

Paul Vincent Spade

Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew,* Chapters 1-9 (=Prologue)

Introduction

Justin Martyr is the earliest of the Christian so called "Apologists" of the Greek tradition. Many of the details of his life are uncertain, but we do know that he was martyred for his faith sometime between 163 and 167 C.E.

Justin wrote two *Apologiae* (in Greek), that is, two pleas to the Roman Emperor for religious toleration.¹ Christians at that time were after all not only a new and somewhat unfamiliar group, but were also people who refused to worship the pagan gods of the Roman state, and so were suspected of treason and lack of proper Roman patriotism. Besides his two *Apologiae* and several other works that are now lost, Justin wrote a famous *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, his best known work. We possess most of this dialogue, although the Introduction (not to be confused with Prologue) and a large part of Ch. 74 are now lost.²

In the Prologue, translated below, Justin tells a certain Jew, Trypho by name, the story of how he was converted from pagan philosophy to Christianity. It is likely that the overall story is true, although the details have probably been arranged and embellished for literary purposes. Here are the main outlines of the story.

Justin, it seems, was searching for wisdom, for God, as philosophers of his day typically did. In short, he felt what is sometimes called "the need for salvation." In his search, he went around to the various pagan philosophical sects of his day to see what they had to offer. He went first to a Stoic. But, alas, the Stoic **did not himself believe in God.**, and in fact thought such belief was

1 The Emperor was Antoninus Pius, although the second *Apology* is addressed to the Roman Senate. See Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 vols. (Westminster, Md. Christian Classics, 1986-88), vol. I, p. 199.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 202

sheer foolishness. So Justin decided he would not be able to satisfy his need with the Stoic.

Next, he went to an Aristotelian, a "Peripatetic." But, after a while, as Justin ironically puts it, "he asked me then to settle on his fee, so that our association should be not profitless to us" (Ch. 2, § 3).

After that, he went to a Pythagorean, in the hope that perhaps the Pythagorean could provide him with what he was searching for. But the Pythagorean instead insisted Justin first learn music (that is, the mathematical theory of harmony, not skill in musical performance), astronomy and geometry, before he could make any advance at all. Unfortunately, Justin found he had neither the time nor the inclination to learn all those other disciplines, and so he went away, leaving the Pythagorean behind like the others.

Note, incidentally, the implicit demand Justin is making in his dissatisfaction with the Pythagorean. He is saying in effect that the way to salvation, the *true* philosophy, should be open to everyone, not merely to the educated, the learned.

Finally, Justin went to a Platonist, "And," he says (Ch. 2, § 6),

I made progress and improved as much as possible every day. I was greatly taken with the thought of incorporeal things, and the contemplation of the Ideas excited my mind. I thought I had become wise in a short time and, in my laziness, I hoped to have a vision of God at once. For that is the goal of Plato's philosophy.

Note the claim in the last sentence, that the Platonists, like Justin, were seriously searching for God in a way other philosophers in Justin's day were not. Note also how it was the *Platonists* who first got Justin to realize that there existed *immaterial* realities. This is a common theme of the literature of this period. (We find it also in St. Augustine's *Confessions*.) It seems that many people of Justin's day and afterwards, even many thoughtful people, were materialists,

and that it took some argument and persuasion to convince them that immaterial things could exist as well as the familiar physical ones.

In any event, having now found what he thought was the true philosophy, the way to salvation, Justin retired to the seashore to meditate on his new discovery. There, as he relates to Trypho, he encountered an old man, who turned out to be a Christian, and who engaged Justin in dispute. Here is a fragment of their conversation (Ch. 3, §§ 4-5):

“Does philosophy then produce happiness?,” he said, interrupting.

“It certainly does,” I replied, “and it alone.”

“What then is philosophy,” he said, “and what is its happiness? Tell me, if nothing prevents your telling.”

“Philosophy,” I said, “is the science of being and the discovery of truth, while happiness is the prize for [having achieved] that science and that wisdom.”

“Then what do you call being?,” he said.

