

## INTRODUCTION

*A theology of re-formation*

“be reformed in the newness of your mind”  
 Rom. 12:2 (Douay Rheims)

 INTRODUCTION: RE-FORMATION  
 IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

To visitors from the countryside, like the recently arrived young Hugh and his name-sake uncle,<sup>1</sup> Paris in 1120 offered a novel spectacle. Signs of emergent urbanization were readily apparent: Merchants, artisans, clerics, lawyers, and students went about their business,<sup>2</sup> as did doctors, bakers, butchers, cooks and tavern keepers.<sup>3</sup> Others were weaving and sewing fabrics of various kinds into “clothes, blankets, saddles, carpets, curtains, napkins, nets, ropes, hats, and baskets,” forging metals and casting tools and implements, and cultivating gardens and rose-hedges, orchards and fields.<sup>4</sup> There was also the sensory evidence of building. Soon to be designated a royal capital by Louis VI,<sup>5</sup> Paris was under construction.

<sup>1</sup> Robert-Henri Bautier, “Les Origines et les premiers développements de l’abbaye Saint-Victor de Paris,” in *L’abbaye parisienne de Saint-Victor au moyen-âge*, ed. Jean Longère (hereafter *APS-V*), Bibliotheca Victorina 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 35.

<sup>2</sup> M.-D. Chenu, “Civilisation urbaine et théologie. L’École de Saint-Victor au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 29 (1974), 1253–63.

<sup>3</sup> See Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon*, 2.21–26. Critical text: *Didascalicon de studio legendi: A Critical Text*, ed. Charles Henry Buttimer, The Catholic University of America Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Latin 10 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939). English translation: *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. and ed. Jerome Taylor, Records of Western Civilization: Sources and Studies 64 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961 and 1991). Cited as *Didasc.*, followed by book and chapter, Buttimer’s page and lines, and Taylor’s page when his translation is used. Taylor’s introduction and notes cited as *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor*.

<sup>4</sup> *Didasc.*, 2.21–26 (Buttimer 39.29–44.28; Taylor 75–79). Chenu (“Civilisation urbaine,” 1257) notes how urbanization brought with it a proliferation of new trades and new commercial and economic activities, which in turn required a new valuation and estimation of their rightful place among human affairs. The specialized trades, the manual arts of the towns, were no longer “servile,” their practitioner was now deemed an *artifex*.

<sup>5</sup> Louis VI settled in Paris c. 1130. Margot Fassler, *Gothic Song: Victorine Sequences and Augustinian Reform in Twelfth-Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 197, writes: “Late

Craftsmen, working “with mattocks and hatchets, the file and beam, the saw and auger, planes, vises, the trowel and the level,” were “smoothing, hewing, cutting, filing, carving, joining, daubing in every sort of material – clay, stone, wood, bone, gravel, lime, gypsum, and other materials ...”<sup>6</sup> Throughout the city, foundations were being laid, structures erected, paint and color applied for adornment – all according to increasingly elaborate architectural plans.<sup>7</sup> Edifices of all types, some newly constructed, others under renovation, were rising throughout the city. Perhaps most conspicuous of all was the construction of churches.<sup>8</sup> Already under way in the eleventh century,<sup>9</sup> ecclesial construction was intensifying in the early twelfth century; in the following decades it would soon tower majestically in the gothic style of St.-Denis and Notre-Dame in Paris, and also the cathedral at Chartres.<sup>10</sup>

For the denizens of Paris, the sheer fact of city life seems to have shaped their consciousness, their thought-forms, even their worldviews in myriad ways. In the mid twentieth century, M.-D. Chenu, and before him Georges Duby, showed how in the early twelfth century “urban civilization ... penetrated all the way into the tissue of reflection, of methods, of aspirations, of contemplations.” This is variously manifest.

eleventh century Paris was one of several important northern French cathedral towns; by the closing decades of the twelfth century, it had become a small, but significantly more cosmopolitan, city of major significance, overshadowing its neighbors in importance. This change in the city’s fortunes occurred, in part at least, because the Capetian kings of France, first Louis VI and then his son, Louis VII, made Paris a true royal capital at the very time that the French throne was being strengthened and its power consolidated.”

