CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

...there is one poetry...comparable in all ages, developing changing, full of possibilities.

The introductory chapter stated the aim of the dissertation, which is to bring out the sacramental vision of the universe in the poetry of Hopkins and Bharathi. It explained the nature of the comparative study. It presented a brief introduction to the two poets and outlined the different philosophical, scriptural and poetical influences on their life, thought and poetry. It also provided an overview of the rest of the chapters.

Chapter II discussed the shaping influences on Hopkins and Bharathi in the understanding of the Godheads of their respective religions. Both poets reveal an earnest desire for knowing the nature of the Ultimate Reality and its relation to the world and man. They sought to know it through a devoted study of philosophy and theology. On account of the essential similarities between their philosophical and scriptural sources, the Godheads of Bharathi and Hopkins share much in common. The Vedantic Brahman and the Parmenidean Being share essential characteristics. The essential characteristics of
Brahman, Existence – Intelligence – Bliss Infinitude, are found in the concept of the Being of the Greek philosopher Parmenides. Hopkins and Bharathi identify the God of their respective scriptures as the Supreme Being. They recognize their respective Holy Trinities as the three aspects of the one Being. A discussion of Hopkins’s poems on Christ and Bharathi’s songs on Kannan brought out the similarities between Kannan and Christ. The incarnate Gods are perceived as the one Being. The significance of the Incarnation lies in the dialectic between the divine and the mundane.

A discussion of Hopkins’s poems on the Blessed Virgin and Bharathi’s poems on his goddess Sakti revealed the essential similarities between Mary and Sakti. Mary and Sakti represent the female, kinetic principle of the Godhead. Both poets treat the male and female principles as the two aspects of the same Divine Energy. They reinforce this perception by delineating Mary and Sakti on a par with the portrayal of Christ and Mary. Mary and Sakti possess Brahman/Being attributes like the male gods. Bharathi explicitly and repeatedly states the oneness of the male and female Gods. The Hindu Godhead is represented by the Androgynous figure. Being a devotee of Sakti, Bharathi fully identifies with the Sakta ontology. Being a Roman Catholic
convert, Hopkins's religious consciousness also stretches towards the identification of the female principle with the male principle in the Christian Godhead. Hopkins's enthusiasm in this regard is said to be far ahead of his time. Both poets reinforce the dialectic between the male and female principles through the use of light/fire imagery in the descriptions of the male and the female gods. The Sakta views everything in terms of Energy/Power. The Androgynous figure of the Godhead is seen as both Being-Power and Becoming-Power. The former is called Siva, the static aspect of consciousness, and the latter Sakti, the kinetic aspect of the same, the material cause of the world. Seen in this perspective Hopkins's Inscape may be seen as the Being-Power: In-scape (The Johannine Word--Christ); and Instress may be seen as the Becoming-Power: In-stress (pre-existent Mary).

Chapter III examined the nature-poems of Hopkins and Bharathi. A comparative analysis of Hopkins's *PB* and Bharathi's *ki* established their ontological belief that unity precedes difference. Creation is the process of the manifestation of the one invisible Divine Energy into many visible beings in the phenomenal world. But the exact nature and the process of creation is ever mysterious. The nature-poems of Hopkins and
Bharathi are susceptible to a classified discussion under the elemental categories. This reveals their deep elemental consciousness. The landscape poems reveal their Romantic fascination for nature but they are more concerned with the perception of the sanctity of the earth. Hopkins and Bharathi reveal a deep love for birds. This love does not indicate escapism. They identify the birds with man’s soul, which longs for Liberation. Bird imagery is a recurring one in the text of their poetry wherever the context warrants a mention of the free nature of the soul of man. The bird imagery seems to inscape their ever-burning quest for freedom. But bird imagery is a conventional poetic device in this regard. Hopkins and Bharathi transcend this level and dramatize the revelation of divinity in the birds. The falcon reveals its Creator Christ in Hopkins’s WH, which finds a parallel in the eagle’s revelation of divinity in Bharathi’s kp and ap. The discussion of the Air/Wind poems brought out their theodicy in perceiving God’s hand behind the havoc caused by the storm in Hopkins’s WD and Bharathi’s k. The Water-poems of both poets show their perception of sanctity associated with water. The Fire-poems of Bharathi and Hopkins reveal their belief in the solar myth. Their perception of the divine energy as solar energy is very obvious. Hopkins’s
NHF and Bharathi's *ūlikōtu* are apocalyptic poems, which stage the drama of the final dissolution of the world in most sonorous terms. Through centripetal action the phenomenal world of diversity hurl back to its creator and fulfil the world purpose. An essentially contemplative response to nature establishes the theophanic vision of Bharathi and Hopkins. Both use fire-imagery to describe their idea of communion with nature. Bharathi presents the vision of God in nature as the perception of Divine Energy (Sakti) and the moment of perception as contemplation (Sakti experience). Hopkins's *Inscape/Instress* finds a parallel in Bharathi's Sakti vision.

