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**Theologie and Mystique in the Work of
Saint Cyril of Alexandria**

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The Criticism of Paganism in the Work
Ten Books for the Christian Faith against the Emperor Julian
by Saint Cyril of Alexandria

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Introduction

The work *Ten books for the Christian faith against the Emperor Julian*, written between 412 and 438 (or 441, the year in which St. Cyril sent a copy of the paper in Antioch) was drawn up as a result of the revival of paganism during and after the death of emperor Julian the Apostate (363). The composition of this writing at a fairly remote period of time from the death of Julian “indicates the strength of paganism in Egypt (and elsewhere), despite imperial efforts of extirpation from Theodosius I onwards”.¹ Moreover, the scale of the actions taken by the emperor and the role that king Julian played in the history of paganism and Christianity, led a modern researcher to record, maybe not far from the truth, in a volume dedicated to the early period of Christianity: “This chapter provides a profile of a man whose ambition, if it had been made, would have been likely that this volume had never been written”.² The figure of the emperor, who tried in his short reign to revive paganism, caused and continues to cause many scholars to write about what happened and what followed in the period in which Julian performed his work. In this line subscribes one of the most famous works of St. Cyril that presents us the Patriarch of Alexandria as a true apologist, in line with his predecessors from the first and second centuries of the Christian era.

The Emperor Julian the Apostate (331/332-363) – life and work

After the death of St. Constantin the Great, the Roman Empire was ruled by his sons, Constantin II (337-340) in charge of Gaul, Britain and Spain (resident in Trever), Constantius (337-361) that led Egypt, the East, Asia and Pontus (resident in Constantinople) and Constans (337-350) that ruled Italy, Africa, Pannonia, Illyricum and Thrace (residing in Sirmium). They fought against paganism supporting the idea that the Christian religion must

¹ ANDREW LOUTH, *Cyril of Alexandria*, in: *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, Andrew Louth, Assistant editor: Augustine Casiday, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, p. 355.

² MICHAEL BLAND SIMMONS, *Julian the Apostate*, in: *The Early Christian World*, Volume I-II, Edited by Philip F. Esler, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, p. 1251.

be the only religion in the Roman Empire.

The law of Constantius in 341 against those who brought pagan sacrifice was adopted immediately by Constans. At the suggestions of the christened Neoplatonism Julius Firmicus Maternus, the emperors ordered the destruction of pagan temples in cities. Some temples continued to exist, however, and from the ancient philosophical centers those led by sophists and Neo-Platonists persisted especially.³ However, the Emperor Constantius, who remained for a time the only ruler of the Empire, favored Arianism to the detriment of Orthodoxy.

After his reign, Julian became the emperor (Flavius Claudius Julianus), who was born in Constantinople in 331 (or 332) and died in the campaign of the Persian borders on the night of June 26 to 27, year 363, wounded by an arrow. He was the son of Julian Constantin (step brother of St. Constantin) and half-brother of Gallus. His father was killed in the year 337, probably by order of Constantin II. Historical data about Emperor Julian come from his writings (although many have been lost or destroyed) from the pagan historians Ammianus Marcellinus, Eutropius and Zosimus, and also from Christian writers as St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Socrates, Rufin, Sozomen, Theodoret, St. Ephrem the Syrian and St. Cyril of Alexandria.

Born into a Christian family, Julian was attracted by pagan philosophy ever since childhood. It seems that he was a relative of Eusebius of Nicomidia, who protected him for a while. After his death (342), Constantius banished Julian and his half-brother, Gallus, in the city Marcellum of Cappadocia for six years, where the future emperor was surrounded by Christian clergy. "The lad has read the Bible, copied religious books, built a chapel of St. Mamas, and is said he have officiated as a lector in public worship, which presupposes (unless there was some departure from the ordinary practice) that he had been baptized, as indeed Cyril positively asserts, though neither Julian nor any of his contemporaries speak of his baptism".⁴ Thereby one cannot discuss of Julian's hostility to the Christian faith during this period.

Around the year 350 Julian was able to leave the city Marcellum returning to Constantinople, dedicating himself entirely to study. He continued his studies at Nicomidia, Pergamon and Ephesus, where he was introduced in the teachings of the Hellenistic and Neoplatonic philosophy and mysticism. It seems that the conversion from paganism to Christianity

³ Pr. NICOLAE CHIFĂR, *Istoria creștinismului*, I, Ed. Trinitas a Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași, 1999, p. 75 (in romanian).

