

**CATHOLIC CHURCHMEN IN  
SCIENCE: SKETCHES OF THE LIVES  
OF CATHOLIC ECCLESIASTICS  
WHO WERE AMONG THE GREAT  
FOUNDERS IN SCIENCE**

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Catholic churchmen in science: sketches of the lives of Catholic ecclesiastics who were among the great founders in science by James J. Walsh

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# Catholic Churchmen in Science

[SECOND SERIES]

SKETCHES OF THE LIVES OF CATHOLIC  
ECCLESIASTICS WHO WERE AMONG  
THE GREAT FOUNDERS IN SCIENCE

BY

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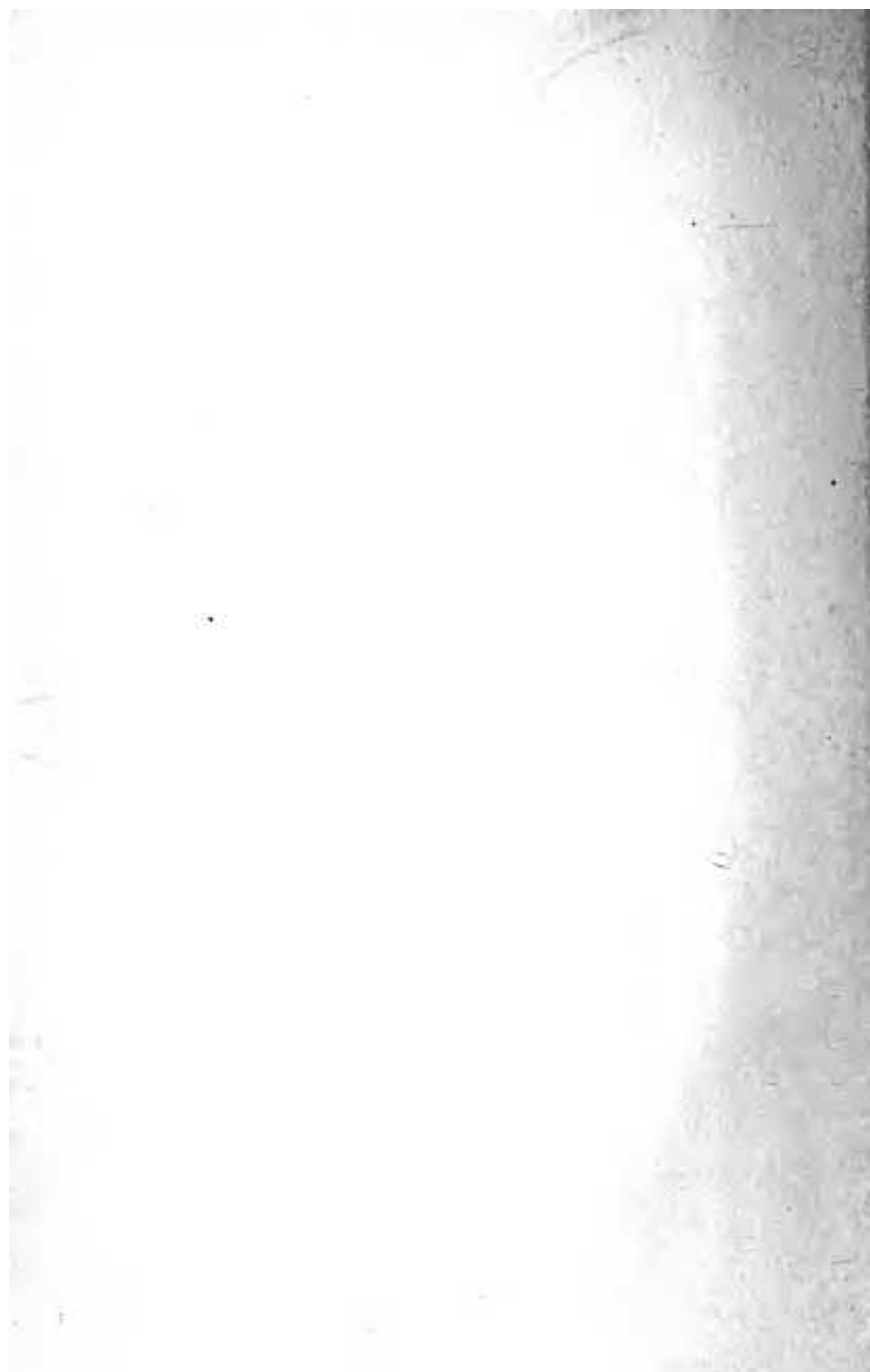
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**American Ecclesiastical Review**  
**The Dolphin Press**

