

" A DAPPLED THING "

THE "OUTWARD" AND "INWARD" SERVICE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

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ABSTRACT

In retreat notes made six months prior to his death, Gerard Manley Hopkins referred to his "outward" and "inward" service. Hopkins' "outward" service as a Jesuit was the visible manifestation of his "inward" one which he considered to be "more important." This thesis investigates the nature of those two services and defines Hopkins' "inward" service as the development of the poet's Christian Gnosticism, the basis for his mythopoesis. Although this hypothesis has already been forwarded, new information has emerged to strengthen the theory. Gnostic manuscripts discovered in the eighteenth century were subsequently made available to British scholars in 1848 and in 1851. Various aspects of his poetry strongly suggest that Hopkins incorporated material from these manuscripts into his writing. Thus, Hopkins' Christian Gnostic sources are wider than previously supposed. It will be demonstrated that all aspects of Hopkins' mythopoesis lend themselves to the development of gnosis. Sources for the poet's imagery are drawn from over two thousand years of Christian gnostic sources. This establishes a very real sense of tradition within Hopkins' mythopoesis. Inscapes of Christ as Alpha and Omega permeate the poetry and the process of enlightenment whereby one perceives these is vigorously depicted. The sequential phases in the developing personal relationship of the Gnostic to his

Creator-Redeemer constitute the ongoing strain in Hopkins' mythopoesis. In this strain he reveals a theology which presages the current trends in twentieth-century theology. The poetry's dynamic energies and movement patterns reveal the means by which Hopkins compels the reader to participate in the process of increasing enlightenment. In its features which combine tradition, revelation, and instruction, Hopkins' mythopoesis constitutes, in effect, new scripture.

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Introduction

The Self and Its Roots--Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Gnostic Tradition

But our lives and in particular those of religious, as mine, are in their whole direction, not only inwardly but most visibly and outwardly shaped by Christ's...my life is determined by the Incarnation down to most of the details of the day. Now this being so that I cannot even stop it, why should I not make the cause that determines my life, both as a whole and in much detail, determine it in greater detail still...(Sermons, 263)

Gerard Manley Hopkins, the poet-priest who scrupulously avoided publication, would, no doubt, be astounded at the extent to which the details of his life are known. "Today [he] stands alone as the best-known and most intensely studied poet of the late Victorian period" (Cotter, xvi). Critical studies of Hopkins have investigated almost all the various aspects of the life and the poetry of the Jesuit priest. He has been viewed in both the Victorian and Modernist contexts, and has been the subject of thorough biographical and psychological studies. Hopkins' poetics have been analyzed according to a multiplicity of literary, artistic, biblical, and musical sources. Thorough assessments of the poetry's linguistics, mechanics, and even its mathematical significance have been made. Hopkins was a poet of tremendously diverse interests; all such critical studies reflect that diversity. Hopkins was never able to

complete the theological and philosophical syntheses he proposed; his mythopoesis must stand in their stead. In a letter to Bridges the poet-priest determines that works of art should be "widely known," should "educate" and "be standards" (Letters 1, 231). Hopkins was never to see his art function in these capacities while he was alive. His first major work of 1875-1876, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," had elicited only a cool response from both Bridges and the Jesuit editors of the Monthly. Subsequently Hopkins shunned publication of his own poetry but continued to urge his friends to publish. In a letter to Bridges of August 21, 1877 Hopkins asserted, "I do not write for the public." Hopkins was "known" but only to a select few friends and family members. Yet the vast majority of critical studies of Hopkins in this century have determined that his poetry certainly "works, it influences, it does its duty, it does good" (Letters, 231).

A considerable amount of light is shed on Hopkins' complex mythopoesis when one examines it in conjunction with his "inward and outward service[s]" (Sermons, 261-262). His meditations on The Spiritual Exercises, his sermons, much of his correspondence, and his journals are all readily accessible. However, a definition of Hopkins' "inward service" proves more difficult. G. F. Lahey, S.J., notes

some faint adumbrations of Hopkins' spiritual life as a Jesuit. It will be remembered that the diaries begun at Oxford were ever afterwards continued, but where he had used the same book prior to 1868 for all his entries, he subsequently used two, one for spiritual phenomena, the other for intellectual. The first he destroyed.

(Lahey, 135)

Although the contents of the destroyed journal can never be known for certain, synthesizing certain biographical information about Hopkins does help to formulate a viable hypothesis about his previously undefined and mysterious "inward service." The "secrets" in Patmore's Sponsa Dei which Hopkins advised Patmore against "telling" are, I believe, the same which lie buried in the poet-priest's mythopoesis. (Letters 3, 365).

In the synoptic gospels, Christ differentiates between the two forms of knowledge which He imparted.

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto those who are outside, all these things are done in parables...That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. (Mark 4: 11-12)

Six months prior to his death, Hopkins also differentiated between the two ("outward" and "inward") aspects of his service. "I do not feel then that outwardly I do much good, much that I care to do or can much wish to prosper; and this is a mournful life to lead...The other part, the more important, remains, my inward service" (Sermons, 262). To ascribe Hopkins' mythopoesis solely to the "outward service" encompassed in the extant sermons, meditations, and journals is not a complete assessment. With these Hopkins took no measures to remain anonymous; his poetry was a different matter. An investigation of Hopkins' mythopoesis must balance the orthodox Catholic and Jesuit with the brilliant, incisive scholar. The importance of Hopkins' multidisciplinary studies cannot be underrated; such studies were his vital and lifelong avocation. Thus the general assumption that "Hopkins accepted without question a ready-made

myth, Roman Catholicism with its established ritual and dogma" as a basis for his mythopoesis does need "urgent reexamination" (Cotter, xvi).

"Outwardly" the chronology of Hopkins' poetic works encompasses the Annunciation, ministry, Passion, and Resurrection phases of Christ's life. Thus one might consider that the poetry fulfills the primary spiritual aspiration of a Jesuit, that of imitation of Christ. However, the reader of Hopkins' poetry is also struck by several vital interior qualities of the works. The first is an intense compression of images. Unravelling these reveals a multiplicity of facets, drawn from Hopkins' studies of art, philosophy, theology, music, physics, and linguistics. Dynamic energies and movement constitute another remarkable aspect of the poetry. There is an immense vitality in Hopkins' depiction of an ongoing process. The dynamics of circling, descent and ascent, stress and attainment, inspiration and expiration induce one to trace the path, and follow the process. One sees "something," gets "a shock," then "waver[s] in opinion," looks "back," and wonders "whether there [is] anything in it or no" (Letters III, 147). That "something" is the living "Christ [seen]...in ten thousand places" ("As Kingfishers Catch Fire"). The sequence of the poetry which culminates in the poet's statement that "I am all at once what Christ is" ("That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection") reveals not merely imitation, but, rather, identification with Christ. This assertion also marks the ultimate aim of the Christian Gnostic process.

This study of Hopkins' evolving Christian gnosis will reveal that the poet-priest's goal was to acquire complete identification with St. Paul's "mind...which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). One aspect of this "mind...in Christ" focuses upon humility, an essential quality of gnosis which is the ultimate outgrowth of higher wisdom. "He thought it nevertheless no snatching-matter for him to be equal with God, but annihilated himself, taking the form of a servant" (Letters I, 175). The rigours of Jesuit service provided the framework within which Hopkins might enact this aspect of his gnosis. The other aspect of the poet's quest for Christian gnosis, the search for enlightenment, is reflected in the poetry; it is a record of increasing awareness gathered from the disciplines of diverse studies as well as from his experiences. The poet-priest's function is that of an alter-Christus; his wording and creation, like Christ's, serve to foster awareness, remembrance, and renewal. The gnostic devotes his life and work to perpetual re-creation of the Word. "What interest[s] these gnostics far more than past events attributed to the 'historical Jesus' is the possibility of encountering the risen Christ in the present" (Pagels, 12). The exuberant joy or the driven intensity with which Hopkins encounters "the risen Christ" irresistibly draws the reader of his poems into the experience of his own gnosis.

The historical development of gnosis is reflected in the specific development of Hopkins' own Christian gnosis. The primary feature of gnosis is its syncretism. Gnostic texts which

have come to light over the last two and a half centuries reveal contributions from the disciplines of Greek philosophy, astrology, mystery religions, and magic. Sources for gnosticism can be traced to religious mythologies from both the Middle and Far East. Elements of myth from Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, as well as Christianity are present (Pagels, xxix-xxx). In a letter to Dixon written in October of 1886, Hopkins, in reference to both Greek and Irish myth, refers to mythology as "something else besides fairytale"; myth was instead "religion, the historical part of religion." Cotter notes that "from [Hopkins'] Oxford years until the end of his life, he showed a deep interest in world mythologies: Egyptian deities; the Eleusinian mysteries; Greek, Roman, and Celtic myths" (Cotter, xvii). Hopkins' quest for a universal element in all of these seemingly diverse belief systems led him to find pre-Christian images of the Trinity in the creation myths of the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Welsh, and the Hindus (Cotter, 16-17). As Hopkins had indicated in an undergraduate essay of 1865, Greek mythology gave rise to poetry, history, and philosophy. Pre-Socratic and Hellenistic philosophy formed the next essential phase in the poet's synthesis of Christian gnosis.

Hopkins' studies of the Greek pre-Socratic philosophers provided several of the pivotal elements in his mythopoesis. Parmenides, revered by Plato as the Father of Realism, had described his cosmology in "The Way of Truth." Hopkins' journal notes for February 9, 1868, which comment on Parmenides' system, mark the first appearance of the terms "inscape" and "instress" in the poet's writing.

His great text, which he repeats with religious conviction, is that Being is and Not-being is not-- which perhaps one can say, a little over-defining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it...His feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape / is most striking and from this one can understand Plato's reverence for him as the great father of Realism. (Journals, 12)

The nature of Parmenidean Being, that of the circle or sphere, appears as a central image throughout Hopkins' poetry. Being is "like the mass of a well-rounded ball, equally balanced from its centre in every direction...Being is an inviolate whole. For in all directions equal to itself, it reaches its limits uniformly" (Ancilla, 44). Hopkins envisioned Parmenides' view of creation as "a system of concentric...spheres or cylinders, ranging between fire and night, governed by a spirit...in the midst, also called Justice or Necessity. This spirit was the cause of the gods, creating Love first" (Journals, 130). The images of circle and cylinder, and the motion suggested by the "ranging between fire and night" (which constitute both the progression of nature, and of gnosis) are employed by Hopkins in poems like "God's Grandeur," "Spelt from Sybil's Leaves," and the sonnets of desolation. Heraclitus, a contemporary of Parmenides, posited a cosmology based upon a governing force called the Logos.

Of the Logos...men always prove to be uncomprehending... For although all things happen according to this Logos, they are like people of no experience, even when they experience such words and deeds...the soul [is] a percipient exhalation...souls by being exhaled are for ever becoming intelligent...the whole is divisible and indivisible, has come into being and not come into being, is mortal and immortal; that Logos is Aeon, the Father is the Son, God is Justice: Listening not to me but to the Logos it is wise to agree that all things are one...
(Fragments, 1, 12, 50)

Evidence and incomprehension, exhalation and inspiration, self-being and universality, the Heraclitean philosophy of contraries was synthesized into Hopkins' mythopoesis. Later Hellenistic philosophers like Plato and Aristotle refined the basic cosmology forwarded by the pre-Socratics. From this body of pre-Christian knowledge, Hopkins incorporated into his poetry the Platonic concept of concrete existence as a replica of the ideal.

Aristotle's Metaphysics defined the means by which one perceives the unity of all being. His theory of how gnosis is acquired appeared later in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine, and, ultimately, of Hopkins. "Aristotle's discovery of the universal in the particular by intuitive reason proceeding from sensations, through memory and back to experience, suited Hopkins' quest for the kinetic and concrete unity of reality" (Cotter, 23). The universal quality in all particulars, whether of the human, natural, or artistic realm is a striving toward an end, toward completion. Hopkins combined pre-Christian philosophy with New Testament scripture to reveal that end or completion as Christ.

Hopkins' knowledge of the New Testament, gathered from daily readings since childhood, was honed into a set of precise and thorough exegetical skills by Benjamin Jowett, Hopkins' tutor of Classics at Balliol. Of all the New Testament texts, the Pauline writings were the most important influence upon the poet's developing gnosis. Cotter notes that "in his spiritual... writings, Hopkins relies most often on St. Paul for the development of his inquiries and ideas" (Cotter, 34). Of all

the New Testament authors, Paul makes the greatest number of references to the term "gnosis" in his writings; it appears twenty-three times. From the Epistle to the Philippians 2: 5-11 Hopkins derived the example upon which he would model his own life as a Christian Gnostic.

It is this holding of himself back, and not snatching at the truest and highest good, the good that was his right, nay his possession from a past eternity in his other nature, his own being and self, which seems to me the root of all his holiness and the imitation of this the root of all moral good in other men.

(Letters I, 175)

According to Paul, each disciple of Christ must conform to his role as a "witness to the resurrection," and "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers" were to "build up the body of Christ until...all attain to the unity of the faith and ... the knowledge of the Son of God, to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4: 11-13). "Moreover, Hopkins' concept of inscape is basically Pauline and rooted in the idea of the *pleroma* (the energy of the creation) as a network of centers which culminate in the Omega point or 'mark' of the risen Christ" (Cotter, 47). Hopkins' recurring image of being's straining for completion is a synthesis of the writings of St. Paul and Aristotle. "Forgetting what is behind I strain forward to what is before, I press on towards the goal, to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3: 13-14). This striving or reaching of man, nature, and created artifacts is an image frequently used in Hopkins' verse and signifies aiming for the mark; it depicts the return of being to Christ. A final and vital Pauline concept which Hopkins

employs is that of the pre-existent Christ. Philipians 2: 6-8 speaks of a Christ whose "being [is] in the form of God," who "was made in the likeness of men," and who "humbled himself and became obedient unto...even the death of the cross." Hopkins reinforces the three phases of Christ's existence "(1) in the procession of the godhead; (2) in his entrance into creation, his incarnation proper; (3) on earth...in the becoming man" (Sermons, 170). The process is perpetual and eternal. Cotter reminds us that

we must recall the Pauline foundation for the idea. For it was in the New Testament and not in Duns Scotus that he first encountered the Alpha and Omega of his myth, just as it was at Oxford, under the tutelage of Liddon and Jowett, that he first sifted these texts. (Cotter, 37)

The concept of Christ's timelessness is reiterated in the opening chapter of the Johannine gospel. The "Word" was "in the beginning," was "with God," and "was God" (John 1: 1). The fourteenth verse reveals the three distinct presences of Christ as primarily, "the Word" who was "made flesh," and subsequently "dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The Heraclitean concept of the Logos is reiterated in the Johannine Christ who is the creating and ordering force in the cosmos. These two aspects of Christ, as the eternal Creator/governor of the cosmos are depicted by Hopkins in stanzas one, six, seven, and twenty-one of "The Wreck of the Deutschland."

The three synoptic gospels focus on the third aspect of Christ, that of the God-made-man who interacts with humanity. They provide a record of the events of Christ's Galilean Incarnation and, thus, provide the example of Christian values

by which the faithful might emulate Christ. However, gnosis is not a major concern of the synoptic gospels; the only references to it are found in Matthew 13: 11 and Mark 4: 11-12. In both cases, Christ contrasts those who are taught by parables with the disciples, to whom is offered access to the mystery of the Kingdom of God.

This difference between the gnostic believer and the ordinary faithful became even more apparent during the days of the early church in the second, third, and fourth centuries. Those who advocated a church, catholic and orthodox, accused the gnostics of hellenizing Christianity; on the other hand, the gnostics may equally well have accused the orthodox faction of romanizing it. Vigorous refutations of the pagan elements of gnosticism comprise much of the text of Irenaeus of Lyons' Adversus Haereses. Ironically, such extensive discussion of gnostic heresy provided, until 1945, most of history's information about gnosticism and the divisive conditions of the early church. Irenaeus sanctioned a true Christian gnosis; this was acceptable to the orthodox faction as long as the only pagan inclusions were those of the Greek philosophers. Tertullian was another of the post-apostolic church fathers whose De Monogamia reiterated the biblical heralding of Christ as Alpha and Omega. Hopkins employs the image of these Greek letters as signifiers of the Son's presence throughout creation. In his Epistle to the Romans St. Ignatius of Antioch advocated that Christians relive the passion and resurrection of Christ. Ignatius' directive for meditation, as well as his name, was adopted by the founder

of the Jesuit Order, St. Ignatius of Loyola. As many critics have pointed out, the phases of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises provide the structure for much of Hopkins' poetry. Images from Ignatius of Antioch's epistle are employed by Hopkins to inscape the Crucifixion and Resurrection, and to connect these to both the poet's and the nun's spiritual awakenings in "The Wreck of the Deutschland." Clement of Rome's Epistle to the Corinthians describes the sequential process of Christian gnosis for which Hopkins derived the terms "inscape ('look' and 'see'), and instress ('feel' and 'understand')" (Cotter, 100).

