

THE OLD STORY OF GALILEO.

Its Relation to the Church Put in its True Light.

Upon the alleged persecution of this illustrious astronomer the bitter enemies of our holy faith have grounded the most malignant calumnies against the Church and Papacy while it is unhappily the fact that the majority of Catholics are so ill-informed of the true history of the case as to be quite incapable of refuting the mendacious statements of pseudo-historians and Protestant poets who have written in such a wonderfully romantic strain about the "starry Galileo and his woes." With your accustomed courtesy perhaps you would permit me to supplement your own acceptable paragraph with one or two remarks of my own upon a subject which Catholic writers appear to me to have singularly neglected. I must desire to elicit from some of your clerical or other well informed readers something further about the true story of Galileo and the Inquisition.

Protestant writers have charged the Catholic Church with having been, in all ages, the persistent enemy of scientific progress; and in proof of this, the condemnation of the heliocentric theory of Galileo is constantly adduced. It is not difficult to demonstrate the falsity of this accusation.

Two hundred years before the time of Galileo there was born of humble parents at Coblenz, Germany, a child who was destined to become one of the most eminent scientific scholars of his age. Nicholas Cusa inclined to the study of astronomy, and as the result of earnest investigation he arrived at the conclusion "that the earth, and not the sun, is in motion, and that the true system of astronomy should be called not geocentric but heliocentric. This opinion he maintained side by side with his friend Cardinal Ceserini, before the assembled Fathers of the Council (of Basil 1431)." How was this audacious ecclesiastic punished for promulgating the doctrines which the Inquisition denounced as "heretical" in Galileo? Nicholas Cusa was summoned to Rome by the reigning Pontiff—Nicholas V.—who conferred on the distinguished philosopher a Cardinal's Hat, together with the spiritual government of the diocese of Brixon, in Switzerland.

Later on the same theory was taught from a chair in the Pope's University at Rome by a still greater man—Nicholas Copernicus. Through the generosity of Cardinal Schomber, who supplied the necessary funds, and with the assistance of another Churchman, Gsio, Bishop of Eremeland, Copernicus was, in 1532, enabled to publish his celebrated work "De Revolutionibus," which (by desire of His Holiness) was dedicated to the reigning Pontiff—Paul the Third. At the same time the new system was maintained by Celio Calcagnini, who was Proto-Notary Apostolic under Clement VII, and Paul III; and John Widmanstadt, private secretary to Pope Clement VII, who, says a writer in the "Dublin Review," "has left behind him a monument still to be seen in the Royal Library of Munich, of the pleasure which he received on another occasion, in 1533, exactly ten years before the appearance of "De Revolutionibus," from the exposition of the forthcoming system of John Albert Widmanstadt, who had just arrived from Germany. It consists of a volume in the fly-leaf of which it is mentioned, in the handwriting of Widmanstadt himself, that the Pontiff had presented it to him in testimony of the gratification he derived from his exposition, delivered by his (the Pontiff's) command in the Vatican Gardens." Yet more remarkable still is the fact that, while the affairs of Galileo himself were for the first time before the Inquisition (March 1615), "the preceptor of Popes, the talented Jesuit, Torvato de Coppis, was delivering lectures in the Roman College (Billarmine's own in support of the same Copernican doctrine—while in the Pope's own University (Sapienza) another Jesuit, as Nelli testifies, was delivering similar lectures; and yet Bellarmine and the Jesuits have been accused of the most bigotted hostility to the Copernican system of astronomy." In the following year, when Galileo was again before the Holy Office, we learn from the same authority (Dublin Review) "the chair of astronomy in the Pope's own University of Bologna was offered to the immortal Kepler after Galileo, the most active, and before Galileo and all others, the most efficient advocate of Copernicanism in his day."

When such was the Church's attitude towards those eminent professors of the Copernican theory, why, it may be asked, was not the same treatment accorded to Galileo? The question will be most convincingly answered by the extract from Fedet's "Modern History":

gian, and for having pretended to impute to the Bible dogmas of his own invention. His great discoveries, it is true, provoked envy against him; but his pretention to prove the Copernican system from the Bible was the real cause of his being summoned before the inquisitors at Rome; and the restlessness of his mind, the only source of the troubles which he underwent on that account.

"In his journeys to Rome (1611, etc.) Galileo found only admirers among the Cardinals and other distinguished personages. The Pope himself granted him a favorable audience, and Cardinal Bellarmine merely forbade him, in the name of His Holiness, to blend in future the Bible with his astronomical systems. Other learned prelates pointed out to him the course of prudence to be observed by him on his point; but his obstinacy and vanity did not permit him to follow their advice.

