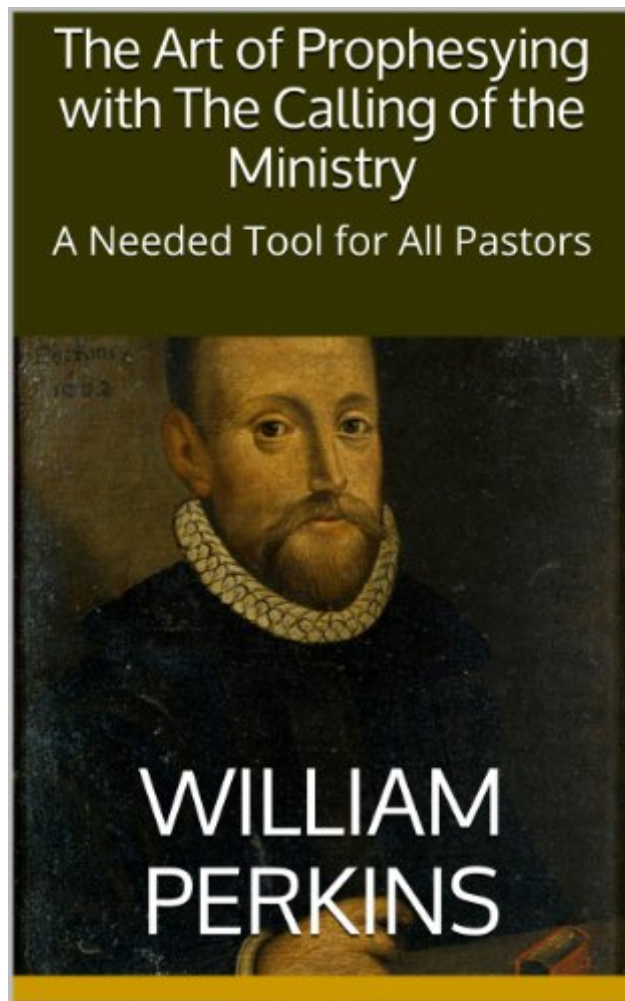


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The Art Of Prophesying With The Calling Of The Ministry: A Needed Tool For All Pastors



Synopsis

William Perkins was a clergyman and Cambridge theologian who was one of the foremost leaders of the Puritan movement in the Church of England. Perkins was born to Thomas and Anna Perkins at Marston Jabbett in the parish of Bulkington, Warwickshire, England in 1558, the year in which the Protestant Elizabeth I succeeded her Catholic sister Mary as Queen of England. Perkins lived his entire life under Elizabeth I, dying one year before the Virgin Queen's own death in 1603. Perkins' relationship with Elizabeth was ambiguous: on the one hand, she was Good Queen Bess, the monarch under whom England finally and firmly became a Protestant nation; on the other hand, Perkins and the other members of the Puritan movement were frustrated that the Elizabethan settlement had not gone far enough and pushed for further Reformation. Influence Although relatively unknown to modern Christian, Perkins has had an influence that is felt by Christians all around the world. and was widely regarded in the Elizabethan Church In addition, Perkins' views on double predestination made him a major target of Jacobus Arminius, the Dutch Reformed clergyman who opposed the doctrine of predestination. He also was influential in the theological development of the American puritan philosopher and theologian Jonathan Edwards In addition, some consider the hermeneutics of Perkins to be a model that ought to be emulated. In his lifetime, Perkins attained enormous popularity, with sales of his works eventually surpassing even Calvin's. When he died, his writings were selling more copies than those of many of the most famous of the Reformers combined. From his position at Cambridge, Perkins was able to influence a whole generation of English churchmen. His pupils include: William Ames, Puritan who eventually left England to become professor of theology at Franeker John Robinson, the founder of congregationalism in Leiden and pastor of the group which went on to found the Plymouth Colony Thomas Goodwin Paul Baynes Samuel Ward, master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge Phineas Fletcher, a poet Thomas Draxe Thomas Taylor James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh James Montagu, master of Sidney Sussex and later bishop of Winchester Richard Sibbes In 1602, Perkins suffered from "the stone". After several weeks of suffering, he died at age 44. James Montagu preached his funeral sermon, taking as his text Joshua 1.2, "Moses my servant is dead". He was buried in St. Andrew's, the church which he had pastored for eighteen years. SOME OF WILLIAM PERKINS' QUOTES: God gives some "benefits" to all mankind, even the non-elect. This is the idea of common grace. The covenant of grace is conditional, because we must believe to gain eternal life, i.e. faith may be called a condition. Christ is "offered" through the Gospel to all those that hear it proclaimed, even to the non-elect. The means of salvation, which must include Christ's sacrifice, is "offered" to all and is "sufficient to save all mankind." There are distinctions in God's will, such that he can be said

