From the Editor...

After just finishing this issue of *The Promethean*, the same nagging feeling reduces me to simple frustration: I know that there are potential writers out there who have thought about contributing but have not. It is not only that I value each piece submitted, but it is because I know that people are moved by and enjoy reading the works of others.

For instance, I'm willing to believe that Amy Westlund's "Homecoming" will stir the thoughts of those who have been lucky enough to travel and rouse a sense of curiosity in those who have not. Hidden meanings and not so hidden impressions of the world are to be found in the poetry of Randy Bush—whom I thank for being a regular contributor—Robert York, Tim Benton, and another author who chose not to reveal his/her identity. I wonder why? This piece is exceptional and speaks to something we may all find of vast importance.

Again and again I will ask that every reader of *The Promethean* make a point of submitting something...anything that may shed new light on an old subject, spark the interest of the reader, provide thoughtful insight on an event, character, or subject, or simply entertain.
Daydreaming in History
by Randy Bush

A dart of memory, regret-tipped and ice bodied, changed to steel and flash and entered her mind, flickering past no! She relaxed, unthinking, and let her inward gaze settle, leaf-like, to the soft floor of dream. Lips moved, soundless, to the rhythm of eentsy-weentsy spider, while, inside, the scarlet thread of desire sizzled wild like canon-fuse, trailing fire, toward a face that had come to her suddenly with its smile and its frame of onyx hair, with its locks of dark midnight hair, young face, face she knew well, face with paley ghost eyes.

In the room of masks, her own hung, tilting against one fisted arm, as the Giver-of-Good-and-Evil-Knowledge spoke of this or that revolution. Inside herself again, the roof above was all of branches, and she knew this tree with its thousand sparkling blossoms, knew its stony trunk and softness of leaf and loam between its toes. Touch-no-more, it said, with absence of warm arms and of matched heart rhythms. She traced in spirit-white the sad outline of gone away smile and woke with the feel of his hand in hers.

She, part dreaming ghost and part visible, gleaming island surrounded by fifteen other islands, stood, positioned her weapons, and passed into the flame and rage of noon.

1969

The bullets dance, gravely greeting, A soldier's foe, a last chance fleeting. The jagged pieces of shrapnel fly, toward tender youths, afraid to cry. Bombs explode! they always do, The noise becomes part of you. The test he asks them, "Is it past?" They tell him, "Yes, you must be blest."

Robert York
I Gave at the Office

Greenpeace knocked at my door today
   In a beard and flowing long hair.
With a soulful look, an expensive book,
   And a button that said, "I care!"
Join us, he pleaded, in quiet tones,
Help us fight to save the whale,
Help condors soar, let grizzlies roar,
   Get driftnetters locked up in jail.
Buy just one copy of this lovely book,
The profits will shore up The Cause.
Join others worldwide who choose not to hide,
When greed would flaunt Nature's own laws.
I told him I'd love to, but couldn't today,
Right now I don't have the money,
Not for spiking old trees, not for nuclear freeze,
   Not even for organic honey.
My loot, I fear, is all tied up
In offshore oil leases,
In South African mines, and EPA fines,
   (And my Exxon stock is in pieces).
My tuna fleet's captain is busy in court
My profits from ivory have stopped;
Our toxic waste site, cost millions to fight,
   Though I'm glad the indictment was dropped.
I really wish I had the means
To help these kids save the earth.
But it's clear to me, as the deep blue sea,
They've overestimated my worth.

Tim Benton

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Untitled

"I have a dream," were the words;
Pride, Inspiration, and Love were the feelings.
Prejudice, Oppression, and Segregation were the hurts;
Equality in Love, Life and Liberty were the wantings.

Present day people, look to dead inspirers;
Hoping to casue an uprising of admirers.
Trying to hear the melodious words of a King;
Wishing it were possible to hear Malcolm sing.

"Free at last! Free at last!" has never come;
the dream, drifting in modern day purgatory.
Pointing fingers, waiting, praying, being numb;
Don't rely on the words of a faded history story.

Our parents stood scarred and battered,
knowing that our future would be tattered.
Today we sit and reminice of the past,
while the idols we cherish (?) are sold for cash.

