

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

Number 376 Copyright 2024 The Trinity Foundation Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 Jan.-Mar. 2024
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The Word of God Is Not Bound

2 Timothy 2:9

By Timothy F. Kauffman

Editor's Note: This is the text of Mr. Kauffman's 2023 Reformation Day Livestream message for The Trinity Foundation. The article will conclude in the next Trinity Review.

George Farmer, formerly an evangelical Christian and chairman of Turning Point UK, now husband of online personality, Candace Owens, is now a Roman Catholic apologist. He recently debated a protestant apologist, Allie Beth Stuckey, which debate immediately turned to the matter of Divine Revelation. Farmer wasted no time getting to the heart of the matter: Sola Scriptura makes no sense to him, because you cannot know which books are in the Bible unless you have an authoritative, infallible magisterium. In other words, for *Sola Scriptura* to work, you would need the Scriptures PLUS an infallible tradition identifying them as Scriptures. And, the Scriptures PLUS anything contradicts the “sola” of Sola Scriptura. In a follow up interview with Roman Catholic apologist, Taylor Marshall, George Farmer took it a step further and said you cannot even know God at all: He said: “God is beyond our comprehension. God is not supposed to be understood. If you think you have understood God, you are completely wrong. He is actually beyond our comprehension” (Pt 1:30:00). Taylor Marshall, himself a former Protestant and now Roman Catholic YouTube personality, agreed with

George Farmer. It is now rumored that Candace Owens is considering converting to Roman Catholicism.

Joshua T. Charles, former Protestant and former White House speech writer, recently converted to Roman Catholicism and now has an online apologetics ministry—not only to announce and broadcast his recent conversion, but also to explain his reason for it: the superior epistemology of Roman Catholicism. “One of the reasons Christ instituted a Church with His authority to teach,” he wrote, “is because, frankly, most people are not capable of understanding Scripture at a deeper level when left on their own, with no divinely appointed teacher to teach them” (July 2, 2023).

Cameron Bertuzzi, a former Protestant online cultural commentator only last year converted to Roman Catholicism on the strength of the Peter-Eliakim typology, which alleges that in Matthew 16:18, “thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church” Jesus was alluding to Isaiah 22, in which Eliakim is elevated to a prime ministerial role over the house of God. Facing the argument for a Peter as Prime Minister, Cameron could no longer resist, and announced his surprise conversion a year ago.

Keith Nester is a former Protestant pastor who converted to Roman Catholicism in 2017. To him,

the real issue was authority, and his own Methodist denomination didn't seem to have an answer to his concerns. In his own words *as a Protestant*, "Without an external authority beyond the Scriptures to help us understand how to interpret the bible authoritatively, what hope is there for us?" (Matt Fradd; 35:00-36:00). That is what hit him as a Protestant, ultimately leading him to convert to Roman Catholicism where such authority ostensibly resides.

Such conversion testimonies are plentiful online, and hardly a year goes by that another prominent Protestant does not convert to Roman Catholicism, or at least announce that he is considering it. They are tired of the division, disagreements, arguments, chaos and squalor among Protestants, and their reasons for conversion largely revolve around the matter of God's Word. Who can understand it? Who can instruct us infallibly as to its meaning? Who can authoritatively tell us what is, and what is not, God's Word? These are the questions these converts ask, and to a man, they have concluded that only the Roman Catholic magisterium—the teaching office of the Roman Catholic Church—can tell us.

There are of course solid intellectual arguments that can be and have been made against all these arguments. George Farmer appeals to ecumenical councils of the Church to claim personal, infallible knowledge of the canon of the Roman Catholic Bible. And yet, no authoritative, infallible Magisterial pronouncement *has ever determined the canon of Ecumenical Councils*, for which reason Roman Catholics have argued for centuries amongst themselves about which councils should be added to that list, and which councils should be removed. It is guesswork and personal opinion, which means the list of allegedly infallible councils is not itself infallible. And to Mr. Farmer's dismay, if one must of necessity appeal to a *fallible* list of councils to determine the canon of Scripture, one cannot claim to have identified the canon of Scripture with *infallible* certainty. As for Joshua T. Charles, he joined Roman Catholicism because Protestants argue endlessly amongst themselves about the meaning of Scripture, only to discover upon his conversion that Roman Catholics argue endlessly amongst themselves not only about the teachings of the Magisterium, but also about which teachings are truly Magisterial. Cameron Bertuzzi, for his part,

