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MEASURE IN THE ETERNITY OF GOD  
AND IN CREATED DURATIONS

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## PROPOSITIONS

1. There is but one time.
2. The method of Limits is an attempt to approach divine knowledge.
3. The external sensibles are rightly divided into proper, common and per accidens.
4. The ultimate end of man is felicity.
5. We may proceed to a knowledge of truth in two ways, by means of resolution and by means of composition.

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## FOREWORD

It has been said that if the problem of time could be solved there would result a great release of the human spirit. In fact, many of the problems which torment the mind of man are more or less involved with time, to cite but one example : the problem of man's free will and God's knowledge of future contingent events. It was Boethius who suggested that the study of eternity, not time, would shed a ray of light on this knotty problem.

While it is true that time is better known to us than eternity, yet the most fundamental problems to which time gives rise can be solved only by a study of eternity. Time is better known only because it is the duration in which and to which we are present, not only as to our being but as to our own knowledge of it. This however does not mean that time is in itself something quite clear. An object is intelligible only insofar as it is in act. Upon investigation however time proves to be more potential than actual. The past is no longer, the future is not yet, and the only actuality, the present, is not time because it has no succession of before and after which is of the very essence of time. Thus time, which is very close to pure potentiality, can shed but little light upon our many problems, which viewed in the light of eternity may seem less contradictory and impossible.

Because of the realization that only from a deeper penetration of this mystery could we ever hope to see the problems of the temporal world in the light of the eternal we undertook a study of eternity for which we used John of St. Thomas' commentary on St. Thomas' treatise on eternity. To make this beautiful and profound commentary better known by making it available to a greater number of readers we have translated it into English. We here present the translation and some considerations or reflections to which the commentary gave rise.

### ETERNITY MEASURES CREATED DURATIONS

By insisting upon the true nature of measure John of St. Thomas not only answered conclusively the arguments of those who denied that eternity is measure but he also illuminated the notion of eternity by insisting upon what is absolutely formal to eternity, its indivisibility.

Having clarified this notion he uses it to dissipate a certain confusion which had arisen because of the imperfectly analyzed notions of measure and eternity. Some theologians had denied the coexistence of eternity and created durations; others, admitting the coexistence, denied that eternity measures created durations; among those who admitted both the coexistence and the measure there existed a difference of opinion as to the mode in which eternity measures the created being and the kind of being it measures. John of St. Thomas restates the position of St. Thomas, solving each problem from the fact that eternity is measure and indivisible. Since eternity is indivisible it is coexistent with created things and, never ceasing, it is simultaneous with every instant of time.

Furthermore, not only is eternity the measure of God's duration but it is the measure of all durations, as is evident from the fact that it is the cause of all durations, the most simple and the most uniform. As John of St. Thomas stressed in the preceding chapter,

that which is the first and most simple in a class is the measure of all the other members of that class. That eternity is the measure of all created beings is proved even more conclusively from the fact that the measure of uncreated duration measures the action by which God produces and conserves, because it is uncreated action; measuring the action it measures the term, for it is not possible that the action be measured and not the term.

In the solution of the first two difficulties we saw that John of St. Thomas used the notion of eternity which he had disengaged from the confusion and obscurity which had resulted after several centuries of controversy. In the solution of the third problem he again makes the whole point turn on the indivisibility of eternity, which is completely indivisible whether considered as it measures its own duration or as it measures beings which in themselves endure successively. Since an incorrect solution of this problem gives rise to many difficulties we shall examine it at greater length.

Granted that eternity measures created being, is the thing measured in its being as known by God, or as it is in its potential being, or is the thing measured by eternity in its real, physical being? Since eternity is real measure it would seem that the thing should be measured in its real duration, but a difficulty arises both in regard to eternity and in regard to the measured thing. As to eternity - it must measure in an immutable mode, possessing and containing immutably

things which in themselves are mutable and successive. Thus, possessing them immutably, it contains them and measures them even before they are in themselves, or after they have ceased to be. As to the thing - how, before it is outside its causes can it be measured physically and how can it coexist with eternity when it has not yet been produced in itself? Why are things as merely possible not measured and how are they rendered physically measured merely by the divine will without any production ad extra?

Concerning this difficulty there is a twofold opinion. The Thomists hold that all created things are really present to eternity, so indivisibly that they coexist with the whole of eternity. While it is true that among themselves in their own proper measure they are not simultaneous, still they are simultaneously present to eternity. The other opinion is that of Scotus, Aureolus, Durandus, and others, who hold that things, after they are in act in their temporal duration are present absolutely and adequately to eternity, and since eternity is indivisible, present to all eternity; but before they are in act in their duration they are future with respect to eternity, although objectively present to the divine mind.

Because of certain passages in St. Thomas in which he talks of objective presence, some of his early disciples thought that he held that things coexist with eternity only objectively, insofar as they are in Him as their cause:



"What is now was to be, before it was, because its future lay in its cause.... But the first cause is alone eternal."  
(I, q. 16, a. 7, ad 3)

"Now before such truth existed, it was not true to say that such a truth did exist, except by reason of the divine intellect, wherein alone truth is eternal."  
(I, q. 16, a. 7, ad 4)

"Although creatures have not existed from eternity, except in God, yet because they have been in Him from eternity, God has known them eternally in their proper natures."  
(I, q. 20, a. 2, ad 2)

"Those things that are not in themselves, exist with God, inasmuch as they are foreknown and preordained by Him."  
(I-II, q. 91, a. 1, ad 1)

"Future contingents before they are, preexist in two things, namely, in divine foreknowledge and in created causes."  
(De Ver., q. 12, a. 3)

These passages influence many to deny in God any presence other than cognitive or objective presence. But the opinion of many Thomists is that things not only have objective and cognitive presence but a real presence with respect to eternity, since they are measured immutably by eternity. For eternity is measure in the genus duration and duration is existence and existence is physical. Hence, since eternity is duration and measure it can only be measure of duration and therefore of physical existence.

That St. Thomas recognized this real, durative presence is evident from the fact that he uses it to prove that God sees intuitively future contingent things in themselves because they are present to Him in eternity.

