PURGATORY IN CATHOLICISM: AN APPRAISAL OF ITS BELIEF, LOGIC, AND HYPOTHESIS

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Abstract: *Purgatory is a theological framework for categorizing a portion of the afterlife; this makes its legitimacy entirely subjective and apologetic. Most scholars in the domains of philosophy and theology have offered arguments and acknowledged that belief in purgatory is a hypothetical proposition that is not realizable, thus making purgatory a problematic dogma. Specifically, purgatory in Catholicism raises the question of whether or not there is a place in the afterlife for those who die. As a result, from a philosophical and theological basis, this article evaluates purgatory in Catholicism by examining purgatory's beliefs, logic, and hypotheses. The paper used a critico-historical method to look at existing literature and found that the existence or idea of purgatory in Catholicism as a place is based on a range of assumptions and speculations that are based on some logical premises that call for further*

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investigations, and that such religious notions are irreconcilable with Protestantism, on the one hand, and logic and science, on the other hand. It concludes that belief in and arguments for purgatory do not have strong scriptural foundations; hence, they are founded on assumptions whose premises beg the question.

Keywords: *Logic, Hypothesis, Religious Belief, Purgatory, Catholicism*

Introduction

Human belief in God or gods is motivated by intuition or reason; the heart or the head. There has long been a philosophical debate about whether supernatural ideas are irrational or reasonable. Religious belief is the result of a person's deeply felt experience of living in that world, not something that can be compared to other cosmic interpretations (Bloor 2002). The religious belief in purgatory is one such belief. Why is an intermediate stage before heaven necessary? This is a valid and commonsensical theological issue to contemplate on concerning the Catholic understandings of the afterlife. After all, faults are forgiven or not forgiven. However, despite how straightforward this question may seem, Catholic teachings have maintained a complex economy of religious beliefs, including the belief in purgatory.

The traditional Catholic understanding of purgatory is based on the notion that purgatory is a real location. Purgatory's evolution as a religious belief system has been complicated historically, theologically,

and philosophically. Purgatory is a stage of purgation in Christian theology in which souls are either cleansed of venial sins after death or endure the temporal penalty that the sinner is yet to face (Egan, 2012). The belief in an intermediate state, as well as instruction and probation on the other side of the grave has also been preserved and taught by the Anglican Church.

This study provided a philosophical investigation of the logic and hypothesis of religious belief in purgatory, as well as arguments and recognition that believing in purgatory in the context of logic is a hypothetical proposition that is not realizable, thus making it problematic. The study suggested that the issue is not that human beings are prone to engulfing themselves in religious ideas that violate the norms of intellectual honesty and logic, but that human beings are unavoidably split along the same lines if they make the decision not to believe in anything. The study argued that appealing to the evidential relevance of legitimate religious experience is one strategy for a religious believer to resist skeptical and propositional objections to their religious beliefs.

Theoretical Foundation of Religious Belief

When attempting to understand the genesis and evolution of a religious belief, it is necessary to differentiate between the idea's inception and its dispersion or expansion into larger circles. Though there may be some overlap between the elements that contributed to a concept's first existence and those that contributed to its popularity, the analytic distinction must be kept in mind. Many efforts to define religion

have been made in academic literature, and many of these attempts have proven to be ineffective. According to Primmer (2018), religion definitions typically have one of two flaws: they are either too narrow, excluding many of the belief systems that most people would agree are religious, or they are too broad and ambiguous, leading one to believe that just about anything is a religion. According to Ottuh and Idjakpo (2020), belief is a mental condition in which one accepts something as true even though he or she is unsure or unable to verify it. Everyone has his or her own set of views about life and the world they live in.

Belief systems, which may be religious, philosophical, or ideological, are formed by mutually supporting beliefs. When attempting to understand the genesis and evolution of a religious belief, it is necessary to differentiate between the idea's inception and its dispersion or expansion into larger circles. Though there may be some overlap between the elements that contributed to a concept's first existence and those that contributed to its popularity, the analytic distinction must be kept in mind. Intuition or reason, the heart or the mind, are what motivates human belief in God or gods (Forrest, 2012). Philosophers have argued for a long time about whether supernatural beliefs are irrational or not, and sociologists have been saying for more than a hundred years that reason will win out over religion.

