

“On the broad shoulders of William Perkins, epoch-making pioneer, stood the entire school of seventeenth-century Puritan pastors and divines, yet the Puritan reprint industry has steadily bypassed him. Now, however, he begins to reappear, admirably edited, and at last this yawning gap is being filled. Profound thanks to the publisher and heartfelt praise to God have become due.”

—J. I. Packer, Board of Governors’ Professor of Theology,
Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia

“Without a doubt, the Puritans were theological titans. The Puritan theological tradition did not emerge out of a vacuum. It was shaped by leaders and theologians who set the trajectory of the movement and shaped its commitments. William Perkins was one of those men. Perkins’s contribution to Puritan theology is inestimable, and this new reprint of his collected works is a much-awaited addition to all who are still shaped and influenced by the Puritans and their commitment to the centrality of the grace of God found only in Jesus Christ. Even now, every true gospel minister stands in debt to Perkins, and in his shadow.”

—R. Albert Mohler Jr., president, The Southern
Baptist Theological Seminary

“The list of those influenced by the ministry of William Perkins reads like a veritable Who’s Who of the Puritan Brotherhood and far beyond. This reprinting of his works, so long unobtainable except by a few, is therefore a publishing event of the first magnitude.”

—Sinclair B. Ferguson, professor of systematic theology,
Redeemer Theological Seminary, Dallas

“The father of Elizabethan Puritanism, Perkins presided over a dynasty of faith. The scope of his work is wide, yet on every topic he treats one discovers erudition and deep reflection. He was the first in an amazing line of ministers at Cambridge University’s main church. A pastor to pastors, he wrote a best-seller on counseling, was a formative figure in the development of Reformed orthodoxy, and a judicious reformer within the Church of England. I am delighted to see Perkins’s works made available again for a wide audience.”

—Michael Horton, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Theology
and Apologetics, Westminster Seminary California

“William Perkins was a most remarkable Christian. In his relatively short life he was a great preacher, pastor, and theologian. His prolific writings were foundational to the whole English Puritan enterprise and a profound influence beyond his own time and borders. His works have become rare, and their

republishing must be a source of real joy and blessing to all serious Christians. Perkins is the first Puritan we should read.”

—W. Robert Godfrey, president, Westminster Seminary California

“This is a welcome collection of the gospel-saturated writings of William Perkins. A faithful pastor, Puritan leader, prolific author, and lecturer, Perkins defended the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation throughout his life. Giving particular emphasis to *solus Christus* and *sola Scriptura*, these Reformed doctrines drove him as a pastor to preach the unsearchable riches of God’s truth with confidence and assurance. Sadly, Perkins is unknown to the modern Christian. However, throughout the centuries, the writings, meditations, and treatises of this Puritan luminary have influenced Christians around the world. It is my hope that many will be introduced and reintroduced to the writings of this Reformed stalwart. May his zeal for gospel advance awaken a new generation of biblical preachers and teachers to herald the glory of our sovereign God in this present day.”

—Steven J. Lawson, president, OnePassion Ministries, and professor of preaching at The Master’s Seminary

“Relatively few in the church’s history have left a written legacy of enduring value beyond their own time. Perkins is surely among that select group. Reformation Heritage Books is to be commended for its commitment to making his *Works* available in this projected series, beginning with this volume.”

—Richard B. Gaffin Jr., professor of biblical and systematic theology emeritus, Westminster Theological Seminary

“Christians have heard about William Perkins, especially that he was an extraordinary preacher whose sermons made a deep impression on Cambridge and that they were still impacting the town in the decades that followed Perkins’s death at a mere forty-four years of age in 1602. He was at the heart of the revival of truth and holy living that made the Reformation a glorious work of God. He was the outstanding Puritan theologian of his time, but most of us have not had the opportunity to study his works because of their rarity. After more than three hundred years, this ignorance is going to be ended with the remarkable appearance during the next decade of the complete works of this man of God. We are looking forward to their appearance very much. There will be sufficient gaps between their publication to ensure a sincere attempt at imbibing the truths of each volume, and then we face the challenge of translating Perkins’s teaching into flesh-and-blood living.”

—Geoff Thomas, pastor, Alfred Place Baptist Church, Aberystwyth, Wales

The Works of
WILLIAM PERKINS

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VOLUME 9

*A Declaration of the True Manner of Knowing Christ Crucified
The True Gain*

A Faithful and Plain Exposition upon Zephaniah 2:1-2

The Nature and Practice of Repentance

The Combat of the Flesh and Spirit

A Treatise of Man's Imagination

A Direction for Government of the Tongue

A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft

A Resolution to Country Man on Prognostication

EDITED BY J. STEPHEN YUILLE

General editors:

Joel R. Beeke and Derek W. H. Thomas



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General Preface



William Perkins (1558–1602), often called “the father of Puritanism,” was a master preacher and teacher of Reformed, experiential theology. He left an indelible mark upon the English Puritan movement, and his writings were translated into Dutch, German, French, Hungarian, and other European languages. Today he is best known for his writings on predestination, but he also wrote prolifically on many doctrinal and practical subjects, including extended expositions of Scripture. The 1631 edition of his English *Works* filled over two thousand large pages of small print in three folio volumes.

It is puzzling why his full *Works* have not been in print since the early seventeenth century, especially given the flood of Puritan works reprinted in the mid-nineteenth and late twentieth centuries. Ian Breward did much to promote the study of Perkins, but Breward’s now rare, single-volume compilation of the *Work of William Perkins* (1970) could only present samplings of Perkins’s writings. We are extremely pleased that this lacuna is being filled, as it has been a dream of many years to see the writings of this Reformed theologian made accessible again to the public, including laymen, pastors, and scholars.

Reformation Heritage Books is publishing Perkins’s *Works* in a newly typeset format with spelling and capitalization conformed to modern American standards. The old forms (“thou dost”) are changed to the modern equivalent (“you do”), except in Scripture quotations and references to deity. Punctuation has also been modernized. However, the original words are left intact, not changed into modern synonyms, and the original word order retained even when it differs from modern syntax. Pronouns are capitalized when referring to God. Some archaic terms and obscure references are explained in the editor’s footnotes.

