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BACK TO ETERNALISM: A RESPONSE TO LEFTOW'S "ANSELMIAN PRESENTISM"

Katherin Rogers

Against my interpretation, Brian Leftow argues that Anselm of Canterbury held a presentist theory of time, and that presentism can be reconciled with Anselm's commitments concerning divine omnipotence and omniscience. I respond, focusing mainly on two issues. First, it is difficult to understand the presentist theory which Leftow attributes to Anselm. I articulate my puzzlement in a way that I hope moves the discussion forward. Second, Leftow's examples to demonstrate that presentism can be reconciled with Anselm's understanding of the divine nature assume a mode of divine knowing which is different from what Anselm proposes. I stand by my interpretation.

I argue that Anselm of Canterbury is probably the first philosopher to enunciate a clear four-dimensionalist account of the nature of time. I hold that four-dimensionalism follows from Anselm's basic claims about the nature of God and the relationship of God to creation. And I propose that positing four-dimensionalism allows Anselm to offer the most satisfactory reconciliation of divine foreknowledge with libertarian freedom.¹ There are two sorts of claim at work here. There is the historical point about what Anselm actually did say, and there is the philosophical point about what theory of time fits best with Anselm's God and what theory best allows him to achieve his aim of defending both libertarian freedom and divine foreknowledge. I take these two sorts of claim to be related, in that the second casts light on the first. Suppose we have a contested text amenable to two different interpretations. If one interpretation fits better than another with other points Anselm makes, or truly allows him to solve a philosophical problem which he claims to be solving, then that is the interpretation to prefer.

Brian Leftow argues that Anselm is better understood to be a presentist, and that, contrary to what I have argued, presentism can be reconciled with Anselm's views on the nature of God and the relationship of God to creation.² Leftow does not raise any objections (beyond the label—see below) to four-dimensionalism *per se*.³ Nor does he argue that presentism

¹Katherin Rogers, "Anselmian Eternalism," *Faith and Philosophy* 24 (2007), pp. 3–27; and *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Chaps. 8 and 9.

²Brian Leftow, "Anselmian Presentism," *Faith and Philosophy* 26:3 (this issue); hereafter, "Presentism."

³There are standard criticisms in the philosophy of religion literature, though none have been very thoroughly developed. I offer a short list of some of these



is a *preferable* position philosophically in light of Anselm's other commitments. Rather he makes the more modest point that Anselm was not, and need not have been, a four-dimensionalist. On the question of Anselm's attempt to reconcile divine foreknowledge with libertarian freedom, Leftow has little to say, but, since much of Anselm's work on time is occasioned by that issue, it is important to keep it in mind in assessing Leftow's analysis of Anselm's theory.

I understand presentism to be the view that all that has any ontological status, all that exists at all, is the present instant of time and what it contains. Past and future are absolutely and objectively non-existent. I am not sure this is Leftow's understanding of the term, since he holds that presentism is consistent with the view that all times exist "in eternity." I discuss his point below. I warn the reader now that "I am not sure" and "I fear I do not understand" are phrases that will crop up repeatedly in the following discussion. There are key theses in Leftow's paper that I simply do not grasp. On these issues my hope is to express my puzzlement in a clear and developed enough way that it may help further the discussion.

I have used the term "four-dimensionalism" to label the position that past, present, and future are perspectival, that is, what time is considered past, present, or future is relative to the perspective of a temporal perceiver at a given point in time. What a given perceiver at a given point in time perceives as the present does not have a different ontological status from what a perceiver at a different point in time perceives as the present. Making an analogy with space is helpful in explaining the view. "Here" and "there" are perspectival and can refer to equally existent places. Take two places, Chicago and Newark, Delaware. It is correct to say that, although Chicago does not exist here in Newark, nonetheless, here in Newark, Chicago exists. What that means is that you will not find Chicago within Newark's city limits. Yet it is truly said, even while here in Newark, that Chicago exists. And Chicago exists in just the same way that Newark exists. If one had a suitable space-travel machine—a car, let's say—then one could go from Newark to Chicago. Upon arrival, Chicago would be "here" for the space traveler. And here in Chicago it would be true to say that, while Newark does not exist here in Chicago, still, here in Chicago, Newark exists.

The relationship of Chicago to Newark is very different from that of Lost Island to Newark. Lost Island is a mythical island. Like Chicago, it does not exist in Newark in that you will not find it within the boundaries of the city. But, unlike Chicago, in Newark, Lost Island does not exist, except perhaps as a fictive object. You cannot get there from here. If we now suppose that there is a ubiquitous God who is wholly present everywhere, then Newark and Chicago are equally existent and immediately "here" to God's Ubiquity. (More will be said below about what it means to say that things are immediately "here" or "now" to God.) Lost Island, on the other hand, exists only as a fictive object and is not "here" to any actual person at all—divine or human.

criticisms, with suggestions for responses, in "God, Time, and Freedom," in *Philosophy of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Issues*, ed. Paul Coplan and Chad Meister (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 202–214.

The four-dimensionalist thesis is that things work analogously with time. So, for example, take two moments in time, one in 1009 (call it "1009" for simplicity's sake) and one in 2009 (call it "2009"). The four-dimensionalist claim is that, while 1009 does not exist in 2009—it's a thousand years earlier—nonetheless, in 2009, 1009 exists.⁴ That is, it is true to say in 2009 that 1009 exists. And 1009 exists *in just the same way* that 2009 exists. Suppose someone for whom 2009 is the present has a suitable time machine. Then he can get to 1009, in which case 1009 is the present for the time traveler, and 2009 is in the future. It may not be physically possible to get to 1009 from 2009, but that is because of our limitations, not because the destination does not exist. To someone who sees 2009 as present, 1009 is quite a different matter from some moment in the fictitious "Time of Legends."⁵ In 2009, that moment in the Time of Legends does not exist, and you cannot get there, even with a working time machine. If there is an eternal God, one to whom all times are equally real, then 1009 and 2009 are both "now" to God's Eternity. The Time of Legends is not "now" to any actual person at all—human or divine. (Note that I might as well have picked a moment in 3009 for my example of a time not-present to someone for whom 2009 is present.)

