

JULIAN OF AECLANUM ON NATURAL VIRTUES AND ROM. 2:14

In his *Ad Turbantium* II, Julian of Aeclanum, Augustine's most vehement opponent within the context of the Pelagian controversy, discusses the virtues of the pagans. The reason for doing so is, quite obviously, Julian's conviction that the created human beings' nature cannot be harmed by the sin of Adam. *Ad Turbantium* was written in about 419, i.e., during the second period of the Pelagian Controversy.¹ It was a reply to Augustine's first book *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*. *Ad Turbantium* can be read as a plea in favour of God, the good creator, and of humanity, the good creation. This work wants to be an homage to God and all human beings, whether they are Jews or Christians or pagans. In this paper I will only pay attention to Julian's position, not to the one of Augustine, for the latter's ideas about natural law have often been the subject of learned studies.²

Julian was of the opinion that the way in which pagans (sometimes) do what all human beings (including Christians and Jews) are expected to do, is a proof that humanity as a whole, because of its natural capabilities, is able to do what God expects them to do. Indeed, according to Julian, what human beings as created beings are, is the result of God's creative activity and such activity deserves the label good. As a result of this position, Julian cannot accept the doctrine of original sin as presented by Augustine, for such a doctrine, at least in the view of Julian, not only rejects the idea of a good creator and creation – how could a being, born with natural evil, be qualified as theologically good?; how could the creator of a *mala natura* deserve the label “good creator? – but also excludes, from the very beginning of human beings' existence, the possibility that human beings are able to act in a moral way.³ For Julian, a good nature, the result of a good creator, is the precondition for every moral behaviour. Further, according to Julian, every human being is responsible for his own deeds, not for those of others (including Adam). For Julian, this is simply a matter

¹ The second period of the controversy starts with the condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius in 418 and ends with the death of Augustine in 430.

² See the survey of R.J. DOUGHERTY, *Natural Law*, in A. FITZGERALD, *Augustine Through the Ages. An Encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., 1999, pp. 582-584.

³ Cf. M. LAMBERIGTS, *Julian of Aeclanum: A Plea for a Good Creator*, in *Augustiniana* 38 (1988): 5-24.

of justice. Judging one's personal moral activities is an essential part of God's qualification as just.⁴

Within this context, Julian used the actual moral behaviour of the pagans as an argument to prove that the acting will belongs to all human beings' capacities. In order to substantiate this claim, Julian seemingly quoted Rom. 2:14b-15a, where Paul stated that those, who do not know the Law, "naturaliter" fulfil what is ordered by the Law.⁵ According to Augustine, Julian quoted this text in order to show that also those who did not believe in Christ (*alienos a fide Christi*) could have true justice because they did what was prescribed by the Law.⁶ Like Paul, Julian is of the opinion that pagans also have a certain conscience of what is good and evil and, as responsible beings, can concretize this conscience.⁷ Julian not only quoted the Pauline text, he

⁴ Julian's position clearly differs from that of Augustine; see, among others, A.E. McGRATH, *Divine Justice and Divine Equity in the Controversy between Augustine and Julian of Eclanum*, in *Downside Review* 101 (1983), pp. 312-319; J. LÖSSL, *Julian von Aclanum. Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werk, seiner Lehre und ihrer Überlieferung* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, 60), Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2001, pp. 130ff.

⁵ See Julian, *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 109, CCL 88, p. 365. The text, quoted by Julian, runs as following: "Gentes legem non habentes ipsi sibi sunt lex, qui habent opus legis scriptum in cordibus suis." The text is not really discussed by J. LÖSSL, *Julian von Aclanum*, p. 207.

⁶ Julian, *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 109, CCL 88, p. 365. It should be mentioned that Julian's point of departure is quite different in comparison to that of Augustine in his anti-Pelagian works. While Augustine strongly related true justice and belief in the redeemer, Jesus Christ, Julian, for his part, on the one hand offered the classical philosophical definition of justice as found in, among others, Cicero (compare *De natura deorum* III, 38; *De finibus* V, 65; V, 23 with Julian, *Ad Florum* I, 35, CSEL 85, 1, p. 26; I, 131, CSEL 85, 1, p. 143; III, 2, CSEL 85, 1, p. 352); on the other hand, he based his ideas on Scriptural texts such as Ez. 18. In fact, large parts of *Ad Florum* III can be read as a commentary on this Scriptural text. Further, for Julian, it was evident that justice has its roots in God, who revealed this through his laws and his judgements; see, e.g. *Ad Florum* I, 37ff., CSEL 85, 1, pp. 27ff. This reference to Biblical texts is neglected by M. SMALBRUGGE, *L'identification interdite et imposée avec Dieu. Sur le moralisme de Julien d'Éclane*, in *Augustiniana* 54 (2004), pp. 307-323, esp. pp. 310-313.

