

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON ANTI-SEMITISM

*As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs (Rom 11:28)*¹

Anti-Semitism: the term, we are told, was coined by the German agitator Wilhelm Marr in 1879, for the cause he championed.² It has been widely used ever since for hostile attitudes and feelings, expressed in theory and practice, word and deed, towards those who are called "Jews." Obvious etymology leads one to question its adequacy: not all "Semites" are Jews (Jews are considered Semites, what does it mean exactly?³), and anti-Semitism today seems to be rampant in mostly Semite populations! "Anti-Judaism" will not do either: it suggests opposition to *rabbinical* religion, whether strictly theological disagreement or opposition incorporated into policies, with or without social constraints, since that religion bears the name "Judaism": many Jews, who have been the targets of anti-Semitism, do not adhere to that religion, not to any of its, often discordant, versions. No one would use "anti-Hebraic," suggesting a linguistic criterion: a minority of Jews in the world speak Hebrew. "Anti-Jew racism" would correspond to the self-understanding of much anti-Semitism, but this branches off a delusive, pseudo-scientific, concept of race which even the Nazis could not consistently apply.⁴ "Anti-Zionism" is the guise under which much anti-Semitism, today, manifests itself,⁵ but Zionism as a particular political project does not coincide with Jewishness. To be sure, as Richard Harvey puts it, "Zionism has become the major expression of Jewish identity for a majority in Israel and the Diaspora who are disenchanted with religious faith but wish to express solidarity with the Jewish people."⁶ This, however, does not embrace all Jews and may include some non-Jews (some Gentile Christian Zionists).

Embarrassment with the words already begins in the New Testament. The use of *Ioudaios* Ἰουδαῖος in the IVth Gospel has been much disputed: can it be charged with anti-Semitism?

¹ Biblical quotations are taken from NIV, unless otherwise indicated.

² "Anti-Semitism," by several authors, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, ed. by Cecil Roth (New York & Jerusalem: Macmillan, 1971) III,87.

³ As Fadyev Lovsky, *Antisémitisme et mystère d'Israël* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1955) 278 points out, the distinction "Aryan/Semite" was a merely *linguistic* one at first; it acquired *racial* connotations in the XIXth century, with Christian Lassen, and the famous Max Müller in 1853 (though Müller in 1888 protested loud and clear against "the myth of the Aryan race"). (Unless otherwise indicated, I am responsible for the translation of quotations from material published in another language.)

⁴ They did *not* define Jewishness by religion but by race (and so sent to Auschwitz *Christian*, baptised, Jews), they counted grand-parents, with intermediate categories (*Mischlinge*, first degree with two Jewish grand-parents, second degree with one), but the Jewishness of these grand-parents was defined as adherence to the Judaic religion! Cf. Carol Iancu, *Les Mythes fondateurs de l'antisémitisme. De l'antiquité à nos jours* (Bibliothèque historique Privat; Toulouse: Privat, 2003) 85.

⁵ Jacques Maritain denounced the fact in his book *De l'Eglise du Christ. La personne de l'Eglise et son personnel* (Desclée de Brouwer, 1970) n.59, according to extracts published in *Le Monde*, 18 November 1970, 13: "Anti-Zionist propaganda at work today, and whose political origin is easily discerned, is actually a well organised anti-Semitic propaganda." Jean-Paul Rempp, *Israël, peuple, foi et terre: Esquisse d'une synthèse* (Charols : Excelsis, 2010), 91f, quotes from Jacques Ellul and from Martin Luther King (Jr.) to the same effect.

⁶ "Judaism," in *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, ed. by Campbell Campbell-Jack & Gavin J. McGrath (Leicester/Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006) 376b.

Already in 1955, F. Lovsky argued from the number of occurrences, the symbolic number 70, that the intention was by no means to disparage Jewishness.⁷ Careful and tactful examination of the *data* has shown that the evangelist was writing as a Jew himself, that he was blaming, under the label the "Jews" (not only "Judeans" but including that nuance), neither all the "ethnic" Jews of the world or adepts of Judaism, but the official *leaders* of the nation. He was preaching, or testifying on Jesus' preaching in the manner of the prophets and Qumran texts, and with probable irony.⁸ That Gospel preserved the statement: "Salvation is from the Jews" (4:22)! But elsewhere also one meets complexity. Paul can use "Jews" for non-Christian ones (1 Cor 10:32, the seed of the "third *genos*" theme, which found its classical expression in the II^d century *Epistle to Diognetus*), and yet write: "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly" (Rom 2:28). The people who bore the name of "Jews" in Smyrna and Philadelphia – undoubtedly, Jews in the ordinary sense, attending the synagogue services⁹ – are branded as *liars*, as regards the very claim they were Jews (Rev 2:9; 3:9). Similarly for "Israel" and "Israelite": the words may refer to those who reject the gospel of Jesus (Rom 9:31; 10:21; 11:7); Paul can say more precisely "the Israel according to the flesh" (1 Cor 10:18, literally; NIV weakens: "the people of Israel") – implying a contrast with what he calls in Galatians 6:16 "the Israel of God"¹⁰; Paul claims an equal right to bear the name "Israelite" (and "Hebrew") as his adversaries boast they have (2 Cor 12:22; cf. Ph 3:5), and finally declares the complex duality: "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Rom 9:6).

If it is difficult to tell precisely who is a Jew,¹¹ anti-Semitism understood as hostile behaviour toward Jews remains a phenomenon with fuzzy edges. Consequently, we shall not try to achieve strict exactness, we shall consider as "Jews" those who call themselves by that name and/or are thus called by many others. Though boundaries may be a matter of dispute, anti-Semitism appears enough of an identified object to be the object of theological reflection. We shall proceed in three main stages: since our reflection will be *Christian*, we shall meet the

⁷ *Antisémitisme*, 428 (with the strengthening argument that no pejorative word is used 7 or 70 times in the Gospel; *ekeinos* is used 70 times). He reaches the 70 number, however, by discounting the occurrence in 4:9b (not found in κ^* and D); yet, since Lovsky wrote the book, papyri support for the reading has been added and makes an original omission unlikely. In his later book, *La Déchirure de l'absence. Essai sur les rapports entre l'Eglise du Christ et le peuple d'Israël* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1971) 213, Lovsky counts 67 and adds three with the same meaning (not the word). The results of my own computing are as follows: there are 67 occurrences in a plural form, for men (the *Ioudaioi*); there are three occurrences of the word in the singular for an individual person (3:25; 4:9a; 18:35); the only other occurrence, feminine singular, qualifies the land (3:22), and, therefore, can be taken apart from the 70.

⁸ Craig S. Keener offers a fine survey and solution in the section he devotes to the topic in his *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003) I,214-228. He notes (226) that the names "Israel" and "Israelite" are used positively (1:31,47-51; I had met the argument in the 1960s, in J. Ramsey Michaels' article in the *Gordon Review*, "Alleged Anti-Semitism in the Fourth Gospel"). With great acumen, he observes "that Jesus is called a Jew only by *non-Jews*" (4:9; 18:35), and accepts so to be, in contrast to his rejection by "his own" (1:11); "I am suggesting here," Keener adds, "that John employs the term 'Jews' *ironically*, as a response to his opponents' functional claims that the Johannine Christians are no longer Jewish" (218; cf. the conclusions 227). The "establishment" of Judaism casts out of synagogues those who believe in Jesus, their right to the title "Jews" is being denied; the Gospel in multiple ways shows that the leaders, rather, are those who forfeit their right, and cut themselves off the true Israel (15:2a; cf. Rom 11:19ff); it ironically calls them "Jews." With the evidence he adduces about irony in ancient writers, and in the IVth Gospel, Keener's proposal is not only illuminating, but quite convincing.

⁹ Keener, *ibid.*, 225 n.484.

