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DEVIL'S DEVICES: WILLIAM PERKINS AND THE
INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE
AND PASTORAL COUNSELING

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PREFACE

This thesis is the culmination of several formative influences in my theological education. First among them in influence is my former college professor, Dr. Hal Ostrander, who introduced me to the concept of spiritual warfare. More than that he was a man who mentored me along with many other students. While Dr. Ostrander has finished his course, his influence on my life and education has helped make this thesis possible. Furthermore, I am thankful for Dr. Shawn Wright who gave me the foundation I needed in seminary to understand the Puritans and their influence. Without the foundation Dr. Wright has provided me and his gracious supervision, this thesis would not have been possible. I am deeply indebted to many of the faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who have had a profound role in my theological education both in my graduate work and in my doctoral work.

Matthew Payne's gracious invitation to take part in a William Perkins scholars group has provided me with invaluable conversation partners whose own scholarship has deepened my understanding and appreciation of William Perkins.

I have been blessed by a loving and encouraging church family who have been supportive of my research. The person who deserves the most credit is my wife, Heather. Her devotion to our five children and my children's accommodation to my schedule has been a true blessing.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

William Perkins, in addressing Christ's temptation after his baptism, points to the ongoing spiritual warfare that marks the believer's life:

In that Christ is no sooner baptized, but he is presently tempted, we learn; that all those who are truly baptized into Christ must make account to be tempted, and prepare for a combat with the Devil, even through the whole course of their lives: for if Satan durst be so bold as to encounter with Christ Jesus the head of the Church after his baptism, then doubtless he will not spare any of his members who are but weak and sinful men.¹

This understanding of spiritual warfare informs Perkins's approach to counseling the afflicted.² Perkins addresses pastoral counseling through casuistry, a field of practical divinity that sought to address various cases of conscience.³ Perkins is often credited with being the father of Puritan casuistry and his posthumously published works on cases of conscience left a lasting influence on later Puritan practice.⁴ In Perkins's writing, he addresses the role of spiritual warfare in his works that address temptation. Perkins provides specific counsel regarding Satan's work in tempting and testing believers, a prominent theme seen both in Perkins's biblical expositions as well as his practical writings.

¹ William Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 88.

² Spiritual warfare is defined as a "New Testament theme expressed in images of combat and athletics to indicate the cosmic struggles of those in the Christian life against the powers of evil." Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 268.

³ W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 113.

⁴ Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 931-33.

Perkins serves as a pivotal figure in emphasizing what J. I. Packer refers to as the “dramatic dimension of the Christian life.”⁵ Packer elaborates on this dimension first regarding the believer’s battle with indwelling sin. He points to spiritual warfare as the underlying reality behind the believer’s battle with sin: “This ongoing conflict is one of the great and constant themes in all Puritan devotional writing. Never let anyone tell you that nobody knew about spiritual warfare until the charismatic movement of the 1960s. The Puritans knew all about it.”⁶

After a period of some neglect, the recent publication of a modern typeset edition of Perkins’s works provides a wealth of resources for understanding how an awareness of spiritual warfare informed Perkins’s pastoral counseling.⁷ Perkins’s understanding of spiritual warfare, as it is addressed in practical works and other writings, provides a helpful model for integrating the concepts of pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare. This thesis will seek to address how Perkins’s understanding of spiritual warfare informs his understanding of pastoral counseling.

Familiarity with the Literature

Four main categories will be assessed in this review of the literature. The first category is secondary sources written about Perkins and his work. The second category is works that provide needed information on Perkins’s historical context. The third category is works that explore the history and development of casuistry, particularly Puritan casuistry. The final category is contemporary works pertinent to the issue of spiritual warfare.

⁵ J. I. Packer, *The Heritage of Anglican Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 86.

⁶ Packer, *The Heritage of Anglican Theology*, 86.

⁷ Joel R. Beeke and Derek W. H. Thomas, general preface to *The Works of William Perkins*, 1: vii-viii.

Sources on William Perkins and His Work

William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England by W. B. Patterson is the most recent scholarly work addressing the life and thought of Perkins.⁸ Joel Beeke notes that Patterson's seminal work builds on the previous work of R. T. Kendall and Ian Breward and is problematic in arguing that there is little connection between Perkins and Elizabethan Puritanism.⁹ This work provides the most thorough overview of Perkins's life and published works to date.

In *William Perkins: Architect of Puritanism* the contributors provide a general overview of Perkins's contributions primarily to pastoral ministry.¹⁰ Five contributors address topics pertinent to developing an understanding of Perkins's theological framework and pastoral practice. Joel Beeke's contribution to Perkins and conscience is of particular importance for this thesis.¹¹ Joel Beeke and Stephen Yuille provide biographical insight regarding Perkins's historical context and ministry in *Bitesize Biographies: William Perkins*.¹² While concise, this work provides valuable information regarding Perkins's theological and ministerial influences. In addition, it provides a broad overview of the ministry contexts that shaped Perkins's practice. *The Gloss and the Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture* provides a detailed study of Perkins's exegesis in his practical writings.¹³

⁸ Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*.

⁹ Joel R. Beeke, preface to Volume 6, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joel Beeke and Greg A. Salazar, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), xv.

¹⁰ Joel R. Beeke and Greg Salazar, eds., *William Perkins: Architect of Puritanism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019).

¹¹ Joel Beeke, "The Greatest Case of Conscience," in *William Perkins*, 57-94.

¹² Joel Beeke and J. Stephen Yuille, *Bitesize Biographies: William Perkins* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: Evangelical Press, 2015).

¹³ Andrew S. Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020).

In *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism*, Perkins's contribution to the development of casuistry is addressed in detail.¹⁴ This work addresses the origins and further developments of Puritan piety which undergird the ideas of casuistry and counseling. In this work concerning the Puritan movement, Bozeman describes Perkins as "the greatest literary disseminator of the new spirituality."¹⁵

Perkins's Historical Context

Knappen's work, *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism*, provides important historical context in its argument for greater continuity between the Puritan movement and the medieval period.¹⁶ Knappen addresses Perkins's role in the development of the Puritan movement in the Tudor period. This work helps assess Perkins's overall historical and theological context.

In *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* David Hall provides historical context regarding the development of the Puritan movement and Perkins's role.¹⁷ Hall's work in addressing the origins and development of practical divinity is of importance for this thesis regarding Perkins's pastoral counseling. Hall addresses Perkins's contribution to practical divinity. In doing so, Hall addresses Perkins's work on casuistry as well as how it relates to the work of his contemporaries and successors.

Being Protestant in Reformation Britain by Alec Ryrie provides a social history of Protestantism in early modern Britain.¹⁸ Ryrie draws on resources that provide

¹⁴ Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism To 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 68.

¹⁶ M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

¹⁷ David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).

¹⁸ Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

a broad understanding of the religious and emotional life among Protestant laity as well as religious leaders. This work is important for understanding the aspects of emotional and spiritual life that shaped and informed William Perkins's pastoral counseling and aspects of spiritual warfare. Ryrie addresses the place of the Devil in early modern spirituality with attention given to the continuity and discontinuity that existed concerning the medieval tradition that preceded the Protestant Reformation.

Understanding the prevailing beliefs about Satan and demons in Perkins's historic context is necessary for evaluating Perkins's thoughts on spiritual warfare. *The Devil in Early Modern English* addresses the understanding of Satan in Perkins's context.¹⁹ In this work, Darren Oldbridge posits that the Protestant understanding of the devil in post-Reformation England can be attributed to a rejection of medieval beliefs that often treated the devil comically.²⁰ Oldbridge addresses the influence of Perkins's writings in shaping and addressing the role of the devil in the believer's life. Euan Cameron's work in *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion* fills an important gap tracing the shifts of understanding between the medieval and early modern periods regarding understanding demons and the devil.²¹ Cameron addresses the different understandings of demons and the devil that arose because of the Reformation. This work addresses developments that shaped Perkins's understanding of issues relating to the devil, demons, and exorcism. Cameron provides a detailed history of thought regarding the devil and demons in the time in which Perkins wrote and ministered. In *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, Nathan Johnstone provides insight into the Lutheran and Reformed thought that led to the understanding of the devil found in

¹⁹ Darren Oldbridge, *The Devil: In Tudor and Stuart England* (Gloucestershire, England: The History Press, 2010).

²⁰ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 35-37.

²¹ Cameron Euan. *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

English Protestantism.²² Furthermore, Johnston demonstrates that in contrast to the medieval Catholic tradition the Protestant tradition placed a greater emphasis on the believer's experience of the devil's attacks.

In *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England* Kathleen Sands provides an account of eleven cases of demonic possession that occurred during the Elizabethan period.²³ Drawing on primary sources, Sands provides an understanding of how demonic and Satanic activity were understood in Perkins's period draws heavily from primary sources. In addition, Sands highlights the tensions that arose from a Protestant rejection of the practice of exorcism and the awareness of demonic activity. This work helps in demonstrating that Perkins's understanding of demonic activity shared commonalities with his contemporaries.

History and Development of Casuistry

Kenneth Kirk provides an overview of the history and practice of casuistry in *Conscience and Its Problems: An Introduction to Casuistry*.²⁴ The first part of this work, in which Kirk provides an overview of the history and practice of casuistry, which is important for understanding Perkins's casuistry. Kirk puts forward an unfavorable view of the work of Perkins and his student William Ames, stating that "Perkins and Ames produced what can at best be called mere sketches of the subject."²⁵ This work is important for understanding the broader development of casuistry and its place in the Christian tradition. Thomas Wood addresses some of the developments of casuistry and

²² Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²³ Kathleen Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 2004).

²⁴ Kenneth E. Kirk, *Conscience and Its Problems: An Introduction to Casuistry*. Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).

²⁵ Kirk, *Conscience and Its Problems*, 205.

Perkins's contributions in *English Casuistical Divinity during the Seventeenth Century*.²⁶

The most recent and detailed work on the development of casuistry is *The Context of Casuistry*.²⁷ In addition to providing some of the latest scholarship on the historical development of casuistry in the Christian tradition, this work also explores Perkins's role in shaping Puritan casuistry, with attention given to the connection between Perkins's preaching application and his casuistry.

Three unpublished works have been particularly helpful in tracing out the development and role of casuistry especially as it related to counseling. The first work is *Casuistical Divinity in English Puritanism During the Seventeenth Century: Its Origins, Development, and Significance*, in which Norman Clifford addresses the development of Perkins's cases of conscience and Perkins's shaping of Puritan practical divinity.²⁸ Clifford provides a biographical and bibliographical overview of Puritan casuistry's origins and development which is important for understanding the influences that shaped Perkins's casuistry and the way he counseled.

A full treatment of Puritan casuistry is found in Arthur Lindsley's unpublished dissertation *Conscience and Casuistry in the English Concept of Reformation*.²⁹ Lindsley provides a broader overview of casuistry in the Christian tradition. Attention is given to the role of conscience and casuistry in preaching and in Puritan practical divinity. In this work, particular attention is given to the contributions of William Perkins and his student William Ames.

²⁶ Thomas Wood, *English Casuistical Divinity during the Seventeenth Century* (London: SPCK Publishing, 1952).

²⁷ James F. Keenan and Thomas A. Shannon, eds. *The Context of Casuistry* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1995).

²⁸ Norman Keith Clifford, "Casuistical Divinity in English Puritanism during the Seventeenth Century: Its Origins, Development and Significance" (PhD diss., University of London, 1957).

²⁹ Arthur William Lindsley, "Conscience and Casuistry in the English Puritan Concept of Reformation" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1982).

A comprehensive treatment of Perkins's casuistry is to be found in Mark Shaw's dissertation *The Marrow of Practical Divinity: A Study in the Theology of William Perkins*.³⁰ In this work, Shaw argues that Perkins's casuistry serves as the key to understanding Perkins's overall thought.³¹ Shaw briefly addresses the place of the believer's combat with the devil arguing that it demonstrates the overall importance of casuistry for Perkins.³²

Contemporary Sources on Spiritual Warfare

In *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare* John Gilhooly addresses the issues relating to spiritual warfare providing answers to questions in the areas of biblical theology, historical theology, and practical theology.³³ The chapters addressing the understanding of spiritual warfare from the Apostolic period to the Reformation are particularly important for assessing the influences that shaped Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare and understanding the continuity and discontinuity between his teaching on spiritual warfare and prior generations. Furthermore, this work is valuable in assessing the differences and similarities that exist between Perkins' works and contemporary understandings of spiritual warfare. Graham Cole's *Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons* is the most recent and comprehensive text on the issue doctrine of angels, Satan, and demons.³⁴ Cole draws on biblical and systematic theology in demonstrating the importance of this doctrine in

³⁰ Mark Randolph Shaw, "The Marrow of Practical Divinity: A Study in the Theology of William Perkins." (ThD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1981).

³¹ Shaw, "The Marrow of Practical Divinity," 27.

³² Shaw, "The Marrow of Practical Divinity," 222-24.

³³ John Gilhooly, *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare*, 40 Questions Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2018).

³⁴ Graham Cole, *Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019).

connection with the gospel. Cole primarily interacts with more recent works and lacks attention to the historical development of the doctrine of spiritual warfare. Cole's work helps assess areas where Perkins's thought is unique in comparison to contemporary understandings of spiritual warfare.

Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles by David Powlison is the most recent work addressing the concept of spiritual warfare in the context of biblical counseling.³⁵ Powlison addresses many of the same issues as Perkins concerning spiritual warfare. Like Perkins, Powlison's understanding of spiritual warfare is focused on the importance of providing biblical counsel rather than on exorcism. Furthermore, Powlison addresses the element of spiritual warfare in facing debt, which is a commonality with Perkins's writings. Lawless and Cook's *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach* provides extensive interaction with the biblical texts concerning spiritual warfare; however, it does not have a clear emphasis on the place of counseling in the context of spiritual warfare.³⁶ In addition, there is little attention given to the development of the doctrine of spiritual warfare in the history of the church. This title helps evaluate the biblical texts Perkins uses in addressing spiritual warfare and whether there has been a shift from his exegesis of pertinent texts and current interpretation.

Void in Literature

A review of secondary literature indicates that there has been inadequate attention given to Perkins's casuistry and his practice of pastoral counseling. While some material speaks to the overall contribution Perkins made to understanding the devil in his

³⁵ David Powlison, *Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2019).

³⁶ William Cook and Chuck Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture: A Biblical, Theological, and Practical Approach*. (Nashville: B&H Academic Group, 2019).

period, nothing written attempts to provide an overview and analysis of his understanding of the believer's warfare with the devil. In addition, no attempt has been made to address how Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare shaped his understanding and practice of pastoral counseling.

Thesis

Spiritual warfare has a prominent place in understanding inner conflict and temptation in the Bible. Despite this emphasis, there are few models for understanding how spiritual warfare should inform pastoral counseling. William Perkins serves as such a model in his development of a system of pastoral counseling informed by the biblical realities of spiritual warfare. This thesis will demonstrate that William Perkins integrates an understanding of the realities of spiritual warfare into his understanding of pastoral counseling.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF
PERKINS'S UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL
WARFARE

From the time of the Reformation in England to Perkins's time there was a gradual refinement and redevelopment regarding the understanding of the nature and role of Satan and demons. Whereas the Middle Ages primarily emphasized a physical understanding of the nature of the devil there was a shift in emphasis in Protestant thought. As Darren Oldbridge notes, "The Protestant Devil was preeminently a creature of the mind: an interior presence encouraging falsehood and sin."¹ Furthermore, the Protestant Reformation brought with it an understanding of providence that led to an emphasis on the limited nature of Satan's power.² It has been noted by Nathan Johnstone that the Protestant understanding of Satan was "a subtle realignment of emphasis rather than an open attack upon tradition."³ Perkins's understanding of the believer's conflict with Satan is representative of the shift in emphasis, focusing on Satan's role as tempter and the sovereignty of God reflected in providence as it relates to the believer's conflict with Satan.

To understand Perkins's beliefs about Satan and spiritual warfare his historical context within the Church of England must be understood concerning the pervading beliefs about Satan and demons. This chapter addresses how developments within the

¹ Darren Oldbridge, *The Devil: In Tudor and Stuart England* (Gloucestershire, England: The History Press, 2010), 12.

² Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250-1750* (Oxford.: Oxford University Press, 2010), 216.

³ Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25.

context of England and the Church of England shaped Perkins's understanding and emphasis on spiritual warfare. This chapter examines Perkins's understanding of the existence of Satan and demons, Satan's power, and the nature of the believer's combat with Satan. This chapter also analyzes *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11* to provide a broad overview of Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare.⁴

A Reformed Understanding of Spiritual Warfare in the Elizabethan Church of England

To understand the influences that informed Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare the immediate context of the Church of England regarding beliefs and practices about Satan and demons must be explored. Before the Elizabethan period, there were major developments that would prove to have a lasting influence on the understanding of Satan and demons in the Church of England. These developments would eventually lead to a shift in understanding regarding the believer's relationship with Satan. The sum effect of the Protestant Reformation in England, regarding Satan, was the perception that "the religious structures that had defended men and women from the devil were stripped away."⁵ This was not the result of a premeditated rejection of prior beliefs regarding Satan. As Johnstone notes, "In England, demonism was not reformed in the sense that eucharistic theology or the cult of the saints were reformed. There was no attempt to alter the fundamentals of belief in the devil or to deny him the power he had previously been accorded."⁶ While there were subtle redevelopments regarding beliefs about Satan, English Protestants did not think less about or less of the devil than their forebears. English Protestants thought of the devil differently. As Alec Ryrie notes, they had

⁴ William Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, in *The Works of William Perkins* ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014).

⁵ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 26.

⁶ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 29.

developed “a more insidious but less immediately terrifying vision.”⁷ This section addresses changes as they relate to the understanding of Satan’s spiritual nature, the believer’s protection from Satan, and the providence of God as it relates to Satan’s power to attack believers. Furthermore, this section addresses the relationship between Perkins’s beliefs regarding Satan and spiritual conflict and the changes regarding beliefs about the activity of Satan.

Satan a Physical or Spiritual Threat?

One of the most notable developments leading to Perkins’s period is the shift away from emphasizing physical realities regarding Satan. This was not a matter of denying the beliefs of previous generations regarding the physicality of Satan but a change in emphasis. Regarding the physicality of Satan, there is a “developing concern with diabolic power among medieval Catholics that focused on the Devil’s physicality, and that was maintained in the face of the Reformation.”⁸ While there was criticism of the emphasis that the laity placed on the physicality of Satan, “Protestant demonism never denied that Satan had the power to appear in physical form; it only asserted that his practice of internal temptation was more common and more dangerous.”⁹ As noted, while not denied the popular emphasis on the physicality of Satan was criticized, as evidenced by Richard Greenham, Perkins’s contemporary, who “recalled, Satan had been known ‘by hornes, by huge collours, by clawes, or by an hollow voice’, and was ‘wonderfully feared’ but now that he was preached as ‘a more secret adversary, a spiritual tempter, a privy overthrower of the soule, no man almost regards him’.”¹⁰ Perkins’s thought reflects

⁷ Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 245.

⁸ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 74.

⁹ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 7.

¹⁰ Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 245.

an ongoing affirmation that Satan was capable of physical manifestation. Of Satan, Perkins states, “By reason of his great power and skill, he is able to appear in the form and shape of a man, and resemble any person or creature, and that not by deluding the sense, but by assuming to himself a true body.”¹¹ Leif Dixon observes this affirmation of Satan’s ability to take physical form was “Perkins’s solution to the apparent problem of dead people seeming to return to life.”¹² Furthermore, this period was marked by an evolving understanding of demonic possession and exorcism. This change has been referred to as a “Protestantisation” of exorcism which was a “compromise born out of the continuing demands for spiritual healing being placed on ministers by their parishioners, and out of the challenge presented in this context by the exorcisms performed by Catholic priests.”¹³ Rather than being viewed as a social stigma, the experience of demonic possession in this period was viewed as bringing a temporary improvement to “the demoniac’s social status in the community by implying special divine attention to that one member of the community.”¹⁴ Beyond the matter of personal demonic possession Perkins, representing continuity with the medieval tradition, expressed the belief that specific locations could also be possessed.¹⁵

Witchcraft, an important aspect connected to the issue of possession, highlights the perceived danger posed by Satan. Treatments of the issue of witchcraft fall into what

¹¹ William Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2020), 319.

¹² Leif Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist.” In *The Science of Demons: Early Modern Authors Facing Witchcraft and the Devil*, ed. Jan Machielsen, (New York: Routledge, 2020), 242.

¹³ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 102.

¹⁴ Kathleen Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 9.