As was common in his day, Perkins did not use quotation marks to distinguish a direct quotation from an indirect quotation, summary, or paraphrase, but simply put all citations in italics (as he also did with proper names). We have removed such italics and followed the general principle of placing citations in quotation marks even if they may not be direct and exact quotations. Perkins generally quoted the Geneva Bible, but rather than conforming his quotations to any particular translation of Scripture, we have left them in

his words. Scripture references in the margins are brought into the text and enclosed in square brackets. Parenthetical Scripture references in general are abbreviated and punctuated according to the modern custom (as in Rom. 8:1), sometimes corrected, and sometimes moved to the end of the clause instead of its beginning. Other notes from the margins are placed in footnotes and labeled, “In the margin.” Where multiple sets of parentheses were nested within each other, the inward parentheses have been changed to square brackets. Otherwise, square brackets indicate words added by the editor. An introduction to each volume by its editor orients the reader to its contents.

The projected *Works of William Perkins* will include ten volumes, including four volumes of biblical exposition, three volumes of doctrinal and polemical treatises, and three volumes of ethical and practical writings. A breakdown of each volume’s contents may be found inside the cover of this book.

If it be asked what the center of Perkins’s theology was, then we hesitate to answer, for students of historical theology know that this is a perilous question to ask regarding any person. However, we may do well to end this preface by repeating what Perkins said at the conclusion of his influential manual on preaching, “The sum of the sum: preach one Christ by Christ to the praise of Christ.”

—Joel R. Beeke and Derek W. H. Thomas

Preface to Volume 9 of William Perkins's Works



More than a century ago, B. B. Warfield encouraged the students at Princeton Seminary to remember “that intellectual training alone will never make a true minister, that the heart has rights which the head must respect, and that it behooves us above everything to remember that the ministry is a spiritual office.”¹ Warfield’s exhortation was fueled by his conviction that preparation for ministry must include the training of the heart, hand, and head—that is, it must incorporate the “devotional, practical, and intellectual.”² Four centuries earlier, William Perkins communicated the same message to his students at Cambridge. A preacher, said he, must possess “not only the knowledge of divine things flowing in his brain but engraved on his heart and printed in his soul by the spiritual finger of God.”³

This was Perkins’s desire, not only for prospective pastors, but for every follower of Christ. It stemmed from his conviction that Christianity is—above all else—a religion of the heart. “Saving knowledge in religion is experimental,” wrote Perkins, “and he that is truly founded upon Christ feels the power and efficacy of His death and resurrection, effectually causing the death of sin, and the life of grace which both appear by new obedience.”⁴

Much has been written on Perkins’s experiential piety—namely, his overwhelming sense of man’s depravity and his corresponding deep appreciation for God’s sovereignty in salvation; his unwavering quest for an assurance rooted in

1. B. B. Warfield, “Spiritual Culture in the Theological Seminary,” in *The Princeton Theological Review* 2 (1904): 65.

2. Warfield, “Spiritual Culture,” 67. Warfield went on to encourage the students to guard and nurture their devotional life. He prescribed the reading of Puritan literature as particularly useful for cultivating piety, because it is “marked by intense devotion to duty and strong insistence on personal holiness.” “Spiritual Culture,” 80.

3. William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying; or, A treatise concerning the sacred and only true manner and method of preaching*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Legate, 1631), 2:672.

4. William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition Upon Christ’s Sermon in the Mount*, in *The Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Haviland, 1631), 3:259–60.

Christ and confirmed by the active testimony of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life; his unassailable conviction that the faith that brings people into union with Christ is that which issues forth in a life of obedience; his unquenchable desire for a heart-felt appropriation of God's truth as opposed to mere intellectual assent; and his steadfast commitment to the Word and sacraments as the means by which God's Spirit works in God's people.

Without question, these motifs were foundational to the development of Perkins's experiential piety, yet they by no means exhaust the subject. This is confirmed in the present volume, which brings together eight of Perkins's lesser known works and, by so doing, introduces the reader to other important facets of his religion of the heart.

The first work is *A Declaration of the True Manner of Knowing Christ Crucified*, published in 1596. Perkins wrote it—as the title suggests—to demonstrate what it means to know “Christ crucified.”⁵ He was driven by concern for those who placed their hopes in a mere theoretical knowledge of Christ—what he described as “a knowledge swimming in the brain.”⁶ For Perkins, true knowledge “alters and disposes the affections.” It is, first, to feel “our sins” so profoundly that we dislike “ourselves and our past lives” and seek “conformity with Christ in all good duties.” It is, second, to comprehend the Father's love in giving “His own dear Son to death” and the Son's goodness in loving “His enemies more than Himself” to such a degree that our hearts are “inflamed to love God.”⁷

For Perkins, we cultivate such “lively, powerful, and operative knowledge” by following three steps.⁸ The first is “consideration,” whereby we see Christ as He is “revealed in the history of the gospel” and “offered in the ministry of the Word and sacraments.” This sight makes us feel our need of Him and correspondingly long for Him. The second step is “application,” whereby we recognize that Christ was crucified for us, meaning He stood in our “very room and place” while our “very personal and particular sins were imputed and applied to Him.” The third step is “affection,” whereby we are “carried to Christ,” esteeming Him at “so high a price” that all else pales in comparison.⁹

5. William Perkins, *A Declaration of the True Manner of Knowing Christ Crucified*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Legate, 1631), 1:625.

6. *True Manner*, 1:627.

7. *True Manner*, 1:627.

8. *True Manner*, 1:626–27.

