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Irenaeus' *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* and Early Catechetical Instruction

Gᴇᴏʀɢᴇ W. Sᴛʀᴏᴜᴘ ɪɴ his book *The Promise of Narrative Theology* states the following:

A community is a group of people who have come to share a common past, who understand particular events in the past to be of decisive importance for interpreting the present, who anticipate the future by means of a shared hope, and express their identity by means of a common narrative. What was true of the identity of persons is also true of that of communities—memory is a necessary if not sufficient category for the description of communal identity. What distinguishes a community from a crowd or a mob is a common memory which expresses itself in living traditions and institutions . . .

The community's common narrative is the glue that binds its members together. To be a true participant in a community is to share in that community's narratives, to recite the same stories as the other members of the community, and to allow one's identity to be shared by them . . . What is perhaps less clear is how a community's past and the narratives by which it preserves that past become a part of an individual's personal history and identity.[1]

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1. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology*, 133, 134.

It is the thesis of this paper that catechetical instruction was the means by which the early church achieved this end of communal identity and that the common narrative transmitted in this instruction was the biblical history of salvation. Early Christian catechetical instruction, therefore, gives a confirmation of Stroup's affirmations and also provides a superb view of how the Christian self-identity was perceived.

The catechumenate as an organised, formal institution took shape toward the end of the second century, when the words "catechesis," "catechumen," and "catechise" acquired a technical sense.[2] The concern of this study will not be this formal catechumenate as such but the content of the instruction deemed important for new converts. For this purpose we follow Turck's definition of catechesis as elementary but comprehensive Christian teaching connected with baptism.[3] Whether that teaching was given before or after baptism is not significant for this study.

Twentieth-century study of early Christian instructional material for new converts received stimulation from the studies of Alfred Seeberg.[4] Working from New Testament material, Seeberg found two parts in the primitive catechism: a moral teaching drawn from Judaism and a specifically Christian "formula" of faith. To these were added explanations on baptism, the Holy Spirit, the Lord's prayer, and the words of the Lord at the Last Supper.[5]

The influential article on catechesis by H. Leclercq in *DACL* followed Seeberg's scheme into the extra-canonical literature. Leclercq saw the "Two Ways" as preserving the pattern of moral instruction and the "Apostles' Creed" as preserving a catechetical summary of the Christian faith.[6] DePuniet's companion article on the catechumenate—still a standard treatment, although not having assimilated the identification of the *Egyptian Church Order* as Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*—carefully assembled the principal literary references bearing on admission to the catechumenate, the stages of instruction, and the content of instruction.[7]

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2. Capelle, "L'introduction du catécheménat a Rome"; Turck, "Aux origines du catéchuménat." On the words see Turck, "Catéchein et Catéchèsis chez les premiers Pères."

3. Turck, *Évangélisation et catéchèse aux deux premiers siècles*, 10.

4. Seeberg, *Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit*.

5. See the summary of Seeberg and criticism of his reconstruction by Turck, *Évangélisation et catéchèse*, 15–22.

6. Leclercq, "Catéchèse. Catéchisme. Catéchumène."

7. DePuniet, "Catechumenate."

Most attention to catechetical instruction has continued to emphasise a two-fold content: moral and doctrinal.[8] That these elements were included seems obvious enough.[9] The *Didache* placed the "Two Ways" in the context of preliminary instruction for baptism. The creed is the basis of the *Catechetical Lectures* of Cyril of Jerusalem, and doctrinal[10] or sacramental/liturgical[11] material is the subject of the fourth and fifth-century catechetical lectures immediately before and after baptism.

Other authors, nonetheless, have offered other schemes. Under the influence of the three pairs in Heb 6:1–2, Turck and Maertens speak of moral conversion and doctrine (repentance = the two ways and faith = the symbol), liturgy (baptisms and laying on of hands), and eschatology (resurrection and judgment). They stress, however, that the catechesis was unified, having its center in Christ, and connected with baptism.[12] Daniélou, with the fourth century in mind, has a different three-fold classification: biblical, dogmatic, and sacramental.[13] In his course of instruction on catechesis in the early centuries, Daniélou organised the material as dogmatic, moral, and sacramental.[14] J. Lupi has seen the surviving evidence as indicating a catechesis in four sections: historical, moral, dogmatic, and liturgical.[15]

The biblical or historical type of catechesis mentioned as a separate category by some authors refers to the use of the history of salvation according to the scriptures as the basis of instruction. This approach in catechesis has been mainly known from Augustine's *De catechizandis rudibus*, where a narrative of biblical history serves as a preliminary instruction in

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8. Robinson, "Historical Survey of the Church's Treatment of New Converts with Reference to Pre-and Post-Baptismal Instruction"; Folkemer, "A Study of the Catechumenate"; Bopp, "Katechese," 27–28; and Jungmann, "Katechumenat," 51

9. Origen, *Hom. in Num.* 27.1; *In Jer.* 5:13; Cyril, *Cat. lect*. IV.2; Ambrose, *De mys.* 1:1; Riggi, "La catéchèse adaptée aux temps chez Epiphane," studies the catechesis of Epiphanius in his *Ancoratus* according to its moral and doctrinal content.

