CrossMark

Religious Studies (2017) **53**, 217–237 © Cambridge University Press 2016
doi:10.1017/S0034412516000056

Atoning in purgatory

JOSHUA C. THUROW

Department of Philosophy and Classics, University of Texas at San Antonio, One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, TX, 78249, USA
e-mail: joshua.thurow@utsa.edu

Abstract: **This article develops a new argument – The Argument from Atonement – that commonplace Christian assumptions about heaven imply the existence of purgatory. According to this argument, many Christians will die with residual moral guilt due to possessing unfulfilled moral debts towards fellow non-divine humans. Some of these debts cannot be fulfilled immediately after death and are not completely fulfilled or cancelled by Jesus's atoning work. Christians with such debts are fit neither for heaven nor for hell and thus must occupy purgatory until their moral debts are fulfilled.**

So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

Matt. 5:23-24

For those transgressions that are between a person and God, Yom Kippur atones, but for those transgressions that are between man and his fellow man, Yom Kippur does not provide atonement until he pacifies his fellow man.

m. Yoma 8.9

Introduction

According to various religions, after death we will all travel to an afterlife home for which we are fit. Many Christians, for example, have believed that some humans are fit for dwelling eternally with God in heaven, while other humans are fit for dwelling eternally in hell. Furthermore, the nature of one of the homes may logically imply – given additional assumptions – that another home exists. For example, some Christians believe that humans are only given their life on earth to determine their eternal destiny, that nobody is annihilated

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

after death, and that some will die outside communion with God. Given these assumptions, the existence of heaven – which is a home only for those who die in communion with God – implies that there must be a home for those who die outside communion with God. That latter home can be called hell.

In this article I will argue that commonplace Christian assumptions about the nature of heaven imply that there is a third afterlife home, distinct from heaven and hell – purgatory. Arguments of this sort already exist in the literature (Barnard (2007), Brown (1985), Walls (2012)), but the argument I will offer is distinctive in that it proceeds from the nature of atonement. I shall argue, in short, that many humans – including some who are destined for heaven – will die without having fully atoned to the human victims of some of their wrong actions. Christians of course believe that Jesus atones for human sin against God; but wrongdoers ought to atone to their human victims as well as their divine victim. Thus, many people destined for heaven will possess unresolved moral guilt at their death. Heaven, on the Christian view, is no place for people with unresolved moral guilt. Any people who, despite being destined for heaven, possess unresolved moral guilt at their death must pass through purgatory before taking their place in heaven.

If my argument succeeds, Christians are committed to believing in purgatory – a place where humans who are destined but not yet fit for heaven must dwell due to unresolved moral guilt. While in purgatory, their guilt must be resolved before they can ascend to their final home – heaven. Although my argument is directed specifically to Christians, it will also apply to any religion that thinks of heaven as a place that is only fit for those who lack unresolved moral guilt.

Holiness and being fit for heaven

We don't know much about what heaven will be like, if heaven exists. But one thing we do know, if we are following the Christian tradition, is that it will be a place of holiness.[1] God lives in heaven and is completely holy. And God in his holiness will not reside with people who are not holy, so all of his followers dwelling with him in heaven will also be holy. To be holy, one must be free of any uncleanliness or stain due to sin. The book of Revelation writes about the New Jerusalem – which Christians typically understand to be a vision of God's heavenly kingdom – that 'nothing unclean will enter it' (Rev. 21:27). The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) references this verse when it says that the heavenly city 'will not be wounded any longer by sins, stains, self-love, that destroy or wound the earthly community' (CCC 1045). Although the Catechism doesn't speak for all Christians, this quote expresses a view about heaven that is widespread amongst Christians.[2] As Gregory of Nyssa writes, 'both common sense and the teaching of Scripture indicate that man cannot enter the divine fellowship unless he has entirely washed away all stains of sin' (Gregory of Nyssa (1954), 317–318).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In short, nothing that dwells in heaven will be unclean or stained with sin. The concepts 'being unclean' and 'being stained with sin' are rooted in purity concepts from the Hebrew scriptures. In the Hebrew scriptures, instances of moral wrongdoing lead to a state of moral impurity or uncleanliness (Klawans (2006), 55). This state persists until the wrong is resolved in some way, usually involving sacrifice. Let's say that *moral guilt* is an objective status a person acquires in virtue of having wronged someone that persists until the wrong is somehow resolved (at which point it disappears).[3] According to the Hebrew scriptures, then, one is unclean or stained with sin if one bears moral guilt. Since, on the Christian view, heaven is free of any uncleanliness or moral stain, nothing that dwells in heaven will bear any moral guilt.

So, it would seem that if heaven exists as Christians conceive of it, then the following is true:

(No Guilt) Nothing that dwells in heaven bears any moral guilt.

But, of course, many of us humans – guilty of various wrongs – hope to get to heaven. We are morally impure, hoping to become morally pure so that we can enter heaven. According to the Hebrew scriptures we can only make this transition to moral purity through punishment or atonement (Klawans (2006), 55). Christians believe that Jesus has offered adequate atonement on our behalf for our sins against God. By accepting this act of atonement through confession of sins, repentance, and faith in Jesus (which beyond mere belief that Jesus offered atonement for us, includes trust in Jesus as one's Lord), one's sins are forgiven and one's moral guilt for sinning against God is eliminated. Let's call a person who has accepted Jesus' act of atonement in this way a 'true believer'.[4]

True believers aren't automatically fit for heaven. That is, true believers don't, simply in virtue of being true believers, meet a set of sufficient conditions for entrance into heaven upon being given an opportunity to enter heaven. Christians will insist that a person must also be sanctified before she is fit to enter heaven because even if her sins are forgiven she will still have sinful inclinations and vices. We can think of sanctification as a process in which one undergoes moral purification, resulting in the elimination of bad moral characteristics such as vices, sinful inclinations, and any residual moral guilt.

Some, including most notably Jerry Walls, have argued that purgatory exists on the grounds that most true believers will need to spend some time in a post-mortem state undergoing sanctification. And this state is purgatory. They argue that God couldn't, or wouldn't, in Judisch's (2009, 170) colourful description, simply zap unsanctified true believers with his sanctification ray, instantly sanctifying them, because doing so would rupture true believers' personal integrity in possibly three ways. First, someone could not survive such a drastic rapid change in personality. The resulting person wouldn't be sufficiently psychologically continuous with the unsanctified true believer, and so would be a numerically different person. Second, the instantly sanctified true believer couldn't

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

identify with her sanctified self. She might doubt whether she is the same person, and she also wouldn't feel that her new character really was her character because she won't have formed that character over time, adopting it as she grew. Third, as Walls writes, 'God desires our free cooperation in his relationship with us, so he will respect that reality and work with us in such a way that we freely endorse each aspect and step of our moral and spiritual transformation' (2012, 115).[5]

My argument for purgatory differs from these.

