

Gunther, Karl. *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525–1590* (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014; Adobe ebook; pp. 293; R.R.P. US\$79.00; ISBN 9781316057285; hardback; £65.00; ISBN 9781107074484.

In *Reformation Unbound*, Karl Gunther provides an important revision of the current historiographical opinion on reform in Reformation England. Gunther's expertly argued thesis rests on the observation that English evangelicals 'were envisioning the reformation in ways that were far more radical than we have hitherto recognized', and that they 'had been part of the English Reformation' from its beginning (p. 9).

Chapter 1 provides a re-evaluation of the intellectual landscape of early English Protestantism, and argues that calls for ecclesiastical reform were not an Elizabethan phenomenon, but were 'being openly canvassed at its very start' (p. 10). Chapter 2 reveals the inherent conflict between peace and reform: few evangelicals shared Henry VIII's belief that the establishment of a national Church would 'bring an end to religious strife' (p. 11). Many reformers believed that living according to Christ's teaching would cause 'permanent strife between the followers of Christ and the children of Satan' (p. 11).

Chapter 3 focuses on the anti-Nicodemite sentiment that flourished among Marian Protestants, and argues that anti-Nicodemism did not disappear with Elizabeth's accession, but continued to be debated well into the 1590s. Chapter 4 analyses the continuance of 'resistance theory' after Elizabeth's succession. Gunther argues that the accession of a Protestant monarch did not 'lead to the abandonment of the more expansive conception of religious authority and godly activism that had taken hold during Mary's reign' (p. 133). Instead, Marian persecution had convinced reformers that their work 'must proceed, with or without the monarch's assistance' (p. 157).

Chapter 5 re-evaluates the Troubles at Frankfurt. Gunther argues that the dispute over the Book of Common Prayer in 1554–55 actually demonstrates a concern to commit 'returning exiles to purge the Elizabethan Church of the "remnants of popery"' (p. 160). In Chapter 6, Gunther argues that the vestments controversy of 1565–66 was not merely a dispute between Protestants, but that 'Catholics were aggressive and crucially important participants' (p. 13) in the debate. [page 269]

In Chapter 7, Gunther demonstrates that Puritan beliefs were not unprecedented, but actually based on similar opinions found in rediscovered works of leading figures of the Henrician Reformation. Puritans could thus argue that they 'were the true heirs of the English Protestant tradition, and that it was the conformists ... who had departed from the original reforming spirit' (p. 14).

Reformation Unbound is an engagingly written and well-referenced reevaluation of the Protestant visions of reform in the sixteenth century, and is an invaluable reference work.