

Chapter XXIII: Reign Of Julian.--Part I.

The Religion Of Julian.--Universal Toleration.--He Attempts To Restore And Reform The Pagan Worship--To Rebuild The Temple Of Jerusalem--His Artful Persecution Of The Christians.--Mutual Zeal And Injustice. The character of Apostate has injured the reputation of Julian; and the enthusiasm which clouded his virtues has exaggerated the real and apparent magnitude of his faults. Our partial ignorance may represent him as a philosophic monarch, who studied to protect, with an equal hand, the religious factions of the empire; and to allay the theological fever which had inflamed the minds of the people, from the edicts of Diocletian to the exile of Athanasius. A more accurate view of the character and conduct of Julian will remove this favorable prepossession for a prince who did not escape the general contagion of the times. We enjoy the singular advantage of comparing the pictures which have been delineated by his fondest admirers and his implacable enemies. The actions of Julian are faithfully related by a judicious and candid historian, the impartial spectator of his life and death. The unanimous evidence of his contemporaries is confirmed by the public and private declarations of the emperor himself; and his various writings express the uniform tenor of his religious sentiments, which policy would have prompted him to dissemble rather than to affect. A devout and sincere attachment for the gods of Athens and Rome constituted the ruling passion of Julian; [1] the powers of an enlightened understanding were betrayed and corrupted by the influence of superstitious prejudice; and the phantoms which existed only in the mind of the emperor had a real

and pernicious effect on the government of the empire. The vehement zeal of the Christians, who despised the worship, and overturned the altars of those fabulous deities, engaged their votary in a state of irreconcilable hostility with a very numerous party of his subjects; and he was sometimes tempted by the desire of victory, or the shame of a repulse, to violate the laws of prudence, and even of justice. The triumph of the party, which he deserted and opposed, has fixed a stain of infamy on the name of Julian; and the unsuccessful apostate has been overwhelmed with a torrent of pious invectives, of which the signal was given by the sonorous trumpet [2] of Gregory Nazianzen. [3] The interesting nature of the events which were crowded into the short reign of this active emperor, deserve a just and circumstantial narrative. His motives, his counsels, and his actions, as far as they are connected with the history of religion, will be the subject of the present chapter.

[Footnote 1: I shall transcribe some of his own expressions from a short religious discourse which the Imperial pontiff composed to censure the bold impiety of a Cynic. Orat. vii. p. 212. The variety and copiousness of the Greek tongue seem inadequate to the fervor of his devotion.]

[Footnote 2: The orator, with some eloquence, much enthusiasm, and more vanity, addresses his discourse to heaven and earth, to men and angels, to the living and the dead; and above all, to the great Constantius, an odd Pagan expression. He concludes with a bold assurance, that he has erected a monument not less durable, and much more portable, than the

columns of Hercules. See Greg. Nazianzen, Orat. iii. p. 50, iv. p. 134.]

[Footnote 3: See this long invective, which has been injudiciously divided into two orations in Gregory's works, tom. i. p. 49-134, Paris, 1630. It was published by Gregory and his friend Basil, (iv. p. 133,) about six months after the death of Julian, when his remains had been carried to Tarsus, (iv. p. 120;) but while Jovian was still on the throne, (iii. p. 54, iv. p. 117) I have derived much assistance from a French version and remarks, printed at Lyons, 1735.]

