Secular Epiphanies:
The Anatheistic Hermeneutics of Gerard Manley Hopkins

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Abstract: What might epiphany mean for a "secular" society? What does it mean after the death of God? This article explores the hermeneutics of immanent, planetary epiphanies in the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins. In the creative spaces between author, text, and reader new possibilities for becoming enter the world. As such we might be able to name these anatheistic epiphanies.

Key Terms: Gerard Manley Hopkins, epiphany, the stranger, Duns Scotus, haecceitas

Planetary Theism

Far from banishing epiphanies, secularization can lead to an immanent multiplication of the times and places in which epiphanies are made possible. In other words, the death of God and other demolitions of the metaphysical Omni-Being, which took us away from the embodied universe, triggers a proliferation of media in and through which epiphanies occur. Far from isolating theology and revelation within the confines of a church or temple, the secularization process may invite a return of earthly, planetary theism—an anatheism—that may have not otherwise been possible. In this brief essay I want to explore one such space: the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Though Hopkins was still squarely within the Jesuit tradition, we find in his poetry a confluence of sacred and profane moments where theological discernment takes the form of a hermeneutic interaction between the author's world, the actor in the text, and the reader's interpretation of the text. In this way the meaning of the text is not fixed—as either sacred or profane—but emerges as a living and growing chiasmus where the text's edges open onto a multiplication of meanings. These meanings then return "from text to action" to help co-create the worlds in which we live. Immanent epiphanies, in the end, keep our finite being-in-the-world open to possibilities of infinite becoming. Before discussing these more theo-secular issues, I begin with a discussion of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Gerard Manley Hopkins on Epiphany

On January 6, 1889, Feast of the Epiphany, G.M. Hopkins made his last known entry in his spiritual diary. It was written in the Royal University in Dublin, just five months before his death of typhoid fever, and its subject was, appropriately, the Epiphany. In very poor health and in the midst of his annual Ignatian retreat, Hopkins consoled...
himself with the fact that if his own journey to
the University on Stephen’s Green was “incon-
vienent and painful,” so too was the magi’s “journey
to Bethlehem.” 1 “To seem the stranger lies my lot
... among strangers,” is how one of his poems
begins, identifying his plight with his migrant bib-
lical predecessors. And yet, like those voyagers in
the night, Hopkins himself was to experience an
illumination in the midst of darkness—“so much
light, more than I can easily put down.” 2 From
that January moment on, though his health grew
worse, his “spirits got better,” and on his deathbed
on June 8, he pronounced his last words to his
family: “I am so happy, I am so happy.” 3

In his January entry on the Epiphany, we find
Hopkins reconstructing the wise men’s journey with
“detective ingenuity” worthy of Kierkegaard’s recon-
struction of Abraham’s journey in Fear and Trem-
bling. But, in this instance, we are dealing with a
very different kind of event—not the sacrifice of a
son (Isaac) on a mountain but the birth of a son
(Jesus) in a cave. During the course of his extensive
reflections on the Epiphany, Hopkins makes what
I take to be six key observations. I will say a word
about each in turn.

**Six Key Observations**

First, Hopkins makes much of the fact that the
three magi were strangers from afar—Gentiles or
“Persian Magians,” as he put it, who may have
come from the “... borders of India.” 4 They came,
he notes, in secret, unrecognized and unannounced;
and it is telling that right after their visitation, the
holy family takes flight into another foreign land,
Egypt.

Second, the strangers came *after* the event of the
birth itself—twelve days after to be precise. The
Feast of the Epiphany January 6 is known in
Ireland as “Little Christmas,” marking the culmi-
nation of the Christmas cycle; and in the Eastern
Orthodox tradition it actually is considered to be
the real revelation of Christ’s incarnate birth. The
first event of Christianity is, in short, a revela-
tion *après coup* by and for strangers. Epiphany as
aftermath. I will return to this crucial point about
epiphanic “aftering” below.