Chapter IV discussed Hopkins and Bharathi as men of practical religion. Both are shocked by the idea of annihilation of man. The affirm belief in the inherent divinity of man. Hopkins believes in the Gnostic assertion of man's identity with Christ. Bharathi's Advaitic faith in the non-difference between the Universal Soul and the Individual Soul reassures him of spiritual victory of man through Self-Realization. The spiritual procedures followed by both poets on the path of self-realization are susceptible to a discussion under the four-fold path of Self-Realization. Hopkins and Bharathi believed in selfless work as a sure path to Self-Realization. Hopkins was a Jesuit priest whose
very mission in life was to imitate Christ in the toil for the welfare of others. Bharathi was a freedom fighter, journalist and poet who dedicated his life to these noble causes. Both poets show their sympathy for the downtrodden, and perceive divinity in the toilers. Hopkins and Bharathi are Men of Action (karmayogi).

As men of Devotion (bhakti yoga), Bharathi and Hopkins show great love for their respective gods, which is very obvious in their works. Devotion involves suffering. A discussion of the ‘terrible sonnets’ of Hopkins and some of the Kannan songs of Bharathi brought out their longing for union with God and the mystical nature of their suffering in this regard. Both poets reveal their agony in poignant terms. They use bridal mysticism in giving expression to the game of hide and seek, played by their Gods to ‘melt’ and ‘master’ them. In the use of bridal mysticism, Hopkins is influenced by the English Metaphysical poets and Bharathi by the Alwar poetic tradition in Tamil. Both poets use imagery of darkness to express their spiritually ‘lost’ condition.

Hopkins and Bharathi follow the mode of Contemplation (rajayoga) in their march towards Self-Realization. They define contemplation and their understanding of the need for mental
concentration and sense-restraint in God-realization is made obvious. Their poems addressed to their heart and mind reveal their difficulty in ensuring mental poise and sense restraint. Their contemplative concern finds expression in their poems. Hopkins’s THP and Bharathi’s cac are self-instructional poems in this regard. They share thematic and structural similarities. Hopkins’s LEGE and Bharathi’s natu dramatize the dialectic between spirit and sense. Hopkins and Bharathi (gnanayogis) declare that they have attained gnosis, the realization of their identity with the divine -- Hopkins in NHF and Bharathi in nāṇ. The knowledge of their oneness with God is reinforced by the use of light imagery, parallelism of thought and sound. The poet’s personal realization of the unfallen state of man is reflected in the repetition of the echo of the monosyllable mantra om, which represents the unfallen nature man’s speech and language. nāṇ and NHF are Gnostic poems in which the spiritual and poetic ambitions of Bharathi and Hopkins are realized.

Bharathi and Hopkins belong to two apparently different nationalities, cultures and religions. They had no personal acquaintance with each other or any mutual access to their works. But as men and poets, they share so much in common
on account of the essential similarity in their metaphysical, scriptural and poetic sources. More important is the identical nature of their spiritual and poetic ambitions. The spiritual procedures by which they realized their aspirations are also similar.

As men, the whole of being as an object of thought and attainment absorbed Hopkins and Bharathi. Nature and Man in all their variety and individuality drew them only as facets of totality. In each object they sought out the mark and telos of unity that connected each with everything else. For this controlling and incorporating energy and end, Hopkins coined the word 'inscape.' For the origin, impact, and grip of that inscape when it fused in man as being and thought, he coined a second word, 'instress'. Hopkins's theory of Inscape/Instress finds a parallel in Bharathi's concept of Sakti Experience. Both concepts embody the dialectic of the divine and the mundane at heart. They define their sacramental vision of the universe. The East and West merge here.

Modern religious verse, unlike medieval religious verse, is poetry of religious experience not of religion itself. The religious poetry of Hopkins and Bharathi contain both aspects. They contain the dogma of their respective religions as well as their
own religious experiences. Both poets turned to the exploration of their own personality to test the validity of religious experience.

The consistent use of light-imagery seems to inscape their personal attainment of Illumination at the structural level, in their overall poetic corpus. With regard to man's Liberation, it is said that the attainment of Brahman is figurative and that the attainment of Brahman-Bliss need not synchronize with the decease of the body. The continuance of the body even after the destruction of nescience is intelligible on the analogy of the potter's wheel rotating for sometime till the momentum is spent even after the propelling rod is removed. True to this observation, Bharathi and Hopkins were realized souls whose mortal existence continued for sometime after their assertions of attainment. Their spiritual victory also indicates that a family man like Bharathi and an ascetic like Hopkins can attain realization alike.

The poetry of Hopkins and Bharathi is essentially concerned with the exploration of the nature of soul, death, purpose and meaning. Both poets interpret these issues in the light of their metaphysical and scriptural sources. Their poetry may be called metaphysical in the widest sense of the term. For,
their poems contain the description of the whole world process, from creation to apocalypse. Everything is seen in the light of God. Logic and faith have gone into the construction of the Godhead in their deep psyche. They don’t stand on the periphery of religion but delve deep into it. The monism of their metaphysical sources is supplemented by their thelsm embodied in their scriptures.

