

not because of the purposes of a wise and powerful creator, but because of the operation of purely natural forces, working in a haphazard way.

In order to understand the situation in the middle of the 19th century we must look at what preceded. In the latter part of the previous century John Wesley and George Whitefield and their associates had led in the Great Awakening which changed the whole moral and religious tone of the English-speaking world. The generation of fiery evangelists and devoted spiritual leaders was succeeded by a generation in which there was great emphasis on social service and human improvement. The effects of the Great Awakening continued even into the third generation, but by this time there were many who longed to be free from the shackles of Christian morality and outlook. The forms of orthodoxy were rigorously maintained but rationalism was rapidly spreading among the educated classes.

Few men were ready to follow Herbert Spencer in attacking Christianity directly and forcibly, but many desired to escape from Biblical ideas. It is necessary to have this situation in mind to understand the explosive effect of Darwin's book.

In the years 1832-36, when Darwin had stopped at various places on the coast of South America, he had been surprised to see the great number of kinds of similar plants and animals and their progression. He pondered over the great variety and profusion of plant life and wondered how such variety had come into existence. One day in October, 1838, while recovering from an illness, he amused himself by reading a book by Thomas Robert Malthus called An Essay on Population. This book had been much discussed since the appearance of its first edition in 1797. Malthus advanced the idea that mankind keeps increasing geometrically while its food supply increases only