

WILLIAM PERKINS' LEGACY HIGH AND LOW: FROM TEACHING THE COMMONER TO MASSIVELY INFLUENCING THE GRANDS OF THE DAY

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ABSTRACT. This paper is a survey on the extent of William Perkins's teaching and influence both from the pulpit and through his books in England and beyond, starting from his work in Cambridge to remote places such as the Massachusetts colony or territories in Transylvania. Living and working under the reign of Elizabeth I and the flourishing Protestantism, we will see him as the instructor of the believers rather than the leading voice of the renowned academic communities of his day, although his influence on Cambridge theologians was not without important echoes. Perkins insisted that his students as well as his flock be chiefly preoccupied with godliness, the Kingdom of God, and the salvation of others, all traits of which he proved to be a living example. And as with all examples, Perkins' influence will here be pursued in relation to his both direct and indirect repercussions on famous English Reformers in order to grasp the weight of his work in his own age and hopefully ours.

KEY WORDS: Perkins, preaching, influence, Protestantism, Puritan

Introduction

William Perkins lived and worked in England under the reign of Elizabeth I in a time when the Church of England was fully experiencing the transition to Protestantism. In this troubled period, Perkins deliberately avoided any involvement in political and ecclesiastical movements, believing that true Reformation stems from the instruction of believers and especially of ministers. A fellow at Cambridge, renowned lecturer at St. Andrew's Church, "soul surgeon" and prolific author, Perkins has exerted a massive influence, most often neglecting the academic community. Patterson states in the chapter on Perkins' legacy:

Perkins's impact as a teacher, lecturer, preacher, scholar and popular religious writer is abundantly clear in the careers of a sizable number of theologians, writers, members of influential families, and church leaders in the early Stuart period. Some of them were students or colleagues of him; many others knew his

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ideas chiefly through reading his books. Perkins did not lead a movement in his life time, not did he instigate a movement in the decades that followed. He was a remarkably private person, but he was a t a centre of a cultural change that resulted in new and generally accepted standards of religious faith and practice. (Patterson 2014: 197)

This article's purpose is to present Perkins' manifold influence, thus contributing to an increase in interest and appreciation towards William Perkins' works and activity.

1. The Dimensions of Perkins' work and preaching within Puritanism

Perkins' influence stretched beyond England's borders. In Switzerland, Perkins' writings went past fifty editions, in Germany almost sixty, and more than a hundred editions in the Netherlands. Perkins' influence extended towards the East, in Europe. Talking about Perkins and Ames, MacCulloch states that "their influence was felt farther away, in Transylvania, where Perkins' and Ames' writings were enthusiastically studied" (MacCulloch 2004: 380). Perkins' influence was felt beyond the Atlantic. For instance, Miller and Jones state that "his works were read not only in mainland Protestant countries, but also in the New England" (Miller and Johnson 1938: 771).

John Chandos, in a note on the Puritans, states that there have truly been some ignorant and uneducated bigots amongst them, who were nonetheless eager to express their opinion. Yet this had been a phenomenon which characterized extremist left-wing Puritanism. Nevertheless, from centre to right-wing, there have been Puritans who have got an academic education of highest standards. One of the latter is William Perkins, "scholar from Cambridge, destined to exert massive influence on the thinking of the Massachusetts Colony and other puritan colonies in America" (Chandos 1971: 129).

Perkins' preaching was also immensely influential. His influence as a preacher began with his moniker as "prisoners' chaplain" (Fuller 1841: 80), received in during his work as preacher for the imprisoned. His popularity and influence stretched beyond prison walls to such an extent that citizens would come and take part in the prison's religious service only to listen to Perkins preach, or in Fuller's words, they would come to feed out of "the prisoners' basket" (Fuller 1841: 80). Perkins' preaching is described as amazingly effective leaving behind long-lasting proof in the lives of the young who benefitted from his work in those memorable days (Burgess 1921: 48, 59). In his account about his years spent as a pastor in Norwich, Burgess mentions the fact that one of the reasons Robinson accepted this position was the possibility of collaborating with Thomas Newhouse, who was educated at Cambridge and "profoundly influenced by Perkins'

teachings". Ziff, referring to the time John Cotton spent at Cambridge, states that young Cotton "had the chance to listen to the greatest men of the pulpit from the Church of England, Lancelot Andrewes and William Perkins" (Ziff 1962: 18).

