

Roman Catholic's View of Man's Primitive Condition

by John Murray

The Roman Catholic view of man's primitive condition and the superadded gifts is critiqued by John Murray, who argues that it supposes a great incompatibility between the component elements of man's being and offers no warrant for a construction of man's origin in terms of a twofold action.

Duration: 51:20

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 8:29, 1 Corinthians 15:49, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10, 2 Peter 1:4, 1 John 3:2

Topics: "Roman Catholic"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of the fall of man and the loss of his free-to-natural and supernatural gifts. The fall resulted in man reverting to a state of pure nature, losing his connection to the divine. The preacher also explores the idea of when man was endowed with these gifts, suggesting that man naturally consists of both flesh and spirit, with affinity to both beasts and angels. The sermon also criticizes the idea that the Bible offers a twofold action for man's origin, instead emphasizing that man was created in God's image with qualities intended to address the defects in his nature.

Transcript

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, do Thou grant that we may ever have discernment, to discern between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong, and do Thou grant that we may have such sensitivity to the truth and to that which is right, that we shall be aroused to opposition and even to indignation against all that is contrary to Thy holiness, to Thy revealed will, and to the demands of that which we may be affections in the world or in the church. The honour of the purity of His name, we, O Lord, of His vocation, will fill our ministry with fidelity and joy.

The state of pure nature, the state of pure nature, that is of two distinct and diverse elements, the one with corporeal impulses and desires, and the other with the higher exercises of reason, conscience, and will. This primitive condition, this condition which arose from God's original creative act, is one in which man is endowed simply with natural gifts, with natural gifts, *dona naturalia*, and it is called in Roman Catholic theology a state of *impuris naturalius*, *impuris naturalius*. I'll stop for tomorrow.

Impuris naturalius. This state is one in which man possesses all the attributes necessary to his nature as man, but destitute of those graces which adorn human nature, which adorn. This condition is one in which

there is concupiscence, concupiscence.

But this concupiscence is not sinful. It isn't sinful. It is simply a state in which there are these diverse appetites and impulses, diverse appetites arising from the diverse concept of his metaphysical being.

Sensuous appetites and impulses arising from the corporeal and higher exercises of reason, arising from the spiritual, spiritual. There can be no fault attaching to this concupiscence because it is not a diversity that arises from the will of man, but proceeds from the very constitution with which man was created. Now we come to Roman II, which I have called the *quidna concupiscentiae*, the conflict arising from concupiscence.

Conflict arising from concupiscence. Although this state of nature is not one of sin, it is nevertheless one in which there is a tendency, a tendency on the part of the lowly to break through the limits of reason, a tendency to break through the limits of reason. And when they do break through the limits of reason, then you have a concupiscence of the flesh which is sinful.

A concupiscence of the flesh which is sinful. Now in many Roman Catholic theologians, this tendency is not more, is not construed to be more than tendency. But in some of the ablest and most representative of Romish theologians, it is construed as a conflict, a conflict between the lower and higher elements, a conflict which would inevitably develop by degrees, inevitably develop, because of the composite nature of man's being.

You'll find the quotation from Bellarmine on page one hundred and four of the textbook, very, very clear to this effect. Fight, battle, conflict. And I'll translate that paragraph, it's at the middle of page one hundred and four.

It must be understood, first of all, that man naturally consists of flesh and spirit, and therefore partly with the beasts and partly with the angels, has affinity of, affinity of nature, has common nature, partly with the beasts and partly with the angels has a common nature. And therefore by reason of the flesh and affinity with the beasts, with the other anemic beings, of course, affinity with the beasts, he has a certain propension to corporal good, to corporal good, and a sense of all good in the sense of, not sense of good, no sense of the word, that's pertaining to the senses. That's corporal and sensuous good, in best translation, towards which he is borne along by sense and appetite.

By reason of the spirit and affinity with the angels, he has a propension to spiritual and intellectual good, to spiritual and rational good, towards which he is borne by intelligence and will. Now here's the insignificancy. But from these two diverse or contrary propensions, from these two diverse and contrary propensions, there exists in the one and the same man a certain fight, a certain conflict, a certain battle, pugna-pundra, a certain battle, and from this conflict, still battle, pugna, and from this conflict an inherent difficulty of doing what is good, while one propension hinders the other.

