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Traditional Conflict Management: How Early Interpreters Address Paul's Reference to Those Baptized for the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:29)

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Abstract: Modern scholars often understand 1 Cor 15:29 as a clear reference to the baptism of living individuals as proxies for the departed. Yet before or at the time of 1 Corinthians, there appears to be no evidence for this practice or a similar one. A reasonable explanation for its emergence, therefore, is that the tradition derives from 1 Cor 15:29, rather than giving rise to it. Consequently, 1 Cor 15:29 supplies a unique opportunity to see how Paul's earliest interpreters navigated the conflict between the emergent proxy baptism tradition and others they had inherited. Responses varied from acceptance (Marcion) to tolerance (Ambrosiaster) to rejection (Tertullian, Didymus, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Eznik) of proxy baptism as being what 1 Cor 15:29 describes. Adopters of proxy baptism found support in Paul for breaking with prior tradition and interpreted 1 Cor 15:29 as a basis for creating a new tradition that fit a distinctive need in their community. By contrast, those who tolerate or reject the proxy baptism interpretation do so by considering both 1 Cor 15:29 and Paul himself as more thoroughly situated within existing prior traditions that rule out proxy baptism. These different responses illustrate the complex interplay between Paul and the conflicting traditions through which his letters have been and continue to be received. These responses also surface key features of the interplay between conflict and tradition, whether that conflict occurs within explicitly religious spheres or not.

Keywords: 1 Corinthians; baptism; Chrysostom; Cerinthus; dead; Didymus; Epiphanius; Eznik of Kolb; Marcion; proxy; Tertullian



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1. Introduction

“Conflict” is a social phenomenon that combines disagreement with a breakdown in the relationship between the disagreeing parties (Proksch 2016, p. 2), and “conflict management” points to how the disagreeing parties or others may address a conflict (see Proksch 2016, pp. 13–87). In the literature, “traditional” conflict management often designates conflict management strategies that view conflict as a problem to be resolved as quickly as possible (see Proksch 2016, p. 14). Yet “tradition” is not simply a particular approach to conflict management. Traditions old and new may themselves become the common ground upon which conflict arises, particularly when disagreements about tradition provide an impetus for ruptures in relationships among those on various sides of the disagreement (Gadamer 1977, pp. 8–10).

As one example of such a tradition, modern scholars often understand 1 Cor 15:29 to be a reference to the baptism of living individuals as proxies for the departed (e.g., Barney 2020; Chester 2005, pp. 267–316; DeMaris 1995; Fitzmyer 2008, pp. 580–82; Paulsen et al. 2010; Paulsen et al. 2011; Paulsen and Mason 2010; Trumbower 2001, pp. 33–41; Wright 2003, pp. 338–40). Shortly after Paul's time, the Marcionites had such a practice. Epiphanius (ca. 315–403) attests to it as a practice of the Cerinthians also (Cross and Livingstone 2005, p. 556), although there is good reason to think Epiphanius has confused Cerinthians with Marcionites on this point, as discussed below.

Despite the early attestation for the proxy baptism tradition, however, there appears to be no evidence of such a practice before or at the time of 1 Corinthians in the mid-1st c. Nor is evidence forthcoming for any similar proxy washing initiation traditions (see [Hull 2005](#); [White 1997, 2012](#); [Zeller 2007](#)). Because such traditions seem to have been absent, it becomes less likely that Paul and the Corinthians would have understood 1 Cor 15:29 as a reference to such a practice not otherwise known to exist in the mid-1st c. A reasonable explanation for early proxy baptismal practice, therefore, is that the tradition derives from 1 Cor 15:29, rather than giving rise to it, as argued below. Regarded in this way, 1 Cor 15:29 supplies a unique opportunity to see how Paul's earliest interpreters navigate the conflict between the emergent proxy baptism tradition and other traditions they inherited.

Responses to the proxy baptism tradition vary from acceptance (Marcion) to tolerance (Ambrosiaster) to rejection (Tertullian, Didymus, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Eznik of Kolb) of proxy baptism as being what 1 Cor 15:29 describes. Adoption of the tradition seems to stem from the need to address a quandary particular to Marcionite communities. Read in the context of that quandary, Marcion could use the "plain sense" of 1 Cor 15:29 to describe a proxy practice of which Paul had approved. Tolerance of this interpretation also stems from the text's "plain sense", yet in this case, this "plain sense" is refracted through both scriptural attestation to unapproved action and antipathy toward Pauline support of the proxy baptism tradition. Rejection of the proxy baptism interpretation results from the perceived greater weight of other traditions, such as (1) baptism's effectiveness only for the baptizand or (2) the desire for coherence between 1 Cor 15:29 and the balance of the argument in 1 Cor 15, the broader scriptural tradition, or other traditional practices. Although authors who take each approach may do so partly from self-interest, their responses helpfully illustrate the variegated similarity of approaches to understanding Paul and the nature of the traditional conflicts that surround him. Careful observation of these responses also surfaces key features of the interplay between conflict and tradition, whether that conflict occurs within explicitly religious spheres or not.