This is the way, beloved, in which we find our Saviour Jesus Christ...By him we look up to the heights of heaven. By him we behold, as in a glass, His immaculate and most excellent visage. By him are the eyes of our hearts opened...By Him the Lord has willed that we should taste immortal knowledge [gnosis].

(Epistle to the Corinthians, 36)

In The Gnostics, Tobias Churton notes that "from Alexandria came a specialized philosophical theology which would later lead to critical divergencies of thought and expression between the eastern Church centred in Alexandria and Antioch, and the Church in Rome" (Churton, 40). At this cultural and trade centre of the Roman Empire, elements of eastern and western philosophies and theologies emerged, were discussed, and ultimately synthesized into a Christian gnosis by Origen, a third-century theologian, and by Clement, Bishop of Alexandria. While at Oxford, Hopkins admitted that there were only two people in history about whom he had a "real feeling": Savonarola was one of these, Origen was the other (Letters 3, 17). Hopkins incorporated three principles

of Origen into his mythopoesis. The first was the use of *epinoiai*, a series of titles of address to Christ. These were worded in sequence by the gnostic aspirant and were designed to elevate the human spirit to a Christic level. Hopkins uses a version of Origen's *epinoiai*, created especially for his England, in the final stanza of "The Wreck of the Deutschland." Origen's concept of the inner man is "an image of the Logos stamped there in mind and will by creation and then actualized by the atonement" (Cotter, 111). Hopkins' elevating grace illuminates this "inner man" to raise pitch of being. A three-fold approach to scriptural study, originated by the Jewish Gnostic, Philo of Alexandria, was refined by Origen. The process of attaining gnosis from scripture involves the "body," "the soul," and the "spirit." At the "body" level the comprehension is "literal," at the level of the "soul," the scripture is interpreted on a moral basis, and the "spirit" provides access to "universal" understanding (De Principiis, 4. 1. 11). The poet-priest who admitted to having a "real feeling" for the third-century theologian might well have borne Origen's three-fold process in mind as he created his own works.

Cotter believes that "the author and book which [Hopkins] particularly studied and used as a model of his thought and as a source of fresh poetic inspiration [was] Clement of Alexandria and his *Stromata* or *Miscellanies*" (Cotter, 244). Clement was also a major source for H. P. Liddon's Bampton Lectures of 1866. The nine pages of Hopkins' notes for those lectures contain the poet's first reference to "superior enlightenment"

or gnosis. In the text of these lectures Liddon notes that "in his most considerable work...(the Stromata,) [Clement]] labors to impart the higher knowledge to which the Christian is entitled, and so render him 'the perfect gnostic'" (Liddon, 389). Cardinal Newman, who received Hopkins into the Catholic Church during that same year, had incorporated portions of Clement of Alexandria's Stromata into his own studies of fourth-century Arianism and into his Idea of a University. Newman observes that Clement's work "well illustrates the Primitive Church's method of instruction, as far as regards the educated portion of the community" (Newman, 48). As Hopkins' spiritual advisors, Liddon and Newman introduced Hopkins to the writings of Clement of Alexandria, "the chief fashioner of an integrated avowal of Christian gnosis" (Cotter, 249). Clement's process of attaining enlightenment was a synthesis of the many belief systems current at Alexandria during his time. Refutation is not his sole purpose; he demonstrates instead that all disciplines and faiths lead to Christ. His gnostic process commenced with faith, gathered and assessed knowledge from a multiplicity of sources, and led ultimately to Christian love and service.

Christ is both the foundation and the superstructure, by whom are both the beginning and the ends. And the extreme points, the beginning and the end--I mean faith and love--are not taught. But knowledge, conveyed from communication through the grace of God as a deposit is entrusted to those who show themselves worthy of it; and from it the worth of love beams forth from light to light. For it is said, 'To him that hath shall be given': to faith, knowledge; and to knowledge, love; and to love, the inheritance. And this takes place, whenever one hangs on the Lord by faith, by knowledge, by love, and ascends along with Him to where the God and guard of our faith and love is.

(Stromata, 7:10)

Clement describes the acquisition of gnosis as "being excited by existing objects"; it is "essentially a contemplation of existences on the part of the soul, either of a certain thing or of certain things, and when perfected, of all together" (Stromata 6. 8). Hopkins' mythopoesis reveals that the poet-priest used Clement's three-stage process to evolve the Christian gnosis which constituted his "inward service."

Augustine is the "the most frequently mentioned of the church fathers in Hopkins' writings" (Cotter, 115). His Confessions emphasize the importance of one's experiences in the formulation of gnosis. The world of creation does not provide a direct route in the upward ascension of knowledge of Christ; rather, it is essential to look within and discover Him there.

Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new! Late have I loved Thee! And look, Thou were within and I was without, and there I searched for Thee: a deformed self, plunging amid those fair forms which Thou hadst made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee. (Confessions 10. 27)

Augustine reinforces Origen's "inner man"; Cotter notes that Augustine also determined the importance of language as a device to connect the "inner man" to Christ.

The De Magistro, which Hopkins seems to have used in arriving at his own theory of language, treats of the connection between words, signs, and things, and, like the poet in his own search for meaning and myth, calls on Christ in the inner man to be teacher and oracle of truth. (Cotter, 116)

A final contribution of the fifth-century church father to Hopkins' gnosis was Augustine's reiteration of the pre-Socratic, Pauline, and Johannine concept of time. According to Augustine,

man measures the sequence of historical events in his mind, but the "inner man" recognizes that the stress of Christ is constant, ever-renewed, and occurring moment by moment. This concept recurs throughout Hopkins' poetry and is especially essential for comprehension of stanzas six and seven of "The Wreck of the Deutschland."

The theology of John Duns Scotus consolidated the concepts of Hopkins' developing Christian gnosis. The major element which Hopkins found reiterated was that of a Christ simultaneously creative and redemptive. The Son, present at creation, was not "made flesh" simply because man's sin made His existence necessary. His kenosis was an act of love whose creative and redemptive motives were inseparable. Both Scotus and Hopkins perceived that "the Lamb is slain from the beginning...The act by which the Father sums up all the *pleroma* in his crucified Son...is the one creative act of love from and to which all being flows" (Cotter, 122). Scotus defined *haecceitas* as "the thisness that constitutes an existent, that makes this being be" (Cotter, 126). Hopkins' parallel is not inscape but pitch of being, "the dynamic motion and course of each...being as it is propelled and propels itself into its niche in time and space" (Cotter, 125). Pitch of being determines individuality while inscape is a mark of unity which connects all being. "For this controlling and incorporating energy and end, the poet coined the word inscape. For the origin, impact, and grip of that inscape when it fused in man as being and thought, he coined a second word, instress" (Cotter, 3).

When Christ illuminates the "inner man" and self-will aligns itself with the will of the Father, self becomes self-in-Christ. Pitch of being thus altered emanates its inscape, that striving of the creature towards Christ, towards completion. Parmenides, Scotus, and Hopkins deemed that being is univocal in inscape, uniqueness lies in individual pitch of being. Thus, creation is like an orchestra made up of various instruments which emits one song. In this vital concept the line of Christian gnosis traces its roots from the pre-Socratics, through the apostolic and patristic fathers, to Scotus, and ultimately, to Hopkins.

Several puzzling elements of Hopkins' mythopoesis still require explanation. Mariani draws attention to "something which, to [his] knowledge, has not yet been pointed out" (Mariani, 98). This is the precipitous shift of perspective in "Hurrahing In Harvest" and "The Starlight Night" (one notes its beginnings in stanzas 12, 21, and 26 in "The Wreck of the Deutschland"). Mariani determines that Hopkins is "deliberately reversing our vantage point, literally turning us on our heads (or perhaps lifting us 'above' the sky) to see the unity of all creation and to glean Christ operative in all nature" (Mariani, 98). Although feasible, Mariani's suggestions somehow fall short of the mark. In these instances Hopkins makes an attempt, not simply to alter perspective, but to join the two dimensions of heaven and earth. There are several possible sources for this. The Corpus Hermeticum of Hermes Trismegistos, a second-century teacher at Alexandria, and Pico della Mirandola's Oratio speak of the

role of the magus.

As the farmer weds his elms to vines, even so does the magus wed earth to heaven, that is, he weds lower things to the endowments and powers of higher things. The magus is to be devoted to the raising of earth (matter) to heaven (spirit). The method or secret of working lies within the gnosis or knowledge of Man as he is and can be--he knows he has access to the divine world. (Churton, 115)

Taken in concert with Heraclitus' philosophy of contraries, "And the up and the down is one and the same thing: The way up and down is one and the same" (Fragment 60), Hopkins, the poet-magus, found this an arresting image to depict elevating grace and to inscape Christ in creation.

Mention has already been made of the influence of Jowett, Liddon, and Newman on Hopkins' developing Christian gnosis during his Oxford years. It seems only reasonable to assume that Hopkins' scholarly interest in gnosis would lead him to two Gnostic scrolls discovered in the eighteenth century and subsequently made available to nineteenth-century British scholars. In 1769 James Bruce, a Scottish explorer, purchased a Gnostic manuscript near Thebes in Egypt. Entitled The Two Books of Jeu, it was placed in the Bodleian Library at Oxford in 1848. Written in Coptic, an Egyptian language employing Greek letters, Hopkins might well have had access to its contents.

Jesus, the living one, answered and said: Blessed is the man who knoweth this, and has brought the heaven down, and carried the earth and sent it to heaven... The apostles answered saying: Jesus, thou living one, O Lord, explain to us in what way one may bring down the heaven, for we have followed thee, that thou mightest teach us the true light.

(Schmidt-Till in Hennecke, 262)

One notes that further consolidation for the Hermetic tradition and Pico's Oratio occurs in The Two Books of Jeu, but all

three sources were decidedly non-orthodox.

Another surprising element in Hopkins' mythopoesis is the combination of gender associated with Christ in Sonnet 68. The nature of this process whereby Christ assumes androgynous being will be discussed at greater length in the third chapter. Hopkins' writing contains several other aberrations of the male qualities traditionally used to present Christ. The Son is depicted in terms associated with motherhood in a sermon at Bedford Leigh in November of 1879.

And in general you will find that what Christ aimed at in his miracles was to *breed* faith in him or it being *bred* to nurse it; to *breed* it and to nurse it I say, both in the receiver of the miracle and in all who should witness it or hear of it.

(Sermons, 31)

In fact, the Christic element in much of the poetry, Sonnets 57, 63, 71, and 76 to name several examples, is depicted as a combination of male and female qualities. This deviation from the orthodox concept of a decidedly male Christ may be explained in this.

Sophia is here regarded as Wisdom, present at the side of God and intervening as Fidelity, Confidence and Faith in the work of creation...The Son of Man agreed...with Sophia, his consort...and revealed himself in a great light as bisexual. His male nature...is called 'the Saviour...the begetter of all things', but his female 'Sophia...mother of all' whom some call Pistis...the faithful wisdom.

(Hennecke, 251)

Not only is Christ seen as androgynous, there is reaffirmation here of another of the poet-priest's tenets, that of the pre-existent Christ. The Pistis Sophia or Books (Rolls) of the Saviour had been discovered in a London bookshop in 1773 and was placed in the British Museum in 1785. "Attention was

first drawn to it in 1778 by C. G. Wode, under the title 'Pistis Sophia', and the text of the codex was published, with a Latin translation, in the posthumous work of M. G. Schwartz in 1851 (Hennecke, 250). The translation of the original parchment manuscript was certainly available to Hopkins; his unorthodox depiction of a Christ who encompasses both male and female traits suggests the possibility of Hopkins' having read it.

Moreover, W. H. Gardner notes that Hopkins

in 1884...had spoken of the Jesuit censorship as 'a barrier which I do not know how anything of mine on a large scale would ever pass'; and this suggests strongly that he feared something too markedly idiosyncratic, if not actually unorthodox, in his own philosophical and theological speculations. (Gardner, 345)

The correspondence of Hopkins and Coventry Patmore reveals various cryptic comments about their spiritual tenets; both were much concerned about the correct expression of their beliefs and their responsibility for publishing them. Hopkins had indicated that his verses "stand or fall by their simple selves; the perceptions he wanted to express "if unsaid right...will be said by somebody else wrong, and that will not let me rest" (Letters II, 150). Following his conscience and Hopkins' admonition about "telling secrets," Coventry Patmore, in a letter of February 10, 1888, tells Hopkins of

much meditation on the effect which my manuscript 'Sponsa Dei' had upon you, when you read it while staying here, I concluded that I would not take the responsibility of being the first to expound the truths therein contained: so, on Xmas Day, I committed the work to the flames without reserve of a single paragraph.

Further evidence indicates discussions between the two men of a theology which was remarkably prescient for its time. In a letter of January 1884, the older poet thanked Hopkins for some

recent poetic criticisms he had provided; Lahey elaborates on the contents of the letter:

Patmore...replies immediately elaborating the 'second coming of Our Lord in ourselves in the flesh--that altogether marvellous and convincing sign, sudden, surprising, unforeseen, immutable, destroying His enemies in us, seizing and giving thousandfold life to them in us that were alive; and raising many that were dead, and dreamed not that they would ever be called upon to give Him glory'. (Lahey, 58)

The Gospel of Philip, which some critics associate with the first book of The Pistis Sophia, contains information pertinent to Patmore's discussion with Hopkins. Pagels quotes the Nag Hammadi text: "'Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error.' Instead they must 'receive resurrection while they live'" (Pagels, 12). When one considers the spiritual relationship of Hopkins to Liddon and Newman (who both draw upon patristic sources of Christian Gnosis), the possible availability of the Pistis Sophia and The Two Books of Jeu, Hopkins' remarks about Jesuit censorship, his cryptic advice to Patmore, discussions between the two about the Resurrection within, and both poets' concerns about publishing this information, a clearer picture of Hopkins' mysterious "inward service" begins to emerge. As stated in the beginning of this introduction, the contents of Hopkins' destroyed journal can never be known for certain, but one thing is apparent: both Hopkins and Patmore, who shared the "secrets" of Sponsa Dei, determined that neither time nor circumstance was right for the revealing of its principles to the general public. The poems, according to Hopkins, "stand or fall by their simple selves," and, sporadically mailed to his friends over a period of some thirteen years, "would...pass" the

Jesuit censors (Letters II, 200). Two conditions were essential for clearer comprehension of Hopkins' mythopoesis. The first was the 1918 publication of the body of his works. The second was the consideration of those works in the light of twentieth-century translations of Gnostic texts. Thus the reader of Hopkins is led to an understanding of how the nature of his "inward service" was connected to his vocation. His "outward service" as a Jesuit forms the final stage of a Christian gnosis begun in faith, augmented by knowledge, and expressed in love and service. The mysteries of the Kingdom of God which Christ imparted to the apostles, and "the secrets" which Hopkins cautioned Patmore against telling are those of the Christian Gnostic. The enlightenment of this gnosis is the key which opens the Omega-shaped lock of Hopkins' mythopoesis.

Hopkins makes great demands upon his reader. Coventry Patmore's assessment that Hopkins' poetry is "of a kind only to appeal to the few" was an appropriate one for the nineteenth century; such is not the case today. This examination of Hopkins' mythopoesis, a combination of his "inward and outward" service, focuses on three elements of the poetry. The first examines biography in conjunction with the poetry's sequence; this reveals the ultimate phase of Christian gnosis, that of the Gnostic's identification with Christ in love and service. The second element is Hopkins' use of gnostic imagery. The sources for these images not only add a sensory dimension beyond that of immediate context, but they also enrich the image with an historic aspect. When these sources consolidate each other,

a spiritual tradition emerges. Hopkins' vigorous depiction of an ongoing process, the aspiration to Christian gnosis, draws the reader into the experience of that process. Finally, both density of imagery and patterns of energy in the poetry inscape the living Christ. Thus, Hopkins words a vital, systematic, and contemporary form of scripture. In effect, his mythopoesis is Hopkins' "new testament."

Chapter One

Wording the Wreck and the Hope--The Wreck of the Deutschland

And when evening was come, the boat was in the midst of the sea...and he saw them toiling...for the wind was contrary unto them. And about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them....(Mark 6: 47-48)

The annunciation of Gerard Manley Hopkins' mythopoesis occurred with a shipwreck of December 1875. A self-elected poetic silence had commenced with the "burning of the innocents" in May of 1868. Hopkins had destroyed his poetic works because he believed that his vocation as a Jesuit precluded that of the poet. The intervening years had been spent in "deepen[ing] his theological sensibility" (Mariani, 45); his studies of philosophy and theology at Stonyhurst, Roehampton, and St. Beuno's in Wales were assessed and assimilated into the gnostic process begun at Oxford. When his superior at St. Beuno's suggested that Hopkins write a poem about the Deutschland, the poet-priest no longer saw his two vocations as mutually exclusive.

