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Has he nothing to tell us of the effects of the Eucharist? These could not have been divulged in any words which would have found understanding and acceptance among the pagans to whom he addressed his *Apology* or the Jews represented by Tryphon. St. Justin was to teach what were the effects of the Eucharist by action and endurance. It was in the strength imparted by this food that the little band of Christians stood up so fearlessly against the contempt and threats of the prefect Rusticus. By virtue of this food they looked forward with confidence to the Resurrection. Thus reads the ancient Martyrium [1]:—

The prefect says to Justin, 'Hearken, you who are called learned, and think that you know true doctrines: if you are scourged and beheaded, do you believe you will ascend into heaven?' Justin said, 'I hope that, if I endure these things, I shall have His gifts. For I know that to all who have thus lived, there abides the divine favour until the consummation of the whole world.' Rusticus the prefect said, 'Do you think, then, that you will ascend into heaven to receive some recompense?' Justin said, 'I do not think it, but I know and am fully confident of it.' . . . Rusticus the prefect pronounced sentence, saying, 'Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the Emperor's command, be scourged, and led away to suffer the punishment of beheading, according to the laws.' The holy martyrs, praising God and going forth to the accustomed place were beheaded, and perfected their testimony in the confession of the Saviour. And some of the faithful, having secretly removed their bodies, laid them in a fit place, the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ having wrought with them. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

JOHN MORSON, O.CIST.

[1] P.G. 6, 1569–1572.

THE THOMIST PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

BY FRANCIS McPOLIN, M.A., PH.D.

'PERFECT schools,' says our late Holy Father in the Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*, 'are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers.' Yet it cannot be denied that one of the most virile movements in modern education is that which expressly and very deliberately aims at liberating the pupil from all dependence on his teacher by enabling him to educate himself. In the New Education developed in Europe and America during the past forty years the whole idea of positive teaching, in the traditional sense, is regarded as obsolete and untenable. The advocates of the new pedagogy claim that learning is after all a work so strictly personal to the pupil that any 'interference' by a teacher can only upset the process and produce a spurious result. Auto-education has become the watch-word of the new movement, and in late years various systems have been devised and perfected with the intention of enabling the pupil to educate himself on his own lines, at his own rate, and by his own efforts.

One such system will be taken up for exposition and critical study in a subsequent article. As a preliminary to that study the present article will outline the main points in the philosophy of teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, giving special attention to such matters of topical interest as—the nature of the learning process; the possibility of auto-education; the teacher's function in relation to self-active learning. The sources relied upon are the *Summa Theologica*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and the *Quaestiones Disputatae*, particularly *De Magistro* (Qq. *De Veritate*, Q. XI, *De Magistro, in quatuor articulos divisa*).[1]

In the first article of *De Magistro*, St. Thomas, as though anticipating the whole modern controversy regarding the possibility of teaching, raises and answers with characteristic thoroughness the basic philosophic question: *Whether man can teach another and be called a teacher, or God alone?* [2] The argument that 'interference' by a teacher only upsets the learning process St. Thomas at once rejects as being 'without reason.' It excludes immediate causes, since it attributes all the effects appearing in things to the first causes solely. This, St. Thomas points out, detracts from the universal order which is woven together by the order and connexion of causes: while the first cause, from the abundance of its own

[1] Reference symbols:—S.T.=*Summa Theologica*; *S.C.G.*=*Summa Contra Gentiles*; *Qq.*=*Quaestiones Disputatae*; *D.M.*=*De Magistro*.
[2] *Utrum homo alium docere potest et dici Magister vel Deus solus*, *D.M.*, art. 1.

goodness, confers upon other things not only that they may be, but also that they may be causes.[1]

At the outset, St. Thomas adopts the Aristotelian distinction between existence *in potentia* and existence *in actu*. Natural forms pre-exist in matter *in potentia* and are brought into existence *in actu* by the operation of an extrinsic proximate agent.[2] So also certain potentialities of knowledge pre-exist in the learner and it is the actualization of these potentialities which constitutes the act of learning.

