

The Influence of Calvinism on the Life, Work, and Writings of William Perkins

PhD Thesis Summary

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This paper is an incursion of contemporary scholars into the life, ministry, and writings of William Perkins, a Protestant, Reformed theologian known in history as the architect or father of Puritanism, whose writings were a major influence on the understanding of Calvinism.

If we initially tried to find out what influence Calvinism had on Perkins' life, gradually, as we researched available theological and historical sources, realized that William Perkins actually influenced and developed Calvinism more than he have been influenced by Calvinism.

The research was conducted in two general directions, namely we first sought to present a brief definition of Calvinism and the theology of the Great Reformer, John Calvin, and in the second part of the paper, to observe the influence of Calvinism in the life of William Perkins and later the influence and development of Calvinism by William Perkins.

Thus, with regard to Calvinism, I have defined it as a Protestant theological current, linked primarily to the writings of John Calvin, but with conceptual roots in Augustinism, which starting from the supreme authority of God's Word, based on exegesis biblical, it asserts the absolute sovereignty of God in relation to all that He has created, all things being done according to a pre-established order, well organized and according to a plan made by God, before the foundation of the world. This divine plan called in Reformed theology, God's Decree, includes not only the major events predestined by God in history, but every detail of our lives. The God of the Scriptures is thus a God: Holy, Perfect, Omniscient, Almighty and Almighty, Infinite and Almighty, Master of all that He has created. By virtue of His qualities and attributes, He cannot be taken by surprise because in that case He would not be longer omniscient.

The principle of God's sovereignty is extremely important in understanding all biblical doctrines, which are interdependent and of course in direct relation to the attributes of God.

Soteriology, or the doctrine of salvation, like the others, depends directly on its divine attributes and is implicitly subject to its absolute sovereignty or dominion.

Although the Protestant Reformation officially began with the German theologian Martin Luther, it was conceptually continued and developed significantly by the French theologian John Calvin. Luther was the initiator of the Reformation, but John Calvin was recognized as its chief theologian. Certainly all the Reformers were also theologians, but Calvin excelled in his theological formulations, through his extraordinary capacity for synthesis, expression, study, and the very clear, logical, and comprehensive exposition of theological ideas.

Martin Luther certainly remains the most important figure of the Reformation or "its spark," but John Calvin is the one who took the foundations of the Reformation and organized them into a theological body that became a classic for any serious theological researcher. The influence of Calvin and Calvinism in general has shifted from the religious sphere to the political sphere of many countries and even continents, famous historians, recognizing that many countries such as England, America or even Australia, owe to Calvin and Calvinism the freedoms expressed in their constitutions.

As for William Perkins's England, Calvin exerted a significant influence here, even before his birth, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, his reference work, which was published in large numbers throughout the reign of Elizabeth I throughout England became a classic and study material for English universities. We notice how God had Reformed theologians who honored His Word, but also people in the political sphere, such as Queen Elizabeth I, through whom the principles of the Reformation came to be rapidly promoted.

The Solos of the Reformation, proclaimed by the Reformers, of course aroused much aversion on the part of the Catholic Church, for it was losing influence every day in relation to the Word of God and His teachings. The Reformers emphasized the authority of Scripture in relation to any other authoritative source, thus significantly diminishing the authority of the Traditional Churches, which directly subjugated the parishioners through the ecclesiastical authority exercised by its clergy. The translation and printing of the Bible into the languages spoken by the common people is another major factor in supporting the Reformation, with people becoming independent in reading and knowing the Scriptures.

It was also emphasized that, although the principle of the sovereign authority of Scripture was proclaimed by all the Reformers, beginning with Martin Luther; its radical

application was made by Calvin and in England by William Perkins. Luther, and later Lutheranism, did not completely break away from Catholicism, being tolerant of certain Catholic customs and dogmas that do not directly contradict the Bible, while Calvin was much more radical and firm in abandoning them because they were unbiblical. We could thus say that Luther represents the flexible, slightly inclusive side of the Reformation, and Calvin the Radical side. If we look in the Reformed spirit — in the Scriptures — we notice that God's Word also encourages a firm approach to the Truth, in terms of Yes or No. Jesus Christ teaches his disciples this way: “Let your speech be such: no no”; what goes beyond these words comes from the evil one. ” We thus believe that Calvin's dogmatic and practice fit the Christic model better than Luther's.

