CHAPTER II

HOPKINS - HIS POETRY AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

The modern Christian concept of man is an attempt at understanding the essence and status of man and his relation to God and his neighbours founded on biblical foundations of the Christian dogmas. The starting point for the Christian understanding of man is the knowledge that man has been created in the image of God. God raised man to a creature in which He recognised His own image and came to be conscious of Himself and man is therefore in a completely decisive way one who belongs to the self-manifestation of God. The history of humanity is theogony. This idea implies the experience of unio mystica which is based on the thought that man and God are designed for each other. In the unio mystica, the longing for God by man fulfils itself; and so too the longing for man by God. The innermost essence of God is love. Any lover can fulfil himself only in a freely returned love. Therefore He bestowed on man freedom so that man could turn his love to Him and return His love. But man had betrayed God’s trust in him; he has loved himself instead of turning his love towards God. So God awakens divine love in man in that He begot and brought forth His son in him.

The image concept does not, however, make man divine; he is a creature of God and as such stands in simple dependence on God; he owes everything including his existence to the will of his Divine Creator. Man also stands in a special relationship, in a solidarity of universal brotherhood with all his fellow creatures, who, like him, have received their life and form from God. The loss of this consciousness of solidarity is one of the results of the revolt of man against God that has basically changed man’s relationship to God, the universe and his fellow creatures.

Early Christian theology considered the concept of image in relation to the rational faculty of man and to his means of cognition. Augustine found it in the spiritual life of man. He sought to establish some traces of the inner triune nature of the life of God in man. He tried
to analyse the process of sense perception and thereby grasp metaphysically and psychologically God's image in man. Christian mysticism goes further and understands man in his unity of body and spirit as the image of God. The later descent of God into flesh, the self manifestation of God in man in the body of history is implied in the idea of the creation of man after the image of God. Man thus becomes that universal being in whom the forces, the formative principles and the forms of manifestation of the whole universe hold together in a personal unity.

The universe, the cosmos is also an image of God in so far as the creative ideas of God are represented in it also and the spiritual forms which existed in the consciousness of God have realised themselves in it physically. God is ens manifestativum sei, a being who forces Himself towards his own manifestation, presentation and incarnation and whose place of self-manifestation and self realisation is the whole realm of the created universe. In it man occupies a special place by virtue of worship, love, service and responsibility. *Man should use the creatures of God for the knowledge, praise and value of God so that God will be praised in all things through our Lord, Jesus Christ.* The creatures among whom man is placed are understood as the hands and messengers of God which shall lead us to God. Thus the world in which man finds himself is not an evil, hostile and naturally sinful and wicked world. He is here as a creature of God, as a microcosmos in the middle of a great cosmos. The world has been built according to the same laws as those that form the inner constitution and spirit body structure of man. Thus *every perfect gift coming from the Father of light* exhorts man freely to love God. While the other creatures are designed to serve man, man is designed to serve the one God as one who is far higher and nobler than man. This service is man's obligation to God. Thus, the farther man goes in subduing the earth - making the creatures of the earth serve him - the wider becomes his obligation before God to the creatures which have been entrusted to man. But *You subdue the earth* was said to man before his Fall. The commission to dominate was tied up with the assignment of the highest obligation to the world before God. This is fulfilled since the Fall only in those men who are regenerated by Christ - who have received again the renewal of God's image from Christ and in Christ.
Another very important aspect of the image relationship between God and man involves the concept of freedom. As said earlier, along with the likeness God also bestowed on man freedom of choice - to love God or himself. Thus the Fall was the result of a wrong application of the peculiar nobility of his nature, the noble gift of his personality, the proper seal of his being the image of God by setting himself as the centre of his will and love, as against God and by being himself like God. The revolt of the men of paradise against God made man subject to death - the indissoluble life of man was changed into a dissoluble life. This takes us to the idea of salvation of man and the conception of Jesus Christ as a guarantee of the salvation of man. The meaning of Incarnation of God in Jesus is explained simply as the Logos become flesh. It is looked at as follows:

1. It is a unique intervention of God in human history,

2. God has, in an unimaginable act of condescension, given unto Himself the form of a unique historical person in whose form He suffers completely the conditions of human existence; overcomes the roots of corruptibility and founds the beginning of a transformed and exalted form of that human existence. Thus Jesus becomes a symbol of suffering, endurance, expiation, atonement in all the dimensions of human existence - the spiritual, the mental and the physical. His was a bloody sacrifice offered and a terrible death undergone.

In this context arises the question about the status and place of suffering in Christianity. The answer to it will decide the meaning and significance of the Cross of Golgotha.

The Jewish expectation of a Messiah was accompanied by the idea of power and splendour of God accompanying the Messiah. The disciples of Jesus also believed in such a Messiah. But Jesus himself was filled with a completely different image of his mission. The Son of Man must suffer many things - the image of the suffering servant of God on earth. But suffering is not the ultimate end and ideal of life in the realisation of the destiny of man; it characterises the great turning point towards resurrection.

The secret of the Cross receives its clarification from the Christian understanding of sin. Sin is an abuse of freedom. Man has alienated himself from God and instead of being a
coworker of His kingdom and companion of His love, man has become a rebel and a usurper. This self chosen alienation made God give man over to death. The results of this rebellion are to be overcome at all stages of human existence down to the physical. Thus suffering and death are but the results of rebellion manifest. Christ died a most painful and disgraceful death to experience to utmost depths, the humiliation in spiritual, mental and physical spheres of the life of the fallen man found in the condition of rebellion against God and to implant afterwards the roots of a new spirit body form of existence in man including the sphere of his physical body. His resurrection is the resurrection of New Adam. As the first-born from the dead, Christ inaugurated the new humanity of the Son of God.

The rebellion against God which is chosen in freedom can be overcome through self-conquest, self-surrender and through sacrifice of the will to self-assertion by the acceptance of suffering. Every individual Christian is called upon to become the successor of Christ - suffering is an element in the great drama of freedom, which, seen by God and worked out by God, is identical with the drama of salvation. It is a transformation into a new form of spirit body existence, spirit body nature. Christ's suffering is thus the beginning of profound transformation of man and the root and source of a new imperishable form of human existence. The significance of Resurrection lies in the fact that God identified Himself completely with His copy in the truest form right up to corporeality and decay in order to take back through this identification the deformed image of God and to renew and transform it.

This renewal and transformation which is indicated by 'rebirth' cannot be identified with 'conversion' in an exact, temporally datable and spatially fixable way. It is not an extinction of the old, but the old being filled with a new content, a new setting of the goal and a new dynamism. In other words, the afflicted holy are cured by faith - the restoration of the image of God in man that was disfigured by sin. The power of the spirit of Jesus Christ permeates and transforms all the spheres of human life, from the bodily sphere to the highest spiritual gnosis and wisdom. This radical power of the renovating spirit of Christ penetrates all the dimensions of human existence.
The Christian idea of freedom determines the peculiar sovereignty of the Christian idea of man. Freedom is the highest nobility of God's essence. Man's will, when it wills for itself (to have for himself the world entrusted to him and thereby set himself in the place of God), abuses this freedom. This abuse has entangled man in slavery. It is the slavery to self will, to alienated love. This slavery is more burdensome than slavery to sensuality and love of life. It is the enslaving of the whole man, including his most spiritual. And the freedom which the Christian receives is the freedom for which Christ has fought on his behalf - He fulfilled it at the Cross.

Father, not I as I will, but as Thou willest.

Father, let Thy will be done.

In Christ and freed by Christ, man can fulfil his destiny as the image of God - free service of love. The basic paradox of Christian freedom which includes both love and service has been appropriately expressed by Luther: A Christian man is a free lord over all things and is the subject of none; A Christian man is a subservient of all things and is the subject of everyone. The process of this evolution of freedom makes man feel himself entangled in a dramatic process of liberation, in which Satan endeavours always anew with new methods to enslave him while God struggles to liberate His children from the prison and establish them in the promised glorious freedom of the children of God. Now arises a rather significant problem: Does the actual, actually lived picture of the Christian fit in the theological understanding of the imago dei? Man is in a position, in the midst of the conflicts of life to look upon all sufferings and afflictions from its point of view of future conquest, which is a situation in which other men feel the bitterness and hopelessness of life, see the coming conquest, already completed in Christ, of suffering and the coming change of sorrow in joy. The Christian Man does not allow himself to be entangled and challenged by the cross and suffering; he sees in the cross and suffering themselves the mark of triumph and joy. The repeated demand made of man is that he should be perfect:

You shall be perfect like your father in heaven.

A man of God may be perfect.

That you may be perfect and complete.
The perfection of man is the perfection by which the image of God is reflected. Man has disfigured this image through his rebellion against God, through his willful abuse of his original image; but in Christ he received back the perfection of God's image.

All of us are men born as men, but all of us are not man-man. Only when we are good and pious do we duplicate the name of man; so that in us lives no longer the mere man, but man-man. So long as man is externally present, while a snake lives within, he is no man-man, but only a man. But when inner man always corresponds to the image of Him who has created him, then will the true man be born and the outer and the inner man will together be harmoniously held to the man-man. Hereby is presupposed for ever the incarnation, the descent of God in flesh, the act of liberation, bringing salvation and the annunciation of Christ, the first born from the dead, the last Adam. The perfection of man worked out by Christ is identical with deification of man. In man's perfection is fulfilled God's promise of salvation to them - You are gods. The idea of perfection of man in the New Testament obtains its peculiar meaning through Christology: the perfection of man is reached in Christ. This perfection is not an individualistic ideal which aims at ethical and spiritual perfection of individual men but is understood always with view to the collective growth of the believers towards the love of Christ. Therein is the thought that the community of saints is the body of Christ.