9. For Perkins, when we know Christ in this way, “all the blessings of God, whether spiritual or temporal... are conveyed unto us from the Father by Christ.” This includes: (1) Christ's merit which is “the value and price of His death and passion whereby man is perfectly reconciled to God”; (2) Christ's virtue, which is “the power of His Godhead whereby He creates new hearts in all them who believe in Him, and makes them new creatures”; and (3) Christ's example, whereby

For these three steps to produce their desired effect, Perkins was convinced that we must meditate on “the passion of Christ.”¹⁰ We do so, not by means of “the wooden crucifix after the popish manner,” but by means of “the preaching of the Word and in the sacraments.”¹¹ As we hear of Christ agonizing in the garden, we think of our sins that “brought such bloody and grievous pains upon Him.” As we hear of Him bound and led away, we remember our sins that “brought Him into the power of His enemies, and were the very bonds wherewith He was tied.” As we hear of His condemnation, we consider “the wrath and fury of God against sin, and...His great and infinite mercy to sinners.” As we hear of Christ clothed in purple and crowned with thorns, we behold “the everlasting shame that is due unto us.” As we hear of Him naked upon the cross, we remember that He covered our deformity “with His most precious and rich nakedness.” As we hear of His cry from the cross, we think of “how He suffered the pangs and torments of hell as our pledge and surety.” As we hear of His death, we consider that “our sins were the cause of it.” As we hear of the trembling of the earth, we think of how we “deserved to be swallowed by the earth and to go down into the pit alive rather than to have any part in the merit of Christ crucified.”¹²

By applying ourselves to this “history of the passion of Christ,” we move purposefully and deliberately through the three steps of “consideration,” “application,” and “affection,” until our knowledge becomes “lively, powerful, and

He becomes a “pattern of all good duties, to which we ought to conform ourselves.” *True Manner*, 1:627–28.

10. *True Manner*, 1:630.

11. *True Manner*, 1:632. Perkins's emphasis on beholding Christ's passion raises the interesting question of his relationship to Ignatian spirituality. Perkins and Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) share some similarities in terms of their subject matter and their common concern to stir the affections. For his part, Ignatius writes, “For it is not knowing much, but realizing and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies the soul.” Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. E. Mullan (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1914), second annotation. Perkins would agree. However, their respective approaches to meditation are markedly different. Perkins stresses the three faculties of the soul, whereas Ignatius depends primarily upon sense data in order to stimulate the imagination. This tendency in Ignatius is evident, for example, in his meditations on hell. He writes of the need “to see with the sight of the imagination the great fires, and the souls as bodies in fire,” “to hear with the ears wailings, howlings, cries,” “to smell with the smell smoke, sulphur, dregs and putrid things,” “to taste with the taste bitter things,” and “to touch with the touch; that is to say, how the fires touch and burn the souls.” *The Spiritual Exercises*, fifth exercise. To arrive at this experience, he encourages his readers “to chastise the flesh” (i.e., give it sensible pain) by “wearing haircloth or cords or iron chains next to the flesh, by scourging or wounding oneself, and by other kinds of austerity.” Such an approach is completely foreign to Perkins, who is primarily concerned with exciting the affections via the understanding.

12. *True Manner*, 1:633.

operative.”¹³ For Perkins, it is only when our affections are thus engaged that we truly know “Christ crucified.”

Perkins's Christ-centered piety remains the focus of his second work: *The True Gain: More in Worth than All the Goods in the World*, published in 1601. According to Perkins, he wrote it to explain an “infallible truth”—namely, Christ “in the act of our reconciliation with God admits neither deputy nor partner.”¹⁴ His text is Philippians 3:7–9, where the apostle Paul declares, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

By way of exposition, Perkins divides the text into two parts. In the first, he considers Paul's losses: (1) his “privileges,” “virtues,” and “works” before his conversion; and (2) his “virtues” (e.g., hope, fear, love) and “works of grace” after his conversion.¹⁵ For Perkins, Paul's example affords a simple (yet profound) doctrine—in short, we must come to Christ without any “virtues or works” of our own and we must esteem ourselves to be “wretched and miserable” sinners while simply praying, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).¹⁶

In the second part of his exposition, Perkins considers Paul's gain: “the whole Christ... according to both natures.”¹⁷ To gain Christ is to gain His Godhead “in respect of virtue and operation showed in (or upon) the manhood of Christ,” and it is to gain His manhood which is “really communicated to the faith of the believing heart.” In this manner Christ is said “to be made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.

13. For an introduction to some of the issues surrounding the Puritan meditative tradition, see F. L. Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth Century England: A Study with the Texts of the Art of Divine Meditation (1606) and Occasional Meditations (1633)* (Binghamton: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981); U. Milo Kauffman, *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); and Louis Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

14. William Perkins, *The True Gain: More in Worth than All the Goods in the World*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Legate, 1631), 1:645.

15. *True Gain*, 1:648–49.

16. *True Gain*, 1:652. Perkins adds, “Works may be considered either as causes of salvation or only as a way directing thereto. If they are considered as causes, they are not necessary, but in this respect they are dung. If they are respected as a way leading and directing to eternal life, they are indeed necessary thus and not otherwise.” *True Gain*, 1:649.

17. Perkins describes this as “the ancient and catholic doctrine.” *True Gain*, 1:653.

1:30). Christ is our wisdom because “from His wisdom there is wisdom derived in some measure to all who are mystically united to Him.” Christ is our justice “because that justice which is in the manhood... whereby He obeyed His Father’s will and suffered all things to be suffered for us... is imputed to us and accounted ours.” Christ is our sanctification because from “this holiness of His our holiness is derived and springs as a fruit.” And Christ is our redemption because He “lives in the estate of exaltation and glory... not only for Himself, but also for us, that we, being partakers thereof, may live together with Him.”¹⁸

Given Christ’s inestimable worth, we (like Paul) desire to be found in Christ—that is, “to be taken out of the first Adam and to be united unto Christ as His very flesh or as a true member of His mystical body.”¹⁹ By this union we gain the righteousness of Christ. “A sinner stands just before the tribunal seat of God,” writes Perkins, “not by the justice of the law, but by the justice of faith, which is the obedience of Christ, without any works of ours.”²⁰ We also gain fellowship with Christ, meaning we “grow more and more in holy experience of the endless love of God.”²¹ Finally, we gain “the reward of eternal life.”²²

According to Perkins, the means by which we become “a true member of His mystical body” (thereby gaining Him) is faith alone.²³ Recognizing that this assertion is “scandalous” to some, he affirms that faith is the only “instrument” by which we receive what is “given by the Father, procured by the Son, [and] applied by the Holy Spirit.” However, when it comes to a “way” to eternal life, faith is not alone, but is accompanied by other works and virtues. “If we speak of the way to life,” says Perkins, “then we are not saved only by faith. For though faith is the only instrument to apprehend Christ, yet it is not the only way to life. Repentance also is the way, yea all virtues and all works are the way.”²⁴

18. *True Gain*, 1:654.