Proceeding on these lines St. Thomas further distinguishes two kinds of potentiality. A thing exists *in potentia activa completa* when the intrinsic principle is sufficiently able to bring it to perfect actuality, as is shown in healing; for through the efficacy of nature in the sick person he is brought to health. But a thing exists *in potentia passiva* when the intrinsic principle is not sufficient to educe it to actuality, as when fire is made from air; for this cannot be done through any power existing in the air.

Corresponding to these two kinds of potentiality there are two kinds of extrinsic agent. When anything exists *in potentia activa completa*, the extrinsic agent acts only by helping the intrinsic agent,[3] just as a doctor in healing is a minister to nature, which does the principal work. But when something exists *in potentia passiva*, then the extrinsic agent is that which does the principal work, just as fire makes air fire in act what was fire in potentiality. From this it follows that since a person could, if left to himself, acquire knowledge, the intrinsic agent is that which does the principal work in the act of learning, and hence we say that knowledge pre-exists in the learner *in potentia activa completa*.

Knowledge can be acquired in a twofold manner, the one when the natural reason of itself comes to a knowledge of the unknown, which is called *inventio*; the other when someone extrinsically gives aid to the natural reason, which is called *disciplina*. *Inventio* and *disciplina* are closely allied; for in those things which are done both by nature and by art, art copies the action of nature,[4] just as nature in one suffering from cold induces health by warming him, so does the doctor. In the same way the teacher leads the learner by means of symbols through the same discursive process that he himself goes through by natural reason, and thus the learner comes to a cognition of the unknown through the aid of what is proposed to him. Hence teaching and healing have this in common that just as the doctor causes health in a sick person *natura operante*, so the teacher causes knowledge in another per *operatione rationis naturalis illius*. But since God is the author of nature's powers,

[1] 'Prima causa ex eminentia bonitatis suae aliis rebus confert non solum quod sint sed etiam quod causae sint.' Loc. cit.

[2] 'Formae enim naturales prae-existunt quidem in materia, non in actu, ut alii dicebant, sed in potentia solum, de qua in actum reducuntur per agens extrinsecum proximum.—*D.M.*, art. 1.

[3] 'Non agit nisi adjuvando agens intrinsecum et ministrando ei.'—*D.M.*, art. 1.

[4] 'Eodem modo operatur ars, et per eadem media, quibus et natura.'—*D.M.*, art. 1.

He is likewise the first cause of nature's operations. Therefore God is the first cause of health and of knowledge. Nevertheless man is said to cure and to teach as an immediate cause.

Good teaching, according to the philosophy of St. Thomas, is based on the concrete, and the reason is that man is composed of body and soul, one in being and one in action. The soul was made for knowledge; and the body was made for the soul, not the soul for the body. The greater good of the soul demands its union with the body, and it is for that reason that it cannot grasp things without having recourse to sensible images; for sensible things impart by their impression a proper knowledge of themselves, and in their regard human souls are like the uneducated who have need for concrete examples for their instruction.[1]

In the present state of life, says St. Thomas, in which the soul is united to a passible body, it is impossible for our intellect to understand anything actually, except by turning to the phantasms (sense representations of experience).[2] In such terms did St. Thomas, writing in the thirteenth century, set forth the true philosophic basis of the Intuitive Method, which method, curiously enough, is commonly regarded as Pestalozzi's own outstanding contribution to educational practice.[3]

The Thomist theory of knowledge is a clear and logical outcome of Thomist teaching regarding the nature of the human soul and the nature of the union that exists between the soul and the body. That teaching is as follows:—

> From the operation of the human soul its being can be known. Inasmuch as it has an operation transcending material things, its existence is elevated above the body, not depending on it; but inasmuch as its nature is to acquire immaterial knowledge from material things, it is clear that the soul cannot be the complement of its own species without union with the body. For a thing is not complete in species unless it has that which is required for the proper operation of that species. If, then, the human soul, inasmuch as it is united to the body as a form, has being, elevated above the body, not depending on it, it is clear that it is constituted on the confines of things corporeal and incorporeal.[4]

The soul acquires immaterial knowledge from material things through psycho-physical action. The physiological apparatus of

[1] 'Ad hoc ergo quod perfectam et propriam cognitionem de rebus habere possent, sic naturaliter sunt institutae, ut corporibus uniantur, et sic ab ipsis rebus sensibilibus propriam de eis cognitionem accipiant, sicut homines rudes ad scientiam induci non possunt nisi per sensibilia exempla.'—(S.T., 1; Q. lxxxix art. 1.)