<sup>6</sup> *Didasc.*, 2.22 (Buttimer 40.28f.; Taylor 76).

<sup>7</sup> See Chenu, “Civilisation urbaine,” 1257–58. Among the various trades emerging in this new context, Chenu singles out the *architectes*, and with them all the related trades, fabrication, construction, carpentry, tools, ornamentation. The traditional classification of arts and trades is here exceeded. The question of architecture was thus treated separately. It is not merely the builders of cathedrals that the theologians are considering, but also the builders of human dwellings.

<sup>8</sup> Giles Constable, “Renewal and Reform in Religious Life: Concepts and Realities,” in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham, Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching 26 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 44: “An important aspect of the reform movement was the rebuilding and repair of the ecclesiastical buildings that had been neglected or destroyed ...”

<sup>9</sup> Around 1000, Ralph Glaber wrote of his world “clothed everywhere in a white garment of churches” (*PL* 142.651D).

<sup>10</sup> See William W. Clark, “Context, Continuity, and the Creation of National Memory in Paris, 1130–1160: A Critical Commentary,” *Gesta* 45 (2006), 161–75; Dominique Poiré, “Symbolice et anagogice: l’école de Saint-Victor et la naissance du style gothique,” in *L’Abbé Suger, le manifeste gothique de Saint-Denis et la pensée victorine, colloque organisé à la Fondation Singer-Polignac le mardi 21 novembre 2000 par Rencontres médiévales européennes*, ed. Dominique Poiré, *Rencontres médiévales européennes 1* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 141–70; and Patrice Sicard, “L’Urbanisme de la Cité de Dieu: constructions et architectures dans la pensée théologique du XIIe siècle,” in *L’Abbé Suger, le manifeste gothique de Saint-Denis et la pensée victorine*, 109–40.

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In contrast to the forms of Benedictine monasticism, for example, new forms of religious life sprang up, especially the orders of canons regular, which reflected urban life.<sup>11</sup> Where traditional thinkers like Rupert of Duetz and Bernard of Clairvaux saw in the city the image of “the world” in all its fallenness, for the new forms of religious life, like the canons regular, the image of the city became paradigmatic of ideal human community.

Shortly after Hugh arrived at the Abbey of St.-Victor in Paris,<sup>12</sup> construction began on the new abbey and monastic buildings,<sup>13</sup> about the same time as the nearby monastery of Ste-Geneviève and the chapel of St.-Aignan.<sup>14</sup> The daily awareness of the gradual building of new and elaborate ecclesial structures seems to have given the image of construction a new theological significance.<sup>15</sup> Here was a religious ethos in which stone, wood, metal, and glass gave invisible forms structured and striking visibility, through the careful application of well-ordered practices and organized processes, in the service of both aesthetic pleasure and divine-human encounter – “the beauty of a city,” Hugh will aver, “consists in the sublimity of its edifices.”<sup>16</sup> Yet, it was a world of form, structure, and order applied not only to the construction of walls and buildings, but also to spiritual disciplines, practices of common life, educational programs, and theological systems. This link between thought and life, between material and intellectual culture, is the point of departure for the “readings of texts and the understanding of doctrines”<sup>17</sup> of Hugh of St. Victor pursued in this study.

Stated simply, this study argues that Hugh conceives of Christian existence in this life as aiming at the construction of a dwelling place, an *aedificatio* for the presence of God within human persons, through their reformation (*reformatio*) in the image of God, accomplished

<sup>11</sup> Chenu, “Civilisation urbaine,” 1254–55: “The multiplication of communities of canons regular is of a piece with the changes which were affecting the social and economic milieu ...: the transition from rural stability to the mobility of mercantile fortunes, to the feverishness of towns, to the multiplication of human relations. Thus the foundation [at St. Victor], in the neighborhood of the city, and with its open school, presents itself as a novelty.”

<sup>12</sup> The abbey of St.-Victor was founded in Paris by William of Champeaux in 1108 and housed an Augustinian order of regular canons. For the most recent study of the early history of the abbey see Bautier, “Origines,” 23–52.