⁷ The correct understanding of Paul's text was, for a long time, a matter of much debate. Current scholarship seems to agree that Paul, when speaking about the Gentiles, does not have in mind Gentile Christians as was suggested by Augustine in *Contra Iulianum* IV, 25, PL 44, 750; see, in this regard, among others, U. WILCKENS, *Der Brief an die Römer (Röm 1-5)* (Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, VI, 1), Zürich-Einsiedeln-Köln-Neukirchen-Uluy, 1978, p. 133. The idea that pagans are actually a law to themselves, is clearly present in Stoic philosophy. Moreover, Paul seems to affirm that knowledge of what one should do is a present, real condition of Gentile awareness; cf. WILCKENS, pp. 133-134. J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible, 33) New York-London-Toronto-Sydney-Auckland, 1992, pp. 305-312, esp. pp. 310-311. Therefore, it will be no surprise that recent commentators can offer the same explanation

also tried to substantiate his claim that before and outside Christianity human beings existed who, through their acts, proved to act as ethically responsible beings. While Augustine claimed that one can only live justly through faith in Christ (cf. Rom. 1:17) and vehemently rejected the idea that, apart from faith, one could be just,⁸ Julian tried to demonstrate that human nature *in se* was capable to do the good. Indeed, for Julian, the goodness of creation as such is already a gift of God and deserves to be described as an act of divine grace. Moreover, the good creator really wants to help and support humanity in order that it should attain perfection.⁹

From an Augustinian perspective, this could be interpreted as a sign of arrogance.¹⁰ For the bishop of Hippo, it was unthinkable that we, sinful human beings, in our current situation, might be able to start ourselves in doing theologically good works.¹¹ However, within Julian's perspective, such position must be understood as a logical next step in the process of human beings moral developments: a nature which deserves the helping grace of God, must be qualified as good.¹² In other words, *because* our nature is good, it deserves to be helped by God. Furthermore, God gives, to every newborn human being a soul, a rational soul, gifted with a will, freedom, etc. Where, with regard to the creation of the body, one can speak of an interplay between God and men, on the level of the creation of the soul, God is the sole creator. On the level where one will situate reason, will, freedom, ethical responsibility, God and God alone is creating and, with regard to the created product as such, before it becomes an actively behaving

of the two verses as the one found in Julian. See, e.g., S. BÉNÉTREAU, *L'épître de Paul aux Romains* (Commentaire évangélique de la Bible, 17), Vaux-sur-Seine, 2002, pp. 86-87: "Paul, toujours soucieux d'attester l'impartialité divine, veut montrer que pour les païens aussi il y a une base pour le jugement: ils n'ont pas la loi révélée, mais ils ont une certaine connaissance du bien et du mal et une conscience qui approuve ou désapprouve, ce qui fonde une responsabilité précise. (...) Au v. 15, il est précisé que «l'œuvre de la loi» (...) est gravée dans leur cœur. Cette thèse suppose un certain accord entre les requêtes de la loi révélée et celles de la conscience."

⁸ See Augustine, *Contra Iulianum* IV, 17, PL 44, 745.

⁹ Cf. *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 101, CCSL, p. 364.

¹⁰ Cf. Augustine, *Contra Iulianum* IV, 17, PL 44, 745: "Sed absit ut sit in aliquo uera uirtus, nisi fuerit iustus. (...) Quis porro eorum qui se christianos haberi uolunt, nisi soli Pelagiani, aut in ipsis etiam forte tu solus, iustum dixerit infidelem, iustum dixerit impium, iustum dixerit diabolo mancipatum?"

¹¹ This is not to say that, for Augustine, we completely lost the "capax boni", but simply that we, because of our fallen nature, without God's grace are not able to act properly; see, e.g., Augustine, *Opus imperfectum* V, 58, CSEL 85, 2, p. 267.

¹² *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 103: "Bonam ... hominum naturam, quae talis gratiae opitulationem meretur."

moral person, the only one responsible.¹³ One should stress the importance of Julian's point: if God creates, for every newly born baby, a new soul, the chain of sin and guilt between predecessors and successors, between parents and children, between Adam and his progeny no longer exists!

As creator of all and everything, God gives this soul to all newborn babies, thus not only to Christians, but also to pagan babies. In other words, according to Julian, all human beings are, on the level of the soul, as rational beings, *imago Dei*.¹⁴ In order to know what one is expected to know and to do, one does not need the Jewish Law. All human beings, pagans, Jews, Christians, are gifted with reason. Pagans do know what should be done, for reason *naturaliter* enables them to obey God's precepts. The possession of the Law is no reason for the Jews to boast. On the other hand, the fact that the Law is not given to the pagans, cannot be invoked by them as an excuse for their sinful behaviour. The gift of reason as such is sufficient to know what one should do.¹⁵ Indeed, God has revealed himself to all through all He has created: all should be able to obey God's commands through the gift of reason. According to Julian, there can be no doubt: if people, not having received the Law, do not do what they all are expected to do, this is the result of a kind of negligence of reason, and therefore, there is no excuse for their sinfulness.¹⁶

In order to substantiate his position, Julian refers to those heroes of the past who, although not familiar with the Christian faith, abounded in virtues. These people possess the goodness of nature, not the help of grace, but, as we all can observe, they often are merciful, modest, chaste and sober, and they are so due to the powers of their innate freedom.¹⁷ Julian, in opposition to the late Augustine,¹⁸ can refer

¹³ See, in this regard, M. LAMBERIGTS, *Julian of Aeclanum and Augustine on the Origin of the Soul*, in *Augustiniana* 46 (1996), pp. 243-260.