"Hence, all temporal things are present to God from eternity, not only in the manner that He has the ideas of all things before Him, as some say; but because His glance is carried from eternity over all things, as they are in their presentiality." (1, q. 14, a. 13)

Here St. Thomas shows that things are present to God objectively because He sees them in their presentiality. Thus the presentiality is something other than objective presence, otherwise St. Thomas would be proving objective presence by objective presence. Some opponents of the Thomistic position have seen the efficacy of this argument but have replied by saying that St. Thomas never said that future things are known by God because they are present but that they are present because they are known. If this passage were the only one noted perhaps doubt could arise as to St. Thomas' meaning, but an examination of a number of others leaves no doubt. In the passage

"Whatever exists in any part of time, is coexistent with the eternal as though present to it, although in relation to another part of time it may be present or future. Now a thing cannot be present to, and coexistent with, the eternal, except with the whole eternal, since this has no successive duration. Therefore whatever happens throughout the whole course of time is seen as present by the divine intellect in its eternity." (1 Contra Gentis, c. 66, nn. 6-7)

St. Thomas clearly proves that God sees things in themselves (which is to be present to Him objectively) because they are present to Him in His eternity. If he were speaking of objective presence alone he would be proving objective presence from objective presence. The following passages leave no room for doubt :

"Future contingents are under the divine cognition only because it sees them in themselves since they are present to it by reason of its eternity." (III Contra Gentes, c. 164)

Why are they known, or present, to divine cognition? Because they are present to God's eternity. Here indeed St. Thomas clearly proves cognitive presence from presence in eternity. Therefore presence in eternity must be something other than cognitive presence; otherwise St. Thomas would be guilty of a vicious circle.

Could St. Thomas express himself more clearly than he has done in the following?

"In regard to things which do not yet exist for us God sees not only the being which they have in their causes but also the being which they have in themselves, inasmuch as His eternity is by its indivisibility present to all time."  
(Contra Gentes, c. 66)

"God, in His eternity, knows with certitude all things whatsoever which are done in the course of time, for His eternity in its presentiality touches the whole course of time and transcends it." (Opus., II, c. 155)

"Since the vision of divine Science is measured by eternity, which is simultaneously-whole, and nevertheless includes all time and is not absent from any part of time, it follows that whatsoever is done in time He sees, not as future, but as present." (De Ver., q. 2, a. 12)

"God sees all things in His eternity, which being simple, is present to all time, and embraces all time." (I, q. 57, a. 3)

"Since God is eternal, it is necessary that His knowledge have the mode of eternity, which is to be simultaneously-whole, without succession. Hence just as His eternity, one and the same and indivisible, is present to all times as they now stand, although time is successive, so also His knowledge knows intuitively all temporal things, although they succeed themselves, as present to it, and no one of them is future with respect to it." (I Sent., d. 33, 3b, qu. un. a. 5)

In the passages quoted St. Thomas proves objective presence from the fact that things are present in God's eternity which includes all time. But eternity is a measure of real duration, so it is of that that St. Thomas is speaking. Otherwise he would be proving cognitive presence from cognitive presence.

There is another opinion advanced to solve the difficulties, but it, too, must be rejected as not in keeping with the mind of St. Thomas. It is that explanation which holds that God knows things according to the time in which they will be, and this time is present to divine knowledge objectively, as things are evident from afar off to one gazing from a high place of observation. This opinion cannot be advanced as being in accord with the mind of St. Thomas, since he says that things are seen by divine cognition in the measure which embraces all time. This measure which embraces all time is not time but eternity. So St. Thomas does not say that God sees things in the time when they are produced outside their causes in their proper measure as this explanation would suggest. Therefore it is to be rejected.

Nor can it be said that by means of eternity God will coexist with time when things will be placed in time, and that therefore by means of it God sees things present, that is, in themselves according to their time. According to this, things are not present to eternity, but future. But St. Thomas says these future things are present and they are known by God as present because He sees them intuitively. Now it is of the

very nature of intuitive vision that that which it sees be really and physically present. Therefore, if God sees things as physically present without their being physically present His knowledge would not be true.

These passages are indicative of St. Thomas' position. Not only do they show beyond the shadow of a doubt that he proves that future things are known by God because they are present (and not vice versa) but that things are indivisibly and simultaneously present to God's eternity because of the very mode in which eternity contains and possesses that which is present to it.

If Saint Thomas expresses himself so clearly in these passages, does he not express himself just as clearly in the passages cited by the opponents and in which he seems to state without equivocation that things are in eternity only as known? To understand these passages we should know why they are given by St. Thomas, from what context they are taken. Moreover, it must be understood that while we are claiming that St. Thomas posited real duration we do not by that very fact claim that he denied cognitive presence. So we admit that these passages prove cognitive presence. But St. Thomas' acceptance of cognitive presence does not ipso facto lead to a denial of real presence; he places the emphasis on cognitive presence in these passages because such a presence is sufficient to prove the point which he wants to make in the places cited. For instance, in the first place quoted he wants to prove that truth is eternal in the divine intellect. (I, q. 16, a. 7). So

judgment is eternal except in the divine mind. Here cognitive presence is sufficient to prove his point. How the truth is or is not present to eternity St. Thomas does not say here because he is talking about truth which is in the intellect and has therefore reference to knowledge.

In the second place he affirms that creatures have not been from all eternity except in God. But he does not say how they were in God from all eternity. From the affirmation that they exist only in God it cannot be inferred that they are in God in only one way, although for St. Thomas' purpose here the cognitive presence sufficed. In the third place he explains how things are in the divine law and ordination. For his purpose, that is, to prove that law is eternal it was sufficient for him to prove it from cognitive presence. But again his acceptance of this kind of presence does not mean that he denies presence according to the measure of eternity. In the fourth place (De Ver., q. 12, a. 3) St. Thomas affirms that futures exist in these two things. He does not, however, say that they do not also exist in eternity, which he affirms in other passages. Here he does not state this, because he is speaking of revelations which are imprinted from the knowledge of God. So he talks of God's knowledge, because they are not imprinted from His eternity but from His knowledge.