¹⁵ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 92. This understanding that demonic spirits could possess locations would prove to have a lasting influence. For the lasting influence of this position see Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 126. In it, Johnstone highlights that Richard Norwood ascribed his physical suffering to demonic possession of his bedchamber because of reading and agreeing with Perkins’s interpretation on this issue.

was categorized as “academic demonology.”¹⁶ While much attention has been given to the issue of Satan in relationship to witchcraft, such attention has proven to be limiting in understanding the role placed by Satan in the early modern English culture.¹⁷ Perkins’s primary treatment of the issue of witchcraft occurred in the context of a series of sermons that were edited and published posthumously.¹⁸ In this work Perkins expresses the belief that Satan could perform wonders either by means of illusions or real action.¹⁹ As Leif Dixon notes, Perkins’s treatment of witchcraft “heavily stresses the ways in which demonic activity invariably contributes to God’s larger providential plan.”²⁰ Perkins notes that God providentially permits the practice of witchcraft for the purposes of “either the trial of his children or the punishment of the wicked.”²¹ Perkins further elaborates that there are those among the elect that God permits temporarily to fall into the devil’s snare of witchcraft “for causes best known to Himself.”²² This may be indicative of Perkins’s personal experience as Thomas Fuller, an early biographer of Perkins notes that prior to conversion he “was much addicted to the study of naturall magicke....Beginning to be a practitioner in that ‘black art,’ the blackness did not affright him.”²³ Although the elect may fall into this snare, God “suffers not the devil to exercise the depth of his malice in discovering them to their confusion.”²⁴ Whatever the nature of the danger posed by Satan, Perkins is keen to emphasize that God’s sovereignty is ultimate when considering

¹⁶ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 19.

¹⁷ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 20

¹⁸ Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 238-39.

¹⁹ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 317.

²⁰ Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 240.

²¹ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 321.

²² Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 388.

²³ Thomas Fuller, *Abel Redivivus: Or, The Dead Yet Speaking. The Lives and Deaths of the Modern Divines* (London: by Tho. Brudenell for John Stafford, 1651), 432.

²⁴ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 388.

the threat of Satan. This is because as Dixon notes, “Perkins’s logical impetus entailed a strong centre of gravity away from the witch and toward the devil, and in turn away from the devil and toward God.”²⁵ While Perkins’s work on witchcraft is important for understanding his beliefs regarding Satan, it is important to observe that it is true of Perkins and other Protestant leaders that “witchcraft was an extreme example of Protestant pastoral concerns. For the most part these identified the norm of diabolic agency in less extraordinary occurrences such as everyday temptation.”²⁶ Despite Perkins’s belief that Satan was capable of physical manifestation and physical power, his primary emphasis would be danger faced by believers in the realm of temptation. Perkins emphasized the devil’s role in temptation within the confines of God’s providence.

Protection from Satan

The second major shift that shaped Perkins’s context in the Church of England regarding beliefs about Satan is in relation to the believer’s protection from Satan. Prior to the Protestant Reformation, there was a presumption of safety that was rooted in the sacramental system. The following brief description of a pre-Reformation baptism highlights this presumption:

A child brought to be baptised in 1548 underwent a lengthy ritual of exorcism in which the Devil was driven out by the mediation of the priest and the efficacy of the holy artefacts used in the rite. Through baptism the child entered the church; Satan was denied ownership of his soul, and was publicly forbidden to trouble the infant further.²⁷

Absent from the post-Reformational baptism service was this act of exorcism.²⁸ Instead in the post-Reformational baptism formula “the signing of the cross and the promise to renounce the Devil were taken as an indication that the new Christian’s life was to be

²⁵ Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 242.

²⁶ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 20.

²⁷ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 60.

²⁸ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 60.

characterised by a constant struggle with the demonic.”²⁹ It is evident that the removal of exorcism from baptism, the rejection of the intercession of the saints, along with the removal of other vestiges of Roman Catholicism led to the Protestant view that “saw satanic affliction as a near certainty within the life of the average Christian.”³⁰ As noted earlier this period introduced what has been called a ‘Protestantisation’ of exorcism.³¹ Perkins’s understanding of the believer’s conflict with Satan is reflective of this settled certainty of Satanic affliction. Perkins, while affirming the reality of demonic possession and affliction, states that the gift of exorcism “is ceased, for it was only given to the apostles in the primitive church as a means to confirm the doctrine of the gospel to unbelievers who never heard of Christ before.”³² Perkins does however give allowance for praying in the name of Jesus for deliverance albeit with a caveat that only “if it is the will of God, and if their recovery may make for His glory, the benefit of the church, and the good of the diseased parties.”³³ However, Perkins’s view on this matter was not universal.

Johnstone notes that “The debate over exorcism was one of the most heated of the Reformation, reaching boiling point around the highly publicised activities of the minister John Darrell in the 1580s and 1590s.”³⁴ As a contemporary of Perkins, Darrell argued for and practiced exorcism within the Church of England. He did so by arguing that neither possession nor exorcism were miraculous. Darrell likened them to natural diseases and viewed exorcism through prayer and fasting as “no more than to apply an

²⁹ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 60.

³⁰ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 61

³¹ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 102.

³² Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 394.

³³ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 396.

³⁴ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 102.

appropriate natural medicine to a natural disease.”³⁵ Darrell proved to be a controversial figure during this period. Around the same period during which Perkins preached the sermons that became *The Damned Art of Witchcraft*, Darrell’s activities as an exorcist would lead to his trial for the alleged crimes of counterfeiting possession and fraudulent exorcisms and his removal from ministry.³⁶ Thomas Darling was one of the individuals that religious authorities accused Darrell of using to counterfeit demonic possession and exorcism. According to Jesse Bee’s eyewitness account, Darling’s possession presented itself in the form of hallucinations, internal conflict with Satan, and fits during which “he was deprived of the use of speech.”³⁷ As time progressed he would be described as experiencing “trances mixed with torments in which, as he suffered grievous pains, so did he utter many strange speeches.”³⁸ The possession was ascribed to the result of being bewitched and Alice Goodgridge was identified as the alleged witch through the young man scratching “the old woman of the face and hands drawing blood.”³⁹ While this was common practice in seeking to identify witches and provide comfort to those afflicted by them, Bee in his account of Darling’s possession is quick to condemn the practice, noting “neither by any natural cause nor supernatural warrant of God’s word it has any such virtue given to it, it is to be received amongst the witchcrafts.”⁴⁰ Perkins also condemned

³⁵ Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England: Contemporary Texts and Their Cultural Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9-10.

³⁶ Brendan C. Walsh, *The English Exorcist: John Darrell and the Shaping of Early Modern English Protestant Demonology* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 1.

³⁷ Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*, 131.

³⁸ Jesse Bee, “The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill, who was arraigned and convicted at Derby at the Assizes there. As also a true report of the strange torments of Thomas Darling, a boy of thirteen years of age, that was possessed by the Devil, with his horrible fits and terrible Apparitions by him uttered at Burton on Trent in the County of Safford, and of his marvellous deliverance,” ed. John Denison (Printed at London for J. O., 1597), quoted in Philip C. Almond, ed., *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England: Contemporary Texts and their Cultural Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 180.

³⁹ Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*, 131.

⁴⁰ Bee, “The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]”, quoted in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 161.

this practice of curing the demonically afflicted and discovering witches “as plain witchcraft” itself.⁴¹ According to the account given, Darling’s affliction was prolonged and drew the attention of several godly ministers, among them Arthur Hildersham. Hildersham reflected the prevailing opinions within the Church of England when he observed:

Howsoever the Papists boasted much of the power their priests had to cast out devils, and the simple everywhere noted it as a great discredit to the ministers of the Gospel that they do lack this power, yet did he profess that there was no such gift in them, and that though the Lord oft in these days, by the prayers of the faithful, cast out devils, yet could he not assure them to cure him. To hold this faith of miracles to remain still in the church is an opinion dangerous.⁴²

While denying the ongoing nature of the miraculous gift of exorcism, Hildersham notes that there was some hope to be found in the practice of prayer and fasting.⁴³ The purpose of prayer and fasting in Hildersham’s view was so that individuals could “ask God to open their hearts in acceptance of his will.”⁴⁴ Perkins falls within this cautious stream of the Church of England noting that demonically afflicted individuals can demonstrate their faith through prayer and fasting, praying for pardon and also deliverance provided it would be to “God’s glory and their own good.”⁴⁵ The cessationist view of Hildersham, shared by Perkins, “appeared to be the prevailing one in England during the late sixteenth century.”⁴⁶ Hildersham advised caution and took no stance on whether he believed Darling’s possession was a genuine experience and ultimately Hildersham was ignored.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 328.

⁴² Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 177.

⁴³ Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 177.

⁴⁴ Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*, 137.

⁴⁵ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 393.

⁴⁶ Walsh, *The English Exorcist*, 179.

⁴⁷ Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*, 137.

Controversial John Darrell, who ten years prior was nearly imprisoned for “his role in the unsuccessful dispossession of Katherine Wright, would receive greater attention.”⁴⁸ In contrast to the guarded stance of Hildersham, Darrell upon seeing Darling’s fits “assured his friends and him that he was possessed with an unclean spirit” and furthermore encouraged them that “he had a promise of victory.”⁴⁹ Darrell instructed the friends and family to pray and fast while noting that “his assistance in prayer and fasting they should have, but not his presence, as well to avoid note of vainglory.”⁵⁰ The next day was marked with prayer and fasting as well as reading from a book provided by Darrell entitled *The Enemy of Security*. Additionally, throughout that day Darling would experience several fits and trances.⁵¹ At the conclusion of the dispossession, Darling “began to heave...and, getting up some phlegm and bile, pointing with his finger...he said, ‘Look, look, see you not the mouse that is gone out of my mouth.’”⁵² Sometime later, Darling would experience another episode of Satanic assault. During this subsequent assault, Satan did not torment Darling in the same manner as before because the demonic spirit “was not as before in him, which also some of the boy’s words confirmed.”⁵³ This final experience of assault concluded with the experience of a trance during which a dove instructed him that “God has tied your enemy Satan fast in a chain.

⁴⁸ Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*, 139.

⁴⁹ Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 183.

⁵⁰ Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 183.

⁵¹ Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 184-186.

⁵² Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 186-187.

⁵³ Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 188.

Unless you fall again, he will never tempt you.”⁵⁴ After prayer “the boy at last arose, finding the dove’s words true and himself very well, both in mind and body.”⁵⁵

In two primary ways, Darrell serves as counterpoint to Perkins regarding the issues of possession and exorcism. First, whereas Darrell encouraged those he perceived as demonically possessed that they could have absolute certainty of victory, Perkins in contrast, like Hildersham, is more concerned with the afflicted accepting the will of God than in offering up hopes of certain victory. Second, whereas Darrell seeks allowance for the practice of dispossession as a wonder as opposed to a miracle, Perkins is content like Hildersham to emphasize cessationism without seeking to redefine dispossession of exorcism in a way that would conform to cessationism. In response to cessationist arguments that paralleled those of Perkins and Hildersham, Darrell “denied that his exorcistic practices could be considered a miracle, positing that dispossession is a weapon provided by God for the enactment of spiritual warfare.”⁵⁶ Perkins, while allowing for the possibility of experiencing deliverance through prayer and fasting, does not view it as the primary means of protection and deliverance. Perkins addresses how believers are to be protected and healed from the wounds and works of Satan stating, “the only way to bring it to pass is the maintaining of a learned ministry, the advancing of the prophets, by whose labors the gospel may flourish.”⁵⁷ Perkins’s emphasis on a learned ministry, as Ryrie observes, likely rises from the troubling observation that Protestants did not “deal with diabolic assaults very differently from their forbears” in that “the blind and ignorant, Perkins claimed, ‘spit at the naming of him and say they defie him with all

⁵⁴ Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 190.

⁵⁵ Bee, ‘The most wonderful and true story of a certain Witch named Alice Gooderidge of Stapen Hill [...]’, in Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*, 190.

⁵⁶ Walsh, *The English Exorcist*, 126.

⁵⁷ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 392-93.

their hearts.”⁵⁸ This emphasis on a “learned ministry” and its role in pastoral counseling of those afflicted by Satan will be addressed in subsequent chapters. What can be seen is that Perkins’s emphasis on the role of the minister concerning spiritual warfare is reflective of the changes that arose out of the Reformation in repudiating the Catholic sacramental system.

Perkins’s View of Spiritual Warfare

The bulk of Perkins’s writings which address Satan and the believer’s combat with Satan does not fall strictly into what has been described as “academic demonology” as they are not “constrained within the parameters set by explaining the nature and significance of witchcraft, and required that the Devil’s physical presence be demonstrated as a mechanism of the witch’s fall into apostasy.”⁵⁹ Rather his writings fall into a broader category which “described the wider experience of diabolic agency around a small number of central emphases, of which temptation was the most prominent.”⁶⁰ Even Perkins’s *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, while technically falling within the category of “academic demonology,” has a broader concern than is to be expected in “academic demonology.”

Existence and Origin of Satan

Perkins’s work, *A Golden Chain* published in 1591, while known best for its emphasis on predestination provides the theological basis for understanding what Perkins believed about the existence and purpose of Satan. Perkins addresses the place of the believer’s combat with Satan in the context of sanctification. Perkins does so by addressing the nature of the believer’s warfare and the devil’s temptation in four

⁵⁸ Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 245-46.

⁵⁹ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 19.

⁶⁰ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 19.

chapters.⁶¹ Perkins addresses the origins of Satan in relation to the fall of the angels. He states that through their fall their nature was corrupted in such a way that their nature now consists of “fearful malice and hatred by which they set themselves against God, or their insatiable desire to destroy mankind.”⁶² Perkins further elaborates that there is a hierarchy among the fallen angels in that Satan “is chief, and the rest attendants.”⁶³

Perkins like his contemporaries demonstrates no interest in elaborating in detail on the nature of the infernal hierarchy. Perkins’s disinterest in the hierarchy of Satan and demons is demonstrative of the fact that “in England the traditional lists of the individual demonic powers were all but abandoned in favour of a concentration on man’s relationship with the Devil himself.”⁶⁴ Perkins’s brevity concerning the origins of Satan and the fallen angels further demonstrates his commonality with prior English reformers who “were relatively unconcerned with what might be termed ‘fundamental’ theodicy – the cosmic origin of evil.”⁶⁵ This focus on the work of Satan, as opposed to his origins, is reflective of continuity with the thought of Reformers such as Calvin and Bullinger.⁶⁶

Perkins’s understanding of the absolute sovereignty of God in relation to evil is vital for understanding the role Satan plays in his theology. Perkins first establishes the relationship between God’s will and the permission of evil by stating that God permits

⁶¹ William Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joel Beeke and Greg A. Salazar, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019).192-205.

⁶² Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 33.

⁶³ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 33

⁶⁴ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 31.

⁶⁵ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 30.

⁶⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1559 ed., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 1.14.13-17. Heinrich Bullinger, “Of Good and Evil Spirits; That is of the Holy Angels of God, and of Devils or Evil Spirits; and of Their Operations,” in *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, vol. 2, ed. Thomas Harding (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 4.9.327– 65. This commonality in emphasis on the role of Satan may be indicative of the influence of the broader Reformed movement on the thought of Perkins. For more on the intellectual influences that shaped Perkins’s context see W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 67-69. Patterson argues that the works of Calvin as well as Bullinger’s *Decades* influenced Perkins’s intellectual context.

evil when “He forsakes the second cause in working evil.”⁶⁷ This permission for a created being to work evil is a result of God’s judgment. This permitted evil, however, is not absent of God’s goodness.⁶⁸ That the existence and role of Satan follow this understanding of the sovereignty of God is reflective of the broader Reformed tradition of which Perkins was a part. The Protestant understanding of Satan that arose from the Reformation was both less powerful and albeit more threatening. The Reformation brought with it an emphasis on divine permission with relation to the action of Satan. Euan Cameron traces out the development of providence in relation to Satan noting a shared affirmation among early Reformed theologians of “God’s meticulous oversight over creation.”⁶⁹ This understanding of providence and divine sovereignty led to Satan being viewed as “a helpless tool in the hands of the Almighty.”⁷⁰ According to Oldbridge, this understanding that Satan was restricted by God’s power meant that “God could employ Satan as an instrument to purify and chastise His people, both directly through temptation and indirectly by inspiring others to persecute the church.”⁷¹ Perkins’s work, in *The Golden Chain*, demonstrates how he understood God could and would employ Satan in the life of a believer as a means of sanctification within the constraints of divine providence.

Perkins and the Power of Satan

In *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, Perkins addresses the power and influence of Satan in the world, and this work is important for understanding Perkins’s view of Satan’s power because as it has been noted already that “Perkins’s logical impetus entailed a

⁶⁷ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 25.

⁶⁸ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 25.

⁶⁹ Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 215.

⁷⁰ Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 216.

⁷¹ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 19.

strong centre of gravity away from the witch and toward the devil.”⁷² As previously noted, this posthumously published treatise was developed from a series of sermons preached by Perkins in the late 1590s.⁷³ Perkins begins by addressing the nature of Satan’s kingdom in the world. He argues that in the world the devil’s kingdom exists in the hearts of the children of disobedience.⁷⁴ Perkins’s focus however is not the vastness of Satan’s kingdom, but the nature of his power.

In the development of Perkins’s thought, Satan’s power and ability arise from his nature as a spiritual being. As a spiritual being who existed before the creation of man, Satan possesses four distinct advantages over humanity. The first advantage is that due to his antiquity, Satan has a great understanding of the world. Second, he has experience in his assaults against mankind. Third, he has great power and might. Fourth, he is capable of great speed.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Satan is capable of great knowledge owing to the fact that he is chief over a hierarchy of demons who are “present at all meetings and assemblies.”⁷⁶ Dixon observes that Perkins believed “the devil can feign profound knowledge, not through any equivalent to divine omniscience, but because he has demonic minions ‘present at all meetings and assemblies’ . . . moving at lightning speed, they can pool and exploit the secrets they have learned.”⁷⁷ In addressing the power of Satan, Perkins presents an important reminder of divine sovereignty in that “the devil can do only such much as God permits, and no more.”⁷⁸ While, as seen in this work, Perkins

⁷² Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 242.

⁷³ While there are questions as to how much the final form of this work is owing to the editorial work of Thomas Pickering, Leif Dixon demonstrates that this work indeed bears the hallmarks of Perkins’s thought. Leif Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 239.

⁷⁴ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 309.

⁷⁵ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 314-315.

⁷⁶ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 330.

⁷⁷ Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 241.

⁷⁸ Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, 322.

believed in a devil who was active in the world, he always placed the emphasis upon God's power over Satan. Dixon notes that "Perkins's theologically self-conscious focus on emphasizing the power of predestinarian deity ensured that he was rigorous in highlighting the devil's inability to transcend the laws of divinely ordained nature."⁷⁹ This is reflective of Perkins's desire to place the theological focus on God and not Satan.

The Believer's Warfare with Satan

Perkins addresses the theme of the believer's warfare with Satan in both his doctrinal and practical writings. In *A Golden Chain*, the believer's warfare with Satan falls within the context of mortification. Perkins sets three areas in which Satan attacks believers. The first assault is regarding effectual calling. Perkins says that in this temptation Satan "blindfolds man's mind and to harden his heart, lest the word of God should work in him to salvation."⁸⁰ Falling to this satanic assault, according to Perkins, leads to either "coldness in receiving the word and neglect thereof, or else a falling into errors."⁸¹

The second assault concerns the believer's assurance of salvation. In this assault Satan causes believers to doubt their election, justification, and faith leading them to believe that they will be condemned.⁸² There are three occasions the enemy uses this assault adversity, a time of remembering past sin, and near death.⁸³ Falling to this satanic assault leads to "doubtfulness and distrust of our elect and God's mercy."⁸⁴ Perkins's view that death was a spiritual battleground for the believer was a continuation of "the

⁷⁹ Dixon, "William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist," 241.

⁸⁰ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 194.

⁸¹ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 195.

⁸² Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 196.

⁸³ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 196.

⁸⁴ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 197.

medieval tradition of presenting the deathbed as a place of combat between God and the Devil for the soul of the dying Christian, while focusing on the particular ‘vexations’ of Satan associated with godly religion.”⁸⁵

The third assault “is a provoking to sin according to the disposition of every man and as occasion shall offer itself.”⁸⁶ In this temptation Satan minimizes the severity of sin “by objecting closely the mercy of God and partly by covering or hiding the punishment which is due for sin.”⁸⁷ In this assault Satan has two helps. The first is “the flesh, which lusts against the spirit.” The second help is “the world, which brings men to disobedience through pleasure.”⁸⁸ In falling to this assault by Satan a believer is “overtaken and falls into some offense.”⁸⁹ Furthermore, after the offence Satan “does accuse and terrify the offender with the judgment of God.”⁹⁰ These three categories of assault are formative for Perkins’s later works in providing pastoral counsel for those facing the assaults of Satan.

Perkins’s *Combat Between Christ and the Devil*

Perkins’s most thorough expositional work on the issue of spiritual warfare is *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-1*, posthumously edited and published in 1606.⁹¹ J. Stephen Yuille in assessing this treatise states that it is “a great

⁸⁵ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 73. For an exploration of the role of Satan in temptation at death in the Protestant tradition see Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 462-468. Ryrie argues that whereas prior generations of Christians sought comfort through sacraments, the experience of spiritual conflict with Satan was itself a means of gaining assuring and overcoming despair.