¹⁴ See, e.g., *Ad Florum* IV, 39, CSEL 85, 2, p. 40: "Ut enim imaginem Dei mentis ratione suscepimus ..."; cf. also I, 94, CSEL 85, 1, p. 109.

¹⁵ See, e.g., *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 138, CCSL 88, p. 369; *Ad Florum* II, 151, CSEL 85, 1, p. 274; II, 185, CSEL 85, 1, p. 302.

¹⁶ *Ad Florum* II, 186, CSEL 85, 1, p. 303: "Ut quibus lex data non est, intelligentur non esse praecepta transgressi, rei autem conuincantur, quoniam negligentes rationem, quam proprii in unoquoque protestantur affectus, uel humanae societatis uel pudoris iura temerauerint ...". See also J. WANG TCH'ANG TCHE, *Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens*, Paris, 1938, pp. 106-112.

¹⁷ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 105, CCSL 88, p. 364: "... in quibus sine adiutorio gratiae, solum est naturae bonum, licet superstitionibus mancipatum, qui solis libertatis ingenitae uiribus et misericordes crebro et modesti et casti inueniuntur et sobrii ...".

¹⁸ According to Augustine, every ethical act must be done *propter Deum*. If this is not the case, such an act does not deserve to be qualified as good.

to concrete Roman people, known for their high ethical way of living. In this regard, Julian refers to people like Fabricius, Fabius, Scipio and Regulus.¹⁹ Fabricius, a very successful military leader, had, as consul, beaten several tribes. His most famous victory was the one against the Samnites in 282 B.C. In classic antiquity he was seen as the model of Roman virtue and ethical excellence. Cicero himself – and we know how much Julian borrowed from Cicero²⁰ – praised Fabricius for his honesty because, in the war against Pyrrhus, he refused to accept the offer of a captive who had proposed to poison Pyrrhus²¹ and was very much impressed by Fabricius freely chosen life of poverty.²² Quintus Fabius Cunctator, who deliberately avoided to fight with the Punic troops during the Second Punic War, was praised in classical tradition for his statesmanship and his brilliant glory, his cleverness, wisdom and his clement humaneness.²³ Cornelius Scipio Africanus Maior was described as a great and wise man. Cicero stressed his superiority of character and praised his search for “otium et solitudo.”²⁴ Atilius Regulus was a man of his word and showed to be honest and trustworthy. Indeed, imprisoned by the Punic, he was sent by them to Rome in order to negotiate about Carthaginian prisoners. He refused to give his support to the Punic request and instead of staying in his homeland and with his family, he preferred to respect his given word for he considered the good of the state as more important than his personal fate.²⁵ Honesty, wisdom, faithfulness, loyalty and the like, are all virtues that, according to Julian, are attributed to these heroes of the pagan past. Julian’s defence of the intrinsic values of pagan behaviour is, in a sense, a logical consequence of his conviction that all virtues have their origin in the rational mind:

“The origin of all the virtues is located in the rational mind, and all the dispositions by which we are good either in a fruitful or in a barren

¹⁹ Cf. *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 106, CCSL 88, p. 364. For similar ideas in the work of a contemporary of Julian, Salvian of Marseille, see M. L. COLISH, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. II. Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 35)*, Leiden, 1985, pp. 113-114.

²⁰ Cf. M. LAMBERIGTS, *Iulianus IV (Iulianus von Aeclanum)*, in RAC 19 (1999), pp. 483-505, esp. 491-493.

²¹ Cicero, *De officiis* I, 40; III, 86.

²² Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* III, 56.

²³ Cf. Cicero, *De officiis* I, 84.108. For a critical evaluation of this classical view, see art. *Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus*, in G. WISSOWA (ed.), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* VI, Stuttgart, 1909, 1814-1830, 1830.

²⁴ Cicero, *De officiis* III, 1ff. The topic of *otium* was well known in both classical and Christian antiquity.

