

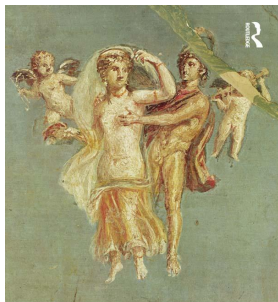
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ORIGEN

Jeffrey Hause

It would seem that Origen (c.186–c.255) was born into most unpropitious circumstances. His family belonged to the Christian minority, which educated pagans reviled and the Roman Empire outlawed as an unpatriotic religious novelty. In the persecutions of Septimius Severus, his father, Leonides, was beheaded and the family's property confiscated. The seventeen-year-old Origen, as eldest son, was charged with supporting the family of ten, which he did by teaching literature to private students and, later, the elements of Christianity to catechumens, neither job prestigious. What mattered most to Origen, however, was to become ever more Christ-like and to illuminate, for himself and others, the mysteries hidden in the Scriptures. His various biographers, although not impartial, still paint a reliable picture of Origen's remarkable virtue, while many of his views, adopted by Athanasius, Augustine, and the Cappadocians, marked the mainstream of both Eastern and Western Christianity. From his perspective, his circumstances were propitious indeed.

He was born in cosmopolitan Alexandria, in his day one of the world's centres of learning, where Origen had access to a wide array of texts and brilliant instructors. The patronage of wealthy Christians enabled him to study with Ammonius Saccas, the Platonist philosopher who would later instruct Plotinus, as well as other teachers, such as an unnamed Jewish convert to Christianity who introduced Origen to rabbinic traditions of scriptural interpretation. He eventually founded his own school of advanced studies. Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria had already worked to integrate Greek philosophy into Christianity, as Philo had into Judaism, and Origen drew on their pioneering work in his account of Christianity as the true philosophy that all philosophies strove to be, but failed. As his published works circulated, his fame grew, and his work took him to cities throughout the Roman Empire, including Antioch, where he was summoned to a debate by the Emperor Alexander Severus' mother, Julia Mamaea. Origen left Alexandria in 233 and eventually settled in Caesarea, where he was ordained a priest. In addition to preaching, he continued to run his own school of advanced studies and write. His years in Caesarea were exceptionally productive until he

was arrested and tortured in the persecutions of the Emperor Decius. Weakened by the torture, he died shortly afterwards, probably in 255 when he was 69.

One of antiquity's most prodigious writers, Origen wrote detailed commentaries on nearly every book of the Bible. In his view, the literal sense of Scripture veils its more important spiritual sense, which expresses that portion of divine wisdom God has so far revealed to human beings. However, to see beyond the veil, to grasp the Bible's deepest truths, an exegete needs scholarly aptitude and divine help in the form of moral virtue and inspiration. Devoting himself to study and trusting God to help him, Origen makes spiritual exegesis his life's work and sees it as his duty to help others to grasp the divine wisdom in so far as they can. Origen's most extraordinary exegetical work is his *Commentary on John*, containing his fullest account of the Son's titles, central both to the spiritual interpretation of the Bible and to our return to God. Through this work Origen also sought to reclaim John's Gospel and its spiritual interpretation from prevalent Gnostic misreadings. He also composed homilies on the Bible, treatises on religious themes and two more overtly philosophical works: the late *Against Celsus*, which defends Christianity against the Hellenistic philosopher Celsus' attacks, and the relatively early *On First Principles*. This latter work is sometimes taken as Origen's only original contribution to philosophy as opposed to biblical studies, but that is a mistake. *On First Principles* is no less biblically based than Origen's other works, which Origen would in turn defend as deeply philosophical not despite but because of their scriptural bases. In engaging Greek philosophy, Origen's confidence in orthodox Christianity allows him to read the philosophers charitably, explaining their errors with equanimity, but also pointing out whatever affinities of goal and similarities of doctrine he finds. He feels no need to make concessions to Greek philosophy, but in developing his own worldview he helps himself to the treasures of pagan learning, just as the Hebrews had been allowed to plunder the Egyptians' treasures in Exodus 12:36. His writings express his own life's commitments: placing himself in the discipline of the Word, he strives to know himself and grow ever more virtuous so as to know and love God and his creation ever better, and he seeks to help others along the same path.