Hopkins and Bharathi may be called philosophical thelsts, who believe in the ontology of one Being, who can also become a being. God is not seen merely as trinity or duality but as an all-encompassing unity. God is transcendent as well as immanent. This dialectical vision is all pervasive in their poetry. Their poetry abounds in the affirmation of their conviction in this regard. Poetry becomes a vehicle for the restatement of scriptural wisdom. Such statements exhibit simplicity as well as majesty. They are charged with the weight of their personal experience. They gain the status of the Great Utterances (nakavakyans), found in the Scriptures. As they cover the dogma of their respective religions, they define various ways of Self-Realization. They can prove a hornbook for anyone who is after Truth.
The poetry of Hopkins and Bharathi derive from their respective traditions and reach out to their own contemporary consciousness marked by an essentially scientific spirit. This is made obvious from the way god’s relationship with the modern world is described. The god of Heaven and the Lord of the living and the dead becomes the electrical power of the modern world. The new idiom is found in very familiar words themselves. The world is charged with the grandeur of God, for both Hopkins and Bharathi. The spiritual wisdom expressed here is nothing new. The words employed are very familiar. The age-old belief acquires a new way of affirmation. The turning of the verb ‘charged’ into an electrical imagery reinvigorates a familiar word. Bharathi also uses electrical imagery to convey this idea. Both heighten the current language by such methods, which impart a sense of novelty to the old concept and worn out words. The dialectic of incarnation colours their aesthetic.

One of the basic essentials of Hopkins’s poetry is his love of parallel, balance, antithesis, apposition, and all modes of comparison, which allow things to reveal their particular difference and their fundamental relationships. Hopkins universalized parallelism, the technical feature of Hebrew poetry, by extending it to English poetry and exploiting its
congruence between form and meaning. Bharathi's poetry also abounds in the use of parallelism. His acquaintance with the English classics has unlocked to him a new treasure of thought and expression. The English poets have exercised a tremendous influence on him. Bharathi introduced initial reiteration, which is new to Tamil poetry.

In Hopkins and Bharathi, the poetic content is taken from old religious poetic traditions such as Milton's, but the mode of expression changes. The Miltonic epic content gets condensed in minor poems. Milton's Satan becomes the sense and mind. The arena of war with God is the world within. Here thoughts fight against thoughts.

Hopkins and Bharathi, to present their deep longing for reunion with God, adapt the bridal mysticism of their respective metaphysical traditions. From the Romantics, they learned the way to open up their eyes and heart to the objects of Nature and went beyond. The Romantic potentials are exploited to assert their spiritual convictions. The beauty of the bluebell or the brilliance of the stars is only a springboard to reach out to their Gods. They to reject the theory of illusion exploit Romantic sensuousness. Their sensuous vocabulary serves the purpose of
registering their rejection of the theory of illusion at the structural level of their poetry.

Meandering through the rivers of various poetic traditions before them with mazy motion, the poetic consciousness of Hopkins and Bharathi gained momentum and gushed into their contemporary soil of soulless poetry and nourished it with startling innovations. Hopkins, indeed, created poetry vastly different from that of his contemporaries and in it the voice of the new poetry was first heard. Likewise, though Bharathi belongs to the age-long tradition of Tamil literature, and limits himself in some places to the conventional banks, his poetry flows with a racing vigour of contemporaneity, gushing with new ideas and emotions. The course of its flow, its speed and manner, its transgressions and its light are totally new, and original. Its impact on modern Tamil literature has been tremendous, as it has given life and form to present day writing in Tamil. Both poets mark a stage in the evolution of the religious and poetic consciousness of their respective traditions.

As poets of integrity and futuristic vision, Hopkins and Bharathi identified word with deed. They poured out soul-stirring and fiery verses steeled with a sense of conviction and of commitment. They blended religious rigour and innovative
vigour not only to discipline themselves and their contemporaries but also to blaze a new trail in the very creative process.

To conclude, Hopkins and Bharathi had their presence felt in their respective social and literary spheres during their lifetime and have left behind works that keep their presence alive forever. The poetry of Bharathi has been compared with many English poets, almost with all Romantic poets. They are mostly influence-studies with no full-fledged focus on the central religious consciousness of Bharathi. A few critical essays like that of Gnani and Tamizhavan highlight the centrality of Bharathi’s creativity. The present study is a humble attempt in this regard by focusing on how his oft spoken Advaitic consciousness influenced his outlook on life and how it coloured his poetic consciousness. A comparative study of Hopkins and Bharathi is mutually illuminating as Hopkins’s incarnational aesthetic is related to the Advaitic aesthetic of Bharathi. A number of their poems stand close comparative analysis. The original intention of focusing also on the striking contrasts between the two poets could not be materialized, as the parallels themselves were found to be much more than what was originally anticipated. A pure psychological approach to
their poetry might yield fresh insights. A comparative study of their prosody by a knowledgeable scholar might also be a rewarding exercise.