

out as the *mulier fortis* of the Old Testament, she guides the way for us during the year with her simplicity and holiness. Her Divine Maternity, the powerfulness of her Immaculate Conception, the glory of her Assumption, the majesty of her Queenship, the well-spring of her Holy Rosary—are just a few in the long litany of Marian liturgical celebrations. If we are to see the oneness of the liturgy and if we are to deepen our love and appreciation for the mysteries of the Catholic Church, we must see them in some relation to this Divine Mother. She may, therefore, rightly be called the Queen of the Liturgy and the Protectress of the Liturgical Year.

Having seen the unity of the Temporal Cycle and a brief inroad into some notions on the feasts of the saints, we can see the need for a deeper penetration into the structure and meaning of all parts of the divine liturgy of the Catholic Church. We can see what the different days and truths should mean to us in the realm of every day living. If we can grasp some of the power that we have in the liturgical cycle, we can see the benefit that we will be able to give to all fellow members of the Mystical Body. The world will witness a new revival and re-birth of love and brotherhood. The answer is found by making this ever new and ever vibrant life of liturgy a part of our daily living. Man must make Christ his center and not just a neat little sub-compartment. If we try to live and love the annual liturgical unfolding of the year's feast by integrating it with our interior life, we will end by finding a taste of the joy and peace of eternal life.

—Anselm M. Egan, O.P.

## WE SHALL ALL WAIT AT MAGEDDO

*As you join battle today with your enemies there must be no faint hearts among you, no flinching, no yielding, no trembling here. . . . Is there anyone here whose spirits are daunted by terror? Let him go back home, or he will daunt the spirits of his brethren, and make them cowards too (Dt. 20:3, 8).*

**J**OSIAS had deployed his men in the path of the Egyptian armies. He was waiting at Mageddo to fight them and halt their advance north along the fertile crescent.

Josias was king of Juda. The year was 609 B.C. The small Southern Kingdom of David and Solomon. The people of this remaining glory of

Israel were not what they should have been. They lacked religious unity, as well as most other kinds of unity. They debased the worship of the true God, making it at times unrecognizable. They became progressively enamoured of the evil in which their little land was steeped. During the reign of Josias, who was a pious and good king, a copy of the Law was discovered and brought to him. Around this event crystallized a great reform movement, which aimed at the rectification of the Chosen People, collectively and individually. It is from this time that the concept of one sanctuary, and only one, becomes inseparable from Jewish life.

Josias was a pious and good king. His aim was to please Yahweh God, and under him senescent zeal was being rejuvenated. What happened to him at Mageddo, and to the Jewish people thereafter, provides food for thought. For the Egyptians marched right over the Jews, and after they had passed, Josias was carried dead to Jerusalem. Within a very few years the kingdom followed the king into the past tense: Babylon decided it could not endure the annoyance any longer and deported the nation en masse. A superficial view of the happenings might find expression in a quip like "nice guys don't win pennants!" A more platitudinous effort would be "God's ways are strange, indeed." It is a serious enough matter that it dispenses with all such attempts at quick resolutions, and rather demands inquisitive awe regarding what facts we may acquire. For, God willing, having done what we had light and strength to do, we shall all face an ultimate trial. We shall wait at Mageddo, and we cannot be surprised if the treatment God decrees is as bizarre and zany from our point of view as was His treatment of Josias. Such considerations will influence the preliminary part of our lives and how we lead it. Such considerations are not easy; an invaluable aid to have at hand while pondering this reality is Deuteronomy, a book Josias may well have had by heart.

Deuteronomy is often suggested as being in fact the work found during the reign of Josias, the work that inaugurated the reform. Abstracting from this question, we can still say that Deuteronomy can be to us what the discovered document was to Josias. And to Josias the document was first of all a clear sketch of what should have been and was not. The ideal was set up, the goal established. And this we have in Deuteronomy. Reform, reform! The refrain is constant. The demands are clear. Effort must be continuous, though we find the thought irksome. We are willing constantly to adjust an FM tuner, but we find constant spiritual rectification a dreadful bother. The music obviously is sufficiently worthwhile. In Deuteronomy the reason for reform is made apparent: not self perfection for its

own sake, but for the sake of Yahweh God, Who is good; not the production of a better state of things for some future generation, but the accomplishment here and now of the will of the Divine Father.

Nevertheless there are qualities about this reform that do not quite gibe with ordinary notions. What actually seems primary here is action not on the part of the creature, but on the part of God. The creature's biggest task is to permit the divine force to straighten out his kinks.

This notion of the divine activity is linked up to a point of particular prominence in Deuteronomy: the emphatically stressed idea of God's Covenant with Israel. At the root of this Covenant is a free choice made by God of the people to be His elect. For His own reasons, God made this people partners in a pact, bound Himself to them by oath in a remarkable way. God promised them rewards if they observed their part of the Covenant. Nothing they did could avoid repercussions. They were His people, He was their God.