Third, Hopkins notes that the divinity of the
child is recognized by the magi thanks to a certain
hermeneutic reading of signs. The visitors read
the stars that guide their path in a way that
Herod and the great multitude did not. So, for
Hopkins, the three foreigners are the first Christian
hermeneuts, so to speak, practicing an astronomical
mix of “ordinary science” and “extraordinary
science”—what he calls a certain “white magic”
or “secret art” that “bridges the gulf between
human and superhuman knowledge.” 5 By contrast,
notes Hopkins, the “star was nothing to ordinary
observers, perhaps not visible at all to them.” 6 It
is the three wise interpreters who can say—like
certain poets and sages after them—“we have seen.” 7
Hopkins explains: “They (the magi) speak of their
art, their observation, magisterially,” and the stellar
illumination in the dark may well have been “only
visible after the practice of their art, (after) some
sort of evocation, had been gone through ...” 8 In
short, epiphanies come and go and may require a
certain poetic-hermeneutic art in order to decipher
“the infinite in the infinitesimal.”

Epiphanies are not given but invitations to dis-
cernment. Calls for responses. Or, as Hopkins says
in one of his poems, the engendering moment of
incarnation “breathes once, and, quenched faster
than it came/Leaves yet the mind a mother of
immortal song.” Paul Mariani, Hopkins’s biographer,
offers this helpful gloss: “The moment of concep-
tion, of poetic inspiration ... was all that was nec-
essary to generate a poem, even if it took months,
even years ... for the poem to come to fruition.
The seed had been planted, and the poem would
come in its own good time—'The widow of an
insight lost she lives ...'” 9

Fourth, the magi bring sweet-smelling gifts of
frankincense and myrrh to mark the sensible na-
ture of the Incarnation—word made flesh. And this
emphasis on the carnal character of the Epiphany is
further confirmed by the presence of animals and
the “scandalous” fact that the divine child mani-
fests as the very least of beings (*elachistos*), naked
and homeless in a lowly feeding trough (manger). 10
Here we have the epiphanic paradox par excellence, of the highest in the lowest, the first in the last, the infinite in the infinitesimal.

Fifth, the Epiphany is, Hopkins observes, surrounded by darkness. The nativity occurs in a cave in the depth of winter since there was no room in the inn of Bethlehem. And it is rapidly followed by a further, more ominous kind of darkness—the perilous flight into Egypt and Herod's slaughter of innocents. In other words, from the very outset, Epiphany is an irradiation of light in opacity. Or as Hopkins reflects, the star of Bethlehem shines "at night." A basic point he carries home in citing Marie Latassle's mystic vision of Mary presenting her son on the "twelfth day" of the Epiphany: "ce désert ne sera plus un désert, mais une douce oasis, ou vous vous reposerez ... après la course, après de rudes épreuves." 11 Epiphany, Hopkins intimates, is always mediated—in this instance by the Madonna as well as the magi. It is a plural, dialogical transition between dark night and natal light, water and drought, torment and rest.

Lastly, Hopkins proposes that the Epiphany be read in the light of what he considers to be two other epiphanic events in Jesus' life: the baptism by John in the Jordan, and the conversion of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana. In the immersion in the Jordan, Jesus performs a second kenotic birth, a further conversion of human to divine (after his first nativity in Bethlehem). He comes to baptism, observes Hopkins boldly, "disguised as a sinner," and leaves cleansed and reborn. Once again, we witness the epiphanic paradigm of descent into darkness (kenosis) and ascent into light (anabasis), a double move repeated over and over throughout the life of Jesus—right up to the final rising from the empty tomb.

At Cana, concludes Hopkins, we meet yet a different disguise and a different conversion: this time with Jesus the "guest" serving secretly as "host" by providing wine which everyone present assumes comes from the householders. Jesus "conceals the miracle at the moment," observes Hopkins, "and increases it afterwards." 12 And this temporality of before-and-after is central, as we will see, to the deep rhythm of epiphany; for just as Jesus tells his mother "non dum venit hora mea" (my hour has not yet come)—thereby marking a lapse in the revelation of his transforming power—so too the conversion of water into wine is not witnessed right away but only afterwards, nachträglich, in the "effects" of the wine on the unsuspecting guests. (A sort of Babette's feast avant la lettre). This notion of temporal lapse or delay is, as we shall see, pivotal to the logic of epiphany in Hopkins. Indeed the very preposition epi- in Greek carries this sense of something extra, in addition, en plus. A beyond-the-bounds that signals a new temporality of before and after, too early and too late, already and not yet (as in the terms epilogue or epigraph). This is what Levinas, talking of revelation, calls the "paradox of posterior anteriority": the opening of ordinary chronological time to kairolological time. 13

One might recall again here the context of Hopkins' attention to these serial epiphanies in the life of Christ: namely, his personal struggles to emerge from the crippling depression of his own "dark nights of the soul." Such dark nights were graphically captured in the "terrible sonnets"—"I wake and feel the fell of dark not day," "Carrion Comfort," "No worse there is none"—via negativa that found their poetic counterparts in the via affirmativa of poems such as "When Kingfishers catch fire," or "Glory be to God for dappled things." We will return to these below.