Joseph Finn Cotter notes that "Of all his [Hopkins'] writings, the *Deutschland* contains the most complete statement of that gnosis or living knowledge of the Lord Jesus which was his constant aim of perfection" (Cotter, 145). Perhaps this is why the "dragon in the gates" of Hopkins' poetry created so much

difficulty for its readers. As noted in the introduction, the reception of Hopkins' ode was not enthusiastic. Bridges refused to read it a second time; the Jesuit Monthly suggested the removal of its stress marks but ultimately did not publish it. Coventry Patmore's comments on several of Hopkins' poems encapsulate the reader's difficulties with "The Wreck of the Deutschland."

It seems to me that the thought and feeling of these poems, if expressed without any obscuring novelty of mode, are such as often to require the whole attention to apprehend and digest them; and are therefore of a kind to appeal only to the few. But to the already sufficiently arduous character of such poetry you seem to me to have added the difficulty of following several entirely novel and simultaneous experiments in versification and construction, together with an unprecedented system of alliteration and compound words--any one of which novelties would be startling and productive of distraction from the poetic matter to be expressed. System and learned theory are manifest in all these experiments; but they seem to me to be too manifest. (Letters III, 355)

Clearly a synthesis or unifying mythopoesis was not apparent to Hopkins' audience; the poetry's diverse elements dominated instead. In his journal, Hopkins discusses his theory of poetry (Journals, 289). Cotter explains this theory in terms of the dimensions which inscape assumes in Hopkins' works.

Poetry then deals not with the inscape of sound [as does verse] but with inscape itself. While it may be multiplied many times in a poem, inscape is single, the musical key in which the whole is written. It rests on the surface and yet underlies everything, giving the poem coherence and control. Inscape is form as well as content, structure as well as tone. It is all these, because inscape is poetical intention, the aim and purpose of the poet in his poem. Poetry not only is its vehicle, it is inscape expressed and revealed. Its counterpart, "instress," is the effect felt and understood by the reader once he has grasped, and been grasped by, the inscape or selfhood of a poem. (Cotter, 144)

Applying this definition to "The Wreck of the Deutschland," one determines that the ode's inscape is Christ. The dynamics of the Christian Gnostic process, that of self which becomes self-in-Christ, govern the ode's progression and energies. The poet's own awakening presages that of the nun; both reveal the phases of faith, knowledge, and self-sacrifice in love which identification with Christ entails.

Cotter has noted that

the inscape of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" eludes even the most attentive reader. Hopkins, who intended that his poems should explode in the mind and emotion, succeeds in his sonnets; but the length and complexity of the Deutschland fail to produce the desired explosion, or inscape of the whole. (Cotter, 146)

The following examination of Hopkins' ode attempts to assess the validity of this statement.

"The Wreck of the Deutschland "is divided into two unequal parts: the first part is a personal recall of the poet's spiritual awakening at Manresa House in 1868; Part the Second encompasses the Deutschland's ill-fated passage and foundering--the disaster fosters a spiritual awakening in a Franciscan nun who was one among a number of shipwreck victims. By writing of the tragedy, the poet hopes that his revelation of Divine Intervention on England's own shores will foster a subsequent conversion of his countrymen. Both the poet and the Franciscan nun "read the unshapeable shock night" (st.29) and, from this vital, contemporary scripture, "word" its illuminating significance.

Part the First of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" opens with a direct address to an omnipotent and omnipresent

God. As Holy Spirit and "giver of breath," His expiration provides man's inspiration. This action perpetually renews the relationship between the Son and his creation, as does the "bread" of the Eucharist. The Second Epistle of St. Clement is echoed in line four. "We are to think, brethren, of Jesus Christ as of God, that he is the judge of the living and the dead" (2 Clem. 1). He limits all creation, establishes the "World's strand, sway of the sea," and the poet's physical bounds, those of "bones and veins," and "fastened flesh" (st. 1). However, that which is made and "almost unmade" will be remade; the experiences of both poet and nun, fraught with "dread," will testify to this. Hopkins recognizes the universal presence as having "touched [him] afresh," the "finger" of God reassures, and writes a divine signature in all of creation, for those who are prepared to "look" and "see," "feel" and "understand" it.

The terror which accompanied the poet's own resolution of vocation in 1868 is described in stanzas two and three. The images employed reflect various apostolic and patristic traditions; Aristotelian and Pauline sources are recalled in the image of the "midriff astrain with leaning" (st. 2). "Forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before, I press on towards the goal, to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3: 13-14). Sudden spiritual illumination, like that of St. Paul, may be marked by a sensation of rapid and powerless descent, "Hard down with a horror of height" (st. 2). The falling sensation is explained in Clement of Alexandria's writings. The surrender of self-will "marks the cast[ing] of ourselves into the greatness of Christ and thence...

into immensity through holiness" (Stromata 5. 11). From Aristotle's Metaphysics Hopkins appropriates the concept of a pitch of being in artifacts as well as in animate beings. Thus this universal forward motion towards completion marks Hopkins' own experience; the driving force of "the sweep and the hurl" is later used in description of the Deutschland's fateful departure (st. 13). The heart, "mother of being" within (st. 18), repository of faith and wisdom, overrides the terror of the senses. Heart calls to heart and the poet's being "whirl[s] out wings" and flees upward "to the heart of the Host" (st. 3).

Stanza two marks the first appearance in the ode of the interjection, "O at lightning and lashed rod" and "O Christ, O God." In his recent essay, "Sounding Alpha and Omega in Dante, Milton, and Hopkins," Joseph Finn Cotter explains the significance of Hopkins' use of interjection in his mythopoesis. The essayist begins by noting Hopkins' observations of the shape of chestnut leaves and their embodiment of a universal imprint. "They do not form part of that most regular of figures the circle, yet in their diminishing they shape out another figure... partly regular, though containing variety; I mean that of a Greek Omega" (Journals, 92). Cotter concludes that

this figure is the in-shape of inscape. This visual pattern Hopkins translates into phonetic experience, using the exclamation O to inscape the presence of Christ-Omega in nature. For Hopkins, such expressions of instress go directly to Christ-Omega as they rise from the Alpha of his love, heart speaking to heart.
(Cotter, 165-166)

It naturally follows then that Hopkins' use of "Ah" signifies recognition, and the beginning in which Christ and the Christian

Gnostic know their end in sacrifice, service, and love.

The first three stanzas of the ode illustrate the gnostic aspiration of identification with Christ. Stanza one enumerates the qualities associated with the Creator who generates, interacts with, and has complete mastery over his creation. In stanza 2 that mastery is depicted as intense and personal; the poet's awakening incorporates "lightning and lashed rod," "the sweep and the hurl," and "strain, horror, and stress". A sensation of loss of control dominates; Christ has predetermined the exact time and place where the poet's pitch of being will be elevated. The poet is enclosed by "walls," and besieged at the "altar." The events of that "hour and night" render his "heart hard at bay"; (st. 7) it is swept, "hurl[ed]" and "trod" / "Hard down." The poet's own "midriff astrain with leaning... laced with fire of stress" presages the same condition of entrapment and helplessness which the Deutschland experiences in stanza 14. The sense of panic increases; there is no escape. Caught between "the frown of his face" in front and the "hurtle of hell/Behind," the poet's heart knows that refuge lies in "the heart of the Host." The heart's homing instinct ("Carrier-witted") to seek peace ("dovewinged") results in a centering and a rising action, the elevation of pitch of being. The eternal, transforming fire of Heraclitus and the power of elevating grace are experienced in the poet's heart.

The gnostic who seeks identification with Christ must duplicate the Master's kenosis. This emptying of self replenishes the pleroma (the divine energy present in creation)

in a constant and ongoing fashion. Visually, this kenosis is depicted in an inverted Omega sign which graphically traces Christ's movements. Starting in the Godhead above, He descends into creation, is crucified, descends further into hell, and is ultimately resurrected. The descending and rising actions of these first three stanzas depict this inverted Omega symbol. The opening address to "God" the Father above expands to include the Son and Holy Spirit who interact with earthly creation. The death of the lower pitch of being which the poet experiences is emphasized by the falling action of stanza 2. The dilemma of stanza 3 marks the furthest point of the poet's descent into his own hell. The fleeing upward of the heart is concluded with the image of its "tower[ing] from the grace/ to the grace." In conjunction with the interjection to inscape Christ as Alpha and Omega, this symbolic depiction of Christ's kenosis is a pervasive device which appears throughout Hopkins' mythopoesis. As the poet descends and ascends, his identification with the Son is reinforced. Hopkins' rhyme scheme (ababcba) reinforces the Parmenidean circular nature of all being; it also establishes, in rhyme, the governing cycle of creation, that of Alpha to Omega and the return to Alpha.

The dynamic of acquiring gnosis is marked by alternating phases of straining and attainment. Stanzas 4 and 5 mark this attainment phase as the poet words his knowing apprehension of the Divine manifested in all nature. This phase constitutes the Augustinian form of spiritual experience; it is cumulative and experiential. The "walls" of stanza 2 which limited "pitch

of being" remain in the images of the hourglass and the well. These images are gentler and embody the replenishing and consolidating nature of the Augustinian awakening. The "sweep" and the "hurl" transform into "soft sift" and "drift." The poet's gnosis is now "steady," "to a poise," and like "a pane," clear as the walls of the hour glass, or the reflective surface of water in a well. The poet's faith is replenished and maintained by "a vein/ Of the gospel...a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift" (st. 4). The outgrowth of gnostic faith and knowledge is enacted here where the poet as *alter-Christus* words Christ's presence in creation; "he is under the world's splendour and wonder," in "lovely-asunder/ Starlight," in "thunder," and in "dappled-with-damson" sunsets (st.5). In his wording, the poet reveals his own cycle of gnosis. The energy and movement of these first four stanzas draw the reader into his own experience of gnosis. Ideally, our own faith, like that of the poet, will be renewed, strengthened and sustained.

Like his sources from the pre-Christian philosophers to Duns Scotus, Hopkins reiterates that Christ's Incarnation is an eternal event. He is the agent through whom original creation was generated and He continues to renew it perpetually. Thus his "stress" has been felt "from heaven" in the beginning and continues to be felt in the present; "it rides time like riding a river" (st. 6). The concept of a Christ whose purpose is love and creation and not simply redemption is essentially gnostic, "and few know this" (st. 6). Thus, "the faithful waver," or dispute it; "the faithless fable and miss" it altogether (st. 6).

To the gnostic, the "stars" and "storms" of creation deliver a powerful "stress" which originated in Christ's Galilean kenosis. It is a stress by which "guilt is hushed" and "hearts are flushed by and melt" (st. 6). It was in "his going in Galilee," His end implicit in His beginning, "Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey," that Christ revealed the perpetual creation that kenosis engenders.

Hopkins generates intensity in his images of the "driven Passion," the "frightful sweat," and the "swelling to be" (st. 7). The "discharge" of the Passion in stanza 7 presages the explosive release of life energies in stanza 8. The "heart, being hard at bay/Is out with it!" The poet incorporates his own struggle as alter-Christus to word this event "Oh,/We lash with the best or worst/Word last!" (st. 8) The interjection "Oh" signifies the poet's identification with Christ in their joint action of creation. Hopkins incorporates an image devised by St. Ignatius of Antioch in his Epistle to The Smyrnaeans. Ignatius depicts Christ as "a Fruit imparting life to us from His most blessed Passion...the Lord's flesh is a fruit hanging from the new tree of life" (Staniforth, 119). Hopkins' "lush-kept plush-capped sloe" is "burst" by a Roman lance (st. 8). Cotter has noted that the process of inserting the spear into the Sacred Heart to release its contents creates a "cleave," an open end to the Heart's circular shape and thus creates an image of Omega (292). The issuing of blood and water from the side of the crucified Christ is the "Gush" and "flush [of] the man" (st. 8). "The being...sour" marks physical death; "sweet" heralds the new life

in the energy which is released into the pleroma at the moment of physical death. Appropriately, Hopkins depicts the crucifixion in images of the birth process; here is a portrayal of labour with its attendant sweat and blood, and the forceful expulsion of the newborn. The blood and water, which emerge in the death/birth sequence at Calvary, are also the elements which serve in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. These elements create and renew Christians repeatedly "Brim, in a flash, full!" (st. 8). The events and the "hero of Calvary" stand at the centre of creation; whether consciously willing it or not, all being flows to this centre.

Hopkins celebrates the forces, "lightning and love... winter and warm," which bring one to apprehension of Christ's eternal presence (st. 9). The gnostic recipient of such strokes may be "dogged in den," and experience, like Christ, a "dark descending," a kenosis, in which self-will is surrendered. Stanza ten reinforces the images of Christ's mastery. The "fondler" who wrings the heart may choose to "forge [his] will" in man with "fire" and "anvil-ding," or master him as certainly as a spring thaw removes all vestiges of winter. Once again, Hopkins contrasts Pauline and Augustinian awakenings. Whichever the experience, mercy is evident in the new self which emerges as self-in-Christ. The force of the stroke is irrevocable, relentless, timeless, and masterful. Its single purpose is to foster adoration and draw being home to Being.

The stress-attainment cycle of gnosis is repeated in stanzas 6-10. The poet's contemplation of Christ's

manifestations ultimately focuses on the Galilean Incarnation. The ode's energies build as both poet and Christ strive to word the moment of death-rebirth when the Sacred Heart is lanced and empties its contents. The expulsion of physical life fills the pleroma "Brim, in a flash, full!" with Christic energy. The Christ depicted at the close of Part the First is presented in terms of contraries. He is "lightning and love," "winter and warm" (st. 9), and his presence is as vigorous and direct on a universal level as it was with the poet in stanzas 2 and 3. He will "wring" the "rebel," and "dog [him] in den," and work His will "with wrecking and storm" (st. 9). In stanza 5, He was "under the world's splendour," He is now that splendour.

The inverted Omega image of Christ's kenosis also appears in the poetry's sequence of movement from stanzas 6 to 10. Christic "stress" was first manifest in the Godhead in "heaven," and then in nature where he is the "stress" in "stars" and in "storms" (st. 6). His "going in Galilee" focuses on the earth-bound "warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey" (st. 7). His physical death was ensued by a further "dark descending" (st. 9). His Resurrection and resumption of mastery in the "three-numbered form" of God completes the image (st. 9). Inscaping Christ in this fashion Hopkins reveals the Son's kenotic purpose. The energy of the sequence of Christ's movements as he acts out His being draws the reader himself into gnosis.

Part the Second, stanza eleven, opens with a mixture of images which herald Christ's agent, death. It may appear in a

variety of forms; these include causes which may be historical (a "sword"), industrial ("the flange and the rail"), or natural ("flame, fang, or flood") (st. 11). Death's auditory portents are those of the "bugle" and "drum." Humanity tends, like flowers in a meadow, to remain oblivious to the inevitability of physical death. Our illusory belief in our own permanence is like a "dream" in which we forget that we are not "rooted in earth", but are, simply, "Dust" (st. 11). Employing a transferred epithet, Hopkins reminds us that all must eventually succumb to the "sour scythe[']s] cringe," and be mown under by the "blear share"(st. 11). The image of the scythe presages the harvest of souls to come; one notes that even its shape strains forward to completion of its task. This opening stanza of Part the Second stands in marked contrast to the ode's first stanza. Here, the concluding images are of descent and death. Mankind's focus, governed by oblivion, does not perceive Christ's universal presence in either nature or in artifact. Hopkins will contrast these two perspectives, oblivion and gnosis, throughout his unfolding of the narrative.

Stanza 12 contrasts man's perspective with the divine one. The first four lines are clipped, mechanistic, and echo the driving force of the ship as it moves out to sea. Facts are given about the Deutschland's port and time of departure, its destination, and passenger list. These stand in contrast to the image of the Father who hovers over "the dark side of the bay and will "reeve" the victims in under his wing. The poet addresses God; his "O Father" signifies Omega, inscape of death

and rebirth. However, the two hundred on board the Deutschland are, like the meadow flowers in the preceding stanza, oblivious to the imminent death of a quarter of their number.

Once again, the clipped, energetic lines 1-4 of stanza thirteen echo the pounding of the ship's engines as she gathers speed. The Deutschland's pitch of being is governed as surely as the poet's was in stanza two: "Into the snows she sweeps,/ Hurling the haven behind" (st. 13). The human perspective perceives "unkind air," a "flint-flake sea," and a wind which blows from a "cursed quarter" (st. 13). The configurations of "whirlwind-swivelled" snow and the spinning action of the storm recall Parmenides' concentric spheres, which funnel down to "the vortex of isness that foredraws or instresses all things" (Cotter, 19). Christ is that vortex of all being; the storm is simply his agent. The driving force of creation is love and for those who "read" nature's conditions, the swirling motion forecasts not only "widow-making, unchilding, and unfathering" but a drawing home to resurrection.

Stanza fourteen recalls the hourglass imagery of stanza four. The Deutschland does not founder because she strikes a reef or a rock, but because she is drawn to ground by "the combs of a smother of sand." Like the poet who was "at the wall/ Fast" (st. 4), the ship, despite technology ("canvas and compass, the whorl and the wheel"), is helpless before the inexorable forces of nature. Hope is personified in stanza fifteen and recalls St. Paul's "faith, hope, and love" in I Corinthians 13. In this epistle, hope is the second phase of gnosis, that of knowledge.

