

contrary to Trajan's rescript is to say something that had no meaning in Roman Law. It is odd that Grant, who has warned so often about the misconceptions in Eusebius' *Church History*, should in this book have slipped back into just such a Eusebian misconception: that there was imperial persecution that depended on the Emperor's attitude to Christianity.

ANDREW LOUTH

**ANSELM, by G.R. Evans (Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series)  
Geoffrey Chapman, 1989; pp. xiii + 108. £12.95 (h/b). £4.95 (p/b)**

This volume contributes in a most well-documented way to a series which promises to be of the highest order. There is no dispute about the greatness of St. Anselm, whose lifespan straddles the time of the Norman Conquest. He is here introduced without any subsumption of that greatness under facile and abstract historical categories, but rather by reference to the concrete evidence of his own writings and those of his contemporaries. Thus Eadmer's *Life* and Anselm's letters form the main basis for the review of his life and the world. His prayers and meditations show the nature and depths of his spirituality. Here, and throughout this volume, such references are made by unobtrusive code-signs, for the use of readers who may wish to follow them up in detail.

Anselm's theological method as such is soberly outlined, with due justice being done to its remarkable overlapping with philosophy of language. Among the items skilfully introduced in a survey of the saint's *Proslogion* is the notorious 'ontological' argument for the existence of God. Here, and in the comment on his various Trinitarian reflections, the reader is well assured of the most solid of introductions without the slightest trace of obfuscatory mystification. The same lightness of touch is maintained throughout the chapters on the Incarnation (drawing upon the *Cur Deus Homo*), on the problems of evil (taking in the *De casu Diaboli*), and on Freewill (comprising *De Libertate Arbitrii*).

The whole is rounded off by a chapter on Anselm's approach to the salvific operation of the sacraments, including controversy on infant baptism, penance, and the Eucharist. His perhaps over-intellectualist limitations in the whole continuum of human possibilities in the field of theological discussion are crisply outlined at the end, along with a reasoned characterisation of his special and unique genius. Both the beginner and the established scholar cannot but benefit from this excellent set of economically-expressed reminders.

Altogether it is most refreshing to enjoy the work of an author who does not overload the main text with heavy footnotes. Indeed, there are none at all, and the end-of-chapter notes are exceedingly brief and to the point. It is perhaps in keeping with this spirit of stripped-down clarity and economy that references to Dr Evans' own works on Anselm and his time, even in the general bibliography, are quite minimal. Fortunately this modesty is somewhat remedied by the bibliography supplied editorially on the rear cover.

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