⁴ A. HARNACK, *Julian*, in: *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Editor-in-Chief Samuel Macauley Jackson, D.D., LL.D., Volume VI, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1953, p. 259.

occurred in this period, around the year 351. “The dreams of poets and the speculations of philosophers were to him the living truth; in Neoplatonism he found the revelation of all the wealth of the highest ideals of antiquity and of Greek civilization. His feelings, principles and aims were, however, not those of the ancient masters whom he thought to follow, but modern, and such as might nearly all have been justified from the teachings of Christian leaders of his days. The fortunes of life, his imagination and his education included him to Greek mythology and learning, as similar elements had brought thousands of others to Christianity”.⁵ All this was due to the time spent in Nicomidia and Ephesus, but also to those of Bithynia and, especially, in Athena where he was initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries and knew Hellenism, completing his Neoplatonic philosophical knowledge, especially under the influence of the school of Iamblicus.⁶

In time, he became known for his feats of arms in the Empire and in 357 he was appointed Cesar, being entrusted the leadership of Gaul and expeditions against the Germans. These tasks, which he performed successfully led to his election as Emperor of the Empire, ruling between 361 and 363. Since Constantius died on November 3, 361 in Cilicia, Julian entered Constantinople as sole emperor, in the same year, on December 11. “This produced a profound change in the young emperor who, idolizing the famous Emperor Alexander the Great, renounced Christianity”⁷ trying in his short reign to restore the old Roman society. Julian remained in history with the name “Apostate” (he called himself “Helen”) because of the his politics and writings against Christians and his desire to revive paganism through the various measures which he adopted, the ideal of his life being the revival of pagan Hellenism.

At the beginning of his reign, the emperor Julian promoted the principle “Everyone is free to believe what he wants”, after a short period becoming the enemy of Christians, although this was not made public at the beginning. In this respect, he gave freedom of all heresies which soon spread throughout the Roman Empire. He removed Christian insignia from the army and coins and gave out all the Christians from the imperial guard. He was also a persecutor of Christians in this period and several martyrs were recorded, as was the case of St. Emilian from Durostorum (burned at the stake on July 18, 363). From the position of “Pontifex Maximus”, Julian made a religious reform of revivalism of the major pagan traditions. He revitalized pagan priesthood, revived pagan festivals, increased the

⁵ IBIDEM.

⁶ BURKHARD GLADIGOW, *Polytheism*, in: *The Brill Dictionary of Religion*, Edited by Kocku von Stuckrad, Brill, Leiden. Boston, 2006, p. 1468.

⁷ Fr. NICOLAE CHIFĂR, *Istoria creștinismului*, p. 76.

importance of temples and created a strong bond of the various Hellenistic priestly classes.⁸ Emperor Julian was concerned essentially in restoring completely the pagan sacrifices system “in which he went work shows that the ideas that underlying for old public worship were not his, but that he designed to bring about the restoration of the old paganism under the forms of certain mystic cults, and to unite all the older religions into a sort of pagan imperial church”.⁹

Among the measures that he took in this regard, Julian canceled all the privileges granted to Christians in recent years and restored confiscated property to the pagan temples. In 362, he made a law through which all products from the public squares were sprayed with water from the abominable sacrifices.

The eunuch Mardonius had an important role in the transformation of the emperor from Christianity to paganism, while the philosopher Maximos of Ephesus initiated him in the mysteries of Mithra. He was a practical man “but also influenced by magic and charlatans like Maximos of Ephesus”.¹⁰ The decisions of Julian against the Christians, among which their exclusion from schools where they taught¹¹, have been contested even by the pagans. Moreover, the king led a policy favoring the Jews, allowing them to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.¹²

The most famous writing of the Emperor Julian remains *Against the Galileans* (which probably included three books, as St. Cyril said, although Jerome mentions seven), written between 362 and 363. This work was not preserved, but it can be reconstructed partially from the writings of St. Cyril of Alexandria, who cited important parts from the work of the Roman Emperor. Not even St. Cyril’s writing was not preserved entirely, researchers tilting towards a greater number of books, 20 or even 30, written by the Patriarch of Alexandria. For Julian, Christians were Galileans, because he considered them a Jewish sect, Jesus called him the “Nazaren” The name “Galileans” was also made official through a law that Julian promulgated as soon as he became emperor. In his writing, Julian uses the

⁸ JULIAN, *Letters on Religion*, in: BART D. EHRMAN, ANDREW S. JACOBS, *Christianity in Late Antiquity – 300-450 C. E. A Reader*, New York. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 48.

