G. M. Hopkins — The Poet as Sacramentalist

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An essential difference between the Christian poetry of John Donne and T. S. Eliot, on the one hand, and George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins, on the other, is that while Donne and Eliot were poets before they were Christians and absorbed into their later poetry of faith earlier experiences of the spiritual inertia and scepticism of secular life, the poetry of Herbert and Hopkins was entirely the handmaid of their Christianity. Such poets, whose work is subordinate to their Christian commitment, place a peculiar demand on their readers. For while it is not necessary to "share" their various religious premises (*pace* Kathleen Raine, who has recently demanded this of the reader of David Jones, the modern English Catholic poet[1]), a prior understanding of their creeds ensures a more confident entrance into essentially private worlds.

And it is not sufficient for the reader to be conversant merely with verities held in common by Christians; for, as in their lives, so in their writing, the Christian poets we have mentioned — none of whom was an oecumenist — cultivated particular aspects of faith in sympathy with their denominational allegiances. The form of David Jones's poetry, for example, was largely determined by his admiration for the Tridentine Mass — the sole (and now historical) property of Roman Catholicism. And in Hopkins's case, a similar special enthusiasm — sacramentalism — provides the principal source of the unique persuasion of his verse. Indeed, the history of his early intellectual and spiritual development is one of a developing receptiveness to the sacramental outlook on man and nature — the grand theme alike of Hopkins's vocation and his poetry. And as the reading of his poems sheds light on the vocation which inspired them, so by turning to consider the origins and application of sacramentalism in his spiritual formation we are better equipped to come to terms with his verse.

Surrounded at home by a family accomplished in artistic pursuits and devoted to a high, though dry, Anglicanism, Hopkins would have found the attractions of mid-Victorian Oxford with its ascetics and aesthetes, its Tractarians and Pre-Raphaelites, irresistible; and on going up to read Classics at Balliol in 1863 he could scarcely have been placed under the direction of more

1 "References Back", *TLS* 3 February 1978, p. 127.

stimulating tutors. There was Walter Pater at Brasenose with his cultivation of the beauty of holiness (for the sake of beauty rather than holiness), and — at Hopkins's own college — Benjamin Jowett, the doyen of the Broad Churchmen, who was applying principles of historical and literary scholarship to the exegesis of Holy Scripture. Such formidable mentors naturally inspired Hopkins's admiration, but he swiftly perceived the flawed absolutism of their theories: Art, for Pater, was an end in itself; while Broad Church rationalism (which was given classic formulation in the notorious *Essays and Reviews* of 1860) deprived Christianity of the numinous — for Jowett, the Bible was but an historical record of mankind's developing awareness of the holy and the good.

Neither liberal theology nor aestheticism had so profound an impact on Hopkins as two contemporary movements, also based in Oxford, in the Church of England. The one — Tractarianism — was revived in response to Jowett; the other — Ritualism — assimilated the ideas of the aesthetes. High Churchmen such as Pusey and Liddon (both of whom acted as Hopkins's confessor), their spirits depressed by the blow of Newman's conversion to Rome in 1845, returned with renewed vigour to their defence of Christian orthodoxy — and, in particular, the mystery of the Incarnation — in the face of rationalist polemic. The Tractarians' spirituality found its most characteristic expression in a reference for the sacraments of the Church as extensions of the Incarnation; and, focusing especially on the Eucharist, they reaffirmed the Laudian doctrine of consubstantiation — the "Real Presence" of Christ in the sacrament, under the appearance of bread and wine. The proponents of Ritualism took up this high doctrine of the Holy Communion and, combining it with another Tractarian contention — that the Church of England was not the creation of Henry VIII but possessed an unbroken succession from St Augustine in the sixth century — asserted spiritual and historical authority for restoring to the celebration of the Eucharist that intricacy and solemnity of ceremony which had been set aside at the Reformation: George Eliot's Dr Kenn, vicar of St Ogg's in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), is a priest of this stamp. In practice, the Ritualists were inclined to view the Mediaeval Church through Pre-Raphaelite eyes, but a more serious aberration was their wholesale adoption of contemporary Roman Catholic ceremonial. This miscalculation of the tolerance of the bishops and the preparedness of the laity — "I don't care much about the tall candlesticks he has put on the communion-table", remarks Stephen Guest of Dr Kenn, "but he's the only man I ever knew personally

who seems to me to have anything of the real apostle in him"[2] — led to a spate of unedifying squabbles, and even to the imprisonment of some Ritualist clergy later in the century.