⁸⁶ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 199.

⁸⁷ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 199.

⁸⁸ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 199.

⁸⁹ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 201.

⁹⁰ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 201.

⁹¹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, This section focuses on *Combat between Christ and the Devil* because as Nathan Johnstone notes this work is essential for understanding Perkins’s views on Satan and temptation: “Christ’s temptation in the desert provided a scriptural exemplar of man’s duty to follow him in resisting the Devil. William Perkins produced a detailed description of the nature of diabolic temptation in his *The Combat between Christ and the Divell* displayed. In doing so he provided

resource for understanding the devil's stratagems and appreciating the believer's calling to look to his 'merciful and faithful high priest' in the midst of temptation."⁹² In this work, Perkins expounds upon Christ's temptation by Satan, with an understanding that it serves as a paradigm for the believer's struggle with Satan. Perkins addresses Christ's example in temptation stating that, "in His example He might give us direction whereby to know the special temptations wherewith the devil assaults the church, as also how to withstand and repel the same."⁹³ Due to Perkins's understanding of the nature of the purpose of Christ's temptation, this work is important for tracing out Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare.

Certainty of Spiritual Conflict

Perkins draws from Christ's experience of temptation after his baptism that "we learn that all those who are truly baptized into Christ must make account to be tempted, and prepare for a combat with the devil, even through the whole course of their lives."⁹⁴ This is a marked departure from prior generations who believed "it was by no means certain that a person would experience diabolic affliction."⁹⁵ This understanding that demonic affliction was a certainty of the Christian life "helped to explain moments of spiritual failure, uncertainty or despair."⁹⁶

Beyond the explanatory power of demonic affliction, Perkins's understanding of the certainty of Satanic temptation shows "the experience of demonic temptation itself

one of the most detailed descriptions of the dynamic of temptation of all the Protestant theologians." Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 69.

⁹² J. Stephen Yuille, preface to Volume 1, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2014), xxxvi.

⁹³ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 88.

⁹⁴ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 88.

⁹⁵ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 60.

⁹⁶ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 23.

was a potential sign of grace.”⁹⁷ For Perkins, this was one of the defining marks of a genuine Christian. Perkins observes of those who have been baptized for many years and not experienced combat that they “have indeed the outward baptism of water, but they never received the inward baptism of the Spirit; they wear Christ’s livery, as yet do service unto Satan.”⁹⁸ He furthers this statement by way of analogy to Israel’s captivity in Egypt in that while they “continued under Pharaoh’s bondage, they were not pursued by his army.”⁹⁹ In summary, for Perkins, to lack the experience of temptation by Satan meant that an individual was still in Satan’s service.

Perkins expands upon an understanding that temptation is universal for believers by noting that those with special callings are to expect a heightened experience of temptation in relation to their calling.¹⁰⁰ There are two distinct purposes for this experience of temptation upon receiving a special call. The first purpose is to be taught “that no man is able to of himself to carry himself in any acceptable course of his calling without God’s special assistance and grace.”¹⁰¹ The second purpose for this special season of temptation is “to stir up in them those good gifts and graces which He has formerly bestowed on them.”¹⁰² Perkins’s emphasis on the certainty of temptation for the believer was at odds with the majority view of the English population which widely believed Satan was “a source of physical danger rather than a ‘ghostly enemy’ within the human heart.”¹⁰³ This emphasis on the universal experience of Satanic temptation by believers is instrumental for understanding Perkins’s view of the normal Christian life,

⁹⁷ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 24.

⁹⁸ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 88.

⁹⁹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 88.

¹⁰⁰ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 89.

¹⁰¹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 89.

¹⁰² Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 79.

¹⁰³ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 79.

and the importance of a “learned ministry.”

Spiritual Conflict and Pastoral Ministry

Perkins believes that because of the universal nature of temptation “all ministers of the word...must prepare themselves against Satan’s temptation...yet they must do it above the rest.”¹⁰⁴ The primary argument for this preparation was the belief that Satan and his forces “bend their greatest forces against the ministers of Christ.”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, preparation for temptation was needed because of Perkins’s view that temptation itself was a preparation for ministry.

From the fact that Satan tempted Christ before he began his public ministry Perkins concludes, that “it is good and profitable for God’s ministers to be exercised with temptations even of Satan himself.”¹⁰⁶ The usefulness of a personal experience with temptation is three-fold. The first is that through personal experience of temptation ministers would “know what temptation means.”¹⁰⁷ The second, and most important for understanding the role of the pastor, is that “they may be more the able to minister help and comfort to those that are tempted.”¹⁰⁸ This is indicative of a post-Reformation shift in emphases that “allowed Protestant ministers to adopt a new role as adepts able to mediate the correct response to temptation to their parishioners and, through their published writings, to society more widely.”¹⁰⁹ Apart from a personal experience of temptation a minister would be incapable of guiding church members in their responses to the experience of temptation. The final benefit of a personal experience of temptation for the

¹⁰⁴ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 89.

¹⁰⁵ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 89.

¹⁰⁶ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 90.

¹⁰⁷ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 90.

¹⁰⁸ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 90.

¹⁰⁹ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 61.

minister is that it would “make them understand the Word of God aright, for many places of Scripture cannot so well be understood by bare study only.”¹¹⁰ Taken as a whole, Perkins’s treatment of the minister’s experience of temptation can be viewed as reflective of “the reformation of the clergy turned full circle as the Protestant ministry shaped a role for themselves as the mediators, not of preternatural power, but of support for the individual in his personal battle with Satan.”¹¹¹ This understanding of the minister’s role as a mediator of support is reflected in Perkins’s pastoral counsel as will be seen in subsequent chapters.

The Nature and Purpose of Temptation

Perkins reflects an understanding of temptation that is rooted in the sovereignty of God. Perkins explains that the origin of temptation is found in “God’s most just permission, and not without His special providence and appointment.”¹¹² This is indicative of the reformed understanding “that the doctrines of providence and predestination were compatible with diverse interpretations of Satan’s earthly power.”¹¹³ Perkins is explicit that God’s appointment of temptation is not limited to Christ’s temptation but that “He also ordained the temptation of every Christian and the circumstances thereof.”¹¹⁴ This is a foundational understanding for Perkins in that it roots temptation in God’s goodness and providence.

With the relationship of temptation and providence provided, Perkins proceeds to address how believers are to respond to and learn from the experience of temptation. Perkins presents the universal nature of the believer’s experience of temptation as

¹¹⁰ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 90.

¹¹¹ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 3.

¹¹² Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 91.

¹¹³ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 19.

¹¹⁴ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 91.

encouraging because temptation serves as God’s “trial of His graces in them.”¹¹⁵ Believers were not to view the experience of Satanic temptation as a strange experience or a sign of divine disfavor, instead, believers should look at their experience of temptation as evidence that they were heirs of grace. Though temptation itself might not be good “*experiencing* such temptations *may* be good or at least necessary.”¹¹⁶ Through temptations, God teaches believers “to labor with patience to bear all trials and afflictions.”¹¹⁷ While believers are not to use “unlawful means to wind ourselves out of them,” believers are not to actively seek out trials. Perkins draws this third lesson from the observation that the Spirit led Christ to his temptation. Owing to this Perkins instructs that a believer must not “wittingly put himself into danger without a calling from God.”¹¹⁸ To seek out danger, that is temptation, apart from divine leading through the Holy Spirit “is to swerve from the practice of Christ in this place.”¹¹⁹ If however one in relation to his divine calling “falls into troubles and temptations, he may not seek to escape them by neglecting his duty, but with courage and patience must inure himself to bear them.”¹²⁰ Perkins holds that those who have received a special calling from God are “changed by His Spirit, and it were made other men.”¹²¹ Perkins traces this understanding to the experience of conversion noting that “we are all by nature the children of wrath, and enemies unto God; but by grace were made kings, priests, and prophets.”¹²² Because of this gracious change believers can rule over the devil and the world, subdue their flesh,

¹¹⁵ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 92.

¹¹⁶ Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 32.

¹¹⁷ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 92.

¹¹⁸ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 92.

¹¹⁹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 92.

¹²⁰ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 92.

¹²¹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 93.

¹²² Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 93.

and “instruct ourselves and others in the way of God.”¹²³ The only way to respond to temptation rightly is to “become new men, and to lead lives fitting and suitable to our holy calling.” There is no inherent strength apart from grace to overcome temptation because as Perkins understood “human nature was like tinder or gun powder for the Devil to ignite.”¹²⁴

Perkins draws upon the location and nature of Christ’s temptation to address the nature of Satan’s attacks, as well as the nature of temptation and the role of Satan as a tempter. Perkins argues that Christ was tempted in isolation because in isolation “Satan seeing Him only in this low degree, might be the more eager and bold to set upon Him.”¹²⁵ Perkins further adduces that Christ chose such a solitary place “because in such places men want those helps and comforts which in society they may find.”¹²⁶ This means that believers are more vulnerable to the temptations of Satan in isolation because “Satan takes advantage of such solitariness.”¹²⁷ Additionally, in a rebuke of monasticism, Perkins is insistent that Christ’s going into the wilderness is not to be viewed as model for life because “a perpetual forsaking of human societies, is neither warrantable by God’s Word, nor commendable in God’s child.”¹²⁸

Regarding the nature of temptation, Perkins states that the devil tempts men by conveying to their minds “either by inward suggestion, or by outward object, the motion or cogitation of that sin which he would have him to commit.”¹²⁹ This means that “Satan

¹²³ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 93.

¹²⁴ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 59.

¹²⁵ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 95.

¹²⁶ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 95.

¹²⁷ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 95.

¹²⁸ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 96.

¹²⁹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 97.

was capable of implanting his *own* thoughts into the mind of a human being.”¹³⁰ This reflects an understanding that temptation could have internal and external elements. Of the effect of Satan’s influence, Perkins observes that “as Satan conveys evil suggestions into men’s minds, so the same are full of trouble, sorrow, and vexation, at least to the godly.”¹³¹ Ryrie notes that “Protestants of all stripes blamed despair not on their doctrine but on the Devil.”¹³² In viewing Satanic temptation as being a source of emotional distress Perkins was reflecting the Protestant tradition to which he belonged.

Perkins observes how Satan’s work of temptation reflects his nature. Perkins elaborates that the name devil reflects his work as an accuser in that “he accuses God to man; man to God; and man to man.”¹³³ Perkins teaches that the great danger posed by Satan is in relation to his cleverness. Reflecting on the subtle and gradual path of temptation, Perkins observes that the devil first “conveys one claw or talent into a man’s heart, and then another; after that he gets in his head, and so at length winds in all his body.”¹³⁴ Rather than beginning with a full-on assault, Satan relies on subtle deception to entrap individuals in sin. Perkins graphically illustrates this danger, noting that “it is Satan’s craft, not to spit his venom at the first, but to sugar his temptations at the beginning that no danger may appear till he has conveyed into us the bane and poison of our souls.”¹³⁵ The deceptive nature of Satan’s work in temptation requires that believers exercise “a special watch through the whole course of our lives against the occasions of

¹³⁰ Oldbridge, *The Devil*, 64.

¹³¹ William Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 97.

¹³² Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 32.

¹³³ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 99. This is the same outline followed by Perkins in *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*, which Dixon argues is reflective of an understanding that for Perkins the Devil did not serve a structural role in his theology. Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 239-240.

¹³⁴ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 103.

¹³⁵ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 103.

sins.” Just as believers must be prepared for temptation, they must also be aware that they face a well-prepared tempter. Perkins says that “Satan is called the ‘tempter,’ because his continual study and practice has been and is, by all means to tempt all men.”¹³⁶ Because of the devil’s perpetual desire to tempt and over-throw, believers have an ongoing need to be ready for his assaults and to draw near to God.¹³⁷ In his infernal wisdom Satan does not “tempt all men at all times, neither always with the greatest temptations; but he forecasts for the times of man’s greatest weakness, and thereto he reserves his strongest assaults.”¹³⁸ In facing Satan believers face an enemy who is attentive to their every weakness. In determining the time of our greatest weakness Satan “observes not only the inclination of man’s heart and soul, but the state and constitution of the body, that if either body or mind will afford him the least advantage, thereon he will be sure to take occasion to tempt.”¹³⁹ Perkins clearly illustrates human weakness in the face of Satan’s temptations noting, “his temptations are like fire and bellows, and our infirmities and corruptions are wood and fuel.”¹⁴⁰ This appraisal of human weakness serves as an encouragement for believers to look outside themselves for strength and support in their battle with Satan.

Weapon of War

Given that believers face such a desperate struggle against an enemy that outmatches them, it would be easy to believe that believers faced an entirely hopeless situation. However, Perkins provides hope rooted in Scripture. Christ in his combat

¹³⁶ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 104.

¹³⁷ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 105.

¹³⁸ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 106.

¹³⁹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 106-107.

¹⁴⁰ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 107.

against Satan uses “the written of God for his defense.”¹⁴¹ In light of this Perkins believed the Bible was the best weapon available against Satan. Because of this he condemns the Church of Rome because it would “lock up the Word of God from their people in an unknown tongue, and commend unto them for their defense against spiritual enemies devices of their own.”¹⁴² In taking away the Scriptures and offering unbiblical substitutes as a defense against Satan, Perkins believed that the Church of Rome sent people out “naked and unarmed to encounter with Satan.”¹⁴³ Perkins did not believe that the Bible functioned as an amulet in defending against Satan, he believed that the Bible was to be understood and applied for it to be of use in defending against Satan. Perkins thought that the understanding that Scripture is the primary weapon against Satan should serve as a strong motivation for “ignorant persons to labor for knowledge therein.”¹⁴⁴ This emphasis on learning and knowledge is indicative of the Protestant tradition that shaped Perkins. Ryrie argues that the Protestant tradition was “a movement born and bred in universities, and it aspired to turn Christendom into a giant university, in which Christians would spend their time in private study or in attending...sermons, prophesyings, and conferences.”¹⁴⁵ Perkins likens those who simply defied Satan in their ignorance apart from using Scripture to a naked man defying an armed man with words ultimately to have his life taken away.¹⁴⁶ Those ignorant of the Bible “defy the devil and spit at him with their mouth, but in the meantime the devil wounds their souls unto death.”¹⁴⁷ It was Perkins’s concerns for those who were ignorant of the Scriptures that led him to

¹⁴¹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 114.

¹⁴² Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 114.

¹⁴³ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 114.

¹⁴⁴ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 115.

¹⁴⁵ Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 262.

¹⁴⁶ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 115.

¹⁴⁷ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 116.

emphasize the importance of an educated ministry as Perkins laments that the cause of so much sin in England owed to “want of love unto, and knowledge in the Word of God, whereupon most are ignorant of it.”¹⁴⁸ In focusing on the Bible in regard to defense against Satan, Perkins is anchoring the believer’s hope in the knowledge of the gospel and the Word of God.

Presumption and Presumptuous Peace

In addressing the issue of the believer’s combat with Satan, Perkins demonstrates a desire to rouse those who have demonstrated a dangerous level of presumption in their spiritual life. This was of great concern to Perkins because presumption “is the common snare of the devil wherein he entangles many souls.”¹⁴⁹ Through the sin of presumption in the life of the believer, Satan will “assay us by temptation drawn from God’s good gifts and graces in us...and so mingling his poison with God’s good gifts.”¹⁵⁰ Satan can do far greater damage through peace and affluence than persecution, as Perkins notes. Satan uses the temptation of worldly advancement to draw away those that “outward violence could not move.”¹⁵¹ Perkins finds in the overall pattern of Christ’s life and ministry an ongoing pattern for Christians. The pattern is that believers will know seasons of temptation, seasons of freedom through God’s mercy, and then “Satan comes upon them again, either by himself or by his instruments.”¹⁵² As members of Christ’s body, believers “must look for the same condition with our Head Christ, who being sorely tempted of Satan was left but for a season, and after temped again.” Given that this pattern is true of all who are genuine believers in Christ, Perkins

¹⁴⁸ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 114.

¹⁴⁹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 127.

¹⁵⁰ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 128.

¹⁵¹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 142.

¹⁵² Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 161.

makes clear that any understanding that one can be a believer and not experience conflict with Satan is presumptuous and wrong. Perkins believed that it was common in his day for individuals to live in what he called “a carnal peace.”¹⁵³ He warns that those who live in this peace “know not their hearts or the fearful case in which they stand.”¹⁵⁴ Rather than a “carnal peace” in which they defy the devil but are never troubled, believers are “constrained to buckle hard with Satan in temptation, and to pray many a time to be delivered from his buffeting.”¹⁵⁵ Throughout this work, Perkins provides an understanding of spiritual warfare and Satanic temptation that is understood to be normative for the Christian life. The normative nature of the believer’s conflict with Satan is foundational for understanding Perkins’s integration of the concept of spiritual warfare with his pastoral counseling.

¹⁵³ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 164.

¹⁵⁴ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 164.

¹⁵⁵ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil*, 164.

CHAPTER 3
WILLIAM PERKINS'S CASUISTRY AND PASTORAL
COUNSELING

William Perkins, while remembered best for his contributions in the areas of predestination and covenant theology, was renowned in his time for his pioneering work in pastoral care. As Ian Breward notes of Perkins, “The cure of afflicted consciences was, he held, part of the work of Christ’s prophetic office, which He has now committed to ministers of the gospel. One is not surprised to find that Perkins spent his Sundays resolving problems of conscience.”¹ This “resolving problems of conscience” has historically been classified as Puritan casuistry.² Rather than focusing on the intricacies of subtle moral questions, Puritan casuistry like Perkins’s was focused on “discernment of one’s interiority.”³ As a result of this focus, Puritan casuistry “included many subjects...which nowadays would be allotted to systematic and practical theology, psychology, and apologetics, as well as dealing with issues which we would consider belonged to the province of ethics or moral theology.”⁴ Perkins served as a pioneer, practitioner, and popularizer of Puritan casuistry. To understand Perkins’s practice of pastoral counseling one must understand the nature and function of Perkins’s Puritan

¹ Ian Breward, “The Casuistry of William Perkins,” in vol 2 of *Puritan Papers* ed. J. I. Packer (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001), 221.

² Whether Puritan casuistry is indeed casuistry has been debated. James Keenan a prominent scholar in the field of casuistry observes of Puritan casuistry that, “When I began reading what was called Puritan casuistry, I could not find much casuistry. This Puritan casuistry, which really should be called ‘practical divinity,’ was not at all like Continental casuistry.” James F. Keenan, “Jesuit Casuistry or Jesuit Spirituality? The Roots of Seventeenth-Century British Practical Divinity” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 627.

³ Keenan, “Jesuit Casuistry or Jesuit Spirituality?” 627.

⁴ Breward, “The Casuistry of William Perkins,” 221.

casuistry.⁵

Perkins's casuistry and his practice of pastoral counseling did not arise in a historical vacuum. To understand the vital pastoral significance of Puritan casuistry in Perkins's thought and ministry this chapter will first establish how post-Reformation dynamics necessitated a new development in pastoral care which led to the emergence of Puritan casuistry. Doing so will establish the historical context of Perkins's particular ministry context. Following this, this chapter will address Perkins's understanding of the function of the minister, as it relates to pastoral care and counseling, through drawing on Perkins's work *The Calling of Ministry*. Finally, this chapter will examine Perkins's understanding of the conscience and pastoral counseling as reflected in *A Discourse on Conscience* and *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*.

From Confession to Casuistry

The English Reformation brought major changes in how the Christian life was understood and how Christians found guidance and comfort. Theodore Bozeman argues, as a result of these changes, that the post-Reformation context fed anxiety and insecurity. Bozeman identifies the cause of this by stating, "The traditional ministrations of comfort through oral confession and priestly absolution was removed."⁶ The issues of conscience, which were normally addressed in the Roman Catholic church by means of the confessional, required a new medium for resolution owing to the Protestant rejection of the confessional. There was a growing belief after the Reformation that "the loss of the ordinary penitential function had the effect of tying one of the reformed minister's hands behind his back."⁷ This led ministers such as Perkins to emphasize that "since it was

⁵ Thomas Merrill notes that Perkins's development of casuistry was "the first notable foray into what was known in its day as 'Practical Divinity.'" Thomas F. Merrill, *William Perkins, 1558-1602: English Puritanist* (Nieukoop, Netherlands: B. De Graaf, 1966), xi.

⁶ Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism To 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 137.

⁷ Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 72.

incumbent upon the minister to confess to God not only his sins but the sins of his own people, his people must confess their sins to him.”⁸ M. M. Knappen notes that as a result of this, Puritan ministers of Perkins’s period “made a specialty of answering particular questions which were put to them on all manner of problems connected with the Christian life. These difficulties were called cases of conscience, whence the name casuistry.”⁹ This emphasis on the inner life and the conscience marked a transition as “mainline clergy of the Church of England were not, on the whole, quite so interested in feelings. Neither did they have much interest in a precise analysis of sin.”¹⁰ As Alec Ryrie notes, in the post Reformation context despair and anxiety could be traced to diabolical assault as “Protestants of all stripes blamed despair not on their doctrines but the Devil.”¹¹ This understanding that diabolical assault is a cause of despair and anxiety is of importance for understanding Perkins’s integration of spiritual warfare and pastoral counseling.

