In the beginning . this was Being alone,
One only, without a second
*Chandogya Upanishad* (6-24)

Hopkins and Bharathi thought about the nature of the Ultimate Reality and its relationship to the world and man. Hopkins was a student and teacher of the Greek thinkers all his life. He was impressed by the ontology of the monistic philosopher Parmenides. The Jesuit priest’s knowledge of the Bible is obvious. Hopkins had access to the Indian Metaphysics also. Bharathi was learned not only in Tamil but also in Sanskrit, English and other traditions of writing. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the philosophies of Sankara, Ramanuja and the Buddha, the Bible and the Koran were among his reading. Bharathi has translated the Gita in Tamil. For the Christian Gnostic, gnosis consists in the identification of Christ as God. For a theistic Advaitin, gnosis consists in the identification of God as Brahman. This chapter examines Hopkins’s poems on Christ and the Blessed Virgin and Bharathi’s on Kannan and Sakti in the background of their respective philosophical and scriptural sources, to discern their understanding of their respective Godheads.
The Christian Gnostic tradition is characterized by its stress on Self-Realization. It can be traced from St. John to Clement of Alexandria. Clement of Alexandria combined a far-reaching concern for the common salvation of man with a deep sense of personal search for truth. He defined gnosis as knowledge which is essentially a "contemplation of existences on the part of the soul, either of a certain thing or of certain things, and when perfected, of all together" (qtd. in Cotter 1972: 212). Gnosis is the faculty of Identification of, and with, Christ, as human and divine Wisdom, a sharing in his species of genius. It is more than mere imitation of Jesus; it is a higher identity with Christ as word-made-man.

The Indian Vedanta asserts that the absolutely real is Brahman; and the absolutely true knowledge is the knowledge of Brahman. The name Sankara, a seer of the eighth century, has become almost synonymous with Vedanta. His concept of Monism is called Advaita in Sanskrit. The central position of Advaita is that all is One, only the Ultimate Principle has any actual existence, everything else is an illusion (maya). Ramanuja, a seer of the eleventh century, founded Visistadvaita (qualified nondualism). He stressed the theistic aspect of the Upanishads, while Sankara was restrained by the rules of logic. He tried to reconcile
the demands of religious feeling with the claims of logical thinking and thereby bridge the gulf between religion and philosophy. The Advaita Vedanta asserts that man is divine and that the realization of this truth is the goal of man. The final position of the Advaitin is that 'self' is non-different from the taintless Brahman. All Advaitins subscribe to the doctrine of non-difference, though they differ in the mode of expounding the doctrine. The Sakta doctrine is a special presentment of the Advaitic non-dualism. Bharathi's poems abound in the affirmation of his faith in the Vedantic assertion of the divinity of man and his longing for self-realization.

The Vedantic concept of Brahman and the Parmenidean concept of 'Being' share similarities as ontological principles. The essential characteristics of Brahman, Sat-cit-ananda (Existence-Intelligence-Bliss Infinitude), are found in the Being of Parmenides.

The quest for knowledge is the search for truth and the aim of philosophy is to discover the Truth in its totality. The true philosophical spirit inspired the Vedic sages of India, when they began their inquiry by asking, 'what is that by knowing which everything else becomes known? What is the nature of Ultimate Reality? What is its ontology?' A thing may be defined in two ways.
One may state its essential nature; or one may distinguish it from the rest by mentioning its accidental attributes. The Vedanta defines Brahman in both the ways. Judged by the test of unsublatability, nothing other than the knowledge of Brahman can be true. "Brahman is the one universal soul or divine essence and source from which all created beings emanate and to which they return" (Bernard 1996: 146). The Vedantic texts define Brahman's essential nature. Taittirya Upanishad (2.1.1) affirms: "satyam jñānam anantam brahmā", that is, Brahman is 'Being', 'Intelligence' and 'Bliss'. Chandogya Upanishad (7.23.1) adds: "yo vai bhūmā tat sukham" that is, that which is infinite is bliss (qtd.in Mahadevan 1969: 110). Parmenides of Elea was the earliest defender of Eleatic metaphysics. His one poem is divided into two parts, The Way of Truth and The Way of Seeming. The Way of Truth is the earliest known passage of sustained argument in Western philosophy. Parmenides like the Upanishads, argued for the essential homogeneity and changelessness of Being.

The Vedanta regards Existence, unlike the nihilists, as the characteristic nature of the Absolute. "Existence alone, ... was this in the beginning, one only without a second" declares Chandogya Upanishad (6.2.1) (qtd. in Mahadevan 1969: 117). It has neither external relations nor internal differentiations. It is unrelated to
anything, for there is nothing else with which it can be related. All that the finite intellect can say of the real is that it 'Is'. It has no form since it is Immutable, eternal. The Existence has no internal modes, since it is not a whole-of-parts. There is nothing akin to it, nor is there anything, which is opposed to it. What is not existence must be non-existence. But the non-existence cannot be the counter-correlate of the existence, since it is non-existent and unreal. Hence there can be no entity different from, and opposed to, Existence. The Bhagavad Gita (2.16) says, there is no non-existent reality, nor is there unreal-existence. The Existence aspect of Brahman corresponds to the concept of Parmenidean Being. According to Parmenides, Being is unborn and unperishing. Being cannot have had a beginning since that would have been from previous non-being and that there could have been nothing, prior to its generation, to make it come into being when it did. It is also indivisible because it is completely homogeneous, its continuity not disrupted by varying degrees of being. As Hopkins himself explains, Parmenides asserts "with religious conviction.... That Being is and not-being is not" (S 1959: 127).

The second aspect of Brahman is Intelligence/Knowledge/Consciousness. The Vedanta asserts that
consciousness is concomitant with Existence. The Aitareya Upanishad (3.3) says, Brahman is Consciousness and Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (4.3) says, that it is self-luminous. The self knows all; but it is not apprehended by any means of knowledge. In the Parmenidean concept of Being too, Reality is intelligence. As Sedley explains, according to Parmenides, ‘thought’ and ‘being’ always go together, since not being is unthinkable. There are no grounds for distinguishing the thinking subject from the object thought. Thinking is being and being is thinking (1998: 232).

The third characteristic of Brahman is Bliss (Infinitude). That Reality is of the nature of bliss is stated in the Taittiriya Upanishad, (3.6): “From bliss, indeed, all creatures come into being; in bliss they live; and unto bliss they return. Hence bliss is Brahman” (qtd. in Mahadevan 1969: 168). The Chandogya Upanishad (7.24.1) states that prior to the creation of the world there was the Infinite. Wherever there is the non-existence of empirical distinctions, there the non-dual self-alone remains. Chandogya Upanishad (7.23.1) asserts that which is great is bliss and that there is no happiness in the finite. Reality, thus, is bliss because of its infinitude. It is free from limitation due to space, time or other things. The Parmenidean Being is Infinite and
perfect and corresponds to the bliss-infinitude aspect of the Vedantic Brahman. Brahman and Being are beyond time, space and causation.

Hopkins and Bharathi reveal a strong desire to know the nature of the Ultimate Reality. Bharathi’s knowledge of Brahman and Hopkins’s knowledge of Parmenidean Being as well as Brahman bring them together. Hopkins and Bharathi show their metaphysical hunger by expressing their curiosity to know about the nature of the Ultimate Reality and its relation to their own selves. Hopkins thought about the relationship between the self and the universal Being. He asks himself:

From what then do I with all my being and above all that taste of self, that selfbeing come? Am I due (1) to chance? (2) to myself, as selfexistent? (3) to some extensive power? (AHR 1966: 398)

Warren remarks that Hopkins is a “dialectician and scholar” and that he did not share Newman’s “distrust” of metaphysics (1966: 170).

Hopkins asserts that this world must have been determined by the “universal being” (AHR 1966: 403), and in the description of its characteristics Being attributes are found. The Being is the “only self existent” and “distinctive being” (AHR 1966: 404). The
idea of self-existence corresponds to the Existence aspect of Brahman. Hopkins asserts that Being has “feeling, consciousness”, and that He must be able “to think”, mean, and say ‘I’ and ‘me’ (AHR 1966: 401). This attribute seems to be identical to the Intelligence aspect of Brahman. Hopkins describes the Being as “infinite” (AHR 1966: 401), which corresponds to the third aspect of Brahman. Hopkins’s Being is obviously derived from the Parmenidean Being and perhaps from Vedantic Brahman too. Hopkins identifies the Being as the God of his scripture, I AM or Christ. As Cotter puts it, “The Lord of Abraham Jacob, and Isaac greeted him in the pre-Socratic poem” of Parmenides (1976: 13). In Parmenides, Hopkins found a conceptual framework with which to relate to the whole of reality.

