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## Analysis of Monotheistic Discourses in Apologist Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*

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**Abstract:** The patristic period is the process that starts with the birth of Jesus and continues until the Nicean Council (325). Before the Nicean Council, Jesus, the only God's apostle, has gone instead of Jesus, the son of God. There was no intact Bible in the time of Irenaeus, who was among the apologists who advocated monotheism. This harsh and hard struggle of Irenaeus against those who do not accept the one God undoubtedly provides us with information about the profile of Christ before the Nicean Council. *Adversus Haereses* consists of five parts. In the first part of the work, he explains his thoughts on Gnosticism, in the second part, he criticizes and refutes the gnostic arguments, and explains the Christian doctrine in the other three parts. The first sentence of his book begins with "There is only one God: it cannot be otherwise." In this article, I will analyze the monotheistic words of Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses*.

**Keywords:** Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, *Against Heresies*, monotheism, tawhid, Christianity, Jesus, son of God.

## Introduction

Patristic philosophy consists of two periods, the first and the last patristic period in the Middle Ages. It is connected with early Christianity and Hellenistic philosophy at the beginning of medieval philosophy. The first patristic period is the ongoing process from the birth of Jesus until the Council of Nicea (325), which includes the preparation and regulation of the rules of Christianity. Paul, who was the first to theoretically build Christianity, blended the laws of the Bible, the shari'ah and laws of the Old Testament. Paul saw his philosophy as superstitious and deceitful.<sup>1</sup>

The apologists, who reject this attitude of the gnostics who use Christianity for their own teachings based on some philosophical mythologies and establish a knowledge building that will replace faith, have aimed to cleanse the true belief of Christianity from these myths and certain purposes. According to apologists, there are some limits that the mind cannot reach, and it is impossible to talk about it as the gnostics do. Apologists made it their goal to show the only true truth pointed out by Christianity in philosophy and said that religion should be presented as the only and highest goal. They argued that Christianity was a rational religion and that philosophical truths served Christianity. While apologists defended religion this much, they did not have a Bible that was not destroyed by human hands. Different Bibles were presented to the commission at the Council of Nicea held in 325.<sup>2</sup> This commission accepted only four Gospels.<sup>3</sup> This point is one of the important turning points for Christianity. The pure revelation (untouched) Bible texts from Jesus started to be corrupted by human hands over time, and then only four Gospels that will be presented as the

<sup>1</sup> Murtaza Korlaelçi and Celal Türer, *Felsefe Tarihi* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Uzaktan Eğitim Yayınları, 2012), 133.

<sup>2</sup> Constantine was not yet a Christian at the time of the Council of Nicea (325). However, considering the conditions of the period, it seems possible to say that the Council also had a political purpose. İsmail Taşpınar, "I. İznik Konsili (325) ve İslâm Kaynaklarındaki Yeri," *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 26 (2004), 26.

<sup>3</sup> Korlaelçi and Türer, *Felsefe Tarihi*, 135-137.

original Bible texts in the Council of Nicea were determined by the human mind. Unfortunately, Christianity, which is built on distorted texts on this reality, is far from its original form. Most of the apologists tried to defend the true religion from Jesus as much as possible. This point is one of the important turning points for Christianity. The pure revelation (untouched) Bible texts from Jesus started to be corrupted by human hands over time, and then only four Gospels that will be presented as the original Bible texts in the Council of Nicea were determined by the human mind. Unfortunately, Christianity, which is built on distorted texts on this reality, is far from its original form. Most of the apologists tried to defend the true religion from Jesus as much as possible. According to monotheist apologists, true Christianity is the religion of monotheism, not trinity. God is one and Jesus cannot be Lord or God. He is the messenger of God. How can we attribute "Lordship" to Jesus when he does not say that he is "Lord" while living? Some apologists advocating monotheism: Irenaeus (140-200), Aristides (c. II. Century), Justinus (100-165), Tatianus (120-173), Minucius (c. II. Century), Athenagoras (c. II.), Clemens of Alexandria (150-215), Origenes (185-254), Lactantius (Lactance) (260-325), Arnobius (260-327), Arius (280-336).<sup>4</sup> In this article, I will focus on the reasons why Irenaeus (c. 126-202), one of the above-mentioned apologists who are pro-unification, rejected the idea of the trinity and the reasons for accepting the idea of unity.

