

## Biblical Allusion in Hopkins's "God's Grandeur"

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### 논문초록

하나님과 인간의 관계에 대한 취급은 많은 작가들의 주제로 다루어지고 있다. 기독교 성직자로서 영국 빅토리아 시대에 활동했던 제라드 맨리 홉킨스(1844-1889)는 시가 이 세상에 현현하는 하나님의 존재를 피력하는 데 가장 적합하다고 생각하고 소네트 형식을 취해 하나님과 인간과 자연의 관계를 자신의 독특한 기법과 언어와 자연의 심상을 통해 표현한다. 본 연구논문은 홉킨스가 그의 시 "신의 장엄"에서 심상과 언어를 통해 드러나는 성경적 인유를 어떻게 사용하여 주제를 부각시키는지 고찰한다.

홉킨스는 세상의 모든 자연물상에는 하나님의 신성함이 깃들여있으며 자연과의 교감을 통해 하나님의 영광을 체험할 수 있다고 믿는다. "신의 장엄"은 하나의 8행시구와 하나의 6행시구로 구성되어 있다. 이 시의 전반부에서 홉킨스는 세상의 모든 만물은 하나님의 장엄함으로 충전되어 있으나 인간이 이를 깨닫지 못하고 자신의 목적과 이기로 하나님의 권위를 무시하고 하나님의 창조물인 자연을 짓밟고 파괴시키고 있음을 창조와 타락, 예수 그리스도의 고난과 십자가에 못 박힘 등과 관련한 성경적 인유와 관련된 시어와 이미지들을 통해 나타내고 있다. 이 시의 후반부에서 홉킨스는 시의 전반부에서 보여주었던 비관적 어조에서 벗어나 낙관적 견지로 인간의 훼손함에도 불구하고 자연은 결코 소진되지 않으며 하나님의 장엄함이 그리스도의 희생을 통한 속죄함과 성령의 활동으로 여전히 이 세상에 충만한 것을 확신에 찬 어조로 성경에 기록된 빛의 심상과 새의 이미지들을 통해 묘사하고 있다.

주제어: 홉킨스, 신의 장엄, 성경의 인유, 예수, 성령, 자연, 인간

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### I. Introduction

Religion is the most influential factor in human society. It is the core of our existence and has become a way of life in all cultures. The impact religion has had on the world is overwhelming. Therefore, human history is full of examples of people trying to define their relationship with the Divine. Literature dealing with various human societies or someone's perspective has played an important role that can be get the proper view of relationship between man and God. The interconnection between human beings and the Divine has been the subject of many authors writings, attempting to capture the obscurity, beauty and knowledge that are ever present in human's relationship with the Divine. In discussing religious poetry T. S. Eliot cited among his examples G. M. Hopkins and in a subtle qualification, allowed "for the possibility that he may be a major poet after all" (Tennyson, 1981: 2). As a Jesuit priest in Victorian Age, Gerard Manly Hopkins(1844-1889) devoted many years of his life to spiritual study and instruction. He was a talented poet, and he was also extremely devoted to his faith. He used his poetry as an avenue in which to express his love and praise to his Creator, and many of his poems are beautiful hymns of adoration of God and nature. In Hopkins, there is a firm conviction that "poetry should serve religion", though this conviction was clearly won at great expenses for Hopkins who

perceived the conflict between the two (Tennyson, 1981: 206).

The Victorian Age was a period of great progress and prosperity for England. This was a period in which industry, technology, and science were celebrated with renewed vigor. Because of the rapid extension of colonialism England became a very powerful empire and preeminent center of world power. The Victorian Age, more formally known, was a time of great prosperity in English literature. The Victorian Age produced a variety of changes. Political and social reform produced a variety of reading among all classes. The lower-class became more self-conscious, the middle class more powerful and the rich became more vulnerable. The novels of Charles Dickens and George Eliot, the poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold, the dramatic plays of Oscar Wilde, the scientific discoveries of the Charles Darwin, and the religious revolt of John Henry Newman and etc., all of those helped to enhance learning and literacy in the Victorian society. Writers of that time challenged the ideas of religion, crime, sexuality, chauvinism and varied social controversies.

Under these circumstances, most Victorians agreed with Tennyson, Robert Browning, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Arnold, and George Eliot that the self could not find serenity in a chaotic age until it had merged with the society behind the self. So the Victorian poetry is full of attempts to grapple with the social problems. And the Victorian poets were more interested in social than in poetic problems. The general Victorian trends of the poetry represent "a subjective dream indulgence in vogues of escape and reverie, including escape from confused emotionalism and passive sensationalism" (Heuser, 95). The Victorian poets like Tennyson, Robert Browning, Arnold presented their vision to a mass audience to make their voices a public voice. Unlike his fellow Victorian poets, Hopkins was faithful to his poetic voice depending upon his own genuine inspiration and on the religious imagination based on his experiences and the Bible (Landow, 1980: 2).