¹⁰ With most interpreters, we should understand the phrase of the church, *ekklèsia/qàhàl* (ἐκκλησία ἡ ἡμετέρα) of the Lord (Jesus), without making again circumcision into *something* dividing between Jewish and Gentile believers (v.15). For a vigorous plea, from an original angle, see Greg K. Beale, "Peace and Mercy upon the Israel of God: The Old Testament Background of Galatians 6,16b," *Biblica* 80 (1999) 204-223.

¹¹ The matter is notoriously difficult, and a bone of contention within Israel and within Judaism : cf. Richard Harvey, *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach* (Milton Keynes... : Paternoster, 2009, 2 (with n.6), 16 (Rachael Kohn's "ethnicity").

vexed question of Christianity's relation with anti-Semitism head-on, as our first section. We shall then dig for the motives, search for the specific features of Jewishness which triggered negative actions and reactions. The third part will be devoted in compact form to import and meaning, in a bold and yet timid attempt to sketch a theology of Israel's privilege.

Christianity and anti-Semitism

It is a firm, both reasoned and passionate, conviction of a great majority of "Jews," and of many non-Jews, that anti-Semitism, for two millennia, has followed Christianity as its shadow. The church has been responsible for an almost constant persecution; she has provided the fertile soil in which murderous myths germinated and thrived, she has advocated and herself applied measures that prefigure the ultimate anti-Semitic atrocity, the Shoah. "There have been times," Elie Wiesel could write, "when the cross symbolized, indeed incarnated, suffering and horror."¹² J. Maritain reported that "in Israel, not only has the Red Cross become the Red Star of David, but even the additive sign + in mathematics has been modified, also because it is evocative of the accursed sign."¹³ Jules Isaac's historical work has persuaded his readers that the Christian "teaching of contempt" was a major (or the major) source of anti-Semitism. Rabbis and other thinkers sometimes draw the conclusion that Christianity is essentially anti-Semitic, and that evangelisation, any attempt to lead Jews to faith in Jesus as their true Messiah, is akin to Hitler's *Endlösung*: evangelisation, though it uses other means, aims at the total destruction of Jewish identity.¹⁴

One gets indeed a grim picture when one reviews large segments of official Christian history. To start with our own age, though no one should dispute the fact that Hitler was moved by an overtly *anti-Christian* ideology,¹⁵ discussions concerning the alleged passivity, or even complacency of church leaders, are not altogether pointless. I am not called to play the role of the Devil's Advocate in Pius XII's canonisation process – as his predecessor's Secretary of State, he, Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, had a hand in the writing of the Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (1938) and its affirmation of Christians being "spiritually Semites"; he cannot be charged with anti-Semitism simply¹⁶ – but the proof has been made of a strange leniency, bordering on complicity, for Shoah measures and actors among the hierarchy. On August 7th, 1941, the Pétain government consulted the Holy See, through Léon Bérard, concerning the new laws against the Jews: would the authorities of the church raise any

¹² In Ekkehard Schuster & Reinhold Boschert-Kimmig, *Hope against Hope: Johann Baptist Metz and Elie Wiesel Speak Out on the Holocaust*, transl. By J. Matthew Ashley (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999) 66.

¹³ Note 48, in the Extracts from *De l'Eglise du Christ, le Monde*, 13.

¹⁴ Ellen T. Charry's article "Judaism," in the *Global Dictionary of Theology*, ed. by William A. Dyrness & Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Downers Grove, IL/Nottingham: IVP, 2008) 434a-442a, offers an accurate picture of the Jewish perspective, and sharpens the antithesis with the Christian one. Her sympathy seems to lie with the "small but dedicated group of theologians and biblical scholars," like Rosemary Radford Ruether and Paul Van Buren, who offer a "[r]ereading" of Paul and Christology (438a), but they are not (apparently) representative of "Christianity." E. T. Charry does not hesitate to ascribe to the New Testament itself positions at which Jews, generally, take offence: "The New Testament already marks Jews as deicides" and it "set up the supersessionism that would dominate the Christian stance toward Jews and Judaism" (437b); Jesus alienated the leaders "by his flippant attitude toward tradition, Scripture and the Law" (439a); "it has been difficult for Christians to grant the 'Old Testament' (meaning 'surpassed') its own non-Christian identity" (439b). This is somewhat surprising in a Christian, evangelical, dictionary (p.vii defines the framework as "evangelical and ecumenical").

¹⁵ Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel. Etude sur les relations entre chrétiens et Juifs dans l'Empire romain (135-425)* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1964 new supplemented edition) 490, in moderate criticism of J. Isaac.

¹⁶ Carol Iancu, 46, mentions that Pius XII gave audience to Jules Isaac in 1949, and accepted to translate the *perfidis* of the *Pro Judaeis* Good Friday prayer (according to its true sense) "unbelieving." John XXIII dropped the word altogether in 1958.

objection? The answer came: *No*.¹⁷ It is well-known that Nazi criminals, after the war, found a refuge in monasteries and other Catholic institutions: was the motive only compassion? Since Vatican II, especially the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (1965),¹⁸ a spectacular reversal has taken place in the most "visible" institution,¹⁹ but unexpected blemishes are mentioned that, even today, soil the Protestant record. Pierre Vidal-Naquet mentions that the stinking forgery, the *Protocols of the Sages of Zion* has been recently republished in the United States by the *Christian Book Club*.²⁰ During the previous centuries, pogroms were almost matter of course in Eastern (Orthodox) Europe.²¹ Do we imagine hordes of murderers, pulling down houses, putting the fire, stealing all valuables, killing women and children, and shouting "Christ is risen"? The greater tolerance and freedom gained by Jews in the West was due to Enlightenment ideals, revolutionary reason: de-christianisation. Before that time, Martin Luther had written his 1543 pamphlet, *On Jews and their Lies*, in which he recommends burning synagogues and expelling Jews if they do not convert: he gathered all possible calumnies, and believed, before Stalin, that Jewish doctors were poisoning their patients, were poisoning him!²² The Nazis republished the text, and their *Kristallnacht* (9-10 November) fell on Luther's birthday (10 November). Luther, alas! was in line with ordinary medieval anti-Semitism. Since 1096, when the First Crusade was preached, one does not count wholesale expulsions of Jews from "Christian" countries, brutal or refined humiliations (with, e.g., the oath *more judaico*), the imposition of special marks on their clothes, and massacres, massacres. According to Iancu, during the first six months of 1096, there were about 10,000 victims, nearly one-third of all the Jews of Northern France and Germany.²³ Though the condition of Jews became worse with the Crusades (with thousands of Jews also slaughtered in Jerusalem), it had not been pleasant before. Several church fathers vituperate the Jews; for St John Chrysostom, they are "the common plague and disease of the whole world."²⁴ The conversion of Constantine marked a tragic reversal for the Jews in the Roman Empire: Christians had been persecuted, and Jews had enjoyed a rather favourable status (except under Hadrian),²⁵ with a Christian emperor, it was no longer the case. We may recall that St

¹⁷ Michel Remaud, *Israel, Servant of God*, transl. by Margaret Ginzburg & Nicole François (London/New York: T. & T. Clark, 2003) 55 n.11. C. Iancu, 87, relates that the French ambassador to Rumania informed his government that a "systematic extermination plan" was to be carried out, as soon as November 10, 1941. Pétain's "Vichy" government emphasised a Roman Catholic France.

¹⁸ The Declaration uses *deplorat* as regards anti-Semitism; Maritain was disappointed it did not use *damnat* – according to Riquet, bishops from the Arab world were reluctant to adopt the stronger verb: Sylvie Bernay, "Le Père Michel Riquet. Du Philosémitisme d'action lors des années sombres au dialogue interreligieux," *Archives juives. Revue d'histoire des Juifs de France* 40/1 (1st semestre, 2007) 111.

