PHILIP ENDEAN, S.J.

(Campion Hall, Oxford)

HOW SHOULD HOPKINS CRITICS USE IGNATIAN TEXTS?

This paper is not going to deal directly with Hopkins's own texts, but with his critics: in particular, with how they have approached Hopkins's religious commitments. I see this paper as a contribution from my present research interest in the field of Ignatian spirituality, reporting on issues that I believe to be relevant for Hopkins studies [1]. I want to argue that the concepts of spirituality in general, and of Ignatian spirituality in particular, are beset with unresolved theoretical questions – questions that are disputed even among theologians and Ignatian specialists. Like Dr. White, I too want to query the tendency of Hopkins criticism to fall into religious stereotypes – but my arguments will themselves be theological in character.

To make this point fully would require a much more substantial and better researched piece of work than is possible here. I want simply to make five points. Firstly, I shall offer a descriptive account of two ways in which critics have frequently tended to write about Hopkins and God. Secondly, I shall try to indicate a wider context of questions about spirituality in general. Then I shall state three convictions about how Hopkins critics should approach Ignatian and Jesuit materials.

[1] I am not setting out here to make an original contribution in the field of literary criticism. I have published some specialist work on Hopkins written during and shortly after my time as an undergraduate: "The Spirituality of Gerard Manley Hopkins", *The Hopkins Quarterly*, 8,3 (1981), pp. 107-29. I would certainly want theologically and historically to qualify some of what I then wrote, but I am simply no longer in a position substantially to move beyond or reassess the interpretation outlined in that article.

Critics, Hopkins, and Ignatian Spirituality

Critical approaches to Hopkins and the Ignatian tradition fall largely into two main kinds. I shall call these the proof-text approach and the 'hands off' approach. Let me try to characterise each of these in turn – in a way that will inevitably be crude, but not, I hope, entirely unfair.

What I am dubbing the proof-text approach proceeds by taking up general principles from the Ignatian or wider Christian tradition, and using them in one of two ways. Either it adduces these ideas as parallels to ideas in Hopkins, or else it uses them to illuminate problems of interpretation. The most striking example of the first of these comes in David A. Downes's *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of his Ignatian Spirit* [2]. Downes's fourth chapter, entitled 'The Ignatian Spirit of the Priest-Poet', goes systematically through the Ignatian Exercises, claiming that all Ignatius's key ideas are illustrated in Hopkins's writings. As for the second, more critical use of Ignatian texts in Hopkins scholarship, the classic instance must be Christopher Devlin's account of Hopkins's inner moral struggles, to be found in the introductory material to the volume containing Hopkins's religious prose [3]. Devlin claims, effectively, that Hopkins sometimes took asceticism too far. He argues that Hopkins mistook a rigorist, Victorian caricature for the true teaching of Ignatius.

Whether Downes, Devlin, or other proof-text critics are right in their judgements is not my concern here. I simply want to highlight a method common to writers in one tradition of Hopkinsian criticism. For the critics in question, the Ignatian tradition constitutes a source of general principles that can, in one way or another, help us understand Hopkinsian texts.

By contrast, critics who adopt what I am calling the 'hands-off' approach simply refuse to venture into the ups and downs of Hopkins's spiritual life. In his foreword to the religious prose, Devlin tells us, rather self-disparagingly, how Humphry House "was very anxious that Hopkins's priestly writings should be handled by a Jesuit as a separate volume" [4]. And

[2] London, 1959.

[3] S., pp. 115-121. My own attempt, in the article I cited above, to distinguish between Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit vocation arrives at conclusions regarding the relationship between priest and poet that are rather different from Devlin's; but both Devlin and I are using Ignatian texts as sources for a principle by which to interpret and evaluate the data given by Hopkins's texts.

[4] S., p. VII.

