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Running at the Devil with God's Word

The Pamphlets of the Early-Reformation Preacher, Jacob Strauss

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

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2010

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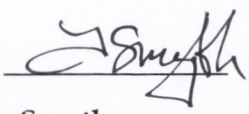
Signed 

Jennifer Smyth

Summary

This thesis examines the printed pamphlets of a preacher of the early German Reformation, Jacob Strauss. The analysis is based primarily on my translations from German of Strauss's pamphlets; manuscript evidence from the Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Weimar; and a variety of printed works by Strauss's contemporaries. Earlier, German-language works on Strauss have reconstructed biographical details and offered summaries and separate analyses of his printed works. This thesis investigates Strauss's objectives in adopting the 'new medium' of the pamphlet and in exploiting the 'old medium' of the sermon. The pamphlets are treated as an extension of Strauss's role as preacher insofar as they are considered to address the laity, broadly identified with the 'common people'. To identify Strauss's aims in addressing this group, his publications are treated thematically. They are particularly suited to such treatment as they were produced in a relatively brief period and cover numerous topics. The emphasis in the analysis is on Strauss's tools for persuasion in the cause of reform and thus on elements which can be used to work towards an analysis of his work as teacher, missionary, and propagandist.

Chapter I gives an overview of Strauss's theology, and explains its bearing on his exhortations to the laity. It identifies some characteristics of Strauss's vision for reform, a task continued in the subsequent chapters. Chapters II and III consider elements in his pamphlets which seem calculated to appeal to lay-people. The first of these is Strauss's argument for the rejection of the authority of the clergy in favour of spiritual and intellectual independence for the laity; the second is the criticism of practices unfavourable to the common man: financial exploitation in particular. Both chapters offer an opportunity to assess Strauss as 'propagandist' and to consider the extent to which he appeals to his readers' self-interest. Chapter IV examines Strauss's works not for their explicit messages to the laity but for the author's defence of his work and his person; his use of these pamphlets to define and present his mission. The conclusion considers how evidence from these chapters can be used to evaluate not only Strauss's vision for reform but also the means by which he believed reform could be introduced.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin for providing the funding necessary to complete this thesis. I also wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the Deutsches Akademisches Austausch Dienst, the Rolf und Ursula Schneider-Stiftung zu Förderung der Geschichtswissenschaften, and the Trinity Trust for making it possible to carry out research in Germany.

My sincere thanks to the staff of the following institutions for their invaluable assistance and advice: Trinity College Library Dublin; Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel; Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar; Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek Weimar; Staatsbibliothek Berlin; and the British Library. I am also grateful to the libraries of the Institute for Historical Research and the Warburg Institute, London, the Bodeleian Library, and the Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Jena for access to their collections.

Finally, I would like to thank Helga Robinson-Hammerstein for her endless patience and inspiring advice. The past years have also been made easier by the specific assistance and general friendship offered by other historians, including my fellow postgrads past and present, in Dublin and elsewhere. A particular debt of gratitude is due to those working on early-modern Germany for enduring my complaints and queries and encouraging my progress, and especially to Jane Finucane for her helpfulness and generosity. I would like to apologize for my frequent hermit-like conduct to my friends in the world beyond almost-forgotten pamphleteers and unreadable manuscripts and to my large and dear extended family, and to thank them for their tolerance. Above all, I owe an immeasureable amount to my parents, Catherine and John, and to my sister Carmel, for their unceasing love and support.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations 9

Introduction 15

Chapter I
'Hungry for Forgiveness'. Faith and the Path to Salvation. 35
Introduction 35
1. Idolatry and presumption 37
2. Faith 47
3. Means of faith 54
4. Faith and love 63
5. Faith and human agency 66
6. Suffering and comfort 72
7. Practical changes 81
8. Persuasion 90

Chapter II
'Storming and Raging and Old Women's Prattle'.
The Priest, the Pastor, and the Knowledgeable Laity. 97
1. Persuasion and anticlericalism 97
2. Neglect, oppression, and tyranny 99
3. Anti-intellectualism 105
4. The new authority 109
5. The active laity 114
6. Reality 126
7. Modification 132
8. Analysis and contradictions 147

Chapter III
Driving the Poor Sheep to Market:
The Exploitation of the Common Man. 153
1. The Eisenach usury conflict 153
2. General anticlericalism 157
3. Usury 168
4. Money and propaganda 178
5. The poor common man? 186
6. The brotherhood 199
7. Reception 215
8. Conclusion 232

Chapter IV
'... with sweet, splendid words they attack the adherents of God'
Reformation, Rebellion, and Reputation. **235**
1. The need for a defence 235
2. Protecting the common peace 241
3. Reputation 253
4. Attack 263
5. Reformation from below 278
6. The purpose of rebellion 288
7. Identifying the true rebels 298
8. The new counsellors 308

Conclusion **319**

Bibliography **327**

Abbreviations.

Strauss's Works.

Due to the length of the titles, and the frequent references to these in the text, the full title of each work will be cited only once, in the Introduction. Therefter, the short titles given before each work below will be used instead.

Trostliche verstendige leer

Ain trostliche versten//dige leer über das wort sancti// Pauli. Der mensch soll// sich selbs probieren / //vnd also von dem// brot essen/ vnd// von dem// kelch// trincken.// Geprediget zü Hall im Intal /// durch Doctor Jacob Strauß.// M.D.XXII. // Kauff vnd liß/ es//wirt dir gefallen. ([Augsburg: Silvan Otmar 1522])

Pruderchafften

Ein kurz christenlich Unterricht von dem [sic] erdichten besondern pruderschafften denen/ von hal / im intal von doctor Jacob Straus tzu gesant / in dem du leichtlich vernemen magst / wie vnchristenlich in denen bruderschafften wider got / vnd den nechsten geirt wirt. ([Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer 1522])

Hochwirdigen Sacrament

Ob/ dz aller hochwirdigeste Sacra=//ment/ das leibs vnnd blutes/ vnsers// heilmachers Christi/ anders benenhet// moge werden dan eyn getrew Testa//ment/ beschttet/ mit dem bluet// vergiessen/ vnd sterben Christi. Eine// newe Disputacion/ geschrifft// lich gehalten Zwiessch//en den Barfuessern// zw Weimmar/ // vn[d] Magister// Wolffgang Steyn/ daß// Durchlauchten hochgebornen// Furstenn hertzogenn Hanszenn// zw Sachsszen. &c. Prediger//. [(Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer, 1523)]

Beichtbüchlein

Ein new wunderbarlich beychtpuch=//lin in dem die warhafft gerecht beycht vnd// pueszfertyg//keit/ christenlychen gelert vnd angezeygt wirt/ vnd// kurtzlychenn all tyranney ertichter menschlycher// beycht auff gehaben/ tzu seliger rewe/ frid vnnd// freud der armen gefangen gewissen.// D. Jacobus Strauss Ecclesiastes tzw// Eyssenach in Düringen. [(Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer, 1523)]

Heiligthüm

Ein kurtz Christenlich vnterricht des// grossen jrrthumbs/ so im heiligthüm zü eren gehalten/ das dan nach// gemainem gebrauch der abgötterey gantz gleich ist.// D. Jacobus Strauß zu Eysenach// in Doringen Ecclesisates. M.D.Xxiij. ([Erfurt: Michel Buchführer] 1523)

Christlichen versamlung

¶ An den durchleüchtigistenn// hochgeborne[n] Fürste[n] vnd herrn herrn Johanßen // Friderichen hertzogen zu Sachssen / Landt=//grauen in Dhöringen / vn[d] Marckgrauen // zu Meyssen &c. // Das nit herren aber diener eyner yedenn Christ=//lichen versamlung zugestelt werdenn / beschluß=//reden vnd haupt artikel/ wen gelüstet/ mag sich// dar gegeb hören lassen/ wirt im sunder zweyfel// auff Euangelischer leer Christlich vn[d] brüderlich// gut bescheyd vnnd bewerung widerfaren.// ¶ Christus die warheit vberwindet.// D. Jacobus Straus// Ecclesiastes.// M.CCCCC.Xxiij. ([Erfurt: Johannes Loersfeld] 1523)

Fegfeur
kurtz vnd verstendig leer/ vber das // wort .S. Pauli / zu den Römern / der todt ist / der ist // von sunden gerecht gemacht / fast disntlich der ge=//meynen woche[n]/ so yn etlichen kirchen / in Francken// vnd Döringen/ vn[d] fast yn allen alnden/ yerlich fur// die seelen gehalten. Darynnen das fegefeur gar // verleschet / auch der pfaffen und Münichen // heyliger geytz getziert / vnd rechgeschaffen // abgemalet ist. // Christus// Fur war sage ich euch/ Der yn mich glaubet// der hat das ewyge leben. Johan. 6.// Eyssennach// Doct. Jacobus Straus// Gedruckt tzu Eylenburgk durch Nicolaum Widemar (Eilenburg: Nikolaus Widemar [1523])

Pfaffen Ee
Ain Sermon In// der deütlich angezeyget / vnd geleert ist// die pfaffen Ee / in Euangelischer leer// nit zü der freyhayt des flaysches / vnnd zü bekrefftigen de[n] alten Adam / wie et=//lich flayschlich Pfaffen das Eelich wesen mit aller pomp / Hoffart vnnd// ander teüffels werck anheben/ gefun=//diert/ aber das Gotes werck vn[d] wort// allein angesehen mit forcht vnd Christ//licher beschaydenhayt auch die wirt=//schafft vollenbracht damit die feind// des Ewangeliums vnns zü// schelten / vnnd Gottes// wort zü lestere[n] / nit geursacht// werde[n]. //1.5.23.// D. Jac. Strauß zü Eyssenach eccle. ([Ausburg: Heinrich Steiner] 1523)

Simonieschen Tauff
Wider den symoneisch.//en tauff vnd erkauft[e]n// ertichten krysam vnd oel / // auch warin die recht cri=//stlich tauff (allain vo[n] Christo auffgsetzt) begrif//fen sey/ ein genötige ser//mon/ gepredigett zü Eysßnach.// ¶ Christus. // ¶ In der welt habt jr angst. aber seyt// geströst/ ich hab die welt überwunden.// D. Jacobust Straus Ecclesiastes.,, NDXXiij. [sic.] ([Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger] 1523)

Ynnerlichen ... Tauff
¶ Uon dem ynner=//lichen und ausserlichem Tauff// eyn Christlych begründt// leer/ geprediget durch D. Ja. Straus// zu Eyssnach// Ecclesiasten// Christus// ¶// In der welt habt ir angst// Aber seyt getrost/ ich hab// die welt vberwunden. (Erfurt: [Johannes Loersfeld] 1523).

Euangelium Luce
Ein sermon vber das // Euangelium Lucae am .xix. Alls // Jesus die stat Jerusalem ansach// do weynett ehr vber sy / wydder // die undanckbarkeit aller men=//schen. Geprediget zü Eysse=//nach. An[no] M.D.Xxiij.// Christus lebt vn[d] regnieret// Doctor Jacobus Strauß// Ecclesiastes. ([Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer 1523])

Ernstliche handlung
¶ Ein ernstliche handlu[n]g wider// eyn freuenlichen widersprecher des lebendi=//gen wort Gottes beschehenn In sant// Jorgen kirchen zu Eyssennach.// Gott vnnßer Herr Christus/ // lebt noch.// D. Jacobus Strauß.// Ecclesiastes. (n.p., n.d.)

Haubtstuck ... wücher
Hauptstuck // vn[d] artickel Christenlicher leer // wider den vnchristlichen// wücher / daru[m]b etlich// pfaffe[n] zü Eysnach// so gar vnrüwig// vnd bemüet// seind. // Gepredigt zü Eysenach durch // D. Jacob Straussen. 1523. ([Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner 1523])

Wucher zu nemen

Das wucher zu nemen vnd gebe[n].// vnserm Christlichem glauben. vnd// brůderlicher lieb (als zu ewiger verdamnyß reich=//ent) entgegen yst/ vberwintlich leer/ vnd geschrifft. In dem auch die gemolete[n] Euange=//listen erkennet werden.// Auch wo dz gemein geschrey auffrur/ auffrur/ außgehet/ // am ende mit kurtzem guttem vnterscheidt angezeigt. ([Erfurt: Joahnnes Loersfeld], 1524)

Auffrur

Auffrur Zwitracht // vn[d] Uneinigkeyt/ zwische[n] woren // Euangelischen Christe[n] für / zukomen/ kurtz auch// vnüberwintlich leer/ Einem yeden erkenner// Gottes/ besünder/ Allen fromen Christen=//lichen Fürsten vnd Landsherren not=//turfftig/ vor ergangner auffruhr/ .. Etlichen großmechtigen Her=//ren geprediget/ vn[d] auß an=//sinnen fromer Christen// (wienach folgt) in // truck bracht.// M.D.XXV. // D. Jacobus Strauß// Jesu Christi vnd aller// Christen diener. // Kauffs vn[d] besichs biß an des ende/ es wirt dir gefallen. ([Nürnberg: Friedrich Peypus 1525])

Antwurt ... Coclei

Christenlich vnd wolgegrun=//det antwurt vnd hertzlich vermanu[n]g D. Ja=//cobi Strauß / Auff das vngüttig schmach=//büchlin D. Johannis Cochlaei von Wenndel=//steyn / Betreffen die auffrür.// ¶ Darumb besich auch mit vlaiß das ander teyl diß büchlins/ So kan//stu grüntlich erkennen/ was warer/ ewiger vn[d] zeitlicher frid ist/ // auch die recht vrsach aller auffrür vnd vneynigkeyt/ zwisch//en menschn auff erden/ wirt dir vnwidersprechlich an//gezeyt.// Christus Johannis am xvj. Capitel.// Inn der welt müßt ihr geenstiget werden/ // Aber seit getröst/ Ich hab die// welt vberwunden ([Worms: Peter Schöffer d.J. 1526])

Irrthumb ... Zwinglins

Wider den vnmilten Irr//thum[b] Maister Vlrichs zwinglins / So // er verneünet / die warhafftig gegenwirtigkait// dess allerhailligsten leybs und blüts Chri=//sti im Sacrament. Doct. Jacobi Strauß// mit ewiger warhait ablenung/ vnd er=clärung/ Darinnen alle from[m]en chri//sten mit vnüberwündtlicher er=//kantnus der wort Christi den// vergyfften Irthum[b] mügen // entweychen. // Imjar. MDXXVj. Mense Junij. // Margraffen Baden. ([Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger 1526])

War leyb Christi

Das der war // leyb Christi vnd seyn // heiliges blüt / im Sacrame[n]t gegenwertig sei/ richtige erkleru[n]g auff das new büchleyn. D. Johan//nes Haußscheyn/ disem züwi=der außgangen.// Jhesu Christi vnd aller glau=//bigen diener.// Jacobus Strauß.// Zü Markgraff Baden.// MDXXVII. ([Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner] 1527).

Other Abbreviations.

Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar:	ThHstA Weimar
Ernestisches Gesamtarchiv:	EGA
Luthers Werke, Weimarer Ausgabe:	*WA*
Luthers Werke, Weimarer Ausgabe, Briefwechsel:	*WA Br.*

Introduction

The importance of communication in the early evangelical movement of the 1520s has long been established. The printing press was employed to full effect by the proponents of the new teaching, producing an abundance of pamphlets and broadsheets in the years leading up the Peasants' War of 1524-1525.[1] The pamphlets have been used to determine the aims of the reformers as well as to try to pin down the mentalities of their target readership, and, to the degree the concerns raised therein may have reflected this latter, to investigate the context in which they were written.[2] Peter Matheson identified this period as that within which a form of 'public opinion' first emerged, which he sees in the form of a 'discourse', objecting to the term 'propaganda' as this word, he has argued, implies a one-way flow of ideas, from pamphleteer to people.[3] Many of the pamphlets examined in these studies had originally been sermons; sometimes adapted for print, sometimes printed more or less as they had been spoken.

In any study of Reformation communication, one must also consider sermon itself in its original form. In its immediacy and the ease with which its content and delivery could be

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1 The research that has been done on this phenomenon is extensive; this is merely a selection of the literature: Richard G. Cole, 'The Reformation Pamphlet and the Communication Process', in Hans Joachim Köhler (ed.), *Flugschriften als Massenmedium der Reformationszeit. Beiträge zum Tübinger Symposion 1980. Spätmittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit – Tübinger Beiträge zur Geschichtsforschung XIII* (Stuttgart, 1981), 139-161, and his 'The Reformation in Print: German Pamphlets and Propaganda', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 66 (1975), 93-102.; Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Printing, Propaganda and Martin Luther* (London, 1994), Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997); Hans Joachim Köhler, 'Fragestellungen und Methoden zur Interpretation frühneuzeitlicher Flugschriften. Forschungsergebnisse und –desiderate' in Köhler (1981), 1-27; Adolf Laube, 'Zur Rolle sozialökonomischer Fragen in frühreformatorischen Flugschriften', in Köhler (1981), 205-224; Paul A. Russell, 'Flugblatt und Analphabetentum. Wie kam der gemeine mann zu reformatorischen Ideen?' in Köhler, (1981), 65-76.; Wolfram Wettges, *Reformation und Propaganda – Studien zur Kommunikation des Aufruhrs in süddeutsche Reichsstädten.* (Stuttgart, 1978).

2 Bernd Moeller, 'Stadt und Buch. Bemerkungen zur Struktur der reformatorischen Bewegung in Deutschland', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen (ed.), *Stadtbürgertum und Adel in der Reformation: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der Reformation in England und Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1979), 25 -39; Steven Ozment, 'The Social History of the Reformation: What can we learn from Pamphlets?', in Köhler (1981), 171-203.

3 Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation.* (Edinburgh, 1998), 27-57, particularly 45-57. Also Miriam Usher Chrisman, 'From Polemic to Propaganda: The Development of Mass Persuasion in the Late Sixteenth Century', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 73 (1982).

adapted to circumstance and audience, to say nothing of its particular suitability as a medium for the illiterate, it may have been far more significant in the process of persuasion. Bob Scribner has argued that 'public and private discussions were probably the most frequent means of transmitting ideas, while pride of place as the major formal means of communication must go to the pulpit, from which most public announcements were proclaimed'.[4] With this remark, of course, Scribner indicates that methods of dissemination ranged far beyond the confines of the printed word or the formal sermon: informal discussions and rumours, arguments and songs, demonstrations and images all contributed to Matheson's 'discourse'.[5] This study, however, will limit itself to the transmission of the evangelical message using sermons and pamphlets. It will examine the efforts of one of these preacher-pamphleteers to inform and convince the laity of his message using both of these forms of communication.

Jacob Strauss was born circa 1485 in or near Basel.[6] He attended the University there, but records are not clear regarding his subsequent education or where exactly he received his doctorate in theology. Joachim Rogge has questioned whether the 'Jacobus Struss of Horb' in the matriculation list of the philosophy faculty at Freiburg is actually Jacob Strauss of Basel. Strauss at some point joined the Dominican order, and became influenced by reforming currents within a few years of Luther's initial protest of 1517. His early years as an evangelical preacher were somewhat peripatetic; he is first recorded in this context in

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4 Robert W. Scribner, 'Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas' in idem., *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London, 1987), 49-69, 51.

5 Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1994); see alsoAndrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 1995).

6 The principal literature on Strauss consists of two biographical studies, that of Hermann Barge, *Jakob Strauss. Ein Kämpfer für das Evangelium in Tirol, Thüringen, und Süddeutschland*, Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte CLXII (Leipzig, 1937); and that of Joachim Rogge, *Der Beitrag des Predigers Jakob Strauss zur frühen Reformationsgeschichte*. Theologische Arbeiten VI, (Berlin, 1957). Three older, shorter accounts of specific periods in Strauss's career are available in G. L. Schmidt, Jakob Strauss, der erste evangelische Prediger in Eisenach', in *Programm des Grossherzoglichen Realgymnasiums zu Eisenach.* (Eisenach 1863), 1-24; Franz Waldner, Dr. Jakob Strauss in Hall und seine Predigt vom grünen Donnerstag (17. April) 1522. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Reformation in Tirol', in *Zeitschrift des Ferdinandeums für Tirol und Vorarlberg* Series 3 Volume 26 (Innsbruck, 1882), 3-39; Sebastian Ruf, 'Doktor Jakob Strauss und Doktor Urban Regius', *Archiv für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Tirols* 2 (1865), 67-81.

Berchtesgaden, and by 1521, after a short time spent in the mining town of Schwatz, was living in Hall in the Tyrol, where he was eventually given permission to preach. He appears to have been a popular figure, drawing large crowds to his sermons, some of which he gave in the open air. This unconventional activity, along with the content of his teachings and particularly his condemnation of the practice of auricular confession to a priest, were unacceptable to local clerical and secular authorities.[7] Following the intervention of the Bishop of Brixen, Strauss made an abrupt departure from Hall. While at Haslach near Freiburg, he wrote a pamphlet on confraternities which was published later that year in Erfurt.[8] Strauss then moved north, living for a while at Kemberg in Saxony.[9] After a brief stint at Wittenberg in mid-1522 (his name being entered in the University's matriculation list for that year), Luther secured for him the post of preacher at the court of Wertheim am Main.[10] Strauss left this position after only a few months, his ideas once again proving unpalatable. In December of that year, Strauss was in Weimar, and there attended a disputation on the sacrifice of the Mass between the court preacher Wolfgang Stein and the local Franciscans. Early in 1523, he wrote a preface to the debate, and published this along with Stein's theses and the propositions of the Franciscans in the form of a pamphlet.[11] By that time, Strauss had

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7 The tone of these sermons can be gleaned from one of Strauss's earliest publications, a pamphlet which appeared the year after he had left Hall, supposedly at the request of his former parishioners: *Ain trostliche versten//dige leer über das wort sancti// Pauli. Der mensch soll// sich selbs probieren / //vnd also von dem// brot essen/ vnd// von dem// kelch// trincken.// Geprediget zü Hall im Intal /// durch Doctor Jacob Strauß.// M.D.XXII. // Kauff vnd liß/ es//wirt dir gefallen.* ([Augsburg: Silvan Otmar 1522]), henceforth *Trostliche verstendige leer.* This work consists of a general instruction on confession and preparation for the Eucharist, and a complete rejection of the existing sacrament of penance. Ibid, B v.

8 *Ein kurz christenlich Unterricht von dem [sic] erdichten besondern pruderschafften denen/ von hal / im intal von doctor Jacob Straus tzu gesant / in dem du leichtlich vernemen magst / wie vnchristenlich in denen bruderschafften wider got / vnd den nechsten geirt wirt.* ([Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer 1522]). Henceforth *Pruderchafften.*

9 It was here that he wrote the pamphlet based on his Hall sermons mentioned above (*Trostliche verstendige leer*).

10 There is no evidence, however, that Strauss and Luther ever met, or that Luther gave any lectures which may have been attended by Strauss. In June of 1523, after Strauss was ensconced in his position in Eisenach, Luther wrote to the Count of Wertheim about his former preacher, informing him that Strauss now 'had his head' and was doing what he could in Eisenach, leaving them to 'write and speak', Letter of 17th June, 1523, *WA Br.* 3, 88, no 623.

11 *Ob/ dz aller hochwirdigeste Sacra=//ment/ das leibs vnnd blutes/ vnsers// heilmachers Christi/ anders benenhet// moge werden dan eyn getrew Testa//ment/ beschttet/ mit dem bluet// vergiessen/ vnd sterben Christi. Eine// newe Disputacion/ geschrifft// lich gehalten Zwiessch//en den Barfuessern// zw Weimmar/ // vn[d]*

been appointed to the position of preacher in the Georgenkirche, one of three parish churches in the town of Eisenach in Thuringia. Here he enjoyed the protection of John, Duke of Saxony as well as the support of prominent townspeople, including civic leaders, and for the next two and a half years was able to introduce changes in ecclesiastical practice inspired by the new evangelical teaching.

It was also during this period that Strauss produced the majority of his pamphlets. These included two pamphlets on the subject of baptism[12], a pamphlet on the honouring of relics[13], a treatise on marriage[14], a short piece, consisting of a preface and a series of conclusions regarding the right of a congregation to choose its pastor[15], a pamphlet on the subject of purgatory[16], and an exposition of Luke 19.[17] He also produced a short account detailing an

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Magister// Wolffgang Steyn/ daß// Durchlauchten hochgebornen// Furstenn hertzogenn Hanszenn// zw Sachsszen. &c. Prediger//. [(Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer, 1523)], henceforth *Hochwirdigen Sacrament.*

12 *Wider den symoneisch.//en tauff vnd erkauft[e]n// ertichten krysam vnd oel / // auch warin die recht cri=//stlich tauff (allain vo[n] Christo auffgsetzt) begrif//fen sey /* ein genötige ser//mon/ gepredigett zü Eysßnach.// *¶ Christus. // ¶ In der welt habt jr angst. aber seyt// geströst/ ich hab die welt überwunden.// D. Jacobus Straus Ecclesiastes.,, NDXXiij. [sic.]* ([Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger] 1523), henceforth *Simonieschen Tauff;* and *¶ Uon dem ynner=//lichen und ausserlichem Tauff// eyn Christlych begründt// leer/ geprediget durch D. Ja. Straus// zu Eyssnach//* Ecclesiasten// Christus// *¶// In der welt habt ir angst// Aber seyt getrost/ ich hab// die welt vberwunden.* (Erfurt: [Johannes Loersfeld] 1523), henceforth *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff.*

13 *Ein kurtz Christenlich vnterricht des// grossen jrrthumbs/ so im heiligthüm zü eren gehalten/ das dan nach// gemainem gebrauch der abgötterey gantz gleich ist.// D. Jacobus Strauß zu Eysenach// in Doringen Ecclesisates. M.D.Xxiij.* ([Erfurt: Michel Buchführer] 1523), henceforth *Heiligthüm.*

14 *Ain Sermon In// der deütlich angezeyget / vnd geleert ist// die pfaffen Ee / in Euangelischer leer// nit zü der freyhayt des flaysches / vnnd zü bekrefftigen de[n] alten Adam / wie et=//lich flayschlich Pfaffen das Eelich wesen mit aller pomp / Hoffart vnnd// ander teüffels werck anheben/ gefun=//diert/ aber das Gotes werck vn[d] wort// allein angesehen mit forcht vnd Christ//licher beschaydenhayt auch die wirt=//schafft vollenbracht damit die feind// des Ewangeliums vnns zü// schelten / vnnd Gottes// wort zü lestere[n] / nit geursacht// werde[n]. //1.5.23.// D. Jac. Strauß zü Eyssenach eccle.* ([Ausburg: Heinrich Steiner] 1523), henceforth *Pfaffen Ee.*

15 *¶ An den durchleüchtigistenn// hochgeborne[n] Fürste[n] vnd herrn herrn Johanßen // Friderichen hertzogen zu Sachssen / Landt=//grauen in Dhöringen / vn[d] Marckgrauen // zu Meyssen &c. // Das nit herren aber diener eyner yedenn Christ=//lichen versamlung zugestelt werdenn / beschluß=//reden vnd haupt artikel/ wen gelüstet/ mag sich// dar gegeb hören lassen/ wirt im sunder zweyfel// auff Euangelischer leer Christlich vn[d] brüderlich// gut bescheyd vnnd bewerung widerfaren.// ¶ Christus die warheit vberwindet.// D. Jacobus Straus// Ecclesiastes.// M.CCCCC.Xxiij.* ([Erfurt: Johannes Loersfeld] 1523, henceforth *Christlichen versamlung.*

16 *kurtz vnd verstendig leer/ vber das // wort .S. Pauli / zu den Römern / der todt ist / der ist // von sunden gerecht gemacht / fast disntlich der ge=//meynen woche[n]/ so yn etlichen kirchen / in Francken// vnd Döringen/ vn[d] fast yn allen alnden/ yerlich fur// die seelen gehalten. Darynnen das fegefeur gar // verleschet / auch der pfaffen und Münichen // heyliger geytz getziert / vnd rechgeschaffen // abgemalet ist. // Christus// Fur*

altercation he had with one of the town's inhabitants.[18] In 1525, John entrusted him with the task of conducting the first evangelical church visitation in Thuringia, an undertaking proposed by Strauss himself.

The most controversial aspect of Strauss's tenure at Eisenach was the furore linked to his condemnation of the practice of usury in a pamphlet of 1523, in which he emphasised not only the sin of the usurer, but also that of the creditor who agreed to the ungodly interest.[19] These pronouncements, which were a distillation of various sermons on the subject, provoked an immediate and direct local response in the form of the 'Eisenach usury controversy', during which numerous inhabitants withheld payment from their ecclesiastical creditors. The affected clergy complained to John of Saxony, who ordered the Eisenach council to ensure that the interest was paid. John's son, John Frederick, was particularly alarmed by the potential for rebellion displayed in Eisenach, and expressed this to Luther, who in turn remonstrated with Strauss. It was probably this intervention which led to the production of Strauss's second work on the subject, which explained his conclusions in more detail while not departing significantly from his original position.[20] Strauss's behaviour during this episode, particularly a perceived disregard for social order, may have damaged his standing in the eyes of the local authorities and certainly in those of John Frederick. This reputation is likely to have been the principal reason for his arrest in the immediate aftermath

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war sage ich euch/ Der yn mich glaubet// der hat das ewyge leben. Johan. 6.// Eyssennach// Doct. Jacobus Straus// Gedruckt tzu Eylenburgk durch Nicolaum Widemar (Eilenburg: Nikolaus Widemar [1523]), henceforth *Fegfeur*.

17 *Ein sermon vber das // Euangelium Lucae am .xix. Alls // Jesus die stat Jerusalem ansach// do weynett ehr vber sy / wydder // die undanckbarkeit aller men=//schen. Geprediget zü Eysse=//nach. An[no] M.D.Xxiij.// Christus lebt vn[d] regnieret// Doctor Jacobus Straußß// Ecclesiastes.* ([Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer 1523]), henceforth *Euangelium Luce*.

18 ¶ *Ein ernstliche handlu[n]g wider// eyn freuenlichen widersprecher des lebendi=//gen wort Gottes beschehenn In sant// Jorgen kirchen zu Eyssennach.// Gott vnnßer Herr Christus/ // lebt noch.// D. Jacobus Straußß.// Ecclesiastes.* (n.p., n.d.), henceforth *Ernstliche handlung*.

19 *Hauptstuck // vn[d] artickel Christenlicher leer // wider den vnchristlichen// wücher / daru[m]b etlich// pfaffe[n] zü Eysnach// so gar vnrüwig// vnd bemüet// seind. // Gepredigt zü Eysenach durch // D. Jacob Straussen.* 1523. ([Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner 1523]), henceforth *Haubtstuck ... wücher*.

20 *Das wucher zu nemen vnd gebe[n].// vnserm Christlichem glauben. vnd// brůderlicher lieb (als zu ewiger verdamnyß reich=//ent) entgegen yst/ vberwintlich leer/ vnd geschrifft. In dem auch die gemolete[n] Euange=//listen erkennet werden.// Auch wo dz gemein geschrey auffrur/ auffrur/ außgehet/ // am ende mit kurtzem guttem vnterscheidt angezeigt.* ([Erfurt: Joahnnes Loersfeld], 1524), henceforth *Wucher zu nemen*.

of the Peasants' War, when Strauss was brought to Weimar and questioned as to his involvement.

Although he avoided the fate of his fellow-prisoner, Thomas Müntzer, and was eventually released, he did not remain long in Eisenach. After another unsettled period, during which he spent time suffering from an unspecified illness in Nuremberg and wrote a pamphlet dealing with the subject of rebellion[21], he managed to obtain another preaching position as a *Stiftsprediger* in Baden-Baden. After his arrival, he published a second work on the recent uprisings, a *Verteidigungsschrift* written in response to one of Johannes Cochlaeus' treatises against Luther.[22] Apart from two forays into the controversy over the real presence in the Eucharist in which he defended the Lutheran interpretation against that of the Swiss reformers,[23] Strauss appears to have descended into in obscurity before he died in or before 1532. It was in that year that his death was mentioned in print by Georg Witzel, who had been associated with Strauss during his time in Thuringia. According to this report, Strauss

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21 *Auffrur Zwitracht // vn[d] Uneinigkeyt/ zwische[n] woren // Euangelischen Christe[n] für / zukomen/ kurtz auch// vnüberwintlich leer/ Einem yeden erkenner// Gottes/ besünder/ Allen fromen Christen=//lichen Fürsten vnd Landsherren not=//turfftig/ vor ergangner auffruhr/ .. Etlichen großmechtigen Her=//ren geprediget/ vn[d] auß an=//sinnen fromer Christen// (wienach folgt) in // truck bracht.// M.D.XXV. // D. Jacobus Strauß// Jesu Christi vnd aller// Christen diener. // Kauffs vn[d] besichs biß an des ende/ es wirt dir gefallen.* ([Nürnberg: Friedrich Peypus 1525]), henceforth *Auffrur.*

22 *Christenlich vnd wolgegrun=//det antwurt vnd hertzlich vermanu[n]g D. Ja=//cobi Strauß / Auff das vngüttig schmach=//büchlin D. Johannis Cochlaei von Wenndel=//steyn / Betreffen die auffrür.// ¶ Darumb besich auch mit vlaiß das ander teyl diß büchlins/ So kan//stu grüntlich erkennen/ was warer/ ewiger vn[d] zeitlicher frid ist/ // auch die recht vrsach aller auffrür vnd vneynigkeyt/ zwisch//en menschn auff erden/ wirt dir vnwidersprechlich an//gezeyt.// Christus Johannis am xvj. Capitel.// Inn der welt müßt ihr geenstiget werden/ // Aber seit getröst/ Ich hab die// welt vberwunden* ([Worms: Peter Schöffer d.J. 1526]), henceforth *Antwurt ... Coclei.* Strauss was responding to Cochlaeus' *Wjder die Reubische[n] vnd// Morderischen rotten der Bawren die vnter dem schey[n] des hei=//ligen Euangelions felschlichen wider alle Oberkeit// sich setzen vnd empören Martinus Luther.// Antword Joa[n]nis Coclej Von Wendelstein.// Eyn kurtzer begriff von auffr=//ren vnd rotten der Bawrn in hohem Teutsch=//land diß Jar begangen.* (Peter Quentell: Cologne: 1525).

23 Strauss's works on the Eucharist: *Wider den vnmilten Irr//thum[b] Maister Vlrichs zwinglins / So // er verneünet / die warhafftig gegenwirtigkait// dess allerhailligsten leybs und blüts Chri=//sti im Sacrament. Doct. Jacobi Strauß// mit ewiger warhait ablenung/ vnd er=clärung/ Darinnen alle from[m]en chri//sten mit vnüberwündtlicher er=//kantnus der wort Christi den// vergyfften Irthum[b] mügen // entweychen. // Imjar. MDXXVj. Mense Junij. // Margraffen Baden.* ([Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger 1526]), henceforth *Irrthumb ... Zwinglins*; and *Das der war // leyb Christi vnd seyn // heiliges blüt / im Sacrame[n]t gegenwertig sei/ richtige erkleru[n]g auff das new büchleyn. D. Johan//nes Haußscheyn/ disem züwi=der außgangen.// Jhesu Christi vnd aller glau=//bigen diener.// Jacobus Strauß.// Zü Markgraff Baden.// MDXXVII.* ([Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner] 1527), henceforth *War leyb Christi.*

had, like Witzel himself, returned to the Roman Church before his death. Despite Philip of Baden's re-catholicisation of his territories from 1528, Barge disputes this and argues that it is more likely that Strauss had died soon after his last publication.[24]

Between 1522 and 1527, Strauss produced eighteen separate works, and has been identified as one of the most prolific and reprinted pamphlet authors of the German Reformation.[25] Many of these were reprinted, the works on confession and marriage appearing in seven and five editions respectively.[26] The 1523 usury articles were also printed five times, including a Low German edition.[27] A prayer to be said prior to receiving the Eucharist taken from Strauss's first work was reprinted, along with extracts from Luther, Urbanus Rhegius, and Oecolampadius among others, in a prayer book printed in 1523.[28] A version of this publication was reprinted in 1531, and in both of these Strauss's name appeared in a prominent place on the title page.[29] One of his biographers has suggested, not without merit, that the efforts, made by Luther but more significantly by members of Luther's circle and followers, to distance themselves from Strauss after the latter's arrest has resulted in his

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24 Barge, *Jakob Strauß*, 164f. Rogge agrees that Strauss's reconversion is unlikely to have taken place, and puts it down to wishful thinking on Witzel's part. Rogge, 147.

25 Alejandro Zorzin, cited in Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*, (Berkeley, 1994), 26. A bibliography of Strauss's works has been compiled by Hermann Barge, 'Die gedruckten Schriften des evangelischen Predigers Jakob Strauß', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* XXXII (1935), 100-121, 248-252. Editions of all but two of these works are included in the Tübingen Microfiche Project: Hans-Joachim Köhler, Hildegard Hebenstreit-Wilfert, and Christoph Weismann. (eds.), *Flugschriften des fruhen 16. Jahrhunderts: Microfiche Serie* (Zug, 1979-). In total, Barge had found 43 editions of the eighteen pamphlets. VD16 lists a further two editions. Part of Strauss's first work appeared as *Ain schöne liepliche// Vnndericht / zü bedenck//en vnnd empfahenn / den kostbarlichen hayligesten// leib Christi / vnd sein// roßenfarbesplüt// zü nyessenn// Durch Doctor// Jacob Straussen//* [(Augsburg: Johann Schönsperger d.J.], 1524).

26 The pamphlet on marriage appeared in a Latin translation as SERMON CHRISTIANISSI=//mus su[pro] co[n]iugio sacerdotico// domini Iacobi Straus// in Eyssenach Ec=//lesiastis. ([Erfurt: Johannes Loersfeld], 1523)].

27 *Houetstucke vnd// Artikele Christliker// lere/ wedd[er] den vnchristlike[n] Wo=//ker/ darvme etlyke Prestere// to Jsenack/ ock anderß=//wor/ so gar vnro=//wich vn[d] bemue=//yet sint.// ... D. Jacobus Strueß.// to Jsenack Ecclesiastes.* ([Erfurt: Johann Loersfeld], 1523).

28 *Ain bet=//büchlin vnd Ain// eua[n]gelische beicht/ vn[d] hüp//sche gepet für die aller// haylsamesten auß// allen so bißheer// Gedruckt sein// außgezoge[n].// Von Doct Lut.// Uo[n] Do. Urbanus. Re.// Uo[n] Doct. Oecolampa.// Uc[n] Do. Jacob Strauß// Uo[n] Do. Joha. Speiser// Uo[n] Jo. Böschenstain.* (Augsburg, 1523)

29 *Vil hailsamer vnd// tröstlicher Gebet / mit// sampt ainer Euangelischen// Beycht / gezogen auß// den sechs Doctorn / //hernach benennt.// Fleyssig Corigiert / Ge=//mert vnd gebessert.// Mathei.21.// Alles was jr bittet im gebett / //glaubt jr / so werdt jrs entpfahen.* ([Augsburg, 1531]).

occupying a much more insignificant place in the historiography of the Reformation than warranted by Strauss's relative importance during his own lifetime.[30]

Of Strauss's two principal biographers, Barge has made a thorough study of the course of Strauss's life and career as far as can be ascertained from the primary material available, and his work has been my chief source for these details. Rogge, on his own admission, has not really gone beyond Barge in this, but instead has examined the ideas contained in the pamphlets, with much of the attention devoted to the theological concepts. Except for some brief sketches of Strauss's relations with other figures of the early evangelical movement in Saxony and Thuringia, and even these are confined to evidence of meetings between Strauss and these individuals and the opinions they recorded regarding one another in letters and print, his only real point of comparison is Luther. Rogge concludes that Strauss's theology was dependent on, although inferior to, that of the Wittenberg reformer. This is understandable, given the importance of the latter, but Rogge's emphasis will not be adopted here, partly because it neglects other potential influences on Strauss,[31] partly because it underestimates the extent to which Strauss anticipated and challenged Luther. Apart from Oyer's interesting but very specific study of the links between Strauss's ideas and those of the early Anabaptists[32], he has been largely neglected in scholarship since the 1950s.

Scholarship on communication and dissemination of ideas in the German Reformation has thus advanced greatly since Strauss was the object of sustained scholarly attention. Historians have broadened their focus from the reconstruction of particular reformers' lives and ideas to an analysis of readership and reception which acknowledges the intricacies of mass communication in the Reformation era. In investigating Strauss's work, I hope to demonstrate the value of an examination of his ideas to this broader question of communication. The

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30 Rogge (1957), 151.

31 The possible influence of the South German and Swiss strain of reforming thought, as expressed by Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer, and others on Strauss has not yet been satisfactorily explored. This is all the more surprising, given Strauss's Swiss origins and Swiss / South German university experience.

32 John S. Oyer, 'The Influence of Jacob Strauss on the Anabaptists. A Problem in Historical Methodology', in Marc Lienhard (ed.), *The Origins and Characteristics of Anabaptism* (The Hague, 1977), 62-82.

investigation will build on the work of Barge and Rogge; while not necessarily extending our biographical knowledge of Strauss, it will illuminate areas of his thought which have remained obscure. It will also, however, proceed on the grounds that Strauss's works are particularly promising ground for the exploration of the relationship between pamphleteer and readership, and in particular of the manner in which the pamphleteer's perception of his readership could shape his message. Strauss's pamphlets are a development of the established relationship between preacher and laity. In pamphlets and sermons on all subjects, in the first years of the Reformation, he simultaneously addresses the laity and redefines their role. He is notable for the space he dedicates to subjects which can be read as purely material: a feature which calls for investigation.

This thesis is therefore an investigation of the pamphlets themselves, its purpose to evaluate Strauss as a teacher, missionary and, indeed, as a propagandist, in the early years of the German Reformation. It will highlight tensions which can be described in terms of Matheson's distinction between 'discourse' and 'propaganda'. Its central questions are relatively straightforward: why did Strauss write these pamphlets, on these subjects, and in this way? Strauss's pamphlets can be examined for his concern with the reception of his work, and for a calculated appeal to self-interest. Whether such elements in fact formed, or distorted, his message, must be considered in the light of his theology and the aims for reform which can be extracted from his pamphlets. This is an exploration of the writing of persuasive publicity and of Strauss's use of the then 'new medium' of the pamphlet but also – and perhaps primarily, at least in the first three chapters – that of the 'old' medium, the sermon. The pamphlets in question provide a particularly suitable selection of sources for the study of these activities, having been written in a relatively short space of time, and on a disparate group of subjects. Almost all were originally sermons in some form, although most were either reduced to point form or expanded for publication. Printing, at least while Strauss was still in his position in Eisenach, was perhaps a secondary consideration, other than when he was consciously writing as an exiled preacher to his former congregation, or in a defensive capacity.

The basic content of each of Strauss's publications has been discussed by Barge and in more depth by Rogge, pamphlet by pamphlet, and I will not be duplicating this work. Unlike previous analyses, I will be examining the pamphlets in relation to the themes and ideas they contain, rather than in chronological sequence. In taking this approach, it is important to remember that these were circumstantial works, written in response to problems which confronted Strauss at various times during his brief career as a preacher, and they cannot be seen to contain a planned and unchanging programme for reform. Although working thematically rather than chronologically, I have nonetheless tried to make the linear progression clear. However, Strauss did have some specific aims and central, relatively constant theological ideas, even if these are not always clear or coherently expressed. Furthermore, the principal over-arching themes isolated and examined here can be seen as consistent and durable elements. Especially from mid-1522 to the beginning of 1524, when he wrote his second work on usury, the broad understandings remain the same. For the pamphlets written during this period (and to a lesser extent for the others, although the Peasants' War does provide a natural and significant 'break'), the short space of time in which they were written does justify the thematic approach to some extent. In fact, in some cases, the chronology is unclear.[33] Although the first chapter does seek to set out the principal points of Strauss's theology as they relates to salvation and religious reform, I have decided to deal with some of the more difficult theological questions throughout the thesis. This discussion will build gradually towards conclusions regarding agency, predestination, works-righteousness, and the need for reform, all of which are relevant to the principal issue of persuasion.

The first of the questions posed above can be answered relatively easily. Strauss saw himself as a pastor, one whose task it was to care for the souls of the laity. He believed that these were in danger due to errors propagated by the existing church, and saw it as his duty to rescue his public from these errors, bringing them instead to the truth as he saw it. Strauss

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[33] Strauss's final two pamphlets, those on the eucharistic controversy, could be said to belong to a separate phase of the early Reformation, and also of Strauss's own career. Although some of the ideas contained therein are relevant to the principle themes of this study, and will therefore be addressed when necessary, the focus will be on the earlier works.

certainly did not feel the need to publish all of his sermons; therefore, it would be impossible and foolish to attempt to derive any comprehensive understanding of his views from these surviving printed works. However, he rarely confined himself to the subjects indicated in the titles of the pamphlets, and these works contain his thoughts on a broad range of topics relating not only to the reform of faith and religious practice but also to more secular matters.

An assessment of why Strauss chose to write on such a variety of topics, and of the manner in which he presented this message, is more problematic. For some time, most noticeably since the middle of the twentieth century, there has been an unmistakeable shift in the historiography of the German Reformation, whereby scholars have sought to determine not only the degree to which it was 'successful', but also the reasons for this success. Historians have been regarding with ever more sceptical eyes the idea that religious change was the inevitable result of God's will, or of the force of nature that was Martin Luther, or both. Instead, they have increasingly asked to what extent this profound alteration in the way in which the people of the cities, towns, villages, and countryside of the Holy Roman Empire viewed their faith and their religious life was natural and spontaneous. Many have posited that they might not in fact have been immediately receptive to the teachings of the reformers, but may instead have been required to undergo a sustained process of persuasion and acclimatisation. A degree of acceptance and indeed enthusiasm for these new ideas is undeniable. Nonetheless, Strauss's own efforts to 'sell' the Reformation and especially – as will become clear – his evident despair at his own lack of success and the failure of God's word to take hold in the hearts of his listeners, would suggest that neither his message nor those of his fellow reformers were welcomed instantly or unreservedly.

In recent decades, then, historians of the German Reformation have sought to explain why the new teaching and its implications eventually took hold in so many parts of the empire. One explanation which does not involve a wholesale departure from more traditional interpretations is that which proposes that people had long been seeking liberation from a real and keenly-felt spiritual oppression, and from which the theology of Luther and others

offered a means of escape.[34] Alternatively, some have attributed this success to anticlerical sentiment already existing among the population, and which responded powerfully to the criticism of the first estate emanating from the reformers.[35] A third and not unrelated answer has been provided by those who have examined the form taken by the new church and the identity of those who led and enforced the changes. The latter of course includes the major reformers, and the scholarship on these figures continues to provide valuable reassessments of both their careers and their ideas. However, our understanding of the reception of the new teaching has perhaps been most significantly advanced by investigations which take account of the broader social context. This is particularly evident when the result of work that has been done on the initial appearance and consolidation of the Reformation in specific rural and urban locations. It has been argued on the basis of these studies that the success of the Reformation in some contexts and its acceptance by the laity can be attributed to the latter having seen in the new teaching solutions to the difficulties they faced and reflections of the aspirations they held in non-religious matters.[36] Bernd Moeller and Peter Blickle have taken a similar approach, although they have reached rather different conclusions. Moeller has argued that the evangelical message was accepted on the basis of lay aspirations in religious and ecclesiastical matters. Blickle rejects both Ozment's theory of an oppressive penitential system and Goertz's focus on anticlericalism in favour of a healthy late-mediaeval religiosity which survived among the peasantry of the early sixteenth-century and, far from causing them to reject the new teaching, led to its enthusiastic acceptance in the communes.[37]

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34 As argued by Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland.* (New Haven and London, 1975). For further discussion of this, see Chapter I.7, below.

35 See especially Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Pfaffenhaß und groß Geschrei. Die reformatorische Bewegungen in Deutschland 1517-1529* (Munich, 1987). On the extensive scholarship on Reformation anticlericalism, see Chapter II.1 and Chapter III.2, below.

36 Thomas A. Brady, Jr., *Ruling Class, Regime and Reformation at Strasbourg 1520-1555* (Leiden, 1978).

37 Bernd Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation – Three Essays,* translated by H. C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards, Jr. (Durham, N.C., 1982); Peter Blickle, *Communal Reformation – The Quest for Salvation in Sixteenth-Century Germany,* Thomas Dunlop (trans.), (New Jersey and London, 1992).

A further strategy that might be useful in attempting to account for the preachers' 'success' and one which does not appear to have been extensively employed in the scholarship on German Reformation, is an examination of how the preachers and pamphleteers themselves, in their presentation of their message to the laity, attempted to ensure that their message took root among the public. Despite the continued appearance of biographical and theological studies of such figures, and of research on the persuasive potential of reformation pamphlets and sermons in general, I have not found any detailed investigation of this type, and it is this approach I intend to pursue in my study of Strauss's campaign of persuasion. It has been said that ordinary people were 'systematically' manipulated through pamphlets and sermons by those who sought to spread the new teaching.[38] Actual reception is difficult if not impossible to assess, even if one were to consider mentalities, other popular issues, and their effect on what filtered through to the listener or reader. The paucity of surviving sources for the town of Eisenach, the location of Strauss's principal reforming activities, does not help, although recent research on lay writers of the period has shed light on some of their preoccupations and expectations.[39] Although this aspect will not be ignored, my principal aim is to try to reach some conclusions regarding Strauss's intent. He certainly did not limit himself to the religious sphere, and even his treatment of the sacraments, church organization, and popular religious practice involve non-theological elements. To what degree was he sincere in his appeal to lay concerns? Did Strauss deliberately address these subjects in a cynical attempt to flatter the laity and gain support for his teaching? I will be assessing these questions with the

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38 Hans-Jürgen Goertz, '"What a tangled and tenuous mess the clergy is!" Clerical Anticlericalism in the Reformation Period', in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994) 499-519, 500.

39 Many of the town's records were destoyed by fire in 1636. On laypeople writing in the early Reformation, see Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture. Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480-1599*. (London, 1982), and eadem., *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519-1530* (Boston, 1996); Paul A. Russell, *Lay Theology in the Reformation – Popular Pamphleteers in Southwest Germany 1521-1525* (Cambridge, 1986); Martin Arnold, *Handwerker als theologische Schriftsteller. Studien zu Flugschriften der frühen Reformation (1523-1525)*, (Göttingen, 1990); Berndt Hamm, 'Laientheologie zwichen Luther und Zwingli: Das reformatorische Anliegen des Konstanzer Stadtschreibers Jörg Vögeli aufgrund seiner Schriften von 1523/24', in Josef Nolte (ed.), *Kontinuität und Umbuch: Theologie und Frömmigkeit in Flugschriften und Kleinliteratur an der Wende vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert; Beitrag zum Tübinger Kolloquium* (Stuttgart, 1978), 222-295; Heinrich Richard Schmidt, 'Die Ethik der Laien in der Reformation', in Stephen E. Buckwalter and Bernd Moeller (eds.), *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch: Wissenschaftliches Symposium der Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1996* (Gütersloh, 1998), 333-370.

target audience of the layman (broadly defined, at least initially, as the 'common man') in mind; even though many of these pamphlets would have been bought and used by other preachers and clergy, as Strauss himself was in the first instance a preacher, the laity were always the intended audience.[40]

A second important development in the historiography of the German Reformation concerns its diversity. Also partly as a consequence of a gradual departure from confessionally-based interpretations of the evangelical movement, work on the 'Radical Reformation' has been moving beyond the confines of Mennonite scholarship and taken its place within broader historiography.[41] The resulting inclusion of such diverse figures as the egalitarian insurrectionist Thomas Müntzer, the peaceable Spiritualist Sebastian Franck, and the apocalyptically-minded troublemaker Melchior Hoffman within a single movement has, in turn, led to numerous re-evaluations of what it meant to be a religious radical at this time. There is an argument to be made that the evangelical movement was originally radical, and that the divisions between its adherents that grew increasingly obvious and problematic during the 1520s were the result of an increasing conservatism on the part of Luther and others rather than the emergence of ever more uncompromising variants of extremist. For the most part, however, radicalism has tended to be assessed in relation to its distance from Wittenberg and the characteristics of what came to be known as the magisterial Reformation.

As well as the traditional benchmark that is the rejection of infant baptism, the theological criteria of 'radicalism' most prominently include the presence of spiritualist and mystical ideas, the existence of a godly and identifiable elect, and a sacramentarian interpretation of the Eucharist. In addition, the distinguishing features of radicalism can also incorporate ideal Christian communities, in which religious and even secular life is dictated by the word of

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40 According to Martin Arnold, pamphlets in German were directed primarily at the laity. 'Mit der Reformation trat die Flugschrift gegenüber dem Buch in den Vordergrund. Sie wurde vornehmlich dazu eingesetzt, Überzeugungen und Meinungen zu verbreiten. Ihr Inhalt war meist aktuell, ihr Umfang gering und das Äußere anspruchslos. Die deutschsprachigen Flugschriften wandten sich vor allem an die Laien', idem., *Handwerker als theologische Schriftsteller*, 45.

41 The most comprehensive survey is still George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (2nd edn., Kirksville MO, 1992).

God, usually involving changes in the area of social justice. This was often to be achieved with an urgency that did not allow the faithful to wait for the consent and approval of traditional secular, ecclesiastical, or intellectual authorities, and which occasionally manifested itself in outright rebellion. These aspects of radicalism were of course not shared by all of those upon whom this label is generally conferred. They appeared in various combinations, and this has meant not only a number of endeavours have been made to sort the reformation radicals into groups, but also that these latter are by no means clearly-defined, and this fluidity is generally acknowledged.[42] One such attempt at classification is that made by Adolf Laube, who identifies two distinct strands of radicalism as having emerged by 1523. The first of these, with Karlstadt as its 'prototype', shared Luther's basic 'socio-ethical views' but campaigned far more vociferously for their implementation, while still rejecting any right of rebellion. This group, which was also characterized by a mystical view of the sacraments, includes Melchior Hoffman and the early incarnation of Eberlin von Günzberg along with Karlstadt. Laube's second strand is that of the 'People's Reformation', led by Thomas Müntzer, and comprising 'the outermost left wing that [...] aspired to overcome not only existing society, but also any kind of class society'.[43] Despite Laube's reliance on the terminology peculiar to the 'early bourgeois revolution' scholarship of the German Democratic Republic, his first group in particular would appear, in its breadth and

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42 See Hans J. Hillerbrand, 'The Reformation and the German Peasants' War', in Lawrence P. Buck and Jonathan W. Zophy (eds), *The Social History of the Reformation* (Columbus OH, 1972), 106-136, and idem., Hans J. Hillerbrand, 'Radicalism in the Early Reformation,' in idem. (ed.), *Radical Tendencies in the Reformation: Divergent Perspectives*, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies Volume IX (Kirksville, MO, 1988), 25-41; Sigrid Looß, 'Alternatives Denken oder Außenseiterpositionen im Zeitalter von Reformation und Bauernkrieg', in Günter Vogler (ed.), *Wegscheiden der Reformation: Alternatives Denken vom 16. bis zum 18. Jh.* (Weimar, 1994), 99-113; and the essays in Gottfried Seebass, Irene Dingel (ed.), *Die Reformation und ihre Außenseiter: gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge; zum 60. Geburtstag des Autors* (Göttingen, 1997) and *Radikalität und Dissent im 16. Jahrhundert. Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* Beischrift 27 (Berlin, 2002).

43 Adolf Laube, 'Radicalism as a Research Problem in the History of the Early Reformation', in Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.), *Radical Tendencies in the Reformation: Divergent Perspectives*, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies Volume IX (Kirksville, MO, 1988), 9-23, 18ff. Laube goes on to write of the first group: 'under the given conditions the assessment of reality by the bourgeois-radical forces was, undoubtedly, more accurate than that of the extreme left. However, the latter were by no means mere utopians. On the other hand, they were carried by an actual social basis, as became apparent especially during the Peasants' War, and they expressed their yearning for a life free form exploitation in social equality. On the other hand, they were able to contribute objectively to implementing attainable aims to the extent that they established themselves as a social movement', ibid., 21.

flexibility, to be an especially workable formulation. It is somewhere in this broad cohort within the early Reformation that recent scholarship has placed Strauss. The intermingling of the temporal and the spiritual, so evident in Strauss's pamphlets, was a feature of radical religion in the early evangelical movement, and he has been most closely associated with the Karlstadt 'circle' of Saxon radicals, with Laube including him in his 'bourgeois-radical' group. This classification of Strauss as a radical will be borne in mind throughout this study, and will hopefully have undergone some degree of clarification by its end.

The existence of a 'Radical Reformation' that is defined, whatever its internal intricacies, in opposition to the mainstream, has long been established. However, a more recent debate concerns the idea that divisions were even less clear-cut, and the possibility that even within the more 'conservative' Reformation there was no real unity. The early years of the evangelical movement during which Strauss was active have been described as a period of *Wildwuchs* or 'wild growth', indicating a plurality of understandings of the 'new teaching' among preachers and reformers, who combined elements of Luther's theology with elements from other sources; a fluidity of religious identity that was brought to an end by the Peasants' War and the increasing control and standardization of doctrine.[44] This interpretation has been challenged most notably by Bernd Moeller. Moeller does not of course claim that there existed no diversity whatever, but he does argue that, in general, the early evangelical preachers were unified by a prevailing shared understanding and acceptance of Luther's fundamental teaching on justification by faith alone. In support of this assertion, he has made a selection of pamphlets from the early 1520s, designed to demonstrate the unity of the evangelical movement at this time. As each of these publications has been condensed from a collection of sermons, presumably giving an indication of the content of its author's preaching at a particular stage of his career, Moeller asserts that they provide an accurate representation of a cohesive movement.[45] Other scholars have countered Moeller's argument,

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[44] On this debate, see, among others, the essays in Hans-Jürgen Goertz (ed.), *Radikalität und Dissens im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2001), and idem., 'Eine "bewegte" Epoche. Zur Heterogenität reformatorischer Bewegungen', in Günter Vogler (ed.), *Wegscheiden der Reformation: Alternatives Denken vom 16. bis zum 18. Jh.* (Weimar, 1994), 23-56.

[45] Bernd Moeller, 'Was wurde in der Frühzeit der Reformation in den deutschen Städten gepredigt?' in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 75 (1984), 176-193, translated as 'What was preached in

maintaining that accidental misunderstanding and deliberate rejection led to the existence of a multiplicity of versions of Luther's ideas, even among non-radical preachers and the general population. Berndt Hamm, while accepting that there was an 'inner coherence' to the early Reformation in its united opposition to late-mediaeval principles, argues that this was overlaid by a simultaneous plurality of views.[46]

In spite of the classification of Strauss as a radical or enthusiast both by his contemporaries and ever since, Moeller has included Strauss's earliest pamphlet in the sample mentioned above. It is true that the theological basis for Strauss's reforms, while drawing much from Luther, cannot be described as strictly 'Lutheran'. Strauss in his writings rarely acknowledges Luther's influence. He saw himself not as a disciple of the latter but rather as a reformer in his own right. He rejected the existence of purgatory in a pamphlet dated 1523, long before Luther was willing to come to the same conclusion, at least in print.[47] Strauss pushed through

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German Towns in the Early Reformation?' in C. Scott Dixon (ed.), *The German Reformation – The Essential Readings*, (Oxford, 1999), 33-52. An extended treatment of this material can be found in Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, *Städtische Predigt in der Frühzeit der Reformation : eine Untersuchung deutscher Flugschriften der Jahre 1522 bis 1529* (Göttingen, 1996). For Moeller's response to his critics: Bernd Moeller, 'Die Rezeption Luthers in der frühen Reformation', in Berndt Hamm, idem., and Dorothea Wendebourg, *Reformationstheorien: Ein kirchenhistorischer Disput über Einheit und Vielfalt der Reformation* (Göttingen, 1995), 9-30.

46 Berndt Hamm, 'Einheit und Vielfalt der Reformation: Oder: was die Reformation zur Reformation machte', in idem., Bernd Moeller, and Dorothea Wendebourg, *Reformationstheorien: Ein kirchenhistorischer Disput über Einheit und Vielfalt der Reformation* (Göttingen, 1995), 57-127. See also Dorothea Wendebourg, 'Die Einheit der Reformation als historisches Problem', in Berndt Hamm, Bernd Moeller, and eadem., *Reformationstheorien: Ein kirchenhistorischer Disput über Einheit und Vielfalt der Reformation* (Göttingen, 1995), 31-51; Susan Karant-Nunn, 'What was Preached in German Cities in the Early Years of the Reformation? *Wildwuchs* versus Lutheran Unity', in Phillip N. Bebb and Sherrin Marshall (eds.), *The Process of Change in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of Miriam Usher Chrisman* (Athens, Ohio, 1988), 81-96.

47 *Fegfeur*. Luther did not definitively reject the idea of purgatory as an intermediate state until 1530. Even the radical Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt reconsidered in his *On the state of the souls of the Christian Faithful of 1523* his earlier denial of such an intermediate state, made in an anonymous collection of Latin theses published the previous year, and showed himself reluctant to go beyond a rejection of the possibility of intercession. The development of the theology of both Karlstadt and Luther on this subject has been traced by Craig M. Koslofsky, The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700, (Basingstoke and London, 2000), 31-39. Gerhard Westerburg published a similar work on the subject to that of Karlstadt in Strasbourg in the same year that Strauss's pamphlet appeared: *Vom fegefewer vnd standt der// verscheyden selen eyn Chrystliche// meynung durch Doctor// Gerhart westerbruch// von Coellen Neu=//lich außgangen.// Gedrucht jm jar .M.D.xxiij.* ([Strasbourg: Martin Flach d.J], 1523). This too retained the idea of an intermediate state for

reforms in outward, ceremonial matters, most notably the use of oil and chrism in baptism, requiring no prior sanction or even advice from Wittenberg, and was consequently regarded by many of his contemporaries, including the earliest historians of the Reformation, not only as independent, but as impulsive and imperious. It is beyond the scope of this study to make a complete comparison between Strauss's views on theology and society and those of other figures, although I have done so on occasions when the subject seemed especially relevant; either when Strauss's ideas were particularly original or different, or when related to the question of propaganda. Given the complex and idiosyncratic nature of his views on both theological and practical matters, this study of Strauss may however make some contribution to the *Wildwuchs* debate.

The first chapter will identify the principal message that Strauss was attempting to sell to the laity; that is, how they were to extricate themselves from the old teaching. It will outline Strauss's theology, as far as this can be ascertained, and the reform of faith, practice, and church that it entailed. This is necessary not only in order to determine both the message of which Strauss needed to convince his public and its inherent appeal, but also because these central theological convictions in turn informed his motivation and the persuasive nature of his pamphlets. Chapter II will deal with the first of two significant themes which may have enabled Strauss to win the sympathy and goodwill of the laity: that of the intellectual and religious independence of the latter in relation to what Strauss portrayed as a spiritually tyrannical clergy. Chapter III will examine the second of these: that of the oppression of the common man beyond the strictly salvific. The oppression in question is primarily financial, and the subject of money plays a particularly substantial role in Strauss's works. As in the preceding chapter, the degree to which the cynical methods of the propagandist may have come into play will be probed. A secondary aim of these two middle chapters will be to

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those souls of the dead which were not yet justified ('ist es auch zü besorgen das etliche selen nach dem tod mangel vnd gebrechten ahben in der lieb gottes, in jrer gerechtigkeyt, in jrer weyßheit das sie got nit mit gantzen vnd vollen herzen lieben, vnd ir gerechtgkeyt noch zü kleyn sey'); these would have to be cleansed in a spiritual fire. Ibid., Biiij r-v. On Karlstadt and Westerburg, see Stefan Oehmig, 'Karlstadts Auffassung vom Fegefeuer: Entstehung und Wirkung', in Sigrid Looß (ed.), *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486-1541): Ein Theologe der frühen Reformation; Beiträge eines Arbeitsgesprächs vom 24.-25. November 1995 in Wittenberg* (Wittenberg, 1998), 73-120.

further ascertain Strauss's reforming aims, as initially explored in Chapter I. The final chapter explores Strauss's use of the pamphlet and sermon for a different, if related purpose. As well as using these forms of communication to convince the laity of the necessity of change, he also employed them as a means of self-defence. In examining this function of the pamphlets, I also hope to come to a conclusion regarding the method by which Strauss intended these reforms to be achieved.

Chapter I

'Hungry for Forgiveness'

Faith and the Path to Salvation.

Introduction.

In order to determine Strauss's use of these pamphlets and sermons to influence the public, it will first be neccesary to identify the message itself: that which he was attempting to sell. It is clear from these works that his fundamental concern was the salvation of his listeners and readers. This chapter will therefore outline the spiritual and ecclesiastical changes he believed were required in order to ensure this, as well as the way in which he presented these requirements to the laity in theological terms. Central to the pastoral mission of the preachers and pamphleteers of the early evangelical movement was the need to implant in the minds of their congregations and readers a new conception of the relationship between God and man regarding the soul of the latter. Luther's break with the popular works-righteousness of the late Middle Ages entailed a transformation of many aspects of religious life. This was a challenge that was taken up by a number of theologians in the early 1520s, who saw it as their duty to defend God's glory and omnipotence in the face of what they perceived to be idolatry and blasphemy: the attempt of man to influence or bribe an all-powerful divinity in order to gain salvation. Despite the general homogeneity regarding this central message apparent in the selection of printed sermons examined by Bernd Moeller[1], the specific theological understandings articulated in these works did contain variations. There are few signs in Strauss's early pamphlets that he consciously disagreed with Luther in the area of theology; any such differences that did exist at this stage, Strauss may have thought minor or irrelevant, more suited to the university than to the general public. However, one cannot assume from this that they thought alike on these matters. By 1522-1523, Luther had published a good deal; this does not mean that his views on salvation were systematically

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1 Bernd Moeller, 'What was Preached in German Towns in the Early Reformation?' in C. Scott Dixon (ed.), *The German Reformation. The Essential Readings* (Oxford, 1999), 33-52; see also Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, *Städtische Predigt in der Frühzeit der Reformation : eine Untersuchung deutscher Flugschriften der Jahre 1522 bis 1529* (Göttingen, 1996).

presented in these works, nor, of course, that Strauss was familiar with everything he had written.

In assessing Strauss's attempts to persuade, therefore, it will be necessary to establish his own understanding of faith and salvation, as this will be central to any examination of his concept of reform.[2] It is by no means easy to identify this, however, or even to be sure that he had a consistent or properly thought-out soteriology. Strauss was far more practical than theological in what he chose to print, and clearly felt obliged to advise the public on how to conduct their religious lives, more so than the need to go into too much depth regarding the theological wrestling that lay behind these prescriptions. His concern was to tell people what they needed to know. He rarely approached the process by which man was saved in a direct and specific manner. Any answer to this problem, therefore, requires much careful reading of his pronouncements on related subjects along with some speculation, although one must be careful not to construct a systematic theology that does not exist. Moreover, the pamphlets almost certainly cannot give a complete picture of Strauss's views, as they can only represent a portion of his sermons. Nonetheless, it is probable that Strauss decided to put into print his writings on those aspects he judged most important or those regarding which the most persuasion was required, or both. Much of the discussion of Strauss's theology and his approach to religious reformation in this chapter has been taken from the pamphlets written in 1522 and 1523, with some reference to the second work on usury of 1524; the latter, however, will be examined fully in Chapter IV. Strauss's first pamphlet on rebellion (1525) contains what he claimed to be 'introduction and conclusion to' sermons he had given in Eisenach.[3] This work includes a lengthy discussion of what can be termed Strauss's 'process'

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2 Both ecclesiastical, which will be set out in this chapter, and that which went beyond the church, which will be discussed in in subsequent chapters.

3 'als ein eingang vn[d] beschluß aller meiner predig', *Auffrur* Aj r. Joachim Rogge, *Der Beitrag des Predigers Jakob' Strauss zur frühen Reformations- geschichte* (Berlin, 1957) 114, agrees with this interpretation. Barge, however, claims that the pamphlet consists of an expanded sermon, and that the unnamed person with the 'pious heart' whom Strauss describes as having been moved by this 'sermon' was probably that of the wife of the Baden *Landhofmeister*, Konrad von Vennigen, through whose intercession Strauss was to obtain his preaching position there. Hermann Barge, *Jakob Strauß: Ein Kämpfer für das Evangelium in Tirol, Thüringen und Süddeutschland* (Leipzig, 1937) 114, n.316. Against this, Strauss spends the preceding paragraphs describing his preaching in Thuringia and explaining the precarious circumstances which have prevented him from putting this tract into print sooner; a

of faith and this latter is also examined below. One must of course be wary of Strauss's claims of consistency, as it is possible that it was only at that point he had properly worked out and expressed this element of his soteriology. Nonetheless, I have taken the ideas contained in this pamphlet to be at least to some degree indicative of his theological position during the preceding years.

1. Idolatry and presumption.

Luther's rejection of the existing understanding of the relationship between God and man was based on the nature of grace. It was through grace that the distance between the two could be bridged and man made worthy of salvation, this grace having been denied to man since the Fall but made available once more through Christ's atonement. The theology of atonement is complex, and there was by no means a unified expression in the period before the Reformation. According to McGrath, justification was in the late Middle Ages 'a favourite topic of debate'.[4] Nonetheless, the most common mediaeval understanding held that grace was a substance inherent in man from birth, placed there by God. However, salvation was not assured by Christ's atonement, which merely reopened the possibility of man attaining such a state. Man needed to move from atonement to redemption[5] through further means of grace. This grace was renewed in man, at God's behest, through the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist. In baptism, man was cleansed, but, being disposed to sin, would do so throughout his life. These sins were to be redeemed principally through the sacrament of confession, through which God's grace once more entered the penitent. This was supplemented by a growing recourse to extra-sacramental works. These included works of mercy as well as pilgrimages, the endowment of masses and the purchase of indulgences. This evolved into what has come to be known as 'works-righteousness'. It has been argued that the mediaeval church did not really believe that one could earn or purchase salvation

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sermon given in Baden, on the other hand, would have been delivered during a relatively stable period in Strauss's life. Of course, it could be both.

4 Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei : a history of the Christian doctrine of justification* (3rd edn, Cambridge, 2005), 105.

5 As expressed in relation to the theology of Geiler von Keysersberg, 'through Christ's Passion the Christian life receives the power to become meritorious', E. Jane Dempsey Douglass, *Justification in late medieval preaching; A study of John Geiler of Keisersberg* (Leiden, 1966), 183.

and that these practices were merely tolerated due to the confusing resulting from a reluctance to make a definite statement on the issue.[6] However, by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, many among both laity and clergy had become enthusiastic participants in the practices described above, while some feared that the centrality of God, and particularly of Christ's sacrifice, in the process of salvation was being forgotten in favour of man's own merit. Luther was convinced that nothing in man was naturally good and that one would never be capable of achieving righteousness by one's own efforts. This led him to develop a soteriology which removed all human agency from the process of attaining salvation. Grace was not inherent in man, but 'imputed'; there being nothing within man that could enable him to approach God. Man, for Luther, was utterly dependent on God, not only for the grace which was in God's gift, but for the redemption that saved. The free will of man in this matter was replaced by the will of God. Faith was all that was required for salvation, and by 1520 even faith itself was no longer a work, as it had appeared to be in Luther's earlier writings; instead, it was received passively by man through God's grace.[7] The effect of Christ's atonement was total and permanent; there was nothing for man to add.

Strauss too emphasises the sufficiency of the crucifixion in these pamphlets. In the work on relics, he describes the flight from Egypt to the Promised Land as mirroring the flight from the 'prison' of the old Adam (that is, man's sinful natural state) through the redemption of Christ to eternal salvation.[8] His most comprehensive treatments of this atonement appear in his first printed work and in the pamphlet on the inner and outer baptism.[9] In the latter, we are told that Christ redeemed through his suffering, with particular emphasis on the cleansing nature of Christ's blood,[10] while in the confession pamphlet Strauss insists that

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6 McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 105.

7 Ibid., 113; also Berndt Hamm, 'What was the Reformation Doctrine of Justification?', in C. Scott Dixon (ed.), *The German Reformation. The Essential Readings* (Oxford, 1999), 56-90, especially 78-80.

8 *Heiligthüm*, Biij v. In the second usury pamphlet, the faithful, 'who are capable of all things in faith,' are saved through Christ's death, and there is no route to salvation that has not been given by Christ. *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij v-Aiij r.

9 *Trostliche verstendige leer; Ynnerlichen ... Tauff.*

10 In her discussion of the 'increasing fixation of blood' of mediaeval theology regarding atonement, Caroline Walker Bynum has observed that 'obsession with blood and suffering is lodged squarely at the heart of theology (both scholastic and vernacular), even where its outpourings carry no implications of exchange, substitution, or punishment. Despite the palpable increase in joyful, even

'Christ became man and suffered for the forgiveness of sins'.[11] In his work on purgatory, he states that salvation will only be found in 'the bottomless unending mercy of God' which has been brought through Christ the saviour'.[12] Strauss echoes Luther's insistence on the impossibility of earning salvation through one's own efforts: none of one's 'good works and laws are worth anything at all'.[13] In the pamphlet on relics, he advises that one will be saved by no creature, but by Christ alone, who does so 'freely from his grace and mercy'; the saints, he writes, have been saved because they heard and believed God's word and not due to their own acts (their *verdienen*).[14] For Strauss, therefore, anything that would detract from the role of God in man's salvation amounted to presumption. In seeking to influence God, such works were not only pointless but also blasphemous.

In many of his early pamphlets, Strauss is particularly concerned with defending God's omnipotence regarding the salvation of man against the clergy, whom he identifies as the greatest blasphemers. They seek, he claims, to usurp God's office, which is to forgive sins and save souls through his grace. One of the chief defects of the existing clergy as opposed to the pastor proposed by Strauss in his pamphlet on the Christian assembly concerns the conduct of the former regarding the hierarchy, especially the 'idolatrous' practice of kissing the feet of the pope; in doing so, they pretend that salvation, 'the entrance to the sheepfold, will be

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erotic and ecstatic, response to God, we might well call the piety of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries 'blood piety' so prominent did themes of bloodletting, pain, sacrifice, and self-immolation become', Caroline Walker Bynum, 'The Power in the Blood: Sacrifice, Satisfaction and Substitution in Late Medieval Soteriology', in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, SJ, and Gerald O'Collins, SJ (eds.), *The Redemption: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Christ as Redeemer* (Oxford, 2004), 177-204, 183f.

11 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aij v-Aiij r; *Beichtbüchlein*, Cij r.

12 *Fegfeur*, A v: 'Der wegen keyn trost noch züuorsicht vnsers heyls tzüuorhoffen, dann alleyn bey der grundlosen vnentlichen barmhertzickeit gottis, die vns so geweltiglich durch Christum vnsern selgimacher tzügestellt ist'.

13 *Auffrur*, Aiij r. Strauss provides a lengthy treatment of this idea in his 1526 answer to Johannes Cochlaeus, as part of his attempt to clear up the latter's 'misunderstandings' regarding the new teaching. He condemns the presumption of those who deny 'God's grace, mercy, and omnipotence' and instead offer him 'unholy, mocking addition and help' in the salvation of his children, *Antwurt ... Coclei*, B r- Bij r.

14 'Hie hörstü wol dz kain hailgthum, hailig, noch creatur, in Christo dich erhelt, aber der gehörig glaub seiner stim, vnd nach volgens, das gibt Chr[ist]us allein, frey auß seiner gnad, vnd parmhertzigkait, in dem allain die hailigen all, vnd nit auß jrem verdienen, geseliget seindt.' *Heiligthüm*, Aiij v.

granted not from God's grace, but from the grace of men'.[15] Christ alone is the gate to this sheepfold, and will judge, he writes, 'according to his eternal word'. Strauss condemns the 'presumption' of those who who set up false criteria for salvation and put themselves in the place of God.[16] The redemption performed by Christ through his death on the cross is diminished by such activity, and the clergy, those 'servants of souls', who 'do not allow Jesus to remain Jesus', deem themselves 'so powerful and holy' that their influence, that of the 'wretched, unhappy maggot sack' of humanity, can assist Christ in this matter.[17] Strauss describes this presumption as impious and godless blasphemy.[18] It is made clear that Christ must not be robbed of his redemptive role, as attempted by the Antichrist and his followers. Elsewhere, one finds a similar condemnation of those who would 'not let Christ be Christ'.[19]

Confession

Perhaps the most visible example of this theft of God's salvific office is to be found in the absolution granted by the priest in the sacrament of penance. Strauss attacks the 'magic' and mystery involved and the associated 'power' of the clergy. He announces that, although 'Christ became man and suffered for the forgiveness of sins',[20] confession as it is now practised is an attack on this sacrifice. In this ritual, 'Christ's office and property will be twisted and diminished, as Christ wants to free the Christian heart in himself, and make the

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15 'das nit auß gottes, aber der menschen gnaden, der eyngang in schafftal vergünt wirt. *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiiij v.

16 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij r-v.

17 'the strong, powerful redemption will also be shamefully seized from Christ our saviour with hellish presumption in the soul-trade; accordingly, such servants of souls do not allow Jesus to remain Jesus, who alone frees his people from their sins', *Fegfeur*, Aiij r.

18 'Züm vierden wirt auch yn dem selen handel Cristo vnserm entlediger mit hellischer vormessenheit die crefftig mechtige erlösunge schmelichen angriffen, also dy solche selen diener, jesum nit Jesum bleiben, der dan allein seyn volck von yren sunden, vnd wollen in helffen genüg thün, alls ob das kostparlich vnentlich verdinen vnsers herren jesu Christi so schmal vnd geryng wer, das dye elenden betrubten madenseck dem herren Christo eyn hulff müsten reychen dye selen zů erlösen vnd fur yre sunde genüg tzü thün, wye vnmildicklich vnd gantz gotloß hye Christus gelestert wirdt, ist schmertzlich vnd beweinlich tzübedencken', ibid.

19 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij v: 'As not to let Christ be Christ, what a desperate business that would be'.

20 *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciij r.

conscience peaceful'.[21] Confession to a priest, writes Strauss, has no scriptural foundation. For the clergy and the theologians to claim that it is God's law, 'established by Christ', amounts to 'blasphemy of Scripture.'[22] Although Strauss agrees that 'repentance' is the 'most necessary Christian teaching,' due to Christ having suffered for the sins of man, this should not involve blowing 'sins into the ears of a priest'.[23] The clergy have then decided that this confession should be a sacrament, giving themselves the authority to release man from this sin, and thereby placing themselves between the sinner and God, the only true confessor.[24] Only God has the power to 'give remorse (*contritio*)'; a power, Strauss suggests, that has been usurped by the priests.[25] He lambasts the clergy for pretending that through them, 'the incomplete penitence (which then truly does not exist) will be made complete'.[26] This 'incomplete penitence' is an invention used by the clergy to bolster their sacramental standing. In mentioning that the clergy insist that confession be compulsory, Strauss allows that they permit the laity to 'have their trust and refuge alone and undivided in God,' but this, he says sarcastically, is only if 'invented help' (i.e. a clerical confessor) is not available.[27]

In an exercise designed to ridicule scholastic teaching, Strauss uses the terminology of his opponents in an attempt to demonstrate that confession is not a sacrament. He claims that confession does not conform to the church's own definition of a 'sacrament', i.e., that which has a hidden effect of grace on the soul (the form), corresponding to a visible sign (the matter). In baptism, the inner forgiveness of sins is represented by the washing with water. Confession, he argues, does not have such an outward sign or matter; the 'speaking, kneeling, walking, trembling' undergone by the 'poor, confessing people' cannot qualify, as these

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21 Ibid., Ciiij r. 'dieweil in der beichte, Christuß ambte, vnd eygenthumb, verkert vnd geschmelert wirt, dan Christus wil das christlich hertz in ym selbß befreyhen, vnd die gewissen ruwig machen'.

22 Ibid., Cij v. Also Ciij r: 'no open, proven Scripture shows their invented confession'.

23 Ibid., Ciij r. He explains that nothing relating to this has been 'hidden' by God and that, if challenged, no one would be able to justify confession using a 'clear text of the gospel.' In Strauss's initial description of the 'invented' confession, we are likewise told that 'no one may be saved, if he has [not] then blown with his mouth each and every sin with all circumstances into the ears of the priest or monk', ibid, Aij v.

24 Ibid., Diij r.

25 Ibid., Cij v.

26 Ibid., Aij v – Aiij r.

27 Ibid., Aiij v.

conditions vary according to one's social standing. At times, the clergy permit 'the wealthy and powerful confessing children to sit or lie in the confession'; the implication being that the use of water in baptism is common to all.[28] Having demonstrated the unsacramental nature of confession using the criteria of the church, Strauss gets to his principal point of attack. Not only is there no true 'matter' in this case, the 'form' (forgiveness) is also absent. The forgiveness of sins belongs to God, who 'alone gives remorse'. Therefore, argues Strauss, the confessors' claim to possess the 'great power and effect from sacramental strength' required to make an incomplete confession complete, to contribute remorse where it is absent, is blasphemous.[29] This proves that all of the claims of the clergy regarding their function in confession are 'false, misleading, and without all foundation'.[30] The 'entire need to confess' is therefore 'false, improper, devilish, and blasphemous'.[31] It must be recognised, writes Strauss, that the complete forgiveness of sins lies in 'God's unfathomable, rich mercy,' and all that is required is that the sinner should know that his sins 'distress God' and wish to be freed from these sins through God alone.[32] That God reserves this power to forgive for himself is demonstrated in Isaiah 43:25, 'I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins'.[33] Regarding God's omnipotence, according to Strauss, 'it is good to recognise how subtly and swiftly the Devil has pushed in with his confession, so that that which belongs to God alone will be taken from him'.[34]

It is not only the clergy, then, who are presumptuous; the laity, in seeking to influence God by the effort of confession and penance are equally so. Strauss includes in his pamphlet on purgatory a refutation of the foundations of the penitential *satisfactio*, and the vigils and almsgiving it prescribes.[35] God's 'bottomless, almighty mercy' forgives all sins. The emphasis is placed on man's own achievements. Strauss announces that Paul's words have been used

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28 Ibid., Cij r.

29 Ibid., Cij v.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., C v.

32 Ibid., Aiij v.

33 Ibid. The insistence on 'I' and 'for my own sake' (Strauss: 'Ich binß/ ich bin der ...') is important here. Also Isaiah 48:8ff, 'for my own sake'.

34 Ibid.

35 *Fegfeur* B r

by the 'wretched misleaders' to claim that 'he who is not purified of all his sins through his own contrition and confession (as said above), he takes the sacrament to eternal death.'[36] When Strauss describes the preparation for communion, he makes it clear that all 'human repentance, confession, or penance,' in other words, any human effort, is futile.[37] This 'invented, human delusion' that one can force God to forgive one's sins through 'satisfaction' is countered with the argument that, if such a thing were necessary, God would have made it very clear in Scripture.[38] This 'human satisfaction' is an insult to Christ's sacrifice.[39]

Other forms of blasphemy.

All other penitential practices (such as vigils, fasting, and almsgiving) associated with 'satisfaction' are similarly dismissed as not only redundant, but also blasphemous.[40] In his pamphlet on confession, Strauss condemns the belief that litanies and anniversary masses of all types 'are such a holy, necessary thing', whereas they are in fact harmful to the soul.[41] Strauss's sermon on purgatory, on which the pamphlet is based, was preached 'in the week of all souls, held after Michaelmas' of 1523.[42] It is this celebration, held 'in several churches in Franconia and Thuringia', that provoked Strauss to tackle the tradition of masses for the dead.[43] This 'sinful work' includes 'all their prayer, singing and reading, alms-giving and that which they do in the invented service of souls'.[44] In this, the 'wretched, misled people undertake to help the pious, righteous souls to salvation', a salvation given to them by God.[45] Strauss states that, as far as salvation and the forgiveness of sins are concerned, 'works and creatures' are of no help. This 'invented trade' denies the very foundation of Christian faith:

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36 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij r.

37 Ibid., Ciiij r. The examination should instead be the 'true practice of the faith', in other words, honouring and recognising one's need for God.

38 *Fegfeur*, B v – Bij r.

39 Ibid., Bij r.

40 Ibid., B r; *Beichtbüchlein*, B r.

41 Ibid.

42 *Fegfeur*, Ciiij v.

43 Ibid., A r.

44 Ibid., Aij v.

45 Ibid.

the belief that God has promised eternal life to the faithful.[46] The attempt to assist the salvation of the 'faithful souls' with masses and other works is a *freuel* or sacrilege and 'a hellish presumption to diminish God's omnipotence'. This omnipotence, to which Strauss refers four times in three paragraphs 'is a helper towards the salvation of the poor, wretched, sinful man'.[47] The 'stupid, foolish people' who believe they are performing works of mercy also diminish God's 'unfathomable and rich mercy' (*vnergrundliche vnd reyche Barmhertzickeyt*), in the anticipation of which the dying faithful had been comforted.[48] These 'wilful people' also presume that God the father will forget his own children; a presumption, writes Strauss, that is contradicted many times in Scripture.[49]

Strauss's purpose, declared at the beginning of his first pamphlet on baptism, is to promote God's word above 'doubt and useless addition'.[50] This doubt is that refusal to trust in Christ's redemption described above; as well as this, the devil has turned baptism away from God's word with his 'trivialities'.[51] These additions include 'long prayers, many signs of the cross, chrism, [and] oil', and blessing the water 'with much singing and reading, candle-burning and crossing'.[52] It is not so much the additions themselves that are harmful (although Strauss mentions that they have not been specified in the Bible), but that they must be abandoned because of the faith that is placed in them; this detracts from Christ's redemptive sacrifice and is therefore blasphemous. Although 'neither Christ nor John the Baptist or the apostles knew of chrism or oil, the misled, faithless people regard the same smearing as entirely necessary'.[53] He who believes that anything other than water and the word is necessary, 'errs in faith and

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46 Ibid., Aiij v: 'our true Christian faith will be broken and denied in such an invented trade, as it is evident that the Christian faith stands and remains firmly in God's word and promise'.

47 Ibid., Aij v. 'Ich sage hye das dye verfurten leüt, solchs vnterstehen durch yre sundtliche werck, dan alle yre gebet, singen, vnd leßen, almußen geben, vnd was sy thun, yn dem erdichten selen dyenst, ist alles on glauben, vnd wider das lebendig wort gottis, vnnd belybt darbey nicht, es lestert gottes almechtgkeit, dem sich der arm elende sundtliche mensche zů einem helffer die selen selig zůmachen eindringt.'

48 Ibid., Aij v.

49 Ibid., Aiij r. Strauss cites Isaiah 49:15f. and Galatians 4:4-7.

50 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aij r.

51 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiiij r.

52 Ibid., Aij r.

53 Ibid., Ciij r.

no baptism or smearing helps'.[54] The result of the 'smearing' in Strauss's own parish has been that 'several simple and stubborn people, led astray from the word by priests and monks, do not want to place any faith in baptism without such additions'.[55] This blasphemy has 'turned the blessing of baptism into God's curse'.[56]

The financial aspect of many of these practices, including endowed masses, is of particular concern for Strauss. Any form of payment (*entgeltnis*) for salvation is pointless, as God gives his grace freely.[57] Furthermore, he 'does not need our wealth, as he owns the entire world'.[58] Like non-monetary works, it does not matter that this is ineffective; the *intent* to influence God is sufficient to make these works blasphemous. The Common Week for the 'invented service of the souls' mentioned above has, Strauss writes, been 'primarily fashioned for the cheating of souls'.[59] This '*sehelen durst*' includes the purchase of 'requiem masses, vigils, tombs,[60] anniversary masses, burning candles',[61] or 'a chasuble, serving for the requiem mass'.[62] Strauss also condemns the new 'hellish, misleading comfort' offered by the purchase of indulgences which has appeared in recent years (a deception, practised by the antichrist and his bishops against the 'poor, simple people' which will lead them to damnation[63]) and the use of pilgrimage as a means of obtaining absolution from a pope or bishop (to gain this, one must 'visit several holy cities', wasting much money in the process).[64] Sinners are likewise encouraged to join confraternities in which they pay 'an annual interest for their salvation'.[65]

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54 On this 'smearing' as 'bribing', see below, I.7.

55 Ibid., Aiiij r. See also ibid., B v, 'Vnd dergleychen ist ein treflich stuck, des ertichten Chrissums auch öles da mit sye in vile einfeltiger leut erkantnus vnglauben vnd irrung erweckt haben, die dan yr vertrawen hiryn gesetzet haben, als were dem tawff, dergleychen menschen ticht notturftig'.

56 Ibid., C v- Cij r.

57 *Fegfeur*, B v: 'And thus the promise of God may not be otherwise understood, than that the sins will be forgiven through the grace of God without any payment'.

58 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Bij r.

59 Ibid., Aij v.

60 Strauss uses the term 'grebnis': this could also refer to requiems or funerals.

61 *Fegfeur*, Aiiij r.

62 Ibid., Aiiij v.

63 *Heiligthüm* Bij v.

64 *Beichtbüchlein*, B v.

65 Ibid.

The pamphlet on relics has a similar aim of defending God's omnipotence. If one trusts God alone, one will need no other 'means to earn God's grace'. As things stand, however, one instead 'places such great devotion in dead legs' that one surrounds them with ' gold and silver, velvet and silk, lights, candles, and shouting, singing and piping, also with armour, and weaponry'.[66] In doing so, one ignores God's promise of salvation.[67] The blasphemous adoration of relics has the added dimension of idolatry. In his introduction to this pamphlet, Strauss defines 'idolatry' (*abgötterey*) as 'that which turns away from God' (*das, was von got abwendet*).[68] This is an etymological explanation (*ab Gott*: from God), originating in the 'meaning and character of our language'; the refusal to honour God is expressed as that which robs God of his honour.[69] Idolatry in general is a deception created by the devil; this dishonour of God being 'cunningly concealed under the appearance of good'.[70] The Christian people have been duped into 'many supposed, invented prayers'.[71] In this pamphlet, Strauss says that he has chosen to tackle the unscriptural honouring of relics, which is 'not the smallest of these' inventions, and intends with this pamphlet to 'kill the same great error and remove [it] from all Christian hearts'. He declares that no intercessor is required if one puts all of one's trust in Christ, 'whose word and teaching in [one's] faith places [one] in God's protection'.[72] No intermediary is needed between the Christian and God; no 'saint, relic, or creature' can bring one to Christ.[73] Strauss warns of the dangerous and deceptive nature of such idolatry; presumably, a false need has been created.[74] In arguing that God has shown that he can be trusted, Strauss provides multiple scriptural references to prove that God

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66 *Heiligthüm*, Aiiij r.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., Aij r.

69 Ibid., 'Darumb wir Teutschenn aller aigentlichest, die vorsprechung an der eer, vnd anbettung gottis in bedeuttung vnd aigentschafft vnser sprach vorbringen, als wir sagen abgötterey, die dinge, die abfallen gott an seiner eer'.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid., Aiij v.

73 Ibid. This direct relationship is based on John 10.27f.: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

74 Ibid., 'how the most sharp and dangerous idolatry quietly and secretly also intrudes hereby, under the appearance of good'.

knows everything ('observes all of our need and torment') and is merciful.[75] We must abandon this 'invented mediation'. In his criticism of those who abandon God's word and instead follow the 'invented laws' by going on pilgrimage, Strauss writes that everyone from the emperor to the common folk, 'buys his own way' and 'relies on his patron and relics'.[76] After death, when the soul has departed, the body should be buried and should be honoured no more than that of a living man.[77] The holy people of the past knew this: 'no saint or friend of God has desired or ordered splendid, considerable honour and regard to be given to his body after his death'.[78] It is easy to see that the transfer of honour from God to the relics is contrary to Scripture and to the wishes of the saints.[79] The 'wretched devotion to the relics' cannot be anything other than idolatry, as it takes God's property (honour) and gives it to the 'wretched relics'.[80]

2. Faith.

Redemption and trust

For Strauss, man will always sin and will always require divine forgiveness. This cannot be obtained through clerical absolution, the intercession of the saints, or any of the traditional penitential practices or works of mercy. These are unnecessary, as Christ's redemption is complete and constantly renews itself in man. Man is simply required to believe that this is so. When Strauss provides a definition of faith in *Trostliche verstendige leer*, this is presented as the belief that Christ died for man's sins: 'And there is the entire conclusion of our faith, that

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75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., Aiiij v - B r. 'Darumb ist auch auffgehabt grundtlicher christenlicher verstant des lebendigen wort gotis, pey den Bischoffen, Kaisern, Könnigen, Fürsten auch dem gemainen volck, vnd kaufft ein jder sein aignen wegk, vnnd sein ertiche andacht, ist sein christenlicher stetter glaub, vnd verlast sich ein jder auff sein patron, vnd hailgthüm'. Given the overall content of the pamphlet, these requests are presumably for salvation, although they could of course also refer to help needed while on earth.

77 Ibid., Aij v. The purpose of the physical body is to honour God (the Christian is to use 'his body and limbs as a tool of the godly service'), and it should not be honoured in itself.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid., Aij v – Aiij r. 'Now it may well be easily recognized by a pious Christian, what a great abuse and evil against God's commandment and the obedient will of all saints the devil has introduced here, so that with inestimable, great cost, effort, and work, relics will be adorned, honoured, and adored; which glorification and honouring in silent humility should be expected by God alone, as Paul says to the Philippians at the 3rd'.