The term "four-dimensionalism" is intended to capture the idea that temporal things exist, not at an absolute present instant—objectively speaking there is no special "now"—but as extended across moments of time, all of which have the same ontological status. Leftow prefers to label this position the view that time is tenseless.⁶ Leftow notes, rightly it seems to me, that the "growing block" view of time can be seen as a sort of four-dimensionalism. Were that view to become popular we might need to start qualifying our four-dimensionalisms, perhaps referring to the view I am promoting as "standard four-dimensionalism," and the growing block view as "past-and-present four-dimensionalism."⁷ Leftow also

⁴One might suppose that the way to deal with the difficulty in expressing four-dimensionalism would be to add something to the term "exists"—to say, for example, that "in 2009, 1009 exists*," adding the asterisk. But that would convey that the term "exists" is being qualified, and that is not really the case. The point of four-dimensionalism is that 2009 and 1009 both exist in the same way . . . just not at the same time.

⁵See Terry Gilliam's *Time Bandits*. (Really, if you haven't seen it, see it!)

⁶"Presentism," note 3.

⁷If the "growing block" theory is indeed a species of four-dimensionalism, I am not sure what theoretical advantage it provides over my sort of four-dimensionalism. From an Anselmian perspective it does not do the job I have attributed to standard four-dimensionalism, of helping to explain how divine omnipotence and omniscience could have access to all of what we consider past, present, and future. Is the supposed advantage that it allows the present to have some sort of special status as the "forward edge" of the block? But, if I am understanding the view correctly, we could have no way of establishing that *our* present is special, as being *the* present. Suppose that some moment in 2009 really is *the* present, the forward edge of the block. Then in 2009, 1009 exists, although 3009 does not exist. That means that, to the perceiver at some moment in 1009, that moment in 1009 seems to be *the* present, when in fact it is not the forward edge of the block, but is rather a past apparent-present. Presumably the perceiver in 1009 has no way to tell that his

notes that something that existed for a single instant might still be said to exist in four-dimensions, of which the temporal dimension has an extension of 0, so four-dimensionalism might properly apply to a presentist conception of things. Another problem someone might raise with use of "four-dimensionalism" is that it seems apt only for physical things which exist extended in the three spatial dimensions, whereas, if the view is correct, then there could be non-physical, temporal things which would exist across only the one dimension of time. Yet another problem with the term is the possibility of more than four dimensions. So I grant that the term "four-dimensionalism" does not seem satisfactory. I stick with it for want of a better one. Besides the fact that it is difficult to construct a handy noun out of "the view that time is tenseless," it seems to me that simply saying that time is tenseless, though it correctly captures the point that past, present and future are purely perspectival, does not convey the central notion that all the times that we call past, present and future are equally existent at each and every moment of time. (Though 1009 does not exist in 2009, in 2009, 1009 exists.) Some people have adopted the term "eternalism" for the view I take Anselm to accept. I eschew that usage because "eternal" has traditionally been reserved for God's mode of being. It seems a confusion to call a temporally extended world where all points of time have equal ontological status "eternal." Sometimes the tenseless-time universe is referred to simply as the "block" universe. I would rather not adopt the term because a "block" sounds both static and finite, and both connotations are misleading. Thus, "four-dimensionalism" seems like the least bad option, but if a really good label comes along, by all means let us adopt it.

Leftow holds that Anselm's statements on the nature of time and the relationship of time to God's eternity should be interpreted to convey a presentist theory of time. For example, if Anselm says that the present is "fleeting" does that not suggest that time "flows," an image that fits better with the presentist thesis?⁸ My view is that when Anselm talks of the

apparent-present is not *the* present. Our time traveler who went back to 1009 from 2009 would be in a somewhat different situation. 1009 would *seem* exactly like *the* present to him, but, since he'd come from 2009, he'd know that 1009 couldn't be *the* present. But then don't we in 2009 have the same problem? We have no reason to suppose that *our* present is not actually an apparent-present which is in the past of *the* present, which actual present is in our future. And since *our* present cannot be discerned to have any special status, the reason which motivated the growing block view seems to be lost. If, to put it somewhat differently, the motivation is that the view allows us to distinguish a fixed past from an open future, the same problem remains in that no one at any moment in time can determine whether or not what they understand as the future is really *the* future. What looks to be the future to us in 2009 may actually be the past apparent-future, if *the* present is in 3009. These problems would disappear if the view holds that the past does not exist the way the present does, but then it is not clear that the view is really a species of four-dimensionalism, that is, it is not clear that it holds that things and events really exist as extended across the dimension of time.

⁸I must say that, as Leftow has explained it, I do not understand Broad's image of the houses and the light. The houses are all there equally. If the light stands for the perspective of a particular perceiver at a particular time then we've got standard four-dimensionalism. But apparently the "characteristic of presentness" is

present as fleeting he means that that is how the present appears to us. We seem to exist only in an ever-changing moment.⁹ To us, the present may look like the unextended point at which the non-existent future becomes the non-existent past.¹⁰ You can't get much more fleeting than that. But that is time as we experience it, not as it really is. A good proof text for Anselm's four-dimensionalism is his point that, "Just as the present time contains all place and whatever is in any place, in the same way the eternal present encloses all time and whatever exists at any time" (*De concordia* 1.5 S.II p. 254; my translation). I take this to point to four-dimensionalism, since "all place and whatever is in any place" refers to actually existing spatial locations and things, all of which have the same ontological status at a given time.¹¹ Although to the spatial perceiver in Newark, Chicago may be "there" and Newark "here," the present time contains Chicago and Newark and the two exist equally and in the same way. And so I take it that when Anselm says that the eternal present contains all time he intends to refer to all temporal locations and things and to suggest that they all have the same ontological status. Although, to the temporal perceiver in 2009, 2009 may be "now" and 1009 may be "then," since divine eternity "encloses" both 1009 and 2009 in some way analogous to the way a present moment "contains" all place and whatever is in any place, that sounds like 1009 and 2009 have the same ontological status. Isn't that four-dimensionalism?

Leftow says no. If I am understanding Leftow, he takes Anselm's view to be that, while 1009 and 2009 do both exist equally *in eternity*, only the present moment exists in time. While I take Anselm's talk of things and events existing in time and in eternity as a way of expressing the differing perspectives of the created and divine persons, Leftow seems to say that every event and thing actually exists in two different ways. All temporal things and events exist at two "presents," the temporal present at the moment in time at which they occur, and the eternal present. I fear I just do not understand this position. But in philosophy they also serve who merely manage to articulate their puzzlement, so I hope that I can raise some helpful questions here. I will limit the discussion to events, just to simplify things.