<sup>13</sup> Construction began during the tenure of Bishop Gilbert (1117–23) (Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 244, n. 11). Unfortunately, nothing of the twelfth-century church of St.-Victor remains today. “All surviving parts of the church were destroyed during the Revolution and its aftermath” (245).

<sup>14</sup> Bautier, “Origines,” 35–36. <sup>15</sup> Chenu, “Civilisation urbaine,” 1258.

<sup>16</sup> *Adnotatiunculae elucidatoriae in threnos Jeremiae* (PL 175.255B–322B), at 267C: “Decor civitatis in sublimitate aedificiorum.” (Hereafter, *Lament*.)

<sup>17</sup> Chenu, “Civilisation urbaine,” 1254.

through ordered practices.<sup>18</sup> While *prima facie* not a startling claim, it nonetheless captures a crucial feature of his theology with both breadth and precision. Many of Hugh's works can be located along the arc of his reforming program; much of what Hugh says within individual works relates to this goal. Toward that end, Hugh advocates specific practices that are both theological and ecclesial-communal. They are theological, in that they emerge explicitly in the context of this divine–human relationship and facilitate the construction of this *templum Dei*; they are ecclesial-communal, in that, while they engage persons individually and comprehensively (physically, intellectually, and morally), they are enacted in the context of the ecclesial and canonical community at the Abbey of St.-Victor in early twelfth-century Paris, and in their execution help to constitute that community. Together, this goal and these practices govern much in Hugh's theology and give it a distinctively practical cast.

This study does not pretend to be a comprehensive overview of Hugh's theology, though it does draw from nearly all of his numerous writings and hopes to offer insight into the whole of it; it is not a study of any particular doctrine, though it touches on many theological themes and tries to organize them within a single overarching frame; it is not a general overview of Hugh's theology,<sup>19</sup> though it does seek to elucidate what might be termed his signature thought-structure.<sup>20</sup> In short, at the heart of Hugh's theology and at the center of the community at St.-Victor stand “reforming practices.”

<sup>18</sup> A similar observation is made by Patrice Sicard, *Diagrammes médiévaux et exégèse visuelle: Le Libellus de formatione arche de Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Paris/Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), 210ff. Sicard stresses the theme of interior construction, though not with the connection to form and re-form as here.

<sup>19</sup> For an excellent introduction to Hugh of St. Victor and an overview of his writings, see Paul E. Rorem, *Hugh of St. Victor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Hugh's corpus is large and diverse. On dating and sequences, see Damien van den Eynde, *Essai sur la succession et la date des écrits de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, *Spicilegium Pontificii Athenaei Antoniani* 13 (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1960); Roger Baron, “Notes biographiques,” and Dominique Poiré, *Livre de la nature et débat trinitaire au XIIe siècle: le “De tribus diebus” de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, *Bibliotheca Victorina* 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 131–54. As Rorem notes, Hugh “taught not only all of theology in its broad sense (biblical, doctrinal, practical, philosophical) but also history and grammar, geometry and geography” (*Hugh of St. Victor*, 3). The challenge that any interpreter of his theology faces from the start is how to organize and present it. In fact, Hugh's theology is susceptible to various, complementary interpretations and presentations. For his part, Rorem's organizing principle of “pedagogy” is quite useful and illuminating. That Hugh's concept of pedagogy can be conceived of as “formation,” or more precisely “reformation,” is the thesis of the present approach.

