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# Reconsidering Anthropology: A Note on Soul and Body in the Thinking of Justin Martyr

Nicu Dumitrașcu

Justin, considered one of the most important Greek apologists of the second century, if not the most important, was at first drawn to several philosophical systems of the pagan world. He attended the Stoic, the Peripatetic and the Pythagorean schools,<sup>1</sup> but none of them satisfied him.<sup>2</sup> Only when he came into contact with Christianity did he feel that he had found what he sought and declared that it was the only true philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Henceforth, he was fully engaged in studying and developing the new doctrine. He managed to prove the superiority of Christianity over the major Hellenistic philosophies that had influenced the development of the culture and civilization of the 'known world' up to that point.<sup>4</sup> Using their terminology and thinking, he put together a viable Christian doctrine in accordance with the understanding of that time.

He was totally dedicated to the truth of the confession of faith and became one of the most important Christian missionaries, preaching the word of God, albeit dressed as a philosopher. He travelled as an itinerant teacher, promoting the moral values of the gospel of Christ. Composing fundamental works for the times in which he lived, he founded a catechetical school, but came into conflict with the pagan philosophers and the authorities of the state and eventually died as a martyr for Christian truth and freedom. His name was soon recognized by his contemporaries and he gained followers. His ideas continue to interest historians and researchers to this day.

The intention of this short essay is to make a few comments on his anthropology, more specifically on his theory about human beings and their destiny on the road to salvation. His teaching, although strongly influenced by philosophy, especially the Platonic, lies to a large measure within Pauline parameters and, with all its deficiencies, opened up the field for a deeper analysis.<sup>5</sup>

Man is a rational being, composed of body and soul, between which there is a constant flow of energy, which we call life; all contained in a body and mind that operates in near perfect harmony with an amazing accuracy. Justin talked about the materiality of the body, about its composition and evolution, starting from a seed that gives forth fruit and which, spreading in all directions, turns itself into an ever-growing source of life. Concerning the soul, he said that it has a kind of 'physicality': this remark clearly demonstrates his uncertain grasp of some concepts in his Christian understanding, still being dominated, as he was, by the influence of his philosophical training prior to his

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<sup>1</sup> Droge 1987, 303.

<sup>2</sup> Osborn 1973, 67–68.

<sup>3</sup> Skarsaune 1976, 55, 56, 58, 61, 65, 71, 73.

<sup>4</sup> Droge 1987, 305. Actually, the entire work was designed to show the superiority of Christianity. Although Justin recognizes that "the philosophy is a divine gift sent down to men", Christianity is "the only safe and profitable philosophy", Droge 1987, 316.

<sup>5</sup> For details about the influence of Plato over Justin's anthropology in his pre-Christian period, see especially Edwards 1991, 17–34.

conversion to Christianity.<sup>6</sup> In fact the oscillating nature of his thought is predominant throughout his anthropological work.

Before reviewing briefly Justin's conception of the body and the soul, one important clarification must be made. Despite some equivocal expressions, he never embraced the trichotomist theory, but was a believer in the dichotomous constitution of the human being. There is some uncertainty in his speech and terminology, but this may simply be because he had not enough time to 'weigh' the philosophical formulations of his time, and to adopt one or the other conclusively.

## The body

The current Christian teaching about the human body and its importance in the process of the spiritual perfection of man is well known. It does not exist separate from the soul, because, "it possesses within itself, from the beginning, the particular working of the soul, an operation *stamped upon the body* with the entire complexity of the soul's rational activities and its forms of sensibility."<sup>7</sup> It differs from all other material creatures existing in the world due to the presence of the soul in it. God created the body directly from the dust, where it will return after death. Such teaching about the body was nothing as clear during the time of Justin.

The Christian world was still under the immense influence of the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophies, which claimed the exclusive immortality of the soul and the final corruptibility of the body. In the idealistic philosophies, the body was not held in high regard because it was considered merely a kind of prison for the soul. The body was regarded as a simple element for the physical support of the man, so having but a secondary character, auxiliary and temporary.<sup>8</sup> Justin opposed this view. He saw the body as a sanctuary for the soul, as something of inestimable value. And even if his interpretations are sometimes quite tentative, no one can deny his genius in analysing and selecting the doctrinal elements to develop an *acceptable* anthropology. Moreover, he was faced with a delicate situation in which he had to present his arguments in two different ways, depending on whether he was in dialogue or confrontation. Of course, here we are referring specifically to *Christians*, but we will also mention briefly *the pagans*.

