

MOTIVES FOR MORTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

1. Occasion: The discussion of this topic has been occasioned by the controversy between Father John J. Hugo and his critics.¹ Several allied aspects of the problem were considered in the talks at the General Congress on States of Perfection held in Rome in 1950; this Congress treated specifically the adaptation of Christian spirituality to modern times.²

2. Limit: The subject of mortification is almost as broad as Christianity. While, at first, we entertained more ambitious plans, the limitation of time and space has forced us to limit the scope of our paper to the "Hugo Controversy." This limitation of our subject-matter was suggested by the subtitle given our paper by the Committee on Current Problems, "Critique of certain excesses or at least ambiguities in recent years in U. S. A. on 'natural' motivation, pursuit of pleasure, etc."

3. Division: Naturally, then, our paper is divided into two parts: (I) Father Hugo's Position, and (II) Critique.

¹ Father Hugo's doctrine is contained in *Applied Christianity* (3rd edition), *A Sign of Contradiction, Nature and the Supernatural, The Inadequacy of Natural Motives, The Conflicting Movements of Nature and Grace*; all these books and pamphlets are privately printed or circulated after the manner of manuscripts by the author. Several articles attacking Father Hugo's doctrine have appeared in American periodicals: in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, P. Parente, "Nature and Grace in Ascetical Theology" (June, 1943); F. Connell, C.S.S.R., "Review of *Applied Christianity*" (July, 1945), J. Fenton, "Nature and Supernatural Life" (Jan., 1946); *Orate Fratres* (now *Worship*), G. Vann, O.P., "Nature and Grace" (Jan., 1947); *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, J. P. Donovan, C.M., "A Bit of Puritanical Catholicity" (Aug., 1948); cf. article against this, Farina, "Is Detachment Puritanical?" (Feb., 1949). One of the more helpful books in this matter, though not dealing specifically with the controversy, is Fernand Paradis, P.S.S.'s *Renoncement Chretien* (Grand Seminaire de Montreal, 1945).

² *Acta et Documenta Congressus Generalis de Statibus Perfectionis*, Vol. ii, pp. 316-354.

I. FATHER HUGO'S DOCTRINE

A. *Difficult to analyze*: Father Hugo's position is difficult to analyze, for ambiguous expressions abound. Several factors contribute to this. He frequently uses technical theological terms, but often in non-technical meanings. His writings are an embodiment of his preaching, and it seems that striving for concrete imagery in preaching has led, in some instances, to over-simplification. Also the very vigor of his style seems to betray him into excessive statements. For example, discussing the disastrous effects of moral imperfections he writes, "(Imperfections) insult God, . . . directly outrage His love . . . deprive us of grace and merit."³ These are strong statements used ordinarily only of sin; but a study of the context shows us that Father Hugo means that imperfections deprive us of the *more abundant* grace and merit we could and *would have had* if our actions had been more perfectly supernatural.

To interpret writings in context is the first rule of fair criticism, and we shall do so to the best of our ability. Here, however, we are not concerned with listing and explaining the obscure passages of his writings. Rather we are going to limit ourselves to following his general line of reasoning, by-passing any and all side-issues that could well stand clarification. I have reduced this general line of reasoning to a complex syllogism, clearly marking out the major steps of his teaching. In this way we can check our own teaching against these statements and discover just where we agree and where we disagree with Father Hugo's position. Before giving a detailed explanation of each premise of the syllogism, we present the syllogism itself as a summary of his thought:

- I. (Major): The role of mortification is to curb whatever conflicts with the perfection of Christian charity in one's spiritual life.
- II. (1st Minor): Besides mortal and venial sins, also moral imperfections (and especially the habits of moral imperfections) conflict with the perfection of Christian charity in one's spiritual life.

CONCLUSION: The role of mortification is partly to curb (especially the habits of) moral imperfections.

³ *Applied Christianity*, pp. 30-31.

III. (2nd Minor): To love creatures out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity is at least a moral imperfection.

IV. CONCLUSION: The role of mortification is partly to curb (especially the habit of) loving creatures out of natural motives other than utility or necessity.

B. *Detailed study of Father Hugo's teaching:*

I. Major: *The role (function, purpose) of mortification is to curb whatever conflicts with the perfection of Christian charity in one's spiritual life.*

A. *Fact:* God has not left man on the merely natural plane, but has given him a supernatural destiny. All men are bound, therefore, to strive for supernatural perfection as an end toward which all should tend. Perfection is commanded,—is included in the precept of charity; but it is commanded not as a thing possessed, or involving a specific obligation to a definite act here and now, but rather as the goal to be achieved.⁴

Now this elevation and obligation to a supernatural destiny involves the consequence that we do not live on the merely natural plane, but that we *supernaturalize* our activity. Hence we must die to the natural level of human activity in the sense that we supernaturalize it, thus promoting the perfection of Christian charity toward which we must tend. Father Hugo writes:

To this end we will exclude trivialities, curiosities, and distractions that take our thoughts, and more important, our affections away from God. . . . The primary motive for all mortification of the senses is the need to keep our minds and hearts pure for a life of prayer and union with God on the supernatural plane. For this reason mortification applies not only to what is evil but also to what is good although likely to turn our affections from God. . . .⁵

B. *Consequent Emphasis on Supernatural Elevation as Primary Motive for Mortification:* In this last quotation we see what Father Hugo believes to be the principal part of the controversy. He be-

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 55-56, 59.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-196.

believes that any questioning of his doctrine on the imperfection of natural motivation (2nd minor) stems from a neglect or ignorance of the "primary motive of mortification"—the elevation of man to a supernatural destiny. Such a neglect, he continues, leads to an undue emphasis on the sin-motive for mortification and the forming of a *sin-mentality*,—the attitude of mind occupied only with the avoiding of sin, not with advancing in love of God.

Thus he assigns two motives for mortification: (1) the elevation to a supernatural destiny, and this he stoutly maintains is the primary motive, and one which would have applied in any state or condition of human nature; (2) correction of the influences of sin, which he says is secondary and contingent upon sin,—one which is true now because of man's fall.

