

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

THE

ACCUSATION,

CON DEMNATION, & ABJURATION

OF

GALILEO GALILEI,

BEFORE THE

Holy Inquisition,

AT ROME, 1633.

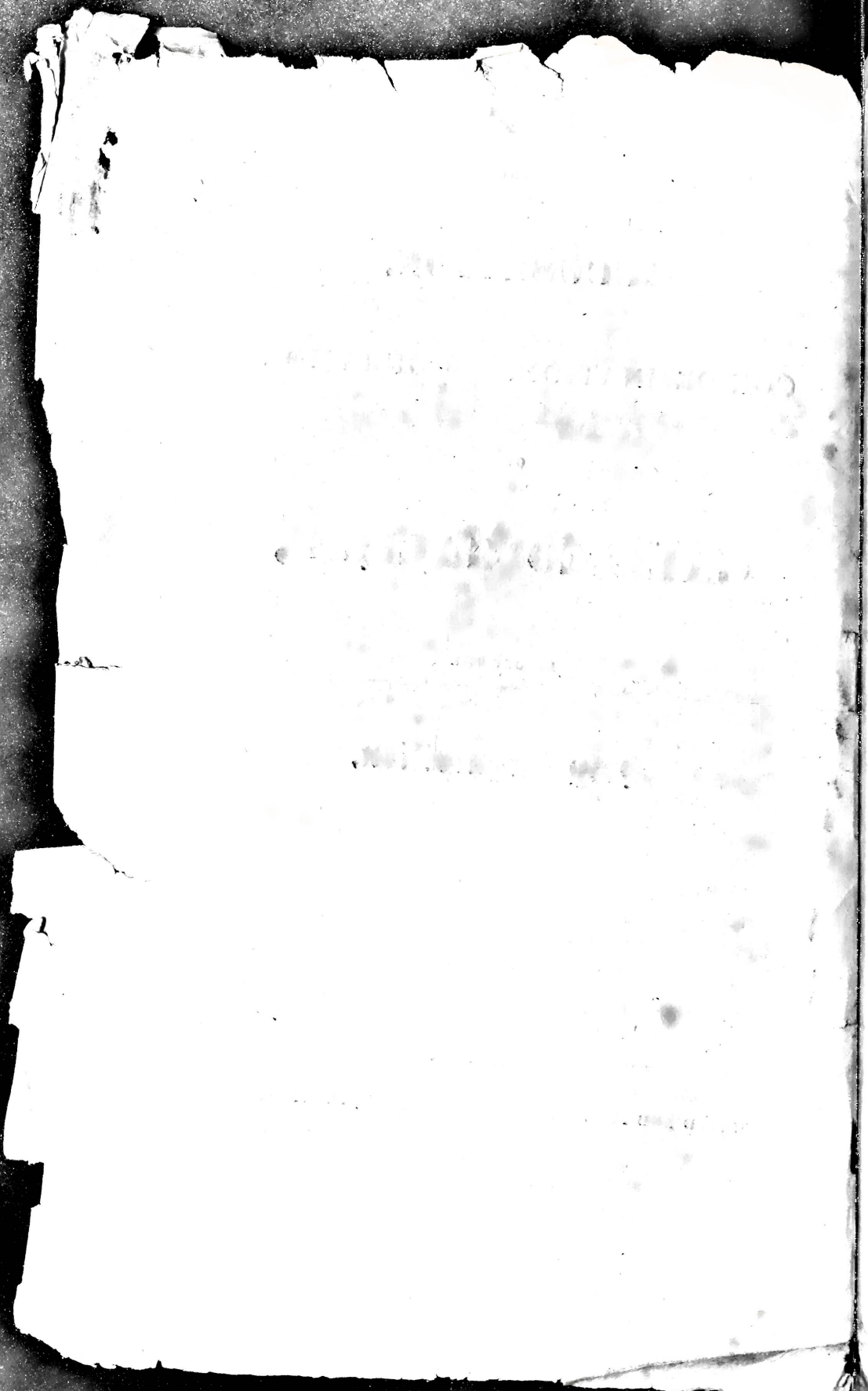


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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

THE Accusation, Condemnation, and Abjuration of Galileo, are amongst the many strong proofs of the mischievous tendency of an established priesthood, which has invariably opposed itself as a bar to the progress of science. It is an evidence that cannot be denied, that the men (admitting their sincerity) who devote their time to the promulgation of certain creeds, or to the illustration of certain passages in the book called the Bible, are at all times deficient in a knowledge of those things which the more reasoning part of the community admit as truths.

