GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, RELIGIOUS POET: A READING OF HOPKINS'S 'MATURE' POETRY AS A RECORD OF HIS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND BELIEF

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Abstract of Thesis

Gerard Manley Hopkins, Religious Poet: A reading of Hopkins's 'mature' poetry as a record of his religious experience and belief.

It is my contention that the 'mature' poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins are a conclusive record of his religious development. They exhibit a loving reverence for God and His creatures. I propose to use the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church as an aid in making an interpretative analysis of the 'mature' poems, in order to demonstrate the validity of my thesis. It will be shown that the 'mature' poetry falls into four distinct groups. The first of these groups is made up of one poem, The Wreck of the Deutschland which is Hopkins's translation into poetry of his own religious experience approximately up to his ordination as a priest. The three remaining groups of poems consist in periods of emphasis during which Hopkins contemplated different aspects of his concept of the relationship between God and man. The first group emphasizes the manifestations of God in the external world. The second is concerned specifically with the relationship between God and man. And the third deals with Hopkins's period of desolation and despair. I shall demonstrate that, although these groups of poems appear to be different, there runs through all of them a single idea which binds them together and gives them a single purpose. This idea is that Christ is all important and must be worshipped. And the purpose in them is to worship and glorify Christ so that salvation may be gained.

PART ONE

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, RELIGIOUS POET: A READING OF HOPKINS'S 'MATURE' POETRY AS A RECORD OF HIS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND BELIEF.

by

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INTRODUCTION

This work is an attempt to demonstrate certain contentions about the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. I intend to treat only those poems written between the years 1876 and 1889; that is, all the poetry written after Hopkins's conversion to Roman Catholicism. Henceforth in this treatment, the mention of Hopkins's 'mature' poetry will refer simply to these poems.

It is my contention that the 'mature' poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins exhibits a loving reverence for God and His creatures. In connection with this, I maintain that the 'mature' poems contain a conclusive record of Hopkins's spiritual development. I will show that The Wreck of the Deutschland is a direct attempt by Hopkins to express in poetry his 'recollected' impressions and feelings of the moulding of his final concept of spiritual perfection. And I will show that all the poems written after The Wreck of the Deutschland are a direct translation into poetry of different aspects of Hopkins's spiritual development. Thus I shall demonstrate in this thesis that in the 'mature' poems Hopkins attempts to give impressions of the manner in which he arrived at his concept of God and His relationship to man and the external world, as exhibited in The Wreck of the Deutschland, and that he tended to emphasize different aspects of the relationship between God and His creations, as exhibited in the poems written after The Wreck of the Deutschland. For example

one group of poems stresses the relationship between God and man, another emphasizes the relationship between God and nature, and another deals with the difficult task of gaining complete comfort from his 'vision of God'.

Thus I shall demonstrate that in the 'mature' poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins we have a conclusive record of his spiritual development, that is of his attitude towards God and God's creations. Therefore we may say that the main aim and prime motivation of Hopkins's 'mature' poems is to glorify God and His creatures. I propose to demonstrate the validity of this statement by making a detailed, interpretative analysis of most of the 'mature' poems. I shall rely heavily upon the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the sacramental doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church since these were the two greatest factors in the development of Hopkins's spiritual beliefs. Finally I would emphasize at this point that the statements made in this thesis concerning Hopkins's feelings as revealed in the poetry, do not necessarily coincide with my own. In other words I shall simply be making an interpretation of the poems, I shall be stating what I consider Hopkins is saying in them. If at times it seems that I am pontificating then the reader will be quite safe in assuming that the author of this thesis believes that Hopkins is making such statements.

I shall demonstrate that the 'mature' poems fall roughly into four groups, the last three of which are not necessarily in chronological order. The first stage consists of The Wreck of the Deutschland and forms Part One of my work. It will be shown that Part the First of the poem is a direct expression of Hopkins's spiritual conflict and of his solution to that conflict. I shall demonstrate that in Part the Second Hopkins, not only recognized a spiritual experience similar to his own

in the plight of the nun, but that he regarded her experience as a confirmation of the essential beauty and goodness of his own. Thus, by analysing the poem in detail, we shall observe how Hopkins arrived at his 'vision of God', how he considered the nun gained her 'vision', and what Hopkins considered to be the significance of such a 'revelation' to all the world.

Part Two of my thesis will demonstrate that there are three general periods of emphasis in the remaining 'mature' poems. The first period is treated in Chapter One, which I call "Nature is never spent". In it I shall show that Hopkins not only saw a revelation of God in the beauties of Nature, but that he used these beauties to glorify and praise God. Also in this chapter I shall make a discussion of Hopkins's early asceticism, which I shall show was the direct result of his not being able, before his conversion, to justify the great joys he found in visual nature. Then I shall contrast this with 'the vision of God' he later saw in nature. The result will be added confirmation of my thesis that Hopkins, in this particular case, uses the beauties of nature to glorify God.

The second period forms Chapter Two of Part Two of my thesis. I call it Man's Purpose in Life. In it will be seen that the emphasis in Hopkins's poetry gradually shifts from the manifestations of God in the external world to a contemplation of God's purpose for man in this life. I shall demonstrate that in these poems Hopkins stresses a desire to 'lead man back to the fold', by attempting to convince him that the hardships he endures in this life are really a means for him to gain salvation. The aim of the poems in both Chapter One and Two is really the same, since

I shall show that Hopkins attempted to lead man back to God through his natural senses, that is by trying to make man perceive God in nature.

The third period is exhibited in Chapter Three, The Dark Night of the Soul leading to the Light of Morning. In it I shall demonstrate that, even though Hopkins suffered spiritual desolation during which he felt God had abandoned his soul 'as an abominable thing', the poet never ceased to glorify God in his poetry. It will be seen that Hopkins considered that the cause of this separation was in himself and not in God. This chapter really exhibits two periods of emphasis for it will be shown that Hopkins completely conquered his spiritual desolation shortly before his death.

PART ONE

THE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND: ITS MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

In 1876 Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote The Wreck of the Deutschland and thus ended seven years of poetic inactivity. However seven years of 'theological studies, religious meditation, and the whole experience of the most formative period of a Jesuit's life also lay behind it.'[1.] The result of this religious training and meditation was a new vision of the world for Hopkins; the universe had taken on new meaning and significance for him. In this light I propose to make a detailed analysis of the poem, and thus it will be seen that The Wreck of the Deutschland is much more than a poem commemorating the death of five Franciscan nuns; rather, Hopkins took the opportunity to tell his own story in telling theirs. For Hopkins the shipwreck is a spectacular and very notable instance of God's dealings with man and of the power and mastery of God. We can be quite sure that Hopkins is telling his own story in the poem for he wrote to Robert Bridges, 'what refers to myself in the poem is all strictly and literally true and did all occur; nothing is added for poetical padding.'

The whole meaning of the poem is summed up in this phrase:

"Ipse, the only one, Christ."

We shall see that Christ was the dominant factor in Hopkins's life.

Everything he did was dedicated to the honour and greater glory of Christ. We shall see that Hopkins always tried to imitate Christ's example as closely as possible and that he attempted to influence all men to follow the same path. Thus I think it plausible to say that the whole meaning of The Wreck is summed up in one phrase because we shall learn that the whole meaning of the poem, indeed the whole meaning of life itself for Hopkins, was in Christ. Christ was the salvation of the world; He died that men, by imitating Him, might find everlasting salvation. But more important, it was Hopkins's firm belief, not only that Christ was the world's salvation, but that He was the only salvation:

"Ipse, the only one, Christ."

The whole poem tells the story of the Passion and Redemption in terms of the lives of men; it shows Christ, 'the Martyr master,' calling the souls of men to Him, through penance and sacrifice, through the Cross, to perfection. And above all Hopkins tried to show this by showing how Christ appeals to men through the beauty of the world. The opening lines of the poem triumphantly tell us that Hopkins has reached his goal in life:

> "Thou mastering me
> God! giver of breath and bread;
> World's strand, Sway of the Sea;
> Lord of living and dead;"

He has become aware of the presence of God in the world about him, which condition he had been aware of before, though less vaguely; but more important, Hopkins feels that God has finally manifested Himself in a religion to him. The Roman Catholic Church has given him what he considers to be a much clearer view of God's purpose in life than he could find in the Church of England. 'Thou mastering me God' is an obvious reference to

the great discipline Hopkins had to exert upon himself in order to draw nearer to God. Also in Hopkins's striving to find adequate ideas to express his great awe and love for God, there is a much more authentic note than is to be found in his early religious verse. For example when he describes God as '..... giver of breath and bread,' he is struggling to express an idea and feelings which affect him much more deeply than when we hear him exclaim in his Anglican days:

"Lo, God shall strengthen all the feeble knees."

Perhaps here would be a good point at which to interject the more important points of Hopkins's religious training, which changed his life so markedly. This will be a brief presentation of the more important influences on his life and poetry since these same phenomena may be observed in his poetry itself. I feel that by emphasizing these influences a more lucid analysis of the poetry may be made. It was in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius that Hopkins first found justification for the great joy which he experienced in the external world, therefore I shall deal with them. First, the purpose and meaning of the Exercises have been elaborated by St. Ignatius himself:

> "By this name of Spiritual Exercise is meant every way of examining one's conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of performing other spiritual actions, as will be said later. For as strolling, walking, and running are bodily exercises, so every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the distorted tendencies, and, after it is rid, to seek and find the Divine Will as to the management of one's life for the salvation of the soul, is called a Spiritual Exercise."

Obviously such contemplation had a deeprooted effect on Hopkins's mind, but to be more specific, here is a summary view of the special objects and aims of the Four Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises:

> "The First Week comprises the consideration of sins, in order that we may come to know their foulness, and may truly hate them with due sorrow and purpose of amendment. The Second sets down before us the Life of Christ, in order to kindle in us an eager desire of imitating Him; and to make this imitation as perfect as possible there is set before us also the method of Election, that we may choose such a state of life as may be most in accordance with the will of God; or if we are not free to make such a choice, some instructions are given for reforming our life in that state in which we are. The Third Week takes the passion of Christ, the contemplation of which begets pity, sorrow, and shame, and greatly inflames our desire of imitating Him. Lastly the Fourth is concerned with the Resurrection of Christ and His glorious appearances, and with the favours bestowed on us by God, and other like matters which are calculated to kindle His love in our hearts." 3

We must remember that to some extent these Spiritual Exercises stayed with the Jesuit for the rest of his life and not only changed Hopkins's whole concept of God and of the purpose of the universe but continued to influence him all his life. This will be emphatically borne out in my analysis of his poetry.

Now I would like to quote the most important part of the Spiritual Exercises so that we may get a better understanding of Hopkins's poetry.

> "Man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God, our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.
>
> And other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created.
>
> Whence it follows, that man ought to make use of them just so far as they help him to attain his end, and ought to withdraw himself from them just so far as they hinder him.
>
> It is therefore necessary that we should make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is left to the liberty of our free will, and is not forbidden; in such sort that we do not for our own part wish for health rather than sickness, for wealth rather than poverty, for honour rather than dishonour, for a long life rather than a short one, and so in all things, desiring and choosing only that which may lead us more directly to the end for which we were created." 4

In this light it is easy to see Hopkins justifying the great joy he experienced in the external world. In this general matter Hopkins was satisfied but when he came to decide whether something was an aid or a

hindrance to his attaining the end for which he was created, he ran into more difficulty. This, of course, explains why he wrote no poetry for seven years. First when he was converted poetry seemed to be 'worldly,' and later he feared condemnation and so did not compose. It was only on the suggestion of his rector that he write a poem, that Hopkins ended his seven years of poetic inactivity. This was a very good thing since the result was The Wreck of the Deutschland. But to continue, here is the final goal and climax of the entire Spiritual Exercises:

> "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my intellect, and all my will - all that I have and possess. Thou gavest it to me; to Thee, Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it according to all Thy will. Give me Thy love and grace, for this is enough for me."

There is every indication in his poetry that Hopkins tried to adhere to this profession.

If we stop and consider the early Hopkins compared with the Hopkins of The Wreck we immediately notice two great differences. First he is no longer searching for a manifestation of God in some church; he has found it in Roman Catholicism; and second he has made the final realization, which he vaguely perceived in some of his earlier poems, that God manifests Himself in Nature, the external world. The second view is supported by Hopkins himself in his prose writings, 'I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at; I know the beauty of our Lord by it.'[5]

In The Wreck of the Deutschland, it now can be seen plainly that Hopkins's disciplining of himself in the opening lines is a direct reference to his putting into practice the Spiritual Exercises. After addressing God he goes on:

"Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,"

in other words, God created him and all men.

"And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
Thy doing:"

This is an obvious allusion to Hopkins's weak health, the frailness of his body, which was no doubt heightened by his ascetic treatment of himself. But Hopkins here uses the frailness of his body as an analogy with his state of mind leading up to his conversion. He had always been aware of the existence of God but the crisis of his spiritual and mental illness obviously occurred when he realized that the Church of England had no revelation of God for him and he could not, for awhile, see a revelation anywhere. This was a period of dread for him and therefore he considers that God 'almost unmade' his creation, both Hopkins's faith and Hopkins the physical animal. Obviously, of course, the mental and physical frailty ran hand in hand. But God revealed Himself because we hear:

"..... and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee."

Hopkins wonders if the shipwreck can be another example of God's power and mastery; can God really reveal Himself in a deed which seems so disastrous in terms of the physical world. And in the last line quoted he feels that the wreck is the work of God.

In the second stanza of the poem Hopkins continues his summation of his spiritual and emotional experiences. It is becoming very plain, even at this stage of the poem, that Hopkins is using the actual shipwreck of the Deutschland as an analogy to his own spiritual storm of the past. Thus in these lines we see Hopkins actually participating in the storm, and the storm within Hopkins:

"I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod;"

he had been enveloped by the storms of doubts and fears but he had survived them because he had finally recognized Christ and truly turned to Him. This is allegorically the same idea as expressed later in the poem, that by dying in the wreck the nun gained life. To be more specific, Hopkins is probably referring to the fact that he had braved the storm of abuse from the people he had left behind in the Church of England, when he turned to Roman Catholicism. He goes on to describe this conversion:

> "Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
> Thy terror, O Christ, O God;"

God really understood the feelings inside him, feelings which he himself could not express to the outside world.

> "Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night:"

This line is a reference to his novitiate as a priest, a period when he was still beset by many anxieties; and the implication is that God alone is present with him. It is the period of contemplation and purgation during which a closer union with God is sought. In the last lines of the stanza we see Hopkins making the final realization of what such a union really means. It fills him with awe and abject terror and he tries to express these emotions by analogies with the physical world and pure physical toil.

> "The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod
> Hard down with a horror of height:
> And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress."

Hopkins realizes that to reach a perfect union with Christ, his heart must be completely subjugated, 'trod hard down'; his surrender must be entire. The idea of 'a horror of height' is an expression of God's vast complexity which is beyond our comprehension and the contemplation of which is so awesome as to cause the senses to reel. The whole image was probably

suggested, again, by the shipwreck. It is not difficult to imagine here a ship being tossed in a turbulent sea with its crew straining with might and main.

In the next stanza Hopkins tries to describe the awful chase before a soul is delivered to Christ. Many critics have compared Hopkins' s plight in this case, to that of Francis Thompson in The Hound of Heaven. Thompson was:

> "..... sore adread
> Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside,"

in other words our whole being, soul, personality must be turned completely over to Christ. Yet Hopkins seems to go even further; his chase and eventual capture take on all the proportions of a terrifying nightmare. Hopkins seems to feel that naught but the complete destruction of his 'self' will satisfy the requirements for a clear 'vision of God.'

> "The frown of his face
> Before me, the hurtle of hell
> Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?"

This image is obviously a description of the death throes of his surrender for he imparts the final stages of panic very well by the searching, horror-struck repetition in the last line. This idea is bolstered because Hopkins quickly goes on to tell of his soul's deliverance:

> "I whirled out wings that spell
> And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host,".

The word 'spell' has many different shades of meaning but basically it is either a short period of time or a period of rest and relief. In either case 'that spell' here refers to Hopkins's last, agonizing moments of panic, before his soul burst from him metaphorically, and soared, as it were a bird, to the heart of Christ. Hopkins probably wishes us to read in both

implied meanings. There is also here a hint of action and reaction as when tension is applied to an elastic band and suddenly released. Thus when Hopkins's soul finally broke loose, its flight to Christ was much swifter because of the great tension it had endured; and in the last quoted line the image is made more concrete by the soul being propelled as it were 'with a fling of the heart' as if by a catapult. When the surrender came it was complete and by this Hopkins implies that a soul's surrender to Christ is its only deliverance.

The last lines of this stanza compare the heart to a homing pigeon:

> "My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell,
> Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast,
> To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace
> to the grace."

The image of the dove here used is very apt because it not only represents the flight of Hopkins's soul but also, since the dove is the symbol of peace, imparts some notion of the comfort its very flight brought to him. The bird image is continued, with the emphasis now on the instinct of the homing pigeon. Just as such a bird, when set loose will eventually find its way home or die in the attempt, so Hopkins's soul reached its resting place, not really knowing why but guided by a complex power beyond its comprehension. However, Hopkins is vain enough to boast of the accomplishment of his instinct. The image of the last line is a difficult one to construe and one would probably need a detailed knowledge of theology to realize its implications but if we imagine the pigeon, Hopkins's soul, in its flight through stormy skies to Christ, stormy because peace can come only when a safe haven is reached, 'the flame to the flame' becomes retributive lightning and a symbol for the Holy Ghost.[6] Thus, once the bird is free from fear of destruction, its comprehension of God's complexities becomes

greater. This also is the view of Roman Catholicism to which Hopkins strictly adhered.

