

"THE GOD"  
OF  
FRANCIS THOMPSON  
IN HIS  
"THE HOUND OF HEAVEN"

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THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
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FACULTY OF ARTS AND LETTERS  
SANATA DHARMA  
TEACHERS' TRAINING INSTITUTE  
YOGYAKARTA

1980

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A THESIS  
PRESENTED TO THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
OF IKIP SANATA DHARMA  
YOGYAKARTA  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
SARJANA DEGREE

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by  
Anton Kedang  
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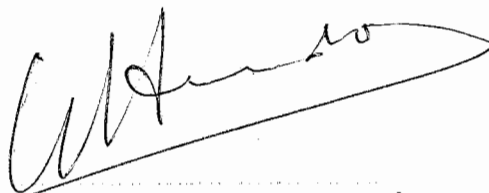
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October  
1980.



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Approved by



(Drs. W.Y. Hendrowarsito)

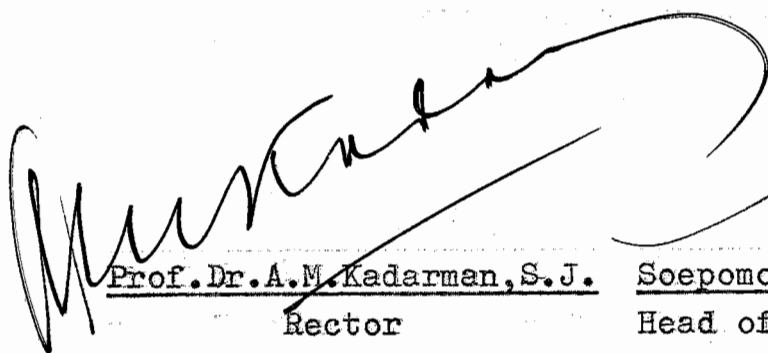
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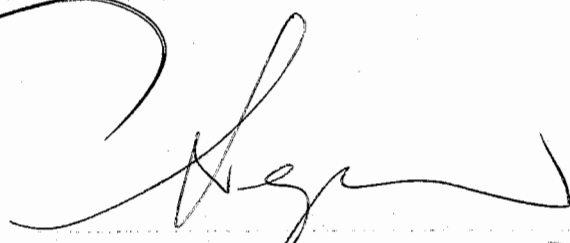
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FOREWORD

This thesis, presented to the English Department of the Teachers' Training Institute of Sanata Dharma, is in partial fulfillment of my sarjana degree and is equally an expression of my gratitude to the Institute and to the Department and all its lecturing staff in particular.

I am greatly indebted to my poetry lecturer, Drs. W.Y. Hendrowarsito, whose appreciation and explication of poetry in his lectures have opened up new vistas of life for me so as to lead me to the choice of poetry for my thesis. His kindness, suggestions, and understanding have encouraged me in accomplishing this thesis. I am also very grateful to Mrs. Gloria Soepomo, Ph.D., who has been so kind and patient as to spare her valuable time for reading the draft of the thesis and making useful corrections on it. I offer my special thanks to Mr. Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo, Ph.D., the head of the Department, who has always been willing to give wise suggestions whenever I came to him for help. I will always remember his kindness and readiness of being always at his students' service.

In the course of writing the thesis some willing hands have rendered me their valuable help. Mr. Graham O'Rourke, from Australia, provided me with a xeroxed copy of Peter Butter's book on Francis Thompson; Miss Trifena Juniarti sent me, from Jakarta, some xeroxed copies about Victorian age

## II

thought; and Father Drs. John Lengkong, M.S.C., was kind enough as to let me have his copy on the background of Victorian literature. To them, I offer my heartiest thanks.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my Superiors, who have given me the opportunity to study and provided me with moral and material support in the course of my study at this Institute.

Anton Kedang.

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

Poetry is one of the most interesting and yet very often the most subtle form of literature. To understand it one has to dig deeper than what is written, since a piece of poetry, I believe, is the expression of feeling, ideas, philosophy and the outlook of a poet in a certain society and period of time. It is a means of communication by which a poet tries to communicate himself, his experiences and his thoughts to his readers. Undoubtedly, the age and the society in which the poet lives give a lasting impact upon his work. This, I think, gives the poetry of a period and a society a character of its own, which makes it distinct from that of another period or society. Its value, however, can be lasting and universal because poetry has its roots in the core of humanity itself.

A piece of poetry is said to be great and rich and of high value if it has the capability of exploiting and expressing the elements that make up life itself: living, suffering, loving, and joy. Mr. W. Y. Hendrowarsito is correct when he says, "Great poetry engages the whole man in his response --sense, imagination, intellect; it does not touch him merely on one side of his nature. Great poetry seeks not merely to entertain the reader but to bring him, along with pure pleasure, fresh insights, or renewed insights, and important insights, into the nature of human experience." 1)

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1) "How to Judge Poetry," Drs.W.Y.Hendrowarsito's poetry lecture sheets for doctoral students of English Department of Sanata Dharma 1979, p.3.

As a form of literature, poetry has had its contribution to changes that have happened in the world. Its penetrating influence touches almost every form of life, since, as Mr. W.Y. Hendrowarsito puts it, "great poetry gives its reader a broader and deeper understanding of life, of his fellow-men, and of himself" <sup>1)</sup> without making itself a moral instructor. To put it briefly, great poetry expresses "the knowledge of the complexity of human nature and the tragedies and sufferings, the excitements and joys, that characterize human experience." <sup>2)</sup>

The main concern of this thesis is to show Francis Thompson's idea of God in relation to man in his great poem "The Hound of Heaven." The poem tells of a fleeing soul and a pursuing God. The whole poem is religiously Catholic, since the poet's background and education were strictly Catholic. So, the poem breathes a spirit purely Catholic.

The relationship of God and man has been a rich source of inspiration for many poets. This has become an eternal theme. Numerous and various ways have been exploited to express this mysterious relationship. A writer's educational background and his inner experiences give colour and taste to his work. The value of his work, however, surpasses every religious boundary. Commenting on Amir Hamzah's poem "PadaMu Djua" <sup>3)</sup> A. Teeuw writes, "To me this poetry

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1) "How to Judge Poetry," Drs. W.Y. Hendrowarsito's poetry lecture sheets, p.3.

2) I b i d .

3) Cf. APPENDIX, p. i.

is of the highest order, as direct and as adequate, as 'to the point' and as up-to-date as the formulation of the problem of communication between God and man can be. The Moslem background is clear, but the author often transcends any particular creed, either implicitly through the universality of his experience, or explicitly." <sup>1)</sup> John Milton's master-piece, "Paradise Lost," although it fails to justify the ways of God to man, does express the biblical fact telling man's crucial state as being led away from God by the Prince of Darkness. Some critics even say that Milton's splendid and vivid portrayal of Satan shows the striking truth that lies at the background, that is, man's continuous attempt "to change the universe from a God-centered universe to a man-centered universe."<sup>2)</sup> In his sonnet "God's Grandeur," Gerard Manley Hopkins sees nature as a reflection of God, which, he wonders, men fail to recognize.<sup>3)</sup> In his "The Dream of Geron-tius," John Henry Newman dramatically depicts the great reality of a soul's going to meet its Judge, God Himself.<sup>4)</sup> And Chairil Anwar, who is regarded as one of Indonesia's post-war literary fore-runners, touchingly expresses man's littleness before God and his total dependence on Him in his beautiful poem entitled "Doa."<sup>5)</sup> This is only to mention a few.

In his relationship with God, Thompson has his own image of God. This image is particularly based on his education as a Catholic and it becomes distinctly

1) A. Teeuw, Modern Indonesian Literature, p.100.

2) Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., English Voices, p.288.

3) -----, op-cit., p.613. Cf. APPENDIX, p.ii.

4) A selection of this poem can be read in English Voices, pp.600-610.

5) Cf. APPENDIX, p. ii.

his own due to his own sad experiences, physical, mental, and spiritual.<sup>1)</sup> What he has written, however, is applicable to every soul, since every man has the inclination of turning away from God.

This thesis tries to present Thompson's image of God in "The Hound of Heaven," first implicitly in the course of presentation of the organization of thought and the explication of the poem (the second part of Chapter III), and explicitly in the third part of the same chapter. Before going into this, it seems necessary to be acquainted first with the poem itself, which we can find in the first part of Chapter III. Some understanding of the poet himself is quite necessary. This means we have to have a global knowledge of his life and his work and of the period in which he lived. So, a few words on Victorian literature and its background are worthwhile (Chapter I); then comes a brief presentation of the poet's life and his literary work in general (Chapter II). Chapters I and II serve as an introduction into Thompson's great work, "The Hound of Heaven." The last chapter (Chapter IV) is very short. It serves as a kind of personal reflection on what has been said in the preceding chapters.

By this thesis the writer has also in mind to tell the reader that a minor poet has his own peculiarities in presenting to us the values of life. So, the writer hopes that this thesis might well open one's heart and mind for a minor poet whoever he might be.

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1) Cf. Chapter II, "Brief Biography."

The writer is very sure that what he presents here is far from perfect. He hopes, however, that the understanding of Thompson and his "The Hound of Heaven" would lead one to the understanding of himself in his relation to God.

## I. VICTORIAN LITERATURE

Literature is life. It describes and tells of human activity. Literature exists and develops along with the people that support it. Literature can be best understood in the context of life and the development of its people. Land, life, and people, therefore, cannot be separated from literature. Together they form one unity which is human culture.

Since it develops along with the development of mankind, literature of each period of time has its own characteristics. The political situation of a country, its scientific development, its industrial progress, its social changes, and its religious life give a certain taste and colour to its literature. It is proper, then, to say that "the history of a national literature cannot be learned apart from the whole history of the nation."<sup>1)</sup>

To understand Victorian literature one has to have some insight into the elements that make up the Victorian Era. Its political and religious strife, its scientific and industrial revolution, and its social chaos must be taken into account. Therefore, before discussing the characteristics of Victorian Literature in general, it is worthwhile to have a general view of the political situation and the scientific development of the Victorian Age, its industrial and social changes, and its religious situation, which together form the background to Victorian literature.

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<sup>1)</sup> George Sampson, Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, p. xiii.

### A. Background <sup>1)</sup>

The Victorian Age started in 1832 with the Reform Bill and ended with Queen Victoria's death in 1901. It was a period of change in England. It was an age marked by economic reforms, religious emancipation, scientific progress, and political expansion--an age in which contemporary problems were carefully sifted by minds well equipped for that purpose.<sup>2)</sup>

The chief elements that make up the Victorian Era can be categorized as: The Political thought and the religious situation; industrialism; agriculture; and the cheap press. They are the basis on which Victorian literature flourished. They are all well reflected in the literature of the age and are strongly knitted together that it seems cruel to discuss them separately. For practical reasons, however, the thesis presents them here one after the other. The presentation here will be a very sketchy one; an elaborate discussion would certainly cover hundreds of pages, which is not the aim here.

#### 1. Political Thought

At home England had two main factions fighting for power. The Tories, or the Conservative Tory Party, were in power between 1783 and 1830. The minority or radical party was the Whig Party. The Tories, who were supported by the monarchy and the Established Church, backed the monarchy system since they believed that mo-

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1) The "Background" was arranged and written under close cooperation with Father John Lengkon M.S.C.

2) Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., English Voices, book four, p. 522.

narchy provided stability. Their chief inspiration was the Tory philosopher, Edmund Burke, who revered constitution, heritage, and tradition. He expounded on a feudal organization of society, a society which was without equality but wherein each person was with recognized position, privileges, and responsibilities. The Tories maintained that inequality was a divine ordination. But their position became unstable when democratic Americans and Frenchmen challenged their doctrine. Moreover, there was the Industrial Revolution which promoted rapid progress of economic and social transformation. When the working classes staged riots, the Tories tried to crush the opposition with extreme measures. After Waterloo they could no longer cope with the lack of prosperity and were defeated by the Whigs.

The Whigs, under Tory government, were supported by the landholding aristocrats and applied parliamentary methods. Although the Reform Bill came under their name, it originated from the radicals. These were Tom Paine, who was practical, William Godwin, who was philosophical, R.T. Malthus, who was practical and suggested individual freedom, William Cobbett, who was a vituperative fighter for democratic reform, and Jeremy Bentham, who taught the doctrine of individual happiness and freedom based on the "greatest happiness of the greatest number." Individual freedom was supported by the romantic poets: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, and Shelley.

Cobbett-like democrats, Tory secessionists, and Benthamite radicals gathered in the Whig Party. They



came into power in 1830 in place of the Tories, who were now an insignificant majority. Aristocratic landholders lost their political power. Significant reforms improved the condition of the common people. Individual freedom, implantation of democracy, free trade, laws protecting common people were the characteristics of the Whig government.

The period between 1850 and the 1870s was noted as the period of prosperity. There was the Victorian optimism and the worship of progress. New inventions in many fields increased progress. There was a deep self-esteem and a strong positive belief in individualism. More voters could participate in the government, and local governments were people's elected councils. Education was promoted.

Social criticisms were launched by critics against social shortcomings, and the Tories won again in 1874. Between 1874 and 1906 the Conservative Tories and the Liberal Whigs were continuously concerned with the issues of imperialism, workers, voters, and socialism. By 1906 imperialism had run its course and the Liberals won decisively for social legislation.

## 2. Religious Situation

In the Established Church of England there were divisions as in the state itself. From 1800 to 1832 the leading parties were the High Church or Orthodox Party, and the Evangelical or radical minority party. The High Church was concerned with incomes and privileges and salaries of office but showed little spirit of religion. It was not religious but materialistic. Virtue for them was doing good to mankind in obedience

to the will of God for everlasting salvation. The spirituality of the clergy reached the vanishing point.<sup>1)</sup> The nobility consisted of the Church and the army. The system was nepotistic, and they practised plurality and absenteeism. The effect was abuses.

The Evangelical or the radical minority party consisted of the Evangelicals--those within the Established Church--and the Methodists, those outside. Their principles and methods differed from those of the High Church. They were fundamentally puritanical, and were concerned with the salvation of individual souls. Their doctrine was that people take suffering and poverty as something which is unavoidable, and they were against political revolution. Thus they proved to be the allies of the Tories. Then their laymen occupied influential positions in the Church of England, and established missionary enterprises, Bible societies, promoted better observance of Sundays, abolished the slave trade, and made philanthropic reforms. They were actually more humanitarian, philanthropic than religious.

After 1832 the Evangelicals, often called the Low Church, became the ruling party and were against the Oxford Movement. The High Church, after the Oxford movement, became a section of genuine religious convictions. Samuel Taylor Coleridge advocated another group with broad doctrine to welcome all types

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1) Cf. for example, Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice.

of religious mind. His doctrine, however, emphasized conduct rather than dogma. It supported the development of science. The doctrine of eternal punishment was one of its dissensions. But the spirit of compromise appeared in the influence of the Court which was always on the side of moderate religious opinions. The Queen was strongly opposed to ritualism, and Prince Albert disliked bigots and fanatics of all sorts.

After 1870 religion was not a deep concern of the public. There was a tolerance of purely secular opinion and there was freedom of puritanical restrictions. Science won its freedom. The Church confirmed its Protestant heritage, and religious organizations were active in the amelioration of social conditions by establishing city missions and other forms of social service.

On the whole the Victorians were Evangelicals and they revered respectability and propriety. They lived according to their light and they did it sincerely and energetically.

### 3. Industrialism

Knowing about the transformation of England by the Industrial Revolution is essential for understanding the political and the social changes and the ideas reflected in Victorian literature.

Between 1760 and 1830 the Industrial Revolution replaced a system of hand manufacture at home with machine manufacture in factories in the cities. The products were carried on foot to the exporting villages and towns. But due to the increase of export de-

mands and the improvements in cloth making, people invented new devices. Successively there were the flying shuttle, spinning jenny, spinning machine or water frame or "mule", carding machines, combing machines, power loom, and steam power. The importations of raw cotton and wool increased, and production multiplied by several thousand per cent. Hand weavers could not possibly compete--and live--with the factory system, and this system was soon applied to woollens and other fabrics, metal, wooden and leather commodities. Similar improvements were accomplished in transportation: waterways and toll roads were built, locomotive and British steamboats were established. England became the world's factory, the world's money market, and the world's carrier.

The Industrial Revolution affected national life, because it brought new ideas, created new classes and established new institutions, and changed the social conditions. There were now the great class of capitalist manufacturers and the new class of workers in the newly built manufacturing cities. There were conflicts between industry and agriculture because of the Corn Laws. The conditions in factories were very bad and unhealthy; in the cities were poor houses, high rents, and lack of sanitation. In factories long working hours became the rule, and women and children were often preferred to men because of their low wages. Children, even at the age of four and five, were employed. The employment of children then became a big topic for writers.

In the second half of the century more inventions continued to come, which gave way to the application of science to industry. They included the telegraph, telephone, wireless telegraph, rotary, gas burners, gas lights, motion picture camera, typewriter, linotype machine, refrigerating machines, and harvesting machinery.

The nineteenth century brought with it great material progress and at the same time problems of adaptation.

#### 4. Agriculture

Abrupt and far-reaching changes also took place in agriculture. An agricultural revolution took place starting from the middle of the 18th century. Agricultural methods and devices were improved, but through the system of enclosures, the ownership and control of English farming land fell into the hands of a very small group only.

Through enclosures the rich lords, clergymen, and persons of influence could hold and divide the cultivated land in England. Scientific agriculture turned the wilderness into gardens. Successful manufacturers and merchants influenced enclosures as they wanted to secure large country estates in order to improve their social rank. Many farmers did not have any legal claims on any land in parishes; they turned into farm labourers for wages; many were driven from farming by the improved methods and machinery. In villages hand weavers, being unable to compete with the factories, became factory hands or

farm labourers; some emigrated to America. On the farms were the landlords, who owned the land, the farmers, who paid rents for the use of it, and the farm labourers. Only the dukes, the marquises, the earls, the viscounts, the barons, and the clergymen possessed the most part of England. Laws against poaching in game preservations imposed severe punishments, for example, miserable transportation. The English commons or the country workers were called 'the lower order,' and the imported Scottish workers were treated without personal sympathy. Transmitting land estates undivided to the nearest heir became traditional, and family sentiment and interest kept the system alive until the end of the nineteenth century.

