

God, Time and Helm

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In much modern thinking, God is eternal only in the sense that he has no beginning or end.¹ I reject that view. But I also reject what is sometimes taken to be the only genuine alternative to it—the suggestion that God is timeless, where ‘timeless’ includes ‘having no temporal location’ (i.e. existing at no moment of time) and ‘lacking duration’.² I think we should speak of God existing at moments of time and having duration. In what follows I shall try to indicate why by focusing on one of the most recent statements to the contrary—Paul Helm’s new book *Eternal God*.³

On Helm’s account, to call God ‘eternal’ is to say that ‘There is for him no past and no future. It makes no sense to ask how long God has existed, or to divide up his life into periods of time. He possesses the whole of his life at once; it is not lived successively’ (p. 24). God’s timeless eternity, says Helm, is to ‘be explained in terms of time-freeness, where the only questions of simultaneity and non-simultaneity are *quoad nos*, and from which both the notions of duration and instantaneousness are banished’ (p. 36).

Some have urged that the equation of eternity with timelessness leads to insoluble problems for the theist. According to Anthony Kenny, for instance, it means that God is simultaneous with distinct temporal events, which are therefore simultaneous with each other.⁴ Such is also the opinion of Richard Swinburne. As he puts it:

God’s timelessness is said to consist in his existing at all moments of human time—simultaneously. Thus he is said to be simultaneously present at (and a witness of) what I did yesterday, what I am doing today, and what I will do tomorrow. But if t_1 is simultaneous with t_2 and t_2 with t_3 , then t_1 is simultaneous with t_3 . So if the instant at which God knows these things were simultaneous with both yesterday, today and tomorrow, then these days would be simultaneous with each other.⁵

Helm, however, rejects this line of reasoning by denying that eternity is simultaneous with anything. ‘Why cannot divine timelessness consist in a manner of existence which sustains no temporal relations with human time? If God timelessly exists he is neither earlier nor later nor simultaneous with any event of time. He exists *timelessly*’ (p. 27).

As a reply to Kenny and Swinburne, this approach seems to me of mixed value.⁶ Certainly, if God stands in no temporal relation to anything, there can be no question of times being simultaneous with him and with each

other. So one might conclude that Helm has ammunition against Kenny and Swinburne. Their simultaneity argument would seem to collapse if their opponent insists that God is simultaneous with nothing.

Furthermore, there are, so it seems to me, problems of understanding when it comes to insisting that God is simultaneous with something or other, ones to which Kenny and Swinburne do not do justice in what they have written on eternity. Are we to say, for example, that 'Helm's writing was simultaneous with Swinburne's writing' means 'Helm was writing while Swinburne was writing'?⁷ Supposing that it does leaves us asking how, for example, we should understand 'God is simultaneously present to Swinburne's writing'. We could say that God is existing while Swinburne is writing. But what might be meant by 'God is existing' here? Does it make sense to say that some thing 'is existing'? Can we predicate existence of God by means of the present continuous tense?

And can we form statements about God which are analogous to all other statements asserting simultaneity? 'Helm's sneezing was simultaneous with Swinburne's smiling' entails 'Neither did Helm sneeze before Swinburne smiled, nor did Swinburne smile before Helm sneezed'. But how do we carry the point over with respect to God? Can we, for instance, countenance statements like 'Neither did God know that Swinburne smiled before Swinburne smiled, nor did Swinburne smile before God knew that Swinburne smiled'. Can it be true that God did not know that Swinburne smiled before Swinburne smiled? Can it be true that Swinburne did not smile before God knew that Swinburne smiled?

On the other hand, however, and as Helm himself observes, 'It makes sense to say that God endures all through my life and the history of the universe' (p. 37). We therefore need to ask how something can endure through what is spread out in time without having temporal location or duration.

Two counter arguments occur to me in response to this question and in defence of Helm. First, one might say that (1) 'It is now true that God exists' does not entail (2) 'It is true that God exists now', and that all the theist needs to endorse is (1).⁸ Second, one might hold that many influential theistic writers accept that God lacks duration, so belief in God as lacking duration is part of traditional theism and not incompatible with it. But neither of these arguments seems to me satisfactory.