Anonymous
One Like Some Readers of Auden

I
He knows, but he does not know what he knows;
He would know, but he cannot know;
Would that he could know.

II
Yet he knows the no;
Or thinks that he knows,
And knows that he thinks he knows;
Yet how can he know?

III
Anon, perhaps he will know;
Others have known and not known,
And others not knowing have known.

IV
He who does, yet would, ought to know:
By knowing alone one can know.

Daniel Wright
Marie’s voice slipped from pleading to grating whine. The sound drove Harry Mitchell crazy. And it was getting worse lately.

How could she expect him to enjoy being around her, let alone choose to postpone an important business trip when she sounded like that? A guy could hardly finish his breakfast.

“I really do have to go, honey,” he said, getting up from the kitchen table and walking over to her at the stove. He ran his hand down her side and let it rest on her hip. She turned around and he had to look into her eyes.

Oh, God, she’s going to try tears this time. Too bad, but that’s not going to change my mind. No way I’m going to pass up this trip. Not with Sandra waiting for me in Atlanta. No way I’m missing out on that bit of southern hospitality.

“Harry! Why are you smiling? Do you think it’s funny that I’m going to miss you?” Marie sobbed and covered her face with her hands.

“Oh, honey, I’m sorry. No, it’s not funny.” He drew her close, but she didn’t lower her arms and his elbows dug uncomfortably into his chest.

“It’s very, um...sweet,” he went on. “I...it’s just...I was thinking how um...pretty you look and how lucky I am to have you....”

“Really? You really think I’m pretty?” She pulled her hands down a little and peeked up over her fingertips at him. Her eyes were puffy and black streaks of mascara were starting down her cheeks.

Geez, not right now, he thought. But he smiled and said, “Sure, you’re still the prettiest girl I know. Haven’t I always told you that?”

She looked down and picked at a button on his shirt. “Well, I guess so...” She was actually blushing! “But you must see so many pretty girls when you travel. I always worry....”

Harry pulled her hands down and held one gently in each of his. “Oh, yeah, you bet.” He arched his eyebrows and rolled his eyes to be sure she understood that this was just a joke. “A paper products sales rep runs into mostly movie stars and fashion models out on the road. So don’t be surprised when Julia Roberts calls, okay?”

Marie ducked her head and looked like she was trying not to grin.

“And you’d better not open all those perfumed envelopes I keep getting from Hollywood,” Harry continued. “Those x-rated love letters will just make you feel worse.”

Marie looked up at him, unable to hold back her smile. She threw her arms around his neck and hugged him hard. Well, he thought, there’s something she doesn’t do very often.

“You’re such a tease, Harry,” she laughed next to his ear. “Is that why I love you so much?”

“Could be, Julia. I mean Marie.”

“Oh, you!” she giggled and hugged him even more.

He folded his arms around her and stared over her shoulder at the spice rack above the stove. Is she acting strange, he wondered, or am I really good at this?

Marie pulled back for a second, then leaned close again and gave him a kiss that made him stop wondering.

After a moment she pulled away and looked at the clock on the wall.

“Well, you better finish your breakfast if you have to catch that plane.” She pulled a Kleenex from her apron pocket and dabbed at her eyes as she watched him sit back down. “But...are you sure you have to...oh, I’m sorry, Harry. I must sound like such a baby.”

“No, no. That’s okay.” He started to get up, but she waved him back.

“Better finish eating, sweetheart,” she said.

He nodded and sat again, then reached across the table and slid the sports page out of the morning paper.

“I’ll miss you, too, you know.”

She hesitated, looked down at her feet and said, “Well, yes, it does take up quite a lot of my time when you’re away.”
Harry shook his head muttered over another report of a baseball millionaire signing a new contract.

"It's a drama course," said Marie.

Harry glanced up. "What? Oh, Shakespeare and all that stuff, huh?" He turned a page and checked to see how the Mets had done against the Cardinals over the weekend.

"Well..." Marie started to say more, but saw that Harry wasn't listening. She began to clear the breakfast dishes from the table, a hint of a smile playing across her lips. "Something like that," she finally said.

"Huh?" grunted Harry, looking up. "Oh, your class... pretty dry is it?"

It's... not bad, actually.