The essence of religious belief as stated by an individual is fundamentally misunderstood by the majority of people with various understandings. The importance of asking this issue is critical: where did

religious beliefs originate, and how can people explain why people are so attracted to religious beliefs? In this regard, scholars have examined a variety of genesis theories, one of which is the trance theory (Vernon, 2019).Non-believers, on the other hand, have beliefs about nature, science, ontological beliefs, epistemological beliefs, politics, and ethics, even if they aren't religious.

Various interpretations of the key characteristics of beliefs have been given, but there is no agreement on which is the best. Representationalism has long been the mainstream viewpoint, and it is often connected with mind-body dualism. According to dispositionalism, beliefs are linked to dispositions to act in specific ways (Primmer, 2018; Williams, 1992). This viewpoint is a kind of functionalism in which beliefs are defined in terms of the behaviours they tend to produce. Another topic that has gained prominence in modern philosophy is interpretationism (Primmer, 2018; Williams, 1992). It asserts that an entity's views are in some way contingent on or related to the interpretation of a third party. Viewing it from the perspective of eco-feminism, Ottuh (2020) asserted that many of the faiths linked with the New Age movement, as well as current reinterpretations of Hinduism and Buddhism, are examples of inclusive religions. After World War II, Abraham Maslow's study revealed that Holocaust survivors tended to be people with strong religious views (Argyle, 1997). Humanistic psychology investigated whether religious or spiritual identity is linked to a longer lifespan and improved health.

According to the Belief Replacement Hypothesis (BRH), secular beliefs have psychological functions that are quite similar to religious beliefs (Moreira, 2010; Judisch, 2009). Religious conviction is the product of an individual's profoundly felt experience of living in that world, not something that can be measured against alternative interpretations of the universe. This has forced the subjectification of religious belief to human reason. According to Ottuh and Idjakpo (2020), religious belief, in this sense, should not be seen as a phenomenon that can be compared to other world interpretations; rather, it should be viewed as the outcome of an individual's profoundly felt experience of living in that world.

In theory, according to Ottuh and Idjakpo (2020), religious beliefs are the product of living a life at a certain moment and in a specific setting. This belies a distinct reaction to the world that arises from a deep-seated yearning to make sense of it and act in it (Malkovsky, 2017). Regardless of how individuals come to their religious beliefs, it is important to examine them on a regular basis to ensure that they are consistent, true, and verifiable. The knowledge of a religious philosopher is required in this case. From Socrates to current philosophers and philosophical theologians, the function of the philosopher of religion as a rational examiner of individual beliefs has a long and illustrious history. Speaking from the Sharia experience in Nigeria, Ottuh (2008) argued and reaffirmed that most people in the modern world are unique, and they are getting more power and the rights to understand and run their religious environments.

Hypothesizing Religious Belief

A hypothesis is not the same as a theory. By determining a prediction and applying it as a hypothesis for an experiment, one may generate a hypothesis from a theory. The theory, on the other hand, is a comprehensive collection of concepts that may be utilized to explain a variety of events. Hypotheses are used to test theories, while conclusions are used to establish a theory's validity, but they are not the same thing. In the public discussion, there are numerous incorrect analogies drawn between theory as belief and theory as science (van Elk, Rutjens, van der Pligt, & Van Harreveld, 2016). People who reject these beliefs describe some theories and concepts as "religious," such as the Big Bang and evolutionary theories, in order to deflect people from their relevance. It is odd that individuals arguing for the superiority of religion over science use this line of reasoning: faith has nothing to do with scientific theory, yet it is typically a religion's *kpim* (backbone). There are several hypotheses underlying religion or religious beliefs. Here, three of them are discussed.