Bharathi’s sonnet experiment, yān (Self) states his metaphysical thirst. It is one of the earliest of Bharathi’s poems, the sixteenth in the chronologically arranged anthology. It is perhaps the first poem dealing with a metaphysical subject. In the opening lines of the poem, Bharathi wonders if he could understand the nature of the ‘Self’, whose knowledge has evaded the grasp of the wise down the ages in human history. ‘Can the 1. h understand the nature of the wonderful sea?’ asks Bharathi.
The ignorant mistake the body for the ‘Self’. The sages on the other hand asserted that Brahman is the ‘Self’.

In art, Bharathi asserts: “ōgru brhgag uḷatu ungil” (Brahman is the one Ultimate Reality). He describes it: “atal kogrî ṭonātu, kuṟaitalnoṇātu” (it is imperishable and incorruptible) (at). His epic, pc, opens with an invocation to Brahman:

Having neither name or form,
It eludes the mind.
It alone is Existence,
Knowledge and Bliss. (PO 1997: 103)

This is a direct poetic restatement of the Vedantic description of Brahman. In paraciva vellan (The Spiritual Ether), Bharathi describes Brahman metaphorically as an all-pervasive flood (spiritual ether), which is infinite, boundless, partless, with no attributes, and which is the subject of eternal controversy with regard to its existence. He affirms that this spiritual ether is seen as God by all religions, the God who is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. He describes it as a mass of cloud, which is the source of all energy.

Christianity and Hinduism have their respective Godheads represented by Three Persons, but look upon them as one. Each person is seen as representing the Supreme Being, though there
are functional/modal differences. Bharathi and Hopkins are guided by their own respective scriptures in the understanding of the concept of their respective Holy trinities. God is essentially seen as one mysterious energy. Hopkins looks upon the pre-Christian Godheads as anticipatory representations of Christ in the pagan religions. Bharathi looks upon the gods of Hindu pantheon as well as the gods of other religions as various versions of the one Supreme Being.

In Christianity, the one God Jehovah, IAM, is represented as the Three persons of the Holy Trinity. The doctrine of Trinity is the summary of Christian faith in God. It is affirmed that God is father, and the Father is God; God is son, and the Son is God; God is spirit and the Spirit is God. The consubstantiality of the Three Persons was established after several controversies down the ages. Hopkins affirms faith in the unity behind the Holy Trinity, and that it is one divine energy. He looks upon his God as “three-numbered form” (WD st.9). He quotes the Athanasian Creed, which asserts that the “Father ...is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty, and they are not three almighties but one almighty.” He adds that “their almightiness, their might, their power is one and the same thing (AHR 1966: 381).
Hopkins says that the Three Persons of the Godhead have functional differences. Each of the divine persons is implicated in the whole economy of salvation. Hopkins distinguished three stages in God's approach to his creatures by finding three kinds of graces: 1) "creative grace, the grace which destined the victim for the sacrifice and which belongs to God the Father", 2) "Corrective or redeeming grace" "is especially Christ grace. It is a purifying and a mortifying grace, bringing the victim to the altar and sacrificing it", and 3) elevating grace "which was given at pentacost and which fastened men in god. This is especially the grace of the Holy Ghost and is the acceptance and assumption of the victim of the sacrifice" (S 1959: 154).

Hopkins finds the similarity between the Christian Godhead and the Godheads of other cultures. Hopkins remarked that Father, Word, and Spirit are revealed in pre-Christian myths. Just as the Three Persons are one Being, so is the one reflected in man's images of God prior to Christianity as a "forepitch" of his real self. In Plato's portrayal of the just man, Hopkins found a prophetic delineation of Christ's Passion: "Plato the heathen...drew by his wisdom a picture of the just man in his
justice crucified and it was fulfilled in Christ” (S1959: 37). Among Hopkins’s papers, quotations from the Rig Veda are found:

Self is the Lord of all things, Self is the Lord of all things. As all the spokes of a wheel are contained in the nave and circumference, all things are contained in this Self; all selves are contained in this Self. Brahman itself is but Self.

(qtd. in Cotter 1972: 17)

The quotation relates to Brhad-aranyaka Upanishad (2.5.15).

The Vedas give detailed descriptions of the deities of Nature and the cardinal elements but there is no emphasis on images. The Vedas mention many gods but assert that they represent one, and that one is Brahman (Brhadēranyaka Upanishad 3.9). In Hindu mythology and popular theology, many gods are mentioned. Early in the Common Era, the Hindu Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, Siva—was proposed. These three were regarded as forms of the neuter Absolute Brahman. The Mahabharatha tells of these gods separately and not as a unity. When the Trimurti concept appeared, its exposition varied according to the preferences of the writers for one or another deity.

Bharathi recognized all the various gods of his religion as individual gods. He writes separate poems on some of the most
popular gods, but insists that they represent the different versions of one God whom he identifies with Brahman. He keeps aloof from all sectarian controversies and affirms that God is one. In fact, he views the gods of all religions as one, and writes poems on Christ and Allah.

In his prose writings, Bharathi states that the gods spoken of in the Vedas and the Puranas are the different manifestations of the one Supreme Being (p 1981: 2). He explains the unity of the Hindu Trinity: The Vedas affirm that the Ultimate Reality is one though the sages called them by different names. In view of the three basic functions of God—creation, sustentation and destruction—the *Puranas* (Scriptures) speak of the Supreme Being as Three Persons. Though for the sake of worship they are looked upon separately as individual Gods, one should learn to identify each person as the Supreme Being. Lord Narayana is the sustainer and also the Supreme Being. Lord Siva is destroyer and also the Supreme Being. Lord Brahma is the creator and also the Supreme Being (p 1981: 16-17). In his poems also, Bharathi repeats the same idea. In *naṇanē* (Oh Mind!), he affirms that Vishnu, Siva and all the celestial beings are one, and that the one divine energy is seen as many gods.
Bharathi looks upon the Gods of all religions as one:

The one - the protector of the worlds Who is hailed as the Lord Vinayaka, Spear-holding Kumara, Narayana Th’ Lord in whose matted lock courses th’ river, The Deity called ‘Allah or Jehovah’- Variously hailed and worshipped by man of other nations in joy; the Being Supernal. (vn 1980: 5)

Bharathi describes Lord Krishna as a being beyond the ken of human mind ("arivinaik katanta vinjakap porul") (pc part II st.92); Goddess Kali as a mysterious being (kali stotrag/A hymn to Kali); Lord Siva as the Ultimate Reality beyond the ken of human mind - "oli arivinaik katanta neiporulavang" (kogaati nakinai/ The Grace of Komathi); Goddess cakti as a being who defies expression - "collat takunta porulanru" (og cakti/ A hymn to Goddess Sakti). Thus Bharathi attributes the qualities of the attributeless Brahman to every god of his religion. And he does so when he writes on the gods of other religions too: Allah is the supreme Radiance beyond the ken of human mind and speech - "collaun, nantaulun toṭaronātapataraṅcōti!" (alla /Allah).

Bharathi and Hopkins describe the world of the Supreme Being as opposed to the phenomenal world. The former is a world
beyond time, space and causation, beyond the ken of human mind. It is a world of pure Existence and Bliss and Truth.

Hopkins's *LEGE* is based on the legend of St. Winefred, the daughter of a seventh century Welsh chieftain. According to the legend, the chieftain Caradoc cut her head from her body as she fled from him in defence of her chastity. St. Beauno, to whose chapel she was fleeing, restored her to life, and a well of healing miraculous water sprang from the place where her head had fallen. Hopkins planned a drama to centre round this episode. The poem is a meditation by the maid on how beauty succumbs to age despite all attempts to preserve it, and how it can be preserved for all eternity by being sacrificed and given back to God. The world described here is like the one in Bharathi's *karpaṇaḷayūr* (Utopia). It is a world beyond time and space and it is a world of essence.

Hopkins explains the relation between the world of Being and the phenomenal world:

A Self then will consist of a center and a surrounding area or circumference, of a point of reference and a belonging field, the latter set out, as surveyors etc., say, from the former; of two elements, which we may call the inset and the outsetting or the display. Now this applies to the universal mind or being
too: it will have its inset and its outsetting, only that the outsetting includes all things. (AHR 1966: 402)

The “inset” here seems to correspond to the world beyond time, space and causation.

In LEGE, Hopkins asserts that there “is one” world “that side”, “yonder...high as that ... yonder, yes yonder, yonder,” the world of “beauty’s self and beauty’s giver”, the world of Spirit/Divine Essence. It is an incorruptible world beyond time and space:

.. not within seeing of the sun,

Not within the singeing of the strong sun,

Tall sun’s tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of the earth’s air,

Somewhere elsewhere there is ah well where!

