

10/2005

Re: Don't Confuse Facts and Beliefs

David Johnson (letters, 10/6/05) could have saved readers some time by simply stating his thesis at the beginning: "My faith in God is so strong that it is a fact to me". Does Johnson mean that his professed faith is a demonstrable fact? I have no reason to doubt it. Or does he mean that his faith is so strong that God's existence is a fact? If so, then we might ask whether the veracity of this fact should be confirmed solely on the degree of one's faith.

Confusion of facts with beliefs is just the beginning of his troubles however. The death bed conversion of Charles Darwin is an old creationist canard, originating with the evangelist Lady Hope who was not present at his death, and subsequently refuted by others who were. But even if Darwin had repudiated evolution, or if Newton had blasted his Laws of Motion or Einstein had recanted Relativity, none of it would matter.

Because science is not what some man or woman, great or small, claims it to be. Science is not based on anyone's authority. Science is an explanation that accurately fits the data.

That evolution occurs, is a fact because the fossil record abundantly demonstrates change over time. That evolution by natural selection is a well accepted scientific theory, is because it explains not only the fossil record, but also the genetic inter-relatedness of all life. Johnson should get his facts straight before he confuses any more of them.

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