

FALL 2022, VOLUME 17, ISSUE 1



THE DARTMOUTH  
**APOLOGIA**

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

*featuring:*

*Keystone and Khesed*

*by Tulio Huggins '23*

*also inside:*

*Face to Face with  
Orthodox Iconography*

*by Anthony Fosu '24*

*Meaning Beyond Religion*

*by Christian Erikson GR'23*



**THE DARTMOUTH APOLOGIA**

*exists to articulate Christian  
perspectives in the academic  
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# THE DARTMOUTH APOLOGIA

FALL 2022

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this issue of *The Dartmouth Apologia*. Regardless of how you came to possess this issue, I am glad it's in your hands. I hope something in these pages resonates with you and encourages you to feed your curiosity.

Walking around campus in the fall is electric. Dartmouth feels truly alive. Transitioning from the blissful ease of sophomore summer to the chaotic joy of First Year Trips and the arrival of new, bright-eyed freshmen, the start of this term has made it apparent that there is a restless energy here. We welcome the Class of 2026, the first class to have their college experience untouched by COVID-19 (knock on wood). Although more energetic than what I've become accustomed to, their energy is a welcome change.

Underlying this new energy is a timeless current of uncertainty that I have only recently become aware of. Perhaps it comes from the anxieties of students thinking about their off-term plans or their lives after Dartmouth—these anxieties have certainly become more foregrounded for me now that I have entered my junior year. Or maybe it lies in all of our decisions, big and small, that are obscured by the haze of the future. It is a difficult truth to contend with, that we cannot predict the outcome of even our smallest choices. But it is amidst all of this uncertainty, more than ever, where our faith has a chance to flourish. Through Christ, we can accept the unknown as a part of life and come away with a peace that surpasses all understanding.

I hope that this issue of the *Apologia* presents an opportunity for you to interrogate the roots of your uncertainty. Our writers and editors are committed to providing an intellectually robust defense of Christianity, oftentimes requiring a difficult examination of our faith and our doubts. This is a daunting task; it is not easy to think critically and deeply about the uncertainties of what one believes, but it is a worthwhile endeavor. In this issue, our writers explore a wide range of ideas, from examining how Greek life is an imperfect representation of Christian brotherhood to tackling the problem of evil. Each article is an opportunity for the writer, and the reader, to question long-held beliefs and, ultimately, emerge on the other side with their beliefs strengthened, or changed. This spiritual and intellectual growth is at the core of everything the *Apologia* does.

With that I leave the rest to you. All I ask, dear reader, is that you open your mind to these ideas. As you flip through these pages, I hope you find something that encourages you to question your own uncertainties. Do not turn away from the unknown—run towards it.

In Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Najma Zahira'.

Najma Zahira D'24  
15th Editor in Chief of *The Dartmouth Apologia*





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GLORIA

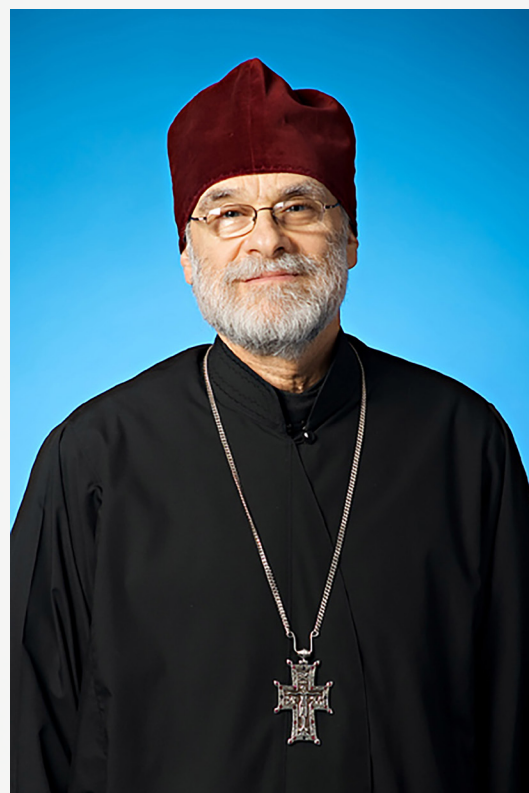
# FACETO FACE WITH ORTHODOX ICONOGRAPHY

An Interview with Father Andrew Tregubov

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ANTHONY FOSU

**Father Andrew Tregubov** is the primary clergy, commonly known as rector, of the Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Claremont, New Hampshire. In addition, Father Tregubov is also a professional iconographer, occasionally teaching iconography as an artistic and liturgical practice. An icon, simply put, is a sacred image that aids in Orthodox Christian worship. One who creates icons is an iconographer. Father Tregubov has also published a book on iconography that focuses on the methods and work of his mentor and master iconographer Father Gregory Kroug. Since publishing the work of Father Kroug in *The Light of Christ* in 1990, Father Tregubov has continued his work as an iconographer, receiving several accolades and recognition from both secular and ecclesiastical organizations and lecturing on his craft to institutions throughout his parish and the United States.



I had the privilege of sitting down with Father Tregubov, and over the course of an hour, he introduced me to a cornerstone of Orthodox liturgical worship. He walked me through the history of iconography, its place in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, and the implications of these images in both Church tradition and in furthering an understanding of how we see ourselves as human beings made in the image of God. I am especially grateful to Father Tregubov for this discussion because I come from a Western intellectual and theological tradition that has lost touch with the use of images in worship. This interview has been edited for concision and clarity.

**Anthony:** Can you tell us a bit about how you came into iconography?

**Father Tregubov:** Very good question.

I think faith is entirely personal. It has to do with something profoundly deep, personal, and unique. It recognizes the presence of Christ in our midst and our encounter with him.

So, for example, look at the [Nicene] Creed. Although we often hear it as “we believe,” the original Creed says, “I believe.” And this emphasis on the personal aspect of our faith is invaluable. By using an objective “we” instead of a subjective “I,” we create a system in which Christ is limited to a function to bind us—the society—together rather than to be a focus of our individual relationship with him.

Why am I saying all this? Faith is entirely personal. Here is the story of my first discovery of faith, a glimpse of Heaven.

When I was about 13, something extraordinary happened to me. My brother and I went for a walk in the woods and promptly got lost. We had no water, and nobody ever thought of bringing a water bottle on a hike in my youth. We were out there for about half a day. I was getting tired and scared because it was getting dark in the woods. Then,

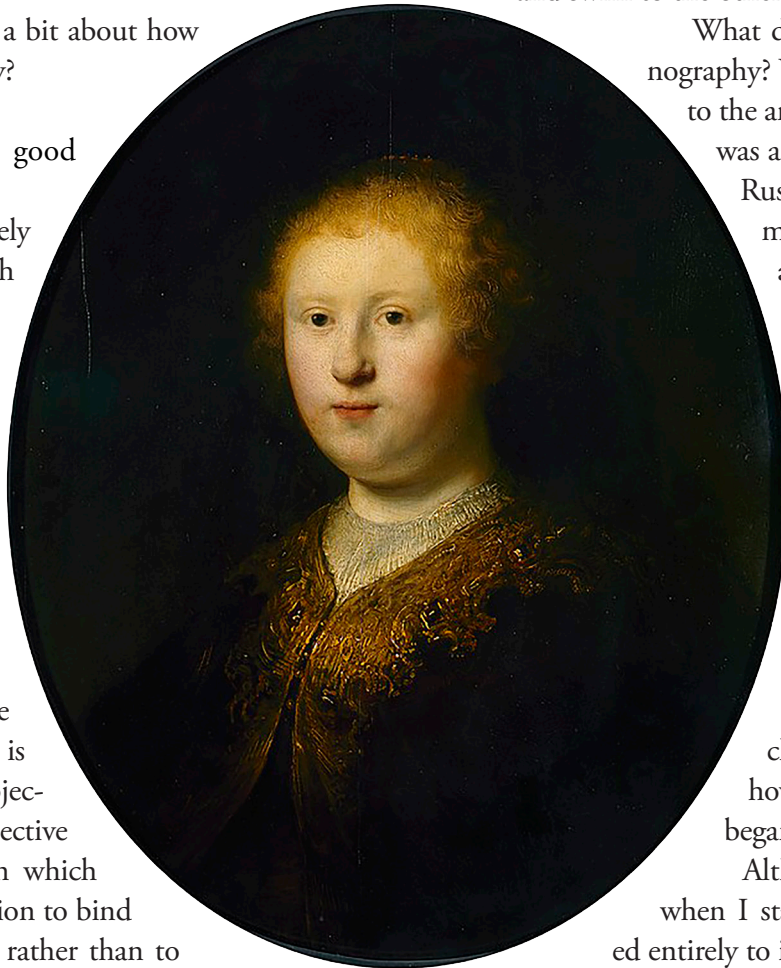
finally, we came out into the open area. I recognized the place immediately; it was not very far from our home. In front of me spread an incredible vista of the rolling fields. The sky was painted in a stunning greenish color of the late sunset. From the top of a little hillock where I stood, I was looking down at the dark ribbon of clouds over the horizon. And suddenly, I felt overwhelmed by the sense that this beautiful greenish sky was an enormous river flowing between two banks—woods at my back and the clouds on the horizon. The sky river looked vibrantly alive, inviting me to enter its flow. And all I wanted to do at the moment was to run down, plunge into that warm steaming water, and swim to the other side of the sky.

What does it have to do with iconography? Well, that same year, I went to the art gallery in Moscow—there was a whole collection of ancient Russian art. Completely mesmerized, I stopped before a large board, where only one part of the painting remained intact. And that was the face of Christ! It was the famous masterpiece of St. Andrei Rublev’s *Christ Pantokrator*. And there, looking at him, I felt the same tug—same invitation—that I had at the sky river. It was the invitation to come closer, to come home. That’s how my iconographic journey began.

Although sometime later, when I started studying art, I painted entirely to impress my future wife. The pictures I was producing were weird and wrong, but I managed to impress her. I got the girl, so that was my success.

In 1980, I had an opportunity to go to France and meet some famous icons face-to-face. It made a tectonic change in my art perception, and from that moment, I immersed myself in Christian iconography—like in that sky river—seriously and professionally.

After four decades of working with icons, I can now tell you that the icon is not an original work of art by one artist. It is, in fact, a fruit of the liturgical, collective creative ac-



tion of the whole Church—past and present. When I begin to work on a specific icon, I try to find as many reproductions as possible of the previous, existing icons on the same subject and study them. After that, I will try to reconstruct the space, colors, meaning, and, most importantly, the living presence of all persons depicted in this icon.

In the next section, I ask Father Andrew for an introduction to iconography both as a discipline and a liturgical act of worship. He offers an explanation of iconography as through an understanding of the art behind the icon. He claims that our common experiences of art (through visual media like movies, paintings, and other decorative practices) prepare us to encounter a person in the medium of an icon. He further claims that an icon uniquely preserves the essence of a person—their personhood, identity, and humanity—through these visual depictions.

## It invites you into a more profound and loving relationship with a person or persons depicted.

**Anthony:** Obviously, you have so much experience with iconography and this beautiful expression of worship, but can you give us a bit of introduction? What is iconography for those who are unfamiliar?

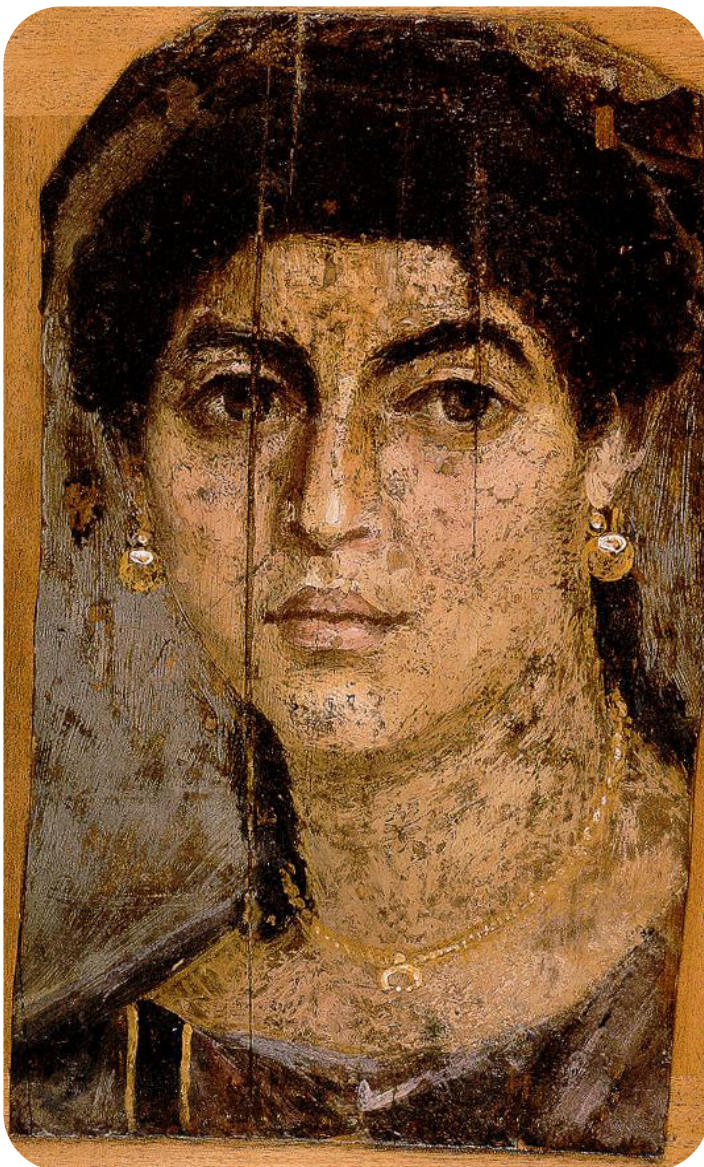
**Father Tregubov:** As Holy Scripture represents the highest masterpieces of inspired literature, so do iconographic masterpieces reveal the creative unity of human and divine spirit.

The entire history of art shows us two radically different notions. One views art as a means to a goal. Such a utilitarian approach uses art to influence and manipulate. It is designed to impact the freedom of the viewer in different ways. We can see it in prehistoric, ancient, renaissance, and especially modern art. The opposite understanding focuses on a living encounter, giving viewers total freedom. It doesn't sell you anything or force any ideas and emotions on you but instead invites you into a more profound and loving relationship with a person or persons depicted.

One of my favorite examples of such art is a funerary portrait of a woman found in Fayum Oasis in Egypt dating from the first century AD, about the time of Christ's coming. This masterpiece in encaustic technique reminds us of the hand of the much later famous artist—Rembrandt. We know nothing about this woman except that she might have been from a wealthy family—hence her gold earrings. But just looking at her face—brought to us by an incredible power of art—we encounter her inner living person; we come to know her.