⁹ A. HARNACK, *Julian*, p. 260.

¹⁰ TIMOTHY E. GREGORY, ANTHONY CUTLER, *Julian*, in: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Alexander P. Kazhdan (Editor in chief), Volume 2, New York. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 1079.

¹¹ As it shows in *Letter 36* (in: BART D. EHRMAN, Andrew S. Jacobs, *Christianity in Late Antiquity – 300-450 C.E. A Reader*, p. 51-52).

¹² In regard with the position of the emperor towards the Jews *Letter 51* is of great significance (in: BART D. EHRMAN, ANDREW S. JACOBS, *Christianity in Late Antiquity – 300-450 C.E. A Reader*, p. 52-53).

arguments of old anti-Christian writers as Celsus and Porphyrios. Among the writings of the emperor against Christians are included: *Misopogon*, *Simposion – the banquet or the Caesars*, *The Praise of Emperor Constantin*, *Praise to the Empress Eusebia*, *To the Senate and the people of Athens*, *Letter to the Alexandrian*, *Letter to the Aristarchus Teodor*, *Letter to the Bishop Forin of Sirmium*, *Against the cynic Heraclius* and so on.

Though the emperor Julian reigned for a short period of time, the consequences of his actions proved to be long-term, that every king who succeeded to the throne had to prove their loyalty to the Christian faith. Thus, after the death of Julian the Apostate, Jovian became Emperor (363-364), a supporter of Christianity. Although he canceled the privileges that Julian had given to the followers of paganism, Jovian also showed a certain tolerance for it, thus paganism continuing to manifest in the Roman Empire. General Valentinian followed after Jovian (364-375) and Valens (364-378) who, although Christians, were tolerant of paganism. Another Roman emperor, Gratian (375-383), formally renounced at the title “Pontifex Maximus”, the essential name of the pagan priesthood, while the Theodosian dynasty made the best connection between imperial power and Christian ideals. “Under the Theodosians, Christianity became, for all intents and purposes, the official religion of the empire; pagan sacrifice and worship were outlawed, and heretics were subject to civil liabilities. The welfare of the empire was increasingly a matter of Christian fidelity as much as military or economic success”.¹³

Context of writing St. Cyril of Alexandria

St. Cyril’s books were written more than 70 years after the death of the emperor, confirming that the religious policy which he resurfaced was still current, especially in a city like Alexandria. Here, paganism was flourishing in the intellectual circles who could not forget that in the year 391 the Serapeion was destroyed, gesture that further deepened the gap between the representatives of paganism and Christianity. “If Alexandria was where such clashes were running, it also offered the possibility of much tougher conflicts, here existing many representatives of state authorities with pagan mentality and even pagan affiliation. When Cyril become patriarch, Alexandria was the «holy city» of Hellenism, which Emperor Julian himself resolved to protect from the influence of «Galilean’s religion»”.¹⁴

¹³ BART D. EHRMAN, ANDREW S. JACOBS, *Christianity in Late Antiquity – 300-450 C.E. A Reader*, p. 24.

¹⁴ NICOLAE, Mitropolitul Banatului, *Prefață*, în: SFÂNTUL CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIE, *Zece cărți împotriva lui Iulian Apostatul*, traducere din limba greacă de dr. Constantin Daniel revăzută de Î.P.S. Nicolae Corneanu, Ed. Anastasia, București, 2000, p. 8 (in Romanian).

