

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

1st Baron
Tennyson
of Aldworth
and Freshwater

ENGLISH POET

Biography

born August 6, 1809,
Somersby, Lincolnshire, England

died October 6, 1892,
Aldworth, Surrey

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Poet's Life & Death, Faith & Love

- Tennyson was the fourth of 12 children, born August 6, 1809 into an old Lincolnshire family, his father a priest, a rector.
- He left Louth grammar school in 1820, but, though home conditions were difficult, his father managed to give him a wide literary education.
- Alfred was precocious, and before his teens he had composed in the styles of Alexander Pope, Sir Walter Scott, and John Milton. Lord Byron was a dominant influence on the young Tennyson.
- In 1824 the health of Tennyson's father began to break down, and he took refuge in drink. In 1831 he died.



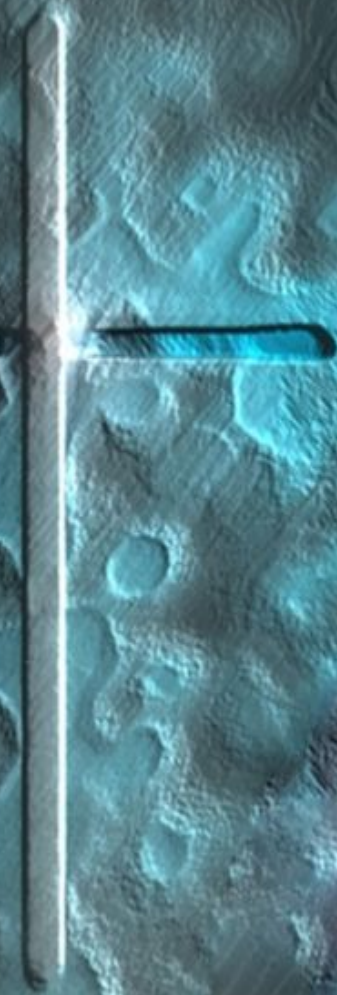
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- In 1827 Alfred and his brother Charles joined their brother Frederick at Trinity College, Cambridge. There Alfred made friends with Arthur Hallam, the gifted son of the historian Henry Hallam. This was the deepest friendship of Tennyson's life. The friends became members of the Apostles, an exclusive undergraduate club of earnest intellectual interests
- Tennyson's reputation as a poet increased at Cambridge. In 1829 he won the chancellor's gold medal with a poem called *Timbuctoo*. In 1830 *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* was published; and in the same year Tennyson, Hallam, and other Apostles went to Spain to help in the unsuccessful revolution against Ferdinand VII



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- "The Princess" (1847), a long narrative poem, was Tennyson's next notable work. But he hit a career high note with "In Memoriam" (1850). The elegiac creation, which contains the famous lines, "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all," incorporated Tennyson's sorrow about his friend Arthur Hallam's death. It greatly impressed readers and won Tennyson many admirers.
- An episode in the Crimean War led to Tennyson penning "The Charge of the Light Brigade" in 1854; the work was also included in *Maud, and Other Poems* (1855). The first four books of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, an epic take on the Arthurian legend, appeared in 1859.



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- Tennyson and his wife had had two sons, Hallam (b. 1852) and Lionel (b. 1854). Lionel predeceased his parents; he became ill on a visit to India, and died in 1886 onboard a ship heading back to England. Tennyson's *Demeter and Other Poems* (1889) contained work that addressed this devastating loss.
- The poet suffered from gout, and experienced a recurrence that grew worse in the late summer of 1892. Later that year, on October 6, at the age of 83, Tennyson passed away at his Aldworth home in Surrey. He was buried in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner.

Thank you for your attention.