

**THE DOMINANT RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS  
IN HOPKINS'S POETRY**

CHAPTER IIITHE DOMINANT RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS IN HOPKINS'S  
POETRY

Thee, God I come from to thee I go.<sup>1</sup>

Gerard Manley Hopkins was a born religious poet. The religious essence ran through his veins. His intellectuality that has been expressed in his poetry is innately religious. Throughout his poetic career it has been noticed that he could not write, without any religious thought, as if he thought of these religious principles at day time and also dreamt of them at night.

The contribution of this sensitive poet-priest to English religious poetry is very rich, in matters of idea, composition and innovation. Almost all of his poems are religious. The desire to witness the Divinity in profound praise and glorification, is the striking note of his poetry. This is the Ignatian Spirit in action. His conversion from

orthodox Anglicanism to Catholicism and joining The Society of Jesus was his spiritual journey.

Hopkins's religious poetry deals with the most important beliefs of Christianity. In this chapter groups of poems depending upon the thematic similarity are made so as to consolidate the theme-wise study of his poetry. The different religious themes found in his poetry are

- i) The presence of God in nature.
- ii) The Supremacy, of the Virgin Mother Mary.
- iii) The concept of Trinity in Hopkins's poetry.
- iv) The crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ and
- v) His second coming.

a) Mystery Stressed Instressed In Nature:

To Hopkins Nature was the replica of the creator. Hopkins once said in a sermon:

"Gods utterance of himself in himself is GOD THE word, outside himself is this world.

This world then is word, expression, news of God."<sup>2</sup>

From the above mentioned words it is clear that Hopkins viewed God in his creation. He believed God was present in whatever He created. To this faith Hopkins applied his terms of 'inscape' and 'instress' is God's plan behind nature's inscapes. The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola and Ruskin's arch principle cumulatively concluded into everything in nature have becomes objects of praise. The objects of praise are God and nature, the art of God.

The poems dealing with the beauty of nature and its relation with God are "Gods Grander", "The Straight Night", "The windhover", "Pied Beauty" and "Hurrahing in Harvest".

'Inscape' and 'Instress' are the two major ideas reflected in his nature poetry. They bring out the preoccupation with the 'Self of things'. For Hopkins Inscape is where art and religion meet from wherein man could give

Praise to God, for the whole created world.  
While Instress is the hidden energy, that  
molded things into shapes, patterns and colors.  
It is the very energy of God. This leads us to  
a straightforward opinion that all nature was  
sacramental to Hopkins. It was the visible  
sign of an invisible intelligent and creative  
energy. The beauty of this visible sign was  
to be beheld and directed back to it's creator  
in the form of poems. Thus this Jesuit  
priest fulfilled the Ignatian principle of  
praising and serving God.

In "~~God Grandeur~~" Hopkins speaks of a  
universe charged with energy and beauty, the  
hiding face of God, when he says in the opening  
lines:

The world is charged with  
the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like  
shining from Shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness  
like the ooze of oil.<sup>3</sup>

For Hopkins God's presence was both beautiful and dangerous like lightning. In lines 3 and 4 the ooze oil is connected with the olive oil in era before Christ times where it was a symbol of power, kingship and priesthood. But here it bears the camouflage of painful crushing of human will under rigorous discipline, for the greater Glory of God. In lines 11-14 Hopkins points out of the creative energy i.e. The Holy Spirit, the source of life when he says:

Oh, morning at the brown brink  
eastward springs  
Because The Holy Spirit over the bent world  
broods with warm breast and  
with ah!bright wings.<sup>4</sup>

In these lines Hopkins has very intelligently handled the praise of scenic beauty, but he gives all the glory to the Holy Spirit, the creative energy of God.

" Hurrating in the Harvest". In the poet experiences the union of the nature with Christ as if He is alive and present in nature.

The 'instress' of a rapturous love's greeting is expressed by the poet on realizing its inscape. The nature around is but revealing God to the Poet, Hopkins grazes the nature with his 'Heart eye' witnessing the glory of God in the heavens down on earth, In the nature. The concluding lines expresses the Divinity in nature in ecstasy:

These things, these things were here  
and but the beholder  
Wanting ; which two when they  
once meet.<sup>5</sup>

The climax is needed an experience while being one with the earthly beauty, pulled magnetically to god in rapturous inscape which is very much a divine experience. This Divine oneness is the experience of the poet who visualizes God in the 'azurous hung hills', 'wind-walks' and 'silk-sack' 'clouds' and feels the divinity in the beauty of nature. The peace, joy and rapture that are experienced by a priest while meditating on God amidst nature are unique.