80 Ibid., Aiiij r.

we recognize and believe that Christ, the true natural son of God and child of Mary, has died for us'.[81] He continues in this vein, emphasising the role of Christ's sacrifice in salvation: 'Christ has redeemed the world from sins through his death and spilling of blood, and has alone given satisfaction for sins, as Paul says in the first Epistle to Timothy at the 2nd chapter. He himself has given the ransom for us, and his death in our ransom works in faith in us until we [are] made entirely free from all sin, reaching the eternal salvation through Christ'. This is a constant, gradual process of redemption.[82] It is only through faith in this redemption that man's will be forgiven and his soul saved. At the end of the pamphlet on purgatory, Strauss states that the only sign in which one should believe is that of Christ, who died for our sins, 'in whom we believe and undoubtingly hope, with all faithful souls, to be redeemed according to God's will and ordinance'.[83] Strauss complains that the Bible, specifically its promise that righteousness (*gerechtigkeyt*) will be granted to the faithful, has been 'overturned' by the notion of purgatory, and provides several biblical references from both the Old and New Testaments which indicate justification by faith.[84] There is no doubt that faith is necessary for salvation; he announces that 'the souls which have no true faith, they will also not be justified (*gerechtfertiget*) from sin'.[85] Not only do the practices condemned in the purgatory pamphlet attack Scripture, they also 'break' and deny the the eternal life which is granted to those who die 'in Christian faith and God's grace (*gnade*)'.[86] The importance of faith unmistakable in this pamphlet; the 'godly text', 'he who has died in faith is redeemed from sin', is printed in capital letters.[87] In a number of passages, Strauss echoes the central Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone. When dismissing the Apocrypha as unscriptural in the pamphlet on purgatory, Strauss states that the 'aim of all godly teaching'

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81 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Biiij r.

82 *Fegfeur*, Ciiij v: 'das gottes son in menschlicher natur vmb vnsere sunde gestorben, vnd vnder die erden begraben, am dritten tag widderumb auff erstanden ist, yn dem wyr alleyn glauben vnd vngetzweyfelet hoffen, mit allen glaubigen seelen noch gottes gefallen, vnd ordenunge geseliget tzü werdenn'.

83 Ibid., Biiij v. 1 Timothy 2:5f., For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.

84 Ibid., Aiij r-v: Genesis 15:6 says that Abraham was made righteous by God because he believed; Habbakuk 2:4, that the 'righteous will live in his faith'. The texts from Romans all proclaim the granting of righteousness or justification through or by faith: Romans 1:17; 3:21f.; 4:3; 5:1.

85 Ibid., Aiij v.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid., Bij r.

is that 'it is Christ who redeems us in faith alone through himself'.[88] In *Trostliche verstendige leer*, he confirms that it is faith will lead to salvation: 'the entire sum of all Christian work will be begun, executed, and blessedly completed in the faith. As in this faith alone will we be justified, and freed from our sins, and Christ begins to exist in us, and we in Christ'.[89]

Faith as true confession

Despite the redemption of Christ, all men are by nature 'sinful and damned'; all are born and will die in sin.[90] Although the possibility of righteousness was given with Christ's sacrifice, the man cannot be made fuly righteous until he has left the mortal life; there can therefore be no state of grace on earth.[91] Not only must one trust in the totality of the redemption, one must also sincerely recognise one's sinful condition. Nonetheless, Strauss, in his concept of faith, appears to have retained the idea of spiritual renewal which must be experienced by the Christian. This renewal is apparently a substitute for the 'false' cleansing of the soul that was provided by the sacrament of penance. The constant 'practice of the faith' mentioned by Strauss in *Trostliche verstendige leer* appears to be this recognition of oneself 'as a sinner in all [one's] works', and honesty regarding one's conscience.[92] The life of the Christian is a constant cycle of sin, recognition, and forgiveness, which continues until death.[93] This constant redemption from sin is something one must 'for all time allow'.[94] It is in *Trostliche verstendige leer*, the *Beichtbüchlein* (the latter described by Steven Ozment as 'one of the great unrecognized tours de force of the early Reformation'[95]), and in the pamphlet on the inner and outer baptism that one finds Strauss's most comprehensive expressions of the true faith before 1525. In the first two works, it is described in terms of a new form of confession. In the *Beichtbüchlein*, faith is defined as the 'true confession and repentance' that consists of the recognition of one's sinful nature and consequent need for God's forgiveness, and may not be

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88 Ibid., Cij v.

89 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Biiij r.

90 *Fegfeur*, A v.

91 Ibid., Aij r; Aiij v-Aiiij r.

92 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij r.

93 'until we will be entirely pleasing to him in his eternal salvation, that will only be completed after the separation and payment of death', ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland* (London, 1975), 51.

overlooked; 'whoever cannot make and neglects this confession, he has neglected his salvation'.[96] The renewal mentioned above is the divine equivalent of the false absolution, corresponding to the true confession: Christ will cleanse the faithful 'from sins in the confession at all hours'.[97] This 'true, single, and sufficient repentance of the Christian heart'[98] is a replacement for the 'invented, godless, and tyrannical confession' of the clergy.[99]

Complete confession as defined by the church (that is, 'to confess each and every sin with all circumstances') is impossible; one would need to go to confession every hour and, most importantly, no man is capable of recognising all of his sins.[100] In place of this impossible and dangerous contemplation of individual sins, Strauss offers to teach his readers 'to recognise all of your sins with one word'. The sinner is to know himself to be a poor, sinful man, 'who has never kept and will never keep God's commandment, whether in intentions, words, or works'.[101] Even if one were to spend a thousand years attempting to find 'excuse and false pretext' for one's actions, one could come to no other conclusion.[102] The Christian should also 'place all his sins' in Christ's wounds and, in doing so, recognise that he stands to lose the benefit of this martyrdom through having sinned.[103] This constant, personal recognition of sinfulness, despair in oneself, and hope in Christ is presented as a definition of 'the true, living faith in Christ'.[104] The life promised to the faithful by the gospel will only be given to one who 'makes his will obedient and subject to God's undeceiving will, and the same

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96 *Beichtbüchlein*, D v.

97 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij r.

98 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aij v: 'die ware, einnige, vnd genugsame bußfertikeit, deß christlichen hertzens'.

99 Ibid., Aij v.

100 Ibid., Aiiij r. This argument is repeated in *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij r. The biblical texts used to support the latter point are Psalm 19:12, 'But who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults' (Strauss cites this as the 8th psalm, and in *Trostliche verstendige leer* as the 13th) and Jeremiah 17:9, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?'.

101 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Cij v.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid., Cij r.

104 *Beichtbüchlein*, D v: 'Da der her spricht Johannis. vi. Das ist das werck gottes das ir glaubtt in den den er gesandt hat. Hie ist die rechtt peicht vnnd puess grundtlich angetzeigt, dann der waren lebendige glaube in Christum ist ein steet, verharrende, bekenntnus, vnd peicht der sunden' (John 6:29).

righteousness will be given to all believers in faith'.[105] This willingness to allow Christ to 'work the release of sins in us' is 'the entire sum of Christian righteousness and the completion of the true faith'.[106] One must be prepared for God's punishment, whatever that may be.[107] In doing this, one begins 'to become worthy of salvation'.[108] In the pamphlet on purgatory, this is expressed in somewhat stronger terms: the combination of self-recognition and trust in God will ensure that both personal and original sin will be 'destroyed' in Christ and will not be counted towards eternal damnation'.[109] Strauss provides a template for this true confession, consisting of a formula to be said to oneself whenever one reminded of one's sins, enumerating both one's general sinfulness and these latest transgressions.[110] This requires a recognition that it is this sinfulness that caused the death and suffering of Christ ('sink your heart in the painful suffering and death of the saviour, that your sins will be painful and hateful to you'), to be accompanied by a sincere request for forgiveness (although this will not necessarily involve the 'sighing and crying or great *beweglichkeit*' that Strauss claims a priest requires of a penitent) and a strengthened faith and a wholehearted belief that God has indeed granted forgiveness.[111] Following this summary, Strauss provides a complete sample wording which encompasses all of these stages.[112]

Faith as baptism.

Given that one sins constantly, one requires a constant, daily purification by Christ. This purification, which accompanies the true 'confession' described above, is presented as a

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105 *Fegfeur*, Aiij r-v. 'Züm funfften stossen solich vorfurt leuthe das gantz euangelium nider, das an allen enden den glaubigen das leben züsagt, wilches leben alleyn stet yn eynem gerechten hertzen tzü got, vnd seynen willen gottes vnbetriglichen willen gehörig vnd vnterthenig macht, vnnd der gleychen gerechtickeyt wirt allen gleubigen yhm glauben tzügestelt'.

106 A reference to Ezekiel 33:19.

107 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij r.

108 Ibid.

109 *Fegfeur*, A v.

110 *Beichtbüchlein*, Diij r: 'Ich befinde mich in allen meinen gedanckenn wortenn vnd wercken, wie ich immer erkennen mag ein armen sunder, vnd ist nichts guts nach gerechts an mir, dan ich einigen willen ader gefallen meines gots, mit gantzem begirden vnd hertzenn noch nye volnstreckt hab, vnd auch yetz neulichen, mit der, vnd der, grossen sunde, widder got gethan hab, ob etwas gegenwertigß vnd wissentlich dein trucke dz melde kurtzlich'.

111 Ibid., Diij r-v.

112 Ibid., Diij v- Diiij v.

constant baptism in which Christ shares 'with us his suffering and dying in the act of redemption'.[113] Baptism in infancy is merely the first instance of this constant renewal.[114] The 'true work' that is to be 'taken in hand' is that of believing in this daily redemption through Christ.[115] It is in this pamphlet that Strauss discusses the role of the Holy Spirit. Speaking of man's life-long baptism at the hands of Christ, worked through the Spirit in faith, he says that this comes from 'God the Holy Spirit, which Christ sends us, through which he remains in us and accomplishes all things'.[116] The Spirit is the most prominent element of the the Trinity in this process of forgiveness; although the Father authorizes forgiveness and the Son is the 'mediator', 'it will be particularly assigned to the Holy Spirit, who internally inspires and executes it'.[117] Both faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit are necessary for redemption: 'faith cannot remain by itself without the continuance of the inhabiting Holy Spirit in us'. However, this purification is incomplete. Baptism means 'complete ablution from sins' (*die volkommen abweschung von sünden*); therefore, true and complete baptism will only occur after death.[118] Strauss confirms in *Fegfeur* that the process of recognition and renewal is complete at one's death.[119] There is nothing more to be done; either one is saved, or one is damned. It was this element of the salvation process that led Strauss to not only condemn the 'blasphemous' practices associated with the souls in purgatory, but the existence of 'the 'painted [false] purgatory' itself.[120] It is made very clear that this true faith must be acquired *before* death, as the life beyond is not a state in which man is or becomes faithful, but one in which he will be judged on the basis of his faith during his mortal life.[121] In death, faith 'accomplishes the final work of the redemption from sins'; the souls of the faithful do not require 'our wretched help'

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113 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aiij r.

114 Ibid., Aiij v.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid., Aiij v.

117 Ibid., Aiiij r.

118 Ibid., Aiij r.

119 See also *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij r.

120 *Fegfeur*, Aij r.

121 'Aber dye seelen dye keynen rechten waren glauben nicht haben, dye werden auch von sunden nicht gerechtfertiget, es mag yhnen auch vyl weniger von vns nach yhrem todt der glaube tzügestelt werden, dan dz zükunfftige leben ist nicht der stant des glaubens, aber des eynnemends, nach de[m] ein yder glaubt, a[der] nicht glaubt hat', ibid., Aiij v.

and we cannot save the souls which have been damned.[122] Regarding the latter, Strauss tells his readers that God 'created them – leave them in his hands'.[123]

Faith as the Crucifixion of Reason and the Old Adam

At one point in the *Beichtbuchlein*, Strauss describes this process of acknowledging Christ's sacrifice and one's own sinfulness as one of dying and being born anew.[124] The most comprehensive treatment of this aspect of the soteriological process is found in Strauss's 1525 work on rebellion, in which it takes the form of a crucifixion. Here, Strauss uses Galatians 5:24 (And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires) as a central text. One must turn to Christ and, with his help, kill one's old Adam. This is not a new theme; it is mentioned in the pamphlet on purgatory, but is dealt with at length here.[125] All of man, body and soul, 'comes from Adam's source'. Therefore, he is 'entirely fleshly, mortal, and sinful in all his parts'.[126] The 'flesh', in this context, is that within man's nature that prevents him from recognising his true worthlessness and placing his trust completely in God.[127] To crucify the flesh, then, is to break with one's own nature and trust in God; to abandon one's own reason in favour of humility. The use of one's own human reason to decide what to trust and how to recognize God is 'the greatest damnable vice'.[128] It is the root of all false faith and confusion; the reason man thinks he can secure his own salvation. Man is 'entirely blind and ignorant; therefore all that he regards as good and great with his own misled reasoning is an abomination before God'.[129] It is faith, and not reason, that

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122 Ibid., Aiij v - Aiiij r.

123 Ibid., Biij r: 'also yn den henden gottes, laß bleyben dye er geschaffen hat, vnd gedenck nicht weyter, dan das dye seelen dye ym glauben abgescheyden seindt, also got yn seyner barmhertzikeyt beuolhen seyn, das sie diener nicht mer bedurffen, die aber on glauben, erfundenn seynd, die seynd gefallen yn die gewaltigen hende, das gerechten gericht gotis, das du ynen nicht helffen magst'.

124 *Beichtbüchlein*, Dij v.

125 *Fegfeur* A v. The idea of crucifying one's nature is also found in *Beichtbüchlein*, Dij v.

126 *Auffrur*, Aiiij r.

127 'And briefly, that is the spiritual, pious, Christian man, who through the spirit of God in faith regards himself as nothing, but whose attention, love, desire, and trust stand in God alone. Against this that is the fleshly, unchristian, earthly man, who without faith, in his own pleasure, loves himself above all things, and has neither love, nor desire, nor trust fundamentally in God', ibid.

128 Ibid.

129 From Luke 16:15, 'But he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God"'.

enables man to recognise that which is good. Reliance on reason ensures not only that one remains in the 'inner darkness' during one's life, but also that one is after death 'thrown into the outer darkness' for eternity.[130] The faith through which man is saved must be thorough, all-encompassing, and complete. It is an attachment to God in all of one's will and desire.[131] The difference between the pious man, who is spiritual and through faith knows that he is nothing but trusts instead in God and desires only him, and the unchristian man, who is fleshly, faithless, earthly, and who loves himself and does not trust or desire God,[132] is that the former has crucified his flesh.[133]

3 Means of faith

Scripture

Although faith is the sole means by which man can be saved, there are certain conditions that are necessary for, or contribute to, its presence. The rejected human reason is to be replaced by Scripture which for Strauss, as for all of the early evangelical preachers, was viewed as essential to the process of salvation. In the pamphlet on relics, Strauss uses John 10:27 ('My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life') to explain the centrality of faith.[134] This voice must be heard through Scripture. Faith and Scripture are closely intertwined: faith 'will only be revealed through the godly word, that shows nothing else other than faith; faith also does not accept anything other than the word of God'.[135] God's word is described as the 'gold, silver, precious stones' of 1 Corinthians 3.[136] The 'fire' mentioned in this chapter has been used by the clergy as proof of the existence of purgatory. According to Strauss, this does not represent a physical fire, but rather Christ himself, faith, and the word. 'Faith', he declares, 'does not accept anything other than the word of God, and accordingly, he to whom the faith has been given by God may be redeemed in the fire of the godly word, if he recognizes that he has [...] introduced human

130 *Auffrur*, Aiiij v.
131 Ibid., Aiij r-v.
132 Ibid., Aiiij r.
133 Galatians 5:24, And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
134 *Heiligthüm*, Aiij v.
135 *Fegfeur*, Biiij r.
136 Ibid.

reason'.[137] On the other hand, he who retains the 'wood, hay, and straw' of human reason and teaching until he dies will be damned.[138] Faith, therefore, should be based on the word and not on one's own reason or on any other information. Strauss repeatedly presents Scripture as the only true source of knowledge regarding both faith and religious practice; a knowledge of Scripture is therefore essential.[139] It is the word that liberates man with its promise of salvation: one must trust only in this.[140] In his second pamphlet on usury, Strauss emphasises the importance of the 'evangelical sword', which 'kills the sins and the old Adam, and sweetens the heart in Christ with indescribable joy'. This is the sword of 'rebellion and disturbance'; the gospel which will cut away 'sinful lust, self interest and worldly honour and joy'. The preaching of the gospel will therefore 'take us from the Devil, and lead us to Christ'.[141] It is the word that tells man that he does not need to buy or achieve his salvation. If, Strauss writes, we were to 'consider [the clergy's] presumption' in pretending that their ceremonies contribute to our salvation, we would gain little from this 'evangelical visitation'.[142] Presumably, that which is to be gained is salvation.[143]

Baptism.

The sacraments of baptism and the eucharist were traditionally regarded as necessary as they constituted two of the means by which God's grace was renewed. According to Oyer, 'Strauss called baptism a sacrament. But he proceeded to undermine and effectively to destroy its sacramental character both by denying the soteriological efficacy of the outward

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137 Ibid.: 'der glaub nympt auch nichtes anders an, dannn das wort gottis, Vnnd also mag der, dem der glaub von got mit geteylt wirt, yn dem fewr des gotlichen wortes selig werden, so er erkennet, das er vff Christum nicht alleyn, golt, silber, edelgesteyn, das ist alleyn gotis wort geprediget hat, aber auch menschlicher vornunfft vnd eigner wercken lere neben eyngefuret hat, das alles vergeblich vnd schadhafftig ist, aber doch ym glauben furgeben vnd abgestelt wurt'.

138 Ibid.: 'Dan solte das gebew von holtz, hew, vnd strawe, yn dem gewissen verharren byß yn den tag des todes, so wurde eynn solcher lerer nicht geseliget, aber ewiglich verlorenn dye weyll so gestrenge got verboten hat dem gottis wort keynen tzüsatz tzüthün'.

139 'We want', Strauss writes in *Trostliche verstendige leer*, 'to examine his word alone, and place faith in it alone', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij r.

140 *Wucher zu nemen*, F v: 'Vnnd soliche auffrur wider den teuffel vnd die welt, hat Christus erweckt vnd die furgeordneten zu der seligkait mit dem schwerd seynes gotlichen worttes erstreytten'.

141 Ibid., Fij r.

142 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij v.

143 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fiij v.

act and also by insisting that Christ worked salvation within man quite apart from any external act'.[144] Is Oyer correct in this assessment? Does Strauss really deny that baptism is a means of grace?

Given that the faithful Christian undergoes a form of baptism by Christ throughout his or her life, what, for Strauss, becomes of the traditional sacrament? This is a particularly difficult aspect of Strauss's theology to decipher. He states that Christ alone is the 'true baptizer', and that the true baptism is his sharing 'his suffering and dying in the act of redemption'.[145] It is this bloodshed that purifies the soul.[146] Strauss appears to suggest that the constant inner baptism described above is sufficient. Without this, the external will not save; internal baptism, on the other hand, takes place with or without the external signs.[147] He briefly explores the relative efficacy of faith and that of the sacrament of baptism in the process of salvation, using Mark 16:16: 'He who believes and is baptized, he will be saved, but he who does not believe will be damned'.[148] This does not mean, says Strauss, that both baptism and faith are equally necessary for salvation; rather, faith is more important than baptism, as the text says, 'He who does not believe will be damned, and not he who does not believe and is not baptized. In this is clearly shown that salvation is attached not to external baptism, but to faith'.[149] The 'external baptism' is described as representing this 'washing of sins in the blood of our lord'. If the 'internal working' can take place without the external blessing and confirmation of faith, it would mean that the external, traditional baptism of infancy is an unnecessary outward symbol. Strauss states that, were our salvation or damnation to depend on an act carried out in our childhood, 'our heart would never more be at peace in God'; this

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144 Oyer, 'The Influence of Jacob Strauss on the Anabaptists', 68f. The reference is to *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aiij v. Oyer identifies Strauss's daily baptism as the true baptism, but says that his 'explanation of this inner baptism was sketchy and inadequate'. However, Strauss 'apparently tended to rely upon it as a deliberate counterweight to what he considered Luther's overemphasis on the sacramental and ceremonial aspects of baptism'.

145 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aij v.

146 Ibid., Aij v-Aiij r.

147 'Without the external signs, Christ always works the internal baptism in us through his spirit in faith' (*on das eusserlich zeichenn die ynnerlich tauff alltzeit Christus durch seyn geyst ym glawben yn vns wirckt*), Ibid., Aiij v.

148 Ibid., Aij r.

149 Ibid., Aij v. Acts 8:37, If you do have faith, then you may be baptised.

would be contrary to the 'good, certain trust' that is central to Christianity. This, he argues, was why 'the early Christians' practised adult baptism.

Strauss calls baptism the 'entrance into the Christian assembly'[150], however, this is not meant merely in a symbolic sense. In the *Beichtbüchlein*, Strauss declares that there are only two sacraments in Christianity, and the 'single effect' of both of these 'is the forgiveness of sins'.[151] At one point, Strauss says that 'without faith, the external baptism no longer has any power'.[152] This implies that, with faith, this external baptism is powerful. It is not merely a sign or representation; something is happening to the soul of the baptised. It also appears from the pamphlet on the 'simonean' baptism that Strauss did indeed believe that the single instance of baptism in infancy (as opposed to the constant, inner baptism) had an effect. In this pamphlet, when defending the biblical practice of the sacrament against the 'additions' mentioned above, he says that any trust placed in such 'human invention' in the sacraments 'falsifies the faith and destroys baptism'.[153] Although the use of water (unlike that of chrism and oil) has been decreed in the Bible, the 'pure water' which washes away sin is 'God the Holy Spirit'.[154]

Strauss appears to argue that the traditional sacrament of 'outward baptism' is designed for children, whereas the adult must engage in the constant, 'inner baptism': the latter must 'occupy himself with independently active faith [so] that the strength of the sacrament may be performed daily in him'.[155] In the work on the 'inner and outer baptism', Strauss emphasises the importance of the faith of the parents or, failing this, of the godparents.[156] He

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150 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiiij r. This entrance 'the devil has turned away from God's word with his trivialities'.

151 *Beichtbüchlein* Ciij v. 'Nim dir des ein behelff bey der Tauff, auch bey dem Sacrament des brots, meer sacrament haben wir in der christenheit nicht [...] die einigk auswirckung der tauff, vnd auch des sacraments, deß laibs vnd bludts vnsers herren Christi, ist vergebung der sunden, vnd ernewrung in got'.

152 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, B r. Strauss's aim is partly to discredit the teachings of the theologians of the church, but especially to 'examine here that which in truth may comfort and protect us in baptism'.

153 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aij r.

154 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aiiij r.

155 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Biij v.

156 Ibid.

refers back to this in his second pamphlet, saying that he has already shown that 'faith in baptism alone brings the effect (*außwirckung*) of the sacrament, and thus the faith of the parents and godparents must help the little child'. This confirms that the sacrament does have an effect, one that is made possible by faith.[157] This effect is the renewal of the redemption, identical to that which takes place in the continual inner baptism described above. Salvation is not conditional on the outward sign. Rather, the latter is merely the first instance of this internal process of the recognition of oneself as a sinner and the placing of all of one's trust in God, carried out by the godparents on behalf of the child.[158] On the other hand, this is why such a ceremony is necessary: although the infant being baptised knows neither good nor evil, all men have been given original sin by Adam and are therefore sinners before they could know sin. Consequently, as no one should be refused redemption in baptism, baptism in the case of an infant must be carried out in this manner, whereby the faith of the parents 'is helpful to all little children'.[159] To insist upon these additions is unscriptural and blasphemous; parents who do so prevent 'the fundamental effect of this true Christian baptism'. In such cases, the sacrament is ineffective, as the faith of the parents or godparents (which in the case of an infant will bring this effect) is inadequate.[160] In the middle of a paragraph on the baptism of children and the responsibilities of the parent, Strauss states that if an adult were to choose such baptism for himself, he would be damned ('whoever may have baptism according to the ordinance of our lord Christ, and does not want it without false addition, he robs himself of his salvation'); in most cases, however, the salvation of the child rests in the hands of their parents.

It is this role of faith, especially that of the godparents, along with the negation of the sacrament through belief in additions, that may explain the apparent ambiguity in Strauss's

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157 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aij r: 'Es ist in der vorbenanten sermon vom teuffen der kyndtlein, angezeigt, vnnd auch sunst ynn viel predigen, das der glaub ym tauff allein die außwirckung des sacraments bringt, vnd also der elteren vnd patten glawb dem kindlin helffen mues'. He goes on to say that no external thing will be added, that 'hinders or does not foster the faith with sincere desire' [ibid. Aij v]; presumably, water and the word do not come under this description, but instead follow the examples of John and the apostles.

158 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aij v.

159 Ibid., Bij v.

160 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aij r.

approach to the necessity or otherwise of outward infant baptism. He makes a point of discussing the problem of children who die without proper baptism; one should not worry about their salvation, he writes, as this depends on no external thing.[161] Regarding unbaptised children, Strauss states that it is easier to be saved than to be damned, declaring three times that 'undoubtedly the salvation is richer than the damnation'. All of this is must be considered in the context of the early evangelical movement. Preachers such as Strauss were disseminating a radically new understanding of faith and religious practice; the laity being told that the faith they and their forefathers had followed until very recently was false and harmful. Here, Strauss was almost certainly reassuring those whose children had died and who were concerned that these children had not been properly baptised. Strauss probably did not mean that an inadequate or spoiled baptism would lead inevitably to damnation, but rather that would remove this opportunity for forgiveness.

Strauss is also speaking to the laity themselves, whose own original baptism would, using Strauss's criteria, have been ineffective. They too are not to worry if they fear that faith was absent from their own baptism; the constant inner baptism will achieve the same purification. One the other hand, Strauss does say that, if one suspects that one's baptism was indeed insufficient, one must be baptised as an adult.[162] At least, one may not refuse a proper baptism 'without any harm to [one's] soul' if one knows for certain that the original baptism was incorrectly carried out.[163] This is not the contradiction it might appear to be if one were to interpret it thus: it is not that the inner baptism that results from one's current faith is not sufficient, but the deliberate refusal of an opportunity for grace would demonstrate a lack of faith. Nonetheless, is difficult to establish Strauss's exact views on the function and necessity of the outward sacrament, and it is tempting to conclude that, in seeking to comfort those who, due to the new teaching, had begun to doubt their own baptism and that of their children, he was being deliberately obscure. Although the traditional sacrament of baptism

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161 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, B v.

162 Ibid., Bij r.

163 Ibid.: 'Wen du aber eygencklich vnd ongezweifelt würdest bericht, das du nitt recht getaufft werest, dan soltdu nit versaumen dz eusserlich sacrament. Dann wem es mit seynem eygnen glauben werden mag, der selb möchte on nachteyl seiner selen recht geteufft zu werden, nitt außgeschlahen. Vnd also ist dem beyarten vernunfftigen menschen dz sacrament notturftig'.

would appear from some of Strauss's comments in *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff* to be unnecessary, he also refers to the 'necessary sacrament of baptism' (*dem genöttigen sacrament der Tauff*).[164] This is probably part of the reason for the emphasis on the 'internal working of baptism' (*die ynnerlich wirckung der tauff*)[165] rather than the outward sign; if the latter is not available in the correct form, the former will suffice.[166]

Eucharist

Strauss rejected the sacrificial character of the mass but maintained that the body and blood of Christ were physically present in the eucharist and that both of these should be received by the Christian. Although in the *Beichtbüchlein* and *Trostliche verstendige leer* God's forgiveness is presented as a result of one's faith, that is, the internal confession or recognition of oneself as a sinner, it is clear that the eucharist also brings with it forgiveness of sins: 'here no one will be fed, but only those who in true faith perceive their sins and are hungry for the forgiveness which Christ has promised at this table'.[167] Strauss condemns the 'preachers of the antichrist' who teach that the reception of the sacrament only after having made a successful confession is a condition of salvation. Instead, he insists that the sacrament itself provides forgiveness: 'What may raise us to the life of grace more certainly than as the body of Christ is truly eaten in faith, and his blood is drunk, to the forgiveness of sins?'.[168] Along with the statement that only those who are 'hungry for forgiveness' will be fed at 'God's table', Strauss uses the image of the man who has already eaten to describe one who

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164 Ibid., Aij r.

165 Ibid., B v.

166 The importance of faith appears to emphasise the necessity of baptism in relation to salvation: All of this appears to be a defence of the effectiveness of the faith of the parents in infant baptism, although Strauss appears uncertain: he does not know how children who die before the 'age of active faith' could be excluded from this promise of universal redemption, even though he has at times taken it to apply to the *selbs wirckenden glauben* alone. (Ibid., Biij v.) In any case, this implies that faith depends at least in part on the efforts of the adult Christian.

167 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij v.

168 'Wa aber nit nach rechtem glauben (wie des Entchrists prediger leren) das Sacrament empfangen wirt, ist kain schadhaftiger tod der armen seelen', ibid. Aiij v. From his description of the confession required by the Church before one may receive communion, it would appear that this is definitely a condemnation of the teaching of the church: 'That the wretched misleaders have falsely shown [...] He who is not purified of all his sins through his own contrition and confession [...] he takes the sacrament to eternal death', ibid., Aiiij r.

has been absolved by a priest: only a 'great, lumpy fool' would come to table if he were already full, as further food (or forgiveness) would be of no use to such a man.[169] Once one accepts the forgiving purpose of communion, confession (even if effective) is rendered superfluous.[170] There is no question, therefore, that forgiveness of sins is not provided in the sacrament; it is confession to a priest that is unecessary. Again, this confession, the constant purification of Strauss's 'process' of faith, can never lead to full absolution in the living man.

As in his discussion of baptism, however, there is a degree of ambiguity in Strauss's account as to whether the physical reception of the eucharist is necessary for there to be an effect on the soul; specifically, whether this sacrament is essential for salvation, or whether it is merely an additional, outward sign of the constant renewal of Christ's redemption that occurs within the faithful throughout their lives. At times, it appears that the latter may be the case. It is necessary to prepare for the sacrament, but this preparation is simply the acknowledgement of one's sinfulness and the complete trust in God that is required of all Christians. Using texts from the gospels, Strauss repeatedly seeks to prove Christ's sacrifice and its purpose; we are to eat and drink in faith that sins will be forgiven, 'and that he has prescribed his true flesh and blood to us as food and drink, as a sure, firm, and indubitable sign of the forgiveness of sins'.[171] Does this mean that the sacrament is a sign, and not a means, of the purification already occuring in the faithful due to their trust in God?

The 'ransom' which Christ has paid continues to work in us in faith, until we are wholly free from sin; the consumption of Christ's body and blood is a renewal of the work of this ransom in the faithful, and forgives all of their sins.[172] Strauss describes the sacrament as the most certain means of salvation, although ineffective without faith.[173] Further than this, is it essential? Strauss devotes a couple of pages of *Trostliche verstendige leer* to an explanation of the sacrament. This is taken from the Gospels and Paul's epistles; passages which refer to the original sacrifice of body and blood and its redeeming effect, and the instructions to eat and

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169 Ibid., Aiiij v.
170 Ibid., Aiiij v. See also Aiiij v.
171 Ibid., Biiij r.
172 Ibid., Biiij v.
173 Ibid., Aiij r.

drink in the belief that this took place. This undertaking will 'be achieved in the faith, which we must have in Christ'.[174] Strauss does use the word 'sign', but it is clearly more than a representation. When faith is present, it becomes effective: the presence of the faith is the true test of which Paul speaks. One must believe that the body and blood will be truly present and given 'as the food and drink of your soul' and that Christ 'here gives himself to you for the renewal of the result of his suffering, dying, and bloodshed'.[175] The true repentance of sins, of which one is incapable by oneself, will follow automatically.[176] Strauss suggests that the gospel only works in man when combined with faith. Once this has occurred, one may be saved through the Eucharist: 'bring here only your heart in faith, then the living word of God will be fruitful in you and Christ will give you to drink savingly from his cup'.[177] This would suggest that the sacrament contributes towards salvation only for those in whom the gospel and faith are already present; it does not mean that the cup alone saves, but neither does it mean that it can be neglected.

It does indeed appear that the sacrament is necessary for salvation. Strauss claims that, due to the false requirements of the clergy, the sacrament which saves has been turned into an instrument of damnation; life has been changed to death at the table of Christ.[178] 'Thus', he writes, 'the poor, hungry children of God will be prevented from their salvation, and expelled from their father's table, as no man any longer believes or thinks to receive the sacrament correctly, because the complete repentance of no man is possible'. This is an attack on the teaching that, if one receives the sacrament while stained with sin (as complete repentance is impossible), one will, according to the pope and his scholars, be damned. It is also perhaps a condemnation of the result that the deceived either neglect the sacrament, believing they have not been sufficiently absolved; or that they do receive, but not in the correct faith.[179] The

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174 Ibid., Biiij v.

175 Ibid., C r.

176 Ibid., C v.

177 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fiij v.

178 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij v.

179 The proper preparation for the sacrament, as described by Strauss in this pamphlet, is that of admitting one's own inadequacy and placing one's trust in God, as described above. The 'true examination' is described in six steps; that one believes that one will receive the actual body and blood of Christ ('as the food and drink of [one's] soul'), and that the purpose of this gift is the 'renewal of the

eucharist therefore is a means of faith and cannot be denied; it must be received frequently, and in both kinds. As with baptism, the context of the early reformation is important in understanding Strauss's treatment of the eucharist in these pamphlets. The emphasis on the inner process is again due to the circumstances facing his readers and listeners, particularly those such as his former congregation in the Tyrol, to whom regular communion in both kinds was not available, and who may have been denied even the traditional form of the sacrament if suspected of heresy or if they had refused to confess. At the end of *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Strauss provides a short instruction to the Christian who is obliged to attend the traditional mass, telling him how he may use the time fruitfully and without sin: one can receive the body and blood 'spiritually and inwardly at all times'.[180] The faithful who truly desire to receive Christ can do so in spirit if the sacrament is unjustly refused. If one has faith and is denied the sacrament, one can still be saved; if one refuses the true sacrament, however, this is a rejection of God's grace and a sign that one does not have faith.

4. Faith and Love

In his denunciations of traditional works of piety and particularly the false pride that these entail, Strauss implies that not only are these particular devotional practices useless, presumptuous, and harmful, but that all of man's works are inadequate and sinful. God has offered salvation, and this is a gift for which he can never be compensated by man: 'God's loyalty and love, shown to us everywhere [to be] wonderfully great, may be in no way repaid by us with thankfulness, as God does not need our good deeds'.[181] Furthermore, it would appear that it is impossible for man to do good; very little of his behaviour is what it should

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result of his suffering, dying, and bloodshed.' Third, one must believe that only Christ can 'make [one] pure and justified', and only by this means. The rest of the steps are part of the confession described in *Beichtbüchlein*; however, the fourth is a little odd, introduced as it is with the claim that once the first three steps have been achieved (or one's faith has encompassed these three articles), 'the true repentance and recognition of your sins may follow, and will not fail to come, and will be entirely completely achieved in a very short time'. The rest of the fourth step is the sorrow one should feel when one considers 'the suffering, wounds, death, and bloodshed of [one's] rescuer and saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ'. Five and six deal with the futility of one's own repentance and the danger of contemplating one's sins (this is to be replaced with the aforementioned contemplation of Christ's sacrifice) and, 'above all', the recognition of one's general sinfulness, ibid., C r – Cij v.

180 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, D r.

181 *Auffrur*, Bij v.

be. If he says he is without sin, he is a liar, and also makes a liar of God. In acknowledging himself to be a sinner 'in all of [his] works', he will not deceive his conscience and will give God his due honour.[182] The 'false opinion of their own good works'[183] that men derive from human teaching must be abandoned as part of the process of self-recognition and replaced by complete trust in God, as described above. All 'singing, speaking, praying, piping, organ-playing, candle-burning, and similar human invention, priestish and monkish sins' must be rejected because, according to Strauss, the 'true worship of God' can only take the form of 'faith, hope, and love'.[184]

Following the alternative confession outlined in the *Beichtbüchlein*, in which the Christian acknowledges that God has given him faith and that this has saved him, we are told that, instead of the usual form of penance set by a confessor, all that remains is to take up one's cross, love one's neighbour, and avoid human teaching. This, Strauss says, is 'fulfilling the entire law of God'.[185] Of these instructions, it is that of brotherly love that is paramount: 'it

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182 *Trostliche verstendige leer* Cij v- Ciij r.

183 This phrase is taken from Strauss's second pamphlet on usury, in which he makes a general denunciation of ecclesiastical vows, fasting and feasting, and all human teaching, echoing those found in his earlier works: 'Jn dem wir dann allein geseliget werden. vnd seiner leere vnd gebott, vns behelffen, vnd benugen sollen lassen. Aber solche selbst erdichte menschliche gesetz, vnd leer, auch secten vnnd eygensynnigkeit, erheben ym menschen eyn falsch vermutung der eygnen gutten wercken, vnd das der mensch sych selbst sucht, als besonders grosses verdienstes bey God, vnd also richtet er zu bey yhm selbst, ein scharffe wichtige abgotterey vnd dem nach beschlußlichen, Got von yhm enteeret vnd gelestert wirt', *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij r.

184 *Heiligthüm*, Bij v. Furthermore, this adoration can only displease the saints themselves. We use their bodies, Strauss argues, to break God's commandment, exhuming their bodies which should remain in the earth until the last day, with the result that 'their bones or clothes with temporal pomp and honour, are moved and handled to please everyone.' If they had desired this honour, they would not have been holy, rather, they would have been disobedient to God. How can this supposed desire for adoration be reconciled with the obedience of their 'mortal lives', especially as they now know God so much better? They would be more wicked than we, whose behaviour can be explained by our active old Adam, 'who daily obscures the knowledge of God', ibid., Aiij r. On his definition of the 'true worship', Strauss declares that even 'Augustine and the school-learned' agree with this. On Strauss and the theologians of the Church, see Chapter II, below.

185 *Beichtbüchlein*, Diiij v: 'After this confession there follows no set penance, other than that you take upon yourself, your cross in which you follow Jesus the Lord in the teaching and content of his godly word, and protect yourself entirely diligently from human teaching and laws, faithfully do your artisanal work or trade, and have the greatest diligence in all outward things, that you prove yourself loyal, friendly, and willing to your neighbour, as to yourself, so you will have fulfilled the entire law of God, Romans 13' (Romans 13:8). On the true confession, ibid., Diiij r.

may not ever be that we can show love outwardly to our God, as he has no need of our good work. For this reason, the return of love to God must be found among us in relation to our neighbour, and so then we will know how much we love God, by whose will we do not refuse to give up even body and life for our brother neighbour'.[186] One serves God through serving one's neighbour. A general description of the form this love is to take is found in Strauss's 1526 response to Johannes Cochlaeus: 'you should love your enemies and intercede for your persecutors, and do well by those that hate you, and always repay wickedness with goodness, and finally love your neighbour, as Christ has loved you'.[187] This brotherly love is to replace the traditional works of merit; not for the purpose of bargaining with God for one's salvation, but simply to fulfil his commandment. Neither do the souls in heaven for whom one, mistakenly thinking that they are in purgatory, buys masses, require our mercy and loyalty; this too is to be replaced by love shown to the living, who do.[188] For Strauss, love is the consequence of faith, its 'proper, sweet, constantly-ripening fruit'.[189] This willingness to love one's neighbour for God's sake is the means by which one can be sure of the strength of one's faith, that one is 'a true Christian and follower of Christ'; he who 'does not find his heart moved and eager for such desire and zeal for God and for God's sake towards his neighbour, he also has no faith and does not yet live in God nor God in him'.[190] In his second

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186 *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij r.

187 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biij r.

188 *Fegfeur*, Ciiij r.

189 *Auffrur*, Aiij v, 'as then the fruit of faith breaks through without cease'. Similarly, in the *Euangelium Luce*, Strauss declares that, indeed, if one's faith is correct, it will 'work in [one] the fruits of the true love of [one's] neighbour', *Euangelium Luce*, B r. Faith enables love: 'Christian love, through faith, breaks through [...] the capabilities of all creatures', *Wucher zu nemen*, B v. See also ibid., Bij r.

190 'So brechen dann die rechte süssen stettigs grünenden früchten vnd werck des waren glaubens herfür vnd weyßt dann der mensch des er eyn warer christ vnnd nachuolger Christi ist. Dann all die weil der mensch sein hetz solicher begird vnd übung zu gott vnd vmb gotts willen zu seinem nehsten nit bewegt vnd begirig befindet, der hat auch keyn glauben vnd wonet noch nit inn Gott noch Gott in ihm. Aber sein alt verdamlich art vnd herkommen im alten toten glauben erhalten, sein selbs eygen liebe vber got vnd den nehsten, vnd liebt weder Gott noch den nechsten, dan alleyn als vil er Gottes vnd seines nehsten endtlich an seel ode leip geniessen mag', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biij r. This does not mean that he who loves his neighbour has become a *perfect* Christian; the use of the term 'constantly-ripening' confirms that the crucifixion of one's old Adam is a continual process, only completed in death. (See also: 'You are a true Christian, if you have crucified your old Adam, along with his natural vices and lusts, but if you have no reduction of your own pleasure, also not an eager heart to abandon your lust, then you are not a dedicated follower and disciple of our lord Christ', *Auffrur*, Aiij r.)

pamphlet on usury Strauss was to write, 'there may be no faith without love'[191], and the following in the 1525 pamphlet on rebellion: '[so] that our thoughts and hope do not deceive us, so we have a certain knowledge of our faith in the infallible proof of the true love and loyalty to our neighbour; for this reason St John says in the first Epistle at the 3rd [chapter], "We know that we are taken from death to life, as we love the brothers"'.[192]

5. Faith and Human Agency

For Strauss, man is saved through faith, that is, the crucifixion of man's nature, reason, and confidence in oneself, replaced by complete trust in God. This faith, along with the sacraments, allows Christ's redemption to work within the soul of each Christian, and enables one to love not only God, but also one's neighbour. Although Christ died to redeem man, it is clear that not all are saved; some (the faithless) will be damned. With whom, then, does this decision rest - with God, who decides who will or will not have faith, or with man, who chooses to be faithful? If man himself is incapable of good before he has faith, does this mean that he has no influence whatsoever on his salvation? Is there any room for free will in this process? The role of predestination in Strauss's soteriology is particularly difficult to ascertain and one must rely on asides and hints which appear here and there, often when he is discussing practical reforms. Even for Luther, this subject is problematic, and scholars are divided regarding his position. Luther's unconditional emphasis on the omnipotence of God and the absolute powerlessness of man must have led him to an understanding of salvation, at least in the earlier stages of his theological development, that involved a deliberate division of mankind by God into an elect and a reprobate. It has been argued, however, that Luther stopped short of articulating definite double predestination, preferring instead to consider it a mystery beyond human understanding.[193] According to Strauss, 'nothing may prevent man from [receiving] the fatherly loyalty and care other than faithlessness alone, and that the man

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191 *Wucher zu nemen*, B r.

192 Ibid., Bij v – Biij r.

193 'It is clear that Luther presumed God had chosen those who would come to faith, but he insisted that this element of biblical teaching could be used only to bring comfort to believers', Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Cambridge, 2005), 43. See also Fredrik Brosché, *Luther on Predestination: the Antinomy and the Unity Between Love and Wrath in Luther's Concept of God*. Studia Doctrina Christianae Upsaliensia 18 (Uppsala and Stockholm, 1978).

strongly does not trust in God'.[194] What, then, makes a man 'faithless'? Is this faith something acquired by man's own efforts, or is it a free gift from God?

At the core of the process of faith described above, for Strauss as for Luther, is man's acknowledgement of his limitations as a sinful descendent of Adam: 'man must for all time recognize the abominable condition of his origin in this violent movement of the works of the flesh, and that he is not at all master of his good desires, according to free will'.[195] The fact that one must despair of oneself, especially considering the form this takes in the sample confession provided by Strauss, underlines this: 'I do not know anything good in myself to trust'.[196] It would appear from this that Strauss considers the possession of faith a decision of God, in which man has no part; God's promise means that he will give faith to man, through his mercy.[197] As described above, one can request God's grace, but cannot influence this gift; due to man's inherent inadequacy, 'that which one can do' can never be sufficient.[198] The initial impetus remains with God; if he does not want man to have faith, nothing else can bring this about. Strauss uses John 6:44 ('no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him') in the context of explaining how difficult it is to conquer one's nature and bring forth the 'fruit' of faith.[199] Is the obvious lack of (active) faith in many due then to God's refusal to give this grace or help to all? Does this mean that Strauss supported a theory of reprobation? Although for many God has offered the possibility of salvation, whether they choose to accept it or not, have some always been destined to be damned? In the second work on usury, Strauss states that God must be recognised as the father of the 'wicked and sinful' as well as of the 'righteous and innocent'. The recognition of oneself as the latter is essential,

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194 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aiiij r.

195 *Auffrur*, Bij r.

196 *Beichtbüchlein* Diij v.

197 *Fegfeur* B v. See also, 'he, to whom the faith has been given by God', ibid., Biiij r: 'dem der glaub von gor mit geteylt wirt'.

198 Strauss says that one can ask for God's grace in the context of the unavailability of the eucharist, *Trostliche verstendige leer*, D v. On the other hand, one certainly cannot *force* God to give grace, especially as one is *unworthy* of it in the first place (the preparation for communion): 'I truly recognize myself as a poor unworthy sinner, also entirely unsuitable for the least grace from you', (*Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij v, 'Nun erkenn ich mich warlich ain armen vnwirdigen sünder, auch der wenigsten genaden bey dir gantz vngemeß').

199 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biiij v.

according to Strauss's earlier writings; is he indicating here that there exists an elect and a reprobate? Furthermore, he does say that 'the number of the chosen, who alone hear and accept [God's] calling voice, was well known to him'.[200]

Despite the use of the word 'chosen', this is not double predestination but rather foreknowledge: God knows who will fail. The 'chosen' are not the elect; they constitute all of those to whom God's word has been revealed. Christ has died for all, and now that the gospel has been made known once more, 'the great grace of God shares itself with all Christian men to the advantage of the souls anew'. All should 'take the renewal of their redemption to their hearts' (this renewal being the return of the gospel, through God's grace), and abandon old errors.[201] For both Luther and Strauss, some will be damned; for Strauss, however, there is even less indication than in Luther that this may be due to God having ordained the damnation of some. Although through Adam all were lost, all have been saved by Christ, and this justification is richer than the damnation brought by Adam's sin.[202] On the other hand, a requirement of some form of voluntary co-operation on the part of man in the process of faith and salvation would explain the existence of the damned. In his 1525 description of this, it does appear that Strauss views at least some degree of human effort to be involved: 'Ah, God, it is such a crusading, painful struggle, which no one can undertake with proper conquest, if he has not made an effort and first crucified his own reason through the word of God'.[203] This willingness to suffer would appear to come from man, and could be seen as his contribution towards his own salvation. There does appear to be a choice when it comes to submitting oneself to the painful process of self-recognition and the crucifixion of one's nature.

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200 *Ein sermon vber das// Euangelium Lucae am .xix. Alls// Jesus die stat Jerusalem ansach// do weynett ehr vber sy / wydder // die undanckbarkeit aller men=//schen. Geprediget zü Eysse=//nach. An[no] M.D.Xxiij.// Christus lebt vn[d] regnieret// Doctor Jacobus Strauß// Ecclesiastes.* ([Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer 1523]), Aij v.

201 *Euangelium Luce,* Aiij r.

202 'We were all damned through a man. Accordingly, we will also be free[ed] from sin and saved through a man [...] the salvation is richer than the damnation. Accordingly, Adam could not harm us so much through his sin, Christ has also brought us more benefit with his righteousness', *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff,* Bij v. This is a reference to Romans 5:19.

203 *Auffrur,* Bij r.

Similar references to human agency are to be found elsewhere in Strauss's works. In his definition of the 'true confession and repentance'[204], this acknowledgement of one's sins and recognition of God[205] is presented as necessary for salvation, although it clearly requires human effort: 'that which we lack here will harm us eternally'.[206] It may be that God provides the possibility of true confession which man must complete; this being the 'work of God' mentioned in *Trostliche verstendige leer* following Strauss's assertion of salvation through faith alone.[207] This would suggest that contrition is indeed a work, an effort to be made by the sinner. Although God's promise alone suffices for the 'entire forgiveness of sins', Strauss advises that 'whoever cannot make and neglects this confession, he has neglected his salvation'.[208] In this sense, man is saved by faith alone, however, this is a definition of faith which requires at least some degree of input from the sinner; faith appears to be a human act or choice, on which salvation depends.[209] Despite the insistence that it is God who has given faith,[210] the despairing nature of the recognition of one's inadequacy mentioned above[211] does not preclude the possibility that the decision to be faithful and recognise this helplessness may reside with man. In his discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in baptism, Strauss

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204 This is also described as the 'true faith': 'Hie ist die rechtt peicht vnnd puess grundtlich angetzeigt, dann der waren lebendige glaube in Christum ist ein steet, verharrende, bekenntnus, vnd peicht der sunden', *Beichtbüchlein*, D v.

205 Ibid., D v. 'ist gantz nodt die recht peicht vnd pueszfertikeit, die in aller geschrifft dem sunder noturfftig angetzeigt wirtt, daß der mensch hertziglich got dem almechtigen beken vnd voriehe sein sunde'.

206 Ibid., D v: 'Dan waß vnß hie abgieng wurde vnß ewiglich schaden'.

207 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Biiij r: 'John at the 6th: That is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent, and how, or why God the Father has sent him'. (John 6.29: Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent'). This is supported by Strauss's statement that only God may give remorse: unlike the priests, who claim to provide this contrition, or prefect sorrow, in the sacrament of penance, this is 'the property of God, who alone gives remorse'. *Beichtbüchlein*, Cij v.

208 *Beichtbüchlein*, D v: 'Und wer diese peicht nycht kan vnd verseumet, der hat sein heil vnd seligkeit versaumpt'.

209 Contrition is nothing without faith. According to Strauss, this recognition of sins takes place in Christ, not in oneself; true contrition is the taking to heart of the suffering undergone by Christ for the sake of God's children, and the redemption of their sins, 'das er nuen meer im glauben trostlych, nicht in ime selbs, aber in Christo ledigung von seinen sunden empfae', Ibid., Dij v. See also Ibid. Dij v: 'So wir sagen wir haben keine sunde, so verfuren wir vnß selbst, vnd ist die warheit nicht in vnß, so wir aber vnsere sunde bekennen, so ist got getrew, vnd gerechtt, das er vns die sunde vergeb vnd reniget vnß von aller vngerechtigkeit'.

210 'you have given me faith', Ibid. Diiij r.

211 'I do not know anything good in myself to trust',.Ibid. Diij v.

indicates that the faith of man alone is not sufficient.[212] Again, however, this does not mean that man's own effort is not required; it is insufficient, but it is still necessary. As mentioned above, Strauss states in *Trostliche verstendige leer* that at God's table only those who truly desire forgiveness and who 'in true faith perceive their sins' will be fed.[213] This would suggest that one's attempt to recognise oneself as a sinner must be successful. This recognition, along with a desire for forgiveness (and an acceptance that this can only come from God), is required for the sacrament to be effective.[214] According to Strauss, 'the sum of all Christian righteousness' is that one permits Christ to redeem one from sin[215] and, recognising oneself to be a sinner, places one's entire hope in God and allows him his honour.[216] Although the decision to forgive belongs to God alone, the use of the words *lassen* (to permit) and the active form of *vollbringen* (to accomplish) in this passage would indicate that the process of acquiring faith is something which requires the participation of both man and God. Elsewhere, Strauss maintains that it is only in allowing 'Christ to be Christ' that we 'will then be saved, and should allow his teaching and commandment to help and satisfy us'.[217] Although this is used to introduce another denunciation of confidence in one's own works, '*sollen lassen*' again indicates that man's consent is necessary; one has a choice regarding faith and salvation.

As mentioned above, the idea that there some have been 'chosen' does not mean that God's grace is offered only to a limited few; 'chosen' appears to be used in a broader, more inclusive sense: those to whom the gospel has been preached. Strauss tells his audience that the gospel,

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212 'Do not allow yourselves to err, if you read as stands above, that in baptism faith alone takes away sins, as faith without the spirit does not come from Christ', *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aiiij v.

213 *Trostliche verstendige leer* Aiiij v.

214 It must be remembered, however, that Strauss's purpose here is to teach that communion is for the sinner, and not those who are without sin.

215 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij r.

216 'Und beschließlich ist das die gantz summa Christenlicher gerechtigkait, vnd des waren glaubens volkommenhait, das wir zü aller zeit Christum in vnns lassen wircken die erlösung von sünden [...] Und demnach volbringst du die gerechtigkait, wenn du got die eer, die jm allain zügehört, in warem rechten glauben vnd vngezweyfelter hoffnung züstellest, so du jm allain getrawest, als dem, der dir deine sünd allain vmb sein selbs willen vergibt. Und also in dem gericht vnd der gerechtigkait wirdest du vnd dein werck gerecht, vnd wolgefellig vor got dem almächtigen', ibid., Ciij r-v.

217 'In dem wir dann allein geseilget werden, vnd seiner leere vnd gebott, vns behelffen, vnd benugen sollen lassen', *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij r.

denied to their forefathers for many centuries, has appeared once more: 'who may think otherwise, than that the great grace of God shares itself with all Christian men to the advantage of the souls anew, and accordingly the comforting promise of God's word in the holy gospel will be revealed'. He urges his 'dear brothers' not to reject the visitation, to their 'eternal harm'.[218] All are to 'take the renewal of their redemption to their hearts' (this renewal being the return of the gospel, through God's grace) and abandon old errors.[219] Unfortunately, according to Strauss, only a few accept this gift. This is the focus of his preaching, and especially of the sermon on Luke: to encourage the acceptance of God and his word through the threat of damnation. Here, Strauss uses the destruction of Jerusalem is a metaphor for the 'ruin and misery of the soul'.[220] Christ wept in the New Testament because the people did not recognize the time of visitation and, Strauss insists, he weeps now because men are still stubborn and ungrateful: 'that is the great reason no one should be pleased if God's grace and mercy were to be rejected and not received by the thankless men'.[221]This is a clear indication that, although God may offer his grace and mercy, man is at liberty to spurn it. We should 'consider whether [...] the reason for the weeping of Christ our lord will be found with us and then we may feel the fruit and strength of the gospel'. Furthermore, if we wish to be citizens of the 'heavenly Jerusalem', we should ensure that 'we too do not oppose the sweet, gracious visitation, the unfathomable mercy of God, so obstinately and ungratefully'.[222] For Strauss, it appears to be wholly within man's power to reject eternal life. God's initial help is necessary as man can do nothing of his own accord, but man's effort and initiative are also required. It is this on which his salvation depends: if he accepts, he is saved not due to his own merit, but to God's grace; if he rejects it, however, he is the architect of his own damnation. Although Strauss did not enter into any systematic discussion of the subject,

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218 *Euangelium Luce*, B r: 'For this reason, dear brothers, [let each of you be sure] that he does not reject the gracious merciful visitation, to his eternal harm'.

219 Ibid., Aiij r.

220 Ibid., A v.

221 We should not fear the signs of the last judgement, (as described by Luke 21. 'look up and raise your heads, as your salvation draws near'), as we will be saved; this is not why Christ weeps, rather, he weeps because the people did not recognize the time of visitation (John 1:11, He came to his own home, and his own people received him not.): 'that is the great reason no one should be pleased if God's grace and mercy will be rejected and not be received by the thankless men', for this reason he will have his revenge, which will be comprehensive and soon'. Ibid., Aij r.

222 Ibid., Aij v.

it must be concluded that he subscribed to a doctrine of single, rather than double, predestination: Christ has redeemed all men and God offers the means of faith to all, but permits man to accept or reject this possibility of salvation.

6 Suffering and comfort

A theme very evident in Strauss's works, particularly those in which he addresses the question of faith, is that of the conscience of the individual Christian. Luther's initial theological revolution regarding salvation had originated in the despair brought about by man's ability to earn God's mercy. When Strauss speaks of the 'conscience' (*gewiss*), he uses the term to mean that which can weigh upon and worry the Christian and which requires comfort. In the *Sermon on Luke*, the conscience is mentioned as something that will allow the Christian to know whether or not he or she has accepted God's visitation.[223] He has put his collection of Hall sermons into print, he says in the prologue, 'in the service of all worried consciences'.[224]

False comfort.

However, worry was not Strauss's principal target. Part of his declared purpose in writing on the inner and outer baptism was to refute the 'dangerous, unnecessary questions of the school-learned' which place too much importance on the 'outward sacrament', leading to both false fear and false comfort.[225] According to Strauss, this false comfort is one of the most pernicious aspects of numerous undesirable religious practices: not only baptism, but also the traditional penitential process, idolatry in general, and all aspects of the blasphemous 'soul-service', all of which inspire false confidence in salvation. In place of the required trust in God, the church offers false comforts in the form of the intercession of the saints, and other

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223 'Your conscience should well tell you whether you fruitfully recognise the gracious, blessed visitation of the fatherly word of God with sincere gratitude'. Ibid., B v.

224 'allen geängstigten gewissen zü dienst' *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aij v. The very title of this pamphlet makes clear its comforting intent.

225 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, B r.

'human laws'.[226] The present form of confession is particularly harmful to the conscience. This is because, when one has sinned, one 'hurriedly runs to confession and receives comfort and help from it'.[227] Once one has been absolved by the priest and has performed one's penance, one 'no longer feels guilty of any mortal sin'.[228] The penitent believes that he has achieved 'true, complete repentance', when in fact he has lost his 'grace and salvation in a despondent manner' because he falsely believes himself to be without sin. This confidence destroys salvation (Strauss refers to confession as a 'tyrannical butcher's stall'[229]) because, in relying on a false, human practice to cleanse one's soul, one denies Christ's redemption and promise ('how then can Christ retain his office [*ampt*]?'), and neglects the necessary crucifixion of one's own reason.[230] If one were to listen to the clergy and believe that the preparation for communion is purification through one's own repentance, one could only conclude that there is no 'effect of Christ' in communion, given that 'he has not come to seek and to redeem the righteous and purified, rather to free and purify the sinners from sins'.[231] Confession, therefore, also has consequences for the sacrament of the eucharist, whereby 'the entire fruit if the most superior Sacrament is abolished, and the life of the poor soul is changed to death'.[232] As described above, if communion is received in faith, it provides forgiveness and salvation. If, on the other hand, it is taken without faith, it will lead to damnation.[233] Communion loses its salvific effect if one receives it under the delusion of purity achieved in confession, through one's own efforts and those of the confessor.[234] Thus, an occasion of salvation has become one of damnation.[235]

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226 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij r. Strauss also warns against relying on the decisions of councils, in this case on the subject of usury, to reassure one's 'soul and conscience'. *Wucher zu nemen*, Eij r-v. On usury, see Chapter III, below.

227 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, B v.

228 Ibid., Aiiij r.

229 Ibid., B v.

230 Ibid., B r.

231 Ibid., B r. Strauss here provides citations from Scripture in support of the forgiving effect of communion, and God's power to forgive: Job 14.4 (with the addition, 'you who are alone'), and Isaiah 43.25.

232 Ibid., Aiij r.

233 Ibid., Aiij v.

234 Ibid., Aiiij v; B r.

235 Ibid., B r.

False anxiety.

Along with this false comfort, Strauss also condemns the corresponding false anxiety engendered by the church's teachings. His anger regarding the 'soul service' associated with purgatory is partly due to the implication that, in accepting the need for 'works' of remission, 'the certain, undeceiving Christian hope with which every pious Christian comforts himself in faith is thus also defeated and destroyed'.[236] In denying the comfort provided to man through God's promise of salvation, he laments, 'the devil has so very miserably robbed us of the true Christian comfort under the appearance of good'. Not only do the the clergy who assign so much power to the outward signs of baptism 'give comfort where there is none', they 'also terrify the people where there is no fear'. The church has portrayed 'the comforting and well-assured Christian death as so dreadful and terrible' that 'the sinful, natural reluctance to die will be strengthened'.[237] Like the false comfort, however, this false anxiety is particularly evident in the sacramental cycle of penance and communion.

The 'poor, sinning people,' recognising that they sin daily, seek forgiveness from God.[238] The clergy, however, in their role as 'binders and releasers of sins' have deceived the people regarding God's promise and have 'compelled them in fear and terror, [so] that no one has been able to breathe in four hundred years, and rescue himself from such a false compulsion'.[239] Strauss is not surprised that the clergy have been able to instil such fear using these methods: 'who may not allow himself to be terrified by this scarecrow (*vor dyesem stroepützen*)'. Emphasising the degree to which this fear has taken hold, he writes that all levels of society have been enthralled by this strategy of terror.[240] The existing teaching on confession is denounced as a form of tyranny, in which one is told that taking communion without having made a complete confession will lead to eternal damnation.[241] This confession is defined as repentance for each individual sin, along with the circumstances of each ('who, with whom, in which person, when, how often, where, from what desire, for what reason, or

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236 *Fegfeur*, Aiij v.
237 Ibid., Aiiij r.
238 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aij v.
239 Ibid., Aiiij v.
240 Ibid., Bij r.
241 Ibid., A v. 1 Corinthians 11:28. Here, Strauss is referring to *Trostliche verstendige leer*.

how well attempted, and the like'), and the telling of the same to the confessor.[242] Once absolved from his sins, he is ready (*geschickt vnd probiert*) for communion. The pope has used the 'lightning, thunder, and hail of the great ban and eternal damnation'[243] to enforce this sacrament, making it impossible for the 'poor, pious Christians' to free themselves from this 'noose'.[244]

The system whereby the eucharist is withheld or the Christian tormented by the idea that he or she is receiving the sacrament in an unworthy state is, for Strauss, the chief cause of anxiety. Although some receive the eucharist under the illusion of absolution, others are not so confident in regarding the state of their souls. Strauss complains that the sophists have caused a 'dreadful coercion and despair [...] to all worried consciences and pious Christians'; they 'transform God's comfort and sweet trust into dismay, fear, and doubt.' They have placed the conscience in a 'hellish noose' constructed from the 'terrible, human laws'. This, writes Strauss, has made it impossible for the poor, Christian man to approach the Lord's table and eagerly receive the body and blood of God secure in the knowledge of his salvation.[245] The clergy have led the people to believe that to receive the sacrament in an unpurified state will lead to damnation. However, because one knows that it is impossible to remember all of one's sins, all who have made the resulting incomplete confession and yet receive must therefore be damned.[246] Strauss does not spell out this latter implication at this point, but it is evident elsewhere.

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242 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij v – Aiiij r.

243 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aiiij v.

244 Ibid., Aij r: 'thus the Antichrist has taught and confirmed with all his antichrists, also ordered [one] with excommunication and with eternal damnation, to believe nothing other than [that] the feeble confession comes from God and from the indispensible law of God'.

245 'Aber grosse hoffnung vnd trost haben sy fürgeben auf die hayligen züeeren, vnd tyrannischen menschen gesatz, die sy dann zü aim hellischen strick der gewissen vnerleidlich aufgelegt haben, damit das der arm Christenmensch nitt meer mit begirigem freyen hertzen zü dem frölichen tisch vnsers herren sich möcht vertruwen, vnd den leib vnsers gotes vnd sein hailiges blüt zü sicherer hailwertigkait empfahen', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aij v.

246 Ibid., Aiiij r (Psalm, 19:12; Job 2:28).

Strauss provides some affecting descriptions of the emotional effects of this anxiety on the 'poor, oppressed people'.[247] Priests and monks who are not satisfied with one's confession and require one to acquire dispensations from the pope or the bishops have 'forced and imprisoned the poor conscience, [so] that this fear nowhere wanes' and a 'worrying need arises'.[248] Unlike communion and baptism, which are mentioned in Paul's epistles, Strauss argues that such confession has no scriptural foundation. It is not indicated even in the Old Testament; why, Strauss asks, would God want to burden Christians with 'such a dreadful, tyrannical law' while allowing the 'sharply biting old Jews' to go free? The clergy who permit no one to receive without confession, 'allow the poor people no more comfort' (*so sy dem armen volck kain trost meer lassen*).[249] Using the powers they have acquired by means of the invented confession, the clergy ('confession lords') 'brutally rule over your conscience': teaching wickedness and pretending to be God.[250] Strauss describes the specific anxieties experienced by the recent penitent as he approaches the altar believing that his confession has been insufficient, and laments the result that one does awaits communion in a state of distress rather than confidence in God's mercy.[251] In seeking to usurp God's power of forgiveness and pretending to the laity that they possess this power, the clergy (once again labelled 'holy confession lords') are 'the true blasphemers of God,' and the 'poor Christian folk' are 'divided from God's mercy, and hunted into human comfort and help', the dreadful consequences of which are described above.[252] The practice of confession is itself a burden on the conscience in another way. If one were to attempt individual examination of each sin, this would awaken 'damnable doubt' or the sin and lust itself. Strauss uses the image of a sick and injured man: what good does it do, he asks, when he examines each of his ailments individually? This useless contemplation of his sins 'truly brings him no relief, rather, much

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247 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aiiij v.

248 Ibid., B v.

249 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, B v.

250 Ibid., Bij r.

251 In confession as it currently stands, one is 'surrounded by worries': 'Also werden sy vmbgeben mit ängsten, wie sy nit gnüg gebeicht haben, vnd haben auch das nit gesagt, vnd jhens nit, mit disem vnd jhenem vmbstand gebeicht. Nun ist die stund hie, vnd müssen hintzü, der pfaff hat nit der weil, vnd hab ich noch nit gnüg gebeicht, vnd hat das arm gewissen kain grössere not das gantz jar, dann zü der stund, in der got dem menschen die sicherst vergwissung vnd freüd berait hat', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Biij r.

252 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aiiij r.

more will he be burdened and his nature sickened'. There is no benefit to be found in such reflection, 'as the poor conscience is more burdened with unfruitful worries'.[253] The Christian should understand that he has 'acted so very relentlessly against God's loyalty and love' but should at the same time remember God's promise.[254]

Liberation: Truth and the conscience (the new sacraments).

Some think they have been absolved from their sins by their priest; others think such absolution is necessary, but have failed to make a proper confession. Some therefore approach the altar in false self-satisfaction while others do so in needless distress. Neither of these is the correct state: one should be a penitent yet hopeful sinner. According to Strauss, one must abandon the 'fearful' teaching, and regard only God's word, 'which frightens no one and abandons no one in worry, but rather comfortingly calls [one] to him in all sweetness'.[255] The overall tone in the work on the inner and outer baptism, with its repeated opposition of sin and damnation on one hand and redemption and righteousness on the other, and the strong implication that the latter is the more powerful, appears to be one of hope, confidence, and liberation from the noose of false teaching.[256]

It is evident that Strauss is anxious to ease the conscience in all aspects of religious practice. He would prefer, he says, that no one attend the mass. However, 'the practice (*gebrauch*) of hearing Mass on Sunday worries the Christian folk. It is necessary to give the poor, imprisoned conscience some air and comfort'; this is what Strauss intended to do with his instruction regarding the spiritual reception of Christ.[257] If the true, necessary sacrament is withheld, the conscience should nonetheless not be burdened. Strauss's principal purpose in *Trostliche verstendige leer* is more generally to allow his readers and listeners, made fearful by the clergy and reluctant to receive the sacrament, to do so as Christ had willed, 'with happy,

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253 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Cij r.

254 Ibid., Cij r.

255 Ibid., Biij r.

256 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Biij r. 'Wie nun durch eynes sunnd die verdamnus vber al menschen komen ist, also ist auch durch eynes rechtfertigkeyt, die rechtfertigung des lebens komen all menschen.'

257 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, D r.

cheerful hearts' and without 'fear, doubt, and moroseness of the soul'.[258] In the *Beichtbüchlein*, Strauss declares that the 'heart and soul' must be freed from the 'tyrannical wickedness' of sacramental confesssion.[259] This practice of confession, he says, arose due to the custom of some pious Christians in the early years of Christianity. Its purpose was to provide more certainty of the conscience and, he admits, that at one time it would have had a consoling effect; however, this time has passed.[260] Whereas Christ 'wants to free the Christian heart in himself and make the conscience peaceful', confession 'makes the heart sad and anxious', and 'one learns to fear sin where there is none'.[261] In its place, Strauss offers the 'true confession' (the continual process of recognition which renews the grace of baptism described above[262]), which 'may occur with eager, free hearts, without fear, coercion and misleading'.[263] One may also confess voluntarily to one's brother,[264] following which the latter should 'comfortingly set forth and say, "Dear brother, I hear that your sins are painful to you in God; for this reason, be in no doubt from the words of God which may not fail. Go and sin no more, your sins are forgiven, and go in peace; your faith has redeemed you from sin"'.[265]

True anxiety.

This resignation and examination will itself involve much suffering; it should 'pierce' the conscience with the truth. However, unlike that imposed by the church, it is necessary. The

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258 Ibid., Aiij r. 'damit ewer andacht auff heüt (vnd als offt ir zü gottes tisch werden geen) on forcht, zweyfel, vnd grißgrammen der ge=wissen mit frölichem rüwigem vnd lustigem hertzen zü ewer säligkait Christum mügen empfahen'.

259 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aiiij r.

260 Ibid., D v.

261 Ibid., Ciiij r.

262 You should 'simply recognize yourself, without question and further experience, in all of your life a poor, sinning man, who has never kept God's commandment', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Cij v.

263 Ibid., Bij v.

264 No one should make a forced confession; this is hypocrisy and a mortal sin, *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciiij v.

265 Ibid., D r (Luke 7:48-50). Degrees of repentance do not seem to matter; it is only necessary that one has faith: 'It also may not help them, that they invent and pretend, as though there were a great difference among sinners, as it is a great and insurmountable mercy of God (*ein grosse almechtige vnuberwintliche barmhertzikeit gotis*) that forgives great and small sins, and must not be won more highly by one sinner than by another; as God's mercy reaches each one who believes in this', *Fegfeur*, C v.

recognition required for the sacrament of the eucharist to work its effect in the sinner is a recognition, not of one's own individual sins, but of the fact that the sin of mankind is the cause of Christ's suffering, and this latter should in itself be distressing. As mentioned above, Strauss's sample of a true confession instructs the Christian to consider Christ's death and his own contribution to this, and to 'sink [his] heart in the painful suffering and death of the saviour'.[266] When faithful Christian considers that man is unfathomably wicked, and that Christ has died for this reason, 'then begins the blessed worry (*selig angst*) and painful contrition, that the sinner sees and painfully takes to heart his great sin in the suffering, wounds, and death of Christ'. He, the 'evildoer, for whom Christ our God has suffered so much', will become 'entirely humbled and despondent in himself'.[267] Furthermore, the process of killing one's old Adam as described above is a painful one. To abandon one's reason in favour of 'the word of God in faith' is 'no small cross'; to break one's nature and trust in God alone is described as 'the most bitter cross of all'.[268] Man's own crucifixion, according to Strauss, is the way to God, and this involves much suffering. This experience is described as a tumult or rebellion, a perpetual conflict between flesh and spirit which causes much pain. This is a process that continues throughout the life of the Christian, beyond the initial recognition of his sinfulness. The spiritual pain that such fleshly desire causes the pious Christian should be that suffered by St Paul who undertook a similar task.[269] The conquest of the flesh therefore leads to a double suffering. First, that of the struggle to overcome one's own nature, and second, the pain that such fleshly desires themselves cause the now pious, faithful, Christian.[270] No living man can fully conquer the flesh and resolve

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266 *Beichtbüchlein*, Diij r; also *Trostliche verstendige leer*, C v: see above. Elsewhere (in a reference to Romans 6:3 and 1 John 1:7), Strauss describes the 'inner baptism' as sharing in Christ's suffering, *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aiij r.

267 Ibid., Dij r.

268 *Auffrur*, Aiiij r. On Luther's theology of the cross, see Walther von Loewenich, *Luthers Theologia Crucis* (6th edn., Bielefeld, 1982); see also Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford, 1985).

269 'For this reason St Paul cries out wholly pitifully to the Romans at the 7th, "I, a wretched man, who will deliver me from the body of this death" [Romans 7:24], as just before that he says, "I find another law in my members entirely opposed to the law of my nature" [Romans 7:23]', *Auffrur*, Bij r.

270 'And this crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh, must not be understood only in as much as it is painful to the body and opposed to all that pleases the corporeal life; but much more as the godly nature through the spirit daily finds itself burdened when the works of the flesh perform their

this suffering; this struggle must be waged permanently. The impious man can choose to give in to his nature and to have an easy life, if a painful eternity. By choosing to attempt to crucify the flesh, one chooses a life of conflict; conflict between one's human nature on one hand and the spirit on the other.[271]

True comfort.

Strauss's suggested wording or prayer for the new confession requires the sinner to admit that he is 'entirely despondent and ruined', although no outward signs of despair are required when saying these words, as such signs prove nothing.[272] However, at the same time the sinner believes that Christ has made full satisfaction for his sins.[273] All of this suffering and despondency will lead to comfort; not the 'false comfort' provided by the 'harsh, godless' confession of the church, but something more valuable and lasting.[274] Strauss ends the first part of his *Beichtbüchlein* with a brief comparison of the true and false confession; a technique he also employed in his pamphlet on the brotherhoods. Christ himself frees and pacifies the heart and conscience; confession enforces human teaching. Christ forgives completely; confession exacts a particular penance. Christ 'makes the sinner's heart joyful and free'; confession causes anxiety and sorrow. Christ shows a certain path; confession causes one to

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defective incitement in the power of the law of sins in all eagerness, which is a distressing and great pain to the pious Christian', Ibid.

271 On the constant conflict between flesh and spirit in Luther's theology, see Von Loewenich, *Luthers Theologia Crucis*, 133f.

272 'Und ob du diese dinge, mit seufftzen, vnd weinen, ader grosser beweglikeit nit kanst bedencken, adder tzu got aussprechen, so verzag nicht. Es ist hie nit nodt sinlicher entpfinlikeit, aber eins waren glaubens', *Beichtbüchlein*, Diij r. Such weeping and sighing were traditionally considered signs of contrition; see Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, (Princeton, NJ, 1977), 23-25. Anne T. Thayer, in her examination of printed sermon collections dating from 1450 to 1520, has concluded that the among features of a 'good confession', along with self-examination, completeness, and 'honest self-accusation,' was contrition, which she describes as follows: 'a good confession is to be made with contrition. Along with shame, humility, and often tears, contrition should include the intention to depart from one's sin', Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation*, (Aldershot, 2002), 61.

273 'Eß ist auch ausz allem meinem vermugen, nichts anders in mir, dan daß ich gantz vertzag vnd vertirbe, aber so ich glaub, dz deyn heiliges leiden vnentlich vns vnauffhorlich, fur meine sunde genugsam ist', *Beichtbüchlein*, Diiij r.

274 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij v: 'As with this life will be changed to death at the table of Christ, the wicked enemy has violently introduced the hellish trade throughout the world through the harsh godless granting of confession, to entanglement and eternal imprisonment'.

depart from this path. You should therefore avoid confession, Strauss tells his readers, 'if you do not want to be kept from Christ and receive unspeakable harm and error in your soul'.[275] The anxiety which results from the necessary *selig angst* means that the penitent 'will in faith be driven hurriedly to Christ our Lord, and in his true, unmistakeable promise, that he henceforth comfortingly receives release from his sins in faith, not in himself, but in Christ'; faith 'makes the man despondent in himself, and entirely comforted in Christ'.[276] Although the avoidance of eternal damnation is crucial, Strauss heavily emphasizes the replacement of needless anxiety with the true comfort for one's 'poor, torn conscience' offered by Christ.[277]

7. Practical changes

Strauss's pastoral mission as evident in these pamphlets was to encourage the laity to replace the false and harmful comfort provided by the church with the true consolation that comes with complete trust in Christ's redemption of sins; to liberate themselves from the tyranny and anxiety of invented doctrine while at the same time accepting an alternative, necessary form of suffering. This mixture of pain and comfort, replacing the false and destructive with the true and beneficial, constitutes the new faith offered by God; an internal struggle against one's own nature which the individual Christian must choose to undertake within him- or herself. This inner experience, however, required accompanying external, ecclesiastical reforms. As noted above, Strauss's published works deal primarily with the more practical aspects of faith, and this can be seen in the manner in which salvation is treated in the pamphlets; his theology must be picked out of treatises on more 'visible' subjects. Certain changes in the structure of the church and religious practice needed to be implemented by clergy and community in order to facilitate this new faith and prevent damnation. What did Strauss's new church look like?

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275 *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciiij r.

276 Ibid., Dij r. The old anxiety of the conscience is replaced with sorrow, trust, and hope. If one experiences this recognition, one should then have no doubt 'that all of [one's] sins have been forgiven', as God has said so (Luke 7:48-50), Ibid., Diij v.

277 This phrase comes from Strauss's example of how the Christian should prepare for the sacrament, in which can be seen the coexistence of true comfort and necessary despair; although the communicant recognises that he is unworthy, he must say to God: 'I want to flee to you, and receive you, that I may find from you alone justification, comfort, and peace for my poor, torn, conscience', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciiij r.

Preaching

A pastor or servant is required to care for the souls of the assembly. Through his preaching, he is to facilitate faith by exposure to the gospel.[278] The preacher is described as one 'who can give advice and instruction from the word of God'.[279] His duty is not simply to reveal Scripture to those who cannot read it for themselves, but to expound on its meaning for the religious lives of the laity. He must to inform the assembly about necessary and unnecessary works, and is particularly responsible for instructing the laity regarding the correct meaning of the sacraments.[280] Those who have the misfortune to live in areas in which the such preaching is prohibited are described as 'poor' and 'forsaken'.[281] Even in places where evangelical preachers are not actively persecuted, such as Saxony, many of those who are currently charged with the office of preaching are failing to fulfil this duty. Those who had previously appointed preachers (all grades of ecclesiastic, and 'feudal lords and patrons') are 'spectres' and were not entitled to do so.[282] Strauss appeals to John Frederick in his pamphlet on the Christian assembly on behalf of several 'assemblies' of his poor people (presumably from the Eisenach area, and perhaps other parishes within the town), who were still 'deprived of the gospel by the erring priests whom one calls father or pastor'.[283]

Preacher and Assembly

The pastor selected to fulfil this duty must be married; very few men, argues Strauss, have been given the ability to remain celibate. For all others, any attempt to live outside marriage can only lead to unchastity. The pastor and his family must live among the community and

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278 *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiiij r.

279 Ibid., Aiiij v.

280 For example, regarding baptism, Strauss states that 'it would also be necessary that the Christian people undergo much teaching and admonition in this subject, regarding how baptism brings the beginning of the Christian nature, accordingly, in the correct understanding, it also demonstrates the complete salvation through Christ', *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aiij v.

281 *Euangelium Luce*, B r.

282 *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiiij r.

283 Ibid., Aiij r. Even though Strauss himself was actively preaching in Eisenach, this must be continued and supported, as the 'enemies of the truth' who oppose Strauss's teachings on baptism and their followers 'have dishonoured the godly word among us without cease, and also begin to deprive other people of it', *Simonieschen Tauff*, Ciij v.

be supported by them. This provision should consist only of what is needed to survive, and no more. The preacher must be paid by the assembly, but not for specific services. The current system of payment must be reformed; as things stand, the clergy demand remuneration in various forms. This is another aspect of the unforgiveable presumption of the clergy in their attempt to usurp God's lordship: 'the same wicked trade shows the devilish presumption, as if the servant were in these matters a lord and possessor of the sacraments, as no one can sell that which is not his'.[284] Christ, Strauss writes, has offered his salvation for free, and the clergy therefore have no right to charge for either preaching or administering the sacraments in the manner now practised. All such income wrung from their congregations in return for 'spiritual things' is simony; 'that which affects the salvation of the soul' should not be bought with money.[285] This has been specifically forbidden in the gospel[286], and cannot be justified by the argument that it is a long-established custom.[287]

The pastor, like his congregation, is a servant of God; he may not therefore charge his fellow servants for the distribution of their master's gifts.[288] Due to the system of tithes and other

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284 *Simonieschen Tauff*, C r. Those who engage in this trade will be damned: 'no one may break God's commandment without eternal damnation, concerning this that money-seeking antichrists remember that in buying and selling the spiritual things, they will receive no other fruit than God's damnation alone', ibid., C v.

285 *Beichtbüchlein*, C r.

286 Strauss cites Matthew 10:8, in which Christ instructs the disciples to perform their duties without payment ('Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay'), Ibid. Biiij v, and the cases of Gehazi and Simon (2 Kings 5:20-27; Acts 8:18-20). He who ignores this prohibition 'will have his part with Gehazi', *Simonieschen Tauff*, Cij v. The ordinance to give freely may not be broken 'without eternal damnation' (ibid. C v). This also applies to those who, like Simon, seek to buy. To sum up, 'all that they also undertake and perform in their invented service of God, that cries without cease, 'money, money, money'; for this reason they too will be removed from the number of the healthy children of God along with Gehazi, and damned to the abyss of hell with Simon the magician' (ibid. Cij r).

287 'no one should protect its execution with any old custom, as the passing of time does not lessen the error, but heightens the sin', ibid., Cijv.

288 'Jesus has earnestly commanded the first servants of the Christian assembly [...] announce that the kingdom of heaven draws near, make the weak well, purify the leprous, awaken the dead, drive out the devils; you will have received it for nothing, you shall give it for nothing, as how may the servant exact money from his fellow servant, as the lord wants all his goods to be given freely', ibid., Bij r.

payments, the mass 'has become a craft and daily purchase and trade'.[289]It is 'terrible to think that in some churches place is given to buying and selling'. The clergy charge to appoint priests, to bury the dead, consecrate marriages, and dispense the other sacraments[290]; three separate people must be paid for a single baptism.[291] Strauss includes in his definition of simony trade in services he regards as unnecessary and impotent, indicating perhaps that the intent is as important as the reality. Although chrism and oil contribute nothing to the sacrament of baptism, the sale of these is simonaical. Even, writes Strauss, if the confession had no other faults, the confession-penny alone would make it ungodly. The system wereby, if one wants a 'willing, diligent father confessor', one must pay for the privilege, is 'the devil's work'.[292] If this confession did indeed provide forgiveness, then it should be given for free, as Christ commanded the disciples.[293] A Doctor Custos, who had been parish priest at Hall, is singled out for condemnation regarding his enthusiastic preaching in support of various offerings; he may well become, notes Strauss, 'a future paid celebrant of early mass (*frumesser*) in hell'.[294] It is not only the souls of the clergy that are in danger, however; both buyers and sellers of sacred or supposedly sacred things will be damned. These reforms, therefore, are urgently required.

Sacraments: external form.

Both sacraments must be returned to their intended function of renewing God's grace in the soul; as it is, through corruption, simony, and blasphemy, they have become means of damnation. The blasphemous mass, in which the clergy claim power over Christ through their sacrificial function, must be brought to an end. Communion must be given in both

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289 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciiij v – D r; as Strauss does not go into any more detail, this could possibly refer to an attempt to buy salvation with service rather than money. More likely, it is a reference to the way in which the clergy are paid.

290 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Cij v.

291 'one must give the baptizer at least eight pennies, the sexton takes two, and the Simonean priest keeps six', ibid., Bij r.

292 *Beichtbüchlein*, Biiij v.

293 Matthew 10:8, Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay. Strauss says that the clergy will offer the defence that this forms part of their livelihood, and therefore accords with 1 Corinthians 9:13 (Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?), *Beichtbüchlein*, Biiij v- C r.

294 Ibid., B r.

kinds.[295] The fact that it is provided only once a year, and then in the form of bread alone, is criticised, but only once, and very briefly, presumably because Strauss would have felt no need to expound on ideas that were already well known.[296] Regarding the external form of the sacraments, Strauss is much more preoccupied with that of baptism. As the baptism of the child depends on the faith of the parents and godparents, by placing their trust in unscriptural additions, the latter endanger not only their own salvation through their incomplete faith, but also that of the infant. Those who insist that their children are baptised in the old manner bring 'their poor ignorant children to ruinous danger'.[297] In describing the use of chrism and oil, Strauss uses the verb *schmiren* (smearing), which can also mean 'bribing'[298]; not only is the sale of such substances a form of simony, but the people pay for them in an attempt to assist the effect of the sacrament. Strauss is careful to reassure his readers that the absence of such 'additions' (*zusatz*) entails no 'reduction in the correct, true sacrament'.[299] Furthermore, there is no need for any 'particular town, hour, day, or time.' Strauss declares most of the 'long procession and ceremony' to be useless, as it is 'read in an unknown language, also so hurriedly mumbled' and therefore has no effect on the heart.[300] Even, he says, if the Bible itself were to be read in this manner, *on behertzigung*, this would be no more than the honouring of God with one's lips, while one's heart is far from him'.[301] John the Baptist, on the other hand, 'preached with great solemnity', and 'made known what the

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295 'The body of Christ and his precious blood is our food and drink at the high supper', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Biiij r.

296 Ibid., D r: 'The fruit and the true Christian usage of the most worthy sacrament is also terminated, and the common Christian folk entirely removed from the table of God, that one does not permit more than once in the year under one form to the Christian man'.

297 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Ciij r. Although Strauss makes a point of presenting the unchristian baptism as an injury to the child ('That which the father and godfather have done to the poor child, [...] who have wickedly brought it from the christian baptism [...] to the godless, simonean baptism'), presumably, this child will be able to rectify this in adulthood, even though the faith of their parents and godparents which was to act in place of their own is shown to be inadequate by this very insistence on unnecessary additions. *Simonieschen Tauff*, Ciij v.

298 Baufeld, s.v., Grimm, s.v.

299 'Es ist auch kein abgang an dem gerechten waren sacrament', *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aij v.

300 Ibid.

301 Ibid., Aiij r. Isaiah 29:13f and Matthew 15:8f.

outward baptism signifies'; the disciples, likewise.[302] As well as water and the presence of faith (that of the godparents in the case of infant baptism), baptism also requires the word of God, which must be preached so that one can understand. The use of an 'invented, unknown language' cannot be tolerated, as it is contrary to this final condition.[303]

The degree to which the outward ceremony of baptism needs to be changed, however, is not terribly clear from these works. Although they are not essential, Strauss says that he does not regard the customary rituals as harmful in themselves ('den alten geprauch zu teuffen, mit souil bannen vnd dem teufel treulichen warten, auch oft außgetruckten creutzen, vnd langen gepetten acht ich nit böß'), and appears to tolerate them, as long as 'the entire trust is not placed in this', or anything 'creeps in with it that is contrary to the true, inner baptism'.[304] One could retain the use of chrism and oil, but would have to ensure that people do not believe that these substances possess any special qualities. He does not object to the use of chrism and oil in themselves, but to their veneration and their purchase, saying that the sacrament may be given in any form, as long as it is in accordance with the true faith and no offence is given to the servants of the gospel or the neighbour.[305] Does Strauss see the retention of the old customs as possible under these conditions?

The emphasis on the potential harm of these practices would suggest otherwise. The old form of baptism is practised by the 'godless enemies of the gospel [...] to our shame and their own damnation'.[306] It is 'openly contrary to God, his word, and the nature of holy baptism'.[307] Any external addition that 'hinders or does not foster the faith with sincere desire, and trust in

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302 Ibid. Strauss carries on in this vein for a couple of paragraphs, insisting on clarity and the vernacular, and stating that the desire to look beyond the gospel is the work of the devil, as he taught Eve 'to become as the Gods, and to know the wicked and the good'.

303 Ibid., Ciij r. The use of the term 'invented' to describe Latin is interesting: Strauss may be suggesting that German is a 'natural' or God-given language whereas Latin is not. On the other hand, he may be commenting on the *use* to which Latin is put in the sacrament, its prayers, blessings, and liturgy, in other words, denouncing a corruption of language.

304 Ibid., Aij v.

305 'Nun möchte ich wol leiden, wo die sacrament den notturftigen gereicht wurden, *wo es nitt außerhalb deß waren rechten glaubens beschehe*, aber nach dez lebendigen wort Gottes, das kein vermessenheit oder verachtung des nechsten vnnd der diener deß Euangeliums, zugibt', Ibid., A v.

306 Ibid., Ciij r.

307 Ibid., Ciij v.

God' is both useless and harmful.[308] His professed willingness to tolerate the traditional baptism is undermined by his insistence that, if the scriptural baptism with water and the word is available, one may not refuse or alter it.[309] Although Strauss had provided this baptism in Eisenach, some inhabitants were still insisting on baptism in the customary form. This is especially true of the dispute over chrism and oil that prompted this sermon. The use of these is not based in the words of Christ or the disciples; they are 'truly a strange addition which is not easily obtained'.[310] He condemns the regulations which contribute to the expense and rarity of these substances, especially the bishops' insistence that only they and the pope may consecrate them, and observing sarcastically, 'what a precious thing it is, that must only be made by the greatest lords of the world!'.[311] Unlike balsam, which is required for making chrism and 'comes from far over the sea', the water specified in Scripture 'may be had everywhere in the world'.[312] In this addition, 'the devil wants to poison the essential sacrament of baptism with violent, terrible knavery'.[313] The clergy will never relinquish this valuable trade, and the use of chrism and oil at least must be discontinued because it is impossible to acquire them without engaging in simony. Even if the people had been convinced that these substances contributed nothing to the sacrament and wished to use them only for the sake of tradition, had Strauss agreed to this purchase (and here, at the end of the pamphlet, he is referring to the assembly as 'we'), they would have brought 'the curse

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308 Ibid., Aij v.

309 'As whoever may have baptism according to the ordinance of our lord Christ, and does not want it without false addition, he robs himself of his salvation', Ibid., Aij r. Moreover, when Strauss is defending his decision to speak out on chrism, he appears to suggest that the corruption of the sacrament of baptism is particularly serious, as it is the subject of a direct order from God: 'God has given us a serious order regarding baptism, therefore it is also indispensably necessary to know what is to be believed and done herein', ibid., Aiiij v. This does appear to suggest that Strauss saw infant baptism at the font as indispensable, with few exceptions. However, see his ambiguous passage on the deaths of unbaptised children, discussed above.

310 Ibid., Aiij v. 'ein seltzamer zusatz der nit leichtlich zu bekomen ist.'

311 Ibid. Strauss describes the consecration itself as 'spendid'. This is presumably a reference to its expense rather than simply its elaborate nature, as suggested by his complaint that one must pay because 'the very powerful lords are not easily moved to work to consecrate the chrism, the holy thing'; this implies that, despite the expense of importing balsam, the chrism is not being sold at cost, rather, the bishops are making a profit.

312 Ibid., Aiij v.

313 Ibid. Strauss may be referring to all additions, but this follows a section specifically devoted to chrism.

of God' upon themselves.[314] In any case, it is clear that he would prefer that the 'additions' be removed, even if there must be some necessary delay.

Confession and the role of the pastor.

According to Strauss, God has concealed nothing regarding the sacraments, and only communion and baptism have any clear foundation in Scripture: 'further sacraments we do not have in Christianity'.[315] Furthermore, as the 'single effect' of both baptism and the eucharist is the forgiveness of sins, there is no need for the 'popish confession'.[316] Strauss gives a thoroughly anticlerical presentation of the 'true' confession; in this, the priest or pastor is utterly superfluous.[317] Strauss spends the conclusion of the *Beichtbüchlein* demonstrating the inadequacies of the existing clergy.[318] Apart from their general immorality, they cannot be trusted to keep the confession secret; both priests and monks are 'over-talkative' (*vorreterisch*)[319], and the Franciscans especially prone to using the secrets of the confessional for their own ends.[320] Even if one did voluntarily choose to confess to another, this function could be fulfilled by any member of the community who has accepted the gospel. Apparently, Strauss had already introduced lay confession to his congregation in Hall.[321] The gist of these sermons, he says, was that there should be no shame in such a confession, as Christ himself was utterly dishonoured before his death. Such confession should be 'voluntary and uncompelled'; to confess by 'force or command' would be a mortal sin.'[322] However, although this confession to one's brother is not necessary, it is beneficial

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314 Ibid., Ciij v.

315 *Beichtbüchlein,* Ciij v.

316 Ibid.

317 *Trostliche verstendige leer,* B v. The clergy insist that each Christian 'should confess to his own priest,' citing canon law. Strauss wonders how anyone does not know his own priest [i.e. Christ], who is 'dedicated to each Christian sinner.' 'Und waißt noch niemant wer der aigen priester ist, der aim yegklichen Christen sunder zügeaignet sey'.

318 *Beichtbüchlein,* E r-Eij v.

319 Ibid., E r.

320 This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Chapters II and II, below.

321 *Beichtbüchlein,* Ciiij r-v: 'It is necessary that I give a good answer to my beloved friends and brothers in Christ, those of Hall in the Innental, also their neighbourhood, of the sixteen sermons that I gave during Lent of last year, and advise to confess [...] that one should not be ashamed to reveal his sin to his fellow Christian man'.