In the Victorian Age, religion was not so separate in every

department of the people's lives as it is today. Hopkins is a reflection of his time period because his work represents realism, but unlike other realism writers at those days, his works have to do with religion. As poetry, painting, and politics have shown, the Victorians employed both Christian symbolism and various unorthodox extensions of it. Many of their derivations, manipulations, and extensions take the form of abstracting one of symbolism's defining elements, such as its emphasis upon the literal truth of both type and anti-type, and then applying it to a secular matter. Like many other Victorians who make extensions of Christian symbolism, most Victorian writers secularizes it, especially applying it to the social problems. In contrast, Hopkins does not secularize this divinely instituted form of symbolism, for he exemplifies a different kind of abstracted symbolism, instead of employing a single defining quality of the entire mode, he invents "a powerful form of typological allusion by abstracting the essence — the defining conceit, idea, or structure — from individual scriptural types" (Landow, 1). What Hopkins seeks to do in his poetry to take by "force of language the very analogies that were readily at hand in Biblical and patristic typology and analogy" (Tennyson, 1981: 207). Hopkins employs allusions to Bible as a means of combining a rich, aesthetic surface with elaborate symbolism. As a Jesuit priest who had converted to Catholicism in the summer of 1866, Hopkins "was no doubt saturated with the Bible" (Bergonzi, 1977: 34).

The purpose of this paper is to analyze Hopkins's sonnet "God's Grandeur" in a religious viewpoint related to the Biblical allusion and to survey Hopkins's vision of the world.

One of Hopkins's themes is how he can see the glory of God reflected in nature. Hopkins combined the natural world with the religious awareness of God, and he also linked this experience as a man with religious theme. Hopkins enjoyed the fusion of form and content, and the structure of the sonnet consisting of an octave(eight lines) and a sestet(six lines) in a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an

intricate rhyme scheme. So the structure of the sonnet is good to show his two-fold intention effectively. In the octave, Hopkins describes his experience as well as his vision of nature, man and God, and in the sestet, a religious conclusion. His sonnets responded to the mysterious presence of God within the world's splendour and wonder. For Hopkins the relationship between octave and sestet is closely connected; it creates a turning point that becomes a rhetorical flourish of limitation or reduction. Conscious of miniaturization octave in sestet, Hopkins seems to find in that turning point a formal trope for the imaginative bridge between "heaven and earth, between the divine and human" (Wagner, 1992: 33). This discovery offers Hopkins a formal analogy for what was the persistent subject of his sonnets the presence of Christ in man, the accommodation of God in nature. Hopkins's one of the famous poems "God's Grandeur" is an Italian sonnet which is divided into two parts, the first eight lines have an 'abbaabba' rhyme scheme and the sestet concludes with 'cdcdcd'. The content of an Italian sonnet is very specifically and thematically organized. In "God's Grandeur", the octave describes the way in which humans are destroying the world by not attending to the greatness that surrounds them. The sestet is more optimistic and reveals Hopkins's personal belief that God's grandeur will remain because of the working of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding Hopkins's own favorite conceit related to the Biblical allusion, we can thus better enjoy the way his poetic, imaginative expressions release unexpected beauties and greater triumphs.

## II. Biblical Allusion in the Octave of "God's Grandeur"

The Victorian Age came after the Romantic Age and took place between the years of 1832 and 1901. Throughout the Romantic Age many authors concentrated and focused on the rights of the people, as well as the idea of individualism. Those beliefs helped spring into the Victorian Age. There are three main things concerning the Victorians during this specific time period: evolution, industrialism, and women. These changes were confusing to many and began to make them wonder if what they had believed in all these years wasn't true after all.

The evolution doubt came into effect when two men began to question nature and disturb the originality of the way things are suppose to be. These two men were Marx and Darwin. Although Marx hasn't been mentioned as much as Darwin, he was known to be a very radical person who began to question the economic injustice of things, as well as the class system. Darwin, on the other hand, was questioning the Bible and how things got to be the way they are. He brought about the idea of "natural selection" and that lead to religious doubts in people. Before Darwin came out with his idea on natural selection and evolution, scientists had exhibited doubt when the Neanderthal skeletons were discovered. This was the beginning of religious doubt. It wasn't until Darwin came out with his explanation that people really began to take into consideration the theories of the evolution.

In those currents of the times, Hopkins who attempted to reconcile his faith with the new knowledge had to find ways to prove God's existence. In the face of evolution, geology, and "natural selection," Hopkins sees the world as the testimony of the grandeur of God. Hopkins enjoyed the intense pleasure in the natural world, linked with a profound sense of natural beauty as a reflection of Divine reality. For Hopkins, the feeling of a real, tangible connection with God is important to

the faith. In "God's Grandeur," Hopkins explores the power of God and the wonder of nature and illustrates the relationship between man and God.

