

THE EXEGETICAL METHODS OF SOME SIXTEENTH-CENTURY  
PURITAN PREACHERS: HOOPER, CARTWRIGHT,  
AND PERKINS  
PART II\*

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In Part I of this series, I provided a brief overview of the preaching careers of the three Puritan preachers here under consideration—John Hooper, Thomas Cartwright, and William Perkins. I also analyzed their concept of the Bible, which concept is fundamental to their exegetical methods. Herein I will continue the analysis of these methods under the sub-headings of “Allegory,” “Typology,” “Literal Exposition of Scripture,” “Other Features of Puritan Exegesis,” and “Use of Church Fathers.”

1. *Allegory*

There is very little of medieval-type allegory in the sermons of Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins. It seems to me that J. W. Blench exaggerates when he says of Hooper’s method of interpretation, “Even more like the old manner of allegory is Hooper’s treatment of Jonah.”<sup>1</sup> There is an occasional allegorical interpretation in Hooper’s *Oversight and Deliberation upon the Holy Prophet Jonas*, but more characteristic is the use of analogy. Hooper compares the spiritual problems of Jonah and his contemporaries with those of sixteenth-century Englishmen. In most

\*Part I was published in *AUSS* 19 (1981):21-36. The following abbreviated forms are used herein for works already cited in Part I:

Carr = Samuel Carr, ed., *Early Writings of John Hooper* (Cambridge, 1843).

Cartwright = Thomas Cartwright, *A Commentary upon the Epistle of Saint Paule written to the Colossians* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, STC 4708, 1612).

Perkins = William Perkins, *The Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the Vniversitie of Cambridge M. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (London, 1631).

<sup>1</sup>J. W. Blench, *Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, 1964), p. 45.

instances it is obvious that Hooper is not intending to impose allegorical meanings upon the text in the manner of John Mirk and others of his kind.

Wishing to indicate the true cause of England's troubles, Hooper speaks of the Jonahs who are not following their vocations or obeying their orders.<sup>2</sup> The point is not that the true meaning of Jonah's defection is to be found in the recalcitrance of sixteenth-century Englishmen. Hooper obviously accepts the historical authenticity of the story of Jonah and deplores his personal rejection of the divine commission. But Jonah's problem is repeated many times in the lives of men. Every man who neglects his vocation is emulating Jonah. The analogy is pressed to the limit. The ship on which Jonah sailed to Tarshish represents the commonwealth of England; the master of the ship represents the king and council; the storm is an analogy of England's troubles; and Jonah is those who are the cause of the tempest. Certainly this is allegory, but it is quite different from claiming, as one medieval preacher did, that the three stones used by David to slay Goliath represent faith, hope, and charity.<sup>3</sup> And it is quite different from using such allegorical applications to substantiate doctrine, in the manner of the medieval preacher who bolstered the concept of Mary's perpetual virginity from the story of the burning bush which was not burnt up.<sup>4</sup>

Perkins resorts very occasionally to an allegorical interpretation which is not thoroughly substantiated in the literature. Explaining why the candlesticks in chap. 1 of the book of Revelation, used to represent the church, are golden, Perkins says that first, it is because gold is the most excellent of all metals, just as the church is the most excellent of all societies.<sup>5</sup> Salvation can be obtained in the church, but not in other societies. The purpose of other societies is to preserve and foster the interests of the church. The church defines and glorifies other societies, for "the principall dignitie of any towns, houshold, or kingdome is this, that they are either Churches of God, or true members thereof."<sup>6</sup> Second, the church is represented by golden candlesticks "because of all societies among men, it is most precious and deare unto

<sup>2</sup>Carr, pp. 459-460.

<sup>3</sup>Woodburn O. Ross, ed., *Middle English Sermons: Edited from British Museum MS. Royal 18 B. xxiii*, Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 209 (London, 1940), p. 135.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>5</sup>Perkins, 3: 245-246.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

God.”<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, the book of Revelation comprises highly symbolic apocalyptic prophecy, but Perkins seems to have read somewhat more into the golden nature of the candlesticks than can be supported, even by the application of his method of interpreting one Bible passage from others which deal with the same theme.

