

Was It / Is It Infallible ?

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Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918) co-founder and first president of Cornell University and author of *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896) was certainly no lover of the Catholic Church. Envisioning himself as the righteous victor in the great war for scientific progress, he summed up his own life work and the spirit behind it in the following words:

This book is presented as a sort of *Edrsrbg qlks* -- a tribute to Cornell University as it enters the second quarter-century of its existence. ...

The ideas for which so bitter a struggle was made at its foundation have triumphed. ... During the quarter-century just past the control of public instruction, not only in America but in the leading nations of Europe, has passed more and more from the clergy to the laity. ... the same thing is seen in the old European strongholds of metaphysical theology. At my first visit to Oxford and Cambridge, forty years ago, they were entirely under ecclesiastical control. Now all that is changed. An eminent member of the present British Government has recently said, "A candidate for high university position is handicapped by holy orders." I refer to this with not the slightest feeling of hostility toward the clergy, for I have none; ... but the above fact is simply noted as proving the continuance of that evolution which I have endeavoured to describe in this series of monographs -- an evolution, indeed, in which the warfare of Theology against Science has been one of the most active and powerful agents. ... My conviction is that Science, though it has evidently conquered Dogmatic Theology based on biblical texts and ancient modes of thought, will go hand in hand with Religion; and that, although theological control will continue to diminish, Religion, as seen in the recognition of "a Power in the universe, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," and in the love of God and of our neighbor, will steadily grow stronger and stronger, not only in the American institutions of learning but in the world at large. Thus may the declaration of Micah as to the requirements of Jehovah, the definition by St. James of "pure religion and undefiled," and above all, the precepts and ideals of the blessed Founder of Christianity himself, be brought to bear more and more effectively on mankind.¹

Academic man that he was, Dr. White saw science as only one, albeit "one of the most powerful and active agents" in a **general evolutionary progress** affecting all facets of life. He died in **1918** and so did not live to see the present consequences of that warfare he described. For while his "Science" has indeed conquered that despised "Dogmatic Theology based on biblical texts and ancient modes of thought". And while "theological control has continued to diminish" even to the point of disappearance, the "Religion" he saw as growing steadily "stronger and stronger ... in the

¹ Andrew Dickson White. *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. 2 vols. New York: Dover Publications, 1960, pp. xi-xii. Originally published by Macmillan in 1896.

One may be permitted to wonder what Dr. White would think of today's secularized priest-administrators like Fr. Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame. I suspect that he would be shocked, for he did not envision the abandonment of theology by the very men ordained to uphold it. But insofar as he foresaw and desired the **submission** of theology to science, he was right on target. And this, of course, has resulted in the syncretism of "one God fits all". See "The Perils of Pagan Piety" by Solange hertz in *Apostasy in America*, Veritas Press, Santa Monica CA, 1999.

world at large" as "a Power for righteousness" is indeed growing strong every day into the one-world religion of the Anti-Christ, prefigured at Assisi in 1986 when Pope John Paul II placed himself, as Christ's Vicar, on an equal plane with the worshippers of the demonic gods of Hinduism and Judaism. Outrageous blasphemy!

There is an infallibly operative principle in reality that minds, conquered by the illusion of liberalist modernism, never understand. It is the **principle of hierarchy**, of the inherent, **created inequality** among all things.

There is good order; but then there is an evil order which quickly degenerates into disorder and chaos. Both good and evil order are the result of the created inequalities of nature. Only in an evil order man's free will has intervened to destroy the good order intended by God.

In good order, the nobler beings and the nobler, higher sciences rule and govern the lower. The higher and nobler recognize their responsibilities towards the lower and rule with charity, while the lower gladly submit to the higher as to God Himself from Whom alone all legitimate authority flows. Good order can only prevail where the true faith is acknowledged and practiced by heads of state. Thus we contemplate with something of both envy and delight the good order of medieval Christendom.

Today, however, there is an evil order gaining ascendancy in the world. It obtains in the sciences and is fast coming to fruition in society at large on a global scale. Due to the **root error** of Russia, about which Our Lady warned us at Fatima, that is, the rule of the proletariat, Satan through his agents has conspired to bring about **class warfare at every level** -- rich against poor, colored against white, women against men, atheist against theist, Protestant against Catholic, neo-Catholic against traditional Catholic, and the ultimate **pretended equality** of good with evil, of virtue with vice (Cf. **Isaiah 5:20**) "straight" against "gay". Under pretext of striving for these mythical rights, the stronger will dominate the weaker and the inevitable result will be the exact opposite of good order. Out of this present democratic lawlessness must come the Dictator capable of forcing his rule on good and evil alike. He is the Prince of Lawlessness, the Anti-Christ.

Such fulfillment of his hopes was undoubtedly far from the mind of Dr. White, optimist-liberal that he was. The consequences of his victory could not have been foreseen by him because he was **not** guided by truth. His science was, in its essential intellectual content and intent, the **grossest error** and not a little **pride**. He lived in a time when Copernicanism was accepted as unquestionable fact and he basked in the triumph of Darwinism. Morality cannot long endure deprived of its roots in reason and faith. Dr. White's science **violates reason** and **scorns Biblical faith**.

The only Catholic of any note to challenge Dr. White's attacks on the Church and its supposed opposition to true science was **James J. Walsh**, Dean and Professor of the History of Medicine at Fordham University in the early part of the century. Dr. Walsh is most famous for his book *The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries* (1906) but his work on *The Popes and Science* (1908) has been just as popular judging from the great numbers of copies **discarded** from Catholic libraries in the wake of *Vatican II*. This latter book is **a running polemic** with White's *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. However, neither Walsh nor White were able to be objective in the highest and truest sense of that word. Walsh, the Catholic, was not able to see the **supernatural** dimensions of his subject, which was primarily medical science, and was intent

upon defending the popes and the Church **in the natural order only**, as the popes were patrons of scientific progress in empirical and experimental methods and results. Thus Dr. Walsh's fervent and at times shockingly insensitive defense of the practice of dissection.

His cold barbarism outstrips that of the most ardent medieval relic-snatcher. He had little or no reverence for the human body as a temple of the Holy Ghost. His was a truly **ruthless detachment**.

As for the Galileo case, he held that "it was an unfortunate incident, but not a policy." **All** that he thought of it can be summed up in these words of his:

There is no doubt that Galileo was prosecuted by the Roman inquisition on account of his astronomical teachings. We would be the last to deny that this was a deplorable mistake made by persons in ecclesiastical authority, who endeavoured to make a Church tribunal the judge of scientific truth, a function altogether alien to its character which it was not competent to exercise.

I have tried to show in my paper *Galileo's Heresy* that Galileo was not condemned directly for any scientific teaching but primarily and directly for the heresy of doubting or denying the inerrancy of Scripture. The theological consultants who condemned the two propositions concerning the movements of the sun and the earth were entirely within their competence and authority in that they judged those propositions to be contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the unanimity of the Fathers on such physical matters. Dr. Walsh continues:

The fact that this was practically the only time that this was done serves to show that it was an unfortunate incident, but not a policy. The mistake has been to conclude that this was a typical case -- one of many, more flagrant than the others.

Dr. Walsh is not entirely right here, either. It has always been not only the "policy" but the right and the duty of the Church to condemn error. In Galileo's lifetime, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) was burned at the stake for heresies that touched intimately upon the physical sciences, e.g., that the Holy Ghost was the soul of the universe, and William Turner, who writes the article on Bruno in the old Catholic encyclopedia (1907-13) admits that Bruno's monism was inspired by his Copernican beliefs. Then there were the condemnations of 1270 and 1277, many of which concerned the physical theories of the Averroists.² However, Dr. Walsh was absolutely correct when he predicted that

This single incident has indeed made it impossible that anything of the same kind should ever occur again.

Not that it necessarily had to be so, but given the consequences of original sin in us and the pride of men, it has so turned out to be so. Dr. Walsh, no less than Dr. White, accepted the Copernican error as truth:

² See Etienne Gilson. *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. New York: Random House, 1955, pp.403-405.

It was rather because of the way in which Galileo urged his truths than because of the truths themselves that he was condemned. Even Professor Huxley, in a letter to Professor St. George Mivart, November 12th, 1885, said: "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."

Huxley was referring here not to Galileo's pugnacious and arrogant attitude but to the fact that he could produce nothing remotely resembling the proofs and demonstrations that Cardinal Bellarmine had required before he would consider the Scriptures and the Fathers seriously challenged by the Copernican astronomy.

