

Chapter 4

The Rule of Faith and Irenaeus's *Demonstration* of the Order and Connection of the Scriptures

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Abstract

Despite a recent resurgence of scholarly discussions, the rule of faith in Irenaeus's theology and exegesis remains a highly debated concept. One underdeveloped aspect of this conversation is the relationship (or lack there of) between Irenaeus's hermeneutics and applied exegesis. Some scholars so closely identify the *regula* with the ordered exposition of the scriptures that the *regula* becomes a narrational construct, while other scholars separate the *regula* from the actual practice of exegesis in Irenaeus. This article endeavors to clarify these misconceptions through bridging the discussion of the *regula* in Irenaeus and his applied exegesis expressed in his shorter work, *The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*. Irenaeus's *Demonstration* displays a methodological concern for the *order* and *connection* of scriptures organized around the contents of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6. This analysis challenges any bifurcation of Irenaeus's theology and exegesis and develops our understanding of the function of the *regula* in Irenaeus's scriptural exposition.

Keywords: Irenaeus, rule of faith, *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*, hermeneutics, patristic exegesis

Introduction

Scholarly interest in the *regula fidei* or *regula veritatis* in Irenaeus has intensified in recent years. These studies often characterize the function of the *regula* as a framework through which scripture is rightly understood. But despite this assumption there remains precious little analysis of the application of the

regula to particular exegetical situations.¹ What is more, this assertion rarely ever accounts for the internal procedures of Irenaeus's scriptural interpretation or how these procedures attend to the multivocality of the scriptural witness. To be sure, some speak of the relationship between Irenaeus's scriptural interpretation and the *regula* as 'dialogical' or 'symbiotic,' but the nature or mechanics of this reciprocal relationship are never clarified (Donovan 1997, 171; Williams 1999, 96; Kugel and Greer 1986, 157). As a result, the association between the *regula* as a hermeneutical construct and Irenaeus's applied hermeneutics remains largely underdeveloped and it is this relationship we wish to explore in his shorter catechetical work, *The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*.²

Irenaeus alludes to the hermeneutical significance of the *regula* in *Dem.* 3 and describes its contents in *Dem.* 6.³ The remaining portion of the work provides an ordered exposition of the scriptures moving from creation to the Christ event and the impartation of the Spirit. In this essay, therefore, we will demonstrate the function of the *regula* as a hermeneutical framework overseeing Irenaeus's interpretation of scripture throughout the *Demonstration*. We will begin with a sketch of the *regula* as a hermeneutical framework coupled with an assessment of Irenaeus's exegetical concern for the *order* and *connection* of the scriptures. Then we will provide a general evaluation of the use and function of scripture in the *Demonstration* as it relates to the contents of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6. As we will argue, there is a close association between the theological contents of the *regula* and Irenaeus's general exegetical presentation in the *Demonstration*.

¹ There is no substantive distinction between the *regula veritatis* and *regula fidei*, but Fantino makes the interesting point that the former is used in the apologetic context of *Adv. Haer.*, while the latter is used in catechetical context of the *Demonstration* (Fantino 1994, 23).

² This document is, as Behr notes, the 'earliest summary of Christian teaching, presented in a non-polemical or apologetic manner that we now have' (Irenaeus 1997, 7).

³ Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are drawn from Behr's work (Irenaeus 1997), hereafter *Dem.* I have also consulted the Latin and French translation by Rousseau (Rousseau 1995), hereafter *SC* 406. All translations of *Adversus Haereses* are adapted from the translation in the Ante-Nicene fathers with consolation of the editions of *Sources Chrétiennes* (Irenaeus 1985; Irénée 1965-82), hereafter *Adv. Haer.* The *regula fidei*, at least based upon its description in *Dem.* 3, discusses the importance between faith and objective reality saying, 'truth brings about faith, for faith is established upon things truly real, that we may believe what really is, as it is...' It is also noteworthy that Irenaeus uses the language of *ordo (taxi) fidei* in *Dem.* 6, which doubtless nuances the function of the faith characterized in *Dem.* 6. While there is need for further clarification of the way Irenaeus qualifies the language of *fides* and *veritas*, for our purposes we will continue to refer to the contents *Dem.* 6 as the *regula*. For the discussion of this terminology see Hefner 1964 and Fantino 1994.

1. The *Regula* as Hermeneutical Framework

It is commonplace to argue the *regula* functions as a hermeneutical framework for Irenaeus. Blowers calls the *regula* a ‘hermeneutical frame of reference for the interpretation of Christian scripture and Christian experience’ (Blowers 1997, 202). Fantino describes it as a ‘principle and guide for interpreting Scripture and faith’ (Fantino 1994, 18). More recently O’Keefe and Reno regard it as an ‘ordered framework for interpretation’ (2005, 125), while Paul Hartog uses more illustrative terminology depicting the *regula* as a ‘road map for the proper interpretation of scripture’ (2007, 66). Finally, Hefner subsumes the concept of the *regula fidei* under the term ‘hypothesis,’ which he defines as an ‘organic structure or framework which is constituted by God’s dispositional actions on behalf of man’ (Hefner 1964, 296).