Haller notes that the influence of Perkins' preaching was far-reaching, and that he is responsible for a new chapter in the history of preaching in England. He engendered a period of dynamic preaching which led to "stream of spiritual preachers" (Haller 1938: 65). In a different writing, he states that at the turn of the century, William Perkins as a fellow at Christ's College and lecturer at St. Andrew's Church "exercised a profound personal influence on the men who were to fill up the ranks of spiritual brotherhood and make the power of the pulpit feared by reactionary rulers" (Haller 1938: 91).

Perkins left his mark on the university, even though he had only been involved with Christ's College for a relatively short period of time. Perkins' reputation as a fellow at Cambridge had no rival—few students chose not to benefit from his advice in one way or another (Leslie and Sydney 1896: 893). As fellow and tutor of students who had come to Christ's College in Cambridge to prepare for ministry, Perkins was extremely loved and valued. The impact Perkins had on his students he instructed for ministry was invaluable.

His influence at Cambridge did not only affect his students but also the school. His interest in developing servants influenced Christ's College. Eusden notes that Perkins inspired and motivated the school to make changes for a better instruction of students, "significantly contributing to the school's renewal of interest for the practical aspects of pastoral work" (Eusden 1958: 11).

John Cotton considered that Perkins' influence at Cambridge was evident due to the number and quality of the preachers formed there in comparison to Oxford. Mather, in his classical work *Magnalia Christi Americana*, recounts how John Cotton congratulated Samuel Mather on his studies by adding that "one of the main reasons so many excellent preachers had come from Cambridge and not Oxford was Perkins' work at that university" (Mather 1820: II 41).

Perkins' impact on the manner of preaching and theological thinking has been acknowledged by famous servants, through whom Perkins' influence expanded farther than he could have ever imagined. Samuel Ward is one of the many whose life has been influenced by Perkins. Ward was Perkins' student at Christ's College, and his journal indicates that the major moral, spiritual, and physical changes in his life were due to Perkins' advice, personal guidance, and academic instruction. Perkins made financial support for Ward possible, and assured him that his pronunciation issues

would not impede his ordination as servant. To sum up, Ward considered one the greatest divine blessings the fact that God “chose me from all my brethren to come here at Cambridge during Perkins’ tenure” (Knappen 1933: 119). A comment by Ward in his journal dated 22nd of October 1602 clearly indicates that in his opinion, Perkins’ influence was not limited only to the intellectual and religious life in Cambridge, but extended throughout England. Here are Ward’s words:

Consider the great blow given unto the gospell of Christ by the death of Mr. Perkins, who by his doctrine and life did much good to the youth of the university, of whome he was had in great reverence, and who likewise did exceeding much good by his advice and direction to many Ministers in the Country, who did resort unto him from everywhere. (Knappen 1933: 130)

William Ames, Puritan servant, theologian, and iconic writer described as “the main intellectual architect of the theology of covenant and the morphology of instruction” exerted “a profound and long-lasting influence on the puritans arrived in America, especially on Thomas Hooker” (Heimert and Delbanco 1985: 59). Ames also acknowledges Perkins’ role and influence on his life and ministry (Pastoor and Johnson 2007: 28-29). Perkins’ student and later his friend, he experienced conversion during one of Perkins’ sermons, whose ideas and examples left indelible marks on Ames’ ministry (Sprunger 1972: 11-13). Regarding Perkins’ preaching, Ames noted the following:

I gladly call to minde the time, when being young, I heard, worthy Master Perkins, so preach in a great Assembly of Students, that he instructed them so soundly in the truth, stirred them up effectually to seek after godlinesse, made them fit for the kingdom of God; and by his own example shewed them, what things they should chiefly intend, that they might promote true religion, in the power of it, unto God’s glory and others salvation. (Ames 1639: A3)

It is noteworthy that these are the first words of his books. Practically, they are a tribute to William Perkins.