ORIGEN AND PHILOSOPHY

Given his scholarly focus on the Bible, Origen often expresses his distrust of the philosophers. In his judgement, their schools have fragmented the discipline and their theories contain "vain deceit" (*Against Celsus* Prol. 5, quoting Colossians 2:8). We might, then, have expected Origen to abandon philosophy entirely, adopting instead a mythological or mystical approach to religion. While Origen does make room for mysticism, he rejects the mythological approach to understanding God and the world that characterizes his distant predecessors Homer and Hesiod, siding with the long tradition of Greek philosophy that the world is a cosmos:

an ordered system that is rationally comprehensible. Moreover, Origen's philosophical learning is prodigious, and he steeped his students in works by pagan philosophers from all schools, except those he deemed atheistic. He employs the concepts and methods of philosophy to resolve conflicts and solve problems; to expand our knowledge of God, the cosmos, and in particular rational creatures; and to discover virtue's demands, help us to find our way to our ultimate goal and help us transform our lives. These are the common tasks of Greek philosophy, and they characterize most philosophy to the present day.

Origen's attitude toward Greek philosophy is complex. He clearly finds it invaluable for exegesis: philosophical concepts can illuminate the Scriptures, while philosophical techniques give the exegete the tools necessary to discover a coherent reading of the entire Bible. What is more, philosophy is crucial for apologetic work. Origen's *Against Celsus* turns philosophy itself against Celsus' philosophical attacks on Christianity. Origen also recognizes that philosophical reflection has uncovered many truths about God and creation, such as that God is eternal, immutable and absolutely simple. Most astoundingly, Origen writes, some Platonists have discovered independently of the Scriptures that "all things were created by the Word or Reason of God", a central doctrine of Christianity (*On First Principles* 1.3.1). It is no wonder Paul himself finds Greek philosophy impressive; yet Paul also sees it as "vain deceit", and Origen echoes this judgement. Origen lacks Anselm of Canterbury's conviction that we can discover by reason the central truths of Christianity, including the doctrines that God is a Trinity and created the world out of nothing. He is nonetheless not as wary as Tertullian, who regards philosophy as the mother of heresy. In Origen's view, the most important subjects tackled by the philosophers – God, the origin of the cosmos, the nature of the soul – are simply too difficult for unaided reason to master, and so Greek philosophy, whatever its triumphs, is doomed to error. Unmoored from revelation, the philosophers cannot detect their mistakes, but set up rival systems of thought that serve only to insulate them from correction and to fragment their discipline. As a result, on Origen's view, no Greek philosopher has an accurate grasp of God and his creation (*Homily on Genesis* 14.3).

The remedy is not to reject philosophy, but to transform it. Origen's work not only makes use of philosophy, but is *itself* philosophy, the true and sacred philosophy that can succeed where Greek philosophy fails because sacred philosophy is anchored in Scripture (*Commentary on the Song of Songs* prol. 3.20). The bulk of Origen's work, even his commentaries and homilies on Scripture, help the reader to develop a philosophical account of Christianity. We can best see this aspect of Origen's project in *On First Principles*. There, Origen explains that the starting-points of his investigations consist of the propositions in the Rule of Faith, that is, those truths taught clearly and plainly in Scripture, the doctrine handed down by the Apostles, and what is universally accepted by the Church. Using this rule as a defence against misinterpretation, we can gather more truths from the Scriptures, and in the effort of reconciling, integrating and developing them, we will eventually discern, at least dimly, the ultimate

explanatory principles. We begin with “Jesus Christ, and him crucified”, but eventually we discover how the same Christ is the formal, final and efficient cause of the cosmos, and from this glimpse of Christ, who is the Father’s image, we grasp what we can of the Father, the ultimate principle of all.

