AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS ON THE POETRY OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

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CHAPTER I.

THE PROBLEM

It is the purpose of this paper to investigate the relation of Gerard Manley Hopkins the poet to Gerard Hopkins the priest. Since both of these professions require time, energy, and devotion from their followers, one might conclude that the one would cancel out the other. The prevailing opinion of critics is that the Jesuit in Gerard Manley Hopkins crushed the poet:

Too many of them [his critics] have felt that he was a poet in spite of his conversion to Catholicism and his membership in the Society of Jesus, that there was a fundamental incompatibility between his genius and temperament on one side and his religious ideals and dedication on the other.  

A few critics, however, recognize that his training as a Jesuit provided Hopkins with a source of inspiration and a broader point of view for surveying the world around him. The poetry Hopkins wrote before his conversion was competent, even skillful, but his later poetry was inspired. His inspiration came from his religious devotion.

Hopkins, considered either as a man, a poet, or a religious, will probably always remain something of a puzzle. Catholics have problems understanding him as a

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convert, Protestants do not understand him as a Catholic, and as a poet he arouses further controversy. Many of the difficulties and complexities of Hopkins are briefly indicated by Alan Heuser in *The Shaping Vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Heuser's study is too limited to be more than an introduction to Hopkins' scholarship. A valuable comparative analysis of Hopkins' poetry is Elsie Phare's *The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, but it too is limited in length. John Pick in *Gerard Manley Hopkins, Priest and Poet* gives a short biography of Hopkins while defending his thesis that Hopkins' being a priest limited the volume of his poetry but also enriched it. Pick has also written a good basic guide to Hopkins' scholarship which appears in Faverty's *The Victorian Poets, a Guide to Research*. In it Pick cites bibliographical materials, editions and selections, biographical studies, and critical studies; Pick discusses the need for a satisfactory biography of Hopkins and the controversy about the effects of art and religion in Hopkins' life. An interesting

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biography has been written by Eleanor Ruggles who makes no claim of settling any controversies. She indicates some problems in understanding Hopkins and leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions. The centennial of Hopkins' birth in 1944 called forth tributes from many periodicals; the Kenyon Review devoted two issues (Summer and Autumn, 1944) to Hopkins. Immortal Diamond, a collection of articles on Hopkins, was intended for his centennial year but was delayed by World War II. Some of its articles are very helpful—the chronological bibliography up to 1946, a glossary of Hopkins' unusual word usage, and an explanation of the Society of Jesus.

One can find many articles about Hopkins' technique, themes, and inspiration. Several of his individual poems have been analyzed, "The Windhover" is especially popular. Father McNamee of the Society of Jesus traced the influence and spirit of the Spiritual Exercises in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and pointed out that many indications of the influence of the Spiritual Exercises can be found in other poems of Hopkins, although no other poem develops the four

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"weeks" of the Exercises so completely. Father McNamee's indication of the extended influence of the Spiritual Exercises in Hopkins' poetry suggested the topic for investigation treated in this study.

To study the interrelation of priest and poet, this paper will treat the life of Gerard Manley Hopkins, the historical foundation and the organization of the Society of Jesus, and the effects of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola on the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins.
CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born at Stratford, Essex, on July 28, 1844; he was the first child of Catherine and Manley Hopkins. The Hopkins family as a whole was creative and artistic. Gerard Manley's first ambition was to be a painter, and he did have considerable skill and facility in his sketches. The other siblings of the family had various talents in art and music. Manley Hopkins was interested in scholarly study and wrote a history of Hawaii and a book of poems. "Gerard Hopkins had inherited his mother's gentleness, her reflectiveness, combined with his father's lively imagination and originality of thought." As a schoolboy, Gerard Hopkins was liked by his school chums. When Hopkins left home to attend Highgate, his mother made him promise to read the Bible. At first his schoolmates teased Hopkins about reading the Bible every night; later he won their respect, and they stopped teasing him about this ritual. Hopkins' sense of fun and his facility with rhyme and cartoons contrasted with an occasional stiffness or formality of manner. That Hopkins got along well with his fellows is indicated by his being nicknamed "Skin." Although Hopkins associated fairly easily with

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the students, he did not always fare so well with the teachers. Hopkins, who always resisted injustice, became a rebel against the severe discipline of the Victorian era schoolmaster.

One incident relevant to Hopkins, the schoolboy rebel, centered around a bet between Hopkins and his friends. Hopkins maintained that he could endure without drinking any liquid for a specified length of time. The time limit was either one week or three--witnesses' reports cannot be reconciled. No matter what the period, Hopkins was succeeding and students were fascinated by the appearance of his black tongue when the school authorities heard of the bet and stopped Hopkins' endurance contest.\(^2\) This event indicates the great will power and control over himself which Hopkins possessed even at this early age.

Hopkins was fascinated by the sounds of words and heroic deeds. One of his earliest poems, "The Escorial," describes a display of heroism which moved him deeply. This poem won the school prize and indicates something of Hopkins' precocious scholarship. "At the battle of St. Quentin, between the French and Spaniards, Phillip vowed The Escorial to St. Lawrence, the patron saint of the

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 22-23.
The subject matter of this poem, the heroism of the Catholic faith, might indicate an early interest in the history of the Catholic church.

In 1863 Hopkins matriculated from Highgate Grammar School to the freer intellectual atmosphere of Oxford University. At Oxford he followed his scholarly bent, going on long walks, sketching freely the countryside and old buildings and churches. In his painting as in his other creative activities, Hopkins displayed a fluctuating interest; his concentration was intense but brief. The most important effect of his attending Oxford, however, was the religious conversion Hopkins experienced.

At Oxford the influence of Newman and Pusey was very strong. In addition, Balliol, the college that Hopkins attended, was a boiling pot of religious ideas. All opinions were listened to, from those of heretics to those of respected churchmen. "It is worth noting that Hopkins' tutor at Balliol was James Riddell, a Puseyite." 4 From the time he entered Oxford until the time of his conversion, Hopkins' religious beliefs were changing, leaning toward Rome although he did not recognize it in

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4Ruggles, op. cit., p. 39.
the early stages. During this time Hopkins was fasting in search of the perfection he describes in "The Habit of Perfection." This religious upheaval of their son upset Catherine and Manley Hopkins who were moderate High Church people. Catherine especially worried about her son's fasting since his health had never been good. In spite of his agitation of spirit and mental uncertainty, Hopkins left the University in June, 1867, with a Double First in literae humaniores and the rank of top man for "form."

Having joined the Catholic Church in 1866, Hopkins saw that his final destination was to be the priesthood. He consulted Newman in his actions after his conversion, and when he later told Newman of his decision to join the Society of Jesus, Newman agreed that the Jesuits would best suit Hopkins' temperament. "In September, 1866, when Hopkins at the age of twenty-four entered the Jesuit Novitiate, the entire direction of his life was changed."5 Although the Hopkins family disapproved his decision, they maintained contact with their son and brother according to the limitation of the Society.

Hopkins himself says little about his first few weeks in the Jesuit order. There is no record of how he felt when he arrived at Roehampton where he began his training.

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Steinmetz,\(^6\) however, describes some of the training the Jesuit novice experiences. The first trial for the novice is the thirty day self-examination aided by the **Spiritual Exercises**. During these thirty days and the two years of probation, the novice is examined very carefully and guided firmly by his examiners and superiors. Both body and mind are kept busy. On all occasions the pride, self-love, willfulness, and dedication of the novice are studied. Since there are no servants in the house, the novices are employed in every menial task. The mental occupation of the novice consists of studying spirituality, learning how to meditate, and acquiring a habit of self-possession and self-restraint. Throughout the probationary period, obedience to superiors is stressed and disobedience is denounced. The dedication of the novice is continually being tested. When the two year probation is finished, the Jesuit takes his first vows and moves on to further intellectual studies which are discontinued during the novitiate.

In September, 1870, two years after entering the novitiate, Hopkins took his first vows in the order. Since he had his university degree, Hopkins went directly from Roehampton to Stonyhurst for his three years philosophy course. From his arrival at Stonyhurst until

his entrance at St. Beuna's in 1874, Hopkins wrote more fully and personally in his journal. The journal for these years is full of rich fragments of observations and descriptions--reference material for future poems. Although the journal contains evidence of Hopkins' continued poetic interest during this time, the priest did not feel that he should write without the consent of his superiors. On the occasion in 1875 of the deaths of five Franciscan nuns while they were sailing for England after being exiled from Germany, one of the older priests mentioned to Hopkins that he wished someone would write a memorial to those nuns. Taking this conversation as a request for his poetry, Hopkins wrote "The Wreck of the Deustchland." This poem is the first of his mature work and contains indications of Loyola's influence through the Spiritual Exercises. Not only can one see the influence of the Jesuit religious teachings developing in Hopkins' poetry, but one can see the effect of his teaching "Rhetoric" at Manresa House. His first teaching assignment involved the area of classical literature and prosody. His intensive study of classical metrical systems and devices affected his own distinctive idiom utilized in "The Wreck of the Deutschland."

During his assignment in Wales, Hopkins' creativity was most inspired. There he found a personal easiness of spirit and an unhindered inspiration. Although his
later assignments did not agree with his temperament and were physically demanding, he went willingly, as a loyal Jesuit, to those places he was assigned. These assignments changed rather frequently. After his ordination in 1877, he was successively select preacher, missioner, parish priest, and teacher of classics in Jesuit establishments from London and Oxford to Liverpool, Glasgow, Chesterfield, and Stonyhurst.

Always very conscientious as to his religious duties, Hopkins wrote sermons, comments on the Spiritual Exercises, and poetry; he further corresponded with his family and literary friends, notably Robert Bridges, Coventry Patmore, and Richard Watson Dixon. He dabbled in music and art for relief and performed the duties of teaching--preparing lectures and grading numerous examinations. Never being very robust, Hopkins suffered with hemorrhoids for a long time and submitted to surgery only when he lost so much blood that he was frightened. When he was appointed Professor of Classics in University College, Dublin, in 1884, "Hopkins had not long to live and perhaps some instinct told him this, since it was his years in Ireland that saw him, in a final bid for accomplishment, launch the greatest number of his fragmentary ventures." 7 Hopkins died in April, 

7 Ruggles, op. cit., p. 251.
1889, of typhoid fever; both his poor physical condition and the virulence of the Dublin drains caused his death.
The last words Hopkins managed to whisper were, "I am so happy, I am so happy." Hopkins was buried in the plot held by his Society at Glasnevin.
CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

The Society of Jesus was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola. St. Ignatius himself, although he was reared as a Catholic, converted from the worldly life of a courtier and soldier to that of a religious devotee and pilgrim. During the period of his conversion and his early service to humanity, Ignatius recorded the steps of his own religious feelings and understandings. When his band of followers established themselves as a religious order, Ignatius used the account of his own religious conversion to prepare the Spiritual Exercises, a manual for the training of Jesuits.