converted to Roman Catholicism because of the ostensible "Peter-Eliakim typology," which upon inspection turns out to be a monumental exercise in begging the question. And Keith Nester left the United Methodist Church because of the intolerable confusion over fundamental issues like the ordination of women, marriage, and sexuality, only to arrive in Rome where, six years after his conversion, Roman Catholics are now arguing amongst themselves over fundamental issues like the ordination of women, marriage, and sexuality.

Any one of these alone could be the focus of a Reformation Day address, but fundamentally, these men all abandoned the Scripture to yield to the teaching authority of Rome. The Scripture to them is not the standard of Truth by which the Church is measured. Rather, the Church is the standard of Truth, by which the Scriptures are measured. And that is the phenomenon we will examine today, as we near the 506th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

We will examine not only what Roman Catholicism *really think about God's Word*, but also what God thinks about God's Word. And what a striking difference we shall discover. We shall find that Roman Catholicism does not share God's high view of His own Word, and in fact has elevated the Pope and the Magisterium above Him. This is precisely what Paul means when Paul warns about him "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God" (2 *Thessalonians* 2:4). God has elevated His word above His own Name, and, as we shall see, Roman Catholicism has elevated herself above even that!

Let us begin by examining what God says about His own Word:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (*John* 1:1)

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. (*Psalms* 138:2)

... He called them gods, ***unto whom the word of God came***, and the scripture cannot be broken (*John* 10:35)

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (*Isaiah 55:11*)

Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? (*Jeremiah 23:29*)

For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (*Psalms 119:89*)

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. (*Psalms 119:160*)

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (*Isaiah 40:8*)

... the word of God is not bound. (*2 Timothy 2:9*)

By His Word the universe was brought into being (*Genesis 1:3*). “All things” are upheld “by the word of his power” (*Hebrews 1:3*). By His Word men are born again to eternal life (*1 Peter 1:23*). By His Word the world is reconciled to Him (*2 Corinthians 5:19*) and faith cometh to the elect by the hearing of it (*Romans 10:17*). His Word is a “sweet savour” to “them that are saved” and “the savour of death” to “them that perish” (*2 Corinthians 2:15-16*). By His just and terrible Word the souls of men are condemned (*John 12:48*), and by His gracious and merciful Word, men receive an everlasting inheritance (*Acts 20:32*), passing from death to life (*John 5:24*). All that has ever occurred, or will ever occur, is by the Word of His power, and nothing can withstand it, thwart it, overcome it or controvert it. There is nothing greater. “Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged” (*Romans 3:4*).

It is a remarkable thing that anyone would propose to stand in judgment of God’s Word. As Gordon Clark highlighted in his work, *God’s Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*, a title inspired by

Jeremiah 23:29, which we just read, critics of God’s Word have repeatedly been overcome by truth as their critiques and judgments fall by the wayside. Standing in judgment of God’s Word is a fool’s errand.

The same is true of anyone who would claim to have the credentials to authenticate God’s word, for to authenticate something, one must first possess the standard by which that thing is measured, making the measurer superior to what he measures. Rods and scales are authoritative, calibrated measuring devices to settle transactions and establish compliance. They represent a “standard” against which all else is measured, to which all things must measure up, and with which all things must comply. In a fishing tournament, it is not the catch that is the standard. It is the measuring rod and the scale. The fish does not judge the scale. The scale judges the fish.

Justin Martyr wrote of something similar in about 150 AD when defending the truth of the Word of God. Not only does God’s Word *not require proof*, but it is an insult to Him to attempt to offer one, for the prover would then be superior to Him that is proved:

The word of truth is free, and carries its own authority, disdaining to fall under any skilful argument, or to endure the logical scrutiny of its hearers. But it would be believed for its own nobility, and for the confidence due to Him who sends it. Now the word of truth is sent from God; wherefore the freedom claimed by the truth is not arrogant. For being sent with authority, it were not fit that it should be required to produce proof of what is said; since neither is there any proof beyond itself, which is God. For every proof is more powerful and trustworthy than that which it proves; since what is disbelieved, until proof is produced, gets credit when such proof is produced, and is recognised as being what it was stated to be. But nothing is either more powerful or more trustworthy than the truth; ... the utterances of truth we judge by no separate test, giving full credit to itself.¹

¹ Justin Martyr, *On the Resurrection*, Chapter 1: *the self-evidencing power of Truth*.

