

# Man:

A Little Higher  
Than Apes,



Or A  
Little Lower  
Than Angels?

by  
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## **THE PROBLEM STATED**

Nations must and will be judged by later generations as to the degree of their inhumanity to man; that is, how did they treat their own citizens and how did they treat people of other nations? How will later generations evaluate America? How will they evaluate the nation which had legalized the murder of unborn human beings--abortion? Alarmingly, many who are in leadership roles in most of our greatest institutions are hailing such atrocities as a great move toward the liberation of humanity. Our beloved nation has slaughtered millions of her own offspring and has made it legal. What has prepared our country for such carnage and has thus brought this deplorable day? What has led most educators, medical doctors, politicians, religionists, and yes, even Christians, to remain silent while unthinkable atrocities take place in our very own communities?

A militant crusade by a religious group has been underway for many years in this country which has been designed drastically to reduce the human race in value. The religion of secular, atheistic humanism, under the guise of emphasizing man, has been successful in depicting man as having evolved, not as having been created in the image of God. The existence of God is ridiculed, and the worship of man is the religion of our nation. One has but to read the Humanist

Manifesto I and II and A Secular Humanist Declaration, of October, 1980, to learn that the intrinsic worth of the individual in the eyes of the humanist is nil. And, their efforts have been so successful that one rarely--if ever--hears today of the "sanctity of life." The potential demise of the "snail darter" leaves people cold, but the cold-blooded murder of an innocent unborn child and of other human beings, including infanticide and euthanasia, is considered noble. One has but to open his eyes to see that humanism has had its way in our country; the values within the Word of God have been replaced by amoral humanism.

The really sad plight brought on by these atheists is that they have destroyed man--not the Creator. Though their theory has taken aim on God and has been hostile toward Christianity, the humanists have actually assailed the dignity and welfare of man. God's existence is an eternal verity and ultimate reality; He is still in His heaven (Daniel 2:28), and man cannot lose his God-like image. However, the earthly and eternal welfare of mankind is precarious at best.

The background of man's cruelty to man must include a number of philosophers. Hegel built a theory in which he postulated that history was moving inevitably toward an utopia. Darwin draped his theory of biology over Hegel's theory, affirming that animals and plants evolve, leading ultimately to a superior race, or to an utopia. Man

is thus simply an advanced animal, thereby dehumanizing man to the level of a brute. Man is not inherently valuable but is valuable only if he can contribute to society. But, human life is precious only if God exists; if atheism is true, man is but an animal!

When God is rejected, 1) man is held to have evolved by chance, merely as an accident of fate. 2) No higher moral, universal law exists, but law is determined by what but few people in power hold to be expedient and best. 3) The shift can be thus made to "sociological law," which includes determining who lives and who dies. 4) No ultimate values exist; therefore, personal cruelty can have free course. And, when the gate is down, there is no means which can adequately quell the flood of barbarity and atrocity pursuant thereunto. In fact, Sigmund Freud, an atheist, feared that when the citizens become as humanistic as their leaders, they will not have any reticence toward murder. Such would lead, he affirmed, to the necessity of total "police state" controls; otherwise mass homicides and rampant lawlessness would follow.

Does not strong support exist in this country for abortion, infanticide, child pornography, euthanasia, and genetic engineering and manipulation (sociobiology)? Much talk is taking place relative to "sub-human life," no doubt encouraged by the January 22, 1973, decision of the

Supreme Court of the United States which not only affirmed a woman's "right of privacy"--to have an abortion--but also stated that "only viable human beings who have the capacity for meaningful life may, but need not, be protected by the state." Who is to define "viable" and "meaningful?" The truth is that the Biblical view of man has been constantly eroded by the atheistic, humanistic influence in and through the public schools, the media, the government, the courts, and the liberal religious bodies in this country. Of all the people who should sound forth in defense of the unborn child, a medical doctor who is a member of the Lord's church wrote, "My opinion is that the fetus is not a living soul until it has the breath of life." Job did not have this understanding, for he cried, "Why died I not from the womb? Why did not I give up the ghost when my mother bare me?" (Job 3:11) He did not have the "benefit" of this modern, superior scholarship; thus he was deluded into thinking he had existed as a human being before birth. Truly, the Psalmist described appropriately those who have little respect for human life: "There is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, That his iniquity will not be found out and be hated" (Psalm 36:1,2).

In a generation which has taken a "giant leap" backward in assessing the value of the human being--any human being, man must come to a

renewed appreciation of what the Bible states about man. Only by acknowledging the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of Adam and his descendants can society return to bowing before the great "I Am," to being conformed to the image of His Son, to crowning mankind with permanent worth, to recognizing one's own individual value, to possessing true individual freedom, and finally to being welcomed into the everlasting kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Only by returning to the absolute moral precepts of the Word can the onrushing tide of man's dehumanization be stemmed.