After noting that Copernicus dedicated his book to a Pope (Paul III), Dr. Walsh continues:

What we would say then, is that the story of the supposed opposition of the Church and the Popes and the ecclesiastical authorities to science in any of its branches, is founded entirely on mistaken notions. Most of it is quite imaginary. Much of it is due to the exaggeration of the significance of the Galileo incident. Only those who know nothing about the history of medicine and of science continue to harbor it. That Dr. White's book, contradicted as it is so directly by all our serious histories of medicine and of science, should have been read by so many thousands in this country, and should have been taken seriously by educated men, physicians, teachers, and even professors of science who want to know the history of their own sciences, only shows how easily even supposedly educated men may be led to follow their prejudices rather than their mental faculties, and emphasizes the fact that the tradition that there is no good that can possibly come out of the Nazareth of the times before the reformation, still dominates the intellects of many educated people who think that they are far from prejudice and have minds perfectly open to conviction.³

Dr. Walsh's historical endeavour is the same as that of Fr. Jaki: an attempt to establish **an evolutionary continuity** from the Middle Ages into the modern world. But the modern world-view gives a predominance to the natural sciences that the Catholic Middle Ages would have

³ James J. Walsh. *The Popes and Science: The History of the Papal Relations to Science During the Middle Ages and Down to Our Own Time*. New York: Fordham U. Press, Knights of Columbus Edition (1908) 1911, pp.17-19.

This Dr. Walsh also authored *Makers of Modern Medicine* (1909); *Makers of Electricity* with Brother Potamian, FSC; and *Education, How Old the New* (1910). James J. Walsh is not to be confused with that other historian and scholar, William Thomas Walsh, who is best known for his superb biographies of such great Catholics as *Philip II, Isabella of Spain, Teresa of Avila* and *Characters of the Inquisition*. Unlike James J. Walsh, William Thomas Walsh always wrote from the supernatural point of view and his works thus have that spiritual dimension without which truth is not really attained.

The reader may well wonder why the books of James J. Walsh were included among those discarded from Catholic libraries in the wake of Vatican II. I can assure the reader that this was so because I not only witnessed the trashing but was a beneficiary of such wholesale house-cleaning. The order was gradually to "weed out" books on religious subjects (this included lives of the saints) written **before 1965** and replace them with new ones written after the Council. I suggest the reason behind this demolition was the very real conviction on the part of the personnel of Catholic institutions that Vatican II ushered in a **totally new** mentality, world view, and way of viewing both past and present -- a striking witness to the inner **reality of that apostasy still going on** but which leaves men and women "having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Timothy 3:5).

Fr. Stanley Jaki in these last years of the 20th century is driven by the same agenda that drove Dr. James J. Walsh at the beginning of the century, and that is to demonstrate by fair means or foul that the Catholic Church is on the side of modern science even to the point of **embracing the errors** of that science. Such an agenda requires, of course, not a little revisionism.

rejected most emphatically. The modern world **has inverted the medieval hierarchy** of values and all but **destroyed supernatural faith** which was the very life-blood of medieval Christendom. It is therefore difficult to see how an evolutionary continuity can be established between the Middle Ages and the modern world unless one takes a very narrow, empirical view of science that places its ultimate crowning achievement in something the medieval Christians valued least of all -- **technology**, especially inasmuch as technology is cultivated **solely for the glory of man**, whereas God, the Creator of all things, is denied both the glory that is His due and **the rights** that are His as Sovereign Lord of the universe, Creator of all things, and our one and only Redeemer, by Whom alone we are to be saved from our sins. Largely because of modern science, the entire modern world has either lost through ignorance or explicitly rejected all that the medieval Christians held most dear -- their knowledge and love of the Blessed Trinity and the Blessed Virgin Mary, the sovereign Kingship of Christ and the Queenship of His Mother Mary. How **desolate** not to say **rotten** the modern world is because of this loss is plain to see for those who have any reason left.

Dr. White, quite unlike Dr. James J. Walsh, is most valuable to us today because he singles out specifically as his target that very **supernatural** aspect of things that Dr. Walsh does not even see. Granted that Dr. White will most often castigate this supernatural reality as "superstition" and irrational "dogma". Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see through his prejudices to the realities we are trying to uncover.

Dr. White is also valuable for us because, despite his obvious biases, he was **a real scholar**. His book, especially in its documentation, is a gold mine of source material. He was acquainted with all the best libraries of Europe as well as of America and could read the scholarly works of the most learned men.

The following survey of Dr. White's chapters on the Galileo case is **admittedly selective**. I do not wish to whitewash or even attempt to explain those instances of real error on the part of medieval writers. It is simply not the focus of this paper to deal with every such case. The reader is invited to consult Dr. White's chapters on "Astronomy" for himself. My purpose is to fill in what has been **sorely lacking** in discussions of the Galileo affair to date.

Speaking of "the geocentric doctrine -- the doctrine that the earth is the centre, and that the sun and planets revolve about it" Dr. White admits:

This doctrine was of the highest respectability; it had been developed at a very early period, and had been elaborated until it accounted well for the apparent movements of the heavenly bodies; its final name, "Ptolemaic theory," carried weight; and having thus come from antiquity into the Christian world, St. Clement of Alexandria demonstrated that the altar in the Jewish tabernacle was "a symbol of the earth placed in the middle of the universe"; nothing more was needed; the geocentric theory was fully adopted by the Church and universally held to agree with the letter and spirit of Scripture.⁴

Three great men, according to Dr. White, were primarily responsible for elaborating the

⁴ White, *ibid.*, pp.115-116. All future references to White's book will be indicated by the page number in the text of the paper.

geocentric cosmology:

1. Dionysius (Denis) the Areopagite widely believed to have been St. Paul's Athenian convert (See **Acts 17:34**) wrote works on the celestial hierarchy, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, on mystical theology and on the Divine Names of God. St. Thomas makes abundant use of this great theologian.

2. Peter Lombard (fl.ca.**1150**) author of the *Sentences or Statements of the Fathers* -- a universally used manual of theology. In it was especially developed the view of man's relation to the universe:

Just as man is made for the sake of God -- that is, that he may serve Him, -- so the universe is made for the sake of man that is, that it may serve him; therefore is man placed at the middle point of the universe, that he may both serve and be served. (p.117)

3. St. Thomas Aquinas (**1225-1274**).

The great triad of thinkers culminated in St. Thomas Aquinas the sainted theologian, the glory of the mediaeval Church, the "Angelic Doctor," the most marvelous intellect between Aristotle and Newton; ... Large of mind, strong, acute, yet just -- even more than just -- to **his opponents, he gave forth ... his** Cyclopaedia of Theology, the *Summa Theologica*. In this he carried the sacred theory of the universe to its full development. With great power and clearness he brought the whole vast system, material and spiritual, into its relations to God and man. (p. 117)

Dr. White's modernist limitations show in his stopping with Newton -- as if there could be **any** comparison of Sir Isaac of the Royal Mint with the Prince of Theologians. God has not yet given to the world a mind to compare in any degree with that of St. Thomas. Nor does it seem likely that He ever will.

To these three theologians Dr. White adds the Italian poet Dante Alighieri (**1265-1321**) whose architectonic *Comedia* embodies the medieval cosmology in its most graphic splendor. It has been described as a Gothic cathedral in verse. Dr. White says:

Pictured by Dante, the empyrean and the concentric heavens, paradise, purgatory, and hell, were seen of all men; the God Triune, seated on his throne upon the circle of the heavens, as real as the Pope seated in the chair of St. Peter; the seraphim, cherubim, and thrones, surrounding the Almighty, as real as the Cardinals surrounding the Pope; the three great orders of angels in heaven, as real as the three great orders, bishops, priests, and deacons, on earth; and the whole system of spheres each revolving within the one above it, and all moving about the earth, subject to the *primum mobile*, as real as the feudal system of western Europe, subject to the Emperor. (pp.117-118)

Understand that for Dr. White, this magnificent image of medieval order under the sovereignty of Christ the King is but a fiction, a medieval paradigm of error and superstition. Despite his fine description of it, he misses the wondrous reality of this correspondence between the structure of the cosmos and that of good societal order. What truths to ponder here in view of our present societal chaos under the rule of a false cosmology! Cosmological a-centrism is a fitting cosmological theory for the world-wide turmoil of populist democracy's refusal to acknowledge

any Creator and Sovereign Lord except itself.

And for ourselves, too, in order to resist the temptation (and it is a temptation from the Devil) to think of this medieval world-view as just another paradigm in a succession of world-view shifts, we might need to be reminded of certain facts.

The geocentric and geostatic cosmology is based on Holy Scripture and is endorsed by the unanimity of the Fathers -- an infallible sign of truth. Theologian Emmanuel Doronzo gives us six norms for discerning the **probative value** of Tradition. The **fourth** of them is as follows:

Fourth norm. ... the doctrine of the Fathers has a particular value and a greater force in any argument drawn from Tradition, because it is scientifically the surest and easiest way to find the truth; this is the reason why the argument from Tradition is often called "the argument from the Fathers" and is confined mainly to their doctrine. In the making of such an argument, the texts should be critically and certainly established, the doctrine should be carefully evaluated to make sure that the Fathers speak of a doctrine about faith or morals and propose it positively (not merely opinionatively) as something to be held with faith, and finally the morally unanimous agreement of the Fathers on such a doctrine should be established.