"How's the teacher?" he asked, his eyes going back to the sports page before she started to answer. Gooden had thrown a one-hitter through eight and the Mets had still managed to lose. Harry thought maybe he'd become a Yankees fan again.

Marie watched him read, then answered, "He's good." When Harry said nothing, her smile grew wider and she said, "Very good."

Harry glanced up blankly then smiled back and said, "Uh, great." He looked back down at the paper then at his watch.

"Oops," he said, pushing back his chair and standing up, "better get rolling. Did you pack those other shirts for me?"

"All pressed and stowed in your suitcase," answered Marie. She watched him walk down the hall to their bedroom. "Everything's all set, Honey."

He turned and smiled then disappeared into their room. Marie finished loading the dishwasher.

Harry went straight to the closet, knelt down and reached way into it. He pulled a flat, gift-wrapped box out from behind the jumble of clothes, stood and took it to his suitcase lying open on the bed. He tucked the box under his favorite blue shirt that lay on top of the other clothes, then patted it smooth before closing the bag and snapping the latches. Sandra's going to love this one, he thought. He turned and looked at himself in the wall mirror. "But not as much as you, you old dog," he said aloud, pretending to shoot his reflection with a well-aimed forefinger and thumb.

That evening in Atlanta, wearing a white bathrobe and vestiges of shaving cream that still eluded the towel in his hand, Harry answered a knock at his hotel room door.

Casual as ever, Sandra was standing there in jeans and a Falcons tee shirt, a light leather jacket slung over her arm. She cocked her head and let her eyes wander from his uncombed hair down to his bare feet. "That's a new look for you, isn't it, Harry?" she teased, strolling past him into the room.

"Wha...? Oh. Yeah, well, yeah. Hi! You're early."

"You don't mind spending a little extra time together, do you?" she asked, tossing her jacket over the back of a chair next to the round table in the corner of the room.

Harry grinned at her. "No, no. That'd be great. Say listen. I brought you a gift." He pointed to the package he'd already taken out of his suitcase. It was propped up against a pillow on the bed.

"Why don't you try it on while I finish cleaning up. I think you'll like it. I'll be right back out." He ducked into the bathroom, picked up the blow dryer, flipped it on and began working frantically on his hair.

A few moments later he thought he heard Sandra call to him. He turned off the blow dryer.

"Did you say something, honey?"

"There was no answer."

"Sandra?"

Still nothing. Harry opened the door and walked out into the bedroom. Sandra was gone. The opened package lay on the bed. He walked over, flopped back the tissue paper and stared at the contents of the box. It was a picture of him and Marie. Their wedding portrait! With shaking hands Harry picked up the picture. He stared at the two smiling young faces and sank down on the bed.

Now, how in the world did this get in here? He shook his head trying to straighten his thoughts. Then it hit him.

Marie.

No. Marie?!

It had to be. He slid over, grabbed the phone and dialed their home number. It rang, but there was no answer. He tried for hours to reach her. He finally fell asleep around three. Still no answer.

The house was dark when Harry arrived home the next evening. He threw open the front door, switched on the light and immediately spied the note on the small table in the foyer. A second piece of paper was clipped to it. The note was short:

"Harry": My Attorney will contact you soon. Matt and I will be back in the area in a couple weeks. (School's out you know.) Hope you understand now about the way I've been acting lately. Marie."

"Who's Matt?" thought Harry. And "School's out?" What's that supposed to mean? He looked at the second piece of paper and then he understood everything.

He slumped onto the hardbacked chair next to the table and stared at the words swimming on the paper in his hand: Putnam County Community College, Quarterly Grade Report. Student: Marie Mitchell. Course: Drama 252, Being Your Character/Convincing Your Audience. Instructor, Matthew Ferris. Grade... Yeah, sure, thought Harry, it had to be.

