happens here in the lower world is subject to the necessitating action of the heavenly bodies; the world is eternal; the soul, man’s proper form, is dissolved with the body; God does not know individual things. 1 In 1277 the same bishop, following John XXII’s invitation, submitted a long list of false and dangerous propositions, which he then condemned; these included some propositions by Aquinas. Immediately after, the Dominican archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Kilwardby, condemned in his turn a number of propositions, including those which summarized Aquinas’s doctrine of the unity of form in man: “The sensitive and vegetative souls are dissolved when the intellectual soul is induced; a body both living and dead is only equivocally a body; a dead body is such, as a body only in an applied sense.” 2 This condemnation was renewed in 1284 and 1286; the Thomistic doctrine of the unity of form was finally and officially rehabilitated only in 1914. The canonization of St Thomas in 1233 meant that his writings were given “droit de cité” in the Church (cf. DTC 15693); Vitoria and the Council of Trent carried this process further, and the Thomist revival under Leo XIII culminated in the drawing up of the XXIV theses of 1914.—Editorial Note.

In the sphere of political philosophy, the doctrine of the natural character of the state (“bona naturale politiae”) led to a reappraisal of, and opposition to, the doctrine that the state was a consequence of, and partial remedy for, the fall of man. The Aristotelian point of view, enlarged to embrace the whole of human kind, combined with a vestige of the doctrine of the unity of the possible intellect, and with an interpretation of human happiness as achieved, in one of its aspects, on earth itself, was used by Dante for his theory of the independent supreme power of the Emperor as against the claims of the Pope: Dante’s Monarchia was soon condemned. Much less opposition was aroused by doctrines connected with Aristotle’s ethical theories. The theory of virtue as a habit, or as the proper fulfillment of the potentialities inherent in man and, above all, the edicto-metaphysical doctrine of the final cause considered as the God motive of action, and its counterpart, that every action aims at some good, had a big share in shaping moral theology (see Acta, Human).


L. M.-P.

ARK OF THE COVENANT. The Ark of the Covenant was a rectangular box (dimensions, roughly 4’ x 3’ x 3’) made of acacia wood, covered with gold, and carried by means of bars passed through rings near the top of the box.

It was the central object in Israel’s cult; the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple were made to house it; and in both, it stood in the heart of the sanctuary in a little room known as the Holy of Holies. According to the Bible it dates from the earliest days of Israel’s existence after the Exodus, accompanied them in their wanderings and wars, and when conditions became more settled it found a fixed home in the Temple at Jerusalem. It was presumably destroyed in the sack of the Temple in 587. (2 Mac 14:8–10 records the tradition that it was hidden away by Jeremias.)

The gods that men naturally worship are gods accessible to the mind and imagination and experience; gods, therefore, that can be represented visibly. To Israel it was revealed that God is transcendent, He is not on the same plane as the objects of man’s normal experience. He cannot be called by any name such as the pagan gods had—Bel, Moloch, Hadad or Ra: His name is ineffable. And in the same way, His person is not to be identified with any object of visible experience. Indeed, the non-representation of God is the best way of conceiving Him—He is utterly unlike anything that we know. However, human nature does need some visible object as a focus of its worship; and to satisfy this need without endangering the principle of ‘non-representation’, Israel has the Ark. It is the symbol of His presence; it is His footstool (Ps 99:5); between the Cherubim, the winged figures which surmount it; He sits enthroned.

The Egyptians carried in procession images of their gods enshrined in little coffins; the secret inner shrine of the Babylonian zigurat probably contained a statue of the god. In this box in the heart of Israel’s sanctuary, there was a copy of the
Our Lord is the mediator of the new covenant; and she is the Ark, containing that covenant. She bore in her womb Christ, the Saviour of our souls; just as the Ark contained the manna. Ps 131:8—
'Thine, thou and the ark of my holiness'—is applied to her being taken up into heaven.

In the Apocalypse, just as the Woman of ch. 12 is sometimes seen as our Lady, sometimes as the Church, so also the Ark mentioned just before this (Apoc 11:19) is sometimes referred to her and sometimes to the Church.

Bibliography. The subject is seldom treated. The article Ark in DAC is entirely given up to the Ark of Noe. C. Spicq in, in his L'Épître aux Hébreux I (1932) 72 and 298, has some helpful passages. Other commentaries on the texts cited in the article can be consulted. For the use of Ark-typology in Mariology, see J. Grehan sj, The Ark of the Covenant, in CR 35 (1951) 201-10.

L. J.

ARK OF NOE IN LITURGY AND TRADITION. The application of the OT story of Noe (Gen 6:8 to 10:1) to the Christian dispensation is one of the clearest cases of the use of the spiritual sense of Scripture (see SPIRITUAL SENSE) by the Church.

Apart from the reference to Noe in Christ's own discourse (Mt 24:37-8) there is the plain teaching of St Peter (1 Pet 3:20 and 2 Pet 2:5 and 3:9) that Noe's escape from the deluge was somehow a type of the salvation that was to be found in the Church. Heb 11:7 stressed the faith of Noe, and the term used for him in 2 Pet is one which recurs as a title in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 'teacher of justice'. There can be no doubt that some part of the revelation communicated to the apostles was concerned with the understanding of this patriarchal figure. In Jewish speculation Noe was beginning to be a figure of interest in the 1st cent. In the OT he had been quite neglected after his appearance in Genesis; he was not included in the great prayer of Nehemiah and only in Wisdom (10:4 and 14:6), Isaías 54:9 and Eccles 44:17 are there allusions to his fate. Later on the interest in him quickened; in 4 Macc 15:31 his ark is taken as a type of the mother of the race that did weather the storms, and in Philo the ark of Noah is compared to the human body and its passions (de multiplicatione Noæ, 220). In the Talmud (Sabbath 10b) there is a curious enlargement on the tale, making that the black colour of the Negro is a curse due to the incontinence of Cham with his wife while they were in the ark, the other human beings having all observed strict continence during that period. The Zadokite work makes the presence of four human couples in the ark an argument for monogamy. In the face of all this speculation it was only to be expected that the apostles should receive some guidance.

Noe as a type broods over the pages of Acts; Peter's vision (Ac 10:11-13) of the 'great vessel' with its 'beasts, creeping things and fowls' and his being told to 'do sacrifice and eat' are all reminders of Noe, and Paul's preaching at Lystra...
AL TOGETHER

ALONG

ALOUD

ALREADY

ALTAR

AL-TASCHITH

ALTER

AMBASSADOR

AMBER

AMBUSH