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Theology and Confession in the *Apologies* of Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher

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Abstract

Saint Justin is the most important of all Christian philosophers of the second century. His life and teaching have a special depth revealing the atmosphere and life of the early Church over the centuries. A secular intellectual, Justin initiates dialogue with Jews and pagans. His life was a long search for the truth. For him, Christianity is not a doctrine, but a person: Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh and crucified. We discover in him a power of acceptance, a will to dialogue, an open soul capable of the ultimate sacrifice, which delights and inspires any Christian from any time.

Keywords

theology, philosophy, Christianity, paganism, Judaism, cosmology, Trinity, Logos, Holy Mysteries, Church, Theotokos, demons, Apology, confession

1. Prolegomena on the Biographical and Theological Profile of Saint Justin

The main representative of Christian apologetics in the second century is Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, born around the year 100 in a pagan family, in the ancient city of Shechem in Palestine, which became

a Roman colony, under the name of Flavia Neapolis¹. For that time, the city was an important cosmopolitan center where all the religious and philosophical currents of the time circulated, an ideal environment for metaphysical searches. Young Justin grows up and is educated in such an atmosphere. Added to this is the pagan background of his family. From his writings we see that Justin was a meditative nature and a tireless seeker of the Truth. Wishing to find out the answer to his metaphysical concerns, he travels an itinerary through the various currents of the age: Stoicism, Aristotelianism, Pythagoreanism, Platonism, ending with the transition to Christianity, which seemed to him the only safe and useful philosophy. His complex intellectual itinerary places him towards a moderate Platonism, as a philosophical conception, the only philosophy that would allow man to rise above material things and have the vision of God. Conversion to Christianity does not prevent him from remaining a philosopher, as he maintains this preoccupation even after conversion, but Christianity remains the true philosophy for him².

¹ Biographical details can be found at: Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan G. COMAN, *Patrologie*, vol. I, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1984, pp. 263-269; Panagioti K. HRISTOU, *Ellēnikē Patrologia*, vol. B', Editura Kyromanos, Tesalonic, 2008³, pp. 542-545; Panagiotou FOUGIA, "Oι protoi Christianoi Apologētai: Kodratos, Ioustinos, Tatianos, Athēnagoras, Theofilos kai Ermeias", in: J. P. Migne, *Ellinikē Patrologia* 6, Kentron Paterikon Ekdoseon, Athēnai, 2001, p. 9; Arhid. Prof. Univ. Dr. Constantin VOICU, Pr. Lect. Univ. Dr. Lucian-Dumitru COLDA, *Patrologie*, vol. I, Editura Basilica, București, 2015, pp. 194-196; Adalbert HAMMAN, *Părinții Bisericii*, trad. de pr. Ștefan Lupu, Editura Sapienția, Iași, 2005, pp. 29-36. Secondary treatises and studies: Basilios N. TATAKIS, *Christian Philosophy in the Patristic and Byzantine Tradition*, edited, translated and annotated by Protopresbyter George Dion. Dragas, Orthodox Research Institute, Rollinsford, 2007, pp. 24-30; Nikolaos MATSOUKAS, *Istoria filosofiei bizantine*, transl. prof. dr. Constantin Coman, Nicușor Deciu, Editura Bizantină, București, 2003, pp. 80-82; Jean LAPORTE, *Părinții Latini ai Bisericii*, transl. Diana Rusu, Editura Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuș, 2009, pp. 9-34; Monahia Filoteia COSMA, "Continuitate și discontinuitate între filosofia antică și creștinism", in: *Altarul Banatului*, XIX (LVIII) (2008) serie nouă 4-6, pp. 42-68; Monahia Filoteia COSMA, "Apologeții creștini, intermediari între filosofia antică și teologia creștină", in: *Altarul Banatului*, XIX (LVIII) (2008) serie nouă 7-9, pp. 81-106.

² David C. FORD, *Învățătura Părinților din primele veacuri. Un ghid pentru omul contemporan*, transl. Mihai Brînzea, Editura Sofia, București, 2019, pp. 90-92; Protoprezbiter Teodor ZISIS, «Urmând Dumnezeuiștilor Părinți». *Eseuri asupra Tradiției Patristice*, transl. Ierom. Grigorie Benea, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, pp. 91-98.

After his conversion to Christianity, which took place around the year 130 in the city of Ephesus, he became a true missionary. The second part of his life, after the year 150, is spent in Rome where he opens a Christian philosophical school, gathering around him a group of disciples, just like Marcion and Valentin. His most famous disciple is Tatian. It is certain that also in Rome he writes his works. We find schools of this kind in the history of the Church, for example the school of Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, in Christian Gaul and the school of Tertullian in Proconsular Africa, more precisely in the famous city of Carthage³.

The school of Saint Justin was not a catechetical school built around or in extension of a church, as it was in Alexandria, Egypt. His disciples were not converted or baptized by him, but were already Christians, not excluding the fact that among his disciples there were also pagans. However, like many communities of this kind in ancient Rome, the Christian philosophical community led by Justin embraced all dimensions of church life, including the liturgical one. In this sense, in *Apology I* we find a valuable description of the way in which Baptism and the Eucharist were performed in that community. Christians gathered weekly, on Sunday, for the reading of the Scriptures, for the offering of prayer and the Eucharist, as well as for the collection and distribution of memorials, all under the authority of the elder of the community (ο προεστώς)⁴.

During his stay in Rome, he engages in various discussions both with the heretics of the time, the Marcionites and the Valentinians, as well as with the cynical philosopher Crescent, who becomes his main rival. His immorality and hatred will ultimately lead to Saint Justin's martyrdom. It is generally accepted that the year of his martyrdom and that of his six disciples: Chariton, Charito, Evelpostos, Paeon, Hierax, and Liberianos, is 165, during the reign of the philosopher Marcus Aurelius (161-180) and Quintus Junius Rusticus, the prefect of Rome (163-168), follower of Stoicism. So, a philosopher-martyr in whose end three other philosophers were actively or passively involved: Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Stoic

³ Claudio MORESCHINI, Enrico NORELLI, *Istoria literaturii creștine vechi grecești și latine*, vol. I, transl. Hanibal Stănciulescu and Gabriela Sauciuc, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2001, p. 222.

⁴ John BEHR, *Formarea teologiei creștine. Drumul spre Niceea*, vol. 1, transl. Mihail G. Neamțu, Editura Sofia, București, 2004, pp. 131-132.

philosopher; Rusticus, prefect of Rome, teacher of the philosopher emperor and the cynical philosopher Crescent⁵.

Endowed with a remarkable philosophical culture, our author consciously tries, through his own spiritual effort, to elaborate the framework of a doctrine, to defend and develop the true Christian, to give birth to what we call today *theology*. The evolution of the theological thinking of the Church up to him places him on a higher level. His superiority is not only the consequence of a richer and deeper culture, but also due to a new attitude that Justin himself has towards culture. For him, philosophy was essentially a way of life, namely one that leads to wisdom and knowledge of God. Therefore, his Christian philosophy is not a simplistic processing of Jewish or skeptical polemics against pagan idolatry, but is the result of personal evolution, of a free and responsible choice⁶.

The theological thinking of St. Justin introduces us to a different world from that of the New Testament or the Apostolic Fathers, a world where the need to dialogue with the political power and the intellectuals of the time is imperatively felt. Until that time, Christianity was expressed only through images taken from the Holy Scriptures or through concepts borrowed from Judaism. His writings, like those of all apologists, open Christianity to the pagan world and thought, Greek philosophy becoming a source of inspiration for future generations of Church Fathers, who will find concepts and ideas which to express the truth of faith through. Consequently, the founder of the first Christian theological school constitutes a living, dynamic and original presence in the Church. His aim was to create the new and true model of the philosopher, the Christian philosopher, as an expression of the unity of truth in the world and therefore of the unity of the world itself⁷.

The Martyr Philosopher responds to a triple challenge of his time: Judaism, Hellenism and Gnosticism, starting from his philosophical past, which often defines his method. However, the premises of his thinking are

⁵ Diac. Ioan I. ICĂ JR., *Sfântul Iustin filosoful-martir: dosarul autobiografic, hagiografic și liturgic*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2011, pp. 134-142.