Beyond the explanations of an increase of anxiety and insecurity as a motivation for pursuing an emphasis on Puritan casuistry, it has been observed that this transition occurred because “it was becoming clear to almost everyone that Queen Elizabeth had succeeded in smashing the crusade to transform the Church of England according to Continental Reformed ideals.”¹² This observation is borne out by the fact that it was only “midway through the reign of Elizabeth I” that “practical divinity begin to flourish.”¹³ Moreover, this system of soul care was distinct from the established patterns in the

⁸ Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft*, 72.

⁹ M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 392.

¹⁰ E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 21.

¹¹ Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 32

¹² Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America*, 23.

¹³ David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 110.

Church of England as they were rooted in “the voluntary resolution of afflicted consciences” whereas the Church of England practice “was closer to coercive social control than to the genuinely pastoral and restorative cure of souls.”¹⁴ Perkins is representative of this shift of focus because as Andrew Ballitch notes, Perkins presented “an alternative to the disputes about polity that both worked within the existing frameworks of the established church and resonated with the spiritual aspirations of his contemporaries.”¹⁵ In summary, the pastoral focus of Puritan casuistry arose from a complex web of interrelated social, political, and religious developments in England.

In developing Puritan casuistry and practical divinity, ministers like Perkins and his contemporaries had four goals in mind. Those goals were the conversion of Catholics, the stabilization of orthodoxy, raising the bar for those content with popular religion, and lastly to bring about social and moral reform.¹⁶ Puritan casuistry did not arise simply as a response to social and ecclesial concerns. There was a theological question behind the development of Puritan casuistry, and that question was regarding the nature of assurance. As Patrick Collinson notes, “For Perkins, as for his readers, the crucial question was how a man might be sure of his salvation, which for a Calvinist was to have assurance of his election.”¹⁷

The distinct context that gave rise to Puritan casuistry and practical divinity aids in differentiating this practice from the Catholic practice of casuistry of the time. James Keenan observes that rather than being representative of what was considered casuistry in that period Perkins’s work on cases of conscience “begins as a devotional

¹⁴ Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft*, 73.

¹⁵ Andrew S. Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 143.

¹⁶ Hall, *The Puritans*, 110.

¹⁷ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 434

directory and becomes a summary of cases.”¹⁸ In doing so this work serves as an example of the development in “Puritan practical divinity which moved...from spiritual directories into full blown practical divinity that integrated devotional and eventually moral literature.”¹⁹ This is important to note as the primary argument regarding the system of practical divinity is that it served as a counterpart to Jesuit casuistry. Rather than that being the case, the roots of the work of Perkins and his fellow practitioners are “found not in the sin manuals of Jesuit casuistry, but in Jesuit ascetical theology.”²⁰ Perkins’s place in this context and development is the subject of some debate. As in other areas, one view of Perkins is that he was “not a great thinker, but he was a great preacher, and popularizer.”²¹ This estimation of Perkins regarding Puritan casuistry and practical divinity is evident in Bozeman’s work. Bozeman argues that Richard Greenham served as the founder of this movement whereas Perkins was “the new piety’s greatest literary popularizer.”²² This brings into question the origins of Perkins’s thought and practice in providing pastoral counsel. Charles Hambrick-Stowe notes that Perkins was “mentored by Greenham at nearby Dry Drayton.”²³ However, the relationship between Perkins and Greenham is not clear, because as Bozeman observes while noting the similarity between Perkins and Greenham, “Although little if any evidence remains to specify his relationship to Richard Greenham, Perkins’s design for spirituality embraced the exacting

¹⁸ James F. Keenan, “Was William Perkins’ Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience Casuistry? Hermeneutics and British Practical Divinity,” in *Contexts of Conscience in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 29.

¹⁹ Keenan, “Was William Perkins’ Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience Casuistry?”, 29.

²⁰ Keenan, “Jesuit Casuistry or Jesuit Spirituality?” 628.

²¹ Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, 374.

²² Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 145.

²³ Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, “Practical Divinity and Spirituality,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul Chang-Ha Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 194.

inward analysis and other mainstays of the older man's spiritual science."²⁴ Regardless of the exact personal relationship between Perkins and Greenham, or the relationship between their understandings of pastoral care, there is a consensus that they "led the way as excellent physicians of the soul."²⁵ Perkins displayed in his work "boldness and originality in writing about matters of conscience in his time. He not only produced the first extensive treatment of this subject by any Protestant in England, but he was also the first and most important Protestant casuist in Europe."²⁶ In fact, as Kenneth Kirk notes of the field of Reformed casuistry, "For the Calvinists the leading authority was William Perkins (of whom Fuller said that he 'first humbled the towering speculations of philosophers into practice and morality') of Christ College, Cambridge who died in 1602."²⁷ More importantly, the nature of Perkins's work demonstrates his pastoral focus as he gave his "most extensive and systematic teaching on the subject in public lectures and sermons."²⁸

Perkins and Pastoral Care

To fully appreciate Perkins's understanding of pastoral counseling, it must be understood in light of Perkins's teaching on the essential nature of pastoral care in relation to the work of the minister. To facilitate this understanding, this section will analyze Perkins's *The Calling of Ministry* originally delivered as lectures to ministerial

²⁴ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 84-85. The nature of the lack of evidence is clarified by Ian Breward who notes that there is no existing correspondence for William Perkins. Beyond being unable to ascertain the nature of Perkins's relationships with other ministers, this lack also makes it impossible to ascertain how his ministerial relationships effected his thoughts and practice in the area of pastoral care and counsel. Ian Breward, ed., introduction to *The Works of William Perkins*, Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics 3 (Appleford, UK: Sutton Courtenay, 1970), 3:10.

²⁵ Keith L. Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames: Dutch Backgrounds of English and American Puritanism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 162.

²⁶ W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 92.

²⁷ ²⁷ Kenneth E. Kirk, *Conscience and Its Problems: An Introduction to Casuistry*. Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 203.

²⁸ Thomas Wood, *English Casuistical Divinity during the Seventeenth Century* (London: SPCK Publishing, 1952), 48.

students at Cambridge sometime time between 1584 and 1595.²⁹ As will be seen, “The minister in Perkins’s model is primarily a pastoral counselor offering instruction and advice, though he does so in strict confidence, just as in the case of the confessor in the sacrament of penance.”³⁰ Perkins roots his understanding of the pastoral office in view of the two-fold orientation of the minister regarding his relationship to God and to the people. This is seen in his view of the minister as an interpreter. Perkins states that “every true minister must be God’s interpreter to the people, and the people’s to God.”³¹ As such, the minister is given the responsibility of bringing from God to the troubled consciences of the people of God “a word ‘in season’ spoken to it for its comfort.”³² As noted in the previous chapter, Perkins placed an emphasis on the importance of a learned ministry, and that emphasis is seen in his thoughts on the minister as interpreter. Perkins teaches that three things are necessary for the minister in relation to his work as an interpreter and as bringer of comfort to the afflicted. The three things necessary for this work are learning, divine knowledge as taught by men, and inward experience taught by the Holy Spirit.³³ While emphasizing the importance of personal spiritual experience in relation to pastoral ministry, Perkins is quick to note that in doing so he does not “give the least allowance to the Anabaptistical fancies and revelations, which are nothing but either dreams of their own or illusions of the devil.”³⁴ Even in addressing the preliminaries of pastoral ministry, an awareness of Satan’s deceptions is present. Perkins further highlights that a minister lacking personal experience in spiritual realities is something incongruous with the nature

²⁹ Ballitch, *The Gloss and the Text*, 147.

³⁰ Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*, 100.

³¹ William Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joseph A. Pipa and J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 10 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2020), 208.

³² Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 208.

³³ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 208.

³⁴ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 208.

of the office of ministry. Perkins does so through a series of rhetorical questions. These questions make clear that an unreconciled and an unholy man has no place in ministry and that they “bestow such fruitless labors in the church.”³⁵

Perkins addresses the need of educational institutions for the training of ministers in relation to the present work of the devil. Perkins notes that “antichrist is so careful to uphold his kingdom, the kingdom of Satan, to erect colleges and endow them with living, and to use so great means to sow his tares in the hearts of young men.”³⁶ For Perkins, educated ministers were an important component in the Church’s struggle against Satan.

Perkins addresses the office of the minister by beginning with the work of the minister as a witness. This touches upon the minister’s responsibility in the area of pastoral counsel as ministers have a responsibility of proclaiming justification and must also “testify it to the conscience of the sinner.”³⁷ This testifying as will be seen occurs both in the public ministry of preaching and in the private ministry of pastoral counseling. Moreover, in being a witness, the minister “is to maintain this truth and this righteousness (if the sinner’s conscience is yet not quiet) against all gainsayers, against the power of darkness and all the gates of hell.”³⁸ The minister has the responsibility of bringing the truths of the gospel to troubled consciences and applying it to them. While Perkins gives allowance to the fact that “other godly Christian men may help one another in the performance of these duties” he is adamant that this duty of being a witness to the conscience “is the peculiar office of a minister of God.”³⁹ Rather than being an optional

³⁵ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 209.

³⁶ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 213.

³⁷ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 218.

³⁸ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 218.

³⁹ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 218.

duty among others, this duty according to Perkins was for the minister “the height and excellency of his office.”⁴⁰ In commending the work of the minister to the laity Perkins points to this soul care as the primary reason for honoring ministers. Perkins argues that the minister who is to be honored is one who can silence the devil’s accusations and then heal the deadly wounds of the soul.⁴¹

Perkins moves from the office of the minister to the blessing provided through the minister. In doing so, Perkins explains that the minister of the gospel is one of God’s ordinary means of declaring sinners righteous through the gospel and pronouncing mercy “to a penitent sinner.”⁴² This reflects an understanding of the need for ministers to provide comfort, which although fundamentally different from auricular confession was analogous to it. As W. B. Patterson notes, Perkins argues for this type of confession for “dealing with matters that trouble the conscience suggests that he sees the decline of auricular or private confession as threatening to cause a spiritual vacuum. He thus proposes a model that will not have the features to which Protestants objected.”⁴³ While Perkins emphasizes the importance and blessing of a godly minister, he acknowledges that there are exceptions in which knowledgeable individuals may provide pastoral care such as “converting of a man to God, and for comforting him at the hour of death.”⁴⁴

Perkins addresses the authority of the minister through the development of his understanding of the nature of pastoral care and counsel. Perkins explains that it is only to the minister that God gives the charge to deliver those who go down to the pit.⁴⁵ This

⁴⁰ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 218.

⁴¹ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 220.

⁴² Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 222.

⁴³ Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*, 99.

⁴⁴ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 225

⁴⁵ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 226.

unique authority is carried out through the totality of the work of the minister. Perkins notes that ministers “must privately confer, visit, admonish, rebuke, and principally they must preach.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, the authority of ministers is such that they have a commission from God to “redeem souls from the power of hell and the devil’s claw.”⁴⁷ Perkins uses the unique authority of this minister as a motivation for the laity to be open and honest with the minister as he performs the work of the ministry. Perkin admonishes that “if your soul is to be redeemed, your minister must see the weakness and purge the corruptions of it.”⁴⁸

Perkins further expands upon the duties of the minister by expositing Isaiah 6. Perkins warns that the minister’s calling is a dangerous one, and that danger is increased because “we have many occasions to be puffed up in self-conceits.”⁴⁹ The danger and occasions for pride are when a minister turns to “human or carnal” weapons, that is he relies upon his “own ability, gifts, and learning.”⁵⁰ Perkins warns that when a minister of the gospel is self-reliant he is guilty of using “carnal weapons in a spiritual warfare.”⁵¹ The minister’s high privilege of being able to “pronounce the most powerful blessings on other men’s souls, and speak the best words of comfort to other men’s consciences” requires a greater understanding of the dangers of pride and a cultivation of humility.⁵² Perkins sees a pattern for Christian ministry in Isaiah’s confession of his and the people of Israel’s sin.⁵³ Owing to this pattern, ministers must confess their people’s sins. Perkins

⁴⁶ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 227.

⁴⁷ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 228.

⁴⁸ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 228.

⁴⁹ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 238.

⁵⁰ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 238.

⁵¹ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 238.

⁵² Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 238.

⁵³ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 245.

observes that a minister “must not only have a flock, and know which is his flock, or have a general eye over it, but he must have a particular and distinct knowledge of the state of it, and the more particular the better.”⁵⁴ As Perkins makes clear, this understanding of the high calling of the minister did not allow for “willful and careless non-residency and all absence.”⁵⁵ Instead, Perkins believed “it is best for a minister to be present with the people, so that he may better know them and their state.”⁵⁶ This requires not only the responsibility of the minister for knowing the people, but the people’s responsibility of making themselves known. As Perkins notes, the people have a responsibility regarding their sins to “discover and confess them” to the minister.⁵⁷ This was not the imposed auricular confession of the Catholic church. Instead, through this type of confession “a Christian voluntarily at all times may resort to his pastor, open his estate, disburden his conscience of such sins as disquiet him, and crave his godly assistance and prayers.”⁵⁸ In calling for the observance of confession between minister and church member, while rejecting the Catholic practice of auricular confession, Perkins was demonstrating continuity with previous leaders within the Church of England.⁵⁹

Perkins addresses the consolation of the minister by anchoring the minister’s preparation for ministry in the experience of humbling. Perkins states, “God never called any man to the state of grace or to any notable work or function in His church, but He first humbled them, and then brought them out of all conceit with themselves.”⁶⁰ It is

⁵⁴ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 245.

⁵⁵ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 245.

⁵⁶ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 245.

⁵⁷ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 245.

⁵⁸ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 245.

⁵⁹ Collinson notes that Hugh Latimer lamented the abandonment of confession between Christians, and that Peter Cartwright as well held that this was a biblically permissible practice. Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft*, 72.

⁶⁰ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 258.

from their own personal experience of the humbling comfort of divine forgiveness that ministers are able “to comfort distressed consciences.”⁶¹ Ministers having the experience of humbling conviction and conversion can comfort the afflicted with the truth that “God comforts not but him who is distressed.”⁶² Perkins observes that the work of the minister requires careful application of doctrine, a lesson which he derives from the angel’s application of the burning coal to Isaiah’s lips.⁶³ Perkins observes of this right application of doctrine that ministers are “to apply the medicines of their doctrine to the times, persons, and places, which are infected, so shall they be sure not to take pains in vain.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, in this incident, Perkins sees biblical grounds for the practice of pastoral counseling. Ministers “learn the true way of comforting troubled and distressed consciences” in that they learn they are to draw them to view their sin and God’s glory in such a way that they are humbled, and then directed to “good grounds of pardons for those sins by Christ Jesus.”⁶⁵ Perkins observes that this providing of comfort calls for careful diagnosis. Perkins notes that in providing pastoral counsel the minister “must first of all search into the cause of the sickness (that is, his sins) and must take them away. If they do not, then all their labor is lost.”⁶⁶

Perkins, in his closing remarks on the commission of the minister reaffirms the comforting results of the gospel ministry. Perkins teaches that “quietness of mind and peace of conscience” do not come from worldly means but are found in “the favor of God and pardon for your sins.”⁶⁷ Perkins notes that in the world ministers have an important

⁶¹ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 259.

⁶² Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 259.

⁶³ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 267.

⁶⁴ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 267.

⁶⁵ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 268.

⁶⁶ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 269.

⁶⁷ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 276.

work from God, as God “speaks to a man by his own conscience and by the voice of His church.”⁶⁸ It is through ministers of the Word as “His messengers and ambassadors” that God speaks to men through the church.⁶⁹ It is as God’s commissioned messengers that ministers bear the responsibility of bringing comfort through pastoral counsel. As seen throughout Perkins’s *The Calling of the Ministry* the responsibility of the minister to provide comfort through pastoral counseling is not an optional task among other optional tasks. Pastoral counseling, which is soul care, alongside preaching are the primary tasks to which the minister of the gospel is called. With the essential nature of pastoral counseling in relation to the work of the minister understood, it is now possible to explore the methodology employed by Perkins in pastoral counseling as evidenced by his treatises on the subject. This understanding is reflected in his sermons because as Bozeman notes of Perkins and his fellow practitioners, “most of the casuistical work on record is found in their sermons, commentaries, letters, and tracts of spiritual counsel.”⁷⁰ The following chapter will explore how this is evidenced in his handling of spiritual warfare in relationship to pastoral counseling.

Puritan Casuistry as Pastoral Counseling

The primary grounds for understanding the general principles that shaped Perkins’s practice of pastoral counseling are to be found in *A Discourse on Conscience* and *The Whole Case of Conscience*, the former was published in 1596 and the latter was posthumously edited and published in 1606.⁷¹ While there is debate as to whether the category of casuistry best describes Perkins’s work, this section will retain the descriptor

⁶⁸ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 279.

⁶⁹ Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, 279.

⁷⁰ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 130.

⁷¹ As Arthur Lindsley notes “these were the first systematic treatises on the subject in England.” Arthur William Lindsley, “Conscience and Casuistry in the English Puritan Concept of Reformation” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1982), 171.

of casuistry for Perkins's work.⁷² However, Keenan's argument that commentators have failed to appreciate that Perkins's work was a "directory for directors" is a compelling one.⁷³

Perkins and the Conscience

To rightly understand Perkins's casuistry and its relationship to his pastoral counseling a proper understanding of the conscience in Perkins's thought is needed. To do this one must turn first to Perkins's work *A Discourse of Conscience*.⁷⁴ This work by Perkins is of significance because it was "the first extensive treatment of this subject by any Protestant in England, but he was also the first and most important Protestant casuist in Europe."⁷⁵ Furthermore, as Mark Shaw notes, in it "Perkins laid the theological foundation for the discipline known as Practical Divinity."⁷⁶ In this work, Perkins explains the role of the conscience, the types of conscience, and the responsibility of maintaining a good conscience. All of this is foundational for understanding Perkins's casuistry.

In Perkins's understanding, a person's conscience serves as a witness with regard to "determining of their particular actions either with them or against them."⁷⁷ As such the function of conscience is to provide judgment "of things done by saying unto us: 'This was done, this was not done, This may be done, this may not be done. This was well done, this was ill-done.'"⁷⁸ Due to the role of the conscience in providing judgment

⁷² Keenan argues that Perkins and his followers' casuistry appears to be innovative in comparison to contemporaries because it was in fact not casuistry. Keenan, "Was William Perkins' Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience Casuistry?," 30.

⁷³ Keenan, "Was William Perkins' Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience Casuistry?," 30.

⁷⁴ William Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 8 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2019)

⁷⁵ Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*, 92.

⁷⁶ Mark Randolph Shaw, "The Marrow of Practical Divinity: A Study in the Theology of William Perkins." (ThD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1981), 102.

⁷⁷ *A Discourse of Conscience*, 7.

⁷⁸ *A Discourse of Conscience*, 8.

and testimony, the conscience is the primary concern for Perkins's pastoral counseling as will be seen.

Conscience for the believer serves an important role in relation to assurance. According to Perkins, conscience can provide "an infallible certainty of the pardon of sin and everlasting life."⁷⁹ Conscience does so in two ways. The first way in which the conscience establishes assurance is through providing "testimony of a certain kind of righteousness."⁸⁰ As such, the conscience testifies to the believer's justification through the experience of peace of conscience.⁸¹ Another way the conscience addresses assurance arises from the understanding that an "office of [a] regenerate conscience is to excuse, that is, to clear and defend man, even before God, against all his enemies both bodily and ghostly."⁸² Perkins argues that it is the Christian's duty to obtain a good conscience and to preserve it.⁸³ It is this understanding of the role of the conscience and the importance of maintaining a good conscience that provides a foundation for understanding Perkins's pastoral counseling in addressing cases of conscience.

Foundations for Providing Pastoral Counsel

Perkins provides an exploration of the role of the pastor in counseling in *The Whole Case of Conscience*.⁸⁴ In the preface to his first book of the cases of conscience Perkins states that Christ has entrusted the work of comforting the distressed and weary to "pastors and teachers upon earth, to whom He has given knowledge and other gifts to

⁷⁹ *A Discourse of Conscience*, 61

⁸⁰ *A Discourse of Conscience*, 79.

⁸¹ *A Discourse of Conscience*, 79-80.

⁸² *A Discourse of Conscience*, 81.

⁸³ *A Discourse of Conscience*, 86-91.