Now Hopkins was attracted to both these movements: his intelligence was stretched by the theological and historical learning of the Tractarians (who were an inspiration to him, also, in the earnest discipline of their apostolic spirituality), and his love of the beauty of holiness was satisfied by a full liturgy. But unfortunately for him, and for a host of Anglicans who trod the Romeward path in those days, the Tractarians, instead of regarding the Ritualists as disciples, looked askance at them. Scholar-divines like Keble and Liddon were either indifferent to ritual or openly critical of it.[3] They suspected that excessive ceremony would deflect congregations from those truths they had been propounding about the nature of the Catholic Church, its sacraments and its ministry, by filling their minds with trivial concerns. Worse still, theological misconceptions might develop: did not liturgical devotion to the consecrated elements in the ceremonies of Benediction and Exposition, for instance, upset the balance — essential to the nature of a sacrament — between the outward and visible sign and the inward and spiritual reality? However, while the subtle donnish mind had apparently arrived at Catholic orthodoxy, and could sustain it, unaided by appeals to the senses, the Ritualist clergy, venturing out from aristocratic Oxford to face the hazards of Pimlico and the East End, had sufficient humanity to acknowledge that their parishioners might need a more tangible encouragement.[4]

2 *The Mill on the Floss*, Book 6, Chapter 2.

3 "The high churchmen of Newman's day were not concerned with these things. Newman himself was indifferent to them; Pusey hostile. . . . To think, then, of the Oxford Movement as a ritualistic movement is a gross error. Ritualism became the mark of the Anglo-Catholic party which grew up in the Church after the Oxford men had done their work. The Tractarians were concerned with invisible, not visible things" (Geoffrey Faber, *Oxford Apostles*, Harmondsworth 1954, p. 92); and see Georgina Battiscombe, *John Keble*, London 1963, pp. 349–350.

4 Not that ritualism did not find a home closer to its source of inspiration. In the working-class suburb, Jericho — part of Oxford's "base and brickish skirt" (as Hopkins describes the Victorian housing development between the city and Binsey in "Duns Scotus's Oxford") — there was built the splendid Romanesque church of St Barnabas, consecrated in 1869. With its flamboyance of worship and Catholicity of doctrine it undoubtedly lived up to its reputation as "Barnabas Junction — change here for Rome".

The disparity between Tractarian and Ritualist was basically a matter of temperament. There was in Keble, for example, a strain of that English Puritanism which we find revealed in a certain blandness and tepidity of form and content in much of his poetry:

> The trivial round, the common task,
> Would furnish all we ought to ask, —
> Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To bring us daily nearer God.[5]

And Hopkins, while under the influence of Tractarian spirituality, attempted in some early verses to capture something of this earnest restraint. Yet, in a work such as "Heaven-Haven" (1864), the poetic interest resides as securely — as if in spite of itself — in the description of what is being renounced, as in the theme of renunciation:

> I have desired to be
> Where havens are dumb,
> Where the great water-heads may never come
> As in the unloved sea.

Taken from the Bodleian autograph, this stanza (most memorable, surely, for its "great water-heads" in the ostensibly "unloved sea") is more familiar in its final version where, in order to increase the tension between the allure of the world and its negation, Hopkins introduced a rhythmic energy into that last line:

> And I have asked to be
> Where no storms come,
> Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
> And out of the swing of the sea.[6]

The buoyancy of "the swing of the sea" (Yeatsian in its zest — "were we only white birds, my beloved, buoyed out on the foam of the sea") further discounts the fiction of the sea's unloveliness. Yet, paradoxically, it augments the act of renunciation badly anticipated in the poem's subtitle — "A nun takes the veil" — for by fusing a desire for complete seclusion from the world with the praise of nature (unstated, but *felt* in the accent of the poetry) the challenge of the nun's quest is strikingly evoked. Such a technique, then, keenly separates Hopkins from those with whom, at this point in his life, he would have most happily identified himself: such a fusion of opposites were unknown to Keble, whose verse ambles along a cosy *via media* between extremes:

5 From "New every morning is the love".
6 All quotations from the poems of Hopkins are taken from *The Poems*, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie, London 1970.