##### 5. Cheap Press

The establishment of the so called "cheap press" in the first third part of the nineteenth century enforced democratization. Newspaper clientele were more liberal than aristocratic. Around the middle of the century newspapers were taxed no more. Along with the progress of transportation, improvement of communication, increase of urbanization, and the growth of popular education, newspapers, which in general served as popularizers of ideas found in magazines and books, were distributed easily and the number of subscribers increased. There was a growth of interest in reading popular writings.

By the end of the century monthlies and weeklies had remarkably increased. Writers, essayists,

novelists, poets were encouraged to express their different views in the periodical press. Individuals and groups interested in affecting public opinion regarded newspapers and magazines as essential for their purpose. Political, social and many other problems were made known to the public and goals were achieved through the press.

For the sake of the liberalization of England public education was necessary, but the growth of the cheap press was more influential, since it had been both the cause and the effect of democracy.

#### B. General View

The world of Victorian Literature is a world of wonder. To enter it, some critics say, means to take a journey not into a land of dreams and fancy of Alice's Wonderland but into a real world transfigured by imagination. There would come into view such figures as the shiny bespectacled Mr. Thackeray, the angular and scholarly novelist Mr. Arnold, the crusty school inspector Mr. Carlyle, the talented Brontë sisters, Tiny Tim and Mr. Micawber, the Lady of Shallot and Long John Silver, Robert and Elizabeth Browning, Queen Victoria, Cardinal Newman, and many more. It is a world as colourful as Victorian life itself, as amusing as the funny rhymes of Lewis Carroll, as vigorous as the essays of Macaulay, as touching as the stories of Dickens, and as vital as Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven." 1)

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1) Cf. Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., op-cit., p. 522.

Victorian literature covers an amazingly large sphere with a marvelous variety of subjects. In those seventy years we see that talented writers made themselves busy with representing life in all its form and aspects. The dream of the Empire being realized during these years, the writers speak also of England's growing power in the world.

As a whole Victorian literature seems to flourish. However, not all the elements that make up literature--e.g. drama, essay, novel, poetry--enjoy a happy development.

### 1. D r a m a

In the field of drama, writing suffered a grave setback. To see it from the artistic point of view, the best dramatic composition were closet dramas. Its decadence is due to the employment of mechanical plots, to their sentimentality, and to a devotion to farce and melodrama.

### 2. E s s a y s

In the field of essay the Victorian Age can boast of brilliant critics. Here one comes upon the great essayists such as Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, and Newman. Each of them has his own individual traits which make them different from each other. They, however, were one in their effort to solve the problems that came upon Englishmen of their time. They were different from each other in their personality, in the fields of interest, in their way of thinking. But this difference was indispensable in the making of sound essays.



The essay is the expression of the opinion held by the author. Personality and personal viewpoint give the essay its warmth and colour. A close study of the writings of essayists would lead one to a good understanding of the Victorian period, since the essayists, being very searchful in their manner of looking at things around them, serve as the chief analysts and interpreters of their time. In this connection it seems proper to mention that one of the best essayists of the time was Cardinal Newman, who was wellknown for his "accuracy and profundity of thinking and the excellence of his style; his energetic leadership helped to prepare the way for a resurgence of Catholic culture in England." (English Voices, p.522).

### 3. N o v e l s

The Victorian age was blessed with magnificent hosts of novels. It is in the novel that the Victorian Age made its greatest contribution to the world of literature.

Victorian novels have the same range of subject matter and feeling as that of the work of the essayists. There seems that the different works of the novelists have no relation with each other. For example, the stories of Dickens, which are mainly concerned with the crowded city streets, seem to have no relation at all with Emily Brontë's moving novel, Wuthering Heights, which has the moorland as background. A close study of the novels, however, will bring us a significant resemblance that can be detected not only between the novels of Dickens and Emily Brontë but in all other novels

as well. Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., points out, "the genius of the novelist lies in his power to create characters that are distinctive and to project them into action that is interesting. It is at this point that we see the resemblance between the work of Dickens, Miss Brontë, Thackeray, George Eliot, Stevenson, and many others." (English Voices, p. 523.)

For an illustration let us have a look at some novelists. Charles Dickens was an amazingly imaginative portrayer of characters. His creative imagination was so wonderfully powerful as to produce such vivid and lively characters as Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Micawber, Old Scrooge and Tiny Tim, Sidney Carton and Charles Darnay, Little Nell and David Copperfield. But Dickens was not only capable of inventing characters; he was also a talented storyteller. His stories cover various areas of interest. They range from the thrilling romances like A Tale of Two Cities, which breathes the odour of the French Revolution, to biographical narrative as David Copperfield. Besides having the talent of being a dramatic and narrative genius, Dickens also had the quality of a poet. There are numerous passages in his novels which bear the imaginative and emotional trait of poetry and which move melodiously in the rhythmic-al order of verse.

William Thackeray was no less picturesque in his description of characters and interesting action. Thackeray, however, unlike Dickens, was interested in the people of high class. He is said to be the

novelist of the upper class. He presented life as something realistic and, at times, ironic. In spite of their difference in interest, both Dickens and Thackeray were united in their effort to expose the evils and hypocrisy that overwhelmed the public and private life in their time.

George Eliot was interested in moral problems. Her book Mill on the Floss and Silas Marner are regarded as novels with classical value in the world of English prose. The Brontë sisters took rural life as their subject of interest; and Stevenson presented us the spell that any adventure might bring. The Victorian stories are so numerous as to make the world of fiction an exhaustible source of ideas, experiences, and entertainment.

#### 4. P o e t r y

In the field of poetry there seems to be a kind of nostalgia for medieval literature. The Victorian air was so much darkened by the smoke of the industrial centres, that the poets turned their eyes with eager earnestness toward the brightness and freshness of the medieval setting, in which knights and ladies of the castles played enchanting roles. The poets seemed to try to escape from the pressure of the forces that were transforming English life and thought.<sup>1)</sup> Social conditions failed to escape their critical eyes; economic problems, religious confrontation, and the scientific revolution became the source of their inspiration.

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1) Cf. "Poetry V, 1979," p. 1. (The stenciled sheets of poetry lecture for doctoral students.)

Two principal poets of the Victorian Age were Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning. There is a great difference between the two. Tennyson proved himself to be a lyricist and a philosophical and moral poet. His deep appreciation of nature linked him with the Romanticists. The subject matter and techniques of his poetry are traditional. His industrial effort in perfecting his art at last made him the poet laureate of the nobler side of Victorian England.<sup>1)</sup> Robert Browning is known as the inventor of new verse forms, particularly of the dramatic monologue<sup>2)</sup> and dramatic lyric. The comparison between Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" and Browning's "Prospice"<sup>3)</sup> presents the great difference between the two poets. Each poem implicitly describes the distinct personality of its author. "Crossing the Bar" takes us into the air of quiet serenity, while "Prospice" presents us with a tumultuous spirit of a person with revolutionary character. Unlike Tennyson, Robert Browning occasionally preoccupied himself with the unworthy side of Victorian life. However great is the difference between the two poets, they had rendered a meritorious service of lifting up and advancing the status of English of their day.

There were still more than twenty poets who were less significant than the two major ones. Minor though they were, they also gave their contributions to English poetry. These poets are categorized as those who

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1) Roy J. DeFerrary, c.s., op-cit., p. 524.

2) His "My Last Duchess" is the best example of the dramatic monologue.

3) Cf. APPENDIX, p. xvi.

belonged to no particular school and those who shared writing interests and principles in common. To the former group belonged such poets like Stevenson and Henley. They carried on their creative effort in the field of poetry along individual lines. To the latter group belonged, among others, the so-called Pre-Raphaelite poets. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, his sister Christina, William Morris, and Algernon were the foremost figures of the Pre-Raphaelites. The following comment given by Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., illustrates the distinct characteristics of the Pre-Raphaelites: "Their interests lay in colorful, musical verse with thought and action suggested by the past--particularly the Middle Ages and the early years of the Renaissance. The Pre-Raphaelites kept alive that lyrical fervor in English poetry which springs from highly stimulated, imaginative, and emotional experiences dedicated to beauty." (English Voices, p.525).

The Catholic poets too had their role in Victorian literature. Such poets as Newman, De Vere, Patmore, Alice Meynell, Thompson, Hopkins, and Dowson revived a type of poetry which had not been produced in England since the rise of Protestantism. Besides being beautiful, their poems breathe a spirit which is purely Catholic in code and creed. Their view on and attitude towards life influenced later poets considerably. Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., explains: "By their choice of subject matter and their explanations of life they helped to stem the tide of naturalistic and materialistic writing which threatened to engulf English literature at the end of the nineteenth

century." (English Voices, p. 525.)

There was a time when the Victorians were looked upon with sneers and searing contempt. The Victorian Age was regarded as a period of false sentiment, hypocrisy, and impossible nobility. The time has now gone. Today the Victorians have obtained their right to stand high in the world of English literature. "Readers of Victorian prose and poetry will find that enduring pleasure that is generated by writing which is truly a heightened representation of life." (English Voices, p. 525.) How true is this last statement!

## II. FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907)

A minor poet as he is, Francis Thompson is hard to find in anthologies. Some authors, however, have dedicated some of their books to discussing him and have presented some light as to what kind of a person he was. The story of his life presented here serves as a general picture of him, his work, and his poetry.

### A. A Brief Biography

In the exposition of Francis Thompson's biography, we are mainly concerned with two points, namely his life and his work. We treat both of them in general terms.

#### 1. His Life

Francis Thompson was born at Preston, Lancashire on December 18, 1859. His father, Charles Thompson, was a doctor. Being devout Catholic converts, his parents sent him to Ushaw College, near Durham, to study for priesthood. His absentmindedness, timidity, and his poor health, however, disqualified him for being a priest. This was the first disappointment of his life. His father, then, sent him to Owen College in Manchester to study medicine. But he spent most of his time in public galleries, the libraries, and the cricket-fields. Three times he failed his medical examinations. In 1885 Francis left his parents and for the next few years we saw a shabby and ragged Francis Thompson roaming about the streets of London, working in a

boot-maker's shop, selling matches, unloading trucks, and taking in opium. He soon became a terribly sorry sight, and would have been unnecessarily perished if Wilfred Meynell had not come to his rescue.

The poem he sent to the Catholic literary monthly, *Merry England*, in 1888 brought him into contact with Wilfred Meynell, the monthly's editor. Mr. Meynell's loving and persistent inducement forced him to a hospital where he was partly restored to health and for a time released from opium. This better condition gave him enough strength for the next seven years, 1889-1896, to produce pieces of poetry which had been lying hidden in his veins for years. From 1889 to 1890 he was the guest of a Fransiscan Community in Sussex, and from 1892 to 1896 he lived near a Capuchin Monastery in Wales, where he came in contact with Coventry Patmore, a Roman Catholic mystic, who had some influence upon him.

Francis Thompson's nomadic impulse, however, kept him from having a permanent place to live. He moved from one lodging to another. The only family where he could come to at ease was the Meynells. This kind of living did not lead him to any perfect health. He was often ill and in pain, and, especially towards the end of his life, his former weakness of taking opium took hold of him again. On November 13, 1907, at the age of forty-seven, he died of tuberculosis in London and was buried in the Catholic cemetery at Kensal Green.

Thompson's poems are the expression of his personality. Even his "The Hound of Heaven" is said to



be a story drawn from his own spiritual experience.<sup>1)</sup>  
 To have a deeper understanding of his poems, therefore, it is necessary to know what kind of a person he really was. Physically he was weak and sickly. This probably had something to do with some psychological distortion. The following data, taken from Peter Butter's book entitled Francis Thompson (Longmans, Green & Co. 1961), would probably give some insight into his personality:<sup>2)</sup>

- 1) His parents seem to have been kind and deeply religious people.
- 2) He was a dreamy, unpractical gentle child, and from early days a great reader.
- 3) He was rather solitary, living in a realm of thoughts and imaginings which he could not, or would not, convey to others; but at the same time he was affectionate.
- 4) He did not want to grow up. His time at school did something, but not much, to take him out of himself. He began to write there--not only serious verse and prose but also humorous verses which were much adored; and the liturgical life at the seminary must have had an effect upon him; but he seems to have made no close friends. He attracted the affectionate interest of the masters, but was considered too impractical and absentminded to be acceptable for the priesthood, for which he had been intended. This was the

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1) Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., op-cit., p. 617.

2) Peter Butter, Francis Thompson, pp. 8-9.



first great disappointment of his life; his sense of failure over this tended to throw him yet further in upon himself.

Based on the data, we can conclude that Francis Thompson was a terribly introverted person. He was a person who found it difficult to communicate. He was unable to express his love to the girls who used to be very close to him. Though such was the case, he did not fail to express himself through other means. He spoke to other people mainly by means of his poems. He tells us of himself, of his personal experiences and desires, of his life and his love through his poems.

His work, on the other hand, shows another point of his personality. Francis Thompson was not a man who just let himself drift away either because of his own tragic physical condition or because of his environment. Peter Butter acknowledges that "at deeper--emotional and spiritual--levels he showed great toughness." Under his thin skinny and sickly body there lay a magic force which made him rise above his suffering and enabled him to make use of it. Peter Butter points out further that his work shows "a considerable body of verse, expressing joyous vision, not of the sordid, but of the Kingdom of God seen all around him in people and in nature; a large quantity of very intelligent and well-written prose; and his own unembittered and gentle character." Nevertheless, a truly religious man and a true artist though he was, he could never free himself from being

a dreamer and an escapist.<sup>1)</sup>

## 2. H i s W o r k

What is Francis Thompson's work? Thompson gave evidence of great power as a prose writer, but it is mainly as a poet that he is remembered.<sup>2)</sup> He wrote three volumes of poetry and several prose works. Most of Thompson's prose works are religious in tone. All but one of them were edited after his death. His Health and Holiness was published in 1905, two years before his death; Life of Blessed John de la Salle, in 1911. His two essays were edited after his death: Essay on Shelley, in 1909; Literary Criticisms, in 1948 by T.L. Connolly. In 1913 W. Meynell edited three volumes of his works.

Francis Thompson came under many people's attention after his first volume of poetry, Poems, was published in 1893. Even though he was said to belong to a "small Catholic clique," he was generally regarded as a new poet of distinction.<sup>3)</sup> The second volume, Sister Songs, was published in 1895. It was written for the Meynell children. Two years later another volume, which was to be the last, appeared. It was entitled New Poems (1897), and it was dedicated to Patmore, whose influence can be felt throughout the volume. As to Sister Songs, it is said that it was less sympathetically received than the first volume.<sup>4)</sup> But both Sister Songs and New Poems, some critics say, "con-

1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 12.

2) Cf. Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 22, p. 48.

3) and 4) John Wilson Bowyer and John Lee Brooks, The Victorian Age, p. 830.

firmed the opinion of his genius." 1)

### B. His Poetry in General

My SMA teacher once asked me why I liked poetry. My answer was: "I like poetry because it has much feeling in it." I did not realize then that the answer was not 100% correct, and that the question had a lot of implications. A piece of poetry, of course, has a lot of feeling in it. But it is not merely an expression of feeling, it is an expression of one's whole personality. It shows one's range of outlook and one's ability of using this unique means of communication which we call language and all its potentialities. What is then the subject of Thompson's poetry? How does he use words in expressing his feelings, his thoughts, and his external and internal experiences? To answer these two questions means to give some explanation as to the general characteristics of Francis Thompson's poems. The first question is concerned with the range of the content of his poems and the second question with the diction.

#### 1. C o n t e n t

Francis Thompson's poems, as most of his prose works, are religious in tone. They sing of the relationship of God and man. In his life man can probably approach God directly. However, it seems to have been natural (or is it in fact according to God's

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1) Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol.22, p. 148.

plan?) that man approaches God indirectly. He comes to God through nature and through his fellow men. Any other means may also serve as a reliable access to God.

As to Thompson's poems, we can distinguish those which are more directly concerned with the God-man relationship from those which are concerned with the approaching of God through people, nature, and poetry. Therefore, Thompson's poems can be classified into<sup>1)</sup>: a. poems dealing with people; b. poems dealing with nature; c. poems dealing with poetry; and d. poems dealing with religion.

a. The Meynells were both rescuers and inspirers to Thompson. They played an indispensable role in his life and even secured, without their intending it, a loving place in his heart. Undoubtedly, their influence upon him was enormous. It is understandable, therefore, that he dedicated the first volume of his poems, *POEMS*, to Mr. and Mrs. Meynell. His second volume, *SISTER SONGS*, was written for the Meynell children.

Love knows no limit. Its mysterious power penetrates every human body and heart. Thompson, sick and wretched though he was, deeply felt this mysterious touch of love. Peter Butter writes, "In a distant and adoring way he was in love with Alice Meynell<sup>2)</sup>, and was briefly attracted by Katherine King, a vivacious and intelligent girl he met in London, and by Mag-

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., pp. 13 ss.

2) The wife of Mr. Wilfred Meynell.

gie Brien, with whose family he lodged in Wales."<sup>1)</sup> Thompson, however, a shy person as he really was, was unable to express his feeling of love to them. He kept this love in his own heart, successfully put it under control. But this love was so strong in him that it forced itself out through another channel. Poetry was its best way out. So, Thompson dedicated several poems to these women, who were very close to him.

He expressed his gratitude to and love for Alice Meynell, for instance, in poems like Love in Dian's Lap<sup>2)</sup> and Ultima. She was his benefactress but at the same time was his muse and his source of inspiration. Consequently, he, inwardly, was strongly attached to her. The following lines taken from 'Before Her Portrait in Youth' of the poem Love in Dian's Lap show how great were his love and gratitude towards Mrs. Meynell. Recalling his wretched lot and the loving hands of the lady who had rescued him, he cries out,

Yet, voluntary, happier Proserpine!<sup>3)</sup>  
 This drooping flower of youth thou lettest  
 I, faring in the cockshut-light<sup>4)</sup>, astray fall  
 Find on my 'lated way,  
 And stoop, and gather for memorial  
 And lay it on my bosom, and make it mine.  
 To this, the all of love the stars allow me,  
 I dedicate and vow me.

