

HERALD OF THE SUN

MARK BARRON, O.P.

Time: It is the year 1245. The young Neapolitan Dominican, Thomas of Aquin, has been sent to the studium of his Order at Cologne, there to pursue his studies under Master Albert who already has gained a name as one of the great teachers of his age.

Place: The studium at Cologne.

As the scene opens Albert is slowly repeating to himself the explanation which Thomas has just given to an objection against the thesis being exposed.

ALBERT: "Plus autem est habere formam . . . et imprimere formam habitam in alterum . . . quam solum habere formam."¹ (*with enthusiasm*)—Yes, yes . . . that's it. (*Looks intently at Brother Thomas.*) But supposing, Brother Thomas, you give the class an example—something that will make your meaning even clearer. (*Pauses to listen.*) "Sicut plus est lucere et illuminare . . . quam solum lucere."² (*With greater enthusiasm.*) Excellent, Brother! Very well put, indeed! (*Looks around the class.*) You . . . you call this man a dumb Sicilian ox; but I declare to you that so loud will be his bellowing in doctrine that it will resound throughout the world. (*Pauses; quietly.*) You have heard Brother Thomas's answer to the objection. Think well upon his words. Let them serve you in your own individual lives as future preachers of the word of God. (*Sighs; wearily.*) That will be all for today. (*Pause during which the students leave the class-room.*)

"Plus est lucere et illuminare, quam solum lucere." From out of the warm skies of Italy he has descended—a light to our generation. Here, under the cooler skies of your own native Germany, he promises . . . yes, Master Albert, he promises to

¹ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 13, a. 1, ad 3. The passage may be rendered into English thus: "Now to have form . . . and to impress this form upon something else . . . is more than merely to have the form."

²*Ibid.* "Thus to shine and to cast forth one's light is better . . . than merely to shine."

outshine you as a teacher. (*Pause; Albert looks up to discover that he is not alone.*)

Ah, Thomas! you still here? (*Pause.*) Was I satisfied with your solution? (*Laughs.*) Did you think, perhaps, that I lied, my son? (*Seriously.*) No, no! That objection I put to you . . . it was my own. (*Smiles in reminiscence.*) I could not, for the life of me, see the answer. Why? Well, Thomas, you know that sometimes we concentrate so intensely upon a certain problem that our minds become . . . well, a kind of book in which there seems to be but a single page—and that we know by heart. (*Pauses.*) We think that we have exhausted every possible solution, that no loophole remains, that the question simply cannot be solved. Then it is that we must see if there is not another page to the book. We must lay our difficulty before another and let his mind, fresh and clear . . . and with a different viewpoint, think it out for us. That will be the second page. (*Smiles.*) And we will find that there is a third . . . and on it will be written: That is strange, now. *I never should have thought of that.*

You remember, my son, those words of Augustine: that whatever of good there is in a heresy rightfully belongs to us as members of the true Church of Christ. Well, it is the same with all of reality. The universe around us is good and true and beautiful because it came from the hand of God. (*Pauses; softly.*) I have studied and investigated for no other reason than to bring out that fact. (*Sighs.*) A new day is dawning. It will be *your* day. *You* must continue and perfect my work. (*Pause.*)

You must go now? (*Smiles.*) Yes, I suppose it is getting late. (*Pauses.*) Thomas? You will pardon the idle wanderings of an older man who likes to dream occasionally? (*Pauses; kindly.*) My blessing upon your work? Certainly, my son. *Benedictio Dei Omnipotentis Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti descendat super te et maneat semper . . .* and our Lady of Wisdom help you. (*Pause while Thomas leaves the room.*)

And so it goes. You have dared to prophesy, today, Master Albert. (*Sighs.*) May you not be deceived. (*With resolution.*) But that depends upon you. *You* are his teacher.