Yes, “The word of truth is free,” or as Paul said, the Word of God is not bound. Indeed, God declares His own name to be “I AM WHO AM” (*Exodus* 3:14), the ultimate self-referential authority. John the Baptist professed that Jesus spoke only “what he hath seen and heard” from His Father, “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God” and testifies “that God is true” (*John* 3:32-34) indicating the self-referential authority of the Word of God. Jesus indeed bore witness *to Himself*: “I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me” (*John* 8:18). But then Jesus acknowledged that His own witness of Himself was simply what His Father had commanded Him to say of Himself, which is to say that the Word of the Father was self-attesting:

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. (*John* 12:49-50).

God is His own self-referential authority, and His Word is to be taken on its own authority for the sake of Who said it. No further proof is required, and the Lord does not suffer fools who claim to have the authority to prove it. Thy Word is Truth (*John* 17:17). Thy Law is Truth (*Psalms* 119:142). God cannot be false, for His words and thoughts are only truth.

Now, we have spent a few moments together as we approach the 506th anniversary of the Reformation, discussing a foundational principle of Christ’s holy religion to emphasize a simple truth: God’s Word is Supreme. God’s word is the standard by which men and their words are measured. We focus on this because Roman Catholicism as a religion attempts to deny, thwart and overturn that simple truth. Whereas God claims that His Word is pure, Roman Catholicism would claim that God’s Word is muddy and confusing. God declares that the Scripture is inerrant and cannot be broken, but Roman Catholicism claims that it is she, not the

breath of God, that confers inerrancy on the Scriptures. As we shall demonstrate that same religion that claims the Word of God is impure and muddy and is not inerrant until she declares it to be, *also claims* that her own word is pure and authoritative *on its own authority*, requiring no third-party attestation. It is a remarkable demonstration of proud boasting when a religion claims that God’s Word is muddy until she clarifies it and is not inerrant until she says so, and cannot be understood unless she interprets it, while at the same time insisting that her own rulings are self-attesting, authoritative and irreformable of themselves, needing no further attestation.

Let us begin with Rome’s *low view of the Scriptures* and then we shall return to her very high view of her own declarations.

Rome Purifies God’s “Muddy” Water

In a recent ecumenical discussion between a Roman apologist and a Protestant, the dialogue turned to the purity of God’s Word. “Thy word is very pure,” the psalmist wrote, and “therefore thy servant loveth it” (*Psalms* 119:140). “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (*Psalms* 12:6). Not so, said the Romanist, for God’s word is delivered to us in its raw, unprocessed and muddy condition, and is not purified until it has been refined and filtered for consumption by the Roman Magisterium.

The occasion for such an audacious comment was a recent Roman Catholic broadcast by *Church Militant*. It was on a show called *Mic’d Up*,² and in this particular episode the host David Gordon engaged in a Protestants vs. Catholics Dialogue with Dr. Gavin Ortlund. Ortlund questioned whether the development of Roman Catholic doctrine is a true outgrowth of the original deposit of faith, or if it was rather a corruption of that pure deposit. Ortlund had opined, “When you have muddy water in a stream, you have to go back to see where it came in. The pure water will be found before the muddy water started” (29:00).

To this, the Roman Catholic host David Gordon responded in disbelief: “Isn’t that absurd?” he asked.

² <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/micd-catholics-vs-protestants-biggest-doctrinal-disagreements>, September 17, 2023.

“Isn’t it the opposite that is the case? That water is muddy at first, and then things have to simmer down and be clarified? *Because you get something in its most raw form, and only after time is it purified.*” It is noteworthy that Dr. Ortlund had been speaking of that “unique era in Church history” when the Apostles were delivering the original “apostolic testimony,” a testimony that their hearers received “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God” (*1 Thessalonians 2:13*). God’s word is originally pure like refined silver. But to the Roman Catholic, when the Word of God is breathed from His mouth, well, *that is when the “waters” are the muddiest*, and God’s raw, unrefined, and unfiltered muddy water must be purified over time by the Magisterium.