Perkins allegorizes the reason for the choice of Ephesus as the first of the seven churches to which messages were sent by John the Revelator (Rev. 2:1-7).<sup>8</sup> It was not that the church of Ephesus was given authority over the others, but that Ephesus exceeded the others in riches and estimation. Therefore, Christ wants us to understand “that those people, townes, and cities which excell others in estimation and wealth, should also goe before them in knowledge, obedience, and other graces of God.”<sup>9</sup> There is no indication in the text that Ephesus was chosen first in view of its wealth and importance, or that the spiritual message which Perkins deduces is in any way intended. But this kind of allegory is certainly not at all characteristic of Perkins’s exegetical method.

## 2. *Typology*

On the other hand, typology, in which a scriptural passage is seen to point forward to later biblical applications, is relatively common to Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins. Hooper refers to the rites and ceremonies of the Jews as types of the work of Christ for man.<sup>10</sup> He uses the book of Hebrews in making his applications.<sup>11</sup> Jonah’s confinement in the belly of the whale is a type of Christ’s period in the grave (Matt 12: 39, 40).<sup>12</sup>

Cartwright recognizes the dividing of the land of Canaan among the Israelite tribes as a type of the inheritance to be given to Christian believers.<sup>13</sup> He uses the rebellion of Israel in the wilderness as a type of the defection of Christians who, like their ancient counterparts, will be denied entry into the promised land.<sup>14</sup> Cartwright speaks of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law as the A-B-C which was designed to prepare mankind for the Gospel era. The ceremonies “were the

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Carr, p. 448.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 487.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 490.

<sup>13</sup>Cartwright, pp. 47-48.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

shadowes of that truth, which now is, and therefore these are the dayes of restauration, and perfection.”<sup>15</sup> He provides an interesting interpretation of Col 2:14–17. The “handwriting of ordinances,” he says, refers both to the sins of mankind, which were nailed to the cross, and to the OT ceremonial law, which was a perpetual reminder that sin had not yet been atoned for. The death of Christ handled human guilt as well as the ceremonial law.<sup>16</sup> Circumcision, ceremonial eating and drinking, and ceremonial sabbaths lost their significance at the death of Christ.<sup>17</sup> But the weekly sabbath did not. Cartwright treats the annual ceremonial sabbaths of the Jews, associated with the three pilgrimage feasts—Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (Ex 23:14–17)—, as types of Christ’s work; but the weekly sabbath he regards as perpetual: “Againe, the Lords day was neuer no ceremony: for it was before all ceremonies, euen in the beginning of the world, before there was need of Christ. And therefore the Sabaoth day heere is not meant: but it is yet to be kept wholly, and holily vnto the Lord.”<sup>18</sup>

Of course, to Cartwright, the weekly sabbath of Christians is Sunday, the memorial of the resurrection of Christ, by contrast with Saturday, which was the Jewish sacred day. Yet he uses Gen 2:1–3 as evidence that Sunday should be strictly observed and argues from Christ’s instruction to his disciples as recorded in Matt 24:20. This passage is a reference to the sabbath day observed by the Jews of the first century A.D., but Cartwright reads veneration for Sunday, as the Christian sacred day, into the text. The relevant point here is that Cartwright’s typological applications excluded the weekly Jewish sabbath. As a strict Sunday-keeping sabbatarian, he wished to use both OT and NT passages stipulating seventh-day sabbath observance as Bible proofs for the Christian significance of Sunday as a sacred day. This mode of sabbatarianism was a characteristic feature of Puritan theology.

Perkins’s typological exegesis was quite consistent with that employed by his Protestant contemporaries.<sup>19</sup> The preparation of the Jews to eat the Passover was a symbol of the preparation to be made by Christians who are about to hear the word of God preached.<sup>20</sup> Perkins

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 128–130, 133, 139–140.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. e.g., Perkins, 3: 20.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

outlined the Passover celebration as described in the twelfth chapter of Exodus, and emphasized its twofold application.<sup>21</sup> It memorialized the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage and pointed forward to "spiritual deliverance from everlasting death, by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus the immaculate Lambe of God."<sup>22</sup>

Perkins regarded the OT Israelite priests as types of Christians. Just as the Jewish priest prayed, not only for himself but for the people also, so the Christian must pray for his brethren.<sup>23</sup> As the priests instructed the people, so Christians are to teach one another. The priests offered sacrifices as the Christian is to offer "spirituall sacrifice unto God, that is, dedicate our selves, our soules and bodies, and all that is in us, our wit, learning, knowledge, and every gift of body or minde to Gods service."<sup>24</sup> The Jewish priests blessed the people. Likewise Christians are to bless others and not curse, slander, or backbite. The Levites had no inheritance of land. "The Lord was their portion. So wee being Priests to God, must bee content with any estate in this world, for God is our portion."<sup>25</sup> Christians must not seek "too much for an inheritance on earth," lest they should lose their status as priests to God.<sup>26</sup> Perkins's teaching was in accord with Luther's definition of the priesthood of all believers.

