Chapter - III

Pessimism in the Poetry of James Thomson
James Thomson is greatly admired for his single poem, *The City of Dreadful Night*, expressing his innermost thoughts and feelings. It's the poet's analysis of his own mind and heart. This poem is charged with utter pessimism and hopelessness which was the expression of a mind naturally prone to gloom and melancholy. The poet's miserable life dragged him into the world of despair which formed the subjects of his writing. So to understand Thomson's writing, it is necessary to visualise painful experiences of his life reflected in his works. James Thomson was born at Port Glasgow in 1834. He spent his childhood in poverty due to the sudden breakdown in his father's health. The incident brought the family into financial crisis and forced them to seek better fortune in London. His mother died when he was a small boy. Inspite of these circumstances, he got sufficient education and became an army school master. The period he spent in the school was the happiest one in Thomson's life. Now he fell in love with Matilda Weller and her premature death accentuated his tendency to melancholy. Dobell Betram writes about the incident ^\textsuperscript{1}\textquoteright"That this was an overwhelming
blow to him, and that it affected his whole after-life, can hardly be doubted. All his hopes and all his plans for the future had been bound up with her; and with her death his chief aim in life had been destroyed. Henceforth his existence was that of one whose will was broken, and who cared not whither he wandered, since there was nowhere a Mecca or a promised land wherein he might hope to find rest and peace".

Here he has also made acquaintance with Charles Bradlaugh who was an atheist and his influence was deep upon Thomson and he helped Thomson to reach those negative conclusions towards which he was slowly moving. Once again Thomson was unfortunate when he was dismissed from the school following a disciplinary incident. He afterwards became a solicitor's clerk, then secretary of a gold and silver mine company, a war correspondent in Spain and finally he turned towards Bradlaugh who was running a magazine 'National Reformer', and almost all his famous poems were published in this magazine. His early works did not get so much acceptance as The City of Dreadful Night got. This poem attracted many critics of that time. Besides this, his work includes Vane's story, Weddah
and Om-el-Bonain The Doom of a City, Insomnia, To Our Ladies of Death and other poems.

The City of Dreadful Night appeared in 1874 and after one year of its publication Thomson's quarrel with Bradlaugh ended this long friendship. The quarrel was disastrous to Thomson and then he wrote only a few lyrics before his death. His later days darkened by poverty and ill-health, largely due to insomnia and intemperate habits, were spent in London. Finally, an atheist, depressive and alcoholic Thomson died at University college hospital, under distressing circumstances in June 1882.

This melancholic story is sufficiently reflected in his works. His most depressing poem The City of Dreadful Night expresses his own feelings and experience. It is the product of that time when he was wandering into the world of despair after the death of Matilda Weller. "The City of Dreadful Night (1874) was Thomson's heart-to-heart communication of a secret to his suffering brethren. He was no sobber, and joined his vision of melancholy (inspired by Durer) to an honestly intellectual pessimistic philosophy, with acknowledgements to his friend Charles Bradlaugh, and to Shalley, Heine, Leopardi and Schopenhauer. Fits of
melancholy and inebriety troubled him more deeply in later life". The whole poem is saturated with atheistic despair and Thomson offers a gloomy interpretation of the human condition, juxtaposed with dark description of the city, London and night. Structured with alternating meditative and episodic sections, London becomes synonymous with the loneliness and despondency of life as Thomson sees it.

The opening section of the poem describes the city and its location. It is the account of the journey of that narrator who travels through the city over the space of one night. The story is communicated through the figure of the first person narrator who participates in the dreamlike scenes of the even number episodes, and then makes comment in the odd number episodes. Also, there a proem which tells the purpose of this work. The proem and eleven odd numbered cantos supply the description and philosophy that makes sense of those symbolic adventures described by the narrator.

The city described by the narrator is a labyrinth surrounded by the sea and mountain and there is no escape except by cessation of consciousness in death. Before the description of the city in section I, poet tells that
he is writing for those who share his feelings while suffering loneliness and despair:

3"I suffer mute and lonely, yet another uplifts his voice to let me know a brother Travels the same wild paths though out of sight"
O sad Fraternity, do I unfold
Your dolorous mysteries shrouded from of yore'.
Nay, be assured; no secret can be told
To any who divined it not before".

