

“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

The Works of WILLIAM PERKINS

VOLUME 4

Exposition of Jude
Exposition of Revelation 1–3

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 4 of William Perkins's Works

In a letter dated August 1, 1684, included as a preface to Thomas Manton's published sermons on Matthew 25, three ministers (William Bates, John Collinges, and John Howe)¹ encourage the reader to seek out sermons that are "substantial, scriptural, and practical," adding that "all other discourses are abusively called preaching, and Athens were a more proper place for them than a preacher's pulpit."² Interestingly, in the course of their commendation of Manton for his "solid" discourses, they provide a brief overview of the history of preaching.

They begin with the ancient church, highlighting two famous preachers: Chrysostom in the Greek and Augustine in the Latin. They applaud these two for their "judicious explications of Scripture"—for their "plenty of matter, clearness of judgment, [and] orderliness of method."³ Moving into the Middle Ages, the three ministers note a dramatic shift in preaching. They contend that it "turned into trifling about scholastic niceties," whereby preachers found their chief texts in Duns Scotus or Thomas Aquinas rather than in Scripture. The Reformation, however, marked another pivotal turning point in the history of preaching. The three ministers speak glowingly of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, William Farel, Pierre Viret, and Theodore Beza, because of their faithful handling of Scripture in the pulpit; yet they lament the subsequent generation of preachers who—for the most part—failed to follow the example of the magisterial Reformers.

Finally, in their overview of the history of preaching, the three ministers arrive at their own day, affirming that God has "reserved it for a great blessing," for it is a "more fertile" season of preaching than "any since that of the

1. William Bates (1625–1699), John Collinges (1623–1690), and John Howe (1630–1705) were Manton's contemporaries. Like Manton, they were Presbyterian ministers, ejected for nonconformity in 1662. Each published popular works on divinity.

2. "To the Reader," in *Several Sermons Upon the Twenty-Fifth Chapter of Matthew*, in *The Works of Thomas Manton* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2008), 9:316.

3. "To the Reader," 9:316.

apostles.”⁴ They account for this unprecedented period of homiletic blessing by pointing to one man, William Perkins, declaring that he was the first to restore preaching to “its true sense” and to teach “the true manner of it.”⁵

According to Perkins, the “true manner” of preaching consists of four succinct steps. In the first, the preacher reads his text “distinctly out of the canonical Scriptures.”⁶ For Perkins, the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament constitute the “wisdom of God concerning the truth.”⁷ He is adamant that the nature of the Holy Spirit’s work in the authors of Scripture was unique. The implication is that the Holy Spirit now illuminates what He then inspired; that is to say, He only works upon the foundation of the Word. For Perkins, this means that the preacher’s task is simply to expound what the Holy Spirit has revealed in Scripture.

The second step in preaching is “to give the sense and understanding” of the text. This is known as interpretation: “the opening of the words and sentences of the Scripture, so that one entire and natural sense may appear.”⁸ Perkins is dismissive of the fourfold approach to studying Scripture (i.e., literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical), popularized during the medieval era. Instead, he focuses on the literary style and structure of the text and examines its significant words and phrases.⁹ He also asks questions of the text. Who wrote it? Why? What other passages of Scripture shed light on it? How does it relate to the principal themes of Scripture? In all this, Perkins emphasizes the importance of opening Scripture so that its meaning becomes evident to all.

The third step in preaching is “to collect a few and profitable points of doctrine.” Perkins refers to this process as “the right cutting of the Word.”¹⁰ In

4. “To the Reader,” 9:316.

5. “To the Reader,” 9:316–17. The three ministers add the following remark: “The generality of good preachers have made it their business to preach Christ and the exceeding riches of his grace, and to study matter rather than words, upon Mr. Perkins’s old principle *verba sequenter res*.”

6. William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying; or, A treatise concerning the sacred and only true manner and method of preaching*, in *The Works of William Perkins* (London, 1631), 2:649.

7. Perkins, *Art of Prophesying*, 2:649.

8. Perkins, *Art of Prophesying*, 2:653. Richard Muller observes that Perkins “evidences a preference for a close, literal/grammatical location of the meaning of the text coupled with, as was true of the work of his predecessors in the Reformed tradition, a strong sense of the direct theological address of the text to the church in the present.” “William Perkins and the Protestant Exegetical Tradition: Interpretation, Style and Method,” in *A Commentary on Hebrews 11 (1609 Edition)*, ed. John H. Augustine (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 87. Muller explains Perkins’s use of “scope” and “method” in exegesis—he divides each verse, explains the meaning of its parts, and then draws out the text’s argument in terms of the grammatical and logical relations of the parts.

9. Perkins, *Art of Prophesying*, 2:653–62.

10. Perkins, *Art of Prophesying*, 2:662.

simple terms, it involves deducing the main point of a passage—both theological and practical. The fourth and final step is “to apply the doctrines rightly collected to the life and manners of men in a simple and plain speech.”¹¹ This is where Perkins excels in his preaching, in that he carefully divides his audience into six categories: (1) the ignorant and unteachable; (2) the ignorant and teachable; (3) the knowledgeable and proud; (4) the knowledgeable and humble; (5) those who believe; and (6) those in a fallen condition. Recognizing that his congregation consists of people from each of these categories,¹² Perkins seeks to “apply the doctrines” to each one through correction, admonition, and exhortation. “Thus any place of Scripture ought to be handled,” writes Perkins, “yet so as that all the doctrines be not propounded to the people, but those only which may be fitly applied to our times and to the present condition of the church.”¹³

The effectiveness of Perkins's preaching was due in large part to this last step. He had a penchant for dealing with cases of conscience through careful self-examination and faithful scriptural application.¹⁴ According to one report, each of his sermons “seemed all law and all gospel, all cordials and all corrosives, as the different necessities of people apprehended it.”¹⁵ By all accounts, he was a skilled spiritual physician, who excelled at expounding and applying God's truth to those under his pastoral care. He adapted his deep theological learning to the needs of his people because he was determined to preach clear and direct sermons that appealed to every listener.

All of the above elements of Perkins's preaching are on full display in the present volume, which contains two treatises—each a collection of edited sermons. He originally preached this material at Great St. Andrews Church, Cambridge, where he ministered for eighteen years.