The cause of his strange and fatal apostasy may be derived from the early period of his life, when he was left an orphan in the hands of the murderers of his family. The names of Christ and of Constantius, the ideas of slavery and of religion, were soon associated in a youthful imagination, which was susceptible of the most lively impressions. The care of his infancy was intrusted to Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, [4] who was related to him on the side of his mother; and till Julian reached the twentieth year of his age, he received from his Christian preceptors the education, not of a hero, but of a saint. The emperor, less jealous of a heavenly than of an earthly crown, contented himself with the imperfect character of a catechumen, while he bestowed the advantages of baptism [5] on the nephews of Constantine. [6] They were even admitted to the inferior offices of the ecclesiastical order; and Julian publicly read the Holy Scriptures in the church of Nicomedia. The study of religion, which they assiduously cultivated, appeared to produce the fairest fruits of faith and devotion. [7] They prayed, they

fasted, they distributed alms to the poor, gifts to the clergy, and oblations to the tombs of the martyrs; and the splendid monument of St. Mamas, at Caesarea, was erected, or at least was undertaken, by the joint labor of Gallus and Julian. [8] They respectfully conversed with the bishops, who were eminent for superior sanctity, and solicited the benediction of the monks and hermits, who had introduced into Cappadocia the voluntary hardships of the ascetic life. [9] As the two princes advanced towards the years of manhood, they discovered, in their religious sentiments, the difference of their characters. The dull and obstinate understanding of Gallus embraced, with implicit zeal, the doctrines of Christianity; which never influenced his conduct, or moderated his passions. The mild disposition of the younger brother was less repugnant to the precepts of the gospel; and his active curiosity might have been gratified by a theological system, which explains the mysterious essence of the Deity, and opens the boundless prospect of invisible and future worlds. But the independent spirit of Julian refused to yield the passive and unresisting obedience which was required, in the name of religion, by the haughty ministers of the church. Their speculative opinions were imposed as positive laws, and guarded by the terrors of eternal punishments; but while they prescribed the rigid formulary of the thoughts, the words, and the actions of the young prince; whilst they silenced his objections, and severely checked the freedom of his inquiries, they secretly provoked his impatient genius to disclaim the authority of his ecclesiastical guides. He was educated in the Lesser Asia, amidst the scandals of the Arian controversy. [10] The fierce contests of the Eastern bishops, the

incessant alterations of their creeds, and the profane motives which appeared to actuate their conduct, insensibly strengthened the prejudice of Julian, that they neither understood nor believed the religion for which they so fiercely contended. Instead of listening to the proofs of Christianity with that favorable attention which adds weight to the most respectable evidence, he heard with suspicion, and disputed with obstinacy and acuteness, the doctrines for which he already entertained an invincible aversion. Whenever the young princes were directed to compose declamations on the subject of the prevailing controversies, Julian always declared himself the advocate of Paganism; under the specious excuse that, in the defence of the weaker cause, his learning and ingenuity might be more advantageously exercised and displayed.

[Footnote 4: *Nicomediae ab Eusebio educatus Episcopo, quem genere longius contingebat, (Ammian. xxii. 9.)* Julian never expresses any gratitude towards that Arian prelate; but he celebrates his preceptor, the eunuch Mardonius, and describes his mode of education, which inspired his pupil with a passionate admiration for the genius, and perhaps the religion of Homer. *Misopogon*, p. 351, 352.]

[Footnote 5: *Greg. Naz. iii. p. 70.* He labored to effect that holy mark in the blood, perhaps of a Taurobolium. *Baron. Annal. Eccles. A. D. 361, No. 3, 4.*]

[Footnote 6: Julian himself (*Epist. li. p. 454*) assures the Alexandrians that he had been a Christian (he must mean a sincere one) till the

twentieth year of his age.]

[Footnote 7: See his Christian, and even ecclesiastical education, in Gregory, (iii. p. 58,) Socrates, (l. iii. c. 1,) and Sozomen, (l. v. c. 2.) He escaped very narrowly from being a bishop, and perhaps a saint.]

[Footnote 8: The share of the work which had been allotted to Gallus, was prosecuted with vigor and success; but the earth obstinately rejected and subverted the structures which were imposed by the sacrilegious hand of Julian. Greg. iii. p. 59, 60, 61. Such a partial earthquake, attested by many living spectators, would form one of the clearest miracles in ecclesiastical story.]