2. Adopting Proxy Baptism

The ancient groups attested to practice proxy baptism are followers of Cerinthus (fl. ca. 100) and Marcion (d. ca. 160; [Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), pp. 316, 1040),¹ but no literature survives from these groups themselves. The earliest surviving records about their practice all come from sources that do not adopt a similar practice ([Myllykoski 2005](#), p. 213; [Padgett 1997](#), p. 706), and many late antique and medieval authors find it quite possible to discuss 1 Cor 15:29 without specifically mentioning proxy baptism, or if they do mention this practice, they do so without explicitly connecting it to Cerinthus or Marcion (e.g., Pelagius, or Pseudo-Jerome (ca. 354–ca. 420), Augustine (354–430), Ambrosiaster (d. after 384), Theodoret (ca. 393–460), Oecumenius (ca. 6th c.), John of Damascus (ca. 660–750), Haymo of Halberstadt (d. 853), Rabanus Maurus (ca. 780–856), Walafrid Strabo (ca. 808–849), Photius (ca. 810–895), Atto of Vercelli (ca. 885–961), Lanfranc (ca. 1010–1089), Bruno Carthusianus (fl. 11th c.), Euthymius Zigabenus (early 12th c.), Hervé de Bourg-Dieu (1080–1150), Peter Lombard (ca. 1100–1160), Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274), Nicholas of Lyra (ca. 1270–1349); for the primary literature, see [Aquinas 2012](#), pp. 359–60; [1913](#), pt. 3. supp, q. 71; [Cramer 1844](#), p. 312; [Euthymius 1887](#), p. 351; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 82:361, 95:693, 124:768; 1844–1864, 17:280, 30:766–67, 45:1596–97, 112:148, 114:547, 117:598, 134:402, 150:209–10, 153:208–9, 181:983–84, 191:1682–83; [Nicholas of Lyra 1488–1492](#), vol. 5; see also [Catholic University of America 1967](#), 3:162; [Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), pp. 126, 129, 580, 896, 954, 1158, 1183, 1275, 1292, 1369, 1611, 1625, 1725; [DeMaris 1995](#), p. 662n4; [Di Berardino et al. 2014](#), 1:99, 3:125; [Fitzmyer 2008](#), p. 98; [Jackson and Loetscher 1949](#), 2:429, 5:118, 5:250; [Rissi 1969](#), pp. 6–14). Consequently, both the paucity of early sources and the antipathy that the sources for this practice have toward it require that any reconstruction of Cerinthian or Marcionite thought about proxy baptism must remain tentative, and in the case of Cerinthus, there are reasons for concern about the legitimacy of the claim that his followers practiced proxy baptism.

2.1. Cerinthus

Epiphanius is the lone ancient source for a distinctively Cerinthian practice of proxy baptism (see [Klijn and Reinink 1973](#), pp. 3–19).² Yet elements in Epiphanius's overall portrait of Cerinthus, within which proxy baptism figures, prove suspect ([Hill 2000](#); [Myllykoski 2005](#)). Suspicion is particularly warranted when Epiphanius's account of the Cerinthians hews closely to how Irenaeus (ca. 130–200) describes the Ebionites ([Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), p. 851; [Hill 2000](#), pp. 145–47). Epiphanius seems to have understood Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.26.2) as suggesting similarity between the Cerinthians and the Ebionites on more issues than Jesus's birth alone. This interpretation is questionable, however ([Hill 2000](#), pp. 146–47; [Klijn and Reinink 1973](#), pp. 10–11).

In addition, Epiphanius describes Cerinthus as an opponent of Paul's (*Pan.* 28.4.1–28.5.3). The primary basis for this description appears to be Epiphanius's alignment of the Cerinthians with Judaizing groups, itself supported by Epiphanius's dubious reading of Irenaeus ([Hill 2000](#), pp. 143–49). With this alignment in place, however, Paul's anti-Judaizing rhetoric can find a natural and specific object in Cerinthus, and with Cerinthus providing a ready opponent in so many Pauline texts, it may well be that Epiphanius then imputes to Cerinthus a practice of proxy baptism derived from 1 Cor 15:29 (cf. [Klijn and Reinink 1973](#), pp. 9–12). That is, given Epiphanius's total portrait of Cerinthus, it appears entirely feasible that Paul himself—not least in 1 Cor 15:29—has become one of Epiphanius's sources for describing Cerinthus.³ As A. F. J. Klijn and G. J. Reinink suggest, “It is possible that Epiphanius had heard rumours about [proxy] baptism in Asia Minor [And s]ince Cerinthus was supposed to be the archheretic of Asia Minor it was customary to ascribe to him any abuse known to exist in that region” ([Klijn and Reinink 1973](#), p. 12).

Given these factors, it proves infeasible to say anything definite about a distinctively Cerinthian practice of proxy baptism. Marcion also hailed from Asia Minor (e.g., Justin, *1 Apol.* 26, 58; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.2; Clement, *Strom.* 3.4.25; Tertullian, *Haer.* 6; Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.1, 1.19, 3.11, 4.10, 5.1, 5.4; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30; Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 26:394; Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil.* 6; see also [Padgett 1997](#), p. 705; [Räsänen 2005](#), pp. 102–4; [Stephenson 1967](#), p. 193). So, it may well be that the Marcionite practice of proxy baptism is what Epiphanius imputed to the Cerinthians, given that Epiphanius understands Cerinthus to be a consistent opponent of Paul's. Such dislocation appears probable for two further reasons. First, Tertullian's testimony from a century and a half earlier than Epiphanius locates proxy baptism as a Marcionite practice (ca. 160–225; [Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), p. 1602). Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), a younger contemporary of Epiphanius, similarly locates the practice among Marcionites ([Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), p. 345). By contrast, second, when Epiphanius discusses Marcion and his followers, there is no mention of proxy baptism (*Pan.* 42). Epiphanius directly discusses both distinctives of Marcionite baptismal practice and Marcion's text of 1 Cor 15. However, Epiphanius does not—as with Cerinthus—critique Marcion for using 1 Cor 15:29 as a pretext for a proxy baptism practice (e.g., *Pan.* 42.3.6–8; 42.4.5; 42.11.7.24; 42.12.1 (scholion and elenchus 24)).

Such problems aside, Epiphanius does comment on the rationale that supports the proxy baptismal practice he relates. This commentary may still prove informative, even if Epiphanius' notes on whose rationale it is prove less so. If Marcionite proxy baptism really does lie behind Epiphanius's description of the Cerinthians, the testimony that Epiphanius gives about the rationale for the practice should prove consistent with other testimonies about Marcionite practice, as noted below.

