Roman Catholicism

Pope Innocent III (pope from 1198-1216) on papal legitimacy:
“You see then who is this servant set up over the household, truly the vicar of Christ, successor of Peter, anointed of the Lord, a God of Pharaoh, set between God and man, lower than God but higher than man, who judges all and is judged by no one.”

Pope Pius IX’s encyclical *Quanta cura* (1864) with a list of condemned propositions:
1. Pantheism
2. Deism
3. The autonomy of reason
4. The anthropomorphic interpretation of the Bible
5. The assertion that the Christian revelation is incomplete
6. Faith in progress on the basis of a perfecting of human reason
7. The historical critique of the Bible

*Catholic Church no longer swears by truth of the Bible*
By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent
The Times  October 05, 2005

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.

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”.

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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 “intransient 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.”

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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