10. Gregory of Nyssa, *Cat. or.*

11. Cyril, *Cat. mys.*; John Chrysostom, *Cat. ad illum.*; Theodore of Mopuestia, *Cat. Hom.*; Ambrose, *De mys.*; *De sacram.*

12. Turck, *Évangélisation et catéchèse*, 144–50; Maertens, *Histoire et pastorale du rituel du catéchumenat et du baptême*, 69–70.

13. Daniélou, "La Catéchèse dans la Tradition Patristique"; and "Introduction," in *L'initiation chrétienne*.

14. Daniélou, *La catéchèse aux premiers siècles*. Thus he seems to have moved away from the claim that "l'objet de la catéchèse est bien l'histoire du salut"—"L'histoire du salut dans la catechese," 19.

15. Lupi, "Catechetical Instruction in the Church of the First Two Centuries," 64.

essentials of the faith to inquirers before their formal enrollment in the catechumenate.[16] Augustine's work is especially valuable, because it gives two sample discourses, a longer and a shorter version, as recommendations for the actual practice in teaching potential converts.

There are other indications of this history of salvation approach to catechetical instruction. The compilation of church order material in the Apostolic Constitutions calls for a similar type of teaching.

> Let him, therefore, who is to be taught the truth in regard to piety be instructed before his baptism in the knowledge of the unbegotten God, in the understanding of his only begotten Son, in the assured acknowledgment of the Holy Spirit. Let him learn the order of the several parts of the creation, the series of providence, the different dispensations of thy laws. Let him be instructed why the world was made, and why man was appointed to be a citizen therein; let him know also his own nature, of what sort it is; let him be taught how God punished the wicked with water and fire, and did glorify the saints in every generation—I mean Seth, and Enosh, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham and his posterity, and Melchizedek, and Job, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Phinehas the priest, and those that were holy in every generation; and how God still took care of and did not reject mankind, but called them from their error and vanity to the acknowledgment of the truth at various seasons, reducing them from bondage and impiety unto liberty and piety, from injustice to righteousness, from death eternal to everlasting life. Let him that offers himself to baptism learn these and the like things during the time that he is a catechumen; and let him who lays his hands upon him adore God, the Lord of the whole world, and thank him for his creation, for his sending Christ his only begotten Son, that he might save man by blotting out his transgressions . . .
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> And after his thanksgiving, let him instruct him in the doctrines concerning our Lord's incarnation, and in those concerning his passion, and resurrection from the dead, and assumption.[17]

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16. Among many studies of this work, note Folkemer, "A Study of the Catechumenate," 301–7; Touton, "La méthode catéchètique de St. Cyrille de Jérusalem comparée à celles de St. Augustin et de Théodore de Mopsueste"; Allard, "La nature du *De catechizandis rudibus* de S. Augustin"; Belche, "Die Bekehrung zum Christentum nach Augustins Buchlein De catechizandis rudibus" (4 parts); Kevane, *Catechesis in Augustine*.

17. *Apos. Const.* VII.39. Translation is taken from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, 475–76.

If the compiler is an Arian, then the agreement with Augustine becomes all the more significant as pointing to an earlier pattern of instruction. There is a further late fourth-century witness to biblical history as the content of teaching to new converts in the Journal of Egeria. She speaks about candidates for baptism undergoing special preparation during the Lenten season at Jerusalem. This seems to be the setting for the instructions in the *Apostolic Constitutions* also, in distinction from the pre-catechesis described by Augustine.

> All those who are to be baptized, both men and women, sit closely around the bishop, while the godmothers and godfathers stand there; and indeed all the people who wish to listen may enter and sit down, provided they are of the faithful. A catechumen, however, may not enter at the time when the bishop is teaching them the law. He does so in this way: beginning with Genesis he goes through the whole of Scripture during these forty days, expounding first its literal meaning and then explaining the spiritual meaning. In the course of these days everything is taught not only about the resurrection but concerning the body of faith. This is called catechetics.
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> When five weeks of instruction have been completed, they then receive the Creed.[18]