Thomas Goodwin, servant and Puritan theologian, enrolled in Christ’s College in 1613, is another witness of Perkins’ massive influence (McGiffert in Bemer and Webster 2006: 108). The second volume of Goodwin’s works contains two biographies. The first one is written by Robert Halley, and the second one by Goodwin’s son. Not only did he live his life by his side, but also had access to his notes, letters, and accounts of his father. Therefore, this biography also includes Goodwin’s words which relate his positive spiritual and academic experience at Cambridge:

... since I came to that College, had quickened and heightened my devotion was that there remained still in the College six Fellows that were great tutors, who professed religion after the strictest sort called Puritans. Besides, the town was then filled with the discourse of the power of Mr Perkins ministry, still fresh in most men`s memories. (Goodwin 1861: lviii)

John Cotton, Puritan theologian and preacher, had an impressive activity both in England and in New England. He was recognized in his times as a leader of the Puritan movement. John Cotton's life and impressive activity is due to Perkins' direct and indirect influence. Ziff considered that once at Cambridge for his studies, Cotton learned two extracurricular lessons that would shape him more than any other academic text (Ziff 1962: 14). Both lessons involved Perkins. The first pertains to politics. Cotton learned that ecclesiastical discussions are not black and white, and that there needs to be temperance even when expressing doctrines, a lesson to which Perkins contributed:

Even the man whom Cambridge recognized as her greatest theologian and who was considered, by his enemies as well as his admirers, the England's most influential religious thinker, a man whose works ranked next after Calvin's in the annals of the English Reformation, even this man, fellow of Christ's, learned public compromise. After being reprimanded in 1587 for his too vehement lecturing against kneeling at the sacrament and facing east, he had worded his Puritan message more carefully and gone on to become Cambridge's great preacher. (Ziff 1962: 16)

The second extracurricular lesson was religious and theological in nature. Cotton came to Cambridge with doubts related to man's relationship with God. Preaching in Derbyshire was severely restricted under the rule of Bishop Overton, leaving preachers without their most important "assault weapon of man's spiritual condition":

But at Cambridge, young Cotton was not only exposed to a superabundance of preaching but was able to hear the greatest pulpit men the Church of England had developed, Lancelot Andrews and William Perkins. The Preaching of William Perkins especially disturbed the adolescent Cotton, for the fellow of Christ's, through instilling in him a deep discontent with his spiritual condition, demanded so arduous a response that the undergraduate felt powerless to act. (Ziff 1962: 18)

Perkins' preaching was so powerful and convincing that Cotton decided to avoid the places Perkins was preaching in so that he could avoid the inner turmoil caused by Perkins' sermons. When Perkins died, Cotton sighed with relief—his joy became infamous when the bells tolled announcing Perkins'

funeral (Norton 1658: 12). But Perkins' preaching had not been in vain. Ziff describes metaphorically the unravelling of events: "even if the great theologian was not present at the time of harvest, he had successfully harrowed young John Cotton's soul and prepared him for the gentle planting by Richard Sibbes" (Ziff 1962: 19).

Another servant who benefitted from Perkins' influence was William Bedell. Educated at Emmanuel by Chaderton, period in which Perkins was active in Christ's College, Bedell became one of Perkins' close friends. Bedell's son, regarding his father's relationship with Chaderton and Perkins, writes:

During his abode at Cambridge he had gained the repute of an eminent scholar and a very grave and pious man. Much esteemed he was by Dr Chaderton, then master of the college, and by famous Mr William Perkins, tho' both fathers in comparison of him. The latter took a very great affection to him, and judg'd him worthy of his more acquaintance: and in answer hereof Mr Bedell likewise bare a filial respect to him, communicating his studies and submitting them to his approbation and direction. (Bedell 1902: 4)

When Perkins died, William Bedell bought the library of his mentor. What followed was a period in which he was a pastor at Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk, where his pastoral ministry was an echo of Perkins'.