Marie had earned an "A."
One man alone cannot help or save the age in which he lives; he can only express the fact that it will perish. --Kierkegaard

I want only to try to live in accord with the promptings which come from my true self. Why is that so very difficult? --Hermann Hesse

End and Goal.--Not every end is the goal. The end of a melody is not its goal; and yet: as long as the melody has not reached its end, it also hasn't reached its goal. A parable. --Friedrich Nietzsche

It is to ascertain the truth that we propose some liberating measures. --Sarah M. Fuller

I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked: I am mad for it to be in contact with me. --Walt Whitman

It was a bright, quiet garden, without striking features. Like a rosary rubbed between the hands, the shrilling of cicadas held sway. --Yukio Mishima

Points to Ponder from the editor

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In 1922, at the age of 23, my grandfather, Einar Westlund, left Sweden to make his fortune in America. He never returned. He left behind his parents and four younger siblings: Ivar, 21, Agnes, 18, Linnea, 13, and Anna, 11. His older brother, Albert, had emigrated some seven years before.

I had the opportunity to visit Sweden during part of my recent spring break tour of Europe, and the experience has profoundly impacted me. I was able to meet Einar’s two surviving sisters, Linnea and Anna, and I was also taken up to the house where all six siblings were born. As I toured the grounds, I observed my great-aunt Anna who, through the help of various translators, explained to me what exactly I was seeing. I wondered what memories pervaded her mind which she would never share.

I stood juxtaposed in time. Seventy years ago my grandfather left this land to settle in the Pacific Northwest where I was born, and two generations later I now traversed the very land upon which he had been raised. The red timber house, the old red-roofed barn and the surrounding countryside seemed to evanescence as my senses tread the hazy waters of illusion. The landscape was so similar to parts of Oregon which have up to now formed the outline for my image of home. I never knew the man, as he died before I was born, but somehow at that moment I felt closer to him than I had ever felt to another human being in my life. It was as if I were completing his journey home for him.

My bearing was further jolted when I read about the earthquake in Portland which occurred while I was in Scandinavia. I felt a twinge of remorse that I would forever be excluded from this bit of local history. When people ask, “What did you do/think/feel during the earthquake?” I will not be able to take part in such dialogues except to explain that “I was over in Europe.” And yet at the time, for me, Sweden was “here,” and all the commotion was “over there” in Portland. What consumed numerous pages in The Oregonian comprised three lines in the International Herald Tribune I bought in Karlskrona.

But travelling does something to a person. All traditional senses of time and place and self are blurred and suddenly then becomes now, there becomes here, and them becomes us. All of the people and places I encountered in Sweden, which have been only names in letters or on a map, now have faces and sounds and scents in memory. They are no longer “the relatives over in Sweden,” but individual people with distinct personalities.

This sense of disorientation continued throughout my travels on the continent. I developed a deep distaste for travelling alone. I didn’t relish visiting these many strange (or rather, unfamiliar) places and having to decipher everything on my own. Nearly every day I was forced to acquaint myself with a new train station, find a new locker for my backpack, and locate a new hostal to stay in. I had to orientate myself with a new city map, a new urban transportation scheme, and a new language. Every night I fell asleep in a different bed and every morning I woke up in a different city. My habitual perception of time and place was constantly in dispute with the reality of the here and now.

I found Berlin to be particularly challenging. The focus of my visit was the newly converted Check-point Charlie museum. In watching a documentary on the 1989 fall of The Wall, it was disheartening to compare the euphoria of the people shown on the video with the reality etched on the faces of those bustling by outside. It is obvious that the burden of reunification is taking its toll on these historically frustrated people.

The documentary showed scenes from Leonard Bernstein’s benefit concert in which he conducted Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy and Freedom” for a fused audience of former Easterners and Westerners, now simply Berliners again. At moments like this, there are no national, political, or class boundaries; there are just people. Through the wonder of modern television, the world watched as the physical barrier which had been so unnaturally erected some twenty years before was now rendered obsolete. We watched and cried as families, friends, and an entire

http://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol2/iss1/1

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community were reunited. Whether you were rich or poor, famous or obscure, for a split second, the world came home with the East Berliners.

At the end of four and a half weeks, I was glad to return "home" to Birmingham. What had before felt so foreign to me here was now relatively familiar and very comforting. For nine months, Great Britain has been my home. But more than challenging my concept of what an apartment should look like or what food should taste like, this island has come to symbolize the ambiguity of perspective.

My time in Sweden, also, connected me with my heritage and my past. The people there now feel like family and the land a second home. But images of yet another home are fighting my consciousness for recognition. Nine months ago I accepted the challenge of adapting to a new physical place and culture. Now I am preparing to face the challenge of redefining what home is.