Egeria explains that the teaching occupied three hours a day for seven weeks, but during the eighth week (the week before Easter Sunday) there were so many other activities that there was no more time for teaching. The baptismal ceremony itself was explained during the eight days after its reception on Easter Sunday. Egeria's diary thus testifies to a historical, doctrinal (the creed), and liturgical sequence in the instructions given to new converts. The *Catechetical Lectures* of Cyril of Jerusalem might not seem to agree with Egeria's summary. The passing of a generation and the presence of another bishop might have given another framework, yet there are similarities: the literal/spiritual approach to the Old Testament and the explanation of the sacraments during the week after the baptism (these *Mystagogical Catecheses* perhaps coming from a successor of Cyril). Although the outline of the *Catechetical Lectures* is provided by the creed, there are elements of a history of salvation exposition included.[19]

18. Egeria, *Journal* 46. Translation is by Gingras, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage*, 123–25. The description of the instruction corresponds to Irenaeus's approach also.

19. Note *Cat. Lect.* XII. Cyril's practice is to draw on Old Testament antecedents, prophecies, and types for each article of the creed. See Daniélou, La catéchèse aux premiers siècles, 103ff. Cyril has fully subordinated the history of salvation approach

Even apart from special lectures baptismal candidates could learn the scriptural story from the lections in the liturgy during this season.[20] In fact, these readings would have provided the point of departure for the bishop's specific instructions. It has been noted that there is a close correspondence between the scripture readings attested later at Rome during the period from Septuagisma to the second week after Easter and the pictures in the Roman catacombs. From this correspondence it has been argued that the catechetical instruction provided the program for the pictures depicted on the walls of the catacombs.[21] Other interpretations, of course, have been offered of the inspiration for the selection of pictures in the catacombs, but whatever element of truth there is in this hypothesis would further support the prominence of biblical history in the teaching of the church and encourage a look for ante-Nicene evidence for this framework of instruction.

In this context I propose another look at Irenaeus' *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*. Harnack in his notes accompanying the *editio princeps* of the Armenian version described the *Proof* in a general sense as catechetical.[22] P. Drews argued that it was a catechetical work in the technical sense. He noted that the essential points in *Apostolic Constitutions* VII.39 (quoted above) occur in Irenaeus in the same order.[23] He further noted the parallels between Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, and Irenaeus' *Proof*,[24] explaining that Augustine was not following Irenaeus but that the

to the credal framework and so completed the shift in framework begun by Irenaeus—see below at n. 44. Doval, "The Fourth Century Jerusalem Catechesis and the Development of the Creed," notes that catechesis was originally structured on salvation history (the thesis of this paper) and was later adapted to a Trinitarian style creed.

20. Surkau, "Katechetik," 1181.

21. Martimort, "L'inconographie des catacombs et la catéchèse antique." Martimort does not put this information in a specifically history of salvation setting, but that would complement the presentation.

22. Ter-Mekerttschian and Ter-Minassiantz, *Des Heiligen Irenäus Schrift zum Erweise der Apostolischen Verkündigung in Armenischer Version Entdeckt*, 55 ("sie zeigt uns den bedeutenden Bischof als Katecheten") and 65 ("unser Traktak ist katechetisch erbaulich").

23. Drews, "Der literarische Charakter der neuentdeckten Schrift des Irenaus 'Zum Erweise der apostolischen Verkündigung.'"

24. Ibid., 230–31, states that Augustine expanded the *Apostolic Constitutions* and Irenaeus by reference to the last judgment and ethical admonitions because the scheme of catechesis had been enlarged since Irenaeus; but moral instruction was early, and Irenaeus has an ethical section in chapters 95–96. Daniélou, "L'histoire du salut dans la catéchèse," 24–25, exaggerates the difference between Irenaeus and Augustine. Irenaeus uses types in his historical sketch, and when he comes to the prophecies, he is

verbal connections were due to the traditional scheme both were following. Of course, if both were following the biblical order, there would be parallels, but what is included and what is omitted would suggest a closer connection.

An alternative classification of the *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* gives its purpose as apologetic. Influential patrologies have popularized this classification.[25] On the other hand, Turck and Maertens describe the *Proof* as the first catechetical manual, but neither develops the significance of the prominence of biblical history in its content for his reconstruction of early catechesis.[26] Daniélou has given his magisterial support to the *Proof* as the "first catechetical work we possess,"[27] and he does utilize the work fully in his treatment of early catechesis; hence to his studies we must return. Not everyone concurred: Michael Dujarier has written his history of the catechumenate without any reference to Irenaeus.[28] Others are content to describe the purpose of the *Proof* as both catechetical and apologetic.[29] Joseph P. Smith in the judicious introduction to his excellent English translation characterizes the *apparent* aim of the work as catechetical but the real aim as apologetic.[30] I would prefer to reverse the priorities.