Admittedly, 'It is true that God exists now' is in some way odd. If someone asserts 'It is true that inflation is running at 9% now', he would normally be taken to imply that inflation has not always been running at 9% and that it will not always do so. So if I say to Fred 'It is true that God exists now', Fred might hear me as suggesting that God once did not exist or might cease to exist in the future, which no theist thinks of as even possible. In this sense I concede that theists have reason to reject (2).⁹

All the same, 'It is now true that God exists' is equivalent to 'God exists', which is surely either true or false whenever it is propounded. If I say 'It is now true that Helm wrote *Eternal God*', I do not mean that Helm

wrote (is writing) the book as I speak. But if Helm does not exist when I say that he does, then he simply does not exist. By the same token, if God does not exist when I say that he does, he does not exist.¹⁰

He might be said to exist at no time. But what is the difference between 'God does not exist' and 'God exists at no time'? The reply might be that 'God exists' can be true even if there is no time. But even if I accept that reply, how can I truly say that God exists if he does not exist at the time I say this?

God might be said to be at all times since he makes all times—since he is the author of history. One might therefore hold that God can be at all times without occupying any time. But if we are right to say that God exists, then he must exist at the time when we say he does. In this sense (2) is perfectly in order.¹¹

I do not mean that 'God exists now' means 'God exists while I am speaking' because that means 'Both I am speaking and God exists' and God would exist even if I were not speaking. My point is that if I say truly 'God exists' then God must exist as I speak for otherwise I would be speaking falsely. 'I am hungry' says that the speaker is hungry at the time he speaks. If I say 'It is now true that God exists' I say that God exists as I speak.¹²

It might be replied that if I say 'God exists', I speak truly simply because God exists timelessly. But if that means that there is no God at the time I speak, I do not know what it could mean. If it is said to mean that there is a God who does not exist when anyone says that he does, I am simply left in a state of total puzzlement.

One might hold that, though it exists at no time at all, the number 6 exists. One might call it a 'non-actual object', as P.T. Geach seems inclined to do.¹³ So perhaps there are things which can exist at no time at all. But God is said to be a living subject possessing knowledge, intellect and will. His mode of existence is not supposed to be that of a number. So again I am lost if told that, though God exists, he does not exist as I speak.

As for the point about theistic writers and God's duration, which influential representatives of traditional theism teach that God lacks duration?

The Bible does not assert that God lacks duration. Its language, in fact, pulls the other way.¹⁴ 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God'.

It has been said that classical discussions of eternity teach that God lacks duration. But that view is questionable.

The most celebrated definition of 'eternity' comes in the work of Boethius, whom Helm rightly treats as a crucial figure in the history of thinking about God as timeless. According to Boethius, eternity is 'the total and complete possession of unending life, all at once' (*interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*). Though Boethius distinguishes between time and eternity, however, he does not unequivocally say that God lacks duration. He denies that God undergoes real change.¹⁵

Such is also the position of Aquinas. Like Boethius, whose definition of 'eternity' he accepts, Aquinas distinguishes between time and eternity. But eternity, for him, is 'a measure of duration ... measuring abiding existence'¹⁶, and the eternity of God 'embraces (*includit*) all times'.¹⁷ Aquinas's distinction between time and eternity is a distinction between what undergoes real change and what, though enduring, really changes in no respect. His primary argument for God's being eternal is that God is unchangeable.¹⁸ On his account, a thing falls short of eternal existence the more it is bound up with change whether actual or potential.¹⁹

One might observe that, if God is unchangeable, he must lack duration. But why? It cannot be that having duration is equivalent to undergoing real changes, for otherwise we could never make sense of something not really changing while other things do, which we can. It is surely possible for something to exist unchanged while co-existing things undergo change. Helm suggests that a duration with no successiveness and no divisibility is no duration at all. 'What is the value of introducing a concept and then so paring it away that hardly anything is left?' (p. 35). Aquinas, I presume, would reply that duration with no successiveness or divisibility is 'abiding existence'. And I see nothing wrong with that answer, not, at any rate, if 'successiveness' in a thing involves it undergoing change. If God exists at all moments of time, but if he is immutable and is not divisible, it could be said of him at any time that he still exists. In this sense he would have abiding existence or duration.²⁰ Helm might reply that on this account God would still lack successiveness, and again he might ask what is left of the notion of duration if successiveness is denied. But 'successiveness' would now mean something which, so far as I can see, is not denied to God on the Boethian-Thomist account of eternity. That account rules out successiveness *qua* changing states, not successiveness *qua* continuing to exist.