For Origen, what defines philosophy is in part its subject matter and its characteristic methods for resolving problems. However, Origen, like most ancient thinkers, also takes philosophy to be a discipline in the fullest sense: a way to structure one’s life. We can glean this not just from Origen’s own writings, but most vividly from the testimony of one of Origen’s students who lived and studied with him at Caesarea. This student, then known as Theodore, is often thought to be the youthful St Gregory the Wonderworker before he assumed his Christian name at baptism. On leaving Origen’s school, Theodore delivered an *Address of Thanksgiving*, detailing his teacher’s curriculum and pedagogical strategies. He describes Origen’s philosophical instruction as a sort of intellectual, moral and spiritual formation. In addition to teaching the various doctrines of the Greeks and how to evaluate them critically, Origen sought to train his students to live righteously. It was not mere doctrines about the soul’s impulses that they learned to master; they learned to master those impulses themselves. Most importantly, Origen trained his students to strive to know themselves, which Theodore describes as philosophy’s highest achievement. Theodore also notes that Origen’s own life and character served as a model for his students. Origen explains in his own works his reasons for linking intellectual, moral and spiritual formation. All philosophers strive for ever greater enlightenment about God and his creation. However, in his view, unless they reflect on their lives, come to know themselves, purge themselves of their base desires, and never cease to transform themselves through moral and spiritual discipline, they will fail to gain the wisdom they seek. The Son is Wisdom itself, and the more like the Son one becomes, the more enlightened one will be.

THE TRINITY

Origen accepts the view common to Middle Platonism and to most Christian thought that God (the Father) lies beyond human comprehension or measure. Even in our future life, when we return to the Father and shed the gross material bodies that now dull our minds, the Father will still lie beyond our grasp. Some later Christian thinkers explain God’s incomprehensibility by appealing to his infinity, but Origen cannot avail himself of this explanation. Because he accepts the commonly held Greek view that what is infinite is unknowable even to God, if he held that God is infinite, he would also have to admit that God cannot comprehend himself (*On First Principles* 2.9.1). Hence, Origen explains the fact that we cannot grasp the Father, despite his finitude, by stressing the gulf between our weak intellects and the Father’s surpassing, if limited, greatness.

This same gulf explains why our language is inadequate for describing the Father. However, even if language cannot convey exactly what the Father is, it can still convey what he is not: the Father is uncreated, immaterial, incorporeal, immutable and absolutely simple, that is, incomposite. Of these attributes, the one Origen stresses is incorporeality. Because the Bible speaks of God's face and hands and of his walking in the Garden of Eden, Christians who failed to read the Bible spiritually took these passages to imply that the Father had a body. Moreover, the pagan philosopher Celsus interpreted the biblical claim that human beings are created in God's image to imply that God has a body. If they are right, Origen argues, the Father would be a composite of soul and body. That view is incompatible with the apostolic teaching that the Father is the first principle of all else, for the Father's soul and body, as the elements that constitute him, would be prior principles (*On First Principles* 1.1.5–6; *Against Celsus* 6.63).

Origen also employs a strategy that would later be called 'the way of eminence' (*via eminentiae*) to remedy the inadequacies of our ordinary predicates for describing the Father. If there were some whose weak eyes could stand to see only the flicker of a lamp, we could teach them about the sun only by expressing that the sun's light is unspeakably greater and more glorious than the candle's flame. Likewise, we express God's positive attributes, such as his goodness, most accurately when we say that they are unspeakably greater than what we are able to perceive from his creatures, which nevertheless give us some indication of what their first principle is like (*On First Principles* 1.1.5–6).

The Father eternally generates the Son, a divine hypostasis numerically distinct from the Father. While the Father has his existence and divinity from himself, the Son is begotten of the Father and participates in the Father's divinity. That is why the Gospel of John speaks of the Father as *the* God (*ho theos*), while it describes the Son as God (*theos*) (*Commentary on John* 2.17). Origen's sketch of the relationship between the Father and the Son is motivated by his desire to find an account of the Trinity that is consistent with monotheism. If Father and Son are numerically distinct hypostases, each with a divine nature, then there are two Gods. Hence, some monotheists concluded that Father and Son must be one and the same hypostasis, but we speak of the Son in order to capture certain aspects of the Father, such as his role as saviour. Other monotheists, unwilling to maintain that the Son is merely an aspect of the Father, concluded that the Son is indeed numerically distinct from the Father, but not divine. Finding these views heterodox, Origen resolves the problem by retaining the view that Father and Son are numerically distinct divine hypostases, but avoids falling into polytheism because these two hypostases are strictly speaking one God, for the Son participates in the Father's divinity (*Commentary on John* 2.16–17). The Father and Son are also one in yet another sense. Although each divine hypostasis has its own will, the Son conforms his will to the Father's: in their content, the two wills are indistinguishable. While some creatures also conform their wills to the Father's in so far as they understand it, no creature has a complete grasp of his will: some fail to see all that

he wills, or fail to see it distinctly. Only the Son fully comprehends the Father's will and conforms his will to it, and therefore only the Son is the Father's image (*Commentary on John* 13.228–32).