The question of the intention of the work is posed already by Irenaeus' own statement in chapter 1:

> What we are sending you is in the form of notes on the main points, so that you may find much matter in short space, comprehending in a few details all the members of the body of truth, and receiving in brief the proof of the things of God. In this way, not only will it bear fruit in your own salvation, but also you may confound all those who hold false views, and to all who wish to hear, you may with all confidence expound what we have to say in its integrity and purity.[31]

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telling the history of Jesus.

25. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, 1:409–11; Quasten, *Patrology*, 1:292; Jungmann, "Katechumenat," 52.

26. Turck, *Évangélisation et catéchèse*, 72, 117, 128–32; cf. Grant, "Development of the Christian Catechumenate," 41; Peretto, ed., *Ireneo de Lione: Epideixis, Antico catechismo degli adulti*.

27. Daniélou, *La catéchèse aux premiers siècles*, 89; see his exposition on 89–102.

28. Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate*.

29. Hamman, "Introduction," in *La prédication des apôtres*, 12 and 17; Altaner, *Patrology*, 152.

30. J. P. Smith, *St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, 14, 19–20.

31. Ibid., 47.

Irenaeus thus saw a three-fold purpose for his writing: (1) the edification of the recipient, Marcianus, (2) the refutation of heresy, and (3) the instruction of those who wish to learn about Christianity. The question is, "Which of these purposes was primary?" The debate is between numbers (2) and (3).

A decision on the question requires consideration of the content of the *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*. One approach is by way of rhetorical analysis, and Irenaeus was not as innocent of rhetorical training as he professes.[32] If rhetorical divisions are more obvious in the *Proof* than in *Against Heresies,* that may be due to the former being an educational work. The *Proof* may rather easily be outlined according to the following parts of a speech:

> I. Exordium, 1–2
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> II. Divisio, 3–7
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> III. Narratio, 8–42a
>
> IV. Confirmatio, 42b–97
>
> V. Conclusio, 98–100

This does not correspond to either of the two common divisions of a speech into four[33] or six[34] divisions, and Quintilian's five parts are different.[35] But Cicero refers to "four, five, six, or even seven subdivisions" into which different authorities distribute every speech.[36] The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* had recognized that "There is also another arrangement, which, when we must depart from the order imposed by the rules of the art, is accommodated to circumstance in accordance with the speaker's judgment."[37] Normally the *narratio*, or statement of the facts in the case

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32. *Adv. haer*. I. pref. 3. See Grant, "Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture"; Schoedel, "Philosophy and Rhetoric in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus"; and Perkins, "Irenaeus and the Gnostics."

33. Aristotle, *Rhet*. III.xiii.4 gives proem, statement, proof, and epilogue; Cicero, *De part. or*. 4 and 27 names them exordium, statement of the facts, proof, and peroration; cf. *Top*. 97–99 and *Or*. 122.

34. *Rhet. ad Heren*. I.iii.4 gives the six parts as introduction, statement of facts, division, proof, refutation, and conclusion; the same outline is in Cicero, *De inventione* 1.19.

35. *Inst. or*. III.ix.1–3 divides a forensic speech into exordium (*prooemium*), statement of facts (*narratio*), proof (*probatio*), refutation (*refutatio*), and peroration (*peroratio*).

36. *De or*. 11.79.

37. *Rhet. ad Heren*. III.ix.16–18; cf. Theon, *Progymnasmata* 12 (Spengel, 125).

preceded the *divisio*, or outline of the points, but Cicero cites an example in which a "narrative follows the plan laid down in the partition."[38] Or, alternatively, if one wanted to be a rhetorical purist, he could treat chapters 3–7 as the *narratio*, the statement of facts, and both the historical and prophetic parts of the treatise as part of the proof. I have preferred to treat the historical section as *narratio*, since Cicero presents *historia* as one kind of narrative and defines *historia* as "an account of actual occurrences remote from the recollection of our own age."[39] This arrangement brings the outline into harmony with the two main parts of Irenaeus' work, Old Testament history followed by proof from the prophecies. Nevertheless, Irenaeus' survey of history would seem to a student of ancient rhetoric a most unusual kind of *narratio*, but perhaps explainable by the special subject matter of his treatise.

Irenaeus himself had other interests which governed his presentation, and these might seem more obviously to determine the outline. These interests are doctrinal, and Irenaeus has imposed a modified Trinitarian framework on his presentation. The doctrinal content gives the following outline:

> I. Introduction, 1–2
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> II. The Trinity, in Creation and Redemption, 3–7
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> III. The Father, 8–29
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> IV. The Son, 30–88
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> V. The Holy Spirit and the Church, 89–97
>
> VI. Conclusion, 98–100

The Son of God clearly gets major attention. He was the fulfillment of words addressed to Adam, Abraham, and David (32–36), the subject of the theophanies to the patriarchs (44–46), and in his earthly life the object of the prophecies (53–85). The apparent lack of attention to the Holy Spirit is partially offset by the consideration that the prophecies of Christ are viewed as the work of the Holy Spirit (30; 42). But the work of the Holy Spirit is little developed apart from this prophetic function; and the last section treats more the calling of the Gentiles through the apostolic preaching than the work of the Holy Spirit as such,[40] although this ap-

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38. *De inventione* 1.33.

