

One of Darwin's friends asked a London firm to issue Darwin's book. When the publisher looked it over he felt that it would not sell. However, he was well impressed with its observations about pigeons, and urged Darwin instead to write a book on that subject, saying, "Everybody is interested in pigeons." However, Darwin insisted that the book be published exactly as it was, and the publisher hesitantly agreed to do so.

WHY THE BOOK WAS SO IMPORTANT

Much to the surprise of both Darwin and the publisher the book was immediately received with great acclaim. The reason for this is easy to see. As we have noticed, many who desired to abandon the Biblical teaching about creation had become fascinated by the idea of evolution. This idea had been strongly criticized by outstanding scientists such as Thomas Henry Huxley who was firmly convinced that species are so fixed that there can be no change from one into another. The idea of evolution appeared to lack scientific respectability, yet many wished to believe it. Now a book by a well-known scientist had appeared, presenting a method which its author felt was sufficient to explain the origin of every type of life from a previous type, and thus to make divine creation quite unnecessary.

Darwin's reputation was an important factor in the attention that the book received. He was known as a careful analytical scientist who for eight years had devoted all his time to studying barnacles and writing a large work on the subject. When Bulwer-Lytton had introduced in one of his novels a Professor Long, who was said to have written two large volumes about limpets, many people had immediately recognized Darwin as the original of the character. The fact that a scientist with such a reputation would write a scholarly book in support of evolution immediately gave respectability to the idea and pushed it to the forefront of discussion.