Due to the current growing hostility against Calvinism, in the Romanian Evangelical space, we have included in the introductory part the biblical support of the five points of Calvinism, seeking to prove the scriptural character of the Calvinist doctrines, with indisputable textual arguments. Thus, starting from the Word, we demonstrated that mankind, through the sin of the first humans, was immersed in a state of terrible spiritual corruption, having dirty thoughts and deeds, and living in rebellion against God and His commandments. This serious condition is called "total depravity".

The anthropological approach is extremely important in the soteriological context, because the understanding and definition of the effects of the fall depends on our later interpretive and implicitly doctrinal line. It has thus been proved, by clear arguments, that man, after the fall, is spiritually dead, separated from God, and incapable of doing His Will. God's promise regarding the sin of disobedience has been fulfilled. "The day you eat of it, you will surely die." Therefore, man, with his fall into disobedience, is not spiritually weak or lethargic, he is dead. Starting from this biblical truth, I understood that man, in order to be saved, needs a resurrection, and this is not in his powers, it is due exclusively to the initiative and intervention of God! In the light of the undoubted biblical passages, we consider this point of Calvinism valid, in contrast to the unbiblical opinion, which presents man capable of seeking God and returning to Him. I further argued that the divine choice of people, and their setting aside for certain purposes, is unconditional on the foreknowledge of their facts or decisions. The choice is based on the Good Pleasure of God's Will and His Sovereign Decree, and not on the qualities or defects of men known before God. God's choice was by His mercy, exclusively by Grace, not by

deeds, otherwise Grace would not exist. The misunderstanding of the Arminianism is that God would have chosen some based on foreknowledge of their facts and decisions, is not only unbiblical but full of pride, indicating the qualitative superiority of the elect over other people. This concept refutes the need for God's Grace, because the choice and salvation of some in relation to others is meritorious, based on their qualities, not on God's mercy. Despite the confusing thoughts created by Pelagius, Arminius, and others like them, we have a precise spiritual compass, which is the Word of God, and when we look into it, we see clearly that we have been no better or worse than others, as to deserve Divine Grace, but we have been included in God's Mercy, thanks to His initiative, based exclusively on the Good Pleasure of His Will. Regarding the Limited Atonement, by far the most controversial point between Calvinism and Arminianism, I have found that this, like the previous ones, represents the description of God's Word and its logical consequence.

The underlining of the error in the translation into Romanian of the expression “pull or draw”, misspelled “attracts” in John 6:44, is a classic example of this. The Lord Jesus Christ conditioned our coming to Him, by the determination that God the Father makes, not by the decision that we make as a result of divine "attraction." A single letter inserted incorrectly in that passage, radically changing the meaning of the whole verse. We consider John 6:44 to be a key text in accepting or rejecting limited atonement, so we insist that it be properly analyzed in relation to the original writings. It has thus been shown, at this point, that in the Greek original, as well as in all the other translations of the Bible from the English language and the Translation B.O.R. In Romanian, John 6:44 is correctly translated as: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ” The coming of a sinner to Christ is directly and exclusively conditioned by the work of God the Father. No one can come to Christ without being drawn or determined by God the Father.

Because God chose those whom He determined to be saved before the foundation of the world, God prepared all the necessary events and people to bring them to Christ and their salvation. God knows exactly, from eternity, the exact number of the saved and the condemned, and this reality cannot be disputed or changed by anyone. By virtue of divine omniscience, His Sovereign election, and His perfect plan, He determined that the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus should be made for His elect, as a substitute and a savior for each of those for whom it was ordained. Christ's sacrifice was never made for any of those whom God had previously ordained

for perdition. Even if this idea causes disturbance and dissension in human logic, it is biblical and logical, in total harmony with the attributes and decisions of God. For the sake of clarity, we would like to recall here the words of Christ the Savior: but for those who are out of your number, all things are set forth in parables; that they may see, and see, and not see, and hear, and hear, and understand, lest at any time they should turn to God, and their sins should be forgiven them. As harsh as it may sound to us, in contrast to the teachings we are accustomed to, God's will has never been the forgiveness and atonement of the sins of all men, as some claim, but of those whom He has chosen. In Him, God chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him, after, in His love, He ordained us beforehand to be adopted by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will.”