This concept of perfection of God is also associated with the concept of the history of salvation as the process of a successive self development of the Trinity in three holy periods of salvation. In the first, God the Father takes a form, in the second it is the Son and in the third and the last, it is the Divine Power in the form of the Holy Ghost. In the first stage, man is the servant; in the second he is the son and in the last he is a friend. This stage is the grand finale of the relationship between man and God. Nevertheless, it is a wholly spiritual and inner experience that lies on the other side of the speakable.

This sense of anticipated fulfilment takes us to an explanation of Christian asceticism. Christian asceticism has an extraordinarily strong, dynamic element of hope - Maranatha (accelerated end of the world.). The Christian community prays to Christ to lead the old world speedily to its destruction and to introduce the new aeon as rapidly as possible, in which the
children of the kingdom will celebrate the messianic meal with the Son of Man. The Christian expectation is the anticipation of the approaching fulfilment. The normal conditions of the now ruling aeon are knowingly ignored. Compromises for possibilities are avoided. Therefore the tendency is towards an asceticism of the inner world, calling the ascetic into the world for transforming it under the commission of God. The aim of the spirit is to raise matter and corporeality to the status of means to its self development and to represent itself bodily. Asceticism is not a flight from the world but the self realization of man, who, for working in the world, was liberated by God Himself through the birth of God in the soul. Thus the fulfilment of existence, of the meaning of life, through work for the Kingdom of God becomes the Christian slogan.

**THE THEORY OF DIVINE DISCOVERY**

The true definition of religion will have a reference to God as part of it in so much as *Religion is a special virtue of the human will, perfecting the moral agent and his actions, in order that he may give to God the honour which is owed to him.* The external acts are not however repudiated in such a definition for the perfecting of religion takes place in the agent and his actions.

The single and ultimate end of man's being is to praise and serve God. In other words, God is the goal of life and every aspect of life is directed towards this end. Thus the very purpose in creation is to set forth a domain that magnifies God. What justifies the glorification of God as life's goal is God's absolute sovereignty as Creator. God has placed the imprint of His will on the creatures and the way for man is to act befitting the form he has. But God unites power with infinite goodness and this goodness justifies man's submission totally. The New Testament declares that God is love (1 John 4:8), not that he is only power. This divine goodness involves the communication and sharing of good with creatures. The creatures then become to partake of the goodness of being. In this process is the fulfilment of the individual. *Man has been created,* Loyola would say, *to praise, reverence and serve our Lord God, thereby saving his soul.* Thus the individual salvation is the consequence of the individual's desire and his will towards God: giving glory to God, he wins himself glory.
For God to be served, He must first be found. God discloses himself to anyone at any time or place through a special revelation or grace. But he has also made his discovery universally possible in a general revelation through the created world. He is immanent and omnipresent. If the created world contains individually distinctive creatures or things which express themselves in design or pattern, there is a dynamic element, the tendency of power of a thing to manifest its unique being and the seething urge of this power to break into consciousness impressions can be said to go to make the phenomenal world as we know it. God is the center of this inner power in nature and the ultimate power behind the inner powers in nature. Every individuality, as an individuality within a unified pattern, models the great individuality in unity of which is God Himself. God being maximally perfect and thus unique, He also unifies maximal diversity in his conceptual understanding. Each thing's individual power thus serves as mirror or symbol of the divine being. As He is mirrored in these things He can be discovered in one's being. Individual things acquire their meaning and value in that they can remind everyone of the goodness of God. The universe then is a value-laden one in which facts and value mesh together, signifying the convertibility of being and value.

Such aspects of things initiate religious experience and lead one to God. Such religious experience sets in motion a recurrence of reflection and experience and the seeker is carried into continuing deepening modes of experience. Creation then becomes a ladder of excellences culminating in the perfection of God Himself. The upward progression of this scale of being is launched into human consciousness by the inner power of the individually distinctive creatures. The created world is therefore an inexhaustible resource for the discovery of God.

If the theory of divine discovery appears to be so naive, it is so because it is an account of an ideal situation. Universal awareness of God directly through creation would occur in the Kingdom of God. Though the phenomenological world has such a possibility, a cloud of darkness has spread over the world and has obscured His presence, clouded His providence and has made His way inscrutable. The world is a world of evil and mischance. Man has to live this life of night with such limited light as is available. The most obvious reason for this night time of the world is the fall of man into evil. Man has spoilt the creation by his own evil acts and has separated himself from close union with God. He lives in shadows partly
of his own making. Secondly the creation of finite things operating under regular causal laws brings with it imperfection and natural catastrophes which explain the prevalence of natural evil. Man's fall and unnatural evil come outside His direct immanent purpose and activity. But God in certain mysterious ways is also involved in the darkness which enshrouds man. He often holds aloof, keeps distant, does not reveal Himself. In Biblical imagery, Vertily thou art a God that hidest thyself. He compounds man's difficulty further: even if man could overcome his sin and adjust himself to natural evil, he might still feel confused, empty, estranged, because of God's silence and distance. The night only gets shaded more. He not only hides himself but sometimes he chooses to disclose himself only through the very darkest elements of life - the violence and destruction in nature, the suffering and tragedy of human life. God is the God of the sun as well as the storm. Such then is the human condition - to live in a world where God's presence is potentially close, universal and knowable, but in which for human, natural and divine reasons, God may be distant, difficult and unknown.

THE PREDICAMENT OF MAN

The experience of desolation, barrenness and spiritual dryness consequent upon this state of man need not necessarily be the doubt of the skeptic, the confusion of an unknown direction in life or the hollowness of hollow man. It may be attendant upon even spiritual affirmation. The process of recovery from desolation involving feelings of barrenness and despair can be looked at as a religious experience which becomes a predicament in the sense that recovery which always appears to be almost at hand is ever elusive. Thus the problem of man is a pervasive, spirit depressing experience of binding confinement. It may be consequent upon his immediate personal surroundings, or by a general sense of nonfulfilment, or by a deeper emptiness felt. Spiritual commitment notwithstanding, the finite conditions in which man lives make such an experience a possibility and often a reality. But certain factors of the same finite conditions may provide man with means for recovery. The world, the whole created realm, including man with his own ways and qualities in contrast to any supernatural activity or being, may provide him with such means for recovery. But in the case of many, over and above such natural achievements, a movement within oneself through a divine efficacy from beyond oneself is felt as a power that restores in spite of one's own inabilities and ineptitudes. Thus God's grace is certainly felt as the qualitative crown of the experience.
Doctrinal foundation, awareness of grace, participation in spiritual discipline notwithstanding, one may feel a sense of confinement. In such a state, life's circumstances which may be outward or inward, physical or mental, may temporarily overpower one's usual sensibilities, outdistance one's will, impoverish one's zeal, enclose one's endeavours. The attendant feeling will be one of being thwarted, constricted, imprisoned. Life looks like being circumscribed in gnawingly narrow bounds and tethered by tightening bands of constraint. A sense of nonfulfilment, barrenness, emptiness and sterility are further stages of this state of confinement. Disappointment, discouragement and despair may become the felt state of man. But none of these terms seem to name the residue of the sense of barrenness and emptiness in the religious mind. Desolation, the opposite of which is consolation seems nearer the mark. So much so, the predicament of a religious mind is the predicament of being between desolation experienced and consolation promised. The experience in religious terms is explained as absence of God. The bitterness of desertion, lament at the great loss, reproaches and even sarcasm and scoffing finally emerge into a questioning of God's ways. The result of such questioning is invariably further bafflement. However, the intensity of supplications for relief and restoration increases unabated. The belief that there is some purpose in the absence sustains throughout. In the case of many who undergo such experience, a sense of estrangement from all that is of this world may come to be felt. A sense of existential estrangement may creep in, which is explained in diverse religious traditions in diverse ways. From the level of the individual sorrow, a transition to world sorrow in terms of transitoriness and death regretting the temporality, changeability and obliteration come to be in which life is looked at as a steady movement from birth to obliteration inherent in mortality. At advanced stages, the mind passes through agony, anguish and self hate. Self hatred adds a sense of being unworthy and despicable.

Such being the nature of religious experience, the resources for consolation and the source of hope are within man himself bestowed upon him as gifts of his nature. But the ultimate resources, sources and hope are from God's grace. Therefore is man's earnest appeal for His grace. Perception of better beauty in the beauty witnessed in nature, creative activity of the individual through which the self is realised, the natural strength and practical reason contributing to moral resolve, the ability to celebrate daily work, human association,
the practice of spiritual discipline are some of the natural means through which desolation can be overcome. The process is completed when grace abounds. Grace is a free, personal bestowal of unmerited favour upon man by God, in terms of theology. In terms of phenomenology, it is a strength beyond oneself, an unexpected gift, a renewal of spirit, a response of deep gratitude. It is a powerful resistance to evil. It is a guard against despair. Thus overcoming privations is not a matter of self heroism but an instance of divine action. The inward impacts of the divine purpose come to be felt when grace is thus identified. Such a feeling brings an altered perspective of everything; it inspires a new mission in life; a new significance is added to it; a new presence is felt in nature and man; a spiritual sanctification is obtained for life which manifests itself in either a personal identification with or a personal proximity to God; a radiance of spiritual affections glows. All these vitalize this life pressing it onward, poised between precarious human realities and ultimate anticipations.

The alternations of consolation and dryness of heart have been recorded by Saints and Prophets. Part of the reason is ascribed to the testing of man by God. It is also partly because all men live in a finite world, a temporary abode, with its own vicissitudes and temptations.