According to the uncertainty hypothesis, religion aids individuals in mentally coping with risky or unexpected events. According to Barber (2011), religious belief, on the other hand, is expected to wane as economic prosperity and technological advancements give people more control over their surroundings. On the other hand, religious belief is likely to decline in

economically developed countries with higher existential security, like financial security and better health. These predictions are tested in regression studies of 137 nations that take into account the impacts of Communism and Islam, both of which have an impact on the prevalence of claimed non-belief (Barber, 2011). Furthermore, research has shown that rising economic progress causes people to lose faith in God (Barber, 2011). As a result, it is self-evident that religious belief will wane as existential security improves. This is in line with the hypothesis of uncertainty.

According to the Intuitive Belief Hypothesis, supernatural belief is primarily reliant on intuitive reasoning and diminishes when analytic reasoning is used. This theory has been investigated in a number of studies using a variety of paradigms, including field investigations and laboratory tests (Farias *et al.,* 2017). There is no link between intuitive or analytical thinking and supernatural belief, according to research (Farias *et al.*, 2017). As a result, it is premature to explain believing in God or gods as intuitive to the exclusion of other elements such as socio-cultural upbringing, which are more likely to have a role in the birth and maintenance of supernatural or religious beliefs than a cognitive typology. Intuitive thinking entails quick information processing with minimal conscious thought.

Analytical thinking, on the other hand, is slower, more deliberate, and requires more work (Stanovich & West, 2000). The emphasis of experimental efforts to test this idea has been on analytical reasoning rather than intuition. It has been shown, for example, that highly analytical thinkers have lower rates of

supernatural beliefs than intuitive people. This might be why studies of tribes have shown that they have rational, utilitarian thinking as well as supernatural beliefs and rituals, or why evidence shows that supernatural beliefs can coexist with logical, scientific knowledge.

According to the Religious rationalities describe religious and psychological openness in ways that are consistent with their own but not necessarily with more naturalistic psychological criteria. The inquiry into religious motivation provided the impetus for looking into this issue. An Intrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (IROS) was developed by Allport and Ross (1967) to capture an adaptive religious posture in which people honestly endeavour to embody their beliefs. Instead, the Extrinsic Scale (ES) was designed to evaluate a more maladaptive use of religion as a way to achieve other goals. While correlational studies typically corroborate earlier conceptualizations of these dimensions, the IROS also revealed high associations with conservative religion (Watson, Chen & Morris, 2014). The Quest Scale (QS) has been proposed as a measure of true religious openness, in which religion is defined as an open-ended, responsive dialogue with existential questions raised by life's contradictions and tragedies (Shenhaz, Rand & Greene, 2012).

There are elements in Quest that emphasize uncertainty as a sign of religious openness. Because of this and other features of the QS, it could not be used to assess Muslim religious openness (Dover, Miner, and Dowson, cited in Pennycook, Cheyne, Seli, Koehler & Fugelsang, 2012). They said that openness for Muslims and Hindus necessarily rejects skepticism and operates

within a faith tradition with the goal of discovering religious truth (Ghorbani, Watson, Chen & Silver, 2012). According to these results, favourable correlations between faith and intellect-oriented contemplation show that traditional religions have standard-specific notions of openness that allow adherents to merge faith and intellect (Watson, Chen & Morris 2014). A study of Muslims and Hindus, as well as a study of Bible-believing Christians after religious fundamentalism was controlled for, backs up this claim.

Purgatory in Catholicism

Purgatory is derived from the Latin term "*purgatorium*," which means "to purify" (Le Goff 1986, 112**).** It has come to refer to a wide spectrum of postmortem suffering concepts that do not include eternal damnation. Purgatory proponents might find support in a variety of religious and non-religious traditions. The story (rejected by Protestants as apocryphal) in which Judas Maccabeus made atonement for slain soldiers, for example, promoted the early Christian practice of praying for the dead. Pope Gregory I (590–604) expanded on the idea, describing the purgatorial fire as an extension of the figurative fire of redemptive suffering beyond the tomb.

Purgation is possible for the dead, and they can benefit from acts of intercession by the living (Griffiths 2010). The Benedictine abbey of Cluny created All Souls' Day as a liturgical feast in the early 11th century to foster widespread devotion to the souls in purgatory. Purgatory, or temporal punishment after death, has a long history and is widely documented in early Christian

literature. Dante Alighieri crafted a lyrical synthesis of theology, Ptolemaic cosmology, and moral psychology that depicted the gradual purifying of the human soul's image and resemblance to God (Vanhoutte & McCraw, 2017). Suffrages (intercessory prayers, masses, donations, and fasting for the dead) were at the heart of a complicated system that had a big impact on Western culture. Purgatory was at the centre of this system.