Yet, the OT priests, Perkins argued, were types of Christ himself.<sup>27</sup> Since they were intended to symbolize the perfect holiness and perfection of Christ, Jewish priests were to be without physical blemish or disability. Animals offered in the ceremonial services symbolized the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>28</sup> The ministration of the Israelite High Priest before the seven-branched candlestick in the Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary or temple, represented the ministration of Christ for his universal church, as symbolized by the Son of man in the midst of the seven candlesticks described in the first chapter of Revelation (Rev 1:13-20).<sup>29</sup>

In commenting on Matt 5:18, Perkins distinguished between three kinds of law given to the ancient Israelites: ceremonial, judicial, and

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

moral law.<sup>30</sup> The ceremonial ceased to have significance when type met antitype at the death of Christ. The judicial was designed only for the nation of Israel. But the moral law, the Ten Commandments, is perpetually binding upon Christians.

In answer to the question as to the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments in view of the change of the sabbath day from the seventh to the eighth day, Perkins stressed that the principle of the sabbath still applies: A seventh day was still being kept, he felt — albeit the day which the apostles instituted as the sabbath of the Christian church.<sup>31</sup> Despite what he felt was a justifiable change, “no creature may dispense with the law of God. Mens laws may be abrogated and changed, but Gods law even in the least part thereof, must stand for ever, till it be accomplished to the full.”<sup>32</sup> Perkins’s typological exegesis, like that of Protestants in general at the time, allowed for no abrogation of the moral law as adhered to by the Jews.

### 3. *Literal Exposition of Scripture*

The most common mode of preaching practiced by Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins was expository. The preacher took a book or a chapter of the Bible and interpreted it phrase by phrase for his congregation. The concern was first to explicate the occasion and purpose for the writing of the book or chapter, and then to state clearly the meaning of each phrase in context. Characteristically, the biblical text was used as the doorway to discussion of those matters, doctrinal or practical, which the preacher deemed important for his contemporary Englishmen. Hence, even though the method of interpretation was literal, quite often motifs were introduced which had no real relationship to the particular phrase being considered at the time.

The method can be well illustrated from Hooper’s series, *An Oversight and Deliberation upon the Holy Prophet Jonas*. After quoting the first and second verses of the book of Jonah, Hooper proceeded to the discussion of the time, place, and particular setting in which Jonah’s ministry was carried on.<sup>33</sup> These matters, he told his congregation, could be discovered in the fourth book of Kings (2 Kings in the English

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Carr, p. 446.

Bible), chap. 14. Jonah was called of God to go to Nineveh. The point, Hooper said, was "that no man can or may teach truly the word of God, but he be called ordinarily, or extraordinarily."<sup>34</sup> A minister is called ordinarily by the church when there is no corruption in doctrine or in the administration of the sacraments. The call is extraordinary when the preacher or prophet is called by God quite independently of the action of an apostate church. E.g., Amos, Jonah, Jeremiah, Moses, and Paul were called by God, despite the incapacity of the contemporary ecclesiastical authorities to recognize and convey the call.<sup>35</sup>

A discussion of Jonah's call became the pathway to Hooper's statement concerning the significance of the divine call to the ministry. It was this Puritan doctrine of the call, in opposition to the Anglican practice by which men sought preferment, or were appointed by secular authorities, which was one factor drastically altering their overall concept of the church.

