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HUGH OF ST. VICTOR ON "JESUS WEPT": COMPASSION AS IDEAL *HUMANITAS*

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In his brief, On the Four Wills in Christ, *Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) offers a carefully nuanced depiction of Jesus' human nature that showcases his human capacity for compassion. Hugh is keen, however, not only to underscore Jesus' human capacity for compassion but also to identify such fellow-feeling as the signature attribute of ideal human nature. Accordingly, one finds throughout the Victorine's corpus that, on this christological basis, Hugh advocates an ethic of compassion for human beings generally.*

TOWARD THE END OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY, interest in the humanity of Jesus surged markedly throughout Europe. Poets, preachers, artists, and monks, in places such as London, Paris, and Rome, gave expression to this apparently deep and widespread shift in religious feeling. Reflecting and extending this development in the twelfth century, theologians as diverse as Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux placed Christ's humanity at the center of their theological reflection and spiritual devotion, a move later medieval generations would emulate.[1] The manifold conceptions of Jesus' humanity produced in what has been called "the

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[1] The literature on this theme is immense. In the middle of the previous century, R. W. Southern observed: "This power of St. Anselm and St. Bernard to give varied and coherent expression to the perceptions and aspirations which they shared with their contemporaries is most clearly seen in their treatment of the central theme of Christian thought: the life of Christ and the meaning of the Crucifixion. The theme of tenderness and compassion for the sufferings and helplessness of the Saviour of the world was one which had a new birth in the monasteries of the eleventh century, and every century since then has paid tribute to the monastic inspiration of this century by some new development of this theme" (R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* [New Haven: Yale University, 1953] 231). See also Rachel Fulton,

uncompromisingly christocentric period of Western civilization"[2] are, however, understudied.[3] Neither their rich diversity nor their distinctive insights have been adequately appreciated.[4]

Less commonly noted by medieval scholars is a particular aspect of Christ's humanity that attracted both theological scrutiny and devotional reflection, namely, the nature of his psyche. The psychological dimension of Jesus' humanity drew the attention of many, prompting questions regarding his capacity to feel or experience such things as fear, joy, sadness, and anger.[5] In their terminology, medievals began to speculate on Christ's affectivity. To be sure, interest in his affectivity was not a medieval innovation. Earlier writers, including Hilary,[6] Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine,

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From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200 (New York: Columbia University, 2002). For later developments, see Ellen M. Ross, *The Grief of God: Images of the Suffering Jesus in Late Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University, 1997) and Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, n.s. 61 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002).

[2] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study of Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1957) 61. More precisely, Kantorowicz intends "roughly, the monastic period from 900 to A.D. 1100" (61). That the scope of his observation deserves to be extended somewhat will be born out below.

[3] In his now classic study of images of Jesus in the Christian tradition, Jaroslav Pelikan highlighted this medieval diversity of views of Jesus. Taking a somewhat different tack, I attempt a bit of historical theology: theological, both in that I treat an explicitly theological topic (Christology) and in that I presume the topic's perduring theological value; historical, both in that I confine myself to a particular part of the Middle Ages and that in so doing I hope to contribute to the understanding of this historical period, since "the way any particular age has depicted Jesus is often the key to the genius of that age" (Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* [New Haven: Yale University, 1985] 3).

[4] Jeffrey E. Brower suggests that "it is problems with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation that prompted medievals to develop the notions of substance and person in striking and original ways" (Jeffrey E. Brower and Kevin Guilfoy, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Abelard* [New York: Cambridge University, 2004] 223).

[5] As Gondreau observes, anger is the emotion most frequently attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. Gondreau tallies 5 explicit and 25 implicit indications of Jesus' anger (*Passions of Christ's Soul* 36–37).

[6] Hilary of Poitiers (315–367) gives Christ's suffering "a glorified twist by refusing to acknowledge the psychical impact of such suffering. For Hilary, Christ suffered in a purely physical or somatic manner, without even the psychical perception of the pain his body was enduring, as if Christ's body was entirely anesthetized—he endured the physical injury but felt nothing" (Gondreau, *Passions of Christ's Soul* 49). In Hilary's own words: "He felt the force of passion, but without its pain (*dolorem*)" and "had not a nature that could feel pain (*ad dolendum*)" (*De Trinitate* 10.23–27, and 47 (CCSL 62A, 477–501; cited in Gondreau, *Passions of Christ's Soul* 49). Most medieval authors (including Aquinas) while demurring on Hilary's position, allow him a "*benigna interpretatio*" (ibid. 50–51).

and John of Damascus,[7] had proffered various (and variously influential) opinions on the matter. But scholars have noted a certain patristic reserve toward Christ's emotions.[8] By contrast, many medievals pursued the matter with vigor. No merely curious speculation, moreover, their careful probing of Jesus' psyche often emerged from a desire to identify personally and experientially with him in his humanity. For many, Christ's affectivity was paradigmatic of ideal human affectivity generally. A striking instance of these developments may be found in the writings of Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141).

Paul Gondreau has recently published an analysis of Christ's passions in the thought of Thomas Aquinas.[9] A glance at this study will help to situate Hugh's distinctive contribution to the topic. As Gondreau shows, Thomas devoted considerable attention to Christ's affectivity. For my present purpose, however, I note that what Thomas omitted highlights by its absence the particular theme so central to Hugh. Strikingly, Thomas did not consider the compassion of Jesus.[10] Despite ample scriptural attestation to this emotion—including repeated Gospel references to his compassion;[11] Paul's reference in Philippians 1:8 to the *visceribus Christi Iesu*, "the tender compassion of Christ Jesus" (New Living); and references in the book of Hebrews to Christ's high priestly capacity to "co-suffer" (*conpati* in Heb 4:15)

[7] As Gondreau notes: "In what will become standard for the scholastic discussion," John of Damascus "restricts the scope of inquiry to only those passions in Christ that ensue upon the sense perception of some evil, such as fear, agony, sorrow, and the like, and hence, to those passions that bring about suffering, or those passions that emerge as consequences of sin" (ibid. 66).

[8] Patristic reflection on the human nature of Christ, while affirming the reality and fullness thereof and establishing basic parameters for christological orthodoxy, did not approach an exhaustive treatment of the matter. Moreover, especially in regard to Christ's suffering, patristic thinkers evinced a certain hesitation regarding what might appear to be the straightforward implications of affirming an integral human nature in Jesus. Torrell observes that "the general influence of Stoic philosophy, with its estimation of the passions as sicknesses of the soul, offered little encouragement to Christian thinkers to pause and reflect on Christ's human feelings." Augustine, however, "reverses this course" and "adopts a decidedly properipatetic attitude" and thereby lays the foundation for further medieval investigation of the topic (ibid. 8).

[9] See n. 1 above. As Gondreau demonstrates in his study, and Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., underscores in its preface, Thomas distinguished himself from his Scholastic contemporaries in the *Tertia pars* of his *Summa theologiae* (hereafter, *ST)* by focusing on the whole of Christ's earthly life and ministry.

[10] Torrell observes that "curiously, Aquinas never speaks of compassion or pity with respect to Christ, even though [Thomas] clearly defines it as a kind of sorrow over an evil that befalls another" (preface to Gondreau, *Passions of Christ's Soul* 13).

[11] See Mt 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34; Mk 1:40–4, 6:34, 8:2; Lk 7:13, 10:33.

and "co-sorrow" (*condolore* in Heb 5:2) with human weakness[12]—the Dominican does not treat this theme. By contrast, Christ's compassion is richly developed in the writings of his Franciscan contemporaries, especially Bonaventure.[13] He is, however, by no means the first medieval author to do so. Indeed, looking back to his teacher, Alexander of Hales,[14] and even further, an identifiable current of thought is visible, wending its way back to the early twelfth century. Standing at the headwaters of this speculation on Christ's compassion stands an understudied treatise of Hugh's entitled, *A Little Book on the Four Wills in Christ*.[15] Occupying only six columns in the *Patrologia Latina*, this brief work seems to be the first medieval treatise devoted to the theme of Christ's compassion.[16]

This theme of Christ's compassion in medieval theological discourse has not been sufficiently noted, let alone explored.[17] Nor, despite Rachel Fulton's recent work, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200*,[18] has the more general theme of affective participation with the experience of another in the Middle Ages been adequately

[12] In the New Revised Standard Version these verses read as follows: Phil 1:8: "For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus"; Heb 4:15: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses"; Heb 5:2: "He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness."

[13] See P.-Augustin Sepinski, *La psychologie du Christ chez saint Bonaventure* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948).

[14] See Boyd Taylor Coolman, "The Salvific Affectivity of Christ according to Alexander of Hales," *Thomist* 71 (2007) 1–38.

[15] Hugh of St. Victor, *De quatuor voluntatibus in Christo libellus* (PL 176.841b–846c) (hereafter, *Quat. volunt*.). All translations of *Quat. volunt* are mine. Gondreau mentions Hugh briefly (*Passions of Christ's Soul* 73–76), noting his importance in the medieval discussion of Christ's affectivity and his influence in this regard on later thinkers, especially on Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, and Aquinas (who cites Hugh's *Quat. volunt*. in both the *Scriptum* on the *Sentences* [*In III. Sent*., d. 17, a. 1 sol. 3, obj. 6; d. 17, a. 3, sol. 4, ad 2] and in *ST* 3, q. 18, a. 3 c).

[16] Lactantius's (240–320) fourth-century *Divinae institutiones* (6.10–16) contains what appears to be the closest prior (and perhaps only) instance of similar attention to this theme.