39. Ibid., 1.27.

40. Justin Martyr too had included the mission of the apostles in his summary of the Christian faith—*Apology* I, 39; 45; *Dialogue* 109–10.

ostolic preaching is probably to be seen as inspired by the Holy Spirit, for it stands in parallel with the prophets' proclamation (86; cf. 41 and 98). The comparative neglect of the Holy Spirit can be explained from the anti-heretical perspective as arising from Irenaeus' concern with teachings which affected the Father and the Son but not the Holy Spirit.[41]

Although in general the content of the *Proof* corresponds to what is stated about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in chapter 6, the material at the end of the work shows the difficulty of outlining the whole in terms of the Three Persons. Indeed, the chapters preceding the conclusion (86–97) still essentially present the sending of the apostles, the new covenant, the calling of the Gentiles, the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, and the new life as part of the scheme of the fulfillment of prophecy which was employed about Christ (42–85). Moreover, the Trinitarian outline does not do justice to the major division at 42–43. Indeed as significant a treatment of the place of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation occurs in chapters 41–42 as in the latter part of the book.

The fact is, there was another scheme at work in Irenaeus' presentation, signalled already in Irenaeus' introduction: "the members of the body of truth" and "the proof of the things of God"(1).[42] Both the rhetorical and doctrinal outlines yield a somewhat artificial arrangement of what is essentially an account of biblical history centered on Christ with a baptismal/doctrinal introduction and a moral/anti-heretical conclusion. I would suggest an outline for the work in terms of the history of salvation. The body of the work consists of two major blocks of material. The first is largely a literal history of salvation as the mighty acts of God the Father, beginning with creation and continuing through the events of Genesis, the Mosaic covenant, taking the promised land, the sending of the prophets, the coming of Christ, the sending of the apostles, and the general resurrection (8–42a). The second block, also historically ordered, concerns the spiritual sense of scripture. Returning to Gen 1:1, Irenaeus treats Christ and his salvation and church from the standpoint of the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The quotations from the prophetic books are not taken

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41. Grossi, "Regula veritatis e narratio battesimale in sant' Ireneo," 442–43.

42. See the outline in Barthoulot, trans., *La Prédication des Apôtres et ses Preuves*: Prologue, 1–3. I. Exposition of the Preaching of the Apostles, 4–42. II. The Proof of the Preaching of the Apostles: Christ the Fulfillment of Scripture, 43–85. III. Christ and the New Law, 86–97. Conclusion, 98–100. Cf. Daniélou, *La catéchèse aux premiers siècles*, 90–91, for a similar structure. My debt to Daniélou is evident, but I want to advance additional arguments for the *Proof* as based on catechesis and carry the implications of its history of salvation approach further.

in their biblical order but are arranged according to the story of Christ as testimonies to his preexistence, his nature, his virgin birth, his miracles, his passion, his resurrection, and his calling a new people through his apostles (42b–97).[43] The basic content of the work is provided by the biblical history of salvation from the preexistent Father and Son to the general resurrection, in general following the books of Law and then the books of the Prophets, all seen as culminating in the Christian age. The accommodation to the Trinitarian scheme has resulted in a certain repetition, since Irenaeus goes back to Genesis in chapter 32, when he turns from talking about the Father to talking about the Son, and again in chapter 43, when he begins the proof from prophecy. Nonetheless, history and prophecy still provide the two main bodies of material in the work, and the prophetic segment is arranged according to the history of Christ. This proposed outline keeps the advantages of the outline according to rhetorical divisions, i.e., a historical *narratio* and a *confirmatio* from prophecy. This history of salvation content has been brought into a Trinitarian framework by Irenaeus. The rough edges and lack of exact correspondence point to the arrangement according to biblical history being the earlier, traditional form of the material, and the "rule of faith" or the Trinitarian summary of Christian doctrine as being imposed by Irenaeus.[44]

If the historical rather than the doctrinal per se lies at the basis of the *Proof* then a catechetical purpose is primary. Several considerations support this conclusion. There are indeed anti-heretical comments scattered throughout the work, and the argument from prophecy as a demonstration of the continuity of the Old and New Testaments was of obvious value in refuting Gnostics and Marcionites.[45] Nevertheless, the content of the *Proof* as a whole does not show this as the primary thrust (much of the historical survey is irrelevant to an anti-heretical purpose) and seems to be dictated by other considerations. This may be readily demonstrated by a comparison of the Proof with an avowedly anti-heretical work by Irenaeus, the *Against Heresies*. The history of salvation perspective is the