REFORM IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Neither the theme of reform, nor the practices that facilitate it, have been extensively or systematically explored in scholarship devoted to Hugh of St. Victor. Broadly speaking, Hugh's interest in *reformatio* should be seen within the grand trajectory of pre-modern, Western Christian reform traditions, first noted by Gerhart Ladner's groundbreaking work, *The Idea of Reform* (1954) and R. Javelet's *Image et ressemblance*, and emphasized more recently by Ellen Charry's *By the Renewing of Your Minds* (1997).<sup>21</sup> Ladner's work demonstrated the centrality and distinctiveness of the notion of reform in pre-modern Christian tradition. John Van Engen observes that, "since re-forming ... is what Christian man was supposed to be about, such movements of renewal become virtually the theme of medieval Christian civilization." According to Van Engen, Ladner was the first to find "'reform' and variations on equivalent Latin words to be central" in early and medieval Latin Christianity. Ladner's analysis helped to distinguish reform from other kinds of renewal initiatives in the Middle Ages, including revolution, rebellion, and re-birth/renaissance.<sup>22</sup> For him, "reform" was a mode of renewal "peculiar to Christianity, taught first by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, worked out by the Fathers of the church East and West, and then rendered influential in innumerable ways through a thousand years of medieval civilization."<sup>23</sup> Though Ladner's study did not reach as far as Hugh, our Victorine stands squarely in the tradition he identified.<sup>24</sup> For her part, Charry brought Ladner's thesis forward in relation to later figures such as Thomas Aquinas, Julian of

<sup>21</sup> Gerhart H. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954); Robert Javelet, *Image et ressemblance au douzième siècle: de saint Anselme à Alain de Lille*, 2 vols. (Paris: Editions Letouzey et Ané, 1967); Ellen Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> See John H. Van Engen, "Images and Ideas: The Achievements of Gerhart Burian Ladner, with a Bibliography of his Published Works," *Viator* 20 (1989), 101–4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 103: "The heart of Ladner's insight is this: Reform, as taught in the Christian scriptures and Fathers, means fundamentally personal renewal based upon man's original creation in the image and likeness of God. This renewal entails a change of mind and heart, graced by sacramental ministrations, that moves men and women ever closer to the likeness of God. The movement, the action implicit in the reforming, has been made possible by the incarnation, God become flesh, the second Adam, who represented perfectly what image-likeness is in all its fullness."

<sup>24</sup> This study hopes to continue Ladner's methodology, which, in Van Engen's words, followed "the principle of speaking about issues and movements in medieval civilization by way of the language contemporaries employed" (*ibid.*, 96; 101, n. 35) and sought "to grasp how this fundamental notion [of reform] worked itself out in a variety of contexts. For this it is better not to concoct any grand scheme – Ladner himself generally refrained from doing that – but to review a series of trenchant observations about aspects of medieval civilization" (*ibid.*, 103–4).

Norwich, and John Calvin, restating and extending Ladner's basic thesis under the rubric of pre-modern "sapiential theology," experience-rich, morally engaged, speculative *and* practical. As will be borne out below, Hugh's theology of reformation is deeply sapiential in similar ways.

More narrowly, Hugh's literary output occurred in Paris at the Abbey of St.-Victor, roughly between 1118 and 1141. Viewing his theology from the perspective of *reformatio* allows his thought to be linked more fully than is often the case to its twelfth-century milieu, where profound economic, political, cultural, and religious changes were producing the so-called "twelfth-century renaissance."<sup>25</sup> Hugh's Paris was in many ways at the center of these dramatic changes in twelfth-century Europe.<sup>26</sup> A "massive economic transformation" was under way, as agricultural production increased along with the population, as trade expanded northward from the Mediterranean Sea and southward from the North Sea, as a money-based economy emerged, as commerce flourished in emerging urban centers, as – broadly speaking – commercialization took hold. Coupled with growing urbanization, this development enabled cities like Paris to support, not only an emerging middle class of merchants and townspeople, but also thriving communities of scholars and students.<sup>27</sup> Charismatic masters appeared in these urban centers – possessing either a wide and developed literary culture, a profound grasp of Aristotelian logic, a technical knowledge of law (Roman or canon), or all of these – drawing students from all over Europe to their classrooms.<sup>28</sup> Relative peace, especially in France, facilitated the formation of strong, well-organized, and stable governments, creating demand for educated, literate bureaucrats to administrate a government based increasingly on written laws and records. The Capetian kings of France, Louis VI, "the Fat" (1108–37), and his son, Louis VII (1137–80), made Paris a true royal capital at the very time the French throne was being strengthened and its power consolidated.<sup>29</sup> Political stability encouraged freedom of movement for many like Hugh himself,<sup>30</sup> who traversed a great distance from his

<sup>25</sup> Recent works, e.g., Robert Norman Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999), 3–6, have stressed the highly regional nature of the so-called "twelfth-century Renaissance."

