

The distinctive features of the Victorian Period are largely a result of *events in* the previous century. John Wesley and George Whitefield carried the Gospel to every corner of the English-speaking world. The rise of the great Methodist Church, which was then characterized by utter loyalty to the Word of God and great emphasis on personal commitment to Christ, was only one of the results of this movement. Blackstone, the noted English legal commentator, shortly before the beginning of the Wesleyan movement visited most of the leading churches of London. He reported that he hardly found a church in which it was possible to tell from the sermon whether the preacher was a follower of Christ, *or* of Buddha, or of Mohammed. Christianity was at a low ebb and the prevailing licentiousness of society showed how small its influence in English life had become.

The Wesleyan movement greatly affected many times as many people as it drew into the Methodist Church. Evangelical movements sprang up in all the other denominations and all of *parts* of England experienced ~~it~~ a great return to Christian faith and Christian life. Before Victoria came to the throne the effects of this change had been felt throughout society. Even those people who did not accept Christianity were greatly influenced in their moral standards and ethical ideals.

It is customary in literary circles today to run down the tone of English literature of the Victorian era and of the part of the 19th Century that preceded it because of its failure to touch upon those aspects of life that are not ordinarily discussed in decent circles. Whether one reads Thackeray, Dickens, Scott, or other writers near the beginning of the Victorian Period, he finds them characterized by an attitude that present day critics regard as prudery. What is not usually realized is that this represents a contrast, not only to the situation of our own day, but also to that of the preceding century. Charles Darwin once remarked on the fact that his grandfather had been the sire of an illegitimate child without arousing any of the disesteem and