However, this generic understanding of the *regula* as a ‘framework’ does not move us closer to understanding how Irenaeus’s conducts the exegesis of particular texts. In fact, in the case of the *Demonstration*, some scholars so closely identify the *regula* with the ordered scriptural exposition that the *regula* becomes the scriptural narrative. While he contributes much to the understanding of the *regula*, Paul Blowers conveys this confusion when he terms the *regula* as a ‘metanarrative’ or ‘grand story’ that ultimately ‘bears the true dramatic *narrative of Scripture*’ (Blowers 1997, 202, 205, 210).⁴ This suggests the scriptural exposition of the *Demonstration* is simply a ‘longer elaboration’ of the *regula* (Blowers 1997, 213). In a certain sense the *regula* is narratival, even Donovan characterizes it as a ‘narrative creed,’ because there is an ‘order’ (*taxis, ordo*) to the *regula*.⁵ It is not, however, identical to the ordered economic unfolding of salvation history (Donovan 1997, 171). On the other hand, Frances Young and more recently Nathan MacDonald have suggested Irenaeus’s *Demonstration* (and especially that of *Dem.* 11-30) is ‘typological’ or ‘figural,’ while also comprising traditional ‘proof from prophecy’ (Young 1990, 51-52; MacDonald 2009, 290). Young and MacDonald are right to correct Blowers conflation of the theological content of the *regula* with the narrative of scripture, but in doing so they detach the *regula* as a hermeneutical framework from its relationship to the formal presentation of the *Demonstration*. Finally, confusion also arises when some authors speak of the *regula* itself as a method or manner of reading rather than merely a framework for interpretation (O’Keefe and Reno 2005, 124-25; Hartog 2007, 68-69). This confusion inflates the function of the *regula* so that it becomes the process and framework of Irenaeus’s exegesis. Instead, the *regula* is the

⁴ Cf. Meeks 1987, 155.

⁵ *Dem.* 6.

theological description of objective reality, or in Irenaeus words: 'what really is, as it is.'⁶ And this objective truth is ontologically grounded in the divine self-disclosure of God revealed in and through the work of Christ; it is not the method by which one arrives at such descriptions.

The proper explanation of the relationship of the *regula* and the scriptural exposition of the *Demonstration* begins to take shape in work of T.F. Torrance. The hints of the association between the *regula* and scriptural exposition are found in Torrance's summary: 'the purpose of the *Epidexis*, therefore, is to offer a summary account of the *structure of Christian belief* through bringing to light the *inner connections of the saving truths* it embodies' (Torrance 1992, 108).⁷ Torrance recognizes the articulation of Christian faith in the *regula* shapes the 'interconnections of saving truths,' but Torrance takes us no further. His concern is primarily doctrinal and theological, so he does not attend to the way the *regula* frames Irenaeus scriptural exposition in the *Demonstration*.⁸ The fullest explanation of the *regula* and Irenaeus's scripture exposition is found in the work of Rowan Greer who is sensitive to the function of the Hebrew Scriptures in Irenaeus's exegesis. Describing Irenaeus's ingenuity in blending salvation history and Christological exegesis, Greer summarizes the interaction of the *regula* and Scripture saying: 'This rule of faith is in one sense built out of specific passages in scripture and out of the broader patterns of the redeemer myth, the doctrine of Christ's headship in Ephesians, and the Pauline Adam typology. It purports to make explicit what is implicit in Scripture, and it enables Irenaeus to make sense of the earlier Christian transformation of the Hebrew Scriptures' (Kugel and Greer 1986, 170).⁹ Thus, what we have in Greer is a functional explanation of the way the *regula* is formulated by 'specific passages in Scripture,' which are drawn out through specific methods of exegesis. The theological contents of the *regula*,

⁶ *Dem.* 3. *SC* 406: 86.

⁷ Emphasis added. In addition, Torrance organizes the 'main theological points' of the *Demonstration* under the headings of the 'Doctrine of God the Father,' 'The Doctrine of God the Son,' and 'The Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit' that are linked with the three articles of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6.

⁸ The variety and particularity of the contents of the *regula* in Irenaeus (and elsewhere) complicate this task. The differing formulations frustrate any historical search for the definitive presentation of the *regula*. The formulaic variants, no doubt, depended upon the exposition of the apostolic faith within localized communities who were facing particular heterodox theological and exegetical challenges. But this recognition, in another sense, actually demonstrates the theological and exegetical dynamic linking the scriptures and the *regula* (O'Keefe and Reno 2005, 119; Blowers 1997, 208).

⁹ Greer mentions the importance of the 'order' of Scripture, but does not clearly develop this concept in Irenaeus's exegesis. See Kugel and Greer 1986, 164-75.

however, extend beyond the Christological emphasis in Greer's summary and the internal procedures of Irenaeus's applied hermeneutics are governed by a more fundamental concern for the order and connection of the scriptures than what Greer recognizes. These accounts also neglect Irenaeus's concern for the order and connection of the scriptures in his exposition, which, as we will see below, is central to his exegetical project. Therefore, given the recognition of the *regula* as a 'hermeneutical frame of reference' and the scriptures as the object of interpretation, how does the *regula* function with respect to the procedures of Irenaeus's applied exegesis?