House, as Norman White has recently reminded us, took the same line regarding his projected biography of the poet [5]. Numerous other critics imply, rather than state, a similar option, insofar as they offer major studies of Hopkins which prescind completely from any serious, explicit analysis of his relationship with God. Moreover, under this heading, however paradoxical it may seem, I want to include the valuable and detailed Jesuit biographical studies by the late Fr. Alfred Thomas, and now by Fr. Joseph J. Feeney. These authors enter with great industry and enthusiasm into the externally visible details of Hopkins's Jesuit life. They tell us about Hopkins's superiors and about other members of his various communities; they investigate all kinds of archival material; they can, or could, tell us when, how and with whom Hopkins made his various retreats. But, for all their learning and inside knowledge, Thomas and Feeney are no more prepared than House to deal with the real spiritual questions. They are not into inquiring how any of Hopkins's retreats might have changed him personally, or into asking more generally what was going on between Hopkins and the reality he called God [6]. Feeney and Thomas are at one with the majority of non-religious scholars in refusing to treat such questions as material for scholarly inquiry.

The Problems of Defining 'Spirituality'

My second preliminary point is, in many ways, a demonstration that this reticence of 'hands-off' critics is readily understandable – indeed, in

[5] See N. WHITE, "Hopkins: Problems in the Biography", *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 21,1 (Spring 1988), pp. 109-119, at p. 113: "It appears to many people that only a Jesuit could write about Hopkins's twenty-four-hours-a-day life as a Jesuit. Humphry House, a great scholar and critic, planned to write a biography of the early life, which finished on the day that Hopkins entered the Jesuit novitiate; his life after that, House considered, could be written only by a Jesuit. How can an outsider know, let alone understand, what goes on in a Jesuit community?".

[6] A. THOMAS, *Hopkins the Jesuit: The Years of Training*, London, 1969, p. IX: "Gerard Manley Hopkins is one of those rare writers whose genius moves in a mysterious way so that it is impossible to forecast what may or may not be a clue to its understanding. It is for this reason that I have set down exactly and in detail what happened to him between the destruction of his early verses and his emergence as a major poet during the final years of his training as a Jesuit. There is, of course, no question of trying

and indeed of compassionate pastors. But it stands in marked tension, both with the claims believers often make regarding the unique and decisive significance of their own traditions, and with modern philosophical reflections on the necessary links between experience, language, and culture. Where critics stand on this issue will decisively determine their interpretation of Hopkins's Catholicism and his membership of the Society of Jesus.

This brief, inadequate naming of issues probably ought to be accompanied by an apology. It seemed to me worth doing, however, for two reasons. In the first place, I am indicating a broader context for some rather narrow points that I am about to make specifically with reference to the Ignatian tradition; secondly, I am issuing a warning. As soon as critics make statements about Hopkins and religion, they will be at least implying, more or less wittingly, positions on some complex issues about which theologians and philosophers are themselves divided. If Hopkins scholars ignore that fact, aiming simply for some detached neutrality, they are liable simply to lapse into incoherence and muddle – at least by implication.

Statements of Principle, and their Limits

I pass on now to the first of my specifically Ignatian points, which points to a major limitation – though not necessarily more than that – in the proof-text approach. I want to claim that Ignatian spirituality cannot be fully reduced to a list of particular principles, and hence that the proof-text method cannot be used – or at least cannot be used exclusively – in assessing Hopkins's particular way of relating to God as a Jesuit.

In 1956, Karl Rahner, a German, and certainly the most influential Jesuit theologian of this century, wrote an important essay in honour of the fourth centenary of Ignatius's death. In it he argued that Ignatius's *Exercises* were grounded on a conviction that God is at work in people's experience, summoning them towards concrete choices. And this action of God takes place in ways that cannot be exhaustively specified in principles, whether of reason or of Christian revelation [11]. In other words, on Rahner's reading of

[11] K. RAHNER, "The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge in Ignatius Loyola", in *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, London, 1964, pp. 84-170. On p. 104, Rahner writes: "As the normal case of his choice-process, Ignatius knows of a decision whose content is not simply and solely a deduction from general principles of reason and of faith with the help of an analysis of the particular case concerned. Rather, Ignatius is convinced that in the normal case God, in a kind of individual inspiration (the nature of which for the moment remains quite open), makes known his will – which, while admittedly falling within the realm of general revelation, the Church, and reason, can nevertheless be known in its concreteness only through this additional movement in God's part". (Translation slightly amended).

