

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER
TO A PRIEST

INTRODUCTION

JULIAN was Supreme Pontiff, and as such felt responsible for the teachings and conduct of the priesthood. He saw that in order to offset the influence of the Christian priests which he thought was partly due to their moral teaching, partly to their charity towards the poor, the pagans must follow their example. Hitherto the preaching of morals had been left to the philosophers. Julian's admonitions as to the treatment of the poor and of those in prison, and the rules that he lays down for the private life of a priest are evidently borrowed from the Christians.

This Fragment occurs in the *Vossianus* MS., inserted in the *Letter to Themistius*,¹ and was identified and published separately by Petavius. It was probably written when Julian was at Antioch on the way to Persia.

¹ p. 256 C, between τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον and καὶ πεποιήκασι.

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..... πλὴν ἦν εἰς τὸν βασιλέα ἐπίδωσιν
 ἀτακτοῦντάς τινας, αὐτίκα μάλα κολάζουσιν· ἐπὶ
 δὲ τοὺς οὐ προσιόντας τοῖς θεοῖς ἐστὶ τὸ τῶν
 πονηρῶν δαιμόνων τεταγμένον φύλον, ὑφ' ὧν οἱ B
 πολλοὶ παροιστρούμενοι τῶν ἀθέων ἀναπέιθονται
 θανατῶν, ὡς ἀναπτησόμενοι πρὸς τὸν οὐρανόν,
 ὅταν ἀπορρήξωσι τὴν ψυχὴν βιαίως. εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ
 καὶ τὰς ἐρημίας ἀντὶ τῶν πόλεων διώκουσιν, ὄντος
 τὰνθρώπου φύσει πολιτικοῦ ζώου καὶ ἡμέρου,
 daίμοσιν ἐκδεδομένοι πονηροῖς, ὑφ' ὧν εἰς ταύτην
 ἄγονται τὴν μισανθρωπίαν. ἤδη δὲ καὶ δεσμὰ καὶ
 κλοιοὺς ἐξηγύρον οἱ πολλοὶ τούτων· οὕτω παντα-
 χόθεν αὐτοὺς ὁ κακὸς συναλύνει daίμων, ᾧ
 δεδώκασιν ἐκόντες ἑαυτοὺς, ἀποστάντες τῶν
 αἰδίων καὶ σωτήρων θεῶν. ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ μὲν τούτων C
 ἀπόχρη τοσαῦτα εἰπεῖν· ὅθεν δ' ἐξέβην εἰς τοῦτο
 ἐπανήξω.

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..... ONLY¹ that they chastise, then and there, any whom they see rebelling against their king. And the tribe of evil demons is appointed to punish those who do not worship the gods, and stung to madness by them many atheists are induced to court death in the belief that they will fly up to heaven when they have brought their lives to a violent end. Some men there are also who, though man is naturally a social and civilised being, seek out desert places instead of cities, since they have been given over to evil demons and are led by them into this hatred of their kind. And many of them have even devised fetters and stocks to wear; to such a degree does the evil demon to whom they have of their own accord given themselves abet them in all ways, after they have rebelled against the everlasting and saving gods. But on this subject what I have said is enough, and I will go back to the point at which I digressed.

¹ The beginning is lost: Julian has apparently been describing the functions of good demons, and now passes on to the demons whose task is to punish evil-doers; cf. *Oration* 2. 90 B.