Hopkins and Scotus on Haecceitas

Hopkins' reading of Epiphany has telling implications, I suggest, for understanding his deep fascination with Duns Scotus' notion of haecceitas. Though Hopkins himself does not make a direct connection, I think what he has to say about these two key notions makes the hypothesis not only telling but compelling. The strange and difficult notion of haecceitas, which has puzzled commentators for centuries, names the precious "thisness" of each creature as it bears witness to the "the infinite in the infinitesimal." In his sonnet, "Duns Scotus' Oxford," Hopkins describes the town he
revisits—six hundred years after his Franciscan predecessor—in terms of the same concrete particulars that Scotus himself would have witnessed in his day:

Towery city and branchy between towers;
Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-raced, river rounded.¹⁴

And he pays his learned magister this highest accolade:

(He) who of all men most sways my spirits to peace;
Of reality the rarest-veined untraveller; a not Rivald insight…¹⁵

Hopkins offers his most consistent account of Scotist eccesisitas in chapter 3 of his Sermons and Devotional Writings. Titled, “On Personality, Grace and Free Will,” it addresses the question: How can God move a human will to attain a destiny beyond the powers of its nature, while leaving it free to act? His answer is that our freedom operates at the level of personality prior to actual existence. Several different personalities can be uniquely different as free persons while sharing the same universal human nature—an actualized nature that each human needs in order to ultimately display itself in a common public world (to become manifest one to another). This freedom of personality is described by Hopkins as pitch (gradus)—a notion that plays a pivotal role in his poetics and that he defines as follows: “Pitch is a pre-existing determination of man towards his eternal destiny by his creator, but in such a sort that the man is left free to determine himself.”¹⁶

This priority of pitch to natural existence seems to imply that there is a “world of possible being,” prior to actual existence, in which God sees and loves each unique person as fulfilling her divine calling before she actually does so. In other words, personality is first conceived as singular pitch in the mind of God but requires our free consent, with the aid of “elevating grace,” to be brought to full realization afterwards. For pitch to be fully “solved” as a unique act of existence, it needs to add (epi) reality to possibility, a second birth to the first birth, so to speak, in order to become visibly manifest (phainy) in natural reality. Or to put it in terms of Hopkins’s reading of the Epiphany, the manifestation of the divine child to the magi occurs after the initial birth of the child—on the twelfth day. Hopkins pointedly asks if this intriguing notion of pitch “is not the same as Scotus’ eccesisitas?”²⁰

The editor of Hopkins’s Sermons and Devotional Writings, Christopher Devlin, put all this in more metaphysical terms:

Pitch can only exist in an existing substance, yet its distinctiveness is so much more than merely conceptual that it must be considered as a reality apart from the nature in which it exists. … A possible pitch is certainly identical with the Divine Essence in so much as it is an idea in God’s Mind. But in so much as it is an intention ad extra in God’s Will, it exercises an influence outside the Divine Essence.²¹

Thus in regard to time, Scotus made allowance for the extra perfection that can come to a finite substance that already is perfect in spirit, though not yet in fact.²² After possibility comes actuality, after essence comes existence, after nativity comes epiphany, after creation comes redemption. Hence the significance of Hopkins’s cryptic but telling note on the temporal deferral of epiphany: “Twelve days = 6 + 6 — Creation and Redemption.”²³ The nativity is revealed in its after-effects. I repeat his explanation: “The star may have been an altogether prenatural appearance, only visible after the practice of (the magi’s) art—some sort of evocation—had been gone through, not necessarily always there….”²⁴ In short, there is no Christianity without witness, no revelation without a certain art of interpretation and action.

