Tennyson's Comfort from Grief
and the Ascension of
Arthur Henry Hallam

by

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ABSTRACT

Alfred Lord Tennyson's "In Memoriam" is a search for comfort from his fear of Death. Tennyson's fear of Death, triggered by the death of Arthur Henry Hallam, is a result of his inability to have faith in the traditional religious beliefs of his society. Without faith, the traditional religious beliefs are unable to assuage his grief. Tennyson's search for comfort, therefore, involves a search for meaningful religious beliefs and for faith in these new beliefs.

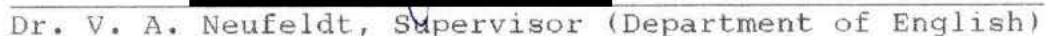
The thesis presents the steps involved in Tennyson's search, represented by the imagined afterlife evolution of Hallam. Hallam's afterlife existence is presented in "In Memoriam" as evolving from one discrete level to another. He evolves from a corpse to a mindless spirit to a soul with Hallam's personality to a guardian spirit to a demigod and, finally, to the level of divinity.

Each level of afterlife existence is associated with a religious crisis which affects the poem's speaker. As each crisis is resolved, Hallam advances another level towards divinity. The religious questions are answered through a combination of orthodox and unorthodox religious beliefs, Tennyson's knowledge of evolution and his vast love for his

deceased friend, Hallam. The answers to the religious crises become Tennyson's newly accepted religious beliefs. Tennyson resolves his religious doubts and fears, therefore, through the medium of the poem and the poem's speaker.

Tennyson's faith is altered during the poem by being empowered not by piety, but by love. With this altered faith, often called intuitive faith, Tennyson is able to accept his new found religious beliefs.

Together, Tennyson's religious beliefs and his intuitive faith give him the comfort from the fear of Death which he seeks.



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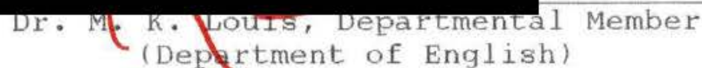

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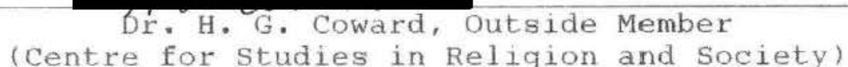

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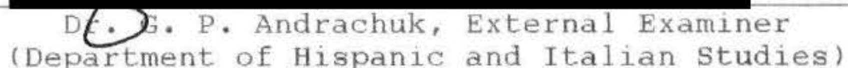

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Introduction

On September 15, 1833, Alfred Tennyson's most beloved friend, Arthur Henry Hallam died in Vienna of an aneurism. This tragic event sparked one of the most famous poems of the Victorian Era, "In Memoriam A.H.H. Obiit MDCCCXXXIII" (Ricks, 1850 ed., 861-988). While "In Memoriam" serves as Tennyson's monument to his beloved friend, it deals primarily with Tennyson, his grief and his search for comfort in a world of pain, doubt, and the fearful spectre of death. During his search for comfort, Tennyson considered many subjects in "In Memoriam", including evolution, religion, faith, memory, fame, love and, of course, death. Since the publication of "In Memoriam", Tennyson's treatment of these subjects has been widely discussed and debated by critics, and yet there remains at least one aspect of the poem which is relatively untouched: Hallam's afterlife as imagined by Tennyson through the speaker.

Tennyson imagines that Hallam evolves after death, moving through various stages of existence until he achieves godhood. Hallam's progress and the current criticism on afterlife evolution within "In Memoriam" will be discussed in chapter two, but there is more to consider than simply Hallam's progression. Each stage reached by Hallam is associated with one or more metaphysical and philosophical questions posited by the

speaker. Before Hallam is elevated to a new level, a question or crisis must be resolved. Chapter one explains the background of conflicts which gave rise to Tennyson's doubts and fears. The second chapter will discuss how these doubts and fears are associated with the speaker's questions and Hallam's progressions. Chapter three will detail how each question is resolved through the use of love, science and belief, and how answering these questions helps Tennyson in his search for comfort from religious doubt and the spectre of death.

Since Hallam evolves during the poem, the unusual chronologies of "In Memoriam" must be considered. "In Memoriam", written over a period of seventeen years, has a professed internal time of three years. Also, the sections were probably not originally intended as parts of a single poem (this point is under debate). Tennyson's comment on the chronology supports the suggestion of an original lack of cohesion:

> The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many. (Memoir I:304)

Assigning specific dates to the sections is a near impossibility:

> Of the poems 133 sections... less than one-

> fifth can be dated with certainty. A further third can be assigned dates of composition which are more or less tentative. And the growth of the general design of the poem is also controversial. (Mason 155)

Bradley warns that "we must be on our guard against inferences drawn from what may be called the internal chronology of the poem" (11).

For the purposes of this essay, however, the poem's varying and unknown chronologies are not a problem because, although the sections were written at different times and places, there is ample evidence that Tennyson carefully assembled them into a specific pattern. He replaced, trimmed and added sections and verses with care and deliberation.

> For although the poet 'did not write them with a view of weaving them into a whole,' he found that when they were written they were capable of being thus woven into a whole; and it seems quite clear that he endeavoured, by arrangement and probably by writing new pieces, to give the collection a certain amount of definite and significant structure. (Bradley 18-19)

It is, therefore, possible to accept and use the order which was deliberately assembled by the poet as a basis for this essay. As to whether Hallam's ascension took three years or seventeen is immaterial. It may have taken Tennyson's heart seventeen or seventy years to heal from Hallam's death, but this has little to do with the time frame he organized for Hallam's imagined evolution in "In Memoriam". Both the imagined

divinization of Hallam and the spiritual progress of Tennyson follow their own, albeit linked, time tables. The only chronology needed for this essay, therefore, is the one provided by the poem. It is not even necessary to reckon the length of time (i.e. three years), because only the order and direction provided by the poem are relevant. The resolution of the speaker's doubts and Hallam's consequent evolution has its own time table which obviates, for this essay, the need for any further discussion of the poem's unusual chronology.

There is only one exception to this elimination of time scales and that is the Prologue. It was certainly one the last sections written for the poem, if not the last, yet it appears first. In this essay, it will generally be associated with the end of the poem. Associating the Prologue with the end of the poem is justified by the fact that it is the only dated section in "In Memoriam". It is dated 1849, one year before the publication of the poem. Tennyson, however, placed the Prologue in the beginning with good reason, as we shall see eventually.

First, however, it is necessary to examine the religious and scientific background out of which "In Memoriam" arose.

Chapter One: Alfred, Lord Tennyson's Religious and Scientific Background

"In Memoriam", triggered by Arthur Hallam's death, arose out of a background of crisis. The influences in Tennyson's childhood and college life raised a number of important questions concerning his faith and religion. These questions are considered further in the next two chapters. This chapter examines the sources of conflict in Tennyson's life so we may better understand his struggle with his religion and faith.

To help define Tennyson's questions about faith or religion, it is vital that we begin with a definition of the terms of faith and religion. A religion is a system of beliefs, practices, and ethical values, but, in discussing "In Memoriam", we need not worry about practices and ethical values, only the purely metaphysical beliefs. Tennyson's religion, therefore, is comprised of his beliefs in God, Death, Immortality, the afterlife and humanity. Faith, on the other hand, is defined by Webster's New World Dictionary (1982) as an "unquestioning belief that does not require proof or evidence" (503). Faith is the hope and trust placed in a metaphysical concept. Religion therefore is the construct of specific beliefs held by an individual and

faith is the force which causes a person to believe in his religion.

Neither Tennyson's faith, nor his religion came easily to him, and both were to become subjects of intense scrutiny by later critics. His religion was challenged by changes in scientific thought and was eventually composed of both orthodox and unorthodox beliefs. His faith, similarly influenced, was unfocussed and doubt moved him more than belief. Traditional beliefs were under attack by unorthodoxies within Tennyson. The traditional beliefs which would be "profoundly modified by the newer conceptions of the Universe" (Masterman 18).

The major force for basic Christian belief in Tennyson's life was his mother. A kind and gentle woman, Elizabeth Tennyson was deeply religious and committed to evangelical Christianity. At the end of her life she "was reading hardly anything but the Bible and Dr. Cumming's *Prophecy*" (Fairchild 111). Mrs. Tennyson was painfully aware of her son's doubtful faith and she took every opportunity to nurture and guide it. "Elizabeth Tennyson's simplicity, affection and instinctive understanding had been the chief support and guide of her erratic and tempestuous sons" (Tennyson, Charles 222). As

Tennyson himself wrote in "Supposed Confessions of a

Second-Rate Sensitive Mind" (Ricks, 1884 ed., 197-202), she was "Great in faith, and strong / Against the grief of circumstance / ... / In deep and daily prayers wouldst strive / To reconcile me with thy God" (91-92,101-102). Upon the first publication of "Idylls of the King" (Ricks 1466-1756), she sent Alfred an emphatic note which read,

> It does indeed give me the purest satisfaction to notice that a spirit of Christianity is perceptible through the whole volume. Oh dearest Ally, how fervently have I prayed for years that our Merciful Redeemer would intercede with our Heavenly Father to grant thee His Holy Spirit to urge thee to employ the talents He has given thee in His Service by taking every opportunity to impress the precepts of His Holy Word on the minds of others. (Tennyson, Charles 318-319)

The effect she had on Tennyson should not be underestimated. At her funeral, Tennyson remarked to Dr. Bickersteth, "I hope you will not think that I have spoken in exaggerated terms of my mother, but indeed she was the beautifullest (sic) thing God Almighty ever did make" (Tennyson, Charles 355). Her greatest contribution to Tennyson was "her spirit of reverence, although he early deserted her strict Evangelical beliefs" (Martin 18). Her steady, pious example seems to have instilled in Tennyson the desire for a similarly steady faith. "Supposed Confessions" displays Tennyson's longing for "the faith which he learned at his mother's knee" (Fairchild 110): "How sweet to have

a common faith! / To hold a common scorn of death!" (33-34). He saw in her the ability to simply believe and envied her faith at times. Although directed at a real or an imaginary "sister", section 33 explifies Tennyson's view of his mother's ability to believe: "Her faith thro' form is pure as thine, / Her hands are quicker unto good. / O sacred be the flesh and blood /To which she links a truth divine!" (XXXIII 9-12). Tennyson had little enough faith in anything, but what little he did have, should be ascribed to the influence of his mother. Love, faith and tradition marked Tennyson's mother as perhaps the only solid influence for the basic Christian beliefs in his life.

If Tennyson's mother was the source of whatever faith he had, then surely his father was the source of his doubt. George Tennyson's own faith had been tested by the injustices of his father. George, judged unfit to manage the Tennyson fortune, was partially disinherited. Forced into the ill-suited profession of clergyman by his father, George's frustration and unhappiness manifested themselves in drinking and mental breakdowns. Mood swings and irritability characterized his life.

There is evidence that George Tennyson's mental instability was passed on to many of his children, including Alfred:

> More than once Alfred, scared by his father's fits of despondency, went out through the black night, and threw himself on a grave in the churchyard, praying to be beneath the sod himself. (Memoir I:15)

The history of the Tennysons reads like a soap opera. Edward was committed to an insane asylum in 1832 and died there in 1890. Charles became addicted to opium and he and Septimus suffered from breakdowns. Alfred claimed epilepsy and admitted hypochondria. Indeed the whole family were considered odd: "they were always ill -- the whole lot of them, both the boys and the girls -- or thinking themselves ill. They were all bundles of nerves" (Tennyson, Charles 110). Either as a result of environment or genetics, Alfred shared in his father's unstable mental state.

If Tennyson's father was not a stable father, he was also not an orthodox clergyman:

> Tradition says that... he strove conscientiously to do his duty as a parish clergyman, though his views and habits were not altogether orthodox. He would never read the Athanasian Creed and was stoutly opposed to the doctrine of eternal punishment. Moreover he took a great deal of snuff in the pulpit. (Tennyson, Charles 14)

Perhaps his unorthodoxy was due to mental instability, or perhaps it was a response to being forced into an unwelcome and unsuited profession, but in any case, Tennyson's later beliefs mirrored some of his father's unorthodox statements. From one of George Tennyson's

sermons, Hallam Tennyson records,

> The Almighty, so infinitely benevolent, can only wish to ensure the happiness of His creatures in the truths which he communicates, in the laws which He imposes and in the doctrines which He promulgates.... What is revealed to us by Christianity but the Redemption of the whole human race by the merits of a crucified Saviour, and the glorious assurance of a future state of existence? (Memoir I:14)

The Anglican Church at this time was not teaching the sure and inevitable "Redemption of the whole human race." Although Alfred would have difficulties with the "promulgation" of doctrines, he would certainly agree with the infinite benevolence and the hope for the redemption of the whole human race. George Tennyson's dismissal of some dogmas and beliefs, such as the Athanasian Creed and eternal punishment, was a precursor to Tennyson's rejection of the attitude that one's beliefs should be defined by the Church.

