

Moral Excellency - Appendix - Dominion Over Creatures

by John Murray

The sermon explores the moral excellency of man as created in the image of God, emphasizing the significance of dominion and original righteousness.

Duration: 48:47

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Genesis 1:28, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 4:24, Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 7:25

Topics: "Morality"

Description

The sermon transcript begins with a prayer, emphasizing the importance of approaching God with humility, contrition, and confidence. The speaker then mentions the need to study the first five chapters of a textbook, particularly focusing on Chapter 3, which discusses the origin of the soul. The sermon then delves into the Roman Catholic view of man's primitive condition, highlighting the belief that man was created with dignity and dominion over all things. The speaker also mentions that the Roman Catholic Church teaches about the state of pure nature and the conflict within human nature.

Transcript

O Lord, our God, let us ever come to Thy throne of grace with humility, contrition, and yet with confidence, for Thou art God Thyself alone, and Thou art reconciled in peace with Christ, having opened that new and living way through His blood. May we ever know that we have in Him a sure and an abiding mediator and intercessor, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. In His name, Amen.

The text of this day will not only include the lectures, but also the first five chapters of the textbook, page 116. Understand that the first five chapters of volume two were hard, and I would urge you particularly to pay attention to chapter three, because I have not dealt with that subject at all, the origin of the soul, as it has been called, but pay particular attention to that, since that was not covered in the lectures. And pay particular attention to the two views, the creationist view and the Sarducian view.

Now, after the text, I may have some things to say on this topic. We now turn to what we were dealing with at the close of the last hour, and the question was whether man's body is embraced within the divine image. And I mentioned as the first consideration in favor of that position that it is man as a unit who is spoken of.

When God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness, His image of God refers to human personality, as I maintain, refers to human personality. We must remember that according to the biblical representation, separation that takes place in death is utterly abnormal. Utterly abnormal.

And therefore there is a consideration residing in the fact of human personality and in the unity of human personality, by which we will be constrained, at least we should be constrained, to regard the human body as brought within the scope of that which is referred to as the image of God. But then there is a second consideration, a second consideration supporting this same conclusion. All the human body is predicated, or are predicated, righteousness and holiness, as well as sin and impurity.

That is to say, the human body is the subject of moral predication. Moral predication. Man in his fallen state has a body of sin.

Romans 6.6. A body of sin. And that means a sinful body. Consequently that predication should not be made unless moral character belongs to the body.

And if the thesis I have presented is correct, it is because man has moral identity, that he is in the image of God. So I conclude that it is man in his unity and integrity who is made in the image of God. And that therefore the very body of man is determined in its precise character and function by the fact that man is made in the image of God.

We must remember, you see, that man has body, has distinguishing character from every other being that is body, or that is body. He has distinguishing character. And the only reason why he has this distinguishing character is that his very identity is defined in terms of the image of God.

That his very identity is defined in terms of the image of God. Now don't be used for that fact that God has a body or anything resembling a body. We must remember that there is a radical differentiation between God and man even in respect of spiritual being.

A radical differentiation in respect even of spiritual being. And there is still further radical differentiation in respect of man as body. But that difference, that difference that obtains in respect of man's body is simply another example of the radical differentiation which applies even to the spirit of man.

Well, that is all on that subject of the first aspect of the divine nature. That's all this personality, morally, ethically. Now we come to the second aspect, according to your discipline, referring to those characteristics which belong to man in his original integrity but which do not belong to him in his fallen state.

And they are briefly after the pattern of Ephesians 4.24 and Colossians 3.10 Knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness of the Truth. Knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness of the Truth. If knowledge is predicated of man in his original state, we must not think of this as consisting merely in the possibility of attaining to knowledge.

If knowledge is an ingredient, if knowledge is an ingredient, then it means the intelligent apprehension of the meaning of reality. It means that the cognitive content of man's mind corresponded with reality. Cognitive content of his mind corresponded with reality.

And that simply means that it was knowledge of the truth and the truth pre-eminently as it belongs to God. So we have the knowledge of God. This does not mean that it was complete knowledge, knowledge

commensurate with the knowledge of God.

But man will never possess that. But in complete knowledge, instilled knowledge, it measures up to that which our Lord characterizes as life. Then also righteousness means not simply freedom from wrongdoing, not mere innocence, but positive conformity to the will of God, positive conformity to the will of God, applying not only the disposition to, but the fulfillment of.

And holiness can be concluded as comprising two elements, namely consecration and purity. Consecration and purity. When we say that man was created with righteousness and holiness of the truth, we mean that he was created with positively holy and righteous character, positively holy and righteous character, and did not need to attain to that character by a process of development.