Secondly, this death to the natural man does not follow in the first place from the fact of sin. It is independent of sin and would be necessary even though there were no sin. It follows, in the first place, from man's elevation to the supernatural order. From our elevation to the supernatural order there follows the need to renounce, at least interiorly by universal detachment, the goods of the natural order.⁶

In accord with this he distinguishes three kinds of mortification: (a) penitential, ordered to satisfaction for (personal) sins; (b) medicinal, ordered to remedying the effects of sin, and thus inhibiting future failures; and (c) "Charitative" mortification (*mortificatio caritativa*), a sacrifice of love, substantially the same as that required of the angels and first parents before the fall.

Thus he objects to the definition of mortification given in many manuals,⁷ e. g. Parente, Tanqueray, because they seem to him to consider only the sin-motive. He finds acceptable Garrigou-Lagrange's definition, "Mortification is the destruction of sin and its consequences, the renouncement of things licit but not useful for us, so that preoccupation with them may not absorb us to the detriment of divine union."⁸

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-83.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

⁸ *Love of God and Cross of Jesus*, i (Herder, 1947), p. 261.

II. 1st Minor: Besides mortal and venial sins, also moral imperfections (and especially the habits of moral imperfections) conflict with the perfection of Christian charity in one's spiritual life.

A. There is an essential difference between mortal sin, venial sin and moral imperfections.⁹ Imperfections "are actions lacking in charity, or conversely, actions proceeding from natural affections or natural motives."¹⁰

B. Now these imperfections conflict with the perfection of charity in the sense that they do not advance us in perfection as much as love counsels. He writes:

Thus, acting out of natural motives—even though we suppose that they contain some merit, which is doubtful—one is like a person who eats foods lacking nutritive value: he may be getting some grace, but not enough; he is therefore undernourishing and weakening his soul. . . . It is still obvious that such actions would have little merit since they receive but a small actual influx of grace. Actions performed out of supernatural motives would be far more meritorious; and the more purely supernatural the motive, the more meritorious the action.¹¹

C. Habits of moral imperfection more seriously conflict with the perfection of our spiritual life than do individual imperfect actions,—especially the mentality of enjoying creatures as much as one can short of mortal sin.¹² In our striving for perfection we should be concerned, therefore, with the habits of mind and will—with the mentalities that regulate our actions; we should form within ourselves the mind of Christ, and then we can proceed in virtue of well formed habits, deep religious convictions and long practice in acting from supernatural motives.

Summary and first conclusion: The role of mortification is to curb whatever conflicts with the perfection of Christian charity in one's spiritual life. Besides sin, especially the habits of moral imperfections conflict with the perfection and growth of grace and

⁹ *Applied Christianity*, pp. 30, 33, 74.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-39.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 35.

charity. The role of mortification is, therefore, partly to curb habits of moral imperfection.

III. *2nd Minor: To love creatures out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity is at least a moral imperfection.* To my mind this premise is the central point of controversy, the keystone of his entire doctrinal edifice. It is also the most ambiguously presented and the most difficult to analyze. Let us try to arrange his thoughts under the headings: (A) Explanation of Minor: (B) Ascetical recommendations:

A. *Explanation of Minor: 1. "Motive other than utility or necessity"*: Obviously we may love creatures out of a purely supernatural motive, e. g. to love one's mother purely as a child of God; to do this would be to place a meritorious act. But, he observes, such purely supernatural love is rare. When there is an intermingling of natural motives, we may love creatures in subordination to God as supernatural ultimate end, and direct our love to the creatures *only as a means* of approaching God, "not (tending to them) merely as a means of sensual and selfish enjoyment, as pagans do, but rather as a means of rising to the knowledge of God."¹³ This is to use creatures out of a motive of utility or necessity, and such use is permitted, since it is dictated by our very nature as material creatures. It is at least counseled that such use be subordinated to the supernatural end, and in this way the use of the creature becomes supernaturalized and meritorious and in no way conflicts with the perfection of Christian charity. We may, then, use creatures (e. g. games, smoking, drinking, dancing, etc.) out of motives of utility or necessity; but we should not use them beyond what utility or necessity recommends.

2. "*To love creatures out of a natural motive other than . . .*" We may never use creatures out of a motive of love that stops at the creature and does not go beyond them to God. He writes:

We have established here a rule of the most fundamental importance for supernatural living. Our use of creatures is to be regulated by motives of *utility* or *necessity*, never by motives of *love*. Our motives of love are to be given to God alone.¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

This statement I find somewhat mysterious. What is meant by a "motive of love"? Is not the appetite for a means leading to an end, an act of love? It seems to me that he explains what he means elsewhere: "if we allow our affections to tarry in the creatures themselves, we so far remain on the natural plane and stop the exercise and growth of charity."¹⁵ In other words, to seek a creature out of a motive of *love* means to have the love *end* in the creature and not be subordinate to God as ultimate end.

Yet even here we can distinguish: (1) If we *end* in the creature even on the natural level, we commit sin, for to choose a creature as end on the natural level is to be turned from God both on the natural and supernatural levels, at least for the duration of the act; and this is to sin, either mortally or venially depending on the nature of this "turning away from God." (2) But if we end in God on the natural level but not on the supernatural level, then we have a naturally good act which is supernaturally imperfect, because it lacks a supernatural motive that is counseled. He writes:

It is possible by means of supernatural motives to sanctify the ordinary natural activity of every day.¹⁶

Our actions become supernatural when, in accordance with our new supernatural status, they are referred to God by one or another of these (supernatural) virtues. . . . It is above all the influence of charity that makes our actions supernatural. Indeed, even when a Christian performs acts of other virtues, such as humility or patience, charity is even then at work implicitly or secretly.¹⁷

Of course in urging supernatural motives it is not asserted that they are necessary under pain of sin. The purpose of these pages is to point the way to the fullness and perfection of the Christian life. To such fullness we are all urged.¹⁸

It is in this sense that he defines a moral imperfection as an action lacking in charity. Since any act will proceed out of love for some good, and this concrete act is not proceeding from charity,

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

then it must be proceeding from natural love of the creature. An imperfection is, he concludes, an action lacking in charity, or conversely, an action proceeding from natural affections or natural motives.