**BINDING CONFINEMENT IN HOPKINS’S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**

The root source of the religious experience as revealed in the poetry of Hopkins appears to be the pervasive, spirit depressing experience of binding confinement. Being trapped in life’s circumstances, frustration of talents and desires and emptiness and barrenness felt in life are factors which appear to initiate this experience. To appreciate this sense as expressed in the poems of Hopkins, one may start with *The Caged Skylark*. The poem is usually interpreted in terms of man’s embodiment. The poem seems to have clear allusions in this direction.

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage
Man’s mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house, dwells.

The poem ends with an affirmation in release from Distress through resurrection. But what is of greater interest is the skylark’s situation as compared to man’s situation. If the skylark is taken to be *imprisoned* in the cage, man is to be taken to have been *trapped* in drudgery, day-labouring out life’s age.
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,  
Yet both drop deadly sometimes in their cells  
Or wring the barriers in bursts of fear or rage.

The barrier that man wrings is the existential trap that man is in. The skylark needs a return to his own nest, wild nest, no prison. Man needs an unencumbered existence.

Man’s spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best.

This line makes it explicitly clear that Hopkins is concerned more with a state of experience than with a longing for annihilation of existence. This feeling has been explained as a feeling of encagement.

In To seem the stranger lies my lot, Hopkins regrets estrangement in life, from family and homeland. The poem concludes with a feeling of being barred and thwarted.

... what word  
Wisest my heart breeds dark heaven’s baffling ban  
Bars or hell’s spell thwarts. This to heard unheard,  
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.

This sense of frustration of bottling up of works within himself has led Hopkins to an isolation of the one who feels he is a mere beginner in spite of years of aspiration and effort. By extension, frustration of spiritual ideals, though not directly implied in the poem, is to be felt to be equally if not more acutely agonising. In Thou art indeed just, Lord the divine relatedness is made more explicit.

How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost  
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust  
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend  
Sir, life upon thy cause.

The sense of bitter defeat, holy thwarting, unthriving stagnation is unmistakable in these lines.

Hopkins also mourns his inability to realize his own natural talents, proper desires, legitimate expectations and ambitions. Lacking opportunities, not getting working, rival claims of a calling, too many demands - whatever be the cause behind, one may feel that one’s life as
a human being is not being fulfilled adequately. Fruition, which is longed for, appears somehow sealed off. Nonfulfillment, in Hopkin's phrase would be the ruins of wrecked past purposes (Patience, Hard thing!). Nonfulfillment is not just a matter of not-positive; it is a purpose, an ideal, an intention that is rudely wrecked leaving desired fulfilment in ruins.

To seem the stranger lies my lot is identified as estrangement poem. It conveys the sense of falling short of what one might or should be. Now I am at a third remove indicates more than that one sense. It indicates the unreality of things compared with their true form, Thou art indeed just, Lord renders the sense of nonfulfillment much more vividly. Hopkins protests to God over his condition and proceeds to compare his futile efforts with nature's fruition.

Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With pretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build - but not I build; no but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes,
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

While perfecting their ways is a matter of smoothness and rhythm for all things in nature, man may not be able to build in spite of all his struggle and strain. This threat of nonfulfillment felt at lower levels as artist, thinker, poet or any other is a threat to those with a spiritual vocation too. Hopkins talks of it in The Candle Indoors. He saw a candle in a window while passing by. He hoped that what is being done inside would only be to glorify God. He was then led to turn inside to his own spiritual state.

Come you indoors, come home; your fading fire.
Mend past and vital candle in close,
What hinders? Are you beam blind, yet to a fault
And, cast by conscience out, spendsavour salt?

Reduced to fault finding and self deception, one's spiritual strength may get reduced to salt which has lost its savor and seasoning power. In See how spring opens with disabling cold, Hopkins attributes part of this fallowness to youthful indecision.

It is the waste done in reticent youth
Which makes so small the promise of that yield
That I may win with late-learnt skill uncoth
From furrows of the poor and stining wield.
Therefore how bitter, and learnt how late, the truth!
Beyond this sense of nonfulfilment is a sense of hollowness, an incapacity, a creative sterility, an emptiness, a barrenness. This is a far deeper, more pervasive and persisting condition. If nonfulfilment may be taken to refer back to failure in particular efforts and in realising particular talents, it can be said that it may be reversed by success. But in feeling oneself to be empty and barren, there is underscored a certain inability for success - a certain lack of the wherewithal for fulfilment. *Time's eunuch* is a person unable to be productive. *A lonely began* is the one who is for ever a beginner. To such a one, the world naturally appears to be a winter world. Following an account of the nature of creative process in art, Hopkins laments in *To R.B.*

Sweet fire the sire of muse, my soul needs this;  
I want the one rapture of an inspiration.  
O then if in my lagging lines you miss  
The roll, the rise, the carol, the creations  
My winter world, that scarcely breathes that bliss  
Now yields you, with some sighs, our explanation.

To aspire, yet to feel barren; to conclude that one has nothing to offer - that is the sense of creative failure, sterility in one's very capacities which we find in this poem.

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

This fragment is a confession of this state. Thus living under conditions of being trapped, thwarted, unfulfilled or barren, man is under constant spiritual threat from which even the spiritually minded person is not exempt on account of his attained spirituality. Even he is subject to sieges of encagement and, like everyone else, his roots also need rain.

This sense of encagement contributed to by a feeling of being trapped, thwarted, unfulfilled and barren is accompanied by disappointment, discouragement and despair. Disappointment by itself is a particular defeat of some hope, expectation, effort or ambition.
If the sense of disappointment is tenacious, it passes into distress. Distress is a general weakening of confidence, a disheartenment, a lessening of courage. Despair is disappointment carried to the extent of disappearance of once felt hopes and expectations. Insurmountable obstacles in one's path make themselves so felt that a deep, brooding sense of futility threatens man. Despair then is the abandonment of hope, rejection of some good as an object of efficacious desire since it is unattainable in the practical order (New Catholic Encyclopaedia). This despair is looked at as one of the seven venal theological sins in the Catholic tradition. In this sense it consists in the relinquishing of present or possible hope. Man has consciously recognised his dependence upon his fellowmen and upon God but has voluntarily rejected the corresponding duties of seeking perfection and salvation in harmony with them. It is important to note here that Hopkins's poetry does not show traces of this kind of despair. The despair of Hopkins is only an emotional despair that can spring up in a person in spite of spiritual commitment. It is not a despair of repudiation; it is a despair of desolateness which befalls despite a steadfast spiritual orientation. The idea of disappointment is quite explicit in Thou art Indeed Just Lord:

Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Peace underlines the vagaries of spirit which disappointment brings.

When will you ever, Peace, wild wood dove, shy wings shut,
Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs?
When, when, peace, will you, peace? - I'll not play hypocrite
To my own heart: I yield you do come, sometimes; but
That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace allows
Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?

In the context of the deterioration in civilization, The times are nightfall, an unfinished sonnet, voices the discouragement which is the result of repeated disappointments.

And I not help. Nor word now of success:
All from wreck, here, there, to rescue one-
Work which to see scarce so much as begun
Makes welcome death, does dear forgetfulness.

Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves also uses the imagery of night to express a sense of gloom. Evening passes into night; obliterates the day's light and activity. Similarly one's spiritual state, already dimmed, is threatened by further loss.
Heart, you round me right
With: Our evening is over us; our night whelm,
Whelm and will end us.

Thus daytime varies between disappointment and success; evening is a cloak of discouragement; the darkness of night is final despair. Hopelessness, darkness so obliterate possibility of consolation that the mind seeks the negative comfort of a possible end to everything.

...... Here Creep
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whole whirlwind: all
Life does end and each day dies with sleep.

Even the waking up for the next day is only to *wake and feel the fell of dark, not day*. The sourness of life is indicated in *Selfyeast of Spirit* a dull dough sours. Release from life's distress and woe is sought not as a means of heroism or because of fear of danger. The drudgery of life's buffetings, the constant jading of life's career is to be seen as an end to

The jading and jar of the cart.
Time's tasking, it is father's that asking for ease
Of the sudden-with-its-sorrowing heart
Not danger, electrical horror. (28:27)

This personal dejection widens to a lament over the condition of mankind.

But man, - we, scaffold of score brittle bones;
Who breathe, from groundlong babyhood to hoary
Age gasp; whose breath is our *memento mori*-
What bass has our viol for tragic tones? (75)

Frail and tragic is man's very condition. Despair is then a structural feature of existence itself, an existential component of life. Finite life with its confines forms a generalized kind of encagement. This is an inherent hazard of life.

So be beginning, be beginning to despair

Be beginning to despair, to despair
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

This encagement engenders a sense of alienation from personal sources of unity with God and identification with other people. It is an inward experience which does not indicate a description of God and other people. But it points to the self as well as to external relationships. Spiritual commitment makes one see encagement in relation to divine reality. This relation
makes it part of the total religious experience without which the experience of positive renewal by itself cannot make religious experience total. Disappointment, despair by themselves without any relationship to God would be of incidental nature because their value is acquired in terms of God-relatedness. Encagement in relation to commitment makes man wonder, doubt, rebel, curse, accuse, defy, disdain, brood, lament and languish in relation to God. But denial, is not part of the experience. Even desolation is looked as of God. The why of the of is strange, mysterious and uncomprehended.

The feeling of desertion, lament and regret, accompanied by sorrow, angry reproach, sober questioning, supplication, realization of the purpose of encagement and acceptance - these make up the human predicament and its resolution. No worst, there is none gives a simple statement of God's absence.

Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?

In the context of an utterance of sorrow that is pitched past pitch of grief, this statement occurs. Nondum is devoted to this theme of God's absence.

God, though to thee our psalm we raise,
No answering voice comes from the skies,
To thee the trembling sinner prays
But no forgiving voice replies:
Our prayer seems lost in desert ways,
Our hymn in the vast silence dies.

We see the glory of the earth
But not the hand that wrought them all;
Night to a myriad worlds gives birth,
Yet like a lighted empty hall
Where stands no host at door or hearth
Vacant creation's lamps appal.

My prayers must meet a brazen heaven is another poem of lament.

My prayers must meet a brazen heaven
And fail or scatter all away
I cannot buoy my heart above.

I wake and feel the fell of dark has this lament.

... And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.
Hopkins’s poems do not proceed to reproachfulness. If at all a note of reproachfulness is to be found in his poetry, it is in *Thou are indeed just, Lord*, in the whole corpus. After a paraphrase of the twelfth chapter of Jeremiah, the poem proceeds to reproach God for his condition of defeat in spite of a life of devotion to God’s cause.

Thou art indeed ... ...
... ... ...
Defeat, thwart me?

This lament and reproach proceeds further to sober questioning: *why does God withdraw, hide himself, desert his faithful?*

*Carrion Comfort* asks,

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me?
The wring-world right foot rock? lay a lien lamb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan
O in turns of tempest, one heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee? (64)

If there is purpose in the trials whose pleasure is it?

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

This experience gives rise to supplication:

Oh! till Thou givest that sense beyond,
To shew Thee that Thou art, and near,
Let patience with her chastening want
Dispel the doubt and dry the tear;
And lead me child-like by the hand
If still in darkness not in fear.
Speak! whisper to my watching heart....

(Nondum)

And the basic supplication of Hopkins is to be found in that classic *send my roots rain*. That there is purpose in encagement and desolation is not denied by Hopkins. There is even a note of acceptance. But this identification of purpose and acceptance is at a later stage of spiritual experience where the grace of God is celebrated.
In relation to other people, isolation from God brings about an isolation from other people too. Leaving aside specific instances of isolation from others expressed in the poetry of Hopkins as matters of biographical interest, one can still find passages about a general phenomenology of isolation. There seems to be a primordial feeling of estrangement underlying

To seem the stranger lies my lot, my life.
Among strangers.

This sense of estrangement, distance and alienation from mankind, this sense of feeling apart from mankind may suggest that felt desertion by God and felt estrangement from humanity are interrelated. Illustrations of specific instances of isolation are to be found in poems like To seem the stranger lies my lot:

... Father and mother dear
Brothers and sisters are in Christ not near
And he may peace my parting, sword and strife

and The Loss of Eurydice

Day and Night I deplore
My people and born own nation
Fast foundering own generation.

In the first it is isolation from family and homeland and in the second it is alienation from England. Even unknown persons may prompt a feeling of isolation. Seeing unknown persons going past at night with their lanterns, Hopkins reflects in The Lantern out of Doors.

Men go by me whom either beauty bright
In mould or mind or what not else makes rare:
Death or distance soon consumes them: wind
What most I may eye after, but in at the end
I cannot, and out of sight is out of mind.

There seems to be no sense of solidarity sanctified by any ethos within the human social order. The reason for this isolation is to be traced to the fallen condition of man. The community of fallen men is not genuine community in the sense that man’s sinful state has spoilt the ideal community in which men would be living in the perfect original state of creation and grace wherein would have been a beautiful accord of man with God and of people among themselves. The Sea and the Skylark is a good illustration of Hopkins’s awareness of the fallen condition of man.
How these two shame their shallow and frail town!
   How ring right out our sordid turbid time,
Being pure! We, life's pride and crown
   Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime.
Our make and making break, are breaking down
   To men's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.

(35)

His bearing witness to the fallen condition of man is to be seen in

O but I bear my burning witness though
   Against the wild and wanton work of man.

(157)

Thus a sense of man's degraded condition seems to accompany the feeling of isolation. It is the condition preventing the communion with others and God.

The emotional climax of this sense of isolation, estrangement and desolateness may be marked by a lament at existence itself and all finite beings driven by the flux of existence. No worst there is none has a heartrending cry of the reality and power of this climactic sorrow.

My cries heave, long; huddle in a main, a chief -
   Woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old univ wince and sing -
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked. No lingering. Let me be pall; force I must be brief.

This is the all consuming, all pervasive, ultimate sorrow we find in Hopkins. This makes personal encagement a circle within the circle of world's encagement; personal desolation a circle within the circle of universal desolation. This sorrow is the chief woe; it is the ground of the individual and the universal miserable lot.

And still th' abysses infinite
   Surround the peak from which we gaze.
Deep calls to deep, and blackest night
   Giddies the soul with blinding daze
That dares to cast its searching sight
   On being's dread and vacant maze.

(Nondium)

The object of this sorrow is existence itself. Its source is not man's wantonness. It is the ruthless destructiveness of time in which even man is caught up, subject as like everything else, he is to transitoriness and death. Passage through temporal existence means change, short life and disappearance. Personal death is the sealing off of particular efforts, hopes and goods.
Death reduces all to nothing. Death is thus part of the transitoriness of the temporal.

The telling time our task is: time’s some part
Not all, but we were framed to fail and die. (153)

That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection is the poem which has this universal flux as its theme. Weather right around us can lay waste earth’s bounty. Man himself is consumed by nature.

... Million fueled, nature’s bonfire burns on
But quench her bonniest, dearest to her,
her clearest - selved spark
Man, how fast his firedim, his mark on mind, is gone!
Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark
Drowned. O Pity and indignation! Manshape that shone
Sheer off, dissoevered, a star, death blots black out: nor mark
Is any of him at all so stark
But vastness blurs and time beats level. (72)

The inevitability of the transitoriness of life is presented in The Wreck of Deutschland in the picture of an hourglass.

I am soft sift
In an hourglass - at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall.

Man’s lot quickly runs out and it is only a moment in the fall of time.

The inevitability of death and the destruction of beauty and vigour are discussed in The Leaden Echo. Whether there is any way to keep beauty from vanishing is answered thus:

No, there’s none, there’s none. O no there’s none,
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair,
Do what you may do, what do what you may
To keep at bay
... ... no, nothing can be done.
Age and age’s evils, hoary hair,
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death’s worst, winding sheets,
tombs and worms and tumbling to decay.
Hurling towards death all through life, man is puny in stature and brief in existence like a comet that streaks through the universe and disappears.

I am like a strip of comet.
Scarce worth discovery, in some corner seen
Bridging the slender difference of two stars.

Temporal life is also brief and insignificant:

So I go out: my little sweet is done:
I have drawn heat from this contagious sun;
To not ungentle death now forth I run.

*Spring and Fall* in one stroke captures the transitoriness of nature, the inevitability of death and the surrounding sense of somber, secluded sadness. A child mourns the fall of golden leaves in the poem. But it is really a mourning of nature’s mortality and her own eventual death. The poem declares that *sorrow’s springs are the same*, namely death. It concludes,

It is the blight man was born for
It is Margaret you mourn for.

This sorrow then is the climactic outer penumbra of the experience of desolation. Its inwardly pointing climax of pain is the mental torture that accompanies the experience. A wave of pure pain, anguish and self hatred are the manifest forms of this mental torture. The pangs of agony are to be seen in

No worst, there’s none. Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.

Its grating is to be seen in,

We hear our hearts grate on themselves: it kills
To bruise them dearer.

Its grinding is to be seen in,

... shelterless, thoughts
against thoughts in groans grind.

Its torment is to be seen in

My own heart let me more have pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.
This agony continues to anguish which adds the fear of uncertainty to mental torture.

Fearsome, it becomes:

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who never hung there.

Lack of direction is indicated in,

What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hairs I mean years, mean life.

The uncertainty of comfortlessness is to be seen in,

I cast for comfort I can no more get
By grouping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.

The burden of the agony, an anguish of defeat, abandonment, sorrow and torment end up in a bitter self hate and self scourging:

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
... ... ... I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

In sum, Hopkins's poetic expression of encagement and desolation has traits of entrapment, nonfulfilment, emptiness, disappointment, discouragement, despair, desertion by God, isolation from others, world sorrow, mental agony, anguish and self hate. This experience is a religious experience in that it is related through and through to God. As such, the possibility of overcoming such pain through nature and grace is to be traced in the poetry of Hopkins without which the hope of religion would have been betrayed by the most religious of poets.

Hopkins's literature is a literature of encagement as we have seen. It is also a literature of spiritual triumph. What is of significance about Hopkins's poetry is the fact that the reader is caught up in the victory over encagement simultaneously with the despair of encagement.
The deeper the sense of desolation and despair, the stronger is the hope of resolution. Entrapment and release, threat of nonfulfilment and assurance of success, emptiness and new birth, despair and rejuvenation, God's desertion and God's steadfastness, isolation from others and communion, world sorrow and world affirmation, agony and joy - these contraries compliment each other in Hopkins's poetry. This resolution is not a matter of a psychological state of an emotional shift. It is totally religious; it involves the individual's acceptance by and acceptance of the love of the one eternal God and of being loved by Him. But one should remember that the fusion of contraries in Hopkins's poetry is a very true account of such fusion of contraries characterising human existence. The one in the absence of the other would make existence this or that and not what it really is. Life is an ongoing combat between the spiritual experience of encagement and the element of triumph contained in it. The resolution of the predicament of man is locked in a living tension which may be as long as life itself. The encagement is real, the release is profound; the despair is real, the rejuvenation is possible; the torture is real, the solace is surer.