<sup>26</sup> See note 5 above.

<sup>27</sup> See C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 239–68. Jaeger notes that "the student population of Paris swelled from whatever the cathedral of Notre Dame could accommodate by itself in 1100 (certainly not more than about 100 students) to 2000–3000 by 1140" (239).

<sup>28</sup> See Swanson, *Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 1–39.

<sup>29</sup> Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 197. <sup>30</sup> Swanson, *Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 9.

birthplace to join the newly chartered chapter of Augustinian canons at the Abbey of St.-Victor in Paris.<sup>31</sup>

Shaping and shaped by these dramatic changes were various monastic, ecclesial, and personal initiatives of reform,<sup>32</sup> “one of the central facts of the history of the eleventh century because of its many wide and deep ramifications.”<sup>33</sup> In this period, “the terms most frequently used for religious change were *reformare* and *reformatio*.”<sup>34</sup> Prevalent in the literature emanating from various quarters in the early twelfth century, the theme of reform has been well documented,<sup>35</sup> but is usefully rehearsed. Toward the end of the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII implemented sweeping reforms directed at bishops and cathedral canons, a movement that runs parallel to profound Cistercian reforms of monastic institutions, advocating stricter observance of the *Rule of St. Benedict*.

There was a common concern at that time, and especially in the period from about 1100 to 1160, with the nature of religious life and the ideal of personal perfection. A set of values as well as a way of life, embodied in various institutions, was at the heart of the movement of reform, which can be seen as an effort to monasticize first the clergy, by imposing on them a standard of life previously reserved for monks, and then the entire world.<sup>36</sup>

Gregory VII “applied *reformare* to the church as a whole,” reflecting “a new perception – that institutional change was possible,”<sup>37</sup> and “a new

<sup>31</sup> On what is known of Hugh’s origins, see Rorem, *Hugh of St. Victor*, 9–11, and the earlier literature, including: E. Croydon, “Notes on the Life of Hugh of St. Victor,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 40 (1939), 232–53; Jerome Taylor, *The Origin and Early Life of Hugh of St. Victor: An Evaluation of the Tradition*, Texts and Studies in the History of Medieval Education 5 (Notre Dame, Ind.: Medieval Institute, 1957); Roger Baron, “Notes biographiques sur Hugues de Saint-Victor,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 51 (1956), 930; Dominique Poirel, “Hugo Saxo. Les origines germaniques de la pensée d’Hugues de Saint-Victor,” *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte* 33.1 (2006), 163–69.

<sup>32</sup> See Constable, “Renewal and Reform,” 37–67 and Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). “The terms *renovatio*, *reformatio*, *transformatio*, *reversio*, *recreatio*, and *reflectio* were applied by many writers in the twelfth century to the conversion or *transitus* of the soul from the state of dissimilarity into which it had fallen as a result of sin into the state of similarity or grace in which it had been created” (Constable, *Reformation*, 45).

<sup>33</sup> David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Introduction,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV c.1024–c.1198, eds. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.

<sup>34</sup> Constable, *Reformation*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> See Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 187–240, and the literature she cites. Fassler observes: “Throughout twelfth-century Europe, calls to reform stirred a wide range of people: not only monks and canons, but bishops, popes and the laity as well. Ideals of reform, their sources and their translation into both new and renewed modes of religious life, are subjects central to understanding the period” (187).