19. *True Gain*, 1:655–57. Perkins affirms that we must follow four rules when seeking to understand this mystery: (1) “The whole person of him who believes is united to the whole person of Christ.” (2) “We are first joined to the flesh of Christ and by His flesh to His Godhead. For that which brings us to have fellowship with God joins us to God.” (3) “This union stands not in imagination but is a true and real conjunction.” (4) “The bond of this conjunction is one and the same Spirit, being both in Christ and us, first in Christ and then in us.” *True Gain*, 1:658.

20. *True Gain*, 1:659.

21. *True Gain*, 1:663.

22. *True Gain*, 1:667.

23. Perkins describes faith as “a special gift of God whereby we believe Christ and His benefits to be ours.... Now God gives Christ in the Word and sacraments. And in them He does (as it were) open His hand and reach forth all the blessings of Christ unto us. We must not, therefore, imagine to find Christ where and how we list, but we must seek Him in the Word and sacraments, and there we must receive Him if we desire to receive Him aright.” *True Gain*, 1:662. The closest Perkins comes to the five solas is when he declares, “We are justified and accepted of God to eternal life through grace alone by faith alone for Christ alone.” *True Gain*, 1:663.

24. *True Gain*, 1:650.

This discussion of the “way to life” brings us to the third work in this volume: *A Faithful and Plain Exposition upon Zephaniah 2:1–2*, published posthumously in 1606. Perkins originally preached this sermon at Stourbridge Fair in Cambridge.²⁵ As the title indicates, he took Zephaniah’s warning to the nation of Israel as his chief text: “Search yourselves, even search you, O nation, not worthy to be beloved: before the decree come forth, and you be as chaff that passeth on a day.”²⁶ In his sermon, Perkins unpacked five principal points: (1) what we should do—search; (2) what we should search—ourselves; (3) who should search—we; (4) why we should repent—God’s decree of judgment threatens us; and (5) why we should repent immediately—the execution of God’s decree is imminent.

In short, the prospect of God’s impending judgment calls for a careful searching of our lives. Perkins describes this as “a principal duty in repentance, even the beginning and foundation of all true grace.”²⁷ To ensure success, he lays out three rules. First, we must know that we have “sinned in the sin of Adam”; that is to say, his sin in eating the forbidden fruit is our sin and, therefore, we stand condemned in God’s sight.²⁸ Second, we must know that “the seeds of all sins” are by nature in us.²⁹ Third, we must know that we are “by nature the child[ren] of wrath and God’s enem[ies].”³⁰ With this foundation in place, Perkins speaks directly to his audience, rebuking them for (among other things) their contempt of religion and godliness, their dishonest business dealings,

25. William Crashaw, “The Epistle Dedicatory,” in William Perkins, *A Faithful and Plain Exposition upon Zephaniah 2:1–2*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Haviland, 1631), vol. 3. Stourbridge Fair was held annually on Stourbridge Common in Cambridge. Originally, it ran for two days, but in Perkins’s day it lasted from August 24 to September 29. The 1589 charter states that it “far surpassed the greatest of and most celebrated fairs of all England; whence great benefits had resulted to the merchants of the whole kingdom, who resorted thereto, and there quickly sold their wares and merchandises to purchasers coming from all parts of the realm.” For more on this, see Alison Taylor, *Cambridge: The Hidden History* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 1999); and Tania McIntosh, *The Decline of Stourbridge Fair 1770–1934* (Leicester: University of Leicester, 1998). Of note, Stourbridge Fair was the inspiration for John Bunyan’s “Vanity Fair” in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

26. I have provided the text as Perkins cited it in his treatise. The KJV reads: “Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD’s anger come upon you.”

27. *A Faithful and Plain Exposition*, 3:414.

28. *A Faithful and Plain Exposition*, 3:415.

29. Perkins adds, “If God did not thus moderate and restrain the natures of men, but suffer them to break out to the full, there would then be no order, but all confusion in the world.” *A Faithful and Plain Exposition*, 3:415–16.

30. *A Faithful and Plain Exposition*, 3:416.

and their blatant abuse of the Sabbath.³¹ Because of their lack of repentance, God's decree of judgment is about to fall on them. "And if you would escape the rigor of that judgment," he warns, "enter now into judgment with yourself and search yourself."³²

Perkins stays with the theme of repentance in his fourth work: *Two Treatises: The Nature and Practice of Repentance; and The Combat of the Flesh and Spirit*, published in 1593.³³ While the previous work is essentially an earnest exhortation to repent, these two treatises provide a systematic explanation of the doctrine of repentance. Perkins walks the reader through its "nature," "cause," "parts," "degrees," "motives," "contraries," and "corruptions." His entire discussion is governed by his view of repentance as "a work of grace arising from a godly sorrow, whereby a man turns from all his sins unto God, and brings forth fruit worthy [of] amendment of life."³⁴ Perkins's definition is carefully

31. This work is the best example of Perkins's "plain" style of preaching. While certainly not void of rhetorical devices, his sermon is for the most part unadorned. While stressing the efficacy of God's Word preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, Perkins was at the same time committed to a method of preaching that was marked by clarity and simplicity, and fueled by a familiar acquaintance with eternal realities, because he viewed this as the principal means by which to instruct the mind and incline the heart. For more on this, see J. Stephen Yuille, "A Simple Method: William Perkins and the Shaping of the Protestant Pulpit," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 9, no. 1 (2017): 215–30.

32. *A Faithful and Plain Exposition*, 3:427.

33. William Perkins, *Two Treatises: The Nature and Practice of Repentance; and The Combat of the Flesh and Spirit*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Legate, 1631), vol. 1. Perkins's emphasis on repentance raises the issue of how he understood it in relation to faith. He clarifies, "Some may object that repentance goes before all grace because it is preached first. . . . The answer hereto may be this: If we respect the order of nature, there are other graces of God which go before repentance, because a man's conscience must in some sort be settled touching his reconciliation with God in Christ before he can begin to repent. Wherefore, justification and sanctification in order of nature go before repentance. But if we respect time, grace and repentance are both together. As soon as there is fire, it is hot. And as soon as a man is regenerate, he repents. If we respect the outward manifestation of these two, repentance goes before all other graces because it first of all appears outwardly. Regeneration is like the sap of the tree that lies hid within the bark. Repentance is like the bud that speedily shows itself before either blossom, leaf, or fruit appear. Yea, all other graces of the heart, which are needful to salvation, are made manifest by repentance. And for this cause repentance (as I take it) is preached first." *Two Treatises*, 1:455.