[17] Ellen Ross's *Grief of God* and various works on Julian of Norwich (including Robert Llewelyn, *With Pity Not with Blame: Reflections on the Writing of Julian of Norwich and on The Cloud of Unknowing* [London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1982]; Margaret Ann Palliser, O.P., *Christ, Our Mother of Mercy: Divine Mercy and Compassion in the Theology of the 'Shewings' of Julian of Norwich* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992]; Sister Mary Paul, *All Shall Be Well: Julian of Norwich and the Compassion of God* [Oxford: SLG, 1976]; and Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "Order, Freedom, and 'Kindness': Julian of Norwich on the Edge of Modernity," *Theology Today* 60 [2003] 63–81) are exceptions to this claim, though these works consider only the later medieval period in England.

[18] See n. 1 above.

analyzed.[19] Fulton illustrates well the current state of scholarship, as she focuses on the passion of Jesus and the corresponding compassion of his mother. For Fulton, Jesus' physical suffering (*patiens*) is mirrored by Mary's psychological co-suffering (*compatiens*). Fulton argues that Mary, in her own compassion, was seen by many as the model of appropriate emotional response to Christ's suffering. Indeed, much of the scholarly work on compassion in the Middle Ages has focused on Mary's compassionate response to her suffering Son.[20] While Marian compassion is certainly a significant aspect of medieval devotion to Christ's humanity, and while the medievals, like their early church counterparts, were certainly interested in Christ's passion, the simple binary, "Jesus suffers: Mary co-suffers" (hence the passion of Christ and the compassion of Mary), risks obscuring the theme of Christ's own compassion, widely attested in the theological literature of the 12th and 13th centuries.[21]

In *On the Four Wills in Christ*, Hugh pursues a unified account of Christ's psychical experience of anticipated suffering and death, as described in the Gospels. He attempts to integrate the diverse scriptural witness to Christ's human affectivity into a coherent psychological portrait of his human experience of this event. More precisely, Hugh strives to make christological sense, not primarily of Jesus' apparent fear and unwillingness to suffer physical pain (a more traditional concern), but of his apparent experience of compassionate commiseration for lost human beings, for whom he weeps as he approaches Jerusalem. Furthermore, in contrast to traditional attempts to account for Jesus' fear of death, which are typically motivated by the commentator's anxiety over this emotion in Jesus,[22] it is in fact Hugh's high estimation of compassion as the proper and signature feature of Jesus' humanity that prompts him not only to make christological sense

[19] Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2006) and Lisa Perfetti, ed., *The Representation of Women's Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2006) reflect an emerging scholarly interest in this theme.

[20] The theme of Mary's compassion was the subject of much medieval art, poetry, and literature, as well as theological reflection and devotional imitation. See Amy Neff, "The Pain of Compassio: Mary's Labor at the Foot of the Cross," *Art Bulletin* 80 (1998) 254–73.

[21] The theme of Christ's compassion, besides being found in the writings of the 13th-century Franciscans Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure, is also found in the writings of 12th-century authors from a variety of religious milieus, monastic, canonical, and clerical: for example, Peter Damian, Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, Gilbert of Hoyland, Nicholas of Clairvaux, and Geoffrey of Admont.

[22] See Gondreau, *Passions* 403–14, for Thomas's treatment of Christ's fear in relation to his medieval and patristic sources that are deeply ambivalent about this emotion in Christ.

of Jesus' tears, but also to hold up Jesus as exemplar of such human affectivity.

FOUR WILLS IN CHRIST?

At first glance, Hugh's reference to four wills in Christ is perplexing. The ecumenical councils of the later patristic period had, of course, endorsed the view of two wills in Christ, one divine, one human. With Hugh, classical christological orthodoxy seems to have been oddly multiplied. In fact, he is not pushing the limits of dogma, but attempting to clarify it with respect to Christ's human affectivity. So, regarding the divine will, he says little, except that it specifically pertains to the divine intention that Christ should suffer and die in order to satisfy the requirements of justice pursuant to human salvation: "The divine will dictated the intention [*sententiam*] [that Christ die] according to justice."[23] About the human will, though, Hugh is expansive, contending that, precisely speaking, the human will should be considered threefold:[24] *secundum rationem*, *secundum pietatem*, and *secundum carnem*.[25] Before these terms can be rendered accurately into English, some initial analysis is required. As with the divine will, Hugh analyzes these modes of human willing in relation to Christ's suffering and death.

Hugh begins with the will *secundum rationem*. Best rendered "according to reason" or "rational human will," this part of Christ's human will agrees with and readily submits to the divine will that he himself suffer and die to satisfy justice: "the rational will [*voluntas rationis*] approved the truth [of divine justice] through obedience."[26] Quoting Matthew 26:41, "the spirit indeed is willing,"[27] Hugh says, "the spirit was inclined toward the suffering of its flesh through the rational will, following the ordering of the divine will."[28]

Scripture also attests to Christ's fearful hesitation in the face of his passion; Hugh ascribes this hesitation to the will *secundum carnem*, "ac-

[23] *Quat. volunt.* (PL 176.841b).

[24] Hugh also distinguishes three human wills in his *De archa Noe*, though with a slightly different conception and not in relationship to Christ. See Hugh of St. Victor, *De archa Noe: Libellus de formatione arche*, ed. Patrice Sicard, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001); English translation: Hugh of St. Victor, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. by a Religious of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin (CSVM), intro. Aelred Squire, Classics of the Contemplative Life (London: Faber & Faber, 1962); cited hereafter as *Archa Noe*, book and chapter, followed by page and line number in Sicard's edition, and by page number in CSVM. Except where noted, all translations of *De archa Noe* are CSVM's. For the discussion of three human wills, see *De archa Noe* 1.17 (Sicard 30–32.179–236; CSVM 70–71).

[25] *Quat. volunt.* (PL 176.841b).

[26] Ibid. (PL 176.841b).

[27] Ibid. (PL 176.841c).

[28] Ibid. (PL 176.841d).

cording to the flesh." This will (*voluntas carnis*), he says, "groaned over its own evil through suffering [*passionem*]."[29] Hugh does not intend *caro* here in the Pauline sense of "the flesh," which arrays itself sinfully against the divine will. Rather, he means the body's natural, even instinctive, resistance to physical suffering. Taking up the latter part of Matthew 26:41, Hugh describes it thus: "On account of the will of the flesh, which, fearing the suffering on account of weakness, resisted punishment, Christ said: *but the flesh is weak*." Hugh continues: "Now the weak flesh resisted suffering by means of the natural providence that caused [it] to hate its own evil."[30] For Hugh, this fleshly resistance to suffering is divinely intended and providentially implanted within embodied creatures as part of their natural constitution.[31]

JESUS' *VOLUNTAS PIETATIS*

It may be surprising, however, to learn that this particular psychological tension in Christ regarding his passion—the rational will consenting, the fleshly will dissenting—is not Hugh's primary concern. Of far greater interest, engaging him for the remainder of the treatise, is the third mode of human willing, Jesus' will *secundum pietatem* or simply the *voluntas pietatis*.[32] This term is the most difficult to render accurately into English. Hugh's use of at least three other synonyms suggests the complexity of the notion. An initial description begins to clarify his meaning. In Christ, he says, the *voluntas pietatis* "sighed deeply over another's evil through co-suffering."[33] Several words in this description require comment.

"Evil" renders the Latin "*malum*," which might also be translated "adversity," since at points Hugh seems to have in mind that which befalls someone, whether deservedly or not. "Sighed deeply" renders "*suspirare*,"

[29] Ibid. (PL 176.841c).

[30] Ibid. (PL 176.841c–d).

[31] Hugh sums up the relationship between these various wills thus: "According to the divine will disposing in advance, and according to the rational will approving and following the divine disposition, Christ willed to suffer. But according to the fleshly will, which he had naturally insofar as he was a man, he did not will to suffer, because he did not hate his own flesh." This situation "was not contrary to the divine will; for even that very thing which [the will of the flesh] did not will was of the divine will not to will it." For Hugh, then, each of these wills has its proper object: the rational will rightly willing what the divine will dictates regarding the necessity of suffering; the fleshly will rightly and, as it were, naturally willing its own self-preservation as divine providence had ordained that it should. *Quat. volunt.* [PL 176.841d].

[32] Ibid. (PL 176.841b).

[33] Ibid. (PL 176.841b–c). "Voluntas pietatis per compassionem in malo alieno suspirabat."

which may carry some of the psychosomatic resonance of "*viscera*," used in the Latin translation of the New Testament to describe the feeling of compassion.[34] Finally, "co-suffering" here renders Hugh's "*compassio*," which could, of course, also be translated as "compassion." But "compassion," especially since the middle of the 17th century, is used with a dizzying array of meanings,[35] which may or may not be consonant with Hugh's meaning. The woodenly literal "co-suffering" is nevertheless useful in forming a contrasting parallel with "suffering," used consistently here to render Hugh's "*passio*." Frequently, Hugh relates "*passio*" to "*compassio*" in various ways, which is more apparent in translation when these are rendered "suffering" and "co-suffering" respectively. Nonetheless, "co-suffering" risks collapsing the distinction between the one who suffers and the one who is affected psychically by it. With all this in mind, I sometimes render *compassio* as "co-suffering" and sometimes as "compassion," despite its attendant ambiguities. From this initial description, accordingly, it is apparent that Hugh's *voluntas pietatis* entails a compassionate, psychosomatic response to the evil that befalls another. More must be said, but

[34] See Dana Radcliffe, "Compassion and Commanded Love," *Faith and Philosophy* 11 (1994) 50–71. Radcliffe notes that in the Gospel parable, the good Samaritan responds with compassion (*esplagchnisthe*), "an emotion which moves a man to the very depths of his being" (quoting William Barclay in ibid. 66 n. 4—from the verb *splagchnizomai*, "to be moved in one's bowels" (quoting Elizabeth Achtemeier in ibid. 67 n. 6), "a sympathetic emotional response to the other man's condition, a response which immediately led to action" (50). Radcliffe defines compassion, accordingly, as "a commiserative emotional reaction to human pain and suffering," or "an affective sensitivity to human need that, in appropriate circumstances, gives rise to benevolent actions" (51). The prodigal son's father responds with the same compassion. As noted above (n. 11) the New Testament attributes the same response to Jesus in Matthew 9:35–38; 14:13–14; 15:32; 20:29–34; Mark 1:40–4, 6:34, 8:2; and Luke 7:11–17, 10:33. James Gustafson speaks of "an affective sensibility which made [Jesus] identify with the needy, the immoral person, the victim of prejudice" (quoted in Radcliffe, "Compassion" 66 n. 5). Achtemeier (in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Mercy, Merciful; Compassion, Pity") notes that "the Hebrews regarded [the bowels] as the center of the tenderer affections, especially of kindness, benevolence, and pity. The bowels were for them equivalent to our heart as the seat of compassion. When Jesus was confronted with human need, the New Testament therefore says he was moved in his bowels—that is, he had pity and compassion." For his part, Helmut Köster (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 7:548–59, at 554) argues that the application of *splagchnon*, *splagchnizomai*, etc. to Jesus is meant to characterize him as "the Messiah in whom divine mercy is present" (quoted in Radcliffe, "Compassion" 67 n. 6).