[Footnote 9: The philosopher (Fragment, p. 288,) ridicules the iron chains, &c, of these solitary fanatics, (see Tillemont, Mem. Eccles. tom. ix. p. 661, 632,) who had forgot that man is by nature a gentle and social animal. The Pagan supposes, that because they had renounced the gods, they were possessed and tormented by evil daemons.]

[Footnote 10: See Julian apud Cyril, l. vi. p. 206, l. viii. p. 253, 262. "You persecute," says he, "those heretics who do not mourn the dead man precisely in the way which you approve." He shows himself a tolerable theologian; but he maintains that the Christian Trinity is not derived from the doctrine of Paul, of Jesus, or of Moses.]

As soon as Gallus was invested with the honors of the purple, Julian was

permitted to breathe the air of freedom, of literature, and of Paganism.

[11] The crowd of sophists, who were attracted by the taste and liberality of their royal pupil, had formed a strict alliance between the learning and the religion of Greece; and the poems of Homer, instead of being admired as the original productions of human genius, were seriously ascribed to the heavenly inspiration of Apollo and the muses. The deities of Olympus, as they are painted by the immortal bard, imprint themselves on the minds which are the least addicted to superstitious credulity. Our familiar knowledge of their names and characters, their forms and attributes, seems to bestow on those airy beings a real and substantial existence; and the pleasing enchantment produces an imperfect and momentary assent of the imagination to those fables, which are the most repugnant to our reason and experience. In the age of Julian, every circumstance contributed to prolong and fortify the illusion; the magnificent temples of Greece and Asia; the works of those artists who had expressed, in painting or in sculpture, the divine conceptions of the poet; the pomp of festivals and sacrifices; the successful arts of divination; the popular traditions of oracles and prodigies; and the ancient practice of two thousand years. The weakness of polytheism was, in some measure, excused by the moderation of its claims; and the devotion of the Pagans was not incompatible with the most licentious scepticism. [12] Instead of an indivisible and regular system, which occupies the whole extent of the believing mind, the mythology of the Greeks was composed of a thousand loose and flexible parts, and the servant of the gods was at liberty to define the degree and measure of his religious faith. The creed which Julian adopted

for his own use was of the largest dimensions; and, by strange contradiction, he disdained the salutary yoke of the gospel, whilst he made a voluntary offering of his reason on the altars of Jupiter and Apollo. One of the orations of Julian is consecrated to the honor of Cybele, the mother of the gods, who required from her effeminate priests the bloody sacrifice, so rashly performed by the madness of the Phrygian boy. The pious emperor condescends to relate, without a blush, and without a smile, the voyage of the goddess from the shores of Pergamus to the mouth of the Tyber, and the stupendous miracle, which convinced the senate and people of Rome that the lump of clay, which their ambassadors had transported over the seas, was endowed with life, and sentiment, and divine power. [13] For the truth of this prodigy he appeals to the public monuments of the city; and censures, with some acrimony, the sickly and affected taste of those men, who impertinently derided the sacred traditions of their ancestors. [14]

[Footnote 11: Libanius, Orat. Parentalis, c. 9, 10, p. 232, &c. Greg. Nazianzen. Orat. iii. p 61. Eunap. Vit. Sophist. in Maximo, p. 68, 69, 70, edit Commelin.]

[Footnote 12: A modern philosopher has ingeniously compared the different operation of theism and polytheism, with regard to the doubt or conviction which they produce in the human mind. See Hume's Essays vol. ii. p. 444- 457, in 8vo. edit. 1777.]

[Footnote 13: The Idaean mother landed in Italy about the end of the

second Punic war. The miracle of Claudia, either virgin or matron, who cleared her fame by disgracing the graver modesty of the Roman Indies, is attested by a cloud of witnesses. Their evidence is collected by Drakenborch, (ad Silium Italicum, xvii. 33;) but we may observe that Livy (xxix. 14) slides over the transaction with discreet ambiguity.]