To

MY FATHER

TO WHOSE INTEREST IN WHAT IS BEST IN LIFE  
I OWE ALL





## PREFACE.

THIS second series of *Catholic Churchmen in Science* is another contribution to the important question of the relations of Faith and Science. Many even well-informed people seem to think that science and faith are incompatible, and that the more science a man knows the less faith he has, while the more he bows in submission to Faith in the things that are not seen, the less possibility is there of his doing good work in science or even of appreciating its true significance. In the abstract the question may seem difficult enough to decide. In the concrete it is a perfectly simple matter to find out what was the attitude of the great scientists of all ages toward Faith. A most important part of the answer to this question is contained in the lives of the ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic Church who have achieved distinction in science. There are a good many Catholic churchmen whose original scientific work has stamped their names indelibly on the history of science in every century. From their lives it can be readily seen that men may be devout believers in all the mysteries of religion and yet do magnificent experimental work; they may submit their intellects humbly to Faith, yet have perfectly open minds that enable them to put searching ques-

tions to nature so as to make great advances in science. This is just what is supposed to be impossible. Submission to authority in intellectual matters of any kind is said to be fatal to the faculty for investigation and inquiry that is so important for progress in science. These lives show that it is perfectly possible for a man to accept revelation on authority and yet refuse to believe anything relating to physical science except on demonstration.

Perhaps even more surprising than this for most people will be the fact that these sketches show that Catholic churchmen have been among the greatest workers in science during the past seven centuries. This surprise will be mitigated, however, for those who realize that, quite contrary to the usual impression in English-speaking countries, devout Catholics have at all times been among the greatest scientific discoverers. Even in what is usually supposed to be so unorthodox a science as medicine, the majority of the greatest discoverers even in the nineteenth century were, as I have shown in *Makers of Modern Medicine*, among the most faithful adherents of the Catholic Church. The tradition that the Church is opposed to science is founded entirely on ignorance of the true history of science. When the Popes were paramount in education during the centuries before the so-called Reformation, physical science flourished to a much greater degree than is now thought. There were then a dozen medical schools in Italy, the great-

est of them in the Papal States, and, as I have shown in *The Popes and Science*, the Popes were as devoted patrons of science as they were of art and of architecture.

Most of the second series of sketches of Catholic churchmen have appeared in various periodicals during the past few years. My thanks are here given to *The Ecclesiastical Review*, *The American Catholic Quarterly*, *The Ave Maria*, *St. John's Quarterly*, and *The Month* (London), for permission to republish papers which appeared in their pages and which are here republished after careful revision and many additions. The article on Guy De Chauliac formed the basis of a lecture before the Johns Hopkins Historical Club on Old-Time Medical Education. A large portion of the article on Pope John XXI, the Ophthalmologist Pope, appeared in *Ophthalmology*, a quarterly journal of ophthalmic science.

While the book has been in preparation I have felt that a third volume of Catholic Churchmen in Science is needed to complete, even in an imperfect way, the story of what they did for science. This should include sketches of the medieval monastic scientists, Roger Bacon, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, Father Pazzi the astronomer, and of some modern clergymen who have done good work in the biological sciences. This I hope to publish as soon as leisure will permit.