In the next stanza we find Hopkins concluding his thoughts on the mystic way of spiritual salvation. Throughout these first four stanzas we may observe Hopkins's use of images becoming more and more complex as he tries to impart at least some impressions of his spiritual experiences. The impact of the shipwreck on his mind caused him to recall these spiritual emotions and so we get a natural progression from the relatively simple ship image in the first stanza to the metaphysical images of this stanza. The growing complexity of thought in these stanzas has a parallel in Hopkins's increasing difficulty in expressing his feelings as he approaches the ultimate of religious ecstasy. Also it may be seen that each stanza is a miniature of the four combined, retelling some aspect of his experience.

> "I am soft sift
> In an hourglass - at the wall
> Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
> And it crowds and it combs to the fall;".

An hourglass is a simple image in itself and the obvious implication is the passage of time. Also implied in the opening lines is Hopkins's plastic personality which he moulded, with God's help, into a temple for the adoration and glorification of God. There probably is a hint in 'sift,' with its idea of purification, of Hopkins's moving, in point of time, from the darkness of the Church of England to a state of grace in the Church of Rome.

The image of the hourglass, a small almost insignificant object, may be said to represent the body which Hopkins considers to be less important than the soul. But in the remainder of the stanza Hopkins tried to give yet another impression of the development of his spiritual life, which life for him is essential;

"I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane;
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift."

We are told that 'the voel' is a mountain in North Wales and since 'a vein' is a little stream the obvious image in these lines is little streams of water running down the sides of a mountain. In fact this is a common occurrence in Wales after a rain storm. Hopkins is comparing himself to a little well of water at the foot of a mountain, which is undisturbed and calm, 'to a poise'. The phrase 'to a pane' suggests glass and is therefore a reference to the comparatively clear and pure condition of the pool. 'But roped with' suggests a connection or being tied to and in this way Hopkins the pool, is tied to the height or Christ by the little ropes of water which flow down the side of the mountain and which periodically refresh him and bolster his spirit. These refreshing streams consist in some inspiration from the gospel, some pressure which forces him to a new realisation; all gifts from Christ. The image of the hourglass and that of the well are obviously meant to be taken as a contrast and the inference is that as the physical life disintegrates the spiritual life is built up; this can be achieved only by faith and grace.

After this treatment of his spiritual experiences Hopkins attempts to express, in stanza 5, the mystic revelation of God in the beauty of nature. It is almost as if Hopkins felt he had failed in his attempt to express the theological and ritualistic forms of revelation and so turns to something more tangible, the beauty of nature, to help him communicate his ideas.

"I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely - asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:".

Kissing of the hand in this manner is an act of supreme admiration; an expression of superlative adoration and love. These feelings are expressed towards the stars and more especially towards the vast infinity of the heavens, 'lovely-asunder,' which gives a hint of the vastness and complexity of God Himself; indeed Hopkins directly sees a revelation of God in it, 'wafting him out of it'. But Hopkins continues that God is not only revealed in nature at peace, in a tranquil state, He also appears in nature in turmoil. Hence we have Hopkins, not only glorying in thunder, but glowing as if he had been illuminated, as indeed he felt he had. In the next line Hopkins is talking, not so much about the vastness of the universe and of God, as the sheer beauty of the world. God is present here also:

> "Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
> His mystery must be instressed, stressed;".

Even in this idea we have an analogy to God; the impression one gets is that the nearer one comes to earth the farther one is from God. Thus Hopkins has a much more vivid perception of God in the vastness of the universe than he has in his description of the horizon, 'the dappled-with-damson west'. The implication is, of course, that the nearer one is to 'worldly' things, the farther one is away from God. This epitomizes Hopkins's problem in his early poetry; he found great joy in nature but could not justify that joy; now because of his religious training he sees God in nature. But even with this revelation we have only a hint of God's mystery, therefore it must be 'instressed, stressed', it must be dwelled upon, emphasized, its many associations must be realized, before we can really feel its vivid impact. This is very difficult to do, and therefore Hopkins concludes the stanza:

"For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand." He knows God is revealed in nature but it is seldom that he gets a direct revelation. The main idea behind this stanza is that God's revelation of Himself in nature does not depend on reason but that God orders the direct manifestations of Himself to the individual.

In stanza 6 the idea of revelation in nature is continued, and is used as a superstructure for a much more profound idea;

> "Not out of his bliss
> Springs the stress felt
> Nor first from heaven (and few know this)
> Swings the stroke dealt ".

The real import of the consideration and revelation of God is not to be found in the great joy He imparts, nor is it through contemplation of heaven. And Hopkins interjects that this is realized by all too few people. Then he turns to divine revelation in nature and says that the real stress is not here either:

> "Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver,":

it is not by any of these:

> "That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt ".

In other words not by these things is guilt mollified, or are hearts made pure and thereby moulded to suit God's purpose. No:

> "But it rides time like riding a river
> (And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss.)"

Hopkins goes on in the next stanza to name specifically the real import of God's revelation, but it is just as evident in this stanza. The call of the Cross 'rides time', inviting man to his own redemption and salvation. It is in the expression of these ideas that we can see the great impact of Hopkins's religious training on his mind. The Spiritual Exercises opened for him what John Pick has called 'Hopkins's new vision of the world.'[7]

Not only was he changed spiritually but the physical world took on a new significance for him under their influence. Hopkins feels that a full understanding of the Incarnation is so difficult to grasp that even the faithful sometimes tend to lose faith, and the faithless tend to miss the point entirely. This, of course, is a reference to his own days' 'in error', as well as to all who are not 'in the true faith'.

The remaining stanzas of Part the First of the poem have an emphatic 'but' in front of them. They all tell how Christ's Passion and Incarnation are 'the stress felt', how redemptive grace has been imparted by them.

> "It dates from day
> Of his going in Galilee;"

The principle began when Christ walked the earth as a mortal man. Its beginnings were thus:

> "Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;
> Manger, maiden's knee;"

Christ came into the world to save sinners and this was accomplished by his Death and Passion, hence the manger is referred to as a 'warm-laid grave' and association of 'maiden's knee' and 'a womb-life grey', suggests Christ's mortal birth. It is 'grey' because it is inevitable that Christ undergo great agony and because of this idea the womb and grave are looked upon as symbols of the same principle. The culmination of this idea, for Hopkins, and the reason why the womb and the grave are the same, is the belief that only through Death can we gain everlasting life, and this was made possible for us by:

> "The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat;
> Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,".

The compelled suffering of Christ and the completion of His God-sent duty, must swell to such proportions that all the world will come to realize its significance. Its great message is that Death can be conquered and eventually will be. So great hope:

> "Though felt before, though in high flood yet -
> What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard at bay
> Is out with it!"

Here we hear Hopkins saying; although God has revealed Himself and His purpose in many ways before and still does, most notably in nature, yet it was Christ's Passion which most fully revealed God to man. Where reason falls short in understanding the import of the Passion, the heart and faith take over and in this sense the heart is 'hard at bay' to reason. This, of course, is yet another expression of Hopkins's main thesis.

The eighth stanza is a direct continuation of the seventh, indeed they are linked, not only by idea, but by a joining sentence. When the heart reaches its ultimate revelation,

> ".....Ch
> We lash with the best or worst
> Word last!".

We 'word' ourselves, we say what we are. Then Hopkins draws from nature to help him express what happens to the heart or soul in this moment of triumph.

> ".....How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
> Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,
> Gush! - flush the man the being with it, sour or sweet,
> Brim, in a flash, full! - "

Just as the sloe, the dark purple, sharply sour tasting fruit of the blackthorn, will gush forth its juice when it is bitten, so the heart, in this moment of conception, flushes and makes pure the whole being of man, completely, brimfull, and in an instant. It is as if we can taste

ourselves, our inmost being, at this instant. Indeed there is evidence that this is exactly what Hopkins meant. In his Commentary on the Spiritual Exercises he says:

> ".....I consider my self-being, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of I and me above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor, and is incommunicable by any means to another man .....". [8]

Hopkins concludes the stanza:

> ".....Hither then, last or first,
> To hero of Calvary, Christ's feet --
> Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it - men go."

This, of course, can only be a direct reference to Hopkins's own conversion. Whether it happens early or late in life, or indeed if the state has always existed, men must surrender themselves completely to Christ, which can be a dire experience as we have seen in the case of Hopkins. If men feel the need for salvation, it is never a question of their knowing the meaning of their desire, or whether they really want it or have been forewarned of it; it is inevitable that they struggle for a 'vision of God'.

Having reasoned thus far in the poem Hopkins next offers a prayer to God; pleading with Him to help men in their search for Him:

> "Be adored among men,
> God, three-numbered form;',

This is an obvious allusion to the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity.

> "Wring thy rebel, dogged in den,
> Man's malice, with wrecking and storm."

Master the rebel in man, his conscious ill will, which is an unchristian concept here analogous with a snarling beast in its den. The image is an apt one for such an animal will die rather than surrender and be pacified

and, of course, this death in Hopkins's concept is the complete immolation of a soul in Christ. Can we not also hear an echo of Hopkins's past here? His soul, like a savage animal, refused to be pacified by the Church of England, but destroyed itself by joining the Church of Rome and thereby gained a complete 'vision of God'. This help from God must come, Hopkins feels, 'with wrecking and storm.' Not only physical storms as in The Wreck of the Deutschland, but inner turmoils such as drove Hopkins himself to a more complete realization of God.

> "Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue,
> Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm;".

Hopkins here finds it most difficult to express his thoughts; God is manifest in violence and gentleness, He is cold and warm at the same time and yet somehow this is not a contradiction. Also here again is a hint of the cold, bleak period leading up to the final surrender of a soul to Christ.

> "Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung;
> Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then."

The words 'thou hastwrung' suggest the great torment of conversion and are heightened by 'thy dark descending', which indicates the awful void in which Hopkins's soul searched for light. When that light finally came the relief was much greater because of the former grief and may be construed as being part of God's mercy. We must remember, in this study, that the ideas of conversion and surrendering his soul to Christ are identical in Hopkins's concept.

In the final stanza of Part the First Hopkins hastens to warn us that God's purpose, in its deeper significance, is not always made known to us in the foregoing manner. Sometimes we are made aware of the awful, mystical element of God's being in a very forceful, violent manner:

"With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will".

But Hopkins would prefer this method:

"Or rather, rather than, stealing as Spring
Through him melt him but master him still:".

Obviously Hopkins had been converted by the first method but he would like, if it is possible, for Christ to capture souls in a much less violent manner. However the end is the same; God is the master. But Hopkins hastens to add that the manner of conversion is not really important, the paramount thing is that man should gain a vision of God:

"Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make, mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King."

It does not really matter whether conversion occurs in an instant or over a long period; but God must 'be adored' as the Master and above all as the King, the omnipotent Creator and Preserver.

Here is a good point at which to pause and attempt to indicate the overall theme of The Wreck of the Deutschland and to place it in its proper perspective in relation to the other 'mature' poems and the general theme of this thesis. As I have stated, the whole meaning of the poem is summed up in one line:

"..... the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:".

I have partially explained this assertion earlier and I shall return to it later. Now I would like to recall the state of Hopkins's religious and spiritual development at the time of composition. He had written no poetry for seven years but he had undergone nearly six years of philosophical and theological studies, the training of a Jesuit novitiate. And shortly after he wrote The Wreck he was ordained to the

priesthood. This means that at the time of the composition of the poem Hopkins had developed his final concept of God and God's relationship to man. Guided by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church he had finalized his 'vision of God'. And since we know that all the sentiments and ideas expressed in The Wreck are authentic and truly representative of Hopkins's feelings, we may assume that the poem is Hopkins's poetic statement of his spiritual development and moreover, of the final concept of his religious beliefs. Thus The Wreck of the Deutschland is by far the most important statement of Hopkins's religious and spiritual development as well as the greatest single contribution to the demonstration of my thesis. In effect The Wreck stands as a commentary on Hopkins's struggle to gain a 'vision of God' and as a final statement of that 'vision'. I shall show later that Hopkins's concept of God and His purpose never changed but that he emphasized different aspects of the relationship between God and man at different periods in his "mature" poetry.

The poem shows Hopkins expressing his own spiritual development and comparing his experiences to those of the nun. But throughout the whole poem, either by implication or by direct assertion, runs one main theme, to gain salvation man must imitate Christ. Everything that man does should be dedicated to the greater honour and glory of God; man must be completely subservient to the will of God. I shall demonstrate later that this is the theme which motivates all of Hopkins's 'mature' poems. He contemplates God as revealed in nature, man's purpose in life and his own 'dark night of the soul', but always we will hear him cry:

"He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him."

Part the Second of The Wreck of the Deutschland opens with stanza 11 of the poem. In Part the First we have seen Hopkins telling of his own spiritual development and striving to express the profound emotions which he had experienced. Having been prompted by the shipwreck to all this discussion, he again returns to the idea of his initial stanza - can God really reveal Himself in such a dire occurrence as a shipwreck? Hopkins knows that this must be so, but realizes that almost always mortal man can see no purpose in such acts. Therefore he calls upon faith to dispel all doubts and fears during such events:

> "Some find me a sword; some
> The flange and the rail; flame
> Fang, or flood' goes Death on drum,
> And storms bugle his fame."

He asks for some weapon to fight off the loss of faith, and here the sword maybe a symbol of faith itself. In the next image Hopkins asks for more protection, some rail or bulwark of safety around him which will ward off all assailing doubts and fears. There is also the hint that 'The flange and the rail', represent the Catholic Church, since 'rail' might imply an altar rail and flange is a projecting flat rim, a collar or rib. It is not difficult to imagine Hopkins combining the idea of an altar rail and a flange with the image of the Catholic Church as a great protective bastion or rib around the 'faithful'. Be that as it may Hopkins certainly regards the Church as his protecting ribs. In the concluding lines quoted we get death symbolized by violence; the force of storms, the ruthlessness of fire, the savagery of animal onslaught and the fierceness of floods, all of which are instruments of death. Also in these lines we can hear the sound of muffled drums, which has become associated with funeral

processions, and thus death has become synonymous with turmoil in nature. This, of course, is what Hopkins is fighting against; he prays for faith so that God's purpose in such events may be truly revealed to us.

Hopkins goes on in the next line to explain why this situation exists:

"But we dream we are rooted in earth - Dust!"

It is difficult to see past our own circumstances and even more difficult to visualize that which we have never experienced. Therefore it is understandable, when we are worried about an after life, that we fall back on the old idea 'from dust we came to dust we shall return'. But Hopkins dispels this idea by saying that 'we dream' when we think such things; we do not use our powers of reasoning, and the logical culmination of this idea is again the main point of Part the First, that Christ's Resurrection forever dispelled doubts as to an afterlife.

> "Flesh falls within sight of us, we, though our flower the same,
> Wave with the meadow, forget that there must
> The sour sythe cringe, and the blear share come."

Here we come to the idea which Hopkins wants to communicate most emphatically. Although we see signs of death all around us, we do not take warning but 'wave with the meadow'. In other words we are inclined to be influenced by more pleasant things when danger is far away. The implication is that unless we truly turn to Christ and surrender ourselves completely, then 'Dust' will be the end. But being preoccupied with temporal matters, we forget that death, 'the sour scythe', will gather us in, will make us cringe in fear and hopelessness. And the final image is of the dull ploughshare, again death, as it tears up even the roots that we have in earth.

In stanza 12 Hopkins moves quickly into a description of the shipwreck itself. He follows closely the contemporary newspaper accounts of the disaster.[9]

> "On Saturday sailed from Bremen,
> American-outward-bound,
> Take settler and seamen, tell men with women,
> Two hundred souls in the round--".

After this piece of description, Hopkins again returns to his wonderings; is God really present in such an event?

> "O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing
> Thy goal was a shoal of a fourth the doom to be drowned;".

Could God stand by and permit the wreck? The stanza concludes with a combined image drawn from architecture and navigation:

> "Yet did the dark side of the bay of thy blessing
> Not vault them, the millions of rounds of thy mercy not reeve even them in?".

The 'dark side' of God's blessing is a reference to the fact that we cannot always see the purpose in God's deeds and therefore since we cannot understand why God should allow the wreck to happen we are 'in the dark'. The 'bay' may be symbolic of God's mercy which covers or vaults the faithful with a protective roof of blessing. A similar analogy would be the darkened condition of a great cathedral at dusk. We know that the vaults are above us but we cannot quite perceive them. The nautical image mentioned earlier is that of 'reeve', meaning to tie to or make fast to. The poet asks if God's boundless mercy has tied fast, or in one sense, gathered in the unfortunates in the disaster.

In stanza 13 the description of the shipwreck is continued but now Hopkins has adopted a much more elaborate style than he had employed in the earlier descriptions of the ship:

"Into the snows she sweeps,
Hurling the haven behind,
The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps,
For the infinite air is unkind,
And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,
Sitting Eastnoreast, in cursed quarter, the wind;".

Even in such a passage we get a hint of the vast complexity of God and the common occurrence of misconstruing His purpose, 'the infinite air is unkind'; and also an impression is given of the difficulty of perceiving His true purpose and the tendency to identify some of His more fierce manifestations such as storms with evil. Thus we have 'flint-flake', 'black-backed', and the wind 'in cursed quarter'. Next we come to the aforementioned elaborate lines:

"Wiry and white-fury and whirlwind-swivelled snow
Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps".

Again an impression of the harshness, the seeming lack of purpose and even cruelty in nature. And finally a description of the actual wreck:

"She drove in the dark to leeward,
She struck-not a reef or a rock
But the combs of a smother of sand; night drew her
Dead to the Kentish Knock;
And she beat the bank down with her bows and the ride of her keel;
The breakers rolled on her beam with ruinous shock;
And canvas and compas, the whorl and the wheel
Idle for ever to waft her or wind her with, these she endured."