"The Starlight Night" also bears the marks of a vision of god and nature in perfect

collision. In this sonnet the poet looks at the stars and their radiance and purity wherein he visualizes the stars to be a symbol of God's radiance. He says:

Look, look a may-ness like an orchard bough!  
 Look march-bloom like on mealed with yellow  
 sallow!  
 These are indeed the barn; Within doors  
 house.<sup>6</sup>

The 'May-ness' refers to the richly massed stars which resemble May blossom on fruit tress, which seems to have given him great joy. It is a rare insight of beholding a glimpse of supernatural beauty in the natural world.

" The Windhover to Christ our Lord" is one of the best of all his poems and is dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ. The general theme is that brute, purely natural beauty of the splendour of Christ whos power and energy



are a billion times lovelier and dangerous  
according to the poet. He says :

Brute beauty and valour and art  
Oh, air pride plume here  
Buckle! And the fire that break  
from thee then, a billion  
Times told lovelier, more dangerous  
O my chevalier.<sup>7</sup>

Hopkins has not found a spiritual beauty in the material world. In fact he is pondering on the hidden splendour of sacrificial suffering. Hence the images of 'humbling' 'gashing' and 'galling' which recall the crucifixion. 'Buckle'— in this word is the inscape of the poet. He refers to the 'buckling' of the windhover as an ecstatic moment of recognition by the poet that the whole inscape is charged with the presence of God. Perhaps Hopkins wants to say that man should 'buckle' or humble himself to the will of God. Then through this 'instress' of self denial there would be the

inscape of a joyful spirit. It is " about the sacrifice of natural beauty and pride;so phrased as to imply the crucifixion of Christ; the archetype breaking of creation and of the creator within creation.<sup>8</sup>

In "Pied Beauty" the poet expresses feelings about the glory of God in the variegated patches of different colours and transient "inscapes" of the world.He praises God The Father for the volcano of everchanging nature around him. He gives glory to God for the 'dappled things',skies of purple colour,'fresh' 'fire-coal','chestnuts', 'landscapes' and all trades. But his main intention is revealed in the last two words " Praise Him". The poem reveals the poet to be in total harmony with its 'pied-beauty',in the context of bringing praise to its creator. Initially it strikes a reader that the first line of the poem is a thanksgiving to God, for having provided this wonderful world around us. But in the last line Hopkins's view about the relation of God and nature is expressed religiously :

He fathers forth whose beauty  
is past change Praise Him.<sup>9</sup>

Here Hopkins plainly states that God's beauty is past change. The universe is of diverse beauty ;but in its unique oneness it has been fathered by God that is it has been created in the image of its fatherhood. For Hopkins, God is the only wonderful example of 'piedness' and in the world the diversity of nature is integrated with God. Hopkins excavates the depth of the secret of knowing God through nature very aptly in J. H. Miller's words :

"Piedness is necessary to get knowledge of the world and God cannot be known directly as the pure one."<sup>10</sup>

How very true is this statement since there can be no relation of anything beautiful unless we have something to compare it with. Hopkins has said " Glory be to God for dappled things" but it is through 'fickle' 'freckled' things ,which combine in themselves that we can know Him and eventually praise Him.

The poems "Spring" and " Lantern out of doors" also written with the same view are fervent expressions of joy in the beauty of nature and a world " charged with the grandeur of God".

All the above poems that have been analyzed so far have the same Sacramental view of nature. Sacramental view is that " man is a compound matter and form and that his body; resurrected will express and implement his soul through all eternity.<sup>11</sup> A religious experience of beauty is the central theme of all these poems. The experiences are undoubtedly shaped and directed by the spiritual exercises of Ignatius Loyola who in his Principle And Foundation means to say that the expression and utterance of God in Himself is God. This world is then expression, news of God (i.e. nature). The purpose of creating it, its purport, its meaning and its end is God and its work is to praise Him.

b) 'The Supremacy Of Virgin Mother Mary'

She holds high motherhood

Towards all our ghostly good.<sup>12</sup>

In many of his poems Gerard Manley Hopkins pays homage to The Blessed virgin Mary. This is the direct outcome of his conversion to Catholicism. He honors her greatness as a Virgin Mother.

In this chapter an attempt is made to concentrate on the poems stressing on the virginity of Mother Mary. The poems "The May Magnificat", "Ad Mariam" "Rosa Mystica", " Ad Matrem Virgin", "The Blessed Virgin, compared to the Air we Breathe," have been studied in particular and others in general.