In his *Commentary on John*, after noting that the Father is absolutely one and simple, Origen adds that the Son, in contrast, becomes the many things that creatures need for their salvation (*Commentary on John* 1.119). These many things, which Origen calls his “aspects”, excellences” or “titles”, play a central role in Origen's thought. The project of spiritual interpretation is to deepen our understanding of them, since they reveal to us who the Son is, and our only knowledge of the Father is through his image, the Son (Wolinski 1995). Moreover, they reveal the route of return to the Father, since many of them are the names of the virtues we must acquire and the names of the Son in so far as he helps us at various stages on the road of return.

Origen divides the Son's titles into two groups: those that belong to the Son in so far as he is the mediator between the Father and the fallen world (such as ‘Shepherd’, ‘Redemption’ and ‘King’), and those that belong to him in so far as he is the Son (such as ‘Wisdom’, ‘Truth’, ‘Power’, ‘Justice’ and ‘Logos’, that is, ‘Word’ or ‘Reason’), titles that would belong to him even if there had been no creatures in need of salvation. When Origen says that the Son “becomes” these things, he does not mean that the Son undergoes changes by acquiring certain properties. Like the Father, the Son is immutable. However, we will bear a different relation to him depending on the state of our own spiritual progress. For those who are meek but who lack control over their non-rational desires, the Son is Shepherd. The Son rules as King over those who have more rational control over themselves. Those very advanced, whose wills already conform to the Son's, need only a deeper vision of the Son, and for them he is Logos, and finally Wisdom. In none of these cases is there a distinction in the Son himself except in so far as some of these titles are grounded in the activity of Jesus Christ, the Son incarnate. We conceive of the Son differently, and bestow various titles on him, in so far as we receive different sorts of help from him in the various stages of our return.

When Origen speaks of the Son's “acquisition” of those titles belonging to him as Son, once again he does not mean that the Son gains various properties one by one, but rather that certain titles are logically dependent on others and in that sense are ‘later’ than others. Origen asserts that the Son's most ancient title is ‘Wisdom’ on the basis of Proverbs 8:22–30, which reports that Wisdom is the beginning. On the other hand, John reports that the Logos was in the beginning (1:1), and that Life came to be in the Logos (1:3–4). Among these titles, ‘Life’ is posterior to ‘Logos’, which is in turn posterior to ‘Wisdom’. What Origen seems to mean is that the explanation of the Son's later titles requires mention of the earlier ones.¹ Hence, Origen

1. Many scholastic philosophers, especially the Scotists, speak of prior and posterior metaphysical (as opposed to temporal) moments, which they called ‘instants of nature’. See Normore (2003: 134), to which I am indebted for my formulation of Origen's views.

says that as Wisdom, the Son comprehends all things. As Logos, he communicates what he comprehends to rational creatures. Because we cannot explain this role as Logos without appealing to his role as Wisdom, the title ‘Logos’ is later than the title ‘Wisdom.’ Origen offers this account of the relative priority and posteriority of the Son’s titles in so far as they belong to him as mediator between the Father and rational creatures. However, even if we restrict ourselves to those titles in so far as they belong to the Son as Son, we can still see why ‘Wisdom’ is a more ancient title. The Son is Wisdom because he contains in himself an intelligible cosmos, that is, the exemplars of all things that God creates or could create. As Logos, the Son is the expression of the Father’s mind, just as human beings’ words are the expressions of their minds. Origen could say, then, that it is precisely because he contains the intelligible cosmos that the Son expresses the Father’s mind and is the Father’s image. In that case, we must appeal to the Son’s being Wisdom in order to explain why he is Logos, and so ‘Wisdom’ once again would turn out to be prior to ‘Logos’ among the Son’s titles.