Just think about that for a moment. The foundational premise of Roman Catholic David Gordon’s argument is that God’s Word, as originally delivered in its raw, unprocessed form is muddy until it is refined and clarified by another authority, the Magisterium of Rome. We are reminded at this moment of the Man of God of *1 Kings 13*. Let’s call him the Prophet of Judah. The Prophet of Judah had received very clear instruction from the Lord to rebuke Jeroboam, instruction that came with an clear command: “Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.” That command was the Word of God. But another prophet, the Prophet of Bethel, claimed to have received a more recent “word of the Lord.” The Prophet of Bethel clarified that it was acceptable for the Prophet of Judah to return the way he had come, and “that he may eat bread and drink water.” But the Prophet of Bethel was lying (*1 Kings 13:17-18*). To the knowledgeable, the first command was pure, and the second was “muddy,” tainted with error. Enter now the Romanist to assess the situation: to press the illustration, David Gordon’s claim would suggest that the initial “word of the Lord” delivered to the Prophet of Judah was “*in its most raw form*,” and must have been too muddy to be understood, requiring a Magisterial cleansing by the Prophet of Bethel, to clarify that the Lord really meant the very opposite of what He said. Indeed, to the Romanist, the *closer one gets to the source, the muddier the*

water gets. By this way of thinking, Roman Catholicism heaps faint praise upon the Scriptures, claiming to revere God’s Holy Word, and then improving, correcting, refining, and purifying it until it says something else. But God claims His Word is “very pure” *from the start*. If only the Prophet of Judah had obeyed the original command, he would have survived the day. Because of his disobedience to the Lord, and in fact because of his obedience to the Prophet of Bethel, that man of God was slain by a lion before the sun went down. The Roman Magisterium in a way captures the spirit of the Prophet of Bethel, claiming to have received a more recent, clearer “word from the Lord.” Those who trust her do so at their peril.

Rome Confers Inerrancy on the Scriptures

On a similar theme, Roman Catholic philosopher and apologist Timothy Gordon recently scheduled a debate with a Protestant on the topic of *Sola Scriptura*. Timothy Gordon helpfully summarized his position in a video entitled: Why Sola Scriptura is a SCAM.³ The sum of his argument is that God is unable to promulgate the Bible on His own and therefore requires an infallible third party to do it for Him. “The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof” sayeth the Lord (*Psalms 24:1*), but Timothy Gordon disagrees: “God does not have a publishing company or a printing press” (31:30). Without such advanced infrastructure and technology at His disposal, God is helpless to promulgate His word and must rely on the Roman Catholic Church to do it for Him. Unable to aggregate His Holy Word into a publishable form, God needs an infallible Church to promulgate it for Him, and (!) to confer inerrancy upon the Word He breathed. According to Timothy Gordon, God breathes His word, and then waits for Roman Catholicism to determine that it is inerrant, and give it the official, magisterial stamp of approval.

Now, having studied the Scriptures, we have some idea of how divine inspiration works. According to Peter, “the Spirit of Christ which was in” the prophets “testified beforehand” such that the Scriptures were divinely inspired (*2 Peter 1:11-12*). The Spirit of Christ only speaks what He has heard from the Father (*John 16:13*), and therefore, “All

³ Timothy Gordon, “Why Sola Scriptura is a SCAM,” August 21, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBEFP5h0rNI>.

scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). What the prophets wrote down was divinely inspired. And because the Word of the Father is Truth, and the Spirit of Christ spoke the Word of the Father through the Prophets, and the Prophets wrote it down, and “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35), therefore, the God-breathed Scriptures are inerrant. “I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14) gave them to us. They are THE self-referential authority.