1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 11.

2) This poem was actually addressed to both Mr. and Mrs. Meynell. Cf. note in APPENDIX, p. iii.

3) Proserpine=a plucking flower maiden, who was carried off into the lower world by Pluto in his car. (Ovid, Metamorphoses, Bk.V, ll. 388 etc; Claudian, Rape of Proserpine, Bk. II.) Cf. T.L. Connolly, Poems of Francis Thompson, p. 341.)

4) Cockshut-light=twilight, when poultry is locked up. Cf. Poems of Francis Thompson, p. 341.

I reach back through the days  
A trothed hand to the dead the last trump shall  
not raise.<sup>1)</sup>

The water-wraith that cries  
From those eternal sorrows of thy pictured eyes  
Entwines and draws me down their soundless intri-  
cacies. 2)

(11. 42-54)

What is more consoling and refreshing than the touch of a soft loving hand of a maiden who comes to raise you up from the dust of your wretched condition? In these lines Mrs. Meynell is sung as a young girl who, by God's design, has come to Thompson's rescue. He could not but return this loving action of hers by arranging these grateful moving lines. Her act of love is pure; she is Proserpine, yes, but the one who has come down to the 'lower world' of his not by the force of any earthly power but by the force of a still higher nature, charity.

His gratitude towards Mrs. Meynell is further expressed in his sonnets entitled Ad Amicam.<sup>3)</sup> In the first sonnet<sup>4)</sup> he describes Mrs. Meynell as a dove which brings peace to him, a 'sole-labouring ark.' An allusion to Noah's ark and dove is quite clear here.<sup>5)</sup> Thompson likens himself to the ark and Mrs. Meynell to the dove, which was sent out by Noah and then returned bringing an olive-branch, the symbol of calm and peace. Relieved by her loving hand he breathes out,

Dear Dove, that bear'st to my soul-labouring ark  
The olive-branch of so long wishèd rest,

1) the dead the last trump shall not raise=Mrs.Meynell  
as a young girl.

2) Peter Butter connects the sonnet with Kath.King.

3) Cf. APPENDIX, p. xiii.

4) T.L.Connolly, Poems of Francis Thompson, p.490.

5) Genesis 8,6-12.

When the white solace glimmers through my dark  
Of nearing wings, what comfort in my breast!

(Ad Amicam I, ll. 1-4)

Lines 3-4 is an inversion for: "When the white solace of nearing wings glimmers through my dark, what comfort in my breast." (Cf. Poems of Francis Thompson, p.538).

A slight love-affair of his days at Pantasaph (Wales) gave birth to a sequence of poems called A Narrow Vessel, which contain eight poems. It is apparently connected with Maggie Brien.<sup>1)</sup> The allegorical character of the poem seems "to indicate that the love which inspired it was not very intense."<sup>2)</sup> His description of love, however, is brave enough as to turn you ablaze. He that was too shy to express his love by means of mouth was capable of showing it through the lines that he delicately composed. Love needs no words; love turns everything in you into fire. He writes,

I looked, she drooped, and neither spake, and cold  
We stood, how unlike all forecasted thought  
Of that desired minute! Then I leaned  
Doubting; whereat she lifted - oh, brave eyes  
Unfrighted: - forward like a wind-blown flame  
Came bosom and mouth to mine!

That falling kiss  
Touching long-laid expectance, all went up  
Suddenly into passion; yea, the night  
Caught, blazed, and wrept us round in vibrant fire.<sup>3)</sup>

(Love Declared, ll. 1-10)

People would regret or even cry over the beauty,  
the pleasure, or the happiness now gone. Thompson has

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 13.  
2) T.L. Connolly, op-cit., p. 490.  
3) Cf. APPENDIX, p. xii.



the same feeling when he meets Katherine King. Her liveliness and radiance immediately win him when they first meet and he soon becomes attached to her. His poem Absence<sup>1)</sup> is said to have been addressed to her. The poem sings of the loveliness which is gone, of the beauty which has passed away, of the happiness which is now remembered only with pain. The following lines are the key to the idea of the whole poem:

But tears for the air  
You were  
When you first were fair!

(Absence, ll.22-24)

In his poems Thompson does not forget children. They are not, however, the object of his study but his contemplation. He sees them as beings of the world remote from ours. His poems on children are mostly not about childhood. They are about the loss of childly innocence and simplicity, which an adult yearns for. The sight of children makes Thompson's own sense of isolation from humankind more hurtful.<sup>2)</sup> He longs for the innocence of a child walking happily in the sea-breeze. Meditatively he mutters:

The hills look over on the South  
And southward dreams the sea;  
And with the sea-breeze hand in hand  
Came innocence and she.

(Daisy, 2<sup>nd</sup> stanza)

And then he seems to be rapt in the realm of childhood beauty, honesty, and ease. He writes:

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1) Cf. APPENDIX, p. v.

2) T.E.Connolly, op-cit., p.307.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry  
 Red for the gatherer springs,  
 Two children did we stray and talk  
 Wise, idle, childish things.

(Daisy, 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza)

His Catholic background makes Thompson think of children as "the manufacture and gift of God Himself, a beautiful result of the joint services of God Himself, and of Jesus, and of Mary and the Angels." His idea of the dignity of a child's soul and body is based on this doctrine.<sup>1)</sup> Children's innocence and purity Thompson sees as the ultimate Beauty, which is "unattainable in this life, though clearly foreshadowed in the beauty of the child."<sup>2)</sup>

What is striking about Thompson's poems on people is that they hardly "tell us about human behaviour or day to day changes of human relationship."<sup>3)</sup> He talks of love and mentions the people involved. But he does not describe them. From his poems we cannot collect as to what kind of people they are. In fact, in these poems Thompson is not concerned with them; he is concerned with only his own emotions, his own thoughts. He seems to suggest that he is giving us more than what is seen or felt; he is giving us an insight into the nature of love and into the relationship of human love to divine love. His checked and restrained love has "enabled him to see beyond merely natural love to that to which natural love should lead."<sup>4)</sup> Peter Butter points out that "the poems con-

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1) T.L.Connolly, op-cit., p. 307.

2) T.L.Connolly, op-cit., pp. 316-317.

3) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 13.

4) Peter Butter, ibid.

tain not only passionate feeling, but also quite clear and precise ideas as to the nature and function of love." (Francis Thompson, p. 13).

b. In his nature poems Thompson does not tell us much about the surface appearance of things. Only here and there he is capable of vivid description of a line and of evoking atmosphere of a scene. His main concern is not to describe the surface of things, but to present us the vision of all things as something alive, as something connected, as the art of God.<sup>1)</sup>

The first main idea presented in his nature poems is his admiration for the power hidden and working in the calm existing nature, in spiritual life, and in the life of artists. This idea is nicely woven in his 79-line poem Contemplation. A description of a beautiful bright morning scene after a shower opens the poem. Lines 20-25 present everything as quiet and at rest. We read:

The river has not any care  
The passionless water to the sea to bear;  
The leaves have brown content;  
The wall to me has freshness like a scent  
And takes half-animate the air,  
Making one life with its green moss and stain . . .

(ll. 20-25)

But he knows that underneath this calm stillness lie hidden great energies that would erupt at any time. This state, to him, is similar to that of the soul that is deeply absorbed in its contemplation, and especially to that of his own mind when, calm and

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 14.

receptive, it is really at its most creative mood.<sup>1)</sup>

He continues:

No hill can idler than I;  
No stone its inter-particled vibration  
Investeth with a stiller lie . . .

(ll. 30-33)

The second idea found in his nature poems is his awe at seeing the perfection in small things. Thompson perhaps is not very effective at describing great things such as the sun, the moon, the stars, great winds, etc. But he is really great in showing great things in small.<sup>2)</sup> The following lines of the poem All Flesh<sup>3)</sup> make us think of this.

I do not need skies'  
Pomp when I would be wise . . .  
One grass blade in its veins  
Wisdom's whole flood contains . . .

that is, if we are able to see in it

God focussed to a point.

(ll. 1-2, 5-6, and 36)

The third point which is expressed in Thompson's nature poems is that, for him, nature is the art of God. Even small things show something of His greatness.<sup>4)</sup> Such though his conviction, he does not depend entirely on nature. He thinks that nature, by itself, gives and teaches nothing; it has no hands to

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 15.

2) Peter Butter, ibid.

3) Cf. APPENDIX p. viii.

4) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 16.

bless. Therefore, he is not obliged to obey it. He believes that he surpasses nature. He says,

Lo, here stand I and Nature, gaze to gaze,  
And I the greater.

(Of Nature: Laud and Plaint,  
ll. 1-2)

c. Thompson's own experience as a poet covers a considerable proportion of his poems. His self-consciousness would probably make his readers tired of him. Some passages of his poems, however, successfully show something what he feels as a poet.<sup>1)</sup>

His experience tells him, first, that a poet is not everything; he has no absolute power over his profession. He writes:

The poet is not lord  
Of the next syllable may come . . .

Secondly, that a poet is not in full command of his plan. There is no binding law or contract that will make his vision obey his plan. He says,

Disguised in life's most holden gray,  
By the most beaten road of everyday  
She waited him, unexpected and unknown.

Thirdly, that to a poet a dream comes unexpectedly. The dream, the vision, is something that comes from the outside and takes hold of him. It is spoken of as another being and he can or is forced to have relations with it. He writes,

And suddenly his limbs entwine  
And draw him down through rock as sea-nymphs  
might through brine.

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1) This and the followings are nicely explained by Peter Butter, op-cit., pp.16-17.

Fourthly, in the spirit of acceptance a poet becomes a vehicle of the dream, of the vision, that comes unexpectedly to him. What he says or writes is not simply a release of energy lying deep in his self.

He writes:

His heart's a drop-well of tranquility;  
His mind more still is than the limbs of fear,  
And yet its unperturbed velocity  
The spirit of the simoom mocks.  
He round of the solemn centre of his soul  
Wheels like a dervish, while his being is  
Streamed with the set of the world's harmonies.

(Contemplation, ll.64-70)

Thompson believes that a poet is similar, in a way, to a saint. Like a saint, who empties himself in order to be an easy access for God and His grace, a poet should place himself in similar state to make himself a possible access for even the slightest urge of inspiration and intuition. Self-discipline is important here. One should not let himself be drifted away by the wild sentimental outpourings of mere emotionalism. A good art, Thompson believes, can stand up the scrutiny of reason, even though it goes beyond the reason itself.

It is generally agreed that there are two kinds of poetry. The one is the poetry which is the produce of a state of slack day-dreaming, and the other is the produce of a state of receptiveness reached by discipline and concentrated effort. The work of the former kind is sentimental and derivative, and of the latter is quite personal. As to Thompson's poems, Peter Butter, in his book Francis Thompson, says, "Some of Thomp-

son's own work is dreamy and derivative--Dreamy-Tryst<sup>1)</sup>, for example, and Absence<sup>2)</sup>; these poems are less than personal. But usually he writes in a way which is unmistakably and distinctively his own, though many of his poems are no more than personal, being weighed with his own sorrows. Sometimes, however, he rises up to that mixture of passion and calm which is characteristic of major poetry." (p. 19)

In some of his poems such as "To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster," for example, and "Any Saint", we meet a Francis Thompson who is humble and has little account of himself. In "A Judgment in Heaven," however, we find another Francis Thompson who is very sure of himself as a poet; he thinks, as a poet he is eternal, as T.L.Connolly rightly puts it, ". . . but at the same time he frequently speaks of himself as destined to immortality as a poet." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p. 406). Thompson, therefore, believes that his work would be immortal. This immortality reflects in the following lines of his poem "The Poppy":

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,  
Heavy with dreams, as that with bread:  
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper  
The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

(ll. 64-67)

The poppy is the symbol of the poet and his spiritual ideals, and the wheat is the symbol of man and his achievements. These are particularly happy figures.<sup>3)</sup> Thompson feels exalted by the fact that--as the poppy

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1) Cf. APPENDIX, p. x.

2) Cf. APPENDIX, p. v.

3) T.L.Connolly, op-cit., p. 305.

and the wheat--he will live on because the eternal Time will reap him. He repeats it again in the last eight lines of the poem:

Love, love! your flower of withered dream  
In leaved rhyme lies safe, I deem,  
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,  
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.

Love! I fall into the claws of Time:  
But lasts within a leaved rhyme  
All that the world of me esteems --  
My withered dreams, my withered dreams.

(ll. 73-80)

Yes, his "withered dreams" lie safe in "his reaper Time," i.e., he that is mortal will be immortal in Time, will always be remembered as any other English poets.

d. Francis Thompson is deeply absorbed in his own sorrows. But he always tries to free himself, especially inwardly, from this state. His life, therefore, is a kind of effort of reaching beyond this negative "absorption to a state of calm acceptance." <sup>1)</sup> This he expresses, with varying success, in his religious poems.

The basic idea or theme that forms the background of his religious poems is his own opinion on mysticism. Peter Butter cites what Thompson has written in a notebook<sup>2)</sup>: "The core of mysticism is a fact, not an understanding or a feeling. Still less is it an endeavour after something nameless and unattainable.

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1) and 2) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 19.



All true mystics know well about what they seek; and that it can be gained or missed according to the fidelity of their own effort. The thing sought is the Union." In another book: "A mystic poet who is vaporous fancy will not go far. Every such poet should be able to give a clear logical prose resumé of his teaching as terse as a page of scholastic philosophy." Peter Butter comments, "One could give such a resumé of the content of Thompson's poems, and show that what he had to say is in accordance with what the great adepts of the spiritual life have taught."

Thompson has probably succeeded in presenting this theme through his poems. The poems, however, are not all of the same quality. Peter Butter notes, "The quality of the emotion and the adequacy of expression vary greatly."

Thompson believes that he has been given the unusual gift of seeing spiritual riches, but he realizes well enough that he has not given due response to the gift. Regretfully he writes:

'Friend, whereto art thou come?' Thus Verity;  
Of each that to the world's sad Olivet  
Comes with no multitude, but alone by night,  
Lit with the one torch of his lifted soul,  
Seeking her that he may lay hands on her;  
Thus: and waits answer from the mouth of deed.

('Whereto Art Thou Come?'  
ll. 1-6)

His failure to give a complete answer to what he knows about the spiritual riches haunts him with sorrow and sadness. He is afraid lest he might be included among those who have betrayed the eternal Truth and would un-

dergo the fate of Judas the traitor.

His poem The Dread of Height presents pretty well his sense of joy and fear, which are always with him in his spiritual journeys. In these journeys he has had the privilege of enjoying spiritual elation. Gaily he says:

. . . . secret music, sweetest music  
From distance of distance drifting its lone flight.

(ll. 14-15)

But the situation is not always so. When the journey has reached its highest peak, he feels himself shaken, feeling empty underneath. He writes,

My soul with anguish and recoil  
Doth like a city in an earthquake rock,  
As at my feet the abyss is cloven then,  
With deeper menace than for other men,  
Of my potential cousinship with mire.

(ll. 80-84)

Thompson's religious poems show us a Francis Thompson that has been shown, more than most men, the high spiritual riches, but at the same time feels deeply responsible for the great gift and worries about the danger of falling, which would be his guilt if he does. His own experiences are behind these poems, which make the poems more authentic.

These poems mostly present us the lower stages of the mystic way, the purgatorial with some glimpses of the illuminative stages. According to Peter Butter, his poem Any Saint is, perhaps, "the only one which attempts to enter the higher stages, to suggest something of the nature of the Union." <sup>1)</sup>

1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 20.

After reading the preceding discussion on the content of Francis Thompson's poems, we come to the conclusion:

- 1) He is a poet of people. In his poems he sings of love. He has experienced various kinds of human love, and his philosophy of love is based on his deep conviction that " . . . all human love was to me a symbol of divine love; nay, that human love was in my eyes a piteous failure unless as an image of the Supreme Love which gave meaning and reality to its insanity." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p. 490).
- 2) He is a poet of nature. As a poet of nature Thompson is more than romantic as he sees God's own hands in nature and God's greatness even in small things.
- 3) As a poet Thompson is humble enough to present his human weaknesses; but at the same time he is very sure that his work will be eternal.
- 4) He is a poet of religion. As such, Thompson shows himself as a mystic, who is sure of his deep insight into spiritual riches; and he feels deeply responsible for their realization in his own life, in words and deed.

One more point to remember: Thompson's poems are primarily the expression of his own self. Thompson who had difficulty in telling other people about his own difficulties and sorrows, about his success and failure, about his love and desires, to put it briefly, about his inner personal experiences, had the courage to express and was capable of expressing all this by means of his poems. His poems are, then, the portrait

of his personality. And since he was deeply involved in a sad physical, mental, and spiritual struggle, his poems breathe the breath of spiritual reformation and renovation, which makes them spiritual and religious. Thompson's poems, therefore, can also be called a story of his spiritual life and struggle; they are the history of a soul.

## 2. Diction

The relationship between the content and the utterance is quite a problem either in writing or in speech. It is all the more problematic if poetry comes into question. It is a fact that poetry has its own way and its own form of expressing things. Its external form should be so as to be appealing not only to the mind but to the senses as well. Poetry has its own taste, its own colour, its own power, which has the capability of penetrating the whole human personality.

As to Francis Thompson's poems, we may ask: how does he express his ideas, his love and desires, his experiences? Is he always successful in his choice and use of words? We are, then, involved in the problem of content and form of Thompson's poems. Since, so far, we have discussed the content of his poems, here we will have a look at their form.

But there are several aspects of poetic form. Poetic form involves, for instance, the choice and use of words, the sound and the rhythm, the rhyme and the line-arrangement, etc. There is not much space to discuss all the aspects here. For this the-

sis we will limit ourselves to the discussion of the words Thompson uses in his poems, that is, his diction. The question is then: are the language of his poems and the subject matter properly matched? I have no intention of presenting a full explanation of Thompson's diction. Some major points, I think, would be enough to lead us to an understanding of his poems. Detailed comments would certainly be boring and exhausting. So, we will not discuss the diction of each of his poems; we will, instead, try to see the striking points which mostly attract the eyes of Thompson's critics.