Note to the text above: In order to have a morally unanimous agreement, it is sufficient that **all the Fathers of one age** agree; for, Tradition being one and immutable, one age cannot disagree with another. It is also sufficient that all the Fathers of **one large part of the Church**, for instance the Western or the Eastern regions, agree, while the other part does not positively disagree; for, the Church being one in Faith, it is impossible that a large part of it disagrees with the other about the same faith. Likewise, it is sufficient that **several outstanding Fathers**, in various principal churches and in various places and times, agree; for it is impossible that a large and important part of the Church be lacking in faith. It may also happen that the doctrine of **very few Fathers**, or even of **one single Father**, be sufficient, as expressing the tacit agreement of the others, if those Fathers or that Father have been recognized (particularly by the Magisterium) as doctors or defenders of the common faith in a particular circumstance or with regard to a particular dogma, as is the case of St. Athanasius in the question of the Incarnation against Arianism, and of St. Augustine in the question of grace against Pelagianism.⁵

With regard to the phrase above concerning "faith or morals", we know that heliocentrism and/or a-centrism are against faith because the condemnations on which Galileo's heresy are based tell us that the doctrine that the sun does not move is "formally heretical" and the doctrine that the earth moves is "at least erroneous in the faith." (See page 4 in my paper *Galileo's Heresy*). The reason for this is because, regarding the doctrine that the sun does not move around the earth "expressly contradicts the doctrine of Holy Scripture ... both in [its] literal meaning, and according to the general interpretation of the Fathers and Doctors." To hold, therefore, that the geocentric/geostatic cosmology has nothing to do with our Catholic faith is to cut us off from infallible **authentic Tradition**, an integral part of the Deposit of Faith handed down to us by the Apostles.

⁵ Emmanuel Doronzo. *The Channels of Revelation*. Middleburg, VA: Notre Dame Institute Press, 1973, pp.19-20 and on St. Thomas p.30. This book is number 3 in the series *The Science of Sacred Theology for Teachers*. Number 1 is entitled *Introduction to Theology* and number 2 is entitled *Revelation*.

In addition to the above, there is the status of St. Thomas Aquinas. Emmanuel Doronzo says this:

Thomas Aquinas, among and above all other theologians may be considered as **a particular and distinct theological place**, having a stronger probable value for a sound and sure theological investigation. This is based on a **very special commendation** of his works and doctrines by the Magisterium, beyond the title of Doctor of the Church, given also to several other theologians. The Magisterium, in fact, besides continuously praising and commending his doctrine through centuries since the very day of his canonization by John XXII (July 18, **1323**), has recently proclaimed him "Prince and Master of all scholastic doctors" (Leo XIII, Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*), "Particular support and glory of the Catholic Church" (ibid.), "Leader of Studies" (Pius XI, Encycl. *Studiorum duces*), "Common or Universal Doctor of the Church ... whose doctrine the Church has made her own" (ibid.), the one who occupies "the main place" among Catholic doctors (Paul VI, Allocution given at the Gregorian University, Sept. 10, **1975**). Besides, the Magisterium has insistently and strongly declared that theological studies should be made according to the doctrine of St. Thomas. His *Summa Theologiae* was prescribed as a text for the Italian Seminaries by Pius X (*Motu Proprio "Sacrorum antistitum"*) and by Benedict XV in **1920**, and for Germany by this same Pope in **1921**. Under the same Pontiff the Code of Canon Law proposed St. Thomas' teaching in seminaries under the form of a law: "Professors shall handle the studies and the instruction of their students according to the method, the doctrine, and the principles of the Angelic Doctor and keep these religiously" (can. 1366, #12). Pius XII in his Encycl., *Humani Generis*, urged the application of this canonical law. *Vatican II* declared that the study of speculative theology in the seminaries should be made "under the guidance of St. Thomas" (Decree on Priestly Formation, no. 16) and in Catholic schools, particularly in Universities and faculties, modern questions and investigations should be made "following in the footsteps of the Doctors of the Church, above all of St. Thomas Aquinas" (Declaration on Christian Education, no. 10).

And so, it is certain from all the above that a geocentric/geostatic universe was held by all the Fathers; and we know that it was also the view of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Church's greatest theologian. Therefore, the geocentric/geostatic essence of the medieval cosmology is infallible truth and *de fide*. It is an integral part of the Deposit of Faith and of Apostolic tradition.

Dr. White's next section, "The Heliocentric Theory", is an account of the immediate reaction to Copernicus' book, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* in **1543**. The fact that the Protestant reformers such as Luther (d.**1546**), Melancthon (d.**1566**), and Calvin (d.**1564**) were vehemently against Copernicus proves the strength of the medieval synthesis, the unity of faith that existed in Christendom prior to the Protestant revolt and that persisted in so fundamental a part of the faith as the inerrancy of Holy Scripture firmly believed to be and accepted as the very Word of God. Dr. White quotes these reformers:

Said Martin Luther: "People gave ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is of course the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth." Melancthon, mild as he was, was not behind Luther in condemning Copernicus. In his treatise on the *Elements of Physics*, published six years after Copernicus' death, says: "The eyes are witnesses that the heavens revolve in the space

of twenty-four hours. But certain men, either from the love of novelty, or to make a display of ingenuity, have concluded that the earth moves; and they maintain that neither the eighth sphere nor the sun revolves. ... Now, it is a want of honesty and decency to assert such notions publicly, and the example is pernicious. It is the part of a good mind to accept the truth as revealed by God and to acquiesce in it." Melancthon then cites passages in the Psalms and Ecclesiastes, which he declares assert positively and clearly that the earth stands fast and that the sun moves around it, and adds eight other proofs of his proposition that "the earth can be nowhere if not in the centre of the universe." So earnest does this mildest of the Reformers become, that he suggests severe measures to restrain such impious teachings as those of Copernicus.

While Lutheranism was thus condemning the theory of the earth's movement, other branches of the Protestant Church did not remain behind. Calvin took the lead, in his *Commentary on Genesis*, by condemning all who asserted that the earth is not at the centre of the universe. He clinched the matter by the usual reference to the first verse of the ninety-third Psalm, and asked, "Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?" Turretin, Calvin's famous successor, even after Kepler and Newton had virtually completed the theory of Copernicus and Galileo, put forth his compendium of theology, in which he proved, from a multitude of Scriptural texts, that the heavens, sun, and moon move about the earth, which stands still in the centre. In England we see similar theological efforts, etc. (pp.126-127)

I'm sure some reading this paper will object to these quotations from Protestants, but it should be clear to anyone familiar with the Galileo case that these men were, **in this instance**, only being faithful to their Catholic parentage. That such was the case will become even more clear in the following pages as Dr. White brings forth numerous Catholic theologians of the same mind.

Because Copernicus' book was prefaced by an assurance that the new theory was held only hypothetically by the author, Dr. White says that the matter rested though somewhat uneasily for the next seventy years:

During nearly seventy years the Church authorities evidently thought it best not to stir the matter, and in some cases professors like Calganini were allowed to present the new view purely as a hypothesis. There were, indeed, mutterings from time to time on the theological side, but there was no great demonstration against the system until **1616**. Then, when the Copernican doctrine was upheld by Galileo as a truth, and proved to be a truth by his telescope, the book was taken in hand by the Roman curia. The statements of Copernicus were condemned, "until they should be corrected"; and the corrections required were simply such as would substitute for his conclusions on the old Ptolemaic theory. (p.124)

No one today would defend Dr. White's statement that Galileo "proved" the truth of the Copernican system "by his telescope". Certainly, nothing was proved to Cardinal Bellarmine's satisfaction. But what is most interesting here in Dr. White's present argument is what he says about the *Index*. In **1616** Galileo was forbidden to teach or discuss the Copernican theory and "all books which affirm the motion of the earth" were forbidden. "Henceforth to read the work of Copernicus was to risk damnation, and the world accepted the decree:

The authorities deciding this matter in accordance with the wishes of Pope Paul V and Cardinal Bellarmine were the *Congregation of the Index*, or cardinals having charge of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Recent desperate attempts to fasten responsibility on them as individuals

seem ridiculous in view of the simple fact that their work was sanctioned by the highest Church authority, and required to be universally accepted by the Church. Eleven different editions of the *Index* in my own possession prove this. Nearly all of these declare on their title-pages that they are issued by order of the pontiff of the period, and each is prefaced by a special papal bull or letter. See especially the *Index* of **1664**, issued under order of Alexander VII, and that of **1761**, under Benedict XIV. Copernicus' statements were prohibited in the *Index donec corrigantur*. Kepler said that it ought to be worded "*donec explicetur*." ... (p.124-125, note)

Pope Benedict XIV in **1757** allowed the Copernican astronomy to be, taught and in **1822** Pius VII removed the books of all the Copernican heretics from the *Index*. Clearly, these were merely negative, permissive non-acts of weak shepherds accompanied by no positive acts either of abrogation or endorsement. These two popes obviously derogated from previous acts of the magisterium involving something more than merely disciplinary matters since they touched directly upon the Church's traditional interpretation of Scripture.

