

William Perkins & “A Real Presence” of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.

By Martin L. Hawley

I. INTRODUCTION

Much scholarly work has been accomplished with respect to English Calvinist and Puritan William Perkins’ published volumes and his significant impact in shaping 17th century preaching (*The Art of Prophesying*), the assurance of salvation (*Cases of Conscience*), as well as the supralapsarian position (*The Golden Chain*). Even those authors unfavorable toward the Puritan movement in England have had commendable things to say of Perkins. A. L. Rowse describes this Cambridge divine as by “far the most influential spiritual leader was the converted sinner, the celebrated Perkins of Christ: a great preacher, the author of some forty works—some of them important...”¹ And yet when it comes to Perkins’ Calvinistic view concerning ‘a real presence of Christ’ in the Lord’s Supper, little serious research has been conducted beyond Bryan Spinks’ *Two Faces of Elizabethan Anglican Theology: Sacraments and Salvation in the Thought of William Perkins and Richard Hooker*.²

William Perkins, as part of that outstanding group of gifted theologians and preachers molded in late 16th century Cambridge, was deeply engaged, on the one hand in apologetics, with respect to responding to a rising Catholic challenge to the Reformed and Protestant movement, and on the other hand, with popularizing the essential Calvinistic doctrines and practices among the English Protestants, who were suffering at the time from a lack of learning and of catechetical instruction. And it is clearly evident, in Perkins’ *A Golden Chain, A Reformed Catholic, An Exposition of the Creed, The Foundation of Christian Religion*, and *The Problem of Forged Catholicism*, that the differences between Calvinistic and Catholic understandings of the nature of Christ’s presence in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper mattered enough to be explicated in each of these major works. There is also ample evidence in the published

material available that Perkins built upon those magisterial Continental and English Reformers who labored so faithfully in the prior decades of the early to mid-sixteenth century. Yet Perkins exceeded them all in sheer print-runs and both English language and foreign language translated editions.

This article seeks to identify the key arguments that William Perkins deployed in his printing press apologetic approach toward Catholics, and, at the same time, enlightening English Protestants about the Calvinistic understanding of Christ’s spiritual, yet ‘real presence’ in the Lord’s Supper. It is evident from arguments in many of his works, that Perkins defended a Calvinistic view of Christ’s presence in the Supper, based upon his understanding of Christ’s resurrected humanity being situated at the Father’s right hand in heaven, denying the Catholic concept of Christ’s humanity being ubiquitous. Perkins also argued for the signifying nature of a sacrament, as opposed to the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and its negation of the very purpose for a sacrament, turning the eucharistic celebration into a bloody, re-sacrifice of Christ. And it was essential to Perkins that the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ Jesus be received by faith and mediated by the Holy Spirit. In these arguments, Perkins was building upon and extending the work of Cranmer, Ridley, and those magisterial Reformers from the Continent.

THE AUTHOR: REV. MARTIN HAWLEY (Ph.D, University of Aberdeen and UHI), is pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Marietta, Georgia. He also serves as the executive director of Reformation Hope, Inc. (founded 2007), an organization that works among the people of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

1. A. L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (Suffolk, UK: Reprint Society LTD, 1953 reprint), p. 578. Yet Rowse cannot resist the aside approving of Perkins’ early death.

2. Bryan D. Spinks, *Two Faces of Elizabethan Anglican Theology: Sacraments and Salvation in the Thought of William Perkins and Richard Hooker* (Scarecrow Press, 1999).

It will also be useful to understand the progression from Cranmer, Calvin, Martyr, Beza, Bullinger, and others of the mid-to-late sixteenth century, concerning 'a real presence of Christ' in the Supper, to Perkins, who clearly influenced the generation of Calvinistic Englishmen who would in the 17th century then be involved in the Westminster Assembly. Perkins' prolific publishing output, both during his flourishing years and after his death, in so many printings and in numerous languages, must have served to solidify the Calvinistic position of the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, while also making the 'real presence' more comprehensible to those gathered on the Lord's Day in order to receive it.

II. THE PRE-PERKINS PROTESTANT EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

The decades between Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* (*Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum* of 1517) and related tracts departing from the doctrine of the Catholic Mass and the beginning of William Perkins' time at Cambridge were a season for the development and achievement of a general consensus among the Reformed branch of the Protestant movement concerning the theology and ecclesiological practice of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. As with any theological topic, especially one so sharply contested between Protestants and Catholics, variations may be discerned within the printed works of the Reformers which rolled off the presses in the second half of the 16th century. However, much foundational theological agreement existed among the primary leaders—especially those who wielded great influence over the English Church of the period.

In the formation of a theological approach to the Eucharist among those who found serious fault with the gross errors of the traditional Catholic Mass, and also with the position of Luther and Melancthon on the one hand, and the approach of Zwingli on the other, John Calvin established the basis for a real yet spiritual

presence of the Lord Jesus in the Communion celebration. It is significant to note that Calvin's landmark theological work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, was a primary resource alongside the Holy Scriptures in the highly influential theological departments of universities at the time:

Calvin intended the *Institutes* (in its later form) as a text-book in theology. It quickly took its place as such, not only among the students at Geneva, but throughout the Reformed world. Francis Junius, in commending it to his pupils at Leiden, used to tell them that he himself had devoted two entire years to its study. Kaspar Olevianus at Heidelberg and Herborn based his theological lectures upon it, going over one book each year and thus completing the course in four years. What Olevianus was doing in Germany, the professors at both Oxford and Cambridge were doing in England.³

In addition to his treatment of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (first published in 1536) there are many insights into Calvin's sacramental theology in three other works, entitled *Catechism 1538*, *Short Treatise on The Supper of Our Lord in Which Is Shown Its True Institution, Benefit, and Utility*, published in 1540, and also *The Clear Explanation of Sound Doctrine Concerning the True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper to Dissipate the Mists of Tileman Heshusius*, which was published in 1561. There are included in these catechistic and apologetic resources a well-defined doctrine of the Holy Supper which impacted other Reformed and Puritan churchmen of the next generations in the Continent, in England, and in Scotland.