The first treatise is *A Godly and Learned Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Jude*. Perkins analyzes Jude's letter by way of three chief sections: the salutation (vv. 1–2), exhortation (vv. 3–23), and conclusion (vv. 24–25). The key to his analysis resides in his understanding of Jude's command in verse 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was

11. Perkins, *Art of Prophesying*, 2:664.

12. For a helpful analysis of these categories, see Erroll Hulse, “William Perkins: Application in Preaching,” in *The Pure Flame of Devotion: The History of Christian Spirituality*, eds. G. Stephen Weaver and Ian Hugh Clary (Kitchener: Joshua Press, 2013), 177–94.

13. Perkins, *Art of Prophesying*, 2:669.

14. See Ian Breward, “William Perkins and the Origins of Puritan Casuistry,” *The Evangelist Quarterly* 40 (1968): 16–22; George L. Mosse, *The Holy Pretence: A Study in Christianity and Reason of State from William Perkins to John Winthrop* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), 48–67.

15. Thomas Fuller, *Abel Redevivus: or, The Dead Yet Speaking. The Lives and Deaths of the Modern Divines* (London, 1651), 434.

needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Perkins perceives this command as a call for “all Christians” to persevere in the profession of the gospel by taking heed of “false teachers and deceivers,” who seek to infiltrate the church.¹⁶ In many ways, Perkins defines his own ministry in terms of this calling. Believing the Church of England had rightly reformed medieval teaching in accordance with the Scriptures, he is earnest in his defense of its confessional standard—namely, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*. Throughout his treatise, therefore, he takes aim at those “adversaries” who undermine the church’s “faith.” These include Epicurists, Libertines, Familists, Anabaptists, and—above all else—“the popish church.”¹⁷

Perkins’s particular preoccupation with the Church of Rome is understandable, given that in his day the English Reformation was far from over. In a span of twenty years, the official religion of the land had shifted four times as monarchs came and went. When Elizabeth I ascended the throne in 1558 (the year of Perkins’s birth), the majority of England’s population was still inclined to Roman Catholicism. This state of affairs was exacerbated by the pope’s contention that Elizabeth was illegitimate and, therefore, unqualified to rule. Her position was made even more precarious by the fact that her relative, Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, aspired to the English throne. As the great-granddaughter of Henry VII, she had a legitimate claim, which was strengthened by her marriage to Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, the grandson of Henry VIII’s sister, Margaret. Mary engaged in on-going plots to take the throne from Elizabeth, until finally meeting the executioner’s axe in 1587.

This political intrigue was compounded by the pope’s continual meddling in England’s internal affairs. In 1570, Pius V issued a papal bull, excommunicating Elizabeth as a heretic and branding her “the servant of iniquity.” Moreover, he promised direct passage to heaven for anyone who would assassinate her. This threat was further heightened on St. Bartholomew’s Day, August 24, 1572,

16. William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Jude* (London, 1606), 2.

17. Writing in the 1660s, Thomas Manton takes issue with Perkins’s application of the Epistle of Jude to the Church of Rome. He comments, “The spirit and drift of this epistle is carried out mainly against this fanatical and libertine party, and therefore I suppose it to be a mistake in Dr. Willet and Mr. Perkins, and others, when they would turn the edge of it against the Papists. I confess they had a temptation that way, these being the only heretical party with whom the church of God was then in suit...but certainly the party described here are not a domineering faction, that carry things by power and greatness and height of natural abilities, as the Papists do, but a creeping party...if our modern Ranters, Familists, Quakers, be not here described...I confess then I understand nothing of the whole epistle.” *A Practical Commentary; or, An Exposition with Notes on the Epistle of Jude*, in *The Works of Thomas Manton* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Books, 2008), 5:7.

when mobs murdered thousands of Huguenots in the streets of Paris. The English saw this horrific massacre as a foreshadowing of an impending invasion. Two years later, the first Roman Catholic priests, trained at a seminary in the Spanish Netherlands, arrived on England's shores. Their mission was to minister to the faithful while opposing Elizabeth. Within a few years of their arrival, Jesuits also made their way to England. These "black horsemen of the pope" infiltrated English society for the express purpose of restoring the old religion.

Perkins would have been well aware of these political and religious machinations—each popish plot being the topic of anxious conversation at Cambridge. Recognizing that the Reformation was far from secure, he was determined to defend the Church of England in its struggle with Rome. He labored to prove to his countrymen that the doctrine of their church differed fundamentally from that of the Church of Rome. In one of his most well-known treatises, *A Reformed Catholic*, he makes it clear that "union of the two religions"—namely, Protestantism and Catholicism—"can never be made, more than the union of light and darkness." By way of explanation, he adds, "For though in words they [i.e., the Catholics] honor Christ, yet indeed they turn him to a pseudo-Christ and an idol of their own brain."¹⁸ In short, they have wandered so far from the teaching of Scripture that they have lost the true knowledge of Christ. They no longer constitute a "true church" because they have overthrown "the truth of doctrine."¹⁹ In Perkins's estimation, therefore, the Roman Church is not merely one of several acceptable Christian traditions; on the contrary, it is the "great whore."²⁰

This on-going conflict provides the historical setting for Perkins's sermons on the epistle of Jude.²¹ While many of his points of application reflect

18. William Perkins, *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 Works of William Perkins: Vol. I* (London, 1608), 1:549. In this treatise, Perkins addresses twenty-two issues. He identifies four as particularly worthy of "separation": the meaning of (1) justification, (2) Christ's satisfaction, (3) Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and (4) prayers to saints.

19. Perkins, *Jude*, 46.

20. Revelation 17:1–5. Perkins, *Reformed Catholic*, 1:549–50.

21. As the publisher acknowledges, a significant portion of Perkins's treatise "seems to be a direct and natural answer unto a popish pamphlet" which asserts "that Protestants have neither faith nor piety." "Publisher's Postscript," in Perkins, *Jude*, 155. The "popish pamphlet" is Thomas Wright's *Certain Articles or Forcible Reasons: Discovering the palpable absurdities and most notorious errors of the Protestant religion* (1600). Perkins appears to have this pamphlet in mind when expounding the essential elements of "the faith"—namely, twenty-one "grounds" of doctrine and eleven "grounds" of practice. *Jude*, 17–33, 34–45. As he explains each of these, he gives specific attention to "adversaries." More often than not, he identifies the chief adversary as "the popish church."

a context peculiar to the Elizabethan era, his insights into what it means to “contend for the faith” still prove applicable today.