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43. Musurillo, "History and Symbol: A Study of Form in Early Christian Literature," *Theological Studies* 18 (1957) 357–86, notes the pattern in early Christian literature of literal history followed by its symbolic meaning (*theoria*) but does not discuss Irenaeus' *Proof* and Melito's *On the Pascha* (see below), two striking examples of this pattern. Cf. Egeria, *Journal* 46, quoted above.

44. Rules of faith first appear with this title about Irenaeus' time—Tertullian, *Praescr*. 13; *Vel. virg.* 1; *Adv. Prax.* 2. Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VI.xv.124–25. Irenaeus offers in *Adv. haer.* I.10.1 and III.4.2 similar summaries to that in *Proof* 6.

45. Cf. Tertullian, *C. Marc.*, esp. Book III.

standpoint from which the argument is constructed in that work too,[46] but the arrangement of the material is obviously for polemical purposes. The position opposed is stated, and then scriptural and historical arguments are introduced in refutation. The plan is quite different in the *Proof*. The history of salvation itself becomes the groundwork. Irenaeus could hardly write anything without a jab at his opponents where the subject matter suggested it, but that does not necessarily make anti-heretical arguments the dominant theme. The history of salvation scheme, which was being challenged by Gnostics and Marcionites, had its origin in the *Proof* elsewhere.

Irenaeus' warning against false teachers at the end of the work (99–100) specified three errors: positing a Father above the Creator, despising the incarnation, and rejecting the gifts of the Holy Spirit (i.e., prophecy). The first error was associated with Gnostic systems, the second was that of Docetism, and the third was part of the Marcionite rejection of the Old Testament. Actually all three positions against which Irenaeus warns apply to Marcion, but Gnostics too were especially in mind, and on the third point perhaps even Jews. Probably we should not try to think of specific heretics. The false teachings are singled out to correspond to the three articles of belief with which the work was introduced (6). The schematising of errors according to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit indicates that Irenaeus' main concern was not the various heresies themselves, but rather the contrast with the true faith. The presentation of the material had a positive goal.

When Irenaeus summarized what he had done, he affirmed: "This, beloved, is the preaching of the truth, and this is the manner of our salvation, and this is the way of life, announced by the prophets and ratified by Christ and handed over by the apostles and handed down by the Church in the whole world to her children. This must be kept in all security, with good will, and by being well-pleasing to God through good works and sound moral character" (98). The sequence of preaching, salvation, and way of life; the reference to what the church handed down to her children; and the insistence on maintaining a good moral life are all motifs

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46. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus*; Benoît, *Saint Irénée*; P. and H. Lassiat, *Dieu veut-il des hommes libres?* Von Campenhausen, "Die Entstehung der Heilsgeschichte," concludes that Irenaeus, in express contrast to Justin and Melito, has the first developed statement of a Christian *Heilsgeschichte*. I would prefer to see this as an underlying pattern of instruction that finds its first full, systematic presentation in Irenaeus.

pertaining to the catechetical process.[47] May it be that "those who wish to hear" in chapter 1 are the "hearers," the term that became a technical designation of catechumens?[48]

In keeping with what is known of the concerns of catechetical instruction, Irenaeus integrates doctrine and morals into the historical framework of the *Proof*. Chapter 2 introduces the human person as a combination of body and soul and so requiring both holy deeds and true faith. Christians must keep "the rule of faith and carry out the commands of God" (3). Similarly, Irenaeus returns to faith in God and love for God and neighbor in chapters 41, 87, and 95. Moreover, Irenaeus begins with the theme of the two ways (1), and the teaching which he presents is that associated with baptism (3). I see the *Proof*, therefore, as a work based on and shaped by catechetical instruction but adapted here and there to include a refutation of Gnostic and/or Marcionite views.

Irenaeus refers in chapter 3 to the "rule of faith." It has been plausibly suggested that the *regula fidei* originated in the outlines of instruction for catechumens which bishops gave to their catechists.[49] These began as oral formulations of a common faith and pattern of instruction and so have come down to us in a variety of wordings. We may think of the *Proof* also as an elaboration in written form of such instructions for a teacher of new converts. Drews suggested that Marcianus may have been recently baptised and in need of elaboration of what was given him more briefly in catechesis.[50] But may not Marcianus have been himself a teacher and this work a manual for his use? If the fact that he was removed in distance from Irenaeus is thought to argue against this (1),[51] there is still the possibility that the kind of guidance Irenaeus gave to teachers in his own church has here been recorded for use elsewhere.

