

this connection it is hard to believe that c. XI of *The Prince* implies faith in a special Providence guiding the Church; the tone is surely ironical.

A word of special praise is due to Father Walker's very thorough examination of Machiavelli's logical method and of its claim (which is allowed) to originality. It is the kind of thing one looks for in vain in most writing upon 'literary' texts. But Father Walker has a scientific mind. Elsewhere in the Introduction a few points seem to call for correction or elucidation. One may be mentioned here. The account given of the negotiations between the Congregation of the Index and Machiavelli's descendants does not quite tally with what Villari and Acton said about them (see *The Nineteenth Century*, April, 1892).

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

ENTHUSIASM. A Chapter in the History of Religion with special reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries. By R. A. Knox. (Clarendon Press; 30s.)

'Just when the Church', says a character in *Anthony Adverse*, 'is about to be taken for a decorative and snugly-woven cocoon... that cocoon bursts and the beautiful, living psyche of Christianity emerges.' When, on the last page of his huge work, Mgr Knox speaks warmly of enthusiasm, he is there contrasting it to the inertia of the 'cocoon'. He is recalling the mood in which Grosseteste told the Pope 'that the true source of heresy was the corruptness of the clergy.' He is not using 'enthusiasm' in the sense it bears in the title of his book.

The Church has, indeed, been generally successful in directing the enthusiasm that is opposed to inertia, witness St Francis or St John Bosco. Lord Macaulay, in his essay on the Papacy, maintains that, if Wesley or the Countess of Huntingdon had been Catholics, the Church would have retained them within her fold. There is, too, an interesting contrast between Innocent XII's dealings with Fénelon and those of Wesley with the class-leader of Norwich whom he excommunicated on hearsay. The definition which Mgr Knox gives to 'enthusiasm' elsewhere throughout the book is that of 'ultrasupernaturalism', a term under which he brings such widely separated phenomena as Jansenism and Wesleyanism, movements so far spaced in time as those of the Montanists and Irvingites. The religious vagaries of the XVII and XVIII centuries are, however, his chief concern.

Over this wide field Mgr. Knox's scholarship, mordant humour and charity never flag, whether he is speaking of the patroness of the Donatists, the *fou rire* of a nun at Port Royal, Count Zinzendorf reading the riot-act to the Moravian Brethren, or the slimy pietistics of an Agapemone in Somerset. The charm, alertness and objectivity of his

treatment leap from every one of the 591 pages of this work which has been thirty years a-building.

Ultrasupernaturalism arises from the mysterious relationship between created beings and the uncreated 'I am.' It is a subjective claim to have solved the problem of how, in the supernatural order, the soul is reduced from potency to act. Predestination is a prime preoccupation in it, whether that doctrine is accepted or rejected. The further doctrine of disinterested love of God, and the kind of prayer by which he is best approached, is, I think, subordinate to that first problem. What happens when the claim to have solved it is made? If the authority of the Church is present, Fénelon and Mme. Guyon make their submission; if not, then Wesley parts with Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon. But whether the milieu is Catholic or Protestant, ultrasupernaturalism shows itself in dreadful shapes before Church or State step in to quell it. Moral rigorism at Port Royal gives place to antinomianism, to trances, mysterious utterances, horrible contortions, sub-human behaviour. The prophets of the new movement become Messiahs, identify themselves with Christ, announce the approaching reign of the Holy Ghost or the end of the world. They are the chosen few, the invisible church, infallible and sinless, guided by an inner light, free from moral restraint, from the need of prayer or good works, free from the authority of the Bible or the law. Even such figures as George Fox or Wesley or the Moravian Brethren are not altogether untouched by these infections. And where their sturdy common-sense is absent, James Nayler ends in public execration, Lacombe in the mad-house at Lourdes.

It is, indeed, a saddening story to read, from the murderous rage of the Circumcellions, through the intoxication with desolation of the Quietists, to the antics of the Shakers. It is not ungenerous to wish that Mgr Knox, who has given us such kindly, perceptive portraits of Fox and Wesley, Zinzendorf and the Countess of Huntingdon, might also do the same for the enthusiasts against inertia, Dominic and Ignatius, Francis and Theresa of Avila. Meanwhile, from its first chapter on, this superb book repeats St Paul's warning picture to the Corinthians; they were to remember what happened to their fathers in the desert, when Israel rebelled against God; they were to remember 'the picture of those innumerable bones, bleaching in the wilderness of Arabia.'

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

ELIZABETHAN RECUSANT PROSE, 1559-1582. By A. C. Southern. (Sands; 42s.)

There are in this book the makings of three important works, quite distinct in character. The first would be an historical study, the second a work of literary criticism, and the third a reference book. Dr Southern is obviously qualified to write all three, but he has chosen to incorporate