2.2. Marcion

From before and contemporaneous with Tertullian, there is already a good amount of surviving literature that addresses Marcion's teaching (e.g., Justin (ca. 100–165), *1 Apol.* 26, 58; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.2–4, 1.28.1, 2.1.2–4, 2.3.1, 2.30.9, 2.31.1, 3.2.1, 3.3.4, 3.4.3, 3.11.2–3, 3.11.7–9, 3.12.5, 3.12.12, 3.14.3–4, 3.25.3, 4.6.4, 4.8.1, 4.13.1, 4.33.2, 4.34.1, 5.26.2; Clement (ca. 150–215), *Strom.* 3.3–4, 3.17, 4.7–8, 5.1, 7.17; [Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), pp. 367, 920). Yet these authors found enough to discuss in Marcion's thought without explicitly mentioning

his group's practice of proxy baptism, as modern writers about Marcion sometimes do also (e.g., [Lieu 2015](#); [Padgett 1997](#); [Räsänen 2005](#)). Even an author like Tertullian who addresses this Marcionite practice explicitly (*Marc.* 5.10) can decline to do so in other contexts (e.g., *Res.* 48; similarly, see Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.21.5, 1.27.4).

So, although Marcion's proxy baptismal practice calls forth critique from his opponents, those opponents' interests vary and do not always include proxy baptism. The primary sources that address Marcion's advocacy for proxy baptism or his interaction with 1 Cor 15:29 are more plentiful than for Cerinthus. Nevertheless, they are still comparatively few and involve Tertullian (*Marc.* 5.10), as already noted, as well as Didymus (ca. 313–398; *Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29), Chrysostom (*Hom.* 1 Cor. 40.1), Eznik of Kolb (5th c.; *Deo* 427), and Theophylact (ca. 1050/1060–after 1125; [Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), pp. 483, 1618; [Rissi 1969](#), p. 9).⁴ To these sources, one may add Epiphanius (*Pan.* 28.6) if one accepts the above suggestion that Epiphanius's representation of Cerinthus as advocating proxy baptism is a refracted witness to Marcion's advocacy for this practice.

The textual basis for this practice in 1 Cor 15:29 may be curious, however. Marcion was and continues to be known for compiling his own NT, whose departures from the catholic text made the corpus more congenial to Marcion's teaching (e.g., Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.2, 1.27.4, 3.11.7–9, 3.12.12, 3.14.3–4; Tertullian, *Carn. Chr.* 2; Tertullian, *Haer.* 6; Tertullian, *Marc.* 2.17, 4.2, 4.4–5, 4.7, 4.21, 4.29, 4.42–43, 5.10, 5.13–14, 5.16–18; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 38; Chrysostom, *Hom. Gal.* 1; for attempts at reconstructing Marcion's NT, see [BeDuhn 2013](#); [von Harnack 1924](#), pp. 40*–255*). Marcion appears to retain a good deal of 1 Cor 15, including v. 29 ([BeDuhn 2013](#), pp. 240–42; [von Harnack 1924](#), pp. 91*–96*; for the primary literature, see Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.10; Adamantius, *Dial.* 5.22–28; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 42.11.7.24, 42.12.1 (scholion and elenchus 24); see also [BeDuhn 2013](#), pp. 284–89; [Räsänen 2005](#), p. 114). Yet modern interpreters regularly recognize the theme of bodily resurrection as central to 1 Cor 15 (e.g., [Hull 2005](#); [Stark 2020](#); [Thiselton 2000](#), pp. 1169–1313; [Wright 2003](#), pp. 312–61), and one of the noted distinctions of Marcion's teaching is his *denial* of a bodily resurrection (e.g., Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.10–11).

Marcion's thought sometimes resembles Epicureanism and sometimes Stoicism (Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.19; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 7, 30). Yet the most formative germ for Marcion's system seems to have been his privileging of Pauline literature, read primarily along the lines of a law–gospel contrast (Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.19–21, 4.6, 4.34–36, 5.14; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30; John [Kaye 1845](#), p. 475; [Lieu 2015](#), pp. 71–75; [Räsänen 2005](#), pp. 106–7; [Stephenson 1967](#), p. 194). Paul's association with Luke explains Marcion's choice to accept as Scripture an emended version of Luke's Gospel (Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.5; Chrysostom, *Hom. Gal.* 1; John [Kaye 1845](#), pp. 469, 473–74; [Stephenson 1967](#), p. 194). This law–gospel emphasis results in much that is critical of Jewish Scripture and what Marcion perceived as Jewish elements within the NT.

Thus, Jewishness was a point of opposition for Marcion ([Lieu 2015](#), pp. 71–75). Yet Chrysostom relates a conversation he had with a Marcionite who thought that Εἰ μὴ τὸν λόγον ἀπῆγτει τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων, ἀγαθότητος ἦν· εἰ δὲ ἀπαιτεῖ, οὐκ ἀγαθότητος (*Hom. Phlm.* 3; “If [God] did not demand an accounting for sins, he would be good. But if he demands one, he is not good”; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 62:717).⁵ This sentiment suggests that the fundamental problem with the Mosaic law in Marcionite thought may not have been its Jewishness as such but its requirement of accountability for failure to meet its demands.