⁶ Hans VON CAMPENHAUSEN, *Părinții greci ai Bisericii*, transl. Maria-Magdalena Anghelescu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005, pp. 17-19; Bogdan TĂTARU-CAZABAN, *Sfântul Martir Iustin Filosoful. O introducere*, Editura Deisis/Stavropoleos, București, 2010, pp. 32-36.

⁷ Prof. Dr. Stylianos PAPADOPOULOS, *Patrologie*, vol. I, transl. lect. dr. Adrian Marinescu, Editura Bizantină, București, 2006, p. 225.

the Church and Scripture. He is not an authentic philosopher because he does not have an authentic philosophical problem, but his philosophical formation is used as a tool in expressing the evangelical truth, a truth that he tried to express in the language of the time he lived in and in the texture of his personal spiritual evolution⁸.

The latest studies and research⁹ show that Justin is not a Christian Platonist, nor does he have a philosophical view of Christianity, but rather has a prophetic understanding of philosophy. His conversion is precisely due to the destruction of Platonism by the wise old man he met on the seashore. Under these conditions, we can affirm that Justin's theological thinking is found in an apocalyptic-martyrdom scenario: that of the cosmic battle between God and the fallen angels who have become demons, who keep people in ignorance and depravity. The one who conquered and always conquers the demons is the Logos, the Son, through the Cross and through His Church. However, the Logos was foretold by the Old Testament prophets and the true Hellenic philosophers, such as Socrates. All the pseudo-philosophies of the world show that the task of true philosophy is a prophetic one: to denounce idolatry and reveal the true nature and work of demons in the world and history at the ultimate cost of their persecution and martyrdom by the exposed demons, their death thus becoming a prophetic testimony in favor of the crucified Logos, Christ. Philosophy is martyrdom and apocalyptic or it is not at all! This is the ultimate message of Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, of his work, thought and personality¹⁰.

The personality of Saint Justin begins to be known even in pagan circles. We know this from his disciple Tatian, who mentions in *Address to the Greeks* (172) that Justin's name was known by the philosophers of the time. Some scholars state that the impact of his *Apology* was so great that a response to this writing was felt. Thus, the theory of history of the Middle Platonist philosopher Celsus, author of the *True Word*, can be understood as a response to Justin's conception of the Logos and human history¹¹. Tertullian calls Saint Justin a "philosopher and martyr" nearly a

⁸ Prof. Dr. Stylianos PAPADOPOULOS, *Patrologie*, vol. I, p. 226.

⁹ Oskar SKARSAUNE, "The Conversion of Justin Martyr", in: *Studia Theologica. A Nordic Journal of Theology*, 30/1976, pp. 53-73, apud Diac. Ioan I. ICĂ JR., *Sfântul Iustin filosoful-martir...*, note 128, p. 168.

¹⁰ Diac. Ioan I. ICĂ JR., *Sfântul Iustin filosoful-martir...*, pp. 169-170.

¹¹ Claudio MORESCHINI, *Istoria filosofiei patristice*, transl. Alexandra Cheșcu, Mihai-Silviu

century after his death, which demonstrates the saint's popularity in the early Church.

The influence of his theological thought is considerable. Consciously or not, almost all the Greek Fathers of the Church follow in his footsteps. The most eloquent example is Clement of Alexandria, in whose work we find the ideas and theological thinking of Saint Justin¹².

The vicissitudes of texts transmission in the ancient and medieval world left their problematic mark not only on the preservation of Justin's work over time, but also on the perpetuation of the ecclesiastical-liturgical memory of Saint Justin's person. The Church preserves a double liturgical-hagiographical memory of the saint: Justin the Philosopher, poisoned as a kind of Christian Socrates by the envy of a fellow philosopher, and Justin the Martyr, beheaded along with six other fellow martyrs¹³.

The amazing personality, destiny and work of Saint Justin, the Christian philosopher and martyr apologist, continues to fascinate and intrigue alike, remaining a bright landmark in the Church's two-millennium itinerary.

II. Brief Remark on the Two *Apologies*

The writings of Saint Justin, the two *Apologies* and the *Dialogue with Trypho*, indisputably authentic, have been handed down to us by the codex *Parisinus gr. 450*, from year 1364 and by its apograph *Claromontanus 82*, from year 1541, British Library, Loan 36/13. This priceless Byzantine manuscript with the original Greek text, ended up in the library of the King of France in Paris, being published in its entirety in 1551, by the humanist and typographer Robert Estienne. In addition to these manuscripts, there are also parts of Justin's writings preserved in 16th century codices, which are nothing more than Athonite liturgical florilegia: *Ottobonianus gr. 274*, *Vatopedi*, *Skete Demetriou 33*, *Ambrosianus lat. H 142 inf.* and *Monacensis lat. 132*, all quoting from *Apology I*, more precisely, the rituals of the first Christians. A fifth manuscript from the 17th century, codex *Parisinus suppl.*

Chirilă, Doina Cernica, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 65.

¹² Hans VON CAMPENHAUSEN, *Părinții greci ai Bisericii*, p. 31.

¹³ This issue is presented in all its complexity in the chapter "Itinerar hagiografic: de la Sfinții Iustin Martirul și Iustin Filosoful la Iustin Filosoful-Martir", in: Diac. Ioan I. Ică jr., *Sfântul Iustin filosoful-martir: dosarul autobiografic, hagiografic și liturgic*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2011, pp. 121-170.

gr. 450, contains extracts from *Apology II* and *Apology I*, dependent on editions printed by Friedrich Sylburg (Heidelberg, 1593) and Guillaume Morel (Paris, 1615), very close to the manuscript *Parisinus* gr. 450, with an inverted order of the two *Apologies*. In 1742, the French Benedictine Prudence Maran published in Paris a massive in-folio, a volume containing an edition of the Greek text with a Latin translation of all the writings of the Greek apologists, starting with the considered authentic writings of Justin. This edition will be reproduced by abbot J.-P. Migne and makes the substance of volume 6 (1857) of the *Patrologia Graeca* series dedicated to the works of Saint Justin. Although the two *Apologies* were transmitted separately, as distinct works, in 2006, the French specialist Charles Munier edited the two *Apologies* as a single work, in volume 507, from the famous series of patristic texts “Sources Chrétiennes”¹⁴.

Subjecting them to a closer analysis, the two *Apologies* appear as a unitary corpus, although the manuscript tradition transmits them to us separately. All the internal clues, such as the construction of the *Apology*, the references in the text, the addressees, the events evoked in chronological order, the literary genre, all tend to closely associate the two *Apologies*. The connection is so close that it is difficult to see what would allow them to be distinct except the title of the second *Apology* given by the manuscript tradition¹⁵.

Apart from the manuscript tradition, which presents us separately the two Justin’s *Apologies*, several Fathers of the Church and Christian writers mentioned the figure of Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, as well as his writings in their works. Eusebius of Caesarea (†340) in his famous work *Church History*, in book IV dedicates many lines to the life and activity of the saint. He quotes profusely from Justin’s *Apologies*, but imprecisely, relative to the manuscript tradition that has come down to us. For example, the *Apology* addressed to the emperor Antoninus is sometimes called the first, sometimes the second. Tatian (2nd century), the disciple of Saint Justin, also mentions a passage from Justin’s writings specifying that it is from *Apology II*. John of Damascus (†749), in fragments 94-101

¹⁴ Prof. Dr. Stylianos PAPADOPOULOS, *Patrologie*, vol. I, p. 230; Bernard POUDERON, “L’unité de l’*Apologie* de Justin”, in: *Connaissance des Pères de l’Église*, 110 (2008), pp. 51 and 54; Diac. Ioan I. ICĂ JR., “Itinerar hagiografic: de la Sfinții Iustin Martirul și Iustin Filosoful la Iustin Filosoful-Martir”, pp. 145-150.