The first four lines of the octave describe a natural world through which God's presence runs like an electrical current, becoming momentarily visible in flashes like the refracted glints of light produced by metal foil when ruffled or quickly moved. Alternatively, God's presence is a rich oil, a kind of sap that wells up "to a greatness" when tapped with a certain kind of patient pressure. Given these clear, strong proofs of God's presence in the world, the persona of the poem asks how it is that humans fail to heed His divine authority.

THE world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?  
(Gardner, 1983: 27)

Hopkins's introductory sentence immediately presents the belief that the power of nature stems from God. Hopkins takes the earth itself to be a concrete manifestation of God's magnificence. The first line of the poem is suggestive both of the Creation story and of some verses from the Bible. In the first line, Hopkins utilizes the word "charged" to imply a sense of power and dynamics to communicate the vast expanse of God's reach. 'Charge' means to pass an electrical current through a battery in order to make it more powerful or to make it last longer. Therefore, the word "charged" leads one to think of a spark or light, and so thoughts of the Creation, which began with a spark of light, are not far off: "And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light." (Genesis 1:3). Light comes also naturally to typify true religion and the felicity it imparts (Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 8:20, Matthew, 4:16), and the glorious inheritance of the redeemed (Colossians 1:12, Revelation 21:23-5). God is said to dwell in

light inaccessible (1 Timothy 6:16). It frequently signifies instruction (Matthew 5:16, John 5:35). In its highest sense it is applied to Christ as the "Sun of righteousness" (Malachi 4:2, Luke 2:32, John 1:7-9). God is styled "the Father of lights" (James 1:17). So, the first line means "the spirit of the Lord fills the world" (Boyle 25). This line also represents the whole world shone with brilliant light, God's Word and the light continues its works without interruption. Moreover, it means Christians are 'the light of the world'. This also connects the final sestet of his poem, that the light will nonetheless continue to shine "without interruption." God will not cease working in the world.

Hopkins's choices of words add to the feeling of grandeur that is the subject of the poem through their powerful imagery, and they express wonder at the power and grandeur of God and the continuity of nature. Hopkins carefully chooses the scientific image to link the secular and scientific to mystery, divinity, and religious tradition. Electricity was an area of much scientific interest during Hopkins's day, and is an example of a phenomenon that had long been taken as an indication of divine power but which was now explained in naturalistic, rational terms. Hopkins is defiantly affirmative in his assertion that God's work is still to be seen in nature, if men will only concern themselves to look. Refusing to ignore the discoveries of modern science, he takes them as some further evidence of God's grandeur rather than a challenge to it.

In line 2, the persona depicts God's grandeur "will flame out, like shining from shook foil". The word "flame" is often associated with God's grandeur. In Daniel 7:9, the prophet describes God's throne as being like "the fiery flame," and its wheels are "burning fire". In Revelation, "... These are the words of the Son of God, Who has eyes that flash like a flame of fire, and Whose feet glow like bright and burnished and white-hot bronze" (2:18). Flame of fire is the chosen symbol of the holiness of God. In Exodus, "the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush."

(3:2). The influence of the Holy Spirit is likened unto fire (Matthew 3:11). His descent was denoted by the appearance of tongues as of fire (Acts 2:3). God's grandeur has been shown through the descent of His Holy Spirit and in the speaking of tongues. Flame of fire is also for sacred purposes. The sacrifices were consumed by fire (Genesis 8:20). The ever-burning fire on the altar was first kindled from heaven (Leviticus 6:9,13), and afterwards rekindled at the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chronicles 7:1,3). And flame of fire is one of the devices of Jehovah to reveal His will or Him to Israel (Deuteronomy 5:24-6).

The poem begins with the surprising metaphor of God's grandeur as an electric force. The figure suggests an undercurrent that is not always seen, but which builds up a tension or pressure that occasionally flashes out in ways that can be both brilliant and dangerous. The optical effect of "shook foil" is one example of this brilliancy. The second half of this image is primarily a scientific one. It refers to "gold leaf foil as used to measure electrical charges in Faraday's famous experiment" (Boyle 26). But there is also a Biblical significance. In Proverbs, God tells us that "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day" (4:18).

Just as light is reflected from gold foil, flashing out in multiplying rays, so too does the Light of God, which leads men, continue to increase. This image in one way ties God's grandeur "gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil / Crushed." Both images demonstrate a process of increase in God's grandeur.