The poet makes it clear in the proem that he is going to discuss something serious. He wants to share his personal suffering and discovery of alienation which he experienced in his life. 4"But instead of proffering any consolation so crude as hope or even resignation, The city attempts to alleviate suffering through the presentation of a truth that should make each man's life more his own, and less vulnerable to the indifferent cruelties of existence".

The poet's personal experience make him clear that man wanders through a Biblical desert which has no promised land and he is spiritually alone in the universe and to share this discovery he writes 'The City'. His journey is a voyage of discovery consisting of a series of symbolic adventures which illustrate the demonic isolation of human
existence in the city.

The city, narrator visits, is the city of death and darkness. It seems that the sun never visited this city. There is silence everywhere and it looks ruinous but it is not ruinous. People who belong to this city, appear to be deaf and blind: As poet describes them in section I.

5"So there; warm faces that look deaf and blind
Like tragic masks of stone. With weary treads,
Each wrapt in his own doom, they wander, wander,
Or sit foredone and desolately pender
Through sleepless hours with heavy drooping
head".

This city is a land of darkness where no light could reach and the night of this city seems 'termless hell'. Although there is silence in the city, no one is sleeping. All of are awake. This waking means that they are conscious and thus feeling pain but are helpless. They have no hope of freedom.

6"They leave all hope behind who enter:
One certitude while same they cannot leave,
One anodyne for torture and despair".

Thus in this section the poet discovers that being a conscious man one has to suffer and there is no escape from this suffering. This pain and despair is must for those who are living in this world with consciousness. In the next section the narrator is telling about the place of the city
where Faith, Hope and Love have died. This experience is communicated by the narrator who is following the reader's shadow. First place, towards which shadow it indicates, is where 'Faith died', poised by the channel air. Then he reaches another site and indicates:

7"He gazed, and muttered with a hard despair,
Here love died, stabbed by its own worshipped pair".

and then he marched towards the street where a house was built, the shadow whispered with a cold despair that here Hope died. 8"Frustrated and disappointed by "this drear pilgrimage to ruined shrines (1.28)", the narrator asks how life can continue in this condition. The shade compares his own existence to a clock without face or hands: life goes on, purposeless, until it runs down. Then the ghostly figure returns to his three-stop round, circling as the clockworks do, a walking symbol of a symbol". The next section tells about the poet's effort to come out from the land of grief but he finds helpless in this effort so he gives up all hope. This theme is presented through narrator when he is telling about his struggle to come out from the city and at last he searches a way.
"And soon the eye a strange new vision learns". But this way is not clear because the city of night is so dark and dense that no effort will be successful:

"Where Death-in-life is the eternal king, Crushed impotent beneath this reign of terror, Dazed with mysteries of woe and error, The soul is too outworn for wondering".

The narrator moves forward where Thomson symbolizes the threat of mechanism and its effect upon human life. Science is challenging the religion, and machine is replacing human beings. The poet expresses his fear in these lines:

"The hoarse and heavy and carnivorous breath Was hot upon me from deep jaws of death; Sharp claws, swift talons, fleshless fingers cold plucked at me from the bushes, tried to hold".

"Here Mechanical 'clanking' is reinforced by 'fleshless' and 'cold', yet this lifeless horror is juxtaposed with the hot immediacy of carnivorous desire. Life is evoked, but unnatural life, the city is populated by just such life". And in such circumstances there is no hope as the life has lost all its charm so there is no fear also. 

"But as soon as he sees the spector of the dead woman he had loved, he says, "I was twain, Two selves distinct that cannot join again (IV 71=72). The ghost embraces the part of him that had died with her and both are swept away forever on the tide of an
indifferent sea. Despite his original refrain. "No hope could have no fear", the traveller has given way to the false hope of love, thus exposing himself to the bereavement which has shattered his identity. The weakness of having hope, Thomson implies lead to an irrecoverable loss of self".