> We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
> Our neighbour and our work farewell,
> Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
> For sinful man beneath the sky.[7]

So Hopkins was ripe, at the end of his undergraduate career, for the synthesis of this-worldliness and other-worldliness expressed not only metaphysically in Catholic theology, but visibly in the sacramental tradition of Catholic worship. This synthesis had yet to be achieved in the English Church, so — inevitably — the poet looked to Rome and he entered that communion in 1866.

It was appropriate that Hopkins should have been received, at the Birmingham Oratory, by Newman — a kindred spirit, whose impatience with the doctrinal confusion of nineteenth-century Anglicanism and the disparity between its faith and practice had led to his own conversion. Yet, this most eminent of Victorians had brought to his new obedience traces of the Evangelical independence of his young manhood: when asked, at an ecclesiastical function, to propose the toast to the Vicar of Christ, Newman responded dutifully, but embellished the customary gesture with a salute to "the Conscience, the aboriginal Vicar of Christ". And his encouragement to Hopkins to join, not his Oratory, nor the Benedictine community (to which the neophyte had been initially attracted), but the Society of Jesus, was the idiosyncratic counsel of a gifted spiritual director.[8] Newman kept in mind the Anglo-Catholic temperament of his charge and anticipated the vocational advantages for Hopkins's poetic sensibility of a markedly unpoetic discipline — as the Oratorian had described the Ignatian order in his little-known masterpiece of 1858, "The Mission of the Benedictine Schools", wherein the community of Ignatius is distinguished from those of Benedict and Dominic:

> we see that it is its very genius . . . to think little both of poetry and of science, unless they happen to be useful. . . . [The Jesuits] have set their affections, not on the opinions of the Schools, but on the souls of men. And it is the same charitable motive which makes them give up the poetry of life, the poetry of ceremonies — of the cowl, the cloister, and the choir, — content with the most prosaic architecture, if it be but convenient, and the most prosaic neighbourhood, if it be but populous.[9]

Later in the century the poetic imagination of James Joyce was to be nurtured by the same prosaic regimen.

7 Also from "New every morning is the love".
8 See letter from Newman to Hopkins, May 1868, in *A Hopkins Reader*, ed. John Pick, London 1953, pp. 22–23.
9 In J. H. Newman, *The Benedictine Order*, London 1914, pp. 20–21.

Like Newman, Hopkins as a Catholic imposed the deliverances of a resilient personality — his "individual markings and mottlings"[10] — upon the wisdom of received teaching. His friendship with the Protestant agnostic Robert Bridges (a spiritual heir of Pater's, and Hopkins's literary executor) persisted and even intensified — as their letters indicate — after Hopkins's conversion; while the poet's warm correspondence with Canon Richard Dixon, an Anglican priest and poet, did not begin until Hopkins had entered the Society of Jesus; and the poem "Duns Scotus's Oxford", written in 1879 — two years after his ordination — in addition to testifying to Hopkins's enduring love of the ancient university, suggests his spiritual communion, not with a father of his own Society, but with a mediaeval Franciscan:

> this air I gather and I release
> He lived on; these weeds and waters, these walls are what
> He haunted who of all men most sways my spirits to peace.

Indeed, the teachings of Duns Scotus, contrary (in emphasis, if not in essence) to those of St Thomas Aquinas — the official philosopher and theologian of the Society of Jesus — are the key to an understanding of Hopkins's verse. As the poet's Tractarian sympathies preserved him from Jowett's rationalism in religion, so his Scotism purged him of the Platonism (to which Hopkins had been exposed at Balliol) of Jowett the classicist, and set him decisively in opposition to the Platonist tendencies of the Thomists.[11] For Scotus concentrates on the One as it is revealed in the

10 The poet's words for Henry Purcell's originality, in a note to his sonnet of 1877 dedicated to the composer. Hopkins continues: "I hope Purcell is not damned for being a Protestant, because I love his genius . . . his own individuality" (*The Poems*, p. 273).