He gives the rule already quoted, "Our use of creatures is to be regulated by motives of utility or necessity, never by motives of love." Does this mean only that perfection counsels us to use creatures subordinate to God as supernatural ultimate end (*utility* or *necessity*) and never out of a *love* that is not subordinate in this way? Or does he go even further and mean by this rule, perfection counsels us never to have any natural *love* (even as intermediate end), for a creature, even though it be subordinated to the supernatural ultimate end? It seems that his rule has the second meaning, so that perfection counsels *exclusively supernatural motivation* in all that we do, at least in the sense that we should be interiorly detached from the natural goodness of any creature we must use.

Applying this to the pleasure derived from eating, for example, Father Hugo says pleasures and recreations subordinated to the glory of God are good and meritorious. But:

When we act from a motive of pleasure, we are attributing to pleasure the goodness and dignity proper to an end. When we eat for mere pleasure, for example, our wills are not directing the action to the end and good that eating was intended by the Creator to serve. Hence a motive of pleasure indicates the abuse of a creature, an imperfection at least as just observed, since in the supernatural world all that we do should be referred to the glory of God. . . . The pleasure we should mortify is voluntary pleasure; but we need not and we really cannot mortify involuntary pleasure. . . . At the same time, the Saint (John of Cross) cautions us to be inwardly detached from involuntary pleasure, otherwise our affections will cling to it and it will soon become voluntary, diverting us from our single-eyed pursuit of God's glory.¹⁹

3. "*At least a moral imperfection*": Father Hugo says it is theoretically possible for a just man to place a naturally good act not supernaturalized by a supernatural motive, but it is at least an imperfection. Furthermore, such an act is fraught with danger and, in

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

practice, will generally be sinful, simply because the unmortified cannot distinguish the good from the bad natural motives in the actual circumstances of daily life.

It is therefore best to get rid of all natural motives, including the good ones. . . . Notice, too, that pure natural motives are not likely to occur, at least very frequently or habitually in imperfect or worldly souls.²⁰

B. Ascetical Recommendations: 1. Introduce supernatural motivation:

In practice, therefore, natural motivation (except utility and necessity) is frequently sinful and always imperfect, having little or no merit for growth in grace.²¹ Our perfection, then, demands that we rid and purify ourselves of the influences of natural motivation in order to extend the full and perfect reign of charity over our acts.

In the case of un-supernaturalized activity, the conflict between our action and our supernatural destiny is found in the lack of a supernatural motive. This lack makes the act imperfect, and exposes it to the danger of becoming sinful indulgence. The imperfection can be removed only by supplying consciously a supernatural motive, by renewing the good intention. He writes:

The rule, then, for supernaturalizing natural activity, and for preserving harmony between the three orders, is to get in the third element, the supernatural motive. . . . If we refuse to do so, obstinately remaining on the natural plane, our actions are in conflict with our supernatural destiny, and this despite the excellence of nature and natural activity in their own order.²² And it is in the motive that the conflict is centered. A supernatural motive prevents or removes the conflict; on the other hand, a natural motive creates conflict. If a man in the state of grace eats for the love of God, his action is supernatural; if he eats for the love of the food, his action is natural. The conflict is not in the act of eating, for, as we know, natural activity can be supernaturalized, and even saints must eat. The conflict is in the impelling force, the motive behind the natural activity: in the *why* of his eating.²³

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 38.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 26.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

2. *Exclude all natural motivation, so there is exclusively supernatural motivation.* Even in the case where there is no danger of the act changing into sinful indulgence, we should rid ourselves of natural motivation. For the love of our hearts is limited, and the more love we squander on creatures, the less we have for God. For this reason our task of perfection is not only to introduce supernatural motives, but to exclude every natural motive. He writes:

Note, too, that there is a double aspect to this effort. Not only must we introduce supernatural motives into our actions, we must at the same time remove natural motives from them; only to the extent that our hearts are freed from natural motives can they be filled with supernatural motives and the love of God. We must cease clinging by natural motives to created good in order that we may cling wholly to God. . . . We are then not to love creatures—except in a supernatural way, which is rare and difficult and possible at all only to those who are detached.²⁴

3. *Interior detachment in the use of necessary creatures:* As a consequence of his counsel of exclusively supernatural motivation, Father Hugo urges the need for interior detachment in the use of necessary creatures. This, of course, is not a new ascetical principle, but against the background of his doctrine it seems to take on a different significance.

Although it is not always possible nor permissible to renounce creatures, still it may be said that, when it is possible, the highest use of creatures is to return them to their Creator unused. . . . It is not that God gives us creatures only to see us renounce them; He gives us creatures to teach us of Himself. We cannot in fact always renounce them, although such renunciation, as just observed, is their highest use. Still, even when we use them, we should renounce them interiorly, by means of detachment, that we may use them in truth for God's glory and not for our pleasure.²⁵

4. *Detachment and perfection:* Truly, Christian perfection consists primarily and essentially in love. The love of which we are capable on earth is not the same as that of the saints and angels in heaven, for their affections are engaged wholly and uninterruptedly

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

in loving God, while the necessities of bodily existence prevent such devotion in our case. While detachment does not constitute the essence of perfection, it is the inseparable companion of more perfect love and the sign measuring the degree of our fervor.

What we can do is to remove from our hearts whatever is opposed to the love of God or even hinders the swift flight of our affections to God. We grow in love, and therefore advance in perfection, by detaching ourselves from creatures. . . . Every time we remove from our hearts some attachment to a creature, however trivial this may be, we advance a step in love. Every time we mortify some desire or affection even for a good thing, we are making progress in perfection; for such attachments hinder our affections from going wholly and at once to God. On the contrary, to retain deliberate attachment or affections for creatures is to come to a standstill spiritually. A soul with voluntary attachments trying to make spiritual progress is like a man trying to make a long and wearisome journey through sticky mud.²⁶

We see, then, the emphasis that Father Hugo places on detachment in striving for perfection: the sincerity of our striving for perfection is attested most surely by our detachment from creatures—"every time we mortify some desire or affection even for a good thing, we are making progress in perfection; for such attachments hinder our affections from going wholly and at once to God."

We may summarize his position, then, by returning to our syllogism:

Major: The role of mortification is partly to curb especially the habits of moral imperfections.

Minor: To love creatures out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity is at least a moral imperfection.

Conclusion: The role of mortification is partly to curb especially the habit of loving creatures out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity.