Jonah was instructed to present a warning of coming destruction to all the people of Nineveh, Hooper pointed out, and Isaiah and Jeremiah likewise conveyed unpopular messages. "This is the note and mark to know the bishops and ministers of God from the ministers of the devil, by the preaching tongue of the gospel, and not by shaving, clipping, vestments, and outward apparel."<sup>36</sup> The exposition of the first few verses of the book of Jonah required no such reference to clerical garb, but Hooper was not merely concerned to interpret a Bible book. He gave plausibility to his particular interests by introducing them in the midst of a scriptural exposition. The exegetical method is one of analogy. The text is interpreted literally first, and then a sixteenth-century situation is dwelt upon. Sometimes the modern application is more or less relevant to the text; at other times it is quite unrelated.

Cartwright's method is similar. He begins his homiletical *Commentary Vpon the Epistle of Saint Paule written to the Colossians* by drawing from the text the occasion of Paul's writing.<sup>37</sup> From the book of Colossians itself he concludes that the people of Colossae had responded to the preaching of the Gospel but had subsequently been deceived by philosophy and by anachronistic Jewish ceremonialism.<sup>38</sup> Cartwright divides the Epistle into two parts: "the first and second Chapters are of

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 447.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 448.

<sup>37</sup>Cartwright, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

doctrine, the other of manners."<sup>39</sup> This, he says, follows the usual Pauline procedure of presenting first the principal grounds of religion, followed by relevant exhortations for the people. In the actual verse-by-verse exposition of the book of Colossians, Cartwright spends considerable time paraphrasing each text.

Unless the thought content of the particular text warranted further comment, Cartwright confined himself to the paraphrase. But he often applied the biblical material to doctrinal and practical matters. His comments on Col 1:21, 22 are a case in point. He first read the passage in an English translation. This he followed with the usual paraphrase. The Colossians, he said, were reconciled to God through Christ.<sup>40</sup> They were now able to live blameless lives. In the two verses he spelled out two major points: (1) "A particular application of the common benefits of Christs redemption unto the Colossians." (2) "An exhortation to perseverance, that they may bee truly partakers of that redemption."<sup>41</sup> The relevant instruction for his auditors followed. The question was whether they too were assured of the reconciliation enjoyed by the Colossians.<sup>42</sup> Cartwright's point was doctrinal as well as experiential. His hearers were to know that Paul taught the certainty of redemption to the believer and to enjoy personally that inner sense of assurance. The obvious attempt was to counteract papal teaching on this subject: "This serueth to confute the Papists, which say that this is a presumptuous doctrine to bee assured of our salvation. But we see the Apostle dealeth otherwise to the Colossians, for he assureth the Colossians of their redemption."<sup>43</sup>

The literal interpretation of the text led to discussion of contemporary situations and problems which may or may not have been directly related to the Pauline material. In this particular instance, Cartwright proceeded to answer the obvious question which would be raised by his opponents. How could Paul know the certainty of salvation for the Colossians, "seeing there are so many deceits, and turnings of Hypocrisy in a mans heart, that a man can hardly know any thing of certaine in himselfe."<sup>44</sup> His answer involved an assertion of the doctrine

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-73.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 76.



of election. Wherever the Gospel is preached, there are some who are "certainly called and elected."<sup>45</sup> Yet the concept of election is not discussed in the passage he was interpreting. Nevertheless, Cartwright's point that "wherever the Gospell is preached, there is a Church planted," is suggested in the passage (Col 1:18-22). The relevant implication which he drew was that corruption within the church does not disqualify it as a Christian church, for God has within it some who are experiencing the certainty of salvation.<sup>46</sup> For this reason, Cartwright rejected the separatism of the Brownists.

The expository preaching of Perkins followed closely the method of Hooper and Cartwright. The aim was to interpret a passage phrase by phrase on the basis of the immediate context, in a manner consistent with the overall teaching of Scripture and relevant to the problems of sixteenth-century Englishmen. Perkins's attempt to structure his sermons by strict conformity to the thought content of the biblical material rendered his sermon style and exegetical method somewhat similar to those of Andrewes.

Perkins's series of sermons in Cambridge, which were later collected into *A godly and learned Exposition or Commentary upon the three First Chapters of the Revelation*, gives us an interesting insight into his mode of prophetic interpretation. After summarizing the contents of Revelation, chaps. 1-3, he dwelt on one verse at a time, interpreting the symbolism and applying the material to the doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and ethical issues of his own day.<sup>47</sup> Since the book of Revelation is highly symbolic apocalyptic literature, Perkins was confronted with the need to find a plausible biblical interpretation of the symbols. He did this by looking for OT and NT antecedents of the symbolism, a method of interpretation which to a great extent prevails among twentieth-century expositors.<sup>48</sup> For instance, he used the white hair of Christ (Rev 1:14) as a symbol of his eternity of existence. As evidence, Perkins cited Dan 7:9, which speaks of the "Ancient of days" as having

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Perkins, 3: 208-222.

