

Librivox Free Audio Books On-Line

Fowre Hymnes

By Edmund Spenser

A Work in the Public Domain
Recorded by Thomas A. Copeland,
a Librivox volunteer

www.librivox.org

Visit our site to view the catalog of available books,
to download audio files, or to learn more about volunteering.

Fowre Hymnes by Edmund Spenser

Recorded by Thomas A. Copeland

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Dedication and Hymne in Honour of Love | 00:19:25 |
| 2. An Hymne in Honour of Beautie | 00:16:23 |
| 3. An Hymne of Heavenly Love | 00:17:53 |
| 4. Hymne of Heavenly Beautie | 00:17:51 |

Spenser explains in the dedication of this volume that the hymns to love and to beauty were written early in his career and their "heavenly" counterparts much later, in response to the dissatisfaction that one of the author's patrons expressed toward the earlier poems, although to a modern sensibility those are in no way offensive except perhaps in focusing upon the sublunary world.

However that may be, all four poems are idealistic, expressing the neo-Platonic philosophy that was growing in popularity in Elizabethan England. According to this doctrine, the soul is primary and shapes the body that clothes it. The material world is only a pale reflection of the ideal world, and mortals gradually, through growth from infancy to old age, unfold, or "dilate," the many-dimensional wholeness of their being as it exists in eternity. Life on earth, a journey to heaven, is conceived of as the pursuit of beauty, the proper object of earthly love, and the quest of love leads the soul back to the source of love and beauty, God. The structure of *The Faerie Queene* rests upon this concept.

Text: The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, Volume 5, by Edmund Spenser, Ed. Francis James Child