In the next stanza Hopkins returns, in point of time, to the plight of the ship amid the storm and gives a very vivid impression of the terrible fear and agony and turmoil which must have occupied the minds of the people onboard the ship. Here again the actual storm at sea is symbolic of the storms in the minds of the unfortunates and may even be said, at least, to suggest the great 'storm' which Hopkins himself had endured.

"Hope had grown grey hairs,
Hope had mourning on,
Trenched with tears, carved with cares,
Hope was twelve hours gone,

And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day
Nor rescue, only rocket and lightship, shone,
And lives at last were washing away:
To the shrouds they took - they shook in the hurling and
horrible airs."

Thus we can see that in the poem there are several levels of interpretation; first we have the shipwreck prompting Hopkins to recall his spiritual experiences; then the shipwreck as a new manifestation of God's glory and mastery: and later on Hopkins visualizing the nun going through a spiritual experience similar to his own.

The whole shipwreck is symbolic to Hopkins, not only as a new revelation of God, but as an analogy with his own turmoil of the past, and the end result is the same in both cases. The nun gained salvation through death and Hopkins and all Christians gain salvation through complete surrender to Christ. In the next stanza we hear:

"One stirred from the rigging to save
The wild woman-kind below
With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave -
He was pitched to his death at a blow
For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew;
They could tell him for hours, dandled the to and fro
Through the cobbled foam-fleece, what could he do
With the burl of the fountains of air, back and the flood of
the wave?"

Again we see an impression of the futility of attempting to compete against the elements, and as such, the stanza is analogous to the terrible hounding of Hopkins until, as with the nun, complete salvation was gained by destruction; in her case death and in Hopkins's the destruction of his 'self' for no other purpose than to serve and glorify God.

Having given an almost factual account of the wreck Hopkins goes on in stanza 17 to give a very impressionistic view of the high points of the physical turmoil as well as to convey an impression of the mental

anguish of the unfortunates.

> "They fought with God's cold-
> And they could not and fell to the deck
> (Crushed them) or water (and drowned them) or rolled
> With the sea-romp over the wreck."

Hopkins here magnificently recreates the confusion on the ship by his confused rendering in these lines. In the excitement he almost becomes one of those onboard ship, and in his confusion identifies the ship itself as a living object, 'the deck (Crushed them)'. This identification shows also the state of mind of the unfortunates; minds devoid of reason and full of panic. In the next lines the storm is at its ferocious height and confusion and chaos reign supreme:

> "Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-broke rabble,
> The woman's wailing, the crying of child without check-."

At this moment, when all seems lost, when utter and complete destruction seems inevitable:

> "..... a lioness arose breasting the babble,
> A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told."

Just as a lioness, when aroused, is a more fierce champion of the young than the male, so the nun rose to the occasion and brought hope where there had been none. She is regarded as 'a prophetess' because she foretold that if a disaster were to occur, it would be God's will and she 'towered' above the rest because, Hopkins regards her as a much greater and more complete being than the rest. This is the real significance of the nun in the poem. Hopkins sees her reading, in the world about her, the message of Christ calling her to the Cross.

At this point Hopkins himself breaks into the poem and questions his own emotions. The complete emotion expressed here is essentially the same as the effect of catharsis experienced in great tragedy; the

feeling of joy and profound pleasure to be found in seemingly disastrous experiences.

> "Ah, touched in your bower of bone
> Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,
> Have you!"

The vision of the nun towering in the tumult, fills him with 'exquisite' pain; his emotions are very concentrated at this moment but he finds great difficulty in expressing them:

> ".....make words break from me here all alone,
> Do you!"

There is also a hint here that if Hopkins had some poetic impulse to lead him, some inspiration as proportionally great as the nun's, then he would have little difficulty in expressing his thoughts. Next Hopkins points out the great difficulty in being a Christian. Even though all men live in some degree of sin, yet a certain amount of truth is permitted to them:

> "....mother of being in me, heart,
> O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,
> Why, tears! is it?"

The major image in these lines is the heart, faith as opposed to reason. Where reason breaks down faith takes over and guides unerringly to the Cross. This is the nun's forte and the realization of this brings tears to Hopkins, an emotional display which at the moment he feels to be quite inadequate as an expression of the nun's triumph:

> "..... tears; such a melting, a madrigal start!"

Then he forsakes reason, in his attempt to explain the cathartic effect of the nun's plight, and addresses his heart again:

> "Never-eldering revel and river of youth,
> What can it be, this glee?"

The heart, symbolizing faith for Hopkins, is a timeless source of joy and

comfort to him and to all Christians, and thus again he puts the question; why do I glean pleasure from such an event? And the answer comes, in this almost rhetorical question:

"..... the good you have there of your own?"

This line, as W. H. Gardner has pointed out in a note, is an important key to the symbolism of the poem.[10] The heart, faith, has taken over both for Hopkins and the nun and both are thus as it were kindred spirits. The wreck is a symbol of Hopkins's own struggle to realize God and the nun makes the same realization in the actual wreck. And in this manner Hopkins actually participates in his old storm all over again. Hopkins himself confirms this view in stanza 29:

"Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;".

This then is the solution; these seemingly disastrous events give pleasure because they reveal God, however nebulous that revelation may be.

Stanza 19 brings us back to the nun:

"Sister, a sister calling
A master, her master and mine!-"

She calls to Christ to 'come quickly'. Thus we see the nun assailed by the elements, as Hopkins had been tormented by the 'elements' of his mind:

"And the inboard seas run swirling and hawling;
The rash smart sloggering brine
Blinds her;",

the salt, smarting sea water pummels at her body and blinds her physical being but spiritually she is illuminated by divine revelation.

".....but she that weather see one thing, one;
Has one fetch in her;".

She has one stratagem, one expedient left; safety may yet be at hand

even if death be imminent.

> "..... she rears herself to divine
> Ears, and the call of the tall nun
> To the men in the tops and the tackle rode over the storm's brawling."

Again this is a reference to her calling upon Christ and with His help she becomes an inspiration and a comfort to the crew and all onboard. In that sense her 'call rode over the storm's brawling', and that is why she is 'the tall nun'; her stature as a spiritual being is much greater than that of the others.

> "She was first of a five and came
> Of a coifed sisterhood."

The fact that there were five nuns was probably very significant for Hopkins; five being the number of Christ's wounds. Therefore he probably regarded the five exiled Francisan nuns as the symbol of Sacrifice and the Heavenly Reward.

> "O Deutschland, double a desperate name!
> O world wide of its good!"

Here we get Hopkins's view of good and evil which may be identified with one thing; Deutschland is a 'doubly desperate name' because not only does it represent the grave plight of the nuns but it also points out the way in which the nuns have been treated by their fellow men; they are exiles from Deutschland (Germany). But the next line completes the contrast; the wreck is a good thing because God is a part of it and thus salvation is gained through destruction. We must think back and remember that this was the exact requirement of salvation for Hopkins and still is, and thus we have another parallel between Hopkins and the nun. But the nun represents much more; she symbolizes the agonizing pleas of all suffering humanity. The poet next employs a concrete example to show, to his

satisfaction, that good and evil can exist in the same thing or place.

"But Gertrude, lily, and Luther, are two of a town,
Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood:"

Gertrude was a German saint and mystic who lived in a convent near Eisleben, Luther's birthplace, and the implication is that Gertrude, the lily, represents a state of grace within the Catholic Church, whereas Luther, who broke with the Church, is a beast in the waste wood, which here is the state of living without a revelation of God. Here we see a point made earlier, that having a 'vision of God' and adhering to the precepts of the Catholic Church mean the same thing to Hopkins. There is no middle road; either one adheres and is saved or one disbelieves and is doomed:

"From life's dawn it is drawn down,
Abel is Cain's brother and breasts they have sucked the same."

This image bolsters its predecessor and addsweight to the original thesis that good and evil can exist in the same event or object; the wreck of the Deutschland.

Stanza 21 continues Hopkins's discussion of the nuns. They were:

"Loathed for a love men knew in them,"

that is they were despised because of their profession of love for Christ and,

"Banned by the land of their birth,
Rhine refused them."

They had been condemned and exiled from Germany but worse still:

".....Thames would ruin them;"

as it did in this manner:

"Surf, snow, river and earth
Gnashed:".

All the elements combined to dash the Deutschland at the mouth of the Thames and the whole catastrophe is made more vivid by this image of the elements, the Thames and the sand bar combined as a vicious animal, determined to destroy the ship and its occupants. It is almost as if the disaster had been preordained; an idea expounded in the rest of the stanza;

> ".....:but thou art above, thou Orion of light;".

This is Hopkins's final statement of belief on the presence of God in the disaster; he was the Prime Mover.[11] 'Orion of light' is the Great Hunter, God, who searches for and tracks the souls of men in order to illuminate them with his truth.

> "Thy unchancelling poising palms were weighing the word,
> Thou martyr-master:"

A chancel is the eastern part of a church reserved for the clergy and railed off, thus here 'unchancelling' means that it seemed to the unfortunates on the ship that they were outside the protecting rail of God's grace; but in reality God was looking over them. 'Thou martyr-master' must mean that God Himself had caused the nuns to be exiled from Germany so that "their faith and fortitude might be tested by ordeal and death."[12] In the concluding lines of the stanza Hopkins expresses his firm belief in God's ultimate goodness and mercy:

> "..... in thy sight
> Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers-sweet
> heaven was astrew in them."

In God's sight suffering assumed for the sins of the world, whether it be through persecution or by personal denial, is a form of beauty. Thus the 'storm flakes' because of their participation in the event are transformed into lilies, the symbol of purity and nearness to God. 'Scroll-

leaved flowers' is possibly a reference to the Bible and old prophetic books and thus mean that Heaven shall be gained because of the ordeal. This is essentially the meaning of the last image as well.

Suddenly the full impact of the symbolic number five hits the poet:

> "Five! the finding and sake
> And cipher of suffering Christ."

'The finding' is a device, an invention, the means by which we 'find' Christ. Hopkins himself has defined his use of 'sake' in a letter to Robert Bridges.[13]

> "Sake is a word I find it convenient to use. It is the sake of 'for the sake of', forsake, namesake, keepsake. I mean by it the being a thing has outside itself, as a voice by its echo, a face by its reflection, a body by its shadow, a man by his name, frame, or memory, and also that in the thing by virtue of which especially it has this being abroad, and that is something distinctive, marked, specifically or individually speaking, as for a voice and echo clearness; for a reflected image light, brightness; for a shadow-casting body bulk; for a man genius, great achievements, amiability and so on."

Thus 'the finding and sake' might be termed the 'index and sign' of Christ and, of course, there is the ever present implication that through Christ's suffering, the salvation of the world was ensured. But Hopkins adds a sobering note:

> "Mark, the mark is of man's make
> And the word of it Sacrificed."

Always remember, states Hopkins, that man not only caused Christ's suffering but necessitated it.

> "But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken,
> Before-time-taken, dearest prized and priced;-".

God in the past has touched some of his more faithful servants with tokens of His suffering. This is probably a direct reference to historical fact but could it not also refer to God's testing of the nuns and to all Christians

placed in similar circumstances? Hopkins goes on to name some of these 'emblems':

> "Stigma, signal, cinquefoil token
> For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-flake."

All of these signs, the five wounds, the five leaved plant or figare, are permanent marks in the flesh of Christ, symbolizing, as I have said, salvation. The last image may be best explained by quoting from one of Hopkins's earlier poems, Rosa Mystica, in which the Rose is Christ.

> "What was the colour of that Blossom bright?
> White to begin with, immaculate white.
> But what a wild flush on the flakes of it stood,
> When the Rose ran in crimsoning down the Cross-wood."

Thus essentially the image is a repetition of the 'lamb's fleece'.

This discussion of stigmata naturally leads Hopkins to mention St. Francis who not only bore such tokens but was able to show his love for Christ through them.

> "Joy fall to thee, father Francis,
> Drawn to the Life that died;
> With the gnarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance, his
> Lovescape crucified
> And seal of his seraph-arrival!"

'Lovescape' is, of course, the pattern of Christ's wounds which St. Francis bore and 'seraph-arrival', with its notion of celestial being, indicates that St. Francis's stigmata were a sign that Christ was truly dwelling in him. In the last lines of the stanza Hopkins is reminded of the five nuns, which number had caused his digression from the shipwreck itself.

> ".....and these thy daughters
> And five-lived and leaved favour and pride";

he visualizes the nuns as a cinquefoil, each of them a separate being but all joined in a common plight, purpose and favour. These, the 'pride' of Christ,

"Are sisterly sealed in wild waters,
To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-
fire glances."

Here we get the same symbolic use of the storm as before; the nuns are being tested by God and if they keep faith, their salvation will be assured. Thus, as before we see the combination of two almost opposite concepts merging into the same idea. By holding faith the nuns will be 'sealed' in God's 'mercy' as they had been in the 'wild waters'. This idea has become so constant with Hopkins that, in these lines, he identifies them as one concept; that God is actually present in the storm itself and if this were perceived by the sufferers then their 'exquisite smart' would have been as great as was Hopkins's in writing about it.

In a magnificent contrast the poet continues in stanza 24:

"Away in the loveable west,
On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
I was under a roof here, I was at rest,
And they the prey of the gales:".

In an instant we are plucked from the heaving deck of the Deutschland, from amid the 'horrible airs', from the midst of chaos, fear and death, and placed down in 'the loveable west' where nature is at rest. This sudden change makes the crisis at sea seem even more acute, if such be possible. Hopkins deplores the fact that he knew nothing of their plight at the time and he finds it saddening that his life should have been so relatively peaceful compared to their turbulent trial. While he rested:

"She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly
Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails
Was calling 'O Christ, Christ, come quickly':".

The 'tall' nun thus bested the elements; by fleeing 'to the heart of the Host' she made a perfect response to His grace.

"The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her
wild-worst Best."

The Cross becomes her symbol of salvation and she finds glory in the storm. The idea of the last image is a familiar one which sums up Hopkins's symbolism behind the storm. The nun's 'wild-worst' experience became her 'Best', most glorious achievement, since she proved her fortitude and faith and thereby gained a complete 'vision of God.'

We have heard the 'tall' nun calling,

"O Christ, Christ, come quickly."

We are led, as was Hopkins, to ask,

".....What did she mean?"

Thus Hopkins proceeds, in stanza 25, to analyse the motives of the 'prophetess' nun.

"The majesty: what did she mean?
Breathe, arch and original Breath."

In these lines we get the beginning of an idea which is to reach fuller expression in stanza 30. The nun, in her martrydom and complete surrender to Christ, is partaking in a second virginal birth and the implication is that such a conception occurs during every such spiritual experience. Thus Hopkins himself had given birth to Christ during his capture by the Great Hunter. Here we are in the midst of the birth scene itself; the great conflict of mind and storm are, as it were, the nun's pangs of birth. Not only does the nun cry in loving impatience for Christ to 'come quickly', but Hopkins is just as eager in his imploring; Breathe again O Christ. Of course Hopkins regards every such mystic advent in man, as an alleviation of the pain and agony, which man forced upon Christ in His Passion. The phrase 'arch and original Breath', of course, refers

to Christ and his coming again, this time in the heart of the nun. But Hopkins goes on:

> "Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?
> Breathe, body of lovely Death."

What kind of emotion in the nun prompts her complete vision of Christ? Is it earthly love? And the implication is that it is not. Again Hopkins implores Christ to be reborn, this time referring to Him as 'body of lovely Death'. But this identification is, for Hopkins, identical to 'arch and original Breath' since 'Breath' equals Life and Life and Death are the same concept. This then is yet another statement of Hopkins's thesis; only through death can we gain eternal life.

While this profound revelation was taking place within the heart of the nun, the ship's crew was completely oblivious to such a concept:

> "They were else-minded then, altogether, the men
> Woke thee with a <u>we are perishing</u> in the weather of Gennesareth".

As W. H. Gardner has pointed out, one of the greatest merits of this poem is the effective use of contrast.[14] We have seen this when Hopkins quickly changed the scene from the storm at its height to a peaceful headland in Wales, thereby heightening our impression of the turmoil of the storm, the turmoil in the nun's mind and in his own. Here also Hopkins makes most effective use of contrast, for the crew has no notion, no comprehension of the transformation which the nun is undergoing. While she is glorying in what she regards as a perfect sacrifice and oblation to Christ, they can think only in terms of having their physical lives saved. Both the nun and the crew call for miracles, hence 'the men awoke thee', and the nun gave birth to Christ. Gennesareth is a lake of Palestine, where miracles were performed and thus the contrast is complete; the crew cries

we are perishing', in other words we will soon be dead, whereas the nun cries I am perishing for the greater glory of God. The concluding lines of the stanza continue the search for the nun's motives:

> "Or is it that she cried for the crown then,
> The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen?"

Did she feel that because her battle with the elements was great, she would have more joy in heaven? Again the implication is that the answer is no.

In stanza 26 Hopkins paints a concrete image to represent the joys of Paradise. This, of course, is another example of Hopkins'svery effective use of contrast:

> "For how to the heart's cheering
> The down-dugged ground-hugged grey
> Hovers off, the joy-blue heavens appearing
> of pied and peeled May!"

It would be very welcome to all concerned if the oppressive tumult of the storm were to be lifted, revealing the beauties of nature. On a higher level this passage is symbolic of the pleasures of Paradise compared to life on earth, and out-going from life to life everlasting is the same as a smothering cloud being lifted off our perception. A description of the future joys of Paradise is continued:

> "Blue-beating and hoary-glow height; or night still higher,
> With belled fire and the moth-soft Milky Way,".

We get the impression of soaring, as Hopkins's 'carrier-witted' soul in its flight to Christ, of moving farther and farther away from the oppressive cares and troubles of the world into the serene peacefulness of outerspace. The images used to illuminate this thought are aptly chosen to bring out the most subtle contrast; 'Blue-beating and hoary-glow height', 'belled fire', and 'moth-soft'. This is connected with the idea that heaven is

'on high' and thus the closer we soar to it, the softer, more peaceful is the atmosphere around us. By this then Hopkins asks if the nun is asking for safety, or comfort, or ease, or reward, or relief.