2. Irenaean Exegetical Methodology: The Order and Connection of the Scriptures

Many have attempted to catalogue Irenaeus's exegetical methodology. Margerie, for example, locates five categories: the rule of truth, Tradition, unity and harmony of the scriptures, reading obscure passages in light of clear ones, and appreciation for the transcendence of the divine author. Norbert Brox confirms Margerie's summary and provides further examples (Brox 2004, 500). Not to be outdone, Eric Osborn locates eight 'principles of interpretation,' affirming those of Margerie, while adding a few of his own (Osborn 2000, 172-75).¹⁰ Grant and Tracy, on the other hand, highlight only two methods drawn from the critique of the Gnostic exegesis in *AH* 1.8.1-1.9.5: the need to attend to the order and the context of the passages they interpret and interpret the dark and obscure by the clear and obvious (Grant and Tracy 1984, 49-50). Margerie considers his first two rules, that is the rule of faith and the Tradition, the 'deux regles fondamentales' (Margerie 1980, 69). The rule of truth is the revelation or the apostolic preaching of the church, while the Tradition is the 'organe de transmission' for the rule of truth (Margerie 1980, 67). Margerie's last three rules complement these two foundational rules, but are more programmatic in nature. In a certain sense Margerie's last three methods are all related to the more fundamental idea of order and connection of the Scriptures expressed in the third rule. The art of reading obscure passages in light of clear ones is a manifestation of the harmony of the scriptures and the recognition that some interpretations are beyond human cognition is a natural admission of finite creatures who are unable to grasp the unity and harmony in all divine actions. Thus, Irenaeus determines the validity of an interpretation according to the degree to which it corresponds and harmonizes with the rest of scripture (Margerie 1980, 69). Margerie observes

¹⁰ Given the extensive nature of these assessments, it is strange that Simonetti would suggest Irenaeus had no 'hermeneutical principle of his own...' (Simonetti 2002, 24).

Irenaeus's continual use of *consonare* in the content of exegetical discussions to the point that it is nearly a technical term. Denis Farkasfalvy, who informed Margeire's comments above, underscores the significance of harmony and *consonare* saying:

The history of revelation as understood by Irenaeus, obliges the Christian exegete to move constantly between the two Testaments, clarifying and illustrating the texts by each other. The method of harmonizing is, for Irenaeus a method postulated by the very essence of the Bible as a record of the history of salvation. *Harmonization becomes a theological norm for exegesis*: an interpretation is proved to be correct if its agreement with other texts can be proved. The word 'consonare' used by Irenaeus repeatedly in exegetical context, sounds almost as a technical term of his exegesis. He considers it as *the principal result of his explanations that the Scriptures could be proved to be in perfect harmony among themselves*: *omnis Scriptura a Deo nobis data consonans (symphonos) invenietur* (2.28.3) (Farkasfalvy 1968, 328).¹¹

For Farkasfalvy, like Margeire, the most fundamental idea of Irenaeus's exegesis is the idea of harmony (*consonans*). It is the 'theological norm' and the 'principal result' of his exegesis. Osborn develops this perspective when he writes that Irenaeus's use of *consonare* moves beyond a Pythagorean sense of harmony to a general principle of coherence and this principle, for Osborn, navigates between the scriptures and the *regula* (2000, 159).¹²

But while Margerie, Farkasfalvy and Osborn highlight the concept of harmony, Fantino turns our attention to another term, 'order' (*ordo*; *ordinatio*), and he defines this rhetorical concept as expressing an 'existing order in a set of realities.'¹³ The term, used extensively throughout Irenaeus, is frequently applied to the scriptures and the *regula*.¹⁴ For Fantino, the term is more ontologically oriented because Irenaeus assumes 'God made all things with measure and order' (Fantino 1994, 23). The concept of *ordo* implies that interpreters should attend to the historical arrangement or chronological nature of scriptures in correspondence to the unfolding of the divine economy (Kugel and Greer 1986, 176).

¹¹ Emphasis added.

¹² A family of synonyms are found throughout Irenaeus's corpus that communicate the fundamental unity and coherence of the scriptures such as: *consonare*, *textum*, *constans*, *congruum*, *coaptare*, and *disponit*. See Reynders 1963.

¹³ Fantino 1994, 22n31; cf. *Adv. Haer.* 1.8.1, *Dem.* 6.

¹⁴ For example see: *Adv. Haer.* 1.8.1, 3.4.1, 4.4.2, 5.19.2, 5.31.1, and *Dem.* 6.

These two concepts coincide in Irenaeus's critique of Gnostic exegesis, when he asserts that they disregard 'the order and the connection of the scriptures.'¹⁵ These connections, no doubt, depend upon the unity of one God operating throughout scripture, which calls to mind Childs's emphasis on the 'theological reality to which scripture bears witness' (Childs 1992, 723). Framing this idea in context with Irenaeus's other methods of scripture, Farkasfalvy also recognizes Irenaeus's primary purpose is to unite the activity of the same God in both testaments and, in so doing 'Christians are justified to use all current methods (allegory, etymology, grammatical analysis number symbolism, etc.) in order to discover the mysteries of Christ hidden in the text' (Farkasfalvy 1968, 327).

