Does Anyone Merit Salvation? Does Anyone Merit Salvation More Than Anyone Else?

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Does anyone merit salvation? Does anyone merit salvation more than anyone else? A belief that is common among some theists is that those who have lived an exemplary moral life deserve salvation more than those who have lived an immoral life. St. Augustine says: "And yet it [life] is still governed by divine providence, which appoints for all things their proper places, and distributes to each man his due according to his desert."[1] This view is consistent with the idea that on judgment day God will discriminate between the morally praiseworthy and the morally blameworthy according to what is just. However, this eschatological view has an obstacle, namely, that it seems to be inconsistent with another belief that is common among theists. Some theists believe that no one deserves salvation and thus anyone who is granted any form of a reward in an afterlife is done so not because it was earned or deserved but rather because God willed it. Aquinas says, "We are entitled to nothing except on the basis of what has come from God in the first place as a sheer gift."[2] This view considers all acts of salvation as gratuitously determined by the will of God, motivated by God's love for creation. According to this view, it may be just for a theist who lived an exemplary moral life to enjoy the same reward in the afterlife as one who lived an immoral life. However, this result seems to conflict with the first view above. Moreover, it runs contrary to our most basic understanding of the notion of justice based on desert. Shouldn't we be disturbed and displeased to find that Mother Teresa has received the

same reward in the after-life as Hitler? In this paper, I will use Francisco Suárez's metaphysical view on the relationship between eternal truths and God to defend the view that moral people do deserve a more rewarding afterlife than immoral people. I will show how this latter view can be reconciled with the view that salvation is gratuitously given by God.

The paper is divided into three parts. First, I will explain the tension that exists between the view that salvation is gratuitous and the view that salvation is merit based. Second, I will explain the contrary metaphysical views of Descartes and Suárez on the conception of God's relationship to universals. I will defend Suarez's view, that there are universal moral truths that are logically prior to God's will and that these truths are independent of God. Finally, I will argue that Suárez's metaphysical view of the relationship between God and universals can serve to reconcile the gratuitous nature of salvation with the idea that its distribution is determined by the concept of justice and not by the will of God.

1. *Eschatology: The Problem*

Why do the claims 1) that no one deserves salvation and thus salvation is a gratuitous act on the part of God, and 2) that people who are morally superior deserve salvation more than those who are morally inferior, incongruent? To better grasp the apparent conflict between these claims, an analogy may be helpful. Imagine that I take my three children to work one afternoon. Before I reach the department, I say to each one of them (individually), "if you behave well while I work, I will reward you with a chocolate bar afterwards."

There are various scenarios that can be formulated concerning the possible outcomes. The first, the most unlikely, is that all three of my children behave well. Let us call this scenario D1. The second scenario is that some of the children behave well and some misbehave. Let us call this scenario D2. In D1, all three children behave well and thus they all deserve the reward that I promised them. As a result of my promise, I have bound myself into a relationship in which my children can rightly demand of me a certain act, namely, the act of giving them a chocolate bar. Imagine that in D2 a clear distinction can be drawn between the children who have met the standard for behaving well and those who have not. In D2, then, I have created a similar relationship with the children who behaved well. Neither of these scenarios, however, rightly portrays the theistic conception of our relationship with God. Thus allow me to present a third scenario. Let us call it D3. Imagine that all three children misbehaved. Furthermore, while I may be able to distinguish between different degrees of the children's misbehavior, they were all so awful that none came close to achieving the standard of good behavior. In this case, I do not owe any of the children a reward.

Many theists consider the human condition to be similar to D3, since they believe that no one deserves salvation. They claim that there is no case in which a person has lived a life so wonderful that his conduct has bound God into a relationship in which the person can legitimately *demand* from God the reward of eternal life. This outcome is not simply a contingent fact, it is not something that theists are uncertain about until every man and woman has lived and died. Instead, it is a necessary claim, imbedded in the theological doctrine of the human person and original sin. The objective in this

paper is not to focus on the theological doctrine of original sin, but rather to deliberate on the following question: if no one deserves salvation, does it make any sense to say that some deserve it more than others? Let us return to our analogy.

In D3, it is interesting that even though we may be able to distinguish the different degrees of misbehavior among my children, granting any of them a reward while denying it to the others would seem unjust. Thus, in the case of D3, either I reward them all in the same way, even though I am not obligated to do so, or I reward none of them. Let us call the first solution S1 and the second solution S2. We could say that, given D3, while I am not obligated, the notion of justice conditionally obligates me, since, if I give a reward to any of my children, then I *ought* to give it to all of them.