Those on board are unknowing and unable to "read" the situation; "tears" and "cares" and "mourning" have replaced whatever faith or hope might have previously existed. As the tide rises in the evening, many victims take to the rigging but these climb to their "shrouds."

Stanza sixteen depicts the grisly fate of one sailor who had attempted rescue of those below by securing himself to the rigging with a rope. He is reminiscent of the poet in stanza four who is also "roped." However, the would-be rescuer's rope is not the sustaining "vein/ Of the gospel" nor Christ's "pressure," principle" or "gift" (st 4). The best intention is futile if it runs counter to divine forces and their purpose. The sailor is dashed against the bulwark, "For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew" (st. 16). His corpse swings "to and fro" like some grisly pendulum amidst the "burl of the fountains of air" (st. 16). The forces of nature, the cold and the raging sea, combine with the heaving of the ship and the darkness to foster a cacophony of "wailing" and "crying" (st. 17). The confusion is finally broken by "a lioness," "a prophetess" who "towered in the tumult" (st. 17).

As the tall nun "towered" and "told," the poet removes the reader from the chaos of the shipwreck in order to examine the reaction the nun's actions have invoked in him. His opening "Ah" is a signifier of Alpha, when he is "touched" in his "bower of bone"--the human head and shoulders form an image of Omega (st. 18). Clearly the nun's actions have a significance whose end the poet knows by its beginning. The "exquisite smart"

(st. 18) recalls Origen.

If, then, a man can so extend his thinking as to ponder and consider the beauty and the grace of all things that have been created in the Word, the very charm of them will so smite, the grandeur of their brightness will so pierce him--that he will suffer from the Word a saving wound and will be kindled with the blessed fire of His love.

(Canticle of Canticles, preface)

Sensing the nature of what was to come generates a force within the poet's heart which will "make words break from [him]." The "melting" action of instress, mentioned previously in stanza 10, is revealed by his "tears" (st. 18). The "virginal tongue" incites within Hopkins "a madrigal start," a "revel" and "glee." In his Protrepticus Clement of Alexandria depicts Christ as song.

Behold the might of the new song: It has made men out of stones, men out of beasts. Those, moreover, that were as dead, not being partakers of the true life, have come to life again, simply by becoming listeners to this song. It also composed the universe into melodious order, and tuned the discord of the elements to harmonious arrangement, so that the whole world might become harmony. (Protrepticus, 1)

The poet thus intuits what the nun perceives, and rejoices in their shared ability to "read the unshapeable shock night" (st 29). Hopkins rejoices in "the good [he has] there"; with his "wording" he too becomes part of the gnostic process which is about to unfold. Like Christ's presence which "rides time" (st. 6), what the nun calls out over the melee of the disaster overrides "the storm's brawling" (st 19). One is left with the intimation, at the close of stanza 19, that her "one fetch" must inevitably result in an event of considerable and eternal magnitude.

Stanzas twenty and twenty-one provide background about

the five Franciscan nuns. Their native country, Germany, is "double a desperate name" due to the turning out of the sisters by Bismarck's Falk Laws, and to its earlier fostering of the Reformation through Martin Luther. Hopkins employs the interjection "O" in address to both Germany and to a world "wide of its good"; both are unknowing agents of Christ (st. 20). Ironically, Eisleben in Saxony was the birthplace of both Saint Gertrude and Luther. The poet also notes that Cain and Abel had been nurtured by the same mother. The nuns had been "banned by the land of their birth"; forces of nature like the Rhine, which "refused" them, and the "Thames [which] would ruin them," join with human indifference to effect their earthly end (st. 21). However, as "surf, snow, river and earth/ Gnashed" below, above the storm Christ, "martyr-master" and "Orion of light," steadies the souls who are about to be harvested from the shipwreck (st. 21). "Storm flakes" are thus evidence of the Word; in His sight, they are "scroll-leaved flowers" whose scripture, written in "lily showers," recalls both the martyr Gertrude and the resurrection (st. 21).

Hopkins next dwells upon the significance of the number five, the stigma, and red, the colour of martyrdom. Creation is fraught with significance, if one can but read it. There are five Franciscan nuns here, and Christ's man-made wounds number five. Martyrs reiterate the master in their self-sacrifice; they too are "score(d)...in scarlet," "Before-time-taken," and "dearest prized and priced" (st. 22). The "stigma" of the nuns' sacrifice is also "of man's make"; the five sisters comprise a

"cinquefoil," a type of rose, the symbol of martyrs. Through Christ's example, they too become a Paschal Lamb, branded for sacrifice, and are marked by their Shepherd as His own. The white purity of the lily in stanza twenty-one becomes the "ruddying of the rose-flake"; they have achieved the ultimate identification with Christ and have been deemed suitable for sacrifice.

St. Francis, the founder of the nuns' order, had been "Drawn to the Life that died" in his close identification of self with Christ's Passion and crucifixion. His faith was so intense that he was visited by the Master himself. Milward notes that "Christ appeared to St. Francis on Mt. Alvernia in the form of a fiery seraph, and the stigmata of the saint were the seal or proof of this appearance" (Milward, 114). In the impress of the stigmata, St. Francis is the crucified Christ's "lovescape" (st. 23). The five nuns, who had joined hands in their terror, form, like the impress of the saint, a "cipher" of martyrdom. Images of autumn and a harvest emerge, and what were spring "lily-showers" (st. 21), then summer roses, now become "fall-gold mercies" (st. 23). The immediacy of Christ's presence, reminiscent of stanza three's "frown of his face/ Before me," is reiterated in "to breathe in his all-fire glances" (st 23).

Hopkins once again removes the reader from the frenzy of the shipwreck to the peace of the seminary at St. Beuno's. He contrasts the relative condition of his sisters, "prey of the gales," with his own, "on a pastoral forehead of Wales" (st. 24). The sensation of the nuns' entrapment, the

blackness of the night, and the forces of terror finally combine, as they had in the poet's own experience (st. 3-4), to end the hunt initiated by the "Orion of light" (st. 21). The tall nun calls: "O Christ, Christ, come quickly" (st. 24). "Wild-worst" is "christened...Best" and Christ-Omega is heralded. Her calling upon the Master is not so much a cry for deliverance from her physical terror as it is a bearing of witness to Christ's eternal presence (st. 24).

In stanza twenty-five, Hopkins invokes the expiration of the Holy Spirit to provide his inspiration for wording. This Presence is an essential element if the significance of the "great sacrifice" is to be comprehended by man.

I shall shew why Christ as a Paraclete would not do alone, why it was better for him to go and another Paraclete to come, why Christ's struggle with the world taken by itself looked like a failure when the Holy Ghost's struggling with the world is a success.
(Sermons, 70)

What long-term development of gnosis has bequeathed to both poet and nun must now be revealed. Approximating the same careful process of apprehension, consideration, and synthesis that the gnostic process demands, the poet now presents and rejects various possible motives for the nun's cry. True gnosis involves both the heart and the mind. Thus, it is not simply her desire to imitate Christ's sacrifice which prompts her outcry. Presented with similar conditions of imminent drowning, the disciples were too fearful to be concerned with much else besides survival. The poet next discounts the motive of the promised heavenly reward, "the crown," awarded for the heroic behaviour of the nun prior to death. Hopkins breaks off considerations

to provide a series of images which draw the reader closer to the nun's real motive and role in the drama.

The poet depicts the short-sightedness of the human perspective by comparing it to fog which obscures our vision. The "down-dugged ground-hugged grey" ultimately lifts, "hovers off," and the "jay-blue heavens" appear (st. 26). Our perspective is thus elevated, then universalized; we are lifted upward and beyond into a "Blue-beating" and "hoary-glow height" (st. 26). In the night sky, in the "belled-fire" of the stars is the image of Omega. This cosmic region, high above the scene of the wreck is the domain of the "Orion of Light" (st. 21) and the promise of treasure "never eyesight got," more than could ever be anticipated, awaits those graced. In addition, the accumulation of Marian images, the "jay-blue heavens," "pied and peeled May," and the "Blue-beating" height presage the link which will later be evident between the tall nun and the Mother of Christ.

It would seem that the nun has been undergoing preparation for her moment over a much longer period than that of the storm. Neither the immediate "danger" nor the "electrical horror" of this chaos is responsible for the nun's utterance. Her "sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart" has been wrung, and brought to bay by "time's tasking" (st. 27). The solitude of the Passion's appeal is clearly impossible here. The "Burden" which her mind bears is that of her gnosis which must be worded in love and service. "Her mind's/ Burden," the "wind's burly" and the "beat of endragoned seas" act in concert to establish a rhythmic progression which

marks the imminent rebirth of the resurrected Christ (st. 27).

The urgency of the broken phrases of stanza twenty-eight indicates the emotion and anticipation the poet feels for what is about to emerge. The blindness of the agnostic perspective sees only imminent death; St. Ignatius of Antioch offers the gnostic perception. "The pangs of birth are upon me. Him I seek who died for us; Him I desire who rose again for our sake" (Epistle to the Romans: 6). The rhythmic sensations grow in speed and intensity, and are, all at once, reminiscent of the terror of the poet's experience in stanzas three and four, the crucifixion depicted in stanza eight, the birth process, and the surging, cresting, and breaking action of the sea.

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! the Master,
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:

Encapsulated in this stanza is the central mystery of Christian gnosis; the resurrection happens in the flesh whenever there is elevation of pitch of being. Christ's essence is not that of the physical body crucified at Golgotha. His very self, *Ipse*, is eternal; it is this living Christ which the nun apprehends and words. The utterance of the Word by nun and poet renders them both alter-Christus whose business is not with death but creation. It remains only to "despatch and have done with" the disaster and doom; these are of no more importance now than were the physical accoutrements of Golgotha.

Stanza twenty-nine affirms the nun's transfigured being which has emerged from the "unshapeable shock night." Its

opening "Ah!" signifies the Alpha of new creation, for that is what the nun's cry has fostered. Her gnosis, accomplished through "a heart right" and a "single eye," allows her true identification with Christ, in service, sacrifice, and in wording. Cotter explains the nature of the nun's transformation.

Just as Jesus creates and redeems, so the sister becomes the maker and savior, the 'AfterChrist', of that stormy night. Without her, by implication, the electrifying presence of the God-Man would not have been felt, no opening for his stress would have been found, and the doomed...would have perished in 'unchrist'. (Cotter, 149)

The poet is also transformed by his wording of the nun's intuition of Christ. His own elevation of pitch of being in the dark night at the altar at Manresa House had allowed him to perceive Christ as the "fruit" of the "new tree of life"; however, the second part of St. Ignatius of Antioch's vision told of Christ's risen body as "a beacon, an eternal beam" signalling all men (Epistle to the Smyrnaeans, 72). In her wording, the nun joins Simon Peter who had also worded his "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God" (Sermons, 254). She is then doubly like her Master, "fruit [of gnosis] on the new tree of life" and, by her example, "a blown beacon of light" (st. 29).

Hopkins notes the significance of the maritime disaster's date; it occurs on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Both Mary and the tall nun undergo similar experiences of conception, gestation, and birthing of the Word. Thus creation is an eternal process, and all who conceive via the intercession of the Holy

Spirit give birth to Christ. Stanza thirty-one addresses the issue of the "remaining, unconfessed" souls on board the sinking ship. However, touched by the finger and the hand of God, the nun who has obeyed the stress is "a bell" rung, to "Startle the poor sheep back" (st. 31). Once again, one notes the inscape of Omega, signifier of endings and of new life. What had appeared as loss, the "shipwreck" and "tempest," is in reality "a harvest" (st. 31).

In images reminiscent of the first and fourth stanzas of Part the First, stanza thirty-two reveals a Christ who, as both creator and creation, is timeless. He called back the "Yore-flood" of Noah's time and effected "the recurb and the recovery of the gulf's sides" (st. 32). The "motionable mind" of the Creator is "stanching" as well as "quenching", and the governing force of creation is as solid as "granite," the "Ground of [our] being." At times, the God-Man, as Father, remains "throned behind/ Death" (st. 32). He is aware of the affairs of creation, but invisible. At other times, the God-Man, as Son, interacts with humanity and demonstrates his purpose of service and sacrifice. It is the Son who is at one with His creation, and who "bodes" there, and "abides" (st. 32). Cotter notes that in this stanza "Hopkins makes his confession of faith and achieves the perfection of gnosis in acknowledging--that is, he owns the knowledge of--the man Jesus as God, I AM" (Cotter, 154).

Stanza thirty-three focuses on Christ as redeemer; He "outrides/ the all of water" and is a new "ark." The body

of Christ thus assumes the dimensions of a haven from the flood; as well, His mystical body is a new symbol of the covenant made between deity and creation. The ultimate point of His kenotic descent is "Lower than death and the dark," and his promise of redemption holds for those "pent in prison," for "last-breath penitent spirits," and even for those "past-prayer" (st. 33). In the depths of the Passion, the will of Father and Son become one, and for "the listener" and "the lingerer" there is promise of knowledge of Him and of ultimate redemption.

With the purifying fire of the Pentecost, the new life in the God-Man is born. In the descent from heaven, in the Word-Made-Flesh, and in the dwelling among men, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in the Trinity. This time, Christ's coming will not be marked by the terror of the sudden Pauline awakening with its "dooms-day dazzle" and "hard-hurled lightning" (st. 34). His coming will be more Augustinian and "kind." The baptism by water had been cataclysmic for the victims of the Deutschland. Hopkins' England, enlightened by understanding of the shipwreck's events, will experience only the gentle baptism of a sudden, "released shower."

A Bride of Christ, rejected by her homeland, has been martyred on English shores. The poet requests her prayers for his countrymen from "the heaven-haven of the reward" (st. 35). His desire for England is awareness, remembrance and renewal. Christ must return as "King," arise, "be a dayspring to the dimness," and a "crimson-cressed" sunrise (st. 35). The inexorable rhythm of the ocean waves and of "his reign"

gathers force and rises in the sonorous tones of a series of epinoia: "Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest" (st. 35). The collection of possessives which concludes the ode suggests the action of a breaker as it floods the shore; repeated sibilant "s" sounds imitate the hissing advance of wave upon sand. There is, moreover, a creation of unity which emerges as the poet announces the tripartite sequence of the Christian gnostic process of faith, knowledge and service. It is the "heart's charity's hearth's fire," the "thoughts' chivalry's throng's," and the wording of the "Lord" which will foster spiritual awakening and conversion for the poet's homeland. Thus, "The Wreck of the Deutschland" becomes its hope.

Cotter's charge of the poem's failure to "explode" is partially valid. The dynamics of the falling and subsequent rising action of the inverted Omega pattern is apparent in Part the First. The confinement of the ten stanzas promotes a vigorous compression of the gnostic process. However, in the twenty-five stanzas of Part the Second, the energies of this particular inscape of Christ tend to dissipate. Parmenidean cyclic patterns continue in the rhyme scheme of each stanza, as well as in the opening and closing stanzas eleven and thirty-five. Hopkins does manage to generate a sufficient building of intensity so that stanza 28 works effectively; he does so by punctuating the narrative portions with lyric interjections from St. Beuno's (stanzas 18 and 24). One critic has noted some "patches of flatness" (Mariani, 72), and Cotter cites length as a problem (146). Viewing Hopkins' ode in terms of the drama, one notes

that a dynamic triangle of elements (Christ, poet, and nature) forms the basis of interaction for Part the First. However, in Part the Second, Hopkins, in an effort to universalize spiritual awakening, adds a fourth and fifth element--the nun and the others on board as representatives of humanity in general. The focus is diffused as a result, and the effect rendered slightly less concentrated, less vigorous. However, this difficulty does not detract from the ode's overall magnificence. Within "The Wreck of the Deutschland," Hopkins himself noted "grubs in [the] amber," but its glow remains golden, nevertheless.

Chapter Two

"Consider the Lilies of the Field"--Poems of the Ministry

He meant the world to give him praise, reverence, and service; to give him glory. It is like a garden, a field he sows: what should it bear him? praise, reverence, and service; it should yield him glory. It is an estate he farms: what should it bring him in? Praise, reverence, and service; it should repay him glory...It is a bird he teaches to sing, a pipe, a harp he plays on: what should it sing to him?...It is a book he has written, of the riches of his knowledge, teaching endless truths, full lessons of wisdom, a poem of beauty: what is it about? His praise, the reverence due to him, the way to serve him; it tells him of his glory.