Where is the man in England, be he Prince, Priest, or Peasant, who can read this Accusation, Condemnation, and Abjuration of Galileo, without a feeling of pity and disgust? Yet I am inclined to believe that my persecutors, at the present day, are influenced by the same feelings and motives, as those who persecuted and condemned the opinions of Galileo. They are alarmed at any evidence, or discovery that has a tendency to invalidate their generally received opinions. They are at all times ready to anathematize the bold enquirer after truth,

and would persecute to destruction the man who dares to avow his dissent from their opinions.

The *Magnificent Inquisitor General* of that day, and of that country, and the *Magnificent Inquisitor General* of the present day, and of this country, are men of the same stamp and disposition. The charge against Galileo was, that his opinions had a tendency to bring into disrepute the Holy Scriptures; the charge against me is, that my publications have the same tendency. Galileo was imprisoned, but before the expiration of his sentence, his persecutors were convinced of their ignorance and folly. Galileo was liberated, and his astronomical opinions espoused, even by his former persecutors. For the honour of my country, I hope, that a jury will not be found in the present day to become a bar to scientific research, progressive improvement, and free discussion on all subjects.

British Juries are called on to assume the patronage of the Press. The Age of Reason will then be seen in the prospective. No possible evil can arise from the utmost effects of a free exercise of the Press. Licentiousness is preferable to restraint. For *Licentiousness of the Press* is one of those vices that carries its own punishment with it, whilst restraint must be a certain bar to utility. The proceedings against Galileo are here submitted to the public, as a proof of this assertion, and for their consideration.

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ACCUSATION,

&c.

WE, Gaspar, of the title of Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Borgia, brother Felix Certinus of the title of St. Anastasia, surnamed of Asculum.

Guidus, of the title of St. Mary of the People, Bentivolus, brother Desiderius Scaglia, of the title of St. Charles, surnamed of Cremona.

Brother Antonius Barbarinus, surnamed of St. Onuphrius, Laudivius Zacchia, of the title of St. Peter, in vinculis, surnamed of St. Sixtus.

Berlingerius, of the title of St. Augustin Gypsius.

Fabricius of St. Lawrence.

Francis of St. Lawrence.

Martin, of the new St. Mary and Ginethis, Deacons, by the mercy of God, Cardinals of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, and specially deputed by the Holy Apostolical seat as Inquisitors General against heretical perverseness throughout the whole Christian common-wealth.

Whereas you, Galileo, son of the late Vincent Galileo of Florence, being 70 years of age, had a charge brought against you in the year 1615, in this Holy Office, that you held as true, an erroneous opinion held by many; namely, *that the Sun is the centre of the World, and immoveable*, and that the *Earth* moves even with a *diurnal motion*: also that you had certain scholars into whom you instilled the same doctrine: also that you maintained a correspondence on this point, with certain Mathematicians of Germany: also that you published cer-

tain Epistles, treating of the *solar spots*, in which you explained the same doctrine, *as true*, because you answered to the objections, which from time to time were brought against you, taken from the Holy Scripture, by glossing over the said Scripture according to *your own sense*; and that afterwards when a copy of a writing in the form of an Epistle, written by you to a certain late scholar of yours, was presented to you, (it following the hypothesis of Copernicus) you stood up for, and defended certain propositions in it, which are against the true sense, and authority of Holy Scripture.

This Holy Tribunal, desiring, therefore, to provide against the inconveniencies and mischiefs which have issued hence, and increased to the danger of our Holy Faith; agreeably to the mandate of Lord N—— and the very eminent Doctors, Cardinals of this supreme and universal inquisition: two propositions respecting the immobility of the Sun; and the motion of the Earth, have been adopted and pronounced, as under.

That the Sun is the centre of the World, and immoveable, in respect of local motion, is an absurd proposition, false in philosophy, and formally heretical; seeing it is expressly contrary to Holy Scripture.

That the Earth is not the centre of the World, nor immoveable, but moves even with a diurnal motion, is also an absurd proposition, false in Philosophy, and considered Theologically, is at least an error in Faith.