[2] 'Respondeo dicendum quod impossibile est intellectum nostrum secundum praesentis vitae statum quo passibili corpori conjungitur, aliquid intelligere in actu, nisi convertendo se ad phantasmata.'—S.T. 1, q. lxxxiv, art. vii.

[3] Cf. Chavannes, a native of Lausanne and contemporary of Pestalozzi: 'Le mot intuition est derive d'un mot latin, qui signifie "Voir," considérer de pres et jusqu'au fond. Dans le langage philosophique, on l'emploie aujourd'hui pour designer la vue du sens intérieur ou de l'ame. L'impression recue par le sens exterieurs, et principalement par celui de la vue, se communique assitot a l'ame qui acquiret par là le sentiment ou là conscience de l'objet. Cette representation de l'objet saisie par l'ame est appelée intuition.'—*Exposé de la Methode Elementaire de H. Pestalozzi* (Paris, 180–), *Introduction*.

[4] *Qq., De Anima*, q. 1 art. 1.

knowledge is the nervous system. Afferent nerves terminating in the brain centres reach out to various parts of the body where they are connected with end-organs specially adapted to the reception of physical stimuli. These stimuli give rise to certain impulses, which are transmitted to the brain. But once a nervous impulse enters the brain we lose trace of it. It is carried over to the intellect by a method which we do not understand, but which must be intimately bound up with the mystery of the union of soul and body.

In treating of the genesis of knowledge St. Thomas recalls the Aristotelian distinction between the active and the passive intellect . . : the *intellectus agens* and the *intellectus possibilis*. The *intellectus agens* is that faculty which abstracts intelligible forms from sense representations of experience, or 'phantasms' as they are called. An external object, as it presents itself to the senses, is singular and contingent, but hidden beneath the surface of qualities which give the object its individuality and contingency is the unalterable nature or essence which is universal and necessary. The *intellectus agens* by virtue of its illuminative power, separates what is necessary and universal—the *species intelligibilis*—from what is contingent and particular, thus rendering actually intelligible what before was only potentially intelligible. The actually intelligible element now acts upon the *intellectus possibilis*, as colour acts upon the eye, producing the *species intelligibilis impressa*. The action of the *intellectus agens* on the phantasms is thus seen to precede the reception by the *intellectus possibilis*. Wherefore the pre-eminence of the action is ascribed not to the phantasms, but to the *intellectus agens*. We should, St. Thomas points out, have a perfect example of this if the eye, besides being a diaphanous body and receptive of colours, had sufficient light to make colours actually visible; even as certain animals are said to throw sufficient light on objects by the light of their eyes.[1]

In all intellectual education the pre-eminence of action is attributed to the *intellectus agens*. The mere reception of symbols in the sense faculty is only a phase of that complex activity by which the intellect produces knowledge in itself: From the sensible symbols, which are received in the sense faculty, the intellect takes the essence which it uses in producing knowledge in itself.[2] Without such intellectual action on the part of the scholar no teaching, however vivid or impressive, can be effective. As colours are not visible in actuality except under the influence of light, so also the phantasms are not intelligible in act except through the operation of the active intellect.[3]

The intellect and bodily vision, St. Thomas points out, are not the same; for bodily vision is not a logical power, so that from

[1] *S.C.G.*, lib. ii. cap. 77.

[2] 'Ex sensibilibus signis, quae in potentia sensitiva recipiuntur, intellectus accipit intentiones intelligibiles, quibus utitur ad scientiam in seipso faciendam.'—(*D.M.*, art. 1 ad 4.)