As a student and later a teacher of sacramental theology on faculty at Cambridge, Perkins must have been very familiar with the previous work done on the doctrines of the Lord's Supper which were available in print. Peter Martyr (1500–1562) whose sacramental explanations were warmly commended by Calvin, observed while commenting upon 1 Corinthians 9:3:

"we ought not to confound the nature of the signs with the things signified. Let us follow the mean and sound way; and let us judge honourably of the sacraments—not thinking them to be things altogether empty of spiritual good, nor so joining the signs with the things that they pass wholly into them. It is enough to appoint a profitable and most excellent signification, by which the faithful mind, through believing, may be made partaker of the things signified."⁴

3. Jean Calvin, and John Allen, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), p. xxxiii. The quotation is from "An Introduction to the Literary History of Calvin's *Institutes*" by Benjamin B. Warfield, included in volume 1. This introduction, despite its age, provides an excellent accounting of the many editions of the *Institutes* and its many translated editions, with "An Account of the American Editions" by Thomas C. Pears, Jr. With respect to the English faculties of Oxford and Cambridge, including Perkins, the footnotes concerning the deep and lasting impact of Calvin's *Institutes* upon these institutions in the second half of the 16th century are highly valuable.

4. John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan* (Stanford: Stanford Press, 1964), p. 59.

Another primary example of a resource available to Perkins would have been the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who composed a work entitled *A Defence of the True and Catholick Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*, which was initially published in 1550 and then reissued in 1551 with added replies to the critiques of Bishop Stephen Gardiner. Cranmer included in this work a section entitled “The Presence of Christ.” And alongside Calvin’s *Institutes*, Cranmer’s work must have had a significant impact on Perkins’ formulation of sacramental theology concerning the Lord’s Supper. Two of Archbishop Cranmer’s statements are particularly instructive in apprehending the development of Perkins’ Reformed sacramentalism:

They say [the Roman Church] that the body of Christ that is in the sacrament, hath his own proper form and quantity: we say, that Christ is there sacramentally and spiritually, without form or quantity.⁵

And this line of argument is further explicated a few paragraphs further along in language that could have also been utilized by Perkins, including Cranmer’s apt use of the illustration or metaphor of the sun in its having a physical location while at the same time illuminating great distances:

They say, that Christ is corporally in many places at one time, affirming that his body is corporally and really present in as many places as there be hosts consecrated: we say, that as the sun corporally is ever in heaven, and no where else; and yet by his operation and virtue the sun is here on earth, by whose influence and virtue all things in the world be corporally regenerated, increased, and grow to their perfect state; so likewise our Savior Christ bodily and corporally is in heaven, sitting at the right hand of his Father, although spiritually he hath promised to be with us upon earth unto the world’s end.⁶

The doctrine of the nature of Christ’s resurrected body being located in the heavenly temple and assembly at God the Father’s right hand in a non-ubiquitous state was a long-established position of many prominent Protestant theologians and churchmen some forty to fifty years before the season of Perkins’ flourishing as a preacher, university lecturer, and prolifically published author. And this was also the case with respect to the essential instrumentality of the Holy Spirit in conveying the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper to those who received it with genuine faith.

In addition to Calvin and Cranmer, there is also the work, first published in 1555, of the Bishop of London Nicholas Ridley, who is perhaps more widely known in the modern era as a martyr for the Protestant faith during the reign of Queen Mary. Ridley composed a work bearing the lengthy title so common in that era which would never survive editorial review and simplification in the 21st century: *A brefe declaration of the Lordes Supper, written by the synguler lerned man and moſte constant Martyr of Iesus Christ Nicholas Ridley byshop of London prisoner in Oxforde, a lyttel before he suffered deathe for the true testimonye of CHRISTE*. It is reported that he completed this work while in prison awaiting his ultimate death for the cause of the Protestant Reformation in England.

Within this work, which went through several editions over more than one hundred years, there are again elements of sacramental theology in common with Calvin and Cranmer, and which must have influenced William Perkins and the other Puritan and Reformed Cambridge divines of his generation. For example, Ridley argues for the non-ubiquitous presence of Christ’s resurrected body in heaven: “... the natural substaunce of Christes humayn nature, which he toke of the virgin Mary is in heauen, where it reigneth nowe in glorye, and not here inclosed vnder the forme of bread....”⁷

This martyred bishop of London writes of the necessity of faith on the part of the receiver of the Eucharist, and also explains that when Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper during that last Passover meal with His disciples, “He was using figurative speech.”⁸ Ridley also uses the same illustration employed by Cranmer concerning the sun and its life-giving rays: “the same body of Christ is here present with vs. Euen as for example, we say, the same Sunne which (in substance) neuer remoueth his place out of the heauens, is yet present here in his beams, light and natural influence, where it shyneth vpon the earth. For Goddes woorde and his sacraments be (as it were, the beames of Christ, which is Sol iustitiae, the sonne of righteousness.”⁹

Bishop Ridley quotes with approbation “books which

5. Thomas Cranmer, *A Defence of the True and Catholick Doctrine of the Sacrament* (East Sussex, UK: Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 1987), p. 100.

6. Cranmer, *ibid.*, p. 101.

7. Nicholas Ridley, *A Brief Declaration of the Lord’s Supper Written by Nicholas Ridley Bishop of London*, H. C. G. Moule, introduction, notes, and appendices (London, UK: Seeley and Co. LTD, 1895), p. 108.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

are written already”¹⁰ concerning the nature of the presence of Christ in the Supper, which according to Moule, would have chiefly been Cranmer’s work. “But Bucer and Martyr had also written during their English residence”¹¹ on the topic of sacramental theology. Perkins would have enjoyed access to these works concerning the Supper and their arguments are reproduced by this Cambridge divine in his own apologetic and catechetical publications.

Ultimately for Ridley, as with Calvin and Cranmer, it is the operation of the Holy Spirit, conveying the body and blood of Christ to the worthy partaker, which is at the heart of what is taking place in the Holy Supper, although Calvin also writes of the Holy Spirit elevating the hearts of worthy partakers into the presence of Christ in heavenly throne room. And again, this pneumatological description of the mystery of the Eucharist will be adopted and articulated by Perkins in his lectures and his published works.