It is important to remember that Anselm does not say that it is the *idea* of some temporal event, or facts about, or propositions about, or knowledge of, some temporal event that exists in eternity. He is not, for example, following Boethius, who seems to hold that God, in one, present act of knowing Himself, has an idea of all times and all they contain *as if* they

not perspectival. But it doesn't affect the ontological status of anything. I just don't see what the "characteristic of presentness" means here.

⁹I offer a lengthy defense of this interpretation in *Anselm on Freedom*, pp. 176–184.

¹⁰That's how Augustine describes it in *Confessions* 11, 15.

¹¹This probably should be read as saying that the present moment contains all place and whatever exists in any place at a given moment. I do not see that this undermines the analogy as representing four-dimensionalism. Eternity contains all times that exist at eternity. And since *all* times do in fact exist at eternity, on both Leftow's interpretation and on mine, I don't quite see the importance Leftow ascribes to the distinction between all times and all times that exist at eternity.

were going on altogether now. Boethius's God seems to see things *as if* four-dimensionalism were the case, when in fact it is not.¹² Anselm says that it is the event *itself* which can be said to exist in time and in eternity. On my analysis this is not too difficult. There is a single event seen from two perspectives, one of which, God's, suffers no limitations and captures reality (more on God's perspective below), and one of which, ours, does suffer limitations. But it is puzzling to say, on a presentist analysis of time, that a single, temporal event actually exists both in the time it occurs and in eternity.

Take the event of a libertarian free choice. This is a good event to focus on since it is concern to reconcile libertarian freedom with divine foreknowledge that inspires some of Anselm's most important work on the nature of time. According to Anselm such a choice entails that there are genuine options open to the agent and that it is absolutely up to the agent which option is realized. And Anselm holds that a choice which is mutable in time may be immutable in eternity, or a choice which is not-necessary in time may be necessary in eternity. Let us say that in 2010 (the future) I will make a libertarian choice. On the four-dimensionalist view, 2010 is as real as 2009. It can truly be said in 2009 that God knows what choice I make in 2010. This is because He just "sees" me making it in 2010. My choice is mutable before 2010 because it is undetermined and entirely up to me, while it is immutable in eternity in that, since God sees all of time at once, the choice is made, and if I choose *x* at *t*, I cannot do other than choose *x* at *t*. The choice is not necessary in time in that it is not determined and it is necessary in eternity with the logical, consequent necessity that follows upon the positing of some fact. Necessarily, if *x*, then *x*. So mutable and immutable, not-necessary and necessary, are not flat contradictories. The very same choice is mutable and not necessary in one way and immutable and necessary in another.¹³

On Leftow's view, my future choice does not exist in 2009 (now), but it exists in eternity. Anselm certainly holds that it is truly said in 2009 that the choice exists in eternity, and that God knows what the choice is. But on a presentist view, how can that be? On the presentist view the future does not exist. As of now I have not made the choice, and if the outcome of the choice is absolutely up to me, how can the outcome exist in eternity, such that it is true to say *now* that it exists in eternity and that God knows what it will be? Moreover, Leftow seems to be saying that the very same choice is mutable in time and immutable in eternity, where "mutable" means the same thing in each instance. The choice is mutable and immutable in the same way, though not at the same present. But how can a choice that is truly immutable be mutable at *any* present? The choice is not necessary in time and necessary in eternity, where "necessary" has the same meaning. So the choice is necessary and not necessary in the same way, although not at the same present. But how can a choice which is truly necessary, not be necessary at some present? I just do not understand that.

Above I suggested that, on presentism, my future choice does not exist. Is it better to say that, on Leftow's interpretation, although presentism is

¹²Anselm on Freedom, pp. 167–168.

¹³Ibid., pp. 169–176.

the case, the future *does* exist? It exists in eternity, as does the past and the present. I had taken presentism to mean the view that the temporal present has an absolute ontological status, such that it is all that exists, and the past and future are absolutely non-existent. Even God would exist only in the present, since that's all there is. That God is eternal would then mean something like God's being absolutely unchanging, unaffected by the flow of time.¹⁴ But perhaps this is not Leftow's understanding of presentism, since he says that future and past events do exist in eternity. At any given moment in time it is true to say that the past, present, and future all exist in eternity. If each temporal instant is actually and equally present to God in eternity, which is what Anselm says, then, in eternity, all the actual moments of time and all they contain have the same ontological status. That sounds like four-dimensionalism. If we say that this eternity constitutes reality and add that our limitations force us to assimilate in a piecemeal way the bits of this reality which we can access, then we have the view I attribute to Anselm. Leftow adds a second present, such that things actually exist in the eternal present *and* in the temporal present. This seems unparsimonious, compared to the perspectival strategy.

And what of the status and experience of the human person? Should I say that I, as a person, exist in both time and eternity? I exist in two very different ways, only one of which is apparent to me? Four-dimensionalism entails the weird consequence that I experience my life as a succession of fleeting presents, without, at any given "present," having access to my past and future. But in fact I am extended across points of time, all of which exist equally, as just "there," not as past, present, or future. I grant that this is bizarre. But what is happening is that my limitations as a temporal perceiver make it impossible for me to see myself as I really am. I seem to exist in one way, but actually exist in another. That seems cognitively manageable. The fact that appearance often fails to capture reality is not news. But Leftow seems to be saying I actually exist in one way *and* actually exist in another. I am in fact a creature that exists in time, that exists only at the present moment, and I am also in fact a creature that exists in eternity, where every thing and event exists equally. It is true to say *now* that I exist in time only at the present moment and I have not yet made my choice in 2010, and it is true to say *now* that I also exist in eternity in which I have made my choice in 2010.

It is also well to note that Anselm does not limit his talk of events and actions as existing in time and in eternity to those involving creatures. He says that God's actions, too, can be described as existing in time and in eternity.¹⁵ On the four-dimensionalist analysis, "in time" and "in eternity" refer to our limited perspective versus the divine, and accurate, perspective. I would take Anselm to mean that God engages in one simple, and eternal act, which we temporal perceivers grasp piecemeal as it affects us at given moments of time. But on Leftow's interpretation it seems that God exists in two ways. On Anselm's view God is absolutely simple and His action is

¹⁴That was Avicenna's and Averroes's understanding of the term. See my "Anselm and his Islamic Contemporaries on Divine Necessity and Eternity," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007), pp. 373–393.

