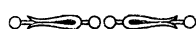


# THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

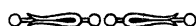
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## St. Albert the Great and Plurality of Forms

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THERE is good reason to hope that well-deserved and widespread appreciation of Albertus Magnus will be a lasting result of his being canonized and declared a Doctor of the Church. His personal sanctity and indomitable industry in the cause of learning should be a new inspiration to those who labor for the spread of the truth. In particular, theologians and exegetes will turn with renewed zest to his contributions to their subjects. Scientific men will have their attention called to his championship of observation and experiment during the very age when these instruments of knowledge were supposed to have been woefully neglected. Philosophers will scan again his valuable commentaries which played so important a part in establishing Aristotelian thought in the West.

Among the philosophical doctrines which Albert taught

there is unfortunately one which has too long kept many scholars in the belief that he was less a philosopher than a scientist. That doctrine has to do with the plurality of forms. On this vital point his teaching has been considered philosophically unsound and to have contradicted the doctrine of his famous pupil St. Thomas. It is to this question that I wish to address myself in the present article.

Our first inquiry is: Did Albertus Magnus really teach a plurality of forms in any given natural body? A frank denial stares at us from many pages of his works. He grants indeed that there may be many substantial forms in an artificial body, as also in what we call a "mixture" (Albert uses Aristotle's example of wheat mixed with barley), but he stoutly maintains in repeated assertions that there can be only one form in any true compound.