The importance of order and harmony are also evidenced in Irenaeus's own descriptions of the exegetical task. He suggests that 'proofs contained in the Scriptures cannot be proved except from the Scriptures themselves.'¹⁶ Elsewhere he will write 'through the many diversified utterances [of Scripture] there shall be heard one harmonious melody in us, praising in hymns that God who created all things.'¹⁷ The most illustrative examples are his analogies of the mosaic and Homeric cento. Just as mosaic tiles are arranged in a proper order and connection to reveal the image of a king (*Adv. Haer.* 1.8.1) and Homeric verses are arranged in a proper order and connection to express an epic poem (*Adv. Haer.* 1.9.4), so also with scriptural exegesis. Gnostic exegetes are distorting the works of art by rearranging the tiles on the mosaic to display a different image and reordering the verses in a Homeric poem to communicate a different narrative. But the faithful interpreter is the one who attends to the proper order and connection of the scriptures.¹⁸

Bringing these streams of Irenaean studies together we find an appreciation for the *regula* as a hermeneutical framework, alongside a functioning exegetical concern for the *order* and the *connection* of the scriptures. Holding these in tension, we are now able to assess the nature of the relationship between the *regula* and Irenaeus's applied hermeneutics in the *Demonstration*. In our examination of the *Demonstration*, we find the positive articulation of the order and connection of the scriptures oriented by the *regula*. Behr even

¹⁵ Ordinem quidem et textum Scripturarum. *Textum* is closely related to *consonantia*; the former applies to the imagery of weaving textiles, while the latter to the harmonization of musical notes. But when applied to scripture they communicate the same idea of connection or harmony of scriptural material.

¹⁶ *Adv. Haer.* 3.12.9.

¹⁷ *Adv. Haer.* 2.28.3.

¹⁸ For examples see Luttikhuisen 2006.

recognizes this saying, 'And it is, of course, this order and connection that Irenaeus describes in summary fashion, in the *Demonstration*' (Behr 1997, 25). But as we will prove, the arrangement of the scriptures are set in correspondence with the contents of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6.

3. The *Regula* and the *Demonstration* of the Order and Connection of the Scriptures

The fundamental importance of the *regula* is evident in Irenaeus's introductory thesis where he states his purpose is to demonstrate the epitome of the apostolic preaching so that 'by means of this small [work] understand all the members of the body of truth...' ¹⁹ The 'body of truth' is a common Irenaeian phrase and equivalent to the *regula*. ²⁰ The Gnostics, Irenaeus argues, are dismembering the body of truth (*soluentes membra ueritatis*) and reassembling them through their own scriptures, revealing their own distinct narrative. ²¹ While Irenaeus supplements his articulation of the *regula* in *Dem.* 4-7, his formal presentation in *Dem.* 6 reads thus:

And this is the order of our faith, the foundation of the edifice and the support of our conduct: God, the Father, uncreated, uncontainable, invisible, one God, the Creator of all: this is the first article of our faith. And the second article: the Word of God, the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was revealed by the prophets according to the character of their prophecy and according to the nature of the economies of the Father, by whom all things were made, and who, in the last times, to recapitulate all things, became a man amongst men, visible and palpable, in order to abolish death, to demonstrate life, and to effect communion between God and man. And the third article: the Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets prophesied and the patriarchs learnt the things of God and the righteous were led in the path of righteousness, and who, in the last times

¹⁹ *Dem.* 1.

²⁰ Irenaeus relates *veritate corpus* and *regula ueritatis* in *Adv. Haer.* 2.27.1; cf. *Adv. Haer.* 1.14.3, 1.18.1 and Fantino 1994, 10. Behr presents conflicting interpretations because he first equates the 'body of truth' with the scriptures and later argues that it is synonymous with the *regula*. See Irenaeus 1997, 26, 102n1. Given that the note on p. 102, which equates the *regula* and 'the body of truth,' is more detailed and developed, I assume this is Behr's position.

²¹ *Adv. Haer.* 1.8.1.

was poured out in a new fashion upon the human race renewing man throughout the world, to God.²²

The *regula* in *Dem.* 6 is an ordered theological account consisting of three ‘articles’ dedicated to the Father, Son, and Spirit, respectively.²³ The Father is characterized with standard apophatic terminology and affirmed as the ‘Creator of all.’ This notion of ‘Creator’ does not merely imply Gen 1-2, but the unbroken chain of salvation events from creation through the prophets comprising *Dem.* 8-30.²⁴ The revelation of the Son turns on the prophets, who reveal the Son’s identity. However, the Son is shown to be with the Father in the beginning and throughout all the ‘economies of the Father.’²⁵ This same one recapitulated all things in the incarnation in order to abolish death and restore communion between God and humankind. The Spirit also pervades all salvation history from the accounts of the patriarchs and the prophets. In the ‘last times,’ however, the Spirit was poured out in a new way for the union of God and humankind. Given the variety of descriptions of the *regula* mentioned elsewhere in Irenaeus, this formulation is not necessarily prescriptive, although the catechetical context certainly affords it some significance.²⁶ Nevertheless, there are discernable connections between this theological synopsis and the order and connection of the scriptures found in the rest of the *Demonstration*.