### ***THE TESTIMONY OF THE BIBLE***

The Bible is very clear concerning man's dignity. First, the human race was not produced by chance, by blind evolution. Inasmuch as "from nothing, nothing comes," mind and spirit must have proceeded from a source, from mind and spirit which had existed eternally. Second, man did not descend from the animals, as per evolutionary speculation. Paul affirmed, "The first man Adam became a living soul" (I Corinthians 15:45). Christ averred, "But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them" (Mark 10:6). Thus, no pre-Adamic man or creature(s) ever existed. Third, man was made a little lower than the angels. The Psalmist exclaimed, "For thou hast

made him a little lower than God (Elohim)" (Psalm 8:5). The Hebrews writer gives an inspired interpretation of Elohim here when he quoted the passage thus, "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels (angelos)" (Hebrews 2:7). Man was crowned "with glory and honor." Instead of saying that man was a little higher than the ape, God reveals that man is a little lower than the heavenly creatures. A tremendous and unbridgeable chasm exists between even "man's best friend," the dog, and man. None of the beasts could make Adam a suitable companion (Genesis 2:20-24). Fourth, man is an exalted, precious, wonderful being, for he was created in God's image (Genesis 1:26). In fact, the members of the Godhood had a consultation when man was to be created, indicating special planning. Man was to be the crowning glory of all God's works, for in man were the eternal spirit and the fleshly body to be united. Whereas the body would return to the dust from which it came (Genesis 3:19), "the spirit returneth unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). James stated that we men "are made in the likeness of God" (James 3:9), whom Paul described as the "Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9). The New Testament speaks of man's immortal nature, the soul, which God can destroy in hell (Matthew 10:28), encourages man to receive the "implanted Word, which is able to save your soul (immortal nature)" (James 1:21), commands Christians to

"save a soul (immortal nature of erring child of God) from death" (James 5:19,20), encourages Christians so to live that they can receive "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls (immortal nature) in obedience to the truth" (I Peter 1:22), compares the prosperity of the soul (immortal nature) to the health of the physical body (III John 2), and affirms that the souls (immortal nature) of men are conscious after death (Revelation 6:9,10; Luke 23:43; 16:19-31). No wonder Job was challenged by God, "Gird up now thy loins like a man!" (Job 38:2). God commanded Job to stand nearly as an equal--"like a man." No wonder Paul told the Athenians that man is "the offspring of God!" (Acts 17:29). Fifth, the body has a dignity which fits the soul. David exclaimed, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made!" (Psalm 139:14) The bodies of animals are crude when compared to the marvels of man's body. For example, he has a tongue capable of symbolic speech and a brain capable of abstract thought. Of all creatures, he is the one can stand upright, looking up to God, toward heaven. How absurd and blasphemous to think of the image of God in the body of an ape! Shakespeare had Hamlet to affirm:

What a piece of work is man! How noble  
in reason!  
How infinite in faculties! In form and



moving how express and admirable! In  
action how like an angel!

In apprehension how like a god!

Hamlet, II, ii, 315-319

Joseph Haydn celebrated in song,

Sublime, in noble dignity

With beauty, courage, strength endowed,

Erect with gaze toward heavenward

He stands, a man.

A man, the king of nature's realm,

The lofty broad and noble brow

Proclaims that wisdom dwells within:

From eyes serene and steadfast shines

The soul, His Creator's breath and image  
he,

And on his breast there fondly leans,

For him and from him formed,

A woman, spouse, a helpmeet fair,

Her smile so soft and innocent

Of lively spring the mirror

Betokens him love and joy and bliss.

"The Creation," Aria 2

Sixth, Christ affirmed the dignity of man when He became a man; the Saviour expressed it, "Sacrifice and offering thou (God) wouldst not, But a body didst thou prepare for me" (Hebrews 10:5). Thus,

the virgin birth was necessarily the miracle which constituted the "how" and the "when" of the incarnation of Christ. The "why" of the incarnation of Christ is expressed by Paul, "Since the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he (Christ) also himself in like manner partook of the same (flesh and blood); that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14,15). Christ was "made like unto his brethren (man), that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest" and "to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). He is man's "Neighbor," "Kinsman," and "Redeemer." Yes! The sunburst of Deity and the transcendent glory of the Infinite has been revealed through Christ, the very image of the substance of God (Hebrews 1:3), "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Sophocles chanted,

The world is full of wonders,  
but nothing is more wonderful  
than man.