²⁵ Cicero, *De officiis* I, 39; III, 99.115.

manner are found in the subject that is our mind: prudence, justice, temperance, courage. Therefore, though the power of these dispositions is naturally in all, it does not, nonetheless, move toward one end in all of them. Rather, in accord with the judgment of the will whose least indication they serve, they are directed either to eternal or to temporal goods. When this happens, they differ not in what they are, not in what they do, but only in what they merit. They cannot suffer the loss of their proper name or of their proper kind, but they are either enriched by the largeness or disappointed by the slimness only of the reward they sought."²⁶

Human beings are created as rational, mortal beings, capable of virtue and vice, for, by nature, created in such a way that they are able to fulfil or transgress God's commandments or protect, on the basis of natural teaching, the rights of human society. They possess the freedom to opt for either of the two options, wherein one will find the essence of either sinning or doing justice.²⁷ What makes us good depends upon what we are and do as rational beings. In theory, we all are expected to fulfil what is required by virtues such as prudence, justice, temperance, courage. *De facto*, the will's choices orientate our moral behaviour. Whether we choose for eternal or temporal goods is, Julian claims, the result of our own will. What kind of merits we will deserve, is the result of our choices.

It is interesting to see that Julian's appeal to the moral behaviour of pagans is directly related to his view that all human beings are gifted with innate virtues, and he will quote in this context Rom. 2:14-15 as an argument for his own position. One can say that for Julian there is no contradiction between good ethical ideas, present in classical tradition, and what one can find as valuable insights in Scripture.

²⁶ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 108, CCSL 88, p. 365: "Cunctarum origo uirtutum in rationabili animo sita est, et affectus omnes, per quos aut fructuose aut steriliter boni sumus, in subiecto sunt mentis nostrae: prudentia, iustitia, temperantia, fortitudo. Horum igitur affectuum uis cum sit in omnibus naturaliter (...), non tamen ad unum finem in omnibus properat; sed pro iudicio uoluntatis, cuius nutui seruiunt, aut ad aeterna aut ad temporalia diriguntur. Quod cum fit, non in eo quod sunt, non in eo quod agunt, sed in eo solo uariant quod merentur. Nec nominis sui igitur (...) possunt nec generis sustinere dispendium, sed solius quod appetuerunt praemii aut amplitudine ditantur aut exilitate frustrantur." The translation is taken from *Answer to the Pelagians, II: Answer to Julian*. Introduction, Translation and Notes by R.T. TESKE (*The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, I, 24), New York, 1998, pp. 391-392.

²⁷ *Ad Florum* I, 79, CSEL 85, 1, p. 94: "Factum est enim animal rationale, mortale, capax uirtutis et uitii, quod posset ex concessa sibi possibilitate uel seruare dei mandata uel transgredi uel magisterio naturali conseruare ius humanae societatis liberum que haberet alterutram uelle partem, in quo peccati et iustitiae summa est."

As Julian will state elsewhere, virtues are *congenital*.²⁸ All human beings possess an innate nobility,²⁹ for virtues such as wisdom, justice, self continence and courage belong to the domain of the rational soul, God's gift par excellence. Indeed, Julian can easily combine Christian thinking about the goodness of creation with Stoic reflection about human beings ethical possibilities.³⁰

In book II of *Ad Turbantium*, within a context where he is describing the task of the soul in its relation to the body – for Julian, it is clear that the soul, gifted with reason, must direct and control the body – Julian explicitly refers to Sallust. Julian was of the opinion that human beings consist of two unequal elements, soul and body: the soul is expected to rule over the body, “quorum alterum nobis cum diis, alterum cum beluis (...) esse commune” (Sallust, *De Catilinae Coniuratione* 1, 2), for the soul is gifted with virtue and thus requested to commend the body.³¹ Julian indeed is aware of the fact that what Christians hold also belongs to the culture he lives in: the distance between his Christian world and his “secular” training is, indeed, much smaller as it was, at that time in history, the case for Augustine.³²

According to Julian, these virtues are, on the one hand, innate, but must also be acquired by the use of perfect reason.³³ Indeed, for Julian, the presence and knowledge of innate virtues as such is not sufficient. Human beings are expected to develop these virtues by living according to them: human beings not only need to know these virtues, but are also expected to make them concrete.³⁴ God enables human beings to fulfil his laws. Pious and just as He is, He will never ask that should be done what is impossible, for He is a good creator

²⁸ *Ad Florum* IV, 129, *CSEL* 85, 2, p. 155: “(...) homo per omnia probus, congenitis dicatur florere uirtutibus.”

²⁹ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 85, *CCSL* 88, p. 362: “(...) atque ob hoc dicatis non esse in carne mali necessitatem, ut erubescat unusquisque laudabiliter conditus, deformiter uiuere, ac sic pudor turpi occurrat ignauiae de commendatione nobilitatis ingenitae ...”

³⁰ On the Stoic aspect, see, e.g., *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 22.

³¹ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 116, *CCSL* 88, p. 366: “(...) quoniam ex imparibus bonis compositi sumus, animum corpori debere dominari, quorum alterum nobis cum diis, alterum cum beluis (...) commemoras esse commune; et ideo id quod est melius, id est, animum, uirtute praeditum (...) et membris corporis bene et cupiditatibus imperare.”

³² Cf. LÖSSL, *Julian von Aeclanum*, pp. 83-90 (Säkulare Bildung und kirchliches Milieu).