But Timothy Gordon disagreed. The way divine inspiration *actually* works he says, is that the Magisterium confers inerrancy upon the Scriptures. Let us now return to his argument as he explains that the real way divine inspiration works, is that people write down some things, and then claim that their works are inspired, and then the Roman Catholic religion either confers inerrancy or withholds it. Citing again from his online video:

“The way that divine inspiration works is that various folks came forward and claimed that the stories they wrote about Jesus were divinely inspired. Now, four of these men, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were divinely inspired. But all that we know *from God’s perspective* is that these four men *claimed to be divinely inspired*. ... Individual humans claimed that they were divinely inspired by God *and some authority simply had to ratify that claim.*” (31:45 – 33:15)

That is an interesting claim. Left with no means by which to promulgate His Word (we speak as a fool!) God required a higher authority than His own Word to ratify it! But Timothy Gordon goes on:

“In the case of Scripture, you cannot give what you don’t have. ... Inerrancy cannot have been conferred upon Scripture by a fallible authority, or by an errant authority. ... Can the promulgator ... exercise fallibility while conferring inerrancy to Scripture? No. He has to be infallible to confer inerrancy upon Scripture.” (37:00-38:15)

In other words, the only way we could know that the Scriptures are God-breathed is that an infallible authority determined that they are. Thus does the Roman Catholic apologist think to elevate the Magisterium of Rome even above God’s own Word.

Now, we might have imagined that God promulgated His Scriptures infallibly and inerrantly *simply by breathing them*. As Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16, “all Scripture is God-breathed.” Because God’s Word “shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11) and the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35) we have every confidence that the Scriptures have come to us, His people, as He intended. It was impossible that they not. We read of God in the Scriptures and discover that His purposes cannot fail, and His designs are perfect. But Timothy Gordon will not have it. No, God lacks a printing press and publishing company, and is therefore unable to promulgate His Word infallibly *even if He wanted to*.

Think about that for a moment. The foundational premise of Timothy Gordon’s argument is that there is something God cannot do. The question before us is this: CAN GOD PROMULGATE HIS OWN WORD? Timothy Gordon says no, He cannot. Let us now find out God’s answer to that question:

Psalm 115:3 But our God is in the heavens:
he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Psalm 135:6-7 ***Whatsoever the LORD pleased***, that did he in heaven, ***and in earth***, in the seas, and all deep places.

Daniel 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: ***and none can stay his hand***, or say unto him, ***What doest thou?***

Jeremiah 32:17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, ***and there is nothing too hard for thee:***

Job 41:11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? ***whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.***

Now, let me ask the obvious question: does that sound like a God who cannot promulgate His written word and arrange the affairs of men without first imbuing His creation with infallibility? No, it does not. Of course He can, and He needs neither the

permission of men, nor their vain imagination, nor their imagined infallibility and proud boasting, to arrange affairs on earth such that a book is published according to the pleasure of His will and for the good of His saints. If Timothy Gordon still believes God cannot get a book published without Roman Catholicism doing it for Him, Timothy Gordon has simply elevated Roman Catholicism above the God Who created the Universe, and above the God of Whom the prophets testified who can do all things! The truth is that Timothy Gordon was wrong to say God cannot effect His will without intermediate infallible actors. Indeed, God can, and does effect His will infallibly through fallible men, for He does whatever He pleases in the heavens and on the earth. Again, this is an artificial problem of Timothy Gordon's own making because he built his argument upon the assumption that there is something God could not do, and therefore an infallible magisterium must do it for Him. The premise of course is false, but carefully crafted to form in the mind of the unsuspecting the illusory need of a Roman Magisterium.

To illustrate our point, let us visit the story of Naboth's vineyard, and King Ahab's confiscation of it. At the conclusion of the matter, Ahab was dead, and the dogs of Samaria licked up his blood. But we ask, how did Ahab's blood end up being licked up by dogs at the pool of Samaria when it was spilled 30 miles to the east in Ramothgilead? All of this, of course, was ordained by the Word of the Lord Who not only sent Ahab to Ramothgilead to perish, but also guided an arrow to the joints in his armor so he would bleed out slowly into his chariot. The Lord arranged for soldiers to return the chariot to the pool of Samaria and wash it, whereupon the dogs licked up Ahab's blood (*1 Kings 22:22-38*). All this was according to the Word of the Lord who had spoken in advance to Ahab for his crime: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (*1 Kings 21:19*). But how is this possible if the Lord has neither bows, nor arrows, nor soldiers, nor dogs, nor chariots to effect His will? The bows, arrows, chariots, dogs and soldiers must have been infallible! God must have first imbued