322 Ibid., Ciiij v.

when the brother to whom one reveals one's 'secret, concealed, sinful conscience' is a 'trusted, pious Christian'. This confidant should not become angry when the sin is revealed, but should instruct and comfort the sinner, following which, both should ask God for mercy.[323] The 'brother' should then give vocal expression to God's forgiveness, as described above ('Dear brother, I hear that your sins are painful to you in God, for this reason be in no doubt from the words of God which may not fail. Go and sin no more, your sins are forgiven, and go in peace, your faith has made you free from sin'). If faith is present in this transaction, this is the true confession, and no clergyman is required.[324] This utter denial of any particular role for the clergyman in this matter was unusual in the early Reformation. According to Rogge, Strauss's rejection of the existing form of confession went well beyond that of Luther at this time.[325]

Confession to a priest is undesirable for yet another reason. Not the only will the (futile) attempt to remember and examine of each sin, as required by the church, bring despair to the conscience by burdening it with 'unfruitful worries',[326] it can also reawaken the impulse that led to the sin in the first place.[327] Strauss claims that, far from being an occasion of absolution, in which one's sins are removed, confession to a priest is in fact a cause of sin. This is due to the 'thousandfold questions' which the confessor is required to ask, in order to ensure a 'complete confession. The longer one is questioned and 'rummages around in sin, the more severely and dangerously one rides away from the correct path'.[328] This questioning corrupts the simple and the innocent, by making them aware of sins outside their experience, and by reminding others of sins long since forgotten; a 'violent misleading of the poor souls.'[329] It is

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323 Ibid., D r. According to Matthew 18:19, God will give grant this (Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven).

324 Ibid.

325 'The conclusion of this work is a complete rejection of the Catholic institution of confession, which Luther at this stage had not yet voiced', Rogge, *Jakob Strauss*, 45.

326 *Beichtbüchlein*, Cij r. Strauss uses the image of a man 'crooked in all his limbs, and full of painful wounds and injuries, also mortally ill internally and externally' to illustrate this latter point; contemplation of this misfortune, he says, will not ease his suffering, but rather 'sicken' his nature, making him utterly helpless.

327 Ibid.

328 Ibid., Ciiij r.

329 *Beichtbüchlein*, Bij v.

obvious that the devil and the 'roguish monks' use the confession to teach 'wickedness'.[330] In this way, the confessors lead the penitents to 'excommunication'[331]; indeed, confirms Strauss, 'where there is not sin, they teach and make sin.'[332]

General religious practices

Strauss regarded many elements of the religious life of the laity as wholly blasphemous and idolatrous and therefore to be abolished completely. Despite his insistence that the bodies of the dead belong in their tombs, he does not explicitly recommend that relics be removed from the churches and buried. His aim is the abolition of the idolatrous practices which they inspire; pilgrimage, adornment, and masses must be abandoned. He also mentions the danger of worshipping other idols, although there is nothing of the detail or urgency of that found in the works of Karlstadt, Hätzer, or even Zwingli on religious images. Confraternities are presented as nests of false faith and exclusivity and having no place in the broader Christian community. Apart from the abolition of masses for the dead which was the aim of his pamphlet on *Purgatory*, there is little evidence of Strauss's attempts to reform other areas of popular religious practice; this does not of course mean that he did not preach sermons devoted to other rituals and traditions.

8. Persuasion.

The new teaching proposed by Strauss and especially the accompanying changes in practice that he was attempting to institute involved in all cases a rupture from long-established tradition. Unless the alternative was inherently attractive, it would have been difficult to wrench a reluctant population away from the familiar rituals and persuade them to adopt a very different approach to their religious life. A preacher engaged in such an enterprise would have sought the cooperation of the secular authorities, and Strauss's presence was tolerated by Duke John of Saxony, the prince within whose Thuringian territories he was active. More important perhaps was the need to be accepted on a local level. His demands

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330 'what you have not known in all wickedness, you must first learn in the wretched confession', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij r.

331 Ibid.

332 Ibid., Bij v. For further discussion of this sin, see below, Chapters III and IV.

were not completely novel. There had been some awareness of the new teaching in Eisenach before Strauss's arrival, and this is presumably why he was appointed to his position by the town council. However, we know from several sources that this body was not unanimous in its enthusiasm for the evangelical message.[333] Furthermore, even if official permission was given to preach and to push through reforms, this did not mean that popular support was not essential, or at least hugely helpful. Strauss's sphere of activity reached beyond Eisenach. As well as his former congregations, particularly that in the Tyrol[334], Strauss sought to influence a much broader section of society. If not, presumably, he would not have sent his works to be printed. He felt a responsibility to save as many souls as possible; this meant that, through his printed works as well as his sermons, he had to convince as many people as possible.

The new teaching undeniably found widespread acceptance.[335] One explanation for this, articulated most notably by Steven Ozment, is that the doctrine of salvation by faith alone liberated the Christian from the regulations and rituals rules to which one had to adhere in order to to purify one's soul and attain eternal life.[336] This, the defining feature of the theology of the evangelical movement, had originated in Luther's own despair at the realisation that he was totally sinful and incapable of pleasing God. Now, the pious Christian could feel confident in his or her salvation, freed from the fearful obligations imposed by the penitential cycle and other required works and devotions; he or she was no longer answerable before God for an inadequate confession, failure to receive annual communion, for having broken a fast. As shown above, Strauss implies in his pamphlets that the anxious layman is a common figure. In his 1525 pamphlet on rebellion, he describes the fleshly, sinful

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333 See below, Chapters II and III.

334 *Trostliche verstendige leer* was based on sermons preached in Hall, and the pamphlet on the brotherhoods was written with this congregation in mind. See the Introduction above.

335 There are countless examples of the demand for reform. See, for example, Bonnie B. Lee, 'Communal Transformations of Church Space in Lutheran Lübeck', *German History* 26.2 (2008), 149-167 on the 'bottom-up' nature of reform in Lübeck; and on Augsburg, where popular pressure forced the council to act, Philip Broadhead, 'Guildsmen, Religious Reform, and the Search for the Common Good: the Role of Guilds in the Early Reformation in Augsburg', *Historical Journal* 39.3 (1996), 577-597.

336 Ozment attributes an eager adoption of the new teaching by the laity to their response to the revelation that they had been 'doctrinally hoodwinked', and 'religiously burdened in vain', Ozment, *Reformation in the Cities*, 45f. See also Gottfried Seebass, 'The Reformation in Nürnberg', in Lawrence P. Buck and Jonathan W. Zophy (eds), *The Social History of the Reformation* (Columbus OH, 1972), 17-40.

descendant of Adam who worries about that which he cannot achieve and hates that which stands in his way, despairing of salvation.[337] When Strauss speaks of anxiety in the early pamphlets, this usually refers to that brought by the requirement to make a proper preparation for communion. In the private prayer provided in *Trostliche verstendige leer* for those who must attend mass, one finds reassurance that no man can withhold the sacrament of bread and wine from the faithful; through the spiritual reception of the body and blood, all sins will be forgiven.[338] Strauss has replaced the false anxiety engendered by the church with the true comfort of Christ's promise of salvation.

However, some have questioned this image of a terrified population awaiting release from the overwhelming burden of the late-mediaeval theology of justification. It has been argued that much of this anxiety was felt only by the reformers themselves, particularly Luther. Indeed, some evangelical writers may not have had any personal experience of this such despair, instead merely reproducing these remarks on repressive nature of the existing system as a standard element of Luther's interpretation of justification. Although Lazarus Spengler, the pamphleteer and Nuremberg city secretary, denounced the mental anguish produced by the requirements of the confessional, Miriam Chrisman has found no evidence of this in her study of lay pamphleteers.[339] Moreover, far from being an onerous and

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337 'because of which therefore he who does not come through his sins and lust will also be an enemy of God, and thus the poor man remains despairing in himself regarding all eternal heavenly riches', *Auffrur*, Aiiij r. Strauss proceeds to outline the process of resisting one's own nature and trusting fully in God.

338 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Dij r. Strauss also employs the theme of comfort and reassurance in relation to baptism: see above.

339 'It is difficult', she writes, 'to determine whether these lay writers felt burdened by the demands of the confessor, as Steven Ozment has suggested. They strongly objected to the secrecy of auricular confession, which they felt resulted in unfair advantage being given to the rich. None of the pamphlets in this study made any mention of the rigorous and prodding questions contained in the confessional manuals discussed by Ozment. The artisans did not write that they had been tyrannized, except by the demands of the clergy for money. The sense of the pamphlets, as I read them, is that auricular confession had become irrelevant to their lives. The clergy had lost the respect of lay men and women, if the pamphlets were representative of the larger artisan community, many confessionals must have stood empty by 1524', Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1518-1530* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1996), 172. In his *Schutzred vnnd christe(-)liche antwurt ains erbern liebhabers gotlicher warheyt*, as paraphrased by Mark Edwards, Spengler announced that 'any reasonable and truthful person who had heard Luther or his followers must acknowledge that his troubled conscience had been relieved of many scruples and doubtful errors', and claimed that

upsetting duty, many may have found comfort in the sacrament of penance and particularly the absolution given by the priest; one left the confessional with the burden of one's sins having been lifted.[340] Purgatory, as a concept, also had a reassuring aspect: although a period of suffering was necessary, it could be seen as preferable to the harsh and unalterable choice between salvation and damnation. All of the means of 'earning' salvation available to the laity (ensuring that they received the sacraments in their correct form, participation in pilgrimage and the devotion to saints and their relics, works of mercy, the purchase of indulgences through money or prayer, fasting and denial) offered a degree of control over their destiny. The obligation to ensure one's salvation through these methods may have been a burden, but this must be seen against the possible difficulty of relinquishing the opportunities they offered to do so. The reformers therefore had to persuade the laity to abandon rituals and beliefs that were not only familiar, but also comforting.[341]

That the latter were reluctant to acquiesce in this can be seen in the persistence of certain practices, even in areas where the secular authorities as well as the preacher promoted these reforms. Occasionally, such changes led to outright opposition; demonstrations of anger or discontent at the loss of popular traditions were not unknown.[342] Sometimes, councils operated a policy of retaining selected elements of the old practices in order to avoid such a

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under the church, comfort had been replaced by anxiety, and trust in God by fear. Mark U. Edwards Jr.,'First Impressions in the Strasbourg Press' in Andrew K. Fix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (eds.), *Germania Illustrata. Essays on Early Modern Germany Presented to Gerald Strauss*. Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies Volume 18 (Kirksville MO, 1992), 75-98, 95ff.

340 See Lawrence G. Duggan, 'Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 75 (1984), 153-175.

341 On the importance of this sense of contributing to one's salvation, and the development of 'forms of Protestant magic' by the laity in order to replace the lost rituals of the old church, see Bob Scribner, 'Reformation and Desacralisation: from Sacramental World to Moralised Universe' in R. Po-chia Hsia, *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe* (Wiesbaden, 1997), 75-92, 85. See also Robert W. [Bob] Scribner, 'The Reformation and the Religion of the Common People', in Hans R. Guggisberg, Gottfried G. Krodel, and Hans Füglister (eds.), *Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa: Interpretationen und Debatten; Beiträge zur gemeinsamen Konferenz d. Society for Reformation Research und d. Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, Sonderband (Gütersloh, 1993), 221-241.

342 A citizen of Nuremberg who had paid for the *Salve Regina* to be sung in one of the churches 'asked the provost and city council "on what grounds such praise and honour had been withdrawn and turned away from God almightly and the Mother of God"', Bridget Heal, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500-1648* (Cambridge, 2007), 86f.

reaction.[343] Some reformers too were aware that this break with tradition was not palatable to all and, even unasked, were willing to delay or modify their preferred course of action.[344]

Even if these changes were welcomed as an easier alternative to an oppressive system, had anything really changed for the laity regarding the balance of fear and reassurance? Luther's saw Christ's suffering on the cross as a model for the Christian spiritual life.[345] As has been shown, Strauss did not view the path to faith as an easy one. For him, the struggle against one's nature and the pursuit of an active faith formed a cross of true and necessary anxiety for the Christian, and could be seen as providing new burdens to replace the old. Despite his condemnation of the psychological effects of the penitential system, this was clearly not the most pernicious effect of the church's teaching. For Strauss, the worry caused to the laity was not in itself his priority, but rather the blasphemy and idolatry to which this had led them; he was not overly concerned with their feelings, but with the safety of their souls. When Strauss speaks of the true comfort provided by faith, he is referring to that provided by the realisation that one has been released from certain damnation, a fate unknown before the renewal of the gospel and which therefore could not have been the cause of worry.

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343 In 1525, the Nuremberg council decided to retain some feast days that the preachers would have liked to have discontinued, ibid., 84.

344 See Susan C. Karant-Nunn on Luther's recognition of this need for continuity. Despite the efforts of the reformers 'to impose their view that God alone was powerful and did not lend his might, the semiotic evidence suggests differences in their conception of God's accessibility. Luther's desire to spare weak consciences by leaving in place, and by permitting others to retain at will, whatever did not contradict his fundamental precepts, meant that the common worshipper could find much continuity in the local santuary [...] Some paintings and statues [...], coloured glass, high altars, wall hangings, candles, vestments, crucifixes, Latin, and, finally, the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper all conveyed to the laity that God was among them [...] Small wonder that people still sneaked bits of the host or baptismal water out of the church! All the signs indicated to them that these, like other accoutrements of the divine service, continued to wield apotropaic power. God still dwelled among men and lend His strength to their causes', Susan C. Karant-Nunn, 'Patterns of Religious Practice: Non-theological Features', in Thomas A. Brady Jr. (ed.), *Die deutsche Reformation zwischen Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Munich, 2001), 159-171, 169.

345 Von Loewenich has argued that Luther's theology of the cross, in the suffering and despair it entailed for the true Christian, was at least as demanding as that of the mediaeval church: ''Wenn jemals behauptet wurde, Luther stelle geringere praktische Anforderungen an den Menschen als der mittelalterlichen Katholozismus, so hätte ein Blick in Luthers theologia crucis genügen müssen, um von Gegenteil überzeugt zu werden [...] Unerbittlich in ihrer eintönigen Wucht klingt uns aus Luthers Kreutzestheologie die Melodie entgegen: Wer mir will nachfolgen, der verleugne sich selbst und nehme sein Kreutz aud sich und folge mir nach!'. Von Loewenich, *Luthers Theologia Crucis*, 136.

According to Strauss, the traditional rituals do provide comfort, but this is false comfort; he was openly depriving his flock of this and forcing them into a situation that was apparently difficult, but which he saw as providing more reassurance. However, it is impossible to how know how many of them would have accepted or understood this. It has been pointed out that the distance between the reformers' message and the interpretation of the audience may have been far greater than these writers and preachers expected or intended.[346] The majority of the laity must have had only a limited comprehension of the complexities of Luther's theology of salvation.[347] It is true that Strauss presents his soteriological reasoning in a relatively uncomplicated manner; the overall message is simple, although it does appear somewhat incoherent and unsystematic. Nonetheless, even if this theology were presented in a way that was accessible to the laity, how seriously would they have taken the suffering involved in crucifying one's old Adam? However, one must also consider the possibility that readers and listeners were selective in the elements they chose to adopt, even if they understood the theological intricacies. Strauss does say explicitly that his intention is to comfort. It is very possible that his listeners and readers could ignore the less agreeable elements of his message. How would Strauss's emphasis on salvation, no matter how difficult, rather than easing anxiety have been received? It is conceivable that people may have seen this as a release, an excuse not to undertake onerous duties (provided they accepted Strauss's claims of 'invention') or relief at having been shown the 'correct' path, rather than as an unattractive invitation to suffer with Christ instead of the traditional means of salvation which latter may have offered more control and less pain.

In any discussion of 'propaganda', one must assume Strauss's sincerity regarding the need to promote salvation. Although he does refer to the false worry caused by unecessary

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346 On the non-existence of the 'passive audience' and the difficulty of knowing just what was taken from during a sermons by their listeners, see Lee Palmer Wandel, 'Switzerland', in Larissa Taylor (ed.), *Preachers and People in the Reformation and Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2001), 221-247.

347 Bernd Moeller, on the other hand, has disputed the idea that Luther's doctrine of justification was to complicated to be undestood by the laity; rather, he claims, Luther's ideas were notable for their simplicity. Bernd Moeller, 'Die Rezeption Luthers in der frühen Reformation', Berndt Hamm, Bernd Moeller, and Dorothea Wendebourg (eds.), *Reformationstheorien: Ein kirchenhistorischer Disput über Einheit und Vielfalt der Reformation* (Göttingen, 1995), 9-29, 27.

obligations, he was not particularly concerned with easing anxiety. On the other hand, this difficult aspect of Strauss's message could have been ignored, making the new path to salvation a much more attractive option. In some respects, however, the old teaching could be said to have been more 'comforting' than the new, and one cannot ignore the argument that there must have been a strong attachment to old and familiar practices. Even if Strauss believed that the spiritual advantages he offered would understood and welcomed by a proportion of the population, he appears to have taken a more practical approach. Although it is probable that on one level he believed that acceptance of the new teaching would be automatic, as this was surely God's will, his propagandistic efforts appear to indicate a degree of realism in relation to the receptiveness of the laity. Two subjects which could have been designed to appeal to the average layman appear prominently in Strauss's works. First, that of the promotion of the independence of the laity and a corresponding denigration of the clergy, the traditional guardians of religious knowledge and therefore the path to spiritual well-being. Second, that of material poverty and financial exploitation. Some of Strauss's theological innovations could have been persuasive in and of themselves, however, this does not preclude what may have been somewhat cynical presentation of his central message; certain recurring themes are evident, and reasons for their presence must be questioned. I will discuss his use of these in Chapters II and III.

Chapter II

'Storming and Raging and Old Women's Prattle'.
The Priest, the Pastor, and the Knowledgeable Laity.

1. Persuasion and anticlericalism.

By the time the 'evangelical movement' emerged in the early sixteenth century, criticism of the clergy had become a long-established and lively occupation, practised not only by the laity, but also by the first estate itself. The degree to which a perceived failure on the part of the clergy to fulfil the requirements of their divine office, and indeed, an observation that many fell short of the standards of morality and piety demanded of Christians in general, was at the root of the Reformation is unclear. Hans-Jürgen Goertz has gone so far as to claim that Luther's development of the doctrine of justification by faith alone was inextricably linked to a sense of anger and disappointment with the shortcomings of the papacy and the clergy as a whole.[1] More relevantly, given the purpose of this examination of sermons and pamphlets, Goertz has also stated that anticlericalism was not only the dominant theme of the pamphlet literature of the early 1520s, but that it penetrated all other subject matter and indeed, was the driving force of this propaganda.[2] Hans-Christoph Rublack has sounded a more cautious note, warning that while anticlericalism 'appears as an element' of the evangelical movement, 'which related it to its medieval past [and] provided a certain impetus', it 'cannot be seen the primary agent in effecting the Reformation'.[3] What is certain is that verbal and printed attacks on the clergy on the part of those attempting to spread the new teaching were widespread and vigorous. Incorporating various facets of the mediaeval

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1 'Der Außreifungsprozeß von Luthers Rechtfertigungslehre steht unter dem Eindruck der antiklerikalen Thematik und erhält durch sie den Charakter eines rigorosen bruchs mit der meritorischen Heilslehre', Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Pfaffenhaß und groß Geschrei. Die reformatorische Bewegungen in Deutschland 1517-1529* (Munich, 1987), 86.

2 'Das große, stets wiederkehrende und fast überall angeschlagene Thema in den reformatorischen Flugschriften [...] ist der Antiklerikalismus. Er läßt sich mühelos mit allen anderen Themen verbinden und schafft mit seiner polemischen Schärfe die idealen Voraussetzungen für die Wirkung von Propaganda und Agitation. Der Antiklerikalismus ist nicht nur ein Thema der Flugschriften, er gibt ihnen zugleich Form und Stoßrichtung. Er ist ihr "Sitz im Leben"', ibid., 118.

3 Hans-Christoph Rublack, 'Anticlericalism in German Pamphlets', in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994), 461-489, 467f.

tradition of anticlericalism (a phenomenon that has been described as the insertion of 'new notes and accents into old songs'[4]), denunciations of clerical misconduct and incompetence evolved into a generally hopeless diagnosis of the existing clergy.[5] Anticlericalism may not have been indispensable to the Reformation but it was certainly pervasive, particularly in the literature produced for popular consumption.

This theme is especially striking in Strauss's pamphlets. Although at one point he suggested that would be best to ignore his clerical opponents altogether, this is by no means borne out by his works, including that in which he made this remark.[6] Strauss had a message to promote. His primary purpose was to save souls, which could only be done by steering the laity away from idolatrous and blasphemous practices and towards complete faith and trust in God. Not only may there have been a residual attachment to the old system, Strauss, like other preachers, was facing a counter-attack in the form of resistance from the existing clergy. There were two competing paths to salvation. The older of these was still enthusiastically defended by the Church, while the other was condemned as heresy. This campaign was spearheaded by the clergy; this group, therefore, had to be demonised. The laity had to be encouraged to overcome the threats and promises of the church, and to listen to Strauss instead. This was to be achieved by a wholehearted use of anticlerical criticism; a strategy employed by Strauss to particular effect in the form of denunciations of the clergy's soul-murdering use of knowledge. This chapter will examine how this preacher, as a publicist for the new teaching, may have used this theme in a deliberate and perhaps cynical manner in order to outrage the public, and will also consider what his portrayal of the clergy and the laity may reveal about the type of reform he envisaged.

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4 Susan Karant-Nunn, 'Clerical Anticlericalism in the Early German Reformation: An Oxymoron?', in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994), 521-534, 523.

5 On anticlericalism in the Reformation, see also Geoffrey Dipple, *Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Günzberg and the Campaign against the Friars*, (Aldershot, 1996); Henry Cohn, 'Anti-clericalism and the German Peasants' War 1525', *Past & Present* 83 (1979), 3-31; and the essays in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994).

6 Considering the 'presumption' of the clergy would, he warns, be fruitless; and he would prefer to 'avoid it, and never mention them again when preaching', *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij v.

2. Neglect, oppression, and tyranny.

As demonstrated in Chapter I, it was not so much the anxiety caused by onerous devotions to which Strauss objected, but the tyranny of 'soul-guzzling'.[7] The clergy are depicted as being little concerned with their pastoral duties. Instead, they have other, less spiritual priorities, long established in the pre-Reformation anticlerical tradition, and Strauss condemns their gluttony, idleness, and general immorality. As their function was to preserve morality and act as an example to the laity as well as to teach and explain the word of God, such shortcomings confirm their unsuitability as teachers.[8] Moreover, far from fulfilling their pastoral role, the clergy currently force the laity into beliefs and practices which prevent their salvation. There is a clear intent in these pamphlets to establish the clergy as tyrants and the laity as their victims. It is important to note, however, that although these accusations were designed to inspire or appeal to a sense of injustice, they had not been concocted by Strauss in order to appeal to the laity. Rather, they stemmed from sincere disgust and anger on his part. His underlying motive was to safeguard the salvation of the laity and end what he saw as the murderous tyranny of the church. The soul-murdering aspect of Strauss's anticlericalism is not especially distinctive; nor does he discuss it in anything other than relatively superficial terms.[9] Nonetheless, the image of the clergyman as a murderer and the layman as his victim is especially evident in Strauss's analysis of confession. This 'confession-coercion' is a 'hellish noose' used to strangle the laity. It is enforced by the clergy who insist

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7 'sehelen fressen', *Fegfeur*, Cij r.

8 On the recent marriages of the clergy, he stated: 'I wish that the priests ... make of their marriage a beautiful example to the laity, entirely according to the word of God, beginning with their quiet, modest wedding, as some have done here – God be praised – where neither evil nor offence is offered to anyone.' *Pfaffen Ee*, B r.

9 Strauss announces that, in the form of the clergy, a 'rapacious wolf's heart has concealed itself under the appearance of devotion', *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij r. The image of the cleric as a wolf rather than a shepherd (Ezekiel 34:4; John 10:12) occurs frequently in Reformation propaganda, in both text and image. Luther used it in his 1522 work, *Against the Spiritual Estate of the Pope and the Bishops*, arguing that the unHoly Spiritual rulers are wolves and soul-murderers: 'Aber geystlich hohe, wo sie nicht heylig ist vnd Gottis wort treybt, sind sie wolff vnd seel mörder [...]', *Widder den falsch// genantte[n] geistlichen// stand des Babst// vnd der bis=//choffen. // D. Martinus Luth.// Ecclesiasten zu// Wittemberg/* ([Wittenberg, 1522]), Br. A broadsheet attributed to Hans Rudolph Manuel Deutsch, *The Monk and the Wolf as Devourers of the Widow's House*, depicts the rapacious clergy, in the guise of a wolf, preying on the vulnerable (an image based on Luke 20:47). This latter is reprinted in R. W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*. Second edition (Oxford, 1994), 57.

upon being recognized as the 'true confession-lords' and who 'know the proper grasp, to probe into all recesses of your heart'.[10] Those who detract from the power of the Eucharist by claiming that confession is necessary are described as 'the tyrannical spiritual elite'.[11] The church has trapped the laity in a 'lamentable, wretched prison'.[12]

The clergy are also tyrannical in the manner in which they conceal God's truth, in the form of Scripture, from their flocks. Even though God has decided to reveal his word once more, the clergy are attempting to prevent its dissemination in sermons and books.[13] In his first publication, Strauss berates the Catholic clergy who, by means of making it impossible for him to remain in the Tyrol, have ensured that 'the hungry children of God have had the divine word and Christian teaching pulled and torn out of their throats'.[14] In the prologue to his pamphlet on the Christian assembly, he appeals to John Frederick on behalf of several 'assemblies' of his poor people, who are 'deprived of the gospel by the erring priests whom one calls father or pastor'.[15] Instead of teaching the truth, these priests mislead; this deception is a common motif in Strauss's pamphlets.[16]. The clergy use 'wondrous signs' to deceive the laity.[17] The false comfort provided by confession is a deliberate disguise for their tyrannical

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10 *Trostliche verstendige leer,* Bij r. Again, this noose is not so much that of burdensome spiritual obligations, but of the prevention of true and necessary faith in God.

11 Or higher clergy: 'spitzgaisten', ibid., B r. This could refer to the hierarchy or the schoolmen, the cream of the clergy. However, Strauss made remark in the context of a discussion of an ordinary Franciscan, indicating that all clergy form this 'spiritual elite'.

12 'I must consider gloomily and with pain the lamentable, wretched prison of the tyrannical, devilish power of the Antichrist, and his antichrists', *Beichtbüchlein,* Diiij v – E r.

13 'Nevertheless, they have found a beautiful, fine refuge, as the pope with his priests thinks that one should on their evidence cease to preach and write with the evangelical teaching', *Euangelium Luce,* Aiij v. The visual form of this portrayal of the concealment of true knowledge from the laity has been described as follows: 'Woodcuts got across the message that the "bigwigs", the rich and the powerful, got away with 'murder' time and time again. And their theft was not only of temporal wealth but also of cultural and spiritual wealth. Lay people were barred from access to Scripture and books in their own language, and were fobbed off with trite catechism verities. The priests had stolen the key of Scripture, locking it up [...] Real knowledge was reserved for the elite', Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation,* (Edinburgh, 2000), 89.

14 *Trostliche verstendige leer,* Aij r-v.

15 *Christlichen versamlung,* Aiij r

16 'O God, how the devil has so very miserably robbed us of the true Christian comfort under the appearance of good', *Fegfeur,* Aiiij r.

17 'But as the Sophists describe frequently, also through noteworthy teachers, appearances of the spirits, and use wondrous signs, we say that Satan can well pretend to be an angel of light', Ibid., Ciiij

noose.[18] The pope is identified as 'the misleader of the entire world'.[19] He and 'all of his antichrists' have falsified Scripture in order to defend the institution of confession.[20] The resulting 'lying, false, and misleading teaching and hypocrisy' is intended to 'blind the poor, common man'.[21] The church's insistence on the use of chrism is described as 'poison and hellish misleading'.[22] In his discussion of usury, Strauss sympathises with 'the poor simple [person], ignorant of the gospel, misled by the Antichrist and all antichristian priests', doctors' and monks' example and teaching'.[23] It has been suggested that this 'explosive new accusation of fraudulence' is what differentiated Reformation anticlericalism from existing complaints about greed and immorality.[24] Strauss's message is that of a campaign to deceive the innocent to their eternal harm; they are warned, if they value their salvation, not to listen to these lies.

What has made the clergy so inadequate, and indeed dangerous, in the fulfilment of their duty? On the one hand, Strauss blames their ignorance: they are 'completely blind and unlearned'.[25] This state of affairs is unavoidable, as the pope and his followers 'have lost all Scripture'.[26] Strauss is particularly fond of the Biblical image of the pharisees as the blind leading the blind into a ditch to describe these 'erring pastors'.[27] This was a popular and

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v. This is 2 Corinthians 11:14, And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light; Strauss also uses this text in *Pfaffen Ee*, Aiij v.

18 'they give their devilish tyranny and appearance and disguise thus', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, B v.

19 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Cij v.

20 In order to support the doctrine of confession and preparation for the Eucharist, Paul has been given a 'false, tyrannical understanding' by the 'corrupted teachers and preachers'; this is 'ruinous, misleading, and a denial of the Christian faith', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij v; also ibid., Aiiij r.

21 *Beichtbüchlein*, Cij r-v; ibid., Ciij r.

22 *Simonieschen Tauff*, C v-Cij r.

23 *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aiij r.

24 Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed. A Social History of Calvinism (New Haven, 2002)*, 12.

25 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij v. After the Peasants' War, Strauss was to accuse those seeking to blame the rebellion on the evangelicals as 'the poor, blind [people]', who 'love darkness more than light' and 'flee the light', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Fij r-v.

26 *Euangelium Luce*, Aij v.

27 This image is taken from Matthew 15:14. *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiij r; *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij v-Biij r.

recognizable image, used by Luther among others.[28] As well as being 'false prophets', the mendicant friars are 'pharisees by nature' and the clergy in general are 'godless pharisees'.[29] The term 'pharisee' is used to convey a sense of mistaken certainty in one's beliefs; the clergy of the day forming, like the pharisees of the New Testament, a 'foolish association of monkeys'.[30] These simpletons 'greatly and impossibly vomit repentance [to] the laity entirely without understanding'.[31] Strauss sees the rejection of the new teaching by a Franciscan active in the vicinity of his parish in the Tyrol as proof of the latter's stupidity: 'Oh, the wretched, foolish monk does not understand one word [of] what gospel, sacrament or faith should be, as (if there were a spark of Christian understanding in him) he would not reject Christian teaching so unnaturally', and extends this to the clergy in general.[32] Introducing this attack on the lies of 'Brother Michael' regarding Lutheran books, Strauss promises that 'here [it] will be heard how the misleaders of the entire world are so very completely blind and unlearned, and have not yet either properly understood nor preached a single word'.[33] Strauss also casts doubt upon the abilities of the bishops to choose suitable priests, claiming that they have been 'made fools of', and finds no reassurance in episcopal authority. A bishop is described as no more suitable to care for the soul than is a 'drunken, fully foolish doctor' to care for the body.[34]

The 'priests and monks, and other monkeys and fools'[35] are not merely deceivers of the common man. They themselves have been led astray by the devil and the papacy. There is a

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28 Luther, in his address to Christian nobility of the German Nation, calls the Pope a 'blind leader of the blind': 'Szo rad ich das, szo solch narn werck nit wirt abethan, das ein yglich frum Christen mensch sein augen auffthu, unnd lasz sich mit den Romischen bullen, siegel und der gleysserey nit yrrhen, bleyb daheymen in seiner kirchen, und lasz yhm sein tauff, Evangeli, glaub, Christum unnd got, der an allen ortten gleich ist, das beste sein, und den Bapst bleyben einen blinden furer der blindenn', *An den Christlichen Aden// deutscher Nation: von des// Christenlichen standtes// besserung: D Martinus Luther* (Wittenberg: Melchior Lotter d.J.: [1520]), Iiij r-v; see also *Von den// gutten wercken// D. Martinus// Luther* (Wittenberg: Melchior Lotter and Micahel Lotter: 1523), Aiiij v.

29 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij r; Aiiij v.

30 *Brotherhoods*, Aiiij r: 'the foolish association of monkeys, as Annas Cayphas and the pharisees have established with Herod and Pilate'.

31 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, B v.

32 Ibid., Aiiij v.

33 Ibid., Aiiij v.

34 'It is well known to all men how the bishops take to heart the care of souls', *Beichtbüchlein*, E v.

35 *Fegfeur*, Ciij v.

hierarchy of deception in which the misled become the misleaders: 'the misled people have deceived and misled the world'.[36] It would appear that the clergy themselves are trapped, the stupidity described above making them particularly susceptible: the second book of Maccabees, upon which, according to Strauss, the doctrine of purgatory rests, is 'an invented, untruthful fable, through which the devil has kept priests and monks, and other monkeys and fools in the powerless soul service'.[37] It is the devil who is behind the lies of the clergy.[38] The insistence that possession of Lutheran books will lead to damnation is described as 'having taught the Christian people, as the Devil would have it'.[39] The clergy are following not Christ's instructions, but those of the devil; thus 'misled', they encourage the activities of the confraternities.[40]

However, the clergy are not merely fools; they are also inherently wicked. The papacy itself is truly fiendish: Pope Adrian, who wants the evangelical preachers to be silenced until a General Council has had the change to debate the matter, has a 'wicked heart'.[41] In his sermon on Luke 19 (a chapter in which Christ surveys the city of Jerusalem and weeps for the punishment it is to undergo), Strauss assures his audience that the fate awaiting the 'pope and his priests' who place their trust in councils of the church and persecute the true preachers of the word will be worse than that of the unfortunate city. He declares, 'Ah, God, how foolishly and unknowingly do the misled people want to bend the strong will of God with their stupid, wicked minds'.[42] The bishops are presented as being in league with the

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36 *Simonieschen Tauff*, C v-Cij r.

37 *Fegfeur*, Ciij v.

38 'he will be a lying spirit, in the mouth of all prophets, so it has also become easy and entirely possible [for] the same thousand-cunning master to lead the unfaithful people from God and his eternal word into unholy, insurmountable nooses and mistakes of error under the appearance of goodness', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij r. The biblical reference is to 3 Kings 22.

39 Ibid., Aiiij v.

40 *Pruderchafften*, Aij v. This idea of the clergy as the instruments of Satan was seemingly confirmed by Strauss in 1526, *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Fiiij v, in a passage in which Strauss appears to despair of all Christians; the sentence ends, however, with a reference to the damnation of 'all those who believe them', so it presumably refers to the clergy in particular.

41 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiij v.

42 Ibid., Aiiij r. In any case, stupidity does not excuse wickedness; the punishment of 'those who resist the visitation' will be worse than that of Jerusalem.

pope.[43] Strauss does not distinguish between the foolish and the wicked clergy. Responsibility is to be borne by all and ignorance is no defence: 'their ignorance may not help these enemies of the truth, as they with their followers have dishonoured the godly word among us without cease, and also begin to deprive other people of it'.[44] Shortly after suggesting that the clergy, like the rest of the people, have themselves been misled, Strauss portrays them as enthusiastic instruments of the devil: 'Here one can now recognize what tyrannical and hellish misleading the devil has introduced through priests and monks, that they thus thirstily and lovingly teach and preach the two false and invented foundations'.[45] They may be ignorant, but this is wilful ignorance.

Although he usually placed the blame for a particular problem on the shoulders of the clergy as a whole, Strauss did single out the regular clergy for especial condemnation. The mendicant friars are particularly guilty of the 'general misleading of Christendom'.[46] It has become common knowledge, he announces, that 'monkishness is the devilish, unchristian hypocrisy through which the whole world is most severely misled'. They are responsible for upholding the 'devilish presumption of the bishops and priests' and for the establishment of 'human laws and prattle' against the word of God.[47] The four mendicant orders[48], with their origin in the devil, have 'blinded the whole world with their shining, gleaming, stinking holiness'.[49] The pious laity are advised to 'open [their] eyes', and recognise the blasphemous nature of monastic vows. The monks claim that these have the same effect as baptism; on the contrary, Strauss declares, they are 'unnecessary and impossible'. Furthermore, they are undertaken contrary to God's commandments to 'lovingly honour father and mother, be subject to every authority [and] also willing towards all men'.[50] No such purification takes place; in fact, these hypocrites are as 'pure and innocent of all sins as a white-washed little

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43 *Heiligthüm,* Bv.
44 *Simonieschen Tauff,* Ciij v.
45 *Fegfeur,* Aiiij v.
46 *Trostliche verstendige leer,* Aiij v.
47 *Beichtbüchlein,* Eij r.
48 Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians.
49 *Beichtbüchlein,* Eij r.
50 Ibid., Eij r.

towel dragged around in excrement'.[51] In one case, at least, this criticism was personal: Brother Michael in the Tyrol, Strauss's competitor in the struggle for the minds of the laity, is excoriated as 'the terrible misleader of the world'.[52] He is a 'raging, furious, wretched monk' who 'has lied throughout Lent on his shuffling pattens' in an attempt to suppress the new teaching.[53] It is the monks, and the Franciscans in particular, who have been responsible for the propagation of confession as a necessary sacrament after its invention, mesmerized by the sacramental power it has given them.[54] They have chosen to place more trust in Scotus than in Paul and it is they who are to blame for the dissemination of the inventions of the former.[55]

Strauss's portrayal of the clergy fluctuates between their being enthusiastic participants in the tyrannizing of the laity and being themselves the victims of a satanic swindle, but the overall message is clear: the world is caught up in a carnival of deception. Although the devil is the origin of this evil, the general and unmistakable impression is that the clergy are both foolish and wicked. They must bear some responsibility, and the machinations of the antichrist do not take away from the usefulness of the clergy as a target. The hierarchy and the ordinary clergy appear to have been working in concert, with the result that all have been 'blinded by the audacious, world-misleading priests, monks, and learned men'.[56]

3. Anti-intellectualism.

Persuading the laity that they are being oppressed by a wicked, foolish, and satanic clergy will presumably convince them of the need to escape by abandoning their old beliefs and practices. However, was this approach enough to overcome the most active and influential opponents of the evangelical movement in their parishes? As mentioned above, Strauss and other preachers would have been facing a counter-campaign in the attempts of the local

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51 Ibid., Eij v.

52 Ibid., Aiij r.

53 *Trostliche verstendige leer,* Aiiij v. This aside regarding 'Brother Michael' is part of a general attack on the unlearned misleaders.

54 '*Beichtbüchlein,* Aij v.

55 'But the wooden-shod have elevated the same coarse liar Scotus [...] so that he, in his writings, is now regarded even more than St Paul by them [the monks], and by those who believe in them', *Beichtbüchlein,* Aiij r.

56 *Wucher zu nemen,* E v.

clergy and, from a distance, the ecclesiastical authorities to dissuade people from following the new teaching. How does one get the common man to take the initiative, and publicly state his doubts; to refuse to take part in the usual ceremonies when accused of heresy or threatened with excommunication? The right of the clergy to advise the laity and to interpret God's word[57] and also their defence of various religious practices were founded in a learned tradition of theology and canon law. The doctrine composed by the theologians to be passed on to the laity was beyond reproach, due to the intellectual superiority and expertise of the former. Strauss, as has been shown, attributed these teachings to the devil. Nonetheless, one can also detect a strong general anti-intellectual streak in his pamphlets. He went beyond broadly-aimed insults regarding the intelligence of the clergy to dismantle these qualifications, presumably in order to equip and encourage the laity to overcome the opposition and persuasion of their local clergyman. Strauss needed a confident laity, and one way of achieving this was to convince them that they knew more about God than did the entire apparatus of the church.

Strauss's view of the origin of the church's doctrine is reflected in his 1525 statement that 'not reason, but faith, saves'.[58] It is because of 'human teaching and law' that the truth of the gospel has been 'concealed and darkened to our forefathers' for centuries,[59] and it is these that have made dying terrifying.[60] Canon law has been the principal instrument of this dangerous misleading and blindness; used by the clergy to support their role as confessors, it is dismissed by Strauss as 'the spiritual, crooked law,' erected 'with great horror'.[61] The adoption of such sophistry to confirm the legitimacy of confession leads Strauss to deplore the fact that 'God's kingdom and almighty mercy should be so very abused and pushed into the stinking, feeble corner of human discourse'.[62] The theologians and schoolmen, inspired by the devil, have been responsible for these laws: 'who', Strauss asks, 'may be surprised at the

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57 On this, see II.4, below.

58 *Auffrur*, B r. See Chapter I, above

59 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiij r.

60 *Fegfeur*, Aiiij r.

61 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, B v. See also *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Fiiij v.

62 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aiij r.

Devil's cunning in these books and this preaching?'[63] All such 'human inventions and fabrications' come from this hellish source.[64] The devil has caused the learned as well as the general clergy to abandon Scripture, the former in their turn contributing to the ignorance of the latter.[65] They, along with the pope, are the means by which God's word is twisted and souls are lost; those who heed the clergy having been blinded by 'their invented, holy laws'.[66] The schoolmen are quite are quite happy to accede to the devil's plans and in fact have striven to disguise the satanic origin of their teachings.[67] Addressing Cochlaeus, Strauss bluntly states that the theologians have never 'wanted to teach or accept the word of God in the true Christian manner'.[68]

These teachings are destructive due to their unscriptural nature. The 'learned' bear the brunt of Strauss's criticism in his pamphlet on purgatory, as it is they who have misused Scripture in order to support their invention; their sophistry is merely regurgitated by the common clergy.[69] Jerome and 'other ancient and recent scholars' have misunderstood St Paul; this is the source of clerical celibacy, that 'hellish law of the Pope'.[70] God's teaching on lending money has undergone falsification at the hands of Aquinas, Scotus, and Bonaventura.[71] 'We do not believe in Jerome', Strauss informs his readers, urging them not to be misled regarding relics, 'but in our lord Jesus Christ; Jerome did not die for us'.[72] He mocks the theologians' choice of authorities to support the sacrament of penance: their 'writing, teaching, disputing, preaching, and crying' on the subject clearly originates not only in Scotus (the 'father of lies', 'the master with the many thousand sins'), but also in 'their evangelist Aristotle', that 'great

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63 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij r

64 'Human inventions and fabrications, which come from Lucifer', *Christlichen versamlung*, B r.

65 'O how the devil has introduced his game so cleverly, that this clear, evident Scripture [Leviticus 25:8ff, the Old Testament prohibition of usury] will be found to be completely unused by the learned', *Wucher zu nemen*, Ciiij r.

66 *Simonieschen Tauff*, B v.

67 'how well the misleaders have established many concealments and glosses here, so that the work of the Devil should never be recognized in this', *Beichtbüchlein*, Aiij r.

68 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biiij v.

69 *Fegfeur*, Biiij r-v.

70 *Pfaffen Ee*, Aij v. This *could* refer to genuine misunderstanding rather than deliberate misrepresentation, but Strauss's general views would indicate the latter.

71 *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij v.

72 *Heiligthüm* Biiij r.

theologian'.[73] This system has given the universities and the hierarchy the means to confuse the laity, enabling them to put the rope of confession around their necks. To this end, 'all universities, monasteries, and the entire world are filled with books, disputations, *summae* and teachers'.[74]

As this deception has come from the top down, with a prominent role played by the inventions produced in the universities, the 'learned men' themselves need to be cut down to size. Despite their years of study, the theologians are as idiotic as the general clergy. Strauss makes sarcastic asides regarding 'their foolish wisdom'[75]; they are highly-learned 'in their opinion'.[76] He was to echo this in 1526 in his response to Cochlaeus' attack on Luther and Wittenberg, claiming that in all his life he had 'never heard and read any more foolish and inhuman writing'.[77] Like the rest of the clergy, these learned men do not know the Bible; they attempt to defend purgatory with 'a narrow, falsified understanding of Scripture'.[78] Furthermore, not only are these laws themselves based on lies, the clergy, even those in the schools, are (due to their 'uneducated, unchristian brains') too foolish to understand them.[79] 'It is thoroughly obvious', argues Strauss, that 'the great rabbis and all universities with their Pope, do not understand one word of their self-confirmed teaching'.[80] They are thus confirmed as 'blind leaders'.

In these pamphlets, Strauss engages in sustained mockery of the supposed academic superiority of the scholars, using the term *Schulgelehrten* as an insult. The 'sophists' who practise such theology are merely concerned with 'beautiful glosses' and complicated arguments, designed to confuse pious Christians. The universities themselves are described

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73 *Beichtbüchlein*, C v – Cij r.

74 Ibid., Aiij r. Later, when claiming that 'learned' arguments such as these must be ignored in favour of God's word, he says, 'Such blasphemous cleverness, advice, and teaching could break the heart of a pious Christian man with worry', *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiij v.

75 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiij r.

76 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiij r.

77 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiij v.

78 *Fegfeur*, Biij r.

79 *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aiij v.

80 *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij v-Biij r.

as 'high whorehouses'.[81] The theologians have abandoned the true teachings of Christ in favour of 'their own art, old custom, human teaching, priestish law, invented ordinances, confirmations of the Councils, and similar women's business'.[82] Their theology is based not only on human invention and hypocrisy, but also on 'babble and fables'.[83] Their teaching is 'useless, vain prattle'.[84] Jerome's epistles *contra Vigilantium*, written in defence of religious images, are dismissed as 'storming and raging [and] old women's prattle'; they come from one who 'puffs himself up' and is emulated by 'all babblers and prattlers'.[85] This motif of 'babbling' had been in common use among humanists when mocking the scholastic learning to which they objected.[86] In this context of these pamphlets, it served to persuade the laity not to be awed by the inaccessible stores of knowledge locked away in the universities. Strauss employs a familiar form of Cochlaeus' given name ('Dr Hans von Wendelstein') in a deliberate attempt to undermine the latter's learned dignity.[87] The pamphlet on relics contains the sarcastic assurance that the clergyman has been educated at a university and therefore has a good strong argument to support his case. The overall implication is that nothing useful is found in these schools; the idea that their inhabitants spend their days babbling, squabbling, gossiping, and inventing pointless distractions should remove most of their mystique.

4 The New Authority

Having thus rejected the foundations of clerical knowledge, Strauss in his pamphlets presents the laity an alternative authority. The Bible is the only standard against which all aspects of

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81 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aij v.

82 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiij v. Duns Scotus is a particular target, a 'coarse' (*Beichtbüchlein*, Aiij r), 'subtle liar' (ibid., Aij); 'Doctor subtilis ... who is now regarded as more important than even St Paul'.

83 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, G v.

84 *Wucher zu nemen*, Biij r

85 *Heiligthüm* Biiij r. Vigilantius, denounced by Jerome as a heretic, is described as having written 'in a Christian manner'. Jerome's *Contra Vigilantium* is also tackled by Zwingli in the *Ußlegen vnd gründ der schluszreden* (1523), E. Egli et al. (eds.), *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke II*, Corpus *Reformatorum* 89 (Berlin, Leipzig, and Zurich, 1905), 212.

86 They 'write, prattle, and teach', *Beichtbüchlein*, Eij v – Eiij r. See, for example, Sebastian Brant, *Ship of Fools*, XIX.

87 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Hiij r.

faith should be measured.[88] The inventions of man must always come second to Scripture, which cannot tolerate 'invented human delusion'.[89] In common with many of his fellow pamphleteers, Strauss repeatedly asks his opponents to counter his arguments with reference to the Bible, almost always ending his writings with such a challenge. This request, however, is clearly made in the complete confidence that they would not be able do so. Scripture offers the laity a means of cutting through the deceptions of the clergy and recognising false prophets.[90] It can expose the confusing sophistries constructed by the schoolmen in order to keep the laity in thrall to confession: 'all of their writing, teaching, disputing, preaching, and crying will be regarded with a good evangelical understanding'.[91] In the face of the twisting doctrines constructed by the schoolmen in defence of purgatory, Strauss tells his readers that 'Scripture may in truth not allow any constraint of human teaching or appearance'.[92] The clergy cannot 'show a few letters of the proven Scripture' to support this doctrine; for this reason they invent and lie further, over and over'.[93] It is the duty of the laity to examine all precepts and doctrines against the word of God, and Strauss has made this a condition of piety. Suggesting that he believes they are equipped to do this, he tells them that 'it is necessary for the pious Christian to test all teaching by diligent and close examination, and to retain that which is good'.[94]

Of course, Scripture had always been accepted as the ultimate authority within the Church. Even Augustine himself, admits Strauss, recognised the primacy of Scripture, and never intended his own writings to be taken as truth. Rather, he placed the same restrictions on reading such works as does Strauss: all must be tested against Scripture.[95] However, the theologians of the past four hundred years as have departed from this ideal. It was the rejection of God's word by 'human, sinful presumption' that allowed the Devil to ensnare the

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88 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij v; *Fegfeur*, Bij v.
89 *Fegfeur*, B v.
90 Ibid., Ciiij v.
91 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij r.
92 *Fegfeur*, C r.
93 Ibid., Aiiij v.
94 *Wucher zu nemen*, A v.
95 *Fegfeur*, Ciiij r.

world in error.[96] Christianity in general is presented as incompatible with such 'human presumption and foolishness'.[97] Strauss informs his readers that it is clear from the fact that all have replaced the word of God with 'old conventions and self-invented undertakings' that the devil succeeded in playing his 'monkey-game' with them. In attempting to justify the payment of interest by saying that poverty excuses sin, the 'school-learned' have 'abandoned God's wisdom and eternal word, and use their own cleverness and great reason'.[98] Regarding 'the care of souls', nothing that 'proceeds from the human brain' may be accepted.[99] This rejection of reason is particularly noticeable in the pamphlet on clerical marriage, a work primarily addressed to the laity in an attempt to assure them that such marriage is justified. Here, Strauss warns against attempting to pit oneself against God's ordinance; God created man to have a mate, and the human mind cannot change this.[100] God's word should be the only guide in such matters.[101]

Knowledge of God cannot be gained through human reason. Not only have the schoolmen placed the works of their predecessors above God's word, their learning and their reliance on reason, far from assisting their reading of the latter, have made them particularly unsuitable for the task. Although Strauss does allow that reason could sometimes chance upon a teaching that is 'in accordance with the law and God's word', he insists that its origin in a superficial knowledge of the law means that only 'false opinion' and 'supposed righteousness' can result.[102] In denouncing the presumption of those who claim to know better than God, he appears to reject the use of reason and knowledge in interpreting God's word. This method of approaching Scripture can only lead to corruption: 'where the word of

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96 *Beichtbüchlein,* Aij v. Faith, which belongs to God alone, has instead been placed in 'creatures and deceitful human law and mistaken teaching', Aij v. All opposition to the truth of the gospel is described as 'presumption', *Euangelium Luce,* Aiiij v.

97 'menschlichen won vnd einsynnigkeit', *Pruderchafften,* A v.

98 *Wucher zu nemen,* Biij v.

99 *Christlichen versamlung,* B r.

100 'It must always be a devilish presumption if the human brain trusts itself more in this, than [it trusts] God's word and work', *Pfaffen Ee,* Aij r.

101 *Pfaffen Ee,* Aiij r.

102 'And if, all the same, reason seizes something which is also in accordance with the law and God's word, so it cannot however lead otherwise, than into outward appearance and work from which also grow false opinion and supposed righteousness', *Auffrur,* Aiiij v – B r.

God is adopted only according to human cleverness and wisdom, there the lust will not be ripped from the ground at the root but only in so far as appearance demands, for some time and in self-invented pause in pleasure'.[103]

If not from human reason and learning, from whence is an understanding of Scripture, so sadly lacking in Brother Michael of Schwatz[104] and the rest of the clergy, to come? Erasmus implied that this came naturally from the clarity of the text, with Christ as the direct teacher of the layman.[105] Strauss presents the Bible, this single source of truth, as accessible to all, in contrast to the obscure and confusing teachings of the schools. As discussed in Chapter I, Strauss, like his evangelical contemporaries, saw the Bible as a means of faith; its renewal a visitation given by God in order to save. However, the relationship between faith and Scripture appears to be reciprocal. At one point, Strauss tells his listeners that 'the truth [...] reveals itself everywhere to those who seek it in faith'.[106] In 1525, he was to announce that is the word understood in faith, and not through reason, that enables man to know what will please and displease God.[107] In a later description of a 'Christian council', he appears to see debate between various individual understandings of Scripture as the way to the truth: 'every Christian member, disregarding [the clergy], would bring to light and show before the whole assembly, what God in his word had given him to understand'.[108] All of this indicates that only 'faith' is required to comprehend Scripture, and that all of the faithful who seek to understand it will be successful. As with the Eucharist, God's word is only effective as a

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103 Ibid., B v.

104 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij v. See above.

105 This is reflected in the following interpretation of Erasmus's concept of understanding the Bible: 'Scriptural literature is self-authorizing, virtually self-interpreting. All other forms of knowledge are [...] "hidden and obscure" in comparison. Christian literature and Christian philosophy are beyond and above interpretation. The New Testament requires a "pious and open mind" to understand it, informed by a "pure and simple faith". Such teaching by definition is universally accessible. And it delivers, without mediation, *ipsa veritas*', Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation. Grammar and Grace* (Oxford, 2002), 105.

106 *Wucher zu nemen*, E v.

107 *Auffrur*, B v.

108 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, H r.

means of grace when approached in true faith.[109] The exclusive right of the schools and the clergy to interpret Scripture has thus been fatally undermined.

Strauss assures the layman that he need have no fear of misunderstanding Scripture, as its meaning is always obvious.[110] That purgatory is a fable, for example, is 'openly apparent in the common, easily-understood judgement, known to all Christian men'.[111] If anything other than the recognition and repentance of one's sins, such as confession to a priest or any traditional form of satisfaction, were required by God, this would have been shown in the gospels. On the contrary, Christ has 'placed the remission of sins in such foundations not secretly and with hidden ways, but openly and with explicit words; so he has absolved the sinners, as one should read in the gospel where he says: your sins are forgiven you, your faith has saved you'.[112] At one point, Strauss does admit that there are 'figurative and secret meanings' in the Bible; these, however, concern only minor matters. All that is 'necessary' is shown in the Bible; if purgatory were to exist, it would be obvious in Scripture, as God has hidden nothing that is important.[113] Otherwise, nothing is 'dark or shady'.[114] The 'true, natural meaning' of the Scriptures, twisted by the 'blind pharisees and *Schriftgelehrten*', has been restored by Christ.[115] Furthermore, Scripture is unified; the laity are not to be fooled by seemingly contradictory passages.[116] This claim that nothing important is concealed is a useful way of dealing with detailed, complicated exegeses as used by the church. The relatively uneducated can reject their conclusions, and do not have to engage in such exercises themselves. Indeed, the arguments of the learned clergyman can generally be ignored; the laity do not need to know the full details of their lies.[117] The intellectual level of the pamphlets reflects this approach; they contain nothing dauntingly complex. As noted in

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109 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fiij v.
110 *Pfaffen Ee*, Aij r.
111 *Fegfeur*, B v-Bij r.
112 Ibid., B v-Bij r
113 Ibid., Bij v. Here, Strauss uses John 15:15.
114 *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciij r.
115 Ibid., Ciij v.
116 *Pfaffen Ee*, B r.
117 *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciij r.

Chapter I, Strauss professed himself deeply suspicious of any language other than the vernacular, and the German used in the pamphlets is simple and often conversational.[118]

5. The Active Laity

Strauss was preaching to and writing for those who would have considered themselves faithful Christians and for this reason equipped to judge Scripture. The clergy, therefore, could be seen not only as mistaken, but also surplus to requirements; leaving the laity unintimidated and self-sufficient. There are places where the 'visitation' has either not taken place at all, or where it has been suppressed: there are 'many poor, forsaken people in the German lands, to whom no one may preach the gospel'.[119] As the gospel is necessary for faith and therefore salvation, these unfortunate people from whom it is kept will be damned.[120] As can be seen from the references to his Hall parish in his earliest pamphlets, by printing his sermons, Strauss was attempting to reach these areas in defiance of the ban on such material. He was writing, therefore, partly in an attempt to encourage adherence to the new teaching and resistance to the old in a politically hostile environment, such as that of the Tyrol. However, a similar campaign, in this case with a more immediate audience, was also necessary in Strauss's new location in Thuringia. As mentioned in Chapter I, Eisenach was a city in religious transition. Both old and new forms religious life co-existed during the time of Strauss's preachership, and some may not always have seen a clear distinction between the two.[121] The town retained a large clerical population, and mass was still being celebrated, particularly in the convents and monasteries. Although Strauss's pamphlet on confession was written with his old congregation at Hall in mind, it was composed during his time in

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118 Strauss used the Vulgate in his earliest pamphlets; passages of Latin appear in *Trostliche verstendige leer*, along with a translation which appears to be Strauss's own: 'First, who may describe each and every one of his sins, as it is however impossible to recognize all sins, as David says at the 23rd Psalm. *Delicta quis intelligit*? Who understands all sins? And Job at the ninth. *Uerebar omnia opera mihi*. I have attended to all of my works,' *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij r.

119 *Euangelium Luce*, B r; see Chapter I, above.

120 When addressing those who *have* had the benefit of such teaching and yet ignore it, Strauss warns that their punishment will be no less than that of the ignorant. Ibid., B v.

121 A similar situation to that of Schleswig at this time, where 'the presence of divergent forms of worship within the same church created [...] conflict', may have existed in Eisenach. Klaus Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman: Social Unrest and Apocalyptic Visions in the Age of Reformation*, translated by Malcolm Wren, (Edinburgh, 1987), 99.

Eisenach and presumably based on sermons delivered in the town. Furthermore, even secular authorities who were generally amenable to the evangelical movement would have been cautious regarding its implementation, wary of enforcing change too quickly. The princes at Weimar and the members of the Eisenach council may not have shared Strauss's views on what qualified as a necessary and urgent reform. One can detect in these pamphlets an attempt to establish an accessible Scripture as the sole authority in matters of religion, replacing pope, clergy, and canon law, and to place it in the hands of the laity. The ultimate aim was to inspire action and protest on the part of the latter, fired by their enthusiasm for religious change and convinced of their right both to identify this need and to fulfil it.

It is clear from these pamphlets that Strauss felt that he needed to do more than simply attack the foundations of the existing doctrine and convince the laity that they had been the victims of deception in order to produce this outcome. In one of the many popular dialogues of the time, a monk is offended at the temerity of a mere artisan who challenges the former's opinion that he is 'Lutherish', demanding that he reveal by what means he knows 'to speak of our business'.[122] On one level, this conversation reflects a depiction of the clergy shutting the common man out of all discussion of religion, an image propagated by the reformers in order to rile the layman. However, it also serves to illustrate the unheard of nature of this occurrence; a layman daring to challenge a member of the first estate on religious matters. Such a departure from the accepted lay-clerical relationship would have required a revolution in the laity's perception both of themselves and of their erstwhile spiritual guardians. In order to further undermine the authority of the clergy, therefore, it was also necessary remove their dignity. The reformers, Strauss among them, made full use of the existing anticlerical stereotypes. The portrayal of the clergy, particularly the monks, often involved violently mocking and scatological language. In many cases, these attacks related specifically to their position as dispensers of salvation and religious knowledge. The preaching and exhortations of the clergy can be ignored; not only has their foolishness has

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122 'Wie wist jhr dan also von vnser sach tzů reden'. *Eyn gesprech zwyschen uyer Personen// wye sie eyn getzengk haben/ von der Walfart ym Grim=//metal/ was fur vnradt odder bůberey/ // dar aus entstanden sey.// Hantwerckßmant Bawer. Pfaff. Münch.// Eyn trew Christlich vermanung/ an alle Hantwercks leute vor// můsßigang sich tzů hůten* [Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer, 1524], Aij v.

been established, their method of preaching is also described as mere 'vomiting'.[123] Once Strauss has established the schoolmen and the clergy as thoroughly undignified figures, no more worthy of respect than a peasant who has over-indulged at a village festival, it should be easy for the layman to resist their imprecations: 'You will in no way allow yourself to be persuaded, be it by a bishop or physician, that you would commend your mortal body to such a drunken, fully foolish doctor'.[124] The confessor comes in for particular ridicule, as it is he with whom the resistant laity would have been confronted on the ground.[125] All of this is meant to ensure that the laity are no longer in awe of the clergy; once they had been shown that the emperor is naked, they would no longer be cowed by tradition, learning, or superior intellect. Now confident in the face of Latin phrases and labyrinthine arguments, they would have the courage to defy their former masters and, presumably, obey their new teachers.[126]

In contrast to the foolish and ranting clergyman, Strauss sought to foster in his readers a self-image of confident perceptiveness. They are deliberately included in his observations and assured that they can recognise the unfounded nature of the church's teaching.[127] The tyranny of the clergy will become apparent, they are told, 'if you examine it properly'.[128] 'An attentive, pious Christian may quickly understand' the true nature of the lord's supper and the required preparation.[129] Likewise, 'every pious Christian may well observe' the deplorable nature of the doctrines of the 'pharisees'.[130] Although the clergy have attempted to twist the teachings of the New Testament, these renew, rather than abrogate, those of the Old

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123 As evident in their method of preaching, as described above: they are 'mislead, hellish screamers' who 'greatly and impossibly vomit repentence also to the laity entirely without understanding', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, B v.

124 *Beichtbüchlein*, E v.

125 Confessing one's secrets to a priest is no different from telling them to 'another good drinking-companion, [except] that he is oiled and half-shorn, and where [people] come together, particularly with wine, so the priest says, be quiet, the speech is mine alone', Ibid., E v – Eij r.

126 The need for encouragement, especially of those living in areas in which the evangelical movement was opposed by force, as well as by the clergy, is apparently acknowledged by Strauss in his description of this persecution, *Euangelium Luce*, Aiij v. This is a more serious form of tyranny than simple 'misleading'.

127 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Cij v- Ciij r.

128 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, B v

129 Ibid., Biiij v.

130 Ibid., Aiiij v.

Testament, 'as any diligent reader of the gospel and the books of Moses, also of the prophets, may easily find'.[131] Strauss follows a denunciation of those who blindly follow the monks with an appeal to common sense regarding confession; he tells his readers and listeners that, unless they do not want to have 'any sense, wit, or understanding', they are to 'regard no more the wretched, sick, and ruinous commandment of the hellish confession'.[132] Whoever cannot perceive the clergy's unspiritual motives in inventing the sacrament of penance 'has neither sense nor wit'.[133]

This strategy is especially evident in the pamphlet on relics, in which Strauss conveys the unmistakable impression that one would have to be particularly foolish to believe in the power of these absurd objects. Their unlikely multiplicity comes in for particular ridicule; the laity invited to laugh with Strauss at the impossible claims made for their authenticity. Saints Mark, Matthew, and James possess two complete corpses each, while St. Barbara has three separate heads. Had St Sebastian been the greatest giant ever to exist, his body could not have contained all the bones attributed to it. Christ's foreskin is to be seen in two or three places and the Virgin's milk is so plentiful that there is 'no cow in Switzerland' of whom such a yield could be believed. Even if St. Anthony's beard had been 'as shaggy as a Dutch sheep', it still could not have produced the amount of hair supposedly to be seen in Europe's churches, and if the Holy Cross had been composed of all of its surviving fragments, 'one could have built a considerable house from it'.[134] All of these legends, therefore, are clearly 'impossible fables'.[135] The lying nature of the hierarchy is underlined by these outlandish beliefs; they are so obviously wrong that only a fool would believe them. Strauss invites the laity to accept their pronouncements on the authenticity of relics as they would if the clergy were to claim that 'water is fire, and fire is water, and just as their lies must be true, thus the truth must be

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131 'As the commandments are shown through Moses and the prophets in all of God's laws. But darkened and led away through the blind pharisees and script-learned, from their true, natural meaning, and for this reason Christ has renewed them, and in their true, complete meaning once more a law, as any diligent reader of the gospel and the books of Moses, also of the prophets, may easily find', *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciij v – Ciiij r.

132 Ibid., Bij v.

133 Ibid., C v.

134 *Heiligthüm*, Bij v – Biij r.

135 Ibid., Biij r. Papal or episcopal letters of authentication are, of course, deemed to be worthless, ibid., Biij r.

false, as they make the wicked good, and the good evil, make light into darkness, and the darkness into light'.[136] Thus church seeks to bamboozle the common man, but the common man, despite his lack of learning, knows better.[137]

In phrases such as '*we* can easily recognise', '*every* pious, Christian man can see', and '*we* do not allow ourselves to be confused by such nonsense', Strauss constantly includes his reader in the struggle against error.[138] The layman is depicted as actively engaged in his own liberation: 'we want to tear their bonds from us, and throw their yoke from us'.[139] Although the 'wretched misleaders' have claimed that to receive communion without the sacrament of confession will result in damnation, Strauss assures his readers that they can easily see through this falsification of Paul. These 'false and erroneous words are easily recognizable to every pious Christian in true correct faith' and, Strauss continues, 'we wish to pull it out by the roots with bright, shining truth, and drop it into the bottomless hell'.[140] Likewise, all of the faithful are invited to judge whether the honouring of relics constitutes idolatry.[141] Of course, this apparent inclusiveness could be nothing more than rhetoric. When Strauss writes, for example, 'and thus we have defeated that which I regard the strongest argument of the soul service and the popish purgatory, but if they dare to repeat something further from the Scripture, so too with the grace of God we will not fail to appear to them with an answer', it may simply be Strauss who is doing the defeating and answering in this case. He could be envisaging a personal, inner reformation, with the inclusive 'we' serving as a friendly, pastoral device or a means of persuading the congregation that they have reached a

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136 Ibid.

137 This idea that the simple people had a particular capacity for understanding God's word was expressed by Zwingli in his *Archeteles*, a Latin work not intended for a popular readership; due to their lack of corruption by higher learning, they can perceive the truth more readily than the 'doctors', Ulrich Zwingli, *APOLOGETI//CVS ARCHETELES ADPELLATVS// QUO RESPONDETVR, PARAENE//SI, A.RE.DO. CONSTANTIENSI// 'QVORVNDAM PROCACI FA//CTIONE AD IDPERSVASO'// ad Senatum Prepositurae Tigurinae// quem Capitulum uocant misse.// Per Huldrichum Zuin=//glium.* ([Zurich: Christoph Froschaer d.Ä.], 1522), b r. On the right of the laity to judge Scripture, in opposition to the scholars, ibid., iii r.

138 *Euangelium Luce*, A v; *Fegfeur*, Ciiij v

139 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij r. Psalm 2.3: 'Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us'.

140 Ibid., Aiiij r.

141 *Heiligthüm*, Bij v.

conclusion that they may in fact have not yet made,[142] rather than genuinely encouraging and expecting his listeners and readers to follow his example and parrot this back to their priests or to their families and neighbours.[143] However, it would appear that Strauss is preparing the laity to actively resist the old teaching, not only internally and privately, but also visibly and vocally.[144]

Strauss provides an answer for those faced with anti-Lutheran sermons coming from the pulpit. The laity are assured that not only are the criticisms of the clergy mistaken and based on falsehood, these denunciations are in fact proof of the justice of the reformers' teachings.[145] Strauss sees it necessary to reassure his readers that the possession of evangelical pamphlets is not a sin, as claimed by their opponents. This is the context of the passage mentioned above, in which he mocks the blindness and lack of learning of the 'misleaders' and particularly the fulminations of Brother Michael; the 'lies' which the latter has told during Lent amount to the assertion that 'whoever had a Lutheran pamphlet with him and went to God's table, he would be the Devil's for eternity'.[146] Such falsehood, Strauss says, is the devil's teaching, and such books have never been proven to be heretical or contrary to the gospel. The layman is self-reliant; he can overcome his familiar customs and beliefs now that he has been armed with his new understanding of faith. When one has accomplished the true confession, one may go to the altar 'joyfully, well-comforted, and wholly abandoned to the merciful, loyal God'.[147] The confidence of the new Christian is such that if the devil were to question is or her suitability to receive (to 'throw you the old, doubting error') he or she

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142 For example, on the interpretation of Luke 21, he says, 'it is well known to us all', *Euangelium Luce*, Aij v.

143 *Fegfeur*, Ciij v-Ciiij r.

144 Dipple, arguing that Luther, at the time of writing his address to the Christian nobility of the German nation, was not an abolitionist but was instead encouraging the laity to *reform* the clergy, says that 'Luther is here involved in a strategy of drumming up support and creating a reforming bloc by inventing a "We" party among the clergy and laity over against the "They" party of Rome', Geoffrey L. Dipple, 'Luther, Emser, and the Development of Reformation Anticlericalism', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 87 (1996), 38-56, 39. Strauss does not appear to be addressing the nobility, much less encouraging reform. His 'we party' has a much broader base than that of Luther in this instance.

145 'their foolish wisdom, and tyrannical undertakings, strengthen and confirm the evangelical, true teaching for itself', *Euangelium Luce*, Aiij r.

146 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij v.

147 See Chapter I, above, on Strauss's preparation for communion.

would be able to 'kick him comfortingly in his false, lying throat, and say, "God is my helper, protector, and preparer, in whom I have placed my hope"'.[148]

The 'instruction, on how the pious Christian should behave at the Mass' that Strauss provides at the end of *Trostliche verstendige leer* is practical advice, given in the context of the persistence of the old faith: 'as we unfortunately may not improve the matter, and the practice of hearing Mass on Sunday worries the Christian folk, it is necessary to give the poor imprisoned conscience some air and comfort; to give an order regarding how they yet might obtain something fruitful at the Mass'.[149] Ideally, he says, it would be better if one did not attend at all. The Mass being an unchristian practice in which God is disgraced, 'it would be much more useful were each pious Christian never to come to Mass, than were he to assist the great error with his presence'.[150] Nonetheless, he feels obliged to advise those who are forced to attend how they may derive some benefit from this. Here, Strauss is almost certainly referring to those in areas where evangelical preaching was forbidden, rather than to people who could not bring themselves to abandon religious services and annual communion, even though an alternative was available.[151] Those attending Mass are to ignore the 'manifold abuses' of 'singing, ringing, piping, organ-playing, or whatever happens there beyond what Christ has established'; Strauss is obviously fearful of the possibility of seduction by the familiar and impressive.[152] Instead of paying attention to these, the laity are to engage in private prayer; Strauss provides a form of *Credo* encompassing belief in the presence of the body and blood and in its function (the original sacrifice and the effect of the sacrament), along with a recognition of sinfulness and request for forgiveness.[153] One is not to rush through this, as one reads in the 'little prayer book', but to perform it with all

148 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciiij r.

149 Ibid., D r.

150 Ibid., D v. In any case, Strauss probably sees this as only a temporary solution, as the gospel will be successful sooner or later.

151 This pamphlet was written with his Hall congregation in mind.

152 Ibid., D r-v.

153 Ibid., D v.

earnestness and diligence.[154] The strategy for the layman is to remind himself of the iniquities of the clergy and of why their interpretation is incorrect. This will presumably provide him with the confidence to resist the appeal of the familiar and not to allow himself to be persuaded by any anti-Lutheran preaching. This is a passive, internal form of resistance and reformation. However, Strauss does not limit his new layman to this.

As well as giving the civil authorities and other powerful laymen the intellectual authority to defy the local hierarchy, Strauss also appears to be creating a confident 'common man' capable of actively and openly opposing his parish priest. The message of these pamphlets is one of conflict and struggle. The 'inward communion' described above should of course be beneficial to those who have no access to an evangelical communion. It is also perhaps designed for those who, although they may still wish to participate in the annual general communion of the Mass, are refused the sacrament due to their rejection of the traditional form of confession. However, Strauss goes further than this; his confident layman is to confront the priest.[155] One is not to wait patiently until the local clergy have abolished confession. If the priest refuses communion, one should approach him in the knowledge that one has made the correct confession and received God's forgiveness. The potential communicant should then apprise the clergyman of this fact, explaining that further confession is therefore unnecessary, and ask to 'receive the sacrament with other Christian

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154 Ibid., D v: Strauss ends this pamphlet with another warning, after stating that any additions to the sacrament instituted by God are blasphemous: 'Beware of this, pious Christian, before the Requiem of Votives ...', ibid., Dij r.

155 According to Cochlaeus, admittedly a far from unbiased source, this did in fact happen; even the unlearned began to read Luther's German New Testament, and 'because of this, in a few months they attributed so much learning to themselves that they did not blush to dispute about the faith and the Gospel, not only with laypeople of the Catholic party, but also with priests and monks, and furthermore, even with Masters and Doctors of Sacred Theology. Nay, more – even mere women were found who of their own accord dared to challenge the proposed themes and published books of the Germans – and that indeed they did by most boldly insulting men, reproaching them with ignorance, and holding them in contempt. And not only laymen and private citizens; but even certain Doctors, and licensed members of the whole faculty of Theology, and even whole universities. This information was obtained from Argula, a certain noble woman', 'The deeds and writings of Dr Martin Luther from the year of the Lord 1517 to the year 1546 related chronologically to all posterity by Johannes Cochlaeus', translated by Elizabeth Vandiver and annotated by Ralph Keen, in *Luther's Lives. Two Contemporary Accounts of Martin Luther*, translated and annotated by Elizabeth Vandiver, Ralph Keen, and Thomas D. Franzel (Manchester and New York, 2002), 53-351, 106.

people'. He or she should ignore any further questioning and not fear excommunication, as in this case the priest would be at fault. If denied the sacrament, Strauss advises, 'do not allow yourself to be terrified, and do not fear scarecrows; his curses are worth just as much as his blessings'. Instead, one should understand that Christ, 'the true father-confessor', will not withhold his body and blood from a faithful Christian even if the physical bread and wine have been denied by the priest: 'he is in you, and you in him, and that is called actually eating his flesh and drinking his blood'.[156]

As the confrontation described above suggests, Strauss also intends the laity to refuse to bow to clerical or social pressure and submit to the sacrament of penance. He provides his readers with a guide to resisting the clergy if forced to confess in the old manner.[157] This is to be accomplished by using their own teachings and laws against them. Strauss provides the unlearned with a crib which would, in theory, enable them to counter the common arguments made in defence of the sacrament. How this would work in practice is another matter. There is, however, little theology here; apart from a reference to Scotus and Thomas regarding secrecy and another to the requirement to confess mortal sins alone, it consists mostly of crude anticlericalism.[158] Once again, the laity are not to be intimidated; this time when the 'priests and monks thunder and lightning with their invented, untruthful confession'. They are to 'allow [the clergy] to shower and hail' while they themselves turn to God, repeating their formula of self-recognition of sins.[159] Once one has achieved this true and full confession, and striven to fulfil one's faith by loving one's neighbour, one should be confident when faced with the raging of the clergy: 'now let the Antichrist go on, with all his anti-christian priests and monks, yes, the devil too, [and] hell, and all creatures, saying, singing, crying, thundering, lightning, hailing, showering, and mourning, and have no fear. Let yourself be satisfied with the holy, holy confession now shown, so no one may harm you; as surely in confession God is with you and stands for you, who then may be dangerously

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156 John 6:55f. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. *Beichtbüchlein*, Eiij r.

157 Ibid., E r.

158 Ibid., Eij v - Eiij r. According to Strauss, all sins, even mortal sins, are forgiven by God in the true confession.

159 Ibid., Diij r.

against you?'.[160] Furthermore, Strauss promises that he will teach his readers to 'overturn the same confession without any effort and care'. This will be achieved by withholding the confession-penny for two years; if this were done, 'you would well discover how the confession would disappear'.[161]

The provision of God's word as the single authority must be seen, therefore, in the context of this conflict. Scripture is 'an insurmountable weapon'[162] which removes all need of theological training and neutralises the intellectual arsenal of the clergy, and is to be employed as such. It can, as has been seen, be used for internal reassurance, but Strauss goes further. The 'gospel in its strong words' shows that one does not require a monk or priest to make a proper confession.[163] In the pamphlet on purgatory, one finds a lengthy discussion of Isaiah 43:25 (I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins). With this, the laity (Strauss again using the word 'we') can both demolish the doctrine of satisfaction and 'extinguish their painted, terrifying purgatory'. This appears to be a demonstration of how to use a relatively simple scriptural text in order to defeat an opposing argument; this, Strauss tells his readers, is 'powerful talk', against which no 'gloss' may compete.[164] In their assessment of the ungodly nature of the 'invented confession', Strauss instructs his readers to 'make use of the godly word that God shows [the laity] so well'.[165] If the clergy insist that one must confess in the traditional manner (or, as Strauss contemptuously describes it, 'blow the sins into the ears of the priest'[166]), he recommends an outright challenge: 'you should not believe their prattle, until they show you

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160 Romans 8:31, What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? Ibid., Diiij v - E r.

161 Ibid., Biiij v.

162 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Biij r-v.

163 *Beichtbüchlein*, D r. He also assures that the laity can ignore the clergy when they say (as Strauss alleges) that problematic biblical texts (in this case John 3:16) are not fairy-stories. Ibid., Dij v.

164 'Dem ersten falschen vnd erthichten grund yres gnüg thuns wöllen wir ynen mit dem crefftigen wort gottis gantz ym boden vmb stossen, so wirt auch tzüm andern, ire gemalet erschrocklich fegfewr verleschen', *Fegfeur*, B r-v.

165 *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciij r.

166 Ibid.

here a clear text of the gospel, which is however impossible'.[167] It is also the Bible that will enable the laity to defeat usury, as it will expose the lies that justify it: 'we want to run at the devil with God's word'.[168] Strauss promises that the common man with his Bible can 'counter the clever and wise of this world in a wise and brotherly manner'.[169] Furthermore, the laity are encouraged with assurances of victory. Strauss is confident that the supposedly 'wise and intelligent men' will tie themselves up in their own knots and that the Bible will overcome the efforts of the schoolmen to suffocate it.[170] The laity are now armed and ready to become active participants in the reformation of their faith.

Luther, in his rejection of the sacramental function of the clergy, recommended their abolition as a separate, spiritual estate. This image of the layman as the equal of the clergyman was strengthened by the resulting concept of a priesthood of all believers, however little Luther may have envisaged the consequences. A woodcut used to illustrate a 1522 German translation of a Latin prognostication from 1508 depicts an upside-down church in which a peasant, facing the altar, elevates the host, while a priest and monk plough the field outside.[171] Although Strauss was deeply critical of the role of the confessor and insisted that

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167 Ibid., Ciij r. On the subject of baptism, Strauss provides his readers with a number of useful texts, with which they can guard against the 'questions' of the schoolmen, which latter are designed to confuse and bewilder; these are *quæstiones* employed by the priest, presumably in sermons, to say that faith is necessary in baptism; according to Strauss, the people are now worried because they believe their godparents did not have the correct faith. This is private rather than confrontational. 'He who believes and is baptized, he will be saved, but he who does not believe will be damned. Mark 16. also all four evangelists describe baptism, so well and richly distributed, as Matthew at the last, Mark at the first, Luke at the third, John at the first. In the book of the acts of the apostles in many chapters, particularly in the eighth, St Paul to the Romans at the sixth, to the Galatians at the third, and everywhere in almost all of his epistles, also St Peter, which almost all the school-learned describe as truly unnecessary, and everyone should adequately guard against the labyrinth of their thousandfold questions', *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aij r.

168 *Wucher zu nemen*, Cij r.

169 *Wucher zu nemen*, Gij v

170 'Neither doctors, nor all the learned of the world will not stifle Deuteronomy 15, also Luke 6, with fabricated glosses', *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aiiij r.

171 Johannes Grünpeck, *Spiegel der naturlichen himlischen und prophetischen sehungen*. This image is reprinted in Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1994), 169. For further discussion of this image, see Henry J. Cohn, 'Changing Places: Peasants and Clergy 1525', in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994), 545-557, 555. In this essay, Cohn recounts instances of the laity imitating the behaviour of the clergy, including their celebration of the

this function could better be filled by oneself or one's (lay) brother, he was not suggesting that the laity should be encouraged to appropriate for themselves the sacramental role of the former first estate. Very little of Strauss's anticlerical rhetoric refers to the 'powers' of the priesthood (beyond those of confessor), or at least, not in a way that is designed to appeal to a sense of injustice or subjugation among the laity; most of it rests on their intellectual and moral crimes, rather than the priest as magician.[172] A 'priest' of sorts is still needed in order to administer the remaining sacraments.[173] As shown in Chapter I above, this teacher was also required to preach the word of God. Nonetheless, the reformers, at least initially, did give the laity some degree of authority in the control of the church or assembly. Luther declared that a Christian assembly had the right to elect its pastor and, significantly, to assess whether his teaching was in accordance with God's word.[174] It has been argued that Strauss was one of the most eager proponents of this idea: 'Along with Luther, the theologians who spoke most clearly when it came to enumerating the rights of the community were Jakob Strauss and Martin Bucer'.[175] For Strauss, there was a 'true, divine institution of the pastorate', but this could only come from the agreement of the assembly. The congregation should be able to recognise 'whether the priest presents the voice of Christ or his own word', and to act

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Mass, during their incursions into churches and monasteries during the Peasants' War, and examines their reasons for doing so: 'Explanations, if any, are given in 1525 for changing places with social superiors, are usually some form of allusion to the Gospel and indirectly to the priesthood of all believers', ibid., 556.

172 On existing popular views of the particular powers possessed by the priest, and their contribution to his position in relation to the laity, see R. N. Swanson, 'Before the Protestant Clergy: The Construction and Deconstruction of Medieval Priesthood', in C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (eds), *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2003), 39-59, 39: Key features affecting late medieval attitudes to priesthood were a widening gap between priest and laity, and the perception of priesthood as a range of powers committed to a person rather than the duties of a minister. Equally formative was the emphasis on the mass as sacrifice, which reduced the laity's status while stressing the priest's role as representative of, and indeed virtual replacement for, Christ'.

173 The instruction to Peter to feed Christ's sheep (John 21:17) is taken to refer to the provision of the word and the 'fulfilment of sacramental need', *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiiij r.

174 'Hie sihestu yhe klar, wes das recht ist tzu vrteylen die lere, Bischoff, Bapst gelerten vnd yderman hat macht zu leren, aber die schaff sollen vrteylen, ob sie Christus stym leren oder der frembden stym', Martin Luther, *Das eyn Christliche// versamlu[n]g odder ge=//meyne: recht vn[d] ma=//cht habe: alle lere tzu// vrteylen: vnd lerer zu// beruffen: eyn vnd ab=//zusetzen: Grund vnd// vrsach aus der schrifft* (Wittenberg: Lucas Cranch and Christian Döring, 1523), Aiij r.

175 Peter Blickle, *Communal Reformation: The Quest for Salvation in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ and London), 125.

accordingly.[176] In his pamphlets, he presents the laity with an image of themselves as having been enlightened by the gospel, allowing them to both see the truth and implement its teachings in the face of opposition. This new depiction of the common man, as propagated by Strauss and designed to be motivating and instructive, must have had an appeal of its own. There is some evidence that the laity resented the role of the clergy in interpreting and determining doctrine and that they wished to think of themselves as authorities on Scripture; that they were indeed were interested and willing to participate in the renewal of religious life. Conrad Distelmair, an artisan pamphleteer, insisted in 1523 that 'the laity, and the poor man and woman, also have a sharp understanding'. God is the only teacher, and he teaches the 'simple' as much as the proud, supposedly learned clergy and scholars; in fact, God reveals to the former that which is hidden to the latter.[177] This would suggest that Strauss's message regarding the equality of the common man, if not his innate superiority, in relation to those previously seen as his learned and spiritual betters, would have found a receptive audience.

6. Reality: Limits of this empowerment.

Although Strauss did not abolish the office of the pastor, he appears in these pamphlets to be advocating an entirely new relationship between the clergy and the laity, one in which the latter are qualified and entitled to judge their preacher's understanding of Scripture. His fellow reformer, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, echoed Distelmaier's claim that no one on earth should be called 'father' or 'teacher', as God in heaven was the sole father and teacher. Rather, Karlstadt claimed, all should be 'brothers', and he declared himself a 'new

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176 *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiiij r – B r.

177 'Es haben die layen, vnd der arm man vnnd weyb auch scharpffen verstandt go hat sy auch erschaffen [...] hat sy lieb vn[d] wil jn auch nichts versagen, vil minder dan[n] den geytzigen neydigen vnd hochfertigen, mu[n]lichen vnnd pfaffen, oder hohen schülern dann solt der gayst gottes allain in die hohen schül, vn[d] in die geschmyrbten platten, gezwingen seyn, so hete got dem armen hauffen syn gnad vnbillich versagt &c. Es ist geschriben nymant wirt geleert in der hayligen geschrifft, dan[n] von got, darumb wen[n] gott nit leret ist vngeleeret, wan[n] gott offenbart den ainfeltigen das er verbirgt den hochgeachten weltweysen', *Ain trewe erma//nunge/ das ain yeder Christ selbs ozu seiner seel// hail sehe/ vn[d] das schwert auch selbs zu[o] seinen// handen neme/ sich der feind// damit were/ auff das er// nit mit falscher leer// überwunde[n] vn[d]// verfu[c]ret// werde// Durch ain[n] layen Cunrad Distelmair// von Arberg gethon// 1523.* (Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner, 1523), Aiij v. 1524.

layman'.[178] To what degree did Strauss's view of the laity and of his own position correspond to this? His rejection of the soul-murdering clergy we can almost certainly accept, but was he wholly sincere in his construction of the new, confident layman? Can this, in its combination of sympathetic victimhood and self-determination, be seen as a device to make the evangelical message more attractive? To what extent was he merely flattering the laity? Did he really believe in this egalitarian form of communal reformation, with the members of the assembly having intellectual authority over their preacher?[179] In a modification of the Grünpeck image, can the peasant who knows the gospel and therefore 'cannot be deceived'[180] replace his pastor at the pulpit if dissatisfied with the latter's preaching and put him to work in the fields? What was to stop him? Did Strauss really believe in this active, confident, self-sufficient layman? However corrupt and inadequate the clergy, it is clear that Strauss's perception of the laity did not correspond to that found in some of his most idealised representations.[181]

At times in these works, Strauss appears to see the laity as straightforward, well-meaning victims who, 'from good loyalty and simple understanding', have trusted the papacy.[182]

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178 On this aspect of Karlstadt's thought, see Hans-Peter Hasse, ''Von mir selbs nicht halden': Beobachtungen zum Selbstverständnis des Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt', in Ulrich Bubenheimer and Stefan Oehmig (eds), *Querdenker der Reformation: Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt und seine frühe Wirkung* (Würzburg, 2001), 49-73, especially 61-68.

179 According to Eike Wolgast, Strauss, along with Karlstadt, Wolfgang Stein, and Thomas Müntzer, was among those who deviated from the Wittenberg 'norm' in recommending a new ecclesiastical system based on *Gemeindeautonomie*, from which the princes later had to 'rescue' it. Eike Wolgast, 'Die deutschen Territorialfürsten und die frühe Reformation,' in Bernd Moeller (ed.), *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch. Wissenschaftliches Symposium des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1996.* Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 199 (Gütersloh, 1998), 407-434, 429.

180 *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiiij v.

181 However, although the common people may be foolish, this does not mean that they are not superior, in religious terms, to the clergy and the learned. Even Thomas Müntzer, that champion of the laity, did not always describe them in the most glowing terms. 'Only unheard of over-simplification, Müntzer argued, could get through to the wooden, thick, foolish people, *grob, tolpelisch und knuttelisch volk*, who were yet, somehow, to be God's chosen instruments. Too much sophistication and literacy can block the road to Christian truth!', Peter Matheson, *The Rhetoric of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1998), 50f.

182 '[Pope Martin V] despicably misled the pious inhabitants of the city and diocese of Breslau, who had then from good loyalty and simple understanding placed their faith in the pope', *Wucher zu nemen*, Diiij v

However, he is often not wholly sympathetic. At any rate, he suggests that they are relatively incapable; it is all too easy for the clergy to dupe 'the poor, simple people'.[183] He acknowledges that those who adore relics mean well ('what else does one seek in the relics, but the pleasure of the saints, that may not occur without God's pleasure?')[184], but have been deceived. Nonetheless, the sustained ridicule of the cult of relics described above could equally be read as a reproof of those who continue to honour them and believe in their authenticity. The exposure of the 'blind worship of relics'[185] could be taken as proof of the gullibility of the common man as well as an appeal to his common sense. Moreover, like the clergy, the common man is not merely simple; there is a degree of wickedness involved in this blindness. Although the general tenor of Strauss's diatribe against confession is fiercely anticlerical, the laity do not escape all blame: 'Truly, if we had not broken from God and his word, it would not be possible that so many innumerable, sensible, clever people in Christendom [should] subject themselves to such a ruinous, impossible law and business'.[186] He also ridicules those who have more respect for 'a priest's cloak or a monk's habit' (*eyns pffaffen rock ader eyns monychs kutten*) than the word of God, and especially those princes whom the monks, with promises of papal indulgences and forgiveness, have induced to have their corpse so dressed and accompanied by a rod. Such a prince, mocks Strauss, 'will be just like a newborn little child, from the mother's body' and will go 'to heaven like a cow into a mousehole' (*fert auch gein hymel wie ein kw in ein mauszloch*).[187] The motives of the laity who participate in such wilful disobedience of God's teaching are sinful and stem from a lack of faith. In the relics pamphlet, Strauss addresses the idolater as 'dear friend', but this is followed immediately by 'you servant of the relics' and a mocking description of his behaviour; this address is not meant to be conciliatory. [188] One cannot use the excuse of

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183 *Heiligthüm*, Bv.

184 Ibid., Aiij r.

185 Ibid., Aiij r.

186 *Beichtbüchlein*, Bij r. See also his description of the 'unfaithful people', again, implying that they are not entirely free from blame, who are led astray by the devil and his prophets, Ibid., Aij v.

187 Ibid., Bij r-v.

188 Their devotion to 'dead legs' is so great that they surround them with 'gold and silver, velvet and silk, lights, candles, and shouting, singing and piping, also with armour, and weaponry', *Heiligthüm*, Aiiij r.

devilish deception to explain one's worship of idols, as the true nature of this practice is obvious.[189]

In this pamphlet, Strauss is clearly addressing those who have chosen of their own accord to persist in these devotions; unlike his advice regarding confession and communion, his primary purpose does not appear to be that of encouraging the common man to resist pressure from the clergy. In 1526, Strauss announced that, as God now 'allows the poor Christian people to see once more so clearly the light of his eternal wisdom', no one who wishes to hear it 'is so foolish' that he cannot 'grasp with hands and feet and see openly revealed the miserable, wretched and contemptible misleading, in which we and our parents have erred for so long'.[190] Although this apparent disbelief is clearly directed at the clergy, it could equally apply to the laity. Whatever ambiguity may exist regarding the degree to which the 'unfaithful people' were at fault before the renewal of God's word, now that the gospel has been made freely available, it is unthinkable that anyone would continue in the old errors. This, however, is precisely what has happened.[191] In the first years of the evangelical movement, not every change was welcomed as eagerly as the preachers perhaps expected.[192] Strauss makes frequent references to the 'witless' laity in his pamphlet in response to Oecolampadius in 1527. Although this criticism, like his scolding on the subject of relics, could be attributed to his urging the laity to reform, this work, while presumably directed at a fairly broad readership, was not a sermon given from the pulpit. The context may have been that of the emergence of a new heresy (the denial of the real presence in the eucharist), but this negative view of the newly 'enlightened' laity had been held by Strauss long before that point. Although he did criticise the peasants who had failed to abandon reason in the aftermath of the rebellions of 1524-1525, this element was visible even during

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189 Ibid., Bij v: 'mag sich doch auch in menschlicher erkantniß das heiligthüm zü preizen, als ein erticht erlogen teüffelisch vorfürüng nit bedecken'.

190 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Gij r. This could be taken as a criticism of those who wilfully reject the gospel, although Strauss may be referring to the clergy. However, it does perhaps acknowledge that some people *are* this foolish, reflecting Strauss's earlier accusations addressed to the laity.

191 As has been shown in Chapter I, above, it was possible to reject the visitation.

192 Even in later years, reformation from above brought no guarantee of success: 'laymen did not consistently welcome the emissaries – preachers or visitors – of their prince', Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors: The Reformation in the Ernstine Countryside* (Philadelphia, 1979), 71.

his active preaching years in Eisenach.[193] In a slightly ambiguous reference to divine punishment made in 1523, he had stated that 'the spirit of error has also come over us, and nothing more remains in all Christian nature which is not attached to doubt and useless addition, from which we will all escape and be free if we adhere only to the godly word'.[194] There is a clear way out of the snare of false teaching, but at times Strauss does not appear particularly confident that many would find it.

Although the inhabitants of Eisenach who refuse to forego the use of chrism and oil in baptism have been 'led astray from the word by priests and monks', they are also 'simple and stubborn people'.[195] The 'weak and poor' are need of instruction, and cannot be trusted to reach the correct conclusions by themselves. They are 'simple and foolish' when they chose to go on pilgrimage rather than help the poor. Strauss's advice on how to deal with one's sins is given 'in a short, understandable [...] manner, for the simple, pious Christians, who are not highly educated in Scripture'.[196] These instructions are intended for the 'weak, poor Christians, who are compelled with force under the Antichrist's compulsion and hellish law'.[197] The Pope is only part of the problem; there is an inherent deficiency in the laity themselves.

Not only are the laity as foolish and weak as ever, they appear to be just as obstinate as the clergy. Even though the gospel has been revealed, many ignore it. Despite God's attempts to 'visit' his people with his word, he has found 'little fruit' with them. Strauss berates his congregation thus: 'And now, anew, the bright evangelical light has appeared to us [...] and almost all men range themselves against it, rebelliously, disobediently, hatefully, and ungratefully'.[198] They have the support of their princes, who allow the gospel to be preached

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193 Strauss knows that the 'einfeltigenn' and 'vnbedachten' will believe Oecolampadius, as he cites the creed as his proof, *Das der war leyb Christi*, Dij r; he later refers to 'das arm weyßlos gemain volck', E r.

194 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aij r.

195 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiiij r.