Strict opposition between law (with its implicit accountability for failure) and gospel then appears to have provided the basis for Marcion's supposition of two divine powers ([Lieu 2015](#), pp. 71, 73; see Justin, *1 Apol.* 26, 58; Origen, *Princ.* 2.7.1; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.2, 2.30.9, 3.11.2, 3.12.12, 3.25.3, 4.6.4, 4.34.1, 5.26.2; Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.2, 1.5–9, 1.11; 2.1, 4.8, 4.17, 4.38–39; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 34; Tertullian, *Prax.* 3; Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 38.2; Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 8.2; Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil.* 6). According to Tertullian, Marcion's *Antitheses* proposed a “separatio[] Legis et Evangelii coactum, qua duos Deos dividens, proiude diversos, alterum alterius Instrumenti, vel (quod magis usui est dicere) Testamenti” (*Marc.* 4.1; “severance of the law from the gospel as should divide the Deity

into two, nay, diverse, gods—one for each Instrument, or Testament”; see Migne 1844–1864, 2:361; Roberts and Donaldson [1885–1887] 1994, 3:345; see also Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.19, 4.6; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30). Marcion also found support for this distinction in the logion about the goodness or badness of a tree and the consequent goodness or badness of its fruit (Luke 6:43–45). With the inferior creator of the material world, Marcion associates the activities of judgment and the creation of evil (Isa 45:7; Tertullian, *Haer.* 6; Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.2, 1.24–25, 2.24; Lieu 2015, p. 388; Räisänen 2005, pp. 105–6; Stephenson 1967, p. 194). The superior deity in Marcion’s system is instead wholly “good” and judges only by the issuance of commands whose violation will not be punished (Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.24–25; Lieu 2015, p. 388; Räisänen 2005, pp. 105–6).

This strict lack of a punitive role for Marcion’s good deity may provide a basis, along with other factors, for Epiphanius’s suggestion that the group allowed for multiple baptisms (*Pan.* 42.3.6; Lieu 2015, pp. 108–9). Nevertheless, there seems to be no firm evidence to support a suspicion that Marcion’s teaching lead immediately to laxity in practice (Räisänen 2005, p. 107). Instead, Marcionites seem to have viewed physical embodiment as inherently tainted and, therefore, wanted to indulge as little as possible in the world that the inferior creator had produced (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.28.1, 2.31.1, 3.11.2; 3.11.7–9, 3.12.12; Clement, *Strom.* 3.17, 4.7; Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.15, 1.19, 3.8, 5.17–18; Räisänen 2005, p. 106). Consequently, Marcionites eschewed both marriage and sexual intercourse (Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.23, 4.29, 5.7; Räisänen 2005, p. 106).

Such a view of human embodiment had important implications for how “resurrection” might be interpreted. First, it led Marcion to deny Jesus’s birth, his genuine possession of a material body, and the bodiliness of his resurrection (Tertullian, *Carn. Chr.* 1, Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.36, Tertullian, *Res.* 2; Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 66, 85; Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 26:394; Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil.* 6–7; Chrysostom, *Incomprehensible* 7.16–17; Räisänen 2005, p. 106). For Marcion, the issue was straightforward. Jesus appears on the side of the superior deity (Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.19, 4.15; Chrysostom, *Hom. Act.* 5; Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil.* 6), but as Chrysostom quotes Marcion to say, Οὐκ ἡδύνατο ὁ Θεὸς σάρκα ἀναλαβὼν μείναι καθαρὸς (Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph.* 23.2; “God would not be able, if he were to have taken up flesh, to remain clean”; Migne 1857–1886, 62:165). Therefore, Jesus could not partake of physical embodiment.

This view correlates with Marcion’s denial, second, of a bodily resurrection for Jesus’s followers (Tertullian, *Praescr.* 33; Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.24, 4.36; Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 66.3). Yet Marcion makes this denial in the context of a persistent hope for a *non*-bodily resurrection. Although the body would not rise again, the soul would (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.27.3; Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.10; Wilson [1933] 1980, p. 111), and when it rose, it would have the form of *spiritus* (Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.10; “spirit”; Migne 1844–1864, 2:495; Roberts and Donaldson [1885–1887] 1994, 3:450; see also Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.9; Wilson [1933] 1980, pp. 110–11). Thus, the aim of Marcionite proxy baptismal practice seems to have been aiding the departed in their transition from dead soul to risen spirit (cf. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.6.4; Eznik, *Deo* 427).

For the identity of these departed, both Chrysostom (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.1) and Eznik (*Deo* 427, 432) specifically cite unbaptized catechumens.⁶ Didymus describes them as the ἀφωτίστοι τεθνεῶτος (*Fr. 1 Cor.* 15:29; “unenlightened departed”; Staab 1933, p. 8), and Theophylact mentions more generally only τὶς παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἀβάπτιστος (*Exp. 1 Cor.* 15:29; “any one of them who is unbaptized”; Migne 1857–1886, 124:768). Yet Tertullian supplies reason to think that the problem of the unbaptized departed may have been particularly acute for Marcionites. Marcionites retained the tradition of baptism (e.g., Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.28–29). However, the group’s strong stances against marriage and sexual intercourse seem to have meant that they would administer the rite to the living only in cases of virginity, widowhood, celibacy, or divorce (Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.29). Such restrictions would tend to increase the proportion of unbaptized Marcionites by comparison with catholics.

As Chrysostom recounts the Marcionite practice, both the body of the departed catechumen and a living proxy were present during the rite (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.1; cf. Theophylact, *Exp. 1 Cor.* 15:29). Chrysostom simply refers to the proxy as ὁ ζῶν (“the living person”)

and indicates that, during the rite, this proxy is ὑπὸ τὴν κλίνην τοῦ τετελευτηκότος (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.1; “under the couch of the departed”; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:347; cf. Didymus, *Fr. 1 Cor.* 15:29; Theophylact, *Exp. 1 Cor.* 15:29). However, even after the living proxy makes a confession for the departed, it is not the body of the departed that receives baptism. Rather, the living person does so in the departed’s stead.