But that this character was concreated, concreated, a concreated investiture or a concreated endowment, that is clearly implied in Genesis 1.31, as it applies to man. Genesis 1.31 says that God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good, very good, including, of course, man. And that predication, as it applies to man, very good, must be given a connotation that is relevant to his distinguishing and specific character.

I repeat, must be given a connotation that is relevant to his distinguishing and specific character as a moral and religious being. This general statement means that each creature was very good in terms of the sphere, in terms of the sphere to which it belonged, and in terms of the purpose it was called upon to fulfill. The sphere to which man belongs, of course, is the highest of created reality.

And consequently, the definition of very good, as it applies to man, requires no lower definition than knowledge, righteousness, and holiness of the truth. For only in terms of these characterizations could he be pronounced very good. Mr. Murray? Yes? This phrase, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness of the truth, does the truth refer only to holiness or to all the great? Well, whatever it may refer to in the particular text, you see, that's a matter of possible difference of opinion.

I think it does with holiness in that particular text. But even if in the strict exegesis of that passage it refers only to holiness, nevertheless, we on the general principle would have to apply to all three. Because the knowledge that measures up to what the scripture describes as knowledge is never knowledge unless it's knowledge of the truth.

And righteousness is never true righteousness in that it is righteousness that is in conformity with truth. Whatever particular exegesis would require of that text, nevertheless, it's proper to extend that, or that phrase, of the truth to all three. Now I come to an appendix to our discussion with the God of man.

This has respect to dominion over the creature. Dominion over the creature. The Socinians, heretical sect, the Socinians restricted the divine image to dominion over the creatures.

Now, it would be quite erroneous to make that restriction. I don't mean to enumerate. Even orthodox, in some orthodox theologians would take the position that dominion of the creature is to be regarded as an ingredient in the divine image.

So they would restrict that as number three, as an ingredient in the divine image, as an element of the divine image. There are two things. First, it would not involve serious error.

As far as theology is concerned, serious theological error it has. The second is that there are certain passages which might seem to convey this idea that the dominion is to be reckoned as of... Take Psalm 8, for example. Psalm 8. It is man that thou wast mindful of him.

Thou wast made him a little lower than the angels. Thou wast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou wast put all things under his feet, sheep and oxen, gay and beasts of the field, and so on.

Well, that psalm is dealing, you see, specifically with the dominion which man is invested in. The theme of that psalm, as far as man is concerned, the dignity that belongs to dominion. As far as man is concerned, the dominion that is reflected in man and the dignity that belongs to him in virtue of that investment.

Now, dominion is imbued in the very definition of man. Because the psalmist asks, What is man that thou wast mindful of him? Or the son of man. It would be very easy, you see, to infer that this dominion belongs to man's very definition.

Because it is with that question that Jekyll's creation begins. What is man that thou wast mindful of him? Or the son of man that thou visitest. Thou wast made in a little more than me, the angel.

So if you were a little more than God, you're not. And the other passage, which might appear to give some plausible support to the idea that the image is to be defined in terms of the authority is 1 Corinthians 11, 7. Because Paul there, you see, is dealing with the authority with which the man, as distinguished from the woman, is invested. The authority is in that connection that he says, The man is the image and glory of God.

And he called, maybe you remember his use there, the image and glory of God. Now these considerations could be pleaded in support of the thesis that dominion over the creatures must, in some way or other, be contrived in what is regarded as the image of God. However, I must say, with respect to this question, in some way or other, be contrived in what is regarded as the image of God.

However, I must say, with respect to this question, although it isn't a question vital to your life, what I would say about this is that the relevant evidence would not the inference that dominion is an aspect of the divine image. When you go back to Genesis 1, 26, Genesis 1, 26 through 28, you are given a very different perspective in respect of the relation of dominion to the image of God. Genesis 1, 26, you remember, And God said, Let us make man in our image according to our likeness, and let them have dominion.

Let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the heaven and over the cattle and over everything of the earth and over all the creeping thing which creeps upon the earth. And God created the man in his image in his image, in the image of God created he, him. And then I just pass over to verse 28, at the latter part of the verse.

This is a command directed to man and exercise dominion and rule over literally and exercise dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the heaven and over every living creature which creeps upon the earth. Now, this representation which you have in Genesis 1, 26, 28, is to the effect that since man is created in the image of God, he is to exercise this dominion. That the dominion is something which rests upon and proceeds from his being made in the image of God.