The Argument from Atonement

I shall not argue that personal integrity requires sanctification to occur over an extended period. Rather, I shall argue that, at their death, many true believers have unresolved moral debts to (non-divine)[6] humans they have wronged. Because they have unresolved moral debts, they bear moral guilt and are thus neither fit for heaven nor fully sanctified. They must dwell in purgatory until they resolve their moral guilt by atoning to their human victims, after which they may move on to heaven. This argument, which we will shortly unpack, I call 'The Argument from Atonement'.

My argument resembles Kenneth Einar Himma's (2010) Problem of Unresolved Wrongdoing. We both argue, in somewhat similar ways, that at their death many true believers have unresolved moral debts to humans. However, we draw different conclusions. Himma concludes that many of these true believers must suffer punishment to resolve their moral debt. My argument does not have this implication. Himma, differently from my argument, does not argue for purgatory; he simply doesn't speculate about where those who die with unresolved moral debts are to be punished in the afterlife. My argument also makes somewhat different assumptions (which I unpack in subsequent discussion, especially in note 8) about the relationship between forgiveness and moral debt.

The Argument from Atonement begins by observing that when one person wrongs another, the offender thereby acquires an obligation towards the victim to 'right the wrong' or 'undo the wrong'. We can call this obligation a 'moral debt', although we should be careful not to take the underlying economic metaphor too seriously. I don't want to import any assumptions that fulfilling a moral debt is like paying down a financial debt. As I am using the term, a moral debt just is, by definition, an obligation that one has incurred towards a person simply in virtue of having wronged that person.[7] So, for example, a fatigued parent just home from work who harshly reprimands his child for leaving some toys on the floor – despite the fact that the child so rarely does this – has wronged his child. The parent has an obligation somehow to 'right the wrong'; in my terms, the parent has a moral debt to his child.

Moral debts to 'right a wrong' are fulfilled through atonement. There are many ways to atone for wrongdoing, including confession, apology, genuine expression of sorrow, explanation of why one acted as one did, repentance, restitution,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reparation, acts of service, gift-giving, efforts at moral improvement, and submission to punishment.[8] However one atones, one must both address the past wrongs done to the victim and address one's own future character and behaviour. To atone adequately for his actions, a wrongdoer must rectify what was done and separate himself from his wrong action – thus addressing past wrongs – and commit to and provide assurances to the victim that he will not wrong the victim in this way again – thus addressing future character and behaviour (Radzik (2009), 85; Stump (2003), 430, 454; and Stump (2012), 131–132). A variety of combinations of actions from the above list can together adequately address both past wrongs and future character and behaviour. Of course, what one should do to atone depends upon the severity of the wrong done. The fatigued parent who harshly reprimanded his child hasn't severely wronged his child. In many such cases, he could atone simply by sincerely apologizing to his child and promising to respond more appropriately in the future. More severe wrongs would of course require more than apologies and promises of better behaviour.

Unfulfilled moral debts produce moral guilt. If one does not atone to the victim of one's wrong actions, then one continues to bear moral guilt by failing to fulfil one's duty towards the victim to fulfil one's moral debt. As long as one continues to fail to fulfil the duty to fulfil one's moral debts, one remains morally guilty for having failed to fulfil a duty.

Some true believers will have unfulfilled moral debts to humans at their death. Many true believers will have wronged people throughout their life and yet failed to atone adequately to the victims for those wrongs. It's easy to think of examples. Jill told terrible lies about a co-worker and, despite feeling sorrow for having done so, couldn't, up until her death, bring herself even to apologize to her co-worker. Steve did the same thing, but after a while he simply forgot about wronging his co-worker. Elizabeth, in anger, rashly fired an employee for allegedly spending too much time surfing the web when he should have been working. In fact, the employee was innocent of this charge. But Elizabeth didn't even apologize or help the employee to find a new job; she quickly forgot about it and moved on to other matters. While in his youth, Derek got away with murder. Later in life, he became a true believer and regretted having murdered. But he feared prison and so up until his death neither turned himself in nor atoned to the family of his victim. Jill, Steve, Elizabeth, and Derek are all true believers and yet they didn't adequately atone to their victims for the wrongs done to the victims. These are hypothetical examples, of course, but they're also *realistic*. Surely many true believers will find themselves, at their death, in situations like these four people.

What must such people do to adequately atone to their human victims? Himma argues that many people's moral debts will be fulfilled only if they undergo retributive punishment (Himma (2010), 408, 413). I have granted that submission to punishment can be a means to atone, but I don't want to assume that submission to punishment is necessary to adequately atone for some wrongdoings. People can

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

atone in many ways, and perhaps there is a way for any true believing wrongdoer to atone to their human victims while avoiding punishment. However, the examples of Jill, Steve, Elizabeth, and Derek make it highly plausible that many true believers will die with moral debts that are too serious to be resolved simply through repentance and moral transformation. Extensive, heartfelt apology and repentance manifested in action, restitution or reparation of some kind, acts of service, or submission to punishment are needed to resolve these serious moral debts. These things cannot be done immediately after death,[9] in an instant, unlike repentance or moral transformation (we could be transformed by a zap from God's sanctification ray).[10]

A question immediately arises: but these people are all true believers, so they trust in Jesus who has offered atonement for their sins. And the wrongs they've committed against their fellow non-divine humans are sins, so haven't these wrongs already been atoned for? I shall come back to this important question throughout the article because different interpretations of this question will dog my argument in different ways. One way of interpreting the question has it asserting the following: if Jesus atones for human sin, then all human moral debt is thereby eliminated. If this assertion is true, then true believers cannot have unfulfilled moral debt at their death, contrary to what I have argued. However, this assertion, I will now argue, is false.

An action can wrong many different people at the same time, thus charging the wrongdoer with moral debts to several different people. And one can fulfil one's moral debt to one person without fulfilling one's moral debt to another person. Imagine that Eve is babysitting for a friend's child and Eve carelessly allows the child to play with a knife. The child cuts herself with the knife. Because she's angry with herself, Eve snaps at the child and then proceeds to bandage her up. Later, Eve explains to the child's parents what happened, profusely apologizes, refuses to accept babysitting money, and promises to be more attentive in the future. Indeed, Eve shows her commitment to attentiveness by doing some extra services for the parents. Suppose the parents accept these acts as adequate atonement. Eve has atoned to the parents for wronging them by not caring adequately for the child, but Eve hasn't atoned to the child for wronging her by not caring adequately for her. Eve still hasn't apologized to the child and explained to her that it was not her fault.