<sup>48</sup>Cf., e.g., Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1906, 1968); R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1920); William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1959); George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1972); Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1969); J. Massynberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, AB 38 (Garden City, N.Y., 1975).

hair as white as wool.<sup>49</sup> He also cited John 1:1, which identifies Christ, the Word, as having been in the beginning with God.

When a satisfactory biblical antecedent was not readily forthcoming, Perkins used his imagination. He provided a very plausible interpretation of the stars in the right hand of Christ (Rev 1:16, 20). He argued that these "angels" or "messengers" are the ministers of the church who are protected and sustained by Christ.<sup>50</sup> His interpretation of the "Nicolaitanes" (Rev 2:6, 14, 15) took cognizance of the linguistic connection between vss. 14 and 15 in chap. 2 of Revelation, and of the consequent identification of the lifestyle of Balaam with that of the Nicolaitans. But Perkins chose to follow the early-church tradition that the Nicolaitans were Gnostic heretics who took their name from Nicholas, one of the seven deacons (Acts 6), and who practiced immorality and idolatry.<sup>51</sup>

Consistently Perkins looked for fulfillments of the prophecy of the seven churches (Rev 2, 3) in the apostolic or the immediate post-apostolic era, but he used the situations faced by the churches in the Roman province of Asia as analogous to the problems confronting the Anglican Church of the Elizabethan era. The prediction that the church of Smyrna would suffer affliction for ten days (Rev 2:10), Perkins treated as a bona fide prognostication of a short period of persecution for that Asian church. But he also saw it as a warning to the church of his own day that, before the eschatological climax, there would be suffering for the true people of God.<sup>52</sup>

This twofold application of the prophecy—literally for the apostolic or post-apostolic period, and analogically to other eras—enabled Perkins to condemn those contemporary doctrines and religious mores, whether papal or Anglican, which he thought to be unbiblical. He applied Rev 2:13 to Pergamos, "I know thy workes, and where thou dwellest, even where Satans throne is."<sup>53</sup> Satan's throne was the ancient city of Pergamos because it was a gentile center of superstition and idolatry. But Satan's throne is anywhere that anti-Christian principles have prevailed. More recently, "in the dayes of Popery, every Church and chappell were thrones of Satan wherein were erected

<sup>49</sup>Perkins, 3: 248.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 251, 260.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 278, 297, 299.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 289-290.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 292.

Images and holy roods for the worship of Saints, whither the people came to worship from country to country."<sup>54</sup> And in his own time, Perkins recognized Satan's throne in dicing houses, brothels, and those homes where people did not practice true religion.

The "woman Jezebel" (Rev 2:20) Perkins thought to be a literal woman in the church of Thyatira who taught false doctrine and committed herself to immorality and idolatry.<sup>55</sup> But he treated her as a symbol of those in the Anglican Church who were deceived by false teaching and who had capitulated to the sins of the flesh.<sup>56</sup> She also represented "Popish recusants" who dissociated themselves entirely from the Anglican Church.<sup>57</sup>

Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins were exponents of the literal interpretation of Scripture. Where the biblical material they were using involved allegory and symbolism, they looked for scriptural interpretations. Nevertheless, their applications to the problems of their own day tended to go beyond the demands of the phrase-by-phrase exposition which they favored. The result was the introduction into their sermons of motifs which were either indirectly related or not related at all to the particular segment of the biblical text which they happened to be expounding. In relation to the sixteenth-century orthodox Anglicans, these three Puritans were ultra-literalists, in the sense that they were not satisfied to give Bible passages their obvious meanings in context, but, to a greater degree than did the Anglicans, sought to see their own era, as well as their own biases, as the subjects of the scriptural messages.

#### 4. *Other Features of Puritan Exegesis*

There is little else to be said regarding the exegetical methods of the sixteenth-century Puritan preachers. It is clear that Cartwright and Perkins were familiar with the biblical languages, and they very occasionally alluded to them. For the most part, however, they used the English Bible in their sermons.<sup>58</sup> Even though they may have used Greek and Hebrew in their personal study, rarely were these languages resorted to as authority for interpretations which they presented publicly.