Richard Baxter, theologian writer and prominent Puritan pastor, influenced the political, pastoral, and theological trajectory of English Puritanism in the seventeenth century through his strong personality and writings (Spurr in Bemer and Webster 2006: 19). Baxter mentioned that his conversion and spiritual formation was also due to William Perkins. In his autobiography, Baxter mentions that the first contact he had with Perkins' writings has been facilitated by his family's servant, who owned some of Perkins' writings (Baxter 1696: 4). Baxter recounts the period of his conversion and spiritual growth. When he was fifteen years old, his interaction with *The Bruised Reed* written by Richard Sibbs contributed to his discovery of God's love and Christ's redemption. Then, "Perkins' works—*On Repentance, Living and Dying Well* and *On the Government of the Tongue*—have seriously contributed to his instruction and growth" (Baxter 1830: 5). Another way in which Baxter acknowledges Perkins' influence and eulogizes him is in the introduction of his work, *The Christian Directory*. When writing about one of the aims of his work, he states:

That the younger and more unfurnished and unexperienced sort of ministers, might have a promptuary at hand for practical resolutions and directions on the subject that they have need to deal in. And though Sayrus and Fragozo have done well, I would not have us under a necessity, of going to the Romanists for

our ordinary supplies. Long have our divines been wishing for some fuller casuistical tractate. Perkins began well... (Baxter 1825: viii)

In his section of Christian Ethics, when discussing zeal and diligence, Baxter states:

As a speedy traveller goeth farther in a day, than a slothful one in many: so a zealous, diligent Christian will do more for God and his soul in a little time, than a negligent dullard in all his life. It is a wonder to think what Augustine and Chrysostom did among ancients! What Calvin, and Perkins, and Whitaker, and Reignolds, and Chamier, and other reformed Divines have done in a very little time! (Baxter 1825: 606)

John Robinson, “known best as the pastor of puritans who immigrated to America” (Pastoor and Johnson 2007: 271-72). Robinson led the Church of English immigrants in Leiden, the Netherlands. Due to various reasons, in 1619 he decided to move to America. On the date of departure, 16th of September 1620, Robinson preached a farewell message to those preparing for the long and dangerous journey. He read Ezra 8:21 and encouraged his community to bring the Reformation further than its beginnings with Luther and Calvin. Robinson died before reuniting with those who eventually crossed the Atlantic. He has also benefitted from Perkins’ positive influence on his life and activity.

But the man by whom Robinson was most profoundly influenced was William Perkins, a Warwickshire man, educated at Christ’s College and appointed lecturer in the church of Great St. Andrews. His preaching was marvelously effective, and left a permanent mark upon the life of many a young man who attended on his ministry during the impressionable days at college... Robinson was deeply indebted to Perkins for the general structure of his scheme of religious thought and his interpretation of Christianity. (Burgess 1920: 48, 59)

In his account on the years spent as a pastor in Norwich, Burgess mentions that one the reasons Robinson accepted this position was the possibility of collaborating with Thomas Newhouse, who was educated at Cambridge and “profoundly influenced by Perkins’ teachings”.

Therefore, Perkins’ immense influence on an impressive number of servants and future generations by proxy cannot be disproved or quantified, in areas that far surpass what he had originally intended. In Schaefer’s words, “an entire generation of preachers was indeed shaped by Perkins, not only through this small tract on hermeneutics and homiletics, but also through his own deep piety mixed with his exacting and penetrating preaching” (Schaefer 2004: 41).

2. Perkins' Influence on High-ranking Individuals in and outside the Church of England

Breward mentions that Perkins had connections with high-ranking individuals and renowned men in the Church of England, such as Bishop James Montague (Breward 1970: 117). Montague worked at Christ's College, delivered the sermon at Perkins' funeral and was one of the executors of Perkins' will. Robert Abbot, deeply connected to Oxford, was the one who defended Perkins' work, *A Reformed Catholike*, from Roman-Catholic attacks and praised Perkins for "the pain and sufferings endured for the advancement and edification of the Church" (Leslie and Sydney 1896: 893).