Justin invoked in his support the novelty of the message brought by Christ, which assigned the human body high esteem by the care he showed for it, through the miraculous healing he performed and especially through the resurrection. Christ had changed the accepted idea of the body, by the promise that he will transform it from being corrupt into being imperishable.<sup>9</sup> Resurrection is the climax of this appreciation of the body. Moreover, the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the flesh becomes the main argument in his theological speech on the value of the body for human salvation.

The Christian concept declares that at the Second Coming of the Saviour believers will rise again with the bodies that they had when they lived on earth. This moment will be the culmination of all the miracles that Christ carried out during his earthly work.

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<sup>6</sup> Dumitraşcu and Voicu 2004, 42.

<sup>7</sup> Stăniloae 2000, 66.

<sup>8</sup> Dumitraşcu 1994, 72.

<sup>9</sup> Just. Res. 10. 298–299.

The feeding of multitudes with a few loaves and fish, the healing of lepers, the blind, deaf, lame and paralytics, the casting out of evil spirits from people and not least through bringing back people from the dead, all lead to this.<sup>10</sup>

This was a totally different concept from that of the philosophical and gnostic currents of the time. They claimed that the body was unworthy of resurrection and heavenly life because of its despicable substance, dust, and the violence used by it against its prisoner the soul, forcing them to sin together.<sup>11</sup> Justin justified his position with two arguments that support each other.

The first refers to the biblical text, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness”:<sup>12</sup> this shows very clearly that it is *the carnal man* being invoked when it is linked to another passage according to which God “formed man of the dust of the ground.”<sup>13</sup> The second argument depends on the internal logic of a comparison as follows: if the painter loves his own achievement, it is impossible for God, who is the creator of the whole universe, not to love every part of his creation, and especially the complete man, body and soul, the most perfect of his creatures.<sup>14</sup>

Justin said that heretics, referring either to all Jewish sects or just to one of them (or even to some Jews influenced by Philo’s philosophy), state that “the human frame was the workmanship of angels.”<sup>15</sup>

Justin refers again here to the image of the painter and his care for the state of his works, in seeking to strengthen his previous statements in favour of the human body. Specifically, he says that if painters want their images to last, in order to be glorified through them, they do not hesitate to restore them when they have deteriorated. Then how could God not take care of his work? How could someone think that God, after creating man, would take care only of the soul, and not also of the body? Would he have worked in vain? Impossible! Clearly, God, who is the Supreme Reason and the Absolute Love, includes the body in the resurrection, not only the soul. The gospel of salvation is addressed to just this point too.<sup>16</sup>

As we have already noted, Justin built all his argument on the reality of Christ’s resurrection. But he often had to face a contrary opinion of this wonderful act, unique, unrepeatable and with universal value as it is: some believed that the resurrection of Christ, if it happened, was just a spiritual matter. Therefore, he was forced to try to explain the inconsistency of such a theory. If the resurrection of Christ was strictly spiritual, then logically, he ought to appear in a two-dimensional form, the body on side and the soul on the other. But we know from his appearances post-resurrection that this did not happen. Justin clearly stated that The Lord Christ had resurrected with his body, as is written in the Holy Scripture.

In order not to leave any real doubt regarding his presence after the resurrection, he said to his disciples: “Why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is Myself. Handle Me and see for a spirit has not

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<sup>10</sup> Dumitraşcu 1994, 72.

<sup>11</sup> Coman 1968, 381.

<sup>12</sup> *Gen.* 1:26.

<sup>13</sup> *Gen.* 2:7.

<sup>14</sup> *Just. Res.* 7.297.

<sup>15</sup> *Just. Dial.* 62.228.