(Sermons, 238-239)

As Christ preached of the lessons to be gleaned from sparrows, mustard seeds, and the lilies of the field, so Hopkins was to turn next in his poetry to a similar revelation of the relationship between the Creator and his creation. After "The Wreck of the Deutschland," completed in 1876, Hopkins wrote little until the following year. During 1877, in a burst of religious and poetic inspiration, Hopkins completed ten nature sonnets. Creation plays an eminent role in the development of Christian gnosis. In contemplation of its "deal[ing] out that being indoors each one dwells" ("As Kingfishers Catch Fire"), one comes to an intuitive knowledge of the Creator's being. Thus, the observer apprehends the "mystery"; it is Christ who "is under the world's splendour and wonder" ("The Wreck of the Deutschland" 5, 6). There is a celebration of distinct

selfness, as well as a unity which evolves as "Being draws home to Being" (Journals, 128), and each element strains toward the Christic centre of creation. This unity is reflected in repeated images of the Parmenidean circle, as well as in the cyclic pattern of each sonnet as a whole. A pervasive sense of motion is apparent; descent and ascent patterns reflect the dynamics of Christ's inscape of the "great sacrifice." Visual images and interjections reinforce the presence of Christ as Alpha and Omega. Thus, all creation assumes the form of animate scripture. If one knows how to "read" it, then all being is an inscape of the "Living Word," and participates in a universal emulation of Christ.

"God's Grandeur," written in the rural setting of St. Beuno's in Wales, depicts the detrimental effects of man's oblivion to God's presence in the world. Limited by a material vision only, man mars creation and enslaves himself. Hopkins also reminds us not only of God's grandeur, but also, more importantly, of the prevailing power of the divine force in nature. Christic energy refreshes creation daily, while the sunrise renews the promise of the resurrection. At times, this power is electrical and "charged," and may generate a sudden, Pauline spiritual awakening. Hopkins' choice of "foil" to convey an image of lightning is particularly arresting:

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

(Letters I, 169)

Sheet lightning illuminates the entire vista, while forked lightning suggests an image of Christ as a centre from which all energies emanate. An experiential, gradual instress, like that experienced by Augustine, is like the "ooze" of oil "crushed" from olives. Cumulative, rather than sudden, it is none the less revelatory. This permeation of creation with "greatness" is the omnipresence of Christ; all nature shares the quality of the "Christus"; it too is anointed with oil. God's presence is seen in flames which purify, but do not consume; the flames generated by man "sear" creation's surface. The unenlightened, those who "now not reck his rod," anoint the earth in their own fashion. "Trade" and "toil" have "bleared," "smeared" and "smudge[d]" natural vistas; "generations" of those, who, mechanistically, "have trod" the "soil...bare," remain oblivious to their march over hallowed ground. Unlike Moses in Exodus 3:5, they do not remove their shoes but remain "shod."

As opposed to man's mercenary, commercial and industrial activities, creation "is never spent." Like the well in stanza four of "The Wreck of the Deutschland," nature is sustained from "a vein of the gospel...Christ's gift"; it is this "principle" which perpetuates "the dearest freshness deep down things." The "lights off the black West" appear to be the "last" and the interjection, "Oh," in line thirteen, signifies Omega, the descent of Christ after crucifixion. From apparent endings in darkness, or death, emerges new life. "Over the bent world," the Holy Ghost, reminiscent of the Pentecostal dove (McChesney, 55), "broods with warm breast." As noted in Chapter One,

Hopkins saw the Paraclete as the form of God which would render Christ's sacrifice a victory, and it does so here. The sight of "bright wings," the sun's rays, elicits the poet's "ah"; it is a recognition of Christ's presence as Alpha. In a sermon delivered at Bedford Leigh, Hopkins asked of his congregation: "What is the sun that makes that day?--It is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ. In him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shone in the darkness and the darkness did not take it in" (Sermons, 40). Thus, daily, Christ's dominion over darkness is reiterated; in the rising of the "sun" is a recurring inscape of rebirth, for those who are able to "read" it.

"God's Grandeur" contains a variety of circle images; these include the world, the olive, the sun, and the world-nest, suggested by the brooding image of the Holy Ghost. Similar in shape, yet diverse in their individual natures, all these images reinforce the nature of Parmenidean Being. Selfness is present, but so is the pervasive inscape of Christ. In addition, the sonnet itself presents a cyclic pattern. Light is the image which begins and ends the poem; the lightning which initially "flame[s] out" becomes, finally, the brilliant dawn with which the sestet concludes. One of the church fathers, Tertullian, refers to Ephesians 1: 9-10, and explains the significance of the circle in the following analogy.

So, too, the two letters of Greece, the first and the last, the Lord assumes to Himself, as figures of the beginning and end which concur in Himself: so that, just as Alpha rolls on till it reaches Omega, and again Omega rolls back till it reaches Alpha, in the same way He might show that in Himself is both the downward course of the beginning on

to the end, and the backward course of the end up to the beginning; so that every economy ending in Him through whom it began--through the Word of God, that is who was made flesh,--may have an end correspondent to its beginning. And so truly in Christ are all things recalled to 'the beginning'. (De Monogamia. 5)

The counterpoint to circular motion discerned in "God's Grandeur" is that of Tertullian's descent and rising. Our initial perspective is that of a lightning-filled sky, followed by a falling action to "bare soil," then, below ground level to "deep down." From this depth, one's point of view is raised up again to the "brown brink eastward," from whence springs the light of the "sun." The trajectory of descent and ascent mirrors Christ's own "great sacrifice"; visually, it is inscaped by an inverted Omega sign. Hopkins' patterns of circles, the descending and ascending motion within the sonnet, and the images and signifiers of Alpha and Omega reveal the mystery of Christ "under the world's splendour and wonder." If our "reading" has followed the images and the motions of Hopkins' "wording," then a development of our own gnosis has begun.

This same pattern of descent and ascent is discernible in Hopkins' "The Starlight Night." However, this time, knowledge of Christ does not simply "dawn" upon the reader; a more active participation is demanded. Our attention is directed heavenward initially; one must "Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!" Images of scattered light predominate in the octave. Hopkins had used similar imagery in his "Notes on the History of Greek Philosophy" in 1868.

The figure shewing how the Idea can be one though it exists in many is that of the sun in broken water, where the sun's face being once crossed by the ripples each one carries an image down with it as

its own sun; and these images are always mounting
 the ripples and trying to fall back into one again.
 (Manuscripts, 12.1)

The "Fire-folk," with their "bright boroughs" and their "circle citadels," are mythologic formulations of the stars. These fragmented, celestial prisms merely reflect Christ's light. In line three, the perspective drops abruptly to "dim woods" and "diamond delves," the realm of elves and earthly myth. Images then shift from the mythical to the natural. McChesney notes that two of Hopkins' journal entries (150 and 201) suggest the images of pre-dawn light as it creates "quickness," light-reflecting drops of dew among short tufts of grass. The wind sets "whitebeam" and "airy abeles" quivering, and the undersides of the leaves catch, and reflect a measure of that same light seen in stars, fire, diamonds, and translucent dew. Doves, set into sudden flight in a farmyard, reveal their version of the Light, as they become "flake-doves." All these diverse aspects of creation reflect the presence of Christ; the "Ah" signifier in the final line of the octave suggests that these "selvings" provide points from which man can begin to know Him. Christ's "great sacrifice" was the "purchase" price for all this beauty in creation; we too must make a "purchase" to gain knowledge of Him, the "prize."

The sestet describes those devices by which we can effect this purchase. "Prayer, patience, alms and vows" of chastity, poverty, and obedience are required. One's reward lies in the gold of perceiving His presence in creation. Blooms, a "May-mess...on orchard boughs," and pussy willows, with their "mealed-

with-yellow shallows," reveal the plenitude of creation's currency; this wealth accrues in the celebration of a May feast (Mary's month), and in the benefits resulting from Lenten fasting (March-bloom). Cotter notes that the "'bright boroughs' of the octave become the 'barn' [of the sestet], and the fire-folk are Christ and his saints" (173). Thus, Christology subsumes mythology. Christ's presence is implicit in the "fire-folk"; this is signified by the "O" which opens the second line of the sonnet. In similar fashion, the "circle-citadels" become the "piece-bright paling." Since both citadel and paling are enclosures, the grain, or "shocks," Christ, Mary, and the saints, are "shut," "withindoors," and are not directly accessible. All of the features of creation depicted by the poet are merely external husks of the divine force; in order to know the Word fully, the means cited by the poet must be expended.

"The Starlight Night" depicts the same motion of inscape as that of "God's Grandeur." One's observations are directed from the heavens to the earth below, and, according to Cotter and McChesney, "This piece-bright paling," the heavens, are the final point of view established by the poet. Hopkins as poet-magus thus "weds" the dimensions of "earth (matter) to heaven (spirit)" (Churton, 115). In the process of having our observation directed, we trace the path of kenosis. The image of the Parmenidean circle is equally important in "The Starlight Night". If one construes "paling" as an encompassing boundary or fence, then those who do not make the necessary expenditures are left on the outside of the "pale." One

perceives, then, only the scattered husks or exterior manifestations of Christ; the harvest or grain within cannot be fully gleaned. Mariani notes an alphabetic system of paired consonants in "The Starlight Night" which depicts this scattered, partial perception of Christ.

The assimilative pairing is not unbroken, and its fragmentary nature is probably indicative of the fragmentary nature of God's evidences in the world about us...the pattern is there in 'bright boroughs', 'circle citadels', 'diamond-delves'[and] 'elves-eyes' [fire-folk, airy abeles, wind-beat whitebeam]. Everything in nature, for all its quaint distinctiveness, forms part of a larger pattern. (Mariani, 100)

It is only when one will "buy" or "bid" in Christ's currency that the "purchase" or "prize" can be obtained; then, "Being draws home to Being" and gnosis is achieved (Journals, 128). The true splendour of creation's source can only be partially perceived in mythic, or in scattered earthly facsimiles.

The occasion of morning and the observation of a windhover in flight precipitate yet another instressing of Christ in the natural world. "The Windhover," "morning's minion," heir or "dauphin" to the "kingdom of daylight" encompasses the circular energies of being in his flight. Since this flight is "upon the rein of a wimpling wing," a governing force must be present. Cotter notes that the imagery of "The Windhover" is "reminiscent of the opening lines of Clement of Alexandria's 'Hymn to Christ the Savior' at the conclusion of Clement's Paedagogus.

Bridle of colts untamed,
Over our wills presiding;
Wings of unwandering birds,
Our flight securely guiding.
Rudder of youth unbending,
Firm against adverse shock;
Shepherd, with wisdom tending
Lambs of the royal flock. (Paedagogus 3. 12)

Thus, the two images of the falconer and the chevalier are employed in an image of Christ's ordering of the windhover's flight. The energy of the falcon in flight is described in terms of the same "sweep" and "hurl" as Hopkins had used previously in "The Wreck of the Deutschland". Instress to the poet's heart (2, 6) and the ship's departure (13, 1-2) are marked by the same forces inherent in the falcon's flight. All three sweep outward on the trajectory of their self-being: "buckle" at the furthest point of outward flight, then the trajectory arcs homeward to the centre of all being, Christ. Apprehension of the governing force behind creation's inscapes causes the poet's "heart" to be "stirred" by the "mastery" of the same "Thing" which the nun had perceived at the height of the storm.

The "Brute beauty and valour and act" of the bird, its sacrifice of selfness of "air, pride, plume," mirrors the kenosis or emptying of self achieved by the Master when He "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Christic energy is signified in the falcon's buckling by the centrally positioned, "oh," in the first line of the sestet. It is in the falcon's natural imitation of Christ that "the fire breaks from [him]." This is creation's replica of the Pentecostal flame; the original was "a billion/Times told lovelier." The windhover "in his riding" is a lesser image of the Word who "rides time like riding a river" ("The Wreck of the Deutschland," 6). Christ is indeed the Master Chevalier who tames and rides all of His creation. Once again, Christ's presence is signified by the use of the poet's "O" in line eleven.

An accompanying prose piece to Clement of Alexandria's "Hymn to Christ the Saviour" provides the images for the final tercet: "But man is transformed by the Word, by whom wild beasts are tamed, and fishes are caught and birds drawn down...He both manages the state and tills the ground; commands and helps and creates the universe" (Paedagogus, 3. 12). In the plough's turning of the soil lies the reflection of Christ's light; "plough down sillion/ Shine[s]." The recognition of His presence in "ah [Alpha] my dear," begins in the fall of "blue-bleak embers." These, like the Son at Calvary, "Fall," "gall themselves" and "gash," and spill the contents of their hearts in a blaze of royal "gold-vermilion." Stanza eight of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" is recalled, and St. Ignatius' image of Christ as a fruit on the tree of life; from the "gash" issues forth a "gush" of gold, the purchase price of salvation, and vermilion, the colour of kingship.

Circle imagery is found in the flight of the falcon: "The 'hurl and gliding/Rebuffed the big wind' accurately sums up the two maneuvers of the bird's flight, the two arcs--with and against the wind--that compose its circling pattern" (Cotter, 179). The light imagery of "The Windhover" reflects the cycle of Christ's kenosis. The sunlight of the morning eventually becomes the "blue-bleak" embers of dying firelight. Then, in imitation of Christ's inscape of crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, the embers burst into flame. The colours of the windhover's breast in the sunlight are recreated in the final "gold-vermilion" of the sestet. Once again, both reader and poet, following the

sequence of movement in "The Windhover," emulate the course of Christ's kenosis. The initial perspective is of the heavens at dawn. Descent follows, in the bird's dive, and in the shift in focus to ploughed fields, and the falling action of the embers. Embers, ploughed soil, and windhover "Deal out that being indoors each one dwells," the Christic light and fire which constitute the centre of all being ("As Kingfishers Catch Fire"). The medieval underthought in "dauphin," "minion," "valour," "plume," "chevalier," and "kingdom" establish the theme of the "great chain of being." The sonnet's dedication heralds Christ as "our Lord," supreme being in all of creation's hierarchy or kingdom.

Of all the 1877 sonnets, "Hurrahing in Harvest" presents Hopkins' most graphic depictions of the inscape of Alpha and Omega in nature. What the eye has discerned draws the heart of the poet into a grateful, exhilarating apprehension of the Word. Acquisition of gnosis is depicted in images of harvesting, and the final instress results in a physical leap or "hurl" heavenward. In a parallel of Christ's Alpha-Omega omniscience, the beginning of the poem speaks of endings. The immediacy of Christ's inscape is captured in the repetition of "now." The "stooks," stacked conically to dry in the fields, create a visual Alpha. They serve as a beginning point for gnosis, as the eye is drawn "around" and "up above." The alliteration of "wind-walks," "silk-sack," "wilder, wilful-wavier," "moulded," and "melted" provide a dynamic blending of heaven and earth; this is the action of the poet-magus of the Hermetic tradition. The

animation of the clouds' "behaviour," the "wind-walks," and "Meal-drift" which is "moulded" suggests a will and intent in nature's agents to unite the two dimensions. As the "wind-walks," so, too, does the poet, and his actions--and consequently those of the reader--result in movements which inscape Christ's kenosis. "Heart" and "eyes" "lift up, lift up" to the heavens, then, "Down." This reversal in direction, "Down all that glory in the heavens," also recalls Heraclitus' Cosmic Fragments. "To the Logos...all things are one..the All is divisible and indivisible... there is a connexion working in both directions as in the bow and the lyre. And the up and the down is one and the same thing; The way up and down is one and the same" (Fragments 51 and 60). These seemingly opposing contraries achieve resolution when one remembers that in Christ's beginning was his ending. His descent and ascent in perpetual selving is outside the temporal and spatial limits which humanity imposes. Christ's being and inscape is circular, and the "eyes" and "heart" of the poet harvest "rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies."

The image of "azurous hung hills," when visualized, presents the sky framed on either side by raised portions of earth, a visual image of inverted Omega. The resulting horseshoe shape is reiterated in the image of the "stallion stalwart." The contraries of "stalwart" and "sweet" mirror the amplitude of the love of Christ perceived by the poet. In the sestet, Hopkins describes the elements of discerning inscape and acquiring gnosis. "These things, these things were here and but the beholder/ Wanting; which two when once they meet/ The

heart rears wings...." The eye, mind, and heart are all essential for a perceptive "reading" of His presence in creation; when the eye and mind mark His inscape, the instress to the heart of the beholder causes it to "rear wings," to grow "bold and bolder." St. Paul's words which describe the aspiration for gnosis of Christ are depicted in the sonnet's last two lines. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3: 13-14). The "mark" discerned is Christ and the poet's heart answers to Christ's heart. In a leap of elation the poet "half hurls earth for him off under his feet." From the apprehension of the Alpha sign in the stooks of the octave to the "O" of Omega captured in the final "hurl[ing]" of self to the centre of all being, the Christ principle has been harvested and "glean[ed]" by the poet.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter into it. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

(Mark 10: 15-16)

In the autumn of 1877, Hopkins' superiors at St. Beuno's determined that he would not be promoted to a fourth year of theological studies. Christopher Devlin, S.J., notes that the historian at University College had recorded

Guardedly but not altogether accurately... 'the strains of controversy' which had marred his earlier years... as a theologian his undoubted brilliance was dimmed by a somewhat obstinate love of Scotist doctrine, in which he traced the influence of Platonist philosophy. His idiosyncrasy got him into difficulties with his Jesuit preceptors who followed Aquinas and Aristotle. (Sermons, xiii)

Hopkins pursued his own studies of gnostic development, as well as the theological curriculum prescribed by his society. Devlin provides evidence of some degree of mutual exclusivity in the two disciplines. He notes "an adverse reference to our scholastics" in Hopkins' comments on the Spiritual Exercises (Sermons, xiii). Of the "Meditation on Hell" and of the pain experienced by the disembodied, Hopkins writes of the essential role played by the imagination.

