

Barth (Markus). *The People of God.*

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architecture, avec Vitruve), elle se trouve liée au luxe, au thermalisme et aux plaisirs divers ; parmi ceux-ci, la chasse, la pêche, l'élevage, les sports nautiques et physiques. L'aménagement du site revêt une grande importance et tente souvent de recréer un microcosme naturel. Les bâtiments mêmes sont équipés de toutes sortes d'agrèments, raffinés et culturels (œuvres d'art, bibliothèque, etc.).

Par son aspiration à une espèce d'évasion, tout en alternant ville et campagne, ce phénomène de villégiature s'est perpétué depuis la Renaissance en Europe occidentale, surtout par l'ardent désir de réponses aux carences et aux faiblesses de la vie citadine, à puiser dans les apports de santé, d'humanité, voire de spiritualité, que peut procurer ce mode de vie élitiste et luxueux. — Étienne GUILLAUME.

BARTH (Markus). *The People of God*. Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1983 ; 1 vol. 13,5 × 21,5 cm, 102 p. (JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, Suppl. Ser. 5). Prix : \$ 21.95. — At the beginning all Christians were Jewish Christians, Jewish influence on early Christianity, therefore is undoubted. Defining the exact extent of that influence is not so easy ; even the concept "Jewish Christianity" is subject to various definitions. As Christians became predominantly gentile, Jewish Christianity came to be regarded as heretical and isolation moved into extremes, further away from the mainstream of the synagogue and church. Judaism itself nevertheless remained attractive to potential gentile converts and to Christians themselves for a much longer period than had often been thought.

Throughout antiquity Christians remained in contact and heavy competition with Jews who did not believe in the Nazarene. The extent to which those contacts were personal and informed is often difficult to determine. Some of the more extreme anti-judaic statements to be found in basic and fundamental Christian literature arise from a polemical context ; some of the statements belong to the theological context of Christian self-definition and do not at all reflect personal prejudice.

In this context the question concerning Paul's guilt for the anti-judaism in the church and theology has already been repeatedly answered in the affirmative. The apostle indeed appears, especially with his teaching concerning the law and justification to have prepared the theological ground for Christian anti-Judaism. If the human being is justified only by grace and faith in the Christ before God, an iron consequence of this appears to be that Judaism is forever and finally done away with, at least theologically ; alongside of the Church it leads only a sad shadow existence, despite all its accomplishments and contributions to the knowledge and culture of humanity. Even if the Church today partly embraces the Jews with love (which it did not do for centuries), this by no means indicates that the Church attributes to the Jews a "theological existence". Paul is supposed to have made this impossible once and for all. If one, nevertheless attempts to do this, it should only be possible because Christianity was built up upon Jesus alone — if one allows the Pauline interpretation of the "Jesus phenomenon" to fall or at least to conduct a substantive critique of Paul and his theology. To say more about this, the theme Paul and Israel must be fundamentally thought through. This is exactly what we find in the booklet under review (100 p.), already published in 1983 and derived from a series of lectures delivered by the author and containing in a first part a number of interrogations concerning the apostle Paul's utterances (pp. 29-49) on the people of God (pp. 11-27). The second chapter deals with the arguments used by the man from Tarsus to establish the oneness and unity of this people, while the third and last part (pp. 51-72) considers some consequences of his teaching for the common life of Jews and Christians at the present time.

Reading works like this leaves a very bitter aftertaste! Somewhere, somehow they come much too late! They only indicate that within some Christian circles the Shoah created an ethical knot, a fundamental questioning about the ultimate *Wirkungsgeschichte* created and modelled by Christendom. Auschwitz, as a symbol of how "Western civilization" committed moral suicide! Afterwards, and long overdue, Christians asked themselves: Are we perhaps jointly responsible for the catastrophe which has overtaken the Jews and Europe? Not simply by our silence, but also by our speech?

Except for an introduction to the "Old" Testament in courses on the Bible, almost the only thing heard in religious instruction about the Jews was: They killed Jesus! This sentence was the ultimate content of Christian theology on Judaism. Through it Christian and theological anti-Semitism was justified. However, after the killing of millions of Jews, amongst them a million and a half children, a horrified reflection set in. Eventually, a rethinking started that bore some fruit within the spheres of the churches and theology. Still, it will take a rather long time before this fruit will ripen. Unfortunately it is certainly not by repeating incorrect statements that the ripening will be furthered. Is it really true that "the apostle Paul (...) was declared an apostate in the twelfth Benediction of the Eighteen Benedictions Prayer...»? (p. 15) A glance at Jacob J. Petuchowski's work on Jewish Prayers ("Gottesdienst des Herzens; eine Auswahl aus dem Gebetsschatz des Judentums", Herder Verlag, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1981) would have made clear that Paul does not appear in the Shemone Esre-Prayer! Even well-meaning Christians forget that Judaism is less interested in Christianity, than Christianity in Judaism!

This again is clear from the book under review. The impression is given that Christendom rediscovers Judaism to dissolve the earlier mentioned knot! To free itself from the moral pressure of having to live with the idea that Christian anti-judaism prepared the twentieth century for its anti-Jewish inhumanities.

Still, when looking at Paul's statements on the abovementioned topic with a positive eye the question might be asked if they are self-contradictory or so obscure that different Christians can quote him in favour of opposite stances towards Jews. In the historical context of the recent diplomatic recognition between the Vatican and the State of Israel the up-to-date answer may be yes.

Barth addresses also other more contemporary topics related to the contacts between the Church and the Jewish people f.i. Zionism. Here we read: "As in earlier days of Christianity, so today Christians of Jewish or Gentile origin, whether they live in Israel or elsewhere in the world, have occasion to show their concern and friendship for the whole of Israel by their special solidarity with the small group of Jews who stand up for the rights of those who are weak" (p. 71). There is something that makes a Jewish reader uneasy about this nice-eying phrase. Recent historical developments have amongst other things proven that the peace-will is not only alive within a minority, furthermore who are those Christians of Jewish descent and how can one define them?

In sum Barth addresses Christians and non-Christians directly throughout the book and he writes clearly and concisely. Unfortunately he also writes from a viewpoint nowadays what dated. It is an intriguing read full of critical goodwill, the often moralizing judgments are every now and then annoying. But it is to be hoped that the knowledge assembled in this volume, together with an awareness of the areas of darkness it has wittingly pinpointed, will indeed act in the future generations as a powerful stimulus to effective understanding of Jews by well-meaning Christians. — J. KLENER.