[35] See the discussion in Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University, 2001) 301–4. See also Peter J. Rosan, "The Varieties of Ethical Experience: Empathy, Sympathy, and Compassion," unpublished paper presented at the Psychology for the Other Seminar, Seattle University, October 18–19, 2003.

what is also apparent is that the contemporary English cognate "piety," though etymologically related, is conceptually unhelpful, even if Hugh's meaning here finds its classical roots in something that might be rendered "piety."[36] What then does Hugh mean by *pietas*?[37]

As with the other wills, Hugh seeks in the Gospel accounts a warrant for positing this will in Christ and finds it in two pericopes. The first is Luke's account of Christ weeping over Jerusalem: "When he approached Jerusalem, seeing the city he wept" (Lk 19:41).[38] Hugh asks: "Why did he weep if he was not mourning?" What was Jesus mourning? The perdition of the city's inhabitants. "If he was mournful concerning the perdition of [the city's inhabitants], he did not will their perdition."[39] Hugh interprets Jesus' tears as an expression of felt sorrow over the eternal fate of Jerusalem's unbelieving inhabitants, which he does not will, *secundum pietatem*. The second text is the account of Jesus' emotional turmoil at the death of Lazarus in John 11. Hugh notes carefully the language with which John describes Jesus' emotional response to this death. Hugh's text reads: "Jesus groaned in spirit and troubled (*turbavit*) himself" (Jn 11:38). "Attend to this," Hugh admonishes: "How did he trouble himself? What was that troubling by which Jesus troubled himself?" This *turbatio*—literally, "a disturbance"—was, Hugh argues, due to "*pietas*," which he then glosses as

[36] This interpretation does not, of course, reduce or restrict medieval (or even Hugonian) uses of "*pietas*" to the meaning apparently intended by Hugh in this work. Before and after Hugh, "*pietas*" can and does contain the Vergilian meaning of "piety," "duty," "religious obligation to God and/or neighbor." Nor does it suggest that "*pietas*" is the only term used by Hugh or other medieval authors for the characteristic here under consideration, as will be evident below. It does, however, imply that "*pietas*" can acquire a semantic range of meanings, as apparently here, that is both distinguishable from classical usage and largely absent from the connotations that today surround the English "piety."

[37] George H. Williams notes that "in the Romance languages a different transposition between the human and the divine turned the Latin *pietas*—primarily the dutiful or loving conduct of the devout toward the divine and toward the public good, and only secondarily, clemency and compassion—into *pietà*, *piedad*, *pitié*, whence the English *pity*. It is almost exclusively compassion toward the pitiable, the mercy of the devout toward those who cry out, an attribute of deity being thereby assumed by the devout toward fellow human beings and by extension to other creatures" ("Mercy in the Grounding of a Non-Elitist Ecological Ethic," in *Festschrift in Honor of Charles Speel*, ed. Thomas J. Sienkewicz and James E. Betts [Monmouth, Ill.: Monmouth College, 1997] 24–51, at 29 [http://department.monm.edu/classics/Speel_Festschrift/williams.htm (accessed November 22, 2007)]). This transposition is largely a medieval development, which has not been fully explored, though James D. Garrison's *Pietas from Vergil to Dryden* (University Park: Penn State University, 1992) provides a helpful overview. That this shift in the meaning of *pietas* is quite visible in Hugh's thought will be confirmed below.

[38] *Quat. volunt.* (PL 176.842b).

[39] Ibid. (PL 176.842b).

"*miseratio*" (commiseration). He then asks: "Is he who is moved by *pietas* rightly troubled with a good troubling?" His answer is yes: Jesus troubled himself as he "willingly [*sponte*] received commiseration."[40] Hugh concludes: "So also Jesus, in his assumed humanity . . . bore both suffering in body [*passionem in carne*] and co-suffering in mind [*compassionem in mente*], according to the property of humanity [*secundum proprietatem humanitatis*]."[41]

In this treatise Hugh is impressed as much with Jesus' co-suffering in his compassion as with his suffering in his passion, as is evident in the rhetorical cadence of this passage:

> For this reason, the God-man, who came to remove both suffering and co-suffering, endured both. He took on suffering in the flesh [*passionem in carne*]; he took on co-suffering in mind [*compassionem in mente*]. In both, he willed to languish for us, so that he might heal us who were languishing. He was weakened by suffering in his penalty; he was weakened by co-suffering with another's misery [*compassione in miseria aliena*]. He bore his passion that he might die for those who were going to die; he bore compassion that he might weep for those who were going to perish. For the sake of misery, he handed over his flesh to passion; for the sake of heart-misery [*propter misericordiam*], he stirred up his own soul to compassion. In his own flesh he was pained for us by his passion; in his own mind he co-sorrowed for us [*condoluit nobis*] by compassion.[42]

Hugh is himself patently moved by Jesus' tears and willing acceptance of commiseration and compassion for fallen humanity. His consistent pairing of "passion" and "compassion" suggests that for him the intensity of the latter matches that of the former: to whatever extent Jesus suffered physically, he also co-suffered psychically. In this light, then, the "*voluntas pietatis*" that Hugh sees in the weeping, troubled Jesus is best captured by the phrase "will of tender pity," which preserves an etymological link while highlighting Jesus' affective, commiserating disposition toward human suffering.

DIVINE AND HUMAN WILLING IN CHRIST

Before probing this will further, it will be helpful to complete Hugh's analysis of the four wills in Christ. How is the will of tender pity related to the other wills?

> Just as the weakness of the flesh in him, according to his natural affectivity, willed not his own punishment, so the tender pity of soul [*mentis pietas*], according to the

[40] Any anxiety over such a disturbance in Christ is allayed for Hugh by the fact that Jesus actively, willingly gave himself over to this emotion, rather than being passively afflicted by it. Hugh compares the situation to Jesus' betrayal by Judas: "Just as he gave himself over, when Judas gave him up: so he troubled himself when commiseration troubled him" (ibid. [PL 176.846a]).

[41] Ibid. (PL 176.845b–c).

[42] Ibid. (PL 176.844d–845a).

feeling of heart-wretchedness [*secundum affectum misericordiae*], willed not the misery of others. For just as he desired that the cup of the passion be taken away from himself according to his fleshly will, which he foreknew was not to be taken away, so he prayed that the sentence of condemnation, which he immutably foresaw, be mitigated for others according to tender pity. For his tender pity acted by commiserating [*miserando*], and his reason followed the divine intention by obeying [*obediendo*].[43]

Hugh takes for granted that from the perspective of divine justice, sinners deserve perdition. So, the divine will in Christ willed such justice and the rational human will followed the divine will in this.[44] On the other hand, the will of tender pity did not will that suffering of condemnation for others; similarly, the fleshly will was unwilling to suffer such a death, even though justly willed by God. Thus, just as Christ's fleshly will recoiled at the prospect of physical suffering, so the will of tender pity recoiled at the prospect of the eternal suffering inflicted on sinners, even though divine justice required both. "According to the will of tender pity, [Christ] comourned [*condoluit*] with the miserable ones without hating justice, just as, according to the will of the flesh, he did not accuse justice, but recused punishment."[45] Hugh sums up: in Christ there was "a divine will dictating justice; a rational will approving justice; a human will [*voluntas humanitatis*], through which it willed evil for no one; a fleshly will through which it willed not punishment for itself."[46]

With all four wills in view,[47] Hugh addresses the question that seems to arise for his contemporaries, as it presumably does for us as well: how can these wills be unified in one psyche? Hugh replies by noting first that each will has its own proper object—"the divine will, justice; the rational will, obedience; the pitying will, compassion [*misericordiam*]; the fleshly will, nature."[48] For its part, this diversity of objects in some sense establishes the integrity, and even safeguards the justice, of each will: "It was just for the fleshly will not to wish its own suffering, since that was according to nature, and it was just for God to will the suffering of [Christ], since this was according to justice,"[49] and "[it was just] for tender pity not to love anoth-

[43] Ibid. (PL 176.845a).

[44] Ibid. (PL 176.842b–c).

[45] Ibid. "Porro secundum voluntatem pietatis sine odio justitiae condoluit miseriae, quemadmodum secundum voluntatem carnis justitiam non accusabat, sed poenam recusabat."

[46] Ibid. (PL 176.842d).

[47] Gondreau notes that Aquinas, who is familiar with Hugh's treatise on the four wills in Christ, will "exploit its particular merit, as when [Thomas] equates Hugh's 'will of pity' with the *vountas ut natura* in Christ" (*Passions* 74–75).

[48] *Quat. volunt.* (PL 176.842c).