⁸⁴ William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 8 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2019).

this end and purpose.”⁸⁵ J. Stephen Yuille notes of this work that it arises from Perkins’s belief that ministers must have “a basic understanding of man as he stands in three different conditions...man as he stands by himself...man as he stands in relation to God...man as he stands in relation to others.”⁸⁶ Perkins’s casuistry was not embroiled primarily in addressing moral quandaries. Instead, as Bozeman notes, it was “engaged...with existential problems.”⁸⁷

As has been noted, Puritan casuistry arose in response to a deficiency that came about because of the repudiation of auricular confession. Perkins’s work demonstrates a desire to address that need. Foundational for meeting the needs of troubled consciences is the understanding “that in the troubles of conscience, it is meet and convenient there should always be used a private confession.”⁸⁸ Perkins, as he does in *The Calling of the Ministry*, argues for the necessity of private confession for rightly knowing and remedying troubled consciences. Perkins at the same time guards against the abuses that had marked confession in Roman Catholicism. He does so by noting that confession is not necessary for salvation, it ought not be exhaustive, and that while confession should primarily be given to ministers as they are the ones responsible for providing pastoral instruction it can be given to any believer.⁸⁹ In conjunction with a knowledge of the afflicted soul’s condition made possible through confession, Perkins argues that a thorough knowledge of the nature of sin is required in the pursuit of addressing the conscience.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 116.

⁸⁶ J. Stephen Yuille, preface to Volume 8, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 8 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), xiv-xv.

⁸⁷ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 131.

⁸⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 117.

⁸⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 117.

⁹⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 120-136.

Perkins's writing is demonstrative of the fact that he had become a specialist in "in the science of comfort, devising means to resolve 'doubts, apprehensions, depressions, and temptations' as these eroded trust in one's state of grace."⁹¹ Furthermore, Perkins's attention to troubled consciences indicates that he understood "that the task of living in accordance with one's conscience was not easy."⁹² Perkins specifically defines distress in the area of conscience as "when a man is disquieted and distempered in conscience, and consequently in his affections, touching his estate before God."⁹³ Owing to the importance of assurance and the anxiety that arose from a lack of it "management of anxiety had climbed the agenda of Puritan concern, and now it both relied on and abetted the analysis and purification of behavior."⁹⁴ For Perkins anxiety and distress arose "from temptation, either begun or continued."⁹⁵ According to Perkins, for distress "the best and most sure general remedy...the applying of the promise of everlasting of life in and by the blood of Christ."⁹⁶ The role of confession in addressing temptation is for the troubled person to "to disclose the cause of the particular distress, so that the remedy may be better applied. For the truth is that they very opening of the cause is a great ease of the mind, before any remedy is applied."⁹⁷ Furthermore, through the disclosure of the cause of distress it is made known "whether the said party is fit for comfort or not?"⁹⁸ Perkins observes that if comfort were applied to persons who are "not touched at all for their sin"

⁹¹ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 131.

⁹² Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*, 95.

⁹³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 161.

⁹⁴ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 132.

⁹⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 161.

⁹⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 162.

⁹⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 162.

⁹⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 162.

then the Word of God would be misapplied.⁹⁹ Those who are not humbled by their sin should be brought to consider their sins and grieve for them.¹⁰⁰

Grounds of Comfort in Pastoral Counsel

With the general foundation provided, Perkins proceeds to provide more specific direction on the grounds of providing counsel and comfort to the afflicted. Perkins observes that the “right way of ministering comfort to a distressed part” entails “bringing them to an awareness of their experience of grace.”¹⁰¹ This is because believers “when they are in distress, feel little or no grace at all in themselves.”¹⁰² Distressed believers are to be made aware of four grounds or evidences of grace. The first evidence is that a “desire to repent and believe...is faith and repentance itself, though not in nature yet in God’s acceptance.”¹⁰³ The second evidence of grace is “godly sorrow whereby a man is grieved for his sins because they are sins.”¹⁰⁴ The third evidence is a desire and willingness to “forsake all sin and turn unto God.”¹⁰⁵ The final evidence is loving “any man because he is a Christian and a child of God.”¹⁰⁶ These evidences of grace are not to be occasional or sporadic. They must be “constant and settled, not stopped or stayed in the way, but such as daily grow and increase.”¹⁰⁷ These four evidences are to serve as the grounds of providing comfort to those experiencing distress.

⁹⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 162.

¹⁰⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 163

¹⁰¹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 165.

¹⁰² Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 165.

¹⁰³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 165.

¹⁰⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 166.

¹⁰⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 166.

¹⁰⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 167.

¹⁰⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 167.

With the grounds of comforting grace provided, Perkins turns his attention to addressing how they are to be tested and applied in cases of distress. Perkins states that one providing comfort to the distressed should test the distressed party through asking certain questions of the distressed person. These questions address whether the individual has repented and believed, whether he desires to do so and whether he loves other Christians.¹⁰⁸ If the distressed person reveals signs of grace then the gospel can be rightly applied as a source of comfort by means of “a kind of reasoning. The first part whereof is taken from God’s Word; the second is from the testimony of the distressed conscience; and the conclusion is the applying of the promise.”¹⁰⁹ The minister of the gospel is uniquely qualified to apply this gospel comfort because of the “authority given him of God, to pronounce the pardon.”¹¹⁰ The pastor in counseling the distressed should not expect them to make self-application of whether there is an interest in Christ because, “in distress, it is as hard a thing to make the conscience yield to the promise as to make fire and water agree. For though men have signs of grace and mercy in them, yet will they not acknowledge it by reason of the extremity of their distress.”¹¹¹

Perkins’s Practical Rules for Pastoral Counseling

Perkins provides six rules for the practice of providing comfort and counseling the distressed. The first consideration is that in providing comfort there must be “some mixture of the law; that is to say, the promise alone must not be applied.”¹¹² Perkins’s reasoning for this is that because of the deceitfulness of the human heart “oftentimes it

¹⁰⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 167-168.

¹⁰⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

¹¹⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

¹¹¹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

¹¹² Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

falls out that men, not thoroughly humbled, being comforted either too soon or too much, do afterwards become the worst of all.”¹¹³ This caution should lead ministers to bring the afflicted “by little and little to repentance. The sweetness of comfort is the greater, if it is delayed with some tartness of the law.”¹¹⁴

Perkins’s second rule for comforting the distressed is that if the distressed person is “possessed with grief of himself, he must not be left alone, but always attended with good company.”¹¹⁵ Perkins was aware of both the danger of isolation in cases of distress as well as the danger of being tempted to commit suicide in such cases. This rule is rooted in Perkins’s understanding of the believer’s warfare with Satan. Perkins notes the danger of Satanic struggle arises because “herein does his malice most appear, in that he is always most ready when a man is in great distress and withal solitary, then upon the sudden to tempt him to despair, and to the making away of himself.”¹¹⁶ This integration of the believer’s warfare with Satan and the issue of pastoral counseling will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter.

The third rule of pastoral counseling is that “the party in distress must be taught not to rest upon his own judgment, but always to submit himself, and to be content to be advised by others who are men of wisdom, judgment, and discretion.”¹¹⁷ This reflects Perkins’s understanding of the unique role of the minister in that “a pastoral counselor offering instruction and advice, though he does so in strict confidence, just as in the case of the confessor in the sacrament of penance. The advice given is based on the minister’s training and experience and draws upon his knowledge of biblical teaching.”¹¹⁸ Perkins’s rule

¹¹³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

¹¹⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

¹¹⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

¹¹⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹¹⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹¹⁸ Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England*, 100.

assumed the presence of ministers that were “in respect of their places and gifts, are the fittest and best able to instruct, correct, comfort, and inform the weak and wounded conscience.”¹¹⁹

This rule hinges upon Perkins’s ideal of a learned ministry. As Ryrie notes, this ideal was not readily available as there were ministers who did not see this as an important aspect of ministry. Ryrie recounts the experience of Richard Norward, “who first found a minister whose ‘imperious strain’ alienated him; on another occasion, he found two ministers who gave the impression they were keen to be rid of this ‘confused and distracted’ young man.”¹²⁰

The fourth rule is that “the distressed party must never hear tell of any fearful accidents, or of any who have been in the like or worse case than he is. For upon the very report, the distressed conscience will fasten the accident upon itself, and thereby commonly will be drawn to deeper grief or despair.”¹²¹ Perkins demonstrates a keen insight into the workings of a distressed mind in providing this rule. Perkins provides this rule so that pastoral counselors would be not contribute to the afflicted mind’s proneness to “imagine fearful things.”¹²²

The fifth rule is that the counselor “must bear with all the wants of the distressed; as with their forwardness peevishness, rashness, and with their distempered and disordered affections and actions.”¹²³ Patience is required of the pastoral counselor in providing comfort. In addition to patience, Perkins points to sympathy as a requirement on the part of the one providing comfort. Perkins states that one providing comfort “must put upon him (as it were) their persons, being affected with their misery, and touched with compassion for their sorrows, as they were his own, grieving when he sees them to

¹¹⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 117.

¹²⁰ Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 397.

¹²¹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹²² Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹²³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

grieve, weeping when they do weep and lament.”¹²⁴ Perkins’s model of a pastoral counselor is far removed from contemporary understandings that call for clinical detachment.

The final rule is a call for perseverance. Perkins states, “he who is the comforter must not be discouraged, though after long labor and painstaking, there follow small comfort and ease to the distressed part.”¹²⁵ Perkins understood that those under distress would often backslide and because of that it would be “long before comfort can be received.”¹²⁶ Perkins reflects a strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God in his understanding of why patience is required on the part of the counselor. Perkins notes, “God has the greatest stroke in these distresses of mind, and brings men through all the temptations that He has appointed, even to the last and the utmost, before He opens the heart to receive comfort.”¹²⁷ While emphasizing divine sovereignty, Perkins has a nuanced understanding of the causes of distress as will be seen in the next section.

Causes of Distress

Perkins puts forward five specific causes of distress. These five causes are as follows: divine testing, outward afflictions, the temptation of blasphemy, a man’s own sins, and a man’s own body.¹²⁸ In Perkins’s understanding these causes are often combined, as will be seen.

Perkins identifies the first cause of distress as divine testing “which is a combat with God Himself immediately.”¹²⁹ This experience of distress “arises sometimes upon

¹²⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹²⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹²⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹²⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

¹²⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 170-218.

¹²⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 170.

the commission of some notorious sins which do wound the conscience... Sometimes again it comes when there is no sin committed, but obedience to God to be performed.”¹³⁰ In making this observation, Perkins is reflective of the Reformed tradition as seen in Calvin’s own observation in his *Sermons on Job*.¹³¹ The purpose of this distress is so that believers would learn to depend upon the mercy of God and learn that “in the work of our redemption, Christ gives life, not by life, but death, and He sends men to heaven by the gates and suburbs of hell.”¹³²

Perkins identifies outward afflictions as “all manner of miseries and calamities in this life, from the least to the greatest, from pain of the little finger to the very pangs of death.”¹³³ The remedy for afflictions of this type is “practice and meditation.”¹³⁴ It is important to note that it is in relation to outward afflictions that Perkins identifies Satan’s work in bringing about distress of mind. Perkins notes that one “particular affliction or distress is satanical molestation, whereby both persons and places of mansion (or abode are either possessed, or otherwise molested by the malice of the devil.”¹³⁵ Even in identifying the role of Satan in bringing about distress, Perkins places the emphasis on divine permission. Perkins in providing comfort states, “Satan’s power is determined by God” and that considering this “will serve to stay the minds of those whose persons, houses, or friends are molested by him.”¹³⁶

The third cause of distress is the temptation to blasphemy. This occurs “when a

¹³⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 170.

¹³¹ John Calvin, *Sermons on Job*, trans. Rob Roy McGregor (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2022), 51-52.

¹³² Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 174.

¹³³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 176.

¹³⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 176.

¹³⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 193.

¹³⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 195.

man is troubled in his mind with blasphemous cogitations and thoughts directly against the majesty of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁷ These blasphemous thoughts have two possible sources: “the thoughts of a man’s own mind or from the suggestion of the devil.”¹³⁸ Because of this, the origin of the thoughts must be determined for comfort to be provided. Perkins’s remedies for this temptation will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter.

The fourth cause of distress “is that which arises from a man’s own sins, or from some special sin committed.”¹³⁹ This type of distress is manifested “by fears and terrors of the conscience, by doubts of the mercy of God, by lamentable and fearful complaints made to others.”¹⁴⁰ Perkins roots the comfort provided for this type of distress in the mercy of God made available to repentant sinners.¹⁴¹ Believers are provided the particular comfort “that the corruption of nature is not part of him, neither does it belong to his person in respect of divine imputation.”¹⁴² Because of the doctrine of imputation the believer’s sin “is not imputed to him to condemnation.”¹⁴³ This provides comfort for believers “when they shall be pressed and troubled in consideration of their estate in this life, which cannot till death be fully freed from much weakness and manifold imperfections.”¹⁴⁴ Perkins’s prescribed comfort is rooted in his understanding of the gospel.

The final cause of distress is the body. Perkins notes that the body can hurt the

¹³⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 198.

¹³⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 199.

¹³⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 204.

¹⁴⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 204.

¹⁴¹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 205-7.

¹⁴² Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 211.

¹⁴³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 212.

¹⁴⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 212.

soul by “corrupting the action of the mind, or more properly by corrupting the next instrument whereby the mind works, and consequently the action itself.”¹⁴⁵ Perkins’s understanding of the relationship between the body and the distress of the mind, reflects a biblical understanding of human embodiment and the reality that one’s health does play a role in one’s spiritual life.

Perkins presents a nuanced understanding of the complexity of distress and its causes. Perkins, in concluding his section on the causes of distress of temptation notes that “if we make examination of the estate of persons as are troubled with any of these five temptations we shall not usually find them single, but mixed together, especially melancholy with terror of conscience or some other temptations.”¹⁴⁶ In stating this, Perkins is presenting a model of pastoral counseling that is not reductionistic but is aware of the complexities of the human heart and mind. Due to the complexity of distress, Perkins advises, “that for mixed distresses, we must have recourse to mixed remedies, using in the first place the best means for rectifying the mind...and then taking the seasonable advice of the physician, whose calling and service God has sanctified for the cure and relief of the body in case of extremity.”¹⁴⁷ Perkins’s nuanced understanding of distress, alongside his understanding of the work of the minister as a counselor, provides the basis for appreciating and understanding his integration of pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

¹⁴⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 214.

¹⁴⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 218.

¹⁴⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 218.

CHAPTER 4

WILLIAM PERKINS'S INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND PASTORAL COUNSELING

Perkins's integration of spiritual warfare into the field of pastoral counseling came about because of the changes traced out in the two previous chapters. As noted in chapter two, the English Reformation brought a subtle shift in how Satan's work was understood by Protestants. This led to a shift involving an emphasis on the mental aspects of Satan's works instead of the emphasis on the physical. In chapter three it has been demonstrated that changes brought about because of the English Reformation led to an emphasis by Perkins and some of his contemporaries on the counseling work of the minister. These historical shifts, alongside Perkins's understanding of Satan and pastoral counseling, are foundational for understanding how and why Perkins integrated pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

This chapter will explore how Perkins integrated pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare. To do so, this chapter will first explore how the two shifts addressed in the previous chapters led to a redeveloped understanding of the work of the minister concerning spiritual warfare. With this historical understanding in place, this chapter will then explore Perkins's treatises drawing out the practical principles that served as a foundation for integrating pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare. Finally, this chapter will examine Perkins's practical writings and sermon material to address how he integrated pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

Exorcising Exorcism

The rejection of the Catholic understanding of exorcism led to a redevelopment of how the work of Satan was practically handled. Nathan Johnstone explains that

because of the development that resulted from the Reformation “the Protestant ministry shaped a role for themselves as the mediators, not of preternatural power, but of support for the individual in his personal battle with Satan.”¹ As Eamon Duffy indicates, leading into the Reformation there was an “insistence on the objective power of sacred things and formulae, and especially of the sign of the cross to banish the Devil.”² Protestants saw these practices as insufficient in addressing the work of Satan and demons. This was a result of the greater emphasis placed upon the work of Satan in temptation. Johnstone elaborates, “The use of candles, bells and holy water to ward off Satan was superstitious, not because the Devil’s threat was unreal, but because the items themselves could have no efficacy against a creature with the power to enter into the soul.”³ This rejection of physical defenses led to some being “disturbed by the idea that men and women might be left defenceless against the Devil, and such glib attitudes seemed only to demonstrate the reformers’ naivety and carelessness.”⁴ However, as Johnstone explains, this was a misleading argument because, “Whilst the reformers were concerned to undermine reliance on ceremony and intercession, and to make the experience of the diabolic a constant of Christian existence rather than a formalised part of the liturgical year, they did not fail to substitute their own understanding of how the Devil might be fought off.”⁵ This redevelopment was not exclusive to the clergy because it has been observed that “as more of the laity became committed to a programme of cultivating personal piety, his role shifted more to that of tempter.”⁶

¹ Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.

² Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1800*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 281.

³ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 83.

⁴ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 84.

⁵ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 85.

⁶ Brian Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 64.

The newly redeveloped understanding of the minister's role in relation to spiritual warfare called for new means of addressing the attacks of Satan. In place of physical defenses, ministers' "sermons and conduct books rehearsed the arguments that could be employed against the Devil when he tempted men to sin or to despair."⁷ Brendan Walsh explains that this period was marked by the fact that "clergymen penned a myriad of sermons and treatises on practical divinity, advocating how one could resist temptations or the possible spiritual remedies for demonic affliction."⁸ This emphasis likely arose from the fact that "Perkins's strong stance on cessationism appeared to be the prevailing one in England during the late sixteenth century and thereby framed how seemingly supernatural phenomena were to be presented in contemporary theological discourse."⁹ The dialogues used in various treatises were presented in the "form of inverted catechism. As the devil was shown attempting to undermine the Christian's faith, it was to be apparent that he in fact offered him an opportunity to demonstrate his learning and godliness."¹⁰ These dialogues were "intended to reflect the real nature of temptation as a divinely sanctioned test of godliness."¹¹ The overall aim of these tools was to bolster the believer's assurance. As Johnstone argues, "Solid grounding in scripture was the key to bolstering assurance, and therefore the means of resisting Satan's suggestions."¹² According to Phillip Benedict, this emphasis began with "the time of William Tyndale" and from the point "the English Protestant tradition displayed an unusual degree of concern with the issue of attaining personal assurance of salvation."¹³

⁷ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 3.

⁸ Brendan C. Walsh, *The English Exorcist: John Darrell and the Shaping of Early Modern English Protestant Demonology* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 45.

⁹ Walsh, *The English Exorcist* 179.

¹⁰ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 97.

¹¹ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 97.

¹² Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 97.

¹³ Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism*. (New

Furthermore, as Walsh emphasizes, because there was such a strong emphasis on the role of the demonic by ministers like Perkins “the primary concern of these ministers was to provide clerical mediation to their flocks in maintaining the integrity of their souls.”¹⁴ A focus on the importance of assurance and the realities of the believer’s conflict with Satan served as the foundation for addressing the believer’s conflict with Satan through pastoral counsel.

One area of continuity regarding the minister’s role of providing pastoral comfort during Satanic assaults was seen at the deathbed. Duffy explains that in the Middle Ages, “It was generally believed that the Devil’s favourite ploy to disturb and terrorize the dying into despair was to convince them of the depravity of their own sins, and especially those not confessed and absolved.”¹⁵ The deathbed continued to be viewed as a place of Satanic assault requiring pastoral care. Johnstone observes that “ministers were often required to offset the temptations that sometimes intruded on the sick- or death-bed.”¹⁶ The pastoral care and counsel provided to the afflicted on their deathbeds were representative of the care provided throughout life. Johnstone clarifies that deathbed pastoral care was not an isolated reality stating, “But whilst death-bed struggles may have been especially intense, they were representative of a broader and more consistent ministerial involvement in bolstering parishioners against temptation.”¹⁷ Perkins paid particular attention to the danger of deathbed temptation stating in his work *A Salve for a Sick Man* that it was objected that “when a man is most near death, then the devil is most busy in temptation, and the more assaulted by Satan, the more dangerous and

Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 321.

¹⁴ Walsh, *The English Exorcist*, 44.

¹⁵ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 314.

¹⁶ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 100.

¹⁷ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 101.

troublesome is their case.”¹⁸ While the belief that the deathbed was a place of Satanic assault continued after the English Reformation, there was a shift in how dying believers were comforted. David Stannard explains this area of discontinuity stating that during the late Middle ages many believed that though “the dying man was assaulted by a variety of demons tempting him with infidelity, despair, impatience, vainglory and avarice; but the victim aided by a battery of saints and angels, attained salvation by resolutely clinging to his optimistic belief in his own goodness and the justness of God.”¹⁹ Perkins’s tradition saw the danger in the opposite direction in that the temptation was through “*security* founded on the heretical premise of good works—and seemingly found salvation by denying it.”²⁰ As will be seen, Perkins addresses the issue of Satanic assault at death in a manner that is thoroughly consistent with Protestant doctrinal commitments.