This painful journey in the city of gloom is continued, it is the picture of the real city of Britain which is presented by Thomson. The life of this city has characteristics of the nineteenth-century industrial city and the poet is the person who is living in that city and he expresses his feeling in this poem.

The geographical condition of the city also does not provide a way of escape to the narrator as it is surrounded by every side, so the escape seems hopeless, but if he gets a chance by luck then also he can't escape as he has wife and babies and being a conscious man he loves them more than death or happy life, so he will have to bear this pain.

In section VI the narrator overhears the talk of two phantoms, in which one is telling the other about his effort to get rid of this city even he prefers hell to this city, but does not succeeded as he is not allowed to enter the hell because he is the resident of this city:
"Leave hope behind, all ye who enter here"
And would have passed in, gratified to gain
That positive eternity of pain
Instead of this insufferable inane".

So he returns with this consolation that it has been written in destiny to live in this city 'shunt out alike from heaven and earth and Hell'. But his companion suggests him to share the feeling and to search again a way with hope because being a conscious man, no one should stop thinking and try to find out a way to escape without wasting time.

In the next section, the narrator discovers the truth that all men are sharing the same feeling of pain though they have different status. The city is a place of horror where phantoms are more comfortable than men.

"I have seen phantoms there that were as a man
And men that were as phantoms flit and ram.
Marked shapes that were not living to my ken
Caught breathings acrid as with Dead Sea foam:
The city rests for man so weird and awful
That his intrusion there might seem unlawful,
And phantoms there may have their proper home".

This journey with symbolic adventures is going on and the narrator reaches the river side where a man is complaining of the fate which is responsible for his painful life:
"Who is most wretched in this dolorous place?
I think myself: yet I would rather be
My miserable self than He, than He
who formed such creatures to His own disgrace".

He also blames God who is the creator of human kind and
such creation is against His dignity. But his companion says
that it is the mechanical function of the universe and there
is no mind behind such life:

"The world rolls round for ever like a mill;
It grinds out death and life and good and ill;
It has no purpose, heart or mind or will".

In this city, the human condition is declining. There is no
purpose to live and all things depend on fate. Everyone is
performing his duties assigned by his fate. The sign of
livelihood as joy, peace and hope has been lost due to the
curse of the city.

In the next section, the narrator enters into a silent
mansion where there is no sign of life. He wanders from
room to room and hall to hall and found the portrait of a
young woman 'held a shrine, around which tapers burned',
in every room. He searches more and finally reaches a room
where the lady of shrine lies in funeral pose and a young
man knees beside the bed and he seems to pray to her
even after death, as he used to pray in her life. The narrator
is very much impressed to see this and he also knees beside her and wishes to stay here till she wakes but he feels that he is turning into stone by shock as someone tells him that she will never wake because she is dead.

18"Most beautiful were Death to end my grief,
Most hateful to destroy the sight of thee,
Dear vision better than all death or life".

and the narrator come out from the palace with grief. In this section, the poet recalls the death of his beloved. This incident was unbearable for the poet: he never comes out from this shock throughout his life and this is reflected in this poem also. So this section is the outcome of the personal experience which was a turning point in his life.

In section XI, the poet is surprised on the patience of the citizens of this city who are now habitual to live in this tomb even though by now they lost all hopes of freedom. They have strength and wisdom to overcome the miseries of life but accept this painful life as a verdict of fate. In this city, everyone is facing same problems inspite of enjoying variety of status and poet disagrees with this indifference towards tackling the problems. He says that these people are making paths of their ruins and 'To cheat itself refusing to be hold; and in the eyes of poet
irrespective of having or not having power, all are same.

19"Yet these and those are brothers,
The saddest and the weariest men on earth".