When humans wrong each other they wrong at least two people: their (non-divine) human victim and God. The two passages quoted at the beginning of the article acknowledge as much. The passage from Mishnah Yoma explicitly acknowledges that there are transgressions between a person and God and transgressions between (non-divine) persons. The passage from Matthew makes the same point, although less explicitly. It grants that humans wrong each other and should be reconciled, and it also assumes the practice of making offerings at the altar, many of which are given because of sin against God in order to reconcile the sinner with God.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

When one wrongs both God and a human victim, one thereby obtains moral debts to both God and one's human victim. There are two different ways to understand how Jesus' atonement relates to these two moral debts. First, it could be that Jesus atones for human sin against God, thereby eliminating human moral debt to God. But it does not follow that human moral debt to fellow humans is thereby paid. Indeed, as we've seen, there's good reason to think that many humans will not have paid all such debt by the time of their death. Second, it could be that Jesus atones for human sin in that Jesus does something humans couldn't do that brings them on the path to full reconciliation with God. But full reconciliation – and full elimination of moral debt to God – won't happen until all of one's moral debts to one's fellow (non-divine) humans are fulfilled. (A Christian appropriation of Mishnah Yoma 8.9 would suggest this understanding.)[11] But the fact that Jesus' atonement is necessary to put people on a path to full reconciliation with God does not entail that human moral debt to non-divine humans is thereby resolved.

We've been wrestling with a challenge to my argument – a challenge based on the assertion that if Jesus atones for human sin, then all human moral debt is thereby eliminated. We can now see that this assertion is false. On both of the above understandings of how Jesus' atonement relates to moral debt, the fact that Jesus atones for human sin does not thereby imply that all human moral debt is eliminated because his atonement does not logically imply that human moral debt to non-divine humans is resolved. It is important to keep in mind that on both understandings Jesus' atonement is necessary for resolving human moral debt. Furthermore, both views can add that Jesus' atoning work helps humans to atone to their fellow humans; indeed, the grace true believers receive may well, as long as they are open to being guided by that grace, fully enable them to atone to their fellow humans.

So, some true believers, at their death, will have unfulfilled moral debt to other humans, and thus will have moral guilt. (No Guilt) says that nothing that dwells in heaven bears any moral guilt. So, these true believers cannot dwell in heaven immediately after their death. They must occupy some other afterlife state. But, they cannot dwell in hell because hell is a place for those who have rejected God. Furthermore, God has promised true believers a place in heaven.[12] So, these true believers must dwell in a place distinct from heaven and hell where they can pay off their residual moral debts to their fellow humans. Paying off such debts is part of what they need to do to become sanctified and morally pure. And an afterlife state involving 'the final purification of the elect' (CCC 1031) is defined as purgatory, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church – a doctrinal summary from the Christian church most firmly committed to purgatory. Thus, purgatory exists.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

We can summarize the preceding argument as follows:

The Argument from Atonement ('AA' for short)

1. One who wrongs another person incurs a moral debt to the victim.
2. Some true believers die without having fulfilled all their moral debts to their (non-divine) human victims.
3. If one does not fulfil one's moral debt to another person, one bears moral guilt.
4. (No Guilt) Nothing that dwells in heaven bears any moral guilt.
5. Some true believers are not fit for heaven upon their death due to having unfulfilled moral debts (from 1–4).
6. Some of these true believers have moral debt that cannot be instantaneously fulfilled immediately following death.
7. Such people are not fit for hell. God has promised true believers a place in heaven.
8. There is a third state of afterlife where people who have not fulfilled their outstanding moral debts to other people can fulfil those debts before entering into heaven (from 5–7).
9. A third state of afterlife where people fulfil outstanding moral debts before entering into heaven *is* purgatory. Therefore,
10. Purgatory exists (from 8, 9).

Although this argument implies that purgatory exists and that in it people can fulfil their outstanding moral debts, the argument doesn't say *what* people have to do to fulfil those moral debts. What people need to do depends on their moral debts. I mentioned earlier that there are a variety of things people might do to atone for their wrongs, including confession, repentance, moral transformation, apology, restitution, and submission to punishment (and combinations thereof). The argument *does* imply that some true believers will have moral debt that cannot be fulfilled immediately following their death; their debts are too serious to be atoned for in ways that can be done nearly instantaneously after death. I argued for that claim earlier with my examples of Jill, Steve, Elizabeth, and Derek. So, in purgatory these true believers will need to do something that cannot be done instantaneously. Any of the above-mentioned acts of atonement could be done in purgatory. Anything that involves only a change in oneself, perhaps with God's help, plainly could be done in purgatory; this would include repentance and moral transformation. God could offer a way for those in purgatory to communicate with their victims, thus allowing for confession and apology. Plainly punishment is possible in purgatory; Dante's depiction of purgatory establishes at least this. Restitution could be possible as well, as long as God allows for some means whereby those in purgatory can serve or aid their victims. God could do this by allowing those in purgatory to 'visit' and interact with their victims; C. S. Lewis's (1945) depiction of the afterlife in *The Great Divorce* indicates one way

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this might be possible. God could also allow messengers to act on behalf of those in purgatory, just as Virgil is an agent of Beatrice in *The Divine Comedy*. Of course, Beatrice wasn't in purgatory, but if it is possible for her to use an agent to act on her behalf, it certainly seems possible that God could allow those in purgatory to use agents to act on their behalf, especially if those agents are used to carry out the godly mission of enabling one to atone for one's moral debts. My references to Dante and Lewis indicate that interactions between those in purgatory and their victims may happen largely after the victims have died and moved on to their own afterlife state. However, in principle God could allow those in purgatory to communicate or interact with the living (although based on experience, this seems rare). So the argument can maintain that it is possible for those in purgatory to atone for their moral debts while also remaining flexible about exactly what those in purgatory will do in order to atone for their debts.[13]

This argument is consistent with a variety of different proposals about the nature of purgatory. Walls (2012, 59–91) distinguishes between satisfaction, satisfaction/sanctification, and sanctification models. Satisfaction models say that the purpose of purgatory is to offer satisfaction – that is, reparation, restitution, and/or suffering punishment – for sins. Sanctification models say the purpose is to complete the process of sanctification. Satisfaction/sanctification models say that offering satisfaction and completing sanctification are dual purposes of purgatory. The AA implies that some people need to go to purgatory to fulfil their moral debts to non-divine humans and that their debts can only be fulfilled by something beyond repentance and moral transformation.[14] However, the AA does not imply that these are the only people who need to go to purgatory; it is silent on whether anybody else may go to purgatory. So, consistent with the AA, it could turn out that a satisfaction model is true – these people all must offer satisfaction and nobody else needs to go to purgatory. It could turn out that some go to purgatory for sanctification and some go for satisfaction (or some, or all, go for both) – thus the mixed model is also consistent with the AA.