¹⁵Leftow himself includes a proof text for this point in "Presentism," note 24.

His very self. So if He is an actor in two actually existing different presents, one in time and one in eternity, then it would seem to follow that He exists in both the temporal present and the divine present. But, again, Anselm's God is absolutely simple. He cannot exist in two ways. And, to my knowledge, Anselm never says that God exists in the temporal present.

Another difficulty for Leftow's interpretation is that Anselm consistently treats time and space analogously. Just as all space is present to God's ubiquity, so all of time is present to God's eternity. Does that mean that, on Leftow's interpretation, spatial things, like Chicago, let's say, exist in two "heres," a spatial "here" and a non-spatial "here"? This would be an unusual view. To my knowledge the claim that God is wholly present to all of space has never inspired talk of two "heres." Chicago exists in just one way spatially, and God is wholly present to Chicago and to all other places. I think it would be too strong for me to insist that Anselm's texts on time cannot plausibly be read in any but the four-dimensionalist way, but at this stage I simply do not understand Leftow's interpretation of Anselm's position, and so I am not prepared to allow that it fits the text as well as mine.

I have argued not only that the textual evidence points to four-dimensionalism, but also that four-dimensionalism follows from Anselm's understanding of the nature of God. For one thing, Anselm's God is absolutely immutable. He does not change even to the extent of going from one thought to the next. He thinks all He thinks in one, simple, unchanging thought. On Anselm's understanding of "immutable" and my understanding of presentism, in a presentist universe Anselm's God could not be omniscient. If the present is all there is, an omniscient God must know that the present is *now*. But then, in the next moment, He must know that the next moment is now, and His thought has changed.¹⁶ It may be that Leftow can invoke his position that the present moment and the next moment both exist eternally in the divine present to solve this problem. Since I do not understand his view, I cannot assess whether or not he can provide an adequate reconciliation of presentism with Anselm's understanding of divine immutability and divine omniscience. (Of course if one is prepared to abandon the Anselmian view of the nature of God, for example by adopting a less absolute understanding of divine immutability, then the philosophical problem becomes less acute. But in doing that one can hardly argue that one is providing a plausible interpretation of *Anselm's* work.) Positing divine immutability is not a problem on four-dimensionalism because there is no objective "now." God "sees" all moments of time in one, simple, unchangeable act of knowing, and He sees all moments as equally real and present to Him, and that is how all time *is*.

Which leads us to the issue of the manner of God's knowledge. Leftow says that my argument begins from the fact that all times are equally and immediately present to God's knowledge and moves "from equal immediate cognitive presence to apparent tenselessness to tenselessness."¹⁷ I think this would be a fair statement of my position, assuming a correct

¹⁶I discuss divine immutability in *Perfect Being Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 46–50.

¹⁷"Presentism," p. 304.

understanding of “immediate cognitive presence” in the Anselmian context. Leftow goes on to offer several different examples to support the claim that it just does not follow from things appearing a certain way to God, that they must in fact be that way. And here it begins to become clear that the God Leftow has in mind is just not Anselm’s God. Anselm is a traditional, classical theist. He believes that it is God’s thought from moment to moment which causes the being of absolutely everything that can be truly called a *thing*; “thing” understood broadly to include objects, properties, and whatever in events can truly be said to exist or have ontological status. God’s thought causes things immediately and directly, that is, the only primary cause for the existence of a thing is God’s thought.¹⁸ There are no intermediary causes between God’s thought and the created existent. And God’s thought causes the being of the thing at the time the thing exists. If something exists at time *t*, then the causal efficacy of God’s thought is acting at time *t*. This most fundamental sort of cause does not precede its effect, but is contemporaneous with it.¹⁹

God is simple and immutable, and so His act of knowing all He knows and His act of causing all He causes are the same act. God does not know anything, with the exception of Himself, which He is not immediately causing to be. And, as I will argue below, this includes His knowledge of what we call the past and future. This may sound like a very odd and extreme claim, but it follows from Anselm’s conception of divine simplicity and immutability. (But doesn’t God know unicorns? He knows them as what they are, the fictive objects of created thought. And it is He who is causing the relevant creatures, thoughts, properties etc. which produce and constitute the unicorns.) How this view of the identity of divine knowledge and causal activity can be squared with the claim that created agents have libertarian freedom is a complex and interesting story which I believe Anselm succeeds in telling.²⁰

An analogy I find helpful is that of the author as he creates the characters, settings and events of a book he is writing.²¹ Think of Tolkien as he first imagines Gandalf. Gandalf, the fictive object, is absolutely and immediately dependent for his present existence on Tolkien’s act of thinking. Tolkien’s thought causes the existence of Gandalf. There is absolutely no more to Gandalf than what Tolkien thinks him to be. This is an analogy which fails at several points. God is a far superior creator. For one thing, Tolkien can think all sorts of things without thereby being their creator. He can think Hamlet, for example. Tolkien is the creator of Middle Earth, not the *Creator Omnium*. Moreover, Tolkien merely combines things which

¹⁸This is not to deny natural or secondary causes. For an introductory discussion of primary and secondary causation see *Perfect Being Theology*, pp. 113–118.

¹⁹The assumption here is that the Humean theory of causation utterly fails to capture the sort of causation under discussion.

²⁰See Chapter 6 of *Anselm on Freedom*. We are the ones who “create” the “property” of evil in a choice, but, on Anselm’s view, the evil is simply the absence of the justice that ought to have been there. It has no ontological status.

²¹I develop this analogy in “How a Perfect Being Creates: Anselm’s Theistic Idealism,” in my collection *The Anselmian Approach to God and Creation* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), pp. 223–261.

already exist independently of him—properties, abstracta etc.—to make what he makes. On traditional, classical theism, there is absolutely nothing which is not God or dependent on God. Even necessary truths are reflections of the nature of God. Tolkien, who can merely rearrange things, is at best a poor reflection of a creator. He is not a real creator, like God, who can bring things into being. Another difference, at least in Anselm's version of classical theism, is that God is such a powerful creator that He can make creatures that have libertarian freedom. Gandalf, on the other hand, is always going to choose just what Tolkien makes him choose. So I do not say that the analogy is very close. However, it does capture one point which is of key importance here: Whatever exists exists because it is being immediately thought by God.

