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Knell, Matthew. Sin, Grace and Free Will: A Historical Survey of Christian Thought. Vol. 2, From Anselm to the Reformation

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Traductions transformatives dans la première modernité française et britannique

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soulignant l'influence considérable qu'il exerça sur les choix commerciaux et savants des éditeurs ainsi que la diversité de ses contributions dans le processus d'impression.

Ce beau volume enrichit l'état de nos connaissances sur une des grandes figures de l'humanisme du nord, dont la science profonde, la diversité des intérêts et la réflexion souvent subtile méritent aujourd'hui plus que jamais l'attention des chercheurs.

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Knell, Matthew.

Sin, Grace and Free Will: A Historical Survey of Christian Thought. Vol. 2, From Anselm to the Reformation.

Cambridge, UK: James and Clarke & Co., 2018. Pp. 287. ISBN 978-0-227-17607-8 (hardcover) US\$150.

Moving away from the church fathers to early scholasticism and some of the key thinkers of the Protestant Reformation, the second volume of Matthew Knell's series on sin, grace, and free will offers readers accessible English translations of texts that—in many cases—have yet to be translated for an English readership. Knell makes a point of saying that his translations of the scholastics and Reformation thinkers differ from those of the first volume of the series because he has attempted to improve the readability of the selections by using more accessible English paraphrases and terminology. Knell's desire to make the translations more accessible is a success. In each chapter, the author limits his commentary to the essentials, thereby creating the necessary continuity between the selected passages, while freeing readers to construct meaning through their own analysis of the passages.

Knell's Introduction is brief yet insightful; he states outright that, although his personal theological beliefs do not always align with those of the scholastics and reformers, his aim is to present an objective collection of primary source texts arranged thematically. All of the chapters, Knell explains, are brought together harmoniously by the final chapter on the Council of Trent. Indeed, this collection of passages is for readers fluent in the theosophical and

historical literature of the late medieval and early Renaissance periods, yet what I have noticed—and truly appreciated—is the role Knell takes as a teacher. On more than one occasion, Knell shares his hope that the selected passages will be enough to inform readers of a given thinker’s essential message relative to sin, grace, and free will, while also encouraging them to turn to the primary sources. Knell clarifies that, although his work is also a secondary source, he has tried to translate passages that, oftentimes, have yet to be Anglicized. Knell’s intention to limit his commentary in the book does not negate his presence as a teacher of theology; from encouraging readers to return to primary source materials to crafting continuity between passages and between chapters, Knell is the ever-present “teacher.”

The first thinker in the collection is Anselm of Canterbury, the father of scholasticism. This chapter addresses three themes: the origin of sin, as expressed in *On the Fall of the Devil*; sin and humankind, as outlined in *On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*; and free will, introduced in the second part of the chapter using selected passages from *On Free Will* and *De Concordia*. The second chapter focuses on the Christian mystic Bernard of Clairvaux, whose *De Gratia et libero arbitrio* seeks to understand the relationship between grace and human understanding. Here, Knell tells readers that Bernard of Clairvaux’s mysticism is an obvious contrast to the work of Peter Lombard and Aquinas, but points out that the former’s critique of logic in scholastic thought serves as a buffer between Anselm—who focused more on faith than on logic—and the later scholastics and reformers in this volume. Introduced next is Peter Lombard, whose treatment of the Trinity and freedom is what Knell believes makes Lombard the “prime” theologian of the twelfth century, although Lombard’s most notable work—the *Sentences*—has received little attention over the past century. The next three chapters are devoted to Aquinas and his work on sin, grace, and free will. Following Aquinas is the chapter on Martin Luther, in which Knell strings together five separate works. Knell acknowledges the difficulty of this task, because the various tracts on sin and free will are nuanced and best understood when read in full and within the larger context of Luther’s writing. After Luther is the sixteenth-century Swiss humanist, Huldrych Zwingli, whose relationship with Erasmus allowed him to break with the Thomistic tradition. Zwingli’s role as a reformer was tarnished by Luther, who accused him of “doing the devil’s work” (219), but his discussion

of grace and free will in *On Providence* offers valuable insight to the concerns of the Protestant Reformation. The final thinker addressed in this volume is John Calvin, who continued the work of Zwingli in Geneva. Translating Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and *On the Bondage and Liberation of the Will* was a difficult task, writes Knell, simply due to the "extent and depth" of Calvin's thought (235). Nevertheless, Knell brings these passages into dialogue and calls upon readers to rediscover Calvin's work, especially those readers who come from a Calvinist background.

The final chapter on the Council of Trent is broken down into sessions, and Knell explains that the Tridentine theology that arises from the Council of Trent is still central to the Catholic understanding of Christian faith. This chapter allows readers to draw parallels between Catholic and Protestant views related to original sin, justification, and the Sacrament. The contrasting arguments presented by Knell underscore his commitment to providing an objective collection of the selected passages. I found that Knell's representational approach to themes in sin, grace, and free will was well-executed, because he took great care to address points of conflict between the thinkers, but without privileging one thinker over another. The complexity of thought presented in the selected passages "stretches our minds well beyond any automatic understanding" (4), but Knell's didactic approach to knowledge exchange inspires that mental "stretch" by making it fulfilling.

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Lee, Alexander.

Humanism and Empire: The Imperial Ideal of Fourteenth-Century Italy.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 438. ISBN 978-0-19-967515-9 (hardcover) US\$100.

In this erudite and densely researched book, packed with historical data, Alexander Lee explores the humanists' political ambitions for territorial expansions and the creation of the Holy Roman Empire. Throughout the book, Lee calls into question the connection between humanism and republicanism, providing a new definition for the "hazily defined" (185) notion of humanism.