This situation raises the question of why the rite should have developed in this way. The Marcionite community had access both to the body of the departed and to the departed’s living proxy during the rite. Further, the rite seems to have been aimed at having the status and benefits of baptism accounted to the departed (Ezrik, *Deo* 427; see also Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.6.4). So, why should the rite not have taken the form of baptizing the body of the departed?

Any answer to this question must ultimately lie in the realm of speculation. The Marcionites may have considered it too cumbersome to immerse the corpse of the departed. Certainly, though, as early as the Didache (late 1st to late 2nd c.), some Jesus communities allowed baptismal modes to vary from the characteristic immersion under certain circumstances (7:2; [Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), p. 482; [Glimm et al. 1947](#), p. 168), and a century after Marcion, both Cyprian (d. 258) and Tertullian recognize how an individual’s being near death may provide reason for changes to typical baptismal practice (Cyprian, *Ep.* 69.12; Tertullian, *Bapt.* 17; [Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), p. 444; [Ferguson 2008](#), pp. 355–57; [2014](#), pp. 155–65; see also Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.6.4).

Within this matrix, however, the reports discussed above about Marcionites’ withholding baptism under common circumstances and viewing embodiment as inherently unclean raise a clear possibility. That is, proxy baptism may have been a Marcionite innovation that stemmed not only from 1 Cor 15:29 but also from a clear need within Marcionite communities with respect to their unbaptized departed—namely, that of admitting to their fellowship individuals who, until their death, persisted in conditions that made them ineligible for baptism (cf. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.6.4). The sources do not clearly specify the status of the living proxy in the Marcionite rite, but it is reasonable to suggest that this proxy was a fully baptized initiate. As such, the initiate could function as a baptismal proxy for the departed, while not profaning the rite’s sacred waters, having already met the qualifications for an individual baptism.

If this surmise is correct, Marcion reads 1 Cor 15:29 within his own tradition just as clearly as other authors do within theirs. Marcion’s core theological topic of the law–gospel contrast facilitates his derivation of two divine powers. Those powers, in turn, legitimate a stance toward the natural world—and human embodiment within it—as fundamentally at odds with the good superior power. Such a construction of the world then further supports Marcion’s disconnection of Paul’s teaching from both the Jewish Scriptures and from the Jesus movement’s other early apostolic testimony. Such disconnection does not, however, leave Paul de-traditioned; rather, he becomes Marcion’s clear ally (Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.20).

Within this hermeneutical circle, 1 Cor 15:29 does not address bodily resurrection, which would only continue the subjection of the faithful to the creative inferior power. Instead, the theme of resurrection in 1 Cor 15 speaks to the prospect of a transition from embodied subjection to disembodied freedom. First Corinthians 15:29 holds out hope for this transition to those departed who were unable to partake of the baptism that would have begun the transition during their embodied lifetimes.

3. Tolerating Proxy Baptism

Reactions to the tradition of interpreting 1 Cor 15:29 as describing proxy baptism move along two lines. One is the critical tolerance shown by Ambrosiaster. Ambrosiaster does not specifically reference Marcion, but he does think that 1 Cor 15:29 describes a proxy baptismal practice (*Comm. 1 Cor.* 15:29; [Vogels 1968](#), pp. 174–75). Ambrosiaster hedges this suggestion with the comment that Paul’s citation of the example indicates only his approval of the faith in the resurrection implicit in the practice—not approval of the practice itself (*Comm. 1 Cor.* 15:29; “exemplo hoc non factum illorum probat, sed fixam fidem in

resurrectione ostendit”; [Vogels 1968](#), p. 175; see also the similar comment attributed to Ambrosiaster by Peter Lombard in [Migne 1844–1864](#), 191:1683).

Rabanus preserves further comments as from Ambrosiaster that expand this line of commentary by reference to the story about Jephthah’s daughter (Judg 11:29–40; [Migne 1844–1864](#), 112:148). Jephthah should not have made his vow, but given that he did, he faithfully discharged it. By comparison, suggests Ambrosiaster, the fact that some individuals perform proxy baptism commends not that act but the reason that the act was performed—namely, faith in the resurrection (“Non . . . factum probatur, sed perseverantia fidei in exemplum profertur”; [Migne 1844–1864](#), 112:148).

The testimony preserved from Ambrosiaster does not clearly show why he finds Paul to be citing a practice on whose appropriateness he does not intend to pronounce. However, Ambrosiaster’s judgment finds itself informed by the baptismal tradition that was common in his context. Therefore, Ambrosiaster reads Paul in terms of this tradition. The structure of this hermeneutic movement is identical to the one Marcion makes. The difference between the two is the tradition to which each owes allegiance—the catholic tradition for Ambrosiaster and the sectarian tradition for Marcion.

Ambrosiaster’s commentary on 1 Corinthians does not include the discussion of Jephthah, and Rabanus does not preserve the larger context in which the remarks about Jephthah would have come—if the attribution to Ambrosiaster is indeed correct. Consequently, the logical relation between the two is scarcely certain, but the remarks on Jephthah could smooth a rough point in Ambrosiaster’s interpretation of 1 Cor 15:29. That is, Ambrosiaster does not find Paul to characteristically commend doctrinal points by citing practices for which he does not intend to show approval. In this context, the Jephthah narrative could provide a parallel instance where Scripture narrates a practice it does not commend, while still showing something commendable in that practice.⁷ Ambrosiaster’s exegesis of 1 Cor 15:29 thus preserves traditional catholic practice and that practice’s coherence with the Pauline tradition, while perhaps logically—if not in the same commentary text—drawing support from the broader catholic scriptural tradition.

