

Is Darwinism just a scientific theory or is it innately destructive of Christianity and Christian moral values?

Initially Christians were not assertive enough in proposing an alternative world-view to Darwinism – although the real solid evidence for that supportable alternative worldview (Intelligent Design) has only been emerging over the last 25 years. Darwinism more than anything else has barred consideration of Christianity as a serious world-view. It has been described as a “universal acid” which has dissolved our traditional world-views.

Debate over teaching of Darwinism in schools has generated more public interest than anything else (e.g. when Ohio debated the issue in 2002 the Dept of Education received more public response than on any previous topic). The public senses instinctively that more is at stake than science. The naturalistic world-view of science is being promoted far beyond the bounds of science. This is the age of universal Darwinism with metaphysical as well as scientific implications.

Christians had previously retreated to a “two tier” view where Darwinian evolution ruled at a scientific real world level – Philosophical Naturalism – and Christianity was relegated to a spiritual/personal/moral level – Philosophical Idealism – which was somehow disconnected from the real objective world.

This model is not supportable, as the pragmatic philosophers such as Dewey and James saw. Apart from the damaging effect (from the traditional Christian viewpoint) of a system of belief which explains life without need for God, then, as Darwin himself foresaw, if his theory is accepted as fact, then it must also apply to human behaviour as well as physical evolution. He said, “infanticide, especially of females, has been thought to be good for the tribe.” A century ago, he saw where his logic must lead.

As Ernst Mayr wrote, “The Darwinian revolution was not merely the replacement of one scientific theory by another, but rather the replacement of a world-view” and as E O Wilson and Michael Ruse write “The basis of ethics does not lie in God’s will” ethics is “an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes to get us to co-operate.” Humans “function better if they are deceived by their genes into thinking there is a disinterested objective morality binding upon them, which all should obey.”

This has resulted in a completely amoral view of behaviour. Rape and infanticide are not reprehensible because (in the Darwinian view) they have come about solely as a result of evolution. There are books on the subject such as *The natural history of rape: biological bases of sexual coercion*. Once Darwinism is accepted it cannot be otherwise, because **all** forms of behaviour, which survive, must ipso facto have survival value.

Now we have books and academic topics such as:

- Darwinian Politics: The evolutionary origin of freedom
- Economics as an evolutionary science
- Evolutionary jurisprudence
- Law, biology and culture
- The evolution of law
- Evolution and literary theory
- Evolutionary medicine
- The new science of Darwinian medicine
- Darwinian psychiatry

The evolution of desire: strategies of human mating

Evolutionary biologist William Provine travels the lecture circuit telling students that the Darwinian revolution is still incomplete because we have not yet embraced all its moral and religious implications. He says “There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life and no freewill.”

Clearly, this kind of philosophy has contributed enormously to the breakdown of traditional social values and law and order.

Darwinism is in fact a complete reversal of classical philosophical ideas. Mind is not transcendent *over and above* matter, rather it is produced *by* matter.

Yet geneticist H Allen Orr states that all these ideas are based on thought experiments, pure hypothesis – we have no objective data to support them.

BUT if we accept the theoretical basis – Darwinism – we have no basis to resist

However, the good news is that as a scientific theory Darwinism is extremely deficient. It has no answer to the paucity (indeed absence) of “missing links” between species from the fossil record, the existence of the “Cambrian explosion” (where huge numbers of new species with radically different body plans appeared in a very short space of time), or the existence of “irreducibly complex” biological systems (primarily the mechanisms within the cell) which cannot have been produced by gradualistic means. Indeed the absence of support from the fossil record has led many prominent evolutionists to abandon traditional Darwinism and posit new evolutionary theories such as the “Punctuated Equilibrium” of Stanley Stevens (which proposes rapid evolution by mutation in geographically isolated sub-groups of a species). Even this theory finds it difficult to cope with the rapid change of the Cambrian explosion. Irreducibly Complex mechanisms (which have no function until they exist in a complete form – e.g. an automobile engine) are impossible to explain by means of evolutionary theories and point clearly to “Intelligent Design”. If Darwinism were not so intellectually satisfying in philosophical terms (no need for God) to so many scientists, it is doubtful if it would have survived to this day.

Christians must be convinced that we have a winning case and go back “on the attack”, firmly asserting the Intelligent Design theories as an intellectually supportable, and indeed preferable, basis for explaining the world of biological life we observe.

This means that evangelical Christians must rediscover a strong and robust intellectual tradition and cease to emphasise the Christian life and experience *only* in terms of personal metaphysical experience – a felt thing – and reassert its objective reality.

There is the case of a (now) well known Christian writer, who, shortly after his conversion, asked his pastor about the nature of the Trinity. The reply was “just believe Jesus is God and don’t worry about the details.” That kind of attitude is not going to carry the day in our cynical post-modern world.