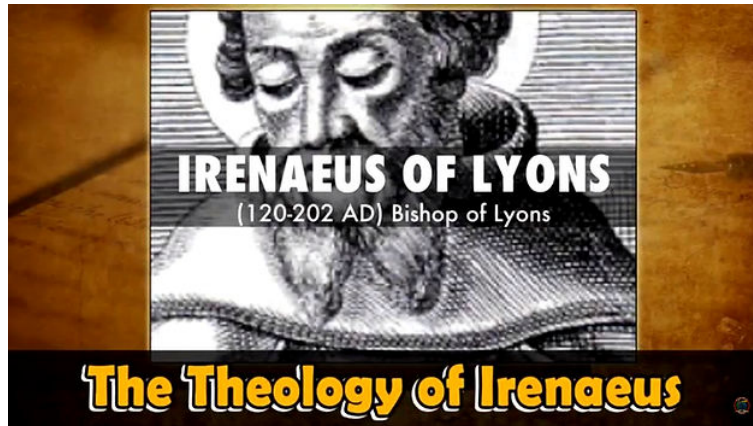




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The Theology of Irenaeus: Irenaeus Did Not Include The Modalists In Against Heresies, Response to Dr. Morrison Part 4



At 7:30 into Mr. Morrison's Part 2 video on church history (https://youtu.be/3-wmTjNBS_o), Mr. Morrison mentioned Irenaeus' list of all of the heretical groups in his day in "Against Heresies", but he never mentioned the Modalists as heretics, nor the Semi-Arians who denied the full deity of Christ (*Wiki Encyclopedia explains the beliefs of the Semi-Arians: "the Semi-Arians, however, admitted that the Son was 'of a similar substance' (homoiousios) as the Father but not 'of the same substance' (homoousios) as him"*). If Irenaeus was a true Trinitarian, then why would Irenaeus fail to mention the Modalists as heretics in his day along with the various groups of Gnostics? Wherefore, Irenaeus apparently viewed the Oneness Modalists and the Semi-Arians as orthodox Christians.

(WHAT IS SEMI-ARIANISM? Under "Arianism", the New Advent Encyclopedia explains the theology of the Semi-Arians: "... while they affirmed the Word of God to be everlasting, they imagined Him as having become the Son to create the worlds and redeem mankind ... Five ante-Nicene Fathers are especially quoted: Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus, and Novatian, whose language appears to involve a peculiar notion of Sonship, as though it did not come into being or were not perfect until the dawn of creation. To these may be added Tertullian and Methodius. Cardinal Newman held that their view, which is found clearly in Tertullian, of the Son existing after the Word, is connected as an antecedent with Arianism...")
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The historical evidence proves that the Oneness Modalists were prevalent both before and during the time of Irenaeus (Examples: Noetus, Melito, Praxeus, and Eleutherus were Modalists who lived during the lifetime of Irenaeus). If Irenaeus thought that the Modalists were heretical, how is it that he never listed them in "Against Heresies"? Also notice that Irenaeus never listed the Semi-Arians who believed that the Son was created before the incarnation as heretical (Examples: Justin, Theophilus, and Athenagoras were clearly Semi-Arians).

Irenaeus Believed In Semi-Arianism and Modalism

Mr. Morrison alleged that Irenaeus was a true Trinitarian. Yet I have documented the evidence proving that Irenaeus held both Modalistic and Semi-Arian views about Christ. This explains why Irenaeus never spoke out against the Modalists or the Semi-Arians.

Irenaeus' Semi-Arian Views

Irenaeus wrote in Against Heresies Book 9:30, "But the Son, **eternally coexisting with the Father**, from of old, **YES FROM THE CREATION**, always reveals the Father." (*Against Heresies Book 9:30*)

"If anyone says to us, 'HOW WAS THE SON PRODUCED BY THE FATHER?' We reply to him, that NO MAN UNDERSTANDS THAT **PRODUCTION OR GENERATION** or calling or by whatever name one may describe his generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable ... but the Father only who begat, and the Son who was begotten." (*Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 2:28,6 / Patrology Vol. 1 Page 295*)

Irenaeus believed that the Son was "produced" or "generated" by the Father who begat him "FROM THE CREATION". Hence, according to Irenaeus, the Son was "produced" by being "born" ("begotten" means "born") "from the Creation" in order to "eternally coexist with the Father" throughout the timeless future. Since Irenaeus clearly taught that the Son was produced or generated (born) "from the creation", he could not have believed that the Son existed throughout the timeless past. Yet Irenaeus departed from other Semi-Arians by writing that the "Son and the Spirit" are the "hands of the Father" (as manifestations of the Father's Person) who created mankind and that believers have received "the Spirit of the Father." (*Against Heresies 6:1 Patrology Vol. 1, Page 309*)

Irenaeus' Modalistic Views

Irenaeus identified the Spirit of the Savior as the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"But as for us, we still dwell upon the earth, and have not yet sat down (with him) upon His throne. For **although the Spirit of the Savior that is in him (in believers) searches all things, even the deep things of God**, (1 Corinthians 2:10)." (*Against Heresies, Book 2, 28:7*)

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 proves that the Spirit of the Savior that Irenaeus was addressing is the Holy Spirit of God.

"For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

Trinitarians allege that 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 is addressing the Holy Spirit of God as an alleged third God Person, but Irenaeus confessed that the Holy Spirit of God is "the Spirit of the Savior" who "searches the deep things of God." How could an omniscient, non-incarnate God the Holy Spirit be said to "search all things, even the deep things of God" while already being omniscient (Knowing all things)? For an omniscient God the Holy Spirit cannot be said to search the deep things of God if the alleged omniscient God the Spirit Person already knows all things to begin with. Since Irenaeus believed that the indwelling Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Savior, Irenaeus could not have been a true Trinitarian.

Rather than writing about an alleged coequally distinct God the Word Person (i.e. a God the logos Person), Irenaeus wrote that the Word (Logos) is the "thought" and "mind" of the Father Himself.

"But **God being all Mind, and all Logos**, both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. **For His thought is Logos, and Logos is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself.** He, therefore, who speaks of the mind of God, and ascribes to it a special origin of its own, declares Him a compound Being, as if God were one thing, and the original Mind another."

(Against Heresies, Book 2, 28:5)

Trinitarians teach that the logos (word) is the coequal and coeternal God the Word Person called "God the Son"; yet Irenaeus identified the Logos as the "thought" and "Mind" of "God" who "is the Father Himself". Thus, Irenaeus' words sometimes sound Semi-Arian while at other times he sounds like a Modalist. Therefore Irenaeus, who read the writings of the Semi-Arians like Justin and the writings of the early Modalists, apparently mixed both Semi-Arian and Modalistic Monarchian thought within his theological teachings and regarded both views as orthodox. This explains why Irenaeus never charged either group as heretical in Against Heresies.

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