¹⁵ On the arguments in favor of the unity of the two *Apologies*, see: Bernard POUDERON, “L’unité de l’*Apologie* de Justin”, pp. 51-53.

of *Sacra parallela* quotes a passage from *Apology I* as coming from the first book of the *Apology* of Saint Justin, and another as coming from the second *Apology*. In the 125th codex of his *Myriobiblos*, Photios the Great (†895) mentions the writings of Justin making a compilation between his knowledge of Justin's writings and the information summarized in Eusebius' *Church History*. However, the patriarch Photios also mentions two *Apologies*. The second *Apology* does not correspond to the one we know, but to another *Apology* addressed to Marcus Aurelius and his associates in the reign¹⁶.

Synthesizing the above, we find that what has been transmitted over the ages presents us with two distinct *Apologies*, while analyzing the content of these writings, as well as the extremely poor manuscript transmission show us a unitary writing, a single *Apology* with a more extensive appendix or a two-part *Apology*. In fact, the Greek-language apologist composed two apologetic writings, the one preserved to this day and the one mentioned by Eusebius, irretrievably lost. So, we are talking about a unity of the two *Apologies* known to us, unity discussed and clarified by the French specialist Charles Munier.

III. God the Creator. Elements of Cosmology

The Roman apologist does not present in his works an actual teaching about God the Creator or about the creation of the world, but we find enough elements to lead us to his conception in relation to the One God, the Creator of all things. In *Apology I*¹⁷ expressions such as: "the truest

¹⁶ Bernard POUDERON, "L'unité de l'*Apologie* de Justin", pp. 54-56; Diac. Ioan I. ICĂ JR., "Itinerar hagiografic: de la Sfinții Iustin Martirul și Iustin Filosoful la Iustin Filosoful-Martir", pp. 134-145.

¹⁷ The texts of the two *Apologies* will be taken from *Apologeți de limbă greacă*, coll. *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești* (PSB), vol. 2, translation, introduction, notes and index by Pr. Prof. Teodor Bodogae, Pr. Prof. Olimp Căciulă, Pr. Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1980, pp. 25-88. For a better fidelity of the text of the quoted works, we will also make references to the original texts from J. P. MIGNE, *Ellinikē Patrologia* PG 6, Kentron Paterikon Ekdoseon, Athēnai, 2001: S. Justini Philosophi et Matyris, *Apologia I Pro Christianis*, col. 329-440 și *Apologia II Pro Christianis*, col. 441-469. Fragments of *Apology I* are also found at: Diacon Ioan I. ICĂ JR., *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. I (Canonul apostolic al primelor secole), Editura Deisis/Stavropoleos, Sibiu, 2008, pp. 363-368.

God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues” (*Apol.* I, 6); “the Maker of this universe” (*Apol.* I, 13); “in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe” (*Apol.* I, 61); “gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe” (*Apol.* I, 65); “God is the maker of all things in heaven and on earth”, “the Creator of all”, “to seduce men from God who made them” (*Apol.* I, 58), reveals to us his theological thinking in relation to the person of God the Father as the Unique Creator of the entire Universe, expressions borrowed from Scripture and from the philosophical language of the time. Through the multitude of quotations from the Old and New Testament, God is evoked as “the heavenly Father” (*Apol.* I, 15), above all the gods (*Apol.* I, 41, cf. *Ps* 9, 1-10), Father also is kind and merciful, and makes His sun to rise on sinners, and the righteous, and the wicked (*Apol.* I, 15, cf. *Matt* 5, 45 and *Luke* 6, 36), who made all things (*Apol.* I, 16, cf. *Mark* 10, 17-18 and *Luke* 18, 18-19), He is good (*Apol.* I, 10, 14, 15)¹⁸, He does not need the material offerings which men can give, seeing, indeed, that He Himself is the provider of all things (*Apol.* I, 10)¹⁹, foreknowing all that shall be done by all men, and it being His decree that the future actions of men shall all be recompensed according to their several value (*Apol.* I, 44; *Apol.* II, 9)²⁰.

Although not explicitly expressed, his cosmological conception, tends towards a conception of creation from nothing. He states that God made the world out of formless matter: “He in the beginning did of His goodness, for man’s sake, create all things out of unformed matter” (*Apol.* I, 10)²¹. He does not tell us where this matter comes from, but neither does he affirm its eternity. Terms used (ποιεῖν, ποιητός) lead us to this

¹⁸ “His goodness”; “to the good and unbegotten God”; “your Father also is kind and merciful” (*Apol.* I, 10, 14, 15, *PSB* 2, pp. 31, 34 și 35; *PG* 6, 340C; 348B; 352B).

¹⁹ “But we have received by tradition that God does not need the material offerings which men can give, seeing, indeed, that He Himself is the provider of all things” (*Apol.* I, 10, *PSB* 2, p. 30; *PG* 6, 340C).

²⁰ “but God foreknowing all that shall be done by all men, and it being His decree that the future actions of men shall all be recompensed according to their several value”; “if this be not so, God does not exist; or, if He exists, He cares not for men, and neither virtue nor vice is anything” (*Apol.* I, 44; *Apol.* II, 9, *PSB* 2, pp. 54 și 83-84; *PG* 6, 396B; 460AB).

²¹ “that you may learn that it was from our teachers — we mean the account given through the prophets— that Plato borrowed his statement that God, having altered matter which was shapeless, made the world...” (*Apol.* I, 59, *PSB* 2, p. 64; *PG* 6, 416BC).

conception. Influenced by his philosophical formation, he states that “God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world” (*Apol.* I, 67), which presupposes the pre-existence of matter at least with respect to the act of creation.

In accordance with Church Tradition, Justin shows that God created the world on the same day that Jesus resurrected, i.e., on Sunday, being the simultaneous creation of the cosmos²². God created the world for men, to whom he subjected earthly and heavenly things for their benefit, added the beauty of the seasons, established laws and entrusted angels with the care of men and the whole creation²³.

From what has been presented we see that the cosmological conception of Saint Justin is based exclusively on Revelation using terms and expressions from ancient Greco-Roman philosophy and mythology, which can be explained by his intellectual formation. It should be remembered that at that time the Church had not yet formulated a clearly defined conception of creation. This will happen in the 4th century through the comments of the great Fathers on the days of creation²⁴.

Viewed from a philosophical point of view, Justin’s cosmology is Middle Platonist, arriving at a considerable differentiation from the biblical doctrine. The fact that the world is not subject to dissolution being maintained by the divine will is also an idea taken from Middle Platonism, more precisely from Plato’s dialogue entitled *Timaios*. The thesis that the world was born but is immortal is also found in philosophers such as Celsus, Plutarch and Atticus. This assumes that matter is eternal and free, as a substratum of creation through the Logos. Borrowing cosmological ideas from Middle Platonist philosophy, Justin does not shy away from correlating Moses’ account of the creation of the world with ancient

²² “But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead” (*Apol.* I, 67, PSB 2, p. 71; *PG* 6, 429C; 452A).

²³ “God, when He had made the whole world, and subjected things earthly to man, and arranged the heavenly elements for the increase of fruits and rotation of the seasons, and appointed this divine law — for these things also He evidently made for man — committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels whom He appointed over them” (*Apol.* II, 5, PSB 2, p. 81; *PG* 6, 452B).

²⁴ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan G. COMAN, *Patrologie*, vol. I, pp. 300-301; Charles MUNIER, “Aspects de la théologie de Justin d’après son *Apologie*”, in: *Connaissance des Pères de l’Église*, 110 (2008), pp. 2-4.

cosmology. Despite all these philosophical influences Justin does not state that the origin of evil is in matter. Created reality has the freedom to choose good or evil. Creation itself is good, while demons were the ones who introduced evil into the world. Justin's thought is clearly demarcated from Gnostic thought, which dominated late antiquity. St. Justin nowhere states that matter can limit God's beneficent action, consequently God's transcendence is not caused by a concomitant deterioration of matter²⁵.

IV. Trinitarian Theology

Saint Justin's theological conception of Trinitarian theology is obviously not very elaborate. He does not know the term "Trinity" (τριάς), term that will be put into circulation by Theophilus of Antioch (*Ad Autolycum* II, 15). Although he developed an elaborate doctrine of the Logos and implicitly His relationship with the Father, due to the indefinite vocabulary regarding the great truths of Christianity, he was unable to express the eternal distinctions between the hypostases of the Holy Trinity. We do not find precise statements about the Son's proceeding from eternity, but we know that the Logos was with the Father before the creation of the world, as expressed in *Dialogue with Trypho*. On the other hand, he faithfully reproduces the Trinitarian formulas from worship²⁶, but he never explains them. We will not find the theological explanation of the existence of the three Persons and the specific action of each.