In "The Blessed Virgin compared to The Air we Breathe" Hopkins praises Mother Mary as:

Mary Immaculate  
Merely a Woman yet.<sup>13</sup>

The immaculate conception of Mother Mary is a strong belief in Catholicism which has been stressed by Hopkins. It states that Mary conceived without any human paternity. The Orthodox church lays complete stress on the purity of Mary which is liturgically described as immaculate. The definition by Pope Pius is that "The Blessed virgin Mary is the first woman who by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ. The saviour of the human race was preserved immune from every stain of original guilt."<sup>14</sup>

The poem "The Blessed Virgin compared to the The Air we Breathe" is a rich tribute to the Catholic doctrine of Mary being the sustainer of our supernatural life on having given birth to the Lord Jesus Christ. "She becomes sustainer" just like the air we breathe. We need air to breathe 'by lifes law' and our lungs 'draw and draw' because it is air that gives life and thus becomes our sustainer according to Hopkins. Similarly, through mother Mary the Messiah came down to earth through whom we can have everlasting life because she definitely did hold a 'high motherhood' for from her, flesh the Saviour of the world 'took flesh' is Hopkins understanding.

"Angelus ad Virginem" is another Marian Poem wherein Hopkins has given the exact Biblical picture of the virgin Mary's encounter with Gabriel, the heavenly messenger of God. In the first chapter of The Gospel of Luke in the New Testament a detailed account of the encounter of Mary with Gabriel the angelic host is given. Gabriel the angel of 'Heaven's kind.' Gabriel is the messenger sent by God Almighty from the time before Christ. This same

Gabriel was sent to the 'maiden sweet' i.e. Mary to convey a 'blissful tiding.' This angelic messenger greets Mary addressing her as a lady 'full of grace'. No woman in The Bible has been esteemed so highly by any angelic host. He further tells her the son of God who is heaven's light loves mankind so He's going to become a man i.e. He is going to take birth as a man and shall be "flesh of thee" to make mankind free 'of sin and devil's might.' Mary the gentle maiden 'surprisingly asks would it be possible to bear a child since she knew not man'. But the angel consoles her by saying that she would conceive 'through the Holy Ghost' On this Mary without any further questions surrenders herself to God's will to be fulfilled. Eventually, Mary conceives through the Holy Spirit and delivers a son . Thus God came down to the earth in the form of man in flesh and blood and was born of Mary. Here the theme definitely is the immaculate conception of Mother Mary and the fulfillment of the prophecy in the Old Testament of The Holy Bible :

Behold a virgin shall  
conceive and bear a son.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus was born supernaturally. "He came into this world to destroy the works that devil had done."<sup>16</sup> He paid the price of his life to buy us. That is what Hopkins means to say in these lines :

Flesh of the maiden bright  
Mankind free for to make  
of sin and devils might.<sup>17</sup>

After the glorification of the virgin Mary, the poet continues to pursue the Catholic belief in Mary being the mediatrix between God and man by pleading to her :

Thou matchless maiden mother  
pray for us to Him that He  
for to thy love above other,  
Away our sin and guilt should take,  
And clean of every stain us make.<sup>18</sup>

Hopkins asks Mother Mary who is "matchless maiden "mother to pray, to Jesus to free Hopkins from every guilt and sin for Jesus is "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the whole world."<sup>19</sup>

"Rosa Mystica " is a riddle. The Rose is a mystery to Hopkins. According to him it was



made of 'earth's mould' meaning that it was very much human like us; but it was lifted from 'mens eyes'. It grew in the will of God at Galilee and it is almost to thousand years ago since it ws 'born', 'bloomed' and had breathed its last. In the fourth stanza Hopkins solves the riddle saying 'Mary the virgin.<sup>20</sup> is the mystery. She is that rose. But the blossom and her rose is 'Christ Jesus our Lord, her God and her son'.<sup>21</sup> This is an emphatic statement which reveals that though Jesus was born to her, she was just like any other woman to him while He was her son and God to her. Jesus-'blossombright' was white in total purity but then he took the burden of sins of all mankind on him and 'ran in crimsoning i.e. shed his precious blood on the 'cross wood'. Throughout the poem Hopkins states in each stanza by making supplication to the Virgin Mother that he would be with her to look on her loveliness, to keep time with her, to worship the wounds of Jesus with her mother. And ultimately the poet prays to her, to draw him "to thy breast" and 'to thy rest' of glory divine. The poem is distinctly Catholic.

