

even attributing it to Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria. G. M. Young, a prominent English historian, has said: "The Vestiges of Creation, issued with elaborate secrecy and attributed by a wild surmise to Prince Albert, was a natural sensation; translated into golden verses by Tennyson, evolution almost became a natural creed." Charles Darwin read the book with great care and made extensive notes in the margin of his copy, but Huxley wrote a savage review, in which he strongly attacked many of its statements, using such phrases as "mean view of Nature," "pretentious nonsense" and "foolish fancies." The book did not have much standing among reputable scientists, but in the world of fashion and intellectual dilettanteism it was very influential.

Forty years later the fact came out that the author of the Vestiges of Creation was Robert Chambers, a well-known publicist who had spent two years in the study of scientific material in order to write it.

Others at this time, including both scientists and philosophers, also promulgated evolutionary theory. Among them was Herbert Spencer who in various writings between 1844 and 1850 popularized the idea of evolution. Spencer declared that he saw only two possible alternatives, "the theory of special creation" and "the theory of progressive development." He declared that the first of these was "intrinsically incredible," and that therefore the second must be true.

At this time the force of the evangelical revival of the previous century was largely waning. Comparatively few men, like Herbert Spencer, were ready to attack Christianity directly and forcibly, but many who desired to escape from the Biblical teachings were moving toward the idea of evolution, even though as yet no name with a reputation for clear thinking and solid research could be advanced to promote it.