But we must remember that he means that our love of creatures must be exclusively supernatural, otherwise our acts are imperfect.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

II. CRITIQUE OF THIS DOCTRINE

Our critique of Father Hugo's position is resolved into two major questions: (A) Does the task of mortification extend to curbing moral imperfections, or does it extend only to sin and the consequences of sin? (B) Is the love of creatures out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity a moral imperfection?

A. *Extent of mortification*: Any Catholic theologian would agree with the predicate of our major proposition,—that we as Christians should strive for the perfection of Christian charity in our spiritual life. They might disagree on whether this is of precept or counsel; they might disagree on what essentially constitutes Christian perfection. But they will agree that Christians are at least counseled to strive for the perfection of Christian charity. Likewise they agree that moral imperfections inhibit the full development of charity. If, then, they question our first conclusion ("*the role of mortification is partly to curb (especially the habits of) moral imperfections*"), this does not arise from laxity or unbridled hedonism. They admit that moral imperfections must be removed; they are questioning only whether this is the task of mortification or of some other virtue, perhaps of charity itself.

For this reason I am not going to dwell at length on this part of the critique, even though Father Hugo believes it is of major importance. Both sides admit the task must be done; it seems of little importance to determine whether this be the work of mortification or charity or some other virtue.

Father Hugo is, I believe, on solid ground in insisting that the role of mortification is partly to curb moral imperfections. That Garrigou-Lagrange extends the task of mortification to moral imperfections is clear from the definition he gives of mortification: "Mortification is the destruction of sin and its consequences, the renouncement of things licit but not useful for us, so that preoccupation with them may not absorb us to the detriment of divine union."²⁷ This is the teaching of Father Buckler, O.P., who, in

²⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Love of God and Cross of Jesus*, i, p. 261.

turn, quotes Louis of Granada and many other doctors of spiritual theology.²⁸

The criticism that Father Hugo believes is directed against his doctrine on the primary motive for mortification seems rather to stem from opposition to his doctrine on natural motivation. For Father Parente writes:

Mortification has the same function (as bitter medicine): we practice it because of sin, which is a deadly disease of the soul. If there were no sin or danger of sin, there would be no reason for mortification. To say that one must die "not merely to sin, but to the natural" seems to imply that, apart from sin, nature is evil. We have already mentioned the danger of such an extreme opinion. The purpose of mortification is to subject nature and make it serve justice; and, with the grace of God, our fallen human nature is still able to do that.²⁹

Here Father Parente rejects the doctrine of the primary motive for mortification. But he does so because of his interpretation of the ambiguous phrase, "we must die not merely to sin, but even to the natural." Nature is a creature of God and so is good, he argues; then the motivation that is in accord with this good nature must likewise be good. Anyone who says we must die to the natural must regard nature and natural motivation as evil, even apart from sin; and this is to renew the errors of the Manichaeans and the Albigensians.³⁰ Thus his objection, it seems to me, is not directed really against Father Hugo's doctrine on the extent or primary motive of mortification; rather he objects to Father Hugo's doctrine on natural motivation and consequently limits the extent of mortification.

B. *Moral Imperfection of Natural Love for Creatures*: Is the love of creatures out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity, a sin or a moral imperfection, and why? What does Father Hugo teach on these questions, and what do his critics teach?

1. *Let us, first, analyze* one of Father Hugo's statements which has with him become a slogan. The phrase just quoted, "We must

²⁸ Reginard Buckler, O.P., *Perfection of Man by Charity* (Burns & Oates, London, 1893), p. 218.

²⁹ Parente, *The Ascetical Life*, p. 95.

³⁰ Parente, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-26.

die not merely to sin but to the *natural*" can mean many different things. (a) The natural can refer to sinful nature corrupted by original sin, and it is used frequently in this sense by spiritual writers.³¹ To say we must die to sinful nature means that we must mortify the disastrous consequences of original sin in our lives. To yield to the promptings of sinful nature is to yield to temptation and to commit sin. All agree to the axiom in this sense. But this is not the meaning of the axiom in Father Hugo's writings, as is clear from the contrast between sin and the natural expressed there. (b) The natural can mean the merely natural order as contrasted with the supernatural order, and this is the sense in which Father Hugo is using the term.

But even here a further distinction must be made, for "we must die to the merely natural" can mean: (1) that we are bound under penalty of sin to supernaturalize our actions, or (2) that we are counseled for the sake of perfection to make our acts intensely meritorious, intensely divine by the ardent love of God. Some passages of Father Hugo's writings emphasizing the *precept* of total love of God sound as though he teaches that we are obliged under penalty of sin to supernaturalize our acts, so that where supernatural motivation is missing, sin is present. Against this, his critics object that there is no precept commanding that we act from a supernatural motive; this the theologians commonly teach against Ripalda.³² I believe that Father Hugo agrees with his critics that there is no precept commanding supernatural motivation in each act, but a counsel recommending it. Thus his statement "we must die not merely to sin but to the natural" means "we are counseled to supernaturalize our activity."

There is, however, a further distinction to be made. "We must die to the merely natural in the sense that we are counseled to supernaturalize our activity" means a different thing to Father Hugo and to his critics. To his critics it means that we are counseled to place a supernaturalized act, but that the morally good *natural motivation may continue* to influence that activity as at least a secondary and impelling motive subordinated to the supernatural end, as long

³¹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *Love of God and Cross of Jesus*, i, pp. 249, 300.

³² Herve, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, iii, pp. 156-158.

as it does not restrict the generosity of our love of God. To Father Hugo the statement means that we are counseled to place a supernaturalized act *and to exclude* the natural motivation from any influence on our activity, even as a secondary and impelling motive, simply because any natural motivation (even as a secondary and impelling motive) does restrict the generosity of our love for God. This exclusion of natural motivations is counseled not because nature is evil, as his critics have sometimes wrongly accused Father Hugo of holding (though he writes ambiguously at times). Natural motivation restricts the generosity of our love for God and so we are counseled to exclude it, simply because creatures are really distinct from God and our love is finite. From these two facts, he holds that it follows that any love given to creatures, even as intermediate ends, is a refusal to give God the total love of our hearts, simply because creatures are not God, even though they be goods made by Him.