According to Moule, “Bullinger was the sacramental teacher whom the successors of Cranmer and Ridley, the theologians of Elizabeth, commended to the English clergy.”¹² In light of the evident influence of Bullinger on Elizabethan theologians, some key statements from Bullinger concerning the Lord’s Supper will be helpful to include. These statements, from a sermon based upon the institution narrative in Luke 22:19–20 and the Pauline statement in 1 Corinthians 11:23–26, emphasize the necessary work of the Holy Spirit in conveying the presence of Christ in the sacrament. This sermon was translated from the French into English as early as 1577:

It followeth therefore hereuppon, that there can none other spirituall meanes be established in the Supper, but that, whereby Christ our Lord (which hath and

retayneth a true body, and is resident in heauen) is present vnto vs by his holy spirit, reuiuet vs, feedeth vs, refresheth vs, and saueth vs: and this vertue is diuine and aboue other most excellent, and not a thing voyde and vayne.

For this cause it is not necessary, that in treating of the Lords Supper, wee should dispute of the corporall presence of Christ in the Supper, and of the carnall description eating of his body, and yet ineffable, considering that our Supper is mysticall, and not capernaycall (that I say no more) the which if it were carnall, myght be expressed: for contraryly if it cannot be expressed, it cannot be called corporall. Let it not therefore be denied agayne, which already is agreed vpon.¹³

The point of this brief survey of mid-16th century Reformation (and particularly English Protestant) publications and comments on the Lord’s Supper is to demonstrate the existing, rich sacramental theology that developed in response to the abuses and distortions of the Roman Church’s Mass in the generation prior to William Perkin’s theological education at Cambridge and his subsequent work as a lecturer in theology at the same institution. Space does not permit further examples from Beza,¹⁴ Bucer, Zanchi, and others whose significant legacy in the doctrines of the Eucharist would have been available to Perkins in the late 16th century. Perkins was therefore an heir to a robust, if still undergoing refinement, sacramental theology. He embraced its essential concepts and worked incessantly to make the Reformed theology and practice concerning the Lord’s Supper as widely available as the pulpit and the printing press could make possible.

III. A REFORMED ANGLICAN STANDING BETWEEN GENEVA AND WESTMINSTER

It would be difficult to overstate the influence of the late 16th century Cambridge faculty upon future generations. They built upon the foundations laid in the earlier decades, which were laid down by Luther, Cranmer, Calvin, Beza, and Bucer. And the students they impacted would go on to set the direction of English Protestant theology well into the 17th century. Among these late Elizabethan divines molding young theologians and preachers at Cambridge was William Perkins, a man remembered by his contemporaries more for his preaching than his classroom instruction. Perkins stands virtually alone in the last decade of the 16th century and the first decades of the 17th century as the most

10. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

11. *Ibid.*, p110, n3.

12. Ridley, *A Brief Declaration of the Lord’s Supper Written by Nicholas Ridley Bishop of London*, Appendix III, p. 250. Moule’s assessment occurs in his introduction to Lavather’s *Historia Controversiae Sacramentariae*.

13. Henry (Heinrich) Bullinger, *A MOST excellent Sermon of the Lordes Supper, wherein briefly (and yet plainly yenough) is liuely set foorth the matter of the Supper of the Lorde Iesus*. By Henry Bullinger. Trans. I. T. (London: Thomas Dawson and Thomas Gardyner, 1577), pages unnumbered. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A17190.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

14. Theodore Beza’s key work on the sacrament, *A Clear & Simple Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, has been translated by David C. Noe and made available in an accessible edition by Reformation Heritage Books. Theodore Beza, *A Clear & Simple Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, trans. David C. Noe, introduction by Martin Klauber, forward by R. Scott Clark (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016).

influential English theologian of his time, and much of this was the result of his prolific publishing output, both in his lifetime and in many posthumous editions and collections. This Cambridge Puritan’s works also enjoyed distribution in various translations, resulting in his major works circulating widely in Europe. Due to the extensive distribution and enduring popularity of his various works, Perkins occupies a rather unique position along the historical timeline between Geneva and Westminster.

Best known to modern theologians, church historians, and churchmen for his *The Art of Prophesying* and *The Golden Chain*, Perkins was much more well-known and widely-read in his own era and for a century afterward. Bozeman writes of William Perkins as “Puritan pietism’s greatest publicist,” and as the “greatest literary disseminator of the new spirituality.”¹⁵ If it is appropriate to anachronistically describe communication and mass media in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, then Perkins achieved the paper and printing ink equivalent of what would today be ‘going viral.’ In Ian Breward’s editorial preface to his edition of selections from Perkins’ works, he describes the popularity and impact of the English Puritan in this way:

William Perkins of Cambridge was the most widely known theologian of the Elizabethan church. By the end of the sixteenth century he had replaced Calvin and Beza near the top of the English religious best-seller list. Even more important, his works were widely published outside of Britain.¹⁶

IV. WILLIAM PERKINS AS APOLOGIST AND POPULARIZER OF CHRIST’S REAL PRESENCE IN THE SUPPER

Perkins was a significant and highly influential popularizer and defender of the theology and practices of the Elizabethan Church in England. As noted by W. B. Patterson, who observes that, “Perkins’s role as an apologist for the established Church can be seen most clearly in his treatise entitled *A Reformed Catholike*, published in 1597.”¹⁷ In this work, the Cambridge divine demonstrates the points of doctrine in which Protestants can fully agree with Roman Catholic theology and ecclesiology, and then provides the very definite refutations for those areas of clear disagreement. The polemical tone of *A Reformed Catholic*, as with many of Perkins’ works, is more apologetic than pugilistic.