During Saint Cyril, in Alexandria were several philosophical currents and prominent representatives of those, among which Theon and, especially, his daughter Hypatia, who was murdered as a consequence of some conflicts between Christians and pagans, an important role in this having prefect Oreste. There were many voices and still are who claim that St. Cyril was involved in this event. He has “definitely a responsibility, at least indirectly - for the climate he created, in the initiative of the fanatical mob to lynch on the famous Platonic thinker Hypatia in 415. A consequence of these abuses were probably the imperial edicts in 416 - 418, to limit the activity of the parabolon groups, a kind of nurses that were in fact the armed guards of the bishop”.¹⁵ Andrew Louth notes that Charles Kingsley’s famous novel of 1853, *Hypatia*, St. Cyril is presented “as a sinister figure, cruel and unscrupulous” which was one of the reasons why the work of the Alexandrian saint was neglected in the English language literature of modern times.¹⁶

Strained relations between Christianity and paganism during Saint Cyril had deeper causes, which included the closure of pagan temples and their transformation into churches, condemning to death those who offered sacrifices to the gods, the sending into exile of the followers of paganism and, finally, the attitude often contrary to Christian teachings of Church representatives. All this and more led to a “strong nostalgia for the time when the emperor Julian tried to restore paganism”.¹⁷ In these circumstances, St. Cyril elaborates the books against Julian, in which he fights against paganism as it was presented by the king in his work *Against*

¹⁵ CLAUDIO MORESCHINI, ENRICO NORELLI, *Istoria literaturii creștine vechi grecești și latine. II. De la Conciliul de la Niceea la începuturile Evului Mediu*, Tomul II, Traducere de Hanibal Stănculescu, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2004, p. 195 (in Romanian). Diarmaid MacCulloch noted about this: “The most repulsive case was probably in 415, the death of philosopher Hypatia, so respected for its teaching that defeated the usual prejudices of men and gained prominence in the Alexandrian schools. Christian crowds were convinced that she was a key figure in the act of preventing the prefect of Egypt to end a dispute with Bishop Cyril of Alexandria, so it was pulled out of the carriage, publicly humiliated, tortured and murdered. The perpetrators were not punished. It was an indelible stain on the episcopate of Cyril and few historians have dared to excuse him” (DIARMAID MACCULLOCH, *Istoria creștinismului. Primii 3000 de ani*, traducere de Cornelia Dumitru și Mihai-Silviu Chirilă, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2011, p. 215-216) (in Romanian).

¹⁶ ANDREW LOUTH, *Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 353. About this book Diarmaid MacCulloch said: “After nearly fifteen hundred years, clergyman novelist Charles Kingsley used the story of Hypatia to irritate Roman Catholics, giving them a fairly parallel transparent role of Alexandrian intolerance killers” (DIARMAID MACCULLOCH, *Istoria creștinismului. Primii 3000 de ani*, 216). Not to be overlooked nor Agora film made in 2009, taking it as directed by Alejandro Amenábar, which seeks presentation of the events of the fourth century from Alexandria, the central character being Hypatia.

¹⁷ NICOLAE, Mitropolitul Banatului, *Prefață*, p. 9.

the Galileans.

In this writing, Christianity is being attacked on all fronts and in all its aspects. Julian brought accusations that were still alive in the time of St. Cyril, at a long distance from the king's death. The Saint starts the defense of the Christian religion from the arguments used by his predecessors, combining them with examples from various sciences of the time. "But how he quotes denotes a somewhat superficial knowledge. In any case, his bibliographic resources and how he used these, makes it clear that not rarely he came to their knowledge through his ancestors, especially through the apologists of the second century or through the patristic authors from the fourth century. This does not mean that it was unoriginal. In addition, unlike the ancestors, St. Cyril did not spare the opponent. He used the insult as it was used otherwise by Julian, does not respect the opponent as they did not spare the Christians".¹⁸ It seems that St. Cyril's arguments against Julian were borrowed from the works of Eusebius of Caesarea.¹⁹ Like the work of Origen, *Against Celsus*, the whole work of St. Cyril presents whole quotes of Julian followed by the author's replies, being really useful in restoring the lost writing of the Roman emperor. St. Cyril "uses the same method as in the books against Nestorius or Diodorus of Tarsus: aims step by step the work that he attacks, citing and examining passage with passage. He exposed himself this method at the beginning of the second book, but stated that he would omit some fragments too offensive to Christians and that and given the unsystematic character of Julian's work, he would expose themes in order. The passages reproduced by St. Cyril are pretty tough, so it can be considered that, in reality, he left out few things from Julian's writing".²⁰

Other Church Fathers who wrote against Emperor Julian before St. Cyril of Alexandria were St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. Ephrem the Syrian.