Thompson's critics seem to agree that his language is customarily orotund, ornate, far-fetched, and eccentric, especially in the use of poetically compound neologisms. In other words, Thompson has been blamed for his "passion for polysyllables," his consistently high coloured language and his too frequent use of archaic, poetical and coined words. <sup>1)</sup> To this Peter Butter comments: "There is some justification for these criticisms. His language is apt to be as grandiose when writing of a poppy or of some trivial event as of the largest subjects. Sometimes this is deliberate, when he is showing how great things are contained in small; but sometimes it is due to a sort of automatism. When not inspired by strong feeling or deep thought his writing seems turgid and verbose. Further he is sometimes too concerned about the sound of words to the neglect of im-

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p.29; Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol.21, p.1068; Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol.22, p.48.

mediate intelligibility. Some of his best lines are those in which he uses simple and short words." 1)

"Quidquid recipitur, secundum modum recipientis recipitur," is a Latin axiom, meaning: We receive or understand things according to what we are or to the condition or situation in which we live or in which we are trained. The modern mind would certainly receive Thompson's poems according to modern way of judging things. The same Mr. Butter points out "that the objection to Thompson's language is partly due to a prejudice which we ought to remove from our minds--a modern prejudice against poetic diction as such. Much of the greatest poetry in the world has been written in a language different from the current language of prose." 2) Were there any commonly accepted convention of poetic diction, it would be much easier for a poet to write a high style without appearing odd. Such was the case in the old days, when individualism had not yet gained any ground in the realm of family and society, but not in modern times, when people think that poetry "ought to be as like prose or ordinary speech as possible." 3)

Reading a new poem, we are usually, at first, drawn to its "poetical" diction; we are puzzled, or probably annoyed, or perhaps delighted, by the words themselves. Such a state makes us fail to see the

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p.29.

2) and 3) Peter Butter, i b i d .

meaning of the poem. It is, however, unfair to judge by the first impression only. Our task is, therefore, to try to find out whether the words are clear enough as to become the fitting tool of expressing the poet's personality and what he intends to say. A reader of Thompson, who is careful enough and who has the diligence of going into his work, will certainly see this in his poems --or at least with many of them--as he begins to find his way into Thompson's world. Apparently, "one of the reasons for the dislike of Thompson's diction is failure to read him with enough care, failure to appreciate the density of meaning which his words often contain." 1)

Many of his critics say that Thompson was careless in his choice of words. Peter Butter does not agree with them; quoting Thompson's own words he asserts the contradictory fact: "These are word-tasters and word-swillers. Unfortunately the two are confounded. Because the tasteless many among writers indulge orgies of 'strong and 'picturesque' language unrecking of fitness and delicate adjustment of meaning, a hue and cry goes out against the few whose love of language goes down to the sensitive roots of words, the few who never bang on a strong word like a tin kettle to deafen the ears of the groundlings, but use it because it is the exact vehicle for a strong thing; because it is not a strong word, but the strong word culled carefully from many strong words." For each purpose Thompson uses a special

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 30.

diction. He makes it clear when he writes: "Essays dealing with subtle thoughts, like books dealing with scientific subjects, cannot be precisely expressed without the use of a specialised language, that is to say, from the point of view of the man in the street. His language is too narrow and limited for their purpose--and, in another sense not limited enough. That is, it is too vague and imprecise." <sup>1)</sup> He has the aim to express precisely a special content, to use the strong word, comments Mr. Butter. He had the habit of writing alternative versions of words and phrases above or below the words he first wrote down; in many cases there are five or six variants for a single word, Mr. Butter goes on to testify.

However careful and purposeful was Thompson in his choice of words, he was not always successful. In many places of his work he is detected of being verbally inventive--"coining words and making new compounds, reviving archaic words, using noun for verb, etc." <sup>2)</sup> Mr. Butter is kind enough as to give us some examples to illustrate the fact. The underlined words in the following lines are the words we would draw attention to: <sup>3)</sup>

And so you said

Things sweet immeditatably and wise.

Wintered of sunning song

Now with wan ray that other sun of Song

Sets in the bleakening waters of my soul.

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 30-31.

2) Peter Butter, ibid., p. 31

3) Peter Butter, ibid.



The passing shower the rainbows maniple  
 Music that is too grievous to the height

Ill is statured to its opposite

The abashless inquisition of each star

She turned, with the roust of her dusk South hair

While in a moted trouble the vexed gnats  
Maze, and vibrate, and tease the noontide hush.

His original hyphenated combinations, for examples  
 are: wood-browned pool, a greening-sapphire sea, the  
snow-cloistered penanced of seed, wind-besomed cham-  
 bers of air.

All these are attempts, says Butter, various-  
 ly successful, to express an exact meaning in a con-  
 centrated way. There are passages, however, where the  
 strange words are no more than decorative (Cf. parts  
 of 'Sister Songs'.) Here and there in his work we find  
 "examples both of preciosity and of verbal invention to  
 express precise and concentrated meanings in most of  
 Thompson's poems." <sup>1)</sup>

In spite of the oddities, Thompson is capable  
 of creating "concentrated plain statements and of  
 making good use of short and ordinary words, as for  
 instance in his poem 'Arab Love Song'." <sup>2)</sup> Many a  
 time he places a single long word in the midst of  
 short ones; the effect is amazing. Look at the fol-  
 lowing lines--the long word is underlined!

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;

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<sup>1)</sup> Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 32.  
<sup>2)</sup> Peter Butter, ibid.; as for the poem, cf. APPENDIX,  
 p. xi.

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind.

(The Hound of Heaven, 11.1-4)

The placement of the single longish words among the monosyllables in the first stanza of 'The Kingdom of God' <sup>1)</sup> produces similar fine effect:

O world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Compared to the skillful and restrained use of long words mentioned above, the following lines of 'Sister Songs,' which describe the evening sun shining on the little Sylvia, seem blurred and absurd:

. . . sinking day, which, pouring its abundance  
Sublimed the illuminous and volute redundancy  
Of locks . . .

(11. 232-234)

Thompson tries every possible way in his effort to have precise words or phrases that will effectively express his idea. He even has the courage of constructing new adjectives by adding the suffix -ed to nouns. In the first twenty lines of 'The Hound of Heaven' we come across such adjectives: vistaed hopes, chasmed fears, and hearted casement.

No doubt, Thompson has his own way of conveying his ideas and experiences through his poems. His diction, at times, is unusual and alien to the reader. It has been pointed out, however, that in Thompson

1) Cf. APPENDIX, p. x.



son's poems "there are examples both of preciousity<sup>1)</sup> and of verbal invention to express precise and concentrated meanings." <sup>2)</sup> Therefore, in analyzing Thompson's diction our main effort is to see what words belong to the "preciousity" and what belong to the "verbal invention." Peter Butter gives us good advice here; he says: "The task of criticism is to distinguish between the two, not to condemn the unusual or the 'poetical' as such." <sup>3)</sup>

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1) preciousity = over-refinement  
2) Cf. p. 49.  
3) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 32.

### III. THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

The greater number of Thompson's poems consist of rather longer poems, which are mostly odes. The odes have no regular stanza form and no tight metrical pattern; because of that they seem to spread out loosely and as wholes they are not firmly enough constructed. A close study of the poems, however, will open up a wide horizon, in which we can see good organization of thought and feeling and an amazingly rich and deep meaning.

One of the odes, which is commonly regarded as Thompson's greatest and best known poem, is "The Hound of Heaven." The ode "illustrates the magic of his figures and beneath his imagery the passionate quality of his thought"<sup>1)</sup>; and in it "language and subject matter are more properly matched"<sup>2)</sup> than in any other of his poems.

In this part of the thesis I will present, first the poem itself and some preliminary notes; then its organization of thought and its explication; and finally, Thompson's image of God as seen in the poem, based on the explication of the poem.

#### A. The Poem and Some Preliminary Notes

The following copy of the poem is followed by some notes as to the circumstance, the mood, the title, and the theme of the poem. There is no intention here to present a thorough explanation of all this. The

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1) John Wilson Bowyer & John Lee Brook, op-cit., p. 831.

2) Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 21, p. 1068.

primary aim is to have a general conspectus of the whole poem. Therefore, the discussion will cover brief notes on the points mentioned, namely on the circumstance and the mood of the poem; on the title of the poem; and on the theme of the poem.

# 1. The Poem

## THE HOUND OF HEAVEN <sup>1)</sup>

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
 I fled Him, down the arches of the year;  
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
     Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter. 5  
     Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
     And shot, precipitated,  
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
     But with unhurrying chase, 10  
     And unperturbèd pace  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
     They beat--and a Voice beat  
     More instant than the Feet--  
 'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.' 15  
  
     I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
 But many a casement, curtained red,  
     Trellised with intertwining charities;  
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
     Yet was I sore adread 20  
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)  
 But, if one little casement parted wide,  
     The gust of His approach would clash it to:  
     Fear wist not evade, as Love wist to pursue.  
 Across the margent of the world I fled, 25  
     And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,

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1) T.L.Connolly, Poems of Francis Thompson, pp.77-81.

Smiting for shelter on her clangèd bars;  
 Fretted to dulcet jars  
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.  
 I said to Dawn: Be sudden--to Eve: Be soon: 30  
 With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
 From this tremendous Lover--  
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
 I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
 My own betrayal in their constancy, 35  
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
 Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.  
 To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet, 40  
 The long savannah of the blue;  
 Or whether, Thunder-driven  
 They clangèd his chariot 'thwart a heaven,  
 Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:--  
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue. 45  
 Still with unhurrying chase,  
 And unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
 Came on the following Feet,  
 And a Voice above their beat-- 50  
 'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

I sought no more that after which I strayed  
 In face of man or maid;  
 But still within the little children's eyes  
 Seems something, something that replies, 55  
They at least are for me, surely for me!  
 I turned me to them very wistfully;  
 But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair  
 With dawning answers there,  
 Their angel plucked them from me by the hair. 60  
 'Come then, ye other children, Nature's--share  
 With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;  
 Let me greet you lip to lip,  
 Let me twine with you caresses,  
 Wantoning 65

With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,  
     Banqueting  
 With her in her wind-walled palace,  
 Underneath her azured daïs,  
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is, 70  
     From a chalice  
 Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.  
     So it was done:  
I in their delicate fellowship was one--  
 Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies. 75  
     I knew all the swift importings  
 On the wilful face of skies;  
 I knew how the clouds arise  
 Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;  
     All that's born or dies 80  
     Rose and drooped with; made them shapers  
 Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;  
     With them joyed and was bereaven.  
 I was heavy with the even,  
     When she lit her glimmering tapers 85  
     Round the day's dead sanctities.  
     I laughed in the morning's eyes.  
 I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,  
     Heaven and I wept together,  
 And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine; 90  
 Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
     I laid my own to beat,  
     And share commingling heat;  
 But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.  
 In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek. 95  
 For ah! we know not what each other says,  
     These things and I; in sound I speak--  
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
 Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drauth;  
     Let her, if she would owe me, 100  
 Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me  
     The breasts o' her tenderness:  
 Never did any milk of hers once bless  
     My thirsting mouth.  
     Nigh and nigh draws the chase, 105

With unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;  
 And past those noisèd Feet  
 A voice comes yet more fleet--  
 'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.' 110

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!  
 My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me  
 And smitten me to my knee;  
 I am defenceless utterly.  
 I slept, methinks, and woke 115

And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep  
 In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
 I shook the pillaring hours  
 And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,  
 I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years-- 120  
 My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.  
 My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
 Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.  
 Yea, faileth now dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist; 125  
 Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
 I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
 Are yielding; cords of all too weak account  
 For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed 130  
 A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
 Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must--  
 Designer infinite!--  
 Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it? 135

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;  
 And now my heart is as broken fount,  
 Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever  
 From the dank thoughts that shiver  
 Upon the sighful branches of my mind. 140

Such is; what is to be?  
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?  
 I deemly guess what Time in mists confounds;  
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds



From the hid battlements of Eternity; 145  
 Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
 Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.  
     But not ere him who summoneth  
     I first have seen, enwound  
 With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned; 150  
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
 Whether man's heart or life it be which yields  
     Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields  
     Be dunged with rotten death?  
  
     Now of that long pursuit 155  
     Comes on at hand the bruit;  
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
     'And is thy earth so marred  
     Shattered in shard on shard?  
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me! 160  
 Strange, piteous, futile thing!  
 Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
 Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said),  
 'And human love needs human meriting:  
     How hast thou merited-- 165  
 Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
     Alack, thou knowest not  
 How little worthy of any love thou art!  
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
     Save Me, save only Me? 170  
 All which I took from thee I did but take,  
     Not for thy harms,  
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
     All which thy child's mistake  
 Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home: 175  
     Rise, clasp My hand, and come!  
  
     Halts by me that footfall:  
     Is my gloom, after all,  
 Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
     'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, 180  
     I am He Whom thou seekest!  
 Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

Before discussing the poem, it is worthwhile to point out that the emotion that permeates the whole poem is in the first part (ll. 1-111) fear, but in the last part (ll. 112 to the end), fear yields to love: "Perfect charity casteth out fear." (St. John IV, 18).<sup>1)</sup>

Much has been said about the diction of Thompson's poems as a whole. As to the diction of "The Hound of Heaven," T.L. Connolly notes that "it is elaborate but not artificial." As to the metre of the poem, there is not much that can be said except what the same T.L. Connolly points out: "In the general iambic movement of the poem there are accentual inversions of rare effectiveness, especially in the initial words of the following lines: 27, 28, 99, 103, 111, 132, 159, 176, 177."<sup>2)</sup>

## 2. The Circumstance and the Mood

The poem was published in the journal Merry England in July, 1890. It was composed when Thompson was 33. Thirteen years before he had failed to become a priest. This was very disappointing and had a lasting negative effect upon him. Then as a medical student he was a total failure; early in his student years he even fell into the habit of drug-taking. Three years before he was rescued by the Meynells, he was a terribly wretched outcast roaming the streets of London. He found some physical and mental and spiritual rest and peace at

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1) T.L. Connolly, op-cit., p.355.

2) T.L. Connolly, i b i d., p.356.

the Franciscan Community in Storington, Sussex, where he lived for two years. Here he was able to conquer his drug-habit and here he began writing "The Hound of Heaven," which he did not finish until after his return to London.

His sad experiences seem to be the basic notes of the poem. Sense of failure and disappointment can be felt throughout. But it very clearly "reflects the mood of one whose ambition was to be the poet not of the return to Nature, but of the return to God." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p.350). The poem is, in fact, a "purely autobiographical one," wrote Wilfred Meynell. T.L.Connolly goes on to note, "It is the story of a 'spoiled priest,' disappointed at his failure, who, after striving to satisfy the cravings of his heart in creature-love is turned back to God by the irresistible power of His grace, symbolized by the parable of the Good Shepherd applied to a particular soul." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p.353).

### 3. The Title

It seems very offensive to call God a hound, a dog. But, no doubt, there are noble qualities in a hound. Many times people are enchanted or even utterly spell-bound by his strength, speed, certainty of approach, faithfulness, and his daring resoluteness. With these qualities in mind, Thompson had enough courage to address God as a hound, not an earthly but a heavenly one.

But it is more than that. Being a pious Catholic, he was familiar with many scriptural styles employing comparisons from the animal world. The words in the following citations from the Holy Writ were and are quite common among Christians (the words meant are underlined):

- "The lamb of God" (Jn 1,29,36; Apoc. 5,12; 6,16; 7,14).

- "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer." (Is. 53,7).

- "And one of the Ancients said to me, "Weep not, lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." (Apoc. 5,5).

These scriptural expressions of God had inspired Thompson to invent his own expressive and dramatic name, taken also from the animal world, for the ever-searching God of his soul and life. The name is no less majestic, no less appealing, but at the same time powerfully compelling; and the name is "The Hound of Heaven." T.L. Connolly quotes Wilkinson: "It is a daring symbol, and, in the hands of a merely talented poet, would become offensive. But Thompson was a genius, and, by putting his emphasis only on the noblest abstract qualities inherent in the nature of his symbol--on strength, and speed, and certainty of approach-- he relieves it of all that might otherwise be distasteful and even lifts it, exalting the symbol by that which it symbolizes into a higher range of meanings and suggestions." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p.350).

#### 4. The Theme

The central idea that stands out clearly as the spirit of the poem is God's first and greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6,5; Mt. 22,37; Mk 12,29 and 30; Lk 10,27). The poem describes man's craving for creatures as a flight from God, his only source of life and love. In his craving for creatures God is always there trying to bring him back to His saving love.

In the poem, we see, God is in full action compelled by His love for man. T.L. Connolly, then, is right when he says: "Considering the poem as a whole, there can be no doubt that the general theme is God's pursuit rather than the soul's flight." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p.353). Peter Butter puts it briefly: "The theme, of course, is God's pursuit of man." (Francis Thompson, p.23). It is God's wish that man should love Him; and He always tries to draw man to Himself. This is what we see in "The Hound of Heaven." Therefore, God's search of man is the focal point of the poem, the theme.

#### B. The Organization of Thought and the Explication

As far as its external form is concerned, there are five sections in the poem. They are: section one, ll. 1-15; section two, ll. 16-51; section three, ll. 52-110; section four, ll. 111-154; section five, ll. 155-182. The division into sections seems to play little

part in the organization of thought, since one section does not necessarily contain one single idea; one idea may cover more than one section. The sections, however, may be of great help as to the explication of the poem.

### 1. The Main Character

It is already clear that the general theme, which is the central idea, of the poem is God's pursuit of man. It is apparent, however, that the main character in the poem is the I, the man, the soul. It is the I that flees; it is the I that seeks satisfaction in creatures; it is the I that is pursued; it is the I that surrenders and finally accepts the love of God. The progress of events shown in the poem centers around the I. It is the I that goes through the chain of events in the poem; it is the I that undergoes change throughout the poem. To put it briefly, it is the I that develops. God is present in the whole process of change, but His role is similar to that of a catalyst. He causes the change, the development, without Himself being changed. The poem's organization of thought is, then, in accordance with the development of the I, the main character.