Do not the many passages cited prove conclusively that St. Thomas posited real presence in eternity and would reject that solution

which posits only objective presence ?

To penetrate more fully the mind of St. Thomas John of St. Thomas noted that the coexistence of the temporal thing with eternity may be understood in two ways : - that the temporal thing, existing in its proper measure and temporal mode coexists with eternity, or, - not by reason of the proper measure but by reason of the eternal duration itself, things which will have their proper measure, already exist in eternity by coexisting with it, not in their proper duration, but in another which is that of eternity. The first of these two ways, that of coexistence with proper measure, is ruled out because of our faith. For it is of faith that nothing created has existed from all eternity. The second possibility (that things coexist with eternity, not in their proper measure but by coexisting with it in the higher duration of eternity) may in turn be understood in two ways : that they coexist adequately and wholly, under every aspect and under every correspondence, or that they coexist inadequately, that is, not under every aspect. It is in this way that we explain the presence of things in eternity.

We have quoted at length from St. Thomas. Let us see what the Fathers of the Church have to say on this same problem. Since some of the quotations which have been advanced from them have been interpreted in favor of cognitive knowledge we shall give only those which cannot be interpreted in this sense but which clearly refer to presence

in eternity. And we find in St. Augustine (XI Confessions, C. 11),

"Who shall hold the heart...and see that a long time cannot become long, save from the many notions that pass by, which cannot at the same instant be prolonged; but that in the eternal nothing passeth away, but that the whole is present."

Here he openly speaks of eternity in relation to creatures, who, he says in eternity have no past but are present. Again we find in St. Augustine (Psalm 101, 25, n. 10),

"The eternity of God is a substance which has nothing mutable; nothing in it is past as if it were not now, nor future, as if it were not yet, but whatever is in it, simply is."

St. Isidore says,

"Divine eternity precedes all times, and in God nothing is believed to be past, present or future, but all things are said to be present in Him because in His eternity He embraces all things. Otherwise God must be believed mutable, if successions of time are ascribed to Him."

(I de Summo Bono, C.6)

In St. Peter Damian we find,

"This today, immutable, indefective, inaccessible, is eternity, to which nothing evidently may be added, nothing evidently subtracted; and all things which among us take place, pass rapidly away, and change with the vicissitudes of time, within that today rest and remain without change. In that today the day is still unchanged in which this world took its origin and nevertheless in that today there is already the day in which it is to be judged by the justice of the eternal judgement."

(Opusc. 36, de Omnipotentia, C. 8)



And St. Bernard says,

"The succession of time runs its course beneath it but not for it. For it does not look forward to a future, not does it reflect back upon past time, and it does not release the present." (Serm. 80 in Cantic.)

John of St. Thomas explains the position of the Fathers as set forth in these passages in the following words :

"In these and other similar passages the Fathers are not speaking about the presence of things in their cognitive being and with respect to the intellect, since they do not refer to this, but they are speaking of it with respect to eternity, and they explain the mode in which this eternity is present to temporal things and contains them. Eternity, however, as it is an attribute distinct from the intellect does not contain them by knowing them but contains them according to indivisibility and supreme uniformity of duration which pertains to the real presence of duration." (Op. Cit., D. II, a. 3, p. 69, n. 14)

From these passages, moreover, he concludes that the Church Fathers are speaking not only of the negation of intrinsic succession in eternity, but also of extrinsic succession, for they say that not only is eternity immutable in itself, but those things which with us are successive and mutable, remain fixed in eternity and do not pass away. This position is admirably summed up in these words of Boethius (De Consol., prose 6), "Eternity, which is in full possession of itself must of necessity be ever present to itself and keep the infinity of movable time always present."

John of St. Thomas maintains that it is the opinion of the

Church Fathers and of St. Thomas that things are really present to Eternity, so indivisibly that there is neither intrinsic nor extrinsic succession. All, even the opponents, grant that eternity is the real and true measure of created duration, at least when things exist in their proper duration and measure. But if eternity measures at any time, and (because of its nature and mode of measuring) it cannot measure successively, then it must measure always. The opponents take issue on this score. They admit that eternity is indivisible and immutable in itself, intrinsically, but it cannot coexist indivisibly with successive things extrinsic to it, not from any defect on the part of eternity but because of the defect on the part of the measured things which pass under eternity and in passing coexist with it, with no mutability on the part of eternity but only on the part of the successive thing. Thus eternity is variable extrinsically, not intrinsically.

In reply John of St. Thomas says that eternity is indivisible not only entitatively but also in its mode of measuring and containing. Therefore not only are intrinsic succession and divisibility incompatible with it, but extrinsic as well. That eternity is indivisible in measuring is proved from the very definition of eternity, - the simultaneously-whole and perfect possession. Thus whatever it measures and contains, although extrinsic to it, it measures and contains so perfectly that it possesses it all at once. If the measure of

eternity were applied to the measured thing successively, or, eternity remaining fixed, if the measured thing were applied to it, eternity could not be said to possess all at once. So whether the succession is taken on the part of the measure or of the measured, the possession would not be simultaneously-whole and perfect, and consequently, whether intrinsic or extrinsic would not be fitting to eternity.

Thus it is evident that eternity cannot be the measure of created things by coexisting with them through many succeeding enumerations but by a single measurement it exhausts the whole quantity of the measured thing, because it measures by a mode of perfect possession, not by a mode of enumeration and of repeated application of the measure to the measured. In this is seen the perfection of this measure for no other measure exhausts all the quantity of the measured thing by a single measure and in a mode of immutable unity and possession. Therefore eternity, indivisible and immutable not only in itself but also in measuring, measures by a mode of integral and perfect possession. It need not await the coexistence and mutable duration of the created thing, but measuring it once, it measures it always by possessing it immutably and indivisibly.

When eternity is viewed thus in its formality of measuring it is seen that all the objections against this position come from an

anthropomorphic conception of eternity, for it is clear that they all arise from the fact that eternity is considered to be a measure in the sense that time is conceived to be a measure. But as John of St. Thomas stresses again and again eternity, because of its indivisibility, measures as a simultaneous possession of everything measured by itself. Hence it is repugnant to its mode of measuring that it await the transition and succession of the temporal thing in order to measure it.