<sup>16</sup> *Just. Res.* 8.297.

flesh and bones as you see I have. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.”<sup>17</sup> In confrontations with those who said that God would save only the soul, which is part of the divine being, and not the body, which is of another nature, the answer of Justin was very clear. He said that between the two elements (body and soul) there is a perfect unity. Therefore, salvation is for both of them and not just for one. Each person carries in his body the inner essence of the soul that lives in him. In other words, the spirit of each person exists in every fibre of the body.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, the body alone cannot be accused of sin, but neither does it constitute a prison for the spirit and thereby forces the latter to sin, because the soul is the starting point of all decisions and actions of man.<sup>19</sup>

Justin emphasized once again the value of the body, when he recommended to Christians to live a sober lifestyle and to abstain from sin, if they really wanted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

When Justin addressed pagans, who had doubts about the state of the body and especially about the absolute power of God, he changed his working methods and arguments. He said that “[i]f the idols of Homer can do all, with more reason God can resurrect the body.”<sup>20</sup> Almost all philosophers, despite all their differences, speak of this idea of rebirth or re-composition of the body. One of their mutual ideas is that everything is made from matter, which after its disappearance may reappear through its own immortal force, by some force which is located within the matter or through the power of a deity. He cites an *alloy* that has several elements, such as gold, silver and copper that someone wants to break down and recombine to suit his own purposes.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, whether he addressed Christians or pagans, Justin was convinced that the human body should be cherished and honoured because it is truly the sanctuary of his soul. Although some infelicity of expression, or even conceptual ambiguity, can be seen in many passages, the general line of his anthropology is correct. Body and soul are interdependent, and they support each other in all activities carried out by man. Even if his pronouncements came rather in the form of questions put by him to his interlocutors or to himself, he has the merit of trying to expound something (as far as it was possible then) from the mystery that is a human being. It is a kind of dialogue with himself, which is meant to show on the one hand the manner of intellectual working and analysis of the author, whilst on the other hand it presents a solution that may be sufficient for the contemporary level of thinking about Christian anthropology.<sup>22</sup>

He asks and answers: “For what is man but the reasonable animal composed of body and soul? Is the soul by itself man? No; but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? No; but it is called the body of man. If then, neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called man to life and resurrection, He has called not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and the body.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Luke 24:38-40.

<sup>18</sup> Just. Res. 8.297–298.

<sup>19</sup> Coman 1968, 385.

<sup>20</sup> Just. Res. 5.296.

<sup>21</sup> Just. Res. 6.296.

<sup>22</sup> Dumitraşcu 1994, 74.

<sup>23</sup> Just. Res. 8.297–298.

## The soul

The concept that Justin held about the soul is perhaps the most controversial anthropological issue present in his writings. This is understandable if we consider that almost all the great thinkers of antiquity (like Plato and Aristotle) have dedicated works to it: Justin came into contact with many of these in his lifetime. It seems that he even wrote something (mentioned by Eusebius of Caesarea) in which he presented their various opinions and where he promised that he would present his own thinking (of course quite different) in a separate work.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately both of these oeuvres are lost.

From the Christian point of view, the soul is a real substance, living and immaterial which comes from God through creation and not an emanation from the divine being. Through the soul, man is in permanent contact with God and the spiritual world. It transcends the body and cannot be identified with the palpable and special rationality of the body. It is a conscious subjective rationality, but beyond all rationality and the passive sensitivity of nature. Nor does it cease to exist when the body dies. It is the created image of the Eternal Conscious Spirit.<sup>25</sup> Two periods can be identified in the intellectual life of Justin, each one of them presenting interesting aspects regarding his doctrine about the soul.

## Before the conversion to Christianity

The first period is the one preceding Justin's conversion to Christianity, when, as is known, he was under the influence of the Platonic philosophy.<sup>26</sup> Justin had the good sense to understand, in time, the weakness of this system of thinking and to gradually free himself from its power and illusion. However, here, we are reviewing the beginning of his attempts at comprehension.

Justin observed the existence of some philosophers who did not even consider the question of whether there were one or more gods, and who were uninterested in why people display faith. It appears that they cared only to contemplate the universe.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, he recalls others who, although they argued that the human soul is immortal and has substance, believed that it could not receive any punishment, because what is not flesh cannot suffer.<sup>28</sup>

In the discussion with Trypho, a Jew, although apparently he wanted to distance his position somewhat from the Platonic philosophy regarding the soul, Justin cannot abandon it completely. Despite this, there is between them a very clear difference of position. For example, Justin says that we are spiritually related to God through possessing a soul, because it is of a divine and immortal nature. Through this relationship we can know him, comprehend him with our mind and gain happiness.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Coman 1968, 382.