4. Rejecting Proxy Baptism

The second reaction to the tradition of reading 1 Cor 15:29 as describing proxy baptism is this reading’s full-fledged rejection shown by Tertullian, Didymus, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, and Eznik.⁸ This rejection is straightforward in Didymus, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, and Eznik. It is likewise present in Tertullian, but Tertullian’s case requires special treatment given his approval of a reference in 1 Cor 15:29 to a “vicarium baptismi” (*Res.* 48; “vicarious baptism”; [Migne 1844–1864](#), 2:865). As they address Marcion’s competing tradition, these interpreters consistently assert the normativity of their own catholic tradition and frequently highlight the coherence of 1 Cor 15:29 with other biblical texts, whether those texts were always received also by Marcion or not.

4.1. Tertullian

Tertullian comments on 1 Cor 15:29 in both *Marc.* 5.10 and *Res.* 48. Tertullian composed *De resurrectione carnis* after at least some of the earlier books of *Adversus Marcionem* (*Res.* 2). But he composed *Marc.* 5 after *De resurrectione carnis* (*Marc.* 5.10). Given these works’ overlapping composition and especially their explicit cross references to each other, Tertullian’s thoughts in one prove helpful for interpreting the other.

In *Res.* 48, Tertullian describes 1 Cor 15:29 as attesting to a “vicarium baptismi” (*Res.* 48; [Migne 1844–1864](#), 2:865), as already noted. Understandably, this phrase has been interpreted as a reference to the Corinthians’ practicing “proxy baptism” (e.g., [Paulsen and Mason 2010](#), p. 32; [Tvedtnes 1999](#), p. 57; cf. [Tvedtnes 2007](#), pp. 230–31; see also [Ferguson 2008](#), p. 349). Given that *Marc.* 5.10 does not support this practice, however, modern scholars sometimes give attention to resolving the discrepancy between these two works of Tertullian’s (e.g., [Hull 2005](#), pp. 40–41; [Paulsen and Mason 2010](#), pp. 32–33; see also [Thompson 1964](#), pp. 654–55).

The overlapping composition of *De resurrectione carnis* and *Adversus Marcionem*, however, makes a discrepancy unlikely in principle. In the same span of time, one would expect Tertullian's views on the same topic to be similar, and as Bernard Foschini (1951b, pp. 67–70; 1951a, p. 172) and K. C. Thompson (1964, pp. 654–55) argue, it is a questionable interpretation of Tertullian's "vicarium baptismi" that makes him out to affirm that the Corinthians were practicing proxy baptism. The vicariousness of the baptism arises because it self-referentially prepares the one baptized for a future bodily resurrection (Foschini 1951b, pp. 67–70).⁹ Thus, one should understand Tertullian's reference to a "vicarium baptismi" quite apart from the hypothesis of proxy baptism.

Tertullian's broader interaction with 1 Cor 15:29–58 in *Res.* 42–60 bears out this non-proxy understanding of his "vicarium baptismi". Space does not allow a detailed discussion of precisely how, but one of Tertullian's recurring points in this section is the necessity of a just continuity between the body that undergoes baptism and the body that experiences resurrection (e.g., *Res.* 43, 48, 56). Such continuity is exactly what Marcion's proxy baptismal practice, as such, would short-circuit (cf. Tertullian, *Res.* 49).

Tertullian finds a further argument against Marcion in the oneness of baptism. As a proof for this oneness, Tertullian cites Eph 4:5, which Marcion seems to have retained in his *Apostolikon*, although he titled the letter as being to the Laodiceans (*Marc.* 5.10; BeDuhn 2013, pp. 252, 254, 309; von Harnack 1924, pp. 114*, 118*). For Tertullian, the single baptism Paul references is the traditional catholic practice, and since this baptism's oneness allows for no alternatives, it rules out the Marcionites' secondary proxy practice (*Marc.* 5.10). Instead, Paul's statement about baptism for the dead points to the reception of baptism "pro corporibus . . . mortuum enim corpus" (*Marc.* 5.10; "for the body; for . . . it is the body which becomes dead"; Migne 1844–1864, 2:495; Roberts and Donaldson [1885–1887] 1994, 3:449–50).

4.2. Didymus

According to Didymus, the fundamental problem with the Marcionites' practice of proxy baptism is that it overlooks how βάπτισμα σώζει μόνον τὸν εἰληφότα αὐτό (*Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29; "baptism saves only the one who has received it"; Staab 1933, p. 8). Consequently, the Marcionite practice cannot support itself from 1 Cor 15:29. Instead, ὁ . . . ἀπόστολος νεκροὺς λέγει τὰ σώματα ὑπὲρ ὧν βαπτίζομεθα (*Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29; "the apostle says 'dead' concerning the bodies in behalf of which we are baptized"; Staab 1933, p. 8).

To support this alternative interpretation, Didymus makes two observations (γάρ . . . ὁμῶς καί; *Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29; Staab 1933, p. 8). The first is that the bodies of which Paul speaks ἄνευ ψυχῆς οὐ ζῆ . . . , ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν συνουσῶν ψυχῶν ἔχει τὸ ζῆν (*Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29; "do not live without a soul, but they have their life from the souls that are joined with them"; Staab 1933, p. 8). The natural implication is then that a σῶμα ("body") that is disconnected from a ψυχή ("soul") is a νεκρὸς ("corpse"; cf. Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.10).

Didymus introduces this sentence with the phrase τῷ . . . ἰδίῳ λόγῳ (*Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29; Staab 1933, p. 8). By doing so, Didymus could be describing a view he ascribes to the Marcionites (thus, "by their own account"; cf. *Five Books in Reply to Marcion* 65–69; Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.24). In this case, Didymus's argument would be that Marcionite practice is inconsistent with Marcionite Scripture or teaching. Yet Didymus's following ὁμῶς καί ὁ Ἀβραάμ . . . (*Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29; "likewise also, Abraham . . . "; Staab 1933, p. 8) takes no opportunity to express tension or scorn for the view described in the prior sentence as might have been expected if his argument were one about Marcionite inconsistency. So, a better interpretation of τῷ . . . ἰδίῳ λόγῳ is that Didymus finds evidence for the position he cites in Paul himself (e.g., 1 Cor 15:45 and the creation narrative to which Paul there alludes; thus, "by his own account"). As such, Didymus's argument is that Marcionite exegesis is inconsistent with Paul, even on Marcion's version of 1 Cor 15 (BeDuhn 2013, p. 241; von Harnack 1924, p. 94*).

