PREFACE

In the present age of ecumenical rapprochement, both Protestant and Roman Catholic historians are exploring anew the reasons for the sixteenth-century Reformation. It is clear that we must become much more familiar with the late medieval theological situation out of which the Reformation grew if our explorations are to be truly fruitful.

This investigation of Geiler of Keisersberg was undertaken to provide one more of the many studies necessary to fill out our knowledge of theology in the period just prior to the outbreak of the Reformation. It is the great advantage of any contemporary writer to be freed from the polemical atmosphere in which so many previous students of Geiler felt obliged to defend his "catholicism" or his "protestantism," defining those categories largely in post-Trentine terms. I have tried rather to place Geiler within the wide spectrum of theological positions current in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

I am indebted to many for assistance in carrying through this research project. It was Prof. Heiko A. Oberman of the Harvard Divinity School who introduced me to the world of fifteenth-century theology, encouraged me to pursue my interest in a study of Geiler, and offered frank and helpful criticism as I prepared the dissertation from which this book has grown. His wife, Mrs. Geertruida Oberman-Reesink, taught me many of the non-academic skills so necessary to finishing a book while also meeting the responsibilities of a family and teaching.

The School of Theology at Claremont has been generous with research and publication assistance. Mr. James Goulding, doctoral candidate in Church History at the Claremont Graduate School, has patiently assisted in reading proof and has prepared the index.

Most of the works of Geiler were available to me at the Houghton Library for rare books at Harvard University. The Harvard Divinity School Library was unusually helpful in obtaining needed sources. Other libraries which must be especially mentioned for their assistance are the Widener Library at Harvard University, the libraries of the School of Theology at Claremont, Yale University, Princeton University, Princeton Theological Seminary, Alma College at Los Gatos, California. Research in Strasbourg was greatly facilitated by
the interest and helpfulness of the staffs of the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, the Archives Municipales de la Ville de Strasbourg, and the Séminaire Protestant.

Above all I am indebted to my husband for his continual encouragement and the genuinely warm welcome which he has given to Geiler during his sojourn in our household, despite the inconveniences which such a demanding guest can create. We hope that one day our young son will be amused by our tales of his own involvement in the completion of this study.

May, 1966
Claremont, California

E. JANE DEMPESEY DOUGLASS

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since the original publication of this study in 1966, our knowledge of late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Strasbourg has been vastly enriched. The work of F. Rapp¹, Miriam Chrisman², Thomas Brady³, and Lorna Jane Abray⁴ should be especially noted.

But despite this impressive resurgence of interest in early modern Strasbourg, little has been published which focuses directly on the aspects of the thought of John Geiler of Keisersberg treated in this study⁵, demanding revision of the view of Geiler presented here. Therefore this book is simply being reprinted. I should like to call the reader's attention, however, to three especially relevant recent publications.

⁵ A doctoral dissertation by Georges J. Herzog, Mystical Theology in Late Medieval Preaching: Johann Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445-1510) (Boston University, 1985), announces a topic barely touched in this study. Unfortunately the dissertation has not yet been released for circulation through University Microfilms International.