<sup>25</sup> Stăniloae 2000, 65–67.

<sup>26</sup> Dumitraşcu 1994, 75; see also Droge 1987, 304–306; Young 1989, 162.

<sup>27</sup> Just. *Dial.* 1.194.

<sup>28</sup> Rămureanu 1958, 403.

<sup>29</sup> Rămureanu 1958, 403.



We must admit the ambiguity of such thinking. Justin had not yet realized the trenchant difference between the rational human being and irrational creatures in saying that the souls of all animals are alike to the soul of man. He considered all the souls only in terms of their spiritual aspect. But after Justin had accepted Christianity, when being asked if “all creatures such as horses and donkeys can see God”, he responded that they cannot see him, as was the case too with the majority of people.<sup>30</sup> This vision is reserved only to those who “live in righteousness and are cleansed by righteousness and by all other virtues.”<sup>31</sup> Justin stated, like Plato, that the soul is of a divine and immortal nature, and that man can think and know God through reason as it lives in the flesh. However, the true knowledge will be acquired only after it will be “opened from the flesh” (having left the body).<sup>32</sup> In the same context he also mentions the pre-existence of souls, although in a less explicit manner, when he says that they were created as ‘special products’ before bodies, and not for any particular body.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding the immortality of the soul,<sup>34</sup> and faced with the contrary argument of his partner in dialogue (according to which, if the world was created and has a limit to its existence, then so it is with the soul: if it was created, it cannot exist by itself or if “the soul is born, then it is not immortal by nature”), Justin supported his position, based on our spiritual kinship with God, by employing the moralistic position taken later in the 18th century by Immanuel Kant.<sup>35</sup> According to Kant, *the* immortality of the soul resides in a note of the will of God, who postulates a noumenal world, where the moral law will prevail, the right balance will be struck between deed and reward, between good and evil.<sup>36</sup> Trypho extended his reasoning to souls, following the Platonic line: he said that if all souls died “for the wicked it would really be a profit.”<sup>37</sup> But he believed rather that the places where they go after bodily death are different, according to the deeds done in their lives.

It is possible, extrapolating from some of the above, to say that the torments of the wicked will eventually have a limit, which leads on to another theory developed later by Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Basil the Great. This is the concept of *apocatastasis*. But Justin supported, elsewhere in his work, the eternity of the torments of hell. The wicked will be punished in the same bodies that they had together with their souls and will be punished for ever, and not only a period of a thousand years, as Plato held.<sup>38</sup>

In the answer that he gives to Trypho on the immortality of the soul appears an idea that somehow foreshadows his future Christian beliefs. Specifically, he says that the soul *is* not immortal by its nature because what is created cannot be eternal, but *becomes* immortal by the will of God. The church’s teaching posits the idea that the soul does not rely for its immortality on its natural indestructibility, as a simple substance, but on *the*

<sup>30</sup> Just. *Dial.* 4.196–197.

<sup>31</sup> Just. *Dial.* 4.196–197.

<sup>32</sup> Osborn 1973, 69; see also Rămureanu 1958, 404.

<sup>33</sup> Rămureanu 1958, 404.

<sup>34</sup> For the nature of the soul in Justin’s thinking, see Grant 1956, 246–247.

<sup>35</sup> Rămureanu 1958, 405.

<sup>36</sup> Rămureanu 1958, 405.

<sup>37</sup> Just. *Dial.* 4.197.

<sup>38</sup> Just. *1 Apol.* 8.165.

indestructibility of its relationship with God, sustained by his will. Trypho is not satisfied with this argument. More specifically, Justin says in *Dialogue* 6 that:

The soul assuredly *is* or *has* life. If, then, it is life, it would cause something else, and not itself, to live, even as motion would move something else than itself. Now, that the soul lives, no one would deny. But if it lives, it lives not as being life, but as the partaker of life; but that which partakes of anything, is different from that of which it does partake. Now the soul partakes of life, since God wills it to live. Thus, then, it will not even partake [of life] when God does not will it to live. For to live is not its attribute, as it is God's; but as a man does not live always, and the soul is not for ever conjoined with the body, since, whenever this harmony must be broken up, the soul leaves the body, and the man exists no longer; even so, whenever the soul must cease to exist, *the spirit of life* is removed from it, and there is no more soul, but it goes back to the place from whence it was taken.<sup>39</sup>