“That which always stays the same, and in the same way, and is the cause of all other things’ being. That is God.”

(Note how that last claim, that God always stays the same in the same way, is the classic Platonic way to describe a Form or Idea as changeless and immutable. By contrast, things in this world are mutable and impermanent.)

The old man then argues with Justin and convinces him that Platonism is wrong! The main point of contention is the Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence and transmigration of the soul. This

feature of Platonism is perhaps not generally emphasized in twentieth century discussions of Platonism, but it is genuinely there in Plato, and was an important part of “popular Platonism” in Justin’s time.

The old man argues that this doctrine of pre-existence and transmigration is just incoherent. According to the doctrine, if you behave badly in this life, you are punished by being reincarnated as a lower form of life - as a serpent, perhaps, or a toad. But what kind of “punishment” is that, if the serpent or toad does not even *know* he is being punished, or why? So too, if you do good deeds in this life, you are “rewarded” by a vision of the Forms, but then you are promptly reinserted in a body (as a result of reincarnation), where you forget the Forms once again. That is not a very impressive reward! (Ch. 4.)

Note how the old man is here arguing against a certain popular form of Platonism on purely *internal* grounds. And he is absolutely right! The re-entry of the soul into the “prison” of the body can hardly be construed as a good thing - hardly a “reward” - for this kind of popular Platonism!

The importance of the old man’s argument cannot be overemphasized. The argument may not be an “iron-clad” or decisive one. But that is not the important point. Rather, the point is Justin’s realization that, in the framework in which he is working, the doctrine of the soul as surviving after death *apart* from any transmigration into further lives in this world, made better *philosophical* sense than the best of the Greek philosophies he could find. For the old man’s religious doctrine *rejected* the unsatisfactory theory of transmigration of souls into higher and lower forms of life.

Where did the old man get his doctrine, Justin asks. From the wise men of old, from the Hebrew prophets, whose prophecies, he says, are fulfilled in Christianity. In this connection, there are two distinct views found in Justin’s *Dialogue*, views that are perhaps not consistent with one another:

(a) On the one hand, there is the view that whatever was ultimately valuable and worthy in Greek philosophy was stolen from the prophets of old. This is an ancient and traditional theory, traces of which may be found in Philo of Alexandria. It is historically dubious, to say the least.

(b) At the same time, we find in Justin the view that all who live "reasonably" - that is, in accordance with *logos* - are really Christians whether they realized it or not, even if they lived before the time of Jesus.

In accordance with (b), we sometimes find later in Justin's *Dialogue* the view that philosophy was a kind of *revelation* to the Greeks (through reason), just as the prophets were a revelation to the Jews of old. As a result, according to this side of Justin's views, there is *continuity* between philosophy and religion. Religion (for Justin, Christianity) is ultimately the *true* philosophy. It *succeeds* in finding salvation, which the best of Greek philosophy tried - and failed - to find.

Justin Martyr's *Dialogue* offers twentieth century readers a unique and fascinating insight into the religious and philosophical thinking of the second century of the Christian era. It repays further study.

Justin Martyr

Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew Chapters 1-9 (= Prologue)

Translated by Paul Vincent Spade from the Greek text in J. C. M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher: Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, Chapters One to Nine*, ("Philosophia patrum," vol. 1); Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971.

Note: Square brackets enclose my own insertions. Section numbers in the edition are marked in the translation by numerals in parentheses. For the most part, I have followed the interpretation presented in van Winden. For other translations, see the Bibliography appended to this one.

Chapter 1

(1) While I was walking early in the morning in the walkways of the colonnade, a certain [man] met me, together with others [who were with him]. "Hi, philosopher," he said. And as he said this, he turned and walked alongside me, and his friends turned with him.

I addressed him in return. "What can I do for you," I said.

(2) He replied, "In Argos I was taught by Corinthus the Socratic that one must not scorn or slight those who are dressed like you,¹ but rather always greet them and carry on conversation with them, in case some advantage might arise from the association, either for him² or for me. It is good for both if even one of them benefits. For this reason, whenever I see someone dressed like this, I gladly go up to him, and I was pleased to speak to you just now on this same basis. These [men] are tagging along with me, because they too are hoping to hear something useful from you."

