



Gledhill: British Catholics Renounce Biblical Infallibility; the Corporate Marriage Illustrates the Relationship between the Heart & Emotions

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Catholic Church no longer swears by truth of the Bible

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THE hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church has published a teaching document instructing the faithful that some parts of the Bible are not actually true.

The Catholic bishops of England, Wales and Scotland are warning their five million worshippers, as well as any others drawn to the study of scripture, that they should not expect "total accuracy" from the Bible.

"We should not expect to find in Scripture full scientific accuracy or complete historical precision," they say in *The Gift of Scripture*.

The document is timely, coming as it does amid the rise of the religious Right, in particular in the US.

Some Christians want a literal interpretation of the story of creation, as told in Genesis, taught alongside Darwin's theory of evolution in schools, believing "intelligent design" to be an equally plausible theory of how the world began.

But the first 11 chapters of Genesis, in which two different and at times conflicting stories of creation are told, are among those that this country's Catholic bishops insist cannot be "historical". At most, they say, they may contain "historical traces".

The document shows how far the Catholic Church has come since the 17th century, when Galileo was condemned as a heretic for flouting a near-universal belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible by advocating the Copernican view of the solar system. Only a century ago, Pope Pius X condemned Modernist Catholic scholars who adapted historical-critical methods of analysing ancient literature to the Bible.

In the document, the bishops acknowledge their debt to biblical scholars. They say the Bible must be approached in the knowledge that it is "God's word expressed in human language" and that proper acknowledgement should be given both to the word of God and its human dimensions.

They say the Church must offer the gospel in ways "appropriate to changing times, intelligible and attractive to our contemporaries".

The Bible is true in passages relating to human salvation, they say, but continue: "We should not expect total accuracy from the Bible in other, secular matters."

They go on to condemn fundamentalism for its "intransigent intolerance" and to warn of "significant dangers" involved in a fundamentalist approach.

"Such an approach is dangerous, for example, when people of one nation or group see in the Bible a mandate for their own superiority, and even consider themselves permitted by the Bible to use violence against others."

Of the notorious anti-Jewish curse in Matthew 27:25, "His blood be on us and on our children", a passage used to justify centuries of anti-Semitism, the bishops say these and other words must never be used again as a pretext to treat Jewish people with contempt. Describing this passage as an example of dramatic exaggeration, the bishops say they have had "tragic consequences" in encouraging hatred and persecution. "The attitudes and language of first-century quarrels between Jews and Jewish Christians should never again be emulated in relations between Jews and Christians."



As examples of passages not to be taken literally, the bishops cite the early chapters of Genesis, comparing them with early creation legends from other cultures, especially from the ancient East. The bishops say it is clear that the primary purpose of these chapters was to provide religious teaching and that they could not be described as historical writing.

Similarly, they refute the apocalyptic prophecies of Revelation, the last book of the Christian Bible, in which the writer describes the work of the risen Jesus, the death of the Beast and the wedding feast of Christ the Lamb.

The bishops say: "Such symbolic language must be respected for what it is, and is not to be interpreted literally. We should not expect to discover in this book details about the end of the world, about how many will be saved and about when the end will come."

In their foreword to the teaching document, the two most senior Catholics of the land, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, and Cardinal Keith O'Brien, Archbishop of St Andrew's and Edinburgh, explain its context.

They say people today are searching for what is worthwhile, what has real value, what can be trusted and what is really true.

The new teaching has been issued as part of the 40th anniversary celebrations of Dei Verbum, the Second Vatican Council document explaining the place of Scripture in revelation. In the past 40 years, Catholics have learnt more than ever before to cherish the Bible. "We have rediscovered the Bible as a precious treasure, both ancient and ever new."

A Christian charity is sending a film about the Christmas story to every primary school in Britain after hearing of a young boy who asked his teacher why Mary and Joseph had named their baby after a swear word. The Breakout Trust raised £200,000 to make the 30-minute animated film, *It's a Boy*. Steve Legg, head of the charity, said: "There are over 12 million children in the UK and only 756,000 of them go to church regularly.

That leaves a staggering number who are probably not receiving basic Christian teaching."

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

UNTRUE

Genesis ii, 21-22

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man

Genesis iii, 16

God said to the woman [after she was beguiled by the serpent]: "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Matthew xxvii, 25

The words of the crowd: "His blood be on us and on our children."

Revelation xix,20

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone."



TRUE

Exodus iii, 14

God reveals himself to Moses as: "I am who I am."

Leviticus xxvi,12

"I will be your God, and you shall be my people."

Exodus xx,1-17

The Ten Commandments

Matthew v,7

The Sermon on the Mount

Mark viii,29

Peter declares Jesus to be the Christ

Luke i

The Virgin Birth

John xx,28

Proof of bodily resurrection

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4. It is apparent that the heart is to be the ultimate authority of the soul, and all other divisions, as well as the emotions, are to be submissive to it.
5. From this we can develop an analogy between the doctrine of right man-right woman and the heart and kidneys.
6. The heart is the right man of the spiritual life while the emotions are the right woman of the spiritual life.
7. The heart initiates action through doctrinal thought while the emotions respond with appreciation, submission, and support.
8. The current status of this relationship is the purpose behind our Lord's daily inventory of both the heart and kidneys.
9. What Jesus Christ seeks to determine is that the emotions are in proper subordination to a large inventory of doctrine in the heart's stream of consciousness.
10. What our Lord desires to discover as a result of the pressures he places on the individual is that our emotions are subordinate to doctrine in the soul, not visa versa.



11. He may find a proper relationship between the heart and emotions, or He may discover an inversion characterized by emotional revolt.
12. All subsequent action is based on His complete knowledge of the facts, i.e., divine omniscience.
13. A believer's choices result in production that demonstrates the relationship between his emotions and heart. We have noted four.
14. The corporate marriage also demonstrates this relationship. The home represents the soul, the husband illustrates the heart, and the wife exemplifies the emotions.
15. The husband is the spiritual leader of the household and is held accountable to the Lord for his decision-making, problem-solving, and application.
16. The wife is to respond to this leadership by submitting to, responding to, and assisting in the application and support of her husband's decisions.
16. Discord in the marriage occurs when the wife, who illustrates emotion, reacts to her husband's leadership, usurps his authority, and ultimately wrests away his control over the household.
17. In Song of Solomon, the Shulammitte is faced with the ordeal of not challenging the legitimate authority of Solomon as her political leader while remaining loyal to her Shepherd Lover, who in her soul she has isolated as her right man, and the spiritual leader in her life.
18. Solomon can offer her great riches and a life without want or need. He is being permitted to intervene as an antagonist into the romance between the Shepherd and the Shulammitte.
19. This symbolizes the temptations that Israel would soon face during the time of the divided kingdoms when, due to her attraction to the false gods of her neighboring countries, she would betray the God of Israel for idols of stocks and stones.
20. The Shulammitte's loyalty to the Shepherd stands as a subtle warning and an object lesson to future Israelites of how they should respond to these impending temptations.
21. But demonstrating the principle about which Jeremiah would write some 400 years later, she put her trust in the Lord and not man.
22. This trust is illustrated by the soul rapport she expresses in the opening line of:

SOS 1:7 - "Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, where do you pasture your flock, where do you make it lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who veils herself beside the flocks of your companions?"