THE MEANS OF RECOVERY

The way of resolution is the way of the religious. It culminates in God's condescending grace on man's behalf. But within the present life of man, there are certain steps that man has to take through his own autonomy. Hopkins's poetry does not accentuate man's depravity and insist upon total appeal to grace. Let us first see what steps man can take to help alleviate the devastation of spiritual dryness and desolation.

Beauty of nature is something in which Hopkins has been intensely absorbed. Hopkins's poetry is replete with the theme of beauty. Beauty alters one's attention and he becomes preoccupied with something outwardly magnificent.

...(33)

Beauty cuts the intensity of despair and reeducates in habits of attention. To what Serves Mortal Beauty poses a question and gives a two part answer.
To what serves mortal beauty - dangerous; does set dancing blood - the O-sailing that so feature flung broader form
Then Purcell tune lets tread to? See: it does this: keeps warm
Men's wits to the things that are: what good means. (62)

Beauty opens one up to the things that are. Depression and desolation would have carried man so far away from reality that the illusion created therein could cut off man totally from reality. In such a psychological situation, man is brought back to sharp reality through beauty. But such an awareness of reality is to be taken as a heightened awareness of what is made manifest through the outward beauty beheld - the inner form and meaning of each thing. The unique form of things - which Hopkins would call their inscapes - so witnessed brings in the rich detail and power of individual beings. These constitute natural reality. Absorption in such natural beauty is an exhilarating and healing experience. Beauty also keeps man warm to what good means. Being brought back to the inscape of beings and heightening one's awareness of natural reality in terms of the perfection of each thing's being are to draw man back to good, the sight of which might have been lost because of the sense of spiritual deprivation to which one becomes subject in the state of encagement. Thus man is ultimately drawn to his own good. Thus beauty is a reminder of all that is good in all creation including himself. It reminds him also of his need to pursue and realise that good. It attunes man to such pursuits and realisation in spite of a felt sense of frustration.

If man's natural life is so bound up with nature, does not man have a certain obligation to nature? This question seems to have struck Hopkins when he seems to indicate that beauty in nature, not being conscious, is being dependent upon man for its preservation. The dependence of nature's beauty upon man is presented in Ribblesdale thus:

Earth, sweet Earth, sweet landscape, with leaves throng
And louched low grass, heaven that dost appeal
To, with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel;
That cans't but only be

... ... ...
And what is Earth's eye, tongue or heart else, where
Else, but in dear and dogged man?

The awareness of beauty in nature is an awareness ipso facto of one's obligation to natural things and thereby to human beings served by natural things. But man is self-bent so bound, so tied to his turn that he gives all to rack or wrong. Nature so often, then, wears brows of
such care, care and deep concern. Man’s havoc becomes so thorough that \textit{After-comers cannot guess the beauty been} (\textit{Binsey Poplars}). Openness to beauty leads to assuming a certain moral responsibility to beauty which in turn leads to a certain heightened awareness of beauty which in its turn leads to an understanding of a certain role of nature in his struggle against desolation.

Beauty, above all, is a source of pure bliss and ecstasy as revealed in that most celebrated of Hopkins’s poems - \textit{The Windhover}. The ecstasy of the bird in its figure-skating evokes a similar feeling in the poet.

\[ ... ... ... \text{My heart in hiding} \\
\text{Stirred for a bird - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!} \\
\text{Brute beauty and valour and act,} \]

In the presence of beauty, as in \textit{Hurrahing in Harvest},

\[ \text{The heart rears wings bold and bolder} \\
\text{And hurls for him, \textit{O} half hurls earth} \\
\text{for him off under his feet.} \]

Such beauty is to Hopkins objective in that is there in things themselves. It is a matter of the characteristics of things and not a matter of the making of the mind. In \textit{Hurrahing in Harvest} he would talk about the \textit{lovely behaviour} and \textit{glory and majesty} of nature. He would then add

\[ \text{These things, these things were here and but the beholder} \\
\text{Wanting.} \]

Such beauty is universal in that it pervades the entire creation. He would talk about \textit{that world of good} and \textit{Spring’s universal bliss} and \textit{this ecstasy all through mothering earth} in \textit{The May Magnificat}. Such beauty has a power of its own and when man encounters it, it stirs an internal ecstasy. Such beauty pervasive as it is throughout the earth provides man with an opportunity for encountering it anywhere and everywhere, any time and every time. Such beauty is thus grounded in reality too. But beauty is not a source of sentimental rapture in Hopkins’s poetry. Hopkins’s praise of beauty is qualified and discriminating. The delight of beauty in itself has the danger of distraction, deflection, false lure. To circumvent this danger is necessary a certain proper perspective of beauty purely as a mortal phenomenon. Nature, good in itself, does not warrant a false religion in its name nor does it deserve an all consuming devotion.
To what serves Mortal Beauty clearly states that beauty is not an end in itself: it serves a higher purpose and focusses on a higher spiritual gift, that of grace. One has to meet beauty. But having met it

... then leave, let that alone,
Yea wish that though, wish all, God’s better beauty, grace.

Grace is a better beauty than natural beauty.

This, all this beauty blooming,
This, all this freshness fuming,
Give God while worth consuming.

(Morning, Midday and Evening Sacrifice, 49)

It is to be dedicated to the source of grace. To go back to To What Serves Mortal Beauty is to clarify this aspect of beauty further. Beauty is to be approached and accepted.

What do then? How meet beauty? Merely meet it; own,
Home at heart, heaven’s sweet gift;

The beauty of seasons and their special features, landscapes and furrowed fields, trees and birds, stars and sun, clouds and wind, brooks and streams, grass and earth, flowers and fruits, why, the human being itself (Harry Ploughman) are all those in which Hopkins finds this beauty. He acknowledges the role of beauty throughout in helping break the bonds of encagement, but with certain limitations. It must yield priority to grace.

Contemplation of beauty is one means of dodging desolation. No less is action another means. One need not enter into the bewitching discourse on the rival claims of action and contemplation in religious experience. Enough to say that some consider the contrast between them as contributing to the essential unity of man while others find it to be the source of the tension in human life and proceed to affirm that in Hopkins’s thought both appear to be antidotal to despair. Three kinds of human activity are discussed in Hopkins’s poetry - creative expression, moral endeavour and daily work. As we understand from As kingfishers catch fire each being has a certain selfhood to express.

Each mortal this does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves - goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.
Of the many kinds of creative expression, Hopkins’s choice had been art—poetry, music and painting. An artist, as an artist, as did Purcell, has given utterance to the moods of man’s mind, he has, beyond that uttered in notes the very make and species of man as created both in him and in all men generally.

Not mood in him nor meaning, proud fire or sacred fear
Or love or pity or all that sweet notes not his might hurstle:
It is the forged feature finds me; it is the rehearsal
Of own, of abrupt self there so thrusts on, so throng the ear.

So reaching the true self through the exercise of artistic creation, one can lift it out of the pit of despair:

Let him Oh! with his air of angels then lift me, lay me.

Artistic expression also seems to have a restorative effect. It restores a certain psychical freedom from under the heavy weight of depression. The bird in The Windhover is a symbol of Christ. But does it not seem there to be a certain perfect spiritual freedom of Christ indicated in terms of the circling and swooping in the air? The abandon, the gracefulness, the free movement of the bird are all characteristic of a free spirit. Striding high the hurl and gliding of artistic expression could rebuff the resistance of encagement. While artistic creation could thus alleviate depression, the very depression could dampen artistic creation. Hopkins is an instance for both these experiences. The Caged Skylark laments encagement; but it also says.

Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells.

The potential of imaginative breakthrough alone can enable this singing. However the mind has to wait in brooding for such a breakthrough. By extension, one’s life itself may need to wait in brooding.

The fine delight that fathers thought; the strong
Spur, live and lancing like the blow pipe flame
Breathes once and quenched faster than it came,
Leaves yet the mind a mother of immortal song.

Nine months she then, nay years, nine years she long
Within her wears, bears, cares and combs the same.

(To R.B.)

Another possibility is that artistic expression can be made to serve the purpose of expressing the despair and desolation of existence as Hopkins had so successfully done through his later years.
Moral resolution and act make up another activity to overcome the throes of encagernent. Drawing steadily from the potential of will, one can escape the despondency of inability to act.

... ... ... I can
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

(Carrion Comfort)

This resolve to act, hope for relief, wish for light, stands guard against giving up one’s being deliberately. Human capacity being part of man’s original creation by divine act, it becomes open to natural employment. This fundamental Christian belief is referred to on several occasions in Hopkins’s poetry.

There rid the dragons, root out there the sin,
Your will is law in that small commonweal.

Returning to the inner self is thus to persist in a steady course of duty and moral resolve.

What the heart is! which like carriers let fly
Doff darkness, homing nature knows the rest
To its own fine function, wild and self-instressed.

(47)

Herein is to be found a chastisement of oneself in despair, an exhortation of oneself to counteract desolation.

Come you indoors, come home, your fading fire
Mend first and vital candle in close heart’s vault:
You there are master, do your own desire.

(The Candle Indoors)

My own heart let me more have pity on is a poem of his ‘tormented mind’. Even in such a poem is the exhortation,

Soul, self; come poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be,’ call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere; leave comfort room-room.

(69)

This moral resolve pertains to outward moral life too. But in the context of having made the inner moral resolve as a means of getting rid of desolation, concern with outward moral life is not so well projected in Hopkins’s poetry. The totality of moral outlook is preserved in the
injunction to protect natural surroundings in Ribblesdale. *The Wedding March* implores *Each be other’s comfort kind*. National service is indicated in

What shall I do for the land that bred me,  
Her homes and fields that folded and fed me?  
Be under her banner and live for her honour.  