Alfred was never truly comfortable with the Church, and although he was raised an Anglican and remained affiliated with it throughout his life, he was not tied to the Church by anything more than habit. He did not often attend church and it seems that this habit was acquired in college. Alfred's cousin, George, writes, "'My cousins hardly ever go to Chapel. I expect they will have a thundering imposition one of these days'" (Tennyson, Charles 58). This lack of connection with

church practice and ritual is evident in "In Memoriam". In section 18, Tennyson mentions "the ritual of the dead" (12) and points to a contemporary controversy in the Anglican community as to whether the dead sleep until judgement day or go immediately to heaven. Tennyson asks whether the dead man "sleeps or wears the mask of sleep" (10). This small question is the only specific Anglican question Tennyson bothers with as the dogmas and doctrines of the Church held little for him: "There lives more faith in honest doubt, / Believe me, than in half the creeds" (XCVI 15-16). Tennyson found no "authoritative last word... in ecclesiastical authority" (Hutton 406), believing instead, like Hallam in section 33, that "faith has centre everywhere, / Nor cares to fix itself to form" (XXXIII 3-4). Tennyson rejected the apparent demand of the Church for an unquestioning faith in its teachings and rituals.

In addition to Hallam, who must be discussed separately, Tennyson encountered liberal minds and beliefs in college life which encouraged his doubts about basic Christian beliefs:

> [H]e found his hold on religious dogma growing gradually weaker under the influence of the liberal ideas current among the more intellectual young men at Cambridge and of his own wide reading. (Tennyson, Charles 82)

As already mentioned, it was in college that he began neglecting his church attendance. Tennyson's

association with the Cambridge Conversazione Society, better known as the Apostles, encouraged his questioning attitude:

> It began as a group devoted to the discussion of serious philosophical subjects.... Politics, science, poetry, aesthetics, metaphysics, and religion all came within the scope of their talk.
> (Martin 86)

Even the nature of God and the Universe was not excluded, one of the debates being titled, "Whether the existence of an intelligent first cause is deducible from the phenomena of the Universe." With this training, Tennyson's ability in and inclination for metaphysical debate grew and would be demonstrated in the questions he asked of himself in "In Memoriam".

Tennyson's associations within the Apostles put him in contact with some of the greatest free thinkers at Cambridge, but other minds also encouraged him to question. The influences of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley's writings have been noted many times and Tennyson had personal acquaintances not only with Wordsworth, but also Charles Dickens (The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson 1:253) and Thomas Carlyle (Letters 1:154). Tennyson knew of John Stuart Mill (Letters 1:130) and once "travelled with Mr. Matthew Arnold" (Letters 1:340n). He also encountered the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "I am much obliged to you [Charles

Wheeler] for the volume of Emerson's Essays. I had heard of him before and I know that [Thomas] Carlyle rates him highly" (Letters 1:193). These men were all read or met before the first publication of "In Memoriam", and Tennyson continued to meet (and read the works of) the great free thinkers such as Thomas Henry Huxley (Letters 2:418) and Thomas Babinton Macaulay (Letters 2:252) for the rest of his life.

Next to Tennyson's parents, Arthur Hallam, another Apostle, exerted the greatest influence on Tennyson's beliefs. Shortly before becoming acquainted with Tennyson, Hallam had struggled with his own religious beliefs and had come to some conclusions. He discussed these conclusions extensively with Alfred, and eventually published them in his Theodicaea Novissima (1831). Mattes summarizes the five theological points of Theodicaea Novissima as follows:

> (1) Hallam believed that man's reasoning faculties can not give him any certain assurance of God's existence or any knowledge of God's nature and that he must seek these truths in the Bible, where God is revealed.
> (2) In the Bible, specifically in the New Testament, man learns that God is love.
> (3) This revealed truth substantiates Hallam's conviction that emotion rather than intellect is the chief dynamic power of human life and that the noblest emotion is love.
> (4) The assertion "God is Love" involves the problem of explaining why a loving God permits moral evil to exist. Hallam, believing that God's motive in creating the World was His love for Christ, argued that sin is essential to fulfill the purpose of

> Christ's existence, since Christ had to save men in order to become the object of God's love and to lead men to love God.
> (5) Against the background of the cast universe and in contrast to the power and perfection of God, Hallam felt men to be merely 'atoms in the immense scheme.' He therefore held that the misery and evil in the world should not be stumbling blocks to faith, since they are indispensable for the completion of God's nature, which is Love. (20)

Alfred read and considered Theodicaea Novissima carefully, "brooding on the dear one dead, / And all he said of things divine, -- / And dear to me as sacred wine / To dying lips is all he said" (XXXVII 17-20). Tennyson's thoughts ran parallel to Hallam's on at least the first three themes, i.e. God cannot be proven, God is Love and Love is the greatest power. Hallam's questions about the existence of sin and evil seemed not to be of concern to Tennyson, but the others substantially affect "In Memoriam" as will be evidenced in the third chapter.

Emily Sellwood, Tennyson's future wife, also influenced his beliefs. She and Alfred had known of each other since 1836, had had an unofficial engagement for several years followed by a seven year break ending in 1848 when Tennyson began courting her again. Alfred's mother, Elizabeth Tennyson, was not the only person concerned with his doubting faith and lack of traditional beliefs. Miss Sellwood was not comfortable

with Alfred's mistrust of Church and doctrine: "she was doubtful about the possibility of reconciling the differences in their religious opinions" (Martin 322). Mattes argues that "In Memoriam"'s Prologue was written to assuage Emily's misgivings: "Emily Sellwood had grown to feel that they two moved in worlds of religious thought so different that the two would not 'make one music' as they moved" (Mattes 91). The Prologue is crafted in such a way that it might be read as a statement of traditional Christian beliefs despite its vague and ambiguous faith. Indeed, most of "In Memoriam" may be considered a statement of Tennyson's developing unorthodox religious beliefs, yet the Prologue and a few other sections have an orthodox appearance, perhaps as concessions to his mother and his future wife. Tennyson, however, maintained his vagueness and continually undercut traditional belief while assembling his own religious beliefs. Sellwood's influence therefore changed Tennyson's presentation of his beliefs, but did not substantially change their unorthodoxy.

That science greatly influenced Tennyson's religion and faith is not surprising. Science in the nineteenth century challenged the beliefs of all men and its greatest challenge to religion was evolution. Tennyson's knowledge of and interest in science,

especially in evolution, rendered him vulnerable to the doubts they raised.

Much of Tennyson's aptitude in science and poetry can be attributed to his father who was "widely read in English, Greek and Latin, and with some knowledge of Syriac, Hebrew and modern languages" (Tennyson, Charles, 12). "For a country parsonage his library was unusually scholarly" (Martin 19). "Amongst the authors most read by [the Tennysons] were Shakespeare, Milton, Burke, Goldsmith, Rabelais, Sir William Jones, Addison, Swift, Defoe, Cervantes, Bunyan and Buffon" (Memoir I:16). Their books and essays occupied Tennyson's mind at an early age.

Tennyson was quick to comprehend scientific concepts and their implications and he used them throughout his poetry. His youthful play "The Devil and the Lady" (Ricks 7-64), written at the age of fourteen, contains references to medicine and science in general: "thou art 80, man, by Reaumur's scale, / And more than twice as much by Fahrenheit(sic)" (Act II, Sc.iv ll.58-59). As a child Alfred advised his older brother to "think of Herschel's great star-patches" (Memoir I:20) in order to overcome uneasiness about attending a party. His interest in all the sciences is obvious from a weekly schedule he drew up for himself around the years 1833-1835:

Monday. History, German.
Tuesday. Chemistry, German.
Wednesday. Botany, German.
Thursday. Electricity, German.
Friday. Animal Physiology, German.
Saturday. Mechanics.
Sunday. Theology.
Next Week. Italian in the afternoon.
Third Week. Greek. *Evenings.* Poetry.
(Memoir I:124)

Within Tennyson's general interest in science, however, there was a specific interest in evolution. Sir Norman Lockyer has claimed that

> the subject deepest in [Tennyson's] thoughts was the origin of things in the widest sense, a Systema Mundi, which should explain the becoming of the visible universe and define its different parts at different periods in its history. (Chatterjee 1)

Evolution, in its many aspects, occupied a large part of such a 'Systema Mundi", and Tennyson learned of it from the original sources.

It is probable, from references in Buffon, Lamarck and Lyell, that Tennyson was familiar with James Hutton's Theory of the Earth (1795). Hutton "asserted that one can account for all the past changes of the earth's surface by reference to natural forces still in operation" (Mattes 56). Hutton's basic premise was necessary for Lamarck's and Buffon's theory of mutability of the species and for Lyell's theory of paleontology and biology.

Lamarck's opinions were presented a few years after Hutton's and linked the "natural forces" to the animal

kingdom. Lamarck's theory was "that species vary under changing external influences, that there is a fundamental unity in the animal kingdom, and that there is a progressive and perfecting development" (Stevenson 25).

Tennyson's interest in the field of astronomy also fed his awareness of stellar evolution through Laplace's nebular theory. The nebular theory claims that the earth and sun were condensed from a huge cloud of gas. The sun and earth were therefore born over time rather than created in an instant and are aging and changing. In "The Princess" (Ricks, 1853 ed., 743-844) Tennyson's knowledge of this theory is apparent in the words of Princess Ida, "'There sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun, / If that hypothesis of theirs be sound'" (IV 1-2). The implication of this nebular theory was stellar evolution.

The main evolutionary influence on young Tennyson, however, was probably George Buffon. Not widely read in England, the Frenchman's book was present and read in the Tennyson library. Buffon was a naturalist and his "stress was on the mutability of species and embryology" (Chatterjee 6). Several stanzas which were excised from "The Palace of Art" (Ricks, 1842 ed., 401-418) display Tennyson's knowledge of the theory of embryology, which claimed that the human moved through

the lower animal stages before becoming human:

> 'From change to change four times within the
> womb
> The brain is moulded,' she began,
> 'So through all phases of all thought I come
> Unto the perfect man.
>
> 'All nature widens upward: evermore
> The simpler essence lower lies.
> More complex is more perfect, owing more
> Discourse, more widely wise.' (Ricks 409)

The theory of embryology, however, was not all Buffon gave to Tennyson. Buffon also "insisted on the inevitable extinction of man and all his works" (Mattes 56). Tennyson picked up on this fearful theme, and a fear of man's extinction, both racial and personal, carried over into his poems:

> [Shall] Man, her last work, who seemed so
> fair,
> Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
> Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
> Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
>
> Who trusted God was love indeed
> And love Creation's final law--
> Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
> With ravine, shrieked against his creed--
>
> Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
> Who battled for the True, the Just,
> Be blown about the desert dust,
> Or sealed within the iron hills? (LVI 9-20)

This fear of evolution in Nature would become an important crisis for Tennyson's faith in God and immortality as we shall see in the next two chapters.

These influences on Tennyson, all prior to Hallam's death, came to him through his father's library or

through his own pursuits at home and college. Gathering them together in his mind, "he probably knew more of science, and was more concerned about its implications, than any other poet of the century"(Bush 109). "Tennyson... had actually forestalled Darwin in recognizing the importance" (Stevenson 18) of the theory of evolution. This fact combined with his own remarkable foresight forced him to develop opinions and concerns about evolution which conflicted with traditional beliefs. This conflict was intensified after Hallam's death by the two most important evolutionary works published before 1850.

Sir Charles Lyell's three volumes of Principles of Geology were published from 1830 to 1833. Lyell dealt with the wearing forces of nature and the variability of species, building on Hutton's belief that past changes in the earth could be attributed to natural forces in effect at the present. Tennyson was "deeply immersed" (Memoir I:162) in the book, absorbing its scientific and religious implications, but the portions which he seemed to focus on were a hundred or so pages dedicated to revealing the smallness and the mortality of individuals and of the entire human species.

> '[T]he choice, the progress, the whole intellectual and moral life of the human race shrivelled into infinitesimal proportions. Man found himself dethroned from his position at the centre of the Universe and relegated

> to an obscure position in one of its least important elements.' Worse than this, it was beginning to be realized that within a period... life on our planet would cease to exist and the human race entirely disappear. (Tennyson, Charles 249)

Lyell's book focused Tennyson's fears about evolution, despite Lyell's attempt to "minimize the revolutionary nature of his conclusions" (Mattes 57). The fate of every human and of mankind was not immortality and the benevolence of God, but destruction and annihilation. Lyell writes, "Species cannot be immortal, but must perish... like the individuals which compose them" (3:155), and even the resulting fossils "must nevertheless eventually perish; for every year some portion of the earth's crust is shattered by earthquakes or melted by volcanic fire, or ground to dust by the moving waters on the surface" (3:280). Mattes says "it was almost certainly his reading in the Principles of Geology that led Tennyson to write section 56" (58):

> 'So careful of the type?' but no.
> From scarped cliff and quarried stone
> She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
> I care for nothing, all shall go.
>
> 'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
> I bring to life, I bring to death:
> The spirit does but mean the breath:
> I know no more.' (LVI 1-8)

Robert Chambers, on the other hand, offered Tennyson a more comforting message in 1844 with his Vestiges of

the Natural History of Creation. Tennyson ordered it in November of 1844 from Edward Moxon noting that

> it seems to contain many speculations with which I have been familiar for years, and on which I have written more than one poem. (Memoir I:222-223)

Its theory of God-directed evolution was "the first attempt to connect the natural sciences into a history of creation" (Chambers 388). Chambers saw God as the "Creative Power" (153) who had established the general laws of Nature. Tennyson gratefully accepted Chambers' conclusion that

> there is a system of Mercy and Grace behind the screen of nature, which is to make up for all casualties endured here, and the very largeness of which is what makes these casualties a matter of indifference to God. (384-385)

Tennyson used Chambers' positive view of evolution, accepting that creation was initiated by a benevolent God who intended only good through evolution and that the progress of the human species and the human individual would continue towards perfection.

