Prinsterer's and Abraham Kuyper's analysis of the idolatrous opposition of revolutionary politics against belief in God help us see that there is more to our situation than the spin of the unintended?

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Andrew T. B. McGowan. *Adam, Christ and Covenant: Exploring Headship Theology*. Leicester: Apollos; London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2016. Pp. xvi + 221.

Andrew T. B. McGowan argues that he stands in a trajectory set by John Murray and wants to bring Reformed theology more into accord with the Bible. The issues under consideration are covenant and headship. He divides his work into three sections: historical considerations, a constructive proposal, and implications. It will be most helpful to review the book according to these three divisions.

The historical section begins with a chapter on covenant theology in the history of the Reformed tradition, but the bulk of the historical treatment covers debates about covenant theology beginning in the twentieth century. It is helpful that before he makes a positive theological case, McGowan surveys the positions of Karl Barth and followers, then John Murray, Meredith Kline, and the Federal Vision (FV) movement because these writers are the ones who determine the issues and the context of current debates about Reformed covenant theology. McGowan calls for an irenic reading of debate partners and is usually very good at reading irenically himself. Although many treatments of Reformed covenant theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exist, far fewer examine changes in covenant theology beginning in the twentieth century. McGowan has done us a favor by providing a succinct survey of the figures and issues involved.

That said, there are some important things to note about this historical section. First, it appears that McGowan sees a closer relationship between Barth, Murray, and FV than many would be willing to accept, including myself. This is not to deny that there may be some shared interests between them, but it is at best a contentious move to cite positions from these three together as if they would all approve of one another. Second, McGowan's presentation of historical covenant theology raises some concerns. Writing that "covenant theology was expressed in different ways, such that there was no one definitive covenant theology, although most of the key elements were agreed" (p. 14) overstates the variations of early modern covenant theology. There is no denying that there were various expressions of

covenant theology, but throughout the rest of the historical section, McGowan seems to suppose that this implies that there was major divergence within the Reformed tradition and that all models were equally acceptable as Reformed. He cites R. T. Kendall as one viable reading of the history of covenant theology, but Kendall's thesis has been criticized by the work of Richard Muller and those who appropriate his methodology. Third, McGowan does not highlight how the paradigm that Barth uses is entirely different from the traditional model: the differences between Barth's ontological appropriation of covenant and the traditional model are much greater than the book suggests. Lastly, there are times when McGowan seems to assume that a given challenge to the confessional position will prove to be correct. Although challenges to the Westminster Confession could prove to be more in line with Scripture, we should not assume the exegesis of one, or a few, commentators automatically will trump the consensus interpretation of Scripture found in confessions. The suggestion that "the WCF [Westminster Confession of Faith] has come to function in conservative Presbyterian theology in the same way as 'tradition' functions in Roman Catholic theology" is wide of the mark. Confessions are not dogmas and practices in addition to Scripture, but are the agreed-upon interpretation of Scripture by a given communion. Subscription is about agreeing to the stated interpretation of what Scripture teaches. McGowan is by far most critical of those who take a firm stance on being confessional, primarily Guy Waters and Michael Horton. In fact, he commends FV for focusing on the doctrine of the church because it is "the weakest area in Reformed theology" (p. 105), despite the fact that Waters and Horton, whom he criticizes most, have both written books on the doctrine of the church.

Part two of the book outlines a proposal for "headship theology," which focuses on the representative nature of the roles of Adam and Christ, but disconnects this representation from a covenantal structure. Two chapters expound on this proposal. The first deals with the Adam-Christ parallel of headship and makes many useful points. It rejects universalism, upholds the theological necessity of there being a historical Adam, and argues that "Adam is viewed as the representative head of the human race such that his obedience or disobedience would affect all those whom he represented" (p. 127). McGowan acknowledges that this is the position of classic covenant theology and maintains that this element, along with the parallel of Christ's obedience and penal substitutionary death, are the most persuasive conclusions from 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5. In this respect, the issue he takes with covenant theology is that it describes these headship roles in covenantal terms. The definite strength of this chapter is that it takes

traditional Reformed positions on these passages. The chapter's weakness is that, although McGowan repeatedly calls for exegesis to norm theology, he provides little exegetical argument and spends more time restating what various modern and historical commentators say, giving his verdict about which is correct. That said, it is very much to his credit that he tends to favor the historical Reformed conclusions.

