. There are said to be some **2000** biblical passages supporting the geocentric hypothesis, whereas apparently none support the heliocentric one. By making the sun the center of Creation, heliocentrism reveals itself as little more than a modern version of Mithraism, the old sun worshippers' heresy, a deification of material energy akin to pantheism.

Small wonder that a solar idol (a huge sunburst composed of gleaming gold-filled wire borrowed from the Metropolitan Museum) reigns in the upper reaches of the National Air and Space Museum on the Mall in the Nation's Capital. Scripture warns:

What is brighter than the sun; yet it shall be eclipsed. Or what is more wicked than that which flesh and blood hath invented? And this shall be reproved (**Eccles. 17:30**).

It is a matter of record that no modern scientist has yet been canonized. Even the Catholics among them, like Galileo, were not noted for their spirituality. Yet, Mother Church continues to maintain, as she has for nearly **2000** years, that no contradiction is possible between faith and science, each being in its own way a revelation of God, who is Truth itself. Indeed, until men like Copernicus and Galileo appeared and were listened to, harmony did prevail. Conflict began only when false science, which cannot accord with truth, reared its head from the abyss. After Alchemy -- specifically characterized in hermetical tradition as the operation of the Sun -- dissolved into the larger Baconian revolution and came out as modern science, it began postulating its own dogmas apart from God's testimony about His own works. Succumbing like Eve to the Serpent's primordial invitation to "be as Gods," scientists began throwing theological guidelines to the winds, inevitably abandoning the real world for one of their own imagining.

Their course led ever farther from the visible and observable to the hypothetical and purely mathematical. Despite the popular impression, Galileo scoffed at experimental proof, finding this suitable only for untutored minds who couldn't handle equations. In other words, science was becoming a true *gnosticism*, meant only for initiates, as it is today. It was the great Aquinas who had maintained that the insights given by mathematics are shallow compared to those offered to

everyone by the physical senses. He was soon left behind.

Yet, with no sense of irony or contradiction, the new gnostics opted for the "practical." Deductive reasoning, which by its nature tends to certifiable conclusions, was abandoned in favor of inductive reasoning, which yields only probabilities, resting as it does on constantly accumulating data. Perpetually shifting its premises, such "science" is not concerned with truth at all, but only with what works for the moment. Small wonder that from its inception it began displaying successes in technology similar to those its handmaid, usury, displayed in economics. The Revolt spawned them both, and they continue to maintain their ascendancy today through their magical ability to confer material comforts and conveniences in ever cascading quantity on bewitched consumers.

By the close of the 19th century science had covered God's whole Earth with electric wires and was imposing its dicta on religion. Catholic apologists could insist that no contradiction existed between science and religion only at the cost of constantly tailoring the Faith to the current science fiction. Acknowledging no master, science opened itself without reserve to every dazzling inspiration of the Enemy, against whose delusions it no longer had the slightest protection. In the frenzy for intellectual freedom, all absolutes eventually gave way; and what was once an ordered, closed, unique Universe created by God and governed by His angelic ministers, became a cold "expanding" cosmos where matter itself, by infinite extension, became eternal.

This Universe, whose center can be anywhere and nowhere, is acceptable only to those who seek to endow matter with the properties of divinity; in other words, to pantheists like Karl Marx or Teilhard de Chardin. It is sheer nonsense to the Christian, whose Creed states, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. If the universe is created, it is by that very token finite, incapable of generating either itself or evolving some "noospheric" spirit not there to begin with. Even angels, purely spiritual beings, are finite and limited, because they are created. Like the mythical "x" of algebra, "infinity" as regards physical things exists only in mathematics. It can be a useful intellectual tool, but it is unable to convey reality. Any Christian knows by faith that the universe has absolute dimensions with reference to God, the Primary Point of Reference.

Material infinity as conceived today is yet another hoary heresy, preached in Aquinas' day by the heretical Siger de Brabant and others. Shortly before Galileo it emerged again in the work of the renegade Dominican friar turned Calvinist, Giordano Bruno, who set himself to presenting Copernicanism in metaphysical terms. Denying the centrality of Earth or any planet, and affirming the infinity of space and the existence of other worlds, he too was taken to task by that zealous watch-dog of orthodoxy, St. Robert Bellarmine. Duly prosecuted, he unfortunately remained obdurate in his error and was burned at the stake in 1600. Galileo was then 36 years old, already deeply won to the new ideas. When it became his turn to stand trial, however, he would feign surface compliance. Far more dangerous than Bruno, he set an example which the modernists succeeding him would follow: They would remain within the Church, as he did, to bring her around to the new thinking.