The last son of eleven children, Ignatius was born in the castle of his father Don Bertram, hidalgo of Ognez and Loyola, in Guipucoa, a province of Biscay, in the mighty kingdom of Spain in the year 1491.¹ In spite of the dissipation of the life he lived in his father's house, "Ignatius had certain principles of religion and

¹ There is some doubt about the year when Ignatius was born. Polanco makes in his Life of Ignatius confused and contradictory statements about the age of Ignatius. Still more puzzling is the fact that Ignatius in his Confessions makes two statements about his age which cannot both be exact.²

probity. He was careful to observe decorum even in his excesses." On one occasion Ignatius refused to accept his share of riches from a town his company had captured. Ignatius hated gambling but enjoyed poetry; without any formal education, he composed some very good verse in Spanish and occasionally used pious subjects. Ignatius' most outstanding talent was his ability to manipulate other people. Many times he used this talent to settle quarrels among the soldiers and to stifle popular commotions.

The conversion of Ignatius occurred more dramatically than that of Hopkins:

The year 1521 is the turning point in Loyola's life. From a self-indulgent boy seeking his own pleasures, he became an austere and steadfast man, following the gleam that lighted up the path of grievous self-denial.  

At the battle of Pampeluna, Ignatius was wounded in both legs. He had conducted himself heroically, gaining recognition from his enemies as well as his allies. He survived the battle but almost succumbed to the treatment of his physicians. For the sake of his vanity, he stoically underwent the torture of having a protruding bone cut out and his leg stretched for several days.


When this procedure failed, his handicap ended his career as a soldier. Ignatius, confined to bed, asked for a chivalric romance to read, but was given instead the *Lives of the Saints*. "He read, and pondered as he read, and then his musing struck off a bright idea. 'What if I were to do what St. Francis did? what St. Dominic achieved?'" Since he could no longer follow the courtly ideal, Ignatius saw his destiny in the religious ideal. He chose a new ambition to replace the old.

His conversion began with the wish to rival the saints in self-denial and in penance for his sins. Then he wished to practice these austerities to please God. His ideal in all this was a solitary one and the Christian life seemed to him to lie entirely between himself and God. He later realized that he must also share himself and his religion with the rest of humanity.

In his early solitary purpose, Ignatius attempted a journey to the Holy Land. When he could not offer his service to the heathens of Jerusalem, Ignatius returned to Venice where he preached of his own inner peace and joy. Although he was in his thirties, Ignatius became a student in Barcelona in order to improve himself as a religious missionary. He had some trouble studying, but with time, he was able to complete his studies.

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5Steinmetz, *op. cit.*, I, p. 118.
6Van Dyke, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
but his study habits improved when he approached school as a part of his religious duties. As he progressed in his studies, he attended the University of Paris (1528-1535), the College of Montaigue, and the College of Sainte-Barbe where he worked on his Master's Degree. In addition to studying, Ignatius continued to teach and to administer to the sick. No task was too loathsome in his service to the spirit and physical body of mankind. His livelihood depended on the generosity of those who accepted and followed his teaching; he used only enough to keep himself alive and passed on any excess of gifts to people more needy than he. Several times he was called before the Inquisition because of his teaching, but each time he appeared before them boldly to defend himself. Usually he was exonerated by the investigation of the Inquisition although once he was ordered to stop preaching for five years.

At Sainte-Barbe Ignatius won over the first six of his nucleus of followers. They were Peter Lefevre, the only priest; Xavier, afterwards a saint; Laynez; Salmeron; Bobadilla; Rodriguez—all famous men in the Society. Ignatius demonstrated his leadership ability in his wisdom in choosing and training his six converts. He allowed them more than two years to complete their studies and consider their decision carefully. Finally, in August, 1937, this group took their vows of dedication
in a monastery in Montmartre, France.

The exact words of the vow have not been preserved, but they promised before God to go to Jerusalem, giving up their family and all worldly goods except fare for the journey, in order to devote themselves at the holy city to helping of their neighbors. 7

Possibly Ignatius feared that again the trip to the Holy Land would be blocked because their alternate plan was to go to Rome to ask the Pope when and how they could serve God and their neighbors.

After Claudius Lejay, Codure, and Bronet joined the band, they set out for Rome. On their journey these ten men decided unanimously to call themselves the "Company of Jesus." Again Ignatius' leadership ability is demonstrated by this unity and agreement within the small group of followers. Ignatius succeeded in welding nine men of various ages and backgrounds into a zealous group all desirous of serving God in the same way. Upon reaching Rome, Ignatius' group went before the Pope who was impressed with Ignatius, one of the few who envisioned a far-reaching reform of the Catholic Church. Pope Paul III, who was faced with the threat of Protestantism, issued the Bull which established the Society of Jesus on September 27, 1540.

After the establishment of the Society, Ignatius began the arduous task of organization for which he was

7Van Dyke, Ibid., p. 94.
In their ideal of living there was no room for ordinary pleasures or natural disgusts. They were determined to strip their life absolutely bare of all motives except obedience to the Church, the wish to help the sins and sorrows of men, joy in God and the fellowship of those like minded with themselves.\(^8\)

For six years after the Constitution of the Company was approved, the original group devoted themselves to missionary work. The Pope recognized the valuable work the Society was doing and enlarged its powers greatly in 1546. "It is unquestionable that they [Jesuits] greatly aided to save the Church when the old monastic

\(^8\) Steinmetz, op. cit., I, p. 143.

\(^9\) Van Dyke, op. cit., p. 111.
orders were tottering. Ignatius did his work so well that the Society of Jesus has maintained the basic structure that he outlined.

The Society of Jesus is a mendicant order, observing the original vow of poverty taken by the founders. The members of the Society are divided into four classes. The advanced Jesuits are titled the Professed. In addition to the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, they take an additional vow of going to any part of the world to serve God and the Church. The simple priests of the Society, the Coadjutors Spiritual and the Coadjutors Temporal, and the lay-brothers who are not admitted to the priesthood but are the servants of the Society make up the second class. The third class is termed Scholars; their future in the Society is to be determined after they have studied and have been studied by the leaders. The fourth class includes the Novices who are on probation for two years. They are trained according to the Spiritual Exercises and taught the importance of the vows they desire to take. The Society carefully screens its applicants. It accepts only those who have a positive contribution of intelligence, business sense, discretion, good memory, a

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desire for spiritual perfection, and a zeal for the salvation of souls. The individual Jesuit possesses neither power, riches, or separate will; all authority for action must come from the General whose power is transmitted to those he chooses.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius play a much more important role in the training of Jesuits than the passing mention of them would indicate. "The most efficient means Ignatius had for gaining suitable recruits for his Company were the Spiritual Exercises."12 The object of the Exercises and the Jesuit's life is religious perfection.

The spiritual exercises agitate the heart, and bewilder the mind, like strains of melting music mysteriously sounding in the midnight hour. It is hard to resist spiritual impulses in solitude; but harder still when to these are added all the emotions of the passions, which, it is evident, are never permitted to slumber for a moment in the Chamber of Meditations.13 Ignatius wrote the Spiritual Exercises as a manual for the administrator of the retreat, not as a guide for the participant. If one does read the instructions which aid the priest who is administering the Exercises, one is impressed with the great psychological, physical, and spiritual understanding which enabled Ignatius to

12 Van Dyke, op. cit., p. 267.

13 Steinmetz, op. cit., I, p. 137.
attract and lead men of his generation and generations to follow. Ignatius may have borrowed ideas from other religious writers, but he "took his raw materials as chance or Providence put them within reach, transformed them in the fiery furnace of his passionate purpose to serve God, perfectly oblivious of what he had taken." 14

The *Spiritual Exercises* teach the Jesuit to desire holiness, to discipline himself by practices prescribed, and to understand the true value of things. In all of this spiritual guidance, Ignatius stresses the necessity of altering the Exercises to fit the communicant, adjusting the amount of time spent on each phase of the Exercise.

The *Spiritual Exercises* is an outline of meditations, prayers, and devotions which the communicant is to follow to attain an intimate understanding and a desire for the truth which allows the communicant to do as God wills. This outline serves as a guide to the administrator in his step by step guidance of the communicant as he progressively reveals the ideas, emotions, temptations, and joys of communion offered by the Exercises. In his outline of procedure, St. Ignatius recommends that the exercitant remove himself from his ordinary surroundings that he may progress faster and gain more merit. The

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communicant is to spend an hour in each of five exercises every day; the content of each of these contemplations is suggested briefly by St. Ignatius. St. Ignatius purposely made these suggested topics very concise because he saw more value in the exercitant thinking for himself and coming to his own conclusions.

While meditating, the exercitant remains in solitude. Under best conditions, he sees only the administrator whose role is that of stimulating the communicant to think and meditate and listening to the communicant's thoughts—if the communicant desires to discuss his contemplation with him. The communicant is encouraged to make a general confession of the sins of his entire life after he has experienced the first week of the Exercises, to take communion, and to do penance.

In order that the reader understand the nature of the 
**Spiritual Exercises**, the four weeks of the retreat are briefly outlined.

I. Daily exercises for the first week.
   A. Particular examination of conscience.
      1. Performance of meditation three times.
         a. On rising.
         b. After dinner.
         c. After supper.
      2. Additional directions.
         a. Sorrow for one's sins.
         b. Inventory of one's sins.
   B. General examination of conscience.
      1. Purification of the soul.
      2. Consideration of sins of thought, word, and deed.
      3. Method of making the general examination of conscience.
II. Specific exercises.
A. Meditation on the first, second, and third sins.
   1. Prayer for grace.
   2. First prelude.
   4. First point on the sin of the angels.
   5. Second point on the sin of Adam and Eve.
   6. Third point on one who went to hell because of one mortal sin.
   7. Colloquy with Christ upon the cross.
   8. Close with an OUR FATHER.
B. Meditation on man's sins.
C. Meditation on first two exercises with the addition of three colloquies.
D. Meditation or summary of the third exercise.
E. Meditation on hell using the five senses to see in imagination the "length, breadth, and depth of hell."
F. Additional directions to improve the Exercises.
G. Penance recommended.
H. Notes to further explain exercises of the first week.