It is spring here now, and it is beautiful. But I have come a long way since the bleak rainy days of the English autumn, and I am ready to come home.
"Landlord of England art thou now, not king" (R2 II.i.113), suggests more that the old duke desires to admonish the young king and dissuade him from dissolute ways than it suggests that Gaunt believes Richard to have forfeited his prerogative to rule.

These examples firmly establish that although crises of authority characterize both John and Richard’s kingdoms, the challenge to each king principally arises from differing concepts of what makes a king legitimate in his authority.

John’s government, like Richard’s after him, is not only impaired by challenges to the monarch’s rule but typified by poor administration and ignoble deeds. Preoccupied by the defense of his throne from those who would wrest from him the throne he himself so ably stole, John consumes England in war and civil rebellion. He causes his subjects to bear the consequences of papal interdict and an assault by French forces, inspired by Rome, to remove the “arch heretic” from power. He acts impulsively, fails to secure good counsel, and provokes others to acts of cruelty and murder to sustain his rule. By depriving Geoffrey’s son, Arthur, of the throne (as Richard deprives Bolingbroke of his inheritance), John, like Richard, violates the code of primogeniture and calls into question all that sustains order in the realm. As the bastard son of Richard I soliloquizes at the conclusion of Act II, John’s attempt to buy temporary security for his throne by surrendering English territory to France is perhaps the most base deed that a sovereign could propose. Yet the effect upon Faulconbridge is ironic:

**Mad world, mad kings, mad composition!**

John, to stop Arthur’s title in the whole,
Hath willingly departed with a part.

Since kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.

(KJ II.i.561-63, 597-98)

Constance, the widow of John’s elder brother and mother to the rightful king, repeats these sentiments, absent Faulconbridge’s touch of irony:

**And with her golden hand hath pluck’d on France**

To tread down fair respect of sovereignty,
And made his majesty a bawd to theirs,
France is a bawd to Fortune and King John,
That strumpet Fortune, that usurping John!

(KJ III.i.54-61)

John, then, in his own peculiar way, precedes Richard in his crime of “selling” England in order to possess a measure of security which he otherwise is too weak to acquire. Accordingly, when Rome crushes the alliance which would preserve John’s cession of the provinces of Volquessen, Tourain, Maine, Poictiers, and Anjou to the Dolphin, Constance is overjoyed; England is not yet bought:

**King Philip. Thou shalt not need. England, I will fall from thee.**

Constance. O fair return of banish’d majesty!

Eleanor. O foul revolt of French inconstancy!

(KJ III.1.139-22)

Frustrated by the failed alliance, John resorts to murder to secure the throne. Though thwarted at first in his attempt to have Arthur put to death, John eventually succeeds—only to discover that Arthur, dead, is more dangerous to his throne than Arthur alive, for his death gives the Dolphin a claim to the English throne as the result of the latter’s marriage to John’s niece. John’s repentance (KJIV.ii.103-05), therefore, is insincere; only when England faces invasion and conquest by France does he regret his complicity in Arthur’s death. John the usurper’s false penitence, then, is similar to that of another royal usurper, Henry Bolingbroke, for Bolingbroke, too, had sought and obtained the death of his rival, Richard II—also a lawful king—out of the need to consolidate his authority.

**Exton. From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed.**

**King Henry. They love not poison that do poison need.**

(R2 V.vi.37-39)

And what of Richard’s fall? Is it not remarkably like John’s? Does it not share with Richard’s overthrow a certain tragic quality? It is technically true that Richard is formally deposed and John is not, but Shakespeare does suggest that John likely may have been murdered by an English monk who perceived in the king so heinous and heretical a nature that God’s justice demanded his death (Pandulph, the Milanese cardinal, confirms this opinion in King John III.i.176-78). In any case, the essential element of tragedy in the fall of these two pitably weak kings is not so much to be discovered in the manner of their deaths as in their sorrowful inability to arrest the forces of disorder and rebellion about them. Richard and John go to their deaths as men who are victims of their own poor kingship. Not born to rule, they labor in vain in a vocation not their own, and they are destroyed by the terrible and awesome power of the office which even greater men than they could not contain. Like princely Phaeton, charioteers of steeds they cannot control, John and Richard are doomed to be struck down from their lofty heights in order that their realms might not be consumed by the fires born of their folly. As such, John the ambitious and Richard the artist depart this world the “module[s] of confounded royalty” (KJ V.vii.58), each to be remembered as a king who would be king.
Book Review
by Daniel Wright