## THE SUBJECT OF THE AEVUM

In his treatise on eternity St. Thomas enumerates the different kinds of duration. There is the duration of the being that is immutable both in being and operation; the duration of beings which change both as to their substance and operations, while midway between these durations there is the duration of the immaterial substances whose being does not undergo any change but who have change joined to them because of their operations. The first duration is measured by eternity, the second by time and the third by the aevum. It is the opinion of many Scholastics that there is but one aevum, just as there is but one time, but even among those who agree that there is but one aevum a difference of opinion arises as to the subject in which it is found. Granted that Lucifer was supreme among the angels, then he was the aevum, for in him would be found the greatest uniformity and simplicity. But in view of his fall a difficulty arises: does he remain the aevum? It does not seem fitting that the operations of the other angels be measured by him and, as it were, subjected to him in his fallen state, yet are we justified in denying the aevum to him since it belonged to him by nature, not by grace, and since after the fall he lost none of his natural perfections (1) but retained all that he had before? Did he

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(1) De Div. Nom., IV, 23.

not then retain the *aevum* which belonged to him by reason of greater immutability and uniformity of duration ?

Because of the strength of this argument some do not find it repulsive to think that Lucifer remained the *aevum* even in his fallen state. Others reject this reply and say that the *aevum simpliciter* is in the soul of Christ. Nazarius held this opinion because he thought that the *aevum* was only inchoatively constituted by natural perfections but had to be completed through grace. Thus the greater the gift of grace the more uniform the duration. Since the grace of Christ exceeded that of all others He would have the greatest uniformity and therefore would be the *aevum*.

Neither of these opinions is in keeping with the mind of St. Thomas. The *aevum* is a natural measure, measuring things of the natural order. While it is true that Christ's soul exceeded all others in grace, still in the natural order, "Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels." (1) The operations of Christ in the natural order proceed in a less universal mode than the operations of the angels. As a consequence the *aevum* cannot be found in Him because the *aevum* measures natural durations which are not affected substantially by their elevation to the supernatural, which is accidental.

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(1) Heb. 2: 7, 9.

The opinion that the aevum is still in Lucifer is expressly contrary to the opinion of St. Thomas :

"...spiritual substances are measured by the aevum not only as to their substance, but also as to their proper operation...thus it is necessary that the angel who is the subject of the aevum be the most simple not only as to essence but also as to operation. Such is the highest of all the good angels...whence the supreme of all the angels is the subject of the aevum - not Lucifer."  
(Quodlib., 5, q. 4, a. 7)

Formally, the aevum is that measure of immutable life which is joined to the least change in operations. By the word life is meant not only the living substance but the substance as it is the root of vital operations. Thus the aevum is the measure of angelic substance, not just in any way, but as it is the root of operations; so the more a substance is joined to greater mutability of operations the more it recedes from the uniformity of the aevum.

Now Lucifer, in the state of pure nature, was the subject of the aevum because his indivisible, immutable nature was the subject of operations which among the operations of the angels were the most supremely uniform. There was in him, as in every free being, a natural inclination of the will to will and to love his own perfection, so that it was impossible for him to will anything contrary to it. While from his nature he could not not love his own perfection, yet he was not necessarily obliged to direct his perfection to a higher end since

the higher end was not his proper end but that of the superior nature. Therefore he was free to direct his own perfection to a higher end or not. But Lucifer, whose own proper good was indeed very perfect, chose it as his last end instead of directing his proper good and perfection to a superior nature. And since rules of action must be taken from the end, the consequences was that through making himself his own end Lucifer pretended to submit other things to his own rule. From one error concerning a principle, various and multiple errors result, so from the initial disorder in the demon's will there arose all manner of sins, hatred of God, envy of the good angels, of man, et cetera.

Thus by his fall Lucifer turned from his end and in turning from this end which had given simplicity to his operations he lost the uniformity and unicity which had characterized his operations from adherence to their final end.

Moreover, he had been the measure of all the lower angels. St. Thomas says,

"Possibly, then, some of the lower separate substances of their own will, directed their good to him, thus departing from the divine order, and so sinned even as he did: while others, adhering by the movement of their will to the divine order, rightly departed from the order of the one who sinned, although he was higher than they according to the order of nature." (Contra Gentiles, c. 109)

Thus Lucifer, instead of now being the savior through the uniformity and simplicity of his operations directed unerringly to their end, introduces a multiplicity and deformity in his operations as he



seeks at every turn to thwart the will of God. He might be likened to the compass which directs the mariner at sea. Unfailingly pointing to the north it is a sure and safe guide; but should the compass, through some defect, lose its fixation it becomes a dangerous guide indeed. So Lucifer, in his natural state, was the *aeuum* of all the inferior angels, but deflected from his true end he veered dangerously in all directions, thus introducing into his operations a disorder so profound that it had its repercussions in the very substance which was the principle of those operations. And thus while it is true that Lucifer did not lose his natural perfections, still (in the instance of the *aeuum*) his very nature, as root and principle of his operations, was affected by the disorder introduced into his operations by his sin. Thus he not only lost grace but also that simplicity and uniformity of operation which had constituted him the *aeuum*.

Had he remained in the state of natural perfection and not sinned he could still have been the *aeuum* even though the other angels had been raised to the supernatural state, for he would not have fallen from greater to less uniformity in his operations. But he sinned and turned from his true, last end which was one and indivisible in drawing all things to itself.

The *aeuum*, then, although remaining formally the same, changed subjectively from Lucifer to the angel that retained the greatest uniformity in his operations.

DEUS MOVET CREATURAM SPIRITUALEM

PER TEMPUS

This section presents an attempt to set in relief the function of discrete time in angelic illumination. It was suggested by a brief passage in John of St. Thomas' Cursus Theologicus, T. II, disp. 10, a. 5, p. 98, n. 8 : Before we discuss this passage we must set forth certain notions and positions connected with this particular question.