11 Extraordinarily, Alison Sulloway describes Hopkins as nothing less than "the Oxonion Platonist" (*Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper*, London 1972, p. 65). Miss Sulloway's undoing here, and throughout her elaborately "scholarly" farrago, is a commitment to generalization. Not content that Hopkins's sketches reflect the strong influence of Ruskin the painter, she insists that Hopkins identified with everything Ruskinian (including his alleged Platonism, and his Calvinism), and then she argues, in a fatal syllogism, that as Ruskin admired Carlyle, so Hopkins must have admired Carlyle too — "and what Victorian did not?" she asks triumphantly, as if that proved anything. As it happens, Hopkins detested Carlyle, describing him as "morally an imposter, worst of all imposters a false prophet" and indicting his style as "most inefficacious-strenuous heaven protestations, caterwaul, and Cassandra-wailings" (*A Hopkins Reader*, pp. 104, 226), and described Ruskin in 1868 as "full of follies" (*A Hopkins Reader*, p. 221).

many, emphasizing the individuality, the "thisness" of an object, in its beauty and design (its "inscape", as Hopkins was to call it) and in the special feelings and associations which it brings to mind (its "instress"). This is not to suggest, however, that the influence of Hopkins's training in the *Exercises* of St Ignatius — the cornerstone of Jesuit discipline and an application of Thomist thought — counts for nothing in his poetry, but I would contend that while the Ignatian method undoubtedly provided the form for much of his work (as for his life in religion) it was the contrary influence of Duns Scotus — "of reality the rarest veinèd unraveller" — which provided its distinctive intensity.[12]

It is the sacramental character of Scotism which justifies a close concentration on even the minute particulars of a scene, an object, or an individual — for in each of these, no matter how trivial (and perhaps especially in the most lowly), the presence of God is discernible. And the force of this sacramental impulse is often manifested in Hopkins's poetry in a cataloguing of attributes, not unlike a litany as it makes the reader attentive to the variety and, hence, the wonder of creation; and a form of poetic epiklesis as it draws towards a closer identity with the Creator. To postulate a contradiction between the worlds of sense and spirit in Hopkins, therefore, is to miss the sacramental point; to mistake Hopkins's view of nature for mere paganism or Wordsworthian pantheism is to be as literal-minded as to confuse Eucharistic communion with cannibalism.[13] In the second line of "Duns Scotus's Oxford", where the poet describes more particularly a city that has already been introduced as "towery . . . and branchy between towers":

> Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmèd, lark-charmèd, rock-racked,
> river-rounded;

the assimilation of diverse features — achieved by virtue of the internal musicality of the line, the balance of "swarmèd" and "charmèd", for instance, and the progression from the sharp alliteration of "cuckoo-echoing" to the heavier consonance of "river-rounded" — is not simply a concentration on those beauties for their own sake, but initiates the swaying to peace of the poet's spirits spoken of in the third stanza and consummated in the overall transcendental motion of the poem, which proceeds from

12 The "terrible sonnets" are an exception to this rule, as they are exceptional amongst the other poems. For in their chaste horror, their desperate though restrained introspection, they conform both to the style and the spirit of the Ignatian meditation on Hell.

13 That Hopkins was aware of the threat of pantheism is apparent in "To what serves Mortal Beauty?".

the constricted world of the college quadrangle, to the country beyond the city (rural "folk, flocks, and flowers"), coming to rest at the pinnacle of the highest order of earthly creation, "Mary without spot": the Virgin, immaculate in her freedom from Original Sin.

Mary, in fact, is the sacramental creation *par excellence*, for God dwelt in her not under a veil — as in nature, or in the sacraments themselves — but corporeally. Not surprisingly then, as Duns Scotus the sacramentalist was a champion of her function in the Divine economy and "fired France for Mary", so Hopkins, the poet as sacramentalist, chose her as a subject on several occasions. But, despite her propitious qualities, it must be acknowledged that there is "something unsatisfactory" — as John Pick rather coyly puts it[14] — about Hopkins's Marian poems. Dr Pick, noting that they were written for the annual observance of May as the Virgin's month at the Jesuit house at Stonyhurst, attempts to explain the problem in terms of their "occasional" status. Certainly, when Hopkins engages with his obligatory subject in "The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe" (1883), for instance, the poetry conveys the impression of a mere theological exercise done into verse:

> If I have understood,
> She holds high motherhood
> Towards all our ghostly good
> And plays in grace her part
> About man's beating heart.

Yet this flatness is strikingly relieved in the same poem by some delicious moments on air, Christ, and the God of the old dispensation:

> His fire, the sun would shake,
> A blear and blinding ball
> With blackness bound, and all
> The thick stars round him roll
> Flashing like flecks of coal,
> Quartz-fret, or sparks of salt,
> In grimy vasty vault.

