What is Faith?

Is Evolution Reasonable?

by Ernest O'Neill Program 10

What is faith? Do you have faith? "Aw, no, I wouldn't bother with that stuff; that's superstitious stuff. No, I don't have faith."
Well, have you ever walked on the ice of a lake in winter? "Well, yes, I have."
Well, why did you walk on it? You know, yourself, that when you observe water you can't walk on it. And you say, "Oh, no, when it's frozen into ice you can walk on it." I say to you, "Why do you believe that?" You say, "I saw other people walk on it. I even saw people who had cars on it and so I knew it was strong enough to withstand my weight."
I say to you, "Have you ever fallen through ice that you thought would bear your weight?
You say, "Yes, of course 1 have."
And I say, "But you still have faith when you walk on ice?
And you say, "Well, I suppose that's right. I suppose it's not mathematical certainty that 1 have, because in fact, you're right. I have fallen through it at times, and proven it would not bear my weight. You're right, it is faith in the sense that I don't really know it will bear my weight until I stand on it. 1 don't really know for certain until I stand on it. So, I suppose, yes, I do have faith. I believe that this ice will hold me up on the basis of the reasonable observations I have made of other people being on it and then I act on that belief. Yes, I suppose I do have faith."
Have you ever stepped on a ladder? "Yes, of course, I've stepped on a ladder." And have you ever found a ladder that wasn't strong enough to bear your weight or that one of the rungs gave way? "Yes, yes, I have." And still do you have faith in that ladder? "Yes, I suppose that's right. I do have faith.

Of course, the truth is that we have faith in almost everything we do in our lives. Our life here on earth could not operate without faith, because very, very few of any of our activities are based on scientific and proven evidence. Most of our activities are based on faith, often, on things that we cannot see and on computers that are in the cellars or basements of banks that we have never seen, on people that look after our stocks and shares that we do not know personally, on doctors that operate upon us whom often we haven't even seen ourselves. So, of course, we have faith in all kinds of things. It's because of faith that our ordinary everyday life can even proceed at all. And, so, yes, we exercise faith in all kinds of things.

Now, I want to ask you this. Do you see that car that is sitting beside you on the freeway? Or, if you're at home, do you see that car that is sitting in the garage or out in your driveway? Now, I want you to have faith in this. That if you, for instance, have a Cadillac sitting out there, or if you have a Ford Escort sitting out there, 1 want you to have faith that it

actually evolved from a VW Bug. OK? And you say to me, "Wait a minute. Don't be stupid! That's not faith you're asking me to have; that's fantasy. That's superstition. That's the belief of a crazy man to have faith that that automobile out there evolved from a VW Bug. Even to believe that a Ford Thunderbird evolved from a Ford Escort ... That's silly! Even to believe that a VW Jetta evolved from a VW Bug ... that's stupid! Even to believe that a Honda 650 evolved from a 150 Honda; that's stupid. No, I don't believe that. I can't have faith in that."
And I say to you, "Why can't you?"
And you say, "Well, machinery doesn't grow like that. My normal idea of evolution is that the thing evolves itself without any help from human beings or human intelligence or without any help from any intellect. It just evolves." And I say to you, "Yea? Well, you know, it took millions of years to do that. It did. If you give it long enough. I mean, maybe it took billions of years. Maybe it took trillions of years to evolve."
And you say to me, "Look, buddy, the only thing that would happen if you gave that VW Bug billions of years is that it would evolve into a collection of rust lying on the ground. Because time plus chance, even billions of years of time, does not create. In our universe, according to the second law of thermodynamics that states that every process has a tendency to run down, it normally decomposes. It normally decomposes. It normally deteriorates. No, even if it didn't deteriorate, even if the VW Bug was able to stay as it was for billions of years, it would never evolve into a Lincoln Continental or into a bigger VW. No, I don't have faith in that, because that, in fact, is not what's happening in our world. I don't see things evolving like that. I certainly do see moths evolving into different colours according to the environment in which they are. so they adapt to different environments. 1 see that. 1 see that there are variations in certain things. I see, for instance, that a VW Bug can be painted yellow, or painted red. it can have some variation in the automatic transmission, but I think that that was built into it. Or, I

think that the differences in colour that take place on the outside of the VW Bugs are due to the changes in the environment that I can observe. But, I don't think that it can evolve into such a very different animal or a very different organism as you're suggesting."
And then I'd suggest to you, "Well, that's the way the earth came into being. it evolved."
"Evolved? What do you mean evolved?"
And I say, "Well, you see ... it started off with some atoms falling down vertically through space and then somehow or other, I don't know how, billions and billions of years ago, two atoms stuck together. They bumped into each other, 1 don't know how. Some wind came or something. And they bumped into one another. And then other atoms fell on top of them. And then it built and built into a big snowball and eventually it became our earth. And then, somehow or other, that earth over years and years and years, even though it was inanimate and had no life in it, yet somehow life came out of it. Somehow, maybe a bug got into it; I don't know where the bug came from but maybe some germs got in or some creepy things, but somehow life started and somehow a single

cell amoeba (I don't know where the single cell amoeba came from.) complicated and it divided into two cells and it divided three cells. Then it formed another cell. It died over billions of years and then another cell was formed and it lived. Then it became a more complex cell and then it developed into a little insect floating on a pond and then it evolved into a bigger insect and it evolved then into a little worm that crawled on the ground and then the insect that was on the water evolved into a thing with fins and a tail. Then it evolved into a bigger fish and then a bigger fish. Then the worm evolved into a bigger worm and it evolved into a snake. I don't know how it ever got legs, but somehow legs evolved and it became a little rabbit."
This kind of thing can't happen however many billions of years you give it. And, indeed, if it evolved, what did it evolve from? And where did these programmed changes take place? Did Someone not program those changes in? Is it not more reasonable to have faith in the idea that even if evolution took place it was a programmed thing that was designed by some intellect? But don't ask me to have faith in the idea that this whole thing came about by time plus chance over billions and billions of years. That just isn't reasonable faith. That isn't what t call faith, because in my book, faith is belief plus action based on reasonable evidence.