

Man Is Not Animal

What is the nature of man? What is his destiny? These questions are being discussed by scholars of various sciences. The mood is generally pessimistic. It receives its characteristic expression in the despairing words of Jean-Paul Satre - "Man is a useless passion.

The popular, mechanistic, materialistic explanation of the external world leaves man to be understood wholly in terms of natural processes and events. The prevailing opinion of modern secular scientists is that man, like other mammals, descended from ancestors of lower kind.

The ascent from lower animal life to Homo sapiens is according to H.G. Wells in his work *The Outline of History*, "based on the comparison of man's anatomy with that of other vertebrate animals, and it is confirmed by the curious phases through which his body passes before birth. "It is claimed that man is only a chemical, physical, organic, social and cultural being. He is the product of a purposeless and naturalistic development. He is only an accident in the universe. He lives and dies and returns to dust.

J. Bronowski asserts in his *Identity of Man* that "man is not different in kind from other forms of life, and to make an appeal to supernatural creator is something of a philosopher's fraud. "Thus man has become a trivial component of the universe and merely a clever animal. This view of man has made a tragic imprint upon our world. It has resulted in a complete decline of human personality.

The famed philosophers historians Will and Ariel Durant claim that the biological lesson of history is that "life is competition . It is the trade of life-peaceful when food abounds, violent when the mouths outrun the food. Animals eat one another without qualm; civilized men consume one another by due process of law.

"Dr. Arnold Toynbee, in his book *Surviving the Future*, said that "the world is being dehumanized." The result? Life has become cheap! Many advocate abortion on demand and others euthanasia (mercy-killing). Violence and terrorism are on the increase. When man is no, longer considered unique, but only an accident in the evolutionary process, we can understand the modern trends towards the dehumanization and self destruction of man.

Communism is one of the many modern ideologies, which try to reshape man. It wants the destruction of the human personality. Individual man should become the mass man, living and dying for the state. Personal rights and the worth of the individual have no place in this totalitarian system.

Igor Shafarevich, a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, still remembers how he marched in columns of young pioneers and sung with fervor:

Bravely shall we enter battle On behalf of Soviet power
And all together we shall die In this struggle of ours.

And he says that the greatest fervor "the greatest" elan was evoked by the phrase 'all together we shall die'. The loss of the right and the worth of the individual. The mass man!

As a Christian I cannot agree with this downward view of man. Man is more than a brute. He is different from all creatures and is made in the very image of God. He alone has the capacity to worship his Creator and to serve Him and he is elevated above animals and destined to have dominion over all the world.

Man is God's representative in this world, a worker and developer. Animals and plants are to be under his dominion. He is the scientist at work in God's laboratory - earth. Man is unique and of infinite value, but far from perfect. Through disobedience to God, man ruined the world. Yet even after his fall into sin, man is still considered to be of infinite worth.

Jesus said that one life is worth more than the world (Matth. 16:26). Furthermore, when God works with His Holy Spirit and gives a person new life in Christ, he becomes a new and joyful creature in the Lord. He receives new life now with a glorious destiny in store - the new heaven and earth.

The Christian faith has a high view of man. Though he is fallen into sin, he is neither junk, nor an animal, to be cast aside at will, or to be used as a tool, for the state. The Bible says of him: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; for thou hast put all things under his feet." (Ps. 8:4-6)

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