> "What by you measure is the heaven of desire,
> The treasure never eyesight got, nor was ever guessed
> what for hearing?"

Was the nun praying for these things when she embraced the Cross?

Stanza 27 answers this question.

> "No, but it was not these."

Her motives were much more profound than these:

> "The jading and jar of the cart,
> Time's tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease
> Of the sodden-with-its-sorrowing hearts,
> Not danger, electrical horror:".

Thus, in Hopkins's view, the nun is praying for the ease of all suffering humanity. Man rides his life span, his 'cart', and suffers the bumping and jolting inflicted by the rocky road of life, and thus 'Time's' tasking', the monotonous, remorseless toil and disappointment of every day, not danger which is 'electrical', stimulating, prompts man to seek relief.

> ".....; then further it finds
> The appealing of the Passion is tenderer in prayer apart."

This I take to mean that the nun's plight was not conducive to earnest meditation. This interpretation is supported by the last lines of the stanza:

> "Other, I gather, in measure her mind's
> Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragoned seas."

In other words, in her present condition, complete meditation is impossible; the hurly 'burly' of the wind and the onslaught of the wild, unreasoning, dragonlike sea prohibit her from a full contemplation of God's presence. Bernard Kelly has said:

> "These meanings, that a mind less pitilessly direct would have rested in, the poet sweeps aside. They are the halfway houses, the less perfect. Relentlessly he strips them off from the naked, the stark perfection of the act which follows; and his mind staggers at the coming of it."[15]

Here is the climax of the whole poem, the epitome of both Parts, the goal for which Hopkins has been searching in this poem, and in his own life up to his conversion. The final impact of this realization is so forceful that a description of its impression is beyond the scope of mere words. Also, as W. H. Gardner has remarked, the frantic efforts of the drowning to save themselves are merged with Hopkins's attempt to evoke and express the vision of the nun.[16] The hysteria is probably deliberately included. Thus we hear Hopkins:

> "But how shall I.....make me room there:
> Reach me a ....Fancy, come faster - -
> Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
> Thing that she....there then!"

Hopkins already has a full realization of the nun's vision but Fancy fails him. And then in a blinding flash we know; the answer is:

> "..... the Master,
> Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:".

Man can only be delivered from his seemingly endless rounds of toil and trouble through Christ, who succeeded by failure. His Passion and Death and Resurrection hold the promise of Paradise, but only by imitating Christ can this be realized. Finally God has revealed Himself in the shipwreck; the agonies and turmoils of life are in themselves Redemptions and as such help to elucidate the only great Redemption, the only salvation.

Having made this realization Hopkins goes on:

> "He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;",

which is further proof that Hopkins regards the ordeal at sea as a test

of the nun's fortitude and faith,

"Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;".

Here the poet expresses his desire that Christ should be the Lord, the Master, the King, the Head of all mankind; His conquest of men's souls should be complete. Finally, having realized the full impact of the nun's cry, Hopkins is anxious to have done with his poetic account of the wreck itself:

"Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch and
have done with his doom there."

'Her pride', is, of course, Christ and his riding in triumph, as a conquering hero, is a fitting image with which to end the account of the actual shipwreck.

Stanza 29 reiterates my interpretation of the poem as a whole:

"Ah! there was a heart right
There was single eye!"

The 'heart right' and 'single eye' refer to the nun and by these epithets Hopkins means that the nun correctly interpreted the existence and purpose of God in this world. He bolsters this in the next two lines, which I have quoted as being the culmination of the ideas expressed in stanza 18. She:

"Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why;";

She saw purpose and salvation in the terrible storm.

"Wording' it how but by him that present and past,
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by?-".

God created everything, 'in the beginning was the word', and all things are completely relative to Him. Hopkins's implication is that the nun perfectly expressed this idea in her cry and resolution. She was:

"The Simon Peter of a soul: to the blast
Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light."

In these concluding lines of the stanza we get a hint of the significance of the nun's sacrifice to the world. 'Simon Peter' I take to be a reference to Christ's statement, 'Thou art Peter, upon this rock I will build my Church.' Thus, in the same way that Peter is the foundation of Christ's Church, so the nun is the foundation of souls which will have been saved through her example. 'Tarpeian' was a cliff from which ancient Roman criminals were hurled, but in this context Hopkins is merely referring to the steadfastness of the cliff against storms. Yet the nun is, as it were, a 'beacon of light' on this cliff, a shining example to all who would follow her in gaining salvation. Later in life Hopkins, in writing on the Spiritual Exercises, expressed this same idea in prose:

> "God's utterance of himself in himself is God the Word, outside himself is this world. This world then is word, expression, news, of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God, and its life or work to name and praise him."[17]

This is the meaning of the world and of man's life, which the nun completely realizes in the poem. Hopkins added this to the above passage, because he felt that the greatest honour that man can give to God, is to re-enact the Incarnation and Redemption; in other words, truly to imitate Christ.

> "The world, man, should after its own manner give God being in return for that being he has given. This is done by the great sacrifice. To contribute then to that sacrifice is the end for which man was made."

Hopkins considers that the nun had perfectly fulfilled that purpose.

The remainder of the poem is made up of five stanzas which are really prayers:

> "Jesu, heart's light,
> Jesu, maid's son,
> What was the feast followed the night
> Thou hadst glory of this nun?-
> Feast of the one woman without stain."

Jesus is referred to as 'heart's light' and 'maid's son', which are still further expressions of Hopkins's thesis that God is the Word and must be glorified. He finds it to be very significant that the night following the disaster was the feast of the Virgin. Actually it was the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, December 8. This, of course, bolsters Hopkins's idea of a second virgin conception.

> "For so conceived, so to conceive thee is done;".

The nun was also a virgin. In the last lines of the stanza, Hopkins directly states his thesis that the nun's acceptance of the Cross was a second Immaculate Conception:

> "But here was heart-throe, birth of a brain,
> Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright."

The complete, utter faith of the nun gave birth to Christ as the Saviour and 'uttered him outright' by her example of patience and pain to all the world.

Hopkins has been preoccupied with the nun's motives for some time, but now he suddenly remembers the other people on the ship:

> "Well, she has thee for the pain, for the
> Patience; but pity of the rest of them!"

His heart bleeds for them that they should have died without confessing:

> "Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the
> Comfortless unconfessed of them-."

It is even possible that Hopkins here refers to the heart of the nun in

which case he is asking her to intercede on their behalf in much the same way as the Blessed Virgin is called upon to perform such blessings. It is also plausible that Hopkins would associate the nun with the Virgin Mary.

But Hopkins reconsiders his statement:

> "No not uncomforted; lovely-felicitous Providence
> Finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy, the breast of the
> Maiden could obey so, be a bell to, ring of it, and
> Startle the poor sheep back!"

The others, who had suffered the wreck and storm, and who had not gained Christ, were also visited by God. In these lines we are reminded of the opening stanza where Hopkins states of himself:

> "And dost thou touch me afresh?
> Over again I feel thy finger and find thee."

Here again we have 'thy finger', 'lovely-felicitious Providence', blissful God, but this time His finger is felt through the nun. She not only accepted Christ herself, but Hopkins considers that she, by her example, acted as a bell to the Word of Christ, ringing it forth to the comfort of all on the ship. Thus, the nun was a guiding light to 'the poor sheep' in the tumult and had possibly, by her cry, forced upon them at least a partial realization of the significance of their plight. If this be the case, Hopkins concludes:

> ".....is the shipwrack then a harvest,
> does tempest carry the grain for thee?"

Here again we hear Hopkins echoing no to his rhetorical question. The tempest really was a test of fortitude and faith and through it many souls were brought home to Christ. This must be so for Hopkins continues in stanza 32:

"I admire thee, master of the tides,
of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall:".

The 'Yore-flood' probably refers to the Noachian deluge or perhaps to Genesis but, be that as it may, the meaning is perfectly clear. God is the Prime Mover in the world; He controls and works everything, the floods, the tides, time and:

"The recurbs and the recovery of the gulf's sides,
The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall;".

He is the master of the stemming and restemming of wave and tide. These lines are probably an answer to this question in the Book of Job: 'Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?' Hopkins continues the same image in the next lines, this time to elucidate a more profound thought; God is the:

"Stanching, quenching ocean of a motionable mind;
Ground of being, and granite of it:".

The image of the ever moving ocean suggests the vacillating, restless mind of man, which can become stable and peaceful only by a complete surrender to Christ. Thus God is the 'Ground of being', the very foundation of existence and the only really stable force in it, 'granite of it'. Therefore concludes Hopkins:

".....past all
Grasp God,"

who is,

".....throned behind
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides;

With a mercy that outrides
The all of water, an ark
For the listener;".

Christ has conquered death and in His omnipotent power He observes all

that happens on earth but does not always reveal Himself. However sometimes he 'bodes', foreshadows, good or evil by means of signs. These ideas continue into stanza 33 which is an expression of the "Salvific Will of God." Hopkins expresses the view that Christ's desire is that all sinners should be saved, through grace and the Church. Even the souls in Purgatory are included in this wish:

> ".....; for the lingerer with a love glides
> Lower than Death and the dark;".

Also Christ is:

> "A vein for the visiting of the past-prayers, pent in prison,
> The-last-breath penitent spirits-".

He is a channel through which the hopeless, the sinful, 'the last-breath penitent spirits', are shunted into a state of grace.

> "..... the uttermost mark
> Our passion-plunged giant risen,
> The Christ of the Faith compassionate, fetched in the storm
> of his strides."

Here is the summing up of the significance of the shipwreck; Christ, the spiritual giant, who had been plunged into passion because of man; Son of the ever merciful Father, had been 'fetched', called upon through the Cross, and had thus revealed Himself in the elements as he strode across the stormy waters of the world.

Hopkins now quietly calls upon Christ to shine in splendor before the world. His prayer is a passionate and almost incoherent adoration of the glory and mercy of the Almighty:

> "Now burn, new born to the world,"

'new born' because of His second birth in the nun:

> "Double-natured name,
> The heaven-flung heart-fleshed, maiden-furled
> Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,

Mid-numbered He in three of the thunder-throne!
Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came;
Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;
A released shower, let flash to the Shire, not a lightning
of fire hard-hurled."

The combinations of images in this stanza, with their cumulative effect, add up to an impression of God completely revealed in nature and external events as well as in spiritual contemplation. The storm has passed. Christ has reclaimed His own. And the final conviction of the poem is a restatement of the thesis that 'the storm of his strides' was not a punishment for the nuns but was a magnificent realization of accomplishment and fulfillment in Christ. He was to them as 'a released shower, let flash to the shire'. This image is very apt, since, as Robert Bridges has pointed out, the shire is the special favoured landscape visited by the shower. Thus Christ was a refreshing shower to the nun but he was 'not a lightning of fire hard hurled'. This image, of course, takes the emphasis off the tumult of the shipwreck and places it on the tremendous fulfillment and communication with Christ in it.

In the final stanza of the poem Hopkins calls upon the nun to pray for the English, among whose shoals she had found her fulfillment, so that England may become completely aware of Christ as the Saviour:

"Dame, at our door
Drowned, and among our shoals,
Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the Reward;
Our King back, oh, upon English souls!"

Then the concluding lines ask that Christ be a light to England, be resurrected again in her presence:

"Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us,
be a crimson-cresseted east,
More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as her reign rolls,
Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,
Our heart's charity's hearth's fire, our thought's chivalry's
throng's Lord."

Thus the poem ends with an eloquent plea that Christ become a part of Britain; that she be completely subjected to Him. Everything we do should be utterly subservient to the will of God.

Without a doubt The Wreck of the Deutschland is Hopkins's greatest poem and its significance among his 'mature' poetry is immediately evident. In it we have seen the poet first attempting to give a complete impression of his own spiritual development and second striving to express the spiritual experiences of the nun, whose situation he feels was similar to his own. I have demonstrated that Hopkins felt that, above all in this life and the hereafter, Christ must be imitated; that Christ should be the most important aspect of man's life:

"Ipse, the only one, Christ."

Also this imitation must be as perfect as possible 'that we may choose such a state of life as may be most in accordance with the will of God'. Thus we have heard echoing and re-echoing throughout Part the First of The Wreck of the Deutschland, Hopkins's main assertion that Christ, by His Passion and Redemption, forever dispelled doubts as to an afterlife. I feel that I have demonstrated conclusively that Part the First is a direct attempt by Hopkins to record in poetry his own spiritual and mental development up to the time of composition. I shall demonstrate in Part Two of this thesis that in later life Hopkins emphasized, at different times, certain aspects of this emotional and mental attitude.

The experiences described in Part the Second are similar to those exhibited in Part the First as I have remarked. We have seen the nun gain salvation through Death, offering herself as a complete sacrifice to Christ and as such an example for all the world to follow. We have

seen Hopkins emphasize that the wreck itself was a good thing since God revealed Himself in it and we have seen him construing the nun as the symbol of all suffering humanity, while undergoing God's test of her faith and perserverance. Thus we see that the great import of the poem as a whole is to stress the great importance of Christ and to emphasize the purpose and meaning of life as embodied in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. As St. Ignatius has it: "Man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God, our Lord, and by this means to save his soul."

PART TWO

CHAPTER 1

Nature is never spent."

The Wreck of the Deutschland was the first and greatest manifestation of Hopkins's maturity. Indeed it was such a tremendous poetic effort that its composition seems to have taxed his poetic energy to the extent that he wrote no other poetry for almost a year. In 1877 he was ordained a priest and this year marks the beginning of the 'mature' poetry which is the subject of Part Two of this thesis. All this remaining poetry seems to fall roughly into three stages. First the group of poems, the main theme of which is the expression of pleasure, definite faith and mystical perception in nature. These poems are, of course, the result of his seven poetically inactive years of spiritual training, as was The Wreck of the Deutschland. Second, the group of poems in which the emphasis seems to have shifted from nature to man. However we must remember that God is still the centre of interest. Finally, the poems written from 1885 to 1889, which are generally regarded as being expressions of desolation and despair. But it must be pointed out that these three arbitrary stages are neither inclusive nor exclusive; this is obvious since a poet's mind in its development cannot confine itself to stringent categories. Thus it is that the so-called period of desolation contains poems which are not 'terrible', and the 'poetry of Man' contains nature poems. This simply proves that Hopkins was never really obsessed

by one theme, except it be his glorification of God, and even this is lacking in his very early poems, such as A Vision of Mermaids and The Escorial.

Thus the next three chapters will deal with these three general periods of Hopkins's 'mature' poetry. Since these general stages in Hopkins's development may be observed, I think it would be wise to treat the poems themselves in chronological order in each group: I shall not treat all the poems in detail but shall deal specifically with the more representative ones, that is the poems which seem to me to express the general theme of each group. However we shall see that most of the poems fall into this category. The main aim of the remaining chapters, as in Part One, is to make an interpretative analysis of the poems themselves. It will be found that the main theme of the period to be treated in this chapter is a religious experience of beauty which has been formed and inspired by the Spiritual Exercises. Hopkins's sacramental view of nature predominates in these poems, therefore I requote these words of the poet himself, because they are most essential to a realization of the full meaning of the poetry.

> 'God's utterance of himself in himself is God the word, outside himself is this world. This world then is word, expression, news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God, and its life or work to name and praise Him."

Bearing these views in mind I now turn to the poems.

In the very first line of the first poem written in 1877, God's Grandeur, we hear:

> "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."

This would seem to be a direct translation into poetry of the above quoted passage and moreover we read in Hopkins's notebooks:

> "All things therefore are charged with love, are charged with God and if we knew how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of him." [1]

This then is one aim of Hopkins's poem; to show that God is not only the Creator of, but is eternally present in, nature. But the poem has a more profound aim, and this aim is accomplished by Hopkins's dynamic imagery. He wished not only to state that God is present in nature but, more important, he wished to give some impression of the significance of God's presence. Thus, in this first line of the poem, we get an image of a thundercloud charged with static electricity and the analogy is that the world is a cloud 'charged with the grandeur of God', the Real Presence of God. Thus God's presence makes itself felt, just as the lightning flames forth from the thundercloud:

> "It will flame out, like shining from shookfoil;"

In these combined images we see probably the best example, in all of Hopkins's poetry, of the tremendous impact of his imagery. There is a sudden transformation from the image of lightning to the more concrete one of 'shookfoil'. Here is Hopkins's own explanation of the image:

> "I mean foil in the sense of leaf or tinsel, and no other word whatever will give the effect I want. Shaken gold-foil gives off broad glares like sheet lightning and also, and this is true of nothing else, owing to its zigzag dints and creasings and network of small many cornered facets, a sort of fork lightning too." [2]

Thus we can see that the combination of the lightning and 'shookfoil' images is not only plausible but is very apt since it illuminates the poet's thoughts and feelings about the external world around him. Not only is the world the dwelling place of love, beauty and the Power of God, but the full force of God's presence and the complexity and completeness of His beauty 'will flame out, like shining from shookfoil'

to enrich man's life, only if he will make the conscious effort to perceive these divine manifestations. Also, and a big point, God's presence makes itself felt even in the most insignificant things, and thus we get Hopkins's point in switching from the lightning image, analogous to the might and power of God, to the insignificant homely image of 'shookfoil', in which Hopkins perceived the same presence as existed for him in the thunderstorm.

In the next line Hopkins continues his revelation of the Divine Power in everyday matters. This furthers the analogy of 'shookfoil' and probably is itself an answer to the materialists of his day:

"It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil crushed."

The image of the crushing of oil-seed is probably deliberately chosen to point out the Divine Presence even in an industrial process, which Presence is usually obscured by industrialism. To carry the analogy further, 'crushed' suggests not only the process of making oil but also the poor human being who is so easily lead away from the realization of God's presence. Therefore Hopkins, in effect, is restating his old thesis; the surrender of a soul to Christ means the complete destruction of that soul, but from that destruction there emerges a complete new entity just as oil oozes forth when the seeds are crushed.