The second treatise is *A Godly and Learned Exposition or Commentary upon the Three First Chapters of Revelation*. It consists of a series of edited sermons, which Perkins originally preached in 1595. Most of the treatise is taken up with a careful consideration of the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia. Perkins approaches each letter from the same threefold angle: preface, matter, and conclusion. In the “preface,” he highlights the person of Christ and His significance to the church. In the “matter,” he focuses on the condition of the church—namely, what Christ approves and rebukes. In the “conclusion,” he emphasizes Christ’s bounty and man’s duty.

At the outset, Perkins affirms that the seven letters constitute “a prophetic history, touching the state of the church to the end.”²² That is to say, they describe churches throughout the age spanning Christ’s two advents. For this reason, Perkins is convinced that the letters contain “singular matter” fit for his particular “time and age.”²³ He sees, for example, the Church of England in the church of Ephesus: “If Christ has something against this church for leaving her first love, then no doubt He has something...against us at this day. Howsoever we may persuade ourselves that we are high in His favor, yet we are in the like or a worse estate than this church now was, for a great part of the body of our church has left off their first love, and the greatest part has no love at all.”²⁴ He also sees the Church of England in the church of Sardis: “This which Christ says of Sardis may be said...of our Church of England.... For the body of our people seem to be alive by their outward profession, but indeed they are dead in respect of the power of godliness.... Men content themselves with an outward profession, but the spiritual life of grace is not to be seen.”²⁵ Even more enlightening is Perkins’s assertion that the Church of England mirrors the church of Laodicea: “From the consideration of our estate, I gather that we are in danger to be spewed out of the mouth of Christ, as lukewarm water out of the stomach. This is the punishment here threatened, which was written for our instruction, that we might know where lukewarmness takes place there this punishment will follow. We may flatter ourselves, as the men in the old world did, and think all is well, never regarding till the judgment come. But

22. William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition or Commentary upon the Three First Chapters of Revelation* (London, 1607), 12. Also see p. 45.

23. Perkins, *Revelation*, 1.

24. Perkins, *Revelation*, 81.

25. Perkins, *Revelation*, 159.

the truth is that in regard of this sin we are in danger to be cut off from the church, and from true society with Christ."²⁶

While acknowledging the Church of England's progress in terms of ecclesiastical and doctrinal reformation, Perkins laments the lack of personal reformation among its members. He is convinced that many of his countrymen still suffer the ill-effects of the Roman Catholic dogma of implicit faith. That is to say, they still assume that as long as they accept certain points of religion they are good Christians. "If we look into the general state of our people," says Perkins, "we shall see that religion is professed, but not obeyed; nay, obedience is counted as preciseness, and so reproached."²⁷ While unwavering in his loyalty to the Church of England, he believes it is for the most part "lukewarm," and thereby in danger of exposing the whole nation to apocalyptic peril. For this reason, he pleads with his audience: "Consider the fearful judgments of God against such as live in His church as members thereof, and yet give no light.... Here then all ignorant persons and loose livers, who abound in every place, must be admonished to reform themselves, and labor to become lights in God's church."²⁸

This admonition provides the backdrop for Perkins's sermons on the first three chapters of Revelation. In his assessment, the church is full of "common Protestants" who demonstrate little vitality. They possess a notional belief in God, yet remain worldly in their ultimate concerns and pursuits. For Perkins, this is unthinkable. True faith can never remain indifferent to the things of God. On the contrary, it always engages the whole person in living for Christ. Troubled by the prevalence of those who accept empty profession as conversion and dead formality as godliness, he urges his audience to move beyond mere intellectual assent to heartfelt dedication to Christ.

There is much in these two treatises to commend to the reader. For starters, Perkins's unwavering commitment to the Bible as the Word of God provides a refreshing corrective to the skepticism that plagues many modern approaches to biblical interpretation. In Perkins's estimation, when we read or hear the Bible, we are reading and hearing that which "goeth forth out of [God's] mouth" (Isa. 55:11).²⁹ It bridges the expanse between heaven and earth, infinite and finite, Creator and creature. It is as powerful as the rain and snow that come down from heaven and "watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread for the eater"

26. Perkins, *Revelation*, 196.

27. William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition upon Christ's Sermon on the Mount*, in *The Works of William Perkins* (London, 1631), 3:261.

28. Perkins, *Revelation*, 50.

29. Perkins, *Jude*, 101.

(Isa. 55:10). This means that, for Perkins, we must listen to the Bible as if we heard God speaking from heaven.³⁰ Furthermore, we must uphold the Bible as the source and measure of all spiritual truth and the only trustworthy guide for all of life. “The Scripture of the prophets and apostles is a perfect rule of faith and manners,” writes Perkins. “It is of all things to be believed.”³¹

Second, Perkins's delight in Christ as an all-sufficient savior is a much needed tonic for the ever-increasing number of professing Christians who question the belief that salvation is found in Christ alone. In Perkins's day, the Roman Catholic Church affirmed the authority of Scripture *et* (and) tradition, salvation by grace *et* effort, and justification by faith *et* works. Moreover, it pointed people to Christ *et* saints, masses, pilgrimages, penances, and indulgences, as the way to obtain favor with God. In the midst of the resultant confusion, Perkins affirmed *solus Christus*. In His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, Christ alone is fitted to be the Mediator between God and man.³² By virtue of our union with Him, we participate in all of the benefits of His threefold office. We have communion with Him in His names and titles; we have communion with Him in His righteousness; we have communion with Him in His death and resurrection; and we have communion with Him in His glory. For Perkins, this makes Christ “a perfect redeemer.”³³

Third, Perkins's portrayal of Christ our Righteousness provides much needed relief to the sin-weary soul. In his handling of the gospel, Perkins repeatedly proclaims two truths: first, Christ's atoning death, whereby He bore the wrath of God in our place; and, second, Christ's perfect life, whereby He fulfilled all righteousness on our behalf. For Perkins, these two constitute a “true description of justification.”³⁴ When explaining “the very thing for which a sinner is justified,” he writes, “It is the obedience of Christ, the Redeemer and Mediator, passive and active. The former standing in suffering the death of His body and the pains of the second death in His soul; the latter in fulfilling the law.”³⁵ As far as Perkins is concerned, only Christ's passive and active obedience can satisfy the sinner's hunger and thirst after righteousness.³⁶ There is, therefore, nothing more soul-satisfying than contemplating our interest in Him.