The AA is also consistent with a certain kind of sanctification model: one that says that sanctification is the purpose of purgatory, but that some people need to fulfil their outstanding moral debts in order to be sanctified. On this model, fulfilling moral debts – by acts of service, act-reinforced apologies, reparation, restitution, or suffering punishment – isn't an independent and fundamental purpose of purgatory. Rather, it is a necessary means to becoming sanctified,[15] which is the fundamental purpose of purgatory.[16] The AA is not consistent with a sanctification model that says that the fundamental and *sole* purpose of purgatory is sanctification of sinful moral inclinations and tendencies. Moral debts are not sinful inclinations or tendencies, so this sort of model would say that nobody in purgatory is atoning for moral debts.

Catholics will cheer for this argument, while most Protestants will be furrowing their brows. Well – is it a good argument? Should we be cheering or furrowing?

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Some objections

We must remember that our main aim is to investigate the implications of Christian conceptions of heaven and of how to get there. Accordingly, we wouldn't want to reject premises that assert core doctrines or theses of Christianity. Premises 4 and 7 assert doctrines that either are universally accepted among orthodox Christians or are fairly clear implications of doctrines that are universally accepted. Premise 1 isn't really a Christian doctrine, but it seems like a presupposition of much Christian doctrine and practice. In any case, premise 1, as well as premise 3, are strongly supported by common moral intuition. They should not be rejected if at all possible. Premise 9 follows from the definition of purgatory along with the evident claim that one isn't morally pure if one has outstanding moral debts. Every other premise except two – premises 2 and 6 – are logical implications of the other premises. So, we are left with two possible vulnerabilities in the argument.

Premises 2 and 6 together say that some true believers die without having fulfilled their moral debts to non-divine humans and they are unable instantaneously to fulfil their debts following their death. In short, some true believers have moral debts that are not fulfilled immediately after their death. So, the main way to object to the AA will be to argue that, in fact, true believers will fulfil their moral debts prior to a time immediately after their death. There are many ways to push this objection. In this section, I will canvass as many of the plausible ones as I can.

It isn't plausible to say that, as a matter of fact, all true believers in Jesus somehow find a way personally to fulfil their moral debts before death. Surely there are very clear counterexamples, such as death-bed converters. Although deep and honest repentance can go some way towards fulfilling moral debt (and in some cases may alone suffice to fulfil moral debt), often something more is required. A thoroughly repentant thief still ought to pay back something that at least begins to approach the value of what he has stolen, and if he hasn't he still bears a moral debt to his victims. So, one way to object to 2 or 6 would be to say that at death or immediately thereafter true believers are somehow able to fulfil their moral debts (or the debts are cancelled) – call this *Way 1*. Another way is to say that sometime prior to or immediately after their death, true believers receive help from another person, who fulfils their moral debt on their behalf (or, fulfils most of the debt, leaving only an amount that true believers can fulfil immediately following their death). On a Christian view, Jesus is the most likely candidate for offering such help to *all* true believers with moral debt. What I will call *Way 2* is the view that the work of Jesus somehow fulfils true believers' moral debts to non-divine persons they have wronged.[17] I will first look at a few versions of Way 1, and then examine a few versions of Way 2.

Way 1, Version 1: there is a statute of limitations on moral debts, and that statute ends at death. A dead person's moral debts are simply cancelled. So, true believers

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

have no outstanding moral debts after death to other persons, and thus are fit for direct entrance into heaven.

There are a couple of problems with Way 1, Version 1. First, if there is an afterlife, then it is very hard to see why the statute of limitations would end at death. If people will continue to exist after death, then death seems merely a particularly traumatic event in one's existence and there isn't any apparent reason why this traumatic experience would result in one's moral debts being cancelled. Second, on the orthodox Christian view, not all of our moral debts are cancelled upon death, for some people will be punished in hell for their sins against God. If the debts due to those sins were cancelled upon death, then it would be unjust to send these people to hell.

Perhaps the problem with Way 1, Version 1 is that it gives the wrong explanation for why moral debts are cancelled upon death. Moral debts aren't automatically cancelled upon death. Something else enables them to be cancelled. *Way 1, Version 2*: God has the unique power to cancel the moral debts that his creatures have towards each other. When God forgives our sins he exercises this power, declaring (and making it the case) that upon death any true believer's moral debts are cancelled.

Himma considers and rejects this move. He plausibly argues that there is no motivation for this view and that it conflicts with our moral intuitions about moral debt. On the former point, neither perfect goodness nor omnipotence seems to require the having of this ability to cancel the moral debts of others. On the latter point, our moral intuitions indicate that although other people can help one resolve one's moral debts, other people cannot cancel them on one's behalf by simply declaring that enough has been given.

If God cannot simply declare that apology and repentance is enough for true believers to fulfil their moral debts to fellow humans, perhaps their moral debts can be cancelled in some other way. *Way 1, Version 3*: God, being the supreme moral authority of the universe, has the ability to dole out punishments that are due to wrongdoers. God chooses to allow humans with unfulfilled moral debt to fulfil their debt via punishment. But, instead of requiring that everyone deserving punishment suffer it, because of his moral authority God can engage in clever penal accounting, whereby the punishment due to a true believer can be either partially or fully cancelled by reducing the punishment due to the true believer's victims by an amount comparable to how the true believer ought to have been punished. Those who are not true believers will still deserve considerable punishment because they will not have atoned for their sins against God.

Though interesting, this move faces a variety of challenges. First, it isn't clear that this sort of penal accounting is just. Imagine that person x severely wrongs person y, who has wronged (although less severely) z. This sort of accounting would imply that the punishment due to x can be reduced by reducing the punishment due to y. But, since y is due less punishment than x (since y's wrongdoing is less severe), y's punishment is reduced to nothing. So, y effectively gets off for free

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

despite having wronged z; this seems unjust. This kind of accounting might be acceptable in resolving down punishment due to two people for having wronged each other, but not all wrongdoing is like that and even if it were there would still be cases where a residue of punishment is left over for true believers to pay. Second, it seems quite plausible that there will be true believers who have severely wronged other true believers who are due far less punishment for their personal misdeeds. This process of penal accounting would still leave the former true believers with a debt of punishment to be paid.

Instead of thinking that at death moral debts are cancelled, perhaps instead at death moral debts are fulfilled. *Way 1, Version 4*: natural death is a punishment that is sufficient to fulfil whatever moral debt a person may owe to other non-divine persons.

This move is implausible. It is hard to see how something that we will all suffer regardless of our moral actions in our life could count as a punishment for the wrongs that we committed during our life. A punishment typically expresses condemnation of the wrongdoer for the wrong done; the fact that we all experience death and our deaths are more or less causally unrelated to our wrongs of other humans makes it hard for our death to express condemnation for those wrongdoings. Punishments should also fit the wrong, and yet we all die regardless of how badly we lived.