(3) " 'But who are you, bravest of mortals?',"³ I said to him in jest.

He told me straight out both his name and his descent. "I am called Trypho," he said. "I am a Hebrew of the circumcision, fleeing the war going on now⁴. I live most of the time in Greece, particularly in Corinth."

"How then," I said, "could you benefit from philosophy as much as from your [own] lawgiver and the prophets?"

"why not? Don't philosophers devote their whole discussion to God," he said, "and aren't their investigations all the time about [God's] sovereignty and providence? Or isn't that the job of philosophy, to inquire about God?"

(4) "Yes," I said, "we think so too. But most [of them]⁵ do not even care about whether there is one or many gods, and whether [the gods] provide for each of us or not, since [they think] this knowledge does not contribute to happiness. Rather they try to convince us that God pays attention to the universe as a whole, and to genera and species, but not also to me and to you and to individuals, since [if we thought he paid attention to individuals], we would not pray to him night and day.⁶

(5) "But it is not hard to understand where this leads them. Impunity and license follow for those who hold these things, [impunity and license] to do and say whatever they want, neither fearing punishment nor hoping for any good from God. And why not? They say it is always the same things that occur, and again that you and I will live all over again in the same way [as now], getting neither better nor worse.

"But other people,⁷ supposing that the soul is immortal and incorporeal, think they will not pay any penalty if they do something evil. For what is incorporeal cannot suffer. And, since [the soul] is immortal, they do not depend on God any more for anything."

(6) Smiling politely, he said, "Then tell us what you think about these things, and what view you hold about God, and what your philosophy is."

Chapter 2

(1) "I will tell you," I said, "the way it seems to me at least. For in fact, philosophy is the greatest, the most valued possession. It alone leads and unites us to God. Those who turn their mind to philosophy are truly holy.

"But most people have forgotten what philosophy is and why it was sent down to men. For [if they remembered,] there would be no Platonists or Peripatetics or Speculatives⁸ or Pythagoreans, since this knowledge is one.

(2) "I want to say why [philosophy] came to be [so] many-headed. It happened that those who followed next, after the ones who had first treated [philosophy] and had therefore come to be held in honor, made no inquiry into the truth but rather, struck by [their masters'] perseverance and self-discipline, and by the strangeness of their statements; just thought that the things each one learned from his master were true. Afterwards they themselves, when they passed such things on to their successors, together with whatever else seemed to fit in, were called by the name by which the father of their doctrine was called.

(3) "From the start I too wanted to meet one of these people myself, and [so] I devoted myself to a certain Stoic. After I had spent a long time with him, since I had got no further [in my knowledge] of God (for he did not even believe [in God]), and said that such knowledge was unnecessary), I left him and went to someone else, who was called a Peripatetic and who, in his own opinion, had a sharp mind. After putting up with me for those first days, he asked me then to settle on his fee, so that our association should not be profitless to us. For that reason I left him too, and decided he was not a philosopher at all.

(4) “Since my soul was bursting to hear what was proper to philosophy and what singled it out, I went to a famous Pythagorean, a man quite knowledgeable in matters of wisdom. But when I talked with him and wanted to become his pupil and disciple, he said, ‘Indeed? Have you studied music, astronomy and geometry? Or do you expect to glimpse any of the things that contribute to happiness, unless you have first been taught the things that will draw the soul away from sensibles and make it ready for intelligibles, so that it beholds the Beautiful itself and that which is the Good itself?’

(5) “After he had highly recommended these studies and said they were necessary, he sent me away, since I confessed to him that I did not know them. I was depressed, of course, at losing what I had hoped for, all the more so since I thought he [really] knew something. But, again, when I considered the time I would have to spend on those studies, I could not bear to delay for so long.