The olive oil is an ancient sacramental substance used for centuries for food, medicine, lamplight, and religious purposes. The olive in itself, however, is not particularly valuable. It can be eaten, but until it is pressed, it has no further use. Once pressed into oil, it was used for various purposes. It was used for many purposes: for anointing the body or the hair (Exodus 29:7, Psalm 23:5, Luke 7:46), in some of the offerings (Exodus

29:40, Leviticus 7:12, Numbers 6:15), but was excluded from the sin-offering (Leviticus 5:11) and the jealousy-offering (Numbers 5:15); for burning in lamps (Matthew 25:3), for medicinal purposes (Luke 10:34, James 5:14), and for anointing the dead (Matthew 26:12, Luke 23:56). The use of it was a sign of gladness (Psalm 92:10, Isaiah 61:3), and binding wounds (Luke 10:34), and in perfume (Luke 8:46). It was very valuable, and the promised land was referred to as, among other things, a "land with oil olive" (Deuteronomy 8:8).

Hopkins's favorite structure of ideas is embodied in the idea of crushing olives to produce oil. "Gethsemane, the location of Christ's agony, means the "place of the olive-press", and he several times draws upon this fact" (Boyle 1961: 32). It was there that God's grandeur gathered to a greatness, for it was there that Christ wrestled with doubt and fear and, gathering His strength, finally made an irrevocable choice to glorify His Father: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

In the poem, the crushed oil is the image of Christ (Landow 1980: 7). This, then, is a suitable metaphor for God's grandeur as revealed through Jesus Christ. If Christ had chosen, at that point of agony in the Gethsemane garden, not to submit to the Crucifixion, His entire life up to that point would have been of little value like the uncrushed olive. His words and His miracles would probably have been forgotten in time, and men would still have no adequate atonement for sins. But just as the olive is "crushed to reveal something costly and useful, so too did Christ choose to be crushed to bring forth His priceless blood, which saves men" (Landow 6). Crucifixion was a common mode of punishment among heathen nations in early times. The modes of capital punishment according to the Mosaic law were, by the sword, strangling, fire, and stoning. This was regarded as the most horrible form of death, and to a Jew it would acquire greater horror from the curse in Deuteronomy 21:23. This punishment began by subjecting the sufferer to scourging. Therefore, accepting this duty could not be an easy matter for

Christ. Robert Boyle(1961) is convicted the olive oil image refers not to "the gathering of ooze from the cracks of a press" but rather to gentle kneading with a hand: "the beauty and power is hidden within the olive and can be brought out without a press at all, e. g., by the pressure of the fingers or palms" (32). This seems unlikely, however, given that at Gethsemane, Christ was not lightly pressed as if in a palm, but was rather weighed down and crushed with great agony, sweating "like drops of blood" and begging that, if at all possible, His cup be taken from Him (Luke 22: 42-44). The mention of oil being produced from the press reminds us that this beauty embodies the specific spiritual principle that Hopkins believes to underlie all existence: that beauty and life were purchased only by Christ's enduring the pressure, bruising, and crushing of the descent into human flesh and subsequent Crucifixion. This leads the results of fallen man to new life and beauty. Hopkins cites the same basic structure of ideas in poems about "earthly beauty, conversion, spiritual agony, martyrdom, and Biblical events, because he obviously believes that it contains the essence of Christian truth" (Landow 6). True beauty, true life, true victory can only be achieved, as Christ has shown, by being bruised and crushed. George P. Landow describes that this imagery is one of Hopkins's "basic and generating conceit" (2). And this conceit is based upon the type of Genesis 3:15, which says: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Christ is the one who bruises Satan's head, defeating the adversary through His own bruising, His Crucifixion.

This image of the "ooze of oil / Crushed" may seem unnecessarily crude. It contrasts sharply with the brilliant metaphor of flame and shining. As Virginia Ellis writes, the image of "shaken gold foil," once properly understood, "vividly suggests both the breadth and the sudden flashing depth of God's power" (129-30). Both the images of the foil and the olive oil show an all-permeating Divine presence that reveals itself in intermittent flashes or droplets of brilliance. The word

"ooze," on the other hand, generally possesses a disagreeable connotation. Yet this contrast must be deliberate. For the Incarnation is, after all, a very vivid thing. An omnipotent, omniscient God chose to come down from the heavenly realm and take on the form of a mere man, subjecting Himself to the limitations of humanity, in order that He might die a cruel death to save men who were yet sinners. "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Roman 5:8).

The brilliance of lines one and two of the poem contrasts with the crudeness of lines three and four to reveal God's amazing condescension, which is part of His grandeur.

Given this awesome condescension, and given the emotional and physical pain to which Christ subjected Himself, Hopkins cries plaintively, "Why do men then now not reckon his rod?". Most likely, this reference to "rod" will evoke in our mind the image from Revelation in which Christ rules men "with a rod of iron" (Revelation 19:15). But a more appropriate allusion may be found in Isaiah: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him..." (11:1-2). God's rod, then, is Christ Himself. God gave up his rod, His only Son, as a sacrifice for the very men who fail both to perceive and to honor Him in His creation. Indeed, the rod of iron that awaits these men could become for them a rod of comfort. If they would trust in God's rod, they too, like David, might say, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

"Why do men then now not reckon his rod?" That is, why do people not pay attention to the authority of God? Why does the creature turn away from the Creator? Why do people fail to recognize in the beauty of nature the glory of God? Why do men neglect to give God the praise, reverence, and service which are his due? No specific answer is given to these questions, but the poem seems to argue, as Norman MacKenzie(1984: 65) points

out, "that disowning God leads to an abuse of nature" (65).