His concept seems quite complex, difficult to understand and hard to follow with any amount of clarity. This vivified spirit (the spirit of life) is, perhaps, that divine influx (life) that the soul has from God; when it separated from him, it will fall into nothingness. I do not think we can suspect Justin of *trichotomism*, because his anthropological formulations are often in flux, leaving room for speculation. For example, he says that the body is the house of the soul and the soul is *the* gate of the spirit and so will learn all who have a clear conscience and a strong faith in God.<sup>40</sup> These expressions do not belong to him, but are part of a more elaborate concept of Platonic and Stoic origin, found in almost identical form in apostle Paul and later in Irenaeus of Lyon and Tatian the Assyrian. He, however, is the author of some texts that speak exclusively about the body and soul, when discussing the resurrection and the final judgment. We do not have enough evidence to declare him a convinced dichotomist, though the appearances, at least, are moving towards such. After all, Justin is the product of his era, where different philosophical Christian or non-Christian currents were in hot competition. The transference of the revealed truths into everyday life was carried out with some difficulty.

## After conversion

After converting to Christianity, Justin reinforced his position on the doctrine of the soul, breaking free of the influences that had marked him before.<sup>41</sup> The place of Platonic and Middle-Platonic philosophy is taken by the words of the Holy Scripture, which became his main source of inspiration and argument.<sup>42</sup> If until now the soul was considered as part of God and received salvation by its very nature, from now on its immortality became a divine gift through which it will escape death, because it will pass into another existential plane, to another life, where it will reap either punishment or reward, depending on the

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<sup>39</sup> Just. *Dial.* 6.198; see the comment on this in Osborn 1973, 69–70.

<sup>40</sup> Just. *Res.* 10.298.

<sup>41</sup> For details concerning the context, reason and significance of his conversion to Christianity, see the excellent work of Skarsaune 1976, 53–73.

<sup>42</sup> For the large influence of the Platonic and Middle Platonic philosophy on Justin's thinking, see Droge 1987, 305–319 and esp. Young 1989, 161–165.

nature of the deeds committed on earth. This gift will have to be gained laboriously by the whole human being, body and soul, through a life in conformity with the moral principles of the Christian God. In this period of his life, Justin dealt with two major themes, namely the freedom of the soul and the situation after its separation from the body.

### The freedom and destiny of the soul

Man is gifted by God with freedom. He may choose one way or another as his conscience dictates. If it were not so, then the whole teaching of the Christian faith, based on love, would have no point because a man would not be able to accept or reject it freely, but would be held in a permanent constraint that would impose upon him a certain direction from which he could never depart.

Freedom allows for the sovereignty of a man, master of his decisions. His full authority lies in reason, free will and love.<sup>43</sup> Justin supported unreservedly the freedom of man and clearly opposed the Stoic teaching concerning destiny, when he stated “men do what they do, or suffer what they suffer, but each man by free choice acts rightly or sins.”<sup>44</sup> The fact that those who reject the word of God will be punished with the eternal fire demonstrates that the Christian doctrine is one not based on fear or terror, but on justice. Because if these sanctions did not exist, then God as we know him would not exist, and, if there were a God who did not care about people, then the concept of good and evil would not exist.<sup>45</sup> In other words, man has by his nature the power to know good and also evil. He is fully responsible for all his activities, all his thoughts and all his actions. The centre of all this lies undoubtedly in the soul. It is the command core of all decisions and actions of every man. God gave autonomy to people as He gave autonomy to the angels. God allowed humans and angels to choose the way they want to go. Each is capable of growing in virtue or descending into vice. Besides, no one could claim merit for himself, if he did not have the possibility to fall. In other words, no one can aspire to the Kingdom of Heaven unless he earns this reward through a long exercise of will and action, resisting manfully any temptation, any inducement, which is put by demons in front of him.

