

Julian the Apostate

Most historians report the simple facts of Julian such as this brief from www.answers.com “(born AD 331/332, Constantinople — died June 26/27, 363, Ctesiphon, Mesopotamia) Roman emperor (361 – 363), noted scholar and military leader. The nephew of Constantine I, he was raised a Christian but converted to mystical paganism. As caesar (subemperor) in the west, he restored the Rhine frontier and was proclaimed Augustus (senior emperor) by his armies. Though Constantius II initially objected to Julian as his successor, he accepted him on his deathbed (361). As Emperor Julian proclaimed freedom of worship for pagans and Christians in 361; he nevertheless promoted paganism over Christianity against which he committed acts of violence and persecution. He introduced austerity to government, reducing imperial staff and overhauling imperial finances. To reassert Roman power in the east he attacked Persia; the effort failed, and he was killed in a retreat near Baghdad.”

The word "apostate" literally means “fallen away”. Since both he and Constantine were Christians [Julian was half brother of Emperor Constantine I and his second wife, Basilina – it was during Constantine’s rule that Christianity became, for the first time, the state religion], why did Julian reject Christianity in favor of Neoplatonic paganism? Julian’s own inner struggles with Christianity and the richness of the ancient Mysteries epitomizes the general struggle taking place during these early Christian centuries. Looking deeper into the life of Julian and his motivations for military campaigns will reveal more about these struggles. For this we turn to a lecture by Rudolf Steiner from December 30, 1910 (lecture 7 from the series entitled *Building Stones for an Understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha*) <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA175/English/RSP1972/19170419p01.html>

“One of the outstanding figures in world history is Julian the Apostate (a successor of Constantine) who fell by the hand of an assassin in the campaign against the Persians in the year A.D. 363 ([note 1](#)). Julian occupies a special place in the history of the West. His life and career show how the course of world history is determined by the clash of contending forces. I pointed out in my previous lecture that in Constantine we have a personality who had to abandon the former coercive measures practiced by the majority of the earlier emperors when they sought initiation into the Mysteries. To compensate for this he therefore did everything in his power to advance the cause of exoteric Christianity in the Empire.

Now from earliest childhood Julian was held in low esteem by the Imperial family and their adherents. In the age with which we are dealing it was the custom to anticipate the future of an individual such as Julian by resorting to prenatal prophecies. The Imperial family had been obliged to conclude from the predictions of the Sibylline oracles that Julian would actively oppose the policy pursued by the Emperor Constantine. From the first, therefore, they tried to prevent Julian from being raised to the purple. It was decided that he should be murdered while still a child and preparations were made to have him butchered along with his brother. There was a strange aura attaching to Julian which inspired terror in those around him and countless stories relating to his personality testify to the fact that there was something uncanny about him. On one occasion during his campaign in Gaul a

somnambulist cried out as the army passed by: "There is the man who will restore the old Gods and their images."

The appearance of Julian at this moment in history must be seen as something predestined, something deeply significant. As often happens in such cases his life was spared lest his murder should bring greater disaster in its train. People persuaded themselves that whatever steps he might take against the policies of Constantine could be quickly nullified. And precautionary measures were taken to neutralize the dangerous tendencies of Julian's make-up and his leanings towards Paganism. In the first place it was decided to give him a sound Christian education which accorded with the ideas of Constantine. It was wasted effort and met with no response. Anything which had survived from the ancient Hellenic traditions fascinated him. Where powerful forces are at work in such a personality they ultimately prevail. And so, because his mentors sought to protect him from dangerous associations he was driven into the arms of Hellenic tutors and was introduced to Hellenic culture and civilization. When he grew older Julian learned how the neo-Platonic philosophers were imbued with the spirit of Hellenism and in consequence he was finally initiated into the Mysteries of Eleusis. Thus at a time when the Roman Emperors had already dispensed with the principle of initiation, an initiate in the person of Julian once again sat on the throne of the Caesars.