From this background of religious and scientific beliefs, Tennyson made an interesting, and for this paper, an important connection. The physical effects of the theory of evolution were beginning to be understood and accepted, but the theory itself began to have widespread social effects. The ability to adapt merged with the desire for expansion resulting in the belief

in progress. Applied to mankind, progress assumed that man would continually become more intelligent, stronger, faster and healthier. Applied to society, the concept of progress gave a foothold to a number of new and old political movements from new democracy to ancient fascism. Even religion was not free from the effects of the theory of evolution. Stevenson, talking about H.G. Wells' fictional character William Clissold, says,

> He perceives that the orthodox religions have lost their authority and that belief must be based on the evolutionary view of the world and human life. But he gives no indication of knowing that these conclusions were reached by Alfred Tennyson the better part of a century ago. (2)

That the concept of progress had touched Tennyson is doubtless: "Move upward, working out the beast, / And let the ape and tiger die" (CXVIII 27-28). More important for this paper, however, is the leap made by Tennyson from the physical change of evolution to the spiritual change of his concept of the afterlife. Tennyson is more concerned with Hallam's soul than with his body, and he quickly leaves Hallam's body behind in the grave, only returning to it later in the poem as a symbol of continuing life. Hallam's soul, as we shall see, rises from the corpse and, like a phoenix on wings of evolution, progresses towards divinity.

Although they eventually resulted in the concept of

progressive divinization, the religious and scientific influences, before and during the writing of "In Memoriam", created a spiritual crisis for Tennyson. On the one hand, represented by Tennyson's mother and later by his wife, was traditional Christianity and its inability to question its beliefs. On the other hand, his father symbolized the fragility and imperfection of the Church, a view which was gaining support due to the influence of science, evolution, new philosophies and the questioning attitude fostered by college and the Apostles. Tennyson, however, rejected both views. He stood in the middle, sometimes accompanied by Hallam and <u>Theodicaea Novissima</u>. Hallam's beliefs, as expressed in his book, however, were more traditional than Tennyson could accept. So it was that Tennyson could not simply model his religion after a parent or a friend. He was forced to ask himself what he could and should believe and from this he began to formulate his own religious beliefs. "The young poet re-asserts man's birth-right to doubt, analyse and question his traditional creeds in his quest of truth" (Chatterjee 20):

> Shall we not look into the laws
> Of life and death, and things that seem,
> And things that be, and analyse
> Our double nature, and compare
> All creeds till we have found the one,
> If one there be? (Supposed Confessions
> 172-177)

"Supposed Confessions" began his challenge of the creeds and the common faith, but in the end it offered no substantial consolation. Tennyson ends it with a plea for forgiveness (181-182), and a lament over his "weary life" (188) and his "damned vacillating state" (190). Tennyson's religious beliefs before and immediately after the death of Hallam were uncertain and unformed:

> When Arthur Hallam died, Tennyson had not worked out any coherent beliefs of his own, like those of Hallam's "Theodicaea Novissima," nor had he wholeheartedly accepted either Hallam's beliefs or anyone else's. (Mattes xiii)

Hallam's death, however, shook him to his foundations and encouraged his search for a personal religion.

Tennyson, with time and meditation, worked out the religious truths in which he was able to have faith. In the years before and during the writing of "In Memoriam", Alfred considered many beliefs, finally accepting only two. "He told Allingham that 'his belief [faith] rested on two things--"A Chief Intelligence and Immortality"'" (Fairchild 114). Tennyson firmly accepted only the existence of a God of Love and the existence of an individual's immortal soul.

Even to believe in the existence of immortality was difficult for Tennyson until he reasoned that "immortality is necessary to give a man conscience and

life and aim" (Smith 90):

> My own dim life should teach me this,
> That life shall live for evermore,
> Else earth is darkness at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is;
> . . .
>
> What then were God to such as I?
> 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
> Of things all mortal, or to use
> A little patience ere I die;
>
> 'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
> Like birds at charming serpent draws,
> To drop head-foremost in the jaws
> Of vacant darkness and to cease. (XXXIV)

Without immortality, neither life nor God held any meaning for Tennyson and yet immortality could not be proven any more than the existence of God. Nor did the Bible offer Tennyson hope: "the belief in immortality founded on the evidence for the truth of the Revelation of Christianity and the promises of Christ never seemed to yield him satisfaction" (Masterman 81). The story of Lazarus, rather than comforting him, yielded only questions for Tennyson: "Where wert thou, brother, those four days?" (XXXI 5). Indeed, Nature itself seemed set against immortality when Tennyson considered Lyell's theory of geology. If even the mighty mountains wore down to dust, what hope was there for insignificant man and his works? Tennyson's doubt about immortality is captured when Nature "cries, 'A thousand types are gone; / I care for nothing, all shall go. // ... / I bring to life, I bring to death; / The spirit

does but mean the breath: / I know no more'" (LVI 3-8). To which the poem's speaker replies, "[S]hall he, // Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair, // ... // Be blown about the desert dust, / Or seal'd within the iron hills? // No more?" (LVI 8-9, 19-21). Despite his doubts, however, he kept searching. Tennyson's need for faith in immortality was so great that he once said,

> If I ceased to believe in any chance of another life, and of a great Personality somewhere in the Universe, I should not care a pin for anything.... I could not eat my dinner without a belief in immortality. If I didn't believe that, I'd go down immediately and jump off Richmond Bridge. (Fairchild 114)

With this great need and a lack of proof, Tennyson turned eventually to Love and the benevolence of God for the "hope of answer" (LVI 27). He could do nothing but have faith that there exists another life "behind the veil" (LVI 28).

Tennyson did not express in his poetry a firm belief in the existence of God before "In Memoriam". "Supposed Confessions" calls out his desire for faith in God: "O God! My God! have mercy now. / I faint, I fall" (1). He could not yet believe in God, although he called out to Him and asked himself, "Why not believe then?" (123). The Bible, as mentioned above, gave Tennyson no proof in God, nor did science: "[Tennyson] would say, on looking through the microscope, 'Strange that these

wonders should draw some men to God and repel others. No more reason in one than in the other" (Memoir I:102). It is not until "In Memoriam" that we see Tennyson accepting the existence of God and the "Strong Son of God" (Prologue 1).

However, before he was able to believe in the existence of God, Tennyson's concept of God had to change. As we shall see in more detail in chapter three, God became inseparably joined with Tennyson's belief in Love, hence we see "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love" (Prologue 1). Tennyson's ability to believe in the existence of God depended on Tennyson's definition of God as Love. Masterman claims that the "knowledge of [the existence of] God does not come to [Tennyson] as a direct intuition... but as a secondary deduction" (50). Tennyson believed that God existed only because he knew that Love existed. Masterman mirrors Hallam's Theodicaea Novissima when he says, "God *does not* love. God *is* love. Love is of God: it is when we manifest love, that God is most 'manifest in us'" (56). As soon as Love and God became inseparable in his mind, Tennyson gained faith in the existence of God. As a consequence, Tennyson saw Christ as the ultimate expression of Love and as the highest form of mankind: "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love, / ... / Thou seemest human and divine, / The highest, holiest

manhood, thou" (Prologue 1, 13-14). Christ as perfect Love and as the highest form of mankind was an example of God being made manifest in mankind. Tennyson felt, therefore, that humans must always strive upward, emulating Christ, towards the "highest, holiest manhood," evolving beyond our animal ancestry: "Arise and fly / The reeling Faun, the sensual feast; / Move upward, working out the beast, / And let the ape and tiger die" (CXVIII 25-28). By linking Love with God, Tennyson is able to have faith in God and he is able to connect mankind with God.

As a legacy from his unorthodox father, Tennyson had great difficulty accepting the concept of eternal damnation: "To him the existence of sin and suffering was a terrible enigma and the idea of eternal punishment horrible and unthinkable" (Tennyson, Charles 82). He considered the possibility of hell occasionally, but he never truly accepted eternal punishment. In a letter to Emily Sellwood he gave an argument which, on the surface, seemed to accept hell:

> If it were proclaimed as a truth 'No man shall perish: all shall live, after a certain time shall have gone by, in bliss with God'; such a truth might tell well with one or two lofty spirits, but would be a hindrance of the world. (Memoir I:170-171)

A more careful reading, however, reveals an ambiguity. Hell has been "proclaimed", but this is only because

the baser spirits of the world would take advantage of God's mercy. Tennyson seems to imply that he knows better. "[W]hen he speaks of 'faintly trusting the larger hope' he means by 'the larger hope' that the whole human race would through, perhaps, ages of suffering, be at length purified and saved" (Memoir I:321-322). On the surface he may have appeared to accept damnation, but Tennyson was never able to reconcile God as Love with eternal suffering.

Tennyson's heaven, however, was not the dull, prosaic heaven of traditional Christians. For Tennyson, there was always the hope that heaven held more than a retirement home for saints. Rather, he believed that it was another, albeit a higher, life: "men may rise on stepping-stones / Of their dead selves to higher things" (I 3-4). Tennyson's view of an afterlife involved continual progress and learning into eternity: "Eternal process moving on, / From state to state the spirit walks" (LXXXII 5-6). In the afterlife, as Richard Hutton expresses it, "the whole nature [of a human] springs into a new vividness of activity as well as insight" (414). Of course all this was an act of faith. Tennyson can only "trust that those we call the dead / Are breathers of an ampler day / For ever nobler ends" (CXVIII 5-7). And yet it was an act of faith. Tennyson was finally able to believe in a progressive

immortality and in a God of Love.

Four beliefs, therefore, comprised Tennyson's religion. Two were the fundamental beliefs in the existence of God and in the immortality of man. Two others sprang from these, connected with the natures of God and Immortality, and were that God is Love, and that the afterlife involves changing and progressing states. As W.E.H. Lecky related to Hallam Tennyson,

> Your father thought much about religious matters, and often dwelt with great force on his intuitive conviction of immortality, with its corollaries of Theism and Providence. These beliefs he held very strongly, but they were, I think, wholly detached in his mind from the dogmas of particular creeds. (Memoir II:206)

God's existence, His connection to Love, the immortality of the human soul and its continuing afterlife evolution are the four beliefs which Tennyson settled upon. These four are worked out in "In Memoriam" and are intimately linked to the imagined evolution of Hallam.

Chapter Two:

"In Memoriam": The Crises of the Speaker and the Ascension of Arthur Henry Hallam

As the speaker of "In Memoriam" expands and solidifies his religion and faith, Hallam is divinized. These two characters are intimately linked by the speaker's questions about life, death and immortality. As the speaker resolves question after question, Hallam evolves farther and farther into godhood.

Hallam's evolution is a progressive divinization in six distinct stages, from mere mortal to a being associated with Christ and the Creator. These six levels are as follows: corpse, spirit, soul, guardian angel, demi-god and Christ-like. Allowing for foreshadowing and past references, the progression is definite and steady with only one major setback between the stages of soul and guardian angel which shall be discussed later in this chapter.

Many critics have noted the presence of evolution in "In Memoriam", but apparently, none have noticed or seen fit to write about the specific evolution of Hallam, despite clear evidences in the poem as well as telling statements by Tennyson: "I can hardly understand... how any great, imaginative man, who has deeply lived, suffered, thought and wrought, can doubt

of the Soul's continuous progress in the after-life" (Memoir I:321). Among the many critics, a few have made mention of some kind of afterlife progress. Aside from John Boyd, there seems to have been little disscussion on this aspect of "In Memoriam" in the last thirty years. Buckley says of Tennyson's use of evolution that it "may now be seen as the dimly understood analogue of a possible spiritual progress" (127), yet he leaves the spiritual progress undefined and earth-bound. He does not expand the progress into Death. Nor does Smith consider evolution after death. His reasoning seems to stop short of this conclusion:

> Arthur Hallam... is a very good product of physical evolutionary process, he foreshadows a higher race to come, he is a representative type of the 'Christ that is to be.' (110)

Bradley is one of the first to clearly mention afterlife evolution:

> The second life is supposed to be succeeded by death, on which follows a third embodied life; and this process is repeated again and again for ages, the soul in each embodiment reaching a higher stage of being and approaching more and more nearly to God. (53)

There is also mention of "what may be called 'spiritual evolution'" (84) or evolution beyond Death in Stevenson's <u>Darwin Among the Poets</u> (1932): "The soul... evolves both before and after its span of life in the body" (115). Mattes recognizes the "progress of the

individual to higher spheres and endeavors after death" (82). Boyd summarizes the five types of evolution so far discussed in "In Memoriam":

> (1) the evolution of the natural world from 'tracts of fluent heat' to Man; (2) the progress of each man from his earthly life to 'an ampler day' in heaven...; (3) the evolution of mankind into a 'higher race'...; (4) the evolution of the speaker's own state of mind from doubt to faith, through the purgation of suffering; (5) the advancement of effort and achievement, only vaguely suggested, which occurs even *after* one has reached the 'ampler day' of heaven. (Boyd 133)

The critics do not seem to have noticed, however, that Hallam's presence in "In Memoriam" is an example of progress after death. Bradley, who saw the "process" towards "higher stage[s] of being", concludes that the "union with God in which this progress would presumably terminate, the poet naturally does not attempt to imagine..." (53). This is not true. As we shall see, Tennyson most assuredly did imagine the progression towards union with God. Hallam's afterlife evolution is just such a progressive divinization using stages of being. Apparently only Fairchild, from among the many critics, has understood Hallam's afterlife as a "continuation of the strivings of mortal life. The Spirit of Hallam continues to struggle and advance, following the gleam even after he has seen the Pilot face to face" (118).