This revelation of God in every aspect of the external world is perfectly obvious to Hopkins, so he wonders:

"..... Why do men then now not reck his rod?"

Why has this presence not been recognized by the world as a whole? Hopkins quickly goes on to answer his query:

"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."

To make a more complete interpretation of this poem I feel it is necessary to recall the state of social and religious affairs in Victorian England. It was the time of the so-called 'higher criticism', when the precepts of scientific materialism were pitted against the Bible. The most appalling aspect of this conflict for Hopkins was the fact that many people turned from religion as a result. However I think that in God's Grandeur Hopkins feels that he has solved the problem of conflict between religion and science; the problem of man's social difficulties. In this sense these three lines are a partial indictment of the modern world. Man has become so tied up with social and economic matters that he has gradually pushed God into the background. Thus the world has become toil-worn, filthy and decadent. The analogy is, of course, with anything which has become physically corrupt and even decadent. Thus man, who has 'shod' himself with material things, can no longer feel the 'soil' of life which, for Hopkins, is still permeated with God's presence. We need not depend upon the poem for Hopkins's feelings on this subject for he wrote to Bridges:

> "While I admired the handsome horses I remarked for the thousandth time with sorrow and loathing the base and bespotted figures and features of the Liverpool crowd." 3

And in a letter to A.W.M. Baillie he wrote:

> "What I most dislike in towns and in London in particular is the misery of the poor; the dirt, squalor, and the illshapen degraded physical (putting aside moral) type of so many of the people, with the deeply dejecting, unbearable thought that by degrees almost all our population will become a town population and a puny, unhealthy and cowardly one." 4

Thus we see the full impact of such images as 'seared with trade; bleared

smeared with toil;". The real force of them is that Hopkins considers that this situation exists because the world has pushed God into the background.

In the poem itself we find Hopkins's solution to the problems of the times. After painting this very dismal picture he continues:

"And for all this, nature is never spent;".

This marks a return to the opening sentiments of the poem; that God is dynamically present in nature. In the external world:

"There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--"

It would seem in these lines that Hopkins is emphasizing nature at the expense of man but if we remember St. Ignatius's words, 'man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God, our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created,' we see that Hopkins was so preoccupied with the salvation of man that he attempted to lead him back to God by forcing upon him the significance of God's presence in nature. Thus Hopkins's prime aim in expressing his views on nature is to regain, for man, his lost 'vision of God', by means of his natural perceptions. Thus Hopkins sees that there is one great hope for the world:

"Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings."

The obvious image here is the Holy Ghost as a mothering bird brooding, with heartfelt pangs of sympathy, over the aging, decrepit, sinful world. The 'warm breast' indicates the comfort to be gained from the Holy Ghost and 'bright wings' indicates Christ's promise, 'the light of the

world to come'. Probably the most forceful word in the poem is 'ah!' which at first glance seems to be the least important. It here expresses the great surprise and rapture with which man greets each new manifestation of God in the external world. It is the expression of supreme approval. Perhaps we would get a fuller view of the impact of the Holy Ghost if we listen to Hopkins's words in one of his sermons. Having spoken of the Holy Ghost as 'struggling with the world', he concludes his sermon with these words:

> "..... the Holy Ghost has followed and will follow up this first beginning, convincing and converting nation after nation and age after age till the whole earth is hereafter to be covered, if only for a time, still to be covered, with the knowledge of the Lord." 5

Therefore we can see, as I have stated, that Hopkins in God's Grandeur is primarily concerned with leading the world back to God, but not in the conventional sense, rather through the direct impact of God in nature.

From God's Grandeur I turn to The Starlight Night. This poem might be said to give specific examples of the 'grandeur of God'. In the opening lines we can hear Hopkins voicing a rapturous 'ah!' as he had done in God's Grandeur:

> "Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
> O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
> The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
> Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
> The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
> Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
> Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!--"

Here we have a Hopkins who has reached his fulfillment; he has gained as complete a 'vision of God' as he feels it is possible for him to perceive in this life. This would be a good point at which to emphasize the change which his conversion wrought in Hopkins. Recall, for a moment, the Hopkins of A Vision of Mermaids. There we see him

wallowing in the lushness of nature but with a guilty conscience, and therefore his pure 'lust' of nature turns his mind in the opposite direction, to asceticism. Now Hopkins again luxuriates in nature but this time his guilty conscience is absent. He is also a much better poet for he now uses the images from nature to illuminate his thoughts and feelings thereby making them more vivid and meaningful to the reader. The clusters and combinations of images in these seven lines of poetry almost defy a prose description; the visual images they evoke are, for Hopkins, beauty itself; again we may hear Hopkins re-echoing 'I know the beauty of our Lord' by them. If one syllable is changed something of splendour and beauty is lost. Thus the panorama of nature is placed before our eyes and re-enforced by Hopkins's memories of childhood, his knowledge of faery lore, his impressions of city lights and his vision of the heavenly hosts in battle array. These things are communicated to his mind by glances at the 'starlight night'. He visualizes part of the heavens as a field of bright flowers nestled, at early dawn, in the slight depressions of the earth. And then the analogy changes; we see pinpoints of light like 'elves'-eyes'. Finally the whole image is completed by the vision of 'cold dawns grey' with dew where 'quickgold lies' glittering. The forceful impact of the 'quickgold' imparts the impression of the suddenness with which the discovery of a new beauty in nature strikes one. The whole atmosphere is one of quivering, eager freshness and beauty. The next line gives us a visual impression of two 'wind-bent' trees, the whitebeam and the abele, both of which are very striking when the wind turns up the white undersides of their leaves. Thus we have still another example of the beauties of nature and the suddenness with which they reveal themselves. 'Nature is never spent', she explodes upon us

with the full force of God's beauty and we 'know the beauty of our Lord' by her. Finally Hopkins brings us down to earth, as it were, and shows us the same beauty and vitality in an ordinary barnyard:

"Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!--"

The last line of the octave reminds us of the profound metaphysical theme of God's Grandeur:

"Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize."

The 'starlight night' must not be casually glanced at and enjoyed for its own sake alone; its full significance must be realized. The beauties of nature, says Hopkins, were created by God so that through them man might save his soul and thus offer them and it to the greater glory and honour of God. Next we get an image of an auctioneer, Hopkins, striving to sell the meaning of God's presence in nature to man:

"Buy then! bid then! - What? -- Prayer, patience, alms, vows."

In other words, the auctioneer says, 'You ask, what price shall I offer?'; and the answer comes immediately; prayer to glorify God; patience or faith in Christ's promise; alms as a sacrifice to God; and vows of sincerity and humility. Then again, in true auctioneer's fashion, the qualities of the object to be bid on, are reiterated:

"Look, look; a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!"

Hopkins expresses great joy and wonder at the beauty of the world. But, not only is he very grateful for the creation of nature, he uses nature itself to praise and glorify God. Thus we get a complete view of the purpose which Hopkins sees in the beauties of nature; in return for a sacrifice, the bliss of heavenly revelation and grace is received. Those who realize God's purpose in the external world will ultimately understand

even the mysteries of Judgment and Death, therefore the poem concludes:

> "These are indeed the barn; within doors house
> The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
> Christ home, Christ and His mother and all his hallows."

The main image in these lines is a direct reference to Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew XIII, 30.

> ".....and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares and bind them into bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."

In other words the truly faithful are 'wheat', the others 'tares'. Mixed in with this image is the parable of the sower and the two combine to imply that not only will Christ gather in the faithful at the Judgment, but that Christ Himself is gathered in by nature, and we have only to regard nature in the 'true light' to really perceive God. This view is consolidated by this quotation from Hopkins's Notebooks:

> "As we drove home the stars came out thick: I leant back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home." 6

Almost every poem in this period of Hopkins's poetic development deals with some aspect of the revelation of God in the external world, ranging from the sorrow which Hopkins felt by the felling of the aspens in Binsey Poplars to the profound images of The Windhover. Therefore the remainder of this chapter shall deal with poems which I feel to be representative of the period. In most cases there will be no need for a detailed analysis of each line since Hopkins is merely restating, by means of different images, his great joy in nature and his sacramental view of it. Spring, The Lantern out of Doors, The Sea and the Skylark, The Caged Skylark, and Pied Beauty are such poems.

In Pied Beauty we get an impression of the external world which is

alive with colour and vitality; we see many varied ways in which God participates in nature. But it is not until the last line that Hopkins pulls all these images together and gives them their purpose and aim:

> "Glory be to God for dappled things--
> For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
> For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
> Fresh-firecoal chestnut-fall; finches' wings;
> Landscape plotted and pieced - fold, fallow, and plough;
> And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
>
> All things counter, original spare, strange;
> Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
> With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
> He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
> Praise him."

The whole variety of life, everything that God ordained, was created as an aid for man in saving his soul. The real import of the poem is that everything is undergoing a constant change, a flux, except God. God is changeless since God is beauty in its ultimate form.

The Windhover: To Christ our Lord is probably the best poem in this period. Indeed Hopkins himself referred to the poem as 'the best thing I ever wrote'. [7] It is a pity that it has been given many different interpretations by critics. However this disagreement among the critics shall not affect my analysis of the poem, since they have disagreed mainly over the meanings and intentions of certain words. This, I feel, shall not be detrimental to my interpretation which shall be an attempt to elucidate the general aim of the poem. In this purpose the different shades of meaning in certain words can have little import. Generally, of course, this poem is again Hopkins glorying in some aspect of nature, this time the flight of a bird and all the associations which it brings to his mind. The real problem in interpreting the poem, as the critics have discovered, is whether Hopkins is using the bird as an analogy with Christ and all

that that implies. Some critics have stated that he is not and that he dedicated the poem 'To Christ our Lord', for conventional reasons, that is, because he was a Jesuit he might have felt that the dedication of the poem to Christ was befitting the Jesuit order and not because he connected the pleasure evoked by the ecstatic flight of the bird with Christ in any way. Other critics, such as I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, William Empson, W. H. Gardner and all Jesuits who have made analyses of the poem, have agreed in general that this interpretation is not the true one; but they too have disagreed in certain details. I, myself, feel that the poem represents what Hopkins felt to be a direct revelation of Christ in the bird, as in a similar circumstance he 'knew the beauty of our Lord by it'. This seems likely when we remember the ideas of the Spiritual Exercises, to which Hopkins strictly adhered, that all things in the world were created to 'aid man in saving his soul', that is in giving himself to Christ as a sacrifice of love, adoration and worship. Also in the vast majority of poems in this period, there is little doubt that Hopkins, not only feels he 'sees' Christ in nature, but that he uses nature to glorify God. This is quite evident in the two poems I have treated in detail God's Grandeur and The Starlight Night, indeed he tells us so in these poems. Listen again to the last line of Pied Beauty:

"He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him."

Thus we can see that Hopkins's main aim in this period is to glorify God by his use of the beauties of nature. We can be positively certain that Hopkins, in The Windhover, is undergoing an ecstatic emotion evoked by the beauty of the bird and its battle against the elements. There is probably in the poem a subconscious analogy between Christ and the bird

but this interpretation is, of course, entirely speculative since there is no evidence in the poem itself to support such an argument. However there is strong evidence from other sources to support this claim. Influenced by his spiritual training Hopkins, as seen from his written work in prose and by implication in his poetry, regarded all things of beauty as being a revelation of God. Thus I think we can assume, before I start my analysis of the poem, that Hopkins saw a direct revelation of the beauty of God in the windhover and that he possibly saw parallels of Christ's life and Passion in the fight of the bird against the elements.

In the opening lines, Hopkins has 'caught' all the sudden surprise and joy which the ecstatic flight of the falcon aroused in him:

> "I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom
> of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon,"

The major image in this line is from hunting; 'I caught' implying, not only the suddenness of the bird's appearance and the capture of its beauty by Hopkins's mind, but also the far-reaching, complicated net of the mind which captures all the beauties of the bird's predicament. The bird itself is the favourite son, 'minion', the half-spoiled heir-apparent, 'dauphin', of the morning. The falcon is 'dapple-dawn-drawn', that is the bird is 'drawn' up by the 'dawn' from its perch, its resting place, into flight. Hopkins places special significance in the bird by applying 'dapple' to it. Dapple is one of the poet's favourite words and it will be evident from these examples that the multicoloured variety of nature gave him special delight. In <u>The Wreck of the Deutschland</u> we hear:

> "I kiss my hand to the dapple-with damson west;"

in <u>Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves</u>, he is utterly appalled that:

> "earth her being has unbound, her dapple is at an end,"

and finally the whole poem Pied Beauty deals completely with this very thing:

"Glory be to God for dappled things".

In other words when Hopkins wished to express the ultimate in beauty of the external world he applied the word 'dappled' to it. Therefore by calling the Falcon 'dapple-dawn-drawn' he implies that the bird is a very special manifestation of the beauty of God indeed it may be the ultimate revelation of 'God's grandeur' possible in this life. Thus we can see, by his choice of images in this first line, that Hopkins finds the windhover to be of great importance to him. Moreover, as Raymond V. Schoder, S. J. has pointed out, because of a special relationship to the monarch, a minion and dauphin is usually inclined to carry himself with a certain self-assurance and haughtiness, fearless and self-willed in his consciousness of relative impunity for his actions because of the king's protecting benevolence. [8] That is why there is such a show of confidence and almost royal behaviour in the bird's flight; Hopkins feels that its beauty reveals the Divine Being to him and thus the bird is under the protection of Christ. The poem takes on more meaning when we remember that the windhover is the kestrel, the small European falcon noted for its habit of hovering in the air against the wind. Thus it seems that the falcon is battling against the wind, which it probably is, for we get in the next line:

"..... in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there,".

Here we get a picture of the bird hovering, almost motionless in the air, that is with no forward motion, but because of its energetic exertion it seems as if the air beneath it has been made 'steady' and calm. Thus this column of air becomes a sort of submissive support for the bird, who

is its master. Here it is possible that Hopkins saw a direct analogy to Christ who rode over opposition, as does the bird, and who also proceeded 'in the storm of his strides'. Thus the windhover not only conquers the air but he does it confidently in his ecstatic power, 'striding high there'. Because of this royal bearing of the bird the poet is moved to admiration just as Christ's aspect arouses delight in him.

The next image has been interpreted in many ways, all of which cannot be completely correct, therefore I shall simply have to state my personal opinion.

> "......how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
> in his ecstasy!"

The word 'ring' is probably a reference to the falconry term which means to rise spirally in flight, go about in rings or circles. It is possible that 'rung' is part of the verb to ring as a bell but I find this inconsistent with the rest of the poem. Also it is possible that I.A. Richards is right when he states that 'rung' is taken from the language of the riding school and means to make a horse go about in a circle under the control of a rope.[9] This meaning is definitely implied in the image since we can observe that Hopkins compares the falcon in flight to a horse and rider; 'in his riding of the rolling level', 'striding high there', 'he rung upon the rein' and later on 'Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume! But it seems logical to me that Hopkins should stress most, in this context, a term which is closer to the bird itself. Thus we see an image of the falcon flying in circles and guided by its wings which to the poet appear wimpled, that is, the feathers are like folds in a garment. And in 'rein' we find Hopkins expressing amazement that the bird can execute such magnificent feats guided or reined by

such flimsy implements as wings. The whole experience gives ecstasy, not only to the bird, but to Hopkins himself. Suddenly the falcon ceases his spiraling circles and makes a wide sweep:

> ".....then off, off forth on swing,
> As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend:"

This long graceful flight into the teeth of the wind reminds Hopkins of the perfect fluid motion of a skater in his erratic course, such as a figure skater performing. But the point is that Hopkins sees beauty in the flight of the bird and this experience reminds him of the flashing steel and thrown-up snow. The bird's flight:

> ".....the hurl and gliding
> Rebuffed the big wind:"

In the same manner a ship will tack to gain an objective so the bird conquers the gale by its manoeuvering. And Hopkins continues:

> ".....My heart in hiding
> Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!"

This line is a summing up of the meaning of the whole poem. At first Hopkins had been completely wrapped up in the beauties of the bird, 'in hiding'; the vision of the bird had dominated his feelings and emotions. Now he turns his thoughts upon the vision and asks himself why he should see such beauty in this object, why his heart had been 'stirred for a bird'. And the answer comes immediately: - 'the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!' Not only is the bird a miracle of creation but the poet has been reminded by it, of Christ's battles with the world and I suppose in this sense the windhover really becomes Christ in Hopkins's mind. This, of course, is supposition based on Hopkins's private life and has no real support in the poem itself. To make such a statement is dangerous to say the least, therefore I had best conclude by saying that such an interpre-

tation is simply a possibility. However I think we may say that the bird's flight and conquering pride are a manifestation of God's mastery and love since Hopkins regards them as the functioning of perfect beauty; the triumphant joy which is to be found in dangerous activity, and the almost reckless disregard of pain and hardship because of the greatness of the thing attempted. Thus the vision of the bird has sublimated into a symbol and reminder of Christ's example. It urges Hopkins on to greater heights of penance and praise.

Many critics have claimed that in the remaining lines of the poem Hopkins is calling upon all the admirable qualities in the bird to translate themselves into his life so that he may be as brave and heavenly as the bird. This is an admirable interpretation and one which Hopkins himself would probably favour, but again there is no evidence in the poem to support it. These critics have based their whole claim on the mood of the verb 'buckle' in the next line of the poem.

> "Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
> Buckle!"