Taking into account the whole of the *Demonstration*, particular theological constructs of the *regula* resurface at the transitional or summary sections of *Dem.* 30-31a and *Dem.* 40b-41a.²⁷ This is evidenced through parallel

²² *Dem.* 6. There is a longstanding discussion concerning the omission of Israel in the presentation of the *regula*. See, for example, Green 2007, 84-84; Soulen 1996, 40-42; and MacDonald 2009, 294-98. While this is an important discussion, in this article we are trying to assess the relationship between the *regula* and the scriptural exposition of the *Demonstration*. While we do not have the space to consider the implications of this thesis for Israel’s place in Irenaeus’s thought, I think some attention should be given to the language of the ‘economies of the Father’ in the *regula* and the way this corresponds to his description of the Old Testament story in *Dem.* 8-30.

²³ For an analysis of the *regula* in *Adv. Haer.* 1.10.1 see Ferguson 2001, 371-74.

²⁴ *Dem.* 8, 9, 15.

²⁵ This mention of the ‘economies of the Father’ is the only reference to Old Testament history in the *regula*. For a discussion of how the prophets uniformly prefigure of Christ see *Adv. Haer.* 4.33.10.

²⁶ Cf. *Adv. Haer.* 1.10.1; 1.22.1; 3.4.1.

²⁷ Beginning with Harnack, the *Demonstration* has often been partitioned into two sections divided at *Dem.* 42a. This perspective tends to bifurcate Irenaeus’s presentation and neglect the more subtle thematic shifts within his overall agenda. For example, Rousseau titles the

language, themes and scriptural allusions between the *regula* in *Dem.* 6 and these transitional sections. This brackets the work into three loosely connected cyclical sections addressing various theological issues.²⁸ This manner of repeated themes is typically Irenaeian. As Philippe Bacq has shown (at least in the case of *Adv. Haer.* 4), Irenaeus's general organization is not linear, but comprises 'concentric circles that address a single issue from different angles of approach' (Bacq 1978, 41).²⁹ Within each of these three cycles, Irenaeus works through the particulars of the material presented in the *regula*. The Father as Creator characterizes *Dem.* 8-30. Prophecy and recapitulation embody the work of the Son in *Dem.* 30-40a, while traditional proof from prophecy and the outpouring of the Spirit organize the material of *Dem.* 40b-97. Following this presentation, the chronology of Christ's life orders the prophetic material in *Dem.* 40b-85. Finally, the Spirit is active throughout salvation history, but the outpouring of the Spirit is concentrated in *Dem.* 86-97 as a conclusion to the work of Christ. Therefore, in the *Demonstration* we find the theological contents of the *regula* functioning as a general framework supervising Irenaeus's scriptural presentation throughout the work.

3.1. The *regula* and the order and connection of the scriptures in *Dem.* 8-30

For *Dem.* 8-30a, the point of departure is the Old Testament narrative and the careful summary of Israel's history from Genesis to the Prophets. This synopsis also corresponds to the administration of the Father over creation in the first article of the *regula*. This represents what Greer calls the 'coherent pattern' of the Hebrew Scriptures (Kugel and Greer 1986, 156).³⁰ In fact, one of the more striking features of this section is lack of discussion about the Son. After the

first portion (*Dem.* 3b-42) as 'la predication apostolique' and the second portion (*Dem.* 42b-97) the 'Demonstration' proper (*SC* 406: 54, 56, 67). It is odd that Wingren, although trying to correct Harnack, would remark that *Adversus Haeresus* has 'great systematic power' but not the *Epideixis* (Wingren 1947, 104 n70).

²⁸ *Dem.* 1-3a provides a brief introduction, *Dem.* 3b-5 discusses the reception of apostolic teaching and issues of prolegomena, and both of these sections culminate in the description of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6-7. *Dem.* 97-100 serves as a conclusion and possibly a scribal addition.

²⁹ Donovan regularly applies Bacq's methodology to Irenaeus's other volumes of *Adv. Haer.* (Donovan, 1997).

³⁰ MacDonald suggests this section is a 'figural' reading of the Old Testament, but clearly the events are set in a narrational or chronological framework with few Christological allusions. It is true that much of the recapitulation material in *Dem.* 30-40 may be considered 'figural,' but here Irenaeus is using other methods of interpretation (MacDonald 2009, 294).

creation by the ‘two Hands’ in *Dem.* 11, there are few references to the second person of the Trinity in *Dem.* 12-29.³¹ Instead, this section is clearly more concerned with the divine-human interactions within the developing economy of the Father that culminates in the sending of the prophets and the advent of the Son.³² Irenaeus is, of course, refuting the Marcionite distinction between the Creator and the Father of Christ and the Gnostic anti-cosmic dualism that casts the visible world in a negative light (Torrance 1992, 111). But the economic mediation of God the Father over creation throughout the Hebrew Scriptures justifies the goodness of creation and prepares humankind for the incarnation (Kugel and Greer 1986, 171).