Hallam's changes are described through the thoughts and words of a speaker. The speaker's imagination drives Hallam upwards towards divinization. The speaker's religious questions, his "fancied hopes and fears" (XLIX 13), when resolved, give him the freedom to imagine changes in Hallam, evolving him through the afterlife, into a divinity. Associated with each distinct stage or level is a crisis experienced by the speaker. While the speaker's questions are not always as distinct as the levels, Hallam is unable to evolve further until the question or questions are explored, debated and resolved by the speaker. The speaker's crises and Hallam's levels are therefore linked, as we shall see, by the speaker's imagining mind.

Before the speaker's imagination can even conceive of Hallam as a corpse, however, the speaker must come to grips with one of the most basic of life's questions, the reality of Death itself. The speaker tries to comprehend Death by association with aspects and symbols of Death. He "grow[s] incorporate into" (II 16) a graveyard yew tree so that he may experience a physical closeness to the dead: "Thy fibres net the dreamless head, / Thy roots are wrapt about the bones" (II 3-4). In an imitation of death, he gives himself up to Sleep to "sit within a helmless bark" (IV 3) like a dead man in a coffin. In section six, the speaker

imagines relationships severed by Death: a father whose son has been shot, a mother whose sailor son has been drowned and a maiden waiting for her lover who is "drown'd" or "kill'd in falling" (VI 39-40). The speaker's first question is resolved as the speaker considers the reality of Death and comes to comprehend Death by imaginative associations. With this first crisis, the foundation is laid for the first level in Hallam's ascension.

Hallam's first level is essentially a narrowing of the speaker's realization of death. The speaker accepts Death's reality, but now he must use his imagination to comprehend the death of Hallam. At the first level, Hallam exists as a corpse, but the speaker does not yet completely believe that Hallam is dead:

> Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
> I do not suffer in a dream;
> For now so strange do these things seem,
> Mine eyes have leisure for their tears,
>
> My fancies time to rise on wing,
> And glance about the approaching sails,
> As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
> And not the burthen that they bring.
> (XIII 13-20)

As the speaker has just meditated on Death in general, so he now meditates on Hallam's corpse in an effort to comprehend Hallam's death. He questions the reality of Hallam's death.

In the mind of the speaker, the ship sailing from

Vienna brings Hallam and not merely Hallam's corpse. The speaker would not be surprised if Hallam came walking off the ship, shaking the speaker's hand and asking "a thousand things of home" (XIV 12). He therefore seeks to resolve this crisis by realizing Hallam's death, meditating on the corpse. Vague references in previous sections foreshadow Hallam's death and corpse. The speaker's death-like sleep "in a helmless bark," refers to Hallam's corpse returning to England by ship as well as evoking the image of a coffin. Section eight moves from life to death by moving from "every pleasant spot / In which we two were wont to meet" (VIII 9-10) to Hallam's "tomb" (VIII 22). It is the tomb which links the speaker's realization of Death to Hallam. The speaker is now able to consider Hallam as being a corpse-"my lost Arthur's loved remains" (IX 3). As the speaker accepts Hallam as being dead, so his imagination sets Hallam into the first level. In this first stage the speaker is unable to disassociate Hallam from Hallam's remains. Hallam "in English earth is laid" (XVIII 2), where he becomes "quiet bones," "the head / That sleeps," and "his faithful heart." Therefore, by meditating on Hallam's corpse, the speaker comprehends the reality of Hallam's death. That the speaker truly realizes that Hallam is dead is obvious from the sudden pain which strikes him:

> The life that almost dies in me;
>
> That dies not, but endures with pain,
> And slowly forms the firmer mind,
> Treasuring the look it cannot find,
> The words that are not heard again.
> (XVIII 16-20)

Unfortunately, although the speaker accepts the reality of Hallam's death, he imagines Hallam to be nothing but a corpse.

The speaker's conception of Hallam as an immortal life force, rather than as a lifeless body, is the second stage in Hallam's evolution. Two questions, however, must be answered by the speaker before Hallam can become more than a corpse. The first is the question of an existence beyond the flesh, and the second is the question of immortality.

The first question is easily answered by the speaker. The idea of a life force existing without a body is foreshadowed in section 12, where the speaker himself, leaves his "mortal ark behind, / A weight of nerves without a mind" (XII 5-6). The speaker therefore has already comprehended, without argument, that the body is merely a vessel for the spirit. All the speaker needs to do now to establish Hallam's second stage is to apply his out of body experience in life to Hallam.

Without resolving his doubts on immortality, the speaker considers images of Hallam as a life force. Section 22 contains the first vague mention of Hallam

without a body: Death "spread his mantle dark and cold, / And wrapt thee formless in the fold, / And dull'd the murmur on thy lip, // And bore thee where I could not see" (XXII 14-17). Despite the slight presence of the dead man's "lip", Hallam is no longer a corpse, he is "formless". In section 30, Hallam's existence as a disembodied spirit can be felt in the presence of "one mute Shadow watching" (XXX 8). In previous sections, the figure of the Shadow is understood to be Death, but in section 30, its nature is ambiguous. In the speaker's imagination, it watches the Christmas festivities. The possibility that the Shadow is Hallam rises when It is counterpointed against Hallam's absence. Essentially, the Shadow takes the place of Hallam in the circle of friends. Sadness holds the circle until they sing "A merry song we sang with him / Last year" (XXX 15-16). In a strange substitution, the Shadow, as Hallam's spirit and as Death, takes the place of Hallam and the circle feels "a gentler feeling" (XXX 17). It is not possible, however, to say with certainty that Hallam has reached the second level, existence as a life force, until his immortality is established.

Before Hallam's second stage is reached, the question of immortality must be resolved. The speaker argues the truth of immortality in sections 35 and 36

by claiming that without immortality, everything, including life itself, would be "dust and ashes" (XXXIV 4) and even love could not exist if "Death were seen / At first as Death" (XXXV 18-19). Thus the first stage of Hallam's afterlife evolution is eclipsed when the speaker realizes the corpse does not hold Hallam: "'The cheeks drop in, the body bows; / Man dies, nor is there hope in dust'" (XXXV 3-4). Rather, when the speaker concludes that "life shall live for evermore" (XXXIV 2), he is able to imagine Hallam's spirit separate from Hallam's remains. Hallam now exists as an immortal life force: "If any care for what is here / Survive in spirits render'd free, / Then are these songs I sing of thee / Not all ungrateful to thine ear" (XXXVIII 9-12). However, as Hallam was confined to existence as a lifeless corpse in the first stage, he is nothing but a mindless life force in the second. The speaker is unsure whether the "spirit" cares about songs or remembrances, but he gains some comfort in believing that an immortal soul, even if it is mindless and unaware, has survived the death of Hallam.

Having established the concept of Hallam as an immortal essence, the speaker returns to Hallam's grave to confirm his speculations. There the speaker finds that Hallam's corpse no longer holds the presence of his friend. It is only an object: "these buried bones"

and "the dreamless head" within "the dark graves of men" (XXXIX). Hallam is not in the grave. He is one of the "Spirits breathed away" (XL 2). And so the speaker's imagination has lifted Hallam's spirit from the grave.

As a mere mindless spirit, however, Hallam lacks personality and self-awareness, and as Mattes writes,

> Tennyson [or the speaker,] found ample assurances that Hallam was immortal; but this impersonal assurance was not enough. He also sought to be convinced that the dead can remember their loved ones and there can be a future reunion with them. (Mattes 39-40)

Hallam's third level adds awareness, love and memory to the a disembodied life essence of the second stage. Hallam exists at this third level as a soul, and the added qualities allow for relationships with the living and the dead. Section 40 speaks for the first time of Hallam's spirit as having personality and awareness with "hopes and light regrets" and a "life that bears immortal fruit" (XL 7,18). The speaker imagines that Hallam is not only immortal, but that he has memories of the past and a productive future. These are only hopeful speculations, however, and the speaker ends section 40 with uncertainty: "My paths are in the fields I know, / And thine in undiscover'd lands" (XL 31-32). For Hallam to be established in the third level of his afterlife evolution, the speaker must reach a

confident answer to his question about the nature of the soul after death.

The third stage has been glimpsed in section 40 but until the speaker can believe in the immortality of Hallam's personality, Hallam remains a mindless spectre. The difficulty is in how to resolve such a crisis. To understand the reality of Death, the speaker used his imagination to associate himself with it and comprehend it. After this, the speaker used a circular argument to believe in Immortality. Without Immortality, he concluded, nothing would have any meaning, including Love, God and his own existence. And now, to resolve his faith in Hallam's personality, the speaker turns directly to his own love for Hallam in another circular argument. He could not bear the possibility that his beloved friend no longer exists, therefore, Hallam, in some form, must exist. Section 41 begins with the speaker's fear that Hallam, imagined now as an immortal spirit and "something strange" (XLI 5), might not remember and love the speaker: "spectral doubt which makes me cold, / That I shall be thy mate no more" (XLI 19-20). The second level is transcended somewhat when the speaker directly addresses Hallam and calls the spirit "my friend" (XLI 12), implying that the spirit has retained enough of Hallam's personality to be considered a friend. It is a only small leap for

the speaker from implication to actual belief in the immortality of Hallam's personality. Sections 43 to 47 affirm the speaker's belief that Hallam's soul will eventually remember his life on earth and his love for the speaker: "clear from marge to marge shall bloom / The eternal landscape of the past" (XLVI 7-8) and "love will last as pure and whole / As when he loved me here in Time" (XLIII 13-14). Love for Hallam dominates the speaker's considerations and eventually is the only basis for the resolution of this question.

In the speaker's mind, the third stage is the point at which Hallam is as close as possible to his earthly personality. At this stage, the speaker imagines Hallam in heaven, and Hallam is Hallam, the speaker's friend and equal:

> Eternal form shall still divide
> The eternal soul from all beside;
> And I shall know him when we meet;
>
> And we shall sit at endless feast
> Enjoying each the other's good.
> (XLVII 6-10)

Hallam exists as an immortal being; not a corpse, nor a simple disembodied spirit, but as the mind and soul and form of Hallam, able to eat and commune in the afterlife with his faithful friend.

After this calm and sentimental image, Hallam is elevated away from his humanity, becoming more than a soul and a personality. In the fourth stage the speaker

imagines Hallam as a "guardian angel" (XLIV 15) with access to wisdom and power and the ability to communicate with and comfort the earth bound speaker. Section 50 is perhaps the best example of Hallam as a "guardian angel":

> Be near me when my light is low,
> When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
> And tingle; and the heart is sick,
> And all the wheels of being slow.
>
> Be near me when the sensuous frame
> Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
> And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
> And Life, a Fury slinging flame.
>
> Be near me when my faith is dry,
> And men the flies of latter spring,
> That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
> And weave their petty cells and die.
>
> Be near me when I fade away,
> To point the term of human strife,
> And on the low dark verge of life
> The twilight of eternal day. (L)

The presence of the Hallam in the fourth level is able to comfort, cheer, encourage and even show the way to heaven, the "twilight of eternal day" (L 16). In section 51, the speaker links "wisdom with great Death" (LI 11) and he asks the dead to "Be near us when we climb or fall; / Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours / With larger other eyes than ours, / To make allowance for us all" (LI 13-16). Hallam appears in section 52 as "the Spirit of true love" (LII 6), who is able to speak to the speaker and counsel him; "fret not, like an idle girl, / That life is dash'd with flecks of sin. /

Abide; thy wealth is gather'd in, / When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl" (LII 13-16). Hallam's existence as a "guardian angel", however, is not yet firmly established in the speaker's imagination. The speaker is able to imagine the fourth level, but has a crisis which he must yet overcome.

Before Hallam can acheive the fourth level as a "guardian angel", the speaker stumbles and falls. A major crisis arises which involves the questions and implications of evolution as presented in sections 54, 55 and 56. These sections challenge the speaker's faith in immortality and in the love of God. In section 55 the speaker loses his hold on the established third stage. How can Hallam's personality exist when Nature is "So careless of the single life" (LV 8)? If "God and Nature" are not "at strife" (LV 5) then it seems logical to the speaker that if Nature does not allow an individual physical life to endure, God will not give immortality to an individual soul. Hallam's existence slips back to the second stage, and in section 56 he slips further. Not only does the individual not survive, but the entire race does not survive. If Nature, "red in tooth and claw" (LVI 15), will not spare Man, then even the spirit must not survive and there is no "hope of answer or redress / Behind the veil" (LVI 27-28). Evolution argues the end of

immortality for the speaker and with his "defects of doubt, and taints of blood" (LIV 4), he loses the answers to the questions which had previously resolved. As the speaker loses his answers, Hallam is dragged from almost being an angel to being once again nothing but a corpse.