2. *Judgment of his general doctrine:* Any criticism of Father Hugo's general doctrine because "it implies that nature is evil" is, I think, superficial and inexact as far as his more recent writings are concerned. I say "general doctrine," for there are some passages and some minor points which might seem to imply this, e. g. some of his statements about reason in the concrete. But in this paper I am trying to discover his general doctrine, and I believe these passages should be interpreted in the context of this general doctrine. His more recent writings show that the controversy has stimulated him to a clearer presentation of his position.

a. *Regarding the theoretic development* of his doctrine on natural motivation, let us summarize the above analysis of his slogan, and try to pin-point the differences between Father Hugo and his critics. We can distinguish purely supernatural motivation (motivation arising exclusively from faith and revelation) and natural motivation (arising from reason in some way). This natural motivation can be further distinguished into: (a) *Corrupt* or sinful natural motivation (arising from reason darkened by original sin, a motive suggested by fallen nature and going toward an illicit object or a licit object illicitly); (b) *Merely* natural motivation (arising from right reason as knowing and observing perfectly the natural law

but not subordinated in any way to the supernatural ultimate end); (c) *Intermediate* natural motivation (arising from right reason as knowing and observing perfectly the natural law, going toward the creature partly because of the goodness it possesses within itself, but subordinating this love of the creature to the love of the supernatural ultimate end); (d) *Purely mediate* natural motivation (arising from right reason as knowing and observing perfectly the natural law, going toward the creature solely as a means of leading to the ultimate end, and subordinating this use of the creature to the supernatural ultimate end).

There is no problem between Father Hugo and his critics concerning purely supernatural, purely mediate natural, or corrupt natural motivation. They agree that the first two are highly meritorious, and that the third involves sin or the danger of sin and so should be mortified. All the difficulty centers around what I have called: (1) merely natural motivation; and (2) intermediate natural motivation.

(1) Regarding merely natural motivation, they agree that fallen man in the state of sin can and does place some morally good actions by his natural powers alone. Both sides agree that *if* a person in grace places an un-supernaturalized morally good act because there is insufficient motivation or influence of charity, the lack of charity's influence would be a moral imperfection in some sense. Perfection would urge such a person to renew the good intention sufficiently so that the influence of charity would extend to and supernaturalize his morally good acts.

But they disagree on the supposed condition, i. e., on the question "Can a person in the state of grace place an un-supernaturalized morally good act? Is every deliberate act of a person in grace either demeritorious (sinful) or meritorious?" Father Hugo answers that he considers it the more probable and the safe opinion in practice that the person in grace can place an un-supernaturalized or merely natural morally good act; such an act is neither sinful nor meritorious. It lacks supernatural merit because it lacks supernatural motivation, and it is therefore a moral imperfection. However practically all theologians teach with St. Thomas that "in those who have

charity every act is either meritorious or demeritorious."³³ Although theologians quite commonly disagree with Father Hugo on this question of the concrete act, they will agree on the ascetical recommendation to renew frequently the good intention—but they urge it for a different reason. Father Hugo urges frequent renewal of the good intention because perfection counsels us to supernaturalize what would otherwise be merely natural acts. Most theologians urge frequent renewal of the good intention because the more actual the influence of charity's intention, the greater the merit of the act.

(2) The principal difference, then, is on the score of the intermediate natural motivation. In both the intermediate and the purely mediate natural motivation, I am pre-supposing that the act of the will has been supernaturalized by a sufficient subordination to the supernatural ultimate end, prescindng from the theological controversy on what kind of influence of charity is required for this subordination. Here we are discussing supernaturalized natural motivation, and distinguishing this into two kinds on the basis of the difference between a pure means and an intermediate end.

A pure means has goodness only from the aspect of leading to the goal or end. For this reason it can be loved not for its own sake but only out of motives of mere utility or necessity. Any love that goes toward the pure means is really a love of the end; and so in no way lessens or dilutes the intensity of the love for the end. Since the pure means has no independent goodness of itself, neither can it intensify the love for the end. For this reason Father Hugo will allow the use of creatures as pure means leading us to the knowledge and love of God, and teaches that no imperfection is involved in such use of creatures.

The intermediate end has two aspects of goodness: the fundamental one is that of being a means leading to the attainment of the ultimate end, and on account of such goodness it is loved out of motives of utility or necessity. But it possesses a secondary and additional goodness within itself of uprightness or pleasure (*bonum honestum* or *bonum delectabile*), on account of which it is loved not merely because it leads to the end, but also for the sake of its own

³³ St. Thomas, *De Malo*, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7; Herve, *op. cit.*, p. 246; Hugon, iii, pp. 271-2.

subordinate goodness. Thus, for example, a vitamin pill or K-rations might serve me the same nutritive value for preserving my health as a T-bone steak; both the K-rations and the steak have the same fundamental goodness as means to my health and God's glory, but the steak has an additional goodness of pleasing my sense of taste.

Father Hugo does not, as far as I know, expressly apply the distinction of pure means and intermediate end to the question of natural and supernaturalized motivation. But it seems to me that this is his meaning. He holds that we are counseled to place an entirely and exclusively supernatural act as far as possible, so that we should exclude any natural motivation tarrying in the creatures even as intermediate end. Any natural motivation restricts the generosity of our love toward God and is a refusal to give God the *total* love of our hearts, simply because the creature is not God, and so any love given it, is love taken from God. This is why perfection urges us to detach ourselves *really* from any creature that is not useful or necessary for our spiritual progress, and why it urges us to detach ourselves *inwardly* from any creature (even involuntary pleasure) which we do use for our perfection.