[49] Ibid. (PL 176.842d).

er's misery."[50] In turn, this diversity of objects creates a kind of noncompetitive relationship among the four wills. Directed toward its proper object, each remains indifferent and unopposed to the others: "one was not contrary to the others, but each desired its own proper object, so that although each was oriented toward one thing, yet each would not be opposed to the rest." That is to say, "even though [each will] had to will something, it nonetheless would not have to *not* will something else."[51] Put concretely, the fleshly will, for example, in willing its own preservation, was not directly resisting the divine will's intention that Christ suffer for justice's sake, and vice versa, even though, as a matter of fact, these two wills indirectly conflicted.[52] Similarly, the will of tender pity, in properly compassionating the suffering of the condemned, was not directly opposed to the divine will, which justly and properly willed the very perdition that the will of tender pity sorrowfully mourned.[53] Thus, Hugh concludes that Jesus was in no way self-contradictory:

> For this reason, there was nothing contradictory if the Christ-man willed something according to the feeling of tender pity [*affectum pietatis*] assumed in his humanity, which nevertheless, according to the divine will, in which with the Father he disposed all things, he foreknew would not come to pass; for it pertained to true humanity that he was moved by tender pity [*pietate*], it pertained to true divinity that he was not moved from his disposition. And so, according to both he did what he ought to have done. In no way, therefore, was he contrary to himself, if he willed, in harmony with humanity according to tender pity, that which, according to the justice owed to divinity, he did not will; for he willed both to will this and to not will that.[54]

In light of Hugh's analysis, the four wills in Christ can be divided into pairs, one pair willing positively, the other negatively. The divine will wills in accord with justice, and the rational human will consents immediately to this divine intention and thus wills to suffer and die. The other two human wills, by contrast, will against the *implications* of this divine intention. That is, the fleshly will naturally wills *not* its own suffering; the compassionate

[50] Ibid. "Et [justum erat] pietati alienam miseriam non amare."
[51] Ibid. (PL 176.842c), emphasis added.
[52] Ibid. (PL 176.842d).
[53] Ibid. (PL 176.842d–843a). "Similarly too, tender pity, according to the feeling of compassion, in a tenderhearted way willed not the punishment or perdition of the miserable; neither against God did it not will what God was justly willing; rather, it loved tenderheartedness, which was its own, and yet it did not reject justice, which was not its own."
[54] Ibid. (PL 176.845a–b).

will humanely wills *not* the suffering of those who fall short of salvation.[55]

Today's readers may well blanch at Hugh's apparently matter-of-fact assumption that divine justice necessitates damnation for many. "He who created all has not redeemed them all, but saves some in His mercy and condemns others in His justice."[56] Few if any in Hugh's time were squeamish about a well-populated place of perdition. Perhaps in some way, though, precisely this dominant sensibility throws into relief the space he carves out in Jesus' psyche for sorrow over sinners whose fate is already certain. The care and nuance, moreover, with which Hugh attempts to construct a complex, yet coherent psychological coexistence of apparently contrary sentiments—simultaneously willing divine justice and yet compassionating its implications for others and resisting its implications for self—hints at a wider medieval inclination to hold justice and mercy, judgment and compassion together in some way.

COMPASSIONATING HUMANITY

Given the title of the treatise, *On the Four Wills in Christ*, Hugh's objective might now seem to be achieved, however unsatisfactory his view may be to modern readers. In fact, however, he has a further goal, for which the christological analysis lays a foundation. As just noted, Hugh's focus is clearly on the will of compassion, of tender pity. It now becomes apparent that this theme is not confined to the human nature of Christ. Rather, with Christ serving as exemplar, Hugh turns to this theme in human beings generally. A brief analysis of this discussion will fill out Hugh's view of compassion and allow its significance to be appreciated more fully.

An already apparent, but noteworthy, first point is that Hugh refers to this will of tender pity as a "feeling of compassion." "In a heart-wretched way," he says, "tender pity willed not the perdition of the miserable, according to the feeling of compassion."[57] Again, "there is a certain feeling of compassion" (*compassionis affectus*) by which we "commiserate with others" (*miseremur*).[58] What is the nature of this *affectus compassionis*? Noting the various terms Hugh employs sheds light on this question. In addition to "*compassio,*" which I have noted, Hugh often uses the verb "*condolore*" (to co-sorrow or co-mourn) to describe this *affectus*: "For just as illness of the flesh is suffering, so sorrow of the mind [*aegritudo mentis*] is compassion."[59] Used more or less synonymously is the verb "*miserare,*"

[55] See the similar notion in Thomas Aquinas, *ST* 3, q. 18, a. 6 c.

[56] *De archa Noe* 4.3 (Sicard 93.21–23; CSVM 29).

[57] *Quat. volunt.* (PL 176.842d) "Similiter et pietas quod secundum affectum compassionis in poena vel perditione miserorum misericorditer noluit."

[58] Ibid. (PL 176.844c).

[59] Ibid. (PL 176.844d).

to commiserate. Etymologically related to "*miserare*" is the noun "*misericordia,*" used throughout the Vulgate to render the Greek "splánchna," referring to the innards or bowels, the seat of deep human emotions.[60] Hugh says that the proper object of the will of tender pity is *misericordiam*, perhaps best rendered as "wretchedness of heart."[61] Or again: the will of tender pity "loved *misericordia*, which was its own."[62] Each of these terms has classical, biblical, and patristic resonances, which I cannot pursue here.[63] Suffice it to say that Hugh's use of them creates a rich semantic field surrounding Christ's compassionate affectivity.

Second, Hugh imbues compassion with a basic moral significance both for those who proffer it and receive it. "In this life," he says, "to compassionate is of virtue."[64] Later, he distinguishes between vicious, natural, and virtuous compassion.[65] Only the latter is truly praiseworthy,[66] and this form of compassion is evidenced "when we compassionate another's pain for

[60] See n. 34 above.

[61] Ibid. (PL 176.842c); "voluntas humanitatis [ad] misericordiam" (the human will [toward] tenderheartedness).

[62] Ibid. (PL 176.843a); "sed quod suum erat amavit misericordiam."

[63] Williams observes: "Classical Latin had a close equivalent of the Septuagintal and New Testament *splánchna* in *misericordia.* Already in Cicero this meant literally wretchedness in the heart or the breast (*pericardium*) of someone who knows sorrow and is acquainted with grief. When Jerome rendered the Old and the New Testament [sic] in Latin as the authoritative Vulgate, *misericordia* was his main term for *rachamim, splánchna,* mercy. 'Have mercy upon me' of Psalm 51:1 and elsewhere became the supplicatory imperative, *Miserere.* In the parable of the prodigal son, for example, where the Greek had the verbal form of *splánchna,* Jerome has the father 'moved by *misericordia*' (Luke 15:20). As a renewed people, the church of the elect was over the centuries bidden to 'put on' 'compassionate mercy' (*splánchna oiktirmoû; viscera misericordiae,* literally, the entrails of mercy), Colossians 3:12. Even the Stoic emotionless *clementia* of superior mercy acquired in Christian usage and later in the Romance languages the component of compassion, taking it over from *misericordia.* The Latin language and its vernaculars have refined the terminology for what emotionally takes place among people and also what is thought to have been revealed about God himself" ("Mercy in the Grounding of a Non-Elitist Ecological Ethic" 35).

[64] *Quat. volunt.* (PL 176.843b); "hic compati virtutis est."

[65] Ibid. (PL 176.844a). "The mode of compassion is threefold. For compassion is either from vice, or from nature, or from virtue. Compassion from vice occurs when the affect is touched by a reprehensible sorrow there, where it was earlier held fast by an illicit love. Compassion from nature occurs when, from the affect of piety implanted within itself, the soul co-sorrows the distress of another, as often as it sees nature oppressed or afflicted against the measure of pity or humanity. Compassion from virtue occurs when we co-suffer the pain of another."

[66] Ibid. (PL 176.844b). "Compassion from vice is culpable; compassion from nature is not reprehensible; compassion from virtue is praiseworthy. The first is reprehended; the third is praised. But the second does not have guilt, since it is from nature; neither does it have reward, since it is not from virtue."

God's sake [*propter Deum alienis doloribus compatimur*], that is, when we see the just oppressed or the innocent afflicted."[67] For Hugh, the necessity of compassionating the suffering of others is itself, like suffering, part of the penalty inflicted on fallen human beings: "to suffer and to co-suffer are both punishments." Yet there is this difference between them: "Suffering is given to human beings for iniquity, while co-suffering is commanded for goodness [*pro bonitate*]."[68] And here the moral dimension emerges, as Hugh explains:

> For it is just and right before God that the one who suffers should also co-suffer, in order that sin may be removed through suffering and that goodness may be increased through co-suffering. For this surely pertains to the goodness of mortal life, that one conform oneself to the conditions of others and be made a participant in another's passion through compassion [*per compassionem*], in order that, as that which is suffered is a necessity, so that which is co-suffered might be a work of goodness.[69]

Hugh does not elaborate regarding the nature of this goodness, but the implication seems to be that, even though co-suffering is technically a punishment that afflicts fallen human beings,[70] it is nonetheless a moral good to be cultivated.[71]

Third, for Hugh compassion is strictly a this-worldly virtue, both because co-suffering can exist only in the presence of suffering, and only while the soul itself is passible can it undergo compassion, that is, in this present life. In the next life, neither suffering of the body nor co-suffering of the mind will be possible.[72] So Hugh notes the proper time and context of compassion. "If you seek the time: we ought to co-suffer as long as we are able to