In " The May Magnificat" one comes across the religious ceremonies that are celebrated amongst Catholics like 'candlemass' a feast celebrated on 2nd February as Mary's purification after the birth of Christ and Lady Day is celebrated as the feast of Annunciation. Annunciation of the Blessed virgin Mary is the announcement by the angel Gabriel to Mary that she had been chosen to be the virgin mother of the Son of God. It is celebrated liturgically, in the East and the West on 25th March. 'May Magnificat' is Mary's hymn praising God. It is a song of praise and thanksgiving and rejoicing when Mary hears from her cousin Elizabeth that the babe in her womb is The Lord. As the spring approaches and the apples blossom and flowers bloom and the cuckoo gives that magical call. This magnificent event is nature's mystery:

This ecstasy all through mothering earth  
Tells mary her mirth till christs birth  
To remember and exultation  
In God who was her salvation.<sup>22</sup>

The jubilant atmosphere on the advent of spring, changes the whole atmosphere around us. The mother earth is filled with exuberance and

ecstasy and the total surrounding reminds us of Mary and her happiness when she was praised for being the mother of the Son of God who was to be born for the salavation of the whole world.

Hopkins's poems pay much tribute to mother Mary. He has praised her for being the mother of the Saviour of the world. Hopkins was a Catholic priest. e believed in the virgin mother Mary. Her viginity has been stressed by Hopkins's in different words like 'women without stain' and she has been also compared to the pure air that we breathe. Mary was pure and in purity. i.e. virginity did the Saviour of the world take birth. The saviour of this world was conceived without any human paternity. Even in our oldest Religious texts of India The Bhawishapuran the virgin birth of Jesus is mentioned. The Bhawishyapuran was written in 7th century A.D., wherein a sage in palestine tells a Shalivahan king from India on his enquiry:

"I am known as Jesus". (It is further mentioned) "Jesus was wheatish complexioned, and wearing white dress. He was a powerful

king God's son and born of virgin" 23

The virginity of Mary is mentioned even in the nineteenth chapter of the Quran. Which is entitled 'Mary'. She is the sole woman who is specifically called by name in the Quran. The Quran says:

"O mary ! Lo ! Allah hath chosen thee and made the pure and preferred thee above (all) the woman of creation." 24

This is an authentic proof of the truth of the fact of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

### c) The Concept Of 'Trinity'

In Hopkins's canon of religious poems there are some which play a distinct Anglican note. Anglicans are Christians who worship the Godhead i.e. The Father The Son and The Holy Spirit which is known as 'Trinity'. The word "Trinity" came to be used to summarize the belief that the three different persons in the Godhead are one.

The Anglicans look upon Jesus Christ as the only mediator between God and man. Mother Mary isn't worshiped or glorified like the Catholics but only confessed as the virgin mother of Lord Jesus Christ. It is yet ironical that all the poems wherein there are shades of anglicanism and where Mother Mary is not worshiped were written after his conversion to Catholicism.

In "Summa" Hopkins he began the poem by almost confessing the true belief of an Anglican. He says:

The best ideal is the true  
and other truth is none.  
All glory be ascribed to  
The holy three in one.<sup>25</sup>

Hopkins has emphasized that there is no other truth and that, 'All glory' should be given to the Holy three in one. This means that God the father, God the Son and God the Holy spirit are one and they alone are to be worshiped and glorified and Hopkins emphasizes the same truth.

In "St. Thomae Aquinatis Rhythmus and SS. Sacranentum" Hopkins echoes the same praise in giving glory to the Godhead He says:

Godhead I adore thee.<sup>26</sup>

He says that he believes in what "Gods Son" did for him and he takes that 'for truth'. Throughout the poem Hopkins has lifted high the name of Jesus praising Him as 'Living Bread' and pleading him to 'feed and feast' his spiritual thirst so that he grows stronger in his faith 'each day'. Hopkins seems to strive for satisfaction in the revelation of the glory of God; so he pleads God to quench his thirst of gazing Him 'face to face' and be blessed for ever by the glorious sight of the Saviour.

In "Jesus Dulcis Memoria" Hopkins says there is none as:

Jesus God the Father's Son.<sup>27</sup>

The entire poem is on dependency of ones self on Jesus for all that is essential for a humans to live in total peace. He expresses his faith on Jesus by calling him hope for those 'who go astray', compassionate to those who ask for his

guidance and help in leading them in life's way. The mercies of Jesus Christ are measureless to Hopkins. He is a springing well and those who 'drink' of him that is come to know will thirst for more of Him. Jesus is the hope in ones utter desolate condition in grief and tears. Hopkins declares Christ to be 'our delight'.

In "Thee God I come from" the poet cries out to the Lord Jesus in repentance for having turned away from him and hid. Further Hopkins moves on to the first person of the Godhead the father and confesses that he is bad "yet thy child " and pleads:

Father, be thou me, since I see  
with thy might that thou art mild.<sup>28</sup>

Hopkins brings the Heavenly father to remembrance His promise of Him being slow to anger. Hopkins says 'thou art mild' so 'spare me' from your wrath. In the fourth para the priest and the poet show their existence but realise their helplessness to do anything on their own so they ask God 'Help me Sir' only

then I can fulfill your will. There is a sudden change in the flow of Hopkins's thoughts when it comes to the last paragraph which speaks for itself condensing the gist of Christianity.