God the Father begat the Logos or the Word, before the other creatures were created. He points to some places in Scripture where God the Father is spoken of. Here Justin calls Him "Father" associating various Old Testament prophecies that describe the filial relationship between the Father and the Son²⁷. Sometimes the Father appears with the qualification

²⁵ Claudio MORESCHINI, Enrico NORELLI, *Istoria literaturii creștine vechi grecești și latine*, vol. I, pp. 72-73.

²⁶ "... For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water" (*Apol.* I, 61, PSB 2, p. 66; *PG* 6, 420C); "... and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (*Apol.* I, 65, PSB 2, p. 70; *PG* 6, 428AB); "... we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit" (*Apol.* I, 67, PSB 2, p. 71; *PG* 6, 428B).

²⁷ See: *Apol.* I, 37, PSB 2, pp. 49-50; *PG* 6, 385BC.

of “Demiurge”, being the cause of creation. We cannot speak of a theophany of the Father in the Old Testament as we see at the Son, in order to preserve the transcendence of the Father, who must not be connected to matter in order to eliminate the anthropomorphism so present in ancient culture.

The Father is unborn, without any name, because he who has a name must have someone before him to give him that name:

“But to the Father of all, who is unbegotten there is no name given. For by whatever name He be called, He has as His elder the person who gives Him the name. But these words Father, and God, and Creator, and Lord, and Master, are not names, but appellations derived from His good deeds and functions”²⁸.

We can speak of a theology of the name of God, in the anticipatory mode, which will be developed in the Areopagite writings.

The Son or the Logos occupies the second place after the Father, and the Holy Spirit the third place, coming after the Logos²⁹. The Logos is a principle, a rational power, which the Holy Spirit calls: Glory of God, Son, Wisdom, Angel, Lord, Ruler, His name varying as it serves the will of the Father. A series of prophecies before the coming of Christ call Him Son³⁰. Christ incarnate is the total Logos, under Him the reign of divine Reason is sovereign:

“And it is nothing wonderful; if the devils are proved to cause those to be much worse hated who live not according to a part only of the word diffused [among men] but by the knowledge and contemplation of the whole Word, which is Christ”³¹.

The divinity of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Justin’s theology argued particularly through the prophecies of the Old Testament. Before, during, and after the event of creation, the Logos coexisted with the Father:

²⁸ *Apol.* II, 6, PSB 2, p. 81; *PG* 6, 453A.

²⁹ “He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third” (*Apol.* I, 13, PSB 2, p. 33; *PG* 6, 345C; 348A).

³⁰ See: *Apol.* I, 38, PSB 2, p. 50; *PG* 6, 386D; 388A.

³¹ *Apol.* II, 8, PSB 2, p. 83; *PG* 6, 457A.

“And His Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word who also was with Him and was begotten before the works, when at first He created and arranged all things by Him, is called Christ, in reference to His being anointed and God’s ordering all things through Him”³².

The Father and the Son are closely united, as they are two fires, one of which proceeds from the other, or as the word proceeds from our mind, without diminishing it³³.

Saint Justin’s references to the person and work of the Holy Spirit are quite discrete. We find several places where the third Person of the Holy Trinity is named “the Spirit of prophecy” or “Holy Spirit” (*Apol.* I, 33, 61, 65, 67), especially related to the prophecies of the Old Testament, to the Holy Mysteries (Baptism and Eucharist) and to the Christian worship. The holy apologist does not insist on the relationship of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, nor on His specific work. We find a brief statement, also mentioned above, of the relationship of the Son to the Father and to the Spirit (*Apol.* I, 13). This theological statement, as short as it is clear, shows the order of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, an order taken over by the entire theological tradition of the Church. This entitles us to believe that the teaching concerning the order of the Persons of the Holy Trinity existed from the beginning in the consciousness, worship and theology of the Church.

Most of the time the Holy Spirit is shown by Saint Justin as “the Spirit of prophecy”, The one through whom the Father works in the Old Testament prophecies (*Apol.* I, 6, 13, 33, 35, 38, 40, 41, 44 etc.). At a first analysis we could conclude that there is an instrumental relationship between the Father and the Spirit, but the same thing is also found in the definition of the relationship between the Father and the Son (*Apol.* I, 33, 36; *Apol.* II, 10). Now, we know that in Justin’s theology the Logos has the quality of mediator par excellence.

Regarding the work of the Spirit, Justin does not always clearly distinguish His action from that of the Son: “But when you hear the utterances of the prophets spoken as it were personally, you must not suppose that they are spoken by the inspired themselves, but by the Divine

³² *Apol.* II, 6, PSB 2, p. 81; PG 6, 453A.

³³ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan G. COMAN, *Patrologie*, vol. I, p. 300.

Word who moves them”³⁴. However, most indications lead us to the conclusion that Justin’s theology sees an independent work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit is a Person.

According to the biblical testimony (*Gen.* 1, 2), we also see the Holy Spirit present at the creation of the world. This is not overlooked by St. Justin (*Apol.* I, 59, 64), which makes us believe that the pneumatological vision of the Roman apologist was an orthodox one, summarized in the essence of the dogmatic truth developed in an exemplary manner by the Fathers of the Church in the 4th century, around pneumatological controversies³⁵.

V. Jesus Christ, The Son of God - The Incarnate Logos

Saint Justin performs a pioneering work in Christian theology by appealing to the notion of “Logos”, common to contemporary philosophy, the Jewish tradition - through Philo the Alexandrine - and the Paleo-Christian tradition. From a philosophical point of view, the Logos retains, all the characteristics of the era in which it circulated as a concept and becomes the term by which the identity of Christ will be communicated and interpreted. If the *Dialogue with Trypho* is centered on the Christological reading of the Scriptures, the *Apologies* are structured on the relationship between Christianity and philosophy, where the central role belongs to the theory of the *Seminal Logos* (Λόγος σπερματικός, *Logos spermatikos*) explaining the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The Seminal Logos is both person and power³⁶.

Christ is the divine Logos born of the Father. He participates in the creation of the world and reveals God the Father to the world. To describe this universal mediating function, Saint Justin is the first in the history of Christianity to use the notion of *Seminal Logos*. This implies that a seed of the Logos is planted in every man: “And those of the Stoic school – since, so far as their moral teaching went, they were admirable, as were also the

³⁴ *Apol.* I, 36, PSB 2, p. 49; *PG* 6, 385A; “... for He was and is the Word who is in every man, and who foretold the things that were to come to pass both through the prophets and in His own person when He was made of like passions, and taught these things” (*Apol.* II, 10, PSB 2, p. 85; *PG* 6, 461A).

³⁵ Charels MUNIER, “Aspects de la théologie de Justin d’après son *Apologie*”, p. 8.

³⁶ Panagioti K. HRISTOU, *Ellēnikē Patrologia*, vol. B’, p. 564.

poets in some particulars, on account of the seed of reason (σπέρμα του λόγου), implanted in every race of men”³⁷, which manifests itself through rationality and following the natural law³⁸.

Son of God, as *Logos spermatikos* implants in man a seed that helps him to think and live according to the measures of the Word Himself. The Logos is the principle that manifests God in history, primarily in Jewish history. We also find His power in the thinking and teaching of the Greek philosophers and legislators:

“For whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Word. But since they did not know the whole of the Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves”³⁹.

Even Socrates (*Apol.* II, 10) and other ancient writers (*Apol.* II, 13) saw the truth in a hidden form, due to the presence of the Logos in the human race. This position enjoyed immense apologetic value also from the perspective of a natural theology. Christians must be at least partially skeptical of the wisdom of the Greeks. Philosophers knew reality in an obscure way, but they had access to the knowledge of truth. The seed of a thing is different from the thing itself, just as the image is different from reality. Man acquires it according to what his intellectual capacities allow. The Christian is in a different condition, since he is free from the uncertainty typical of human nature, since all truth has been given to him by the grace of Christ. So, the difference between the Greek world and Christianity is theologically interpreted as a difference between nature and grace⁴⁰.