[Footnote 14: I cannot refrain from transcribing the emphatical words of Julian: Orat. v. p. 161. Julian likewise declares his firm belief in the ancilia, the holy shields, which dropped from heaven on the Quirinal hill; and pities the strange blindness of the Christians, who preferred the cross to these celestial trophies. Apud Cyril. 1. vi. p. 194.]

But the devout philosopher, who sincerely embraced, and warmly encouraged, the superstition of the people, reserved for himself the privilege of a liberal interpretation; and silently withdrew from the foot of the altars into the sanctuary of the temple. The extravagance of the Grecian mythology proclaimed, with a clear and audible voice, that the pious inquirer, instead of being scandalized or satisfied with the literal sense, should diligently explore the occult wisdom, which had been disguised, by the prudence of antiquity, under the mask of folly and of fable. [15] The philosophers of the Platonic school, [16] Plotinus, Porphyry, and the divine Iamblichus, were admired as the most skilful masters of this allegorical science, which labored to soften and harmonize the deformed features of Paganism. Julian himself, who was directed in the mysterious pursuit by Aedesius, the venerable successor of Iamblichus, aspired to the possession of a treasure, which he

esteemed, if we may credit his solemn asseverations, far above the empire of the world. [17] It was indeed a treasure, which derived its value only from opinion; and every artist who flattered himself that he had extracted the precious ore from the surrounding dross, claimed an equal right of stamping the name and figure the most agreeable to his peculiar fancy. The fable of Atys and Cybele had been already explained by Porphyry; but his labors served only to animate the pious industry of Julian, who invented and published his own allegory of that ancient and mystic tale. This freedom of interpretation, which might gratify the pride of the Platonists, exposed the vanity of their art. Without a tedious detail, the modern reader could not form a just idea of the strange allusions, the forced etymologies, the solemn trifling, and the impenetrable obscurity of these sages, who professed to reveal the system of the universe. As the traditions of Pagan mythology were variously related, the sacred interpreters were at liberty to select the most convenient circumstances; and as they translated an arbitrary cipher, they could extract from any fable any sense which was adapted to their favorite system of religion and philosophy. The lascivious form of a naked Venus was tortured into the discovery of some moral precept, or some physical truth; and the castration of Atys explained the revolution of the sun between the tropics, or the separation of the human soul from vice and error. [18]

[Footnote 15: See the principles of allegory, in Julian, (Orat. vii. p. 216, 222.) His reasoning is less absurd than that of some modern theologians, who assert that an extravagant or contradictory doctrine

must be divine; since no man alive could have thought of inventing it.]

[Footnote 16: Eunapius has made these sophists the subject of a partial and fanatical history; and the learned Brucker (Hist. Philosoph. tom. ii. p. 217-303) has employed much labor to illustrate their obscure lives and incomprehensible doctrines.]

[Footnote 17: Julian, Orat. vii p 222. He swears with the most fervent and enthusiastic devotion; and trembles, lest he should betray too much of these holy mysteries, which the profane might deride with an impious Sardonic laugh.]

[Footnote 18: See the fifth oration of Julian. But all the allegories which ever issued from the Platonic school are not worth the short poem of Catullus on the same extraordinary subject. The transition of Atys, from the wildest enthusiasm to sober, pathetic complaint, for his irretrievable loss, must inspire a man with pity, a eunuch with despair.]