34. *Two Treatises*, 1:455. Perkins acknowledges that "divines" understand repentance differently. He remarks, "Some make it a fruit of faith containing two parts (mortification and vivification); some make faith a part of it by dividing it into contrition, faith, [and] new obedience; [and] some make it all one with regeneration. The difference is not in the substance of doctrine, but in the logical manner of handling it. And the difference of handling arises from the divers acceptance of repentance. It is taken [in] two ways: generally and particularly. [It is taken] generally for the whole conversion of a sinner, and so it may contain contrition, faith, [and] new obedience under it, and be confounded with regeneration. It is taken particularly for the renovation of the life and behavior, and so it is a fruit of faith. And I only follow this sense

worded so as to address what he perceived to be the prevalence of “counterfeit” repentance. Far too many rested in their “ceremonial” repentance (“an outward show”) or “desperate” repentance (“a horror of conscience”).³⁵ Yet, these lacked one essential ingredient in Perkins’s estimation, namely, “godly” sorrow.

When we experience “the wrath of God and other miseries,” we often experience a measure of “worldly” sorrow. But “godly” sorrow is quite different, since it does not arise from an apprehension of the negative effects of sin but of the very nature of sin. When this “disposition” takes root, we see sin as the greatest evil and we sorrow because of it. Perkins elaborates, “If there were no conscience to accuse, no devil to terrify, no judge to arraign and condemn, no hell to torment, yet he would be humbled and brought to his knees for his sins because he has offended a loving, merciful, and longsuffering God.”³⁶

The “principal cause” of such “godly” sorrow (and, therefore, of repentance) is the Holy Spirit. By the ministry of the Word, He enables us to gain some “knowledge” of the law of God, the judgment of God, and the guilt of sin. He then assists us in our application of this knowledge to ourselves, thereby producing “fear and sorrow” in respect of God’s judgment against sinners.³⁷ At this point, the Holy Spirit enables us to see God’s mercy in the offer of the gospel. Once we apply this to ourselves, we experience joy (as we see our sins pardoned in Christ) and sorrow (as we see how much our sins displease Christ). The end result is repentance, whereby we resolve within ourselves “to sin no more as [we have] done, but to live in newness of life.”³⁸

For Perkins, this work of repentance continues throughout the believer’s life. This is necessitated by the internal combat between the flesh and the spirit (Gal. 5:17). He defines the “spirit” as “a created quality of holiness” which the Holy Spirit produces in the soul (i.e., the mind, affections, and will), and the “flesh” as “the natural corruption” of the soul whereby it is inclined “to that which is against the law.”³⁹ These two are mingled together in each of the faculties of the soul. Thus, the whole of each is partly flesh and partly spirit.⁴⁰

in this treatise.” “To the Reader,” in *Two Treatises*. Perkins acknowledges that Calvin speaks of repentance in the “general” sense—that is, of the whole conversion of a sinner. He provides the following marginal note: Calvin Inst. I. 3. c. 3. par. 9.

35. *Two Treatises*, 1:468. Perkins believes that Saul typifies “ceremonial” repentance, while Judas typifies “desperate” repentance.

36. *Two Treatises*, 1:455.

37. For an analysis of Perkins’s use of the law and gospel in preaching, see J. Stephen Yuille, “Ready to Receive: Humbling and Softening in William Perkins’s Preparation of the Heart,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 5:2 (2013): 91–106.

38. *Two Treatises*, 1:456.

39. *Two Treatises*, 1:469.

40. *Two Treatises*, 1:469–70.

They fight with each other by “lusting”—that is, “stirring up motions and inclinations in the heart, either to good or evil.”⁴¹ The lusting of the flesh is “to engender evil motions and passions of self-love, envy, pride, unbelief, anger, etc.,” and “to hinder, quench, and overwhelm the good motions of the spirit.” The lusting of the spirit is “to beget good meditations, motions, inclinations, and desires in the mind, will, and affections” and “to hinder and suppress the bad motions and suggestions of the flesh.”

For Perkins, this internal combat is “the estate” of all believers in this life. We are not free from “evil cogitations,” “rebellious inclinations,” or “slips in life and conversation”; rather, we feel ourselves “laden with the corruptions of [our] vile and rebellious nature.” For this reason, we “beware them from [our] heart, and with might and main fight against them by the grace of God’s Spirit.”⁴² In a word, we repent.

Central to Perkins’s doctrine of repentance is his view of the mind as the principal faculty of the soul—a theme he takes up in his fifth work: *A Treatise of Man’s Imaginations, showing his natural evil thoughts, his want of good thoughts, and the way to reform them*, published posthumously in 1607. Perkins’s text is Genesis 8:21, “And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.” For Perkins, the “whole meaning” of this text is summed up as follows: “The mind and understanding part of man is naturally so corrupt that as soon as he can use reason, he does nothing but imagine that which is wicked and against the law of God.”⁴³ This corruption is evident in man’s thoughts concerning God, his neighbor, and himself.⁴⁴

Perkins prescribes a number of rules for reforming these evil thoughts. First, we must bring all our thoughts “into the obedience of God.” Second, we must keep our hearts by watching and guarding them (Prov. 4:23). Third, we must fix our minds on heaven, “where Christ sits at the right hand of His Father.” Fourth, “we must labor to be assured in our hearts by God’s Spirit of our particular reconciliation with God in Christ.” Fifth, we must give ourselves to “spiritual consideration.”⁴⁵

41. *Two Treatises*, 1:470.

42. *Two Treatises*, 1:474.

43. William Perkins, *A Treatise of Man’s Imaginations, showing his natural evil thoughts, his want of good thoughts, and the way to reform them*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Legate, 1631), 2:458.