One might hold that 'X still exists' entails 'X undergoes change and is divisible'. But why should one suppose that change and divisibility are part of the concept of continuing to exist? Must we accept that only what is changeable or material can continue to exist? Why can there not be something which continues to exist even though it is changeless and immaterial?

Helm's view is that if nothing about God could change then God must be timeless (where 'timeless' includes 'durationless'). He reasons as follows: (1) If a given individual has location in time it would be consistent to say that that individual persists for more than one moment; (2) If it is consistent to say that a given individual persists for more than one moment in time, it is consistent to say that that individual undergoes change (p. 88). But while an individual persisting in time might undergo change, can there be change in a persisting (sc. enduring) individual who is also the cause of all change?

Helm seems to bypass this question. He notes the view that something might endure through time and never change. But he dismisses it by asking whether something could exist through time and not possibly change (p. 89). He also says that if something is such that nothing about it could change,

then it cannot exist in time for more than a moment. The answer to his question ('Can something exist through time and not possibly change?') is 'Yes, if the thing has duration and is also immutable'. The proper response to his assertion ('Something of which nothing about it can change cannot exist in time for more than a moment') is 'Something which endures and is immutable must exist through time'.

In reply to this response it might be said that nothing can have duration if there is no real change. I am not entirely convinced that this is so, for I do not see that something cannot continue to exist though no changes occur.²¹ But it is true that we can only measure duration if there are changes in terms of which the duration can be measured. We can, for example, only cash the claim that the Taj Mahal has endured for an hour by noting that while various changes of other things occurred, while hands moved round clock-faces, for instance, it was still there. Given, then, that there is no change, there is no measurable duration.

All the same, there is change (there are, in fact, changing things). And with reference to the changes that occur we can speak of God having measurable duration. He has existed as long as his creation. His duration co-exists with the world he has created.

If nothing existed but a world lacking change, it would not be a world with measurable duration. What makes the case of God different is that we can get a purchase on the notion of 'at the same time as' which can be applied to him in relation to the changing world. This, I think, allows one to say that had God not created he would not have had measurable duration. But it also permits one to ascribe such duration to him given the fact that the world has been created by him and is sustained by him over time. Between midnight and 2.00 a.m. on March 1st 1989, God continued to exist for two hours. How can any theist intelligibly deny that?

He might reply that my thesis prevents him from maintaining that God is unchangeable—for would God not change by coming to have measurable duration as the world comes to be and continues? In reply, I agree that God is unchangeable. Only if God is unchangeable could he be the cause of a changing world, for otherwise he would simply be an inhabitant of the changing and changeable world and not the cause of its change. But God's coming to have measurable duration need not, I think, involve him undergoing real change. He could come to have it only in the sense that other things came to be and continued to be. I was not thinking of God at 8.00 p.m. last night. Now I am thinking about God. But this does not entail that God in himself has undergone real change. By the same token, so it seems to me, we may argue that God comes to have measurable duration without undergoing real change. He would come to have it if, because there are changing things, we find ourselves truly speaking of God co-existing with them. Our speaking of God in this way would be justified because of the fact that both God and the changing things exist, not because God has undergone some change as his world comes to be and endure.²²

And to this I would add two further points (suggested by what Helm

writes, but also prompted by much else that has recently been written with respect to God's eternity).²³ The first is that God's temporal location and duration seem entailed by the fact that God has knowledge. The second is that they seem entailed by the fact that God has effects.

The first point is a familiar one in modern philosophy of religion. For it has often been argued that an omniscient God must know what we know when we know that something is now the case (e.g. that it is now 2 o'clock) and that God cannot therefore be timeless (employing recent philosophical jargon, we can call this the 'argument from indexicals'). But I do not want to say this exactly. As Helm observes, if one must occupy time to know that such and such is the case *now*, then one must occupy space to know that such and such is happening *here*. And 'If one can only know now precisely what is happening now, then, by the same token, one can only know precisely what is happening to *me* if one is *me*' (p. 75). It would seem that the argument from indexicals could also be applied to prove that God is in space and that God is *me*.²⁴

But, though what Helm says about it might seem powerful *ad hominem* when directed at someone who both contests God's timelessness by virtue of the argument from indexicals and wants to deny that God is in space or that God is *me*, his comments are suspect when viewed in a broader context.