Popes **often give their private opinions** even in public and Catholics sometimes take their statements as infallible. But such is not the case. Popes can and have deviated from the doctrines of their predecessors **in various non-official and non-legal ways**, as have Benedict XIV, Pius VII and John Paul II.

Benedict XIV and Pius VII yielded to the pressures of a rebellious science which had become arrogantly autonomous. The weakness of these popes *vis a vis* the firmness of their predecessors says **absolutely nothing** about the truth or falsity of the science they thus implicitly endorsed. But it says volumes about those areas in which **popes may err** and still not call in question the promise of Our Lord whose vicar they are. (Cf. **Matthew 16:18**). *Vatican I* (**1870**) spelled out these limitations and extensions.

However, to put undue emphasis upon the power of one pope to undo what was done by a previous pope could lead to a relativism in doctrine and morals of which only the Anti-Christ or his ecclesiastical right arm could be the author.

And so, we acknowledge changes in the *Index* (which is now abolished anyhow even though there are more heretical books than ever) and we affirm that there has been no legal abrogation of the decrees condemning Galileo's heresy. By such **fine omissions** may not the Holy Spirit preserve His Church?

Kepler's explications finally won the war against Copernicanism but not without a long battle. (Nothing, however, in any way to compare with Poitiers, Orleans, or Lepanto!) Fr. Denis Fahey said and demonstrated in his books that "notwithstanding the weakness of fallen human nature, Western Europe in the 13th century had come to acknowledge God's rights, in accordance with the Divine Plan He had Himself laid down, and had organized society on the basis that **man's supreme dignity** is his **supernatural** and **supranational** life as a member of Christ. Since then, ... there has been a steady decay, with disastrous consequences."⁶ [Emphases added) One of these

⁶ Rev. Denis Fahey, C.S.Sp. *The Mystical Body of Christ and the Reorganization of Society*. Dublin: Regina Publications, **1978** reprint of original **1945** book. Page iii.

disastrous consequences has been the unchecked spread of error, especially in the sciences. The Church's duty of censorship is rooted in the created natural order and in Holy Scripture, a duty whereby superiors (such as parents, shepherds and governments) must protect inferiors (such as children, sheep, and citizens or subjects) from anything that could harm them in body and especially in soul. The best discussion of this obligation on the part of superiors is that of William Thomas Walsh in his book *Characters of the Inquisition*.⁷

The decline and decay since the 13th century was slow and mostly hidden during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. But with the Protestant Rebellion, the revival of pagan learning, and the rise of experimental-empirical science, the decline took a turn that signaled its eventual triumph: it clothed itself in the glory of this world. Today the revolutionary inversion of all that the 13th century prized most -- the Catholic Faith and the Glory of God -- seems complete. The Apostolic Faith is reduced to scattered pockets of faithful and very often isolated individuals. The end resembles the beginning as Catholic Christians are more and more called upon to live their Faith in a hideous matrix of error and corruption made all the more glitteringly seductive by that crowning triumph of science -- Technology.⁸

Dr. White continues to describe the reactions against Copernicus before the condemnations:

The people of Elbing made themselves merry over a farce in which Copernicus was the main object of ridicule. The people of Nuremberg, a Protestant stronghold, caused a medal to be struck with inscriptions ridiculing the philosopher and his theory.

Why the people at large took this view is easily understood. When we note the attitude of the guardians of learning both Catholic and Protestant in that age. It throws great light upon sundry claims by modern theologians to take charge of public instruction and of the evolution of science. So important was it thought to have "sound learning" guarded and "safe science" taught, that in many of the universities, as late as the end of the 17th century, professors were forced to take an oath not to hold the "Pythagorean" -- that is, the Copernican -- idea as to the

⁷ William Thomas Walsh. *Characters of the Inquisition*. New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1940. See also the article "Censorship of Books" in the old *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907-1913).

⁸ A preliminary example of the precipitous decline of Faith that accompanies the progress of error unchecked is masterfully exposed by Solange Hertz in *The Star Spangled Heresy*, 1992, and her other books, all published by Veritas Press, POB 1704, Santa Monica CA 90406. See also her articles in the Nov 1992 *The Remnant* entitled "The Master Heresy". The unchecked spread of latter day heresies such as religious liberty and popular sovereignty plus the perennial refusal of the Jews to accept Our Lord's Divinity and Messiahship -- evils infecting Catholic theologians in the highest places -- all such dogmatic aberrations allowed to flourish unhindered because of a self-righteous populism, certainly betray the Church's primary mission to save souls and do nothing to inhibit the idolatry of technology.

movement of the heavenly bodies. As the contest went on, professors were forbidden to make known to students the facts revealed by the telescope. Special orders to this effect were issued by the ecclesiastical authorities to the universities and colleges of Pisa, Innsbruck, Louvain, Douay, Salamanca, and others. During generations we find the authorities of these universities boasting that these godless doctrines were kept away from their students. It is touching to hear such boasts made then, just as it is touching now to hear sundry excellent university authorities boast that they discourage the reading of Mill, Spencer, and Darwin. Nor were such attempts to keep the truth from students confined to the Roman Catholic institutions of learning. (p.128)

It is all too easy to see where Dr. White's sympathies reside and with what conviction he refers to "the truth" of Mill's liberalism, the Copernican theory and Darwinism as if these errors were a direct revelation from Almighty God to a newly enlightened humanity instead of the most decadent political and philosophical inventions of men. And so he goes on:

Still, the new truth lived on. Ten years after the martyrdom of Bruno the truth of Copernicus's doctrine was established by the telescope of Galileo. Herein was fulfilled one of the most touching of prophecies. Years before, the opponents of Copernicus had said to him, "If your doctrines were true, Venus would show phases like the moon." Copernicus answered: "You are right; I know not what to say; but God is good, and will in time find an answer to this objection." The God-given answer came when, in **1611**, the crude telescope of Galileo showed the phases of Venus. (p.130)

Such piety would indeed be not only touching but edifying if it were not, sadly, in the service of error. For the phases of Venus prove nothing. They merely may be said to indicate, with some probability, the rotation of that planet around the sun.⁹ This probability was incorporated by Tycho Brahe into his system wherein all the planets orbit the sun and the sun, with its retinue of planets, orbits the central stationary earth.

With the condemnation of Galileo in **1633**,

... measures were taken to complete the destruction of the Copernican theory, with Galileo's proofs of it. On the 16th of June, **1633**, the Holy Congregation, with the permission of the reigning Pope, ordered the sentence upon Galileo, and his recantation, to be sent to all the papal nuncios throughout Europe, as well as to all archbishops and inquisitors in Italy: and this document gave orders that the sentence and abjuration be made known "to your vicars, that you and all professors of philosophy and mathematics may have knowledge of it, that they may know why we proceeded against the said Galileo and recognise the gravity of his error, in order that they may avoid it, and thus not incur the penalties which they would have to suffer in case they fell into the same." (pp.143-144)

There are two things to note here:

- 1) the documents were sent out with the permission, i.e., approval of the reigning Pope, and
- 2) their message was intended for the universal Church.

⁹ See Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers*. New York: Macmillan, **1959**, p.426.

Modern theologians deny that there is any significance in these facts but others, as will be shown later, assert that such facts are crucial and indicate the documents' very high degree of authority. We return now to Dr. White's account of the immediate response to these events:

The Rector of the University of Douay, referring to the opinion of Galileo, wrote to the papal nuncio at Brussels: "The professors of our university are so opposed to this fanatical opinion that they have always held that it must be banished from the schools. In our English college at Douay this paradox has never been approved and never will be." (p.144)

I wonder if the college at Douay would have been able to send out men so ready to be martyred for the Faith, as were the English martyrs educated there, had it become a haven for one of the most pernicious errors ever to invade the Church?

Still another step was taken: the Inquisitors were ordered, especially in Italy, not to permit the publication of a new edition of any of Galileo's works, or of any similar writings. On the other hand, theologians were urged, now that Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler were silenced, to reply to them with tongue and pen. Europe was flooded with these theological refutations of the Copernican system. (p.144)

It is that last sentence that is a revelation to modern Catholics. "Europe was flooded with these theological refutations of the Copernican system." Who would guess it, from the books on Galileo today, that such was the case? Even allowing for some hyperbole on the part of Dr. White, it is a very encouraging historical note.

To make all complete, there was prefixed to the *Index* of the Church, forbidding "all writings which affirm the motion of the earth, "a bull signed by the reigning Pope which, by virtue of his infallibility as a divinely guided teacher in matters of faith and morals, clinched this condemnation into the consciences of the whole Christian world. (p.144)

This Bull was that of Alexander VII prefixed to the *Index* in **1664**. Dr. White affirms, following some Catholic theologians and canonists of his day, that

This bull confirmed and approved in express terms, finally, decisively, and infallibly, the condemnation of "all books teaching the movement of the earth and the stability of the sun." (p.158)

Next, Dr. White sums up the contents of a few of those books that flooded Europe with their refutations of Copernicus:

From the mess of books which appeared under the auspices of the church immediately after the condemnation of Galileo, for the purpose of rooting out every vestige of the hated Copernican theory from the mind of the world, two may be taken as typical. The first of these was a work by Scipio Chiaramonti, dedicated to Cardinal Barberini. Among his arguments against the double motion of the earth may be cited the following:

"Animals, which move, have limbs and muscles; the earth has no limbs or muscles, therefore it does not move. It is angels who make Saturn, Jupiter, the sun, etc., turn round. If the earth

revolves, it must also have an angel in the centre to set it in motion; but only devils live there; it would therefore be a devil who would impart motion to the earth.

