

JULIAN Of ECLANUM

Letter To Rome

Edited By Rev. Daniel R. Jennings

Synopsis: *This letter was a defense against the doctrines of the established church and a statement of faith of the Pelagian Christians. It was sent to Rome, as a defense of sorts as well as a warning against what they understood to be Augustine's infusion of Manichaeian thought into Christian theology. It is preserved only in fragments of Augustine's critique of it. These fragments can be divided into three parts: 1.) The doctrines of the non-Pelagian Church (at least how they understood them to be), 2.) The doctrines of the Pelagians, and 3.) A conclusion.*

I. The Doctrines of Augustine, As The Pelagians Understood Them

- “Those Manicheans (Julian refers to the non-Pelagians, whose chief theologian has become Augustine, as Manicheans, a clear intimidation that he has sensed a carry over of Manichean thought from Augustine into the Christian Church. Augustine was a Manichaeian himself for about nine years) say with whom now we do not communicate,—that is, the whole of them with whom we differ,—that by the sin of the first man, that is, of Adam, free will perished: and that no one has now the power of living well, but that all are constrained into sin by the necessity of their flesh.”
- “They say also that those marriages which are now celebrated were not appointed by God, and this is to be read in Augustine's book, against which I replied in four books. And the words of this Augustine our enemies have taken up by way of hostility to the truth.”
- “They say also that sexual impulse and the intercourse of married people were devised by the devil, and that therefore those who are born innocent are guilty, and that it is the work of the devil, not of God, that they are born of this diabolical intercourse. And this, without any ambiguity, is Manichaeism.”
- “They say that the saints in the Old Testament were not without sins,—that is that they were not free from crimes even by amendment, but they were seized by death in their guilt.”
- “They say that even the Apostle Paul, even all the apostles, were always polluted by immoderate lust.”
- “[Augustine says] that Christ even was not free from sins, but that, from the necessity of the flesh, He spoke falsely, and was stained with other faults,”
- “They also say that baptism does not give complete remission of sins, nor take away crimes, but that it shaves them off, so that the roots of all sins are retained in the evil flesh.”

II. A Doctrinal Statement of The Pelagians

- “In opposition to these things we daily argue, and we are unwilling to yield our consent to transgressors, because we say that free will is in all by nature, and could not perish by the sin of Adam; which assertion is confirmed by the authority of all Scriptures.”
- “We say that that marriage which is now celebrated throughout the earth was ordained by God, and that married people are not guilty, but that fornicators and adulterers are to be condemned.”
- “We say that the sexual impulse—that is, that the virility itself, without which there can be no intercourse—is ordained by God.”
- “We maintain that men are the work of God, and that no one is forced unwillingly by His power either into evil or good, but that man does either good or ill of his own will; but that in a good work he is always assisted by God’s grace, while in evil he is incited by the suggestions of the devil.”
- “We say that the saints of the Old Testament, their righteousness being perfected here, passed to eternal life,—that is, that by the love of virtue they departed from all sins; because those whom we read of as having committed any sin, we nevertheless know to have amended themselves.”
- “We confess that the grace of Christ is necessary to all, both to grown-up people and to infants; and we anathematize those who say that a child born of two baptized people ought not to be baptized.”
- “We condemn those who affirm that baptism does not do away all sins, because we know that full cleansing is conferred by these mysteries.”

III. Conclusion

- “Let no one therefore seduce you, nor let the wicked deny that they think these things. But if they speak the truth, either let a hearing be given, or let those very bishops who now disagree with me condemn what I have above said that they hold with the Manicheans, as we condemn those things which they declare concerning us, and a full agreement shall be made; but if they will not, know ye that they are Manicheans, and abstain from their company.”

(Preserved in Augustine of Hippo's Against Two Letters Of The Pelagians, Bk. 2)