***THE TESTIMONY OF THE  
INTRINSIC NATURE OF THE  
HUMAN BEING***

All human life--prenatal, postnatal, youth,

middle aged, or older aged--is sacred. However, the atheistic humanists seem always to emphasize only the "rights" of a few, such as the right of a woman to kill the human life in her womb, the right of a smut dealer to sell his pornographic materials, the right of showing filthy movies, even in his home, the right of teaching children the "art" of sexuality--heterosexual, homosexual, et al.--in the schools, the rights of teachers to undermine the parents in the eyes of the children by ridiculing through "values clarification" techniques the values taught in the family, the right of undermining the sanctity of the life of those who no longer have a "life worth living," to use their term, and the right to teach the faith--religion--than man descended from the ape and is thus just so much meat. Whatever happened to the rights of the unborn to life, to the rights of our youth not to have evil thoughts and not to be obsessed with sex, to the rights of children to be free from perversion, to the rights of parents to inculcate Biblical ethics into their offspring, to the rights of all human beings--including the handicapped, the senile, and the mentally ill--to life, and the right to teach those timeless moral principles upon which this republic was built? And, be not deceived! If the rights and dignity of one member of the human family are taken away, each of us is a loser. How do the characteristics of mankind testify that man is unique, sacred, and nonexpendable?

In the first place, man's dignity is affirmed by his personality. God is a person; man is a person. He is a replication of God, made in His image. Man can thus contemplate himself, he is aware of his existence, and he realizes that he exists independently of other objects and beings in the universe. Having this awareness, he can determine his own character and destiny.

In the second place, man's dignity is affirmed by his free-moral being. He was created with a will; consequently, he determines, chooses, and shapes his life. He is not bound to follow his instincts, as are the animals. Not even God interferes with this freedom. The prodigal was no doubt surprised to see how easy it was to leave his father (Luke 15:13), and Christ does not force entrance into a person's heart (Revelation 3:20). However, God in His holiness and justice--a part of His very nature--does hold man responsible for his decisions. Whereas the animals are controlled by nature, man has the responsibility to subdue nature (Genesis 1:28). A few people choose to control nature, but most allow themselves to be controlled by it. Some choose to walk on the higher ground, while others are content to allow themselves to be lowered to a level near beasts. Ezekiel warned, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). The "Wise Man" declared, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and

in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9). But, humanism stresses man's freedom to the total exclusion of his responsibility. Man has the capacity to love, serve, and worship his Creator and to love and serve his fellow human beings; on the other hand, such potentiality also necessitates having the potentiality of spitting into the face of God and of being inhumane to man.

In the third place, man's dignity is affirmed by his intelligence. Whereas the brute is born with instinct--specific stores of knowledge--which is adequate for a brief existence on earth, man is not born with, does not inherit, such knowledge; he has the facility of learning adequately how to live both now and in eternity. His existence is not limited to instinctive patterns. Man can reflect upon and benefit from the past, and he can contemplate and ponder upon eternity. He is thus equipped to make judgments relative to his manner of life; he can advance his culture, and this unlimited advancement potential guarantees immortality. Interestingly enough, the human infant does not know a fraction of what the newborn animal knows; however, he is already heir of eternal existence, which quality he received from the time he was conceived. The infant's parents are responsible before God to prepare him for life and especially for eternity. His intellect is in some measure mentally of the same nature as the mind

of God. Each conceives of the laws of nature, i.e. of mathematics and of gravity. Man is also capable of thinking the thoughts of God. The Holy Spirit reveals the mind of God through His Word (I Corinthians 2:11-14), man is capable of learning and of mediating upon the thoughts of God as revealed in the Word of God; thus, man can have the mind, thoughts, of his Creator (Philippians 2:5-12).

In the fourth place, man's dignity is affirmed by his sense of morality. God is a moral being; man is a moral being. Of all of God's creatures on earth, only man is able to appreciate things morally right and morally wrong. He can choose between alternatives, whereas the brute can not. The animal is amoral, merely a creature of instinct. Whereas Adam was called "the son of God" (Luke 3:38), no animal ever was thus distinguished relative to genealogy. The animal is not bound by nor is it responsible to moral law. In addition, man has a conscience. It cannot be picked up on an x-ray photograph; neither can it be weighed, measured, or divided; yet, the conscience is real, having the capacity of speaking to a person, of condemning a person, of approving of one's actions, and of making one weep bitter tears of remorse. Furthermore, man has a sensitivity to injustice.