Father Hugo's critics and, I believe, most theologians disagree with this, saying that we are counseled to place a supernaturalized act, but that the morally good natural motivation may continue to influence that activity as at least a secondary and impelling motive subordinated to the supernatural end, as long as it does not restrict the generosity of our love of God. Any natural motivation restricts the generosity of our love toward God and conflicts with our perfection, in so far as it loses its subordinate role and becomes the ultimate end; for then it begins to distract our mind and affections away from God and to attract them to itself for itself and no longer as leading to God. In so far as it loses its subordinate role, it lessens and dilutes the intensity of the love for the end, drawing the love to itself instead. As long as there is no danger of its losing its subordinate role (e.g., a Saint using snuff), perfection is served just as well by supernaturalized intermediate natural motivation and the enjoyment of the creature, as it would be by supernaturalized purely mediate natural motivation or detachment from the creature, simply

because there is no lessening of the intensity of love for the end,—no preventing the swift flight of our affections to God. These theologians use the same texts from spiritual writers and Saints that Father Hugo uses; but they point out that, in practically every one of these texts, there is a condemnation only of those attachments which lessen or dilute or prevent the full growth of one's love of God,—attachments to creatures which are not keeping their subordinate role. For example, Garrigou-Lagrangé's definition of mortification extends its role to "the renouncement of things licit but not useful for us, so that *preoccupation with them may not absorb us to the detriment of divine union.*" Thus, they argue, the Saints tell us to free ourselves from any *harmful* attachment to creatures, from any attachment *opposed* to perfection. But to love creatures *in a supernaturalized way* out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity is not an imperfection, as long as there is no danger of this natural love losing its subordinate role and supernatural modality. In this sense they deny Father Hugo's conclusion, "The role of mortification is partly to curb especially the habit of loving creatures out of natural motives other than necessity and utility."

However, it should be pointed out that there is great danger of the intermediate natural motivation losing its subordinate role. Even the minds of the first parents before the fall, and of the angels in their trial, were capable of a voluntary inconsideration of the subordinate role of their natural gifts; and this voluntary inconsideration prepared the way for sin. Then how much more fallen man subject to concupiscence is a ready prey for such sweet seduction! It would be as impossible to list a concrete natural thing as "no danger here of excessive attachment," as it would be to list a creature and say "that matter is venial *ex toto genere suo*"; for a human being can be so perverse as to find its ultimate end in any creature, however trivial. We agree with Father Hugo that, in practice, men frequently follow a somewhat darkened reason,—that acts of self-indulgence do not usually come singly,—that an immoderate love of ease and vanity corrupts much that we do,—that no one can deceive us as thoroughly as we deceive ourselves. With him we agree that we need an *honest* appraisal of our affections for creatures, to see whether they are really, truly and properly subordinated to our

supernatural destiny. We disagree with him when he says that any natural motivation, even that which is supernaturalized and toward the creature as an intermediate end, is always and necessarily a moral imperfection.

Father Charles Boyer, S.J. makes a helpful remark:

Sometimes one hears or reads some who seem to think that it is a greater perfection to use the good things of nature well than to be deprived of them for the sake of mortification. It can indeed happen that a saintly person, or even one not quite so saintly but in a moment of fervor, would elicit a better act of charity when using some gift of God than by abstaining from it. However, I do not think that this is a safer path to follow, if it be ordinarily done; nor is it the way of the Saints. Here likewise the law holds, "*a thing should be used or not used according as it is for the good of charity.*" Now in our present condition charity is fostered by abstaining from earthly goods to which our hearts cling, rather than by enjoying them. It is a teaching both of the Gospels and of Tradition that we are aided unto spiritual abnegation by the real privation of goods, as long as there is no sincere reason urging otherwise. "Let each be convinced that he shall make as much progress in spiritual matters as he separates himself from his own self-love, his own will and convenience." (St. Ignatius.)³⁴

b. Regarding the practical ascetical recommendations we have already treated the first two in the course of our critique of the theoretic part of his teaching. (1) "Introduce supernatural motivation by frequently renewing the good intention." Even if this is not required to avoid sin or to supernaturalize what would otherwise be merely natural acts, it is still advisable because the more actual the intention of charity the more meritorious the act. Beginners might be warned of the impossibility of continual actual intentions of charity during life on earth.

(2) "Exclude all natural motivation, so that there is exclusively supernatural motivation." Keep any natural motivation that will foster charity. But be sincere in acknowledging and repressing any dangerous attachments for creatures, any attachments that will restrict the generous love of God.

³⁴ Boyer, S.J., Chas.: "Nature and grace in states of Perfection" in *Acta et Documenta Congressus Generalis de Statibus Perfectionis*, ii, pp. 321-322.

(3) "Interior detachment in the use of necessary creatures,"—in the sense that one rejoices in any pleasure that God allows, but without growing attached to it so that one would offend God for the sake of the pleasure, or be less generous with God when the pleasure cannot be had.

(4) Detachment and perfection. One must admit the importance of detachment in any solid Christian spirituality. Detachment is the inseparable companion of more perfect love and a sign measuring the sincerity and degree of our fervor. However I would object to the emphasis on detachment, as something that can be, and frequently is, misinterpreted by beginners in spiritual life. I much prefer Father Boyer's positive approach to the problem, "Do whatever will foster charity." With this positive rule beginners are not so likely to think that perfection consists in successively giving up smoking, drinking, games, etc., so that the more empty and void one's life is, the greater must be his love of God. I know that Father Hugo does not mean such a caricature of his doctrine, but I believe many untrained souls would get such an impression from passages like this:

Every time we remove from our hearts some attachment to a creature, however trivial this may be, we advance a step in love. Every time we mortify some desire or affection even for a good thing, we are making progress in perfection; for such attachments hinder our affections from going wholly and at once to God.³⁵

In the practical application of the doctrine of detachment to souls, supernatural prudence must be exercised. Now prudence judges all means in relation to the finis. Since the goal of such direction is the steady and prudently rapid advance of the soul in perfection, a wise direction of consciences will insist that beginners in the spiritual life avoid an extreme bodily mortification in favor of a less severe but more lasting practice of detachment. In this way he makes sure of continual effort at perfection, rather than allowing a sudden burst of energy that mortifies all bodily cravings, only to lapse, after a time, into a state of complete indulgence. This is the rule given us by St. Alphonsus:

³⁵ *Applied Christianity*, p. 55.

Transported with a certain fervor, by which the Almighty animates their zeal for virtue, beginners are often very indiscreet in their fasts and other works of penance. Their rigors sometimes bring on infirmities, which disqualify them for the duties of the Community, and sometimes make them give up all exercises of piety. . . . St. Francis de Sales used to say to his nuns of the Visitation, that "continual moderation is better than fits of violent abstinence interspersed with occasional excesses. Besides, such abstinences make us esteem ourselves more holy than others who do not practice them." It is certainly the duty of all to avoid indiscretion, but it has been justly remarked by a great spiritual master (and the remark deserves attention), that the spirit seldom deceives us by suggesting excessive mortifications; while the flesh, under false pretences, frequently claims pity, and procures an exemption from what is displeasing to its inclinations. . . . It is certainly better to practice small and frequent works of penance, than to perform rare and extraordinary fasts, and afterwards lead an unmortified life.³⁶

Thus perfection is found in the greater intensity of charity, for charity is the bond of perfection. The true meaning of detachment is, then, expressed in the prayer, "Detach me, O Lord, from all else that would be incompatible with or lessen and dilute my love for Thee."

