

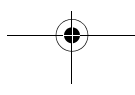
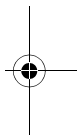
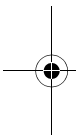
## Conclusion

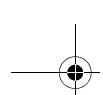
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Students of twelfth-century theology will be struck by many of the key components that are lacking in the Chartrian theology that we have presented. First and foremost among these is the lack of any real Christological elements. Christ—except as formulated as the eternal exemplar—is not presented as a key figure of either their doctrine of creation or of the pathway that leads back to God. Moreover, because this pathway is very focused on the abilities of the human being within the context of this life to use the powers of the soul to ascend to union with God, there is little room for the development of an eschatology. Neither is there any conversation about grace or sacramental efficacy. Further, the contention that every aspect of the cosmos is an image of God and is, as such, revelatory of God, leaves one asking whether there are not gradations in the natural order—as one finds clearly in Pseudo Dionysius. These are indeed important issues, but they are not ones addressed by William and Thierry. We shall leave inquiry into the significance of this deficit for another time. We turn now to offer a summary of the central elements of Chartrian thought as it has been re-constructed in these pages.

The Chartrians believed that theological inquiry does not exist in a vacuum. It is not compartmentalized into neat subsets divorced from each other and from any connection to other fields of learning and aspects of life. Theology, for it to reap the full benefits of the search for meaning, exists as an integrated part of a holistic approach to life and learning. Science and the human experience of the cosmos hold a central place in any articulation of spirituality and the quest for theological truth.

The Chartrians believed that Plato and the Neoplatonists had discovered aspects of the divine truth, and that God spoke through them to the Greeks and the Romans, and continued to speak through them to the twelfth-century world. They held that, just as God placed truth in the pages of scripture, so too the pages of the Church Fathers, the writings of pagan philosophers,





and the very cosmos itself, were all filled with hidden meaning and divine revelation.

The tools of integument guided the Chartrian interpretation of all material and experience. This investigation extended to the reading of the natural world and must be understood within the Neoplatonic metaphysical context. Within this context all that exists in the sense world of our experience is an image of the world of ideas, and all words and experiences function as guides and signs that, when interpreted, lead one to truth and to God. The Chartrians taught, in effect, that every encounter that one has in his or her lifetime is a theophany. Each human person is equipped with the essential tools for seeking and discovering this revelation. This search starts with our senses and with the natural world.

In order to understand the cosmos one has to understand something about the intelligible world. In their search to understand something about God and the intelligible world, William and Thierry began with the belief that all talk about God or creation is rooted in metaphor. The ideas that the human mind connects to are real, but the words are integument, and in the Neoplatonic metaphysical view, the words are themselves aspects of the imperfect sense world. Consequently, all knowledge about the cosmos is only partial knowledge—or in the words of the *Timaeus*, a likely story. This does not stop the Chartrians from pursuing such knowledge either about God or the cosmos. It does, however, prevent them from idolizing one word or one set of words and claiming that they are to be exclusively used in reference to the divine or certain aspects of nature. This represents a certain humility and it sets up a developmental understanding of both God and the cosmos.

The Chartrian understanding of the intelligible world reveals a unique trinitarian Christian Neoplatonism. For the Chartrians, the Father is the source of all being, the efficient cause, power, the One from whom all else comes. The Son, from all eternity, is generated from the Father, and is the wisdom of God—coequal and coeternal. This generation is so intense that it generates a second self that is the exact image, or measure of equality of the Father. Since the Son is rooted in God's act of thinking of God's self, it is spoken of as the Mind and Word of God. It is the exemplary cause of the cosmos for it is through it that God creates. The Son is the perfect archetypal exemplar that the Father uses as the model for creating the cosmos. That generation is rooted in love, so much so that it generates another person, the Holy Spirit, the bond, love, goodness, will, and final cause of the cosmos.

The eternal generation of wisdom is the eternal generation of everything that is in the Father. In the Father, because God is infinite, are all possible ideas that are expressed in the Son. These ideas are infinite, as is the Father.