Jesus Christ sacrificed on the cross  
 Moulded he in maiden's womb  
 Lived and died and from the tomb  
 Rose in power and is our Judge that comes  
 to deal our doom.<sup>29</sup>

Hopkins wrote 'St. Thecla' in memoriam of a woman martyr who is considered to be the first woman to be martyred. She was converted on hearing the sermons of St. Pauls who spoke of "God the Father and His Son". He also spoke of virtue and vice. Thecla was obsessed by the teachings of the saint who was a Greek convert that she was charmed by the 'Charity of Christ' was engaged to be married but on overhearing St. Paul's preaching was converted. God miraculously rescued her from death forced by men for her faith.

Hopkins in a very lowly spirit declares himself to be unholy, compared to the



'sweet living of his friends in his poem "Myself unholy". As he finds a fault in one and another fault in another he realised that all those faults are in him. So when he mirrors himself he is ashamed of his 'self'. And ultimately he runs to the Lord and says:

Save Christ: to Christ I  
look, on Christ I Call.<sup>30</sup>

As a rule man is insufficient in himself. It is his free will that wavers him and sways him like a reed to and fro.

Since man is a born sinner he cannot change his sinful nature how hard he tries. He needs the help of God. That is why Hopkins asks Christ to save him.

" He hath abolished the old drouth is a deeply religious poem written with the spell of mystery. The poem reveals the purpose of Christ coming down to earth. The whole mankind was governed by the law i.e. 'the old drouth'. But God in his mercy abolished the old drouth and taught the lips to quote "that I shall live, I shall not die"<sup>31</sup>

d) Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ

The most important theme that Hopkins has dealt with in his poems is that of the Crucifixion of Lord Jesus Christ and His Resurrection on which is the very soul of Christianity. His poem 'Barnfloor and winepress' gives one a pictorial idea of the crucifixion and pangs of suffering borne by Jesus. The poem begins with the words:

Thou that on sins ways starvest  
Behold we have the Joy in harvest.<sup>32</sup>

This depicts that the son of man bore upon Him all the sins of mankind so that we would have the 'Joy in harvest' that is the resurrection. The Bible says, "without shedding blood, there is no remission of sins".<sup>33</sup> and further in the Bible it is written that "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sins".<sup>34</sup> The soul that sinneth shall die. So He died on our behalf. He suffered for the sake of mankind. For all the mankind He was 'lifted from the roots'. He gave his glory and power humbled himself and took human birth. "He was born not

of blood nor of the will of the man but of God".<sup>35</sup> Thus becoming the 'First fruits'. Only because he loved us he allowed himself to be 'Sheaved in cruel bands' i.e. His hands and feet were nailed to the cross, his body was bruised. For us 'the vine' was fenced with thorn. Here vine symbolises Christ who was crowned with thorns upon his head. He took all the sins, sicknesses and diseases, curses, sorrows, pains and poverty of all mankind upon himself and "The wine was racked from the press."<sup>36</sup> Thus Christ died for our sake on the cross. He was laid in the tomb of Joseph a rich man from Arimanthea, who borrowed the body from the Pontius Pilate and laid the 'vine leafless lifeless' in his own new tomb. And this 'vine' which signifies Christ :

On easters morn the Tree was forth

In forty days reached heaven from earth.<sup>37</sup>

On the third day after His crucifixion Jesus Christ rose again from the dead and was on earth for forty days appearing to his disciples and other men. Then he ascended to heaven. Hopkins gives a message of hope by asking the

weary to come into the shade,' of the resurrected Christ. This resurrection of Christ is a unique miracle of human history. Christ came out of the grave immortal, totally triumphant over death. Hopkins, so called him the 'Firstfruit'; which means the only one to have risen from the dead. By asking to come into the shade, Hopkins invites all to come in living touch with Jesus Christ for eternal life. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared and told his disciples to take the 'Good news' of his resurrection to the whole world. And here Hopkins does it in his way through poetry.