³³ *Ad Florum* III, 165, *CSEL* 85, 1, p. 469: “Sed de illis ego uirtutibus dico, quas usu iam perfectae rationis adipiscimur.” See also F. REFOULÉ, *Julien d'Éclane. Théologien et philosophe*, in *RSR* 52 (1964), pp. 42-84, p. 53.

³⁴ Cf. *Commentarius in Canticum Canticorum*, frg. 9, *CCSL* 88, p. 400: “(...) sic ergo et in te, cuius generositatem doctrina componit, ut uirtutes, quas natura inchoet, disciplina consummet.”

of human beings, who are innocent by nature, and at the same time able to freely live according to the virtues,³⁵ for God made us all *capax virtutis*.³⁶ It will be evident that Julian, with his belief in a God who is the creator of all human beings, a God who created his humanity in such a way that they *naturaliter* know what they must do, hardly can accept the idea that people are born guilty because of the sin of their ancestor, Adam.³⁷

Julian's position will result in a firm protest against any idea of natural evil, because of his concern for a life according to the *verae virtutes*. Like Hincmar of Reims and Hrabanus Maurus in the ninth century, he fears that the idea of natural evil might question one's personal responsibility, something a Roman citizen, even in the fifth century, could not accept.³⁸ It should be emphasized that Julian's protest against any idea of natural evil is thoroughly related with this concern for the autonomy of the individual, rational and thus ethically responsible human being.³⁹

Julian is well aware of some other consequences of his appreciation of the pagans' ethical capacities. Indeed, it seems unfair to him that those who are able to act in a just way, who prove that true justice is in themselves, will receive eternal condemnation.⁴⁰ In a sense, Julian questions Augustine's clear but radical position: without faith in Christ no one can be saved, i.e., those who do not believe in Christ (e.g., because they lived before Christ's coming), will be condemned to eternal death. Julian is of the opinion that such a radical position is, in a sense, unjust towards those who did not know or still do not know Jesus Christ, while at the same time fulfilling what ethically was and is requested from them. Cynically, Julian remarks that if one is no longer allowed to call the chastity of the pagans chastity, one no longer

³⁵ *Ad Florum* III, 82, CSEL 85, 1, p. 406: "Ergo Deum et iustum et pium credimus et ueracem ac per hoc nihil impossibile mandasse legem eius tenemus, nihil falsum confirmare testimonia, nihil iniquum pronuntiare iudicia, sed ipsum esse hominum conditorem, quos nullo crimini obnoxios creat, uerum plenos quidem innocentia naturali, uoluntariarum autem uirtutum capaces."

³⁶ Cf. *Ad Florum* I, 79, CSEL 85, 1, p. 94.

³⁷ For Julian's ideas about Adam, see M. LAMBERIGTS, *Julien d'Éclane et Augustin d'Hippone: deux conceptions d'Adam*, in *Augustiniana* 40 (1990), pp. 373-410, esp. pp. 373-382; LÖSSL, *Julian von Aeclanum*, pp. 102ff.

³⁸ See, e.g., *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 85, CCSL 88, p. 362.

³⁹ Cf. *Ad Florum* III, 197, CSEL 85, 1, p. 496; IV, 129, CSEL 85, 2, pp. 153ff. With regard to Julian's distinction between human beings' created nature and their moral activity, see F. REFOULÉ, *Julien d'Éclane: théologien et philosophe?*, in *RSR* 52 (1964), pp. 42-84; pp. 233-247.

⁴⁰ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 111, CCSL 88, p. 365.

can call their bodies bodies, nor the fruits of their fields fruits. This is absurd, Julian concludes.⁴¹ Therefore, Julian asks Augustine, "If a pagan were to clothe the naked, rescue the one in danger, care for the wounds of the sick, share his wealth in honest friendship and could in no way be forced to give false testimony even by torture, is this all sin, because it does not come from faith?"⁴² In Julian's view, one must evaluate what people actually do. One gets the impression that, in Julian's argumentation, *what* we do is more important than *why* we do it. In any case, one cannot separate the *why* from the *what*.

Faithful to his conviction that human beings' nature deserves the qualification good, he repeats that human beings can be without sins by pursuing holiness, a pursuit which is supported by God.⁴³ In Julian's view, God helps his humanity two times: first through the gift of a good creation; next through his constant help and support of those who want to do what He requests them to do.⁴⁴

In a sense, Julian emphasizes the importance of human beings' responsibility simply because he fears that an idea in which only faith should lead to salvation might result in a kind of laziness or fatalism. Julian fears that such idea annihilates human beings' free will and ethical responsibility, for if evil is in one's created nature, he will never be able to overcome it and do the good, one is expected to do.⁴⁵ Moreover, Julian interprets 1 Tim. 2:4: "(Deus) qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri et ad agnitionem veritatis venire" in its broadest sense, *id est*, God wants all human beings to be saved, for all are his creatures.⁴⁶

⁴¹ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 112, CCSL 88, p. 365: "Si dicatur (...) quia castitas infidelium castitas non est, eadem fronte dicitur, quia corpus paganorum corpus non sit et oculi paganorum sensum non habeant intuendi et frumenta quae in paganorum nascuntur agris frumenta non sint; et multa (...) alia quae tantae absurditatis sunt, ut risum possint intelligentibus commovere."