This phenomenon is the foundation of the Christian art of iconography, keeping in mind that the icon brings us into the presence not just a mere human person but the God-Man, the only-begotten son of God, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Anthony:** What is iconography used for? What does the use of icons in worship reveal? And what does it reveal about humans being made in the image of God?





**Father Tregubov:** With this question, we again fall into the context of our culture. In the West, everything must have utility. Everything is used for something else, and, as I have already pointed out, art also is a means to a goal. How do we “use” iconography? We don’t use it. And when we try to do it, we’re going in the wrong direction.

Similarly, how would someone answer the question, “How do you use holy communion?” Many people will say communion is a means to become closer to God, be enlightened, and change one’s life perspective. Or it is a beautiful medicine to become a better human being. It might be accurate; however, I should insist that from the point of view of the Christian Church, these benefits are secondary by-products. They are not our primary focus. The focus is not on me in this relationship but on the other—on Christ himself.

In summary, I would like to say that a person should not be used in any way. Limiting the value of a person to use is abuse. The icon, therefore, is not created for any specific use, like a magic potion for healing our social and physical ills. It simply reveals the very person of Christ, so those who love him can bond with him.

**The focus is not on me  
in this relationship  
but on the other—on  
Christ himself.**



Father Tregubov’s helpful introduction to iconography has also granted us a glimpse into the Orthodox liturgical tradition. From this introduction to an artistic expression of worship, I hope you may begin to see how Orthodoxy unites a more fully realized view of the human person with a developed view of the personhood of God.<sup>1</sup> ✠

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1. If you would like to learn more about Orthodox iconography, see Fr Andrew Tregubov, *The Light of Christ: Iconography of Gregory Kroug* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990). If you would like to learn more about the Orthodox Church’s history and doctrines, see Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity* (London: Penguin, 1963).

DECLINATE



A MALO

# THE MOUNTAINS SHALL BURST INTO SONG

Wilderness and the Problem of Evil

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WILL BRYANT

Reflecting on the first night of his captivity in the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz, the author and Jewish activist Elie Wiesel writes:

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.<sup>1</sup>

The Holocaust marks the absolute apogee of human cruelty. Wiesel's 1960 novel *Night* is a tour of suffering: a staggering degree of evil cramped into the account of one teenage boy. Not only does his account demonstrate the intensity of the Holocaust; it also reveals its awful scale. Every one of the six million Jewish victims of the genocide—each “wreath of smoke beneath a silent blue sky”—bears a memoir's worth of suffering.<sup>2</sup> There is no telling the magnitude of the Holocaust. Wiesel goes on:

Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.<sup>3</sup>

Faced with the monumental horror of the Holocaust, Wiesel rejects his faith in God, his dreams, even himself. In his 1973 memoir *The Gulag Archipelago*, the Russian priest and author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrestles with a similar tragedy, that of the Soviet gulag system that killed tens of millions.<sup>4</sup> He writes:

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?<sup>5</sup>

# Evil seeps into us. It is sewn into our skin and bone.

Wiesel and Solzhenitsyn recognize that mass murders of the 20th century motivate self-rejection. In response to the massive churning of tragedy, both men turn inward. In his introspection, Wiesel finds himself a living vessel of the Holocaust: his inner self has suffered a total burn.<sup>6</sup> Solzhenitsyn recognizes that evil, even at its grandest scale, is located within “the heart of every human being.”<sup>7</sup> Whether we are victim or perpetrator, evil seeps into us. It is sewn into our skin and bone.

What can be done? This “problem of evil”—as it is often called—poses a significant challenge to any account of the human condition.<sup>8</sup> In particular, religious narratives struggle to solve it because the existence of an all-good and all-powerful God seems incompatible with the reality of evil. An omnibenevolent and omnipotent God would not let bad things happen to good people. If God were all-good, then he would want to prevent evil, and if he were all-powerful, then he would be capable of preventing all evil. If God is all-good and all-powerful, then how does evil exist? For many, the plain existence of evil in the world is the best evidence against God’s existence.

The Christian tradition has struggled with the problem of evil for its 2,000-year lifespan, but it did not invent the dilemma. The Jewish tradition stretches another millennium into the past, and it faces the same fundamental question: how can an all-good and all-powerful God—Yahweh, in this case—let bad things happen to good people? The Jewish authors of the Hebrew Bible offer answers to this question that reverberate forward in time. When the Hebrew Bible entered the Christian tradition as the Old Testament, its claims about the nature of evil—and the nature of God—provided a foundation for Christian theology. To this day, the book of Job in the Hebrew Bible is essential to the Christian response to the problem of evil.

In this essay, I will explore the response to the problem of evil offered by the book of Job, and the development of this response in contemporary Christian theology. I will begin the essay with a characterization of Job, the eponymous main character of the book. Next, I will explore Yahweh’s response to Job at the end of the book: what does Yahweh say about the nature of evil, and what does he say about himself?<sup>9</sup> I will argue that Yahweh establishes his benevolent supremacy over his creation, but he never offers a direct answer to the problem of evil. Instead, he appeals to the natural wonder of his creation to establish his incomprehensible goodness, offering us an incomprehensible redemption from evil.

## “A MAN IN THE LAND OF UZ”

Job’s story begins in Uz, a region southeast of Israel.<sup>10</sup> Job is not an Israelite, and he exists outside of the main historical narrative of the Hebrew Bible, but he is utterly devoted to Yahweh, the God of Israel. The author of the book of Job says as much: “That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.”<sup>11</sup> The author continues for several verses, describing Job’s considerable wealth; his large, happy family; his verdant agricultural estate; and his ritual devotion to Yahweh.<sup>12</sup> He is an upright and virtuous paragon of religious observance and faith.

Unfortunately, Job’s prosperity does not last. The account describes an angelic meeting in which a “heavenly being” named the Accuser challenges Job’s righteousness before Yahweh.<sup>13</sup> The Accuser asks, “Does Job fear God for nothing? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.”<sup>14</sup> Job has every reason to devote himself to Yahweh because he has been blessed by Yahweh. The Accuser challenges Job’s motives: is he devout because he really loves his God, or is he devout only because of the good fortune he has received?<sup>15</sup>

Yahweh considers this challenge and allows the Accuser to test Job: “Very well, all that he has is in your power, only do not stretch out your hand against him!”<sup>16</sup> Yahweh allows the Accuser to take away all that Job has, but not to harm Job himself. From tragedy to tragedy, the Accuser makes short work of Job’s many blessings. His oxen and servants are stolen by raiding parties from the north and south, his sheep are struck dead by lightning, and his children are killed in a violent dust storm.<sup>17</sup> Job, “blameless and upright” as he is, does not renounce Yahweh.<sup>18</sup> He “tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped.”<sup>19</sup> Even as he mourns his children, he devotes himself to Yahweh: “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”<sup>20</sup> The account confirms that the Accuser has failed in his challenge: “In all of this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.”<sup>21</sup> So far, it seems that Job does not require material blessing in order to be faithful.

# If Yahweh is truly all-powerful, why does he allow evil to occur?

Having failed in his first attempt, the Accuser returns to Yahweh with another request: “All that people have they will give to save their lives. But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and flesh, and he will curse you to your face.”<sup>22</sup> Initially the Accuser could not harm Job directly, but he now seeks to increase his challenge to Job’s faithfulness. Yahweh concedes: “Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life.”<sup>23</sup> The Accuser then inflicts Job with “loathsome sores” that cover his whole body; Job is ruined.<sup>24</sup> He “sits among the ashes” and scrapes himself with a shard of pottery.<sup>25</sup> Three of Job’s friends hear of his affliction and visit him.<sup>26</sup> The account details that they “sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.”<sup>27</sup> This is the apex of Job’s suffering. After a week of silence, he “opens his mouth and curses the day of his birth.”<sup>28</sup> He says, “Let the day perish in which I was born ... Let that day be darkness! ... Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire?”<sup>29</sup> Though Job does not curse Yahweh, this lament is the beginning of a challenge that Job levies against him. He questions why Yahweh caused him to suffer so greatly; he even questions why Yahweh gave life to him, only to inflict such pain.<sup>30</sup>

Job’s fall from grace clues us into the nature of evil. The account makes it clear that Yahweh does not cause Job’s suffering, at least not directly. Instead, Yahweh acquiesces his power to the Accuser, the real culprit of Job’s suffering. Though Yahweh is not the immediate cause of evil, he does have control over the Accuser. If only Yahweh had not let the Accuser challenge Job, he would not have suffered so much.

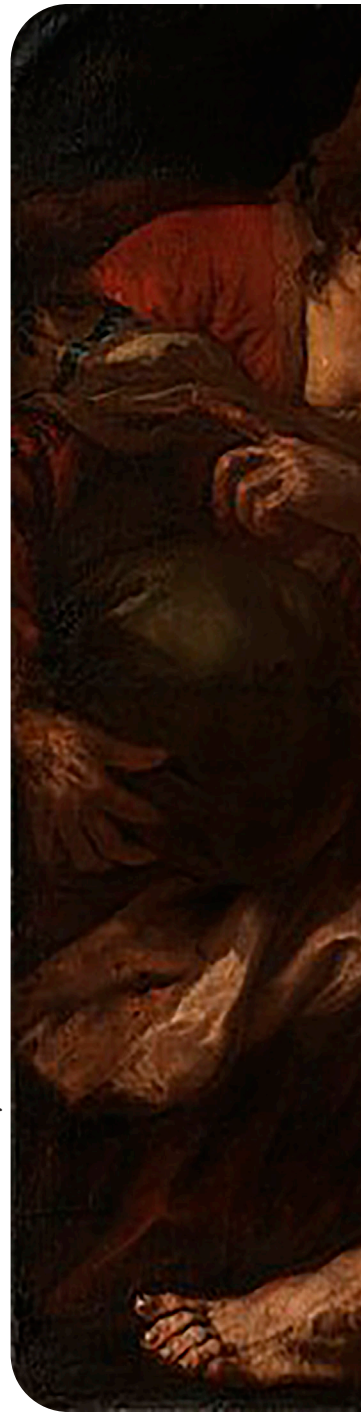
## Yahweh is primal in every sense of the word—he is the wild and powerful progenitor of all created things.

I will return to this question—who causes evil?—later in Yahweh’s response to Job. While Yahweh always makes it clear that he does not directly cause evil, the question still stands: if Yahweh is truly all-powerful, why does he allow evil to occur in the first place? If Yahweh could really stop the Accuser, why does he not? For now, at least, these questions remain unanswered, and I return to Job.

### “OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND”

After his lament, Job’s friends begin a conversation with Job that spans most of the book of Job.<sup>31</sup> Their discourse examines the injustice of Job’s suffering, and it questions Job’s righteousness before Yahweh. It is abruptly ended, however, by an appearance from Yahweh himself. From “out of the whirlwind,” he speaks directly to Job in poetic verse.<sup>32</sup> Yahweh’s response marks the climactic end of the book of Job, and settles the friends’ discussion with divine finality. In his speech, Yahweh makes claims about the nature of evil and claims about himself. With respect to evil, Yahweh establishes his control, domination, and hatred over all darkness and injustice; he justifies this authority with his divine distinction from his creation. In his creative omnipotence, Yahweh has given life to humanity and set himself totally apart from them. He is primal in every sense of the word: he is the wild and powerful progenitor of all created things.

Yahweh begins by meeting Job’s attack on his Lord’s faithfulness. He demands, “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”<sup>33</sup> Yahweh reverses the direction of interrogation: “I will question you, and you shall [answer] me.”<sup>34</sup> The rest of Yahweh’s speech consists of rhetorical questions that challenge Job’s authority to question his maker. Yahweh’s first set of questions establishes his divine ability to order the cosmos justly. He demands,





“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? ... Who determined its measurements—surely you know! ... who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?”<sup>35</sup> Yahweh pictures his universe as a construction project on a grand scale. He meticulously planned its dimensions before time began. Yahweh shows himself to be the master craftsman of reality, who artfully constructed the cosmos in accordance with a heavenly plan.<sup>36</sup> Crucially, Yahweh’s design is the cause of a profound cosmic exuberance: the stars sing together, and the angels shout with joy!<sup>37</sup> In scorning his own creation, Job has forgotten that the material world

is essentially wonderful. The American essayist Marilynne Robinson writes that “Existence is remarkable, actually incredible ... materiality is profoundly amazing, uncanny.”<sup>38</sup> The very existence of the cosmos brings the angels to sing. Yahweh’s first response to Job is an exultation. Yahweh is the divine artist of a masterful painting. He is the ordering principle of a beautiful materiality.

After establishing his authority to order the wonderful cosmos, Yahweh responds directly to the presence of evil in creation using the well-worn Hebrew metaphor for chaos and evil: the ocean.<sup>39</sup> He questions Job: “Who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb ... and

prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, ‘Thus far shall you come and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped?’<sup>40</sup> Throughout the Hebrew Bible, the ocean serves as a metaphor for chaos and darkness; it is often juxtaposed with Yahweh’s divine ability to set the cosmos to order. With these images, Yahweh establishes his ability to control the presence of evil in his creation. He is the divine hydrologist, building levees and dams to impound and control evil.<sup>41</sup> Importantly, Yahweh sets himself in opposition to the oceanic forces of evil. He did not initiate its birth “from the womb”; he only orders and controls it within his creation. As the divine author of a beautifully ordered creation, Yahweh has the omnipotent ability to control and restrict the chaotic action of evil.

Not only can Yahweh control evil, he also hates it and will ultimately destroy it, as the perfect judge over his creation. Yahweh illustrates his coming destruction of evil as the rising dawn. He asks Job, “Have you commanded the morning since your days began and caused the dawn to know its place, so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?”<sup>42</sup> Yahweh continues the metaphor with the revelatory power of the morning light: “It is changed like clay under the seal, and it is dyed like a garment. Light is

The stolid splendor  
of the mountains, the  
habitual brilliance  
of the sunrise, the  
plaintive expanse of  
ocean: these remind us  
of Yahweh’s steadfast  
care for creation.

withheld from the wicked, and their uplifted arm is broken.”<sup>43</sup> Yahweh promises to reveal the horror of evil with the coming of the dawn, as hot wax reveals every facet of a seal in sharp relief.<sup>44</sup> He will break the uplifted arms of the wicked, and they shall be shaken out of the earth. This is harsh language, but it is comforting. Yahweh possesses a deeply righteous hatred of evil, and he promises to destroy it on the hope of the dawn, when the morning stars sing together.



In his speech to Job, Yahweh establishes his authorial power over creation and his ability to restrain the evil present in creation. He clarifies that he did not create evil, and that he will ultimately triumph over evil. Taken together, these claims form the beginning of a response to Job's lament. Yahweh is the cause of every blessing that Job has experienced, he is not responsible for Job's current suffering, and he will one day bring an end to all suffering, for Job and for all mankind.