The first elaborates his speeches against Julian in the winter of 363-364 years, without reference to the work of the Emperor *Against Galileans*. The writing of St. Ephrem, *Hymns against Julian*, is conceived as a result of the loss of Nisibe by the Byzantines after the disastrous military policy of the Emperor Julian and the moving of the Saint in Edessa. The first hymn shows how Julian got emperor as "bad shepherd", the second describes Julian's desire to revive paganism, in the third hymn he presents the tragic death of the king as a sign of the triumph of Christianity, while the fourth hymn accounts Julian's unsuccessful campaign to revive paganism on the

¹⁸ IBIDEM, p. 14.

¹⁹ ANDREW LOUTH, *Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 356.

²⁰ CLAUDIO MORESCHINI, ENRICO NORELLI, *Istoria literaturii creștine vechi grecești și latine. II. De la Conciliul de la Niceea la începuturile Evului Mediu*, p. 213.

Syrian territories and his desire for Jews to rebuild the temple.²¹ Other sources against the king could be found, although the sources are not safe, at Theodore of Mopsuestia, Filip of Side and Theodoret of Cyr.

The criticism of paganism in the work *Ten books for the Christian faith against the Emperor Julian*

The writing of St. Cyril starts with a “Word to the more pious and Christ - loving emperor Theodosius” in which the patriarch of Alexandria presents the reasons that led him to write such a work. After the recalling of the Christian deeds of the Emperor Theodosie, St. Cyril justified his approach that he did not write against a king, but against “the man who fought against the glory of Christ”.²² This is Julian, who worked against Christians, although at first he was baptized and served among them. Although the king had died many years ago, pagan ideas and practices that he supported and encouraged were current among the Alexandrians of fifth century.

In his writings, the emperor Julian accused the Christians that they were away from the right path and without blemish, proposing “a life intermediate between the two religions (Christianity and the Greeks ‘religion) that is defective to both”.²³ The Patriarch of Alexandria brings numerous examples from the *Old Testament* (Moses, Noah, etc.) and the Greek writers (Alexander Polihistor, Abidenos, Pythagoras, Plato, Porphyrios, etc.) to demonstrate the error of Julian. Some of pagan authors that Julian cited in his writings had ideas that contradicted each other. However, St. Cyril acknowledged that some of them were close to the true teaching in that they went to Egypt to learn the truth. “But I consider that my speech showed in a sufficient way Christian teachings are older and more truthful, and to the submission of the Greeks writers, better designed, and incomparably more valuable than the pagan Greeks’ blasphemies”.²⁴

In the second book, St. Cyril compares Julian with the Babylonian Rapsakes in his attempt to bring blasphemy to God by promoting pagan teachings. He denies the historicity of what related Moses and brings mockery of all the saints, although the writings of Moses were long before of those pagan thinkers that Emperor commemorates. It follows an analysis of the work of Julian and demonstrating all his teachings were wrong.

Julian considers the teaching of “Galileans” as a fiction without anything divine, relying only on miracles and fairy tales. But St. Cyril

²¹ EPHRAIM: *Hymns Against Julian*, în: BART D. EHRMAN, ANDREW S. JACOBS, *Christianity in Late Antiquity – 300-450 C.E. A Reader*, p. 53.

²² SFÂNTUL CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIE, *Zece cărți împotriva lui Iulian Apostatul*, p. 19.

²³ IBIDEM, p. 24.

²⁴ IBIDEM, p. 67.

reminded him that “the fairy tales are a feature of pagan Greeks”²⁵ and true lovers of wisdom (philosophers) are those who love the contemplative part, reaching the understanding of the ideas about God.

Julian says that in the Christian teachings are the most despicable elements of the Hebrew (deception and lack of conscience) and the Greeks (bad and careless life, laziness and vulgarity) to bring honor to God. But the king is the one who changed his religion and turned to idolatry, accepting for himself a religion which he blames himself at a certain point, when he is speaking about the fairy tales created by the Greeks, among which stand out the stories about Chronos, Zeus and Dionysus. If Julian himself recognizes this, then why does he accuse Christians of the same monstrosities? Moreover, the king said that they are atheists claim that might better suit those who do not know the true God.

Julian accuses the teachings of Moses as a bunch of old things and defends the doctrines of Plato and other Greek philosophers as true. St. Cyril quotes the philosopher Plutarch, who presents the ideas of his predecessors over genesis. “But since Julian chooses and prefers Plato of all, and remains especially in his ideas, I can say that Plato and Pythagoras have an accurate doctrine about God and the world. But they have gathered this teaching and this knowledge by going and sitting together with the Egyptians, which talked a lot about the most wise Moses and were admired his doctrines”.²⁶ Julian is the one who opposes the teachings of the Greek philosopher to Moses after he studied all the Jewish writings.