It is a world of “everlastingness”,

where whatever’s prized and passes of us,

everything that’s fresh and fast flying of us, seems to us sweet of us and swiftly away with, done away with, undone .. the flower of beauty, fleece of beauty...

never fleets more.
It is a world of Truth, "fastened with the tenderest truth to its own best being". Bharathi’s thought of regaining all the lost joys finds a parallel in Hopkins’s poem in terms of beauty and possession. Whatever is surrendered to God is regained here:

...not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost; every hair

Is, hair of the head, numbered.

He says there is no need for anxiety or sorrow: no need to feel “so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed” because “the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care” in the world of God. So, it is a world where beauty is preserved for all, naturally it is a world of joy too. As McChesney observes, in the poem Hopkins says that in God all things are found in their “highest cause; in their finest essence” (1968:126). As Gardner remarks, the “ethico poetic purpose” of the poem is “to instress and stress the doctrine that mortal beauty can be repossessed at a price, on the supernatural plane” (1966: 318).

The joys of Khantarvalokam (the world of celestial beings) and some of the experiences regarding peace, truth and virtue are the themes elaborated in Bharathi’s Nāṇa rataṇ (The Chariot of Knowledge). It is the “foremost example of good prose as to its manner and style” (Bharathi, Vijyaya 1975: 165). It is a
description of Bharathi’s imaginative sight of wondrous scenes while travelling into *Upasantilokam* (the world of peace), *Khantarvalokam*, *Satyalokam* (the world of truth), the Earth and *Dharmalokam* (world of righteousness). Bharathi’s *Khantarvalokam* is a world of absolute happiness. He experiences the moon’s rays with its many coloured splendour, which shower sounds of joy *and* waft gentle music to his soul. He has the vision of a *khantarva* girl (Celestial being). Her face glows with the radiance of the moon. He cannot describe her divine nature, unmutilated perfection and heavenly demeanour. After enjoying the beauties of *Khantarvalokam* the poet travels to *Satyalokam*. There he realizes, if the desire to attain Truth is genuine and deep, the mind must itself die, and, in that state of transcendent glory, Truth would be achieved.

In *karpanaiyūr* (utopia), Bharathi’s translation of an English poem, a dream world is described. It is a world populated by celestial beings all of whom experience bliss. It is a world of eternal joy. Even inanimate things like stick and ball have life there. This reflects the Existence aspect of Brahman. Even matchwood looks like a sparkling sword of gems. The dreams of children materialize there and lost joys could be regained there.
Hinduism and Christianity swear faith in the human incarnation of God. Christology consists in the central faith that Jesus of Nazareth and God, the eternal and omnipotent creator of the universe, are one. The recognition of the Incarnate Krishna as Brahman/ God Himself is the core of Krishnaitism as expounded in the Gita. Hopkins and Bharathi have deep faith in their respective incarnate Gods and their main poetic task is to give expression to this religious conviction. Both have written poems on their respective Incarnate Gods. Hopkins’s WD is essentially a religious poem, comprising thirty-five stanzas. There are several other poems on Christ. Bharathi’s kaniṣṭha pāṭṭu consists of a sequence of twenty-three lyrics, where he sings of Krishna as friend, mother, father, valet, king, child, teacher, boy, lover, ladylove and God.

Cotter observes that of all the writings of Hopkins, WD contains the most complete statement of that gnosis or living knowledge of the Lord Jesus, which was his constant aim of perfection. He remarks that the whole poem is a confession of Jesus Christ God and Man and is addressed to him: he is its “inscape.” He adds that gnosis of Christ’s nature and of his heroic deeds is the reason of its being. He avers that Christ is “here the Being of Parmenides” (1972: 145-155). He also points out that
the myth, which Hopkins fashioned, is a synthesis of pre-Socratic, Pauline and patristic strains (1972: 271). With reference to Kannan songs, Gnani remarks that Lord Krishna has descended from Bhagavada and the Bhagavad Gita into Bharathi’s consciousness, preaching new gospels, morals and is reborn in new relationships. Kannan becomes a myth here (1983: 33).

Hopkins’s **WD** and Bharathi’s songs on Kannan affirm the intervention of divine life in the cosmos, in history and in personal existence. In them, each identifies his incarnate God as the Supreme Being, who is transcendent as well as immanent in relation to everything in the world including man. Hopkins asserts that Christ is “Ipse, the only one” God (st. 28), who is “past all grasp” (**WD** st.32). Christ is transcendent, the “world’s strand” and also immanent, the “sway of the sea” (**WD** st1), but His “mystery must be instressed” (**WD** st.5). Christ is present in the inner self of man as He “plays in ten thousand places” (**AK**). This Gnostic belief is stated by Hopkins: “That is Christ being me and me being Christ” (**S** 1919: 154).

Bharathi comes out with a poetic statement of his gnosis in the opening lines of **kec**:

\[
\begin{align*}
y\text{-}\text{\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b5e\u0b3f} & , \ e\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} \ p\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} \\
y\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} & , \ a\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f}\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} \ v\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} \\
y\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} & , \ p\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} \ n\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} \ k\text{-\u0b30\u0b48\u0b3f\u0b41\u0b3f} \\
\end{align*}
\]
These lines mean that Kannan is both transcendent and immanent: Kannan is in the poet, in the rest of the things in the world; He is the poet and the world put together yet different from both; Kannan the juggler is a mysterious being.

The transcendent nature of Christ and Kannan can be seen in the perspective of the concept of Being/Brahman, for they reveal the essential attributes of Brahman/Being: Existence-Intelligence-Bliss Infinitude. Hopkins describes Christ through epithets which suggest the Existence aspect: "beauty past change" (PB), an "all youth", whose abode is "yonder", world of "everlastingness" (LEGE). Bharathi hails Kannan: "āṭiyē āṭiyappā" (the uncaused cause) (pc part II st.92). He describes him: "aṭcarap porul" (the imperishable essence) (pc part II st.89). He writes of the beauty of Kannan: "vālipak kalai enṟun nāṟuvatillai" (Kannan's youthful charm never changes) (ktan). Through these expressions, Bharathi states that Kannan is pure Existence.

Christ and Kannan are identified with the second attribute of Brahman: Intelligence. Hopkins associates Christ with wisdom. In his use of Wisdom Literature, Hopkins emphasizes the identification of the divine 'sophos' with the mental activity and transtemporal role of Christ. Hopkins says, "personally wisdom is Christ out Lord" (S 1959: 257). Bharathi describes Kannan as
The ‘Bliss’ aspect of Brahman is also found in Christ and Kannan. Hopkins associates Christ with ‘bliss’: “Not out of his bliss /Springs the stress felt” (WD st.6). As Foxell explains, these lines express the idea that the revelation of God “does not come from Christ’s bliss as He reigns in the eternity of heaven” (1966: 229). In the sestet of The Soldier, Hopkins turns to the meditation on the call of Christ: “Mark Christ our King.... There he bides in bliss!” With reference to this context, Cotter points out that in the suffering and loneliness of the Dublin exile, Hopkins never doubted his faith that Christ is in bliss (1972: 212). Bharathi looks upon Kannan as the embodiment of all the joys in heaven and earth and describes him as infinite beauty (kkt).

The philosophy of Parmenides is one of absolutes and opposites: Being and Nothing. There is no place for becoming or change. For Hopkins, the insights of Parmenides are not merely conceptual, but involve acts of faith in Being. He fused Greek metaphysics in the crucible of his Catholic beliefs. For him Being can become being. St. John was the only New Testament writer to use the title, Word, of Jesus. He begins the first strophe of his hymn to Christ with the phrase of Genesis: “In the beginning was
the Word, /and the Word was with God.” To John this same Word is the man who said to his challengers: “Before Abraham came to be, I am” (8:18). Hopkins identifies Christ with the Johannine Word.

The Word, for Hopkins, expresses God and the world: “God’s utterance of himself is God the word” (S 1959: 129). In his copy of the Exercises, Hopkins copied out a spurious Welsh text, which purported to be an ancient account of a pre-Christian announcement of the Divine Name. The account begins:

God in vocalising his NAME said, “[I am], and with the Word, all words and animations sprang co-instantaneously to being and life from their non-existence: shouting in extacy [sic] of joy” [I am] and thus repeating the name of the Deity. Still and small was that melodiously sounding voice, (i.e. the Divine utterance). (S 1959:354)

This shows that his religious consciousness has deeply identified God with the first manifested sound. To him, God first speaks his name, I AM, for He is Being, and He Himself is the Word. This Word, which each creature then chants, is its own inner being. Hopkins showed a familiarity with oriental religions and shared in the new interest at Oxford in philology and comparative
mythology. On account of this familiarity, Cotter suggests that Hopkins privately may have associated Greek Omega with the sacred syllable om and that he may also have linked om with ‘home’ (1972: 286). His identification of God with the first manifestation in the form of sound gets a mention, when Hopkins asks God to interpret the significance of the chief nun’s call to God in the last moments of her life. God is addressed here as “arch and original Breath” (WD st. 25).