### 2. The Stages of Development

Looking closely at the poem, we are sure to find that the main character undergoes three major stages of development.<sup>1)</sup> The stages are closely knitted and logically show the sequence of events in which the main character is involved. The first stage (ll. 1-110) show how the main character flees from God and

1) Peter Butter, op-cit., pp.25-26.

vainly tries to find satisfaction in other things. In the flight God, with sure and instant but calm pace, is there behind him. The second stage (ll. 111-154) presents us with the terribly exhausted soul, who is unable to continue the flight. God at last gets hold of him. But the soul accepts God's love without any joy; his old life has been destroyed, but he has not yet entered upon a new; he realizes his own nothingness before God, but still sees Him as the jealous God, who has deprived him of what he wanted. The third stage (ll. 152-182) shows that the main character has at last fully realized and understood that he would find in God everything that he had previously tried to find elsewhere. This lead him to a willing and complete surrender.

A brief view of each stage seems worthwhile to have a good understanding of the main character's development. An explication is, therefore, needed here. The explication, however, is very limited. It is presented here insofar as it will serve as a tool leading us to have an idea of how the main character progresses to his final development. Therefore, comments on the meaning of words will not be given ample space here, unless they contain some key points as to the understanding of the events concerned.<sup>1)</sup>

#### a. The First Stage

The core of the poem is shown in the first section, which pictures the flight of the beloved from the

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1) Those who are interested in detailed explanation of the words of the poem will find T.L.Connolly's Poems of Francis Thompson and F.P.LeBuffe's The Hound of Heaven very helpful. The 'Notes' in the Books are very consulting.

Lover (ll. 1-15). The first three words describe the scope of the whole poem. Whatever might be the reason, we are confronted with the dramatic fact of a flight. The writer, at the first instant, leads us straight in to the reality of the story of his own past, a very sad one. An overpowering force seems to be his antagonist. His primary effort is to get rid of the force, which is, to him, very menacing. He understands too well that it is beyond his strength to fight against the force. He, therefore, tries to avoid it by running away from it. He tells us,

" I fled Him, . . . . "

The flight must have been an urgent one. The repetition of the first three words in the second and the third lines shows its compelling necessity.

The flight is a continuous lifelong action, "through sunshine and darkness, both physical, mental, and spiritual." The words "nights" and "days" are employed to show the writer's uneventful life, which is pictured "as a journey down a long colonnade, each arch of which is a year." <sup>1)</sup> He writes,

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;

(ll. 1-2)

Hope, sorrow, joy, and disappointment seem to be his constant mates during his flight; more than that, they are even the cause of his flight. First he tries to take refuge in his own realm, in the thoughts and

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1) F.P. LeBuffe, The Hound of Heaven, pp. 28-29.



emotions of his own mind. We read,

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind . . . . .

(11. 3-4)

The poet uses the phrase "labyrinthine ways" to describe his complicated state of mind. The labyrinth, being a network of winding paths, roads, etc. through which it is difficult to find one's way without help<sup>1)</sup>, correctly shows "the mind's unlimited capacity of grasping and dwelling on objects without numbers." <sup>2)</sup> The fugitive thinks his own mind is a right 'place' to escape to. He thinks, by absorbing himself in the activity of thinking he can escape from the reality of this ever pursuing God.

Both sorrow and happiness may drive man away from God. Having experienced this kind of feeling, the poet makes it clear to us:

. . . . . and in the mist of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

(11. 4-5)

Man's tears blur his eyes as to hide him from God and His love; while in his joy man laughs and forgets the One Who is the real source of happiness.

What is more promising than hope? Hope makes everything easy to bear and revives enthusiasm for the goal that is to obtain. But once that hope has nothing to promise, disappointment enters and makes one feel like being thrown down into an abyss. Fear

1) Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, New Edition, p.477.

2) F.P.LeBuffe, op-cit., p.29.

overpowers him and, to him, there would be no more light to show the way to go. The promising hope of escape and the fearful disappointment of no more hope the writer describes in these dramatic words:

Up vistaed hopes, I sped;  
And shot, precipitated  
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears

(11. 6-8)

The fugitive seems to have failed to find refuge in his own realm. The tremendous force, which he tries to escape from, is there behind him. The beat of its strong feet shows its majestic presence. The poet writes,

From those strong Feet that followed, followed  
after

But with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat . . . . .

(11. 9-13)

As to "strong Feet," F.P. LeBuffe comments: "By a happy use of 'transferred epithet,' strong is applied to the feet rather than to the whole man. 'Strong' foretells the end of the pursuit, for 'the strong win the race'." (The Hound of Heaven, cf. Notes, p. 31). The repetition of the word "followed" here is to show the insistency of the pursuit, its long and persistent process. These lines give clearly the idea of a calm but sure and at the same time very pressing pursuit. The fleeing soul feels it very compelling.

. . . . . and a Voice beat  
More instant than the Feet -

(11. 13-14)

To make it more pressing, Thompson points out the underlying truth that seems to make the flight a totally vain attempt. The voice cries out the striking fact that the denial of God will turn out to be your own denial by other creatures:

'All things betray thee, who betrays Me.'

(line 15)

The line is a warning. It seals up the first section of the poem, in which Thompson forecasts the dramatic action of the flight.

Having failed to find harbour in the realm of his own self, the fugitive turns to human love (ll. 16-24). Thompson proves himself to be a superb image inventor. In his reflection he sees the soul "as an outlaw from the love of God," <sup>1)</sup> asking "for shelter at a human heart which is likened to a cottage, with little casement windows." <sup>2)</sup> The human heart is said to be "curtained red"; the red curtains symbolize love. <sup>3)</sup> But the human heart, besides being the sedan of love, is so completely covered with charity that it is, as F.P. LeBuffe explains, "susceptible to every appeal and promises a secure and inviolate refuge once the assured admittance is gained." The human heart is not only "trellised" with the love of God but with the love of creatures as well. The poet puts the idea in to the following words:

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1) T.L. Connolly, op-cit., p. 357.

2) F.P. LeBuffe, op-cit., p. 33.

3) Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., op-cit., Cf. footnote, p. 618.

I pleaded, outlaw-wise  
 By many a hearted casement curtained red,  
 Trellised with intertwining charities

(11. 16-18)

Why does the fugitive try to hide himself in human love? Too often man has a false knowledge of God's love. He knows God's love, but he thinks God is too demanding, God wants everything only for Himself. To him, having God means the loss of everything, even himself. His fallen nature makes it difficult for man to see beyond the visible world. Here we come across the reason of the soul's flight:

(For, though I know His love Who followed,  
 Yet was I sore adread  
 Lest having Him, I must have naught beside.)

What a false idea of the love of God!

But, also the fugitive finds no harbour to rest in human love. The great speed of the Pursuer, which is perfectly conveyed by the words "gust" and "clash", shuts off his possibility of entering into the "hearted casement." Under the light of God's love, human love seems to be poor and frail, and therefore seems to have no value at all unless it is based on a complete surrender to God's love. The soul finds itself cornered by the pursuing love of God. It cannot evade the tramping pace of the tremendous Pursuer. Lines 22-24 give a clear picture of this:

But, if one little casement parted wide  
 The gust of His approach would clash it to:  
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

The "little casement" being shut, the fugitive is off again on a new search for refuge. This time he tries to find shelter in external nature, "in the broad expanse of the heavens." <sup>1)</sup> (11.25-45). He immediately leaves this small world of ours, where he has found no hospitality, hurrying away beyond its borders, coming first to the stars and the moon. His description of them gives way to his idea of the furious, confusing, and impatient flight of the fugitive as contrasted to the calm pace, but majestic and full of determination, of the Pursuer shown in the refrain, 11. 10-14, 11. 46-50, and 11. 105-110.

Thompson describes the stars as having gateways of gold, at which the fugitive knocks with furious impatience as to make them resound loudly; he pictures the moon "as a shadowy castle ("pale ports" conveying this image), at whose huge silver door he beats for entrance, thus making them ring with that pleasing discord peculiar to silver." 2)

Not only the stars and the moon he turns to for help, but to Dawn and Eve as well. The tramping sound of the approaching feet with its sure determination overwhelms him terribly with fear. Frantically he calls out to Dawn and Eve to cover him.

. . . . Be sudden -- . . . . Be soon  
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
From this tremendous Lover!  
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!

(ll. 30-33)

1) F.P.LeBuffe, op-cit., p.38 (Of. Notes).

2) F.P.LeBuffle, i b i d.

Inanimate nature is the mirror of God's excellence. Every part of it shows His greatness. The storm is the mirror of His power; the cataract of His grandeur; the flower of His beauty. Man's misuse of them will never change their nature; and so they are eternally the portrait of their Creator and remain loyal to Him.<sup>1)</sup> Thompson understands this too well as to present us with the disappointing reality the fugitive faces in his flight. Their faithfulness to their Creator is seen as his betrayal. His approach to them meets a total failure. We read all this in lines 34-37. For instance, hopelessly he complains:

I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
My own betrayal in their constancy

(ll. 34-35)

Lines 38-40 give us the picture of things that are always on the move: "swift things", "wind", "thunder", "lightnings". How can one find shelter in things that always move? You can run away with them all right, but it would be of no avail for the fugitive, since they move, in full speed, towards the One, from Whom he flees:

They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven

(l. 43)

God is everywhere, so it is impossible for the fugitive to avoid His presence. His fear cannot help him to get rid of his Pursuer:

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

(l. 45)

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1) F.P.LeBuffe, op-cit., p. 42 (Cf. Notes).

God's overwhelmingly majestic power can be felt throughout the lines 46-50, which end with this forceful concluding line:

'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

(1. 51)

The fugitive, once again, faces the fact that his flight would never lead him to a right place to rest, for he fails to be the resting place of the Pursuer.

The fugitive, however, is still not sure of the Pursuer's loving pursuit. In his flight he then turns once again to earth. Knowing that the adults have cheated him, he turns to find solace in children. (11. 52-60). He seems to be quite sure to find what he is seeking for in them. With great eagerness he goes to them:

They at least are for me, surely for me!

I turned me to them very wistfully.

(11. 56-57)

But again, he fails to find satisfaction in their company, for

. . . . just as their young eyes grew sudden fair

With dawning answers there,

Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.

(11. 58-60)

Notice the use of "plucked" in the last line. It shows the sudden and the swift pull of the children done by the angel.

Disappointed by the children's negative response, the fugitive once again turns to nature. This

return to nature seems to be a needless repetition. However, a close examination of the two passages on nature will give light as to the fact that what seems to be a repetition is not a repetition at all. Of this Peter Butter explains: "On examination one sees that the two passages on nature are not repetitive, but deal with different periods of the poet's life. In the first (when quite young?) he delighted in the power and beauty of nature and felt something of the same vitality, but did not imagine natural things as sympathising with his emotions; the winds swept by unheeding. Later (perhaps when he became a poet?) he began to imagine a response from nature, sentimentally to cultivate the pathetic fallacy:

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather  
 Heaven and I wept together,  
 And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine."<sup>1)</sup>

Lines 61-110 show how the fugitive tries to be one with Nature's children, which are rain, clouds, trees, plants, and flowers. F.P. LeBuffe writes: "The soul tries to frame all its moods on theirs, hoping to be one with them in their 'delicate fellowship'." (The Hound of Heaven, Notes, p.48). This part is rich in imagery. Nature is personified as a queen sitting in her wind-walled palace, the earth which is canopied by the azure sky. Within are Nature's children banqueting and drinking from chalices which pour forth streams of light spilled by the sun at dawn. (Cf. Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., p.619, footnote). This beau-

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1) Peter Butter, op-cit., p. 23.



tiful and somewhat sentimental description of nature gives light as to how Thompson feels towards nature. Nature is beautiful and full of promise. It gives the impression of a peaceful and pleasing refuge, even when it is in its most turbulent state.

Tired, physically but especially mentally and spiritually, of the flight, the fugitive feels greatly in need of some intimate friend, in whom he might find freshness for body and mind; he longs for a kind of fellowship which can strip all his mental and spiritual burdens off him. He is really in need of a cool and refreshing place where he can rest and live in peace. He returns to nature and calls out for its children, saying:

'Come then, ye other children of Nature's--share  
With me your delicate fellowship;  
Let me greet you lip to lip,  
Let me twine with you caresses,  
Wantoning  
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses'

(11. 61-66)

What is more refreshing than a sweet kiss and a fond embrace? These are what he longs for. But he wants more than mere kisses and mere embraces. He wants to be happy with them and enjoy the luxurious gift of nature in a magnificent banquet in the sweetness and coolness of the morning air. He continues,

'Banqueting  
With her in her wind-walled palace,  
Underneath her azured daïs,  
Quaffing, as your taintless way is  
From a chalice  
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.'

(11. 67-72)

Whatever is the description, one thing is clear, that is, the fugitive wants to be completely absorbed in all Nature's events and movement so as to make himself free from the imminent Pursuer. Once he becomes absorbed in Nature, some of Nature's secrets become clear to him. F.P. LeBuffe beautifully explains: "Though Nature is an open book, which God spreads before us all, still there are secrets that one can find out only by diligent search. As in any other book, it requires time and thought to 'read between the lines'." We read:

I in their delicate fellowship was one--  
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.

(ll. 74-75)

Quoting Mr. Wright, T.L. Connolly comments on the I of line 74: "The I is emphatic! I, the child of man-- I, the one who fled from God, was admitted to this wondrous privilege. He marvels at the gift of insight with which he was endowed, even when he was least worthy." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p.360).

The fugitive seems to know every event and movement of Nature; this knowledge shapes him so that he deeply shares every movement of Nature.

I knew. . . . .

. . . . .

All that's born or dies

Rose and drooped with; made them shapers  
Of my own moods, or wailful or divine--

(ll. 78-82)

or clearer still in these lines:

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
 I laid my own to beat  
 And share commingling heat

(ll. 91-93)

Lines 76-93 dramatically and vividly present the fugitive's oneness with Nature. Here, as well as in other places, Thompson proves himself to be a great romantic poet, even though he probably does not mean to be romantic at all. The following lines will probably be representative enough as to his greatness:

When she lit her glimmering tapers  
 Round the day's dead sanctities.

(ll. 85-86)

F.P.LeBuffe, one of the foremost Thompson masters, was so touched by these lines as to give the following comment: "This is a beautiful image of the stars as glimmering tapers placed round the day that is dead and which by its brightness and glory was like to the holiness of grace." Then he asks us to compare the lines with Macbeth, Act II, Scene 1:

"There's husbandry in heaven;  
 Their candles are all out."

(Banquo is speaking)

What does the poet mean by "dead sanctities"? F.P.LeBuffe goes on to comment: "To Thompson, even as to every true lover of God, everything in nature was "sacramental," that is, a sensible sign of some hidden, mysterious power behind." (The Hound of Heaven, Cf. Notes, p. 52).

Man's heart is, however, too vast to be filled



only with the knowledge of nature. After years and years of nature-study man is never satisfied with what he has learned. His heart always craves for more, and piteously he cries out:

But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.

(l. 94)

Note the repetition of "by that." It intensified the pathos that the line breathes. It shows how the fugitive is utterly disappointed at not finding what he is seeking for in Nature. He finds no consolation "even when on cloudy, damp days nature seemed best attuned to his sorrow," as F.P. LeBuffe rightly puts it. He complains despairingly:

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.

(l. 95)

Now the fugitive seems convinced that Nature, whom he realizes as only a step-mother to him, is unable to satisfy him. He says,

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my draught

(l. 99)

and

Never did any milk of hers once bless  
My thirsting mouth.

(ll. 103-104)

Nature, however, is not to blame for her failure to satisfy him. This child of hers is "not of her kind nor of her own choosing." (F.P. LeBuffe, p. 56).

Nature lays there bare before the fugitive. But he, even after his long study of "Nature's children,"

is still unable to understand her completely. He wonders at how, in "their stir, they speak in silences" of the mysterious Power from which he is fleeing. Their silence can never bring peace to his troubled heart (ll. 96-98). It is because, as F.P. LeBuffe meditatively explains, "there is only one silence that can heal every human smart; and that is the 'silence of Death,' that ushers us into eternity, wherein reverberates unceasingly 'the soundless thunders of eternal bliss, breaking on an immaterial shore.'" (p. 56).

In lines 105-110 we come across a desperate man not knowing where to flee, while the tramping feet of the Pursuer come nearer and nearer. The refrain comes again here, showing the relentless pursuit of the Lover for the beloved, of God for the soul. The man finds no "content" in mankind and nature; and the reason for this he hears from a voice that seems to unceasingly whisper inside him, saying:

'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

The first stage ends with this line. Reading the stage closely, we are sure to find five connected sets of thought in the flight. In his flight the fugitive seeks satisfaction

- (a) in the thoughts and emotions of his own mind, ll. 1-15;
- (b) in human love, ll. 16-24;
- (c) in external nature, i.e., in the expanse of the heavens, ll. 25-51;
- (d) in children, ll. 52-60; and

(e) in nature again, ll. 61-110

b. The Second Stage

This stage presents the progressive awakening of the soul. Lines 111-129 give us the picture of the shattered life of the poet "and the fading of his last hope to find comfort at least in his worded work, just as every shattered soul clutches with piteous futility at some pet nothingness on which to try to stay to its beaten love." (F.P. LeBuffe, p. 58).

First the soul is seen as a person who, in his confusion, is forced to surrender to the overpowering Pursuer. Things seem to go against him. He accepts everything that befalls him as a *fait accompli*. He becomes extremely tired and his flight ends in a dramatic stop.

In line 111 the poem reaches its climax as the soul, terribly exhausted, finally gives himself up to the mighty Pursuer. As nothing, in his flight, is for him, the soul feels himself being stripped of everything and naked; while God, in full readiness to put a hand on him, is there near him. As he waits for His powerful hand to fall upon him, fearfully he says:

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!

"Naked" means, T.L. Connolly explains, "stripped of pride, rebellion, servile fear, and inordinate love of creatures." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p. 363). All the elements of which he is stripped the poem describes as a flight from God. His next move, then, is to clothe himself not in the old elements (pride, rebellion, ser-

vile fear, inordinate love of creatures) but in the new garment of humility, submission, confidence, and the love of God. (Ibid.) The line, however, speaks more than that. By the words I wait Thompson wants to make clear that the soul, as the consequence of his surrender, acts actively; and here for the first time the soul addresses God directly as he speaks to Him in the second person using the word Thy.