The *Aevum* is the measure of the duration of a being incorruptible according to its substance, yet variable in its operations. Hence this measure applies not only to the very substance and faculties of the angel, but also to those of his operations which are inseparable and invariable, namely the knowledge and love of himself. The angel's cognitive and voluntary operations however are not confined to himself. He knows other beings as well; and while he knows them in knowing himself, this knowledge is confused and quite inadequate, as St. Thomas point out :

"...ea quae sunt infra angelum et ea quae sunt supra ipsum, sunt quoddammodo in substantia eius, non quidem perfecte, neque secundum propriam rationem, cum angeli essentia, finite existens, secundum propriam rationem ab aliis distinguatur; sed secundum quandam rationem communem. In essentia autem Dei sunt omnia perfecte et secundum propriam rationem, sicut in prima et universali virtute operativa, a qua procedit quicquid est in quacunque re vel proprium

vel commune. Et ideo Deus per essentiam suam habet propriam cognitionem de rebus omnibus; non autem angelus, sed solum commune." (1, q. 55, a. 1, ad 3)

It is for this reason that, to know other things distinctly, he needs added intelligible species, as St. Thomas has shown in the body of the same article :

"Potentia autem intellectiva angeli se extendit ad intelligendum omnia: quia objectum intellectus est ens vel verum commune. Ipsa autem essentia angeli non comprehendit in se omnia: cum sit essentia determinata ad genus et ad speciem. Hoc autem proprium est essentiae divinae, quae infinita est, ut in se simpliciter omnia comprehendat perfecte. Et ideo solus Deus cognoscit omnia per suam essentiam. Angelus autem per suam essentiam non potest omnia cognoscere; sed oportet intellectum eius aliquibus speciebus perfici ad res cognoscendas."

In article 3 of the same question St. Thomas goes on to show that the intelligible species of the higher angel are more universal and hence fewer in number, than the species of the lower angel :

"...ex hoc sunt in rebus aliqua superiora, quod sunt uni primo, quod est Deus, propinquiora et similiora. In Deo autem tota plenitudo intellectualis cognitionis continetur in uno, scilicet in essentia divina, per quam Deus omnia cognoscit. Quae quidem intelligibilis plenitudo in intellectibus creatis inferiori modo et minus simpliciter invenitur. Unde oportet quod ea quae Deus cognoscit per unam, inferiores intellectus cognoscant per multa: et tanto amplius per plura, quanto amplius intellectus inferior fuerit.

Sic igitur quanto angelus fuerit superior, tanto per pauciores species universitatem intelligibilium apprehendere poterit. Et ideo oportet quod eius formae sint universaliores, quasi ad plura se extendentes unaquaeque earum."

Obviously the universality of these intelligible species is not just universality according to predication, as the universality of animal which is predicable both of man and of brute. To know man or brute merely as animal, is to know them imperfectly. Distinct knowledge would require either distinct means of knowing as is the case of our knowledge of things; or, if both natures were to be known distinctly, the means of knowing would have to be what St. Thomas calls universal virtute. The explanation he gives in Book 11 of the Summa Contra Gentiles, c. 58, is to the point :

"...summa autem hujus universalitatis est in Deo, qui per unam, scilicet per essentiam suam, omnia cognoscit; infima autem in intellectu humano, qui ad unumquodque intelligibile indiget specie intelligibili propria et ei consequente.

Non est igitur per formas universales apud substantias superiores imperfectior cognitio, sicut apud nos. Per similitudinem enim animalis, per quam cognoscimus aliquid in genere tantum, imperfectiorem cognitionem habemus quam per similitudinem hominis, per quam cognoscimus speciem completam: cognoscere enim aliquid secundum genus tantum, est cognoscere imperfecte et quasi in potentia, cognoscere autem in specie est cognoscere perfecte et in actu. Intellectus autem noster, quia infimum gradum tenet in substantiis intellectualibus, adeo particularitas similitudines requirit quod unicuique cognoscibili proprie oportet respondere propriam similitudinem in ipso: unde per similitudinem animalis non cognoscit rationalis, et per consequens nec hominem, nisi secundum quid. Similitudo autem intelligibilis quae est in substantia separata, est universaliore virtutis, ad plura representanda sufficiens. Et ideo non facit imperfectiorem cognitionem, sed perfectiorem: est enim universalis virtus, ad modum formae agentis in causa universali, quae quanto fuerit universalior, tanto ad plura se extendit et efficacius producit. Per similitudinem igitur unam cognoscit et animal et differentias animalis: aut etiam universaliore modo et contractiori, secundum ordinem substantiarum praedictarum." (1)

(1) See also 11 Sent., d. 3, q. 3, a. 3; de Ver., q. 3, a. 10; 1 Contra Gentiles, c. 50-5; 1, q. 14, a. 6; q. 55, a. 3; de Causis, lect. 10.

Hence we might say that as we descend the hierarchy of the separated substances, the number of intelligible species tends toward equality with the number of objects known, so that the means by which the lower angel reaches the universe are more scattered than those by which the higher angel reaches it. The thesaurus of his species is numerically greater but inferior in value. A bulging pocket of copper coins may be worth less than a single piece of silver. Although the higher knows many things by a smaller number of species, he knows them more distinctly than the lower does. His view is more concentrated and penetrating. In the lower angel the very multiplicity of his species and the corresponding division of his view implies confusion in his knowledge.

The above prolegomena will suffice to show how the multiplicity of intelligible species gives rise to a radically new kind of duration in the life of an angel, a duration which implies a succession, and which in this precise respect is comparable to our cosmic time. For an angel can actually and simultaneously consider only those things which are represented in a single species. This means that in order to tour his intelligible universe he must use his various species successively. Let us read at least one passage where St. Thomas explains why this is so :

"...sicut ad unitatem motus requiritur unitas termini, ita ad unitatem operationis requiritur unitas obiecti. Contingit autem aliquid accipi ut plura, et ut unum; sicut partes alicuius continui. Si enim unaquaeque per se accipitur per sensum et intellectum. Alio modo accipiuntur

tur secundum quod sunt una in toto: et sic simul et una operatione cognoscuntur tam per sensum quam per intellectum, dum totum continuum consideratur, ut dicitur in III de Anima. Et sic etiam intellectus noster simul intelligit subiectum et praedicatum, prout sunt partes unius propositionis; et duo comparata, secundum quod conveniunt in una comparatione. Ex quo patet quod multa, secundum quod sunt distincta, non possunt simul intelligi; sed secundum quod ununtur in uno intelligibili, sic simul intelliguntur.