Since He was begotten of God, the Logos is not simply divine, but is God and is united with Him as His equal: “the Word, who is the first-birth of God, was produced without sexual union...”⁴¹. The birth of the Son must not be understood in a human way, because it is the birth of a spiritual beings from another incorporeal being. His birth is not comparable to anything

³⁷ *Apol.* II, 8, PSB 2, p. 83; PG 6, 457A.

³⁸ Bogdan TĂȚARU-CAZABAN, *Sfântul Martir Iustin Filosoful. O introducecere*, pp. 65-67.

³⁹ *Apol.* II, 10, PSB 2, p. 84; PG 6, 460BC.

⁴⁰ Claudio MORESCHINI, *Istoria filosofiei patristice*, pp. 63-64; John BEHR, *Formarea teologiei creștine. Drumul spre Niceea*, vol. 1, pp. 149-150.

⁴¹ *Apol.* I, 21, PSB 2, p. 39; PG 6, 360A.

created; It is a mystery. Various analogies can be used to understand this mystery, and Justin uses an analogy that refers to the term Logos itself, meaning both “word” and “thought”. The word has its origin in the very essence of the thought, without the thought suffering any diminution for this reason (*Dialogue with Trypho* 61). Justin’s theological way of thinking influenced the apologists and polemicists after him, resorting to a similar terminology related to the problem of the Logos. Thus, in Tatian the Assyrian, Theophilus of Antioch (†182/183), Irenaeus of Lyon (†202/203), Hippolytus (†235), Tertullian (†240-250) and Origen (†253/254) we meet the terms of *Immanent Logos* (*Logos endiathetos*) and *Extrinsic Logos* (*Logos prophorikos*), which shows the imprint of Justin’s theology on everything that was said about the Logos in the history of the Church after him⁴².

The Logos is the incarnate Son of God, supreme wisdom and reason, present “from the beginning” in the history of humanity through divine thoughts (*logoi*). Justin devotes an entire passage to this idea in the first *Apology*, chapter 64, associating God’s thoughts with the intelligible world. The mind of God coincides with the world conceived by thought, that is, with the totality of ideas. Justin met this way of association with the Platonist Antioch from Ascalon, 1st century BC, who interpreted the goddess Athena as the intellect of the god⁴³:

“And in like manner also they craftily feigned that Minerva was the daughter of Jupiter, not by sexual union, but, knowing that God conceived and made the world by the Word, they say that Minerva is the first conception [ἐννοια]; which we consider to be very absurd, bringing forward the form of the conception in a female shape”⁴⁴.

Justin opposes the difficult, fragmentary, sometimes confusing understanding of the truth that philosophers and sages have reached, the complete and perfect knowledge granted to Christians by the divine Logos incarnate in Jesus Christ (*Apol.* II, 7). In Christ, believers possess

⁴² See: Jaroslav PELIKAN, *Tradiția creștină. O istorie a dezvoltării doctrinei*, vol. I, transl. Silvia Palade, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2004, pp. 206-207.

⁴³ Claudio MORESCHINI, *Istoria filosofiei patristice*, p. 69.

⁴⁴ *Apol.* I, 64, PSB. 2, pp. 69-70; PG 6, 425C.

infallible and indisputable knowledge (*Apol.* II, 13), since they possess in themselves the whole Logos, who appeared to us as a true man with body, mind and soul: “Our doctrines, then, appear to be greater than all human teaching; because Christ, who appeared for our sakes, became the whole rational being, both body, and reason, and soul”⁴⁵. The Logos is identical with Christ Who appeared for our salvation *body, mind and soul*. This expression, which repeats the tripartite anthropological formula, emphasizes the fullness of Christ’s being rather than an analysis of the relationship between the divine Word and the *body, mind and soul* which he became man in⁴⁶.

In these circumstances, the Incarnation is no longer seen as a simple link in a chain of events that reveals to us God the Father, the Creator of the universe, but it constitutes the culmination of the divine economy, the unique and definitive discovery of the only Mediator between God and people, Jesus Christ, crucified, dead and risen⁴⁷.

Justin insists on the reality of the incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus Christ, and for this fact he quotes the long prophecy from Isaiah regarding the “servant of the Lord” (*Apol.* I, 50, 51) and more than all the other Greek apologists of the second century, he testifies that Christ saved us by His death and resurrection: “...become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe in Him, He endured both to be set at nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death”⁴⁸; “For next to God, we worship and love the Word who is from the unbegotten and ineffable God, since also He became man for our sakes, that becoming a partaker of our sufferings, He might also bring us healing”⁴⁹.

The Logos is the second Person of the Trinity, inseparable from the Father and planted in Him. The personal reality of the Son is related to the personal reality of the Father. The Son is God insofar as he is the Logos of the Father. Thus, the Logos is the Son of God in a specific sense (μόνος ἰδιώτης)⁵⁰, in the literal sense of the word *kyrios* (κύριος), because he is also

⁴⁵ *Apol.* II, 10, PSB. 2, p. 84; *PG* 6, 460B.

⁴⁶ Panagioti K. HRISTOU, *Ellēnikē Patrologia*, vol. B', p. 565; John BEHR, *Formarea teologiei creștine. Drumul spre Niceea*, vol. 1, p. 153.

⁴⁷ Charels MUNIER, “Aspects de la théologie de Justin d’après son *Apologie*”, p. 7.

⁴⁸ *Apol.* I, 63, PSB. 2, p. 69; *PG* 6, 425B.

⁴⁹ *Apol.* II, 13, PSB. 2, p. 87; *PG* 6, 465C; 467A.

⁵⁰ “Jesus Christ is the only proper Son who has been begotten by God, being His Word and first-begotten, and power; and, becoming man according to His will, He taught us

the sole holder of the divine parentage (*Apol.* I, 23, 33, 45, 53, 63). This quality distinguishes the Son from all creation and all mythology (*Apol.* I, 22).

The Logos, being both the First Born and the Son of God, remains at the same time a distinct person: “who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God”⁵¹. He is from the beginning with the Father, through him the Father created and ordered the universe:

“And His Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word who also was with Him and was begotten before the works, when at first He created and arranged all things by Him, is called Christ, in reference to His being anointed and God’s ordering all things through Him”⁵².

Saint Justin does not make a clear statement related to the eternal birth of the Son or the Logos. He is content with the formula “Firstborn” to specify the absolutely unique position of the Logos in relation to other creatures. But, looked at closely, this lack of clarity brings the martyr apologist closer to subordinationism. Although he speaks in a traditional manner about Jesus Christ, presenting Him as the revealing Word of God, he shares the philosophical position prevalent in his era, according to which God, being totally transcendent in relation to created reality, needs an intermediary. It was not God Himself who appeared and spoke to men, but the Word of God, as He brings messages from the Maker of all. Justin tries to find a way to explain how Jesus Christ is God, yet distinct from the God and Creator of all. The way of explanation undermines the very revelation of God in Christ. The divinity of Christ, an “other God”, is no longer that of the Father, but subordinate to it, a diminished divinity. For Justin the revelation of God in the incarnate Word is the last, even if it is the most important, in a series of distinct revelations⁵³. Chapter 63 of *Apology* I demonstrates this fact, Saint Justin commenting on chapter 3 of *Exodus*, with the help of the quotation from *Mark* 11, 7⁵⁴.

these things for the conversion and restoration of the human race” (*Apol.* I, 23, PSB 2, p. 41 și PG 6, 364B).

⁵¹ *Apol.* I, 63, PSB. 2, p. 69; PG 6, 425B.

⁵² *Apol.* II, 5, PSB. 2, p. 81; PG 6, 452B.

⁵³ John BEHR, *Formarea teologiei creștine. Drumul spre Niceea*, vol. 1, pp. 144-147; Charels MUNIER, “Aspects de la théologie de Justin d’après son *Apologie*”, p. 5.