Tawhid derives from the root "wahd", meaning "one" in Arabic. It is to admit that something is one and only. In the belief of Islam, tawhid is to embrace that God is one, unique and unique in his essence, attributes and actions.<sup>5</sup> Tawhid declares the unity and uniqueness of God as the creator and protector of the universe. It is used by Islamic thinkers as a regulatory principle for human society and the foundation of religious knowledge, history, metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics, as well as social, economic and

<sup>4</sup> Korlaelçi and Türer, *Felsefe Tarihi*, 137.

<sup>5</sup> Mevlüt Özler, "Tevhid," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2012), 41, 18.

world order.<sup>6</sup> The opposite of tawhid is shirk. Tawhid; If it includes the concepts of whole, harmony, order, unity, shirk; It is the counterpart of the concepts of disharmony, disorder and confusion. In verse 105 of Surah Yunus: “and, ‘Be steadfast in faith in all uprightness, and do not be one of the polytheists.” Then, we can see that choosing tawhid and cleansing from polytheism is to be able to read the unity of Allah from the reflections of the unity in the universe, and we can see that it is necessary to stop the chaos and conflict and turn towards tawhid.

The perfect order and harmony in the universe show us that it came out of a single hand as a “meaning of stance”. This unity of the landscape in the universe should only not be read theologically, it can be thought with the same understanding of unity for human beings. As the manifestation of the idea of the one and only God in the universe, oneness is also like a gate of friendship where all humanity is together. Because the only God of all humanity is the unification of people under the roof of tawhid.<sup>7</sup>

### **Irenaeus and the All-Inclusive Father in *Adversus Haereses***

Saint Irenaeus was born in 126 around Smyrna. He communicated frequently with Polycarpe, who came from a generation who saw Jesus himself. Polycarpe was educated by the apostles and met with others who saw Jesus. It is the apostles themselves who appointed Polycarpe to the Smyrna church as a bishop. Polycarpe has held himself obliged to protect the only truth he learned from the apostles. From the rumors, we see that Polycarpe learned about the life of Saint John close that he can still describe. The meaning of life for Irenaeus is hidden here. It is not known when Irenaeus came to Gaul from Smyrna. But in Gaul, he was promoted to priesthood and even was elected as the successor of the archbishop. There are allegations of martyrdom about him, but it

<sup>6</sup> “Tawhid,” *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2356>.

<sup>7</sup> Türer, “Tevhid ve Bir İnsanlık,” *Hız. Peygamber: Tevhid ve Vahdet* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2016), 93-100.

is not known exactly whether it is true or not.<sup>8</sup>

Irenaeus's book *Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies)*<sup>9</sup> has a Latin translation, which is common in Greek but contains some errors. My source is Philip Schaff's English translation published in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series. In the book, I will try to examine Irenaeus' discourses of monotheistic. The first chapter of the work, which consists of five books, describes the thoughts of Gnosticism, the second chapter criticizes and refutes the gnostic arguments, and the other three chapters explain the Christian doctrine. The second part of the book begins with the title "There is but one God: the impossibility of its being otherwise", right after the first chapter preface of the book. Irenaeus says that he should begin this chapter with the most appropriate title and that it is a beginning like this: The Creator has no power above God, and then there is no power but Him. He is not affected by anybody. It creates only by its own free will. Because he is the one God, One Lord, One Creator, One Father, and the One Father, who commands all things to come into being and exist to them.<sup>10</sup> The emphasis on uniqueness here is intriguing. It seems that he needed such an explanation in order to break down the emphasis on Jesus, which Christianity rable with his own hands. In particular, Irenaeus' emphasis on "One Father that contains everything" is a harsh criticism of metaphysical explanations developed over the trinity belief, for example,<sup>11</sup> the triangular triangle metaphor. The word "One God" appears in many places in Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*.

<sup>8</sup> Étienne Gilson, *Ortaçağda Felsefe*, Tr. trans. Ayşe Meral (İstanbul: Kabcı Yayınevi, 2003), 41-42.

<sup>9</sup> The Greek title is "Presentation and Refutation of Pseudo-Knowledge." See Gilson, *Ortaçağda Felsefe*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Philip Schaff, *Ante-Nicene Fathers 1 : The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1885), 939.