However, even as the crisis of Evolution thwarts him, the speaker struggles to believe in the benevolence of God and to "trust that good shall fall / At last -- far off -- at last, to all, / And every winter change to spring" (LIV 14-16). He admits his fall and refocuses his gaze on his upward goal:

> I falter where I firmly trod,
> And falling with my weight of cares
> Upon the great world's altar-stairs
> That slope thro' darkness up to God,
>
> I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what I feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope.
> (LV 13-20)

The same sections which carry the crisis of Evolution, carry the answer to the question. The speaker resolves this crisis through faith in the benevolence of God. Trust and hope in God and Love carry him through. With this admission and reaffirmation of his faith, the speaker's relapse into grief and doubt is quickly over: "Peace; come away: the song of woe / Is after all an earthly song. / Peace; come away" (LVII 1-3).

Unfortunately, Hallam is again at the first level. The speaker's imagination must again fix itself on Hallam as a corpse and must regain Hallam's second and third levels of immortal spirit and soul before it can establish the fourth level of Hallam as "guardian angel".

Fortunately the advance goes quickly. The speaker seems to fly past his previous questions of Immortality and Personality with ease. In a matter of six sections Hallam reascends from the first level to the fourth. Hallam begins again as a corpse "in sepulchral halls" and "cold crypts" (LVIII 2,8). Returning to the second level, Hallam is a life force, a "soul of nobler tone" released from the body to mix "with his proper sphere" (LX 1,5). And once again Hallam's "ransom'd reason" (LXI 2) is restored to the nameless spirit and in the speaker's imagination, Hallam is able to remember the speaker's love once more (LXI 9-12). With a momentum gained by the retracing of the first three stages, the speaker easily moves Hallam into the fourth level and establishes him as the comforting angel: "unto vaster motions bound, / The circuits of thine orbit round / A higher height, a deeper deep" (LXIII 10-12). Having repeated the first three stages of Hallam's imaginary afterlife, and having established the fourth, the speaker takes a moment to summarize Hallam's

progressive divinization to this point in section 85:

> O friendship, equal-poised control,
> O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
> O sacred essence, other form,
> O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!
> (LXXXV 33-36)

Hallam has been moved from life (friendship & heart) to corpse (implied by the physical heart (see XVIII 14) and the "other form"), to immortal life force (essence), to ghost with solemn personality (soul) and finally to "crowned soul".

The movement from Hallam's fourth level to the fifth level occurs essentially without the resolution of a question, but the speaker does experience a crisis. After the speaker's crisis of faith and the establishment of the fourth level, he meditates deeply on his desire for the presence and resurrection of Hallam. Wishing for the return of his friend, the speaker relates his memories of Hallam in sections 87 to 93. The speaker remembers Hallam debating in Trinity College (LXXXVII) and the many things which gave Hallam pleasure (LXXXIX). He considers what troubles could occur if Arthur should return (XC), but calls to him regardless: "Come; not in the watches of the night, / But where the sunbeam broodeth warm, / Come, beauteous in thine after form, / And like a finer light in light" (XCI 13-16). The speaker calls to Hallam to "Descend, and touch, and enter; hear / The wish too strong for

words to name, / That in this blindness of the frame / My Ghost may feel that thine is near" (XCIII 13-16). The result of the speaker's deep desire for Hallam's presence and the meditation on memories of Hallam is revealed in section 95:

> And strangely on the silence broke
> The silent-speaking words, and strange
> Was love's dumb cry defying change
> To test his worth; and strangely spoke
>
> The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
> On doubts that drive the coward back,
> And keen thro' wordy snares to track
> Suggestion to her inmost cell.
>
> So word by word, and line by line,
> The dead man touch'd me from the past,
> And all at once it seem'd at last
> The living soul was flash'd on mine,
>
> And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
> About empyreal heights of thought,
> And came on that which is, and caught
> The deep pulsations of the world
>
> Aeonian music measuring out
> The steps of Time -- the shocks of Chance --
> The blows of Death. At length my trance
> Was cancelled. (XCV 25-44)

It is important to note that until 1878 the words 'The living soul' and 'mine in this' were *'His* living soul' and 'mine in *his'* (Bradley 190); 'his' referring to Hallam's soul. Originally, therefore, Tennyson was specific in indicating that his soul had touched Hallam's. Whether or not this connection actually occured is impossible to say, but it is reminiscent of one of Tennyson's own childhood experiences:

> [A] kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me thro' repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life. (Tennyson, Hallam 320)

Meditating on Hallam, the speaker's vision suddenly touches "the living soul", or "his living soul", in the same way that Tennyson's trance, induced by his own name-mantra, suddenly connected him with "boundless being" and immortality. The vision in section 95 serves as a kind of spontaneous crisis and revelation which resolves the fifth level in Hallam's afterlife evolution. Without debate, in a sudden burst, the speaker's vision combines Love, Faith and Evolution so that Hallam may gain supernatural knowledge about the nature of the universe and of man. With this knowledge Hallam becomes more than a "guardian angel". The speaker's 'mystic' trance, roused by his meditation on his memories of Hallam, introduces an empowered Hallam. The imagined greatness of Hallam in life and the vision of greatness even in death pushes Hallam into the fifth level.

In the speaker's imagination, Hallam takes on godlike qualities in the fifth level. He is addressed in a manner which can be described as prayer. The speaker calls out to Hallam, "Descend, and touch, and enter; hear / The wish too strong for words to name, / That in this blindness of the frame / My Ghost may feel that thine is near" (XCIII 13-16). Like a responding deity, Hallam's spirit entwines with the speaker's: "The living soul was flash'd on mine, / And mine in this was wound" (XCV 36-37). The speaker associates Hallam with nature and with an understanding denied to mortal men and angels:

> My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
> He finds on mist mountain-ground
> His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
> He sees himself in all he sees.
>
> . . .
>
> He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
> He reads the secret of the star,
> . . .
>
> . . .
> And he, he knows a thousand things.
> (XCVII 1-4,21-22,32)

Although in this piece the speaker is still ambiguous about who or what his love is, in section 103 any uncertainty is resolved. Hallam has progressed to a level beyond mankind and beyond the near divinity of angels. Section 103 relates the speaker's second meeting with Hallam, this time in a dream:

> They sang of what is wise and good
> And graceful. In the centre stood
> A statue veil'd, to which they sang;
>
> And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
> The shape of him I loved, and love
> For ever. (CIII 10-15)

The speaker dreams that he and his muses, though not certain of the nature of Hallam's existence, sing his praises. However, in his dream, the speaker is summoned to the afterlife where he and his accompanying maidens meet the being that they once knew as Hallam:

> The man we loved was there on deck,
> But thrice as large as man he bent
> To greet us. Up the side I went,
> And fell in silence on his neck.
> (CIII 41-44)

Hallam is now a giant, worshipped by the speaker and the muses. He holds the keys to heaven, allowing entry into the afterlife (CIII 51-52) like some ancient demigod. The speaker turns back to Hallam's life on earth in sections 109 to 113 and glorifies Hallam without restraint. Hallam, in life, was possessed with "Seraphic intellect" (CIX 5), "manhood fused with female grace" (CIX 17), "Christian art" (CX 16), "High wisdom" (CXII 1) and "the expression of an eye / Where God and Nature met in light" (CXI 19-20). Following his trance, his dream and his reminiscences, the speaker wonders out loud,

> For what wert thou? some novel power
> Sprang up for ever at a touch,
> And hope could never hope too much,

In watching thee from hour to hour.
(CXII 9-12)

Hallam soars higher than the angels in the speaker's mind, knowing the unknowable, being reflected in Nature and deserving praise and worship. Hallam is divine, a demigod who was once incarnate and who has now returned to heaven.

The sixth and final stage in Hallam's ascension is foreshadowed in the first sections of "In Memoriam". From the beginning, the speaker associates Hallam with Christ. Although the Prologue speaks of the "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love" (Prologue 1) and of Hallam, "thy creature" (Prologue 38), as separate entities, the suggestion is that Hallam is divine. When the speaker writes, "Thou seemest human and divine, / The highest, holiest manhood, thou" (Prologue 13-14), "thou" ambiguously refers to the "creature" as well as to the "Son of God". This strong connection with Christ fits in well with the sixth and final stage of Hallam as divine, especially when it is noted that the Prologue was written last and is the only poem in the collection which is printed with a date. Other hints of Hallam's impending divinity are scattered throughout "In Memoriam". The speaker remembers Hallam as the "man I held as half-divine" (XIV 10) and "divinely gifted" (LXIV 2). Superhuman praise frames the speaker's

memories of Hallam: "The God within him light his face, // And seem to lift the form and glow / In azure orbits heavenly-wise" (LXXXVII 36-38). That Hallam is becoming like Christ is strongly implied by the line of section 106, "Ring in the Christ that is to be" (CVI 32). All these foreshadowings are strengthened by section 107 in which the speaker writes about the birth of Hallam, speaking of the day as if it were perhaps a second Christmas: "With festal cheer, / With books and music, surely we / will drink to him, whate'er he be" (CVII 21-23). Hallam comforts the speaker as Christ would in section 25: "Love would cleave in twain / The lading of a single pain, / And part it, giving half to him" (XXV 10-12). This comfort continues as Hallam moves through the "angel" and "demigod" stages. Indeed, during the fourth and fifth stages, unless relating memories, the speaker often imaginatively speaks to Hallam in prayer (L, XCIII) or meditation (LII, LXXV). His descriptions of Hallam are through dreams (LXIX, CIII) and visions (LXX, XCV). The speaker's telling of his prayers and visions, his reverential language and the associations between Christ and Hallam are all glimpses of the sixth level.

The sixth stage in Hallam's divinization, though strongly foreshadowed, is not reached until the final sections and the Epilogue and Prologue. Within these

sections, Hallam is imagined by the speaker as being equal with Christ and at times subsuming God and Christ, but the assimilation of Hallam and Christ is not a simple matter and he approaches the concept cautiously. The traditional concept of God will not allow the connection between God and a mortal, so the speaker must redefine the concept of the nature of God. This is the speaker's final crisis. The speaker uses section 124 to prepare himself and his readers for the sublimation of Hallam into Christ by invoking an aura of vagueness about who or what God is.

> That which we dare invoke to bless;
> Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
> He, They, One, All; within, without;
> The Power in darkness whom we guess,--.
> (CXXIV 1-4)

This vagueness and doubt, this inability to know God, provides the speaker's imagination with the flexibility necessary for his new definition of God. The speaker weakens the traditional concept of God by speaking not of God, but only of "Love" as "lord and king" (CXXVI 1). Until the speaker is ready for the final ascension of Hallam, Hallam continues as a demi-god: "dear spirit, happy star, / O'erlook'st the tumult from afar, / And smilest, knowing all is well" (CXXVII 18-20). The speaker's redefinition of God as Love, unlike his previous crises, is not resolved before Hallam's ascension, but rather is resolved by Hallam's

ascension.

The speaker begins to redefine the nature of God by equating Hallam with God in section 129. Hallam is "Known and unknown, human, divine" (CXXIX 5) and the speaker "dream[s] a dream of good, / And mingle[s] all the world with thee [the new Hallam]" (CXXIX 11-12). Hallam is now divine, part of God and part of nature. Using strikingly biblical language the speaker worships the new Hallam:

> Thy voice is on the rolling air;
> I hear thee where the waters run;
> Thou standest in the rising sun,
> And in the setting thou art fair.
>
> What art thou then? I cannot guess;
> But tho' I seem in star and flower
> To feel thee some diffusive power,
> I do not therefore love thee less.
>
> My love involves the love before;
> My love is vaster passion now;
> Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
> I seem to love thee more and more.
>
> Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
> I have thee still, and I rejoice;
> I prosper, circled with thy voice;
> I shall not lose thee tho' I die. (CXXX)

Hallam's voice is powerful like that of God the Creator. His presence is unknowable, yet it surrounds like the Holy Spirit. His blessing brings prosperity like that of Christ.

Once a man, Hallam has evolved in the speaker's mind until he is now God, Love, Nature and Hallam mingled in one divine concept.

The speaker's description of Hallam in section 130 has a remarkable similarity to stanza 42 of Shelley's "Adonais" (Knerr, 1821 Pisa ed., 24-51):

> He is made one with Nature: there is heard
> His voice in all her music, from the moan
> Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet
> bird;
> He is a presence to be felt and known
> In darkness and in light, from herb and
> stone,
> Spreading itself where'er that Power may
> move
> Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
> Which wields the world with never wearied
> love,
> Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it
> above. (42 370-378)

And yet, despite the obvious similarities, two key differences separate Hallam from Adonais/Keats. The first is that Adonais is "made one with Nature" while Hallam, although "mix'd with God and Nature", is more than just a "presence". Hallam's "voice is on the rolling air" and he "standest in the rising sun". Hallam still exists while Adonais is lost in the "Power". This brings on the second key difference. Hallam ascended, step by step, to his divinity while Adonais/Keats merely assumed it. Adonais' static divinity is obvious from stanza 38:

> Dust to the dust! but the spirit shall flow
> Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
> A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
> Through time and change, unquenchably the
> same... (38 338-341)

Perhaps since Keats has been assigned his divinity (he

is even given the name of a god), rather than having ascended to it, he is unable to retain his personality in the face of the godhead. On the other hand, the imagination of Tennyson's speaker is able to carry Hallam's personality into the place of God.

