


*Justin Martyr*, by Dr Eric Osborn, of Queen’s College, University of Melbourne (already well known as a Patristic scholar for his *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* [Cambridge, 1957]) will at once become the standard book on Justin, and an important general book on Greek philosophy in the second century A.D. To the present reviewer it seems a more detailed and more carefully thought out study than L.W. Barnard’s *Justin Martyr, his Life and Thought* (Cambridge, 1967), valuable though the latter is.

Osborn’s Introduction includes remarks on the kinds of objections made against Christianity in the second century, and summarises the evidence for Justin’s life and writings. Chapter 1, ‘The God and Father of All’, elaborates the fact that ‘Justin’s sources for ... theology were scripture and Plato’ (p.17); it includes useful notes on such descriptions for God as agennētos in Middle Platonism. Chapter 2, ‘The Logos of God’, discusses (with comprehensive reference to other relevant philosophers and to Biblical and intertestamental texts) Justin’s terms for divine emanations; chapter 3, ‘The World’, brings together Justin’s various remarks on creation, including (pp.51-3) his curious interpretation of the ‘chi’ of Plato’s *Timaeus* 36B as a cosmic sign of the cross of Christ; chapter 4, ‘The Demons, Enemies of the Word’, explains why Justin believes that it is demons which prevent men from all accepting Christianity, and bring about the persecution of Christians; Osborn’s comments on the Jewish and Greek backgrounds to this demonology are terse but adequate. Chapter 5, ‘The Knowledge of the Truth’, shows how for Justin Christianity sums up the truth which is available to all men — it is ‘the only sure philosophy’ (p.71). The following chapter 6, ‘The Love of Truth’, extends the same theme, and includes a particularly interesting discussion of the various uses of the term ‘truth’ in Justin, Celsus, and the Nag Hammadi Coptic ‘Gospel of Truth’ (pp.84-6).

Chapter 7, ‘The Holy Scriptures’, discusses in particular Justin’s view of prophecy and its fulfilment, and his general style of biblical exegesis; he notes the ‘limited identity’ (p.95) of Justin’s methods with those of rabbinic Judaism, and also the surprisingly few detailed similarities between Justin and Philo
The next chapter 8, ‘The True Philosophy’, consists of a summary of Christian theology as Justin presents it; Osborn notes, no doubt correctly, that the Gospel of Matthew is ‘the major source of Justin’s knowledge of the New Testament and of the Old’ (p.109). Chapter 9, ‘Text and Testimonies’, discusses briefly some interesting Biblical readings in Justin, and concludes, very moderately, that ‘the evidence and recent discussion suggest the conclusion that Justin used testimonia documents of limited size’ (p.118).

The following chapter 10, ‘The Memoirs of the Apostles’, discusses the question of Justin’s use of the Gospels; Osborn notes that ‘the general evidence concerning Justin’s writing points to his use of a harmony’ (p.125), and further: ‘In Justin we have to do with oral tradition; but it is not the kind of oral tradition which Köster postulates for the Apostolic Fathers. It is much more a secondary or tertiary growth. Between the original oral synoptic tradition and Justin’s oral tradition stand the written gospels. Oral tradition in Justin is largely the transmission in unwritten form of what had been written in the synoptic gospels’ (p.132). This chapter will be of interest to all students of the New Testament tradition in the second century. Chapter 11, ‘Man, his Nature and Freedom’, creates what order is possible from Justin’s mixture of Platonic, Stoic and Christian views of the nature of man. Chapter 12, ‘History and Recapitulation – Law, Word, Christ’, presents Justin’s view of the course of history, and especially the course of salvation-history; this includes some valuable comments on the claim of C. Andresen, *Logos und Nomos* (Berlin, 1955), pp.308ff., that ‘Justin’s attitude to history is a direct result of his Christian faith and that the new emphasis on historical truth provoked and shaped the attack of Celsus’ (p.165). Osborn remarks: ‘There is, however, a sense in which Justin denies history. He denies the autonomous development of events. He insists on the unchanging identity of the logos. The denial is also implied by the charge of plagiarism, which was levelled against the Greeks, first by Pseudo-Aristobulus and then by others, like Justin ... This view implies identity rather than historical development. In this respect both Celsus and Justin are Platonic and do not have a theology of history’ (p.166). This is immediately followed by a discussion of Andresen’s more particular claim that Celsus had read, and indeed wrote his *Alethēs Logos* in reply to, Justin; Osborn concludes: ‘Therefore his direct acquaintance with Justin is an attractive but unnecessary hypothesis’ (p.169).

Chapter 13, ‘The True Israel’, presents Justin’s views on the continuity of the Christian Church with the ‘old’ Israel, and includes remarks on Justin’s references to Baptism and the Eucharist. The last chapter 14, ‘Men of Good Hope’, discusses Justin’s views on the second coming, resurrection and judgment; Osborn compares his undogmatic chiliasm with the more literalist views of Irenaeus and Tertullian, and the wholly allegorical interpretation of Origen.
SOME RECENT BOOKS

There is a short conclusion on the general significance of Justin’s place in Christian thought, and a useful bibliography.

The present reviewer finds almost nothing to quarrel with in this book. Osborn’s interpretations of both the texts of Justin and of his modern commentators is always fair and unforced. He is not afraid to show up the many loose ends in Justin’s thought. The book is splendidly printed and indexed.

Cullen I.K. Story is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, and his book is a revised and expanded version of a dissertation presented at the same institution. It is a rather less finished work than Osborn’s, at least partly because it is breaking exciting new ground: it represents the first really comprehensive attempt to compare one of the Nag Hammadi Coptic Gnostic texts with known Patristic texts. In his Introduction, Story dates both the writings of Justin Martyr and the Gospel of Truth to the mid-second century. For Justin this is certainly correct; for the Gospel, Story is following what is probably the majority view at present in identifying it with the ‘Gospel of Truth’ of the Valentinian Gnostics mentioned by Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses III.ii.9, written about 180 (the Nag Hammadi text being a Coptic translation of this Greek document, from the late fourth century). The reviewer finds the evidence for this view less than conclusive, but is prepared to accept it unless positive arguments can be put against it.

Story’s chapter 1, ‘An analysis of the Evangelium Veritatis’, would alone make his book worthwhile; it will be an essential guide for any future reader of the Gospel, and as far as a less than amateur Coptic scholar can tell, generally explains accurately the nuances of the text (for a few criticisms, however, cf. the review by Malcolm L. Peel, Journal of Biblical Literature 92 (1973), p.633). Chapter 2, ‘A Comparison of the Backgrounds of the Writer of Evangelium Veritatis and of Justin Martyr in Relation to the Nature of Truth’, includes the following summary: ‘The writer of Evangelium Veritatis is familiar with the New Testament writings, with the gospel and its cosmic realism, and with the authority of the New Testament. These things, however, are only preliminaries to his own production. His is a unique book . . . It presents no system but bears witness to the gospel – what it means to the writer and what it can mean to others. On the whole, the writer does not engage in polemics against other works . . . The writer is content to describe what the gospel meant to him – it is reality that is experienced’ (p.53); and then sets out some of the same material on Justin as does Osborn in his chapters 5 and 6, but in a more schematic way.

Chapter 3, ‘A Comparison of Evangelium Veritatis with the Writings of Justin Martyr in Relation to the Nature of Truth’, the heart of the book, effects a comparison through a series of ‘propositions pertaining to truth, the truth concerning God and his world (propos. 1), concerning Jesus Christ as the Logos