The concept of Irresistible Grace is closely related theologically but also practically to the other three. Since man is completely dead in sin and spiritually lost, he needs God's supernatural, saving intervention! God, based on His sovereign choice, miraculously intervenes in the lives of His elect, reviving them spiritually, regenerating them, giving birth to them again, and adopting them with full rights into His Family. In this process, they have no contribution to their salvation! Their salvation has been ordained of the Lord, comes from the Lord, and is accomplished from beginning to end by Him in the lives of His elect. At this point it has been shown that all men reject the general call of God, and Grace is effective only in the lives of those whom God determines in it. Both John 6:44 and the “Parable of the Supper” are clear textual evidence on this point for all who are able to understand God's Word.

The perseverance of the Saints, or the preservation of salvation, was presented as a natural consequence of the first four. Before the foundation of the world, God decides to turn some into Christ and condemn others into their sins. God's choice is eternal and is based on His will, not on the answer or deeds of the elect. The theory of the loss of salvation is ridiculous and completely contradicts God's Scriptures, character, and attributes. Predestination, or God's choice for the salvation of some and the condemnation of others, cannot be changed by the subjects of that choice. Because of divine omniscience, He cannot be surprised by any of our actions, He is not surprised by our thoughts, attitudes, or decisions. God carries out His plan and the number decided by Him, on both sides, does not change and does not support the exchange between categories. God's salvation in the lives of His elect is based solely on His Grace, not on human deeds or decisions.

We would like to reiterate here that the Calvinist system is defined as Calvinism, insofar as all 5 points are accepted. Rejection of one or more of the five points, in fact proving the indirect rejection of the whole system. All five points are biblical and closely related. Modern theologians who claim to be “moderate Calvinists” or “Calvinists in 3.5 or 4 points” indirectly state that they also share doses of non-biblical Arminian philosophy. In this context, their name of moderate Calvinists can thus be justifiably changed to moderate Arminians or Pelagians.

Concluding this chapter of the paper, I demonstrated not only the Scriptural character of Calvinism, certified by the multitude of textual evidence, but also the ecclesiastical support that Calvinism officially received, following the Synod of Dort. During this Synod, important leaders of the Reformed Church, from eight countries, decided based on the biblical texts consulted, that Arminianism is a heresy in relation to the Bible, and Calvinism is the teaching of the Word of God, being defined as a five-point theological system. The Dort decision (Dordrecht in Dutch) states that the Dutch Reformed Church, together with delegates from other countries, rejected Arminian heresies, even in the territory where they were propagated in the Netherlands, on the grounds that they were unbiblical. It is sad to see today that a philosophical current deviating from Scripture, namely Arminianism, is considered correct and propagated as truth, and Calvinism, biblical and certified ecclesiastical by a Synod, is considered suspicious and even denigrated by most modern evangelicals.

William Perkins' experience of conversion certainly left its mark on his theology, Perkins beginning his student years with a disordered, flawed experience similar to that described by Augustine in his Confessions, and then being torn from God by this state and changed by the work of the Holy Spirit. Perkins experiences in his own life the regeneration initiated and produced by God, without which he would have died in his iniquities and vices. Perkins thus becomes a preacher of Sovereign Grace, out of conviction, analyzing his life and conversion in the light of God's Word!

For William Perkins, as for John Calvin before him, the Word of God is the only authority worthy of following and preaching. The principle of interpreting Scripture with the help of Scripture is embraced and used by Perkins as a basic hermeneutic method. Although his education was extremely extensive in many areas, Perkins believed that Scripture was the only one worthy of preaching. The overwhelming majority of Perkins' writings abound in biblical arguments, from time to time; he quotes from other sources, not to argue his idea but to show

other Christian thinkers who used the same argument, thus being correct against certain sources of his ideas.

Perkins' deliverance from sin and vice owes Perkins not only to God but also to the afflicted, with Perkins preaching the gospel to the inmates of Cambridge Castle. He was recognized as a dynamic preacher, always biblical and kind in using his time for the benefit of those around him.

Perkins's major influence, however, was his writings. During his short life, William Perkins wrote numerous biblical commentaries, theological and apologetic works, being the most prolific Christian writer, after Calvin, of the sixteenth century.

Although all of William Perkins' writings are valuable and unique, his iconic work is "Armilla Aurea," or "A Golden Chain." In this paper, as we have shown in the third chapter of this paper, William Perkins explains in detail the Doctrine of Predestination, showing how this doctrine applies to everyday Christian life.

William Perkins is a follower of experiential predestinarianism, emphasizing how the choice for salvation begins with the regeneration, justification, and adoption of the elect, but continues with their sanctification or sanctification through the supernatural work produced by the Holy Spirit.