"The planets, the sun, the fixed stars, all belong to one species -- namely, that of stars. It seems, therefore, to be a grievous wrong to place the earth, which is a sink of impurity, among those heavenly bodies, which are pure and divine things." (p.145)

Doubtless, Dr. White has chosen as representative texts those which would seem most ridiculous to modern minds. However, much can be said in defense of each point made above. First, it is asserted that the earth could not move unless it had an angelic mover, such as the planets have. No less a respected theologian than Fr. Valentine Long, OFM has recently defended this theological opinion in a reputable journal. He quotes a nuclear physicist and former atheist:

According to the law of entropy, he insists, "all the material world should have turned into a cloud of chaotic dust a long, long time ago," since the particles that form its many bodies "have a tendency to run wild." Why do they not? "I thought about this," Dr. Dotsenko concludes, "and it dawned upon me that the world is being held in existence by a non-material power that is capable of overruling the destructive entropy."¹⁰

The physicist here was doing exactly what St. Thomas said the physical sciences should do and that is point to God. What the physicist could not be expected to assert, however, is what St. Augustine, the theologian, said -- that every visible thing is put under the charge of an angel." And there is a near unanimity of the Fathers, both East and West, that angels, under God and by His order, govern the movements of the heavenly bodies. St. Thomas explains the reason for this: the angels are part of the order of the universe; we are situated between the angels and the animals in the hierarchy of being and have more in common with the angels above us than with the animals below us by reason of our intelligence and free will. That the angels should govern the movements of the heavens in a way analogous to the appointed governance of man over the earth, is eminently reasonable and in complete harmony with the Scriptures and the many aspects of angelic activity revealed to us therein.

To view the earth as a "sink of impurity" as the geocentrist quoted by Dr. White does, is a graphic witness to the sense of sin and what it really is that the modern world has lost, much to its peril. The medieval Catholic also had a deep sense of being redeemed from sin by the Blood of Christ, as the literature of the time so beautifully shows. (E.g., "The Dream of the Blood".) But they knew, too, that only in the Resurrection after the Last Day, would the material world be completely renewed, and so they did not strive after unrealistic utopias of human devising.

As for the purity of the heavenly bodies, we must acknowledge that modern science has revealed by means of superior instruments the fact that the moon and planets have undergone terrible catastrophes of some kind in the past, for they still bear the scars. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that they have lost, even as man and the earth have lost, an original purity.

That devils live in the center of the earth is traditional teaching of the Church. See the article "Hell" in the 1910 *Catholic Encyclopedia* where it is stated: "... no cogent reason has been advanced for accepting a metaphorical interpretation in preference to the most natural meaning of

¹⁰ Valentine Long, OFM, "Do Angels Run the Universe?" *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*. Aug-Sept 1976, pp.76-83.

the words of Scripture. Hence theologians generally accept the opinion that hell is really within the earth."

And, as if in answer to modernist unbelief, Our Lady at Fatima, July 13, 1917, showed the children a vision of Hell, within the earth beneath their feet. We doubt these truths of Faith at the peril of our immortal souls.

Dr. White's second representative of the anti-Copernican writings is as follows:

The next, which I select from the mass of similar works, is the *Anticopernicus Catholicus* of Polacco. It was intended to deal a finishing stroke at Galileo's heresy. In this it is declared:

"The Scripture always represents the earth as at rest, and the sun and moon as in motion; or, if these latter bodies are ever represented as at rest, Scripture represents this as the result of a great miracle. ...

"These writings must be prohibited, because they teach certain principles about the position and motion of the terrestrial globe repugnant to Holy Scripture and to the Catholic interpretation of it, not as hypotheses but as established facts. ..."

Speaking of Galileo's book, Polacco says that it "smacked of Copernicanism," and that, "when this was shown to the *Inquisition*, Galileo was thrown into prison and was compelled to utterly abjure this erroneous dogma." (p. 145)

That a geocentric/geostatic cosmology based on Holy Scripture was a received, i.e., traditional and official teaching of the Church, is incontrovertibly demonstrated by this text which is but one representative of "the mass of similar works". Subsequent popes have indeed permitted, under pressure of an arrogant and autonomous science, a contrary view to prevail and have thus **allowed** the authority of Holy Scripture **to be undermined** -- a process of destruction that continues in our time due to the failure of the shepherds to take effective protective action.

Dr. White continues:

As to the authority of the cardinals in their decree, Polacco asserts that, since they are the "Pope's Council" and his "brothers", their work is one, except that the Pope is favoured with special divine enlightenment. (p.145)

And this did not cease to be the opinion of many theologians and canonists until very late in the 19th century, as we shall see.

Dr. White's next section is entitled "Results of the Victory over Galileo":

Having gained their victory over Galileo, living and dead, having used it to scare into submission the professors of astronomy throughout Europe, conscientious churchmen exulted. Loud was their rejoicing that the "heresy", the "infidelity," the "atheism," involved in believing that the earth revolves about its axis and moves around the sun had been crushed by the great tribunal of the Church, acting in strict obedience to the expressed will of one Pope and the written order of another. As we have seen, all books teaching this hated belief were put upon the *Index of books* forbidden to christians, and that *Index* was prefaced by a bull enforcing this condemnation upon the consciences of the faithful throughout the world and signed by the

reigning Pope. (p.152)

.....
 Yet this did not end the war. During the 17th century in France, after all the splendid proofs added by Kepler, no one dared openly teach the Copernican theory, and Cassini, the great astronomer, never declared for it. In **1672**, the Jesuit Father Riccioli declared that there were precisely forty-nine arguments for the Copernican theory and seventy-seven against it. Even after the beginning of the eighteenth century -- long after the demonstrations of Sir Isaac Newton -- Bossuet, the great Bishop of Meaux, the foremost theologian that France has ever produced, declared it contrary to Scripture. (p.154)

These are powerful testimonies to the Church's true teaching on this important matter.

In England, John Hutchinson, ... published in **1724** his *Moses' Principia* maintaining that the Hebrew Scriptures are a perfect system of natural philosophy, and are opposed to the Newtonian system of gravitation; and, ... was followed by a long list of noted men in the Church. In France, two eminent mathematicians published in **1748** an edition of Newton's *Principia*; but in order to avert ecclesiastical censure, they felt obliged to prefix to it a statement absolutely false. Three years later, Boscovitch, the great mathematician of the Jesuits, used these words: "As for me, full of respect for the Holy Scriptures and the decree of the Holy Inquisition, I regard the earth as immovable; nevertheless, for simplicity in explanation I will argue as if the earth moves; for it is proved, that of the two hypotheses the appearances favor this idea." (pages 154-155)

By such half-hearted support for the truth of Holy Scripture and the judgment of the Church on the part of "eminent" men of science was the authority of God's Word gradually weakened in the minds of many. As some wit has observed, "With friends like that, who needs enemies?" Furthermore, the idea of "appearances" loses all meaning when it is restricted, as it is in Boscovitch's statement, to the calculations of mathematicians. What of the appearances of common sense and universal human perception? These are abandoned and that "rape of the senses" exalted by Galileo continues. (See page 38 in the previous paper, *Galileo's Empiricism*)

Dr. White's survey continues:

In **1757** the most enlightened perhaps in the whole line of the popes, Benedict XIV, took up the matter, and the Congregation of the *Index* secretly allowed the ideas of Copernicus to be tolerated. Yet in **1765** Lalande, the great French astronomer, tried in vain at Rome to induce the authorities to remove Galileo's works from the *Index*. Even at a date far within our 19th century the authorities of many universities in Catholic Europe, and especially those in Spain, excluded the Newtonian system. In **1771** the greatest of them all, the University of Salamanca, being urged to teach physical science, refused, making answer as follows:

"Newton teaches nothing that would make a good logician or metaphysician; and Gassendi and Descartes do not agree so well with revealed truth as Aristotle does." (pp.155-156)

Well and rightly spoken by the guardians of the Church's teaching at Salamanca, the university honored by the presence of St. John of the Cross in the **1560's**. It's well worth slogging through the muck of Dr. White's prejudices to come upon such wonderful shining testimonies as that of the great Bossuet and Salamanca!