30. Perkins, *Jude*, 18.

31. Perkins, *Jude*, 18.

32. Perkins, *Revelation*, 17–22.

33. Perkins, *Revelation*, 23.

34. Perkins, *Jude*, 27.

35. Perkins, *Jude*, 27.

36. Perkins, *Jude*, 151. Also see *Revelation*, 203.

Fourth, Perkins's handling of the doctrines of justification and sanctification brings clarity to some of the recent discussions concerning the relationship between the two—between faith and works, grace and effort, the indicative and the imperative. Perkins believes that the faith that unites us to Christ is a life-imparting, fruit-bearing, and work-producing faith. “The end of all God's grace,” says he, “is that we should be furthered in holiness of life. We are elected that we might be holy; the end of our calling is that we may be saints; justification frees from punishment of sin; sanctification from corruption and sin itself; faith purifies the heart; love contains us in obedience; he that has hope purges himself and so of all other graces.”³⁷ For Perkins, the gospel is about what God does for us and in us. Therefore, he is careful to teach both justification and sanctification, refusing to separate the two when speaking of the Christian life. Yet he is also careful to distinguish between the two, in order to avoid the pitfalls of legalism and antinomianism.

Fifth, Perkins's view of theology as “the science of living blessedly forever”³⁸ is a healthy challenge to the Enlightenment concept of religious neutrality in theology. Adopting this false premise, many people view theology as the academic study of religious concepts without any consideration of how they relate to life. This kind of thinking is completely foreign to Perkins, for whom theology is not the study of information about abstract ideas but an encounter with the living God. Simply put, to know God is to be changed by God.³⁹ For this reason, it is impossible to divorce faith (belief/theology) and love (practice/piety). “The wholesome doctrine of faith contains things needful to be believed,” writes Perkins. Likewise, “the wholesome doctrine of love contains things necessarily to be practiced.”⁴⁰

Finally, Perkins's emphasis on preaching as the means by which the Holy Spirit exercises His power in our salvation elevates the pulpit to its rightful place. Perkins approaches every text as either law or gospel, “the two parts of the word of God.”⁴¹ The law promises life to those who obey, whereas the gospel promises life to those who believe. The law requires us to do something to be saved, whereas the gospel requires us to believe in Christ, “not as a work, but as it is an instrument and the hand of the soul to lay hold upon Christ.”

37. Perkins, *Jude*, 53.

38. William Perkins, *A Golden Chain: or, The Description of Theology: Containing the Order and Causes of Salvation and Damnation, According to God's Word*, in *The Works of William Perkins* (London, 1608), 1:11.

39. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones notes, “There is nothing that [the Puritans] more deplored than a mere academic, intellectual, theoretical view of the truth.” *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002), 55.

40. Perkins, *Jude*, 17.

41. Perkins, *Jude*, 21.

The law shows sin, while the gospel covers sin. The law manifests justice, while the gospel mingles mercy and justice together—justice upon Christ and mercy upon us. The law tells us what good works must be done, whereas the gospel tells us how good works must be done—“the former is pleased with nothing but the deed; the latter signifies that God is pleased to accept the will and unfeigned endeavor for the deed itself.”⁴² Perkins preaches the law as a “hammer to break the heart and prepare the way to faith and repentance,” and he preaches the gospel, encouraging all to look to Christ, the Savior of sinners. When God so pleases, such preaching becomes the vehicle of His power in the salvation of sinners.

We can only imagine what it was like to hear Perkins deliver these sermons in their original format from the pulpit at Great St. Andrew's Church—his faithful affirmation of sound doctrine as he earnestly contended for the faith; his careful probing of the heart through his close application of the law; and, above all else, his exuberant exaltation of God's sovereign grace in Christ Jesus toward sinners. Thankfully, something of his “penetrating preaching”⁴³ is preserved for us in the present volume, and a careful reading will prove profitable to all—whether in the lectern, pulpit, or pew.

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42. Perkins, *Jude*, 23.

43. Paul R. Schaefer, “The Arte of Propheying by William Perkins (1558–1602),” in *The Devoted Life: An Invitation to the Puritan Classics*, eds. Kelly M. Kapic and Randall C. Gleason (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 39.

A GODLY AND LEARNED EXPOSITION
UPON THE WHOLE EPISTLE OF JUDE

Containing threescore and six sermons

Preached in Cambridge by that
reverend and faithful man of God
Master William Perkins

Whereunto is prefixed a large analysis, containing the sum and order
of the whole book, according to the author's own method

“Behold, I come shortly: hold that which thou hast,
that no man take away thy crown”

Rev. 3:11

London

Printed by Felix Kingston for Thomas Man, dwelling
in Paternoster row at the sign of the Talbot

1606

To the Right Honorable William Lord Russell, Baron of Thornhaugh, grace and all good blessings from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Right Honorable, as it cannot be but true, which Truth itself has uttered, “Him that honoreth me, I will honor” [1 Sam. 2:30], no more can it be but sure payment which such a creditor has undertaken, and not by any surety, but by Himself to be performed. Bootlessly¹ had the world been entrusted with such a charge, which by suffering some to walk through dishonor and by pouring out contempt upon others unwittingly suits the condition of the servants to the case of the Son, who said, “I honor the Father, but ye dishonor me” [John 8:49]. Well then is it with us that He, whose bare word is above all bonds, has said, “I will honor,” not those who by treading down His honor, honor themselves, neither whom men honor, nor who honor men, but those who honor Him by loving Him as a father and fearing Him as a lord [Mal. 1:6]. Not that any man can enlarge His honor, the infinite perfection whereof is in itself incapable of any accession [Job 11:7]; nor that any can of himself express this honor, seeing [He] Himself works both such wills and deeds also of His own good pleasure [Phil. 2:13]; neither that if any could, he might merit the return of honor, for all that were but his duty [Luke 17:10]; nor that if any could and would, he should thereby profit God, to whom man’s goodness is not extended [Ps. 16:2]; nor, lastly, if any could and would not, God should thereby be disprofited, for if one be wicked he hurts not Him [Job 35:6–7]. But because the Lord, who delights to be the portion of Jacob, is pleased to accept the broken and homely service of His children as a high honor done unto Himself and themselves as honorers of Him, and such as He (by crowning His own work in them) cannot but honor.