The theological system of Julian appears to have contained the sublime and important principles of natural religion. But as the faith, which is not founded on revelation, must remain destitute of any firm assurance, the disciple of Plato imprudently relapsed into the habits of vulgar superstition; and the popular and philosophic notion of the Deity seems to have been confounded in the practice, the writings, and even in the mind of Julian. [19] The pious emperor acknowledged and adored the

Eternal Cause of the universe, to whom he ascribed all the perfections of an infinite nature, invisible to the eyes and inaccessible to the understanding, of feeble mortals. The Supreme God had created, or rather, in the Platonic language, had generated, the gradual succession of dependent spirits, of gods, of daemons, of heroes, and of men; and every being which derived its existence immediately from the First Cause, received the inherent gift of immortality. That so precious an advantage might be lavished upon unworthy objects, the Creator had intrusted to the skill and power of the inferior gods the office of forming the human body, and of arranging the beautiful harmony of the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms. To the conduct of these divine ministers he delegated the temporal government of this lower world; but their imperfect administration is not exempt from discord or error. The earth and its inhabitants are divided among them, and the characters of Mars or Minerva, of Mercury or Venus, may be distinctly traced in the laws and manners of their peculiar votaries. As long as our immortal souls are confined in a mortal prison, it is our interest, as well as our duty, to solicit the favor, and to deprecate the wrath, of the powers of heaven; whose pride is gratified by the devotion of mankind; and whose grosser parts may be supposed to derive some nourishment from the fumes of sacrifice. [20] The inferior gods might sometimes condescend to animate the statues, and to inhabit the temples, which were dedicated to their honor. They might occasionally visit the earth, but the heavens were the proper throne and symbol of their glory. The invariable order of the sun, moon, and stars, was hastily admitted by Julian, as a proof of their eternal duration; and their eternity was

a sufficient evidence that they were the workmanship, not of an inferior deity, but of the Omnipotent King. In the system of Platonists, the visible was a type of the invisible world. The celestial bodies, as they were informed by a divine spirit, might be considered as the objects the most worthy of religious worship. The Sun, whose genial influence pervades and sustains the universe, justly claimed the adoration of mankind, as the bright representative of the Logos, the lively, the rational, the beneficent image of the intellectual Father. [21]

[Footnote 19: The true religion of Julian may be deduced from the *Caesars*, p. 308, with Spanheim's notes and illustrations, from the fragments in Cyril, l. ii. p. 57, 58, and especially from the theological oration in *Solem Regem*, p. 130-158, addressed in the confidence of friendship, to the praefect Sallust.]

[Footnote 20: Julian adopts this gross conception by ascribing to his favorite Marcus Antoninus, (*Caesares*, p. 333.) The Stoics and Platonists hesitated between the analogy of bodies and the purity of spirits; yet the gravest philosophers inclined to the whimsical fancy of Aristophanes and Lucian, that an unbelieving age might starve the immortal gods. See *Observations de Spanheim*, p. 284, 444, &c.]

[Footnote 21: Julian. *Epist.* li. In another place, (*apud Cyril.* l. ii. p. 69,) he calls the Sun God, and the throne of God. Julian believed the Platonician Trinity; and only blames the Christians for preferring a mortal to an immortal Logos.]

In every age, the absence of genuine inspiration is supplied by the strong illusions of enthusiasm, and the mimic arts of imposture. If, in the time of Julian, these arts had been practised only by the pagan priests, for the support of an expiring cause, some indulgence might perhaps be allowed to the interest and habits of the sacerdotal character. But it may appear a subject of surprise and scandal, that the philosophers themselves should have contributed to abuse the superstitious credulity of mankind, [22] and that the Grecian mysteries should have been supported by the magic or theurgy of the modern Platonists. They arrogantly pretended to control the order of nature, to explore the secrets of futurity, to command the service of the inferior daemons, to enjoy the view and conversation of the superior gods, and by disengaging the soul from her material bands, to reunite that immortal particle with the Infinite and Divine Spirit.

[Footnote 22: The sophists of Eunapias perform as many miracles as the saints of the desert; and the only circumstance in their favor is, that they are of a less gloomy complexion. Instead of devils with horns and tails, Iamblichus evoked the genii of love, Eros and Anteros, from two adjacent fountains. Two beautiful boys issued from the water, fondly embraced him as their father, and retired at his command, p. 26, 27.]