The modern man's problem of alienation has been discussed by the poet in the next section. The narrator tries to find out a way for all those sufferers who are facing same problem but due to lack of communication they are not aware of each other's problems, so the narrator suggests a plan of procession, to bring together all isolated units. In this long procession every citizen will participate and it will end near the cathedral. 20"Yet as Thomson's inverted procession of isolation toward a cathedral of atheism demonstrates, the more men realize their separation, the more they can see in each other a common despair or, worse, the consequences of their own seemingly isolated actions. Thomson's procession serves an authentic purpose finally, beneath its silent, dissociative demeanor and godless destination, for it requires total participation and a renunciation of individual identity for the common acceptance of 'this real night". But very soon he realizes that this is his dream only and his efforts are useless so he accepts the painful reality and enters into the cathedral with others:
"From desperate fighting with a little band
Against the powerful tyrants of our land
To free our brethren in their own despite
I wake from daydreams to this real night".

In this sunless city, time is passing slowly. All men are suffering with consciousness but sometime pray secretly to become unconscious so that they can pass time without pain. The hours in this city are intolerable and nights are full of pain. In this situation they wish to have death which will give them relief.

"We yearn for speedy death in full fruitions
Dateless oblivion and divine repose".

In section XIV, the narrator reaches a place where all men are gathered and patiently waiting for the event when the preacher will arrange for their freedom. They hear a sad voice of preacher who addresses the crowd in these words:

"O Melancholy Brothers, dark, dark, dark
O battling in black floods without an arc
O spectral wanderers of unholy Night!"

He confirms it in his speech that he is sharing their pain, and to provide them freedom from this suffering, he tries to search a way but he is not successful in his effort and at last he reaches the conclusion:

"There is no God; no Friend with names divine"
so all are free to end their life as they wish because there will be no reward of this suffering after death and this life is a curse and the grave is the best place in this city, so the death is best way for them. But this declaration is for the time being and again the poet insists them to pass this life with patience as "all sustenance lives and struggles ever more" and this is the Necessity which have forced all for this life and if they will bear all these pains with consciousness only for some years then will get relief forever but if they are unable to do so then free to end their lives:

"End it when you will".

In this section the poet wants to tell them that there is no solution of their pain in religion, so they should rely upon their way of thinking and try to find out a way themselves. No preacher or religious leader is able to solve their problems so they should take decisions according to their self consciousness.

"The fifteenth and shortest section of the poem celebrates the congregation's new found self awareness and freedom to act. In a ritual expression of collective suffering, it recognizes that only human activity and belief can create value and meaning in an impersonal universe".
In next section, the narrator hears a voice of man who is the member of congregation. The man is complaining that in all eternity he has got the chance to pass his life with wife and babies. This chance was never offered to him and he wishes to enjoy this opportunity but this life is so painful and worse that it has become curse. Hence, he does not accept the idea of suicide offered by the preacher. He discovers that:

28"Our life's a cheat, our death a black abyss; Hush and be mute envisaging despair".

In the next section, the poet is talking about all those things which are doing their jobs without any objection or resistance as the moon does its duty through the endless nights and stars also glitter. They are performing their jobs because they have no mind or heart, they are only puppets. But

29"if we could near them with the flight unflown We should but find them worlds as sad as this. Or suns all self consuming like our own Enringed byplanet worlds as much amiss: They wax and wane through fusion and confusion; The spheres eternal are a grand illusion, The empyrean is a void abyss".

The quest is going on. The mental disorder of the residence of this city has been described by the poet. 30"The overall
effect of Thomson's section XVIII is of pervasive melancholy, a wasted life searching for an impossible ideal, no more than escape 'Beyond the reach of man-evolving Poem' which is never achieved'. A man's wish to reunite his present with past, so that he could get back his innocence, is an escape from reality:

31"For this is law, if law there is in fate:
What never has been, yet may have its when;
The thing which has been never is again".

The next section insists on being experienced through suffering. 'The River of Suicides' is the Thomson's best expression about his philosophy of life. He says that suicide is not the solution of this suffering and if one gains maturity at the cost of this painful night then this will be a great success. This time is precious which one can utilise in gaining self-knowledge and after the death he will sleep forever.

32"What matters one brief night of dressy Rain?
When after it the weary eyelids fall
You the weary eyes and wasted brain;
And all sad scenes and thoughts and feeling vanish
In that sweet sleep no power can ever banish,
That one best sleep which never wakes again".