There is a third possible solution. Let us call this solution S3. I may distribute a reward in proportion to the degree in which each child has behaved well. Notice, however, that even in such a case, I am not obligated to reward any of them since none of them met the minimum standard required to earn the reward. According to this solution, if I believe that one of my children misbehaved more than the other two, I may give her only one quarter of a chocolate bar while I give the others a half of a chocolate bar. This solution makes sense. Are these solutions analogous to those available to God?

Theists may argue that there is a fourth solution available only to God. God may decide to give the reward to whomever God pleases. Let us call this solution S4. Does S4 seem reasonable? It appears self-evident that if a person carried out S4, it would be arbitrary, capricious and unfair. So why isn't this the case for God? Theists may argue

that since the reward is gratuitous, God is not bound to give it to anyone. Moreover, since the will of God is absolute, what is just *is* what God wills.

Let us summarize the forgoing analysis. First there are three possible states concerning the question whether people deserve salvation: D1, all deserve salvation; D2, some deserve salvation and some do not; and D3, no one deserves salvation. In this paper, I will accept D3 as the most prevalent theistic view, thus it will be the view I will assume in the analysis below. Given D3, there are four possible alternatives concerning God's treatment of us and the world: S1, everyone is saved; S2, no one is saved; S3, salvation is distributed proportionally according to moral conduct; S4, salvation is distributed according to the will of God. S3 and S4 are the most common theistic views, although there are, at least in the history of philosophy, some adherents to S1.

S3 seems like a very attractive alternative. However, it has two major difficulties. The first difficulty concerns the plausibility that eternal salvation can be distributed in parts or in portions. I will leave this problem for another time. The second difficulty concerns a more complicated metaphysical issue, which will be the focus of this paper. It concerns the relationship between the concept of justice and God. Accepting S3, requires that God's will be limited by the concept of justice, so that God is *morally* bound by what is just and must distribute salvation in a specific manner that is not ultimately determined by God but by justice itself. On the other hand, to accept S4 and reject S3 is to grant God an unqualified will or an absolute will. Thus, according to S4, God distributes justice not according to some independent notion of justice but according to God's absolute will. This controversy is not new. Indeed, a major rift in

Christian thought occurred in the 17th Century between Rene Descartes and Francisco Suárez on this issue.

2. *Descartes and Suárez on God and Eternal Truths*

Are eternal truths independent of the will of God? Is the concept of justice independent of the will of God? The view that eternal truths are independent of the will of God seems to conflict with the view that God is omnipotent. However, if eternal truths are dependent on the will of God, then the possibility of attributing reality to eternal truths in and of themselves is precluded. As a result, we seem to be faced with a difficult dilemma. Another way of expressing this dilemma is as follows: Does God know eternal truths because they are true, or are eternal truths true because God knows them as true? If the former is correct, God's omnipotence is undermined. If the latter is correct, universals are undermined.

In this section of the paper, I will attempt to resolve this difficulty. First, I will explain two opposing metaphysical views concerning the conception of God's relationship to eternal truths, namely, those of Descartes and Suárez. Second, I will argue that Suárez's view – that there are eternal truths that are logically prior to God's will and independent of God – is the correct view. Finally, I will show that Suarez's view is consistent with the orthodox Christian tradition, specifically with Aquinas's view. Adopting Suárez's metaphysical view on the relationship between God and eternal truths will permit us to reconcile the view that moral people do deserve a more rewarding afterlife than immoral people with the view that no one deserves salvation and thus salvation is gratuitously given by God.

Descartes, in a letter to Mersenne dated May 6, 1630, says the following:

> As for eternal truths, I say once more that they are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible. They are not known as true by God in any way which would imply that they are true independent of Him. If men really understood the sense of their words they could never say without blasphemy that the truth of anything is prior to the knowledge which God has of it. In God willing and knowing are a single thing in such a way that by the very fact of willing something he knows it and it is only for this reason that such a thing is true. So we must not say that if God did not exist nevertheless these truths would be true; for the existence of God is the first and the most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which all others proceed. [3]

One of the most interesting enigmas of this letter is to whom was Descartes referring when he says, "If men really understood the sense of their words …etc."[4] Today, thanks to the work of P. Garin and T.J. Cronin, S.J.,[5] we know that Descartes was most probably referring to Francisco Suárez and his disciples.