All of the versions discussed so far assume that at death or shortly thereafter true believers' moral debts to other humans either disappear on their own, are paid by true believers, or are cancelled through God's clever penal accounting. Perhaps instead God pays, or helps pay,[18] true believers' moral debts. I suspect that many Christians think this is definitely the right kind of move to make because they think that whatever Jesus does to give humans forgiveness of sins results in righteousness and one cannot be righteous if one is still guilty of wrongdoing against other humans. So, somehow Jesus' work pays for, or helps pay for,[19] all true believers' moral debts. This is exactly what *Way 2* proposes.

How could Jesus fulfil true believers' moral debt? I've argued that many true believers, at their death, will have substantial moral debts to non-divine humans – so substantial that mere repentance, apology, and moral transformation will not (alone or together) be sufficient to fulfil. So, Jesus cannot fulfil those debts by merely repenting or apologizing on true believers' behalf (it isn't even clear that repenting for someone else is possible). He also cannot merely transform true believers morally. This leaves two general options. First, Jesus could suffer punishment, substituting himself for the punishment true believers might have undergone to fulfil their moral debts. Second, Jesus could do something *for* the victims of the true believers' wrong acts (aside from repenting, apologizing, engaging in moral transformation, and suffering punishment); that is, he could offer proper reparation, restitution, acts of service, assurances that the true believer won't wrong the victim again, etc. We can summarize this second option by saying that Jesus can offer satisfaction on behalf of true believers, where

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

satisfaction is understood broadly to cover the kinds of actions mentioned above (setting aside repentance, apology, moral transformation, and suffering punishment). Readers familiar with theories of the Christian doctrine of atonement will observe that the first option draws on penal substitutionary theories, saying that Jesus is a penal substitute not only for human sin against God, but also for human moral debt to (non-divine) humans. The second option draws on satisfaction theories, saying that Jesus offers satisfaction to God for human sin and to human victims for the wrongs done to them by true believers.[20]

Let's begin with the first option. *Way 2, Option 1*: Christ's death is a penal substitute for all moral debt anybody owes to anybody. To avail ourselves of this penal substitute, we need merely to become a true believer.[21]

Expanding the penal substitutionary theory of atonement so that Jesus' death is a penal substitute for the punishment due to us for wronging our fellow humans both exacerbates a classic objection to the penal view and creates a new problem. A classic objection is the Justice Worry: it is unjust for a person innocent of wrongdoing to be punished in the place of the guilty party. As a bumper sticker might say: do the time if *and only if* you commit the crime. This worry might (although I have serious doubts) be weakened in the special case where the victim decides to bear punishment in lieu of the offender. Perhaps the victim might have good reason to do so in some cases to obtain certain special ends. Assuming Jesus is God (as Christians do), then on the penal view God is the victim bearing punishment for human offence against him. But, the Justice Worry is restored to full force if Jesus' passion is also a penal substitute for human wrongs against non-divine humans. An innocent third party now suffers for what one human did to another. It is very hard to see how this is just. We would never consider this just for serious offences in our dealings with each other (although we seem okay with it for some fines).

The new problem is this: if Way 2, Option 1 is correct, then true believers' moral debts to their fellow humans are fulfilled during their life since Jesus has already suffered the punishment for all of their wrongdoings. Thus, true believers never have an obligation to do anything else for their victims in order to fulfil their moral debts to them. But, this is surely incorrect. Even true believers should (morally, not just practically) pay their speeding tickets, help up those they've tripped, and replace what they have stolen. One could argue that humans still have moral obligations to do these sorts of things because God wants us humans to make amends with our victims. God's desire or command would certainly give humans an obligation to make amends, but this would be a duty *to God alone*, not to the human victims.[22] When we wrong someone, it seems as if we have a duty *to our victim* to make amends with them, not just to God to make amends with them. Analogously, when I accidentally trip and injure my friend's child, I have a duty *to the child* to, say, help her up, and apologize and get her an ice pack. I surely also have a duty to my friend to do these things for his child, but

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this duty to my friend doesn't alone account for the obligations I have regarding making amends for tripping the child.[23]

Now on to *Way 2, Option 2*: Jesus offers satisfaction on behalf of true believers to the human victims of true believers' wrong actions. Satisfaction, again, is understood broadly, to cover any sort of action done for the victim aside from suffering punishment, apologizing, repenting, and undergoing moral transformation. So, offering reparation, restitution, and other acts of service all count as offering satisfaction.

The most immediate worry facing this move is that it is hard to see how Jesus offers satisfaction to these human victims. He could offer them satisfaction either during their life or in their afterlife. Empirically, it seems highly unlikely that Jesus does something unique for each victim during the victim's life, tailored to the particular way in which they were wronged. Perhaps the best thing he could do for all victims during their lives is – through the agency of his body, the Church – to offer them the great gift of the gospel message of redemption through faith in Jesus. But, as great as this gift may be, it seems an insufficient satisfaction for all human wrongdoing. First, many victims will be true believers who have already received this gift independently or prior to having been wronged by other humans. One cannot give to another a gift that the latter already has (and hearing the gospel isn't the kind of thing one can have doubles of). Second, what if the victim has already heard and rejected a compelling presentation of the gospel? Although the gospel is an immense good, it isn't clear that satisfaction can be made by offering an immense good that the victim has already considered and rejected. Third, the gospel message is offered to all humans because of their sinfulness, regardless of how sinful they are or of how much they have been wronged by others. So proclamation of the gospel seems insensitive to the wrongs done to human victims – the gospel isn't proclaimed to victims because they are victims and the nature of this gift isn't at all sensitive to the ways they've been wronged. But an adequate satisfaction ought to be sensitive in both of these ways to the wrong done.

Even assuming this gift is an adequate satisfaction for human wrongs against other non-divine humans, many humans will not receive this gift during their lives. Many will die without having heard the gospel proclaimed to them in an even minimally adequate way (think of people who by chance never hear a clear proclamation of the gospel, such as children who die young, some murder victims, some who become too depressed to understand that a great gift is being offered to them).

So, some victims will need to receive satisfaction in the afterlife. What would that look like? True believers who are victims go to heaven; they already receive the best life, so how could they receive further satisfaction? Those who are not true believers go to hell; what would satisfaction look like for them? A nicer place in hell? These are difficult questions, but I don't want to make too much of them. It is difficult in general to conceive what the afterlife will be like, so our inability

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to answer these questions well shouldn't count as much of a problem for Way 2, Option 2.

Let's grant that somehow Jesus can and will make satisfaction to victims on behalf of true believing wrongdoers. Nevertheless, Way 2, Option 2 will ultimately require purgatory. There are two reasons for this – both, I believe, are strong, but the former is perhaps somewhat more contentious than the latter. The first is this: true believers who die while their victims live need to dwell somewhere other than heaven and hell while they are waiting for their moral debts to be fulfilled by Jesus' satisfaction. Until the victims have received proper satisfaction, the wrongdoer's guilt due to unfulfilled moral debt persists. Guilty humans are unfit for heaven. So they must dwell in a third state waiting for satisfaction to be given by Jesus, perhaps even helping to give satisfaction. They are waiting for their moral guilt to be purged, so this state seems rightly characterized as a kind of purgatory.