Just as he desired, Perkins influenced not only theologians and servants, but also common folk, businessmen, magistrates, governors, and entire families. David Hall, in his anthology *Puritans in the New World*, includes a chapter with the testimonies of secular people, "men and women, who were unknown for the most part until recently", testimonies that indicate the influence of Puritan preaching on the colonial life in New England (Hall 2004: 119-34). The testimony which is most relevant within the scope of this paper is that of a mariner named John Trumbull, who arrived in America in the mid 1630s. Here are a few of the words that describe the life of this man, and Perkins' impact through one of his writings:

I lived in sin without contradiction in a town without means, not only abusing God but his people. I used to take God's name to grieve the spirits of the people of God, though I knew them not... And so I saw the evil of the sin, that it should separate me from his glory as the creature could not desire God again. So I resolved no more to sin, but then many friends set themselves against me that I would go mad as other ministers with study. And after this I came to acquaint with saints and had many temptations to lay down all again... And being in a stand and being fair weather, I was loath to go to prayer where others were at. But walking on the deck took a book *To Live Well and to Die Well* which affected me. (Hall 2004: 122)

Nehemia Wallington was a "Puritan Londoner who lived between 1598 and 1658 without leaving a visible mark during his lifetime", yet was an exceptional puritan (Seaver 1985: 1). With a troubled spiritual past, including depression and a few suicide attempts, owner of a library that contained at least two hundred titles, he worked as a woodworker and managing his own business (Seaver 2006: 262-63). Since his mental issues and suicide attempts were caused by doubts referring to his salvation, it is no wonder that as an avid reader, Wallington was deeply influenced by Perkins' work, *A Treatise unto a Declaration Wheter a Man be in the Estate of*

Damnation or Salvation (Eales 1996: 61). Wallington was passionate about writing. It is difficult to estimate exactly how much he had written, but some estimate about 50 notebooks, *i.e.*, about 3200 pages (Wallington 2007: IX). The relevant aspect for this research is that he mentions and quotes Perkins in his writings (Seaver 1985: 5). Perkins' influence also affected the manner in which Wallington thought and managed his business. Paul Seaver considered that Wallington was influenced in this respect by preachers from London, who were replete with Perkins' ideas expressed in his treaty *A Treatise on Vocation or Calling of Men*, according to which every man has a calling from God, and the fulfilment of it "must be done so that God might be glorified and that it is for the betterment of society" (Seaver 1985: 132-33; Perkins 1605: 750).

Another important individual who "was not only the by-product of the times but also a shaper of times" (Bemer 2009: 1) is the Puritan governor of the Massachusetts colony (for an excellent biography, see Morgan 1958). Born in Suffolk, an evidently Puritan area of England, he studied at Cambridge, got married, and went again to study to become a lawyer in London in 1613-1628. "He was influenced by Puritan writings by Thomas Cartwright and William Perkins" (Pastoor and Johnson 2007: 353-54). Bemer states that during Winthrop's activity as magistrate, he tried applying Christian values as described by Ward, namely faith and integrity. The effort of integrating these characteristics led, similar to many instances of other Puritans, to turmoil and doubt. In those moments "he would revisit the writings of Richard Rogers and William Perkins for guidance" (Bemer 2003: 109). It was not just Governor Winthrop who acknowledged Perkins' influence. In the history of Transylvania, one of the most important politicians to interact with Perkins' writings would also own copies of Perkins' works and mentioning the massive impact of Perkins' worldview on his life.

This individual was Nicolae Bethlen. Politician, diplomat, economist, physician, mathematician, architect, polyglot of six languages, having studied at the University of Heidelberg and Leyda, Nicolae was considered the most highly educated and literate Transylvanian nobleman of the time (Bethlen 2004). Nicolae belonged to a renowned family boasting many high-ranking individuals in their history. His grandfather, Wolfgang Bethlen, was the supreme commander of Transylvania, councillor, first lessor, county head of Târnava comitatus, first captain of Gherla, and his father, Ioan Bethlen, chancellor of Transylvania, councillor, county head of the Alba comitatus, and supreme captain of the Odorhei sedes judiciaria. Nicolae Bethlen walked in the footsteps of his forefathers and became councillor in Prince Apafi's Council, deputy in the noble Transylvanian Diet, and eventually, prime chancellor of Transylvania under the Roman-