There exists in the one and the same man a certain fight, and from that fight an inherent difficulty of doing good, as long as the one propension hinders the other. Now there is... Now Bellarmine is quite representative on that, because Thomas Aquinas, much earlier than Bellarmine, as I said earlier, took the very same position. He used this term pugna.

Well, so much for that. Now we come to the third, the superadded gifts, *donas superaddit*. Whether this condition of concupiscence is regarded as simply tendency, or as actual conflict, it created the necessity

for the bestowal of the dona superaddita.

Now, in the older Roman Catholic theology, this is spoken of as dona superadditum, as the superadded gift, and it is called origin of righteousness, *istitia originalis*, origin of righteousness. And the purpose of this supernatural or superadded grace is that the sensual and super-sensual, the sensual and super-sensual elements in man's being were maintained in harmony, the one with the other. By this gift of original righteousness, according to the older formulation, by this gift of original righteousness, man was brought into the closest communion with his creator, into the closest communion with his creator.

And man was exalted above human nature, and made to participate in the nature of God, made to participate in the nature of God. It is important to bear in mind that this gift is due to special grace from God's part, due to special grace, what Muller calls a special condescension of the Almighty. God was under no obligation for survival.

He went down and went this added grace. It is therefore superadded, not supernatural. But in more recent, and that goes back quite a long time, supposed to be a hundred years, in more recent Roman Catholic theology, these superadded gifts, *dona superaddita*, are divided into creature-natural and supernatural.

Creature-natural and supernatural. The older Roman Catholic theology calls supernatural. This Roman Catholic theology calls creature-natural.

And of these creature-natural gifts, there are two, namely immortality and integrity. Now this creature-natural superadded gift was necessary in order to, from the necessity of dying, deliver man from the necessity. Roman Catholic theology teaching that death is a necessity inherent in the corporeal nature of man.

Necessity inherent in his corporeal nature. Hence man were to be immortal. This required a superadded grace.

Immortal creature-natural is that of integrity, to the harmony between the component elements of man's nature, between the component that overcomes the conflict existing in the state of pure nature between the corporeal and the spiritual. Every gift is called sanctity. Sanctity.

By this supernatural gift, man was made a partaker of the divine nature, elevated to a higher order of existence, endowed with that which is above the essence and exigency of any creative nature. The essence and exigency, that is need, of any creative nature adopted into the position occupied by the Only Begotten Son and given the capacity for the beatific vision. The beatific vision.

Given the capacity for the beatific vision. Beatific. Beatific.

Now, that when man fell, he lost all of these. Preternatural. Preternatural and supernatural gifts.

Well, now, at this point, that when man fell, he lost all of these preternatural gifts. Preternatural and supernatural gifts he lost. And that is, after all, the calamity of the fall.

And since he lost these gifts, he reverts to this condition called cognacompassion. He reverts to the position in which he was in a state of pure nature. In a state of pure nature.

Now, one other question arises. When was the preternatural and supernatural gifts? When? Historically, there was a painting from the Polish theologians on that question. Following them, the Scottists.

The Scottists maintained that there was an interval elapsed between the original creation of man in pure his natural abode and his elevation to great time elapsed. Taken by Peter Lombard, Bonaventura, Bonaventura, but Thomas Aquinas contends that these super-additivists were given at creation, from the very beginning of creation, so that these, as far as time, the state of pure nature, and that bestowed by the super-additivist, were contemporaneous. And that appears to be the prevailing view among Roman Catholic theologians today.

No time elapsing between the original creation and endowment with dona superabita. You will have the order, Roman Catholic, original righteousness, this tipia originality, is defined in terms of what later is called integrity. So you see that there has been a considerable refinement and expansion in more recent Roman Catholic theology of the dona superabita, and therefore it is very necessary when dealing with Roman Catholic theology how most representatively is to speak not simply of dona superabita, after the pattern of older Roman Catholic theology consisting in original righteousness, but of the dona superabita, the superadditivist, defined as preternatural and supernatural.

Now we come to number four, imago deis, the image of God. What does in this scheme, well, there is no unanimity, there is not unanimity on this question in Roman Catholic theology. Some Roman Catholics make a distinction between image and likeness.

Image and likeness. And image is regarded as belonging to the state of pure nature and pertains to the spirit of man per se. That God made the spirit of man to his image, to his image.