They are not, however, a complete answer, and Yahweh recognizes this. His response to Job continues for several more chapters. Yahweh spends little time talking about evil and much more time talking about his own nature. After settling Job's specific challenges about evil, Yahweh offers a dramatic picture of his primal power over creation. Because Yahweh is wildly separate from creation, he has the ability to control it omnipotently. He challenges Job: "Have you entered into the spring of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? ... Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?"<sup>45</sup> Yahweh has access to the most remote parts of his creation; the most inaccessible summits and hardest depths are available to him, because he made it.<sup>46</sup> He has complete knowledge and dominion over the expanse of the earth. "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow?" Yahweh asks, "What is

the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?"<sup>47</sup> The most isolated corners of the natural world—the highest summits, the upper atmosphere where rain and snow precipitate out of the clouds—these places are Yahweh's territory. There is no such thing as a godforsaken land; every barren desert and unreachable alpine cliff are intimately known by a wild and powerful God. The expanse of the stars, too, fall under Yahweh's domain. He challenges Job, "Can you bind the chains of Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion?"<sup>48</sup> In his supremacy above creation, Yahweh can access the most lonesome exoplanets and distant galaxies.

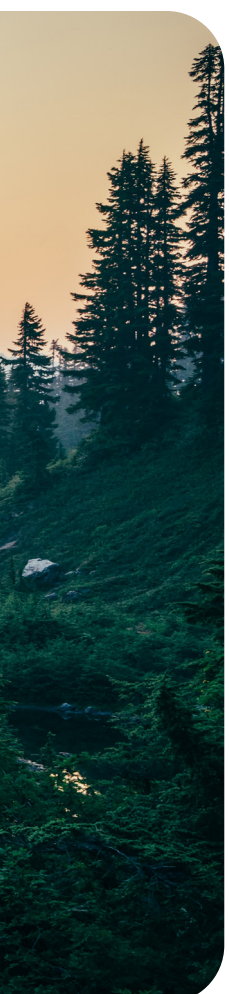
More than any distant location, the wild ferocity of the animal world reveals God's primacy over his creation. He asks Job, "Do you observe the calving of the deer? ... The young ones become strong and do not return ... Who has let the wild ass go free? ... It ranges the mountains as its pasture and it searches after every green thing."<sup>49</sup> He goes on, "Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes it nests on high? It lives on the rock and makes it home, in

the fastness of the rocky crag."<sup>50</sup> Yahweh continues for several stanzas, mentioning nine animals in total; each one is undomesticated.<sup>51</sup> In his creative command over every wild beast, Yahweh establishes his complete primacy over creation. Job cannot "range the mountains as his pasture" or make the "fastness of the rocky crag" his home, but Yahweh can.<sup>52</sup> The terrible splendor of a mountain spine and the desolate awesomeness of the gray-green ocean reflect God's wild beauty. Job is scared and small, and Yahweh created these wonders by the power of his word. The author Mike Mason writes that, in the brilliant mystery of the wild, "there is something of the enigma of God himself, whom we must go out to meet in the wilderness. ... He is a wild, alien God."<sup>53</sup> In his command over the most terrible wilderness, Yahweh establishes his complete separateness from humans. The book of Isaiah records a prophecy from Yahweh: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."<sup>54</sup> The blazing splendor of the natural world evinces God's complete primacy over humanity. Isaiah continues: "The mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands ... it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."<sup>55</sup> The Earth's wild beauty is a "memorial," that we may be reminded of God's holiness over creation whenever we look upon it.<sup>56</sup>

Why does Yahweh respond to Job's problem of evil with an appeal to his wild holiness? First, Yahweh uses his primacy over the natural world to remind Job of his incapacity to understand the divine. Job cannot see the snowflakes form in a stormcloud; much less can he see into the mind of Yahweh, whose design for creation outlasts any individual. Second, Yahweh reminds Job that his design for creation is essentially and deeply good. For proof, Yahweh offers the wonder of creation, visible in the natural world. The stolid splendor of the mountains, the habitual brilliance of the sunrise, the plaintive expanse of ocean—these remind us of Yahweh's steadfast care for creation. He sustains the world as surely as the sun rises in the morning.

## "A FUNDAMENTAL DELIVERANCE"

In the length of his response, Yahweh never explicitly answers the question, "where does evil come from?" He establishes that he can control evil, but he never addresses the problem raised at the beginning of the book of Job. Why does Yahweh allow the Accuser to test Job? If Yahweh were all-good and all-powerful, would he not prevent the Accuser from causing harm to Job?



Yahweh implies two answers to this question: one when he responds to the Accuser, and one when he responds to Job. When Yahweh allows the Accuser to cause Job's suffering, he implicitly agrees with the reasoning that the Accuser offers in defense of his actions. The Accuser asks Yahweh:

Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.<sup>57</sup>

The Accuser wants to test Job's faith in Yahweh; he wants to prove the strength of his devotion. In this sense, it is not hard to see why Yahweh allows suffering. We allow suffering into our lives for the same reason. Exercise, schoolwork, a dieting regimen: all of these practices use suffering to strengthen the sufferer in the long run. We are willing to give up immediate pleasures for a long-term goal. Yahweh applies this same logic to Job: he experiences intense suffering so that his devotion to Yahweh may be strengthened.

The objections to this answer, however, come easily: one may choose to suffer for themselves, but why does Yahweh have the right to allow others to suffer for his sake? Is Yahweh a selfish God, who does not care for the well-being of his devotees? Yahweh's second response attempts to answer these objections. When he responds to Job, Yahweh repeatedly emphasizes the goodness of his creation. His allusions to the wonder of the heavens and the glory of the wild animals establish Yahweh's complete benevolence for those he has made. Yahweh communicates to Job that, though Job cannot comprehend the heavenly design for creation, it will ultimately work together for his good. Though we cannot understand the reaches of the starry heavens, or the vast expanse of the ocean, their goodness is self-evident. The natural world is proof that Yahweh's wild omnipotence is essentially good.

Yahweh's design for creation is incomprehensible to us. His response to Job makes this clear. Though unsatisfying, Yahweh's incomprehensibility can provide us a degree of comfort. The theologian Karl Barth writes that God is "wholly Other, the fundamental deliverance from that whole world of man's seeking, conjecturing, illusion, imagining, and speculating."<sup>58</sup> God is utterly separate from us and all of our faults. Our own redemption is incomprehensible to us because it is made possible by an incomprehen-

# The natural world is proof that Yahweh's wild omnipotence is essentially good.

ble God. But it is its incomprehensibility that makes God's redemption so incredible. God, in the person of Christ, offers a "peace that surpasses all understanding."<sup>59</sup> He delivers us from ourselves and our "illusion . . . and speculating."<sup>60</sup>

In the end, God does not answer the question about the origin of evil. He does establish his dominion over his creation, his ability to restrain evil, and his ultimate hatred of evil. He also establishes that he will allow evil to exist in the world in order to strengthen us, and bring us closer to him. But these answers are incomplete; Job's story never solves the problem of evil. We are left wondering: why did Yahweh allow the Accuser to harm Job?

Rather than answer this question, Yahweh challenges it: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding."<sup>61</sup> In his complete holiness and omnipotence, Yahweh is incomprehensible to us. We were not there when he laid the foundation of the earth; we do not have understanding. Though we cannot understand him, in his love Yahweh reveals himself to us. When "the mountains burst into song," we see Yahweh's incomprehensible goodness, revealed for us.<sup>62</sup> ♣

1. Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 22.
2. "Documenting Numbers of Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution," accessed September 6, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution>.
3. Wiesel, 22.
4. Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Gulag," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 6, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Gulag>.
5. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 168.
6. Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "What Is the Origin of the Term Holocaust?" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 25, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/story/what-is-the-origin-of-the-term-holocaust>.
7. Solzhenitsyn, 168.
8. Michael Tooley, "The Problem of Evil," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), last modified March 15, 2015, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/evil/>.
9. In this essay, I use both "Yahweh" and "God" to refer to the Christian deity. I use "Yahweh" when in the context of the Hebrew Bible and "God" when in the context of modern theological sources.
10. Job 1:1 (NRSV).
11. Job 1:2 (NRSV).
12. Job 1:2-5 (NRSV).
13. Job 1:6 (NRSV); many translations of the Bible, including the one used here, translate "the Accuser" as "Satan." The word in Hebrew is *ha-satan*, which literally means "the accuser." I use "the Accuser" to avoid the modern connotations of the word "Satan," and to remain faithful to the text as its original readers would have read it.
14. Job 1:9 (NRSV).
15. Job 1:10-11 (NRSV).



16. Job 1:12 (NRSV).
17. Job 1:13-19 (NRSV).
18. Job 1:2 (NRSV).
19. Job 1:20 (NRSV).
20. Job 1:21 (NRSV).
21. Job 1:22 (NRSV).
22. Job 2:5 (NRSV).
23. Job 2:6 (NRSV).
24. Job 2:7 (NRSV).
25. Job 2:8 (NRSV).
26. Job 2:11 (NRSV).
27. Job 2:13 (NRSV).
28. Job 3:1 (NRSV).
29. Job 3:2-3, 11 (NRSV).
30. Job 3:23 (NRSV).
31. Job 4-37 (NRSV).
32. Job 38:1 (NRSV).
33. Job 38:2 (NRSV).
34. Job 38:3 (NRSV).
35. Job 38:4, 7 (NRSV).
36. Christopher Ash, *Job: The Wisdom of the Cross* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 378.
37. Job 38:4, 7 (NRSV).
38. Marilynne Robinson, "Givenness," in *The Givenness of Things* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2015), 56.
39. See Gen 1:1-10 (NRSV); Exod 14 (NRSV).
40. Job 38:8, 11 (NRSV).
41. Ash, 380.
42. Job 38:12-13 (NRSV).
43. Job 38:14-15 (NRSV).
44. Ash, 384.
45. Job 38:16-18 (NRSV).
46. Ash, 384.
47. Job 38:24 (NRSV).
48. Job 38:31 (NRSV).
49. Job 39:2, 5, 8 (NRSV).
50. Job 39:27-28 (NRSV).
51. David J.A. Clines, "Job" in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Coogan, Michael, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 767.
52. Robert Alter, "The Writings," in *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2018), 3:570.
53. Mike Mason, *The Gospel According to Job: An Honest Look at Pain and Doubt from the Life of One Who Lost Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 401.
54. Isaiah 55:9 (NRSV).
55. Isaiah 55:12-13 (NRSV).
56. Isaiah 55:13 (NRSV).
57. Job 1:9-10 (NRSV).
58. Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 36.
59. Phil 4:7 (NRSV).
60. Barth, 36.
61. Job 1:2 (NRSV).
62. The title phrase of this essay is from Isaiah 55:9 (NRSV). Many thanks to Isaiah Menning, Emil Liden, and Najma Zahira for advice and edits.



# TRUE FORGIVENESS

## The Importance of Repentance and Punishment in Reconciliation

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CHARLIE AMBROSE

**O**n the Fourth of July, 2022, families in Chicago's Highland Park neighborhood gathered to celebrate Independence Day at the Highland Park parade.<sup>1</sup> Trucks and floats started to drive around 9:30 AM while kids grabbed candy and waved flags. Soon after, tragedy struck the otherwise joyful celebration. Just after 10:00 AM, a shooter opened fire from a rooftop above the parade, raining down over seventy rounds of ammunition. The gunman killed seven people and injured dozens more before fleeing the scene.<sup>2</sup> Men and women from all ages and backgrounds were killed; an eight-year-old boy was severely wounded by the gunfire. Two of the victims were parents of a two-year-old child, who was taken to safety by a stranger.

According to orthodox doctrine, Christians are called to love and forgive the criminal without hesitation, but what does it mean to love and forgive? Is forgiveness antithetical to punishment? How can one love and forgive someone who killed seven innocent people and severely

wounded dozens more? It is unimaginable. The shooter committed an egregious, cold-blooded act with apparently no remorse; how could forgiving him be an act of love? The Christian ethic of forgiveness seems unreasonable, even cruel. How can we forgive something so horrible?

These concerns are significant, but Christianity offers a wealth of ethical resources to answer this question. Christian doctrine teaches that forgiveness is a two-way street, requiring as much from the forgiven as it does from the forgiver. Hence, forgiveness is an act of true love only when it is shown

## Is forgiveness antithetical to punishment?

in conjunction with repentance. Forgiveness without repentance will lead the sinner to sin again, damaging their relationship with the person sinned against and with God. Without repentance, forgiveness is not a true act of love.

### WHY CARE ABOUT FORGIVENESS?

Before I address the meaning of forgiveness, I will discuss why one should care about forgiveness at all. To

some, it may seem obvious that forgiveness is a crucial aspect of the human experience; one needs to forgive oneself, as well as others, to remove the weights of grudge and anger. Forgiveness, however, is not solely a way to reconcile with ourselves and our brothers and sisters; it is also the way to reconcile ourselves with God. We have nothing tangible to offer to any higher power; our forgiveness is all we are able to give. In Christianity, however, Jesus teaches that God wills people to forgive.<sup>3</sup> If there is a God or some sort of meaningful higher power, and if forgiveness, when utilized properly, is a net-positive for all parties involved, then we should attempt to understand better what it means to forgive.

### HOW DO WE DEFINE LOVE?

In both secular and religious circles, love and forgiveness are often confusing, unclear ideas. Before exploring what it means to forgive, I will investigate what it means to love. Forgiveness is an expression of love—a specific application of the general principle. Throughout the Old Testament, God often forgives while punishing his people. In Exodus 32, God sends a plague on his chosen people after they start worshipping a statue of a

# Forgiveness is an act of true love only when it is shown in conjunction with repentance.

golden calf.<sup>4</sup> How can these ideas of punishment and forgiveness be reconciled when thinking about love? Unlike some Christians who believe love is antithetical to conflict, God shows throughout the Bible that conflict is often a necessary part of real, biblical love. This is because love leads people away from darkness. It must enter into darkness in order to lead the loved to light. Forgiveness without repentance tells the sinner that injustice can be forgiven without any need to atone for the sin. This leads people closer to darkness than light. Therefore, whatever draws someone farther away from God is an act of hate, and whatever brings someone closer to God is an act of love.

God calls his people to love their neighbors, which strengthens neighborly relationships, and through them, relationships with God. In Leviticus 19, God commands his people to “love your neighbor as yourself.”<sup>5</sup> Throughout the Old Testament, God shows respect and



appreciation to people by raising them up; in this way God brings his people closer to him. Since humans are made in God's image, humans must uphold themselves in accordance with that divine image. In doing so, they show respect to God and themselves. Because God commands to "love your neighbor as yourself," to love is to uphold a neighbor, to raise that person away from darkness and into light. This is not easy; psychologists have found that "the tendency to retaliate or seek retribution after being insulted or victimized is deeply in-grained in the biological, psychological, and cultural levels of human nature."<sup>6</sup> It is against human nature to seek forgiveness, but this is what God calls humans to do. Resisting this instinct to retaliate and instead seeking to bring one's neighbor closer to God is love.