III. General confession and communion.

IV. Second week.
A. First day.
   1. First contemplation, the Incarnation.
   2. Second contemplation, the Nativity.
   3. Third contemplation, repetition of the first and second.
   4. Fourth contemplation, repetition of the first and second.
   5. Fifth contemplation, application of the five senses to the first and second contemplations.
B. Second day.
   1. First two contemplations, the Presentation in the Temple and the Flight into Exile in Egypt.
   2. Last three contemplations, two repetitions and the Application of the senses.
   3. Note.
C. Third day.
   1. First two contemplations, the Obedience of the Child Jesus to His parents and the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple.
   2. Two repetitions and the Application of the senses.
D. Fourth day.
   1. Meditation on two standards.
      a. Standard of Satan.
      b. Standard of Christ.
   2. Three classes of men.
E. Fifth day, the journey of Christ from Nazareth to the river Jordan and His baptism.
F. Sixth day, Christ's departure from the river Jordan for the desert and the temptations.
G. Seventh day, St. Andrew and others follow Christ.
H. Eighth day, the Sermon on the Mount.
I. Ninth day, Christ appears to His disciples on the waves of the sea.
J. Tenth day, Christ preaches in the temple.
K. Eleventh day, the raising of Lazarus.
L. Twelfth day, Palm Sunday.
M. Notes.
   1. Three Kinds of Humility.
   2. Introduction to Making a Choice of a Way of Life.
   3. Matters about which a choice should be made.
   4. Three times when a correct and good choice may be made.
   5. Several ways to make a good and correct choice.
   6. Directions for the reformation of one's life.

V. Third week.
A. First day.
   1. Christ goes from Bethany to Jerusalem.
   2. The Last Supper.
   3. From the Last Supper to the Agony in the garden.
B. Second day.
   1. From the Garden to the House of Annas.
   2. From the house of Annas to the house of Caiphas.
C. Third day.
   1. From the house of Caiphas to the house of Pilate.
   2. From Pilate to Herod.
D. Fourth day, from Herod to Pilate, the contemplation divided in two parts.
E. Fifth day.
   1. From the house of Pilate to the Crucifixion.
   2. From the raising of the cross to His death.
F. Sixth day.
   1. From the taking down from the cross to the burial.
2. From the burial to the house to which Mary retired after the burial of Christ.

G. Seventh day, the contemplation of the whole passion.

H. Rules with regard to eating.

VI. Fourth week.

A. First contemplation, the apparition of Christ to His mother.

B. Contemplation to attain the love of God.

C. Study of the three methods of prayer.

D. Contemplations on the mysteries of the life of Christ.

The notes on each Exercise contain directions or explanations for the administrator of the retreat, cautioning him of harmful and beneficial procedures in the supervising of the Exercises. The four weeks of the Exercise are used in the Long Retreat in the training of Jesuit novices, and a shorter modified version is used by other Catholic orders of priests and nuns in some of their retreats.

Approximately ten years after taking their first vows in the Society, Jesuit priests return for a third year, or tertianship, of noviceship. The Jesuit returns to the noviceship for spiritual renovation and reappraisal after having faced the corruption of the world. At this time the priest is not free to change his mind because the vows taken after the novitiate are perpetually binding and the priest is required to renew his vows publicly every six months. The tertianship prepares the mature priest for his final vows when he is assigned to whatever degree he is to hold in the Society. In this repetition and continued usage of the *Spiritual Exercises* one can see
the importance of the Exercises in the lives of all Jesuits. It is evident that the Jesuit would incorporate the precepts of the Exercises in all phases of his life, in his profession, and in his personal feelings and expressions.
CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON OF HOPKINS' POETRY WITH THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

When Hopkins entered the Society of Jesus, he began a life attuned to the Spiritual Exercises. As a novice, Hopkins started his training with the Long Retreat of thirty days and continued to participate in a shorter eight-day retreat every year until he repeated the Long Retreat in his Tertianship. In addition to the formal retreats, Hopkins meditated on the content of the Spiritual Exercises for an hour each morning and renewed his vows privately every day. The life of a Jesuit is based upon the principles established by the Spiritual Exercises.

It [the Society] places before its young men the only ideal it has always cherished—Christ the God-Man who in obedience to the will of his eternal Father came upon earth that all men might be saved.¹

Hopkins, as a convert to Catholicism, was even more conscientious and meticulous about observing and meditating on these principles. Hopkins devoted his life to the service of Christ, a service which encompassed the Jesuit's whole being—his thoughts, feelings, and actions. The

change in Hopkins' life affected his creativity. His new awareness of the religious significance of life and the world was incorporated in his poetry. One can find in Hopkins' poetry the ideas of the Spiritual Exercises plus the more nebulous moods and feelings aroused in the communicant while he is participating in the retreat.

In examining the content of the Spiritual Exercises, one can divide the meditations into four general headings which correspond to the four "weeks" of the Long Retreat: (1) consideration and contemplation of man's sins, (2) the life of Christ up to Palm Sunday, (3) the passion of Christ, and (4) the Resurrection and Ascension. Each communicant, given the topic for meditation, is free to incorporate his five senses and his imagination in the exercise of his spirit. St. Ignatius, in this manner, utilizes both sensuousness and asceticism as means of setting man free to attain his purpose, "to clear away the path to his one great goal, union with God through love." Asceticism is incorporated in the rituals of the first week as a penance and to help the individual realize a great and intense sorrow for his sins. Hopkins' poem "The Habit of Perfection" praises asceticism with an enthusiasm which is typical of a newcomer to the faith and Society. Hopkins praises the virtue with enthusiasm and firmness.

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finds a beauty in asceticism which surpasses the beauty observed by the senses. The poem "The Habit of Perfection", outlines the greater beauty of asceticism:

Elected Silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorled ear,
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb:
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shelled, eyes, with double dark
And find the uncreated light:
This ruck and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hut of tasty lust,
Desire not to be rinsed with wine:
The can must be so sweet, the crust
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
Upon the stir and keep of pride,
What relish shall the censers send
Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
That want the yield of plushy award,
But you shall walk the golden street
And you unhause and house the Lord.

And, Poverty, be thou the bride
And now the marriage feast begun,
And lily-coloured clothes provide
Your spouse not laboured-at nor spun. 3

Unconsciously Hopkins too combines sensualness and asceticism; he sees the high value of asceticism but praises its value with elaborate sensual imagery. In

spite of the seeming conflict of theme and images, Hopkins' goal is the same as that of St. Ignatius, and Hopkins states his goal in two lines of "The Habit of Perfection"--"But you shall walk the golden street / And you unhouse and house the Lord." Hopkins, who always seemed to demand the most of himself, carried his own asceticism further than St. Ignatius intended. St. Ignatius saw that all of the ritual should be adapted to the individual's needs, education, health, and emotional and mental attitudes. It is the extreme flexibility of the Exercises which permits their being used in all aspects of the life of a Jesuit.

The emphasis of the entire Exercise is the discovery of God's will, that man may act in accordance with God's demands. The principle and foundation of the Society is that "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul." Hopkins was so determined to put God first in his life that he destroyed his poetry when he entered the Society and wrote no more until a superior suggested that he write about the shipwreck which is the subject of "The Wreck of the Deutschland." When this poem was written, Hopkins had experienced the Exercises several times and had studied the prosody of the classical writers. He had limited his writing to his journal, but

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it was a storehouse of material for future poems. McNamee sees the entire poem, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," as a revelation of Hopkins' religious development and his perception of the Spiritual Exercises. First the communicant realizes the mastery of God:

Thou mastering me
God! giver of breath and bread;
World's strand, sway of the sea;
Lord of living and dead;5

and then the communicant finds himself between two poles and forced to make a decision:

The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?
I whirled out wings that spell
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host.

Man, who is "soft sift in an hourglass," is formed by the pressures God provides; he may not understand God's ways, but Hopkins says, "I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand." In Stanza 7, Hopkins briefly outlines Christ's life and sacrifice, and Stanza 8 describes Christ's fascination for mankind:

--Hither then, last or first,
To hero of Calvary, Christ, 's feet--
Nevermask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it--
men go.

Hopkins sees God as the "giver of breath and bread,"
"lightning and love" and "Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,/ Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our

thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord." Both "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and the *Spiritual Exercises* emphasize the mastery of God the Creator and the mercy of Christ the Redeemer.

The main motivation of *The Exercises*, then, might be summed up as the majesty of God the Creator inducing a reverence and awe for Him as Lord and Master and the mercy and love of Christ the Redeemer instilling in the hearts of men a generous and unselfish service of Christ the king.6

One effect of the private Chamber of Meditations of the retreat is the very personal "I-thou" relationship of the individual and God. The communicant, being isolated as much as possible during his retreat, achieves an awareness of the presence of God which is encouraged by the use of colloquies in which the communicant imagines the presence of God and converses with Him. In "The Wreck of the Deutschland" Hopkins seems at times to have a colloquy with God: "Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh / . . . Over again I feel thy finger and find thee."7 At other times Hopkins witnesses the colloquy of the "tall nun" with God. Stanza 34 reiterates the double nature of God's power:

Now burn, new born to the world,
Doubled-natured name,
The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-

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"The Wreck of the Deutschland" broke the silence of Hopkins' self-imposed penance and poured forth Hopkins' new religious perceptions and his dedication to the service and praise of God.

The foundation of the Society and the Exercises, that man's purpose is to praise, reverence and serve God, suffuses Hopkins' poetry. Hopkins interprets this purpose as the great sacrifice demanded of him and mankind:

the world, man, should after its own manner give
God being in return for the being he has given
it or should give him back that being he has given.
This is done by the great sacrifice. To contribute then to that sacrifice is the end for which man was made.8

The Society of Jesus requires its members to sacrifice in the vows that they make. The demands of chastity, poverty, and obedience to the Company are sacrifices intended to insure the placement of God's will before the desires of the member. St. Ignatius explains that man must not desire health instead of sickness, wealth instead of poverty, but he must accept gratefully what is given him and use his gifts to insure the greater glory of God. Hopkins utilized all his powers to

Of virtues I most warmly bless,
Most rarely seen, Unselfishness.
And to put graver sins aside,
I own a preference for Pride.