196 *Beichtbüchlein*, Dij v.

197 Ibid., E r.

198 *Euangelium Luce*, Aij v – Aiij r.

in their lands, and their behaviour therefore cannot be excused.[199] The laity are still far from perfect. Regarding marriage and sexual relations, they are subject to harmful desires, as well as scolding and quarrelling. Although some of the damage can be attributed the interference and regulations of the church, these existing deficiencies have been retained despite the new teaching. All who use God's word and his institution of marriage in order to indulge their lust are guilty, not only of disguise and deceit, but also of blasphemy.[200] This conduct is condemned as a general opportunistic misuse of God's teaching on the part of the laity, rather than merely as an example of clerical deception. Such failure to heed God's word can be seen in the many who are content to appear Christian, but in whom love, the fruit of true faith, has not taken root.[201]

Those who persist in old baptismal practices are 'stubborn and insolent' and, as with the clergy, ignorance is no excuse for their wickedness in turning away from God, especially now that the truth has been revealed: 'ignorance justifies no error, but only in part, when one cannot know a thing, as such was not shown to our forefathers through the hellish spirit of the priests, but he who does not know and [does not] want to know, God does not know him either'.[202] Although the clergy are responsible for propagating the cult of relics, by which 'the whole world is paralysed in wickedness and knavery', they do not bear sole responsibility for the results: 'no one wants to hear his holy, godly word in true, complete understanding any more, neither may it be openly read by anyone any longer'. This obstinacy is shared by bishops, kings, princes, and the 'common folk' alike.[203] Those who attempt to bribe God in this manner are 'wilful and presumptuous'; there is a general and deliberate refusal to trust in the divine mercy for one's salvation.

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199 Ibid., B r.

200 *Pfaffen Ee,* B v: 'Dear brothers, who will not recognise the devil's work in this? That one in recent times under the appearance of the living word of God, has acted against the word so sinfully'.

201 *Euangelium Luce,* Aiiij v. The entire thrust of this sermon is an admonition to all to examine their faith and behaviour, using the gospel as their guide, and a warning of punishment to come if things do not improve.

202 *Simonieschen Tauff,* Ciij v.

203 *Heiligthüm,* B r.

Far from the idealised picture of the pious congregation 'worried' by the mass as described above, at least one prominent inhabitant of Eisenach objected to the new arrangements. On the Tuesday after the feast of St Margaret, 1523, as Strauss was just coming to the end of one of his frequent weekday sermons with the congregation kneeling silently ready to join him in prayer, a commotion was heard at the back of the church.[204] It would appear that a member of the town council had arranged to have a dance held outside the church during the sermon; when the mayor interfered, this 'wicked old man' threw open the doors and made his way up the nave, shouting at the preacher as he went.[205] He was so worked up that he could barely be understood, but the following at least came through clearly enough: 'When will your babbling come to an end?', he demanded. 'Must we all obey you? If I were to follow your advice, I would no longer follow my father'. He rebuffed Strauss's attempts to reason with him and turned to the assembled worshippers, crying: 'Why do you listen to him? He misleads you with his heretical teaching'.[206] Although this attempt on the part of the councillor to reclaim his parish church from a man he viewed as a heretic may have been a particularly vociferous form of protest, it is unlikely that he was alone in his resentment of Strauss and his proposed changes.

7. Modification

The message of the gospel was simple and could easily be understood by the laity; despite this, it had been rejected. For Strauss, this was partly due the machinations of the church, but it was also the fault of the laity themselves, who had failed, through weakness or obstinacy, to accept the gift offered by God. Despite having heard and perhaps read of God's promise of salvation, they still put their faith in the old practices. This obvious and undeniable inadequacy had implications for the ideal of the priesthood of all believers. According to this concept, the laity should have the ability (due to the understanding of Scripture that comes with faith) and right to judge all teaching against God's word. It is clear from the above that

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204 The only available account of the incident is that written by Strauss himself: *Ein ernstliche handlung wider ey freuenlichen widersprecher des lebendi//gen// wort Gottes beschehenn In sant// Jorgen kirchen zu Eyssennach.* (n.p., n.d.).

205 Ibid., Aij r-v.

206 Ibid., Aij v.

they are not capable of doing so. They are vulnerable to both the antichrist and his servants, and their own human nature. They cannot, therefore, be left to their own devices.

Despite his insistence on the priesthood of all believers, Luther was always aware of the need to direct the laity in their interpretation of God's word. This can be seen in his many sermons and printed commentaries on Scripture and the prefaces and marginal notes in his German Bibles. It is also, however, evident in his definition of the office of the pastor. Although described as a 'servant', this individual is required to be 'learned': '"the holy scriptures make no other distinction than to call those learned or ordained individuals who are meant to preach Christ, faith, and Christian freedom to others, by the name of *ministros, servos,* or *oeconomos,* that is, servants, attendants, and stewards. For even though we are all priests alike, we could not all serve or be stewards and preach"'.[207] The layman was to be closely guided by the new evangelical clergy who, although no longer part of a separate estate, would eventually undergo a form of ordination.[208] Although evident in his writings as early as 1520, Luther's conviction that the laity were in need of supervision and control in their use of the Bible is generally thought to have been cemented by the Wittenberg Movement and the Peasants' War.[209] It is generally thought that a stronger emphasis on lay authority survived among radical preachers, who adhered to a more undiluted form of the priesthood of all believers. This is particularly true of the Spiritualist and Anabaptist groups, who, due to the nature of their approach to Scripture and revelation, held to a more egalitarian interpretation of learning and authority.

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207 Susan Karant-Nunn, 'Clerical Anticlericalism in the Early German Reformation: An Oxymoron?', in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe,* (Leiden, 1994), 521-534, 351f. The quotation is from Luther's *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* (1520).

208 At the behest of John Frederick in the 1530s and not, according to Karant-Nunn, due to any desire of Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, or others. Luther's 'laying on of hands' of Georg Rörer in Wittenberg in 1525 was 'an exceptional occasion'. Communities themselves, instead, held ceremonies to invest a new pastor. However, the opposition of Luther and others was 'short-lived'; as well as the need to obey John Frederick, 'they also began to see the advantages that might accrue to the ordained, all of which would enhance pastoral dignity.' Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors,* 59f.

209 Andrew Pettegree, 'The clergy and the Reformation: from "devilish priesthood" to new professional elite,' in idem. (ed.), *The Reformation in the Parishes: The Ministry and the Reformation in Town and Country* (Manchester, 1993), 1-21, 6.

Strauss's pamphlets contain no dedicated, systematic treatment of the acquisition of knowledge, and his views on the matter, and particularly those regarding the relationship between knowledge and faith, are vague and difficult to pin down. The problem presented above, concerning the extent to which each of these may contribute to the other, must remain unresolved. What exactly enabled one to understand Scripture? Was its meaning, in Strauss's eyes, always as obvious as he sometimes claimed? One possible solution may relate to his description of the spiritual life of the Christian as a gradual and constant process of conquering his or her 'old Adam'. For Strauss, therefore, there may have been degrees of knowledge corresponding to degrees of conquest; those who possessed a stronger faith requiring less instruction than others. In this model, true knowledge of God would only come with the complete eradication of one's old Adam, a state only possible at death, while those who had not defeated their old Adam could never know God.[210] All of this, however, is merely a speculative attempt to trace Strauss's thought on this question, and it is quite possible that not only did he neglect to set out such a concept in print, he may never have considered the problem of knowledge in any great depth.

In any case, it is clear that Strauss believed that there were too many problems to really permit the laity to be true authorities on Scripture and truth. Their own understanding of the Bible was not a weapon sufficient to protect them from their attachment to tradition, from the arguments of the clergy, or from those within the congregation more stubborn and wicked than they themselves. Most, through a combination of natural stupidity, ignorance, human weakness, and deliberate obstinacy, made worse by the clerical 'enemies' of the gospel, had failed to accept Christ's message and therefore required constant and intensive instruction. Despite the image of the enlightened layman propagated by Strauss, it would appear that the former could not rely on his own abilities in order to understand Scripture. This instruction is one of the principal objectives of the pamphlets, many of which of course were sermons. In the preamble to the pamphlet on confession, Strauss asks that those who had already been redeemed through the death of Christ be released 'from all imprisonment and error of human

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210 'If the saints, who now see God, and no longer merely know him in faith, were to desire this worship, they would be worse and more wicked than we poor sinners here on earth, to whom the old Adam daily obscures the knowledge of God', *Heiligthüm*, Aiij r.

law and teaching'.[211] Despite their redemption, the people must still be freed from error. Strauss, through his preaching and writing, was to achieve this, using the gospel.[212] He may have described the common man as more virtuous and receptive to the truth than the blind and obstinate clergy, but his view of the laity was paternal and admonitory, and it is clear that a properly-trained pastor was required in order to prevent error.[213] The latter does appear to receive a specific appointment from God. The articles on the Christian assembly open with the verse, 'if you love me, feed my sheep', and the true shepherd who teaches from God's word is given this office by 'divine order'; the pastorate being described as a 'divine institution'.[214]

The laity require illumination, protection, and admonition. This is by no means an unusual position; few, if any, denied the need for a teacher. However, there existed differing approaches regarding how one was chosen to fulfil this office. In the pamphlet on the Christian assembly, it does appear that Strauss advocates a particularly 'communal' arrangement; the assembly itself selecting its pastor. If, however, the assembly is not capable of understanding and following God's word, how can they be fit to choose their teacher? How does one reconcile the need for instruction with the ability to make this assessment? The duties of the pastor require a detailed knowledge of the Bible.[215] The pastor must, for example, inform the common man of the 'invented' nature of the Apocrypha.[216] The necessary discernment and familiarity with Scripture is lacking in the common man; Strauss's assurance that the meaning of all Scripture is obvious is counteracted by his own preaching activities. In one of his pamphlets, he mentions that he has spent a sermon explaining a biblical allegory.[217] Ironically, perhaps, the message of this sermon was that one must

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211 *Beichtbüchlein*, Aij r

212 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, H r.

213 'To that end we wish to pull it out by the roots with bright, shining truth, and drop it into the bottomless hell', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiiij r.

214 *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiiij r; Aiiij v.

215 *Fegfeur*, Cij r.

216 In the pamphlet on purgatory, Strauss argues that it is because the second book of Maccabees (which appears to sanction works done on behalf of the dead) contradicts the rest of Scripture that it can be judged to be false: 'as God the Holy Spirit cannot be contradictory within itself, so this Scripture must also not have come from God the Holy Spirit', *Fegfeur*, Ciij r.

217 *Simonieschen Tauff*, B r-v.

abandon human teaching in order to fully understand the gospel, whereas Strauss's flock have obviously not yet done so: this is a work in progress. He also has to advise them how to read the Bible.[218]

The 'we' described above of course includes Strauss as well as the laity; he will help them to uncover this deceit. Of course, collaboration and leadership are rather different: to what extent is the pastor 'in charge'? Strauss's first task in *Trostliche verstendige leer* is to reject the twisted understanding of Paul promulgated by the 'corrupt teachers and preachers in support of their confession'.[219] Although he includes the laity in this enterprise ('*we* want to drive [this teaching] out thoroughly from *our* ears and hearts'), it is Strauss who will demonstrate the mendacity of the clergy in this matter ('*I* want to show you, dear people').[220] The problem is not so much that the clergy, and particularly the schoolmen, ignore Scripture completely, but that they misuse it. Although Strauss says that the layman can see through the sophistries invented to establish purgatory, he goes through various biblical texts in order to refute its legitimacy.[221] Regarding baptism, he says that, given its importance, it is 'necessary that the Christian people undergo much teaching and admonition in this subject'.[222] This was later to be echoed in his response to Cochlaeus; it is not only the latter, but also the 'poor, weak, imprisoned Christians' who require Strauss's illumination.[223] It would appear that the laity cannot not get there by themselves; the simple people need a preacher and they must be taught how to listen.

Of course there were limits to what the preacher could do. It appears from Strauss's account of the disagreement with some of his Eisenach congregation regarding chrism that he cannot prevent a wicked man from rejecting God's grace: 'I do not presume', he wrote, 'to drag such

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218 The 'words of the Holy Scripture are to be read harmoniously for an undivided purpose, [and] not against one another', *Pfaffen Ee*, Aij r.

219 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aiij v.

220 Ibid., Aiij v. Strauss uses a similar phrase in his account of the excommunication of the Eisenach councillor: 'I now want to instruct you, my dear people, in the power of the divine word and with the help of your faith', *Ernstliche handlung*, A v.

221 *Fegfeur*, Biij r ff.

222 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Aiij v.

223 'Now I will praise God the eternal truth and [bring] the poor, weak, imprisoned Christians to comfort and stability in the word', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiij v.

a stubborn, insolent man to the gospel by the hair, as faith does not come forced, but from the free grace of God in a purified heart'.[224] He did however need to explain this behaviour, so that the simple people are not encouraged in error.[225] This is also evident in his response to the confrontation with the councillor mentioned above. He has expelled 'this godless, wretched man' from the assembly, he explains, because he had 'behaved in an unchristian manner'.[226] Strauss instructed his parishioners to have no *gemeynschafft* (or communion) with the sinner; anyone who disobeyed would receive the same sentence.[227] Strauss's expulsion of the councillor thus fell somewhere between the greater and the lesser ban. He did allow for communication in the form of admonition; nonetheless, it appears that he intended this to occur outside the church, as removal from the 'assembly' (*Versammlung*) would imply a prohibition on joining the congregation at prayer.[228] In 1524, Strauss convinced Duke John of Saxony to establish an ecclesiastical visitation in his Thuringian territories with Strauss himself in charge; an undertaking in which he saw himself as ensuring that the religious instruction of the laity conformed to a specific standard.[229] Although the real problem here may have been the difficultly of removing the existing clergy, this enterprise was completely

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224 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aij r.

225 This public denunciation from the pulpit was also of course designed to shame the father of the child in question.

226 We are not told exactly how the incident itself ended, and it is not clear whether the excommunication was announced at the time, or whether Strauss decided on this afterwards. Given Strauss's behaviour in other matters, the former is not altogether unlikely; although it is possible that the man was simply removed from the church building, and that this later became an official excommunication. This was a measure which, when taken by the Catholic church, Strauss described as tyrannical. It was the first such action taken by an evangelical preacher, and would have been seen as an extreme reaction by those who agreed with Luther's policy of gradually persuading the reluctant. On this, see Chapter III, below.

227 *Ernstliche Handlung*, Aiij r-v.

228 'Whoever hopes that he might accomplish something good with a good, Christian admonition to this evildoer, let him not spare himself, for God's sake.' *Ernstliche Handlung*, Aiij v.

229 The visitation was cut short by the outbreak of the Peasants' War the following spring. In a letter written shortly before he set out on this task, he informed John that he was confident of success, despite his expectation of much opposition from some 'tyrannical' individuals: '[Ich] bin vngezweifelt, es soll auß der gnad gotis nit vnfruchtbar sein. wie woll es villeicht ettlichen des Adels vnd E.f.g. Amptleutten möchte nit gefallen, als sie dan in Jrem tyrannischen fürnemen vber die armen vnterthanen, auch vnchristlichs vnd ergerlichs wandels haben, wie sie dan vnverschampt leben, sie die göttliche warheit vnd straff Jn keinem wege erleiden mögen, wie ischs dan an zween enden gefunden hab', ThHstA Weimar, EGA Reg. Ii 133, fo. 1r. On this visitation, see Rogge, *Jakob Strauss*, 86-90; Barge, *Jakob Strauß*, 93-99; and Rudolf Hermann, 'Die Kirchenvisitationen im Ernestischen Thüringen vor 1528', *Beiträge zur Thüringische Kirchengeschichte* 1 (1929-1931), 169-179.

at odds with the independent and self-determining assembly envisaged in his pamphlet of the previous year. It is clear that the local congregations could not be trusted to appoint their own pastors.

Further need for discipline and control was to arise: the difficulties faced by the new reformers involved the defence of the new teaching not only against reluctant traditionalists, but against new divisions and sects, as shown by Strauss's later condemnation of Anabaptists and Zwinglians. Someone was required in order to determine correct teaching and to suppress dangerous error. In fact, Strauss attempted to introduce disciplinary structures later adopted by the other, more 'mainstream' reformers at a relatively early stage. Although excommunication was to become a feature of Anabaptist congregations, and the Schmalkaldic Articles of 1537 confirmed the use of the minor ban in the developing Lutheran church, the overall impression is of a particularly severe and prescriptive approach to ecclesiology.[230] Far from being 'radical' in the sense of placing the control of doctrine and the structure of the church in the hands of the common man, Strauss could be said to have been even more hierarchical and authoritarian, and further from the ideal of the priesthood of all believers than was Luther. After his death, Strauss was accused of behaving like a pope: Johann Herolt's *Chronicle of Schwäbisch-Hall* mentions the apostle Müntzer, the suffragan bishop Georg Witzel, and the pope Strauss; while Justus Jonas wrote that Witzel had learned of his new apostolic office from his pope, Strauss.[231]

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230 On Luther's reluctance to impose even this lesser form of excommunication, see James M. Estes, 'Johannes Brenz and the Problem of Ecclesiastical Discipline', *Church History* 41.4 (December, 1972), 464-479. Brenz was much more enthusiastic about the use of the ban. Strauss's 'excommunication was not quite the first to be imposed in evangelical circles. In a pamphlet printed in 1523, Martin Reinhart announced that during the summer of 1522 he, with his 'brothers', had put the entire Dominican community of Jena under the ban, Sigrid Looß, 'Karlstadt und der Bann. Stationen in Thüringen, Zürich und Altstätten zwischen 1522 und 1532', *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 56 (1999), 7-17, 11. However, Strauss's action was almost certainly the first 'official' excommunication of an individual.

231 On Herolt, see Barge, *Jakob Strauß*, 111. Jonas makes repeated references to Strauss's 'papacy', Justus Jonas, *Wilch die rech=//te Kirche / Vnd da=/gegen wilch die falsche Kirch// ist / Christlich antwort vnd// tröstliche vnterricht / //Widder das Pha=//risaisch ge=//wesch// Georgij Witzels* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau: 1534), O r; Oiij r; O iiij r.

There is no indication in Strauss's pamphlets that the pastor does not need training or that he should be found among the uneducated laity. Strauss's confidence in the layman would appear to be conditional on the latter being guided by a pastor. The pastor is needed to protect the flock from error; some people require assistance to see the truth as offered to them by God. The idea that the truth of Scripture was obvious to all who read it in faith would have been useful in order to reinforce one's own teaching and perhaps also to encourage the laity when in conflict with their priest or their own conscience. In practice, however, a proper understanding could only come from instruction provided by a more knowledgeable teacher. In any analysis of the need for a pastor, one must remember that the majority of the laity could not read. Although Strauss insisted that the pastor of a congregation should be regarded as a 'servant' rather than a 'lord', he was to be a servant of Christ, and not of the laity; he is demoted in a material but not in an intellectual sense. For Strauss, no more than for Luther, the priesthood of all believers did not mean that the laity were to view themselves as priests, or to be of equal intellectual standing with their pastor. The degree to which Strauss believed that a congregation was truly capable of choosing an appropriate teacher must therefore called into question. Many of the early preachers, including Strauss, were themselves graduates. Strauss wrote nothing specifically regarding the training of pastors and it is impossible to say for certain whether he believed that they required any education beyond a thorough knowledge of the Bible. Did Strauss view higher learning as having any purpose in his concept of the church?

Strauss was not alone in his comprehensive condemnation of the universities. The 'left-wing' of the Reformation is usually associated with a disdain for academic honours. Karlstadt not only rejected the idea of the university, as mentioned above, he also retreated to Orlamünde, dressed like a peasant, abandoned his status as a doctor of theology, and called himself 'Brother Andreas'.[232] As shown above, one can see in Strauss's writings not just a condemnation of specific doctrines, but of theological learning in general and the entire

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232 Another example of this was 'mad Friedrich' of Schleswig, who expressed his solidarity with the simple "layman" by wearing a habit of coarse blue cloth. He was unpopular with both local authorities and other evangelical preachers, with the latter 'because he followed the example of St. Paul in living on voluntary donations and part-time manual work'. Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman*, 100.

institution of the university. Was this sincere? In order to ascertain whether Strauss's anti-intellectualism was merely an anticlerical device used to undermine the teachings of his opponents, or whether it was more profound, it may be useful to examine more closely his treatment of higher learning in his 1526 response to Johannes Cochlaeus.

Strauss mocks Cochlaeus' learning and his reliance on human laws and 'superfluous words', and calls him 'Doctor Snail'. In a jibe at the grandeur assumed by the schoolmen, he addresses him as 'dear Sir Doctor and brother in Christ'.[233] Cochlaeus is advised to 'keep no longer with [his] doctorate and priesthood'.[234] This title is worthless; it confers only a false dignity, and (like holy orders) separates Cochlaeus from his brothers. He is accused of an utter ignorance of Scripture ('you have yet acquired very little, or no fundamental understanding and knowledge of God and his word') and of deliberately ignoring the truth ('I find you in the darkness, and with eyes closed against the true light that enlightens everyone who should be saved').[235] Cochlaeus' entanglement in human laws and reasoning is due primarily to this foolishness: 'As who is so simple anyhow, who knows God in truth, and yet struggles and fights with human laws, old usage, [his] own reason and teaching alone?'[236] His defence of the 'old faith' is made 'entirely childishly', and his doctorate is itself 'childish'[237]. He does 'not know God at all according to his holy word', and instead relies on the 'inventions and lies of men', which are all that remain when one abandons Scripture.[238] Cochlaeus' version of the faith is, in fact, 'foolishness.'[239] His blindness appears to be deliberate, rather than congenital, Strauss berating him for his 'closed eyes'.[240] His publication is described as 'ignorant'; his 'unformed writing' are mocked.[241] His standard of truth is not

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233 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiiij v.

234 Ibid., Biiij r.

235 Ibid., B r.

236 Ibid.

237 Ibid., B r; Ciij r.

238 Ibid., Bij r. 'And as you bewail the withering of the fruit of the old faith by our preaching, so you throw down God's grace, mercy and omnipotence altogether, and turn away, my Dr Wendelstein, from the eternal godly truth and God's word, to inventions and lies of men; as all men lie without God's word, where then does that leave you (my brother) with your human teaching and laws?'

239 Ibid.

240 Ibid., Bij v.

241 Ibid., C r; ibid., Ciij r.

that of the Bible, but that of 'human invention' and his 'old false custom and belief'.[242] All of this accords with the general condemnation and mockery of such scholarship found in Strauss's earlier pamphlets.

This continued wholesale disdain for the universities also shows that the defence of 'doctorality' in the Cochlaeus pamphlet is not the result of a development in Strauss's views on learning; he had not become progressively conservative, or been frightened back into the arms of the university by the violent eruption of the common man and his Bible during the Peasants' War. Furthermore, in Strauss's final two pamphlets, forays into the controversy over the real presence in the Eucharist, we find his most extensive condemnation of human learning, 'subtlety', and reason. Although still calling himself 'doctor' in the first of these, Strauss uses this same title, and that of 'master', to mock Oecolampadius and Zwingli.[243] The emphasis is on the simplicity of Scripture, and the training found in the universities is both useless and pernicious. These works also contain his most emphatic confirmation of the ability of the 'simple man' to perceive the biblical truth.[244] Although, as mentioned above, Strauss criticised the stupidity of the laity in these pamphlets, they are also presented as being well able to see through the deceptions of Oecolampadius and Zwingli.

However, there appears to be another side to Strauss's denunciation of the learning and knowledge of the universities. Strauss scolds his target for lacking 'the least doctoral spark' in his writing. Were it not for Cochlaeus' title, Strauss writes, he would have thought that 'such

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242 'How then do you want to throw the same immovable, eternal word thus underfoot with your Pope and church, [with] your childish doctorate, so that must all be heretical and damned, which would not be accepted according to human invention and your false, old custom and belief?', ibid., Ciij r.

243 *Wider den unmilten Irrthum Maister Vlrichs zwinglins/ So er verneünet/ die warhafftig gegenwirtigkait dess allerhailligsten leybs und blüts Christi im Sacrament.* [Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger 1526], Bij r-v; Biiij r (where he calls Zwingli the highest master of this new art'); Cij v; Dij r ('is that not a masterful argument?'); *Das der war leyb Christi vnd seyn heiliges blüt / im Sacrament gegenwertig sei, richtige erklerung auff das new büchleyn.* [Erfurt: Johannes Loersfeld] 1524, Fiij v ('I must here make use of your art, dear Doctor, and ask you, from what origin, nature [etc] comes the holy body of Christ'). Strauss addresses Oecolampadius as the 'dear Doctor' throughout this pamphlet, always in a saracastic manner.

244 *Irrthumb ... Zwinglins:* B r; Ciij v; Ciij r; Dij v; *War leyb Christi:* Eij r; Giiij v; Hiij v; Kiiij r-v.

dishonourable and shameless insults had been emitted by drunken bath maids'.[245] He warns him of the divine punishment that must follow this loss of 'all doctorly, [and] Christian courtesy and modesty.'[246] Cochlaeus' work is 'disorderly and undoctoral'.[247] Were he to examine the latter properly, he would recognise himself to be 'such a strange doctor and Christian'. Here, for Strauss, theological training appears to be of some value. Strauss begs Cochlaeus not to abuse Scripture by twisting it in support of his teachings: 'do not underpin,' he says, 'your dense, dark foolishness [...] with the clear light of God and peaceful, holy gospel'. A true doctor would not misuse Scripture for his own ends in this way and, in abstaining from such behaviour, Cochlaeus would prove himself to be 'doctoral and Christian'.[248] Cochlaeus' reading of Luther is unscholarly: 'you lack much, dear Doctor Wendelstein, of doctoral reading in Martin's books'. The correct scholarly method, which Cochlaeus has neglected, is to 'always read one well against the other, so [that] one can speak properly of them'.[249] This training is not something to be despised.

On the other hand, Strauss's specific defence of learning is present only in the 1526 pamphlet, and it is possible that this approach was no more than a sarcastic rhetorical device inspired by Cochlaeus' own choice of words. Strauss accuses Cochlaeus of having judged everything that differs from the 'old faith' of being be 'Lutherish', and 'not only bad and undoctorly, but also entirely unchristian'.[250] Against this interpretation, however, there is some evidence that Strauss was sincere in his positive evaluation of 'doctorality'. Luther and his followers are praised in the confession pamphlet as 'the godly, highly-learned evangelists'.[251] Although Strauss mocked Cochlaeus' use of the title of 'Doctor' to claim some sort of nobility, he himself retained it and it features prominently in almost all of his pamphlets. Some of these

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245 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Hiiij r.

246 Ibid.

247 Ibid., Bij r.

248 'I would like to ask you sincerely, that you show yourself in the truth doctoral and Christian, and do not underpin your dense, dark foolishness [...] with the clear light of God and peaceful, holy gospel', Ibid., Cij v.

249 Ibid.,

250 Ibid., C v

251 *Beichtbüchlein*, A v: 'But as through the godly, highly-learned evangelists, so very many teachings and instructions of confession written in recent years are available everywhere, it would perhaps not be necessary [for me] to produce something further'.

are signed 'D.J.S.', reminiscent of Luther's well-known 'D.M.L.', presumably in an attempt to project intellectual authority.[252] Strauss's instruction to Cochlaeus, his 'dear doctor', to examine his own work and see discover himself 'in the light of christian meekness and modesty to be such a strange doctor and Christian' follows upon his statement that Cochlaeus has condemned all of the new teaching as 'Lutherish' and could simply be a mocking response.[253] However, it is more likely that Strauss does hold the qualities of 'meekness and modesty' to be as an integral to 'doctorality' as they are to Christianity, and that it is the vanity associated with higher learning that is to be rejected.[254] Strauss concluded his criticism of Cochlaeus by associating the latter's loss of 'doctorly, also Christian courtesy and modesty' with divine punishment.[255] True learning has always been useful, and indeed essential for those whose job it is to guide the laity; when this is abandoned or neglected in

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252 Strauss did abandon this title in his final work, possibly stung by accusations made in a pamphlet attacking his criticism of Zwingli regarding the Eucharist, that he saw himself as superior to 'Master Zwingli' due to his higher academic title. Johann Schnewyl, *Wider die vnmilte verdammung.// Nach art vnd aygenschafft/ aller gleychßner/ on gebot// vnd ordnung Christi// erdicht auß aygnem kopff/ dem ain// ualtige[n] verschliessen väterlichs reych/ wider alle bil//igkayt/ Jacob Straussen/ allen denen die auß// warer erkantnuß Christlichs glaubens/ nit// glauben den warhafften layb Christi/ // vnsichtbarlich sein blüt vn[d] flaisch/ // gegenwirtig vnder dem brot// vnd wein des herrn genent// sacrament zü trost de[n]// gefangnen irri=//ge[n] selen ant=//wort* [Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner, 1526]. Schnewyl accuses Strauss of being both a rabbi, and a blind leader, and accuses him of writing in a manner typical of one 'der hoch fliegend adler daher mit hohem bracht sich selbs erheben, mit übermütiger stoltzer berümu[n]g nach phariseischer art, der warhaftig mittegisch teüffel verwandelt in die gestalt des liechts ', C r. Later, the author mocks Strauss's 'scholastic' use of argument, 'bistu nit auch ain schener Rhetoricus', Cij r. However, this pamphlet particularly addresses Strauss's his title of doctor, which, it is claimed, he believes will make him invincible: 'Sagst von hohen tittel, wer braucht mer bachantischer tittel dann die minchinish art, als wir noch teglich hören solch schmaychler, preclarus uir vnd vestra prestantia, was ist das für ain schützerey, warumb setzest du ain dock, auff dein büchli, vnd wie man spricht, solt ain doctor nit mer wissen dann ain mayster, das dein büchli dester ain grössern glauben hab', B v – Bij r. Schnewyl is generally thought to be a pseudonym of Haug Marschalck, but Russell disputes this interpretation, claiming that one work attributed to Schnewyl displays an understanding of theology greater than that possessed by Marschack, Paul Russell, *Lay theology in the Reformation : popular pamphleteers in southwest Germany, 1521-1525* (Cambridge, 1986), 248 n. 39. On this, see below.

253 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, C v. Again: 'you should yourself with modesty as a doctor lament such abuse', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Cij r. This 'modesty' is necessary in the face of God; this abuse is 'is a clear alteration and insult [to] Christ God our saviour, to assign to a mortal, weak man, that which belongs to Christ alone'. Christ has demonstrated this modesty in deference to God, Strauss quoting John 7:16, 'So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me"'.

254 Reacting to a Franciscan who claimed that a pious layman was better than a 'proud preacher', Jean Gerson declared that such ideas 'will lead to pride and rebellion on the part of the laity', D. Catherine Brown, *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge, 1987), 39: Gerson's ecclesiology was that of a hierarchical and clerical church. (*De orationibus privatis fidelium*).

255 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Hiiij r.

order to justify greed, wickedness, or outright heresy, those who display such pretention leave themselves open to ridicule and condemnation. Strauss's defence of learning in the Cochlaeus pamphlet did not reflect a chronological development, that of being frightened by radicalism into a retreat from an earlier position of anti-intellectualism. On the contrary, it was a device for a particular purpose: Cochlaeus claims to be learned, Strauss will show that he is more so; Oecolampadius and Zwingli claim to be evangelists, Strauss will show that they rely on sophistry. Although Strauss may always have recognised the value of mocking the scholarship of the universities, he never believed that such knowledge should to be abandoned completely. The problem was not higher learning in itself, but its misuse by such as Cochlaeus, who, with academic dishonesty and inadequacy, relied on sophistry in an attempt to conceal, rather than using rigorous scholarly methods to reveal the truth.

Was Strauss therefore proposing a new type of doctor; a reform of the universities based on knowledge of God's word rather than sophistry? In his assessment of Cochlaeus' ignorance and blindness, Strauss appears to suggest that a knowledge of God is a prerequisite for a true doctor.[256] Erasmus criticised not the theologians but of their corrupt followers.[257] For Strauss, not every source beyond the Bible was pernicious or indeed useless; not all teachers were entirely wrong. Like Luther[258] and most of his fellow reformers, Strauss distinguished between the teachers of the early church and those of recent centuries. Augustine is described

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256 'as you entirely undoctorally accuse your God, you show first most clearly of all, that you do not know God in the least', ibid., Ciij v. Geoffrey Dipple has argued that Johannes Eberlin von Günzberg scolded the clergy for the scant attention paid to learning itself, rather than its trappings, and that this, being at the centre of his criticism, shows his Erasmian sensibilities. In fact, Eberlin believed 'that the true essence of Christianity may only be retrieved through the study of the Bible and the Fathers', *Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Gunzburg and the Campaign against the Friars* (Aldershot, 1996), 52f.

257 Geoffrey L. Dipple, 'Humanists, Reformers, and Anabaptists on Scholasticism and the Deterioration of the Church', Mennonite Quarterly Review 68 (October 1994), 461-482, 464.

258 On the use of the authorities of the early Church by the Lutherans, see Scott H. Hendrix, *Tradition and Authority in the Reformation* (Aldershot, 1996), especially the following essays: 'Validating the Reformation: the use of the church fathers by Urbanus Rhegius', 281-305, and 'Deparentifying the fathers: the reformers and patristic authority', 55-68, In the latter, Hendrix asks, 'Were the reformers guilty of opportunism ... when they invoked the fathers only in support of their arguments or to demonstrate that the fathers disagreed among themselves?', and contends that, on the contrary, their position with regard to the latter was 'intentionally balanced', ibid., 57.

as one 'against whom without doubt no other teacher may be placed in opposition'.[259] The schoolmen wickedly 'apply' Augustine to the problem of the poor man who lends money for profit. Strauss, however, hints that this is a misuse of the latter, insisting that he never intended 'that his word should be regarded by the misled school-learned as higher than God's word'.[260] Augustine may not have been infallible, but neither was he wicked. Even Strauss's opinion of Jerome appears to vary: in the pamphlet on purgatory, he identifies the latter as someone who cautioned against placing faith in human teaching.[261] Strauss may have been seeking a return to the earlier, less corrupt and self-important teachers of the early Church. Although a general condemnation of the universities is prominent in Strauss's earlier works, his use of his own theological training would suggest he believed that the knowledge found in such institutions did have a purpose.

Strauss never used scholastic theology to support his own arguments with any degree of sincerity. However, someone with a familiarity with canon law is required to dismantle the complicated scholastic teachings, such as the *quæstiones* regarding baptism which result in false comfort and false fear.[262] As mentioned above, Strauss makes much of the idea that the scholastics are unfamiliar with their own teachings and authorities. In fact, it this very learning of which they are so proud that will be their intellectual downfall ('I am of no doubt that the same wise, intelligent [men] will knot themselves up in their own snare'). Strauss, thanks to his theological training, can assist them in this.[263] He, having knowledge of the sources used by the 'schoolman', is best placed to oppose their arguments on their own terms. In his pamphlet on the 'simonean baptism', he spends some time rebutting the

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259 *Fegfeur*, Ciiij r.

260 *Wucher zu nemen*, Biij v – [B4 r].

261 'the writing of other doctors will be found to be mere human teaching, so we reject it as Jerome says', *Fegfeur*, Ciiij r.

262 'It will be necessary to oppose the dangerous, unnecessary questions of the school-learned with much explanation and sub-divided teaching, in which they set forth much worry and care in the outward sacrament, and assign salvation or damnation to the baptized or unbaptized without proper understanding of Scripture, and give comfort where there is none, also terrify the people where there is no fear', *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, B r. It is at this point that Strauss refers to 'form and matter (as the school-learned speak of it)'.

263 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiiij v.

'magicians' with their own decretal, in which such simony is condemned.[264] Because the Bible shows from the examples of Gehazi and Simon that trade in the sacraments leads to damnation, even the 'Councils and popish laws' must, like Balaam's ass, 'speak the truth'.[265] Regarding good works, he informs Cochlaeus that even his own scholars say that such presumption is blasphemous.[266] The authority bestowed by his title allows him to demonstrate disagreement, and therefore error among the scholastics, by asserting that Scotus 'rebels against Thomas' in denying the 'actuality of grace'. Strauss does not go into any detail, however, simply declaring that this is 'well known'.[267] He makes reference to the *Tripartita Historia* in his arguments in the *Beichtbüchlein;* a knowledge of church history unavailable to the common man has allowed him to dispute the tradition of confession to a priest.[268] After denouncing excommunication and its refusal of the sacrament regarding the tithe, he gives titles of laws in Latin, and later goes into some detail on the scholastics' use of Aristotle.[269] The cardinals, he insists, will not find support for usury even in 'their written law'.[270] Strauss is capable of standing nose to nose with 'such clever, highly-learned people as Doctor Eck and his like', whereas the common man may not have the required knowledge.[271]

Pride in one's own cleverness and a reliance on reason make one not only wicked, but also foolish; such thinking leads not only to a rejection of God as one's only recourse, but also to lust, self-indulgence, and error.[272] For Strauss, however, there appears to be a distinction 'reason' and 'learning'. Learning, when assisted and inspired by faith and derived from Scripture, has an important role to play in achieving the pastoral objectives of the preacher. Why did Strauss not simply tell the laity to ignore all arguments based on the teachings of the

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264 *Simonieschen Tauff,* Cij r

265 Ibid., Cij v- Ciij r.

266 'Remember that your scholars also say, that God will be blasphemed, if one helps with a created thing, partly or entirely, that which is God's own property and is kept for him alone', *Antwurt ... Coclei,* B v

267 *Beichtbüchlein,* Cij r.

268 Ibid., D v.

269 'as one reads in their most holy laws, *De deci.c.discrecione li. 6.* and in *Cle. de. Pe. cle. Cupientes*', Ibid., B r. Ibid., C v – Cij r.

270 *Wucher zu nemen,* Diiij r.

271 Ibid., Eiij r.

272 *Auffrur,* B r.

'sophists'; why bother, for example, to dismantle the Aristotelian argument on confession or to list the titles of various decretals?[273] The discussions of scholastic theology in the *Beichtbüchlein* are directed at the laity who have been told to confess.[274] Such expositions are always brief and superficial in Strauss's works and may have been intended to provide short, accessible rebuttals to be internalized and repeated by his unlearned audience. Their more likely purpose, however, would have been simply to reassure the laity. By making reference, however casual, to these learned matters, Strauss could reinforce his own authority and convince the laity that both he and they knew as much as, if not more than, those who defended the traditional teachings. Moreover, the litany of Latin titles would in itself have had the effect of illustrating the 'babbling' nature of the language of the schoolmen.[275] The Bible, as read or heard by the laity, was not on its own sufficient to counter the bewildering learning of the theologians. Ridiculing these doctrines by revealing their inconsistencies may give confidence to the laity, but this could only be achieved by someone with knowledge of their sources.

8. Analysis and Contradictions.

There exist two apparently opposing views of the laity and of learning in Strauss's sermons and pamphlets. The first is a rejection of non-scriptural authorities and an elevation of the laity through flattery, for a specific purpose. They are told that they have been exploited and harmed by the soul-murdering clergy, instilling a sense of resentment and abhorrence regarding the old traditions. Now, however, they have been enlightened by the gospel and, being more receptive than the wilfully blind clergy, are therefore capable and independent. Assured by this, they will have sufficient confidence to oppose their priests and engage in internal and external reform. Throughout Strauss's career, he assured the laity that they had

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273 *Beichtbüchlein*, C v – Cij r.

274 Ibid., Eij v – Eiij r.

275 See, for example, the 'sophist' who reels off a reference to canon law, in Johannes Jäger's 'Theologists in Council': 'Although I have anger in my heart I can still say Mass every day, for it is hatred for a cause not a person, as the Holy Doctor says, Book II, chapter 2, article 1e, paragraph 3, fig. I in his solution to the first arguemnt, at the end of line 4.', translated by Erika Rummel, *Scheming Papists and Lutheran Fools: Five Reformation Satires* (New York, 1993), 58. Strauss does not expect his audience to check the volumes of canon law; he is not writing for his fellow theologians.

an essential role to play in combating false teachings. Uncorrupted by higher learning, they were particularly suited to the task of interpreting and teaching God's word. The pamphlets and sermons were intended to rouse a desire for change and also to serve as consultative tools for the active layperson resisting his or her parish priest and reforming his or her fellow parishioners. A reliance on human reason and scholastic learning was a useful accusation to level against an opponent and also had the advantage of encouraging the laity who did not possess such knowledge.

The second identifiable strain involves a much more sceptical image of a foolish and weak laity, unwilling to change and in need of instruction, admonition, and direction from a learned pastor. Strauss was one of the most vehemently anticlerical preachers of the early Reformation. Nonetheless, despite his apparent elevation of the laity, his actions do not reflect those of a man prepared to allow his congregation to take the lead in matters of religion. Although he repeatedly insists in these writings that Scripture has a single, evident meaning, he often laments that many cannot or refuse to see this. The laity are not as pious or perceptive as they are sometimes depicted, and in fact do not seem to be all that different from the clergy in their obstinacy and need for correction. Does the presence of two seemingly contradictory representations of the common man mean that one of these was no more than insincere flattery on Strauss's part?

Strauss's portrayal of the clergy and their doctrines as soul-murdering and exploitative was almost certainly sincere. However, he was also constructing a version of the laity that would appeal to their self-image, and one must therefore allow for an element of exaggeration in this. The more negative descriptions can be attributed to Strauss's response to the reality of the laity rather than this ideal; those who refused to accept the new teaching as well as those who went too far. Just as the blindness prior to the visitation was due to the failings of humanity as a whole, rather than simply to those of the clergy, the essential weaknesses of the laity have not simply disappeared. Furthermore, one should not expect to find absolute consistency in sermons and tracts put together in a range of situations and for different purposes. Again, one must be wary of over-analysis and the search for a synthesis that never

existed; Strauss did not compose these works as a coherent corpus and neither were they received as such by their original audience, especially those heard in the form of a sermon. It is possible that this dichotomy may underline the circumstantial nature of these writings, rather than their having stemmed purely from insincerity and opportunism on the part of their author.

However, the limitations of Strauss's priesthood of believers were not the product of a gradual disenchantment with the laity as they failed to live up to his expectations; a stubborn and troublesome reality replacing his original view of a receptive if previously misled ideal. Rather, the former is present alongside the latter even in his earliest pamphlets. On one level, this could indicate varying degrees of conversion among the laity. The distinction between the enlightened and the still blind and stubborn laity may refer to two types of parishioner. The criticism of those who refuse to forego the use of chrism and oil in baptism is immediately followed by the statement that 'we' want to tell 'them' what is done in 'our assembly' (that is, a Christian baptism based on God's word rather than on additions); presumably setting those in Eisenach who have accepted the new teaching apart from their fellow townspeople who were less enthusiastic as well as the clergy in Saltzungen. This may have been a deliberate combination of flattery and ridicule, through which the (faithful) laity were meant to view themselves against those who adhere to the old traditions, and perhaps to convert their brothers and neighbours. It may have been with the existence of such a hierarchy (based perhaps on one's social standing and level of education as well as on the strength of one's faith) within the one congregation in mind that Strauss insisted on the right of the assembly to assess and select its pastor. However, the reception of the new teaching was not a straightforward question of some obeying Strauss in everything and others opposing his recommendations completely; some must have been selective, deliberately or otherwise, in their adoption or rejection of particular elements. Strauss was addressing multiple versions of the laity: those who were under pressure in a hostile environment, whether from clergy, government, or family; those who were to encourage others to reform; and the willing individual in the congregation, who needed encouragement to fully abandon his or her old beliefs and practices.

The layman Strauss is praising in these pamphlets is an ideal that almost certainly did not exist. He knew perfectly well that the learned peasant was a myth. His consistent recognition of the 'reality', however, does not mean that he did not believe in the possibility of its realization. The laity are presented as amenable to reform and Strauss's efforts to convert them would in themselves confirm that he thought this to be the case. His frequent scoldings originated in ambition rather than despair, and do not indicate that he was wholly disillusioned regarding the ability of the laity to understand and accept the gospel. The object of the contrast drawn between the simple, virtuous laity, and the misleading clergy, blinded by superfluous learning, was not merely to endow the former with a sense of superiority for propagandistic purposes; rather, the ideal Christian was to serve as an example or mirror[276] to the imperfect. The effectiveness of this strategy is in its contrast. Although one could look upon this model and see oneself, the intent was that one should acknowledge one's shortcomings and strive to emulate such perfection. In reprimanding the laity in general, Strauss was shaming them into improvement, as well as addressing the more 'sensible' laity in an attempt to have them reform their foolish neighbours.

Strauss was sincere in his views regarding both the nefarious nature of the clergy and the weakness, obstinacy, and stupidity of their victims. Neither the learned and diligent pastor nor the new 'doctor' were merely temporary necessities. The devil and the 'old Adam' would always be present; the former manifest in the clergy and the 'sophists', but also in the new 'false prophets', and the latter active within all Christians until death. Their combined and constantly renewed efforts to derail the acceptance of God's word were to be met with the counter-arguments of the truly learned as well as the admonition of the laity by the pastor. Few if any of the early, educated reformers, no matter how 'radical' their view of the priesthood of all believers, abandoned their theological training in practice. Even Karlstadt, although he rejected the 'university', 'did not rebuke learning as such, nor did he argue for its diminished usefulness. He merely objected to the pursuit of knowledge for selfish reasons

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276 As Strauss proposes that one use the gospel itself: 'Accordingly, Christian people must everywhere look in the gospel as in a mirror, so each will find who he is.' *Euangelium Luce*, Aij v.

rather than the glory of God'.[277] Such ideas may have been worthless to the true Christian, who should rely on Scripture alone, but their centrality to the arguments of the *Schriftgelehrten* meant that the pastor must be educated in these matters in order to protect his congregation.

The flattery and sympathy contained in Strauss's presentation of the laity's potential to direct their own spiritual lives would have had broad appeal. Furthermore, the fervent and pervasive anticlericalism in these sermons and pamphlets may have made it possible for the laity to ignore much of the criticism directed at them and choose instead to embrace the message that, despite their own faults and weaknesses, the clergy (led by the devil and the antichrist) were principally to blame of the current state of affairs. However, even if taken to heart, Strauss's frequent admonition of the common man may not necessarily have been objectionable. Although they may have been receptive to the portrayal of themselves as victim and of the clergy as the enemy, there is no evidence that the laity rejected all guidance. The traditional deference expected by priests and monks did not mean that alternative religious leaders were not required. The frequent requests for a pastor made by the laity, and the defence of their right to have a proper preacher, would appear to confirm this. These campaigns were more the norm than the auto-dictat or the lay preacher; on the whole, the laity recognised that they needed instruction, and the image of the knowledgeable peasant, capable of defeating the clergy in argument, was mostly an invention of the pamphleteers. Even if the common man expected to play a part in the process of reformation, he still required direction, and the criticism of the clergy as unlearned and unable to fulfil their duties did not necessarily mean that they should be replaced by the laity. Regarding higher learning, the lay author Haug Marschalck showed similar discernment to that of Strauss on this subject; distinguishing between the false teachers, who are to be despised and mocked, and the true teachers, who are to be respected. In a 1523 pamphlet, he praised Luther as a doctor and extolled his scholarship, while at the same time denigrating the universities,

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277 Bill McNeil, 'Andreas von Karlstadt as a humanist theologian', in Werner O. Packull and Geoffrey Dipple (eds.), *Radical Reformation Studies. Essays Presented to James M. Stayer* (Aldershot, 1999), 106-119, 118.

whose scholars were concerned only with the 'red cap'.[278] The laity, eager to improve their faith and therefore their chances of salvation, may have welcomed advice and even criticism, especially when leavened with the promise of liberation and a degree of flattery.

Strauss, who was happy to make full use of the image of the new layman empowered by his understanding of Scripture, acknowledged the limitations of this figure in practice. He was conducting a balancing act. This involved coping with an incomplete reformation while still projecting the ideal, and employing flattery, encouragement, caution, instruction, and admonition all at once. Mocking the learning of others was too useful a tactic to be abandoned fully. Strauss's response to Zwingli and Oecolampadius demonstrates not a rejection of learning, but a willingness to employ propagandistic techniques as needed. The intellectually and ecclesiastically egalitarian elements in his writings sit alongside his authoritarian approach to discipline and the control of knowledge. The conclusion that there was a degree of insincere and deliberate flattery in Strauss's presentation of the laity is unavoidable regarding the former position.

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278 Haug Marschalk, *Von dem weytersch=//allen Namen Luth=//er/ Waß er bedeüt// vnd wie er wirt// mißbraucht.// Er heist nit der tru[e]ber.// vil mer derlauterer.// Er heist auch nit der lotter// vil mer der bewarer.* (Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger, 1523). In an acrostic constructed using Luther's name, the letter 'r' is used to indicate 'rabbi'; this is given a positive sense: 'Rabi dz er ist meister worden aller schriff schender', Aiij v. When compared to Schnewyl's use of the same title to insult Strauss (see above) this may indeed indicate that Schnewyl and Marschalk were two separate people. On the other hand, as is clear from Strauss's own use of the word 'doctor', there is no reason that either he or Marschalk should have been consistent in their use of vocabulary. On the circumstances that provoked Marschalk's defence of Luther, see Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform*, 114f.

Chapter III

Driving the Poor Sheep to Market:

The Exploitation of the Common Man.

1 The Eisenach usury conflict.

Sometime after Easter Sunday 1524, a delegation from the ducal court at Weimar was sent to Eisenach in an attempt to resolve a dispute that had been rumbling in the town since the previous summer.[1] At its heart were the recent difficulties experienced by the ecclesiastical institutions in securing various payments owed to them. Some of this revenue was in the form of *Erbzins* or perpetual ground rent[2], but many also relied on interest payable on loans taken out under the system of *Wiederkauf*.[3] These latter agreements were not set for a fixed term; rather, the debt was inherited by the descendents of the original debtor until the principal was repaid.[4] The debtor 'sold' an income (that is, the interest) in return for a specific amount (the loan), using his or her property as security.[5] Most of the surviving contracts contained in the Weimar archive are those for loans granted by the canons of the Augustinian chapter attached to the *Frauenkirche*. Typical of these is a document dated 17th September 1516, according to which Hans Funke of Eisenach and Margarethe, his wife, made a *wiederkäuflich* 'sale' of one florin annual *Zins* to Johannes Schlotzhauer, *Domherr* (canon), for twelve florins or *Gulden* on their house in the Löbergasse and one and a half acres of land on the Petersberg, east of the town. The *Erbzins* on the property was owned by the convent of St Nicholas, and the Funkes therefore required the permission of the abbess in order to enter

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1 A more comprehensive account of this dispute can be found in Hermann Barge, *Jakob Strauß : Ein Kämpfer für das Evangelium in Tirol, Thüringen und Süddeutschland* (Leipzig, 1937), 80-92; also Reinhold Jauernig, 'D. Jakob Strauß, Eisenachs erster evangelischer Geistlicher, und der Zinswucherstreit in Eisenach', *Mitteilungen des Eisenacher Geschichtsvereins*, 4 (1928), 30-48. The instruction given to this commission is to be found in ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fos. 5-16.

2 This was usually a nominal amount, paid in specie or in kind on property on ecclesiastical, noble, or municipal land. The *Erbzins*, like the property itself, was 'inherited' through generations.

3 On these institutions, especially their possessions and income, see Joseph Kremer, *Beiträge zur geschichte der Klösterlichen Niederlassungen Eisenachs im Mittelalter*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Abtei und der Diözese Fulda II (Fulda, 1905).

4 Fixed term loans only appear to have been made for particularly large amounts.

5 For a more detailed explanation of the *Wiederkauf* system, see III.3, below.

into the contract.[6] This rate of 8.33% appears to have been standard, and the majority of the loans were for amounts between six and twelve florins, with corresponding annual interest payments of between one half florin and one and a half florins.[7]

Only a handful individual contracts survive for other institutions. Nonetheless, the extant account-books of Eisenach's convents and monasteries, although few in number and therefore inadequate for a proper analysis of the subject, do give some indication of the importance of the two types of *Zins* to the finances of these institutions.[8] While the convent of St Catherine appears to have dominated in terms of overall income from *Zins*[9], the accounts

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[6] ThHstA Weimar, Urkunden, Marienstift, 1519, 17th September. Schlotzhauer himself took out a loan of eighteen florins from the chapter in 1512, although this is the only example of *Wiederkauf* within the institution that appears in the surviving contracts of the period. Schlotzhauer's property was a house in the Fleischgasse. ThHstA Weimar, Urkunden, Marienstift, 1512, 12th February.

[7] The chapter had been lending money in the form of *Wiederkauf* since at least 1366. See Kremer, 48. Of 114 contracts dating from 1499 to 1522 (the most recent surviving document), 34 were for loans of six florins, with an annual interest of one half florin; four were for loans of nine florins with ¾ florin interest; and 48 were for loans of twelve florins, with one florin interest. A small number, usually for larger amounts, had slightly lower interest rates (for example, a loan of 50 florins with an annual interest of three florins, dated 14th February, 1520); a couple, for no obvious reason, carried a slightly higher rate (two loan of nine florins dated 9th August, 1516 and 21st September, 1520 both required an annual *Zins* of one florin, a rate of 11.1%). ThHstA Weimar, Urkunden, Marienstift, 1499-1522.

[8] The account books which have survived from the early 1520s include those of the Cistercian convent of St Catherine for 1521-1522, 1522-1523, 1523-1524 (all running from Michaelmas to Michaelmas), and for Michaelmas, 1524 to Jubilate, 1525 (ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. 3532; 3533; 3534; 3535); those of the Benedictine convent of St Nicholas for Easter to Michaelmas, 1525 and for Michaelmas, 1525 to Walpurgis, 1526 (ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3510; 3511); those of the Dominican monastery for Michaelmas, 1525 to Walpurgis, 1526 (ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3511d); those of the Carthusian monastery for the same period (ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3511); and those of the Cistercian monastery in the Johannestal for Michaelmas, 1525 to Quasimodo, 1526 (ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3536). All of the entries regarding *Zins* are listed under place-names rather than those of individuals, except those in the records of St Catherine's; however, these latter are only enumerated as separate entries in 1523-1524.

The only surviving financial record of this type for the Augustinian chapter prior to the 1540s is a single sheet fragment from 1502-1503 containing a list of *Zins*, ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Kk, 354.

[9] The accounts for Michaelmas 1521 to Michaelmas 1522 show an income from *Erbzins* of 260 *Schock*, 57 *Groschen*. This constituted just under one third of its total income, with a much smaller proportion (53 *Schock*, 23 *Groschen*) coming from *Widerkäufliche Zins*. The *Erbzins* payments for the following year were identical, while *Wiederkäufliche Zins* of 52 schock, 53 groschen was collected, one

of the Carthusian monastery from three years later show it to have received a particularly high proportion of its income from *Wiederkäufliche Zins*.[10] All of the Eisenach institutions gathered *Zins* from an area that stretched far beyond the town itself. The chapter drew up contracts with inhabitants of the towns of Marksuhl, Creutzburg, Haina, Eckhardshausen, and Salzungen, among others.[11] The records of the convents and monasteries show that their *Wiederkäufliche Zins* and *Erbzins* came from a similarly broad region. Of the 181 *Schock*, 9 *Groschen Wiederkäufliche Zins* received by the Carthusians in 1525 – 1526, 43 *Schock*, 49 *Groschen* came from Eisenach; 35 *Schock* from Gotha; 25 *Schock* from Mühlhausen; 23 *Schock*, 20 *Groschen* from Weißensee (north of Erfurt); and 18 *Schock* from Creutzburg. Smaller amounts were collected from a further eighteen towns and villages. The *Erbzins* listed in the Carthusian records came from an even more varied range of places, 34 in total.[12] Of the twenty payments of *Wiederkäufliche Zins* collected by St. Catherine's convent in 1523 – 1524, fifteen were from people resident in places other than Eisenach; the remaining names, which are given without locations, were probably those of local people.[13]

The canons were affected by the refusal of the Eisenachers to pay, as can be seen from their complaints to the Weimar court.[14] However, no records survive to show the exact loss of income. The accounts St Catherine's for 1523 – 1524 show that the convent received 93 *Schock*, 2 *Groschen* less in *Erbzins* than in the previous year, a decrease of roughly 36%. The reduction

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loan having since been redeemed. One *Schock* was equal to sixty *Groschen*. ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. 3532, fos. 2-3r; Reg. 3533, fos.2-3r.

10 Of a total income of 296 *Schock*, 3 *Groschen* for that period, 181 *Schock*, 9 *Groschen* was paid in *Wiederkäufliche Zins*, compared to only 20 *Schock*, 52 *Groschen* in *Erbzins*. ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3511, fos. 2-13.

11 ThHstA Weimar, Urkunden, Marienstift, as above.

12 ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3511, fos. 2-7.

13 An example of the latter is 'hanns goltschmedt bey dem brawhawß', who made an interest payment of one half *Schock*. ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. 3534, fo. 3r. There are no individually enumerated entries for *Erbzins* in any of the convent's records.

14 Unspecific complaints of the Chapter regarding the refusal of both the nobility and their subjects to pay the *Zins* are described in a letter of January, 1526 from John of Saxony to officials in Creutzburg and Eisenach, ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Kk 403. The canons were also reported to have been particularly assiduous in seeking *Zins* from those who could not afford to pay, ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fo. 2.

in *Wiederkäufliche Zins* was much less significant, falling by just under 6 *Schock* to 47 *Schock*, 4 *Groschen*.[15] The Carthusian records (1525 – 1526) list amounts of outstanding *Zins* from the previous two years separately from the payments for the current year. A further distinction is made in the former between *Zins* which had since been paid and that which was still owed by the completion of the accounts.[16] In total, 105 *Schock*, 54 *Groschen* of *Wiederkäufliche Zins* had been lost in 1524 – 1525 (43 *Schock*, 40 *Groschen* of which remained outstanding). The figures for unpaid *Wiederkäufliche Zins* for 1523 – 1524 are much lower, perhaps indicating that it had not been affected by events in Eisenach until slightly later than St Catherine's. However, it is possible that this money may have been recovered before Michaelmas of 1525 and listed in the accounts of 1524 – 1525 which no longer exist.[17] Notably, no outstanding *Wiederkäufliche Zins* from 1523 was received from Eisenach in 1525 – 1526, but 21 *Schock*, 28 *Groschen* was received for 1524 – 1525, roughly one third of the total overdue interest for that year that had since been recovered. The monastery's records also show payments made to messengers sent to Creutzburg, Weißensee, Mühlhausen, Salza, and to the village of Grossen Lupnitz, sometimes more than once, in unsuccessful attempts to recover *Zins*.[18]

The Weimar delegation mentioned above represented one of the final stages in this saga which had begun the previous year with a series of sermons given by Strauss on the ungodly nature of lending money at interest, the content of which is indicated by a short pamphlet printed in the first half of 1523.[19] The townspeople apparently responded by withholding

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15 ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. 3533, fos. 2-3r; Reg. 3534, fos. 2-3r.

16 ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3511: outstanding *Erbzins* from 1523 received, fos. 8v-9r; outstanding *Wiederkäufliche Zins* from 1523 received, fos. 9v-10r; outstanding *Erbzins* from 1524 received, fos. 10v-11v; outstanding *Wiederkäufliche Zins* from 1524 received, fos. 12r-13r; *Erbzins* from 1525 still outstanding, fos.26r-26v; *Wiederkäufliche Zins* from 1525 still outstanding, fos. 27r-27v; *Erbzins* from 1523 still outstanding, fo. 28r; *Wiederkäufliche Zins* from 1523 still outstanding, fo. 28v; *Erbzins* from 1524 still outstanding, fo. 29r; *Wiederkäufliche Zins* from 1524 still outstanding, 30 r.

17 The Carthusian monastery suffered particularly badly in the disturbances of 1525.

18 ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Bb 3511, fos. 21 – 24. The Mühlhausen Council wrote back to confirm that the *Zins* would not be paid: '3 gr. bothenlohn kegen Mulhausen, mit vorschrifft deß schultheissen, zum Radt der Carthuser zinse halbenn, schrifftliche antwurtt erlangtt, daß sie der zins nit geben wollenn', ibid., fo. 22r.

19 *Haubtstuck ... wücher*.

payment, not only of *Wiederkäufliche Zins*, but also of *Erbzins*. Sometime before the autumn of that year, a complaint must have been made to Weimar, and Strauss was summoned there to account for his behaviour. The Eisenach Council were advised to do all in their power to ensure that the *Zins* was paid. Johann Oswald, the Eisenach *Schultheiss*, and Heinrich Weyßensee, one of the *Ratsherren*, were ordered to make a report on the matter to *Landesregiment* in Weimar, which they did on 14th January, 1524.[20] It is clear from this report that the Eisenach authorities had met with limited success in forcing the townspeople to relinquish the *Zins* and, in fact, were reluctant to do so. An initial delegation was sent to Eisenach to investigate. During Lent, two members of the Eisenach Council arrived in Weimar, representing the interests of the creditors, but also taking the opportunity to complain about Strauss and his unsettling influence on the town. The Duke sent his second deputation shortly afterwards, with renewed instructions to settle the problem, and with the recommendation that the rate of interest be reduced to 5%.[21] By June, Strauss had produced a second, much more detailed treatment of usury.[22]

2 General anticlericalism.

This episode highlights a second particularly prominent theme in Strauss's works: that of money. Although especially so in the case of usury, due to which subject he became notorious, a preoccupation with the material is evident in almost all of his writings. This was a subject not always immediately relevant the reform of faith and one must therefore ask why, when writing on matters of religious belief and practice, he so often included references to the financial, linking offence given to God with robbery of the common man. The ostensible purpose of the pamphlets is that of instruction; of turning the laity away from spiritually damaging practices. The emphasis on material exploitation is so pronounced that it cannot simply be accidental. It must be deliberate, and may reveal something about

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20 The only source for these events is the instruction to the delegation sent to Eisenach in April or May of 1524, ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fos. 5-16. This holding also contains the report made by Oswald and Weyßensee (Reg. Ii 126, fos. 1-4).

21 ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fo. 11.

22 *Wucher zu nemen*. On Strauss's works on usury, see III.3, below.

Strauss's strategies of persuasion, and what he thought his audiences wanted to hear. Was this a cynical attempt to appeal to the common man?

It has been shown in Chapter II that Strauss did engage in this to some degree regarding the intellectual capabilities of the laity. There, his identification of the clergy as the enemy of the common man was made in the context of the spiritual tyranny of the former. In one sense, this was fundamental to his view of the degeneration of the church and the danger it posed to the salvation of its flock. At the same time, however, the designation of the defenders of the old teaching as oppressors, and the appeal to a sense of victimhood among the laity while assuring them that they had the capability to defeat their tormentors, were used to great propagandistic effect in his pamphlets and sermons. Alongside this denunciation of the soul-murdering nature of the clergy's religious deception are found persistent descriptions of their financial tyranny. Strauss's goal would have been to remove the respect, trust, and possibly fear, in the clerical-lay relationship. He may have been attempting to underline the deception described in Chapter II by giving it another dimension, or, more generally, using these accusations of a more wide-ranging impropriety to discredit the clergy (the 'enemies of the gospel') as a group. Was Strauss's engagement with this more tangible form of cheating merely incidental to his concept of religious reform and something that he highlighted in order to create or manipulate a sense of financial exploitation among the laity, or does it indicate a more deeply-held view of church and society?

Rublack has identified three principal strands in the late-mediaeval tradition of anticlericalism that underlay that of the evangelical movement: '1. the attitude of the clergy to worldly goods and power; 2. their life style; 3. their understanding of the clerical office'.[23] The second of these is not as evident in Strauss's pamphlets as the other two, except when linked to avarice; he spends relatively little time on accusations of sexual impropriety, and, while

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23 Hans-Christoph Rublack, 'Anticlericalism in German Pamphlets', in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994), 461-489, 463.

this cannot be ignored in any analysis of his anticlericalism, it can be dealt with relatively briefly.[24] This aspect is chiefly evident in the pamphlet on confession and, as with the misleading and soul-murdering discussed in Chapter II, the regular clergy are singled out for particular approbation. Although at times in the marriage pamphlet the entire first estate is denounced for its role in upholding the dangerous rule of celibacy, it is the monks who are accused of having tricked the 'poor children' into taking false and dangerous vows.[25] It is they who are condemned as corrupters of the innocent; it is they, 'roguish and perverted' (*die schalckhafften verkerten mönich*), who use the confessional to teach the innocent about fornication[26] and are so anxious to know about the sexual practices of married couples that they force 'demure wives' to discuss these matters with them. Their eager inquiries cover 'all circumstances of their marital activities, and how their husbands bring the thing to completion, how often, how much pleasure they have in it, at what times, and the like'. This, Strauss implies, is not due to any concern for propriety, but to a perverse obsession with sex, rooted in their 'shameful hearts.'[27] The 'roguish monks'[28] also make it their business, 'according to their lust [in] their immodest hearts', to question the innocent ('the poor little

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24 Dipple has observed an absence of all criticism of the general 'life style' of the clergy in Eberlin's early works, and notes that this is unusual: 'As a *Volksprediger*, Eberlin makes surprisingly little use of these images [of 'gluttony, drunkenness and sexual immorality'] in the earliest confederates. On one occasion in the 'Sevent Confederate' he referes to the clergy as 'studs' (*somen pfard*), but otherwise he avoids the charge of sexual immorality', Geoffrey Dipple, *Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Günzberg and the Campaign against the Friars*, (Aldershot, 1996), 50.

25 *Pfaffen Ee*, Aiij r-v. This worry regarding the 'poor children' is also expressed in Strauss's letter to Duke John, the same missive in which he gave his views on the proposed visitation: he presents the pitiful case of the 'arme gefangnen klosterkinder' of the convent of St Nicholas, the mother of one of whom had approached him, 'weynende vnd klagende', to tell of her failure to speak 'ein einigs mütterlichs wort' to her 'natural child'. The daughter in turn responded to this ban on communication with 'schmertzen vnd weynen'. ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 133, fo. 1v.

26 *Beichtbüchlein* , Bij v.

27 Ibid., Biij r. A particularly salacious roumour of Thuringian origin, almost certainly still present in some form in popular memory in the early sixteenth century, concerned a parish priest who was not at all what he seemed to be: '1457 verbreitete sich in Thüringen die Kunde von einem unerhörten Skandal. Es stellte sich heraus, daß der Pfarrer in der Pfarrkirche in Weißensee ein Weib war und mit einem der [Johannite] Ordensherren unerlaubte Beziehungen unterhalten hatte', Wilhelm Wintruff, *Landesherrliche Kirchenpolitik in Türingen am Ausgang des Mittelalters*, (Halle, 1914) 69.

28 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij r.

women, maidens and youths') on sexual matters.[29] These marriage wreckers, who are the cause of both adultery and quarrels, are identified as 'the arch-hypocrites of the wooden-shod'.[30] Strauss's description of the confessional as a brothel may be meant to be taken literally, as in *Trost* he refers to the 'confession-corners' in monasteries rather than to those in churches: these are 'more impure and shameful than any whore-corners in the entire world'.[31] The extent of this impropriety is well known in Schwatz, he confides in an aside to his former parishioners. This is possibly a reference Brother Michael[32], who elsewhere is accused of spending three days interrogating an unnamed noblewoman and thoroughly corrupting her, in mind if not in body.[33] It has been observed that 'the most common accusation levied against priests or monks in fifteenth-century poetry denounced them for blatant sexuality either within the convents or outside'.[34] Given Strauss's assessment of the inevitable consequences of celibacy ('adultery, the violation of virgins, and debauched impurity'[35]), it is unlikely that he is telling his audience that Brother Michael and the other confessors confined themselves to the *encouragement* of impropriety. Strauss may have been deliberately playing on the fears of husbands regarding the conduct of their easily-influenced wives.[36] The effect

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29 Ibid., Bij v. The implication is that the monks themselves are guilty of such thoughts and actions, and cannot conceive of such innocence.

30 *Beichtbüchlein* , Biij r-v.

31 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij v.

32 See Chapter II, above.

33 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bij v. 'the dreadful heretical misleader, whom one calls brother Michael or Sir Michael, this past year, also heard the confession of a pious married woman of the nobility for three days, one after the other', after which experience she apparently declared that she had never in her life supposed that any man was capable of the 'evil' which she had been taught, *Beichtbüchlein* , Biij v. This image of the monks, particularly the Franciscans, using the confessional for immoral ends had become entrenched in the popular imagination: 'Especially powerful is the theme of the betrayal of the family by clergy trusted by the family to support its integrity and spiritual health. Four stories in this selection involve Franciscans who exploit their trusted roles as spiritual advisors within a household out of uncontrollable desire for women', the results being kidnap, rape, attempted seduction, and the encouragement of the rape of a wife by her husband and her consequent suicide, Jane Dempsey Douglass, 'A Report on Anticlericalism in Three French Women Writers 1404-1549,' in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994), 243-256. 250f.

34 Albrecht Classen, 'Anticlericalism in Late Medieval German Verse,' ibid., 91-114, 99.

35 *Pfaffen Ee*, A v.

36 In Erasmus' colloquy, 'The well-to-do beggars,' an innkeeper's wife asks him to allow two Franciscans to spend the night free of charge. He replies, "'Just look at the intercessor woman! There's

of all of this was to portray the existence of the traditional clergy, particularly that of monasteries and convents and the Franciscan confessors, as undesirable. The unchaste lives of the latter harming not only themselves, but society in general. The unnatural celibacy, as proclaimed by the monks, and recommended by them to the 'demure wives', gives rise to lust, adultery, and fornication. Overall, however, it forms but a small part of Strauss's printed anticlerical campaign. The impression given is that he was making occasional use of a well-established criticism and, in the case of confession, linking it to a practice he saw as bringing particular spiritual danger. It was the blasphemous nature of confession rather than the possible corruption of his parishioners that formed his motivation.

The predominant 'secular' accusation in Strauss's pamphlets is related not to sex but to money; the clergy are guilty of greed more often than of immorality. This too had its origin in the traditional late-mediaeval anticlericalism, but with specific connections now being made between clerical greed and straightforward exploitation on the one hand, and the very practices that the reformers wished to abolish on the other. The church as a whole, along with the individual clergy, is portrayed in these pamphlets as grasping and avaricious. The former is involved in a large-scale greed and gathering of wealth, bleeding the people dry; the latter are concerned with filling their purses and bellies. Strauss, however, makes relatively few references to Rome, reserving most of his fire for the local, immediately visible clergy. Their avarice is highlighted in all of these works: in the pamphlet based on the Hall sermons, the priests are described as having 'their hearts, maws, and purses open for money, as long as you have a coin', and the mendicant orders are depicted as locusts, devouring all that has not been grabbed by the 'claws' of the bishops and priests.[37] This theme surfaces repeatedly,

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an understanding between you, I'll warrant. And I'm not altogether pleased to hear this testimonial, 'good men,' from my wife."' Desiderius Erasmus. *Colloquies.* Translated and annotated by Craig R. Thompson. *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Vols. 39-40 (Toronto, 1997), Vol. 39, 469-98, 473.

37 'Dann all ir hertz, maul, vnd beitel außgedent auffginet auff dein gelt, weil du ain haller hast [...] Also was der schaur der bischoff vnd der pfäffischen geytz nit erschlagen hat, fressen darnach die Heüschrecken', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Bijr, Bijv.

sometimes as a general denunciation of clerical greed and gluttony.[38] However, most of the religious customs and rituals Strauss describes as 'human and invented' and therefore inimical to salvation have a monetary aspect, and he is always careful to introduce this.[39] These practices have originated, Strauss insists, in the desire to make money: 'confession is built in a ruinous, fleshly, and misleading manner on the idolatry of the belly'.[40] The confession penny is a form of 'robbery'.[41] The clergy use the threat of damnation for financial gain, and this is described by Strauss as a 'hellish trade'.[42] One must pay not only to receive absolution in the first place but, the more one pays, the better the absolution. If you can only offer a *Kreutzer*, Strauss advises, the priest will merely mumble, place his 'impatient, holy hand' on your head, and let you go.[43] The Franciscans may not ask for money, but this is not to their credit; for Strauss, it is further evidence of their hypocrisy. They ask for such volumes of goods, and so frequently, that it would be cheaper to pay the secular priest in the first place.[44] The economic exploitation of the laity at the hands of the clergy, especially through the monks and their frequent demands, is stressed, and Strauss announces that confession not only dishonours God, but also injures 'the honour of the body and wealth.'[45] The priority

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38 For example, in his pamphlet on the Christian assembly, Strauss criticises the wealth of the clergy, their possessions and endowments, 'silver and gold', all of which, he says, are superfluous, *Christlichen versamlung*, Br–Bv.

39 Strauss does not always restrict himself to condemning the specific practice that is the subject of the pamphlet; having associated one of his targets with the financial difficulties of his audience, he is often reluctant to pass up the opportunity to make a general attack on all forms of spiritual 'buying and selling'. In his work on the 'simonean baptism', for example, he gives a list of duties for which the clergy expect to be paid (burial of the dead, consecration of marriages, and dispensing of sacraments), remarking that this exchange is deemed appropriate merely due to 'long custom', *Simonieschen Tauff* Cij r.

40 *Beichtbüchlein* , C v.

41 Ibid. , Biiij v.

42 Ibid. , B r; B v.

43 'Es hat auch der pfarner eygentlych auff geschryeben, dis tzal aller beichtkinder, das ime, am Creutzer nichtzerrin, vnd darumb bringst du ein guts dapfferß beychtgelt, so fyndest du einen guten beychtuatter. Ist aber nur der Creutzer fur handen, so hebt er flugs an brommelen, vnd legt die seine vngedultige heilige hant, auffs haubt, vnd last dych lauffen', ibid. , C r.

44 They will willingly accept 'a whole roast pig, a cloth for a cap, a hearty, good fish, a large bottle of wine or a whole cask', and will call all year long 'for wine and bread, for salt and lard, for cheese and meat, for light and all that they need'. The monk, warns Strauss, will never leave your purse or your house, ibid. , C r-v.

45 Ibid. , C v.

of the clergy appears to be to convince the laity to 'fill priests, monks and nuns stock full, that is the single teaching held constantly by all destroyers of Christianity',[46] and these payments are described as a 'dreadful oppression' of the average journeyman: 'in this way the poor little sheep go to market'.[47]

The clergy are therefore engaged in two forms of deception and tyranny: the laity are told that they are being robbed by those who are withholding the word of God and endangering their souls. All are duped into giving money to the clergy under the pretence of serving God.[48] Money is 'richly wasted' in the 'new, hellish, and misleading comfort' that forms the system of indulgences and payments to various brotherhoods.[49] Strauss describes the artisan as particularly vulnerable to the dangers presented by the confraternities, both spiritual and economic, and warns him not to dissipate his income in blasphemous endeavours.[50] This artisan is invited to see himself as an honest worker, whose money as well as his salvation is being frittered away. The poor common man has been encouraged to spend what little he has to spare on adorning idols, going on pilgrimages, and in giving alms to the mendicant friars, fooled into believing that this will contribute to his salvation, whereas it is this very presumption that will condemn him to hell.[51] In his attacks on the blasphemous practices for which they are charged, Strauss tells the laity that they are doubly victimized; often, in the process of being swindled, they are damned by means of these very payments. Not only are they being deceived by the idea that they can purchase salvation, the attempt to do so will have consequences for one's soul as well as one's pocket.

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46 *Fegfeur*, Aiij v.

47 *Christlichen versamlung*, B r.

48 Ibid., B r.

49 *Beichtbüchlein* , B v.

50 *Pruderchafften*, Aiij r – Aiiij v.

51 At one point, Strauss launches a general attack on these wastes of money, 'ablas, gnad, gnadtprieffen, pruderschafften, walfarten, vnd der gleichenn', *Beichtbüchlein* , Bij r.

There was an existing perception that payment for ecclesiastical services had nourished the church and papacy.[52] According to Strauss, although God had not intended that the sacrament should be expensive, the clergy have ensured that consecrated chrism has been made not only essential but also particularly costly.[53] It is its sale for money by the 'insatiable money-jaws'[54] to which Strauss claims to be opposed; those churches in which it is sold are part of the great 'flea market' (*grempelmarkt*) in holy goods.[55] The lengths to which the church has gone to conceal the simonaical nature of these charges underlines the idea that the entire institution has been founded not only for the purpose of bringing the souls of the laity to the devil, but also in order to transfer their wealth to the church. It is because of this simonaical aspect that, according to Strauss, the church has had to resort to sophistry to redefine the nature of such payments; it cannot, for example, be seen to be selling the sacrament of penance. Strauss derides the 'beautiful gloss' used to explain away the confession-penny as a means of feeding the confessor[56] or to class it as a 'prayer' or offering. Strauss counters this

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52 A mediaeval 'devil-letter', reprinted in 1521, contains the line, 'We commend to you our dearest daughters: Pride, Avarice, Trickery, Unchastity and all other vices, especially Mistress Simony, that is spiritual usury, who brought you forth and suckled you at her breasts', *Ain grosser Preiß*, [Aiiij v]. Jane Finucane and Helga Robinson-Hammerstein (trans. and ed.), *A Great Prize: The Long Life of a Medieval Polemic* (Dublin, 2004). Strauss too describes simony as 'spiritual usury': 'the spiritual usury (that one calls *Symoney*), *Simonieschen Tauff*, Cij r.

53 'First, the bishops declare that chrism must be made from balsam and olive oil, afterwards, the powerful leaders, that no one may bless or consecrate the chrism, or the oil, apart from the pope or bishop. O, what a precious thing it is, that can only be made by the greatest lords in the world? Here you can easily recognise the devil's work. God almighty did not want to have anything strange or costly in his sacrament, but only water, that may well be had everywhere in the world. Now pope, bishops, and monks wish to have the addition of the balsam, which comes from far across the sea, and such a splendid consecration held over it, as if the most strict commandment of God had decreed such a thing', *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiij r.

54 'dan niemants kan verkeuffen das nit sein ist, vnd also greyffen die vnersettlichen gelt schlunden, gott in seyn herligkeit, vnd gütter, die mit geldt nicht vergleycht sollen werden', ibid., Cr.

55 Ibid., A v. The term *Grempelmarkt* is also used by Karlstadt in his work on religious images: 'Sye haben vermerckt, was sie die schefflein, yhn die bucher furtten, yhr grempell marckt wurtd nichst tzunehmen'. Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Von abtuhung der Bylder// Vnd das keyn Betdler// unther den Chri=//sten seyn soll.// Carolstatt. in der Christliche[n]// statt Wittenberg* (Wittenberg, 1522), and Wenzeslaus Linck's *Von Arbeyt vn[d] Bet=//teln wie man solle// der faulheyt vorkommen/ vnd yeder=//man zů Arbeyt ziehen* (Zwickau, 1523) B v.

56 'Here the misleaders have found a beautiful gloss and say the confession penny will not be given in the manner of a purchase (*in kauffs weise*), but for their upkeep, as God has ordered, he who serves the altar should also be fed from it', *Beichtbüchlein* , B iiij v – C r. This is also the excuse of the

latter claim with a description of the multiple payments given to various clergymen for a single confession, particularly the practice of priests 'hiring' other clergymen to hear confessions. This, he writes, is no prayer, but a 'known trade', and its practitioners, 'merchants'.[57] The church has invented ways to enrich itself, by making religion into a trade; this is at the expense of the poor, the papacy having arranged matters so that 'the fair will be complete, and the poor, simple people will be relieved of their money'.[58]

Through this simonaical conspiracy, the clergy have abused their position in order to enrich themselves far beyond their needs. By means of the confession-penny alone, they 'have amassed for themselves superfluous goods, tithes, money and rents, land and people, in which many of you may recognise a superfluous upkeep of the priesthood'.[59] Just as they have used their powers of deception to mislead the people into false belief, they have employed the same in order to line their pockets through tithes and other charges.[60] God, on the other hand, has ordered that pastors should receive no superfluous income and possess no ostentatious finery. The current system of funding churches and priests is therefore contrary to God's word, and both the clergy and those who fund them are sinning.[61] There is the implication that people have always given offerings and are happy to do so, but this money is not intended for the enrichment of the clergy: 'He who has given to the parish does not wish that the priests, monks and the wretched nuns should dissolve the same'.[62] Strauss would do away with 'all priestly endowments, tithes, sacrifices, florins, guilders, fields, meadows and all splendour'; his alternative method of financing the church, as outlined in

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priest who sells chrism: 'Our envoy went to Saltzungen, asked for the chrism for God's sake, it was refused, but if he had wanted to pay money, one would have been willing to sell – our envoy came back empty, told us that the priest had said he could not give it without money, as he derived his nourishment from the trade', ibid., Aiiij v.

57 Ibid., C r.

58 *Heiligthüm*, Bv.

59 *Beichtbüchlein* , C r.

60 *Christlichen versamlung*, B r. '

61 Ibid., B r.

62 Ibid., B v.

the *Assembly* pamphlet, should remove any danger of this.[63] This is in contrast to the existing system, which allows the priests to indulge their greed to the full: 'the hellish spirit knows no moderation'.[64] Their constant money-grubbing will lead to their damnation.[65]

Just as the vanity of the doctors of the church has led them to resort to deception in order to defend their status and the regard in which they are held, the clergy in general have long been trying to assume the power and appearance of the nobility.[66] Strauss accuses Cochlaeus and 'his like' of using 'false glosses and outrageous reason' in order to preserve their 'spiritual estate'. Their motives are 'wickedness, self-interest, and temporal honour'.[67] His frequent target, Brother Michael of Schwatz, is sarcastically referred to as 'Sir (*Ritter*) Michael'.[68] Strauss urges Cochlaeus to become part of society and not seek to rise above his natural station: 'Do not separate yourself from [the] common Christian condition. Do not enjoy particular favour and honour of the world'.[69] Prestige and money are incompatible with the role of God's servant.[70] Furthermore, God will not allow those whom he deems unsuitable, the swaggering pseudo-lords who are preoccupied with status and wealth, to bring his truth to the people.[71] God's pastors should not constitute a form of nobility.

As with the accusations of sexual impropriety, this idea is used primarily in connection with the confessional, and, as before, the regular clergy are identified as the principal culprits.

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63 Ibid., B r. 'The servant of Christ and housekeeper of God does not serve for a wage but in faith for the sake of God [...] the assembly shall deliver suitable food to him according to [his] need, rejecting all surplus', See Chapter I, above.

64 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Cij r. See also Strauss's claim that all of their activities cry, 'money, money, money', as Chapter I, above (ibid. Cij r).

65 'all that they also undertake and perform in their invented service of God, that cries without cease, money, money, money, money; for this reason they too will be removed from the number of the healthy chidren of God along with Gehazi, and damned to the abyss of hell with Simon the magician.' Ibid., Cij r.

66 *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aij v.

67 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biiij v.

68 *Beichtbüchlein*, Biij v.

69 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biiij r.

70 Ibid., G v.

71 Ibid., H r-v.

Strauss's aside regarding the willingness of princes to be dressed in a monastic habit after death is used to attack the Franciscans in particular; he denounces the 'most humble hypocrites, the discalced' and their 'stinking, lousy habit'.[72] The clergy have gained sufficient influence over their secular lords in the spiritual realm (the 'great powerful lords and the mighty of this world' being 'led on ropes like monkeys'), that the power of the former has extended into the non-religious sphere. They have used their position as confessors to gain useful knowledge of state affairs, which they use to their own advantage: 'the secret counsels of the kings, princes, and lords are also not hidden; [their] attempts to protect [...] their lands and peoples in peace, they do not remain unconcealed from their enemies'.[73] Strauss implies that the power given by the 'scarecrow' of the confessional has enabled the clergy to control the entire world: 'the priests and monks have done as they wish with the emperor, king, princes and lords, and the common folk, noble and non-noble, rich and poor'.[74] This is part of a conspiracy designed by the devil ('the devil has assisted the monks well here [...] that many kings, princes, and lords have only had monks as father confessors'[75]) in order to protect his soul-murdering agents on earth ('How may the monks be destroyed anywhere, and their misleading hypocrisy not have a persistent, long practice, as they have the great power, among kings, princes, and lords, to know and to order in their most inner secrecy'[76]). It has the further effect of ruining land and people.[77] This was a persistent refrain in Strauss's works: the presentation of the clergy as a malign force in society, secretly working against the interests of the people; not just murdering their souls, but also, driven by greed, ensuring their general ruin.[78]

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72 *Beichtbüchlein* , Bij r-v.

73 Ibid., Biiij r.

74 Ibid., Bij r.

75 Ibid., Biiij r.

76 'Wie mochten die Mönich irgent zw grundt gen, vnd ire verfurlich gleißnerei nicht ein verharlich langwerigs wesen gehabt haben, die wiell sie den grossen gewalt, bey König,fursten vnd hern, tzuwissen vnd tzuordenen ir aller innerlichst heimligkeit, in gebrauch vnd yebung erhalten haben', ibid., Biiij r.

77 Ibid. , Biiij r.

78 Strauss was to return to this theme in the pamphlets written after the Peasants' War; see Chapter IV, below.

3 Usury

The subject of the sermons that inspired the events described at the beginning of this chapter forms part of this general theme: usury or *Wiederkauf* is simply one more way in which the clergy gather wealth and destroy the land. Although it may not have been obviously connected with religious reform in the same way as tithes, charges for services, or money spent on relics, it appears to have been one of Strauss's principal preoccupations. It may occupy a disproportionate space among his printed works compared to his unpublished sermons and its relative importance may been distorted by events and scandal. Nonetheless, it will be examined here in detail as the consequences of these sermons in Eisenach and the surviving sources allow for an examination of an instance in which Strauss's propaganda had a tangible and immediate effect.

The mediaeval church's ban on usury (taken to mean not merely the lending of money at extortionate interest, but of any interest received by the creditor above the initial outlay), was traditionally based not only on the prohibitions found in Deuteronomy and the gospel of Luke[79], but also on the teachings of Aristotle, who rejected the possibility that money could in itself be productive. This clergy were prohibited to lend at interest in the fourth century, and this was extended to the laity and enshrined in canon law by the twelfth century. In the late Middle Ages, however, theology was confronted by reality. Not only was there a need for capital, but those with available capital, particularly the merchant banks, wanted a means of using this, and the latter campaigned for alterations canon and civil law to accommodate lending at interest. The *montes di pietà* were founded in Italy from the late fifteenth century in order to provide loans to the poor at strictly controlled rates of interest and were given

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[79] Deuteronomy 23:19f., 'You shall not lend upon interest to your brother, interest on money, interest on victuals, interest on anything that is lent for interest. To a foreigner you may lend upon interest, but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest; that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are entering to take possession of'; Luke 6:34f., 'And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish'.

official papal approval in 1515. At a disputation held in Bologna that same year, the Ingolstadt theologian Johannes Eck, his journey financed by the great Augsburg merchant house of Fugger, argued in favour of a 'triple contract'. In this, merchants would be able to borrow money at 5% interest under certain conditions, the most important being that there should be sufficient risk to the creditor.[80]

Most significant for the church itself, however, was the fourteenth-century concept of the 'sale'. This was a 'purchase of a right to money', based on the existing idea of the census (in German, *Rente* or *Zins*), a mediaeval right to a proportion of the produce of a piece of land in the form of an annual payment. This concept was developed into a means of lending money at interest in the form of the redeemable *census* (in German, *Wiederkäufliche Zins*), which used the terminology of a sale to describe a loan. The seller of the *Zins* sold an annual income, supposedly that derived from a property, to the creditor in return for capital. The property itself served as an insurance against loss on the part of the latter. As well as the fact that these contracts were based on property rather than in the person of the debtor, the right of the borrower or seller to redeem this *Zins* at will (by repaying the capital) was considered to pose sufficient risk to the buyer or creditor to avert the possibility of usury. This system, already widespread, was given official sanction in 1425 by Pope Martin V, in effect permitting the clergy to lend money at interest.[81] Its popularity was due to its guarantee of a relatively

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80 On usury and interest in this period, see John Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury*, (Cambridge, MA.,1957); Benjamin Nelson, *The Idea of Usury. From Tribal Brotherhood to Universal Otherhood*, (Second edition, Chicago and London, 1969); Heiko A. Oberman, *Werden und Wertung der Reformation: um Wegestreit zum Glaubenskampf* (Zurich, 1977), Chapter 8, 'Oeconomia moderna', 161-200; Eric Kerridge, *Usury, Interest, and the Reformation* (Aldershot, 2002). On Eck's position on the triple contract, his links with the Fugger, and his participation at Bologna, see Johann Peter Wurm, *Johannes Eck und der Oberdeutsche Zinsstreit 1513-1515* (Münster, 1997).

81 In the Bull *Extravagantes communes, Corp.iur.can.* III:5:1. On the emergence of the *Wiederkauf* (also known in German as *Rentenkauf*), see Noonan, *Scholastic Analysis of Usury*, 154-164, and Winfried Trusen, 'Zum Rentenkauf im Spätmittelalter', in Mitarbeiter des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte (eds.), *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel*. Vol. 2, 140-158. The context of the papal decree was the need to confirm the legitimacy of the *Rentenkauf*, long practised in the diocese of Breslau, where more than 2,000 church benefices and prebends were tied into this system (Trusen, 'Zum Rentenkauf', 142).

stable, long-term source of income in return for an initial investment.[82] In the Holy Roman Empire of the 1520s, not only had the lending of money at interest been established as permissible, defaulters were now subject to the same regulations as applied to all debtors, and were faced with excommunication as well as the secular courts.[83]

Before the Reformation, much of the popular criticism of usury had been combined with anti-Jewish preaching and linked to the cult of Mary.[84] By the time Strauss arrived in Eisenach, Luther had published two works on the subject,[85] and it is evident from his own publications that Strauss had read these.[86] However, whereas Luther allowed that lending at interest could be tolerated as long as a reasonable rate was charged and the collateral limited, for Strauss, all interest was usurious interest. There could be no acceptable rate: 'A penny taken above the principal sum lent is usury'.[87] There were no exceptions: the biblical prohibition was unassailable. By this, Strauss meant not only the specific laws on money-lending found in the Old Testament, but also the injunction in Luke 6 to 'give without hope of return'.[88] The

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82 On the use of the these 'sales' by parishes in order to finance their poor-relief system, see Michael Galvin, 'Credit and parochial charity in fifteenth-century Bruges'. *Journal of Medieval History* 28 (2002), 131-154. Compared to other forms of investment, such as buying and renting land or buildings, *Wiederkäuf* (Galvin uses the term 'redeemable annuity rents' to describe what in Bruges were known as *losrenten*) 'offered stable income with lower administrative costs', ibid., 143.

83 The Bull of Martin V, and that of Calixtus III (1455) 'specifically approved the real *census*, redeemable by the seller, and threatened ecclesiastical penalties for debtors of ecclesiastical endowments who refused to meet their *census* obligations on the grounds they were usurious', Noonan, *Scholastic Analysis of Usury*, 160.

84 Maurer mentions Hubmaier and Johann Deuschlin, both of whom later became evangelical preachers, who campaigned against the Jews in the years 1518-1520: 'den Synagogendienst in eine Marienwallfahrt umgewandelt und die Vertreibung der Juden erreicht. Beide Male hatte die Ablehnung des unbiblischen "Wuchers" den Ausgangspunkt gebildet'; however, both abandoned this theme in the 1520s. Justus Maurer, *Prediger im Bauernkrieg* (Stuttgart, 1979), 72.

85 *Eyn Sermon// von dem wucher // D.M.L.* (Leipzig, 1519); *Eyn Sermon von dem Wucher.// Doctoris Martini Luther// Augustiner zu Wittenbergk.* (Wittenberg, 1520).

86 For a comparison between Luther and Strauss on this subject, see Rogge, Joachim Rogge, *Der Beitrag des Predigers Jakob Strauss zur frühen Reformations- geschichte* (Berlin, 1957), 78-82.

87 *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aij r. On the position of other reformers on the subject of interest, including that of Zwingli, see J. Wayne Baker, 'Heinrich Bullinger and the Idea of Usury', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 5.1 (April 1974).

88 *Wucher zu nemen*, C r.

clergy, he wrote, have turned this commandment of God into a mere counsel.[89] Furthermore, unlike Luther, Strauss extended the sin to the borrower for his or her part in perpetuating the practice. If there were no borrower, he claimed, there could be no usury: 'usury can never be carried out by a single man [...] as, if there were no giver, so could the usurer not take'.[90]

Although contrary to God's commandment, usury, unlike the practices described above, was not directly related to any aspect of the reform of faith and religious practice. It was, however, a particularly useful subject from the perspective of gaining support. The lending of money at interest had received papal sanction, and its condemnation could therefore be used as a means of discrediting both the papacy and the doctors of canon law. According to Strauss, it was the Church that was responsible for the spread of usury; an institution that that endorsed such an ungodly practice could not be Christian. As usury is wicked, any Council of the Church that would defend such a thing must be the work of 'the puffed-up, terrible sinner [...] the Antichrist'.[91] Anyone who could support such a practice must be 'directed by the father of lies'.[92] Furthermore, Strauss's attentions were directed at the *Wiederkauf* in particular, not because it was the only type of usurious loan, but because it was the form that was practised by the clergy. Not only had the church permitted usury in general, but the clergy themselves were directly responsible for the *Wiederkauf* and its salvific and material consequences.