The work "Armilla Aurea" represents, in our opinion, in the right of William Perkins, what the "Institutes of the Christian Religion" are for John Calvin, that is, the apogee of his theology. Next we will make a brief recapitulation of this work, trying to show the harmonious way in which William Perkins organized and structured his thoughts, composing a biblical doctrine, well argued, in full logical harmony with the character of God.

The first chapter of William Perkins's work states the foundation of all his thinking, namely, Scripture, and the relation of theology to it. In this chapter, Perkins argues that theology is the primary discipline of God's Word. Theology thus does not rely on Scripture, as some believe, but springs from the Word of God, being in turn divided into two major categories: about God and about His works.

Before we talk about God's works, we need to understand his nature and attributes. Thus, the next four chapters of Armilla Aurea's work are focused on divinity. Because God is a spiritual, immutable, omnipotent, and eternal being, His works can only be in harmony with His nature.

Wisdom, Divine Will and Omnipotence, are in Perkins' conception the three attributes manifested by God in relation to His creatures. Looking at the manifestation of the Divine Will, Perkins identifies two contrasting descriptions: love and hate; grace and justice. God wants to manifest His righteousness and grace to some, revealing Himself and bringing them into the kingdom of the Son of His Love, while punishing the rest for the iniquities and rebellion in which, according to His Will, He left them. In this desire to love and reject others, God manifests his love and mercy because we all deserve the same punishment. His will is sovereign and does not take into account human preferences but His Eternal Good Purpose.

In the sixth chapter of the book, William Perkins continues to define theology, now considering the works of God. Perkins shows that the works of God are those which He does outside Himself, that is, outside His divine essence. These works are often encountered with specific reference to each Person, for the ultimate purpose of all things, the glory of God! "From Him, through Him, and for Him, are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen!"

At this point, William Perkins defines the Divine Decree, a very important concept in his theological system, defining it as: the one by which God in Himself, determined from eternity - necessarily and yet freely, all things.

William Perkins argued here that the Divine Decree precedes creation and even predestination, being the starting point of all things created by God.

God thus created all things according to the Good Pleasure of His Will, with the common and declared purpose of bringing Him glory.

The divine decree, especially concerning man, is called Predestination, and is defined as the decree of God by which He planned before all men, for a certain eternal location, which is either salvation - or condemnation, for His Glory. ! William Perkins is not shy about claiming double predestination, dividing it between the Election Decree and the Rejection Decree, both of which are part of God's plan before the foundation of the world. The two decrees take place simultaneously in human history and converge on the same end point, namely, the glory of God! The placement of the two decrees and destinations decided by God, before the founding of the world, is extremely important, because this position is the main difference between Calvinism and other soteriological positions.

Calvinism positions predestination in the eternal Decree of God, deciding in Himself whom He chooses and rejects, whom He saves and whom He condemns, whom He loves or hates, His judgment being completely free from any conditioning or limitation.

God has the full right to decide and to do whatever he wants with the creation, without being held accountable or criticized by anyone. God, Perkins said: in accordance with His Good Pleasure, decreed with certainty all things and actions, past, present, or future, together with their circumstances: geographical and temporary, to the end. Yes, He has decreed in His righteousness even the evil deeds of the wicked. If He had not decided them, they would never have existed. Certain things that are evil in nature have a purpose, in fact good, in relation to God's Eternal Decree.

Perkins then proved that the foundation of the redemption of God's elect is Jesus Christ. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." The election is the decree of God, by which He, totally free or unconditionally, determined some people for salvation, to the glory of His grace. "In Him, God chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him. , for, in His love, He ordained us beforehand to be adopted by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will."

The divine decree is the basis on which the names of some people were written in the Book of Life and is the cause of the salvation of the elect. God's decree was thus fulfilled by the redemptive and substitute death of His Son Jesus Christ for the elect. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. And he called those whom he had decided before; and those whom he called, he counted righteous; and he glorified those whom he considered righteous.

Perkins also develops the idea of the two covenants. affirming that God's covenant in his contract with man, concerning the attainment of eternal life, has a condition. This Covenant is made up of two parts: God's promise to man and man's promise to God. God promises to bind Himself to man, to be God, if man fulfills the condition, and man promises obedience to the Lord by fulfilling the condition between them. Thus are two parts of this covenant: the covenant of deeds and the covenant of Grace!