[67] Ibid. (PL 176.844a–b).
[68] Ibid. (PL 176. 843b).
[69] Ibid. (PL 176. 843b).
[70] Similarly, Thomas Aquinas: "All sorrow is an evil of punishment; but it is not always an evil of fault, except only when it proceeds from an inordinate affection" (*ST* 3, q. 15, a. 6, ad 3).
[71] Hugh's distinction between natural and virtuous compassion seems to anticipate a similar distinction emphasized in the early modern period. See Jennifer A. Herdt, "The Endless Construction of Charity: On Milbank's Critique of Political Economy," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32 (2004) 301–24. Herdt notes that, while some early modern thinkers (e.g., late 17th-century Latitudinarian divines) championed the superiority of natural, involuntary compassion, "insofar as a trend does appear over time, it was away from sympathy as an involuntary instinct and toward imaginative understanding as an intentional practice that builds on natural sympathetic impulses" (305).
[72] *Quat. volunt.* (PL 176.843a–c) "that tender pity is moved passibly by co-suffering love, is owed only in the present life . . . for in the next life, just as neither suffering nor the fear of any suffering will afflict the flesh, so the mind will endure no punishment from co-suffering for another's sorrow. . . . And so co-suffering thus

suffer."[73] The proper context for compassion is where there is still hope: "the misery of compassion ought to be shown forth there, where the pity of suffering is not yet to be despaired of."[74] Yet Hugh is careful to note that it is not the co-suffering disposition that will cease to exist in the next life: "not because there will be cruelty toward another's punishment"; rather, only the situation of suffering that elicits it in the present time will cease to exist: "but because there will not be excruciation from another's misery."[75]

In the proper time and context, compassion is also to be cultivated and exhibited rightly. For Hugh, this means that in its compassion the soul must not "transcend the measure of justice,[76] in so far as this is known. Where someone suffers for violating a clear precept of divine law, Hugh demurs regarding compassion: "where the intention of divine justice is revealed as immutably fixed, against that . . . the place of tender pity is not owed."[77] The Victorine suggests, however, that in this present life certainty regarding divine justice often eludes human understanding, and in such situations justice should always give way to compassion:

> But in this life, where we can neither know nor foreknow perfectly the meaning of divine justice, we also can without injustice will certain things that are not just according to divine justice; but this alone pertains to us that, where we are ignorant of what pleases God more, we should choose above all that which concords with tender pity [*pietati concordat*].[78]

For Hugh, it is always better to err on the side of mercy and compassion.

All this leads Hugh to his strongest endorsement of compassion. At the very outset of his christological analysis, as he introduces Christ's will of tender pity (*voluntas pietatis*), he observes that this is also called simply the "*voluntas humanitatis*," the "will of humanity" or, more simply, the "human will." Earlier, he had spoken of tender pity as "pertaining to true humanity." Here, he elaborates:

> For that tender pity is called humanity, and they are called human who pity tenderly, and [who] readily compassionate the miseries of others. For it is proper to humanity to compassionate and to be moved with tender pity by the misery of others. A beast can suffer, but to compassionate is the property of humanity. For

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is not possible, except there alone where suffering is possible, since co-suffering is itself suffering."

[73] Ibid. (PL 176.844b–c).

[74] Ibid. (PL 176.844c). Hugh seems to leave unresolved here an apparent inconsistency between the nature of Christ's compassion for fallen humanity (whose perdition is apparently certain even though humanity is the object of his compassion) and the form of compassion here enjoined on human beings generally.

[75] Ibid. (PL 176.843b).

[76] Ibid. (PL 176: 844b).

[77] Ibid. (PL 176: 844a).

[78] Ibid. (PL 176: 843d–844a).

this reason the will of tender pity is called the human will, because it is of a human being to be moved with tender pity.[79]

Evident here is how central compassion is to Hugh's conception of ideal human nature, preeminently in what Christ assumed,[80] but also in what humans bear generally. To have such a will is to compassionate the misery of others, and to be so moved is basically and properly human.

Thus, according to Hugh of St. Victor, there are four wills in Christ. In his reflections on the volitional and affective dimensions of Christ's humanity, the will of tender pity (*voluntas pietatis*), of compassion and commiseration, has a privileged place. Indeed, this *pietas* emerges as the signature disposition of human nature generally. At one point, Hugh uses the phrase "with the love of compassion" (*amore compassionis*) to refer to this commiserating affection for one who suffers.[81] In sum, compassion emerges for Hugh as a preeminent expression of Christian love in this life.

COMPASSION IN HUGH'S THEOLOGY

Intriguingly, Hugh's discussion of *pietas* in *On the Four Wills in Christ* links to other aspects of his theology in other parts of his corpus. Throughout his writings, he returns frequently to the theme of Christ's human affectivity, with an eye toward compassion.

The very act of incarnation, for example, is one of divine commiseration, beginning with the Father himself. In his *Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy*,[82] regarding the phrase "the movement of the Father" from whom "every good and perfect gift descends" (Jas 1:17), Hugh observes: "the movement of the Father is the feeling [*affectus*] of paternal kindness; for the Father is moved solely by kindness [*benignitate*] and by tender pity [*pietate*] to pour out his light upon us. [The Father] is not moved by his own distress, but by compassion for us [*miseratione nostri*]."[83] Divine *miseri-*

[79] Ibid. (PL 176.842b) "Nam ipsa pietas humanitas vocatur, et dicuntur humani qui pii sunt, et facile alienis miseriis compatiuntur. Proprium est enim humanitatis compati et moveri pietate in miseria aliena. Bestia pati potest, compati autem humanitatis est proprium. Idcirco voluntas pietatis, voluntas humanitatis vocatur, quia hominis est pietate moveri."

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid. (PL 176.843a). Perhaps this phrase echoes the sentiment of Paul, who says that he longs for the Philippians "with the compassion of Christ Jesus" (*visceribus Christi Iesu*) (Phil 1:8).

[82] *In hierarchiam caelestem S. Dionysii* (PL 175.923a–1154c).

[83] Ibid. (PL 175.937c). Hugh's comment raises the much larger issue of divine impassibility, which cannot be taken up here. Both the question itself and its history in Western thought continue to attract significant contemporary interest, as is witnessed by the recent conference "Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Hu-

cordia, then, is for Hugh a fundamental disposition toward human beings.[84]

As the Father, so also the Son: Christ's love, says Hugh in his *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*,[85] "passed through tender pity [*pietatem*] to those below him"[86] and was prompted by his "compassion for rendering aid."[87] In the *Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy*, Hugh glosses the Dionysian reference to Jesus' human kindness (*humanam benignitatem*) with the notion of mercy (*clementia*) toward human beings.[88] Again in *On*

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man Suffering" (Providence College, March 30–31, 2007), which brought together both historical and contemporary theologians to explore the topic in the history of the Christian tradition. While interest in a "suffering God" is certainly a modern preoccupation, that premodern thinkers were not insensitive to this concern can often be seen in their christological reflection (e.g., Cyril of Alexandria's insistence that in Christ God suffered "impassibly"). Something similar seems to be at work in medieval thinkers like Hugh, for whom, one senses, Christ's human suffering was the expression of divine sympathy. Ellen Ross comes to a similar conclusion in *The Grief of God* (see n. 1 above). Ross notes that for many "the image of the suffering Jesus" was "the primary scriptural symbol for conveying the depth of a merciful God's love for human kind," "a vivid narrative of divine mercy," and "an act of divine mercy directed toward humans" (5–6). She concludes, accordingly, that in late medieval sources "the concentration on Jesus' suffering was consistently directed toward and complemented by an understanding of the divinity of Christ. Far from signaling mere humanity, as it does for many contemporary viewers, the physicality of the wounded Jesus . . . manifested the reality of divine presence in Jesus Christ and made tangible the doctrinal claim that the Divine had become human" (6).

[84] For a provocative account of the theme of divine compassion in Western art, see François Boespflug, "The Compassion of God the Father in Western Art," *Cross Currents* 42 (1992–93) 487–503. On the theme of divine pathos in the patristic period, see John J. O'Keefe, "Kenosis or Impassibility: Cyril of Alexandria and Theoderet of Cyrus on the Problem of Divine Pathos," *Studia patristica* 32 (1997) 358–65.

[85] PL 176.173a–618b. Hugh of Saint Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* (*De sacramentis*) (hereafter, *Sacr.*), Medieval Academy of America 58, trans. R. J. Deferrari (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951).

[86] *Sacr.* 1.8.xiii (PL 176.314d). [87] *Sacr.* 2.1.vi (PL 176.388a).

[88] *In hierarchiam* (PL 175.1058c). John Scotus Eriugena, whose commentary and translation Hugh seems to know, also interprets the Dionysian *philanthropia* as *humanitas*, defined as mercy (*clementia*). See *Expositiones in Ierarchiam coelestem*, Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis 31, 4.563–564, p. 79: "nam nihil aliud est humanitas, id est amor humanitatis, nisi clementia." See Paul Rorem, *Eriugena's Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005) 155, 159. See also the English translation of *The Celestial Hierarchy* in *Pseudo-Dionysius*, chap. 4 of *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid, foreword, notes, and trans. collaboration by Paul Rorem; pref. Rene Roques; intro. Jaroslav Pelikan, Jean Leclercq, and Karlfried Froehlich (New York: Paulist, 1987): "I note that the mystery of Jesus' love for humanity (*philanthropia*) was first revealed to the angels" (158, and n. 56).

the Sacraments, discussing the "human affections in Christ" (including "desire, joy, pain, and fear of suffering"), Hugh claims that some have gone too far in their speculation on Christ's capacity for compassionate identification with sinful human beings by asserting his participation in vice.[89] Hugh rejects the conclusion, but certainly sympathizes with the premise. He then argues vigorously against those who make the opposite mistake by denying Christ any capacity to suffer at all. His logic is telling: "For how was there true compassion [*vera compassio*] in Christ, if there was not true suffering [*vera passio*]?"[90] Hence, "Job, a name that means 'sorrowing [*dolens*],' signifies Christ who first dwelt in the riches of the glory of his Father, coequal with Him, then lowered himself to our misery [*condescendit nostrae miseriae*] and sat humbled in the dung heap of this world, sharing in all our defects, except sin."[91]