Occasionally there is in these sermons a glaring misapplication of a

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 313-314.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 314.

<sup>58</sup>Cartwright, pp. 70, 184-185, 204, 243; Perkins, 3: 218, 354, 411, 570.

Bible passage. Without explaining his millennial theory, Cartwright used the binding of Satan for a thousand years (Rev 20:1-3) as a reference to the devil's purposes being frustrated for ten centuries after the launching of the early Christian church.<sup>59</sup> How Cartwright could reconcile this interpretation with the context of the passage in the book of Revelation, and with his own concept of the medieval church, is difficult to imagine.<sup>60</sup> Speaking of the events on the mount of transfiguration (Matt 17:1-3), Perkins declared, "And Moses and Elias assumed their bodies in the Mount with Christ in his transfiguration: But yet they laid them downe againe to the former misery of corruption for a time."<sup>61</sup> There is no such suggestion in the Synoptic accounts (Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36). Perkins obviously read his view of immortal disembodied souls into the circumstances of Moses and Elijah before, during, and after the transfiguration.

### 5. *Use of the Church Fathers*

There are remarkably few appeals to the early-church fathers in these sermons. Hooper argued from Augustine and the Fathers of the first eight centuries against the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass.<sup>62</sup> But Perkins seemed to be speaking for his Puritan brethren when he asserted: "It cannot be denied, but many of the fathers were worthy members of Gods Church: but if the fountaine be left, the ministerie will soone be tainted with the filthy puddles of mens inventions."<sup>63</sup>

The Fathers erred in their traditions, Perkins claimed, and very rarely in the hundreds of pages of his sermons is there any reference to them.<sup>64</sup> Nor are their writings any more frequently cited in Cartwright's series on the Epistle to the Colossians. The history of classical antiquity is likewise largely left out of these sermons. Very occasionally there is a passing reference.<sup>65</sup>

The attitude of these preachers to ancient philosophy was not entirely negative. Cartwright rejected the opinion of the philosophers that knowledge of God is available apart from revelation, and that man has

<sup>59</sup>Cartwright, p. 64.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 29, 40.

<sup>61</sup>Perkins, 3: 222.

<sup>62</sup>Carr, pp. 515, 520-524.

<sup>63</sup>Perkins, 3: 239.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 493.

<sup>65</sup>Carr, p. 490; Cartwright, p. 178.

some virtue by nature.<sup>66</sup> But he admitted a subsidiary role for philosophy as the handmaid of theology:

He [Paul] biddeth them take heed of Phylosophy, which is a glorious name, signifying the loue of wisdom. But the Apostle doth not take away the use of Phylosophy. For if it be well used, it is a good handmaid for to help the Ministers, if so be it be not used to make a glose, and a shew to the world.<sup>67</sup>

Philosophy, declared Cartwright, is not to be used "hand in hand" with the Bible, nor are doctrines to be drawn from it. Only insofar as it assists ministers in the true understandings of the Bible is it to be used.<sup>68</sup>

Perkins's statements on the subject were more negative. The philosophers and wise men of this world were wrong to identify happiness with pleasure, or wealth, or civil virtue. Only the Bible has the secret of happiness; "and hereby we have just occasion to magnifie the bookes of Scripture, farre above all humane writings, because they doe fully set out unto us the nature and estate of true felicity, which no humane worke could ever doe."<sup>69</sup>

Never do Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins have recourse to philosophy as an aid in interpreting a Bible passage. Their exegetical method was the natural outgrowth of extreme biblicism, associated with the compulsion to provide authority for their religious world view.

## 6. *Summary and Conclusions*

We are now in a position to summarize the findings of our analysis regarding the exegetical methods of Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins. The belief of these Puritan preachers in the primary authority of the Bible was not markedly different from the position taken by orthodox Anglicans such as Latimer, Jewel, Hooker, and Andrewes. The difference lay in the frequency with which the Puritans broached the subject and the additional emphasis they gave to their pronouncements. They tended to stress more than did the Anglicans the perfection of the Scriptures, and they denigrated mere human literature by comparison. Their presuppositions in regard to the inspiration of the Bible resulted in exegetical ultraliteralism.

