is commendable. One understands more readily how Trent developed its rigorism when Dr. Nugent indicates how similar intractable and triumphalist views were spawned at Poissy. It is probable that with the spectre of Philip II's Spanish Catholic power in the background, any accommodation made for the Reformers at Poissy would only have been made at the price of further schism. The "Hispanicization of Roman Catholicism" was clearly recognizable at Poissy, and as the days went by the irenicists lost any hope that the synod might transcend itself and become an exercise in ecumenism. From this time there disappears the anxiety of earlier churchmen over the fate of Christendom and their contribution to the sin of schism. Poissy, as Dr. Nugent so cogently and expertly argues, was a "kind of watershed" in sixteenth-century religious history. From this time the papacy decided to support the ideology of the Counter-Reformation, and the age of religious wars was inevitable.

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A. G. Dickens. *The German Nation and Martin Luther*. London: Edward Arnold, 1974. Pp. vii, 254. £3.75.

Since completing his magisterial study of the English Reformation in 1964, A. G. Dickens has increasingly devoted his attention to the continental Reformation. This shift in focus has already yielded two attractive volumes in the "Library of European Civilization" series as well as a brief biography of Martin Luther—the latter a competent but highly conventional treatment of the subject. In *The German Nation and Martin Luther*, however, Dickens has produced an original and provocative study of the German Reformation that deserves to be taken as seriously as the author's work on England.

This is neither another biography of Luther nor a survey of German history in the early sixteenth century. Instead, the author's purpose is to distil and interpret the fruits of recent work in some of the most active areas of German Reformation research. The first four chapters bring us up to date on the ever-vexed problem of the intellectual and theological "influences" on Luther's thought. Two chapters are devoted to the relationship among Luther, Lutheran pamphleteers and the printing profession in sixteenth-century Germany. And another three chapters deal with the urban Reformation, a field which has been enriched in recent years by the questions and techniques of social history.

The material which Dickens presents is based entirely on secondary sources, a fact which the author confesses with almost zealous candour, but this book is more than a mere survey of current research. In fact the author has chosen his three topics as vehicles for exploring a single theme: the relationship between Martin Luther and the German people. In examining the various "influences" on Luther's thought, for example, the author really wants to know what there was about Luther's ideas that made them so palatable to sixteenth-century Germans. In this context, one can understand why German nationalism looms so large in Dickens's analysis—and why certain theological forerunners, notably Occam and Biel, are so sharply deemphasized. The *via moderna*, Dickens tells us, was "hardly capable of forming a platform for mass-action." Thus, when Luther began to "speak directly to the masses" he tended "to select issues which they could understand and to simplify those issues by literary techniques amounting to an inspired journalism" (p. 83). From this premise the

author's progression to the topic of Lutheran pamphleteering is obvious, as is his concern with the reception of Lutheranism in the cities.

Martin Luther, in Dickens's view, was a genius who captured the mood of the German people and gave it vigorous expression. But what the people heard and how they reacted had little to do with the detailed structure of Luther's thought. "By 1517," Dickens argues, "the German masses had their faces averted from Rome and were ready to march . . . their willingness to march did not depend on the theological niceties of leaders" (p. 225). Any truly inspiring religious leader might have led the movement away from Rome; Luther just happened to fit the bill.

It is scarcely surprising, then, that Dickens now flatly rejects biography as a valid technique for interpreting the German Reformation. In fact, not only are the "cloudy speculations of modern psychologists" about Luther's personal development unconvincing (pp. 56, 209), but they are also unnecessary. For Luther was not the Great Man that Erik Erikson—or, for that matter, Roland Bainton—assumed him to be; instead, he was merely an instrument of the German national will.

Indeed, Dickens seems to suggest that Luther at one point failed the German people even in this particular role. For Luther's stubbornness at the Marburg Colloquy "prevented the German Reformation from becoming a Germanic Reformation" (p. 74). Readers who recall the author's devotion to the doctrine of *adiaphora* will not be surprised to detect the note of bitterness that creeps into his description of Marburg, where Luther "suffered the two Reformations, which could agree on fourteen articles of faith, to split asunder and drift into enmity over this fifteenth article of the eucharist" (pp. 74-75).

This book, then, is scarcely dispassionate. Nor is it complete: there is, for example, no chapter on the Peasants' War. Specialists may find much to criticize or question. But the *loyen* of English Reformation historians will surely remain unfazed. What we need, he argues, is not only detailed studies but also imaginative attempts to synthesize the results of existing research. "This work of synthesis," Dickens tells us, "remains no practicable task for purists, pedants, individualists who will trust no other man's deductions from the original sources. It can afford to disdain the timidity or the spiritual pride which has made some scholars consecrate a lifetime to a couple of articles. In short, synthesis must involve writing books which form challenges to write better ones . . ." (p. 210). Some day the challenge will be met; but in the meantime, *The German Nation and Martin Luther* will remain the freshest English-language discussion both of German Reformation research and of the German Reformation itself.

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Steven E. Ozment. *Mysticism and Dissent. Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973. Pp. xiv, 270. \$10.

The importance of late mediaeval mysticism in the Tauler and Eckhart tradition for sixteenth-century radical dissent has long been recognized. For his examination of a particular dimension of this influence, Ozment consecrates a chapter to each of six persons—the in-