And therefore the image of God belongs to man as man. Belongs to man as man. That is what you find, for example, in the older Roman Catholic theology.

That is the viewpoint represented by the Council of Prayer, for example. And you find it particularly in the Catechism of the Council of Trade. It is a companion volume and is very important, the Catechism of the Council of Trade.

Likeness, however, has been regarded by such Roman Catholic theologians as a superadded gift of grace. A superadded gift of grace. But there are others, other Roman Catholic theologians, and I think this is more representative of present-day Roman Catholic theology.

Other Roman Catholic theologians do not make this distinction between image and likeness. They do not make it. And regard all images as gifts of grace.

As gifts of grace. However, that position does put Roman Catholic theology in a rather difficult position on its own premise. Puts Roman Catholic theology in a rather difficult position.

And so the position is taken that in a certain sense, in some sense, the image of God belongs to the very soul of man. In some sense, the image of God belongs to the very soul of man. However, not in the full sense.

Not in the full sense. Because, out of deference to such passages, 2 Peter 1, 4, which, remember, speaks of our becoming partakers of the divine nature, 2 Peter 1, 4, and 1 John 3, 2, which, remember, has not yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when it shall be manifested, we shall be like Him on the basis of such passages. The image and likeness of God are more properly regarded as super-added, even as supernatural, and would belong, I think, if I might so judge, belong particularly to the gift of sanctity.

Sanctity. Because when they are defining sanctity, when Roman Catholics of the Lord Jesus are defining sanctity, they use that very text from 2 Peter 1, 4, which supports the doctrine that man is elevated above the essence and exigency of human nature. Elevated above the essence and exigency of human nature.

Now you, I could give you various references to support this latter view as the view that is represented in Roman Catholic theology today, that image and likeness are properly regarded as super-added, supernatural, also in a certain way, in a certain way, the image of God belongs to the very soul of man. But how Roman Catholic theology would work out that sort of discrepancy, now by way of noting that Roman Catholic theologians speak of two additional super-added gifts, namely impassibility and infused knowledge. Impassibility and infused knowledge.

Now impassibility would be freedom from suffering, and infused knowledge would be the impartation of knowledge that did not belong to man in his state of pure nature. But Roman Catholic dogma up to date, Roman Catholic dogma does not include these two additional gifts, does not include these two additional gifts in the donor-superadditor. Perhaps someday Roman Catholic dogma will include elements of this dogma from time to time.

Someday they may be included. And I suspect, though I wouldn't be certain of this, rather than a supernatural, well, that's the outline. I now come to criticism of this.

First of all, Rome entertains a degrading view of man's metaphysical constitution. A degrading view, because it supposes that there is a great incompatibility between the component elements of man's being, namely between flesh and spirit. In Bellarmine terms, there is a disease, a languor, that needed a remedy, a disease more than a languor, that needed a remedy.

Or in Aquinas terms, this battle of concupiscence, which he says is not derogatory to human nature, nevertheless requires a supernatural grace or gift to prevent this sinful concupiscence. Which would inevitably be supernatural grace to prevent sinful concupiscence inevitably results. So on the most restrained Roman Catholic construction, conflict proceeding from the composite nature of man necessarily arises.

Now I say that one's a thwart. One's a thwart. The uniform representation of Scripture is no inherent incompatibility in the nature of man.

That is what we found already when we were dealing earlier with the nature of man. I say that is what we found to be the distinctive feature of the Biblical teaching in contrast with all pagan thought respecting the incompatibility between the spirit and material elements in man's being so that the ideal of human existence is to be relieved of the degrading influence inevitably exerted by the corporeal, the material. Well, that's the first point.

Now second point of criticism is that the Scripture offers no warrant whatsoever for a construction of man's origin in terms of a twofold action. Twofold action. The only action, the only action which the Bible speaks is that of making man in his own image.

There is not the remotest suggestion of any superadded action. The superadded action whereby man was endowed with graces or qualities intended to make a defect in man's nature as originally created. Now just before the gentleman may I say for a second it makes absolutely no difference as far as this criticism is concerned whether you take the scottish position or the thomist.

The thomist, although he offers contemporary immediacy in these two actions nevertheless possible. This differentiation, this radical differentiation that is the point of significance. That is the main point of criticism.

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