



Syzygy: Aligning Heaven, Earth, and Faith

During my freshman year in college, I enrolled with some trepidation in a two-semester, six-credit-hour course called "Western Civilization I & II." Fresh out of graduate school, Professor Conrad DiMichele attempted to excite students with the fascination of history. Far more than simply retelling dated historical events, his teaching style was to extrapolate issues and problems from a historical context and recast them into contemporary times. From those classes, I gained insight into the linear progression of historical events and the cycloid of issues that humankind has faced from the dawn of creation through the present.

DiMichele provided an insight into what he called "pre-Adamic human history," humans living before the recorded stories of the Hebrew Scriptures. As a naive nineteen-year-old, I wondered and struggled with this information and feebly tried to reconcile it with the interpretation of the Genesis creation story that I had been taught at home and at church. However, the two streams of thought—human history and the Holy Bible—seemed "out-of-line" and irreconcilable. So who was wrong, DiMichele or my biblicist-oriented pastor?

Evangelical Christians, who accept the Scriptures as God's written Word, are constantly challenged to reconcile their faith system with the books of God—the laws of nature and the scroll of Scripture. Investigation of nature and theology continually uncovers both new accounts of their conformation as well as disturbing evidences of conflict. What is the resolution?

Christians have worked to adjudicate nature and theology in several ways. Some have maintained a "Bible science" and disregarded any evidence of natural science that

seems to conflict with the "biblical evidence." Others have skillfully compartmentalized theology as spiritual reality and natural science as material reality, never allowing the twain to meet. Another approach has made Scripture subservient to science, resulting in a radical reinterpretation of Scripture to fit theology into nature. And finally some have chosen to maintain an equivalent respect for both of God's books, believing that careful reading and interpretation will ultimately result in a harmonious synthesis.

In the regular paper section of this issue, four authors reveal how they harmoniously reconcile Scripture and science. In his treatise on Adam, John McIntyre places this character at a traditional time-line spot, 4000 BC, suggesting that a pre-historical evolutionary line of *Homo sapiens* pre-dated a real person, Adam. Raymond Zimmer presents a natural complementary metaphor, the Ubaid period (5000 BC) along with the evolution of language to frame the biblical story of the Fall. Carol Hill tackles the issue of a "universal" Noachian flood and carefully demonstrates geological and archeological evidence to show that a more limited Mesopotamian flood corresponds to the biblical Noachian flood. Alan Padgett uses a philosophical framework—dialectical realism—to align theology and science. He argues that this approach best provides a framework for a continued dialogue between theology and science.

Read our authors in this issue. In so doing, you can gain an insight on how four Christians have worked to bring their faith, natural science, and the Christian Scriptures into a metaphoric syzygy. *

Sedulous reading,
Roman J. Miller, *Editor*

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