⁴² *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 114, CCSL 88, p. 366: "Si gentilis nudum operuerit, periclitantem liberauerit, aegri uulnera fouerit, diuitias honestae amicitiae impenderit, ad testimonium falsum nec tormentis potuerit impelli, numquid quia non est ex fide, peccatum est?" The translation is, with some small changes, taken from *Answer to the Pelagians, II: Answer to Julian*. Introduction, Translation and Notes by R.T. TESKE (*The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, I,24), New York, 1998, p. 398.

⁴³ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 113, CCSL 88, p. 366: "Perfacile igitur studio sanctitatis, quod Deus adiuvat, potest homo carere peccatis."

⁴⁴ It should be remembered that people like Pelagius and Julian constantly add: "with the help of God" when they speak of human beings ability to do the good they are expected to do.

⁴⁵ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 118, CCSL 88, p. 366: "Si aliquis malus condi posset (...) numquam in bonum ablutione transiret."

⁴⁶ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 123, CCSL 88, p. 367.

This is possible for God's Law is written in the heart of all people and, as can be seen in the moral behaviour of the prophets, patriarchs and other saints of the Old Testament, of pagans and Christians, people can really excel through their own efforts⁴⁷. Julian really thinks through the consequences of God's universal creativity and the goodness related to it.

Julian reproaches Augustine that the latter does not expect anything from human beings' ethical efforts. According to Julian, Augustine thus contradicts Mt. 7:7-8par. where the Lord explicitly states: "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives; everyone who seeks finds; and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks."⁴⁸ Scholars dealing with the Pelagian controversy quite often claim that one of the issues, underdeveloped by the Pelagians, is prayer. I think this reproach is correct: one will seldom find a systematic discussion of the importance of prayer in Pelagian writings. At the same time, one must admit that a text as the one quoted above makes clear that somebody like Julian, when dealing with evangelical texts, referring to prayer, interprets these texts literally: we are expected to ask, seek and knock. We are expected to take the initiative. We have to recognize that we need God's help. In other words, although Julian does not share Augustine's view of a *gratia praeveniens*, or a *voluntas a Deo praeparata* – at least in so far as such ideas are related to a postlapsarian status –, he is still well aware of the need to pray in order to be helped. At the same time, this does not exclude our duty to make use of the capacities we all received.

Julian is of the opinion that Augustine too easily attributes to the *gratia Christi* (to the saving and restoring grace) what can be considered as belonging to human beings' created nature as such. E.g., Julian reproaches Augustine for considering marital chastity as a gift of grace, while such chastity is also present among unbelievers.⁴⁹ Julian here seems to suggest that by attributing too many human qualities and activities to Christian grace, one, in a sense, is endangering the

⁴⁷ *Ad Florum* I, 124, CSEL 85, 1, p. 137: "Prophetas et patriarchas omnesque sanctos ueteris testamenti constat baptismatis expertes fuisse, sed a Deo conditos propriis deinceps fulsisse uirtutibus ...".

⁴⁸ Cf. *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 122, CCSL 88, p. 367.

⁴⁹ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 125, CCSL 88, p. 367: "(Quid est autem quod loqueris) nihil pertinere ad laudem gratiae, si id donet suis, quod peccata impiis largiuntur (propter pudicitiam scilicet coniugalem, quam tibi habere uidentur et impii? (...)) Ut quid autem pudicitiam et uirginitatem quasi eiusdem generis iungis?"

actual value and specificity of such grace, for the qualities and activities mentioned, are also present with pagans.⁵⁰ Not without rhetorical exaggeration, Julian states: "But if on account of this evil of sexual desire even Christian spouses produce a sinful offspring, it follows that virginal chastity is the bearer of happiness. And since (...) it is found in people without the faith, those unbelievers exalted by the virtue of chastity are better than Christians defiled by the stain of sexual desire."⁵¹ Again, Julian's point is clear: much of what is considered to be done "sub gratia",⁵² is already present in the pagans, who, although not having experienced God's grace, are doing the same things as the Christians. It seems to me that Julian's main concern – and I frankly admit that the bishop sometimes can be extremely boring in his arguments – consists in protecting and defending what can be qualified as common to humanity. By doing so, he in no way wants to depreciate Christian ethical behaviour, but wants to avoid that what can be done by human beings because of their own natural capacities, should be attributed by Christians to an external saving power, wrongly called "grace".⁵³

This is not to say that, from the perspective of the Christian faith, there should be no problem with these pagans' positions. Indeed, the pagans' *bonum naturae* is caught in superstition,⁵⁴ which can, according to Julian, in no way be excused, for the pagans too could have known God's law on the basis of their innate reason, for God had revealed himself through his creation.⁵⁵ Indeed, that human beings must venerate and honour the one and true God is imprinted in them

⁵⁰ Of course, it should be admitted that, for Augustine, the core of his argument had not so much to do with what one *de facto* is doing, but with what motivates someone to act in such a way.

