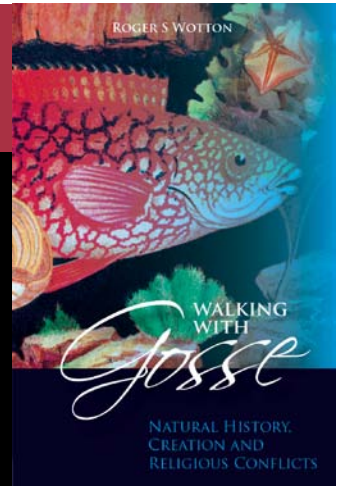


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# Walking with Gosse: Natural History, Creation and Religious Conflicts

**Roger S Wotton**Foreword written by Sir Patrick Bateson,  
President of the Zoological Society of London

Philip Henry Gosse (1810-1888) was an English Victorian writer and lecturer who popularised Natural History. Stephen Jay Gould, in his essay *Adam's Navel* - one of four in the book of the same name - described him as the nineteenth century's answer to Sir David Attenborough. Gosse's books were illustrated by his beautifully crafted paintings and woodcuts, and he encouraged the use of microscopes and marine aquaria. His scientific enquiry ran side-by-side with evangelical Christianity and, in an effort to resolve the conflict between the literal Biblical account of Creation and the concept of geological time, he wrote his most controversial book, *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*. This was published in 1857, two years before Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.

Henry's strong religious beliefs had a profound impact on his personal relationships, none more so than that with his only child, Edmund, who later became a famous literary figure and was knighted for his contribution to the Arts. *Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments*, Edmund's best known work, chronicles the development of the major differences between himself and Henry, and it is this description of his father as a religious oppressor that is the accepted view of the man. In *Walking with Gosse: Natural History, Creation and Religious Conflicts*, Professor Roger S. Wotton has given us a remarkable insight into the world of Philip Henry Gosse and, by interweaving historical biography with his own life as a Natural Historian, who was raised as a Christian, he conveys an intuitive and intimate understanding of his subject's struggles. *Walking with Gosse* has much to say about contemporary attitudes to living things, to debates about creation, and to the causes of religious conflicts.

The author Roger S. Wotton is an Emeritus Professor of Biology at University College London (UCL). He was born in Paignton, Devon, during the Great Blizzard of January 1947 and grew up in the town before leaving to study Zoology at Reading University. Roger's research has focused on the biology of organic matter in streams and rivers and he has worked in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland and the USA. He has published many research papers, the web book *Life in Water*, and he devised and edited both editions of the book *The Biology of Particles in Aquatic Systems*. A main focus of Roger's work has been to integrate ideas from all branches of aquatic science, from streams to oceans, resulting also in a number of wide-ranging reviews.

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