Utiqueque autem est intelligibile in actu, secundum quod eius similitudo est in intellectu. Quaecumque igitur per unam speciem intelligibilem cognosci possunt, cognoscuntur ut una intelligibile; et ideo simul cognoscuntur. Quae vero per diversas species intelligibiles cognoscuntur, ut diversa intelligibilia capiuntur.

Angeli igitur ea cognitione qua cognoscunt res per Verbum omnia cognoscunt una intelligibili specie, quae est essentia divina, et ideo quantum ad talem cognitionem, omnia simul cognoscunt; sicut et in patria non erunt volubiles nostras cogitationes, ab aliis in alia euntes atque redeuntes, sed omnem scientiam nostram simul uno conspectu videbimus, ut Augustinus dicit in IV de Trin. - Ea vero cognitione qua cognoscunt res per species innatas, omnia illa simul possunt intelligere, quae una specie cognoscuntur; non autem illa quae diversim. (1, q. 58, a. 2, c.) (1)

Thus in using the variety of his intelligible species the angel produces that successive duration which is called discrete time. It is called time because of the succession. This it has in common with time as opposed both to eternity and eviternity. It is called discrete because of the absence of continuity, by which it differs from cosmic time. That it cannot be continuous is shown from the fact that continuity is formally quantitative and hence implies matter.

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(1) See also Sent. 11, d. 3, q. 3, a. 4; 111, d. 14, a. 2, q. 4; de Ver., q. 3, a. 14; Quodlib., 7, a. 2; Contra Gentes, c. 55; 1, q. 12, a. 10; q. 55, a. 4.

Yet, as John of St. Thomas points out, the absence of continuity does not mean that the duration of the use of a single species must be equated with an indivisible instant of cosmic time (1). While any single consideration is indivisible, it may be related to a great span of our time. Like the indivisibility of both eternity and the atom, the instant of discrete time differs widely from that of cosmic time. In the cosmic instant we must distinguish two aspects: one which bespeaks perfection, namely indivisibility as opposed to the imperfection of division; and one which bespeaks imperfection, namely, its being the minimum, the least of the lowest kind of duration. In spiritual beings, the indivisibility of their duration excludes only the paucity of the cosmic instant.

It is clear when we view them in a common measure, that the lower angel will diffuse a much more fragmentary succession in making the tour of his intelligible universe than does the higher angel. Whereas the higher angel in contemplating a manifold of objects may rest in one species, the lower angel in order to cover the same manifold must move about as it were, turning from one species to the other. Yet even in one single consideration, the vision of the higher angel endures more perfectly than either the single or the successive views of the lower.

Because we cannot conceive supra-cosmic duration except from the viewpoint of our time, permanence without succession is known to us only through negation—not the negation of permanence but the negation of the <sup>in</sup>perfection of that permanence which can be realized

1. Cursus Theologicus, T. II, disp. 10, a. 3, n. 2.

only in succession. Now just as the eviternal duration of one angel is more regular than that of another, so too the permanence of the use of an intelligible species (whether this permanence be wilfully protracted or brief) will have greater uniformity in one angel than in the other according to their degree of perfection.

Applying the general principle that what is most simple and uniform in a genus is the principle and measure of whatever is contained within that genus, both Cajetan<sup>(1)</sup> and John of Saint Thomas<sup>(2)</sup> hold that discrete time, taken formally, must be identified

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- (1) Multiplicatio autem temporis discreti in pluribus angelis aut in eodem, iudicio meo, non est necessaria nisi materialiter: quoniam admodum etiam tempus continuum quo nostra mensurantur, materialiter multiplicatur in omnibus mobilibus, et aevum in omnibus aeviternis. Consequens namque rationi videtur ut, sicut omnia aeviterna simplicissimo aevo mensurantur, quod solum est aevum formaliter, ita omnis operatio huiusmodi simplicissimam operationem seu simplicissimam mensuram illius mensuretur; et similiter omnis successio operationum, simplicissimam successionem. Talis autem operatio et successio est ea quae in primo operante temporaliter invenitur: quem constat esse supremum angelum, in quo, ut dicitur, est etiam aevum. Et quia operationes intellectus sunt naturaliter priores et simpliciores operationibus voluntatis, erit unum tempus omnium huiusmodi temporalium; quod est primo mensura operationum succedentium in intellectu primi angeli, et ex consequenti et extrinsece mensura ceterarum operationum tam suarum quam aliorum spiritualium. (Comm. in I, q. I, a. 5)
- (2) Nihilominus respondetur ... dari unum tempus discretum formaliter, quod subjective est in supremo Angelo magis ordinate et regulariter operante, sicut nostrum tempus est in motu coeli. (Op. cit., disp. I, a. 3, n. 4)



with that of the highest angel. We might add by way of corollary that (just as in the case of the serum) this is wholly to the advantage of the lower angels, for it means that the lower angel can introduce a more perfect order and rhythm in his thoughts and actions and thus participate in a higher mode of life.

The succession and discreteness of angelic operations differ not only according to numerical multiplicity but more profoundly according to the mode of enduring. It is precisely from this mode that the measure is taken. No matter how long or how briefly the highest angel chooses to concentrate upon one species, the regularity of his operation is the measure of the regularity of the operations of all the inferior angels.

At this point we must examine more closely the nature of this regularity. We must distinguish two types of regularity: a material or mechanical one, such as the regularity of a straight line, of an equilateral triangle, of a circle, of a uniform local movement, of a clock; but there is also a formal or virtual regularity, such as the heterogeneous regularity of a living body or of a musical composition. The latter kind would be quite irregular when expressed in terms of the former and vice versa. The permanence and succession of discrete time are obviously of the latter type. It is therefore quite compatible with a great deal of freedom.