It is claimed that 'buckle' here is a command to all the nouns in the series and thus means, as The Oxford English Dictionary has it, 'to prepare self for a contest or undertaking; hence to apply self with vigor to a task; to come to close quarters, grapple, engage,' Thus the poet prays for all these qualities so that he may be an even greater sacrifice to God. However I find completely no evidence in the poem to support this and I feel that these critics have read a great deal into the poem to suit their own purposes. Surely this is a visual image of the bird, probably compared to a horse and rider, denoting the sudden realization of Hopkins that all these fine qualities are present in this one little

bird, 'here buckle!' This is a good point at which to point out that this poem is not inconsistent with the religious poems of this period, which specifically point out manifestations of God in nature. For in The Windhover Hopkins perceives a thing of great beauty which gives him a feeling of ecstatic joy and he dedicates this realization of beauty, which for Hopkins is a manifestation of God, 'To Christ our Lord'.

The 'and' in the next line is deliberately emphasized by Hopkins and means something like, 'now that I have made this realization the result is:

> "And the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
> Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!"

When the sudden realization is made that these admirable qualities, this manifestation of God's beauty, is present in the falcon then their worth, as a glorification of Christ, will be 'a billion times told lovelier'. And also 'a billion times.....more dangerous' because of the pure ecstatic joy and beauty of a perfect communionin Christ no matter how great the peril of such a revelation. Incidentally the whole poem is overlaid with an atmosphere of medieval chivalry as suggested in such terms as 'minion', 'dauphin', 'chevalier', 'riding' and 'rein'. This is probably intended to give an impression of Christ, as suggested in the bird, as a crusading king in search of souls. Thus we might say that Hopkins addresses the bird, 'my chevalier', as a knight of Christ, that is the bird, in its revelation of the beauty of God, brings man closer to the joys of Heaven.

The poem continues with Hopkins's firm conviction that the beauty exhibited in the bird is to be found in other parts of the external world:

"No wonder of it;"

if we stop to consider we see that this beauty is manifested in other aspects of nature and thus the poet may become more acute in his praise just as:

"Sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine,"

that is, just as a rusty ploughshare, when run through the earth, regains its shining quality, so Hopkins may be led on to greater things by the example of the windhover. I realize the danger of reading too much into a poem but I feel that it is emphatically implied in this poem that Hopkins regards the beauty perceived in the bird not only as an offering to God but that he considers the bird's example of courage and valour to be well worth following. Here is the final analogy in the poem:

".....and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion."

Thus again Hopkins may be urged on to a great blaze of glory in the same manner as dying 'blue-bleak embers' will, when dashed against the ground, 'gall themselves' and 'gash' as if bleeding and in the same instant will burst forth into an orange spendour. Thus in the last lines we are brought back to earth, to the more realistic, sobering images of everyday life, but even here Hopkins sees a certain amount of the falcon's beauty and so he feels that the example of the bird can be followed and we can almost hear him making a resolution that he will follow it.

Because Hopkins is fond of certain ideas and images he repeats them throughout his poetry. A combination of this repetition of thought and idea is his use of the bird analogy. Thus I offer these two lines from an earlier poem as strong confirmation of my interpretation of The Windhover:

"Let me be to Thee as the circling bird
That shapes in half-light his departing rings."

known it works, it influences, it does its duty, it does good. We must then try to be known, aim at it, take means to it." 2

Finally let us listen to these words from another letter to Bridges:

> "I cannot in conscience spend time on poety, neither have I the inducements and inspirations that make others compose. Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse, and the only person I am in love with (this could only be Christ) seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly and when he does I cannot always 'make capital' of it, it would seem sacrilege to do so. Then again I have of myself made verse so laborious." 3

From these quotations we can see that Hopkins was becoming more deeply aware of himself as a suffering human being but this in him was not really a dire thing. We have seen that he believed expressly in the 'after life' and all its promises and thus the hardships of this life are really a means of gaining salvation:

> "Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize."

Therefore, because of these growing feelings in Hopkins's mind, we can observe the emphasis in his poems changing from his contemplation of God in nature to the relationship of man to God. As in the preceding chapter , this general emphasis is easily discernible in the poems themselves. It is in this period that we get the first real indication of the desolation and despair which were to haunt his later years. There have been hints of it before such as the desolation expressed in Nondum and in these lines from stanza 27 of The Wreck of the Deutschland:

> "The jading and jar of the cart,
> Time's tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease
> Of the sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart,"

but it is not until we come to the sonnet Peace that we see a definite mood of sadness and unrest.

> "When will you ever, Peace, wild wooddove, shy wings shut,
> Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?"

Here we have the familiar bird image, which immediately recalls to mind its special significance for Hopkins. The image is extended throughout the sonnet; therefore I shall return to its significance later. We know, from his own writings, as I have quoted, and from speculation which is consistent with his beliefs, that Hopkins at this time was bothered by what he thought to be an inability to express himself clearly in his sermons. The realization of this, added to his impressions of the state in which man lived around him, helps us to realize the full import of these two lines. Hopkins feels that because he is a human being his soul is in exile from heaven; and his whole purpose as a priest is to prepare his soul for the eternal bliss of heaven. Thus by showing an example he may be able to lead his fellow man 'back to the fold'. But as yet he feels he is not perfect in the sight of God and he therefore asks when such a state of grace will exist in his soul; when will you ever end your roaming round me and come to rest under my boughs, o wooddove? Hopkins had such a high standard of spiritual behaviour that his striving to root out his own imperfections must have been a very difficult task. Thus we can detect a tone of anguish in these lines since Hopkins felt that he had not succeeded in rooting out every evil and in cultivating every good. In a sermon he says, 'For now, after the Fall, good in this world is hard, it is surrounded by difficulties, the way to it lies through thorns.' [4]

Again Hopkins asks:

"When, when, Peace, will you, Peace?"

But he cannot delude himself:

".....I'll not play hypocrite
To own my heart: I yield you do come sometimes:"

He admits that sometimes he has found peace:

> "..... but
> That piecemeal peace is poor peace."

Hopkins feels that in moments when his mind is at peace he is not enjoying true peace but merely a consolation which eases his soul. His conscience would not allow perfect peace, if such were possible on earth, for he goes on:

> ".....What pure peace allows
> Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?"

'Daunting' is here used to mean dispiriting, discouraging or even vanquishing; that Hopkins considers that man's actions and deeds have led him far away from God and no peace can be gained while the world is in this decadent state. This of course is the idea of these lines from God's Grandeur carried to their logical conclusion:

> "....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."

But Hopkins is reminded of the Spiritual Exercises where St. Ignatius said:

> "Let him who is in desolation labour to hold on in patience, such patience as makes against the vexations that harass him; let him consider that soon he shall be consoled, using diligent efforts against desolation, as is enjoined in the Sixth rule." 2

and continues:

> "O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu
> Some good!"

To reave is to rob, plunder or carry off, therefore we get the impression of bereavement because Christ, in his perfection, has denied Hopkins the possibility of gaining 'pure Peace' on earth. But Hopkins reasons

that God must leave something to compensate for this imperfection:

> ".....And so do does leave Patience exquisite
> That plumes to Peace thereafter."

Thus by 'Patience exquisite', which hints at the pangs endured through it, perfect peace will be gained. 'Plumes' is the key word in this image. It suggests not only the mere enhancing by plumes of beauty, but the soaring of a soul to Christ. And finally Hopkins states:

> "And when Peace here does house
> He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo,
> He comes to brood and sit."

That is, when a higher degree of Peace does come to Hopkins, it will mean that he has rooted out most of his imperfections and thus will be a true spiritual leader to the rest of the world. 'He does not come to coo' refers to Hopkins's present state of spiritual leadership.

I mentioned earlier the significance of the bird image in this poem. We know from our previous studies that for Hopkins the bird symbolizes nearness to Christ, the apex of earthly perfection. We saw this epitomized in The Windhover. In this poem, the 'wild wooddove' represents Peace. The image of 'plumesto Peace' reminds one of stanza 3 of The Wreck of the Deutschland where Hopkins's soul wings its way to 'the heart of the Host',

> "I whirled out wings that spell
> And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host".

The final bird image in the poem is, no doubt, a reference to the Dove of the New Testament. We are also reminded most forcefully of the concluding lines of God's Grandeur. Doubtless the ideas expressed and the images themselves are virtually the same:

".....the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings."

Hopkins's great interest in and affiliation with his fellow man is clearly discernible in almost all of the poems in this period. This is easily seen in The Bugler's First Communion, The Candle Indoors, The Handsome Heart, Felix Randal and Brothers. Different aspects of this feeling are exhibited in the poems written later in the period, as we shall see. Perhaps Hopkins's concern for his fellow man is nowhere as emphatic as in Felix Randal. The poem opens with the report of Felix Randal's death:

"Felix Randal the farrier, O he is dead then?"

It continues with a reminiscence of his sickness and gradual weakening of body:

".....my duty all ended,
Who have watched his mould of man, big-boned and hardy handsome
Pining, pining, till time when reason rambled in it and some
Fatal four disorders, fleshed there, all contended?"

After this account of the farrier's waning strength and health, Hopkins goes on to recreate the priest's(Hopkins)ministering to his spiritual needs:

"Sickness broke him. Impatient he cursed at first but mended
Being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some
Month earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom
Tendered to him."

'Being anointed and all' refers to the anointing of sick persons, with consecrated oil according to the rites of the Catholic Church and 'a heavenlier heart' is a reference to his state of mind after he had received the Holy Eucharist, 'our sweet reprieve and ransom'. Thus Hopkins concluded the second quatrain with a plea for complete pardon:

".....Ah well, God rest him all road ever he offended!"

That is, may God forgive him no matter in what ways he has sinned. In the next lines Hopkins expresses the great satisfaction and consolation which he feels is to be found in the priesthood:

> "This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.
> My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,
> Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal;"

Thus the emotions of the dying, especially love, represent an intuitative recognition, not only of the fate of mankind, but of the common origin of man as well. That is why Hopkins ends the poem with a picture of the farrier in the prime of life, a splendid physical being:

> "How far from then forethought of, all thy more boisterous years,
> When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers,
> Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and
> battering sandal!"

Thus Felix Randal almost seems to be born again, to be reliving his most glorious hour, making his greatest contribution to life as a living sacrifice to God. We get the barest hint of this idea in the one word 'sandal' which is much lighter than a horseshoe, the idea of which gives an indication of the promise of the 'after life' for Hopkins. Also can we not catch, in 'peers' and in the total image, an impression of God's favoured host of a blissful Paradise? Thus Hopkins considers that, in some small measure, the life of Felix Randal the farrier has been a partial glorification of God.

A poem in much the same tone as Felix Randal is The Bugler's First Communion. It exhibits the same loving, tender care for his flock and also it tells again of the consolations of being a priest. Hopkins made no attempt to disguise Roman Catholic doctrines in the poem. There is no need to analyse the poem in detail as some of it is purely descriptive, telling of the Bugler boy's parentage and his lot with them. We are told:

"This very very day came down to us after a boon he on
My late being there begged of me, overflowing
Boon in my bestowing,
Come, I say, this day to it - to a First Communion."

Thus for Hopkins the Communion is an 'overflowing boon', it is the highest act of sacrifice and glory that man can give to God. It is an intimate and personal contact with Christ Himself, heightened by Hopkins's firm belief in the Real Presence. Thus Hopkins continues as the Bugler kneels at the altar:

"Forth Christ from cupboard fetched, how fain I of feet
To his youngster take his treat!
Low-latched in leaf-light housel his too huge godhead."

This communication with Christ is, says Hopkins, a 'treat' for the Bugler, for the last line tells us that Christ actually is present in the wafer, 'housel'. Thus the experience is one for the Bugler to savour, to cherish and to keep in his mind as long as possible. The result of the Communion will be this:

"There! and your sweetest sendings, ah divine
By it, heavens, befall him!"

That is, may your sweetest graces, O God, flowing from the Eucharist through Christ in heaven, fall to him. Hopkins obviously regards the Bugler as a highly favoured 'partaker' for he calls him:

"Breathing bloom of a chastity in mansex fine",

and later on:

".....fresh youth fretted in a bloomfall all portending
That sweet's sweeter ending;
Realm both Christ is heir to and there reigns."

Here of course the Bugler may be said to represent all youth and thus the 'bloomfall' of fresh youth' is much like the 'lily-showers' and 'rose-flakes' of The Wreck of the Deutschland. They are to be showered before Christ as loving tokens of adoration and worship and in that way

they 'portend' the fulfillment of Christ's Promise, 'sweet's sweeter ending', Paradise, where Christ reigns. Only through the regular partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ can the Bugler's days be dressed 'to a dexterous and starlight order'. It is important to remember that Hopkins the priest is playing as great a part in the Bugler's 'communication' with Christ as the boy himself, for in ministering to the communicant he himself partakes in the Real Presence. But the priest can do only so much, and being aware of the waywardness of man, he feels that the boy's innocence may become tainted in the future:

> ".....but may he not rankle and roam
> In backwheels though bound home?-"

This could happen but Hopkins leaves the Bugler's possible absolution from sin in the hands of Christ:

> "That left the Lord of the Eucharist, I here lie by."

But the last lines of the poem express Hopkins's confidence that heaven will answer his prayers for the youth:

> "Recorded only, I have put my lips on pleas
> Would brandle adamantine heaven with ride and jar, did
> Prayer go disregarded:
> Forward-like, but however, and like favourable heaven
> heard these."

Thus we may see in this poem that Christ has shown not only how the Reward may be earned, but also we find that He bestows it in person on those who follow Him. This is the only salvation.

A different aspect of Hopkins's awareness of himself as a suffering human being is exhibited in The Candle Indoors. Hopkins considered that a priest had a double duty; to try to lead others to perfection and to strive to rid himself of all faults and evils so that he might be more worthy to become a spiritual leader to men. Thus in the opening lines

of the poem, Hopkins is prompted, by the sight of two people in the light of a candle, to wonder about their lives:

> "Some candle clear burns somewhere I come by.
> I muse at how its being puts blissful back
> With yellowy moisture mild night's blear-all black,
> Or to-fro tender trambeams truckle at the eye.
> By that window what task what fingers ply,
> I plod wondering, a-wanting, just for lack
> Of answer the eagerer a-wanting Jessy or Jack
> There God to aggrandise, God to glorify.-"

Thus we see what profound feelings a simple homely scene can arouse in Hopkins. His utter dedication to serve God and to help others to a full realization of the power and mercy of God is plainly revealed in the last lines of this stanza. Hopkins does not know the people he sees by candle-light, indeed he has only a hazy view of them; they, therefore, represent all mankind, whether they be 'in a state of grace' or not. But the real point of this stanza is in its ending. He wishes that these shadowy figures would ply all their efforts and dedicate their souls, 'God to aggrandise, God to glorify'. Thus to glorify God and to 'aggrandise' His kingdom, to make it more potent and glorious, Hopkins feels should be the main purpose, not only of himself as a priest, but of all mankind. This spirit of dedication pervades almost all the poems of Hopkins's maturity and we shall see a more specific example of it later. But to get back to The Candle Indoors, Hopkins quickly uses this scene before him as an analogy to himself. Thus the candle has become a symbol and its significance is twofold. Its use in the remainder of the poem, not only illuminates for us the terrifying fear in Hopkins's mind that he may not be living up to the standard of perfection which he has set, but also it establishes a vital connection between Hopkins and the people to whom he is a spiritual leader. Therefore the real agony in these lines is Hopkins's fear that he himself has fallen short of the perfection which he expects in others. If this be so then Hopkins feels he has failed

as a priest which, for him, means he has failed not only himself but, more important, Christ. Here is the real import of the poem; if he has failed to aggrandise and glorify God himself, and to show others how to do so, then his chosen life has been an utter failure and a complete mockery. Thus we hear Hopkins addressing his heart:

> "Come you indoors, come home; your fading fire
> Mend first and vital candle in close heart's vault:
> You there are master, do your own desire;"

The poet asks for reassurance that he has been serving God well and also for added help that he may serve and glorify God even more; but no concrete assurance is forth coming:

> "What hinders?"

and he continues to search for an answer:

> ".....Are you beam-blind, yet to a fault
> In a neighbour deft-handed?"

'Beam-blind' is a possible connection between the physical candle and Hopkins's spiritual light but I am inclined to think these lines are a reference to Matthew Vll, 5: 'Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.' Thus the more important aspect of the line is Hopkins's agonized fear that, although he is 'deft-handed' at seeing other's faults, he cannot see the faults which may exist within himself. That is why he bids his heart 'your fading fire mend first', the doubt of his own moral purity fills him with consternation. He concludes his questioning:

> ".....Are you that liar
> And, cast by conscience out, spendsavour salt?"

Again a reiteration of the feeling of doubt but this time more of its implications are presented. Hopkins feels that if he has not lived up

to his position as spiritual leader then his life has been completely worthless, 'spendsavour salt'. This image is more poignant because of its associations with the salty tears of Christ.

To realize the full import of The Candle Indoors we must remember that at this time Hopkins was undergoing his Tertianship. This is a period when a priest turns away from his active life and re-examines his inner self, when he attempts to discover any imperfections in his moral being and enquires whether he has followed the rules of perfection laid down in the Spiritual Exercises. I shall here quote the purposes of the Tertianship which, we shall see, Hopkins has incorporated into this poem:

> "Having completed the diligent task of cultivating the intellect, those who have been engaged in studies, must, during the time of the last probation, more diligently exercise themselves in the school of the heart ('in schola affectus') and devote themselves to spiritual and corporal things which help towards progress in humility and the abnegation of all sensual love as well as of their own will and judgment and also toward a greater knowledge and love of God; so that, having progressed themselves, they may better help others towards spiritual progress for the glory of God our Lord." 6

As if prompted by this searching of his heart in The Candle Indoors, Hopkins almost immediately wrote The Handsome Heart. Here again we get a hint of Hopkins's dedication and the consolations of being a priest. Hopkins felt it necessary to remark to Bridges that the poem was 'historical autobiographical' and to fill in the background story, I shall therefore follow suit. "The story was that last lent, when Fr. Parkinson was laid up in the country, two boys of our congregation gave me much help in the sacristy in Holy Week. I offered them money for their services, which the elder refused, but being pressed consented to take it laid out in a book. The younger followed suit; then when some days after I asked

him what I should buy answered as in the sonnet." 7

> "But tell me, child, your choice: What shall I buy.
> You? - 'Father, what you buy me I like best'
> With the sweetest air that said, still plied and pressed,
> He swung to his first poised purport of reply."