Hopkins himself would consider poetry as one such art, in his own life, performing epiphanies of instress and inscap and disclosing the process of divine incarnation in nature, in a process which he called, revealingly, “aftering” or “over and overing.” (We will return to this.) Epiphany—whether it be through the witness of art or action—involves the “lifting of one self to another,” the natural to the
divine and vice versa: "as if a man said: That is Christ playing at me and me playing at Christ . . . that is Christ being me and me being Christ."22 Epiphany thus reveals itself, for Hopkins, as that moment of poetic theopoiesis where “Christ plays in ten thousand places/Lovely in eyes and lovely in limbs not His/To the father through the features of men’s faces.”

“This and No Other”

But how exactly does pitch relate to “being in Christ”? Here Hopkins emphatically returns to the notion of “thisiness.” He is aware that for Scotus, haecceitas was the “final determinant in the scale of natures that descend the tree of Porphyry by way of communicable genus and species: it is that which stops the common nature in one member of the species from being communicable to other members”—that is, from being translated into common universal properties (22a).23 Haecceitas is what makes someone or something this and no other. Or as Gilles Deleuze explains: “Duns Scotus created the concept of haec, ‘this thing’ . . . and you will yield nothing to haec unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that.”24 And he adds: “Not content to merely analyse the elements of an individual he went as far as the conception of indivisibility as the ‘ultimate actuality of form.’”25 Haecceity in sum, is where the buck stops once and for all, where the person is manifest in his or her irreducible uniqueness and individuality. Where—one says, “ecce”: behold who comes, this one unique person! And everyone is one such person.

Hopkins exploits the felicitous homonymy here between the Latin-Romance spelling of eccitas (without an “h”) and the exclamation, “ecce”—as in “Ecce Homo,” when Pilate announces Jesus to the crowd in Jerusalem; or “Ecce Agnus Dei,” when John the Baptist announces Jesus at the Jordan (Hopkins explicitly cites this Latin greeting in his January 6 entry on the Epiphany). Individuality as haecceitas is intrinsic to being but prior to existence, since no natural existence is de se haec. More precisely, for Hopkins as for Scotus, “being” (in the divine) is not only “existence” (in nature) but also and quintessentially a “process of coming into existence from a state of possibility in the creator’s mind”—that is, qua “essence or esse conceived by God.”26 Scotus conceived individuality, accordingly, as the culmination of a process of becoming the ultima realitas entis. Its cause, like its pitch, remains ultimately a secret, a mystery to humans: “Ratio intima haecceitas non est quarendae nisi in Divina voluntate.”27 Pitch, as Hopkins admits at one point, “is really a thread or chain of pitches between the actual self and the ideal self.”28

The Scotist double idea of finite being as 1) already there and 2) always-still-coming-more-fully-into-existence (semper in fieri) is intimately linked to the concept of “personalitas” (Quodlibet, xii).29 And it leads Hopkins to some fascinating if highly complex reflections on the relation of proportionality between: a) Divine Personality vis-à-vis human personality, and b) the infinite vis-à-vis the infinitesimal. These reflections not only pertain to the naked incarnate child, witnessed in the Epiphany, but also to the words of the Psalmist, abyssus abyssum invocat (cited in chapter 3 of Hopkins’s Devotional Writings). Hopkins boldly affirms that the “blissful stress of selving in God is, when translated ad extra, the stress of creation,” and can only fully be understood in terms of the Trinity.

But Hopkins breaks off at this point, apparently unable to say more in prose. No metaphysical account of the analogy or univocity of divine-human being can, it seems, adequately articulate this mystery. Perhaps only poetic language—and in Hopkins’s case a singularly innovative and idiosyncratic one—can hope to fathom this unfathomable secret. Philosophy and theology can make no ultimate sense of these incomunicable and untranslatable imponderables. (Indeed Duns Scotus’s own repeated attempts to do so merely earned him the epithet of dunque from his contemporaries.) And finally, where even poetry fails, the best we can do, Hopkins suggests, is to embrace loving actions that accompany faltering words, beyond all logical propositions.30

Here, ultimately, Hopkins reckons with the mystery of continuous creation (ensarkosis)—the perpetual coming of word into flesh—an audacious notion that both Scotus and Hopkins endorsed.31
At the limit of thought and language, the most Hopkins can stammer is this: “So that this pitch might be expressed, if it were good English, the doing be, the doing choose . . .”\(^3^2\) In the heel of the hunt, Hopkins, the classics scholar and professor, opts for Scotist praxology over ontology, suggesting that Aristotle and Thomas were mistaken to place final felicity in the “intellect” rather than in free individual expression, that is, in our unique selving in song and action. In our effects and affects.