One finds in Strauss's usury works the traditional themes of anticlerical rhetoric: greed, deception, and tyranny. Like many of the religious practices described above, usury

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89 'If we must accept the school-learned and the teaching endorsed by the Roman church in this, so the usury-lords and interest-squires have found a finely-invented little gloss that will be ascribed to St. Thomas, and as priests and monks instruct and teach, as though in this precious, high commandment of Christ were only a counsel (*rethe*) and an unnecessary commandment, and the Devil wants to have it thus', *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij v. This, for Aquinas, was the difference between the prohibition on charging interest (a 'command') and the duty to lend *freely*, i.e., without hope of return (a 'counsel'), *Summa Theologiae* Vol 31, ed. and trans. T. C. O'Brien, (London, 1974), 233 (Question 78).

90 *Wucher zu nemen*, B4 r.

91 Ibid., Diij r. In any case, this is a hypothetical statement: Strauss claims that he has 'read the usurious purchase strengthened and confirmed to such a degree in no Councils' acts', ibid., Diij v.

92 Ibid., Diij v.

spiritually damages all who participate.[93] The pope's confirmation of usury will result in 'unspeakable damnation of souls',[94] because 'to take and give usury speeds one's road to hell'.[95] Both borrower and lender have broken God's commandment. This industry then, authorised by the church, is yet another instance of victimization of the laity; they have been trapped in sin through the trickery of their shepherds. The Church's preference for money over God is, according to Strauss, the 'true reason' for the papal sanction of usury; it has been implemented in order to finance benefices and livings. Of course, he says, the pope ignores truth in order to fill the 'purses and bellies' of the priests.[96] As in their other activities, the clergy, in search of profit, have not only tyrannized over the laity but also harmed the common good. Strauss makes frequent reference to the concept of 'natural fairness', to which every aspect of the usury trade is opposed. He cannot understand what type of 'holy Christian church' could sanction 'that which our God our Lord Christ has forbidden so many times, and natural fairness too may not tolerate'.[97] Both 'natural fairness' and 'daily experience' confirm the gospel's teaching on usury.[98] Again, the clergy have used their influence with the powerful to protect their own interests to the detriment of the general population; those who have constructed the usury defence are described as 'world-ruiners'.[99] They have persuaded their rulers to protect this practice[100]; the latter, along with the rest of society, have been 'only too blinded by the audacious, world-misleading priests, monks, and learned men' in this matter as in all others.[101] The entire land is in debt to the clergy.[102]

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93 'To take and give usury is cleary contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ', *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aiij r.

94 *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij v

95 Ibid., B4 r.

96 Ibid., Diiij v.

97 Ibid., Dij v. Elsewhere, usury is described as burdening 'the poor common crowd contrary to God and the natural fairness', ibid., Fij v; and 'entirely poisoned, contrary to faith, the word of God, brotherly love, the whole Christian nature, and natural fairness', ibid., Ciij r. See also ibid., Fiiij v.

98 Ibid., Eiij v.

99 Ibid., E v; Eiij r.

100 Ibid., E v.

101 Ibid., E v.

102 Ibid., Eij r.

In his account of the mediaeval relaxation of the laws on the *Wiederkauf*, Strauss again depicts the layman as the victim of a clerical conspiracy designed to enrich the clergy at the expense of their flocks while fulfilling the devil's goal of turning men away from God. This plot is founded on lies invented by the doctors and sanctioned by the pope; as with the justifications of their blasphemous practices, this use of trickery and canon law to get around the biblical prohibition proves that, from the start, there has been a deliberate attempt to deceive.[103] Since then, usury has flourished. Just as in other areas Strauss had insisted that the Bible should be placed before all human teaching, in his longer work on usury he defends the commandments against both Aristotelianism and canon law. Again, the arguments made against the school-learned are relatively superficial, indicating that this is not a learned contribution to a debate on the theological basis of the usury ban, but rather a handbook for the common man with which to counter the learned. Strauss's principal purpose in examining the doctrinal justification of the *Wiederkauf* is to undermine the church and underline the deception. In taking this deception apart, he all the while emphasises the exploitation of the laity and the villainy of the clergy. Much of the information on doctrine, for example, is present in the 1524 work only. This does not, however, mean that this longer pamphlet cannot be used to reconstruct the ideas presented to the Eisenach congregation in 1523, or that the ideas and instructions therein could not have contributed to events. Strauss does mention these matters in the first pamphlet, if very briefly.[104] As this work consists only of brief points which must themselves have been summaries of his sermons, he almost certainly expanded on these points in the latter, if perhaps not in quite so much detail.

Strauss goes to some lengths in order to show that the *Wiederkauf* is nothing but a euphemism designed to disguise and justify sin. This 'annual interest purchase' has been invented to

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103 As mentioned in Chapter II, above, Pope Martin V, in his authorising the clergy of Breslau to lend money in a manner condemned by Strauss as disguised usury, is described as having 'despicably misled the pious inhabitants', ibid., Diiij v.

104 '8. The interest permitted in the Council of Constance, as one says, of one hundred and five gulden, is undoubtedly usury-interest. 9. In which [it] is found, that the Councils have not merely erred, but have profitably protected and confirmed a heretical error. 10. The Council of Constance has burnt Jerome and Johann Hus', *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aij r.

'protect the hellish usury' by those who 'perhaps think that God does not understand all language'.[105] Strauss scorns such linguistic trickery: 'a fast, senseless run to Hell, that would be the correct name'.[106] This 'sophistry' or 'labyrinth' has allowed usury to flourish, and must therefore be dismantled.[107] In the *Wiederkauf*, one supposedly purchases the 'fruit' of the land or house and it is this, according to the church, that makes this contract of sale rather than of a loan. On the contrary, argues Strauss, nothing concrete is bought or sold, other than that which the debtor may earn from working this property.[108] The sophists say that that which distinguishes this 'purchase' from an ordinary loan is the risk to the creditor. This risk is supposedly the 'disappearance' of the property which is to bear the *Zins* that has been purchased; if there is no land, there can be no fruit. Strauss claims that such disintegration of property would be a strange occurrence; usually, the creditor continues to earn interest and the debtor must try to feed himself as well as paying this. The debt does not die with the debtor, but is passed to the next owner of the property. Therefore, the purchaser is not really risking anything more than an ordinary lender, and the purchase is no different from a loan.[109] Strauss admits that a creditor who gives money against a house in a town is more at risk; unlike land in the country, this can disappear; Strauss giving the example of fire. He employs some fairly tortuous reasoning: if the justification of *Wiederkauf* rests on the supposition that the 'purchaser' is buying a share of the income made on the property (i.e., the interest) with his capital, this does not apply in the case of a house as the 'seller' would not have used the capital to contribute to the money made on the property. Strauss is probably not suggesting here that the capital has not contributed in any way to the income made from or on the property, but rather that the loan has not caused this income to increase to such an extent that one can both make a living and pay interest. It is possible, he admits, that one could improve a property in such a way that it could sufficiently increase one's

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105 *Wucher zu nemen*, C v.

106 Strauss is here making the most of the rhyming possibilities of the word 'kauf': 'vnd heyst nun meer eynem yerlichen zynss kauff, ya zu der hellenn eyn schnellen vnsynnigen lauff, das wer ye seyn rechter nam', ibid., C v.

107 Ibid., Cij r..

108 Ibid., Cij r.

109 Ibid., Cij r – Ciij r.

income to allow one to eat and pay interest, but this happens very rarely, 'and in few towns'.[110]

In this discussion of the reasoning underpinning the *Wiederkauf*, Strauss depicts the borrower as the hard-working common man, brought to ruin by this inequitable system. There is indeed a significant element of risk in the *Wiederkauf*, claims Strauss, but this is borne by the debtor.[111] Although the buyer should have 'no more advantage' than the seller, the terms of what Strauss sarcastically calls this 'dangerous contract' (referring to the supposed danger posed to the creditor) ensure that the value of the property is greater than that of the principal paid out and that the debtor's entire property is tied up in the pledge.[112] Furthermore, the seller should not have to guarantee the buyer his *Zins*, which he has already bought, in case of accident: the loss should rest with the purchaser. The only thing sold here is the fruit of the worker's labours, which should go towards his own nourishment; if this does not happen, that is usury and tyranny, ungodly and unnatural. The sole possible redeeming feature of such an arrangement would occur if the creditor alone were to bear the risk of loss of interest, as this may occur despite the hard work of the debtor, as the result of

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110 Ibid., Dij r. In fact, artisans did use this means of raising capital to fund new businesses. In such cases, one's 'usual living' would have been very little, if anything, before the investment enabled one to buy tools, material, and so on. Strauss is either basing his argument on the fact that it is not the building itself that has been improved ('as houses generally bear no more use after the interest is bought than before', ibid., Dij v), or on the difference between sustenance and profit.

111 Again, Strauss uses the concept of 'natural fairness' to underline this inequity: 'The purchaser should always [...] have no more advantage than the seller, as all natural fairness demands', ibid., Cij v; 'The same natural fairness may also not tolerate that the seller be forced to guarantee the purchaser his purchased property against damage and danger', ibid., Cij v.

112 This does appear to have been the case in Eisenach, where the contracts issued by the chapter usually mention a house along with a list of various types of acreage as the property on which the purchase has been made, ThHstA Weimar, Urkunden, Marienstift, 1499-1522. The exceptions were either burghers of Eisenach or other towns, whose contracts mention only houses, and a few debtors whose collateral was in the form of agricultural land alone, although the latter may well have contained an unmentioned dwelling. A loan of 6 florins made in 1516 to Hans and Gerthe Kammerman of Wenige Lupnitz (a settlement just to the east of Eisenach) was taken out on 'einem Viertel einer Hůfe ůnd einen drittel einer halben hůfe', which included '1, winterfeld 5 Acker bei Curde Stegel baůern ůnd Clausen Schambach 2, sommerfeld 5 ½ Acker bei Curde Stegel ůnd dem Jůnker Broche, 5 Acker bei Curde Stegel, Jacoff Stegel ůnd Curde Langelotren ½ Acker wiede zwischen Curde ůnd Jacoff Stegel', ThHstA Weimar, Urkunden, Marienstift, 1516, 3rd April.

damage to crops or similar events outside of his control. As it is, claims Strauss, the creditor will always demand his interest no matter what the circumstances, and the debtor is left to struggle to both feed himself and find the interest.

This exploitation of the debtor is further intensified by the possibility of endless repayments. Even if the creditor were to take on the risk of damage to the property, the purchase would still be unchristian as the debtor is bound to the creditor until he gathers together the principal, despite having paid an equivalent sum in interest. The creditor's investment is always safe, and he can often take perhaps ten times that amount in interest alone.[113] Strauss uses the jubilee of Leviticus 25:8 ff. to claim that God has catered for such an eventuality. This, he argues, contains the provision that one may buy back one's land (when it has been sold in a straightforward transaction, due to the poverty of the original owner) for the sale price, in which any profit or fruit gained by the original purchase in the meantime must be taken into account. Strauss then applies this to the sale of the 'annual use of [an] inheritance, fields and meadows, and the like', in other words, the theoretical *Wiederkauf*. The interest squires, however, would not 'want to allow anything to be deducted from the *Wiederkauf*', even if they were to receive 'one thousand times' the principal in interest.[114] As he does in his treatment of the application of risk, Strauss feels the need to deal with an apparent exception in his chosen Old Testament text. Leviticus 25:29f. allows only one year for a 'seller' to redeem 'a dwelling house in a walled city' (as opposed to an unlimited period of redemption for other property), and such a house would therefore appear not qualify for the jubilee release. The reason for this exception, Strauss argues, is that the Jews of the Old Testament earned their living from the fields alone, and never in the cities. It is different today, he says, as many use their urban property to earn their living; therefore, such property should be subject to the same conditions as the fields and countryside of Leviticus.[115]

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113 *Wucher zu nemen*, Ciij r

114 Ibid., Ciij r.

115 Ibid., Dij r-v.

Strauss acknowledges what had been a standard justification of the legitimacy of charging interest, one designed to protect the lender: that the responsible, wealthy man has no duty to lend money without interest to a 'rogue', someone who will idly fritter away the capital. He denies, however, that in order to counter this one may lend 100 Gulden at 5 or 6% annual interest to be paid until the principal is returned, Strauss's objection rests on the argument that this principal would in effect remain the property of the lender and not of the borrower. To lend money and then make use of it until it is returned is unnatural, and therefore the 'true form of usury'.[116] That the 'rogue' who borrows 100 gulden 'gets his use out of it' does not mean that the lender should profit: this profit has been achieved 'without work or care': 'two daughters will never be sent with one dowry', that is, one cannot get something for nothing. In any case, the argument that one must protect the lender must be ignored as one must rely on faith and not on reason in all things, and faith decrees that one should give without hope of return. The lender therefore should not expect the return of his capital, let alone any profit.[117]

Employing his usual strategy of ridiculing the learned, Strauss sought to demonstrate that not only was the jurists' justification of usury unscriptural, it was contrary to the 'human teaching' they were alleged to prefer. There is no evidence, he insists, that a Council has endorsed usury.[118] As mentioned in Chapter III, Strauss constantly mocks and denounces hierarchy, papal authority, and canon law in his pamphlets, but even canon law, properly read, will not support usury.[119] The *Wiederkauf* is not even in accordance with the church's own teachings. Strauss claims that there is no *Wiederkauf* 'in the popes' old law books', but only in the bulls of Martin and Calixtus.[120] He states with some justice that the bull of Martin V permitting usury was partly founded on tradition: the argument made by the clergy of Breslau that a system of *Wiederkauf* had been in place there for a century. Even canon law,

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116 Ibid., C r.
117 Ibid., C r.
118 Ibid., Diij r – Diij v.
119 Ibid., Diiij r.
120 Ibid., Diij v – Diiij r.

writes Strauss, says that custom must give way to truth.[121] Even canon law does not advocate keeping a pledge when this would be contrary to God's word.[122] This must be explained to 'Doctor Eck and his like'.[123] Although human teachings themselves are faulty and must always give way to those of the Bible, the church has twisted its own position on usury in order to make money. Strauss also takes issue with the secular terminology employed by the jurists. This is the point at which he claims that there is sometimes accidental good in human reason, having recourse to the original Aristotelian argument used by the church to oppose lending at interest in order to show that money cannot increase by itself: only 'external addition' can achieve this. Any profit gained by money alone, therefore, is usury. If wealth is given to someone else to use, it belongs to him. This is because 'the use of money lies in spending, and not in keeping'; if the seller gives something in exchange for this money, that something belongs to the buyer.[124] Anything else, Strauss writes, is 'against the use and nature of money, and will customarily be called usury in our German'.[125] However, the teachings found in canon law, even if they did make sense, are contrary to God's commandment. Aristotle, too, even though he supports Strauss's position, is not to be relied upon. Strauss ends his second usury pamphlet with his usual challenge to oppose him only with Scripture, and announces that 'every one [may] stay at home with human teaching and law, old custom and conciliar reform, all of which has no standing here'.[126] One is to ignore the laws of men in favour of those of God, in this matter as in as in all others.[127]

4 Money and propaganda.

Describing a woodcut by Leonhard Beck, *The Monk and his Maid* (an image in which a monk sits at a table, grasping a coin in one hand and the hand of a young woman in the other, to

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121 Ibid., Diiij r.

122 'I wish that the great doctors would look at their own law books, where it will be undoubtedly read that faith should not be kept in unseemly vows,' Ibid., Eiij r.

123 *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aiij v.

124 *Wucher zu nemen*, B4 v.

125 Ibid., C r.

126 Ibid., Giiij r.

127 Ibid., Aij r-v.

the anger of the layman in the picture), Scribner says that it was in 1523 that 'it first became inescapably clear that a new wave of peasant unrest had broken. It was no less clear that it was directed largely against the privileges of the clergy. [This] woodcut therefore invokes a broader social theme, linking clerical immorality to economic exploitation of a poor peasantry by an over-rich clergy, a favourite theme of printed propaganda'.[128] The extent to which this was an existing popular discontent based on a sense of economic and social injustice, but which had lacked a specifically anticlerical focus, now being deliberately directed against the clergy by the publicists of the evangelical movement is difficult to quantify. What is certain is that the link between the misconduct of the religious and the oppression of the common man was unmistakeable in the sermons, pamphlets, and woodcuts of the time.[129] Strauss's message, depicting the church as a scourge not only of men's souls but also of society in general, was, presumably, intended to have a specific effect. Many of the money-making activities of the clergy to which Strauss objected were closely associated with practices he regarded as blasphemous, and it could be argued that his descriptions of the 'robbery' involved were simply part of an attempt to discourage works-righteousness in the form of bribery; however, any general resentment that could be associated with the guardians of the old teaching was to be welcomed. This conspicuous presence of money, greed, and exploitation in these works could also be interpreted as Strauss telling people what they wanted to hear: a conscious and cynical use of propaganda.

This must have been an attractive message. All could see themselves as victims of the clergy and their unjust demands for payment for spiritual services. Not only are these harmful to

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128 R. W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*. Second edition (Oxford, 1994), 38-40.

129 The link between the social criticism, not all of it anticlerical, found in the literature and preaching of the evangelical movement and the demands and grievances of the 'common man' during the 1524-1525 revolts has been noted by Adolf Laube, who insists that the latter did not misinterpret the former, deliberately or otherwise: 'the Reformers took up genuine social and economic concerns of the peasants and burghers, and worked out a biblically based critique of them, and the rebels then used this critique to legitimize their demands', Adolf Laube, 'Social arguments in early Reformation pamphlets, and their significance for the German Peasants' War', *Social History* 12.3 (October, 1987), 363-378, 367.

the pockets of the laity, they are being cheated by the same figures who are endangering their salvation by withholding the truth of the gospel; these payments often themselves constituting a trap for the soul. There does appear to be a direct appeal to a personal sense of injustice. Liberation from such obligations would entail obvious financial benefits. The prospect of improved circumstances is held out as an additional benefit of the rejection of the old teaching and the embrace of the alternative. The oppressed laity, this tyranny now well established in their minds and the oppressors identified, are given the confidence and authority as well as the incentive to free themselves. Far from being holy and respected individuals, the clergy are shown to be wicked and destined for damnation, and their teachings discredited. There is no doubt that they are on the side of the devil.[130] All forms of simonaical and devotional payments must cease: tithes, payments to priests and monks for specific services, the purchase of masses, of baptismal chrism, and of indulgences, as well as expenditure on honouring saints and their relics. This is yet another advantage, from Strauss's point of view, of his strategy of blame. Destroying the sources of income of the local clergy would surely remove them as competitors for the minds and the souls of the laity. His proposed scheme for getting rid of the confession penny is slightly ambiguous. It would appear from Strauss's specific instructions that people should continue to demand absolution, only now for free; however, he clearly does not expect the clergy to sacrifice this payment.[131] The confessor, like those who sell chrism, imprisons the conscience due to 'self-interest'.[132] Although Strauss claims that even if there were nothing else wrong with the practice, the monetary aspect alone would make it intolerable, this is mere rhetoric, as it is clear that he believed that absolution received from another person was a form of

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130 The announcement that those who refuse to abide by the Old Testament commandments will meet their judgement at God's hands is printed in large type; although this could be the printer's decision, it is safe to assume that it was central to Strauss's sermons. 'Let each one also manage his own affairs, and pay no heed to such teaching; all will be found in God's judgement' ('bestehe auch eyn yetlicher seynn obenteur, vnnd achts söllicher leer nicht, es wirt sich fyndern Jn Gottes gericht alles'), *Wucher zu nemen*, Dij r.

131 *Beichtbüchlein* , Biiij v.

132 Ibid., B r. This latter is 'dispensed by our priests in the honour and the name of money alone, and for this reason God's curse, and no blessing, is to be expected here. It is all poison and hellish misleading, where they are concerned', *Simonieschen Tauff*, C v.

blasphemy.[133] It could be that Strauss was simply advising his readers to see the priest simply as a brother, a brother who would listen to their sins and remorse. However, it is far more likely that he intended to kill the practice along with the payment.

The cessation of *Zins* payments to the chapter, monasteries, and convents of Eisenach would, presumably, have had similar convenient consequences. During the early Reformation, the question of usury and interest, previously debated within the universities, became part of a public discussion held in sermons and print and connected to the 'struggle for the souls of the people'.[134] By the time Strauss began to preach on usury in Eisenach in 1523, not only had Luther's sermons of 1519 and 1520 condemning usury as unchristian been published in a number of editions, the subject had also appeared in popular literature, now combined with disapproval of the clergy and praise for the new teaching.[135] In the anonymous dialogue, *Hie kompt ein Beüerlin,* the popular figure of a knowledgeable and argumentative peasant interrupts a usurious burgher counting his money in order to lament a state of affairs in which all property is burdened with interest payments and is in danger of being requisitioned.[136] Well-versed in Scripture, the peasant can see through the terminological sophistry of the burgher and that of the priest who joins them. He scorns the euphemism of the 'purchase' (*Kauf*)[137] and rejects the argument that the clergy depend upon this practice for

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133 *Beichtbüchlein,* Biiij v.

134 'Mit der Reformation wurde der innertheologische Disput der Orden und Schulen zum offenen Kampf um die Volksseele; in Predigt, Druck, volkstümlicher Sprachmächtigkeit und Übersetzungsarbeit erreichte die theologische Kontroverse breite Massen der Bevölkerung', Walter Busch, 'Vom Eigennutz der Kreatur und von den Listen des Junkers Wucher. Zwei Formen des Gesellschaftsbezugs in der religiösen Polemik Müntzers und Luthers', in Italo Michele Battafarano (ed.), *Begrifflichkeit und Bildlichkeit der Reformation* (Bern, 1992), 39-85, 39.

135 VD16 lists two 1519 editions of the short sermon (Leipzig and Wittenberg) along with seven editions of the longer sermon printed in 1520 (one printed in Wittenberg and two each in Leipzig, Augsburg, and Nuremberg) and one in 1522 (Wittenberg).

136 *Hie kompt ein Beüerlein zu // einem reychen Burger von der gult/ den wucher // betreffen/ so kompt ein pfaff auch dar zu // vnd dar nach ein münch/ gar kurtz=//weylich zu lesen.* ([Speyer, 1522]). 'es ist aber dar zu komen wo ein gutt ist es seindt ecker oder wißen gertten oder heusser, es würdt durch die leüdt beschwerdt alß wucher güldt genant, also dz nichtz nit mer frey ist', ibid, Aiij r.

137 'Beüerlein. Ey ey ey ich lacht schier gern, das ein grindtiger dem anndern so sanfft krauelt, der pfaff leydt auch vnder dem gedeck, des wuchers guldte genant, Jch sehe nit vill güldt kauffen, man

their living. To the claim that it is not usury (*Wucher*) but interest (*Güldt*), he answers that any amount of interest (even the 5% charged in this case) is usury, and that this has been forbidden by Christ; even if one were to call a child Fritzel and also Friederich, or another Hans but also Hansel, each is still but one child.[138] The new, evangelical common man protesting against the payment of interest was not confined to the inventions of the pamphleteers; in the Erfurt Articles of 1525, directly following the standard request that the community should be permitted to replace their priest with a true preacher of the gospel, one finds a complaint regarding *Wiederkauf*.[139]

Usury was particularly useful topic when employed to appeal to a sense of exploitation and attract followers; indeed, this was the motive to which Luther's opponents attributed his decision to write on the subject.[140] The image of servitude contained in Strauss's usury works is inflammatory, even if it were not intended as a criticism of the social order. The debtor is described as a *Zinsmann* or *Zinsknecht*, and his creditor as a *Zinsjunker* or *Zinsherr*. 'The seller or interest-servant', Strauss laments, 'must be bound over and over without cease to the

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sagt allwege man hab alßo vill vff das oder yhenß gutt gelauhen, wie kans dan kaufft sein, so es ein pfandt ist', *Hie kompt ein Beüerlein*, Aiij r.

138 'Der pfaff vnd burger sagten zum beüerlein, Du wilt vnd lautter geheyen mit dem wucher, es ist güldt vñ nit wucher. Beüerlein. Ja man teüfft zwey kind das ein heyst Fritzel vnd heyst es auch Friderich, das ander heyst man henßel vnd heyst auch Hanß, noch ist yglichs ein kindt. Also ist auch gelt hinleyhen vmb genuß, heyst manß schon gult so ist es doch wucher', ibid.

139 'Von den untreglichen zinßen, durch welche wir vornehmen den widderkauf adder wucherzins, so die heutsum widder heim, auch oft zum uberfluß gefallen ist, welche zinße man furtan nicht gedenkt mehr zu geben. Wue aber die heubtsum nicht gegeben, sal uf tregliche zeit das rest, so nicht bezalt, vorgnugt und entricht werden, das darinne ein leidliche masse erfunden werde. Auch bitten wir, das in die muntze und wechsel gesehen werde'. Reprinted in Adolf Laube and Hans Werner Seiffert (eds.), *Flugschriften der Bauernkriegszeit* (2nd edn, Berlin, 1978), 65-67, 65.

140 'Luther [...] wrote a book – *On Business and Usury* – in German, so that he might in some manner both reconcile the people to himself and render them hostile to the Princes. In it he recounted the very numerous grievances of Germany caused by the excessive greed of merchants, so that he might seem most loving toward the people and his country, and most zealous for the public good concerning the common people', 'The deeds and writings of Dr Martin Luther from the year of the Lord 1517 to the year 1546 related chronologically to all posterity by Johannes Cochlaeus', translated by Elizabeth Vandiver and annotated by Ralph Keen, in *Luther's Lives. Two Contemporary Accounts of Martin Luther*, translated and annotated by Elizabeth Vandiver, Ralph Keen, and Thomas D. Franzel (Manchester and New York, 2002), 53-351, 149. Cochlaeus was referring to Luther's *Von Kauffshand=//lung vnd wu=//cher.// Martinus Luther* (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1524).

interest-squire in his work and trade; [...] he may never again, even until the last day, be free in his work and goods, unless he produces the first principal sum once more'.[141] This form of economic enslavement and tyranny wrought by the church over the laity is thoroughly unnatural and reflects that which they enforce in the spiritual realm; in the divine and natural order, the fruit of labour should nourish the worker.[142] As with the simonaical demands of the clergy, one can extricate oneself from this using God's word and have the full use of one's income. Strauss's attempt to create an active, empowered laity, no longer in awe of the 'highly-learned', is particularly evident with regard to usury.[143] The Bible, with its simple instruction to lend and expect nothing in return, is, as always, held up as the only authority. Scripture not only permits but indeed obliges one to renege on one's debts: the ungodly contracts are no longer binding. Even if these contracts had originally been made by one's parents, one may break them, as God's law must always take precedence.[144] As in the struggle against the old teaching, Strauss includes his readers ('we') in the fight against usury, and urges them not to be frightened by objections, as the gospel will be victorious.[145] Yet again, Scripture is presented as a weapon: 'we' have been promised 'that we are capable of all things in faith through our lord Christ'.[146] Assisted by their learned pastor, who has demolished scholastic tradition, the debtors can now to dismiss all 'exceptions' and

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141 *Wucher zu nemen*, Ciij r.

142 'Nothing can ever be sold here, other than the fruit and use of the faithful work, [which is] however everywhere reserved for the nourishment and upkeep of the worker. Where such does not occur, then such a purchase is above all usurious and tyrannical, against God and nature', ibid., Cij v – Ciij r.

143 Strauss provides his detailed explanation of money-lending, markets, and the 'nature of money' from an apparent position of authority (*Wucher zu nemen*, Biiij r). It has been noted that, unlike Strauss, Luther did not claim to understand these things: 'Talking about usury, for example, he candidly acknowledged that the intricacies of high finance were beyond his understanding (as well as competence) and added, "I turn this matter over to the experts"', Hans J. Hillerbrand, 'The German Reformation and the Peasant's War', in Lawrence P. Buck and Jonathan W. Zophy (eds), *The Social History of the Reformation* (Columbus OH, 1972), 106-136, 109.

144 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiiij v; Fiij r.

145 'The gates of hell', he assures them, 'cannot win the upper hand', ibid., Aij v.

146 Ibid., Aij v.

permissions granted by Councils of the Church.[147] 'Such a Council', Strauss writes, 'must of necessity be known as and called a school or assembly of the same Principal liar, in which God the Holy Spirit has nothing to do. But Lucifer takes precedence with his company'.[148] The Aristotelian nature of money is explained in simple, accessible terms as an alternative, if superfluous, argument against the taking of interest. One must ignore the 'scarecrow in armour and shield' of excommunication in this matter as in all others, and the argument made by the supporters of usury that 'each king, prince, or lord, also each pious, honest man, should in no way break his promised loyalty and faith and bond, but keep it firmly; also no one should have his prescribed income reduced' can be disregarded.[149] The debtor has a licence to act and, he is assured, he should not be subject to either civil or ecclesiastical penalties.

As demonstrated by the events described at the beginning of this chapter, Strauss's denunciation of usury and particularly of the *Wiederkauf* clearly found a receptive audience in Eisenach. The presentation of the church as an exploitative institution, devoted to squeezing money out of the poor common man, was applied in this case to a specific situation. The records show that the Augustinian chapter, the convent of St Nicholas, and the Carthusian monastery, at least, were particularly involved in lending money at *Wiederkauf*. Oswald and Weyßensee claimed in their report that, although they had done their best to recover the outstanding *Zins*, the poor people of the town were unjustly burdened by these payments; a state of affairs which, if true, must have caused resentment before Strauss's arrival.[150] In 1511, Hans von Reckenrode had objected on behalf of his 'old miller' at Mechterstädt who had

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147 'Now I know in this case not to believe the Councils. As God the Holy Spirit speaks in the book of Proverbs, at the twenty-first: There is no wisdom, no intelligence, or council against the Lord God', ibid., Diij r.

148 Ibid., Diij v

149 Ibid. Eij v - Eiij r

150 The 'styfftthernn vnnd anndere weltliche pfaffheit' in particular, should not work to the disadvantage of 'mannchan armen Man' in this way, through their 'müdtwillenn vnnd vermessennheit', ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fo. 1v. Others who could not afford to pay were expected by their creditors to 'mit jren armenn weybernn vnnd kindernn hünger vnnd nodt leydenn dafftenn', ibid., fo. 2v.

been placed under the ban due to unpaid *Zins* owed to the Eisenach chapter.[151] Although Strauss was singled out by the chapter and its supporters for blame, there may have been protests already in train, and he may simply have added his voice to these. However, he was certainly tailoring his teachings on usury to the local context. The nature of usury targeted in the pamphlets, that of the *Wiederkauf*, must have been chosen in response to the prevalent system of lending and borrowing in Eisenach, and the careful references to 'houses in towns'[152] may have been a deliberate appeal to his urban 'constituency'. Although a reference to usury appears in a work written before his Eisenach period, possibly due to an awareness of and disapproval of its practice in Hall,[153] all of this would indicate a certain opportunism in the decision to tackle the subject in 1523. The clerical 'usury lords' were the local, visible embodiment of Strauss's general ecclesiastical conspiracy against the layman, and the *Wiederkauf* provided a useful confluence of religious and financial aspects.

Was this focus on economic matters a deliberate attempt on Strauss's part to gain support? Was his decision to attack the practice of *Wiederkauf* during his time in Eisenach due less to a deep-seated objection to usury for its own sake, as one of the most harmful effects of the church on society, than to a cynical exploitation of an existing local grievance for the purposes of propaganda? This emphasis on money connected religious practice and the entire institution of the church with exploitation and greed, creating a sense of victimhood and conspiracy. The image of a vain, grasping cohort, obsessed with the task of sating their unnatural appetites and improving their status, is used to discredit the clergy in general, implanting or confirming in the minds of the laity the idea that the former need to be brought down to size. The economic exploitation and soul-murder pursued by the church are

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151 ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg.Kk 343. Von Reckenrode requested that the chapter should not be so severe on a little man ('ey[n] klein mhan nicht schwer sein'), ibid., fo.1 r.

152 'tzinßkauff auf den Hewsern', *Wucher zu nemen*, Dij r.

153 In a pamphlet written before his arrival in Eisenach, he condemns the moneylending practised by confraternities, *Pruderchafften*, Aij v (see below). In this work, he refers to 'lending to the rich'; however, the loans made by the Hall brotherhoods under the *Wiederkauf* system, as recorded in the printed records of the Innsbruck archives, were not for particularly large amounts. See Heinz Moser, *Urkunden der Stadt Hall in Tirol* (Innsbruck, 1989-90) Tiroler Geschichtsquellen 26, 30, 106-124, documents 291, 295, 312, 320, 321, 322.

inextricably connected, there being 'nothing in the same institution other than snorting, cheating, tearing, ripping after worldly things, and squabbling, murdering, and damning the souls which God has bought with his blood'.[154] The economic aspect of the religious deception not only adds the crime of robbery to that of soul murder, but also makes the anticlericalism more effective for Strauss's reforming purposes. This image of the clergyman as 'wolf, thief, and soul-murderer' permeates his publications.[155] Furthermore, the victims of the clergy are told that escape from this tyranny is not only justified but also necessary. As discussed in Chapter II, Strauss appears to have been attempting to create an active laity ready to resist the clergy in spiritual matters, especially when directed by a true teacher of God's word. If one were prepared to oppose the church in pursuit of economic justice in the form of interest payments, one could surely expect the abandonment of traditional devotional practices to follow, especially if they too were an economic burden. Furthermore, the reduction in the income of the clergy that would result from the withholding of all payments, including *widerkäufliche Zins*, could lead directly to their demise. In assessing this as a deliberate attempt to gain support, it will be necessary to identify this 'active laity': who were Strauss's carefully constructed victims? Was the distinction between the laity as victims and the clergy as tyrants entirely clear?

5 The poor common man?

In Strauss's presentation of usury, it is difficult to determine exactly who, apart from the clergy, is guilty of this extortion. In his first printed condemnation of the practice the year

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154 *Christlichen versamlung*, B r.

155 'Wer ein wolff, diep, vnd selen mörder der versamlung Christliches volcks eintringt oder hanthabt, der sehe vnd laß sein condition, namen vnd titel, im Euangelio vor sich selbs', ibid., Aiiijv. The image of the cleric as a wolf rather than a shepherd (Ezekiel 34:4; John 10:12) occurs frequently in Reformation propaganda, in both text and image. Luther used it in his 1522 work, *Against the Spiritual Estate of the Pope and the Bishops*, arguing that the unHoly Spiritual rulers are wolves and soul-murderers: 'Aber geystlich hohe/ wo sie nicht heylig ist vnd Gottis wort treybt/ sind sie wolff vnd seel mörder [...]', *Widder den falsch// genantte[n] geistlichen// stand des Babst// vnd der bis=//choffen. // D. Martinus Luth.// Ecclesiasten zu// Wittemberg.//* ([Wittenberg, 1522]), Br. A broadsheet attributed to Hans Rudolph Manuel Deutsch, *The Monk and the Wolf as Devourers of the Widow's House*, depicts the rapacious clergy, in the guise of a wolf, preying on the vulnerable. This latter is reprinted in R. W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk*, 57.

before his arrival in Eisenach, he condemned lending money at interest as one of the ungodly activities of the confraternities.[156] Although all are affected by the ruinous consequences of the trade ('usury spares no one, whatever estate, rank, or power he may be'[157]), in the later pamphlets the overall impression given is that it is the wealthy who are, by and large, guilty of charging interest and thereby share responsibility for the impoverishment of the poor common man.[158] The non-clerical usurers among them (especially the Fugger, the 'arch-usurer') have been permitted by the princes to ply their trade. When describing the prevalence of *Wiederkauf* among the Breslau clergy in the fourteenth century, Strauss says that 'other self-serving, simple people' (presumably a reference to those with capital to lend and therefore the relatively well-off) excused their own participation in the trade by saying that 'the holy Christian church has permitted this'.[159] This, says Strauss, will not wash with God; they who trust the pope and use the latter's 'invented and lying promise and confirmation' to justify their 'unfaithful, unbrotherly trade' will not escape damnation.[160] While usury is a universal problem, the practice of *Wiederkauf* having 'engulfed not only priests and monks but also nobility and citizens of all cities and places of the world', Strauss's emphasis is on the exploitation of the vulnerable by the wealthy.

This oppression is not limited to usury. The 'common man' is robbed directly by the plundering clergy as he is forced to pay for unnecessary and occasionally idolatrous offices, but also indirectly by the princes. These rulers have as their duty the protection of their 'land and people', but have been duped into emptying their treasuries for the sake of the cult of relics:

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156 *Pruderchafften*, Aiij r.

157 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eij v.

158 It should be noted however that Strauss does not often use the term ' poor common man' and prefers the image of the 'poor sheep'. This is consistent with his portrayal of the clergy as wolves who attack their own flock in both a religious and a material sense. An exception is his attack on those who have 'used the poor common man to the point of ruin', *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aij v.

159 *Wucher zu nemen*, Diiij v.

160 Ibid., E r.

> Just look, pious Christian, at the generous princes and feudal lords, how one of them shall squander two, three thousand gulden, yes much more, on honouring relics; but should he pardon the poor, his subjects, in their annual duty, then he could no longer be a king or prince. The poor man must pay and he and his wife and child shall suffer hunger and want.

Like those who owe interest, the 'poor worker' who, 'through injury or other misfortune', cannot meet these payments to the government will be prosecuted.[161] The 'great Hanses' have no regard for God's commandment, being quite content to cheat their subjects by means of unjust taxes and give this wealth to the clergy in the name of 'relics, idols, and knavish work'.[162] This account of bad government enables the poor worker to feel aggrieved; the victim of yet another oppressor. Nonetheless, the common man himself, however defined, does not escape criticism.

It is not only the wealthy and powerful who, in their attempt to purchase salvation, ignore their fellow men: 'the whole world is paralysed in wickedness and knavery'.[163] The relatively poor common man is not merely a victim; he too wickedly neglects his brothers, the real poor. The concept of brotherly love is, for Strauss, central to the life of the Christian and inextricably connected to faith. It is necessary to 'reject human teaching and human law', not only because they have 'obscured the bright light of our faith', but also because they have 'torn up brotherly love'.[164] When instructing Cochlaeus to abandon his priestly status, Strauss was to lecture his opponent on his duty to his neighbour: 'Offer, donate, give to everyone who because of his need requests or requires your help. Think also of no repayment'.[165] This commandment to give freely to one's brother applies to the laity as much as to the clergy and, as Strauss makes clear throughout his printed works, they have failed just as miserably.

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161 *Heiligthüm*, Bjr. Similar sentiments are expressed in Johann Eberlin von Günzberg's *Mich wundert das// kein gelt ihm// land ist.// Ein schimpflich doch vnschedlich ge//=sprech dreyer Landtfarer/ vber yetz ge=//melten tyttel.// Lese das buchlin so wirdstu dich furo//hyn verwundern/ das ein pfennig ihm// landt bleiben ist* (Eilenberg, 1524).

162 Ibid., B r.

163 Ibid., B r.

164 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij r.

165 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biiij r.

This sin of being 'unfeeling and uncharitable toward [one's] neighbour's need', writes Strauss, occurs everywhere.[166] Blasphemy and presumption, therefore, are not the only reasons for which he admonishes his readers and listeners for their attachment to traditional religious practices. At one point, when writing of the offerings the laity have made for the benefit of their souls and those of their families, Strauss's overall position could be taken to be one of pity. They are the 'souls who believe the sophists'[167]; the 'wretched misled people [who] undertake to help the pious, righteous souls to salvation'.[168] On the following page, however, the same 'souls' are described as 'wilful people', attempting to move God.[169] In rejecting the gospel and clinging to the blasphemous relics trade, the stubborn people have decided to allow the clergy to continue their financial exploitation.[170] The Antichrist is of course at the root of the problem, but the 'poor, simple people' are by no means blameless. Strauss denounces the 'inestimable great cost, effort, and work' spent on adorning and honouring relics and laments the fact that widows, orphans, and other 'poor, needy christian folk' are forgotten in the eagerness to build churches, endow monasteries, and 'squander such an inestimable amount of wealth in gold, silver, precious stones, song, piping, [and] organ-playing'.[171]

It is those who appear to be especially pious who are most neglectful of the poor:

> 'Oh, God, the great deception, that any expense should be placed on the bones of the dead, and the living must suffer [...] hunger and thirst. Consider, each pious Christian, with how many gold and silver treasures the relics are furnished, with which many thousands of homeless people, widows and orphans, and wretched, needy people could be comforted, from God's commandment. It is demonstrated everywhere, that they who give their devotion and attention [to] the unholy

166 *Heiligthüm*, Bij r.

167 *Fegfeur*, Aij r.

168 Ibid., Aij v; also the description of the 'hellish presumption to diminish God's omnipotence' (*Fegfeur*, Aij v), mentioned in Chapter I, above.

169 Ibid., Aiij r.

170 *Heiligthüm*, Bv.

171 Ibid., Aiij r; Ibid., Aiiij r.

> relics, must also [venture] a large sum of money on it, and spend with joy; and if you were to lend to your brother neighbour a couple of gulden in his great need, they would think [that] it would lead you into damnation'.[172]

The money wasted on pilgrimages, both to local shrines and to distant lands, should rightfully go to the poor. The above lamentation continues thus: 'Yet remember, everyone, what inestimable wealth is made disappear to visit St. James' tomb in Spain, Saint Peter and Paul in Rome, to go on pilgrimage; ah, in the procession to Nuremberg, Bamberg, Magdeburg, to St. Annaberg, also among my dear brothers and friends at Hall in Innental [...]; how many thousand poor needy people would be pleased and supported by this?'.[173]

The service of souls, particularly in the form of masses for souls in purgatory, comes in for similar criticism. Those who ignore the poor, to whom it is their duty to give any surplus wealth, in favour of the dead who require no assistance, are excoriated. They may have been misled by the greedy clergy, but Strauss's disgust at their selfishness is unmistakable. In the service of souls, God's commandment must 'stand still', as 'brotherly love and loyalty [...] to give help and assistance to one's neighbour in evident need, has no standing or very seldom any attention' among those who purchase candles and masses at 'indescribable expense':

> 'no one takes it to heart that so many poor, sick, hungry, naked, and wretched people are visible everywhere, of whom God has commanded, that all that we have above the nourishment of ourselves and our children [should be used] to comfort and support the same poor, needy people. And here the blind, shameful misleading of the priests, monks, and nuns, and of all those who place their faith in them must be recognised, as according to the commandment of God it is certain and sure that we are responsible and duty-bound to help our poor, needy fellow brother, [but] this is regarded by no one'.[174]

Strauss continues with another denunciation of the particular callousness of the supposedly devout, who refuse to help even their own parents, siblings, and friends

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172 Ibid., Aiiij v.

173 Ibid., Aiiij v.

174 *Fegfeur*, Aiiij r.

while alive but who are willing to 'fill up' the clergy 'against God and brotherly love, also natural fairness'.[175] Such people are similarly unmoved by their poor neighbours:

> 'Oh, how evident it is, that they who so support with great, inestimable expense the invented soul service, are not moved to any compassion at all for the poverty and need of the living, and if they were to donate or present the thousandth part of a house for the poor, they would think that it would contribute to their ruination; it is ever found to be thus, than many, many [a person] must spend thirty or forty gulden for a chasuble to serve for the requiem mass, who would not lend or give one gulden or even less to his neighbour in need, even if he were to cry naked before him.[176]

The lay members of the confraternities come in for some of Strauss's most scathing criticism. In a paragraph in which he uses Matthew 25:40ff. and its threat of damnation for those who ignore the poor and hungry (in this case, in favour of the idols), Strauss puts words into the mouths of the brothers: 'we want to keep our money from the poor man in his need, against God, and want priests and monks to hang [it] on stone and wood. God must accept this from us, whether his word is against it or not; God must also give us what we want, as we do not want his word and commandment.'[177] These lay organisations are guilty, along with the clergy, of soul-murdering.[178] Their failings are most strikingly laid out in a series of contrasts:

> 'Christ wants to have no money in the community of saints, but faith, hope and love. The brotherhoods admit no one, except on account of his [financial] contribution or assistance.
>
> 'Christ wants that what is remaining to men from [their] food, should be given [to the] poor wretched people who cannot have their food for themselves. The brotherhoods have no care for the poor, but want that an unnecessary, invented mass will be attended to.
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> 'Christ wants that one should feed the poor [and] hungry, the brotherhoods want commonly to hold a lavish feast on the days of the patron and feasts of the

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175 Ibid., Aiiij r – v.

176 Ibid., Aiiij v.

177 *Pruderchafften*, Aiij v – Aiiij r.

178 'It is my faithful advice on this [that] you will protect yourselves from your familiar faults and the damnation of the souls, so that yours [will not be] terribly destroyed', *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r.

> dead. So that many a poor artisan spends and consumes so much in one day, he could support a wife and child on it for a whole week [...]
>
> 'Christ wants that one should clothe the naked; the dreadful brotherhoods wish that one should adorn the idols and rails with gold and silver.
>
> 'Christ wants that one should house the wretched; the brotherhoods wish to buy houses to earn interest so that all abuse may occur all the more.
>
> 'Christ wants that we should lend and offer [to] the poor [man], and hope for no return. The brotherhoods have no care for the poor, but one is so often assiduous to lend to the rich for usury.[179]

The traditional charitable services provided by the confraternities are hardly mentioned; these have been tainted by the lack of faith of their members.[180] Almsgiving as a means of gaining favour with God is of course blasphemous. The new charity, on the other hand, is to give without the expectation of a return, whether financial or salvific. Furthermore, one cannot offer the argument that one can both honour relics and institute 'beautiful' charities to comfort the poor. It does not matter how many of the latter are founded, Strauss insists, as it is this very 'adornment' of relics that has caused this poverty: 'they would nonetheless have in the neighbourhood due reason for charitable help where the same excess of the relics belongs'.[181] Finally, there is an important distinction to be made between the deserving needy neighbour and the false, voluntary poor of the mendicant clergy. Christ does advocate almsgiving, but not to those who choose to beg in this manner. Strauss presents the latter as solely a means of clerical enrichment; it is not the almsgiving advocated by Christ, but rather

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179 Ibid., Aij v – Aiij r. This work was written in Haßlach (supposedly) at the request of his Hall congregation, but parts of it may have appeared in his sermons during his time in the Tyrol, and a passage such as this with its juxtaposition of the wishes of Christ with those of the 'invented brotherhoods', and of brotherly love with self-interest may have been even more effective in that form. Ibid., Aij v – Aiij r.

180 'All that is undertaken in the particular brotherhoods is fundamentally against the common brotherhood of saints, and has no good part for anyone. Because in truth nothing good may be accomplished here, because that which is undertaken outside of faith, is all sin, and an abomination [to] the Lord God', ibid., Aiij r.

181 'Es hilfft auch nichts das gesagt möcht werdenn, wie neben der getzir vnd eer des hailthumbs viel schöner, grosser almüsen verordnet seint, den armen leuten zü vnterhaltüng vnd trost, mag domit nit entschuldiget werden, dan die selben almüsen allesam seint nit zü achten gegen dem grossen mißprauch bey dem heilthum, vnd ob gleich wil etlich stet jr armen getrewlich vnterhielten, so habent sy doch in der nachpurschafft wol vrsach der parmhertzigen hilff do der selb vberfluß des hailgthums hingehort', *Heiligthüm*, Bj v.

a practice designed 'to carry and give to priests, monks, and nuns in heaps and excessively, with which they joyfully fulfil the service of their God, that is, their belly'.[182]

It is not only the wealthy owners of capital who have been willing participants in the usury trade; the debtors have clearly been content to have the possibility of borrowing money when needed. Strauss rails against 'all those who want to defend the usury trade, whether princes and lords, also the common man'.[183] Furthermore, although the 'learned' are clearly the original villains, Strauss was later to accuse the rulers of having willingly allowed the usurers to rise above their station, treating them as princes: 'Oh blindness, oh folly, nothing seen with seeing eyes, and nothing understood with open ears', an apparent reference to the seizing of temporal power and wealth in the past.[184] However, Strauss states that God has now permitted the people to see the truth, implying that the situation has changed, and that there is now really no excuse as all who wish to perceive this truth may do so.[185] This mixture of admonition for past weaknesses and an inducement to action reveals a degree of impatience and also lack of sympathy with those who, despite Strauss's attempts to enlighten them using the gospel, persist in their foolishness.

Not only does Strauss not baulk at scolding the laity for their unbrotherly conduct, his alternative of a society based on love and obedience to God's law is not especially attractive. The immediate consequences of refusing to pay interest are not financial gain but the risk of imprisonment, confiscation of goods, or worse. If payment is not made, the usury-seekers will say that the debtor is rebellious and call for his punishment 'in body and property', and Strauss readily admits that this is a 'depressing worry and need'.[186] If Strauss is read at face value, the common man will not escape tyranny in the short term, as he is not permitted to

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182 *Fegfeur*, B r.

183 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiij r.

184 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, G v. Ibid., Eiij r.

185 The injustice and danger of the usury trade, he says, has been exposed by 'the bright light of the gospel', *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiij r. As shown in Chapter II, however, Strauss did not see ignorance as an excuse for disobeying God's law.

186 Ibid., Fiij v.

use force to resist such punishment. Even if one were to be liberated from the *Wiederkauf* and other payments to the clergy, this does not necessarily mean a better, easier life. Strauss recommends a strict and even ascetic version of the Christian path, in which one is to abstain from any form of over-indulgence. He scolds his audience not only because of their selfishness towards the poor, but also their preference for a life of ease and pleasure. Along with the gluttony described above[187], the excessive drinking and accompanying wild behaviour of the confraternity feast-days is attacked in Strauss's long comparison between Christ's ideal and the reality of the brotherhoods: 'on a confraternity day one will be so drunk that one will sing, dance and leap'.[188] In what is almost certainly an attempt to defend himself from accusations that lending without return would lead to wickedness and idleness, Strauss warns that there are restrictions to the assistance one may give to one's neighbour: the latter must not be encouraged in sin, as 'it is in the end God's pleasure and not the neighbour's own that is considered in these things'.[189] One should give just enough to meet the immediate need, and ensure that this money is not spent in gaming, feasting, or 'other knavery'.[190] Strauss may have depicted the artisan or labourer who is forced to pay unfair interest as hard-working, but this life of labour is not in itself something that may be altered; rather, it is his natural state. There is to be no life of leisure. All have the potential to be grasping and

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187 See above: 'he could support a wife and child on it for a whole week'.

188 *Pruderchafften*, Aij v. Luther had made a similar complaint in 1520 regarding the celebration of saints' days in the confraternities: 'Was sol vnser lieben Frawen, sant Annen, sandt Bastian, oder annder hailigenn namen bey deiner brüderschafft thün, da nitt meer, dann fressen, sauffen, vnnütz gelt verthün, pleren, schreyen, schwetzen, tantzen vnnt zeit velieren ist', *Ain Sermo[n] vo[n] de[m]// hochwirdigen Sa//crament, des hailigen waren leich//nams Cristi, Vn[d] von den Brü//derschaffte[n]. Doctor Martini// Luthers Augustiner zü// Wittenberg// Für die// Layenn.* ([Augsburg: Hans Froschauer, 1520]), Ciij r.

189 *Wucher zu nemen*, Biij r. 'so that useless, vain prattle should not occur, [it] should not be thought that the commandments of our lord show, [regarding] everyone who asks us for help for his sake, to do it immediately. The sophists may otherwise say: if the same evangelical teaching should take absolute precedence, many godless people would be strengthened in their wickedness and from this allow themselves to no longer worry about any work, as they would be so willing and ready to find help from the rich'.

190 'Help should be given to each not according to his desires, but according to need, and in accordance with our means, for the sake of God. As he who asks us for temporal goods against the salvation of his soul, virtue, and honour, should not be heard by us; [just] as he who requests us to lend or to give him [money] to play, feast, or other knavery. Brotherly love teaches us in faith to pause, and not give any more help, than required by the mere immediate need of the body', ibid., Biij r.

idle, and usury has facilitated the idleness not only of the money-lenders, but also that of the debtors, some of whom at least have borrowed to fund unnecessary luxury.[191]

In his pamphlet on confraternities, Strauss argues that nothing belongs to the individual (*eygens*), rather, all things are common (*gemein*), and that each is entitled to share in all goods of his fellow brothers.[192] This community of goods may simply be a description of the altruism required of all Christians rather than a concrete, practical proposal on Strauss's part. The implication that all goods should be held in common was echoed in greater detail in Johann Lindenmaier's work of the following year on the correct distribution of wealth in a Christian society and the obligation to help one's neighbour, in which he argued that riches had been given to the prosperous so that they could accomplish their divinely-ordered office (*ampt*) of assisting the poor, the neglect of whom is one of the vices inherent in wealth.[193] This assistance, Lindenmaier hoped, would soon become universal, thanks to the recently uncovered word of God. It is possible that Strauss did in fact envisage a similar society of economic equality, based not on a forced or even centrally organised redistribution of goods, but on a voluntary renunciation of material wealth by the faithful, comparable to that practised in the apostolic community of the early church, the community of goods mentioned above being described as 'die gemeinschafft der heiligen'.[194] It also appears at times that

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191 'The nobleman by birth, and the common citizenry, have also in usurious interest a confirmation from the Pope of their idleness', *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aij v.

192 *Pruderchafften*, Aijr.

193 Johannes Lindenmaier, *Ain kurtzer gründtlicher bericht// vnd vnderweisung/ auß der heyligen ge//schrifft/ Das der schöpffer aller ding// nit ansicht die person. Vnnd wie// ain mensch dem andern dienen// vnd helffen soll/ mit seym zeyt//lichen gütt/ von Gott jm// verlyhen/ auß zu spenden// vnd was schaden die// geyttigkeit bring/ // darumb nyemant// am zeitlichen// gůtt han=//gen soll/ mit dem// hertzen &c.* ([Augsburg, 1524]). This pamphlet has been reprinted in Adolf Laube, Sigrid Looß, and Annerose Schneider (eds.), *Flugschriften der frühen Reformationsbewegung (1518-1524)*, Vol. 2, (Berlin, 1983), 1200-1209; see too Heinz Holeczek, 'Johannes Lindenmaiers Schrift von der Gleichheit des Besitzes', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 66 (1975), 103-141, which also contains an edition of the text.

194 Acts 2:44f., 'And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need'. Lindenmaier, on the other hand, does hold out the possibility of an 'external, temporal force' (*ain eusserlichen weltlichen gwalt*) that may come into play if the rich do not willingly give up their possessions. *Ain kurtzer gründtlicher bericht*, Aiijr.

Strauss was advocating a moneyless society: 'Christ wants to have no money in the community of saints, but faith, hope and love'.[195] Elsewhere, he announces that 'the Lord Christ has called all wealth unjustifiable (*vnrechtfertig*)'.[196] Given that the alternative to money offered here takes the form of virtue, rather than communal ownership, and that this statement is used as a contrast to the exclusive confraternities who base their membership on wealth, it is probable that Strauss is advocating not a cashless economy, but one in which one's wealth would not determine one's treatment. This could have been an attractive to some, particularly the poorest in society, but many would have seen themselves as the losers in such an arrangement. The appeal would have been limited at best.

In normal circumstances, the duty to give when asked as long as the purpose of the gift is not immoral does not mean that one was obliged to give so much as would endanger the giver's own subsistence.[197] However, what would the effect of a total abolition of interest on loans have been? Strauss, unlike Luther, did not countenance even an interest rate of 4 to 5%.[198] Even given the guarantee mentioned above (that is, that one is expected only to give from one's surplus) would people have been prepared to do this? What would happen to those in economic difficulties if they were not able to borrow money? In addition, according to Strauss, not only should one forego interest, one must also lend without hope of return of the original gift.[199] This is not to say that the lender is obliged to refuse repayment; if the

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195 *Pruderchafften*, Aij v.

196 *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aijv. This is probably a reference to Mark 10:23ff., And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God'. Alternatively, Laube suggests Matthew 13:22. Laube et al. (eds.) *Flugschriften*, Vol. 2, 1074.

197 Strauss does say that this generosity should be 'according to our means', *Wucher zu nemen*, Biij r, as above.

198 The example he uses is of 5 or 6 florins in 100; somewhat lower than the usual Eisenach rate as shown above. 'A penny taken above the principal sum lent is usury', *Haubtstuck ... wücher*, Aij r. Luther recommended that, although this was not ideal, John Frederick could improve matters by reducing rates to this amount, *WA Br.* 3, no.753, 307.

199 'Christ has ordered [us], to lend money to our neighbour, as [much as] we can, and not expect anything in return, neither the capital nor interest', *Wucher zu nemen*, C r.

'neighbour in burdensome need' who is helped by a 'rich and prosperous man' wishes to return the money, the latter may accept in good conscience. This, however, must not be the motive in lending.[200] A gift is a gift. For Strauss, there is no guarantee that one will ever see one's money or goods again. In practice, it would have been very difficult to adhere to this; one must ask whether the charitable impulse of the common man would stretch that far. Although Strauss decries the existence of confraternities, the charitable endeavours of which were so important, nowhere does he mention the establishment of a common chest to help the poor. An evangelical common chest was not set up in Eisenach until 1529.[201] Both the poor and the relatively well off may have had reason to be sceptical about Strauss's proposed changes.

Strauss's treatment of economic matters in these pamphlets presents something of a contradiction. On the one hand, it contains a message of liberation that, on the surface, plays into a sense of injustice and associates Strauss's reforms with financial benefit while identifying the church as the principal source of these burdens. This was clearly an effective tactic for a preacher attempting to wrest his congregation away from religious beliefs and practices he believed would contribute to their damnation, counteracting as it did both their long-standing confidence in these methods of salvation and a suspicion, confirmed by the local clergy, that Strauss's teachings were those of a heretic. There was a particular advantage in condemning those payments directly connected to the supposedly idolatrous practices and the clergy who defended them. In 1526, Strauss was to deny outright this very tactic of being all things to all people; he has, he says, not yet found a message that will please everybody, unlike his opponent Cochlaeus who preaches only to flatter the powerful.[202] Was he in fact

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200 Ibid., C v.

201 'Auch in Eisenach wurd ab dem Jahre 1529 ein Gemeiner Kasten eingerichtet, der seine Bedeutung für die Versorgung der Hausarmen im 17. Jahrhundert jedoch völlig verloren hatte', Stefan Wolter, *'Bedenket das Armuth'. Das Armenwesen der Stadt Eisenach im ausgehenden 17. und im 18. Jahrhundert. Almosenkasse – Waisenhaus - Zuchthaus* (Göttingen, 2003), 34. There was, however, a poor relief system in place before this; Oswald's report of January 1524 to the Weimar court which mentions the poor who must depend on the 'common chest', ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fo. 3 v.

202 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Eiiij r.

claiming to be the opposite, presenting a message unpalatable to all? This may have had an element of truth: Strauss's version of the future does not appear to be a comfortable place for anyone. Perhaps not everything in these pamphlets is to be taken seriously (it is unlikely that Strauss have thought the moneyless society practical or possible), but the general principles of love and sacrifice are unavoidable. Strauss did expect the commandment of giving without return to be fulfilled along with that forbidding usury, as long as the money were to be put to good use.

On the surface, Strauss's teachings present an attractive prospect; when one looks closely, however, they do not eliminate hardship. This is so not only with regard to the consequences of refusing to pay interest, but also in the demanding nature of the Christian life. Despite his repeated pronouncements on 'natural fairness' and 'brotherly love' and his condemnation of the clergy who conspire against the well-being of the laity, Strauss is not afraid to admonish the latter for their failure to conform to the ideal of the hard-working, clean-living Christian, ever prepared to put his neighbour's needs before his own. The potential for appeal was therefore mixed, and would appear to run counter to a deliberate attempt on Strauss's part to flatter the common man and tap into popular discontent in order to gain support for religious reform. Likewise, the at times unrealistic view of the function of brotherly love in society, a certain vagueness concerning practical reforms in order to improve the lot of the common man, and an occasional indifference regarding the actual difficulties faced by the latter throw some doubt on the theory that Strauss may have been motivated by a straightforward concern with economic injustice for its own sake. Given the particularly anticlerical nature of Strauss's treatment of wealth and poverty, the regular appearance of this theme could simply be attributed to the need to encourage resentment of to the church and clergy and nothing more. However, the extent and frequency of these references to money would indicate a greater significance than casual anticlerical propaganda; nor does such an explanation accord with his consistent and stringent condemnation of the laity for their own 'unbrotherliness', the emphasis being as much on the sinner as on than the sinned-against, if not more so. In order to determine the exact purpose of Strauss's apparent fixation with money and its role in

church and society, it will be necessary to examine his conception of non-ecclesiastical reform and the theological foundations of this in more detail.

6 The brotherhood.

For Strauss, a Christian society was both possible and necessary, and this required a total reformation, one reaching well beyond the boundaries of the church. He describes usury trade as contrary to 'the entire Christian way of life, which works faithfully only in faith and brotherly love'.[203] Although he did not have a planned, fully thought-out design for the new society, it appears that he was thinking in terms of a brotherhood based on obedience to God's commandment, particularly that of love. The significance of this concept in Strauss's thought is clear from early on; the Christian society not just a construction that could be used to promote 'natural fairness' for the sake of publicity in Eisenach. It is obvious from his introduction to the pamphlet on confraternities that the true brotherhood had been a theme of his preaching in Hall, and he urges his former congregation not to forget it.[204] The concept of the 'great brotherhood' serves partly to discourage the activities of the confraternities, but also provides a framework within which Strauss can describe the true Christian society. Although Strauss uses the 'brotherhood of all the children of God' as a synonym for the Christian assembly (that is, the church on a local level) he does not appear to distinguish between the church and the community as a whole.[205] The church mentioned in the Creed is

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203 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiiij r.

204 'der grossen Pruderschafftt, von der ich ewer andacht offt getrewlich, myt ewangelischer geschrytft gereytzt, vnd erinnert hab', *Pruderchafften*, A v.

205 Ibid. A v. In Luther's short discussion of confraternities, he too contrasts these exclusive brotherhoods with the 'most noble' brotherhood of Christians. This latter, however, appears for Luther to be conceived on a spiritual level; he does not describe it as an 'assembly', rather, it appears to refer to the brotherhood of believers: 'die göttlich, die himelisch, die aller edelst, die all ander vbertrifft, wie das gold übertrifft, kupffer oder pley, die gemainschafft aller hailigen', *Ain Sermo[n] vo[n] de[m]// hochwirdigen Sa//crament*, Ciiij r. He does recommend that the money wasted on feasts should instead be collected to help the poor or those of their own trade who are in difficulty, he says that this would be 'true, brotherly work', and that God and his saints would be happy to be patrons of such a brotherhood ('das weren rechte brüderliche werck, die got vnd seinen hailigen, die brüderschafft angenem machten, darbay sy gern patrone[n] sein wurden'), ibid., Ciij v. However, the brotherhood to which Luther refers here is not the true brotherhood of Christians, which is 'spiritual' (and not material or political), but the existing confraternities, which are to be reformed and put to good use, as

defined in its broadest sense; it is 'nothing other than the brotherhood of the true sibness and children of God'. The brotherhood, society as a whole, and the church, are one; or, rather, the church is the brotherhood. Although, as the term itself is used in only one pamphlet, it might be considered a stretch to take this idea of a brotherhood as representative of Strauss's view of society, the general principles established there can be seen throughout Strauss's works.

The brotherhood, as described in the pamphlet on confraternities, is based on faith and love: 'Christ wants to have [a] community in faith and all good works'.[206] At its heart, it is a society of mutual help: 'the substance of the brotherhood must be taught and enforced according to the words which God's mouth itself has spoken, how and in what form each Christian is obliged, required and bound by God's commandment and Christian faith to give help, support, compassion, service to the other'.[207] It is free of 'human invention' and all associated rituals and expenses, and is based on a constant willingness to accede to appropriate requests for assistance.[208] Strauss gives some general guidelines on how to live a Christian life in his pamphlet on confession, all of which are repeated in his descriptions of the brotherhood: 'protect yourself from human teaching and laws, faithfully do your artisanal work or trade, and have the greatest diligence in all outward things, that you prove yourself loyal, friendly,

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indicated by his reference to each brotherhood helping its own colleagues ('solt das gelt, das man versauffen wil züsamen legen vnnd ainen gemainen schatz samlen, ain yegklich handtwerck für sich, das man in der not, einem dürfftigen mithandtwercksman, anzülegen helffen vnd leyhen kündt, oder ain jung par volcks des selben handtwercks, von dem selben gemaynen schatz, mit eeren auß//setzen'), ibid., Ciij v – Ciiij r. The spiritual brotherhood of the faithful is to serve as an example for the individual confraternities, whose true function is to serve society in their activities ('Also wo ain brüderschafft sich erhebt, sollen sy sich also lassen annsehen, das die selben für andere menschen herauß springen, für die Christenhayt, mit betten, fasten, almüsen, vn[d] gütten wercken, etwas besunders zü thon, nit jren nutz noch lon süchen, auch nyemandt auß schlahen, sunder wie frey diener der gantzen gemayn der Christenhayt zü dienen'), ibid., Ciiij v.

206 This is in contrast to the exclusive nature of the 'invented brotherhoods', *Pruderchafften*, Aij v.

207 Ibid., A v. Strauss refers to Matthew 5, 6, and 7 and Luke 6.

208 'In this brotherhood is no patron or intercessor, also no one who usurps the service of God, but only Christ, his teaching and law. So that neither gold, silver candles, idols, masses for the dead, singing, belling, piping nor any human invention whatsoever may have a place here; but Christ alone in his holy gospel teaches, leads and induces the brothers and sisters to do according to brotherly love for their neighbours in the truth, that which each may ask of the other to be done for him according to proper desire', ibid., Aij r.

and willing to your neighbour (*negsten menschenn*), as to yourself; then you will have fulfilled the entire law of God, Romans 13'.[209]

For Strauss, as mentioned in Chapter I, faith is made manifest in love for one's neighbour. This love is the most important commandment, that which we owe to God, as he has 'directed the entire law there'.[210] The love that is the fulfilment of the law and the fruit of faith, however, goes beyond mere benevolent intent or good will towards one's neighbour; brotherly love cannot be achieved by 'the word and the tongue'.[211] Rather, it must take an active, visible, and (when appropriate) material form, bringing charity and justice in place of exploitation and neglect.[212] It is clear from Strauss's discussion of material matters, and particularly of the money wasted in supposedly pious practices, that this visible form is that of monetary 'service to the neighbour in need'.[213] In the second usury pamphlet, following a brief description of the brotherhood and the service to one's neighbour this involves, Strauss announces that 'there may be no faith without love'.[214] The central message of the sermon on Luke 19 is that it is necessary to act on one's faith, and not merely be a 'Christian of the mouth'. The Reformation must be manifest in active faith. Once one has accepted God's grace, this will or should be evident in one's outward behaviour.[215] Merely hearing, understanding, and speaking of the gospel is not enough. This 'improvement' also needs to

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209 *Beichtbüchlein,* Diiij v. The citation is Romans 13:8, Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. Strauss uses a very similar formulation in the pamphlet on purgatory: 'All we must do is to with all diligence undertake, from the commandment of the living God, to offer help and service to all men, as much as possible, while we and they are still alive, in heartfelt brotherly love and loyalty, also in this we will have fulfilled the entire law, as St Paul says to the Romans at the 13th, the love of one's neighbour is the fulfilment of the law,' *Fegfeur,* Ciiij r.

210 *Auffrur* , Biij r. Also *Fegfeur,* Ciiij; *Beichtbüchlein* ; Diiij v.

211 'And the same love of our Lord Christ will not be fulfilled with the tongue and the words, but with the works and the truth, accordingly the word and the tongue will not accomplish brotherly love among us, but it must be enforced with the works, that God has commanded us [to do] in the truth', *Wucher zu nemen,* B r.

212 *Antwurt ... Coclei,* Biij r.

213 *Heiligthüm,* Aiiij r.

214 *Wucher zu nemen,* B r.

215 *Haubtstuck ... wücher,* Aiij r.

be visible, and can mean nothing other than outward improvement in behaviour. Those who are Christian in name only are compared with the Jews of the New Testament, for whom Christ wept.[216]

The faithful Christian must obey the law of the gospel, particularly its commandment of love; if not, punishment will follow. In his sermon on Luke, Strauss likened the present-day Christians who reject the gospel to the ancient Jews whom God punished for not recognising the visitation. He was to resurrect this comparison when admonishing the former for their toleration of usury: 'no one at this time wants to take the wondrous, merciful, and gracious visitation of God to heart, in the new light of the gospel, and turn to Christ. For this reason we can expect nothing better than that which has happened to the Jews'.[217] In fact, the 'ingratitude' of the Christians is 'much greater and more serious than [that] of the Jews' and this is evident in the failure to practise brotherly love.[218] What form will this punishment take? This obedience to the gospel is not a work of merit by which one can gain salvation; as mentioned in Chapter I, God does not need such works.[219] One is to follow God's commandments solely in order to please him, and not for one's own benefit. However, although one may not earn salvation through works of love, this does not mean that, for Strauss, there was no direct connection between the two. Strauss's criticism of the selfish and neglectful laity is so severe precisely because adherence to the commandment of brotherly love is essential for salvation, this latter being his greatest concern. All must emulate God's fatherliness and generosity in their dealings with one another: 'Christ has commanded us to

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216 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij v.

217 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fij v. Strauss also uses this image in relation to relics: 'it must also happen [to] us as the ancient Jews; because they replaced the divine law and commandment with human invented law[s] and ordinance[s], and preserved it with all devotion and expense, they were plagued, blinded and paralysed, in their senses; finally [they] murdered the Son of God on the cross', *Heiligthüm*, Aiiij v.

218 'God's vengeance and punishment will not be further from you, than from those who did not receive the word of God, which is the true strength of God the almighty, with faith; and consider carefully the quotation, as Christ says, Luke at the 12th, the servant who knows his lord's will and does not do it, he must suffer many blows, but he who does not know it, he will suffer fewer blows', *Euangelium Luce*, B v.

219 *Auffrur* , Bij v.

give, serve, donate, and lend to our neighbour'.[220] Those who fail to do so are 'not Christians'.[221] Strauss thus makes the definition of a true Christian dependent on behaviour: if one wishes to know if one is 'God's child', one should ask whether one treats all men equally, and grants them 'as much honour, happiness and goodness' as one does oneself. One must question whether one gives one's neighbour as much 'help, advice, and support with heart, mouth and works, in outward sadness and all of his need' as one would wish for oneself.[222]

Fewer than two pages after apparently denying that works can earn salvation, there comes a paragraph in which Strauss announces, with no ambiguity whatever, that the 'last, final decision' regarding salvation or damnation rests on whether one has fulfilled or neglected one's duty to the poor. Using Matthew 25:31 – 46, Strauss confirms that God will save those who have 'fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, housed the wretched, visited the sick, comforted the imprisoned'. Those who have not done so will be banished to 'eternal torment'.[223] There can be no doubt that, although one cannot *earn* salvation through works of charity, the omission of such acts will bring one's damnation. This is repeated for emphasis and is echoed in the pamphlet on confraternities, preceding Strauss's lament regarding the neglect of one's brother, made in God's image, in favour of decorating idols. The brotherhoods' habit of giving money to the clergy for devotional purposes will also lead inescapably to damnation.[224] This is due partly to the presumptive, blasphemous nature of these activities, but also to the associated neglect of brotherly love: those who disobey the gospel 'must unfortunately hear for eternity: go away, you damned, into the eternal fire, as I have been hungry and you have not fed me etc. and what you have not done for the littlest of mine, you also have not done for me'.[225] The members of such confraternities are warned not

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220 *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij r.

221 This is the context in which Strauss declares that 'there may be no faith without love', *Wucher zu nemen*, B r.

222 Ibid., B r. Luke 6:31.

223 *Heiligthüm*, Aiiij r-v.

224 'It is my faithful advice on this [that] you will protect yourselves from your familiar faults and the damnation of the souls, so yours [are] not terribly destroyed', *Pruderchafften*, Aiij v, as above.

225 Ibid., Aiij v. Again,this is a paraphrase of Matthew 25:40ff.

to allow themselves to dissipate their money 'in such abuse against God and brotherly love' and thereby 'enter into damnation'.[226] There can be no mistake here. The two sins combine to ensure that the confraternity members murder their own souls.[227] This possibility of damning oneself through the neglect of God's law applies primarily to the neglect of one's brother, but also to other aspects of life; for example, the clergy who seek to alter God's law regarding marriage must likewise be 'forever damned'.[228]

Strauss in fact describes usury as worse than the abandoned popish idolatries which did not 'allow Christ to be Christ'; the doctrine that permits usury is 'an even more dreadful, hellish law'.[229] This is because, as mentioned above, usury requires two participants. Although Strauss does present the debtor as a victim of the trade, in terms of his soul as well as his income, the overall impression is one of guilt. Both parties are equally culpable. The debtor too is mired in sin ('which then is the more pious, the usury lord or the usury servant?'), and will both be damned.[230] The money-lender is obviously breaking the commandment of brotherly love, yet the debtor is also guilty of failing to love his brother, the usurer. One could argue that a refusal to pay one's debts is a failure to show love to those to whom one owes money; that helping one's neighbour should extend to the creditors. One's neighbours, after all, include the wicked as well as the good. Strauss declares that one must show love 'not only to the good and to our friends, but also to the wicked, and those who have insulted us and done evil to us'[231]; the children of God must always 'substitute good for evil.'[232] However, this is not his interpretation of usury. Not only are the buyer and the seller in the *Wiederkauf* 'the ruiners of their own souls'[233], the 'buyer' ruins own soul, and the seller allows him to do

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226 Ibid., Aiiij r

227 Strauss's address to those who would mock his teaching due to their greed and blindness (in contrast to the small number of true Christians) implies that their damnation will be their own fault: they may go about their business, but will be judged by God, *Wucher zu nemen*, Dij r.

228 *Pfaffen Ee*, Aiij r.

229 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij r-v.

230 Ibid., B4 r.

231 Ibid., Bij r.

232 Ibid., Bij v.

233 Ibid., G v.

so. The sin of the debtor is that he is partly to blame for the damnation of the soul of the usurer due to his collusion in the perpetuation of this trade. The commandment of love for one's neighbour extends to concern for his soul.[234] Strauss had described the love for one's neighbour (the 'fruit' of true faith as described in Chapter I) as involving some degree of responsibility for the salvation of this neighbour in his sermon on Luke.[235] The debtor must from the strength of the godly commandment of brotherly love give no consent or help to [his creditor's] damning request' for payment; this is because 'the salvation of his neighbour should be of more importance to each pious Christian, from God's commandment, than his own corporeal life'.[236] God will judge the debtor as though he had physically murdered the usurer, and will damn him too. Strauss compares this situation to that of a man who is complicit in the death of another, even though he may not have strangled him with his own hands.[237] True Christians should never consider their own advantage in this matter, but 'sadly grasp to heart the ruin of [their] brother's soul, in which they simply cannot be willing or supportive, without the abrogation of God's commandment and the damnation of their own souls'.[238] On this dual responsibility for one's own salvation and that of others, Strauss states that 'the commandment of love considers the redemption and salvation of the neighbour, and does not allow us to consent to or help in the sin and ruin of the soul'.[239] The debtor can be held accountable for the double soul-murder. By engaging in an ungodly contract, 'the usury servant subordinates himself powerfully to his usury lord against God

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234 Ibid., Bij v – Biij r. In this 'murderous trade', 'at least two souls will be murdered, that of him who takes the usury, and of him who gives the usury'.

235 This process is described in the following paragraph: you must recognise in your heart that 'your salvation and redemption is in Christ alone'; you must have faith in him; and 'this faith ... works in you the fruits of the true love of your neighbour; accordingly that you, to please God, thus diligently and from your whole heart, prove yourself faithful to and eager [to serve] your neighbour, as you would want and grant to your own heart, yes, also to die, for the sake of your neighbour's salvation', *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij r.

236 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fiiij v.

237 'It is worth the same [...] in the judgement of God, if you strangle a man by hand, or consent to his death or give help or advice to it. Thus in this case too, if you are willing and helpful to the usurer or to the death of his wretched, dying soul, you are responsible before God for his damnable undertaking', ibid., G r.

238 Ibid., G r.

239 Ibid., G r – v.

and the salvation and eternal bliss of both their souls'.[240] Those who do not agree with this position ignore the fact that faith and love must take a visible form, and that 'we cannot be children of God and, in seeking usury, bring our neighbours to hell with us'.[241] Instead, one must 'advance the salvation of [one's] neighbour's soul with the highest, most thorough effort'.[242]

If love is absent, then so is faith. The neglect of the practical aspects of brotherly love entails a rejection of God, and damnation must therefore ensue. Keeping the commandment of love, on the other hand, requires a willingness to suffer, and this does not apply solely to the 'usury lord'. Just as a Christian must 'show more loyalty to his fellow man regarding his soul, than to wish to demand of him the temporal, unjustifiable wealth', so too the 'interest people' should 'sadly grasp to the heart the ruin of their brother's soul'.[243] Poverty, even if this brings the threat of starvation, will not be accepted as an excuse for borrowing at interest when God comes to judge the debtor.[244] Fear of punishment for non-payment will be similarly disregarded. For both borrower and lender, the salvific should be paramount as, of all the sins that will lead to damnation, the most egregious is the neglect of one's neighbour's soul, more so than that of his physical welfare.[245] Strauss says that he cannot give any comfort to those who use God's word as a cover for their desire to escape payment, as Scripture teaches only 'to agree in no way to the ruin of the soul of the next man, or give any help or

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240 Ibid., Eiij r.

241 Ibid., B v

242 Ibid., B r; later in the pamphlet, Strauss writes that brotherly love requires one 'to agree in no way, or give any help or support to the ruin of the soul of the neighbour. As the salvation of the neighbour should be of more importance to each pious Christian, from God's commandment, than his own corporal life. If the usurer demands [unfair interest], so he desires nothing other than the ruin of his poor soul', ibid., Fiiij v – G r.

243 Ibid., G r.

244 Ibid., Biij r; Ibid., Biij v.

245 'And the primary thing above all in that which pertains to the soul, as the embodiment of brotherly love contains us, first and last, against offence and harm of the conscience of our neighbour', ibid., Biij r.

support'.[246] This reformation of behaviour as well as of faith must come before all material considerations.

A society based on brotherly love, therefore, is not wholly advantageous to anyone. A degree of suffering is unavoidable and is an inherent part of the 'brotherhood' and the life of a true Christian. If one has gratefully accepted God's 'visitation' (that is, if one has faith), one will be prepared to undergo any injury, persecution, or difficulty for the sake of God's word.[247] Marriage, for example, is presented as something of a hardship, in virtuous contrast to the easy if sinful life of the false celibate. In the former, one must suffer both good and evil, as Adam and Eve were burdened.[248] These complaints are part of married life, but must be borne with patience and love. Even so, there will be suffering, but this is one's lot as a Christian: 'You will also take on with patience offensiveness, worry, and need, much of which you will find here, and not beat out love and tolerance, there you will find the true cross of Christ, [with which] all of Adam's children here in the vale of tears have been burdened by God'.[249] It is this aspect of Strauss's view of faith and salvation that accounts for his apparent indifference regarding the general harshness of the life of the debtor. The internal suffering of the process of faith described in Chapter I must be reflected in a willingness to suffer outward and inevitable difficulties.

The inward and outward suffering that comes with bearing one's cross and being crucified with Christ is presented as an essential part of faith and therefore of salvation. The central text regarding the crucifixion of the self is Matthew 10:38, 'and he who does not take his cross

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246 Ibid., Fiiij v.

247 'Vnd beschlußlich yhn allen dyngen bedenck dych wol ob du dye straff des gotlichen wortes erleyden magst, vnd vmb des wortts willen auch schaden vnd verfolgung gedulden, vnd also sol dyr deyn gewyssen woll sagenn ob du die gnedig selyg heymsuchung, des veterlichen wort gottis, mit hertzlicher danckbarkeyt, fruchtbarlichen erkennest', *Euangelium Luce*, B v.

248 *Pfaffen Ee*, Aiiij r.

249 Ibid., Aij r [Bij r].

and follow me is not worthy of me'.[250] The effort required to conform to God's will, particularly in relation to love, is yet another aspect of the perpetual struggle between flesh and spirit, whereby the love of oneself is in constant conflict with the love of one's neighbour mandated by God. This attempt to overcome our natural instinct 'will almost kill us'.[251] When refusing to pay the ungodly interest, Strauss instructs his readers thus: you must suffer, and 'allow another to seize your temporal nourishment'. This may be disagreeable, but you thereby 'prove yourself sadly and patiently as a healthy limb of your suffering head, Christ'.[252] We need to 'study the gospel for our improvement'.[253] If one is prepared to renounce worldly wealth, including suffering the seizure of one's goods following refusal to pay interest, this is a sign that God's word has taken root, 'as where the holy gospel does not seize the old Adam powerfully in the will, there it has not yet come into the heart'.[254] Faith is practised not only in works of love, but also in the accompanying denial of one's own self-interest. This, Strauss was later to claim, is the difference between the 'true and painted Christians'.[255] Both love and suffering are the fruit of true faith. The latter (denying one's own needs in favour of those of one's brother) will also enable one to achieve the former. Strauss uses Galatians 5:13f. to show the close connection between the two: 'You should love your neighbour as yourself'; here, Strauss writes, 'we will find the true crucifixion, with which we must be worried in our flesh along with the vices and lusts'.[256]

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250 Strauss also cites Matthew 16:24, Then Jesus told his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' *Auffrur* , Aij v.

251 Ibid., Bij v.

252 *Wucher zu nemen,* Fiij v.

253 *Euangelium Luce,* Aiiij v.

254 *Wucher zu nemen,* Fiij v. Strauss continues, using the image of the grain of wheat dying and bearing fruit: 'should it bring the fruit of our redemption, thus it is also necessary that we, considering the word of God, kill our own will, right, and inclination in ourselves, otherwise we will bring no evangelical fruit', ibid., Fiij v- Fiiij r.

255 'You are a true Christian, if you have crucified your old Adam, along with his natural vices and lusts, but if you have no reduction of your own pleasure and lack an eager heart to abandon your lust, then you are also not a dedicated follower and disciple of our lord Christ', *Auffrur*, Aiij r.

256 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. This text, according to Strauss, is the fulfilment of the law. Also, it is through faith and love that we are burdened with our cross: love, the outward exercise of our

Pleasure is coupled with reason. Both of these must be overcome, the latter first, and this alone will lead to the necessary complete trust in God. Not only does reason give rise to the blasphemous works-righteousness, it also leads to all sin, preventing one from truly conquering the flesh.[257] The defeat of one's own false reason, which is associated with pride and the old Adam, will, as described in Chapter I, necessitate great suffering.[258] The struggle for faith is a conflict between flesh and spirit; the former is not merely the traditional 'works of the flesh', but all that man's sinful nature desires.[259] When one abandons reason, one conquers lust; when one embraces reason, one increases wickedness. The conquest of lust must be carried out according to the spirit, and not human reason, 'otherwise lust will be stopped in one place according to reason, and sought a thousandfold at another'.[260] Man may have good intentions, but the products of reason, including celibacy and other traditional methods of conquering the flesh which have come from mere knowledge of the law rather than from faith, have failed to abolish vice. No one will be successful in endeavour without having first 'crucified his reason through the word of God. And second, abandoned all of his reason, and afterwards he can properly and strongly seize the lust of the flesh, as the spirit shows him the word'.[261] All of the 'human teaching and law' which has originated in reason and been sanctioned by the church, therefore, has led not to a true Christian life, but only to the 'beautiful, decorated appearance of the painted Christian way'. It has failed to make man virtuous or free from vice; this is because 'not reason, but faith, saves'.[262] Strauss again cites Galatians 5:24 in support of the chaste ideal of marriage and general denial: 'that concerns all Christian men, as to carry the true cross and to try to follow Christ every day is nothing other

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faith, is presented as akin to suffering: 'to burden each one with his cross through the stirring, constantly active faith in love', ibid., Aiij v.

257 Ibid., B v.

258 Ibid., Aiiij v.

259 Again, Galatians 5:13ff. Ibid., Aiij v.

260 Ibid., B v.

261 Ibid., Bij r.

262 Ibid., B r.

than not to give any place to corporal and fleshly sensuality, so that Christ, and not the old Adam, takes the upper hand in us'.[263]

The crucifixion of the flesh, then, involves not only the conquest of reason (that is, man's conviction that he can achieve salvation for himself), but also the more literal interpretation of the conquest of the flesh: the need to overcome actual physical desires. Strauss describes this corporal denial as less severe than the spiritual anguish caused by the recognition of these desires, but it is nonetheless part of the Christian life.[264] This denial must not be undertaken for the sake of spiritual vanity, however. Just as Strauss condemns the false chastity, purportedly practised by the priests and monks, he also denounces false moderation, in the form of fasting.[265] This is of course not only of no merit with regard to gaining salvation, it is also of no use when it comes to conquering lust itself.[266] Lust is incompatible with piety, and this includes greed and all fleshly desires. The avoidance of over-indulgence in food or drink is an important part of killing one's old Adam.[267] This same care to forego unseemly pleasure must also be applied to sexual relations: God 'does not want that our hearts be dissipated in

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263 *Pfaffen Ee*, B v.

264 'And this crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh, must not be understood only in as much as it is painful to the body and opposed to all that pleases the corporeal life, but much more as the godly nature through the spirit daily finds itself burdened, when the works of the flesh perform their defective incitement in the power of the law of sins in all eagerness, which then is a distressing and great pain to the pious Christian', *Auffrur*, Bij r. See Chapter I, above.

265 *Fegfeur*, B r. *Pfaffen Ee*, B v; *Fegfeur*, B r; *Auffrur*, B v.

266 This is because these practices are founded in reason rather than faith, and the conquest of reason must take place before that of lust. *Auffrur*, B v: 'If the cross has prevailed and imprisoned the individual reason, and judgement, so the man can restrain his physical lust and pleasure'. The monks are described as the worst promoters of the false denial ('as if the flesh were crucified enough according to the true manner of the true, genuine cross, through wearing a cowl, staying awake, and fasting for some time, to be shut up in convents and ruled by the voluntary obedience of a man, and the prayer and harshness taken on by the same'); in fact, this type of behaviour only intensifies lust and desire, *ibid.*, Aij v. Such behaviour of the 'work-holy' is 'envious, spiteful, impatient, insolent and swaggering'.

267 'God speaks through St. Paul to the Galatians at the 5th. Those men who are men of Christ, they have crucified their flesh, including its desires and longings. That concerns all Christian men, as to carry the true cross and to try to follow Christ every day is nothing other than to not give any place to corporal and fleshly sensuality, so that Christ, and not the old Adam, takes the upper hand in us. And Christ does not want that our hearts be weighted down with gluttony and drunkenness, Luke 21', *Pfaffen Ee*, B v.

the lust of the marital state without any fear of God'.[268] In his sermon on marriage, Strauss condemns the over-eating and drunkenness that takes place at weddings not only because, like the gluttony of the confraternity feasts, it signifies a waste of money that could otherwise be given to the poor, but also because such indulgence is in itself inimical to salvation. At these weddings, 'all wantonness must be practised in guzzling, gluttony, running, dancing and all devilish luxury [enjoyed] completely freely and disgustingly'. This very 'expense and abundance' are incompatible with Christ and his word: 'here Jesus, Mary and the disciples of Christ are not invited to a wedding, rather the world with all pride and satanic work [...] where Jesus comes to the wedding, there is moderation and shortage'. The difficulties of marriage can be mitigated in this moderation, as faith will provide consolation. Only God and faith can transform the water of difficulty into the wine of comfort: 'it should be known that the complaints in the marriage are lightened for you through God alone'.[269]

The opening section of Strauss's second work on usury is designed to persuade the Christian that he or she should not be concerned with worldly things. One must not be preoccupied with money; all care for wealth, 'even in appropriate trade', is unchristian.[270] This 'unholy, destructive preoccupation with the temporal' is symptomatic of a lack of faith.[271] The most obvious targets of this criticism are the usurers. Strauss mentions the 'spirit which raises us above nature'; this has not worked in a man who is worried about the return of his money.[272] Only the 'fleshly, earthly man, untouched by the 'spirit of Christ', will not grasp that he should risk the loss of his money; he is 'bound' to usury by his own needs and possessions.[273] This is partly why one should seek to help one's neighbour not in order to please him, but to

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268 Ibid., B v.

269 Ibid., B r.

270 *Wucher zu nemen*, Diij r. This is in a passage in which Strauss laments the financial ruin caused by usury, not the financial worries which have led the debtor to take out a usurious loan.

271 Ibid., Aiij v.

272 Ibid., C v.

273 Ibid., C v.

please God.[274] Strauss is not concerned with comfort for its own sake. The restitution of 'natural fairness' is merely a side-effect of the restoration of God's law regarding usury. Strauss, when speaking of the 'victory' of the gospel, contrasts the richness of 'heavenly and supernatural wealth', given by God to the faithful, and 'the ephemeral lust of the world'. It is necessary to abandon the latter in order to gain the former.[275] In speaking of 'all heavenly and eternal wealth', Strauss is not merely warning his readers against preoccupation with the material: it should be concluded from all of this, he writes, that the Christian must not only trust in God for salvation, but also 'in the very slightest, smallest things'.[276]

The uncertainty brought to God's promise of eternal life by the defenders of purgatory and the 'soul-service' has 'portrayed for us the comforting and well-assured Christian death as so dreadful and terrible'. Through this, 'the certain, undeceiving Christian hope with which every pious Christian comforts himself in faith is thus also defeated and destroyed' and 'the sinful natural reluctance to die will be strengthened'.[277] Following the series of contrasts of the confraternities pamphlet, Strauss underlines the idea that loss of one's own money, faithlessness, and now, neglect of the poor, are all connected: 'Thus dear lords and friend[s], your money will be spent and God dishonoured, [the] faith suffocated, the gospel broken, and brotherly love prevented'.[278] The fatal mistrust in God's mercy, which leads one to rely on other means of salvation, combines in these instances with the neglect of the poor to

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274 This is why works of love are necessary; one must to make some 'reparation (*widerlegung*)' for God's grace. He himself does not require anything (presumably a reference to masses, fasting, and so on); instead, one is to serve one's neighbour on his behalf: 'The reparation for God's excessive grace and good works must also be found in here with us. For that reason, as God does not require our good works, he has commanded us to love the neighbour who is (as [are] we ourselves) full of affliction', *Auffrur*, Biij r.

275 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aiij r.

276 Ibid., Aiij v.

277 *Fegfeur*, Aiij v - Aiiij r.

278 *Pruderchafften*, Aiij r. Strauss uses a similar construction when writing about relics, pointing out that the commandment of love is central to the gospel; if the former is abandoned, the latter is 'broken': 'it is openly shown that in the false, invented adoration, God's commandment and the whole law is broken, as then all of God's law[s] are completed and fulfilled in brotherly love, as God says through St. Paul to the Romans at the 13th. So it is easily to be recognized, how damnable is the great inestimable wickedness due to the relics', *Heiligthüm*, Aiiij r.

ensure damnation.[279] Strauss likens the idolatrous attempts to gain salvation to unrighteous or unnatural methods of making money: 'if we devote great work and effort into nourishment when God does not make the same beneficial to us, so we cannot use it'.[280] The same complete trust in God should apply to one's material needs.

Strauss uses Matthew 6 to argue that God has provided everything one could want.[281] Even the birds and flowers trust in God; the Christian ('whom God places above all his creatures, and has loved above all of them') who fails to do so and instead 'regards God's care as so meagre and limited, as God promises to feed him, and to nourish him, and yet has doubts about this' can possess only a 'destructive faith'.[282] Those who scramble to acquire these things for themselves are 'presumptuous, anxious, and despairing men who have neither faith nor trust in God', and 'are not Christians'.[283] This *Gelassenheit*, or surrender to God's will in all matters, is a particularly notable feature of Karlstadt's theology.[284] The clergy's eagerness to fill their pockets originates in this lack of trust: 'the anxiety that the servants of

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279 'Dan so die rechtfertigkait, vn[d] ledigung vo[n] sunden, allain auß gotis parmhertzigkait her fleust, die vns gar abgeschlage[n], so wir hert vnd vnmilt in der not vnsers nechsten gefunden werden, so hat auch gott kainn tail an vnns, der glaub ist auch dahin, vn[d] dan so geen vir vo[n] einer boßheit in die ander', ibid., B r.

280 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aiiij r.

281 Matthew 6:27ff., Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap not gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them [...] And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these [...] Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well', ibid., Aiij v – Aiiij v.

282 Ibid., Aiiij r-v.

283 Ibid., Aiiij r.

284 Karlstadt, in his work on the meaning of *Gelassenheit*, makes the following points: 'we must abandon all created things (*creaturen*), if we want to have God as [our] one protector and [...] ruler', and 'those who are poor should not worry about what they are to eat tomorrow, or how they are to feed themselves, neither should those with possessions comfort themselves with their money, if they were to be robbed of all their goods, they should say, God has given them, God has taken them', Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Was gesagt ist/ Sich// gelassen/ vnd was das wort// gelassenhait bedeüt/ vnd wa es in hailiger ge=//schrifft begriffen.* [...] *Andres Bodenstain von Ca=//rolstat/ ain neüwer Lay* ([Augsburg, 1523]), Aijv, Biijr.

the churches should have no shortage comes from faithlessness and evil hearts to God'.[285] However, it is this faithlessness too that leads people to borrow money at usury: they trust in the moneylenders rather than in God. This is why Strauss condemns the 'damnable gloss' that states that 'the need of the poor excuses him from mortal sin'; neither may the good use the wicked for their own benefit. God, and not need, is the standard by which one must judge truth.[286] In borrowing money at interest, therefore, one has abandoned both God and godly poverty and suffering, and turned instead to the devil: 'It is just as though the despairing people were to say, if God will not help me, so nonetheless the Devil will help me'.[287] Just as the usurer has damned himself by his greed, his 'victim' should have been content to suffer and trust in God.[288]

This is the second reason for the damnation of both usurer and borrower. The soul of the former is lost because of his 'hard, money-grubbing heart'; that of his debtor, because 'he does not want to be content in temporal need with God for a short time, and in temporal poverty regards the cross of Christ with such disdain, and [is] proven entirely unbelieving of God's promise'.[289] It is this, along with the harm they do to the usurers' souls, that makes the borrowers wicked. An active faith expressed in love involves the willingness to suffer both the shortage involved in going without a necessary loan and the prosecution resulting from a refusal to pay interest for the sake of the usurer's soul. The true love which comes from faith is contrasted with the 'painted love' found in those who refuse to suffer for the sake of their neighbour.[290] This is why Strauss can claim that both 'buyer and seller, interest-lord and interest-man are openly trapped in the despicable, temporal wealth, offensive to God and the

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285 *Christlichen versamlung*, B r.