The devout and fearless curiosity of Julian tempted the philosophers with the hopes of an easy conquest; which, from the situation of their young proselyte, might be productive of the most important consequences.

[23] Julian imbibed the first rudiments of the Platonic doctrines from the mouth of Aedesius, who had fixed at Pergamus his wandering and persecuted school. But as the declining strength of that venerable sage was unequal to the ardor, the diligence, the rapid conception of his pupil, two of his most learned disciples, Chrysanthes and Eusebius, supplied, at his own desire, the place of their aged master. These philosophers seem to have prepared and distributed their respective parts; and they artfully contrived, by dark hints and affected disputes, to excite the impatient hopes of the aspirant, till they delivered him into the hands of their associate, Maximus, the boldest and most skilful master of the Theurgic science. By his hands, Julian was secretly initiated at Ephesus, in the twentieth year of his age. His residence at Athens confirmed this unnatural alliance of philosophy and superstition.

He obtained the privilege of a solemn initiation into the mysteries of Eleusis, which, amidst the general decay of the Grecian worship, still retained some vestiges of their primaeval sanctity; and such was the zeal of Julian, that he afterwards invited the Eleusinian pontiff to the court of Gaul, for the sole purpose of consummating, by mystic rites and sacrifices, the great work of his sanctification. As these ceremonies were performed in the depth of caverns, and in the silence of the night, and as the inviolable secret of the mysteries was preserved by the discretion of the initiated, I shall not presume to describe the horrid sounds, and fiery apparitions, which were presented to the senses, or the imagination, of the credulous aspirant, [24] till the visions of comfort and knowledge broke upon him in a blaze of celestial light. [25]

In the caverns of Ephesus and Eleusis, the mind of Julian was penetrated with sincere, deep, and unalterable enthusiasm; though he might sometimes exhibit the vicissitudes of pious fraud and hypocrisy, which may be observed, or at least suspected, in the characters of the most conscientious fanatics. From that moment he consecrated his life to the service of the gods; and while the occupations of war, of government, and of study, seemed to claim the whole measure of his time, a stated portion of the hours of the night was invariably reserved for the exercise of private devotion. The temperance which adorned the severe manners of the soldier and the philosopher was connected with some strict and frivolous rules of religious abstinence; and it was in honor of Pan or Mercury, of Hecate or Isis, that Julian, on particular days, denied himself the use of some particular food, which might have been offensive to his tutelar deities. By these voluntary fasts, he prepared his senses and his understanding for the frequent and familiar visits with which he was honored by the celestial powers. Notwithstanding the modest silence of Julian himself, we may learn from his faithful friend, the orator Libanius, that he lived in a perpetual intercourse with the gods and goddesses; that they descended upon earth to enjoy the conversation of their favorite hero; that they gently interrupted his slumbers by touching his hand or his hair; that they warned him of every impending danger, and conducted him, by their infallible wisdom, in every action of his life; and that he had acquired such an intimate knowledge of his heavenly guests, as readily to distinguish the voice of Jupiter from that of Minerva, and the form of Apollo from the figure of Hercules. [26] These sleeping or waking visions, the ordinary effects of

abstinence and fanaticism, would almost degrade the emperor to the level of an Egyptian monk. But the useless lives of Antony or Pachomius were consumed in these vain occupations. Julian could break from the dream of superstition to arm himself for battle; and after vanquishing in the field the enemies of Rome, he calmly retired into his tent, to dictate the wise and salutary laws of an empire, or to indulge his genius in the elegant pursuits of literature and philosophy.

[Footnote 23: The dexterous management of these sophists, who played their credulous pupil into each other's hands, is fairly told by Eunapius (p. 69- 79) with unsuspecting simplicity. The Abbe de la Bleterie understands, and neatly describes, the whole comedy, (Vie de Julian, p. 61-67.)]

[Footnote 24: When Julian, in a momentary panic, made the sign of the cross the daemons instantly disappeared, (Greg. Naz. Orat. iii. p. 71.) Gregory supposes that they were frightened, but the priests declared that they were indignant. The reader, according to the measure of his faith, will determine this profound question.]

