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## Green Eye of the Storm (Book Review)

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*Green Eye of the Storm*, by John Rendle-Short (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998). xiv + 294 pages. pb. \$19.99. Reviewed by Russell Maatman, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry, Dordt College.

*Green Eye of the Storm* is a fascinating account of the modern creation-evolution controversy. John Rendle-Short describes the faith struggle of four persons who encountered Darwinian theory. Written primarily for Christians who accept evolutionary theory, the book is unusual because of the care taken in choosing the four people and in describing many incidents in their lives, enabling the reader to understand each person and his motivations.

Rendle-Short chose persons who lived over a period of two centuries and whose Christian faith was challenged by Darwinian evolutionary theory. The four are Philip Gosse (1810-1888), George Romanes (1848-1894), the author's father, Arthur Rendle-Short (1880-1953), and the author himself (1919- ). Except for the author, who emigrated to Australia when he was over 40, all spent their entire lives in England. Gosse and Romanes appear prominently in standard histories of the debate. The "green eye" of the title is the green eye of a tropical storm, which at first seems innocent, but, like evolutionary theory, eventually wrecks everything in its path.

Rendle-Short evaluates their positions by his own, summarized as follows: (1) Because God is a God of peace and love, the "good" of Genesis 1 means there was neither suffering nor death before the Fall. But plants and animals that do not possess blood could have died before the Fall. (2) Evolutionary theory cannot account for the origin of the first woman, Eve. (3) Since the Bible describes one catastrophe, the universal Noachic Flood, uniformitarianism is not a viable position. (4) The earth, only thousands of years old, was created in six 24-hour days. (5) The historicity of Adam and Eve belongs to the unity of Scripture. The author's theme is that ever since Darwin's *Origin* appeared, many Christians have assumed that evolutionary theory and the Bible cannot both be true. These Christians seemed to be crushed between the irresistible force of science and the immovable inerrancy of Scripture.

Rendle-Short begins with Philip Gosse, a committed Christian who produced standard works in marine biology. Learning of Darwin's theory before it was published, he was "thunderstruck" because of its threat to both the Christian faith and science. Perhaps to dissuade Darwin from publishing, Gosse published *Omphalos* (navel) before *Origin* appeared. "Navel" here refers to Adam's navel; did he have one? If so, presumably he had a mother. Gosse used a "law of prochronism," which, when applied to the world of life and nonlife, means that development is circular. Thus, a cow is derived from a cow, which in turn is derived from another cow, ad infinitum—in a circle which has neither beginning nor end. Creation, then, is the arbitrary, divine irruption into the circle of nature. In this sense, movement from one cow to its descendants does have a beginning. Intense opposition

arose to Gosse's ideas. Rendle-Short suggests that many of Gosse's day felt they had to choose between science and Scripture, but that Gosse himself never accepted Darwinian evolution.

George Romanes, born in 1848, was a free-lance scientific researcher whose doubts about the Christian faith were raised by Darwin's books. Romanes was so overwhelmed by Darwin's congratulations for an article of his in *Nature* that he became Darwin's disciple. As a result, he became acquainted with many of the leading scientists of the day. Like others in the Darwin camp, he became interested in psychic phenomena. When he was 30, he wrote *A Candid Examination of Theism*, which "disposed" of theism. Even so, he felt that evolution destroyed the loveliness of the universe. An ode he wrote when Darwin died was desolate. Evidence suggests that he returned to the Christian faith only a few weeks before his death.

The author's father, Arthur Rendle-Short, born in 1880, became a surgeon and a lay preacher in the Brethren church. In one three-day period during World War I, he performed 54 operations in Bristol. An article of his suggesting why the incidence of appendicitis had increased greatly in modern times led to later recognition for its significant contribution to the field.

Rendle-Short suspects that his father's crisis of faith may have been triggered by Romanes' ideas. Arthur was "thrilled" with Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (1883), a book which Rendle-Short perceives as a bizarre mixture of Darwinism, Christianity, metaphysics, and Teilhardian philosophy. In 1910 Drummond said that developing life was called ten thousand times to go forward to nobler things; all but one, man in God's image, died out. Arthur was also impressed by *The Fact of Christ*, a book by Simpson (an evolutionist) that emphasized the virtues of Christ but ignored many miracles.

Arthur's positions shifted throughout his life, but he based acceptance of the Bible on the inability of science to explain how life arose. The author repeatedly laments that his father and his predecessors would have come to better conclusions had they been in possession of modern scientific knowledge. For example, his father's book stressed the importance of Piltdown Man. The author points out that the Piltdown Man "discovery" was shown to be a hoax only months after Arthur died. But Rendle-Short has no doubt that his father died in the faith.