Faith and the new science were doomed to collision from the outset, and the point of encounter was basic: the motion of the Earth. It is still the crucial issue. Mother Church foresaw what would happen if the Copernican heresy were allowed to sap the credibility of Scripture. This is the only reason the theory had any interest for her. Galileo was not condemned any more than Copernicus for presenting his observations on the movement of the heavenly bodies, but for implying on the basis of these observations that Scripture was in error, or rather, as modernists would later maintain, erroneously interpreted by Tradition. Both Scripture and Tradition were therefore in jeopardy. If the sun did not move, and so could not have been made to stand still as

stated in the book of Josue, then Scripture could say one thing and mean another. If this could be proved regarding so important a fact as the sun revolving around the Earth, then the Bible could hardly be trusted wholly in any area.

Loosing this bombshell at the very height of the Protestant Revolt, when already huge segments of Christendom were interpreting the Bible to suit themselves, was a masterstroke on the part of the Enemy. Relying as they did on Scripture as sole source of revelation, even some of the heretics were alarmed. Aghast at Copernicus, Martin Luther had exclaimed: "The fool wants to turn the whole science of astronomy upside down." And the Anglican divine John Donne wailed, "'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone. And oh, it can no more be questioned that beauty's self, proportion is dead..." In his *Essay on Man*, Alexander Pope would get closer to the heart of the matter:

In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies:
All quit their sphere and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes.
Men would be angels, angels would be
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel.

In **1616** the Congregation of the Index, founded by St. Pius V in **1571**, was forced to take action, based on the findings of consultors to the Holy Office. Without naming Galileo, it banned all writings which treated of Copernicanism as anything but an unproven hypothesis,

... because it has come to the attention of this Congregation that the Pythagorean doctrine which is false and contrary to Holy Scripture, which teaches the motion of the earth and the immobility of the sun, and which is taught by Nicholas Copernicus in *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*, and by Diego de Zuniga's *On Job*, is now being spread and accepted by many -- as may be seen from a letter of a Carmelite Father entitled "Letter of the Rev. Father Paolo Antonio Foscarini Carmelite, on the Opinion of the Pythagorean: and of Copernicus concerning the Motion of the Earth and the Stability of the Sun, and the New Pythagorean System of the World," printed in Naples by Lazzaro Scoriggio in 1615: in which the said Father tries to show that the doctrine of the immobility of the sun is the center of the world, and that of the earth's motion is consonant with truth and is not opposed to Holy Scripture.

Therefore, so that this opinion may not spread any further to the prejudice of Catholic truth, it (the Sacred Congregation) decrees that the said Nicholas Copernicus, *De revolutionibus orbium*, and Diego de Zuniga, *On Job*, be suspended until corrected; but that the book of the Carmelite Father, Paolo Foscarini, be prohibited and condemned, and that all other books likewise, in which the same is taught, be prohibited...

At Cardinal Bellarmine's entreaty, Galileo had previously agreed to teach the new theory only as an unproven hypothesis, but actually he continued to expound it as probable. In **1632** in his *Dialogue concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, with a pretense of objectivity, he put the telling heliocentric arguments in the mouth of the champion of the piece, whereas the geocentric ones fell into the mouth of an idiot labeled *Simplicio*. Prefaced by a hypocritical justification of the Index' decision, the book fooled no one. "I am told on very good authority," its author wrote a friend, "that the Jesuit fathers have persuaded those concerned that my book is more reprehensible and more calculated to harm the Church than were the writings of Luther and Calvin."

A year later Galileo -- and not just his theory -- was brought to trial, where it was established that he had in fact taught it as proved, besides glossing Scripture to support it, whereas his judges maintained,

The proposition that the Sun is the center of the world and does not move from its place is

absurd and false philosophically and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and likewise, the proposition that the Earth is not the center of the world and immovable but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is equally absurd and false philosophically and theologically considered at least erroneous in faith.

The condemnation was signed by seven judges, but not by the Pope, so there is no question here of an *ex cathedra* pronouncement. Nonetheless, Galileo had by this time completely alienated Urban VIII, who had encouraged his studies and even granted him a pension. There was no torture of any kind. Wishing to remain in the Church, the **70**-year-old Galileo abjured his opinions without coercion or difficulty. He expressed bitterness only at being sentenced to punishment:

We condemn you to the formal prison of this Holy Office during our pleasure, the bench decreed, and by way of salutary penance we enjoin that for three years to come you repeat once a week the seven penitential Psalms. Reserving to ourselves the liberty to moderate, commute, or take off, in whole or in part, the aforesaid penalties and penance.

They did. Galileo's favorite daughter, Sr. Maria, undertook to recite the Psalms for him, and the "formal prison of the Holy Office" turned out to be his own house in Arcetri near Florence.