[Footnote 25: A dark and distant view of the terrors and joys of initiation is shown by Dion Chrysostom, Themistius, Proclus, and Stobaeus. The learned author of the Divine Legation has exhibited their words, (vol. i. p. 239, 247, 248, 280, edit. 1765,) which he dexterously or forcibly applies to his own hypothesis.]

[Footnote 26: Julian's modesty confined him to obscure and occasional hints: but Libanius expiates with pleasure on the facts and visions of the religious hero. (Legat. ad Julian. p. 157, and Orat. Parental. c. lxxxiii. p. 309, 310.)]

The important secret of the apostasy of Julian was intrusted to the fidelity of the initiated, with whom he was united by the sacred ties of friendship and religion. [27] The pleasing rumor was cautiously circulated among the adherents of the ancient worship; and his future greatness became the object of the hopes, the prayers, and the predictions of the Pagans, in every province of the empire. From the zeal and virtues of their royal proselyte, they fondly expected the cure of every evil, and the restoration of every blessing; and instead of disapproving of the ardor of their pious wishes, Julian ingenuously confessed, that he was ambitious to attain a situation in which he might be useful to his country and to his religion. But this religion was viewed with a hostile eye by the successor of Constantine, whose capricious passions alternately saved and threatened the life of Julian. The arts of magic and divination were strictly prohibited under a despotic government, which condescended to fear them; and if the Pagans were reluctantly indulged in the exercise of their superstition, the rank of Julian would have excepted him from the general toleration. The apostate soon became the presumptive heir of the monarchy, and his death could alone have appeased the just apprehensions of the Christians. [28] But the young prince, who aspired to the glory of a hero rather than of a martyr, consulted his safety by dissembling his religion; and the easy

temper of polytheism permitted him to join in the public worship of a sect which he inwardly despised. Libanius has considered the hypocrisy of his friend as a subject, not of censure, but of praise. "As the statues of the gods," says that orator, "which have been defiled with filth, are again placed in a magnificent temple, so the beauty of truth was seated in the mind of Julian, after it had been purified from the errors and follies of his education. His sentiments were changed; but as it would have been dangerous to have avowed his sentiments, his conduct still continued the same. Very different from the ass in Aesop, who disguised himself with a lion's hide, our lion was obliged to conceal himself under the skin of an ass; and, while he embraced the dictates of reason, to obey the laws of prudence and necessity." [29] The dissimulation of Julian lasted about ten years, from his secret initiation at Ephesus to the beginning of the civil war; when he declared himself at once the implacable enemy of Christ and of Constantius. This state of constraint might contribute to strengthen his devotion; and as soon as he had satisfied the obligation of assisting, on solemn festivals, at the assemblies of the Christians, Julian returned, with the impatience of a lover, to burn his free and voluntary incense on the domestic chapels of Jupiter and Mercury. But as every act of dissimulation must be painful to an ingenuous spirit, the profession of Christianity increased the aversion of Julian for a religion which oppressed the freedom of his mind, and compelled him to hold a conduct repugnant to the noblest attributes of human nature, sincerity and courage.

[Footnote 27: Libanius, Orat. Parent. c. x. p. 233, 234. Gallus had some reason to suspect the secret apostasy of his brother; and in a letter, which may be received as genuine, he exhorts Julian to adhere to the religion of their ancestors; an argument which, as it should seem, was not yet perfectly ripe. See Julian, Op. p. 454, and Hist. de Jovien tom ii. p. 141.]

[Footnote 28: Gregory, (iii. p. 50,) with inhuman zeal, censures Constantius for paring the infant apostate. His French translator (p. 265) cautiously observes, that such expressions must not be prises a la lettre.]

[Footnote 29: Libanius, Orat. Parental. c ix. p. 233.]