



William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England

W. B. Patterson

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William Perkins and the Making of Protestant England presents a new interpretation of the theology and historical significance of William Perkins (1558-1602), a prominent Cambridge scholar and teacher during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Though often described as a Puritan, Perkins was in fact a prominent and effective apologist for the established church whose contributions to English religious thought had an immense influence on an English Protestant culture that endured well into modern times. The English Reformation is shown to be a part of the European-wide Reformation, and Perkins himself a leading Reformed theologian. In *A Reformed Catholike* (1597), Perkins distinguished the theology upheld in the English Church from that of the Roman Catholic Church, while at the same time showing the considerable extent to which the two churches shared common concerns. His books dealt extensively with the nature of salvation and the need to follow a moral way of life. Perkins wrote pioneering works on conscience and 'practical divinity'. In *The Arte of Prophecy* (1607), he provided preachers with a guidebook to the study of the Bible and their oral presentation of its teachings. He dealt boldly and in down-to-earth terms with the need to achieve social justice in an era of severe economic distress. Perkins is shown to have been instrumental to the making of a Protestant England, and to have contributed significantly to the development of the religious culture not only of Britain but also of a broad range of countries on the Continent.

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