The most striking image in the city is that of an armed angle's statue crumbling before an inscrutable
sphinx. In the poem, the weary and depressed narrator sits at the base of a pillar across a great cathedral. The narrator is thinking about these two contrasting shapes, suddenly he awakens by the noise and sees.

"The angle's wings had fallen, stone on stone,
And lay there shattered: hence the sudden sound:
A warrior leaving on his sword alone
Now watched the sphinx with that regard profound.

This defeat of Angel who is associated with religion confirms that now there is no place of religion in human life and the only way for existence in this city is, to change the human life according to science. Religion is not only stone which can give them protection.

The last stanza which has been appreciated by almost all the critics of that time is the 'Meloncolia' Passage. The last six stanzas of this passage are considered as 'the highwater mark of pessimism' by 'The London Quarterly Review', which disliked the poem. The end of the narrator's quest is the statue of Melancolia representing the only way to endure a universe which, though indifferent, nonetheless binds existence with the chains of time. The Melancolia indicates Thomson's development towards accepting the domanic world as the ultimate reality of existence. She is
surrounded by the scientific and geographical instruments by which she measured the time and space of human life and the result is despair.

"Unvanquished in defeat and desolation,
Undaunted in the hopeless confligration
Of the day setting on her baffled prime".

The final discovery which Meloncolia makes is a cosmic nihilism. She is a bronze statue and cannot move, but she has eternal consciousness as she sits with the tools of action around her. In the last lines the poet reveals his intention by describing the position of Melancolia.

"Her subjects often gaze upto her there:
The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,
The weak new terrors: all renewed assurance
And confirmation of the old despair".

Thus in the end, she suggests to become time conscious in the real life as there is nothing after death.

"The narrator in the city, then is searching for a way to come to turn with the meaninglessness of a universe ruled by blind Necessity. His journey gradually uncovers the hidden connections between the isolated members of his suffering fraternity, eventually showing that freedom and comfort can be achieved through a shared stoic confrontation of the city". Thomson's city has been
compared with the Eliot", The Waste Land. Both poets have written about London. Before writing The Wasteland, Eliot had read Thomson and his influence could be seen in his poem. The city of Thomson is hopeless and Eliot's, 'The Wasteland' also gives this impression as Thomson says 37"They leave all hope behind who enter there" and Eliot confirms this in Wasteland "Leave hope behind all ye who enter there". The fear of inanity which is found in Thomson's poetry is also expressed by Eliot. Both poets are searching for peace and joy in a desert. But the one big difference in both poet's city is that Thomson's city is without God and Eliot's. 'The Wasteland' is seeing towards God for peace. So the similarity indicates that Thomson made impact upon Eliot's mind and both poets were suffering from same feeling and despair for which that age was responsible in which they were living. But the dark pessimism of 'The city' could not be compared to any other work of the age. It is absolutely without hope, and without God in the world. 38"What make this work remarkable among victorian poems about the city is that it offers a solution to the familiar catalogue of urban complaints and fears, a way of dealing and living with the urban despair to which it at first appears to succumb".
Thomson's another poem The Doom of a City which is his first poetic masterpiece was written at that time when he was passing through a great spiritual struggle. "His theme belongs distinctly to his earlier period; the recognition of a Providence has not been rejected and even a faith in human amelioration is expressed". The poem is about the voyage of the poet to a city of stone people. In the first part of the poem he tells about the atmosphere of the city which create a terror upon his mind. He gives the picture of the city.

"That mighty city through the breathless air
Thrilled forth no pulse of sound, no fainted him
Of congregated life in street and square;
Be calmed beyond all calm those galloon lay,
As still and lifeless as their shadows there".

The poet is horrified to see this city where no one is alive. He finds himself helpless and alone in that mysterious city.

"In the second part, there is a description of this city, where all life has turned to stone - an allegory of the stony insensibility of the human heart when numbed by destiny and despair". He visits through the city and tells about it:

"What found I? - Dead stone santries stong-eyed.
Erect, steel, sworded, brass-defended all,
Guarding the sombrous gateway deep and wide
Hewn like a cavern through the mighty wall;"
Stone statues all throughout the streets and squares,
Grouped as in social converse or alone;
Dim stony merchants holding forth rich wares
To catch the choice of purchasers of stone”.