286 *Wucher zu nemen*, Biij v – B4 r.

287 Ibid., B4 r.

288 Such a man 'does not want to be content in temporal need with God for a short time, and in temporal poverty regards the cross of Christ with such disdain, and [is] proven entirely unbelieving of God's promise', ibid., B4 r.

289 Ibid., B4 r.

290 Ibid., Bij r.

ruiners of their own souls'.[291] Not only should a rejection of temporal comfort and a concern for the usurer's soul preclude one from entering into a usurious contract in the first place, it should also mean that one must break such a contract if it has already been made. The spiritual welfare of one's neighbour should be valued more than one's own life and, therefore, any consequences of a refusal to pay should be borne as part of the necessary suffering of the Christian.

7 Reception.

According to Rogge, Strauss's soteriology did not conform to the Lutheran doctrine of justification through faith alone: 'Eigentümlich unberücksichtigt in den Schriften von Strauß ist der sola-fide-Gedanke Luthers! Gewiß redet er an zahllosen Stellen von der *fides*, aber dann nicht in der unmittelbaren Verknüpfung mit der *justificatio*'.[292] In his brief examination of this subject, he insists that Strauss adopted this element of Luther's teaching only superficially, without having 'experienced' it himself.[293] On the other hand, Moeller and Stackmann use Strauss's earliest pamphlet as part of their study demonstrating a strong degree of unity in the early Reformation. Strauss, like all of the authors of the sermons examined there, is described as an unconditional advocate of this aspect of the Wittenberg message.[294] It is clear from the pamphlets discussed above, however, that not only must the

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291 Ibid., G v. The debtor, requiring money, takes out a loan and disregards his brother's salvation.

292 Rogge, *Jakob Strauss*, 149. This is not quite true; as mentioned in Chapter I, Strauss does say 'the entire sum of all Christian work will be begun, executed, and blessedly completed in the faith. As in this faith alone will we be justified, and freed from our sins, and Christ begins to exist in us, and we in Christ', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Biiij r.

293 'Er ist im Süden in seinen Anfängen einer der mahnenden Prediger des Reformkatholizismus gewesen. In Wittenberg hat er dann entschiedende Anregungen durch die Reformatoren bekommen, die ihn über den Reformkatholizismus hinausführten. Er nahm das Neue in sich auf, ohne den Prozeß, der dazu geführt hatte, auch mit durchlebt zu haben. Daher bleibt Vieles an der Oberfläche, erscheint farblos und unvollständig', Rogge, *Jakob Strauss*, 149.

294 'In vielfältigen Variationen wird dargelegt [in the pamphlets], daß der Empfang des Heils unbedingt und ausschließlich dem Glauben zugesagt sei – an keiner einzigen Stelle ist dieses "sola fide" irgendwie relativiert oder beschränkt', Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, *Städtische Predigt in*

Christian have complete trust in God, he also has duties and obligations towards his brother. Failure to fulfil either of these commandments will lead to damnation. Only faith is required for salvation, but this is the 'faith that works through love'.[295] The importance of love is evident in Strauss's discussion of those who are now in heaven and have been saved for both reasons; they 'who remain in Christian faith and godly, also brotherly love, until their end, and thus die in God's favour and compassion'.[296] The exact relationship between the factors which contribute to salvation appears to be that God saves, but only if the Christian lives in faith. Had Strauss had completely abandoned works-righteousness? What, for him, was the exact nature of the relationship between faith and works? Are there any indications that loving one's neighbour and bearing the cross could be seen as works of merit?

The passage in *Trostliche verstendige leer* in which Strauss announces that man is sinful in all of his works follows a discussion of Romans 14:23. Strauss interprets this verse in a general sense to mean, 'whatever does not proceed from faith is sin'.[297] This could imply that works which *are* carried out in faith and in love of God, may be valuable. In the former passage, Strauss had been admonishing sinners. It is clear from this section of the pamhplet that, although all will be sinners until the death of their mortal bodies and their old Adam, it is possible for a sinner to have faith, and that the works of the faithful sinner may indeed be good.[298] This possibility is confirmed later in the pamphlet, in the case of the sinner who always permits Christ to redeem him from sin, recognises himself to be a sinner, places his hope in God, and allows him his honour. 'Accordingly', Strauss reassures such an individual,

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der Frühzeit der Reformation: eine Untersuchung deutscher Flugschriften der Jahre 1522 bis 1529 (Göttingen, 1996), 318.

295 *Auffrur*, Aiij r.

296 *Fegfeur*, Aij r; *Wucher zu nemen*, D r.

297 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Cij v. Romans 14:23, But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

298 In the same way, none of the activities of the confraternities are of use to anyone, as anything undertaken without faith is sinful and 'an abomination' to God: 'die weil inn der worheit hie nichtt gutes volbrachtt mag werden, dan waß euszerthalb des glaubens beschickt, ist alles sind vnd gottem herren vnd allen auszerwelten ein grewel, nuen mögen selich sunder synnikaiten, vnd erticht angenomen menschen findt vnd ordenungen auß angetzeyten grunt im galuben kein bestant haben, dan es alles versamlungen seint auszerthalb des heiligen euangeliumß', *Pruderchafften*, Aiij r.

'you and your work will be righteous and pleasing before God the almighty in the law and righteousness'.[299] This suggests that works, if done in faith, can please God. Is there any indication that these works performed in faith, as they please God, can affect salvation? There is a degree of ambiguity in Strauss's denial of the utility of masses for the dead who have died in faith, in which he insists that the salvation of these souls is beyond man's influence as there is no intermediate state of purgatory.[300] If Strauss believed that one's good works had no effect on one's *own* salvation, would he not have employed this to support his argument that these same good works could have no effect on someone else's salvation? This would provide an easier, more coherent argument. As it stands, Strauss's apparent reluctance to abandon necessary works allows for inconsistency.[301]

In his pamphlet on the inner and outer baptism, Strauss does say that salvation depends on no external thing.[302] As mentioned in Chapter I, however, this statement must be read in context. Strauss is attempting to reassure, and the phrase 'external thing' represents only ceremonies and acts performed without faith. The most unambiguous suggestion that there are certain good works (presumably works of love) that contribute towards man's salvation also comes in the pamphlet on purgatory. Here, Strauss denounces the useless attempts of the

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299 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij v. 'And therefore you accomplish righteousness, if you give to God in true correct faith and undoubting hope, the honour that belongs to him alone, if you trust [in] him alone, as he, who alone forgives you your sins of his own accord', *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciij r-v.

300 *Fegfeur*, Ciiij r. Romans 6:7. See Chapter I, above.

301 Another example of such ambiguity is found in a passage in which Strauss distinguishes between necessary and unnecessary works using the New Testament example of Mary and Martha, and insists that participation in any attempt to buy salvation is proof of a lack of faith, as the faith will not permit one to do 'anything in which it can be doubted or uncertain whether human salvation can be promoted thereby', *Heiligthüm* B v- Bij r· (Der christenlich lebendig glaub, gibt nichts zü dem christen zü wircken, thun, ader zü lassen, das vngewiß vnd zweiffelhaftig ist, obs menschen hail darin gefurdert sey, dan alle christenliche gothafftige werck müssent mit gewisser erkantniß im glauben bestheen, wie dan der glaub in dem lebendigen wort gotis/ was züthün ader zü lassen not ist, offenbarlich anzaigst). The implication is that there are other, 'godly works' that can 'promote' salvation; once one has faith (or, indeed, has read the Bible) one will know without doubt which works are necessary for salvation and which are not. One must only do that which the word shows to be necessary; anything else, 'even if it concerns the body of our Lord Christ [as Martha's ministrations], has no standing with God', *Heiligthüm* Bij r.

302 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, B v.

Maccabees to influence God on behalf of the dead and says that 'the qualities of the true, good works are twisted in this invented little book, which [works] in the faith of our lord Christ alone, serve towards salvation'.[303] Is the active form of faith then a form of works-righteousness? Is Strauss's brotherly love a direct replacement for the traditional devotional works?

There is plenty of evidence that Strauss rejected the idea of gaining salvation even by means of fulfilling this central commandment. At one point in the pamphlet on confraternities, he makes a fairly unequivocal statement against meritorious works, stating that God is the origin of all that is good in man: 'the brothers also have no particular influence or idea themselves of their own works except alone what the head performs in them, as the members may do nothing praiseworthy without the influence of the head, as here Christ will be recognised as he who alone is the creator, rescuer and saviour'.[304] It would seem that good and necessary works are performed through divine, rather than human agency. The true brotherhood of mutual help, in which is 'each brother too has his share in all goods of his fellow-brothers', is a 'most holy good work that Christ, the head of the church, performs in his members in true faith, hope and love'.[305]

Are works of brotherly love merely an indication, then, that one's faith is sound, rather than a contribution to salvation in and of themselves? It does appear to be faith that enables love: 'Christian love, through faith, breaks through [...] the capabilities of all creatures'.[306] The precise sequence is set out here: 'As faith allows our desire and attention to adhere to nothing other than God, whose compelling, commanding will moves us from the start to all Christian

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303 *Fegfeur*, Cij v. 2 Maccabees 10:43ff

304 This passage begins, 'that is a most holy good work that Christ, the head of the church, performs in his members in true faith, hope and love. [...] For as no member of [the] corporal body works by itself, thus the members of the holy brotherhood work in God nothing other than what the common body may work, affect and support [in] each one, according to the influence of the head, that is, according to the grace of Christ', *Pruderchafften*, Aij r.

305 Ibid., Aij r.

306 *Wucher zu nemen*, B v. Also, 'the proper, true Christian love, that the godly powerful faith introduces', ibid, Bij r.

practice, [this] too should be the final conclusion of all of our acts'.[307] It seems from this that faith leads one to God and brings one under his will, enabling one to obey the commandment. An insistence on the importance of good works to the process of salvation would not in itself contradict Strauss's inclusion in that group of early-reformation preachers identified by Moeller and Stackmann; a group, they argue, that embraced wholesale Luther's version of salvation through faith alone.[308] Luther too, it has been argued, believed that works were essential for salvation. However, 'Luther treats good works as the natural result of having been justified, rather than the cause of that justification [...] The believer performs good works as an act of thankfulness to God for having forgiven him, rather than an attempt to get God to forgive him in the first place'.[309] Obedience to the law is required of the Christian, but will not influence his salvation. In the second usury pamphlet, Strauss states that God gave up his life for us, therefore we should live only at 'his command and pleasure'.[310] This could indicate a duty to be fulfilled for its own sake, due to gratitude, rather than a means to salvation. If this interpretation were correct, it would enable Strauss's presentation of 'works which are necessary for salvation' to be reconciled with salvation through faith *alone*, meaning that he had indeed adopted Luther's soteriology in all of its aspects.

For Luther, however, love is a result of faith, and faith is given by God; there is no room for human agency in earning salvation. Strauss's interpretation of this is somewhat different, and it is in this question of divine and human agency that the difficulty in accepting the unified picture of the early Reformation proposed by Moeller and Stackmann, in which the average preacher fully accepted or even comprehended Luther's understanding of the path to

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307 Ibid., B v – Bij r.

308 Moeller and Stackmann (1996), as above.

309 Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (3rd edn, Cambridge, 2005) 114. 'Luther does not, as he is frequently represented, reject the necessity of good works in justification: opera sund necessaria ad salutem, sed non causant salutem, quia fides sola dat vitam. He frequently appeals to the biblical image of the good tree which bears good fruit, thus testifying to, rather than causing, its good nature', ibid., 203.

310 *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij r

salvation, becomes apparent. For Strauss, both love and its outward expression are inextricably linked with faith. Outward behaviour, then, can be taken as proof of the presence or absence of faith. This may not mean that such behaviour will in itself save or damn, but rather that it is a sign of the inward righteousness. Does it then follow that, if one acquires faith, one's attitude towards one's neighbour will thereafter conform? When Strauss exhorts his audience to love their neighbour, it would appear that he is really telling them that their faith is incomplete, and must be improved. The purpose must be to induce the individual to become truly faithful; to substitute that faith which brings love for the false, 'painted' version, and in doing so, to change his or her behaviour towards others. One can reconcile this with man's own inability to do good in so far as it is faith that allows him to achieve this, even though a degree of inconsistency remains, as even the faithful man is not perfect and must constantly acknowledge this. As love is the 'fruit' of faith,[311] the real question is whether man has any influence on salvation through a decision to accept or reject this active faith. Can the faithful truly choose to submit themselves to this process of crucifixion and sacrifice, or have those who do make this 'decision' already been selected by God?

In his second usury work, Strauss makes it clear that man requires divine assistance, specifically that of the Holy Spirit (which, in raising him 'above nature', enables him to obey God), if he is to act in accordance with his faith.[312] However, given that which Strauss has written elsewhere, this almost certainly does not mean that this work of the spirit will be sufficient. On the contrary, one must choose to take advantage of the help offered by the spirit in order to live according to the commandment. The exhortation in the sermon on Luke not to reject God's 'gracious, merciful visitation' refers specifically to behaviour in accordance

311 See Chapter I, above.

312 'Die Euangelische gebot deuten an den geist der vns vber die natur erhocht, vnnd dz vns naturlich nit muglich yst, vonbringt ym glauben der geist Christi reichtlich yn vns. Darumb der fleischlich yrdischen mensch, nach seinem alten Adam, kan er die gebot Christi nit fassen. Darumb scheinet yhm sein eygener nutz notturfft vnd gut, vnd besteht yhn leichtlich die wucher sucht', *Wucher zu nemen*, C v.

with God's teaching.[313] There are people who are not prepared to undergo the painful process of self-recognition and self-crucifixion in a physical sense; who prefer their own pleasure and interest to Christ. Strauss presents this as a free choice.[314] Presumably, these people are those who have chosen to reject the visitation.[315] Perhaps the most significant indication that salvation is in one's own hands is the possibility of condemning one's neighbour to damnation. The passage from the second usury pamphlet quoted above to show the importance of faith ('God the almighty has insurmountably confirmed and indicated to us that we are capable of all things in faith, through our lord Christ and nothing so great may be found in heaven nor on earth regarding our salvation, that is not given to us through Christ from God') should be interpreted to mean that one has been given the *possibility* of salvation through Christ's sacrifice and that nothing one does towards one's salvation can be done without Christ or faith; nonetheless, the choice to obey or disobey the commandment of love remains with the individual Christian.[316] This conforms to the ideas expressed elsewhere, that there are indeed works which are necessary for salvation. However, these can only be works that are done through faith, a faith which has been granted by God. Strauss ends his second usury tract with the words, 'Our teaching and law, [...] in which we, according to God's will and only with God's grace, remain unmoved, is Christ our dear Lord and his godly, eternal word, to whom alone is praise and honour, the power and kingdom forever'.[317] This, however, does not necessarily preclude choice: it is only by God's will and grace that man can follow the teaching and law of the gospel, although he may still do otherwise.

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313 'Darumbe lyeben brüder gedenck eyn jder fur sich selbs, das ehr dye gnedig heymsuchung, tzü seynem ewygen schaden, nit außschlahe, warliche lieben brüder ych wil aller menschen geschweygen yhn der weytenn welt, got hat euch großlich vnd vornemlich seyn gnade mitt geteylt, das yhr vonn ewern Christlichenn fursten yhm Euangelio alßo gefurdert, *das euch nichts yhn Christlicher ler verhalten wirt*, darumb, habt ir vnwissens halb kein enschuldigunge', *Sermon on Euangelium Luce*, B r.

314 'Wer nun solliche auffrur nicht erleyden mag, dem bleibt nemlichen die wellt vnd seyn aygen leben, freudt, wollust, vnd aygner nutze, meer als Christus, darumb mag er dz schwert nit erleyden, das yhme sein sundtlich wollust, aygen nutz, vnd weltlich ehre vnd freudt abschlecht', *Wucher zu nemen*, F v.

315 See Chapter I, above.

316 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij v- Aiij r.

317 Ibid., Giiij r.

It does appear that Strauss believes some form of human co-operation is necessary. Good works, or the love in which they originate, may be the product of faith; this latter, however, does not deny man's responsibility for his own salvation. For Strauss, it does not appear that God gives faith, unrequested and without the possibility of refusal, which faith in turn leads to salvation and to good works. Rather, faith, as given by God and accepted by man, will be known to be true faith through the presence of good works; it is only this faith which can save. Apart from man's responsibility to accept God's gift of faith, the principal difference between Luther and Strauss may be one of emphasis. This emphasis on Strauss's part on the centrality of fulfilling the commandment of love, however, the neglect of which indicates a false faith, is very prominent. Stephen Strehle, in a discussion of the differences between Luther and Zwingli regarding justification, mentions Melanchthon's criticism of the latter for 'not inculcating faith enough and preaching a doctrine of works', but points out that this could more readily be said of Heinrich Bullinger.[318] Bullinger's views on justification, as described by Strehle, appear very similar to those of Strauss. Although for Bullinger, faith alone makes one pious, God has elected all men to be saved. Nonetheless, all are at liberty to reject this salvation.[319]

The exact relationship between works, faith, and salvation in Strauss's thought is difficult to establish even on close examination. Despite the insistence that there is nothing good in man, it also appears that a decision to trust God enables but does not automatically lead to love. Faith must be wholehearted and visible in works of love; otherwise, it is not true faith. The means to salvation appears to be a combination of the word, given by God's grace, and the

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318 Stephen Strehle, 'Fides aut Foedus: Wittenberg and Zurich in Conflict over the Gospel', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23.1 (Spring, 1992), 3-20, 10.

319 'God seriously extends his message to all men, even if they choose to reject it', ibid., 14. Bullinger 'so stresses a human component in the fulfulment of God's work, that he verges upon the synergism of humanistic teaching. In creation, he speaks of God as working through certain creaturely means to achieve his end, so that even if he is to be praised as the *fons omnis boni* and author of all good things in man, he does not accomplish his work without human cooperation [...] In salvation, he speaks of man's complicity in the entire process, from his initial acceptance to his final perseverance', ibid., 15.

effort one puts into accepting it.[320] It would seem that Christ offers the means to salvation; one must trust in him; this faith allows one to practise brotherly love; this last pleases God and allows one to avoid eternal damnation. Both the decision to accept God's grace and to use this gift in the service of one's neighbour would appear, for Strauss, to be in the hands of the individual Christian. Furthermore, one can also influence the salvation of one's neighbour. The difference between Strauss's co-operation in accepting God's grace and the accompanying inner and outward turmoil, and brotherly love as a form of meritorious work, would almost certainly have been even less obvious to a member of his congregation who heard this message in the form of a sermon.

He or she would not have been alone. Many of the laity and also some preachers, like Strauss himself, reached different conclusions regarding the relationship between faith, salvation, and works, while on the whole accepting Luther's message, particularly its anticlerical elements and the centrality of the Bible. In his study of lay pamphleteers in the 1520s, Paul A. Russell has noted the survival of the traditional link between charity and salvation, remarking that 'a theology of the poor as the gateway to heaven was apparently so deeply rooted in medieval piety, that even these first Protestants could not so easily dispense with it'.[321] Although this association is not so straightforward in Strauss, the apparent continuity must have struck a chord with his general audience. Although Russel argues that Sebastian Lotzer seems still more Lutheran in tone than Zwinglian, he has found that, for Lotzer, 'grace from Scripture, manifest in faith and active in works, saved man'. It is a bit unfair to try to

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320 Strauss describes this process in the *Euangelium Luce*: 'Nun besich vnd erforsch deynn eygen hertz nach dem du etlich hundert mal mit gruntlicher geschreyfft gelert, vnd erindert bist worden, yhm beschlus aller predigett, das deyn heyl vnd selygkeyt alleyn auff Christo stehet, tzü dem deynn glaub mit allen begirden vnd hertzlichem vortrawen, dych vngetzweyfelt furen vnd furdern sol, vnd das dyesser glaube auch on alle vorhynderunge, dye fruchtenn der warhafftigen, lyebhabung deynes nehesten yhn dyr wirkcett, also das gantzem hertzen getrew vnnd dinstlich dich beweyest, alß du wolltest, vn[d] vorgunnest deynem eygnen hertzen, ya auch yn thot tzü gehen, vmb der selyckeyt willen deynes nechsten', *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij r.

321 Paul A. Russell, *Lay Theology in the Reformation – Popular Pamphleteers in Southwest Germany 1521-1525* (Cambridge, 1986), 214.

divide influences on lay theologians between Luther and Zwingli'.[322] Haug Marschalck emphasized the importance of the traditional works of mercy; although he rejected the devotions and rituals which had also been linked to salvation, 'because works of mercy are based on Scripture, they may be meritorious'.[323] Franziska Conrad has observed that Alsatian peasants, as revealed in writings emanating from their communities in 1524-1525, saw Scripture as a 'schoolmaster': a set of instructions to be fulfilled in order to please God. This, Conrad argues, they took from the centrality of brotherly love as a sign of faith found in the theology of Martin Bucer.[324] Most of these villagers understood evangelical preaching in the form of a traditional works-righteousness, albeit a works-righteousness based on biblical

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322 Russell, *Lay Theology*, 110. On Ozment's theory of popular anxiety as an explanation of the reception of the new teaching, Russell writes: 'Steven Ozment sees auricular confession as the key to understanding the acceptance of the Reformation by common people in German cities. Ozment's thesis is at least partly correct for our furrier: he prefers sure faith to the anxiety caused by uncertainty of absolution, in the case of having confessed too little or too much and in the case of a priest who put human teaching above the gospel and therefore could not give adequate absolution. Yet, although Lotzer is critical of the penitential system of the church, he preferred a more mystical solution to the problem of justification. United heart and mind to God was the only means by which one could reliably receive the eucharist, which effected the forgiveness of sins. But this one aspect of Lotzer's theology is far less important than the overall plan by which laypeople could effect their own salvation, primarily by working their way toward the end.' Ibid, 108f.

323 Russell, *Lay Theology*, 132f.

324 'Insofern die Bauern die Notwendigkeit eines veränderten Lebens betonten und das Evangelium als Gesetz interpretierten, übernahmen sie zentrale Ansichten der Butzerischen Theologie: seine Lehre vom ethischen Leben des Gerechtfertigen sowie sein Verständnis von der Schrift als "schulmeister" des Christen. Die lutherische Lehre von der rechtfertigenden Macht des Glaubens an Christi Erlösertat, die sich in Butzers Predigten noch findet, rezipierten die Landbewohner dagegen ebensowenig wie die Deutung des Evangeliums als frohe Botschaft von der Erlösung des Menschen. Die theologische Schwerpunktsetzung der Predigten von Butzer und anderer elsässischer Propagatoren der Reformation leistete somit einer Entwicklung Vorschub, die Luther schon 1522 befürchtete, daß "der einfältige Mann Gebot und Gesetz suche, wo er Evangelium und Verheißung Gottes suchen sollte". Luther ging so vehement gegen diese Betrachtung des Evangeliums an und zögerte, die Nächsten liebe so stark hervozuheben, weil er die Gefahr eines Werkglaubens in neuem Gewand sah', Franziska Conrad, *Reformation in der bäuerlichen Gesellschaft. Zur Rezeption reformatorischer Theologie im Elsaß* (Stuttgart, 1984), 98. On Bucer's emphasis in his *Summary* as it differed from that of Luther, see ibid. 59f.; also Alister E. McGrath, 'Justification and the Reformation. The Significance of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith to Sixteenth Century Urban Communities', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 81 (1990), 12. *Martin Butzers an ein christlichen Rath und Gemeyn der statt Weissenburg Summary seiner Predig daselbst gethon 1523*, [Strasbourg: Johannes Schott, 1523] is in Robert Stupperich (ed.), *Martin Bucers deutsche Schriften* I (Gütersloh, 1960), 71-147.

principles.[325] Finally, although Luther saw those who practised usury as ignoring the gospel, for him, the incentive to obey the gospel is generally that of following Christ for his own sake and not in order to influence one's salvation or damnation.[326] However, in his 'long' usury sermon of 1520, Luther stated that God would not ask each Christian upon death and on the Last Day, 'How much money have you given to the church?' but would say instead, 'I was hungry and you did not feed me'.[327] There may indeed have been a degree of 'confusion', on Strauss's part and on that of the lay authors, regarding the salvific consequences of the neglect of brotherly love. This, however, should be attributed not to conscious opposition to Luther's teachings, but rather to a combination of the persistence of earlier ideas and the piecemeal reception of a doctrine of justification which may not have been entirely straightforward, even at its source.

Even if the salvific function of the brotherhood was not the result of deliberate ambiguity stemming from a reluctance to downplay the importance of a Christian life, it could be said to be Strauss's strongest argument in motivating the laity; stronger, perhaps, than the promise of financial gain. The centrality of the soteriological arguments can be seen from the title of the second usury work: 'That to take and to give usury is contrary to our Christian faith and brotherly love (as brings eternal damnation)'; nowhere on this first page is there an allusion to injustice or exploitation.[328] This should not only motivate the laity to act, it should also make them more aggrieved towards the soul-murderers, and would at the same time have been a much stronger argument against economic exploitation than the standard objections to tithes, rents, and duties found in the various peasant grievances. The salvation of all

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325 'Ein eigentlich katholischer, auf evangelisch-biblischen Prinzipien', Conrad, *Reformation in der bäuerlichen Gesellschaft*, 99.

326 'Vnd ist daruber fast dahyn kommen, das wyr das heylig Euangelion fur nicht acthen. Derhalben es not ist, eynem iglichen menschn ynn dieser derlichen zeyt, sich wol fur sehen, vnd ynn den hendeln zeytlicher güter mit rechtem vnterscheydt wandeln, mit vleyssigem auffmercken des heyligen Euangelij Christi vnsers Herrn', Luther, *Von Kaufshandlung und Wucher*.

327 *Eyn Sermon von dem Wucher*, biij r. This is Matthew 25:34f., a text used by Strauss in an identical manner in his condemnation of the confraternities, *Pruderchafften*, Aiij v, as above.

328 *Wucher zu nemen*, A r.

participants is endangered by this trade.[329] There is also the attraction (or, alternatively, the excuse) of responsibility for the usurer's soul. This may be expressed in an admonitory reminder about brotherly love, but could also be seen as the least sincere element of the argument, given Strauss's general emphasis on the wickedness of the usurers. It is unlikely that many debtors would really have been swayed by this consideration, even if their own priority was that of salvation rather than material gain.[330] Furthermore, the retention of some form of self-determination with regard to one's soul must have been attractive. Strauss denies the salvific efficacy of traditional charity as well as its actual usefulness, but also suggests that service done to the poor will please God.[331] Even though these works are not one's own but those of God, and one should therefore take no pride in them, avoidance of the aforementioned ungodly practices and diligence with regard to loving one's neighbour should help to avert damnation.[332]

Is living a good life then proof of one's faith? For Luther, according to von Loewenich, the true 'Christian life' is hidden from man and known only to God. Luther interprets Psalm 1:6,

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329 Ibid., Aij v.

330 There is also, at one point, an apparent denial that one can affect the salvation of one's neighbour, usurer or anyone else: 'We also know that Christ gave himself up entirely for our sake, and is in faith our own, we are also commended to him to such a degree that no one may harm us in any way, as he remains inseparably with us through faith, also no one may pull us away from him, as he himself says, John at the 10th: those whom my father has given me, no one may pull out of my hand', ibid, Aiij r-v. However, as this utterly contradicts what Strauss says elsewhere, it may just be employed as rhetoric within an argument about trusting in God for one's nourishment, in small things as well as great.

331 'But if you always wish to collect something monetary, to have a true divine service to the almighty God from it, protect yourselves from priests and monks, and to hang great or small candles, silver, gold, [on] idols, altars and rails, arrange no singing, ringing, organing, piping. But take up the gospel and help the poor from the same money without distinction where you recognise true need, as that which you further undertake to do from such money is offensive to God and [to] the faith', *Pruderchafften*, Aiij v.

332 Bernd Hamm, in stating that 'normative centering' was the answer to a general search for security, has said that 'it is well known that contemporaries longed for guaranteed methods of obtaining grace and salvation. Behind such "pious" quests for salvific insurance lay a specific and shared way of interpreting experience: how one perceived his age as a time of "crisis" with an accompanying susceptibility to the feelings of ominous danger and *Angst*', idem., *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late-Medieval Piety*, edited by Robert J. Bast (Leiden, 2004), 4f.

'The Lord knows the way of the righteous', to mean not that the righteous will be rewarded, but that *only* God knows this 'way'.[333] For Strauss, if visible love of one's neighbour is absent, so too is faith.[334] It would seem that Strauss does know the 'way of the righteous' or, at least, that of the unrighteous, and intends to instruct the laity on this. Suffering appears to be a proof of faith, rather than a means to salvation: if one cannot suffer 'the same violence or need in outward things as Christ', he asks, how will one remain constant to God?[335] Of course, this does not mean that it could not be understood by his audience to be both.[336] Unlike Luther, Strauss was able to identify necessary works (those related to love), the fulfilment of which is a sign of faith, and the neglect of which will show that one is heading for damnation. In 1523, he provided a list of ways in which to test one's reception of the gospel: do you love and help your enemy? Do you act according to self-interest? Do you eat and drink to excess, and indulge your lusts in dancing, clothing, and other ephemera? Are you prepared to suffer for the sake of God's word?[337] The idea that love and denial are both proofs of faith could also be seen as reassuring; one knows that one has true faith which enables one to be saved if one lives a Christian life and aids one's brother.[338] Whatever conclusions one can reach regarding Strauss and predestination, from the perspective of

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333 Von Loewenich, 131. 'Das christliche Leben ist ein Gegenstand des Glaubens und als solcher verborgen'.

334 *Wucher zu nemen*, B r. Luther believed that the elect and the reprobate would not be known until the last day. Fredrik Brosché, *Luther on Predestination: the Antinomy and the Unity Between Love and Wrath in Luther's Concept of God*. Studia Doctrina Christianae Upsaliensia 18 (Uppsala and Stockholm, 1978), 188 n.17.

335 *Wucher zu nemen*, Gij v.

336 As discussed in Chapter I, the willingness to suffer is a sign of true faith and the internal struggle to conquer one's old Adam; the latter leads to the former. However, this could be interpreted rather differently by an audience steeped in a tradition of penance, mortification, and suffering in pursuit of satisfaction and salvation.

337 *Euangelium Luce*, B v. See also *Auffrur*, Bij v – Biij r, 'we have a certain knowledge of our faith in the infallible proof of the true love and loyalty to our neighbour; for this reason St John says in the first Epistle at the 3rd, "We know that we are taken from death to life, as we love the brothers" [1 John 3:14]'. On this theme, it appears in the second usury pamphlet that withholding interest is a proof of faith: 'As where the holy gospel does not seize the old Adam powerfully in the will, there it has not yet come into the heart' (a reference to the wheat on barren ground of John 12:24), *Wucher zu nemen*, Fiij v.

338 Furthermore, Strauss is careful to point out that, despite the suffering brought on one level, and the commitment to love being described as a 'cross', this in fact will bring joy: 'that that which will be undertaken from love, has no pain or cross, but happiness and joy', *Auffrur*, Bij v.

those listening to a sermon or reading a single pamphlet it is evident that faith is visible in works and that, if one were to fulfil this duty, one could be sure and would be seen to have true faith and, therefore, salvation.

All of this assumes that salvation was also the primary concern of the common man. Russell's pamphleteers would argue against the idea that it was simply a preoccupation of theologians, and not of the general population, or even the general clergy. There may have been some resentment of pre-Reformation acts of charity and mortification, but the promised eternal reward must have been an equally strong motivating factor. McGrath has disagreed with Scribner's conclusion that Luther's concern with what he has called 'spiritual athleticism' did not trickle down to the common man: 'Scribner's important analysis of the appeal of Luther's views on justification does occasionally give the impression of lacking a due sense of historical empathy. What we do know about late medieval German piety suggests that the German laity were indeed disposed towards interest in "spiritual athleticism": not as an end in itself, but on account of what this was understood to achieve (for example, the remission of purgatorial penalties)'.[339] However, McGrath also attempts to reconcile the interpretations of Scribner and Ozment: 'Scribner's suggestion that "few lay folk either experienced or aspired to" spiritual athleticism actually goes some way towards explaining *why* Luther's doctrine of justification had such popular appeal; it offered to allow access to the same religious benefits as monastic "spiritual athleticism," but by a much more convenient and less demanding route. The end remained the same; the means was altered'.[340] For Strauss, the means of salvation were slightly different, involving not only faith but also love; the visible aspect of the latter making this more reassuring still. The consequences of blasphemy are hammered home; those of breaking the commandment of brotherly love equally so. The laity may of course have had other motives, such as the desire to *appear* virtuous; the vehement condemnations of this desire by the reformers perhaps confirming its prevalence. Any or all of these concerns would have made Strauss's version of the path to salvation attractive. Tom

339 McGrath, 'Justification and the Reformation', 9.

340 Ibid, 10.

Scott has recently warned of the dangers of ignoring the laity's 'religious' or pious motives for action.[341] In relation to the Eisenach usury conflict, should one assume that those who reneged on their contracts did so out of material concern? Eisenach, like most towns with an active evangelical preacher, must to some degree have had an atmosphere of religious fervour, more so than usual, which may have coloured most acts. Unfortunately, from the point of view of reception and Strauss's influence on the matter, no statements by those who actually refused to pay interest have survived, if they were ever recorded in the first place. There is no way of knowing, therefore, whether they cited the biblical prohibition or mentioned brotherly love as justification, or whether there they saw their salvation or that of the usurers as the driving force behind their actions.

Still, Strauss's brotherhood does hold appealing non-spiritual possibilities. As well as the obvious material benefits of freedom from interest and other payments, he does display what appears to be heartfelt concern for natural fairness; not merely due to the salvific consequences of its neglect, but from actual sympathy for the poor. This could, to his audience, have the effect of balancing or apparently negating the suffering involved. Although Strauss appears to be more concerned with obedience to God's law than with the alleviation of the suffering of the poor, help and 'natural fairness' do seem to be part of this law. It may be this ideal that all will help their neighbours in need; it may be this that is the means by which God ensures that all are provided for.

These positive qualities offer the potential for misreading, mishearing, and selective reception. The degree to which a concept such as *Gelassenheit* would have been fully understood or accepted must be questioned. Despite Strauss's insistence on suffering and sacrifice, one could still see oneself as a victim. The neglect of brotherly love towards the poor and the impoverishment of those who fail in this duty (in this case, the artisans who belong to confraternities) are explicitly linked in Strauss's instruction not to waste one's money in

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341 Tom Scott, 'The Reformation between Deconstruction and Reconstruction: Reflections on Recent Writings on the German Reformation', *German History* 26.3, 406-422, 410.

blasphemous devotions.[342] One can improve one's own lot by guarding one's income from such wastefulness, and thereby have some money available to help the poor. The former victim, misled but also guilty, becomes the conscientious brother. However, would one think of oneself as someone who should put material considerations aside, trust to God for one's nourishment, and be prepared to help one's neighbour within moral limits; or as the neighbour in need who is entitled to help? Would one be prepared to starve or simply endure shortage rather than borrow money, even in the short term? Would one be prepared to suffer the legal consequences of non-payment, even, as Strauss recommends, to the point of death? The salvific element should, from Strauss's point of view, have been a greater motivation than material gain, but he was aware that readers or listeners could focus on the latter. He was careful to insist that one should refuse payment not for reasons of self-interest, recognising that some may God's word to cover their selfishness, and assuring his readers that 'this little book can bring no protection or comfort to the same'.[343] However, one cannot be certain that these debtors would have had the same motives, and that they would not have welcomed the idea of brotherly love as a pretext.

In any case, although self-interest should be disregarded, government in accordance with the commandment of love is not an ideal, but a requirement. For Strauss, this was not merely a matter of ethics: change, it would appear, is imperative due to the danger posed to the salvation of those living in an unnatural, ungodly, and unjust society. The law of the gospel as the law of the land in order to ensure the spiritual well-being of its people was rejected by Luther as unworkable and unnecessary. However, it has been noted that such ideas were particularly characteristic of the reception of the new teaching in rural areas: 'even a cursory comparison reveals that not the entire core of reformation theology, was appropriated, but only part of it, namely the principle of *sola scriptura*, justification through Scripture alone. The "gospel" stood chronologically always at the beginning of the reformation movement in the

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342 *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij v.

343 'As then many self-interested men accept the word of God if they may conceal their own love of their interest and lust with it, and fundamentally consider the necessary pleasure of God, also the salvation of the soul, as nothing', *Wucher zu nemen*, Fiiij v.

cities and villages, and it usually headed the list of demands and grievances drawn up by peasants and burghers. When the latter justified their support for the gospel, they argued that failure to do so would bring certain damnation and pointed out that the gospel could offer guidance in promoting brotherly love and the common weal'.[344] These petitioners extended their demands for proper preaching into those for a reformation of society; 'the political utopia of the peasants is a Christian republic'.[345]

Reformers in Southern Germany and Switzerland tended to view church and society as more closely integrated than did Luther, who believed that the community of Christians was spiritual and invisible. For Zwingli, unlike Luther, the membership of the church 'encompassed the whole city'. He 'conceived of both the civil community and the church as a living organism composed of many members which worked together in close relationship. And the civil and eccelsiastical communities formed a body not only individually but together as *ecclesia et populus*'.[346] The city was the church, and the church was the city. Martin Bucer had a similar concept of church and society but, due to the difficulties he experienced with the Strasbourg Council in the 1530s, he 'emphasized more strongly than Zwingli the limits of magisterial competence', presenting the holy community of the church as a model for the holy community of the city.[347] Nonetheless, the commandment of brotherly love, as well as the commandment of faith, was central for both. Blickle recognises that this peasant understanding of the gospel as *lex* came from Zurich: writing on the peasant movements of Southern Germany in the 1520s, he has said that their 'ideas about divine law emerged in a "theological climate" which favoured the applicability of the gospel for the social order, not in Luther's Wittenberg, but among the Christian humanists around Zwingli, who trusted the

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344 Peter Blickle, *Communal Reformation: the Quest for Salvation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Atlantic Highlands NJ, 1992) , 98f.

345 Peter Blickle, 'Communal Reformation and Peasant Piety: The Peasant Reformation and Its Late Medieval Origins', *Central European History* 20.3/4 (Sept.-Dec., 1987), 216-228, 218.

346 Bernd Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. H. C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards (Philadelphia, 1972), 78.

347 Moeller, *Imperial Cities*, 80f. For both Zwingli and Bucer, Moeller argues, this concept of church and society was the result of their southern background and humanist outlook: ibid., 83ff.

gospel's capability to improve the ways of this world'.[348] According to Blickle, however, this application of the message of the gospel to society had a more strictly religious aspect in the towns than it had in the countryside. This, he argues, was because the inhabitants of the former heard the message of the major reformers in a more unfiltered form.[349]

Strauss, although originally from Basel, a product of southern German universities, and with an early preaching career in Switzerland and the Tyrol, produced almost all of his pamphlets in Saxony and Thuringia. Nonetheless, one can see similarities between his view of the Christian community and those held by Bucer and Zwingli, and even the views on predestination held by Bullinger and of which Melanchthon accused Zwingli. Furthermore, Strauss's writings and the events in Eisenach of which he was apparently the cause need not necessarily contradict Blickle's interpretation regarding the dilution of the religiosity of the message the further it got from the towns. Like Bucer in the villages of rural Alsace, it was almost certainly the preacher himself, as well as existing concerns, who determined the particular direction taken by demands for reform. Physical closeness to the origin of the message may have been a factor, but if this message was at its origin (that is, the preacher) directed at social concerns, the practical application of the gospel could well have gone beyond religious reform. Strauss applied the commandment of love to the economic realities of urban life more explicitly than most.

8. Conclusion.

Strauss did use the theme of money for propagandistic purposes, and probably quite successfully. It would appear that he was trying to create or play into existing grievances, and

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348 Peter Blickle, *From the Communal Reformation to the Reformation of the Common Man*, (Leiden, 1998), 160.

349 '... minor differences emerged between city and countryside. In the countryside, the gospel became more clearly relevant to practical concerns, as is reflected in the fact that the peasants developed, at least in rough terms, an ethical system derived from the gospel. In the city, on the other hand, the gospel was used more to support theological concerns and problems of church organization, such as the abolition of the Mass, the removal of images from churches and so on, issues which seem to have been rather secondary in the countryside. This is not surprising, since the burghers were literally closer than the peasants to the religious preaching of the reformers', Blickle, *Communal Reformation*, 99.

in doing so, concentrated on the clergy as a way to undermine his enemies and mobilise opposition to the church. The corresponding benefit of offering better prospects in the new church and society was clearly, as demonstrated by the usury episode, taken up by a receptive population. At the same time, these reforms were central to the type of reformation Strauss saw to be necessary for the salvation of souls. Although his pronouncements on wealth were partly opportunistic, they stemmed from sincere convictions regarding the centrality and salvific necessity of brotherly love. His presentation of the alternative society would suggest that Strauss was not simply and cynically using social issues to build an attractive framework for religious reform. He was not primarily concerned with appeasing his audience. When applied properly, this message was not altogether attractive; Strauss did not shy away from the difficult or uncomfortable implications of brotherly love. On the other hand, one must consider the priorities of the laity themselves. These may not have been entirely material, in which case the salvific aspect would have been effective in itself. Nonetheless, one must allow for the possibility of selective reading and hearing; it would have been quite possible to ignore the less palatable aspects of the brotherhood.

As mentioned above and in the previous chapter, Strauss can be read as pitting the righteous laity, who were armed with the gospel and therefore assured of success, against the wicked and worldly usurers. The idea that he and his followers were on the side of God and his word, sometimes used to encourage those who were suffering, could have been employed here to give confidence in an actual victory; apparently in this world, rather than the next.[350] Strauss's readers were being presented with an alternative society, as well as a new form of religious life, and convinced of its necessity through a mixture of anticlericalism, sympathy, and warnings regarding their lack of faith and the state of their souls. Presumably, in Strauss's terms, any delay and the toleration of ungodly practices such as usury would amount to soul-murder. In order to establish when, how, and by whom Strauss believed this

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350 Rejecting the justifications of the pope and his lawyers, he announces that 'our judgement and righteousness stands only in Christ, according to the proof of the holy gospel; that we will not allow heathenish and temporal law in the interpretation of our faith and [in] that which concerns the love of one's neighbour', *Wucher zu nemen*, E r.

religious and social reformation was to be achieved, it may be helpful to examine the alternative functions of the pamphlets, particularly their defensive role.

Chapter IV

'... with sweet, splendid words they attack the adherents of God ...'
Reformation, Rebellion, and Reputation.

1. The need for a defence.

Strauss used various methods in order to make his message palatable, playing particularly upon the self-image of the common man in opposition to his oppressors, both clerical and lay. This was not entirely insincere, given their relevance to some of the central beliefs involved in his concept of reformation. In his insistence on the necessity of suffering, one can see that the brotherhood was more important than an attractive message. However, there may have been some distance between Strauss's intent and the effect these ideas may have had on the laity. They contained some explosive elements, most notably their emphasis on the need for a renewal of society as well as of the church, the frequent appearances of the subject of money, the identification of tyrants both clerical and lay, and the risk to one's salvation that made such reform imperative. One could seize upon any of these messages to the exclusion of the second and not always terribly obvious thread running through Strauss's works: that of not only tolerating but embracing moderation and shortage. Furthermore, he was preaching and publishing in a two- to three-year period during which sporadic violence developed into widespread, organized resistance amid calls for brotherly love in the form of social justice and the pure preaching of the gospel. By the summer of 1524, the common man, armed not only with the Bible but also with pike and flail, was attempting to achieve by force an ideal that reflected many of the requirements of Strauss's new brotherhood.[1]

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[1] The ideal of a society based on the law of the gospel did not, of course, necessarily entail rebellion. However, unlike the urban reformers of Switzerland and Southern Germany, who shared and, according to Blickle, inspired their concept of the godly community of brotherly love, the

Eisenach did not escape the violent upheavals of the Peasants' War.[2] However, although a band of peasants from the Werra valley had camped outside the town, it was the inhabitants themselves who, in April 1525, were responsible for the destruction that took place. In an apparent attempt to avert bloodshed, either at the hands of a population inspired by news of recent peasant victories or following a potential incursion by the nearby band, the Eisenach authorities had ordered the remaining clergy to leave and had removed the more valuable possessions of the religious houses to Weimar for safe-keeping. The townspeople thereupon attacked the vacant properties and raided their remaining contents, leaving some in ruins. Johann Oswald, the *Schultheiss* who had officially expelled the clergy, stated that he had been acting on Strauss's advice. After the defeat of the peasants, the latter was taken to Eisenach, although it is not clear whether he was actually imprisoned there. He was certainly subject to a hearing in order to determine his role in the recent events, the result of which was that he was permitted to return to his preaching position. However, he did not remain in Eisenach for long, probably because things had become rather uncomfortable for him there. Perhaps alarmed by the violence that had taken place, many of those among the Eisenach authorities who had supported Strauss appear to have turned against him. The previous year, only a minority of councillors (represented by the two men who took their complaints to Weimar in Lent of that year) appeared to have actively opposed Strauss's presence in the town.

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peasants who rose up in 1524 and 1525 believed that such a society should be established immediately. For the rebellious peasants, 'divine law dictated the norms and behaviour they displayed throughout the war: in terms of norms, the overall priority of the common good and neighbourly love (the latter informing calls for personal freedom, the former justifying demands for unrestricted access to forests and commons) and in terms of behaviour, the imperative to enforce the will of God at all costs, if necessary by means of a violent rising. Upper German theologians did not deduct the abolition of serfdom from the scriptures, and their appeal for a more Christian *res publica* remained vague. Reformed teaching, in the end, could not have any political consequences, as it failed to square the "Christianization" of society with the gospel's overriding message of peace', Peter Blickle, *From the Communal Reformation to the Revolution of the Common Man,* translated by Beat Kümin (Leiden, 1998), 161.

2 On these events, see *Hermann Barge, Jakob Strauss. Ein Kämpfer für das Evangelium in Tirol, Thüringen, und Süddeutschland, Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte CLXII (Leipzig, 1937),* 100-113, and Joachim Rogge, *Der Beitrag des Predigers Jakob Strauss zur frühen Reformationsgeschichte.* Theologische Arbeiten VI, (Berlin, 1957), 90-99.

However, a report sent to John in June of 1525, in which the reformer was accused of having deliberately stirred up the people with 'rebellious preaching', was signed by the Council as a body.[3] Strauss had supposedly left the town during the unrest and had met with the peasants gathered outside the walls; the description of these events given by the Council implied that he had done so not with the intent of dissuading them from further insurrection, but in order to conspire.[4]

The usury controversy had obviously laid the foundations for the suspicion with which many viewed Strauss's contribution to the events of 1525. Duke John had indeed insisted that the chapter (at least) should be paid what they were owed and certainly recognised that Strauss's position on the matter differed from that of Luther. On the other hand, he does not appear to have thought any less of Strauss, as can be seen from his agreement that the latter should conduct a visitation in his territories early in 1525.[5] However, the young Prince John Frederick was already wary. He had been reassured by Luther in June of 1524 that one should follow the law of the land rather than that of Moses, against those who insisted that the former was 'unrecht und unchristlich'.[6] The prince's reply reveals his frustration with

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3 This report is contained in ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. N 834, fos. 5-6. The undesirable effects of Strauss's sermons are described on fo. 5.

4 ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. N 834, fo. 5 r-v. There is no reliable record of what exactly Strauss said to the peasants, but the account-book of the Eisenach *Amt* indicates that he did indeed travel to Saltzungen in April with the intention of speaking to the peasants there. Strauss's expenses for the journey were paid by the authorities, and he had obviously gone there with their blessing. Oswald and Hans von Berlepsch, the Prince's *Amtman* at the Wartbug, travelled to Weimar the following month at Strauss's request, presumably in order to speak to the authorities there on his belalf. Otto Merx (ed.), *Akten zur Geschichte des Bauernkriegs in Mitteldeutschland* Volume 1 (Aalen, 1964), no. 535, 384.

5 John wrote to the 'Amptleüten, Schültheßen Burgermaistern der stete, predigern, heimbürgen vnnd gemain der dorfschaffen' of Thuringia, saying that due to the emergence 'false preachers', he had authorised 'dem Erwirdigen vnnserm lieben anndechtigen ern Jacobus strauß, doctor prediger zu Eisenach, als aynem den wir darzü tügentlich vnd geschickt achten' to inspect the parishes to ensure 'das jhennige fur zü wenden vnd einsehens zühaben so sich der gotlichen schrifft nach gezÿmet vnnd gebüret', ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii, fos. 1v, 2r. John acknowledged the distance between Strauss and Luther regarding usury in a letter to his brother, the Elector Frederick, ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. N 834, fo. 30r.

6 *WA Briefwechsel III*, no. 753, 306. 18th June, 1524.

Strauss, and his fear that the insistence on the sinfulness of the debtor as well as that of the usurer would counteract all efforts on the part of the authorities to keep the peace.[7]

The construction and preservation of reputations was a notable feature of the early Reformation, particularly in the pamphlet literature.[8] Protagonists not only attacked the doctrines and characters of their opponents, but also sought to elevate their own standing in the eyes of the authorities particularly by distancing themselves from undesirable elements. The critics of the evangelical movement had condemned its followers for their 'fleshly' interpretation of the gospel even before the Peasants' War, and were able to use the events of 1524-1525 to associate the new teaching with dangerous incitement of the common man.[9] In many places it was seen as an opportunity or as advisable to put a stop to the ecclesiastical reformation.[10] According to Strauss's own account, he was the subject of insulting accusations, due to which he had left Thuringia and which had followed him since.[11] He was

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7 'Der wiederkäuflichen Zins halben ist bei uns die große Mühe zu handeln [...] Ist bei den Geistlichen, auch sonst bei den Leuten zu nehmen wohl zu erlangen; so es aber erlangt ist, und das von denen, den' es gut geschehen, soll geben werden, da ist Mühe, da läuft man hin und her, da muß dieser und jener Predige vorgesetzt werden und helfen, daß sie nichts geben dürften. Darüber müssen wir fast alle auf die Kanzel kommen. Da schreiet Straus, daß der es gibet, als wohl sündiget, als der es nimmet; da muß die Oberkeit sündigen, wenn sie es zu Erhaltung des Friedes und Rechtens gebieten, und das Geschrei uberall', *WA Briefwechsel* III, no. 753, 310.

8 One example of this is the heroic and almost saintly image of Luther propagated by his supporters. See, for example, Robert W. Scribner, 'Incombustible Luther: The Image of the Reformer in Early Modern Germany', *Past & Present* 110 (Feb., 1986), 38-68; idem., *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation.* Second edition (Oxford, 1994), Chapter 2, 'Images of Luther 1519-1525).

9 'Besonders die Altgläubigen verwiesen auf die "fleischliche" Interpretation des Evangeliums bei den Laien. So glaubten die bischöflichen Räte, das gemeine Volk wolle die Prediger hören, "so ime freyheyt reychen, das sie nyman nichts geben sollen; selbs meyster syn vnd die oberkeyt nydertrucken"', F Conrad, *Reformation in der bäuerlichen Gesellschaft: zur Rezeption reformatorischer Theologie im Elsass* (Stuttgart, 1984), 92. On the accusations regarding the idea of 'freedom' in particular, see Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley and London, 1994), Chapter Seven: 'Catholics on Luther's Responsibility for the German Peasants' War', 149-162.

10 'Erst kurz darauf setzte such in den meisten Gebieten der Wille durch, die Kirchen reformation gleich mit zu vernichten bzw. rückgängig zu machen. Die Gelegenheit war günstig, denn man konnte ihr die Schuld am Aufruhr geben', Justus Maurer, *Prediger im Bauernkrieg* (Stuttgart, 1979), 263.

11 *Auffrur*, A v. He may have been in fear for his life. Maurer has traced the fate of a number of preachers in the immediate aftermath of the Peasants' War. A few are known to have been killed

cited in Hieronymus Emser's verse pamphlet, *Der Bock Tritt Frei*, as one of those, along with Müntzer and Luther, who had misled the Christian people.[12] Johannes Cochlaeus, in his description of the activities of the new preachers in Thuringia, accused Strauss of irresponsible preaching throughout his career and of having induced the Eisenachers to drive the clergy from the town. Due to these activities, Cochlaeus wrote, Strauss had been seized by the princes following the defeat of the peasants.[13] However, this criticism of Strauss did not come only from the opponents of the evangelical movement. Although Luther had addressed him in relatively friendly terms as a colleague in a letter dated October 1523,[14] and viewed his second work on usury as an improvement on the first,[15] by April of 1525 he was clearly uneasy regarding Strauss, describing him as headstrong and drawing a comparison with Karlstadt's reckless preaching.[16] Luther's supporters were to reinforce in print this impression

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during the rebellion itself; many others, he surmises, must have died anonymously; many, such as those in Strasbourg, continued their reforming activity; others returned to their positions after a time. However, numerous preachers also fled their locations, sometimes following an official demotion and expulsion. This, Maurer has found, was the most common occurrence and was the fate of those who had had little or no actual involvement in the rebellion, met by Eberlin and Karlstadt as well as by Strauss. There is no record, however, of Strauss having been officially demoted and expelled. Maurer, *Prediger im Bauernkrieg*, 247-263.

12 'Thomas [Müntzer], der itzgenante geister// Und Luther, aller lügen meyster// Das christlich volck schentlich verfurt// Derhalb yn gleycher lohn geburt// Mit Zwingel, Straus, und Carolstat', *Der bock trith frey// auff disen plan// Hat wyder Ehren nye gethan// Wie sehr sie yn gescholden han/ // Was aber Luther fuer ein man// Vnd wilch ein spil er gfangen an// Vnd nun den mantel wenden kan// Nach dem der wind thut eynher ghan// Findstu in disem büchlin stan* ([Dresden: Emserpresse] 1525). I have used the version printed in Adolf Laube and Ulman Weiß (eds.), *Flugschriften gegen die Reformation* Volume 2: 1525-1530 (Berlin, 2000), 136-141, 138f.

13 'Die fursten sein darnach aff Ysennach gezogen, haben d[a] Doctor Jacob Strauß gefangen, welcher nicht allein da selbst sonder auch dar vor zu Hal im Yntal und zu Werdtheym am Meyn lutherische und rumorische lere hat auß geprayt. Seind da etlich enhaupt worden, pfaffen, nonnen und munechen welche durch strassen predig und falsche brieff waren ußgetrieben, widerumb ein gesetzt'. Johannes Cochlaeus, *Wjder die Reubische[n] vnd// Morderischen rotten [...] Antword Joa[n]nis Coclej* in Adolf Laube and Hans Werner Seiffert (eds.), *Flugschriften der Bauernkriegszeit*, (2nd edn, Berlin, 1978), 400.

14 Luther opened his letter of 18th October, 1523, 'Venerabili viro, Domino Iacobo Strauss, servo Christi in verbo Dei Isenachi, suo in Domino fratri charissimo', *WA Briefwechsel* III, no. 674, 178.

15 As he wrote to Spalatin in June, 1524: 'Sermo Straussii placet plusquam antea libellus eiusdem', *WA Briefwechsel* III, no. 755, 313.

16 'Valde vellem D. Straus sua quoque regna quaerenti per principes inhiberi. Non deest homini furor, sed locus & tempus. Iamdudum, licet occulte, nos ei parum probamur, qui Rusticum illum seditiosum totum Carlstadiensem nobis longe praefert, quem tu Norimbergae mirabaris, Sed nequam

of Strauss as dangerous and bull-headed. Friederich Myconius, in his history of the period, accused Strauss of having made the task of Justus Menius (who had been appointed superintendent at Eisenach) particularly difficult due to the 'eggs and stink' he had left in his wake.[17] Justus Jonas, in a work directed against Georg Witzel, bracketed both Witzel and Strauss together with Thomas Müntzer with regard to their influence on the peasants.[18] When he was not sidelined or overlooked completely,[19] this was the impression of Strauss that persisted in Lutheran representations of the 1520s. The seventeenth-century Eisenach chronicler Andreas Toppius was to describe Strauss as having had a 'rebellious spirit'; according to this version of events, he and Witzel, no less than Müntzer and Heinrich Pfeiffer, had incited the peasants to revolt, teaching that no one owed obedience to the authorities. After the revolt, Toppius states, Strauss should have been beheaded, like the rebellious deacon and twelve peasants who were executed in the *Marktplatz*.[20] Thus, Strauss's reputation as an irresponsible, unbiddable, and dangerous individual, provoking the common man to act at his behest in defiance of God's secular authorities, was formed by others, including the early Lutherans. This chapter will assess to what degree he may have deserved this

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inuentus est, & vt dicitur, Monachus simulato rustici vultu', letter to Spalatin, 10th April, 1525, *Briefwechsel Br.* 3, no. 854, p. 470.

17 'Zu Eisenach: Herr Justus Menius, der hatt große Mühe, des Dr. Straußen hinter sich gelassene Eier und Stank auszukehren'. I have used Otto Clemen (ed.), Friedrich Myconius, *Geschichte der Reformation*, (Gotha, 1990, reprint), 53.

18 'Witzel, Straus, Müntzer, vnd jhr gleichen', Justus Jonas, *Wilch die rech=//te Kirche / Vnd da=/gegen wilch die falsche Kirch// ist / Christlich antwort vnd// tröstliche vnterricht / //Widder das Pha=//risaisch ge=//wesch// Georgij Witzels* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau: 1534), Oij v - Oiij r. See Chapter II, above.

19 Gottfried Arnold, in his *Ketzerhistorie*, mentions Strauss only in passing, as having begun to preach in Eisenach in 1523, and as having removed the 'idols' from the town; he also quotes Müntzer in his *Bekäntnüß* as having seen Strauss at the disputation in Weimar between Wolfgang Stein and the Franciscans. *Gottfrid Arnolds Fortsetzung und Erläuterung Oder Dritter und Vierdter Theil der unpartheyischen Kirchen= und Ketzer Historie Bestehend In Beschreibung der noch übrigen Streitigkeiten im XVIIden Jahrhundert Nebst den svpplementis und emendationibvs* (Frankfurt: Thomas Fritschen, 1715), Part II, 71; 1231.

20 'Und seynd von diesem Doctor Straussen, und neben ihn von George Witzeln, die Bauern nicht weniger, als von Thomas Müntzern und Heinrich Pfeiffern, angefrischet und geretizet worden zum Auffruhr. Denn die lehreten beyde, D. Strauß und Witzel: Man solte der Obrigkeit keinen Schoß und Schatzung reichen, sondern das alles müsse abgestellet werden', Andreas Toppius, 'Historie der Stadt Eisenach von Andreas Toppius, 1660', *Beiträge zur Geschichte Eisenachs* 25.2 (1916), 42f.

judgement, by examining in particular his use of pamphlets and sermons as a means of both constructing his own reputation and shaping those of others. Did he seek to bring about his desired reforms through changes directed from above, or from below, through the agency of the common man?

2. Protecting the common peace.

Strauss's condemnations of the rebellion in the works written in its aftermath is severe. The uprisings have been orchestrated by the devil, who, through 'several false prophets', has led the people to follow 'another gospel'.[21] Their 'raging and destructive wickedness' was not only godless, but 'also contrary to all nature and reason'.[22] Had they fulfilled the devil's aim and 'abolished all authority', says Strauss, they would have ended by murdering one another. This lack of control was evident in their wanton destruction of property as they senselessly laid waste to anything that might have served the common good.[23] Their actions have stemmed not from a desire to promote brotherly love, but from pure self-interest, as could be seen by their failure to distribute to proceeds of their looting.[24] The peasants have understood the 'freedom' described in the gospel to be a justification of self-indulgence rather the freedom to serve one's brother[25], and this has been done with enthusiasm. In pursuit of their 'own fleshly wickedness', many 'wretched and deceived people' have used the

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21 Last summer, wrote Strauss in 1526, some people 'wanted to defend, with murder and death-blow, another gospel from the devil and not from God's spirit, preached to them and partly written by several false prophets', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Eiiij v.

22 Ibid., Eij r.

23 'I want to hear from the peasants, what useful and good [thing] they wanted to accomplish all the same, when they had peformed the harmful will of the devil, and abolished all authority, also the nobility? It is truly impossible to think otherwise, than that they also would have subsequently murdered one another. That has been very evident, where they have for a short time had the upper hand, how they have so senselessly torn, destroyed and laid waste all that they have obtained, all of which could have been serviceable and useful to the common good', ibid., Eij r.

24 Strauss's sarcastic words are, 'it is also ingloriously known how faithfully they have shared several goods'.

25 Strauss uses Galatians 5:13: 'But you are, dear brothers, called to freedom, but beware, that freedom does not give you an occasion to the flesh, but through the love of the spirit, each of you should serve the other', *Auffrur*, Aiij v. (See Strauss's use of this text as described in Chapter III, above). Similarly: 'we call that the Christian freedom, that every pious Christian is so much more free, the more he demonstrates service to his neighbour and all men', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biij v.

teachings of the gospel for their own ends and 'to cover their impatience'.[26] In this misuse of God's word, they have proven themselves more godless than those they have attacked, and have brought disgrace upon both themselves 'and their children's children'.[27] As a result, the peasants, along with 'their evangelists', have deservedly been put to the sword.[28]

A growing unease within the evangelical movement regarding such 'evangelists' had been evident since 1521 when, perturbed by Karlstadt's actions in Wittenberg, Luther returned from the Wartburg. Many others began to identify new 'enemies of the gospel'. This group was no longer restricted to the Catholic clergy, but also included the radicals: those whose recommendations and actions were seen as too fast, unnecessary, or even dangerous.[29] By the eve of the Peasants' War, these divisions had, in many cases, become deeply entrenched.[30] Strauss himself was one of the preachers who were causing consternation; both Luther and John Frederick believed that his stance on usury was much too hard-line. Strauss's own perception of the growing divisions within the evangelical movement is difficult to determine. Although he presumably included Müntzer and his followers among the 'several false preachers' who had encouraged and misled the peasants in his account of the rebellion, there is no real evidence that he saw any such schism before the Peasants' War. However, he had identified over-enthusiastic elements within the evangelical movement in 1524, when he

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26 They have taken the 'single, saving freedom of the cross' (see above) to justify violent rebellion against God's ordained secular governments in pursuit of their 'own fleshly wickedness', *Antwurt ... Coclei,* Aiij r.

27 Also, 'God's word may not be a cloak or patron of that which is always contrary to God's law and ordinance', ibid., Eij r.

Ibid., Eij r.

28 Ibid., Eiiij v. A reference to Matthew 26:52.

29 Among those worried by the 'enthusiasts' was Johann Eberlin von Günzberg. By 1524, he was claiming that 'the enthusiasts pose[d] a greater threat to the cause of the Gospel than the Papists who [had] been laid low'; shortly afterwards, he described them as the 'agents of Satan', Geoffrey Dipple, *Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation: Johann Eberlin von Günzberg and the Campaign against the Friars,* (Aldershot, 1996), 209f.

30 Eberlin was no longer including 'Karlstadt among the Reformers and [beginning] to refer to Johannes Bugenhagen in his place, again suggesting that the boundaries of orthodoxy were being drawn more clearly in Wittenberg. This suggests a wider concern on the part of those associated with Wittenberg that their movement was now imperilled more from the left than the right', ibid., 210f.

advised that violence against the clergy should not be contemplated, as even if 'pope, bishop, priests, monks, and nuns, with all their followers, were killed and exterminated', this would achieve nothing.[31] Even non-violent resistance to the clergy had its limits; Strauss telling the laity to 'let priests and monks go'. The clergy were not to be encouraged in their 'wickedness' with 'temporal help'; however, if they were owed *Erbzins*, this should be paid.[32] Finally, as mentioned above, Strauss may have attempted to dissuade the peasant bands from attacking the towns.

The 'poisonous, stubborn, and rebellious' peasants have offended not only against legitimate authority, but against their neighbour and the 'common public peace' (*den gemeinen offnen friden*).[33] This peace was the foundation of any community, and the authorities constantly feared the eruption of disorder and *frevel*.[34] One can see a general concern for orderliness and

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31 *Wucher zu nemen*, Giij r.

32 This should be done even if the clergy are not entitled to this payment: 'if you are in some way obliged to them, such as *Erbzins*', you must pay, although do not think that 'they have become the true owners of the same *Erbzins*'. Ibid., Giij v.

33 *Auffrur*, Ciiij r: 'Where then a poisonous, stubborn, and rebellious [person] [is] found among the subjects, who may immoderately wickedly rebel against your praiseworthy Christian and loyal rule, or to injure his neighbour, and to spoil the common public peace; then faith through love urges you to punish such a wicked, poisonous man according to all urgency'.

34 Peter Matheson, writing on the early sixteenth century, has said that 'a mark of the age is its concern for law and order, not in a reactionary, but in an anticipatory and transformative sense, the quest for a "Christian order and brotherly unity"'. There was an 'assumption that the city or commune itself was sacred' and, Matheson claims, 'this sense of the commonalty, the commonwealth, the commune as constituting sacred community, is fundamental to an understanding of the Reformation. It could, and often did, lead to an idealisation of the harmony, continuity, and concord of the republic', Peter Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 2000), 49; 57f. Berndt Hamm has applied his theory of 'normative centering' as a means of accounting for the Reformation beyond the sphere of the church; this search for an 'answer to what many contemporaries saw as unsettling patterns of differentiation, multiplicity, individualisation, and concern for (and attention to) the things of this world', is seen in law (the introduction of Roman law), politics (the consolidation of the early modern state), humanism (the classical sources as authoritative), and art'. Berndt Hamm, 'Normative Centering in the 15th and 16th Centuries: Observations on Religiosity, Theology, and Iconology', in idem., *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety. Essays by Berndt Hamm*, edited by Robert J. Bast (Leiden, 2004), 1-49, 3. For Karlstadt's view of the orderly Christian community, see Stefan Oehmig, '"Christlicher Bürger", "christliche Stadt"? Zu Andreas Bodensteins von Karlstadt Vorstellungen von einem christlichen Gemeinwesen und den Tugenden seiner Bürger',

good behaviour in Strauss's pamphlets. One of the principal threats to this public peace was that proferred by drunkenness. The consumption of alcohol is of course harmful because it does not fit Strauss's concept of *Gelassenheit*, and can lead indirectly to the neglect of the poor. However, it will also lead to further corruption: 'wine will deprave the foolish man with unseemly joy in the gall of diverse vices and sins'.[35] Drinking frequently led to dancing: 'on a confraternity day one will be so drunk that one will sing, dance and leap'.[36] This combination, with its potential for sexual immorality, was thought to be particularly dangerous.[37] The councillor who interrupted Strauss's sermon had, we are told, arranged for a dance to be held in the marketplace that Tuesday evening. Although it appears from Strauss's account that the councillor had done this specifically to annoy him and disrupt the peace of the church, it may well have been a regularly scheduled dance, which was interrupted by the sermon. It is possible that this was a long-running battle between Strauss and some of the townspeople regarding dancing; the preacher and his sermons may in fact have disrupted the dance.[38] Strauss describes dancing as 'unholy'[39] and just as much a part of undesirable pleasure as over-consumption of food and alcohol. He criticises the exuberant celebration of a wedding as inappropriate to what should be a serious, godly event but has instead become an

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in Ulrich Bubenheimer and Stefan Oehmig (eds), *Querdenker der Reformation: Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt und seine frühe Wirkung* (Würzburg, 2001), 151-185.

35 *Pfaffen Ee*, B r. The sixteenth fool in Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, says of drunkenness: 'Eyn schädlich ding ist vmb den wyn// By dem mag nyeman witzig syn// Wer freüd vnd lust dar jnn jm sücht// Eyn drunkner mensch gar nyemans rücht// Und weiß keyn moß noch vnderscheyt// Vil vnküsch kümbt vß trunckenheyt', *Doctor Brants Narrensciff* (Basel: Nikolaus Lamparter, 1506) dij r.

36 *Pruderchafften* Aij v, as mentioned in Chapter III, above.

37 Regarding dancing, Brant writes: 'Uß dantzen vil vnratts entspringt// Do ist hochfart, vnd üppikeyt// Und fürlouff der vnlutterkeyt// Do schleyfft man Venus by der hend// Do hatt all erbarkeyt eyn end', *Doctor Brants Narrensciff* (Basel: Nikolaus Lamparter, 1506), l iiij r.

38 *Ernstliche handlung*, Aij r. On the disruptive, rather than immoral, interpretation of this incident, see below. In 1756, a Bavarian publican held a dance on Easter Tuesday, 1756 as part of a general dispute with the preacher; the latter 'publicly branded Mayrhofer [the publican] a disobedient and negligent parishoner from the pulpit', Beat Kümin, 'Sacred Church and Worldly Tavern: Reassessing an Early Modern Divide', in Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, 2005), 17-38, 28.

39 Strauss denounced 'the unholy joyful dance at a priest's wedding', *Pfaffen Ee*, B v.

opportunity for 'carousing, feasting, gluttony, dancing and leaping, and other work of the devil'.[40]

Marriage itself was a means of preserving propriety and a stable society. This was the reasoning used by those, including Strauss, who advocated the necessity of clerical marriage; voluntary celibacy, they wrote, leads inevitably to fornication. Although Strauss is pleased by the fact that priests are marrying he is dismayed by the conduct of some, whose impropriety has offended the word of God.[41] Strauss appears to criticise some of his congregation, and not just the priests involved, for the disorderly weddings which have taken place 'here' (in Eisenach?).[42] However, it is not only the outward form of the wedding that should conform to God's law. Strauss saw society as indulgent and corrupt. Marriage, which should be a stabilising force in the community, was affected by this. Both men and women (and not only the recently married clergy) were, in Strauss's eyes, swayed by lust and physical attraction when contemplating marriage. Such foolishness, far from contributing to the conquest of one's 'Old Adam', merely gave the latter free rein. Strauss describes physical desire as 'excrement', an unsuitable foundation for a lasting marriage.[43] A marriage based on nothing but 'the outward beauty of the body' will not last long, as it cannot withstand illness and old age.[44] Strauss insists that marriage is a serious decision, requiring much thought, and

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40 'As if carousing, feasting, gluttony, dancing and leaping, and other work of the devil make [for] a true understanding [between] marriage and us Christians', ibid., Aij r. A popular representation of this disorder can be seen in the carousing, vomiting, and brawling figures in Bartel Beham's *Große Bauernkirchweih* (c.1525), and Hans Sebald Beham's *Bauernfest* (1537) and *Bauerntanzfest oder die Zwölf Monate* (1546, 1547). Reprinted in Herbert Zschelletschky, *Die 'drei gottlosen Maler' von Nürnberg. Sebald Beham, Barthel Beham und Georg Pencz. Historische Grundlagen und ikonologische Probleme ihrer Graphik zu Reformations und Bauernkriegszeit* (Leipzig, 1975), 328f., 343ff.

41 'I praise it highly, that the priest has entered the marital state. But it is repugnant to me through God's word, and to be deplored by all pious Christians, if God's word be hindered, and goodness removed from the word with impropriety and abuse', *Pfaffen Ee*, B v.

42 Ibid., B v. Strauss offers as an example of correct behaviour 'that which has been done here in the marriage of priests': 'Also was hie in der priester Ee, von aller Christen menschen, Christenlich allain mit dem wort Gottes züthun gebürt'.

43 *Pfaffen Ee*, B r.

44 'Es erzaigt sich auch wol hernach wenn die küßwochen fur ist, vnd kranckhayt den Spiegel vnd Schauffal vmgewendt, was verharlich trew inn den lust Elichs wesens gefunden wirt', ibid., B r.

consultation of the Bible. Lust, even within marriage, is described as the 'vomitious, raging fire of unchastity' (*dem wülenden, wütenden fewer der vnkeüschait*).[45] He who marries in order to sate his lust, either by later adultery or simply through taking too much pleasure in the marriage bed, 'turns the chaste, marital state into a whorish, knavish life' (*in ain hürisch bübisch leben*).[46] Strauss tells all married couples: 'live with your spouse in a Christian manner, and be content'; they must have patience all difficulties that will inevitably arise.[47] In his pamphlet on confession, Strauss condemns the confessors for encouraging married women to abstain from sex during Advent and Lent, whereby 'the poor little women learn not to be obedient to their husbands'. Neither husband or wife should neglect this 'high obligation and duty' on the advice of these 'misled scoundrels', for this way lies adultery. Husband and wife should not deny themselves to one another (as the body of each is the property of the other), but should instead 'come together again', in order to evade the devil.[48] Strauss's practical advice, given in order to promote constant and peaceful marriages and to avoid adultery and quarrelling, demonstrates a concern for stability that was shared by the secular authorities as well as according with general humanist and civic ideals.

A key element of the ideal Christian community was the principle of unity among its citizens. The chief concern of Duke John during the usury dispute appears to have been that of preserving 'Christian, brotherly unity' among the townspeople.[49] This is also one of the central features of Strauss's brotherhood, and the purpose of the crucifixion: 'the son of God has died for this alone, that he would unite the children of God'.[50] Strauss was to return to this theme in his first work on the rebellion, where it is contrasted with *Aufruhr*; a term that can mean 'upheaval' or 'disorder' as well as outright 'rebellion'. The offence committed by the councillor who interrupted Strauss's sermon was not merely that he had rejected the

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45 Ibid., B v.

46 Ibid., Aij r; Aiiij r.

47 Ibid., Aij r.

48 *Beichtbüchlein*, Biij r.

49 The phrase 'cristliche bruderliche einigkeit' is found in his instructions to the commission, ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fo. 14v.

50 *Pruderchafften*, A v.

preacher's teachings in front of the congregation. Invading the church was not his only crime: he had intended to 'wickedly and with great mischief' hold 'a dance with shawms and trumpets at the town hall, which stands just by our church'. In this, as Strauss is careful to stress, the miscreant stands in contrast to the conscientious citizenry: 'as the pipers did not want to begin, or further pipe during the sermon, and a burgermaster solemnly made a prohibition against it; also the others did not want to dance so that God's word would not be hindered'. It was only then, according to Strauss, after storming out of the town hall in a temper and charging about the market square, that the councillor made his way to the church.[51] In doing so he had disrupted the public peace. Strauss ends his pamphlet with an appeal to a *bürgerlich* consideration of the 'ridicule and disgrace such a wicked man has brought upon an honourable Council, also the whole community of Eisenach'.[52]

This apparent concern for orderliness is evident in some of Strauss's pronouncements regarding the conduct of his followers. When advising the laity on how to behave when refused communion because they have not received the sacrament of penance, Strauss does tell them to approach the priest, to request the sacrament, and to explain why the priest is wrong to refuse. This, however, is not to be done for the sake of public confrontation, but politely and with respect.[53] The instruction in *Trostliche verstendige leer* 'on how the pious Christian should behave at the Mass' is to be followed 'if he cannot exclude himself from it with good propriety (*mit gütem füg*)'; this is presumably a warning not to make a fuss and cause public strife.[54] Those who are still oppressed by the clergy are advised to be patient.[55] As mentioned in the previous chapter, Strauss is careful (as he says, 'so that useless, vain prattle should not occur') to deny that help given to one's neighbour should be

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51 *Ernstliche handlung*, Aij r-v.

52 *Ernstliche handlung*, Aiiij r.

53 'and say that trustingly in Christian love as my priest', *Beichtbüchlein*, Eiij r.

54 This could also refer to possible social shame. However, 'füg' could also indicate the possibility of worrying *oneself*, as Strauss later speaks of those who are unwilling to abandon the mass. *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Ciiij v.

55 Ibid., D r.

indiscriminate, in case it should encourage idleness or dissolution.[56] He urges his followers to pray for their enemies' comeuppance rather than to openly scold them.[57] That Strauss's reaction to the incident in the church was not an isolated event provoked by loss of temper is perhaps indicated in his advice on how to deal with unrepentant usurers; not only there is to be no violence against them, but neither are they to be scolded or brought 'into disrepute'. If admonition does not work, they should be shunned.[58] This concern is reminiscent of Luther's view of 'offence'. The disagreement with Karlstadt regarding the latter's innovations in Wittenberg during the winter of 1521 – 1522 was based on Luther's desire to avoid offending the consciences of those who were not yet prepared to accept these changes.[59] A similar caution can be seen in some of Strauss's descriptions of his own approach to reform. He has only addressed the subject of baptismal chrism and oil, he says, because he has been forced to do so; the 'great enemies of the gospel' having established this trade.[60] Because people had been so accustomed to the use of chrism, Strauss was prepared to continue the practice, but only in a way that would be tolerable to God, that is, with no payment. Nonetheless, the 'additions' are a problem in themselves. God has shown Strauss that he cannot delay in their abolition, and has done so by ensuring that the chrism sellers insist on payment: 'God wanted to have it otherwise, and quickly free our assembly from the error'.[61]

Strauss also displayed an awareness of the dangers of publishing which in itself could be construed as trouble-making, especially considering the imperial ban and the prohibition of 'Lutheran' books in certain territories. He was therefore often anxious to offer an excuse for his writings. He has produced the pamphlet on brotherhoods, he claims in the preface, because his 'dear lords and friends' in Hall, to whom the pamphlet is dedicated, have asked

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56 *Wucher zu nemen*, Biij r.

57 *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r.

58 'But if we can do nothing with them with Christian teaching and admonition, so we should avoid them, and have no community with them, as one reads, Matthew at the 10th.', *Wucher zu nemen*, Giij r.

59 On this dispute, see James S. Preus, *Carlstadt's* Ordinaciones *and Luther's Liberty: A Study of the Wittenberg Movement 1521-22*. Harvard Theological Studies XXVI (Cambridge MA, and London, 1974).

60 *Simonieschen Tauff*, B v; see Chapter I, above.

61 Ibid. Aiiij v.

him for 'a written short instruction' on how to behave in these matter.[62] In *Trostliche verstendige leer*, too, he defends his decision to publish; he is acting at the request of the people who are being oppressed by the 'princes of the priests and the pharisees'.[63] The work on confession is necessary in order to repair the damage done by Brother Michael after Strauss had been forced to flee, so that his former congregation may be directed in their faith and given 'good encouragement'.[64] Strauss claims that he has consented to write on the subject of relics due only to 'the request of many pious Christian people'.[65] He was even to profess himself reluctant to enter into the debate with the critics of the evangelical movement after the Peasants' War; in his response to Cochlaeus, one gathers that he has been forced to write partly because the 'misleaders' had done all they could to prevent the evangelicals from putting their case, and partly because Cochlaeus' unchristian abuse and calumny have forced a response.[66] Throughout his works, there is an apparent unwillingness to contribute to disunity, quarrelling, and scandal.

The initiative when it comes to reform should come, it would seem, from the authorities. Luther was apparently reluctant to appeal to the princes to direct religious reform, more so than any of his followers, and did so only out of desperation, maintaining a 'stubborn refusal to accept the then common belief that the political commonwealth and secular authority have an intrinsically religious purpose'.[67] Strauss, in dedicating his pamphlet on the Christian assembly to Prince John Frederick, gives the impression that the prince must intervene. It would appear that it is up to the rulers to rescue the local churches: 'may no pious prince or *landesherr* pay attention to a veiled word and human counsel, where God's law would be

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62 *Pruderchafften*, A r – A v.

63 *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aij r. This entire introduction to this work is an explanation of his recent career, filled with protestations of humility.

64 Ibid., Bij v – Biij r.

65 *Heiligthüm*, Aij r.

66 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, H v; Aiiij v.

67 James M. Estes, 'Luther on the Role of Secular Authority in the Reformation', in Timothy J. Wengert (ed.), *The Pastoral Luther. Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids MI and Cambridge, 2009), 355-380, 356, note 4.

denied'.[68] In the realm of secular reform, it is the duty of the authorities to cut through the pretences of the usury-defenders.[69] Strauss seems to defend the lack of action to date on the part of the rulers; they have, like their subjects, been blinded by the clergy and 'turned away from God'.[70] Due to their natural inclination to mercy and kindness, they have been tricked into tolerance and, because of their respect for law and justice, into upholding the usury contracts, believing as they do that each man should keep his word.[71] The usurers have persuaded them to collect these debts; those who have 'submerged themselves so thoroughly in the usury trade' want the authorities to forbid any criticism of it (including Strauss's brotherly admonition), and to enforce it 'with violence'.[72]

Until the authorities have abolished usury and other injustices, as mentioned in Chapter III, Strauss warns that one must be prepared to suffer. After the Peasants' War, Strauss was to reaffirm the standard principle that all secular authority comes from God.[73] Obedience to this authority is part of the message of the gospel, and the product of faith.[74] Those who wish to live without any secular authority wish for ungodly freedom, and their disobedience to God's commandment will result in their damnation.[75] God has given the princes the sword in order to punish such sedition, and in doing so, a prince acts out of love for his subjects, seeking to protect them from a poisonous element.[76] This was the argument used by Luther regarding Müntzer and other false prophets. It is certainly not the place of the common man to 'be his

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68 *Christlichen versamlung*, B r.

69 'Because of that [i.e., that the 'learned' have turned people from God], no pious Christian prince can allow to such world-ruiners embellished, concealing, and subtle words', *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiij r.

70 Ibid., E v, used in Chapter IV; Ibid., Eiij r.

71 Ibid., E v.

72 Ibid., Gij r.

73 *Auffrur*, Ciij v.

74 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Biij v.

75 'the men who want to live and behave [according to] their own intentions without law and authority, do not know themselves, also God, and want to be more free than man was created in paradise, and are enemies of God's mercy and fatherly care, and also of themselves; [and], what is more, wickedly disobedient to God's commandment to their eternal ruin', ibid., Diij v.

76 *Auffrur*, Ciiij r. Strauss uses the metaphor of the amputation of a poisoned limb in order to save the body; see below for a more detailed discussion of this corporal imagery.

own judge' and take the lead in this matter by attempting to requisition wealth gained by the clergy through deception.[77] Strauss recognises that, as 'no human power' can release one from one's obligation to 'God's commandment and brotherly love', this puts the 'pious, godly man' in an impossible situation: one cannot behave with both godliness and propriety towards a secular authority which enforces usury.[78] Furthermore, if one were to obey the authorities, one would endanger not only one's own soul, but also that of one's brother.[79] One of these commandments must be broken: either that of love, or that of obedience. The solution, according to Strauss, is to admonish the usurer in an attempt to convert him, and then to pay the interest rather than actively disobey the authorities. The need to obey also takes precedence over the neighbour's soul; this is because one should consider one's own soul first.[80] There are limits to what the debtor can do for the usurer's soul. If he is ignored by both the usurer and the authorities, he should submit to financial injustice, even though it 'hurts him in his heart that the other, through his crime, ruins himself'.[81]

The suffering that will be brought by following God's law will not be restricted to pain felt on the usurer's behalf, but will also involve harm to oneself. For this, one has the example of Christ.[82] Strauss claims that he has always maintained that this suffering, and not violence or

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77 'Do not be your own judge, as that belongs to kings and territorial princes; if they want to be good Christians, they will seize the priests and the monks in their excessive wealth', *Wucher zu nemen*, Giij v – Giiij r. This warning is announced earlier in the text: 'But how the common man should not be his own judge, and [how he should] behave in the usury interest with regard to everyone, will afterwards be clearly taught at the end', ibid., Eiij r. Strauss repeats these sentiments in *Antwurt ... Coclei*: 'Also, no one may protect himself or fittingly be his own judge, and the daily and inevitable experience proves that without any teaching', E r.

78 Ibid., Fiij v.

79 See Chapter III, above.

80 There is no contradiction between the commandment of love, and that of patience in suffering, Strauss writes, 'as each has its own subject, and should be kept faithfully in this case'. The former concerns the 'redemption and the salvation of the neighbour' and our role in this; the latter, our love for ourselves (i.e., 'patience in suffering'; the *rejection* of self-interest), which must take precedence: 'for this reason we must patiently abandon our temporal wealth or [allow] the same to be seized, whereby no greater evil against love occurs. And thus God's will done, and the order or commandment of the temporal authority also kept', *Wucher zu nemen*, G v – Gij r.

81 Ibid., G v.

82 Ibid., Fiij r.

resistance, is the proper Christian path: 'as I have taught a hundred times, if you wanted to make noise, rant and rage, hit, attack, and strangle, and suppose to introduce the gospel thus, then the murderers and mercenaries would be the most suitable apostles and most powerful preachers'.[83] He is confident that his congregation, at least, will be prepared to remain under the cross, and pursue the following course.[84] When entangled in usury, one should refuse to pay; not from self-interest, but from consideration of one's brother's (the usurer's) soul. One should therefore admonish the usurer, but this should be gentle and orderly, not angry and scolding, and there should certainly be no violence. If this admonition does not work, one must suffer all injustice with patience, but under protest. As the debtor has recognised from the gospel that one must place brotherly love above self-interest and should ignore human orders to the contrary, he must inform the authorities that he does not wish to break God's commandment. This should be done in a submissive and docile manner. Strauss is not entirely consistent regarding the course to be followed from this stage. At one point, he says that one should withhold the interest until the point at which the authorities would have to compel one to pay. The good Christian should not put the 'pious territorial princes, who now from the word of God [...] recognise the harm of the damnable interest, and nonetheless so wretchedly cannot put a stop to it' into the position of forcing their subjects to pay against their consciences. Once the debtor has satisfied his own conscience by attempting to reform his creditor, he must pay up.[85] Elsewhere in the same pamphlet, however, he tells the debtor to 'allow his goods to be seized to pay the debt'.[86]

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83 Ibid., Giij r.

84 Strauss admonishes his readers (and, indicating that the second usury pamphlet may indeed have been based on sermons, the people of Eisenach) to suffer rather than actively defy the authorities: 'But God be praised, we have learned so much in the holy gospel, that we know to keep ourselves thus under the cross of our Lord, whereby we will not abandon God's commandment and his living, eternal word in the usury trade, and show ourselves in addition of all obedience to the temporal authority', ibid., Eiiij v.

85 Ibid., Gij v. A similar instruction appears earlier in the text, when Strauss advises the debtor that if it comes to it, he must follow Christ's teaching and 'give such unreasonable interest to the usury lords with [his] own hand', ibid., Fiiij v.

86 You must 'first fearlessly open your Christian, steadfast heart and give the temporal power with all docility to know that you do not want to act further against God's commandment and his eternal word, and submissively and diligently request the authorites that they protect and deal with

In this way, Strauss is able to reconcile obedience with love, and preserve social order. He reassures his readers that they may surrender their goods without harming their souls, but tells them that they may not 'defy further and rebelliously show audacity' to their rulers, as commanded by Christ's instruction to offer one's cloak as well as one's coat.[87] In this way, they can do God's will and obey the laws of the secular authority. It is possible to both keep out of the usury trade and to be good citizens.[88] In what was presumably meant as a warning, Strauss can inform his readers that 'we [...] will prove ourselves utterly obedient to the temporal authority'.[89] Having reassured his readers that God will not allow the present situation to remain, Strauss urges suffering and patience instead of plotting against the authorities. It appears that this voluntary bearing of the cross will give the former the moral authority, or 'wisdom', to 'counter' their oppressors: 'For this reason here the precious, rich cross of Christ, our certain wisdom, under which we are not pushed away from God, and can counter the clever and wise of this world in a wise and brotherly manner'.[90]

3. Reputation

Taken as a whole, however, Strauss's pamphlets contain relatively few of these these counsels regarding patience rather than action. To what degree was this apparent concern for order and propriety sincere? How much of it was due to a genuine belief that the Christian should be sober or to an attempt to prevent greed and waste; how much to a belief in an orderly society, a belief in the social order, or concern for the weak; and how much to an attempt to protect his reputation and that of the evangelical movement? To what extent do these

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you from Christian love with the word of God; but where the [word of God is not observed], so you should willingly [say] that you would very much like to suffer, that they the authorities, as customary, seize your goods and pay the usury-seeking interest squires', ibid., Fiiij r.

87 Ibid., Fiiij v. Matthew 5:40; again at G v.

88 'And thus God's will done, and the order or commandment of the temporal authority also kept', ibid., Gij r.

89 Ibid., Eiiij v.

90 Ibid., Gij v.

instructions show a concern for image above anything else? How many of the warnings about disobedience came from a genuine desire to prevent rebellion for its own sake; a belief that one could not oppose one's ordained authorities? An indication can be seen in both Strauss's awareness of criticism from various quarters, and in his response.

The rebellions of 1524 and 1525 and their link to the evangelical movement were seized upon by its opponents, and Strauss was fully aware of this. In his answer to Cochlaeus, he tells the latter that the critics of the Reformation would have found few receptive ears had it not been for the rebellion.[91] The peasants, through their use of the gospel to support their wickedness, have allowed the critics of the new teaching to claim that the peasants 'as simple people' have only accepted the 'new evangelical preaching' because it is attractive, and to attribute the recent rebellion to this cause.[92] The revolt has provided the 'world-misleaders' with a wonderful opportunity. They can now present themselves as 'righteous and holy prophets' and 'one must worship them again, and fear them as the gods, as they have foreseen, that the new teaching (as they call God's word) would awaken only rebellion'.[93] Based on this, the authorities now persecute the evangelical preachers.[94] Although Cochlaeus pretends that he is grieved by the bloodshed of 1524 and 1525 (he 'can barely keep from weeping'), Strauss

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91 'if the rebellion which happened had not occurred, so your unformed writing (as you yourself think) would not have had such a great reputation among your like', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Ciij r. The work to which Strauss is responding is Johannes Cochlaeus, *Wjder die Reubische[n] vnd// Morderischen rotten der Bawren die vnter dem schey[n] des hei=//ligen Euangelions felschlichen wider alle Oberkeit// sich setzen vnd empören Martinus Luther.// Antword Joa[n]nis Coclej Von Wendelstein.// Eyn kurtzer begriff von auffr=//ren vnd rotten der Bawrn in hohem Teutsch=//land diß Jar begangen.* (Peter Quentell: Cologne: 1525). I have used the reproduction found in Adolf Laube et al. (eds.), *Flugschriften der Bauernkriegszeit*, 376-412, 400.

92 'the peasants, as simple people, have easily received the new evangelical preaching, as it is happy and pleasing for itself', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiiij v. The rebellion, according to Cochlaeus, has been caused by 'the new teaching and preaching of Luther and other evangelical teachers', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiiij v. Cochlaeus had written, 'Ir habt dem armen volck so lang und so hefftig furgepredigt und furgeschryben felschlich von Gots wort unnd cristlicher fryheit, bys das yr gar tobend unnd unsynnich gemacht habt, nicht anders dan het irs ime zu fressen geben oder sunst verzaubert, das es nichts dar gegeb wolt weder horen noch sehen, die weyl ir ime die falschen freyheit so suß ein streichet', Johannes Cochlaeus, *Wjder die Reubische[n] vnd// Morderischen rotten [...] Antword Joa[n]nis Coclej* in Laube (ed.), *Flugschriften der Bauernkriegszeit*, 378.

93 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiij r.

94 Ibid., Aiij r.

claims that, on the contrary he would be thoroughly satisfied were it to result in the eradication of 'evangelical teaching'.[95]

Strauss's response is to compare the slandering and persecution of the reformers by their opponents to that of Christ by the 'confused teachers, pharisees, and priests of the Jews', who also played upon 'invented fear of rebellion' and in doing so turned the Romans and the common people away from the true teaching.[96] He also attacks the clergy's motives for these denunciations. He claims that Cochlaeus especially has benefited from the revolt; he has used it to increase his own fame.[97] Those who are desperately trying to convince the princes that the recent upheavals originated in the activities of the evangelical preachers are accused of acting from a mixture of blindness, fear, greed, and self-preservation, rather than any concern for order or faith. They disguise their own persecution of Christ by attacking God's true followers 'with sweet, splendid words'. They attempt to stifle the gospel because 'they love the darkness more than the light' and their 'belly and purse may not tolerate it; their work is nothing other than self-interest, arrogance, lust, revenge, anger, deceit, trouble of one's neighbour; for this reason they flee the light, and that is so evident, that the stones in the earth may cry out over it'.[98] Whereas the rebels and their leaders had been accused by all as having been inspired by a 'rebellious spirit', Strauss turns this accusation back on his opponents; it is easy to see, he claims, by which 'spirit' these people are led to 'storm and rage' against God's word'.[99] As he had earlier mocked those who blindly led the laity to their

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95 Ibid., Aiij v.