Practical Foundations of Integrating Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Warfare

Perkins demonstrates a practical view of handling spiritual warfare with pastoral counseling. Matthew Payne highlights that in this area “The ‘how to’ character of Perkins’s practical divinity is particularly evident.”²¹ This practical comfort was provided “in the strict terms of Calvinist dogmatic.”²² Perkins’s exploration of the relationship between pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare arises from his first doctrinal work *A Golden Chain*. Perkins in this theological treatise, “lays out the key

¹⁸ William Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joseph A. Pipa and J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 10 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2020), 411.

¹⁹ David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 84.

²⁰ Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, 84.

²¹ Matthew Payne, “Sin, Grace, and Free Will,” in *Faith Working through Love: The Theology of William Perkins*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, Matthew N. Payne, and J. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2022), 68.

²² Harry C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 289.

spiritual assaults that the Christian ought to expect with respect to each step of the *ordo salutis*, describing in practical terms how Christians are to resist those temptations, and what remedies they should make use of when they fail.”²³ This emphasis in his theological writing carries over into his practical writing. This is because, as Leif Dixon argues, “Perkins was a remarkably consistent writer, and as well that he very rarely wrote treatises about only one thing: the headline subject quickly becomes reabsorbed into an all-encompassing worldview.”²⁴ Perkins’s integration of spiritual warfare and pastoral counseling is demonstrative of this consistency.

Pastoral Counsel and Satanic Assault

In his principal work of casuistry, Perkins traces out the causes and remedies of distress in the lives of believers. Perkins identifies distress as being “when a man is disquieted and distempered in conscience, and consequently in his affections, touching his estate before God.”²⁵ This demonstrates Theodore Bozeman’s observation that “A sense of being manipulated was evident also in pietist belief that the soul’s refractory motions are the personal work of Satan.”²⁶ Perkins states that one cause of affliction is “satanical molestation, whereby both persons and places of mansion (or abode) are either possessed or otherwise molested by the malice of the devil.”²⁷ Concerning possession, Perkins posits that different levels of possession may occur. In some instances, the devil may be present “either in the whole body of in some part of.”²⁸ In contrast, there are other

²³ Payne, “Sin, Grace, and Free Will,” 68.

²⁴ Leif Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640*. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 64.

²⁵ William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 8 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 161.

²⁶ Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism To 1638* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 165

²⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 193.

²⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 193.

occasions in which “he has rule of the said body, either in the whole or in part, so as the party himself has not that use of his body which he would.”²⁹ Perkins provides a pastorally sensitive and theologically robust understanding of the limitations of Satan to ease fears that may arise from over-emphasizing the power of Satan. Perkins does this by addressing two rules concerning the believer’s combat with Satan.

Perkins states that the first rule is “that though Satan’s malice and power are very great and large, yet he cannot practice the same against the children of God, when, where, and how he lists.”³⁰ Perkins, owing to his rigorous theological consistency, does not address the work and power of Satan without an exploration of God’s sovereignty over Satan. Perkins, while acknowledging that Satan is an active and powerful enemy, reminds readers that “God has determined his power by certain bounds and limits, which he cannot pass.”³¹ This demonstrates that Perkins had “a rigorous schema to delineate the extent and limitations of the Devil’s power, in order to show the fundamental ways in which God differs from His most wayward angel.”³² This first rule, and the comfort that is intended by it, is rooted in Perkins’s emphasis upon the creator-creature distinction. Satan is doubly restricted. First, he is restricted by the fact that “he is a creature and, therefore, finite.”³³ Secondly, “Satan’s power is determined by God.”³⁴ Dixon argues that, while initially the emphasis upon divine permission regarding Satan’s power might seem to create a problem concerning Satan’s limitations, “Perkins’ insistence that God’s power over all things, however evil, was quite consistent, and was motivated by pastoral

²⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 193

³⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 194.

³¹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 194.

³² Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, 69.

³³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 194.

³⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 195.

ends.”³⁵ One of the pastoral ends that Perkins had in mind was to encourage believers in knowing “that God, who has the devil bound up (as it were) in chains, will not suffer his power to be enlarged against His own children to their destruction and confusion, but so far forth alone as shall be expedient for their good and salvation.”³⁶ This pastoral and theological consideration means that the believer’s experience of spiritual assault is neither arbitrary nor subject to the will and whims of Satan; instead, it is divinely ordained to bring about a greater good.

The second rule is that those who experience Satanic attack “must have recourse to God in His word, in which He promises His presence and protection to His children in their greatest dangers.”³⁷ Perkins further balances out the promise of being able to call upon God during spiritual conflict with a reminder of God’s freedom to use spiritual warfare for the good of the believer. Perkins states, “And yet, if God sees it to be good for His children to be tried by possessions or witchcraft, in this case the promise frees them not.”³⁸ The comfort is not that believers are divinely protected from all forms of spiritual warfare. The comfort is that “though such calamities befall them, yet they shall turn to their good rather than to their hurt.”³⁹ The overall aim of this second rule is to encourage believers to “sue unto God by prayer, either for deliverance, if it may stand with his good will and pleasure, or else for patience, that they may meekly and patiently bear that particular affliction.”⁴⁰ In summary, the limited power of Satan and the believer’s ability to call upon God for strength and support in the midst spiritual conflict are foundational for Perkins’s understanding of how spiritual warfare is to be addressed

³⁵ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, 70.

³⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 195.

³⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 195.

³⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 195.

³⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 195-96.

⁴⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 196.

pastorally.

Perkins identifies another cause of distress that relates to the work of Satan, the temptation to blasphemy. Perkins identifies Satan's influence as one potential source of this temptation. Perkins states, "Sometimes it comes merely and only by the suggestion of the devil, who troubles the fantasy, even of those who are in that regard innocent, and casts into their hearts impure and ungodly thoughts."⁴¹ As Darren Oldbridge observes, this creates a problem in "distinguishing between one's own cognitions and those 'injected' by the fiend."⁴² This established a level of distrust in oneself. Furthermore, Bozeman argues that "Puritans conscious of these dynamics and aware of the devil's inordinate cleverness and power had good reason to doubt whether they fully understood and controlled their own personalities."⁴³ However, this problem was not without a solution.

Perkins holds that it is possible to discern whether blasphemous thoughts arise from one's mind or through the influence of Satan. Perkins lays out four ways in which blasphemous temptations can be traced to Satanic attacks. The first is that thoughts that arise from the devil's assaults "come speedily as lightning into a house. And they are after a sort forced into the mind by violence, so the party cannot avoid them."⁴⁴ Racing and intrusive thoughts, in Perkins's estimation, indicate a Satanic origin. The second piece of evidence are thoughts that are "clearly against the very light of nature" because "every man thinks reverently of God by nature."⁴⁵ These blasphemous thoughts that arise from Satan "are most wicked and devilish, fastening upon God things that are most vile

⁴¹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 198.

⁴² Darren Oldbridge, *The Devil: In Tudor and Stuart England* (Gloucestershire, England: The History Press, 2010), 65.

⁴³ Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain*, 165.

⁴⁴ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 199.

⁴⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 199.

and monstrous, whereas commonly the thoughts that arise from ourselves are not against the light of nature.”⁴⁶ The third indication is thoughts that cause fear and a feeling of sickness because “the thoughts men conceive of themselves cause neither fear nor fainting nor sickness.”⁴⁷ The fourth and final indication of thoughts introduced by Satan is the fact that “blasphemous thoughts cannot come ordinarily from the heart of any, save those alone who are of reprobate minds.”⁴⁸ The main point is that a believer would be troubled by blasphemous thoughts whereas an unbeliever would not. Perkins, while allowing that Satan can and does intrude thoughts into the mind of believers, does not leave believers without recourse as to the origins of their thoughts. Furthermore, in those cases where the thoughts in question arise from the devil and there is no pleasure taken in them, then “they are not to be accounted our sins, but the devil’s, by whom they are suggested.”⁴⁹ This understanding of the nature of Satanic intrusion of thoughts is an essential element in Perkins’s integration of pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Warfare Integrated in Perkins’s Ministry

To understand how Perkins integrates pastoral counseling one must look both at his treatises and his sermons. James Keenan notes the interrelated nature of these sources stating, “Perkins’ casuistry grew out of his preaching, which was clearly more instructional than motivational, more practical than speculative.”⁵⁰ This is consistent with Iain Breward’s observation of Perkins that, “Detailed attention to instruction of

⁴⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 199-200.

⁴⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 200.

⁴⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 200.

⁴⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 200.

⁵⁰ James F. Keenan, “William Perkins (1558-1602) and the Birth of British Casuistry,” in *The Context of Casuistry* ed. James F. Keenan and Thomas A. Shannon (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1995), 115.

conscience was reinforced by preaching of the word.”⁵¹ So Perkins’s casuistry, which was foundational for his pastoral counseling, both formed and was informed by his preaching ministry. As such, to understand how Perkins integrated pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare both his practical treatises and his sermons must be explored. This section will explore Perkins’s writings as they relate to his integration of pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare in three areas. The first area is Perkins’s pastoral counsel to pursue a life of prayer considering the realities of spiritual warfare. The second area is Perkins’s pastoral counsel considering spiritual warfare and its relation to the believer’s sanctification. The third and final area to be addressed is Perkins’s treatment of spiritual warfare at the deathbed.

Pastoral Prescription of Prayer

Perkins’s understanding of the ongoing threat of spiritual assault undergirded his exhortations to pursue a life of prayer. In this Perkins reflects an understanding of prayer as a struggle that marked early modern Protestantism. Alec Ryrie remarks, “For early modern Protestants, prayer was a battle. To pray was to embark on spiritual warfare against a daunting array of opponents.”⁵² In Perkins’s understanding believers were called to pray because they were already amid a daunting battle. Perkins, in a list of various reasons for prayer, states that “Satan seeks by all means to overthrow our souls continually; and in that regard, it behooves us always and upon every occasion to lift up our hearts to God for his merciful protection.”⁵³ For Perkins prayer serves as the primary prescription for meeting the challenge of spiritual warfare.

⁵¹ Ian Breward, ed., introduction to *The Works of William Perkins*, Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics 3 (Appleford, UK: Sutton Courtenay, 1970), 3:80.

⁵² Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 243.

⁵³ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 267.

Perkins, in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer, observes how fitting it is that believers pray for deliverance from temptation and evil. He does so by stating, "there is no man in this world so beaten and buffeted with temptation as the penitent sinner that cries most bitterly for the pardon of his sins."⁵⁴ It is the one who has seen his sin and become a target of the enemy that is in most need of prayer. Perkins demonstrates that contrary to expectation, spiritual warfare is a mark of grace rather than of judgment. Perkins states, "this great measure of spiritual temptations is a sign rather of God's love. For whom God loves, the devil hates; and where God works in love, the devil works in malice."⁵⁵ Perkins's desire to bring comfort through pastoral counsel is evident in this understanding of the relationship that exists between God's love and Satan's assaults. As will be seen, Perkins explores how and why believers call upon God during spiritual warfare for protection in his works on the Lord's Prayer.

Perkins addresses the fact that temptation does not come directly through the work of God, but through divine permission. Perkins states, "God never puts any evil motion into the mind, but yet He suffers Satan to do it."⁵⁶ Since God can permit Satan to attack believers, Perkins teaches that believers are taught two things regarding their warfare with Satan. The first is that "we are taught to mourn for the corruption of our nature, whereby we are prone to yield up ourselves to every temptation of sin and Satan, and be slack in negligent in resisting."⁵⁷ Through praying for deliverance from temptation believers are reminded of their weakness and tendency to fail in their fight against Satan. Prayer is key in moving believers away from a sense of self-sufficiency regarding the

⁵⁴ William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Ryan Hurd, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 459.

⁵⁵ Perkins, *An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer*, 459.

⁵⁶ William Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 482.

⁵⁷ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount*, 483.

assaults of Satan. However, believers are not left with only their weaknesses to reflect upon through prayer. Perkins teaches that believers “learn to desire of God all such graces as may help us against temptation, and they are many.”⁵⁸

Perkins points to graces that are available to believers who face temptation. Chief among the graces available are watchfulness to avoid temptation and “grace to pray in time of temptation.”⁵⁹ This prayer was not to be sporadic. Perkins taught that “we must daily pray ‘that God would not lead us into temptation.’”⁶⁰ The reason for this daily dependence on prayer regarding spiritual warfare is “that if God should leave us, we would give up ourselves unto the devil.”⁶¹ Perkins’s understanding of human sinfulness, even among the elect is foundational for his emphasis on prayer and its primacy in withstanding temptation. Perkins highlights this reality by stating, “If God leaves you, you cannot stand in any temptation, but must needs fall into the bondage of Satan.”⁶² As a pastoral counselor, Perkins prescribes prayer because of his conviction regarding human weakness in temptation. God’s grace and mercy are vitally needed to stand against temptation, and grace and mercy are readily available through prayer.

Prayer, in Perkins’s understanding, was to set the pattern for the believer’s life. Perkins states that what “we ask of God in prayer, we must sincerely endeavor after in life, and therefore as we pray to God not to be carried into temptation, so we must seek to arm and furnish ourselves with grace.”⁶³ Furthermore, Perkins teaches that believers receive this grace through taking up the whole armor of God as seen in Ephesians 6.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 483.

⁵⁹ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 483.

⁶⁰ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 483.

⁶¹ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 484.

⁶² Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 484.

⁶³ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 485.

⁶⁴ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 485.

Moreover, believers are instructed to pray not only against Satan. Perkins teaches that believers are to “pray against sin, the flesh, and the world, because they are Satan’s agents and instruments in temptation against us.”⁶⁵ In praying against the temptations that arise from Satan believers are to pay attention to threats both internal and external.

Perkins further emphasizes the importance of believers’ lives aligning with what they pray for. Perkins teaches that when believers pray to be delivered from evil, they must practice what they pray.⁶⁶ In light of this, Perkins states, “our special care must be to resist the devil, and to keep ourselves from the assaults of Satan unto sin, whether they come from our own corruption or from the evil world.”⁶⁷ Perkins elaborates on what it means for believers to practice what they pray for in being delivered from evil by pointing to two duties of believers. The foundational duty is genuine faith. Perkins states, “we must have in our hearts sincere love to God in Christ, and to His church, and true religion.”⁶⁸ A genuine faith that demonstrates itself through a love of Christ and the church is the first responsibility believers have in facing temptation. The second duty, which reflects Perkins’s pastoral concern regarding assurance, is possessing a good conscience.⁶⁹ The second duty Christians have in spiritual warfare “is to persevere and keep our conscience so that it may excuse us and not accuse us unto God in respect of living in any sin.”⁷⁰ A desire for a good conscience, which is vital for assurance, should motivate believers to pray and live in such a way that they would be on guard and guarded against the schemes of the enemy. Perkins understands that being overcome by the assaults of Satan will rob believers of peace and assurance.

⁶⁵ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 486.

⁶⁶ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 489.

⁶⁷ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 489.

⁶⁸ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 489.

⁶⁹ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 490.

⁷⁰ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 490.

One sees a reflection of Perkins's pastoral concern in his second use of the petition to be delivered from evil. Perkins calls for consistency when he states, "If we pray God to deliver us from evil, then we must beware of all satanic practices, as means of help in any distress."⁷¹ What Perkins is referring to is praying for deliverance from evil while at the same time using what might be considered satanic practices as a source of comfort. According to Perkins it "is gross hypocrisy to pray against the evils of Satan and to give ourselves to the practice of them."⁷²

An emphasis on prayer in relationship to spiritual warfare is found in other expositions by Perkins. Perkins, in his exposition of Hebrews 11, counsels that believers are taught in the Lord's Prayer, "to pray that God would not forsake us or leave us to ourselves or to the power of Satan, but that He would be with us and show His power in our weaknesses continually."⁷³ Innate human weakness makes prayer a necessity if believers are going to withstand the power of Satan. In summary, Perkins's counsel regarding prayer and spiritual warfare is that in finding strength from God believers are reminded of their weakness and of the great importance of living a life that is consistent with their prayer for deliverance.

Answering the Attacks of Satan

As has been noted in chapter two, the theological foundation for understanding satanic temptation is found in Perkins's *A Golden Chain*. In this work, Perkins addresses the issue of the Christian's warfare and the three temptations of Satan. These are found in the section on sanctification.⁷⁴ According to Perkins, sanctification is progressive rather

⁷¹ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount*, 491.

⁷² Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount*, 491.

⁷³ William Perkins, *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses, Leading To The Heavenly Canaan: Or, A Commentary upon the 11th Chapter to the Hebrews*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Randall J. Pederson and Ryan Hurd vol. 3, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017), 321.

⁷⁴ William Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joel Beeke and Greg A. Salazar, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 192-202.

than immediate because “if sanctification should be perfect at the first, then a man would not go out of himself, but would rather stay as he is, and rest contented in his own goodness.”⁷⁵ Moreover, Perkins observes that through the warfare that is the Christian life “whoever will lead a godly life in Christ, the power of God is to be made perfect through their infirmity.”⁷⁶ This is indicative of the fact that Perkins, like Calvin, believed that God did all works through contrary means.⁷⁷

To understand how spiritual warfare informed Perkins’s understanding of sanctification one must turn to Perkins’s inverted catechism found in *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace* as well as his expositions. As has been noted, Perkins and his fellow spiritual counselors used the device of the inverted catechism to demonstrate the role and nature of spiritual warfare. Through the inverted catechism a believer was able to understand that while “the Devil was shown attempting to undermine the Christian’s faith, it was to be apparent that he in fact offered him an opportunity to demonstrate his learning and godliness.”⁷⁸ In Perkins’s work, he provides three dialogues addressing the conflicts faced by Christians in general, by weak Christians, and by strong Christians.

Perkins held that spiritual warfare was a vital part of sanctification. This is seen in Perkins’s remarks on Paul’s experience of satanic assaults: “For this cause Paul, after his exaltation, was buffeted by Satan’s temptations, that he might not be exalted out of measure, but should content himself with this, that he was in the love and favor of God in Christ (2 Cor. 12:7).”⁷⁹ This is demonstrative of Porter’s observation that Perkins’s

⁷⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 209.

⁷⁶ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 193.

⁷⁷ Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge*, 311.

⁷⁸ Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 97.

⁷⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 209.

model of the Christian life was “The Way of negation, then, not that of affirmation. Grace does not perfect nature, it destroys it.”⁸⁰

Among the infirmities of the Christian life which bring the Christian to perfection is spiritual warfare. As will be seen, Perkins makes clear that one of the contraries God uses in perfecting the Christian is that of spiritual warfare, which serves as a response to Satan’s assaults. One area of temptation according to Perkins “is concerning sanctification. The temptation is provoking to sin according to the disposition of every man and as occasion shall offer itself.”⁸¹ These assaults were marks and means of grace. Perkins provides hypothetical counsel to one who says, “My corruption so boils in me, and Satan will never let me alone.”⁸² In the dialogue in question, Perkins points to Satan’s attacks as a mark of salvation. In the dialogue, the minister states to the troubled soul, “Your case is a blessed case. For not to be troubled of Satan is to be possessed of him, that is, to be held captive under ‘the power of darkness’ and to be a slave and vassal of Satan.”⁸³ In Perkins’s counsel peace with Satan is what should trouble an individual rather than spiritual warfare. Believers who face the conscience-troubling assaults of Satan are exhorted to continue believing. In his exposition of Hebrews, Perkins observes that “The child of God in this life has innumerable causes of desperation. And sometimes his own conscience will take part with Satan in charging the soul to be in state of damnation.”⁸⁴ Perkins provides the following counsel for such troubling circumstances: “In this heavy case, what must be done? Surely, at this time, when a man is a castaway in

⁸⁰ Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor* Cambridge, 312.

⁸¹ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 199.

⁸² William Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille vol. 8 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 571.

⁸³ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 571.

⁸⁴ Perkins, *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses*, 317.

himself, he must even then believe. Being in hell, as it were, he must believe that God will bring him to heaven.”⁸⁵

As an aspect of sanctification, a significant resource in facing spiritual warfare is the believer’s sanctification. Perkins exhorts believers in undergoing Satan’s attacks to “spoil him of his furniture, we must exercise ourselves in the practice of two duties. First, use all means for the cutting off of the lock of our sins, whereby alone Satan has the advantage [over] us.”⁸⁶ Sanctification as it is expressed in relationship to sin deprives Satan of one of his primary advantages in attacking believers. Believers pursue this sanctification through “the duties of humiliation, invocation, and true repentance.”⁸⁷

In the first conflict addressed in *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, Perkins provides the arguments that Satan uses to undermine the believer’s assurance. In this dialogue, Satan seeks to convince the Christian that he already stands condemned by God because of his sin.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Satan argues that “If God’s purpose were not to condemn you, persuade yourself [that] He would never lay so many afflictions and crosses on you as He does.”⁸⁹ The believer is being led to believe that all the hardships including the experience of a satanic attack serve as an introduction to hell.⁹⁰ Perkins argues that the opposite is true. The believer facing these devilish insinuations can argue “my afflictions are lively testimonies of my salvation. For God as a loving Father, partly by them, as with scourges, chastens my disobedience and brings me into order.”⁹¹ This is reflective, as seen in other areas of Perkins’s thought, of a

⁸⁵ Perkins, *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses*, 317.