But whereas we have thought fit in the interim to proceed gently with you, it has been agreed upon in the Holy Congregation held before D. N. on the 25th day of Feb. 1616, that the most Eminent Lord Cardinal Bellarmine should enjoin you entirely to recede from the aforesaid false doctrine; and, on your refusal, it was commanded by the Commissary of the Holy Office, that you should recant the said

false doctrine, and should not teach it to others, nor defend it, nor dispute concerning it: to which command if you would not submit, that you should be cast into prison: and in order to put in execution the same decree, on the following day you were gently admonished in the Palace before the above-said most eminent Lord Cardinal Bellarmine, and afterwards by the same Lord Cardinal: and by the Commissary of the Holy Office, a notary and witnesses being present, entirely to desist from the said erroneous opinion; and that thereafter it should not be permitted you to defend it, or teach it in any manner, either by speaking, or writing; and whereas you promised obedience, you were at that time dismissed.

And to the end, such a *pernicious doctrine* may be entirely extirpated away, and spread no farther, to the grievous detriment of the Catholic verity, a decree was issued by the Holy Congregation *indicis*, prohibiting the printing of books, which treat of such sort of doctrine, which was therein pronounced false, and altogether contrary to Holy and Divine Scripture. And the same book has since appeared at Florence, published in the year last past, the inscription of which, shewed that you were its author, as the title was, "*A Dialogue of Galileo Galilei*," concerning the two principal systems of the World, the Ptolemaic and the Copernican, as the Holy Congregation, recognizing from the expression of the aforesaid book, that the false opinion concerning the motion of the Earth, and the immobility of the Sun prevailed daily more and more: the aforesaid book was diligently examined, when we openly discovered the transgression of the aforesaid command, before enjoined you; seeing that in the same book you had resumed and defended the aforesaid opinion already condemned, and in your presence declared to be erroneous, because in the said book by various circumlocutions, you earnestly endeavour to persuade,

that it is left by you undecided, and at the least probable which must necessarily be a grievous error, since an opinion can by no means be probable, which hath already been declared and adjudged contrary to divine Scripture.

Wherefore you have by our authority been summoned to this our Holy Office, in which being examined you have on oath acknowledged the said book was written and printed by you. And have also confessed, that about ten or twelve years ago, after the injunction had been given you as above, that the said book was begun to be written by you. Also that you petitioned for licence to publish it, but without signifying to those who gave you such licence, that it had been prohibited you, not by any means to maintain, defend, or teach such doctrine.

You likewise confessed, that the writing of the aforesaid book was so composed in many places, that the reader might think, that arguments adduced on the false part, calculated rather to perplex the understanding by their weight, than be easily resolved; excusing yourself, by saying you had fallen into an error so foreign from your intention, (as you declared) because you had handled the subject in the form of a dialogue, and because of the natural complacence which every one hath in maintaining his own arguments, and in shewing himself more acute than others in defending even false propositions by ingenious deductions, and of apparent probability.

And, when a time was assigned you for making your defence, you produced a certificate under the hand-writing of the most eminent Lord Cardinal Bellarmine, procured as you said, in order to defend yourself against the calumnies of our enemies, who every where gave it out, that you had abjured, and had been punished by the Holy Office: in which certificate it is said, that you had not abjured, nor had been punished, but only that a declaration had

been filed against you, drawn up by the said Lord, and formally issued by the Holy Congregation *Indicis*, in which it is declared that the doctrine concerning the motion of the Earth, and the immobility of the Sun, is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and therefore can neither be defended or maintained. Wherefore seeing no mention was then made of two particulars of the mandate; namely, (*docere & quovis modo,*) *teaching, and by any means*, we judge that in the course of fourteen or sixteen years they had slipped out of your memory, and for the same reason you were silent respecting the mandate, when you petitioned for a licence to print your book, and yet this was said by you not to maintain, or obstinately persist in your error, but as proceeding from vain ambition, and not perverseness. But this very certificate produced in your defence, rather tends to make your excuse look worse, because in it is declared, that the aforesaid opinion is contrary to the Holy Scripture, and yet you have dared to treat of it as a matter of dispute, and defend, and teach it as probable: nor does the licence itself favour you, seeing it was deceitfully and artfully extorted by you, as you did not produce the mandate imposed upon you.

