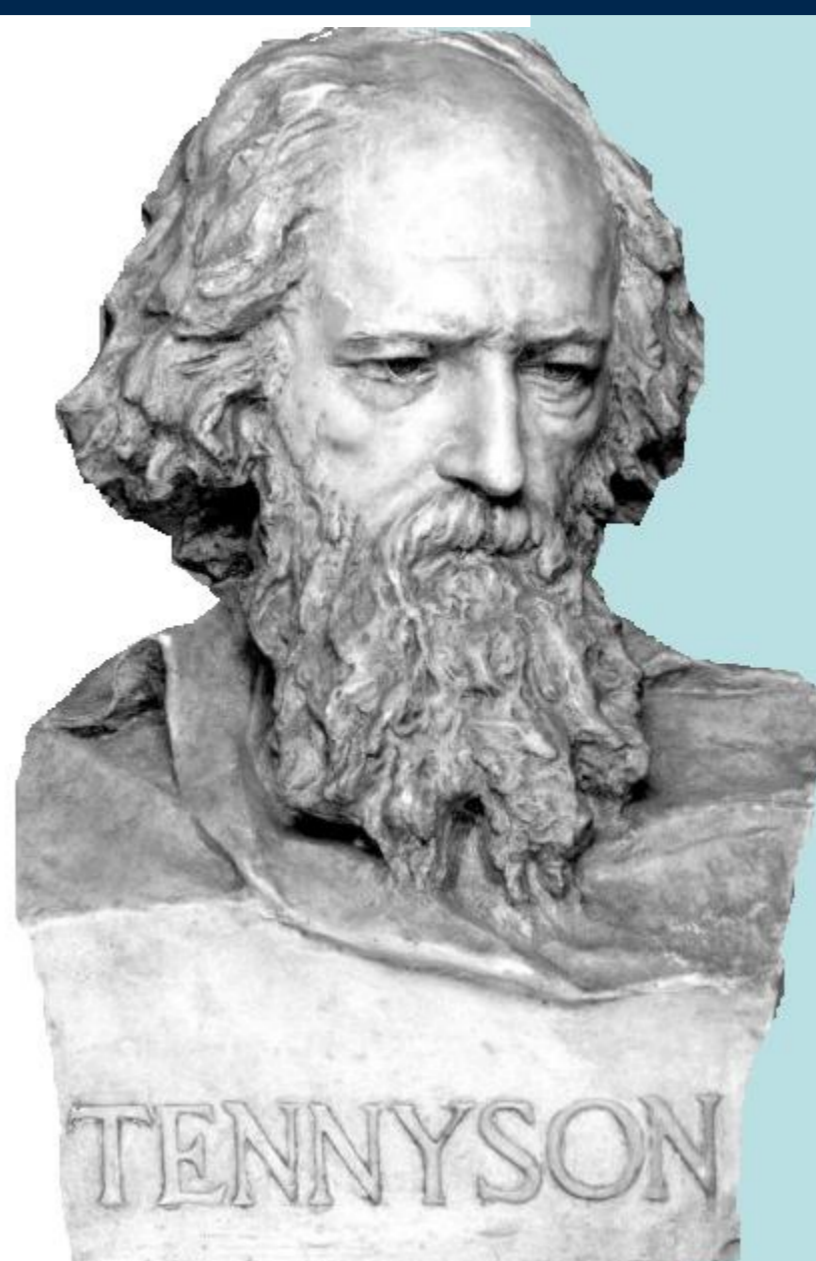


INTRODUCTION