44. *Man’s Imaginations*, 2:459–73.

45. *Man’s Imaginations*, 2:477–78. Perkins explains in great detail what we should “consider” concerning God and ourselves. *Man’s Imaginations*, 2:479–83.

This last point is crucial to an accurate understanding of Perkins's piety. He never speaks of the Holy Spirit directly touching our soul; moreover, he never contrasts the work of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of the mind. On the contrary, for Perkins, the Holy Spirit works through the mind to edify and sanctify us. This means that we must seek to grow in our knowledge of the truth and in our "spiritual consideration" of the same. Such "consideration" entails "any action of the mind, renewed and sanctified, whereby it does seriously think on those things which may further salvation."⁴⁶ This is the means by which the Holy Spirit produces repentance in our lives. "If we give our minds thereunto in a constant course," says Perkins, "we shall undoubtedly find by good experience that evil thoughts shall not prevail against us, but being reformed in our cogitation we shall send out of our minds as from a cleansed fountain such streams of good words and works, through the whole course of our lives, as shall redound to the glory of our God, the good of our brethren, and the consolation of our own souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be praise in His church for evermore."⁴⁷

In this discussion it becomes apparent that, for Perkins, the mind is "the principal part of the soul."⁴⁸ In making this assertion, he is not suggesting that the will necessarily follows the dictates of the mind.⁴⁹ He does not believe that the mind is the efficient cause of the will's choice. Rather, in referring to the mind as the supreme faculty of the soul, he means: (1) that (as created in the

46. *Man's Imaginations*, 2:478.

47. *Man's Imaginations*, 2:483.

48. *Man's Imaginations*, 2:475. This perspective echoes John Calvin, who states, "Let the office...of understanding be to distinguish between objects, as each seems worthy of approval or disapproval; while that of the will, to choose and follow what the understanding pronounces good, but to reject and flee what it disapproves." *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, in *The Library of Christian Classics*, ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.15.7. Here, Calvin describes the proper functioning of the soul as the mind directing the will. There is no suggestion, however, that the will necessarily follows the mind. On the contrary, he writes, "It will not be enough for the mind to be illuminated by the Spirit of God unless the heart is also strengthened and supported by his power. In this matter the Schoolmen go completely astray, who in considering faith identify it with a bare and simple assent arising out of knowledge, and leave out confidence and assurance of heart." Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.33.

49. Norman Fiering identifies three competing perspectives on the relationship between the mind and the will: (1) According to Scholastic intellectualism (or Aristotelian and Thomist intellectualism), the will always follows the mind. This idea is based upon the notion that no one can will evil as evil. In other words, the soul is always inclined toward what it perceives to be good. (2) According to Scholastic voluntarism, the will is divided, in that there is a conflict between the relative and absolute judgment. (3) According to Augustinian voluntarism, the will does not necessarily follow the mind. Therefore, sinful nature is primarily a matter of perverse will, not intellectual error. Norman Fiering, *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-Century Harvard: A Discipline in Tradition* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 111–18.

image of God) the will ought to follow the mind; (2) that the knowledge of God always begins in the mind; and (3) that the will cannot choose that which is unknown to the mind. In his discussion, Perkins clearly distinguishes between temporal priority and causal priority,⁵⁰ remarking, “The mind must first conceive before the will can desire, or the affections be delighted, or the members of the body practice anything.”⁵¹

According to Perkins, the fall inverted the psychological priority within each of us. In innocence, we were intellectual beings, with the mind informing the will. As a result of the fall, we became voluntarist beings with the corrupted will now driving the darkened mind. By regeneration, however, the temporal priority of the mind is restored. It behooves us, therefore, to engage in “spiritual consideration” whereby God’s Spirit impresses God’s truth successively upon the three faculties of the soul—instructing the mind, inflaming the affections, and inclining the will.

When the faculties are thus engaged, the alteration in life is plain for all to see. Perkins insists that one of the most significant changes occurs in relation to the tongue. He takes up this subject in the sixth work: *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue according to God’s Word*, published in 1593. In the introduction, Perkins bemoans the “lamentable and fearful” abuse of the tongue in his day, and says that it causes “manifold sins against God and innumerable scandals and grievances to our brethren.”⁵² He is convinced that the only way to tame the tongue is by means of a “pure” heart. “If the fountain is

50. There are two main schools of thought surrounding intellectualism and voluntarism. According to Richard Muller, these terms refer to “the two faculties of soul, intellect and will, and to the question of the priority of the one over the other, intellectualism indicates a priority of intellect, voluntarism a priority of the will.” “*Fides* and *Cognitio* in Relation to the Problem of Intellect and Will in the Theology of John Calvin,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 25 (Nov. 1990): 211. Intellectualism identifies the mind as the causal faculty in the soul’s approval of good whereas voluntarism identifies the will (inclination and choice). Does the will necessarily follow the intellect’s proposal of the good, or does the will possess the ability to deny the known good? For overviews of the historical development of the views surrounding the relationship between the mind and the will, see Hannah Arendt, *Two/Willing in The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt, 1971); and Vernon Bourke, *Will in Western Thought: An Historico-Critical Survey* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964).

51. *Man’s Imaginations*, 2:477. Elsewhere, Perkins comments, “The mind must approve and give assent, before the will can choose or will: and when the mind has not power to conceive or give assent, there the will has no power to will.” *A Reformed Catholic; or, A declaration showing how near we may come to the present Church of Rome in sundry points of religion, and wherein we must forever depart from them*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Legate, 1631), 1:553.

52. William Perkins, “To the Reader,” in *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue according to God’s Word* in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Legate, 1631), vol. 1.

defiled,” says he, “the streams that issue thence cannot be clean (Matt. 15:19).”⁵³ For this reason, Perkins encourages us to “get” a pure heart by examining our lives for sin, confessing our sin to God, and seeking pardon in the name of Christ. When God pardons, He stretches forth His “mighty hand” (whereby He made us) to make us a new creature—“to create a new heart in [us], to renew a right spirit in [us], and to establish [us] by His free Spirit.”