Irenaeus’s reference to the Father is found in the opening transition of *Dem.* 8, where he writes: ‘And the Father... is the Maker of heaven and earth and the whole world...’³³ God the Father has created all things and ‘nourished all things’ (*nutriuntur omnia*) throughout salvation history. *Dem.* 8-16 comprises the primordial and prelapsarian period with a careful exposition of Gen 1-3. Of course Irenaeus is concerned with the question of God’s activity prior to creation, but it is not a question he wishes to dwell upon, because this type of endless speculation is reserved for the Gnostics.³⁴ *Dem.* 17-30 expresses the rest of Israel’s history beginning with Cain and briefly touching upon the Patriarchs, David, Solomon, and concluding with the prophets in *Dem.* 30. The terse summary in *Dem.* 29 (and the comments in *Dem.* 52) suggests Irenaeus could continue his ordered exposition. The ‘pattern of heavenly things’ mentioned in Heb. 8:5 is paradigmatic for life within the divine economy and frames this initial portion with allusions in the opening section of *Dem.* 9 and the closing section of *Dem.* 29.³⁵

Throughout this summary, there is a clear methodological *ordo* to the biblical narrative that allows Irenaeus to fashion a series of texts drawn predominately from the Pentateuch. There may be a temptation to rush over the narrational flow without recognizing the significance of Irenaeus’s point or the inherent correspondence of particular scriptural material. These biblical events

³¹ The brief exceptions are an allusion in the blessing of Japheth in *Dem.* 21, the Son as the image of God in Gen. 9:1-6 in *Dem.* 22, and Christ’s prophetic relationship to Deuteronomy in *Dem.* 28.

³² The rhetorical term *oikonomia* is used frequently in Irenaeus and it bears the sense of ‘arrangement’ or direction of a plot (Grant 1997, 49-50).

³³ *Dem.* 8.

³⁴ *Adv. Haer.* 2.28.1-9

³⁵ *Dem.* 9 alludes to the newly created world as after the ‘pattern’ of the heavens, while *Dem.* 29 discusses the formation of the temple after the ‘pattern’ of heavenly things.

have a natural coherence due to their common reference to God the Creator and Father. Irenaeus's exegetical predisposition to the order and connection of texts yields a natural understanding of the divine economy organized around the unfolding of the salvation history under the provision of one God who is Creator and Father. In addition to the description of God as Creator, the events of salvation history are the 'economies of the Father' mentioned in the *regula*. The significance of each moment of scripture finds its place within the chronology of the Old Testament. Irenaeus is not concerned with the proper 'meaning' of the scriptural accounts in isolation from their broader context within the trajectory of salvation history, but rather intentionally locates each narrative or character within an ordered divine *oikonomia*. To say it another way, Irenaeus could have easily begun his scriptural exposition with Christological interpretation of the Old Testament in *Dem.* 30b-40a, but without concern for the ordered events leading up to the incarnation in *Dem.* 8-30 the very concept of recapitulation would seem unintelligible.

3.2. The *regula*, recapitulation and the order and connection of the scriptures in *Dem.* 30b-40a

As we mentioned earlier, *Dem.* 30b-31a is a transitional section with several links to the content of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6. Both *Dem.* 6 and *Dem.* 30b-31a discuss recapitulation and allude to Eph. 1:10.³⁶ We also find the similar discussions of preexistence and the organization of the divine economy. The opening lines of *Dem.* 31 also mirror the language of the *regula*: 'He united man with God and wrought a communion of God and man, we being unable to have any participation in incorruptibility if it were not for His coming to us, for incorruptibility, whilst being invisible, benefited us nothing: so he became visible, that we might, in all ways, obtain participation in incorruptibility.'

This transitional section blends into the second thematic cycle spanning *Dem.* 30-31-*Dem.* 40a. The remaining portion of *Dem.* 30-42a is a mirrored account of the recapitulation of salvation history that corresponds to the events

³⁶ *Dem.* 6, '...in fine temporum ad recapitulanda-et-instauranda omnia homo in hominibus factus (est) visibilis et palpabilis, ad destruendam mortem et ostendendam vitam et communionem-concordiae Dei et hominis operandam.' *Dem.* 30b-31, '...recapitulans in seipsum omnia Verbum Dei (quae) in caelo (sunt) et (quae) in terra. [31] ...et communionem-concordiae Dei et hominis operatus est, ...ut secundum omnem partem participationem-receptionis acciperemus incorruptibilitatis...'