Ignatius, Christian choice cannot be reduced to the application of general rules. Rather, God is who God is, and we are who we are; and some Christian choices can only be arrived at by discerning the logic of a unique relationship obtaining between creator and creature. On this account, Hopkins's decision to become a Jesuit is not, or at least not ultimately, a matter of what anyone in his situation would have been obliged to do; rather, it is a response to a leading of God over and above what is implied by such general considerations. It is quite possible that another young man with all the same qualities, had he existed in the England of the 1860s, would not have been so led.

Rahner's position needs to be nuanced and qualified [12], but what I have outlined is certainly a fair account of what Ignatius's text implies. And such an understanding must underlie at least a *theological* interpretation of sentences from Hopkins such as the following, from the famous letter to Dixon of 1 December 1881:

> When a man has given himself to God's service, when he has denied himself and followed Christ, he has fitted himself to receive and does receive a special guidance, a more particular providence. This guidance is conveyed partly by the action of other men, as his appointed superiors, and partly by direct lights and inspirations. If I wait for such guidance, through whatever channel conveyed, about anything, about my poetry for instance, I do more wisely in every way than if I try to serve my own seeming interests in the matter [13].

This statement too needs qualifying, but the central insight is, in my view, valid. Moreover, this insight lies close to the central concerns of Ignatian spirituality. What is at stake is, in a strong sense, "a special guidance, a more

[12] I am currently engaged on trying to do just that in an Oxford D. Phil thesis.

[13] L. II, p. 93; cf. S., pp. 253-4: "Also in some med. today I earnestly asked our Lord to watch over my compositions, not to preserve them from being lost or coming to nothing, for that I am very willing they should be, but they might not do me harm through the enmity or imprudence of any man or my own; that he should have them as his own and employ or not employ them as he should see fit. And this I believe is heard".

particular providence". The *Exercises* are a pedagogy, designed to help people become aware of such guidance and providence, and respond to this special leading of God's.

Three applications of this point are relevant to Hopkins critics. Firstly, and most obviously, there are limits to the validity of the proof-text approach. Ignatian spirituality is primarily and most specifically concerned with a realm in which general principles do not directly apply – or, if they do, their only function is to facilitate the freedom of the encounter between creator and creature [14]. At its heart is an awareness that the deep things of life cannot be wholly systematised into an orderly body of doctrine. The *Exercises*, carried out properly, do not force people into a mould, but free them to be themselves under God. Thus a young German Jesuit in the 1930s, involved in controversy over Ignatian spirituality, could write in a letter:

> I once had the chance to be in a house where the so called 'Long Retreat' (i.e. for 30 days) was going on. The retreat was given in its pure Ignatian form to religious from 13 different orders and congregations, including Dominicans and Benedictines. Afterwards, participants from an enormously wide variety of orders told me that each of them had taken from the retreat a great deepening and enrichment in living out their own vocations [15].

[14] See Ignatius's counsel to the retreat-giver: "The one who is giving the Exercises ought not to influence the one who is receiving them more to poverty or to a promise, than to their opposites, nor more to one state or way of life than to another. For though, outside the Exercises, we can lawfully and with merit influence every one who is probably fit to choose continence, virginity, the religious life and all manner of evangelical perfection, still in the Spiritual Exercises, when seeking the Divine Will, it is more fitting, and much better, that the Creator and Lord Himself should communicate Himself to His devout soul, inflaming it with His love and praise, and disposing it for the way in which it will be better able to serve Him in future. So, the one who is giving the Exercises should not turn or incline to one side or the other, but standing in the centre like a balance, leave the Creator to act immediately with the creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord" (Exx 15, in the translation by Elder Mullan, S.J., reproduced in D. FLEMING, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: a literal translation and a contemporary reading* [St. Louis, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978], with occasional amendment to avoid exclusive language).