Having obtained a pure heart, we must now be diligent to “keep” it. This is done by applying “Christ crucified with all His merits.” By faith we must spread ourselves “upon the cross of Christ,” applying our hands and feet “to His pierced hands and feet,” and applying our “wretched heart to Christ’s bleeding heart.” As we do, we will feel ourselves “warmed by the heat of God’s Spirit, and sin from day to day crucified with Christ, and [our] dead heart quickened and revived.” By means of this application, God’s tender mercy in Christ compels us to “endeavor to keep [our] heart and life unblameable, so that [we] do not offend Him hereafter in word or deed.”⁵⁴

From all this it is evident that Perkins has no place for a truncated gospel—a Christ who fails to transform. While excluding good works from justification, he most certainly does not exclude them from the Christian’s life. The instrument by which we lay hold of Christ is faith alone (without any works). However, when we speak of the way of salvation, good works are absolutely essential. In short, there must be a transformation in word and deed.

The seventh work in this volume is *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, published posthumously in 1608. Perkins was driven to preach this series of sermons by his concern over the prevalence of witchcraft in his day.⁵⁵ “Witchcraft is a rife and common sin,” he writes, “and very many are entangled with it, being either practitioners thereof in their own persons, or at the least yielding to seek for help and counsel of such as practice it.”⁵⁶ To address the

53. *Government of the Tongue*, 1:440.

54. *Government of the Tongue*, 1:440.

55. For more on this, see Peter Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford: University Press, 2016); Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders: A Seventeenth-Century English Tragedy* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005); Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: University Press, 2006); Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London: Routledge, 1999); Darren Oldridge, *The Devil in Early Modern England* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000); and J. A. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

56. William Perkins, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft, so far forth as it is revealed in the Scriptures and manifested by true experience*, in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Haviland, 1631), 3:607.

prevalence of this sin, he chooses to expound Exodus 22:18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

Perkins begins by defining his terms. Witchcraft, says he, "is a wicked art, serving for the working of wonders, by the assistance of the devil, so far forth as God shall in justice permit."⁵⁷ This "wicked art" consists primarily of "divination," "enchantment," and "juggling." As for the "witch," Perkins defines him or her as "a magician who either by open or secret league, wittingly and willingly, consents to use the aid and assistance of the devil in the working of wonders."⁵⁸

Having instructed his readers as to the nature of witchcraft and the character of witches, Perkins arrives at his main point—namely, "All witches, being thoroughly convicted by the magistrate, ought according to the law of Moses to be put to death."⁵⁹ Witchcraft is particularly deserving of death because of its obvious association with the devil. Perkins explains, "Now let it be observed of what horrible impiety they stand guilty before God, who join in confederacy with Satan. Hereby they renounce the Lord who made them, they make no more account of His favor and protection, they do quite cut themselves off from the covenant made with Him in baptism, from the communion of the saints, from the true worship and service of God. And on the contrary they give themselves unto Satan, as their god, whom they continually fear and serve. Thus, they are become the most detestable enemies to God and His people that can be."⁶⁰

Perkins defends his position on the basis of his understanding of the law. First, he believes Moses's judicial law is perpetual because it is moral. It is made "moral" by the sentence of death and, therefore, it "binds all men in all ages."⁶¹ Second, Perkins believes that Moses's judicial law is perpetual because it is natural. Treason is punishable by death "in all countries and kingdoms, among all people in every age." It follows, for Perkins, that witchcraft is punishable by death because it is treason against "God Himself, the King of kings."⁶² Third, Perkins believes that witchcraft is a form of idolatry and, therefore, punishable by death (Deut. 17:3–5). Fourth, Perkins believes that witchcraft is a form of seduction and, therefore, punishable by death (Deut. 13:6–9).

57. *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 3:607.

58. *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 3:636.

59. *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 3:650. Perkins's insistence that witches be put to death might pose a problem for some readers. Even more disconcerting is his belief that torture ("the rack or some other violent means") may "lawfully and with good conscience be used" to force a confession. *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 3:643. Perkins does limit its use to exceptional cases of obstinacy; nevertheless, the fact that he makes any allowance at all is problematic.

60. *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 3:639.

61. *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 3:651.

62. *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 3:651.

While providing a fascinating glimpse into an era steeped in folk religion and superstition, this treatise's most lasting significance is its reminder that believers are the victims of the devil's continual assaults. Our vulnerability to attack necessitates prudence in distancing ourselves from all forms of witchcraft, vigilance in keeping watch over our hearts, and diligence in practicing those disciplines by which we can resist the devil's schemes.

The final work in this volume is *A Resolution to the Country Man, Proving It Utterly Unlawful to Buy or Use Our Yearly Prognostications*.⁶³ The reader will in all likelihood find this treatise to be tedious and even somewhat superfluous, but its subject matter was a serious enough problem in Perkins's day to merit his attention. He was well acquainted with the practice of making prognostications based on the stars, stating that he had "long studied this art" in hopes of learning its "secrets." But eventually God showed him its "profaneness."⁶⁴ For this reason, Perkins takes it upon himself to rebuke the prognosticator for his "manifold untruths and impieties," "profane speeches and actions," and "tricks of deceit." While the actual content of this treatise will not generate much interest among pastors or theologians, it might prove otherwise for the historian who will undoubtedly glean some insight into the nature and practice of prognostications in the sixteenth century, and a better understanding of the prominent place they occupied in English society.

When William Crashaw arrived as a young student at Cambridge in 1591,⁶⁵ Perkins was well installed in his lectureship at Great St. Andrew's Church (1584–1602) and in his fellowship at Christ's College (1584–1595). Crashaw immediately fell under Perkins's ministerial influence, and it is likely that he was among those students who sought his spiritual counsel on Sunday afternoons. After Perkins's death in 1602, Crashaw supervised the publication of several of Perkins's works. He observed in a preface to one of these: "The scope of all his godly endeavors was to teach Christ Jesus and Him crucified, and [he] much labored to move all men to repentance."⁶⁶ This ministerial emphasis is confirmed in the present volume, which brings together several important motifs in Perkins's preaching and writing—namely, what it means to look to

63. William Perkins, *A Resolution to the Country Man, Proving It Utterly Unlawful to Buy or Use Our Yearly Prognostications* in *The Whole Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London: John Haviland, 1631), vol. 3.