¹⁹ "Repentance" has gone quite far. Joseph Ratzinger, then only Cardinal Ratzinger, wrote of the Shoah: "it cannot be denied that a certain insufficient resistance to this atrocity on the part of Christians can be explained by an inherited anti-Judaism present in the hearts of not a few Christians," "New Vision of the Relationship Between the Church and the Jews," *Origins* 30/n°35 (February 15, 2001) 565.

²⁰ *Réflexions sur le génocide* (Bibliothèques 10/18; Paris: la Découverte, 1995, paperback 2004) 327 n.12. In 1999, the name of the man who forged the document, in Paris, for the sake of the Okhrana, the tsar's secret police, was disclosed: Mathieu Golovinski (according to Carol Iancu, 100).

²¹ As Marcel Simon observes, 490, against the idea that the influence of the Roman liturgy was the decisive factor.

²² David G. Singer, "Baptism or Expulsion: Martin Luther and the Jews of Germany," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44/3 (Summer 2009) 401-408, 404 for the details. Singer, who belongs to Reformed Judaism, offers a loyal and nuanced account of M. Luther's attitude. Luther "drew upon the anti-Jewish writings of Antonius Margarita, a Jew who converted first to Catholicism and then later embraced the Lutheran cause"; in 1543, Luther wrote two other, less obnoxious, tracts: *David's Last Words* contends that the Trinity can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures; *On the Ineffable Name (Vom Schem Hamaphoras)* criticises the Kabbalah

²³ *Les Mythes fondateurs*, 34.

²⁴ *First Homily against the Jews*, 6, as quoted by M. Simon, 239 (*koinèn lumèn kai noson tès oikoumenèn hapasès, κοινήν λύμην και νόσον της οικουμένης ὅλης*)

²⁵ M. Simon, especially 493-500.

Ambrose's glorious feat when he stood his ground before the Emperor and forced him to back out: the Emperor's decision which Ambrose opposed was to pay Jews an indemnity for their Callinicum synagogue "Christians" had burned!²⁶ Heroes can be moved by a nobler inspiration! How far should we go, tracing back hostility toward Jews in Christian history? Common judgment finds anti-Semitic accents in the *Epistle of (Pseudo) Barnabas*²⁷: are the roots already apparent even before, in the earlier, apostolic, period? We shall come to this question in a moment; at this stage we must briefly assess the evidence we have just surveyed.

That anti-Semitism was present, massively present, in "Christian" tradition lies beyond controversy, but the most significant question is this: is anti-Semitism *essentially* bound to Christianity, to *true* (biblical) Christianity? One reason to doubt a substantial kinship is the evidence of *pre-Christian* anti-Semitism, inclusive of the invention of the typical slanderous legends, such as the legend of ritual murder,²⁸ and massacres, not seldom.²⁹ In Marcel Simon's estimate, it is a weakness of J. Isaac's historical work that he should unduly minimise this pre-Christian anti-Semitism, and he approves of Lovsky's more balanced account³⁰; Christian anti-Semitism inherited the weapons paganism had fabricated.³¹ In Scripture itself, not to speak of Pharaoh's policy, is not a whole book, long before Christ, illustrative of such an attempt to destroy all Jews as would be repeated so often through the centuries? Haman is already Hitler – and the Shoah he had planned boomeranged on him as it did on the Nazi dictator. Islam only tolerated Jews with a lower *dhimmi* status, and invented the special clothing constraints, already in the VIIIth century A.D. (Omar Ben al-Aziz).³² In Spain, Jews would flee from Moslem territories to Christian one.³³ One may add that post-Christian, "neo-pagan" in a way, modernity was far from friendly toward Jews; at best, it could fight for abstract human rights, but aversion transpired toward Jews as Jews. Voltaire used extreme anti-Semitic language, Diderot and other revolutionaries followed suit.³⁴ The Socialist thinker Pierre Proudhon wrote: "One must send this race back to Asia or wipe it out."³⁵ Anti-Semitism does not look like an exclusively Christian disease!

Anti-Semitism enrolled "Christians": were they *true* Christians? As a believer whose spiritual ancestors, and also according to the flesh, were persecuted by the *same* church authorities who persecuted Jews (one of my ancestors from the Cévennes was sentenced to the galleys), I am somewhat reluctant to assume that the persecutors' Christianity was my Christianity. One way to interpret the scheme of church history is to discern in the Patristic era and in the Middle Ages a gigantic compromise, an amalgamation of the biblical message and teaching with a mass of pagan ideas and practices. (One symptom, linked with the erotic overtones of anti-Semitism is the role of the opposition between Jewish *generandi amor* and the high valuation of virginity³⁶ – really an ascetic pagan infiltration into Christianity.) F. Lovsky rightly stresses the part played by "half-Christians" in the genesis of Christian anti-Semitism.³⁷ And some "fuller" Christians are on record: St Bernard of Clairvaux solemnly

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 266.

²⁷ F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 147f.

²⁸ F. Lovsky, *ibid.*, 63, the witness is a "Damocrite" as he writes the name. C. Iancu, more recently, 22f, names Democritus [os] (c.460-370), the great "atomic" philosopher, in a work entitled *Tactics*. He also regards as authentic the *Aegyptiaca* of Hecataeus, with slanderous material already.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 41-100, with many examples, not only from Egypt, but from the whole Mediterranean world.

³⁰ M. Simon, 491.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 246.

³² C. Iancu, 50f (the famous Haroun al-Rashid in 807 again enforced the laws decreed by his predecessor).

³³ F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 251; the whole chapter on Moslem anti-Semitism (well documented), 241-260.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 263-273. Also Ernest Renan, 279ff.

³⁵ Quoted by C. Iancu, 69 (he names other Socialists, and so does Lovsky, 274ff).

³⁶ M. Simon, 250f.

³⁷ *Antisémitisme*, 81.

charged the Crusaders: "March toward Zion, defend the tomb of Christ. But touch not ye the Jews; speak to them with mildness; For they are the flesh and bones of the Messiah; and if you molest them, you will run the risk of touching the very apple of the Lord's eye!"³⁸ The Reformation only partially repudiated the "pagan" element. The tragic lapse of which Luther was guilty, Luther old and sick, Luther bitterly disappointed that the Jews did not receive his biblical message (he had been branded as "a half-Jew" by Catholic polemicists³⁹, sadly illustrated the truth he had preached: he who is *justus* by God's grace remains *semper peccator*. Nevertheless, his final anti-Semitism was not representative of the Reformation. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* acknowledges: "(T)he role played by the Old Testament in Calvinism led the Puritan sects to identify themselves with the Jews of the Bible and reflected favorably on their attitude toward contemporary Jewry. The French Calvinists were a special case: themselves persecuted until the French Revolution, their sympathies were traditionally pro-Jewish, an outlook retained to a considerable extent to the present day."⁴⁰ "The historian Myriam Yardeni rightly holds" a 1590 sermon by Théodore de Bèze "the most powerful rebuttal of Christian anti-Semitism."⁴¹ As a child during World War II, precisely in a religious (ecclesial) environment indebted to Calvin and Th. de Bèze, I was close to rescue actions that saved the lives of Jews – at the peril of the rescuers' lives. Pierre Vidal-Naquet himself was protected by French protestants; he quotes from an evangelical hymn I still remember from those days!⁴² But the German Pietists also had a strong Philo-Judaic tradition.⁴³ This suggests that biblically shaped Christianity does not necessarily breed anti-Semitism.⁴⁴

Heirs of Calvin and Beza do not believe the tradition, and whatever magisterium churches may claim, to be infallible. The decisive consideration, if one speaks of *true* Christianity, is whether the New Testament sows the seeds of anti-Semitism. The conviction that it does has been voiced, and rather stridently, e.g. by Rosemary Radford Ruether.⁴⁵ Alain Blancy deprecates as the fatal move of Christian theology that Jesus was believed to have pre-existed and was given divine honours: he does not deny, he implies, that it started in the New Testament.⁴⁶ Saying that Jesus is the Messiah already implies condemning the Jews.⁴⁷

³⁸ From the classic biography of St Bernard, by Ratisbonne, as quoted by Peter Stravinskias, "Anti-Semitism and the Christian Bible: Interpretation and Misinterpretation," *Origins* 30/n°33 (February 1, 2001) 531; the whole article, 529-538, is a powerful protest against a certain blackening of the picture.