And whereas it appeared to us, that the whole truth was not expressed by you, respecting your intention: we have judged it necessary to come to a more accurate examination of the business, in which (without prejudice to those things which you have confessed, and which have been brought against you as above, respecting your said intention) you have answered as a penitent, and good Catholic. Wherefore we having maturely considered the merits of your cause, together with your abovesaid confessions, and defence, and are come to the underwritten definitive sentence against you.

Having invoked the most holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his most glorious mother the

ever blessed Virgin Mary, we, by this our definitive sentence, by the advice and judgment of the most Reverend Masters of Holy Theology, and the Doctors of both Laws, our Counsellors respecting the cause and causes controverted before us, between the magnificent Charles Sincerus, Dr. of both Laws, Fiscal Procurator of this Holy Office on the one part, and you, Galileo Galilei defendant, question examined, and having confessed, as above on the other part, we say, judge and declare, by the present processional writing, you, the abovesaid Galileo, on account of those things, which have been adduced in the written process, and which you have confessed, as above, that you have rendered yourself liable to the suspicion of heresy by this office, that is, you have believed and maintained a false doctrine, and contrary to the Holy and Divine Scriptures, namely, that the Sun is the centre of the orb of the Earth, and that it does not move from the East to the West, and that the Earth moves and is not the centre of the World; and that this position may be held and defended as a probable opinion, after it had been declared and defined to be contrary to Holy Scriptures, and consequently that you have incurred all the censures and penalties of the Holy Canons, and other Constitutions general and particular, enacted and promulgated against such delinquents from which it is our pleasure to absolve you, on condition that first, with sincere heart and faith unfeigned, you abjure, execrate, and detest the above errors and heresies, and every other error and heresy, contrary to the Catholic and Apostolical Roman Church, in our presence, in that formula which is hereby exhibited to you.

But that your grievous and pernicious error and transgression may not remain altogether unpunished, and that you may hereafter be more cautious, serving as an example to others, that they may abstain from the like offences, we decree, that the book of the

Dialogue of Galileo, be prohibited by public edict, *and we condemn yourself to the prison of this Holy Office, to a time to be limited by our discretion ; and we enjoin under the title of salutary penitence, that during three years to come you recite once a week the seven penitential Psalms, reserving to ourselves the power of moderating, changing, or taking away entirely, or in part, the aforesaid penalties and penitences.*

And so we say, pronounce, and by our sentence declare, enact, condemn, and reserve, by this and every other better mode or formula, by which of right we can and ought.

So we, the underwritten Cardinals pronounce, F. Cardinal de Asculo, G. Cardinal Bentivolus, F. Cardinal de Cremona, Fr. Antony Cardinal S. Onuphrii, B. Cardinal Gypsius, F. Cardinal Verospius, M. Cardinal Ginettus.

THE ABJURATION OF GALILEO.

I Galileo Galilei, son of the late Vincent Galileo, a Florentine, of the age of 70, appearing personally in judgment, and being on my knees in the presence of you, most eminent and most reverend Lords Cardinals of the Universal Christian Commonwealth, Inquisitors General against heretical depravity, having before my eyes the holy Gospels, on which I now lay my hands, swear that I have always believed, and now believe, and God helping, that I shall for the future always believe, whatever the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church holds, preaches, and teaches. But because this Holy Office had enjoined me by precept, entirely to relinquish the false dogma which maintains that the sun is the centre of the world, and immoveable, and that the Earth is not the centre, and moves ; not to hold, defend,

or teach by any means, or by writing, the aforesaid false doctrine; and after it had been notified to me that the aforesaid doctrine is repugnant to the Holy Scripture, I have written and printed a book, in which I treat of the same doctrine already condemned, and adduce reasons with great efficacy in favour of it, not offering any solution of them; therefore I have been adjudged and vehemently suspected of heresy, namely, that I maintained and believed that the Sun is the centre of the world, and immoveable, and that the Earth is not the centre, and moves.

Therefore, being willing to take out of the minds of your eminences, and of every Catholic Christian, this vehement suspicion of right conceived against me, I with sincere heart, and faith unfeigned, abjure, execrate, and detest the aforesaid errors and heresies, and generally every other sect contrary to the aforesaid Holy Church; and I swear that I will never any more hereafter say or assert, by speech or writing, any thing through which the like suspicion may be had of me; but if I shall know any one heretical, or suspected of heresy, I will denounce him to this Holy Office, or to the Inquisitor, and Ordinary of the place in which I shall be. I moreover swear and promise, that I will fulfil and observe entirely all the penitences which have been imposed upon me, or which shall be imposed by this Holy Office. But if it shall happen that I shall go contrary (which God avert) to any of my words, promises, protestations, and oaths, I subject myself to all the penalties and punishments, which, by the Holy Canons, and other Constitutions, general and particular, have been enacted and promulgated against such delinquents: So help me God, and his Holy Gospels, on which I now lay my hands.