The soul's tight and snug love of all earthly things, which are grasped so willfully, needs powerful strokes to tame it. The cut of it into pieces give way to a new vista of heavenly love. After the strokes have fallen, the fugitive does not only feel himself naked but by far more destroyed; he is left without anything to defend himself. Piteously he cries,

My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,  
And smitten me to my knee;  
I am defenceless utterly.

(ll. 112-114)

According to F.P. LeBuffe, line 113 is a metaphor from the old wars of lances.

During the fugitive's bodily and mental wanderings in his blind effort to find satisfaction, solace and rest in creatures, his soul must have been asleep, aware not of the reality around him and of the things concerned with him. (Cf. F.P. LeBuffe, p.60). When the fugitive failed to find what he was craving for, the soul woke up only to find himself "stripped in sleep." Thompson writes,

I slept, methinks, and woke  
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.

(ll. 115-116)

Slowly gazing, how true to life are these words. Wakened from his deep sleep after harrowing experiences, man would surely gaze slowly round him. (F.P. LeBuffe, p.60).

Stripped in sleep, is a reference to Samson, the strong man of the Old Testament, who was stripped of his hair as he was asleep. (Cf. Judges 16, 15-22; English Voices, p. 620.)

After being "stripped in sleep" the soul feels as if he is being trapped and imprisoned, as Samson was seized by the Philistines and was put into prison after his eyes being gouged out. But, unlike Samson who later died under the ruins of the building killing thousands of his enemies feasting in it, the soul is able to pull all his mental and spiritual vigour upon himself and emerge from under the ugly heap of ruins of his youth which he has shattered by his own conduct, "grimed with smears" all over. These ugly years of his youth seem to be burned and gone up like smoke. Thinking of his past unfruitful years but knowing that he has survived them, even though "besmirched and bedraggled," Thompson, through the mouth of the fugitive, says,

In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
I shook the pillaring hours  
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,  
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years--  
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap,



My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

(11. 117-123)

Emerging from under the ruins of his youth the poet feels empty. He seems to have been plunged into darkness. Nice dreams and fine music give him no joy, and the world itself is too full of sorrow to offer him any solace. Disappointingly he writes,

Yea, faileth now even dream  
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;  
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account  
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

(11. 124-129)

Notice the words "dream, lute, fantasies, blossoming, twist, and trinket," all of them are words expressing consolatory power. In such a state of mind, however, all the objects having consolatory power fail the fugitive completely. Nothing can offer him any relief. Commenting on the above lines F.P.LeBuffe explains: "Like many another poet, he wove sweet sound cadences of words around the world and all its trinkets, and toyed with it as would a child; but now, when that earth is loaded with heavy griefs, the fragile cords can bear no such strain." (The Hound of Heaven, Notes, p. 67).

In this empty and black state, however, God's loving grace begins to work its own power upon the fugitive. Under its mysterious light the fugitive begins to realize "that," as F.P.LeBuffe points out, "love of God must stand alone in the soul and that it grows and

flourishes therein only when the soul has been 'dunged with rotten death' and by its dead hopes rendered fertile to give God unstinted love."

(The Hound of Heaven, Notes, p. 58). We read all this in lines 130-154.

God's love, like an amaranthine weed,<sup>1)</sup> does not let any other love grow beside it. The fugitive cannot understand this. He wonders at how God's love can be so self-seeking as to eliminate any other love. So he questions:

Ah! is Thy love indeed  
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed  
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

(ll. 130-132)

Amaranthine weed, what an expressive metaphor describing God's jealous love! It is no less dramatic than the title of the poem.

Line 133 is a reaction of the person who now begins to grasp something of God's grandeur but still reluctant to give ready submission, while line 134 is a confession of God's existence through His design. The whole universe, including our small earth, is a marvelous design which proclaims a Great Designer, who arranges everything so wisely that they live and move in perfect harmony. The Designer is "all-wise in His conceptions and infinite in His power to make such conceptions materialize." (F.P. LeBuffe, p.68)

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1) Amaranthine weed= an imaginary never-fading flower, which was supposed to absorb all moisture around it. No other flower could survive near it. (English Voices, p. 621, footnote!)

When can a piece of wood be fit for use in charcoal painting? It must first be changed into charcoal by charring it. To be fitting for God's love man must undergo some kind of charring process. He must first be burned, that is, must undergo some kind of pain and suffering before being worthy of God's kindness and love. By this reason, then, such pain and suffering are a grace of God. But is this process a must? The fugitive, in his flight, finds only failure and disappointment, emptiness and darkness of mind. It is hard for him to understand such a process. He looks into the Pursuer's eyes and asks:

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn  
with it?

(l. 135)

Meaning to say: Is it according to Your unchanged plan to strike me first to pieces before You receive me into Your loving hands and make me useful to You?

The fugitive, reflecting on his past deeds, comes to realize that he has spent his youth uselessly. See how Thompson puts this into words:

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust.  
Instead of saying my youth Thompson uses my freshness, because youth is the time of freshness and energy. His youth has been uselessly spent, just like showering in the dust: the water is absorbed by the dust and never sinks deep down into the earth to fructify it.

He likens his deeds to a wavering shower just to show that the effort of youth are wont to be spasmodic and unstable. (F.P.LeBuffle, p. 69).

Realizing this, grave sorrow overwhelms him. He imagines his heart as a broken fountain wherein his mind pours sad thoughts, which inflict it all the more. Thompson has his own way of expressing this state of mind. He writes,

And now my heart is a broken fount,  
Wherein tear-dripping stagnate, spilt down ever  
From the dank thoughts that shiver  
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

(ll. 137-140)

The lines show that it is his ugly past, which always troubles his mind, that makes his heart broken.

Such is his state now, but how will it be next? If his past had been so bad, what would be his future? If his youth had been so ugly, how would his old age be? Seeing his bleak and dreary past, he seems to doubt his future state.

Such is; what is to be?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?

(ll. 141-142)

Here Thompson uses the words of the world of fruit, pulp and rind. Pulp is the soft fleshy part of fruit; and rind is the hard, outside skin or covering of fruits. The poet likens his youth to pulp, for the young age is commonly regarded as soft and flexible; while his old-age to rind, because old-age is thought of as hard and inflexible. Here we might recall Jesus' consoling words to the women of Jerusalem lament-

ing Him when He was on His way to Golgotha: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry? (Lk. 23, 28-31).

Repeatedly bombarded by disappointment, sorrow and misfortune, the fugitive's inner eyes begin to see some light that reveals some good promise for the future. A feeling of appreciation for all that is hard for the human heart to accept gradually forms in his mind; the meaning of the old sayings, "per aspera ad astra," "per crucem ad lucem," <sup>1)</sup> begin to take shape in his heart. It seems natural (or is it really in line with God's eternal plan?) that to have a good understanding of life and to value it correctly one has to suffer first. Divine Wisdom has so arranged that, as F.P.LeBuffe puts it, "from time to time, as we absorb experiences, it becomes clearer and clearer to us that the way of progress in this vale of tears is the way of the cross." (p. 73) Here the poet tells us of how his sad experiences had opened up for him a door, through which he was able to see, at first dimly, the true aim of his life.

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1) per aspera ad astra and per crucem ad lucem are Latin sayings with the same meaning, that is, happiness comes after suffering; in other words: success is usually the result of hard struggle (=no success without hard work).

This dim understanding he expresses in these words:

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;

(l. 143)

meaning to say, that I do not see clearly what the Divine Wisdom is concealing.

A good teacher does not reveal everything to his disciples all at once. That is what God has done and is doing to each one of us. Now and then He would allow man to see His goodness and love. The poet, as a mystic, at times might have felt that God had the pleasure of allowing him to have a glimpse into the life of the world to come, which is the end of every human being. Notice how Thompson expresses the idea in his own characteristic way:

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sound  
From the hid battlements of Eternity;  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again

(ll. 144-147)

Here Thompson employs a scene of war to make his idea more expressive. F.P. LeBuffe has a beautiful explanation of these lines: "battlements of Eternity" -- for he has been fighting against what is of God and now the unshakable walls are seen; the "mists" in which Time confounds everything because of our shortened purview are "shaken" for a short "space" by the magic trumpet. The soul catches a faint, dim, yet convincing view both of the turrets and the summoner, and then the mists slowly fold all out of sight. (p. 74).

What does he see? That is what lines 148-151

are telling us about. We read:

But not ere him who summoneth  
I first have seen, enwound  
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned  
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.

There are, however, three<sup>1)</sup> explanations as to the figure seen upon the visioned turrets of Eternity.

(1) The figure is a personification of Death. This interpretation seems to be valid taking into account the idea represented by glooming robes purpureal<sup>2)</sup> and cypress-crowned<sup>3)</sup>, they being the picture of sadness and death. Besides that, "the personal pronouns in the lines are spelled without capital letters, which Thompson invariably uses when referring to God," points out F.P. LeBuffe.

(2) The figure represents Christ, Our Lord. F.P. LeBuffe gives the following explanation: Our Lord is pictured in "glooming robes purpureal": for He trod the wine-press of Golgotha, coming "from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, the beautiful one in His robe" (Isaiah, 63,1), and He is "cypress-crowned," for this crown, with which He was crowned conqueror of the world, was the crown of death. (The Hound of Heaven, p. 74).

(3) The figure is a symbol of death of self as seen in the Christian spirit. Based on this interpretation, then, "the difficulty of capitalization," explains T.

1) Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., op-cit., p. 621, footnote;  
T.L. Connolly, op-cit., p. 367.

2) glooming robes purpureal: gloomy and purpureal here are taken in their literal sense, that is, that they describe sadness and sorrow.

3) cypress-crowned: cypress symbolizes sorrow and death.

L.Connolly, "will be avoided and the general spirit of the context will be preserved. In this case the crown of cypress may be taken as a symbol of death to self that leads to immortality. Such a vision only, it seems to me, is keeping with its consoling and strengthening effect upon the soul." (Poems of Francis Thompson, p. 367).

What interpretation should we take as a valid explanation to the lines? Here again we come across the fact of Thompson's genius of creating lines that are rich in meaning. Considering the poem as a whole, the interpretations are not quite in contrast with each other. Whatever may be the interpretation, one thing is certain, that is, the vision plays as a stimulant for the soul's progress towards God.

After seeing all the things that Eternity has allowed him to see, the soul is still reluctant to give himself up willingly. It even bravely challenges God by asking Him why eternity may be approached only through the avenue of death. Thompson writes,

Whether man's heart or life it be which yields  
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields  
Be dunged with rotten death?

(ll. 152-154)

It is clear that these lines are addressed to God. When does, however, man's heart or life yield its harvest to God? When it has been dunged with rotten death. F.P.LeBuffe explains: "Man's heart is "dunged with rotten death" when it feels upon it the weight of the drooping and dead objects of its earthly love;



and man's life yields God most harvest then only, when it has passed through ordeals that bring it well within the shadow of the cross." (The Hound of Heaven, p. 76.)<sup>1)</sup>

The lines bring the second stage to a close. The stage presents two steps of development on the part of the fugitive.

- (a) The description of the fugitive's shattered life and his vain hope to find comfort at least in his worded works, ll. 111-129.
- (b) In his desolation the fugitive comes to the realization that the love of God does not allow any other love to stand beside it, and that he would only be of great value to God when he is dead to all his earthly cravings, ll. 130-154.

#### c. The Third Stage

This stage tells us of the complete surrender of the fugitive. Here he faces the fact of his own nothingness and of the greatness of God's love, both of which convince him of the need of being with God and of accepting Him as his sole refuge. In these lines it is the Pursuer that speaks, and the fugitive hears Him submissively. God's tender love has had its ground to stand in his soul.

The Pursuer is now very near. The tremendous steps of His feet are so near that their noise sounds terrifying. The fugitive is facing the unavoidable

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1) F.P. LeBuffe's sentence here is probably not very clear. What he is trying to say is that man's life becomes fruitful and worthy to God only after it has gone through sufferings.

fact of being overtaken. The poet cleverly puts the idea into these words:

Comes on at hand the bruit<sup>1)</sup>

(l. 156)

It is not only that. His voice he hears "like a bursting sea." <sup>2)</sup> (l. 157). Like a stormy sea that roars around a vessel caught in a storm, the Pursuer surrounds the fugitive completely that there would not even be a slight crack through which he could find his way out.

The Pursuer makes the fugitive realize his folly, first by a mild reproof. In lines 158-160 He is trying to convince the fugitive of the fact that his flight from Him is the main cause of all his troubles and sad misfortune. Notice how Thompson describes the fugitive's broken and shattered life, and rather cynically points out the futility of his flight. The poet writes:

'And is thy earth so marred  
Shattered in shard on shard?

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

Thy earth is the fugitive himself, who is so terribly damaged as to be like a badly broken earthen jar any parts of which can never be of any use for whatever purpose.

In lines 161-170 the Pursuer, slowly and with the tenderest care a mother can apply to her delicate child, lays bare the fugitive's sorry sight and clear-

1) bruit = a loud, indistinct noise.

2) At the time of writing the line, Thompson was probably thinking of Apoc. 1, 15: "And His voice like the sound of many waters."

ly points out his uttermost unworthiness. First  
He calls him

Strange, piteous, futile thing!

He is strange because under the guidance of his strange heart, he, who is the child of God, runs away from Him to find love outside the love of a Father who wants no other love beside; he is piteous because, as his flight is a foolish, childish stubbornness, he needs to be pitied; he is futile, because his flight, before God, is a futile action: no one can ever win against God.

God wants man's love to be reserved only for Him, for Him alone; because having Him means having everything. It is altogether in contrast to what the fugitive previously thought, as shown in line 21. The poet writes,

Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
Seeing none but I makes much of naught.

(ll. 162-163)

Everybody knows that man loves somebody else because he sees in him some excellence: beauty, strength, faithfulness, helpfulness, sympathy, diligence, intelligence, richness, bravery, etc. A man with these or some of these qualities may well invite other people's love. Because of this, we can say that people love a man because he has something for them, that is, his excellence. He deserves their love because he has some merit.

" . . . human love needs human meriting,"

(l. 164) reminds the Divine Pursuer. But the Pursuer points out that the fugitive has merited nothing, even human love, because he is the least worthy of all human children. So he goes on to say,

"How hast thou merited--  
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!"

(ll. 165-168)

These lines present the humiliating truth about man, that is, that he is actually nothing and is of no value at all. He has been created out of nothing, so he has no right to demand love and service from other creatures. His realization of his nothingness, however, will be the basis for his development towards spiritual salvation. F.P. LeBuffe explains: "For, as in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth out of nothingness, so in the spiritual life, God will not build and form and fashion save where there is nothingness of self-esteem." (The Hound of Heaven, p. 79).

So unworthy though we are, we are still the product of Divine Love. We have been created in His image, after His likeness. (Cf. Genesis 1,26.27; 9,6). Because of that, God is still and always willing to love us. He will not let His image be destroyed. So He is always there after the image to save it; and He is the only one that can do that. Emphatically He says to the overwon fugitive:

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?

(ll. 169-170)

Ignoble thee: by nature we are surely ignoble. Commenting on the word ignoble, F.P.LeBuffe writes: <sup>1)</sup>  
Surely man is ignoble:

- i. In his primeval origin.--"And the Lord formed man of the slime of the earth."(Genesis ii,7).
- ii. In his present nature.--"I find then a law,that when I have a will to do good, evil is present within me. For I am delighted with law according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind,and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans viii,21.24).
- iii. By the ending of his body.--"I have said to rottenness: Thou art my father; To worms: my mother and my sister." (Job xviii,14).
- iv. By his ingratitude to God.--Most say "Thank you" to God far fewer times than they would in decency dare say to a human benefactor. "Were not ten made clean? Where are the nine?" (St.Luke xvii, 17).
- v. Above all in his sin.--"Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed: how then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?" (Jeremias ii,21).

Lines 171-176 are very touching. There we find a tender explanation and a warm invitation. The Pursuer makes it clear that He does everything for the

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1) This is a complete copy of F.P.LeBuffe's comment found in The Hound of Heaven, pp.80-81 (Notes).

fugitive's own good, even if He seems to deprive him from everything that he has been looking for. Everything he thinks as lost in his flight has been safely stored for him "at home." What is more consoling for a badly beaten and broken-hearted man than the following words that are peace-rendering?

All which I took from thee I did but take  
 Not for thy harms,  
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
 All which thy child's<sup>1)</sup> mistake  
 Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home;<sup>2)</sup>  
 (11. 171-175)

and what is more beautiful and reassuring for a surrendering captive than this eager and sympathetic welcome?

Rise, clasp My hand, and come!

(1. 176)

The whole scene is a mother-and-child's. The mother's tender and loving effort has finally won her wayfaring child back. Her sweet words and her stretching hand reassure it for its true safety. "Can a woman," says the Lord, "forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." (Isaiah 49,15). It is man's fate not to be forgotten by God. He flees, but God is sure to

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- 1) child's mistake - as to child here F.P.LeBuffe comments: "A pitiable commentary on a man is to say, 'He is an overgrown child'; and yet every strayer from God is such." (The Hound of Heaven, p.83).  
 2) at home - there is no home sweeter than God Himself: there is peace and safety, love and life.

be there behind him.

Now that the flight is over, the fugitive, seeing the truth of God and of himself, willingly give himself up to his Pursuer. In smoothly rhythmical lines he expresses the Pursuer's presence:

Halts by me that footfall

(l. 177)

Here we are facing a soul, a fugitive, a man, that has changed. He sees that his misfortune is actually God's loving hand stretching out to pull him from all his vain cravings. The pull hurts him badly, but the hurt is only a "shade" of His protecting hand.

We read:

Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretching caressingly?

(ll. 178-179)

These lines reveal the mystery of life's suffering. Suffering is, then, God's hand pulling a soul from its earthly desires and leading it towards its salvation.

Looking at the fugitive lovingly and caressing him tenderly, the Divine Pursuer whispers His last warm, peaceful magic words:

"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

(ll. 180-182)

Fondest - man is the prime concern of God. Everything is for him, even God Himself. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eter-

nal life," says Jesus. (John 3,16).