Leftow seems to have a very different conception of God's knowledge. He seems to assume that the divine manner of knowing is roughly the same sort of phenomenon as human knowing; much better—indeed perfect—in degree, but nonetheless similar in kind.²² (I grant that incautious terminology on my part may be part of the problem, here. Saying that things “appear” or “look” some way to God, or that God “perceives” things does, I think, suggest the view that He knows things in a way similar to the way we know things.)²³ Leftow seems to take it that things exist independently of God's immediately thinking about them. Sometimes Leftow speaks of God's knowledge as consisting of knowing facts or propositions *about* things. Sometimes he speaks of God perceiving things which, apparently, exist independently of Him and which cause Him to perceive them.

Thus Leftow writes, “It could be true precisely from God's perspective that there is more to ultimate reality than things' being as they appear to Him.”²⁴ This is just not true on Anselm's analysis. It is not possible for Tolkien to be creating Middle Earth and to include in his fictive world things which he is not thinking. Similarly, ultimate reality is just what God is thinking, and there cannot be more to it than what appears to Him. The very term “perspective” might suggest that God's way of seeing things is just one among a number of ways. But that is not the Anselmian understanding. God's “seeing” is the source of everything and there is nothing not seen by God.²⁵ God's “perspective” makes ultimate reality,

²²I have argued that Anselm believes language is used univocally of God and creatures, so in one sense it is correct to say that “knowledge” falls under the same definition when used of divine and human knowledge (*The Neoplatonic Metaphysics and Epistemology of Anselm of Canterbury* [Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997], pp. 199–215). It does not follow that God and man “come to know” in the same way.

²³Exacerbating the problem is the fact that I have failed to spell out the distinction between divine and human knowledge in connection with my argument about time. In “Anselmian Eternalism” I mention the mode of divine knowledge only very briefly on p. 12, and in *Anselm on Freedom* I introduce the issue, but again rather briefly, on pp. 16–18. A somewhat more developed (though still introductory) discussion of divine knowledge *per se* can be found in Chapter 8 of *Perfect Being Theology*.

²⁴“Presentism,” p. 304.

²⁵I do think Leftow's point that we may experience things in a way God cannot is correct. We may, in the first-person, actually feel fear in the way a limited creature

and ultimate reality cannot contain any thing, or any mode of being, not immediately “perceived” by God.

Leftow analyzes how things might appear to God along epistemic lines, “what judgement God is inclined to make” or along non-epistemic lines—something “in the broad vicinity of phenomenologically appearing.”²⁶ But this whole discussion seems couched in terms of God’s beliefs having to conform to what exists independently of Him. True, knowledge for the created perceiver lies in his belief’s conforming to a reality which is largely independent of himself. That is not the case with God. It would not make sense to talk about the various ways Gandalf might “appear” to Tolkien as if the underlying assumption is that Tolkien’s cognitive job is to get Gandalf right by bringing his beliefs into line with the way Gandalf is. Gandalf is constituted by Tolkien’s thinking. Analogously all of created reality is constituted by God’s immediately thinking it.

In his analogy of the circle (about which more below) Leftow repeatedly describes the knowledge had by God “at the center” as *caused by* “firings” from points on the circle. He says that the fact about cognitive relations which he is trying to model is “that we can have knowledge caused by and about things which no longer exist.”²⁷ He speaks of temporal events, “which somehow have a causal impact on God’s cognitive state.”²⁸ He writes, “And events that cause God to know of their occurrence must be causally prior to His knowledge that they’ve occurred if the knowledge is observational, as I’m assuming.”²⁹ Now, it is true that for Anselm, unlike for Augustine and Aquinas, there are events which, in a very qualified way, could be said to have a causal impact on God. Anselm believes that created agents have libertarian free choice. But absolutely nothing with ontological status in those events is caused by the created agent. God is the immediate source of the existence of every *thing* involved in the choice. Thus, even in the case of libertarian choice, Anselm would hold that Leftow has the arrow of causation running almost entirely backwards. Objects and events do not cause God’s knowledge. God’s knowledge causes objects and (whatever has any real being in) events.³⁰

does, while God may have only a third-person (perfect) grasp of what it is to feel fear in the way a limited creature does. (See *Perfect Being Theology*, pp. 86–91.) I do not see that this undermines the claim that every *thing*, whatever has any sort of ontological status, is immediately kept in being by God’s thought. God may not experience fear the way a fearful creature does, but it is He who immediately causes the fearful creature, including everything that has any real being in the situation. This is sufficient to ground my argument about four-dimensionalism.

²⁶“Presentism,” p. 306.

²⁷Ibid., p. 312.

²⁸Ibid., p. 313.

²⁹Ibid., p. 314.

³⁰The late Fr. W. Norris Clarke provides a very helpful discussion and imagery of this point. He writes that “God knows my choice by knowing his own active power working within me, as thus determined or channeled determinately here and now by me” (“A New Look at the Immutability of God” in his *Explorations in Metaphysics* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994], p. 205). He is talking about Aquinas, and I am not entirely sure that Aquinas would approve

Leftow notes that different perceivers may perceive different properties in things, and it would be a mistake for the perceiver to assert that, just because he did not perceive some property in a thing, the thing could not have that property. "A tree n-e [non-epistemically] looks one way to me and quite another to a bat. The tree n-e looks visible to me but not the bat. It would be wrong for the bat to assert that since the tree is not visible to it, the tree is not visible I don't see why things should differ when we consider how things look to God and to us."³¹ The difference between God on the one hand and us and the bat on the other is that we and the bat are limited perceivers whose beliefs and phenomenal experiences are caused by things which exist independent of us. Thinking well, on our part, involves trying to conform our beliefs to those things. Since it is God's thinking that causes everything, the way something "looks to" God is just the way it is.³²

How does all of this relate to four-dimensionalism? If God is simple and immutable and knows all He knows and causes all He causes in one, simple and immutable act, then it is difficult to make sense of presentism. If presentism is the view that the present is not a matter of the perspective of the limited, temporal perceiver, but rather is absolutely the only time that actually exists, then, from all perspectives that are actually perceiving reality as it is, including God's, all that actually exists is the present moment of time. If God is omniscient He knows that it is actually *now*, the present moment. If it is God's knowledge that immediately causes all that is, then God is now causing only the present moment and whatever it contains. At the present moment He knows that yesterday is past and absolutely non-existent and tomorrow is yet to come and absolutely non-existent. He is not now causing yesterday or tomorrow. When tomorrow becomes the present He will be knowing that it is *now* and He will be causing it. But then His knowledge which is His act of causing must change. On (my understanding of) presentism, today He is causing today and not causing tomorrow, and tomorrow He will be doing something different, causing tomorrow and not causing today.