³⁹ David G. Singer, 402. F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 13, recalls that Blaise Pascal in the 16th letter of his *Provinciales* affirmed that the Calvinists brought us back to a Jewish condition (in my edition, *Lettres écrites à un Provincial par un de ses amis* [Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1933] 281: "voilà ce qui nous fait abhorrer les calvinistes, comme nous réduisant à la condition des Juifs").

⁴⁰ "Anti-Semitism," III, 108.

⁴¹ Patrick Cabanel, "Le Pasteur Jacques Martin de l'objection de conscience à la résistance spirituelle à l'antisémitisme," in *Archives juives. Revue d'histoire des Juifs de France* 40/1 (1st semestre, 2007) 86. Cf. Jean-Paul Rempp, *Israël...*, 22 and the appendix 119-122.

⁴² *Réflexions sur le génocide*, 203 ("Le mal est là et Satan gronde..."); Vidal-Naquet compares the action with what was done in Denmark, 199f, and refers to an article he wrote on the topic, 186 n.3.

⁴³ Acknowledged by F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 215.

⁴⁴ Forms which abandon the biblical line do not fall necessarily into anti-Semitism, but the connection has been observed, e.g. by F. Lovsky, *ibid.*, 347; Stephen T. Davis, "Evangelical Christians and Holocaust Theology," *American Journal of Philosophy* 2/3 (1981) 121-129, indicted the liberal criticism of the Old Testament, according to John Jefferson Davis, "The Holocaust and the Problem of Theodicy: An Evangelical Perspective," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29/1 (January 2005) 61. I remember reading once that rabbis had complained: "Higher Criticism" is really "Higher Anti-Semitism."

⁴⁵ *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury, 1974).incriminating especially the Gospel of John.

⁴⁶ "La Théologie chrétienne d'après la shoah," *Foi et Vie* 99/1 (February 2000), 65-67. He also denounces the Law/Grace antithesis, 66.

⁴⁷ Michel Remaud, 70.

Christian authors have offered detailed replies.⁴⁸ The argument that the (human) authors were all Jews does not settle the issue, for history knows of Jews who have been anti-Semitic,⁴⁹ but it does carry some weight. Two propositions seem to be established beyond any reasonable controversy. *First*, there is not a word of disparagement for the Jews' *racial* origin and characteristics.⁵⁰ Stephen's strictures in Acts 7:51 merely echo Old Testament language, and are related to his fellow-Jews' attitude towards Jesus and the Good News. Being born a Jew involves no stigma, no inferiority: on the contrary, it is something Paul could boast of (though, *for the sake of the exceeding superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*, he had come to reckoning it "loss" and "rubbish," Ph 3:7-8 – he means that natural assets, if they tempt one into relying on oneself instead of relying on the pure grace of God, become liabilities; in themselves, they constitute advantages). Paul's allegory of the olive-tree implies that the *natural* branches possess, and retain even as cut off branches, a superiority in this regard over the branches from the wild olive shoot (Rom 11:21, and the whole passage). This is a stark contrast with modern racist anti-Semitism, and also with the older one: the latter was not racist but did indulge in slanderous rumours and ugly caricature – and such cannot be traced to the New Testament. The older anti-Semitism granted full acceptance to the Jew who was baptised, but felt, then, that the Jew was cleansed of his Jewishness – nothing of the sort in the apostolic church!

Second, the New Testament sharply disagrees with the ruling interpretations of the Torah (and of the whole Tanakh) among their fellow-Jews in the final period of the Second Temple: with those of Sadducee and Pharisee persuasions according to the more explicit references in the Gospels and Acts.⁵¹ Whatever the gamut of divergences, the central issue is obviously the truth of Jesus' Person and Work: since he is not recognised as the Messiah, Lord and Saviour, the reading of the "Old Covenant" currently pursued in synagogues is *blind*, for the veil of misunderstanding remains on the "hearts" (minds) of devout Jews – "because only in Christ it is taken away" (2 Cor 3:14f). The conflict of conviction is so decisive that we should not be surprised if rabbinic Judaism – not to be confused with Old Testament religion, not even with Second Temple Judaism simply, but should be viewed as the twin⁵² and rival interpretation of the Tanakh that established itself at the same time as did Christianity – denounced Christians as heretics, *mînîm*⁵³ and "blessed" them to eternal perdition (the *Eighteen Benedictions*); it is no surprise, alas! given the tendencies of human nature, if the ones used the "weapons of the

⁴⁸ Conveniently summarised by Stephen Motyer (briefly), "Anti-Semitism," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. by Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids/London: Baker Academic/SPCK, 2005) 49b-51b, and J. A. Weatherly "Anti-Semitism," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. by Joel B. Green & Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester: IVP, 1992) 13b-17b.

⁴⁹ F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 14; his examples are Nicolas Donin, Pablo Christiani, Pfefferkorn. He also cites adversaries of Judaism who were *not* anti-Semites: Herz Homberg, Simone Weil.

⁵⁰ Marcel Simon, 488, rightly distinguishes between St John Chrysostom's undeniable anti-Semitism and *racism*, which shows features foreign to the Church Father..

⁵¹ Strangely, the third "sect" in Josephus' precious description, that of the Essenes (with whom I would join the Qumran community, though debates still go on among experts on this point), is not mentioned in the New Testament. There are striking similarities with the early church, the claim to be "the Community of the New Covenant" to start with, and the starkest antagonism of spirits (radical legalism vs. freedom in Christ, separation, withdrawal vs. mission); this combination may explain why there is no overt reference in our Scriptures. I do not deny a large measure of agreement between Jesus and the Pharisees (cf. Mat 23:2-3), a popular theme nowadays, but the opposition is also very deep, and should not be minimised.

⁵² Tertullian, in his *Adversus Judaeos* 1 used the image of Rebecca's twins, Esau and Jacob: "Procul dubio per edictum divinae elocutionis prior et major populus, id est Judaicus, serviat necesse est minori et minor populus, id est Christianus, superet majorem" (quoted by M. Simon, 102, from Migne's *Patrologia latina* 2,636). It is worth noticing that the "greater" (*major*) people at this stage is still the Jewish people.

