One way out of this impasse may be to search for the external conditions that produced and shaped German Anabaptism. There is, first of all, the question of popular religious movements before Anabaptism. Zeman gives the customary, cavalier dismissal to the hypotheses of Ludwig Keller and Albrecht Ritschl, who tried to connect Anabaptism with previous sectarian movements, but he cites approvingly the theories of Amadeo Molnar, which point in the same direction. Molnar links the reform movements of the Middle Ages ("the First Reformation") with those of the Reformation era ("the Second Reformation"). The Anabaptists fall into the former category, a classification which Zeman disputes, though he is sympathetic with Molnar's schema as a whole. No one would not study English Methodism, French Jansenism, the Spanish *allumbrados*, or the medieval poverty movement as though such movements had no historical antecedents. Why Anabaptism should continue to be an historical orphan, without parents and without causes, is difficult to say.

A second line of approach is the study of South German society during the 15th and early 16th centuries with an eye to the social forces which spawned Anabaptism as a movement, what Zeman lumps together under the rubric "non-theological factors." (p. 48) The modern literature on the economies and societies of South Germany during this era is growing very rapidly, and it should prove indispensable for students of the German Reformation when and if Reformation studies move back to the study of history rather than historical theology alone. What sort of society was it that produced significant numbers of masterless men, who repudiated all established institutions, and who pitted the Bible and the inner light against the loyalties and customs of their fellows? It is not usual for men to cast off their previous lives and to risk poverty, exile, and death for the sake of some new message. Zeman seems dimly aware of the need to know something about the societies in which these men lived. He notes, though without comment, that non-Roman ecclesiastical life in South Moravia apparently rested in the hands of an alliance between gentry and clergy – an extremely common phenomenon in reform movements in less advanced areas of Europe. If Zeman had set his tantalizing topographical survey into a context of Moravian society and history, his readers might have been able to judge the relative historical significance of Moravian Anabaptism. Zeman fills many pages with chains of personal contacts and literary influences; but there was certainly more to Moravian Anabaptism, just as there was more to the Unity, than the personal connections and the ideas of a few preachers and writers.

Zeman's book reflects the successes and failures of the finely tilled garden of Anabaptist studies. New sources may be uncovered, and we are likely to have new and more refined studies of the theologies of individuals. What we are unlikely to get is an answer to one of the most serious historical questions about Anabaptism, namely, why there should have been an Anabaptist movement at all.

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Carl S. Meyer, ed. *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* (Volume II). Saint Louis: The Foundation for Reformation Research, 1971. Pp. viii, 118. \$3.50.

This second volume of *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* consists of essays originally read to the second annual Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in Saint Louis, 30 and

31 October 1970. There are six essays: on Erasmus, by John B. Payne; on Calvinist psalmody by W. Stanford Reid; on Pierre Viret, by Robert D. Linder; on liturgical reform among the Irenicists, by John P. Dolan; on Marpeck and Butzer, by Donald J. Ziegler; and on Cranmer, by John P. Forman. Copies may be ordered from The Foundation for Reformation Research, 6477 San Bonita Avenue, Saint Louis, Missouri 63105.

R. W. VAN FOSSEN, *University of Toronto*

J. W. Lever. *The Tragedy of State*. London: Methuen, 1971. Pp. ix, 100. \$7.95 cloth; \$3.65 paper.

In this series of lectures Professor Level considers a number of Jacobean tragedies for their concern with the "phenomenon of state." Arguing for the "relevance" of the plays to the political realities of the early seventeenth century, he dismisses as outmoded the concepts of providential order that comprise a supposed Elizabethan World Order. The old formulas were inadequate to account for what thinkers of independent mind viewed as the patternless flux of human affairs or to justify tyrannies dedicated to power for its own sake, fostered by the decadence of the old nobility, and maintained by policy. The preoccupation of Jacobean dramatists with the corruption of the political order deeply affected their expression of the tragic forms they had inherited.

Lever distinguishes three principal versions of the tragedy of state. Into the Kydian revenge play the Jacobean brings a new level of intellectual speculation, strengthened by both satire and aphoristic moralizing, that emphasizes the evil of statism and the debasement of human values under corrupt rule. The heroic play, which has its Elizabethan model in Marlowe's treatment of aspiring supermen, sets its heroes against the unconquerable machinations of policy rather than against the limits of mortality. The Roman play, like its antecedent, the English history play, deals directly with politics, but it replaces the earlier faith in providence by a pessimistic sense of the incurable depravity of power. These relatively distinct forms merge towards the end of the Jacobean period in Webster's great tragedies. *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* have their most obvious affinities with the revenge play; but the first conveys a Jonsonian sense of corruption as "a universal phenomenon, the ambience of an entire civilization," and the second presents a Chapman-like focus upon the heroic struggle of the individual.

Lever's approach yields generally satisfying accounts of the plays he discusses. One feels that there is in much tragic writing after 1600 a narrowing of compass, a reduction in the scope which imagination conceives as the context of tragic experience. Heroism is mocked - tragically mocked - by the dispiriting persuasion that man's desire for heroic assertion is opposed by forces that are petty as well as invincible. Lever's direction is altogether right when he speaks of Jacobean tragedy as "a drama of adversity and stance, not of character and destiny."

By insisting upon the innovations of the Jacobean the author, as he points out, goes against the tendency in recent scholarship to stress the continuity of English Renaissance drama. Lever's forensic strategy in urging his position by no means leads to general excess,