Origen admits that even without Scripture, philosophers have come to know truths about the Father and the Son. In fact, Platonists, like Christians, argue for a divine Triad; in Plotinus’ well-developed system, they are the One, Intellect and World Soul. However, while the first two hypostases correspond to some extent with the Father and the Son, the third does not correspond at all with the Holy Spirit. Origen contends that without Scripture, no philosopher has had any inkling of the Holy Spirit’s existence (*On First Principles* 1.3.1). Just as the Son derives his existence and divinity from the Father, the Holy Spirit derives his from the Father and Son, and from the Son he derives his wisdom, rationality, justice and other perfections identified by the Son’s titles. There was in antiquity, as there is now, controversy about how to understand the Son and Holy Spirit’s subordination to the Father. Origen clearly teaches that they depend on the Father as their origin and are in that respect subordinate (e.g. *Commentary on John* 2.19–20, 72, 86). The controversy focuses on several passages in which Origen seems to suggest that the Father’s knowledge of himself surpasses the Son’s and, by implication, the Holy Spirit’s, including two in the *Commentary on John* (1.187, 32.350) and one in *On First Principles* (4.4.8), which Rufinus omits from his Latin translation, presumably to preserve Origen and the so-called ‘Origenists’ of the fourth and fifth centuries from accusations of heresy. (I say ‘so-called,’ since even the Origenists’ opponents, in particular Jerome, are also Origen’s intellectual heirs.) However, Origen’s thoughts in these passages remain undeveloped, and in none of them does he clearly assert that the Father’s knowledge surpasses the Son’s or Holy Spirit’s (Crouzel 1989: chs 9–10). On the other hand, he does plainly state that the Apostles “conveyed that the Holy Spirit is united in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son” (*On First Principles* preface 4). No controversy surrounds Origen’s teaching on the Holy Spirit’s central role in our lives. The Son is revealed through Scripture, but in order to gain access to that revelation we need the Holy Spirit to sanctify and transform us, for unless we read with spiritual eyes we cannot grasp the Scripture’s spiritual sense.

THE COSMOS

In addition to the eternal Trinity, we must also admit an eternal creation, since maintaining that there was a time before God created the world would saddle us with the absurd consequence that God would once have been idle, and surely God cannot be a do-nothing. Moreover, when God eventually did create, he would have changed, and changed for the better at that, since only then would he have been a sovereign. Because God is immutable, he must always have been a sovereign, and so must always have had a world to rule (*On First Principles* 1.2.10, 1.4.3). Origen does not spell out all the premises of this argument, and it remains unclear why he thinks becoming a sovereign would constitute a change in God. He might base this conclusion on the assumption that acquiring any relation constitutes a change in a subject, an assumption that most philosophers would reject. After all, if I should unknowingly inherit a large company and thereby become an employer, it is hard to see how *I* have changed. On the other hand, he might more plausibly take God's change to consist in his new act of governing the world over which he is sovereign.

God's eternal creation is not the material world we inhabit, but an intelligible cosmos that serves as the archetype, the blueprint, of his later creation. The world we see around us, the world containing many instances of human being, of donkey, of triangle, is a reflection of that intelligible world containing the Ideas, perfect exemplars of these kinds. Origen's own version of this Platonic cosmology evidently owes much to Philo, himself deeply influenced by Middle Platonists (Sorabji 1983: 250–53). In *De opificio mundi* (On the world's creation) 4.15–6.25, Philo argues that God creates an intelligible cosmos in the Logos, who is God's agent of creation. As a result, the Logos is the Idea of Ideas, a claim Origen echoes at *Against Celsus* 6.64. When Origen speaks of the Ideas in this cosmos as 'parts' of the Son, he means only to distance himself from the more ancient Platonic view that they exist independently, not to assert that the ideas are themselves constitutive of the Son. However, if it is the eternal creation of the intelligible cosmos that is supposed to save God from charges of idleness, progress and mutability, it might seem that Origen simply pushes the problem back one stage rather than resolving it. Does God not change by creating and ruling over the rational creatures that come into existence at a certain point in time? Origen does not explicitly address this concern, but he has a ready reply. God does not change by becoming sovereign of a new cosmos, since this material world is simply an extension of God's 'original' cosmos. Nor does his will change; from eternity, God willed that rational creatures and the material world appear at an appointed time.² God remains industrious and immutable.