The second chapter of McGowan's proposal section describes the role of each biblical covenant in the history of the covenant of redemption: the Noahic covenant establishes common grace and the ability for all humanity to build culture, the Abrahamic covenant makes the promise of grace by faith, the Mosaic covenant delivers the law to God's people, the Davidic covenant promises an eternal king, and the new covenant fulfills all the promises made in other covenants. He describes the new covenant as being "through Jesus Christ" (p. 151). I imagine he avoids naming Christ the head of the new covenant because that would undermine his thesis that headship and covenant are separate. The crucial idea for McGowan's overall argument is the relationship between Abraham and Moses. He argues that grace is given first in the Abrahamic covenant and the law is given later to direct God's people in how to be faithful. This reduces the essential function of Mosaic law to spelling out the obligations of the Abrahamic covenant (p. 146). Some will celebrate this as an expansion of Murray's covenant theology, and, in fact, all should agree that the moral law, then and now, guides what faithfulness looks like. On the other hand, this seems to ignore much of the typology in the Mosaic covenant and how there is a condemning role of the law as well. Stating that the Mosaic law simply enumerates the obligations of the Abrahamic covenant *could* be read as the exact type of change to the promise covenant that Paul rejects in Galatians 3. I am not sure McGowan has explained the nuances of these issues sufficiently to prevent that conclusion.

Part three draws implications from noncovenantal headship theology. In the chapter on the law, he argues that the relationship he poses between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants brings some rapprochement with the New Perspective on Paul's views of the law. He affirms that justification happens by faith alone. Yet, he also argues that grace is at least chronologically, if not logically, prior to law, and so grace is followed by the obligation of obedience. The last chapter is about union with Christ. McGowan argues that imputation is crucial to the historic Reformed doctrine of justification, but does not state if he believes it to be true. He does appear to maintain justification as forensic. With stated dependence on Richard Gaffin and Sinclair Ferguson, he criticizes the *ordo salutis* model of soteriology in favor of union with Christ.

All too often, McGowan insists his conclusions are biblical for the most controversial points for the Reformed community and argues by summarizing other literature, rather than providing exegetical or theological demonstration. Yet his work is a readable and clear presentation of a noncovenantal scheme that shows awareness of the major issues and figures.

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Sinclair B. Ferguson. *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance—Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016. Pp. 256.

In this book, Sinclair Ferguson uses an eighteenth-century controversy in the Church of Scotland to illuminate, in both a theological and pastoral way, the reality of God's free grace in Christ.

The "Marrow Controversy," which took place in the Church of Scotland in the early eighteenth century, brought great division to the church and ultimately led to the first secession of 1732, where a number of distinguished ministers, led by the brothers Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, left the Kirk. It began when a young candidate for the ministry was asked, during his "trials for licence" by the Presbytery of Auchterarder, to affirm a statement (called "the Auchterarder creed") that denied that repentance was a prior requirement for coming to Christ. The student refused and was ultimately vindicated by the general assembly, which condemned the presbytery's statement. In the subsequent debate, Thomas Boston, who favored the presbytery, urged a friend to read *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, which he believed set out the issues very well. *The Marrow* was a pastiche of quotations from significant Reformation and Puritan writers, written in the form of a dialogue, which involved a minister counseling a young Christian on gospel issues, the other contributors being a legalist and an antinomian. This led to a great debate, which lasted a number of years. Later, the general assembly would also condemn *The Marrow*.

At its heart, the Marrow Controversy was about the nature of God's free grace in Christ Jesus. There had arisen a "legal" strain in the Kirk that so emphasized predestination that it denied the free offer of the gospel. The gospel was only to be offered to those showing "signs of election." This view prevailed in the general assembly for a number of years and had implications for the doctrines of repentance, assurance, and faith. On the opposing side, Boston, the Erskines, and the rest of the "marrow men," emphasized