[3] 'Sicut colores not sunt visibiles actu nisi per lumen, ita phantasmata non sunt intelligibilia actu nisi per intellectum agentem.' *Qq. de Anima*, q. 1 art. 15.

certain of its objects it arrives at others; but all its objects are visible to it as quickly as it is turned towards them. Hence the one looking does not need to be excited by another to see, except inasmuch as his gaze may be directed by someone to something visible, as with the pointing of the finger.[1] But the intellective power, since it is discursive, does infer some things from others. Hence it has not precisely an equal relation to all intelligible objects to be considered. Some things it sees immediately; others it cannot see except through the office of reason. To knowing things of this kind the intellect is not only in accidental potentiality, but even in essential potentiality; for it needs a mover which will lead it into actuality through teaching. The teacher, then, excites the intellect to knowing those things he is teaching as an essential mover, leading it from potentiality to actuality; but he who shows something to the bodily sight excites it as an accidental mover.[2]

The teacher is an essential mover, but he is not, and cannot, be the efficient cause of any learning. He is, and must remain, an extrinsic agent. Too often the art of teaching is conceived as the transmission of knowledge to a passive recipient. Such was the root error of Herbartianism; and Herbartian pedagogy led to over teaching, with all its deadening consequences for the pupil. No Herbartian 'presentations,' however skilfully presented, could transfer knowledge, much less create an 'apperceiving mass.' Such methods of instruction only blunt the faculties and foster passivity of mind.

Self-activity, on the other hand, constitutes the central method principle of the Thomist philosophy of teaching. 'He who teaches,' says St. Thomas, 'is not said to transfer knowledge to the pupil.' What errors in modern pedagogy could have been avoided had Thomism formed a part of the inheritance of the modern educator! And what an amount of modern pedagogical literature need not have been written! When Pestalozzi said: 'Let the child not only be acted upon, but let him be *an agent* in intellectual education,' he was, all unwittingly. emphasing a Thomist maxim. The same, indeed, might well be said about many of Professor John Dewey's teachings in regard to such matters as the nature of reflective thinking, the essential basis of experience needed for the educative process and the nature of the process itself as self-development.

But the philosophy of St. Thomas places the art of teaching on a far higher level than anything contemplated in the materialistic monism of Dewey and his school. Learning, as St. Thomas shows, involves psycho-physical action. By an operation transcending material things the intellect takes the intelligible content (i.e., meaning) from sensible objects. Meaning is not tangible to matter, because matter and meaning belong to different spheres of reality;

[1] *D.M.*, art. 1 ad 12um.

[2] 'Doctor ergo excitat intellectum ad sciendum illa quae docet, sicut motor essentialis educens de potentia in actum; sed ostendens rem aliquam visui corporali, excitat eum sicut per accidens . . .' Loc. cit.

hence thought, the human urge after the meaning of things, is a spiritual function. Meaning is simply the seal of man's reason. It can be put into sounds and the sounds become language; it can be put into lines and curves and they become writing. Language and writing are, therefore, meaning incarnate in matter. In these composites of matter and meaning (symbols) the meaningful element is more real than the material. In writing, the paper and the ink are for the meaning; in language the sound is for the meaning, not vice versa. Hence :—

> The words of the teacher, heard or seen in writing, have the same relation to causing knowledge in the intellect as anything outside the mind has, because from both, the intellect takes the intelligible content (meaning); yet the words of the teacher have a closer relation to causing knowledge than have the mere perceivable things outside the mind, inasmuch as words are symbols of intelligible content.[1]

In the last analysis all teaching depends upon symbols. Even if some things seem to be taught by themselves (for example, if when somebody asks what it is to walk, someone walks), yet this is not sufficient to teach one, unless some symbol be added; and the reason is that in the same thing there are many elements, so that it would not be known how far the demonstration held in regard to any aspect of that object, whether in regard to the substance of the object or in regard to some accident of it.[2]