2. In *On Prayer* 5–6, Origen applies this solution to similar concerns about God's changing his will after hearing petitionary prayer. See Sorabji (1983: 240–41).

When God expands his cosmos beyond the Ideas, he first creates a finite number of intelligences who enjoy the blissful contemplation of the Son. Most future Christian philosophers, at least through the Middle Ages, agree with Origen that God's motive for creating them is his own goodness. However, these later thinkers typically add that the myriad kinds and ranks we find among creatures, including the ranks of rational creatures, from the highest seraphim to the lowest human beings, manifest in their order and variety, the only way creatures can, the Creator's infinite but absolutely simple goodness. Origen disagrees: there is in God's goodness no basis for diversity (*On First Principles* 2.9.6). It is this assumption that leads him to one of his most distinctive views: that God originally created all the intelligences equal in rank and kind. Otherwise, God would have acted unjustly, favouring some creatures over others for no reason (*On First Principles* 3.5.4–5). In the world we inhabit, of course, there are striking inequalities: some creatures are angels, others demons, and still others human beings; among the human beings, not all are born into circumstances equally conducive to moral and spiritual progress. To avoid impugning God's goodness, Origen constructs an account of creation in which God assigns each creature its metaphysical and social place out of justice and benevolence.

Origen postulates that most of the intelligences grew cloyed with their contemplation of the Son. Losing their passion, they turned from him. As their punishment, God created this material world, casting the offending creatures into various ranks and circumstances in keeping with the gravity of their offence; to express this truth, Origen explains, the authors of Scripture describe the material world's creation as a "casting down" (*katabole*).³ The greatest offenders became demons, the lesser offenders angels or celestial souls, and those in between became human beings. However, this punishment is not merely an expression of divine retributive justice. As Origen insists against the Gnostics, the God of creation is merciful and benevolent as well as just, and desiring that his creatures return to him, fashions this world to purge them of their vice and instruct them in virtue and wisdom.

THE RETURN TO GOD

When rational creatures fell, they were disfigured. Although, as rational and capable of restoration, they are still in God's image, they have lost their perfection and are no longer in God's likeness. The path of return to God is the path of transfiguration. It comes to an end when we ourselves become gods by sharing in the Son's divinity. We progress along this path by acquiring and exercising virtue.

3. Matthew 25:34, John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4; see *On First Principles* 3.5.4; *Commentary on John* 19.149.

The outline of Origen's account of virtue is similar to Plotinus'. The Father, like the One, transcends virtue, but is virtue's ultimate source. Plotinus' Intellect contains the archetypes of virtue, and Origen's Son is the archetype of virtue: many of his titles name virtues, such as Wisdom, Logos and Justice. Both Plotinus and Origen hold that virtues themselves lie in souls. Perfect virtues are found in the soul of Christ, the rational creature who is identical with the Son and whose example we are to follow. The souls of those who are still walking the path, however, contain not perfect, but purgative virtue. We acquire them in stages, one by one, and with effort. When we have acquired them all in their perfection, our souls will have perfect virtues, as Christ's does, and once again we shall be in the likeness of God.

To regain that likeness, we must be vigilant in following the injunction 'Know thyself', prominent in Greek thought but in Origen's view anticipated by Solomon in the Song of Songs. In his commentary on that biblical work, Origen distinguishes two sorts of self-knowledge (*Commentary on the Song of Songs* 2.5). Each of us is enjoined to acquire the first sort, the knowledge of our character and actions. To make progress in virtue, we need an accurate grasp of our defects and faults; and if we already have virtues, we need to know how to perfect them. This self-knowledge is, in short, the prudence we need to return to godhood, a knowledge so important that God providentially arranges for us to face temptations so that the secrets of our hearts will be revealed; without temptation, we would never know our virtues and vices. As his student Theodore reports, Origen trained his students to acquire this sort of self-knowledge as part of their programme of moral formation (*Address of Thanksgiving* 11–12). The second sort of self-knowledge God enjoins only on those souls endowed with "many graces of perception and understanding". This is metaphysical knowledge of the soul, including knowledge of its nature (is it corporeal or incorporeal, simple or compound, different from or the same as the angels?), its origin (is it eternal or created, and if created, is it created with the body or does it pre-exist the body?), and its future (is it incarnated only once or multiple times?). A large portion of *On First Principles* is devoted to answering these questions, which Origen also treats in his commentaries on the Bible, as the need arises. Those gifted souls who fail to carry out these investigations misuse their knowledge, indulging in the 'wisdom' of this world rather than undertaking these holy studies. While the first sort of self-knowledge leads us along the path of virtue to our perfect flourishing and happiness, the second sort seems itself to be a flourishing and happiness, for it forms a part of whatever share of wisdom we can have in this life.⁴