Everything that Julian undertook must be judged in the light of his initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries (and history has been at great pains to misrepresent his actions in every possible way). In order to form a true estimate of such a personality as Julian we must give due weight to the effects of this initiation. What spiritual benefit had Julian derived from his initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries? Through direct spiritual perception he learned the secrets of cosmic and world evolution, the spiritual origin of the world and how spiritual forces operate in the planetary and solar systems. He learned to understand certain things which were quite incomprehensible to his contemporaries (with the exception of a few Greek initiates), namely, the relation of solar influences and the Being of the Sun to the old Hermes-Logos. He understood the meaning of the Pythagorean maxim: "Thou shalt not speak against the Sun!" This does not refer, of course, to the physical sun but to the Spirit which is concealed behind the Sun. He knew that the ancient sacred traditions ascribed the origin of the world to the spiritual Being of the Sun and above all that man must recover his relation to the spiritual Sun if he is to penetrate to the source of his existence.

Julian therefore was aware of the ancient Sun-Mystery. He realized that the physical sun is but the external form of a spiritual Sun which can be awakened in the soul of man through initiation, and when awakened can reveal to him the intimate connection between the universe and the historical life of man on Earth. It was clear to Julian that the world can never be ordered on a basis of rationalism, that only those who are able to be in touch with the Sun Logos are in any way fitted to have a voice in the ordering of the world. He had to recognize that the movements of the celestial bodies and the great historical movements of mankind are governed by a common law.

Even a Church Father such as St. Chrysostom was aware of the existence of an ancient Sun-Mystery, since he went so far as to declare that men are so dazzled by the physical sun that they cannot penetrate to the spiritual Sun. The soul of St. Chrysostom was still illumined by a ray of wisdom from

olden times, but in those around him hardly a trace of it remained. It is clear that scarcely a vestige of understanding remained for that method of awakening the soul to the secrets of the universe which had been communicated through the ancient Mysteries and which were certainly communicated to Julian who was one of the last to be instructed in that method. He was therefore surrounded entirely by adherents of Constantine, by those who echoed the thoughts of Constantine. It is true that in the West, up to the end of the ninth century we find outstanding personalities even amongst the Popes, who were still inspired by the ancient Mystery wisdom; but the real opposition came from Rome which set out to nullify the efforts of these individuals and to pursue in its place a definite policy of its own towards the traditions of the ancient Mysteries. I shall say a few words about this later. In effect, Julian only came in contact with a very exoteric form of Christianity.

Through complicated psychological processes which are difficult to describe in detail he lighted upon the idea of utilizing the last surviving remnants of initiation in order to ensure continuity in evolution. In reality he was not an opponent of Christianity; he simply favored the continuity of Hellenism. He was more interested in promoting Hellenism than in opposing Christianity. With passionate enthusiasm he strove to arrest the decline of Hellenism and to transmit its traditions to posterity. He was opposed to any sudden break in continuity, any radical change. As an initiate of Eleusis he knew that the policies he proposed to embark upon could not be realized unless one was in close touch with the spiritual forces operating in the sensible world, and that if we seek to introduce new impulses into world evolution by appealing to physical and psychic forces alone, then we are "speaking against the Sun" in the Pythagorean sense. Julian had no such intention; indeed his purpose was quite the reverse. In effect he accepted one of the greatest challenges that it is possible to imagine.

Now we must not forget that in Rome at that time and throughout the whole of Southern Europe there was active opposition to this challenge. Remember that up to the time of Constantine, in large sections of the population the last remnants of ancient cults had been preserved. Today the question of miracles is a real thorn in the side of Biblical exegesis, because people refuse to read the Gospels from the standpoint of the age to which they, the Gospels, belong. The question of miracles raised no problems for the contemporaries of the Evangelists, for they were aware of the existence of rites and ceremonies from which men derived spiritual forces which they were able to control.

Whilst, on the one hand, Christianity was introduced as a political measure which culminated in Constantine's edict of toleration, so attempts were made on the other hand, to suppress the ancient pagan rites. Endless laws were promulgated by Rome which forbade the celebration of rites which derived their power from the spiritual world. These laws, it is true, declared that the old superstitions must cease, that no one may practice ritual magic in order to injure others and no one may communicate with the dead, and so on, but these were only pretexts. The real purpose of these laws was to eradicate root and branch any traces of pagan cults which had survived from ancient times. Wherever possible, history has endeavored to hush up or to conceal the real facts of the situation. But our earliest historical records were the work of priests and monks in the monasteries (a fact which modern science, which claims to be "objective and to accept nothing on authority", studiously ignores). The avowed object of the monasteries (i.e. priests and monks) was to suppress all knowledge of the true

character of antiquity and to prevent the essential teachings of the pagan Mysteries from being transmitted to posterity.