2.1 *Suarez On Eternal Truths* [6]

We begin the discussion of Suárez's notion of eternal and necessary truths with a difficulty created by his view on essences. Suárez denies any kind of real distinction between essence and existence in actual beings. If any sort of real distinction is denied in actual beings, then the distinction between essence and existence must be a mental distinction. This is Suárez's position.[7] Suárez's view of the distinction between essence and existence has significant consequences for his doctrine of essences. One consequence that arises from such a view is that it seems to deny eternal essences, since, given that there is no real distinction between essence and existence in actual beings, the commencement of the existence of a thing is the commencement of the essence as well, and the termination of the existence of a thing is also the end of the essence.

Therefore, all essences would be temporal and thus contingent. Consequently, there would seem be no eternal essences except for that of God, which is existence itself. Suárez states the problem as follows:

> If, with the removal of existence, the essence perishes, then those propositions, wherein essential predicates are attributed of a thing, are not necessary nor possessed of eternal truth; but the consequent is false and contrary to the opinion of all philosophers. [8]

Suárez claims that the central problem concerning eternal and necessary truths is caused by a confusion concerning the interpretation of the copula "is" [*est*], which connects the subject with its predicate. He argues that there are two interpretations of "is" in the proposition (1) "*man is an animal*. The first one includes an existential import such that (1) *man is an animal* can be interpreted as saying (2) there exist such things as men and animals, and man is an animal. If (1) is the same as (2), then (1) can only be necessary and true if there necessarily exist eternal essences of man and of animal. Suárez claims that this interpretation of the copula "is" connects it to time so that it implies an actual eternal duration in time. He says: "In the first instance, the truth of the propositions undoubtedly depends on the existence of the terms [*existentia extremorum*], because, in terms of that signification, the word "is", is not divorced from time. Or (which is the same thing) it indicates a real and actual duration [*actualem durationem*]"[9]

There is another possible interpretation of the copula "is" in the proposition (1) *man is an animal*, which does divorce it from time so that "is" carries no existential import with respect to the subject or predicate. It is in this sense that Suárez believes we should interpret (1) as a necessary and eternal truth. Suárez claims that by interpreting the

copula "is" in this way, (1) can be reduced to a conditional or hypothetical proposition, such as (3) "if it is a man, it is an animal" [*si est homo, est animal*].[10] Defining eternal truths as conditional propositions has interesting consequences. One consequence is that they can be considered completely abstracted from time and, as a result, independent of any efficient cause.[11] Suárez says:

> Indeed, in this same sense these connections [conditional eternal propositions, e.g. If it is a man it is an animal] not only do not require an efficient cause in act, but also they do not seem to demand one in potency, if we take our stand formally and precisely on their truth. This can be clarified by the argument made about a conditional proposition, whose truth does not depend upon an efficient cause or one able to effect.[12]

For Suárez, therefore, the proposition "man is an animal" does *not* mean "there is a man and there is an animal, and man is an animal." Instead, it means, "if there is a man, he is an animal." The truth of this conditional is eternal and necessary, according to Suárez. Through this interpretation, Suárez avoids the necessity of an actual or existent foundation for the essences in question. He therefore does not require actual eternal essences to maintain that there are eternal truths, and thus he does not require an ultra-realist view of the ontological status of essences. However, it is difficult to understand what, if not some eternal essences of some sort, serves as the foundation for the necessity of the truths in question. Suárez is aware of the need for some sort of foundation to ground necessary truths. He says,

> …it has still not been explained what that necessary connection of nonexisting terms is. For since it posits nothing in reality, it is difficult to understand how it can afford a basis for necessary truth.[13]

 What possible foundation can serve to ground Suárez's idea of necessary truths?

Suárez's notion of necessity can be articulated in terms of modal logic semantics so that in any possible world in which God could have created man, it would have been necessary that man be an animal. We have to be careful not to confuse Suárez's position with a Neo-Platonic realist position. It is not the case, according to Suárez, that there exists some realm of reality independent of God where real essence exist and by which God is bound. Instead, Suárez takes necessary truths stated in conditional propositions to be nothing more than identity statements. Therefore, necessary propositions are founded on the law of identity. In scholastic terminology, we would say that a predicate, e.g. animal, is part of the essence of a subject, e.g. man. Or, we could describe the necessity as a *de re* modality as opposed to a *de dicto* modality. Thus, as Suárez points out, the foundation for necessary truths is not found in propositions but in objects themselves. This view has also been called *essentialism.* Plantings, in *The Nature of Necessity*, describes it in this way: "One who accepts tha idea of modality *de re* typically holds that some object – 9, for example – have some of their properties – being composite, for example – essentially or necessarily." Suárez describes it as follows,