But what shall be done to the man whom this King will honor [Esth. 6:6]? *Answer.* If Belshazzar, king of Babel, were to promise his highest honors [Dan. 5:7]; if Haman were to advise Ahasuerus, king of twenty-seven provinces, in the bestowing of what honors [he] himself could wish or hope [Esth. 6:8]; if Pharaoh should call again his nobles to consultation, how to enlarge Joseph’s advancements [Gen. 41:43]—[then] no more could be promised, expected, or preformed than that such a one should be arrayed with royal attire as cloth of purple and fine linen, with a golden chain about his neck, the king’s ring on his hand, his princely diadem set upon his head, and withal by proclamation

1. *Bootlessly*: unavailingly or uselessly.

published the third man or viceroy in the kingdom. Which indeed were singular advancements, but yet the highest of these [is] far inferior to the least and lowest honor, which this King of kings vouchsafes to bestow. For even those kings, whilst they enriched and invested others with such royalties as belong to a kind of external happiness, [they] themselves were exceeding poor and destitute of things truly good, the which (being of a higher strain, and of nature internal and external) are incomparably and only the best blessings. In a word then, “thus shall it be done,” yea, “this honor hath all his saints” [Ps. 149:9], that, being born of God, their descent is from the King of glory, all of them King’s sons, all brothers to Christ, the firstborn among many brethren, all younger brothers indeed, but (which is admirable) all princes apparent, and to the same incorruptible crown of glory [Rev. 5:10].

Tell me now, was it not the highest stair of earthly honor to which Moses was mounted when he was called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter [Heb. 11:24]? And yet justly he refused, nay, he despised the title that he might be called the servant of God. But “behold what love the Father beareth us, that we should be called,” not servants anymore, but “friends” (John 15:15), nay more, “the sons of God” (1 John 3:1). Was it such an advancement that David should become the son of Saul, a wicked king of Israel [1 Sam. 18:18]? And can it seem a small thing to become the sons of the Holy One, the God of Israel? Is it to be reputed a great grace to be nobly descended from great men and backward with the alliance of the mighty? Who then can deem it other than the top and tower of truest nobility to be (as the believer) so nearly allied unto Christ, who sprouted out of the most honorable stock that ever the great field of the earth bare upon it? Unto which their descent, if you add their whole suitable estate, they will appear so absolutely glorious, as it seems no further honor here below can befall them. Their garments are the white and unstained robes of Christ’s innocence and righteousness [Rom. 13:14]. Their chain is the golden chain of their salvation, the links whereof are described in Romans 8:29. Their ring or signet is the Spirit of God, pledging and sealing up in their hearts the assurance of their salvation [8:16]. Their jewels and ornaments [Ezek. 16:11] are the graces of that Spirit, as humility, knowledge, faith, love, hope, etc. Their diet, more choice than that manna which was but a shadow of this “bread which cometh down from heaven” [John 6:50]. Their ministers are all the creatures. Their attendants are the angels, not only going before them and at their heels, but as a guard pitching themselves round about them [Ps. 34:7]. Their diadem is that “crown of righteousness, which the righteous judge shall give to all them that love his blessed appearing” [2 Tim. 4:8]. This is such honor as darkens all the honor of the world, as the bright shining of the sun obscures the light of the lesser stars. This causes the heart that has it to condemn the contempt of

the world and quiet itself in the holding hereof, as in a choice inheritance and a precious purchase.

Now, my Lord, by all that has been premised, you may behold what goodly grounds your Lordship's lines are fallen into, whom the Lord has not only thus inwardly honored by putting His fear in your heart (whereof I might truly relate more than either your Lordship would be willing to read, or [I] myself—hating even the suspicion of the base sin of insinuation—am heartened to write), but also in your whole outward estate. A great honor is it to be the son of so noble and worthy an earl as was your father of famous and perpetual memory. But that the same love of religion, zeal to the truth, practice of piety, wise care of your country, noble and valiant resolution, bountiful hospitality and liberality, should be so eminent, and that the best part of his better part and virtues should so seat themselves in your person—this is it which makes your Lordship honorable, not in him so much, as in yourself, neither in yourself alone, but (as Samuel was) in the hearts of all the people [1 Sam. 9:6]. These, my Lord, especially of the former kind, are qualities well beseeming Nebuchadnezzar's nobles [Dan. 1:17]. For who are so fitted to stand before earthly kings as they who are often in the presence of the great King, to whom all kings are to be accountable? Or who are so worthy to stand in the presence of earthly gods as those whom the God of heaven has vouchsafed to set in His sight and gracious acceptance? Whereunto when I have added how God has honored your Lordship to be the husband of a virtuous and religious Lady, the father of a hopeful heir, the brother of three so worthy and religious countesses (two of whom of late have received the end of their faith, even their glory with God, the possession of a goodly revenue), I may well say, "not many thus noble" [1 Cor. 1:26].

Now because to whom much is given, much is of them required,² and where the Lord sows liberally, there He expects a plentiful crop, let your Lordship be pleased to give me leave by writing to stir up and warn your pure mind by calling to your remembrance that duty which you religiously received from my mouth (and that not seldom) those divers years I employed my pains and poor talents in your Honor's house—namely, that as either you tender the continuance of the honor which the Lord has already poured upon you or expect any access thereunto, so you faithfully proceed in the ways wherein honor may redound to the highest, persisting to honor Him with your heart [Prov. 23:16] by giving it unto Him with your life, by adorning the doctrine of God with your countenance [Titus 2:10], by encouraging the practices of piety [Ps. 101:6], with your riches and increases by relieving the poor members of Christ

2. Luke 12:48.

[Prov. 6:9],³ seeing that in all these large receipts God has made your Lordship His steward and requires your faithfulness. These are the paths beaten by the feet of the faithful, wherein they are well experienced of the Lord's faithfulness. In these stand the whole duty of a man, upon performance whereof and no other condition the Son of God Himself made challenge of the glory of His Father: "I have glorified thee on earth, and now glorify me with thyself" [John 17:4–5].