<sup>36</sup> Constable, *Reformation*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> Constable, “Renewal and Reform,” 38.



historical outlook, which emphasized the mutability of all terrestrial institutions.”<sup>38</sup> Innovative here was Gregory VII’s attempt to reform the whole church, not just individuals. “For the first time in Church history more than personal, more than monastic, and more than even imperial renewal, indeed a structural reform of the Church as a whole had to be envisaged.”<sup>39</sup>

Situated as a kind of hybrid of clerical and monastic reform was the canonical movement. The canons regular, or Augustinian (Austin) canons, were distinguished from their secular counterparts by their common life of shared property and their submission to the so-called *Rule of St. Augustine*. At the same time, in certain respects, they forged an identity in contrast to traditional monasticism. The canons regular “fell in between these two branches [clerical and monastic reform] and looked to both for inspiration.”<sup>40</sup> On one hand, they participated in the “monasticization” of the clergy; on the other hand, they strove to “promote the goals of the Gregorian reform movement.”<sup>41</sup> Central to the canon’s *raison d’être* and perhaps his most distinguishing characteristic was, in the words of Carolyn Bynum, a “sense of a responsibility to edify his fellow men both by what he says and by what he does,” that is, *verbo et exemplo*.<sup>42</sup> Behind this central feature of canonical life lay, at least in part, newly emerging conceptions of the *vita apostolica*, characterized by a shift away from the monastic ideal of common property and shared communal life to a pastoral or evangelical ideal, “combining a stress on individual perfection with pastoral activity (e.g., preaching and teaching).”<sup>43</sup> Bynum thus sums up the distinctive ideals of the canonical movement, as exemplified at St.-Victor, under three heads: (1) a conviction that the mixed life (contemplation and active service) is superior to the contemplative life; (2) a new emphasis on preaching; and (3) a new emphasis on sacraments and history.<sup>44</sup> These interests are readily apparent in Hugh’s theology.

Of particular relevance to Hugh’s theology is the way in which the ideal of reform came increasingly to entail an attempt, not to return to

<sup>38</sup> I. S. Robinson, “Reform and the Church, 1073–1122,” in Luscombe and Riley-Smith, *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1V, 275.

<sup>39</sup> Van Engen, “Images and Ideas,” 104–5. See also John Howe, “The Nobility’s Reform of the Church,” *American Historical Review* 93.2 (1988), 317–39.

<sup>40</sup> Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 187–240. <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>42</sup> Carolyn Walker Bynum, “The Spirituality of Regular Canons in the Twelfth Century,” in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 22–58. Bynum observes that “canonical authors see canons as teachers and learners, whereas monastic authors see monks only as learners,” 36.

<sup>43</sup> Constable, “Renewal and Reform,” 54–55.

<sup>44</sup> Bynum, “Spirituality of Regular Canons,” 33–34.



an earlier, traditional form of religious life, but to establish new and better forms. The emerging ideal, “applied to religious and secular institutions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries,” was not merely change, but change “for the better” (*in melius*),<sup>45</sup> a forward-looking change,<sup>46</sup> as the prefix “re” increasingly came to mean “new.”<sup>47</sup> Originating apparently with Augustine, and emerging as distinctively Western (Ladner’s thesis),<sup>48</sup> this ideal of reform “for the better” had an affinity with canonical reformers,<sup>49</sup> including Hugh, in whose writings it appears repeatedly. Part of a “developmental mentality,”<sup>50</sup> both Southern and Constable have noted an optimism animating twelfth-century reform, a forward-looking posture that sensed “a new stage in God’s plan for the reformation and recreation of men.”<sup>51</sup> In a biblical idiom, the goal was not of “reforming the Garden of Eden on earth but of transforming men into paradisiacal flowers.”<sup>52</sup>

Scholars have noted the special importance of reform for the canons regular in twelfth-century reforming initiatives. In the opening decades of twelfth-century Paris, powerful currents of both royal and ecclesiastical resistance, arrayed against reform initiatives directed at the cathedral canons of Notre-Dame, plunged the newly founded community of canons regular at the Abbey of St.-Victor into a maelstrom of conflict and intrigue.<sup>53</sup> The community of canons regular was initially established

<sup>45</sup> See Ladner (*Idea of Reform*, 43, 47, 156–59) for the importance of this sense of reform in earlier Christian tradition.

<sup>46</sup> Constable, *Reformation*, 3: Reform “could refer either to restoration and revival, in a backwards-looking sense, or to re-birth and re-formation, as a forwards-looking change.”

<sup>47</sup> Constable, “Renewal and Reform,” 40.

