

DR. O'NEILL'S ANALYSIS

Blanshard 'Scholarship' Myth Exploded In Blanshard Book

In recent weeks the American Catholic educator and author, James M. O'Neill, has published a book with a two-fold significance: (1) Point by point, it examines and shatters the scholarship and "documentation" of anti-Catholic oris Paul Blanshard, and (2) it provides the Catholic layman with clear, terse summaries of Catholic attitudes with regard to church-state relations, American democracy, education, censorship, and social policies.

Paul Blanshard's thesis is that the Catholic Church is an enemy of American Freedom. He tries to persuade his readers of the soundness of this thesis by his treatment of many aspects of alleged Catholic belief and practice.

My position is that Mr. Blanshard's basic thesis is false, and that the discussion of the belief and practice of American Catholics which he presents in support of his thesis is so biased and inaccurate as to be substantially worthless.

If the Blanshard book ("American Freedom and Catholic Power") is so bad, a reader may well ask, why take it so seriously? The answer is, because it has been praised and promoted by men, who on account of the positions they occupy and the fields they advocate, should have been expected to expose its antireligious, anti-Catholic bias, its basic freedom-smothering philosophy of the omnipotent state, and its erroneous scholarship.

IT IS HARD to pick out Mr. Blanshard's weakest chapter from the standpoint of sound, competently documented argument, but there are certain objective things about his chapter on "How the Hierarchy Works" that seem to make it the best example. It is his longest chapter; it has more footnotes than any other, and as its title indicates, it is Mr. Blanshard's barage of heavy artillery.

Mr. Blanshard writes: "Wherever possible I have let the Catholic hierarchy speak for itself!" He does not keep this promise in this chapter.

THE CURRENT number of members of the American Catholic hierarchy is 181. They are all busy administrators, writing, speaking, issuing circular letters. Mr. Blanshard could have let them speak for themselves for hundreds of pages showing "how they work," what they do, why they do it, how they do it. In this chapter he allows only two members of the American hierarchy to speak, last once, each.

AN EXAMINATION of Mr. Blanshard's 51 footnotes reveals the following: 23 with colorful, noncontroversial facts, population figures, etc., containing no substantiation or proof of any of the charges against the hierarchy; six deal with ancient, universal, well-known doctrines; not with how the hierarchy works; five deal with the doctrine of infallibility but furnish nothing to substantiate Blanshard's charges; two continue the text

not only records the history of the hierarchy during the 200 years in which it has operated in the United States; he cites in detail its methods of procedure and its accomplishments, documenting all of his major statements. The same procedures are followed throughout.

Mr. Blanshard makes no pretense even of recording the history of the hierarchy; neither the American hierarchy nor the United States is two hundred years old; there is clearly no citation "in detail" or otherwise of either methods or accomplishments; and no one of his "major statements" in this chapter is documented at all.

One of the most serious faults in Mr. Blanshard's book is his constant misuse of the imprimatur. He has scores of references to publications which he gives weight and value as he seeks to use them only on the assumption that he makes and expects the reader to make, that because these quotations carry the imprimatur of a Catholic Bishop the matters he quotes from them are "official, authentic Catholic doctrine."

ANYONE WHO has ever a passing interest in the meaning of the imprimatur can find out easily that the imprimatur is simply a statement of permission to publish, given to a subordinate by his superior. The only essential meaning of the imprimatur is that, in the opinion of the official granting the imprimatur, the document concerned contains nothing contrary to Catholic doctrine in faith and morals. It in no way guarantees the accuracy, authenticity, credibility, or infallibility of the document to which it is attached.

Mr. Blanshard found many passages written by some Catholic which he could use to prejudice the uninformed against American Catholics. In any of these were published with an imprimatur, he used that fact inaccurately to convey the idea that the passage was "authentic Catholic doctrine." Some of them were inaccuracies, some fragments which Mr. Blanshard misinterpreted, some just remarks in bad taste, some mere opinion that represented no one but the author.

ONE OF MR. Blanshard's most elaborate series of misrepresentations is his treatment of 14 "erroneous ideas" about Catholics as given in a national Knights of Columbus ad. Mr.

China Reds Turn On Apostate Who Masterminded Attack Against Church

HONG KONG (AP)—The man who masterminded the schismatic church movement in China and tried to build up nationwide ties for the "imperialist" missionaries has himself fallen a victim of communist rule.

Chow Li-Hsing, a communist party member since 1938 and director of the religious section for the East China area since February, 1949, has been accused of leading a "counter-revolutionary" movement according to the Liberation Daily of Ssang.

Blanshard accuses the K. of C. of adopting "the transparent device of misquoting slightly the major criticisms of non-Catholics about the hierarchy's reaction to its own dogmas; and no one of his 'major statements' in this chapter is documented at all.