<sup>11</sup> "Richard Swinburne developed a Trinity theory that each person is a different individual and that God is the unity of these persons. He states that this theory is compatible with Athanasian's teachings and the Fourth Lateran Council." Nicholas M. L. Nathan, "Yahudi Monoteizmi ve Hristiyan Tanrısı," Tr. trans. Mehmet Ata Az, *Şırnak Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4 (2011), 190.

The book *The Doctrine of The Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* expresses the accusations of the central dogmas of historical or mainstream Christianity. Scholars of the Baptist School of Theology of America, who are the authors of the book, ask the question: “He points out that Christian people have the ability to convince three people that there really is a god. Paul preached God's full appreciation from its source (Acts 20:28).” But why didn't he reveal the Trinity from its source?”

Why has not a subject of faith such as the Trinity been removed from the Bible and explained by reference? After these comments that emerged about the metaphorical concepts of the Bible, the disruption brought about by the change of the Bible by the human hand has created the present-day Trinity belief. Whether Paul's idea of a Christ God crucified in the name of human sins contains a difference in nature or a difference in degree.<sup>12</sup> This is a question that needs to be explained in more detail.

According to the authors of the book, Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, “The Trinity Doctrine is an adult theological legend”. “Orthodoxy wants something equally problematic: a very personable God”: “A familiar criticism of the Protestant Reformation only goes back to the Nicaean Council. Here it encountered a barricade, in which case it consisted of politics, philosophy, reluctance, jealousy, and intrigue. The authors of this book are not deterred by such a barricade - Nicaea, Caledon or otherwise.”<sup>13</sup>

*Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* is not an anti-Christian book, yet it intends to reveal what is essential in the Council of Nicea. Their most important and striking question is: “If Jesus himself did not belong to the” Trinity “principle, why should his followers be like that?” This is the main question to be asked. The answer is clear. His followers should not be, but “Christianity still

<sup>12</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, “Pavlus: Hristiyanlığın Mimarı, Şinasi Gündüz,” *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8 (2002), 124.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* (Oxford: International Scholars Publications, 1998), xii-xiii.

prostrates before Constantine's low throne with gold tattoos.”<sup>14</sup>

Irenaeus asks, in the second point, how can there be another principle, power, or God above God, and says that no one but Him can contain these properties that God has.<sup>15</sup>

II. The title of the second part of the piece is: “The world was not created by angels or any other being against the will of the highest God, but by the Father through the Word.” Under this heading, he continues his discourse on tawhid. According to him, the claim that God and his angels created the world is false. For if angels were capable of creating the world, they would have to be strong like God. This is not possible. It is He who created the world and created the angels. As an indicator of the glory of Allah, He does not need any other means to create.<sup>16</sup>

He quotes Paul's words from the New Testament: “There is only one God, the Father is in all of us before and with everything. (Eph. Iv. 6, differing somewhat from Text. Rec. Of New Testament.)” He then says that he proved that there is only one God through the apostles. “In this case, there is no trace in the New Testament that Jesus is God or the formulation of the testament. In the First Letter to the Corinthians (12 / 4-6), Paul establishes a relationship between spirit, lord and God, but this does not mean trinity.”<sup>17</sup>

VI. chapter writes: “... there is only one God, the Lord of all.”<sup>18</sup> By 320, most churches regarded the “Father” as the only God who created all things, all-powerful, eternal and eternal. It was unthinkable that Jesus the Son had attributes of God. Arius says it is religious denial to think that Jesus the Son is divine in the sense that it corresponds to the attributes and names of God, but Bishop Alexandros and Athanasius disagreed. According to them, father

<sup>14</sup> Buzzard and Hunting, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound*, xiii.

<sup>15</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 939.

<sup>16</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 941-942.

<sup>17</sup> Kürşat Demirci, “Hıristiyanlık,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), 17, 346.