The first covenant, in fact, is described by Peking in detail, over almost 100 pages, and of course describes the condition imposed by God: perfect obedience to his Will expressed through the Decalogue. Under this condition, called by Perkins, the Moral Law, God requires

perfect obedience to man, both in nature and in his actions, forbidding the contrary. Perkins points out exactly how man breaks the covenant of deeds, deviating and rebelling against that covenant, and thus being guilty before God of sin. Man proves incapable of fulfilling his part in all respects, thus becoming in total dependence and need on the divine Grace and the Covenant of Grace.

The role of the law is to reveal to man his inability to rise to divine standards and his condemnation in the context of breaking the law. Grace is God's merciful initiative toward those chosen by Him, and this mercy is shown by the totally undeserved justification offered in Jesus Christ.

William Perkins then explains the choice for salvation by dividing it into two stages, namely; the love of God and the declaration of God's love. In God's love, He freely and unconditionally loves those who are chosen in Christ Jesus, even though they were already wicked in their nature. "We love Him because He first loved us. But God shows His love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

He continues Perkins's definition of justification as the security of our judgment as righteous or righteous, based on obedience to Jesus Christ. . (2 Corinthians 5:21) "The justification, then, is the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, upon all the elect of eternity to be sanctified by Him.

Justification is followed by sanctification or sanctification of the believer. For William Perkins, the doctrine of predestination not only provides security for God's elect, but it motivates, encourages, and guides us in a holy way. Sanctification or sanctification is Perkins' conception, a clear sign that we are chosen. We have not been chosen for good works, but have been chosen by grace, and God has prepared good works for His children. Sanctification is a continuous process, in which our life acquires more and more resemblance to the Savior, and our nature becomes less and less visible, in the crucifixion in which it finds itself. We believe that Perkins's approach is extremely useful and honest in relation to God's Word, because it does not encourage laziness and spiritual lethargy, but a holy, set-aside, transformed, and bright life that shows our belonging to others.

William Perkins divides sanctification into two distinct stages, namely, mortification and vivification. The mortification of sin is the first part of the sanctification process, and it refers to the diminution and crucifixion of the power of sin in believers. "How can we, who have

died to sin, live in sin? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him by baptism into death, that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life ”(Romans 6: 2-4).

The vivification is the second part of sanctification, through which the sanctification received is sustained and developed. First we receive the fruit of the Spirit and then an increase in this fruitfulness. While the mortification of sins is expressed by the death of the Lord and His burial, the vivification is illustrated by His glorious resurrection and ascension. Mortification and vivification thus represent direct results of God's work in us.

William Perkins explains sanctification in the context of our resurrection with Jesus Christ, a supernatural work produced by the Power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ generates holiness in our lives. The ability to have a new life, full of good works, of course, begins with our inclusion in Christ, on the cross of Golgotha, His crucifixion also being ours in Him. Once crucified together, we are identified with Him, not only in His death but also in His glorious resurrection. From the spiritual state of death we were in, we were brought to life through Christ and transformed into His image and character.

After sanctification, William Perkins deals with the final application of God's declaration of love for the elect, namely, glorification. In this blessed end, God's elect are delivered not only from the power of sin but also from its presence. In this part of the paper, William Perkins presents the position of the elect in Christ, after glorification, speaking of the Divine Judgments and of the eternal security which the elect of the Lord have received in Jesus Christ.

The experiential predestinarianism promoted by William Perkins is practically the doctrinal basis of Puritanism. Those chosen in Christ are justified by faith, adopted, and sanctified by the supernatural work of the Spirit of God. Faith in the Word of God is not only saving but also transforming, generating godliness, love of God and neighbor, and a desire to turn away from evil by fulfilling divine commandments.

In the final part of *Armillae Aureae*'s work, William Perkins presents the Catholic Church's dogmatics of predestination, and then points out 17 serious errors he identified in it. The inclusion of this chapter is necessary because by studying it we realize that many of the misconceptions of Catholicism have been borrowed and promoted in modern evangelical

Christianity, such as the predestination of all for salvation, the free will that determines our eternal destiny, or the loss of salvation regaining it.

William Perkins, dare to write punctually here about the decree of conviction, aware of the opposition and the negative attacks that will result from it. He believes that this biblical truth is important and necessary to know, along with other Bible doctrines, before completing his work.