That cannot happen on Anselm's analysis. But how can God know all objects and events, whatever is—to us—past, present, and future, without undergoing any change? He must grasp all things in one, unchanging thought to which everything is immediately and equally present. Leftow apparently agrees that this could be the case, but says that God's knowing all things as equally existent in His eternal present does not entail four-dimensionalism. As I said above, I simply do not understand Leftow's view. God's knowing all things is the same action by which He makes all

of all of his conclusions, but it seems to me that Anselm would embrace this way of expressing the position.

³¹"Presentism," p. 310.

³²I am not sure the Tolkien analogy is helpful, here, but it would go roughly like this: In the course of *Lord of the Rings* Gandalf might appear one way to Frodo and another way to Sauron, and, if the issue came up in the book, we would think that both ought to grant that Gandalf might have properties that each of them fail to perceive. But Gandalf cannot possibly have properties which Tolkien does not "perceive" him to have.

things. If He thinks all times as equally and immediately present to Him, then He is making all times to exist as equally and immediately present to Him. This is what reality is. There is no more to the universe. And this sounds like four-dimensionalism to me.

I take it that four-dimensionalism follows from Anselm's views on the nature of God and the relationship of God to the universe. It also allows him to solve the dilemma of freedom and divine foreknowledge. I argue that Anselm holds a genuinely libertarian account of created free agency. How could God foreknow a choice if the agent confronts truly open options, and which option wins out is absolutely up to the agent? As I read him, Anselm answers that it is true today that God can know that you will choose *x* tomorrow because "today" and "tomorrow" are relative to the temporal perceiver. To God it's all present. God "sees" tomorrow and you choosing *x* in it, along with every other moment of time, as immediately present to Him. It follows that there is a sense in which it is necessary today that you will choose *x* tomorrow. But this is a consequent necessity which follows upon the fact of your choosing *x* tomorrow. If you choose *x* tomorrow then, necessarily, you choose *x* tomorrow by just the same necessity that if you are reading this now you cannot possibly not be reading this now. The origin of this consequent necessity is your own choice, and so it is a necessity that in no way conflicts with a robust libertarian freedom.³³

Can presentism be reconciled with divine timelessness and omniscience—an omniscience which encompasses future libertarian free choices? If I am understanding him correctly, Leftow intends his circle-of-light analogy and his circular time proposal to help explain how such a reconciliation might be possible. Leftow does not explicitly discuss Anselm's libertarianism, but since he is responding to me, and my most developed interpretation of Anselm's work on time occurs within my discussion of his attempt to solve the dilemma of reconciling divine foreknowledge with libertarian freedom, I think it is fair to state the question as I have stated it.³⁴ Leftow certainly makes the point that what he is trying to demonstrate is the possibility of God's knowing the future, even on a presentist analysis of time.³⁵ And so to the analogy of the circle of light and the proposal of a circular time. Here is another point where I fear I am just not following the argument, and so my contribution must consist largely in trying to express why I am mystified.

Leftow writes, "As we look at the night sky, we see stars as they were at widely separated times. . . . The stars jointly cause our experience; it does not follow that they exist at once or that presentism is false."³⁶ Now imagine a "blip" of light traveling a circular path, where a perceiver at the center of the circle experiences light from each point on the circle at once.

³³*Anselm on Freedom*, pp. 169–176.

³⁴The dilemma is set up in Chapter 8 of *Anselm on Freedom*, and then Chapter 9 consists of two parts, first my understanding of Anselm's solution (pp. 169–176), and then a discussion of the four-dimensionalism on which the solution depends (pp. 176–184).

³⁵"Presentism," p. 311.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 310.

What the perceiver would perceive would be, not a point of light, but a circle of light. Now suppose, analogously, that time is circular, and that each point of time “fires” information to God, imagined as at the “center” of the time circle.

Already I have a difficulty because initially I had supposed that this image was intended to represent a timeless God beholding a circular time. (The import of the image in late classical and medieval thought was to express the equidistance of all points of time—the points on the circumference—to an *eternal* God—the center of the circle.) If the image meant to represent God as temporal, He’d be on the circumference, I thought. However, Leftow says that in this image it is divine *temporality* which is conjoined with presentism, appearing-at-once, and omniscience.³⁷ I do not think my puzzlement here need prevent me from expressing my other questions, though. So I proceed.

God, at the center of the circle, receives each piece of information from each point of time on the circumference, at the same time. And so it all appears to Him at once. As I noted above, on an Anselmian understanding of God and His relationship to creation, this has the arrow of causation pointing the wrong way. God does not “receive information” from things at all (with the strictly qualified exception of divine knowledge of the free choices of created agents). Reversing the causal arrow, if God is directly knowing and hence causing all that has any real being at all the points on the circumference equally in what is “at once” to Him, then it seems that all the points exist equally. It is hard to see how one point can be “special,” the only one with ontological status, which is what is required by presentism.

But there are further puzzles. Leftow’s picture of a circular time is intrinsically difficult. He writes, “Time has a truly circular topology only if the *same* events and times recur.”³⁸ According to my dictionary (Webster’s) to recur is “to occur again after an interval.” If we are talking about events “recurring” wouldn’t we mean to say something like this; some event occurs which has relevantly similar properties to some event which occurred earlier? That is not what Leftow means, since he proposes that in his circular time there can be two (actually an infinite number) of events which have *all* the same—absolutely identical—properties including the property of occurring at the very same time. If absolutely nothing distinguishes the two (infinite number of) events, how are there two (an infinite number of) events, rather than just one event? Perhaps there is some haecceity distinguishing this “next” event from the “previous” event with all the same properties, (“next” and “previous” in some way which is not temporal)?

What about the arrow of time? On Leftow’s image the present seems to be whizzing around the time circle in one direction rather than the other, which would reflect the view shared by presentists and four-dimensionalists alike, that temporal sequence is ordered in one direction. But on circular time every time is in both the past and the future of every other time. Every time is in the chain of causes and of effects of every other

³⁷Ibid., p. 315.

³⁸Ibid., p. 313.

time. One promising way of grounding the claim that temporal sequence must be ordered in one direction is to appeal to the notion that the earlier moments are, or include, causes of the later moments.³⁹ Circular time seems to rule this out. So what explains the arrow of time?