### ACKNOWLEDGING THE SIN

In this way, forgiveness in conjunction with repentance is a true display of love. To forgive is to mend a tear in a relationship, and to repent is to understand that you created a tear that needs mending. Mending a relationship through repentance enables forgiveness to be an act of love. Without repentance, a relational tear goes unattended. As the Boston University professor of moral philosophy Charles Griswold writes, "Forgiveness requires a reciprocity between the injurer and the injured."<sup>7</sup> This reciprocity requires repentance. To repent is to say, "I know I messed up; I reject what I did, and I vow to do better." As C.S. Lewis explains in *The Weight of Glory*:

"There is all the difference in the world between forgiving and excusing. Forgiveness says: 'Yes, you have done this thing, but I accept your apology; I will never hold it against you and everything between us two will be exactly as it was before.' But excusing says, "I see that you couldn't help it or didn't mean it; you weren't really to blame." If one was not really to blame, then there is nothing to forgive. In that sense forgiveness and excusing are almost opposites."<sup>8</sup>

This dichotomy between forgiving and excusing is often blurred by Christians and non-Christians alike, but it is the difference here instituted by repentance that one must attempt to understand, to truly forgive.

Repentance is not a self-deprecation but rather a sin-deprecation. The sin is what is cast away, not the sinner. To acknowledge the tear that one's sin has caused in the relationship (whether with God or another person), requires true humility. As Jesus says in Luke's Gospel, "For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those

who humble themselves will be exalted."<sup>9</sup> Jesus identifies that restoration requires humility. In the same way that repentance requires the sinner to acknowledge the tear caused by the sin, forgiveness requires this same awareness and acceptance. As C.S. Lewis elucidates further:

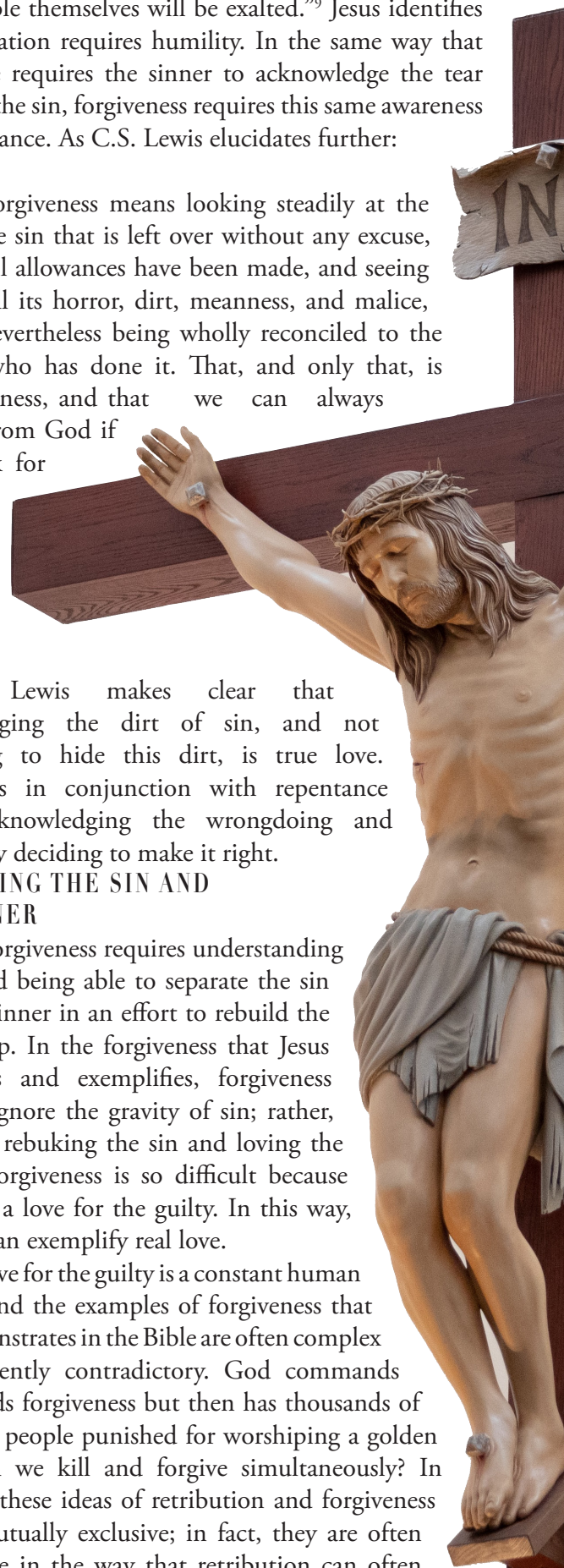
Real forgiveness means looking steadily at the sin, the sin that is left over without any excuse, after all allowances have been made, and seeing it in all its horror, dirt, meanness, and malice, and nevertheless being wholly reconciled to the man who has done it. That, and only that, is forgiveness, and that we can always have from God if we ask for it.<sup>10</sup>

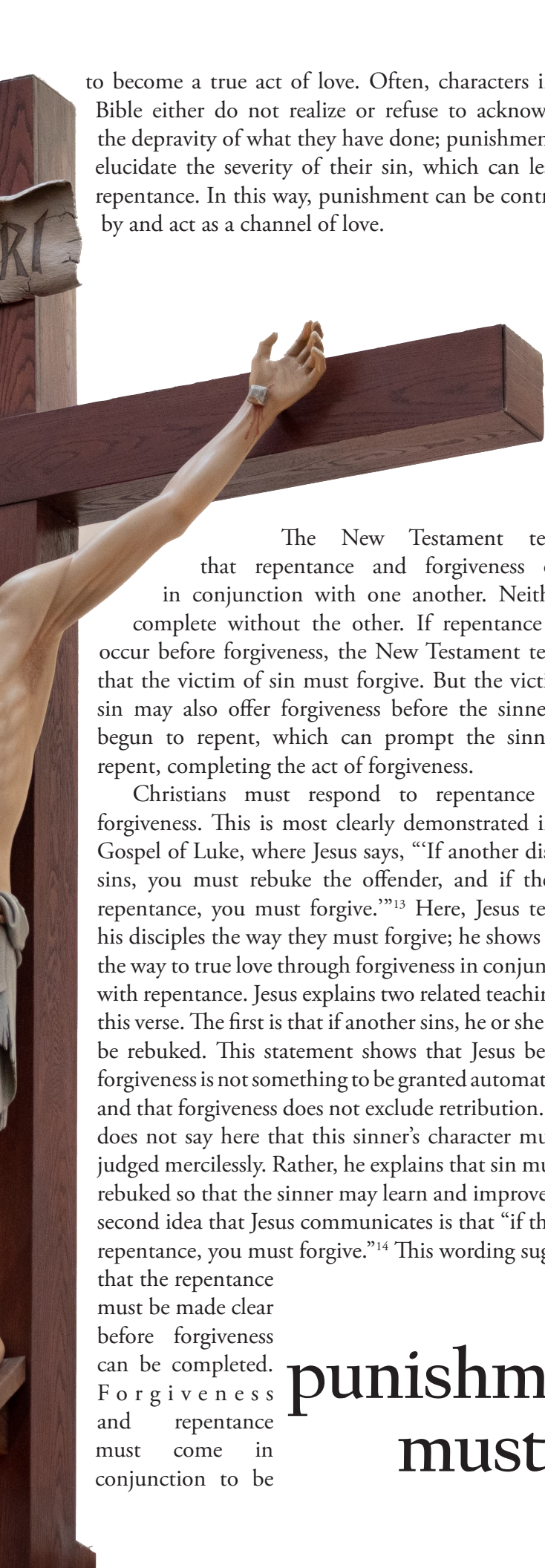
C.S. Lewis makes clear that acknowledging the dirt of sin, and not attempting to hide this dirt, is true love. Forgiveness in conjunction with repentance means acknowledging the wrongdoing and consciously deciding to make it right.

### SEPARATING THE SIN AND THE SINNER

True forgiveness requires understanding the sin and being able to separate the sin from the sinner in an effort to rebuild the relationship. In the forgiveness that Jesus commands and exemplifies, forgiveness does not ignore the gravity of sin; rather, it requires rebuking the sin and loving the sinner.<sup>11</sup> Forgiveness is so difficult because it requires a love for the guilty. In this way, criticism can exemplify real love.

This love for the guilty is a constant human struggle, and the examples of forgiveness that God demonstrates in the Bible are often complex and apparently contradictory. God commands and rewards forgiveness but then has thousands of his chosen people punished for worshipping a golden calf.<sup>12</sup> Can we kill and forgive simultaneously? In the Bible, these ideas of retribution and forgiveness are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they are often conjunctive in the way that retribution can often lead to repentance, which allows for forgiveness





to become a true act of love. Often, characters in the Bible either do not realize or refuse to acknowledge the depravity of what they have done; punishment can elucidate the severity of their sin, which can lead to repentance. In this way, punishment can be controlled by and act as a channel of love.

The New Testament teaches that repentance and forgiveness occur in conjunction with one another. Neither is complete without the other. If repentance does occur before forgiveness, the New Testament teaches that the victim of sin must forgive. But the victim of sin may also offer forgiveness before the sinner has begun to repent, which can prompt the sinner to repent, completing the act of forgiveness.

Christians must respond to repentance with forgiveness. This is most clearly demonstrated in the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus says, “If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive.”<sup>13</sup> Here, Jesus teaches his disciples the way they must forgive; he shows them the way to true love through forgiveness in conjunction with repentance. Jesus explains two related teachings in this verse. The first is that if another sins, he or she must be rebuked. This statement shows that Jesus believes forgiveness is not something to be granted automatically and that forgiveness does not exclude retribution. Jesus does not say here that this sinner’s character must be judged mercilessly. Rather, he explains that sin must be rebuked so that the sinner may learn and improve. The second idea that Jesus communicates is that “if there is repentance, you must forgive.”<sup>14</sup> This wording suggests that the repentance must be made clear before forgiveness can be completed. F o r g i v e n e s s and repentance must come in conjunction to be

an act of the neighborly.

Offerings of forgiveness, however, can precede repentance. In Luke’s Gospel, when Jesus is dying on the cross before his executioners, he says, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”<sup>15</sup> Jesus calls for forgiveness when his abusers have not repented, “for they know not what they do.” In this case, the offer of forgiveness triggers repentance as the sinner does not know that they are sinning. In this instance, this powerful communication of love draws at least one of the sinners to repentance. Later in the narrative, the centurion implicitly repents of his participation in the innocent Jesus’s murder. He “praised God and said, ‘Surely this was a righteous man.’”<sup>16</sup> Prompted by Jesus’s forgiveness of his murderers, the Roman centurion comes later to repent of his crime. Even as the victim of an abomination of justice, Jesus shows that he is not a tyrant God but rather a God of love who seeks to show his love through forgiveness.

#### HEALING WITH FORGIVENESS

The Bible teaches that forgiveness is an act of true love when it is shown in conjunction with repentance. According to Christian teaching, the atrocity committed on July 4, 2022 in Highland Park, Illinois, should not be forgiven without first reckoning with the atrocity. What the shooter did on that day was unfathomable and atrocious, but if he were to express true repentance for his actions, Christians would be called to forgive. This would not imply, however, that the shooter is free from punishment, and it does not mean that the families impacted by his evil actions need to forget what occurred. Love can involve punishment, and forgiveness must involve repentance. Today, forgiveness is often synonymous with simple kindness and affection; throughout both the New and Old Testaments, this idea is shown to be inconsistent with the Christian tradition. To truly follow Jesus’s teachings, one must realize his or her own sin, acknowledge that only Jesus offers atonement for the sin, and turn to him for forgiveness. This is offered to all people, even the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes, even to the Highland Park shooter. The sinner must then turn to the victims of their sin, repent, move towards reconciliation that may include punishment, and seek forgiveness. In

Love can involve punishment, and forgiveness must involve repentance.

the case of the Highland Park tragedy, true forgiveness in conjunction with repentance can justly offer peace to the perpetrator and the victims. †

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1. James Murphy, "Writing 5: Sex and Violence in the Bible," (lecture, Dartmouth Class, Silsby, September 2021).
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3. Luke 17:3 (NIV).
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10. Lewis, 181.
11. Luke 7:36-50 (NIV).
12. Ephesians 4:32; Exodus 32:1-35 (NIV).
13. Luke 17:3 (NIV).
14. Luke 17:3 (NIV).
15. Luke 23:34 (NIV).
16. Luke 23:47 (NIV).



FRATERNITAS



CHRISTIANA

# KEYSTONE AND *KHESED*

Christian Brotherhood in the Greek System

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TULIO HUGGINS

Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at Dartmouth have a predictable social rhythm. At around 10:00 PM, Greek houses hold “tails,” small-scale parties usually hosted by at least one fraternity with at least one sorority. Drinks are provided liberally—Keystone Light beer becomes a common sight and “batch,” mixed drinks with names ranging from “Green Machine” to “Moscow Mule,” flow freely. Tails typically end at around 11:00 PM, when houses open to the entire campus for either a band, a DJ, or most commonly, Dartmouth pong.

It is hardly a secret how important Greek life is for Dartmouth’s undergraduate character and social sphere. Any time spent around students on campus reveals how much social life revolves around these spaces. According to *The Dartmouth*, the student newspaper, about 60 percent of eligible students are affiliated with a Greek house.<sup>1</sup> From terms like “on night” to “tails” to “semis” to “golden tree-d” to “darty” to “rho gam,” Greek-inspired language permeates the Dartmouth vocabulary. Greek houses are carriers of ancient traditions, representing a deep connection to

Dartmouth’s history: the College’s oldest Greek house was founded in 1842.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, polarized opinions around the system abound. From an onlooker’s perspective, the night-to-night life of our campus’s Greek life may appear filled with debauchery, drunkenness, and dangerous practices, along with the systemic issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, and elitism. I contend that these issues are real and pervasive, and they are worthy of investigation because Greek life has such a hold on Dartmouth’s society. Since they are so real, is Greek life even worth keeping? Is it worth interacting with at all?

As real as these problems are, I do not believe that they irrecoverably condemn the system or its future. In fact, I will contend that the system may receive a redemptive hope in an understanding of brotherly love informed by Christianity. In this article, I will first identify the legitimate problems with the manifestation of brotherhood in Dartmouth Greek life. Then, I will introduce the idea of brotherly love as presented in the Christian tradition. Next, I will identify how the Greek houses already incorporate love into their creeds and practice. Ultimately, I will conclude that despite



# Despite its immense shortcomings, Dartmouth's Greek system resembles biblical brotherhood, and it can be made healthier by aligning with the Christian view of community.

its immense shortcomings, Dartmouth's Greek system resembles biblical brotherhood, and it can be made healthier by aligning with the Christian view of community.