The central idea of Advaita with regard to creation is that the one Absolute has become the universe. By this is meant not only the material world, but also the mental world, the spiritual world, heaven and earth, and in fact everything that exists. The one question that is most difficult to grasp in understanding the Advaita philosophy is: how has the infinite become the finite? Sankara’s monism does not regard God as Brahman. The understanding of Brahman as God – the Creator and Sustainer of the universe as both its stuff and a will that fundamentally shapes things was developed in devotional texts of popular religion, such as the Bhagavad Gita, as well as in polemical treatises by theistic philosophers, like Ramanuja. In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna emphasizes His identity with Brahman by using the term Brahman for himself (5:10) and by describing himself as
unmanifested form (9:4). He also states that He is Lord Vishnu (10:21) and that He is the monosyllable *om* (10:25). Lord Krishna declared that he is the beginning, the middle and also the end of all creation (10:20). The Bhagavada Purana also affirms that Krishna is God Himself and not merely a portion or manifestation of the divine fullness (1:3:27), and states that He who moves in the heart of all corporeal beings here on earth took on a body through playfulness (10:33:36).

Bharathi identified his god with Brahman, and he was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Bharathi has rendered the Gita in Tamil. In the introduction, he states that the Gita is an interpretation of the Vedas (1997:12). He firmly rejects Sankara’s theory of ‘illusion’.

“*Om is God; Om is all*” say the Vedas, and from this sacred word, all things began (Woodroffe 1998:272). *Om*, the mystic syllable, uttered at the opening of each verse of the Vedas, sounds the beginning, middle and end of the universe, its essence and totality. It is the first manifested sound and the Mantra equivalent of the state in which the Alogical Whole/Being divides and becomes threefold. It is the original sound, which was heard by the Absolute Ears of Him and Her who caused that vibratory movement. It is the ground sound and ground movement of
Nature. From om are derived all special movements, sounds and Mantras. It is constituted by the union of the letters A, U, M. "The Divinities of these three letters are Brahma, Vishnu and Siva and their Saktis" (Woodroffe 1998:272).

Bharathi repeatedly states that om is the language of God, the unfallen language of the one Being. His God 'thrives as sound in the state of om (vn st 16). He recognizes the monosyllable as the language of Kannan (at). In The opening lines of pc, Bharathi describes Brahman as the one who is chanted as om by the sages. In ket, he states that om is the name of his God:

...The sea
   No bounds you will find for that-
   Foams and spouts that sing
   ‘OM’, the name of my Mother
   You will hear in their loud ring. (ket)

In at, Bharathi identifies Kannan with the monosyllable om. In ket he states that om, the name of Kannan could be heard in the chanting of the waves of the sea. This profuse repetition of the monosyllable shows that in Bharathi’s consciousness, the sound form of God has made a deep impression, the first manifested form of God.
Hopkins and Bharathi see Kannan and Christ as the creators of the world respectively. Both see creation as emanation, the process of one becoming many. Both employ liquid and light imagery in their description of the creative process. According to the Bible, "All creation issues from Jesus - not only newness of his divine life, but natural reality from its origin" (Col.1:16:17). An important Christological distinction was made by Hopkins in his interpretation of St. John's statement that "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Hopkins found two moments of the divine design to create all things in Christ in the two phases of the verse: the 'Word' 1) was made flesh, and 2) dwelt among us as man. According to Hopkins, the incarnation is already assumed in Genesis: "In his entrance into creation is his incarnation proper, at the beginning of time" (§ 1959:181). Hopkins concluded that Christ is engaged from the beginning of the world of time: his 'Kenosis' is the first act of creation. 'Kenosis' is the emptying action of the Godhead to become the cosmos. Hopkins, however, never employed the word 'kenosis' but used his own phrase for it instead: the great sacrifice.

While examining the nature of Christ's sacrifice in the act of creation, Hopkins uses liquid and light imagery: it is as if the blissful agony or stress of selving in God had forced out drops
the sweat or blood, which drops were the world,” or as if the
lights lit at the “festival of the ‘peaceful Trinity’ through some
little cranny striking out lit up into being one ‘cleave’ out of the
world of possible creatures” (S 1959: 197).

As Philips points out, the Bhagavad Gita uses a Vedic motif
developed by later theists to explain the process of emanation:
Brahman sacrifices its infinity in becoming finite, and thereby
creates the world (Philips1998: 4). Several theists trace a process
of contraction through gods and goddesses and earthly
incarnation of God, through humans and animals and down to
rocks and dust. Through sacrifice, Brahman emanates the world
as its body. Bharathi repeatedly asserts the idea that creation is
the process of one becoming many. In kcar, he writes:

From that lone thing, the primordial sea,

Bubbled life in its numerous forms,

Sun, the Light of wisdom is God,

All the rays are His creations. (POS 1982:91)

The Vedanta claims that man is divine. It sees in the most
learned priest, in the cow, in the dog, in the most miserable
places, neither the learned man, nor the cow, nor the dog, nor
the miserable place, but the same divinity manifesting itself in
them all. And each one of us is trying his best to manifest that
Infinite outside. So potentially, each one of us has that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss as our birthright, our real nature. Our individuality is God. The real individuality is that which never changes and will never change, and that is the God within us. This individuality is represented by the concept of Atman or Individual soul. Atman is "that which animates the inanimate, the eternal spirit unconscious of its true nature" (Bernard 1996:149). This concept of individual soul/Atman is found in the Gita and the Bible.

Lord Krishna said in the Gita: 'I am the self... seated in the hearts of all beings...' (10:20). Similarly Christ said: "I am the light, which is over all of them.... Take up the stone and there you will find me; cleave the wood and there I am" (qtd. in Cotter 1972: 67). Both these affirmations establish that the Paramatman/Universal Soul is present in everything in the world as the Individual Soul/Atman.

Hopkins and Bharathi affirm their faith in the concept of the presence of God in everything in the phenomenal world. Both use fire/light imagery in asserting the presence of God in man as Atman. Hopkins asserts that God is "under the world's splendour and wonder" (WD st.5). He explains that "God rests in man as in a place, lotus, bed, vessel expressly made to receive him as a
jewel in a case hollowed to fill it, as the hand in the glow or the milk in the breast” (AHR 1966: 405). He describes Christ as “heart’s light” (st.30), “our heart’s charity’s hearth’s fire” (WD st.35), the “vital candle in close heart’s vault” (The Candle Indoors). But the “mystery” of God’s presence has to be “instressed” (WD st.5). Bharathi also affirms the immanent aspect of Kannan in everything in the world including man. Kannan is the sky within the sky, the element of the elements, earth, air, water and fire (pc part II. st. 91).

Bharathi addresses Kannan as “naṇacuṭar” (the mind’s radiance) (st. 95), and as the one who lights up the hearts of sages in deep meditation (pc part II st.91). Both recognize that their respective God’s role as Atman is to cheer the spirit of man and show the path of salvation. Hopkins always treated the Holy Spirit and Christ together. In his sermons and meditations the spirit of Christ is a dynamic and transfiguring love at work in the universe and within human history. He defines a Paraclete as “something that cheers the spirit of man” crying to his ears or to his heart: This way to do is God’s will, this way to save your soul, come on, come on! He asserts that “no wonder Christ is a paraclete” (AHR 1966: 378).
Bharathi refers to the scene of the Gospel of Gita delivered by Krishna to Arjuna, when the latter hesitated to plunge into action in the battlefield. Kannan calls upon Arjuna to take his bow and wipe out the evil forces. He asks Arjuna not to despair and explains the immortal nature of man's soul (at).

Hopkins and Bharathi emphasize the human aspect of their respective incarnate Gods. Both employ fire/light imagery in the context of the birth of God as human being. Christ is a 'sufferer' (Passion-figure) whereas Kannan is portrayed as a playful and passionate lover. They are described as ideal and perfect men. Both poets deal with their beauty of person, mind and character in a similar way.

