

final lines: “Eternal life, I believe, belongs to those who live in the presence, and eternal consciousness is an awareness of ‘real presences,’ our real presence to one another and to ourselves and to God, and God’s real presence to us” (108).

I have reviewed the three books in the progressive order of academic disciplines. But it would be equally, and perhaps more intellectually stimulating and spiritually profitable, to read them in reverse order. One can see then that spirituality lies at the heart of theology, philosophy, and history, and that is how it should be.

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JOURNEY BACK TO GOD: ORIGEN ON THE PROBLEM OF EVIL. By Mark M. S. Scott. AAR Academy Series. New York: Oxford University, 2012. Pp. xiv + 228. \$74.

At the beginning of this interesting and succinct study of theodicy in Origen’s writing, Scott explains why the question of theodicy is best viewed as a search for meaning. Drawing, in his opening chapter, on Max Weber, Peter Berger, and Clifford Geertz, whom he calls “seminal theorists,” he explains why the project he is proposing moves from “theodicy as meaning-making” to “theodicy as navigation.” The image of navigation, S. suggests, is more likely to put us in mind of narrative rather than heavy speculative effort. What he has in the back of his mind, however, is not his own personal narrative, but the narrative that shaped Origen’s thinking: creation, the fall of souls, and final restoration. “Rather than simply explaining evil and suffering,” he writes, Origen’s theodicy “charts a way through it and beyond it by creating a cosmic narrative that becomes a map for the soul’s ascent” (21). S. does not attempt to defend Origen but simply to explicate, with his eye on the homilies and Scripture commentaries as well as on the *De principiis* and *Contra Celsum*.

Chapter 2 takes up the way Origen and others approached the problem and metaphysical status of evil in light of the Platonism that shaped their thinking. Yet Origen was first and foremost a man of the church, and thus the status of evil—“existing and not existing,” “uncreated and yet arising from creation” (48)—was always more than a philosophical issue. Chapter 3 explores Origen’s reasoning about the origin of evil and the precosmic fall of souls, and then raises the question as to “why the *potential* for evil exists in the first place” (71, emphasis original). Clearly, by giving us free will, God has created a universe in which the possibility for evil exists, but why not fashion a universe where our choices are not between good and evil, but solely between different kinds of goods? The fall of souls accounts for the terrible unevenness we see all around us, but why did souls fall?

Whatever answer there may be seems to hinge on how we are to understand free will.

Chapter 4 tackles the issues of suffering and the integrity of divine justice by highlighting Origen's view of divine providence. What God wants for the world is nothing short of wholeness and healing, and thus the pain and misfortune that creatures experience, either as a result of their own sinfulness or the sinfulness of others, in the long run figure into the way God teaches and heals. Thus suffering is often remedial, both for the ones undergoing it and for the ones who accompany them. But the human being can also be thought to be on a journey, a dynamic set in motion by the soul's desire for God, which belongs to its very essence. Chapter 5 therefore turns to Origen's theology of the interior life and its picture of the soul being gradually purified and divinized. Does Origen believe in the resurrection of the body? S. argues that he does, but then he goes on to say that "when God becomes all in all, the soul will be united with God, who has no commerce with corporeality" (126). Maybe at that point, having achieved its purpose, freedom disappears in absolute loving union.

Finally, in chapter 6, S. takes up the question of universal salvation, arguing that Origen's thinking on this point is complex. Origen, S. explains, both "affirms the traditional church teaching on the doctrine of hell and posits the damnation of the Devil" and "speculates on mysteries that lie beyond established church teaching" (151). For ordinary believers, S. concludes, Origen followed mainstream teaching. For those who were prepared to look more deeply, Origen engaged in speculation, guided by the intuitions that were embedded in his cosmology and his understanding of God; it was a matter of audience.

Theodicy issues have been around a very long time. S. does not attempt to situate Origen within the long history of theological efforts to reconcile order and chaos, evil and goodness. Origen did not share the evolutionary perspective that frames the way we approach questions today. It can be argued, however, that the God who set the universe in motion is actually ahead of it, drawing the world and history forward. In this sense, creation continues to evolve and the divine labor of separating order from chaos is by no means finished. Of course, this leaves unanswered why chaos exists in the first place. Nevertheless, while Origen lived centuries before Darwin, some aspects of his thinking are compatible with the worldview Darwin introduced. It might have been helpful if, however briefly at the end, S. had set Origen's contribution to theodicy against the wider backdrop of the tradition's wrestling with this question, and if he had also touched on how we see the origins of the cosmos so differently from Origen. Someone as interested in the stars as Origen was would have been thrilled to discover that the universe is expanding. We even look at free will (and thus the

possibility of sin) differently; freedom is less a given and more an endowment that needs constant nurturing and development.

In the end, Origen's theology is essentially a narrative about the soul's journey back to God. Readers today might not find the landscape along that journey always to their liking (not many are middle Platonists), but Origen can still take them on quite a ride.

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ICONS AND THE NAME OF GOD. By Sergius Bulgakov. Translated from the Russian by Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. Pp. v+180. \$29.

Jakim, the foremost translator of Sergius Bulgakov (1871–1944) into English, has provided yet another important addition to Bulgakov scholarship in the English-speaking world. *Icons and the Name of God* consists of three main chapters: J.'s introduction, B.'s essay, "The Icon and Its Veneration (A Dogmatic Essay)" (1930), and "The Name of God," which is the final chapter of B.'s *The Philosophy of the Name* (1920s). His chapter on "The Name of God" includes his "Post scriptum to 'The Name of God': A Sophiological Interpretation of the Dogma of the Name Jesus" (1942). J. includes these two different works by B. on the account of their shared theme of the Divine Energy (vii). This is appropriate since B. argues that while the icon is the revelation of the Divine Energy through human artistic creativity, the Name of God is a verbal icon, or the revelation of the Divine Energy through human speech (126).

In his article, "The Icon and Its Veneration," B. provides a theology of what an icon is and how it is possible. His latter point makes this work a unique contribution to iconography. In his exposition of the historical debate between the iconodules and iconoclasts, B. provides an exceptional account of important thinkers from both sides. He creates a dialectic between the iconodules and the iconoclasts to demonstrate the need for his theology of icons and then offers his synthesis of both positions. B. offers an original insight on the debate between the iconodules and iconoclasts, arguing that they created a false antinomy. Iconography must be situated within the sophiological antinomy (36–37).

This context allows B. to persuasively conclude that God, as Sophia, correlates Godself (Divine Sophia) to creation (Creaturally Sophia), allowing God to be portrayed. The icon expresses this correlation since it is a particular proto-image of God's Wisdom revealed to the artist, who in turn depicts this mental image in matter (43). It is the mold of a proto-image (47). Although B.'s definition of the icon is at times vague, he qualifies these statements with his thought on the importance of the name of an icon. Referencing the Orthodox rite of the blessing and sanctification of icons, B. stresses