In the next stanza Hopkins exclaims at the natural beauty and goodness of a young heart. It is much the same feeling as we saw in The Bugler, who was a 'breathing bloom of a chastity in mansex fine!

> "What the heart is! which, like carriers let fly--
> Doff darkness, homing nature knows the rest--
> To its own fine function, wild and self-instressed
> Falls light as ten years long taught how to and why."

The first image is again the familiar bird analogy and we are reminded most forcefully of Hopkins's 'carrier-witted' soul in The Wreck of the Deutschland. Thus home in this image is Christ, the habitat of all beauty and goodness, but before the heart can gain a full realization of God it has to 'doff darkness'. The whole image is undoubtedly a veiled reference to the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. The poet continues:

> "Mannerly-hearted! more than handsome face--
> Beauty's bearing or muse of mounting vein,
> All, in this case, bathed in high hallowing grace....."

The beauty of the soul, says Hopkins, is of more value than physical beauty. This idea is stated explicity in a letter to Bridges:

> "I think that no one can admire beauty of the body more than I do. But this kind of beauty is dangerous. Then comes the beauty of the mind, such as genius, and this is greater than the beauty of the body and not to call dangerous. And more beautiful than the beauty of the mind is beauty of character, the 'handsome heart'." 8

Hopkins sees the 'handsome heart' in the boy but, in the final lines of the poem, he expresses the desire that the boy may come to realize the full import of his God-given gift, that he may learn to dedicate himself

and his attributes to Christ.

> "Of heaven what boon to buy you, boy, or gain
> Not granted!--Only.....O on that path you pace
> Run all your race, O brace sterner that strain!"

Thus Hopkins considers that if this boy were to realize the need of resisting evil and being guided by the Divine Will, then his life would be a most fitting sacrifice to Christ.

I mentioned earlier that Hopkins's dedication of himself to the service of God may be seen in almost all his poetry. We saw it in The Candle Indoors and The Handsome Heart; now we come to a poem which deals with that theme specifically, Morning Midday and Evening Sacrifice. This poem consists of three stanzas, concerned, in turn, with the morning of youth, the midday of middleaged maturity and the evening of age. First the poet gives a vivid picture of the beauties of youth:

> "The dappled die-away
> Check and wimpled lip,
> The gold-wisp, the airy-grey
> Eye, all in fellowship--."

Not only is this a magnificent picture of 'blooming' youth, but it contains an implied question; what is the purpose of this beauty, what is its fulfillment? Hopkins gives the answer:

> "This, all this beauty blooming,
> This, all this freshness fuming,
> Give God while worth consuming."

Hopkins echoes the Spiritual Exercises and we know that he firmly believes that all things were created to aid man to save his soul and thus he feels that the best of everything should be dedicated to God. But his main point is that youth, in its sheer beauty and innocence, is a more worthy sacrifice to Christ, if it is offered as such before it fades and loses its natural purity and grace. If this state of grace

is not dedicated to God in youth, then the sacrifice will come much harder at the midday of life.

> "Both thought and thew now bolder
> And told by Nature: Tower;
> Head, heart, hand, heel, and shoulder
> That beat and breathe in power--."

Gone are the natural morals of youth; man is now at the peak of his physical and mental development. But he has entered this state of being guided by God's presence in the external world, 'told by Nature', therefore Hopkins goes on to stress the need of this stage of life as well:

> "This pride of prime's enjoyment
> Take as for tool, not toy meant
> And hold at Christ's employment."

Beauty, grace, life itself, were given to man by God, not for any trivial reason, 'not toy meant', but to aid him in saving his soul. Therefore everything we do, say and are, should be dedicated as a living sacrifice to Christ. Then in the last stanza Hopkins reminds us that 'we were framed to die' and that by the 'evening' of life our surrender of 'self' to Christ may be long awaited by God, therefore we should hasten to make amends:

> "The vault and scope and schooling
> And mastery in the mind,
> In silk-ash kept from cooling
> And ripest under rind--
> What life half lifts the latch of,
> What hell stalks towards the snatch of,
> Your offering, with despatch, of!"

We have Hopkins's own gloss on this stanza in a letter to Bridges:

> "I meant to compare grey hairs to the flakes of silky ash which may be seen round wood embers burnt in a clear fire and covering a 'core of heat', as Tennyson calls it.....'Your offer, with dispatch, of' is said like 'Your ticket', 'Your reasons', Your money or your life','Your name and college':

it is 'Come, your offer of all this (the matured mind), and without delay either!' (This should now explode)". 9

Thus the poet tries to impress upon us that in old age the time for redemption is very short and that a reconciliation with Christ must be made quickly. The whole poem is a plea that man dedicate himself, his life and all created things 'that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created.....to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.' 10

Hopkins deals with the theme of beauty, as exhibited in the first stanza of Morning Midday and Evening Sacrifice, in The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo. But this time he treats a slightly different aspect of it as we shall see. The poem opens with a question:

> "How to keep-- is there any any, is there none such, nowhere known some, bow or brook or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep
> Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty.....from vanishing away?"

In other words, is there any way for man to arrest the fading of beauty? The 'Leaden Echo' answers itself:

> "No there's none, there's none, O no there's none."

Time ravages all living things. It brings about the:

> "Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay;"

and therefore the Leaden Echo ends with this dirge:

> "O there's none; no no no there's none:
> Be beginning, to despair, to despair,
> Despair, despair, despair, despair."

This then is the fate of everybody who can see no purpose in the beauties of the world. But the Golden Echo replies that this situation need never, indeed, never should exist. Its comforting tones exhort the listener by saying:

"Spare!
There is one, yes I have one (Hush there!);
Only not within seeing of the sun,
Not within the singeing of the strong sun,
Tall sun's tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of the
earth's air,
Somewhere elsewhere there is ah well where! one,
One."

There is a solution to the problems of mortality. There is a purpose and aim behind the beauties of the world and the Golden Echo goes on to give us this exact information:

"Come then, your ways and airs and looks, looks, maiden
gear gallantry and gaiety and grace,
Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet
looks, loose locks, longlocks, lovelocks, gaygear,
going gallant, girlgrace;"

all these things of beauty the Golden Echo advises:

"Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion
them with breath,
And with sigh soaring, soaring sighs deliver
Them; beauty-in-the ghost, deliver it, early now, long
before death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God,
beauty's self and beauty's giver."

Thus we have essentially the same message as we found in Morning Midday and Evening Sacrifice. All beauty must be dedicated to God for in that way only can we save our souls. God created these beauties as an aid to our salvation and therefore they must be used to that end.

In my study of these poems, we can begin to see Hopkins's real purpose in writing as he did. There can be little doubt that he truly attempted to follow the rules laid down in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. I have demonstrated that the Exercises elucidate and illuminate the poems themselves, therefore I can say with certainty that Hopkins dedicated his experiences of beauty to God and that he tried to lead man to a fuller communication with God by attempt-

ing to give some impression of the Divinity as revealed in the beauties of the world. I shall have more to say on this later. I now come to a poem which seems to carry further the solution of the Golden Echo. There we were advised to give all beauty back to God, who is ultimate Beauty, and we gathered that the result would be salvation. In To what serves Mortal Beauty? we are told, not only of its dangers, but of its compensations in this life. The implication of the whole poem is that if we do not use the God-given gift of beauty in this life we shall lose it forever. By use, of course, Hopkins would mean 'dedicate it to God.'

"To what serves mortal beauty - dangerous;"

Hopkins goes on to point out its dangerous aspects:

".....does set dancing blood-
the O-seal-that-so feature, flung prouder form
Than Purcell tune lets tread to?"

Here is the curse of a profligate use of beauty, but Hopkins goes on to point out its redeeming aspects:

".....See: it does this: keeps warm
Men's wits to the things that are; what good means - where a glance
Master more may than gaze, gaze out of countenance."

In other words, Hopkins would say that God created beautiful things so that man might be reminded of God, 'good', who is the perfect form of all beauty. And the logical conclusion of this is that the beauty found in mortals is greater than beauty found in the external world since the 'world's loveliest' is 'men's selves'. Therefore Hopkins advises man to:

"Love what are love's worthiest, were all known;
World's loveliest - men's selves. Self flashes off frame and Face."

That is, some aspect of God is revealed in mortal beauty, and this revelation is its only consolation.

> What do then? how meet beauty?"

and the answer:

> ".....Merely meet it;"

Accept it where it comes and;

> ".....cwn,
> Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift, then leave, let
> that alone."

The poet concludes that physical beauty as such should not be prayed for; it is 'heaven's sweet gift', which God bestows at random in His mysterious ways. Rather we should pray for God's grace, which Hopkins considers a higher form of beauty.

> "Yea, wish that though, wish all, God's better beauty, grace."

I have shown in this chapter that Hopkins, in this particular period of his life, was especially interested in the relationship between God and man and I have pointed out the different ways in which the poet tried to show man's purpose in life. I should like to end this chapter by analysing the following poem, the main idea of which, I feel, is the main point which Hopkins tried to communicate. That is, that when a man offers himself as a living sacrifice to Christ and thereby gains a state of grace, he becomes an 'alter Christus', man and Christ become one.

> "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flames;
> As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
> Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
> Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;"

that is, just as God is revealed in the external world so:

> "Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:"

The 'self' of everything, that particular, individual entity is what

makes all mortal things a mirror of God's beauty, but each reflection is, because of this 'self', in some way different from all others. 'Each mortal thing':

> "Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves-goes itself; myself it speaks and spells;
> Crying What I do is me: for that I came."

But Hopkins says more:

> ".....the just man justices;"

that is he lives in a godly manner, he radiates the divine life of grace, having been fully energized by God's blessing. 'The just man':

> "Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
> Christ - for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
> Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
> To the Father through the features of men's faces."

Perhaps the best commentary on this poem has been made by Hopkins himself. In his Comments on the Spiritual Exercises he says:

> ".....grace is any action, activity, on God's part by which, in creating or after creating, he carries the creature to or towards the end of its being, which is its selfsacrifice to God and its salvation. It is, I say, any such activity on God's; so that so far as their action or activity is God's, it is divine stress, holy spirit, and, as all is done through Christ, Christ's spirit; so far as it is action, correspondence, on the creature's it is actio salutaris; so far as it is looked at in esse quieto it is Christ in his member on the one side, his member in Christ on the other. It is as if a man said: That is Christ playing at me and me playing at Christ, only that is no play but truth; That is Christ being in me and me being Christ." [11]

This then should be the ultimate aim of man; to be one with Christ. And we have seen in the last chapters that it was Hopkins's main aim in his poetry to impress this upon mankind.

CHAPTER III

The Dark Night of the Soul leading to the Light of Morning

The last poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, the poems of 'desolation', are the most misunderstood of all his poems. In this chapter I shall attempt to dispel this misunderstanding by analysing the poems of this group, especially the 'five or more' sonnets. We shall see that these poems are the expression, not of a man who has abandoned God, but of a man who feels that God has abandoned him. But throughout the poems Hopkins's faith will be seen asserting itself; implied is the conviction that either he himself had forced God to abandon him, by his impurity and worthlessness, or that God would eventually come to his aid and resolve all his doubts and fears. To realize this fully we must first get a picture of Hopkins's life at the time the poems were written. It was a time when Hopkins was beset by 'the prostrating anguish of ill-health, uncongenial surroundings, the tedium of heavy routine-duties, and the sterility and impotence which constituted his spiritual aridity when he felt that his God had withdrawn His love.' [1] Perhaps the best picture we can get of Hopkins's life at Dublin is to be found in his own letters. In 1884, when he seems to have reached his lowest spiritual ebb, he wrote:

> "The melancholy I have all my life been subject to has become of late years not indeed more intense in its fits but rather more distributed, constant, and crippling. One, the lightest but a very inconvenient form of it, is daily anxiety

> about work to be done, which makes me break off or never finish all that lies outside that work. It is useless to write more on this; when I am at the worst, though my judgment is never affected, my state is much like madness. I see no ground for thinking I shall ever get over it or ever succeed in doing anything that is not forced on me to do of any consequence."[2]

Earlier he had written:

> "I must say that I am very anxious to get away from this place. I have become very weak in health and do not seem to recover myself here or likely to do so. Teaching is very burdensome, especially when you have much of it: I have. I have not much time and almost no energy - for I am always tired - to do anything on my own account. I put aside that one sees and hears nothing and nobody here." [3]

And he wrote to Bridges in this tone:

> "Write me an interesting letter. I cannot do so. Life here is so dank as ditch-water and has some of the other qualities of ditch-water: at least I know that I am reduced to great weakness by diarrhoea, which lasts too, as if I were poisoned." [4]

I have quoted these passages from Hopkins's letters because I wish to give an impression of his state of mind at the time. It is only when we realise the true significance of his attitude at this period in his life that we see that the so-called poems of 'desolation' exhibit the same love of God and his fellowman, as is so plainly seen in all the other 'mature' poems. At first glance the poems seem to be devoid of any ray of hope but when we realise Hopkins's attitude towards His Maker and our purpose in life, the poems take on new meaning for us. At the time of composition of the 'dark sonnets' Hopkins wrote in prose:

> "When a man has given himself to God's service, when he has denied himself and followed Christ, he has fitted himself to receive and does receive from God a special guidance, a more particular providence. This guidance is conveyed partly by the action of other men, as his appointed superior, and partly by direct lights and inspirations. If I wait for such guidance, through whatever channel conveyed, about anything, about my poetry for instance, I do more wisely in every way than if I try to serve my own seeming interests in the matter.

> Now if you value what I write, if I do myself, much more does our Lord. And if he chooses to avail himself of what I leave at his disposal he can do so with a felicity and with a success which I could never command. And if he does not, then two things follow; one that the reward I shall nevertheless receive from him will be all the greater; the other that then I shall know how much a thing contrary to his will and even to my own best interests I should have done if I had taken things into my own hands and forced on publication. This is my principle and this in the main has been my practice: leading the sort of life I do here it seems easy, but when one mixes with the world and meets on every side its secret solicitations, to live by faith is harder, is very hard; nevertheless by God's help I shall always do so." 5

One final quotation will complete our picture of Hopkins. In it we shall see that Hopkins was guided by one all-important factor - his love of God - and that he strove to make himself a fitting sacrifice to God. I contend that it is only in this light that a plausible interpretation of the poems may be made. Also I offer this quotation as conclusive proof of the accuracy of my thesis - that all the 'mature' poems exhibit a loving reverence for God and His creatures.

> "When a man is in God's grace and free from mortal sin, then everything he does, so long as there is no sin in it, gives God glory and what does not give him glory has some, however little, sin in it. It is not only prayer that gives God glory but work. Smiting an anvil, sawing a beam, white-washing a wall, driving horses, sweeping, scouring, everything gives God some glory if being in his grace you do it as your duty. To go to communion worthily gives God great glory, but to take food in thankfullness and temperance gives him glory too. Too lift up the hands in prayer gives God glory, but a man with a dungfork in his hand, a woman with a sloppail, give him glory too. He is so great that all things give him glory if you mean they should. So then, my brethren, live." 6

Hopkins told Bridges of the sonnets in this manner; 'I shall shortly have some sonnets to send you, five or more. Four of these came like inspirations unbidden and against my will. And in the life I lead now, which is one of a continually jaded and harassed mind, if in any leisure I try to do anything I make no way - nor with my work, alas! but so it

must be.' [7] It is as if these sonnets were a great emotional relief for Hopkins. His troubled soul experienced a great catharsis in the composition of the poems. All of the sonnets are, to a large extent, autobiographical, especially the first. It deals with Hopkins's reaction to the social and political aspects of his life in Dublin:

> "To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life
> Among strangers. Father and mother dear,
> Brothers and sisters are in Christ not near
> And he my peace my parting, sword and strife."

This is no mere complaint; it is the bitter cry of a man who is religiously apart from those he loves. Hopkins cannot find perfect comfort and peace in his Catholicism unless its graces are shared by everybody, especially his own relatives. Thus everybody living outside the Catholic Church was living in sin and Hopkins felt bound to bear the burden of their sin. But his exile in Ireland was not his most difficult hardship;

> "England, whose honour O all my heart woos, wife
> To my creating thought, would neither hear
> Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I wear -
> y of idle a being but by where wars are rife."

These lines imply his most bitter hardship because they refer, not only to his exile from England, but also to a much more profound idea which is best expressed in Hopkins's own words:

> "In thought I can of course divide the good from the evil and live for the one, not for the other: this justifies me but it does not alter the facts. Yet it seems to me that I could lead this life well enough if I had bodily energy and cheerful spirits. However these God will not give me. The other part, the more important, remains my inward service."

In other words Hopkins at all times dedicated himself and all he did to the glory of God, however insignificant he felt his sacrifice to be.

Hopkins goes on in the next sonnet of the group to elucidate the implications of his epithet for Christ, 'my peace my parting, sword and

strife'. St. John of the Cross states that one of the greatest tortures of the soul suffering spiritual desolation 'is the thought that God has abandoned it; that He cast it away into darkness as an abominable thing .....the shadow of death and the pains and torments of hell are most acutely felt, that is, the sense of being without God .....All this and even more the soul feels now, for a fearful apprehension has come upon it that thus it will be with it for ever." [8] These words seem to me to be an apt commentary on the sonnet:

> "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
> What hours, O what black hours we have spent
> This night! What sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
> And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
> With witness I speak this. But where I say
> Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
> Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
> To dearest him that lives alas alas! away."