LETTER TO A PRIEST

Δικαιοπραγίας οὖν τῆς μὲν κατὰ τοὺς πολι-
 τικοὺς νόμους εὐδηλον ὅτι μελήσει τοῖς ἐπιτρόποις
 τῶν πόλεων, πρόποι δ' ἂν καὶ ὑμῖν εἰς παραίνεσιν
 τὸ μὴ παραβαίνειν ἱεροὺς ὄντας τῶν θεῶν τοὺς
 νόμους. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸν ἱερατικὸν βίον εἶναι χρῆ τοῦ 289
 πολιτικοῦ σεμνότερον, ἀκτέον ἐπὶ τοῦτον καὶ
 διδακτέον· ἔψονται δέ, ὡς εἰκός, οἱ βελτίους· ἐγὼ
 μὲν γὰρ εὐχομαι καὶ πάντας, ἐλπίζω δὲ τοὺς
 ἐπιεικεῖς φύσει καὶ σπουδαίους· ἐπιγνώσονται γὰρ
 οἰκείους ὄντας ἑαυτοῖς τοὺς λόγους.

Ἄσκητέα τοίνυν πρὸ πάντων ἡ φιланθρωπία·
 ταύτη γὰρ ἔπεται πολλὰ μὲν καὶ ἄλλα τῶν
 ἀγαθῶν, ἐξάίρετον δὲ δὴ καὶ μέγιστον ἡ παρὰ τῶν B
 θεῶν εὐμένεια. καθάπερ γὰρ οἱ τοῖς ἑαυτῶν
 δεσπόταις συνδιατιθέμενοι περί τε φιλίας καὶ
 σπουδᾶς καὶ ἔρωτας ἀγαπῶνται πλέον τῶν
 ὁμοδούλων, οὕτω νομιστέον φύσει φιλάνθρωπον
 ὃν τὸ θεῖον ἀγαπᾶν τοὺς φιλανθρώπους τῶν
 ἀνδρῶν. ἡ δὲ φιλανθρωπία πολλή καὶ παντοία·
 καὶ τὸ πεφεισμένως κολάζειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐπὶ C
 τῷ βελτίονι τῶν κολαζομένων, ὥσπερ οἱ διδά-
 σκαλοι τὰ παιδιά, καὶ τὸ τὰς χρείας αὐτῶν
 ἐπανορθοῦν, ὥσπερ οἱ θεοὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας. ὁράτε
 ὅσα ἡμῖν δεδώκασιν ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἀγαθὰ, τροφὰς
 παντοίας καὶ ὁπόσας οὐδὲ ὁμοῦ πᾶσι τοῖς ζώοις.
 ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐτέχθημεν γυμνοί, ταῖς τε τῶν ζώων ἡμᾶς
 θριξίν ἐσκέπασαν καὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῆς γῆς φυομένοις
 καὶ τοῖς ἐκ δένδρων. καὶ οὐκ ἤρκεσεν ἀπλῶς οὐδὲ
 αὐτοσχεδίως, καθάπερ ὁ Μωυσῆς ἔφη τοὺς χιτῶ- D

LETTER TO A PRIEST

Though just conduct in accordance with the laws of the state will evidently be the concern of the governors of cities, you in your turn will properly take care to exhort men not to transgress the laws of the gods, since those are sacred. Moreover, inasmuch as the life of a priest ought to be more holy than the political life, you must guide and instruct men to adopt it. And the better sort will naturally follow your guidance. Nay I pray that all men may, but at any rate I hope that those who are naturally good and upright will do so; for they will recognise that your teachings are peculiarly adapted to them.

You must above all exercise philanthropy, for from it result many other blessings, and moreover that choicest and greatest blessing of all, the good will of the gods. For just as those who are in agreement with their masters about their friendships and ambitions and loves are more kindly treated than their fellow slaves, so we must suppose that God, who naturally loves human beings, has more kindness for those men who love their fellows. Now philanthropy has many divisions and is of many kinds. For instance it is shown when men are punished in moderation with a view to the betterment of those punished, as schoolmasters punish children; and again in ministering to men's needs, even as the gods minister to our own. You see all the blessings of the earth that they have granted to us, food of all sorts, and in an abundance that they have not granted to all other creatures put together. And since we were born naked they covered us with the hair of animals, and with things that grow in the ground and on trees. Nor were they content to do this simply or off-hand, as Moses tells us men took

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