The communicant is sincere in trying to remove his sins, and the next step after attaining an extreme consciousness of his own sinfulness is the consideration of the sins of mankind.

The poem "Myself unholy, from my self unholy..." expresses the transition from the individual to the universal:

Myself unholy, from myself unholy
To the sweet living of my friends I look—
Eye greeting doves bright-counter to the rook,
Fresh brooks to salt sand-teasing waters shoaly:
And they are purer, but alas! not solely
The unquestionable readings of a blotless book.
And so my trust, confused, struck, and shook
Yields to the sultry siege of melancholy.

He has a sin of mine, he its near brother,
And partly I hate, partly condone that fall.
This fault in one I found, that in another:

And so, though each have one while I have all,
No better serves me now, save best; no other
Save Christ: to Christ I look, on Christ I call.

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9 Hopkins, Poetry, op. cit., Poem 82, p. 129.
10 Ibid., Poem 11, p. 33.
The awareness of all sin in a decadent world causes Hopkins to single out the sins of others, but typically, he finds the most fault with himself. Hopkins sees himself and man as weak, ignorant, malicious, and corrupt in contrast to God's power, wisdom, goodness, and justice. The despair and horrible awareness of the first week, unrelieved by any expectation of reprieve or hope of salvation, lead the communicant to feel that

My prayers must meet a brazen heaven
And fall or scatter all away.
Unclean and seeming unforgiven
My prayers I scarcely call to pray.
I cannot buoy my heart above;
Above it cannot entrance win.
I reckon precedents of love,
But feel the long success of sin.

The communicant knows his own uncleanliness and feels himself caught in the quicksand of humanity's filth. He knows that God has shown man love and that man has not reciprocated. His heart is heavy with his knowledge of man's rejection of God and his own responsibility for his sinfulness.

The first week emphasizes the tragedy of man, that he refuses to act or actually sins in withholding his praise of God. The poem "God's Grandeur" questions why men cannot see the greatness of God revealed in the universe:

. . . Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared
with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell.

11Ibid., Poem 15, p. 36  
12Ibid., Poem 31, p. 70.
Man, when he destroys or disfigures nature, ignores or denies God's appearance in nature. Hopkins views the cutting of a tree as near blasphemy in "Binsey Poplars":

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;
Of a fresh and following folded rank
Not spared, not one
That dandled a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding bank.13

Nature, always renewing its offer of beauty and sustenance to mankind, represents the continuing presence of God Who offers grace to those who serve Him. Man's rejection of God's grace, which is so freely offered, greatly increases man's guilt. Nature is not all sunshine and flowers, for the destructive forces of nature reveal God's might and wrath to man. "The Shepherd's Brow, . . ." pictures despair in the natural sphere:

The shepherd's brow, fronting forked lightning, owns
The horror and the havoc and the glory
Of it. Angels fall, they are towers, from heaven--a story
Of just, majestical, and giant groans.
But man--we, scaffold of score brittle bones;
Who breathe, from groundlong babyhood to hoary Age gasp; whose breath is our memento mori--
What bass is our viol for tragic tones?
He! Hand to mouth he lives, and voids with shame;
And, blazoned in however bold the name,
Man Jack the man is, just; his mate a hussy.
And I that die these deaths, that feed this flame,
That... in smooth spoons spy life's masque mirrored:

tame
My tempests there, my fire and fever fussy.14

If the fall of Angels is just, then the fall of man is infinitely more justified. When man cannot look beyond tomorrow and is engrossed in daily life, he crowds God out of his view, his scale of values is unbalanced, and man never considers the more important values of life. The Exercises require man to look at himself "as a sore and ulcer, from which have sprung so many sins and so many iniquities and so very vile poison." Being continually aware of man's iniquity, Hopkins at times desired the presence of a comforting peace which he knew only in short periods of time. The poem "Peace" laments the briefness of the respite offered by peace:

> When will you ever, Peace, wild wooddove, shy wings shut,  
> Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?  
> When, when, Peace, will you, Peace? I'll not play hypocrite  
> To own my heart: I yield you do come sometimes; but  
> That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace allows  
> Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?  
> O surely, reaving Peace, my Lord should leave in lieu  
> Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite,  
> That plumes to Peace thereafter. And when Peace here does house  
> He comes with work to do, he does not, come to ooo,  
> He comes to brood and sit.

Hopkins' continued questioning of God's purpose reminds one of his recognizing the presence of God but not always understanding God which he expressed in "The Wreck of the

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15St. Ignatius, op. cit., p. 41.  
Deutschland." Hopkins does recognize that man must be aware of his own weakness and impotence before he can fully appreciate the power of God. "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" first describes an impression of nature: "Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, voluminous, . . . stupendous./

Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night."17 / Then as the darkness swells, Hopkins views the world as divided into the "spools" of right and wrong:

... Our evening is over us; our night whelms, whelms, and will end us.
Ours Only the beak-leaved boughs dragonish damask the tool-smooth bleak light; black,
Ever so black on it. Our tale, 0 our oracle! Let life, waned, a; let life wind
Off her once skeined stained veined variety upon, all on two spools; part, pen, pack
Now her all in two flocks, two folds--black, white; right, wrong; reckon but, reck but, mind
But these two; ware of a world where but these two
tell, each off the other; of a rack
Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe-and shelterless,
thoughts against thoughts in groans grind.18

17 Tortured by remorse, the communicant sees this section of the Exercise as the dark evening which symbolizes the existence of evil. The communicant is in reality putting his own soul on the rack of self-torture, and his conscience is the inquisitor. Hopkins sees that the consciousness of a world divided into right and wrong with the majority of mankind on the wrong side is important in deciding for God.

17 Ibid., Poem 62, p. 105. 18 Ibid.
When good and bad are intermixed in the world, man can rationalize his own conduct, but the division into flocks forces man to see the good and bad in himself and to choose which will receive his devotion.

The intensified comprehension of good and evil continued throughout the Jesuit's life and made Hopkins sensitive to both sides of life. Hopkins possessed both a keen consciousness and a high nature which blessed him with sharp perceptions and cursed him with an acute sensitivity which engendered his joyous poems and his "terrible sonnets." Hopkins described his own sensitivity in his devotional writing:

The keener the consciousness the greater the pain; The greater the stress of being the greater the pain: both these show that the higher the nature the greater the penalty.19

Considered in a body, the "terrible sonnets" are a record of Hopkins' despairing moments as he tries to reconcile the evil and good in the world. Two of these sonnets, numbers 65 and 69, seem to plummet the lowest depths of despair. Number 65 describes Hopkins' mental anguish:

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief, More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring. Comforter, where, where is your comforting? Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?

My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief Woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing-- Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No lingering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief'. [Sid]

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19 Hopkins, Sermons and Devotional Writing, op. cit., p. 138.
O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.\(^{20}\)

Unable to understand and yet struggling to understand the
reason for the condition of man, the communicant endures
the highest pitch of grief when he cannot find any comfort
either from God or the Virgin. Hopkins is clearly one who
has hung over the sheer cliffs in the mountains of the
mind, balanced over a sheer drop which no man can measure.
People who have not experienced an intellectual struggle
cannot appreciate the pangs of conscience which grow as
the torment continues. In Poem 69, Hopkins returns to the
motif of night and the obscuring blackness which surround
the dark travail of his soul:

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.
I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste; my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.\(^{21}\)

Hopkins' complaint is extended because his inner turmoil
has continued throughout his life. God seems far away and


\(^{21}\)Tbid., Poem 69, p. 109.
uninterested in man. The communicant feels that God has disassociated Himself from the world of man, leaving man to suffer in his own cursedness. The distance which seems to separate man from his Creator causes a penetrating introspection in which the self realizes that the bitterness of his soul comes from within. The lost carry part of their penance with them in their own personality because the inner ferment of their spirit corrupts them and renders them incapable of serving God. Hopkins recognizes that if he who is devoted to praising God feels the bitterness contained in his own self, the man who does not serve God must be infinitely more bitter to himself when he finally realizes his sin of omission. One feels that part of Hopkins' inner struggle is to understand his sense of uselessness; he has been faithful and has attempted to follow God's will—why then should he feel as the lost soul does. One of Hopkins fragmentary poems expresses his sense of his own iniquity:

Whose inner heart has not some strength which he would lay
Will no one show
I argued ill?
Because, although
Self-sentenced, still
I keep my trust.

Trees by their yield
Are known; but I--
My sap is sealed,
My root is dry.
If life within
I none can shew
(Except for sin),
Nor fruit above,--
It must be so--
I do not love.

My inner heart has not some strength which he would lay
Will no one show
I argued ill?
Because, although
Self-sentenced, still
I keep my trust.
If he would prove
And search me through
Would he not find
(What yet there must
Be hid behind... .22

Hopkins knows that his own motives have been good, that he intended to do God's will, and yet he knows that he did not always succeed in his attempt to imitate Christ. He therefore pronounces himself guilty. The poem ends with the unfinished thought that God can probe all the motives of mankind and that the judgment of God and man may differ.

The other four "terrible sonnets" are not completely unrelieved pictures of mental and spiritual agony. Hopkins may find himself wrestling with his God, but in "Carrion Comfort" he affirms that he can resist his black moments:

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist--slack they may be--these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry I CAN NO MORE. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.
But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee?

Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, Since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, cheer.

22Ibid., Poem 94, p. 144.
Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-handling
flung me, foot trod
Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each
one? That night, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with
(my God!) my God.23

The struggle with God consists of man in his finite knowledge
attempting to understand the infinite purpose of God.
Hopkins sees that part of the answer to his "Why?" is "That
my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear."24 God
forces man to struggle and administers a certain amount of
punishment, and man in turn seeks to flee from God or
faces his Creator and "wrestles" with Him. Still Hopkins
feels a stranger at odds with men and Christ. His family is
far from him geographically and spiritually, he is unhappy
in Ireland, and Christ seems far removed. These reasons for
his desolation are expressed in "To Seem The Stranger. . ."