> … it seems we have to say that this connection [the connection between the subject and predicate of a necessary proposition] is nothing else than the identity of the terms [*identitatem extremorem*] which are in essential and affirmative propositions (the same thing is to be said proportionally about the difference of the terms in negative propositions). For every truth of an affirmative proposition is founded on some identity or unity of the terms [*in aliqua extremorum identitate vel unitate*] which, though conceived of by us in a complex way [synthetic], and by way of joining of a predicate with a subject, is still in reality nothing but the very entity of the thing.[14]

2.2 *Descartes' Criticism of Suárez*

Having now a clearer understanding of Suárez's notion of eternal truths, we can address Descartes' criticisms. First, however, we need to clarify and confirm Descartes' claims. Descartes, in his letter to Mersenne, provided the following description of Suárez's theory of eternal truths. (1) All eternal and necessary truths are true prior to the knowledge that God has of them.[15] (2) All eternal and necessary truths are independent of the will of God.[16] (3) If God did not exist, eternal and necessary truths would still be true. [17] (4) God knows all eternal and necessary truths because they are true and it is not the case that all eternal and necessary truths are true because God knows them as true. (5)Any position that maintains (1)-(4) is unorthodox in relation to Christian doctrine. Besides the foregoing criticisms, Descartes reveals something about his own position. (6) The act of willing and the act of knowing in God are one act.[18] (7) All eternal and necessary truths depend on the will of God[19] (the opposite of (2)). (8) All eternal and necessary truths are true because God knows them as true and it is not the case that God knows them because they are true (the opposite of 4). [20]

There are various ways of approaching this polemic between Descartes and Suárez. First, let us consider what their views have in common. Suárez's view is consistent with Descartes' claim (6) that the act of the willing and the act of knowing in God are one act. It is important to notice that the remaining claims can be deduced from claims (1) and (2). (3) follows from (2). (4) follows from (2). (5) is based on (1), (2), (3), and (4). (7) is the opposite of (2), and (8) is the opposite of (4). Even though propositions (3)-(8) can be reduced to propositions (1) and (2), propositions (3) and (4) appear sufficiently independent and controversial to warrant further examination. As a

consequence, let us examine propositions (1) (2), (3), and (4), and confirm that these propositions are an accurate representation of Suárez's view.

The first proposition, (1) "that eternal and necessary truths are true prior to the knowledge that God has of them" is an incorrect interpretation of Suárez's view. On the contrary, Suárez claims that God is eternal and omniscient, which would make it impossible for some truth to be prior to the knowledge that God has of it. Descartes must have falsely thought that if God knows eternal truths because they are true, then the truths must be prior to the knowledge that God has of them. However, this argument seems to conflate logical priority with temporal priority.

The second proposition, (2) "that eternal and necessary truths do not depend on the will of God" is ambiguous. It could mean (2.1) that the existence or actuality of eternal and necessary truths is independent of the will of God. Or, it could mean (2.2) that the truth and necessity of eternal and necessary truths is independent of the will of God. Suárez's view is consistent with (2.2) but not with (2.1). Suárez claims that *all existential* truths depend directly or indirectly on the will of God. Suárez affirms at various places in the *Metaphysical Disputations* that every true real being (*verum ens reale*)[21] depends on the efficient cause of God,[22] given that God is the cause and creator of all things. On the other hand, Suárez does maintain (2.2) that the truth and necessity of eternal and necessary truths are independent of the will of God, since, as conditional propositions, eternal truths do not require the actuality or existence of either the subject or the predicate.

The third proposition, (3) "that if God did not exist, eternal and necessary truths would still be true," appears more controversial than the foregoing. However, if one accepts the claim (2.2) that the truth and necessity of eternal and necessary truths is independent of the will of God, then one must also accept (3). Thus, since we have confirmed 2.2 as an accurate interpretation of Suárez's view, it follows that (3) is also correct.

Finally, the fourth proposition is an accurate representation of Suárez's view. Suárez says: "Again, those enunciations [eternal truths] are not true because they are known by God, but rather they are thus known because they are true; otherwise no reason could be given why God would necessarily know them to be true."[23]

To summarize, then, Suárez does seem to hold a seemingly controversial view that entails the following propositions:

(2.2) All eternal and necessary truths are independent of the will of God.

(3) If God did not exist, eternal and necessary truths would still be true [from 2.2].

(4) God knows all eternal and necessary truths because they are true and it is not the case that all eternal and necessary truths are true because God knows them as true [from 2.2].