And so Julian saw the vanishing world of antiquity in a totally different light from the forerunners of Constantine. Through his initiation he knew that the human soul was related to the spiritual world. He could only hope to succeed in the task he had undertaken — to use the forces of the old principle of initiation in order to further the continuity of human evolution — by resisting the current attitude to man's evolution. Because of his initiation Julian was in reality a man with a profound and sincere love of truth, a sense for truth that was totally foreign to Constantine. Indeed Julian's profound respect for truth has not its like in the history of the West. With his deep instinct for truth that had been fortified by his initiation he turned his attention to teachings of the universities and schools of his day. He found that the Christian dogma had been introduced into the schools in the form that had existed since the time of Constantine. Armed with this dogma the teachers gave their personal interpretations of the Hellenistic writers whose works were centered round the figures of Zeus, Apollo, Pallas Athene, Aphrodite, Hermes-Mercury and so on. And Julian said to himself: "These teachers are the most outrageous sophists. How can they presume to expound ancient writings whose authors were convinced that the old gods were still living forces in the world? On what grounds do these teachers presume to interpret these writings when, by the very nature of their dogmas, they must deny the existence of these gods?" Julian's instinct for truth was outraged. He therefore forbade those who, by virtue of their Christian dogma were unable to believe in the old gods, to expound the ancient writings in the schools. If today we had the same honesty of purpose as Julian you can well imagine how much would be excluded from the curricula of our schools!

Julian wished to meet the challenge of the current trends which none the less were a necessity from another point of view. In the first place he had to come to terms with the Gospels, which had arisen in a totally different way from the knowledge imparted to him in the Eleusinian Mysteries. He could not reconcile himself to the way in which the Gospels had arisen. He said to himself: If that which is manifested in the Christ is a genuine inspiration that stems from the Mysteries then it must be possible to find it in the Mysteries, for it must have been incorporated in the Mystery-teachings. He wanted to ascertain if it were possible to continue the ancient Mystery-teachings. In the first place he was only familiar with the Christianity of his time in its exoteric aspect. He decided to make an experiment — not the kind of experiment that relies purely on human expedients (that would have seemed childish to him) — but to undertake an experiment that had a spiritual significance. He reasoned as follows: It has been prophesied that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed, not a single stone would remain standing. This has indeed come to pass. But if this prophecy could be discredited, if its fulfillment could be prevented then the mission of Christianity could not be accomplished. At the cost of great capital outlay Julian decided therefore to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. A large number of workmen were assembled to begin the reconstruction. Now the whole affair must be regarded from a spiritual standpoint; it was not men alone, but gods, whom Julian set out to challenge. And it is an undoubted fact that can be demonstrated historically — in so far as historical facts can be demonstrated, even externally, although internal evidence leaves no doubt of their truth — that each of the workmen engaged on the work of reconstruction had a vision; he saw tongues of flame licking over the place

where he was working and was obliged to withdraw. The undertaking was abandoned; but we recognize the high purpose that inspired Julian to undertake this venture.

Julian's experiment miscarried. After he had failed to discredit the prophecy of the destruction of the temple, he decided to approach the problem from another angle. His new plan was no less boldly conceived. The time had not yet come when the evolution of Europe had been influenced by that spiritual current which owed its origin to the fact that one of the greatest Church Fathers, Augustine ([note 2](#)), could not rise to a certain idea because at that time he lacked the necessary spiritual development. You know perhaps from your study of history — and I have referred to this on frequent occasions when discussing the Faust legend — that Augustine had originally been a Manichaeism. Manichaeism originated in Persia and claimed to understand Christ Jesus better than Rome and Constantinople. This doctrine (unfortunately it is not yet permissible today to unveil the ultimate secrets of this doctrine, even in our present circle) filtered through into Europe in later times in various guises and still survived, though in a corrupt form, in its ramifications in the sixteenth century when the Faust legend was first recorded. By a happy intuition the revival of the Faust legend by Goethe preserved something of the spirit of Manichaeism. Julian thought on the grand scale; his thought embraced all mankind. In the presence of a man such as Julian we realize only too clearly how limited are the thoughts of ordinary mortals. The doctrine of the “Son of Man” will of necessity assume different forms according to our capacity to form conceptions of the real nature of man himself. Our conceptions of the “Son of Man” must therefore depend upon our conceptions of man; the one involves the other. In this respect men differ widely. At the present time people have only the most superficial understanding of such matters.

