

# A Dayspring to the Dimness of Us: The Symbolic Reality of Edith Stein, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Marie-Dominique Chenu

PETER TYLER

St Mary's University, Twickenham – London  
peter.tyler@stmarys.ac.uk

Thou mastering me  
God! giver of breath and bread;  
World's strand, sway of the sea;  
Lord of living and dead;  
Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,  
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,  
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?  
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee<sup>1</sup>.

## Introduction

The circumstances surrounding the writing of one of Gerard Manley Hopkins' greatest poems, if not one of the greatest pieces of 19<sup>th</sup> Century English literature, are almost too well known to be reiterated again. Yet, as with the beginnings of St John of the Cross' poetic career in the dungeons of Toledo or St Teresa of Avila's whilst recovering from

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from *The Wreck of the Deutschland* are taken from G.M. Hopkins, *Poems and Prose*, Ed. W.H. Gardner, Penguin, London 1985, hereafter *Deutschland*, here 12.

a life-threatening illness, it is worth recalling these circumstances so as to give us an insight into the underlying themes of the work.

Hopkins was lucky enough to have studied in Oxford in the 1860s with and under some of the greatest philosophical and aesthetic minds that venerable institution has ever produced: St John Henry Newman, Coventry Patmore, Robert Bridges and Benjamin Jowett could all be listed as, amongst others, his confidantes, advisors and mentors. At this time he himself showed great promise as a poet and literary scholar. But, after his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1866 and subsequent entrance into the Society of Jesus ('The Jesuits') in 1868 he abruptly decided to burn all his early poetry in an oblation he called 'the slaughter of the innocents' in his diary. For the following seven years he placed himself under the spiritual discipline of the sons of Ignatius Loyola inwardly determining only to write again should his gifts be required for the 'greater glory of God'.

In 1875 whilst at the Jesuit theologate at St Beuno's on 'a pastoral forehead of Wales' he finally received the permission he had been waiting for to write again. The Jesuit community read with shock the lurid accounts in the newspapers of the drowning of sixty passengers on the German ship, *The Deutschland*, as she foundered off the Kent coast during a horrific storm between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1875. Amongst the passengers were five Franciscan tertiaries, driven from Germany by the Falk laws, all of whom drowned: Mothers Barbara Hultenschmidt, Norberta Reinkober, Aurea Badziura, Brigitta Damhorst and Henrica Fassbaender. One of the them, 'the tall nun', was heard to cry before she perished: '*Mein Gott! Mach es schnell mit uns!*'<sup>2</sup>. Poignantly, for Hopkins, they were finally laid to rest near his childhood home at St Patrick's Cemetery, Leytonstone. Whilst discussing the incident with his rector at St Beuno's, Fr Jones, the priest opined that he 'wished someone would write a poem on the subject'<sup>3</sup>. This was all Hopkins needed to rekindle his writing career and within a few weeks he had produced the great ode of 35 verses – what Bridges would later call in his first edition of Hopkins' poetry, 'the great dragon guarding the entrance to his work'.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in R.B. MARTIN, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life*, Harper Collins, London 1991, 245.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

Unique, untranslatable and possibly one of the most misunderstood religious poems in the English language, I want to draw upon *The Wreck of the Deutschland* as illustrative of the theme this article will explore: the role of the *symbolic* in the Christian contribution to the wisdom tradition and how by living and acting through the symbol, as well as seeing and thinking about it, we actually enter into the Christian Paschal mystery of Death and Resurrection at the deepest personal and cosmic level. This, I would like to contend here, is the essential message of Hopkins' masterpiece.

### 1. Chenu's Medieval Symbolic

To begin with, then, what do we mean by this weasel word, 'the symbolic'? In his masterful essay on the 'symbolist mentality', Chenu explores in great depth how the 'symbolic mentality' came to characterise the uniquely medieval (or we could say, 'pre-modern') perspective on creation. The term (literally, 'that which brings together' from *syn*- "together" + stem of *ballein* "to throw") had been associated with Christians since the earliest days. In c.250 St Cyprian of Carthage commenting on its manifestation in the Apostles' Creed remarking that it is the "mark" that distinguishes Christians from pagans. Following Chenu, the symbolic for the Medievals thus became distinguished from the dialectic. It was not considered another form of logic but a different way of 'showing' truth:

To bring symbolism into play was not to extend or supplement a previous act of the reason; it was to give primary expression to a reality which reason could not attain and which reason, even afterwards, could not conceptualize<sup>4</sup>.