The edition of the *Index* published in **1819** was as inexorable toward the works of Copernicus and Galileo as its predecessors had been; but in the year **1820** came a crisis. Canon Settele, Professor of Astronomy at Rome, had written an elementary book in which the Copernican system was taken for granted. The Master of the Sacred Palace, Anfossi, as censor of the press, refused to allow the book to be printed unless Settele revised his work and treated the Copernican theory as merely an hypothesis. On this Settele appealed to Pope Pius VII, and the Pope referred the matter to the *Congregation of the Holy Office*. At last, on the 16th of August, **1820**, it was decided that Settele might teach the Copernican system as established, and this decision was approved by the Pope. This aroused considerable discussion, but finally, on the 11th of September, **1822**, the cardinals of the Holy Inquisition graciously agreed that "the printing and publication of works treating of the notion of the earth and the stability of the sun, in accordance with the general opinion of modern astronomers, is permitted at Rome." This decree was ratified by Pius VII, but it was not until thirteen years later, in **1835**, that there was issued an edition of the *Index* from which the condemnation of works defending the double motion of the earth was left out. (pp.156-157)

A study of this gradual acceptance of the heliocentric heresy prepares us for the failure on the part of 19th and 20th century popes to combat decisively the lie of evolution.

Vatican Council I spoke strongly against false science in its Decree on Faith and Reason, but it said nothing at all specifically against evolution. And this was in **1870**, at the height of Darwin's triumph.

It was Pope Saint Pius X who, in *Pascendi* (**1907**) spoke specifically against evolution, nailing that error as "the principal doctrine" of the modernists (D 2094) by which they attack dogma, the Church as an institution, the Church's worship, Holy Scripture, and the Faith itself, insisting that all these sacred realities are subject to the "laws" of evolution, of change.

In **1950**, after opening the front door to scholarly investigation of **human evolution** in paragraph 36 of *Humani Generis*, Pope Pius XII closed the back door to **polygenism** in paragraph 37.

Then there are the many condemnations of Teilhard de Chardin's works beginning in **1926** and culminating in **1962** with the *Monitum* of Pope John XXIII.

That none of these condemnations of evolution is enforced by the present hierarchy is a cause of sadness but should no longer surprise us. Error of every kind is allowed to flourish and is even encouraged for reasons best left to the Wisdom of God. But He has given us plenty of clues in both public and private revelation. There is the Secret of La Salette, there are the Fatima revelations, and there are many Scriptures, especially **2 Thessalonians**, the second chapter. We are certainly living in a time of terrible breakdown in law and order, so one may be permitted to wonder if the advent of that "lawless one" may not be near. (**2 Thess. 2:9**. RSV transl.)

The final section of Dr. White's discussion of the Galileo affair is entitled "The Retreat of the Church after its Victory over Galileo". The **attempts made to excuse** the condemnation of Galileo are worth consideration, if for no other reason than that **they all fail utterly** to find any solid basis.

Dr. White prefaces his account of these attempts to justify the condemnation of Galileo by the following remarks to which I beg the reader pay close attention:

Any history of the victory of astronomical science over dogmatic theology would be incomplete without some account of the retreat made by the Church from all its former positions in the Galileo case.

The retreat of the Protestant theologians was not difficult. A little skillful warping of Scripture, a little skillful use of that time-honoured phrase, attributed to Cardinal Baronius, that the Bible is given to teach us, not how the heavens go, but how men go to heaven, and a free use of explosive rhetoric against the pursuing army of scientists, sufficed.

But in the older Church it was far less easy. The retreat of the sacro-scientific army of Church apologists lasted through two centuries.

In spite of all that has been said by these apologists, there no longer remains the shadow of a doubt that the papal infallibility was committed fully and irrevocably against the double revolution of the earth. As the documents of Galileo's trial now published show, Paul V, in **1616**, pushed on with all his might the condemnation of Galileo and of the works of Copernicus and of all others teaching the motion of the earth around its own axis and around the sun. So, too, in the condemnation of Galileo in **1633**, and in all the proceedings which led up to it and which followed it, Urban VIII was the central figure. Without his sanction, no action could have been taken.

True, the Pope did not formally sign the decree against the Copernican theory then; but this came later. In **1664** Alexander VII prefixed to the *Index* containing the condemnations of the works of Copernicus and Galileo and "all books which affirm the motion of the earth" a papal bull signed by himself, binding the contents of the *Index* upon the consciences of the faithful. This bull confirmed and approved in express terms, finally, decisively, and infallibly, the condemnation of "all books teaching the movement of the earth and the stability of the sun." (p. 158)

Now is the time and place to introduce the English priest, Fr. William W. Roberts and his book *The Pontifical Decrees Against the Doctrine of the Earth's Movement*, first published in **1870** and later, with many additions of a polemic nature, in **1885**.¹¹ Here is what he says about the Bull,

¹¹ Rev. William W. Roberts. *The Pontifical Decrees Against the Doctrine of the Earth's Movement, and the Ultramontane Defense of Them*. London: Parker & Co, **1885**. Fr. Roberts was not a geocentrist; rather, he firmly believed that modern science was correct in its heliocentric views. His aim in presenting the case for the infallibility of the decrees in the Galileo condemnation and especially that of the Bull, *Speculatores Domus Israel*, was to dissuade the Fathers at the First Vatican Council from voting in favor of the dogmatic definition of the infallibility of the Pope. He believed the theologians and the Inquisitors, as well as Alexander VII, had erred in their actions, thus proving that the doctrine of infallibility was an erroneous one and should not be declared at the Vatican Council. But history and the honesty of some scientists have vindicated the truth of the Church's infallibility in the Galileo case. We see, also, the action of the Holy Spirit in preventing the conciliar popes from abrogating these infallible decisions and decrees. Pope Paul VI symbolically abdicated his papal authority when he placed the tiara in a museum and gave away or sold the Fisherman's Ring. The reality of this abdication is proven to us every day as we witness the failure of the conciliar papacy to exercise its Petrine office and authority for the salvation of souls by denouncing error and punishing heretics. While the wolves feast unhindered on the sheep and the lambs of Our Lord's flock, the shepherds refuse to acknowledge the carnage, a blindness that could only be caused by loss of divine Catholic faith. The Roberts book is difficult to find. It **may** be possible to obtain a photocopy of this book from:

Speculatores Domus Israel of Alexander VII, in answer to the challenge of a noted canonist:

M. Bouix requires me to adduce some officially published document attesting the Pope's confirmation of the anti-Copernican decrees. The last thing he expected to see was a Bull to this effect. Nevertheless there is one. Towards the end of his Pontificate, it occurred to Alexander VII that it was his duty as guardian of the household of Israel, to compose and place before the faithful a new *Index* of prohibited books that should be complete up to his time, and be more conveniently arranged than former indices. Whereupon, he set to work with a specially chosen number of Cardinals; and in the March of **1664** there issued from the Vatican press a book entitled *Index Librorum prohibitorum Alexandri VII Pontificis Maximi jussu editus*.

It was prefaced by a Bull wherein the Pope describes the composition of his *Index*, and gives reasons for putting it forth. Amongst other things, the Pontiff says that the books noted therein will not be found distributed into three classes as they were in the *Tridentine Index*. That method of arrangement has been found inconvenient, and has given rise to mistaken estimates of the relatively bad character of the books prohibited. Yet it is so far retained that the class to which each book belongs will be found cited where the book is named, and also the decree by which the book was originally prohibited, in order that the whole history of each case may be known. "For this purpose," pursues the Pontiff, "we have caused the *Tridentine* and *Clementine Indices* to be added to this general *Index*, and also all the relevant decrees up to the present time, that have been issued since the *Index* of our predecessor Clement, that nothing profitable to the faithful interested in such matters might seem omitted. Since then all these directions have been faithfully and accurately carried out, and a general *Index* of this kind has been composed -- to which also the rules of the *Tridentine Index*, with the observations and instructions added to the *Clementine Index*, have been prefixed; this same general *Index* as it is put forth, composed by our order, revised, and printed at the press of our Apostolic Camera, and which should be considered as though it were inserted in these presents, together with all, and singular, the things contained therein, we, having taken the advice of our Cardinals, confirm, and approve with Apostolic authority by the tenor of these presents, and command and enjoin all persons everywhere to yield to this *Index* a constant and complete obedience."

Turning to this *Index*, we find among the decrees the pope caused to be added thereto, the following: *Quia ad notitiam* of **1616**; the *monitum* of **1620**, declaring the principles advocated by Copernicus on the position and movement of the earth to be "repugnant to Scripture and to its true and Catholic interpretation;" the edict signed by Bellarmine prohibiting and condemning Kepler's *Epitome Astronomie Copernicanae*, the edict of August 10th, **1634** prohibiting and condemning the *Dialogo di Galileo Galilei*; and under the head "Libri," we find: "*Libri omnes docentes mobilitatem terrae, et immobilitatem solis, in decr. 5 Martii, 0505.*" These, therefore, were some of the things the Pope confirmed and approved with Apostolic authority by the tenor of his Bull. It is clear, therefore, that the condemnation of Copernicanism was ratified and approved by the Pope himself, not merely behind the scenes, but publicly in the face of the whole Church, by the authority of a Bull addressed to all the faithful. Nay, more -- and I call particular attention to this point -- the *Index* to which the decrees in question were attached, was confirmed and approved by the Pope, not as a thing external to the Bull, but as though actually in it, *quem praesentibus nostris pro inserto haberi volumus*, and therefore it, and all it contained, came to the Church directly from the Pope himself, speaking to her as her Head, "as guardian of the household of Israel, as

the shepherd who had to take care of the Lord's flock, to protect it from the evils that threatened it, to see that the sheep redeemed by the precious blood of the Saviour were not led astray from the path of truth."

