

Publishing Business in Eighteenth-Century England will likely strike most as the more engaging read, it is hard to imagine any scholar of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England not profiting from or enjoying a half-hour's stroll through the image and map galleries Raven and the British Library generously offer in *Bookscape*.

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W. B. PATTERSON. *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. 288. \$82.00 (cloth).
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Two main arguments lie at the core of W. B. Patterson's *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*. First, Perkins was "the most important and influential contemporary theologian of the Elizabethan Church of England ... in shaping the Protestant religious culture of the nation" (63). Second, Perkins has been systematically misunderstood by scholars, who have too often viewed him through the lens of social movements or developments (Puritanism, capitalism) that only really came into their own after his 1602 death. That Perkins was one of the leading lights of the Elizabethan church is hardly in dispute, and Patterson largely succeeds in arguing that he was "more highly regarded within the leadership of the Church of England than has generally been recognized" (206). At the conclusion of the book's first chapter, he points out that "[t]he English Church desperately needed ... a more comprehensive theological formulation that English Protestants could accept and on which they could build a more caring and humane society" (39). Patterson devotes the remainder of the book to exploring Perkins's role in articulating that formulation.

Patterson's deep knowledge of, and affection for, his subject is evident as he systematically unfolds the main tenets of Perkins's thought and its significance for understanding early modern English religious life. But ascribing such singular historical influence to an individual thinker can be risky. Patterson claims, for example, that Perkins "was not the only writer to call for a simpler, more direct, and more readily intelligible use of the English language, but he was one of the first and one of the most influential" (134), and that he "had, in all likelihood, a significant impact on the use of English in both speaking and writing" (134). Yet it is not clear what sort of criteria we might use to measure such influence, especially since Patterson admits that "Perkins was not the only significant writer" to weigh in on these topics during his time (130). And the fact that England contained many households "in which the head of the family led prayers, read and commented on passages of scripture, and instructed the family in religious and moral matters in the way Perkins advocates" (205) hardly proves Perkins's influence, since heads of families had presumably been performing these devotional duties long before Perkins's time. Surely Perkins's thought reflected, even as it helped to shape, larger social and religious trends; acknowledging this reality does not undermine Perkins's significance but nests it within a broader context.

Part of the difficulty of understanding Perkins's thought, according to Patterson, has been a series of reductive interpretive frames that scholars have brought to bear over the years. The chief culprit here, in his view, is Christopher Hill, who saw in Perkins a capitalist *avant la lettre*, indicative of an emerging acquisitive Protestant ethic that denigrated the poor and celebrated those who attained wealth. But Patterson's engagement with Hill seems cursory, a few paragraphs that rely heavily on citations from Patrick Collinson without ever engaging directly with the texts Hill brought to bear in his influential interpretation of Perkins. This feature of the book is emblematic of a more general tendency, a defensive tone toward any

hint of criticism of Perkins. For example, Patterson asks a provocative question toward the end of chapter 3: “Was Perkins right in his treatment of the doctrine of salvation?” Given the contested debates over predestination—that “God is seen as condemning some human beings from eternity without cause” (89)—the reader may be forgiven a sense of disappointment to read Patterson’s response to such a full-throated critique of his subject: Perkins, we are told, “contend[s] that God is just and that his love and mercy are incalculable and without limits” (89).

Some of these aspects of Patterson’s treatment of Perkins are necessary outgrowths of his textual focus. Much of the book consists of exegeses and summaries of Perkins’s work and of the secondary literature, which tend to obscure the broader contexts in which those texts were produced. Casting his 1592 *A Case of Conscience* in dialogue form might have been “a novel method” (96) for Perkins, but would not have seemed so to the broader reading public. Dozens of dialogues, on topics political as well as religious, appeared during Perkins’s lifetime. Perkins’s *Faithfull and Plaine Exposition* (1609) seems, by Patterson’s own telling, a rather standard early modern jeremiad, lamenting the nation’s sin and calling for national repentance. Dozens, if not hundreds, of such sermons were preached and published during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Was Perkins’s *Exposition* unique in some way? Did it break new ground, rhetorically or theologically? Patterson does not tell us. And Perkins’s attempt, in his treatment of vocation, to insist that individuals reflect on “the choice ... of a particular kind of work” (144) can obscure the fact that “choice” rarely figured into the economic lives of the vast majority of early modern Englishmen and—women.

As an overview of the major themes put forward by this important thinker, Patterson’s volume is a valuable addition to the literature on this important English churchman. Read in conjunction with social, ecclesiastical, and political histories of Perkins’s time, it yields a rich portrait of a powerful thinker whose death in his mid-forties deprived the English church of one of its leading lights.

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MARCUS HARMES and VICTORIA BLADEN, eds. *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 237. \$125.00 (cloth).
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In recent years the supernatural has been a lively and revealing area for those who study early modern England. This excellent new collection of essays, *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*, edited by Marcus Harmes and Victoria Bladen, attempts to integrate aspects of occult belief—in magic, witchcraft, demon possession, and the realm of spirits—into the larger cultural context of the period. In doing so it offers a welcome reminder that the otherworldly was not an exotic adjunct to Tudor and Stuart society, but a central theme with important political effects.

The general acceptance of magic and the unseen world of spirits meant that the supernatural was threaded into the fabric of public life. In a chapter on the Elizabethan magician John Dee, Glyn Parry shows how alchemy and prophecy were explored in the Tudor court and used to support particular directions in foreign policy. The chapters by Pierre Kapitnick and Michael Devine, respectively, consider the powerful but ambiguous confluence of witchcraft beliefs and anti-Catholicism. The former describes the delicate politics that informed Reginald Scot’s skeptical treatise *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), in which Scot attacked witch persecutions as the product of popish superstition. In contrast, Devine points to the fears of a