[15] Letter from Alfred Delp, S.J. to Karl Thieme, in K. H. NEUFELD, S.J., *Geschichte und Mensch*, Rome, 1983, p. 281. I chose the example for its vividness, but two other points should be noted. Firstly, both participants suffered under the Nazis: Thieme lost his university post and was exiled to Switzerland; Delp was hanged in February 1945 for his involvement with a group planning the future of Germany after what they saw as the inevitable loss of the war. Secondly, one of the stimuli for the controversy between the two thinkers was the publication of the first German article on Hopkins listed in Dunne's bibliography, I. BEHN, "Gerard Manley Hopkins und seine Dichtung", *Hochland*, 32,2 (May 1935), pp. 148-69.

Secondly, it is highly misleading to think of the Ignatian Election, the choice which may be made during an Ignatian retreat, as an option for right over wrong, for God as opposed to what is not God. An Ignatian choice presupposes initial conversion, and assumes a way of life in conformity with the general principles of Christianity. The question at stake is how that conformity should be further specified. Conversion to Christianity is no doubt more fundamental and important than the Ignatian choice; but the two are not identical. There have been attempts at Ignatian interpretations of "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves", "The Windhover", and the opening stanzas of "The Wreck of the Deutschland" which rather miss this point [16].

Thirdly, what I am saying here leads to an understanding of Ignatian Prayer rather different from that implied in Louis L. Martz's seminal work, *The Poetry of Meditation* [17]. The *Exercises* are composed in large part of what Ignatius calls 'contemplations', periods of imaginative prayer around gospel images – a form of prayer which a later tradition, shaped by scholasticism and the Carmelite traditions, called 'meditation' [18]. Martz's claim was that much devotional poetry in English structurally reflects this form of prayer: a thesis which has been influential, both among Hopkins scholars such as David Downes, and more widely among students of religious poetry in general. I have neither the competence nor the inclination to dispute Martz's historical claims about the influence of Jesuit-inspired meditation manuals on the piety of the seventeenth century. I want simply to suggest that Martz's rather stylised understanding of Ignatian prayer, on which his

[16] See J. PICK, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Priest and Poet*, London, 1942, p. 43; DOWNES, pp. 97-103; contrast DEVLIN in S., pp. 12, 107, who attributes the first stanzas of "The Wreck" to the First Week of the Exercises – i.e. the consideration of sin and forgiveness that clears the ground for a choice in the later part of the *Exercises*.

[17] New Haven, 1954.

[18] As a recent glossary of technical terms suggestively put it, Ignatius takes up a traditional distinction between 'meditation' and 'contemplation' in terms of progress from one to the other, and interprets it, "not in the sense of spiritual ascent but along the path of the Incarnation. [...] Ignatian contemplation is qualified by its object: the mysteries of the life of Christ in the Gospel, and also the history which continues, as in the Contemplation to attain Love". In meditation, by contrast, the retreatant works on "that which, within the doctrine of the faith, is not directly the Gospel" (IGNACE DE LOYOLA, *Exercises Spirituels*, edited by E. GUEYDAN, S.J., Paris, 1987, pp. 224-5, 238).

account depends, may not in fact be authentically Ignatian. For, if what I have said in this section so far is correct, the point of Ignatian contemplation cannot be simply to internalise and ponder on the generally valid truths of the life of Christ. Somehow, this gospel prayer must help the exercitant discover the individually-directed will of God. It must help the one making the prayer arrive at a genuine Ignatian choice.

This is far too large a problem to be dealt with fully here. I simply want to assert that Ignatian prayer may indeed start with an imaginative recreation of the gospel scene, but typically moves further, into a process of fantasy, of imaginative engagement and dialogue. This kind of fantasy may help a person come to important life-decisions; through it, people may experience something of the special guidance to which Hopkins's 1881 letter refers. I make this point partly on the basis of the Ignatian texts, partly through reflection on the experience of giving and making retreats. To illustrate what I mean, let me take an example. A Martzian 'poem of meditation' on the marriage feast at Cana would probably turn on some rather conventional Marian piety, or else on how Jesus's arrival in the world transforms our watery situation, invigorating us with the heady new wine of the Kingdom. Something notably different happened, however, when an experienced retreat giver asked a rather driven and earnest young man to contemplate this scene during a retreat:

> (The man in question) had a vivid imagination and had seen tables heaped with food set out beneath a blue sky. The guests were dancing, and it was a scene of great merriment. 'Did you see Christ?' I asked. 'Yes', he said, 'Christ was sitting upright on a straight-backed chair, clothed in a white robe, a staff in his hand, a crown of thorns on his head, looking disapproving' [19].