Since proposition (2.2) is a necessary and sufficient condition for propositions (3) and (4), we can focus solely on it. Does the view that eternal and necessary truths are independent of the will of God constitute an unorthodox position in relation to the traditional Christian doctrine? Is it inconsistent with the traditional view of God? Is God's power limited in any way if God's will is curtailed by eternal and necessary

truths? More relevant to our discussion is the following: Is God's omnipotence diminished in any way if God's will is limited in the distribution of salvation by what is just?

3. *Suárez's View on the Relationship between God and Eternal Truths and a Theory of Salvation*

St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophy is that which best represents the orthodox Christian Catholic view. Therefore, I will use the help of Aquinas to show that Suárez's view of independent eternal truths is consistent with the traditional conception of God. Suárez's claim (2.2) that the truth and necessity of eternal and necessary truths are independent of the will of God rests on his belief that eternal and necessary truths are conditional propositions. Suárez argues that since conditional propositions do not require the actuality or existence of either the subject or the predicate, they do not depend on the will of God (see 2.1). St. Thomas Aquinas' view on the nature of conditional propositions is consistent with that of Suárez's. Aquinas claims that given the nature of a conditional proposition its truth is not dependent on the existence or actuality of either antecedent or consequent; instead, its truth lies in the relation between the antecedent and the consequent. He says: "For there is no reason why a conditional proposition should not be true, though both the antecedent and consequent are [not only false but] impossible: as if one were to say: *If man is a donkey, he has four feet.*"[24] Nevertheless, showing that Aquinas's view of conditionals is consistent with Suárez's is not sufficient to resolve the tension that exists between independent eternal truths and the traditional conception of God.

Is it possible to consistently hold that God is omniscient and omnipotent and (2.2) that the truth and necessity of eternal and necessary truths is independent of the will of God? To say that eternal and necessary truths are independent of the will of God means that God's will is limited by these truths. In other words, God's will has no power over them. God cannot make an unjust act just solely because God wills it. If this view is correct, then God's will is constrained by the concepts of justice, good, etc. Thus God's will is not absolute. At first glance it appears that Descartes is right, and that the traditional conception of God is not logically compatible with (2.2).

3.1 *The Will of God*

What is the meaning of an absolute will? In Descartes' fourth meditation of his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, he explains that a free will is synonymous with an infinite will. To have an infinite will means to have the capacity (or power) to desire any possible end. Descartes argues that humans have an infinite will. How, then, are we to understand God's absolute will? When we refer to an absolute will, we cannot simply mean an infinite will. An absolute will refers to a will that has the power to desire any possible end and has the power to bring it about. Thus only an omnipotent being can have an absolute will. Also an absolute will cannot have an extrinsic cause. According to Aquinas, "if anyone in one act wills an end, and in another act the means to that end, his willing the end will be the *cause* [my emphasis] of his willing the means."[25]   For instance, if my son Kristian wills a specific end, let us say to finish high school, and he also wills to attend class in order to achieve this end, then the cause of his willing to attend class is his willing to finish high school. Aquinas would argue that my son's

willing to attend class, has an extrinsic cause namely his willing to finish high school. If a will has an extrinsic cause it would be limited and could not be considered an absolute will. There are, therefore, three requirements that need to be fulfilled for a person to have an absolute will: 1) the person must have an infinite will; 2) the person must be able to accomplish anything she can will; and 3) the person's will cannot have an extrinsic cause. How do these criteria relate to our problem of salvation?

If God is bound by an independent conception of justice, then God would have problems meeting an absolute will's criteria 2 and 3. God would have problems meeting 2 because He would not have the power to will an unjust salvific plan to be just. He would have problems meeting criterion 3 because God's act of implementing a just salvific plan would have an extrinsic cause, namely, the independent concept of justice.

3.2 *Does an independent concept of justice create an extrinsic cause for God?*

In God, the relationship between the act of willing an end and the act of willing a means to that end is different from created, finite beings. The difference is a result of God's unity and thus the simultaneity of all God's acts. Aquinas explains: "This [that willing the end is the cause of willing the means] cannot be true if in one act He [God] wills both end and means; for a thing cannot be its own cause."[26] This insight of Aquinas's is essential to show that the independence of eternal truths and God's omnipotence are reconcilable. Let us call this insight the simultaneity principle. We can restate the simultaneity principle as follows: God wills means and ends all in one act. A result of the simultaneity principle is that if God wills an end that requires God to will a