The development of science in the Victorian Age conflicted greatly with religion. It gave a damaging blow to the Christianity and God's Creation. Also the society in the age, the period of industrial revolution and early capitalism, was materialistic and more self-interested and thought little of the authority of God. The second quatrain of the poem contains an indictment of the way a culture's neglect of God translates into a neglect of the environment. But it also suggests that the abuses of previous generations are partly to blame; they have soiled and "seared" our world, further hindering our ability to access the holy.

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod. (Gardner 1983: 27)

The capacity to find God in nature has been sacrificed to the false idols of industrial progress and science. In the Victorian Age, some people looked upon themselves as "bearers of a new science, a new renaissance Hellenism, or an invigorated Hebraism," and others feared that "the breakdown in faith and in the remnants of the ancient feudal order presaged the end of England as a civilized power" (Sulloway 1972: 1). Hopkins recognizes a wearied modern man who is more concerned with profit and who is systematically ignoring God's message. The repetitions of 'have trod' reflect Hopkins's disgust at the long-failing ignorance and selfishness of his fellow man. Similarly, the internal rhyme of 'seared', 'bleared' and 'smeared' mirrors modern man's life, a repetition of dreary and progressively more sullied moments. Instead of God's grandeur consolidating the environment, all nature now "wears man's smudge and shares man's smell."

The imagery of line 5 resembles God's complaint in Ezekiel: "Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must

you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?" (34:18). It is too wicked that people have disregarded the beauty of God's creation and failed to see His grandeur in it. What is worse people have polluted it with his own sinful nature. Men have brought darkness upon himself in the very midst of God's light. All things have been spoiled. Nothing has escaped man's materialistic touches. People, consumed by their own interests, have forgotten James's warning: "Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:13-4).

This image of all being seared with trade conjures up a picture of the symbolic wicked city of Babylon, where men trade in "cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; "cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men" (Revelation 18:12-3). Men have put their trust in the produce of their own hands, caring nothing for the soul. Indeed, they have chosen the beast over God, and have perhaps been seared not just with trade, but in order to trade, for "no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name." (Revelation 13:17) Yet all of men's monotonous, materialistic striving will come to nothing: "Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out: "Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour

she has been brought to ruin!" (Revelation 18:17-9).

Men, laboring to gather useless wealth, have become "bleared, smeared with toil" This should "not be taken merely as an indictment of industrialism but the situation reaches far more deeply into the nature of man" (Boyle 1961: 36). After the Fall, because the ground is cursed, "through painful toil you(Adam) will eat of it all the days of your life.

It(the ground) will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken;" (Genesis 3:17-9).

Hopkins especially put an emphasis on the "all" of "all is seared with trade." And his complaint is that the soil is not cleared here and there, but it is bare. He is not here "condemning man for the Fall", but for "what he adds to the Fall from his own personal malice and rebellion against God" (Boyle 1961: 36). This image of bare soil pertains not just to men's destruction of nature, but to his spiritual bareness. In Jesus Christ's parable of the sower, Jesus says that: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants" (Luke 8:5-7).

Nature is the vehicle of this metaphor, but man's spirit is the purport. The soil is bare just as man's soul is bare; he has borne no spiritual fruit. Either he has rejected God's good news, as if trampling it beneath his feet, or he has at first received it gladly, but then he goes on his own way he is been "choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures," and he does not mature (Luke 8:14).

The soil is not only "bare now," but "nor can foot feel, being shod." In the burning bush, God tells Moses: "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). People "have profaned what should be

holy ground, not bare soil with shod feet" (Boyle 1961: 31). To go barefoot was a sign of great distress (Isaiah 20: 2-4), or of some great calamity having fallen on a person: "David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot" (2 Sam 15:30). Yet the scene of Exodus, to be barefoot is to feel. In Moses's case, the feeling is reverence. Therefore, in the poem, the men "being shod" represents the fact that they have become calloused, incapable of spiritual feeling.

The vivid description depicted in the second quatrain of the poem seems to leave little apparent hope for men. But we have been alluded in the first three lines of the poem that God's light has not been eclipsed by men's darkness, and that His grandeur will yet "flame out." Hopkins does not abandon this promise, but resumes it with full force in the final sestet of his poem.