It is clear, therefore, that as far as intellectual education is concerned no sensory material, no apparatus, can rival in efficacy the spoken word of the teacher. No matter what may be said to the contrary, telling will always form an important element in teaching. Mere telling, however, is not enough; the teacher must see to it that the pupils assimilate what is proposed to them through the medium of language. But how is he to do that, if he is only an extrinsic agent? Obviously the simplest way is by constant interrogation. No external stimulus can more effectively cause the pupil's intellective light to be focused on a specific point than a well-shaped, well-put question. Moreover, the mere expectation of searching questions keeps the pupil's *intellectus agens* alert, ready to seize the intelligible content of the teacher's words. Nor is that all; for the effort which the pupil makes to reproduce ideas in an orderly way and to clothe them in suitable language in answer to a question tends to fix those ideas firmly in his mind.

Such in general are the method principles underlying the *disputatio*, the typical stimulus method employed by St. Thomas himself and his contemporaries in the medieval university. The disputations, we are told by De Wulf,[3] consisted of two acts; first there was a passage at arms between one or many objectors (*opponens* and a person replying (*respondens*) different from the one charged with the final defence. When the discussion had gone on sufficiently long, we are told, the master entered upon the scene, and in another

[1] *D.M.*, art. 1 ad 11um.
[2] *D.M.*, art. 1.
[3] *History of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 255.

part of the discussion or on another day he took up again in a methodic way each question propounded, grouped the opinions and arguments, summed up the objections and replies, dealt with certain difficulties which the person replying had intentionally left in suspense, and finally presented a definitive solution or *determinatio* introduced by the words *respondeo dicendum* or a similar formula.

It can easily be seen that the introduction of the *disputatio* as a regular feature of class-room procedure in the medieval university had the double effect of minimizing, while at the same time magnifying, the teacher's role in the educative process. On the one hand it tended to make the students more alert and active in acquiring knowledge, and in a corresponding degree lightened the teacher's task. On the other hand the fact that the teacher had to deal with unforeseen difficulties and to make even erroneous arguments contribute towards the illumination of a subject in the final *determinatio*, called for thorough and detailed knowledge and made every disputation an intellectual exercise for him as well as for the students.

Scholarship is the first requisite for success in teaching. Merely to have knowledge *in potentia* is not enough for the teacher; he must have explicitly and perfectly that knowledge which he is to cause in another; else he cannot be called a perfect agent. For there are two kinds of agents in nature, as Aristotle shows.[1] One kind of agent is that which had in itself everything which in the effect is caused by it, either in the same way, as in the case of univocal agents, or in a superior way, as in the case of equivocal agents. But there are certain agents in which there pre-exists only a part of the results which are brought about, just as movement or some warming medicine in which the heat is found, either actually or virtually, causes healing; but the heat is not the healing entirely, but only partially. In the first kind of agent the action is perfect, in the second it is not. Instruction, says St. Thomas, implies perfect action of knowledge in the teacher or master. Hence, he who is the teacher must have explicitly and perfectly the knowledge which he causes in another, as in one learning through instruction.[2]

There is, therefore, an important difference between the function of a teacher in causing knowledge and that of a doctor in causing health. Both act as extrinsic proximate agents ministering to nature which does the principal work. But whereas the doctor need not have health himself *in actu*, he can nevertheless cause it in another, inasmuch as he has health '*in cognitione artis*'; and that is why a doctor can heal himself. But it is not enough for a teacher to have knowledge '*in cognitione artis*'; he must have it *in actu*; hence he cannot teach himself any more than he could have knowledge *in actu* and at the same time not have it. No finite being can be a perfect agent of his own knowledge, therefore self-teaching is beyond the power of man.

