



# The Art of Prophecy: with The Calling of the Ministry

*William Perkins*

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### Summary

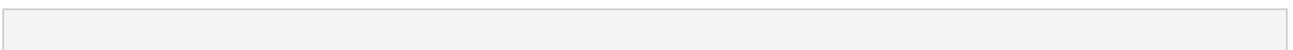
The pages which follow have been written for faithful ministers of the gospel and for all who are concerned about and pursue the knowledge of holy learning.

The preparation of sermons is an everyday task in the church, but it is still a tremendous responsibility and by no means easy. In fact it is doubtful if there is a more difficult challenge in the theological disciplines than that of homiletics. Its subject matter is prophecy, which is a 'higher gift' indeed (cf. 1 Cor. 12:31), whether we think about its dignity or its usefulness.

The dignity of the gift of preaching is like that of a lady helped into and carried along in a chariot, while other gifts of speech and learning stand by like maidservants, conscious of her superiority.

In keeping with this dignity, preaching has a twofold value: (1) It is instrumental in gathering the church and bringing together all of the elect; (2) It drives away the wolves from the folds of the Lord. Preaching is the flexanima, the allurer of the soul, by which our self-willed minds are subdued and changed from an ungodly and pagan life-style to a life of Christian faith and repentance. It is also the weapon which has shaken the foundations of ancient heresies, and also, more recently cut to pieces the sinews of the Antichrist. So, if anyone asks which spiritual gift is the 'most excellent', undoubtedly the prize must be given to prophesying.

The better something is, the more it deserves to be carefully presented with a wide variety of rich and wise counsel. But this everyday task is frequently described in a scarcely adequate and even impoverished manner by comparison with the attention other disciplines receive. I have, therefore, carefully studied the writings of the theologians, composed a series of rules and principles from their teaching, and tried to explain them in a way that will be both useful and easily remembered.



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