To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life
Among strangers. Father and mother dear,
Brothers and sisters are in Christ not near
And he my peace my parting, sword and strife.
   England, whose honour 0 all my heart woos, wife
To my creating thought, would neither hear
Me, were I pleading, plead nor do I: I weary
of idle a being but by where wars are rife.
   I am in Ireland now; now I am at a third
Remove. Not but in all removes I can
Kind love both give and get. Only what word
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven's baffling ban
Bars or hell's spell thwarts. This to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.25

23Ibid., Poem 64, p. 106.  24Ibid.
Hopkins did find friends as he moved from one assignment to the next, but the frequent changes made him feel something was missing. The "baffling ban" of heaven seems to keep him from attaining his goal of perfection. He must constantly start with what he is and work to attain what he wants to be. The sense of forever starting and never getting anywhere causes him to feel that he is left "a lonely began."  

The awareness of the sins and unhappiness of life arouses the rebellious will of the communicant whose heart is bruised by the grating of his desire for spiritual perfection. Where is God while man is sinning? Hopkins partially answers the question in the sonnet "Patience":

Patience, hard thing! the hard thing but to pray,  
But bid for, Patience is! Patience who asks  
Wants war, wants wounds; weary his times, his tasks;  
To do without, take toses, and obey.  
Rare patience roots in these, and, these away,  
Nowhere. Natural heart's ivy, Patience masks  
Our ruins of wrecked past purpose. There she basks  
Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day.  

We hear our hearts grate on themselves: it kills  
To bruise them dearer. Yet the rebellious wills  
Of us we do bid God bend to him even so.  
And where is he who more and more distils  
Delicious kindness?—He is patient. Patience fills  
His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know.  

Only God is truly patient: He has a great storehouse of patience which Hopkins compares to a honeycomb filled to the top. Man's patience is often not genuine, for man uses patience to mask his disappointments, his "ruins of

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26 Ibid.  
27 Ibid., Poem 70, p. 110.
wrecked past purpose."  

Humanity cannot manufacture patience, it comes from God only. Man must wait, and be ready, for God's offer of comfort. Hopkins relents in his demands of himself and sees that he can achieve nothing without the aid of God. Sonnet 71 advises man to show himself as much mercy as he would show to the suffering of others:

My own heart let me more have pity on; let Me live to my sad self hereafter kind, Charitable; not live this tormented mind With this tormented mind tormenting yet. I cast for comfort I can no more get By groping round my comfortless, than blind Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts awhile Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile's not wrung, see you; unforseen times rather--as skies Betweenpie mountains--lights a lovely mile.

Hopkins, a perfectionist demanding much of himself, realizes that man tortures himself and accomplishes nothing by driving himself past a certain point. One might say that Hopkins finally sees the value which St. Ignatius realized early in his career: that all man can do is open his heart to God and live as he believes God desires him to live. God does the rest when man can "call off thoughts awhile / Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size / At God knows when to God knows what."  

28Ibid., Poem 71, p. 110.  

29Ibid.
Another sonnet which is not included in the group of "terrible sonnets" continues their questioning attitude and attempts to understand the conflict of a just God and the prosperity of sin. "Thou are indeed just, Lord, ..." is both a protest and a prayer to God:

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir; life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced: they are again
With pretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build—but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.31

This poem summarizes some of the elements that have contributed to Hopkins' spiritual upheaval. He has witnessed the success of evil in the world. Sinners seem as happy as the religious people, and tragedy comes to both evil and good people. At times an enemy could accomplish no more torment than God creates. In his own life, Hopkins feels the sterility of both his poetic endeavor and his religious work. Hopkins does not give himself up completely to despair for the final line is a prayer for aid: "O thou lord of life, send my roots rain."32

The "terrible sonnets" reveal Hopkins' consciousness of evil and the ambiguity of a good Creator and the continued

31Ibid., Poem 74, p. 113. 32Ibid.
presence of evil, sorrow, and injustice in His creation. Even in his despair, however, Hopkins realizes that there is hope because "Patience fills / His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know." In the bulk of Hopkins' productions, his works of joy far overbalance his poems of despair. The "terrible sonnets" do express the emotional state sought during the first week of the retreat: the contrition, sorrow, and tears for his sins and mankind's sins are apparent in the tone of these sonnets. After the communicant feels the necessary remorse for his sins, he turns to the contemplation of Christ's life on earth.

During the second week, Christ's life is studied as an example to the communicant in amending and reforming his own life. From the day of His birth, Christ provides guidance and salvation for man:

Moonless darkness stands between.  
Past, O Past, no more be seen!  
But the Bethlehem star may lead me  
To the sight of Him who freed me  
From the self that I have been.  
Make me pure, Lord: Thou art holy;  
Make me meek, Lord: Thou wert lowly;  
Now beginning, and alway:  
Now begin, on Christmas day.

The contrast of Christ's purity and holiness with man's degradation brightens the beauty of the Bethlehem star which can lead man to better life. Without Christ, man is surrounded by darkness which he cannot disperse. Christmas

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33 Ibid., Poem 70, p. 110.  
34 Ibid., Poem 96, p. 146.
day is just the beginning of the salvation offered by Christ. Without the aid of Christ man can do nothing for "Where we, even where we mean / To mend her [earth], we end her." 35 Man may have good intentions, but his actions are destructive and inspired by unconsciously selfish motives. Whether man is acting in the sphere of nature or the spirit, he does not realize the consequence of his movements:

O if we but knew what we do
When we delve or hew--
Hack and rack the growing green! 36

Man must, therefore, investigate Christ's life on earth in order "to investigate and to ask in what life or state His Divine Majesty wants to be served by us." 37 Christ's life serves as a yardstick by which man may judge his own worthiness. "The Incarnation was God's most perfect external enunciation of himself, and, as such, it becomes the measure of perfection of all other things." 38 The priests of the Society of Jesus attempt to imitate Christ and measure themselves against His perfection.

The best ideal is the true
And other truth is none.
All glory be ascribed to
The holy Three in One. 39

35 Ibid., Poem 43, p. 83. 36 Ibid.
37 St. Ignatius, op. cit., p. 71.
Since "Man is most low, God is most high," man's struggle is unceasing and difficult. Man can depend on Christ alone, for guidance: "There's none but truth can stead you. Christ is truth." Man's perceptions can be deceived but not Christ's:

Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived; How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed; What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do; Truth himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.

By following the example of Christ, the communicant may dedicate himself to God. Hopkins states that the great sacrifice must be given to God while the offering is fresh and worthwhile:

Head, heart, hand, heel, and shoulder That beat and breathe in power—
This pride of prime's enjoyment
Take as for tool, not toy meant
And hold at Christ's employment.

Man's sacrifice, the dedication of his whole self to God, is possible, but only with the help of Christ:

I have life before me still And thy purpose to fulfil; Yea a debt to pay thee yet: Help me, sir, and so I will.

Repenting of his sins, his hiding from his duty to God, the communicant asks to be reconciled to God that he may be strengthened to assume his debt to God. The individual pays.

\[\text{Footnotes:}\]

40 Ibid., Poem 131, p. 186
41 Ibid., Poem 116, p. 167.
his debt by adhering to the standard of Christ, not the
standard of Satan. Man has the choice and the responsibility
for his decision:

What makes the man and what
The man within that makes:
Ask whom he serves or not
Serves and what side he takes. 45

Sometimes the insight of angels cannot fathom the heart of
man because goodness appears in many different degrees and
aspects. Only the man himself can determine his purposes:
"But right must seek a side / And choose for chieftain one." 46

One may rejoice with God when the standard of Satan is thrown
over as in "Felix Randal."

Sickness broke him. Impatient he cursed at first, but mended
Being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some
Months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom
Tendered to him. Ah well, God rest him all road ever he offended! 47

Sometimes the standard of Christ is apparent in the
individual, although worldly beauty is nothing without the
spiritual beauty of God's grace:

To man, that needs would worship block or barren stone,
Our law says: Love what are love's worthiest, were all known;
World's loveliest--men's selves. Self flashes off frame and face.
What do then/ how meet beauty? Merely meet it: own

45 Ibid., Poem 110, p. 163. 46 Ibid.
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift; then leave, let that alone.
Yea, wish that though, wish all, God's better beauty, grace.

God's gift of grace demands a return of devotion. To truly decide for God, the Divine vocation must always be "pure and clear, without mixture of flesh, or of any other inordinate tendency." Man, like the caged skylark, is capable of singing very sweetly, but both sometimes droop in their physical beings or rage in their spirits. Man, "flesh-bound when found at best," possesses a mounting spirit which can triumph over the drudgery of daily life.

When man succeeds in giving himself completely to God, he finds a joy which Hopkins expresses in "Rosa Mystica."

Does it smell sweet, too, in that holy place? Sweet unto God, and the sweetness is grace; The breath of it bathes the great heaven above, In grace that is charity, grace that is love. To thy breast, to thy rest, to thy glory divine Draw me by charity, Mother of mine.

The complete dedication to God is not a step to be lightly considered. In the Exercises, an entire section at the end of the second week is devoted to choosing a way of life.

The Passion of Christ is the subject for meditation during the third week. "It belongs to the Passion to ask

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48 Ibid., Poem 61, p. 104.
49 St. Ignatius, op. cit., p. 87.
50 Hopkins, Poetry, op. cit., Poem 39, p. 75.
51 Ibid., Poem 27, p. 50
for grief with Christ in grief, anguish with Christ in anguish, tears and interior pain at such great pain which Christ suffered for me."\(^{52}\) The suffering evidenced by Hopkins' "terrible sonnets" parallels the emotional state of the third week of the Exercises, but in the sonnets Hopkins seems to be suffering alone instead of suffering with Christ. Hopkins describes Christ's torment as "the dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat."\(^{53}\) Christ makes his sacrifice for man:

\[
\text{Thou that on sin's wages starvest,} \\
\text{Behold we have the joy in harvest;} \\
\text{For us was gather'd the first-fruits} \\
\text{For us was lifted from the roots,} \\
\text{Sheaved in cruel bands, bruised sore,} \\
\text{Scourged upon the threshing-floor;} \\
\text{And on a thousand Altars laid} \\
\text{Christ our Sacrifice is made.}^{54}
\]

Hopkins is willing to sacrifice his life to God as Christ gave his life to save man:

\[
\text{Thou, thou, my Jesus, after me} \\
\text{Didst reach thine arms out dying,} \\
\text{For my sake sufferedst nails and lance,} \\
\text{Mocked and marred countenance,} \\
\text{Sorrows passing number,} \\
\text{Sweat and care and cumber,} \\
\text{Yea and death, and this for me,} \\
\text{And thou couldst see me sinning:} \\
\text{Then I, why should not I love thee,} \\
\text{Jesu, so much in love with me?}^{55}
\]

\(^{52}\)St. Ignatius, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 101.