Ignatian prayer aims at fostering an interaction between the gospel and a person's life-situation – an interaction going beyond general statements, whether profound or platitudinous. Through this experience, and through subsequent reflection on it, the young man in question was helped to see that his fundamental operative understanding of God had been sub-Christian. Moreover, he was empowered to change, to grow towards something more authentic. The point I want to stress here is that the fruits of such

[19] G. W. HUGHES, *God of Surprises*, London, 1985, p. 36.

prayer are individual, and in principle unspecifiable in advance. It may be possible to state generally that the just act out in God's eye what in God's eye they are, namely Christ – just as "Each mortal thing does one thing and the same". But that general, integrating truth is lived out, not in uniformity, but rather "in ten thousand places" [20].

Christianity, Ignatian Spirituality, and Jesuit Religious Life

If my argument so far is accepted, it follows that the decision to live the life of a Jesuit is only one out of many possible outcomes of the Ignatian *Exercises*. Not all who make the Exercises fruitfully are called to be Jesuits. One needs to distinguish sharply between Ignatian and Jesuit spirituality; and indeed, I have argued elsewhere that Hopkins's poetry is, in general, expressive only of the former [21]. Whether or not that claim is true, anyone setting out to discuss Hopkins and God needs to adopt some defensible position on how Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Ignatian spirituality, and the Jesuit vocation interrelate. These four are not synonymous. Moreover, one also needs to consider how all of these religious notions relate to an understanding of the human as such.

Much writing by Ignatian specialists, let alone Hopkins critics, fails to meet this requirement. An example comes in Downes's book – chosen only because it is the fullest attempt in the Hopkinsian literature known to me to describe what is specifically Ignatian. Yet Downes writes of what is specifically Ignatian in terms which in fact fail to include any significant element not common to Christianity as a whole. We are told that Ignatius believed in the Trinity, and in the Trinity at work in the world. Christ is the central figure of human history, through whom the human destiny "is again made divine". And no more [22]. Such writing in Jesuit authors gives

[20] I hope to contribute a fuller discussion of imaginative prayer to an Ignatian celebration number of *The Heythrop Journal*, scheduled for autumn 1990. It may be possible to link the general point I am making here with Hopkins's often mentioned intellectual preference for Scotism rather than strict Thomism. According to standard textbooks, Scotus regarded individuation in terms of the absolute uniqueness of each created being under God. Mainline Thomism, by contrast, saw individuals merely as numerically different instances of a general kind. I sense, however, a need for caution in this area.

[21] In "The Spirituality of Gerard Manley Hopkins", cit., pp. 121-8.

[22] *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Study of his Ignatian Spirit*, cit., pp. 74-5.

the Society a bad name for arrogance, because it becomes hard to see, on this sort of account, how one who is not a Jesuit, or who has not made the Exercises, can possibly be a Christian [23]. Elsewhere it is commonly said that the Ignatian way to God lies through the created world. Yet this all too easily implies that other ways somehow bypass the created world – a supposition that seems to me both nonsensical and sub-Christian.

I shall leave aside questions about the relationship between the human and the religious, and about Catholicism as one version of Christianity. I want merely to suggest one possible way of using the words: Christian, Ignatian and Jesuit. Christianity is a religion of the Incarnation, of God's total self-involvement with creation. Through the Spirit, God invites all human beings to be conformed to Christ, wherever they may be and however they may live. Response to this invitation may or may not involve conscious awareness of an institutional church. Ignatian spirituality centres on a particular discipline of prayer and reflection, focused in the *Spiritual Exercises* – a discipline designed to help people appropriate God's self-offer more fully. One can and must recognise that this particular discipline, hard or otherwise, is not everyone's way to heaven; it is one method among others. The adjective 'Jesuit' should be reserved for what is distinctive to the Society of Jesus – an international body of priests and brothers ultimately at the disposal of the Pope for the sake of worldwide mission. It should therefore not normally be applied to the *Spiritual Exercises*.