them with infallibility, for He was unable to accomplish His will without them, nor could His word be effectual to fulfill the purpose for which He sent it, unless He had first established an infallible archer, an infallible chariot, infallible soldiers, and infallible dogs. We jest, of course, at Mr. Timothy Gordon's expense, but it is by just such foolish reasoning that a trained Roman Catholic philosopher can claim that God is unable to promulgate His Scriptures without an infallible third party, and that inerrancy can only be "conferred" upon God's Word by an outside, inerrant, infallible authority. Thus, does Roman Catholicism claim to be able to confer upon God's Word something that He Himself cannot!

Mr. Gordon, of course is not alone in his opinion, for the Roman Catholic Encyclopedia confirms that the Scriptures cannot be self-attesting:

The unique quality of the Sacred Books is a revealed dogma. Moreover, by its very nature *inspiration eludes human observation and is not self-evident*, being essentially superphysical and supernatural. Its sole absolute criterion, therefore, is the Holy inspiring Spirit, witnessing decisively to Itself, not in the subjective experience of individual souls, as Calvin maintained, neither in the doctrinal and spiritual tenor of Holy Writ itself, according to Luther, *but through the constituted organ and custodian of Its revelations, the Church*. All other evidences fall short of the certainty and finality necessary to compel the absolute assent of faith.⁴

Please note that subtle wordcraft by which the encyclopedia denies the self-attesting nature of the Scriptures and insists rather upon the the testimony of the Church. *All other evidences* fall short of certainty and finality, except the testimony of the Church.

Peter Kreeft, former protestant, and convert to Roman Catholicism, made a similar observation in his work, *Forty Reasons I am a Catholic*.⁵ The

⁴ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Canon of the New Testament," <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03274a.htm>.

⁵ Sophia Institute Press, 2019. See also, Peter Kreeft, "The Bible Leads Me to the Church," February 12, 2019, The Catholic

Church, according to Kreeft, “told us which books did and which books did not belong in the sacred canon, the books that were divinely inspired and religiously infallible and authoritative.” In Kreeft’s mind, it is the Church that *certifies* the word of God. The Scriptures require external attestation from a divinely appointed infallible authority. So to summarize, Kreeft says we may not know the Scriptures to be infallible and authoritative, apart from the Church. The Encyclopedia says all other evidences fall short of the certainty and finality of the Church’s ruling on them, Timothy Gordon says it is the Church that confers inerrancy on the Scriptures and David Gordon claimed that the Scriptures are delivered to us in their most raw, unprocessed, muddy form, requiring purification by the Roman Magisterium.

I have provided these various illustrations to show in what low esteem, the Roman religion holds the Word of God, to make the case for an infallible magisterium not merely to teach infallibly, but to judge infallibly the Word of God. That is bad enough, on its own, but by way of a remarkable contrast, we discover that Rome has denied the self-attesting attributes of God-breathed Scripture and has aggregated those attributes to herself. While God’s Word, according to Rome, requires infallible third-party authentication, Rome herself does not. Rather Rome is self-authenticating and needs no external attestation for her claims are to be received at face value without question.

The Scripture Requires Proof (but the Church does not)

In view of Rome’s claims that the Scriptures require attestation by an infallible third party, we must ask: if the Roman Magisterium must attest to the certainty, inerrancy and canonicity of the Scriptures, who attests to Rome’s authority? Who is the infallible third party that attests to Rome’s declaration of what is Scripture and what is not? Well, it turns out the Roman religion enjoys a higher privilege than God’s Word, and unlike God’s Word, she requires no such attestation. Fr. Brian W.

Harrison, in his argument about the infallible nature of Vatican Council II “The *Ex Cathedra* Status of ‘*Humanae Vitae*’,”⁶ actually claimed that it is “up to ‘the Church’ to decide ‘how far her infallibility extends: *otherwise there could never be any certainty.*” If the Church is not self-attesting, “infallibility would be placed in grave peril, and the whole of religion would...be placed in doubt.” Imagine that: God’s Word cannot be self-attesting, but if Rome is not able to determine the limits of her own infallibility, all of religion is in doubt! It is a fascinating look into the depravity of the Roman mind. God’s Word requires attestation by a third, infallible, inerrant party, *but the Roman Magisterium does not*. She is self-attesting.