set of particular necessary means to that end, God's will does not have an extrinsic cause. However, it may still be true that if God decides to create some end, it is *necessary* that God also create the means that are *necessary* for the end in question.[27] Aquinas says: "Yet it will be true to say that He wills to order to the end the means to the end."[28] Therefore, when God wills an end, God also wills the necessary means to that end, *which are presented to Him through His intellect*, all in one act. Applying Aquinas' understanding of the will of God, we can interpret Suárez eternal truths as follows: if God freely wills to create a human being, He also necessarily wills to create an animal.[29] We can also say that if God freely wills to grant a just salvation to creation, God also necessarily wills to grant the particular salvific plan dictated by that which is just. Through the simultaneity principle we have shown that even if God must necessarily will a particular set of means to accomplish an end, God's will has no extrinsic cause and thus remains uncaused. However, even if we can show that no extrinsic cause can affect God's will, doesn't the inability on the part of God to create a certain being, e.g. a human being, without its essential properties, as an animal, represent an erosion of God's omnipotence? Doesn't God's inability to implement a just salvific plan that deviates from an independent notion of justice represent an erosion of God's omnipotence?

3.3 *Does an independent concept of justice limit God's omnipotence?*

What does it mean to be omnipotent? God's omnipotence consists in His ability to do all things. Aquinas claims that "all" in the claim: "God can do all things"[30] should be interpreted as "all possible things."[31] Possible should be interpreted as absolutely

possible. Absolutely possible refers to any proposition in which the terms are not incompatible with one another. Aquinas, like Suárez, describes absolute possibility as that which is opposed to non-being or the impossible. Thus, whatever is absolutely possible for Aquinas is "whatsoever has or can have the nature of being… [or]…everything that does not imply a contradiction in terms…"[32] Let us call this description of God's omnipotence the omnipotence principle.

Let us reconsider once more Suárez's notion of necessary and eternal truths as truths that are based on the principle of identity. Suárez says: "For every truth of an affirmative proposition is founded on some identity or unity of the terms which, though conceived of by us in a complex way, and by way of joining of a predicate with a subject, is still in reality nothing but the very entity of the thing."[33] According to Suárez, therefore, eternal truths are complex analytical statements. Even though we may not always grasp the unity present in an eternal truth proposition, as we do in the proposition "All bachelors are unmarried men," the unity is present for an omniscient observer. As a consequence, for God, eternal truths are logically necessary truths and thus their independence from God does not represent a diminishing in any way of His power. To say that God is limited by eternal truths is nothing more than to say that God must act within what is possible. Aquinas says: "whatever implies contradiction does not come within the scope of divine omnipotence, because it cannot have the aspect of possibility."[34]

4. *Conclusion: Solution to the Eschatological Problem*

In this paper I have defended S3 as the correct eschatological view. The essence of S3 is that moral people do deserve a more rewarding afterlife than immoral people. I have argued that S3 is consistent with the view that salvation is gratuitously given by God. Thus, even though God may not be obligated to grant salvation to anyone (because no one deserves salvation), if God does grant salvation, then God is obligated to distribute it according to some real notion of justice. The difficulty this paper has tried to resolve concerns the apparent problematic relationship between the concept of justice and the traditional view of God.[35] S3 requires that God's will be limited by the concept of justice, so that God is *morally* bound by it. This view makes God's will appear restricted, since when God wills certain ends, He necessarily must will certain means to bring about those ends. However, given Suárez's metaphysical view of the relationship between God and universals, the simultaneity principle, and the omnipotence principle, the view that eternal truths are independent of God does not imply either that God's will has an extrinsic cause or that God's power is limited. We can conclude, then, that justice has the sort of independence and necessity such that if God is to act morally perfect, He must conform His will to a real concept of justice. We should expect, therefore, that if rewards and punishments are distributed in some way by God in an after-life, then they should be based on God's infallible judgment concerning the moral praiseworthiness of the person. Moreover, given the just allocation of rewards and punishments on the part of an infallible judge, we probably will not find Mother Teresa in the same heavenly state as Hitler.

NOTES

[1] St. Augustine, On Free Will in Philosophy in the Middles Ages edited by Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1973) pp. 33-64.

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Vol.5, edited by Thomas Gilby (Eyre and Spottiswoode and McGraw Hill, 1967) I, Q.25, A.3 R3.

[3] René Descartes, "Letter to Mersenne," May 6, 1630, The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. III, trans. by John Cottingham, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 24.

[4] Descartes, p. 24.

[5] T.J. Cronin, S.J. Objective Being in Descartes and in Suárez (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1966) 37-38.

[6] All references of Suárez's work will be from Disputationes Metaphysicae (hereafter DM), in Opera Omnia, ed. Vives (Paris, 1856-77) vol. 26 and from the English translation of disputation 31 Francis Suárez On The Essence of Finite Being As Such, On The Existence of That Essence and Their Distinction, (hereafter EED) translated from the Latin with an Introduction by Norman Wells, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1983).