presented in *Dem.* 8-30.³⁷ In the same way the content of the *regula* commences the Old Testament narrative in *Dem.* 11-30, so also *Dem.* 30-31 serves as the framework for Christological reading of salvation history. The sense of *ordo* is again present in the scriptural arrangement but in this case supported by a sense of *consonare* as Irenaeus relates salvation history to the work of Christ. For example, in *Dem.* 31-34a Irenaeus develops the Pauline Adam-Christ typology, appealing to Rom. 5:12,19, Rom. 6:6 and John 1:14, which reconfigures the events of Gen. 1-3 in *Dem.* 11-16. Both sections depend upon the interpretation of Gen. 1:26 and 2:7, but in the present case the incarnation in John 1:14 is viewed as the ‘same arrangement of embodiment’ as the formation of Adam in Gen. 1:26 and 2:7.³⁸ In *Dem.* 17-23, the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin, first embodied in Cain, spread out to ‘seize the entire race of men.’³⁹ Following this is the Noahic account, the cursing of Shem, the blessing of Sem and Japheth and ultimately Babel, where humankind was ‘scattered and occupied the earth.’⁴⁰ The extent of sin and the spreading out of all humanity across the earth corresponds to *Dem.* 34b with the overturning of Babel and the extent of salvation in the Word of God who ‘invisibly pervades <...> the whole creation..., and stretches the length from the East to the West, and who navigates the “breath” of the northern regions, inviting the dispersed from all sides to the knowledge of the Father.’⁴¹ In *Dem.* 24-28, the promise of the Abrahamic covenant and the giving of the Law relates to *Dem.* 35 and both rely on particular readings of Gen. 15:5-6 in continuity with Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6. Finally, *Dem.* 29-30 announces the Davidic covenant, which is fulfilled in *Dem.* 36-39a.

Once again, the concluding lines of *Dem.* 40a echo the opening lines of *Dem.* 30b-31a and the words of the *regula* allude to John 1:14 and the ‘communion with God and man’ (*comunione-concordiae Dei et hominis*).⁴² The transitional sections of *Dem.* 30-31a and *Dem.* 40a, contain discussions of preeminence, incorruptibility and recapitulation with terminology that recalls the language of the second article of the *regula*. Whereas the previous section was ordered by historical events, this section is much more concerned with the

³⁷ Elsewhere Irenaeus argues that Luke’s genealogy emphasizes recapitulation because it begins with Christ and ends with Adam. See *Adv. Haer.* 3.22.3-4.

³⁸ *Dem.* 32.

³⁹ *Dem.* 18.

⁴⁰ *Dem.* 23.

⁴¹ *Dem.* 34b; cf. Eph. 3:18, 4:9, Matt. 24:27, Isa. 11:2, and John 11:52.

⁴² *Dem.* 40: in *comunione-concordiae hominem denuo-iterum-vocans Dei, ut per (eam quae) ad eum (est) comunione nos participationem incorruptelae acciperemus.*

Christological interpretation of the same events.⁴³ Here all the 'economies of the Father' find their *ordo* and *consonare* in Christ. The sheer number of intertextual scriptural references that saturate this section also supports this point. Naturally Christ's human nature as a 'son of David' depends upon these historical connections, but this same one is also the Word existing in the beginning with the Father. More specifically this kind of exegesis may be characterized as figural or typological, where each moment of salvation history is figured into the life of Christ. But this presentation, which is kerygmatically oriented, it is not a pure prophetic use of the Old Testament, as in the presentation of Justin or even Melito, because there is a greater concern for *ordo* (MacKenzie 2002, 134). Therefore, what we find in *Dem.* 30b-40a is the recapitulation of the 'economies of the Father' in the person of Christ and framed by the content of the *regula*.

3.3. The *regula*, preexistence and prophetic fulfillment in *Dem.* 40b-97

The third thematic section of the *Demonstration* begins with the transitional section in *Dem.* 40b-41 where Irenaeus rehearses the contents of *Dem.* 42b-97. *Dem.* 42b-97 is dedicated to Christological prophecy and fulfillment, but also includes a final portion depicting the outpouring of the Spirit and the calling of the Gentiles. In continuity with the structure of the previous sections, *Dem.* 43-52 discusses Christ's preexistence within the contours of salvation history. The remaining sections, *Dem.* 53-97, are chronologically ordered by the sequences of Christ's life and the events in the early church. Therefore, the content is arranged as follows: preexistence (*Dem.* 43-52), virgin birth (*Dem.* 53-66), miracles (*Dem.* 67-74), passion (*Dem.* 75-82), glorification (*Dem.* 83-85), and the calling of the Gentiles (*Dem.* 86-97).⁴⁴ Each of these sections comprises crucial thematic material found within the formulation of the second and third articles of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6.

Beginning with the notion of preexistence, *Dem.* 43-52 reflects an ordered account of Christophanies and prophecies. This subsection reveals a third cycle through the Old Testament narrative, only in this instance Irenaeus is concerned with the preexistence of the Son. In *Dem.* 43 the Son is present at creation in Gen. 1:1, *Dem.* 44 mentions his conversation with Abraham in Gen. 18:1-3, *Dem.* 45 alludes to his wrestling with Jacob in Gen. 28:10-15, *Dem.* 46 finds him in the burning bush with Moses in Exod. 3:7-8, *Dem.* 47 mentions the access to the

⁴³ The recapitulation argument also carries the implicit critique of the Valentinians, Ebionites, and Tatian as established in *Adv. Haer.* 3.18.1-23.8.

⁴⁴ The majority of these sections are themselves separated by brief summary or transitional paragraph.

Father though him in Ps. 44:7-8, *Dem.* 48-49 speaks to his divinity in Ps. 110:1-4, and *Dem.* 50-51 describes how the Son fashioned in the womb in Isa. 49:5-6.⁴⁵ Here we find Irenaeus is not simply concerned with isolated testimonies of the Son's preexistence, but an ordered demonstration of the presence of the Word of God throughout the whole of human history from creation to the fashioning in the womb (Kugel and Greer 1986, 166).⁴⁶ He confirms this saying, 'since it is not possible to draw up an ordered account of all the Scriptures, from these [passages] you can also understand the others, which speak in a similar manner...'⁴⁷ His brief portrayal of the Son's preexistence is paradigmatic for establishing an ordered account of other scriptures and identifying the presence of the second person of the Trinity elsewhere in the text.