In fact, that was the very fulcrum of Peter Kreeft’s conversion. Listen to him describe the last domino to fall in his transition to Rome: that it is necessary to accept the Roman Church’s claims as true *based solely on who she claims to be*: This is Peter Kreeft:

The Catholic Church's claim to be the one true Church, the Church Christ founded, forces us to say either that this is the most arrogant, blasphemous and wicked claim imaginable, *if it is not true*, or else that she is just what she claims to be. ... the Catholic Church stood out above all other denominations in claiming to be not merely a denomination, but the Body of Christ incarnate, infallible. (*Hauled Aboard the Ark*)

Based on that reasoning, Peter Kreeft took her claims at face value, checked the authority of Scripture at the door and walked right in.

This, of course, is precisely what the Roman Catholic Church would have us believe. According to Vatican council I in 1870, “The judgment of the apostolic see of Rome (above which there is no higher authority) is not subject to revision by anyone, nor may anyone lawfully pass judgment thereupon”⁷

Indeed, when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, from the Chair of Peter, he does not require *proof from the Scriptures*, the consent of the Church, or any

Exchange, <https://catholicexchange.com/the-bible-leads-me-to-the-church/>.

⁶ <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/ex-cathedra-status-of-the-encyclical-humanae-vitae-10367>.

⁷ Vatican I, First dogmatic constitution on the church of Christ, Chapter 3, On the power and character of the primacy of the Roman pontiff paragraph 8.

other evidence at all for his teachings to be considered true, for they are “of themselves” infallible:

... when the Roman Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*, ...such definitions of the Roman Pontiff **are of themselves irreformable and not by the consent of the Church.**⁸

Again, it is a remarkable testimony to the hubris of Rome that she would say that God’s Word, the Scriptures, *cannot be self-attesting* because by its very nature divine *inspiration eludes human observation and is not self-evident*, but that the Magisterium and the Pope *must be self-attesting* and self-evident, or else *all certainty* is lost! Indeed, “*the whole of religion*”!

Returning to Justin Martyr’s claim about the Word of God, his warning of the 2nd century is appropriately directed at Rome today: Of God’s Word, Justin said “*it were not fit that the Word of God should be required to produce proof of what is said; since neither is there any proof beyond itself, which is God.* For every proof is more powerful and trustworthy than that which it proves.” What the early Church believed to be true of God’s word, Roman Catholicism believes to be true of herself: namely that “*it were not fit that the Church of Rome should be required to produce proof of what is said; since neither is there any proof beyond itself.*” It is indeed a striking contrast. The prerogatives God claims for His own Word, are the very same prerogatives Rome denies to Him, and asserts of herself.

Conclusion:

God claims His Word is truth, and is self-attesting, and is the standard by which all things are judged, while nothing may stand in judgment of Him:

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (*Isaiah* 8:20)

“Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in

thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” (*Romans* 3:4)

“I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” (*Psalms* 138:2)

Such is God’s very high estimation of His own Word. But Rome would claim to be the arbiter of His Word, the seal to guarantee its truth, and the sole determinant of its authenticity. By this means, she has elevated herself above God’s word, not only claiming that His Word *cannot* be self-attesting, but also insisting that hers *must be*!

In his deliciously ironic assessment, Peter Kreeft insisted that if we do not simply accept the claims of the Roman Catholic Church *as true on her own testimony*, we are forced to say that she is the most arrogant, blasphemous and wicked organization in the world. He accepted her claim, and thus concluded that the Roman Catholic Church cannot possibly be the most arrogant, blasphemous and wicked organization in the world.