Dealing with the suffering of Christ on the cross Hopkins does not ignore the total submission that Christ did, when He gave up His spirit on the Cross. There is a message and a lesson for all. Jesus was the son of God equally powerful. But He laid aside His divine prerogatives and learned obedience. All the while he lived here, He was living as man ought to live ; in full fellowship with God the Father and absolutely fulfilling His will. In "New Readings" Hopkins deals with the question

that must have raised in the minds of several person over the ages that the Son of God who could feed five thousand but didn't command a 'legion of winged things' to rescue him from the terrible cup that he had to drink. But the entire beauty lies in this very fact that He never did anything because he had laid aside His divine. The great ~~egony~~ of all human history was voiced in Jesus's cry on calvary. "My God My God why hast thou forsaken me ?".<sup>38</sup>

Heavens fellowship the very intimacy of the Godhead was broken at calvary but for the sole purpose that we might live in an everlasting life. Hopkins says :

"CHRIST at all hazards fruit that shewed".<sup>39</sup>

He lived to glorify His fathers name. On the whole He lived a life on earth as a man ought to live in full fellowship with the father and absolutely fulfilling his will. This final great act of obedience at calvary was but a life time of total obedience to his father.

In "windhover" (To Christ our Lord)  
Hopkins praises the Lord :

Brute Beauty and valour act, oh!  
air, pride,plume here  
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks  
from thee them, a billion  
Times told lovelier,more dangerous,  
O my Chevalier !<sup>40</sup>

Hopkins attempt to say that christ's social life was indeed beautiful and sacredly pretty. But 'billion times' lovelier was his sacrifice on the cross. To Hopkins his sacrifice was a victorious attempt in the physical as well as spiritual realm. The 'living bird' with all its expertise in fight with whom the poet has almost identified himself because a source of disdain for the poet, for he would like to see the 'windhover''buckle' along with its 'valour' 'pride' and 'plume' for a transformation from the physical to the spiritual as Christ on his sacrifice migrated from the physical realm to the spiritual to reign forever in the heavenlies.

The fact of crucifixion and its purpose has been stressed in a few other poems apart from their thematic value in 'Thee God I come from' Margaret Citheroe' and 'Wreck of the Deutschland'.

e) His Second Coming

"Behold I am coming soon  
Amen, Come, Lord Jesus."<sup>41</sup>

"The Horror and the Havoc and the Glory of it" i.e. the terror of Christ's second coming and the glory of beholding Him face has been the most important of all the themes that have been traced so far in his poems. The authenticity of Christ's second coming is universally considered, hence its importance. The above mentioned theme has been very distinctly apprehended in Hopkins's greatest and longest work of his life time, viz. "The wreck of the Deutschland". The "Loss of Euridyce" is but a imitation of 'The wreck of Deutschland' obviously bearing the same theme. "The Nature

is a Heraclitean fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection" too is a study of christian belief of final judgment and eternal life.

" The wreck of Deutschland is a thoroughly ' Apocalyptic' poem. This word is based on the Greek verb "apokalupto".<sup>42</sup> Apocalyptic books are usually full of visions and symbols which attempt to reveal divine mysteries. Hopkins firmly believed in the Apocalypse of St. John of Patmos recorded in the Book of Revelations. Apocalyptic writers always used symbolic language and normally presented their message in the form of visions. There was usually a messianic aspect as to what they wrote, and the present evil age was commonly contrasted with the evil age to come. The final judgment was a continuing theme. A period of trouble was usually described as occurring just prior to the end of time and the ushering in of the golden age.

Hopkins believed that the day of divine judgment was at hand with it the end of the world. He was dismayed, depressed and dejected at the low moral standards which were



pulling down his country men . So when he was to write after breaking a silence of seven years, he wanted to make his country men realize that they were living in a Godless age and heading towards destruction. He wanted to give them a very genuine and realistic vision of the future and for a priest cum poet, nothing else but the Apocalypse of St. Johns would serve else but the purpose.

"The wreck of the Deutschland" is a complete Apocalypse in itself. With St. Johns Apocalypse as the model it fulfills the divine purpose of flowing the horror of HIS second coming as a judge and the joy of Heaven.

"The wreck of Deutschland" though an occasional ode, is much more than a tribute paid to the Franciscan nuns who died in the wreck. Hopkins obtained details of the wreck such as the weather conditions, the number of passengers on the board etc. from the

newspapers. But from the first stanza the allegorical purpose were clearly visible.

There is a great similarity between the "Apocalypse " and "The wreck of the Deutschland ". Both are divided into two parts; a short prologue embodying the private vision of one of God's seers, full of swooning terror and comfort and a bigger sections to follow in which terrible punishments and warning are narrated as the fate of man who rejects Christ as the Lord. In the second stanza Hopkins says:

"Thy terror, O Christ, O God  
Thou knowest the walls, altar  
and hour and night".<sup>44</sup>

This is a warning of the hour to come when Christ is to come to judge and the time of his coming is known only to God the father. No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven or the Son, but only the Father, "So one must be ready because the Son of man will come at an hour when you do not expect him".<sup>45</sup>

When Hopkins says :

The swoon of a heart that the  
 sweep and the hurt of thee trod  
 Hard down with a horror of height  
 And the midriff astra in with  
 leaning of, laced with fire of stress.<sup>46</sup>

He means to say that though there is  
 undergoing of stress and trod in this life. But  
 ultimately there is peace only with Christ.  
 This is the swoon.