In mediaeval Chinese Buddhism, the traditional Buddhist ideas of rebirth and merit transfer fused with beliefs about ancestor reverence and the pacification of potentially problematic spirits. The Chinese Buddhist afterlife is viewed as an imperial bureaucracy in whom the departed are put through a series of trials, the outcome of which is primarily determined by family members' contributions. The yearly Ghost Festival's popularity demonstrates that societal responsibility for those in "purgatory" is a long-standing concern in China. Purgatory is the name given by the Catholic Church to the after-death purification of "those who die in God's love and friendship, but who are still insufficiently pure" (Pasulka, 2015 p. 201; also see Lancaster-Thomas, 2018). According to Catholic belief, purgatory is a place where souls deliberately endure purification in order to prepare for paradise. The theory is rejected by Eastern Orthodox Christians as an unjustified innovation. According to Tingle (2013), the Popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, have proclaimed that the phrase refers to a state of being rather than a location. The punitive part of modern Roman Catholic teaching has shifted away from hellish imagery.

Although certain Protestant faiths teach the existence of an intermediate state, most Protestant denominations deny the Catholic notion of purgatory. Many Protestant groups, although not all, preach the teaching of *sola scriptura* (through faith alone), which states that salvation is obtained solely through faith. Others, such as Methodists, believe that Christians must strive for purity and good actions throughout their lives. Walls (2012) argued that Protestants may support the Catholic notion of purgatory without violating their theology. Some early church theologians believed in "*apocatastasis*," the concept that, following a corrective purgatorial reformation, all creation would be restored to its original perfect state (Gould, 2016 p. 72). For those who have never heard, this is addressed in a Lutheran work that expresses a similar notion of what may happen to the unevangelized.

The Catholic teaching on purgatory is based on a number of assumptions. The Church solemnly teaches the distinction between mortal sin, which results in the permanent loss of one's soul in hell, and venial sin, which does not result in eternal damnation and is committed by even the righteous in their everyday lives (Daly, 2003). The Church also teaches that the punishment for sin, whether mortal or venial, is not always and inevitably forgiven along with the sin's guilt; so, the offender must pay this punishment either in this life or in the next (purgatory) before entering heaven (Daly, 2003). Regrettably, the Catholic Church has never designated purgatory as a distinct location. The exact nature and duration of purgatorial penalties are unknown, and others, like Catherine of Genoa (1447–1510), depict the purgatorial fire as the fire of God's love.

The authoritative teaching of the First and Second Councils of Lyons, as well as the Council of Florence, all of which expressed the common belief of both the East and the West, clearly demonstrates the existence of purgatory as a state where those dying with such temporal punishment may be cleansed before being admitted to heaven and the direct vision of the divine essence (Denzinger, 2007). Finally, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the revealed nature of purgatory's existence in response to the reformers' denials that it had any validity in Sacred Scripture (Denzinger, 2007). The only certainty is that the punishment due for forgiven crimes is exacted from the soul, as the Church has made no solemn proclamation about the reality of venial sin guilt in purgatory. In addition to establishing the certainty of purgatory's existence, the Church has also declared that the souls imprisoned there can be helped by the prayers and other good works of the faithful on earth. The Church has not officially decided the manner in which these faithful members' prayers and good works are applied to the souls in purgatory.

Purgatory: A Theoretical Explanation

According to Dante's dualism, purgatory is a penitential journey to God guided by Christian principles (Armour, 2000).For most of the poem's lifetime, purgatory has been viewed generally in this sense. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, a competing perspective evolved (Corbett, 2019). Many academics have suggested that Purgatory depicts a secular path directed by philosophical ideas to temporal bliss, influenced by Dante's dualistic conception of man's two ethical aims (one temporal and

one eternal). As a result, Dante's Purgatory's ethical structure is essentially Christian. Purgatory is governed by a new law of the beatitudes that turns natural ethics on its head. Purgatory's spirits are specifically guided away from secular, this-worldly goods and desires (Scott, 2004). Instead, the spirits are urged to accept the deeper demands of Christ's commandment, which may include acts like severe poverty or fasting which go beyond the virtuous meaning of philosophical guidelines.