Perkins consistently maintained in *A Reformed*

Catholic and his other works on the Eucharist, that there is a true and real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. The language he chose in describing this sacramental theology is deliberately unambiguous as Perkins deemed necessary to be unmistakably understood by both Catholic apologists and his many English Protestant readers as well. For example, in *A Reformed Catholic*, at the commencement of his “The Tenth Point: Of Real Presence,” Perkins emphasizes:

We hold and believe a presence of Christ’s body and blood in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, and that not feigned, but a true and real presence . . . we hold and teach that Christ’s body and blood are truly present with the bread and wine, being signs of the sacrament.¹⁸

And yet, Perkins was quite firmly committed to a sound, theological refutation of the Catholic doctrine of the Mass and the transubstantiation of the sacramental elements. In one of his most well-known compositions, *A Golden Chain*, the Cambridge divine declares rather bluntly that, “The doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches that the bread is turned into the very body and of Christ and the wine into His blood, is a very fable.”¹⁹

In comparing Perkins’ various catechetical and doctrinal works concerning the Eucharist, the following observations can be made. In the first place, the presentation of the order of the sacramental principles is not identical across the publications. For example, in *A Reformed Catholic*, the first point with respect to the Lord’s Supper has to do with the real presence of Christ. Perkins then develops the real presence as conveyed in a spiritual and mystical way by the Spirit of God and also that the real presence of Christ can only be received by those who possess real faith. In Perkins’ *The Problem of Forged Catholicism*, as this was a more precisely polemical work, the primary emphasis is on the refutation of the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation while

15. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisionist Strain: Disciplinary Religion & Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 68.

16. Ian Breward, ed., *The Work of William Perkins, The Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics III* (Berkshire, England: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), p. xi.

17. W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins & the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 52.

18. William Perkins, “A Reformed Catholic,” in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Shawn D. Wright and Andrew S. Ballitch (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), vol. 7, p. 85.

19. William Perkins, “A Golden Chain,” in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), vol. 6, p. 168.

defending the real presence of Christ. The Cambridge divine also includes in this work a historical survey of the early church and its Fathers on a real physical or spiritual presence of Christ, tracing the development of the eventual error of transubstantiation.

The Golden Chain features three chapters dealing with the sacraments. The first, “Chapter 32, of the Sacraments,” makes the case for the elements that constitute a sacrament. Then, following a chapter treating baptism, “Chapter 34” deals with the Lord’s Supper and includes a “Figure 4” which charts the various sacramental relations in the Supper.²⁰ Yet there are in this chapter what might be classified as more pastoral concerns, in providing guidance to his readers as to how to prepare oneself to worthily partake in the Lord’s Supper. Perkins’ *Foundation of the Christian Religion* includes an “Exposition of the Principles” near the end. And this section is formatted as a catechism of sorts. The order produced here concerning the Supper begins with the nature of a sacrament, continues to the Holy Spirit as the instrument of conveying Christ, and finally Perkins addresses the necessity of true faith in order to receive the real presence of Christ.

Each of these works, which of course had different intended audiences and purposes, share in common a concern on Perkins’ part to establish the nature of Sacrament. With the exception of *The Problem of Forged Catholicism*, the remaining works which deal with the Eucharist progress from the nature of a sacrament to the work of the Holy Spirit in administering Christ to those who receive, and then to stress the necessity of genuine faith within the partakers in order for them to benefit from the presence of Christ and the benefits of the grace of God.

Based upon analysis of this Cambridge divine’s printed works, it can be demonstrated that Perkins’ sacramental theology with respect to the Lord’s Supper was built upon five essential biblical-theological pillars. Of course, he advanced additional arguments of a secondary importance as well. Yet it is evident that this Reformed Puritan was not so much an innovator as he was a thorough and effective apologist and popularizer, the sturdy biblical timbers that framed his approach to the sacrament were hewn and shaped by Reformers like Cranmer, Calvin, Bucer, and Beza:

The Right Understanding of the Nature of a Sacrament
 The Right Understanding of the Nature of Christ’s
 Resurrected Body
 The Dependence of the Sacraments Upon the
 Proclamation of God’s Word
 The Necessity of the Presence of Real Faith for the Right
 Receiving
 The Necessity of the Presence and Work of the Holy Spirit

While all five of these sacramental doctrines were important to Perkins, the two most foundational have to do with the proper nature of a Sacrament and the correct understanding of the nature and present location of Christ’s resurrected body. It was the biblical understanding of what constituted a Sacrament and the present location of Christ’s glorified body at the Father’s right hand which clarified for Perkins the right doctrine and practice of the Lord’s Supper.

According to Perkins, in his *The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered Into Six Principles*, ‘The Fifth Principle Expounded,’ “a sacrament is a sign to represent, a seal to confirm, an instrument to convey Christ and all His benefits to them that do believe in Him [Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:1].”²¹ It is this Puritan’s commitment to the sacraments as employing signs and seals which moves him away and sets him apart from the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, as well as the modified consubstantial position put forward by Martin Luther. Thus Perkins writes of a ‘sacramental relation.’ His firm position is that if Christ’s physical body and blood are conveyed in substance to the partakers of the Supper, then the Eucharist is no longer a sacrament, according to the proper nature and right understanding of what constitutes a sacrament. In this regard, it is helpful to quote at length Perkins from his ‘The Tenth Point: Of Real Presence,’ included in *A Reformed Catholic*. In this work, the Puritan seeks first of all to demonstrate areas of agreement or consent between the Reformed position and the Catholic doctrine of the Supper, and then to clearly explain and defend the areas of dissent. The first quotation below is taken from “I. Our Consent”:

... we hold and teach that Christ’s body and blood are truly present with the bread and the wine, being signs of the sacrament. But how? Not in respect of place, of coexistence, but by sacramental relation, on this manner: When a word is uttered, the sound comes to the ear; and at the same instant, the thing signified comes to the mind; and thus, by relation, the word and the thing spoken of are both present together. Even so at the Lord’s Table, bread and wine must not be considered

20. William Perkins, “A Golden Chain,” 6.166.

21. William Perkins, “The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered Into Six Principles,” in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Ryan Hurd (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), vol 5, p. 505.

barely as substances and creatures, but as outward signs in relation to the body and blood of Christ. And this relation, arising from every institution of the Sacrament, stands in this, that when the elements of bread and wine are present to hand and to the mouth of the receiver, at the very same time the body and blood of Christ are presented to the mind. Thus and no otherwise is Christ truly present with the signs.²²