Rendle-Short, like his father, became a physician. After emigrating to Australia in 1961, he founded the Department of Child Health in the Children's Hospital associated with the University of Queensland in Brisbane. As a student, he began to have doubts about his faith. Did all the biblical miracles have naturalistic explanations? With this approach one could rationalize the supernatural

—even the Resurrection—out of Christianity.

During his university years Rendle-Short learned that his father had struggled with the creation-evolution question all his life. His own turning point on that question was meeting A. E. Wilder-Smith in 1974 and reading his book, *Man's Origin, Man's Destiny* (1968). Wilder-Smith maintained that the earth was created in six 24-hour days. Rendle-Short also had discussions with Francis Schaeffer and read some of his books. He liked many of Schaeffer's ideas, but questions his views on creation.

In the last part of the book, Rendle-Short repeats his reasons for rejecting evolutionary theory and adds new ones: (1) It fails to account for intelligence. (2) It is not consistent with the second law of thermodynamics. (3) Evolutionary humanism has failed. He accepts a young earth and a universal flood because: (1) Animals with blood could not have died before the Fall. (2) A universal flood accounts for the fossils. (3) These conclusions are consistent with biblical teaching.

Rendle-Short is absolutely correct in insisting on the necessity of accepting the entire written Word, on Christ's sacrifice, on free grace, on the insufficiency of human works, and on our complete dependence on God. I do not agree with all of his conclusions on evolution and creation, but even if his conclusions on this question were the same as mine, I would still have a fundamental disagreement on how one arrives at such conclusions. My problem is that Rendle-Short and many other Christians assume that we can know a priori how God must have acted. This assumption may be the reason for all four faith struggles

he describes. Two examples—the first from the author and the second from Christians who accept evolution, theistic evolutionists—illustrate how this assumption is used.

First, if in God's plan animals die before, and not because of, man's sin, then it is not for us to reason that "animals could not have died in a good creation." Rendle-Short seems to base his belief that animals did not die before the Fall more on the unreasonableness of such death than on his rather weak biblical argument. We limit God when we decide that pre-Fall death would be unreasonable.

Second, theistic evolutionists also use an a priori assumption about how God must have acted. They claim some ancient fossils are either pre-human or human because these fossils were like human beings: some were buried with flowers, some were cared for by their fellows, some were associated with religious ritual, and so forth. The mistake is not in the claim that the fossils are actually very old, or that artifacts found with the fossils are not what they seem to be. The mistake is assuming that human-like activities and characteristics prove human-ness. The Bible provides only one criterion: to be human is to bear the image of God. We cannot presume to know how God must have acted. We limit God when we claim God would not have created beings with human-like characteristics.

I enjoyed this book and I recommend it because in a non-polemical account the author shows how views on evolution are shaped—to a certain extent—by personal experiences. Its British manner of dealing gently with controversial issues is refreshing.

*Science in Faith, A Christian Perspective on Teaching Science*, by A. Jones, et al. (Romford: The Christian Schools' Trust, 1998). 142 pp. Reviewed by John Zwart, Professor of Physics, Dordt College.

In a *Time* magazine essay last summer, Stephen Jay Gould wrote that "No scientific theory, including evolution, can pose any threat to religion – for these two great tools of human understanding operate in complementary (not contrary) fashion in their totally separate realms: science as an inquiry about the factual state of the natural world, religion as a search for spiritual meaning and ethical values." This view of science as somehow being religiously neutral is common in the scientific community. Another less common (but still frequently encountered) view claims that science has done away with the need for religion. *Science in Faith* exposes the misconceptions on which these views are based. This book, written in the UK, addresses Christians who teach science to students aged 11-18. Editor and main author Arthur Jones explains that the book was written for the "new independent Christian schools" that have been founded in the UK in response to "perceived secularism in the state system." The book is the "first publication from within this movement to provide a wide ranging defense of Christian

approaches to education."

The main thrust of the book is that science is not a neutral subject but is heavily shaped by worldview. Commonly accepted understandings of the neutrality of science shape not only the practice of science, but also the way textbooks are written for the secular market. Such science is characterized by reductionism, and texts tend to promote a "faith in the idols of *science, technology and economic growth*" (p. 95, emphasis in original). *Science in Faith* seeks to clarify the role of worldview in science, to promote a Christian worldview, and to provide examples for teaching science from a Christian worldview using the themes of creation, fall, and redemption. Chapter one provides an overview of worldview and a Christian approach to science. The second chapter discusses the evolution/creation debate. Chapter three considers a few of the stories of science. The fourth gives three examples that illustrate the teaching of science from a Christian perspective, and chapter five provides an annotated bibliography. Overall, the topics of biology and