This argument is somewhat contentious because it assumes that time passes in heaven and that it passes in a way that is comparable to the temporal order on earth. Some, however, accept eternalism – that dwelling with God in heaven is a sort of timeless state. From the perspective of that state, all of what happens on earth seems to occur as in a single instant. Moral debt to human victims is then no obstacle preventing true believers from entering heaven because in heaven 'all things happen at once' and so satisfaction has 'already' been given and thus all moral debts of true believers are fulfilled. Personally, I have serious doubts whether any of this is coherent – it seems true of someone in heaven that she used not to be in heaven, so heaven appears to bear temporal relations to times on earth. Lest this article turn into a discussion of God and time, I simply flag this concern. Even if this eternalist story can be coherent, there's a worry about practical reasoning. Suppose I've wronged someone. It isn't clear what would be wrong with this line of reasoning: from the heavenly, eternal perspective – God's perspective – satisfaction for what I have done has been given, and thus my moral debt is fulfilled. If my moral debt is fulfilled from God's perspective, then I don't need to do anything further right now, here on earth during my life, to fulfil my moral debt. Perhaps I should act so as to make amends because God desires it, but then my duty to make amends is a duty to God not to the victim, which – as we discussed earlier – is problematic.

The second reason why Way 2, Option 2 ultimately requires purgatory is inspired by an argument in Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*. He writes,

> A. Let it be true that God forgives a person who does not repay what he owes, for the reason that he is incapable of repaying.
> B. I would wish this were the case.
> A. So long, however, as he does not repay, he will either be wishing to repay, or not wishing to do so. But in the event that he has a desire to do what he is incapable of doing, he will be a person in want: in the event that he does not have this desire, he will be a wrongdoer.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

B. Nothing could be clearer.
A. Now, whether he is in want or whether he is a wrongdoer – in neither case will he be blessedly happy. (Anselm (1998), 312)

In short, Anselm argues that if God simply forgives us because we are incapable of repaying what we owe him, we will not be able to be fully happy because we will want to have repaid him. A similar sort of argument can be given regarding Way 2, Option 2. Someone who is virtuous and who desires to be fully sanctified will want not only that his moral debts be fulfilled, but he will also want to assist in fulfilling them. Obviously, he will want to feel remorse, repent, and apologize, but he will also want to help offer satisfaction when appropriate. Indeed, it is much better if he assists in offering satisfaction. He will be less than perfectly happy if he does not assist and his virtue will be more perfect if he exercises his virtue by assisting. So, even if (as we've granted) God could arrange for Jesus to offer complete satisfaction on behalf of true believing wrongdoers, he has excellent reasons to allow true believers to assist in offering satisfaction. Indeed, if heaven is a place where humans are as happy and perfect as they can be, then true believers who die without having fulfilled all their moral debts to other humans will need to dwell in a place where they can assist in offering satisfaction to their human victims. Such a place would be purgatory.

Let's conclude this section with a brief examination of one more objection. Those in heaven will be sanctified, will know each other to be sanctified, and will enjoy an immeasurably better form of life than mortal life on earth. From this perspective, the troubles of their mortal life may seem trifling in comparison to their life in heaven. The ways they were wronged in the mortal life may seem comparatively unimportant. Unimportant wrongs can be very easily atoned-for – perhaps remorse, repentance, apology, and moral transformation are enough. All of these can be done upon or immediately after death.[24]

Much of this objection is plausible, but it shows at most that true believers could fulfil their moral debts *to each other* without spending time in purgatory. But many true believers will also die with unfulfilled moral debts to people who are not true believers. Those who are not true believers will not benefit from the sanctification and joy of heaven. Wrongs perpetrated on them in their mortal life will seem important to them. Surely many true believers who have wronged such people will not be able to fulfil their moral debts to them simply through remorse, repentance, apology, and moral transformation. They'll need to do something more for their victims – something that cannot be done in an instant following their death (e.g. suffer punishment or offer satisfaction of some sort). In addition, any true believers who have died with unfulfilled moral debts to living humans – true believers or not – will still need to dwell somewhere until their debts can be fulfilled. So there is still a need for purgatory.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Some brief concluding theological reflections

Some Christians have biblical and theological concerns about purgatory. I cannot resolve these here; my primary goal has been to offer a new argument for purgatory, not to rebut all objections to purgatory. But it would be problematic if the AA argument raised new or additional theological problems.[25] Fortunately, I don't think it does. Here I will briefly respond to three theological problems one might worry the AA argument faces: it implies (i) a false model of purgatory, (ii) Pelagianism, and (iii) that Christ's work is insufficient for salvation. Problem (i) was addressed above in the section 'The Argument from Atonement'. There I argued that the AA argument is consistent with a variety of models of purgatory, including the model endorsed by the Catholic Church.[26] The AA does not fall foul of Pelagianism. It is entirely consistent with the AA that God's grace motivates and guides whatever a human does to fulfil their moral debts to other humans. For very similar reasons, the AA does not imply that Christ's work is insufficient for salvation. It is entirely consistent with the AA that Christ's work gives humans grace to help fulfil their moral debts to non-divine humans. Some Protestant scholars, including Turretin, James Dunn, Peter Stuhlmacher, and Bradley Green – who are quite keen to say that Christ's work is sufficient for salvation, and that justification is by faith alone – nevertheless maintain that obedience to God and good works are necessary for salvation and that, through good works and obedience, true believers 'do' or 'keep' the law.[27] This position is possible because, as Green puts it, 'the cross unleashes a power that leads to the transformation of God's people (a transformation that includes the manifestation of works, obedience, and faithfulness)' (2014, 91). If Christ's work can be sufficient for the salvation of true believers even while they are enabled by his work to fulfil the law in obedience, then there seems to be no reason to think such obedience must occur during their earthly lives. Perhaps true believers are obedient to God in purgatory by acting (through the power of Christ) to fulfil their moral debts to fellow humans. If obedient actions powered by the work of Christ, done while alive, are consistent with the sufficiency of Christ's work, then so are obedient actions powered by the work of Christ that are done while in the afterlife.

The AA argument has interesting implications regarding the sacrament of penance. If the AA is correct, then the practice of the sacrament of penance/reconciliation should be focused, when appropriate, as much on making amends with the humans one has harmed as on reconciling with God. Although some older penitential practices included elements of restitution and reparation,[28] focus seems to have shifted heavily towards reconciliation with God. In a survey of the history of penitential practices, Joe Grayland observes that:

> [T]here is the obviously dominant theological concept of sin as being personally and privately indebted to God, fearful of God's just punishment, while on the other hand there is an almost total lack of being indebted to the one sinned against, deserving of their punishment, or being publicly liable for restitution. (Grayland (2004), 161)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The AA argument implies that reconciling with one's brother, sister, or fellow man is of crucial importance to being fully reconciled with God. The passages from Matthew and Mishnah tractate Yoma quoted at the opening of this article would approve.[29]

References

Adams, Robert (1986) 'The problem of total devotion', in Robert Audi & William Wainwright (eds) *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment* (Ithaca: Cornell), 169–194.

