

The Doctrine of Infallibility

It is clear that Papal pretensions to infallibility are arrogant and blasphemous.

~ Rev Kyle Paisley ~

The doctrine of infallibility is to be rejected for the following reasons:

Romanists have contradicted each other in their zeal to defend their doctrines against the criticisms of Protestantism. Di Bruno (Catholic Belief) affirms that the Pope, apart from the bishops, is infallible, stating: "Some people wrongly imagine that this dogma is new. They might, with as much show or reason, assert that the dogma which teaches the existence of a personal God is a new dogma." On the other hand, Keenan (The Controversial Catechism) declares that to say Catholics believe the Pope to be infallible is "a Protestant invention, and no article of the Catholic faith, for no decision of his can oblige, unless it be received and enforced by the bishops of the Church."

The idea of Papal infallibility is open to be rejected because of its late addition into Roman dogma. Claims of infallibility were first made in the eleventh century, Pope Gregory being one of the first to assume it. Although the idea was affirmed by the Council of Trent some five centuries later, there was no clear determination on the matter until the Vatican Council of 1870. Prior to this there were four difference opinions. The Jesuits and Italian bishops held that infallibility was vested in the Pope. The French bishops held that it was the Church councils that were infallible. A third party held that the infallibility was in both Pope and councils. A fourth party held that it was vested in the Church as a whole.

The development of the concept of 'infallibility' contradicts its very use, because it suggests uncertainty. The idea that any man or system suddenly realises that it is unerring, after long years of argument, shows how fallacious the claims of infallibility are. 3. Infallibility is to be rejected because the very Council that is said to have determined upon it was not unanimous. One would have expected unanimity in an infallible Church, but this was not the case. At the outset of the Vatican Council of 1870, 410 bishops petitioned in favour of the dogma and 162 against. When the vote was being taken, those opposed to the dogma absented themselves from the Council, and the decree was accordingly passed.

Papal infallibility is to be rejected because it is a convenience and not a truth. The successful passing of the dogma at the Vatican Council is credited mainly to the Jesuits. This order was particularly partial to the idea of the personal infallibility of the Pope, but they secured, by a brief dated October, 1836, that the Pope virtually resigned himself and the Church to their control; so, because it was easier for them to manage one than a multitude of individual bishops, it was their purpose to have infallibility lodged in one man, that man being the Pope.

This dogma is further to be repudiated because of its inconsistency with the Creed of Pope Pius IV, which is an official summary of the Roman faith. The creed requires the Romanist to receive all things delivered by the general councils of the Church, one of which, the Council of Constance, declared that the Pope is subject to the councils of the Church in matters of faith - a thing which could not be if infallibility is vested in himself.

Protestants reject the notion of Papal infallibility because there is no substantiation for it in the words of Christ. Romanists have attempted to base their

reasoning on the words of Christ to Peter (whom they claim to be the first Pope) in Matthew 16:18: "I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." However, there is not one word here with regard to the Pope or infallibility. Rather, there is the anticipation of Roman error, for in the same chapter Peter is proved most fallible. Immediately after the promise, he fell into error, rebuking Christ as He spoke of the necessity of His death (Matthew 16:21-23).

With infallibility we might have expected an unflinching loyalty to the truth, but this is not to be found in the Papacy. Pope Liberius was an Arian, denying the deity of Christ, Pope Honorius was a Monothelite, denying the deity of Christ and His real humanity. Pope Boniface denies the doctrine of the Trinity. Popes John XII, Benedict IX, John XXIII and Alexander VI were guilty of some of the worst depravities. Cardinal Baronius declared that many Popes were "monsters of iniquity". Yet the Vatican pronounces them all infallible. It is clear that Papal pretensions to infallibility are arrogant and blasphemous. By these the Pope proves himself to be that Antichrist spoken of in the Word of God, that "man of sin" and "son of perdition", who "opposes and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2:3-4).