This observation Didymus then supports with a second about how Abraham τὸ ἄψυχον σῶμα νεκρὸν ὠνόμασεν (*Fr.* 1 Cor. 15:29; "named the body without a soul

a corpse"; [Staab 1933](#), p. 8). Didymus's allusion is to Gen 23:3–20. That passage narrates Abraham's purchase of the cave and field at Machpelah as a burial place for Sarah and the departed of Abraham's family more generally. The Greek version has Abraham call these departed ὁ νεκρός (Gen 23:4, 8, 13; "the corpse"; see also Gen 23:6, 11, 15; [Hanhart et al. 1931–](#)), the definite article with the masculine singular reflecting whichever corpse it is that may need to be buried on a given occasion (see [Conybeare 1905](#), secs. 44, 48; [Smyth \[1956\] 2002](#), sec. 197.a). Thus, Didymus draws from Abraham's comments support for how the νεκροί in 1 Cor 15:29 may be the bodies of those who receive baptism.

4.3. Epiphanius

After narrating what he knows about proxy baptismal practice, Epiphanius mentions some unnamed καλῶς ἄλλοι τὸ ῥητὸν ἐρμηνεύοντες (*Pan.* 28.6.4; "others who interpret the passage well"; [Holl 1915–1922](#), 1:318). These interpreters suggest that 1 Cor 15:29 refers specifically to baptisms undertaken by catechumens who are near death (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.6.4). Epiphanius's preference for this tradition over that of the proxy baptizers is clear because he both describes the other interpreters as reading Paul καλῶς (*Pan.* 28.6.4; "well"; [Holl 1915–1922](#), 1:318) and affirms proxy baptism as a practice of those whom he critiques in the section (although probably mistaking Marcionites for Cerinthians).

Such terse comments supply little detail about why Epiphanius finds the other interpreters' tradition more compelling than the proxy baptizers'. Yet one salient possibility appears precisely from the structure of this terseness. That is, the other interpreters—as presumptive representatives of the catholic tradition—express what Epiphanius judges to be normative Christianity. The burden of proof, therefore, falls to any alternative tradition, and if the catholic tradition has a reasonable way to address the Pauline witness, Epiphanius suggests that one should prefer that tradition over its competitors.

4.4. Chrysostom

Chrysostom's primary interaction with 1 Cor 15:29 comes along two lines—one negative and one positive (*Hom.* 1 Cor. 40). The negative line has two segments. The first and largest segment is Chrysostom's association of the Marcionites' proxy baptismal practice with undesirable states. Proxy baptizers are sick with Marcion's teaching (οἱ τὰ Μαρκίωνος νοσοῦντες; *Hom.* 1 Cor. 40.1; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:347). Their practice is ridiculous in the extreme (οἶδα μὲν ὅτι πολὺν κινήσω γέλωτα . . . Εἶδες τὸν καταγέλωτα τὸν πολὺν; *Hom.* 1 Cor. 40; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:347). They are like stage actors, the insane, and those over whom the devil himself has direct influence (καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς παίζοντες . . . τοσοῦτον ἴσχυσε ταῖς τῶν ῥαθυμῶν ψυχαῖς ὁ διάβολος . . . τοῖς μαῖνομένοις ὑπὲρ ὧν παραπαίοντες φθέγγονται] διαλέγεσθαι; *Hom.* 1 Cor. 40.1; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:347).

For the second segment, Chrysostom draws from the necessity of baptism and the harmful consequences for those who do not undertake it (*Hom.* 1 Cor. 40.1). Citing John 3:5 and 6:53, Chrysostom argues that proxy baptism—if legitimate—removes these consequences (*Hom.* 1 Cor. 40.1). Indeed, if consequences should obtain, then τὸ ἐγκλημα . . . παρὰ τὸν ἀπελθόντα γίνεται, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὸν ζῶντα (*Hom.* 1 Cor. 40.1; "the charge of wrongdoing comes not against the departed [for not having received baptism] but against the living [for not having served as baptismal proxies]"; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:347). Further, there is no need for reasoned assent on the part of the one who benefits from the proxy rite (οὐ χρεῖα γνώμης τῆς τοῦ λαμβάνοντος, οὐδὲ συγκαταθέσεως τῆς ἐν τῷ ζῆν; *Hom.* 1 Cor. 40.1; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:347).

Marcion did not receive John's Gospel as canonical ([BeDuhn 2013](#); [von Harnack 1924](#)), but its authority for Chrysostom is clear. The cited texts create consequences for those who do not receive baptism—not for those who might or might not function as their proxies. Yet if proxy baptism were permissible, Chrysostom reasons, there should be no departed person who felt these consequences, no need for assent from the departed to their posthumous conversion, and no living person who should fail to be punished for

neglecting proxy baptismal duties. Such outcomes Chrysostom indicates his audience should find clearly laughable.

Chrysostom expresses his positive line of interaction with 1 Cor 15:29 more vaguely because he feels a need not to be too explicit about ineffable mysteries in the presence of the uninitiated (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.2). But to the extent that he feels he can explain the text, he does so by reference to the baptismal tradition with which his audience is familiar. In turn, Chrysostom links this tradition as contiguous with that in Paul's day.