Among other furtherances of your Honor hereunto, may your Lordship be pleased to receive this book and give it your reading, after what time I hope you will not deny it your protection in regard of itself—although neither your Honor's affection to the author himself whilst he lived, neither his love toward your Honor's house made known to the world in the dedication of sundry of his works unto the same, neither yet my own duty (which in many regards as your Lordship may justly challenge, so [I] myself am straitly bound always to tender) could suffer me elsewhere to seek the shelter of this orphan commentary. My hearty desire of the Lord is that as He has directed it unto your Lordship, so He would also direct your Lordship by it and make it as fruitful unto your Lordship as it is in itself in leading you into all the ways of God's honor, and as His faithfulness has honored you, so your faithful heart may out of settled resolution say in itself, "Him that hath thus honored me, I will still honor."⁴ And so He who is first and last in mercies, "who giveth his grace and glory" [Ps. 84:11], shall (after your Lordship has many good days through His grace been found faithful before Him and your sovereign) deck your soul with perfect righteousness as a robe, clothe your body with immortality, crown your head with glory, and (in a word) shall be all in all unto you and all His, who beyond all times be blessed forever. Amen.

Your Honor's to command,
Thomas Taylor

3. Prov. 22:16?

4. 1 Sam. 2:30.

To the Christian Reader, much peace and prosperity from the author thereof, even the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Since it pleased the God of light by chasing away the black mists of popish darkness to restore the clear and sunshine light of His glorious gospel unto these parts of Europe, He has never been wanting in raising up most faithful and furnished instruments who as golden trumpets have sounded out and like golden candlesticks have held forth before His people that great light, even the word of truth which we preach. Wherewith they have been mighty through God both by voice and pen, by word and writing, not only to discover and to detest that antichrist, but to overthrow and cast down his strongest holds. Yea, and [they] have by the power of the same spirit of their mouths, which out of Christ's own mouth shall most powerfully utterly abolish that man of sin at the brightness of His appearing, given the beast already his deadly wound. Yea, and by the light [they] have driven away that former Egyptian darkness and blind barbarism wherein men sat and could not for many days, yea, hundreds of years before stir out of the place wherein the corruption of their nature had set them.

Witness this truth with me: those incomparable lights of Germany (that I may begin where the Lord began), Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, Oecolampadius, etc. France justly glories of her three worthies, Calvin, Beza, and Marlorat, and of her three nobles, Sadeel, Morney, and Junius. How happy has Helvetia¹ been in her fruitful gardens, whence so many sweet flowers such as Bullinger, Lavater, Zwingli, and others (not a few) have sprouted. Yea, Italy herself, whose soil is a stepmother indeed to such plants, has yet been so far manured by the hand of the good husbandman that even from thence two fair branches, neither of them inferior to the former, Martyr and Zanchi, have sprung up, that as out of the mouth of two witnesses from among themselves their sentence might be sealed against them. But among the nations, glorious are you, Great Britain, in your greatness, which as you have stripped all these neighbor nations in other external beauties, so no whit are you inferior to them in this honor. Yea, herein is your truest triumph over them, thus as peace and truth have kissed each other within your walls, and as the scepter of the Prince of Peace has been almost fifty years upheld by the scepters

1. *Helvetia*: Switzerland. The Romans used this Latin term to name the region between the Alps and Jura mountains, because of the predominantly Celtic inhabitants, the Helvetii.

of peaceable princes, so your seas and seminaries have not been destitute of their jewels, Whitaker, Fulke, Reynolds, Rollock, Sutcliffe, Willet, and their late Perkins, whom alone I make mention of, not because either they are alone or alone worthy, but partly that I may be moderate and not (as I might) infinite in recital, and partly for that these have more valiantly like David's worthies broken through these Philistines' forces and brought unto us in despite of them the pure water of the well of life.²

Among whom this, our author last named, was not the least nor of so small note through the Christian world that I can think by my pen to add any moment unto his. Whose writings so savory and so innocent have sufficiently proclaimed his profound knowledge in all learning, his prudent zeal, his mature judgment, with an admirable dexterity and facility, yea, I may say felicity (for herein he reigned, that I may use the phrase of the reverend Dean of his majesty's chapel, properly applied unto him at his funeral, which with singular approbation he performed) in the direct resolving [of] the obscurest doubts of divinity and the acute loosing and dissolving [of] the hardest knots of papists, so briefly and yet so perspicuously, as that his most polemical writings,³ being first by himself in our vulgar tongue published, could scarce meet even among our common people with such an incapable reader (if any whit catechized) into whom they might not convey some competent conceit⁴ and understanding of the deepest and darkest differences between the papists, those patrons and defenders of darkness, and ourselves.

But beside these, such a tongue of the learned had the Lord God given him, that he knew to minister and ministered according to knowledge a word in due time to him that was weary [Isa. 50:4]. The which most weighty duty of the ministry was so familiar unto him that he made it his holy day's exercise (as his recreation) to resolve cases of conscience. In his ordinary ministry, how powerful was he! Which of his hearers cannot confess that he spoke as one having authority?⁵ Add now unto these his labors, a holy and harmless life, for why should I disjoin them, seeing they were so happily combined in him? Between which two (both of them conspiring to the glory of God and His cause) was such a sweet harmony and consent, that in reading his writings any man might see the manner of his life, and in seeing his life he might also therein read his writings, for his life spoke what his pen wrote, and his person was the precedent of his written precepts.

2. 2 Sam. 23:16.

3. In the margin: Reformed Catholic.

4. *Conceit*: idea or notion.

5. Matt. 7:29.

But when these unweariable labors had quickly worn out such a candle, who so freely spent himself to give others light, such a life was not shut up but by a proportional, even a religious and Christian death. Of the which when God made (with some others) myself a beholder, I could not but conceive him a messenger one of a thousand, singled out by God to give directions to others, both how to live, and that well, as also in the right manner of dying well, who himself was so trained to a blessed death by a holy life, whereby he became both in life and death a most happy and blessed man, for whose written precepts concerning both, the whole church is bound to bless God with us. But especially we, his ordinary hearers in Cambridge, who besides were also the beholders of both, cannot be but so much the more strengthened and confirmed (our own heedless ingratitude not resisting or withstanding us) by how much the eye is quicker than the ear, and the sight a more certain sense than can be the hearing. But we will leave him with God and omit those worthy works which [he] himself whilst he lived (according as the relaxation both from the weekly labors of his calling and the daily weakness of his body would permit) did publish, not only for the watering of this famous seminary where he lived, but even out of his abundance and full buckets to the refreshing of all the heritage of God, and come to our own purpose.

