

AGAINST THE GALILAEANS

INTRODUCTION

JULIAN, like Epictetus, always calls the Christians Galilaeans¹ because he wishes to emphasise that this was a local creed, "the creed of fishermen," and perhaps to remind his readers that "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet";² with the same intention he calls Christ "the Nazarene."³ His chief aim in the treatise was to show that there is no evidence in the Old Testament for the idea of Christianity, so that the Christians have no right to regard their teaching as a development of Judaism. His attitude throughout is that of a philosopher who rejects the claims of one small sect to have set up a universal religion. He speaks with respect of the God of the Hebrews, admires the Jewish discipline, their sacrifices and their prohibition of certain foods, plays off the Jews against the Christians, and reproaches the latter for having abandoned the Mosaic law; but he contrasts the jealous, exclusive "particular" (μερικός) Hebraic God with the universal Hellenic gods who do not confine their attentions to a small and unimportant portion of the world. Throughout Julian's works

¹ Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *First Invective Against Julian* 76 (115), Γαλιλαίους ἀντὶ Χριστιανῶν ὀνομάσας καὶ καλεῖσθαι νομοθετήσας. This was ignored by Neumann in his reconstruction of the work, which he entitled *Κατὰ Χριστιανῶν*. Cf. Socrates 3. 12.

² *John* 7. 52.

³ In the fragmentary *Letter* 55, *To Photinus*, p. 189.

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there are scattered references, nearly always disdainful, to the Galilaeans, but his formal attack on their creed and on the inconsistencies of the Scriptures, which he had promised in *Letter 55, To Photinus*, the heretic, was not given to the general public, for whom he says he intends it, till he had left Antioch on his march to Persia in the early spring of 363. He probably compiled it at Antioch in the preceding winter.¹ Perhaps it was never completed, for at the time Julian had many things on his mind. It was written in three Books, but the fragments preserved are almost entirely from Book I. In the fifth century Cyril of Alexandria regarded the treatise as peculiarly dangerous, and said that it had shaken many believers. He undertook to refute it in a polemic of which about half survives, and from the quotations of Julian in Cyril's work Neumann has skilfully reconstructed considerable portions of the treatise. Cyril had rearranged Julian's hurriedly written polemic, in order to avoid repetitions and to bring similar subjects together. Moreover, he says that he omitted invectives against Christ and such matter as might contaminate the minds of Christians. We have seen that a similar mutilation of the letters occurred for similar reasons.

Julian's arguments against the Christian doctrine do not greatly differ from those used in the second century by Celsus, and by Porphyry in the third; but

¹ Libanius, in his *Monody on Julian*, says that at Antioch there were composed by the Emperor βιβλίων συγγραφαὶ βοηθούτων θεοῖς; in the *Epitaph on Julian*, that the attack on Christian doctrines was composed in the long nights of winter, i. e. 362-363, at Antioch, where he spent the winter with Julian.

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his tone is more like that of Celsus, for he and Celsus were alike in being embittered opponents of the Christian religion, which Porphyry was not. Those engaged in this sort of controversy use the same weapons over and over again; Origen refutes Celsus, Cyril refutes Julian, in much the same terms. Both sides have had the education of sophists, possess the learning of their time, borrow freely from Plato, attack the rules or lack of rules of diet of the opponents' party, point out the inconsistencies in the rival creed, and ignore the weaknesses of their own.¹

For his task Julian had been well equipped by his Christian teachers when he was interned at Macellum in Cappadocia, and he here repays them for the enforced studies of his boyhood, when his naturally pagan soul rebelled against the Christian ritual in which he had to take part. In spite of his insistence on the inconsistency of the Christians in setting up a Trinity in place of the monotheism of Moses and the prophets, he feels the need of some figure in his own pantheon to balance that of Christ the Saviour, and uses, both in this treatise and in *Oration 4*, about Asclepius or Dionysus or Heracles almost the language of the Christians about Christ, setting these pagan figures up one after another as manifestations of the divine beneficence in making a link between the gods and mankind.

Though Julian borrowed from Porphyry's lost polemic in fifteen Books,² he does not discuss

¹ Geffcken, *Zwei Griechische Apologeten*, p. 259, speaks of a Chinese polemic against Christianity, composed according to the regular conventions of this type.

² On Julian's debt to Porphyry, and his lack of sympathy with Porphyry's attitude to religion, see Harnack, *Porphyrius*, Berlin, 1916; Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre*, Gand, 1913.

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questions of the chronology and authorship of the Scriptures as Porphyry is known to have done. Libanius, always a blind admirer of Julian, says¹ that in this treatise the Emperor made the doctrines of the Christians look ridiculous, and that he was "wiser than the Tyrian old man," that is, Porphyry. But apparently the Christians of the next two centuries did not agree with Cyril as to the peculiarly dangerous character of Julian's invective. At any rate, the Council of Ephesus, in a decree dated 431, sentenced Porphyry's books to be burned, but did not mention Julian's; and again in a law of Theodosius II. in 448, Julian was ignored while Porphyry was condemned. When in 529 Justinian decreed that anti-Christian books were to be burned, Porphyry alone was named, though probably Julian was meant to be included. Not long after Julian's death his fellow-student at Athens, Gregory Nazianzen, wrote a long invective against him, in which he attacked the treatise *Against the Galilaeans* without making a formal refutation of Julian's arguments. Others in the fifth century, such as Theodorus of Mopsuestia and Philip Sideta, wrote refutations which are lost. But it was reserved for Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, writing between 429 and 441, to compose a long and formal refutation of Julian's treatise; the latter seems to have been no longer in circulation, or was at least neglected, and Neumann thinks that the bishop was urged to write his polemic by his dislike of the heretical views of other and earlier antagonists of Julian, especially Theodorus of Mopsuestia. This refutation, which was dedicated to the Emperor Theodosius II, was in at least twenty

¹ *Oration* 18. 178.

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Books. But for Cyril's quotations we should have a very vague idea of Julian's treatise, and as it is we are compelled to see it through the eyes of a hostile apologist. Cyril's own comments, and his summaries of portions of the treatise have been omitted from the following translation,¹ but the substance of the summaries has been given in the footnotes. The marginal numbers in the Greek text correspond with the pages of Spanheim's (1696) edition of Cyril's polemic *Pro Christiana Religione*, from which Neumann extracted and strung together Cyril's quotations of Julian. There is, therefore, an occasional lack of connection in Julian's arguments, taken apart from their context in Cyril's treatise.

¹ For a full discussion of the work of Cyril and the other Christian apologists who attempted to refute Julian, and for an explanation of Neumann's method of reconstruction, the reader is referred to the Latin *Prolegomena* to Neumann's Edition of Julian's polemic.

The numerous passages or expressions in this treatise that can be paralleled in Julian's other works have been collected by Asmus in his Concordance, *Julian's Galiläerschrift*, 1904.

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