⁵³ Marcel Simon, 215-238, has offered a splendid piece of scholarship on the word and its use; 233: "The Christian character of the *Minim* was thus attested in very many cases..."

world" (2 Cor 10:4, literally "fleshly") against the others, social pressure, legal discrimination, even physical violence: "Jews" first (that is: official representatives of rabbinic Judaism), as they held greater power, and then "Christians" (that is: official representatives of a Constantinian "Christendom").⁵⁴ Richard L. Rubenstein points to the memory of the old catastrophe, "70 CE," and its significance: for Christians, it provided the proof of Jesus' redemptive messianic identity and lordship (and so the Gospels did intimate), and for Jews...⁵⁵

Does the label "anti-Semitism" apply? The use of worldly or "fleshly" means to induce conversions and to fight false doctrine⁵⁶ is utterly opposed to the spirit and the letter of Jesus' message and apostolic teaching (though we should not ignore the depth and grandeur of Dostoevski's Great Inquisitor; this is a temptation for noble hearts *also*). The modern term "anti-Semitism" to characterise acts of that sort throughout "Christian" centuries may introduce unhelpful interferences (e.g. confusion with racism) but it is in such common use that we shall not reject it and we say: anti-Semitism in that sense is not found in the New Testament, it is not *truly* Christian. But spiritual/theological polemics against rabbinic Judaism? Does it amount to anti-Semitism? F. Lovsky argues that we should distinguish anti-Semitism and *anti-Judaism*,⁵⁷ and Stephen Motyer emphasises the point: "Does theological argument against *Judaism* constitute hostility toward *Jews*? Some significant Jewish writers in this area (e.g. Cohn-Sherbok) do not distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, because they regard a theology that treats Jesus as the fulfilment of the Scriptures, and salvation as by faith in him (rather than through membership in Israel and obedience to Torah), as implicitly anti-Semitic. In fact, this is the predominant Jewish reaction to the NT, with Berkowitz [*sic*], for instance, describing the NT as 'the most dangerous antisemitic tract in history,' providing the theoretical basis for actual anti-Semitic hatred throughout time."⁵⁸ He efficiently argues back. If, with Jacob Neusner, one uses "Judaist" for someone who practices Judaism as a religion,⁵⁹ we have every right to say: attacking the beliefs and rites of Judaists implies no hatred of Jews. If a Jew who trusts in Yeshua' for salvation is stigmatised with the label *meshumad* (*m^ešummàd*, מִשְׁמָד), "the issue that is at the heart of the objection can be answered satisfactorily only through a realization of the fundamental truth of the claims of

⁵⁴ Craig A. Evans, "Christianity and Judaism: Partings of the Ways," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, ed. by Ralph P. Martin & Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL/Leicester: IVP, 1997) 159b-170a provides a remarkable synopsis, starting from New Testament times and depicting accurately the growing alienation (J. D. G. Dunn's two works under the title *Partings of the Ways* are in the background). I regret, however, that the defence of the traditional evangelical reading of the New Testament *data* concerning Christ's deity be *so timid*. Is it intended to win an easier academic reception? Evans speaks of the "divinization" or "deification" of Jesus (162-164); he only affirms "Jesus own tendency to assume divine prerogatives in his words and deeds" (162a), only a close association when YHWH becomes the Lord *Jesus* in quotations from the Old Testament (163a), he does not go beyond the *possibility* of "God" used for Christ in Rom 9:5 (163ab), he draws from the Johannine *egô eimi* passages that the intention was "to imply that in some sense Jesus was the manifestation of Israel's God" (164a). This is much too weak. I suspect that the reason why conclusions are so far below the mark is *not* the need for caution, if one is to resist apologetic distortion and follow rigorous method (the conscious motive, I guess), but the dominant unbelief in the community of scholars – they will not accept, or even respect, a clear-cut orthodox reading and this deflects the reading of evangelical scholars themselves.

⁵⁵ "Some Reflections on the 'Odd Couple'," 139.

⁵⁶ Marcel Simon, 315-355, 432-439, *et passim*, agreeing with F. Lovsky, shows the role Jewish proselytism played in *Christendom*: it was so successful that Christian leaders were alarmed, from Chrysostom to Luther (cf. David Singer, 403, about Luther's fears; n.2, he cites the famous Viennese rabbi Adolph Jellinek, in the XIXth century, who was the descendant of Czech Hussite peasants converted to Judaism).

⁵⁷ *Antisémitisme*, 14.

⁵⁸ "Anti-Semitism," 50a. I believe the name is spelled (Eliezer) Berkovits. In Harvey's memory, probably the name of Messianic Jewish believers Ariel and Devorah Berkowitz had left is imprint...

⁵⁹ "Being Israel: Religion and Ethnicity in Judaism," in *The Religion Factor: An Introduction to How Religion Matters*, ed. by William Scott Green & Jacob Neusner (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 32.

Jesus and a recognition that it is perfectly compatible with Jewish identity to accept them, despite the prejudices and misperceptions of the past."⁶⁰

This outlook I share, and yet... I, a Gentile Christian, a Jew-in-heart by the grace of adoption into God's people, I confess a large dose of sympathy for the majority reaction among Jews. For Jewishness, Jewish identity, is a unique and complex phenomenon. Restricting Jewishness to participation in rabbinic religion (as Neusner argues⁶¹) and severing Jewishness from it fail to account for the complexity. Ellen T. Charry's comments sound realistic: "It is a way of life based on religious practice, a shared history and cultural tradition that holds the Jewish people together as a globally dispersed national identity that has been called peoplehood"; hence, "it is possible to be Jew and yet not to accept Jewish religious beliefs. One may identify with Jewish history and culture, and now the state of Israel, without participating in religious practices...",⁶² and yet the religious reference cannot be erased. Ethnic identity, culture and religion blend nearly everywhere in human history: our "modern" disjunction is a fruit of Christian influence, but the Jewish blend is unique: because of the permanence in diaspora conditions, through trials so disastrous; because of the character of the religion, its universal scope and genealogical particularity...⁶³

This uniqueness also comes to light when one inquires about the motives and factors of anti-Semitism, as we should now (more briefly) inquire.

Factors of anti-Semitism

Genocides, total (the Etruscans' case) or partial, persecutions again and again, the persistence of a distinct identity with ethnic and religious components combined (the Armenians' case), human history has recorded. These expressions of universal sinfulness displayed the role of common xenophobia, religious fanaticism, lust and greed in individuals as well as the pursuit of social and political interests. All this has been evident enough in anti-Semitism. Yet, I cannot gainsay what the Eckardts wrote: "There are no parallels to it. There simply is no historical analogue to antisemitism" (at least, I would say, no equivalent or close analogue): "No prejudice can approach antisemitism for either geopolitical pervasiveness or temporal enduringness."⁶⁴ If so, *why*? Jean-Paul Sartre, in the wake of the Shoah, reviewed all the alleged characteristics of the Jews that could explain why they have been the target of

⁶⁰ Richard S. Harvey, "Judaism," 378a.

⁶¹ "Being Israel," 37: "Israel becomes Israel through the Torah. It must follow that an ethnic religion is set aside in favor of one that invokes faith, covenant, obedience." (36: deniers of the divine origin of the Torah and of resurrection are excluded, according to the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 10.1).

⁶² "Judaism," 435a; she goes on: "although religious Jews frown on this. Secular Judaism is not a self-contradiction because Judaism is both a religion and a cultural identity, largely focused on remaining a distinctive community with its own land and language."

⁶³ This comment follows the common use of "Jew" to denote those who call themselves by that name and are connected, sometimes loosely connected (when assimilation has taken place), with the community shaped by rabbinical (Talmudic) traditions. However, one should heed Francis Bacon's warning about, the *idola fori* (the "idols of the market-place," involved in human exchanges), the subtle distortion and deception which the use of *words* may induce. The fact that people call themselves "Jews," while others don't, does not entail that they have the monopoly of Jewishness. A strong *historical* argument (not only theological) could be mounted to establish a paradoxical claim: belonging to the Christian church is another form of Jewishness. Gentiles becoming Christians are proselytes joining a Jewish community ("fellow-citizens of the saints") – not any less than the Khazars joining the Talmudic community; both communities remain "Jewish," whatever the number of proselytes; in that sense "Gentile church" is a misnomer. The place of the Old Testament is a concrete testimony of the Jewishness of the church. To defeat the argument, one has to grant the anti-Christian rabbis of the first centuries CE the *right* to define Jewishness through their interpretation of the Scriptures and through their rules for cult and life: this is arbitrary. But I shall not develop here this unusual suggestion.