Julian says that the idea of God is innate to all humans and the Divine is in heaven, because there the Divine can watch and care for all creatures. At these arguments, St. Cyril recalls Hesiod’s *Theogony* which speaks of the birth of the gods, where ideas are not in line with what the king said and of what he might be ashamed. But Julian does not always feel compelled to argue from the teachings of the Greeks and the Jews because anyone can pray to God and his prayer to be accepted, even admitting that God is heaven.

The king criticizes the episode of man’s creation in Paradise, and that God takes no action so that Adam and Eve do not fall into sin. St. Cyril replied to the king with examples from literature and philosophy of the Greeks, especially the works of Hesiod and Plato. Even the latter agreed to Hesiod’s stories that are fairy tales and fables more than the Jews believed by Julian as simple fables. In the defense of the man creation, as shown in the Christian teaching, St. Cyril argues that by the work of Greek thinkers, especially those of Porphyrios and Alexandros.

²⁵ IBIDEM, p. 24.

²⁶ IBIDEM, p. 84.

Julian considers unjust the commandment from God in heaven, saying it's a crazy thing the interdiction of man to know good and evil. But this "proves and shows that Julian ignored the meaning and power of the written"²⁷ because it do not refers to God's prohibition of hate or ignorance, but of His love for His creature, "because the human mind has been made in such a way for him to be able to contemplate God exactly, I mean, with the measure destined to (attributed) his nature".²⁸

Emperor Julian disputes the fact that the Bible states that God would take care only of the Jews, proving that He is the creator of all people since others are overlooked. But, says St. Cyril, throughout the Old and New Testament stands God's love for all people and especially the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our salvation.

Since the Roman emperor accuses Christians that they respect the Old Testament, although there are examples of bloody sacrifices, St. Cyril recalls the Greeks worship pagan altars where sacrifices were brought not only animal but also human, as emerges from the writings of Porphyrios.

Julian says that any nation can preserve much of the Ten Commandments that Moses received, however, by bringing his critique in his writings, he implicitly accuses the lawmakers Solon and Lycurgus whose laws are similar with those of the Jews. And the commandment "You shall not bow down to other gods besides Me" does not prove that God is malevolent, Julian is impious and he has no respect for the Divine which is not in any way touched by any passion or envy. This is drawn from the words of Aristotle's pupil Alexander, defined devotion to God as the greatest happiness.

Julian contests the quality of God of Jesus Christ and believes Divinity as touched by human desires and pleasures, being little more than what people are, thus contradicting the teachings of philosophers whom he appreciated most, Plato and Porphyrios. The king brings blasphemy to God when he says that God can be compared with the gentleness and patience of Lycurgus or Solon or with the goodness and righteousness of Romans. "Since it is obvious and clear that the Nature (of God) is not covered by our passions, though Julian shows that nature above and beyond all thought, is ruled tyrannically by fury for any offense that it may make it grieve".²⁹

Julian compares the works of the Greeks with the Jews and Christians and says that theirs are much better than the latter in particular by the fact that philosophers have commanded to imitate the gods and to arrive at contemplation dispassionately. Instead, the Hebrew and Christian all

²⁷ IBIDEM, p. 145.

²⁸ IBIDEM, p. 146.

²⁹ IBIDEM, p. 273.

come down to passion and anger. Through these statements and those that come to complement, Julian does nothing else than to descend the God to the level of humanity with joys and sufferings of the creatures. But if Julian speaks about the imitation of the gods, he must not forget that the Greek writer's stories they appear with many passions, as is the case of Ares (Mars) or Athena (Minerva).

The king criticizes the way in which Jews behaved in history and, especially, Moses, when he punished those who disobeyed, which included the Moabites. In counterbalance he places Socrates, Aristide, Acimon, Thales, Lycurgus, Agesilanos, Arhimadon or other philosophers and leaders of the Greek states. But, says St. Cyril, if one carefully examines the lives of philosophers as they were recorded by Porphyrios, one will see that they were possessed of passions and committed acts that do not live up to the image they have created in front of people. Also, many of those who were raised by their thinking over the legislators of cities were punished for impiety, as is the case of Anaxagoras or that of Diagoras.