This is what Hopkins, following Scotus, calls the love of things themselves, \textit{amor objecti}, the praise of ordinary dappled things—“all things counter, original, spare, strange.” At which stage, the famous Scotist uni-vocity of being (natural, human, and divine) may be said to consort with a plurivocity of expression. The \textit{haecceity} of each creature proclaims itself multiply and uniquely: “Each mortal thing . . . deals out that being that indoors each one dwells . . . Crying, What I do is me, for this I came” (“When Kingfishers catch fire”).

\section*{Being and Becoming}

One last remark, if I may, on these allusive and elusive matters. The reference to pitch as “abyss” aptly echoes here the Scotist claim that the ground of individuality is an intrinsic \textit{lack} of being (\textit{carentia entitiatis})—a void that results in a creature from its being created. Each finite creature is marked by this paradox of a simultaneous possession of positive being and a lack of further possible being, which ensures our constant \textit{becoming}. Hopkins’s notion of singular pitch is an attempt, I submit, to translate Scotus’s view that each finite being is individuated by the \textit{intrinsic degree} (\textit{gradus sibi instrinsecus}) in which it possesses both a positive perfection of its “nature” and simultaneously lacks a further possible perfection of its “being” (still to come in nature). As such pitch can be compared to a hole, or series of holes, in a violin for example, “into which a peg can be fitted so as to tighten the string: the holes would be the \textit{carentia}, the peg would be an ideal self, the string would be human nature.”\(^3^3\)

Hopkins usually equates pitch and personality; but once, speaking of pitch as pre-existent, he introduces the key notion of temporal delay or process. Pitch, he concedes, “is not truly self: self or personality truly comes into being when the self, the person, comes into being (existence) with the accession of nature.”\(^3^4\) The human self, on this account, is a doubled self, stretched like a violin string between the perfect possession of its “nature” and the desire for ever further perfection of “being”—a perfection perhaps never fully achievable or understandable, as Scotus held, until we partake of the “beatific vision.” Hence the deep inclination (\textit{pondus}) of each creature to seek ultimate fulfillment in God as final cause. And if, Hopkins implies, we may glimpse moments of beatific vision in this life—in certain states of poetic epiphany—the human self may even be said to express itself as a “triple self,” echoing the \textit{vero imago} of the Trinity in one’s own ideal soul. Namely, the Father generates the Son through the Spirit not only in the Epiphany witnessed by the magi two thousand years ago but each and every time infinite being crosses finite being, here and now, in our everyday lives:

\begin{quote}
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.\(^3^5\)
\end{quote}

But epiphanies—whether they be then or now, upper case or lower case—express the fact that individual \textit{haecceitas} is intrinsic to “being” (divine) prior to “existence” (actual), and so requires a delay to become manifest—an overing, a following-through, a re-doing, a witnessing. Existence expresses itself ultimately as epi-phony in that it does not confer individuality on something as matter of form (as Aquinas held) but rather brings out what is already there as “being,” after the event of first creation. Poetic invention, in sum, is discovery! Or as Hopkins portentously put it in his undergraduate essay on Parmenides: “Nothing is so pregnant and straightforward to the truth as simple \textit{yes} and \textit{is}.”\(^3^6\) Hopkins’s poetics is, in two words, a “yes” to the “\textit{is}” of \textit{haecceitas}. A consent—in and through darkness—to the everyday manifestation
of being. Epi-phony as ana-phony. Epi-theism as ana-theism.

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing 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.37

Textual Triangles

We might, finally, rephrase all this in more explicitly hermeneutic terms. We would then say that epiphany is a triangle between author, text, and reader. Or to borrow from Ricoeur’s terminology: the prefigurative epiphany of lived experience passes through the configurative epiphany of the text before finding its achievement in the refigurative epiphany of the reader. Epiphany may thus be construed as a triadic movement from life to text and back to life again—a movement amplified and enriched by the full arc of hermeneutic transfiguration.38

The three witnesses to the epiphany of meaning might, in the final analysis, be hermeneutically construed as author, character, and reader. In which case, we might say that while a) the lived actions of the author’s world “prefigure” the text, and b) the voices of the actor-narrators “configure” the meaning in the text, it is c) we readers who complete the arc of witness by “refiguring” the text once again in our own lived experience—namely, as a world amplified by the novel meanings proposed by the text.