⁶⁴ A. Roy Eckardt with Alice L. Eckardt, *Long Night's Journey into Day: Life and Faith after the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982) 50.

constantly hostile attitudes, and dismissed all of them.⁶⁵ A Jew is someone others make into a Jew – but why? Jean Améry goes even further: "I am a Jew by the simple fact that people around me do not expressly define me as non-Jew (...) As a non-non-Jew, I am a Jew, I must be one and I must will that it be so."⁶⁶ Again, why?

One possible explanation of recurring animosity could be that Jews have been able to secure places of power and privilege, and so attracted envy, jealousy, and feelings of resentment. What Haman's wife and advisers told him: "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him" (Est 6:13) might express the frustration of many non-Jews, in many lands. The promise "The LORD will make you the head, not the tail" (Deut 28:13) has held good also in diaspora conditions! The Rothschilds' riches fanned much socialistic anti-Semitism through the XIXth and early XXth centuries.⁶⁷ Conversely, the high proportion of "Jews," after Karl Marx, among socialist and communist leading ideologists – up to 80%, in the estimate of experts⁶⁸ – was the most efficacious theme of anti-Semitic propaganda during the preparation and the perpetration of the Shoah. The coexistence of such symmetrical motives suggests that factors of this kind were more accidental than essential. For one Rothschild there were a thousand poor Jews, so poor, in an Eastern Europe *shtetl*. In the Middle Ages, they were identified with usury – because the church had confined them in that role⁶⁹; but in Egypt, they were attacked as brutal soldiers representing Persian power.⁷⁰ Caricatures cancel each other out. And all ascription of racial, *genetic*, characters founders on the fact that successful proselytism, even if the whole population of the Khazar kingdom did not convert to Judaism, introduced so much foreign genetic material that the "pool" is as diverse as many a "melting-pot."

The most frequent complaint, already in ancient times, names the Jews' *amixia* (ἀμικξία), their isolationism, their "way of life contrary to humaneness and hospitality."⁷¹ Their food-laws that forbade table-fellowship, their refusal of intermarriages, their stubborn intolerance of other mores and rites persuaded their neighbours of their "misanthropy." "Haters of the human race," this is the label and the charge.⁷² The command to separate was, of course, inculcated by the Torah, with the illustration of the Lord's design to deal with the Israelites separately when Moses brought the plagues on Egypt – when he spared the land of Goshen (Exod 8:22f; 9:4,6f,26; 10:23); it was painfully reinforced by Nehemiah's reform. It is in harmony with God's character and the way he chooses to act: creation is first of all a work of separation (Gen 1); God dislikes vague mixtures, and reveals himself through the *sword-like* Word (cf. Is 45:19: the NIV rendering "in vain" for *tôhû* eht fo noitatonnoc eht esol yam תהו Genesis 1:2 formless void, the obscure emptiness that allures pagans in their oracles; Alec Motyer adequately suggests: "a maze of 'meaninglessness'"⁷³). The temptation of spiritual

⁶⁵ *Réflexions sur la question juive* (coll. Idées; Paris: Gallimard, 1954, paperback 1961).

⁶⁶ *Par-delà le crime et le châtement. Essai pour surmonter l'insurmontable*, transl. By Françoise Wuilmart (coll. Babel; Arles/Québec: Actes Sud/Leméac, 1995) 194.

⁶⁷ F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 275f.

⁶⁸ George Steiner, *Dans le château de Barbe-Bleue. Notes pour une redéfinition de la culture*, transl by Lucienne Lotringer (folio Essais; Paris: Gallimard, 1973, quoted: paperback 1996) 56. I had no access to the English original of the book and must translate back my quotations (G. Steiner, who had his secondary education in Paris, certainly checked the French version of his work).

⁶⁹ "Anti-Semitism," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, III,101: lending with interest was a danger to the soul, but since Jews were lost anyway, they were allowed to do it (and forbidden many other roles). With the development of "Christian" banking (Florentine bankers, the Lombards), Jewish lenders were less indispensable to kings – hence the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290 (102f).

⁷⁰ Marcel Simon, 491f (referring to work of J. Yoyotte).

⁷¹ C. Iancu, 22f.

⁷² I found it quoted several times by F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 59 (Philo mentions it), 180, 265, 371...

⁷³ *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993) 365.

pride lies in wait, and Jesus pictures counterfeit sanctification in the Pharisee's prayer of thanks – the Pharisees are the *p^erûšîm*, פרושים, "separate ones" – "I thank you [Thee] that I am not like other men" (Luke 18:11), but Jesus' disciples are also enjoined a kind of separation (Mat 18:17; John 17:9,14-18; 1 Cor 5:9-3, etc.). A refusal to mix is bound to arouse ill feeling, and it was verified in history for non-Christian Jews, Christian Jews, and non-Jew Christians.

What is the meaning of separation, one aspect (at least) of sanctification? With spiritual penetration (though he does not claim to be a believer), George Steiner emphasises both the primacy of ethical concerns and the pure monotheism of the invisible, unthinkable, Deity.⁷⁴ He has perceived the tie between them: pantheistic religion, ultimately all idolatry, is unable to ground radical and ultimate difference, it is bound to weaken and to obscure the disjunction between good and evil. "No historical or psycho-sociological model anyone has framed to this day, no psycho-pathological analysis of crowd behaviour or the mental aberrations of some leaders and of some killers separately considered, no diagnosis of deliberate hysteria, account for certain features of the problem,"⁷⁵ why anti-Semitism. Hitler's word is revealing: "Conscience is a Jewish invention."⁷⁶ And this combined with the most demanding monotheism of the invisible God, "a purer abstraction and harder to reach through the senses than the most arduous mathematics."⁷⁷ Whereas Christian churches, "apart from a few exceptions, combined a monotheistic ideal with polytheistic practices,"⁷⁸ the Jewish reminder of pure monotheism nourished the Western "bad conscience" and consciousness of "bad faith": "By killing the Jews, Western culture would eliminate those who had 'invented' God and had become, though imperfectly, though reluctantly, the heralds of his Unbearable Absence."⁷⁹ Emmanuel Levinas heightens hyperbolically the same themes: the ethical is first,⁸⁰ and God, the Infinite, is so transcendent that Levinas assumes the language of atheism (not in any vulgar sense!), and insistently so.⁸¹ In a more accessible talk for the Jewish public, he spells out what it means: "To love the Torah more than God."⁸² This outcome sounds as a theological warning. Though breathtaking in brilliance and nimbleness, Levinas' discourse moves away from the Scriptures. One may perceive a continuity with the centrality of the Law (not as a code but as requisition) and with speculation about the *'én sôf eno tub*, וְיֵשׁוּב הַיָּסוֹד has to measure the serious departure from the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets – if one is interested in what they mean to say, not in the multiplicity of clever inventions that take the letter as a pretext, a spring-board for indefinite creativity. G. Steiner's terms are more moderate, but they are still one-sided, and speaking of "abstraction" is unfortunate. The God of Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, is not the Exile of infinity. He is the God who is at home in *his* world, immanent as well as transcendent, and "living": concretely present and active; he

⁷⁴ *Dans le château de Barbe-Bleue*, especially 45-56.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 47. Cf. 53, a "maximum ethical commitment" (Steiner associates Jesus with the prophets), 57, "infectious character of morality."

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸⁰ *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'extériorité* (La Haye/Paris: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971/Biblio Essais-Kluwer Academic, 1990) 340.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 52,75,151 (cf. 107). In *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (La Haye/Paris: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974/Biblio Essais-Kluwer Academic, 1990) he can only tolerate a totally negative theology, "theology would only be possible as contesting the purely religious, confirming it only by its failure or struggle" (184 n.1).