Worse, the information from all the times "hits" God at once. What is actually a whizzing "blip" of time, the present, looks to God to be a circle where every point is equally there, and is equally the cause and effect of every other point. If that's how it appears to God, how can He know which direction the present is traveling around the circle? If He doesn't know, then this seems a poor image of omniscience. If He "just knows," without having received the information from the points on the circumference, then this seems a poor image to *explain* omniscience. Perhaps in addition to the "thisness" which distinguished the "next" from the "previous" event, we could posit a brute "arrowness"? The image is getting awfully ad hoc and cluttered. Leftow may say that that doesn't matter because all he is trying to do is construct a possible scenario in which presentism and omniscience can be reconciled. But isn't this scenario supposed to provide evidence for, or insight into, the way reality works? It seems to me that in this case the implausibility of the image may render it unhelpful when we come to ask whether the actual world allows for the proposed reconciliation.

And what of God's knowledge of the future—especially future free choices? Leftow says that "if the time truly is circular, there never was a time when the projectiles fired by these very times had not reached the center all at once. For they had done so on a prior journey round the circle. And so God knows of what is, that it is, when it is, because at that time, a knowledge-inducing projectile has already landed, having been fired on an earlier trip round the circle. . . . Thus at the beginning of each cycle of time, God foreknows all that the cycle will contain."⁴⁰ Suppose we live in the circular time world. It is now 2009 and, now, God knows that I will choose *x* in 2010. Leftow seems to be saying that He knows it because "previous" I chose *x* in the "previous" 2010. In fact, the infinite number of previous *I*s chose *x* for all the infinite number of previous 2010s. Standardly libertarians have said that libertarian freedom requires open options such that the entire history of the world could be the same up to the point of choice and the agent could truly choose other than she chose. Leftow does say that "this" instance of an event is distinguished from the "previous" instance of an event. If it weren't, they'd be one and the same event. So my choice of *x* in 2010 is not one and same event as the choice my "previous" self made "last" time. And yet, on Leftow's scenario, I cannot choose other than *x* "this" time around, since I chose *x* "last" time around. In fact, since all events have *exactly* the same properties, the Big Bang (and every event before my choice of *x* in 2010) of "this" time circuit must have the property of "Occurring before Rogers chooses *x* in 2010," since that is the property it had in the "previous" time circuit.⁴¹ So before "this" choice

³⁹"God, Time, and Freedom," pp. 211–213. Tooley, in advancing the growing block view, appeals to causation in *Time, Tense and Causation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁴⁰"Presentism," p. 314.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 313.

of x in 2010 occurs, it is not possible that it not occur. And the impossibility rests on events in the local past of this time circuit, and on events in the infinite number of “previous” time circuits. But if I cannot choose otherwise because of factors outside of my actual choice itself, then that seems to conflict with libertarian freedom. That, at any rate, is how it looks to me. But again, I do not feel that I have a good grasp on the proposal.

The point that strikes me as most troubling is that the image of circular time is (I had thought) intended to illuminate Anselm’s theory of time and Anselm’s understanding of divine omniscience. But it is an image far removed from what most of us take to be actuality, and Anselm certainly does not propose such an image. As Leftow grants, the Christian cannot accept that time is circular.⁴² Leftow responds that he was supposing a temporal divinity in the circular time scenario. “It’s the story of an *atemporal* God with linear time that I’m defending with the story of a temporal God and circular time.”⁴³ I’m afraid I just do not see it. Divine foreknowledge requires that it be true in the present, e.g., 2009, that God knows what I will choose in 2010. On a linear time there is no “previous” 2010 for God to know or which would make it the case that the Big Bang must have the property of “Occurring before Rogers chooses x in 2010.” Is Leftow saying that, although 2010 has not occurred in time, the information from 2010 and from all of the infinite future of linear time has already “hit” God in eternity? Is this because all the future actually exists “in eternity”? Even my actual choice, which truly involves open options, and which—if presentism is true—I simply have not made? I am back to my puzzlement over the view that exactly the same event does not exist yet in the temporal present and does exist in the eternal present. Perhaps if I understood that position I could appreciate Leftow’s claim that the analogy involving circular time points to a reconciliation of presentism and divine omniscience in a way which illuminates Anselm’s views on the matter.

In the final two sections of his paper Leftow discusses my claim that saying that God is atemporal and time is four-dimensional allows the view that God is truly immutable and perfectly powerful.⁴⁴ Leftow argues that divine immutability might consist in His will never changing, such that He always wills that “if P at t , then Q . Time passes. . . . T arrives, and P is the case. P in conjunction with the divine will then brings it about that Q .” Even setting aside the misleading implication that causes other than God act “in conjunction with the divine will,” this proposal does not capture

⁴²Among the theses condemned by Bishop Tempier in the Condemnation of 1277 was #92: “That with all the heavenly bodies coming back to the same point after a period of thirty-six thousand years, the same effects as now exist will reappear.”

⁴³“Presentism,” p. 315.

⁴⁴In the next-to-penultimate section Leftow responds to my argument about “immediate causation.” His suggestions rest on the idea that things in time “appear” to God, rather than that God is causing them immediately—I have noted that that is not Anselm’s understanding—and on the idea that an event exists both in time and in eternity. I have already admitted to my failure to grasp this position. I think I have already said enough to explain why I do not see that Leftow’s approach is preferable to mine.

Anselm's understanding of "immutable."⁴⁵ On Anselm's view, it is not just that God's will remains steadfast, but that God thinks and does all He thinks and does in a single, simple act. God's actions and thoughts do not change at all. As I noted above, if presentism is true, then (as I have understood it) the present is absolute, and so God, if He thinks about the world and acts in it, must be thinking and doing something different today than He thought and did yesterday. Once again, perhaps Leftow's distinction between the divine and the temporal present could solve the problem if it could be made more comprehensible. It should be noted, though, that my interpretation jibes with medieval discussions of the question of God's immutability. For example, I mention Avicenna and Averroes in the passage from which Leftow quotes.⁴⁶ These Aristotelian Muslims apparently assumed presentism and concluded that, since God's radical immutability is non-negotiable, He must not be able to act in time. My argument is that by adopting four-dimensionalism, you can square the idea that God does act in the world with Anselm's very strong—though standard in the Middle Ages—doctrine of divine immutability.⁴⁷

In the final section of his paper Leftow criticizes my argument that four-dimensionalism allows for greater divine power. I do think he is quite right to point out that if God intends to achieve some effect at a time, then that effect can only be achieved at that time. In the two passages which Leftow quotes I was actually making two different points and was speaking especially to Open Theists like William Hasker.⁴⁸ Open Theists understand presentism as I do, to entail that absolutely all that exists is the present moment, such that God, too, must exist only in the present moment. That means that it is true at the present moment that God acts directly only at the present moment. The past is fixed and gone and cannot be acted upon by anyone at all. The future is not yet and can be "acted on" only in the extended and indirect sense that things we, including God, may do in the present will affect the future. On (this understanding of) presentism no

⁴⁵God is the primary cause and other causes are secondary causes. Each is wholly sufficient to bring about the effect on its own level. They do not act "in conjunction." *Perfect Being Theology*, pp. 113–118.