Duties to society are underscored in *Tom’s Garland*, where it is suggested that one can be concerned if all had bread; one can work in wide the world’s weal; one can care but share care (70). Thus desolation has the function of confronting one with right and wrong and demanding to decide for the right. As James Reeves’s note on *Spelt from Sibyl’s Leaves* says, *The night of torture and selfexamination descends and in this blackness all the sensuous delight in appearances, as well as all the half-truths and ambiguities with which we surround ourselves in life are swallowed up, and nothing but absolute right and wrong remains.*

...  
Let life waned,  
Ah let life wind  
Off her once skeined stained, veined variety upon, all on two spools; part pen, pack  
Now her all in two flocks, two folds - black, white; right, wrong; reckon but, reck but, mind  
But these two; ware of a world where but these two tell, each off the other; ...

Thus desolation is made a vehicle to bring the priority and purity of moral resolve before all men. Moral resolve also gives the strength of will to persist in one’s vocation. Depression of spirit would otherwise affect one’s daily tasks. Moral resolve steadies persistence in one’s work deflecting interest away from self pity, keeping alive a sense of constructive contribution. Hopkins would say:

And when peace here does house  
He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo.  

*(Peace)*

*Tom’s Garland* symbolizes Tom as the meaning of work

Tom Heart - at-ease  
...  
...  
...  
Tom seldom suck  
Seldomer heartsore; that treads through, prickproof, thick  
Thousands of thorns, thoughts.
Hopkins celebrates the work of a ploughman, a miner, a farrier, a sailor, a soldier, an artist and a cleric in his poems, such men are praised and prized as symbolic representatives of work.

... ... ... Here it is: the heart
Since, proud, it calls the calling manly, gives a guess
That, hopes that, makes believe, the man must be no less;
It fancies, feigns, deems, dears the artist after his art. (63)

The person who is active in his work brings glory to God, and finds thereby a measure of restoration for his own troubled soul. *Pied Beauty* says that glory is due to God for all natural things *And for all trades, their gear and tackle and trim*. Daily work, thus, is identified as a natural rain against complete dryness.

Human association is another stable and solid recourse of recovery. Mankind as such and individuals like friends, family members, children, the sick, the victims of accidents, strangers, workers, fellow believers, religious supplicants and past heroes all find a place in Hopkins's as expressions of human feeling. From mere human contact to the depths of personal friendship and love are to be found traced and graphed in Hopkins's poems. Even while lamenting alienation, Hopkins can say in *To seem the stranger lies my lot*

I am in Ireland now; now I am at a third
Remove. Not but in all removes I can
Kind love both give and get.

Physical and denominational separation does not necessarily imply loss of personal proximity. The feeling of warmth and affection received is acknowledged in *In the Valley of the Elwy*.

I remember a house where all were good
To me, God knows, deserving no such thing. (34)

Affirmative attitude towards human community makes affection extended even to strangers. *The Lantern out of Doors* talks about human tie with the unknown and laments that finite life does not permit more than a momentary contact with people one meets in passing. Hopkins's admiration for the man whose *heart is fine* and whom *want could not make fine* come out in *Cheery Beggar* (142). Hopkins evinces a special fondness for children. *The Handsome Heart* is a tender response composed *at a gracious answer* given by a ten year old boy. *Brothers* brings forth the feelings of a child at a children's play. *Felix Randal* is an epitome of sympathy with the sick.
This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,
Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix
Randal;

Duns Scotus and Henry Parcell as companions of the past are paid full length tributes in Hopkins's poetry. Scotus most sways my spirits to peace. Purcell is so arch-especial a spirit. The Bugler's First Communion illustrates comradeship celebrated in relation to fellow believer, fellow supplicants and fellow Catholics.

A bugler boy from barrack ... 
... ... ...
Came, I say, this day to it - to a First communion
... ... ...
How it does my heart good, visiting at that bleak hill,
When limber liquid youth, that to all I teach
Yields tender as a pushed peach
He headstrong to its wellbeing of a self-wise self-will!
Nothing else is like it, no not all strains
Us: Fresh youth fretted in a bloomfall all portending
that sweet's sweeter ending:
Realm both Christ is heir to and there reigns. (48)

Human feeling is natural, spontaneous, uncomplicated by thought and doctrine. The Christian theological basis of it lies in the original created goodness and worthiness of man. Besides saying much about the baseness and sinfulness of man, Hopkins also celebrates the original created worth of man.

To man, that needs would worship block or barren stone,
Our law says: Love what are love's worthiest, were all known;
World’s Loveliest - man’s selves. (To What Serves' Mortal Beauty)

Loving the love’s worthiest is to be drawn into its worth and goodness which can overcome the encagement, loneliness, defiance and agitation of temporal existence; it is to renew one’s stature. In terms of incarnation, the mediation between God and man is human embodiment. Each embodied human being then becomes a mediating vehicle for the restoration of other human beings within the times, places and situations in which they find themselves. Just as Christ restores, each person can be a healing vehicle for another in time of trouble. That is the way the human community has been designed. But there is certainly a gulf between the potentials and actualities. Still, human relatedness is a real and grounded fact of restoration. The absence of human contact, in turn, can be decisively destructive.
Speaking of Mermaids in *A Vision of the Mermaids*, Hopkins seems to refer symbolically to man.

And a sweet sadness dwelt on everyone;
I knew not why - but know that sadness dwells
On Mermaids - whether that they ring the knells
Of seamen whelmed in chasms of the mid-main
As poets sing; or that it is a pain
To know the dusk depths of the ponderous sea,
The miles profound of solid green and be
With loathed cold fishes, far from man - or what -
I know the sadness but the cause know not.
(2)

If *with loathed cold fishes, far from man* could be human existence without human contact, the opposite extreme, human solidarity and love, becomes profoundly significant.

But thou bidst, and just thou art,
Me shew mercy from my heart
Towards my brother, every other
Man my mate and counterpart.
(155)

In so far as regular spiritual exercises check waywardness of purpose, fill a vacuum of time, deflect the barrenness of brooding, bring consolation and comfort, they may be considered to have potentials of healing the sense of felt emptiness in life. Spiritual exercises are directed towards the worship and revering of God; they are religious obligations; they prepare the soul or personality to receive gifts of grace. Still, their psychological implications ought not be ignored. *Carrion Comfort*, a desolation poem, still has space to talk about spiritual quest, its strength and joy.

Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy would laugh, cheer.

*The Bugler's First Communion* talks about the consolation in teaching the faith and in administering the eucharist. It enables one to 'tread tufts of consolation days after'. *The Habit of Perfection* urges that lips, eyes, palate, nostrils, hands, etc., are to be devoted to the life of silence and poverty. Again,

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

(Morning, Midday and Evening Sacrifice)
Spiritual discipline is considered indispensable for receiving what nature has to offer in *The Starlight Night*. James Reeves in his note on the poem would ask *What is the price of a true love and understanding of the beauty of the universe?* The answer is in the lines,

Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
Buy then! bid then! - what- prayer, patience, aims, vows.

The poem begins with a suggestion of the richness of natural goodness. Something is demanded of the beneficiary to reap the harvest. Then this payment is identified as acts of spiritual discipline. The implication then would be that there is something open to man, something that can be accomplished spiritually before spiritual discipline is sanctified by grace. Spiritual exercise is a negative virtue too in that it involves forfeiture. What is thus forfeited may be a possible good in itself. But what is thus forfeited is to be preserved in a more significant form to be returned at the appropriate time and circumstance. There is a certain assurance in faith that is being readied for accomplishment beyond his immediate knowledge. Thus seems to be argument of *The Golden Echo*.

O then, weary then, why should we tread? O why are we so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed, so fagged, So fashed, so cogged, so cumbered.
When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care.
Fonder a care kept, than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care ( and we, we should have lost it) finer founder.
A care kept - where kept? do but tell us, where kept, where -
Yonder - what high as that! We follow, now we follow-
Yonder, yes, yonder, yonder, yonder.

These lines present the paradox of hope and faith. The bonds of engagement, though not directly eased through spiritual discipline, are in a way, transcended in the conviction of hope and faith. Spiritual discipline brings psychic integration and time deployment; it is essential for the attainment of certain natural good and it fosters the contentment of hope and faith. Spiritual discipline thus looked at is looked from the human, therapeutic side rather than from the divine, theological side in which case, it being a matter of worship and revering of God, a religious obligation, a preparation of the soul for grace, is to be practised for the sake of their spiritual function rather than for a psychic therapy.
Intelligence pursuit and good humour also seem to be mentioned as means of manoeuvring oneself through the state of spiritual desolation in the context of the poetry of Hopkins. Intellectual pursuit is a pursuit after truth. But one has to fall back on Hopkins's life and letters rather than on his poetry to see how intellectual interests helped him in going through many a dark day. It enables one to get outside himself and look at his own predicament from an objective perspective. It is a lifelong use of the mind which is to be cultivated. It fascinates and this fascination is sustained in perpetuity. Good humour is another means which brings forth a perspective in detachment. Tears and laughter strangely blended is a condition which ultimately condition the mind even for a cheerful death.

Laughing or tears, I think I could do either -
So strangely elemented in my mind's weather,
The tears and laughter are hung close together.

It does amaze me, when the clicking hour
clings on the stroke of death that I can smile. (102)

Desolation leads to life restoring balm and good cheer. The process awaits culmination in grace.