(6) “While I was [thus] at a loss, it came to me to go the the Platonists. For they were very highly regarded. So I spent most of my time with an intelligent man who had just taken up residence in our town and who was distinguished among the Platonists. And I made progress and improved as much as possible every day. I was greatly taken with the thought of incorporeal things, and the contemplation of the Ideas excited my mind. I thought I had become wise in a short time, and in my laziness, I hoped to have a vision of God at once. For that is the goal of Plato’s philosophy.

Chapter 3

(1) “In this situation, I resolved to take a long rest, and to ‘avoid the path of men.’⁹ I went out to a spot not far from the sea. When I was close to the place where I intended to be by myself once I arrived there, an ancient old man [began] following me from a little way off. He was impressive to look at, and appeared to be gentle and noble in character. I turned around to him, stood there, and stared at him sharply.

(2) “ ‘Do you know me?,’ he said.

“I said not.

“ ‘Why then are you examining me like that?,’ he said to me.

“ ‘I am surprised,’ I said, ‘that you happened to be in the same place with me. I did not expect to see any man here.’

“He said, ‘I am worried about some of my family. They are away from me, and so I have gone out to look after them in case they should appear somewhere. But what are you doing here?’, he [asked] me.

“ ‘I am enjoying whiling away the time like this,’ I said. ‘My conversation with myself is unimpeded, and such places promote the love of reason.’

(3) “ ‘Then you are a lover of reason,’ he said, ‘but not at all a lover of deeds or a lover of truth? And you do not try to be a practical man rather than a sophist?’

“ ‘But,’ I said, ‘what better work could one perform than to show that reason rules all things, and, having understood that and being supported by it, to observe the error of others and their practices, that they do not do anything wholesome and pleasing to God? Without philosophy and right reason, wisdom cannot be present in anyone. Therefore, every man must philosophize, and think of this as the greatest and most honorable work. Other things are [only] and worth allowing if they are derived from philosophy, but burdensome and vulgar for those who undertake them if they are separated from it.’

(4) “ ‘Does philosophy then produce happiness?’, he said, interrupting.

“ ‘It certainly does,’ I replied, ‘and it alone.’

“ ‘What then is philosophy,’ he said, ‘and what is its happiness?’

Tell me, if nothing prevents your telling.’

“ ‘Philosophy,’ I said, ‘is the science of being and the discovery of truth, while happiness is the prize for [having achieved] that science and that wisdom.’

(5) “ ‘Then what do you call being?’¹⁰ he said.

“ ‘That which always stays the same, and in the same way, and is the cause of all other things’ being. That is God.’” I answered him in this way. He was delighted when he heard me, and asked me another question, as follows.

“ ‘Is not “science” a name common to different things? For in all technical matters, one who knows any of them is called a scientist. This is so in military science, navigation and medicine. Is it not also so for divine and human matters? Is there a science that provides the knowledge of human and divine affairs themselves, and also the realization of their divinity and justice?’

“ ‘Yes indeed,’ I said.

(6) “ ‘Well then, is knowing man or God like [knowing] music, arithmetic and astronomy, or something like that?’

“ ‘Not at all,’ I said.

“ ‘Then you have not answered me correctly,’¹¹ he said. ‘For some [sciences] come to us through study or the spending of a certain amount of time, while others produce science through “seeing.” If someone were to tell you that in India there is an animal with a nature unlike all other [animals], but rather such and such, multiformed and multicolored, you would not know [it] until you saw it. Indeed, you would not be able to give any account of it at all if you had not heard [about it from] someone who had [actually] seen it.

(7) “ ‘No, I wouldn’t,’ I said.

“ ‘Then how,’ he said, ‘could the philosophers think or say anything true about God, since they have no science of him, having neither seen nor heard him?’

“ ‘But sir,’ I said, ‘it is not with the eyes that the divine is visible to [philosophers], as other living things are. Rather it can be grasped only by the mind. So Plato says, and I believe him.’