F. F. Bruce’s work, first published by Paternoster Press and now recently by Wm. B. Eerdmans, is(35,186) a compilation of lectures which, though first delivered in 1968 at Fuller Theological Seminary, remain of marked contemporary value. Bruce’s declared purpose in these lectures (and, by extension, this volume) is “to take a few [!] of the chief themes, images, and motifs which are used as vehicles of revelation in the Old Testament and consider how the New Testament writers continue to use them to set forth the perfected revelation in Christ” (21). Among the examinations of prominent themes, images, and motifs through which Bruce organizes and articulates his presentations are studies in the role of God, the salvation of God, the victory of God, the people of God, the Son of God, the servant Messiah, and the shepherd king—each of which forms a chapter in the collection dedicated to the exposition of an Old Testament theme or “consider[s] each instance of Old Testament quotation, allusion or application in its immediate New Testament context” (18).

Bruce’s chapter on “The Rule of God” reviews the figure and role of the king in the Old Testament and brings the appraisals of critics thereof to bear on the presentation of messianic kingship that is offered by the New Testament. Bruce devotes special emphasis to “[t]he development of the companion concepts of the kingdom of God and the Son of Man in the interval between Daniel and the Gospels” (26) and pointedly observes Jesus’ frequent application of the designation, Son of Man—so extensively employed in Old Testament prophecy by the prophet Daniel—to himself. But Bruce also suggests that Jesus’ understanding of the Son of Man is one that is shaped not by Daniel alone. Rather, Bruce contends Jesus’ conviction that the Son of Man is one who first must suffer before inaugurating his kingdom is a conviction derived from Jesus’ parallel association of his mission with that of the suffering Servant in the Servant Songs of Isaiah. Indeed, Bruce declares that Jesus’ self-understanding should be evident to us not so much as a [consequence of] direct quotation [or] of verbal echoes [in] the Servant Songs …, [but due to] the fact that His conception of His life-mission, crowned by suffering and death, is anticipated more clearly in those passages than any others in the Old Testament.

In “The Salvation of God,” Bruce points out that not only is the exodus motif from the Old Testament pervasive in the New, but so is the phraseology associated with redemption window. In this section, Bruce also emphasizes that Paul’s first letter to the Church at Corinth unambiguously articulates that the value for Christians in heeding the revelation of the Old Testament is that we might be spared the chastisement of God that Israel knew of old, for “these things happened to them [Israel] … but they were written down for our instruction” (10:11; emphasis added). Such reminders, Bruce tells us, are especially valuable to those Christians who otherwise might be inclined to dismiss the merit of Old Testament proclamation, for both the Old and New Testaments disclose “one continuous history of salvation and the same God who is active throughout its course” (17).

“The Victory of God” recounts Scripture’s attestation that Yahweh’s victories in the Old Testament accounts are always victories of grace—and victories, accordingly, that are achieved for his people; indeed, by the time of Isaiah, Yahweh is being referred to as his people’s “kinsman-redeemer” (48). Underlining this salvific power of Yahweh, once again, is Scripture’s appeal to the event of the exodus. As Bruce declares, “The crossing of the Sea of Reeds was their [Israel’s] salvation because it was Yahweh’s victory—not only over Pharaoh and his chariotry but over all the gods of Egypt…” (42). Yahweh’s mastery of such adversaries, Bruce continues, is frequently depicted in Old Testament accounts by his ability to control the seas, e.g., at creation, at the Reed Sea, etc.; indeed, many metaphors of Yahweh’s power derive from his ability to command the sea and its creatures, for to Israel and the early church, dominion over the waters was dominion over chaos; Yahweh restrains them at creation and separates them at the exodus; and, to mark his victory over them, abolishes them in the Apocalypse. As Bruce writes, “when John sees the first heaven and the first earth pass away to be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth, he adds with emphasis, “and the sea was no more”” (50). But Yahweh’s definitive revelation, of course, is achieved in the events of Jesus’ death and resurrection at Passover, for by these events, the people of faith again could see that the God of Israel had once again, in events linked to the great exodus, “visited and redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68).