⁵¹ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 127, CCSL 88, p. 367: "Sed si propter hoc (...) libidinis malum etiam de coniugibus christianis proles criminosa profertur, sequitur ut pudicitia uirginalis sit felicitatis illatrix; et quia in impiis inuenitur (...), antecellunt infideles pudicitiae uirtute sublimes, christianis libidinis tabe pollutis." The translation is, with some small changes, taken from *Answer to the Pelagians, II: Answer to Julian*. Introduction, Translation and Notes by R.T. TESKE (*The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, I, 24), New York, 1998, pp. 409.

⁵² Meant is the saving grace of Christ.

⁵³ In *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 128ff., CCSL 88, pp. 368ff. Julian will try to show that, on the corporeal level, elements such as concupiscence should be considered as belonging to our created nature and thus, *in se*, deserve the qualification good for they refer to God's creative activity. According to Julian, moral qualifications such as good or evil should be related to moral activities of human beings, not to their substance, in its creation result of God's own activity.

⁵⁴ *Ad Turbantium*, frg. 105, CCSL 88, p. 364.

⁵⁵ *Ad Florum* IV, 23, CSEL 85, 2, pp. 23-24.

as images of God through their natural reason⁵⁶. In other words, Julian does believe that pagans can perform good acts but at the same time points out that their adoration of the pagan gods can in no way be an excuse for them.

In this regard, one should remember that Julian, throughout the controversy, constantly protested against Augustine's accusation that the Pelagians claimed that they were able to venerate God without his help.⁵⁷ For Julian, the cult of God is so rich and diverse and has so many implications that it is simply nonsensical to suggest that a human being could fulfil all these things without God's helping grace.⁵⁸ Moreover, on the level of doctrine and mystery, the human beings' free will is simply insufficient.⁵⁹ Julian clearly said 'yes' to a grace that helps us to believe and understand Christian doctrine.

As far as I can see, Julian never read, or better, never replied to Augustine's *Contra Iulianum*. Therefore, it is hard to know whether he ever would have agreed with Augustine that the great heroes of ancient Rome could not be truly righteous because they did not have the true faith in Christ. At the same time, it must be recognized that also for Julian, Christ's coming, suffering, death and resurrection are a great momentum in Christian history. Indeed, Julian speaks of Christ's manifold grace: Christ created all out of nothing, gave us reason, made us

⁵⁶ Julian, *Ad Florum* II, 151, CSEL 85, 1, pp. 274-275; III, 106, CSEL 85, 1, p. 426: "Cum utique ista omnia, tam quae dogmatibus quam quae mysteriis continentur, libertas arbitrii per se non potuerit inuenire, quamuis, ut nec idola colerentur nec Deus, qui innotescebat mundi ipsius conditor, sperneretur, magistro gentium teste docere potuerit ratio naturalis."

⁵⁷ *Ad Florum* III, 106, CSEL 85, 1, p. 425: "Quod enim ais ad colendum recte Deum sine ipsius adiutorio dici a nobis sufficere unicuique libertatem arbitrii, omnino mentiris."

⁵⁸ *Ad Florum* III, 106, CSEL 85, 1, pp. 425-426: "Cum enim cultus Dei multis intellegatur modis et in custodia mandatorum et in exsecratione uitiorum et in simplicitate conuersationis et in ordine mysteriorum et in profunditate dogmatum, quae de trinitate uel de resurrectione multisque aliis similibus fides christiana consequitur, qui fieri potest, ut nos inconfuso dicamus sine adiutorio Dei liberum arbitrium sufficiens ad eius esse culturam, cum legamus in euangelio dicentem dominum: confiteor tibi, Pater, Domine caeli et terrae, qui abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus et reuelasti ea paruulis: ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit beneplacitum ante te?"

⁵⁹ *Ad Florum* III, 106, CSEL 85, 1, p. 426: "Cum utique ista omnia, tam quae dogmatibus quam quae mysteriis continentur, libertas arbitrii per se non potuerit inuenire, quamuis, ut nec idola colerentur nec Deus, qui innotescebat mundi ipsius conditor, sperneretur, magistro gentium teste docere potuerit ratio naturalis." On Julian's view about grace, see M. LAMBERIGTS, *Julian of Aeclanum on Grace: Some Considerations*, in E.A. LIVINGSTONE (ed.), *Studia Patristica. Papers Presented at the Eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 1991*. Vol. XXVII: *Cappadocian Fathers, Greek Authors after Nicaea, Augustine, Donatism, and Pelagianism*, Leuven, 1993, pp. 342-349.

his image, and granted us free will. Through grace, benefits increased. Grace itself gave us the law as a help that should stimulate the light of reason. Christ's incarnation was described as belonging to the fullness of grace. It was seen as an expression of God's incalculable affection for us, so that we would love him in return. God's love was so great that He did not spare his son but delivered him for us. Through baptism, He not only forgives our sins but raises us up, adopts us and makes us holy. The only thing Julian cannot accept is that, through the gift of grace, the essentials of the created human nature are radically changed or destroyed.⁶⁰