Perkins maintains a ‘real presence’ of Christ’s body and blood, “but by a sacramental relation.” And so the physical signs and seals—the elements of the bread and the wine—serve for the believing recipient to bring to their minds the reality of the presence of Jesus Christ and all the benefits of union with Him. Perkins will later on, in the same discussion, describe a real union with Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and received by those partakers who possess real faith, what he describes as a “true believer.” Thus in terms of a ‘real presence’ of Christ conveyed and received in the Supper Perkins is in agreement with what he describes as “the Romish Church touching the real presence.”²³

Yet this Cambridge divine is quick to move on from consent to dissent with the Church of Rome. And his primary disagreement with the Catholic position on the Eucharist has to do with the manner of Christ’s presence. Perkins declares in “II. The Dissent,” that, “For though we hold a real presence of Christ’s body and blood in the sacrament, yet we do not take it to be local, bodily, or substantial, but spiritual and mystical; to the signs by sacramental relation, and to the communicants by faith alone.”²⁴ It is evident that for Perkins it is an affront and a glaring theological inconsistency for the Church of Rome to maintain that Christ’s presence in the Holy Supper is local, bodily, and substantially (or physically) present. The Puritan goes on in his *A Reformed Catholic*, to argue a series of reasons in support of the Reformed and Puritan position in this area of sacramental theology.

Perkins articulates the essential concepts supporting the Reformed position and disproving the Catholic position in a section entitled “Our Reasons.” And if it is correct to understand that Perkins organized these theological refutations according to their priority in his sacramental thinking, then it can be concluded that his primary reason for denying the physical, bodily presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper has to do with both the nature and the present location of Christ’s resurrected body.

In “Reason 1,” Perkins maintains that Christ’s “corporeal presence overturns sundry articles of faith.”²⁵ And

he argues that if Christ’s body becomes present here in this world “under the forms of bread and wine,” then in fact Christ has “not yet ascended into heaven but remains still among us.”²⁶ And based upon this logically consistent line of reasoning, the Puritan also concludes that the Savior could not truly be confessed by the faithful to be returning a second time in order to carry out the Day of Judgment and oversee the resurrection of the dead and the separation of the sheep from the goats.

Perkins continues to argue against the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and the bodily presence of Christ in the Supper in “Reason 2,” in which he further insists that, “The bodily presence overturns the nature of a true body, whose common nature or essential property it is to have length, breadth, and thickness; which being taken away, a body is no more a body.”²⁷ In order to accept that God would overturn His nature and His consistent order Perkins argues that one would be in essence denying the omnipotence and the perfect consistency of God.

Immediately after laying the theological groundwork challenging the Catholic doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ’s body, Perkins proceeds in “Reason 3” to argue for the Reformed sacramental position and against the Catholic position based upon what actually constitutes a sacrament. “Transubstantiation overturns the very Supper of the Lord. For in every sacrament there must be a sign, a thing signified, and a proportion of relation between them both. But popish real presence takes all away.”²⁸ In order for the elements of the bread and the wine to signs and seals they must serve to point to that which they were given to signify—the Lord Jesus Christ. If the signs and seals actually become the body and blood of Christ, then the relation between the signs and the thing (in this case the Person) signified is eliminated because that which is signified is immediately present. The purpose of the elements of the bread and the wine is, as Perkins observes, “abolished.”²⁹

“Reason 4” presents an interesting argument that is typically not considered in the 21st century church and yet is quite sound. Perkins considers the ramifications involved with Christ’s one-time death and the fact that His blood, shed from His wounds while dying upon the

22. William Perkins, “A Reformed Catholic,” 7.85.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

28. William Perkins, “A Reformed Catholic,” 7.88.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

cross, was never collected and “put into veins.” All of this was unnecessary and would have been quite foolish in the wake of Jesus’ resurrection, clothed in a then-glorified body. As an aside, it might well be asked how such a thing might have been accomplished at the time. Therefore, not only the unbiblical concept of a perpetual, real, re-sacrifice of Christ is involved in the Catholic Mass, but also the untenable doctrine that in the Holy Supper Christ’s blood is actually received “as it was shed on the cross.”³⁰ Well does Perkins declare that, “we may better say it is received spiritually by faith, whose property is to give a being to things which are not.”³¹

And Perkins proceeds in “The Eleventh Point: Of the Sacrifice in the Lord’s Supper, which the Papists Call the Sacrifice of the Mass,” to on the one hand consent to the Catholic position in terms of a sacrifice occurring in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. But on the other hand not consenting to a bloody, bodily sacrifice, offered up unto God. For Perkins, the sacrifice of Jesus was made once upon the cross (see Hebrews 9:15, 26; 10:10).³² And this biblical point eventually leads in the development of Perkins’ reasons to “Reason 3,” which brings the Puritan back around to the very definition of what constitutes a biblical sacrament. He observes that:

30. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

32. William Perkins, “A Reformed Catholic,” 7:94.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

34. William Perkins, “The Problem of Forged Catholicism,” 7:308.

35. See Geoffrey Butler, “‘This Mystical Blessing’: The Patristic Roots of John Calvin’s Eucharistic Theology,” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Volume 30, Issue 3 (August, 2021): 323: “Tony Lane points out that although Calvin offered no definitive date for the end of the supposed ‘golden age’ that was the primitive church; one event he pointed to was the rise ‘belief in the carnal presence of Christ’ in the Lord’s Supper.⁴ Such a notion, Calvin charged, was unheard-of in the patristic era and only emerged 600 years after the time of the apostles.” See also, John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Chapter 17: 16, 17, and 18.

36. See John Williamson Nevin, *The Mystical Presence: A Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (Philadelphia: S. R. Fisher & Co., 1867), p. 128: “Now it is very certain that the early fathers do not teach either transubstantiation or consubstantiation.” It is evident from his many published works that William Perkins does not propose the kind of ecclesiological implications that Nevin draws from Christ’s real spiritual presence in the Lord’s Supper.

37. William Perkins, “A Golden Chain,” in *The Works of William Perkins*, eds. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), vol. 6, p. 156.