96 'But where the same unexpressible and most gracious visitation was disregarded, accordingly, as the tyrannical priests and monks of the Jews, did not want their immoderate wickedness and misleading of the common people to suffer Christ's teaching and punishment in any way, they, with deathly poisonous hatred (as the blind and leader of the blind) and so very murderously stamped upon the eternal light Christ without cease, to quench the light, until they had yet turned the common people, also the Roman authority, under invented fear of rebellion, away from Christ, and brought life into death.' Ibid., Fiij v – Fiiij r.

97 'if the rebellion which happened had not occurred, so your unformed writing (as you yourself think) would not have had such a great reputation among your like', ibid., Ciij r.

98 Ibid., Fij r-v; a reference to Luke 19:40, 'He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out"'.

99 Ibid., H v.

damnation, in 1525 Strauss derided the 'blind, wise people' who condemn the rebellion for their own ends.[100] In his response to Cochlaeus, this earlier tactic of 'exposing' the true foolishness of the supposedly learned schoolmen is revived in order to ridicule his opponent. Cochlaeus is presented as being utterly stupid, incapable of recognising either God's word or simple concepts; for whatever reason, he cannot express himself clearly.[101] He is not to be trusted; no confidence should be placed in his position as a doctor, and his accusations are worthless.[102]

Against the claims of Cochlaeus and his supporters, Strauss proposes to show that the grounds upon which 'the peaceful word of God is blamed, along with its servants, as a cause of the past hellish rebellion' are entirely unreasonable.[103] The principal accusation, as mentioned above, was that the reformers had deliberately taught a form of freedom which permitted the lazy and the greedy to ignore all authority and seize what they wished. After a standard denunciation of works-righteousness as presumptuous and ungodly, Strauss responds to the accusation that according to the new teaching no one is obliged to do good by expressing astonishment that even one so blind as Cochlaeus should think that the new teaching is an attractive one.[104] In order to clear this up, Strauss offers Cochlaeus an explanation of evangelical teaching, asking which will do more to defeat the old Adam: the new teaching, which enjoins one to accept the 'fruit and works' that accompany faith and Christ, or the old with its 'invented, human works and sour, withered fruit'.[105] The former, Strauss claims, is by far the more difficult; it requires an 'entirely new man', one who has conquered his own nature. For such a man, 'life is a cross'.[106] For this reason, it could not

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100 *Auffrur*, Cij v.

101 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiij v

102 'Here one fundamentally perceives, that you do not yet know what gospel is, or how it would be preached in truth, and scold all pious christian preachers', ibid., Bij v. See Chapter III, above.

103 Ibid., Aiiij r.

104 Ibid., B v; Bij r-v.

105 Ibid., Bij v. Cochlaeus, says Strauss, laments the loss of 'the fruit of the old faith, withered by our preaching', Bij r

106 Ibid., Biij v.

appeal to the selfish.[107] The 'old faith', on the other hand, does not require such a deep-seated change, but only superficial works which will not deceive God; unlike the true faith, it does not 'strangle and murder the man in himself'.[108] The requirements of the true faith, humility and generosity, make it 'such a strange, intolerable teaching', especially for such as Cochlaeus.[109] The fault lies not with the new teaching, but with man himself, who finds its true meaning too harsh and unbearable.[110]

These accusations that the new preachers were stirring up the common man, encouraging him to regard himself as entitled to financial and social improvement against all ordained authority, did not make their first appearance in the aftermath of the Peasants' War. Secular authorities as well as clerical critics had long feared that disorder and rebellion would result from these sermons. This potential for disorder was certainly recognised in Strauss's own region, and not only by opponents of the evangelical movement. Eberlin retrospectively identified an element in Thuringia in 1524, possibly enthusiasts among the common people, who had wholeheartedly abandoned their traditional religious practices but neglected to reform their behaviour.[111] Luther was certainly associated with a desire for social and economic change and did not do much to disabuse people of this idea. Even though he called for this to be achieved in an orderly manner by those with the authority to do so, his followers recognised the need to protect him from accusations of rebellion. However, Strauss himself was seen by many, including Luther, as belonging to this group of enthusiasts,

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107 'Then, dear sir Doctor, it does not please the old faith and Adam in you at all', ibid., Biij v.

108 Ibid., Biij v - Biiij v. Here, Strauss instructs Cochlaeus in how to live as a Christian and carry his cross; as well as abandoning his learned and spiritual status, he must give to all in need as requested, with no though of repayment, and to bear enmity 'with patience under the cross'. These are the 'fruits of faith'.

109 'Here all men flee from Christ and [*verschewen*] the holy cross. As these things must not be practised in appearance and with words, rather in work and the truth', ibid., Biiij r.

110 Ibid., Biiij v.

111 '"I taught very distinctly that there is more to being a Christian than censuring priests, eating meat, or refusing mass and confession. I scolded the gluttony, drunkenness, whoring, usury, cursing, lying and more, of these vicious, so-called gospel hordes', Kyle C. Sessions, 'Christian Humanism and Freedom of a Christian: Johann Eberlin von Günzburg to the Peasants', in in Lawrence P. Buck and Jonathan W. Zophy (eds), *The Social History of the Reformation* (Columbus OH, 1972), 137-155, 148.

irresponsibly promising social change on the basis of the gospel, and encouraging disobedience and disunity. That Strauss was aware of this criticism, both of the evangelical movement as a whole and of himself in particular, is evident in his pamphlets before 1525.

This is especially apparent in his writings on usury, in which his appeals for obedience to the authorities are framed within an attempt to portray his conduct and that of his followers in a good light. There are numerous oblique and direct references to allegations of trouble-making. Strauss insists in the introduction to the second pamphlet that all he has taught is to trust in God and help one's neighbour. He ends the work with one of its clearest instructions regarding orderly conduct, followed by a declaration that this is how 'we' have behaved, and that he wants to have this information 'preached, taught, and written'.[112] Strauss was eager to get his version of events in Eisenach into print. There are clear suggestions that he and his congregation were acquiring a reputation for disobedience, and that he was very conscious of such criticism. He vows that he has not said that one should refuse to pay *Erbzins* and denies rumours that no one in Eisenach pays any interest at all.[113] Strauss claims that these rumours have been started as a direct result of the success of his teachings on usury. The usurers, he writes, feel threatened and, lying unashamedly, are trying to discredit him and the Eisenachers.[114] Those who do not listen to the usury protectors 'will be called disobedient and rebellious, and then the enemies of truth say: I and my like create nothing with our preaching other than we awake the common man to rebellion'.[115] This censure has been a partial

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112 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij r; Ibid., Giiij r.

113 'Of course, no one is so simple, who has heard my preaching, and will read this book, who does not understand, what usury-interest, or inheritance interest is, as I have nonetheless so often uncovered the usury trade with clear understanding', ibid., Eiij v.

114 'As we are now well protected against the usury interest, taught clearly and openly from the godly Scripture, and will also be strengthened in this according to the strength of natural fairness and daily experience. So now the usury-seeking have raised themselves in a great outcry, and are not ashamed to lie so impolitely. That they say, we teach here in Eisenach [that] one should pay no one any more, also give no *Erbzins*', ibid., Eiij v.

115 Ibid., Eiiij r-v.

success, as the clergy 'with such bawling' have turned many powerful princes from the gospel.[116] Strauss makes sarcastic references to '*die Weysen*' and their accusations.[117]

The advice to surrender one's property is clearly a reaction to such an accusation. Such a course of action, Strauss maintains, cannot be regarded as rebellious, despite the untruthful, cruel pretence of the 'enemies of God' that 'we have taught rebellion, uprising, or disobedience to the temporal authority'.[118] He admits that 'the greatest raging and charging has pushed in against me and our assembly because of this teaching [on usury], and increases daily' and adds, 'we do not want to pay any attention to it'; announcing that 'we' will not tolerate the devil.[119] While this could be seen as simply encouraging his congregation not to falter, given that preacher and laity have been criticised, it is almost certainly also intended to reassure the Eisenach and Weimar authorities, who must have been worried by events. When Strauss urges his followers not to conspire against their appointed authorities, his concern that this will lead to he and his reforms acquiring a reputation for disobedience is unmistakeable. He tells his readers that if they wish 'to be angry, scold, or plot against the command of the human power', not only will they fall out of favour with God and the authorities, but that such behaviour will also 'highly please our enemies'.[120]

Although Strauss's reputation as a radical within the evangelical movement originated in the usury controversy, he appeared conscious of anything that may have provided an opportunity for criticism. One of the principal purposes of the marriage pamphlet, in its insistence on order, modesty, and moderation, is to defend the marriages of the clergy, particularly those which have taken place in Eisenach. Strauss praises the inhabitants for their contribution to the abolition of dangerous, false celibacy and adherence to the word of God: 'And from this hellish law you have recently been raised through the grace of God, and some

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116 Ibid., Eiiij v.
117 Ibid., Dij r.
118 Ibid., Gij r.
119 Ibid., E v.
120 Ibid., Gij v.

of your children and kin have wed the priests in holy matrimony in belief of the divine word'.[121] He is obviously concerned that the marriages of priests be even more proper than those of the laity, and suggests that this is mostly the case: 'And therefore I wish that the priests in the first place make of their marriage a beautiful example to the laity entirely according to the word of God, beginning with their quiet, modest wedding, as some have done here, God be praised, where neither evil nor offence is offered to anyone'.[122] The problem is not that the weddings of priests and monks are especially raucous, but that they are *as* disorderly as those of the laity, whereas Strauss believes that the former need to be seen to act with even more propriety than is normal. These marriages are open to criticism in from those who defend priestly celibacy, and their behaviour therefore needs to be above reproach.

This anxiety to promote Eisenach as a thoroughly pious community, in which the majority adhere to God's word, had clearly been prompted by an awareness of specific or general accusations of rebellion or simple heresy. Much of the introduction to the pamphlet on the Christian assembly consists of praise of Prince John Frederick. He is portrayed as a well-intentioned Christian ruler of a territory and the target of his people's appeals for help; his priests and their defenders, however, are attempting to mislead him.[123] It is possible that Strauss was aware of a campaign to persuade the prince of the heretical nature of the new teaching.[124] When advocating prayer rather than 'scolding or anger' (*schellten oder tzorn*) as a method of dealing with one's enemies, this is necessary not only in order to avoid antagonising one's neighbours or the authorities, but also because the latter course would

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121 *Pfaffen Ee*, A v. A similar portrayal of the godly nature of the Eisenach assembly can be seen in *Simonieschen Tauff*, Ciij r-v: 'It is false that one may be baptized without faith, in our assembly we baptize in the form and manner [that] Christ has taught and commanded us. Here no money nor monetary value will be given nor taken'.

122 *Pfaffen Ee*, B v.

123 *Christlichen versamlung*, Aij v - Aiij r.

124 Duke John of Saxony, and not his son, was officially responsible for ecclesiastical organisation in Thuringia at this time. Although Strauss describes John Frederick's relationship to the people as their 'future reigning lord,' the overall impression is that he *is* the reigning lord; no mention is made of his father or uncle. It is wished throughout the territory, Strauss writes, that the gospel be preached in accordance with John Frederick's own beliefs, so as to obey the requirement that 'the subjects are not found to be different in faith in God from their Christian prince', ibid., Aij v).

bring their opponents the satisfaction of being able to regard them as 'rebellious and disobedient' (*auffrurig vnd vngehorsamen*).[125] Although Strauss gives the impression that God has forced him to act immediately regarding baptism rather than take the slow, inoffensive route (the priest having refused to give the chrism for free by God's design[126]), there is a sense that he is trying not only to convince his readers that his position is correct, but also to justify his conduct. This can be concluded from his references to the 'gentle evangelicals' (presumably an allusion to Luther and his followers) and their 'usual talk of [him]', whereby they 'scold [him] as an enthusiast, fanatic, and impetuous person'.[127]

It is clear from the title page of the marriage pamphlet that Strauss fears that the unruly and splendid weddings of certain priests have provided an opportunity for the critics of the new teaching to 'scold us and blaspheme God's word'.[128] He implies that the disorderly marriages of the clergy are the devil's attempt to destroy the good that has come from the abandonment of false, dangerous chastity. Announcing that 'the enemies of the gospel have as their purpose to harm us here at Eisenach', Strauss attributes to this their claim that the people are being instructed to obey only the flesh, rather than abstinence or 'Christian discipline and order'.[129] The role of Satan in seeking to destroy what has been done at Eisenach through his promotion of lust and self-indulgence could refer to the destruction of the morals of the town, or more specifically to an attempt to derail the reformation effort by associating it with disorderly behaviour and thus frightening the authorities. The Reformation is being accused not just of heresy and immorality, but also of indiscipline and disorder. The reference to the word of God being 'hindered' by such behaviour would suggest that Strauss believed that any unsavoury associations could lead to the suspension of his preaching and reforms.[130]

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125 *Pruderchafften,* Aiiij r.
126 *Simonieschen Tauff,* Aiiij v; used above.
127 Ibid., Aiiij r-v.
128 *Pfaffen Ee,* A r.
129 Ibid., A v.
130 Ibid., B v.

As has been demonstrated in Chapter III, Strauss was indeed deeply concerned with morality, moderation and asceticism; not so much due to a need for 'justice' for its own sake as to the necessity of following the cross and the commandment of love.[131] Society had to be reformed in the interests of the soul and, therefore, not all of Strauss's rebukes regarding Christian behaviour were insincere. However, serious doubts remain regarding his occasional professed unwillingness to cause offence or division within the community and the degree to which these may have been the result of a desire to avert criticism. It is generally clear from Strauss's works that not only was a total reformation of society required, but that this had to be achieved with some urgency. Souls were in danger, and the present situation therefore could not be allowed to persist. A sense of inevitable and imminent reformation pervades these writings. Strauss declares that God will not tolerate the neglect of the poor in favour of relics for much longer.[132] The 'dreadful men' who attack the gospel will soon be defeated by the truth.[133] The suffering (for example, the payment of unjust *Erbzins*) is certainly not to be indefinite. Likewise, although one should surrender one's property for the sake of the princes who, even though they recognise the injustice of the situation, for some reason cannot ignore the usurers' demands, Strauss is confident that this will not last for long.[134] The gospel which compels him to preach 'penetrates all secrecy, corners, and places', and he is confident in its victory. The laity should pay no attention to the fact that 'the open enemies of the godly truth will become yet more biting' and, if they seek to destroy usury with the word, 'the gates of hell cannot win the upper hand'.[135] Although Strauss does not advocate violence against the clergy, saying that this time has not yet come, he promises that God will punish the obstinate and, as the Psalms say, the oppressed will wash their hands in their blood.[136]

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131 See Chapter III.

132 *Heiligthüm*, B r.

133 *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r: 'that you diligently ask God that the joy of the dreadful men, as they propose to destroy the gospel, will not be long ... the truth will not support their defence for long'.

134 *Wucher zu nemen*, Gij v.

135 Ibid., Aij v.

136 Ibid., Giij v. This, however, accompanies a warning not to use force in order to convert. Strauss states that the gospel will not spread by means of force or *freuel*'.

4. Attack.

This sense of urgency and inevitability is evident in Strauss's references to those whom he saw as standing in the way of the necessary reforms. The pamphlets and sermons were not merely used to persuade the laity of the necessity to reform, and to reassure those in power that Strauss was not a dangerous radical; they also served as a platform from which to launch pointed attacks. Despite his professed reluctance to contribute to disorder and disunity by engaging in quarrelling, for the sake of which even open disagreement with the godless is to be avoided[137], Strauss was clearly prepared to use polemic when necessary. A concern for order and a need to ingratiate himself with anyone were not priorities; they ranked well below the need to discredit those who would challenge his vision of the necessary reformation.

As has become clear, the principal targets of Strauss's broadsides were the old clergy. Although anticlerical polemic is particularly prominent in these pamphlets, few of his fellow reformers held back from forceful and antagonistic invective. By 1523, almost all had dismissed the possibility of reform from within the church, and the clergy were regarded as agents of Satan. It is true that in 1524 Strauss had suggested that some of the clergy could yet be converted, and two years later encouraged the 'misleaders' to examine their own consciences and reform and improve before God properly punished them.[138] In his request that Cochlaeus abandon his status of doctor and priest, and integrate himself into the general community, Strauss appears to be attempting to turn the former into his ideal pastor, as outlined in the *Assembly* pamphlet, implying that if the wealth of the clergy is removed, the Holy Spirit may give them the understanding necessary to become true servants of the word.[139] Despite this, however, and the veneer of politeness contained in Strauss's response

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137 *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r, as above.

138 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Gij r.

139 'Do not be encouraged by popish or other human freedom. Keep no longer with your Doctorate and priesthood. Do not separate yourself from [the] common Christian condition. Do not enjoy particular favour and honour of the world. Offer, donate, give to everyone who because of his

to Cochlaeus, there is no real indication that Strauss believed that there could be any form of fruitful dialogue with the Catholic clergy.

Strauss insists that he does not want to 'abuse or malign' Cochlaeus[140] and asks him, if he has something to say in response, to say it nicely.[141] For his part, although the victim of unbrotherly scolding, Strauss insists that he will not respond in kind.[142] Nonetheless, while he protests his own patience and love, he implores Cochlaeus to allow Strauss to teach him.[143] This does not suggest dialogue: who would respond well to being told that he is a fool, and that he must submit to instruction like a child? Although Strauss claims to act from 'brotherly compassion'[144], offering to pretend that Cochlaeus' 'shameful error' stems from ignorance, rather than, presumably, malice, the overall tone is one of sarcasm rather than concern. The declarations of brotherly love are somewhat undermined by the insults elsewhere, and there is enough 'scolding' in this very pamphlet to suggest insincerity, especially the wholesale attack on Cochlaeus' intelligence and Strauss's liberal use of personal insults. Cochlaeus was to be the first of the non-evangelical clergy whom Strauss addressed directly; the contrast with his descriptions of 'Brother Michael' would suggest that this was not a genuine attempt to reform. Although in Strauss's description of a 'Christian council', he appears to see debate between various individual understandings of Scripture as the way to the truth, this

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need requests or requires your help. Think also of no repayment', ibid., Biiij r. Strauss tells Cochlaeus not to trust in himself or any other created thing, and to see himself 'as a servant and servant of all men for God's sake', ibid., Biiij r.

140 Ibid., Aiiij r.

141 Ibid., C r.

142 'I immediately thought to take up the quill to answer him as befits a Christian, and not answer scolding with scolding', ibid., Aij r. Of course, immoderate scolding would be contrary to the gospel, according to the principles Strauss sets out in this very pamphlet: 'you should love your enemies and intercede for your persecutors, and do well by those that hate you, and always repay wickedness with goodness', ibid. Biij r.

143 Strauss asks that, given the patience he has shown regarding Cochlaeus' insults, that the latter 'with Christian meekness take brotherly punishment and instruction from me', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiiij v. Strauss says that he would have left Cochlaeus be (as his ignorance regarding the true definition of rebellion and his 'childish undertaking' have aroused only pity in the former), 'if love in God had not forced me to exercise myself for [his] improvement', ibid., Cij v. Also: Bij v; C v-Cij r; C r.

144 Ibid., Ciij r.

explicitly excluded any contribution by the papacy or its defenders.[145] Even in this work, it is clear that he held out little hope of converting the 'mighty apostles and self-grown saints': 'I do not doubt that this, my faithful writing and admonition, will bring me little goodwill among several of the same agitators and bloodthirsty people'.[146]

In his earliest pamphlets, Strauss reserved his attacks for the clergy of the old church; the evangelical movement receiving only praise, even if this was somewhat generalised. He was careful to present himself as inferior to, or at least no better than, the other evangelical writers, those 'godly, highly-learned evangelists' who had written 'so very many teachings and instructions of confession'.[147] This was not to last. As the differences between their vision of reform and that of Strauss became apparent, they too became the target of Strauss's criticism. This divergence originated in the nature of the changes necessary for salvation and the speed at which these were to be implemented. For Luther, certain practices were not in themselves harmful, and moderation could be employed in these matters. For Strauss, usury, whether spiritual or material, condemned the souls of all participants, and as such needed to be abolished immediately. Against the protestations that he was willing to wait until the weak are ready for change, we must place his eagerness to proceed, especially in matters he deemed essential to salvation, many of which were connected to money. This urgency is particularly apparent in Strauss's condemnation of those who counsel patience in relation to

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145 'Also that every Christian member, disregarding [the clergy], bring to light and show before the whole assembly, what God in his word had given him to understand', ibid., H r. This excludes Cochlaeus and his like, and Strauss goes on to condemn any alternative council that would be set up by the pope: 'But the dreadful enemy of truth, would not cease [...] to hold a consultation or council in Caiphas's house, that one entirely exterminates Christ, unheard and overcome, with the most shameful death of all', ibid., H v.

146 Ibid., Hij r.

147 *Beichtbüchlein*, A v. Strauss also describes his own writing as 'plain' and 'simple', and offers it to be judged by 'each pious, evangelical Christian'. The identity of 'courageous, divinely-taught, and highly illuminated teacher of the entire evangelical illumination', the 'most fruitful preacher and describer of all' who has made Strauss reluctant to contribute his own meagre thoughts is somewhat obscure. This could be a description of the gospel and its message (the 'visitation' he mentions in his later pamphlets), however, as he goes on to mention 'splendid pamphlets' which appear to have encouraged, rather than discouraged, him to write, the 'teacher' is probably Luther, *Trostliche verstendige leer*, Aij r.

chrism: 'God's word does not know how to remain silent in that which concerns the salvation of souls, and the living, eternal word of God does not permit that for an hour. Let whoever wishes be annoyed here; that which turns the Christian heart away from God's law may tolerate no patience'.[148] In this work, Strauss presents Luther and his followers (the gentle or tender evangelicals, despite whose scoldings he cannot remain silent) as not only cautious and self-indulgent, but uncaring and unbrotherly, exclaiming in apparent exasperation: 'God the almighty has not left us so entirely simple that we have not known what we owe to the weak'.[149] Ironically, this concern for 'the weak' was Luther's argument in favour of a gradual implementation of change. Strauss, on the other hand, despite his avowals regarding his willingness to retain chrism in baptism, redefines 'offence' and what it means to care for the weak. The refusal to care for one's brother's soul (in this context, the willingness to assist him in his sin of usury), thereby breaking the commandment of brotherly love as described in Chapter III, is, he says, what Christ meant by offending one's neighbour's conscience.[150]

Strauss's insistence that usury may not be tolerated as the commandment of love must be fulfilled by all Christians, and not merely with words, is vigorously given voice in a diatribe against the cautious and self-interested Wittenbergers:

> 'Here it follows and is concluded that we all accordingly shame Christ's name, and particularly those evangelicals mentioned, who everywhere in corners express and preach love with the tongue and in sweet words, [saying that] one should only preach faith and love, as though anything else could be preached in evangelical teaching. Yes, one must everywhere say to the same gentlemen, 'faith, faith, love, love', and merely shout into the wind, as faith and love cannot be fulfilled in words and on the tongue; the divine word must come to work in faith

148 *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiiij v.

149 'I must own that I, due to the manifold outcries that will be proclaimed over us from priests and monks, also their followers, would have preferred not to have addressed this great error in particular for a while yet, also that the gentle evangelicals, their usual talk of me, as they scold me as an enthusiast, fanatic, and impetuous person, were perhaps idle for longer.' Ibid., Aiiij r-v.

150 'And the most important thing of all in that which pertains to the soul, [is that] the embodiment of brotherly love keeps us, firstly and lastly, from offence and harm of the conscience of our neighbour. For this reason, Christ applies such effort to the avoidance of offence', *Wucher zu nemen*, Bij r.

> through love. It easily seen with the same evangelical windbags, when it serves their own interests and concerns the temporal, to what degree their trust is in God, and how great is the assistance, to comfort and support one's neighbour'.[151]

Strauss continues by condemning the 'hypocrisy' of such people, especially visible in the case of usury, a practice that cannot be defended by God's word as 'in this all Christian loyalty and love is wickedly rejected, and God's word and commandment stand imprisoned and bound. For this reason, whomever this pleases, he believes the same harsh, usurious evangelicals. We cannot be children of God and, in seeking usury, bring our neighbours to hell with us, as God has spoken once and will never retract it: it is not possible that you can serve God and the unrighteous property'.[152]

Had Strauss abandoned Luther, or was he trying to reform him; to provoke him, through admonition, into action? The epithet, 'painted evangelists', on the title page of *Usury II* is quite harsh, and does perhaps indicate that Strauss had definitely condemned the Wittenberg reformation as false and self-serving.[153] He interprets Matthew 20:16 ('So the last will be first,

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151 This cry of 'faith, faith, love, love' is reminiscent of Karlstadt's 'weak, weak, sick, sick, not too fast, slowly, slowly' from his 1524 attack on Luther's policy of caution and moderation: 'schrybet jr mir, ir wolt bey euch gemach hernach ziechen [...] vnd thüt nichts anders, denn dz die gantze welt itzt thüt, welche schreyhet. Schwachen schwachen, krancken krancken, nit zu schnell, gemach gemach', Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Ob man gemach // faren/ vnd des ergernüssen // der schwachen verschonen // soll/ in sachen so // gottis wil=//len an=//gehn. // Andres Carolstadt* ([Basel], 1524), Aijr. Luther, in turn, was to accuse Karlstadt of having riled up the common people to the point that all they could say was 'Gotts wort, Gotts wort, Gotts wort', and demand the removal of images from the churches, Martin Luther, *Widder die hymel=//lischen propheten/ // von den bildern// vnd Sacrament &c// Martinus Luther* (Wittenberg: Lucas Cranach and Christian Döring, [1525]), Eiij r.

152 *Wucher zu nemen*, B r-v. The fact that these 'evangelicals' are described as 'usurious' could possibly mean that Strauss is referring not to Luther and his followers, but to the Eisenach clergy. Strauss is hardly claiming that the former does have an interest in protecting the usury trade; however, this is probably just hyperbole, alluding to Luther's willingness to tolerate a moderate rate of interest. In any case, this must refer to the Lutherans, as surely their opponents would insist on works, rather than 'faith and love'.

153 It does appear that Strauss includes the 'painted evangelists' among those who refuse, with 'faithless hearts', to hear the gospel. The Eisenach clergy are not Strauss's only opponents, invited to disprove him by using God's word: 'It is the character and nature of God's word, that the disobedient will become yet more godless from it, and the obliging improved. As then Christ the uncreated word has come for the fall and resurrection of many people in Israel, Luke 2, and as a bone of contention, also the rock of offence, because of which, you will read here to your annoyance, where no one is to

and the first last') to mean that 'many of those who now rant and rage against the holy gospel should be converted through God's wondrous mercy'. As we have seen, he says, 'many of the first, and as we had thought, the most fervent of all in the gospel, are unfortunately only the last, and only persecute the word, as though they had never heard or spoken of it'. Luther and his followers, who had initially seemed to be the most evangelical, have now abandoned the gospel in all but name; this observation is presented as 'comforting', fulfilling as it does one half of this prophecy of conversion.[154]

A new set of enemies had emerged by 1526, although, as ever, Strauss was reluctant to name names. A tirade against the 'evangelicals of the mouth' (*mündigen euangeliern*) who boast of their evangelicalism and use the gospel as a *schandeckel* (a cloak for their shame) is directed at the Zwinglians and Anabaptists, who have forgotten that 'self-praise stinks, and he who praises himself is not worthy'.[155] Strauss proceeds to bring them down to size by mocking them as *spitz gelehrten*; they who wish to be seen as 'something new' and as 'loyal servants of the word'.[156] On the contrary, he argues, by taking the sacraments away from the people, they have 'brought several thousand believers' to apostasy.[157] Strauss declares that he does not want 'any of their bread or sour wine' in place of the body and blood of Christ[158] His attitude towards Luther is more ambiguous, again largely due to his failure to name his targets. He

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blame for anything other than your own faithless heart and harsh mind; but if you presume to to wound and to chastise with the word of God anything described in here, you are quite right [to do so], and have our eager goodwill, and do it in a Christian and brotherly manner by mouth or in writing, as we are prepared in God to do good to everyone who approaches us, and to be conscientious regarding God's word', ibid., A v.

154 Ibid., Giij r-v.

155 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aij r-v. A reference to 2 Corinthians 11:17f. as an image of insincerity: 'Truly, even if the entire Bible were to be read at a baptism, heedlessly from word to word, what more profit is in that, than that one uselessly blows air, and a praise of God is held with the lips, and not with the heart, loads oneself with the curse from God for the blessing, as is written, Isaiah at the 19th and Matthew at the 15th', *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiij r.

156 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aij v.

157 Ibid., Aij v. Interestingly, Strauss claims that the Zwinglians too have attacked him, and apparently from a position of power. If he were to agree with them, he would have 'more peace and praise of the world', ibid., Aij v.

158 Ibid., Aij v.

does use the word 'Lutherish'; a term which he has taken from Cochlaeus, who has called anything that does not accord with his 'old faith' Lutherish, unchristian, heretical, condemned, and worthy of death.[159] Strauss objects to Cochlaeus' elevation of Luther as the personification of the evangelical movement.[160] Indeed, it has been observed that Cochlaeus deliberately pursued this tactic, as having a single arch-heretic to attack was particularly effective.[161] Strauss does realise that Cochlaeus has built Luther up in order to damn him, and insists that he himself is not a follower of Luther.[162] This rejection of the inflation of Luther's importance could be attributed to Strauss having been affronted by the implied subordination; he declares that Luther has not taught him the gospel.[163] However, Strauss's objection seems to be at least partly due to Cochlaeus having elevated Luther to such a degree that he has given 'to a mortal, weak man that which belongs to Christ alone'.[164] Foolish people are wont to attach great importance to their leaders. This, says Strauss, is an insult to God's majesty, and Luther, like St Paul, has himself objected to this use of his own name.[165]

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159 'Ibid., C v. In Strauss's summary of Cochlaus's arguments, anything that is contrary to papal teaching is 'Lutherish, heretical, and condemned', ibid., Aiiij v; also Ibid., Ciij r.

160 In response to the banning of books written by Luther and his followers, one pamphleteer wrote: 'Aber ich byn kain anhanger des Luthers, dan er ist nit meyn seligmacher, besunder alley Christus, den mir der Luther hat angezaigt, vnd mich geleert, das ich yhm söll anhangen mit glauben vnd liebe, vnnd gantz an kainer geschöpfft', *Das Euangeliu[m] von// dez verlorne[n] Son/ Luce. XV.ca.// Ain mensch hatt gehabt// zwen sön &c. Auß=// gelegt durch// Michael Styffel// von Eßlingen.// a]-M.D.Xxiii* ([Erfurt: Johann Loersfeld], 1523), Aij r.

161 'Since, for Cochlaeus, the Reformation is a conflict of divine and diabolical elements, he tends to depict its leaders in heroic terms. Jan Hus and his accomplices are portrayed as larger-than-life enemies of religion in Cochlaeus' *History of the Hussites*. Likewise, Cochlaeus depicts Luther as a colossal figure, a person uniquely able to wreak havoc in the social and ecclesiastical realms', Elizabeth Vandiver, Ralph Keen and Thomas D. Frazel (trans. and annot.), *Luther's Lives: Two Contemporary Accounts of Martin Luther* (Manchester, 2002) 49.

162 'you have not yet come across any more offensive name than Luther's name, as according to your understanding, so the name and man is damned and worthy of the eternal curse', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Cij v.

163 'I will by no means have myself called Lutherish, as Luther has not taught me the gospel', ibid., Cij r.

164 Ibid., Cij r.

165 St Paul objected to the use of terms other than 'Christian' and, Strauss says, Luther has done likewise. 'But that the great simple-mindedness [is] shown among many people, who follow the servants of the word so much, I think, it should not please Dr Martin at all; as I [have] read a little book

Although Strauss claims that Luther does not require his help[166], he reprimands Cochlaeus for his eagerness to take part in the campaign against Luther, emphasising the pointlessness of scolding.[167] He objects to Cochlaeus' 'bloodthirsty' call for Luther's head.[168] Cochlaeus is not fit to judge such matters and should attend to the beam in his own eye before attacking others.[169] This does not of course mean that Luther is blameless, but it does appear that Strauss sees Luther having been part of the same movement as he himself: 'Martin and all true evangelical preachers who have taught and described the Christian freedom with me'.[170] It also seems that he is defending Luther as a fellow 'servant of God', subject to attacks similar to those that have been launched against Strauss himself.[171] On the basis of this sentence, one could conclude that, in contrasting the followers of Aristotle with those 'evangelical preachers' who use only the word of God, Strauss is including among the latter those whom he had previously denounced as 'painted evangelists'.[172] The very fact that he is

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published by him, in which he highly complains about it, that the single, holy name of Christ should be altered in his name, as he calls himself a fragile man and maggot-sack', ibid., Cij v. Strauss is referring to Luther's *Eyn trew vormanung Mar=//tini Luther tzu allen Chris=//then. Sich tzu vorhuten// fur auffruhr vnnd// Emporung.//* (Wittenberg: Melchior Lotter d.J., 1522), in which he wrote, 'hore vnd laß dyr sagen, tzum ersten, bitt ich man wolt meynes namen geschweyge[n], vn[d] sich nit lutherisch sondern Christe[n] heyssen. Was ist Luther? ist doch die lere nitt meynn. Szo byn ich auch fur niemant gecreutzigt [...]Wie keme denn ich armer stinckender madensack datzu, das man die kynder Christi, solt mit meynem heyloßen namen nennen?', ibid., [Biij r]. For Strauss's own objections, see *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Ciij r, where he also uses John 7:16, So Jesus answered them, 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me'.

166 'he has no need at all of my protection or help to refute your little book of calumny', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Cij r.

167 'Therefore dear doctor, as long as you presume to write as a doctor [...] scolding for scolding does not bring but a thousandfold empty fruit, but that you yourself subdue justice in your writing, with which you then judge and pronounce upon Luther', ibid., C v. This is ironic not only in relation to the rest of this pamphlet, but especially given Strauss's earlier eagerness to insult those with whom he disagreed.

168 'you also reveal yourself in your little book to be entirely bloodthirsty, and reprimand, from supposed holiness, with your unusual scolding the pious Elector Duke Frederick of Saxony deceased in God, because he has not [allowed Luther to be killed]', ibid., C v.

169 Ibid., C v. Luke 6:41f.

170 Ibid., Biij v.

171 Ibid., Aiij r-v.

172 'Never yet has any evangelical preacher ventured to defend and justify with Aristotle or invented, subtle words, or also with the old usage, rather only with the eternal, strong word of God.

writing in response to a tract which denounced Luther specifically would suggest that Strauss is defending the evangelical movement as a whole, excluding the rebellious preachers, the Anabaptists, and the Sacramentarians.

This, however, would be a significant leap from the usury pamphlet of 1524, in which Strauss had insinuated that Luther and his fellow timid reformers had become the worst enemies of the gospel. The key passage in the 1526 work is that in which he states that those who do the most harm to the fruit of the gospel (by many thousand times) are the 'false brothers, who without cease babble, "Gospel, Gospel, Faith, Faith, Christ, Christ" with the maul', yet neither Christ, nor his word, nor faith are found anywhere among them.[173] Strauss's targets are difficult to identify as he appears to be lambasting various, usually anonymous, figures.[174] Some of these are the subject of generic insults that could be applied to more than one candidate, and it is not entirely certain that he is speaking of Luther here, when he condemns those who are evangelical in name only. Later in this pamphlet, Cochlaeus and his like are also to be counted among those who boast of the gospel.[175] On the other hand, Strauss's use of the phrase 'false brothers' (indicating a form of betrayal) and the cry of 'gospel, gospel' (used when criticising Luther in the second usury pamphlet) both point to the Lutherans.[176] Such a

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And one should in no way listen to or allow to be revealed the advice and wicked intent of the mighty apostles and self-grown saints and their ferocious following', ibid., Hiiij r. Cochlaeus has, writes Strauss, scolded 'all pious Christian preachers', ibid., Bij v.

173 Ibid., A v.

174 Barge has identified three groups, among them the rebels and the Zwinglians, but it is the remaining group (the arrogant people who who prattle about faith, gospel, and Christ and who follow none of these) that is in question here, and remains unidentified. (Barge, *Jacob Strauss*, 124). According to Oyer, Strauss is referring to the Wittenbergers, and I am inclined to agree (John S. Oyer , 'The Influence of Jacob Strauss on the Anabaptists. A Problem in Historical Methodology', in Marc Lienhard (ed.), *The Origins and Characteristics of Anabaptism*. (The Hague, 1977), 62-82, 66).

175 After instructing Cochlaeus on his duties as a Christian, Strauss tells him that 'without these fruits of faith, no one may boast of the Evangelical or Christian name. It also does not help that you, along with the monks and other hypocrites, want to glorify yourself with the disciples in the gospel', ibid., Biiij r-v. It is possible that here, rather than condemning both the Catholics and the Wittenbergers, Strauss is simply describing the former in the same terms as he had used in 1524 for the latter.

176 The other possibility is that he is speaking of the Müntzerites; implying that they are eager to shout about being Christians, and that they are following the gospel, but in fact are acting in their own

conclusion is also indicated by the charge that this shady group attempt to counter accusations (accusations which are based on the gospel) that they injure both their neighbour and God's honour, by using the gospel themselves, 'as though they were entirely good evangelicals', but in this case with 'scolding and raging'. They are, Strauss remarks sarcastically, 'entirely perfect and unpunishable, as soon as they can say "Gospel"'.[177] The offence caused to God and the neighbour may be a reference to the toleration of usury and other unbrotherly or blasphemous practices; the 'scolding and raging' must be the criticism of Strauss himself emanating from Wittenberg.

For Strauss, until some point in 1523, there appears to have been little conscious opposition to Luther. Even after the Peasants' War, he defended Luther against Cochlaeus' attacks. On the other hand, there are signs that the disagreement which had led him to condemn the 'windbags' who had betrayed the gospel in the case of usury had not entirely disappeared. On the whole, Strauss appears to see the 'evangelical movement' as a communal effort, united against the old teaching if not unanimous. The range of those who disguise, twist, ignore, or abuse the gospel included, for Strauss, the Catholic clergy and the Lutherans as well as the 'false preachers [who] strengthened and encouraged [the peasants] under the appearance of true evangelical teaching'[178], the Anabaptists, and the Zwinglians. Although Luther was less harmful than either the Catholics or the Zwinglians and Anabaptists, he was nonetheless vulnerable to error. The willingness to attack those with whom he disagreed, even other evangelicals, demonstrates that Strauss had a very specific idea of the necessary reformation and could not contemplate compromise.

An expectation of imminent change is evident, but can this happen without the co-operation of the authorities or the effort of the people? It is clear that it must occur with or without the consent of the church and the clergy. The word of God (the 'visitation' of the sermon on

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interests. For this to be the case, Strauss would have to have recycled his earlier anti-Lutheran insults (as he had with the charges first raised against the non-reformed clergy).

177 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, A v.

178 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, H v

Luke), is presented as a type of litmus test: 'the disobedient will become yet more godless from it, and the obliging improved', which would appear to suggest that everything is in the hands of God.[179] However, as discussed above, the emphasis is on choice rather than double predestination.[180] In any case, a limited internal reformation will never lead to the voluntary establishment of the true Christian society. The reformation may have been inevitable, but this does not mean that human agency was not required. As the effect of the gospel is to improve the good and make the wicked worse, preaching alone in the hope that this change will come from within the individual presumably cannot suffice; some external force must compel the wicked to behave in a Christian manner. Strauss is clearly expecting the establishment of the radical new society, or at least giving this impression; who, then, is to bring this about? The status quo cannot persist, as the existence of the usury trade, for example, continues to murder souls. Was Strauss assuming, rather than simply hoping, that the secular authorities, fulfilling their purpose as a godly government, would *not* require the recalcitrant debtors to pay up? The previous behaviour of the Eisenach Council and John of Saxony at least should have given him confidence in this regard.

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179 *Wucher zu nemen*, A v.

180 Here, Strauss's condemnation indicates free will: 'no one is to blame for anything, other than your own faithless heart and harsh mind', ibid., A v. However, when Strauss returns to this theme at the end of the pamphlet, urging his readers not to kill the enemies of the gospel, the emphasis is on God's agency: 'the wondrous work and judgement of God [...] no one may either promote or prevent it, as God has mercy on whomever he will, and also hardens whomever he will', ibid., Giij v. This could be explained as disillusionment, although Strauss had always been sceptical regarding the ability of the common man. It could also be a simple expression of anger against those who refuse to reform; the irredeemably wicked providing an explanation for apparent failure. This interpretation could be applied to the excommunication incident; the failure being not that of Strauss or of God's 'visitation', but of the 'wicked' man. This was not unusual: pastors later in the century explained continued misbehaviour among their parishoners in this way; in other words, explaining their own 'failure': 'To the clergy the answer was obvious: the Devil had never been so prominent among the people as in the sixteenth century [...] "Few are those," was the common complaint of some pastors in 1569, "who follow the narrow road through life; many are those who march to Hell with the common herd. Lord have mercy"', C. Scott Dixon, 'The Reformation and Parish Morality in Brandenburg-Ansbach-Klumbach', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 87 (1996), 255-286, 268.

The rulers are subjected to the same admonitions regarding brotherly love as are the common people; the pamphlet on rebellion is directed specifically at the former.[181] They are reminded that, in his willingness to die for man, Christ, despite his greatness, 'became the servant and vassal of all of us'. Therefore, no true Christian, no matter what his standing, should baulk at being such a servant, ready to help anyone.[182] However, the role of the ruler is more specific than that of the general Christian. He is portrayed as a *Hausvater*, whose duty it is to love all men, but especially his subjects, just as the head of a family has a special responsibility to those within his household.[183] Strauss also employs the image of the head and the body.[184] All of the parts of the body have been assigned their places by God, and each is nothing without the others. This serves to underline the government's duty to protect its subjects; a reminder to the powerful that they should honour and protect the weak.[185] This image of the mutually dependent body describes, Strauss writes, 'the entire Christian way', in accordance with Matthew 22:40 ('whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the

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181 One must love one's neighbour in imitation of Christ, *Auffrur*, Biij r. (John 15:12, This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you). As mentioned above, God does not want or need good works, and has instead 'commanded us to love the neighbour who is (as [are] we ourselves) full of affliction', *Auffrur*, Biij r.

182 'no one on earth is so great, if he should want to be Christian and truly evangelical, than he must also know himself to be a servant and vassal with his God and saviour Christ, to refuse his help and service [to] no one for God's sake', *Auffrur*, Biij r- v.

183 'It is well to show love for all men, but a pious Christian must especially look after with love and loyalty those who are entrusted to him in particular', *Auffrur*, Biij v.

184 Strauss gives 1 Corinthians 12:27 in its entirety. On the 'body politic', and especially its use in the sixteenth century, see Abel Althouguia Alves, 'The Christian Social Organism and Social Welfare: The Case of Vives, Calvin and Loyola', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 20.1 (Spring, 1989), 3-22. Also Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957).

185 *Auffrur*, Cij r. Also, 'so ist groß von nötten, das doch ein yeder der vnterthonen hat, gedenck, Das als wenig das haupt one glider einen menschen macht, Also auch kan kein herschafft, gemach oder erhalten werden, an die vnterthonen'. Ibid., C v. Again, Strauss uses 1 Corinthians 12.: No member of the body can view any other as unnecessary, and the weaker or 'unpresentable' (1 Corinthians 12:22-25) members are given most honour: this has been ordained by God so that 'there should not be discord in the body, but that one member cares for the other'. Ibid., Cij r. 1 Corinthians 12:26. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. There should be no envy between members, but rather sympathy in one another's difficulties, and pleasure in one another's success.

law and the prophets').[186] Strauss returns to the metaphor of the body in his reply to Cochlaeus, when explaining the function and obligations of the secular authorities. These were established by God to keep the common peace. However, this requires not only obedient subjects but also 'firm, honourable commandments of the authorities'; neither can exist without the other.[187] The rulers have received this commission from God, and must therefore treat their subjects as though they were their own limbs. This means that they must ensure that 'that the good and pious are protected and kept from all wickedness and compulsion against fairness'.[188] This, of course, is open to interpretation, but for Strauss presumably accords with the conditions of brotherly love outlined in his other works, including freedom from the requirement to pay usury.

The rulers therefore have an obligation to reform church and society, but it would seem from Strauss's comments both before and after the Peasants' War that they are neither fit nor likely to do so. They have become yet another target for his accusations of failure. While the clergy are busy plotting to take over government for their own purposes,[189] the princes are content to wallow in luxury while the former ruin the land under their noses.[190] They are still enslaved by 'foolish' human reason and, instead of loving their subjects as brothers, have been led to think much of themselves and 'regard the poor subjects disdainfully and little'.[191] Strauss rebukes the princes by outlining the consequences of ignoring the lesser members of the 'body'. If the 'foolish head' contemptuously 'leads the feet and legs into thorns and other dangers, and does not observe its own injury', thereby making the limbs 'wounded and

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186 'das gantz Christenlich wesen', ibid., Cij r. Strauss also cites the equivalent verse from Luke (Luke 6:31, And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them).

187 'as there is no rule without servant and subjects, accordingly the people is no use without authority; so too are good and proper commandments and statutes are in vain without obedient enforcement, accordingly obedience can also not be known without law'; both are required: 'the authority with proper, loyal and loving government, and the subjects with diligent and willing obedience', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Diij v.

188 Ibid., Diiij r.

189 See Chapter III, above.

190 'the princes in the meantime tend well their dear old Adam, and live according to unnecessary splendour and lust', *Auffrur*, Cij v.

191 Ibid., Biiij v.

powerless', the body can go nowhere.[192] Such a fool deserves to be mocked for his injury as he goes about 'on crutches or sticks', as it is all his own fault.[193] This is the injury (a reference to the recent rebellion) suffered by all princes and rulers who have 'placed their high birth, reason, and lust before the common good and welfare of their land and people', ensuring that 'the feet, the poor workers, who carry the head and the entire body, [are] despised and valued as entirely lowly'.[194]

Before the rebellion, Strauss had expressed confidence in the imminent disappearance of usury. He insisted that God would ensure that 'the means by which the word [...] will be powerfully believed and trusted may happen in a short time, [so] that every pious Christian prince and territorial lord may rescue and free his land and people from the same burden'.[195] This sentence is somewhat ambiguous, and could either mean that the princes will be given courage by an increased trust in God, or that the usurers themselves will be made more Christian and pliable, making it easier for the princes to act. In any case, Strauss also suggests that many princes did understand that interest was ungodly but, although they were no longer deceived by the clergy, were still somehow paralysed.[196] It is not entirely clear what is preventing the 'pious princes' from enforcing God's law. However, bearing in mind the influence of human reason mentioned above, their failure to properly destroy their old Adam must be partly to blame.[197] Strauss bewails the fact that the clergy have been treating the princes like children and leading them on ropes like monkeys; this, while deplorable on the

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192 Ibid., Cij r. 'After all', writes Strauss, warming to his metaphor, 'one cannot walk on the head, unless such a senseless person (due to his misfortune) were to fall down the stairs'. It is not entirely clear whether this a threat, or simply humour.

193 Ibid., Cij v.

194 Ibid., Cij v.

195 *Wucher zu nemen*, Gij v.

196 As mentioned above, it is for the sake of the 'several pious territorial princes, who now from the word of God ... recognise the harm of the damnable interest, and nonetheless so wretchedly cannot put a stop to it' that one should surrender the interest before the princes are forced to seize it, ibid., Gij v.

197 Ibid., Eiiij v. It may be this that has led them to believe the whispers of 'rebellion' levelled at Strauss due to his stance on usury.

part of the clergy, does not entirely excuse the latter, implying that the princes have been happy to acquiesce in this.[198]

This willingness to lay bare the failings of the authorities can also be seen in Strauss's vehement criticism of the punishment meted out to the rebellious peasants.[199] The princes have acted from vengeance and not from justice. The sword may have been given to the princes, but its use should not stem from hatred; rather, it should be employed from a desire to preserve God's honour.[200] It is true that those who rebel and, in doing so, 'burden the others against propriety and common peace' must be dealt with, but this should be done 'according to all necessity and from proper intent and not from personal vengeance'.[201] Although it is necessary to remove the poisoned limb, this must be for the protection of the rest of the body, that is, the common good, in order to qualify as an act of love.[202] The punishment that has been meted out was, Strauss implies, an indiscriminate over-reaction, harsh and tyrannical.[203] More people have been killed than were required, the innocent along with the guilty.[204] A proper investigation and trial is required to distinguish the two and, as this has not been done, the punishment has been arbitrary and not in accordance with written

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198 All from *Auffrur*, Biiij v.

199 According to Maurer, very few participants decided after the Peasants' War to oppose the actions of the authorities. An exception was the Rothenburg priest Caspar Cristan, who preached in June 1525 that one should show comfort and compassion to the peasants who had just lost the battle of Königshofen, that the authorities with their oppression and burdens were responsible for their downfall, and whoever blamed the 'poor people' themselves were 'dogs and pigs'. Maurer, *Prediger im Bauernkrieg*, 264.

200 *Auffrur*, Ciij v. 'Dann als die liebe im glauben nit feyret oder miessig stet, aber alle ding mit dem höchsten fleyß außteylt, vnd in Gottes ere ordenet, Also fürt sie auch das schwert, das von Gott kumet in seinen rechten vnd löblichen geprauch, das gepürlichen vnd nit auß eygnem rach vnd haß, alles was an den vnterthonen streflich ist gestrafft wirt.'

201 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Diiij r.

202 'a pious Christian prince and sovereign lord fulfils a well-practised godly love towards his subjects, if he punishes the wicked, harmful, and criminal (people) with regard for the common good and peace, according to necessity, and not from personal vengeance and tyrannical undertaking', *Auffrur*, Ciiij r.

203 Ibid., Ciij v.

204 The princes are required to protect the obedient and, if this is done, then they will be loyal: 'Accordingly the powerful should treat, protect, and deal with the pious and obedient entirely graciously and lovingly, as the obedient are well to be praised', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Diiij v.

laws.[205] There are also degrees of guilt. Strauss suggests that the purpose of such punishment should be one of reform; capital punishment is not always required.[206] Many 'poor simple people' were misled by a minority.[207] Those responsible for the massacres should examine their consciences in the same way as the rebellious peasants.[208] Luther was willing to criticise the secular rulers, and did so frequently. However, he blamed the rebellion on the 'spirit' that had infected the people and their fanatic preachers, and saw the authorities' response as warranted. Strauss was not the only preacher to disapprove of the executions and massacres, but his sympathetic portrayal of the majority of those killed as 'poor forsaken subjects' who were the victims of misgovernment and exploitation is unusual, and shows the persistence from before the revolt of his claim that the common good was being neglected and the common man exploited.[209] The survival of this complaint demonstrates perhaps that this pamphlet is not primarily an attempt to defend himself and the evangelical movement.

5. Reformation from below.

The instruction in the gospel to love all men as Christ has done applies to the Christian ruler, whose faith compels him to ensure that his 'poor subjects will not be grieved or worried (contrary to fairness), either by [himself] or anyone else'.[210] A reformation is required, whereby 'fairness' as required by the commandment of love will supersede the 'old usage

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205 Ibid., Diiij v. Justice as it stands is corrupt; trials are run for the 'profit and vain honour' of the *verwalter* (functionary), ibid., E v. For Strauss, there is no such thing as emergency justice, ibid., Eij v.

206 'And the disobedient with appropriate, fitting punishment, compelled and turned away from their wickedness, according to which then each one [who] has erred [would] bear punishment and penance', ibid., Diiij r. Strauss's position on execution appears to be deliberately vague: 'I do not say that one should not punish the insurgents in body and life, according to that which they have done. But however one can also, according to the old saying, be responsible for the murder of a murderer', ibid., Eij v; presumably, one must consider one's own soul. The execution of the 'false prophets' and their followers, however, is justified, as 'they have seized the sword contrary to God's word and commandment; they are also [...] killed with the sword' (Matthew 26:52), ibid., Eiiij v.

207 Ibid., Eij v.

208 Ibid., Eij r-v.

209 *Auffrur*, Ciij r.

210 Ibid., Biiij r.

and custom', which latter 'emanates from the old Adam, along with his vices and lusts'.[211] As it is, the princes have failed, land and people are saddled with 'unbearable burdens', and 'neither God nor his word [are seen] to rule in all of Christendom'.[212] In *Auffrur*, Strauss's strictures regarding the necessity of loving one's neighbour and the accompanying crucifixion of the flesh appear to be directed at the wealthy in particular. They are even more prone to the 'vices and lusts' of the flesh than the 'simple, poor people', and their path to the cross is more difficult.[213] Even if Strauss were aware that the latter were also inclined to self-interest, being of noble birth would not mean that one is more virtuous or Christian than the common man; one's right to be called a Christian comes from faith and love, and not 'royal crown, nor princely birth, splendour, or great earthly power'.[214] If Strauss had been preaching these ideas before the revolt, it is perhaps not surprising that he was accused of involvement. His frequently asserted confidence in the victory of the gospel could be interpreted as a ploy to pacify the laity by assuring them that reform will occur, even if it seemed unlikely.[215] On the other hand, it could be read as a call to action. as a device to rally support. The latter interpretation is supported by the language in which these promises are expressed, and the general tone of urgency and danger in which Strauss discusses the need for reform.[216] Did he believe that a reformation from below was possible or desirable? Would it be achieved in a lawful, orderly manner? Who is to act, if not the princes? Who are the active laity who,

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211 This is also promoted by the advisors. Ibid., Biiij v. The princes have been encouraged to 'burden land and people with splendour and coercion, and to trouble them unceasingly with new unbearable burdens', ibid., Biiij v.

212 Ibid., Biiij v.

213 Ibid., Aiij v.

214 'Then if one boasts of the gospel and [the] Christian name, so one must also know that neither imperial nor royal crown, nor princely birth, splendour and great earthly power, will make the same highly-powerful people holy, but only the faith through which love works', ibid., Bij v. According to Laube, this is a reference to Galatians 5:6.

215 Faith and patience, Strauss promises in the pamphlet on confraternities, will ultimately defeat the 'monkeys', as 'the truth will not support their defence for long', *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r.

216 Although the only weapon to be used against the usurer should be God's word, Strauss expresses great confidence in this: 'we want to run at the Devil with God's word. So he must (give way to) us, and the *kauff* will vanish from its roots in faith and brotherly love', *Wucher zu nemen*, Cij r. When urging the use of the gospel rather than 'heathenish and temporal law': 'Here God's word must overcome and obtain victory, and put the Codex with its laws to flight', ibid., E r-v; as Chapter III, above.

guided by the godly preachers, are to ensure reform? An examination of two prominent conflicts in Strauss's career, that concerning preaching and that concerning usury, may help to clarify his thoughts on this.

It was Strauss who, in his pamphlet on the Christian assembly, appealed to John Frederick to rescue the churches in his father's territory from their 'erring' priests. However, if we are to believe Strauss, it was not merely the preacher himself but also the congregations who wanted these priests to be replaced by evangelical pastors. Presumably, this would have to be ordered from Weimar, as the reforms appeared to have been stalled at the local level. Although it would appear that Strauss intends the princes to take charge of this by going over the heads of the local authorities who have been campaigning on behalf of the incumbents, the impetus is presented as coming from the parishoners.[217] It may be that Strauss himself was fully responsible for this petition, but the fact that he strove to give the impression that it had been instigated by the congregations indicates that he was not averse to a 'communal reformation' of this type. If the prince did not respond, it is likely that Strauss would have expected the new preachers to be installed without authorisation, funded by the communities themselves. He clearly believed that the preaching of God's word, even where it had been specifically banned by the authorities, should continue at all costs, telling his fellow preachers that they were obliged to disobey any such prohibition.[218]

Who was to take the initiative in the case of usury? Who were the debtors whom Strauss was trying to discourage from paying? As discussed in Chapter III, there is a clear appeal to the individual's sense of being exploited in these pamphlets; however, Strauss also cites the general ruin of the land as a consequence of usury. One may inquire, he writes, in any city or region in the land regarding contributions to the treasury, and the answer will be that most of this income is 'pawned and pledged to the merchant, the nobleman, also at times to the

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217 It is not clear whether Strauss is talking about Eisenach, Eisenach and its surrounding area, or Thuringia in general. There is more than one assembly in question, although Strauss later refers to 'the council', *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiij r.

218 *Euangelium Luce*, Aiiij v.

priests and fat monks'. Strauss insists that this is well known; even the 'great powerful principalities' are in debt to the 'arch-usurer', who is 'well-known to the whole world'.[219] The result is that no ruler can afford to protect his land and promote 'useful, good government', because 'the usurer lies everywhere in the way'.[220] This lament could also be directed at the individual 'common man', whose country is in a state of decay, but Strauss may have been intentionally appealing to the Eisenach Council.

The records of the 1520s are patchy, but the town itself had in the past been in debt to moneylenders, although not to the ecclesiastical institutions that were the target of Strauss's wrath.[221] Is the second usury work, in its motivational rather than defensive guise, aimed at those with the power to change the law at a local level? Strauss does provide a lengthy examination of the regulations and legal justification of the *Wiederkauf*, which is almost certainly not directed at the common man. Nonetheless, the usury pamphlets can work on both levels. Elsewhere, Strauss employs the usual simple exhortation to common sense: 'every child may know and recognize' that, whatever the decision of a council of the church on usury, one must not 'teach, command, or decide contrary to the Holy Spirit'.[222] Is there evidence that the local authorities were only too happy to buy into this sort of protest? When protests against the payment of *Wiederkäufliche Zins* had taken place in Erfurt in 1521, the Council had not been slow to take advantage. It 'blackmailed the clergy into paying 10,000 gulden as protection money [and] extracted an agreement to tax their houses as well as to force them to pay an excise tax, in addition to reducing interest on annuities owned by the clergy from 6% to 4% per annum'.[223] Oswald and Weyßensee complained in their report to

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219 An allusion to the Fugger; see Chapter III, above.

220 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eij r.

221 In 1501, for example, the towns of Eisenach and Gotha ('Burgermeistere, Rate vnnd gemeynde') had borrowed 4000 florins from Hans von Dorengenberg the Elder, using their 'gemeyner Stat Jarrenten vnnd Jnn komenn' as security. Gotha took out a further loan of 7000 Gulden from Ernst von Cochberg in the same year. ThHstA Weimar *Copial-Buch* D5, fo. 48v.

222 *Wucher zu nemen*, Diij v.

223 R. Po-Chia Hsia, 'Anticlericalism in German Pamphlets: A Response', in Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Leiden, 1994), 491-498, 493. This did not eradicate resentment of the *Zins*, however, as can be seen from the Erfurt Articles

Weimar that the Eisenach clergy refused to submit to any authority within the town regarding the *Zins*; instead, they insisted on appealing to their own spiritual governors, or to the Duke himself.[224] There is a certain amount of resentment of the autonomy of the local clergy visible in this report; this, along with the pitying descriptions of the wretched, poor people who cannot afford to pay, would indicate that the Eisenach authorities were perfectly willing to support Strauss's position on the *Wiederkauf*. Indeed, the fact that nowhere in this report is there a single mention of God, sin, or damnation, would suggest that this dispute may have existed long before Strauss's arrival.

Strauss admitted in the aftermath of the revolt that the peasants had misunderstood the suffering and patience required by the new teaching. However, had he contributed to this misunderstanding? Did he, deliberately or otherwise, give the impression that not only was the common man entitled to a better deal, but that he could acquire this for himself? When defending the evangelical movement against accusations of rebellion, Strauss was careful to insist that one should never engage in outright disobedience against the secular authorities, nor should one disrupt the public peace in any way. Apart from the motive of reassuring the secular powers, his own behaviour must lead one to doubt the sincerity of this apparent concern for order, demonstrating the inherent conflict between the compulsion to save souls and the requirement to obey one's appointed ruler. During his time in Hall, Strauss did not seem to be terribly concerned with preaching in an orderly manner.[225] His defence of this in the *Beichtbüchlein* is particularly defiant, emphasizing his sense of mission.[226] Although he

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of 1525, see Chapter III, above. Strauss's absolute rejection of interest was obviously far more in line with popular feeling than were the reduced rates recommended by Luther, the Saxon princes, and the Erfurt Council.

224 'Vnnd nach deme das gemeyne armüdt also vonn denn geystlichenn jnn Mancherley wege beschwert wirt, vnnd die geistlichenn, wo gleich eynn armer Mann notdürfftige clage ader forderüng kegenn sye fürwenndet, zuo Eysennach keynnen richter Leydenn wellenn, Sünndern erbietenn sich vff jre geordennte richter oder aber E f g', ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg.Ii 126, fo. 3v.

225 Strauss preached to large crowds in the open air, ignoring the warnings and injunctions of the Bishop of Brixen. See Barge, *Jakob Strauss*, 8-14.

226 'Den wan ich gleich zu derselbigen zeit etz was erschrockenlich, vnd mit forcht, wider die beicht gelertet het, wer keyn wunder, dye weyl ich alleyn denn mechtigen vnd viellistigen beichtherren, vnnd langem teuffelischem gebrauch widderstehen hab sollen. Es ist auch gut wissen

claimed that God had forced him to abolish the use of chrism, due to the refusal of the priest to give it for free, it is probable that Strauss had seized upon this (not unexpected) refusal in order to push through changes in the form of the sacrament.[227] Similarly, he insisted that he had written on the subject of relics because he had been asked to do so, while acknowledging their popularity as the very reason he needed to write.[228] Strauss was fully aware that he was dealing with a divided public, but the urgency of reformation had to come above all other concerns. His protestations that he was reluctant to publish were merely form; in the case of usury, for example, he was prepared to preach publicly on the subject, rather than approach the council or the Duke directly.

This sense that the reformation could not be halted and that considerations of offence or disruption must come second to this urgency is evident in all of Strauss's works, and this must have trickled down to the general reader of his pamphlets or listener to his sermons. When writing on the need to act as well as speak regarding usury (faith of the mouth being useless), Strauss returns to the theme of his sermon on Luke, cautioning the laity not to prove themselves more thankless than were the Jews.[229] He uses Romans 1:32 in the usury articles to prove that both usurers and borrowers are worthy of death; this may have been meant in the sense of damnation but, even if Strauss was advocating capital punishment, this was not to be carried out by the common man.[230] However, this was extremely inflammatory language with potential for misunderstanding, especially given the increased instances of anticlerical violence. In his second usury work, Strauss writes that if an authority were to punish the recalcitrant debtor beyond the seizure of his property in order to pay the usurer, such an

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wie ich von inen geenstiget wardtt. Dach hab ich der warheit nicht vorschwigen, wye ich dan im beschlus einer ieden predigett allen tag, angetzeigt hab, das kein mensch aus tzwangk ader gepot beichten sol, er wel dan von newen an todtlichen sunden, vnd ein gleissenner vor got sein', *Beichtbüchlein*, Ciiij v.

227 The 'persecution of the word of God', after all, is taking place 'among us', *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiiij r.

228 They are provided with 'such great decoration, honour, respect, and attentiveness', *Heiligthüm*, Aij r.

229 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fij v.

230 'The eternal word of God stands here [...] that not only those who do such a thing, but also those who consent to it, are deserving of death', ibid., B4 r.

authority would be tyrannical rather than Christian.[231] Although he does not suggest that this would justify active resistance, this is yet another incendiary remark. By declaring that all contracts requiring the payment of interest were ungodly, Strauss had given the debtors a licence to break their bonds; this may not have been rebellious in his eyes, but was contrary to the law of the land as it currently stood.[232] Although he says at one point that one should pay the interest voluntarily, this is not because resistance would be improper, but because one must consider the consciences of the authorities; one would be within one's rights to withhold the interest and allow one's property to be distrained. The latter course would be 'no rebellion or crime' in God's eyes.[233] Strauss must have realised, however, that his readers and listeners might simply focus on God's permission rather than the consciences of those who would force them to pay. Passive resistance is still resistance; a form of protest not conducive to public unity.

What did Strauss think was going to happen when he stated in the articles that the payment of interest was incompatible with salvation? What type of reaction did he envisage? Would the common man really be prepared to suffer, as Strauss advises, or did the latter not realise that the debtors would protest, as they had done before? The argument found in the second pamphlet which allows the Christian to pay ungodly interest once he has attempted to dissuade his creditor by admonition, sits uneasily with Strauss's fervent condemnation (both in this second pamphlet and in the earlier usury articles) of the double soul murder involved. It does read as though this was a half-hearted response to an accusation that he had advocated outright resistance. It is almost certain that the simple statement of double damnation would have been more accessible and acceptable to the debtor than this rather complex reasoning, particularly given his other motives for withholding interest. In fact, it was this to which both Luther and John Frederick particularly objected; for Luther, it was the

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231 Ibid., Fiiij r.

232 'I want to ask the wise, highly-learned men in submissive diligence, that they also share with me their great art, and show us clearly which faith, loyalty, or bond, oath or vow should be against the true God's Christian faith', ibid., Eiij r. As Chapter III, above.

233 Ibid., Gij r: 'kein auffrur noch freuel'.

'most dangerous' aspect of Strauss's articles, which the 'common crowd' would use for their own benefit.[234] Strauss must have been aware of the protests, described above, that had taken place in Erfurt three years earlier; these had not merely taken the form of refusals to pay the *Zins*, but had become violent.[235] Even if one did restrict oneself to words, however, brotherly admonition, particularly with regard to usury, would not have been a completely non-disruptive option. This is a protest nonetheless; the debtor must be vocal regarding the ungodliness of the payment he is forced to make. He must bear witness to his faith, and not keep silent and allow it to rest on his conscience.[236] Even though Strauss at one point insists on no 'scolding' or ranting, and on shunning if this course were to fail, such admonition could not but have led to quarrelling and a divided community. In *Auffrur*, he extends this obligation to admonish to all to those who have not crucified their old Adam, and here, scolding does appear to be an option.[237] When Strauss tells his audience that temporal authority can have no 'command over the heart and inner will of men', this again is not in itself seditious. However, when combined with Strauss's continued attempt to convince the common man that he was being oppressed with the permission of the authorities, it could

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234 Luther wrote to Gregor Brück, the Chancellor at Weimar, in October of 1523: 'Das Fährlichst aber in diesem Buchlin ist, daß er lehret, der Zinsmann sei schuldig, die Zinse nicht zu reichen dem Wucherer; anders wurde er dem Wucherer verwilligen und mit ihm sündigen [...] wiewohl sich rechte Christen nit haben dran geärgert, so ist doch der gemein Pöbel sunst zu frech und solchs nit anders dann umb seins Nutzs willen gerne höret und tut', *WA Briefwechsel* III, no. 673, 176. John Frederick, in his letter to Luther of the following April, made the exasperated statement that the only solution to the trouble created by Strauss's insistence on this double sin was for he himself to take to the pulpit: 'Der wiederkäuflichen Zins halben ist bei uns die große Mühe zu handeln, daß 5 oder 4 aufs hundert gegeben werden. Ist bei den Geistlichen, auch sonst bei den Leuten zu nehmen wohl zu erlangen; so es aber da ist Mühe, da läuft man hin und her, da muß dieser und jener Prediger vorgesetzt werden und helfen, daß sie nichts geben dürfen. Darüber müssen wir fast alle auf die Kanzel kommen. Da schreiet Straus, daß der es gibet, als wohl sündiget, als der es nimmet; da muß die Oberkeit sündigen, wenn sie es zu Erhaltung des Friedes und Rechtens gebieten, und das Geschrei uberall', *WA Briefwechsel* III, no. 754, 310.

235 'Students at the University, joined by townspeople, demolished many houses that belonged to the clergy of the collegiate churches of St. Severin and St. Marie', Hsia, 'Anticlericalism in German Pamphlets', 493.

236 The debtor must still, while surrendering the money, 'always protest that he is unjustly treated in this, and that he will tolerate such to avoid a greater evil and compulsion as could be placed on him against brotherly love, and commend the matter to God the almighty. *Wucher zu nemen*, Fiiij r.

237 *Auffrur*, Aiij r.

only help to foster resentment of the latter.[238] The two Eisenach citizens who had travelled to Weimar to complain about Strauss, accused him of having told the townspeople that they had good reason to act against their Council, who were oppressing them as much as the priests. Furthermore, they insisted, the preacher had declared in the marketplace that the Council were fools, blasphemers, and murderers of God, and not fit to govern pigs. This may have been exaggerated for effect, but the fact that the two men felt that this would be believed and its faithful transcription in the instruction given to the duke's own commission, would suggest that Strauss's sermons had a reputation for intemperance.[239]

Strauss did not show any awareness that his own writings may have inspired the anticlerical violence of which he disapproved. Was he being disingenuous? The injunction in the second usury work not to attack the clergy as they will eventually be converted does not appear in any of his earlier, vehemently anticlerical works; like the argument permitting one to regard one's neighbour's soul as less important than obedience to the authorities, it too looks like an afterthought.[240] The responsibility to ensure that the gospel is available to the people may be that of the princely *Hausvater*. If the latter fails to act, however, the congregation who have been told that 'the priest who wishes to be seen as a lord of the assembly acts against both God and the salvation of men' may well, with their own salvation in mind, bypass all authority and install their own preacher.[241] Although Strauss advises (in the second usury work at least) that *Erbzins* should be paid, he also insists that it is unjust. Again, given the general emphasis on the exploitation of the laity in his sermons, one could surmise that the latter point would have had more resonance with his lay audience. It was certainly a current complaint, and had the potential to lead to popular protest. Strauss's advice not to pay the *Beichtpfennig* could be seen as a precursor to his strategy concerning usury; the individual Christian playing his or her part in abolishing an ungodly practice. Overall, he offered a

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238 Gij r.

239 'Ach eüer reat seint narren seint gots lesterer vnd got mörder, seint nit wirdig, das sie scwein[e] haüffenn regirenn soltenn', ThHstA Weimar EGA Reg. Ii 126, fos. 6 r-v.

240 *Wucher zu nemen*, Giij r.

241 *Christlichen versamlung*, B r.

mixed message. Despite his occasional remonstrances regarding obedience, Strauss allowed and indeed encouraged the laity to take matters into their own hands with both justice and salvation as motives, the extent of this authorisation remaining dangerously open to interpretation.

Strauss used his sermons and especially his pamphlets both to criticise the princes and to attack other reformers, not only those with whom he had serious doctrinal differences such as the Anabaptists and the Sacramentarians, but also Luther and his supporters. This criticism, and his attacks on the princes for their failure to fulfil their office, were due to his radical convictions regarding the speed and extent of the Reformation. His critics were not entirely wrong in seeing in Strauss's writing and preaching the potential for disorder. The promise of an inevitable reformation would have given many the impression that God was on their side, perhaps even that they were to act as his instruments. The appeal to popular discontent, even if accompanied by injunctions to suffer, could only have helped to strengthen resentment against their purported oppressors. In many cases, Strauss linked the obliteration of any offence against the New Testament commandment of love to the salvation of the community. Every Christian had a duty not only to avoid any personal acquiescence in blasphemy, idolatry, or the neglect of brotherly love, but also to discourage and perhaps even prevent others from doing so. Strauss addressed his sermons and pamphlets to the 'common man', giving him the impression that he was now entitled to judge the behaviour of others as godless, and thus empowered to act to protect the gospel and his weaker brothers. Even so, did he really intend this common man to be responsible for anything other than the reformation of his own faith and behaviour? In one of his earliest works, Strauss appears to suggest that faith alone and not criticism of one's opponents will bring reform. In this he is apparently holding out the possibility of change without effort, although this does not of course mean that the layman is to continue to participate in false rituals.[242] On the other hand, he does seem to allow for a degree of necessary disorder, even in his works written after the Peasants' War to defend the reformation and admonish the rebels. To what extent is Strauss

242 *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r.

reassuring the laity in these works, enabling the individual to break with his or her old beliefs and practices, and to what extent is he encouraging them to participate in their abolition?

6. The purpose of rebellion.

In order to ascertain his true position on reformation from below and reformation at speed, it will be necessary to examine Strauss's treatment of the idea of rebellion more closely and identify what exactly it is that he meant by 'disorder'. Echoing his concept of comfort and anxiety, there is a true and a false rebellion[243] and a corresponding true and false peace. Strauss first articulated this at length in his 1525 pamphlet on rebellion. There, as has been shown in Chapter I, Strauss presented his understanding of the process of becoming a faithful Christian using the framework of a rebellion within the individual, whereby one's own nature must be crucified and replaced with complete trust in God. This has a material dimension, described in the 1524 usury work, which involves physical suffering and denial, a rejection of temporal comforts, and much suffering at the hands of 'the lovers of this world'.[244] He who cannot bear this 'rebellion' places 'the world and his own life, joy, lust, and self-interest above Christ.[245] This spiritual and physical rebellion which the individual Christian must suffer in himself will lead to the true peace of Christ, whereby one will trust in God for both one's spiritual and material welfare.[246]

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243 Strauss uses the term 'Aufruhr', a word which, as noted above, can also mean 'disruption' or 'upheaval'. I will used 'rebellion' throughout, with the caveat that this is not necessarily meant to signify 'rebellion' in the sense of a violent uprising.

244 Es muß also seyn, das die welt yres gleichen liebehabe, vn[d] was God durch sein gotlichs wort von der welt yhme ausserwelet hat, das hasset auch die welt' (John 15:19, The world loves its like, and the world also hates that which God has chosen for himself), *Wucher zu nemen*, F r-v. See Chapter III, above.

245 *Wucher zu nemen*, F v.

246 The true (inner) peace is not that which can be brought by the world, but that which results from the sword of the gospel, which 'kills the sins and the old Adam', ibid., Fiij r. See also *Antwurt ... Coclei*, F r: 'The peace of Christ, as his own wondrous work, which lasts and remains forever, as long as God shall eternally live, and the world can give the same peace much less than the temporal, as the worldly heart and mind may neither hear nor comprehend God's peace. Such peace exceeds all reason and human understanding [...] Whoever wants to have peace, he must renounce all creatures and remember to rejoice in God's promise and ordinance alone' (Philippians 4:4ff.).

This definition of rebellion accords nicely with Strauss's condemnation of the self-interest that had led people to both give and demand usury, and he had almost certainly devised this formulation in response to accusations of unruliness even before the Peasants' War. The injunction to 'take into your hands the sword of the spirit, that is the word of God' (Ephesians 6:17) on the title page of the second usury work is Strauss's answer to such criticism. The choice of this verse indicates the two-fold purpose of this tract: to shore up his condemnation of usury, and to defend himself.[247] In the second pamphlet on usury, he promises that an examination of the meaning of peace and rebellion will show that he and his congregation are perfectly obedient to temporal authority.[248] Any discussion of this concept of rebellion found here and in the pamphlets of 1526 and 1526 must be understood in the context of Strauss attempting to excuse his own disruptive influence. He tells Cochlaeus that the latter 'certainly knows little of what spirit or true spirituality, or rebellion, preaching, gospel and cross is. For this reason the same is unknown to him, what or against whom he writes'.[249] The purpose of the second part of this pamphlet is therefore devoted to enlightening Cochlaeus as to the true cause of rebellion and disunity and to identifying 'true, eternal, temporal peace'.[250]

Strauss announced in relation to usury that Christ did not come to bring peace, and man would not be redeemed through peace; rather, he says, a 'terrifying rebellion must occur'.[251]

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247 It was also in this work that Strauss first used the concept of true and false peace. 'I want to first bring back into consideration that which was formerly preached and taught with a good instruction, of the peace of Christ and of the Devil's peace, and accordingly of Christian rebellion and the worldly rebellion', *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiiij v. Matthew 10:34, 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword' appears on the title page, and is repeated here (F r).

248 Ibid., Eiiij v. It is this distinction between true and false rebellion to which he refers when he claims to be 'of no doubt that the same wise, intelligent [men who have persuaded many with their cries of 'rebellion'] will knot themselves up in their own snare', and that he will explain this later, ibid., Eiiij r

249 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiij v. The 'invented fear of rebellion' awoken by the clergy is unfounded. Ibid., Fiij v – Fiiij r.

250 Ibid., A r.

251 Strauss cites the example of Christ separating families (who should not be loved more than he is loved) and offering life to those who lose it for his sake; similarly, one must separate one's 'Christian heart' from all 'creatures and extraneous love': this must include 'temporal wealth' as well as life and family, *Wucher zu nemen*, F r. This requires a 'great, multiple rebellion', internal and external, in order

Although this forms part of his response to his critics and therefore refers to some extent to the rebellion against one's own nature, Strauss was also distinguishing violent revolt from a degree of disruption and vocal disagreement among neighbours.[252] In this sense, he is happy to admit to preaching and encouraging rebellion: 'I would that no man remain a friend of the other, and all lanes and streets, and their inhabitants remain without cease in such discord and squabbling'; this is essential in the struggle against sin.[253] It is an unavoidable part of the reformation, and Strauss is defiant in his pursuit of it: 'I will in no way cease from promoting such rebellion, as long as the spirit remains in my heart'.[254] As Strauss first expressed this concept of peace and rebellion in 1524, it is impossible to say to what extent it may have informed his thought and activities before that. One must therefore be cautious when attempting to use this to explain his previous conduct; however, it is useful in that it appears to be his own assessment of his approach to reform. The requirement to instruct one's neighbour in relation to usury forms part of this. Elsewhere it is clear that Strauss is not merely praising the conduct of his own congregation in order to preserve his reputation; they are to serve as an example, and therefore an agent of reform, to others. The 'simple and stubborn people' criticised in his pamphlet on the simonean baptism are to learn from the

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to defeat the old Adam: to be suffered 'daily in faith in [one's] inner being, also in flesh and blood, before the old Adam dies in him entirely', ibid., F v. One must shun the 'lovers of this world', and pay no heed to their 'disfavour and enmity or persecution'.

252 Violent action is not permitted; in the context of usury, while one waits for God to act, one should not 'deal tyrannically or murderously with a man on earth' (Ibid., Giij v). and cannot be successful.

253 Ibid., F v. For an introduction to the defence of this quarreling and conflict as a necessary consequence of the introduction of God's word into a world of sinners, at least by the early reformers, see Beat Hodler, 'Protestant Self-Perception and the Problem of *Scandalum*: a Sketch', in Bruce Gordon (ed.), *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Aldershot, 1996), 23-30. Zwingli, in a reply to Fabricius, said that the suffragan bishop of Constance had accused some, perhaps Zwingli himself, of preaching rebellion; Zwingli's answer was that some disturbance was inevitable (citing Matthew 10:34), but he insisted that the preaching of God's word has brought peace to Zurich. Emil Egli and Georg Finsler (eds.), *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke.* I. Corpus Reformatorum 88 (Munich, 1905), 144f. Karlstadt appears to have had a similar concept of necessary rebellion, not limited to that which must take place within the individual Christian. On this, see Sigrid Looß, 'Radical Views of the Early Andreas Karlstadt (1520-1525), in Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.), *Radical Tendencies in the Reformation: Divergent Perspectives.* Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies Vol.9 (Kirksville, MO, 1988), 42-53.

254 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fij r.

conduct of their preacher and their fellow-parishioners.[255] This indicates that the reformation will succeed through example and imitation; action, as well as preaching, is to be an agent of encouragement and persuasion. The abolition of an old custom is not to be feared, even if it may cause initial offence. Despite the desirability of outward peace, one must put up with a certain amount of social disturbance, so as to ensure reform and avoid offending God. Strauss's formulation of peace and rebellion was primarily a defensive tactic, but one that allowed for change and an element of disorder that would be uncomfortable for many. In this too can perhaps be seen the role of the pious common man. Spurred on by his preacher, he is the catalyst through which the broader reformation will occur.

However, could common man be relied upon as an adequate vehicle for reform? It has been demonstrated that Strauss's assessment of the laity could be somewhat less idealistic than it at times appeared in the pamphlets.[256] They had always been foolish, prone to self-interest, and not always successful in the struggle against their own nature. After the Peasants' War, Strauss's view of mankind in general appears to have deteriorated still further. All have shown themselves to be ungrateful to God, all have refused to detach themselves from human teaching and self interest, and, Strauss says, 'the true faith and law of brotherly love [is] entirely quenched in us'.[257] This condemnation is universal; like the 'painted evangelicals' of the usury work, all are Christians in name only. This is a much more wide-ranging criticism than the concerns about the weak, simple people which appeared in 1523, and their disheartening lack of response to the gospel, as outlined in the second usury pamphlet.

This apparent disappointment that the new teaching has failed to take hold through preaching and the individual efforts of the laity is accompanied by a corresponding emphasis

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255 'we want to inform them ... of *our* baptism in *our* assembly', *Simonieschen Tauff*, Aiiij r. Towards the end of the pamphlet: 'in our assembly we baptise in the form and manner [that] Christ has taught and commanded. Here, no money or monetary value will be given or taken', ibid., Ciij r-v.

256 See Chapters II and III above.

257 '*Antwurt ... Coclei*, Fiiij v. This part of the discussion begins with a condemnation of the extremists, goes on to criticise the ungrateful people generally, and ends with the iniquities of the clergy.

on the responsibility of their rulers. In the two pamphlets written in the wake of the Peasants' War, one can see a shift in terms of the target audience, already noticeable to some degree in the usury pamphlet of 1524. The response to Cochlaeus in particular is clearly directed at the secular authorities. Strauss denounces his opponents' propaganda as 'highly sweet flattery and babble', composed for the benefit of the princes in order to poison them against the Reformation and to promote the interests of the clergy.[258] Even if he can get nowhere with Cochlaeus, Strauss writes that he can at least prevent others from being deceived; his broadsides against the clergy are for the benefit of 'all Christian princes and governing rulers'.[259] He was engaged in a struggle for the ears of the princes and other authorities. Given the circumstances, this focus on the secular rulers could be attributed to Strauss's need to convince them that they had no reason to fear the destabilising effects of the new teaching, rather than to a conviction that the reformation of church and society now depended on them alone. As has been shown, Strauss was unstinting in his criticism of the authorities; they too had failed to respond adequately to God's visitation. In fact, both approaches (that of reassurance and that of remonstrance) served the same purpose.

The shortcomings of those in power are so deplorable precisely because of their duty to safeguard their subjects. In 1526, despite recent events, Strauss was still confident that the gospel would be victorious.[260] It does appear that he was expecting the princes to act as God's instrument in promoting the gospel and its implications for society. The admonition of those who have ignored their obligations indicates that the reformation should come from above; the vehemence of this underlining the necessity of reforming the rulers so that they will be capable of reforming society.[261] Strauss certainly appears convinced that he has an obligation to admonish as well as to preach. The former is particularly necessary in the case of the authorities, as they have a responsibility for the spiritual as well as general welfare of their

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258 Ibid., Eiiij r.

259 Ibid., Ciij v. Again, when revealing the cause of all rebellion, this is for the benefit not so much of Cochlaeus, but rather for that of 'all Christian princes and governing rulers', ibid., Ciij v.

260 The clergy will be punished, he says, as God continued to punish the Jews through the Romans, ibid., Fiiij r.

261 *Auffrur*, Cr.

subjects.[262] The secular authorities have been instituted by God in order to ensure a peaceful society and have a duty to guide the common man so that both he and society as a whole will be protected from the consequences of his sinful nature.[263] Their path will not be an easy one; like all Christians, they will have to 'renounce high human reason', as it is this that has led them to despise their own subjects.[264] The preservation of the kingdom depends on this reform.

One must not only distinguish the internal peace of God from the external temporal peace; the latter is further divided into good, 'righteous' peace and 'destructive and ruinous' peace.[265] Again, Strauss introduced this distinction partly in order to counter those who had attributed the recent rebellion to the new teaching,[266] and partly as an exhortation, directed at all, but at the rulers in particular.[267] At the moment, the bad peace reigns, due to a lack of faith. The princes must replace it with the former, through a reformation of society and government.[268] Strauss claims that 'peace' is the subject of much discussion, particularly in Germany, but that everyone ignores its foundation: the abolition of self-interest, and the protection of the 'common great good'.[269] This requires the protection of the people, of their

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262 Ibid., Bij r-v.

263 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Diij r.

264 'you can, with foolish reason teach nothing else, than much of yourself, and regard the poor subjects disdainfully and little', *Auffrur*, Biiij v.

265 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Dij v.

266 They say that peace must be restored but, according to Strauss, one cannot return to the previous, imperfect situation. The peace of which Cochlaeus and others speak is not that ordained by God. Ibid., Dij r. All 'temporal, well-maintained peace', on the other hand, comes from God and is founded in his word, ibid., F r.

267 'It is necessary', writes Strauss, 'for Imperial and royal majesty, through the entire Christendom, also all territorial princes and governing lords, the true nobility and cities, also all Christian folk, most highly and with keen diligence, to listen and unforgettably to take to heart [that which Christ has said about peace]', ibid., Ciiij r.

268 Ibid., D v.

269 'As it is always lamentable and pitiful, that all men, particularly the the German nation, sing and say so much of peace, and yet no one directs his attention to the correct foundation. So however it naturally follows that all peace and friendship, also temporal nourishment, and all true wares and trade is only permanent and happy, where self-interest is torn up, and the common great good powerfully has its progress', ibid., E r.

safety and their goods, and not the pleasure and self-interest of the individual.[270] The most prominent feature of this bad peace is its lack of fairness, the unjust burdens placed on the poor, and neglect of the common good and one's neighbour.[271] Such 'shameful and ruinous peace', says Strauss, should really be termed 'destruction and discord (*vnfride*)'; all kingdoms and cities throughout history in which such peace was attempted have perished.[272] This is partly the natural result of bad government which leads to poverty and general decline (the injury done to the body of the land due to the feet having been led into thorns by the head and eyes[273]), but also the prospect of destruction through rebellion, the people having been provoked beyond patience.

Working from the saying, 'self-interest, old hatred, childish counsel, destroyed Troy, Jerusalem, and Rome',[274] Strauss provides three corresponding historical examples: Rehoboam, the king of Israel who, on the advice of his 'young counsellors', acted tyrannically towards his people who then deserted him; the ancient Romans, for whom the good of the individual took precedence over the common good, leading to hatred and disunity; and Priamus, who placed his own ambitions above the interests of his people, to illustrate his point.[275] Thus the pattern is established: tyranny and neglect of the common good will lead to

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270 Ibid., Ciiij r-v. This must be done with the common good in mind, and not 'the self-interest, lust, splendour, and personal pleasure of everyone', ibid., Ciiij v.

271 This comes up frequently; one example: 'where the men want to burden other people, and to defend self-interest alone, there is neither God nor his word', ibid., Dij r.

272 Ibid., Ciiij v.

273 *Auffrur*, Cij r-v. As above.

274 Ibid., D v. 'Eygner nutz, alter haß, kindischer rath, Troy, Jerusalem vnd Rom zerstöret hat'. A slight variation of this is recorded in the *TPMA*: 'Eigennutz, heimlicher Hass und kindischer Rat haben Rom, Troja und Jerusalem zerstört', *Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi. Lexikon der Sprichwörter des romanisch-germanischen Mittelalters*, begründet von Samual Singer, ed. Kuratorium Singer der Schweizerischen Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (Berlin, 1999). Vol. 2, 403.

275 Rehoboam not only practised idolatry, but also burdened his people even more than did his father Soloman; 'against kingly wisdom and leniency' he answered the 'humble request' of his people thus: 'My father laid a heavy burden on you, but I will add yet more to that, and want to make it even heavier; my father struck you with rods but I want to strike you with scorpions',. *Antwurt ... Coclei*, D r. (1 Kings 12; 2 Chronicles 10) His people, who elected another king, were abandoned by God, delivered into the hands of the Assyrians, and eventually destroyed by the Babylonians; Strauss does not condone this inevitable rebellion. Priamus, king of Troy, kidnapped Helen in order to exact vengeance

rebellion and in turn destruction. The recent rebellion, therefore, can have surprised no one. It has resulted from the governments' disregard of the subjects in favour of its own interests, which treatment has in turn inspired the same self-interest in the latter.[276] Although the common man is forbidden to rebel, this outcome is inevitable. The unchristian peace that comes from selfish and tyrannical rule, which destroys faith, loyalty and love to one's neighbour as well as all virtue, will not be tolerated by God.[277] Strauss warns that God will 'break' such peace; rebellion is God's means of punishing the unchristian ruler, with the disobedient subjects as agents of divine wrath.

As in the case of the Jews, rebellion is God's punishment. It is inflicted upon those who refuse to accept his word[278] and can only be prevented through reform of government and of faith.[279] This punishment will, of course, be accompanied by damnation, and it is not limited to the rulers; God will punish all of his apostate people.[280] However, in the pamphlets of 1525 and 1526, Strauss was principally addressing the powerful and emphasising the earthly

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on the Greeks and enforce peace, and 'did not think what harm and ruin would grow [in] his happy kingdom from the same union with his children. So he afterwards lost land and people, body and property, and all of his children', ibid., D r-v.

276 Ibid., Ev.

277 'where self-interest, pleasure, and splendour is present, there is also no God, no Christ, no gospel, no true righteousness, and finally nothing other than all vice and wickedness, tyranny, rebelliousness of the subjects, deceit, shame, and vice, and before the world nothing more than hypocrisy', ibid., D v – Dij r.

278 'But they who in no way want to give place to God's inner peace in faith and entire happy love and trust, they then must be damned and punished with unholy fear and strife, now and forever', ibid., Giiij v.

279 'Much will be said and written of rebellion, but I am concerned that the true sword will not be grasped, without which one cannot uproot rebellion; it is a punishment and plague from God on Adam's children, that none wants to give way to the other, and it may not be otherwise, until God frees us through his beloved son from the old condition and nature though his word accepted in faith', ibid., Ciiij r.

280 Strauss reminds his readers that the Jews, who rejected the inner peace of God (that is, refused to trust wholly in him), were punished not only by the loss of knowledge of God, but also by that of temporal peace: 'they for their short-lived lust and fleshly peace, did not want to recognise the godly and most-loved promise and teaching of eternal peace, and in such a way called God's unavoidable vengeance and wrath upon them[selves], that they were not only punished in their souls with temporal and eternal darkness and pain, rather also with wives and children so dreadfully exterminated', ibid., Fiiij r-v.

consequences. God has provided instructions for faith and life, but just as the common man must conquer his natural inclinations, the rulers have a particular responsibility, and also stand to suffer the greater material loss. This interpretation of the Peasants' War is doubly useful. By attributing its cause to bad government and the resultant divine anger, not only are the true evangelical preachers exonerated (if not the rebels themselves), the threat of further insurrection also serves as a method of convincing the rulers to advance the necessary reforms. Strauss had employed a similar strategy before the Peasants' War when trying to persuade the princes to abolish usury, although at that time he was defending his own preaching, rather than that of the evangelical movement in general.[281] Government in accordance with the commandment of love is the only type that will last and, although the authorities themselves are partly to blame for the resulting disobedience, they are also the solution. It is possible to prevent self-interested rebellion 'if everyone carries his proper Christian and godly burden, also does not burden the poor common crowd contrary to God and natural fairness; one must remember in Christian love that we are all brothers, and for this reason none should compel the other so despicably and tyrannically, and [ignore] him, as though his fellow Christian man were growing under his feet'.[282]

A ruler may not enforce obedience however he pleases.[283] Just as bad government will lead to the collapse of the kingdom, so too will the injudicious and over-enthusiastic punishment of the rebellious subjects.[284] On the other hand, a quick and fair trial to determine guilt will

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281 *Wucher zu nemen*, Fij v.

282 Ibid., Fij v. 'It is also firmly necessary that all Christian princes and lords conduct their affairs with Christ and not with self-interested people, as the rebellion that self-interest causes is easily prevented.' Strauss follows this by saying that if a man rebels using the gospel as an excuse, he should be 'improved' by punishment, as an example to others. 'Es yst auch fast not, das alle Christenlichen Fusten vnd herrn yhre sach mit Christo, vnd nicht mit aigennutzigen lewten tractirn dan die affrur, die der aigennutz furwe[n]det yst leichtlich fur zu komen',

283 From the example of Rehoboam: 'God did not want that Rehoboam dared to make the people obedient to him once more with the sword'. God's instruction that Rehoboam not to restore his kingdom by force is in 2 Chronicles 11:3f.

284 *Auffrur*, Ciij v. If the obedient are treated as they deserve, Strauss assures his readers, they will honour their prince, implying that failure to do this will result in disloyal subjects: 'it is the highest

prevent 'squabbling and discord'.[285] The cruelty of those who, from stubbornness, blindness, and bloodthirsty personal vengeance, have put on their armour and sought to 'eradicate rebellion and discord with guns, spears, halberds, and with inhuman bloodshed' has only strengthened the 'most harmful enemy' of peace, that is, 'individual interest'.[286] Furthermore, not only is this indiscriminate overreaction counter-productive, the slaughter of peasants is not the way to achieve peace. Even if one were to 'slay each year as many peasants as the past summer', this would not eradicate true cause of rebellion. It would merely reduce the number of peasants, who are an easy target as they have not been able to conceal their wicked actions; the secret enemy, however, is much more dangerous.[287] One should instead look to those who 'burden princes and lords, also land and people, and disguise the matter with their attachment [to] the mighty governments', and who allow the 'unjust burden of the poor' to persist.[288] Punishment of the guilty, Strauss warns, should be administered to those who deserve it, taking no account of one's status: 'the common peace should and must be avenged [...] against all those who have acted against it, also without consideration of the person; as no matter what rank or standing he may hold, if he is found to be an enemy and violator of the common, proper peace, he should also bear fitting punishment'.[289] Who are these 'selfish' people who have escaped punishment due to their position?

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honour and most magnificent praise of the prince, if he has pious, obedient subjects, who then with joy consider their lord to be most highly honourable and pious', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Diiij v.