Our relationship as the Church to Abraham, and heirs, therefore, of the promise first offered to Abraham, is the theme of “The People of God.” But the covenant, Bruce argues, having been fulfilled in Christ’s perfect obedience, ought perhaps more properly be designated a testament—a word which he contends receives the play of “double meaning” with the word “covenant,” especially in Hebrews 9:15-17 (56). The New Testament assembly, therefore, is both fulfillment and bearer of the testament of God in Christ. Its mission is to continue the commission conferred on Abraham: “Israel was not chosen that other nations might be consigned to perdition, but that through Israel’s election they might all enjoy God’s blessing. So when God called Abraham, the first subject of divine election in the biblical record, He promised not only to bless him but to make him a blessing to others” (61).

“The Son of David” defines the character of David as a type of Christ, for as Christ emphasized in his person the roles of prophet, priest and king, so, too, did David. He was, as Bruce observes, “one of the few figures in Israel’s history in whom the offices of prophet, priest and king concurred” (72). In turn, the Davidic Son, after many prophecies announcing the imminence of his arrival, appears in Jesus of Nazareth, whose human descent in David’s line is affirmed by all of the Gospels (except Mark) and by Paul (although the accounts in Matthew and Luke trace his genealogy by divergent paths) (78). The fulfillment of the Davidic oracles suggested to many within and without Israel who heard the Good News that “just as the promise to build a house for David was fully realized not in Solomon but in Christ, so the prediction that David’s son would build a house for God was not consummated in Solomon’s temple but in the temple of Christ’s body…” (79). If Yahweh’s way of deliverance through Cyrus had been by military conquest and armed might, that path of deliverance is reversed in Jesus. The limitations inherent in the kind of triumph accomplished through men like Cyrus, and the endurance and enormity of the kind of triumph accomplished by Jesus in the pattern of the Suffering Servant are the foci of Bruce’s chapter on “The Servant Messiah.” Bruce identifies Old Testament readings of the Servant’s mission and the several assumptions prevalent in Israel with respect to the Old Testament readings of the Servant’s identity. According to Bruce, Jesus’ consolidation of many of these interpretative traditions unified “the originally intended identification of the Son of Man with the Servant” (98). The tradition of the Messiah as conqueror in Old Testament Scripture is therefore not so much overthrown as invested with more-than-immediate, transcendent significance by its incorporation through Christ into a pattern of conquests attained not by violence but by reverent submission to the divine will.

Bruce’s book of lectures concludes with “The Shepherd King”—a study which, to some degree, extends the theme of the previous chapter—and notes that a shepherding role for an ideal king was not unique to Israel. But Israel’s shepherd had always been Yahweh himself, Moses, David, and others committed to the care of Israel had always been subordinate to Yahweh’s guidance (101). Jesus, however, in looking at New Testament application of the shepherd-king iconography, embodies Yahweh’s rule and takes upon himself, as well, the character of the “smiten shepherd” who guides an often indifferent or faithless flock. Indeed, as Bruce points out, Jesus’ execution emphasizes not only his
place as one who leads and suffers for a flock; it underscores his identity as one who becomes one of that flock in the experience of this suffering (113).

Bruce's work guides us through the complexities of messianic prophecy by its careful thematic organization of a seven-part thesis that asserts no proposition without a referent in Scripture. The book serves not only as a condensed and valuable guide to the enormity of Old Testament proclamation about the Messiah as that prophetic tradition is interpreted by the New, but it systematically orders that tradition within conceptual frameworks that facilitate ease of understanding and application; accounts which might seem disparate or fragmented are unified in discussions that sweep the breadth of all Old Testament messianic proclamation and consolidate that proclamation in areas that make for more ready discernment of Old Testament tradition, society, culture, and—most importantly—hermeneutical convictions and approaches with respect to Scripture's messianic content. The book, furthermore, could be a cherished homiletical and/or pedagogical aid, for its reliance on authoritative and insightful exegetical commentary to confirm and expand insight offers the reader avenues for exploration and continuing study that the presentation of bare, unsupported opinion could not provide or perhaps even inspire.

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