⁵⁴ *Apol.* I, 63, PSB. 2, pp. 68-69; PG 6, 424-425.

The Logos was begotten by the Father by His power and will, “not by abscission, as if the essence (ουσία) of the Father were divided; as all other things partitioned and divided are not the same after as before they were divided”⁵⁵ and sent for the mission of being a mediator between God and creation and to reveal the Father to men. The Logos existed in God as divine Reason, Justin suggesting that there was a time when God was alone, separated from this reason or thought. However, there came a time when God “uttered” His thought, and the Logos came to exist outside of God, as speech or word. This process did not in any way involve diminishing the being of God. God gives birth to the Logos without losing any part of Himself⁵⁶.

The theology of Saint Justin’s *Apology* also reveals to us the cosmic dimension of the Logos. This dimension is not only found in the act of creation, but also in the permanent function of mediator. The universal power of the Logos is manifested in the symbolism of the Cross, mystically present throughout the universe, anticipated by Plato in his work entitled *Timaeus*:

“Which things Plato reading, and not accurately understanding, and not apprehending that it was the figure of the cross, but taking it to be a placing crosswise, he said that the power next to the first God was placed crosswise in the universe. And as to his speaking of a third, he did this because he read, as we said above, that which was spoken by Moses, that the Spirit of God moved over the waters. For he gives the second place to the Logos which is with God, who he said was placed crosswise in the universe; and the third place to the Spirit who was said to be borne upon the water...”⁵⁷.

The cross is imprinted even in the physical form of the human body and even in man-made objects:

“For consider all the things in the world, whether without this form they could be administered or have any community. For

⁵⁵ *Dialogul cu iudeul Trifon*, 128, PSB. 2, p. 244; PG 6, 776B.

⁵⁶ Jonathan HILL, *Istoria gândirii creștine*, transl. Timotei Manta, Editura Casa Cărții, Oradea, 2007, p. 20.

⁵⁷ *Apol.* I, 60, PSB. 2, p. 65-66; PG 6, 420AB.

the sea is not traversed except that trophy which is called a sail abide safe in the ship; and the earth is not ploughed without it: diggers and mechanics do not their work, except with tools which have this shape. And the human form differs from that of the irrational animals in nothing else than in its being erect and having the hands extended, and having on the face extending from the forehead what is called the nose, through which there is respiration for the living creature; and this shows no other form than that of the cross”⁵⁸.

The Logos is the One who inspired the prophets of the Old Testament (*Apol.* I, 36)⁵⁹. Every appearance of God in the Old Testament was actually the Logos, God’s emissary on earth, and He inspired the prophets⁶⁰. The meaning of Scripture is offered by Christ himself as a meaning that is fulfilled in history and reveals Himself, interpreting Himself. Christ is the one who “revealed to us all that we understood from the Scriptures by His grace”. Christ not only embodies the meaning, but realizes the transparency of this incarnation, explaining himself in relation to what has been written about Himself. Although the prophecies constitute the foundation of the recognition of His messiahship, irrefutable evidence for Christians, there still remains a distance between the text and its meaning revealed through Christ, which the one who wants to know the truth can only cross through the “grace of understanding” (*Dialogue with Tripho*, 58)⁶¹.

In his *Apology*, Saint Justin presents the Savior Jesus Christ also in the pose of a teacher, as a master, with the idea of being easier to understand and accepted by the emperor and his court. As any philosophical system has a founder, called a teacher (*didaskalos*), Christianity is also founded by the teacher Jesus Christ, and Christianity is a school of wisdom and truth. Saint Justin presents his impressive plea from two perspectives: the Savior’s teaching (*Apol.* I, 14-20) and Jesus Christ as the Logos, the Son of God, born without blemish, crucified, dead, resurrected and ascended to heaven (*Apol.* I, 21-60). The great difference between philosophical

⁵⁸ *Apol.* I, 55, PSB. 2, pp. 62-63; *PG* 6, 412BC.

⁵⁹ “But when you hear the utterances of the prophets spoken as it were personally, you must not suppose that they are spoken by the inspired themselves, but by the Divine Word who moves them” (*Apol.* I, 36, PSB. 2, p. 49; *PG* 6, 385A).

⁶⁰ Jonathan HILL, *Istoria gândirii creștine*, p. 21.

⁶¹ Bogdan TĂTARU-CAZABAN, *Sfântul Martir Iustin Filosoful. O introducere*, pp. 63-64.

systems and Christian teaching is that: “He was no sophist, but His word was the power of God”⁶².

VI. The Holy Mysteries and Christian Worship

Having become a Christian, Justin was never a priest. He lives in Rome as a simple member of the Christian community, describing to him the Sunday meetings and the essential Sacraments of a primary Christian community: Baptism and the Eucharist. His testimony about the liturgical life of the early Christian community is of inestimable historical and theological value, showing the liturgical tradition present in the heart of the Christian community from the beginning.

The Holy Sacrament of Baptism is presented by the Christian apologist in an entire chapter (chapter 61) of the *Apology* I. From the description we find precious information about the way of performing Baptism, the formula, the matter, the conditions of the performance, but also the theological valences of the Sacrament. Thus, Justin calls Baptism “renewal”, “rebirth” and “enlightenment”, all these names show the new life brought by Christ, which the baptized partakes of: “we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ”; “are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated”; “this washing is called illumination”⁶³. Receiving Baptism required a certain preparation in which the whole community participated, accompanying the catechumens on this journey of illumination: “to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them” (*Apol.* I, 61). Baptism was performed in water, the essential element of the sacrament: “they then receive the washing with water” (*Apol.* I, 61). It was invoked over water “the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe”, and afterwards the catechumen was immersed three times: “in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit” (*Apol.* I, 61). The practice of triple immersion was present in the Church from the beginning, according to the words of the Savior spoken after the Resurrection (Matt. 28, 19). The triple immersion, in the name of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, shows that the one who is

⁶² *Apol.* I, 14, PSB. 2, p. 34; *PG* 6, 349A.

⁶³ *Apol.* I, 61, PSB. 2, pp. 66-67; *PG* 6, 420-421.

baptized dies to sin together with Christ and rises with Him to a new life. About this tradition present in the heart of the Christian community, Justin tells us: “we learned it from the Apostles”. We are therefore talking about a continuity of tradition and the life of the Church started by the Savior’s disciples and left as a spiritual legacy in the communities founded by them.

Saint Justin also presents us with a theological motivation of baptism based on the radical change of the way of being: “in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed” (*Apol.* I, 61). Baptism brings light and purity to man’s life:

“And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed”⁶⁴.

Therefore, the grace of Baptism imprints the face of Christ on the baptized person, which means the new life acquired through Baptism and the renewal of our psycho-physical being. The reborn through Baptism becomes a son of God by grace, incorporating himself in Christ as a member of His Body, which is the Church⁶⁵.

In the First Apology of Saint Justin, chapters 65-66, we find the most detailed text in the early Church regarding the Eucharistic divine worship, his testimony becoming the most important written record with reference to the history of Christian divine worship from the second century. The Eucharist is preceded by the “kiss of peace” and is performed by a proestos, the one who “presides over the meeting”. Receiving the gifts of the brothers - “bread and a cup of wine mixed with water”, he raise prayers – “praise and glory” - to the Holy Trinity – “to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” – and utters “offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands”⁶⁶. After the celebration of the Eucharist, the deacons partake

⁶⁴ *Apol.* I, 61, PSB. 2, pp. 66-67; *PG* 6, 420-421.

⁶⁵ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan G. COMAN, *Patrologie*, vol. I, p. 304.

⁶⁶ See full description: *Apol.* I, 65, PSB. 2, p. 70; *PG* 6, 428AB.

with those present “of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced” (*Apol.* I, 65), they even take communion to the homes of those who could not participate.

The description of the Eucharistic synaxis includes all the elements present even today in the Eucharistic celebration. The central moment of the Eucharist belongs to the presbyter or proestos. The Eucharistic elements are presented: bread and wine mixed with water. The gifts are eucharized through the word of prayer, according to apostolic teaching. We see here the New Testament basis of the Eucharist, the Last Supper as history or “memorial”. Some theologians claim that the words of Saint Justin explicitly contain the words of institution or the words of consecration of the Eucharist, but they only include the prayers and thanksgivings uttered by the proestos. In the celebration of the Eucharist, already clearly distinguished from agape, the priest says a prayer (eucharist), which in Saint Justin’s view comes from Christ Himself⁶⁷.