It is not now to be wished, but bewailed rather, that all his works were not finished by him before his own course, seeing the orphan writings of the learned published by others are commonly less polished. For sometimes the author's mind is not taken, and sometimes his matter is mistaken. Other times his form is inverted, and not seldom either his own elegancies and proprieties, "which are like goads,"⁶ are neglected, or something besides his own is injuriously inserted. But yet the Lord, having loosed him from his labors, the Christian care of his executors commends itself to the church herein, that before it should be deprived of any part of his pains so profitably employed, desirous they are to communicate them, if not altogether in such exact manner as they would, yet as perfectly as they can, contented rather to hazard the due regard of the author himself, by committing unto his scholars' hands the publishing of his labors, than that the church should want them by their holding and hiding them with themselves.

As for myself, my wish was to have been spared in these pains, both because of my own weekly employments and that in this place wherein the business might have been committed to divers others far better furnished with gifts and fitted with opportunity than myself; but especially seeing how safe and wise a thing it is to sit silent where a man need not speak, and that in

6. Eccl. 12:11.

these days, wherein every man's oar is in every man's boat, and most men are become left-handed in receiving things which are reached unto them with the right; too like the seven hundred left-handed Benjamites, whose sole commendation seems to stand in this, that they can throw stones and darts against others at a hair-breadth and not fail [Judg. 20:16]—yet notwithstanding, considering my calling hereunto, as also being after a sort reared up by the poet's rule,⁷ not doubting but that the matter following is far better than silence, I was contented at the instant entreaty of the author's executor to undertake the publishing of this epistle, which [he] himself had in his heart (if God had given him longer time) to have with his own hand set and sent out in its own native beauty and perfection, wherein what my pains have been, they only know who have fathered other men's posthumous writings.

I have not trodden in their steps who make the grounds of the authors serve their own discourses (for so should I have made this exposition containing in it the sum of sixty-six sermons, exceed the measure even of a tedious commentary), but in the author's own, who was wont to transcribe out of the notes of some of his hearers, the heads and marrow of things more largely in public delivered, explaining the points which were more obscure and with a second hand polishing and perfecting things so explained. Yea, herein imitating not only the author of the commentary, but even of the text and epistle, the apostle Jude himself, who perceiving the men of his days quickly waxing weary of hearing or reading sermons or epistles, if extended to any length or prolixity, condescended so far to their infirmity as to contract and abridge much matter into a very short and summary epistle. Upon the same consideration also have I studied brevity, so far as in such multiplicity of matter I might avoid obscurity, having herein employed my best pains that it might appear that though I may have failed in other complements, yet so far as my endeavor could erect⁸ me, not in faithfulness to the author either of the text or commentary.

The fitness and seasonableness of this exposition may seem to plead for the more gracious acceptance of it, which, being breathed out by the apostolic spirit against the heretics and heresies which were to infect and infest the last ages of the world, may by God's blessing in the due reading hereof strengthen the people of God in the land in discerning and resisting both the wicked seducers themselves daily sent in among us, those popish instruments (I mean) who (like so many devils compassing the earth) are so diligent to compass sea and land to make carnal Protestants popish proselytes, and so sevenfold more the children of the devil than they were before, as also their diabolical doctrines

7. In the margin: Euripides.

8. Direct?

which everywhere it meets withal. Let them out of their malice (as that foul mouthed Franciscan Feverdentius,⁹ which has not throughout his book passed many lines without some egregious lie or other) apply the scope of the epistle to black the doctrines and lives of those most excellent instruments of God the restorers of true religion, Luther, Calvin, Beza, etc., yet as a millstone rolled up a mountain, or as a ball tossed against a brazen wall so returns and recoils it upon themselves, as this grave divine has through this exposition in particular divinely proved. Read it, Christian reader, with diligence, faithfully consider and remember what you read, and the Lord give you understanding in all things and build you up further upon your most holy faith.

From my house in Cambridge, May 24, Anno 1606

Yours in the Lord Jesus,

Thomas Taylor

9. Ed. note: A Jesuit.

A Brief View of the Whole Epistle, Drawn according to the Author's Own Method

The epistle contains three parts:¹

Salutation, wherein are considered:

The person saluting, described by his:

Name: "Jude"

Office: "a servant of Jesus Christ"

Alliance: "a brother of James"

The persons saluted, members of the church militant, which are:

"Called"

"Sanctified of God the Father"

"Reserved to Jesus Christ"

The form of salvation—viz., a prayer for:

Blessings:

"Mercy"

"Peace"

"Love"

Increase of blessings: "be multiplied"

Exhortation, wherein are considered:

The motives, exciting the apostle:

His love: "beloved"

His ready mind: "gave diligence," enlarged by three arguments:

"All diligence"

"To write unto you" (when he could not speak)

"Of the common salvation" (of most weight matters)

1. Ed. note: In the following outline, some very light edits have been made as to form (not content) to accommodate to modern sensibilities.

The matter:

Propounded—viz., “to maintain the faith,” wherein are considered:

The parties:

Maintaining: saints

Oppugning: seducers

The means of maintenance—viz., by “fight”:

The kind: spiritual

The weapons:

Doctrine

Confession

Example

Prayer

Confirmed by:

The state of the church in his time pestered with enemies, described by their:

Hypocrisy: “crept in”

State before God: “ordained of old to this condemnation”

Religion: “ungodly men they are”

Doctrine: “which turn the grace of God into wantonness”

Lives: “and deny God the only Lord, and our Lord Jesus Christ”

A prolepsis answered in a perfect form of syllogism, consisting of a:

Proposition—viz., whosoever takes liberty to sin shall be destroyed, proved by example of:

Men. Here consider:

The persons destroyed: “the people”—viz., Israelites

The time: “after he”—God—”has delivered them out of Egypt”

The cause: “which believed not”

Angels. Here consider:

The persons sinning: “the angels”

The sin itself, and it in:

The author set down:

Negatively: not God

Affirmatively: but themselves

The parts:

Negative: “which kept not their first estate”

Affirmative: “but left their own habitation”