Those who are searing, blearing and smearing the world are obviously unaware how these destructive movements are nullifying any relationship with its Creator. Hopkins also believed a reconnection with God's Creation that would invigorate a relationship with the Creator. The wearying, deadening effect of dehumanizing labour is on man, not God. For in spite of man's abuse and disregard, "nature is never spent." The sestet of the poem is filled with hope and the promise brought by each new sunrise.

### III. Biblical Allusion in the Sestet of "God's Grandeur"

The Victorian Age, as mentioned above, was a turbulent time during which many old institutions were damaged irrevocably; a number of religious beliefs were challenged and discarded as baseless. Some Victorians chose agnosticism as their new philosophy of God; if someone could prove to them His



Existence, then they would believe. Others chose to become atheists. Atheism stated that there was no God, no afterlife, and no divine creator. While neither of these theologies was very popular during the Victorian period, they have continued to exist. However, some Victorians, including Hopkins, were able to reconcile what they had learned of the physical world with what they believed of the spiritual realm. Hopkins who attempts to reconcile his faith with the new knowledge has to find ways to show that it is possible for God to work through nature to achieve His ends. In the final section of the poem, the persona of the poem comes to a sense of peace within his heart and mind in the conviction of God's care for man.

The second quatrain of the poem describes the state of contemporary human life — the blind repetitiveness of human labor, and the sordidness and stain of "toil" and "trade." The landscape in its natural state reflects God as its Creator, but industry and the priority of the economic to the spiritual have transformed the landscape, and robbed humans of their sensitivity to those few beauties of nature still left. The shoes people wear sever the physical connection between their feet and the earth they walk on, symbolizing an ever-increasing spiritual alienation from nature. But the sestet enacting a turn or shift in argument of the poem asserts that, in spite of the depravities of Hopkins's contemporary Victorian world, nature does not cease offering up its spiritual indices.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
 There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
 And though the last lights off the black West went  
 Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—  
 Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
 World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.  
 (Gardner 1983: 27)

In spite of the interdependent deterioration of human beings

and the earth, God has not withdrawn from either. He possesses an infinite power of renewal, to which the regenerative natural cycles testify. Permeating the world is a deep "freshness" that testifies to the continual renewing power of God's creation. This power of renewal is seen in the way morning always waits on the other side of dark night. The source of this constant regeneration is the grace of God who "broods" over a seemingly lifeless world with the patient nurture of a mother hen. This means God possesses an infinite power of renewal, to which the regenerative natural cycles testify.

The word "nature" may be taken to apply, on three different levels, to physical nature, for example rocks, trees, animals, and etc., human nature and Divine nature. Physical nature, despite man's misuse of it, has not been spent, but continues to be rejuvenated and to bare witness to its Creator. Indeed, God has promised peace in nature, vowing that they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. In Isaiah, Jehovah proclaims "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (11:6-9). Likewise, human nature is never spent, for God formed man to be imperishable, the image of his own nature he made him (Genesis 1:26). And finally, Divine nature is never spent because God is not exhausted, and He has not given up on man. He will continue to labor, through the Holy Spirit, to bring men to repentance, helping them to become partakers of the Divine nature: "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate

in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (2 Peter 1:3-4). Human beings have not been "spent" for they have not been sold to Satan at all. To the contrary, Human beings have been bought with a price: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This price is priceless for it is never fixed. Christ's Crucifixion is what makes the "freshness" "dearest." Despite the fact that trade and labor have smudged the earth, "nature is never spent" because the Holy Ghost continually infuses "the dearest freshness deep down things." This freshness is dearest because it is both precious and very costly, purchased, in fact, by Christ's descent into human flesh (Landow 1980: 6). In the spiritual viewpoint, this "freshness" is probably meant to evoke and consequently to defy the finality of the image of the wanton destruction of human nature in Mark. "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins" (Mark 2:21-2). Meanwhile, when interpreting the poem on the level of physical nature, we should not underestimate "the anguish that Hopkins felt because industrial man not only failed to respond to the forms of nature but in fact seemed dedicated to their annihilation" (Bump 1982: 159). Hopkins explicitly states his admiration of nature in his journals, writing, "I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the blue bell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it" (Miller 1963: 313). Hopkins's joy at re-discovering nature then comes about because he sees all things as created in Christ. Yet, despite the fact that man abuses nature for his transitory pleasure, he does not have the power to destroy it altogether, for there still "lives the dearest freshness deep down things."

The "deep down" things signify not only the restoration of nature, but the restoration of man through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ's death, while ransoming sinners, also made it possible that the Holy Spirit might be sent into the world. In John, Jesus tells the disciples the truth "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:" (John 16:7-8).

The symbolic dove image expresses "the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in creatures and above all in the souls of men" (Boyle 1961: 37). All four Gospels describe the Spirit of God descending like a dove upon Jesus after His baptism (Matthew 3:1, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32). This familiar bird with all its rich associations was chosen to symbolize God's Spirit. The Spirit dwells within all believers, but He will also continue His efforts to bring unbelievers to repentance, for God is "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9). And although Christ was crushed down, emotionally and physically, He rose again, and He will also come again. God's energy fallen, crushed, debased in this world is "only seemingly" (Ellis 1991: 128). For, even "though the last lights off the black West went / Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward springs." Christ is "like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth" (2 Samuel 23:4).