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Digest of the Discussion:

Prenote: It may be noted that some questions in the discussion period have been answered in the paper. In fairness to the questioners it should be pointed out that there was time to read only a digest of the paper, so that many questions answered in the written paper were not mentioned in the oral presentation. Moreover, the record of this discussion is a summary, rather than a direct quotation of what was said.

Father Augustine Hennessy, C.P. of Baltimore, Md.: "I have two questions. First, would you care to comment on what Father Hugo has called the 'sin-mentality' of some authors? I believe some in their explanation of mortification have concentrated unduly on this aspect. What would you think? Secondly, Father Hugo says that in the just man there can be found three kinds of deliberate acts: (1) sinful acts, (2) meritorious acts, (3) merely natural acts, which are neither sinful nor meritorious, although they are morally good. Is this essential to his system? And would you agree or disagree that there are in the concrete some merely natural acts?"

Father Coyle: "The 'sin-mentality' seems to mean a concern only with avoiding sin without a concern to grow in the love of God. Certainly many lay-persons in our country have such an attitude. And the presumption would be that they have learned it from the emphasis preachers and instructors have placed on avoiding sin, without a balancing emphasis on the positive side of Christianity. Such an attitude has probably found its way into some popular spiritual treatises. But I do not know of any scientific treatise of Christian spirituality that does not emphasize the striving after perfection, and emphasize the importance of charity in such perfection.

"Regarding the second question, Is there in the just man a merely natural act that is neither demeritorious nor meritorious? This is a part of Father Hugo's system, but not a vital part, for he is willing to by-pass this theoretic question by saying, 'Well, at least it would have very little merit; the practical rule is therefore, to introduce a supernatural motivation to make it highly meritorious.' He implies that only the Jesuit theologians (like Noldin) and those who hold habitual influence of charity is sufficient for merit, would hold also that every deliberate act of the just man is either sinful or meritorious. But this is not true, for Herve, Hugon, VanRoey, and countless others who demand a virtual influence of charity for condign merit, hold also that every deliberate act of the just man is either sinful or condignly meritorious (with one small area of possible exception). Herve even calls this the common and certain opinion of theologians. Personally, I would deny the existence of any such merely natural acts placed by a just man."

Father Louis J. Trevison, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel parish, Wickliffe, Ohio: "Here are two persons in the state of grace. Now if you say that every good deliberate act they place is meritorious, how do you explain moral imperfections?"

Father Coyle: "I am not sure I understand your question. I presume you mean these two persons have the same degree of grace and charity. The mere fact that they both possess the same degree of the habit of charity does not mean that their acts are equally meritorious. For one may be acting to the full intensity of his charity, while the other one is acting remissly. There are *many* factors which increase the merit of an act. The degree of the habit of charity is probably one; the degree of influence of charity on the act is another. The one who places a remiss act of charity places a meritorious act, but the act is a moral imperfection from the score of its remissness."

Father Trevison: "How about the soundness of Father Hugo's doctrine on the need of supernaturalizing motives?"

Father Coyle: "It is sound to this extent, that some subordination to the supernatural ultimate end must be had for the act to be condignly meritorious. I have stayed clear of the controversy on whether this in-

fluence of charity can be merely habitual, or whether an habitual or virtual intention is needed. Father Hugo wants a conscious supernatural motivation or else the act remains merely natural. I do not think he is correct in this. I personally hold that a virtual intention is needed, but that this is much more simply realized than Father Hugo's conscious supernatural motivation. Since he was willing to by-pass this particular controversy in favor of the practical rule, 'Renew the good intention frequently; it will make the act at least more meritorious,' I was also willing to by-pass that controversy. We have enough controversial matter without that."

Father Trevison: "Why then do you object to his doctrine?"

Father Coyle: "I object to his doctrine that teaches it is necessarily morally imperfect for me to go to God through creatures with equal intensity as when I go to God directly. It may be that he does not teach this, but that is what his doctrine seems to me to mean. I think my act of loving God supernaturally through creatures, even though I do not need to use them here and now, is just as perfect as my act of loving God directly, as far as the perfection of charity is concerned."

Father Trevison: "Would you say, then, that it is better to go to week-day Mass than to offer up the hour of added and un-needed sleep?"

Father Coyle: "I said before that many factors contribute to the greater merit of an act. The intensity of charity is one such factor. And from the score of the intensity of charity I think I *can* love God just as perfectly at times by loving Him in conjunction with creatures subordinated to Him, as I can by loving Him directly. The objective excellence of the act is another factor increasing merit, so that all else being equal it is more perfect to go to Mass than to offer up the sleep of which one would otherwise be deprived."

Father Trevison: "Would you say that Father Hugo's doctrine is unsound and dangerous?"

Father Coyle: "I do not think that Father Hugo's doctrine has been condemned by the Church even by implication, if that is what you mean. I do think that it is wrong, opposed to the more sound opinion of theologians. I think it can be dangerous in the sense that some persons who are beginners in the spiritual life might be misled by its vigorous statements to place an undue and even harmful emphasis on detachment. Priests, perhaps because of their theological training or perhaps for less noble reasons, are not so inclined to misinterpret something like this."

Father Hugh O'Connell, C.S.S.R., of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin: "The way I understand it—and I have not read any of Father Hugo's writings, but I have come into contact with some priests who have made retreats under him, and so forth—it comes down to a matter of a prudential judgment. He seems to say that it is imperfect for a priest to smoke, or go to ball games, or to own a car."

Father Coyle: "I do not think that you can truthfully say Father Hugo

holds that, at least not quite so simply. He allows recreation and so forth to the extent that it is necessary or useful for charity. Anything beyond that is at least an imperfection. At least that is the interpretation I would take from his writings."