Blindest - Every flight from God is blindness. The poem's character is very blind indeed as to be unable to see God's loving hand in his flight. His flight would have never ended had he not returned to his Creator; he would have been still in search for peace and rest had he not been led by God's grace to God Himself. St. Augustin says: "O Lord, Thou has made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." (Confessions, Bk. II, ch. 1).

Weakest - without the help of God's grace, a man would never find, in this valley of chaos and tears, true happiness and peace. By reason of his fallen nature, man is doomed to his destruction. Only God can save him.

The pursuit ends in a divine embrace. The soul, the man, the fugitive, at last sees God as the true object of his quest and learns that there would be no love for those who do not love God.

It has already been said that the third stage is the stage where a complete surrender takes place: fear yields to love. The surrender, however, happens only after the soul has undergone the process of development, in which the soul gradually comes to the realization of self and of its relationship to God.

Based on T.L.Connolly's arrangement of events,<sup>1)</sup> I divide the process of this stage into the following

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1) Poems of Francis Thompson, pp. 354-355.



ideas of development of the soul in its progress towards God.

- (a) The soul learns its own nothingness and the greatness of God's love, ll. 155-170.
- (b) The complete victory of the tender love of God and His final reassurance, ll. 171-176.
- (c) The soul's willing surrender and God's loving acceptance:
  - The race is over, l. 177;
  - the mystery of life's suffering is solved, ll. 178-179;
  - the soul sees itself as God sees it, l. 180;
  - the soul sees God as the real though formerly unrecognized object of its quest and learns at last:
 

"Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me,"

l. 182.

#### G. This Ever-Pursuing God of Thompson

The third part of this chapter is an explicit explanation of the thesis' main concern, that is, Thompson's image or idea of God as seen in the poem, which is only implicitly shown in the first and the second parts of the chapter. Therefore, the following pages serve as a kind of grouping the ideas that seem only suggestively present in the preceding parts of the chapter.

The preceding parts have given us some light as to the meaning of the poem. The explication has,

it is hoped, opened a new insight into not only the poem itself but especially into the idea or image of God which the poet is trying to convey. The religious tone that rings in every line of the poem needs a second thought.

Having learned something from the explication, it seems wise to see the background or the key factor that makes the poem a distinct entity. Considering Thompson's religious education and background, we are sure to find in "The Hound of Heaven," as in almost all of his poems, some elements and thoughts that are religious in nature. This is what we are going to deal with here, so as to make the chapter complete.

However, it is not the intention here to present a spiritual or theological treatise based on the emotions or impulses that happen to lie hidden between the lines. The thesis is neither a spiritual writing nor a theological work. It is merely an attempt to see how the poet sees God and His relation to man. This, I believe, has taken possession of him and has become the magical breath of "The Hound of Heaven."

It has been pointed out that the central idea or the theme of the poem is "God's pursuit of man."<sup>1)</sup> But what is this God who is so industrious in His pursuit of man? In other words, what is this ever-pursuing God that Thompson presents in "The Hound of Heaven"? We try to answer this question in this part of the chapter; and by answering it we might come to the

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1) Cf. Chapter III, A-4. "The Theme."

knowledge of what the fugitive is. So, here we will come upon the Pursuer and the pursued, as Thompson is telling us in this peculiar story of his personal experience.

### 1. This Ever-Pursuing God

The poem begins with "I fled Him . . . . ." These opening words imply the presence of a certain power which must have been the cause of the flight. The whole poem breathes the mysterious action of this power, which relentlessly follows its "victim." The capitalization of the first letter of the pronoun Him in the opening words shows that Thompson is referring it to God. What is this God? From the poem we collect the following points. This ever-pursuing God is:

#### a. A Tremendous Lover

In his flight the fugitive tries to take refuge in the dawn and the eve, and urges them to hide him "From this tremendous Lover." (ll. 30-32.) "God is love," says St. John (1 John 4,16), and is a tremendous one. He is a tremendous Lover because, as F.P. LeBuffe explains it<sup>1</sup>):

(1) His love is eternal. Through the mouth of Jeremiah God revealed: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you." (Jer 31,3). This eternal love has brought forth the creation and procures its continuation. "By an utterly free and mysterious decree of His own wisdom and goodness," says the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

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1) Cf. The Hound of Heaven, Notes, pp. 41-42.

of Vatican II (ch.I,2), "the eternal Father created the whole world." "The Hound of Heaven" throbs the palpitating heart of this eternal Love.

(2) His love is unsurpassed. "His plan," continues the above mentioned Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, "was to dignify men with a participation in His divine life. He did not abandon men after they had fallen in Adam, but ceaselessly offer them helps to salvation." (ibid.) Through the mouth of Isaiah this eternal Love assures: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." (Is 49,15).<sup>1)</sup> And what is more convincing than the following straightforward statement: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (Jn 3,16).<sup>2)</sup> The unsurpassed love forces the Lover to invite the utterly exhausted straying beloved, saying: "Rise, clasp My hand, and come!" (l. 176).

(3) His love is insistent. This love is so tremendous that no one can hinder it from achieving its goal. F.P. LeBuffe writes: "When God wills to win the full love of the human heart, there is no silencing His grace's knocking." (The Hound of Heaven, cf. Notes, p. 41). To go against God's love means to fall into the fate of Saul who fell off his horse at the gate of Damascus when he was on his way to arrest the follow-

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1) Cf. page 94.

2) Cf. page 95.



ers of Jesus. (Cf. Acts 9,1-9). In his vision St. John heard the following strong words: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." (Apoc. 3,20). There is no way to escape for those whom God's love is running after because He would, finally, engulf them "like a bursting sea." (Cf. 1. 157).<sup>1)</sup>

(4) His love is munificent. It is God's wish that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. (1 Tim 2,4).<sup>2)</sup> God's divine grace is there in every step of man to help him to find true salvation. He fills us with His "gifts of inward grace in this life and a reward surpassing thought in the next." (The Hound of Heaven, Notes, p.41). Our life, temporary and eternal, is the true sign of His extreme generosity. Besides that, the fact of His giving Himself for men shows how deep is His concern for mankind, both as group and as individuals. The fugitive in the poem is given the light to see His generosity and the strength to lift himself up from his spiritually wretched condition and come to His bounteous divine banquet. The loving Pursuer explains to the overtaken fugitive: "Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee, / Save Me, save only Me?" (ll. 169-170). In his first letter to the Corinthians St. Paul writes: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Cor 2,9).

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1) Cf. Chapter III, B 2, c.

2) Cf. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II, chapter I,5.

(5) His love is overwhelming. God's love has the capability of turning one's heart ablaze so as to carry on His mission of love with utmost enthusiasm, even to the point of forgetting oneself. This tremendous love has led many a saint to martyrdom, has persuaded many people to fight for His causes and to leave everything behind for His sake. "If any one comes to me," says Jesus, "and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." (Lk. 14,26).

In the story of St. Francis Xavier we find another side of this overwhelming love: During prayer the saint was often heard of saying "Enough, Lord, enough" putting his hand on his heart; God's fire of love was burning in his heart. Now and then he would open his soutane and pour water upon his chest to cool it because of the ardour of the fire of the divine love that inflamed his heart.<sup>1)</sup> The same overwhelming and ardent love has successfully made Thompson's fugitive surrender completely to his Pursuer. "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,/ I am He Whom thou seekest!" (ll. 180-181).

(6) His love is changeless. Once God has set Himself to love He will never take His love back. That is why to whatever place our fugitive fled, God was sure to be there. He has loved him and He will never stop loving him. The Holy Bible says, "Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Heb 13,8).

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1) F.P.LeBuffe, op-cit., p. 41.

(7) His love is so great and so overwhelming and so exclusive. F.P.LeBuffe explains: "Bringing tremendous back to its root sense of making fear, His love is so great and so overwhelming and so exclusive that it does make the poor unschooled human soul fear the isolating greatness of this same love." (The Hound of Heaven, Notes, p. 42). This fact has caused Thompson's fugitive to fly away:

"For, though I knew His love Who followed,  
Yet was I sore adread  
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside."

(11. 19-21)

God has expressed Himself as a jealous God. In Exodus 20,5 we read: "For I the Lord your God am a jealous God," and in Exodus 34,14: "For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." God's love does not want other love to grow beside it. God's love is "an amaranthine weed," as Thompson describes it.<sup>1)</sup> It is man's misunderstanding of it that makes it fearful. If God wants us to love Him alone, He means to say that our love for others must be in accordance with His love. In other words, we love others "because God commands us to love them, and as He commands us, always remembering that any goodness or holiness or excellence we find in them is but a faint reflection of His infinite perfections."<sup>2)</sup>

b. A Good Shepherd

One of the most beautiful titles that can be

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1) Cf. Chapter III, B 2, b.

2) F.P.LeBuffe, op-cit., pp. 34-35.

used for God is to call Him a good Shepherd. This title is very touching, since it describes God's love and His protecting power for the sheep, His people. Jesus calls Himself a good shepherd. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (Jn 10,11; cf. 10,14-15). He stressed this again in His parable of the lost sheep. (Cf. Mt 18,12-14). A good shepherd has been the symbol of sacrificing spirit and of protecting power. In his relation to men, God shows His great sacrifice by descending down to human nature in order to lift it up to His divine nature, and His powerful protection in leading men to His loving embrace.

"The Hound of Heaven" is a story of a good shepherd who went out to find a straying sheep and finally led him back to safety. The Pursuer's strong determination and His relentless pursuit are the real picture of the strength and the faithfulness of a shepherd.

#### c. A Merciful Saviour

Man's fallen nature needs a supernatural power to lift it back to its former state of grace. By himself man is absolutely incapable of reaching God. Without the living grace of God man lives in an ugly condition and becomes an easy prey of the Power of Darkness. Without God man faces a terrible destruction, nay, even that living without God in itself is already a destruction.

However, God Himself, in His mercy, comes to



our rescue. So, when the time had fully come, God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. (Gal.4,4; 1 Jn 4,9-10). This is the realization of His wish to save men. This is the work of salvation, which is directed to mankind both as group and as individuals.(Cf.above:la (4)!)

"The Hound of Heaven" is a story telling us about the realization of God's redemptive work which is directed to an individual. From the very beginning of the poem up to the last word we come across a God who industriously managed to lift a fallen creature up to safety. The man's flight is an ugly thing. It is from this ugly state that the Pursuer saved him. He became his saviour. God comes into this world to save us and to bring us the peace of heart and soul.

#### d. God Always First

One more point to remember: In the whole history of salvation the striking fact is that God is always on the initiative. God started the creation; when our first parents fell, it was God that first come to them and promised them redemption; it was God that called Abraham to be the Father of a great nation (cf. Genesis); it was God that called Moses to take his brethren, the Israelites, out of Egypt back to the promised land (cf. Exodus); and finally He sent His only begotten Son to us to bring us back to His loving embrace (cf. The New Testament). Not only that: He found the sacraments by which we can nurture our spiritual life in this vale of tears; and He found a Church, a holy

one, to keep us in one family of divine nature in which we can more easily come into contact with Him by means of His sacraments. He creates and makes everything for men. St. John says, "In this is love, not that we loved God but he first loved us." (1 Jn 4,10).

All this is His expression of love. A true lover always tries to serve and to please his beloved first. That is what God always does. His work reveals His real nature, that is, love. He is truly a tremendous lover, a good shepherd, and a merciful Saviour. What is man's response to this expression of love? God is always stretching out His loving hand to us and it is ours to accept or to refuse it.

## 2. The Pursued

Much has been said about the fugitive in the explication of the poem due to the fact of his being the main character in the poem. Two important events, which are the high lights of the whole poem, are the flight and the surrender or the return of the fugitive to the true source of happiness, God Himself. Let us have a short talk on these two events.

### a. The Flight

The flight seems to be the leading action in the poem. It is the flight that encourages the pursuit. Why is there a flight at all?

The yearning for something beautiful, for something that can bring you happiness and peace, or to put it briefly, the craving for satisfaction, is the

background of every action, sometimes without your being conscious of it. The sad thing about it is that very often man tries to have it in the wrong way.

Man seems to be too busy with the apparent phenomena to the neglecting of the hidden force that vitalizes him. Many a man in this busy world of ours are too easily driven to flee 'outwards,' to lose touch with himself, to 'wander far' from his 'own heart.' According to St. Augustin this is the real tragedy of man. Humbly the saint addresses God, saying: "You are right before me: but I had moved away from myself. I could not find myself: how much less, then, could I find you." (Conf. V, ii, 2).<sup>1)</sup>

This outward drive seems to be one of the most fatal diseases of human personality and spirituality. Those who are not content within themselves always try to find compensation in the outside of their being. The same St. Augustin states: "Men go to gape at mountain peaks, at the boundless tides of the sea, the broad sweep of rivers, the encircling ocean and the motions of the stars: and yet they leave themselves unnoticed; they do not marvel at themselves." (Conf. X, viii, 15).<sup>2)</sup> This failure to turn into oneself and to think of one's own self are the main cause of man's flight. His knowledge of self will sure lead him to his acknowledg-

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1) Peter Brown, Augustin of Hippo, A Biography, p.168.

2) Peter Brown, i b i d ., p.168.

ment of God the Creator.

This outward drive gives him no satisfaction. Material things can never fulfill the unlimited desire of man. His heart is too vast to be filled only with the apparent phenomena. His heart longs for a still higher entity with unlimited possibility.

Our fugitive is sure to have been infected by this disease of outward drive. He tries to find satisfaction in his thoughts and emotions, not in his own self; he runs for refuge in human love and in children's innocence, not in his own heart; he seeks peace in nature, not in his own soul.<sup>1)</sup> He fails to look closely at himself. This outward drive closes his mental and spiritual eyes to the reality of God as being his sole source of satisfaction. It even presents him with false ideas about God's redemptive love. God's love is too demanding, too compelling, too self-seeking, so that he flees Him in the hope of finding happiness in creature. His fleeing effort meets a complete failure.

#### b. The Return

The return or the surrender of the fugitive is a successful effort not only on the part of the Pursuer but on the part of the pursued as well. His return is, in part, his own victory over his outward drive, over his own wild self. This is what the spiritual teachers call "metanoia," a total turning or conversion. It is very hard and hurtful. A subtle

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1) Cf. Chapter III, 1 a.

manoeuvre--many times it is extremely difficult--is needed to gain the final victory over self. Here God's grace comes into action. The conversion implies a close cooperation between God and the fugitive, between the Pursuer and the pursued.

Here we come upon the practical fact of God and man relationship. Without God's grace man can do nothing for his salvation. On the other hand, without man's cooperation God's grace is blunt. How grace works can be seen throughout the flight. It does its duty slowly but with great determination and the fugitive opens himself to it not at once but only gradually.

This God of Thompson is, therefore, a tremendous Lover. His love for man turns Him to be a Good Shepherd and a merciful Saviour. In the realization of His redemptive plan God is always on the initiative. In the undertaking of His loving action God needs man's cooperation. So, in his effort to achieve his salvation man should open himself to the grace of God. By this reason, his success in his effort is his own.

#### IV. THIS STORY OF "THE HOUND OF HEAVEN"

A brief reflection on the poem brings the thesis to its conclusion. Here the thesis presents the fact that "The Hound of Heaven" is a story.

In spite of the explication and the comments on the poem in the preceding chapters, we may still ask ourselves: "What is, in fact, this 'The Hound of Heaven'?" After reading all the lines, many times we are still puzzled and perplexed. The words, the constructions, and the ideas that they represent do not easily enter into our minds and hearts. Whatever might be the case, the poem is rich in meaning. The thesis does not grasp everything that is hidden between its lines. Its richness is still in need of further searching. Every time you read it you would probably come across new ideas coming out from each line or word. Such is the characteristics of great poems; it makes them always new and so their value surpasses all ages.

##### I. A Love Story

Reading "The Hound of Heaven" one cannot but marvel at the same key note that has ceaselessly resounded all the centuries over. The key note is love. Therefore, "The Hound of Heaven" is, in fact, a love story.

This love story, however, is particularly unique because of the unique position of the persons involved. On the one hand there is a soul, and on the other hand there is a God, two entities that are so essentially different in nature. It is all the more

unique, considering how God, a supernatural and all powerful Being who is so high over all creatures, comes down to His beloved only to find her running away. Then comes the long dramatic chase.

The dramatic chase happens again and again in the course of years as long as man still fails to see God as his only lover. This dramatic chase is, therefore, not new. It has happened, it is still happening, and it will still happen. Is not God foolish? Crazy? Why all this chase? However it may be, that is just what happens. That is a fact. The unique love story with its dramatic chase goes on to happen. The eternal love, with its mysterious force, stretches out its powerful but merciful hand to pull man back to its warm and peaceful embrace.

The poem sings the eternal dramatic love affair between God and man.

## 2. Everybody's Story

"The Hound of Heaven" is Francis Thompson's story about himself. It is an autobiography telling of his mental and spiritual experiences in his relation with God. The story is, of course, personal but at the same time it gives the message of a universal truth. The feelings, the emotions, and the desires described in the poem are not alien to man. Joy and fear, success and failure are always there with man in the course of his life. Thompson's experiences may also be the experiences of anybody else. The fate of being a fugitive may also be the

fate of me and of you because every man has the capability of fleeing God. Therefore, the story of "The Hound of Heaven" is everybody's story.

### 3. A Winner's Story

"The Hound of Heaven" is the story of a struggle between man and his base passions and desires. Due to his weaknesses, he has been led away from the right course of life by his inordinate desires. The struggle is actually a fight in man himself. It is a hard and violent fight, in which man mostly fails to win. So, again and again he is forced to follow the dictation of his inordinate desires and base passions. This fact is described as a flight in the poem.

Man's continuous struggle to free himself from the slavery of his passions is shown as God's pursuing effort to win him back to His loving kindness. This is true, because in our struggle against our evils it is God's help that we should ask for. Therefore, man's effort to win over his false love is the work of grace.