The virtuous pagans' theologically original limbo signifies the path, via philosophical teaching, to moral and intellectual happiness in this life. On the other hand, purgatory represents the spiritual road to eternal life (*beatitudo vitae aeternae*) (Newhauser, 2012). The immediate Christian setting of Dante's Purgatory picture supports this interpretation. This perspective is supported by the fact that Dante's Purgatory's moral order is distinctly Christian and outside the scope of intellectual ideas. This is because Dante's picture of Purgatory and an interpretation of its moral order both refute a philosophical view of the place, but they also give strong reasons to keep the Christian ethical interpretation of the place.

According to Hick's (1981) "soul-making" theodicy, the role assigned to what might be referred to as the "post-mortem intermediate state" is not primarily to allow a person to continue and eventually complete his or her unique journey of spiritual, intellectual, and moral development (p. 39; cf. Cheetham, 2003; Bounds, 2010). Specific insights into Hick's soul-forming understanding of the human person's sanctification

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journey and the role of the intermediate state, particularly those emphasizing the importance of a person's communal, environmental, and relational circumstances, can help to inform the doctrine of purgatory by demonstrating their compatibility with the traditional concept of sin's double effect and contextualizing them within the Catholic tradition to enable Hick's understanding of purgatory.

As a result, Hick's soul-forming insights can assist it in transcending its history as a response to, and possibly perpetuation of, a person's fear of death and judgement by a harsh and justice-oriented God to become something a person can look forward to as the next positive step on his or her spiritual journey toward a compassionate and merciful God of love (Thiel, 2008; Walls, 2012). So, these ideas might help place purgatory theology within the modern Catholic hope of the end of the world.

The Purgatorial Logic and Hypothesis

I will make the case for those who believe in purgatory, which can be said in this way:

Premise 1: In heaven, there will be neither sin nor attachment to sin.

Premise 2: At the conclusion of this life, believers are still sinning and attached to sin.

Premise 3: After death, there is a place where we (the "believers") shall be cleansed of our sins.

Premise 4: After death, sinner-believers have a chance to be saved and go to heaven.

Premise 5: As a result, between death and heavenly glory, sinner-believers (or "the saved") must be cleansed of sin and their attachment to sin.

Here is a logical case for or against the existence or nonexistence of purgatory. It could be said this way:

Speculation 1: If p only contains essential features that are negative, it is purgatory-like.

Speculation 2: If x is the essence of S, then p must have every characteristic of T if x entails T.

Speculation 3: If the essence of p is not always shown, then p must not exist.

Axiom 1: A property's negation is negative if it is not positive.

Axiom 2: When you have a negative property, you have a negative property for everything that goes with it.

Axiom 3: Being purgatory-like is a negation.

Axiom 4: A property is inherently negative if it is negative.

Axiom 5: Because of this, a place like purgatory is not necessary (it is not real).

Axiom 6: If any attribute h is negative, then h is not always positive (not real).

Theorem 1: If a property is negative, it is inconsistent, which means that it cannot be exhibited.

Theorem 2: The attribute of being purgatory-like is inconsistent.

Theorem 3: If anything is not purgatory-like, then its purgatory-like quality is not an essential part of that item.

Theorem 4: Because of this, it follows that the property of being like purgatory is not shown.

As a result of the above theorems based on the given axioms, an appropriately objective understanding of qualities, and the acceptability of the underlying logic, the critique of the argument is compelled to focus on the axioms, or assumptions, that are necessary to produce the proof. However, in this case, universal conceptions of property may be abandoned in favour of a sparse conception in which just a few predicates express such attributes. If it is acknowledged that the function of Axioms 1, 2, 4, and 6 is simply to confine the idea of negative property in the correct way, or if it is assumed that Axiom 1 states the truth about negative properties, then proponents of the "proof" have strong cause to be dubious about Axioms 3 and 5. As a result, there are at least some grounds to believe that the feature of being purgatory-like is negative and should be dependent on whether or not there is a purgatory-like place, as discussed above.