In Sanscrit the word for man is Manushya. This word expresses the basic feeling which a large number of people associate with the idea of *humanity*. When we use this vocable to describe man we are referring to the spiritual aspect of man, we are appraising man primarily as a spiritual being. If we wish to express the idea that man is spirit and his physical aspect is only the manifestation of spirit, then we use the word “Manushya”.

From our earlier discussions you know that we can study man from another angle. We can consider him mainly from his psychic aspect. We shall then give more attention to man as soul than to man as spirit; his physical aspect and everything that is related to his external aspect will be of secondary importance. We shall then be able to characterize man from the information derived from his inner life which is reflected in the eye or in the fact that he holds his head erect. If you look into the derivation of the Greek word anthropos you will find that it gives a rough indication of this aspect. Those who characterize man with the word Manushya or some similar vocable see him primarily as spirit, as that which descends from the spiritual world. Those who characterize man with a word resembling the Greek word anthropos (and this applies especially to the Greeks themselves) are expressing his soul nature.

Now there is a third possibility; we can concentrate on the external, the corporeal or somatic aspect, which is the product of physical inheritance. We shall then characterize man with the word homo that signifies (approximately) the procreator or the procreated.

Here are three conceptions of man. Julian who was aware of this trichotomy felt the need to look for a spiritual interpretation of the "Son of Man". The thought occurred to him: "I have already been initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Perhaps it is possible to have myself initiated into the Persian Mysteries and into the Mysteries which are in accordance with the doctrine of the Manichaeans. By this means perhaps I may be able to achieve my aim — the continuity of the pagan Mysteries." This was a momentous thought. Just as Alexander's campaign had deeper motives than the mere conquest of Asia, so Julian's expedition had other motives than the conquest of Persia. He wished to find out whether he could further his objective with the help of the Persian Mysteries.

In order to understand the problem that faced Julian we must ask: What was it that Augustine could not understand in Manichaeism? I have already said that the time had not yet come to reveal the ultimate secrets of Manichaeism but it is possible to give a few indications. In his youth, Augustine was deeply attached to these teachings and they made a profound impression on him. He later exchanged the teachings of Manichaeism for Roman Catholicism. What did he not understand in Manichaeism? Why did he reject it, what was beyond his comprehension in Manichaeism?

The Manichaeans did not cultivate abstract ideas which divorced the world of thought from the world of reality. The Manichaeans and the initiates of the Eleusinian Mysteries were alike incapable of abstract thinking. In earlier lectures I attempted to show the difference between logical concepts and concepts in conformity with reality. The basic principle of Manichaeism was to cultivate only those ideas which are consistent with reality. Not that unreal ideas do not play a part in life; unfortunately they play a large part in life, especially at the present day, and the part they play is disastrous. And so, amongst other things, it was consistent with Manichaeism to form representations that were not purely abstract, but which were sufficiently powerful to intervene in the external world and to play an active part in that world. The conception of Christ Jesus that was commonly held by people at that time would have been quite impossible for the Manichaeans. And what was this conception? They had a somewhat nebulous idea of the Christ who had incarnated in Jesus through whom a change had been brought about in Earth evolution. Ideas about Christ have become incredibly vague, especially in the nineteenth century.

If we are really honest and sincere we cannot say that the notions afforded by Christian dogma about Christ and His mission will take us very far. If Christian ideas are not powerful enough to envisage an Earth which is not the graveyard of humanity, but the seed-bed of a transformed humanity, if we cannot envisage Earth evolution differently from the natural scientists of today who predict that life on the Earth will one day become extinct, then all our conceptions of Christ are vain. For even if we believe that Christ has brought new life to the Earth, it is difficult for us to imagine that matter can be so spiritualized that we can envisage it as capable of being transmuted from its present earthly condition to its future condition. We have need of far more powerful ideas in order to be able to conceive of the Earth's metamorphosis to the Jupiter condition.