<sup>48</sup> Van Engen, “Images and Ideas,” 103: Ladner saw different emphases between Eastern and Western versions of this theme. “In the Eastern church the key term is *apokatastasis*, a total renewal which brings about a return to the original paradisiac state.” “In the West, beginning with Tertullian and then especially through Augustine, the key term is reform and especially *reformatio in melius*. Through the incarnation, the perfection and grace of the God-man, fallen man is enabled so to ‘reform for the better’ as to surpass in the end his original paradisiac state and to reach a new state of recreation. This is the goal, and it was this personal reform that animated notions of renewal throughout Western medieval culture.”

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 104: “In the West ... Augustine’s understanding of ‘reform for the better’ went hand in hand with his emphasis upon building a ‘city of God’ different from the city of man. ... Augustine’s circle of friends and clerics sharing a common Christian life provided a potent image of a monastic vanguard, the model later for canons regular in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and for Dominicans in the thirteenth.”

<sup>50</sup> Luscombe and Riley-Smith, “Introduction,” 2. <sup>51</sup> Constable, “Renewal and Reform,” 62.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 63. “The concept of renewal and reform that started as an effort to recreate conditions that had existed in the distant – and often mythical – past came increasingly to be based on principles of nature and reason and to accept forms of religious life that had never existed in the past and could be justified only as part of God’s emerging plan for the present and the future” (66).

<sup>53</sup> For a helpful overview of these developments see Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 187–210. For general discussions of various aspects of Victorine thought and life in the twelfth century, see Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality* (Missoula:

in 1108, when William of Champeaux, a prominent cathedral canon and leading master in the cathedral school, left Notre-Dame to establish a new mode of religious life at Paris. William, and the students who joined him, located themselves on the site of an abandoned hermitage dedicated to St. Victor just outside the city walls on the left bank of the Seine. “William’s decision to leave the cathedral, contrary to the story Abelard tells, may have been motivated by a deep commitment to reform, not only to pursue a reformed clerical life, but also to promote the cause of reform at Notre Dame itself.” For her part, Fassler observes that “the circumstances of [St.-Victor’s] foundation suggest that the abbey was created not only as a haven for Parisian canons who yearned for the common life, but also as an example for the secular canons at the cathedral. Thus, although St.-Victor was a royal abbey from the time of its official foundation ... the house nevertheless served immediately to promote conversion to a particular mode of religious life.” This interest in effecting reform is evident even in the choice of the abbey’s location: “It was precisely in such locations that reformers ... established new houses of canons regular: far enough from the city to have land and solitude, yet near enough to make their presence strongly felt within it.”<sup>54</sup>

The importance of reform for the Abbey of St.-Victor is thus manifest. Its reason for being was the cause of reform, both of those canons who lived within it, and of the cathedral clergy throughout the diocese and beyond. The Victorines were in the vanguard of twelfth-century reform initiatives in Paris. As Fassler has described, the decade or so between the founding of St.-Victor and Hugh’s arrival there witnessed subtle maneuvering and even open conflict in the struggle between various parties arrayed for and against reform in Paris. Hugh’s career at St.-Victor coincides to a great extent with the period of triumph for the reform party, of which St.-Victor was a part, in their attempts to bring canonical reform to the chapter at the cathedral of Notre-Dame.<sup>55</sup>

In the first half of the twelfth century, then, the diversity and ubiquity of the theme of reform, the various images used to describe it, and the wide range of objects to which it could be applied suggest that by Hugh’s time *reformare* was a fundamental concept and framework by which to

Scholars Press, 1979); Bynum, “Spirituality of Regular Canons” in *Jesus as Mother*, 22–58; and Jean Châtillon, *Le mouvement canonial au moyen âge: réforme de l’église, spiritualité et culture*, Bibliotheca Victorina 3 (Paris/Turnhout: Brepols, 1992).

<sup>54</sup> Fassler, *Gothic Song*, 201.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 206: “After 1123, however, when Stephen of Senlis [a reform-minded cleric] became Bishop of Paris, there would have been no barrier to writing new works for the cathedral liturgy as well. It was during this same time that Hugh of St. Victor wrote his first great works of scriptural