Hopkins and Bharathi use fire/light imagery when they refer to the human incarnations of their respective gods. Hopkins uses fire/light imagery when he refers to the nativity of Christ: Human Jesus is "the light sifted to suit out sight" (BV). Hopkins describes Jesus as the son of Mary: "Jesu, maid's son" (WD st.30). "Double-natured name/The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled/ Miracle-in-Mary of flame" (WD st.34). "Mary, Immaculate/Merely a woman" moulded those "limbs like ours" (BV). In his sermons too, Hopkins emphasized the fully human aspect of Jesus: Christ was "the greatest genius that ever lived,"

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and a "perfect man." He lived and breathed and moved in a "true and not a phantom human body" and in that "laboured, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried"; as he merited by acts of his "human will"; so he "reasoned and planned and invented" by acts of his own human genius, genius made perfect by "wisdom of his own", not "the divine wisdom" only (AHR 1966: 367).

Although Hopkins, like Scotus a supralapsarian (one who sees the Incarnation as destined from all eternity rather than as atonement to an avenging God), Christ's passion still has its place in the divine scheme. He goes to the extent of asserting that those "who do not pray to him in His Passion pray to God but scarcely to Christ" (AHR 1966: 375).

To Bridges, Hopkins explained that "mystery" for a Catholic was not a matter of interest or curiosity but an "incomprehensible certainty" (AHR 1966: 408-09). In WD (st.7), the sequence of details from the life of Jesus — womb, manger, maiden's knee, the Passion—emphasizes his humanity. The use of these four images loads this stanza with the weight of the whole history of the Christian salvation. The revelation of God in Nature's beauty and in human misfortune dates only from the time of Christ's Incarnation and Christ's Passion. By his death and Resurrection, Christ led humanity to a new life, thus ending the 'womb-life' (or
the merely natural life) and inaugurating a new era. Memorable and momentous, indeed, was the birth of Christ to Virgin Mary; so were Christ’s sufferings and his sweating blood at Gethsemane, the scene of his sufferings. The appearance of Christ had been foretold in the Old Testament, and his life and death are re-enacted daily, sacramentally in the ceremony of the Mass and mystically in the sufferings of human beings. But it is only the heart in extremity, which best understands the beauty and terror of Christ’s sacrifice, says Hopkins.

Hopkins asserted that “the trivialness of life is and personally to each one, ought to be seen to be done away with by the Incarnation... It is one adorable point of the incredible concession of the Incarnation...that our Lord submitted not only to the pains of life the fasting, scourging, crucifixions etc. or the insults as the mocking” (AHR1966: 367).

Bharathi also emphasizes the humanity of Kannan. In kpr, Bharathi celebrates the birth of Kannan, who incarnated as a human being to wipe out the evil forces. He employs the metaphor of fire to suggest the name of Kannan. He writes: “akṣi varitān”, that is, Light(Kannan) descended on earth to dispel the darkness of falsehood. True to the traditional lore, Bharathi presents Kannan through the child and youth Krishna’s pranks
and dalliance with the milkmaids in Brindavan. From childhood to boyhood and manhood, the worship of Krishnan encompasses every phase of his life. In *ktn*, Bharathi insists on the human aspects of Kannan's life on earth:

Those that know nothing about him
Say he comes from the realms of light.
He was born of the warrior caste
And was among cowherds bred:
With the Brahmins he got his fame-
And with Chettis a gay life he led
Black in colour himself
He goes for the gold bright girls.  

*kv* is an elaborate and full-length poem on the young Krishna dallying with the milkmaids of Brindavan. Kannan is described as a persistent playboy, a perpetual nuisance to the girls in his street. He will give a fruit to the girl (poet) but will snatch it away when the girl tries to eat. He will bite it, soil, and return it to her. In the same way he will tease her with honey and sweet things, beautiful flowers. He will pull at her plait from behind, when the girl turns he will vanish. He will throw handfuls of dust on her brand new saree. He will play on his flute and bring the girls under a spell. When the girls listen so enraptured with open
mouth, he would drop a few thick black ants into their mouth. The youthful passion of Bharathi’s Kannan is apparently in sharp contrast to the ‘Passion’ (suffering) of Hopkins’s Christ.

Hopkins and Bharathi describe the person and character of Jesus and Kannan eloquently. Hopkins in this regard provides most of the details in his sermons, while Bharathi furnishes them in his songs on Kannan. Christ and Kannan are handsome, healthy and well built. Hopkins writes on Jesus: "There met in Jesus Christ “all things that can make man lovely and loveable.” In his body he was “most beautiful”, “moderately tall, well built and slender” in frame, his features “straight and beautiful”, his “hair inclining to auburn, parted in the midst, curling and clustering about the ears and neck”. He wore a “forked beard” (AHR 1966: 361). Christ is “beauty past change”, a “Pied Beauty” (PB), and his sweetness cannot be described in words (WD st.8). Bharathi describes Kannan as “naḷḷaṇṭan” (handsome as Cupid) and well built like Bhima in the Mahabharatha (at). Kannan has been on earth for ages, but has no grey hair (kc) and no weariness, sorrow, disease, or age can over him range (ket). Christ’s constitution, according to Hopkins, was “tempered perfectly”. Christ had “neither disease nor the seeds of any”(AHR 1966: 366), his health being perfect, never could “a hair even fall
to the ground” from his locks upon his head or from his beard (AHR 1966: 365).

Hopkins and Bharathi describe ‘the beauty of the mind of Jesus and Kannan respectively. Christ, according to Hopkins is “the greatest genius that ever lived... genius is beauty and perfection in the mind”. Christ is “the hero of a book or books of the divine Gospels.” He “drew up” the New Testament in his blood. He is a thinker, an orator and a poet, as he appears in his eloquent words and parables (AHR 1966: 364). And no stories or parables are like Christ’s, so “bright, so pithy, so touching; no proverbs or sayings are such jewellery”: they stand off from other men’s thoughts “like stars, like lilies in the sun”; nowhere in literature is there “anything to match the Sermon on the Mount” (AHR 1966: 367). When Hopkins was soft sifted in the hourglass of life, It was “gospel proffer, a pressure, principle, Christ’s gift” that enabled him to remain “steady as a water in a well” (WD st.4). Kannan is well cultivated, expert in knowledge (ket) and resourceful. Should any one ask him the way to live, in a word he gives it. Kannan is the author and hero of the Vedas; In men’s language, the spirit of his Vedas won’t be found; his Vedas are not the idle tales, and exquisite is his poetry (ktan). His Bhagavad Gita (a sermon in the battlefield) is an invaluable
Scripture showing the sure path to Liberation (p 1966:16). Bharathi acknowledges that the Gospel was a boon to him:

For my daily bread I came to serve him,
He gave me wealth beyond compare;
An ignoramus I, but to me
The subtle Vedas he laid bare. (ka) (P05 1966:382)

Hopkins and Bharathi describe the beauty of the character of their respective gods. Hopkins comments: “far higher than beauty of the body, higher than genius and wisdom the beauty of the mind, comes the beauty of his character, his character as man. For the most part his very enemies.... Allow that a character so noble was never seen in human mould” (AHR 1966: 368). Personally Christ has been a “Father and fondler” to Hopkins (WD st.9). Kannan is an embodiment of love, a friend of the downtrodden. He will playfully dismiss and bless those who are stricken with sorrow (ktan). He is a teacher, doctor, and nurse to the children. And in short, he is a friend, philosopher and guide, but in look a mere servant (kc).

Christ’s heart is very tender but he could be stern too. He “warned or rebuked” his friends when need was, as Peter, Martha, and even his mother. He was “feared when he chose and
he took a whip and single-handed cleared the temple” (AHR 1966: 368). Christ has been “lightning and love”, “winter and warm” (WD st.9). Hopkins responded to both aspects with affirmation and acceptance: He “did say yes” (WD st.2), and instead of running away from God he flew towards him” with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host” (WD st.3). He only prayed to Christ to “forge” His “will” by melting and mastering him (WD st10). Kannan has a streak of madness amidst all his wonderful parts. He would test the righteous and try to the point of breaking their hearts (ktan). He will be provoked at the attitude of the rich who are proud, and at the abuse of the Vedas (ktan). Kannan will tramp the liars and the unrighteous under his feet. He will spit on the faces of even his near and dear if they utter a word with guile in the heart. If anyone becomes proud he will smash it with a blow (kt). He will look on and bide and bide till the foe waxes fat and ripe, but will destroy the evil forces in a split second (ka):

One moment in which the discus to seize
One moment in which to establish right,
In between will be no moment;
And utterly ruined the enemy’s might!