So the argument from the circumstances of composition does not provide a compelling explanation of the bathos: in any case, Hopkins's most sustained writing — the poem on the foundering of the *Deutschland* in 1875 — was the result of an official request on a specific occasion. Rather, as the "unsatisfactoriness" of the Marian poems develops in proportion to Hopkins's engagement with his principal subject, I would postulate instead a failure of

14 *Gerard Manley Hopkins Priest and Poet*, London 1966, p. 103.

interest, on his part, not in the Virgin as a theological entity, but in Mary as a woman. While Hopkins acceded, of course, to the former orthodoxy, he was unattracted by the latter humanity which involved those very qualities most favourable for Mary's poetic celebration: indeed, the sensitivity and gentleness of femininity at large never elicited from him any real enthusiasm. Instead, on the human plane, Hopkins found his inspiration in the world of men — a world which, I suspect, being further removed from him temperamentally than the femininity of Mary, possessed the mystique of something imperfectly known. And as if to exaggerate the mystery of masculinity, he chose representatives of that world — Felix Randal the farrier, for example, and Harry Ploughman — who are almost archetypal in their maleness and poetic incarnations of that perfect Man delineated in Hopkins's sermon of 1879 on "Christ our Hero":

> There met in Jesus Christ all things that can make man lovely and loveable. In his body he was most beautiful. . . . he was moderately tall, well built and slender in frame, his features straight and beautiful, his hair inclining to auburn, parted in the midst, curling and clustering about the ears and neck as the leaves of a filbert, so they speak, upon the nut. . . . picture him, in whom the fulness of the godhead dwelt bodily, in his bearing how majestic, how strong and yet how lovely and lissome in his limbs, in his look how earnest, grave but kind.[15]

These virtues of majesty and loveliness, manliness and godliness are found in the hero of "Felix Randal" — composed six months after "Christ our Hero" — as the narrative relates how Felix's physical strength and beauty (he was "big-boned and hardy-handsome") is diminished by illness, and replaced, through the agency of the sacraments ("our sweet reprieve and ransom", administered by Hopkins) by a spiritual strength and beauty — "a heavenlier heart". The climax of the anecdote, however, is invested in a sacramentalism more subtle than this tale of anointing and communion of the sick: for as Hopkins's tendering to Felix made the farrier more tender, so there had been an emotional and spiritual tenderness communicated by Felix to Hopkins:

> 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

15 In *A Hopkins Reader*, pp. 271–272. Ian Sellers has noted that the theme of "Christ Hero" was popular sermon material for dissenting preachers about the 1850s (*Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity*, London 1977, p. 22). Hopkins apparently shared this impulse — at once personalizing and idealizing — though it is doubtful whether such an exotic exegesis as his ever fell on the ears of Chapel-goers.

and, thus, in the reciprocity of priest and farrier, the spiritual and the natural man (unimagined and unimaginable in the throwaway aside at the poem's beginning: "Felix Randal the farrier, O is he dead then?") the essential note of sacramentalism — reconciliation with the Eternal — is, paradoxically, bound up with the circumstances of death. And the closing lines of "Felix Randal" bear poetic witness to the accommodation of opposites accomplished by this mutual ministry, for as Hopkins commemorates Felix at peace,

> How far from then forethought of, all thy more boisterous years,

he discovers in the reminiscence of that former vital and assertive masculinity — so grandly enunciated in a percussive alliteration — not the negation of the rest of eternity, but its mortal complement:

> thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers,
> Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and battering sandal!

Unlike the anecdotal "Felix Randal", "Harry Ploughman" (1887) embraces a life force in the full flush of its persona's earthly existence. The element of religiosity, present in the second stanza of "Felix Randal", is entirely absent here; and if Felix and Hopkins, farrier and priest, accommodated one another in the earlier poem, it seems that the ploughman, on the contrary, is an unaccommodated man.

Indeed, the impression created in the sonnet's octet, where brutish features are so adoringly enumerated and the conflation of horse and ploughman is complete ("one crew"), is that Harry is none other than Felix's "great grey drayhorse":

> the rack of ribs; the scooped flank; lank
> Rope-over thigh; knee-knave; and barrelled shank —
> Head and foot, shoulder and shank.