In The Book of Revelation, in the  
 middle of a vision St. John falls at the feet of  
 Christ as if dead. He was filled with strange  
 fear and awe on beholding the countenance of  
 the Lord, which was as 'as the sun shinesth in  
 soothing hand upon the terrified dreamer saying:

"fear not, I am the first and last;  
 I am he that liveth and  
 was dead; and behold, I am  
 alive for evermore, Amen; and  
 have the keys of hell and of death."<sup>47</sup>

Hopkins derives a sort of comfort from the terror itself. Since his second coming is inevitable, we are to behold 'The frown of his face' but then Hopkins says that the way out of this awful terror is to :

To flash from the flame to  
the flame then, tower from the  
grace to the grace.<sup>48</sup>

The underlying idea would seem to be explained in notes entitled "On personality, Grace and Free-will" in his sermons. Here Hopkins suggests that each man's life may be lived on a series of different degrees of moral goodness, each state called a 'pitch'. God's grace allows a man to taste the degree of goodness above the one in which he is already living. In order to rise to the higher 'pitch' man has merely to accept the opportunity. To stay at the new pitch further grace is required, that is what it means by 'grace to the grace.' And it was this, mystery to be 'stressed' and 'instressed'. When the terror of

the wreck affected the ship and the nun was terrified she shouted :

Hither then, last or first,  
 To hero of calvary, Christ feet  
 Never ask if meaning it wanting  
 it, warned of it means go.<sup>49</sup>

Hopkins aims at persuades the whole of Victorian England to the warning to fall at the feet of the 'hero of calvary' but for forgiveness saving themselves from the terror to come.

The poet prophet worships both nature of God, in this ode. The Christ of the Father compassionate and the rebel avenger who checks humanity's, malice with flood, wreck and storm.

The second part of the ode is the announcement of its relationship with revelations of the horror and havoc of His second coming in this apocalyptic language full of imagery. It to be understood that Apocalypse is written in a

coded language, a sort of riddle we ought to crack, when Hopkins says :

Some find me a sword; some  
The flange and the rail; flame,  
Fang or flood, goes death on drum  
And storms bugle his fame.<sup>50</sup>

This is apocalyptic language, It is for us to crack the coded language. The imagery is condensed from various chapters of the Book of Revelation. In this stanza a drum and a bugle proclaim the usual apocalyptic scenes of death by sword, flame, famine, storms, earthquakes before his coming.

Northrope ~~tyre~~ calls typical metaphors of apocalyptic mood. i.e. "ordeals of water and fire', 'The image of the 'garden of the sheepfold', fold', of 'sun moon and stars, the collusive bestiality of men and nature operating according to God's blueprint". 51

The events of the wreck with its 'all fire glances' 'and fall- gold mercies' both signify the wrath and the mercifulness of God.

Red, white and gold are the colours repeatedly described in the Apocalypse. Whenever an angel appears before St. John in his dream to announce destruction at sea, the prophecy is accompanied by the fire blood, water imagery of red and white. When gold is combined with the red and white, St. John is indicating the divine element present in the destructive plan.

At first St. John saw Christ in his vision. He saw Him in His glory and splendour. "He wore a golden girdle and his eyes were as a flame of fire. His feet were burnished like brass, as if they burned in a furnace and his voice" to the terror filled prophet was very much equivalent "as the sound of multitude of waters".<sup>52</sup> Here the flames and water signify the natural agents of destruction. As once God has used water to destroy the inhabitants on earth, in floods, in Noah's<sup>53</sup> time. The thunder and lightning were supposed to be instructive. Hopkins here by stating all these images of destruction, as if warns mankind of the wrath of God and seems to be reminding

Christ's warning to all in 'sins deed share'. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten ; be zealous therefore and repent".<sup>54</sup> Hopkins was priest indeed.

In this way Hopkins interpreted the Deutschland's episode as an opportunity for the souls on the board to reap eternal glory and bliss by confession. The Christ of "The wreck of the Deutschland" is the Christ of Revelation, 'The son of man', 'the slain lamb', and 'the Bridegroom' of the New Jerusalem.'