285 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Diiij v.

286 Ibid., E v – Eij r; Eiij v. This is written in the subjunctive, but presumably refers to recent events. Good government and the eradication of injustice will, of course, do more.

287 'which enemy does longer and greater harm, the secret or the open, that which stands before the door, or that which remains unmoved in the house?', ibid., Eiij r. 'the slain peasants have not alone been sinners', ibid., Ciij v.

288 Ibid., Eiij r.

289 Ibid., Diiij r. Furthermore, anything that is seen to be unfair will only lead to further resentment; all should receive the judgement they deserve, so that 'personal vengeance, favour, or disfavour (*eygen rach gunst oder vngunst*) will in no way be sensed'.

7 Identifying the true rebels.

The clergy have persecuted the gospel with their human teachings and laws, and have turned 'the Christian people away from the true understanding of God'.[290] They are therefore responsible for the general lack of brotherly love and persistence of self-interest.[291] Even before the peasants' war, Strauss had identified the first estate as a destabilising force in society, in both their own unchastity and their interference in the marriages of the laity. It is their influence on the temporal authorities, however, that has allowed them to destroy God's peace; this is the contemporary equivalent of the historically destructive 'childish counsel'.[292] They have 'trodden all orderly power and authority under their feet', whereby the pope controls 'the greatest government of all ordered by God over kingdom, land and people of the whole world, the Roman Emperor'.[293] They had been the cause of Strauss's persecution the Tyrol; there, the 'lords in the government' have acted, he says, in order to 'please the priesthood and their flatterers' (*der pffaffheitt vnnd iren tzututlern tzu gefallen*).[294]

The church has not only gained control of God's ordained authorities in matters of religion; its conspirators have also infiltrated government. The priests and monks have blinded emperors, kings, 'powerful princes and territorial lords', leading them to disregard their 'natural children'.[295] This is how they have been able to gather such wealth (so unsuitable for true servants of God[296]), and wealth in turn has given them more power.[297] Usury has flourished because the 'princely leniency' mentioned above has always been inclined to

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290 Ibid., Fiiij v.

291 Ibid., Gij v – Giij r.

292 Ibid., D v.

293 Ibid., Fiiij v. The pope, writes Strauss, spares only those who contribute to his coffers.

294 *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r.

295 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, G r-v.

296 'How then can the apostolic office be held under such great temporal power, government, taxes and wealth, since all that Christ demonstrated in himself and commanded his followers, will be fundamentally overthrown!', ibid., G v.

297 Ibid., G v.

indulge the 'self-interested', who threaten excommunication if their income is endangered.[298] The rulers may have exploited the people and ruined the land, but the clergy have advised them to do so.[299] Strauss's contention that the rulers have allowed themselves to be treated 'like children' is of course not terribly flattering, placing them on a similar level to the 'poor simple people' who have also been duped. Still, it would have been more acceptable than a direct attack; there was a long-established tradition of prudently criticising the actions of one's rulers by means of identifying corrupt advisors as the true culprits. In the context of the Reformation, this approach acquired an added benefit in the selection the enemies of the gospel to fulfil the latter role.[300]

Strauss's description of the malign influence of the church on secular government has yet another dimension. Not only has the country come to ruin through the usurers, but something more revolutionary still is at work. One of the consequences of the universal destruction of 'natural fairness' through this 'despicable, contemptible trade' is that 'the great kings, princes, and lords must be subject to their own servants, and be servants of their servants'.[301] Here, Strauss is appealing to the rulers' sense of honour and position which is under threat from these usurpers. The clergy are portrayed as the true insurrectionists in the second usury pamphlet, echoing Strauss's earlier descriptions of their pretentions to a higher status. The schoolmen argue that 'princes and lords, also the common man, would be bound to the usury interest' which entails a subversion of the natural order. The ruler, when he borrows money, places himself in the same servile position as the common man as, whatever his natural status, 'the usury servant subordinates himself powerfully to his usury lord, against God, and the salvation and eternal bliss of both their souls'.[302] The usurers and their

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298 This is the work of the 'wise and highly-learned', who advise that one should not break one's bond; nor should one 'have his prescribed income reduced': either of which will result in excommunication. *Wucher zu nemen*, Eij v.

299 *Auffrur*, Biiij v.

300 Ibid., Biiij v.

301 *Wucher zu nemen*, E v.

302 Ibid., Eiij r. And, as above, 'And thus the lords have the title, and their servants and subjects the income', ibid., Eij r.

defenders have proven their disobedience more than any reluctant debtor: 'every subject should acknowledge himself duty-bound and required to give his ruler not only wealth, but also his body and life, with his oath, loyalty, and honour'. Even non-Christians would be appalled at the current state of affairs.[303] Although the usurers do not consist exclusively of churchmen (as has been mentioned, Strauss at one point alludes to the Fugger), it is they who have provided the justification for the great creditors to enslave their natural lords. The 'highly-born governing lords' must act to reclaim their rightful authority over the rebellious 'painted lords' of the clergy and put an end to this unnatural situation; to ensure, as Strauss puts it, that the stools will not be placed on the benches.[304] The princes must free themselves and their subjects from 'the wretched yoke of usury', and re-establish prosperity and peace.[305] The emphasis here is as much on the disobedience of the usurers as on the restoration of 'peace and justice'.

In his assessment of the causes of the peasants' revolt, Strauss reprises the accusation that these 'blind, wise people', driven by greed and a lust for power, have attempted to control all government. The 'fine, noble folk' have befuddled their rulers with flattery and babble to ensure that God's word is ignored, as a just government would work against their 'bottomless begging'.[306] In the social body, they serve as the eyes and hands to the heads of

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303 Ibid., Eij r. This passage is also the context of the claim that usury has 'torn up and destroyed all natural fairness everywhere and in all places': 'Es solt doch ein yetlicher vnterthan seyner herschafft, nit allein das gut, aber auch sein leib. Vn[d] lebe[n], fur zusetzen bey seinem Eyde, trewen, vnnd eeren, pflichtig vnnd schuldig sych erkennen. Wenn wir gleich nit Christen weren, so vberwinde vns doch geweltiklich die naturlichen billigkait, das solichs verschmelich vnd grawsam zu horen yst', ibid., E v.

304 'solten ye die großmechtigen herschafften dz schwert selber zu handen nemen, vnd yrer landt vnd leutt gerechter nutzung, vnd einkomens selbert herren vnd besytzer sein. damit sye yrer eigener knechten knechtliche dienstbarkait veryagten, vnd die stuel nicht auff den bencken hupfften', ibid., Eij v.

305 'so wurden yre landtschafften, vnd yr hendel widderumb erneuwert, fridt vnd gerechtikait widderumb eingesetzt, vnd alle vngehorsamkait der vnderthanen leichtlich abgestelt', ibid., Eij v.

306 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Eiiij r. Strauss places them in a similar category to the 'false prophets' of the rebellion, due to their shared distaste for the true meaning of the gospel, Eiiij r-v.

the temporal rulers, directing and deceiving the latter for their own purposes.[307] It is these eyes and hands who, along with the 'foolish head' of the prince, have led the poor legs and feet into thorns.[308] Taking the opportunity to praise the 'wonderfully precious and noble office of princely government' and to emphasize the natural and godly authority of the princes, Strauss complains that this manipulation has resulted in empty treasuries (*Camergut*). It is the eyes and hands, therefore, who are responsible for the 'uncommon taxation and services' with which the 'poor inhabitants' are burdened, with the result that the 'feet and legs of the princely body' will be wounded and broken, forcing it to walk on 'stumps and false legs'. The servants, on the other hand, have bettered themselves to the point that they often hold the 'highly-powerful princes' in their hands, and do as they please.[309] The resulting indirect government, in which the head has become separate from the limbs, is 'the greatest, most harmful poison of all', as 'the poor, forsaken subjects, saddened everywhere by the selfish [people], will be led to resentment and rebelliousness'.[310] Furthermore, the peasants in

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307 'But the eyes and the hands to these heads (that is) the world-learned and powerful with the princes, they can disguise and defend it all, that which openly and knowingly contributes to the harm of land and people. As their own profit alone compels the same blind, wise people, that they only strive so that the government and all power will be placed in their hands', *Auffrur*, Cij v.

308 'Now if the eyes, that is the wise and learned, or your own mind, were to say to the feet, "one does not require you" - dear, how then would the head be carried with the eyes, or with the entire body?', ibid., Cij v. Here the blame appears to be shared equally; do the princes think that the learned (the eyes) will be able to carry them in place of the limbs?

309 Ibid., Cij v, 'Wenn man die Fürsten dahin gefuret hat, das sie das wunderbarlich köstlich vnd edel ampt Fürstlicher regirung, mit dem geringsten finger, grundlichen vnd statlich nit anregen. Vnd wirt denen befohlen, die allein (wie gewonlich am tag ligt) jren aygen nutz bedencken Es stee vmb den Fürsten, oder vmb die armen vnterthonen wie es mag, Sie werden vol des Fürsten Camergut wirt geringert, vnd das sie es verplümen, So suchen sie vrsach vnd ratten, wie man die arme landschafft mit newen beschwerden vberlestige mit vngepreuchlichen schatzungen vnd diensten. Damit werden die füß vnd bein an der Fürstlichen glidmoß, verschmetziget vnd verwundt, Ja auch gantz glidprechig vnd verderbt, So geet es dann alles auff stetzen vnd frembden füssen, vnd haben die knecht in kurtzen iaren sich so viel gepessert, das jnen offt die großmechtigen Fürsten, in die hend müssen sehen, vnd schlechtiglich thun was sie wöllen'.

310 Ibid., Ciij r. Those who have raised such a clamour with their cries of 'rebellion!' themselves 'rebel' against God's spirit, *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiij r. Peace will never be kept as long as 'the authorities forget the common, magnificent power given to them by God, and replace their rule with self-interest, lust, and splendour, or grant this to some subjects', ibid., D v.

their violent and self-interested reaction to exploitation have only followed the example of the clergy, who have done everything they could in pursuit of their own interests.[311]

The rulers have been encouraged to act according to destructive human reason, but one cannot govern using 'human cleverness'; this is as transient and unstable a foundation as splendour, pleasure, and lust, and history has shown that no kingdom built on these has lasted.[312] Instead, it is faith through love that will maintain peace and unity: 'without this accord which faith brings in love, [let] no potentate think to preserve permanently peace and unity in his land'.[313] Even the powerful ancient Romans could not preserve their 'common peace', despite centuries of trying, as they did not have God's word.[314] Those who seek to conceal the true cause of the rebellion will shortly feel God's wrath; this does not mean that nothing is required of the rulers. By establishing the guilt of the advisors or clergy, Strauss has given the princes a way out; a means of reform. They can fulfil their divine office and rescue their territories and their souls by removing the clergy who, in their unnatural wealth and power, imperil the temporal peace, the common good, and the salvation of the people.[315] Just as Cochlaeus and others used the Peasants' War to discredit the evangelical movement, Strauss (by identifying the clergy as the origin of the revolt and the true rebels) used it to punish the first estate and encourage the princes to dismiss or ignore all 'advisors' who were

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311 'If the peasants had wanted to remain under the cross, and commended to God their wretchedness and need, and not wanted to dispel violence with violence, as they are taught from your books, so thus rebellion, murder and killing would easily have been avoided, and God's deliverance awaited in patience. But, dear brother, little have you and your kind ever wanted to teach or accept the word of God in the true Christian manner, rather [you] have enforced the defence of your spiritual estate with false glosses and outrageous reason from all wickedness, self-interest and temporal honour', ibid., Biiij v.

312 *Auffrur*, Biiij v.

313 Ibid., C r.

314 Ibid., C r.

315 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, G v – Gij r.

hostile to the Reformation. In fact, he declares, all of history shows that princes should abandon these selfish 'eye-servants'.[316]

The fanatical leaders of the peasants have been justly punished, but the wealthy and the selfish also number among those who do not trust in God and instead seek their own interests to the detriment of their souls and the common good.[317] As in the usury pamphlets, this lack of faith is presented as the cause of self-interest, harmful not only to the sinner himself but also to the wider community. One must not merely cut off the offending limb, therefore, but also remove the eyes and hands if these too lead to 'offence in the inner kingdom of the souls'.[318] In fact, not only should the 'common law' be applied to the rich as to the 'poor and rough people', the apologists for human teaching[319] have, through their ambition and greed, done most to harm the common good and are the most wicked of all.[320] The protection of the innocent is the primary duty of the ruler, and he cannot 'demonstrate his Christian, princely, and loving nature' and thereby ensure obedience and respect unless those who have tyrannised his poor subjects are watched and punished when necessary.[321]

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316 'Auch das erstockenlich menigfeltig exempel, vnd was die alten göttlichen vnnd menschlichen historien anzeygen, kein ansehen vor den augendienern vnd eygennützigen, beyn Fürsten mag haben', *Auffrur*, Ciij r.

317 '[The prince must ensure] das der ellendt verzweyffelt mensch sein poßheit (jme selbert zu grösserm schaden) nit lenger üben möge. Es muß aber selliche straff nicht allein an den armen vnd groben leutten gehalten werden, aber one vnterschied es sey wer es wöll der also schadhafftig der gemein erfunden, soll auch straff tragen', ibid., Ciiij v.

318 A reference to Mart 9:43ff. (All parts of the body that cause one to sin must be removed): 'der herr Christus in dem innerlichen reich der seelen zuuermeyden ergerniß nit die füß allein abzuschneyden [...] Aber das aug vnd die hende, der mossen außzustechen vnd ab zuschneyden', ibid., Ciiij v.

319 'die weysen vnd gewaltigen bey den Fürsten'.

320 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Eiij v.

321 'Dann fürwar kan kein fromer Christenlicher Fürst, sein Christen, Fürstlich, vnd liebhabent gemüt hertzlicher erzeygen, vnd sein gantz Fürstenthumb in gepürlicher forcht vnd gehorsam erhalten Dann so er am ersten vnd fürnemlichen mit straff ob denen haltet, vnnd jnen auffs wenigest vbersicht, die großgeweltig geachtet, vnd doch der vntrewe vnd tirrannei mit seinen armen vnterthonen allzeyt spilen, vnd vmb jren eygnen nutz, wollust vnd mutwillen, alle gute Fürstliche ordenung verachten, Auch am ersten brechent', *Auffrur*, Ciiij v; 'So weder stammen noch namen angesehen, einem yeden durch den fromen Fürsten nach seinem ge-gehorsam [sic.] in allen sachen, schutz, schirm, vnd gnad bewisen, oder nach seinen verprechen straff nit enzogen wirt', ibid., Ciiij v. See the discussion on the proper use of the sword, above.

Immediate reform is essential, and the most important step is for the rulers to fulfil the office to which they have been assigned and remove it from the hands of their 'clever' advisors who, through their 'embellished, concealing, and subtle words', have shamelessly turned 'the highly-powerful rulers and the common folk away from God'[322] Government should instead be conducted according to the God's word; this will result in happy and obedient subjects.[323] With his usual emphasis on brotherly love, Strauss describes the proper temporal peace as 'a secure, friendly society, with peaceful and appropriate possession of temporal goods and nourishment, kept with orderly, firm commandments and statutes of the authorities, and fitting, willing obedience of the subjects, of each Kingdom, Principality, Land, of the Cities and all areas and habitats of men on earth'.[324] The 'single foundation of all peace and good friendship' is the protection and promotion of the common good, part of which will involve the abolition of usury.[325]

If the mutual respect between all members mentioned above exists, all following the commandment of love and seeking to help one another despite individual interests, then 'all harm and misfortune will be averted'; if the prince cares for his subjects, the subjects will be loyal and obedient to their prince.[326] Strauss says that he will be accused of impracticality by

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322 'you must take your princely office into your own hands with the inffalible, eternal truth (which flows from God, and alone bears fruit with you) in faith, which works through love', ibid., Biiij v; *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiij r.

323 'It is therefore very necessary for the Christian princes (to whom I now preach) to remember God's word alone and to hear or believe no one else; accordingly your rightful power and government will long be strengthened with the joy and unanimous obedience of the subjects, according to God's promise', *Auffrur*, Biiij r.

324 In such a place, 'no one injures or burdens the other, and no one seeks to take advantage of or deceive the other, rather much more one helps the other in his need from loyal friendship, and the men are constant and comforting to one another, accordingly, that the disadvantage of one will be regarded as the disadvantage of all the others, and the happiness of one, also the happiness and well-being of the others', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Dij v.

325 Ibid., E r - E v; the prince who wants to have a peaceful and happy land must get rid of 'all usury and shameful *Fürkauf*, ibid., Eiij v.

326 'Es muß sich der herr gegem knecht, vnd knecht zum herren, im glauben nach der liebe richten, Vnd dann wirt aller vnrath, vnd vnfal fürkomen Dann so das haupt die glider, vnd herwider die glider, das haupt lieben vnd wore trewe auff beden teylen geübt wirt, So sucht keines sich selbert fürnemlich, Aber der herr schawet mit gnaden, vnd höchstem fleiß auff sein eygen armen vnterthonen,

the critics who constantly damage his reputation with the princes; they will say that God has given the sword to the princes who are entitled to use it against their subjects, and that mildness and love will not ensure obedience.[327] This government founded in faith and love, say the 'wise', will not keep the wicked and disobedient peasants from rebellion. Strauss, however, insists that it will be both virtuous and lasting.[328] The prince should use the sword to protect the weak and punish the wicked. This must be done according to love. The ruler must of course undergo his own internal reformation, trust in God and conquer his old Adam. A kingdom founded on justice and fairness will result, in which all men, no matter what their social standing, will be treated equally before the law.[329] This is of course connected to Strauss's claim that the true rebels have escaped unpunished, but it also accords with the general egalitarianism of his earlier works. It is not merely a benevolent prince that is required, but a reformed society, although Strauss does appear to accept that there will always be both rich and poor.

Removing the wealth and influence of the clergy will not be sufficient to establish the true brotherhood and peace. The rulers are not themselves blameless. Strauss indicates that their foolishness has brought them to this; they have allowed themselves be divested of their 'godly office'.[330] They have been only too happy to allow the clergy to interfere in government

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Also auch stet das empsig auffmercken der vnterthonen, mit willigem, lüstigem gehorsam, zu einem solchen Fürsten', *Auffrur*, Ciij r.

327 'Wenn all regirung allein nach der senffte vnd militkeyt der Fürsten in der liebe mit den vnterthonen fürgenomen werden solten, Wie würden die schalckhafften, widerspennigen, vnd vngehorsamen Pawren gestrofft vnd von auffrur enthalten?', ibid., Ciij r-v.

328 'But all of your wisdom and counsel should be concluded and accomplished in faith through love (which is then the firm rule and mistress of all lasting government and virtuous human works)', ibid., Biiij r.

329 'If God thus moves and exercises your princely nature through the word, so that you have entirely surrendered yourself to your God and saviour Christ, and are willing and eager, according to his law and image, to protect and to shield all of you subjects, yes, one like the others, and spare no princely or fatherly loyalty to them, and also allow fitting justice and fairness be done to the poor as to the rich, without burdensome delay, and keep your lands and people in true, good Christian order, all of such things love will teach', ibid., Ciij v – Ciiij r.

330 'Dann wenn sich die Fürsten jres gotthafften amptes begen vnd lassen sich dahin weysen, das sie das schwert der getrewen milten vnd Fürstlichen regirung jrer armen einfeltigen vnterthonen, auß der hand lassen, So spaltet sich auch fridsame einickeyt', ibid., Ciij r.

due to their preoccupation with luxury and frivolous pursuits.[331] Strauss grimly describes their neglect of God in government as 'tyrannical'.[332] The consequences of failure, he tells them, will not be restricted to the loss of one's earthly kingdom; as with all neglect of brotherly love, whether to one's neighbour or to one's subject, one must eventually answer to God. Such mismanagement, Strauss implies, will result in eternal damnation. Regarding the crafty and wicked advisors, he informs the princes that the former 'will also not go neither to heaven nor to hell for you; you must present yourself and give an account to God your strict lord concerning your power and government'.[333] Even before the Peasants' War, he had warned the princes that it would be they, and not their 'teachers and advisors', who would have to 'settle their accounts with God for themselves and all of their subjects'.[334] It would appear from this that, just as the debtor who pays interest contributes to the damnation of his creditor, the princes have a specific responsibility for the salvation of those in their charge. This confirms the vital role that, for Strauss, the authorities must play in the reformation.

If Strauss's pamphlets provide a reasonably accurate representation of his preaching, it is clear that he engaged in frequent and obvious attempts to rouse the laity to action, an encouragement that went beyond the personal, internal reformation of the individual.[335]

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331 Strauss sarcastically describes the rulers' true interests thus: 'the princes in the meantime tend well their dear old Adam, and live according to unnecessary splendour and lust, hold banquets, tourney, wound, hunt, and likewise have good cheer, and so land and people are well-governed and looked after', ibid., Cij v.

332 Although at one point Strauss attributes this to the princes' natural leniency (see above), the overall impression given is that of the princes' guilt. They are compared to other historical rulers 'who have proceeded without God in false presumption of their own strength and tyrannical harshness', ibid., Biiij v.

333 Ibid., Biiij v.

334 'let no pious Christian prince rely on the embellished, concealing, and subtle words of such world-ruiners. As they themselves and not such teachers and advisors must settle their accounts with God for themselves and all of their subjects', ('Derwegen lass sych keyn from[m]er Christenlich Furst an solcher welt verfurer, verbluemte, geschinde vnd subtyle wort Dan si selber vnd nicht solicher lerer vnd rethe mussen Got fur sich selbs vnd alle yhre vnterthanen rechung thun') *Wucher zu nemen*, Eiij r-v.

335 According to Barge, Strauss did want things 'to get going': 'All the same, he sought to bring about a situation which necessitated an intervention by the authorites in the usury question in

However, this reformation from below had not, in his view, made much progress; whatever the faults of the common man, he could never succeed in this endeavour while the clergy continued to conspire against the acceptance of faith and brotherliness. There is very little condemnation of the peasants in the 1525 pamphlet on rebellion. Even the criticism of their leaders appears to have been included principally in order to underline the need for equal punishment of the powerful and the powerless. The rebellion may be indefensible, but it is understandable; a reaction to ungodly injustice and oppression. This interpretation of recent events serves multiple purposes: it exculpates Strauss and most of his fellow evangelical preachers; it offers a rationalisation of their apparent failure to reform; and it provides an opportunity for a renewed attack on the clergy.

In Strauss's later writings, he is not so much defending the rulers' right to be obeyed as reminding them of their duty to protect their subjects. His priority appears to have been the abolition of injustice in favour obedience to God's commandment in the form of brotherly love more so than the prevention of rebellion. The reformation is to be achieved by a combination of means, not all of them originating from those in authority.[336] Each Christian must engage in the conquest of his trust in human reason, his own abilities, and his selfish nature. This struggle is to be visible in an accompanying alteration of his conduct in religious and secular matters. Both individuals and entire congregations must act as an example to others. This may result in a degree of disturbance and disruption which may be uncomfortable for some, but is an inevitable outward expression of the internal conflict between human nature and the faith and love required by God; Strauss makes no apologies for this necessary tumult. Was Strauss deliberately inciting trouble and disorder with this in

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accordance with the gospel'. Nonetheless, 'all thought of *Aufruhr* was as far from his mind as the intention to intervene in the authority of his lords', Barge, *Jakob Strauss*, 80 (my translation).

336 It appears that all have failed. There is a sense of despair, but this does not preclude the possibility of success; Strauss is admonishing all sections of society, with a view to all being agents of reformation: 'But it may certainly no longer be found thus among Adam's children, that anyone force himself to keep to that degree of friendship and unity with all men of their own initiative. As all men love and esteem themselves so highly, that no one considers any more what he owes to his neighbour and the common peace. From which then neither peace nor unity may be kept, if each one wants to live his own pleasure', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Diij v.

mind? He may well have been attempting to force the hands of the authorities by provoking agitation from below.

Reform cannot happen if the rulers through their advisors actively oppose it. Outright rebellion (including passive disobedience in the case of usury and, presumably, all of Strauss's 'disturbances' in retrospect) is explained as divine punishment, a means by which God directly forces the rulers onto the correct path. Strauss may have identified the 'advisors' as the principal culprits, but the princes have still failed; the threat of future rebellion will hang over them until the reasons for the previous rebellion have been resolved. Despite his identification of the secular government as an essential driving force of reform, his insistence that 'each sensible person may easily [...] recognize that in the same teaching nothing will be taken away from the authorities' is not entirely sincere.[337] The warnings regarding God's wrath expressed as insurrection and the loss of one's domain can be seen as an extension of Strauss's tactic of encouraging reformation from above by rousing popular action. The efforts of the common man must be complemented and supported by those of the powerful.

8 The new counsellors.

However, as the old Adam is fully vanquished only in death, these efforts will require a constant struggle to overcome one's natural instincts. As discussed in Chapter II, above, Strauss's reservations regarding the capacity of the laity to correctly grasp the new teaching are evident even in his earliest works. This can only be rectified by the preaching of God's word. The most indispensible agent of reformation, therefore, is neither the common man nor the secular authorities, but the evangelical pastor, who will provide the necessary instruction and correction.[338] The laity must be persuaded to abandon their priests, whether by means of

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337 *Auffrur*, Ciij v.

338 At the end of the second usury work, confidence in the victory of the reformation is expressed in terms of conversion. One must not attack one's enemies, as God will convert them; one cannot do so by force, neither should one's rulers: 'the Christian lord should not want to kill off the objectors to the gospel with death and force', *Wucher zu nemen*, Giij v. The rejection of force also appears in *Auffrur*: 'the raging self-interest and obstinate human inclination in these recent days can scarcely allow itself to be destroyed with force, as only God's word must obtain victory', *Auffrur*, Aij r.

sermons in areas where the new teaching is tolerated, or through printed advice elsewhere. Strauss's apparently consistent disdain for the higher schools existed alongside a conviction that a learned pastor was required to oversee the necessary reforms. The visitations he demanded in 1525 would appear to confirm this view; although in the *Assembly* pamphlet the congregation is conferred with the authority to assess and select its pastor, if the visitor were to find that chosen pastor did not live up to his evangelical standards, he would presumably remove him, with or without the assent of the laity.

The authorities therefore must not only remove the damaging influence of the clergy on general government, they must foster this preaching, despite the efforts of the latter to prevent it. The persecution of the word through the persecution of its servants is the aim of those who accuse the evangelical preachers of having caused the rebellion, and the 'innocent', whose protection is the primary duty of the secular rulers, include the preachers as well as the unjustly massacred laity. According to Strauss, this slanderous campaign seeks to persuade the 'good and innocent princes' to strangle and martyr the word in the person of its followers, as happened to the disciples.[339] The misuse of God's word by a minority has allowed Cochlaeus and others to label all 'preachers who do not praise and extol the old error' as rebels; 'now the agitators (*anhetzer*) (as they think) have won'.[340] The preachers, like all followers of Christ, are presented as the victims of summary justice[341], and even when they are given leave to put their case, the 'misleaders' ensure they cannot be heard through their 'babbling'.[342] This persecution of the word, of course, is in itself another reason for God's

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339 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Gij v.

340 Ibid., H v. In his condemnation of the arbitrary justice meted out to all, mentioned above, Strauss would appear to have had a point. According to Maurer, the victors would have liked to have executed many more: 'Sie konnten nur selten eine Führungsgruppe bestrafen oder die Prozesse zu einem einheitlichen Geschehen gestalten, wie das bei anderen politischen Racheakten geschiet. Sie hatten auch keine klaren Maßstäbe, was nun todeswürdige Verbrechen gewesen seien'. Maurer provides a list of preachers, pastors, and general clergymen who were executed in the aftermath of the revolt, including the deacon who was hanged with sixteen others at Eisenach. Maurer, *Prediger im Bauernkrieg*, 258-260.

341 They are 'hanged, drowned, or else strangled; one no longer requires a lawful trial', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, H v.

342 Ibid., H v.

wrath.[343] Accordingly, Strauss promises, this 'new martyrdom and bloodshed of the true witnesses and preachers', caused partly by Cochlaeus' 'bloodthirsty little book', will be avenged.[344] This provides both the carrot and the stick to accompany Strauss's appeal to 'all Christian emperors, kings, princes and magistrates' to do their duty and prevent this unavoidable divine punishment as well as protect temporal peace. The rulers will only be successful in this if they ignore those who 'with bloodthirsty hearts call for murder and death for all honest preachers, without any reason or Scripture'.[345]

However, as Strauss tells these rulers, the fulfilment of this duty will be a 'hard, heavy cross'; the path of the true Christian, the struggle against their 'old Adam, high reason, and customary lust' will be as difficult for them as for the common man, and perhaps more so.[346] A personal, inner reformation incorporating an adherence to faith and love rather than to indolence and pleasure is needed on the part of the princes and other authorities.[347] They therefore require the preaching and instruction of the new teachers; the latter, using the word of God as their guide, are to replace the existing selfish and misled counsellors. Strauss himself provides an example of how to advise the authorities in the practical reform of government. The princes, he says, are willing to abolish lending money at interest, but are not strong enough to oppose the usurers. However, Strauss is confident that, by explaining the sinfulness of this practice, he will give them the courage and knowledge they require to prohibit it.[348] Strauss's understanding of his own role in this reformation may become clear

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343 'He will and must keep and watch over his word, as he says, Jeremiah 1[:12]', ibid., Giiij v.

344 Ibid., H r.

345 Ibid., H r.

346 This is the exhortation with which he ends the *Auffrur* pamphlet, Ciiij v.

347 In *Auffrur*, Strauss expresses this in the form of a prayer: 'Ah, allow nonetheless the infallible, eternal word of God, that now so powerfully pushes in everywhere with its radience and illumination, to go to the heart of the pious prince', *Auffrur*, Ciij r.

348 *Wucher zu nemen*, Eij v, as described above. Strauss outlines his role as the princes' instructor: 'And that I want to have particularly taught and advised, for the sake of several pious territorial princes, who now from the word of God, God be praised, recognise the harm of the damnable interest, and nonetheless so wretchedly cannot put a stop to it. With which the same pious princes from which the number of the usurers grows, will not be forced to ask the subjects against their [the princes'] consciences', ibid., Gij v.

with an examination of the way in which he represents himself in these pamphlets; this construction of his personal reputation constituting a further aspect of their defensive purpose. On one level, he is simply attempting to protect himself; on another, one can discern an effort to set himself up as an authority and a leader.

The former was especially necessary after the Peasants' War. Strauss may have feared for his safety, claiming that since the revolt, 'the preachers of the gospel have [...] been murdered in all laneways'.[349] There is an element of self-preservation, therefore, in his condemnation of the indiscriminate nature of the reaction of the authorities discussed above, whereby 'several pious and peaceful preachers [were] also banished in the senseless revolt, also several martyred by the dreadful tyrants'.[350] The true servants of the gospel have been accused of rebellion, 'hanged, drowned, or else strangled', to the delight of their enemies.[351] In any case, he was clearly worried about the effect that rumours regarding his personal conduct may have had on his ability to continue his preaching. He has, he writes, received abuse and 'public and wicked insults' from Cochlaeus.[352] The 'harmful little libel-book (*schmachbüchlin*) of the latter is regarded as a personal attack.[353] He disputes Cochlaeus' 'unfounded stories' according to which Strauss had taught rebellion and been taken prisoner, and challenges him to tell him in which prison he was supposed to have been held.[354] Strauss employs sarcasm to expose the preposterous nature of these accusations, professing that, as 'Dr Johannes Snail Wendelstein has written [him] into prison', he must therefore be condemned, as he cannot

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349 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Aiij r.

350 The 'tyrants', presumably, are those princes hostile to the Reformation. God, warns Strauss, will judge these in his own time. Ibid., Eiiij v.

351 'So now the agitators (as they think) have won, and whoever considers the gospel, he is rebellious, and only hanged, drowned, or else strangled, one no longer requires a lawful trial, the preachers who do not praise and extol the old error[s], they are all rebellious', ibid., H v.

352 Ibid., Aiiij v; used elsewhere – again, it is not entirely clear whether it is Strauss or the Bible that is being abused.

353 Ibid., Aij r: Strauss must answer lest his weaker brothers be 'offended' by him.

354 'As thus you write in your unfounded stories, the princes, after they had stormed Mülhausen in Thuringia, and thus taken [it], they went to Eisenach, took the same Dr Jacob Strauss prisoner, who had previously also at Hall in the Innental, and at Wertheim am Main, spread rebellious and Lutherish teaching, and the priests and monks who were driven out through the same Strauss's preaching and false letters were reinstated', ibid., Hiij v.

possibly answer 'such a learned, powerful man'.[355] He insists that he and his listeners and readers are beyond reproach.[356] A similar account of his activities in Eisenach appeared in his first work written after the rebellion; he has been humble and friendly in his preaching and writing, but has not hesitated to be severe with the obstinate.[357] In his reply to Cochlaeus, he insists this work is a true representation of the non-rebellious nature of all that he has preached and written, and that his publications over the past four years will attest to this.[358] He has not 'driven away monks and priests', and his preaching at both Wertheim and Eisenach has been wholly based in Scripture.[359] Strauss is aware that his admonition of the princes in *Auffrur* and his assertion that they have an obligation to serve their subjects will lead to accusations that he has no regard for the position of the former and will damage their standing and respect. He therefore feels it necessary to explain himself, so that 'the hypocrites and flatterers cannot vex themselves and grumble against God's word with their sharp tongues, as though I teach here to diminish the authorities in the eyes of their subjects'.[360]

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355 'But here I must excuse myself; Dr Johannes Slug Wendelstein has written me into prison, therefore I must also [be] condemned, [I] am so troubled at hands and feet that I cannot answer such a learned, powerful man', ibid., Hiij v-Hiiij r

356 Ibid., Hiij r.

357 'You beloved friends of God, after I have now for the third year diligently preached, with a Christian heart in the principality of Thuringia, from the given grace of God, the wondrous and singular Christian faith which works through love alone and proves itself obviously, also otherwise practised in writing and speech without cease humble, also friendly admonitions. Also [I have] not spared the sharply piercing word of God to those whom God the Holy Spirit in this regard full of grace has found to be obstinate and openly recalcitrant', *Auffrur*, A v.

358 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Hiij r.

359 Ibid., Hiiij r-v. Presumably a response to Cochlaeus' accusation regarding Strauss's preaching: 'Doctor Jacob Strauß [...] welcher [...] luterische und rumorische lere hat auß geprayt', *Wjder die Reubische[n] vnd// Morderischen rotten [...] Antword Joa[n]nis Coclej* in Laube et al. (ed.), *Flugschriften der Bauernkriegszeit*, 400. Strauss also threatens to respond to any further libel, 'But if you have further desire to write against me, so I must also sharpen the quill'.

360 *Auffrur*, Biiij r. This refers to the 'old usage and custom' which must be supplanted by fairness; the former is the selfishness and greed which has resulted from the influence of the advisors; explain this in Part 4. He later says that these 'selfish' people constantly tell the princes that he rejects the legitimate princely use of the sword: 'Diß alles so ich es tröstlichen im wort gottes fürtrag, vnd lere, bringt mir wol bey viel eygennützigen, die dann on auff hören mich bein Fürsten (wie sie glustet) dargeben, gefarlich fürderung', ibid., Ciij v.

Strauss is adamant that he has done his duty, and claims that he has won the approval of the powerful.[361] He is confident that people will see through Cochlaeus' version of events.[362]

Strauss, like the other servants of the word, has suffered persecution; although his life has been spared, he writes, he had been in mortal danger.[363] This comes across particularly strongly in the pamphlets written in 1525 and 1526. However, he had always tended to portray himself as a martyr to the gospel. In 1526 he wrote that he had been preaching for nineteen years, 'with much persecution and hard work', but had not yet found 'the gospel, that everyone liked to hear'.[364] At the end of the pamphlet on confraternities, he urges his readers not to pay any attention to the government in the Tyrol which has accused him of an unspecified 'great wrong' in order to please the clergy, and which has put his life in danger.[365] Once in Eisenach, he was to claim that he could not write as much as he would wish, partly due to a shortage of time, but also because 'the enemies of the holy gospel leave [him] no peace'.[366] In his address to John Frederick, Strauss says that those same 'clever people' who are resisting the installation of evangelical preachers (in various assemblies) have accused him before the council.[367] Elsewhere in the same piece (possibly at this stage unaware of the

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361 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Hiij r.

362 Ibid., Hiij r-v. 'as if there were no one in Thuringia or in Eisenach who could reveal your invention to be feeble and against all truth'.

363 Ibid., Hiij v. On the consciousness of their identity as persecuted followers of Christ and possible martyrs among the early reformers, see Brad S. Gregory, 'Late Medieval Religiosity and the Renaissance of Christian Martyrdom in the Reformation Era', in Robert James Bast and Andrew C. Gow (eds.), *Continuity and Change. The Harvest of Late-Medieval and Reformation History. Essays presented to Heiko A. Oberman on his 70th Birthday* (Leiden, 2000), 379-399.

364 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Eiiij r.

365 'it is my request to to you, dear people, [that] you will not allow yourselves to err if the enemies of the holy word of God, and my begrudgers, groan and ascribe to me the great wrong, of which the government have accused me contrary to all christian justice, besides, although they have persecuted and harassed me in open danger of my life in order to please the priesthood and their flatterers, and I have barely escaped alive', *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r. The accusation to which Strauss referes was presumably that of heresy, but may have been rebellion: 'with which the unmerciful, godless, lying flatterers are not further pleased and regard us as rebellious and disobedient people', *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r.

366 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Biij v. He goes on to say that 'innumerably many priests and monks with their followers cry and rage against [him]'.

367 *Christlichen versamlung*, Aiij r.

prince's particular distaste for religious radicalism of the type expounded by Strauss and by Wolfgang Stein), he acknowledges the fact that he has critics, and immediately sets out to discredit them. These critics are, he says, the 'friends of this world' ([*die*] *freunden dieser welt*) who have 'harshly oppressed' him because he has served Christ. Had they praised him, he would know that he had not fulfilled this duty; the true followers of Christ can expect no less. Strauss is not merely presenting his conduct as consistent with that of a 'true servant of Christ'. One gets the impression from his short account that he is a particularly brave and single-minded in his willingness to invite hostility: 'it is evident to Your Princely Grace that I cannot be hypocritical or make kisses of love'.[368]

Strauss also claims to have expected persecution due to his preaching on the 'dangerous' subject of usury; however, he maintains, the sword cannot be restrained.[369] He is compelled to reveal the deception of the authorities, and its consequences: 'I speak much here, and perhaps put myself in danger. But I cannot pay it any heed; truth is truth. If I and my like were to be silent, the stones of godly wrath would very soon cry out'.[370] Urging the rulers to take up the sword against the usurers may incriminate him with many, but to do nothing would be godless.[371] Had Strauss not preached his 'rebellion', he would not have been a 'servant of the gospel' but rather 'a liar and an enemy of the cross of Christ'; this being the case, he claims to be thankful for such daily scolding and condemnation.[372] Here, as well as explaining his actions, Strauss is portraying himself as possibly the sole preacher courageous enough to properly serve the cause of the gospel. This depiction of constancy in the face of an unreceptive audience, and bravery on behalf of the word of God, is echoed after the Peasants'

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368 Ibid., Aij r: 'E. F. G. ist vnuerporgen das ich nit heuchlen oder liebkoßen kan.'

369 *Wucher zu nemen*, Aij v. 'Because the deception is so complete (the secular authorites having become the protectors of the usury trade, and the 'common nobility, citizens, and almost all men' deceived by the clergy and the learned'), 'it will be considered strange and bizarre and opposed by everyone when the correct, true reason for the usury trade will be revealed [...] the greatest raging and charging has pushed in against me and our assembly because of this teaching, and increases daily', ibid., E v. This comes before the exhortation not to grant the devil 'any rest or peace among us'.

370 Ibid., E v – Eij r. Again, this is Luke 19:40, as used in *Antwurt ... Coclei* (see above).

371 *Wucher zu nemen.*, Eij v. The majority of our princes are young, Strauss says (and presumably in need of advice); it is in this context that he is proclaiming his sense of mission.

372 Ibid., Fij r.

War; Strauss is prepared to defend himself 'against Dr Wendelstein and all shameless wailer and dishonourer of God's word, [and] against all the forces of Hell'.[373]

Does the persecution of Strauss confirm that he and his mission are godly and correct? He employs a number of texts from the New Testament to compare the abuse of the servants of the gospel of his own time with that suffered by the apostles. Two years before the Peasants' War, he wrote that, if one opposes the teachings of the sophists, they 'curse, scold, dishonour, heresize, kill, capture, and martyr once more the undamaged and unconquered servants of Christ so dreadfully in all places and locations'. This is presented as the fulfilment of Matthew 24:9, which, Strauss noted, promised that 'the chosen would be persecuted and designated apostate'.[374] Strauss almost certainly included himself among the persecuted. The true followers of God, according to John 16, will suffer persecution, and this has apparently come to pass.[375] Although this is generally applied to all evangelical preachers, it is also personalised; Strauss knows that his 'name, actions, and deeds shall and must be insulted, abused, yes also condemned'. This is interpreted using Matthew 5:11f., which would appear to confirm Strauss's holiness.[376] Furthermore, he insists that his opponents use only the Bible to argue against him, and appears confident that this will get them nowhere.[377] This is a more specific version of his general predictions of victory; the word of God, which Cochlaeus so wickedly alters, may turn into a millstone and crush him.[378] If Cochlaeus and others wish to

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373 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Hij r.

374 *Luke*, Aiij v. Matthew 24:9, 'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake'.

375 John 16:2, 'They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, A v.

376 Matthew 5:11f. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Ibid., Aiiij r.

377 'Whomever [is] now more beloved who attacks my writings, but who shows other defences than human invention and human teaching, otherwise he will not frighten me, and as I trust God he will not be dismissed from the plain with a small victory', *Heiligthüm*, Biiij r.

378 'But you have occupied yourself with Christ in order to alter to his word according to your brain, as though he were a millstone of your hand and name; but he will be too heavy for you; see, if you want to move and alter him with human teaching and law, that the same beautiful, precious, and excellent stone does not fall on you, and entirely grind you', *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Ciij r.

persecute Strauss further, God will protect his servant; his mission will not be thwarted.[379] This is presumably directed in part at the authorities: God is on Strauss's side, and will prevent his persecution.

Perhaps all of this self-promotion was simply designed to convince Strauss's readership in general of the righteousness of the evangelical cause. It is true that Strauss sometimes includes himself in his despairing rebukes to humanity for its blindness and selfishness. Nonetheless, the personal nature of this depiction of Strauss as an especially brave and single-minded victim, persecuted without cease due to the constancy of his adherence to the gospel, could indicate an attempt establish himself as one who should provide counsel to the secular authorities. The preface to the pamphlet on the Christian assembly, for example, may have been written not only to reassure John Frederick that Strauss was not a revolutionary, but also in an attempt to ensure his own future as an advisor on religious matters in Thuringia. His word had clearly managed gain some degree of weight at Weimar by the time Duke John had given him permission to conduct a visitation.[380] The frequent requests for scripturally-based correction, especially the claim that he was willing to listen to his opponents and to take part in civilized dialogue rather than mere exchanges of insults should also be seen in this light; Strauss was trying to portray himself as an exemplary preacher, humble and well-mannered.[381] The emphasis on 'brotherliness' is especially significant, in view of the 'brotherhood' of godly peace as the ideal, orderly society based on love.[382]

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379 'So I well know that my God and Lord Christ still lives, who also does not withhold his comfort and spirit from me. Rather, it will be given as before, and even more powerfully, from his unfailing promise [...], so that all of you will not accomplish the least of your undertakings toward me', ibid., Hiij r.

380 Of course, by the time Strauss wrote the response to Cochlaeus, he had left Eisenach. There followed a period of illness in Nuremberg which delayed the completion of the work, and it was not printed until after his arrival in Baden. During the former period, Strauss may have been trying to regain his former post in Eisenach, if not, presumably another another preaching position in Thuringia or elsewhere.

381 *Ynnerlichen ... Tauff*, Biij v. Of course, he immediately goes on to say that such decorous correction has never happened, and the priests and monks simply 'cry and rage' against him.

382 *Wucher zu nemen*, Giiij r.

The continued use of his doctoral title may very well have been a deliberate tactic to underline Strauss's suitability to assist in the direction of this transformation. Moreover, his complaints regarding the 'evangelical windbags' who have shown that they are not prepared to follow God's law to its full extent could be seen as an attempt to discredit Luther and replace him as the primary influence on the Wettins, rather than simply an attempt to deny his own rebelliousness or to persuade or shame Luther into reform. It should be noted that Strauss mocks Cochlaeus for this type of self-promotion, accusing him of having attempted to become a princely advisor by exaggerating the punishment meted out to Strauss.[383] In fact, negative assessments of Strauss, when not directed at his 'rebelliousness', tended to focus on what was condemned as unwarranted pride and authoritarianism.[384] Luther objected greatly to Strauss's appointment as visitor; this, rather than any air of insurrection surrounding the latter, was what had prompted his complaint to Spalatin.[385]

For Strauss, as concluded in the previous chapter, the soul of the Christian was deeply affected by the society in which he or she lived. The salvation of the members of the social body or brotherhood required not only an exhausting and painful inner struggle against their old Adam, but also a reformation of their surroundings. This latter entailed, above all, limitless preaching of the word of God, and also a transformation of society. In the latter, relations between individuals would be based in brotherly love, and the soul-murdering consequences of self-interest, particularly usury, would be eradicated. This external aspect of Strauss's radical reformation, despite a patina of communalism, would appear to rely on the

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383 *Antwurt ... Coclei*, Ciij r 'You have perhaps hoped', he tells Cochlaeus, '[that] the princes would attribute great praise and honour to you as their advisor (*rathe*) and servant', ibid., Hiij v. This charge also levelled at the 'mündigen euangeliern', who have forgotten that 'self-praise stinks'. This is why he has sent his expensive Latin book from Cologne to England: in order to win 'eternal praise'. Strauss remarks of this that 'one probably also finds people in Cologne and in England who could be very good at such inventions'.

384 For example, Justus Jonas on Strauss's 'papacy', as discussed in Chapter II. Justus Jonas, *Wilch die rech/te Kirche / Vnd da/gegen wilch die falsche Kirch/ ist / Christlich antwort vnd// tröstliche vnterricht /Widder das Pha/risaisch ge/wesch/ Georgij Witzels* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau: 1534).

385 As mentioned above. 'Valde vellem D. Straus sua quoque regna quaerenti per principes inhiberi. Non deest homini furor, sed locus & tempus', letter to Spalatin, 10th April, 1525, *WA Briefwechsel* III, no. 854, 470.

agency of the secular authorities. They in turn would be directed by God's servants, the new teachers of the gospel. However, although Strauss disapproved of rebellion, it is clear that he recognised the usefulness of protest and disorder as a means of forcing the rulers to act. His condemnation of 'upheaval' is limited; one must not disobey the legitimate authorities, but one must make one's objections known. The urgent fulfilment of God's law is much more important than earthly peace. The rebellion of 1524-1525 was providential, both in the sense of a punishment from God designed as a warning to those who would reject his visitation, and also in the opportunity it afforded Strauss to convince the authorities of their duty to make the necessary changes.

This reformation held a particular role for Strauss himself: as an educator, an arbitrator of right, and the voice of God in the ear of the princes. Not only did he fit perfectly the image of the persecuted disciple, he went beyond this in establishing himself as a leader. One could see this as a two separate power struggles, one between Strauss and the Catholic clergy, and the other between Strauss and Luther, with the latter's potential to influence the Saxon princes. However, none of the self-promotion in which Strauss was engaged means that he was not sincere in his professed willingness to suffer. The discomfort of the 'true' rebellion also applied to Strauss himself; the reformation must come first. The efforts of the 'unmerciful, godless, lying flatterers' described in the *Brotherhoods* pamphlet which threatened his safety, were not decried for reasons of personal survival alone.[386] Strauss was worried that his reputation, and particularly these allegations of rebelliousness, would discourage people from hearing and following his message. Moreover, he used the printing press and the pulpit to distance himself not only from the dangerous and seditious, but also from the conservative and comfort loving evangelicals, directed from both Rome and Wittenberg, who merely told the rulers what they wished to hear. Strauss's message must not be diluted and, despite this persecution, 'Christ still lives, and his holy word is still free,' with which latter Strauss will visit those who need it.[387]

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386 *Pruderchafften*, Aiiij r.

387 Ibid.

Conclusion

In his pamphlets and sermons, Strauss was selling a new concept of faith and, perhaps most significantly for his lay audience, an unfamiliar form of religious practice. The religion of the laity was in need of both outward and inward transformation. A reliance on their own efforts and the sacramental contribution of the clergy was to be replaced by an internal struggle, one that would involve the individual Christian in the conquest of his or her human reason and nature and set in motion a life-long conflict in which the old Adam fought back against his crucifixion. Those rituals and practices which Strauss viewed as blasphemous were to be replaced by true means of grace, in which the Holy Spirit would purify and renew those who were prepared to trust in God alone. Most importantly, however, Scripture was to replace all human teaching and reason, providing the means by which man could know the truth and defeat the agents of the devil. With this, Strauss promised the laity, they could cut through the arguments and defences of the tyrannical soul-murderers who so oppressed them. He assured the laity of their capability in this matter; while displaying appropriate sympathy for their status as victims, he encouraged them to have confidence in their ability to escape. In a similar manner, the poor common man was promised liberation from the 'grasping claws' of the clergy, from the latter's demands for confession-pennies and other simonaical charges, donations, endowments, alms, and usurious interest payments. In their spiritual and economic lives, the laity were promised self-determination and improvement, both tangible and invisible, in this life and the next. They were to have power over both their salvation and their surroundings. There was much that could be seen to be attractive in this message, whether the laity were concerned with their material well-being, or their chances of salvation, or both.

For Strauss, as the old Adam would not be fully defeated until the end of one's mortal life, there could be no such thing as a perfect Christian. Nonetheless, a Christian society was not only possible, but necessary. The 'brotherhood' was to be founded not only on faith, but also on the commandment of brotherly love, taking the reformation well beyond the walls of the

church. Strauss was adamant that the reformation of faith could not be restricted to the individual and the internal; such a reformation would be incomplete and ungodly. It could only ever provide a false peace, 'destructive' and ephemeral, and would therefore work neither on a salvific nor on a practical, earthly level. It must be noted, however, that this latter consequence only really raised its head in a general sense in Strauss's writings after the Peasants' War. Previously, the earthly consequences of the unbrotherly society had been limited to the 'ruin of land and people' through usury, unless one were to see Strauss's interpretation of the punishment for ignoring the visitation as entailing visible consequences similar to the biblical destruction of Jerusalem. In 1526, the year after Strauss had published his account of the true nature of peace and rebellion in *Aufruhr*, the Anabaptist Hans Denck was to decry in his *Ordnung Gottes* the 'false peace, that the *Schriftgelehrten* teach'.[1]

This broad concept of reformation could be said to indicate an unresolved tension in Strauss's thought, as it requires the sinful man to sufficiently defeat his own nature to enable him to fulfil God's commandment of love, despite the personal sacrifices this will involve. For Luther, society could not be Christian. While their request for the true preaching of God's word was praiseworthy, the concerns expressed by the peasants in their demands for the abolition of tithes and services were nothing to do with Christ.[2] Strauss had no such list of demands, and this lack of a specific plan indicates the theological foundation of his brotherhood. One cannot ignore this, while still taking note of the opportunistic and reactive nature of Strauss's writings. He is consistent regarding the necessity of keeping to godly law, but the specifics had not been worked out and could perhaps vary according to circumstance. However, the breaking-point for Strauss, regarding what does and does not need to be reformed at once, often seems to come down to money: chrism is permitted as long as it is not bought (although it is not entirely clear whether chrism is idolatrous in itself); usury

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[1] Hans-Joachim Diekmannshenke, *Die Schlagwörter der Radikalen der Reformationszeit (1520-1536)* Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihen 1. Deutsche Sprache und Literatur Vol. 1445 (Frankfurt, 1994), 145.

[2] Martin Luther, *Ermanung züm// frid/ auf die zwölf // artickel d[er] baur//schafft ynn// Schwa//ben* (Augsburg: Ruff Simprecht], 1525), A v – Aij r.

condemns the souls of both borrower and lender. That Strauss was to address the latter subject in his sermons and then in print was by no means unrelated to the situation he discovered in Eisenach. However, neither can it be said to be a wholly cynical decision, made in order to ingratiate himself and his teaching with the local population. It appears to be fully in accordance with the general concept of a society based on brotherly love, particularly the idea that this also includes the responsibility to care for one's brother's soul. From the perspective of the laity, however, it would have been possible to interpret Strauss's references to 'natural justice' to mean that God had provided the means of nourishment and clothing in the form of natural resources, whereas man has been responsible for their unequal distribution; that God has done his part, and now man must do his. This would have the effect of a call to action, rather than an admonition to acceptance and suffering.

In any case, Strauss believed that the total reformation of society, the brotherhood of saints, had to be established with all urgency, before more souls were lost. Especially after 1525, but possibly earlier, it appears that Strauss was doubtful that this would happen naturally. He had become disillusioned — not with the intellectual capabilities of the common man, of which he had never really been convinced — but with the possibility that a complete reformation of faith and behaviour would follow automatically from preaching and enlightenment. Strauss's views on the means by which this new society should be achieved may resolve (although they would not for Luther) the tension between the sinfulness of man and the earthly community of saints. This reformation must be enforced from above, by the secular rulers. Just as the common man was to remain responsible for his own salvation, and to ensure that he did not endanger that of his brother, the princes and governments had a special responsibility regarding the souls of their subjects. Strauss's audience, then, was varied: his sermons and pamphlets included directions regarding individual behaviour, intended for the laity in general, along with specific instructions regarding the responsibilities of their rulers. Nonetheless, he was not averse to provoking the common man into taking matters into his own hands, at least in the form of vocal protest and passive resistance. Individual action on the part of the laity, along with specific warnings of rebellion,

could bring about a reformation from above. Strauss was no social revolutionary, but was always willing to criticise the secular authorities in the most stinging terms; whereas Luther reserved his most vehement censure for the peasants in the aftermath of the Peasants' War, Strauss's denunciations of what he saw as the rulers' neglect of God's law became particularly fierce.

The theological implications of God's law are of course among the accepted criteria used in assessing radicalism. Although the elusive and occasionally eccentric nature of Strauss's beliefs would appear to defy categorization, a number of observations can be made. He allows for the identification of an elect of sorts, not as the result of predestination, but due to the implication that one can recognize the existence of true faith through one's works, even as the old Adam awaits his final defeat in death. His views on baptism are not entirely clear-cut. Strauss may have emphasized the importance of the spiritual dimension of the sacrament over that of the visible act, but this was due to circumstances: he needed to reassure those who had not and could not avail of the new, pared-down ceremony that their souls would not be lost. Strauss certainly did not reject the tradition of infant baptism itself. A degree of haziness in relation to the Eucharist can be attributed to the same motives. Strauss was by no means a sacramentarian, and this is underlined further in his later pamphlets against the Swiss reformers.

However, it is in Strauss's views on the source and speed of reform, and on the all-encompassing form it was to take, that his membership of the Radical Reformation is most evident. Although Strauss's economic egalitarianism, despite a declaration in one pamphlet that 'all things should be in common', is perhaps not as absolute as that found elsewhere in the early Reformation, it appears to be more sincere than his intellectual elevation of the common man. It was most likely Strauss's position on economic matters, and not his views on infant baptism, that appealed to the Swiss Anabaptist Conrad Grebel. Grebel praised Strauss in a letter written to Müntzer in September 1524, mentioning the Eisenach preacher

by name directly following a denunciation of the financial misdemeanours of the clergy.[3] The new society in itself appears to be the invention of an 'enthusiast', using the criteria of the time. Strauss's campaign for a wide-ranging reformation of church and society bound by God's commandment of love, along with his insistence on pushing ahead with necessary reforms without waiting for the 'weak', led to criticism from almost all quarters. His priorities certainly differed from those of Luther, most clearly in his method: the urgency of reform was to take precedence over any equivocation dressed up as concern for the easily-offended. Strauss may have preferred the option of reform from above, appealing not only to the local municipal authorities, but also to the territorial lords, and with some degree of success. However, his methods could be seen as radical in this willingness to use the discomfort caused by 'necessary rebellion' in its outward form (that is, protest and debate and perhaps some general disturbance and unrest) in order to force the hands of those to whom God had entrusted the government of his people. He did not approve of violent insurrection but, when the revolts did occur, he was quite happy to make use of them as a lesson. If one must categorize Strauss, Laube's 'bourgeois-radical' label would seem to be the most reasonable fit, at least in its non-theological critera; Strauss's views on Baptism and the Eucharist failing to correspond to Karlstadt's more mystical understanding.

Strauss himself identified the 'gentle evangelicals' as those who were unwilling to cause necessary offence even before the usury issue had come to a head. However, his views on the extent and method of reform were not all that set him apart from the Wittenberg Reformation as personified by Luther. This distinction is evident in at least one important area, in which it

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[3] 'Wie wol wir dich manend und bettend [...] daß du mitsampt Carolstadio by unß für die reinisten ußkünder und prediger deß reinisten götlichen wortes geacht sind, und üch beden, so ir sy straffend und billich die menschen wort und brüch mit götlichen vermischend, sollend ir üch billich von der pfaffheit, pfründen und allerley nüwen und alten brüchen, eignen und alten gütdunken von rissen und gar rein werden. Sind üwer pfründ gestifft uff zins und zehenden, bede warem wücher, wie by unß, und so nit ein gantze gmein üch ertzücht, wellend ir üch der pfründen entzüchen. Ir wüssend wol, wie ein hird ernert werden sol.

Wir versehend unß fil gütz zü Jacobo Struß und anderen etlichen, die wenig geacht werdend by den hinlessigen gschriftgelerten und doctoren zü Wittemberg', taken from the reproduction in Siegfried Bräuer, 'Die beiden Briefe des Grebelkreises an Thomas Müntzer vom 5. September 1524', in *Mennonitsche Geschichtsblätter* 57 (2000), 147-174, 158-159.

is Luther who appears to be the 'radical'. In stopping short of the full implications of justification through faith alone, Strauss failed to adopt the most uncompromising, novel, and 'extreme' aspect of the latter's theology. It should not be surprising that Strauss was seemingly unaware of any significant differences between his soteriology and that of Luther; the subtleties in Luther regarding human agency and predestination were by no means obvious, partly because Luther himself had not developed a coherent or systematic theology at this point. On the other hand, Strauss was conscious of a difference between their relative concepts of society, as can be seen in his condemnations of the 'evangelicals of the mouth'. Strauss's apparent retention of a negative form of works-righteousness was by no means unusual, as can be seen in the findings of those who have studied lay pamphleteers of this period. His thought, on paper at least, would have provided a connection with the religious mentality of his audience for whom the idea that they had absolutely no control over their salvation, had they understood such a doctrine, would have been startling and perhaps unwelcome news. Furthermore, the centrality of brotherly love does not necessarily put Strauss on the fringes of the evangelical movement. This was not just a slogan peculiar to revolutionary groups; as well as its use by the Swiss-South German reformers, it is one of the unifying factors among Moeller's selection of preachers, a group whose relative homogeneity he uses to argue for a much more limited concept of 'wild growth'.[4] Perhaps it is in the filtered and slightly altered reception of Luther's views on salvation and on law and gospel that one may find the unity of the early Reformation.

In his addresses to the laity, Strauss employed a combination of hectoring, warning, and scolding with encouragement and a degree of flattery. His overall approach was that of the carrot and the stick. Although willing to pander to the self-image and grievances of his audience to a certain degree, and even to engage in constructing these, he was equally prepared to denounce their conduct when they broke the central commandments of faith and brotherly love. The extent to which their salvation was the central concern of the laity, more important than the comfort of their life on earth, is impossible to ascertain. Strauss clearly

[4] Moeller, 'What was preached?', 47.

believed that it should be, but did he consider that that the priorities of his audience may have lain elsewhere? Is this why he so often emphasized injustice and tyranny? Was he offering a promise of a better life that could, by a certain type of reader, be separated from the need to suffer? Was he relying on obfuscation in order to sell the new teaching to the laity? On the whole, although Strauss may have deliberately couched his teachings and advocacy of change in the *language* of tyranny and freedom, the salvific necessity of the fulfilment of the commandment of brotherly love is such that, for his audience as for Strauss himself, his principal method of persuasion is the threat of damnation. Selective reading and hearing on the part of the laity was indeed a real possibility, but it was certainly not Strauss's intent. 'Natural fairness' was to be enforced because it was God's incontrovertible commandment, not because the life of the common man or that of his rulers should be easy.

The elevated image of the laity proffered by Strauss, on the other hand, did contain an element of propagandistic intent. Its primary purpose was to encourage them to persist in their adherence to the new teaching. Furthermore, it was a corollary of the condemnation of their former spiritual lords. Strauss's anticlericalism is perhaps the most notable feature of his persuasive endeavours. It is persistent and angry, and takes on a new emphasis in the later works. Not only has it survived the rebellion, but it has evolved into new type of accusation, building on Strauss's earlier condemnations of the unhealthy influence enjoyed by the first estate on the rulers of Christendom. The former are now identified as the real insurrectionists, the true cause of the recent uprisings. In all of Strauss's works, the clergy perpetually play the part of the insolent, rebellious, and tyrannical schemers, plotting to gather wealth and power for themselves and souls for their master, the devil. This anticlerical rhetoric was not simply a means to stir up resentment; Strauss believed this conspiracy was real and dangerous, and that he was engaged in a battle for the souls of the laity. This was Strauss's own role: to reveal the truth and directing all levels of society in this struggle. His constant efforts to defend his actions and teaching can be attributed to urgency of this mission; to have his reforming efforts and recommendations interrupted or ignored would have been disastrous. On the other hand, it is also this that explains his willingness to chastise

the rulers, as well as his reaction to any reformer he viewed to be diverging from the implementation of God's law. Echoing the effective and striking contrasting lists of the *Pruderchafften* pamphlet, Strauss's world view can be seen in terms of dichotomies: true comfort and false anxiety, true comfort and true anxiety, human teaching and godly teaching, true rebellion and false rebellion, the common Christian brotherhood and the individual confraternities, all of them reflecting the struggle in which he saw himself to be involved, that between God and the devil.

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Anonymous

Der Curtisan vnd pfrunde[n] fresser// Würde yn byllich genant// Hie würdt meine Bůbery bekant.// Dem Buren vnd gemeynem man// Jch rüff vnd schrey On abelan.// Zum Adel vnd aller Oberkeyt// Besich mich du fyndest gůten bescheydt ([Strasbourg?], 1522)

Ein Ewanglium// Pascuilli Dar//in das Römisch// leben gegrün//det vn[d] be//stetiget// würt. ([Strasbourg: Johann Knobloch d. Ä., c.1522])

Das Euangeliu[m] von// dez verlorne[n] Son/ Luce. XV.ca.// Ain mensch hatt gehabt// zwen sön &c. Auß=// gelegt durch// Michael Styffel// von Eßlingen.// a]-M.D.Xxiii ([Erfurt: Johann Loersfeld], 1523)Eyn freüntlichs gesprech/ zwischen// eynem Parfusser münch/ auß der Prouintz Oster//reich/ der Obseruantz/ vnd einem Löffelma//cher/ mit namen/ Hans Stösser/ // gar lustig zůlesen/ vnd ist der recht grundt. ([Nürnberg: Höltzel, 1524])

Ain grosser Preiß // so der F[ue]rst der hellen genant Lucifer yetz den gaistlichẽ // als B[ae]pst Bischoff Cardinel vnd der gleychen //zů weyßt vnd empeüt &c.// [Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger 1521], in English translation: J. Finucane and H. Robinson-Hammerstein (trans and eds), *A Great Prize: The Long Life of a Medieval Polemic* (Dublin, 2004)

Hie kompt ein Beüerlein zu // einem reychen Burger von der gult/ den wucher // betreffen/ so kompt ein pfaff auch dar zu // vnd dar nach ein münch/ gar kurtz=//weylich zu lesen. ([Speyer, 1522]).

[Johann Lang], *Ain nützlicher Dialogus oder ge//sprechbůchlein/ zwischen aine[n] Münze//rischen Schwermer vn[d] aine[n] Eua[n]//gelische[n] fru[m]men Bauern/ Die// straff der auffrůrischen// Schwermer zů// Francken// hausen geschalgen/ belangende// M.D.XXV.* ([Augsburg: Grimm], 1525)

[Johannes Römer], *Eyn schoner Dialogus von den vier// grosten beschwernuß ein jeglichenn Pfarrers// nach sag eines sunderlichen verß her//nach geschribenn.* ([Georg Erlinger: Bamberg, 1522])

Ain schener spruch von dem// bösen mißprauch in der hayligen Chri//stenhait entstanden ([Augsburg: Ulhart, c.1522])

Die scharpff Metz wider die// (die sich Euangelisch nennen) vnd// doch dem Ewangelio ent//gegen seynd.// Esaie am 9.// Jhesus ain Fürst des fryds.// Ewangelion ain bottschafft des fryds.// Hůt dich du frummer Christen man/ // heb kaynerlay embörung an. ([Augsburg: Ulhart, 1525])

Ain Schöner// trostspruch/ an al//le/ die sorg vnd not// leiden zů disen// zeyten. ([Augsburg: Otmar, c.1547])

Wer horen wil wer die gantzen // welt arm gemacht hat/ der mag lesen dises biech//lein/ die vnß solten reich machen an der seel // die haben vns arm gemacht an gůt/ vñ // got waist wie es den seelẽ gangen // ist/ vñ das ist das ander biech//lein/ das võ dem Adel auß//geet/ vñ haist die weyß // gilgen die gott ge//pflantzt hat.// ([Augsburg: Erhard Oeglin 1521])

Der Wůcherer Meß// Kram oder Jarmarckt.// Ein Newer Pasquillus Ob der// Wůcher Sünde / Ob vnd wo er verboten / // Vnd was seine gebürliche straff sey / // Auch Ob man sein zů erhaltung// der nöttigen Kauff hendel// entberen könte / Vnd// zů straffen sey etc. (Frankfurt/Main: Hermann Gülfferich], 1522)

Erasmus Alberus
Widder die verflůchte// lere der Carlstader/ vnd alle fürnem//ste heubter der Sacramentirer/ Rot//tengeyster/ widderteuffer/ Sacramentlesterer/ Ehe//schender/ Musicaverecher/ Bildstürmer/ feiertagfein//de/ vnd verwüster aller gůten ordnung. (Neuenbrandenburg: Brenner, 1556)

Sebastian Brant
Doctor Brants Narrensciff (Basel: Nikolaus Lamparter, 1506)

Martin Bucer
Entschuldigung der die//ner am Euangalio Je//su Christi zů Franckfurt am Meyn/ Vff// einen Sendbrieff Martin Luthers// im truck außgangen/ An den// Rath vnnd Gemeyne// der Stat Franck//furt.// I.Thessal. V.// Průfet alles/ vnd das gůt behaltet (Frankfurt a.M.: Engenolff,1533).

Ain schöner dialog[us]// Vn[d] gesprech zwischen aim Pfar//rer vnd aim Schulthayß/ betreffend allen übel// Stand der gaystlichen. Vnd böß handlu[n]g// der weltlichen. Alles mit geytzig//kayt beladen. &c (Augsburg: [Ramminger], 1521).

Johannes Cochlaeus
WJder die Reubischẽ vnd // Mordischen rotten der Bawren, die vnter dem scheỹ des hei//ligen Euangelions felschlichen wider alle Oberkeit // sich setzen vnd emp[oe]ren Martinus Luther.// Antwort Johãnis Coclej // Von Wendelstein.// Eyn kurtzer begriff von auffru=//ren vnd rotten der Bawrn in hohem Teutsch=//land diß Jar begangen.// Anno M CCCCC XXV.// Martinus Luther wider Thomas Muntzer.// Eyn vßtzug Mar. Luther widder den geistli//chen standt in. C.xxxij. Artikeln.// (Cologne, Peter Quental, 1525) [reprinted in Adolf Laube (ed.), *Flugschriften der Bauernkriegszeit* (Berlin, 1975), 376-412.

Christopher Cuppener
Ein schons buchlein tzu//deutsch. doraus ein itzlicher mensche. was// standes er sey. lernẽ mag. was wucher vnd// wucherische hẽdel sein. vñ was der berg der// mildigkeit der dy wucherischẽ hẽdel vortilget// vñ in deutschẽ landen biszher vnbekant ge//west ist. in sich helt. Auch was rechte vñ

vn//rechte kaufmāschafft vñ hendel gesein. vnd// wechsel aller wechseler des wechsel geldes// durch den achtbarn hochgelertē vñ Gestrē// gen hern Cristoferum Cruppener der freyen// kunstē. Vñ beider recht doctorē vnd ritter. got// tzu lobe vnd gemeinē nutz tzu gut gemacht// vnd geendet. (Leipzig: Lotter, 1508).

Johannes Dietenberger

Cristliche vnder//weisung/ wieman gotes heili//gen in dem hymmel an//rüffen/ vnd das heil//thum auff erden// Eeren soll. ([Strasbourg: Grüninger], 1524). Contained in *Ein nutzliche// rede frag vnd antwort// von dreyen personen sich vben in lutrischen// sachen/ Gezogen vß ewa[n]gelischer/ apostolisch//er leer/ durch Sebastion felbaum vo[n] Brete[n].// Ein Würstbůb ein Altuater vn[d] ein münch. Hienach volgt wiema[n] die heilige[n] eere[n] sol.*

Conrad Distelmaier

Ein trewe Ermanunge:// das ein yeder Christ selbs zü seiner seel// heyl sehe/ vnd das schwert (das ist die heylig schrifft// das Alt vnd new Testament) auch selbs zü sey//nen handen neme/ sich der feynd damit were/ // auff das er nit mit falscher leer überwun//den vnd verfüret werde. ([Zwickau: Jörg Gastel], 1524).

Andreas Dober

Antwort auff drey// Artickel/ nach begerung des// wirdigen herre[n] Custos/ des newe[n]// Spitals zů Nürmberg/ vo[n]// Andrea Dober/ allda// Vicarier/ zů ge//schriben. (Nuremberg: [Höltzel], 1524).

Johannes Draconites [Carlstadt]

Epistel an die Gemeyne// zů Miltenberg den abschyed des// Pfarhers daselbst betreffendt/ // So alle priester vnuerjagt/ // auß der Stat flohen.//
Wie die Burger zu Milt//tennberg Durch verklagung irer// außgeflohenenn priester/ vber//fallen/ gestürmet vnd eynß//teils gefange[n] worde[n] seind// Suplication des ueriag//ten pfarhers vonn wegenn der// Burger vnnd gefanngnen// zu Miltenberg. ([Bamberg: Erlinger], 1523]

Johann Eberlin von Günzburg

Der Frommen pfaffen trost.// Ain// getreüer glaubhaf//ter vnderricht vnd antwurt// vff der syben trostlosen pfaffen clage// Newlich durch die Fünfzehen Bundsgnossen// beschriben vf die hyeundenn verzaichnetenn artickel. (s.l., 1522)

Sendbrieff an den Pfarrer von Hohen//synnen/ Doctor Martini Luthers// Leer betreffende // Oder an eynen yeden Prelatischen Pfarrer// seines vatterlands. [Augsburg: Grimm & Wirsung, 1520].

Sybenn frum[m] aber trostlose pfaffen// klagen jre not/ ainer dem andern vnd ist niemant der sy tröste// Got erbarme sich jre.// Psalmus.// Da nobis auxiliu[m] de tribulatio[n]e/ [et] vana salus hominis (s.l., [1522])

Wie gar gfarlich sey. So ein Priester kein Ee//weyb hat. wye unchristlich. und sched//lich eym gemeynen nutz Die menschen seynd.// Welche hyndern die Pfaffen am// Eelichen stand. Durch// Johann Eberlin von Guntzburg (s.l., 1523)

Wie sich eyn diener// Gottes wortts/ vnd sonderlich ge//gen denen/ wilchen das// Euangelion zuuor// nicht geprediget// ist/ das sie sich// nicht er//gern.// Johan Eberlyn von// Gynczburgk.// Wittemberg.// 1525. (Wittenberg: [Rhau-Grunenberg], 1525).

Eckhart (zum Drübel von Hündeßheim)
Ein demütige ermanung an// Ein gantze gemeine Christen//heit. Von Eckhart zům// Drübel. &c.// Da. Gloriam deo.// Mann soll. Jn der. Kirchen// nitt mitt. Gelt vmb gon. (Strasbourg: Flach(?), [c.1522]).

Hieronymus Emser
Der bock trith frey// auff disen plan// Hat wyder Ehren nye gethan// Wie sehr sie yn gescholden han/ // Was aber Luther fuer ein man// Vnd wilch ein spil er gfangen an// Vnd nun den mantel wenden kan// Nach dem der wind thut eynher ghan// Findstu in disem büchlin stan ([Dresden: Emserpresse] 1525). In Adolf Laube and Ulman Weiß (eds.), *Flugschriften gegen die Reformation* Volume 2: 1525-1530 (Berlin, 2000), 136-141, 138f].

Desiderius Erasmus
'Beggar Talk' (Πτωχολογία) in Desiderius Erasmus, *Colloquies.* Translated and annotated by Craig R. Thompson. *Collected Works of Erasmus,* Vols. 39-40 (Toronto, 1997), Vol. 39, 469-98, 473.

Sebastian Felbaum
Ein nutzliche// rede frag vnd antwort// von dreyen personen sich vben in lutrischen// sachen / Gezogē vß ewāglischer / apostolisch//er leer / durch Sbeastion felbaum vō Bretē.// Ein Würstbůb ein Altuater vñ ein münch ([Strasbourg: Grüniger], (1524))

Jakob Fuchs
Eyn Missiue an Bischoff von// Wirtzburg/ von herr Ja//cob Fuchsz/ dem Eltern// Thumbherrn/ auszgan//gen.// M.D.XXiij.// Was er helt von vereelichten// geystlichen personen. ([Nuremberg: Höltzel], 1523).

Hans Greyffenberger
Ein trostliche ermanu[n]g/ // den angefochten im gewissen/ // von wegen gethaner sündt/ // wie vnnd wo mit/ sie ge//tröst werden/ Den// Sathan/ sich nit// erschrecken// lassen. (s.l., 1524)

Die Weltt// sagt sy sehe kain besse//rung von den / die sy //Lutherisch nen//net wz besserūg// sey / ein wenig //hierinn be//griffen, ([Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger], 1523)

Johannes Groner
Zu trost allen armen// gewissen: Eyn kleyn// buchlyn/ durch Joannem Gro//ner/ Jtziger zeyt Ecclesiasten zu// Zerbest/ zur anthwort auff nach//folgende artickel/ Den hochgebor//nen Herrn/ Herrn Wolff vnd// Johan Fursten von An//holt &c. eyngelegt.// Vvittemberg.// 1524. (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1524)

Kaspar Güttel
Dialogus odder ge//sprechbuchleyn wye// Christlich vnd Eua(n)gelisch// zcu leben/ Nach dem vn//lustig Also auch ynn// heyliger schryfft// gegrundt fast// nutzlich// Vhyel rům[m]en sich Euanglisch// Der leben doch gantz ist Teuffelisch// Wildt guet Euangelisch leben// Dyß buechleyn mag dirß klar geben// 1.5.22. (Erfurt, 1522)

Vber das Euangelion // Johannis/ da Christus seyne M[ue]tter // auch seine Junger/ warẽ auff die Hochtzeyt ge//ladẽ/ Waß mit worten vñ wercken daselbst // gehãdelt. Eyn Sermon dem Ehlichẽ // standt fast freudesam vñ n[ue]tzlich.// D. Caspar G[ue]tell Ecclesiastes zů Eyßleben. Xxiiij. ([Zwickau: Jörg Gastel 1524])

Georg Hawer
Georg Hauer (Ingolstadt), Drey christlich predig vom// Salue regina/ dem Eua[n]//geli vnnd heyligen// schrift ge//meß ([Ingolstadt: Andreas Lutz], 1523)

Justus Jonas
Wilch die rechte Kirche / Vnd dagegen wilch die falsche Kirch ist / Christlich antwort vnd tröstliche vnterricht / Widder das Pharisaisch gewesch Georgij Witzels (Wittenberg, Georgen Rhaw, 1534)

Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt
Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Ob man gemach // faren/ vnd des ergernüssen // der schwachen verschonen // soll/ in sachen so // gottis will//len an//gehn. // Andres Carolstadt* ([Basel], 1524)

Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, *Von abtuhung der Bylder// Vnd das keyn Betdler// unther den Chri=//sten seyn soll.// Carolstatt. in der Christliche*[n]*// statt Wittenberg* (Wittenberg, 1522)

Was gesagt ist/ Sich// gelassen/ vnd was das wort// gelassenhait bedeüt/ vnd wa es in hailiger ge=//schrifft begriffen. [...] *Andres Bodenstain von Ca=//rolstat/ ain neüwer Lay* ([Augsburg, 1523])

Johannes Lindenmaier
Ain kurtzer gründtlicher bericht// vnd vnderweisung/ auß der heyligen ge//schrifft/ Das der schöpffer aller ding// nit ansicht die person. Vnnd wie// ain mensch dem andern dienen// vnd helffen soll/ mit seym zeyt//lichen gütt/ von Gott jm// verlyhen/ auß zu spenden// vnd was schaden die// geyttigkeit bring/ // darumb nyemant// am zeitlichen// gůtt han=//gen soll/ mit dem// hertzen &c. ([Augsburg, 1524]).

Martin Luther

An den Christlichen Aden// deutscher Nation: von des// Christenlichen standtes// besserung: D Martinus Luther (Wittenberg: Melchior Lotter d.J.: [1520])

Das eyn Christliche// versamlu[n]g odder ge=//meyne: recht vn[d] ma=//cht habe: alle lere tzu// vrteylen: vnd lerer zu// beruffen: eyn vnd ab=//zusetzen: Grund vnd// vrsach aus der schrifft (Wittenberg: Lucas Cranch and Christian Döring, 1523)

Ain Sermo[n] vo[n] de[m]// hochwirdigen Sa//crament, des hailigen waren leich//nams Cristi, Vn[d] von den Vrü//derschaffte[n]. Doctor Martini// Luthers Augustiner zü// Wittenberg// Für die// Layenn. ([Augsburg: Hans Froschauer, 1520])

Eyn Sermon// von dem wucher // D.M.L. (Leipzig, 1519)

Eyn Sermon von dem Wucher.// Doctoris Martini Luther// Augustiner zu Wittenbergk. (Wittenberg, 1520).

Von den// gutten wercken// D. Martinus// Luther (Wittenberg: Melchior Lotter and Micahel Lotter: 1523)

Von Kauffshand=//lung vnd wu=//cher// Martinus Luther (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1524)

Ermanung züm// frid/ auf die zwölf // artickel d[er] baur//schafft ynn// Schwa//ben (Augsburg: Ruff Simprecht], 1525)

Widder den falsch// genantte[n] geistlichen// stand des Babst// vnd der bis=//choffen. // D. Martinus Luth.// Ecclesiasten zu// Wittemberg.// ([Wittenberg, 1522])

Haug Marschalck

Durch Betrachtung und Bekarung Der bössen gebreych in schweren sünden Ist gemacht Dyser Spiegel der Blinden (Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger, 1522)

Eyn Edles / schönes / lieplichs Tractalein / von den raynen / hymlischen / ewige wort (Verbum Domini) zu lob Got dem Schöpffer Hymmels und Erden un zu eren den Christlichen diener des Götlichen worts (s.l., probably 1522)

Das heilig ewig wort Gottis / was das in ym krafft … in eym rechten Christen zu erwecken vermag (Zwickau: 1524)

Die Scharf Metz under die, die sich evangelisch nennen und doch dem Evangelio entgegen sind, (originally Augsburg, 1525)

Von dem weytersch=//allen Namen Luth//er/ Waß er bedeüt// vnd wie er wirt// mißbraucht.// Er heist nit der tru[e]ber.// vil mer derlauterer.// Er heist auch nit der lotter// vil mer der bewarer. (Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger, 1523)

Thomas Müntzer

Hoch verursachte Schutzrede// vnd antwwort/ wider das Gaistloße Sanfft// lebende fleysch zü Wittenberg/ welches// mit verklarter weyße/ durch den// Diepstal der heiligen schrift// die erbarmdliche Chri//stenheit/ also ga[n]tz// jämerlichen// besudelt// hat. (Nürnberg: Hieronymous Höltzel, 1524).

Johannes Oecolampadius

Billiche Antwort // Johnannes Eocolampadij auff D: Martin Luthers bericht des sacrame[n]tts halb / sampt einem kurtzen begryff auff etlicher Prediger in Schwaben geschrifft die wort des Herren nachtmals an treffendt ([Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner] 1526)

Zwen Schön Sermon, inhaltende: das man von wegen des Herren Nachtmals, Brüderliche Liebe nitt soll zertrennen ([Augsburg: Philipp Ulhart d.Ä. 1526])

Martin Reinhart

Wes sich doctor andreas // Bodenstein von Karlstadt mit // doctor Martino Luther/// beredt zu Jhen/ Vnd wie // sy wider einander zu // schreiben sich ent//schlossen ha///benn.// Jtem // Die handlūg Doctor Ma//rtini Luthers mit dem Rath.// vnd Gemeyne/ der Stat Or//lamund/ am tag Bartholo//mei Daselbst geschehen.// Anno etc. xxiiij.// (Leipzig, 1524).

Vnderrichte wie sich // ein frūmer Christ bey den Papi=//stischen Messen/ so yetz noch vil gehal=//ten werden «wenn er sich mit gůt=//ten fůg nit absundern kan» hal=//ten sol/ das er sich nit ver=//sünde/ vnd die zeit vn=//nütz verliere.// Jtem ein Christliche betrachtung // so du zů dem heyligen Sacra=//ment wilt geen.// Martinus Reinhart.// Ecclesiastes zů Jhen.// (Nuremberg, 1524).

Johann Schnewyl

Wider die vnmilte verdammung.// Nach art vnd aygenschafft/ aller gleychßner/ on gebot// vnd ordnung Christi// erdicht auß aygnem kopff/ dem ain// ualtige[n] verschliessen väterlichs reych/ wider alle bil//igkayt/ Jacob Straussen/ allen denen die auß// warer erkantnuß Christlichs glaubens/ nit// glauben den warhafften layb Christi/ // vnsichtbarlich sein blüt vn[d] flaisch/ // gegenwirtig vnder dem brot// vnd wein des herrn genent// sacrament zü trost de[n]// gefangnen irri//ge[n] selen ant//wort [Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner, 1526].

Jacob Strauss

Ain trostliche versten//dige leer über das wort sancti// Pauli. Der mensch soll// sich selbs probieren / //vnd also von dem// brot essen/ vnd// von dem// kelch// trincken.// Geprediget zü Hall im Intal /// durch Doctor Jacob Strauß.// M.D.XXII. // Kauff vnd liß/ es//wirt dir gefallen. ([Augsburg: Silvan Otmar 1522])

Ein kurz christenlich Unterricht von dem [sic] erdichten besondern pruderschafften denen/ von hal / im intal von doctor Jacob Straus tzu gesant / in dem du leichtlich vernemen magst / wie vnchristenlich in denen bruderschafften wider got / vnd den nechsten geirt wirt. ([Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer 1522])

Ob/ dz aller hochwirdigeste Sacra=//ment/ das leibs vnnd blutes/ vnsers// heilmachers Christi/ anders benenhet// moge werden dan eyn getrew Testa//ment/ beschttet/ mit dem bluet// vergiessen/ vnd sterben Christi. Eine// newe Disputacion/ geschrifft// lich gehalten Zwiessch//en den Barfuessern// zw Weimmar/ // vn[d] Magister// Wolffgang Steyn/ daß// Durchlauchten hochgebornen// Furstenn hertzogenn Hanszenn// zw Sachsszen. &c. Prediger//. [(Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer, 1523)]

Ein new wunderbarlich beychtpuch=//lin in dem die warhafft gerecht beycht vnd// pueszfertyg//keit/ christenlychen gelert vnd angezeygt wirt/ vnd// kurtzlychenn all tyranney ertichter menschlycher// beycht auff gehaben/ tzu seliger rewe/ frid vnnd// freud der armen gefangen gewissen.// D. Jacobus Strauss Ecclesiastes tzw// Eyssenach in Düringen. [(Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer, 1523)]

Ein kurtz Christenlich vnterricht des// grossen jrrthumbs/ so im heiligthüm zü eren gehalten/ das dan nach// gemainem gebrauch der abgötterey gantz gleich ist.// D. Jacobus Strauß zu Eysenach// in Doringen Ecclesisates. M.D.Xxiij. ([Erfurt: Michel Buchführer] 1523)

¶ An den durchleüchtigistenn// hochgeborne[n] Fürste[n] vnd herrn herrn Johanßen // Friderichen hertzogen zu Sachssen / Landt=//grauen in Dhöringen / vn[d] Marckgrauen // zu Meyssen &c. // Das nit herren aber diener eyner yedenn Christ=//lichen versamlung zugestelt werdenn / beschluß=//reden vnd haupt artikel/ wen gelüstet/ mag sich// dar gegeb hören lassen/ wirt im sunder zweyfel// auff Euangelischer leer Christlich vn[d] brüderlich// gut bescheyd vnnd bewerung widerfaren.// ¶ Christus die warheit vberwindet.// D. Jacobus Straus// Ecclesiastes.// M.CCCCC.Xxiij. ([Erfurt: Johannes Loersfeld] 1523)

kurtz vnd verstendig leer/ vber das // wort .S. Pauli / zu den Römern / der todt ist / der ist // von sunden gerecht gemacht / fast disntlich der ge=//meynen woche[n]/ so yn etlichen kirchen / in Francken// vnd Döringen/ vn[d] fast yn allen alnden/ yerlich fur// die seelen gehalten. Darynnen das fegefeur gar // verleschet / auch der pfaffen und Münichen // heyliger geytz getziert / vnd rechgeschaffen // abgemalet ist. // Christus// Fur war sage ich euch/ Der yn mich glaubet// der hat das ewyge leben. Johan. 6.// Eyssennach// Doct. Jacobus Straus// Gedruckt tzu Eylenburgk durch Nicolaum Widemar (Eilenburg: Nikolaus Widemar [1523])

Ain Sermon In// der deütlich angezeyget / vnd geleert ist// die pfaffen Ee / in Euangelischer leer// nit zü der freyhayt des flaysches / vnnd zü bekrefftigen de[n] alten Adam / wie et=//lich flayschlich Pfaffen das Eelich wesen mit aller pomp / Hoffart vnnd// ander teüffels werck anheben/ gefun=//diert/ aber das Gotes werck vn[d] wort// allein angesehen mit forcht vnd Christ//licher beschaydenhayt auch die wirt=//schafft vollenbracht damit die feind// des Ewangeliums vnns zü// schelten / vnnd Gottes// wort zü lestere[n] / nit geursacht// werde[n]. //1.5.23.// D. Jac. Strauß zü Eyssenach eccle. ([Ausburg: Heinrich Steiner] 1523)

Wider den symoneisch.//en tauff vnd erkauft[e]n// ertichten krysam vnd oel / // auch warin die recht cri=//stlich tauff (allain vo[n] Christo auffgsetzt) begrif//fen sey / ein genötige ser//mon/ gepredigett zü Eysßnach.// ¶ *Christus. // ¶ In der welt habt jr angst. aber seyt// geströst/ ich hab die welt überwunden.// D. Jacobust Straus Ecclesiastes.,, NDXXiij. [sic.]* ([Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger] 1523)

¶ *Uon dem ynner=//lichen und ausserlichem Tauff// eyn Christlych begründt// leer/ geprediget durch D. Ja. Straus// zu Eyssnach// Ecclesiasten// Christus// ¶// In der welt habt ir angst// Aber seyt getrost/ ich hab// die welt vberwunden.* (Erfurt: [Johannes Loersfeld] 1523).

Ein sermon vber das // Euangelium Lucae am .xix. Alls // Jesus die stat Jerusalem ansach// do weynett ehr vber sy / wydder // die undanckbarkeit aller men=//schen. Geprediget zü Eysse=//nach. An[no] M.D.Xxiij.// Christus lebt vn[d] regnieret// Doctor Jacobus Straußl// Ecclesiastes. ([Erfurt: Wolfgang Stürmer 1523])

¶ *Ein ernstliche handlu[n]g wider// eyn freuenlichen widersprecher des lebendi=//gen wort Gottes beschehenn In sant// Jorgen kirchen zu Eyssennach.// Gott vnnßer Herr Christus/ // lebt noch.// D. Jacobus Strauß.// Ecclesiastes.* (n.p., n.d.)

Hauptstuck // vn[d] artickel Christenlicher leer // wider den vnchristlichen// wücher / daru[m]b etlich// pfaffe[n] zü Eysnach// so gar vnrüwig// vnd bemüet// seind. // Gepredigt zü Eysenach durch // D. Jacob Straussen. 1523. ([Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner 1523])

Das wucher zu nemen vnd gebe[n].// vnserm Christlichem glauben. vnd// brůderlicher lieb (als zu ewiger verdamnyß reich=//ent) entgegen yst/ vberwintlich leer/ vnd geschrifft. In dem auch die gemolete[n] Euange=//listen erkennet werden.// Auch wo dz gemein geschrey auffrur/ auffrur/ außgehet/ // am ende mit kurtzem guttem vnterscheidt angezeigt. ([Erfurt: Joahnnes Loersfeld], 1524)

Auffrur Zwitracht // vn[d] Uneinigkeyt/ zwische[n] woren // Euangelischen Christe[n] für / zukomen/ kurtz auch// vnüberwintlich leer/ Einem yeden erkenner// Gottes/ besünder/ Allen fromen Christen=//lichen Fürsten vnd Landsherren not=//turfftig/ vor ergangner auffruhr/ .. Etlichen großmechtigen Her=//ren geprediget/ vn[d] auß an=//sinnen fromer Christen// (wienach folgt) in // truck bracht.// M.D.XXV. // D. Jacobus Straußl// Jesu Christi vnd aller// Christen diener. // Kauffs vn[d] besichs biß an des ende/ es wirt dir gefallen. ([Nürnberg: Friedrich Peypus 1525])

Christenlich vnd wolgegrun=//det antwurt vnd hertzlich vermanu[n]g D. Ja=//cobi Strauß / Auff das vngüttig schmach=//büchlin D. Johannis Cochlaei von Wenndel=//steyn / Betreffen die auffrür.// ¶ Darumb besich auch mit vlaiß das ander teyl diß büchlins/ So kan//stu grüntlich erkennen/ was warer/ ewiger vn[d] zeitlicher frid ist/ // auch die recht vrsach aller auffrür vnd vneynigkeyt/ zwisch//en menschn auff erden/ wirt dir vnwidersprechlich an//gezeyt.// Christus Johannis am xvj. Capitel.// Inn der welt müßt ihr geenstiget werden/ // Aber seit getröst/ Ich hab die// welt vberwunden ([Worms: Peter Schöffer d.J. 1526])

Wider den vnmilten Irr//thum[b] Maister Vlrichs zwinglins / So // er verneünet / die warhafftig gegenwirtigkait// dess allerhailligsten leybs und blüts Chri=//sti im Sacrament. Doct. Jacobi Strauß// mit ewiger warhait ablenung/ vnd er=clärung/ Darinnen alle from[m]en chri//sten mit vnüberwündtlicher er=//kantnus der wort Christi den// vergyfften Irthum[b] mügen // entweychen. // Imjar. MDXXVj. Mense Junij. // Margraffen Baden. ([Augsburg: Melchior Ramminger 1526])

Das der war // leyb Christi vnd seyn // heiliges blüt / im Sacrame[n]t gegenwertig sei/ richtige erkleru[n]g auff das new büchleyn. D. Johan//nes Haußscheyn/ disem züwi=der außgangen.// Jhesu Christi vnd aller glau=//bigen diener.// Jacobus Strauß.// Zü Markgraff Baden.// MDXXVII. ([Augsburg: Heinrich Steiner] 1527).

Michael Styffel
Das Euangeliu[m] von// dez verlorne[n] Son/ Luce. XV.ca.// Ain mensch hatt gehabt// zwen sön &c. Auß=// gelegt durch// Michael Styffel// von Eßlingen.// a]-M.D.Xxiii ([Erfurt: Johann Loersfeld], 1523)

Gerhard Westerburg
Vom fegefewer vnd standt der// verscheyden selen eyn Chrystliche// meynung durch Doctor// Gerhart westerbruch// von Coellen Neu=//lich außgangen.// Gedrucht jm jar .M.D.xxiij. ([Strasbourg: Martin Flach d.J], 1523).

Ulrich Zwingli
Antwurt Hul/drychen Zwing/lins über Doctor Strussen B[ue]chlin/ wider jnn geschriben/das Nachtmal Christi betreffende (Zürich : Froschauer, Christoph d.Ä., 1527)

APOLOGETI//CVS ARCHETELES ADPELLATVS// QUO RESPONDETVR, PARAENE//SI, A.RE.DO. CONSTANTIENSI// 'QVORVNDAM PROCACI FA//CTIONE AD IDPERSVASO'// ad Senatum Prepositurae Tigurinae// quem Capitulum uocant misse.// Per Huldrichum Zuin//glium. ([Zurich: Christoph Froschaer d.Ä.], 1522)

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