I, the aforesaid Galileo Galilei, have abjured, sworn, promise, and have bound myself as above, and in the fidelity of those with my own hands, and have subscribed to this present writing of my abjuration,

which I have recited word by word. At Rome, in the Convent of Minerva, this 22d of June, of the year 1633.

I, Galileo Galilei, have abjured as above, with my own hand.

*The following is copied from the quarto edition of
MACLAURIN'S NEWTON, pages 54, 55, and 60.*

“GALILEO made surprising discoveries in the heavens by the telescope, an instrument invented by himself; and, by applying geometry to the doctrine of motion, began to establish natural philosophy on a sure foundation. He made the evidence of the Copernican system more sensible, when he shewed from the phases of Venus, like to the monthly phases of the moon, that Venus actually revolves about the sun. He proved the revolution of the sun on its axis, from his spots; and thence the diurnal rotation of the earth became more credible. The four satellites that attend Jupiter in his revolution about the sun, represented in Jupiter's lesser system, a just image of the great solar system; and rendered it more easy to conceive how the moon might attend the earth as a satellite in her annual revolution. By discovering hills and cavities in the moon, and spots in the sun constantly varying, he shewed that there was not so great a difference between the celestial and sublunary bodies as the philosophers had vainly imagined.

“He did no less service by treating in a clear and geometrical manner, the doctrine of motion, which has been justly called the key of nature. The rational part of mechanics had been so much neglected, that there was hardly any improvement made in it, from the time of the incomparable Archi-

medes to that of Galileo ; but this last named author has given us fully the theory of equable motions, and of such as are uniformly accelerated or retarded, and of these two compounded together. He first demonstrated, that the spaces described by heavy bodies from the beginning of their descent are as squares of the times, and that a body, projected in any direction that is not perpendicular to the horizon, describes a parabola. These were the beginnings of the doctrine of the motion of heavy bodies, which has been since carried to so great a height by Sir Isaac Newton.

“ He also discovered the gravity of the air, and endeavoured to compare it with that of water ; and opened up several other enquiries in natural philosophy. He was not esteemed and followed by philosophers only, but was honoured by persons of the greatest distinctions of all nations. Des Cartes, indeed, after commending him for applying geometry to physics, complains that he had not examined things in order but had enquired into the reasons of particular effects only ; adding that by his passing over the primary causes of nature, he had built without a foundation. He did not, 'tis true, take so high a flight as Des Cartes, or attempt so universal a system ; but this complaint, I doubt, must turn out to Galileo's praise ; while the censure of Des Cartes shews that he had the weakness to be vain of the worst part of his writing.

“ But all the merit of this excellent philosopher and elegant writer could not preserve him from persecution in his old age. Some pretended philosophers, who had imprudently objected against his new discoveries in the heavens, when they found themselves worsted and exposed to ridicule, turned their hatred and resentment against his person. He was obliged by the rancour of the Jesuits and the weakness of his protector, to go to Rome, and there solemnly renounce the doctrine of the motion

of the earth, which he had argued for with so much ingenuity and evidence. After this cruel usage he was silent for some time, but not idle; for we have valuable pieces of his of a later date.

“Geometry and philosophy advanced together at a great pace, and gave mutual aid to each other. The evidence of geometry began to take place in philosophy, while all things were examined by number, weight, and measure; and the principles of the theory of motion, being now clearly understood, furnished excellent illustrations of the abstruse parts of geometry. Galileo had scholars worthy of so great a master, by whom the gravitation of the atmosphere was established fully, and its varying pressure accurately and conveniently measured, by the column of quicksilver of equal weight sustained by it in the barometrical tube. The elasticity of the air, by which it perpetually endeavours to expand itself, and, while it admits of condensation, resists in proportion to its density, was a phenomenon of a new kind (the common fluids having no such property) and of the utmost importance to philosophy. These principles opened a vast field of new and useful knowledge, and explained a great variety of phenomena, which had been accounted for in an absurd manner before that time.”

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