

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons

Irenaeus was born in Smyrna, Asia Minor, in 130 AD. He died as a Christian martyr in 202 AD. A Christian Pastor, Bishop, and Theologian, Irenaeus, became known for defending the Christian faith against Gnosticism and other heresies that arose within the Church. He was a student of Polycarp, who was taught by the Apostle John. This made Irenaeus a staunch believer in the orthodoxy of scripture, which was handed down by the Apostles, and which affirmed the Christian faith. Irenaeus was a bridge between the apostolic age and the early church.

Irenaeus critical belief was that the apostolic tradition preserves orthodoxy and the Christian faith. The rise of Gnosticism, the teachings of Marcion, Cerdo, and others, had become a threat to the Apostles' traditional teachings within the Church. This led Irenaeus to write "Against Heresies", a five-volume work that protected the Christian Faith from heretical doctrine, mainly Gnosticism. In his work, he emphasized the unity of the Old and New Testaments, the incarnation of Christ, and the Resurrection of Christ Jesus, arguing that it was necessary for salvation. He discussed other subject matters within the Church and how they were to be framed by sound doctrine and apostolic teaching.

Irenaeus also wrote the "Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching." A manual or guide for Christian doctrine. This work also emphasized the importance of the apostolic tradition and the authority of scripture. He believed the apostolic tradition was to be continued through,

1. The Canon of Scripture
2. Interpretation by the rule of Faith
3. The succession of Bishops guaranteed by the Apostles

I believe Irenaeus was one of the strongest voices to cry out against heresies because he was only one generation after the Apostle John. A quote of his that really means a lot to me is, "Jesus Christ, in his infinite love, has become what we are, in order that he may make us what he is."

References;

Bradley Nassif, Irenaeus and Christian orthodoxy
Equip.Org, 2/21/2022 article #JAF3431