Anselm (1998) *The Major Works*, Brian Davies & G. R. Evans (eds) (New York: Oxford).

Barnard, Justin D. (2007) 'Purgatory and the dilemma of sanctification', *Faith and Philosophy*, **24**, 311–330.

Beilby, James & Eddy, Paul R. (eds) (2006) *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (Downer's Grove IL: Intervarsity Press).

Brown, David (1985) 'No heaven without purgatory', *Religious Studies*, **21**, 447–456.

Dumsday, Travis (2014) 'Purgatory', *Philosophy Compass*, **9/10**, 732–740.

Grayland, Joe (2004) 'The sacrament of penance/reconciliation in relation to public sin: remembering the place of restitution', *The Australasian Catholic Record*, **81.2**, 154–168.

Green, Bradley G. (2014) *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience, and Faithfulness in the Christian Life* (Downer's Grove IL: Intervarsity Press).

Gregory of Nyssa (1954) 'An address on religious instruction', in Edward R. Hardy (ed.) *Christology of the Later Fathers* (Philadelphia PA: Westminster John Knox Press), 268–325.

Grensted, L. W. (1920) *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

Himma, Kenneth Einar (2010) 'The problem of unresolved wrongdoing', *Faith and Philosophy*, **27.4**, 405–422.

Judisch, Neal (2009) 'Sanctification, satisfaction, and the purpose of purgatory', *Faith and Philosophy*, **26.2**, 167–185.

Klawans, Jonathan (2006) *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford).

Lewis, C. S. (2001/1945) *The Great Divorce* (San Francisco CA: HarperSanFrancisco).

Meens, Rob (2014) *Penance in Medieval Europe 600–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

McNeil, John T. & Gamer, Helena M. (eds) (1938) *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Radzik, Linda (2009) *Making Amends: Atonement in Morality, Law, and Politics* (New York: Oxford).

Schmiechen, Peter (2005) *Saving Power: Theories of Atonement and Forms of the Church* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans).

Stump, Eleonore (2003) *Aquinas* (London: Routledge).

Stump, Eleonore (2012) 'The nature of the atonement', in Kelly James Clark & Michael Rea (eds) *Reason, Metaphysics, and Mind: New Essays on the Philosophy of Alvin Plantinga* (New York: Oxford), 129–144.

Swinburne, Richard (1989) *Responsibility and Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Walls, Jerry (2002) *Heaven: The Logic of Eternal Joy* (New York: Oxford).

Walls, Jerry (2012) *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation* (New York: Oxford).

Notes

1. See e.g. Deut. 26:15; 2 Ch. 30:27; Ps. 11:4.
2. Jonathan Edwards also writes: 'it is therefore impossible for an unholy thing to be admitted unto the happiness of heaven as it is for God not to be, or be turned into nothing' (quoted in Walls (2002), 39).
3. It is clear, then, that by 'guilt' I do not mean the emotion of feeling guilty.
4. Some Christian traditions hold that more is required to obtain forgiveness of sins (e.g. baptism). I stay neutral about what exactly is required to obtain forgiveness of sins. None of the disputed additional conditions, should they be added to the conditions listed above, would affect my argument in this article.
5. See Walls (2012), ch. 4 and Brown (1985) for these arguments.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

6. I add this qualification because, according to Christianity, all humans have moral debts to God and God, in the person of Jesus, is human. But my claim is that, in addition to moral debts to God, many humans will have unfulfilled moral debts to fellow non-divine human persons. This qualification should be understood to apply throughout the article.
7. Although I am personally inclined to understand this obligation deontologically, my argument does not assume a deontological moral theory. Utilitarian or virtue theories that can ground some account of what it is to have this sort of obligation are compatible with my argument. I will come back to this point again later on (in notes 22 and 23) since there are a couple of normative theories that might initially seem to cause problems for aspects of my argument; I will argue that in fact they don't.
8. This list is both broader and stricter than Himma's, who allows only that 'punishment, compensation, forgiveness, or some combination of the three' (Himma (2010), 408) may fulfil or release one from a moral debt. I think that contributions besides these three may contribute to fulfilling or releasing one from moral debt (see again the list). Forgiveness can release the wrongdoer from her moral debt in a distinct sort of way. Forgiveness is never sufficient on its own to release a wrongdoer from moral debt because the wrongdoer owes the victim some assurance that she has separated herself from the wrong action and that she intends to treat the victim with respect in the future. Forgiveness from the victim doesn't fulfil this duty the wrongdoer has to the victim and doesn't release the wrongdoer from this duty. What I think forgiveness can do is declare that the wrongdoer has done enough to fulfil her moral debt. Following Swinburne (1989, 87–88) and Radzik (2009, 122–123), I believe that victims have some power to determine what the wrongdoer must do to adequately atone (and thus fulfil their moral debts) for her wrong action against the victim. This power is not universal; it can't make atonement too cheap or too hard. Strictly, the victim's forgiveness doesn't make it the case that the wrongdoer has done enough. The fact that the wrongdoer has done enough on the victim's appropriate standards for enough is what makes it the case that the wrongdoer has done enough. Forgiveness is a way of declaring 'enough' to the wrongdoer so that she knows that she has given enough. (One might not vocalize one's forgiveness; this would be a way of telling oneself that the wrongdoer has done enough. Unfortunately, it leaves the wrongdoer with some doubt about whether she has offered enough.) In principle, then, it is always possible to fulfil a moral debt without obtaining forgiveness from the victim. One might meet the victim's standards without the victim actually declaring forgiveness (perhaps because the victim has died, or has forgotten about the matter, or is simply reluctant to declare forgiveness), or one might do quite enough to fulfil the moral debt by any reasonable standards while the victim refuses to forgive.
9. An objection: if these people cannot resolve their moral debts immediately after death, then since ought implies can, these people no longer have the obligation to fulfil these debts upon death; the debts disappear. My reply: surely God can give these people the ability to fulfil their debts in some way or other after their death. Allowing them to pass through purgatory is one way, but it might not be the only way. Indeed, in the next section, 'Some objections', I will discuss some other ways God might enable these people to fulfil their moral debts to other humans (one way that will come up again and again is that somehow the atoning work of Jesus also enables us to fulfil our moral debts to fellow humans); I will argue either that these ways don't work or that these ways also require purgatory. I will also argue later that God has a good reason to give us the opportunity to fulfil those moral debts. So, I take it that it is plausible to assume that God can provide some way or other for humans to fulfil moral debts they still retain at their death. And this assumption doesn't beg the question in favour of the existence of purgatory because it still remains to be argued (as I will argue in what follows) that purgatory is necessary for humans to be able to fulfil these moral debts to their fellow humans.
10. I'm granting this possibility for the sake of argument because, as I mentioned earlier, I'm trying to give a different argument from Walls and others, who argue against instant sanctification.
11. Matthew 5:23–24 could also be interpreted in this second sort of way – so, perhaps Jesus is saying that atonement to God is properly made only if one also atones to the human victims of one's wrongdoing by making some sort of peace-making effort. But, other interpretations may be possible. Just to be clear about how I am using this text: I'm not attempting to use it as a proof text for my view that we have moral debts to God and humans (although I think it fits very nicely with my view). I think my view is very plausible for the other reasons given above. I think Matthew 5:23–24 acknowledges, if only implicitly, that humans wrong both God and other humans, and I use the passage only to make that point.
12. See John 12:26; 2 Cor. 5:1; Php. 3:20–1; 1 Th. 4:15–8; Heb. 11:16; 12:18–29; 1 Pet. 1:3–4. See also the Catechism of the Catholic Church 1054.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