Chapter 4

(1) “ ‘Then,’ he said, ‘does our mind have such and so great a power that it can grasp what it has not previously grasped through sensation? Or will the mind of man ever see God if it is not adorned by the holy spirit?’¹²

“ ‘Plato says,’¹³ I replied, ‘that the eye of the mind is itself like this. It was given to us in order [for us] to be able to see being itself with it when [that eye of the mind] is clear, that [being itself] which is the cause of all intelligibles, having no color, no shape, no size – none of the things the eye sees – but rather, I say, something that is just being [and nothing more], beyond all substance,¹⁴ ineffable and unspeakable, just the Beautiful and the Good, [something that] suddenly arises in souls that are naturally apt for it because of their kinship [to it] and their desire for seeing it.’

(2) “ ‘What kinship is there between us and God?’ he said. ‘Or is the soul divine and immortal, and a part of the sovereign mind itself?’¹⁵ Just as that [sovereign mind] sees God, is it likewise easy for our mind to attain a grasp of the divine and to be happy thereby?’

“ ‘Quite so,’ I said.

“ ‘Then, according to [Plato], do all souls,’ he asked, ‘pass through all animals? Or is there one [kind of soul] for man, and another for a horse or an ass?’

“ ‘No,’ I replied. ‘Rather, they are the same [kind] in all cases.’

(3) “ ‘Then will horses and asses see God,’ he said, ‘or have they ever seen [him]?’

“ ‘No,’ I replied. ‘Neither do most men, unless one lives in righteousness and is purified by justice and every other virtue.’

“ ‘Then,’ he said, ‘is it not through a kinship [to the divine] that one sees God, or because one is a mind, but rather because one is self-disciplined and just?’

“ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘and by having the wherewithal to discern God.’

“ ‘Oh? Do goats or sheep do anything unjust?’

“ ‘Not at all,’ I said.

(4) “ ‘Then,’ he said, ‘will these animals see [God], according to your view?’

“ ‘No, because in their case the body, such as it is, is an obstacle.’

“ ‘If these animals were to acquire speech,’ he replied, ‘you know full well that they would criticize our body with much better reason. But let us leave that as it is, and agree with you in what you say. Tell me, then, does the soul see [God] while it is still in the body or when it has escaped from it?’

(5) “ ‘Even while it is in a human form, it is possible,’ I said, ‘for [such a vision] to arise in it through the mind. But is especially when it is released from the body and stands by itself that it reaches what it wanted all the time.’

“ ‘And does it remember this when it comes to exist in a man again?’

“ ‘I think not,’ I said.

“ ‘Then what advantage is there for the [souls] that see [God], or what does the seer have more than the non-seer [does], if he does not remember the very fact of his seeing?’

(6) “ ‘I have nothing to say [about that],’ I replied.

“ ‘But those [souls] judged unworthy of such a vision, what happens to them?,’ he said.

“ ‘They are imprisoned in certain wild animals’ bodies. And that is their punishment.’

“ ‘Do they know that this is the reason they are in such bodies, [this reason] and [the fact] that they have committed some wrong?’

“ ‘I don’t think so.’

“ ‘Then it seems there is no advantage for them from the punishment either. [In fact,] I would say they are not even being punished, if they do not understand the punishment.’

“ ‘Well, no.’

“ ‘Souls then do not see God [after all], and do not exchange [their bodies] for other bodies. For they would know they were being so punished, and would be afraid thereafter of doing wrong even by chance. But I agree,’ he said, ‘that they are able to know that God exists, and that justice and piety are lovely things.’

“ ‘You are right,’ I said.

Chapter 5

(1) “ ‘Those philosophers, then, do not know anything about these matters. For they cannot even say what the souls is.’

“ ‘It seems not.’

“ ‘One must not say it is immortal either, because if it is immortal then clearly it is also ungenerated.’

“ ‘But, according to some people who are called Platonists, [the soul] is [indeed] ungenerated and immortal.’

“ ‘Do you also say the cosmos is ungenerated?’

“ ‘There are those who say so,¹⁶ but at any rate I do not put myself among them.’