(POS 1982:81)
Christ is a king. Jesus of Nazareth is the king of the Jews. He is also a warrior and conqueror of souls. He is "true-love and the bridegroom of men's souls." The "virgins follow him" whither soever he goes. The martyrs follow him through "a sea of blood, through great tribulations." And his entire servants "take up their cross and follow him" (AHR 1966:365). Hopkins also chose to respond to the call of Christ when He called him to "His Church" (AHR 1966: 355). He acknowledges that it is Christ, who is his creator (WD St.1). Hopkins admires him (WD st.32), recognizes him as his "heart's light" (WD st.30), lifted up his "heart, eyes" (HH) to instress his "mystery" under the world's splendour and wonder. He greets his Lord when he 'meets' Him and blesses when he understands (WD st 5). He affirms that Christ "minds" and "eyes" him and hoped that Christ might become his "ransom" his "rescue" (The Lantern Out of Doors) in his efforts to wriggle out of his "winter world" (To R.B.). He prays that Christ might "easter" in him (WD st.35). Hopkins's WD and Bharathil's kaṇṭaṇ pāṭṭu affirm the intervention of divine life in the cosmos, in history, and in personal life.

Kannan reigns in North Mathura (kcar). He is a warrior by caste and leads the army of the Pandavas and a counsellor and the charioteer who is behind the conquest of the Pandavas (kt).
Kannan is also a true lover of human souls and he dallies with the milkmaids (kv). His raasa lila (dalliance) symbolizes the love and concern of God for each individual. Bharathi records Kannan’s dalliance with him.

Bharathi finds pleasure not only in portraying Kannan as a male beauty but also in feminizing his Lord and in infantizing him. The song, Kannanga en kulantai, is a “treasure house of felicitous expression” and it is full of “untranslatable delicacies of touch and colour” (Sundaram 1964:70). Bharathi describes his infant Lord as a poppet, a heavenly treasure, who has come to take his sins away. The child is a speaking picture of gold and it gives the poet rapture to run after her. When he kisses her, he is dazed like a drunkard. He becomes mad with joy when he hugs her.

In the field of love for god, Bharathi has made a daring experiment. The close relationship between the human and the divine is generally expressed in terms of the bride and bridegroom. The individual soul is considered as the bride of the Lord. But in Kannamma-poems, Bharathi reverses the order. He makes the Lord his bride and gives expression to this kind of unique experience. He wonders if his sweetheart (Kannan)’s flaming eyes are the sun and the moon; and the darkness of the
eyes the sapphire of the sky. He exclaims if the starlit blue sky is her diamond-embroidered saree. Her lovely smile is the light of the laughing flower in the grove. Her voice is like the song of the cuckoo. He kisses her in ecstasy. In kaṇṇān en kaṇṭan, Bharathi gives an inventory of the varied gifts, which a lover brings to the shrine of his beloved. Of what use would these gifts be if the lover were to be unkind? The ceaseless tender grace of his face is worth all the riches. Before the splendour of Lord’s grace all the wealth of the world pales into nothingness.

Bharathi’s songs on Kannan and Hopkins’s WD have invited similar critical remarks with regard to the presentation of the respective myths of Krishna and Christ. Kelly observes that the meaning, the movement the poetic depth of WD is “Christianity, integral and absolute, Christianity splendid and entire” in its accepted sacrifice, and that it is useless to read it with a mind unprepared for the profound power of its spiritual movement” (1985:117). Jennings comments that WD embodies “a complete vision of creation” held in the hands of God. According to her the poem is a “celebration of the glory of human and divine life, of both the physical and the spiritual world” (1985:192-93). Cotter remarks that no other English poet has more “tellingly conceived and proclaimed” the height, depth
and breath of Christ, the maker and remaker of mankind. Few Christian poets, in any language, have been so “inventive in their myth making” and so “urgently eloquent in venturing a novelty” (Cotter 1972: 166). Cotter further says that Hopkins’s myth is also “of its place and time”, late Victorian in its light and shades, “innately British” in its deliberation and eccentric secrecy. He further remarks that “formed in his psyche”, born of its ultramontane setting and the emergence of modernism, Hopkins’s mythogenesis was of necessity a private affair (1972:271).

With regard to kannan pāṭṭu, Nandakumar observes that Bharathi’s identification with the Krishna myth is “indeed absolute”, and that he rings the changes in Krishna’s roles with a singular and compelling felicity. She adds Bharathi’s Kannan songs, “certainly reach the bull’s eye” (1977:31). Vijaya Bharathi remarks that Bharathi’s Kannan songs move in the “world of awareness” and portray the doings of God to man; they lead man into the limitlessness of awareness through its numerous steps leading him through many stages so that he may get “absolute joy and knowledge” (1975: 124). Iyer points out that Bharathi follows the Alwar tradition in the matter of emotional experience in Kannan songs (qtd.in Bharathi, Vijaya 63)
Gnanl points out that Bharathi’s Advaitic consciousness finds expression in his songs on Kannan (1983:29). Meenakshi Sundaram comments that a “mighty vision” floats before a great poet and that he “strives to give shape to it in unique Manner” (1964:82). With regard to style, Ramakrishnan remarks that “simple diction, utter clarity of expression, homely imagery and off-hand allusions to mythological lore are the hall marks of the style of the Kannan lyrics. The tone is relaxed and almost colloquial. The conversational naturalness is somewhat deceptive, however, for it is really art concealing art” (1982:60).

Though the Hindu mythology presents a plethora of goddesses, they are perceived only as different manifestations of one goddess. Being a Sakti devotee, Bharathi explains Saktism in some of his essays and writes many poems on the goddess. He writes poems on the various goddesses of the Hindu pantheon as each individual goddesses, representing a particular aspect. But he always insists that they are all different manifestations of Sakti.

In Christianity, there is only one mother figure, Mary, who is not accommodated in the Christian Godhead. Hopkins, being a convert to the Roman Catholic Church, affirms his faith in the Immaculate Conception of Mother Mary in his sermons. He has
written separate poems on her, very few though. He affirms faith in the co-presence of the Blessed Virgin with Christ in his preexistent as well as ‘risen’ phase. He preached on the Immaculate Conception and explained it in his best pulpit manner. He has written very few poems on Mary, which are called ‘May pieces’. At Stonyhurst College, where Hopkins was staying at the time of writing these poems, it was the custom to hang verses near the statue of Mary. May is Mary’s month and it is traditional to honour her at this time. May Lines, a Latin poem, MM and BV are some of the May pieces. Though hardly five poems, Hopkins’s poems on Mary contain all the essential characteristics of Bharathi’s Sakti. Bridges speaks of the “exaggerated Marianism” of these pieces (1966: 71).

The six Indian philosophies represent different standards according to the manner and to the extent to which the one Truth may be apprehended. All these systems start with the fact that there is Spirit, and Matter, consciousness and unconsciousness, apparent or real. Samkhya, Vedanta and the Sakta Agama called the first Purusha, Brahman, Siva: and the second Prakriti, Maya, Sakti respectively. Though Hindu mythology presents several goddesses, they are all believed to be the different manifestations of one goddess. Saktism worships one goddess as Mother Sakti.
Woodroffe explains the Saktist ontology: It is "Sakti" (power) that is, God in Mother form as the "Supreme Power, which creates, sustains and withdraws the universe." God is worshipped as the Great Mother because in this aspect, God is "active, and produces." The ultimate, Irreducible Real is not mere undetermined Being, but "power which is the source of all Determinations." This power is both to Be, to self-conserve, and to resist change, as also to be the "efficient cause of change, and as material cause to Become and suffer change." Relatively to the world, Immutable Being as Divinity called Siva the Power-Holder and His Power is Sakti or the Mother Siva; but in "the alogical state power-to-Be and Being-Power-Holder are merged in one another." The two concepts of Being and Power are treated as two persons. Siva is the "Power-holder, who is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and Sakti is Power and the Becoming." She, In the alogical state, is also "Being-Consciousness-Bliss" without ceasing to be in Herself what she ever was is and will be, She is "the power of Siva as efficient and material cause" of the universe and universe itself. While Siva represents the consciousness aspect of the Real, she is its aspect as Mind, Life and Matter. He is the Liberation aspect of the Real. She is in the form of the universe or Samsara. As Siva-Sakti are in themselves one, so Moksha and Samsara are at root
one. It is "monotheistic" because Siva and Sakti are two aspects of one and the same Reality. It is "dual" because, these two aspects are worshipped as two Persons, from whose union as Being and Power the universe evolves (1998: 26).