German Empire. With uncanny foresight, he had an intuition regarding the role of economics, trade, and manufacture in the advancement of society, pleading for the involvement of nobility in business. He set an example, and together with the Englishman Sadgewitz, the Genovese Leyard, and Italian Vecelli he developed a commercial trade between Transylvania and the Levant. He established friendly relations with the ruler of Wallachia, Matei Basarab. Vasile Lupu, ruler of Moldova invited him to the wedding of his daughter and Radzivil, the Lithuanian prince. Nicolae Bethlen's involvement in politics was surely of some consequences. He was arrested twice and imprisoned in 1676–1677 in Făgăraș, and then in 1704–1708 in Sibiu, while later on being transferred to Vienna, where he was kept under house arrest. Radu Constantinescu notices that he was one of those rare men in history who were ahead of their times, waiting patiently for futurity to validate their intuitions (Constantinescu 2004). In his memory and for a better understanding of Nicolae Bethlen, the Lucian Blaga Central University Library organised an exhibition between 15th of April and 15th of July 2016 in Cluj-Napoca under the title *Solitudo Transilvaniae—Nicolae Bethlen and His World*. Among many valuable documents on display are

[...] volumes that influenced him overtly and shaped his mindset, and the effects that are evident in his works... We know that some of them remained his favourite authors even after the completion of his studies: for instance, Perkins, Amesius, and Seneca. Besides the ideas of stoicism and Cartesianism that he acquainted himself with during his studies, Bethlen's vision was decisively influenced by the fundamental works of Protestant pietism—continual introspection, analysis of conscience, the importance of penitence—he studied all these from his home from Perkins' and Amesius' works. (See “*Solitudo Transilvaniae. Nicolae Bethlen si Lumea sa*”, 2017)

J. T. Cliffe presented evidence about families in which men took their role as a leader earnestly, organising prayer time with their families, reading and commenting on Scriptures and instructing them about life in terms that clearly indicate Perkins' influence. In the personal libraries of many families one could find Perkins' writings, which also included advice on family life (Cliffe 1984: 30-32). Jacqueline Eales remarks how Perkins' writings were read even by less privileged social classes by offering examples from the 1630s, the revival during Richard Baxter's time (Eales 1996: 196-97).

3. Perkins' Influence on the Literary World

The literary world acknowledges the high quality of Perkins' writings and his influence. Phineas Fletcher recommends reading every sermon of “our wonderful Perkins”, who “although dead, he is still speaking to us”, guiding wandering steps, speaking to us even though he is buried:

Perkins (our wonder) living, though dead,
 In this white paper, as a winding-sheet;
 And in this vellum lies enveloped:
 Yet still he lives, guiding the erring feet,
 Speaking now to our eyes, though buried.
 If once so well, much better now he teacheth,
 Who will not hear, when a live-dead man preacheth.
 (Anderson 1795: 472)

Rosemary A. Sisson introduces her article by reminding us about Perkins' influence on the English literature, acknowledging the fame and high profile he enjoyed during his life, mentioning Phineas Fletcher's eulogy, the slip into forgetfulness during the Commonwealth period, so that we might experience a rekindled interest in Perkins' writings. Sisson states that "it is undeniable that in his lifetime, William Perkins enjoyed considerable fame, probably even greater and certainly wider than that of Hooker" (Sisson 1952: 495). The article goes on affirming Perkins' importance in the American literature, which is obvious, since the first books brought by William Ames' widow to New England were Perkins' works (Sisson 1952: 495). Lastly, regarding Perkins' influence on the English literature, Sisson states that

it is not only in New England literature, however that Perkins deserves a place, nor is it only for his influence upon the thought and religion of his day and among succeeding generations of Calvinists. It is as the master of a superb English prose style that I would claim for Perkins a position of real importance in the history of English literature. (Sisson 1952: 495)

Barbara Kiefer Lewalsky argues that the poets of the first half of the seventeenth century, John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, and Thomas Traherne had been influenced by the language and biblical symbolism promoted, which was elevated to a new status of prominence by Calvinist theologians, to whom the ideas of human sinfulness and man's empowerment by divine grace were central. These ideas are analysed by Perkins, who pays attention to literary genres encountered in the Scriptures and which "employed language in a way that contributed to the shaping of the poetry of the time" (Kiefer Lewalsky 1979: 5, 24-27).