⁴⁶"Anselmian Eternalism," p. 11. See also my "Anselm and his Islamic Contemporaries."

⁴⁷It should be noted that many medieval philosophers who do not seem to embrace four-dimensionalism do hold that God is radically immutable and yet is, in some way, an actor in the world. Aquinas, for example, manages the task by appealing to the extremely difficult view that, while things are really related to God, God is not really related to things. It seems to me that this places God at a greater distance from creation than Anselm will allow, but a discussion of this complex issue lies far outside the scope of the present note. This point does not count in favor of Leftow's interpretation of Anselm. Leftow clearly has a very different view of divine immutability (and causality and omniscience) than what was standard in the Middle Ages.

⁴⁸I note that Hasker seems to share my puzzlement over the thesis that things and events might exist "twice" once in time and once in eternity ("Anselmian Eternalism," p. 8). I attribute misunderstanding to Hasker, but perhaps Hasker has correctly understood Leftow's version of divine timelessness, and simply disagrees with it, while it is I who have failed to understand the thesis.

one can directly act upon the future. Four-dimensionalism would say that it is true at what we perceive as the present moment that God acts directly on what we perceive as the past, present, and future. My first point was that being able, in one act, to act directly upon all moments of time seems a metaphysically greater sort of power than the ability to act only upon the present moment of time. That was what I intended when I said that “A being . . . able to act immediately on all of what we call past, present and future is more powerful than a being whose activity is confined to the present instant.”

The other point was in response to the Open Theists’ claim that God’s knowing the future would not enhance His power. They argue that since He would know only what actually *will* happen, He is not in a position to *change* the future, and so His power is not greater than if He did not know what will happen. My argument was that, while God does not *change* anything that happens at any time—if *x* happens at *t* it is logically impossible to make it so that it is not the case that *x* happens at *t*—having direct access to all of time means that He has tremendous power to *bring about* what happens at any given time.⁴⁹ (When I said, “that all of spacetime is immediately present to Him . . . makes Him far more powerful,” I did not intend “makes Him . . .” here to mean “causes Him to be . . .,” but rather “means that He is . . .”)

I do not think Leftow disagrees with my anti-Open Theist argument here. The disagreement lies elsewhere. On four-dimensionalism (assuming there *is* a future) we can say that for any and every moment in the future, it is true today that God acts, that is produces some effect, in a specific way upon that moment. We know this is true because if God were not acting upon it, the moment would not exist at all. So, letting *x* stand for a divine action, if *t* + 1 is some moment in the future, it is true today that God does *x* at *t* + 1. Leftow may agree that we can truly say today that God does *x* at *t* + 1. But adds that “Whether time is tenseless or not, He can’t have an effect at *t* + 1 that is located other than at *t* + 1. Whether time is tenseless or not, it can be true at *t* that timelessly, He acts and has effects at *t* + 1.”⁵⁰ So where is the extra divine power that I claim four-dimensionalism would entail?

I have to grant that I am thinking of presentism within the debate between Open Theism and more traditional analyses of divine omniscience and omnipotence. Open Theism holds, and this seems right to me, that if you combine presentism with libertarian freedom for created agents, this renders the future radically open.⁵¹ There is no truth now about what choices you and I will make in the future. But presumably God acts in response to our choices. (In the tradition this is actually a daring “presumably.” I take it that Aquinas would deny the presumption, holding that God is not affected by, and does not respond to, anything or anyone

⁴⁹“Anselmian Eternalism,” pp. 19–21.

⁵⁰“Presentism,” p. 319.

⁵¹Molinists disagree. I argue against the Molinist alternative in *Anselm on Freedom*, pp. 148–152. For an earlier criticism of Molinism see my “Middle Knowledge versus Knowledge of Vision,” in *The Anselmian Approach to God and Creation*, pp. 175–197. (*Caveat lector*—the latter may contain too Anselmian a view of Aquinas.)

created. Anselm, as a libertarian, is committed to the view that God does indeed respond to us.)⁵² Combining presentism and libertarian freedom, even God cannot know what we will actually do in the future, and so He cannot know what He will actually do in the future, and, at least on the Open Theist assessment, it is not the case that there is a truth value in the present for all propositions about future choices human or divine. (Perhaps *some* divine choices are made from all eternity, but specific divine choices responding to libertarian free creaturely choices are not yet made.) On this analysis, if “x” is taken to be a future divine act in response to a creature’s future libertarian choice, then it is *not* true *today* that “God does x at t + 1.” It is not true today that God exercises a specific power at t + 1. On the Open Theist view God does not, today, act directly on what we call the past and the future, and there are a host of propositions about God’s future acts that presently have no truth value. That seems to me to be a more limiting assessment of divine power than my four-dimensionalism proposes. I take it that Leftow does not accept the Open Theist view of presentism and of divine omniscience and omnipotence because he holds that events which are future to us are present in divine eternity. So he would likely say that Open Theism inappropriately circumscribes God and it does not follow that we need to adopt four-dimensionalism to avoid the unhappy consequences I ascribe to presentism. I fear, yet again, that I just do not understand Leftow’s point about the two presents. But I hope I have expressed my puzzlement in a way that may help to advance the debate. As of now it seems to me that, in the absence of strong arguments against four-dimensionalism, it remains the preferable theory of time to attribute to an Anselmian universe. That being the case, I stand by my historical claim that Anselm should be read as a pioneer of four-dimensionalism.

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⁵²*Anselm on Freedom*, pp. 191–192.