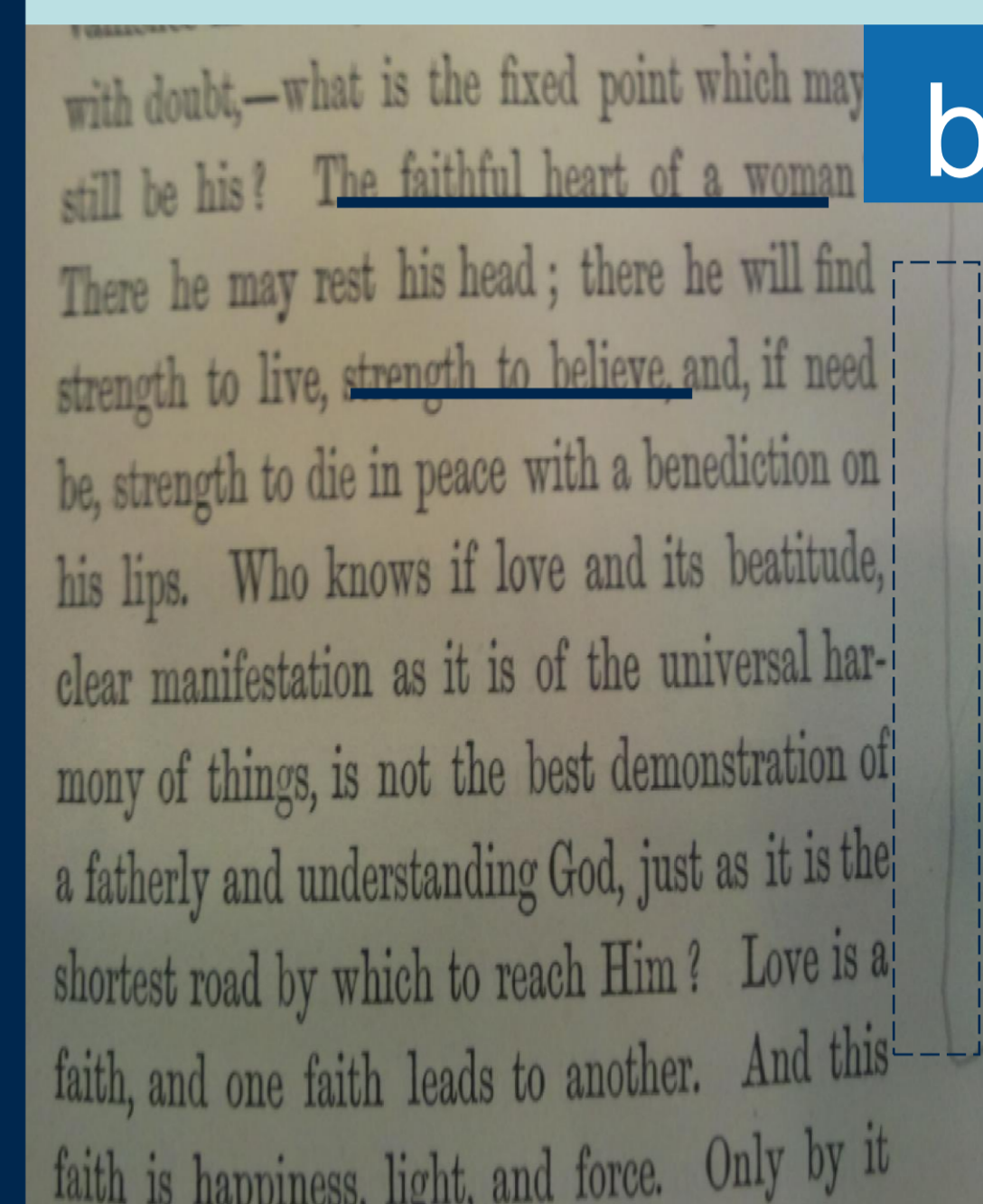
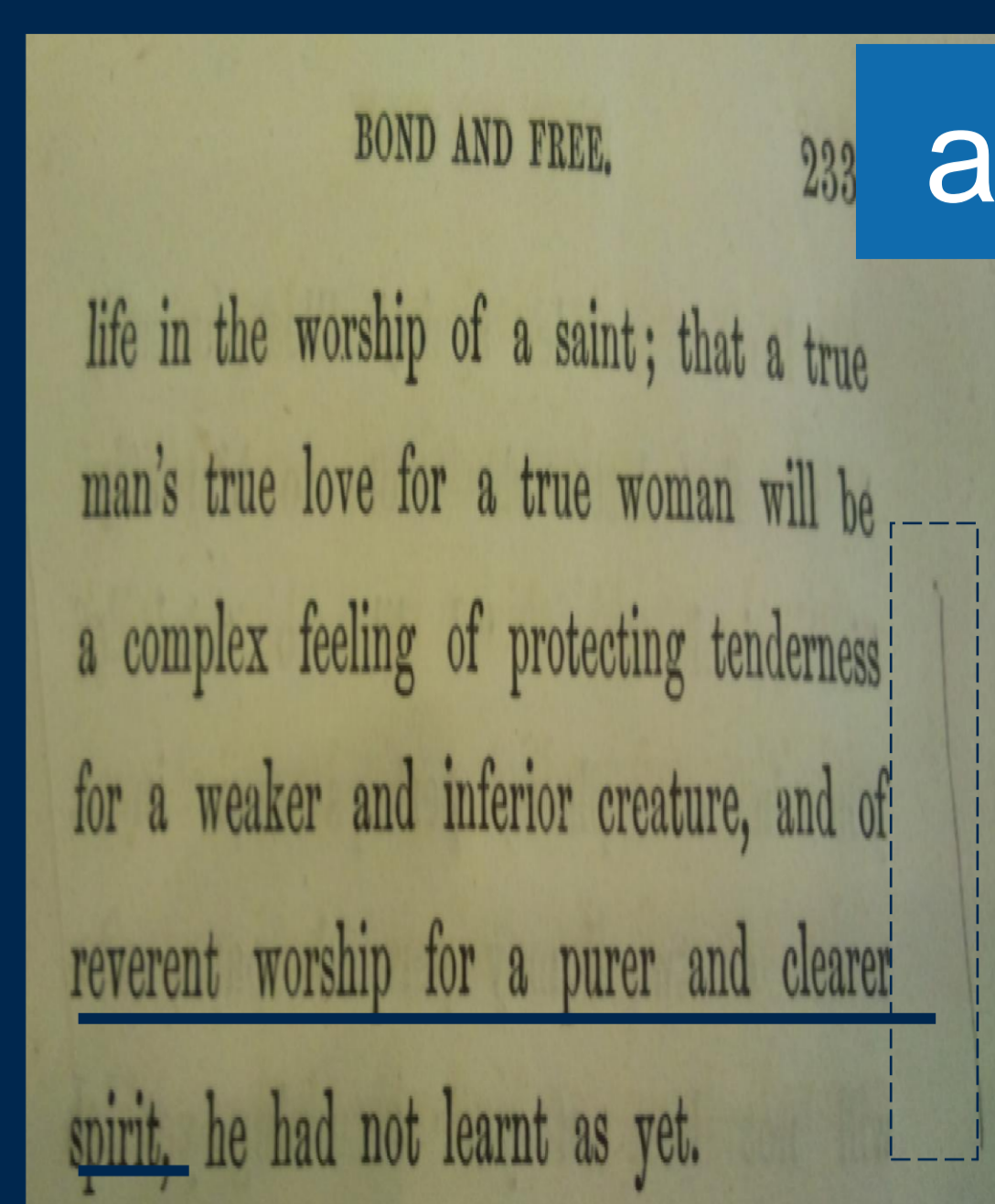
The aim of this project was to research Tennyson's views on women's views on religion.