First, they concede too much to proponents of the argument from indexicals. For why should I suppose that an omniscient God can know such things as 'It is now 2 o'clock' or 'Such and such is happening to me'? Much, of course, depends on what you take omniscience to involve. But God, I suggest, would be omniscient if he knows all true propositions. And it is not at all clear that 'It is now 2 o'clock' and 'Such and such is happening to me' are propositions.

'It is now 2 o'clock' and 'Such and such is happening to me' only signify truths in context. Napoleon probably once said 'It is now 2 o'clock'. And I have said that frequently. But neither of us were assenting to a single proposition.²⁵ And you and I certainly do not assent to a single truth when each of us says 'I'm happy'. One might even doubt that we are talking about any specifiable thing in saying this, for 'I' is not evidently a term signifying a subject to which we can ascribe properties or attributes.²⁶ (Of course it is true that, when they say things like 'I'm happy', people presume that they are talking about something. They presume that they are talking about themselves. And so they are. But can we construe 'I'm happy' as ascribing a property to an object or individual identifiable by means of the word 'I'? When Fred says 'I'm happy' he means that the one who says 'I'm happy' is happy. If what he says is true, that cannot be because 'I'm happy' is true. Someone other than Fred can truly say that.)

In the second place, suppose I say that God cannot have spatial location since he is incorporeal and that God cannot be *me* since I am a bodily individual created and sustained by God. Suppose I then add that even an incorporeal God must have temporal location since, if I truly say that there is a God, there must be a God at the time at which I speak. I can

then argue that, though God cannot be in space, he must be somehow in time.

In short, Helm may be right to suggest that the argument from indexicals contains the seeds of an argument in favour of God's occupying space and being me. But one may doubt the relevance of what he says to his thesis that God is timeless. Helm may reply that God just knows *timelessly*. But how can it be true at T1 that God knows if God's knowledge is in no way simultaneous with T1? How can I truly say at a time (e.g., when some atheist is hitting me on the head) that God knows if there is nothing we may call 'the knowledge of God' to which one successfully refers at the time at which one speaks?

Helm says that in 'God timelessly knows now' the 'now' provides an indexical reference to the speaker (p. 103). But he adds that 'What does God (timelessly) know now?' is 'equivalent' to 'What does God (timelessly) know at the time this utterance is being made?' (*ibid.*). I may have lost some subtlety here, but does this not make God and his knowing something co-existing with events in time?

Helm seems not to think so, for he adds: 'To say that God may be said to know timelessly that p is not to say that God, considered as a timeless knower, also exists sempiternally' (*ibid.*). God's timeless knowledge undergoes no change, he knows nothing different at T1 and T10, and 'What does God timelessly know now?' is a pointless question since there never will be different true answers to it.

But if we can give *any* true answer to the question 'What does God know?', that can surely only be because the knowing God exists as such an answer is given.

You might say that it being true at T that God timelessly knows no more puts him in time than it being true at T that $2 + 2 = 4$ puts that truth in time. Helm, in fact, seems to imply this on p. 105. But it's being true at T that God knows such and such depends on there being a subject at T to whom knowledge can be ascribed, and it is not at all clear that mathematical truths are subjects in the sense that God is.

With respect to the view that God cannot be timeless since he acts, my argument is a simple one. To say that God has brought such and such about implies that God existed at some time. I do not want to say that, for example, God's creating the world depends on God occupying some clockable moment of time. I presume that there are no clocks independently of creation. But, if God has produced such and such, he must have surely existed when such and such came to be. If he did not exist when it came to be, it would have been true that God did not exist then.

In answer to this point one might object that God can bring such and such about without existing at the time it is brought about. One might, for example say that, just as God can bring about the suds in the sink without being in the sink, he can bring something about at some time without being at any time. But I do not see that the analogy implied here works. If I in Britain have telephoned you in the States, then I have brought about certain

sensations in you without myself being where these sensations occurred. And, given the operations of transatlantic calls, what is needed from me to bring the sensations about can be done by me before they occur. So I need not exist where and when what I have brought about comes to be (I can say 'Hello' in Oxford and die before you received my greeting in New York). But that is surely because I, unlike God, am mortal. I can bring about such and such and be dead before such and such comes about. God, however, surely cannot die before what he has produced has come about. And, even though I can die before effects of my actions occur, these effects must be the result of causes contiguous temporally to them. They must also be the result of causes operating as sustained by God. I may die before my effects come about, but the effect of God which constitutes his sustaining things in existence requires the existence of God at the time they continue to exist.