We know that Hopkins suffered from insomnia but surely this sestet has a symbolic as well as a literal meaning. The poet feels that he is away from God's 'light' and is therefore in spiritual darkness; that God has abandoned his soul as an abominable thing. Therefore the abysmal image conjured up by the poet here is truly representative of his own mind. The best description of that state of mind is St. Ignatius's commentary in the Exercises:

> "I call desolation....darkness of the soul, disturbance in it.....the disquiet of different agitations.....moving to want of confidence, without hope, without love, when one finds oneself all lazy, tepid, sad, and as if separated from his Creator and Lord."

This is surely the situation expressed by Hopkins in this poem. The final sestet of the sonnet is a more concentrated, bitterly inflictive expression of the terrible agony of Hopkins's desolation. In anguish the poet cries:

"I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse."

Because he is a man and because he feels that he has not been able to make himself the best possible sacrifice to Christ, Hopkins considers that his very being is a loathsome thing to God. This is a most important point. Hopkins was always inclined, in the final analysis, to blame himself for 'light's delay', as witness the conclusion of the Tullaberg Retreat Notes: 'Then I went out and I said the Te Deum, and yet I thought what was needed was not praise of God but amendment of life.' Thus in the next line of the poem we get a very ambiguous image; Hopkins feels that he is a mere shadow of the spiritual perfection he should attain:

"Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours."

And the last lines support my contention that Hopkins completely blames himself for the condition:

".....I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse."

Hopkins considers that the punishment of hell is not to be by fire and physical torment but is to be the greatest of mental agony prompted by one's removal from God.

In the remaining sonnets of the group we see two distinct rays of hope; in the poem which Bridges named Carrion Comfort, the poet attempts to reject despair and in 'Patience, hard thing', and 'My own heart let me have pity on', we can detect a slight slackening of the bonds of Hopkins's feelings of hopelessness and despair. In the opening lines of Carrion Comfort the poet feebly attempts to push aside despair:

"Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist-slack they maybe - these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry I can no more."

No matter how desperate his situation may become Hopkins is determined not to let 'Despair' get the better of him for that would mean that he had given up the 'last strands of man' in him, which is the image of Christ. He asserts that he will never cry 'I can no more' for there is always the hope that Christ will eventually come to him and aid him to 'doff darkness' and regain his lost 'vision of God'. Then he will be free of all his doubts and fears, his desolation, and will enjoy everlasting peace. Thus Hopkins summons all his strength and cries:

"I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be."

Thus we hear Hopkins echoing the words of St. Ignatius: 'Thou oughtest not to be cast down, nor to despair; but resign thyself calmly to the will of God, and whatever comes upon thee, to endure it for the glory of Jesus Christ.' Hopkins can have only one consolation in his present situation; the hope that his terrible agony is an atonement for his sins. He believes that his present turmoils are the 'will of God' but he can see no real purpose behind them, therefore his faith takes over and he shouts 'I can', I will 'endure it for the glory of Jesus Christ'. 'I can.....not choose not to be'; I must be a man, an imitation of Christ's image, that is the only way he can remain a 'real' man is to have faith in God's ultimate mercy and goodness. Through faith he will gain salvation and the reward of Paradise. The 'will of God' is of course behind all of Hopkins's reasoning, he is confident that he is fulfilling God's purpose. But his extreme agony is due to the fact that he can see no reason why he should be singled out to bear such a terrible burden. The

whole poem is, of course, an impression of a wrestling match between Hopkins and God, with the match itself taking on the proportions of a nightmare. Indeed the whole image is much akin to a bout with a succubus which is probably what is intended. There is no need to elucidate the images further since the grotesqueness of the ideas conveys the desired effect; and, of course, the whole aim of these lines is implied in the question, "Why am I on trial?'

> "But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
> Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lion-limb against me?
> scan
> With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
> O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic
> to avoid thee and flee?"

Again a reiteration of Hopkins's 'agonized cry','Why do I undergo such torments?' The images in these lines are very hard, harsh and cruel, giving an impression of the severity of the poet's hardships and his 'darkness' concerning the purpose of it all. But the answer to his question comes immediately: "

> "That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear."

He is on trial that he may be purged and thus become a worthy offering to Christ. Therefore Hopkins realizes his suffering and mental turmoil came directly from God. Then we see the paradoxical situation of the conquered rejoicing in the conqueror, that is Hopkins's surrender to Christ has been complete:

> "Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
> Hand rather, my heart lo% lapped strength, stole joy, would
> laugh , cheer."

Here again we hear echoes of St. Ignatius; 'Behold, O beloved Father, I am in Thy hands, under the rod of Thy correction I bow myself%' In other words Hopkins feels that he has done his best to make himself a worthy

representative of Christ on earth. If his sacrifice has not been good enough then he is doomed, but there is the ever-present ray of hope that Christ will eventually teach him to make perfect his soul. Thus again we get an indication that Hopkins considers that he himself is to blame for the abandonment of his soul by God. These lines immediately remind us, as they did Dr. Pick, of the nun in The Wreck of the Deutschland:

> "the Cross she calls Christ to her, christens her wild-worst
> Best."

This is the point which I made earlier, that Hopkins regarded the nun's spiritual experiences as identical to his own. But having expressed this great joy and elation at the event, Hopkins is not sure who deserves the credit for his purgation:

> "Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-handling flung me,
> foottrod
> Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one?"

Does God deserve the credit? Does Hopkins deserve the credit? Or did each play an active part in the surrender of Hopkins's soul? Even though that surrender is far behind him, Hopkins shudders whenever he thinks of his dreadful ordeal:

> "That night, that year
> Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!)
> my God."

This is the appalling thing for Hopkins, that he had entered into combat with his God. Thus we see that Carrion Comfort, like many of Hopkins's 'mature' poems, is a restatement of his struggle to gain as perfect a 'vision of God' as is possible in this life.

I mentioned earlier two poems, 'Patience, hard thing' and 'My own heart let me have pity on', in which we can detect a slight slackening of the bonds of despair. The first of these is a direct example of my

thesis that Hopkins felt that he himself was to blame for the absence of God in his life and that God would eventually reveal Himself fully. But patience is essential if this situation is to be tolerated. This poem is again a direct rendering into poetry of the Spiritual Exercises and dogma of the Catholic Church. The Exercises insisted: 'Let him who is in desolation labour to be in patience', and again St. Ignatius admonished; 'Dispose thyself to patience rather than to comfort. All men recommend patience; few, however, thy are who are willing to suffer,' and again, 'We are always willing to have something for our comfort; and with difficulty a man doth strip himself of self.' [9] Thus the poem begins:

> "Patience, hard thing! the hard thing but to pray;
> But bid for, Patience is! Patience who asks
> Wants war, wants wounds; weary his times, his tasks;
> To do without, takes tosses, and obey."

To have patience is a very difficult thing but the reward is worth all the toil and hardship. Hopkins fully realizes that to pray for patience is to ask for a most difficult time but:

> "Rare patience roots in these, and these away,
> Nowhere. Natural heart's ivy, Patience masks
> Our ruin of wrecked past purpose. There she basks
> Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day."

Immediately we are reminded of an earlier poem, Peace and we realize that here we have a further development of it. In Peace, it is 'Patience exquisite' which 'plumes to Peace thereafter.' But for Hopkins there is only one way to plume to Peace and that is the way of St. Ignatius: 'Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my intellect and all my will.....all is thine, dispose of it according to Thy will!" This he realizes is most difficult:

"We hear our hearts grate on themselves: it kills
To bruise them dearer."

But he remains steadfast in his submission to God:

".....Yet the rebellious wills
Of us we do bid God bend to him even so."

Finally we learn that God is close at hand:

"And where is he who more and more distils
Delicious kindness?"

and the answer comes:

"He is patience;"

He 'plumes to Peace thereafter':

".....Patience fills
His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know."

Thus Hopkins feels that faith and patience are similar concepts. We may see no purpose at all in life but if our faith tells us that every insignificant thing is done according to the will of God then patience helps us to bear our hardships since we know that ultimately there will be a 'vision of God'. Thus, in this sense, patience is a direct consolation from God.

The final sonnet contains much the same idea except that Hopkins feels, by the time of its composition, that every man must show charity towards himself, otherwise he will be incapable of distilling 'delicious kindness':

"My own heart let me more have pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet."

These then are the sonnets of desolation. It is obvious that many and varied factors form the background of these poems; Hopkins's ill health, his drab life in Dublin, his heavy routine duties, his parents and

friends being away from Christ and so on. But the important thing concerning the poems is the point which I hope I have demonstrated; that Hopkins interpreted all of these factors in terms of 'spiritual desolation' and furthermore that he attempted to deal with his problems, as seen in the poems, through the guidance of spiritual writers of all ages. Thus it matters little what caused Hopkins's trials; the important thing is what Hopkins believed to be the cause. This is all we need know to make a just interpretation of his poetry.

There is a very remarkable poem written in the last year of Hopkins's life, That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection. It is most fitting for two reasons that I end my discussion of Hopkins's poetry with this poem. First it seems to embody the main characteristics of all three observed periods of emphasis in Hopkins's 'mature' poems. In it we see again the dappled world; a completely realistic view of timeless earth with its cycles of life and death, flesh and dust. The whole world is here including man and most important, God is ever present. Secondly it conclusively justifies the title of this chapter, 'The Dark Night of the Soul leading to the Light of Morning', referring to Hopkins's period of desolation and despair and his final recovery from such torment. Hopkins survived his 'agenbite of inwit' for throughout the whole of this poem one can hear the golden echo of immortality. Reiterated is the point made by Hopkins in almost all his religious verse; that life itself is a purgation of the soul, a preparation of the individual spirit to be a perfect sacrifice to Christ. We can be perfectly certain of this for Hopkins has given us the meaning of the poem in prose:

> "Everything in nature is in a perpetual state of flux: air, earth, and water make a constant cycle of integration and disintegration - a motion which creates the dynamic beauty of the

> visible world. In fact, the inexhaustible energy of being and becoming throughout all creation is like a huge self-fuelling, non consumed bonfire. And even man, the most clearly individuated being, higher and apart from all others on earth - he too dies and is quickly forgotten, swallowed up in the general flux. This thought fills us with horror, until we remember that through Christ's promise the disintegration of the physical body is(or should be) the immediate beginning of a richer life for the immortal spirit. Strong in this faith, we take heart, we exult..."[10]

The poem opens with a panorama of the dappled world:

> "Cloud-Puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth
> then chevy on airbuilt thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers,
> in gay-gangs they throng; they glitter in marches.
> Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, wherever an elm arches,
> Shivelights and shadowtackle in long lashes lace, lance and pair.
> Delightfully the bright wind boisterous ropes, wrestles, beats
> earth bare
> Of yestertempest's creases; in pool and rut peel parches
> Squandering ooze squeezed dough, crust, dust; stanches, starches
> Squadroned masks and manmarks treadmire toil there
> Footfretted in it. Million-fueled, nature's bonfire burns on.
> But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest-selved
> spark
> Man, how fast his firedint, his mark on mind, is gone!
> Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
> Drowned."

This is Hopkins's last visual view of the world as presented in his poetry. All God's creation is here amid its frustrating, transcending flux and because of it the poet must cry out:

> ".....O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
> Sheer off, disseveral, a star, death blots black out; nor mark
> Is any of him at all so stark
> But vastness blurs and time beats level."

For a moment Hopkins is assailed by the old doubts and fears endured during his period of desolation. He becomes lost in the vastness and beauties of the universe which make man appear very insignificant. Man also undergoes the flux of life and death and Hopkins forgets the promise of Christ and is greatly saddened that 'death blots black out'. But he quickly remembers that man is not inferior to the external world but

is spiritually in the image of God. This realization forcefully reminds the poet of his concept of salvation and he cries:

> "Enough, the Resurrection,
> A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, joyless days, dejection.
> Across my foundering deck shone
> A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
> Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash."

Christ's Resurrection forever dispelled doubts as to an afterlife; it was as a clarion call to the heart, lifting it out of the mire of uncertainty and it stands forever as a glorious reminder, 'an eternal beam', of man's destiny. Man may die and be consumed in nature's flux but this destruction of the physical being marks the beginning of another, more glorious life, a life with God. Thus gone forever are Hopkins's doubts and fears; this is his final testimony to the supremacy of Christ: At last the complete story of his spiritual fulfillment can be told; Hopkins the poet and priest has become the Alter Christus, he has realized the 'achieve of, the mastery of the thing'.

> "In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
> I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
> This jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal
> diamond,
> Is immortal diamond."

'In a flash' Hopkins's soul rids itself of all desolation and despair, it wings its way 'to the Heart of the Host'. Here is the great paradox of Christian life. Man is, in Hopkins's view, almost completely worthless and insignificant without Christ in his life, he is a 'joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood.' But the instant Christ enters his life he becomes 'immortal diamond', he is the most precious and glorious of all God's creations. Man, who is made in the image of God, is pricelessly precious and immortal because in his final fulfillment he is a part of the heavenly family. The promise of Christ to man is to be fulfilled

and thus Hopkins can die with these words on his lips:

"I am so happy, I am so happy, I am so happy."

.....

The time has come to tie together all the loose ends of argument and evidence and attempt to gain a composite view of Hopkins's spiritual achievement as exhibited in his poetry. Since I have summarized earlier his achievement in The Wreck of the Deutschland, a brief summary will suffice here. We have seen him 'reliving' his own spiritual experiences and attempting to express in poetry the similar experiences of the nun. I have pointed out that Hopkins's main aim in the poem was to stress the great importance of Christ in man's life and to emphasize the purpose and meaning of life as expounded in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. I have undertaken, in this thesis, to demonstrate that Hopkins's 'mature' poetry, not only exhibits a loving reverence for God and His creatures, but that the main aim and object of the poems themselves is to glorify God and His creations. This I think is true, since the most important part of every poem studied is either the Divinity Himself or some aspect of the relationship between God and man.

It is desirable to refresh our memories concerning the main import of the poems studied so that we may have a general impression of the purpose of Hopkins's poetry. We may remember that one of the main points of The Wreck of the Deutschland was that Hopkins considered that the nun had 'read' correctly the purpose and meaning of the terrible disaster:

"There was a single eye:
Read the unshapeable shock night
And knew the who and the why:"

she realized that the wreck was the will of God and Hopkins implies that no other explanation is possible. The nun was:

> "Wording it how but by him that present and past,
> Heaven and earth are word of, worded by?"

Earlier Hopkins had expressed the fervent wish that God 'be adored among men', and toward the end of the poem he states that man should 'past all grasp God', who is 'throned behind Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides'. In other words Hopkins is making a plea for faith in the purpose and will of God. But the full import of the poem, as I have demonstrated, is summed up in these lines, which express the final realization of the nun's motives:

> ".....there then! the Master
> Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:"

Christ should be the most important aspect in man's life and above all he should be glorified.

In the group of poems which emphasize the manifestations of God in the external world we hear Hopkins stating that 'the world is charged with the grandeur of God' and that, even though the world may be in a decadent state, even though 'all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil', yet 'nature is never spent'. God is always present to lend a helping hand to man; the external world, nature, 'shuts the spouse Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.' Again in this period we hear Hopkins praying 'Glory be to God for dappled things', that is, for beauty found in nature. He ends his poem Pied Beauty with the idea which epitomizes the main aim and purpose of the poems of this period; Christ 'fathers-forth whose beauty is past change.' And he ends with a simple command to man: 'Praise him'. Give glory to Christ for He is the only salvation.

In the poems which emphasize the relationship between God and man we have seen Hopkins attempting to lead man back to God by imploring him to use his natural perception and to search for manifestations of God in the external world. We hear Hopkins plead:

> "This, all this beauty blooming
> This, all this freshness fuming,
> Give God while worth consuming."

In other words dedicate all experiences of beauty to the glory of God, 'hold at Christ's employment'. There can be little doubt that Hopkins dedicated his poems to Christ since he felt that they were, in some measure, expressions of beauty and as such were a worthy offering to Christ. The best example of this is the fact that Hopkins dedicated The Windhover, 'To Christ our Lord'; presumably both his experience of the beauty of the bird and his expression of that beauty in poetry. Hopkins's fervent prayer is that man will learn 'God to aggrandise, God to glorify'. He pleads with man to 'give beauty back to God' who is 'beauty's self and beauty's giver'. And finally in this period we get the expression of a concept which, for Hopkins, is the ultimate of Christian revelation. He states that 'the just man acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is - Christ'. Each Christian should strive for this, should ardently desire to become an Alter Christus.

Thus we can see that in all the poems surveyed so far, Hopkins has been primarily concerned with the relationship between God and man and his prime aim has been to further that relationship, that is, to make man more aware of God's presence and to try to make him aware that Christ is the one true goal in life.

In the last group of poems we have seen Hopkins suffering great

pangs of desolation and despair but, as I have pointed out, there runs throughout all of these poems the conviction that he himself is to blame for his tremendous mental turmoil. We hear him state:

> ".....Yet the rebellious wills
> Of us we do bid God bend to him even so."

Thus Hopkins prays for patience so that he may finally conquer his 'agenbite of inwit' and go to his heavenly Reward. As I have pointed out, there is great evidence that Hopkins did emerge from his 'dark night of the soul' for in That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection, one of his final poems, we can easily see that he has regained his 'vision of God.' Again he takes great pleasure in the joys of nature and in contemplating man's purpose in life and he makes his final statement concerning man's relationship to God. 'I am all at once what Christ is,' he states, 'since he was what I am'. Therefore I and all men who have made this realization are 'immortal diamond', perfect imitations of Christ. The culmination of the Christian ideal, the Alter Christus, has been reached.

Thus we can see that the binding factor in Hopkins's spiritual and religious life, in his consideration of the relationship between God and man, is Christ. Every 'mature' poem which Hopkins wrote, in some way deals with Christ's relationship to man and His revelations of Himself to man; He is:

> "..... the Master,
> Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head."

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PART TWO

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