Arguments of a theological and intellectual character were employed; initially, they tended to either refute or reinforce the religious belief in purgatory. Such arguments were the logical outcome of an intellectual milieu so deeply saturated with religious ideas that, in addition, it valued humanistic critique of the beliefs' historical-philological origins. The study of Catholicism's assumptions has already allowed several authors to show the tight relationship between religious beliefs and philosophy (Pasulka, 2015; Capel, 1985). Despite the seeming theological consistency, their findings are less valid for most Catholic nations; there are still significant variances amongst well-differentiated thinking traditions. Those affiliated with religious orders, for example, may hold opposing viewpoints. Theology was developed by the Augustinians, Franciscans, and Capuchins based on Saint Augustine and thus on the Platonic root; on the other hand, the Dominicans have been building their theology with Aristotelian principles since the 13th century (Plantinga, 2000). The Jesuits have held eclectic and somewhat open views on new intellectual ideas, such as Cartesianism, since the 16th century (Capel, 1985).

Catholic philosophers and scientists steeped in the Platonic tradition may readily associate the Demiurge of Timeo with God as Creator, who gives shape to the cosmos according to a predetermined design, as they have done since the 12th century (Willard & Cingl, 2017). Greater challenges arose from the Aristotelian tradition, since the Christian understanding of the created world made it impossible to embrace the idea of the world's eternal nature (Capel, 1985; Vanhoutte & McCraw, 2017). God's fury over human

transgressions, as well as God's intention to carry out an example punishment that would affect not just people but also the world itself, would have been the source of that disparity.

According to Le Goff (1986), the 12th century saw the birth of purgatory, which arose as a natural development of certain currents of thought that had been flowing for centuries, and the 13th century saw its rationalization, purging it of its offensive popular trappings and leading to its definition as the Church's doctrine by a council in 1274. Walls (2012) does not base his belief in purgatory on Scripture, the Church's Mothers and Fathers, or the Catholic Church's *magisterium* (doctrinal authority). Rather, his primary point is that it makes sense, to borrow a word he frequently employs. According to Walls (2012), purgatory has logic, as evidenced by the title of his book. He examines purgatory's contrast between the satisfaction and sanctification models. According to the satisfaction model, purgatory's punishment is meant to appease God's justice.

Walls (2012) suggests that purgatory in the sanctification model may be regarded as a routine to reclaim one's spiritual health and get back into moral condition (Walls, 2012). The doctrine of purgatory has swung between the poles of satisfaction and sanctification in Catholicism, sometimes combining both elements somewhere in the middle. People think that Protestants can agree with the sanctification model without contradicting their beliefs. They believe that cleaning away the remnants of sin makes more sense

than an instantaneous cleansing at death, and that cleaning away the sin makes sense.

Some Catholic saints and theologians have had differing views on purgatory from those held by the Catholic Church, reflecting or contributing to the common picture of purgatory, which includes beliefs of cleansing by physical fire, in a specific location, and for a specific amount of time. Recent Catholic purgatory thought often keeps the basics of the basic concept while also proposing second-hand speculative interpretations of these aspects (Griffiths, 2010). Ratzinger (2007) says that, contrary to what Tertullian thought about purgatory, it is not some kind of extraterrestrial concentration camp where people are punished for no reason.

Rather, it is an inwardly essential metamorphosis by which a person becomes capable of Christ, capable of God, and therefore capable of oneness with the entire communion of saints (Hendricks, 2018). The theories and popular imaginings that were widespread in the Latin Church, especially in late mediaeval times, have not always been accepted by the eastern Catholic Churches, of which there are twenty-three in full communion with the Pope (Ratzinger, 2007). Some people have outright rejected the conventional image of purgatory, which includes conceptions of punishment by fire in a specific location. If souls leave this life in faith and charity but are marred by some defilement, whether minor or major, that they have repented of but have not yet borne the fruits of repentance, it is believed that the prayers of the living will help them.