My opponent might observe that if the universe as a whole does not exist in time, it is hard to see how God can have duration. If he has duration, must he not occupy time independently of the universe? If God occupies time independently of the universe, can we not speak of the universe as occupying time? And there are genuine worries lying behind such questions. For it certainly sounds odd to speak of the universe as occupying time. If the universe occupies time, then there was a time before the universe. Yet how could there be time in the absence of the universe? What could count as time passing if no change succeeds another?²⁷

But, though we may be unable to measure time passing unless we refer to things changing, we can still hold that ascribing duration to God makes sense in view of the existence of the universe. Such duration, given that it does not involve God undergoing real change, can be called 'non-temporal' as a way of indicating that God has no life of which the stages are distinguishable from each other by changes undergone by God.

In short, I have no objection to distinguishing in a Boethian-Thomist manner between eternity and temporality, and to denying that God is temporal. But I hesitate to conclude that the non-temporality of eternity is a matter of timelessness where that is understood as Helm understands it. Why can it not mean 'continuing to exist without undergoing any real change'? This question may be pressed against others than Helm. It can be directed against anyone insisting that the eternal God exists at no time and does not continue to exist.²⁸

- 1 Cf. Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford 1977) and Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'God Everlasting', in Steven M. Cahn and David Shatz (ed.), *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford and New York, 1982).
- 2 I defended this position in 'A Timeless God?' (*New Blackfriars*, 64, May 1983). Cf. also my *Thinking About God* (London, 1985).
- 3 *Eternal God: A Study of God without Time*, by Paul Helm. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988. Pp. xv + 230. £25.00. In this article I am largely critical of Helm, but I agree with much that he says on matters outside the scope of my present concerns.
- 4 *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 38f.
- 5 *The Coherence of Theism*, p. 220.

- 6 I defended it in 'Kenny on God', *Philosophy* 57, No 219 (January 1982). But what I said there was wrong.
- 7 This would be the line with someone in sympathy with the work of P.T. Geach and Arthur Prior. See P.T. Geach, *Logic Matters* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 302—318 and Arthur Prior, *Past Present and Future* (Oxford, 1967).
- 8 This argument has been put to me by Herbert McCabe OP.
- 9 You might compare 'now' with 'still' as in 'Fred is still writing his book'. Here 'still' hints at some expectation surprisingly not fulfilled ('Is Fred still writing his book; I thought he'd finished by now'). To add 'now' to 'Fred is writing his book' hints at the expectation that Fred has already finished writing, or is asleep, or is dead and using a medium, or something like that. To say 'It is true that God exists now' hints at the expectation of God not existing at some time.
- 10 Some have said that believing in God means believing that he does not exist. This has been said by people purporting to explain what it means to believe in God. But believing that God does not exist is to believe that nothing whatsoever has the divine attributes, which any atheist can accept. So I deny that believing in God means believing that he does not exist. One might say 'God does not exist' in order to stress that to be God is not to be what other things are. 'God does not exist' might be taken to mean something like 'God is no physical object' or 'God is the source of the existence of everything we can classify or understand, and must therefore be distinguished from such things'. But atheism is entailed by such statements if they are also taken to say that nothing whatsoever has the divine attributes. Even such an austere apophatic writer as Pseudo-Dionysius would surely have agreed with this conclusion. Aquinas would certainly have agreed with it, though he quotes Denys at enormous length.
- 11 I would say the same of statements like 'It is now true that $2 + 2 = 4$ '. We would not normally say that, for we presume that $2 + 2$ cannot but equal 4. But it certainly is now true that $2 + 2 = 4$, just as it was true yesterday and just as it will be true tomorrow.
- 12 Though one can give sense to the notion of God being at a place (cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, 8), this does not imply that, since God makes and sustains all places, he must have spatial location as bodies do. If God is incorporeal, he cannot thus have spatial location (as God) because he has no body to be in or to constitute a place. On the other hand, if it is true that God exists it must be true that he exists at the time we say he does. 'God exists' entails God's temporal location in some sense in a way that it does not entail his spatial location. I may be misunderstanding him, but this seems to be what David Braine is arguing in *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 130f.
- 13 'What Actually Exists', in *God and the Soul* (London, 1969), pp. 66ff.
- 14 So it seems, I think. But one treads on dangerous grounds in making such assertions. In Chapter 1 of his book Helm briefly considers the topic of biblical documents and what is consistent with them. I entirely agree with what Helm says on this matter. So what 'seems' to me concerning biblical talk about God's duration is subject to constraints along the lines which Helm suggests. On the other hand, however, it surely is true that the Bible does not generally teach that God lacks duration, isn't it? And it surely is true that its language pulls the other way, isn't it? Cf. James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London, 1977), p. 277.
- 15 *Consolationis Philosophiae*, V, VI. Richard Sorabji argues that Boethius is pretty unequivocal in denying duration to God (*Time, Creation and the Continuum*, London, 1983). He notes that Boethius distinguishes between a temporal and an eternal 'always', between *sempiternitas* and *aeternitas*, and between *sempiternus* and *aeternus* (pp. 115ff.). But one can make such distinctions without wishing to deny that God has duration. Sorabji reads *Consolation* V, VI as denying duration, but the text does not enforce this reading. It tells us that what is eternal does not pass from a past state, that it does not grasp tomorrow and lose yesterday, that it has all