## PROBLEMS WITH BROTHERHOOD IN GREEK LIFE

The reputation of Dartmouth's Greek system often precedes it, particularly in relationship to sexual assault, excessive drinking, and the marginalization of vulnerable people. Tragically, anecdotal evidence of sexual assault at Dartmouth fraternities are far too common. Survey data regarding Greek life on campus corroborates this grim reality. According to a Dartmouth sexual misconduct survey in 2021, 10.8 percent of students on campus have experienced "completed or attempted nonconsensual sexual conduct" since coming to campus.<sup>3</sup> This figure may be an underestimate: a 2015 survey reported that 63% of assault cases were not reported to campus authorities.<sup>4</sup> Not only that, but the 2015 survey identifies Greek houses as one of the main places where assaults take place on campus.<sup>5</sup>

Further, the Greek life drinking culture encompasses Dartmouth as a whole—one only has to look at the College's unofficial mascot, Keggy the Keg.<sup>6</sup> Aside from this satirical illustration of campus drinking culture, the empirical evidence points to regular excessive drinking in the student population. A recent study on binge drinking on campus showed that "41 percent of Dartmouth undergraduates responding to The Dartmouth Health Survey reported having had five or more alcoholic drinks in a sitting at least once in the last two weeks."<sup>7</sup> According to the same study, fraternities are among the most common locations to drink.<sup>8</sup>

Similar to how binge drinking is prevalent across Greek spaces at any college, Dartmouth's Greek system also has an extensive history of racism. Most of the fraternities remained segregated well into the 1950s, and most went local under the risk of losing recognition by the College, though not without much opposition from the alumni and national representatives of Dartmouth's fraternities.<sup>9</sup> The fraternities were all desegregated decades ago, but instances of racism still pervade these spaces today. Since the summer of 2020, an Instagram page called @blackatdartmouth has existed

for students of color to anonymously pen their experiences at Dartmouth—particularly with regards to racism. Multiple entries have dealt specifically with racism in fraternities. One notable instance was when a black woman wearing long braids had her hair used by a white man to clean up a sprayed drink.<sup>10</sup> Stories like these show a general distrust between people of color and Greek life.

Each of these dysfunctions too common in the Greek system—sexual assault, substance abuse, and marginalization—is often protected and perpetuated by a committed sense of loyalty expected among house members. In an infamous *Rolling Stones* article and subsequent 2014 book, *Confessions of an Ivy League Frat Boy*, a former Sigma Alpha Epsilon brother named Andrew Lohse describes the culture of loyalty like this: "What happens in the house stays in the house. Trust the brotherhood. Always protect your pledge brothers." In the book, Lohse gives the public an in-depth look at Dartmouth's now-derecognized Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter (it is now a local fraternity operating officially under the name Scarlett Hall).<sup>11</sup> Lohse examines its hazing, drug abuse, and rampant binge drinking.<sup>12</sup> He dictates the story of his ostracization from the brothers of SAE, which was partly a result of him speaking out about the incidents of hazing and debauchery that happened in the house. These stories exposed a dark yet well-known side of Greek life, where hedonism and group acceptance comes at the cost of self-dignity, one's health, and relationships with others, most particularly in the hazing initiation process. Hazing can come in various forms, from the humiliation of pledges to dangerous levels of drugs and alcohol consumption, or both.<sup>13</sup> Lohse includes examples from the obscene to the innocuous, from eating an omelet made out of a mixture of vomit and eggs to bringing a stuffed animal to class and having to recite a specific phrase if asked about it. This type of bonding through shared hazing creates loyalty to a house.<sup>14</sup> This deep house loyalty can be twisted to protect members from facing the consequences of the most denigrating activities associated with Greek life, including sexual assault, substance abuse, and marginalization.<sup>15</sup> Naturally, all of this brings us back to the initial question: given its deep flaws, is Greek life irrecoverable?

## CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD

Christianity and the Greek system often appear far from compatible. First, these clear but hardly unique flaws of the Greek system are legitimately opposed to the traditional teachings of Christianity. Of course, self-identified Christians have committed every sin one could find in the Greek system—including sexual assault, substance abuse, and marginalization. Jesus’s message clearly condemns these shortcomings within and outside of the Greek system. Nonetheless, key foundations of Dartmouth’s Greek system arguably oppose its own shortcomings too, particularly in the house creeds and the best manifestations of its brotherly ethos. Analyzing how the concepts of love and brotherhood in the Christian tradition overlap and challenge those Greek houses can help identify how Greek life’s own principles can be redeemed to resolve its faults.

The concept of love is foundational to the Christian tradition, especially in reference to God’s identity. In his first epistle, the apostle John describes God himself as “love,” emphasizing that God does not simply have qualities of love, but that he embodies it.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, since Christians should follow God, they have a responsibility to embody his identity of being loving. The specific words translated as “love” in the Biblical texts vary across the canon. Additionally, the languages of the Bible often had multiple words for love, unlike English.

Examining the *khesed* love of the Hebrew Bible is particularly useful for considering Greek life. *Khesed* is often translated from Hebrew as “loyal love” or “loving-kindness.”<sup>17</sup> According to Bible scholar Tim Mackie, the circumstances accurately described as *khesed* love are when someone is “keeping a promise.”<sup>18</sup> This promise, or perhaps more accurately, covenant, is what makes the person giving *khesed* love, in the words of Mackie, “go above and beyond and be super generous more than what you would expect.”<sup>19</sup> This type of love is a behavior and an action. Practically, *khesed* is displayed in relationships throughout the Hebrew Bible. *Khesed* love can be thought of as showing commitment in relationships. It is present in many biblical narratives and chiefly demonstrated by the character of God, particularly in how he relates to his people in the Hebrew Bible. For example, in the book of Exodus, God describes himself as “overflowing in *khesed* love” when he talks with the people of Israel.<sup>20</sup> Further, God’s relationship with Israel in the book of Hosea is described in the language of marriage, and in God’s “vows,” the word used is *khesed*.<sup>21</sup> Using this word in the vows, *khesed* is established as a word revolving around covenants and loyalty to them. God further exhibited *khesed* in the book of Genesis through his covenant with Abraham, promising to make Abraham the fa-

ther of a great nation.<sup>22</sup> Many biblical figures implemented God’s example of *khesed* in their relationships, forming a community based on loyalty. Thus, as the early Christian community illustrated, *khesed* love is more than a feeling. It is a continuous action of loyalty to someone or something. Loyalty, the basis of *khesed* love, is essential in Christian brotherhood, since it holds those in relation with each other through times of troubles or disagreements by way of a common bond. In Christianity, this bond is not drawn on family lines but on the identification of being a Christ-follower in one body.<sup>23</sup> The concept of the Christian church being a “body” stems from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, where he emphasizes that each member is critical to the community’s functioning, paying special attention to the low-prestige roles that appear to contribute little.<sup>24</sup> When we open ourselves up to relationships in community, our ability to “acknowledge, appreciate, and love each person” increases, in the words of Pope Francis’s “Fratelli Tutti” encyclical.<sup>25</sup> Brotherhood then becomes a critical desire for Christians because they can love people more while in community, becoming better followers of God’s example of *khesed* love. In today’s world, Christian brotherhood manifests in various forms: from “LifeGroups” in the evangelical





megachurch Life.Church, where groups of Christians gather weekly to grow spiritually and support people through their difficulties, to the Dominican Order in the Catholic Church, an order of priests that focuses on evangelizing, caring for the poor, and living in community.<sup>26</sup> All of these organizations focus on bringing a group of Christians closer in the bond of *khesed*. From the Hebrew Bible to the modern day, the Christian story demonstrates the foundational nature of *khesed* in its bonds of brotherhood.

## GREEK BROTHERHOOD REFLECTS CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD

*Khesed* love deeply influences Christian brotherhood, yet it is also reflected in the Greek system, particularly in the house creeds. Though the Greek system and Christian groups are different expressions of community, both are established with the similar goal of binding members together and developing members' characters. God ultimately

# Though indirectly, *khesed* love is the primary concept the creeds speak of in establishing Greek communities.

calls Christians to community in Heaven by following his teachings, which is unlike the Greek system's final goal. Jesus instructs his followers to "love the Lord your God with all your heart" and "love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>27</sup> At its core, Christ's message of love is a fully realized version of the exhortations found in Greek house creeds. Most houses have an oath or creed new members must pledge. Scarlett Hall mentions in its creed—"The True Gentleman"—that: "The True Gentleman ... thinks of the rights and feelings of others, rather than his own; and who appears well in any company."<sup>28</sup> The true gentleman is called to care for others through committed action and remain loyal to this charge. In other words, he is instructed to demonstrate the principles of *khesed* love.

Sigma Nu, the fraternity on campus that I call home, also describes *khesed* in their Creed:

To believe in the Life of Love,  
to walk in the Way of Honor,  
to serve in the Light of Truth -  
This is the Life, the Way, and the Light of Sigma Nu.  
This is the Creed of our Fraternity.<sup>29</sup>

To live a "life of love" could mean conducting philanthropic works with house members or simply investing time to deepen relationships as Jesus's teaches, by exhibiting *khesed* love. The loyalty to loving people in relationships is encapsulated in the start of Sigma Nu's creed. "Life of love" is one of the guiding principles of the fraternity. These "lights" are supposed to guide brothers and the chapter as a whole in how they act. They allude to a lifelong loyalty to such lights.

Many of these creeds have a similar goal of guiding Greek members to support one another and develop their character. Though indirectly, *khesed* love is the primary concept the creeds speak of in establishing Greek communities.

The guiding theme in both cases is to love, not only your fellow brother, but your entire house. *Khesed* love then

forms both the pillar of the Christian and Greek life community. It creates a bond of brotherhood for each, something the current Sigma Nu president Max Breuninger '23 describes as "the soul of the fraternity."<sup>30</sup> Yet just as a foundation does not describe the full architecture of a house, a creed does not reflect the full reality of an organization.

*Khesed* helps form brotherhood in both the Christian community and the Greek system, and Greek members often live out *khesed* in their communities, even amidst the smell of stale beer and the sounds of house music. House leadership provides *khesed* under the direction of the house "chaplain." The chaplain, or the functional role of a chaplain, exists in many houses under various titles. This position is a non-biased mediator, as well as a friendly and anonymous ear for the brothers in the house.<sup>31</sup> Chaplains are a form of emotional and mental support in the house and their use by the brothers in the house demonstrates their importance. During the beginning of my pledge term, I reached out to our chaplain to inform him that I was considering dropping the pledge term. I was overwhelmed. He comforted me, validated my concerns, shared advice, and provided himself as a constant resource. He emulated *khesed* through his acts of loyalty to the people in the house and showed a type of devotion to build his brothers up.

Beyond Greek house leadership, *khesed* love is expressed through smaller supportive actions. Lucas LaRoche '24, a rising junior and brother at Alpha Chi Alpha, described loyal love as being there for your brothers when they need it. It isn't necessarily "as advertised in fraternity culture."<sup>32</sup> LaRoche continued, saying that fraternal care means "taking time out of our busy schedules to go support one of the brothers," such as at a social event, or simply being a shoulder to cry on "when life brings its challenges."<sup>33</sup> The institutional structures of Greek life facilitate spaces otherwise strangers to care for each other: two members do not have to be close for them to display *khesed*. For Elizabeth Hadley '23, a sister at Chi Delta, "even if you aren't super close, you are still a part of the house, and you are family."<sup>34</sup> It is common for sisters to attend one another's sporting events or acapella performances, or for a brother to assist another brother in completing his problem set in the library. *Khesed* love abounds because of this bond of brotherhood in a Greek house. The same *khesed* love that united early Christians as they lived out their faith in the Roman Empire fuels Greek members caring for and supporting each other in a house basement.

Unfortunately, the ideals written in Greek house creeds and the loyal love that Greek members display paint an

incomplete picture, obscuring the damage that unhealthy behaviors in the Greek system cause. And although *khesed* love is the base for the Greek system, it is also present in varying degrees depending on the house. Considering *khesed*

love requires work, and the Greek houses' creeds present their members with a high standard of *khesed*. House members should focus on aligning themselves with these ideals, encouraging other members to strive towards them. Moreover, we must shift away from protecting brothers from deserved consequences. Fraternities are known to protect their brothers after issues such as hazing or sexual assault. For example, in the Beta Theta Pi Penn State hazing death of 2017, one of the many brothers involved was charged with deleting security camera footage. This footage would have incriminated the house for giving pledge Timothy Piazza a lethal amount of alcohol in 2017.<sup>35</sup> Brotherhood should not involve covering up others' wrongdoings.

As the teachings of Jesus and the Greek system creeds both express, brotherhood is built on *khesed* love, exhorting us to loyally support and facilitate growth for those around us. To help one another become the best version of ourselves, we cannot accept or even encourage harmful behaviors. Instead, Greek members and those in Christian communities both need correction. Correction of community members is strong in the Christian tradition. This is particularly evident in "The Rule of St Benedict," a set of guidelines written in the sixth century by St. Benedict for "a practical guide to Christian monastic life."<sup>36</sup> In it, St. Benedict describes how monasteries can correct unhealthy behavior. For example, if a monk broke any of his vows, he would be punished to hold him accountable. St. Benedict's rule is one of the oldest used in today's monastic traditions.<sup>37</sup> Discipline is not the antithesis of brotherhood but the actualization of it. By this logic, fraternity members should seek to hold their brother accountable to best support them and realize the creed of the house. Loyal love

*Khesed* helps form brotherhood in both the Christian community and the Greek system, and Greek members often live out *khesed* in their communities, even amidst the smell of stale beer and the sounds of house music.

requires recognizing what is unhealthy in a relationship partner—whether it be binge drinking, sexist comments, or unacceptable actions—and helping him to repent, face necessary consequences, and change. We need loyalty to the ideals of the house and not to the house itself.

## CONCLUSION

Greek life at Dartmouth generates undeniable harm while simultaneously creating a supportive community that, at its best, reflects Christian brotherhood. There are many problems with our system, and though there have been improvements over time, our Greek system still upholds sexism, substance abuse, and racism. Yet just as *khesed* love orients Christian communities towards loyally supporting and improving their community, so it does for the Greek system. As stated in their creeds, Greek systems are constructed on the notion of *khesed*. Despite its problems, members of each house still endeavor to represent a Christian *khesed* in their relationships with each other, whether in small gestures like showing up to acapella shows or in larger commitments like helping a brother or sister heal from trauma. These acts of love illuminate the positive aspects of the community of students who call Greek letters their homes. Lastly, if a Christian or Greek member truly subscribes to *khesed* love, then they are called to be loyally committed to improving the unhealthy behaviors in those around them. If a person truly loves another, he or she wants what is best for that individual, not necessarily what is easiest. Biblical *khesed* love permeates the Greek system in ways we do not often notice. By realizing this and aligning more with the biblical view of brotherhood, the Greek system can be reformed to be a space where genuine brotherhood and love abound.<sup>38</sup> ✠

"Discipline is not the antithesis of brotherhood but the actualization of it."