The expressions and positions of these statues give the idea that they were not prepared for their doom and life was therefore going on normally in the city. They were busy in their daily life’s work. In one place, people were participating in congregation and clothed in rich array, suddenly all of them turned into stones. In another place, people were enjoying theatre and an actor was performing on the stage whose expressions reflect that it was tragic drama and he also turned into stone. Poet also describes the position of the King, the Queen and their company which were gathered in the palace, and after the doom they all turned into stone.

"Gathered together, all awaited there
Such scenic storms as purify life’s air;
Whose scathless lightening slimmer wildly grand,
Whose lofty thunders soo the sure peace more bland;
And now, without a throb, without a breath.
They wait, all frozen into icydeath”.

The poet is upset to see these statues. He wants to know the reason of this doom so he continues his visits and
comes to the statue of Melancolia which is capable of reading all theological mysteries. The poet tells about this statue:

44"He sits, the full length statue of a sage,
  Amid the busts of those every age
  Who handed on the torch of Wisdom, bright
  With growing splendour; thwert the billowy night
  Of shoreless ignorance Before him lies
  The roll which tellath on what mysteries
  He shed its lustre till they shone and clear;
  It race its period by the moonlight here".

He gets an answer to his question when he comes to know that the personage, who symbolizes the state of religious existence in the city, and all his fellow inhabitants were punished by God for the sins they had committed. Thus the male personage contains, in symbolic form, the implications of being reprobate to God. The inhabitants being 'Frozen into a nightmare', ghastly death' implies lack of an after life, the fear of ultimate nothingness. The poet is depressed because of this situation. He says:

45"It is too horrible: - alone, alone,
  I make mad delliance with the empty flesh;
  Whose form is whole, whose ghastly bloom is fresh;
  And by my side, that hater of the soul -
  The grimming, the accursed skeleton ?

To see this condition of human beings he begins to lose
faith in God. He starts believing that man wanders through a Biblical desert with no promised land. 

"The climax of the poem, The Judgment, comes in the third section of the poem, where the narrator overhears God's Doom on the city. In this judgment, which has somehow the hall-marks of early inflicted Scotch Presbyterianism about it, and whose manner is constantly reminiscent of Shelley and De Quincey, the wicked statues crash to dust, and the good become free spirits". This destructive judgment is the message of ruin for the inhabitants of this city. They cry and make plea to God for forgiveness.

"Abominable Fate,
We hurl thee back thy hate!
The poison and the wine -
Our sins and souls are thine!
Ah! pangs of utter death
Stifle our breath
Hear us, we plead; herar us; oh wait".

But their request has not been accepted and they are crushed to dust. This judgment confirms poet's fear of ultimate nothingness which becomes undeniable reality in The City. This poem belongs to Thomson's earlier period when the poet was not an atheist but was progressing towards it. In the poem, one finds some indications of faith in religion till this period as the poet celebrates the freedom
of spirits by a triumph song.

48"The fourth part, 'The Return', is calmer and more

diadactic in tone. Thomson here states his creed of life

vaguely and uncertainly, but not without force and art". In

the last section the narrator returns home in his boat with a

warning to his own city.

49"If ye do not all repent, and cleanse each one

her heart
From the foulness circling with its blood to poison

every part.
Woe to thy pampered rich in their arrogant

selfishness;
Woe to thy brutalike poor who feel but their bread

distress.

........
The final Doom evolveth, burdened with woe on woe
Sure as the justice of God while yet his patience

slow;
For the earth is pervaded wholly, through densest

stone and clod.
With the burning fire of the law of the Truth of the

Living God;
Consuming the falsehood, the evil, the pride, the

lust, the shame,
With ever burning unrelenting irresistible flame
Until all save the purest spirit, eternal, of truth and

love.
Be altogether consumed away, beneath as well as

above".
In this poem, the poet stresses on the necessity of the organisation of the institutions belonging to human kind. He wants to solve all the problems causing social and religious evils and he warns people that if they will not follow the right path, they will be punished by God like the people of the stone city.