Similarly, Jesus' soteriological role is a function of that same compassion. "In his compassion [*misericorditer*]," Hugh tells his readers, Christ "permitted Himself to suffer the penalties which were yours."[92] In another work, he comments on Christ's high-priestly role, as described in Hebrews 5. Following the biblical author, he stresses Christ's sympathetic approachability: "Let us therefore approach with confidence, for . . . he always wants to be compassionate [*compatietur*], because he has been surrounded with infirmities on our account."[93] Accordingly, we are to entreat "the compassion [*pietas*]of the Savior,"[94] who will respond "with his habitual tender pity [*solita pietate*]."[95]

The preceding remarks provide a backdrop for an intriguing aspect of Hugh's conception of compassion, namely, the tendency to pair it with an opposite, often majesty or power, and to see both simultaneously present in the divine nature *per se*: "He who mentions the Creator confesses majesty [*majestatem*]; he who understands the Savior venerates tender pity

[89] *Sacr*. 2.1.xi (PL 176.404d); see *Sacr*. 2.1.vii (PL 176.391a).
[90] *Sacr*. 2.1.vii (PL 176.390c).
[91] *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris* 3.3 (PL 175.12b–c).
[92] *De arrha animae* (PL 176.962b). See also the recent critical edition, *L'oeuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, 2 vols., Latin text by Hugh B. Feiss and Patrice Sicard, French trans. Dominique Poirel, Henri Rochais, and P. Sicard, intro., notes, appendixes D. Poirel (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997).
[93] *De Verbo Dei* [Heb 4.12–5.2] unpublished translation by Hugh Feiss, O.S.B., December, 2005; from Hugh of Saint Victor, *Six opuscules spirituels*, intro., critical text, French trans., and notes Roger Baron, Sources Chrétiennes 155 (Paris: Cerf, 1969) 60–81.
[94] *De quinque septenis*, line 123; *Six opuscules spirituels* 100–118; translations of *De quinque septenis* are mine.
[95] *Ibid*. lines 198–201.

[*pietatem*]."[96] Hugh does not elaborate further, but seems to suggest that God's primary acts *ad extra*, creating and redeeming, manifest two crucial, yet at least distinct if not contrasting, qualities in the divine nature: majesty and compassion.[97] But Hugh more typically posits this confluence of majesty and compassion in the incarnate Christ. In his treatise on Noah's ark, he refers to "our Lord Jesus Christ," "who is Himself both above and below, above in majesty [*sursum majestate*], below in compassion [*deorsum compassione*], above that He may draw our longings thither, below that He may offer us His help."[98] In a treatise on Mary, Hugh finds compassion alone in Mary's humanity, majesty alone in the Father's divinity, but both in the incarnate Christ:

> Mary is human, Christ is human and God, the Father is God. Through Mary to Christ, through Christ to God. In Mary, tender pity [*pietas*], in the Father majesty [*majestas*], in Christ tender pity and majesty: tender pity from the compassion [*pietas ex compassione*] of the [human] race, majesty by the excellence of deity.[99]

In a striking way, then, Hugh attempts to forge a fully orbed account of Christ's humanity without jettisoning his divinity, to embrace in the incarnate Christ both compassionate humanity and majestic, powerful divinity.

As in *On the Four Wills*, Hugh extends the importance of compassion from Christ to human beings generally, prescribing an ethic of compassion and fellow-feeling with Christ again as the exemplar. Again in his *Com-*

[96] *Sacr*. 1.10.iv (PL 176.333c). Hugh goes on to link the actual presence and perceived awareness of both majesty and compassion to human beatitude: "And the greatest good of man is that in his God he finds the majesty which he contemplates with the eye of the heart, and the humanity on which he speculates with the eye of the flesh, that the whole man may be blessed in God" (ibid.).

[97] In this regard see Hugh's *Super canticum Mariae* in *L'œuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, 2 vols., intro., trans., and notes Bernadette Jollès (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000) 2:24–91, at 36, lines 168–77 (PL 175.417B–C) where he writes: "There are two things that draw the blessed spirits of men and angels into the font of contemplation of eternal goods, namely the incomprehensible majesty and ineffable goodness of God. The one generates chaste fear, the other gives birth to love. For his majesty, they venerate God and for his goodness, they love him, lest love without reverence be dissolute or reverence without love be punitive. Admiring, they love; loving they admire, so that love might burn inextinguishably through admiration and admiration be sweetly fervent with love" (my translation).

[98] *De archa Noe* 2.6 (Sicard 42.10–12; CSVM 82).

[99] *Maria Porta*, lines 1–6, in *L'œuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, 2:282–83. Reflecting this simultaneity, Hugh elsewhere concludes that no one should be anxious about well-being in this life, since Christ is aware of the danger "by His compassion [*per compassionem*] and by His power provides the remedy against it" (*De archa Noe* 1.3 [Sicard 16:216–17; CSVM 59]).

mentary on the Celestial Hierarchy, Hugh observes that Jesus exhibited "the virtues of humanity," namely, "clemency and kindness."[100] Defining the nature of Christian devotion, Hugh posits three expressions of fellow-feeling, with compassion at the center.

> Devotion is the ardor of a good will, which shows itself by unmistakable signs the heart is powerless to repress. It has three parts: zeal, compassion, and goodwill. Zeal occurs when, from love of the right, a soul, unable to endure a falsehood against the truth, spontaneously takes the role of its defender. Compassion occurs when we co-sorrow with [*condolemus*] other people's troubles. Goodwill emerges when we accede to the kindnesses that people ask of us with a ready will.[101]

Hugh consistently endorses such "other-affectedness," which at one point he attributes to the Holy Spirit, perhaps complementing the christological aspects noted above. Discussing the trinitarian appropriations of power (to the Father), wisdom (to the Son), and goodness (to the Holy Spirit), Hugh remarks: "If you call someone gentle [*mitem*] or mild [*mansuetum*] or compassionate [*compatientem*] or kind [*benignum*] or anything else of this sort, all this belongs to goodness."[102] The genuinely charitable person will exhibit such "gentleness" (*mansuetudinem*) especially toward evil persons.[103] After noting the traditional six works of mercy, Hugh observes: "in these necessities all the trouble of life is either comprehended or figured in which, whoever has compassion for his neighbor on account of God merits mercy from God in his own necessity."[104] At the same time, sadness (*tristitia*) descends on the one who "is unwilling to take delight through fellow-feeling [*pie*] in the good of another."[105]

Not surprisingly, as a regular canon teaching other canons, Hugh enjoins the feeling of compassion especially on clerics and prelates: "Those who receive honors in the Church for their own glory, and look down on others when they see themselves set high, will not from compassion [*ex compassione*] condescend to weaker brethren in the Church."[106] Elsewhere, Hugh inveighs against avaricious clerics, precisely because greed inhibits their compassion: "How many are there today who smelt in the furnace of avarice the opprobrium, spit, nails, spear, finally the death of Christ, and rush to include the price of the universe in their own purses, and when they have thickened, fattened, and enlarged themselves beyond measure from the patrimony of Christ crucified, they are no longer compassionate [*non*

[100] *In hierarchiam* (PL 175.1056b).
[101] *De archa Noe* 3.6 (ed. Sicard 63.3–9; CSVM 101), translation slightly emended.
[102] *Sacr*. 1.2.vi (PL 176.208d).
[103] *De archa Noe* 2.1 (Sicard 33.25–26; CSVM 74).
[104] *Sacr*. 2.13.ii (PL 176.527b).
[105] *De quinque septenis*, line 107.
[106] *De archa Noe* 2.2 (Sicard 36.39–45; CSVM 76).

compatiuntur] . . . ?"[107] By contrast, Hugh enjoins upon the virtuous cleric the Pauline injunction "to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15), and, in a striking illustration, he links these two facets of fellow-feeling with the "breasts of maternal affection [*ubere maternae affectionis*]."[108] For, he asserts in one place, "there are two breasts of clemency [*clementium ubera*]: compassion [*compassio*], whence flows the milk of consolation, by which the weak are nourished; congratulation [*congratulatio*], whence flows the milk of encouragement, by which the strong are sustained."[109] In another place, he continues the thought:

> For a mother has two breasts, from which she pours forth a twofold milk to her sons. The first breast is congratulation, the second is compassion. . . . From the breast of congratulation, the good pastor produces the milk of exhortation for those making progress; from the breast of compassion [he] pours forth the milk of consolation to the faint-hearted who are battered by the force of temptation. . . . This is "to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep."[110]

Hugh clearly affords a crucial place to a cleric's capacity for maternal fellow-feeling in ministering as a priest. Indeed, a priest's capacity to mediate between God and human beings depends on this capacity for fellow-feeling: "on this account, the priests should have peace with God through excellence of sanctity and should preserve concord with neighbors through a feeling of compassion [*per affectum compassionis*]."[111]

In all these ways, Hugh's high estimation of fellow-feeling is evident throughout his writings. As seen in *On the Four Wills*, such compassion is central to his conception of Jesus' humanity, and, as confirmed by other texts, to his view of genuine, even ideal, humanity generally. From there, compassion also finds its way into Hugh's conception of the divine nature, such affectivity emerging as the disposition of the Father toward fallen humanity and the driving force behind the incarnation itself. At the same time, Hugh develops a kind of ethic of compassion, where it figures centrally in interpersonal human relationships, especially pastoral relationships between clergy and laity.