As he struggles with the questions of life and death, immortality, evolution, and the love and nature of God, the speaker establishes his own personal religion. At the same time, he is able to imagine the afterlife evolution of Hallam from a corpse to an immortal spirit, from an aware and loving soul to an angel with wisdom and power and from a demigod to an existence equal to Christ.

Chapter Three:
"In Memoriam": Alfred Tennyson's Comfort from Grief

"The main crisis with which the "In Memoriam" speaker is confronted is, of course, death: the death of a friend, and the principle of Death in all its many forms, personal, social, and cosmic" (Boyd 126-127). Death is the fearful unknown which threatens the speaker, Tennyson and ultimately all mankind. Hallam's death has wrenched this crisis to the forefront of Tennyson's mind and Tennyson is forced to deal with Death, yet he sees the possibility of comfort and even gain from this crisis. He hopes to "reach a hand thro' time to catch / The far-off interest of tears" (I 7-8); interest from the investment in Death and the fear and grief it brings.

In the second chapter we saw how Hallam evolved from a corpse to a god. This chapter will examine Tennyson's motivation for his progressive divinization of Hallam. As the speaker's questions of life and death are resolved, Tennyson vicariously gains the comfort of these answers. With its connection to the speaker's questions, Hallam's imaginary evolution both supports and is dependent upon Tennyson's quest for comfort.

Before continuing, however, a fundamental issue must be discussed concerning the relationship between

Tennyson and his speaker. "Who is the speaker?" is one of the most basic questions asked of a poem, and at first it appears to be a problematic one. However, for this essay, it is not necessary to distinguish between the speaker and poet, for two reasons. The issues concerned are Tennyson's and the imagination used in the poem's creation is Tennyson's.

While the speaker of "In Memoriam" is not always Tennyson, it is reasonable to assume that the themes addressed by the speaker in the poem are those which concern Tennyson. After all, the poet would not examine issues which did not interest him. Mason claims that

> where there is no such discrepancy between the explicit and the implicit content of the lyrics it will still not be safe to assume that Tennyson's own feelings are being expressed. (161)

Mason's conclusion, however, removes Tennyson's feelings from the speaker and the poem. Certainly there is a risk in assuming that the speaker's discussion of topics reflect the author's beliefs, but the risk is small, acceptable and, in fact, necessary, especially if we are to make any conclusions about the poem's effect on the author. Tennyson writes about the poem,

> It must be remembered... that this is a poem, not an *actual* biography. It is founded on our friendship, on the engagement of Arthur Hallam to my sister, on his sudden death at Vienna, just before the time fixed for their marriage, and on his burial at Clevedon Church. The poem concludes with the marriage

> of my youngest sister Cecilia. It was meant to be a kind of *Divina Commedia*, ending with happiness.... The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through Faith in a God of Love. 'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking thro' him. (Memoir I:304-305)

The speaker, therefore, the 'I', relates the author's convictions. Even the concerns of the human race are filtered through the author before reaching the speaker.

The differences between speaker and poet are also negligible because of the speculative nature of the poem's themes. The speaker admits that all the arguments and comments are imagined. The speaker's "fancy fuses old and new" (XVI 18). The speaker confidently presents settings, memories, visions, arguments, conclusions and beliefs, and yet he says of his own words,

> If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
> Were taken to be such as closed
> Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
> Then these were such as men might scorn.
>
> Her care is not to part and prove.
> (XLVIII 1-5)

The issue of the evolution of a soul after death is, by its nature, completely speculative. All evidence obtained for Hallam's ascension to godhood, his progressive divinization, comes to Tennyson and the

speaker through dreams, visions, imagination and speculation. If the speaker admits that his words are speculation, then what does it matter whether the words come directly from Tennyson's imagination or from the speaker's imagination? The question of speaker is moot.

Death is present from beginning to end in "In Memoriam". The first section groans with pain as Tennyson grieves for Hallam through the speaker: "Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd, / ... / Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss, / To dance with Death, to beat the ground" (I 9-12). When the Prologue and the Epilogue, the final pieces of the quest, are examined, grief has been greatly reduced despite the fact that Death is still present: "Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot / Is on the skull which thou hast made" (Prologue 7-8). The fact that Death no longer causes extreme despair indicates that the speaker has reconciled himself to the fact of Death in general and to Hallam's death in particular. This reconciliation is the result of "In Memoriam" and it is what we must examine.

For Tennyson, the fear of Death is the fear of the unknown realms which lie beyond. Tennyson wishes he could interrogate Lazarus, fresh returned from the grave, asking him, "Where wert thou, brother, those four days?" (XXXI 5). He wants to pierce the veil and travel the "undiscover'd lands" (XL 32) because there

must be "wisdom with great Death" (LI 11). It is Death which will uphold or crush Tennyson's religious beliefs because only "The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot, / ...keeps the keys of all the creeds" (XXIII 4-5). Only Death can give Tennyson the truth, and so only Death can provide the basis for religious belief.

Tennyson's faith in the traditional beliefs, undermined by his father's example and by his own questing, doubting mind, is far too ful of doubt to accept the teachings of Church and society. As he says through his speaker, "There lives more faith in honest doubt, / Believe me, than in half the creeds" (XCVI 11-12). Caught between his own doubt and the inability to see beyond the veil, Tennyson requires new beliefs and a means of gathering information from beyond Death.

Hallam is Tennyson's scout into Death and he is Tennyson's best source of information. Hallam has pierced the veil, gaining access to knowledge greater than that of mortal men and so it is that Tennyson, "one that loves, but knows not, reaps / A truth from one that loves and knows" (XLII 11-12). Unfortunately, Tennyson's use of Hallam as a scout is limited because he can not truly be certain of Hallam's soul, "whate'er he be" (CVII 23). Tennyson's thoughts on Hallam's afterlife are admittedly speculative. Not only does Tennyson make his considerations through a speaker, he

also realizes that his "fancy fuses old and new, / And flashes into false and true, / And mingles all" (XVI 18-20). Despite the limitations of a distant and unknown scout, Tennyson greatly relies on his imagined Hallam, whom he has known and loved in life.

Tennyson's use of Hallam as a source of afterlife information is understandable for several reasons. First of all, Hallam's death was itself the trigger for Tennyson's crisis. But second, and more importantly, Tennyson knew and loved Hallam. Hallam was a solid, physical, believable part of Tennyson's life. Creeds, beliefs, faith: all these things are flimsy and weak when compared to the truth of Hallam's existence. Tennyson's love for Hallam is the key ingredient in his ability to use Hallam as a scout, despite Hallam's changes:

> Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
> Did ever rise from high to higher,
> As mounts the heaven-ward altar-fire,
> As flies the lighter thro' the gross.
>
> But thou art turn'd to something strange,
> And I have lost the links that bound
> Thy changes; here upon the ground,
> No more partaker of thy change. (XLI 1-8)

The connection between Hallam and Tennyson, though strained, is present when Tennyson's heart and mind feels his love for Hallam. He simply could not bear to think of Hallam being nonexistent and eternally removed from him and so, with no better reasoning than love,

Hallam exists:

> Thy voice is on the rolling air;
> I hear thee where the waters run;
> ...
>
> ...
> Tho' mixed with God and Nature thou,
> I seem to love thee more and more.
>
> Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
> I have thee still, and I rejoice;
> I prosper, circled with thy voice;
> I shall not lose thee tho' I die.
> (CXXX 1-2,11-16)

Finally, Tennyson dreams of a reunion with his beloved friend. From the beginning of the poem until the end, this desire is present:

> My Arthur, whom I shall not see
> Till all my widow'd race be run;
> Dear as the mother to the son,
> More than my brothers are to me. (IX 16-20)
>
> That I could wing my will with might
> To leap the grades of life and light,
> And flash at once, my friend, to thee!
> (XLI 10-12)
>
> Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
> Whatever change the years have wrought,
> I find not yet one lonely thought
> That cries against my wish for thee.
> (XC 21-24)
>
> O days and hours, your work is this,
> To hold me from my proper place,
> A little while from his embrace,
> For fuller gain of after bliss;
>
> That out of distance might ensue
> Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
> And unto meeting, when we meet,
> Delight a hundredfold accrue....
> (CXVII 1-8)

Tennyson's hope for a reunion with Hallam helps to

motivate Tennyson's quest into the afterlife, while his love and belief in the continued existence of Hallam maintain the vital connection with Hallam's soul.

Despite this vital connection, Tennyson's use of Hallam in an exploration of death is not enough. Since Hallam is an imagined source of information, Tennyson must use a non-speculative source, like evolution, to compensate. Evolution is a science which Tennyson understands and accepts. To Tennyson, it is a truth which can be proved. It brings with it its own disturbing problems, but for Tennyson, it provides a reliable and scientific means of exploring Death.

Along with the two known factors of Hallam and Evolution present in his mind, Tennyson includes some aspects of traditional faith, perhaps because of the influences of his mother and his future wife. Despite a lack of faith in traditional creeds and dogmas, Tennyson cannot help but hope for a life after death and some kind of a benevolent God.

Finally, Tennyson uses some of the conclusions of _Theodicaea Novissima_. It is apparent as we read both _Theodicaea Novissima_ and "In Memoriam" that Tennyson and Hallam held similar beliefs in several areas, some of which would appear unorthodox to traditionalists, such as Tennyson's interpretations of God as Love and of the progressive nature of the afterlife.

All four of these factors come together in Hallam's imagined existence after death. In "In Memoriam", Tennyson embraces Hallam, evolution, orthodox and unorthodox beliefs in Hallam's progressive divinization. As Hallam evolves, Tennyson develops religious beliefs in the immortality of a non-traditional afterlife and in the Love of an apparently orthodox Christ and God. Tennyson's faith in these beliefs is his answer to Death and is the purpose for Hallam's afterlife evolution.

How did Tennyson, using the four factors above, deal with his fear of Death through Hallam's evolution? The step between each level in Hallam's progression involves a crisis in the speaker's religious beliefs. Each crisis asks a specific question in Tennyson's mind, represented through the speaker. Like Dante moving through Purgatory, each of Hallam's levels teaches another lesson. Every time Tennyson asks a question, a belief is clarified. From each answer he is able to imagine Hallam changed from one level to the next. From crisis to crisis, and level to level, Tennyson, through the speaker, answers his doubts and imagines Hallam's soul moving higher and higher. By the end, Tennyson finds the "far-off interest of tears".

Before Tennyson can realize his gain, however, he must answer the questions which plague him. He has at

his disposal the four sources already mentioned: his love for Hallam, his knowledge of science, and the orthodox and unorthodox beliefs which surround him or arise in him. His fear of Death is an element in each crisis and all of his doubts must be resolved before he find comfort from his grief.

The first three crises attempt to comprehend the realities of Death and Immortality, both of individuals and of man in general. These three crises may be taken together because of their close association. The resolution of the first crisis brings the realization of Death in general. The resolution of the second is the realization, specifically, of Hallam's Death and the third resolution yields a belief in life after Death. These three, understandably, comprise the basis of Tennyson's fear of Death. Given the indisputable existence of Death, as evidenced by the death of Hallam, only immortality can offer the beginning of comfort. Without immortality, the "earth is darkness at the core, / And dust and ashes all that is" (XXXIV 3-4). Without immortality, God, creation and physical life would have no meaning for him; the speaker would "drop head-foremost in the jaws / Of vacant darkness and... cease" (XXXIV 15-16). Tennyson turns to his own existence for proof of the immortality of man: "My own dim life should teach me this, / That life shall live

for evermore" (XXXIV 1-2).

Immortality is the most difficult belief for Tennyson to establish in "In Memoriam". At first it is Faith which bears up his belief in immortality. However, for Tennyson to believe in immortality solely on the basis of his faith would be impossible. Therefore he turns to a stronger source; he turns to Love. Tennyson knows Love through his love for Hallam and so he argues that without immortality, Love could not be; knowing that Love exists, we know that there is life after death: "If Death were seen / At first as Death, Love had not been" (XXXV 18-19). Unable to deny the reality of Death, Tennyson uses the reality of his Love to have faith in immortality. For now, Love is enough for Tennyson to establish a belief in man's immortality.