I said recently in a public lecture that natural science thinks — or rather calculates — that if the forces of nature as they exist today were to persist for millions of years, then a condition would arise according to Dewar (I mentioned in Lecture Three his lecture before the Royal Institute) when, if the walls of a room were painted with albumen, it would be possible to read the newspaper in its

phosphorescent light. And I spoke of the scientist who declared that in the distant future milk would be solid and emit a blue light and so on. These ideas are the inevitable consequence of nebulous thinking that is unable to come to terms with reality. Such calculations are equivalent to deducing from the modifications in the human stomach over a period of four or five years what its condition would be after two hundred and fifty years. I am able to arrive at this conclusion by extending my calculations over a large number of years. The scientist calculates what will be the condition of the Earth a million years hence; on the same principle I can calculate the condition of the human stomach after two hundred and fifty years — only by that time the man will be dead! Just as the geologists calculate the condition of the Earth millions of years ago, so too on the same principle one could calculate, by showing the modifications in a child's stomach over a period of a week or a fortnight, the condition of the same stomach two hundred and fifty years ago — but of course the child would not have been alive at that time. Concepts cannot provide a total picture of reality. Scientific concepts are valid for the period of time between 6000–7000 B.C. and A.D. 6000–7000, but not beyond that time.

We must think of the evolution of man in terms of a totally different time scale. And the Christ Being must occupy a central place in this future evolution. I said therefore on a previous occasion that we must distinguish between what the Middle Ages called “mystical marriage” and what Christian Rosenkreutz called “chymical marriage”. Mystical marriage is simply an inner experience. As many theosophists used to say (and perhaps still say): if one looks within, if one withdraws into oneself one becomes united with the divine Being! This was depicted in such roseate hues that, after an hour's lecture, the members emerged with the firm conviction that if they took firm control of their inner life, if they practiced self-discipline, they would experience the first intimations of the divine within. The chymical marriage of Christian Rosenkreutz imagines forces to be active in man which embrace the whole man, which so transform his being that when he is purified from the dross of the physical body he is translated to the Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan conditions.

The aim of Manichaeism was the conquest of evil and of matter by thought. Julian was brought face to face with the deeper implications of the problem of evil and the relation of Christ Jesus to this problem. He hoped to find an answer through initiation into the Persian Mysteries and to return to Europe with the solution. But unfortunately he fell by an assassin's hand during the Persian campaign. It can be proved historically that this was the work of an adherent of Constantine. Thus we see that in the course of history the attempt to establish the “principle of continuity” was fraught with tragedy and that in the case of Julian it led into a blind alley.

In the following years the Augustinian principle triumphed — ideas that in any way echoed Manichaeism were forbidden, i.e. the inclusion of material ideas in spiritual thinking. The West therefore was driven to an abstract mode of thinking and in the course of time this mode of thinking permeated the whole of Western Europe. Only a few of the foremost minds rebelled against this tendency and one of the most celebrated of these was Goethe. His whole cast of mind was opposed to abstract theorizing. And one of those who succumbed to it most was Kant. Take, for example, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* — I know that what I am about to say is heretical — and let us look at the main propositions. If you reverse each of these propositions you will arrive at the truth. And the same applies particularly to his theory of space and time. You can equally well reverse every proposition and

you will then arrive at conclusions that are valid for the spiritual world. You can gather from this why some people have a professional interest in misrepresenting Goethe (the great opponent of Kant) as I showed in the case of Haller, who wrote: “no created spirit can penetrate into the inner recesses of nature” — a complete distortion of Goethe's conception of nature.

If we bear this point of view in mind, we can appreciate at its true worth Julian's essay which was directed against Pauline Christianity ([note 2](#)). It is a remarkable document, not so much for its contents, but for its similarity to certain writings of the nineteenth century. This may seem paradoxical, but the facts are as follows: Julian's polemic against Christianity musters every kind of argument against Christianity, against the historical Jesus and certain Christian dogmas, with passionate sincerity. And when we compare these arguments with the objections raised by the liberal theology of the nineteenth century ([note 3](#)) and the later theology of the adherents of Drews against the historicity of Christ, when we consider the whole field of literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which reveals most careful, painstaking and thorough philological investigation, there are endless repetitions, so that one has to consult whole libraries — we find that we can piece together certain guiding principles. The leading critics began to undertake a comparative study of the Gospels and found many discrepancies in the texts. But all these critical methods were already anticipated by Julian. The nineteenth-century criticism offered nothing new that was not already known to Julian. Julian spoke out of a natural creative gift whilst the nineteenth-century criticism displayed enormous industry, great erudition and downright theological sophistry.