38. William Perkins, “A Reformed Catholic,” 7:136.

39. William Perkins, “A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses, Leading to the Heavenly Canaan: Or, A Commentary upon the 11th Chapter to the Hebrews, preached in Cambridge by that godly and judicious divine,” in *The Works of William Perkins*, eds. Randall J. Pederson and

A real and outward sacrifice in a sacrament is against the nature of a sacrament, and especially the Supper of the Lord; for one end thereof is to keep in memory the sacrifice of Christ. Now every remembrance must be of a thing absent, past, and done. And if Christ be daily and really sacrificed, the sacrament is no fit memorial of His sacrifice.³³

Perkins also does not shy away from using a historical analysis of the surviving materials from the early church and from the early Fathers. Included in his work, *The Problem of Forged Catholicism*, is the statement that, “A sacrifice of Christ in the mass, being proper, real, and propitiatory for the living and the dead, in the hand of the priest, was not admitted into the Church for the space of twelve hundred years after Christ, for it was not known in Lombard’s time, *lib. 4, dist. 12.*”³⁴ Not unlike Calvin³⁵ before him and John Williamson Nevin³⁶ long after, Perkins surveys the sacramental doctrines and discussions of the ancient church and finds no unambiguous theological arguments for a perpetual re-sacrifice of Christ in the church’s celebration of the Eucharist.

Another concern for this Cambridge divine and effective apologist was to vigorously defend the necessity of the preached Word of God in connection with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. He describes the sacraments as “the appendants” to the preaching of the Word,³⁷ and also as “annexed to the Word.”³⁸ The proclamation of the Covenant of Grace should never be separated from the administration of the sacraments. Perkins would have none of the Roman Church’s private masses or the practice of conducting the Eucharist with inadequate scriptural exhortation. For this Cambridge divine, the right use of the Lord’s Supper depends upon the faithful proclamation of God’s Word, alongside the necessity for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of genuine, saving faith on the part of those who are going to partake.

Perkins, in his commentary on Hebrews chapter 11, verse 1, argues for the necessity of faith in order to receive the Lord’s Supper in a sacramental fashion. “Faith gives being to things which are not and makes things present which are absent. They therefore that will have Christ locally present, they take this notable prerogative from faith. For here is nothing absent, which faith should make present. We need not go in this sacrament to require a corporal presence. It is sufficient if we have true faith; for that makes Him present much more comfortably, than it might be His bodily presence would be unto us.”³⁹ The gift of God of genuine faith is one of the essential prerequisites for the conference of grace

and the real spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper unto the recipient. In a sermon concerning 1 Corinthians 11:28, Perkins declares that, “faith, which is that we must eat of this [the Lord’s Supper] faithfully, although we have never so much knowledge, yet if we bring not faith with us when we come to eat of these, we cannot receive it aright; therefore, after knowledge we must seek faith, for as it is in the [epistle to the] Romans, without faith it is impossible to please God.”⁴⁰

In Perkin’s “The Foundation of Christian Religion,” there is included ‘The Exposition of the Principles,’ in which each of Perkin’s Six Principles are treated in a catechetical question and answer format. Under the heading ‘The Fifth Principle Expounded’ are a series of these catechism-like learning tools focused upon the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. One of these, dealing with the work of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments is instructive:

Q. Why is the sacrament the instrument of the Spirit to convey the mercies of God into our hearts?

A. Because we are like Thomas. We will not believe till we feel them in some measure in our hearts.⁴¹

It is also evident from Perkins’ *A Reformed Catholic* that he identifies the Holy Spirit as the means by which there is a real presence of Christ and union with Him accomplished for worthy receivers of the Holy Supper:

...when God gives Christ, He gives withal at the same time the Spirit of Christ, which Spirit creates in the heart of the receiver the instrument of true faith, by which the heart really receives Christ given of God by resting upon the promise which God has made, that He will give Christ and His righteousness to every true believer. Now then, when God gives Christ with His benefits, and man for his part by faith receives the same as they are given, there rises that union which between every good receiver and Christ Himself. Which union is not forged, but a real, true, and near conjunction; nearer than which, none is or can be—because it is made by a solemn giving and receiving that passes between God and man, as also by the bond of one and the same Spirit. To come then to the point, considering there is a real union, and consequently a real communion between us and Christ (as I have proved), there must needs be such a presence wherein Christ is truly and really present to the heart of him that receives the sacrament in faith.⁴²

This is a key theological principle guiding Perkins’

sacramental doctrine and his understanding of the nature of the Lord’s Supper. He is quite willing to acknowledge the Catholic teaching that there is a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. But this real presence is conveyed by the Holy Spirit of God and is a spiritual presence and union with the Savior received by means of the gift of genuine or true faith. Perkins, like Calvin, refuses to confine the celebration of the Lord’s Table to a bare memorial which only serves to remind the receiver of Jesus’ sacrifice. This Cambridge divine is committed to a genuine conveyance of the presence of Christ and the benefits of God’s grace in like manner to the Holy Spirit’s initial work in uniting a previously unconverted sinner, now born again, with Christ, the Redeemer of God’s elect. And in this key building block of Perkins’ sacramental theology, as well as his understanding of the nature and the present location of the resurrected and glorified body of Christ, the influence of Calvin is evident:

So how is it, in Calvin’s understanding, that a local presence of Christ must be strongly rejected, yet, a true reception of the body and blood of Christ can be affirmed with equally strong language? The role of faith and the agency of the Spirit, who ensures the efficacy of the sacrament, are of vital importance in understanding this paradox. Indeed, Calvin even claims a “serious wrong is done to the Holy Spirit, unless we believe that it is through his incomprehensible power that we come to partake of Christ’s flesh and blood.” Rather than bringing Christ down to earth, as in Catholic or Lutheran conceptions, by the power of the Holy Spirit all true believers who participate in the Supper are “lifted up” into heaven to experience communion with him. They feast on his flesh and blood, not in the sense that they orally consume him, but in that he nourishes them by a spiritual, rather than carnal, eating.⁴³

Ryan Hurd (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), vol. 3, pp. 10–11.

40. Matthew N. Payne and J. Stephen Yuille, “1 Corinthians 11:28 (Sermon 2),” in *The Labors of a Godly and Learned Divine, William Perkins: Including Previously Unpublished Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022), pp. 189–190. See also Perkins’ ‘The Exposition of the Principles’ in “The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered Into Six Principles,” 5.507: “Q. What is the receiver? A. Everyone that has been baptized and after his baptism has truly believed in Christ and repented of his sins from his heart [1 Cor. 11:28, 31; Matt. 5:23–34; Isa. 66:2–3].”