Moreover, Julian accuses Christians that they do not recognize the holiness in that they destroyed pagan temples, killing those who worshiped or prayed to them. But the situation was reversed, as the Greeks are those who persecuted the Christians, the blood of martyrs is the best example of this. Charged that the Christians are drawn from the slaves or they have vulgar trades, the Patriarch of Alexandria brings examples of Greeks thinkers who have trades as slaves: Socrates, Plato, Zalmoxis. "From what reason you, Julian blame Savior's disciples if they had the divine proclamation to all, the famous and not famous people, the rich and those in poverty and even some of the servants. So, they made a call to know who is God of all, the Creator and Lord by nature".³⁰

Putting the teaching of Jews and the Greeks in parallel, Julian believes that Phokylode, Theognis or Isocrates are stronger than Solomon, and their superior wisdom of *Proverbs* of Jews. St. Cyril recognizes the importance of the teachings of this Greek for Greek, but highlights the fact that some of them have not lived a life at the height of the tips you gave those around. The king states that Greeks have superior gifts, crafts, wisdom and understanding than Christians that they have received from the gods, as were Asclepius, Apollo, Hermes, Ares and Hephaestus. St. Cyril says that the gods listed by the king, have only a single quality, without having the power to do anything else. "But how could the gods be such beings? Who will it be the one who would dare to say, the God is without any of the good qualities? The God is fully adequate to itself (does not need anything) is mighty and with the will fully open, and it has sufficiently all that it entitled

³⁰ IBIDEM, p. 329.

to have in the natural way, Being the highest possible”.³¹

In the view of the Emperor Julian, the Christians are wrong and far away from the faith of the Jews, even more than the fact that they were removed from the teachings of the Greeks. Their mistake is double because they began to worship other gods, contrary to the Jews, and that they were removed from the piety of the Greeks. St. Cyril replied the king that followers of Christianity actually give up a certain way of life that is worthy of derision and follow only the laws of God that lead to genuine virtuous life.

The emperor critics the statements of Christians after they are the true Jews respecting the words of the prophets of the Old Testament, unlike the Jews of that time teaching that God is One in three Persons and the Perpetual Virgin Mary. Julian also contested the fact that by the law of the Jews, the Christians would have received another law that would contradict the Old Testament. To all these accusations, St. Cyril answers with examples from the Scriptures and the works of Greek thinkers, especially Plato and Porphyrios by removing all allegations of Julian.

Among the most serious allegation of the king is that nowhere in the Bible does it say that Jesus Christ is God, the Christians are the ones who changed the scriptures and they did not comply the teachings of the apostles. Also, Christians are wrong when they honor the graves of the dead, being inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus who says that the scholars and the Pharisees are whitewashed tombs on the outside but on the inside are full of bones. St. Cyril replied that there is no connection between the words of the Lord and what Julian understands.

Moreover, the Patriarch of Alexandria argues that in the Homer’s writings it says that the gods are like people being afraid of hell. “Therefore, as poets inspired by the Muses of the Greeks (Pagans), who had a reputation that was inspired by the gods, who knew well locations and attributes of the gods, said that they were overpowered and subjected to both death and fate, for the reason that Julian calls Christ as a dead, He who has conquered the death from others through His commandments and inexpressible divine and miraculous power of life”.³² Even the Greeks are examples of places to which were made pilgrimages and all those who mocked such places were punished for impiety. And if Julian accuses Christians that they do not want to sacrifice, even in the Old Testament speaks of sacrifices to God, and he does not understand that the sacrifices of Christians have a different role than the heathen, which are made to the idols and not to the true God.

³¹ IBIDEM, p. 369.

³² IBIDEM, p. 521.

Conclusions

From the above lines one can see that St. Cyril of Alexandria is presented, along with a great theologian, as it is clear from the writings against the heretics of his time, like a true apologist for Christianity with paganism dispute that resurfaced after Emperor Julian, the Apostate. On the other hand, the writing of the Orthodox Patriarch proves to be of great importance in understanding the difficulties experienced by the Christian faith in a territory where paganism flourished from time to time. Moreover, the work of St. Cyril can be put together with Christian apologists 'works from previous centuries, being of a real interest for our times into a field so necessary but forgot in the theological schools and pastoral work: Apologetics.

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