Father Trevison: "I think it would be only fair to the Fathers here in the room and to Father Hugo himself to let him answer that question For he is present here in this room."

Father Coyle: "I would be most happy to let Father Hugo answer the question. I had no idea that he was here. I had invited him to attend but did not know whether he would be able to make it. I would like to know whether I have accurately represented his doctrine. Would Father Hugo please identify himself?"

Father Hugo: "Father Coyle, I want to thank you for your extremely fair presentation of the case. As you know, when I first wrote I suddenly found myself being condemned of heresy, bracketed with Manicheans and Albigensians, with Baius and more recently with Luther. I was accused of teaching that creatures are evil; a thing I have never taught; indeed I stated the contrary; that creatures are good, that they are reflections of the good God, countless times. Contrary to the statement of a few minutes ago, I own a car. However, there are some minor points which I would like to clear up.

"(1) I insist on the obligation of the first commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind and with all thy strength.' This command obliges us, not under counsel, but under precept to total perfection as an end to be striven after.

"(2) I teach that the conflict between the natural and supernatural motives is a conflict in the practical order, in the concrete order in which man lives and in which he must work out his salvation. And I point out that, in that practical order, love for creatures withdraw souls from God. For that reason the spiritual writers say that love for creatures is darkness. And they say that we should not have any love for creatures.

"(3) You remarked that a virtual intention is sufficient for the supernaturalization of deliberate good acts. I have not maintained that any more was required as a moral obligation. But I have urged the need of the good intention, of the supernatural motivation, as an ascetical necessity. And this St. Alphonsus teaches—that the good intention is an ascetical necessity.

"(4) I would object to the wording of your second minor, the one which reads, 'To love creatures out of a natural motive other than utility or necessity is at least a moral imperfection.' I would admit that creatures can be used for love of the good. And I would substitute, 'To love creatures out of affections for creatures other than utility or necessity is at least a moral imperfection.' This is the teaching of St. Thomas, 1-2, q. 108,

'Now man is placed between the things of this world, and spiritual goods wherein eternal happiness consists; so that the more he cleaves to the one, the more he withdraws from the other, and conversely. . . . Nevertheless, for man to gain the end aforesaid, he does not need to renounce the things of the world altogether; since he can, while using the things of this world, attain to eternal happiness, provided he does not place his end in them; but he will attain more speedily thereto by giving up the goods of this world entirely; wherefore the evangelical counsels are given for this purpose.' (a. 4, c) Here then, is a concrete formula for increasing in the love of God. We are naturally worldly and have to fight it. That is the reason that Father Faber tells us that the best use of creatures is to give them up if we can and if there is no obligation to use them.

"(5) You, Father Coyle, glided very quickly over the question of the primary motive of mortification, and said that it was not an important part of the controversy. I believe it is of paramount importance, for it is on this that my critics base their attack. Let me read from Father Parente, pp. 94-95, 'A recent Catholic writer (he means me, Father Hugo, though he does not name me) has said that sin is only a secondary reason for mortification and that mortification would be necessary even if there were no actual sin, for we must die, not merely to sin, but to the natural. Here the question does not concern the necessity of mortification, on which we all agree, but on its motive. We do not practice mortification for mortification's sake. (A proposition which I have never held.) It is a bitter and unpleasant thing. We do not take a distasteful medicine for its own sake, but to regain health. Mortification has the same function; we practice it because of sin, which is a deadly disease of the soul. *If there were no sin or danger of sin, there would be no reason for mortification.*' Contrast that with what Garrigou-Lagrange has written in *Love of God and the Cross of Jesus*, i, p. 261. 'Mortification is the destruction of sin and its consequences, *the renouncement of things licit but not useful for us*, so that pre-occupation with them may not absorb us to the detriment of divine union.' And on p. 300, '(Our supernatural end) requires even the mortification of natural activity which, though not plainly reprehensible, would not hesitate to push its own development to the detriment to the life of grace.'"

Father Coyle: "I have explained in my paper why I considered this question of the primary motive as a less important part of the controversy. I pointed out there that the very next sentence of Father Parente's book shows he rejects this proposition of yours because your axiom, 'We must die not merely to sin, but to the natural,' seems to imply that, apart from sin, nature is evil."

Father Augustine Hennessy, C.P. of Baltimore, Md.: "Many theologians, to whose arguments I feel forced to assent, declare that all imperfections are venial sins. Father Hugo seems to say that to allow a

natural love for creatures to enter into the motivation of our actions is an imperfection, but not a venial sin. The problem might be put concretely: Is Vermeersch too lenient when he says that an act can be morally good if it is immediately, but not principally and exclusively moved by pleasure? Are not some actions useful precisely because they are pleasurable, e. g. to offer a drink to a friend when he comes to your house? Or, to put the question in a different way: What is the difference between the ultimate end of venial sin in the concrete and the ultimate end of a moral imperfection?"

Father Hugo: "It is a moral imperfection to make pleasure the voluntary end of our actions. What might be called 'the pleasure mentality' is opposed to the true striving for Christian perfection. However, since the matter is disputed among theologians I do not wish to be drawn into a discussion as to the difference between venial sin and imperfections."

Father Gerard Owens, C.S.S.R. of Woodstock, Canada: "Does not the demand for a supernatural motive of charity in every good action exclude the moral goodness of attrition which justifies with the sacraments, even though it implies not a motive of charity, but a less perfect motive?"

Father Hugo: "Even attrition demands a preference of God above the creature."

Father Owens: "Yes, but this is not charity."

Father Hugo: "Attrition implies hope which is the beginning of love."

Father Hugh O'Connell, C.S.S.R. of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin: "As time is running out, before we close, I would like a clarification of the doctrine that 'nothing is to be loved except God.' Does this exclude only the love of creatures in so far as this is in conflict with the love of God, or does it mean the exclusion of the love of creatures, even when this love is not opposed to the love of God? For example, may I love my mother as my mother?"

Father Hugo: "That would be a moral imperfection."

Father O'Connell: "But suppose I love my mother as my mother, and as a child of God?"

Father Hugo: "That would still be a moral imperfection."

Father O'Connell: "What would be said then of Christ's love for His Mother as His Mother?"

Father Hugo: "It would be morally imperfect for Christ to love His Mother as His mother."

Here time ran out, and the discussion was brought to a close.

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