The idea of destiny is repudiated by Justin. He builds his argument against destiny by focusing on the singular value of everyone’s responsibility for his or her actions. If everything was under the power of destiny, free will would not exist and people would be innocent of all their mistakes. But free will, or the freedom of choice on how to act, exists. It is the origin of both good and bad deeds. The whole history of humanity has been determined by free will. Justin makes a clear distinction between free will (with its direct implications on a human’s life) and *foreknowledge* of God, when he says:

But if the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall be certainly punished, it did so because he foreknew that they would be unchangeably wicked, and not because God had created them so.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Coman 1970, 359.

<sup>44</sup> Just. 2 *Apol.* 7.190.

<sup>45</sup> Just. 2 *Apol.* 8.191.

<sup>46</sup> Just. *Dial.* 141.270.

He stressed his understanding of this distinction when he related a series of hypothetical questions, such as: Why did God not kill Herod much earlier to stop the slaughter of the innocents? Why did he not make the serpent in Paradise disappear before it tempted Eve and caused him to utter the famous sentence, “I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies”?<sup>47</sup> Could not he have created lots of people at once? The answer is to be found within the same mental and philosophical approach, where freedom is not mutually exclusive with foreknowledge. Justin pronounced that God knew that it was good to do as he did when he made angels and people free and defined the time for them to use that freedom. Also, because of his foreknowledge, God made both universal and partial judgments, keeping further freedom within parameters.<sup>48</sup> Thus, we could say that destiny is the inevitability of reward or punishment to those who choose good or evil.

### Life of souls after death

Starting from the Bible text in 1 *Samuel* 28.7, when king Saul employed a witch to invoke the soul of the prophet Samuel, Justin set out to prove that souls live and are conscious after death. Using the pronouncements of oracles and the authority of philosophers like Empedocles, Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates and of epic myths such as Odysseus’ descent into Hades, Justin acknowledged that the ancients had also demonstrated this as true.<sup>49</sup> In support of this truth he also used the magical practices harnessed by the senders of dreams together with their assistants, of necromancers and of diviners using the bodies of unborn children and of invokers of human souls, all of which customs were practised during the time of the Roman emperors.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, he claimed that many from the pagan world believed that the souls of the dead are transformed into demons, which then oppress people. If the pagan world believed so strongly in their gods, who are merely idols, assigned to them all power, the more must we believe that our God can resurrect bodies by restoring the souls to the material state they had left long before.<sup>51</sup>

He thus proved to be a visionary in Christian theology, because he affirmed and developed a proper eschatological doctrine that would be further developed in the following centuries. The resurrection of the bodies, together with their restored souls, will be followed immediately by the universal judgment.<sup>52</sup> From death to the time of universal judgment, the souls who committed good would remain in a better place, and the souls of the unrighteous in a worse one. But Justin talked also about a particular judgment.<sup>53</sup> Regarding the end of the world, it will proceed as follows: the eternal fire will descend from above and produce the dissolution of all, as had happened before with the Flood that “left no one but him only with his family who is by us called Noah, and by you Deucalion, from whom such vast numbers have sprung, some of them evil and others good.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Gen.* 3:15.

<sup>48</sup> Just. *Dial.* 102.250.

<sup>49</sup> Just. *Dial.* 105.251–252.

<sup>50</sup> Just. *1 Apol.* 18, 168.

<sup>51</sup> Coman 1984, 303.

<sup>52</sup> Rămureanu 1958, 412.

<sup>53</sup> Rămureanu 1958, 413.

<sup>54</sup> Just. *2 Apol.* 7, 190; see the comments of Barnard 1965, 96–97.

Continuing on the purely Christian line of thought, Justin asserts that judgment will be given by Christ, who will come in glory from heaven together with all his angels, and, after the resurrection of the bodies, all who were ever the righteous, who followed his word, will be dressed in incorruptibility; and the others, the unrighteous, will go to the eternal fire to be tormented forever together with the wicked demons. This teaching was regarded with great suspicion by the pagans. Therefore, in order to make his concept about the resurrection more convincing, he used an example that targeted and built upon the concrete experience of people. He said that if man had no body, he would not have believed it possible for a small germ of human seed to produce bones, nerves and muscles in the form that we see. This is an observation that could not be questioned. Even so, if from this little beginning could be born a human being, and no one doubts this process, we should admit that the bodies of people, opened and scattered on the ground, like seeds, can at a proper time, by the commandment of God rise and “put on immortality.”<sup>55</sup>