At the introduction to the sestet, however, a simple half-line —

> He leans to it, Harry bends, look —

being a *larghetto* passage in the wake of that more aggressive tempo, and at last introducing Harry by name, distinguishes the human element in this intricate portrayal of a massive force. The momentary pause casts a spell over the ensuing line, both rhythmically and thematically, as the little energy recovered in "back, elbow, and liquid waist" is compromised by the fact that Harry is now at the mercy of "the wallowing o' the plough" — and how ponderously does the air of disappointed strength hang on that slow-moving phrase! All is by no means lost, however, for Hop-

kins has contrived this pause to discover a gentler, but no less alluring, beauty in Harry's blush of submission — " 'S cheek crimsons" — demonstrating that man, consisting of body and soul, is a being in whom contraries meet. Yet, as he recovers his poise, the wind in exaltation gathers up the ploughman's hair by sweeping through it in a word arrangement (*tmesis*) which emblematizes the unity of Harry and this natural element — "see his wind-lilylocks-laced" (that is, "see his lilylocks windlaced") — as the union of ploughman and horse in the octet was determined by a wilful confusion of muscles. Thus, from this point, the sonnet retrieves its former vigour: in a sinuous syntax the ploughman's "frowning feet", broad in their "bluff hide" sandals are seen to be directed, as the wind governed Harry's hair, by his peasant soul, his "churlsgrace" — the "child of Amansstrength" (a compound embracing primeval nobility, even godliness) — and his feet are, in turn, in harmony with the furrows newly generated by the plough:

> raced
> With, along them, cragiron under and cold furls —
> With-a-fountain's shining-shot furls.

The world of this sonnet is a world in which man and horse and wind and soil are, in their communicated aliveness, *at* one and — by virtue of their common life force — *in* One.

Hopkins's distinctive achievement was an ability to inject into his portrayal of men, animals, and nature a sense of their vitality; and his innovative use of rhythm, though but a component of what W. H. Gardner has called his "total complex of style",[16] is the fundamental source of this liveliness. Hopkins's "sprung rhythm" proceeds from an anxiety to emphasize the essential God-given vitality of an object (a basic tenet, we have seen, of Scotism); and the note of triumph in the opening words of "The Windhover" (1877) — "I caught" (rather than the less hectic apprehension, "I saw") — expresses the realization that nature, being thus animated, is in an elusive state of quasi-Heraclitean flux:

> Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth, then chevy
> on an air-
> built thoroughfare: heaven roysterers, in gay-gangs they throng;
> they glitter in marches.
> Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, wherever an elm arches,
> Shivelights and shadowtackle in long lashes lace, lance, and pair.
> ("That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of
> the comfort of the Resurrection")

16 Introduction, *The Poems*, p. xxiii.

So, Hopkins's art, unlike that of the Symbolist who must petrify for celebration, invests the elements of the natural world with an enhanced life: his "sacraments", which are not still long enough to become symbols, enjoy the precarious existence of a momentary larger-than-lifeness by virtue of Hopkins's concentration not only on the feverish vibration of their temporary *being*, but — and this again recalls Heraclitus — on their potential for *becoming* one with their Creator. His technique is to be distinguished also from the Realist in fiction and the Pre-Raphaelite in painting, both contemporaries (like the Symbolist), who, in their zeal to "approximate reality",[17] transcribed nature — human and otherwise — with the deadening hand of literalism.[18] An incapacity for the numinous vitiates their "novels" and paintings, and it is a further testament to that individualism we discerned in his undergraduate days that Hopkins eschewed the principles of their schools.

Unlike them, and true to his vocation as a sacramentalist, Hopkins transcended the world even as he studied every fibre of its being. Abiding in the tension between the material and the spiritual — and sacramentalism is the theology of this tension — his poetry is at once as close to the pulse of life as we are likely to come in verse and an earnest of that condition when sacraments shall cease:

> Across my foundering deck shone
> A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
> Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash:
> In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
> I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
> This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
> Is immortal diamond.

17 Harry Levin, in Damian Grant, *Realism*, London 1970, p. 19.

18 Timothy Hilton (*The Pre-Raphaelites*, New York 1970) observes of William Morris that "there is never in Morris's art, whether in his poetry or in his handiwork, any sense of energy, of movement or progression" (p. 171), and that in Burne-Jones's world "all is still. . . . Nothing is emphasized. . . . There is no tension" (p. 190).