

Rev. Dr. Owen B. McGuire

George Bernard Shaw And The Catholic Church

Yet another biography of George Bernard Shaw has been published recently. It was reviewed in the New York Times by John Cochrane, who in the course of the review stated that Shaw understands neither Catholicism nor Protestantism.

This remark of Mr. Cochrane led Father Gillis to devote one of his weekly columns to the subject. He maintained that John Cochrane is who does not understand Catholicism or Protestantism, or Shaw either. With that I entirely agree. Shaw knows a whole lot about Catholicism. He says, it is true, that he is himself a Protestant; and that does seem paradoxical in a man who does not believe in a personal God, nor, as a consequence, in the Bible or in any supernatural Revelation such as orthodox Protestants believe the Bible to be. But you have to understand Shaw to know what he means when he says he is a Protestant, as you have to understand what he meant when he said St. Joan was a Protestant. "The First Protestant" in history, Mr. Cochrane does not understand Shaw.

CLEAR IN MIND

There is one little incident in the article of Father Gillis to which I cannot subscribe. He says Shaw is now "in his intellectual dotage." On the contrary, I believe he shows an amazingly clear mind for an octogenarian, and a clarity and logicality of expression which is also impressive, as indeed it has always been.

It is these very things rather than his philosophy, which gained for him and retained for him a public hearing, neither squaled nor approached by any contemporary writer in any language. For nearly two generations—certainly for one—it can be said without exaggeration that he has held the center of the literary stage. You may disagree with him. In fact there are very few, if any, who do agree with him throughout. But whatever his subject, whatever his medium for addressing the public, he compels all to listen to him. In England, if he but writes a letter to the Times, you are not in the swim of current events if you do not know what he had to say.

Nor is this strange and apparently inexplicable phenomenon confined to England or to the world of English speech. All over Europe he is quoted. He is thoroughly anti-Christian, but he differs from all other anti-Catholic writers in this respect and in other respects too.

People get tired of H. G. Wells singing the same song whatever the accompaniment. Joseph McCabe is hardly known outside Britain and was hardly heard of in this country until he became the hero of the Haldeman-Julius publications when his superfluous and blasphemous tirades against God and his Anointed had to be noticed for the sake of peace in a country where we all have to try, at least, to live in harmony. But these publications and their author receive no notice in the daily or periodical press. But let Shaw write a book, or a play, or give an

Chaplain O'Brien Writes To Bishop

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mas time. It really hurt. But I can honestly say that we're all glad we're here doing our part to make sure that the old accustomed way will never change but will be there for us when we get back."

Father O'Brien, whose parents live in Auburn, then speaks of his work with the soldiers, the same work in many elements he has had at home. Most come to church; many are edifying, some are inspirational. "My experience with the men convinces me more than ever of the value of home training." There is a certain paganism present in our homes where the name of God and the ways of God are not taught. The influence of such homes is reflected in the life of some soldiers.

"I've said Mass on fine affairs, on picnic tables, on boxes, and on gasoline tins. I've heard confessions with the water running off of me, and with an overcoat on. And I suppose it can get worse, but I'm all for it if it will get this world straightened out. Keep praying for us."

Father O'Brien has two brothers in the service. Pfc. John O'Brien was home on furlough in Auburn during the past week.

interview on some current topic, and the whole journalistic (ironically think it their duty to sit up and listen and comment). It is amazing. It is apparently less, pleasurable.

SHAWIAN SUBJECT

I have said that "another" biography of Shaw has just been published. If you want to understand Shaw, to see what he is and how he came to be what he is, I would advise you to read a book published by Sheed and Ward. If my memory does not play me false, its title is George V. Bernard. The author bears an Irish Catholic name; but at the moment I forget it. (Strange, my memory is good except in this particular of remembering proper names.) I read the book when it was published, but it has disappeared from my little library. I probably lost it and forgot who was the borrower, and the borrower forgot who was the lender. Such things are not so rare as the George Bernard. If it turns up, or if George Bernard writes another book, I may have something to say on the subject.

In view of what I have just said of the character of this amazing Anglo-Irish product of the Reformation, it will seem another impeccable paradox, if I add that George Bernard Shaw has done a real service to the Catholic Church and to the Catholic people, especially to the Catholics of England. Yet that is just what I say and intend to say.

There is a mass of false history, and of falsehoods in classic English literature, that has come down like driftwood increasing as it proceeded in the current of English writing for the past 500 years. Belloc has called attention to this repeatedly, and tried to correct it. It has, he says, made of England the most anti-Catholic country in the world. But Belloc was speaking pro domo sua. Those who had been the victims of it and became Catholics know better, namely, from experience, the force of that malign tradition. Newman tells in the Apologia how it "stained his imagination." For instance, when as a youth he used the Garden of Parnassus in preparing his Latin poems and came to names that could be used for the Pope, he wrote in the margin alternatives so vile that he could not bring himself to copy them into his book.

NOTIONS DEVELOPED

John Moody in his *The Low Road Home* asks the question: Where or how did I get these notions of the Middle Ages? And he answers: "Ask almost any layman of my generation outside of Catholic circles. We all got these notions in school, in college, in the history and literature we read and studied. . . . Our civilization really began with the fifteenth century." (Page 238)

And in the Book of Common Prayer (or in the Homilies) the British people were told and asked to believe as religious truth that "for nearly a thousand years" their forefathers, their writers—Bede, Alfred, Chaucer and the rest—had seen "steeped in idolatry and superstition." And it is well to note and to remember that we Catholics today do not and cannot wholly except that influence. To some extent at least those who write the text books for "school and college and university" write in conformity with that tradition and are still our masters.

Many, very many of these falsehoods have been shown up and blasted by George Bernard Shaw. In a later column I will give some examples of how he did it.

Explains Dutch Bishops' Policy In Anti-Nazi Pastoral

CAMBRIDGE. — Principles involved in the policy which the Dutch Bishops employed in 1934 when they delivered their celebrated pastoral against Nazism and Fascism and which guided them in their continued stubborn and heroic stand against National Socialism were traced by the Rev. P. J. M. H. Mommersteeg in a discussion of "The Individual and Society in Holland between the Two Wars" at Harvard University here. Father Mommersteeg gave a discussion of the Thomistic principles, which govern the relation between the individual and society, and showed the view of those principles in the historic anti-Nazi, anti-Fascist stand of the Dutch Bishops.

The Institute Catholic, the Catholic who is not a deer but a hunter only, takes no vote to better his tongue.

Maharajah Presents Medal To Catholic Teacher

TRIVANDRUM, India. — P. T. Thomas, teacher in a Catholic high school here, received a medal from the Maharajah of Travancore.

Rene Verne, the Mahatma of Transylvania, on the Government's part in the University of Chicago, is the University's highest honor for Graduate Students.

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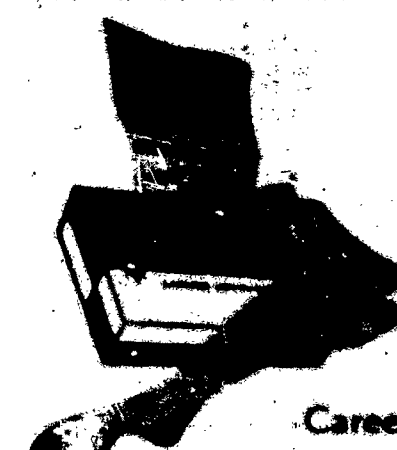
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(Left)
Coat, dress with shawl collar. Sprawling poppy print. 16 1/2-20 1/2.

(Right)
Classic coat dress with shirred pockets. Swirling daisy pattern. 12-20.

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