[1] *Metaphysics*, vii. 22, 28.
[2] *D.M.*, art. 2. *Utrum aliquis possit sui ipsius Magister dici.*

In the natural order knowledge can be acquired either *per doctrinam* or *per inventionem* according as one studied under a teacher or independently. The second method is the more perfect on the part of the one receiving the knowledge, because he is thereby distinguished as a more gifted student; but on the part of that which causes the knowledge, the more perfect mode is *per doctrinam*, because the teacher who has the knowledge as a whole explicitly can lead to knowledge more quickly and easily than anyone can lead himself.[1]

Man gains a knowledge of the unknown by means of his intellective light and the first concepts intuitively known, which are compared to the light of the active intellect as tools to a builder. With regard to both God is the cause of man's knowledge in the most excellent way possible, because He endows the mind itself with the intellective light and impresses on it the knowledge of first principles which are as certain germs of knowledge, 'just as He impresses on other natural things germinal capacities of all the effects to be produced.'[2] Therefore God is said to teach interiorly. Man cannot teach interiorly, because he cannot increase the intellective light in another. But he can teach as an extrinsic agent, for although germinal capacities are not educed to actuality through a created power, yet that which is in them originally and virtually can be educed to actuality by the action of a created power.[3]

Here then is an evolutionary concept of human development free from that determinism which, St. Thomas says, takes away from the universal order. Both the learning and the teaching processes are here considered from the evolutionary or developmental point of view. Learning is an evolutionary passing from potency to act. Teaching is the art of evoking that transition. Learning and teaching alike depend for their efficacy upon the first cause which has endowed man with the potentialities of knowledge and of virtue. God is therefore the first cause of man's learning, inasmuch as He is the author of man's potentialities; but, *ex eminentia bonitatis suae*, He has left the unfolding of those potentialities to human initiative. Man was made educable in order that man might teach and be taught. Education is therefore the fulfilment of a double duty: of charity to the young and of a social duty to the adult.

Materialistic evolutionism, on the other hand, leaves no scope for education in the traditional sense of the term. Of this Herbert Spencer, the philosopher of Darwinism, was fully conscious when he wrote:—

> If it is true that the mind like the body has a predetermined course of evolution—if it unfolds spontaneously—if its successive desires for this or that kind of information arise when these are severally required for its nutrition—if there thus exists in itself a prompter to the right species of

[1] *D.M.*, art. 2.
[2] *D.M.*, art. 3. *Utrum homo ab angelo doceri possit.*
[3] *D.M.*, art. 1 ad 5.

> activity at the right time; why interfere in any way? why not leave children wholly to the discipline of nature? why not remain quite passive and let them get knowledge as best they can? why not be consistent throughout?[1]

For a way out of the difficulty Spencer had recourse to the naturalistic principle that the helplessness of children is the one and only reason for trying to educate them. He argued thus:—

> It is a general law of life that the more complex the organism to be produced, the longer the period during which it is dependent on a parent organism for food and protection. . . . Now, this law applies to the mind as to the body. For mental pabulum also every higher creature, and especially man, is at first dependent on adult aid. . . . Thus, in providing from day to day the right kind of facts, prepared in the right manner, and giving them in due abundance at appropriate intervals, there is as much scope for active ministration to a child's mind as to its body.[2]

The determinism inherent in that debased concept of education is at once apparent. Less apparent but no less real are its moral dangers. In the words of Pius XI,

> Every form of pedagogic naturalism which in any way excludes or weakens supernatural Christian formation in the teaching of youth is false . . . if the intention is to banish from education despotism and violence, which, by the way, just punishment is not, this would be correct, but in no way new. It would mean only what has been taught and reduced to practice by the Church in traditional Christian education. . . . But, alas! it is clear from the obvious meaning of the words and from experience, that what is intended by not a few is the withdrawal of education from every sort of dependence on the divine law. . . Such men are miserably deluded in their claim to emancipate, as they say, the child, while in reality they are making him the slave of his own blind pride and of his disorderly affections, which, as a logical consequence of their false system, come to be justified as legitimate demands of a so-called autonomous nature.[3]

Of Spencer's educational theory St. Thomas would emphatically say: it puts things in the wrong order, since in every movement the *terminus ad quem* is more important than the *terminus a quo* (the end is more important than the beginning).[4] The first requisite then for a sound theory of education is a dependable ideal. But it is philosophy that determines ideals. Therefore education pertains to philosophy more than to natural science. Moreover, philosophy is necessary to determine accurately the nature of man, the subject of education. For the manner of studying man ought to conform to humanity's place in the hierarchy of things. Hence St. Thomas says: 'Having treated of the spiritual and of the corporal creature, we proceed to treat of man, who is composed of a spiritual and of a corporal substance.'[5]