64. "To the Reader," in *Prognostications*.

65. William Crashaw (1572–1626) completed his M.A. in 1595 and B.D. in 1603. He ministered at several churches in London. For a brief biographical sketch, see *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. S. Lee (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1909).

66. William Crashaw, "The Epistle Dedicatory," in Perkins, *A Faithful and Plain Exposition upon Zephaniah 2:1–2*.

Christ, repent of sin, renew the mind, tame the tongue, and combat the devil. Each occupies an important place in Perkins's experiential piety—what he himself described as “the more sincere profession of religion.”⁶⁷

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67. *Man's Imaginations*, 2:472. Here, Perkins acknowledges that opponents use the term “Puritanism” in a derogatory fashion to describe this “sincere profession of religion.”

A Declaration of the True Manner of
Knowing Christ Crucified

“God forbid that I should rejoice, but in the cross
of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14).

Printed by John Legate,
Printer to the University of Cambridge.

1596

To the Reader

It is the common sin of men at this day, and that in the very places of learning, that Christ crucified is not known as He ought. The right knowledge of [Christ] is not to make often mention of His death and passion and to call Him our Savior, or to handle the whole mystery of God incarnate soundly and learnedly, though that is a worthy gift of God. But [it is], first of all, by the consideration of the passion to be touched with an inward and a lively feeling of our sins, for which our Redeemer suffered the pangs of hell, and to grow to a thorough dislike of ourselves and our past lives for them, and from the ground of the heart to purpose a reformation and a conformity with Christ in all good duties that concern man. [It is,] second, in the passion, as in a mirror, to behold, and (in beholding) to labor to comprehend the length, breadth, height, [and] depth of the love of the Father who gave His own dear Son to death, and the goodness of the Son who loved His enemies more than Himself, that our hearts might be rooted and grounded in the same love, and be further inflamed to love God again.

To further this true manner of knowing Christ crucified, I have penned these few lines. Read them at your leisure, and have care to put them in practice; otherwise, you are but an enemy of the cross of Christ, though you profess His name ever so much.

William Perkins

January 5, 1596

The Right Knowledge of Christ Crucified

It is the most excellent and worthy part of divine wisdom to know Christ crucified. The prophet Isaiah says, “The knowledge of thy righteous servant (that is, Christ crucified) shall justify many” [Isa. 53:11]. And Christ Himself says, “This is eternal life to know thee the only God, and whom thou hast sent Jesus Christ” [John 17:3]. And Paul says, “I have decreed to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified” [1 Cor. 2:2]. Again, “God forbid that I should rejoice in anything but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” [Gal. 6:14]. Again, “I think all things but loss for the excellent knowledge sake of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do judge them but dung that I might win Christ” [Phil. 3:8].

In the right way of knowing Christ crucified, two points must be considered: (1) how man for his part is to know Christ; [and] (2) how [Christ] is to be known of man.

Point 1

Touching the first, man must know Christ, not generally and confusedly, but by a lively, powerful, and operative knowledge, for otherwise the devils themselves know Christ. In this knowledge three things are required.

The first is notice or consideration, whereby you must conceive in mind, understand, and seriously bethink yourself of Christ as He is revealed in the history of the gospel, and as He is offered to your particular person in the ministry of the Word and sacraments. And that this consideration may not be dead and idle in you, two things must be done. First, you must labor to feel yourself to stand in need of Christ crucified, yea, to stand in excessive need even of the very least drop of His blood for the washing away of your sins. And unless you thoroughly feel yourself to want all that goodness and grace that is in Christ, and that you even stand in extreme need of His passion, you shall never learn or teach Christ in deed and truth. The second thing is with the understanding of the doctrine of Christ to join thirsting, whereby man in his very soul and spirit longs after the participation of Christ, and says in this case, as Samson said, “Give me water, I die for thirst” [Judg. 15:18].

The second part of knowledge is application, whereby you must know and believe not only that Christ was crucified but that He was crucified for you; for you, I say, in particular. Here two rules must be remembered and practiced. First, that Christ on the cross was your pledge and surety in particular; that He then stood in your very room and place in which you yourself in your own person should have stood; that your very personal and particular sins were imputed and applied to Him; that He stood guilty as a malefactor for them, and suffered the very pangs of hell; and that His sufferings are as much in acceptation with God as if you had borne the curse of the law in your own person eternally. The holding and believing of this point is the very foundation of religion as also of the church of God. Therefore, in any wise, be careful to apply Christ crucified to yourself. And as Elisha, when he would revive the child of the Shunamite, went up and lay upon him, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his hands upon his hands, and his eyes upon his eyes, and stretched himself upon him [2 Kings 4:34], even so, if you would be revived to everlasting life, you must by faith (as it were) set yourself upon the cross of Christ, and apply your hands to His hands, your feet to His feet, and your sinful heart to His bleeding heart, and content not yourself with Thomas to put your finger into His side, but even dive and plunge yourself wholly, both body and soul, into the wounds and blood of Christ. This will make you to cry with Thomas and say, "My Lord, my God."¹ And this is to be crucified with Christ. And yet, do not content yourself with this, but by faith also descend with Christ from the cross to the grave, and bury yourself in the very burial of Christ. And then, look as the dead soldier tumbled into the grave of Elisha was made alive at the very touching of his body [2 Kings 13:21], so shall you by a spiritual touching of Christ, dead and buried, be quickened to everlasting life. The second rule is that Christ crucified is yours, being really given you by God the Father, even as truly as houses and land are given by earthly fathers to their children. You must firmly hold and believe this, and hence it is that the benefits of Christ are before God ours indeed for our justification and salvation.

The third part in lively knowledge is that by all the affections of our hearts we must be carried to Christ and (as it were) transformed into Him. Whereas He gave Himself wholly for us, we can do no less than bestow our hearts upon Him. We must, therefore, love Him above all, following the martyr, Ignatius, who said that Christ "his love was crucified." We must value Him at so high a price that He must be unto us better than ten thousand worlds; yea, all things which we enjoy must be but as "dross and dung" unto us in respect of Him. Lastly, all our joy, rejoicing, comfort, and confidence must be placed in Him.

1. John 20:28.