In this respect Chenu contrasts the earlier psychologisation of Augustine's approach with the non-reducible symbolic of Dionysius, making here a distinction between the 'signs' of Augustine and the

<sup>4</sup>M.-D. CHENU, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century*, Trans. J. Taylor and L. Little, University of Toronto Press, Toronto (1957/2013), 124, hereafter 'CHENU'.

‘symbols’ of Dionysius, even though both ‘streams’ would continually interact with each other throughout the medieval period and even into the early modern period<sup>5</sup>:

The symbol was the starting point of knowledge, of ‘initiation’ and it was no more reducible to analysis than the mystery it made present<sup>6</sup>.

In this respect he characterises the medieval period as being dominated as much by the ‘symbolic’ as by the ‘dialectic’: ‘In the whole range of its culture, the medieval period was an era of the symbol, indeed more than, an era of dialectic’<sup>7</sup>. ‘Nay’, he adds further, ‘it was through symbolization that reality fulfilled itself’<sup>8</sup>. Drawing upon the works of Alan of Lille, the various Arthurian romances, philosophical commentaries, liturgical texts, biblical exegeses and pastoral letters, Chenu presents not only a medieval guide to the symbolic mentality but even a series of ‘laws’ that guided that mentality. He characterises it as:

A permeating influence, of which men were more or less aware, upon their ways and turns of thought; a cast or coloration given to even their commonest notions; a body of assumptions rarely expressed yet accepted everywhere and by all and very difficult to uncover<sup>9</sup>.

Thus, the writers and exegetes of, in particular, the twelfth century, carried a universal conviction that ‘all natural or historical reality possessed a *significance* which transcended its crude reality and which a certain symbolic dimension of that reality would reveal to man’s mind’<sup>10</sup>. Accordingly, following Dionysius ‘it was not the believer who gave

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-125. See also P.M. TYLER, ‘Psychology, *Theosis* and the Soul: St. Teresa of Avila, St. Augustine, and Plotinus on the Western picture of *theosis*’, in: *Mystical Doctrines of Deification: Case Studies in the Christian Tradition*, Eds J. Arblaster and R. Faesen, Routledge, London 2018.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-127.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>10</sup> Loc. cit.

signs their meaning [*pace* Augustine]’ but ‘it was objective elements themselves which, before everything else and by their very nature, were so many representations, so many “analogies”’<sup>11</sup>. The symbol was thus ‘the true and proper expression of reality’ and through it ‘reality revealed itself’. This, I would contend, is the use, and power, of the ‘symbol’ in Hopkins’ poem – by entering symbolically into the suffering of the doom-struck passengers of the *Deutschland* we do, in fact, enter into reality itself. What form this reality takes we shall return to at the end of this article.

## 2. The Medieval Laws of Symbolism according to Chenu

The ‘primary law’ of medieval symbolism derived, suggests Chenu, from Dionysius, was thus:

To join two realities within a single symbol was to put the mind into secret contact with transcendent reality, not without a sense of inward exaltation, and certainly with an affective response that inspired poetic creativity<sup>12</sup>.

Quoting John of Salisbury, Chenu reminds us: ‘*vera latent rerum variorum tecta figuris, Nam sacra vulgari publica jura vetant*’ / ‘truths lie covered by the figures of various things, for public laws forbid sacred things to the crowd’<sup>13</sup>. The ‘laws’ of symbolism must lie secret and hidden. Something unacceptably heretical to our modern mind. Only through much work and study at the feet of the ‘masters’ will the ‘sacred truths’ be revealed – only then will the exaltation of the poetic moment provoke an affective response. One could go further to highlight the role of *eros* (so important to Dionysius) in this response too – the symbolic, no less than the aesthetic moment, may contain within itself an intrinsic trace left by the encounter with the *eros* of God. Such a re-

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>13</sup> JOHN OF SALISBURY, *Entheticus de dogmate philosophorum* 183 – 187, PL CXCIX, 966, in CHENU, 101.

sponse 'fixed upon a likeness underlying the contrasting realities and made a leap between them'<sup>14</sup>. This is Dionysius' 'dissimilar similitude' who states in *The Celestial Hierarchy*: 2, 'one must be lifted upwards towards the anagogical and symbolic form'.