COMPASSION IN A VICTORINE COMMENTARY ON LAMENTATIONS

A telling witness to the importance of compassion for Hugh, as well as an indication of his pioneering reflection on this theme in the history of Christian thought, appears in a commentary on Lamentations attributed to

[107] *Miscellanea* 6.3 (PL 177.812d).
[108] Ibid. (PL 177.812d).
[109] Ibid. 4.116 (PL 177.744a–b).
[110] Ibid. 6.3 (PL 177.812c–813a).
[111] *Sacr*. 2.3.xi (PL 176.429a).

him, the *Adnotatiunculae elucidatoriae in threnos Jeremiae*.[112] Though this attribution has recently been questioned,[113] the case against Hugh's authorship is far from conclusive,[114] and good reasons remain for linking it to him.[115] In fact, a brief glance at this work from the perspective adopted

[112] PL 175.255B–322B (hereafter, *In threnos*).

[113] See Rebecca Moore, "Hugh of St Victor and the Authorship of *In Threnos Ieremiae*," *Journal of Religious History* 22 (1998) 255–69; and Moore, *Jews and Christians in the Life and Thought of Hugh of St. Victor* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), esp. chap. 6, "Victorine Anti-Jewish Commentaries." Moore's case consists of both external and internal evidence. Regarding the former, she questions the manuscript traditions that attribute this work to Hugh and tries to demonstrate that these are far from conclusive indications, as other works once attributed to Hugh, now widely considered inauthentic, also have impressive manuscript pedigrees. Her main arguments, however, are internal, based on the occurrence of various words used to describe the ancient Jews (e.g., "faithless," "blind," "rejected") which she finds to be "pointedly anti-Jewish" in contrast to his "generally irenic view toward Jews" (257).

[114] Grover Zinn has expressed his own reservations about Moore's conclusions regarding the authenticity of *In threnos*: "To put it succinctly, having reviewed her work and having gone through Goy, some of Baron's work, de Ghellinck on the *Indiculum*, and van den Eynde, I would say that at this present juncture of research on Hugh's works and the manuscript traditions, the indications for Hugh's authorship of *In threnos* are very, very strong. [Moore's *Patrologia Database*] search with the resulting information concerning word use in Hugh writings raises some very interesting questions about *In threnos,* but without a more detailed study and examination of the manuscripts, the questions remain interesting but unresolved, in my opinion" (private correspondence, July 30, 2007).

[115] Perhaps the most important pieces of evidence in this debate are the scattered remarks in *In threnos* which in fact seem to contain positive comments on Jews. Moore correctly notes that, for example, the word *perfidus* (or cognates) occurs six times in the commentary. She does not note, however, that four of those are in a single passage I translate here: "'The bulwark has mourned, and the wall has been destroyed together' (Lam 2:8); for hence the multitude of all the prior fathers mourned because the faithless people of the Jews did not receive the Savior who was sent to them. That which is said, 'the wall has been destroyed,' was said regarding them from whom it is taken away. The wall was knocked down for the Jews so that it might be built up for the Gentiles, for through this, their faith [i.e., the faith of the Jews] passed over to the Gentiles, because the Jews rejected faith, remaining faithless, just as was said through the Psalm: 'the stone, which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner' (Ps 117). For by this, that which was rejected by the faithless Jews has become 'the head of the corner' for both the faithful Jews and Gentiles together, as if Jews and Gentiles were two walls running from different directions into a single point. . . . For that the very Redeemer of the human race with other faithful ones [i.e., faithful Jews] wept over the destruction and faithlessness of that people, the Gospel manifestly declared, when it said: 'when the Lord approached Jerusalem, seeing the city he wept over it . . . (Lk 19:43–44)" (PL 175: 279A–B). Moore cites this passage untranslated and without comment in "Hugh of St. Victor" 265 n. 59. Prescinding from any evaluation of

below strengthens the argument in Hugh's favor. Even if, however, a verdict against his authorship is ultimately rendered, all scholars agree on the generally "Victorine" character of the work[116] and thus it nonetheless reflects his teaching.

Full-length commentary on Lamentations is itself apparently a medieval innovation, inaugurated by Hrabanus Maurus[117] and Paschasius Radbertus[118] in the ninth century.[119] Three centuries later, interest in Lamentations surged markedly and produced several extant commentaries,[120] in-

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Hugh's theology of the Jews as expressed here, his category of "faithful Jews and Gentiles together," united in Christ as a cornerstone, seems consistent with a similar description of Jews and Gentiles found in the prologue to his *On the Sacraments*. There, Hugh describes both Jews before the incarnation and Gentiles afterward united together as one army under the banner of Christ their King: "all the saints who were before his coming are soldiers as it were, going before their King, and those who have come after and will come, even to the end of the world, are soldiers following their King" (*Sacr*., Prol., ii). The consistent and not wholly negative, assessment of Jews in these two works would seem not only to be an argument in favor of the authenticity of *In threnos* but also to render inaccurate Moore's claim that "*In Threnos* reflects the position that Judaism was over, Jews were abandoned, and Jews no longer had anything to say to Christians" ("Hugh of St. Victor" 269).

[116] For her part, Moore conjectures that the commentary's literal interpretation is by Hugh himself, while a student may have later added the allegorical and moral interpretations; see ibid.

[117] Rabanus Maurus, *Expositio super Jeremiam libri viginti* (PL 111:1181–1216).

[118] Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Lamentationes Hieremiae libri quinque*, ed. Beda Paulus, Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis 85 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988). See also PL 120:1059–1256.

[119] John J. Contreni observes, "Paschasius Radbertus, in the absence of an earlier commentary on Lamentations, wrote his own" ("Carolingian Biblical Studies," in *Carolingian Essays*, ed. Uta Renate Blumenthal [Washington: Catholic University of America, 1983] 87). See also E. Ann Matter, "The Lamentations Commentaries of Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus," *Traditio* 38 (1982) 137–63; and Alexander Andrée, *Gilbertus Universalis: Glossa ordinaria in Lamentationes Ieremie Prophete: Prothemata et Liber I,* a critical edition with intro. and trans. Alexander Andrée, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Latina Stockholmiensia 52 (Stockholm University, 2005) 54–57.

[120] Andrée notes: "In the twelfth century . . . there is an explosion of Lamentations commentaries. Those preserved to this day are the *Tropologiae*, moral reflections on Lamentations by Guibert de Nogent (d. 1124); a commentary by Guillaume de Flay (fl. ca. 1120); another one by Hervé de Bourg-Dieu (d. 1150); the *Adnotatiunculae elucidatoriae* of Hugh of St Victor (d. 1141); a commentary on Lamentations by Peter the Chanter (d. 1197) which is in fact an abbreviation of the Gloss on Lamentations; and other commentaries written by Rupert of Deutz (d. ca. 1130) and William of Malmesbury (d. 1142). On the threshold of this sudden period of prosperity stands, of course, Gilbert the Universal's Gloss on Lamentations" (*Gilbertus Universalis* 55–56).

cluding Hugh's *In threnos*, which draw heavily on Radbertus.[121] This situation affords the historian some relatively rare insights. Given both the paucity of patristic commentary and the substantial influence of Radbertus on later twelfth-century interpretation,[122] where a given twelfth-century commentary develops or departs from Radbertus's exegesis is a fairly clear indication of its author's own theological priorities. Such is the case with this Victorine commentary, which frequently and without apparent precedent finds the theme of compassion to be the deepest spiritual meaning of Lamentations.[123]

In the voice of Jeremiah, mourning the fallen city of Jerusalem, Lamentations 2:11 reads: "My eyes have failed with weeping, my bowels are troubled: my liver is poured out upon the earth, for the destruction of the

[121] As Robert R. Edwards has observed, "the medieval commentary on Lamentations is vast (Friedrich Stegmüller's *Repertorium Biblicum* lists nearly seventy works), but the key text in this medieval reading is the *Expositio in Lamentationes Hieremiae* by the Carolingian writer Paschasius Radbertus. Radbertus's commentary was incorporated in the *Glossa ordinaria* and so became the dominant reading in the exegetical tradition; it served, for example, as a direct source for Guibert of Nogent and Hugh of St. Victor and for late medieval commentators like the Oxford Franciscan John Lathbury (fl. 1350)" (Edwards, "The Desolate Palace and the Solitary City: Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Dante," *Studies in Philology* 96 [1999] 394). For general information, see Friedrich Stegmüller, *Repertorium Biblicum Medii Aevi*, 11 vols. (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones scientificas/Instituto Francisco Suárez, 1950–1980) 3:342.

[122] Andrée observes that "Radbert's commentary was to serve as a model for all Western Lamentations exegesis to follow" (*Gilbertus Universalis* 54).

[123] At the present time, it is impossible to judge with precision how unique Hugh's exegesis of Lamentations is in relation to those of his twelfth-century contemporaries, as many of these Lamentations commentaries lack modern critical editions, including the very important and influential *Glossa ordinaria* on Lamentations, which has been partially edited by Alexander Andrée (see n. 119 above). Of the works that have been edited, neither the earlier medieval exegetes (the anonymous *In Lamentationes Jeremiae* [PL 25:827–32] falsely ascribed to Jerome and possibly written by Bede, Hrabanus Maurus, or Paschasius Radbertus) nor contemporary twelfth-century commentators (Guibert of Nogent, Rupert of Deutz) treat significantly the topic of compassion. Radbertus only intimates the theme: "'All they that passed by the way have clapped their hands at thee: they have hissed, and wagged their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem.' Others, to be sure, interpret this as a lament over the Synagogue or the Church or the soul: they say that those who clap their hands concerning these are enemies, as if they are insulting with happiness and derision. But, on the contrary, we say that they are the holy Fathers and friends, who with zeal and charity, affected by excessive sorrow, perceiving daily one of their own fallen away from God, clap their hands, not with the scorn of ridicule, but with the feeling of sorrow and lament, over the fact that the Synagogue or the Church or the soul, fallen from such a height and glory, has come so quickly and unexpectedly to such ruin" (*Expositio in Lamentationes* 124:1362–1372; PL 120.1132b–1132c; my translation).