\(^{53}\)Hopkins, \textit{Poetry, op. cit.}, Poem 28, p. 57.

\(^{54}\)\textit{Ibid.}, Poem 18, p. 38.  \(^{55}\)\textit{Ibid.}, Poem 133, p. 188.
Christ's sacrifice affirms that He cares for sinful man. The unworthiness of man who receives Christ's compassion emphasizes the greatness of the gift He offers. Christ's unreserved generosity inspires the communicant's devotion. Christ alone is worthy to guide mankind: "No better serves me none, save best; no other / Save Christ: to Christ I look, on Christ I call."\(^{56}\) Men have only a passing interest in others as they encounter each other in life, but Christ's interest is everlasting:

Christ minds; Christ's interest, what to avow or amend
There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot follows kind,
Their ransom, their rescue, and first, fast, last friend.\(^{57}\)

The realization of Christ's suffering and a willingness to serve God and man as Christ did motivates the life of priest and poet. Since Christ suffered for a purpose, the communicant is also willing to sacrifice to a higher purpose which he may be unable to comprehend. God's power is withheld from the sight of the world while he allows Christ to suffer, and man cannot understand the desertion by God of His Son. Hopkins expresses this feeling of being abandoned:

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God, though to Thee our psalm we raise
No answering voice comes from the skies;
To Thee the trembling sinner prays
But no forgiving voice replies.\(^{58}\)
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\(^{56}\)ibid., Poem 11, p. 33. \(^{57}\)ibid., Poem 34, p. 72.
\(^{58}\)ibid., Poem 22, p. 43.
During this period prayers seem lost and a vast silence absorbs the hymns which should reverberate in the heavens. Since God's person is unseen and unknown, each man imagines a personage according to his own perceptions of religion. The world is thus in a chaotic state of controversy in religion:

And Thou art silent, whilst Thy world
Contends about its many creeds
And hosts confront with flags unfurled
And zeal is flushed and pity bleeds
And truth is heard, with tears impearled,
A moaning voice among the reeds.  

Soon, however, the triumph of the Resurrection brings truth into the open and relieves the desolation of the passion.

The fourth week of the Exercises rejoices in the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. The communicant no longer observes the penance imposed at the first of the retreat; instead, he complies with the standard of temperance and moderation in his actions. The communicant now is able to share the great joy and gladness of Christ. In his poem "Easter," Hopkins urges

Seek God's house in happy throng;
Crowded let His table be;
Mingle praises, prayer and song,
Singing to the Trinity.
Henceforth let your souls alway
Make each morn an Easter Day.

Man may open his heart, cleanse himself of the ashes of sorrow, and adorn his physical being to celebrate the triumph

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59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., Poem 23, p. 45.
of God. During the fourth week the communicant desires an "interior knowledge of so great good received, in order that being entirely grateful, I may be able in all to love and serve His divine Majesty."61 The realization of the great good received completes the communicant's cycle of awareness. He fully realizes God's power and grace, Christ's sacrifice and triumph, and man's debt and responsibility. The communicant may now celebrate with God and the whole of creation:

God shall o'er-brim the measures you have spent
With oil of gladness; for sackcloth and frieze
And the ever-fretting shirt of punishment
Give myrrh-threaded golden folds of ease.
Your scarce-sheathed bones are weary of being bent;
Lo, God shall strengthen all the feeble knees.62

Through the exercise of his spirit, the communicant finds his God and enters into a new relationship with Him:

Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue,
Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm;
    Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung:
    Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.63

God is recognized as a spring which will not fail, the source of all things. Everything that man is given, however, must be used to add to the greater glory of God or God's creation does not fulfill the purpose for which it was intended.

The Jesuit, then, spends his life seeking to find the best

61St. Ignatius, op. cit., p. 120.
62Hopkins, Poetry, op. cit., Poem 13, p. 35.
63Ibid., Poem 28, p. 58.
means of serving God.

Hopkins saw his method of serving God as putting his work as a priest before his work as a poet. A few of his poems were printed and others were rejected by editors. Some friends encouraged him to publish his poems, and at times Hopkins indicated a willingness to comply with their wishes. Hopkins did say that if his literary friends, especially Robert Bridges, did not understand what he was trying to do, the general reading public certainly would not understand his work. One of Hopkins' disappointments in life was the lack of literary appreciation for his work, but he later philosophied that God would preserve his poetry if it served God's purpose. His thought on this subject is typical of the Jesuit resignation of personal desires to the will of God. Although Hopkins did write some light verse, the bulk of his poems seem hardly separable from his life as a Jesuit. Most of his poems are dedicated to the glory of God, the praises of saints and religious people, and nature which reveals the beauty and power of God to man.

The Resurrection offers hope and salvation. Hopkins explains that since Christ entered our world as a human being man is more capable of becoming what Christ is. This thought is most fully developed in "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection." Nature tempers the coal with pressure and heat to form her most precious jewel, the diamond; God tempers His Son by allowing
Him to come on earth in the form of a man and to suffer the tribulation of the cross. Jesus, the man, is thus changed to Christ the Savior:

... Million-fueled, nature's bonfire burns on.
But quench her bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest-selved spark
Man, how fast his firedint, his mark on mind, is gone!
Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned. O pity and indignation! Manshape, that shone
Sheer off, disseveral, a star, death blots black out; nor mark
Is any of him at all so stark
But vastness blurs and time beats level. Enough! the Resurrection,
A heart's clarion! Away grief's gasping, joyless days, dejection.

Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash:

In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsheréd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
Is immortal diamond. 64

Each individual then contains within himself the spark of Christ. Each is free to destroy that spark within him or to develop his spark into a bonfire equal to nature's. Hopkins looks at individuals to find the spark of Christ which may appear in them. "Margare Clitheroe"* 65 is a fragment which praises a woman who was pressed to death; Hopkins

64 Ibid., Poem '72, p. 111.
65 Starred poems are printed in the Appendix.
s eyes of her "Christ lived in Margaret Clitheroe." 66
"St. Thecla* praises a maiden who was influenced for
Christ when she heard the Apostle Paul teach. The presence
of Christ in the individual is celebrated in these poems of
Hopkins: "St. Thomae Aquinatis," * "St. Alphonsus Rodriguez," *
"Harry Ploughman," * "On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young
People," * and "Brothers." * It is Poem 57 that summarizes
Hopkins' conception of Christ appearing in the individual:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each
hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves--goes itself; myself it speaks and spells;
Crying WHAT I DO IS ME: FOR THAT I CAME.
I say more: the just man justices:
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces:
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is--
Christ--For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces. 67

The Resurrection also reveals to humanity God's presence
in His creation--in the elements, in animals, and in plants.
Hopkins' nature poems reveal his awareness of God's creation
disclosing God. The mighty power of the creator appears in
the strength of the wind and sea when two ships, the
Deutschland and the Eurydice, are destroyed. "The Loss of
the Eurydice" indicates that God possesses the means by

66 Ibid., Poem 107, p. 160.  67 Ibid., Poem 57, p. 95.
which to instrument His purpose:

The Eurydice— it concerned thee, O Lord:
Three hundred souls, O alas! on board,
Some asleep unawakened, all un-
warned, eleven fathoms fallen

Where she foundered! One stroke
Felled and furled them, the hearts of oak:
And flockbells off the aerial
Downs' forefalls beat to the burial. 68

The ocean squalls, thunder storms, wind storms, and other
natural forces prove the more terrifying presence of God
while the grandeur of the stars is a comforting and inspiring
reminder of God's omnipotence. As one surveys the heavens
in the evening, every star and galaxy fits into its allotted
place:

How looks the night? There does not miss a star.
The million sorts of unaccounted motes
Now quicken, sheathed in the yellow galaxy.
There is no parting or bare interstice
Where the stint compass of a skylark's wings
Would not put out some tiny golden centre. 69

Not only is the universe a witness of God's maintenance
of His creation, the universe inspires the individual to
religious worship through its beauty. "The Starlight Night"
eulogizes cosmic beauty which reveals Christ:

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

68 Ibid., Poem 41, p. 76. 69 Ibid., Poem 92, p. 144.
Buy then! bid then!--What?--Prayer, patience, alms, 
vows.

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

These are indeed the barn; withindoors house 
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the 
spouse 
 Christ home. Christ and his mother and all his 
Hallows.70

Hopkins uses more cosmic imagery when he sees himself as a 
small comet which grows as it approaches the sun, its 
source of warmth and energy:

--I am like a slip of comet, 
Scarce worth discovery, in some corner seen 
Bridging the slender difference of two stars, 
Come out of space, or suddenly engender'd 
By heady elements, for not man knows;

But when she sights the sun she grows and sizes 
And spins her skirts out, while her central star 
Shakes its cocooning mists; and so she comes 
To fields of light; millions of travelling rays 
Pierce her; she hangs upon the flame-cased sun, 
And sucks the light as full as Gideon's fleece: 
But then her tether calls her; she falls off, 
And as she dwindles shreds her smock of gold 
Between the sistering planets, till she comes 
To single Saturn, last and solitary; 
And then she goes out into the cavernous dark. 
So I go out: my little sweet is done: 
I have drawn heat from this contagious sun: 
To not ungentle death now forth I run.71

The cycle of nature, the provision of sun, rain, and soil, 
is governed by God. The combination of elements in nature, 
the changing seasons, give man an environment which tests 
him at times and also surrounds him with beauty. Hopkins 
sees spring as the most beautiful time of the year because 
it recreates the sinless purity of Eden. He describes

70Ibid., Poem 32, p. 70. 71Ibid., Poem 83, p. 130.
Nothing is so beautiful as spring—
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy pear tree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden—Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.72

The most familiar of Hopkins' nature poems are "God's Grandeur," "Pied Beauty," and "The Windhover." The first of these, "God's Grandeur," praises the continued renewal of nature's bounty as a gift to unappreciative humanity. The world in its entirety witnesses the glory of God:

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 Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.73

72Ibid., Poem 33, p. 71 73Ibid., Poem 31, p. 70.
"Pied Beauty" focuses man's notice of God's appearance in nature to the "dappled thing"—objects which seem mundane to the casual observer, but Hopkins sees and describes worldly objects from his spiritual point of view. With the eye of an artist Hopkins appreciates the coloring of the dappled things as he praises the variety of God's creations:

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoat chestnut-falls; finches' wings; 
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;  
And all trades; their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?) 
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim; 
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him!