41. William Perkins, “The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered Into Six Principles,” 5.506.

42. William Perkins, “A Reformed Catholic,” 7.86.

43. Geoffrey Butler, “‘This Mystical Blessing’: The Patristic Roots of John Calvin’s Eucharistic Theology,” in *Pro Ecclesia: A Journal of*

This Calvinistic Eucharistic theology is traceable in the Genevan Reformer's works at least back to the first 1536 printing of the *Institutes* and then in 1538 with his first catechism, in which he declares in '29. The Lord's Supper,' that: "The symbols are bread and wine, under which the Lord exhibits the true communication of his body and blood—but a spiritual one which, obviously content with the bond of his Spirit, does not require an enclosed or circumscribed presence either of the flesh under the bread or of the blood under the cup."⁴⁴ This line of argumentation concerning the non-ubiquitous nature of Christ's body and a real presence of the Savior in the Supper, as conveyed by the operation of the Holy Spirit, are clearly articulated and promoted by William Perkins some sixty years after the Genevan began publishing on sacramental theology and practice.

Through his various theological tracts, apologetical works, and catechetical materials, William Perkins effectively promoted a 'real presence' of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Yet the proper understanding of the nature of what constitutes a sacrament led this Cambridge divine to a spiritually conveyed presence of the Savior for those who worthily partake of sign and seals of the bread and the wine. Building upon the foundation laid by Calvin, Cranmer, Bucer, Beza, and others in the generation just prior to his own, Perkins defended the Reformed sacramental doctrines concerning the nature of a sacrament, the proper understanding of Christ's resurrected body, and the necessity of preaching, the operation of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of genuine faith in the receiver.

V. WILLIAM PERKINS AND THE POPULARITY AND USEFULNESS OF HOME CATECHIZING

In order to battle the lack of Christian education and

Catholic and Evangelical Theology, Volume 30, Issue 3 (August, 2021): 326. These quotations from Calvin are taken from his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.17.31, 32, and 33.

44. I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary*. Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), p. 35. See also Hesselink's commentary, pages 148–149. Calvin also writes in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Chapter 17:24: "We say that Christ descends to us both by the external symbol and by his Spirit, that he may truly vivify our souls with the substance of his flesh and blood."

45. William Perkins, *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Ryan Hurd (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), vol. 5, p. xvii. See also the full catechetical section in pages 487–509.

46. *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

47. Lady Margaret Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599–1605*, Joanna Moody, ed. (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2001), p. 41.

widespread confusion about doctrine and practice in the emerging Protestant movement, teaching through the method of catechization became more commonplace in the late 16th and early 17th centuries in England, Scotland, and in those European nations impacted by the Reformation. John Calvin produced a catechism for use in Geneva and other Reformers quickly followed suit. It is therefore not surprising that William Perkins utilized a catechetical format of questions and answers to explicate for his readers the six principles contained in his *The Foundation of Christian Religion*. Perkins brought a pastor's, as well as an apologetic theologian's, burdens into his published works. Hurd observes that this short catechism at the end of *The Foundation of Christian Religion*, "was first to be memorized, and then studied in its exposition that followed every point."⁴⁵ This is then followed by a further exposition of the principles, which is also organized in the catechetical question and answer format. This does seem, as Hurd further observes, to create the impression of a "larger catechism."⁴⁶

It is also important to realize, in an era without electronic media and constantly available entertainment, how Perkins' printed works of every sort would be useful for personal, devotional study at home—even those works not necessarily intended for such a purpose. In a rare surviving example from the late Elizabethan period, a diary has survived composed by Lady Margaret Hoby. This collection of accounts of her daily life and activities includes frequent references to spending time with her husband in reading from William Perkins. Among the many entries along this line is an example from 1599: "... after I discharged household billes and, after, praied: then reed a whill of perkins, and so went to bed."⁴⁷

It is also of interest that there is a rare report of a face-to-face social meeting between Lady Hoby and others of her higher social circle with Perkins, again recorded in her diary as taking place in November of 1600. Of course, it is very difficult to draw any quantitative conclusions from Lady Hoby's direct contact with William Perkins. Yet it is instructive that Perkins had such a significant regular impact upon her practice of her Protestant faith through his published works and also through social engagement. This then is a hint of Perkins' pastoral, as well as apologetic labors:

The :12: day

After I was readis I was busie to make some readie for Sir Edward Hoby, Mr. Docter perkins, and Docter lister, that came to vs to dinner : and so, hauinge praied I went to Dinner : after, I was busie about some linan, and at

night I praied and went to supper : then I went to Read
a whill and, when I had praied, I went to bed

VI. MAXIMIZING THE 16TH–17TH CENTURY INTERNET: BOOK PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

It is often argued that William Perkins was the most widely-published theologian of his era. Breward notes that, “At least fifty editions of Perkin’s work were printed in Switzerland, the same number in various parts of Germany, almost ninety in the Netherlands, with smaller printings in France, Bohemia, Ireland, Hungary, plus translations into Spanish and Welsh published in London.”⁴⁸ Such prolific output insured that William Perkins’ impact in the late 16th and early 17th centuries was extensive. It would not be an exaggeration in 21st century language to describe Perkin’s widespread distribution as a kind of early viral propagation—‘going viral’ in today’s parlance, as it were.

Publication records indicate not only a geographically wide distribution of Perkin’s works, but also quite significantly, a range of translations into several languages, making his apologetic and catechistic materials on the Lord’s Supper more approachable by scholars and laypeople alike. These languages included, besides the English, also Dutch, German, Spanish, and even Italian.

VII. CONCLUSION: PERKINS AS THE CONVEYOR OF CHRIST’S REAL PRESENCE TO THE WESTMINSTER GENERATION OF DIVINES

It is difficult to assess and quantify the impact that any great theologian may have had on their students, fellow teachers, leaders in their society, the wider visible church, and especially with respect to later generations. Much of the influence achieved by the Puritan divines was by example, was personal, or occurred in university lecture halls or from pulpits in English cities and villages. The task of proper analysis is made all the more difficult when the subject of one’s research providentially lived a short life—as was the case with William Perkins and other notable Reformation laborers such as James Durham.