The triangular model of epiphany implies, as we have seen, a semantic re-birth of what Proust called “des petits miracles” of meaning. It signals the transfiguring of the impossible into the possible beyond the impossible. Regarding biblical epiphany, we recall the three strangers of Genesis announcing Sarah’s conception of an “impossible” child, Jacob; the three magi bearing witness to the “impossible” child Jesus; and, lastly, the three persons of the Trinity promising the birth of a new and “impossible” Kingdom.

This third example (with no supercessionist intent), graphically illustrated by Andrei Rublev’s famous icon of the Trinity, recapitulates the three strangers of Mamre and Bethlehem, and foregrounds the pivotal role of the chalice womb-space (chôra) at the core of epiphany. The movement of the three persons—which the Patristics named peri-choris or the dance around the open space—may also be read, hermeneutically, as the creative encounter of author/actor/reader around the birth cradle of Logos (or what Stephen Dedalus, in A Portrait, calls “the silver womb of imagination”).39 Moreover, this implies that the triadic model of epiphany also may involve a fourth dimension—the chora aktoraton, container of the uncontainable—understood as the space of advent for the new, the miracle of poetic innovation and increase, the epi of extra, more, surprise, grace.

That the witness of the three personas is invariably accompanied by a celebratory “yes” (Sarah’s “laugh” in Genesis, Mary’s “Amen” in the Gospels, Molly’s “yes” in Ulysses) signals a new kairosical time that breaks the conventions of chronological time and births a surplus of possible meaning hitherto unsuspected and unknown. Epiphany may thus be said to testify, simultaneously, to an event already there and an advent not yet come; and so doing, to echo the Palestinian formula of Passover and Eucharist that recalls a past moment while anticipating a future still to come. (“We remember him until he comes.”)40

Epiphanies Without End

Pursuing the eschatology of epiphany to the end, one might suggest that this eucharistic anticipation
epitomizes Walter Benjamin’s notion of messianic time as an openness to “each moment of the future as a portal through which the Messiah might enter.” Once again, the sacred in the secular, kairos in chronos, the first in the last, the near in the far. Epiphany, from the beginning, involved, as we saw, wandering witnesses from afar—the three strangers at Mamre, the three magi from the East, the three persons of perichoresis. In the case of Hopkins, we find multiple echoes of such triune witness, including the hermeneutic exchange between author, text, and reader. His writings, in this sense, may be called epiphanies without end. We readers know them by their fruits, after the delay of reading, après-coup, as after-tastes.

I leave the last words to Hopkins: 

How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe
Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,
Gush!—flush the man, the being with it,
Sour or sweet,
Brim, in a flash, full! ...  

Endnotes

2. Ibid., 222.
5. Ibid., 264.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 265.
10. Both Soren Kierkegaard and Walter Benjamin make much of the “scandalous” character of the Epiphany. In a short text of discourses, entitled For Self-Examination: Judge for Yourself, Kierkegaard speaks of the image of Christ as an “arch-image” (Christus summ Formulato); see Soren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination: Judge for Yourself, ed. Edna H. Hong, trans. Howard V. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, reprint 1991). Walter Benjamin, for his part, captures this epiphanic temporality well in his *Trauerspiel* project when he writes of the mystical “Now” (*Jetzt*) of divine birth as an allegorical witness to the Eternal, where transcendence wrestles with immanence and resists symbolic fusion and totality: “It is an unsurpassably spectral gesture to place even Christ in the realm of the provisional, the everyday, the unreliable ... between an ox and an ass” (*Trauerspiel*, 183).
11. Hopkins, The Sermons and Devotional Writings, 335.
12. Ibid., 270–271.
15. Ibid.
16. See Devlin’s scholarly commentary in Hopkins, The Sermons and Devotional Writings, 338.
17. Hopkins, The Sermons and Devotional Writings, 151.
19. Ibid., 340.
20. Ibid., 265.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 341.
23. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 349.
32. Ibid., 345.
33. Ibid., 343.
34. Ibid., 342.
36. Hopkins, The Sermons and Devotional Writings, 293.