⁸⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 187.

⁸⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 187.

⁸⁸ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 558-59.

⁸⁹ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 560.

⁹⁰ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 560.

⁹¹ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 560.

commitment to the doctrine of contraries. Perkins believed that “when God will send His own servants to heaven, He sends them a contrary way, even by the gates of hell.”⁹² The present experience of “certain flashings of the fire of hell” in this life are indicative of God’s fatherly chastening as opposed to a mark of condemnation. Where believers might be tempted to view the hardships of life as a mark of damnation, Perkins provides an argument that redirects them to view present suffering as the chastening of a loving God.

In the second dialogue, Perkins accounts for the experience of temptation that strong Christians may face. In this temptation, Satan seeks to undermine the faith of strong Christians with the fact that they continue to sin.⁹³ The response a strong Christian is to give to this temptation reflects Perkins’s commitment to progressive sanctification. In this inverted catechism, Perkins has the believer respond with an awareness of and grieving for his sin. The strong Christian responds, “In the doing of any sin, I would not do it. My heart is against it, and I hate it, and yet by the tyranny of my flesh being overcome, I do it.”⁹⁴ Perkins is teaching believers that they are to meet the temptation to despair in light of sin with a recognition of their hatred of sin and the need for divine forgiveness. The believer’s sense of assurance in the face of satanic assaults is not to be found in his perfection. It is found in the perfection of Christ. Perkins, in the strong believer’s response to the accusation of hypocrisy owing to the continued presence of sin, states, “I trust my perfections shall have no power to damn me, for Christ’s perfection is reputed to be mine by faith, which I have in his blood.”⁹⁵ In the face of the discouragement that the enemy brings to believers in spiritual warfare, believers are to look to the imputed righteousness of Christ as a strong defense against the attacks of

⁹² Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 410.

⁹³ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 562-63.

⁹⁴ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 563.

⁹⁵ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 563.

Satan. In this Perkins models a gospel-centered integration of pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

In Perkins's third dialogue, he addresses the temptation and doubts that Satan brings to a weak Christian, that is, one who is weak in faith. In responding to the enemy's accusations that the weak Christ is ignorant and rebellious, Perkins has the weak Christian respond, "If I have but one drop of the grace of God, and if my faith is no more than little grain of mustard seed it is sufficient for me."⁹⁶ In this, Perkins is emphasizing that in these temptations that would seek to discourage believers because of the smallness of their faith, it is the object of faith, not the size of faith that counts. The final appeal a weak believer makes is not an argument to the doubts raised by Satan. Perkins through this dialogue models again that believing prayer is the final weapon in dealing with Satan's attacks. Perkins closes this dialogue with the weak Christian praying, "Good Lord, forget not your former mercies! Give an issue to these temptation from my enemy, Satan!"⁹⁷ In Perkins's pastoral counsel for spiritual warfare, the ultimate answer to Satan's attacks comes through the work of God in the life of the believer.

Dying and the Devil's Assaults

For Perkins, the deathbed was the last place where believers encountered Satan's temptation. As David Atkinson notes, Perkins, with regard to deathbed temptation, "accepts the commonplace view that temptation, while initiated by Satan, is still allowed by God as a test for man and as a way of making man aware of sin."⁹⁸ The theme of the deathbed as the final battleground believers face is one found in several of Perkins's writings. In Perkins's *Golden Chain*, he addresses a temptation in which Satan

⁹⁶ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 564.

⁹⁷ Perkins, *A Treatise on whether a Man is in Damnation or Grace*, 566.

⁹⁸ D. W. Atkinson, "A Salve for a Sicke Man: William Perkins' Contribution to the Ars Moriendi," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 46 (1977), 416.

causes the believer to doubt his election. One occasion given for this temptation is when there is “A feeling of death even already at hand.”⁹⁹ This understanding was common among Protestants of Perkins’s time. Ryrie notes that a Protestant’s understanding of Satan’s tempting at death was that his “almost exclusive argument at the deathbed was: despair, for you are too sinful to be saved.”¹⁰⁰ While Perkins and those like him provided a different source of comfort and means of preparation than those accepted in the medieval church, death and the assaults that came with it were no less important. Perkins like those who came before had a “desire to equip the clergy and laity for this final struggle.”¹⁰¹ Perkins does so primarily through his work *A Salve for a Sick Man*.

It has been noted that Perkins had a nuanced understanding of temptation at death which represents a shift from medieval thought. Atkinson argues that Perkins’s handling of this is evidence that he “de-emphasizes the importance of deathbed temptation.”¹⁰² Moreover, Dixon sees this development arising because of greater knowledge of disease. After noting that Perkins understood one could die in peace and still go to hell Dixon states that “there was an increase awareness that some final illnesses could cause even the most composed individuals to lose control of their bodies or minds.”¹⁰³ Perkins does not place every experience of torment in the category of spiritual warfare, or as being indicative of one’s spiritual condition. Perkins observes that at death torment can arise from despair “whether it arises from weakness of nature or from conscience of sin.”¹⁰⁴ As Kathleen Sands notes, there was an understanding that there

⁹⁹ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 196.

¹⁰⁰ Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 464.

¹⁰¹ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 316.

¹⁰² Atkinson, “A Salve for a Sicke Man: William Perkins’ Contribution to the *Ars Moriendi*,” 416.

¹⁰³ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, 334.

¹⁰⁴ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 410.

may be physical causes to distress. In discussing how “bodily humors” were understood, Sands states “An excess of anyone one of these humors caused an imbalance in the bodily system, resulting in physical or mental distress.”¹⁰⁵ Perkins reflects this understanding in his statement that “Raving and blaspheming arise from the disease of melancholy and of frenzies, which often happen at the end of burning fevers, the choler shooting up to the brain.”¹⁰⁶ However, even though rooted in physical causes, these imbalances might have been viewed as being caused by Satan. This is seen in Sands observation that “Humoral theory was basic to the early modern logic of exactly *how* Satan could afflict mankind...he simply perpetuated an imbalance in the humors of a human body.”¹⁰⁷ Perkins had a careful categorization of the causes of torment that included spiritual warfare but was not limited to it.

In addressing the satanic temptation that may occur at death Perkins clarifies that the experience of temptation at death is not universal. Perkin provides comfort by addressing the disparity that “for them who are tempted, though their case is very troublesome and perplexed, yet their salvation is not further off by reason of the violence and extremity of temptation.”¹⁰⁸ Believers facing satanic assaults at death serve as a display of divine strength through their weakness. Perkins in providing this comfort does so through his emphasis on faith in Christ as the grounds for a believer’s assurance as opposed to any present experience.

According to Perkins, the greatest danger faced as death draws near is that Satan would work in such a way “that they would not resist him, and by this means he

11. ¹⁰⁵ Kathleen Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004),

¹⁰⁶ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 410.

¹⁰⁷ Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 411-412.

endeavors to extinguish hope.”¹⁰⁹ The way Satan does this is subtle as he does not “urge men to desperation.”¹¹⁰ In this assault, Satan subtly undermines the believer’s hope and faith. Perkins sees this assault and the danger it poses evidenced in the temptation that John Knox experienced at death. Perkins records Knox’s account of temptation, “For the wily serpent would persuade me that I shall benefit eternal life for my fidelity in my ministry.”¹¹¹ What would have been grounds for confidence in the Middle Ages, is viewed here as one of the most dangerous assaults believers could face at death. Perkins’s pastoral concern for genuine assurance seeks to direct the believer away from any optimism based upon their works. Perkins provides further counsel to those who face these last assaults from Satan. Perkins, addressing those who feel there is no escape from Satan’s attacks, says to “close your eyes, and answer nothing, but commend yourself to God.”¹¹² There is a consistency to Perkins’s pastoral counsel here. As seen in the previous section on prayer, Perkins’s counsel is for believers to be aware of their weakness and to call upon God’s grace. They do so especially through the means of prayer. Believers facing death can draw near to God with confidence because according to Perkins, “seeing Satan is most busy and malicious in our greatest weakness, it would please the Lord to magnify His mercy in strengthening our souls against all the assaults of sin and Satan.”¹¹³ Here, at death, believers are to do the same. Perkins observes that this “is a principal point of Christian wisdom which we must follow in our time of death.”¹¹⁴ Christian wisdom looks away from self and looks to God for sustaining grace in death as well as life. Perkins finally addresses an assault of fear in which the believer

¹⁰⁹ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 458.

¹¹⁰ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 458.

¹¹¹ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 458.

¹¹² Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 458.

¹¹³ Perkins, *An Exposition of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount*, 501-2.

¹¹⁴ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 458.

“trembles and fears to enter into another life, and doubts of salvation.”¹¹⁵ Perkins advises that to yield brings self-harm and that believers are to commend themselves to Christ.

Through his writings Perkins provides a model for meeting the challenges of spiritual warfare. Through his integration of pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare Perkins demonstrated that there are grounds for comfort despite Satan’s attacks through life and death. Whereas prior generations looked to ceremony for comfort and protection, Perkins directs the afflicted Christian to believe in the saving and sanctifying work of Christ.

¹¹⁵ Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 458.

CHAPTER 5
AN APPLICATION OF WILLIAM PERKINS'S
UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND
PASTORAL COUNSELING

William Perkins ministered in a context in which there was a growing awareness of the need to guide believers in the context of spiritual warfare. Unlike previous generations, Perkins saw that spiritual warfare was normative for the Christian life. Perkins states in his exposition of Christ's temptation that "all those who are truly baptized into Christ must make account to be tempted, and prepare for a combat with the Devil."¹ Perkins held that an essential tool in aiding believers in temptation and their combat with Satan was the comforting direction of pastoral counsel. This thesis argues that Perkins integrated the realities of spiritual warfare into his understanding of pastoral counseling. As a result, Perkins serves as a model for how spiritual warfare should inform pastoral counseling.

The second chapter of this thesis set Perkins in his historic context, demonstrating the influences and theology that shaped his beliefs about spiritual warfare. Perkins addressed the person and work of Satan in a manner that sought to continually emphasize the sovereignty of God. Moreover, Perkins developed an understanding of spiritual warfare undergirded by a belief in cessationism. This belief in cessationism in no way undermined Perkins's belief that spiritual conflict was an important aspect of the believer's life. As such, Perkins provides a model of understanding spiritual warfare that is consistent with contemporary Reformed theology and cessationism.

¹ William Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 88.

The third chapter explored the relationship between Perkins's casuistry and his practice of pastoral counseling. While there is debate as to whether Perkins was more a popularizer or a pioneer in the field of practical divinity, it cannot be debated that his works made a major contribution regarding the nature of pastoral ministry. Perkins understood that the responsibility of providing pastoral care and counsel was inherent to the nature of the pastoral office.

The fourth chapter demonstrated that Perkins integrated pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare throughout his expositions and his practical works. It was demonstrated that the shift from viewing Satan as a physical threat to a tempter contributed to Perkins's emphasis on spiritual warfare in his writings. Whereas prior generations looked to ceremonies and relics for protection from Satan, Perkins demonstrated and developed an understanding of spiritual warfare that reflected Protestant commitments. Perkins emphasized both the sovereignty of God and the danger Satan posed for believers. He developed practical means for understanding and ministering to those facing Satanic temptations in a manner that emphasized prayer in the life of the believer.

Perkins's integration of pastoral counseling is not simply a historic curiosity. Perkins provides a model useful for contemporary practice. This is because in this area "The 'how to' character of Perkins's practical divinity is particularly evident."² Perkins provides a model by developing an understanding of Satan's role in attacking believers. In Perkins's model spiritual warfare is addressed through pastoral care and counsel. This chapter will address the benefits of drawing on Perkins in three ways. First, this chapter addresses how Perkins provides a corrective regarding contemporary disbelief or avoidance of the issue of spiritual warfare. Second, this chapter will show that Perkins

² Matthew Payne, "Sin, Grace, and Free Will," in *Faith Working through Love: The Theology of William Perkins*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, Matthew N. Payne, and J. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2022), 68.

provides a biblical model for understanding the nature of spiritual warfare. Finally, this chapter will address contributions that can be made by drawing on Perkins's work of integrating pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

A Silent War

Whereas Perkins's context was marked by a widespread acknowledgment of the devil and the danger he posed, in contrast, Richard Lovelace observes of the contemporary context that "Christians since the Enlightenment have become nervous about acknowledging the reality and agency of demonic powers."³ What has led to this avoidance of acknowledging the realities of spiritual warfare? Charles Taylor addresses the most significant contribution of the Enlightenment regarding supernatural forces. Taylor posits that contemporary individuals hold to the idea of a buffered self by stating "As a bounded self I can see the boundary as a buffer, such that the things beyond don't need to 'get to me'."⁴ In contrast to a porous self, this buffered self is not "vulnerable, to spirits, demons, cosmic forces."⁵ Inasmuch as contemporary Christians have been shaped by an understanding of the buffered self, they have grown to be silent and uncomfortable in addressing the realities of spiritual warfare. As Lovelace notes, "there is a strange inability among modern Christians to take this information seriously and uneasiness even among Evangelicals about paying much attention to it [T]his reluctance is not because the subject is trivial, morbid or dangerous, but because the forces have access to our minds."⁶ This neglect of spiritual warfare is comparable to the ignorance that Perkins addressed in his ministry. Perkins describes the thought of his day in this way: "But unto

³ Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal*. Expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 69.

⁴ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007), 38.

⁵ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 38.

⁶ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 71.

many this doctrine of temptations will seem to small purpose, nay, altogether needless, for that they never felt any such conflicts with the devil. They defy him from their hearts, and they trust to God never to be troubled with him.”⁷ Whether through reluctance or ignorance, many believers find themselves in a position comparable to those Perkins sought to warn against.

Many pastors find themselves ill-equipped in addressing spiritual warfare. As Harold Senkbeil laments “We receive precious little instruction in spiritual warfare.”⁸ This ill-equipping explains why the reluctance to address the realities of spiritual warfare has bled into the counseling ministry of the church. Robert Jones points to this reluctance among biblical counselors: “We don’t talk about demonic matters. Moreover, our counselees sometimes come with imbalanced views about Satan, either overemphasizing or underemphasizing the demonic. This can happen not only on the individual level but also on church and societal levels.”⁹ Perkins provides an understanding of Satan and the demonic that avoids overemphasizing and underemphasizing because of his rigorous consistency and his commitment to the absolute sovereignty of God. More importantly, Perkins reminds readers that spiritual warfare is a nonnegotiable in the Christian life. Perkins addresses the question of whether a believer can avoid conflict with Satan stating, “But does the child of God escape his hands? No verily; Satan is a professed deadly foe to all such, he is their ‘adversary’ [1 Peter 5:8] and ‘accuser’ [Rev. 12:10]: that which should procure them good he seeks to hinder; and whatever may work them woe, he will be sure to further.”¹⁰ All of this makes the following description of the church’s warfare

⁷ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 164.

⁸ Harold L. Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor’s Heart* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019), 195.

⁹ Robert D. Jones, Kristen L. Kellen, and Rob Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives: An Introduction to Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2021), 96

¹⁰ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 74–75.

apt: “Much of the church’s warfare today is fought by blindfolded soldiers who cannot see the force ranged against them, who are buffeted by invisible opponents and responding by striking each other.”¹¹ Perkins’s model of integrating spiritual warfare is important because, as Jones notes, “Biblical counseling involves spiritual warfare against forces of evil stronger than you that hate you and those you counsel.”¹² Perkins points to this truth as well noting the responsibility of the minister to “maintain this truth and this righteousness (if the sinner’s conscience is yet not quiet) against all gainsayers, against the power of darkness and all the gates of hell.”¹³ Perkins’s counsel was informed by awareness of Satan’s hatred of the believer. Perkins’s understanding of the certainty of spiritual warfare in the life of the believer, and the need to provide pastoral counsel, serves as a corrective to contemporary avoidance of this issue.

A Biblical Model

One difficulty in addressing the issue of spiritual warfare in counseling arises from the ambiguity surrounding it. John Gilhooly notes that “spiritual-warfare discussions often take place at the level of folk religion.”¹⁴ The same could be said of Perkins’s context. Perkins ministered in a context where the pervading opinions about the devil and his work owed more to folk religion than to a rigorous study of Scripture. Due to this commonality, Perkins serves as a valuable guide in addressing the issue of spiritual warfare in pastoral ministry. Through his rigorous consistency, Perkins provides contemporary Christians with a theological model for understanding the believer’s

¹¹ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 18.

¹² Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 95.

¹³ William Perkins, *The Calling of the Ministry*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joseph A. Pipa and J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 10 (Reformation Heritage Books, 2020), 218.

¹⁴ John Gilhooly, *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare*, 40 Questions Series. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2018), 9.

warfare against Satan.¹⁵ In addition, Perkins provides a model for how to minister to believers considering the realities of spiritual warfare. Gilhooly argues that “the concept of spiritual warfare as we find it in churches today is a very recent invention, not much older than the 1970s.”¹⁶ However, the historical background provided in Chapter 2 demonstrates that, while the term may not have been employed, Christians were wrestling with how to understand and address the issue of Satan’s conflict with believers. Perkins’s context and work are demonstrative of J. I. Packer’s admonition, “Never let anyone tell you that nobody knew about spiritual warfare until the charismatic movement of the 1960s. The Puritans knew all about it.”¹⁷ To faithfully bring comfort to those experiencing Satanic attack a biblically faithful understanding of spiritual warfare is required. Graham Cole argues that a biblically defensible model of spiritual warfare requires four key aspects. First, “a robust, biblically informed Christology.”¹⁸ Second, a correct understanding of our present eschatological setting.¹⁹ Third, an awareness of the strength a believer has considering the assurances from God.²⁰ Lastly, an understanding of the biblical context of warfare. In short, Cole argues that such a model will embrace “the biblically warranted” and will avoid the fanciful which “goes well beyond what is written in Scripture.”²¹ As will be demonstrated, Perkins’s understanding of spiritual warfare fulfills these key criteria needed for a biblically defensible model of spiritual warfare.

¹⁵ As Dixon notes, Perkins was rigorously consistent in the way certain themes, such as the believer’s combat with Satan, were woven throughout his writings. Leif Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640*. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 64.

¹⁶ Gilhooly, *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare*, 10.

¹⁷ J. I. Packer, *The Heritage of Anglican Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 86.

¹⁸ Graham Cole, *Against the Darkness: The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 187.

¹⁹ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 187-88.

²⁰ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 188-89.

²¹ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 191, 194.

A Victorious Christ and Spiritual Warfare

A robust Christology is foundational for Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare. Perkins's high Christology led him to see a parallel between Christ's experience of temptation by Satan and the believer's warfare with Satan. This is evident in Perkins's observation that "if Satan durst be so bold as to encounter with Christ Jesus the Head of the church after His baptism, then doubtless he will not spare any of His members who are but weak and sinful men."²² Moreover, Perkins's Christology leads to an emphasis on Christ's complete victory over Satan. This is highlighted in Perkins's observation that "For as in temptation Christ stood in our room and stead, so is this victory not His alone, but the victory of His church."²³ Perkins's model of spiritual warfare left no room for doubt regarding the fact Christ stood as the victor against the works of Satan. Perkins points to Christ's death on the cross as being the source of His victory, "He now being under this curse through the sense and a feeling of this strange terror (Matt. 27:35, 46) complains to His Father that He is forsaken, who notwithstanding encountering then with Satan and his angels did utterly vanquish (Col. 1:14–15) and overcome them."²⁴ This reflects an understanding of Christ as both a substitute bearing the curse and as a victor over the spiritual forces of darkness. In this way, Perkins serves as a biblical, Christ-centered, and hopeful model in understanding spiritual warfare.

Eschatology and the Enemy

Cole argues for the importance of a correct understanding of eschatology in relationship to spiritual warfare stating that "An overly realized eschatology expects all the blessings of the gospel to be available now. . . . A now-but-not-yet eschatology is

²² Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 88.

²³ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 157.

²⁴ William Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joel Beeke and Greg A. Salazar, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 57.

aware that the devil is still working his mischief, even though the cross has signaled his ultimate overthrow.”²⁵ Perkins reflects such an understanding of the believer’s present eschatological moment. In his development of the theme of spiritual warfare, Perkins avoids the triumphalism of over-realized eschatology and the defeatism that would come from an under-realized eschatology. Perkins’s warnings prove this. Paul Schaefer explains, “Perkins, through such warnings mixed with exhortations, attempted to guard against triumphalism and the ever-present danger of self-satisfaction.”²⁶ Perkins specifically places the believer’s current eschatological moment as the latter days, “which is the whole space of time from the coming of Christ to the end of the world.”²⁷ Since believers are currently in the latter days Satan is a great threat to them “because these are the last times, and Satan sees that he has but a short time to continue, therefore he bestirs himself; his desire is to bring confusions and to make havoc of all.”²⁸ The Christian at this point in salvation history “must make account to be tempted, and prepare for a combat with the Devil, even through the whole course of their lives.”²⁹ In Perkins’s understanding, this was to mark the totality of the believer’s life. According to Perkins, “Death, it frees the godly from the tyranny of Satan, sin, the world, the flesh, and eternal damnation, yea, from both infinite perils and losses, and does place us both safe and happy under the shadow, as it were, of Christ’s wings.”³⁰ Perkins provides an eschatologically informed model for spiritual warfare, with a reminder that the believer’s hope is found in being with Christ.

