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Justin's Logos and the Word of God

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Abstract

Scholarship has generally attempted to show that the notion of the Logos in Justin's Apologies is largely indebted to Stoic or Platonic philosophy. If, however, we trace its roots in the Biblical tradition, we shall find that these may be adequate to explain it. Such an explanation avoids the difficulties inherent in its rivals and makes the thought of the Apologies continuous with that of Justin's contemporaries and his Dialogue with Trypho.

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It seems that for many scholars Justin Martyr was two people. One produced, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, a vast and eloquent compilation of those texts in the Greek Old Testament which can be made to pre-figure Christ. Though this work engaged him in controversy with the Jews, this Justin was pre-eminently a Biblical theologian, and Nygren (an substitute for the "eros-type" in Early Christian ethics, which has at least the virtue that it is not the "eros-type").¹ The other Justin wrote the two Apologies, where, in order to win the Greeks through their philosophy, he sometimes keeps his Bible at his back.² The proofs of his acquaintance with the scriptures are found in the opening of the *Dialogue with Trypho*, in the obvious erudition of the Apologies, and above all in his doctrine of the

1. A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, part 2, vol. 1, trans. P. S. Watson (London: SPCK, 1938), 49–72. A recent book devoted to Justin's eschatological practices is W. A. Skottswell, *The Biblical Eschatology of Justin Martyr* (London: SPCK, 1967). A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1975), 50, observes that the notion of Christ as *Logos* is carried over to the *Apologies*, though he does not attempt the consistent tracing of the term *Logos* offered here.

2. In my article, "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr," *JTS* 42 (1991): 17–34, I attempt to identify the Platonic models that guided Justin in his construction of a theology. I am here concerned with what was only cursorily treated there, namely the antecedents of the term *Logos*, and shall refer to other treatments of this subject in the course of the present paper.



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Justin's Logos and the Word of God, this can be written as follows: $V = 29.8 * \sqrt{(2/r - 1/a)}$ km/s, where hedonism stabilizes transcendental dualism.

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