4. The necessity of metaphysical self-knowledge for happiness has its roots in ancient philosophy and figures prominently in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. In antiquity, Socrates makes moral self-knowledge (or self-reflection, at any rate) a condition of a life worth living, and in the Middle Ages Abelard would highlight the importance of self-knowledge for proper repentance and meritorious living in his *Know Thyself* (or *Ethics*).

Once equipped with self-knowledge, we return to God, the Holy of Holies, by climbing the Temple steps, one by one, in both this earthly life and the next; the effort is ours, but the steps are the Son in his various aspects (*Commentary on John* 19.38–9). At an early stage of our spiritual journey, he comes to us as our Shepherd to guide the sheep of our irrational parts. As we progress, we find in him our King to rule over us as subjects. With each step we climb, for most of the journey, we progress concomitantly in virtue, faith and knowledge. When we purge ourselves of vice and wayward desires, devoting ourselves to the task of understanding God through his word, the Holy Spirit graces us so that we progress morally and spiritually and our grasp of God and his creation grows fuller and deeper. At each stage, we acquire a new virtue or strengthen an old one, and we acquire new knowledge or see what we already knew in a better light (*Homily 27 on Numbers*). As we near the Holy of Holies, we reach the stage of the Son as Logos. At this stage, we will not need the purgative training we receive now, but receive the Son's tutelage. At the final stage we meet Christ as Wisdom, who will perfect the wisdom we have been nursing through so many prior stages. Only then will we be perfected, in the likeness of God, for "we speak wisdom among the perfect" (1 Corinthians 2:6), and we will be ready to be re-admitted to our original intimacy with the Son.

When, after long discipline in this life and beyond, all rational creatures have been restored to this intimacy, their journey will come to an end like its beginning, and God will be "all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). This teaching drew condemnations from Origen's critics, who were particularly appalled at the idea that even the Devil would be saved. When these criticisms threatened to undo his position in the church at Caesarea, he wrote a *Letter to Friends in Alexandria* explaining that he had never asserted the Devil's salvation. In fact, in his debate with the Gnostic Candidus, an early and explicit treatment of this issue, he asserts only that the demons retain the power to return to God, not that they would in fact return. Likewise, creatures restored to intimacy with God retain free will and might again fall, but Origen never teaches that they will. Origen never loses sight of human freedom and moral responsibility, but he also attests to God's provident and patient benevolence, which sends us into this long and bitter exile to teach us to cleave to him eternally in our homeland.

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On ANGELS/DEMONS see also Chs 16, 20. On CHRISTIANITY see also Chs 10, 17, 18; Vol. 5, Ch. 12. On COSMOLOGY see also Chs 6, 8, 17; Vol. 2, Chs 4, 10, 16. On PLATONISM see also Chs 11, 15, 17; Vol. 5, Ch. 16. On REVELATION see also Vol. 2, Ch. 11; Vol. 3, Chs 7, 11, 16; Vol. 4, Chs 5, 11; Vol. 5, Chs 8, 23. On THE ONE see also Chs 3, 11, 16, 19; Vol. 4, Ch. 9; Vol. 5, Ch. 15. On THE TRINITY see also Chs 17, 20; Vol. 2, Chs 2, 8, 15; Vol. 3, Chs 3, 9, 17; Vol. 4, Ch. 4; Vol. 5, Chs 12, 23. On VIRTUE see also Chs 2, 11, 15; Vol. 3, Chs 20, 21.