<sup>18</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 952.

and son had the same essence. God was one essence and made up of three persons. When the disagreements grew, the Council of Nicea was established in 325. As a result of the council, Athanasius, the party holding the dominant and political powers, managed to impose his views. According to the Council's conclusion, "one essence, three hypostases" was accepted as the official doctrine for Christianity.<sup>19</sup> A common day has been determined for the Easter holiday celebrated on different days. Abdülehad Dawud, who had been guided before as a Christian, writes that the number of those who attended the Council of Nicea was 2048 but after the council, this number decreased to 318 and that these people accepted the deity of Jesus and accepted to change the creed of the religion. After that, it is decided what kind of a book the New Testament will be, and the rest of them are destroyed as a result of the decision taken by the Council.<sup>20</sup>

In XXVIII. chapter, he explains that many problems in our present life that we cannot know everything from which we cannot achieve perfect knowledge must be left in the hands of God with a surrender. Accordingly, the answers to many questions that we cannot find answers to in the universe are hidden in God's knowledge. It uses the definition of "living god" later in the text. We can investigate the mystery and will of the living God so that we can increase our love for God with the information from him. The meaning of the living God can mean both "Jesus" and any spirit that is God's image in the universe that will increase our love for Him. It could be an "Agapornis" (lovebird) where we see God in that thing, or it could be a "baby" with its loveliness that touches our souls. Looking at the end of the paragraph for a better understanding of this subject, Irenaeus says, it should never be doubted that this Being alone is truly "God and the Father" (as the same person) who formed this Being, the world and formed man. The

<sup>19</sup> Hasan Yücel Başdemir, "Thomas Aquinas'ta Tanrı Tasavvuru," *Gazi Üniversitesi Çorum İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 3 (2003), 110.

<sup>20</sup> Suat Yıldırım, *Mevcut Kaynaklara Göre Hristiyanlık* (İzmir: Işık Yayınları, 2005), 286.



Creator of a baby in the womb is also the same Creator, the Creator of the sun. It is the same Lord (Lord) who grew corn stalk and grew wheat and blessed it. Considering that the word “Lord” is used here as Jesus / Lord after the council of Nicaea, Irenaeus clearly states in the text that the one who is the Lord is one God who creates everything. As it can be understood from the paragraph, what he calls living god (living god) can be understood as God who is the Living (al-Hayy / the Ever-Living), al-Qayyûm / the Sustainer of [all] existence) at every moment and who is always in a state of creation.<sup>21</sup>

Hans Küng, a contemporary theologian in revealing the true identity of Jesus, offers a way for him to be better understood by sincere Christian followers. Accordingly, the Jewish followers of Jesus invite him to listen to him by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) so that Jesus can be understood.<sup>22</sup> To see Jesus in the Qur'an is to see the true position of Jesus. Monotheistic Christians do not deny this position.

The claim that Jesus represents God in the soul can never be a claim to Jesus. There is no evidence for this in the first three Gospels. Even Jesus warned Christians to be deified himself. It shows as “Jew slander” that he is God or equal with God in John. He tells him that the father did not reveal all the secrets to him. As a revelation messenger, Jesus is of course different from other people, but if he is the Son of God, all men are the Son of God, that is God's creation. The word “son” is used in different meanings in the New Testament. It is possible that the “son of God” has been removed from its own meaning by degrading it after a comprehensive and broad meaning in the sense of “son of man” and attributing divinity to Jesus. Jesus is a prophet charged with guiding people to define “right” and “wrong.”<sup>23</sup>

Irenaeus, in the fifth point of the same chapter, criticizes those

<sup>21</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1026.

<sup>22</sup> Mahmut Aydın, “Tarihsel İsa Araştırmaları ve Onların Bulguları Üzerine Bazı Mülâhazalar,” *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 5 (2001), 41.

<sup>23</sup> Yıldırım, *Mevcut Kaynaklara Göre Hıristiyanlık*, 184.

who destroy the word by confusing the human word with divine revelation. He says that they conveyed the lineage of the Prophet as if they came from God. He criticizes their attitude to transferring the word of man to the word of God that he has produced, and to portray non-divine things as divine. You do this because you think you know what is in God's mind. Even the Lord, the Son of God<sup>24</sup>, does not know of the last hour, says that his knowledge is with God.

The title of the fifth part of the third part of the book titled *Against Heretics* is as follows: "Without any fraud, deception, or hypocrisy, Christ and His Messengers preached that one God, the Father, is the founder of all."<sup>25</sup> Again, chapter VI heading is "The Holy Spirit did not mention any God or Lord other than Him who is the true God in all of the Old Testament scriptures."<sup>26</sup> In the same paragraph, Irenaeus says that neither Jesus nor the apostles call the person who is not God "God". Likewise, God said to Moses: "I am me. You will tell the sons of Israel that you have sent me to you." (Jesus. xliii. 10).<sup>27</sup> A similar verse is mentioned in the Qur'an. In the 104th verse of Surat al-A'raf: "And Moses said, "O Pharaoh! I am truly a messenger from the Lord of all worlds."