If he ever said *Still, it moves*, as so often attributed to him, no contemporary recorded it. His *Dialogue* was of course now prohibited by public edict. Admitting he had disobeyed the previous injunction of the Inquisitors, he signed a long statement protesting that

... with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith I abjure, curse and detest the aforesaid errors and heresies and generally every other error, heresy and sect whatsoever contrary to the Holy Church, and I swear that in future I will never again say or assert, verbally or in writing, anything that might furnish occasion for a similar suspicion regarding me; but, should I know any heretic or person suspected of heresy, I will denounce him to this Holy Office or to the Inquisitor or Ordinary of the place where I may be. . .

He continued experimental work on motion for about ten years, dying blind and still under house arrest. Two centuries later Thomas Huxley, in a letter to Prof. St. George Mivart, dated November 12, **1885**, summed it up thus:

I gave some attention to the case of Galileo when I was in Italy, and I arrived at the conclusion that the Pope and the College of Cardinals had rather the best of it.

The import of the controversy cannot be overestimated. The displacement of Earth made it possible for legions of heresies to proliferate under cover of scientific research. The untenable theory of evolution is merely one of them, profoundly theological in character, but always camouflaged in pseudo-technical vocabulary. Some of the finest minds of Christendom have thus been deceived. With Galileo began the times when "...the powers that are in heaven shall be moved, concerning which our Lord said, Watch!" (Mark 13:25)

Occurring as it does near the beginning of the Fifth Age of the Church, which began with the reign of the Emperor Charles V, the Galileo revolt is only now approaching its climax. According to the respected interpretation of Ven. Clement Holzhauser and the exegetical school of Nicholas of Lyra, this period is exemplified in the *Apocalypse* by the letter to the Church at Sardis, at which Christ levels the accusation, "Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead." (**Apo. 3:1**) It is predominantly the age of lies and heresy unparalleled. With unity dissolved at all levels of society, the vast majority of people calling themselves Christians no longer live the Faith.

It is significant that the name Sardis can mean "remnant." Excepted from the general corruption are only a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments. All are exhorted to if be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die.

For I find not thy works full before my God. Have in mind therefore in what manner

thou hast received and heard: and observe, and do penance, for Christ's return to Earth as a thief is imminent and will catch the indifferent unawares. He promises that those who remain faithful shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy. He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Apo. 3: 2-5)

This is where we stand today, at a time when heliocentricity, a true heresy, has overwhelmed the entire thinking world, including the teaching organ of the Church. Rome held the line against the Enemy until the reign of Pius VII, who in **1822** finally gave limited entry to the general opinion of modern astronomers.

When Gregory XVI removed heliocentric works from the Index in **1835**, the sequel was not hard to predict. Two modern encyclicals on Scripture, the liberal Leo XIII's *Providentissimus Deus* in **1893**, and especially Pius XII's *Divino Afflante Spiritu* in **1943** (said to have been actually penned by the judaizing Cardinal Bea) opened the floodgates to almost any kind of "accommodated" meanings of Scripture. Although the authenticity of the Vulgate decreed by the *Council of Trent* is maintained, *Divino Afflante* holds, "...its authenticity is not specified primarily as critical, but rather as juridical", a curious distinction, when all that matters is what Scripture really says. "The Holy Fathers, the Doctors of the Church and the renowned interpreters of past ages are characterized as sometimes less instructed in profane learning and in the knowledge of languages than the Scripture scholars of our time."

No mention is made of the fact that these Fathers and Doctors -- notably St. Jerome, to whom we are indebted for the present form of the Vulgate -- were in fact multi-lingual and far closer to sources than the ablest scholar today, both in space and in time, not to mention in mentality. Nevertheless, fruitful union is condescendingly hoped for between "the doctrine... of the ancient authors and the greater erudition and maturer knowledge of the modern." Solutions to biblical difficulties must furthermore "satisfy the indubitable conclusions of profane sciences." In other words, Galileo's views are now the norm regarding biblical exegesis itself, which now forms part of the larger body of science. Insight into the depths of Scripture is now no longer the exclusive gift of the Holy Ghost.

Vatican II delivered the final blow in *The pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* by deploring certain habits of mind, sometimes found too among Christians, which do not sufficiently attend to the rightful independence of science. The arguments and controversies which they spark lead many minds to conclude that faith and science are mutually opposed. (III,36).

Indeed. The sole great and holy voice raised against the debacle had been that of St. Pius X, who in his Syllabus *Lamentabili Sane* and elsewhere condemned the notions that "...the interpretation of the Sacred Books ... is subject to the more accurate judgment and correction of the exegetes," or that "...Divine inspiration does not extend to all of Sacred Scripture, so that it renders its parts, each and every one, free from every error." Also condemned was the prevalent idea that, "...Since the deposit of Faith contains only revealed truths, the Church has no right to pass judgment on the assertions of the human sciences..." the truth of the matter being that Scripture contains many truths which can be known by reason alone, or by simple observation.