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# A Chorus

Elizabeth Hadley

Fake stained glass, cloth couches, and  
smells of hand sanitizer and surgery and cancer.

*Please—*

...

Two golden circles, one set of painted nails.  
Yin and yang attire, and a promise of eternity.

*In Your name, I do—*

...

Tears that could fill this sea of black. Flowers  
that could fill a garden. A new forever.

*Keep her safe, keep me sane—*

...

A dream that becomes a reality for the next four years.  
Hard work rewarded. Stars shining in the colors  
of his next home that sprinkle out of the envelope.

*Thank You, thank You—*

...

An underpass that becomes a roof. The same jacket  
worn every day. Uncertainty that becomes routine.

*Let me see the light—*

...

Unfulfilled hopes. A lonely heart. The feeling of being  
forgotten. A pit migrating from the chest to the  
stomach at the sight of glued-together hands  
in the park, a concert, the airport...

*Why not me—*

...



Tires plunged in mud. Quicksand. Planes flying off,  
stuck on the tarmac. Clouds passing, everyone moving  
except one. Seeking meaning, answers.

*Deliver me—*

...

A young girl crying in her room, longing to be understood,  
feeling the weight of her mistakes, tantalized by the sky of blue  
in the hole she dug herself into, the hole she fell into.

*Help me, help me out—*

...

Heavy eyelids. Tantrums that become background noise.  
A strange desire to be an octopus: a never-ending to-do list,  
never not on-call. Pulled in every direction.

*Patience, Lord, give me patience—*

...

A face falling on a pillow. Moonlight seeping in.  
A soundtrack of crickets. An ordinary day.

*Our father—*

...

In all these moments, it is Your name whispered on their lips.

A beautiful chorus, calling out to You.

# MEANING BEYOND RELIGION

Examining Nietzsche's *Übermensch* in a Puritan Framework

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## CHRISTIAN ERIKSON

In his famous madman parable, Friedrich Nietzsche announces the death of God.<sup>1</sup> In the parable, a “madman” runs about mourning what he identifies as God’s death, incessantly asking haunting questions like, “How do we console ourselves, the murderers of all murderers?” and, “Are we not continually falling?” As the most godless man on earth, Nietzsche himself faced the threat of plummeting into nihilism while he grappled with the question: what meaning is there in a world without God?<sup>2</sup>

For nearly all of human history, organized religious practices have provided structured meaning with near ubiquitous assent. Rejecting such religious ideals, Nietzsche contended that religious meaning is a deceptive veil for those who are resentful of their weakness and of a low position in society.<sup>3</sup> After deconstructing the cornerstones of his cultural heritage and “killing God,” however, Nietzsche was left with the difficult work of reconstruction. His reconstructive effort led him to propose a transcendent state of humanity as a solution, the *Übermensch*. Nietzsche believed meaning could be

self-created rather than adopted, where the *Übermensch* is one who has mastered this process of self-creation. To Nietzsche, religion is obviated by meaning that depends solely on the individual. When Nietzsche proclaims “The [*Übermensch*] shall be the meaning of the earth,” he envisions humanity empowered by creative freedom.<sup>4</sup>

Nietzsche identifies personal desire and individuality as critical contributors to achieving a purposeful and free life. However, Nietzsche’s appeal to self-created meaning falls short of actualizing freedom because self-creation is governed by pre-existing proclivities. Because Christianity acknowledges the contribution of personal desire while offering meaning that transcends both circumstance and the self, the Christian source of meaning supplies a genuine result more satisfying than what Nietzsche can provide. This is evident when comparing Nietzsche with the 18<sup>th</sup>-century theologian Jonathan Edwards. Considered the last Puritan, Edwards primarily found meaning in the glorification of God, far different from Nietzsche’s self-created meaning. This belief led Edwards to pursue conformity to a standard external to

# Nietzsche suggests that the Christian reliance on God is a foolish acceptance of bondage, but it is precisely this reliance on God that overcomes human shortsightedness to achieve substantive meaning.

himself, motivated by his view that human desire is not always trustworthy in isolation. Nietzsche and Edwards both seek to find meaning in life, but Edwards wanted a way to account for personal error in identifying how to pursue that meaning. Nietzsche suggests that the Christian reliance on God is a foolish acceptance of bondage, but it is precisely this reliance on God that overcomes human shortsightedness to achieve substantive meaning.

## NIETZSCHE AND THE *ÜBERMENSCH*

Writing in late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Germany, Friedrich Nietzsche was concerned with the moral trajectory of society at the time. He saw the prevailing “Christian virtues” as stultifying authentic human existence. To Nietzsche, Christian virtues like meekness restrict a person from being able to define a personal idea of goodness. In Nietzsche’s view, Christian obedience to a god is really a confession of the lack of power for anything other than submission.<sup>5</sup> In such a state, the Christian has lost the creative freedom distinctive to humanity.

With his idea of self-created meaning, a person gains power through the process of determining meaning for themselves. This control, the “will to power,” satisfies what Nietzsche sees as a person’s most fundamental desire.<sup>6</sup> For Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*, the merits of pursuing an internally defined meaning are tangible because the *Übermensch* is empowered by creating it. For Nietzsche’s conception of the Christian, the shadowy merits of pursuing an externally defined meaning are only as tangible as the strength of one’s faith. Meaning for the *Übermensch* is, thus, something more real and more attainable than religion could offer.

Nietzsche’s idea of the *Übermensch* claims not only to be empowering but promises a freedom that religion cannot offer. This promise is embedded in the centrality of individuality to the Nietzschean idea of freedom. The significance of individuality in Nietzsche’s conception of freedom is evident when he rhetorically asks in *The Gay Science*, “What is the seal of having become free?,” and answers, “No longer to be ashamed before oneself.”<sup>7</sup> While individuality is important, Nietzsche at the same time asserts “man is something that should be over-

come,” and believes that freedom does not mean a lack of limitations.<sup>8</sup> This duality means Nietzsche advocates for a self-defined meaning beyond mere unregulated primal impulses. The balance between individuality and overcoming becomes clearer when recalling Nietzsche’s position that a need for power is the most fundamental human desire. A person gains power by controlling themselves in a way that serves this most fundamental longing. Even though some subordinate desires are controlled, individuality is preserved because the control is for a self-determined purpose and is relative to the individual.

Nietzsche provides an illustrative example of the power gained through relative self-control when he discusses chastity. He claims that chastity can be either a virtue or a vice depending on the person seeking to be chaste.<sup>9</sup> Chastity is a virtue for those who may have some desire for the contrary but control this desire because they think being chaste is worthwhile. Importantly, the Nietzschean reason to be chaste is not because it is objectively right or generally accepted as appropriate but because these types of individuals choose to be chaste.<sup>10</sup> Chastity is a vice for those who strive to be chaste, though they would like not to be. Their restraint only causes them to burn with passion and demonstrates that they live dishonestly with themselves.<sup>11</sup> As Nietzsche writes, “Those moralists who command man first and above all to gain control of himself thereby afflict him with a peculiar disease, namely, a constant irritability at all natural stirrings and inclinations . . .”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is not the exercise of self-control alone that gives a person power, but self-control for a purpose decided by the individual. Relatedly, it is not the expression of all desires which makes a person free, but the mastery of these desires for a higher self-defined meaning.

Nietzsche’s example of chastity is easily expanded to see his broader criticism of Christianity. Those who fail to create meaning governing their actions are like the group for whom chastity is a vice. In pursuing a standard they did not create for themselves, they lose the meaning that would be true for themselves and abandon the

power gained through self-creation. This is one of the errors Nietzsche sees in religion. Religious standards are all externally defined and necessarily sever adherents from their personal truth. Following his accusation that Christians are discontent with their position in society, Nietzsche even suggests that religion for some is but a deceitful way of elevating their relative social status.<sup>13</sup> Imposing moral demands on a cultural level raises the supercilious above those who inevitably fail to fulfill the demands of “righteousness.” This leaves Nietzsche’s characterization of Christianity unfit as a moral system for the modern world.

The failures of religion that Nietzsche sees contribute to his proclamation, “God is dead,” with the *Übermensch* to take his place.<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche argues that Christian morality is unreliable, causes a loss of freedom, and provides inauthentic meaning. The *Übermensch* is Nietzsche’s solution for the void left behind by the absence of a god. Without meaning provided by religion, he attempts to escape nihilism by transferring the ability to create meaning to the individual. To Nietzsche, if a person does not create meaning for themselves, they will be left without it.

#### EDWARDS AND MEANING

Because religion prevents personally true meaning, Nietzsche’s disdain for Christianity is especially apparent in those whom he calls “Preachers of Death.”<sup>15</sup> These “Preachers of Death” are so focused on religious conformity that they devalue life by enslaving themselves and eagerly await death to end their misery. They suppress their true desires not for the purpose of obtaining a self-defined meaning, but because they are weighed down by religious dogma.<sup>16</sup> When Nietzsche writes “they are hardly born before they begin to die and long for doctrines of weariness and renunciation,” he seems to have in mind people just like Jonathan Edwards, the so-called fire and brimstone preacher who grandfathered Aaron Burr.<sup>17</sup>

Although it would not improve Nietzsche’s opinion of him, Jonathan Edwards was more than a preacher of death. Regarded by some as America’s “greatest

**To Nietzsche, if a person does not create meaning for themselves, they will be left without it.**

metaphysical genius,” Edwards had his own carefully thought-out source of meaning.<sup>18</sup> Edwards thought of meaning in terms of end goals, believing “the end which [God] had ultimately in view [in creating the world], was that communication of himself which he intended through all eternity.”<sup>19</sup> To Edwards, creation existed for the purpose of knowing God’s glory; meaning for mankind is to magnify and relish the glory of God. Crucially, “God in seeking his glory, therein seeks the good of his creatures: because the emanation of his glory ... implies the communicated excellency and happiness of his creature,” which means that Edwards saw the glory of God and the good of the creature as joined together as a single end.<sup>20</sup>

Contrary to Nietzsche’s portrayal, Edwards would have viewed his abstemious lifestyle as full of joy, rather than a weary pursuit, because it was a way of participating in the communication of God’s glory and the accompanying happiness. In a sermon titled “The Pleasantness of Religion,” he claims “self-denial will also be reckoned amongst the troubles of the godly ... But whoever has tried self-denial can give in his testimony that they never experience greater pleasures and joys than after great acts of self-denial.”<sup>21</sup> Edwards’s self-denial enabled him to taste the sweetness of God, as he would say, making it a way of life that was not burdensome.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Nietzsche’s criticism that this way of living is inauthentic seems to stand because Edwards’s self-denial implies a need to labor against natural desires.<sup>23</sup> Edwards would agree with Nietzsche’s critique in that he may be fighting desire, instead of only controlling it, but this is because he sees human desire as being in a naturally corrupted state and unable to lead to a profitable end.<sup>24</sup> But this does not mean that he is relegated only to war with himself. In striking contrast to Nietzsche, Edwards believed that the external God-wrought restoration of desire causes a person to delight in the things of God.<sup>25</sup> This belief means there is a fundamental change in desire. A person like Edwards is not always wearily waiting for death, as Nietzsche suggests they are, but is actively being transformed to enjoy a new set of desires that are fulfilled in magnifying God’s glory.

The reality Edwards sees in enjoying God is evident from what he calls religious affections. What he considers an affection can be thought of as similar to emotion, where a person is inclined toward a certain response when perceiving something because of their internal disposition.<sup>26</sup> When writing on the affection that a person should

have toward God, Edwards reasons, “[it] is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first foundation of a true love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of his

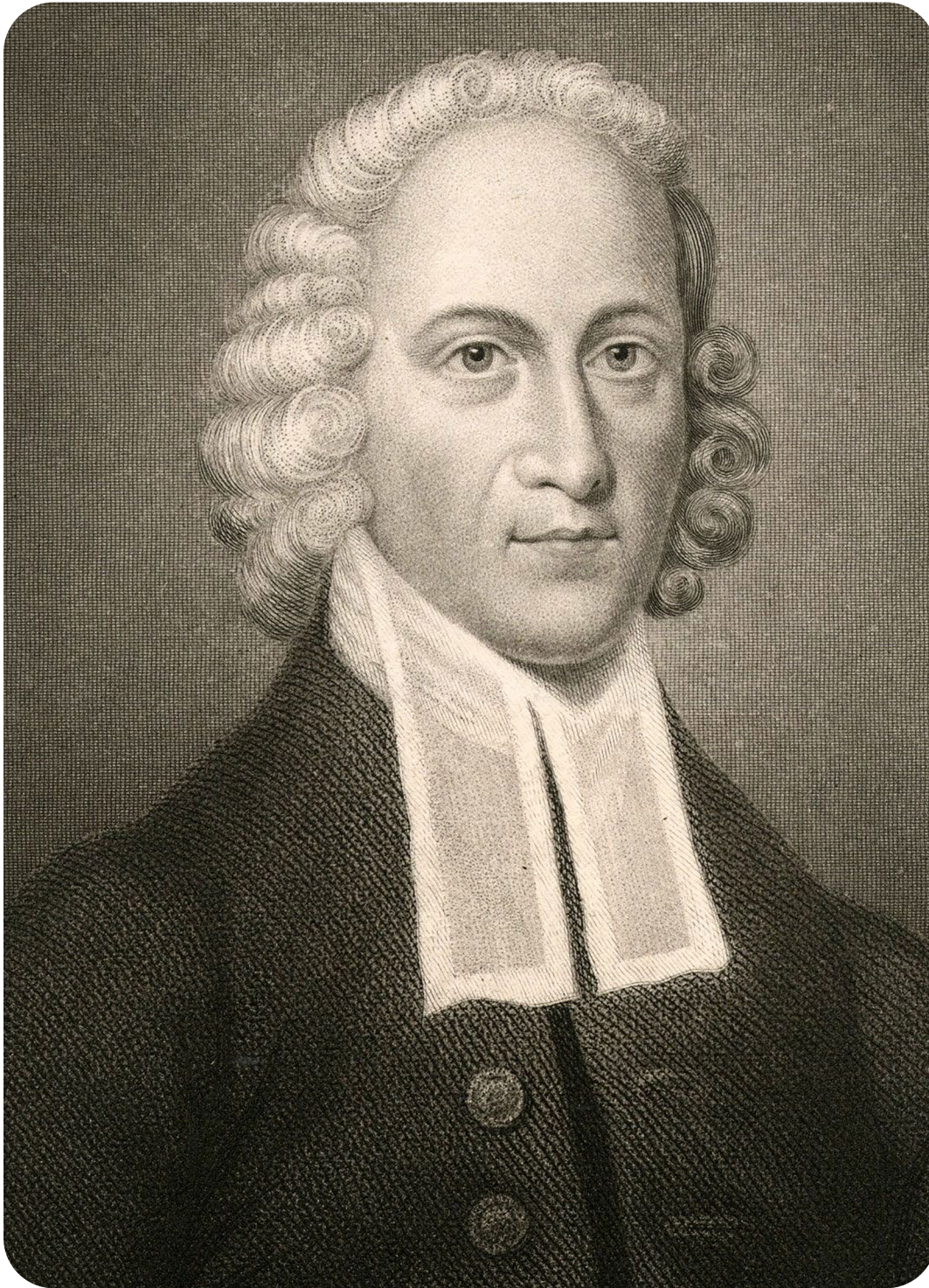
live as a Puritan was not an arduous and inauthentic task, but was the manifestation of his greatest desire. Unlike Nietzsche’s claim that Christians make themselves suffer while awaiting a reward that will not come, the Christian

who possesses Edwards’s religious affections finds delight in the present life.