The second 'law' of Dionysian symbolism is for Chenu intimately connected with the first, namely:

The crudest symbols are seen as those most capable of signifying the mystery<sup>15</sup>.

For, 'the more gross the material, the more it induced the anagogic leap, as against the peril of anthropomorphism that was nurtured by symbols too closely resembling the thing they symbolized'. Why should this be so? Chenu supplies the answer: the symbolic value 'emerges only in proportion as the *res* retains its integrity while functioning as *signum*'<sup>16</sup>. For if we turn material reality into 'nothing but a figure' are we not dangerously near to a type of Manicheism that denies the material world any significance whatsoever? This is clear in Hopkins' poem where for all his eulogy to the symbolism of the snow and the storm there is no getting around the fact that they will destroy vulnerable human beings in the most cruel way possible: the seaman garrotted by a rope, the nuns gasping for life and breath as the waters rise around them. Christianity, Hopkins reminds us, despite its acquired tendency to transcendence, must never forget its *historical* roots in the grit and grime, the blood and sweat, of First Century Palestine.

Chenu thus calls the type of symbolism propounded by Dionysius, Alan of Lille and their followers as a 'realist symbolism' where 'symbolic action is a normal part of the dynamism of a cosmos reaching upward toward God in hierarchical stages'<sup>17</sup>. Such realist symbolism would thus come to embrace all actions in a person's life from the most mundane to the most exalted. We shall return to this shortly.

<sup>14</sup> CHENU, 131.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

### 3. Edith Stein and the Symbolic

Before returning to Hopkins I would like to introduce one more interlocutor to clarify how I am using the term ‘symbolic’ in my argument, this time from another fascinating and misunderstood writer: Edith Stein, Teresia Benedicta a Cruce. Appropriately enough, in the light of this discussion, the last academic paper Edith wrote before her death in the Nazi extermination camp of Auschwitz in 1942, was on the symbolic in Dionysius. In 1940 Professor Marvin Farber, one of Edith’s old circle of Göttingen phenomenologists, who had been driven out of Germany by the anti-semitic policies of the Nazis, wrote to Stein at her convent in Echt in Holland asking for a contribution to the newly created journal of *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*<sup>18</sup>. The result was the article we now know as *Ways to Know God: The ‘Symbolic Theology’ of Dionysius the Areopagite and its Objective Presupposition* (*Wege der Gotteserkenntnis: die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihresachlichen Voraussetzungen*).

Stein begins her discussion in this article by noting that part of our problem with accepting the symbolic perspective lies in the ambiguity hidden within the term ‘theology’. She interprets Dionysius, on whom her article is based, as not seeing theology as ‘a science or systematic doctrine about God’, but rather as ‘Holy Scripture – God’s word’ (Stein 2000: 87) and those who speak this word, ‘the sacred writers’ are the *theologians*<sup>19</sup>. That is, people who ‘speak of God because God has taken hold of them’ – in this respect then Christ becomes the highest of the theologians, the first theologian – ‘*der Ur-Theologe*’. Thus, different the-

<sup>18</sup> See *Knowledge and Faith*, Vol. 8 of *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, translated by Walter Redmond, Washington: ICS, 2000, xii-xvii (hereafter *Ways*). Whilst Farber and his colleagues discussed the academic merit of Stein’s essay she had been arrested and transported to the concentration camps. After much discussion following her death the article eventually appeared in the July 1946 edition of *The Thomist* in an English translation by Rudolf Allers. I shall use Walter Redmond’s English edition and the 2003 edition of the work in the *Edith Stein Gesamt Ausgabe: Wege der Gotteserkenntnis: Studie zu Dionysius Areopagita und Übersetzung seiner Werke*. Ed B. Beckmann and V. Ranff. Freiburg: Herder with my own translation where necessary (hereafter *Wege*).