**GRACE**

Religious experience in its totality culminates in its grace-induced, grace-filled aspects. Religious experience is a movement from desolation to consolation; from privations to liberation; from despair to hope and joy; from desertion to home coming; from self torment to recovery and resilience. It is a deliverance effected from beyond oneself. It is a gift, a bestowal from God. Life does not however conform to this simplistic abstraction of religious experience for it is too precarious, too confused, too subject to ups and downs, too slippery a slope. The phenomenological stage of encagement passing to grace through what has been described in the past few pages indicates a progression which is by no means chronological, horizontal but vertical and spiritual. The course of life is a veritable map of the swing of the psyche in variable paces between extremes of desolation and consolation, the former marked by a felt sense of encagement and the latter marked by a recognition of felt deliverance effected beyond oneself. Off such fluidities of life, it is possible to arrive at a bracketed study of grace in the experience as encagement has been studied earlier. The theological definition of 'grace' would be: *God's self communication in his own divine life, both as a given and as accepted by man, is essentially God's free, personal, uncovenanted favour* (Sacramentum
Thus grace is looked at as a divine attribute manifested in a divine-human encounter. But grace as a matter of phenomenology, rather than as a matter of theology, is to be looked at for the ways in which grace is humanly felt and the vehicles through which it is mediated to man. As such, it is felt as originating from without, from beyond oneself; it is felt as flooding in and over one; it is felt as coming from a transcendent power; it is felt as unmerited, undeserved; it is felt as unexpected, a joyful surprise; it is felt with deep gratitude; it is felt as a renewed strength; it is felt as a resumed dedication.

Grace is a source of enablement, which manifests itself in acts of sanctification - an intensified sense of God's steadfastness and identification with Christ, pervaded by joy. Encagement has the inherent threat of complete encravation or nullification, the temptation to give in completely to the privations of one's being and the positive good within his achieve. The temptation is the temptation to yield to the tendencies at work in one's current situation drifting towards the annihilation of the positive good. Such destruction of positive good may become mere vegetating and self brooding or actions that are not constructive. Evasion of such temptation does not seem to be within the potentials of one's own ingenuity. It necessitates a rescue from beyond. Maintenance of the integrity of one's being is thus the first experience of grace. Carrion Comfort talks of the same.

Not, I not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee; Not untwist - slack they may be - these last strands of man In me or, most weary, cry I can no more, I can.

Thence comes the strength to resist, as illustrated by Felix Rendal.

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

Grace also implies endowment of certain virtues. Patience is one such virtue.

O surely, receiving Peace, my lord should leave in lieu Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite, That plumes to peace thereafter.

Patience, difficult by itself, is possible as a grace sought.
Patience is natural heart’s Ivy which can mask the ruins of wrecked past purpose; patience enables to bid God to bend to hun even so our wills are rebellious; our hearts grate in themselves. God himself is patient and the grace of patience is to be received though his activity.

And where is he who more and more distills Delicious kindness? He is patient. Patience fills His crisp combs and that comes those ways we know.

Love is another form of grace. The Bugler’s first Communion would say

O now well work that sealing sacred ointment!
O for new charms, arms, what buns off had
And locks love ever in a lad!

Love is a resistance to rankling and roaming in backwheels though bound home.

Grace is a means of finding God anew. Suffering too is sometimes a means to spiritual discovery. Grace shakes man into a realisation of God’s sovereignty and presence through desolation and its attendant suffering. Depths of despair felt at desolation only heighten the knowledge and worship of God when they come to be:

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, listened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

(Wreck)

This finding of God is the phenomenological climax of removing barriers to the knowing of God: winnowing out our defects and purifying our spiritual being; cultivating patience; turning away from the passing events of time and toward the eternal verities that endure; renovating selves. The Wreck of the Deutschland will mention two barriers to the knowing of God - guilt and hardheartedness (Stanza 6). Grace hushes the guilt and flushes the heart.

That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed. By and melt.
Coming into this greater openness to God is the divine intention in desolation. Again, we suffer torment and tempest so that my chaff might fly, my grain lie; sheer and clear. In other words, our defects are cleared through torment and tempest. That is why Hopkins is made to ask is the shipwreck then a harvest / does tempest carry the grain for thee? Thirdly acquisition of patience is another bestowal of grace which is acquired with hardship and weariness.

... ... Patience who asks
Wants war, wants wounds; weary his times, his tasks;
To do without, take toses and obey.

Rare patience roots in these, and, these away,
Nowhere. (68)

Desolation scourges man for patience through divine grace. The fleeting nature of this causal world and such a world being a source of despair when man’s mind cannot transcend such finitude, is indicated in The Leaden Echo. Realization of the nature and danger inherent even in the profound beauty of good directs man to permanent good. He will then.

... deliver it, early now, long before death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God
beauty’s self and beauty’s giver

The climactic effect of the removal of these barriers in the path of realization of God is to forge the self of man as the crowning effect in man. This unifying function then becomes the goal of this life. The purpose of grace is to make new Nazareths in us or new Bethlehems.

Bethlehem or Nazareth
Men here may draw like breath
More Christ and baffle death;
Who born so, comes to be
New self and nobler me
in each one.

In sum, to find God anew, to have the barrier to the end be removed, to have one’s defects cleared, to be scourged for patience, to turn to the eternal, to be led to one’s true self is the impact of divine purpose in human experience. Over and above all, God accomplishes his own will for mankind through his grace. Man comes to merge with this purpose as we understand from the The Wreck of the Deutschland.
With an anvil ding
And with fire in him forge thy will
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still:
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill.
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.  
(Stanza 10)

The adoration of divine purpose actually urges God to accomplish his will through the wreck and storm. The previous stanza implores Wrung thy rebel with wrecking and storm.

This note of submission is not that in the face of mere might, sheer power. It is an opening out to the creative activity of love without any reservations of any kind.

I say that we are wound
With mercy round and round
As if with air.

(The Blessed Virgin... Breathe)

It is an affirmation of the grace of felt divine purpose in a partnership of mercy.

This experienced form of grace carries forward into life’s activities and attitudes. It carries out a transforming effect thereupon. A sense of one’s own calling is motivated and exalted in us as much as it is considered in the service of the divine purpose. The otherwise routine, menial and inconsequential daily tasks become worthwhile, changing a job into a vocation, an occupation into a calling. Within the limitations of the fleeting and finite context in which man works, a certain meaning is obtained in what one is doing. Hopkins’s poetry seems to testify this apparently difficult transformation. This priceless affection to what one does, looked at as what one is ordained to do, is indeed a grace from beyond oneself. Despite the vagaries of job description, working conditions, incentive, mood, which are precarious for the continuity of a sense of mission, grace provides an altered perspective of one’s work.

Hopkins honours St. Alphonsus Rodriguez who was a doorkeeper for forty years. By grace, he had inner victory and outward purpose in his menial work.

Honour is flashed off exploit, so we say;
And those strokes once that gashed flesh or galled shield
Should tongue that time now, trumpet now that field,
And on the fighter, forge his glorious day.

(73)
But this does not necessarily bring honour. On Christ, however, they do *On Christ they do and on the martyr may*. The story is different when one tries to find meaning in one's work, when the battle faced is inner and private.

But be the war within, the brand we wield
Unseen, the heroic breast not outward-steeped,
Earth hears no hurtle then from fiercest fray.

(73)

But God does raise one's work to a higher calling and renders the person honourable.

Yet God...

... ... 
Could crowd career with conquest while there went
Those years and years by of world without event
That in Majorca Alphonso watched the door.

(73)

When the calling itself happens to be blessed, the followers come to have a *prima facie* honour as we understand from *the soldier*.

... ... 
the heart
Since proud, it calls the calling manly, gives a guess
That, hopes that, makesbelieve, the man must be no less.

(63)

Christ also was glorified through his calling. He blesses human work done in his spirit-Christ-done deed. Thus the possibility of having a sense of calling as divine vocation is a firm conviction of Hopkins's. Hopkins's calling being specifically religious, we find many allusions to this kind in his poetry. He dedicates senses to God and accepts poverty as a religious virtue in *The Habit of Perfection*:

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

(22)

The new perspective of man, his work and nature thus brought about through grace provides man with a totally new perspective of the world as a whole. Nature, from which he felt alienated, men from whom he felt isolated and estranged, while in the throes of encagement, are now seen as divine creations intended for greatness and perfection. Divine grace enables him to interpret these as furnishings of God's grandeur. Thus we find explicit statements of divine disclosure in and through nature and man.
The world is charged with the grandeur of God
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed.

All things become hallowed by His presence in them.

These are indeed the barn withindoors house
The shocks. This piece bright paling struts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

Hurrahing in Harvest sounds similar.

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;
And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder.

The fifth stanza of the Wreck of Deutschland illustrates this profound theme of instress in nature.

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to dappled-with-damson west;
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, succeed;
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

There is a paranthetical statement on God and nature in St. Alphonsus.

Yet god (that hews mountain and continent,
Earth, all, out; who with trickling increment,
Veins violets and tall trees makes more and more).

The same connection is made between God and nature in the last stanza of The May Magnifica it.

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

Man can also be seen in his magnificence if seen through eyes infused with grace. Man is of course sordid, degraded, despoiling and is subject to sin. But man is also a creation of goodness and this original copy of him is to be seen when man is free from encagement and despair.

Referring to a child in The Handsome Heart Hopkins would say

Mannerly-hearted! more than a handsome face -
Beauty's bearing or must of mounting vein,
All in this case, bathed in high hallowing grace.
Man’s true self bears the impress of his instress and this is to be seen only with the grace of insight. Human selves are called love’s worthiest, were all known. As the crown of creation, they flash off the earthly bodies. They are in essence

World’s loveliest - Men’s selves, Self flashes of frame and face

(To what serves Mortal beauty)

That man is the embodiment and vehicle of God’s grace is to be seen in As Kingfisher’s Catch Fire.