The tall run played an important role as Hopkins's Apocalyptic Christ. She was the mouthpiece of St. John, 'a prophetess' anticipating the second coming and the day of judgment. When the run cries out for her crown, in her longing for the accomplishment of martyrdom, she becomes the body of the Church under persecution and virgin Mary, the woman with the crown of twelve stars in revelation, who "being with child, cried fravailing in birth to be delivered, and she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a



rod of iron and her child was caught up in God and his throne"<sup>55</sup> i.e. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Hopkins visualizes in her, the triple role of martyr, prophet and bride of the lamb of revelation :

"The bride belongs to the bridegroom  
The father who attends  
the bridegroom waits and listens  
for him, and is full of joy when  
he hears the bridegrooms voice."<sup>56</sup>

The tall run is a perfect emblem of the bride of Christ, who had relied on Christ in total faith and submission. The bride is a symbol of the Church and the friends of the bride the believers. So Hopkins stresses that Jesus is coming for those who loved Him and mankind should look forward to His return with great joy and gladness. But Jesus himself is also looking forward to this time, when He and his beautiful bride (congregation) begin an eternal life of believers, but then one must be ready for His coming or else He will be doomed to

destruction. We shall be ready only when He  
 'easters'<sup>57</sup> in us. That is when we are risen  
 with Christ triumphantly by abiding his words.  
 i.e. by being born again in the spirit of God.

The wreck of the Deutschland indeed  
 functions like a life-giving fire and life  
 giving water bringing the good news of God. It  
 is a warning and a good news letter.

"That Nature is a Heraclitean fire and  
 of the comfort of the Resurrection" is a philo-  
 religious poem with the ritual message of  
 destruction and Resurrection. Its philosophical  
 background goes back to the teachings of Hera-  
 clitus. "Heraclitus (535B,C,-475B,C), believed  
 that all nature would ultimately resolve itself  
 into fire. Everything was in a state of  
 flux ;not even man's body or soul could escape  
 destruction".<sup>57</sup>

It is ~~a~~ contended that the Heralitian  
 belief is that the earth would be consumed by

fire one day, so Hopkins says the Heraclitian dogma would :

"Delightfully the bright wind boisterous ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare"<sup>58</sup>

That is the 'bright wind' meaning fire would fight out the earth to its barrenness and doom it to destruction. Hopkins speaks of the destruction of nature by 'man - marks's 'cloud puffaballs', due to the industrial hazards. Man himself stands responsible for the same. Similarly, Heraclitus believed that man's soul was 'a star' meaning fire and that it could be destroyed by 'water' embodying sin. All these consequences of his sinful life results in his death. But Hopkins has a relieving message :

Enough ! the Resurrection!<sup>59</sup>

Hopkins clearly points to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is clear that resurrection of Jesus Christ was a unique personal experience. While there is a sense in which the whole mankind shares the results of what he did, the physical

experience of death and resurrection are still ahead for us where as it has been completed for Him as believed. But the Bible says :

"We died and our life is now hidden with Christ in God",<sup>60</sup> and that we have been raised with Christ. Hopkins concludes :

"In a flash, at a trumpet  
 Crash,  
 I am all at once what  
 Christ is : Since he was what  
 I am .<sup>61</sup>

These two lines are apocalyptic. The trumpet bears significance of the Biblical reference in the New Testament :

"At that time the Son  
 of Man will appear in the  
 sky, and all the nations  
 of the earth will mourn. They  
 will see the Son of Man  
 coming on the clouds of the  
 sky with power and great  
 glory and he will send his

angels with a loud trumpet  
call, and they will gather his  
elect from the fore winds  
from one end of the heavens  
to other"<sup>62</sup>

So Hopkins found complete solace and consolation in the 'trumpet call' because he was sure that he was one of God's elect on earth and the angels would definitely gather him as they will gather believers from the four winds i.e. four directions. Now Hopkins has a message that there is indeed no need to fear even if one has to die before Christ's coming. For "The resurrection of the believers will be first of all"<sup>63</sup> so Hopkins means to say that there is no fear of destruction or there is no need of mourning and greiving as others who have no hope, as just at the Lord Jesus died, and rose again, so God will bring back from the dead all those who have fallen asleep in Christ. Hopkins has emphasized the theme of resurrection because without the hope of resurrection, the Christian faith is pointless. In fact, if there is no resurrection for us, then

Christ was not raised from the dead either. But  
Christ was raised and we too will be raised<sup>64</sup>  
is Hopkins's faith.

That Hopkins bears burden for the  
Victorian England when wrote about 'His Second  
Coming' in his various poems is very clear.  
Hopkins's mission of a priest is emblemed  
throughout the poem.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES.

## Abbreviations

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.T. - New Testament

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