²⁵ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 188.

²⁶ Paul R. Schaefer, *Spiritual Brotherhood: Cambridge Puritans and the Nature of Christian Piety*, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011) 88.

²⁷ William Perkins, *A Fruitful Dialogue Concerning the End of the World*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joel Beeke and Greg A. Salazar, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 460–61.

²⁸ Perkins, *A Fruitful Dialogue Concerning the End of the World*, 470.

²⁹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 88.

³⁰ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 212.

Assurance and Spiritual Warfare

Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare reflects his emphasis on the believer's assurance. Cole argues that three assurances must be found in a biblical model of spiritual warfare. First, "to be in Christ means that there is no divine condemnation."³¹ Second, "nothing can separate believers from the love of Christ."³² Finally, "the Holy Spirit is greater than the evil one."³³ Perkins emphasizes all these assurances as grounds for hope.

A cornerstone for Perkins is his emphasis on the believer's assurance of remission of sin. Perkins notes the severity of sin and follows with the following gospel comfort "yet God has shown His mercy to those who believe in Him, and [He] has accepted of "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, whereby they are cleansed from all their corruptions."³⁴ This comfort is of particular importance in dealing with Satanic attacks. Perkins reasons that a desire to repent and believe in Christ serves as comforting evidence of one's salvation. Perkins puts forward the following syllogism: "*Major*: He who has an unfeigned desire to repent and believe, has remission of sins and everlasting life. *Minor*: But you have an earnest desire to repent and believe in Christ. *Conclusion*: Therefore, remission of sins and everlasting life is yours."³⁵ The one who expresses such an interest in Christ has solid grounds to believe that he or she is no longer under condemnation. Perkins teaches that ministers are "to pronounce the pardon. For in distress, it is as hard a thing to make the conscience yield to the promise as to make fire and water agree."³⁶ It is the pastor's responsibility to directly apply and remind afflicted believers of this comfort.

³¹ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 188.

³² Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 188.

³³ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 189.

³⁴ William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 156.

³⁵ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

³⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 168.

In providing counsel for those who face afflictions of various sorts including those arising from spiritual warfare, hope is found in the certainty of God's love. Perkins reminds readers that despite the believer's experience of affliction, God is not a capricious lover. Perkins notes that God's love is a certainty even when afflictions do not end: "though God withholds His hand in respect of deliverance, even to death, yet His love is constant and unchangeable, and the cross which we undergo cannot separate us from that love wherewith He has loved us in [Jesus] Christ."³⁷ For Perkins, this is an important ground of assurance and hope because of the unending conflict that marks the believer's life. Perkins notes that there is never a ceasefire when it comes to Satanic assault: "One temptation is to be looked for after another, and then especially when our enemy, as though he had made truce with us, is at rest—for the devil never makes an end of his malice."³⁸ Christ's unending love for believers is even more important because of Satan's unending hatred.

The person and work of the Holy Spirit play a prominent role in Perkins's understanding of the believer's experience of assurance and sanctification. Perkins describes the Spirit's work in assurance as follows: "Again, the Holy Spirit gives testimony by applying the promise of [the] remission of sins and life everlasting by Christ, particularly to the heart of man, when the same is generally propounded in the ministry of the Word."³⁹ It is important to remember the power of the Holy Spirit that undergirds its work. Perkins defines the omnipotence of God: "God's omnipotence is that by which He is most able to perform every work. 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible' (Matt. 19:26)."⁴⁰ This understanding of omnipotence equally

³⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 186.

³⁸ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 193.

³⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 154.

⁴⁰ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 17.

applies to the person of the Holy Spirit because in the Trinity all three members “are coequal and are distinguished not by degree but by order.”⁴¹ The Spirit’s work and power are of utmost importance in the believer’s warfare as Perkins states, “A resistance in those that are to be called is wrought by the Spirit of God, that causes man to lend their ears to hear and does engraft the word in their hearts, that the immortal seed of regeneration may spring in them.”⁴² As Schaefer observes, “Perkins confidently asserted in “Combat” that the work of the Spirit within the heart would prevail over the course of the believer’s life, and that the “spiritual” quality given by grace would finally and fully triumph over the flesh at the end of the believer’s earthly sojourn.”⁴³ Perkins’s understanding of the person and power of the Holy Spirit are foundational to how he counsels believers regarding spiritual warfare and provide a model for understanding the work of the Spirit in counseling cases involving spiritual warfare.

Biblical Context of Spiritual Warfare

Cole argues, “Any model of spiritual warfare must take into its purview the context of the warfare, as does Paul’s description of the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-20.”⁴⁴ A biblically informed understanding of the context of spiritual warfare has “no room for demythologization.”⁴⁵ Perkins’s understanding of the believer’s warfare is well situated in the biblical context addressed in Ephesians 6. As such, it avoids a key danger that David Powlison warns of, in that neglecting this context “turns ‘spiritual warfare’ into a wildcard of ideas and practices that are antithetical to the Lord’s explicit teaching

⁴¹ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 20.

⁴² Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 194.

⁴³ Schaefer, *The Spiritual Brotherhood*, 88.

⁴⁴ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 190.

⁴⁵ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 190.

and intentions.”⁴⁶ Perkins addresses the context and characters of this warfare as follows: “The combat is a mutual conflict of them that fight spiritually. The warriors are the tempter and the Christian soldier.”⁴⁷ For Perkins, the believer’s current context of spiritual warfare is an internal conflict. This is seen in the observation that “The conflict of all these is temptation, whereby man is provoked to commit such wickedness as is hurtful to the salvation of his soul.”⁴⁸ Moreover, this internal conflict is defensive in nature.⁴⁹ For Perkins, the believer is either withstanding attacks or falling to attacks. This is seen in Perkins’s statement that “In the soldier, two things are to be considered: his resisting and his fall. Resistance is an action whereby the soldier does withstand temptation through grace working inwardly in him.”⁵⁰ Perkins regularly warns against taking an active and offensive attitude in seeking out spiritual warfare. Perkins admonishes that “Christ went not to be tempted till He was led by the Spirit; therefore no man must wittingly put himself into danger without a calling from God, lest therein he tempts God.”⁵¹ Perkins, in rooting his understanding of spiritual warfare in the context given by the New Testament, provides a biblically informed defensive understanding of spiritual warfare.

Avoiding Error and Excess

Finally, Perkins’s biblicism leads to a model that embraces “the biblically

⁴⁶ David Powlison, *Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2019), 21.

⁴⁷ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 192.

⁴⁸ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 192.

⁴⁹ The language Paul uses in Ephesians 6 has been viewed as defensive. As Cole notes there is no “calling for Christians to seek out the devil and his entourage for combat.” Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 190.

⁵⁰ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 192.

⁵¹ Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 92.

warranted” as well as “avoiding the fanciful.”⁵² In Perkins’s writings, one sees agreement with Cole’s observation that “the Christian needs to believe that, as Scripture makes plain, spiritual warfare is real and the struggle us cosmic in scope.”⁵³ Throughout Perkins’s writings, there is a demonstrated understanding that “There are malevolent intelligences destructively at work. Chief among these is Satan, the prince of darkness. His demonic entourage is real too. Ignorance of this reality is dangerous.”⁵⁴ Perkins teaches, regarding the fallen angels, that “one is chief, and the rest attendants. The chief is Beelzebub, prince of the rest of the devils and the world, far above them all in malice.”⁵⁵ This malice arises from their corrupted nature in “either that fearful malice and hatred by which they set themselves against God, or their insatiable desire to destroy mankind.”⁵⁶ In Perkins’s work one does not find room for modern reductionist understandings of the demonic that reduces them to little more than a metaphor for political powers.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Perkins through his emphasis on Scripture generally avoids the embrace of non-biblical beliefs and practices regarding Satan and spiritual warfare.

As has been addressed in previous chapters, Perkins’s context was marked by a gradual reorientation away from what could be classified as almost fanciful understandings of Satan and demons. As Cole observes, in the New Testament epistles there is an “absence of any hint of what passes for spiritual warfare in some circles today.”⁵⁸ In addressing the believer’s warfare with Satan, the gifts of the Spirit, and the

⁵² Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 191, 194.

⁵³ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 191.

⁵⁴ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 191.

⁵⁵ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 33.

⁵⁶ Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 33.

⁵⁷ Graham Cole highlights a recent trend that views Satan as a metaphor for understanding political oppression. Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 173-75

⁵⁸ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 195.

officers of the church, the New Testament epistles are silent on exorcisms and exorcists. Gilhooly places the New Testament emphasis on Satan's work in the realm of temptation: "The scriptural record indicates that the Devil and his angels are less interested in possession than deception."⁵⁹ In providing a model of spiritual warfare that is not rooted in exorcists and exorcisms, Perkins places the proper emphasis upon Satan's work as deceiver. In this, his model accords with Powlison's argument that there is a mode shift in the New Testament regarding spiritual warfare. Powlison argues, "The silence thunders. The mode of addressing demonically induced sufferings reverts to the classical mode: live the Christian life of receptive faith and active obedience in the midst of life's hardships."⁶⁰

While Perkins's biblical commitment guarded him from focusing on the fanciful in his understanding of spiritual warfare, one does on occasion find what might be considered fanciful. Cole defines the fanciful by means of contrast stating that "avoiding the fanciful is positively to embrace the biblical; that is to say, to embrace what is in the text or consistent with it. In practical terms, have the expectations that the New Testament fosters."⁶¹ This fancifulness is primarily seen in Perkins's understanding that Satan could possess physical locations. Perkins readily accepted the possibility that there are "places which are certainly known to be haunted with evil spirits."⁶² While the New Testament does teach that Satan and demons are present in the world, there seems to be insufficient data to embrace a view of places being haunted. Furthermore, Perkins's understanding of how Satan might physically manifest himself could be categorized fanciful. Perkins says of Satan that "by his dexterity and skill in natural causes he can

⁵⁹ Gilhooly, *40 Questions about Angels, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare*, 125.

⁶⁰ Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 102.

⁶¹ Cole, *Against the Darkness*, 194.

⁶² Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil: Matthew 4:1-11*, 92.

work wonderfully. For he is able, having gathered together fit matter, to join member to member, and to make a true body, either after the likeness of a man or some other creature.”⁶³ Again, as with his understanding of haunting, there seems to be insufficient biblical evidence to make a strong case for Satan physically manifesting himself by means of reanimating corpses.⁶⁴

Overall, Perkins provides a biblically defensible model for understanding spiritual warfare. His model recognizes, like Powlison observes, that spiritual warfare is “a battle that encompasses all of life. Not just for a few odd or bizarre moments, but in every moment of every day we are in battle for who we will serve.”⁶⁵ His understanding reflects a biblical Christology which emphasizes the victory of Christ. Perkins’s understanding reflects that Satan is a present danger considering the believer’s present eschatological moment. Given Perkins’s emphasis on assurance, his model is hopeful. Aside from the two noted exceptions, Perkins provides a model that embraces what is biblically warranted while avoiding the fanciful.

Contributions to Contemporary Care and Counseling

There is wisdom in drawing from the observations made by Perkins in the field of counseling. Perkins stood as a pioneer and popularizer of Puritan practical divinity.⁶⁶ Tim Keller notes the important contribution to be found in the Puritans stating, “The Puritans are an excellent ‘laboratory’ for studying biblical counseling, because they were not influenced by any secular models of psychology. . . . Thus we need to consider very

⁶³ William Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2020), 319.

⁶⁴ Leif Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist.” In *The Science of Demons: Early Modern Authors Facing Witchcraft and the Devil*, edited by Jan Machielsen, 238–51 (New York: Routledge, 2020), 242.

⁶⁵ Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 14.

⁶⁶ Thomas F. Merrill, *William Perkins, 1558-1602: English Puritanist* (Nieukoop, Netherlands: B. De Graaf, 1966), xi.

seriously their counseling methods.”⁶⁷ Perkins’s model is particularly helpful because, like Powlison, he understands that “Spiritual warfare is a normal part of ministry to daily life struggles, because powerful forces are at work in what happens every day.”⁶⁸ Perkins provides several contributions to contemporary counseling practices. First, Perkins provides an important model regarding pastoral presence in ministering to the afflicted. Second, Perkins provides an understanding of how counselors can trace thoughts to their source. Finally, Perkins provides insight into addressing Satanic assault at death.

Presence and Pastoral Counseling

Perkins’s emphasis on the importance of pastoral presence serves as a needed corrective for those who would maintain a clinical distance from those who are afflicted. Perkins points to the importance of a ministry of presence stating, “if the distressed party is much possessed with grief of himself, he must not be left alone, but always attended with good company. For it is a usual practice of the devil to take advantage of the place and time, when a man is solitary and deprived of that help which he might have in society with others.”⁶⁹ An isolated and afflicted believer is in great danger because Satan “is always most ready when a man is in great distress and withal solitary, then upon the sudden to tempt him to despair, and to the making away of himself.”⁷⁰ For Perkins the importance of pastoral presence is that the one who is afflicted might be “taught not to rest upon his own judgment. . . . as to be content to be advised by other who are men of wisdom, judgement, and discretion. . . . [T]he very neglect thereof has caused sundry persons to remain uncomforted for many years.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ Timothy J. Keller, “Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling.” *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 9, no. 3 (January 1, 1988), 12-13.

⁶⁸ Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 46.

⁶⁹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

⁷⁰ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

⁷¹ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 169.

The Origins of Temptations

Jones notes a particular difficulty faced by biblical counselors today asking, “Can we distinguish between temptations that might arise primarily from our hearts and primarily as direct temptations from Satan? If so, how? Our general answer is that we cannot.”⁷² Jones further observes that “there seem to be occasions when one of these enemies—in this case Satan and his demons—might seem more prominent than the other two.”⁷³ This a widespread problem in the church as Senkbeil observes: “When the conscience is under attack the devil drives a person toward despair, pounding home the conviction he is unlovable and that God could not possibly love him. Tragically this condition is epidemic.”⁷⁴ Perkins provides a schema that helps answer the question posed by Jones and in order to bring comfort to those attacked by the devil. While Perkins would readily agree that “Our triad of enemies— the world, the flesh, and the devil— typically function together against us,”⁷⁵ he teaches that it is possible to know whether a tempting thought arises from the work of Satan. In fact, Perkins argues that knowing the origin of tempting thoughts is important because “distinction of thoughts must be remembered, for hence it follows that blasphemous thoughts, not consented to by us, are not our sins, but the devil’s.”⁷⁶ Moreover, being able to identify the origin of the thoughts is important for the practical aspect of providing comfort. Perkins notes, “The party then, who is troubled with these thoughts, may upon these grounds stay his mind and comfort himself. For if he shall not be condemned for them, then let him not fear them above measure.”⁷⁷ Perkins instructs that unwelcome and intrusive thoughts are likely a result of

⁷² Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 99.

⁷³ Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 99.

⁷⁴ Harold L. Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor’s Heart* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019), 128

⁷⁵ Jones, Kellen, and Green, *The Gospel for Disordered Lives*, 99.

⁷⁶ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 201.

⁷⁷ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 201.

Satan.⁷⁸ Perkins's recognition that tempting thoughts can arise from Satan's temptation is an important tool in addressing the challenge Jones notes of identifying the origin of thoughts.

Death, Despair, and the Devil

Another aspect of pastoral counsel that would benefit from drawing on Perkins regards counseling individuals on their deathbeds. As Peter Leithart reminds us, pastors are "specialists in death, in actual physical death and all the shocks of death that the flesh is heir to."⁷⁹ Perkins's work serves as a reminder that one of the "shocks of death" can be the temptations used by Satan. While Christians of previous generations readily acknowledged the potential of Satanic assault at death, a survey of some more contemporary books addressing death, ministry to the dying, and spiritual warfare demonstrates a silence on this issue amongst evangelicals.⁸⁰ Perkins notes that the experience of temptation at death is not universal observing that "some are not tempted, and some are. Some, I say, are not tempted."⁸¹ Perkins addresses the issue of deathbed temptation in a way that is helpful for the contemporary church considering the silence on this issue. Perkins observes that there is an insidious nature to the temptation believers may experience at death. Rather than actively assaulting the believer at death Satan "labors with them that they would not resist him when he assaults them, and by this

⁷⁸ Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of The Cases of Conscience*, 199.

⁷⁹ Peter Leithart, "The Pastor Theologian as Biblical Theologian: From the Church for the Church" in *Becoming a Pastor Theologian : New Possibilities for Church Leadership*, edited by Todd Wilson, and Gerald L. Hiestand (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 22.

⁸⁰ The following works are silent on the matter of spiritual warfare in relationship to death or counseling the dying. Matthew McCullough, *Remember Death: The Surprising Path to Living Hope* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018). J. Ligon Duncan, *Fear Not: Death and the Afterlife from a Christian Perspective* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2008). R. Kent Hughes, and Douglas Sean O'Donnell. *The Pastor's Book: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide to Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015). Harold Ristau, *Spiritual Warfare: For the Care of Souls*, ed. Harold L. Senkbeil, Lexham Ministry Guides (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022).

⁸¹ William Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Joseph A. Pipa and J. Stephen Yuille, vol. 10 (Grands Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020), 411.

means he endeavors to extinguish hope.”⁸² Perkins’s model brings to light the variety of means by which Satan might seek to assault believers through life and on the deathbed. Furthermore, Perkins provides a nuanced understanding of Satanic assault at death which can consider physical causes of despair at death. Considering the silence regarding Satanic assault on the deathbed, Perkins provides a needed reminder of the dangers posed by Satan at death.

Conclusion

This study has considered the place of spiritual warfare within William Perkins’s pastoral counseling. While the believer’s warfare with Satan has an important place within Perkins’s understanding of the Christian life, no reader should think it was the primary theme. As Leif Dixon argues, “Perkins’s primary concern, throughout his writings was to emphasize the absolute power of God over every situation. Satan was not a major actor within his theology.”⁸³ In this, Perkins’s model has common ground with more contemporary individuals such as Powlison, who notes “Scripture never puts Satan and his activities front and center. God puts people and our relationship to him front and center.”⁸⁴ While not a primary concern, it was a theme that “weaved its way throughout Perkins’s writings.”⁸⁵ As such Perkins provides a wealth of material for understanding spiritual warfare, particularly regarding ministering to those who are satanically afflicted.

Owing to the paucity of biographical material on Perkins, the primary focus of this study has been Perkins’s writings. While Perkins’s broader social and theological context has been explored, it is difficult to understand specific influences that may have shaped his understanding and practice of pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

⁸² Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man*, 458.

⁸³ Dixon, “William Perkins: The Ambivalent Demonologist,” 239.

⁸⁴ Powlison, *Safe and Sound*, 15.

⁸⁵ Schaefer, *The Spiritual Brotherhood*, 88.

Schaefer highlights this difficulty. He notes, “Perkins rarely appealed directly to other Reformed writers from the Continent or England in order to buttress his points. He determined instead to use the Bible as his measuring stick.”⁸⁶ Owing to this, further research can be done in tracing the origins of Perkins’s beliefs and practices regarding pastoral counseling and spiritual warfare.

As this chapter has noted, contemporary culture has been marked by unbalanced views of spiritual warfare and avoidance of it in the context of counseling. In an age marked by mental affliction, contemporary pastoral and biblical counselors would be amiss if they neglect an important potential cause of despair. As Perkins has a worldview that had not been shaped by a secular and anti-supernatural understanding, he can serve as a model for addressing spiritual warfare in the context of pastoral counseling. If contemporary pastors and counselors are to learn any lesson from Perkins’s work, it is that there is an enemy who hates and destroys but there is hope in Christ.

⁸⁶ Schaefer, *The Spiritual Brotherhood*, 55.

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ABSTRACT

DEVIL'S DEVICES: WILLIAM PERKINS AND THE INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND PASTORAL COUNSELING

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This thesis argues that William Perkins integrates an understanding of the realities of spiritual warfare into his understanding of pastoral counseling. The first chapter provides a survey of sources relevant to understanding Perkins's thought in the areas of spiritual warfare and pastoral counseling and demonstrates a void in the literature followed by the thesis. The second chapter explores the biblical and theological foundations of Perkins's understanding of spiritual warfare. The third chapter examines the nature of William Perkins's pastoral counseling as evidenced by his casuistry. The fourth chapter provides an overview of how spiritual warfare was integrated with pastoral counseling in Perkins's writings. The fifth chapter addresses the relevance of Perkins's integration of spiritual warfare and pastoral counseling for contemporary ministry practice.

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