

# Current Topics

## Business Is Business

According to a report in *Leaves of Healing*, Rev. W. G. Voliva, leader of the Dowieites, expects the millennium to arrive almost immediately, if not sooner. Anyhow, it is set down as the next great event, and seven years later Christ will appear for the great settling-up. Mr. Voliva is quite definite on the subject; the world has run the length of its tether, and it must now listen acutely for the sound of the drums of doom. On another page of the same paper, however, the rev. gentleman advertises real estate in the Dowieite colony, all of it to be had on leases which run for a period of eleven hundred years. Whatever else Mr. Voliva's enemies may urge against him, they certainly cannot accuse him of being a sentimentalist where real estate is concerned.

## The Church and Salvation

Recently an Anglican journal took Dean Inge to task for his wild and senseless attacks on the Catholic Church, comparing this West End Divine to an ordinary Low Church ranter. The Dean gives further justification for the comparison by his late outburst on the Dark Ages, concerning which it is clear that his own mind is indeed benighted. That an educated man could utter such nonsense as this Anglican dignitary writes and speaks would be unintelligible if experience did not teach us that bigotry makes the unfortunate people afflicted by it almost insane. Another instance of this is furnished by General Booth, who is reported by the *War Cry* as saying that "the Roman Church" damns every human being who is not subject to the Pope. As it is almost incredible that a person deemed sufficiently responsible to be allowed to wander around without a keeper could have said such a thing, we give his own words as quoted by the Salvation Army organ:—"The astounding claim of the Lambeth Bishops and their Sub-committee, that those only are redeemed who belong to a visible Church, and a visible Church ministering two sacraments, thus shutting out the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends, to say nothing of others—is equalled in my judgment only by the claim of the Roman Catholic Church, first promulgated in 1300, and reaffirmed in 1871. That claim reads: 'We declare, affirm, define, and pronounce, that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.' It will not be by such miserable exclusiveness that the Kingdom of Christ will be extended." Nonsense of that kind only exposes to the ridicule of people of common sense those who utter it. On a par with such hallucinations are the efforts of a baser type of bigot to make their dupes believe that Catholics take all sorts of wild and wicked oaths. Old ladies of both sexes, at home and abroad, supply the funds for the printing of leaflets containing bogus Sinn Féin Oaths, Knights of Columbus Oaths, Priests' Oaths, Hibernian Oaths, and goodness only knows how many other varieties of oaths.

## Contemptible Methods

Most of us remember that such methods have been used with deadly effect against a Catholic statesman more than once, and it is certain they will be used by similar contemptible fighters in the future. That at the present time a campaign of this kind is in progress in England is clear from the following extract from the *Catholic Times*:—"A leaflet, well printed on good paper, but without any imprint on it, is being circulated in Liverpool. It purports to be the 'Oath of the Knights of Columbus,' an American Catholic organisation which did such wonderful work during the Great War. It is such a farrago of nonsense and stupidity that it ought to deceive no one. Still, as people are found to believe at this day that Catholics worship idols, there are some who may think that there is something in it. It did service in America till one David J. Gordon was unwise enough to publish it in his magazine, *The Crusader*, at the same time mentioning a member of the Knights, one David Supple. He was forthwith arrested on a charge of criminal libel, tried in the Superior Court of San Francisco, and convicted. On appeal the conviction was affirmed by the Appellate Court. The oath as printed in the leaflet is a copy of the one which was printed in *The Crusader*. We would be glad to learn if any of our readers have come across the leaflet in circulation in other districts. One wonders what political or supposed religious motive the circulation of such a scurvy libel is intended to serve at this time."

## The Problem of Crime

A very strong effort is being made to induce Governments to treat criminals as patients. Needless to say that effort comes from those who are least qualified to express an opinion upon such a complex question as that of the soul's relation to the body it inhabits. Their reasoning, where it is not transparently foolish, is painfully superficial. It is depressing to hear people who claim to be educated advancing shallow reasons in support of a thing and ignoring the fundamental truths which lie at the root of it. So-called experts in crime are now talking about the "Irresistible Impulse," which, they hold, relieves the criminal of responsibility for his wrong-doing. Such nonsense leads straight to the denial of a doctrine that is of fundamental importance in religion as in psychology—the freedom of the will. An English Catholic physician recently discussed so-called irresistible impulses from the Catholic standpoint. After explaining the irresistible impulses in insane people, he went on to show that if normal persons would closely analyse their desires, they would find that what was called an irresistible impulse was merely the *culminating point or climax in a chain of causes that led up to the said impulse*. In plain terms, an irresistible impulse in a normal person is merely an impulse that could have been controlled in the beginning. It stands to reason that if a person nurses a desire for

a thing unlawful and allows that desire to dominate him, then when the opportunity of fulfilling that desire presents itself, he will probably yield to the temptation and seize upon the object of his desire. The irresistible impulse, therefore, in most cases is simply the result of failure to resist temptation in its first stages.

## Occasions of Sin

If men, says a Catholic exchange, would study the age-old doctrines of the Church about temptation and occasions of sin, there would be no need of inventing a theory of "irresistible impulses." With the wisdom of twenty centuries of experience to supplement the teaching which she received from her Divine Master, the Church has warned her children to shun the occasions of sin, to resist temptations in their beginnings, and to pray for Divine grace to strengthen their wills. The root cause of all such modern theories concerning the nature of crime lies in a materialistic philosophy of life, which traces all evil to physical causes and ignores the spiritual element in man. Materialists and determinists arbitrarily set down as irresistible predetermining causes of moral evil, natural forces or influences which are merely hindrances to virtuous action. Natural temperament, inherited dispositions, vicious environment, may incline the will to evil, but they can never rob it of its native independence. Catholic teaching recognises these influences and allows for them. But it also teaches that in Divine grace, which God gives in sufficiency to overcome these tendencies, man has the corrective and destroyer of such impulses. More attention to old-fashioned teachings of morality and less talk about urges, irresistible impulses, and complexes, is what the world needs to cope successfully with the problem of crime and criminals.

## The Pope and the Tory Press

The British yellow press have discovered a great man in Pope Pius XI, the reason being that the latter, in his Allocution issued last December, wrote against Socialism and Communism. The *Daily Mail* published extracts from the Allocution. Needless to say, the passages quoted were judiciously selected. The half-truth nuisance, which Chesterton identified as England's greatest evil, was a prominent feature of the Tory press reprints of the Pope's Allocution. Every word written in condemnation of Communism and Socialism was reproduced faithfully; but the Pontiff's emphatic assertion of the workers' rights was carefully omitted. The Rome correspondent of the *Morning Post*, however, made his paper more ridiculous than the others. He gravely attributed the anti-Communist sentiment in the Allocution, "in its general sense," to "the Pope's conversation with Mr. Chamberlain," and he described it as a "most direct and outstanding statement." The *Irish Weekly* thus comments upon the *Post* correspondent's absurdity:—"Quite probably Pope Pius XI had heard of Pope Leo XIII before he met Mr. A. Chamberlain; it is indeed, quite likely that the reigning Pontiff had read Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum*, the immortal Encyclical Letter issued from the Vatican on

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