<sup>19</sup> *Ways*, 87.

ologies become 'different manners of speaking about God or manners of knowing God'<sup>20</sup>.

Accordingly, what we are speaking of in this article is thus on the threshold of the deepest mysteries of human existence for, as Edith writes, 'the higher the knowledge, the darker and more mysterious it is, the less it can be put into words'<sup>21</sup>. The symbol, then, is a *Bild*, a picture that holds all together – light and dark, evil and holiness, love and hate – here Stein takes her lead from the original Greek meaning of the term 'symbol': 'a throwing-together'<sup>22</sup>. This Christian 'symbol' will appear as words, things named, events narrated or actions 'by which the prophets often graphically illustrate what they were to preach, as Christ, too revealed divine truth not only by word but also by deed, and as the church through her liturgical acts gives us matters to understand'<sup>23</sup>. The believer, the 'theologian' thus speaks the word of God through speech, action and deed (and having done unto). *They become themselves a symbol in its deepest sense:*

What the prophet hears and sees is as it were the great school of symbolic theology where images and words become available to the sacred writer so that the unsayable may be said and the invisible made visible<sup>24</sup>.

Therefore, we can suggest, the symbolic perspective turns the Christian actor into a symbol of God's action in the world: whether it is the German sisters on their doomed ship, Stein in her filthy cattle wagon or any depressed or lonely person seeking meaning in a meaningless world during Covid lockdown. These, for the Christian, must all be ways to know God, especially God at the foot of the Cross, which are expressed *symbolically*. In this respect the artists, poets, musicians and liturgists are the 'keepers of the mystery' for in their symbolic language the outward sign of God's action in the world is made manifest.

<sup>20</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>23</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> *Wege*, 49.



Thus, in her life and eventual horrendous death, Stein (as indeed does Hopkins) *becomes the symbol* that she so prophetically described in her last published essay.

#### 4. Hopkins' Symbolic Christian Discipleship

To summarise my argument so far, I have used Chenu and Stein, both drawing upon Dionysius, to argue for a symbolic Christian modality that ushers us into the mystery of human life on earth, especially, following Chenu's second law of the symbolic, into the brutal suffering at the heart of human existence. Such a modality, in common with its Latin medieval origins, attempts to hold together the transcendent and immanent poles of human existence, often, following Chenu, drawing attention to the crudest and darkest aspects of human existence. In Stein's essay we saw her suggesting how a Christian would ultimately *become the symbol* expressed in this symbolic modality as they entered into the Passion and Death of the High Symbol of all existence – Jesus Christ.

To conclude then I would like to suggest that this is exactly what Hopkins is expressing in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. What is striking in the poem is that the first third of the poem is not given over to a narrative of the *Deutschland's* destruction (this only begins in 'Part the Second' at verse 11). Rather, the first 10 verses, 'Part the First', beginning with the opening verse with which we started the article, are given over to a sort of 'examination of conscience' as Hopkins explores his own Christian perspective on the events he is about to narrate. He is, as it were, preparing himself and us his readers for the events we are about to witness. This begins with a 'fiat' rather like Mary's at the Annunciation when Hopkins first says 'Yes' to the reordering of his life around Christ's pattern or *Bild*:

I did say yes  
O at lightning and lashed rod;  
Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess  
Thy terror, O Christ, O God;  
Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night:

The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod  
Hard down with a horror of height:  
And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress<sup>25</sup>.

‘Laced with fire of stress’. In this second verse Hopkins introduces one of his personal *leitmotiven* – the ‘stress’, ‘pitch’ or as he famously calls it ‘instress’ of being. In an early undergraduate essay on Parmenides he had linked the ‘instress’ of creation with being itself:

It [Parmenides’ notion of being] means all things are upheld by *instress* and are meaningless objects without it... the feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape is most striking<sup>26</sup>.

As Abraham comments:

Instress then in its ultimate sense is being or the final principle in virtue of which all things are unified and upheld and by reason of which the mind can make univocal and particular judgements and can say ‘Yes’ and ‘is’ and can conform itself to reality<sup>27</sup>.