Another pessimistic poem which also belongs to Thomson's earlier period is Vane's Story. In this poem, the poet idealised the image of his dead beloved Matilda. The death of this girl was an unforgettable sorrow for Thomson and his grief has been expressed in most of his poems, specially in "vane's story". Vane's Story (1864), a more uneven work, has definitely autobiographical elements. The speaker, after a brief prologue in skeltonics, narrates how he encounters the vision of his dead beloved. They speak together, he of his atheism and she of her simple, self-consoling faith. This poem reveals the poet's spiritual struggle. His faith in God is now fading and he blames God for the suffering of human being. He says:

51"He cursed
The work the thought so good at first;
And surely Earth and Heaven evince
That the has done but little since".
He complains that God has made this world within six days and now he is taking eternal rest but

52"I have worked life after life
Of sorrow, sufference and strife".

The struggle of present life makes the poet feel tired. He feels alone and regards the world as a scene of black and immitigable despair. He describes his life as:

53"Meanwhile I passively endure
The wounds bequeathed by so much strife
The hopelessness of present life.
And this is much; what further can
Be looked for from a wreck of man
I bear in silence and alone
What maddened me at first, I own".

This painful description causes sorrow to his beloved but she does not agree with his complaint that God is unknown from our suffering. She gives many arguments to restore his faith in God. But she does not succeed in her aim as the poet mocks at those customs and prayers which have been performed by saints. He also makes fun of the religious people who pray throughout their lives only to get entry into Heaven. They perform all these acts for their comfort in the next life and are not genuine. So the poet mocks at all those people who do it for mockery.
Their earnest prayers were coward cries,
Their holy doctrines blasphemies;
Their faith, hope, love, no more, no less,
Then sublimated selfishness.

In this poem there are autobiographical elements. The poet recalls his past life when he was going through the painful phase of his life. He tells his beloved about that life.

I half remember, years ago,
Fits of despair that moddened woe,
Erantic remorse, intense self-scorn,
And yearnings harder to be borne,
of utter loneliness portion.

The terror with which he recognizes the necessity of accepting this life is expressed in lines reminiscent of Blake:

As well a thorn might pray to be
Transformed into an alive tree;
As well a weevil might determine
To grow a former hating vermin".

Despite his belief in God, he is not satisfied with his life and he blames God for this suffering. After a discussion with his beloved, the poem changes with the recital of Heine's Kh bin die prinzessin Ilse. The lady ceases to be a vision gains definite human qualities, and goes off with the speaker to a working men's ball. Here they meet Brown and done with their rough, enthusiastic pleasure making, and
so Vane's dream ends". This poem tells about the life of the poet which was 'a long defeat' according to his own version. He never comes out of the grief of his beloved's death and here he idealises her image. The isolation of present life is the cause of melancholy which is poisoning him.

58"The stream fell stagnant, and was soon
A bloated marsh, a pest-lagoon:
The sweet flowers died, the noble trees
Turned black and gaunt anatomies
The birds all left the saddened air
To seek some other home as fair".

Despite the defect of poetic unity, the poem is a large work in the field of pessimism. It tells about the time of the poet when he was torn between faith and doubt, and he frankly describe his mental condition and fits of despair. Thomson's another pessimistic poem To Our Ladies of Death also deals with the pain and suffering of the poet's life. In the first stanza of this poem the poet expresses his wish to die.

59"Weary of erring in this desert life,
Weary of hoping hopes for ever vain,
Weary of struggling in all-sterile strife,
Weary of thought which maketh nothing plain,
I close my eyes and calm my painting breath,
And pray to Thee, O ever-quite Death!
To come and seethe away my bitter pain".

In this poem which is full declaration of pessimism the poet
is describing three ladies. The first is 'the Lady of Beatitudes, who represents individual and conscious immortality', the poet calls her for help and describes her like this

60"Twin heavens uplifted to the heavens, thine eyes
Are solemn with unutterable thought
And love and aspiration; yet there dies
Within their light eternal sadness, wrought
By hope deferred and baffled tenderness:
Of all the souls whom thou dost love and bless,
How few reverse and love thee as they ought.