Perkins was prolifically published and widely known at the end of the 16th century and throughout the 17th century. His works occupied shelf space in the libraries of the local village clergymen as well as among the volumes in the collections of high-ranking bishops of the Church of England. And for the first few decades of the 17th century his works were increasingly published

and distributed posthumously. His works during that era are described as “amongst the religious bestsellers of the late-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries” and “they were such a guaranteed success that his executors embarked on an ambitious programme of posthumous publication which continued for over three decades after Perkins’s death in 1602.”⁴⁹

Perkins’ sacramental theology was constructed using the framework created in the previous generation by the pioneers of the Reformation. According to various contemporary eyewitness accounts, he was also a very effective pulpiteer and enjoyed the devotion of many of his Cambridge students, who bemoaned his departure from his lectureship. This brief examination concludes that the Cambridge divine was not so much a theological or sacramental innovator as he was most certainly a prolific and persuasive apologist, promoter, and promulgator of the Reformed position on the doctrines and the practice of the Lord’s Supper. “Jacqueline Eales notes that Perkins’ writings ‘provided a popular combination of Calvinist theology and practical puritan piety’ for a wide range of readers, including Richard Baxter, Lady Margaret Hoby, and Lady Brilliana Harley, all deeply affected by the culture Perkins helped to shape.”⁵⁰ It should also not be forgotten that William Perkins was a key mentor to William Ames. And “the influence and popularity of Ames’ work amongst English divines was considerable, and may be taken to represent the doctrine of many in the period 1620–1640. This seems to be the case, for example, with the simpler catechism of William Twisse (1578–1646) rector of Newington and then Newbury, later to be the Prolocutor of the Westminster Assmably.”⁵¹

William Perkins’ work, as someone who widely promulgated the Reformed sacramental theology previously developed by Calvin, Martyr, Cranmer, Ridley, Bullinger, and other Reformation pioneers, can be seen

48. Ian Breward, ed., *The Work of William Perkins, The Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics III* (Berkshire, England: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), p. xi.

49. Jacqueline Eales, “A Road to Revolution: The Continuity of Puritanism, 1559–1642,” in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700*, ed. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin’s Press), p. 196.

50. W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins & the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 61. The quotation is originally from Jacqueline Eales, “A Road to Revolution: The Continuity of Puritanism, 1559–1642,” in C. Durston and J. Eales, eds., *The Culture of English Puritanism*, p. 196.

51. Bryan Spinks, *Sacraments, Ceremonies, and the Stuart Divines: Sacramental Theology and Liturgy in England and Scotland 1603–1662* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002), p. 70.

in the Westminster Assembly's final output concerning the Lord's Supper:

The Westminster Larger Catechism [168]

Q. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament of the New Testament, wherein by giving, & receiving Bread, & Wine, according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and, they that worthily communicate, feed upon his Body & Blood, to their spiritual nourishment, & growth in grace, have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify, & renew their thankfulness & ingagement to God, & their mutual love & fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

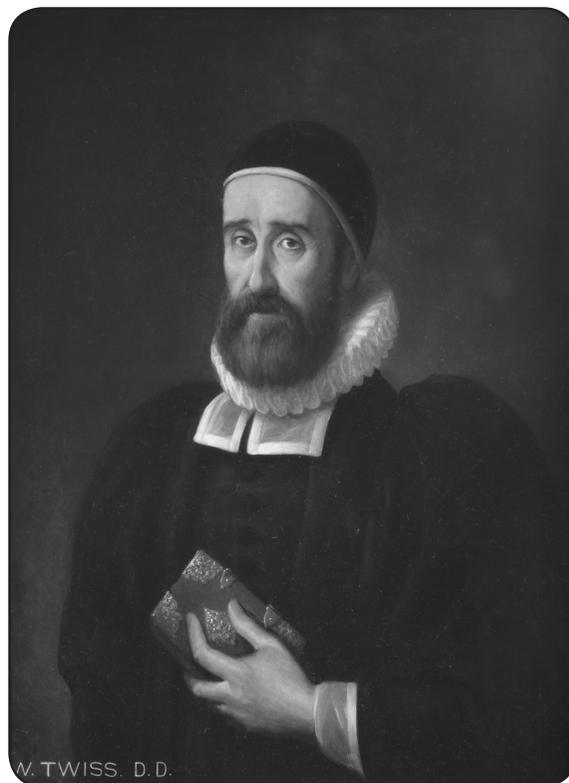
The Westminster Larger Catechism [170]

Q. How do they, that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper, feed upon the body & blood of Christ therein?

A. As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally, or carnally present, in, with, or under, the Bread & Wine in the Lord's Supper; & yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no lesse truly, & really, then the Elements themselves are to their outward senses: So, they that worthily communicate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body & blood of Christ, not after a corporall, or carnall, but in a spirituall manner, yet truly, & really, while, by faith, they receive, & apply unto themselves, Christ crucified, & all the benefits of his death.⁵²

The work carried out by Cambridge Puritan William Perkins was essential in the period between Calvin's mid-sixteenth century Geneva and Twisse and Burges' Westminster, not because Perkins innovated or developed the Reformed sacramental doctrines adopted at the Assembly, but because he was the greatest apologist, promoter, and popularizer of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper—in a spiritual rather than a corporeal manner. He also upheld the non-ubiquitous nature of Christ's resurrected and glorified body, what properly constitutes a sacrament, and the necessity of

receiving the Supper in true faith. These biblical and Reformed pillars of sacramental theology and practice were not only essential to Perkins—they were enshrined at the heart of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms* some 45 years after Perkins' lamentably youthful death.■



William Twisse (1578–1646) by Gustavus Ellinthorpe Sintzenich (c.1821–1892).

52. Chris Coldwell, trans., ed., *The Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly: A Transcription of the Surviving Manuscripts With Notes* (Austin: Westminster Letter Press, 2009), pp. 109–110; 111. See also, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter XXIX. "Of the Lord's Supper," esp. VII. And see *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Question 96 and 97.