The Sakti worship has struck a deep root in the consciousness of Indians. The age-long cult has found its perfection in the towering personality of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Bharathi’s stay in Calcutta and Pondicherry may have contributed much to the development and enrichment of his own soul through the worship of Mother Kali. Rajagopalan observes that the poetry of the Vedic sages caused the birth of Bharathi’s devotion to Sakti and adds that Sri Aurobindo’s association strengthened that ‘religion’ and made it “the core of Bharathi’s writings” (qtd. in Nandakumar 1987: 21-22). In the years of his exile at Pondicherry, Bharathi was initiated into the mystical tremendum of Sakti-tattva during his close association with Sri Aurobindo, whose Yoga was based on absolute surrender to the Divine Mother. Bharathi himself was to approach Her, now as Lakshmi, now as Saraswati, Kali, Gomati, Valli, Kannamma, Radha, or Muthumari, but behind the veil it was Sakti all the time. Bharathi has written poems on the various goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, but all the time he always asserts that all of
them are different manifestations of the one goddess, Sakti. Bharathi was a great devotee of Sakti and his poems on her are forty-seven lyrics, of varying length and composed in varying intensities of mood or fervour. As Mahadevan points out, the poems on Sakti are devotional pieces. They are to be cherished for containing the most satisfying expression of Sakti as the "ultimate cosmic force" (1957:152).

In Christianity, popular Marian devotion in the Litanies calls Mary, 'Queen of Heaven', identifying her with the woman of The Song of Solomon (6.10), "fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners." The conception reappears on a cosmic scale in the woman of Revelation 12, "clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve-stars".

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was solemnly proclaimed in 1854. The idea of Mary's preexistence must be seen as part of the development of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception defined in 1854. The concept is particularly identified with Scotist theology. Hopkins's attraction to Duns Scotus, the Marian Doctor received much of its impetus from the heroic defence offered by Scotus against strong opponents to the teaching of the idea of Mary's preexistence.
Single handedly, Scotus turned the tide by lecturing on the Immaculate Conception at Oxford and carrying the day at a previously hostile Paris. Hopkins was glad that the greatest of the divines and doctors of the church who had spoken and written in favour of this truth came from England. For Hopkins, Scotus was eminently the shining knight “who fired France for Mary without spot” (Duns Scotus’s Oxford).

The idea has won liturgical approval. The atonement Christ accomplished for others and offers in baptism, this he gave to Mary in its fullness from the beginning. She is “filled with all the pleroma of God” (Eph: 18-19). Hopkins himself preached on the Immaculate Conception. He followed Scot in insisting on the role of Christ in bestowing this honour on his Mother: “The Blessed Virgin was saved and redeemed by Christ her son not less than others, but more, for she was saved from even falling” (S 1959: 43).

In his notes on Incarnation, Hopkins summarizes his view of the atonement, and gives to Mary a central place and states that Christ retrieves the Blessed Virgin to “divine motherhood”, a “status in kind and not in degree higher than what is attainable by any other creature’s correspondence with grace” (S 1959: 170). So Intimately was she united with him in the mysteries of

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her son's life that Hopkins conjectured, even if men had not 
sinned, "Christ would have been his/ forma servi", and she would 
still have been "mother of all men in the spirit, but without 
sorrow" (S 1959: 170). This may be seen as an indication that 
Hopkins's deep consciousness recognizes the female principle in 
the Godhead.

Peters points out that 'inscape' and 'instress' are two terms, 
which well bring out Hopkins's "preoccupation with the 'self' of 
things" (1948:19). As in the case of 'inscape', Hopkins has 
nowhere defined 'instress', although it is of no rare occurrence. 
The starting point in trying to get at its precise meaning will be 
the use of the noun 'stress', which in Hopkin's philosophical 
writing stand for the perfection of being, proper to a thing. The 
noun 'instress' adds little to this meaning of stress, except in so 
far as the prefix emphasizes that this force is intrinsic to the 
thing. A good instance of its use is found in Hopkins's notes on 
the Spiritual Exercises of St.Ignatius, "...as in man all that energy 
or instress with which the soul animates and otherwise acts in the 
body is by death thrown back upon the soul itself..." The verb 'to 
instress' is oftener found; the following quotations all bear out the 
fundamental meaning of "to come to stress", "to actualize": "And 
as a mere possibility, passive power, is not power proper and has
no activity it cannot of itself come to stress, cannot instress itself. " (qtd. in Peters 1948: 13-14). As Hopkins looks upon Mary as the actualizing power of the ontological principle, the term 'instress' may be identified with her. In this sense, 'instress' may be seen as similar to the Saktist concept of Sakti as the Becoming-Power.

As a Sakti devotee, Bharathi asserts that Paramatma and Parasakti are one and the same. He explains, in one of his essays on the Sakti cult, that since the whole universe is upheld by Paramatma in the form of Parasakti, the Saktas look upon the kinetic aspect of the supreme Being as the female principle and worship it as the universal Mother (p 1981: 12-18). In another essay, Bharathi says that it is Mother Parasakti, who is seen as the three goddesses—Saraswati, Lakshmi and Paravati. It is she who is the creator, sustainer and withdrawer of the universe (p 1981: 23). In poems such as ṇṆṟu kāṭal, (The Love for the Three Goddesses), Bharathi describes the three goddesses individually as representing particular aspects of divinity, in terms of mythological portrayals. In vn, Bharathi looks upon the Supreme Being as a fusion of the male and female principles:

Art thou, the ultimate! The Absolute!

Who as inner light glows in all universe
As Mother, Father, Sakti and Siva,
The Lord-God and His consort getting over.

(vn 1980:12)

The exact nature of the relationship between the male and female principles in the Godhead is beyond the ken of human knowledge. This metaphysical puzzle seems to have intrigued Bharathi’s poetic consciousness. He describes Sakti variously as Brahman’s daughter, Krishna’s sister, Siva’s wife and as Krishna’s wife, Siva’s daughter, Brahman’s sister and also as the Mother of Brahma, Krishna and Siva (cak). Hopkins also reveals such metaphysical confusion, for he describes Mary as the “Virgin Mother, daughter of her son” (qtd. in Cotter 1972: 137). The imagery of the Holy Ghost’s “warm breast” brooding on the bent world (GG) is an implied poetic recognition of the female principle in the Godhead. Reversal of relationship and feminization of the male principle in the Godhead seem to be common between Hopkins and Bharathi. For it is a mystery, which can never be unravelled by man. Bharathi’s feminization of the male principle is obvious, as he makes his Lord Kannan into Kannamma. In the sequence of kannan pāṭṭu, nearly ten poems carry the title, Kannan g. In Hopkins, it appears to be a subtle process for, when he uses metaphors or similes to describe the nature of his
Lord, he includes antithetical attitudes. In HH, he describes Christ: “the azureous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder/Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violet—sweet!” As “azureous” (blue) suggests Mary, the statement here associates Christ with Mary. The stalwart Christ is simultaneously described as violet, which is obviously a feminine image. Similarly the ‘stalwart image’ seems to be used to describe Mary when she is called the “mighty mother” (MM). In this sense, all antithetical attributes in the description of the male or female gods in the poems of Hopkins and Bharathi may be seen to represent the male/female dialectic in the Godhead.

Hopkins and Bharathi identify the female principle of the Godhead as Energy, the origin of which is mysterious. Hopkins identifies Mary as Power/Energy along with Christ and conjectures the origin of both thus, in their preexistent phase: “The first intention then of God outside himself, or, as they say, ad extra, outwards, the first outstress of God’s power, was Christ, and we must believe that the next was the Blessed Virgin” (S 1959:197). The deep religious consciousness of Hopkins accommodates Mary in the ontology of the Christian Godhead. In BV too, he associates her with power: “Mary Immaculate.../ whose presence, power is/Great as no goddess’s.” In MM, Mary is described as “the mighty mother”. To Bharathi, Sakti is
the First of all, the uncaused cause whose origin is beyond the ken of human knowledge:

---Parasakti, the Great Energy.

How was she born? We do not know....

She is the Mother of all; but she has no mother,

She was born of Herself to Herself, of IT by IT.

From where did she arrive? From IT the Supreme IT.

How was she born? That is not known at all.

(pac 1989: 114-15)

Hopkins and Bharathi include the three attributes of Being/Brahman in the description of Sakti and Mary, as they have done in the description of Kannan and Christ respectively. Hopkins’s description of Mary as “without spot” is nothing but the recognition of Mary as the ontological principle (Duns Scotus's Oxford). In that pre-existant state Mary, like Sakti represents pure existence. This idea seems to be stressed when he explains the dogma of Immaculate Conception: “. . . that the Blessed Virgin Mary was never in original sin; that unlike all other men and women, children of Adam, she never, even for one moment of her being, was by God held guilty of the Fall. All others but Mary, even the holiest, have fallen at least in Adam.... Her privilege has been granted to none but her” (S 1959: 43). To Bharathi, Sakti is
(a mysterious being) – "narāṇāṇa purul" (ks). He describes her as—"coIūkku elitāka nīrgitāl" (par) — one who defies definition. Bharathi explicitly defines Sakti—"ātiyāī anātiyāī akanṭa arivāi.../ānantattīn elīai aṭra poykai" (nakā kālīyan pukai/The Glory of Maha Kali) —as Existence-Intelligence-Bliss Infinitude.