In **1979** John Paul II (the pope specifically symbolized as *De Labore Solis* in St. Malachy's famous prophecy) requested the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, in conjunction with the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers, to re-examine Galileo's case and "...in frank recognition of wrongs wherever they originate, to dispel the mistrust that this affair still arouses in many minds, preventing fruitful concord between science and faith, between the Church and the world."

The groundwork for exonerating Galileo was initiated by a liberal French Dominican, Fr.

Dominic Dubarle, an atomic scientist and pugwash conferee, who first broached the idea to Pope John XXIII when he was papal Nuncio in Paris. Paul VI steadfastly refused the possibility, but John Paul II proved more receptive. A Commission for this heady work was duly named, chaired by Archbishop Paul Poupard of the Secretariat.

Among its members is the American Fr. William Wallace, O.P., a former electrical engineer, physicist and Commander in the Navy, who now teaches history and philosophy at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Lecturing in March **1982** at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, he disclosed this alarming information:

The total content of revelation was not available for authoritative definition with the death of the last Apostle. Only through slow and pains-taking scientific investigation were the literary genres of the Bible uncovered and the rules for its interpretation ascertained. The example is simple, but it illustrates well the true complementarity of science and religion, of reason and belief. Were such rules known to Rome in **1615** and **1633**, Galileo would have been spared the indignity to which he was finally subjected. But had he not suffered that indignity, had he not been motivated by that passionate desire for truth that brought it about, Scriptural studies would never have achieved the status they enjoy today.

If Fr. Wallace speaks here for the Commission as a whole, the outcome of the re-trial is a foregone conclusion. Well may Protestants like Walter van der Kamp, editor of the geocentric *Bulletin of the Tychonian Society* in Canada (from which much of the contents of this paper have been gratefully drawn), fear for orthodoxy. In the December **1981** issue of that bulletin Van der Kamp wrote the following:

For the Galileo affair and its aftermath, as all historians of whatever aspect of human action and thought acknowledge, has wrought a change in our attitude towards the world not equalled by anything since Our Lord was among us . . . Straws in the wind and the Vatican's tactical retreats from **1822** onwards presage a conciliatory course and a compromise whereby the give is on Rome's side and the take on the side of Scientism. For unless the Catholic Church surrenders the claim, hushed up but never yet openly and completely abandoned, that the Earth according to Holy Writ is the unmoved center of the observable Universe, and hence is that center -- is there anyone who thinks that secular science will sign a peace treaty?

In about a hundred years the Roman Church has reached the position that it took the large "mainline" Protestant denominations **300** years to reach. This is especially deplorable because it occurs at a time when "orthodox" Christianity, driven back step by step since **1543**, dares to fight again. During the last decennia the tide of the battle between Science and Theology has begun to turn. All over the world 'liberal' denominations, the Roman Catholic church included, are losing members by the ten thousands, while evangelical and fundamentalist groups are growing. Creationists speak and act with such a zeal that Darwin's devotees now are rallying around their leaders to organize a defense. To top all these anachronistic apparitions, even defenders of a geocentric Universe, pointing at the *vitium originis*, the basic error behind the downfall of Western Christianity, are again coming out of the woodwork.

Against this background the Vatican's revision of the trial of Galileo within the broader context of a desirable rapprochement between secular science and sacred theology gains added significance. What is Pope John Paul II going to do? Taking into account his fairly positive comments on Vatican II, I fear that he will neglect the renaissance among us, whom he calls "separated brethren". Galileo will be canonized, and St. Robert Bellarmine quietly sacked.

This paper, written in **1983**, was slightly revised & computerized in **1998**.
Substantially, it forms Chapter 4 of ***Beyond Politics*** [Solange Hertz], 1995.
[currently out of print]

Bulletin of the Tychonian Society was turned over by Walter Van der Kamp [**1913-1998**]
to Gerardus D. Bouw, Ph.D., who currently titles this publication
The Biblical Astronomer, at 4527 Wetzel Avenue, Cleveland OH 44109, USA

A number of papers on the Geocentricity-Heliocentricity [A-centricity] issue
are temporarily available from origins@ev1.net

From this same source is also available [in electronic or photocopy form] the out-of-print books,
Beyond Politics, Solange Hertz, **1995**, 156pp
De Labore Solis, Walter van der Kamp, **1988**, 172pp
[copy permission granted by Mrs Hertz & the Van der Kamp family, respectively]

2001 A.D.