The People were Chosen, Deuteronomy takes pains to note, not only as a big people; but chosen also was each of the little people who went together to form the community. This truth is not so shocking after thousands of years of repetition, but it still requires effort to see it really meaning exactly what it seems to mean. The reform was not to be merely a group reform—which might only be external. It was to be a reform reaching to the heart. The message of Deuteronomy to all men of all times addresses both the individual and the community. The relation between the group and a member of the group is a difficult one to understand and grasp, and a difficult one to maintain. And we, all of us, are involved as members of some group—perhaps a parish or a religious community or a Catholic Action group, all belonging to the mysterious community, the Church of God. Deuteronomy, in spite of and because of the difficulty, calls on individuals and community both to hew the terms of the Covenant, correcting deviations that creep in. Group and individual both must improve, and improve together. Any improvement of the group must be built on improvement in the members.

Improvements in the members must come precisely as they are members of the group. To further its reform the group should take ruthless action on members holding it back. And the burden weighs heavy on authority to see that the community does not impede a member. Since, however, the member and the group are allotted different spans of life, the relationship of the reforming process is unique and to try to observe this relationship can be maddening.

Moreover, the handling God gives us and our efforts, which to our inferior reasons seems rather absurd, extends also to the community and the efforts we expend on it. How many zealots find confusion in the fact that their plans for reform do not always materialize according to their own time table. About our own attempts for perfection, attempts to bring things to completion, we must be able to say with Moses, unable to bring the Israelites across the Jordan, "It is the Lord, your God, that will lead you across" (*Dt.* 31:3). And then we must be content to let the leading across be done in the way the Lord ordains.

If the existence of two aspects, individual and group, in our lives makes for some untidiness, slighting the one or the other makes for a false solution. Penetration of Deuteronomy's message will, at the very least, forestall such foolishness.

Roughly paralleling the group-individual quality is an ambivalence which Deuteronomy secures from its composition. For there are two elements side by side in the work, a thread of legalities and another of fiery rhetoric. The Law and the Prophets are thus represented: the Law connected with the society, the community it is designed to safeguard; the prophetic utterances appealing to the individual members of the community. The Law is represented by the legal prescriptions (*Deuteronomy* is translated as *second law*), and the Prophets by the discourses of *the* Prophet, Moses. The book contains three discourses of Moses; in the middle of the second the Law is inserted with an account of the final events in the life of this titanic religious leader.

Various demands are made by the Law. For example, the feasts are decreed which the New Testament tells us Our Lord attended, and the practices which were to safeguard the Jewish community from falling away and running after strange gods were established. In the exhortations of Moses, the corpus of the Law receives the breath of life. The Law becomes lovable, just as one's living body is lovable. The reformer's fiery spirit is lovable, when conjoined to the Law. The applications to religious observance, to the laws of the Church, are obvious if not easy.

For a testimonial to Deuteronomy's appeal to the fervent spirit, one could call upon mystics like St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila—two reformers by an odd coincidence. St. John for instance obtained ample spiritual stimulus from *Dt.* 4:24: "The Lord thy God is a fire that burns all before it, loves thee with a jealous love."

Perhaps it was because of its mystical overtones that Deuteronomy found an honored place among the primitive Christians—all on fire with

divine love, docile to whatever effect the divine causality worked in them. Perhaps it was, as some authorities claim, because the book had acquired during its history meaning with regard to the Messiah, Who had now come. Perhaps the plea of Deuteronomy for righteousness and newness of life struck a responsive chord in these first followers of the New Law. Or possibly its popularity stemmed from the fact that the early Christians having seen the Christ, could now give a new answer after all the centuries of inquiry to the question with which Deuteronomy ends:

There was never such another prophet in Israel as Moses: what other man was the Lord's familiar, meeting him face to face? Were ever such wonders and portents as the Lord empowered this man to perform in Egypt, till Pharaoh and all his court and kingdom obeyed the Lord's will perforce? Were ever such great miracles done as Moses did, for all Israel to see?

—Francis Bailie, O.P.

## NATURAL LAW, ST. THOMAS, AND CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS

*The question arises: Can St. Thomas' teachings be taken out of the books and put to work by busy Christians? A 'No' would have stunned him. Some predigestion may be advisable in a few tracts—certainly in the tract on law, which is subsistent succinctness.*

*For the dialog form which follows we are indebted particularly to Christopher St. Germain, author of a 16th century legal classic and more recently to Professor Henry Hart. The matter is St. Thomas.*

### I

#### **"I Am Confused"**

*Querin*—I am desperately confused about the natural law. As a Catholic I know that the Church has the mission to teach on matters of faith and morals. But what does the Church mean when she says that something is binding, not on her say-so alone, but because it is in agreement with the natural law?

*Ansgar*—You are clear on what revelation is?