I say ironic, because if we take the Scriptures at their face value, — if we assume of the Scriptures the prerogatives Kreeft grants to Rome — they reveal to us precisely what is now hidden from him: that Rome, as a Religion, *because of the audacity of her claims and the haughtiness of her presumption*, is in fact the most arrogant, blasphemous and wicked organization in the world. This is evident simply by evaluating her claims about the Word of God. We have summarized them here to show what stratospheric presumption must have inebriated the Magisterium of Rome to arrive where she has. Only a divinely ordained “strong delusion” can account for such a preposterously inflated view of one’s self-importance. The power and authority of the Word of God, which He Himself has magnified above all, Rome has assigned to herself, all while standing in judgment of God’s Word — as the arbiter of what He said, and the authority by which “inerrancy” is conferred upon what He breathed, and the filter through which His “muddy” waters are purified!

This is indeed what Paul means when he warns of an apostasy from within the Church, whereby

⁸ Vatican Council I, *Pastor Aeternus* 4.9.

“there would come a falling away first, so that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 *Thessalonians* 2:3, 4). We might well ask how it is possible for there to be a falling away from the Church so that someone who claims to be within the Church could “oppose and exalt himself above God.” Well, in Rome, we have the answer. God has magnified His Word above even his Name, and Roman Catholicism, claiming to be the one and only True Church, opposeth and exalteth herself above even that.

It is for just such reasons that Daniel warned of the Little Horn that had “a mouth speaking great things” (*Daniel* 7:8), and John warned of a Beast to follow the Roman Empire, with “a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies” (*Revelation* 13:5), and “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle” (*Revelation* 13:6). Indeed, that Beast of *Revelation* 13 has the mouth of a lion, a reference to the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar of the kingdom of Babylon signified by the Lion of *Daniel* 7. It is that Lion who once said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” (*Daniel* 4:30). For such arrogance Nebuchadnezzar was humbled until the Lord restored his reason and he finally confessed, “All [His] works are truth...and he doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand” (*Daniel* 4:37, 35).

Yes, it is true that converting to Roman Catholicism is fashionable and her converts are notorious for their conviction that God’s Word cannot be trusted unless He first secures Rome’s blessing, and that He cannot promulgate His Word unless she do it for Him, and He is unable to reveal Himself to us except through her Magisterial lens. But those converts have simply joined in another refrain of Nebuchadnezzar’s Chorus. “Who is equal to the Roman Magisterium, and who can resist her great claims!” Such precisely is the opinion of Peter Kreeft and all the other Protestants we mentioned earlier, who departed for Rome and were entranced

by her siren song of magisterial infallibility, believing that God is unable to effect His word without her.

But as Paul says, the Word of God is not bound, and as Isaiah said, His Word will accomplish the purpose for which He sent it, not because of Rome but in spite of her. For any who are tempted by her claims of unlimited, unquestionable authority, you need not fear her great claims, for she is unable to live up to them. Her own children at this moment are squabbling over the simple scriptural precepts like the definition of marriage, the ordination of men, and the very design of sexual relations. In fact, they are not even sure who is currently the pope, or if there is currently a pope, so catastrophically has their house of cards collapsed upon them.

Do not fear her, neither give heed to her preposterous claims. She can neither effect the purposes of God’s Word for Him, nor prevent Him from effecting them Himself. Jesus promised that God’s Word would have its way, the proud arrogance of Roman Catholicism notwithstanding. God has supernaturally prevented the sheep from hearing what is not God’s Word and has supernaturally ensured that they will receive what is. The magnificent power by which the Scriptures accomplish their purposes resides in the Scripture itself.

“All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.” (*John* 10:8)

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” (*John* 10:16).

“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep” (*John* 10:26)

“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.” (*John* 8:43)

“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” (*John* 8:47)

On this day we take great comfort in Christ's own testimony of His Word, for He esteems the power and effectiveness of His Father's word much higher than Rome does. The sheep hear and believe His word, and do not hear and do not believe the thieves and robbers. By way of contrast, those who are not sheep cannot hear and cannot believe the word. That effect—the same Word being the savour of death unto death in them that are perishing, and the savour of life unto life in them that are saved—resides entirely in the Word itself. Indeed, Jesus' prayer was for that very outcome: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (*John 17:20*) — a prayer that the Word accomplish the purpose for which He sent it.

And we know that it will, for the Word of God is free, unrestrained by the wiles and sophistry of Rome. Indeed, as Paul testified: "the Word of God is not bound" (*2 Timothy 2:9*). We can rejoice in that truth this and every Reformation Day.