And as it is by the imagination that we are to realize these things so I suppose it to be by the imagination that the lost suffer them and that as intensely as by the senses or it may be more so. This simple explanation will never strike our scholastics, because they do not see that there is an intellectual imagination.

(Sermons, 136)

Moreover, of the Tracts of Suarez, which comprised much of the poet's studies at St. Beuno's, Hopkins had written: "Suarez is our most famous theologian: he is a man of vast volume of mind, but without originality or brilliancy; he treats everything satisfactorily, but you never remember a phrase of his, the manner is nothing" (Letters II, 95). Cotter notes that "Neither Aquinas [nor Suarez...seems to have exerted much influence on the growth of his [Hopkins'] myth" (Cotter, 137). During the next seven-year period, the poet-priest was assigned to eight different teaching posts and parishes in Britain. Other than his assignments in Bedford Leigh and in Glasgow, his overall experiences as a curate and priest were not edifying. Devlin notes that "of his failure as a missionary the main and decisive cause was ill health; but it was to some extent bound up with his efforts to be a popular preacher" (Sermons, xiv). Hopkins,

"deeply devoted to the priesthood" (Bergonzi, 155), would have aimed at no less than execution of the priestly office in perfect identification with Christ. John Henry Newman describes this ideal: "Christ's priests have no priesthood but His. They are merely his shadows and organs, they are His outward signs; and what they do, He does; when they baptize, He is baptizing; when they bless, He is blessing" (Newman, VI, 242). The role of the priest in conjunction with Christ is perhaps best depicted in one of the poems which Hopkins wrote while still at St. Beuno's in 1877.

"The Lantern out of Doors," according to McChesney, is a poem in which Hopkins expresses "his vocational concerns. In this case the poem is one of faith; that where human, priestly care must fail or cease when death or distance intervene, the overseeing Providence of Christ has an eternal care for all men, wherever they may be" (McChesney, 76). The image of a point of light which is surrounded by darkness, "a lantern [which] moves along the night," appears in Hopkins' Sermons (197). Of this passage, Cotter notes that the poet-priest's concept of creation was that of "[a] sphere as full of light within, where the Trinity abides; then one opening is slashed on its surface and a ray of light shoots outward into the exterior darkness and void. This ray was the eucharistic Christ, the Host who focuses and centers all reality back within himself" (Cotter, 48). The Second Epistle of Peter 1:19 is also a possible subtext for the sonnet. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, unto which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until

the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." The image of Christ's beauty, reflected in those whom "beauty [makes] bright/ In mould or mind or what not else makes rare...interests our eyes." The palpable darkness or void, "much-thick," "marsh-air," is "rain[ed] against" by the "Rich beams" of Christ-light which emanate from within. Those who reveal this inner light are eventually bought or "consume[d]" by "death or distance." The elements of temporal, human caring, are limited by concerns of "death," "distance," and "end"; those who are "out of sight [are] out of mind." Hopkins' dependence is upon Christ to provide what he, as a priest, cannot. This dependence is encapsulated in the eye imagery in the sonnet. In his 1989 essay "All on Two Spools--Aesthetics, Morals, and Janus-Words in Hopkins," R.K.R. Thornton reveals this.

[Hopkins] seems to lose this sense of stability in himself and to transfer it to God and Christ, and then to seek stability in God's eye...Hopkins' eye is associated with movement ('wind/ What most I may eye after') [becomes] Christ 'eyes them' and thus establishes their identity. (Thornton, 60)

Hopkins himself contrasts the ministry of the church with Christ's perpetual care of his human flock.

God knows infinite things, all things, and heeds them all in particular. We cannot 'do two things at once'. God heeds all things at once. He takes more interest in a merchant's business than the merchant, in a vessel's steering than the pilot, in a lover's sweetheart than the lover, in a sick man's pain than the sufferer, in our salvation than we ourselves.
(Sermons, 89)

In a priest, recognition of human limitations is essential.

"Be in at the end/ I cannot" for Christ alone "minds" humanity beyond the limitations of time and space. He "eyes them,"

"heart wants" them, "care haunts" them, and "foot follows" them. In being the "first, fast, last friend," He alone can effect their "ransom" and "rescue."

"The Candle Indoors," which was "a companion to the Lantern, not at first meant to be...but it fell in," was written by Hopkins at Oxford in 1879 (Letters I, 84). The sonnet illustrates the necessity for a priest to minister unto himself prior to ministering unto others. It is also Hopkins' self-admonition to realign himself with his own gnostic principles; to tend to the light within before making judgment of others. Clement of Alexandria's words depict the nature of Christ's light in the world, and are a likely subtext to the poem.

For just as the sun not only illuminates heaven and the whole world, shining over land and sea, but also through windows and small chinks sends his beams into the innermost recesses of houses, so the Word diffused everywhere casts His eye-glance on the minutest circumstances of the actions of life. (Stromata 7. 3)

The light of the candle, which in its own minor way reflects Christ's light in the world, "puts blissful back/ With yellowy moisture mild" the "blear-all black" of the night. The "tender trambeams" which "truckle at the eye" is an image which depicts the act of apprehending inscape. The "to-fro" relationship between object and observer's spirit is mediated by the eye, which acts as a cipher. Cotter has noted a description of the process in one of Hopkins' early poems, "It Was a Hard Thing to Undo this Knot" (Cotter, 11). Beams may also refer to the action of the eye taking light in, thereby forming the image, or giving back light, since the eye is considered to reflect the light in one's soul. Thus, the relationship between object and observer's

spirit is reinforced. A "truckle" or small wheeled vehicle runs in both directions on its track or "beam." In either event, both vision and the object of vision are interconnected in the process of inscaping. The poet, "just for lack of answer," in idle curiosity, "plod[s] wondering," if the inhabitants of the house "glorify" Christ by revealing His light in their actions.

The inscape has had a chastizing effect upon the poet-priest. He turns inward in contemplation of his own "fading fire." The idle curiosity, which has led to a judging of the actions of others, has distracted him from his own "vital candle in close heart's vault." This he must "Mend first" prior to assessing another's spiritual condition. Cotter notes the interweaving of a number of references from the gospel of St. Matthew which elucidate the final tercet. Hopkins has incorporated

the beam in the eye (Matt. 7:3-5), the salt of the earth and the lamp set in the window (Matt 5:13-16), the false swearer (Matt. 5: 33-37), the sound eye (Matt. 6:22-23), and finally the parable of the wedding guest 'cast into exterior darkness' (Matt. 22:1-14) (Cotter, 201)

Thus, the poet's perception of even a common, everyday item like a household candle serves to inscape Christ, the teacher, to him. This experience reminds him to look within, the primary stage of gnosis: one must first have an awareness of one's own self prior to offering enlightenment to others. The imitation of Christ's sacrifice, in the role of priest, is dependent upon a clear radiation of the Master's light from within the inner man.

It was at Bedford Leigh, September to December, 1879,

that Father Hopkins had his most rewarding experiences as a priest. Devlin notes that here "he came up against people who needed him desperately and their need was what he needed. A man must fall in love with his parish or cure of souls if he is to do well by it. Hopkins fell in love with Leigh as he had never quite been able to do...with Oxford" (Sermons, 5). If there is a moment in poetical expression which best captures that reciprocal need and love between priest and parishioner, it is to be found in "Felix Randal." The sonnet depicts the essence of true humility; the ministering unto the dying man results in spiritual awakening of both the farrier and the poet-priest. In the performance of their respective duties, both men inscape Christ. The sonnet contains a system of omega inscapes, the first of which lies in the name which Hopkins has chosen for the blacksmith. Mariani notes that "'Randal'...means 'shield', as well as a strip of leather placed on the heels of a shoe" (Mariani, 170). However, it is in the note provided by Mariani about a "Rand turning machine...which delivers the rands...in a horse-shoe form ready for use," that one perceives the beginning of the poem's underlying system of imagery. The hidden significance in the title of the sonnet, in which "Felix" translates as "blessed," and "Randal" as an Omega-shaped piece of leather, inscapes Christ from the outset. The first line signifier "O" reiterates the divine presence in a simple conversational question, "O is he dead then?" The first quatrain depicts an apparent end in the wasting of Felix's admirable physical "mould, big-boned and hardy handsome."

However, in the presence of the Omega element, a promise of new life is discerned. Felix's tuberculosis had also fostered a "pining" away of the farrier's mental powers; "reason rambled," "and some/ Fatal four disorders fleshed there all contended." "Sickness broke him"; as the farrier's physical "mould" deteriorated, his spiritual condition was "mended."

During his visits to the invalid the priest had provided comfort with the Host, a "sweet reprieve and ransom." The octave ends with a simple blessing, couched in Lancashire dialect, which presages spiritual awakening. Hopkins' "Ah well, God rest him all road ever he offended!" incorporates the signifier of Alpha, and underscores a dawning of awareness for the poet-priest.

While the octave has focused upon one form of metamorphosis, that of the disease and passing of Felix, the sestet presents a second. The stance of the poet-priest has been that of an external, dutiful comforter, one who has observed decline, and administered relief in a kindly, yet detached fashion. However, objective beneficence is lost in performance of Extreme Unction. Performance of priestly duties results in instress, a depiction of the gnostic process of "seeing," sensing, and the "touch[ing]" of the "heart." "Seeing...endears" the two souls to each other; the priest's "tongue has taught...comfort, [and his] touch... quenched...tears." It is in the next moment, from the "tears" of this dying "child," that the stroke or instress of love and compassion "melts" the poet-priest's heart. The result is a vivid knowledge of both his own and Felix's true inscape. Out of the service and love of his own gnosis, the priest has

fostered faith in the dying man. Hopkins is granted a vision. In the final tercet, there is a depiction of the farrier at work in "more boisterous years," at his "random grim forge." Mariani notes that, an "obsolete variation of 'Randall', means 'random', a gallop, a rapid headlong course" (Mariani, 170). In the exuberant execution of his former duties at his "random grim forge," Felix had little "forethought" of the universal significance of his work. "Smiting on an anvil, sawing on a beam, whitewashing a wall, driving horses, sweeping, scouring, everything gives God some glory if being in his grace you do it as your duty" (Sermons, 240). Felix's work at the forge and the priest's at the bedside of the dying inscape Christ, and thus, give back glory to God. Both men then, in execution of duty, no matter how humble, act in imitation of Christ. Felix, true to his name and to his duty, is indeed blessed; it is he who forges the "bright and battering" inscape of Christ-Omega at the sonnet's conclusion.

The progression of Felix Randal's disease and death is cyclic. As physical powers wane, spiritual power grows. In the sonnet's beginning is an implicit ending; the Omega image present in the title as well as in the first line is apparent in "his bright and battering sandal," which ends the sestet. The poem's movement inscapes the Omega sign; Felix's physical decline constitutes downward motion; and the poet-priest, in recalling ministering to the dying blacksmith, is also drawn into this descending movement. At the lowest point of that descent, "tears," prayers, and death result in an emptying of

the physical self. A rising motion is generated in the final tercet; Cotter sums this up most effectively.

The picture evoked here is appropriate to the blacksmith's character and role and yet quite startling and unexpected. The vigorous phrasing creates a powerful impression that goes beyond the recollected scene of a young man at work before the fiery stone forge and suggests an element of mystery. The literal level yields to the spiritual one in the final unifying object of the poem. The inscape comes in the semicircular sandal, the mark of Christ--capital Omega--held and glowing with fire. (Cotter, 211)

"Felix Randal," a universalizing "wording" of duty and resurrection, reveals the path to gnostic apprehension of Christ. In its depiction of the priestly role, in the poignancy of a wasting death, and in the triumph of resurrection, "Felix Randal" captures a special inscape of Christlike humility. In imitation of this essence of the Son, we truly become most like Him.

The gnostic process of coming to "know" Christ is mirrored in the images, signifiers, motions, and shapes of Hopkins' poetry of the ministry. From Philo through Origen has come a major legacy to the world of Christian Gnosis; it is a "threefold method... a key to reading the true depth of scripture" (Cotter, 107).

The 'key to gnosis' is exegesis of the whole divine word. Its literal or bodily sense and its spiritual or divine mastery unite in the body spirit of the reader who thereby becomes one with the Word-made-man. [Those who] achieve this high aim...guided by the inspiring Spirit, penetrate the inner secrets of the Logos' purposes and his inner meaning for man.
(Cotter, 107)

Hopkins' "wording" of Christ's presence in nature and in the affairs of men introduces a vital, new form of scripture. If one "reads" his precise patterning of circles, descents and ascents, and dynamic imagery, then Hopkins has generated gnosis, not only within himself, but within the reader also.

Chapter Three

"Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?"--The Sonnets of Desolation

Above all Christ our Lord: his career was cut short and, whereas he would have wished to succeed by success...he was doomed to succeed by failure; his plans were baffled, his hopes dashed, and his work was done by being broken off undone. However much he understood all this he found it an intolerable grief to submit to it. He left the example: it is very strengthening, but except in that sense it is not consoling. (Letters III, 137-138)

"Although Gerard Hopkins set small store by poetic fame," he had hoped, at least, that his vocation with the Jesuits would enable him to dedicate his talents "to the greater glory of God" (Sermons, xiii). "Yet the failure to find an orthodox outlet for his theological ardour was a disappointment"; Devlin speaks of "three wounds" which Hopkins had received in his expectations of a "full and useful" life as a Jesuit (Sermons, xiii). The first of these "wounds" was Hopkins' not being promoted to an anticipated fourth year of theological studies. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Hopkins was not a popular preacher nor did he feel very effective as a teacher. In his essay, "Hopkins as Teacher: The English Years," Joseph J. Feeney, S.J., examines the progression of a weary, beset condition to which Hopkins was subject. It had appeared as early as his first year of teaching at Newman's Oratory School in Birmingham.

'I did a great deal of work, clinched with the exam papers, and am much tired'...despite comments on his students, his weariness, and his lack of time, he never once in a letter or journal mentioned either teaching or any classroom experience.
(Feeney, 183)

This initial response to teaching was to continue and was to mushroom into lengthier periods of anxiety and depression. The malaise marked Hopkins' subsequent pedagogical experiences both in England and in Ireland.

Later, at Roehampton and especially at Stonyhurst, his condition indicated true depression, sometimes for no apparent reason. He became unable to work or write, and at Stonyhurst, watching other Jesuits at work, he realized that his difficulty lay not in his work but in his own body and psyche. From December 1882 Hopkins was the victim of recurring depression and melancholia, which seems to have been brought on, at least in part, by the burdens of teaching and examining. (Feeney, 218)

Therefore, in the two primary aspects of his Jesuit vocation Hopkins found little gratification. His sense of failure with both preaching and teaching constituted the second "wound."

Hopkins' third "wound" can be traced to 1882; Feeney marks the "onset of recurring depression and melancholia" from that December (Feeney, 218). In the September of 1882, Hopkins had had an interview with his Provincial, Fr Edward Ignatius Purbrick. The letter which followed the discussion about Hopkins' proposed writing projects was particularly distressing for him.

Confronted with the perfect neatness of the Provincial's mind, with his massive and smoothly-moving deliberation, a wave of diffidence amounting almost to despair seeped up in Hopkins. It was borne in upon him that he must look on his poetic genius as an amiable weakness which a hard-working Jesuit might indulge for an hour or two occasionally. And he grasped, half-consciously but

once and for all, that the secret 'wildness' of his inspiration could never be channelled in that manner.
(Sermons, 215)

Hopkins' "poetic genius was his very essence, his 'inscape', his special likeness to the 'Divine Essence'" (Sermons, 119). The struggle between Hopkins' "very essence" and the exterior demands of his vocation is depicted in the terrible sonnets. Deep personal distress is apparent; it is a distress that his Jesuit discipline alone cannot dispel. The "secret wildness" of Hopkins' inspiration was his unorthodox theology, his deepening Christian Gnosis, and the poetry of the period provides a record of its progress. At the conclusion of the sonnets of desolation, a resolution of humility and acceptance does materialize. However, Hopkins continued to struggle with melancholy and a sense of personal failure which was largely unrelieved until just prior to his death in June of 1889.

In January of 1889, while on Retreat at St. Stanislaus' College, Tullabeg, Hopkins assessed the two dimensions of his life.

I am now 44. I do not waver in my allegiance, I never have since my conversion to the Church. The question is how I advance the side I serve on. This may be inwardly or outwardly. Outwardly I often think I am employed to do what is of little or no use...I do not feel then that outwardly I do much good, much that I care to do or can much wish to prosper; and this is a mournful life to lead... The other part, the more important, remains, my inward service. (Sermons, 261-262)

This "inward service" is a reference to Hopkins' own personal Christian Gnosis; in this lay the only possible means by which he felt he might attain identification with Christ. However, even this hope was drowned in ruthless self-abnegation. In the

same retreat, Hopkins wished for death, yet he was fearful that he should "die imperfect," "no master of [himself]," and this was "the worst failure of all" (Sermons, 262). Cotter outlines the reasons why Hopkins, the Christian Gnostic, was also convinced of the failure of his "inward service."