The certainty of the resurrection for Justin was so strong that he said: “But, we refuse to sacrifice to those to whom we were of old accustomed to sacrifice, undergo extreme penalties and rejoice in death, believing that God will raise us up by his Christ, and will make us incorruptible, undisturbed and immortal.”<sup>56</sup> He urged the pagans to embrace the teaching of Christ in order to become the possessors of immortality.<sup>57</sup>

However, he was influenced by the powerful millenarian beliefs and tendencies, which were characteristic of most of the doctrines encountered during the primary period of Christianity. The Resurrection of the dead will certainly happen, because nothing is impossible to God, but will occur in two stages. In other words, he spoke of two resurrections. The *first* resurrection will occur at the Parousia of Jesus Christ (The Second Coming), when only the righteous will rise, with whom he will set up a kingdom that will last 1000 years.<sup>58</sup> Then will be the *second* resurrection, at the same time as the universal judgment, after which each will go to the eternal life (salvation) or, conversely, to eternal punishment (condemnation), according to the deeds of each man in his earthly lifetime.<sup>59</sup> This millenarian belief, characteristic also of some modern Christian groups, falls into his general anthropological way of thinking, with its positive or negative aspects, but enhanced by how he highlights man’s responsibility for his condition after his bodily death.

## Conclusions

Justin never developed a full idea and definition of anthropology: the study of humanity, both physically and culturally. But he has the merit of having founded a version which, although rudimentary and unsystematic, served as the starting point for the development of a coherent and systematic concept in the following centuries. He had the acumen and

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<sup>55</sup> 1 Cor. 15:53; Just. *I Apol.* 19.169.

<sup>56</sup> Just. *Dial.* 46.218.

<sup>57</sup> Just. *Dial.* 57.225.

<sup>58</sup> Justin’s strong belief in the *Parousia*, and “the millennium or 1000-year reign of the Saints in Jerusalem inaugurated by a resurrection of the righteous” is largely discussed in Barnard 1965, 86–98.

<sup>59</sup> See Coman 1968, 392.

aptitude to build on such ideas existing in the Hellenistic culture that he knew very well from his own studies, in clarifying and elucidating such thought in the New Testament. The influences of the philosophies of the time, especially the Platonic, are visible during his pre-Christian period and it can be said that he displays a certain inclination towards a *trichotomic* doctrine (body, soul and spirit),<sup>60</sup> but this is unsupported by any very convincing evidence. Later, after his conversion, he seemed to have clarified his ideas on man and on his *dichotomic* constitution (body and soul).

Regarding the body, Justin believed that it should be given a special honour by virtue of the prominence given to it by Jesus Christ, through the numerous healings performed during his earthly activities, culminating in his own bodily resurrection.

Regarding the soul, there are significant differences between his pre-Christian period and that after his conversion. Before his conversion Justin supported the Platonic idea, according to which the soul is immortal by the will of God, but also that the soul can know God through reason only when it will 'unravel' itself from the body. At this stage he supported the pre-existence of souls and their transmigration after death into other human bodies and even animals.

After his conversion to Christianity, he broke with these kinds of ideas about the soul. He tried to develop a doctrine to respond more effectively to the new challenges of the Christian world, one that was looking not only for its place in society, but also searching for its own system of thinking and expression, in order to give itself a unique identity. Consequently, Justin totally changed his outlook on the pre-existence of souls, later saying they are made 'close' together with bodies, without explaining more clearly what that meant. He also agreed that the soul can see God, not through its own power and abilities, but only by being adorned with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, Justin strongly supported human freedom and opposed the idea of predestination. Free will governs the world. Man is responsible for all his actions. In other words, freedom automatically involves responsibility. This concept finds its perfect fulfilment in his doctrine regarding the resurrection of the dead, which addresses man in his entirety, body and soul. Both the souls of the righteous and of the wicked shall dwell in the interim period between death and the Universal Judgment in different places, according to the deeds of each in his earthly life. And the resurrected will take back the souls that left them at the time of bodily death to restore the human beings as they were formerly,<sup>62</sup> as did the saviour, Jesus Christ.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Just. *Res.* 10.298.

<sup>61</sup> Dumitraşcu 1994, 82.

<sup>62</sup> Barnard 1965, 92.

<sup>63</sup> Coman 1984, 303.



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