Hopkins identifies Mary with sophos, wisdom/intelligence, "the Blessed Virgin in that being which she had from the beginning, as expressed in the book of Wisdom" (S 1959: 257). Hopkins’s identification of Mary with “spring’s universal bliss” and the "ecstasy all through mothering earth” is clear indication of Hopkins’s perception of Mary in terms of ‘Bliss’. Hopkins and Bharathi employ fire/light imagery in the description of Sakti and Mary as they have done in their portrayals of Kannan and Christ respectively. Hopkins presents Mary through light/fire imagery and his perception of inscape in nature is described as the perception of the inner light in things of the world. Mary is described as “Mary-of-flame” (st.34 WD). Her ‘mystery’ can also be instressed because she is also immanent like Christ: “This piece-bright paling shuts...Christ and his mother” (TSN). Bharathi describes Sakti as radiance of Siva (nakākālīyan pukai/The Glory of Mahakali), the immortal flame, the resplendent sun (pōtri akaval/A Hymn), the light in a cave (ck), the glow of
thought, the light of meaning in words (*ca*), the eternal Light, a hillock of light (*cakti vijakkan*/A Discourse on Sakti).

Hopkins and Bharathi present Mary and Sakti as the Mothers of creation. Mary is the universal mother, “the world-mothering” air (*BV*). She is predestined through the merits of the innocent and she is identified with Christ in creating, as she is in saving the world. The opening apostrophe of his Latin poem, *May Lines* praises this double role in creation and redemption as Mary’s greatest privilege, uniquely and initially prepared for her alone. The epigraph of this poem repeats the wisdom motif. In *BV*, Hopkins describes Mary as, “a nursing element”, who is the mother for the whole humanity:

> She holds high motherhood  
> Towards all our ghostly good  
> And plays in grace her part  
> About man’s beating heart. (*BV*)

He also suggests that without the presence of Mary, the female principle, no creation or survival of the world is possible:

> Whereas did air not make  
> This bath of blue and slake  
> His fire, the sun would shake,  
> A blear and blinding ball... (*BV*)
Hopkins goes on, in this visionary passage, to describe what the universe would look like if the earth were not surrounded by this "bath of blue," which "slakes" the blinding ferocity of the sun. The "sun" here is the male principle and the "bath of blue" is the female principle for blue colour is traditionally associated with Mary. And in this poem, Mary is compared to the atmosphere which is suggested by "the bath of blue" here. As Gardner observes, here, Hopkins means that "the atmosphere sustains the life of man and tempers the power of the sun's radiation." Similarly "the immaculate nature of Mary is the softening, humanizing medium of God's glory, justice and grace. Through her the ineffable Godhead becomes comprehensible" (1969: 241).

Bharathi's Sakti is the universal Mother who creates, sustains and withdraws the world and finds joy in that (nakā cacti pañcakanj/A Hymn to Maha Sakti). She is the creatrix who makes one into many (cak). She has created countless worlds in the sky and imparted immeasurable energy for their existence; countless treasures she has created in the heart of the oceans, plant herbs and crops (mv). She is the creator of the light emanating from the stars, of the wind and space (nakā cakti/Sakti the Supreme Mother); she is the creator of man his
body, his mind, which is like an ocean (mv). Bharathi gives an extensive list of the creations of Sakti in many poems. To stress that it is the female principle, which is active in creation of the world, Bharathi describes Kannan as mother in the title of the poem, which deals with creation (ket).

Sakti is the power we recognise behind the movements of history and dreams of mythology; and Sakti inspires our hopes and achievements, our dreams and visions. All energy is the play of Sakti, and all life and knowledge flow from Her. Bharathi sees her as a state of being, a condition of awakened consciousness. Sakti is sorrowless state, joy’s fulfilment, thought’s glow, the crown of Realisation(Ca)

Hopkins identifies Mary with nature’s motherhood. She is the material cause of the world. Hopkins in a sermon, touched upon the subject of Mary as Mediatrix of all Graces: “Now holiness God promotes by giving Grace; the grace he gives not direct but as if stooping and drawing it from her vessel, taking it from her storehouse and cupboard. It is in someway laid up in her” (S 1959: 29-30). The imagery of ‘vessel’ suggests that Mary is the material cause of the universe. And in BV, Hopkins emphasizes this idea:

All God’s glory would go
Through her and from her flow
Off, and no way but so.
Mary assumes all the forms in the world: "...the same/Is Mary, more by name." She is the life-breath of man and is "rife in every least thing’s life" (BV). She is also all-pervasive and the Life force of every thing; she is obviously represented as Nature in MM. May is the time of blossom and fecundity in the world of nature when all life germinates and comes forth. Upon the nature’s motherhood, Mary smiles because it recalls to her the days on earth when she “did in her stored/Magnify the Lord” (MM). In BV, Hopkins suggests that Mary represents the finitizing principle, for it was she who “Gave God’s infinity/Dwindled to infancy.” In MM, that Mary is the material cause of the creation and that creation is a joy is suggested powerfully through imagery of womb, and words expressing joy. The imagery of “blue eggs”, “sheath”, “shell”, “mothering earth”, reinforce the idea that Mary is the female aspect of the ontological principle. The expressions “swell”, “all things rising”, “all things sizing” and “blossom” convey the process creation/manifestation. That creation is ‘bliss’ is inscaped by strewing the poem with synonyms denoting the sense of joy- “ecstasy”, “merry”, “mirth”, and “universal bliss.” It further reinforced by the sensuous imagery with which the poem is loaded. The poem is marked by a strong sense of verbal dynamism, which is a structural reinforcement of

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Hopkins’s recognition of Mary as the kinetic principle. The imagery, “drop-of-blood-and-foam-dapple” indicates Hopkins’s identification of Mary with Christ in the creation of the world, for he uses blood imagery while describing Christ as the Creator.

Bharathi describes Sakti as the one eternal light, which manifests as many. All forms of life in the world are assumed by her (avt). She is hailed as Nature and the sky is her arm, the earth is her lap (ket). She originates as life and grows here as Sakti (valyan nulutug/All over the World). She is the all-pervasive hot rays of the sun, the lightning and rain, the waters of the ocean, she is the Air/Atmosphere, the Life of everything. She is the various minerals and metals in the heart of the earth, the mountain, rivers, dense forests and hills (mv). She is the five senses (kāji pāttu/A song on Kali).

To sum up, Hopkins and Bharathi reveal a quest for spiritual knowledge. They sought to know it through a devoted study of metaphysics and theology. They express their gnosis in their poems. Hopkins’s poems and observations on Christ, and Bharathi’s on Kannan reveal the essential similarities between Christ and Kannan. Both poets identify their respective incarnate gods as the Supreme Being. They regard them as creators of the world and creation as the process of the one divine energy
manifesting as many in the world of time and space. They affirm their faith in the transcendence and immanence of their incarnate Gods. They emphasize the human aspect of their incarnate Gods. Incarnation is seen as an exemplification of the dialectic between the divine and the mundane. The unity of Incarnation is reinforced by the use of fire/light imagery. The difference between Christ and Kannan as human beings lies in the fact that Christ is a sufferer (Passion figure) while Kannan is a passionate youth.

Like Christ and Kannan, Mary and Sakti show Brahman attributes. Sakti and Mary are mighty mothers of creation, representing the material cause of the world. Mary possesses all the essential features of Sakti. Both poets impart Being attributes to both male and female gods, which suggests the male-female dialectic of the Godhead. The use of fire/light imagery in the description of Mary and Sakti, as in the case of Christ and Kannan, reinforces this dialectic. In ontology as well epistemology, the male and female principles of the Godhead are perceived as one by Hopkins and Bharathi. In Bharathi, it is very explicit, while in Hopkins, it has to be inferred. In Saktist terms, Hopkins’s ‘Inscape’ may be seen as the Being-Power: In-scape (Christ); ‘Instress’ may be seen as the Becoming-Power: In-stress (Mary).
Hopkins and Bharathi reveal their gnosis in their religious poems. They describe the nature of the Ultimate Reality and its relation to the world. Both show a Paramenidean/Vedantic understanding of their respective Godheads. Hopkins reveals the Saktist perception of Bharathi in the recognition of Mary as the ontological female principle.