The design of the metaphor is nature, and its restoration symbolizes Christ's coming into the world. The image of morning links with "shining" in the line 2 of the poem. Morning is frequently paired with evening to indicate a complete day. The coming of morning serves as a figure for joy (Psalm 30:5) or vindication (Psalm 49:14) which comes quickly. And morning star is a name figuratively given to Christ (Revelation 22:16). When Christ promises that He will give the "morning star" to His faithful ones, He promises that He will give to them Himself, that He will impart to them His

own glory and a share in His own royal dominion; for the star is evermore the symbol of royalty (Matthew 2:2), being therefore linked with the scepter (Numbers 24:1). This image of morning springing from darkness also draws our attention to the words of Isaiah: "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard" (58:8). The Lord promises: "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them" (Isaiah 42:16).

The continuing presence of the Holy Spirit is a proof of this promise. God continues to work through "the Holy Ghost," who "over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings." The bent (crooked) world has not been abandoned by God; it will be made straight, for it has been conquered by Him, and it is still being protected by Him. "Bent" here doesn't have any negative connotations, probably just a reference to the curves of the globe.

The bird imagery of line fourteen is drawn from the baptism of Jesus: "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-7). This dove imagery, in turn, is meant to recall Genesis, in which the Holy Spirit apparently broods over the world: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:1-2).

The wing imagery possesses a variety of positive connotations. Wings are the specialized part of the bird that allows flight (Genesis 1:21). The word is most often used figuratively: of God's help (Ruth 2:12), of God's judgment (Jeremiah 48:40), of strength to return from Exile (Isaiah 40:31), of God's healing

(Malachi 4:2), and His conquest. Though it is not the most obvious meaning, the last association may be of vast importance. When God is said to "spread His wings over Moab", it means He has conquered it (Jeremiah 48:40).

This final image is one of God's images guarding the potential of the world and containing within Himself the power and promise of rebirth. With the final exclamation "ah! bright wings," Hopkins suggests both an awed intuition of the beauty of God's grace, and the joyful suddenness of a hatchling bird emerging out of God's loving incubation. In the nature sonnets, "the soul spontaneously discovers itself in the things of the world at the same time that it discovers the presence of God in all creatures; the soul thus finds itself in a state of consolation, and the affective will sings prayers of praise" (Salmon 389). This felt harmony with God and nature finds expression in the colloquy-like exclamations - 'Oh' and 'ah!' - of the poem's final tercet.

At the end of "God's Grandeur," God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, has spread His "bright wings" over the "bent world," implying that He is not only protecting, healing, and strengthening it, but that, despite the seeming triumph of darkness, He has already conquered the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who was crushed like an olive for this very purpose. The Holy Spirit ceaselessly repeats the miracle of the Incarnation by inspiring the world and thus making it bear that beauty which symbolizes God.

#### IV. Conclusion

The Victorian Age, named for the queen who reigned nearly the entire century, was characterized by incredible scientific progress. Charles Darwin, for example, came forth with his treatise *The Origin of Species*, which advanced his radical theories of evolution and survival and rocked the pillars of

traditional Christian faith in humankind's superiority to the beasts of the earth. Darwin's theories of natural selection and survival of the fittest conflicted with the story of the Creation related in the Bible. Moreover, scientists now had proof that the Earth was much older than had ever been imagined before, making the history of humanity seem like a blink of the universe's eye. The Victorian population could no longer blindly accept that the world had been created in six days after geologists had proven that the world evolved into its current form over millions of years. In addition, a theory called "Higher Criticism" developed which read the Bible not as the infallible word of God, but as a historical text. In the face of these incredible and disturbing discoveries and theories, the faith of many Victorian Christians was profoundly shaken. The Victorian masses no longer had a bedrock of tradition and Biblical scripture to stand upon; it had been dashed to pieces by fossilized rocks and the skulls of apelike men.

Under these circumstances, the poet the age, Hopkins, the voice of the Victorian people, expresses his belief in God weakened and his faith foundering in the face of scientific facts. In the face of evolution, geology, and "natural selection," Hopkins's sense of wonderment in the God-created world is evident in his various exclamations and ejaculations. Hopkins takes the nature of the world itself to be a concrete manifestation of God's magnificence which has the unity of beauty, so Hopkins finds pleasure and delight at nature's variety, and he reaches height of wonder as in many of Hopkins's poems. For Hopkins, all things, though different, are identical for they are found in God through Christ. God's existence is the absolute fact of His Creation. Hopkins's poetry mimics the dynamics of this relationship between God and Creation. His inspiration is certainly his response to the omnipresence of Christ.