Thus, Perkins defined the Decree of Rejection as that part of the Predestination by which God, in accordance with His purpose and will completely free, determined the rejection of certain people, in punishment and eternal suffering; in doing so, to the praise of His righteousness. "Is not the potter a master over his clay, to make one vessel out of the same clay pot, and another vessel for the use of reproach?" (Romans 9:21). "A stumbling block, and a rock of fall." They are struck by it because they did not believe the Word, and they are ordained to it. ” (1 Peter 2: 8)

God, in His absolute Sovereignty, from His position as the Absolute Creator and Father of all things, decrees and chooses, before the foundation of the world, special people to fulfill His purposes. In His sovereign Will and in His complete freedom to plan, He determined vessels of wrath made for destruction, and vessels of mercy made for glory. In all His decisions, He is the absolute master, and no one has the right to question and contradict Him.

We understand, then, that the Decree of Rejection is as real in Scripture as the Decree of Choice, both of which were determined by God before the foundation of the world and carried out in accordance with His Will in human history.

Before concluding, William Perkins criticizes the erroneous semi-Pelagian system, proposed in his time by some confused German Calvinists, harshly criticizing it and proving, as always with biblical passages, the errors of positioning the choice after the act of creation, when in the Bible it occurred with long before creation.

The final chapter of "Armilla Aurea" is called by Perkins, About the Application of Predestination. William Perkins shows here the practical effects of the doctrine of predestination in the life of God's elect, giving himself a set of rules or principles by which one can discern his own predestination. We urge every Christian who reads this work to make a self-assessment, in the light of the signs of sanctification pointed out by William Perkins, thus analyzing his piety and spirituality.

In the *Treatise on the Order and Order of Predestination*, William Perkins repeats certain ideas from *Armilla Aurea* and develops new ones, such as the idea that God did not reveal Christ to all people. The revelation of Jesus Christ is reserved for a limited number of people, and is not accessible to all. Divine wisdom and the revelation of Jesus Christ are naturally rejected by the natural man, for flesh and blood are naturally opposed to God. On the one hand, these things are hidden from the wise and skilful, but revealed to God's elect, enabling them not only to understand them but to perceive them as absolute truths, as they are.

William Perkins' third treatise on predestination is called the *Treatise on Free Divine Grace and the Free Will of Man*. Perkins argues that Adam was given the power to resist evil and to obey the Lord with his creation, but he lacked the will to do so.

The author of this paper contradicts at this point the concept presented above by William Perkins, considering that both power and will are directly related to knowledge. How could Adam resist, decide freely, or at least discern between good and evil, without being tasted of this tree of the "knowledge of good and evil." We consider that in these circumstances, he was not at all free or sufficiently informed to be able to make an informed decision. At the same time, we cannot talk about his freedom of choice, or even less free will, when his access to information was extremely limited.

On the subject of human will, we have drawn the attention of readers to an unbiblical view, frequently promoted in the modern Evangelical Churches, which states that: in some way invading the freedom of the individual, He offers salvation but expects us to receive it willingly, depending on this personal decision depending on the eternal destiny of each one of us. ” Using the methodology of William Perkins, I have pointed out here the unscriptural errors of the statement, criticizing them and presenting the biblical alternative.

The last chapter of the thesis represents the practical attempt of the Reformation within the contemporary Evangelical movement. In 1996, the Confessional Evangelical Association was formed, with the aim of signaling the departure of today's churches from the Scriptural principles of the Reformation, and their need for revival!

Here is a summary that presents the practical problems reported, and the solution proposed by them. We realize today that modern evangelical churches have strayed from the pure saving gospel, preaching today a modified gospel based on man's efforts to obtain God's salvation and favor. The modern church raises man on a false pedestal, presenting him as the

maker of his own destiny, being himself able to obtain divine blessing through his own decisions. The work of the Lord Jesus on the cross is replaced by the work of man, by the spiritual techniques which he is called to perform in order to be saved. Modern worship has in many places turned into Christian entertainment and artistic manifestations, with people going to church to feel good and not to learn how to live according to God's Will. In the light of this situation of acute spiritual crisis, we need, like the 16th century Church, a Spiritual Reformation! A return to the teachings of God's Word, a profound change in our religious thinking and practices.

The work ends in the Perkinsian spirit, practically, with the 1996 Cambridge Declaration of the Evangelical Confessors, a statement in which the problems of modern evangelicalism and the reaffirmation of the principles of the Reformation are pointed out: *Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus, Soli Deo Gloria!*

We conclude this work with the hope that it will whet the appetite of contemporary readers, to the experiential predestinarianism proposed by William Perkins, to the sanctification emphasized by him, and to a more passionate study of the Holy Scriptures, but without ever forgetting that all that we have good in this life or in the eternal, it is entirely due to God!

TO GOD IS ALL THE GLORY!