The prophecies cited by Irenaeus are used to narrate the gospel of Christ, not to construct a formal proof per se. As much as an argument

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47. Cf. Turck, *Évangélisation et catéchèse, passim*. The *Apostolic Tradition* implies scriptural (17, 20, and 35), doctrinal (21); liturgical (22–23, 27, 33, 37–38, 41); and moral (42) instruction in the catechumenate.

48. Tertullian, *Paenit*. 6; *Cor*. 2; Origen, *C. Cels*. 111.51; *Apos. Const*. VIII.6.2.

49. Countryman, "Tertullian and the *Regula Fidei*," 221–26. For the catechist see Hippolytus, *Ap. Trad*. 16; 18; 19; Cyprian, *Ep*. 23 [29]. For references to the regula see n. 44. The connection of the regula in Irenaeus with baptism, specifically the baptismal interrogations, has been argued by Grossi, "Regula veritatis e narratio battesimale in sant' Ireneo." Smulders, "The *Sitz im Leben* of the Old Roman Creed," argued the creed was a *homologia*, not catechetical, polemic, nor a test of orthodoxy.

50. Drews, "Der literarische Charakter," 232.

51. But need the distance be any more than that between Lyons and Vienne?

from prophecy, the work is a telling of the story of Jesus out of the prophets. And there are other collections which indicate such an approach to Christian teaching.

Telling the Christian message in terms of Old Testament history has precedent already in the New Testament. Particularly to be noted are Stephen's speech in Acts 7 and the sermon attributed to Paul in Acts 13:16ff. The facts connected with the life of Jesus appear as the content of most Christian preaching in the New Testament, and the fulfillment of prophecy is prominent in that presentation.[52] These passages are in a kerygmatic context, but as Christianity moved from a Jewish to a Gentile setting the need must have been felt to acquaint those without a background in the synagogue with the Old Testament history, of which Christians claimed to be the heir. And in fact there is an impressive knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures shown in early Christianity and considerable influence from the Old Testament on the development of early Christianity. The case for the history of salvation providing the groundwork of early Christian catechesis is strengthened by looking at two other collections of Old Testament *testimonia* to Christ, one a near successor to Irenaeus' *Proof* and one an immediate predecessor.

The earliest surviving formal collection of *testimonia* is Cyprian's three books *Ad Quirinum*. Jean Daniélou has noted that Book II arranges the prophecies according to the order of the life of Christ and pointed to the formal parallel with the Old Roman Symbol and Irenaeus' approach in the *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*.[53] Although Cyprian uses few of same proof texts from the Old Testament as Irenaeus, his ordering of the material covers the same points, beginning with the pre-existence (1–6; *Proof* 43; 50–51) and moving through the virgin birth (7–9; *Proof* 53–58), Christ's two natures (10; *Proof* 31; 37), his descent from David (11; *Proof* 59; 62; 64), birth in Bethlehem (12; *Proof* 63), the passion and crucifixion (13–23; *Proof* 68–77; 79–81), descent into Hades (24; *Proof* 78), resurrection and exaltation (25–27; *Proof* 83–84), and second coming for judgment (28–30; *Proof* 85). There are indications of a catechetical origin or motivation for Cyprian's collection. Book I is an anti-Jewish collection emphasising that

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52. The classic statement is Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*. Whatever criticisms of detail are sustained (as by Worley, *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church*), Dodd has noted a consistent feature in the content of Christian preaching.

53. For this paragraph I draw on Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 288–95. The Pseudo-Epiphanius Testimony Book similarly arranges the prophecies by the life of Christ: Hotchkiss, ed. and trans., *A Pseudo-Epiphanius Testimony Book*.

the church of the Gentiles has replaced the ancient people of God. This is a more elaborate development of the theme of the latter part of Irenaeus' treatise (87–96). Moreover, Cyprian's Book III of *Ad Quirinum* is a collection of Old and New Testament passages on Christian moral duties.[54] Cyprian here has made an original collection on a traditional theme of Christian teaching. We may, then categorise Cyprian's collection of *testimonia* as representing three themes of Christian catechesis: historical (the new Israel replacing the old—Book I), doctrinal (Christology—Book II), and moral (duties of the Christian life—Book III).