[7] Suárez says, "this opinion [third] asserts that existence and essence are not distinguished in the thing itself [in re ipsa], even though the essence, conceived of abstractly and with precision, as it is in potency, be distinguished from actual existence, as a non-being (ens) from a being (ens). Moreover, I think that this opinion as set forth is absolutely true." Suárez, EED, p. 52. <<Et sic affirmat haec sententia existiam et essentiam non distingui in re ipsa, licet essentia, abstracte et praecise concepta, ut est in potentia, distinguatur ab existentia actuali, tanquam non ens ab ente. Et hanc sententiam sic explicatam existimo esse omnino veram.>> (DM disp. 31, sec. 1, no. 13; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 228])

[8] Suárez, EED, p. 199. <<…si, ablata existentia, perit essentia, ergo propositiones illae in quibus praedicata essentialia de re praedicantur non sunt necessariae neque perpetuae veritatis; consequens autem est falsum et contra omnium philosophorum sententiam. Suárez continues: "Because otherwise all the truths dealing with creatures would be contingent, hence there would be no science of creatures, because this concerns only necessary truths. The sequence is proved, because if, with the removal of existence, essence is nothing [ablata existentia, essentia nihil est], therefore neither is it a substance, nor an accident, and consequently, neither a body nor a soul nor other things of this kind. Therefore, no essential attribute can be rightly predicated of it." Quia alias omnes veritates circa creaturas essent contingentes, unde non posset de creaturis esse scientia, quia haec solum est de veritatibus necessarriis. Sequela probatur, quia si, ablata existentia, essentia nihil est, ergo nec est substantia neque accidens, et consequenter neque corpus, neque anima, neque alia huiusmodi; ergo nullum essentiale attributum potest de illa iure praedicari.>> (DM disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 38; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 294])

[9] Suárez, EED, p. 203. <<In priori sensu veritas propositionum pendet sine dubio ab existentia extremorum, quia juxta illam signficationem verbum est non absolvitur a tempore, seu (quod

idem est) significat realem et actualem durationem…>>(DM disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 44; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 296])

[10] Suárez, EED, p. 204. DM disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 45; (Vives; vol. 26, p. 297)

[11] The fact that eternal truths are independent of any efficient cause does not make anything independent of God as creator. Suárez claims that nothing that has true real being is independent of the efficient cause of God, since God is the creator of all things. But eternal truths, as conditionals, do not have actual being (esse) and thus are not actual beings (ens). Suárez says, "Now the being of truth in a proposition of itself is not a real and intrinsic being, but it is an objective being in the intellect as it is composing; <hence it belongs also to privations.>" See Suárez, EED, p. 45. <<Esse autem veritatis propositionis ex se non est esse quoddam obiectivum in intellectu componente, unde convenit etiam privationibus.>> (DM disp. 31, sec. 1, no. 2; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 225])

[12] Suárez, EED, pp. 204-5. <<Imo, in hoc eodem sensu non solum non requirunt hae connexiones causam effiecientem in actu, verum etiam neque in potentia videntur illiam postulare, si formaliter ac praecise sistamus in earum veritate. Quod potest declarari ratione facta de propositione conditionali cujus veritas non pendet ex causa efficienti vel potente efficere, et ideo aeque reperitur in rebus impossibilibus ac in possibilibus…>> (DM disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 45; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 297])

[13] Suárez, EED, p. 205. <<…nondum est explicatum quid sit ista necessaria connexio extremorum non existentium; nam, com nihil in re ponat, difficile est intellectu quomodo possit fundare necessariam veritatem. Neque enim satisfacit si dicamus, ablata rerum existentia, solum manere hanc connexionem in divino exemplari et ab illo oriri talem necessitatem…>> (DM disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 46; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 297])

[14] Suárez, EED, p. 206. <<…dicendum videtur hanc connexionem nihil aliud esse quam identitatem extremorem quae sunt in propositionibus esseientialibus et affirmativis (et idem dicendum est proportionaliter de diversitate extremorum in negativis). Omnis enim veritas propositionis affirmativae fundatur in aliqua extremorum identitate vel unitate, quae, licet a nobis concipiatur complexo modo, et per modum conjunctionis praedicati cum subiecto, tamen in re nihil est praeter ipsammet rei entitatem. Identitas autem, cum sit proprietas entis (nam idem et diversum ad unitatum reducentur, ut supra diximus), in omni ente seu in omni statu entis cum proportione reperitur. Unde, sicut homo existens et animal in re idem sunt, ita homo possibilis, seu qui objici potest scientiae aut exemplari hominis, identitatem habet cum animali proportionaliter sumto; haec ergo identitas sufficiens est ad fundandam illam necessitatem, et reperiri potest in ente in potentia, quamvis nihil sit actu, quia nihil addit enti in potentia nisi habitudinem rationis in ordine ad conceptus nostros.>> (DM disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 46; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 298])

[15] Descartes, "If men really understood the sense of their words they could never say without blasphemy that the truth of anything is prior to the knowledge which God has of it." p. 24.