He says that he puts down (on an opposite page) "the exact statement of Catholic doctrine in frank terms." Mr. Blanshard does not state "exact Catholic doctrine" in a single one of his 14 chapters.

AN EXAMPLE: K. of C. You hear it said that Catholics believe all non-Catholics are headed for Hell.

Blanshard: Non-Catholics who deliberately reject Catholicism are headed for Hell. This would express Catholic teaching only if the word "deliberately" were taken to mean deliberate rejection of what the individual non-Catholic actually believed to be the truth.

The deliberate rejection of the truth is condemned by the Catholic Church as an immoral act. Evidently, pretending to believe the opposite of what is actually believed to be the truth, is condemned by substantially all persons who have a moral code of any kind. Mr. Blanshard's statement would clearly include a non-Catholic who deliberately rejected Catholicism because he honestly and conscientiously believed it to be the truth.

HOWEVER, ACCORDING to the teaching of the Catholic Church the person who rejects Catholicism deliberately, in the sense of carefully following his conscience (which should involve deliberation), is not "headed for Hell." Either Mr. Blanshard does not know the Catholic doctrine concerning salvation "outside the Church" and the "priority of conscience" or he does not wish his readers to know them.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: K. of C. That they believe non-Catholic marriages are invalid. Blanshard: Non-Catholic marriages involving a Catholic are invalid.

Look at Mr. Blanshard's statement and compare it with the statement he is trying to answer. Even if Mr. Blanshard's statement were accurate and true, it still would not show that there is any "misstatement" in the Knights of Columbus ad.

hal. The communist party has requested that the government "deal severely" with him. The "religious section of the cultural committee" which he headed is the Red instrument for dealing with "religious problems." Under his aegis, the "reform" program for Christian churches was initiated and it bears responsibility for the execution of local "reform" church committees. The section also conducts the "dechristianization courses" for Christians and exhorts them "under compulsion of their patriotic duty" to denounce foreign priests as "imperialist" and a "Chinese priest as a "turning dog."

The Liberation Daily did not state that Chou Li-Hsing had been deprived of his post; nor comment on his possible punishment.

The accusations allege that he was a "degenerate libertine" and a "despotic dictator" in his official capacity. Although warned to stop a serious attitude of reform, the paper continues to display an unwarranted evasive demeanor. His fellow workers asked for his punishment as a "party member who has lost all the requisites for his position."

There, the statement "non-Catholic marriages," unmodified, means all marriage among non-Catholics, and it is a belief held even today by some well-educated, fair-minded, unprejudiced non-Catholics that Catholics do not believe that these are marriages.

I have talked to exactly that sort of non-Catholic who, at least until I talked to them, believed that the Catholic Church did not acknowledge any Protestant marriages of any kind as being valid marriages.

THE CHURCH holds that a marriage between a baptized Protestant who is free to marry is a valid marriage and a sacrament. This is explicitly stated in the book Mr. Blanshard refers to in his documentation. Mr. Blanshard should say what he means by "non-Catholic marriages" and by "invalid." As it stands, his is a false statement.

And another: K. of C. That they adore statues. Blanshard: They venerate statues by canonical order.

Anyone who has read much anti-Catholic literature or who has even had friendly conversations with inquiring non-Catholics knows that the absurd idea that Catholics adore statues is still fairly common.

MR. BLANSARD, in answer to this nonsense, does not say "of course it is nonsense," as he would have said if he knew and wished to spread the truth. His answer is that the Catholics "venerate" statues by canonical order. Anyone who is linguistically unable to distinguish between "worship" and "venerate" should refrain from discussing Catholic doctrine or Canon law.

Webster's Dictionary says that "venerate" means "to regard with reverential respect, or with admiration and deference; to revere." And the canon referred to by Mr. Blanshard does not order Catholics to venerate statues. This canon does not even recommend the veneration of statues, but is essentially a list of directions to the clergy concerning the placing and care of statues, pictures and similar objects. Of course, the doctrine of the Church is that Catholics should venerate the saints whom the statues represent.

These examples exhibit the Blanshard "scholarship" and argument in their almost total unreliability.

(Next week: "Separation of church and state.")

Belgium Decorates Cardinal Spellman

Washington, D.C. (AP)—His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, was formally presented at the Belgian Embassy here with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown of Belgium in recognition of his outstanding services to the Allied cause during the second world war.

The presentation was made on behalf of King Baudouin of Belgium by Baron Silverstein in the presence of a distinguished gathering of civic and church representatives.

The CATHOLIC SHOP HOME SHRINES Statues of Our Lady 7.50 TO 10.95 Rosaries For May 1.00 to 14.00 Tucker's INC. 300 Main St. E. 12 North Street

Holy Father To Address Germans

Berlin (AP)—Pope Pius XII will address a special message to the Catholics of Germany gathered for a mass meeting in the Olympic Stadium here on August 24 to mark the close of the 75th Katholikentag, or national convention of German Catholics.

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