A Critical Essay on the Sources of Mani Religion, Boycott of Manichaeism in Christian Discourse and Modern Studies

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The aim of this research is to study the knowledge of Christian world from Mani and his religion. Manichaeism has been one of the most important issues of writing refutation amongst Christian discoursers and those refutations had been the sources for modern studies about Manichaeism for years. This issue not only rises from the lack of primary sources but also had a discursive side. From the primary Christian discoursers’ point of view, Manichaeism have “Other” function, the “Other” which should be boycotted in order to determine the border between the Christianity and non-Christianity. This tradition of making other had influenced the modern Manichaeism studies and the relation of Manichaeism with Christianity, Iranian thought and even Gnosis had been interpreted under this influence for many years. Discovery and publication of Manichaeism primary sources had disproved old speculations. New evidences show that Manichaeism contrary to what had been introduced before had alliance with Christianity. In fact, Mani maintained an authentic narration of Christianity and it eminent that Manichaeism emerged in the period that there is no ecclesiastical official narration of Christianity that had presented by Christian discoursers yet. This study show that Manichaeism as a new religion, had root in Christian tradition and contrary to conventional conceptions, it can not be assigned as an Iranian religion.

Keywords: Manichaeism, Christianity, Gnosis, Heresy, Boycott, Religious Identity, Foucault.

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Received: 2014/04/22                        Accepted: 2015/02/01