It cannot, then, be said with truth that the Bull in question confirmed the decrees simply as Congregational edicts and left them in the category in which it found them. Congregational decisions that are taken up by the Pope as Head of the Church, and are presented by him in that capacity to the faithful with an assurance that he approves and confirms them with Apostolic authority, obviously must, by this very fact of being so conditioned, possess the precise warrant to be accounted *ex cathedra*, the lack of which is the main reason for disputing the *ex cathedra* claims of Congregational decrees issued under ordinary circumstances; that is, they came to the Church directly from the Pope himself acting, as her Head, whereas the latter came to the Church only indirectly from the Pope, through the medium of his delegates.

The evidence for papal infallibility in the Galileo case rests, then, upon the Bull of Alexander VII in **1664**. We might refer to this papal Bull as an exercise of the **extraordinary** Magisterium, whereas the decrees of the *Index* and the *Decree of the Inquisition* condemning Galileo were acts of the **ordinary** Magisterium. However that may be, there is a twofold basis for infallibility in the Galileo case:

- 1) the *Decrees of the Index and the Inquisition*, which were based on the truth of the Church's tradition, especially, as in this case, it rested upon the unanimity of the Fathers and the constant position of the Church; and
- 2) the infallibility of the Pope speaking in his own official capacity as Head of the Church, and therefore *ex cathedra*, even though not defining any new dogma but simply **affirming tradition**.

The modern theologians have never addressed the problem posed by this Bull of Alexander VII. If they had, they would need to admit its direct papal authority and search for some subsequent document by a subsequent pope that formally and specifically abrogated [i.e., nullified] the **1664** Bull. But no such document has ever been found or produced.

The case seems to me exactly parallel with that of the Bull *Quo Primum* by Pope Saint Pius V by which he established in **1570** the Mass of the Roman Rite as celebrated at the *Council of Trent* in perpetuity. With the Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* of April, **1969**, Pope Paul VI promulgated the *Novus Ordo Missae*. However, as Michael Davies points out¹², *Quo Primum* could "only be abrogated by explicit mention, something *Missale Romanum* does not do."

The **legal power of one Pope to undo the legal actions of a previous Pope** is not in question. The simple fact is that neither Paul VI **nor** John Paul II has **legally abrogated** the actions of their predecessors. Therefore, both *Quo Primum* and the Bull of Alexander VII stand as written and are **still in force as the will of the Church binding the consciences of the faithful**.

All the rest is anticlimactic, to be sure, but instructive nevertheless. The first attempt to justify or excuse the condemnation of Galileo was also the one closest to the truth:

¹² Michael Davies. *Pope Paul's New Mass*. Angelus Press, **1980**, p.53.

... the first important move in retreat by the apologists was the statement that Galileo was condemned, not because he affirmed the motion of the earth, but because he supported it from Scripture. (p.159)

The physical theory is so closely connected with the statements of Scripture that it is sometimes difficult to see precisely in what Galileo's heresy consisted. It is my contention that his heresy was precisely that of denying the inerrancy of Scripture, and it just so happened that the inerrancy in this case concerns absolutely clear statements indicating the physical structure of the universe. Dr. White says:

What was condemned in **1616** by the Sacred Congregation held in the presence of Pope Paul V, as "absurd, false in theology, and heretical, because absolutely contrary to Holy Scripture," was the proposition that "the sun is the centre about which the earth revolves;" and what was condemned as "absurd, false in philosophy, and from a theologic point of view, at least, opposed to the true faith," was the proposition that "the earth is not the centre of the universe and immovable, but has a diurnal motion."

And again, what Galileo was made, by express order of Pope Urban, and by the action of the Inquisition under threat of torture, to abjure in **1633**, was "the error and heresy of the movement of the earth." (p.159)

What Dr. White fails to see is **the cause** of the heresy which is "because absolutely contrary to Holy Scripture." It is the inerrancy of the Scriptures that is at stake, not a physical theory. The physical theory is, however, important also because it is the physical theory which the Scriptures describe in popular, common sense terms. And so, one could not doubt or deny the one without doubting and denying the other.

Furthermore, Galileo never succeeded in reconciling the Copernican theory with Holy Scripture anymore than the evolutionists of the late 19th and 20th centuries have. They have only succeeded in denying the literal plain meaning of historical narrative and in trying to substitute a mythical, fictional figurative meaning, all of which turns out to be bad literary analysis and worse exegesis.

Having been dislodged from this point, the Church apologists sought cover under the statement that Galileo was condemned not for heresy, but for contumacy and want of respect toward the Pope. (p.160)

But as Dr. White says, "the very language of the various sentences shows the folly of this assertion; for these sentences speak always of "heresy" and never of "contumacy."

The next rally was made about the statement that the persecution of Galileo was the result of a quarrel between Aristotelian professors on one side and professors favouring the experimental method on the other. (p.161)

But again, as Dr. White indicates, professorial squabbles, while they may be the occasion could never be **the cause** of a condemnation involving absolute truth. Otherwise, "how did the Church at that time differ from any human organization sunk into decrepitude, managed nominally by simpletons, but really by schemers?" In other words, the nature of the Church as a divine

institution requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit over and above and aside from professorial squabbles and the human passions of popes and cardinals.

The next point at which a stand was made was the assertion that the condemnation of Galileo was "provisory"; but this proved a more treacherous shelter than the others. The wording of the decree of condemnation itself is a sufficient answer to this claim. When doctrines have been solemnly declared, as those of Galileo were, solemnly declared under sanction of the highest authority in the Church, "contrary to the sacred Scriptures," "opposed to the true faith," and "false and -- absurd in theology and philosophy" -- to say that such declarations are "provisory" is to say that the truth held by the church is not immutable; from this, then, the apologists retreated. (p.161)

This next point is of some interest today because I have seen it used in defense of the present Pope's declarations that Galileo was right and the church was wrong, with all due apologies. Again, we are not speaking of any legal actions taken by Pope John Paul II to abrogate and thereby nullify the decisions of the *Congregations* in **1616** and **1633** or the Bull of Pope Alexander VII, but **only of private opinions**, although these were given before the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences*.

Still another contention was made, in some respects more curious than any other; it was, mainly, that Galileo "was no more a victim of Catholics than of Protestants; for they more than the Catholic theologians impelled the Pope to the action taken."

But if Protestantism could force the papal hand in a matter of this magnitude, involving vast questions of belief and far-reaching questions of policy, what becomes of "inerrancy" -- of special protection and guidance of the papal authority in matters of faith? (p.162)

Even more essential to the contention, what happens to the Catholic Church's claim to be the one and only true Church, founded by Christ on St. Peter, if she must seek the truth of things outside her own divinely established parameters, that is, outside of herself? Hers is the entire Deposit of Faith, and it is hers alone in its fullness, in such a way that fragments found outside her are tainted even in their very essence.

Another strategy employed by the apologists was to utterly destroy the reputation of Galileo as a man and to evade the evidences of the documents of the case which were opened to the public in **1850**. This, of course, also failed.

The last "and most desperate effort of all" -- the one that still prevails today -- is that the popes as popes had never condemned the doctrines of Copernicus and Galileo; that the Church had never been committed to them; that the condemnation was made by the cardinals of the *Inquisition* with no great or lasting authority; and "that the Pope had evidently been restrained by interposition of Providence from signing their condemnation."

Nothing could show the desperation of the retreating party better than jugglery like this. The fact is, that in the official account of the condemnation by Bellarmine, in **1616**, he declares distinctly that he makes this condemnation "in the name of His Holiness the Pope."

Again, from Pope Urban downward, among the Church authorities of the seventeenth

century, the decision was always acknowledged to be made by the Pope and the Church. Urban VIII spoke of that of **1616** as made by Pope Paul V and the Church, and of that of **1633** as made by himself and the Church. Pope Alexander VII in **1664**, in his bull *Speculatores*, solemnly sanctioned the condemnation of all books affirming the earth's movement.