The term *metabolē* denotes the eucharistization of the gifts, their transformation into the Body and Blood of the Savior, an expression that encompasses the theological significance regarding the Eucharist. The pretense of the gifts was separated from the words of institution, Saint Justin reducing their eucharistization to a prayer (*euchē*). The words of institution may have had a special function from our traditional understanding, considering that in the Gospels we have an introduction followed by the account of the institution. Therefore, it has a different function here than that of being a component part of the Eucharist or even a sanctification formula. Rather, it appears as an answer to the question: “What are we doing here and why are we doing it? Or to put it another way: What exactly distinguishes this festive meal from other festive meals?”⁶⁸

The Eucharist is called “food”, and those who participate in it must fulfill several conditions: to be baptized, to believe in Christian preaching and to live the Savior’s teaching⁶⁹.

We discover at once the purity of Christian living from the first centuries and their relation to the nature of the Eucharist. This is not “common bread

⁶⁷ Karl Christian FELMY, *De la Cina de Taină la Dumnezeiasca Liturghie a Bisericii Ortodoxe. Un comentariu istoric*, transl. pr. prof. Ioan I. Ică, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2004, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁸ Karl Christian FELMY, *De la Cina de Taină la Dumnezeiasca Liturghie a Bisericii Ortodoxe*, p. 31.

⁶⁹ See: *Apol.* I, 66, PSB. 2, pp. 70-71; PG 6, 428BC-429A.

and common drink”, but “likewise have we been taught that the food is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh” (*Apol.* I, 66).

We learn about the day on which the Eucharist was celebrated

“on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place... bread and wine and water are brought... and there is a distribution to each” and “But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead”⁷⁰.

Here we find the theological motivation for celebrating the Eucharist on Sunday and, at the same time, the theological motivation regarding the celebration of the rest day on the first day of the week. Through this double celebration, Christians re-actualize the creation of the world and the Savior’s Resurrection from the dead. On the one hand, the evocation of creation in relation to the Eucharist reflects the Jewish roots of Christian baptismal symbols, taken up in the liturgical anaphora, and, on the other hand, the connection between creation and Resurrection signifies the participation of Christians in the new creation in Christ⁷¹.

Saint Justin also provides us with valuable information related to Christian worship, as well as some practices in early Christian communities. Sunday Christian gatherings had a certain cultic order: they started with the readings from “the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets”; the speech of the proestos followed, then joint prayers “Then we all rise together and pray”; the offerings of bread and wine mixed with water are brought; “the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings”, that is, the transformation of the gifts takes place and ends with the partaking of the faithful (*Apol.* I, 67). Helping the poor, orphans and widows, assisting the sick and needy was a practice present in the community representing the lived faith of the first Christians. The philanthropic work was maintained by the voluntary help offered by Christians every Sunday (*Apol.* I, 67).

⁷⁰ *Apol.* I, 67, PSB. 2, p. 71; PG 6, 429BC.

⁷¹ Bogdan TĂTARU-CAZABAN, *Sfântul Martir Iustin Filosoful. O introducecere*, p. 59.

VII. Theotokos – “The New Eve”

The meaning and perfection of Revelation find meaning in the Incarnation of the Logos and His birth from the Virgin Mary, which occupies an unparalleled place in the economy of salvation. Justin’s *Apologies* remove the Mother of God from the circle of Christian communities and present her to the world as a faithful collaborator in the plan of salvation. The virgin motherhood of the Theotokos becomes one of the central points of his apology against the pagans and the dialogue with the Jews, starting from the historical event, but also from faith: Christ was born of a Virgin. To demonstrate the reality of this event, Justin resorts to the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Pagans and Jews who considered the Incarnation of the Logos to be only a myth are shown that it was announced and prepared throughout time, and “when the time had fully come” “He become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father”⁷², from the stump of Jesse (Is 11, 1, 11), like a shining star (Num 24, 17) “for by the power of God He was conceived by a virgin of the seed of Jacob, who was the father of Judah”⁷³.

The Virgin Mary is the one predicted by the prophets, and the Virgin’s Son - Immanuel - is Christ the Savior:

“And hear again how Isaiah in express words foretold that He should be born of a virgin; for he spoke thus: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and they shall say for His name, ‘God with us.’ For things which were incredible and seemed impossible with men, these God predicted by the Spirit of prophecy as about to come to pass, in order that, when they came to pass, there might be no unbelief, but faith, because of their prediction”⁷⁴.

The teaching of Saint Justin and of the early Christian community shows the Mother of God as the meeting point between fallen man and the redeemed one, between time and eternity, between God and man.

⁷² See: *Apol.* I, 63, PSB. 2, pp. 68-69; *PG* 6, 424-425AB.

⁷³ *Apol.* I, 32, PSB. 2, p. 47; *PG* 6, 380C.

⁷⁴ *Apol.* I, 33, PSB. 2, p. 47; *PG* 6, 380C-381A.

Motivating the presence of the Theotokos in God's plan of salvation, the Christian apologist enunciates the principle of reconciliation: in the same way that sin and death entered the world and human life, God wants to bring it back to life, and the human history to its origins. Thus, he uses for the first time the famous antithetical Eve-Mary parallelism, which contrasts the scene of the original fall with the Annunciation event (Gen. 3, 1-20; Luke 1, 26-38)⁷⁵.

The incarnation as the restoration of the fallen world reveals two antithetical positions in the history of salvation: man destroys, God brings to life. For this there is only one way: the Woman-Virgin. Through Eve, Adam falls, through Mary, Christ is born as God Incarnate. Thus, Eve and Mary, two women, two virgins are partakers of the divine economy, being put in relation to the two men: Adam and Christ. Eve is responsible for the death of mankind, Mary for its life⁷⁶.

The Mariological theology of St. Justin is a precious testimony about the place that the Theotokos occupied in the life and tradition of the Church, in the 2nd century.

VIII. Eschatology and Demonology

The eschatological teaching of Saint Justin suffers a deviation from the official doctrine of the Church. By stating that Christ will reign with the righteous for a thousand years, he implicitly testifies Jesus' temporary kingdom. In other words, Justin is a Chiliast. Jesus will appear to the world twice. The first time, in the form of a slave, and the second time, in the form of glory. The first coming took place through his Incarnation. At the second coming Christ will descend on the clouds of heaven, surrounded by bands of angels, raise the dead from the graves and judge them according to His righteousness. He will then establish the Kingdom of heaven on earth, rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem:

“For the prophets have proclaimed two advents of His: the one, that which is already past, when He came as a dishonored and

⁷⁵ Ligia MAN, *Mă vor ferici toate neamurile... Elemente de mariologie biblică, patristică, magisterială*, Galaxia Gutenberg, Târgu-Lăpuș, 2006, p. 91.

⁷⁶ Ligia MAN, *Mă vor ferici toate neamurile...*, p. 92.

suffering Man; but the second, when, according to prophecy, He shall come from heaven with glory, accompanied by His angelic host, when also He shall raise the bodies of all men who have lived, and shall clothe those of the worthy with immortality, and shall send those of the wicked, endued with eternal sensibility, into everlasting fire with the wicked devils”⁷⁷.

The apologist’s chiliastic creed is provoked by a malicious allusion of Trypho to the groups of Christians who did not accept the bodily resurrection of the dead, and consequently did not accept the Last Judgment either – that is the Gnostics. Because of his zealousness and wanting to separate himself from these pseudo-Christians, Justin falls into the opposite extreme. His very coming to Rome in the hope of martyrdom reveals his conviction that the second coming of the Savior is imminent⁷⁸.

