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Cardinals in History: The Papal Princes

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in themselves most exasperating instances of misrepresentation by people whose good faith can be seriously doubted.

The resignation in 1958 of Mr. Stanley Lichtenstein as Research Director of POAU and his reasons for it, together with the entire Fourth Part of this analysis, are telling blows against the organization in question.

The issue which finally prompted the resignation of Mr. Lichtenstein has now become academic. It concerned the "Questions for a Catholic Candidate" proposed to Mr. John F. Kennedy during his recent campaign for the Presidency of the United States. Mr. Lichtenstein honestly admitted that the set of questions "actually tended to undermine the constitutional principle which the organization (POAU) professes to uphold." In other words, the Research Director of the POAU found himself caught in a complete contradiction of principles and chose the only way out left to an honest man. This is damning evidence indeed.

The painstaking scholarship displayed throughout the pages of this work renders a welcome service to the cause of justice and truth. The controversies are by no means dead. Recent actions of the POAU included a campaign against the sale by the City of St. Louis of some downtown property to the University of St. Louis, a Catholic institution of learning. It has loudly joined in the storm raised over the question of Federal aid to education.

The election of a Roman Catholic candidate to the presidency of the United States indicated that prejudice on that particular issue has died down in large measure. This is true despite the cartoons and scurrilous literature which were released during the heat of the campaign. But the ugly head of prejudice whether religious or racial is far from dead.

The lesson to be learned by all from this closely-reasoned refutation is the blindness of prejudice. It is all the more true when the issues concerned are intimately linked with passion and sentiment. Catholics too can profit therefrom by a stern determination even in the heat of controversy, to adhere rigorously to the canons of truth, scholarship and charity.

SAMUEL R. WILEY

CARDINALS IN HISTORY

THE PAPAL PRINCES: A History of the Sacred College of Cardinals. By Glenn D. Kittler. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1960. 369pp. \$4.95.

During the past eight centuries the intimate connection of the College of Cardinals with the supreme governing power of the Church makes it impossible to create an adequate distinction between the histories of the two entities, the Sacred College and the Church itself. Hence the history of the cardinals becomes in effect, a skeleton on which to hang the flesh of Church history, and particularly that of the Papacy. Although subtitled a history, this work is more of a popular presentation of the peaks and valleys which mark the passage of the Church through the centuries.

A thousand years of ecclesiastical history are telescoped into the first three chapters. The obscure origins of the cardinalial dignity are summarized in journalistic style. Indeed the very rapidity of the pace is sometimes confusing. A less informed reader might be led to suppose that the so-called cardinals of that era were comparable to the modern princess of the Roman church when in fact nothing is further from the truth. Not only in Rome but in other cities of the Christian world, the title of cardinal was given to important priests of large cities such as Milan, Constantinople, Ravenna, etc.

The largest portion of the book is devoted to the development and influence of the Sacred College during the Middle ages. Some ten chapters are allotted to this colorful, stormy and at times shameful period of the Church. With a journalist's eye for the spectacular, the author highlights the seamy incidents of this period. Well described are the long wrangles which marked the prolonged conclaves at Viterbo; the jealousy and riots which led to the Western Schism; the rising nationalism which led to the long-drawn-out struggle between the emerging European states and the Papacy. All these are etched in short, sharp strokes and the total picture is not edifying.

Hence the main defect of this effort is oversimplification. For the most part it is true that the record of the medieval cardinals is one of selfishness and obstruction. Interest in self, or family, or nation more often than not prevailed over sincere devotion to the Church. However the tendency of the author is to paint a picture which is wholly black. Unless the reader fills in the background from other sources, his view will not be balanced.

The last portion of the book brings us up to modern times and to the very recent appointments of cardinals to Japan, the Philippines and Africa. The final pages of the work are concerned with the life of Pius XII and the career of Cardinal Rugambwa of Africa, to whom the book is dedicated.

Since for the past thousand years popes have been chosen from the College of Cardinals, it was natural for the author to focus on those members of the Sacred College who were elected to the Papacy. This perspective tends to blot out the names

of some great cardinals who never became popes. Thus neither in the text nor in the index are the names of Baronius or Bellarmine mentioned, although they were among the most learned of the cardinals. Consalvi, the great diplomat of the Napoleonic period, is also completely ignored. In outlining the life of Pius XII, mention is made of his contribution to the codification of Canon Law but not a word is said of Cardinal Gasparri, the outstanding man who shouldered the entire burden of this momentous task and saw it to completion.

General statements made without adequate background could lead to certain false impressions. It is not correct to imply that all or even most papal legates in the early church were cardinals. In the fourth century, the lines of demarcation between cardinals, bishops and priests were hardly clear. While no one would gainsay the impact of the Cluniac reform, Benedictine historians will be suprised to learn that it was Cluny and not Subiaco or Montecassino which was the motherhouse of their order.

As befits a popular writer, the style of the author is for the most part vivid and readable. Occasionally an incomplete sentence appears to mar the perfection of the writing. Despite these strictures, the book is both interesting and informative. Above all, the thoughtful reader will close its covers with two conclusions firmly planted in his mind. The Catholic Church, as revealed in its highest authorities, is deeply human. On the other hand, her survival and vitality in the midst of and despite this very humanity, more eloquently than any other testimony, gives evidence that she is sustained by a power that can only be divine.

SAMUEL R. WILEY

NEW CHALLENGE TO AN OLD PROBLEM

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION. By Robert Hamilton Moore.
New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1960. xiii, 224pp.

The apparently insurmountable problem in teaching writing has always been that students need to write ten times more than their overburdened teachers can evaluate and correct. Devices for inspiring cajoling or bullying the young writer to write have always been few and of limited effectiveness, for even if he did accede to writing on his own such a course is fraught with the danger of making writing faults an indelible habit.