Catherine Gimelli Martin researched the influence of Perkins' theology on English poetry and demonstrated that Donne's work, Holy Sonnet XIV, clearly expresses the experiential predestination of Perkins, according to which a person undergoes a series of stages preparatory for grace, which can lead man into profound desperation from which man is dramatically saved by God. In Martin's words, Perkins' theology is "Donne's centre of

poetic vision”, his poem expressing “key aspects of Perkins’ concept of salvation” (Gimelli Martin 2013: 350-81).

Perkins’ influence was massive through his textbook on preaching, *The Art of Prophesying*. Pipa, in his work on Perkins analyses Puritan sermons from the period before the publishing of Perkins’ textbook and those after 1592 when Perkins had already been known and had already published *The Art of Prophesying*. The comparative study conducted by Pipa is impressive. Sermons by Cartwright, Chaderton, John Stockwood, John Udall, and John Smith were analysed (Pipa 1985: 178-96). Pipa analysed twenty volumes of sermons delivered in the Long Parliament between November 1640 and October 1650. Moreover, sermons by Richard Sibbes, John Preston, Thomas Taylor, Thomas Manton, John Owen, and Thomas Brooks were analysed. Pipa’s conclusion is that Puritans employed more frequently the clear style of preaching (in contrast to the sophisticated Anglo-Catholic style) without consistency though, and varying in the structure of the sermon. After the publishing of Perkins’ textbook, one could note the standardisation of the clear style preaching and that of sermon structure, two phenomena that are owed to the influence of the textbook *The Art of Prophesying*. In Pipa’s words,

this examination of Puritan preaching before and after William Perkins wrote *The Arte of Prophecyng* has made it clear that before its publication, the Puritans used a great deal of variety in sermon construction. After this book was published, Puritan preaching was marked by a uniform use of the new Reformed method. Although circumstantial, this evidence points to the pivotal importance of *The Arte of Prophecyng* in shaping Puritan preaching. (Pipa 1985: 197)

Perkins’ significant influence through his textbook *The Art of Prophesying* was asserted by Wilson in a significant study of sermons delivered in the Parliament. Regarding the sermons delivered in the Long Parliament during 1640-1650, Wilson states that

virtually all of the sermons delivered at parliamentary humiliations and thanksgiving display the general “method” of preaching commonly employed by most of the puritan clerics in Stuart England. This method may be traced in general outline to the patriarch, William Perkins. (Wilson 1969:191)

The influence of Perkins’ textbook can also be noted due to the fact that the terminology and philosophy of preaching found in the directions of Westminster Assembly reflect the textbook’s instructions for preaching. Breward states:

The method set out by Perkins and reinforced by the quality of his own preaching exerted an important influence on later puritan preaching, as can be

readily seen in the sermons of men like Bolton, Sibbes and Cotton and a host of lesser men in Old England and New, or in the instructions for preaching set out in the Westminster Assembly's Directory of Public Worship. Theological conviction, practical direction and careful attention to current psychological theory were combined with an ability to popularise and summarise the writings of other scholars and made *The Arte of Prophecyng* one of Perkins' most important and influential works. (Breward 1970: 328)

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that textbooks on preaching published after Perkins' reaffirm what he had written without much variation. In this respect, Miller thinks that,

following chronologically after Perkins, a succession of Puritan manuals reaffirmed and developed his teaching; *it was set forth by Abraham Scultetus in Germany, in his Axiomata Concionandi Practica*, 1619, and in England most notably by Richard Bernard in *The Faithful Shepherd*, 1621, by Oliver Bowles in *De Pastore Evangelico Tractatus*, 1649, by William Chappell, known to fame as having been for a short and not too happy interval the tutor of John Milton, in *The Use of Holy Scripture Gravely and Methodically Discoursed*, 1653, and in *The Preacher; or the Art and Method of Preaching* from 1656, and by William Price, an English Puritan stationed at Amsterdam, in *Ars Concionandi* from 1657. (Miller 1939: 335)

Certainly, this does not mean that authors and preachers have completely plagiarized Perkins. They used Perkins' method with creativity and diversity. Moreover, that does not mean that things have stagnated. Pipa notes that there have been two aspects Perkins' successors highlighted more than he did. The two are about proof and argumentation and simplifying the structure, especially by presenting one doctrine instead of many at once (Pipa 1985: 210-13).