its life in a motionless way. This need only mean that God undergoes no distinguishable real changes. Boethius says that if the world lacked beginning or end it would still be only *perpetuus*, not *aeternus*. But that, he explains, is because it would fail to be like God who 'stays still'—i.e., so far as I can see, 'does not change'. For a better exposition of Boethius, see Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, 'Eternity' (reprinted in Thomas V. Morris, ed., *The Concept of God*, Oxford, 1987).

- 16 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a,10,1, 14,13 and 57,3. In the last passage here Aquinas says that eternity is 'present to all time and embraces all time' (*toti tempori adest, et ipsum concludit*). Cf. also 1a,42,2 where the language of 'duration' is again accepted by Aquinas in talking of God. In the *Compendium of Theology*, Ch. 7 (*Quod deus semper est*) Aquinas several times over insists that God exists always (*Deus est Semper*).
- 17 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a,10,2 ad.4.
- 18 By 'unchangeable' Aquinas seems to mean 'unable to undergo real change'. 'Real change' is hard to define. Here I take it to mean genuine alteration in a subject. On this criterion, you do not undergo real change by, for example, coming to be thought of by me. But you do by moving, growing, or coming to have different thoughts. Cf. P.T. Geach, 'What Actually Exists'.
- 19 That Aquinas conceives of God's eternity principally in terms of changelessness emerges with particular clarity in the *Compendium of Theology*, Ch. 8 and the *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, Lecture 18, 586. In the first of these passages Boethius's definition of eternity is explained in terms of immutability. In the second Aquinas writes: 'As the "now" of time is understood as the number of a mobile object, the "now" of eternity is understood as the number, or rather the unity, of a thing which is always the same'. Cf. also 1a,10,5, where Aquinas talks of the difference between aeon and time. For some analysis of Aquinas on eternity as duration see Carl J. Peter, *Participated Eternity in the Vision of God: A Study of the Opinion of Thomas Aquinas and his Commentators on the Duration of the Acts of Glory* (Rome, 1964).
- 20 In Chapter 8 of the *Compendium of Theology* Aquinas denies that succession occurs in God. But the context makes clear that by 'succession' he means the occurrence in a subject of real change. 'Succession is not found except in things that are in some way subject to motion ... God, however, is in no sense subject to motion'. In the sense in which Aquinas denies that succession occurs in God, I am also happy to deny that succession occurs in God.
- 21 Cf. Sydney Shoemaker, 'Time Without Change', *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969). Aristotle and Aquinas, of course, famously take a different view (cf. Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, Lecture 16, when the passing of time is linked to the perception of motion).
- 22 An analogy would be 'God became man'.
- 23 Cf. Helm, Ch. 3.
- 24 I am not, however, totally confident of this line of reasoning. For 'now' 'here' and 'I' function differently, and one might query the practice of lumping them together as if they constituted members of a distinct category.
- 25 By 'proposition' here I mean what Frege calls 'Gedanken', 'thoughts'. Frege's views on thoughts can be found in 'Sense and Meaning' and 'Thoughts' (*Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy* (ed. Brian McGuinness, Oxford, 1984).
- 26 Cf. G.E.M. Anscombe, 'The First Person', in *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, Vol. II (Oxford, 1981).
- 27 Cf. St Augustine, *Confessions*, XI, 13.
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