But the term "freedom" is quite ambiguous and calls for

further precision. Let us consider the various ways in which the discrete time operations of the angels may be called free. In the first place, the angelic intellect is as it were loose and free from its various species; it is not fixed or restricted to one species. The abundance of his intelligible universe requires detachment from any given species. This freedom finds its expression in the successive transition from one act to the next. In other words, the production of discrete time is an expression of the detachment and freedom of the angelic intellect which serve his pursuit of greater vision.

Furthermore, no created means of knowing, however many, can be considered wholly adequate to the knowable universe. It would seem, likewise, that no given rigorous order of intelligible species could be commensurate with their possibilities. It seems fitting, therefore, that the angel be allowed and able to establish different degrees of permanence and varying orders of succession in his consideration, which give rise to different slants upon his intelligible universe.

We presume that apart from the purely intellectual freedom just mentioned the angel uses his free will with regard to the species and their order, just as in contemplation we may choose to consider now this question, now that. This use of free will, as well as its application to purely practical matters, raises a difficulty. For in what sense may an operation, freely performed and freely protracted, be called regular and uniform? Furthermore, since the operations of the highest

angel are the prime measure and discrete time of the operations of all the lower angels, how can the required regularity be reconciled with such freedom? John of St. Thomas expresses the latter difficulty in the following terms:

"Videtur enim nullo modo posse dari unum tempus discretum, sicut datur apud nos unum continuum. Et primo quidem, si datur unum tempus discretum, id esse debet quia reduci possunt omnes durationes operationum spiritualium ad aliquam summam uniformitatem in operando. Hoc autem explicari non potest in quo consistat: praesertim quia, cum istae actiones sint liberae, nihil habent finem vel stabile quantum ad uniformitatem: si quidem potest Angelus superior habere modo plures, modo pauciores, dum inferior habet tantum unum, vel e contra: non ergo potest ibi fundari aliqua ratio mensurae magis in una, quam in altera." (Op. cit., disp. 10, a. 3, p. 96, n. 3)

The answer to this difficulty is that the uniformity which makes the operations of the higher angel the measure of all the lower angels is not taken from the objects he considers, nor from the freely chosen length of a single consideration, nor from the particular order of succession he chooses to follow, but from the regularity with which he performs whatever he performs, a regularity which consists in the perfection of the mode in which he thinks or wills whatever he thinks or wills. This perfection actually shines forth in any single operation or series of operations. It is this mode, inseparable from any one of his operations and consistently expressed in each, which unceasingly serves as a norm for the operations of the lower angels.

Perhaps we may suggest a metaphor to illustrate the manner in which the regularity of the thoughts and actions of the higher angel

introduce greater regularity in those of the lower, by comparing the relation between them to the one which exists between the composer and the listener. Music is an imitation of the passions as expressed by the intonations of the human voice. By listening and applying himself to the more orderly and rational expression of the movement of a given passion, the listener has a better understanding of his own physical passion of joy or of sorrow. The music thus accomplishes what Aristotle called a catharsis. (Politics, Bk. 8, c. 7, 1341b28; Poetics, c. 6, 1449b28) The lower angel, too, by ordering his thought and action in conformity with a higher regularity is purged as it were of the relative confusion which would be his were he to confine himself to the innate uniformity of his operations.

The second objection against the unity of discrete time is taken from the doctrine that the free action of one angel is known to another only if the former wishes to make it known. Here is how John of St. Thomas states this difficulty :

"...quia actiones liberae Angeli superioris non sunt cognitae inferiori, neque a converse, nisi quantum Angelus voluerit manifestare; ergo non serviunt pro mensura, quae debet esse notior mensurate. Si autem actio libera manifestetur in aliquo effectu, talis effectus non fundat mensuram temporis discreti; quia aliquando solet mensurari tempore nostro, sicut motus coeli est effectus operationis Angeli, et tamen pertinet ad nostrum tempus, non ad discretum." (Op. cit., d. 10, a. 8, p. 98, n. 8)

To this objection he answers :

"...quod operationes liberae Angeli superioris, licet in quantum liberae sint occultae, sicut etiam operationes liberae Angeli inferioris: sunt tamen manifesta-

biles, et de facto manifestantur multae per illuminationes, locutiones et alias actiones hierarchicas, quibus manifestatur modus ipse procedendi Angeli superioris magis unitus et simplex. Et quia nunquam deest aliquis influxus a superioribus in inferiores in coelesti patria, quia fluminis impetus laetificat civitates Dei : ideo nunquam deest operatio, quae cognoscatur in influxu superiorum ad inferiores, ubi relucet ratio temporis discreti. (ibid., p. 99, 6)

This reply leaves many difficulties unsolved. It would seem to imply that the highest angel never ceases to perform some thought or action which is manifest to all the lower angels. Thus we might ask if in order to be the discrete time the transient operations of the highest angel must unceasingly be manifested to the lower. If such is the case, then the highest angel must always have some thought or action manifested to the lower without any interruption. Yet since even the highest angel cannot simultaneously use two species, it seems that the necessity of an uninterrupted mensuration of the inferiors would destroy his freedom to keep his thought or will to himself.

John of St. Thomas does not mention this difficulty. Perhaps it arises from our lack of penetration. Yet whatever the reason may be, the difficulty is avoided by his use of the plural : Angeli superiores. Now it is quite true that "nunquam deest aliquis influxus a superioribus in inferiores in coelesti patria" (ibid., n. 6), but since we identify discrete time, taken formally, with the uniformity not of just any higher angel, but of the angel whose operations are the most uniform, this reply does not answer our difficulty.

On the supposition that our difficulty is reasonable (we are not at all certain that it is) we might approach a solution by suggesting further questions. This venture could have at least the merit of offering a clue to our own misunderstanding. Since even the highest angel can use but one species at a time, does he cease to illuminate other angels when he speaks to a particular one? And ceasing to illuminate them does he cease to measure them? Or, in regard to the lower angels, if they converse with an angel other than the highest, and hence are not attending to the thought of the highest angel, do they cease to be measured by it?