"Some years after, he published his 'Dialogues and Memoirs', in which he again took upon himself to raise the system of the rotation of the earth to the dignity of a dogmatical tenet. Being summoned before the tribunals of Rome the lodging assigned to him in that city was not a gloomy prison, not a frightful dungeon, but the palace of Tuscany, and, for 18 days, the apartments of the attorney-general, where he had every facility to take exercise, and carry on his correspondence. During the trial the main object of his answers was not the scientific view of the question, since he had been allowed to defend his systems as an astronomical hypothesis, but its pretended association with the Bible. Not long after, having received his sentence and made his recantation, Galileo obtained leave to revisit his native country, and, far from being persecuted, was dismissed with new marks of esteem for his talents and regard for his person." (Fedet's "Modern History," note M. pp. 526-7)

To this notice we may append the following extract from the "Freeman's Journal" report, December 18th 1873, of a lecture delivered before St. Kevin's Branch of the Catholic Union of Ireland by the Very Rev. Canon Murphy, the accomplished president of the society. On three occasions the affairs of Galileo were brought under the notice of the Inquisition. On two of those occasions he was never cited by that tribunal. The denunciation against him was annulled without casting him any molestation. On the second occasion he actually forced the Inquisition to take up his cause and to pronounce judgement more on his scriptural than his philosophical aspect. Lastly, he was arraigned before the Inquisition, but it was to render an account of his flagrant transgression of an injunction laid on him by the highest tribunal in the land, a transgression, too, which was aggravated by circumstances of insult and contumely. In a word, he was arraigned for a grievous contempt of court. The term 'heretical,' applied to what is now regarded as a scientific truth has caused no little perplexity. To me, however, the solution so often given of the difficulty appears to be simple and satisfactory. It is undeniable that the term, as used in this sentence, cannot bear the strict meaning which now attaches to it. The Church never in any way tolerated, much less favoured a doctrine directly opposed to a dogma of faith; and to such doctrine only is the term hereby now applied. If Galileo had not published his Dialogue he might have continued to entertain any philosophical theory he pleased, without forfeiting the favour and friendship of the head of the Church."

The Law of Finding

The law of finding is this:—The finder has a clear title against all the world but the true owner. The proprietor of a coach or a railroad car or of a shop has no right to demand the property which may be found upon their property or premises. Such proprietors may make regulations in regard to lost property which will bind employes, but they cannot bind the public. The law of finding was declared by the King's Bench, one hundred years ago, in a case in which the facts were these:—A person found a wallet containing a sum of money on a shop floor. He handed the wallet and contents to the shopkeeper to be returned to the owner. After three years, during which the owner did not call for his property, the finder demanded the wallet and money from the shopkeeper. The latter refused to deliver them up on the ground that they were found on his premises. The finder then sued the shopkeeper, and it was held, as above set forth, that against all the world but the owner the title of the finder is perfect. And the finder has been held to stand in the place of the owner, so that he was permitted to prevail in an action against a person who found an article

which the plaintiff had originally found but subsequently lost. The police have no special rights in regard to articles lost unless those rights are conferred by statute. Receivers of articles found are trustees for the owner or the finder. They have no power in the absence of a special statute to keep the article against the finder, any more than the finder has to retain the article against the owner.

A Shrewd Wife

The wife of a Detroit speculator went East a few days ago to visit friends in the Mohawk valley of New York. In due time he received a letter from her announcing her safe arrival, and adding: "I am going to show you that a woman knows how to speculate as well as a man. Apples are much cheaper than in Detroit, and I am going to buy and ship a car load on speculation."

The thermometer was at zero, and the man pranced around like a crazy steer. She could not be reached by telegraph, and the letter he sent in reply had not been gone two hours when he received a second, which said:

"Enclosed you will find the shipping bill of the car load of apples. Don't sell one of them at less than \$2 a barrel, and don't never say again that women don't know how to turn a dollar to account."

Yesterday the man went down to look at the car. Every apple was, of course, frozen as hard as a stone, and when the freight agent asked, "What blanked fool shipped you these apples in this sort of weather?" it seemed to be a great satisfaction to reply:

"My wife, sir—my wife!"

TRAVEL BY THE FAMOUS "ALBERT LEA RAILROAD" TO ONTARIO AND THE EAST.

Leave Winnipeg	9:45 a. m.	Chicago	10:30 p. m.
Arrive St. Paul	7:30 a. m.	Milwaukee	8:30 p. m.
St. Thomas	7:45 a. m.	St. Louis	9:00 p. m.
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