Julian therefore was engaged in a titanic struggle. He finally attempted, by reviving Manichaeism, to bring about continuity in the evolution of the pagan Mysteries. Bear in mind how the most enlightened minds such as Goethe felt an instinctive urge to recapture the spirit of ancient Greece! Imagine what would have happened if Julian's policy had been crowned with success! That he was doomed to fail was a necessity of the time. And we shall not understand the reason for his failure if we belittle his great achievements, if we fail to see him as a titanic figure, fighting for a realistic understanding of the relations between man and the universe. And it is of paramount importance today to recall these great moments in the historical evolution of the West. For we are living in an age from which we shall not emerge with a healthy outlook unless we make a fresh assessment of the aims of Julian the Apostate. It was not possible in his time — herein lies his great tragedy — to reconcile the old principle of initiation with the real essence of Christianity. Today this has become possible and we must not fail to translate the possibility into reality if the world and mankind are not to suffer evolutionary decline. People must realize the need for regeneration in all spheres of life and above all the crying need to restore communication with the spiritual world.

First of all we must understand the factors that militate against this necessary regeneration. Today we are afraid of definite, clear-cut ideas which could lead to such an understanding. There is no lack of physical courage today — but we are certainly lacking in intellectual courage! Mankind today is unwilling to face realities and this is the greatest need of our time. For if our age is not to end in futility it must learn to understand the principle of the creative spirit and what it means when it is said that the spirit, when creative, is as powerful a force as the instincts, save that our instincts work in the dark, whilst the creative spirit works in the light of the Sun, i.e. the spiritual Sun. This is what our age must learn to

understand. And especially in our own time many forces are still arrayed against any understanding of the creative spirit and are actively engaged in suppressing that knowledge.

Cato's policy was to establish a highly centralized political system. In order to achieve this he felt it was necessary to exile the adherents of Hellenistic philosophy. "They only prate", he said, "and that has a disturbing effect upon the decrees of the authorities." And the celebrated Florentine Machiavelli was also of this opinion and gave high praise to Cato because he proposed to banish those who used the weapon of spiritual knowledge in order to raise objections to State decrees. Machiavelli fully appreciated the fact that in the Roman Empire any interference with the structure of the social order was on certain occasions punishable by death. Intercourse with the spiritual world was anathema especially to the Roman Empire and the successor States in Europe. Every effort was therefore made to ensure that the greatest uncertainty should prevail in these matters and they were hushed up as much as possible. If a conception of the Mystery of Golgotha that is both radical and uncompromising gains a firm foothold in the world, then we shall have to modify considerably our mental attitude. This is not to our liking, but it will have to come. And a way must be found to arrive at a real understanding of the nature of Christ. In our next lecture I propose to discuss how we can directly experience the being and nature of Christ today.

We shall see this whole question in wider perspective through a study of two contrasting figures — Constantine who inaugurated the exoteric side of Western culture and Julian the Apostate who, when the times were out of joint (for him), attempted to take up the struggle against the exoteric side of Western evolution. It is a curious phenomenon that if anyone with a slight knowledge — I do not mean of occult facts, but with a real knowledge of those occult facts that can still be found in ancient writings — makes a study of Christian dogma, if, for example, we inquire into the origin of the Mass, or if ritual and dogma are studied in the light of this occult knowledge derived from ancient writings, we discover the most extraordinary things. What lies behind these dogmas and cult acts? Not I alone, but countless authors who have studied these questions from this standpoint have come to the conclusion that in ritual and dogma a large residuum of paganism has been preserved or has survived, so that an attempt was made for example by the French writer Drach ([note 4](#)), who was an authority on Hebraism, to demonstrate that the dogma and ritual of the Catholic Church were simply a revival of paganism. And others attempted to show that certain people were at pains to conceal from the faithful the fact that the dogmas and ritual of the Church were imbued with paganism.