We have already pointed out that it is because of the uniformity of the mode in which the superior angel proceeds in his thoughts and actions, and not precisely because of the object that he considers, that he measures the operations of the inferior angels. A possible solution to the difficulty may lie in the fact that the inferior angel can know the mode according to which the higher proceeds without knowing or attending to the content of his thought. Indeed, in order to be the measure of all the variable operations of all the inferior angels the higher must ever be their measure. Yet does this require the express and unceasing attention of these inferiors? The regularity is always there, but does it have to be always and incessantly considered, in actu signato as it were? It seems not, for while we live by the clock and thus introduce an order in our actions of the day, we do not have to keep our eyes fixed upon the clock. In fact, if the lower angel had to

attend to the measure in such a fashion, only the operation of the highest angel could ever be the main object of his attention.

Let us now turn to the main subject of this chapter suggested by the following passage (which is from a reply to an objection) to which reference was made at the beginning :

"Istae autem major regularitas attenditur in operationibus superioris Angeli: tum quia minus multiplicentur operationes Angeli superioris, et quaelibet earum potest plus nostri temporis consumere et ei correspondere; ubi autem est minor multiplicitas, est major uniformitas, quia difformitas et confusio nascitur ex multitudine minus ordinata. Tum etiam attenditur regularitas penes ordinem in procedendo de una operatione ad aliam, et de uno objecto ad aliud; cum enim Angelus superior plures rationes percipiat in quolibet objecto, minus confuse in eo procedit, et cum majori ordine et uniformitate de ipso transit ad aliud; Angelus autem inferior cum minori ordine et uniformitate procedit, quia confusius intelligit circa illa objecta: et multo magis Angeli mali, qui minus ordinate procedunt in his quae sunt ad finem. Unde D. Thomas (in 11, D. 9, q. 1, a. 2) docet ex Dionysio, quod superiores Angeli purgant inferiores a confusione et nescientia, quatenus per lumen superius illuminantur ad intelligendum plura, ad quae erant in potentia, et consequenter secundum quasdam confusionem (intelligebant). Itaque conaturali modo procedendo (sicut semper procedunt Angeli boni), semper uniformiori modo procedunt superiores Angeli. Et licet dum ipsi habent unam operationem, inferiores Angeli habeant plures: quia tamen una operatio pertinet ad mensuram temporis discreti tamquam pars illius, sic ratio illius cum ordine ad aliam mensurat; sicut in nostro tempore partes ejus non sunt praesentes nisi ratione instantis, et sic istae mensurant in ordine ad illas. (Curs. Theol., loc. cit., n. 5)

As we have already pointed out, the multiplicity of intelligible species and the dispersion of the means of knowing make for a certain confusion and lack of formal regularity. To this scattering of

the means of knowing and to the ensuing division of thought we may apply the expression used by St. Thomas in the article referred to by John : "dissimilitudinis confusio". As the latter shows in the above quotation, the lower angel may be purged of this confusion in being measured by the greater uniformity of the operation of the higher, and thus proceed more 'ordinate' in his thoughts. We have also pointed out that any single thought of the higher angel (we mean of course a variable operation) may measure the succession of operations to which the lower angel must have recourse in order to cover the same field. In this particular case a succession corresponds to an indivisible permanence. The latter measures the former. Now as we have seen in the first chapter the measure draws the measured to itself and reduces to greater unity whatever multiplicity there may be on the part of the measured. In what does this unity consist ? The multiplicity of the species and of the acts is not reduced. Hence the unity established in these acts is a peculiar unity, an orderliness due properly to the extrinsic higher measure. The succession imitates the unity and uniformity of the measure by proceeding according to a certain order and temporal rhythm, thus approaching through the quasi-dynamic and rhythmic unity of succession the indivisible and uniform permanence of the higher mode of operation. We say "quasi-dynamic" since this succession is not a movement proper; yet it has something of dynamism in that it implies a transition from one thought to the next, as well as formal unity in the very series of the transitions, this orderly whole being somehow drawn together and contained by the measure. It seems then



that the rapture of the operation of the lower angel by the formal regularity of the higher is inseparable from tempo. The uniformity of the higher indivisible concentration is imitated by a particular tempo, binding and ordering the manifold steps into unison. There is no novelty on the part of the known, the innovation consists entirely in the mode of reaching the objects.

Now the same will apply to the succession of operations of the lower angel when it imitates the more intense and orderly succession of operations of the higher. The lower will be enraptured by the more perfect tempo of the higher angel's succession of thoughts. The tempo of discrete time thus seems to be the binding power which unifies in descending and ascending movement the variable operations of the entire angelic order. It forms as it were the bed of the fluminis impetus (qui) laetificat civitatem Dei. (1)

The finite intellect, confined to its created means of knowing, can achieve greater perfection of variable thought only by a unification of its succession under a higher measure. We believe that we have shown that it is not enough to consider the mere succession of the intellect's operations as the means of bringing within its reach the fulness of its intelligible universe and of exercising its thought to the limit. The mere succession is not enough. The mode of the succession is

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(1) Psalm 46 : 5.

essential to its perfection. Nor is the innate mode sufficient. The broader grasp and the more penetrating intensity can be achieved not merely through an increase of succession, but by the imitation of a higher mode in the succession. And this mode consists not in a purely material regulation and rhythm, but in a formal, heterogeneous uniformity which we believe to be expressed sufficiently by the word tempo.

Thus - fluminis impetus iustificat civitates Dei - the unceasing activity of God's thought is like the source of the river from which flows the angelic participation. Into this constant flow is introduced a rhythm as the inferior angels imitate and follow the more uniform regularity of the higher angels. It is to this rhythm and tempo that St. Augustine (1) refers in the words Deus movet creaturas spirituales per tempus. This rhythm is manifestly not the material regularity of which we spoke earlier in this chapter, but it is dynamic, interior, growing from the unceasing attempt on the part of the lower angels to establish greater conformity and regularity.

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(1) VIII de Genesi ad litteram, c. 20, n. 39; PL 34, 393.