Critics are now considering Tennyson's views on Victorian culture. This is revealing a more complex understanding of his views regarding religion. My role was to examine books in the Tennyson Research Centre by women writers on religion and to look for any markings or comments made by Tennyson and put my results on a website online. Whilst this was the central aim of the project I was also invited to attend a four day conference on Tennyson in Lincoln.



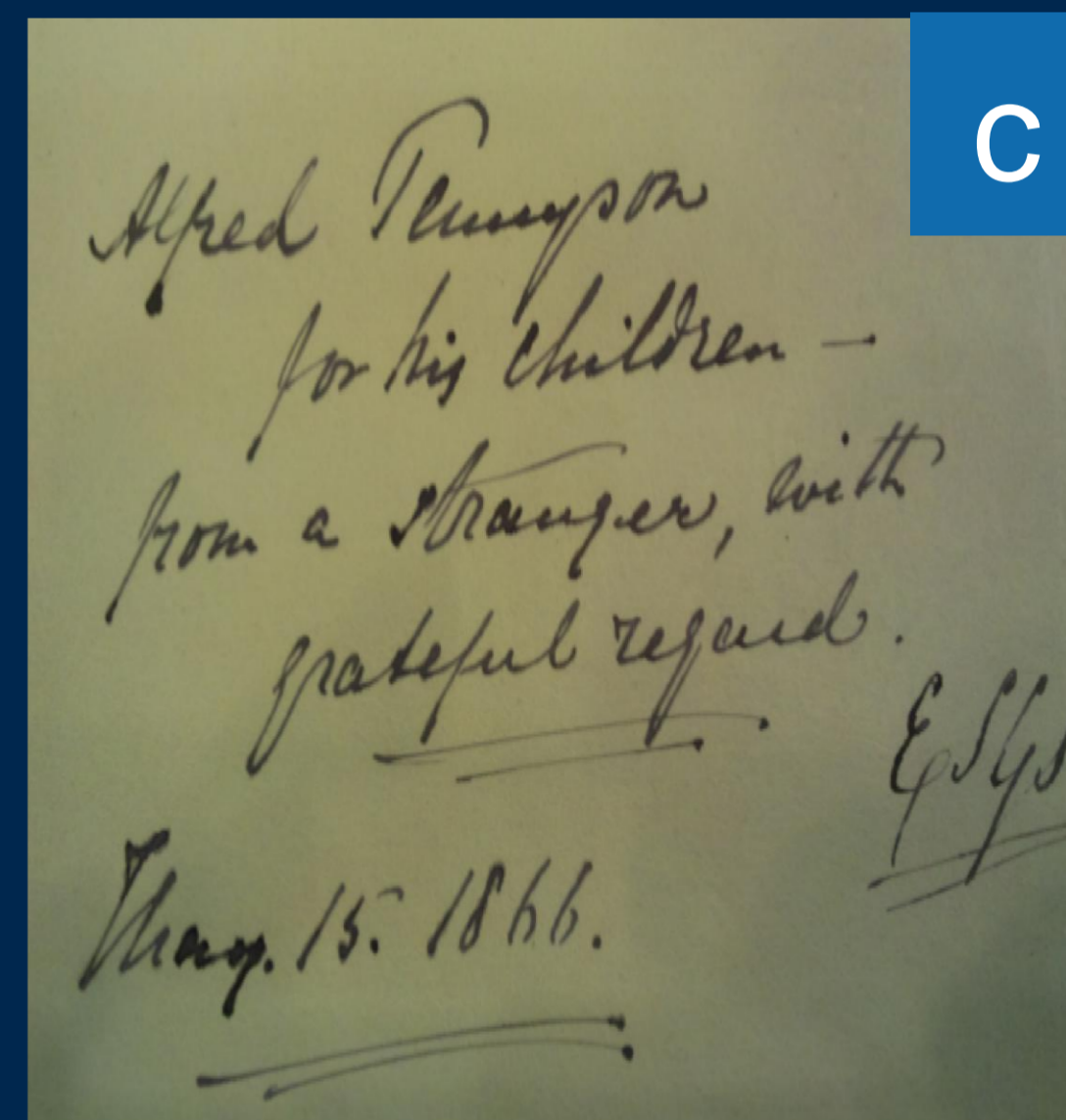
CONFERENCE

I spent four days at a conference at the University of Lincoln. Throughout the time I went to a series of papers and lectures on Tennyson ranging from childhood and beginnings to science, dreams and the role of the poet. I also went on a coach trip to Tennyson's home and Harrington Hall, looked around an art gallery displaying visual representations of his work and listened to a poetry reading by Gabriel Woolf .



METHOD

For one week I worked in the Tennyson Research Centre both as part of a group and also individually. I looked through many books by women writers on religion that Tennyson had had in his library, for example Emily Saunders' *The Flowers of Grass*, Dinah Marie Craik's *King Arthur*, Jane Octavia Brookfield's *Only George* and recorded any of Tennyson's annotations and a brief summary of the religious views expressed in these books. I then used the internet to look up letters between Tennyson and these authors to try and see what his opinion was of their views. I also noted down the messages in the front covers of some of these books. I was also given the chance to see the original manuscript of *Maud*.



RESULTS

Having carried out this research I found out that Tennyson had:

Written to Frances Power Cobbe, Jane Olivia Brookfield, Dinah Marie Craik and Jean Ingelow in praise of some of their work and also written letters indicating he was good friends with these female writers

Highlighted two areas of text from *Bond and Free* by Emily Jolly and *Amiel's Journal* which discuss that despite the inferiority of women their purity enabled them to have a special connection to God (See fig a and b)

Had three dedications written by Jane Olivia Brookfield, Emily Saunders and Jean Ingelow to him in their books (see fig c, d and e)

Appeared to own a large amount of religious texts by women for children and actually had one which was dedicated to his own children

CONCLUSION & EVALUATION

From these results I have found that Tennyson appeared to be very supportive of women's views and writings on religion. Various letters describe some of the books as 'interesting', 'delightful', 'very charming' and how good some of the texts were. Furthermore, Tennyson's focus on one's personal relationship to God has a central importance in relation to how he perceives women. His annotations emphasise the idea of women as pure, and therefore closer to God, perhaps enabling Tennyson to consider them as having a greater understanding of religious ideas and explaining why he had so many texts written by women on religion for his own children.

I have never been involved in a project like this before and it has given me a great opportunity to be involved in the first stages of researching a topic. In particular the URSS experience has allowed me to:

- Gain a key insight into how research is carried out
- Meet and talk to leading academics and listen to how papers are delivered and responded to
- Work as part of a team and also to organise myself to work independently