(2) “ ‘You are right. What sense does it make to think that a body as firm, resistant and composite [as the cosmos is], being changed, passing away and coming into being every day, did not come into being from some source? But if the cosmos is generated, souls have to have come into being too,¹⁷ and [so] will perhaps at some time not exist. For they came into being for men and the other animals – if you are going to say that they came into being at all on their own, and not together with their proper bodies.’¹⁸

“ ‘That seems to be right.’

“ ‘Therefore, they are not immortal.’

“ ‘No, since even the cosmos seemed to us to be generated.’

(3) “ ‘But yet I do not say that all souls die; that would truly be a stroke of luck for evil people. What then [do I maintain]? That [the souls] of the pious remain somewhere in a better place, while those of the unjust and wicked [remain] in a worse one, waiting for the time of judgment. Thus some of them, the ones seen to be worthy of God, die no more. The others are punished as long as God wants them to exist and to be punished.’¹⁹

(4) “ ‘Is what you say like what Plato hints at in the *Timaeus*²⁰ concerning the cosmos? He says that, while it is corruptible insofar as it was generated, nevertheless through the will of God it will not be destroyed or doomed to die. Does it seem to you that the same thing is to be said about the souls and about everything whatever? Whatever things are or will ever be lower than God have a corruptible nature and are able to disappear altogether and not to exist any longer. For God alone is ungenerated and incorruptible; that is why he is God. But all other things that are lower than him are generable and corruptible.

(5) “ ‘It is for this reason that [evil] souls die and are punished,²¹ since if they were ungenerated they would not have sinned or been filled with foolishness, would not be cowardly or, on the other hand, rash, and they would never voluntarily enter into pigs and snakes and dogs. Neither would it be right to compel them [to enter into such things], if they are ungenerated. For the ungenerated is like the ungenerated, equal [to it] and the same [as it], and one is not superior to the other in power or dignity.

(6) “ ‘Hence there are not several ungenerated things. For if there were any difference among them,²² you would not, in your searching, find the cause of that difference. Rather, if you direct your reason always to the infinite,²³ you will eventually stop in exhaustion at one ungenerated thing, and this you will call the cause

of all things.²⁴ Or did these matters,' I said, 'escape Plato and Pythagoras, who were wise men, and who are singled out by us as the fortress and pillar of philosophy?'

Chapter 6

(1) " 'I don't care about Plato or Pythagoras,' he said, 'or about anyone at all who maintains any such things.'²⁵ For the truth is as stated, as you may learn from the following.

" 'The soul either is life or has life. Now if it is life, it would make something else be alive, not itself, just as a motion too moves something else rather than itself. But no one would deny that the soul is alive. If it is alive, it is alive [therefore] not as being life but as participating in life; what participates in something is other than that in which it participates. The soul participates in life, since God wills it to live.

(2) " 'So too, then, it will not participate [in life] when he does not want it to live. For living is not a property²⁶ of it, as [it is] of God. Rather, just as man does not exist forever, and his body is not always together with his soul, but when that harmony has to be dissolved the soul leaves the body behind and the man does not exist [any longer], so too, when the soul must not exist any longer, the life-giving spirit departs from it, and the soul does not exist any longer, but goes back again to where it was taken from.'²⁷

Chapter 7

(1) " 'Then,' I said, 'whom could one use as a teacher, or where could one get [any] benefit, if the truth is not [to be found] among these [men]?'

" 'A long time ago – longer ago than all those regarded as philosophers – there arose certain [men], blessed and just and beloved by God. They spoke by means of a divine spirit and foretold future events, which are now coming to pass. [People] call them "prophets". They alone both saw the truth and announced it to men.

They were not afraid or ashamed about anything, or overcome by ambition, but spoke only the things they heard and saw when filled with a holy spirit.

(2) “ ‘Their writings survive even now. One who encounters them can, if he believes them, be greatly benefited [on matters] concerning the origins and the goal [of all things], and the things a philosopher has to know. They did not at that time give their accounts along with a proof, since they are trustworthy witnesses of the truth, beyond all proof. The events that have occurred and are occurring [now] force one to agree with what was said through [these men].