Finally, it should be stressed that Julian's position was not simply held because he wanted to undermine Augustine's doctrine of original sin. Indeed, it was an integral part of his own theological convictions. In this regard, one might refer to Julian's *Expositio libri Iob* XXIII, 12. Here, Julian explicitly states that the Biblical text: "Mandatis labiorum eius non recessi" should be interpreted as follows: God's orders are impressed in the human nature by the power of reason and as such they are, like the law, able to teach justice to human beings, a position, confirmed by Paul in Rom. 2:14.⁶¹ In other words, the belief that all human beings as rational images of God know what should be done and are created in such a way that they are able to

⁶⁰ Julian, *Ad Florum* I, 94-95, CSEL 85,1, pp. 109-110: "Gratiam ergo Christi multiplicem confitemur: primum munus eius est, quod facti ex nihilo sumus. Secundum, quod ut uiuentibus sensu ita sentientibus ratione praestamus, quae impressa est animo, ut conditoris imago doceretur, ad cuius aequae respicit dignitatem arbitrii concessa libertas. Ipsi etiam gratiae beneficiorum, quae nobis praestare non desinit, augmenta reputamus; ipsa gratia legem in adiutorium misit; ad eius spectabat officium, ut rationis lumen, quod prauitatis exempla hebetabant et consuetudo uitiorum, multimodis eruditionibus excitaret atque imitatos suos foueret; ad istius ergo gratiae, id est diuinae benevolentiae, quae rebus causam dedit, plenitudinem spectauit, ut uerbum caro fieret et habitaret in nobis. Reposcens enim Deus ab imagine sua amoris uicem palam fecit, quam totum in nos inestimabili egisset affectu, ut uel sero redamaremus eum, qui commendans caritatem suam nobis filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis illum tradidit pollicens, quia, si uoluissimus deinceps uoluntati eius oboedire, unigeniti sui praestaret nos esse coheredes. Haec ergo gratia, quae in baptismo non solum peccata condonat, sed cum hoc indulgentiae beneficio et prouehit et optat et consecrat, haec, inquam, gratia, meritum mutat reorum, non liberum condit arbitrium, quod eo accipimus tempore quo creamur, utimur autem, quo ualentiam inter bonum et malum discretionis adipiscimur. Bonae itaque uoluntati innumeras adiutorii diuini adesse species non negamus, sed ita, ut non per adiutorii genera aut fabricetur quae fuerit arbitrii destructa libertas aut aliquando ea exclusa uel boni uel mali cuiquam necessitas credatur incumbere, uerum arbitrio libero omne adiutorium cooperatur."

⁶¹ Julian, *Expositio libri Iob* XXIII, 12, CCSL 88, p. 265: "Mandata labiorum Dei esse dicit naturae suae uim rationis impressam, quae uice legis potuit homines docere iustitiam, sicut et apostolus ait: cum enim gentes quae legem non habent, naturaliter ea quae legis sunt faciunt, eiusmodi legem non habentes, ipsi sibi sunt lex."

realize God's commandments belonged to the essentials of Julian's personal conviction, whether this was defended in a controversy or explained in an exegetical commentary.

I think that the following conclusions can be drawn from what is developed in this article:

1. The idea that the good God is the good creator of all human beings (Christians, Jews, pagans) is one of the cornerstones of Julian's theology.
2. All human beings are born with a rational soul and are, especially on that level, images of God. Moral behaviour happens on the level of the soul; here, one must situate the innate virtues and the personal conscience. Moreover, here, in a sense, every human being starts *ab ovo*. No previous sinners, not even Adam, can destroy the "purity" and innocence of the newly created soul of a baby.
3. Further, that all humans beings are created with a morally good nature is proved by the ethical behaviour of pagans.
4. As a Christian, Julian stresses that God wants all human beings, including pagans, to be saved, for all are born with the needed capabilities (cf. Rom. 2:14).
5. Julian radically denies the existence of any natural evil in human beings' created constitution, for that might result in the negligibility of human beings' personal and ethical responsibility.
6. Julian's praise of the moral life of the pagans does not mean that pagans do not need the saving grace of Christ.

Of course, Julian's position, in its logical coherence, also causes some problems especially on the level of concrete human beings' moral behaviour. Indeed, all human beings are born in a concrete context. The influence of education on children is well known and nobody is born *tabula rasa*. At the same time, it remains true that Julian's creationist approach is a very fundamental critique of Augustine's ideas about original sin. Moreover, his view that non-Christians can live and act as ethically speaking good humans is not only a challenging statement towards Christians, it is even, in the context of today, a very relevant position. Julian is convinced that non-Christians are able to do what should be done, but, at the same time, he stresses that these non-Christians have no excuse for not venerating the true God.

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