Now it would have been a strange phenomenon if paganism in particular had survived quite unconsciously. In that event, we might ask, in what way would the survival of paganism have contributed to the survival of the Roman Empire? And what would have been the position of Julian the Apostate? If many recent writers are right in saying that the Catholic sacrifice of the Mass, for example, is in essence a pagan sacrifice and that Julian had been at great pains to preserve and perpetuate the ancient pagan rites, then to some extent Julian has achieved his aim after all. A study of these two contrasting figures, Constantine and Julian, raises countless problems of the highest importance, "thorny" problems as Nietzsche calls them, problems which are fraught with fateful consequences for us today and which without question will become the central problems of our time.

NOTES BY TRANSLATOR

Note 1. Julian had received a strict Christian education; during his internment in Cappadocia he began to doubt the validity of Christianity and when sent to Athens in 354, the intellectual centre of Greece, he secretly abandoned Christian beliefs. His treatise “Against the Galileans” (referred to here) summarizes his polemical arguments against Christianity. Briefly they are as follows: Knowledge of God is natural to man and does not come by teaching. The story of Eden in the Old Testament is a fable and the account of Creation is inferior to that of Plato. The idea of a jealous God and a chosen people is unacceptable. The Mosaic law is barbarous; the Decalogue common to all nations. No man is better for reading the Jewish scriptures. The New Testament is full of inconsistencies. Matthew and Luke disagree on the genealogy of Jesus. Peter and Paul were hypocrites. [Matt. IV, 5](#), is illogical and in [Luke XXII, 42-47](#), since the disciples were asleep, who could have told him the story of the angel? The Christians were fanatics and cheerfully massacred heretics. By contrast the Greeks were mild and forbearing, they were superior in wisdom and intelligence. Christianity has achieved little or nothing in the fields of science, astronomy, arithmetic and music. The achievements of Plato, Socrates, Aristides, Thales, Lycurgus, Agesilaus and Archedemus, the Sibyls, the Delphic Oracle and the pagan Mysteries surpassed anything that Christianity had to offer.

The formal refutation of Julian's treatise was “Pro Christiana Religione” composed between A.D. 429 and 441 by Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria.

Note 2. Manichaeism and Augustine. Augustine (A.D. 345–410), an African by birth, was a Manichaean for ten years. He became dissatisfied with Manichaeism and when Faustus, a leader of the sect, failed to resolve his doubts he abandoned Manichaean teachings. (See *Confessions*, Books IV and V.) Augustine repaired to Rome where he was converted by St. Ambrose in A.D. 386. His chief works were directed against the Manichaeans, e.g. *Books against the Manichaeans* and *On the Utility of Believing*. The Scriptures were a means to faith and hope and the Canon was the testimony of Christianity in the Church. His dictum, “Better a man's body be destroyed than his soul” leads to the Inquisition. When Christianity became the State religion he distinguished between “Civitas Dei”, which was perfect and in which all men were equal in the sight of God, and “Civitas terrena”, which of necessity was imperfect. It was the devil's domain where sinful men had to submit to the authorities. Augustine was the founder of Western monasticism and monastic spirituality and exercised considerable influence on Pascal, Fenelon and Port Royal. On Manichaeism in general, see F. C. Burkitt, *Religion of the Manichees* (1925) and H. C. Puesch, *Le Manicheisme, son fondateur, sa doctrine* (1949).

Note 3. Liberal theology. The chief representatives of Liberal Protestant theology in the nineteenth century were Bauer, founder of the Tübingen school of New Testament research, and Ritschl (1822–89) who rejected metaphysics and mysticism and developed an objective and scientific method of research. The great exponent of the Ritschl school was A. von Harnack (1851–1930) whose *History of Dogma and What is Christianity?* are regarded as monuments of liberal historiography. Harnack eschewed metaphysical speculation, perfected the scientific-historical method and emphasized the need for source study and the faithful representation of facts. “The Gospel about Jesus does not belong to the Gospel preached by Jesus”, said Harnack. Radical historical research led to Bultmann's

“demythologization”, the attempt to liberate the Church's teaching from the mythological language in which it is expressed. Myths, he said, need reinterpretation in terms of modern consciousness. The other burning question of the nineteenth century was: is the Gospel true and how can we know that it is true? Drews, Jensen and Kalthoff in Germany, J. M. Robertson, W. B. Smith and T. A. Jackson in England claimed that the Christ figure was a copy of the cult-god of pagan beliefs under another name.

Note 4. Drach (1791–1865) studied at various Talmudic Schools and was converted to Christianity, 1823. He went to Rome and was appointed librarian of propaganda.