[16] Descartes, "So we must not say that if God did not exist nevertheless these truths would be true; for the existence of God is the first and the most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which all others proceed." p. 24.

[17]Descartes, "In God willing and knowing are a single thing in such a way that by the very fact of willing something he knows it and it is only for this reason that such a thing is true." p. 24.

[18] Descartes, "In God willing and knowing are a single thing…" p. 24.

[19] Descartes, "In God willing and knowing are a single thing in such a way that by the very fact of willing something he knows it and it is only for this reason that such a thing is true." p. 24.

[20] Descartes, "As for eternal truths, I say once more that they are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible." p. 24.

[21] It should be kept in mind that Suárez distinguishes between true real being (Verum ens reale) and real being (ens reale). The former is limited to existential beings, meaning beings that have existed, exist or will exist. The latter includes both existential beings and possible beings, meaning all beings that are not nothing and not impossible beings (i.e. all beings that are not non-contradictory). See John P. Doyle, "Suárez on Beings of Reason and Truth (1)," Vivarium, 25 (1987): 47-75; John P. Doyle, "Suárez on Beings of Reason and Truth (2)," Vivarium, 26 (1987): 51-72; Francisco Suárez, S.J. On Beings of Reason (De Entibus Rationis). Metaphysical Disputation 54, translated from the Latin with an introduction by John P. Doyle (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995); John P. Doyle, "Suárez on the Reality of Possibles" The Modern Schoolman 46 (1967): 323-341; and Bernardo J. Cantens, Suárez and Meinong on Beings of Reason and Non-existent Objects, (Dissertation, University of Miami, 1999).

[22] See for one such example: MD, disp. 29, sec2, no.21 (vives; vol. 26, p.)

[23] Suárez, EED, p. 200. <<Rursus neque illae enuntiationes sunt verae quia cognoscuntur a Deo, sed potius ideo cognoscuntur quia verae sunt…>> (Disputationes Metaphysicae in Opera Omnia, disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 40; [Vives; vol. 26, p.])

[24] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Vol.1-5, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948) I, Q.25, A.3RO2. [p. 138].

[25] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.19, A.5C. [p. 107].

[26] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.19, A.5C. [p. 107].

[27] Aquinas says: Now in willing an end we do not necessarily will things that conduce to it unless they are such that the end cannot be attained without them;" Summa Theologica, I, Q.19, A.3C. [p. 105].

[28] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.19, A.5C. [p. 107].

[29] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.19, A.5C. [p. 107].

[30] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.25, A.3C. [p. 138]

[31] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.25, A.3C. [p. 138]

[32] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.25, A.3C. [p. 138]

[33] Suárez, EED, p. 206. <<…dicendum videtur hanc connexionem nihil aliud esse quam identitatem extremorem quae sunt in propositionibus esseientialibus et affirmativis (et idem dicendum est proportionaliter de diversitate extremorum in negativis). Omnis enim veritas propositionis affirmativae fundatur in aliqua extremorum identitate vel unitate, quae, licet a nobis concipiatur complexo modo, et per modum conjunctionis praedicati cum subiecto, tamen in re nihil est praeter ipsammet rei entitatem. Identitas autem, cum sit proprietas entis (nam idem et diversum ad unitatum reducentur, ut supra diximus), in omni ente seu in omni statu entis cum proportione reperitur. Unde, sicut homo existens et animal in re idem sunt, ita homo possibilis, seu qui objici potest scientiae aut exemplari hominis, identitatem habet cum animali proportionaliter sumto; haec ergo identitas sufficiens est ad fundandam illam necessitatem, et reperiri potest in ente in potentia, quamvis nihil sit actu, quia nihil addit enti in potentia nisi habitudinem rationis in ordine ad conceptus nostros.>> (DM disp. 31, sec. 12, no. 46; [Vives; vol. 26, p. 298])

[34] St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, Q.25, A.3C. [p. 138]

[35] I have not addressed the further problem concerning the plausibility that eternal salvation and absolute bliss can be distributed in parts or degrees. I will leave this problem for another time.