daughter of my people" (Douay-Rheims). Commenting on this verse, Hugh notes that at the literal level the prophet introduces the theme of compassion,[124] which he then develops into a tropological meaning, both individual and ecclesial:

> What is it, therefore . . . that the eyes of the church fail, and its bowels are troubled, and its liver poured out upon the earth, except that those who truly have the charity of Christ are always compassionating the suffering of others [*alienis miseriis compatiuntur*]? As the Apostle said: *who is weak and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn?* [1 Cor 15]. For there is no more certain sign of true charity than the feeling of fraternal compassion [*affectus fraternae compassionis*].[125]

A few verses later Lamentations 2:15 says: "All they that passed by the way have clapped their hands at thee: they have hissed, and wagged their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying: Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth?" (Douay-Rheims). On this text Hugh argues that "according to the spiritual understanding this is more fittingly referred to compassion. . . . For when those passing by see such lamentable ruins, they are provoked to compassion by a certain humanity [*quadam humanitate ad compassionem*], and they sorrow over the misery they see. . . . From the sorrow of compassion [*dolore compassionis*], they clap their hands."[126] Here, where earlier authors had tended to hear a tone of reproach and judgment, Hugh finds commiseration:[127] "'Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth?' As if he had said: Once so glorious, now so miserable, which words, nevertheless, are believed to have been spoken (as was said), not as ridiculing [*irridendo*] but as compassionating [*compatiendo*]."[128] Hugh stresses this theme: "'My bowels are troubled,' that is, the arrow of sorrow has penetrated all the way to the innermost heart, sorrow has touched the senses and stirred up the feeling of tender pity";[129] again, "'they wagged their heads': By 'head' not unfittingly we can understand the mind, and by 'wagging of the head,' compassion of the mind [*compassionem mentis*]."[130]

Not just in relation to these verses, but repeatedly throughout his exposition, Hugh returns to this interpretation, expressing a kind of general ethic of Christian compassion: "it is a proper characteristic of the elect to

[124] *In threnos* (PL 175.285c).
[125] Ibid. (PL 175.285d–286a).
[126] Ibid. (PL 175.296d).
[127] In this, Hugh appears to be adopting and extending the exegesis of Radbertus. See n. 123 above.
[128] Ibid. (PL 175.297c).
[129] Ibid. (PL 175.286d) "Conturbata sunt viscera mea, id est usque ad cordis intima sagitta doloris penetravit, dolor sensum tetigit, et contremuit affectus pietatis."
[130] Ibid. (PL 175.300a–b).

lament [*plangere*] another's evil as their own,"[131] and "charity always provokes the elect to compassion over the ruin of neighbors."[132] As in other works, Hugh pursues the "maternal Paul" theme: "Those who do not know how truly to compassionate the sorrow of another cannot effectively console others who are suffering," but to have such compassion is to be like the apostle Paul "when he said: 'my children, with whom I am in labor until Christ is formed in you'" (Gal 4:19).[133] Elsewhere, Hugh observes "in mothers a more tender feeling of affection [*affectus dilectionis*]" and this "maternal tender pity [*maternam pietatem*]" is never "hardened by vice."[134] As above, this general ethic of compassion receives a pointedly pastoral application, reflecting Hugh's participation in the currents of ecclesiastical reform, especially of the clergy, that surged in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries: "Prelates of holy Church" are to be "mothers with tender pity [*matres pietate*]," whose "compassionate minds" (*pias mentes*) are provoked by "the visible poverty of the afflicted," rather than "depraved and negligent" pastors who "postpone the care of their subjects, and are instead zealous for their own avarice and luxury."[135] Such pastoral affectivity should even be evident in preaching, just as "the Lord Jesus Christ showed when he saw the ruin of the faithless city." For "he wept and was placed in passion, and, praying for his persecutors, he was solicitous for their salvation." Even so, in preachers "the pupil of the eye ought not to have silent tears; since it is necessary for spiritual ones to exhibit the word of preaching with the feeling of compassion [*cum affectu compassionis*]."[136]

In these various comments on Lamentations, much as he had done in other works treated above, Hugh holds up the virtue of compassion, modeled on Jesus and Paul, as the proper characteristic of human affectivity in relation to other human persons, reflecting the presence of genuine *caritas*. Though the jury on Hugh's authorship of *In threnos* is still out, the continuity in the theme of compassion between it and other authentic works must not be ignored. At the same time, Hugh's seemingly distinctive exegesis of Lamentations sheds light on his apparently pioneering work on compassion in the Middle Ages.

CONCLUSION: A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF COMPASSION

Imbued with a vague conception of the medieval era as the "dark ages," typified by harsh physical conditions, authoritarian rule, endemic violence, and recurring crusades—"a religious world of gloom and fear," and "an

[131] Ibid. (PL 175.286c).
[132] Ibid. (PL 175.301b).
[133] Ibid. (PL 175.300b).
[134] Ibid. (PL 175.287d).
[135] Ibid. (PL 175.288b–c).
[136] Ibid. (PL 175.308c).

angst-ridden society terrified by death"[137]—the contemporary reader may be surprised to find there a developed ethic of compassion. Yet if, as Karl Morrison avers, "the history of compassion is yet to be written,"[138] a crucial chapter in that narrative must include conceptions of ideal *humanitas* that emerged in twelfth-century Europe. Central to them is a notion of "fellow-feeling," which, for thinkers like Hugh of St. Victor, constituted a signature feature of humanity. That medieval thinkers were innovative in this regard may be appreciated by noting the evolution of the meaning of the term "*pietas*," the classical term for ideal Roman *humanitas*, from the classical period to the Renaissance. Put oversimply, the *pietas*, which for Vergil was the "Roman ideal of principled conquest that confers the blessings of order exemplified by the devotion of sons to fathers" had acquired for Dante—as perhaps its primary meaning[139]—the sense of "compassion that is the dominant sense of the derivative *pietà* in medieval Italian."[140] The question of precisely when and why "the evolution of *pietas* toward *misericordia*"[141] occurred cannot be pursued here, except to note that it is a Christian and medieval development that Hugh's writings both reflect and affect.[142]

This question is not perhaps insignificant. The theme of compassion, of course, has vast contemporary currency in diverse discussions of ethical, religious, and political theory. Yet, strikingly, these discussions rehearse a summarized history of compassion in Western thought that begins with classical antiquity (especially, Aristotle and the Stoics) and then leaps to

[137] Ross, *Grief of God* 4.

[138] Karl F. Morrison, *I Am You: The Hermeneutics of Empathy in Western Literature, Theology, and Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1988).

[139] This is not, of course, to suggest that *pietas* no longer had for medievals the sense of religious devotion or obligation that the modern English word "piety" still retains. It did. Nor is it to imply that these two senses of the word are entirely distinct or do not overlap. But it is to underscore the semantic novelty and theological significance of the sense of pity and compassion that the word acquired in the Middle Ages. As Garrison observes: "From the fourth century to the seventeenth the glosses [on Vergil's *Aeneid* and on the Gospels] recurrently point to a fundamental distinction between *pietas in deum* and *pietas in homines*. The first meaning, consistent with the synonym *cultus* emphasized by Cicero, is discovered in passages of the epic that look upward through a patriarchal system of values to divine authority. The second meaning is attached to expressions of divine or parental compassion, thus offering evidence for the popular synonym *misericordia*" (*Pietas from Vergil to Dryden* 22).

[140] Ibid. 2.

[141] Ibid. 8.

[142] See ibid., especially chap. 2, "*Auctores Pietatis*: Classical and Christian Ideas of *Pietas*" 21–60, where Garrison narrates the complex developments in the late patristic and medieval periods when both Aeneas and Christ come to be regarded as the authors of piety (*auctores pietatis*) but with different senses of *pietas* associated with each.

the early modern period, when, after long neglect (it is implied), the theme emerges prominently again in thinkers such as Adam Smith, Rousseau, Kant, Schopenhaur, and Nietzsche. There is thus a widely held assumption that between Seneca and Smith no significant contribution to the discussion occurred.[143] Moreover, as has been recently pointed out, this early modern "discovery" of compassion as foundational for human morality occurred in a context where ethical and political theory was increasingly divorced from explicitly Christian theological frameworks.[144] In some quarters, though, there are signs of dissatisfaction with the absence of a specifically Christian account of compassion implied in this narrative.[145] Recent scholarship signals an interest in developing a philosophically sophisticated, profoundly Christian "theology of compassion" that draws deeply from the resources of the Christian tradition.[146] If such trends continue, the thought of medieval theologians like Hugh of St. Victor may well offer a useful contribution to the discussion.

[143] See, for example, Nussbaum's widely-noted and critically acclaimed *Upheavals of Thought*, wherein compassion is the centerpiece of her analysis of the ethical and civic significance of emotions.

[144] See Jennifer A. Herdt, "Divine Compassion and the Mystification of Power: The Latitudinarian Divines in the Secularization of Moral Thought," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23 (2003) 1–21; and Herdt, "The Rise of Sympathy and the Question of Divine Suffering," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 29 (2001) 367–99. Herdt observes that, "within [18th-century] sentimentalist thought, the focus shifted to *human* sympathy for other human beings, and God gradually dropped out of the picture" (389).

[145] See Stanley Hauerwas, "Killing Compassion," *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular* (Durham: Duke University, 2004) 164–76, where he expresses concern over an ethic of compassion divorced from a christological framework (173).

[146] See Oliver Davies, *A Theology of Compassion*: *Metaphysics of Difference and the Renewal of Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), which attempts to ground a postmodern metaphysics of difference and a Christian systematic theology in the notion of divine and human compassion. Similarly, Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt's essay on Julian of Norwich, "Order, Freedom, and 'Kindness'" (76–80; see n. 17 above) argues that the English anchoress' conception of christological "kindness" (including compassion) derived from Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, avoids the twin pitfalls of premodern essentialism and modern autonomous freedom.