(3) “ ‘Moreover, they had a right to be believed, because of the miracles they performed, since they were glorifying God, the maker and father of all things, and proclaiming the Christ issuing from him, his son. The false prophets, filled with the deceptive and impure spirit, did not do this and do not do it [now]. Yet they dare to do certain miracles for the amazement of men, and they glorify the spirits and demons of error²⁸. But pray above all that the gates of light might be opened to you. For unless God and his Christ give one [the power of] understanding, [these things] are not visible or comprehensible to anyone.’

Chapter 8

(1) “ ‘When he told me these things, and many other that now is not the time to relate, he left, urging me to pursue these matters. And I never saw him again. At once a fire was lit in my soul, and a love for the prophets and for the men who are dear to Christ took hold of me. When I considered his words for myself, I found this alone to be a firm and beneficial philosophy.

(2) “ ‘In just that sense and for these [reasons], I am a philosopher. I would like all people to make a resolution as firm as mine not to avoid the savior’s words. For they contain in themselves a kind of terror, and are enough to depress those who are turning away from the straight path. [But] there is also the sweetest rest for

those who practice them. If then you care at all about yourself, and are seeking salvation and trust in God, [then] since you are not a stranger to the topic, it is possible for you to be happy by following God's Christ and becoming initiated."

(3) After I had said these things, my dear fellow²⁹, the men with Trypho laughed aloud. Bu he smiled a little and said, "I accept the rest of what you [say], and I admire your ardor for the divine. But it would be better for you to philosophize still according to the philosophy of Plato or someone else, practicing patience and self-control and moderation, than [it would be for you] to be deceived by false words and to follow men who are not worth anything. For while you remained in that kind of philosophy and lived without blame, there remained the hope for a better fate. But when you abandon God and trust in men, what kind of salvation is still left [for you]?"

(4) "If, then, you want to listen to me – for already I think of you as a friend – be first circumcised, then keep the Sabbath and the festivals, and God's new moons, as is the Law. In a word, do all the things written in the Law, and then perhaps somewhere, is unknown and does not yet know himself. He does not have any power at all until Elijah comes and anoints him, and makes him plain to all. But you accept an idle rumor and mold a kind of Christ for yourselves and, for his sake are now heedlessly going to ruin."

Chapter 9

(1) "You have an excuse," I said, "[for thinking that], my good man, and may you be forgiven. For you do not know what you are saying. Rather, persuaded by teachers who do not know the Scriptures, you act like a prophet and say whatever comes into your head. If you want to have an account of this, [I will explain] how we have not been led astray and will not stop confessing him,³⁰ even if reproaches are heaped upon us by men, even if the most terrible tyrant [tries to] force us to renounce [our religion]. For I will show in his³¹ presence that we have not trusted in empty myths or in

unprovable words, but in [words] full of a divine spirit, bursting with power and abounding with grace.”

(2) Then those with [Trypho] laughed out loud again and called out an unseemly [remark]. I stood up,³² ready to leave, but he caught my cloak and said he would not let go until I had done what I promised.

“Well, your fellows must not cause an uproar or act so boorishly. But if they want, let them listen quietly. If there is some more pressing business that prevents them, let them go away. Let us, however, withdraw somewhere and, once we have rested, finish the discussion.”

(3) It seemed to Trypho too that this [would be a good thing] to do. We then turned off and went to the area in the middle of the colonnade. Two of the others went away scoffing and laughing at our seriousness. When we arrived at the place where there are stone seats on both sides, the [men remaining] with Trypho sat on one of them. One of [the men] made a comment about the war going on in Judea³³, and they talked it over.