But the Eastern Orthodox Church representatives at the Council of Florence argued against these notions while declaring that they do believe that there is a cleansing after death of the souls of the saved and that this is assisted by the prayers of the living ("First Speech by Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus on Purifying Fire," 2009). That council's definition of purgatory did not include other ideas that the Orthodox disagreed with. They only talked about the parts of their religion that they said were also part of their religion.

Although axioms are not proven, they can be regarded as self-evident and used as a starting point for drawing conclusions. So one might question why religious belief (faith) is just an axiom on which purgatory is built, effectively comparing purgatory with some illogical logical ideas. In an indirect manner, reality is one item that may be utilized to test axioms. Something that exists just in the mind and in the mind's eye may or may not exist in reality. In religion, like in mathematics and science, one establishes certain assumptions, which he or she then applies to their logical conclusions, determining whether or not the result is rational.

If this leads to absurdity, the individual must return to their assumptions and examine what may have been a mistake. People can compare what they imagine a world to be like if it were created by a god to reality, which would constitute a test for God or God's "activities" without having to actually test God. A test against reality will never establish that the axioms are correct, but it will increase one's trust in the assumptions if one has a hypothesis that is based on

them. When a theory is shown to be counter to observation, the axioms on which the theory is built must be changed, as in the instance of the religious belief in purgatory. This is where a basic religious belief differs greatly from a theory or hypothesis. It is possible to retain some views for the rest of one's life without ever testing them, yet science can only exist and be helpful if it is tested. A person does not have to believe in purgatory to be religious. Instead, it is a theological framework for explaining a part of the afterlife, and its truthfulness is completely objective, so it doesn't matter if you believe in it or not.

Towards a Synthesis

To solve some types of doctrinal or theological concerns, Christian intellectuals have always turned to philosophical reasoning. The previously established principles of Christian orthodoxy offer a normative framework within which this philosophical thought happens for Christian thinkers. They kept trying to address such issues using the greatest philosophy of the day, ranging from Aristotelianism to analytic metaphysics (Zachhuber, 2020). Christian philosophers who consider Christian beliefs intellectually usually do so within the conceptual framework given by what they consider authoritative Christian orthodoxy, as in the case of the religious belief in purgatory (Mosser, 2021). An orthodox Christian thinker, for example, would never claim that there is no God or that God is not triune. Because of the philosopher's own orthodox Christian beliefs, these theoretical possibilities are ruled out.

A common notion in popular culture is that Christianity necessitates a severe clash between religion and philosophy (Timpe & Hereth 2019, 24). This contrast between "revealed truths" and "facts of reason" suggests that not all revealed truths are also truths of reason (Torrance, 2019). While some historically significant Christian philosophers seem to support dogmatic conflict, deeper examination reveals that they do not. Tertullian (cited in Roberts & Donaldson, 1968) criticizes philosophy's impact on Christianity, even claiming that philosophy is the source of all heresies. According to Brown (1969), Augustine's decision to completely accept the Catholic version of Christianity results in a real synthesis of theology and philosophy. Augustine had finally discovered the illusive truth he had been searching for (see Augustine, 2003).

Brown (1969) proposes Origen, the archetypal Eastern Church Father, as a paradigm for how this sort of integration may take place. For Origen, Greek philosophy was a seedling that grew into a tree under the tutelage of none other than Christ himself (Sheed, 2006). As indicated from the beginning of this research, the goal is not to establish or deny the "truth" of any purgatorial ideology, but rather to investigate its speculative properties and reality. In this sense, its objective is not to establish the truth of the purgatory dogma. During the earliest centuries of the church, several of the church's finest theologians disputed and studied the early development and evolution of the purgatorial concept. What is obvious from these works is that early church theologians believed in and speculated about a third place, separate from heaven and hell,

where the human soul dwelt, though momentarily, until ultimate judgement (Mosser, 2021).

Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus (160–225), the first church priest to proclaim a specific belief in a purgatorial condition after death, believed in the immortality of the soul and declared that the soul is constantly in motion after the death of the body (Le Goff, 1986). Of course, in the absence of free will, God might deterministically arrange things such that a comparable process happens. This raises the issue of why God does not just decide people's choices and behaviours in order for them to become morally flawless, as well as if "determined virtue" is not a contradiction in words. These are contentious issues, as is the notion that humans have libertarian freedom and need it to be moral actors. The presence of libertarian liberty is a Wallonian purgatory premise.

