

A “Hands On” Creator

Preachers learn to “let sleeping dogs lie” as far as some subjects are concerned. From my teenage years I understood that Jesus made *real wine* and that its proper use was common among ancient people of God, but for me to stand in the pulpit and teach that, I would have had to anticipate a career change! However, when I taught the Biblical perspective of the use of wine in my second book, *Free To Speak*, response indicated that most disciples already believed that and were not averse to a “little wine” or an occasional beer. They just could not teach it!

In similar manner, to leave an option that God could have created all things in a process rather than instantaneously would leave the preacher with no option other than an instantaneous career change. Having already made that career change, I began in my second book also to throw out questions about the absolutely literal interpretation of the Genesis account of creation which rejects any possibility of an extended process of creation. Later I published other articles suggesting that God just may continue to refine his creative work. My readers have either considered me hopeless or already were believing those things, for very little negative response has been received.

My purpose in writing about the method or process that God used in creating all things is not to promote a dogmatic answer. Scientists certainly cannot prove evolution, but neither can we prove that we were brought into existence by a divine power either instantaneously or progressively. We have to weigh evidences on which to base faith, and even then we are likely to decide in favor of what we want to believe. Faith is not the fruit of proof but of evidence that falls short of proof. Even while believing in creation, since the details are not specified in Scripture, we must allow others to have their own opinions. “Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind.” (Rom. 14:5). That does not indicate that we must all be convinced of the same thing in non-essential matters.

The Galatians were preaching “another gospel” when they proclaimed salvation by “the gospel-plus.” If we add our plus to the gospel, we are doing the same thing if our plus is a scientific opinion.

A person can hold opinions about predestination without being a Calvinist, or opinions about salvation by faith without being Lutheran, or opinions about the process of creation without being a “Darwinist” or “naïve creationist.” Those are prejudicial terms used to categorize persons unfairly.

As far back as 65 years ago when I was a teenager, my teachers drilled me in the concepts of instantaneous creation and changeless “natural laws” initiated by God. Science was commonly ridiculed and scientists who disagreed with us were arrogantly denounced as being dishonest and evilly motivated. There could be no middle ground. None dared to allow more than six literal days or for a continuing process of God’s work in his creation, which might include his directing and shaping it.

The sincere disciples of my upbringing held to some facets of deism. A deist denies the interference of the Creator with the laws of the universe. Denying that God or the Spirit would work separately from the Word left the creation without God’s interaction with his universe. He had set the universe in order and then had a “hands off” policy. Although we prayed for God to “guide, guard, and direct us” and to heal the sick,

we actually were indecisive about his interference with the natural laws of the universe. Our concepts of creation fitted into that way of thinking.

While disallowing such interaction of God with the created universe, even the most conservative and fundamental disciples have had to make some concessions. God supplied water to cover the entire earth above the 17,650 foot height of Mount Ararat, for example. After the flood previously herbivorous animals, fowls, and sea creatures were changed to be carnivorous. God made the “sun stand still” for a day. Certain ones were raised from the dead, many were healed, and others were taken up without dying.

All of the many miracles in the Biblical record were instances of God intervening with the natural order. Unless we are deists, we grant that God is still shaping and changing the earth and universe for we can see those things happening. Why then can we not grant the possibility that God has added biological variations and upgraded members from one species to a new one by his creative power through the ages?

Since no power could force the Almighty One to create this vast universe and its inhabitants, we may assume that he did it for his delight. It is not beyond reason that he has continued to find pleasure in producing unending diversities in color, shape, size, texture, substance, and activity in enhancing the work of his hands. To contemplate that he might have flung out a few more heavenly bodies each day for a billion years could do nothing less than instill greater awe in us.

If the Genesis account is all literal, then we are limited by the declaration that God completed the whole creative project in six literal days (Gen. 2:1-3). Consider, however, that you and I would be non-existent if that were literally true.

Because the Eternal One had no beginning, we must conclude that the first sentence of the Bible means *in the beginning of creation* or as the RSV footnote reads, *when God began to create*. That first sentence covers all of the creating of the elements of this universe from nothingness. From there on, he used existing material to make-form-create. For example, he made-formed-created man of the dust (material elements, mostly water!).

In the record of God’s initial work, *create* (1:1; 1:27), *make* (1:16), and *formed* (2:7; 1 Tim. 2:13) are used interchangeably. Those three terms are used to reveal how individuals came into existence in history – *created* (Mal. 2:10), *made* (Psa. 119:73; 139:14-15), *formed* (Psa. 139:13). So all creation was not finished in six days for we are included. You and I, like Adam, are formed of the dust also (Ecc. 3:20; 12:7; Job 34:15). God still creates-makes-forms us, not instantaneously, but by a process of development in our mothers’ wombs. He is a “hands on” creator. We are proof of that.

Most that I have read by disciples dealing with the subject ignore or twist the concept of God’s extended process of creation through development and change. I do not know a Christian who believes in “random, purposeless, natural processes,” “random changes and blind sifting of natural selection,” and/or a “completely mechanistic and material system,” which leaves God out. There are no believing atheists. But some believers do allow that God could have used the “natural laws” which he inaugurated and also to have intervened or made deviations at points in time, thus developing the vast number of species and variations. We need not seek that elusive “missing link” between species for the Creator might initiate those abrupt changes as he wills.

Belief in God's continued supervision and interventions in creation allows us to believe that he works in our lives and, conversely, belief that he works in our lives allows us to accept his "hands on" supervision and intervention in the universe. The Creator is a "hands on" God. Otherwise, prayer becomes a fruitless exercise.

This is brief. The subject is far-reaching. You are free to form your own opinions about it. The only dogmatic claim of this essay is that we must not be dogmatic about this subject. []