The argument from messianic proof texts in the Old Testament is pervasive in early Christianity, but we select here only Justin Martyr, who is clearly one of Irenaeus' important sources.[55] Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* is much less systematic and organized than Irenaeus and Cyprian, but a broad outline may be observed: the replacement of the Jewish law, rites, and covenant (*Dialogue* 11–30; cf. Irenaeus, *Proof* 87–96; Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* I.8–18); the two advents and deity of Christ (*Dialogue* 31–62; cf. *Proof* 43–51; *Ad Quirinum* II.1–7; 13); the incarnation (*Dialogue* 63–78; cf. *Proof* 51–64; *Ad Quirinum* II.7–12); the cross (*Dialogue* 86–105; cf. *Proof* 68–82; *Ad Quirinum* II.13–23); resurrection and ascension (*Dialogue* 106–8; cf. *Proof* 83–85; *Ad Quirinum* II.25–27); the calling of the Gentiles and the church (*Dialogue* 109 to end; cf. *Proof* 89–96; *Ad Quirinum* I.19–24). R. Way-Rider in a communication to the Seventh International Conference of Patristic Studies pointed out how Justin arranged his references to pagan parallels to Christianity according to the elements of the kerygma. The same sequence even more clearly provides an ordering principle for the Old Testament proof texts, and the history of salvation sequence closely approximates Irenaeus. Thus Justin's summary of the faith includes the calling of the Gentiles, a theme not normally found in the *regula*. The presence of this topic in both Justin and Irenaeus would fit a salvation history approach to catechetical instruction. Justin's purposes required putting the material on the rejection of the Jewish law early in his *Dialogue* separate from the discussion of the calling of the Gentiles, even as the needs of the anti-Jewish polemic have put all of this material in Book I of Cyprian's *testimonia*.

There is one other work to be considered, not a collection of *testimonia* but coming from a contemporary of Irenaeus, the *Homily on the Pascha* of Melito of Sardis. The paschal season, it will be remembered, was

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54. Baker, "*Ad Quirinum* Book Three and Cyprian's Catechumenate."

55. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*.

the time for the preparation for and administration of baptism.[56] I would not claim the *Peri Pascha* is a catechetical address, but once more the pattern of presenting the material has striking similarities to what appears to be a traditional method of approach.[57] Stuart Hall outlines the work in two major parts.[58] Part I is a historical account of the Old Testament Passover and its interpretation (1–45). Part II develops the Christian meaning of the Passover. Melito begins this section with the creation and fall of man (47–48). After discussing sin and its punishment in death (49–56), he presents types and prophecies from the Old Testament of the Lord's sufferings (57–65).[59] Then are described the Lord's coming, passion, and exaltation (66–71). The theme of the rejection of Israel (72–99), including a summary of her early history (83–89), is followed by the conclusion on the resurrection, salvation for all, and glory (100–105). The similarities to the development in Irenaeus' *Proof* are again obvious.

The examination of these few works indicates that the biblical history of salvation is more pervasive in early Christianity than perhaps even the biblical theology movement, now considered in some circles as *passé*, thought. That movement emphasised the saving acts of God as the structure of biblical faith. Jean Daniélou was one of the few who applied its insights to patristic studies. He has stimulated much of what is presented here, but he was still perhaps too much under the influence of traditional categories and did not push on to the full implications of his insights for the structure of catechetics. The Old Testament was more than an explication and proof of the New Testament message;[60] as the story of God's saving deeds it was the very framework of catechesis and provided the setting for presenting Christ, the very center of that catechesis.[61]

The *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* is what it purports to be: a work for the teaching of inquirers about Christianity which also serves to refute false interpretations of the Christian message and so to confirm the faith of the reader. Therefore, a better rendering of the title than *Proof* would be *Demonstration* or *Presentation*, for the work is an exposition or a showing

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56. Tertullian, *De bapt*. 19.

57. Winslow, "The Polemical Christology of Melito of Sardis."

58. Hall, *Melito of Sardis on Pascha and Fragments*, xxii–xxiii.

59. Perler, "Typologie der Leiden des Herrn in Melitons Peri Pascha." Justin and Irenaeus use types as well as prophecies—*Dial*. 40–42; 113; 132; 134; 138; *Proof* 12; 25; 26; 32; 33.

60. Daniélou, *La catéchèse aux premiers siècles*, 86–88.

61. Ibid., 231, 251–53 on Augustine have a wider validity.

forth.[62] And if this work is indeed a guide for a catechist, or based on such a guide, then we not only know more about the framework of catechetical instruction than perhaps we thought we did, but we also know something very important about early Christian self-understanding. The importance of the theme of the history of salvation shows a sense of identity with old Israel and a sense of "roots" in a world where the modern was assumed to be erroneous. Biblical history provided for the early church the "common narrative" which shaped its identity.[63]

62. The Greek ἐπίδειξις could go either way, but the primary meaning is exposition. The Latin *demonstratio* as used in rhetoric could be applied to the *narratio*; see the note in Fredouille, trans. and ed., *Tertullien: Contre les Valentiniens*.