That is to say, dominion is regarded as a function, as a duty, as a duty that man is to perform. In other words, the sequence would be much more naturally taken as following. The input, I should say, of the sequence would naturally be taken as following of God.

God, because he is God, is following over God. God, since he is God, is following over that which he has created. Man, in turn, is in the image of God, is God's vicegerent on earth.

That is to say, he is given a dominion. The pattern of that is the dominion which God exercises. By saying this, this dominion which God exercises doesn't define his necessity arising from it.

So, the dominion which man exercises is not the definition of his man, but a function which he necessarily exercises in virtue of his design of his man, which is necessary because of his manhood in terms of the image of God. You can find the very same sequence in Ptolemy and in 1 Corinthians 11-7, the same sequence. These forms is certainly reflected upon the dignity which belongs to man, the dignity that belongs to man, but that dignity that belongs to him and is expressed in the dominion that he exercises is not made according to it.

We find that it is perfectly compatible with the sequence of form eight, perfectly compatible to regard the dominion, the dominion reflected upon a function which illustrates and certifies, illustrates and certifies the dignity which belongs to his nature, belongs to his being. And likewise, in 1 Corinthians 11-7, it does not say that the image consists in the authority with which man is invested. It doesn't consist in the authority.

And so it is perfectly compatible with the thought of that passage to recognize the authority with which the man is invested, something correlative with. The authority with which the man is invested has something correlative with. He is being the image and glory of God.

But this correlative with does not mean that the image and glory of God are to be defined in terms of this. Correlativity does not mean identity or equation. We must remember that the uniform representation of the church with respect to dominion, the uniform representation is that it is a function or office to be executed, a function or office to be executed.

It is a duty which man is commanded to fulfill, commanded to fulfill. Now these two, these two considerations and that duty to be fulfilled do not comport, that is, do not agree, do not comport with the idea that it belongs to the image of God, but is rather evolving upon Him because He is made in the image of God, because He is made in the image of God. Now that is why you have respect to dominion.

If you want to include it as an element in the image of God, yes, something may be exegetically untenable and yet not involve If you were to suppose that the image of God is comprised exclusively in the domain, well, that would be a serious error. But I wouldn't characterize the viewpoint that it is a subordinate element in the divine, subordinate element as evolving in the field of theological error. The theological principle would be at stake are certain things which deviate from what you would call sound exegesis, but which nevertheless do not involve basic theological error.

All deviation from sound exegesis is error, but there are differing degrees of error. It does not involve a great deal of difference so long as you recognize the primacy of the first two elements, especially of the first element. Well, now I'm going to pass on to the various views with respect to more accurate and designated man-primitive conditions, just the view of man's primitive conditions.

It so happens that especially with respect to the woman's casual view, that is a more felicitous felicitous capture. It concerns much more than the view of that in which the divine image consists. You bear that in mind because if I should ever ask you a question in an examination to give the effect of the Roman Catholic view of man's primitive condition, you'll understand what I'm getting at.

It wouldn't be so accurate to call it the Roman Catholic view of man's primitive God, because it involves far more than that. That is the concern of the Lutheran view and the classical Roman view and so on and the Hellenian view. So, this caption is a little more accurate and more felicitous at this particular point.

Now, we take up first of all the Roman Catholic view. The Roman Catholic view of man's primitive condition. And I'm going to deal with that under four, I'll ring the bell with some four main captions.

The Roman Catholic view under four main captions. I might get expanded the five before I'm finished, but you'll have to be satisfied with four just now. And you just have to put these down now so that you'll know where I'm going.

But first, I'm going to put down Latin terms. The state of human nature Respecting the state of pure nature. Translation, state of pure nature.

Then, the second would be what the Roman Catholic Church teaches about the conflict. And in the final term, this could not come to this chapter. And then, you have the third, the Dona Supradita.

Then you have the Imago Dei. No doubt, you often hear about the Dona Supradita, don't you? Dona Supradita. It's really not strictly accurate to speak of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Dona Supradita because it is a plural.

Dona Supradita. Bear that in mind. The Supradita gift, because Roman Catholic theology today does not speak of a Dona Supradita, but of Dona Supradita.

The older Roman Catholic theology would speak about Dona, and present-day Roman Catholic theology is very jealous of the statements about Dona Supradita, Supradita gifts. That is not a singular, remember, Dona is a neuter, and Dona is a plural. And this refers to the image of God.

Now, we'll begin with the first point, which is the state of pure nature. Well, let's not put this in my beginning, because then we'll win in a moment.

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