Another notion is that those who are flawed are not allowed to enter paradise. If there is a purgatory for purification, there will be enough people to populate it. One will find little information on purgatorial theology in the current Catechism of the Catholic Church. In fact, these official church teachings only provide three brief reasons to explain the church's position on purgatory. This includes: (1) there will be some type of purification of the soul after death through a cleansing by fire; (2) the soul will experience some discomfort as a result of this purification; and (3) God allows those who are still alive to assist those souls being purified through their actions. It is rare to discover scriptural proof as unambiguous as that found in the book of the Second Maccabees. What can be unearthed, however, are

remarks that may help us comprehend how the early church developed its purgatorial teaching.

The Gospel of St. Matthew (12:32) is a good place to start because it contains the implication that some sins are forgiven after death. From this one line of scripture, it is easy to conclude that some types of sins may be forgiven in the afterlife but not in purgatory. Christ said, "Amen, I say to you, thou shalt not leave from there until thou hast paid the last penny." He was referring to purgatory. The Gospel of Saint Luke provides more evidence for the belief in an afterlife experience that is neither heaven nor hell. This was not an uncomfortable situation; this spot in Abraham's bosom was: "the just were comforted in hell in the bosom of Abraham" (Turner cited in Mosser, 2021). Abraham's bosom was not thought to be a place where sins were purified; rather, it was thought to be a place of waiting.

This passage reveals a belief in a type of afterlife that included a third place, one that was neither for the saved nor for the damned. Other biblical indicators include Matthew 12:40 (just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and nights), Acts 2:31 (Jesus was not abandoned in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption), Romans 10:7 (who will descend into the abyss to bring Christ back from the dead?), Ephesians 4:10 (and if he ascended, what does this mean? Purgatory is nevertheless considered unbiblical, a rejection of the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, a post-mortem form of salvation by works, and therefore entirely out of place in Christian

theology, even with the aforementioned verses (Lougheed, 2018). Such writings do not need a purgatorial interpretation, although they have encouraged purgatory proponents to do so. In their interpretation of scripture, theologians have said that there should be a third place after death that isn't either heaven or hell, but that is not the intermediate paradise of comfort that comes to mind when you think of Abraham's bosom, either.

Conclusion

When something is accepted as true despite skepticism or the inability to verify it, it is said to be in a state of belief. Religious and secular ideas both serve comparable psychological purposes. Religious belief is not something that can be compared to other cosmic interpretations; rather, it is the product of a person's profoundly felt experience of living in that cosmos. In Christian theology, purgatory is a stage where souls either undergo temporal punishment for unadmitted crimes or are cleansed of venial sins after death. Purgatory has never been officially recognized by the Catholic Church as a distinct geographical area; however, Apocatastasis, the notion that all creation will be returned to its original, perfect state after a purgatorial reformation, was held by certain early church theorists. The Church has declared that the faithful on earth may assist the souls imprisoned there by praying and doing good works. According to some academics, purgatory symbolizes a secular path toward temporal happiness led by philosophical ideas. Here, it is demonstrated that both the error of a philosophical

analysis of the subject and the accuracy of the traditional Christian ethical perspective are at variance.

According to the Church, through their prayers and other good deeds, the faithful on earth may aid the souls who are imprisoned there. Some scholars believe that purgatory is a secular road to temporal pleasure guided by intellectual principles. Rereading the text reveals the flaws in both the conventional Christian ethical viewpoint and the intellectual examination of the issue. Purgatory, therefore, is a conceptual framework for defining a portion of the afterlife, not a religious idea that one should believe in or not. It is a "third world," different from heaven and hell, which were thought to exist by early church thinkers. This raises the issue of why God does not just predetermine people's decisions and actions so that they might develop moral perfection. Thus, the belief in and arguments for purgatory do not have strong scriptural foundations; hence, they are founded on assumptions and propositions whose premises beg the question.

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