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1. dressed like you: Philosophers of the day often dressed in a characteristic and readily identifiable way. Compare the modern "clerical garb."
2. him: The switch from plural to singular is in the Greek.
3. *Iliad* VI. 123 and XV.247. Justin is playfully quoting Homer. Even today, some people find this sort of thing amusing.
4. The Jewish revolt of 132-135 AD, led by Bar Cochba against the Romans.
5. Justin has the Stoics especially in mind here.
6. Presumably because there would be no need to; the divine providence would already have taken care of everything.
7. Apparently certain Platonists are meant.
8. It is not clear who these were.
9. *Iliad* VI. 202.
10. The manuscripts have 'God' here. See van Winden, pp. 59-63, for the emendation.
11. In claiming that there is a science of divine things.

12. The point is that such vision is not within our natural powers, and must be granted by God as a special “decoration.”

13. *Phaedo* 65e-66a

14. beyond all substance (ousias): See Republic 509b. In Plato’s use of the term ‘ousia’ there, it means something like “the realm of being.” That translation would be inappropriate here, however, since Justin is talking about being itself (autotoon), which is presumably not “beyond the realm of being.” See van Winden, p. 73.

15. *Philebus* 30d. Notice the question here about the relation of soul (psuche) to mind (nous).

16. For example, Aristotle, *De caelo*, I, 11-12.

17. The Platonic doctrine of transmigration of souls has already been rejected. The present argument seems to be based on the notion that to reject transmigration of souls is also to reject the doctrine of the *pre-existence* of souls, the theory that souls exist in advance, in a kind of heavenly warehouse, and are then sent down and implanted in bodies. (It is in fact a long way from that view to the theory of transmigration, but never mind that now.) The present argument, then, is that since souls do not exist before their bodies do, therefore if the cosmos – and all the material things in it, including human and animal bodies – came into being, so did souls.

18. That is, if you are going to say it is correct to speak of the *soul* as generated, rather than of the *composite* man or animal as being generated. Compare Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII.8, where it is said that it is the *composite* of matter and form that is generated, not the form itself. On this “Aristotelian” alternative, of course, the force of the old man’s argument is even stronger.

19. The theory then is that, although all souls are naturally prone to be destroyed, nevertheless good souls are preserved by

God, while evil souls are punished for a while, and are then destroyed. This is confirmed below, Ch. 6, δ 2. Note that the theory that evil souls are destroyed conflicts with Justin's doctrine in his *Apology I*, 8.4, where evil souls are "punished with an eternal punishment, not just for the period of a millennium, as Plato says." See van Winden, p. 106 n. 2, and for a discussion of this discrepancy, van Winden, pp. 106-108.

20. *Timaeus* 41 a-b

21. See above, n. 19.

22. As there presumably would have to be, if there are several of them, on the grounds of the "Identity of the Indiscernibles."

23. The sense of this is not altogether clear. Justin does not mean to be committing himself to an infinite regress, as the rest of the sentence makes plain.

24. On the formulation of the argument in this paragraph, see van Winden, pp. 97-98.

25. The old man is presumably not objecting to the theory that evil souls die, since he agrees with that. Perhaps what bothers him is the appeal to the *Timaeus* for the claim that the cosmos, although corruptible, nevertheless will endure forever. Or perhaps all the old man is saying is that he is not impressed by Justin's appeal to authority.

26. Property in the logical sense described in Porphyry's *Isagoge*.

27. See Ecclesiastes 12:7. Note that here the soul appears to be a kind of composite of "life-giving spirit" and something else, just as the whole man is a "harmony" of souls and body. The "something else" that enters into the composition of the soul is

therefore analogous to the material body. The old man's argument, in short, appears to presuppose a kind of hylomorphism of the soul.

28. I Timothy 4:1.

29. Ch. 141 of Justin's *Dialogue* shows that the whole thing was dedicated to a certain Marcus Pompeius, who is otherwise completely unknown.

30. That is, Jesus.

31. That is, the most terrible tyrant's. See the discussion in van Winden, p. 124.

32. When did he sit down? The last we heard (at the very beginning of the dialogue), they were all walking around. Perhaps the explanation comes from the fact that the words "I ... cloak" seem to be taken from Plato, *Protagoras* 335c8-d2. See the discussion in Van Winden, pp. 124-125.

33. See above, n. 4.