The emphasis on finding Christ in nature in Hopkins is not as the result of a moral or religious or doctrinal impulse, although all those impulses may be involved as well; rather, it

is the necessary fulfillment, the logical conclusion, of his own aesthetic sensibilities which could not be satisfied serving anything less than the temporal manifestations of an absolute beauty and an absolute truth.

Hopkins saw poetry as the highest mode of reasserting God's presence in the world (Miller 1963: 277). Hopkins believed poetry was not something in itself to be idolized but a means for worshipping Christ and affirming his existence.

Hopkins found that the most fitting way of expressing his devotion to Christ was through the inscape of words, his poetry. In the sonnet form, Hopkins represents the omnipresence of Christ in the patterns of the world. He would compress those thoughts and association within the narrow limits of the sonnet form of fourteen lines. In the sonnet, Hopkins has an affirmative attitude toward the world and God. He insistently visualizes a comfort that has gradually occupied through faith and patience, though he expresses the mood of spiritual desolation which results from the conflicts between man and God along with man's against God.

Hopkins, a religious poet with a theologian's knowledge of "the hermeneutic tradition, creates his own peculiarly effective mode of typological allusion" in the Bible (Landow 1980: 2). Hopkins employs allusions to Bible as a means of combining a rich, aesthetic surface with elaborate symbolism. Christ triumphs over sin and death by giving Himself to be bruised in the Crucifixion, remains one of Hopkins's central, organizing ideas. "The ooze of oil crushed" image echoes the idea of bruising or crushing from Genesis 3:15. Stress, pressure, crushing, bruising, and similar terms appear as organizing ideas throughout his poetry, for here is a point at which Hopkins's basic beliefs, literary techniques, theological methods all converge.

As seen in his poem 'God's Grandeur', Hopkins translated his intense spirituality into poems that explore the relationship between humans and the natural world as an expression of God's divinity. The title, "God's Grandeur" is a title that is self-explanatory in that Hopkins wants to convey the

magnificence and power of God. If ever a line in Hopkins summed up his philosophy of God and nature, it is the first line of this poem: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God". He is a nature poet and knows who to credit with the beauty of it. There's a warmth here in his depiction of God that doesn't surface in all his religious poems, a sense of God looking after the world with loving care.

In the poem, Hopkins presents the Victorian fixation on progress and change not as an improvement, but rather as a regression from a constructive communion with God's glory as found in the natural world. Though Hopkins has the negative view on the impact of man's progression, he remains confident and appreciative of the protective power of God and the inexhaustibility of nature as further expression of God's glory.

Man lacks proper gratitude for nature. People often are blind to nature's great beauty. Many people never see a sunrise or a sunset because we are too concerned with the hustle and bustle of our tiny worlds to appreciate the opulence around us. We don't recognize the creation that God has bestowed upon us. The world remains charged with the grandeur of God, "in spite of all mankind has done and is doing to pollute and pervert and tread out its radiance" (Ellis 1991: 129). God, through the constant presence of His Holy Spirit, continues to rejuvenate physical nature as well as the human spirit; both are being made over anew. Hopkins asserts that God's work is still to be seen in nature. We don't always realize that we get all of our wealth from nature. So, however dark and dreary this world may appear, we must not surrender hope. For Christ tells us now: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

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## Abstract

### Biblical Allusion in Hopkins's "God's Grandeur"

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The development of science in the Victorian Age, for example "natural selection" by Charles Darwin, conflicted greatly with religion. It gave a damaging blow to the Christianity and God's Creation. These social conditions afflicted the pure minded priest Hopkins who combined the natural world with the religious awareness of God. Hopkins saw poetry as the highest mode of reasserting God's presence in the world and as the most fitting way of expressing his devotion to Christ. "God's Grandeur" is a sonnet that contains one octave and one sestet. In "God's Grandeur", the octave describes the way in which humans are destroying the world by not attending to the greatness that surrounds them. The sestet is more optimistic in that it reveals Hopkins' personal belief that God's grandeur will remain because of the working of the Holy Spirit.

Hopkins employs allusions to Bible as a means of expressing the divinity in the world. Through the Biblical allusion, "God's Grandeur" manages to conjure up, at various points, images of the Creation, the Fall, Christ's Agony and Crucifixion, man's continuing sinfulness and rebellion, and the continuing presence

and quiet work of the Holy Spirit. Hopkins has an affirmative attitude toward the world and God. Although the world may look bleak, man may yet hope, because God, through the sacrifice of Christ and the descent of His Holy Spirit, has overcome the world.

For Hopkins, all things, though different, are identical because they are found in God through Christ.

**Key Words : Hopkins, God's Grandeur, Nature, Biblical Allusion, Christ, Holy Spirit, Crucifixion**