The Ignatian Tradition Then and Now

My final point concerns the significant transformations in the understanding and practice of Ignatian spirituality that have occurred in the hundred years since Hopkins died. Fr. Walter Ong has recently given us a

[23] In 1553, there was a process in Toledo against the Exercises. One of the arbitrators, a Dominican called Tomás de Pedroche, commented in passing: "From the text and the context it appears that the title and name of this brotherhood and company is *Societas Iesu*. This title and name is certainly arrogant and schismatic, and quite insulting to the whole Christian people. For the gospel tells us that there are, and can only be, two societies: the society of Jesus and the society of the devil. If these people, and only these, are called and are in fact the Society of Jesus, then it follows that everyone else is to be called and actually to be the society of the devil" (*MHSJ*, Fontes Narrativi, 1, pp. 319-20).

critical account of the speculative theology and philosophy Hopkins studied in the light of subsequent developments in those fields [24]. Any adequate account of Hopkins's spirituality must try to do the same for mainstream nineteenth century understandings of the Ignatian tradition. I offer simply five telegraphic pointers. Firstly, any contemporary spiritual writing within the Ignatian tradition is likely to be drawing, more or less directly, on a far richer and better edited selection of early material than would have been available to Hopkins [25]. Secondly, Hopkins's retreats would have been either completely private, or else preached by a retreat-giver. Since World War II, Ignatian circles have gradually rediscovered the practice implicit in the text of the *Exercises*: namely, that the retreatant should meet daily for individual conversation with "the one who gives the Exercises": The implications of this shift are far-reaching. It is not so much words and ideas that have changed, as the human dynamics through which the Ignatian process is imparted [26]. Thirdly, Rahner's claim that the Ignatian choice dealt with dimensions of the Christian life not subject to general rules is clearly a departure from what were generally accepted positions – at least at the level of reflective awareness [27]. Fourthly, the relationship between the official documents of the Society and the actual spirituality lived on the ground may be complex. It is one thing to document the inevitably idealising and idealised statements of religious leaders – quite another to assess how such theories interact with the prosy routines of individuals and the social factors

[24] W.J. ONG, S.J., *Hopkins, the Self, and God*, Toronto, 1986, pp. 89-126.

[25] A precise specification of this claim would require a fair amount of detailed spadework. But a number of major texts were simply unpublished in 1889: for example IGNATIUS's *Spiritual Journal* (or, better, 'Discernment Log-Book'); most of his letters; the writings of Nadal.

[26] Such changes are necessarily difficult to document or assess, especially when the period in question is recent and matters are still in some flux. A decisive impetus for the shift was probably the publication of the first volume of I. IPARRAGUIRRE's *Historia de los ejercicios de san Ignacio* in 1946, dealing with the period up to Ignatius's death in 1556. In Britain, and the English-speaking world in general, the change is associated with the name of Fr. Paul Kennedy. There is some scant documentation on him and his approach to the Exercises in *Letters and Notices*, 68 (1963), pp. 87-95 – a report of a talk he gave in 1963; 88 (1987), pp. 228-38 – an interview given a year or so before his death in 1988; and 89 (1988), pp. 197-210, his obituary. See too the articles on the directed retreat in *The Way Supplement*, 38 (Summer 1980); and G.W. HUGHES, "Forgotten Truths about the Spiritual Exercises", *The Way Supplement*, 27 (Spring 1976), pp. 69-78.

[27] See "The Logic", pp. 98-100, n. 13.

conditioning their way of life. Fifthly, and more generally, the term 'spirituality' is almost certainly not one that Hopkins would have known – at least not in its standard modern sense; and this new usage reflects some far-reaching changes in theological understanding [28].

Conclusions

In 1935 Christopher Devlin began an article on Hopkins as follows:

> So much has been written about the effect of Gerard Hopkins' vocation on his poetry that it may seem tedious to say anything more. Yet when the sum of things said has established a first class misunderstanding, it is tantalising, if not requisite, to attempt a reconciliation [29].

