

sick occupied in the minds of the originators of the Order. He leaves the reader with the impression that the care of the sick was from the start as recognized an aim as was the service of pilgrims and of the poor. This may have been the case, but the earliest evidence concerning the care of the sick and the distinction, such as it may originally have been, between running a hospice and running a hospital, deserve greater elucidation. The Order eventually advanced the notion of the lordship of the poor, but the earliest documents do not exactly bear out Dr Riley-Smith's claim that this idea was explicitly acknowledged under Gerard and with papal support. An early feature of the organization of the Order was its centralization under a Master. Dr Riley-Smith approaches near to claiming for the Order the honour of anticipating the Cistercian achievement in this respect, even though the Cluniacs were already an old model. Dr Riley-Smith

handles well the criticisms which the Order incurred from time to time, notably at the third Lateran Council in 1179 which decreed, for example, that gifts of churches and tithes made to the Order in 'modern times' by lay persons were invalidated. Pope Alexander III later blunted the force of these criticisms, but it is surely arguable that when he defined these 'modern times' as being the ten preceding years, his action did not *seriously* weaken the policy of the bishops. Just imagine how one would feel today if the Inland Revenue were to go back *as much as* ten years in reclaiming its dues after successfully establishing a case for terminating an existing practice. Yet a few observations of this kind fade into insignificance in comparison with the fairness and soundness of innumerable assessments made by the author in the course of an attractive, welcome and very full book.

DAVID LUSCOMBE

THE NAZI PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCHES, by J. S. Conway. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson*, London, 1968. 474 pp. 65s.

The story of the Nazi persecution of the Christian churches has now been told so many times—though not very frequently in the English language, as Professor Conway points out—that prospective readers of this book may like to know what fresh emphasis it contains. The fresh emphasis springs from a realization, which is growing amongst historians of the Third Reich in general, that the Nazi hierarchy was by no means so united in its policies as its public declarations would lead us to imagine. Such dissensions within governments often prove fascinating to the historian for the clash of principle and need to compromise which they reveal; in the case of the Nazis their differences about policy in the East or in France, or about the use of the air force, have not, however, proved specially fascinating; because none of the hierarchy had anything that might be called principles and so had no idea of compromise—in-fighting was the only method they understood.

Professor Conway's study, therefore, suffers from this fact: it is rather dull, not only because he writes in the flat manner induced by the Ph.D., but also because the people he describes, Kerrl, Müller, Bormann and company, are so primitive in their thinking. But he does show how Kerrl's career in the Church Ministry was a dramatic demonstration of the empiricism, indecision and lack of understanding which formed the basis of the Nazis' official

Church policy in the first years of the Thousand-Year Reich. He also brings to light one or two lesser figures, such as Dr Wilhelm Stuckart, and provides *Biographical Notes* about them which are often very interesting for what they reveal of their careers since 1945. Stuckart, for instance, was an ambitious young *Staatssekretär* who tried to ingratiate himself with Hitler by drawing up a plan for settling the Church question; through devious paths he became a Lieutenant-General in 1944, was tried at Nuremberg in 1946, was elected in 1951 as vice-chairman of the Provincial League of Dispossessed Persons Party, in Hildersheim, and died in a car accident in 1953. Stuckart must be typical of many of the Nazi officials just below the first rank.

However, the Nazis are, like sin, ultimately boring; and just as sin is only worth studying in the light of the virtue it tries to destroy, it is their opponents' attempts to preserve virtue which gives significance to the Nazis. Its handling of the Christians is the crucial test of Professor Conway's book and here, it must be said, he is disappointing. Certainly his work is thorough and painstaking and he has worked very conscientiously through the literature, but the reader never feels drawn into the drama and dilemma of the Christians which provoked the literature.

Perhaps there have already been too many books about the Christians and the Nazis of

this size and what we now need is some far bigger work both on the physical and on the moral scale. In this case the two are not unconnected because so much human conflict and anguish was concentrated into the twelve years of Nazi rule that a huge canvas is necessary in order to do justice to any of it. For instance, Professor Conway devotes some six lines to the Protestant Pastor, Paul Schneider (p. 209) which are perfectly correct but convey no impression of the man's tremendous heroism—how could one in six lines? And the same is true of virtually every incident in the book. For example, in the weeks before Munich the Confessing Church leaders, with Hans Asmussen to the fore, drew up an extraordinarily courageous service of intercession in case of war which was really a great act of self-accusation on the part of the German people: how such a service might produce a conflict of loyalties is illustrated in the person of Otto Dibelius, whose son was in the army and who did not feel he could ask his son to go into action with such a tempered blessing, however much he might sympathize with Asmussen's intentions. I have no doubt that Professor Conway knows

all this but the restricted space he allows himself does not give him chance to show it.

As far as the Catholics go, Professor Conway is much more just than such writers as Lewy and Amery, but in their case also it is very restricted justice that he is able to offer. In many ways the critical period for the Catholic hierarchy was in the first half of 1933; and the critical point for the historian to elucidate is how it came about that Cardinal Bertram took the attitude he did, why Bishop von Preysing took such a very different attitude, and then to explain how Bertram's policy came to prevail. Of all this there is no hint in Professor Conway's pages. And at every other critical point in the story I find myself wanting to expand what Professor Conway has to say, because if one is going to say anything at all decisive it must be at much greater length than this. Let the historians of Christianity in Nazi Germany learn from a medievalist who really knows what writing history is all about: let them study David Knowles's *The Episcopal Colleagues of Thomas Becket*.

DONALD NICHOLL

THE FLYING SAUCER VISION, by John Michell. *Sidgwick & Jackson, 1967. 25s.*

'There are more things in heaven and earth . . .' and especially at a time when 'archetypal forces and fantasies are released anew to inspire and delude' (*New Blackfriars*, August 1968, Comment). One of the most important of current archetypal fantasies (if such they are, which is perhaps doubtful) is flying saucers, about which, as Jung pointed out, there has grown up quite a considerable folklore, which in many points closely resembles the beliefs and stories of primitive myth. This is where John Michell comes in. He demonstrates many connexions between dragons and flying saucers, ancient and modern visitors from space, or earthmen captured into space. About these parallels there can be no doubt. But what is their significance?

John Michell maintains that the old myths are to be taken quite seriously as an account of the origin of our civilization: millennia ago, the 'gods' did actually descend to earth from space, in flying discs, and for a whole they lived with men, initiating them into some of their own wisdom and learning. But the basic culture of men was morally unable to keep up with the technology of the 'gods', who therefore found themselves bound to leave the earth.

After their departure, the culture they founded gradually decayed, and is now coming to its end. And the 'gods' are going to return, to initiate the next stage in our growth; the flying saucers are to prepare us. When they come, all our conceptions will be shattered.

This sounds, and of course is, fantastic, which is not necessarily to say that it is false. Be that as it may, this is the sort of way in which many, many people, especially among the young, are thinking. The belief 'that our salvation is from 'on high' seems to be very widespread, and is preached even by evolutionists, as well as hippies (call them what you will), astrologers (remember that astrology is probably more widely practised today than ever before, albeit in a somewhat degenerate form), and esoteric societies nice and nasty (scientology, in at least one of its forms, included), and of course, Jung, and C. S. Lewis in his space trilogy (the obvious parallels between him and John Michell are all the more significant for the fact that Michell has not read Lewis). Likewise, there is a widespread 'eschatological' expectation, especially though far from exclusively among young people. A cartoon on the back of one number of *Oz* shows Christ stepping out