When Gassendi attempted to raise the point that the decision against Copernicus and Galileo was not sanctioned by the Church as such, an eminent theological authority, Father Lecazre, rector of the College of Dijon, publicly contradicted him, and declared that "it was not certain cardinals, but the supreme authority of the Church," that had condemned Galileo; and to this statement the Pope and other Church authorities gave consent either openly or by silence. When Descartes and others attempted to raise the same point, they were treated with contempt. Father Castelli, who had devoted himself to Galileo, and knew to his cost just what the condemnation meant and who made it, takes it for granted, in his letter to the papal authorities, that it was made by the Church. Cardinal Querenghi, in his letters; the ambassador Guicciardini, in his dispatches; Polacco, in his refutation; the historian Viviani, in his biography of Galileo -- all writing under Church inspection and approval at the time, took the view that the Pope and the Church condemned Galileo, and this was never denied at Rome. The *Inquisition* itself, backed by the greatest theologian of the time (Bellarmine), took the same view. Not only does he declare that he makes the condemnation "in the name of His Holiness the Pope," but we have the *Roman Index*, containing the condemnation for nearly two hundred years, prefaced by a solemn Bull of the reigning Pope binding this condemnation on the consciences of the whole Church, and declaring year after year that "all books which affirm the motion of the earth" are damnable. To attempt to face all this, added to the fact that Galileo was required to abjure "the heresy of the movement of the earth" by written order of the Pope, was soon seen to be impossible. Against the assertion that the Pope was not responsible we have all this mass of testimony, and the Bull of Alexander VII in **1664**.

This contention, then, was at last utterly given up by honest Catholics themselves. In **1870** a Roman Catholic clergyman in England, the Rev. Mr. Roberts, evidently thinking that the time had come to tell the truth, published a book entitled *The Pontifical Decrees Against the Earth's Movement*, and in this exhibited the incontrovertible evidences that the papacy had committed itself and its infallibility fully against the movement of the earth. This Catholic clergyman showed from the original record that Pope Paul V, in **1616**, had presided over the tribunal condemning the doctrine of the earth's movement, and ordering Galileo to give up the opinion. He showed that Pope Urban VIII, in **1633**, pressed on, directed, and promulgated the final condemnation, making himself in all these ways responsible for it. And finally, he showed that Pope Alexander VII, in **1664**, by his Bull -- *Speculatores domus Israel* -- attached to the *Index*, condemning "all books which affirm the motion of the earth," had absolutely pledged the papal infallibility against the earth's movement. He also confessed that under the rules laid down by the highest authorities in the Church, and especially by Sixtus V and Pius IX, there was no escape from this conclusion.

Various theologians attempted to evade the force of the argument. Some, like Dr. Ward and Bouix, took refuge in verbal niceties; some, like Dr. Jeremiah Murphy, comforted themselves with declamation. The only result was, that in **1885** came another edition of the Rev. Mr. Roberts, a work even more cogent than the first; and, besides this, an essay by that eminent Catholic, St. George Mivart, acknowledging the Rev. Mr. Roberts' position to be impregnable, and declaring virtually that the Almighty allowed Pope and Church to fall into complete error regarding the Copernican theory, in order to teach them that science lies outside their province, and that the true priesthood of scientific truth rests with scientific investigators alone.

In spite, then, of all casuistry and special pleading, this sturdy honesty ended the controversy among Catholics themselves, so far as fair-minded men are concerned. (pp.164-166)

Mivart was admonished three times by Cardinal Vaughan and required to sign a profession of faith to prove his orthodoxy. He died impenitent in **1900**. His trouble was precisely this: he denied the divine authority and guidance of the Church in its interpretation of Holy Scripture.¹³

Many if not most Catholics today seem to agree with Mivart and Fr. Roberts that the Church erred in the Galileo case and that she has no authority over the teachings of the physical sciences even when they touch most directly upon the plain teaching of Holy Scripture and the Church's traditional interpretation of God's Word. I, for one, reject any such "priesthood of science" that pretends to reign supreme with absolute power even over its proper field of investigation, for physical reality can not be cut off from its relation of dependence on the Creator of all things anymore than spiritual reality can. The hierarchy of being exists and is real, however much the scientists refuse to acknowledge their subordinate place in that hierarchy. For, like it or not, they are subject to the higher sciences of theology and metaphysics and cut themselves off only to their own loss. That theology and metaphysics today are, as it were, in a coma, does not mean that science can sin with impunity. There definitely will be a terrible day of reckoning.

In conclusion, we may confidently assert that the Church's judgment of Galileo's heresy was given with the same kind of infallible authority that we recognize in the universal ordinary Magisterium. Disciplinary deviations from the Church's consistent position are one thing; doctrinal deviations are something else. The Galileo case involved the doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

Fr. Brian Harrison¹⁴ defends the infallibility of the teaching of Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968) on grounds which apply with equal certitude to the Church's judgment in the Galileo case. A teaching is infallible and irreformable "by virtue of having been taught constantly and definitively over a period of many centuries, by a consensus of popes and bishops around the world." A geocentric/geostatic cosmology was simply taken for granted by all the Fathers of the Church, East and West, and never questioned for any reason until Copernicus because it was perceived to be the plain teaching of the inerrant Scriptures. Furthermore,

A prevalent error amongst even well-intentioned Catholics ... is the idea that in order for a papal pronouncement to be infallible, in terms of *Vatican One's* conditions, it has to be a

¹³ The information on St. George Mivart is taken from the old *Catholic Encyclopedia*. I have not been able to find anything about Fr. Roberts of a biographical nature.

¹⁴ Rev. Brian W. Harrison. "Humanae Vitae and Infallibility." *Fidelity* [now *Culture Wars*] magazine, Nov 1987, pp.43-48. Fr. Harrison is here reviewing a book by Ermenegildo Lio, OFM, entitled *e Infallibilita il Concilio, Paolo VI e Giovanni Paolo II*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1986. Needless to say, Fr. Harrison agrees with everything that Fr. Lio says. We must protest that the infallibility of Encyclicals extends only to those doctrines that enjoy the **constant** teaching of the Church. Insofar as *Humanae Vitae* allows for Natural Family Planning, a form of birth control, and insofar as it demotes the primary end of marriage to an equality with the secondary purpose, it cannot enjoy the charism of infallibility but must be seen to have allowed the wolves of error to creep into the Sheepfold. The same must be said of Leo XIII's *Providentissimus Deus* insofar as it allows error in Scripture on physical matters. Such is not the teaching of the Apostles, Fathers and Doctors of the Church constantly maintained until modern times.

dogmatic definition; that is, the highest possible exercise of papal authority. ...

However, ... it simply is not the teaching of either *Vatican I* or *Vatican II* that the Church's infallibility (which is enjoyed and exercised by the Pope alone under certain conditions) is limited to the field of dogma, that is, to the determination and promulgation of truths revealed by God in either Scripture or Tradition. Rather, infallibility also covers other truths which are **closely linked** to divine revelation, and which cannot be denied without endangering this deposit of revealed truth in some way. ... truths concerning faith or morals which are necessary to safeguard the deposit of faith are not Catholic **dogmas**, but they are Catholic **doctrines**. And the Church can teach them infallibly. The *Vatican I* definition of papal infallibility expressly said that it extends to "doctrine" (*doctrina*) -- a general term which covers both dogmas and the secondary, related truths.

Is it not certain that a geocentric/geostatic universe as upheld so definitively in the Galileo case and by the 1664 Bull, *Speculatores* by Alexander VII, is one of these secondary, related truths -- secondary to the received dogma of divine revelation?

The *Vatican I* Fathers were not told by Bishop Gasser that there was anything sacrosanct about the word "define." All that is necessary is that the Pope clearly express his intention of speaking decisively and with finality on a point of doctrine, in such a way that good Catholics can be certain what the truth is.

All these conditions were certainly fulfilled in the Galileo case and by the subsequent editions of the *Index*. It seems equally certain that neither Benedict XIV nor Pius VII made any attempt to **legally** undo or abrogate the actions of their predecessors in this matter. Therefore, what prevents these former decisions from being still in force and binding on our consciences? Mere practice, such as the permission to read forbidden books, does nothing to change the heretical nature of those books. No more does the failure to denounce such practices as birth-control and abortion change at all their grievously sinful nature.

Finally, if a doctrine, teaching or position of the Church is constant from Apostolic times, as the geocentric/geostatic cosmology is, it really matters little what legal form its verbal expression takes. The legal form it is given indicates the degree of concern for the souls of the faithful on the part of the chief shepherds. The anathemas of former Councils, like those of St. Paul, manifest great love for souls and care for the protection of the Lord's flock. Conversely, the absence of such warnings indicates a terrible indifference.

POSTSCRIPT

To those who attack these papers, I offer the following considerations:

When sacred, time-honored structures are torn down, something just as worthy or better should be put in their place.

But what has been put in the place of the Aristotelian-Thomistic synthesis?

Nothing but the man-made bricks, and straw and slime of a new Tower of Babel (**Genesis 11:3**) -- process theology, bringing about moral and doctrinal relativism; theistic evolutionism, leading to pantheism and New Age demonism.

Much of what passes for theology today is indistinguishable from pop psychology.

What has replaced the divine liturgy of the Mass? Something that more and more Protestants can recognize as their own.

All that is true in the modern sciences could easily be incorporated into the Thomistic synthesis. But this task can only be accomplished by competent scientists and theologians full of supernatural Faith, Hope, Charity and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. May God raise up such men for His Church very soon.

This paper is 3rd in a trilogy of studies:

I. *Galileo's Heresy*

II. *Galileo's Empiricism*

III. *Was It / Is It Infallible ?*

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