13. One might wonder: couldn't people in heaven perform all these same actions? In principle, yes. But, if my argument is correct, denizens of heaven can't perform them as acts of atonement because, if they need to atone, they bear moral guilt and so given (No Guilt) cannot dwell in heaven.
14. Since these things could be done immediately following death, thus contradicting premise 6.
15. In ST IaIIae.87.6, Aquinas argues that one cannot be sanctified without offering satisfaction for one's sins:

> the stain of sin cannot be removed from man, unless his will accept the order of Divine justice; that is to say, unless either of his own accord he take upon himself the punishment of his past sin, or bear patiently the punishment which God inflicts on him; and in both ways punishment avails for satisfaction.

And of course one cannot be sanctified without removing the stain of sin. This argument seems to imply also that sanctification requires fulfilling all one's moral debts because surely Divine justice requires that humans fulfil all their moral debts and, as Aquinas says, 'the stain of sin cannot be removed from man unless he will accept the order of Divine justice'.

16. Judisch (2009) argues that the Catholic view of purgatory just is a sanctification model. As far as I can tell, the AA argument is consistent with the kind of sanctification model Judisch describes. In addition, Walls (2012) rightly notes that prominent Catholic models in the past have allowed that humans in purgatory atone for moral debts. So, the AA argument is consistent with the Catholic view of purgatory.
17. Or Jesus fulfils most of the debt, leaving only an amount that true believers can fulfil immediately following their death (for example, through sincere repentance and moral transformation). Note that Way 2 is different from the claim, addressed earlier, that if Jesus atones for human sin, then all human moral debt is thereby eliminated. That claim states that Jesus' atonement for human sin – simply in virtue of being an atonement for human sin (that's the point of the 'thereby') – eliminates all human moral debt, and thus all human moral debt to non-divine humans. Move 2 does not make this assumption. Move 2 simply says that, as a matter of fact (not merely in virtue of having atoned for human sin), Jesus' work fulfils human moral debt to non-divine persons.
18. Leaving only an amount of debt that true believers can fulfil immediately after their death (for example, through sincere repentance and moral transformation).
19. I will hereafter drop the qualification 'help pay for', for the sake of simplicity. The argument is not affected.
20. Since moral transformation isn't sufficient to deal with this moral debt, moral exemplar/influence theories of atonement cannot be similarly built up to possibly explain how Jesus fulfills true believers' moral debt to (non-divine) humans. Christus victor theories, for my purposes here, will count as satisfaction theories given how broadly I've characterized 'satisfaction'. For three useful surveys and discussions of theories of atonement, see Grensted (1920), Beilby & Eddy (2006), and Schmeichen (2005).
21. Himma considers this move (2010, 415–416), but his only reply is that the tradition does not typically think of the work of Christ in this way.
22. One could use the idea that we have duties to God alone to push against premise 1 of the AA. We can wrong humans, but only in the sense that we fail in our duties to God with respect to humans, thus we can only acquire moral debt to God. This move of course still suffers from the worry I raised above. It also is hard to see a motivation for the idea. The divine command theory doesn't even require it, for God could declare that humans acquire moral debt to each other by wronging each other. Furthermore, this idea seems to treat humans as means to an end – serving God – rather than ends in themselves. But, surely humans are ends in themselves and, as such, those who wrong them owe a moral debt to them, not just to God. And surely it is possible to love God fully and above all else while also treating and loving humans as ends in themselves (see Adams (1986) for excellent discussion of this point).
23. One might argue that even if true believers' moral debts are fulfilled during their life by Jesus' work, they should still make amends with their victims because that's what a virtuous person would do. A virtuous person would work to be reconciled with his victim during his life and making amends is a part of that (even if one has no moral debt to the victim). (Thanks to Robert Hartman for suggesting this argument.) Something about this move is right – a virtuous person should work to be reconciled with his victim at the very least by repenting, apologizing, and seeking moral transformation. This is true whether or not Jesus' death has fully atoned for whatever else a true believer owes to his human victims. But, if Jesus has atoned for everything else beyond whatever a true believer fulfils through repentance, apology, and moral transformation, where's the virtue in doing more? It might be good to do more, but if all the true believer's

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press

other moral debt has already been fulfilled, it looks supererogatory to do more (rather than obligatory). There is another reason this move will not help shore up Way 2, Option 1: God has excellent reason to allow humans to help fulfil their moral debts to their non-divine victims. I elaborate this argument in more detail below.

24. Thanks to Michael Rea for this objection.
25. After briefly presenting an argument that strongly resembles the AA, Dumsday (2014) raises this concern.
26. The one sort of sanctification model it is inconsistent with (which I described earlier) is a model that denies that people in purgatory have moral debts. Such a model then already has other reasons for rejecting the AA argument and this model's charge that the AA argument gives an incorrect model of purgatory amounts to nothing more than the charge that the AA argument falsely assumes that people in purgatory have moral debts.
27. See Green (2014) for further discussion of this point and quotations from the mentioned scholars.
28. See Meens (2014) and examples in the medieval penitential handbooks (McNeil & Gamer (1938)).
29. Incidentally, so might Plato! See *Phaedo* 114. Thanks to an audience at the Center for Philosophy of Religion weekly meetings at Notre Dame for helpful discussion. Thanks also to the participants in the Interim State Workshop at McCall, Idaho in July 2015, especially Robert Hartman (my commentator), Thom Atkinson, Susan Brower-Toland, Christopher Brown, Caleb Cohoe, Turner Nevitt, Tim Pawl, Mark Spencer, Allison Thornton, and Kevin Timpe. Lastly, thanks to Travis Dumsday, Jerry Walls, and an anonymous referee for additional helpful comments.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412516000056 Published online by Cambridge University Press