⁸² Frans Jozef van Beeck, *Loving the Torah More Than God? Toward a Catholic Appreciation of Judaism* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989), including the English translation of a talk by Levinas, which includes the phrase, 40.

dwells, he "tabernacles"⁸³ in the midst of his people; he makes his ways and *himself* known in clear and intelligible human words. There are secret things he keeps to himself, "but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever" (Deut 29:29 [Hebrew 28]). The paradox is that negative theology, intending to defend divine transcendence against pagan continuity with the world, makes him still dependent upon the world – through negation or antithesis; only *Trinitarian* monotheism is thoroughly and consistently monotheistic.

The unique energy to free deity from continuity with the world, a discontinuity reflected in Jewish *amixia*, flows from this distinct source: from the Word of God they received. "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew (...)? First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God" (Rom 3:1f).⁸⁴ And since God *chose* this "family," Israel, to give his Word to humankind, the ultimate distinctive is divine *election* – the one characteristic Jean-Paul Sartre failed to consider! Here lies the uniqueness: "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). "Have I chosen" is the right translation here of *yàda 'tí*, in accordance with one of the regular uses of the verb in the Bible; though not all scholars reach such lucidity, C. E. B. Cranfield's comment on Romans 8:29 perfectly hits the mark: "The - εγνω is to be understood in the light of the use of *yàda'* in such passages as Gen 18.19; Jer 1.5; Amos 3.2, where it denotes that special taking knowledge of a person which is God's electing grace."⁸⁵ Israel uniquely chosen, Israel uniquely persecuted: the uniqueness of anti-Semitism seems to match the uniqueness of election.

Some writers, at least, have identified the neuralgic centre. Among adversaries: "The Bible, the 'sophism' of grace and election, this is what Michelet did not forgive Israel."⁸⁶ Among friends and supporters: "The election of Israel arouses the nations' enmity"; "anti-Semitism is the shadow cast by the mystery of Israel in man's rebellious heart."⁸⁷ One can follow Karl Barth when he affirms Israel's election confers a specific status or "holiness" to all who are by nature Jews (cf. Gal 2:15, *phusei φύσει*), and only to them, irrespective of their spiritual commitment: "In a sense, all are there sanctified by nature (*von Natur*) through him, sanctified as the ancestors and relatives of the unique Holy One in Israel, as no non-Jew (*Heide*) is by nature, as not even the best among the Gentiles are, not even the Gentile Christians, not even the best among them, despite their belonging to the church, though now they also are sanctified by the Holy One of Israel and have become Israel" – this is valid "in every Jew without exception."⁸⁸ One can therefore draw the conclusion: "Jew-hatred is God-hatred": anti-Semitism is a *theological* phenomenon, in that hatred of the chosen race is in the final analysis hatred directed against God himself."⁸⁹

⁸³ I intend to recall the "tabernacle," *'òhèl mò 'éd* and *miškàn* ni mrof labrev tnacifingis eht dna ,נכשם dna דעומ להא, John 1:14 *eskèndōsen* εσκίνωσεν. In that sense, I could underwrite Bruce Marshall's proposition (as quoted by Harvey, after Kinzer, *Mapping*, 129): "The Christian doctrine of the incarnation is an intensification, not a repudiation, of traditional Jewish teaching about the dwelling of the divine presence in the midst of Israel" – though I suspect that the proposition is embedded in a far different theological structure.

⁸⁴ In Rom 9:4, "the covenants, the receiving of the law [or legislation, *nomothesia* νομοθεσία], the temple worship and the promises" can come under the same head.

⁸⁵ *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) I,431. In the weaker, non-volitional, sense, God knows *equally* well all human families and individuals; since the verb refers to something distinctive, it must have a stronger meaning in Am 3:2 and Rom 8:29..

⁸⁶ F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 282.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 407 and 402.

⁸⁸ *Die kirchliche Dogmatik II/2. Die Lehre von Gott* (Zollikon Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1946²) 315f.

⁸⁹ J. J. Davis, 69.

Theses for a theology of Israel

We may use the elucidation of the uniqueness of Israel ("according to the flesh") and the spiritual root of anti-Semitism as the basis for a brief and tentative construction.

Israel's election is both firm, enduring, and limited in what it involves. Israel's uniqueness, as was just stressed, proceeds from God's gracious election. It could be called a "family" privilege: not strictly genetic, since proselytes can be adopted into the family and are granted the rights of sons and daughters,⁹⁰ and yet genealogical, with promises to the "seed" of patriarchs. This privilege is not abolished when individual Israelites fail to obey God's supreme Messenger, and even when the leaders, who represent the community as an organic whole (hence the vocabulary of "rejection," *apobolè* ἀποβολή and partial "hardening" come to Israel) fail to do so: because of the root, the branches remain holy. Jews who still refuse to acknowledge Yeshua' as the Messiah, the Lord, Incarnate Word and Son, are *beloved* for the sake of the Fathers, because of election (Rom 11:28).

The privilege of "family" election does not comprise, however, the unconditional promise of blessing, salvation, fellowship with God, eternal life (none of these benefits in the Romans 9:4-5 list). On the contrary, privilege entails increased responsibility, and punishment more severe, as Amos 3:2 plainly states. The same Amos strikingly relativises Israel's privilege, with the Exodus in focus, 9:7ff – comparing God's paradigmatic intervention with what he has done for Philistines and Arameans. Under the image of the grain, 9:9, Amos at the same time indicates that there will be a category for whom the promises will apply: the Remnant. "A Remnant shall return," Isaiah had proclaimed! There is *another election* which intersects the global "family election," the election of individuals, sometimes of one out two twins (Rom 9:10ff), which is an election to personal sonship, salvation, glory (v.23). This election is conditional, in the sense that the condition of the "obedience of faith" will not be by-passed, but it is unconditional in that God in sovereign grace has decided to create faith, through the ministry of the Word and the Spirit, in all the elect, and he will! The 7,000 of Elijah's time represented this "remnant chosen by grace," God's "people whom he foreknew" in the volitional sense (Rom 11:2-5). The duality of elections, which obviously limits the import of the "family" election, produces the duality of Israel: "not all who are descended from Israel [Israel in common parlance, Israel 'according to the flesh'] are Israel" (Rom 9:6). The "holiness" of the branches which were cut off for unbelief, and which do not belong to the Remnant, does not spare them the divine condemnation: "As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies" (Rom 11:28). If the horror anti-Semitism inspires led us to mute that element of the divine teaching, we would be yielding to manipulation.

The two elections are closely related (hence the use of the same name "Israel"). The personal election to final salvation operates within the framework of the more external "family" election: this remains true to some extent when the New Covenant is inaugurated, and the door is opened for all the nations: Gentile believers become "fellow-citizens" of the saints (Eph 2:19), grafted into the old Olive-tree (Rom 11:17ff); they received the "circumcision done by Christ" (Col 2:11); they correspond to proselytes under new conditions (Heb 12:22 *proselèluthate* προσεληλύθατε). The church is the Lord's *qàhàl* tnanmeR eht yb demrof קהל (after the sifting the prophets and John the Baptist had announced) and the new regime proselytes. Conversely, the more external election is subservient, in God's plan, to the election of the "vessels of mercy" who will share in his glory. The "old disposition" which embodied and organised the privileges of the "family" election had already been made near-obsolete by Jeremiah's prophecy (Heb 8:13). Everything that happened and was written for the benefit of

⁹⁰ This often stressed; however Marcel Simon, 442, notes that according to the Mishnah *Bikkurim* I,4, only Jews by birth, in the liturgy, say "our Fathers" whereas proselytes say "your Fathers."

Christians, in the age of fulfilment (1 Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4). The institutions given Israel were the shadows that prefigured the reality (the "body") we find in Christ. The New Testament testifies abundantly to the preparatory significance of the "Old Covenant," itself bound with Israel's election.