<sup>66</sup>Cartwright, pp. 36-37.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp. 121-122.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>69</sup>Perkins, 3: 5-6.

There is very little medieval-type allegory in the sermons of Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins. Even so, just as the medieval preachers used allegory to bend the meaning of the Bible to their particular theological and religious biases, so the sixteenth-century Puritans employed their ultra-literal hermeneutic "to prove" their predilections. Their method of interpretation was vastly different from that of their Roman Catholic predecessors, but they also tended to warp the contextual meanings of passages. Typology was quite common in the sermons of Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins, even though their applications were at times too largely influenced by issues external to the Bible passages they used.

The most characteristic method of preaching adopted by these three preachers was expository. They publicly interpreted Bible books phrase by phrase. The particular phrase under discussion was often used as the catalyst for the introduction of contemporary issues which were either indirectly or not at all related to the particular Bible text. Using this method, the preachers were able to condemn those contemporary doctrines and religious mores, whether papal or Anglican, which they did not like, and at the same time make it appear that the Bible supported their aversion.

There is relatively little use of the early-church fathers in their sermons, because the preachers had less respect for extrabiblical commentary than did the orthodox Anglicans. Also, they felt that philosophy was to be used only if it assisted the student in the true understanding of the Bible, certainly not as an independent or supplementary source of truth. Never do these preachers use it as an aid in biblical exegesis. Any use or allusion to the biblical languages is very rare in these sermons.

Although it has not been my primary purpose to deal with the subject matter or content of the sermons (rather I have treated the exegetical methods of the preachers), it will be appropriate here, in closing, to make at least brief mention of this matter. For instance, Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins bitterly opposed the polity and worship of the papal Church and resented those aspects of Roman Catholicism that remained in the Church of England. These papal remnants within Anglicanism were not considered matters of indifference at all; because they were not mentioned in the Bible, they were positive evils which must be weeded out at all costs. The true church of Christ is not the visible organization but the invisible church of the elect. Since it

is possible that important bishops and clerics within the visible church may not belong to the elect, it follows logically that the elect must be given a greater voice in the decisions and appointments of the church. Thus, the theology of predestination pointed away from episcopalianism to some kind of presbyterian or congregationalist polity. And the implications of the Puritan teaching regarding the call to the ministry involved a modification of the episcopal system and the organizational procedures of the Anglican Church.

Further, Hooper and Perkins did not oppose the monarch's headship or governorship of the Anglican Church. But they clearly wanted it to be exercised within the framework of scriptural teaching as they perceived it. According to our three Puritan preachers, state authorities were to foster the life of the church by disciplining the clergy and providing secular punishment for those laymen who were judged in church courts to be recalcitrant. All monarchical and magisterial conduct was to be directed by Bible principle as outlined by the church.

The people, including the clergy, were to render strict obedience to secular law and never to rebel in word or deed. The ethical demands of the church enforced by the state were designed to mold individuals and society into that spiritually perfect form required by God. The aim was preparation of the elect for the hereafter. True doctrine was an important ingredient in the process. These preachers were orthodox Anglicans in their understanding of the natures of God and Christ, the sacrificial atonement, the existence of a personal devil who led man into the original sin, justification by faith alone, the validity of only two sacraments, the immortality of the soul, the second advent of Christ at the end of the world to usher the redeemed into heaven and to commit the damned to the sufferings of hell for eternity. They differed from orthodox Anglicans in their great stress on spiritual perfection as a definite goal to be sought, and on the doctrine of double predestination.

As in their explication of the nature of the church in relation to the state, so also on doctrinal issues it was not so much the specific differences between these Puritans and orthodox Anglicans which produced such strong reaction and even division. These resulted from the greater amount of emphasis the Puritans gave to motifs which they held in common with Anglicans and to doctrines which, though not accepted by the English Establishment, were by no means unrepresented in Reformation theology generally.

Sixteenth-century English Puritanism as represented by the sermons of Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins depended on an ultra-literalistic interpretation of the Bible, which was utilized to imply the need for changes in the theology and practice of the Anglican Church—changes which the Establishment was not prepared to make. Moreover, by largely ignoring the methods and mores of humanism, Puritanism, through certain of its emphases, tended to point sixteenth-century Englishmen back in the direction of medieval culture.