I say more: the just man justices,  
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;  
Acts in God’s eye what in God’s eye he is -  
Christ. For Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the father through the features of men’s faces.

Beginning with Glory be to God, Pied Beauty ends with He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change! praise him attributing God’s glory to the varied magnificence of created things through the poem.

One’s elemental being maintained and ensured against negativity, one sees meaning afresh in one’s work and world. This is an indication for having become ready to grow again in spiritual life. A deeper and more fervent awareness of divine grace is to be experienced. In such an experience, Hopkins, a Christian poet becomes aware of God’s steadfastness and grows into a deepening personal identification with Christ. God is found steadfast in his patience towards man’s foolishness and folly. Even in the event of man’s failures he is patient. This steadfastness is in fact his mercy towards man’s inability to perfect himself.

‘God, lover of souls, swaying considerate scales,  
Complete thy creature dear O where it fails,  
Being mighty a master, being a father and fond  

(In the Valley of the Elwy)

It is a concern to rescue every person to achieve fulness of being, and eternal life. In The Lantern Out of Doors Hopkins says that strangers pass out of man’s orbit but

Christ minds; Christ’s interests, what to avow or amend,  
There, eyes them, heart wants, care haunts, foot follows kind,  
Their ransom, their rescue and first, fast, last friend.
This concern is felt in specific events too.

The Eurydice-it concerned thee, O Lord:
Three hundred souls, O alas! on board.

(The Loss of Eurydice)

The theme of *The Golden Echo* is God's preservation of all men's selves. The leaden lump that man feels himself to be at times of desolation has a golden original preserved by God.

Somewhere, elsewhere, there is ah well where! one
One. Yes I can tell such a key. I do know such a place,
Where whatever's prized and passes of us, everything that's
fresh and fast flying of us....
Never flees more, fastened with tenderest truth
To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: It is an ever
lastiness of, O it is an all youth!

The whole natural world is sustained because of God's steadfastness. *God's Grandeur* is thus more about God's steadfastness in nature than about God's magnificence in nature.

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Though *The Wreck of the Deutschland* is not a purely symbolic poem but a reflection on a concrete historical event, the wreck of a ship can be seen symbolically as a plunge into encagement.

Then with all the loss at issue, God is steadfast in rescuing and in preservation.

Be adored among men,
God three numbered form;
Wring thy rebel, dogged in den;
Man's malice, with wrecking and storm
Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue,
Thou art lightning and love, I found it, winter and warm,
Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung;
Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then. (Stanza 9)

And again,

I admire thee, master of the tides,

Ground of being, and granite of it; past all
Grasp God, thorned behind
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodies but abides;

(Stanza 32)
With a mercy that outrides
The all of water, an ark
For the listener, for the lingerer with a love glides
Lower than death and the dark.

(Stanza 33)

A growing identification with Christ as another aspect of felt grace renders the deepening awareness of divine presence more concrete. Grace filled experience activates and heightens the identification. The Christian pilgrimage towards an ever-progressing unity with Christ is sustained because of this identification.

Hope holds to Christ the minds own mirror out
To take His lovely likeness more and more.

The thirty fourth stanza of the Wreck of the Deutschland develops doctrinal consideration but Christ’s coming to man is more accented. Christ of course partakes in God`s power, the thunder throne but his coming is gentle

Not a doomsday dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came
Kind but royally re claiming his own;
A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of fire
hard-hurled.

The released shower is a veritable answer to the earlier cry send my roots rain.

The Loss of Eurydice also focuses on Christ. The essentially saving grace of Christ is celebrated here. At the face of the shipwreck, the deep grief of drowning and the inability to provide oneself with comfort, the supervening grace of Christ is appealed to:

Though grief yield them no good
Yet shed what tears sad true love should.

... ... ...
But to Christ lord of thunder
Crouch; lay knee by earth low under:
Holiest, loveliest, bravest,
Save my hero, O Hero savest!

And the prayer thou hearest me making
Have, at the awful overtaking,
Heard; have heard and granted
Grace that day grace was wanted.
The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air We Breathe describes the mediating mission of Christ.

Mary is the vehicle that

Gave God’s infinity
Dwindled to infancy
Welcome in womb and breast,
Birth, milk and all the rest
But mother’s each new grace
That does now reach our race

Directing his affection to Mary, Hopkins is actually relating her role entirely to Christ and his mission. Hopkins identifies Christ as an example for moral effort. Christ’s life is a criterion for measuring the worth of human deed. Christ is seen as the superlative model for measuring and dealing with human faults as we find in Myself Unholy, from myself unholy.

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

On the Portrait of Two Beautiful Young People looks up to Christ as a model and goal for young people to follow.

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

Leaving these ontological, soteriological and moral Christological functions aside, a total commitment of one’s entire person and the resultant unification seems to be the subject of That nature is a Heraclitean fire and of the Comfort of Resurrection and The Windhover. The world is a Heraclitean flux subject to time, death and destruction. Human beings are subject, in addition, to dejection.

The culminating experience of grace is joyfulness of spirit. It is a simple exultant happiness which supercedes, overcomes and conquers the everpresent finite threat of desolation and the finite possibility of grief. No earthly joy is comparable in completeness with a final beatitude. (Heaven-haven). Such joyful spirit is the proper and destined fruition of human nature dwelling on sin and evil. Christian theology as whole is said to be sin conscious at the expense of joy. But without overemphasising the generalisation, one can look at
Hopkins's poetry and find explicit and implicit allusions to joy. Ezekiel is looked at as the one who has understood the mystery of earthly life being prone to grief yet having sparks of joy. He is the one

Who knowing all the sins and sores
That nest within close-barred doors,
And that grief masters joy on earth,
Yet found unstinting place for mirth.

(II Mystico)

The capacity to understand this mystery is a balm to aching soul.

*Carrion Comfort* provides us with an example of the joyfulness of spirit. Though the poem is a desolation poem, Hopkins does admit that his heart *stole joy*. The sonnet *My own heart let me more have pity on* speaks of tormented mind and inability to find comfort in its octave. But the sestet has the following lines.

... ... let joy
At God knows when to god knows what; whose smile
's not wrung, see you: unforeseen times rather - as skies
Betweenpie mountains - lights a lovely mile.

There are instances of joy felt at the removal of torment, at the driving out of agony by grace. *God's Grandeur* and *Pied Beauty* speak of the possibility of joy evoked through created things. *May Magnificat* objectifies joy or bliss or ecstasy: *this ecstasy all through mothering earth*; *Spring* speaks of all the joy in nature as coming down from *earth's sweet being...in Eden Garden*. Thus nature is looked at as charged with divine instress and awakens the joy that comes from knowing God, his being and acts. Here arises the question if Hopkins looks at God as naturalised or deifies nature. We can say that God is mirrored through but does not become nature and nature reflects God but does not become God. The spirit's eye looks at the mirror and finds the reflected image all the while being aware of the mirrored image as separate from both the mirror and the truth. Nevertheless, the experience of joy is real, undeniable, unmistakable though unexplainable. Hopkins would ask his eyes and heart in *Hurrahing in Harvest* whether anything gave you / Rapturous love's greeting of realer of rounder replies? *The Woodlark* personifies a bird's joy. By extension, it is an identification on the part of the poet with the joyful sounds made by the bird.
I am so very, O so very glad
That I do think there is not to be had.
(Anywhere any more joy to be in
Cheerios...)

To the nest’s nook I balance and buoy
With a sweet joy of a sweet joy,
Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy,
Of sweet - a sweet - sweet - joy.

A wedding ceremony would make Hopkins turn to his own quite different wedlock to God:

I to him turn with tears
Who to wedlock, his wonder wedlock,
Deals triumph and immortal years.

(At the Wedding March)

This would be an example of humanly mediated joy.

Above all these indirect and mediated joy is an immediate spiritual sense of the presence of God. Hopkins has slender examples of poetry elaborating on this experience. That is more because Hopkins seems to be more preoccupied with the quest for such a culmination than with the culmination as such. Had such preoccupation possessed Hopkins, we would have had a large body of mature devotional poetry. Hopkins seems to probe religious inquiry, interpretation, and reflection in terms of felt desolation, means of getting rid of desolation and the indispensibility of grace in the process. *The Golden Echo* may be taken as an example of an expression of joy; but it is more in the nature of an anticipation of fruition rather than a realization. It does mark a culmination of some sort but yet anticipates a greater. This duality is the essence of Hopkins’s idea of the religious experience of even the most committedly religious. That decides the nature of the pursuit that becomes a life-pursuit.

Thee God, I come from, to thee I go
All day long I like fountain flow
From thy hand out, swayed about
More like in thy mighty glow.

What I know of thee I bless,
As acknowledging thy stress
On my being and as seeing
Something of thy holiness.

Once I turned from thee and hid
Bound on what thou hadst forbid;

Spare thou me since I see
With thy might that thou art mild.
I have life left with me still
And thy purpose to fulfil;
Yea a debt to pay thee yet;
Help me, sir, and so I will.

(Thee God, I come from)

This poem points to the resolution that grace completes. It is an ongoing living in which reliance upon divine mercy is of utmost significance.
CHAPTER III

NAMMALVAR - HIS POETRY AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

The Concept of Man in Indian Thought
The Theory of Divine Discovery
The Predicament of Man
The Means of Recovery
Mystical Element and Grace