

married monogamously, out of her communion, and makes all their children technically illegitimate and therefore not admissible to the seminary. The core of Mgr Mullin's contribution to this very grave problem is: 'With regard to mixed marriages, we may recall the words of the Code: *Severissime Ecclesia ubique prohibet.*' Almost everywhere the author misses an appreciation of the real human factors involved. A good example is the section on minor seminaries – institutions of enormous importance in the African Church, but ones where quite obviously something is just failing to click. All we get from the author is the time-honoured stress on chastity and piety, when the real problem is the sheer boredom of young boys expected to undergo years of semi-priestly life before they have had a chance of

realising what is involved or making a free decision.

Perhaps the chief fault in the book lies with the publisher, not the author. If it had been left, as first intended, as a diocesan pastoral guide for African parish priests, it would have been – within its own limits – of value. It is when it is blown up by title and blurb into an original study of church problems, that it is seen to fail so lamentably. The picture on the front, incidentally, seems to illustrate effectively both one of Africa's chief pastoral problems and the character of the book: masses of children are shown going into church but there is hardly an adult in sight. How common that is in Africa, even on a Sunday morning! It is not a problem upon which Mgr Mullin throws much light.

ADRIAN HASTINGS

WITCHCRAFT, EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN, by Geoffrey Parrinder. *Faber, 1963, cloth 25s., paper, 8s. 6d., pp. 215.*

Professor Monica Wilson wrote, 'I see witch beliefs as the standardized nightmares of a group, and I believe that the comparative analysis of such nightmares is not merely an antiquarian exercise but one of the keys to the understanding of society'. Dr Parrinder has provided an overall picture of European beliefs as they emerge in the records of legislation and of witch-trials; a brief statement of such beliefs as they be found in the Bible and the Near East; and a broad selection of anthropological accounts from Africa. That Faber should be able, five years after its first publication, to take over such a book from Penguin is evidence of the wide interest in 'witchcraft' which now exists in this country.

But definitions are necessary. Dr Parrinder adopts the distinction, now general among British anthropologists, between *witchcraft* – the power to harm others by simply willing – and *sorcery* – the use of material means (whether 'magical' or physiologically efficacious) to the same end. As becomes clear in Middleton and Winter's symposium on *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, this distinction is not useful in all African societies; and Dr Parrinder's material suggests that it is no more useful in Europe – at least as it appeared to contemporary chroniclers. Much of what was recorded must surely come under the heading of *sorcery*; and this confusion tends to vitiate the discussion. If European witchcraft was different from

African witchcraft, it is not possible to use the latter to refute Dr Margaret Murray's hypothesis that it was the survival of an earlier religious cult. There is a traditional spirit-initiation cult in Ankole, driven underground by mission and government and practised now at night instead of, as traditionally, in broad daylight. It is not difficult to see how, thus forced into disrepute, it might draw to itself some of the old, less reputable, beliefs and become a cult akin to the legend of European witchcraft.

A further disappointment is the lack of East African material. Middleton and Winter have crept into the bibliography. But Monica Wilson's *Good Company* is not there. Either of these must have modified Dr Parrinder's emphasis on the attribution of witchcraft mainly to women and its consequent interpretation in terms of sex antagonism (Lugbara witches are almost all men. While the Pondo see witchcraft in sexual terms, the Nyakyusa find it in jealousies over cattle). He would have had doubts seeking its origin in kinship stresses; and he could not have written (p. 129), 'most mysterious deaths and diseases were attributed to witches'. In many societies ancestral ghosts were at least as likely to be responsible for the latter; and witchcraft might play no part in kinship (as distinct from affinal) relationships. This is simply to say that it is a mistake to generalise, to speak of 'African beliefs', when

what we in fact have is a common human belief in psychic power expressing itself in many diverse forms in different societies. This raises the further interesting question whether – if the material were only available in sufficient detail – it might be found that European witchcraft beliefs were not so uniform as they are often made to appear. And the modern cults in England – they are not mentioned; but they give this book its popular appeal – are they witchcraft at all within the anthropological meaning?

What is perhaps most surprising is that Dr Parrinder should accept almost uncritically the dictum of Professor Evans-Pritchard: 'Witchcraft is an imaginary offence because it is impossible'. If today we can see much of our attribution of evil to others as projection of our own paranoid phantasies, that is not necessarily to exclude all evil from them. If self-confessed witches are often enough depressives, is that evidence that *all* their evil thoughts are ineffective in the external world? The schizogenic power of families, described by R. D. Laing in *Sanity, Madness and the Family* is extraordinarily reminiscent of stories of unconscious witchcraft. The only reason for rejecting extra-sensory perception and, *pari*

*passu*, what is now dignified as *psycho-kinesis* is refusal to believe in them; and that, as Professor Broad said years ago about the rejection of miracles, is empirical nonsense.

We simply must be agnostic about the objective nature of witchcraft; and, because the act is one which by definition cannot be observed, perhaps the question is wholly intolerant of empirical investigation. What is much more necessary is to deal with the fundamental causes of the nightmares of which witchcraft is one standardized form. In his last chapter Dr Parrinder calls it a 'tragic illusion' and thinks that 'an enlightened religion, education, medicine, and better social and racial conditions, will help to reduce "man's inhumanity to man"'. But the evidence from East Africa is that years of government action and mission teaching have increased the incidence of witchcraft belief; and Dr Parrinder has already seen (p. 202) that Nazi persecution of Jews and Ku Klux Klan (one should perhaps add, the Smethwick by-election) express the old belief in new forms. It is difficult to see any end except in a rather thorough-going conversion.

F. B. WELBOURN

THE FAITH OF THE COUNSELLORS, by Paul Halmos. *Constable, 30s.*

The 'Counsellors' whom Professor Halmos discusses in this book are social and psychiatric workers of different kinds, and the idea of giving these a general descriptive title points to the book's chief significance. This is a study, not of particular aspects of social work, but of its meaning and impact within a whole culture, of the ways it has altered our structures of feeling and value. The point is well made when the author comments that social/psychiatric work is reaching a stage where one of its main objects of study will have to be 'the impact of its own growth . . . on human behaviour'; it is this kind of self-reflection which Halmos is trying to begin, in writing a book on social work with a title reminiscent of a solemn and slightly dated theological study.

Examining the cultural significance of the counsellors involves exploring their impact on other cultural elements, particularly on politics. The title of the first chapter – 'The Discrediting of Political Solutions' — gives a clue to

Halmos's position: he argues that counselling has taken over from politics, as a focus of human compassion and social change, because politics is crude, dull, impersonal, narrowing, and aesthetically distasteful. What is really narrowing is Halmos's definition of politics, as the clumsy, bureaucratic science of organisation: from this it's an obvious step to claim that 'So long as political action is aimed at organisation and institutional changes it will not catch up with the personal miseries of the individual'. Ideas of politics which try to make precisely that connection, between personal and social experience, lie outside the range of Halmos's descriptions: his position is the classically liberal belief that individual relationships are somehow more *real* than social involvements, as his more or less interchangeable use of 'private' and 'personal' reveals. The real focuses of concern are for him the 'private' and 'incalculably human' aspects of individual life; it is depressing to see from this that the welcome