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**TWO ORATIONS OF THE
EMPEROR JULIAN**

THOMAS TAYLOR

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Two Orations of the Emperor Julian by Thomas Taylor.

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bodies themselves, become worthy of receiving much assistance and health: “for (say they) the mortal vestment of bitter matter will, by this means, be preserved ⁷⁹.” And this the gods in an exhortatory manner, announce to the most holy of Theurgists.

What therefore now remains for us to say; especially since we have composed this Oration without any respite in a short part of one night, without any previous reading or meditation on the subject, and without even intending to discourse on these particulars, till we called for these note books in order to commit them to writing? The goddess herself is a witness of the truth of my assertion. What then remains for us to accomplish, except recalling the goddess into our memory, together with Minerva and Bacchus, whose festivals the law establishes in these purifying rites? And this indeed took place, in consequence of the authors of these ceremonies perceiving the alliance of Minerva with the mother of the gods, through providential similitude in the essence of each; from perceiving likewise the partial fabrication of Bacchus, which this mighty god receiving from the uniform and stable life of the mighty Jupiter, in consequence of proceeding from him, distributed to all apparent natures; at the same time administering and ruling over every partial fabrication. But it is proper likewise to call to mind, in conjunction with these, Hermes *Epaphroditus* ⁸⁰; for thus is this god denominated by the mystics, who are said to kindle lamps in honour of the wise Attis. Who, therefore, is so dull of apprehension as not to understand that all things which entirely subsist for the sake of generation are called upward through Hermes and Venus ⁸¹? And this recalling power is especially the characteristic of reason; but is not Attis he, who, a little before being imprudent, is now, through his castration, denominated wise? For he was before unwise, because he connected himself with matter, and undertook the government of generation: but he is now wise, because he has adorned with beauty the sordid nature of matter, and has so vanquished its deformity, as to surpass all the imitative art and intelligence of man.

But what will be the end of this discourse? Is it not evident that it should close with a hymn to the mighty goddess!

A mother of gods and men! O assistant and partner in the throne of mighty Jupiter! O fountain of the intellectual gods! O thou whose nature concurs with the uncontaminated essences of intelligibles, and who, receiving a common cause from all intelligibles, dost impart it to intellectual natures! Vivific goddess, Counsel and Providence, and the fabricator of our souls! O thou who didst love the mighty Bacchus, who didst preserve the castrated Attis, and when he had fallen into the cavern of earth, didst again lead him upwards to his pristine abode!

⁷⁹ This is most probably one of the Chaldæan Oracles, but is not to be found among the fragments of the Zoroastrian Oracles, collected first by Patricius, and afterwards republished by Stanley. Among these fragments, however, the following Oracle is to be found, which perfectly corresponds in meaning with that quoted by our pious Emperor:

Εκτεινας πυρτινον νου

Εργον επ’ ευσεβιης, ρευστον και σωμα σωσεις.

i.e. “By extending a fiery intellect to the work of piety, you will preserve the flowing body.” But the Oracle by a fiery intellect, means an intellect full of divine conceptions, and which profoundly beholds the nature of the gods.

⁸⁰ That is, *beautiful*, or *graceful*, a name which was doubtless given to Hermes from his intimate alliance with Venus; for Mercury forms the summit of the *harmonic* and *elevating*, or *reductorial* supermundane triad, which consists of *Mercury*, *Venus*, *Apollo*. To which we may add, that the Greek word επαφρος Epaphros, signifies *one upon whom there is foam*; and foam implies, as Proclus on the Cratylus beautifully observes in his account of Venus, *purity of nature, prolific light and power, and, as it were, the highest flower of life*.

⁸¹ And this because they belong to the supermundane reductorial triad, which elevates through *Truth*, *Beauty*, and *Harmony*.