By being aware of the ‘pitch’ of existence the individual can conform themselves to the reality of Christ’s presence in all things as the one who ‘plays in ten thousand places’. This cosmic being, this divine ‘inscape’ and indwelling was one of the chief insights Hopkins derived from the British medieval theologian, Duns Scotus, whom he described as: ‘of realty the rarest-veinèd unraveller’<sup>28</sup>. What is exceptional, and shown exceptionally in the First Part of the *Deutschland*, is how Hopkins takes this cosmic sense of Christ’s presence and personalises it into our own ‘pitched’ ‘taste’ of realty / reality. As he put it in his commentary on St Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*:

<sup>25</sup> *Deutschland*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Essay on Parmenides’, in: H. HOUSE (ed.), *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1959, 71-72.

<sup>27</sup> J. ABRAHAM, *Hopkins and Scotus: An Analogy between Inscapè and Individuation*. PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin 1959, 262.

<sup>28</sup> *Duns Scotus’s Oxford*, in HOPKINS 1985, 40.

For human nature, being more highly pitched, selved, and distinctive than anything in the world, can have been developed, evolved, condensed from the vastness of the world not anyhow or by the working of common powers but only by such finer or higher pitch and determination than itself<sup>29</sup>.

For:

Nothing else in nature comes near this unspeakable stress of pitch, distinctiveness and selving, this selfbeing of my own. Nothing explains it or resembles it<sup>30</sup>.

Indeed, later on in the commentary, this 'pitch' or 'stress' will explicitly be linked by Hopkins with Scotus's *haeccitas* or thisness: 'is this pitch or whatever we call it then the same as Scotus's *ecceitas*?'<sup>31</sup>.

From this pitch, this insight into Christ's presence in reality, comes the *fiat*, the Yes to that same creative force: 'I did say Yes'. Notice, a typical Hopkinsian move, the shift of the pronoun from the third person plural of the nuns, and even the third person singular of Mary at Nazareth to the 'I', the pitched selving of individual existence with its own taste 'more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnut leaf or camphor'<sup>32</sup>. From this *fiat*, my personal 'Yes', flows everything else as we are pitched with the nuns into the dark and distressing destruction of the winter storm off the Kent coast:

I kiss my hand  
To the stars, lovely-asunder  
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and  
Glow, glory in thunder;  
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:  
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>31</sup> HOUSE 1959, 328.

<sup>32</sup> *Notes on the Exercises*, HOPKINS 1985, 145.

His mystery must be instressed, stressed;  
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

Not out of his bliss  
Springs the stress felt  
Nor first from heaven (and few know this)  
Swings the stroke dealt –  
Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver,  
That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt –  
But it rides time like riding a river  
(And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss)<sup>33</sup>.

‘The faithless fable and miss’. The symbolic presence of Christ is the key, not only to my own existence as a believer but to all that happens in the world, including its grossest and coarsest destruction as depicted in the poem. For the symbolic interpretation of these events comes through knowing Christ:

It dates from day  
Of his going in Galilee;  
Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;  
Manger, maiden’s knee;  
The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat;  
Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,  
Though felt before, though in high flood yet –  
What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard  
at bay,  
Is out with it!<sup>34</sup>

From this symbolic perspective, even the ghastly events off the Kent coast (or in 1940s Germany) begin to make sense. The poetic representation of the symbolic thus presents for the Christian something of the structure of the universe, and God’s saving (and loving) plan for

<sup>33</sup> *Deutschland*, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Loc. cit.

suffering creation. In this respect the winter storms that destroy the *Deutschland* become the *symbolic* signifiers for Hopkins' vision of the Creator's plan for his creation – the nuns' suffering off the Kent coast becomes the means for their instantiation of the grace of God:

Surf, snow, river and earth  
Gnashed: but thou art above, thou Orion of light;  
Thy unchallenging poisoning palms were weighing the worth,  
Thou martyr-master: in thy sight  
Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers – sweet  
heaven was astrew in them<sup>35</sup>.

The nuns' suffering thus becomes an insight into the profound truth that lies hidden within our selves and our world. Or as Hopkins calls it, the 'ground of being, and granite of it', which is:

throned behind  
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides;  
  
With a mercy that outrides  
The all of water, an ark  
For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides  
Lower than death and the dark<sup>36</sup>.