The three writings of the martyr apologist also include the theme of demons as masters of history and the theme of heretics as instruments of demonic power. His demonology is aimed exclusively at paganism. The two *Apologies* speak much more explicitly about this theme, the main stake being the exculpation of Christianity in front of the imperial power, but also the awareness of pagans in the perspective of a possible conversion. In the *Dialogue with Trypho* this theme does not find coverage or justification. If he had invoked the name of Satan too many times in the presence of a rabbi, or had developed a larger discussion on the subject, our philosopher would have been immediately sanctioned⁷⁹.

In the second *Apology* he presents Satan, the “prince of this world” and the supreme god of pagan cults. God placed man as the master of the earth, and the angels, guardians of everything under heaven, including humans.

“But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begot children who are those that are called demons; and besides, they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and the punishments they occasioned, and partly

⁷⁷ *Apol.* I, 52, PSB. 2, p. 59; PG 6, 404D-405A.

⁷⁸ Cristian BĂDILÎȚĂ, *Metamorfozele Antihristului la Părinții Bisericii*, transl. de Teodora Ioniță, coll. *Plural-Religie*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2006, p. 83 .

⁷⁹ Cristian BĂDILÎȚĂ, *Metamorfozele Antihristului la Părinții Bisericii*, p. 85.

by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they were enslaved by lustful passions; and among men they sowed murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and all wickedness”⁸⁰.

Out of fear and ignorance, the pagans turned their gods into demons, thus demonizing their religious life:

“since of old these evil demons, effecting apparitions of themselves, both defiled women and corrupted boys, and showed such fearful sights to men, that those who did not use their reason in judging of the actions that were done, were struck with terror; and being carried away by fear, and not knowing that these were demons, they called them gods, and gave to each the name which each of the demons chose for himself”⁸¹.

Demons are essentially evil, angels essentially good; the former dominate people by instilling fear in them. Socrates is the first to dare to denounce the wiles of the demons, but they promptly reacted by raising the Athenians against the sage⁸².

The same happened with Jesus, the incarnate Logos. Demons thwarted true revelation by falsifying it through pagan poets. They knew the predictions of the prophets, but did not understand their true message. The meaning of Old Testament prophecies was intentionally twisted by demons (*Apol.* I, 54). They manage to falsify almost all the important stages in the divine economy as well as their characteristics: the birth of the Virgin – the creation of Perseus’ myth; miraculous healings - the creation of Asclepios; the omnipotence of the Son of God – distorted by mighty Hercules; the ascension of the Savior to heaven – mystified by the myth of Dionysios.

The same evil creatures are found at the origin of persecutions. Here, the instruments are politicians and emperors. Justin projects personal and political events into a cosmic framework, conflicts between two individuals or two communities thus becoming conflicts between two cosmic principles⁸³.

⁸⁰ *Apol.* II, 5, PSB. 2, p. 81; PG 6, 452BC.

⁸¹ *Apol.* I, 5, PSB. 2, p. 28; PG 6, 336AB.

⁸² Cristian BĂDILÎȚĂ, *Metamorfozele Antihristului la Părinții Bisericii*, p. 86.

⁸³ Cristian BĂDILÎȚĂ, *Metamorfozele Antihristului la Părinții Bisericii*, p. 87.

Demons also act through heretics, against whom Saint Justin has a clear position⁸⁴. They must be severely punished because they act knowingly in the service of the devil. Some names of heretics from the early Church are also mentioned: Simon the Magus and his wife Elena, Menander, Simon's disciple, and Marcion of Pontus⁸⁵.

As a conclusion to his teaching concerning demons, Saint Justin states:

“For they who are called devils attempt nothing else than to seduce men from God who made them, and from Christ His first-begotten; and those who are unable to raise themselves above the earth they have riveted, and do now rivet, to things earthly, and to the works of their own hands; but those who devote themselves to the contemplation of things divine, they secretly beat back; and if they have not a wise sober-mindedness, and a pure and passionless life, they drive them into godlessness”⁸⁶.

IX. Conclusions

Saint Justin's theology is not systematic, but it has the disposition to show the universality of Christianity, to show that Christianity is the pinnacle of history and truth. The complete capture of Justin's thought is almost impossible considering several aspects: his originality, then the fact that he theologized in a climate and space that we do not know very well from a historical point of view, the fact that not all his works have been preserved, and part of his theological thinking did not become Tradition of the Church. Nevertheless, the Church honors him among the saints, especially because he became a martyr of the faith, but also because he achieved the confrontation of Christian truth with philosophical thought and the pagan world, with courage and wisdom. His life was a true program that most of the Greek Fathers of the Church followed.

The mastery of the scriptural text has fascinated many historians and biblical scholars, showing the great familiarity of Saint Justin with

⁸⁴ “... after Christ's ascension into heaven the devils put forward certain men who said that they themselves were gods; and they were not only not persecuted by you, but even deemed worthy of honours” (*Apol.* I, 26, PSB. 2, p. 42; *PG* 6, 368A).

⁸⁵ Cristian BĂDILĂ, *Metamorfozele Antihristului la Părinții Bisericii*, p. 87.

⁸⁶ *Apol.* I, 58, PSB. 2, p. 64; *PG* 6, 416B.

Holy Scripture. The dialectical dimension of Christian apologetics, the rhetoric of argumentation, and the exegetical technique are discreetly but significantly accompanied by the need for the presence of grace that makes possible and guarantees the understanding of Scripture. By faith the meaning is actualized by the power of evidence itself.

The memory of Christendom preserves him as someone animated by the passion for the search and communication of the truth, willing to recognize the fragmentary presence of the truth revealed in the Greek tradition, which was the basis of European and even world civilization. His effort focused on defining and highlighting the relationship between Christianity and the philosophical tradition, which brought Christianity to a certain degree of cultural elevation, the elevation it needed after emerging from the catacombs.

The doctrine of the *Seminal Logos*, typical of the theology of Saint Justin, in addition to the theological value taken over by the thinking of the Church Fathers, initiated a dialogue with the philosophy of his times. He was the first Christian writer to develop it, thus opening up to Christianity a wide missionary horizon, which included not only ancient philosophy, but more generally also different cultures, given that they all participate in the one divine Logos. The great spiritual openness of the Christian philosopher consists in his desire to understand and recognize all the fragments of truth spread in the systems of Greek philosophy and in the writings of the ancient poets.

The God of the universe is known to us only through his Word, which appears as a bridge between the Father and the world. Therefore, God created the world, acts in it, and governs it. All those poets, writers, or philosophers possess of truth is a ray of His luminous presence. The Word guides not only the history of the chosen people, but also every sincere search for God. This admirable fresco, this broad and generous vision of history, in spite of some erroneous formulations, contains a brilliant intuition, which will be taken up by many Fathers, such as Irenaeus of Lyons, Origen, Tertullian, Augustine, Bonaventure and, closer to us in time, Maurice Blondel.

If one can follow the Logos by living a rational life, this means that it is possible to follow Christ even if one has never heard the Christian message. Prophets and philosophers who lived before Christ were Christians, even if they were not aware of it. This conception is extremely current and reflects

the benevolent attitude of Justin and Christianity in general towards those who hold a different creed. The same attitude inspired the great theologian of our time, Karl Rahner.

Justin Martyr and Philosopher was the first Church Father to generate a new way of thinking, using the philosophical concepts of his time. The fact that he did not produce a meticulous work does not discredit him in any way. When, inevitably, other, more enlightened minds arose to reflect on Christian doctrine, this was made possible by the preliminary directions drawn by the Christian philosopher and martyr.

The testimonies related to the Christian cult from the second century, the liturgical tradition of the early Church, are also invaluable. Saint Justin speaks about the performance of the Holy Liturgy on Sunday, about Baptism, about the Eucharist and about the Sunday gatherings. He describes how they were performed, but also their theological significance, being given an indisputable historical value and representing the oldest descriptions of the Mysteries and the worship of the Church and, in this case, of the Divine Liturgy.

The thought and theology of Saint Justin does not analyze the Person of Christ, but through the extended form of the terminology centered on “Word/Logos”, through his reflection on the Scripture and through the conscious thematization of a history of revelation, a stage was fulfilled in the formation of Christian doctrine, during theology of the Church.

Justin becomes the expression of the first Christians’ way of being, who accurately embodied the evangelical truth.