XXV. The title of the chapter is "This world is governed by the discretion of one God. He is endowed with both eternal justice to punish the wicked, and eternal goodness to bless the devout and give them salvation." In the third point, Irenaeus accuses Marcion of dividing God in two. He mentions that he divides one into two as the good and the other as the provider of justice on earth, and actually says that Marcion put an end to the existence of God in both respects. Because if he is not good at legal matters, God is not

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<sup>24</sup> We can assume that the word "son" here is used in the meaning of "messenger" not in the trinity because the rest of the paragraph will already say that this "son" does not have the knowledge of God. In addition, we can say at the beginning of the work Irenaeus's explanation of "there is only one Lord" so that we think that the word "Lord" here means "our master", "his dignitaries".

<sup>25</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1066.

<sup>26</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1068.

<sup>27</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1069.

because God is good. If the good God cannot provide justice, he is not almighty. Therefore, he is not God again.<sup>28</sup> Here we can say that Irenaeus had the idea of an indivisible, all-encompassing and all-powerful God. Apart from this, Irenaeus went to prove the existence of God in many parts of his work and turned to prove God with different evidence. In these proofs, he generally mentioned only one God, but he used the word “Lord” for Jesus.<sup>29</sup>

IV. In chapter V of the passage it says that there is only one God, whom Christ calls the Father, declared to humanity by the prophets.<sup>30</sup> In Islam, Jesus is the prophet of God. Also, Christians were warned that they should give up the trinity. In Surah an-Nisa, verse 171 it is stated as follows: “O People of the Book! Do not go to extremes regarding your faith; say nothing about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger of Allah and the fulfillment of His Word through Mary and a spirit created by a command from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers and do not say, “Trinity.” Stop!—for your own good. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him! He is far above having a son! To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And Allah is sufficient as a Trustee of Affairs.”<sup>31</sup>

The religion of Christ is pure monotheism. However, Qadi Abdul-Jabbar (d. 415/1025) explained how Jesus was impressively included in the trinity system. According to him, Paul applied Rome's own religious beliefs to Christianity in order to impose himself on Roman domination.<sup>32</sup> In the 19th century, the images of Paul's trinity arrangement and the idea of an absent third God appear based on the discourse that “God did not create man, man

<sup>28</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1153.

<sup>29</sup> For example: “Chapter II.—Proofs from the plain testimony of Moses, and of the other prophets, whose words are the words of Christ, that there is but one God, the founder of the world, whom Our Lord preached, and whom He called His Father.” Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1163.

<sup>30</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1169.

<sup>31</sup> Surah an-Nisa, verse 171.

<sup>32</sup> Jon Hoover, “İslâmî Monoteizm ve Teslis,” Tr. trans. Zeynep Yücedoğru, *Oksident* 1, no. 1 (2019), 120-121.

created God”, which stood out with a temporary passion for innovation.<sup>33</sup>

In Chapter XX it is written that it is impossible to know God. Because Father is immeasurable. When we obey God's word, he leads us to God.<sup>34</sup> But in the history of Christianity, Paul will withdraw from God and direct obedience to himself. Paul made it his duty to see the deformations in the religion of the Jews and to correct them. In fact, “God has given me to the non-Jewish nations.” He declared himself a prophet. Later, he said that he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus, and therefore he expected people to believe and obey him. Subsequently, his influence on the Church increased, and the Church adopted basic doctrines such as trinity, incarnation, penance, and fundamental sin. Whereas Paul was a former enemy of Christians.<sup>35</sup>

In Chapter XXXII, Irenaeus says, “The author of both Testaments is one God.”<sup>36</sup> But now how do we explain the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament? If only one God wrote them both, then there should be no contradiction in them, but there is.<sup>37</sup>

While Jesus was a human being made of flesh and bones in the region and his lifetime, who called people to God, after Easter, Jesus was stripped of flesh and bone and became a God with the same gem as God's ore. Jesus, who invited people to God, suddenly disappeared, on the contrary, he turned into a figure calling people to himself.<sup>38</sup> The following question summarizes the problem

<sup>33</sup> Hasan Hüseyin Tunçbilek, “İslâm'ın Dışındaki Monoteist Düşünce ve İnançlarda Ulûhiyet Anlayışı,” *Marife* 3, no. 1 (2003), 139.

