

ANSELM OF CANTERBURY AND THE DESIRE FOR THE WORD by Eileen C. Sweeney, *Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC, 2012, pp. xv + 403, \$74.95, hbk*

It is difficult to do justice to this excellent book in a brief review, for Eileen Sweeney offers us a wide-ranging account of what she calls Anselm's 'project', doing so through careful attention to Anselm's texts and discussions of Anselm in the secondary literature. Her Anselm is deeply committed to the power of human reason and yet fundamentally humble before the greatness of God, both coolly rational and emotionally fervent, a thinker committed to the paradox and necessity of the Christian faith. The book is divided into seven chapters plus an introduction and conclusion. In the Introduction, Sweeney presents us with her thesis, 'that Anselm's corpus, from his earliest prayer to his last treatise, is a single project in which knowledge of self and God are inextricably linked'. The project 'is union of the self with God' (p. 7). The chapters take us through Anselm's writings following a sequence, which reflects in the main the order of their production. Chapter 1 addresses Anselm's *Prayers* and spirituality, which is 'both highly pessimistic and optimistic: it is impossible that he be saved because of his sinfulness, and unthinkable that he *not* be saved' because of God's goodness and power (p. 34). The *Letters* are dealt with in Chapter 2.

One of the benefits of this book is that it draws attention to texts which may have passed the reader by on previous occasions. Particularly striking is the quotation from Anselm's second letter (p. 67) in which he tells us that, if the world smiles on us, we should not smile in return. This is not just another example of conventional spiritual language, but a real call to those 'in the world' to face up to its horrors and to turn away from it. Not a message designed to go down well with twenty-first century 'modernity', but no less important for that.

Chapter 3 looks at *De Grammatico* and the *Philosophical Fragments*, arguing that for Anselm neither logic nor theology is subservient to the other (p. 76). In her discussion of the contributions of Desmond Henry and Lothar Steiger to our understanding of Anselm's logic, Sweeney makes the highly significant point that in spite of the greater power of modern logic in producing results, it achieves this at some cost. It loses 'the multiplicity of meanings and references', 'the need for interpretation', which 'are intrinsic aspects of language that cannot be avoided by the right technical language or symbolism' (p. 80). Chapter 4 addresses the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. Here Sweeney discusses whether Anselm's works are theology or philosophy (they are both – Anselm lived before the reification of the distinction between philosophy and theology in the different university faculties) and whether there is a change in method between the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* (there is not). The paradoxical nature of Anselm's thought is captured by the formula of the *Proslogion* (that than which nothing greater can be thought) which 'mirrors the sense in which God is both supremely present, given in the very structure of thought, and, at the same time, always beyond the limits of thought' (p. 121).

Sweeney continues her discussion of 'the strategy of alternating paradox and necessity' (p. 211) in Chapter 5, which covers the dialogues: *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* and *De Casu Diaboli*. In this chapter, Sweeney provides a neat account of what Anselm means by 'necessary reasons': 'Reasons are necessary when they are derived validly from assumptions we are unable to give up without giving up basic principles, principles without which things as we know and experience them are unintelligible' (p. 239). Chapter 6 treats of *De Incarnatione Verbi*, *Cur Deus Homo* and *De Conceptu Virginali*. By the time of these works, Anselm had shifted his attention to debates external to the monastic community,

e.g. the views of Roscelin and of the School of Laon (pp. 246f.). Sweeney prefers the account of the Trinity in the *Monologion* to that in *DIV*, the former being 'more intellectually modest' but revealing 'deeper insight' (p. 271). She begins her discussion of *Cur Deus Homo* by asking whether the objections put forward by Boso originate with 'real' Jews or Muslims and suggests that attributing objections to unbelievers 'may be a kind of cover' for addressing questions that would be considered 'impious' if simply put forward by believers (p. 283). For Sweeney, *CDH* is 'thematically central to Anselm's work as a whole', a kind of middle term uniting the extremes of God and humanity. The necessity and unlikeliness, if not impossibility, of the Incarnation is reflected in 'Anselm's arguments in which paradoxes are shown to be necessary and vice versa' (p. 301). *De Conceptu Virginali*, in which Anselm addresses the question of original sin as inherited from Adam, is 'proto-scholastic' and less polished and literary than *CDH* (p. 313).

In Chapter 7, Sweeney argues that Anselm's last works, *De Processione Spiritus Sancti* and *De Concordia* 'are the most "scholastic" of Anselm's writings' (p. 328). *De Processione* is 'more professional, more the product of a distinct and independent academic discipline' (p. 345). At the same time, it is 'striking' that, in spite of the change of approach, *De Concordia* involves little substantial change in the views he had put forward in *DLA* and *DCD*. In her Conclusion, Sweeney writes that 'to the degree that Anselm succeeds, he does not do so without exposing deep difficulties for reason in the faith he wants to understand' (p. 369). It might be better to state that he succeeds, *because* he exposes those deep difficulties. Sweeney's Anselm is 'deep', but 'flawed'. The question is whether what she refers to as flaws are not in fact challenges to the project of post-enlightenment modernity.

'Thusly' is a term to be avoided, I think. And should not that be 'papal' rather than 'papist' on p. 69, and 'monastic' rather than 'monkish' on p. 254?

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CHRIST'S TWO WILLS IN SCHOLASTIC THOUGHT: THE CHRISTOLOGY OF AQUINAS AND ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXTS by Corey L. Barnes, *Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies*, Toronto, 2012, pp. vii + 356, \$85

'Not what I will, but what you will'. In the passage where Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before the Crucifixion, apparently submitting his own will to that of the Father, Matthew 26.39 posed for early Christian theologians the question whether Christ had two wills, human and divine. This became a major patristic controversy. It goes to the heart of the debates with Arians and others, who sought to argue through innumerable refinements of concept and wording, that the Son was not of the same substance as the Father. Disputes went on in Chrysostom and Gregory Nazianzus, and among the Latin Fathers in Ambrose and Augustine, until the Monothelite controversy of the seventh century brought matters to a head. The introductory chapter provides a clear summary of the intricacies of all this and its immediate aftermath.

There was a pause. The topic largely dropped from view in the Latin West for some centuries, although, as the author notes, the twelfth century Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard and Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard and the early thirteenth century William of Auxerre had relevant points to make about the will of Christ. But they lacked the knowledge of the Greek tradition to take the story on directly from where the seventh century had left it.

It came into its own again in the thirteenth century and the main chapters of this book concentrate on the contributions of Albertus Magnus and Bonaventure; then