The measure of their fall: a total defection

Punishment in two degrees:

Custody: “reserved in chains under darkness”

Full punishment: “unto the judgment of the great day”

Cities with their:

Names: “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them”

Sins

According to

Against nature:

Committed fornication

“Followed strange flesh”

Punishment, wherein:

Use: “set forth for example”

Matter: “suffered vengeance of eternal fire”

Assumption—viz.: But these seducers take liberty to sin, proved by enumeration of their sins in their:

Grounds or fountain: “dreamers”

Kinds:

Uncleanness: “they defile the flesh”

Contempt of magistracy

Proved from their:

Affection or judgment: “they despise government”

Speech or practice: “speak evil of them that are in authority”

Amplified three ways:

They blaspheme glories and dignities

By comparison from the greater, thus: Michael
“durst not rail,” enlarged by the:

Persons contending: Michael, Satan

Cause: “about the body of Moses”

Speech of Michael: “The Lord rebuke thee”

They “speak evil of a thing they knowest not”

Intemperance in it:

The cause: “natural knowledge”

The work: “corrupt themselves as beasts without reason”

Cruelty against God's people, comparatively called "Cain's way"

Covetousness by similitude from Balaam with:

The measure: they are poured out, or "cast away"

The ground: hope of reward, or "wages"

Ambitious, "gainsaying" of the truth, illustrated by:

Comparison: with that of Korah

The end of that: "perished" in it as he did

Riotousness, proved by example and instance from love feasts, in which:

Sin: "fed themselves" with neglect of the poor

Ground of it: "without fear"—viz., of God

Fruit of it: makes them "spots in their feasts"

Unprofitableness in their places: "clouds without water"

Unconstancy: "carried about with every wind," as light clouds

Barrenness in themselves, illustrated by a comparison and described by four degrees of naughtiness—viz.:

Corrupt trees—that is, without good fruit

Altogether fruitless—that is, without any fruit

Hopeless of fruit: "twice dead"—that is, certainly

Hopeless of life itself: "plucked up by the roots"

Impatience: "raging waves of the sea, foaming out of their own shame"

Unstableness in doctrine: "wandering stars"

Murmuring

Complaining, which proceeds from:

Discontentment with their outward, present state

The forwardness of their disposition

Walking after their own lusts

Proud boasting

Admiration of men's persons

Covetousness: "for advantage"

Conclusion, inferred in verses 13–15—viz.: Therefore these seducers shall be destroyed. This conclusion is:

Propounded (v. 13): "for whom is reserved black darkness"

Confirmed (vv. 14–15), and that by an ancient testimony. In it, consider:

The author: “Enoch”

The preface: he “prophesied of such, saying”

The testimony itself, wherein:

The Lord’s coming to judgment

His judgment being come, which is:

General

Special

Cause of this judgment

An apostolic testimony that such there should be. In it:

A preface: “but ye beloved, remember,” etc. (v. 17)

The testimony itself, and in it are two things:

The time when these wicked men shall abound: “in the last times”

What manner of persons they shall be, described by two properties:

“Mockers”

“Fleshly, walking after their own lusts”

The application of it to these persons, who are indeed:

Mockers, common to makers of sects

Fleshly, having not the Spirit

A direction in some means tending to this maintenance of faith in five rules, concerning:

Faith, on which as upon a foundation they must build up themselves, enforced by:

A motive: “most holy faith”

The means: “praying in the Holy Spirit”

Love of God, in which they must “keep themselves”

Hope: “looking for the mercy of God,” etc. And in it, three things:

The person on whom the saints must wait by hope, our Lord Jesus Christ

The thing for which they must wait—viz., God’s mercy

The end of their hope: “eternal life”

Christian meekness in recovering weak offenders, in which consider:

The rule itself: “others save with fear”

The manner of it: “pulling them out of the fire”

The caveat for better observation of it: “and hate even the garment which is spotted by the flesh”

Conclusion, consisting on a praising of God, wherein three things:

Person praised: Christ Jesus

Inducements moving to praise Him, drawn from:

His power

Propounded here: “to him which is able,” etc.

Amplified by four effects:

Keeping the saints “that they fall not”

Presenting them “faultless”—that is, justifying them

Presenting them in the judgment day “before the presence of His glory”

Possessing them with “joy everlasting”

His wisdom: “to God only wise”

The work of our redemption: “our Savior”

Form of praise, wherein four things:

What things are ascribed to God—viz., glory, majesty, dominion, power

That these belong to Christ “only”

The circumstance of time: “now and forever”

The affection of the heart ever needful in the worship of God, in the word “amen”

A Godly and Learned Exposition upon the Epistle of Jude

The general aim and scope of this epistle is partly to declare the duty of all Christians and partly to set out the corruptions of those and these days and times, in both which everyone may receive edification who are desirous either to follow the former or avoid the latter. In which general consideration, note three things concerning this epistle, before we come to show the parts of it in particular: first, the authority; secondly, the superscription; and, thirdly, the argument or substance of it.

The Authority

First, concerning the authority, two questions are to be answered: first, whether this epistle be canonical Scripture; secondly, how we may know the certainty of it.

Question 1. Concerning the former, Luther and others, who acknowledge it to be a profitable writing, deny it to be canonical Scripture and allege four reasons.

Reason 1. They say Jude calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ and not an apostle, but all the New Testament was penned or approved by some apostle. *Answer.* This hinders not but that he was one of the apostles, who also called themselves servants of Jesus Christ, as Paul (Rom. 1:1) and Peter (2 Peter 1:1). Secondly, by this reason the epistles to the Philippians and Philemon, as also of James, John, etc., might be rejected. Thirdly, he calls himself as much as an apostle.

Reason 2. Jude writes of such things as the apostles themselves had formerly foretold (v. 17). Therefore, he was no apostle. *Answer.* Jude lived after the apostles Paul and Peter, who with John were the last of the apostles, and, living after their decease (who were the principal), might very well put them in mind of those things they had foretold.

Reason 3. In the ninth verse, he brings in a profane author, concerning the strife and disputation between Michael, the archangel, and the devil “about Moses’ body,” which cannot be found in canonical Scriptures; as also of “Enoch the seventh from Adam,” out of profane writers. *Answer.* By this reason, neither should the epistle to Titus be Scripture, seeing Paul makes mention of the