In the fifth place, man's dignity is affirmed by his emotions. He can feel, just as his Creator

feels. Man feels love, anger, and mercy; he has the capacity to sense value and worth in God, in his fellows, and in himself. He values his parents, his mate, his children, his friends. Man's emotions motivate him to act, whether out of noble purposes or out of base and selfish purposes.

In the sixth place, man's dignity is affirmed by his aesthetic qualities, which are connected to the emotions. God was guided by his appreciation of beauty in creating the universe, the snow-capped mountains, the flower, the snowflake, the face of a child; man responds emotionally to these and to other such creations. The animal is destitute of like response, having no appreciation for beauty. Also, man can imitate God, creating things of beauty such as paintings, sculpture, architecture, songs, poetry, and musical compositions. Man's sense of symmetry and of creativity is phenomenal.

In the seventh place, man's dignity is affirmed by his religious nature. Augustine expressed this truism thus, "O God, thou hast made us for thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in thee." One may refuse to reverence God, but he must worship something or someone. And, elements of false religions inevitably move toward and demand a personal higher Being as their ultimate object. Human beings are just not satisfied to worship some vague, unknown power. "The force be with you" does not meet the need; man is driven by a deep impulse to seek guidance,

forgiveness, grace, peace, and hope in God just as he is driven by thirst and hunger to seek water and sustenance. No liberal, atheistic philosophy, no ruthless power of man, and no wishful thinking can destroy man's religious nature, for no such reason by man did create it. Man will continue to cry, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us!"

In the eighth place, man's dignity is affirmed by his immortality. A man's spirit has not always existed but once created, his spirit is like God, immortal. Man loves life and dreads the inevitability of death. Man longs for life beyond the grave; at his brother's grave, the skeptic Robert Ingersoll eulogized,

...in the night of death hope sees  
a star and listening love can hear  
the rustle of a wing. He who  
sleeps here, when dying, mistaking  
the approach of death for the  
return of health, whispered with  
his latest breath, "I am better  
now." Let us believe in spite of  
doubts and dogmas and tears and  
fears, that these dear words are  
true of all the countless dead.

--*Complete Lectures of Col. R.G. Ingersoll*, pp.  
14,15

Indeed, one may as well speak of the death and



annihilation of God as to speak of the annihilation of man.

### CONCLUSION

Encouraged by the infamous decision in 1973 by the Supreme Court and by the increasingly bankrupt condition of our nation morally, the "playing god" syndrome is at epidemic and malignant proportions. And, as more and more human beings are sacrificed--murdered--on the guillotine of "personal freedom," "meaningful life," and "life worth living," the urgent and critical question must be, "What can be done to stem the tide?" What can the Christian, the elder, the preacher do to help salvage an appreciation in this country, and elsewhere, for the absolute, intrinsic value of every human being? What can be done to promote reverence toward our offspring, our elderly, our retarded, and our mentally ill? And, yes, for all of us?

One, every Christian must defend the inerrant, authoritative, objective Truth, the Word of God. "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The personal worth, personality, and nature of God is the only guarantee of our own worth, personality, and nature. As the sun holds the planets in their orbits, so the permanence and substance of God maintains the dignity of all mankind. As any tampering with the Word undermines the

receptivity, whether by teaching liberal theology of the seminaries or by defending the new translations which pervert the Word, elders must not allow into the pulpits those false teachers who question the authority, reliability, and morality of the Scriptures. The mouths of false witnesses must be stopped (Titus 1:10,11). Without respect for God and for the Truth, human life becomes cheap, and the inhumanities grow to gigantic and disastrous proportions, bringing wreck and ruin, both now and in eternity. Civilization and freedom will go crashing into savage brutality and remorseless tyranny.

Two, every Christian must treat all human beings with dignity. "Let us do good toward all men" (Galatians 6:10). The fact that we are children of God does not give us license to sit back and do nothing for the elderly, the retarded, the less than "perfect" infant or adult. Merely saying "Be ye warmed and filled" will not stem the tide of inhumanity! The writer has seen "Christians" who would do anything or say anything to others and about others; in fact a sad commentary, but none-the-less true, is that the worse the writer has ever been treated was by members of the church. These were in the minority, however. Job affirmed regarding his kindnesses to the needy, "Did not he that made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb" (Job 31:15)? He

who is God's child treats everyone with dignity! They also, are made in God's image.

Three, every Christian should become aware of the deprivation of man's dignity and should equip himself to cry out against such injustices. The tide can be turned, but the hour is late. The voice of the Christian can still be heard; may we utilize the freedom to speak while we still possess it! And, may we not be seduced by those who say, "Peace; and there is no peace" (Ezekiel 13:10).

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