The remaining portion of the work, *Dem.* 53-97 unfolds in the same general framework as the narration of Christ's life in the Gospels (birth, miracles, passion, and glorification) and concludes with the outpouring of the Spirit and the preaching of the apostles.⁴⁸ Similar references are found in the *regula* of *Dem.* 6 and the transitional sections of *Dem.* 30b-31a and *Dem.* 40-41. The *regula* speaks of the prophetic fulfillment of Christ's life, his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection, all of which flows out of the allusion to recapitulation. The transitional sections also contain nearly all of these sequences.⁴⁹ These episodes correspond to the virgin birth (*Dem.* 53-66), miracles (*Dem.* 67-74), passion (*Dem.* 75-82), and glorification (*Dem.* 83-85). Finally, the calling of the Gentiles in *Dem.* 86-97 and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a 'new way' expressed in *Dem.* 89 as the fulfillment of Isa. 43:18-21 relates to the third article of the *regula*. The *regula* also speaks of the Spirit leading the faithful in all righteousness, which is echoed in the transitional section of *Dem.* 41, *Dem.* 89, and the third article of the *regula*. In the closing lines of *Dem.* 97, Irenaeus places emphasis on creation in the image of God, which links up with the recapitulation in the *regula*, the opening scene of creation in *Dem.* 11, and the Adam-Christ

⁴⁵ In the ordering of the LXX the wisdom literature precedes the prophets.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Dem.* 35.

⁴⁷ *Dem.* 52. Non enim est fas-et-possibile omnem Scripturam incomputationem-ordinatim-mittere: ex his autem et reliqua intelleges (quae) similiter his dicta (sunt), credens Christo et sapientiam intellegentiamque petens a Deo ad intellegendum (ea quae) a prophetis dicta (sunt).

⁴⁸ There appears to be some connection in this section, *Dem.* 42b-97, to the methodology identified by Bacq in *Adv. Haer.* 4 (1978).

⁴⁹ The preexistence of the Son, virgin birth, incarnation, and recapitulation are found in *Dem.* 30-31. These same points, along with the mention of his passion, resurrection, and ascension are mentioned in *Dem.* 40b-41.

typology in *Dem.* 32. The language of Christ 'mixing and blending the Spirit of God the Father with the handiwork of God, that humankind might be according to the image and likeness of God,' has loose associations with the idea of 'renewing humankind to God' in the closing line of the *regula* and the 'Spirit of God resting, blending with his [Christ's] flesh' in *Dem.* 41.⁵⁰ This imagery of restoring humankind to God is a fitting way to conclude both the *regula* and the *Demonstration* as a whole.

Conclusion

What can we say, then, about the interaction between the content of the *regula* and Irenaeus's applied hermeneutics in the *Demonstration*? For Irenaeus the exegete, the theological substance of the *regula* functions as a hermeneutical framework guiding Irenaeus's reading of scripture, while at the same time the underlying exegetical assumptions of *ordo* and *consonare* exemplify the operating basis of Irenaeus's applied hermeneutic. This interaction between the *regula* and scriptural exegesis is nowhere more evident than within the structure and argument of Irenaeus's *Demonstration*. The *Demonstration* exhibits a methodological concern for the order and connection of scriptures that are organized thematically by the contents of the *regula* in *Dem.* 6. There is a continual return to the themes and language of the *regula* highlighted by the transitional sections at *Dem.* 30b-31a and *Dem.* 40b-41. The three intervening sections correspond in content and argument to the three articles expressed in the *regula*, so that there is an obvious association between the theological contents of the *regula* and Irenaeus's general structure and exegetical presentation in the *Demonstration*.

Irenaeus's exegetical orientation that attends to the *order* and *connection* of the scriptures recognizes that all scriptures exist in varying degrees of chronological and associative relationships manifested through an assortment of exegetical methods. It is too general to say Irenaeus reads the testaments together or to describe their relationship as 'dialogical' or 'symbiotic,' because this does not appreciate the particularized nature of his conflation of individual terms, images, characters, phrases, or passages. Irenaeus is not working at the level of the testaments, but navigating the trenches of individual texts and doing so with an eye towards the theological content of the *regula*. Framed correctly the *Demonstration* is a methodologically organized reconstruction of the Old

⁵⁰ *Dem.* 6 *renovans hominem Deo*; *Dem.* 41: ...*Dei Spiritus requievit, commixtus carni eius*; *Dem.* 97: ...*miscens et conspergens Spiritum Patris cum plasmate Dei, ut fieret homo secundum imaginem et similitudinem Dei*.

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Testament story in correspondence with the Christ event and framed by the contents of the *regula*. This analysis presses us beyond the descriptions of Torrance, Greer and others who have tried to characterize the function of the *regula* in Irenaeus's scriptural exposition.

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