### Conclusion: The Science of the Cross

In conclusion I would like to suggest that the 'symbolic mentality' is at the heart of a Christian view of the world. This is not as Chenu called it 'a psychological game played by an esthete'<sup>37</sup>. Rather than an escape from reality, from suffering, the symbolic mode is one that draws us to

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>37</sup> CHENU 1957, 99, even though, he adds, 'literary elegance – *elegans pictura* – is also involved'.

the 'granite of being': 'the profound truth that lies hidden within the dense substance of things and is revealed by these means'<sup>38</sup>.

I have explored in this article another way of seeing reality – a symbolic truth especially open to the discerning eyes and ears of poets, artists and creators. Such an art, 'the use of poetic fiction to express intellectual truth', puts poetry 'in the service of wisdom – of philosophical and theological wisdom'<sup>39</sup>. Which is exactly what has been attempted here. The shorthand for this symbolic form is, of course, 'the Cross'. The Cross, for the Christian, straddles these two realities of existential despair and eschatological fulfillment. The Christian, as Stein suggested, thus becomes the symbol as they face the Cross in an act of faith, or as Chenu put it:

To join two realities within a single symbol was to put the mind into secret contact with transcendent reality... the result was a double resonance within the single grasp of a 'dissimilar similitude'<sup>40</sup>.

As we contemplate the Franciscan nuns' (or Edith Stein's) response to adversity (or our own responses to the extraordinary events of the Covid pandemic), we are asked to part company with simplistic, materialist notions of the self and enter the symbolic world as described by medieval theologians such as Dionysius and Scotus. In this respect the crisis itself becomes a symbol in the rich sense delineated by Stein in her 'Science of the Cross':

The Crucified One... demands from the artist more than a mere portrayal of the picture. He demands that the artist, just as every other person, follows him: that they themselves become the picture of the Cross-Bearer and Crucified One and allow themselves to be so transformed<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>40</sup> CHENU 1957, 131, cf. DIONYSIUS, *The Celestial Hierarchy*: 2.

<sup>41</sup> 'Aber der Gekreuzigte verlangt auch vom Künstler mehr als ein solches Bild. Er fordert von ihm wie von jedem Menschen die Nachfolge: dass er sich selbst zum Bild des Kreuztragenden und Gekreuzigten gestalte und gestalten lasse'. E. STEIN, *Kreuzeswissen-*

The deepest disasters, including death, are thus transformed, from the symbolic perspective, into the entrance to the 'double-natured name', 'the heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled, Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame, Mid-numbered he in three of the thunder-throne!'. Following this argument, entering into the symbolic – Stein's 'Science of the Cross' – is thus an invitation to let Christ 'Easter in us' so that ultimately He becomes for us, as Hopkins concludes his epic poem:

A dayspring to the dimness of us, be  
a crimson-cresseted east...  
Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,  
Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's  
Lord<sup>42</sup>.

*schaft: Studie über Joannes a Cruce*, Ed. L. Gelber, Herder, Freiburg 1950, 6, my translation.

<sup>42</sup> *Deutschland*, 24.

PETER TYLER

A Dayspring to the Dimness of Us:  
The Symbolic Reality of Edith Stein,  
Gerard Manley Hopkins and Marie-Dominique Chenu

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the 'symbolic reality' of two twentieth century theologians inspired by the works of Dionysius the Areopagite: Edith Stein/Teresia Benedicta a Cruce ocd (1891-1942) and Marie-Dominique Chenu op (1895-1990). To illustrate their arguments about the role of the symbolic in Christian life, the author takes as his text the great narrative poem of the English Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-889), *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. The article argues that the symbolic theology provides resilience to those undergoing psychological and physical trauma as they enter into what Stein called 'the Science of the Cross'<sup>43</sup>.

**KEYWORDS:** symbol; Gerard Manley Hopkins; Marie-Dominique Chenu; Edith Stein; resilience.

<sup>43</sup> A version of this paper was first given at the summer 2020 conference of the *Friends of Sophia* in Cambridge, England. I am grateful to Fr Dominic White op and the 'friends' for their helpful comments.