to both will and not will the same thing in different respects. God willed the "conversion" of all of Jerusalem, which included the non-elect Jews. The gospel is God's "merciful visitation" to all that are exposed to it. Some "set the ministry of the gospel at naught."

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Customer Reviews

Perkins was one of the fathers of Puritanism and his practical and pastoral wisdom is captured well in this modernized edition of his two books "The Art of Prophesying" and "The Calling of the Ministry." Part One, "The Art of Prophesying," is really a handbook on hermeneutics and homiletics from the Puritan perspective. Perkins explicates the several principles for interpreting and expounding the Scriptures and then gives detailed instruction on how to apply the same. The chapter on "Use and Application" will give readers the background behind the familiar Puritan sermon structure of "Doctrine and Use." Parts Two and Three deal with "The Calling of the Ministry." They are really nothing more than the exposition of two Old Testament passages of Scripture, Job 33 and Isaiah 6. Many interesting and practical issues are handled here including how a minister might know his calling and what his responsibilities are to God's people. Perkins had a high view of

the dignity and authority of the ministerial gift which is sadly lacking among evangelicals today. While some of his ideas will seem foreign and perhaps a little extreme to many, it is certain that his emphasis will help balance our opposite extremes. Perkins is not the best Puritan author that I have read, nor is this book the most helpful book on preaching I have encountered. But it was worth while. Incidentally - for those who are checking out this title hoping to get a Puritan perspective on the charismatic understanding of the gift of prophesy, the following quote well summarizes Perkins' view: "I am not here making any allowance for the claims people make that they have received 'revelations'.

Where do the Puritans come from? They come from an effort to purify the Church of England. Where does their involved expository method come from? Considerably, it comes from William Perkins (1558-1602) who tailored the logical technique of Pierre de la Ramee (1515-1572) for use in unfolding the riches of the Bible. Perkins also consulted certain theologians for the composition of his rules and principles (p. 4.) He does not name them here. The Art of Prophesying is a little system for discovering the meaning of Scripture in order to its preaching. Here is what that looks like. Prophesying has two aspects: preaching and prayer (p. 77.) And so the minister is both the people's mouth to God (when he prays) and God's mouth to the people (when he preaches, p. 89.) A passage of Scripture is either plain or cryptic (p. 30.) Both law (exposure of the disease of sin) and gospel (the remedy) are to be preached (p. 54) So the law to give birth to repentance and the gospel to lead to faith (p. 105.) Both milk (general explanation of basic truth) and meat (detailed handling of doctrine) are to be served (p. 57.) There are seven ways to apply the word (pp. 56-63.) Unquestionably, ministerial transformation would begin at once if even these few distinctions were put into practice! We should take a look at his use of this interpretive design, which, besides being beautifully distinct and logical, is marvelously brief and forceful. He gets at the sense of a passage by resorting to common sense, which, when you get right down to it, is the essence of logical reasoning. In the following excerpt he is casting light on a dark, or cryptic, passage. "He took it. He broke it." It is hardly likely that Christ sitting among his disciples took and broke his own body with his hands!

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