Edwards preserves his personal identity and authenticity even in pursuing external meaning because it is internally agreeable to him, but Nietzsche might say Edwards is still not free. Because Edwards is not creating anything for himself, Nietzsche might argue that Edwards is still bound. To Nietzsche, it is not merely the expression of desire that makes one free, but the self-created meaning governing those desires. The Edwardsean ethic questions how significant self-created meaning is, however. Edwards observes that when it comes to acting on a desire, a person cannot act, or will, in opposition to their greatest desire at the time.<sup>28</sup> Since creating meaning for oneself is still an act of the will, it is still subject to preexisting desire. If creating meaning is contingent on underlying desires, the creative power is lost as this process is, at best, a reordering of desire rather than a development of something transcendent.

nature.”<sup>27</sup> Here, Edwards demonstrates his view that true religion must arise from genuine apprehension of God as desirable. To Edwards, one should not force religion upon themselves; they should rather pursue it because God is truly lovely when perceived correctly. For Edwards, to

The dependance of the will on a shifting strongest motive is why Edwards defines freedom as the natural ability to pursue desire.<sup>29</sup> He does not see freedom as self-autonomy. Nietzsche appears to acknowledge the need to create meaning within some confines with his concept of *amor*



**Nietzsche traps the individual in a hopeless self-descent of creating meaning that can never satisfy if circumstance will not allow, while Edwards seeks fulfillment of the most innate desires where circumstance cannot hinder him.**

*fati*, the love of fate. When Nietzsche confesses “I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them—thus I will be one of those who makes things beautiful,” he recognizes a need to create only out of what already is.<sup>30</sup> In this way, Nietzsche’s self-creation is virtually contained within his circumstances, and represents an attempt to discover meaning more than it represents actual creation. While the immediate reference for Nietzsche is himself, when he looks for meaning in life, the meaning he finds is still externally adopted.

Nietzsche traps the individual in a hopeless self-descent of creating meaning that can never satisfy if circumstance will not allow, while Edwards seeks fulfillment of the most innate desires where circumstance cannot hinder him. It is Edwards, not Nietzsche, who holds the liberating viewpoint. Nietzsche’s self-created meaning is confined by a person’s existing desire and constrained by available resources. He is left with merely an unguided palimpsest of desire. Instead of trying to make things beautiful, Edwards sees something beautiful and is transformed to obtain it. Although Edwards would ultimately attribute the work to God, Edwards disciplines himself to find ever greater pleasure in God despite initial natural limitations. Rather than continually recreating meaning out of transient circumstances and hoping the choice produces agreeable results, Edwards has a lasting meaning that both promises a desirable end and sweetens present pleasures.<sup>31</sup> The value in pursuing a meaning that Nietzsche might create can only be as good as the initial circumstances and desires that serve as the creation materials will allow. Even then, there is no way to distinguish what the meaning with the highest value is. Because of the religious affections associated with Edwards’s meaning, he actively enjoys his pursuit knowing he aims at the highest possible value.

Curiously, it appears that Nietzsche criticizes Christians for following his advice more effectively than he does himself. He suggests that a person create meaning out of their present state to empower themselves. When

considering the genesis of Christian morality, though, Nietzsche chastises Christians for devising a system that improves an inherited low societal position.<sup>32</sup> Nietzsche judges this act of creation as condemnable

but preaches that the *Übermensch* should do this very thing. In reality, Edwards had no need to craft a better societal position for himself, but his reliance on God for meaning was cause for his joy. Edwards’s love for his God was sustained through his dying moments while all of the meaning Nietzsche thought he could create ultimately crumbled as he descended into insanity.<sup>33</sup>

### CONCLUSION

If Edwards genuinely found satisfaction in God, it cannot be said that his austerity was inauthentic even though his meaning was externally defined. If this is the case for a stringent Puritan, it is also true for Christianity at large. If Edwards was able to find for himself a way of more deeply experiencing satisfaction by adhering to religion, it cannot be said that he did not possess freedom. This pursuit of the greatest possible joy in God is common among Christians and it challenges Nietzsche’s intimations that religion is bondage. Furthermore, the use of externally defined meaning enables Christians to extend meaning above what is possible for those who depend on themselves. This enablement introduces the possibility that Christians have access to a meaning far superior to anything that could be self-created. Christian meaning is one in which God redeems both desires and circumstances out of the chaos of life through the atoning work of

**Edwards’s love for his God was sustained through his dying moments while all of the meaning Nietzsche thought he could create ultimately crumbled as he descended into insanity.**

Christ to prepare an imperishable inheritance. When Edwards affirms that “glorifying God and enjoying [God] make one chief end of man,” he shares in the hope of satisfaction that self-creation cannot offer.<sup>34</sup> ✠

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 120.
2. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 120; “I am Zarathustra the Godless, who says ‘Who is more Godless than I’...” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 2003), 191.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Michael A. Scarpitti (New York: Penguin, 2013), 32–4.
4. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 42.
5. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 22.
6. “Only where life is, there is also will: not will to life, but—so I teach you—will to power!” Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 138.
7. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 275.
8. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 41; “Do you call yourself free? I want to hear your ruling idea, and not that you have escaped from a yoke.” Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 89.9. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 81.
10. “Is chastity not folly? But this folly came to us and not we to it.” Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 82.
11. “Those to whom chastity is difficult should be dissuaded from it, lest it become the way to Hell—this is, to filth and lust of the soul.” Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 81.
12. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 305.
13. “They want to scratch out the eyes of their enemies with their virtue; and they raise themselves only in order to lower others.” “Their knees are always worshiping and their hands are glorifications of virtue, but their heart knows nothing of it.” Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 119.
14. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 41.
15. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 71.
16. Compare the words of the Puritan John Owen, “be killing sin or it will be killing you,” with Nietzsche’s own words: “[Preachers of Death] have no choice except lusts or self-mortification. And even their lusts are self-mortification.” John Owen, Kelly M. Kopic, Justin Taylor, and John Piper, “Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers,” in *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 50; Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 72.
17. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 72; Leslie Odom Jr., vocalist, “Wait for It,” by Lin-Manuel Miranda, recorded August 2015, track 13 on *Hamilton (Original Broadway Cast Recording)*, Atlantic, compact disc.
18. Perry Miller, “Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 41, no. 2 (1948): 123–45.
19. Jonathan Edwards, “The End for which God Created the World,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 8: Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 443.
20. Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 459.
21. Jonathan Edwards, “Sermons and Discourses 1723-1729,” *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 14*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 106.
22. Jonathan Edwards, “Religious Affections,” *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 278.
23. Jonathan Edwards, “Letters and Personal Writings,” *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 16*, ed. George S. Claghorn (New Haven: Yale University Press), 757.
24. “[Natural appetite] without the government of superior divine principles, will certainly be followed with corruption, yea, and total corruption of the heart, without occasion for any positive influence at all.” Jonathan Edwards, “Original Sin,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol 3*, ed. Clyde A Holbrook (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 381.
25. Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1723-1729*, 80.
26. For more discussion on Edwards’s definition of an affection, see Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 14.
27. Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 242.
28. Jonathan Edwards, “Freedom of the Will,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 1*, ed. Paul Ramsay (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 144; Although their viewpoints certainly differ, Nietzsche also seems to reject libertarian free will. “The *causa sui* is the best internal contradiction ever devised . . . but because of man’s excessive pride we have come to be deeply and terribly entangled with this particular

- nonsense. The yearning for ‘freedom of will’ in the superlative metaphysical sense . . . is really nothing less than being that same *causa sui* . . .” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Marion Faber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 20.
29. Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 156–62.
  30. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 157.
  31. Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1723-1729*, 103.
  32. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 24.
  33. R. Lanier Anderson, “Friedrich Nietzsche,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, May 19, 2022), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/#LifeWork>.
  34. Jonathan Edwards, “Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758”, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 25*, ed. Wilson H. Kinnach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 116–17.

DEUS NOSTER



REFUGIUM

# FEAR IN FAITH

An Analysis of the Role Fear Should Play in Faith and Life

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KELI PEGULA

There are many things that motivate human beings—from desires to incentives to emotions. Emotional motivators serve important roles in driving individuals to or from certain behaviors or situations, and fear is a strong example of this type of motivator.<sup>1</sup> Is that a good thing? Should we allow fear to take part in our decision-making processes and dictate our behaviors? This is a complicated question because fear is a complicated emotion. We can, however, indulge this inquiry by looking at biblical passages as well as figures from Christian history, namely the patriarch Abraham. Throughout his biblical narrative, Abraham, who is esteemed within Scripture as God's friend, the father of God's children, and one of his most faithful followers, exemplifies the correct balance of fear and faith.

This route of analysis will be helpful because Abraham's fear is reverential. A reverential fear not only means that Abraham has a deep respect and awe for God, but that he also holds a fear of separation from God. This is not, however, the only sense in which Scripture describes and employs fear.

In order to classify the position of fear in faith, it is important to differentiate between the various senses of the emotion. This variance is prevalent not only between Christians and the secular world, but also within Scripture itself. Scripture describes fear at an earthly level—recognizing the dangers that elicit terror—while also emphasizing the idea of reverential fear, which encompasses reverence, prudence, discipline, and compassion. Abraham displayed this emotion throughout his life, so

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# Fear does not have one simple definition because it encompasses a spectrum of emotions.

psychologically examining Abraham will allow us to understand how fear drove his behaviors and interactions with others and, more importantly, with God. Apart from the Abraham of the Bible, I will explore how Abraham is characterized in the pseudepigraphal text, the Testament of Abraham. This testament is not recognized as Scripture, but it can be helpful for understanding the roles of faith and fear in the biblical Abraham's life by highlighting certain behaviors that are fueled by fear. Ultimately, I will examine these texts to show how exactly fear should play a role in faith and inform the Christian life.

## FEAR AS A MOTIVATOR

Fear does not have one simple definition because it encompasses a spectrum of emotions. As defined above, fear in the Bible typically translates to a position of awe and reverence for God. In modern parlance, however, fear is more often associated with physiological changes, such as a racing heart, and it is elicited by some perceived danger.<sup>2</sup> This is a very powerful emotion, and it can be the driving force behind many behaviors in everyday life. And yet, does fear act as a healthy form of inspiration or as a harmful motivator? The answer depends on the actions following the fearful emotion. Take the fear of rejection as an example. This emotion is prevalent when an individual dreads social exclusion. This fear could easily become a detriment to a fulfilling life if it limits one from genuinely engaging with others. If the fear of missing out motivates one to accomplish righteous goals, however, then fear can be advantageous. It is clear that this emotion has a dual effect on our behaviors, so we must acknowledge the power that fear has over our lives and search to understand it.

This fear of rejection is not so different from the reverential fear described in Scripture, since both are associated with a desire to be seen and included. Reverential fear, however, is different precisely because it pertains to a relationship with the holy God. To understand how this fear works in faith, I will now present it in the context of Scripture, since these multiple expressions of fear do exist within Scripture itself.

I will first mention Proverbs, a book which seeks to “provide firm principles to guide us through life: not a set of dogmas or a book of laws, but precepts, norms and guidelines for securing a life of well-being, decency, and dignity.”<sup>3</sup> These precepts, norms, and guidelines provide much practical advice for practical matters, but its aims of well-being, decency, and dignity are all ultimately motivated by a concern for a right relationship

with God—and a fear of how God may arise if one does not aim for well-being, decency, and dignity. In effect, all of Proverbs is guided by reverential fear.

Conversely, the book of Isaiah, an eighth-century BCE prophetic narrative which comments on the impending judgment of the nation of Israel and expresses hope for the coming Messiah, presents the more common understanding of fear. Here, God spoke to the prophet Isaiah saying, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”<sup>4</sup> Fear here does not point towards God, but rather to earthly things—God insists that his followers not be afraid of the dangers of the world because he is their protector. Whether the Bible reports a fear of God or a fear of earthly things, it still instructs its readers to look to God with reverence and respect. Therefore, fear in faith is not a completely separate concept from the common, root emotion of fear.

## FEAR AND HEBREW SCRIPTURE

In order to fully explain these multiple impressions of fear within Scripture, I now turn to the original Hebrew. This can be helpful for understanding the biblical uses of fear because, as of 2020, the entire Bible has been translated into 704 languages and each of these translations have been interpreted in various ways.<sup>5</sup> A philological study of the biblical Hebrew word for fear, therefore, may promise a clearer understanding of the spectrum and nuances of meaning of fear in Scripture.

In biblical Hebrew, *yârê'* is commonly rendered “to fear.”<sup>6</sup> According to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, the simplest conjugation of *yârê'* can be broken down into three meanings: (1) to fear, be afraid, (2) to stand in awe of, be awed, and (3) to fear, reverence, honor, respect.<sup>7</sup> These meanings are not divorced

from each other, but rather hold discrete significance in distinct contexts. For example, *yârê'* is used in the aforementioned verse, Isaiah 41:10, in terms of the first meaning—an earthly fear. Conversely, *yârê'* is translated in Jonah 1:9 and Isaiah 29:13 to mean “worship.” Furthermore, Genesis employs all three of these meanings—in Genesis 15:1 to speak of fear in the presence of God, in Genesis 26:7 to speak of being afraid of earthly consequences, and again in Genesis 42:18 to signify honor and respect for God. Each of these separate books within Scripture use the same Hebrew verb for fear, thus encompassing the spectrum of emotions, attitudes, and behaviors associated with the word.<sup>8</sup> This places the Bible in a position to comment on fear and to specifically highlight the significance of fear in a relationship with God.