To believe in the immortality of Hallam, however, Tennyson must again debate with himself. In the next crisis he questions whether personality actually survives Death. He is not certain that the individual is immortal and he carries a "spectral doubt which makes me cold, / That I shall be thy mate no more" (XLI 19-20). Using the science that he knows, Tennyson, through the speaker, compares the newborn immortal spirit to a newborn babe. "[H]e forgets the days before" his birth, "And yet perhaps the hoarding sense

/ Gives out at times... / A little flash, a mystic hint; / / ...some dim touch of earthly things" (XLIV 6-8,11). Tennyson considers the possibility that the immortal spirit does not retain the personality it had on earth, becoming part of the "general Soul" (XLVII 4), but he rejects this simply because of his desire to be reunited with Hallam: "I shall know him when we meet; / / And we shall sit at endless feast, / Enjoying each the others good" (XLVII 8-10). To think that he might never again speak to Hallam or embrace him is "unsweet" (XLVII 5) and discomforting and so his rejects the loss of personality after death. Having established his belief in general immortality, it is relatively simple for Tennyson to believe in individual immortality. It is the connection to Hallam which quickly resolves the speaker's crisis of individual immortality.

For Tennyson to believe that the dead have wisdom and knowledge greater than the living is simple compared to a belief in immortality. There are no difficulties for the speaker to overcome in order for him to imagine Hallam evolving from the third level of the soul to the fourth level where the dead become angelic. For the speaker, it seems to be a matter of fact. This is an excellent example of a traditional, orthodox belief being incorporated into Tennyson's

defense against Death. The speaker states, "There must be wisdom with great Death; / The dead shall look me thro' and thro'. / ... / With larger eyes than ours" (LI 11-12,15) and this is enough for Tennyson to believe.

As mentioned in chapter two, however, a difficulty does arise between Hallam's third level and the fourth. Tennyson's belief in immortality was seemingly resolved earlier by his trust in Love and his desire to see Hallam again. These two are no longer enough. Evolution, the science so well known by Tennyson, challenges his belief in immortality. As noted in chapter two, evolution, represented by "Nature, red in tooth and claw" (LVI 15), pushes the speaker's view of Hallam back to the first level of a mere corpse. Evolution does this by weakening the two things supporting his belief in immortality, Faith and Love. The speaker, "Who trusted God was love indeed / and love Creation's final law" (LVI 13-14), comprehending the seeming carelessness of evolution, is unable to reconcile Death with Love and so he loses his ability to believe in immortality. Tennyson must now find a new basis for immortality. He solves his doubt by eliminating the offending source. By wedding the science of evolution, stable, known and understood, with his doubting Faith, Tennyson finds a strong answer

to the question of immortality. It is a resolution stronger than that created by Love and Faith alone.

The solution to evolution's challenge to immortality is actually foreshadowed several times before the crisis occurs. This explains Tennyson's quick recovery from the crisis which cast Hallam back to the first level:

> I held it truth...
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.
> (I 1,3-4)
>
> They do not die
> Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
> Nor change to us, although they change;
>
> Rapt from the fickle and the frail
> With gather'd power, yet the same,
> Pierces the keen seraphic flame
> From orb to orb, from veil to veil.
> (XXX 19-28)
>
> Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
> Did ever rise from high to higher,
> As mounts the heaven-ward altar-fire,
> As flies the lighter thro' the gross.
> (XLI 1-4)

Although the concept of some kind of afterlife evolution has been mentioned before now, it is not until after this crisis that the connection is solidified. Sections 55 and 56, following the crisis, have subtle hints that Hallam is seen as being greater than before. He is "richly shrined" (LVII 7), "a soul of nobler tone" (LX 1) in a "second state sublime" (LXI 1) where he can look down on earth where his "first

form was made a man" (LXI 10). After these initial hints, the speaker plainly states the joining of immortality, afterlife and evolution, maintaining this joining until the very end of "In Memoriam":

> ...unto vaster motions bound,
> The circuits of thine orbit round
> A higher height, a deeper deep.
> (LXIII 10-12)
>
> ...moving up from high to higher. (LXIV 13)
>
> Eternal process moving on,
> From state to state the spirit walks;
> And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
> Or ruin'd chrysalis of one. (LXXXII 5-8)
>
> But trust that those we call the dead
> Are breathers of an ampler day
> For ever nobler ends...
>
> ...at the last arose the man;
>
> Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
> The herald of a higher race,
> And of himself in higher place,
> If so he type this work of time
>
> Within himself, from more to more;...
>
> ...Arise and fly
> The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die.
> (CXVIII 5-7,12-17,25-28)

After this important evolutionary crisis, Hallam's divinization truly begins. Up to the fifth level, all the progress imagined by the speaker was merely to restore Hallam's personality and to give him a traditional heavenly place. Now, Evolution mingled with Love and Faith carries him to the higher levels,

"working out the beast" and revealing the god.

In achieving the fifth level, the stage at which the speaker presents Hallam as a demi-god, Evolution, Love and Faith are connected by the speaker's vision of Hallam:

> And strangely on the silence broke
> The silent-speaking words, and strange
> Was love's dumb cry defying change
> To test his worth; and strangely spoke
>
> The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
> On doubts that drive the coward back,
> And keen thro' wordy snares to track
> Suggestion to her inmost cell.
>
> So word by word, and line by line,
> The dead man touch'd me from the past,
> And all at once it seem'd at last
> This [His] living soul was flash'd on mine,
>
> And mine in this [his] was wound, and whirl'd
> About empyreal heights of thought,
> And came on that which is, and caught
> The deep pulsations of the world,
>
> Aeonian music measuring out
> The steps of Time -- the shocks of Chance --
> The blows of Death. At length my trance
> Was cancelled. (XCV 25-44)

With Love and Faith, through the speaker's mystic experience, Tennyson summons a changed Hallam, an evolved Hallam with access to "empyreal heights of thought" and the "deep pulsations of the world". Hallam's divinity is apparent in his access to "The steps of Time -- the shocks of Chance -- / The blows of Death" (XCV 42-43). Hallam's ascension to demigod status is made more apparent in another vision:

> The man we loved was there on deck,
> but thrice as large as man he bent
> To greet us. Up the side I went,
> And fell in silence on his neck.
> (CIII 41-44)

Hallam is imagined to be a demi-god and as such, he holds the key to the afterlife; he has the power to say, "Enter likewise ye / And go with us [into the afterlife]" (CIII 51-52]. Evolution, Love and Faith are woven together, lifting Hallam to the fifth level, but now a deep question confronts Tennyson, a question deeper than evolution and almost as deep as immortality.

For Hallam to reach the sixth stage, Tennyson must deal with the very concept of the nature of God. The speaker's relationship with the traditional Christian view of God is not a strong one. Although there are rare moments when God offers him comfort, these times are more than offset by his explicit or implicit doubts:

> O, yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
>
> That nothing walks with aimless feet;
> That not one life shall be destroy'd,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete;
>
> That not a worm is cloven in vain;
> That not a moth with vain desire
> Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
> Or but subserves another's gain.

> Behold, we know not anything;
> I can but trust that good shall fall
> At last -- far off -- at last, to all,
> And every winter change to spring.
>
> So runs my dream; but what am I?
> An infant crying in the night;
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry. (LIV)

What begins as "trust" ends with fear and doubt. Conflict rages in the speaker's words. Tennyson needs to know God, but cannot comprehend Him. He may only hope for the best and put what faith he can muster in an unknown entity and an unknown future. His doubt is further complicated by the evidence of evolution: "Are God and Nature then at strife, / That Nature lends such evil dreams?" (LV 5-6). And, of course, God is the one who took Hallam from him: "in Vienna's fatal walls / God's finger touch'd him" (LXXXV 19-20). Regardless of the difficulties, however, the divinization of Hallam will not be complete without Tennyson's answer to the question of God's nature.

For Hallam to reach the sixth level, three things are necessary. First, the traditional concept of God must be altered to allow the addition of Hallam into the Godhead. Second, Hallam must be elevated to the level of divinity and, third, God and Hallam must be connected.

Altering the concept of God is relatively simple for Tennyson. Society's traditional views of God and the

Bible are in flux during the writing of "In Memoriam". Science is beginning to describe a clockwork universe with an impersonal god. The uncertainty, especially in Tennyson's mind, is enough so that the words of doubt can be made to seem very reasonable:

> That which we dare invoke to bless;
> Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
> He, They, One, All; within, without;
> The Power in darkness whom we guess.
> (CXXIV 1-4)

Tennyson does not even present God as a knowable entity, let alone as a personal and intimate deity.

Left without a personal God, Tennyson imposes his own notions of deity on God and he does this by taking a liberal interpretation of an orthodox belief. The Bible tells him "God is love", or as Hallam's Theodicaea Novissima says, "GOD IS LOVE" (202). Tennyson slightly alters this belief and says, Love is God: "Love is and was my lord and king" (CXXVI 1). Rather than try to comprehend God, who is, after all, responsible for so much death, Tennyson turns to Love. In effect, he subordinates the person of God to the power of Love while maintaining a reasonably orthodox appearance of God.

Long before Tennyson revises the traditional concept of God, however, he begins associating Hallam with divinity, preparing him, as it were, for his ascension. Early in "In Memoriam", Hallam is like a saint who is

"held as half divine" (XIV 10) and his bones are "precious relics" (XVII 18). Later, Hallam, amongst the dead, is "like God... / With larger eyes than ours" (LI 14-15) and he is the "perfect flower of human time" (LXI 4). By the end of "In Memoriam", the speaker speaks of Hallam's "seraphic intellect" (CIX 5), his "soul on highest mission sent" (CXIII 10), his "rapt oration" (LXXXVII 32) and the "God within him" (LXXXVII 36). The speaker sees "[I]n the expression of [Hallam's] eye / Where God and Nature met in light" (CXI 19-20). In section 97, Hallam has many of the powers of a divinity, but is not yet connected to the godhead:

> My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
> He finds on mist mountain-ground
> His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
> He sees himself in all he sees.
> ...
>
> He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
> He reads the secret of the star,
> He seems so near and yet so far,
> ...
>
> ...
> And he, he knows a thousand things.
> (XCVII 1-4,21-22,32)

Tennyson, therefore, prepares Hallam for ascension into the Godhead by associating him with divinity.

Having prepared Hallam, Tennyson provides the means of attaining it through evolution. As discussed above, evolution allows Hallam's rising above the fourth

level. Hallam is

> The herald of a higher race,
> And of himself in higher place,
> If so he type this work of time
>
> Within himself, from more to more.
> (CXVIII 14-17)

That Tennyson could conceive of Hallam's afterlife evolution as progressing to a union with God is not surprising and can be considered fairly orthodox. Hallam writes in Theodicaea Novissima that even Christ had to rise to perfection, "the Godhead of the Son has not been a fixed, invariable thing from the beginning: he is more God now than he was once; and will be perfectly united to God hereafter" (204). If Christ, who was a man, evolved to divinity, then perhaps Hallam, who, in Tennyson's eyes, was almost as remarkable as Christ, may also evolve to divinity.

To this point God has been altered to accommodate Hallam by unorthodox interpretations of orthodox beliefs and Hallam has, through evolution, been divinized, but the union between them must be forged by another power, the power of Love. Tennyson's belief in Love as God and his strong love for Hallam provides an association through which Hallam is connected to God. Since Hallam engenders such love in Tennyson, Hallam must be slowly but surely becoming divine, mirroring a statement from Theodicaea Novissima, "love that is

infinite must embrace all objects calculated to excite any degree of that holy feeling" (208). That is, the great love felt for Hallam qualifies Hallam as being an "object" of love and therefore Hallam would be embraced by the Love which is God. Although this is not an entirely logical process, for Tennyson, God is the essence of Love and Hallam is, like Christ, the epitome of love. Again from Theodicaea Novissima, "it has become possible to love as God loves, that is, to love Christ and thus to become united in heart to God" (210). In Tennyson's heart and imagination, Hallam unites with God, with the union being cemented by love:

> They sang of what is wise and good
> And graceful. In the centre stood
> A statue veil'd, to which they sang;
>
> And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
> The shape of him I loved, and love
> For ever. (CIII 10-15)
>
> O loved the most, when most I feel
> There is a lower and a higher;
>
> Known and unknown, human, divine;
> Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
> Dear heavenly friend that canst no die,
> Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;
>
> Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
> Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
> Behold I dream a dream of good,
> And mingle all the world with thee.
> (CXXIX 3-12)
>
> Thy voice is on the rolling air;
> I hear thee where the waters run;
> Thou standest in the rising sun,
> And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die. (CXXX)

It is no coincidence that "In Memoriam" ends with a wedding, a union forged by Love. Also, the ambiguity in the Prologue is now clarified. The "Strong Son of God" (Prologue 1) is both Christ and Hallam and the "immortal Love" (Prologue 1) is Christ, Hallam and God. Christ and Hallam are both "human and divine, / The highest, holiest manhood" (Prologue 13). The Prologue, written last and, in fact, the conclusion of "In Memoriam", is in a brilliant turn placed at the beginning of the poem, foreshadowing the ascension of Hallam.

The nature of God is, therefore, resolved as being Love represented in all humans who love and especially in Christ and in Hallam. It is through afterlife evolution and Love, that all who love shall come to be united with the Godhead.

With the completion of Hallam's progressive divinization and the resolution of Tennyson's doubts

through the speaker's crises, we can see the gains made by Tennyson: "The far-off interest of tears" (I 8). Not only has Tennyson gained answers to his questions, he has gained greater love, the promise of a union with Hallam and comfort from the fear of Death.