What the poet-priest intended by his self-denunciation was his failure to reach the perfection of gnosis, 'a perfecting of man as man' in the attainment of full stature in Christ through all one's doings. For the Gnostic achieves that knowledge which always judges right and waits with equanimity to carry out the Father's will. His is the peace not given by the world because he is in earnest about the things of God. (Cotter, 259)

Hopkins' struggle for the "equanimity" of gnosis, for rebirth of the inner man as self-in-Christ is, according to two critics, a reenactment of Christ's Passion and Sacrifice.

The sonnets of desolation...enact the same cosmic drama and remain, at the same time intensely personal in their anguish and dread...Hopkins is 'exceedingly troubled', in the words Mark uses to describe Jesus in the garden. So the poet himself depicts his master: 'However much he understood all this he found it an intolerable grief to submit to it'...However much Hopkins understood, the grief was real; for faith and gnosis are not an antidote for suffering nor a panacea Christ miraculously dispenses to those who receive him.... (Cotter, 221)

David Anthony Downes adds that Hopkins, in the sonnets of desolation,

expressed his own 'great sacrifice'...[he] moved from the poetic parable form of faith-witnessing...to the drama of faith-testing...[the poems are] a final act in the mysterious, secret drama of the deepest personal religious disconsolation--the ultimate lover's quarrel. (Downes, 239-240, 264)

Although Downes does not mention gnosis in his criticism, his vocabulary--"mysterious", "secret", and "lover's quarrel"--is essentially gnostic. This terminology, which originated in Old Testament Wisdom Literature, was developed by Philo and

incorporated into Clement of Alexandria's Stromata. These "mysterious secrets" and the "lover's quarrel" between the spirit and its bridegroom Christ are metaphors for the struggle to attain Christian Gnosis.

In "On Personality, Grace and Free Will," Hopkins discusses three types of grace essential in the development of gnosis. These include

(1) quickening, stimulating, towards the object, towards good: this is especially in the affective will, might be a natural grace, and in a high degree seems to be the grace of novices; (2) corrective, turning the will from one direction or pitting into another, like the needle through an arc, determining its choice (I mean/ stimulating that determination, which it still leaves free): this touches the elective will or the power of election and is especially the grace of the mature mind; (3) elevating, which lifts the receiver from one cleave of being to another and to a vital act in Christ: this is truly God's finger touching the very vein of personality, which by bare acknowledgment only, the counter stress which God alone can feel...[it is] the aspiration in answer to his inspiration. (Sermons, 158)

In his early aspirations to gnosis, those of Hopkins' Oxford experience, "natural grace" had been apparent in his fervent admiration of Christ. "Natural grace" had also fostered his subsequent conversion and his choice of vocation. "Corrective" grace was evident in Hopkins' strict obedience in the Society of Jesus. "Elevating grace," which lifts the receiver "from one cleave of being to another," constitutes the force at work in, the essence of, the sonnets of desolation. Hopkins' distress was caused by his attainment of less than perfect gnosis. However, "elevating grace" cannot be "wrung" from God, it must be bestowed. Nor is "elevating grace" a perpetual condition in one's life; its role is one which

regenerates the gnostic cycle of faith, knowledge, and love.

Hopkins' poetry also traces the role of grace in his developing gnosis. His nature poetry celebrates "natural grace"; there is unbounded joy in the apprehension of Christ's inscape in the created world. The poems of the ministry illustrate "corrective grace"; a note of constraint appears, and Hopkins' joy at perceiving Christ's inscape in man is mixed with pity and compassion for the limitations of the human condition. At approximately the same time as Hopkins received his "third wound" (1882), the poetry's mood shifts again. There is a much stronger focus upon grace; creation only has beauty when Christ lifts each aspect to its highest "cleave of being." The emphasis becomes one of Christ's mastery; increasingly the poet attempts to "Grasp [a] God, throned behind/ Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides" ("The Wreck of the Deutschland", 32).

"Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" provides Hopkins' darkest, most ominous "reading" of nature. W. H. Gardner suggests that the account of the descent of Aeneas' and the Cumaean Sybil into Avernus (Book vi of the Aeneid) is a likely source for the central images of Hopkins' sonnet.

They moved along darkling, under the solitary night
through the shade...as is a journey in woods beneath
the unsteady moon, under a scanty light, when Jupiter
has wrapped the heavens in shade and black night has
stripped objects of colour. (Gardner, 311)

The prophecies of the Cumaean Sibyl were enigmatic and had to be "Spelt" out or interpreted. "Spelt" is also a type of wheat, which, when ground, produces a very fine flour. Thus,

the sonnet concerns itself with the grinding and sifting out of the self in order to divinate Christ's will. McChesney notes that a journal entry made by Hopkins in 1870 accounts for the poet's perspective of nature in this sonnet.

This busy working of nature wholly independent of the earth and seeming to go on in a strain of time not reckoned by our reckoning of days and years but simpler and as if correcting the preoccupation of the world by being preoccupied with and appealing to and dated to the day of judgment was like a new witness to God and filled me with delightful fear.

(Journals, 200)

By 1885, "delightful fear" had deteriorated into darkness; what inscape the poet perceives in the heavens is ominous. Mariani notes the sonnet's relationship to the "Dies Irae... a traditional part of the Roman Catholic Burial Mass" (Mariani, 201). The sonnet's lengthy, heavily burdened, eight-foot lines produce a dirge-like effect. Hopkins begins with a catalogue of seven sonorous adjectives which depict the evening sky's "vaulty" immensity. A dark eternity looms as time reaches out to encompass space; "Evening strains" to become "time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night." The poet's spiritual darkness fosters a bleak perspective of sunset which contrasts sharply with "the dappled-with-damson west" from stanza 5 of "The Wreck of the Deutschland." The comfort of the sun's "fond yellow hornlight" is replaced by the remote, "wild hollow hoarlight" of the paler moon. The delight which the poet had taken in the "piece-bright paling of "The Starlight Night" is now transformed; this canopy of stars "overbend[s] us" and adds to the ominous tone established.

Earth's "being has unbound." In the fading light, the

poet can no longer discern pitch of being; "her dapple" grows indistinct. Creation's inscape, its controlling and incorporating energy, has lapsed into chaos and disunity. Being appears to have lost its Christic centre and elements of reassuring patterns are "at end," "as/ tray...aswarm." All is reduced to "throng[s] [of] self in self"; the parts forget their function within the whole and are "disremembering [and] dismembering." Hopkins' heart "round[s] [him] right"; in its whisper, he is reminded of his own end.

In the fading light the poet can only discern the stark outlines of "beakleaved...dragonish boughs" against the "smooth bleak light." An image of implicit primordial threat, the leaves form a "damask"[ed] pattern against a "tool-smooth" background; creation's maker forges being like fine damascene steel. The Christ in Matthew 10:34 "comes not to send peace, but a sword." The "beakleaved boughs" are associated with the leaves of Sibyl's prophetic book; both foretell the "tale" of man's death which follows as certainly as this night has followed evening. Christ is signified as Omega in "O our oracle"; this is the Christ of judgement and the Apocalypse. Hopkins' "ah let life wind" signifies (Christ-Alpha) and reveals the poet's acceptance, but a forbidding Christ brings little joy and comfort. A vision of apocalypse appears; all in it is reduced to black and white. As creation "wane[s]," there will be a "wind[ing],/ Off her once skeined stained veined variety." On this day all being will be reduced to two categories and wound "upon...[one of] two spools" according to the quality of life lived. Matthew 25: 31-46 is

recalled as Christ the shepherd will "part, pen, [and] pack" his "two flocks" into "two folds." However, even if we "mind" and are "ware," pitch of being cannot elevate itself. Without apprehension of Christic inscape, the self is reduced to an uncomforted "selfwring, selfstrung...shelterless" being. The inverted Omega pattern which had governed both the poet's and the reader's perspective in the nature poetry is only partially depicted in "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves." The initial heavenward point of view gives way to a consideration of earth's dark disintegration and the perspective fails to rise again. "Spelt From Sibyl's Leaves" concludes instead with the poet enmeshed within the confines of his tortured self.

The path of the Christian gnosis reveals this same inverted Omega form. Ironically, in order to complete the cycle in love and service for others, one begins with a descent into the self to understand fully its nature. It is only by knowing and relinquishing that self that elevating grace can do its work.

Abandon the search for God and the creation and other matters of a similar sort. Look for him by taking yourself as the starting point. Learn who it is within you who makes everything his own and says, 'My God, my mind, my thought, my soul, my body'. Learn the sources of sorrow, joy, love, hate...If you carefully investigate these matters you will find him in yourself.

(Monoimus in Hippolytus, 8.15. 1-2)

By the conclusion of the sonnets of desolation, Hopkins will know that self-being which is identification with Christ.

The torturous descent into self begins with Hopkins' statement of his blighted spiritual condition. He realizes what lies in wait for him in the seeking of his identification

with Christ.

I have much and earnestly prayed that God will lift me above myself to a higher state of grace, in which I may have more union with him, be more zealous to do his will, and freer from sin...In meditating on the Crucifixion I saw how my asking to be raised to a higher state of grace was asking also to be lifted to a higher cross.

(Sermons, 253-254)

"To Seem the Stranger" opens with the poet's lament of his isolated condition. His estrangement from family, "Father and mother dear/ Brothers and sisters...in Christ not near," recalls Matthew 10:35 and the Christ who "come[s] to set a man at variance against his" family. This constitutes the poet's first "remove." The second was his separation from England, his muse, and "whose honour" the poet "wool[ed]." This caused Hopkins much anguish; he associated the producing of art with patriotic duty. The English Jesuit in Dublin, "where wars are rife," was distressed by the mix of nationalism and religion in the Irish Church. Hopkins' sense of personal ineffectuality, "wear-/ y of idle a being," reflects the war within.

The nature of the third remove is explained in Hopkins' meditations at Beaumont in 1883; it is clear that the Provincial's assessment of his poetry as "an amiable weakness" was a great blow to Hopkins' sense of self. The strain arises between the fulfilling of his vows of obedience and service and finding the time and inspiration for expression of his "inward life."

But when I speak of the stress and strain of removal it must be understood that the removal is primarily not a physical but a moral thing, nor even moral in the sense that the affective will is moral, but in a higher, applying to the self of things, and the arbitrium, the highest sense in which one thing

can equal or excel or fall below another in the scale of being.... (Sermons, 139)

The nature of the conflict is thus defined; what Hopkins seeks lies beyond application of the affective will to duty. Instead, he seeks that total relinquishing of self-being which fosters not mere imitation but identification with Christ. Although in all removes the poet can "Kind love both give and get," this is insufficient comfort. He seeks a "higher cross" and comprehends that his "poetic genius," his "very essence," is at stake here. "Heaven's baffling ban," or "hell's spell thwarts" his "word/ Wisest." Anonymity, the spiritual foundation of Hopkins' life, results in his being "Unheard," unpublished, or, by friends who know his work, "Heard unheeded." McChesney suggests that the sonnet's final two words leave "a half-picture in the mind of a solitary figure left at a starting post, all others having finished their race" (McChesney, 156).

Sonnet 65 sees the raising of the poet onto his "higher cross." "No Worst, there is none" manages to depict the spirit in its most despairing moments of anguish and torment. "The suffering penetrates to archetypal depths, and contains echoes, conscious or otherwise, of Job, of Lear, and even of Milton's Satan" (McChesney, 152). Satan's despair at finding himself removed from the presence of God is suggested in the first part of the sonnet's opening line. "...infinite despair/ Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell/And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep/Still threatening to devour me opens wide" (Paradise Lost IV, 75-78). "Pitched past pitch of grief" is an image which reveals blackness and the powerlessness of

being hurled to a depth of grief which exceeds the poet's human limitation. There is a cumulative effect to these "pangs"; the current agonies have been "schooled at forepangs" and show no signs of abatement. His cries to the "Comforter" (the Holy Spirit) and to "Mary" are fruitless; comfort and relief are not forthcoming. Spiritual blows and attendant cries come in waves; they are "herds-long" and convey, as McChesney notes, an image of "endless unrest" (McChesney, 153). The cries "huddle" around the poet's Weltschmerz; his world-weariness is a universal "chief-woe" which has also been depicted in Job 6:4. "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison of it drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." Mariani associates the vigour and intensity of the Fury's onslaught with Edgar's words in King Lear: "And worse I may be yet, the worst is not/So long as we can say 'This is the worst'" (IV, i, 27-28).

Gloucester's blindness also serves as the underthought for the sonnet's sestet. His blindness, figurative, then literal, has led him to suicidal despair; there is a good deal of irony in his pre-swoon prayer. "This world I do renounce, and in your sights/ Shake patiently my great affliction off" (King Lear IV, vi, 35-36). There is, thus, about the poet's "mountains" and "cliffs" which are "no-man-fathomed" that same illusory quality as Gloucester's cliff. The terror is nevertheless perceived as real and those who have not experienced these "cliffs" may "Hold them cheap." Hopkins' assessment of the "small durance" of self is more insightful than Gloucester's,

but his only relief is to "creep...under a comfort...in a whirlwind." However, Christ's presence had been signified in "O the mind" but it is only the finality of Omega which the poet perceives. In his terror, the poet cannot "read" this "unshapeable shock night." He chooses, instead, that lack of consciousness and oblivion which sleep fosters.

In sonnet 67, Hopkins awakens only to find that the "black hours" of the preceding night are not yet finished. The "sights" seen by the heart in the "black hours" of "This night!" continue "in yet longer light's delay." Job 7: 13-18 is recalled:

When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch
shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with
dreams, and terrifiest me through visions , So that
my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than my
life...thou...visit [me] every morning and test [me]
every moment....

In recounting the visions and terrors of the current despair, the poet realizes that his lament is not only "hours" but "years," indeed "life" long. With the thought of the accumulation of dead-letter pleas to a God who "lives...away," the volta occurs.

One notes the interjection, the sigh of "alas!" in the final line of the octave; its double "a" signifies Alpha. Christ did not move and leave no forwarding address; the "cries countless" have been heard and the poet's sigh, an expiration of self, reveals who has blocked communication.

For there must be something which shall be truly the
creature's in the work of corresponding with grace:
this is the arbitrium, the verdict on God's side,
the saying Yes, the 'doing-agree'...it is found to be
no more than the mere wish, discernible by God's eyes,
that it might do as he wishes...might say Yes to him...

And remark that prayer understood in this sense, this sigh or aspiration or stirring of the spirit towards God...this least sigh of desire, this one aspiration is the life and spirit of man...and by this infinitesimal act the creature does what in it lies to breach the gulf fixed between its present actual and worser pitch of will and its future better one. (Sermons, 155)

The illumination of self-gnosis appears and it is a bitter knowledge. The poet's preoccupation with self has barred spontaneous communion with God. It is not the cup of gruelling circumstance which life has offered up to the poet, but fear and self-will which has created his alienated condition. The poet is "gall," the herb which reduces awareness; he is "heartburn," and the cause of his own pain. That taste of self "more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor" has been rendered bitter by self-will run riot (Sermons, 123). The elements of the poet's eucharist, governed by supplicant, not Saviour, foster no communion or renewal. The body which he offers, "Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed," is a "curse." The bread of this host is "sour," a "dull dough"; "Selfyeast of spirit" has made it so. He, like the damned, has experienced the hell created by self. In the continuous, futile selving of the "lost," their scourge is "their sweating selves," as the poet is his own.

"Carrion Comfort" depicts Hopkins' struggle to maintain his newly-elevated pitch of being despite continuing adversity. McChesney notes that "to abandon oneself to despair, though it brings a kind of relief, is to feed on spiritual death" (149). In the octave, the poet realizes his own part in renewed being.

"I'll not...feast on thee;/ Not untwist...these last strands of man/ In me." Downes notes the biblical source for this sonnet: Hopkins, "like Job, ('My days have been swifter than a runner... swift as vultures swooping on carrion') has been doing mortal battle with the forces God has permitted to assault him" (Downes, 248). Self-will grows weaker; "these last strands of man" are "slack" and "most weary." Recognition of the mastery of God, as Alpha and Omega, appears in line five: "But ah, but O thou terrible." Images of being ground under the "wring-world right foot" of God, and of the persistence of the fierce lion of Judah (Job 10:16), "wring" the "rebel" and "dog" him "in den" ("The Wreck of the Deutschland, 9). God's "darksome devouring eyes" survey the poet's "bruised bones." Recall of those means devised to secure surrender, and experienced in the dark night described in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (II and III), provide an underthought for Sonnet 64. The solution then was also to "flee" to the "heart of the host" and the concluding words of the octave's "thee and flee" reiterate this.