It has not at all been my intention to argue that the 'hands-off' and 'proof text' approaches have yielded merely "a first class misunderstanding" – quite the contrary. But I nevertheless believe that even now we still lack a properly sensitive account of Hopkins's spirituality; and in this paper I have tried to indicate what such a project might entail.

Three kinds of issues are involved. The first group falls broadly within the field of philosophy of religion or fundamental theology; they are questions about the religious, and its interaction with wider human concerns. Just what is involved in contrasts such as that between the physical and the spiritual, the flesh and the spirit? Such issues will always, to some extent, be a matter of personal conviction. Nevertheless, there is some place for

[28] The sense of the word as used most commonly in religious circles today is not given in Webster's, nor even in the 1989 edition of the OED. Received wisdom is that the term arose in seventeenth-century French Catholicism, and spread to other languages and other religious traditions at some point around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is only after World War II, however, that the significant Jesuit journals of the spiritual life drop subtitles referring to 'asceticism and mysticism', replacing these words with 'spirituality'. For helpful discussions see S. SCHNEIDERS, IHM, "Theology and Spirituality? Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?", *Horizons*, 13,2 (1986), pp. 253-74, especially p. 254; and *The Study of Spirituality*, edited by C. JONES, G. WAINWRIGHT and E. YARNOLD, S.J., London, 1986, especially pp. XXIV-XXV.

[29] G. ROBERTS, *op. cit.*, p. 318. By contrast, Roberts himself notes that, "not until the mid-thirties did Scotism and the Ignatian *Exercises* receive authoritative treatment" at the hands of critics.

academic rigour and argument even here. We need to strive imaginatively for relatively subtle theories that have as few counter-intuitive or undesirable consequences as possible. Moreover, even if ultimate convictions regarding beliefs and world-views are not themselves matters of reasoned argument, critics may nevertheless legitimately be challenged on their consistency in following personal convictions through.

The second group are matters of the theology of religious life. We need to develop a theoretical understanding which does justice to the flexibility and sensitivity of Ignatius's vision, while still allowing for a distinctive content in the Ignatian tradition as one strand among others within Christianity and Catholicism at large. In the present state of Ignatian scholarship, there is no consensus on these matters, and the points I have been making are still new. But there does not seem to me any great intrinsic difficulty here.

The third group arise from our modern awareness of the historical and social location of all religious statements. It is not simply a matter of finding out the ideas which influenced Hopkins; one needs also to draw on the human sciences in order to assess how such ideas actually shaped Jesuit culture in Hopkins's time. Here a great deal of spadework needs to be done [30].

If what I have said is broadly correct, it follows that the proof-text approach to Hopkins's spirituality is itself a tradition standing in need of considerable innovation. For their part, the 'hands-off' critics – those who find it better simply to leave major spiritual questions untouched – may well feel that this paper only confirms the wisdom of that policy. The issues are formidably difficult; and some of them at least are quite unresolved – even among Christian theologians. It is not simply that there is what Norman White has called "an incompatibility between secular and

[30] Two papers in the American Jesuit series, *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, carry this sort of reflection rather further: J.W. O'MALLEY, S.J., "The Jesuits, St. Ignatius, and the Counter Reformation", 14/1 (Jan. 1982); and my own "Who do you say Ignatius is? Jesuit Fundamentalism and Beyond", 19/5 (Nov. 1987). These are available from: The Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality, Fusz Memorial, 3700 W Pine Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63108, USA. One prerequisite for a sensitive understanding of Hopkins's spirituality is a critical history of the nineteenth century British Jesuits. Such a work is currently being written by Fr. Peter L'Estrange, S.J. It should be available in dissertation form at Oxford in the next year or so, and subsequently as volume 4 of a general history of the (then) English Province.

religious approaches" to Hopkins [31]; there is also considerable uncertainty regarding what counts as an adequate religious approach in the first place. Nevertheless, it does seem to me legitimate to ask the real questions about Hopkins's relationship with God – even if any answer remains necessarily tentative, and even if there can be valid criticism and biography abstracting from them. But I hope I have also clearly indicated my conviction that there is no future in theological reflection on Hopkins unless that reflection is informed by a wide variety of non-theological insights.

[31] N. WHITE, "Hopkins: Problems in the biography", cit. p. 113.