Hopkins then moves to the revelation of God in one specific creation—a soaring bird which stirs the poet's heart as it rebuffs the wind:

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding  
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing  
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing, 
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding 
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding 
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing! 

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume here  
Buckle! And the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion 
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

Ibid., Poem 37, p. 74.
No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillon
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.75

Whether Hopkins looked at nature as a unity or as an individual unit, he saw nature through his religion. Nature revealed God's power and compassion to Hopkins.

Just as the meditation on the Resurrection aroused Hopkins' interest in the revelation of God and Christ in man and nature, the meditation on the life of Christ initiated Hopkins' devotion to the Virgin Mary. Several of his poems are dedicated to her, and she is mentioned with respect and praise in other poems. "Ad Mariam"* and "The May Magnificat,"* praise the beauty of the Virgin and the month of May which is dedicated to her. The mystery of the Rose is developed as a riddle in "Rosa Mystica,"* and the answer is that the Virgin is the tree and Christ is the blossom. The most intricate of the poems devoted to the Virgin is "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe." Hopkins extends the metaphor to emphasize the close association and protection the Virgin offers man. As the air surrounds man every minute of his life and enters into his very life blood, Mary's life is meant to be shared with mankind.

Be thou then, O thou dear
Mother, my atmosphere;
My happier world, wherein
To wend and meet no sin;

75Ibid., Poem 36, p. 73.
Above me, round me lie
Fronting my froward eye
With sweet and scarless sky;
Stir in my ears, speak there
Of God's love, O live air,
Of patience, penance, prayer:
World-mothering air, air wild,
Wound with thee, in thee is led,
Fold home, fast fold thy child.76

This partial examination of the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins reveals his assimilation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. As a devout Jesuit he lives the Exercises every minute of his life.

For twenty-one years Hopkins dedicated himself to the Society of Jesus; for twenty-one years he studied, meditated, and practiced the Spiritual Exercises. They became a part of his life and attitude. They gave direction to all he experienced, thought, and wrote.77

Although Hopkins esteemed his vocation as a priest above his vocation as a poet, both of his vocations must be considered to attain any understanding of the man and his poetry. His poems are devotional pieces and might even be considered hymns to God. The priest recognized God as "beauty's self and beauty's giver,"78 the source of all man's possessions.

In his life and in his poetry, Hopkins attempted to return his gifts to the Creator. In "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" Hopkins shows that what man seeks to keep, he loses and that which man gives freely is returned in better

76 Ibid., Poem 60, p. 99.
77 Pick, op. cit., p. 25.
O then, weary then why should we tread? O why are we so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed, so fagged, so fashed, so cogged, so cumbered, When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder care, Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it) finer, fonder A care kept.--Where kept? Do but tell us where kept, where.--Yonder.--What high as that! We follow, now we follow.--Yonder, yes yonder, yonder, Yonder.

Hopkins placed himself and his poetry at the disposal of God and attempted to meet the requirements of God as he saw them. His poetry records both the despair and the joy he felt. Hopkins does state that he found what he was searching for:

Let me be to Thee as the circling bird, Or bat with tender and air-crisping wings That shapes in half-light his departing rings. From both of whom a changeless note is heard. I have found my music in a common word, Trying each pleasurable throat that sings And every praised sequence of sweet strings, And know infallibly which I preferred. The authentic cadence was discovered late Which ends those only strains that I approve, And other science all gone out of date And minor sweetness scarce made mention of: I have found the dominant of my range and state--Love, O my God, to call Thee Love and Love.

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79 Ibid., Poem 59, p. 96. 80 Ibid., Poem 16, p. 37.
CHAPTER V

REVIEW OF THESIS

This paper has treated the influence of religion on the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. The poet's early life was introduced first to illustrate his innate tendencies, inherited characteristics, and environmental factors which influenced him. From his parents Gerard Hopkins inherited a good mind and poor health.

His was a family in which no ordinary son would be expected, for his father himself published a volume of poems; uncles on both sides of his family were painters; his brothers, Arthur and Everard, were to become artists; one sister did facile sketches, another wrote competent verses, and still another was to help him all his life with his music.1

Hopkins' intelligence, sensitivity, and creativity were encouraged by the cultural environment afforded by his family. With precocious skill, Hopkins early proved himself a poet of sorts. It remained for his poetry to be purified by the spiritual fires of his conversion. Hopkins enjoyed a pleasant life in the midst of a loving and religious family. Yet Hopkins' own scrupulosity never allowed him to be completely content. He never felt that he was doing his best; even as a youth, Hopkins questioned whether he was doing his best.

Hopkins' conscientiousness perhaps initiated his quest for spiritual perfection and his ultimate conversion to Catholicism.

The historical foundation of the Jesuits was reviewed to acquaint the reader with the religious and environmental forces which formed Hopkins' mature poetry. The militant organization of the Society of Jesus contrasts strangely with the picture of Hopkins as a sensitive, poetic artist. Yet Hopkins' base fiber equaled the firmness of the founders of the Society. His determined will demanded that his body and spirit put forth full effort to achieve the goals he set for himself. Hopkins perhaps demanded much more of himself than the standards of the Society would have required; St. Ignatius himself realized that an excess of zeal could be detrimental to the individual and the Society.

The examination of the Spiritual Exercises as a source of inspiration and a determiner of attitude for the Jesuit reveals the great influence of the Society of Jesus in Hopkins' life. Hopkins' creativity has been described as the spontaneous reaction of a truly spiritual man, who, by sincere application to the ways of contemplation taught him by St. Ignatius (added to an already extraordinary sensitivity to the minutest details of nature's loveliness) had come to an affective realization of a theological truth of such intensity that it
poured itself forth in poems of great power and beauty.  

In an introductory thirty day retreat, Gerard Hopkins began his training according to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Throughout the rest of his life, Hopkins was guided by the methods of meditation, of examination of conscience, of contemplation, of vocal and mental prayer, and of other spiritual activities designed to prepare the soul for the seeking and finding of the will of God that salvation of the soul might be attained.

Hopkins' intense spiritual life, born of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, daily strengthened by meditation and vividly realized every hour of joy or hardship, finds its full expression in the passionate and personal force of his verse.

Before his intimate understanding of the Spiritual Exercises, the scrupulosity of Hopkins kept him from expressing his sensual perceptions, but the Exercises revealed the presence and majesty of God in all aspects of His creation. For the Jesuit there is no separation of the spiritual and mundane sides of life. Hopkins expresses God's presence thus:

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Homo creatus est--CREATION THE MAKING OUT OF NOTHING, bringing from nothing into being: once there was nothing, then lo, this huge world was there. How great a work of power.  

He pursues this thought by considering the creativity of the man of genius who creates from himself, from his own mind, who is himself the creation of God. Since God "meant the world to give him praise, reverence, and service; to give him glory," the poet, the painter, the musician tithes to God through his own creativity. Hopkins' poetry then is a hymn of praise and a tithe which he offers first to God and then to humanity.

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5Ibid.
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Ad Mariam

When a sister, born for each strong month-brother,
Spring's one daughter, the sweet child May,
Lies in the breast of the young year-mother
With light on her face like the waves at play,
Man from the lips of him speaketh and saith,
At the touch of her wandering wondering breath
Warm on his brow: lo! where is another
Fairer than this one to brighten our day?

We have suffered the sons of Winter in sorrow
And been in their ruinous reigns oppressed,
And fain in the springtime surcease would borrow
From all the pain of the past's unrest;
And May has come, hair-bound in flowers,
With eyes that smile through the tears of the hours,
With joy for to-day and hope for to-morrow
And the promise of Summer within her breast!

And we that joy in this month Joy-laden,
The gladdest thing that our eyes have seen,
O thou, proud mother and much proud maiden--
Maid yet mother as May hath been--
To thee we tender the beauties all
Of the month by men called virginal.
Salute thee, mother, the maid-month's Queen!

For thou, as she, wert the one fair daughter
That came when a line of kings did cease,
Princes strong for the sword and slaughter,
That, warring, wasted the land's increase,
And like the storm-months smote the earth
Till a maid in David's house had birth,
That was unto Judah as May and brought her
A son for King whose name was peace.

Wherefore we love thee, wherefore we sing to thee,
We, all we, through the length of our days,
The praise of the lips and the hearts of us bring to thee,
Thee, oh maiden, most worthy of praise;
For lips and hearts they belong to thee
Who to us are as dew to grass and tree,
For the fallen rise and the stricken spring to thee,
Thee May-hope of our darkened ways!
Brothers

How lovely the elder brother's
Life all laced in the other's,
Love-laced!—what once I well
Witnessed; so fortune fell.
When Shrovetide, two years gone,
Our boys' plays brought on
Part was picked for John,
Young John; then fear, then joy
Ran revel in the elder boy
Their night was come now; all
Our company thronged the hall;
Henry, by the wall,
Beckoned me beside him:
I came where called, and eyed him
By meanwhiles; making my play
Turn most on tender byplay.
For, wrung all on love's rack,
My lad, and lost in Jack,
Smiled, blushed, and bit his lip;
Or drove, with a diver's dip,
Clutched hands down through clasped knees—
Truth's tokens tricks like these,
Old telltales, with what stress
He hung on the imp's success.
Now the other was brass-bold:
He had no work to hold
His heart up at the strain;
Nay, roguish ran the vein.
Two tedious acts were past;
Jack's call and cue at last;
When Henry, heart-forsook,
Dropped eyes and dared not look.
Eh, how all rung!
Young dog, he did give tongue!
But Harry—in his hands he has flung
His tear-tricked cheeks of flame
For fond love and for shame.
Ah Nature, framed in fault,
There's comfort then, there's salt;
Nature, bad, base, and blind,
Dearly thou canst be kind;
There dearly then, dearly,
I'll cry thou canst be kind.
Harry Ploughman

Hard as hurdle arms, with a broth of goldish flue
Breathed round; the rack of ribs; the scooped flank; lank
Rope-over thigh; knee-nave; and barrelled shank--
   Head and foot, shoulder and shank--
By a grey eye's heed steered well, one crew, fall to;
Stand at stress. Each limb's barrowy brawn, his thew
That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank--
   Soared or sank--,
Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a roll-call, rank
And features, in flesh, what deed he each must do--
   His sinew-service where do.

