

Fundamentalist?

This term gained common usage early in the last century when some orthodox Christian theologians assembled a collection of essays outlining the 'fundamentals' of the faith. 'Fundamentalist' has since been stuck to anyone who embraces the literal, supernatural teachings of the Bible. Western media now uses 'fundamentalist' with reference to any religion associated with 'extreme' behaviour. 'Fundamentalist' now equals 'extremist' whenever some aspect of a belief system, taken to its logical conclusion, drives people to that which most would consider bizarre, or just plainly wrong. Let's apply this approach to any worldview-Darwinism for example. If evolution is true, then it must be applied broadly, to politics, economics, law, education, medicine, business, labour, war, and psychology. Natural selection must be why we are 'good' or 'bad'. Terrorism then has nothing to do with 'evil'; it merely proves that we have a predisposition to violence which is encoded in our genes. With evolution established as 'fact', it only follows logically that since human behaviour arose over time as adaptation to the environment, then the impulse to rape is a natural, beneficial phenomenon. It must be good. Natural selection surely would have weeded it out if there was not some evolutionary advantage. Perhaps you find this to be frightening logic. That's too bad. Evolution and its ethics are a package deal.

The die-hard Darwinist clings to his belief, no matter where it takes him. That's because he is a fundamentalist, and can justify his extremism by his faith. But his faith cannot explain 9/11, nor can it explain what we all know is right and wrong. Our conscience tells us that we are subject to a law higher than our own thinking. The basic human moral code is imprinted not in our DNA, but in our souls. It leaves us without excuse.

We find ourselves borrowing constantly from the Christian heritage to fill the gaps where other belief systems fail to match the data of our experience. Only the divine revelation espoused by Christianity gives credence to our conviction that humans have a unique dignity. In a world where people are but complex biological blobs, the Christian message is great news indeed. Ultimate reality is not the random mechanics of evolution. It is a personal Being who loves and relates to individuals He made in His image.

And that's a good thing, because there's a bit of fundamentalism in all of us.

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