The reason for this testing, "That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear," is understood. The God of the disciplinary "rod" is transformed into a reassuring "Hand." On this realization, the mood of the sestet is elevated, and the enthusiasm and spontaneity of a wrestling match dominate. Stripped of intellectualization and brooding, the poet's exuberance surfaces in "strength...joy...laugh[ter]" and "cheer[s]." The poet has a moment of uncertainty as to whether his own pitch of being or Christ's action in elevating

grace fostered this awakening. "Cheer whom though?...Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one?" The resolution lies in the sustained metaphor of the wrestling match itself. Both participants are essential.

Identification with Christ, the poet's own passion, and his self-sacrifice, have now been realized. However, the work of "elevating grace" is that of a moment; Hopkins describes the continuing process of gnosis.

It is into that possible world that God for the moment moves his creature out of this one...shewing it to itself gracious and consenting; nay more, clothing its old self for the moment with a gracious and consenting self... consent is not [only] to the momentary affection but also to the action which is to follow...This [moment] is a prophecy, a forecast, not of the certain future, for it leaves us free still to discard and unmake that future.
(Sermons, 154-155)

Sonnet 68 attests to the need to continue the consent and resulting ascent fostered by "elevating grace." The nature of Christ expands to incorporate an additional dimension in "Patience, Hard Thing!" Simply stated, Christ is depicted in the sonnet in terms of both the masculine and the feminine. His masculine aspects predominate in the first half of the octave. He "Wants war, wants wounds" and as well would have us wrestle with Him, "take tosses" and "obey" Him. However, the wisdom acquired from spiritual struggle is also essential if patience is to be learned. "Rare patience roots in these [past struggles] and "Nowhere" else. Through the progressive healing process, "Natural heart's-ivy," the patience born of wisdom, "masks/Our ruins of wrecked past purpose." Like ivy, she is nourished and grows on the wisdom gained. According to gnostic tradition,

Christ redeemed Sophia, wisdom, from her fallen condition. Hans Jonas, in a compilation of the writings of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, two of the early church fathers, explains the redemptive process of Sophia.

The passion was a search for the Father, for she strove to comprehend his greatness. This, however, she failed to achieve, because what she attempted was impossible, and so she found herself in great agony; on account of the depth of the Abyss, into which in her desire she penetrated more and more she would in the end have been swallowed up...Christ, stretching out over the Cross, imparted from his own power a first fashioning to her... after which he withdrew back into the Pleroma...leaving her with the awakened awareness of her separation from the Pleroma and the aroused longing for it. This initiates a redemptional task whose accomplishment requires a long detour of successive and divine interventions.

(Jonas, 182-186)

One notes that this account from the church fathers is at variance with that of the Pistis Sophia in which Christ and Sophia were the masculine and feminine aspects of one being. Hopkins, by associating Christ with patience in the sonnet's sestet seems to favour the interpretation of Pistis Sophia. Led by the wisdom acquired from his "ruins of wrecked past purpose," the poet must "bid" and "pray" for patience. "We hear our hearts grate on themselves"; wisdom prevents that we should "bruise them dearer." Christ, the teacher, provides the example of gnosis: identified as both Creator and creation, "He is [both] patient" and "Patience." The process of gnosis demands that love and service follow knowledge; wisdom is distilled into "Delicious kindness." As the bee patiently builds combs to contain honey, man must continually render the self a worthy receptacle for true Christian gnosis.

In Sonnet 69, in addition to the healing quality of

"Patience," Hopkins adds humility and self-charity. The human heart must cast out the contents of the "tormented mind," and provide for its "sad self" a "Charitable" love. Within the "combs" of the self without grace lies no comfort. Light of illumination cannot be seen nor spiritual thirst quenched. The poet "is 'blind eyes' in the midst of that day and 'thirst' in a pleroma of redeeming baptismal waters" (Cotter, 230).

Humility is acquired; "Jackself," "comfortless," "poor" and "jaded," needs "root-room." When the poet manages to "call off thoughts awhile" or to turn them "elsewhere," joy emerges. However, only "God knows when" or in "what" this joy will be discovered. Hopkins' journal entry for September 10, 1883 reveals this process.

The walk to Emmaus. This morning in Thanksgiving after mass much bitter thought but also insight in things. And the... meditation was made in a desolate frame of mind; but towards the end I was able to rejoice in the comfort our Lord gave those two men, taking that for a sample of his comfort and them for representatives of all men comforted, and that it was meant to be of universal comfort to men and therefore to me and that this was all I really needed; also that it was better for me to be accompanying our Lord in his comfort of them than to want him to come my way to comfort me. (Sermons, 254)

The instress of Christ appears at "unforeseen times rather"; His smile and radiance cannot be "wrung," commanded, ordered, or otherwise forced by man. His inscape in nature reappears in Sonnet 69 in the inverted Omega sign depicted by "skies/ Between pie mountains," the same image employed in "Hurrahing in Harvest." The gnosis evidenced by Christ's inscape in the ivy, honeycombs, and skylscapes of creation, has taken the distant light and brought it comfortingly close to illuminate the poet's

path to further gnosis.

According to Cotter, "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection" "may be justly regarded as Hopkins's *summa*, the culmination of years of studying nature and mankind in his own search for inner gnosis" (Cotter, 231). In a letter to Bridges, September 25, 1888, Hopkins comments upon the syncretistic quality of the sonnet; elements of his gnosis, from Oxford days onward are incorporated. "I sent you a sonnet, on the Heraclitean Fire, in which a great deal of early Greek philosophy was distilled; but the liquor of the distillation did not taste very Greek, did it"? (Letters I, 290-291). W. H. Gardner has drawn attention to the number of Hopkins' nature journal entries, drawn from over a period of twenty years, which have been employed in the sonnet's octave (Gardner, 164-165). Sonnet 72 culminates with a statement of identification with Christ; in this is the culmination of all strains of Hopkins' Christian gnosis. "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire" provides a resolution to "Spelt From Sibyl's Leaves" in a resounding declaration of the Christian Gnostic's ultimate goal. The previous vision of apocalypse is incorporated into a new vision of resurrection.

Eyes are initially directed heavenward where clouds, in various round shapes are in vigorous motion: "puffball," "tufts," and "tossed pillows" "flaunt," "chevy," "throng" and "glitter" in "gay-gangs" of "heaven roysterers." There is then a lowering of the perspective to "elm arches" which render the sun's light into "Shivelights and shadowtackle" on

the ground below. The "boisterous" wind "ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare," but does so "delightfully." "Ooze," left in ground creases after "yestertempest," is "squeezed" into creations of "dough, crust, and dust." Footprints in the mud, "manmarks," are obliterated by the wind's action on the earth; the eternal fire of Heraclitus "burns on." The energies in this whirlpool of nature's activities destroy all traces of man; as a created being, he too is subject to the laws of creation's transience. His "firedint" (physical stamp or mark) and, more sadly, his "mark on mind" (gnosis) will eventually, like all distinct elements of creation, be "drowned" in an "unfathomable," "enormous dark." The terrible end to which the most highly wrought creature in creation, "that shone/ Sheer off," distinct, and "a star" prompts Hopkins' "O pity and indignation!" Christ's presence as Omega is signified in the poet's outcry. The end, in a "vastness [which] blurs and time [which] beats level," heralds, for those who are "ware," a new beginning.

Like the tall nun in "The Wreck of the Deutschland," the poet "reads" the Word in the midst of desolation. Christ's heart calls to the poet's; "grief's gasping, joyless days" and "dejection" are banished. The Son's "great sacrifice" is recalled in "Across" and "beam." St. Ignatius of Antioch's image of the resurrected Christ as a beacon appears now on the poet's "foundering deck." All may be consumed in Heraclitus' eternal fire, "Flesh fade," and "mortal trash/ Fall to the residuary worm" and "leave but ash." But the "comfort of the resurrection" lies in oneness with Christ. Despite the abject

humility of self, "Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood," Christ's once having been man makes the poet "all at once what Christ is." What might have been considered spare, or of little use, is thus rendered timeless, invaluable, and "immortal."

The pattern established in the earlier nature poems reappears once again in Sonnet 72. The inscape of Christ's kenosis, a pattern of descent and ascent, is discernible in the sequence of shifting perspectives. Cloudscapes, the elm and its casting of dappled shadows, and the subsequent consideration of the soil with its "manmarks," constitute the falling action of kenosis. The energy pattern of the sonnet is, according to Mariani, that of "a spiral downward and inward, toward the inevitable chaos and strife at the center of a materialistic and atomistic universe: the dark cold waters at one pole of the Heraclitean flux" (Mariani, 283). However, at the centre of that universe is the spirit affirmed by Parmenides, that of Necessity or Justice...creating Love first" (Journals, 130). That Love is Christ through whom all being is metamorphosed. The Christian Gnostic is aware that the eventual material of creation, "black...ash," will be, through the Resurrection, rendered priceless. The ascending portion of the Omega pattern is thus completed by the poet who, under the auspices of elevating grace, is "all at once what Christ is." The tone of the sonnet marks a cyclic progression; the delight in the skyscape and in the playful escapades of the "gay-gangs" of clouds is matched by the triumph and elation at the ultimate realization of the unity of all being. Light imagery also traces

a cyclic progression; clouds "glitter," the sunlight casts dappled shadow through the elm branches, and an "enormous dark" enshrouds the poet's meditations on death and eternity. He is suddenly enlightened; the Omega of Christ is also Alpha. The "beam" of the Resurrection shines across the poet's "foundering deck" and the final "flash" of light reveals his own resurrection to identification of self in Christ.

In his "Inscaping the Alpha and Omega in Dante, Milton, and Hopkins," Cotter reveals just how thoroughly Christ is inscaped in the sonnet. "All the rhymes have A and O assonance, with A sounds in the octave and both A and O used in the sestet and three codas" (Cotter, 168). Most significantly, Cotter comments on the sonnet's final words. "The trigrammaton IAO, where I is the Divine Name [I am], rises from....`ImmOrtAl dIAmOnd'" (Cotter, 168). Thus, "immortal" contains "I am Omega and Alpha"; diamond reveals "I am Alpha and Omega".

When one considers the sequence of Hopkins' sonnets of desolation and consolation as a unit, the descent-ascent pattern of his own kenosis emerges. "Spelt From Sibyl's Leaves" sees the beginning of descent in its bleak consideration of the annihilation of pitch of being to which all creation must inevitably come. As redemptive grace is removed, the sonnets grow more ominous and the natural world is eliminated. Forced to focus solely on his own pitch of being, despair deepens in Sonnets 66, 65, and the octave of 67. The sestet of "I Wake and feel the fell of dark" sees the expiration of the poet's lower pitch of self-being; the sigh, "Alas!," signifier of Alpha

and Christ, ends the poet's spiritual blindness. Rising action occurs when redemptive grace reappears and the poet learns of the balance between self and Christ in Sonnet 64. Sonnets 68 and 69 reincorporate nature and reveal the qualities necessary to maintain the poet's elevated pitch of being. Rising action culminates with the final identification of self-in-Christ in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection."

In The Gnostic Gospels Elaine Pagels discusses the differences between gnostic and orthodox Christian beliefs.

Orthodox...Christians insist that a chasm separates humanity from its creator: God is wholly other. But some of the gnostics...contradict this: self-knowledge is knowledge of God; the self and the divine are identical...the 'living Jesus' of [gnostic] texts speaks of illusion and enlightenment...Instead of coming to save us from sin, he comes as a guide to spiritual understanding. But when the disciple attains enlightenment, Jesus no longer serves as his spiritual master: the two have become equal--even identical...Orthodox Christians believe that Jesus is Lord and Son of God in a unique way: he remains forever distinct from the rest of humanity whom he came to save. Yet the gnostic...relates that as soon as [he] recognizes [Christ, he knows] that they have both received their being from the same source. (Pagels, xx)

In his "outward service" framed by orthodox Catholicism and his Jesuit precepts, Hopkins felt himself to be "of little or no use." In theological studies, preaching, teaching, and writing, "his plans were baffled, his hopes dashed, and his work was...broken off undone" and unpublished (Letters, 137-138). The growing disenchantment with his ministry led to the loneliness and agony of his own Gethsemane and Golgotha. "The comfort of the Resurrection" lies in the poet-priest's

learning that he too is "immortal diamond." Although he might have disclaimed it for himself, a perfection of his gnosis has emerged. "It is as if a man said: That is Christ playing at me and me playing at Christ, only that it is no play but truth; That is Christ being me and me being Christ" (Sermons, 154).

Conclusion

"But The Greatest of These is Love"

The alter-Christus is inseparable from his creation. He generates it, fashions it, dwells with it, sacrifices himself to it, and thereby gives it perpetual life. The single quality which most appropriately characterizes Hopkins' poetry is its intense vitality. One hundred years later this same quality continues to fascinate the reader and to generate a body of scholarship which shows no signs of abatement. The vast majority of Hopkins studies continues to determine that his poetry "works, it influences...it does good." Gerard Manley Hopkins' "new testament" is encompassed in a mythopoesis which lends itself well to Origen's Christian Gnostic method of scriptural exegesis. Thus, the conclusion of this study might be most aptly expressed in terms devised by that third-century theologian.

It will be remembered that Origen had determined that scripture reveals three levels of revelation which correspond to the parts of man. The historical or literal interpretation corresponds with the body, and is associated with the first phase of gnosis which is faith. At the level of literal interpretation, the body of Hopkins' poetry reflects the phases

of the life of Christ. Annunciation, ministry, Gethsemane, Golgotha, and Resurrection are all present here. Moreover, as the man is inextricably bound to his works, Hopkins' life also reveals these same phases. Framed by the vows of his Jesuit vocation, he executed his teaching and ministry, despite all difficulties, with love, humility and self-sacrifice. So intense was his desire to fulfill the primary aspiration of his Jesuit calling, that of imitation of Christ, that he often did so to the detriment of his physical well-being.

Origen's second level of meaning was that of the soul; its interpretation was associated with interior meaning and the second phase of gnosis, that of knowledge. The multiplicity of disciplines which Hopkins undertook was synthesized into his "inward service" of Christian gnostic poetry. Thus, the poet's faith and knowledge are incorporated into the poetry's imagery and generate a new mythopoesis. Hopkins made "the cause that determine[d] his life, both as a whole and in much detail, determine [his creation] in greater detail still" (Sermons, 263). The central experience of the poetry is a series of perpetual encounters with the risen Christ and Hopkins' imagery is repeatedly employed to word these encounters. Each image of the experience fleshes out that body of the risen Christ and reveals its vital, multi-faceted, and pervasive nature. As image plays off against image, a vitality emerges which reveals that Christ "is [truly] under the world's splendour and wonder"; it is the poet's task to "instress and stress" His presence repeatedly.

Hopkins' use of the device of interjection signifies the omnipresence of Christ as Alpha and Omega. This is often done in a manner by which the poet, in context, seems caught unaware. The becoming "ware" stresses the wonder of these encounters. Enlightenment is generated and provides an intellectual grasp of the poetry by which, to use Mariani's expression, one admires "its labyrinthine coils of gold" (Mariani, xxvii).

Origen's final level of interpretation is the anagogical or universal, and affects the spirit or "inner man." This ultimate level of knowledge is associated with the poetry's dynamic movement. The vigour with which the governing pattern is depicted draws the reader into the final level of gnosis. The essence of spirit is energy; one must participate fully in the sweep and the hurl, the circling and the spiralling, the falling and the rising action of the poem's dynamics. Hopkins insisted that his poetry be read aloud. The voice adds its own dimension of energy to the wording process and the oral tradition of myth-making is reiterated. Thus both reader and listener experience the dynamic inscaping of Christ. When the trajectory is traced by the eye, the voice, and the ear, the features of Christ's "great sacrifice" are realized in the mind; an identification with Christ has been effected. It is in the retrospective examination of a participatory experience that Hopkins' desired aim of an "explosion" of meaning can be realized.

Thus this examination of the relationship between Hopkins' biography and the body of his poetic works reveals the essence of the poet-priest's imitation of Christ. However, identification with Christ is a gnostic process which operates simultaneously on the levels of body, soul, and spirit. By generating a Christian Gnostic mythopoesis, in which the images function individually and as part of a system, Hopkins more fully enriches their Christic significance and dimension. The historic tracing of these gnostic images, from their beginnings in myth and their subsequent development in philosophy, in scripture, in patristic, and in post-Nicene sources emphasizes the lengthy tradition of Christian gnosis. The coming to light of Gnostic manuscripts over the last two centuries reiterates the ongoing nature of that gnosis. The personal relationship of the Christian Gnostic to his Creator-redeemer, the essence of Hopkins' prescient mythopoesis, is the hallmark of current trends in theology. Participation in the vigorous dynamics of Hopkins' Christic inscapes draws the reader into a realization of the Resurrection within. A new form of scripture has been created, and with each wording it is renewed and revitalized. With characteristic humility, Hopkins had said "my poems stand or fall by their simple selves." He is reminiscent of another of whom it has been said "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

Abbreviations

- Journals The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Eds. Humphry House and Graham Storey. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Letters I The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges. Ed. Claude Colleer Abbott. London: Oxford University Press, 1955.
- Letters II The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon. Ed. Claude Colleer Abbott. London: Oxford University Press, 1955.
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