Love is not only part of the conclusion of "In Memoriam", it is one of the rewards gained by Tennyson. He compares his love for Hallam to a harvest which would not have ripened had not Death, the "sudden frost", given "ripeness to the grain" (LXXXI 10,11). Similarly, Time, which separated Tennyson from Hallam, increased the "Desire of nearness" "For fuller gain of after bliss" (CXVII 6,4). Also, by Tennyson's unorthodox definition of God, Hallam embodies Love more and more as he progresses towards godhood:

> My love involves the love before;
> My love is vaster passion now;
> Tho' mixed with God and Nature thou,
> I seem to love thee more and more.
> (CXXX 9-12)

By the end of "In Memoriam" Tennyson realizes how he has gained more love by Hallam's death:

> Regret is dead, but love is more
> Than in the summers that are flown,
> For I myself with these have grown
> To something greater than before.
> (Epilogue 17-20)

Besides the gain of love, however, Tennyson has become "something greater" now that he has answered his questions and doubts. Through these answers he is

reconciled with the "Shadow fear'd of man" which "sits and waits for me" (XXII 12,20). Immortality, Love and Evolution help to overcome his fears. Immortality validates the earthly life: "life shall live for evermore, / ... // [otherwise] 'Twere best at once to sink to peace" (XXXIV 2,13). Love helps to take away the fear of Death: "Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot / Is on the skull which thou hast made. // Thou wilt not leave us in the dust" (Prologue 7-9). And finally, the wedding of Evolution and Immortality gives hope for all of eternity:

> I wage not any feud with Death
> For changes wrought on form and face;
> No lower life that earth's embrace
> May breed with him can fright my faith.
>
> Eternal process moving on,
> From state to state the spirit walks;
> And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
> Or ruin'd chrysalis of one. (LXXXII 1-8)

With Tennyson's doubts answered, his concept of Death is altered.

Tennyson's changing view of Death can be seen graphically in the varying descriptions of Hallam's grave from the beginning to the end of "In Memoriam". In section 2, the yew tree shading the graveyard is in "dusk" and "gloom" (II 7,12). A later description of a yew tree again has it "darkening the dark graves of men, -- / ... / Thy gloom is kindled at thy tips, / And passes into gloom again" (XXXIX 9,11-12). The funeral

and the tomb of Hallam dominate the first two dozen poems, but in contrast, the epilogue involves a marriage near Hallam's grave. However, in the epilogue the grave is not darkened and in gloom, but is lit by the sun: "[the married couple] pass the grave / That has to-day its sunny side. // To-day the grave is bright for me, / For them the light of life increased" (Epilogue 71-74). As the grave moves from shadow and gloom into the light of the sun, so too does Tennyson move from the fear of Death and the unknown into the hope of eternal love and progress.

Throughout "In Memoriam", Tennyson laments his separation from Hallam. He expresses his great desire to follow and be reunited with Hallam, but as his doubts and fears are resolved, he is more willing to wait for the reunion. His desire to follow Hallam is evident when the speaker says, "[Death] bore thee where I could not see / Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste, / And think that somewhere in the waste / The Shadow sits and waits for me" (XXII 17-20). Tennyson knows that he will only be able to pursue Hallam when his own life is gone: "till I sail / To seek thee on the mystic deeps, / And this electric force, that keeps / A thousand pulses dancing, fail" (CXXV 13-16). Tennyson dreams of the conclusion of his own journey when he will be actually reunited with his beloved friend:

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me. (IX 16-20)

That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!
(XLI 10-12)

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.
(XC 21-24)

O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue... (CXVII 1-8)

And yet, by the end of "In Memoriam", Tennyson is willing to wait until Hallam and he will be "Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost" (XCIII 8) and "soul in soul" (CXXXI 12).

Alfred Tennyson's Conclusion in Faith and Evolution

"In Memoriam" resulted from Tennyson's search for religious beliefs which could comfort him from his grief and his fears of Death. His religious doubts and fears were the motivation behind his desire for answers. Who is God? Is He a God of Love or an impersonal, evolutionary force? Is the human soul Immortal? What lies beyond Death? These questions and fears were instilled in him by the conflicting religious attitudes of his mother and father, by the traditions of society and by the impact of secular science on sacred thought. Although motivated by his fears, Tennyson's search for answers was limited by his ability to have faith in the answers which he discovered. He could only accept those religious beliefs which his faith could accept. To find his religious beliefs within the limits of his faith required not only simple answers, but also support from Love and Evolution for his doubting faith. Triggered by Hallam's death, Tennyson's religious progress, and the comfort it brought, was marked by the stages in Hallam's afterlife evolution.

The importance of Tennyson's faith must be part of any religious discussion of "In Memoriam". Tennyson's faith did not *grow* throughout "In Memoriam". Rather, it

focussed on his emerging religious beliefs and it gained support from Tennyson's trust in science and in emotion. Masterman writes,

> The thought of the poem advances in periodical rhythmic progress: doubts and difficulties, followed by an answer; more difficulties, again an answer; and, finally, a summary and conclusion of the whole matter. And in each of the answers, and in the final summary the same result is attained; each essentially consists of an appeal from the hard logic of facts to that faith which refuses to acquiesce in the counsels of despair.
>
> But there is in each case a definite advance from the proceeding position; the confidence increases, the doubts become shaken; finally, 'steadfast rather than triumphant' at the close of the poem, although worn and wearied with the long struggle, faith remains master of the field. (42-43)

Each "advance" in faith was a result of a resolution of the speaker's "doubts and difficulties" and was marked by a new level of existence for Hallam. Although Masterman understands this progress and rhythm of the poem, his confidence in Tennyson's faith as "master of the field" is excessive. Faith, unable to support Tennyson in the beginning, would not have been able to support him in the end if it had not been changed by Love and supported by Evolution.

Tennyson's unsupportive and doubting faith was a legacy from his father and an era of science and atheism. In "Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind" (Ricks, 1830 ed., 197-202), Tennyson

expressed a desire for an unquestioning faith in the traditional beliefs of God, Immortality and Christian salvation: "How sweet to have a common faith! / To hold a common scorn of death!" (33-34). He longed for the "beauty and repose of faith" (75) that he had experienced at his mother's knee. He envied those who, like his mother and Hallam, possessed an ability to believe the Bible and the proclamations of the Church. Yet even before Hallam's death, Tennyson's faith was more doubtful than confident: "From boyhood to old age he was quite as much a doubter as a believer" (Fairchild 116). Even after Hallam's death and the writing of "In Memoriam", Tennyson's faith and doubt continued to cause him much anxiety: "like a child in doubt in fear" (CXXIV 17). Yet he would not turn completely to science and reason and give up his faith:

> I hate utter unfaith, I cannot endure that men should sacrifice everything at the cold altar of what with their imperfect knowledge they choose to call truth and reason. One can easily lose all belief, through giving up the continual thought and care for spiritual things. (Memoir I:309)

Tennyson was surrounded by science and plagued by a faith which never gave him complete hope and certainty: "We have but faith: we cannot know" (Prologue 21). His only solution lay in a new faith and in new beliefs.

Tennyson's faith began to change and focus after Hallam's death. As he began his search for religious

beliefs to anchor his faith, his concept of faith turned from traditional piety towards emotion and intuition. "The Two Voices" (Ricks, 1842 ed., 523-541) serves to communicate his first faltering steps towards his unique intuitive faith, but not until "In Memoriam" did Tennyson establish his faith in Love.

When news of Hallam's death reached him, Tennyson began composing almost immediately: "'The Two Voices' or 'Thoughts of a Suicide' was begun under the cloud of this overwhelming sorrow" (Memoir I:109). In "The Two Voices" as in "Supposed Confessions", Tennyson sought an anchor for his unfocussed faith. In desperation, he turned to the world, to nature and to mankind, but he was unable to believe in them and they were abandoned. Finally he abandoned the debate, anchoring his faith, not, as Donald Hair claims, to an "actual living of life" (193), but to the ritual of life. The comfort of continuity in a family and the habits of life held Tennyson's faith for a short time: "Nature's living motion lent / The pulse of hope to discontent" (The Two Voices 449-450). A small family going to church made his "frozen heart [begin] to beat, / Remembering its ancient heat" (421-422). Essentially Tennyson's faith was upheld not by piety, but by an emotion: "the arguments of despair are never answered, the poet's doubts are never laid. Instead, the poet's reasons are

replaced by the poet's emotions" (Smith 17). Unable to quiet the voice of despair with traditional Christian faith, Tennyson resisted "all negative or sceptical suggestions by taking his stand on his intuitive belief [faith]" (Chatterjee 24):

> To feel, although no tongue can prove,
> That every cloud, that spreads above
> And veileth love, itself is love.
> (The Two Voices 445-447)

Although he had not found an acceptable religious belief through "The Two Voices", Tennyson began mingling Faith and Love which gave him comfort for a time.

It was not, however, until "In Memoriam" that Tennyson created his new faith. Tennyson's intuitive faith is a subject which has been discussed extensively amongst the critics and which can be only poorly summarized here:

> Theologically, he believes in the existence of God, the working out of His purpose in the world, and personal immortality, not because he is intellectually convinced of their intrinsic truth and reality, but because he fears that otherwise life would be simply unbearable. (Smith 112)

As we have seen in chapter three, "In Memoriam" focussed Tennyson's intuitive faith on his new religious beliefs. He found God "not in world or sun, / Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye: / Nor through the questions men may try" (CXXIV 5-7), but in his own

heart which remembered "its ancient heat" (The Two Voices 423) and "answered 'I have felt.'" (CXXIV 16). As Tennyson was able to feel the truth of his belief in God, he was able to have faith in it and, because he had truly felt love, he believed in Love. "The Two Voices" set the foundation of Tennyson's intuitive faith, but "In Memoriam" completed it.

Tennyson's intuitive faith and his fear and understanding of evolution, came together in "In Memoriam" and in the imagined afterlife existence of Hallam. Faith and evolution, together supporting Tennyson's newly formed religious beliefs, allowed Hallam's existence to change from corpse to divinity. For Tennyson, religion and science became intertwined and interdependent:

> We have but faith: we cannot know,
> For knowledge is of things we see;
> And yet we trust it comes from thee,
> A beam in darkness: let it grow.
>
> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell;
> That mind and soul, according well,
> May make one music as before.
> (Prologue 21-28)

For Tennyson's faith to stand, even though it was based on Love, Tennyson had to bolster it with science. Therefore, for Tennyson, faith and knowledge made "one music". Both were "beam[s] in darkness" which came from God.

> [T]he distinction between faith and knowledge is insistent, not because Tennyson sees the two, finally, as opposed, but because... he is keenly aware of the role of faith in making up for the limitations of knowledge. (Hair 192)

And, more importantly for Tennyson, the role of knowledge was making up for his limitations of faith. Although Tennyson relied on science and love as much as, perhaps more than, on faith and beliefs, it was the combination of all which provided him with the resolutions to his fears and doubts.

For himself and for all mankind, with the soul of his beloved friend as a scout, Tennyson explored Death and his own religious fears searching for comfort from the fears of his soul and of his era. With his love for Hallam, his imagination, his intuitive, but still doubting faith, and with his scientific knowledge, Tennyson tenatively answered his doubts about God, immortality and the afterlife. He altered his concept of the nature of God, and made it possible for himself to believe that all people would eventually reach the godhead, if they knew Love. In his own mind he resolved the conflict between evolution and immortality. He calmed his grief of separation from Hallam by making it possible to be reunited with him in the afterlife.

All these resolutions, however, no matter how well spoken or argued, were religious beliefs, expressed

through a fictional speaker, using information from an imaginary and unknowable source:

> So hold I commerce with the dead;
> Or so methinks the dead would say;
> Or so shall grief with symbols play
> And pining-life be fancy-fed. (LXXXV 93-96)

Realizing his still uncertain faith, Tennyson could only say, "I trust I have not wasted breath; / I think we are not wholly brain. / Magnetic mockeries; not in vain, / Like Paul with beasts, I have fought with Death" (CXX 1-4). Tennyson's beliefs were now enough to comfort him and were sufficient to assure him of a union with Hallam and God:

> With faith that comes of self-control,
> The truths that never can be proved.
> Until we close with all we loved,
> And all we flow from, soul in soul.
> (CXXXI 9-12)

Although he had reconciled himself with Death and achieved some comfort, his peace and reconciliation still rested on faith in Love and faith in his own religious and scientific interpretations of Death, God and Immortality, "truths that never can be proved."

Walters is largely correct when he writes,

> No one can rise from the study of it [In Memoriam] without feeling strengthened, cheered and refreshed. It is the history of a soul's struggle and of the victory of life and its Giver. It is the passage from darkness to light, from mystery to revelation, from fear to faith, from rebellion to resignation, and from reproof to praise. (120)

Not all things, however, were revealed and resigned in the end and not all was darkness, rebellion and fear in the beginning. The change was more like that of twilight to early dawn. It was not the degree of the change but the change itself which was important: a change marked by the ascension of Arthur Henry Hallam. Tennyson concluded "In Memoriam" more in faith than in fear and less in reproof than in praise. For Alfred Lord Tennyson, the "victory of life" was accomplished, but only through an amalgamation of science and religion, faith and feeling, creature and Creator.

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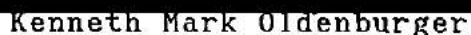
Author: 

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