He leans to it, Harry bends, look. Back, elbow, and liquid waist
In him, all quail to the wallowing o' the plough: 's cheek crimsoms; curls
Wag or crossbridle, in a wind lifted, windlaced--
   See his wind-lilylocks-laced;
Churlsgrace, too, child of Amansstrength, how it hangs or hurls
Them--broad in bluff hide his frowning feet lashed! raced
With, along them, cragiron under and cold furls--
   With-a-fountain's shining-shot furls.

(Margaret Clitheroe)

God's counsel columnar-severe
But chaptered in the chief of bliss
Had always doomed her down to this--
   PRESSED TO DEATH. He plants the year;
The weighty weeks without hands grow,
Heaved drum on drum; but hands also
Must deal with Margaret Clitheroe.

The very victim would prepare.
Like water soon to be sucked in
Will crisp itself or settle and spin
So she: one sees that here and there
She mends the way she means to go.
The last thing Margaret's fingers sew
Is a shroud for Margaret Clitheroe.

The Christ-ed beauty of her mind
Her mould of features mated well.
She was admired. The spirit of hell
being to her virtue clinching-blind
and work in spine of his shining.
No wonder therefore was not slow
To the bargain of its hate to throw
The body of Margaret Clitheroe.

Great Thecla, the plumed passionflower,
Next Mary mother of maid and nun

And every saint of bloody hour
And breath immortal thronged that show;
Heaven turned its starlight eyes below
To the murder of Margaret Clitheroe.

She was a woman, upright, outright;
Her will was bent at God. For that
Word went she should be crushed out flat

Fawning fawning crocodiles
Days and days came round about
With tears to put her candle out;
They wound their winch of wicked smiles
To take her; while their tongues would go
GOD LIGHTEN YOUR DARK HEART--but no,
Christ lived in Margaret Clitheroe.

She held her hands to, like in prayer;
They had them out and laid them wide
(Just like Jesus crucified);
They brought their hundredweights to bear.
Jews killed Jesus long ago
God's son; these (they did not know)
God's daughter Margaret Clitheroe.

When she felt the kill-weights crush
She told His name times-over three;
I SUFFER THIS she said FOR THEE.
After that in perfect hush
For a quarter of an hour or so
She was with the choke of woe.--
It is over, Margaret Clitheroe.

She caught the crying of those Three,
The Immortals of the eternal ring,
The Utterer, Uttered, Uttering,
And witness in her place would she.
She not considered whether or no
She pleased the Queen and Council. So
To the death with Margaret Clitheroe!

Within her womb the child was quick.
Small matter of that then! Let him smother
And wreck in ruins of his mother.
May is Mary's month, and I
Muse at that and wonder why:
   Her feasts follow reason,
   Dated due to season--

Candlemas, Lady Day;
But the Lady Month, May
   Why fasten that upon her,
   With a feasting in her honour?

Is it only its being brighter
Than the most are must delight her?
Is it opportunest
   And flowers finds soonest?

Ask of her, the mighty mother:
Her reply puts this other
   Question: What is Spring?--
   Growth in every thing--

Flesh and fleece, fur and feather,
Grass and greenworld all together;
   Star-eyed strawberry-breasted
   Throstle above her nestled

Cluster of bugle blue eggs thin
Forms and warms the life within;
   And bird and blossom swell
   In sod or sheath or shell.

All things rising, all things sizing
Mary sees, sympathising
   With that world of good,
   Nature's motherhood.

Their magnifying of each its kind
With delight calls to mind
   How she did in her stored
   Magnify the Lord.

Well but there was more than this:
Spring's universal bliss
   Much, had much to say
   To offering Mary May.

When drop-of-blood-and-foam-dapple
Bloom lights the orchard-apple
   And thicket and thorpe are merry
   With silver-surfed cherry
And azuring-over greybell makes
Wood banks and brakes wash wet like lakes
And magic cuckoo-call
Caps, clears, and clinches all--

This ecstasy all through mothering earth
Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's birth
To remember and exultation
In God who was her salvation.

On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People
A Brother and Sister

O I admire and sorrow! The heart's eye grieves
Discovering you, dark trampler, tyrant years.
A juice rides rich through bluebells, in vine leaves,
And beauty's dearest veriest vein is tears.

Happy the father, mother of these! Too fast:
Not that, but thus far, all with frailty, blest
In one fair fall; but, for time's aftercast,
Creatures all heft, hope, hazard, interest.

And are they thus? The fine, the fingerling beams
Their young delightful hour do feature down
That fleeted else like day-dissolved dreams
Or ringlet-race on burling Barrow brown.

She leans on him with such contentment fond
As well the sister sits, would well the wife;
His looks, the soul's own letter, see beyond,
Gaze on, and fall directly forth on life.

But ah, bright forelock, cluster that you are
Of favoured make and mind and health and youth,
Where lies your landmark, seamark, or soul's star?
There's none but truth can stead you. Christ is truth.

There's none but good can be good, both for you
And what sways with you, maybe this sweet maid;
None good but God—a warning waved to
One once that was found wanting when Good weighed.

Man lived that list, that leaning in the will
No wisdom can foretell by gauge or guess,

The selfless self of self, most strange, most still,  
Fast furled and all foredrawn to No or Yes.

Your feast of; that most in you earnest eye  
May but call on your banes to more carouse.  
Worst will the best. What worm was here, we cry,  
To have havoc-pocked so, see, the hung-heavenward boughs?

Enough: corruption was the world's first woe.  
What need I strain my heart beyond my ken?  
O but I bear my burning witness though  
Against the wild and wanton work of men.

Rosa Mystica

'The Rose in a mystery!--where is it found?  
Is it anything true? Does it grow upon ground?  
It was made of earth's mould, but it went from men's eyes,  
And its place is a secret, and shut in the skies.  
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine  
Find me a place by thee, Mother of mine.

But where was it formerly? Which is the spot  
That was blest in it once, though now it is not?  
It is Galilee's growth; it grew at God's will  
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth Hill.  
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine  
I shall look on thy loveliness, Mother of mine.

What was its season, then? How long ago?  
When was the summer that saw the Bud blow?  
Two thousands of years are near upon past  
Since its birth, and its bloom, and its breathing its last.  
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine  
I shall keep time with me, Mother of mine.

Tell me the name now, tell me its name:  
The heart guesses easily, is it the same?  
Mary, the Virgin, well the heart knows,  
She is the Mystery, she is that Rose.  
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine  
I shall come home to thee, Mother of mine.

Is Mary that Rose, then? Mary, the Tree?  
But the Blossom, the Blossom there, who can it be?  
Who can her Rose be? It could be but One:  
Christ Jesus, our Lord--her God and her Son.
In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Shew me thy Son; Mother, Mother of mine.

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

In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall worship the Sounds with thee, Mother of mine.

How many leaves had it? Five they were then,
Five like the senses, and members of men;
Five is the number by nature, but now
They multiply, multiply, who can tell how.

In the Gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Make me a leaf in thee, Mother of mine.

Does it smell sweet, too, in that holy place?
Sweet unto God, and the sweetness is grace;
The breath of it bathes the great heaven above,
In grace that is charity, grace that is love.
To thy breast, to thy rest, to thy glory divine
Draw me by charity, Mother of mine.

In Honour of
St. Alphonsus Rodriguez
Laybrother of the Society of Jesus

Honour is flashed off exploit, so we say;
And those strokes once that gashed flesh or galled shield
Should tongue that time now, trumpet now that field,
And, on the fighter, forge his glorious day.
On Christ they do and on the martyr may;
But be the war within, the brand we wield
Unseen, the heroic breast not outward-steeled,
Earth hears no hurtle then from fiercest fray.

Yet God (that hews mountain and continent,
Earth, all, out; who, with trickling increment,
Veins violets and tall trees makes more and more)
Could crowd career with conquest while there went
Those years and years by of world without event
That in Majorca Alfonso watched the door.
That his fast-flowing hours with sandy silt
Should choke sweet virtue's glory is Time's great guilt.
Who thinks of Thecla? Yet her name was known,
Time was, next whitest after Mary's own.
To that first golden age of Gospel times
And bright Iconium eastwards reach my rhymes.
Near by is Paul's free Tarsus, fabled where
Spent Pegasus down the stark-precipitous air
Flung rider and wings away; though these were none,
And Paul is Tarsus' true Bellerophon.
They are neighbours; but (what nearness could not do)
She, high at the housetop sitting, as they say,
Young Thecla, scanned the dazzling streets one day;
Twice lovely, tinted eastern, turned Greek--
Crisp lips, straight nose, and tender-slanted cheek.
Her weeds all mark her maiden, though to wed,
And bridgroom waits and ready are bower and bed.
Withal her mien is modest, ways are wise,
And grave past girlhood earnest in her eyes.
Firm accents strike her fine and scrolled ear,
A man's voice and a new voice speaking near.
She looked, she listened: Paul taught long that day.
He spoke of God the Father and His Son,
Of world made, marred, and mended, lost and won;
Of virtue and vice; but most (it seemed his sense)
He praised the lovely lot of continence:
All over, some such words as these, though dark,
THE WORLD WAS SAVED BY VIRGINS, made the mark.
He taught another time there and a third:
The earnest-hearted maiden sat and heard,
And called to come at mealtime she would not:
They rose at last and forced her from the spot.

S. Thomae Aquinatis
Rhythmus ad SS. Sacramentum
'Adoro te supplex, latens deitas'

Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more,
See Lord, at thy service low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.
Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived;
How says trusty hearing? that shall be believed;
What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;
Truth himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.

On the cross thy godhead made no sign to men;
Here thy very manhood steals from human ken:
Both are my confession, both are my belief,
And I pray the prayer of the dying thief.

I am not like Thomas, wounds I cannot see,
But can plainly call thee Lord and God as he:
This faith each day deeper be my holding of,
Daily make me harder hope and dearer love.

O thou our reminder of Christ crucified,
Living Bread the life of us for whom he died,
Lend this life to me then: feed and feast my mind,
There be thou the sweetness man was meant to find.

Bring the tender tale true of the Pelican;
Bathe me, Jesu Lord, in what thy bosom ran—
Blood that but one drop of has the world to win
All the world forgiveness of its world of sin.

Jesu whom I took at shrouded here below,
I beseech thee send me what I thirst for so,
Some day to gaze on thee face to face in light
And be blest for ever with thy glory's sight.