

Discuss the Features of the Victorian Age.

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The Victorian Age (1832-1901) is often called the **"Age of Faith and Doubt"** due to the conflicting beliefs and ideologies that dominated the era. This era witnessed profound societal transformations, including industrialization, the rise of the middle class, and significant social reform movements. Rapid industrialization, scientific advancements, and societal changes have shifted people's perspectives about religion, science, and morality. Let's discuss it.

The Note will cover the following questions:

- **Why is the Victorian age called an age of faith and doubt? Mention the main features of this age.**
- **Discuss the features of the Victorian age.**

Reasons why the Victorian Era is called the Age of Faith and Doubt:

Faith and Religion: The early part of the Victorian era was marked by strong Christian faith. Religion played a central role in the lives of people. Many Victorian people adhere to traditional Christian beliefs and values. The Church had a powerful influence on society. It controls moral codes and shapes personal and public life. *"In Memoriam"*, **Alfred Lord Tennyson** reflects the Christian faith and hope in God, even in the face of personal loss and doubt:

Be near me when my faith is dry.

This shows like other Victorian people, Tennyson desired solace in faith during times of hardship.

Doubt and Scientific Progress: As the century progressed, **scientific discoveries**—especially Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in *"On the Origin of Species"* (1859)—challenged traditional religious beliefs. After this, people began to question the inevitability of religious doctrines. Many intellectuals and

poets struggled to reconcile faith with the new scientific understanding.

Matthew Arnold, a leading poet of the era, captured this sense of doubt and loss of faith in his poem “*Dover Beach*”: he says,

*The Sea of Faith Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore Its melancholy,
long, withdrawing roar...*

In these lines, Arnold laments the fading of religious faith in the face of modern doubt.

Main Features of the Victorian Age: The characteristics of Victorian that shaped society, culture, and ideas. Some prominent features are discussed below.

Industrialization and Urbanization:

The Victorian Age saw rapid growth of cities and factories due to industrialization. It made England an industrial nation. It led people to bad working conditions, overcrowding, and poverty. In “

Oliver Twist”

and “

Hard Times,

” Charles Dickens shows the struggles of the poor and working class. This reveals the dark side of industrial growth. Tennyson says,

*Forward, forward let us range, let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves
of change.*

The Rise of the Middle Class:

The middle class expanded because of the rise of industries and trade during this period. They gained power in society. Their values, such as hard work, saving money, and maintaining respectability, became very important. These ideas are often seen in George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë.

Social Reform Movements: Many social reform movements started in the Victorian Age. These movements fought for workers' rights, women's right to vote, and the end of slavery. People wanted fairness and justice in a rapidly changing society. In the poem “*The Princess*,” Tennyson says,

Man for the field and woman for the hearth:

Man for the sword and for the needle she.

Scientific and Technological Advancements:

The Victorian Age saw many scientific discoveries, especially in areas like geology, biology, and astronomy. These discoveries made people question long-held religious beliefs about the Earth and humanity and made many people uncertain about traditional ideas.

Realism in Literature: Novels became very popular during this time, and writers used them to show the real issues of life in a changing world. Authors like Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, and George Eliot wrote about class struggles, gender roles, and human challenges. Literature became a way to talk about social problems and the moral issues of the time.

In short, the Victorian Age is called the "Age of Faith and Doubt" because of the conflict between traditional religious beliefs and new scientific ideas. Poets like Tennyson and Arnold and writers like Charles Dickens captured people's struggles in their writing. They tried to balance old beliefs with new ways of thinking. They reflect on societal struggles during rapid industrialization, reform, and progress.