In striking contrast to modern systems Thomist education considers man whole and entire, body and soul, such as right reason and revelation show him to be. It is therefore more truly scientific

[1] *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (Everyman), p. 54.
[2] Op. cit., p. 55.
[3] *Divini Illius Magistri.*
[4] S.T., II–II, Q. 37, art. 2 and 2um.
[5] Ibid., I, q. lxxv.: Prologue.

than any system founded upon naturalism. Thomist education views human nature *from above*, beginning even with God and the angels. It believes that man's true nature is exhibited in his highest functions, and that it is more clearly manifested in the genius than in the idiot, in the saint than in the criminal. Thomism is synthetic. It does not despise any branch of learning. Especially does it welcome the contributions of those sciences devoted to the study of man *ex parte corporis*. But it recognizes that above all the sciences is 'wisdom' which 'judges all things and sets them in order.'[1]

FRANCIS MCPOLIN.

[To be concluded.]

[1] S.T. II–I, q. lvii, art. 2.

NOTES AND QUERIES

[Queries in Theology, Canon Law, or Liturgy sent in for solution in this section of the 'I. E. Record' must in every case be accompanied by the name and address of the sender, even though these are not intended for publication. No reply can be given to queries which do not admit of being authenticated by reference to the sender, should such verification be deemed in any case desirable.—Editor.]

THEOLOGY

OCCULT COMPENSATION FOR AN UNJUST WAGE

REV. DEAR SIR,—Will you kindly discuss the following case in the I. E. RECORD?

Petrus is a country agent for an Insurance Company. He devotes his whole time and energies to extending the Company's business. He travels long distances by bicycle. He has been very successful. As a result of his efforts innumerable policies, of one kind or another, have come the way of the Company for which he works. And yet, tell it not in Gath, Petrus receives only a miserable remuneration—one which is certainly far below a living wage. On several occasions he has appealed, without success, for an increase of salary. He continues to act as agent for this Company because he can get no other suitable employment. He devoted special energy to his work, partly because he is interested in insurance, but more particularly because he had hoped that the Company might one day recognize the good work he had done and, repenting of its previous hardness, would compensate him generously. Of late he has become less hopeful and more cynical. And some time ago he evolved a very elaborate system—fool-proof he thinks—whereby he can appropriate to his own use part of the money received in payment of premiums (fairly large sums pass through his hands in this way). Recently, too, he has faked a bill of expenses amounting to £10 odd—which the Company reluctantly paid. He has done all this, he says, to make up for the injustice and inadequacy of his wages.

Yet Petrus is conscientious after a fashion. He is, at all events, uneasy about his actions and he has asked a priest (1) if he may retain what he has taken to supplement his meagre salary? (2) if he may continue for the future similarly to supplement what he receives from the Company to the amount of a minimum living wage? What replies should the priest have given him? The questions were asked outside confession.

AMATOR JUSTITIAE.

Our correspondent does not tell us whether or not Petrus is a whole-time employee of the Insurance Company. We understand that insurance agents oftentimes are only part-time. In other words, the agency may be a side issue, a supplementary or, at most, only a partial source of livelihood. The evidence in this case shows clearly that Petrus has been acting as a whole-time employee—devoting all his energies to the furtherance of the interests of the Company. Yet this may be a purely voluntary activity on his part, undertaken because he is interested in insurance work and because he is, or was, hopeful that, one day, he would be rewarded suitably for his voluntary service. It may be then that the Company has employed Petrus on a part-time basis, leaving him perfectly free to spend the rest of his working time in the employment of others or in any remunerative occupation. The point is important. It makes a considerable difference whether Petrus is a whole-time or part-time employee. Naturally, an employer who claims and utilizes the energies of an employee during [illegible] part of the working day cannot be obliged to pay a living family wage in th[illegible] as the employer