This lady is unable to provide him peace so he calls another Lady of Annihilation, 61"who represents eternal death, in turn appears before the poet but fails to solace him. Last comes the lady of oblivion, the spirit of peaceful fusion into the world spirit". The poet requests her for eternal rest.

62"O Sweetest Sister, and sole patron saint
Of all the humble cremites who flee
From out life's crowded tumult, stunned and faint.
To seek a stern and lone tranquility
In Libyan wastes of time: my hopeless life
With fanished yearning craveth rest from strife
Therefore, thou Restful One, I call on thee".

The poet is tired of this painful life. Now he wants to get rid of this life where there is only struggle. So he prays for death which is the only way of rest and the poem ends with the wish for death
63"Weary of living isolated life
Weary of hoping hopes forever vain
Weary of struggling in all sterile strife,
Weary of thought which maketh nothing plain
I close my eyes and hush my painting breath,
And yearn for thee, divinely tranquil death,
To come and soothe away my bitter pain".

One more poem which tells about the poet's early days is Insomnia. This poem is the experience of the poet when he walked on the streets of London at night due to insomnia.

64"Insomnia, shorter and less complex, sounds perhaps even deeper abysses of woe and suffering, and reveals one of the causes which produced it. For many years Thomson was a victim of sleeplessness, so this poem has the dreadful reality of personal experience". He tells about those nights which he passes without sleep:

65"But I with infinite weariness outwarn
Hoggard with endless nights unblessed by sleep
Ravaged by thoughts unutterably forlorn
plunged in despairs unfathamibly deep".

These nights seem endless to him and the thought of many events is the cause of insomnia. He tried to get rid of these painful thoughts but the burden of this tortured life impelled the poet, night after night, to roam about the streets of London. Thomson's despair and gloom, on the death of his beloved is expressed again in Mater
Tenebrarum. 

"He cries out in the night at the thought that perhaps his love is dead in soul as well as in:

In the endless nights, from my bed, where sleepless in frenzy I lie,

I cleave through the crushing gloom with a bitter and deadly cry:

Oh! where have they taken my Love from our Ealen of bliss on this earth,

Which now is a frozen waste of sepulchral and horrible dearth?

Have they killed her indeed? is her soul as her body, which long

Has mouldered away in the dust where the foul warms throng?

O'er what abhorrent Lethes, to what remotest ster,

Is she rapt away from my pursuit thou' cycles and systems par?

She is dead, she is utterly dead: for her life would hear and speed

To the wild imploring cry of my heart that cries in its dreadful need".

He loses all hope and in this hopeless condition he wants to die.

Thomson's one more long poem Weddah and Om-el-Bonain, not pessimistic, but is sad. It is the story of two lovers. The Juliet of the tale, Om-el Bonain, in order to save her country, has wedded Walid without love. Her Romeo, Weddah who is learning that he must relinquish his love, is
brought very close to death.

67"This truth was a potent poison-drought,
Fire in the entails, wild fire in the brain,
Which kindled savage strength in him who quaffed
And did not die of its first maddening pain
It struck him like the mere malignant shaft
which stings a warrior into sense again,
Who lay bonumbed with wounds, and would have
died
Unroused: the fresh wound makes him crawl and
hide.

He wanders alone in the desert and visits her in disguise
and has been caught by her husband and is buried alive.
Umel-Bonain pines and dies and thus this story ends. This
poem is a romantic tragedy. 68"It has the same range of
ambition as Keat's Isabella; decorative elements enter
without corrupting the development, and the memory left
from the poem lies not merely in incident but in a pictorial
image of beauty's unfair struggle with power".

After analysing the pessimistic poems of Thomson,
it has been found that his personal experiences are the
subject of his writing. His sensitive nature did not allow him
to escape from the struggle of life by engaging the social
life. He was unable to free himself from those past griefs
which became a life-long pain for him and his poems are
the reflection of that time.
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