<sup>34</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1216.

<sup>35</sup> Mahmet Zafer İnanlar, *Din-Mitos İlişkisi: Hristiyanlık Örneği*, PhD Thesis (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 2015), 60-61.

<sup>36</sup> Schaff, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 1257.

<sup>37</sup> Maurice Bucaille, *Tevrat, İnciller, Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Bilim*, Tr. trans. Suat Yıldırım (İzmir: Işık Yayınları, 2005), 19.

<sup>38</sup> Who is God according to the Bible? Is the true God of the Bible one individual - the Father or two or three Gods? Sidney Hatch and Anthony Buzzard, “Who is God? Bible Discussion,” <https://www.21stcr.org/one-god-over-all-videos/who-is-god>.

here very nicely: “How was it that Jesus, a Galilean peasant who invited people to worship God throughout his life, was elevated to the position of being with the same essence as God, who was worshiped after his death?”<sup>39</sup> Although Jesus today appears to be an image of God, a historically reconstructed image of Jesus cannot of course be this image itself.<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

Monotheid ones among the apologists who aim to defend the intact religion from Jesus emphasized one God and maintained that Jesus also spoke of one God. There is the work *Adversus Haereses (Against Heretics)*, in which Irenaeus, who lived between about 140-200 years, criticized the denials and wrong ideas of the gnostics. He explained the false theses of the gnostics and tried to refute them with the rules of logic. Irenaeus is a devout Christian, but examples of rational theology are seen in his work.

According to Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, who work on monotheist Christians, if the Trinity was such an important subject of faith for Christianity, why do we not find such information in Jesus' explanations? Even Paul did not receive any information explaining the submission in all its details. In the introduction to the Book of Trinity, they summarize the purpose of writing the work as follows: “This book deals with a single question. Does the Bible show God as the only creator of the universe as a unique being, or is God just two or three peers?” We explained that the answer to this question varied before and after the Council of Nicaea (325). Jesus, who was “the prophet of God” before the Council, was changed to “the son of God” after the Council. This was decided by the human mind. “Man” replaced “God”.

Irenaeus divided *Adversus Haereses* into five parts, wrote the

<sup>39</sup> Aydın, “Birbirine Tezat İki Farklı İsa Portresi: Paskalya Öncesi İsa versus Paskalya Sonrası İsa,” *Milel ve Nihal* 4, no. 1 (2007), 143-156.

<sup>40</sup> Marcus J. Borg, “Does the Historical Jesus Matter?” *HTS Theologiese Studies* 51, no. 4 (1995), 956.

claims of gnostics item by item and made criticisms and explanations under that item title. At the beginning of the work; It says that there is a Creator who commands all things to come into being and to exist as one God, One Lord, One Creator, One Father, and all-inclusive. The emphasis on “one God” in the book is mentioned in most places.

Some of Irenaeus' monotheist statements in *Adversus Haereses* are as follows:

- There can be no other power or principle above God.
- No one other than God can have the qualities that God has.
- The world was created by God, not angels or other beings, against God's will.
- There is only one God, Lord of all things.
- Christ and His Apostles preached that one God is the founder of all things.
- This world is ruled by the will of one God, bestowed with both eternal justice to punish the wicked and eternal goodness to bless the pious and give them salvation.
- There is only one God declared to humanity by the prophets.
- When we obey God's word, he brings us to Himself.
- The author of both Testaments is one God.

However, we cannot infer that there are only monotheist discourses in Irenaeus's work. Although there are monotheistic and descriptive discourses, concepts such as “Son of God” and “Our Lord Jesus Christ” are also included. We mentioned that there may be a shift in meaning due to the use of words in the background of these concepts, but we cannot present this as absolute truth. From this article, we can definitely say that there are unified discourses in Irenaeus' work, but I have to abstain from inferring purely monotheistic Irenaeus. Although the concepts of “One Lord” and “One God” are monotheistic, the mention of the aforementioned discourses in the work makes it difficult to see Irenaeus as a complete monotheist. Of course, his views are closer to the monotheistic line than Paul or other non-monotheistic apologists, but if we

are to give a definition, we can define him as a monotheist Christian based on the *Adversus Haereses* by Irenaeus.

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