Karl Barth concocted a powerful model of the relationship between the election of Israel and the election of the church. His genius shines through, but we must question the biblical adequacy of his proposal. On the basis of his dialectical⁹¹ understanding of election, which combines reprobation and predestination, judgment and grace, as two *moments* of the same Event (not directed at two distinct categories), he sees Israel, *disobedient* Israel, and the church as the two sides of the one Community of Christ., with one election only in Christ. They appear remarkably symmetrical.⁹² I suspect an inordinate love of order (aesthetic order indeed) to have produced symmetry where Scripture knows none. Jews cannot exult when they see which side of the symmetry Barth grants them: "Israel is the people of the Jews opposing their divine election"⁹³; they are destined to be "the mirror of Judgment"⁹⁴; they are represented by Judas, and since Judas had to die, so with the right of Israel to exist⁹⁵. But, at the same time, this disobedience is practically made harmless: "the result of Jewish unbelief (the model for all other unbelief!) is not to be sought outside, but only inside the results of the divine grace."⁹⁶ As it was for Judas (in Barth's interpretation), so for Israel: rejection is governed and surmounted by grace, in the end.⁹⁷ A critique of Barth's development lies beyond the scope of this paper, but I recommend David Gibson's splendid synthesis on this very topic.⁹⁸

Barthian symmetry has encouraged views of Israel's election that assign parallel destinies and possibilities of blessing/salvation to Christianity and (rabbinic) Judaism.⁹⁹ The foregoing material shows roundly enough that full-blown versions belong to radically other perspectives. I may mention, however, a milder proposal: R. W. L. Moberly suggests a "multi-level reading" that will allow for both the Jewish and the Christian reading of the Hebrew Scriptures: "Just as a faith perspective can be both bracketed out and incorporated in relation to a nonfaith perspective, so can a Christian perspective be both bracketed out and included in relation to a Jewish perspective, and vice versa."¹⁰⁰ This depends on a "late modern" type of hermeneutics which I would not endorse; the flexibility of our minds allows us to sympathise with the workings of other minds and, to some degree, "mimic" these, but the all-determinative perspective *cannot* be "bracketed out," and it *should* not: in the last analysis, abandoning the faith perspective is *ungodly* (cf. Rom 14:23b).

⁹¹ I know he reacted negatively when this word was used (which had been his in the early stages), with the argument that, for him, the two terms are not evenly balanced: there is a movement from judgment to grace, not the reverse. Yet, in this life at least, the movement back and forth never ceases: when we say "grace" we must immediately recall the reality of judgment, without which grace is not grace, the Yes is only in Christ, not in ourselves... This I call dialectical.

⁹² E.g. *K. Dogmatik II/2*, 215.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 562.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 562f.

⁹⁸ "The Day of God's mercy: Romans 9-11 in Barth's doctrine of election," in *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*, ed. by David Gibson & Daniel Strange (Nottingham: Apollos [IVP], 2008) 136-167.

⁹⁹ It is one of the problems of Mark Kinzer's views that he imbibed Barthian ideas that are not rooted in Scripture, together with so-called "postliberal" ways of proceeding; see Harvey, *Mapping*, 126f,253.

¹⁰⁰ "Jewish-Christian Dialogue," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 372.

The preparatory character of Israel's election implies a subordinate role, but it does not entail that there be no specific future for Israel "according to the flesh." Because "God' gifts and his call are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29), one may expect some magnificent compensation for the almost incredible sum of suffering that Jews have undergone through history. Evangelical exegetes diverge on conclusions one may draw from Romans 11. Without entering into their debate, I may register my conviction that the apostle rejoices in a symmetry of God's design – this time, a truly biblical symmetry – and lets us hope for a final turn to Yešua' among Jews that will match the refusal in the 1st century. The re-gathering in the Land may be a move towards that end. The revelation of the wickedness and anti-Christian essence of anti-Semitism after the Shoah, with a large-scale "conversion" in this respect among Christians (whether nominal or not), has removed some obstacles in the way. The time may be near!

The persistence of a Jewish identity can be seen as a positive sign. That Jewishness did not disintegrate under persecution, through pogroms and Shoah, through comfortable assimilation also, and *haskalah* secularisation, is so extraordinary that it suggests the stamp of election remains on this people: probably Dr Zimmermann's meaning in his famous reply to king Friedrich of Prussia.¹⁰¹ More precisely, St Augustine's has been repeated by many after him (including Blaise Pascal): non-Christian Jews are the perfect witnesses when Christians use the argument of prophetic fulfilment – since Jews who do not see Yešua' in the prophetic Scriptures zealously guard the books, Christians cannot be suspected of tampering with the text when they show how the gospel events had been foretold.¹⁰² Jews have been the "librarians" of the church. Without claiming to have found the *reason* why Jews, in numbers, have been "hardened," we may admire how God is able to draw benefits from evil itself, the evil of Jewish unbelief in Yešua' and the evil of anti-Semitism (this one, though aiming at the destruction of Jewish identity also comforted it, reactively).

It is possible to credit the Jewish persistence with other positive effects, though Scripture seems to be rather silent on these.¹⁰³ The "librarians" have also been the teachers – of Hebrew; without Nicolas of Lyra, no Martin Luther, and without Jewish teachers, no Nicolas! Christianity has been vulnerable to the pagan temptation, and Jewish monotheism has constituted a helpful reminder. Not to mention those Jews, armed with Jewish learning and culture, who have turned to Yešua', through the centuries, and, being grafted back in the Olive-tree, have brought abundant blessings, "life from the dead," to the church.

The inner meaning of Israel's election might be the representation of humankind. Elie Wiesel affirmed the identity: "... to me being a Jew and being a human being are one and the same."¹⁰⁴ If we consider the place of Israel in the total Plan of God, we may own the thought. "Israel, for rabbinic Judaism," Jacob Neusner tells us, "forms the counterpart and opposite of Adam."¹⁰⁵ If Jesus was born a Jew, it was to become the Saviour of the world, to be "made in human likeness" (Ph 2:7), becoming simply "flesh" (John 1:14): Jewish stock represented the human whole with which he wanted to be identified. If "his own" who received him not were the Jews, they represented the world who did not recognise him (John 1:10f). If the God of the Jews is the God of all Gentiles (Rom 3:29), do not the Jews represent all the others?

I suggest that Israel's election privilege and calling is to be the humankind of humankind, the quintessence of humanity. To be a Jew is to be human to the second power. Except for this special calling, practically everything we say of Jews may be said of all. All created by God

¹⁰¹ Karl Barth, 230, also alludes to it.

¹⁰² *Civitas Dei*, XVIII,46-47. Augustine notices the advantage of the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world.

¹⁰³ F. Lovsky, *Antisémitisme*, 494f.

¹⁰⁴ In Schuster & Boschert-Kimmig, 65.

¹⁰⁵ "Being Israel," 39 (cf. 41: "The Torah forms the antidote to Adam's sin.").

and his children in that sense (cf. Deut 32:4,6), all wayward, stiff-necked, under condemnation, all given a testimony to the truth of God, all invited to receive forgiveness through Christ's blood (cf. 1 John 2:2), all to be drawn to the Cross and receive the life-giving Spirit, for the King of Israel is the New Adam. This reveals the meaning, also, of the anti-Semitic effort at de-humanising the Jews: the devil's lie, and humankind's suicide.

The glory of representing humankind radiates when one affirms: Y^ešua', the Jew, is the New Adam, the Redeemer of the whole world. When we add, with the apostle, that this Yešua', who was born of the seed of Israel *to kata sarka* το κατὰ σάρκα, as regards flesh-connections, this Yešua' our Lord and Saviour is "God over all, forever praised" (Rom 9:5), we discern: first, that on the "fleshly" plane, Israel's privilege is the supreme privilege, the higher of which cannot be thought; second, that anti-Semitism was not only God-hatred but God-man hatred, the hatred of such a God as was able to unite himself with the children of Adam and *help* Abraham's descendants (Heb 2:16).

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