The battle against one's own self is the most difficult one. The most successful man in the world is the man who is able to win over his own self. The fugitive's complete surrender to his Pursuer in the poem is a tremendous victory over self. The victory is the success of the work of grace, but at the same time it is the success of the struggle of the man himself. God wins and with Him the man. "The Hound of Heaven," there-



fore, is the story of a winner. The winner is either God Himself or the man himself, who in his cooperation with divine grace, emerges as a victor over his own false love and accepts the divine love.

In the battle both God and the man are active. God comes down and pursues the man. His pursuit, however, is a loving pursuit. He is jealous, yes, but His jealousy does not turn Him to be like Amir Hamzah's God, who makes you a prey in His claws and turns you to a plaything.<sup>1)</sup> His jealousy turns Him, instead, to be a Saviour and Protector, even a light that shows you the way to safety. The pursuit itself shows that He is always active in His effort to win His beloved back. He is not like Chairil Anwar's God, who only sits in His palace waiting for you to knock at His "door."<sup>2)</sup> His love forces Him to leave His throne and come down to save His miserable beloved.

Man's role in the battle is no less striking. He makes himself empty of all his earthly cravings and allows God to fill him with His living grace and lead him to victory. So, in God he wins.

In his effort of writing this thesis, the writer could only collect these three ideas concerning "The Hound of Heaven" as a story. They, however, the writer believes, give some light as to what "The

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1) Cf. APPENDIX p.i, "PADAMU DJUA," and its English translation, *ibid.* p.xiv, "TO YOU ALONE."

2) Cf. APPENDIX p.ii, "D O A," and its English translation, *ibid.* p.xv, "PRAYER."

Hound of Heaven" really is. A careful reader may as well find other ideas, since the poem is, presumably, full of meanings and messages. Whatever might be the case, the poem is really a story, that is, a story of love in which the divine and the human involve in a mysterious and daring cooperation to create a lasting and eternal relationship.

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A P P E N D I X

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## A P P E N D I X

Here and on the following pages the reader will find some of the poems mentioned in the thesis. I deliberately choose only those which are rather short. The reader who is interested in the longer poems of Francis Thompson will find T.L.Connolly's book Poems of Francis Thompson (The Century Co., New York, 1932) very helpful. I hope these poems will help the reader to understand the subject matter presented in the thesis.

### PADAMU DJUA<sup>1)</sup> (Amir Hamzah)

Habis kikis  
 Segala tjintaku hilang terbang  
 Pulang kembali aku padamu  
 Seperti dahulu

Kau kandil kemerlap  
 Pelita djendéla dimalam gelap  
 Melambai pulang perlahan  
 Sabar, setia selalu.

Satu kekasihku  
 Aku manusia  
 Rindu rasa  
 Rindu rupa

Dimana engkau  
 Rupa tiada  
 Suara sayup  
 Hanya kata merangkai hati

Engkau tjemburu  
 Engkau ganas  
 Mangsa aku dalam tjakarmu  
 Bertukar tangkap dengan lepas

Nanar aku, gila sasar  
 Sajang berpulang padamu djua

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1) Cf. A.Teeuw, Modern Indonesian Literature, p. 166.

Engkau pèlik menarik ingin  
 Serupa dara dibalik tirai  
 Kasihmu sunji  
 Menunggu seorang diri  
 Lalu waktu -- bukan giliranku  
 Mati hari -- bukan kawanku....

GOD'S GRANDEUR<sup>1)</sup>

(Gerard Manley Hopkins)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
 It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
 It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
 Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
 Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
 And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
 And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
 Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.  
 And for all this, nature is never spent;  
 There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
 And though the last light off the black West went  
 Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs -  
 Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
 World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

D O A<sup>2)</sup>

(Chairil Anwar)

Kepada Pemeluk Teguh

Tuhanku  
 Dalam termangu  
 Aku masih menjebut namaMu  
 Bila susah sungguh  
 Mengingat Kau penuh seluruh  
 tjajaMu panas sutji  
 tinggal kerdip lilin dikelam sunji

1) Roy J. Deferrary, c.s., English Voices, p. 613.

2) A. Teeuw, op-cit., pp. 155-156.



Tuhanku

aku hilang bentuk  
remuk

Tuhanku

aku mengembara dinegeri asing

Tuhanku,  
dipintumu aku mengetuk  
aku tidak bisa berpaling

#### LOVE IN DIAN'S LAP<sup>1)</sup>

The poem is too long to be put down here. It is actually a sequence of twelve poems containing a 'Proemion' (135 lines) and eleven other poems: I. Before Her Portrait in Youth (54 lines); II. To a Poet Breaking Silence (71 lines); III. "Manus Animam Pinxit" (75 lines); IV. A Carrier Song (91 lines); V. Scala Jacobi Portaque Eburnea (18 lines); VI. Gilded Gold (50 lines); VII. Her Portrait (168 lines) & Epilogue to the Poet's Sitter (52 lines); VIII. Domus Tua (4 lines); IX. In Her Paths (23 lines); X. After Her going (30 lines); and XI. Beneath A Photograph (19 lines).

Those who are interested in the poems are invited to have a look at T.L. Connolly's book Poems of Francis Thompson (The Century Co., New York, 1932) on pp. 53-76 and notes on the poems pp. 338-349. The first poem of the sequence, however, will be written down here.

#### BEFORE HER PORTRAIT IN YOUTH<sup>2)</sup>

As lovers, banished from their lady's face,  
And hopeless of her grace,  
Fashion a ghostly sweetness in its place,  
Fondly adore  
Some stealth-won cast attire she wore,

1) T.L. Connolly, op-cit., pp. 53-76.

2) -----, op-cit., pp. 57-58.

A kerchief, or a glove:  
 And at the lover's beck  
 Into the glove there fleets the hand,  
 Or at impetuous command  
 Up from the kerchief floats the virgin neck: 10  
 So I, in very lowlihead of love,--  
 Too shyly reverencing  
 To let one thought's light footfall smooth  
 Tread near the living, consecrated thing,--  
 Treasure me thy cast youth. 15  
 This outworn vesture, tenantless of thee,  
 Hath yet my knee,  
 For that, with show and semblance fair  
 Of the past Her  
 Who once the beautiful, discarded raiment bare, 20  
 It cheateth me.  
 As gale to gale drifts breath  
 Of blossoms' death,  
 So, dropping down the years from hour to hour,  
 This dead youth's scent is warfed me to-day: 25  
 I sit, and from the fragrance dream the flower.  
 So, then, she looked (I say);  
 And so her front sank down  
 Heavy beneath the poet's iron crown:  
 On her mouth museful sweet 30  
 (Even as the twin lips meet)  
 Did thought and sadness greet:  
 Sighs  
 In those mournful eyes  
 So put on visibilities; 35  
 As viewless ether turns, in deep on deep, to dyes.  
 Thus, long ago,  
 She kept her meditative meads, with wavèd shadow gleam  
 Of locks half-lifted on the winds of dream 40  
 Till Love up-caught her to his chariot's glow.  
 Yet, voluntary, happier Proserpine!  
 This drooping flower of youth thou lettest fall  
 I, faring in the cockshut-light, astray  
 Find on my 'lated way, 45

(Francis Thompson)

When music's fading's faded,  
And the rose's death is dead,  
And my heart is fain of tears, because  
Mine eyes have none to shed;  
I said,  
Whence shall faith be fed?

Canst thou be what thou hast been?  
No, no more what thou hast!  
Lo, all last things that I have known,  
And all that shall be last,  
Went past  
With the thing thou wast!

If the petal of this Spring be  
As of the Spring that's flown,  
If the thought that now is sweet is  
As the sweet thought overblown;  
Alone  
Canst thou be thyself gone.

To yester-rose a richer  
The rose-spray may bear;                      20  
Thrice thousand fairer you may be,--  
But tears for the fair  
      You were  
When you first were fair!

Know you where they have laid her, 25  
 Maiden May that died--  
 With the loves that lived not  
 Strowing her soft side?  
 I cried,  
 Where Has-been my hide? 30  
  
 To him that waiteth, all things!  
 Even death, if thou wait!  
 And they that part too early  
 May meet again too late:--  
 Ah, fate! 35  
 If meeting be too late!  
  
 And when the year new-launched  
 Shall from its wake extend  
 The blossomy foam of Summer,  
 What shall I attend, 40  
 My friend!  
 Flower of thee, my friend?  
  
 Sweet shall have its sorrow,  
 The rainbow its rain,  
 Loving have its leaving, 45  
 And bliss is of pain  
 So fain,  
 Ah, is she bliss or pain?

D A I S Y

(Francis Thompson)

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown  
 Six foot out of the turf,  
 And the harebell shakes on the windy hill--  
 O the breath of the distant surf!--  
  
 The hills look over on the South, 5  
 And southward dreams the sea;  
 And with the sea-breeze hand in hand  
 Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry  
 Red for the gatherer springs, 10  
 Two children did we stray and talk  
 Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,  
 Breast-deep mid flower and spine:  
 Her skin was like a grape whose veins 15  
 Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,  
 Nor knew her own sweet way;  
 But there's never a bird, so sweet a song  
 Thronged in whose throat that day. 20

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington  
 On the turf and on the spray;  
 But the sweetest flower on the Sussex hills  
 Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face. 25  
 She gave me tokens three:--  
 A look, a word of her winsome mouth,  
 And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,  
 A still word,--strings of sand! 30  
 And yet they made my wild, wild heart  
 Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,  
 And candid as the skies,  
 She took the berries with her hand, 35  
 And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,  
 Their scent survives their close:  
 But the rose's scent is bitterness  
 To him that loved the rose. 40

She looked a little wistfully,  
 Then went her sunshine way:--  
 The sea's eye had a mist on it,  
 And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way, 45  
 She went and left in me  
 The pang of all the partings gone,  
 And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul  
 Was sad that she was glad; 50  
 At all the sadness in the sweet,  
 The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still  
 Look up with soft replies,  
 And take the berries with her hand, 55  
 And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,  
 That is not paid with moan;  
 For we are born in other's pain,  
 And perish in our own. 60

ALL FLESH  
 (Francis Thompson)

I do not need the skies'  
 Pomp, when I would be wise;  
 For pleasaunce nor to use  
 Heaven's champaign when I muse.  
 One grass-blade in its veins 5  
 Wisdom's whole flood contains:  
 Thereon my foundering mind  
 Odyssean fate can find.

O little blade, now vaunt  
 Thee, and be arrogant! 10  
 Tell the proud sun that he  
 Sweated in shaping thee;  
 Night, that she did unvest  
 Her mooned and argent breast  
 To suckle thee. Heaven fain 15  
 Yearned over thee in rain,  
 And with wide parent wing

Shadowed thee, nested thing,  
 Fed thee, and slaved for thy  
 Impotent tyranny. 20  
 Nature's broad thews bent  
 Meek for thy content.  
 Mastering littleness  
 Which the wise heavens confess,  
 The frailty which doth draw 25  
 Magnipotence to its law--  
 These were, O happy one, these  
 Thy laughing puissances!  
 Be confident of thought,  
 Seeing that thou art naught; 30  
 And be thy pride thou'rt all  
 Delectably safe and small.  
 Epitomized in thee  
 Was the mustery  
 Which shakes the spheres conjoint-- 35  
 God focussed to a point.

All thy fine mouths shout  
 Scorn upon dull-eyed doubt.  
 Impenetrable fool  
 Is he thou canst not school 40  
 To the humility  
 By which the angles see!  
 Unfathomably framed  
 Sister, I am not shamed  
 Before the cherubin 45  
 To vaunt my flesh thy kin.  
 My one hand thine, and one  
 Imprisoned in God's own,  
 I am as God; alas,  
 And such a god of grass! 50  
 A little root clay-caught  
 A wind, a flame, a thought,  
 Inestimably naught!

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DREAMY-TRYST  
(Francis Thompson)

The breaths of kissing night and day  
 Were mingled in the eastern Heaven:  
 Throbbing with unheard melody  
 Shook Lyra all its star-chord seven:  
 When dusk shrunk cold, and light trod shy, 5  
 And dawn's grey eyes were troubled grey;  
 And souls went palely up the sky,  
 And mine to Lucidé.

There was no change in her sweet eyes  
 Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine; 10  
 There was no change in her deep heart  
 Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.  
 Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's,  
 Wherein did ever come and go  
 The sparkle of the fountain-drops 15  
 From her sweet soul below.

The chambers in the house of dreams  
 Are fed with so divine an air,  
 That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,  
 And they who walk there most fair. 20  
 I joyed for me, I joyed for her,  
 Who with the Past meet girt about:  
 Where our last kiss still warms the air,  
 Nor can her eyes go out.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD  
(Francis Thompson)

'In no Strange Land'

O world invisible, we view thee,  
 O world intangible, we touch thee,  
 O world unknowable, we know thee,  
 Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Does the fish soar to find the ocean, 5  
 The eagle plunge to find the air--



That we ask the stars in motion  
If they have rumour of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,  
And our benumbed conceiving soars!-- 10  
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,  
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angles keep their ancient places;--  
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!  
'Tis ye, 'tis your enstrangèd faces, 15  
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
Cry;--and upon thy so sore loss  
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder  
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross. 20

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,  
Cry,--clinging Heaven by the hems;  
And lo, Christ walking on the water  
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!

#### ARAB LOVE-SONG

(Francis Thompson)

The hunchèd camels of the night  
Trouble the bright  
And silver waters of the moon.  
The Maiden of the Morn will soon  
Through Heaven stray and sing, 5  
Star gathering.

Now while the dark about our loves is strewn,  
Light of my dark, blood of my heart, O come!  
And night will catch her breath up, and be dumb.

Leave thy father, leave thy mother 10  
And thy brother;  
Leave the black tent of thy tribe apart!  
Am I not thy father and thy brother,  
And thy mother?

And thou--what needest with thy tribe's black tents 15  
Who hast the red pavilion of my heart?

LOVE DECLARED  
(Francis Thompson)

I looked, she drooped, and neither spake, and cold  
We stood, how unlike all forecasted thought  
Of that desired minute! Then I leaned  
Doubting; whereat she lifted--oh, brave eyes  
Unfrighted:--forward like a wind-blown flame 5  
Came bosom and mouth to mine!

That falling kiss

Touching long-laid expectance, all went up  
Suddenly into passion; yea, the night  
Caught, blazed, and wrapt us round in vibrant fire. 10

Time's beating wing subsided, and the winds  
Caught up their breathing, and the world's great pulse  
Stayed in mid-throb, and the wild train of life  
Reeled by, and left us stranded on a hush.  
This moment is a statue unto Love 15  
Carved from a fair white silence.

Lo, he stands

Within us--are we not one now, one, one roof,  
His roof, and the partition of weak flesh  
Gone down before him, and no more for ever?-- 20  
Stands like a bird new-lit, and as he lit,  
Poised in our quiet being; only, only  
Within our shaken hearts the air of passion,  
Cleft by his sudden coming, eddies still  
And whirls round his enchanted movelessness. 25

A film of trance between two stirrings! Lo,  
It bursts; yet dream's snapped links cling round the limbs  
Of waking: like a running evening stream  
Which no man hears, or sees, or knows to run,  
(Glazed with dim quiet,) save that there the moon 30  
Is shattered to a creamy flicker flame,  
Our eyes' sweet trouble were hid, save that the love  
Trembles a little on their impassioned calms.

AD AMICAM  
(Francis Thompson)

I

Dear Dove, that bear'st to my sole-laboring ark  
 The olive-branch of so long wishèd rest,  
 When the white solace glimmers through my dark  
 Of nearing wings, what comfort in my breast!  
 Oh, may that doubted day not come, not come, 5  
 When you shall fail, my heavenly messenger,  
 And drift into the distance and the doom  
 Of all my impermissible things that were!  
 Rather than so, now make the sad farewell,  
 Which yet may be with not too-painèd pain, 10  
 Lest I again the acquainted tale should tell  
 Of sharpest loss that pays for shortest gain.  
 Ah, if heart should hear no white wings thrill  
 Against its waiting window, open still!

'WHERE TO ART THOU COME?'

(Francis Thompson)

'Friend, whereto art thou come?' Thus Verity;  
 Of each that the world's sad Olivet  
 Comes with no multitude, but alone by night,  
 Lit with the one torch of his lifted soul,  
 Seeking her that he may lay hands on her; 5  
 Thus: and waits answer from the mouth of deed.  
 Truth is a maid, whom men woo diversely;  
 This, as a spouse; that, as a light-o'-love,  
 To know, and having known, to make his brag.  
 But woe to him that takes the immortal kiss, 10  
 And not estates her in his housing life,  
 Mother of all his seed! So he betrays,  
 Not Truth, the unbetrayable, but himself:  
 And with his kiss's rated traitor-craft  
 The Hacedama of a plot of days 15  
 The buys, to consummate his Judasry  
 Therein with Judas' guerdon of despair.

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The English translation of the poems "PADAMU DJUA"  
and "D O A".

TO YOU ALONE<sup>1)</sup>

Entirely swept away  
Is my love, it has flown away,  
I return to You  
As before.

You are a gleaming candle,  
The light in the window on a dark night  
Beckoning home, gently,  
Patient and ever faithful.

My Belovèd is one --  
But I am a man,  
Who yearns for feeling,  
And yearns for form.

Where You are  
There is no form  
Sound is vague  
Only words bind my heart.

You are jealous  
You are cruel  
I am prey in Your claws  
As You seize, let go, and seize again.

I am bewildered, half mad,  
But my love keeps coming back to You  
You are mysterious, You attract my desires,  
Like a girl behind a curtain.

Your love is lonely  
And waits alone.

Time passes -- it is not my turn;  
The day dies -- not my companion. (i.e. I cannot  
yet die toge-  
ther with the  
day).

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<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Modern Indonesian Literature, pp. 265-266, APPENDIX.

P R A Y E R <sup>1)</sup>

For a faithful believer.

My Lord

When overcast by thought  
Still I utter Your name

Although it is truly difficult  
To think on You to the full.

Of Your light, pure and burning  
There remains only a flickering candle in silent  
darkness

My Lord

I lose my human form  
And am crushed

My Lord

I wander in a strange land

My Lord

At Your door I knock  
I cannot turn away.

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<sup>1)</sup> Cf. Modern Indonesian Literature, pp.267-268, APPENDIX.