The influence of the clear style of preaching promoted by *The Art of Prophesying* penetrated non-Puritan circles within the Church of England. Robert Johnson, in a sermon delivered at Paul's Cross in which he viciously attacked the Puritan wing of the Church, uses the exact methodology prescribed by Perkins. John employs Psalm 119:33 and divides the text in two parts (supplication and promise), which would then be expounded on. Definitions for the meaning of words are given, and doctrines and applications are formulated. MacLure stated that Johnson's sermon evidently reflected the new Reformed method of preaching: "in every section [Johnson] explained words, gave paraphrases, extracted doctrines, and offered uses and applications" (MacLure 1958: 155).

Perkins' influence through *The Art of Prophesying* extended later to the Baptist teachers of England. Judson Allen demonstrates in an article that the preaching of Baptists from the 1640s adopted the clear style of

preaching. After the text was presented, the preacher would divide it into sections, or seldom explain it word by word. Then, the doctrines or textual truths would be deduced, which would in turn be divided further. These sections would then be preached. Applications and answers to objections were ever-present (Boyce 1968: 6-7).

Even preaching in Scotland was influenced by Perkins and his textbook. Henderson indicates the fact that Scottish preachers used Perkins' textbook noting that preceding preachers, such as the great Knox, used the "ancient way" of presenting a sermon. After Perkins, Scottish preachers adapted the new Reformed method (Henderson 1937: 198).

Preaching in New England, including great Jonathan Edwards' preaching, was significantly influenced by Perkins and his textbook, *The Art of Prophesying*. This aspect does not surprise us if we consider the fact that many immigrants had direct contact with Perkins as students or had access to his writings. Miller's words in this respect are illuminating: "The teacher from whom, above others, Puritan leaders learned the lesson of sermon was William Perkins, who gave the classic exposition in his *The Art of Prophesying*, available to most students of the century in the second volume of his collected works" (Perkins 1996: 335).

Conclusions

Although he lived a short life, Perkins' influence in his time and future generations has been massive. Perkins clearly understood the times and needs of his generation. He considered that spiritual renewal was done through the instruction of the folk and preachers. His pastoral and academic activity had an immense impact. Geographically speaking, Perkins' impact was not confined to England or Western Europe but stretched until Transylvania, thus shaping the folk's spiritual life and pastoral ministry. Moreover, his influence was strongly felt in New England, wherein men whose lives, theology, and pastoral ministry had been modeled by him. Perkins was not only a good theoretician but also an exceptional preacher. Multitudes who attended religious services at the prison of the Cambridge Castle or his students who would come to listen to him at St. Andrews fully prove his influence as a preacher to both laymen and trainees for pastoral ministry. His didactic activity at Cambridge was efficient, thus shaping students. Moreover, he was involved in Christ's College for a better instruction of future servants. The long list of servants and famous Puritan theologians who acknowledge Perkins' influence suffices to indicate Perkins' impact. A list which mentions William Ames, John Cotton, Richard Baxter, and later Jonathan Edwards speaks for itself. Adding not only famous Puritan servants to the list, but also high-ranking individuals within the Church of England, such as Bishop Montagou, we

clearly realize the dimension of Perkins' influence. Just as he had intended, working intensively to fulfill his wish, Perkins left an indelible mark on the daily life, the manner in which believers lived day by day. Simple folk, entire families, businessmen, and governors found in Perkins' writings resources to biblically fulfill their calling. William Perkins' writings had a long-lasting impact. Multiple editions, translations in various languages, and massive sales indicate that the diverse topics discussed and his arguments presented intelligibly to the common reader fulfilled a great need of the people, Perkins' impact far surpassing everything he had ever imagined. Since Perkins' writings were of high quality, the literary world acknowledges and appreciates Perkins' influence. Lastly, we took notice of Perkins' impact through his textbook, *The Art of Prophesying*. Practically, after its publication, preaching was never the same again.

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