#### FEAR AND ABRAHAM

Now that I have established a definition for fear in its reverential biblical sense, I may analyze how it plays out in a biblical narrative. In the first book of the Bible, God singles out Abraham for his righteousness. God calls him to leave his country and people for a promised land that God sets aside for him, along with the promise that he will make Abraham into a great and blessed nation.<sup>9</sup> Abraham places his trust in God, not wanting to be separated from him, despite not knowing anything about the land he is promised or how the journey to get there will be.

Later in Abraham’s life, God blesses him with a son, despite his wife’s apparent barrenness.<sup>10</sup> Abraham’s son,



Isaac, is born as a symbol of God keeping his promises with his people. After a number of years, God tests Abraham’s faith by commanding that he sacrifice his son as a burnt offering.<sup>11</sup> Abraham obeys and binds his son on an altar for God, but God stops him before he can kill Isaac, saying, “Do not do anything to him. Now I

know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the biblical Hebrew word for fear is the adjective *yārē*, which has the same spectrum of connotations as the verb *yārē*. Abraham’s fear here is specifically situated in the context of his relationship with God, thus making him a great candidate through which to study the role of reverential fear in faith.

As previously mentioned, Abraham is also a figure in the apocalyptic text the Testament of Abraham. The exact origin of this text is unknown. It is, however, suggested to be of either Jewish or Egyptian origin, dated around the latter part of the 1st century CE.<sup>13</sup> This places it well after Genesis reached its final authoritative form.<sup>14</sup> This indicates that the author would have been well aware of the Genesis stories that ultimately placed Abraham as a strongly venerated part of the Jewish cultural tradition. This text’s depiction, however, is an inversion of the well-known patriarch within Jewish literature. This is evident in Abraham’s behavior through the Testament in which his actions are in opposition to his typical steadfast faith described throughout Genesis. He is depicted as an old man who is fearful of his own mortality, leading him to disobey one of God’s commands. This is such a clear inversion of the ultimately faithful Abraham of Genesis, who bound his own son at the Lord’s command, that it cannot be taken as a serious critique on the character of Abraham.<sup>15</sup> Rather, knowing that the author understood the true character of God’s Abraham, the Testament must have been written so as to clearly highlight the motivation that drives Abraham’s actions: fear.

This attitude of fear is, however, also seen in the biblical text. Throughout the history of Abraham in Genesis, many of his actions can be attributed to a heart motivated by fear. At the point when Abraham was instructed to kill his son, Isaac, Abraham obeyed God’s command out of fear because he understood God’s power and authority over him. Abraham knew that if he disobeyed God, it was within God’s power to separate himself from Abraham. This would have been distressing for anyone, but especially for a man who gave up his life and control over

his future for God. This representation of Abraham as fearful could be interpreted as a method of self-preservation, or what the reformer Martin Luther would refer to as “servile fear.”<sup>16</sup> An alternate interpretation instead understands Abraham’s fear in this situation to be a reverential fear, or what Luther would call “filial fear”: he knows God’s power and trusts that God knows best for his children.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Abraham obeys God’s command. This is a fear born out of respect.

This raises the question posed by Howard Moltz, a professor of psychology at the University of Chicago: “was Abraham a man of faith, convinced that God would somehow keep the promise invested in Isaac, or was he a man of commandment, willing to obey God even at the cost of his beloved son?”<sup>18</sup> This could be rewritten as: was Abraham a man acting out of filial fear, or was he a man controlled by servile fear? The former seems the most accurate choice, since Abraham is exalted in both the Old and New Testaments as a righteous and faithful man, and even specifically as God’s friend.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, if Abraham truly did act out of a heart of servile fear in all of these circumstances, does that discredit his righteousness? In the face of the Testament of Abraham, that seems unlikely. Fear is not a non-Jewish or non-Christian value. The idea that it is exemplified in Abraham, God’s faithful friend, points to the notion that fear is a recognizable trait amongst Christians; it does not create a gap between God and a believer, but it rather presents an opportunity for the Christian to learn to trust in him. The fact that Abraham acts out of a fear of God throughout Genesis indicates a strong faith and a healthy relationship between him and God, furthering Abraham’s identity as the revered progenitor of Judaism and Christianity. Just as the author of Hebrews states, “Abraham did everything by faith, which is the example that all Christians should strive to follow.”<sup>20</sup>

#### FEAR IN FAITH

According to Proverbs 9:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”<sup>21</sup> This verse makes it obvious that fear plays a role in the lives of Christians, but to what extent? And how can it be ascertained just how far fear should go in dictating decisions and influencing behaviors? The American Reformed Baptist pastor John MacArthur has discussed this verse, guided by questions like these. MacArthur emphasizes the first half of the verse, stating that “if you do not fear God, you do not have wisdom.”<sup>22</sup> He further states what it means to have

# Christians are not meant to obey God's commands out of trepidation of what may happen if they do not obey him. Instead, with a sense of deep respect for his majesty and goodness, Christians can obey out of trust that he knows what is best.

a fear of the Lord: “to fear God is to know Him as He is and respond accordingly.”<sup>23</sup> But what does the Bible suggest is the correct response? As I have already explored, Abraham's response sought to prevent any divine disapproval because of his understanding of God's character and power. Acting in this kind of fear leads to prudence, wholeness, compassion, and freedom, rather than groveling servitude. Christians are not meant to obey God's commands out of trepidation of what may happen if they do not obey him. Instead, with a sense of deep respect for his majesty and goodness, Christians can obey out of trust that he knows what is best.

The final question remaining rests on the practicality of all of this. Abraham set an example that all Christians should follow—but how can we follow that example? What is needed to develop a healthy fear of God and then to act accordingly? According to Pastor David Lindell of James River Church in Missouri, it is relatively simple. He articulates the difference between Martin Luther's servile fear and filial fear, clearly stating that “as Christians, servile fear is not what sustains us. It's in Christ that we have filial fear. Your fear is not about the judgment of God, but rather a fear of being distant from Him.”<sup>24</sup> This is the differentiating feature between Abraham's story and the stories of Christians today. Through Christ, God's love, compassion, and mercy have been fully revealed. God's implicit nature is still holy, righteous, just, and good, so believers still carry a fear of his judgment and stand in awe of his might. But in Christ, we can live out reverential fear with a heightened sense of joy and love. Through a relationship with Christ, we can achieve a strong trust in God, and act according to that trust, understanding that God has provided and will continue to provide because he will always act for our good. Christ can lessen the fear of distance from God because Christ brings us close to his side through his

sacrifice. With Christ, fear can sustain a healthy faith in God, as well as respect for God, thereby strengthening a relationship with the Creator of the universe. ✝

1. Steven Andreasen, “Fear: The Social Motivator-The Only Thing You Have to Fear Is Everything,” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Scientific Research* 4, no. 2 (April 30, 2016): 13–18.
2. Andrea Scarantino and Ronald de Sousa, “Emotion,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford University: September 25, 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotion/>.
3. Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1 - 9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 3.
4. Isaiah 41:10 (NIV).
5. Biblica Team, “How many different languages has the Bible been translated into?” Biblica, Accessed August 7, 2022, <https://www.biblica.com/resources/bible-faqs/how-many-different-languages-has-the-bible-been-translated-into/>.
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10. Genesis 21 (NIV).
11. Genesis 22 (NIV).
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13. E.P. Sanders, “The Testament of Abraham,” in *Outside the Old Testament*, ed M. de Jonge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 56.
14. JVL Team, “Jewish Holy Scriptures: Canonization,” Jewish Virtual Library, 2004, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/canonization>.
15. To be clear, the Abraham of Genesis is hardly depicted in the text as perfect. There are multiple instances where he acts dishonorably, including lying about his wife's relationship to him and attempting to bypass God's plan for the birth of Isaac; cf. Genesis 16-18, 20 (NIV). In contrast to the Abraham depicted in the Testament of Abraham, however, whose righteousness is almost satirized, the Abraham of Genesis is shown to be ultimately faithful. Later New Testament writers including the author of Hebrews identify him as a person of faith.
16. David Lindell, “How Should We Fear God? Changing How We Think about Fear,” JRC, June 23, 2017, <https://jamesriver.church/blog/how-should-we-fear-god>.
17. Lindell, “How Should We Fear God?”
18. Howard Moltz, “God and Abraham in the Binding of Isaac,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 26, no. 2 (2001): 59–69, <https://doi.org/10.1177/030908920102600203>.
19. 2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23 (NIV).
20. Hebrews 11:8-12 (NIV).
21. Proverbs 9:10 (NIV).
22. John MacArthur, “The Fear of the Lord” Thinking Biblically with John MacArthur, April 1, 2021. <https://thinking-biblically.masters.edu/posts/the-fear-of-the-lord-5-2/>.
23. MacArthur, “The Fear of the Lord.”
24. Lindell, “How Should We Fear God?”



# A PRAYER FOR DARTMOUTH

*This prayer by professor of religion Lucius Waterman appears on a plaque hanging at the entrance of Parkhurst Hall.*

O Lord God Almighty, well-spring of wisdom, master of power, guide of all growth, giver of all gain. We make our prayer to thee, this day, for Dartmouth College. Earnestly entreating thy favour for its people. For its work, and for all its life. Let thy hand be upon its officers of administration to make them strong and wise, and let thy word make known to them the hiding-place of power. Give to its teachers the gift of teaching, and make them to be men right-minded and high-hearted. Give to its students the spirit of vision, and fill them with a just ambition to be strong and well-furnished, and to have understanding of the times in which they live. Save the men of Dartmouth from the allurements of self-indulgence, from the assaults of evil foes, from pride of success, from false ambitions, from hardness, from shallowness, from laziness, from heedlessness, from carelessness of opportunity, and from ingratitude for sacrifices out of which their opportunity has grown. Make, we beseech thee, this society of scholars to be a fountain of true knowledge, a temple of sacred service, a fortress for the defense of things just and right, and fill the Dartmouth spirit with thy spirit, to make it a name and a praise that shall not fail, but stand before thee forever. We ask in the name in which alone is salvation, even through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

— The Reverend Lucius Waterman, D.D.

## NICENE CREED

**We, the editorial board of *The Dartmouth Apologia*, affirm that salvation is given through faith in Jesus, that the Bible is inspired by God, and that we are called to live by the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. We affirm the Nicene Creed, with the understanding that views may differ on baptism and the meaning of the word “catholic.”**

We [I] believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

We [I] believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

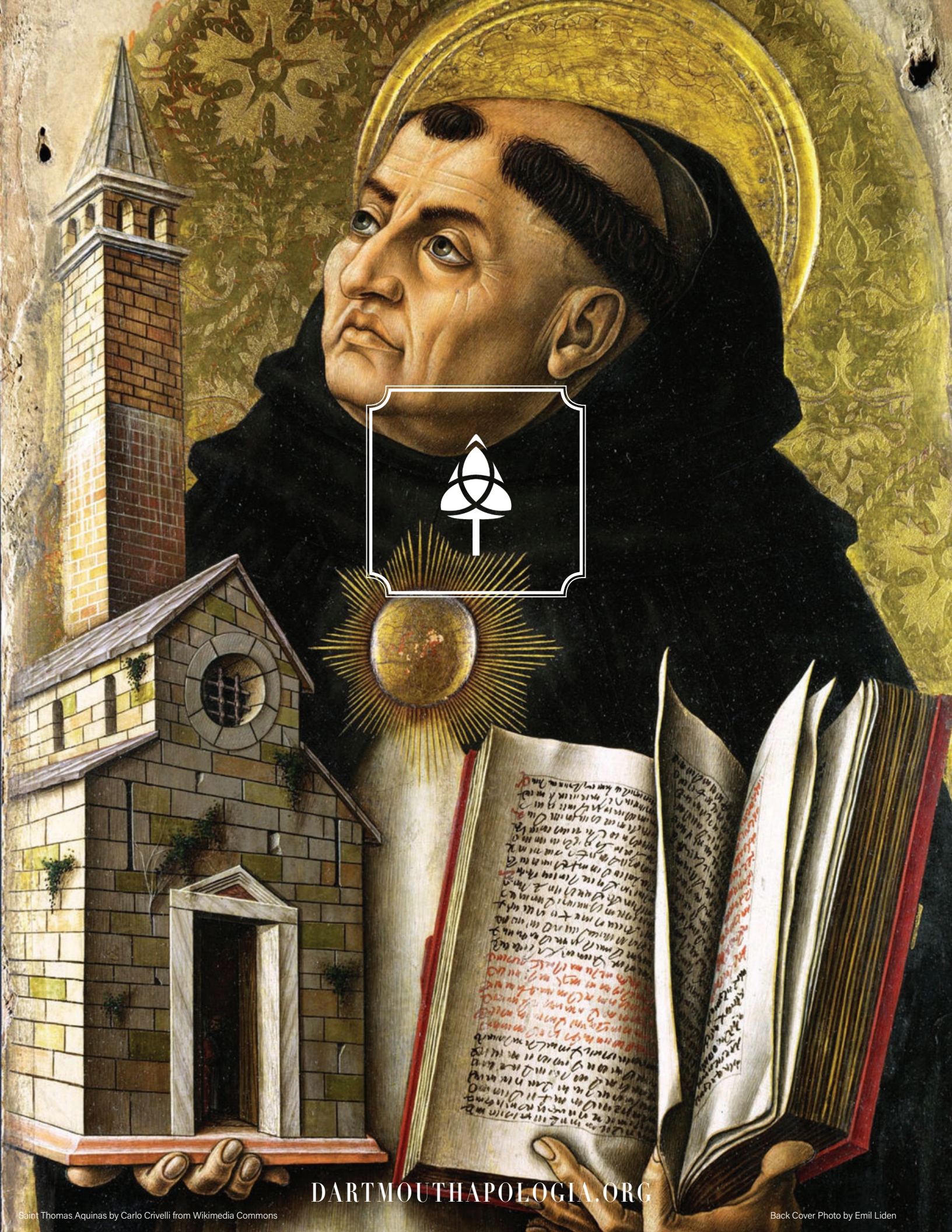
We [I] believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son], who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets

We [I] believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We [I] confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and we [I] look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## GETTING INVOLVED

*The Dartmouth Apologia* exists to articulate Christian perspectives in the academic community. We do this through our biannual publications, lecture series, and weekly reader groups where we read and discuss the works of exemplary apologists such as G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis.

We at *The Dartmouth Apologia* invite people from all intellectual, religious, and spiritual backgrounds to join us in our discussions as we search for truth and authenticity. If you would like to get involved, please feel free to email us at [the.dartmouth.apologia@dartmouth.edu](mailto:the.dartmouth.apologia@dartmouth.edu) or check out our Instagram or Facebook [@dartmouthapologia](https://www.instagram.com/dartmouthapologia). To subscribe to the journal or to check out past issues of the journal, visit our website at [www.dartmouthapologia.org](http://www.dartmouthapologia.org).



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[1 PETER 3:15]