For Chrysostom's audience, a customary part of the baptismal rite was acceptance of the confession Πιστεύω εἰς νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν . . . [κ]αὶ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.2; "I believe in the resurrection of the dead . . . and in the life everlasting"; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:348–49; cf. Theophylact, *Exp. 1 Cor.* 15:29). This confession entails belief that the body that undergoes baptism οὐκέτι μένει νεκρόν (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.2; "is no longer going to remain dead"; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:348).¹⁰ Modern concerns about anachronism aside, Chrysostom understands a similar confession to have been part of baptismal practice in Paul's day. First Corinthians 15:29 is then a case of τούτων . . . τῶν ῥημάτων ἀναμνησκῶν ὁ Παῦλος (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.2; "Paul reminding [the Corinthians] about these words"; [Migne 1857–1886](#), 61:349), and should the words of the baptismal confession fail, Chrysostom argues, there will be no further recourse available to those who have undergone the rite, exactly as Paul says in 1 Cor 15:29 (*Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.2; cf. *Hom. 1 Cor.* 23.3; Theophylact, *Exp. 1 Cor.* 15:29).

4.5. Eznik

In some ways, Eznik's case for the catholic tradition and against the Marcionites' practice of proxy baptism closely echoes Chrysostom's. Like Chrysostom, Eznik points to John's Gospel to show the necessity of each person's baptism for that person's own benefit (*Deo* 427). As he does so, Eznik appeals also to two texts, one of which is John 3:5 (*Deo* 427). But instead of Chrysostom's appeal to John 6:53, Eznik draws his second text from John 8:3 (*Deo* 427).

In addition to these Johannine texts, Eznik draws on Paul's agricultural analogy in 1 Cor 15:36–38 (*Deo* 427). Marcion and his followers edited this passage but also substantially preserved it ([BeDuhn 2013](#), p. 241; [von Harnack 1924](#), p. 93*). Thus, Eznik's argument for the catholic tradition draws support from a passage whose agrarian essentials both the catholics and the Marcionites shared.

The point Eznik draws from this Pauline analogy is the identity of the seed that is sown with the plant that sprouts (*Deo* 427). To be sure, the plant differs from the seed, but it is not as though one can sow one kind of seed and expect a harvest of a different plant (*Deo* 427). From this analogy, Eznik reasons, the same body that dies is the one that must rise (*Deo* 427), and as he has already shown from his interaction with John, the person who is to take part in the resurrection is the same person who must undergo baptism (*Deo* 427).

4.6. Summary

Among these early authors, each has his own emphases in and approaches to how he looks to preserve the catholic tradition. Tertullian, Didymus, and Eznik draw on related texts elsewhere in 1 Cor 15 that Marcion also seems to have received. Didymus, Chrysostom, and Eznik draw on other texts that the catholic tradition received but that Marcion did not (i.e., Genesis, John). Chrysostom explicitly expresses his distinctive scorn for the Marcionite practice, and Epiphanius commends the catholic practice with a unique brevity. No two handle 1 Cor 15:29 exactly alike, but amid the diversity in their specific approaches, each author asserts the catholic tradition's normativity as a working basis for the discussion, not simply a result of it. From this position, their interaction with 1 Cor 15:29 is, in some ways, already settled before it begins.

5. Conclusions

The early interpretation of 1 Cor 15:29 is an example of traditional conflict management in multiple ways. First, Marcion and the bulk of the catholic authors discussed here view their conflict as a binary alternative. Either proxy baptism or the catholic tradition is acceptable, and each side puts forth the claims it finds most in favor of its position. Even in his position of comparative tolerance, Ambrosiaster finds it necessary to describe how Paul could commend the faith inherent in proxy baptism while still not commending the practice itself.

Second, beyond simply how the parties conduct this conflict, the conflict is “traditional” in the sense that it is about a specific tradition. That tradition is primarily the Pauline comment in 1 Cor 15:29 that both Marcion and early catholic authors received as Scripture. But the tradition is secondarily also the respective tradition through which Marcion and early catholic authors encountered 1 Cor 15:29. Indeed, the two can be distinguished, but scarcely separated, since there could be no encounter with 1 Cor 15:29 that was not itself thoroughly traditioned (Gadamer 2013, pp. 278–398).

A key part of how such traditioning plays out is in the assertion of ultimately incommensurable paradigmatic starting points for the engagement—Marcion’s on the one hand and the early catholics’ on the other (cf. Kuhn 1996, pp. 147–49, 197–99; Stark 2013, pp. 1–45, 195–97). On both sides of the conflict, therefore, these hermeneutic horizons significantly, but perhaps not wholly, decide how the engagement with 1 Cor 15:29 will take place. None of the parties to the conflict—including Marcion—appeals to a trans-contextual “plain sense” of 1 Cor 15:29. Instead, arguments made from one horizon prove compelling if one adopts the same horizon (e.g., early catholic), but not necessarily if one adopts the alternative horizon (e.g., Marcionite).

At some points, there are appeals to shared space where the two horizons, although incommensurable, do overlap. Such appeals are clear in Didymus and Eznik but are most thoroughgoing in Tertullian’s substantive engagement with Marcion’s *Apostolikon* (e.g., *Marc.* 5.10). Tertullian’s effort to adjudicate the conflict in terms of the textual basis adopted by his opponent is a notable step into this shared space where the Marcionite and early catholic horizons overlap.

Despite such overlap, however, the horizons are still incommensurable. Tertullian’s engagement with Marcion’s *Apostolikon* is no dispassionate examination. From Tertullian’s perspective, Marcion’s *Apostolikon* is always already at fault, always already judged as derivative from the catholic tradition. In this way, the incommensurability of Tertullian’s horizon shapes even his engagement in the hermeneutic space that he agrees to share with the Marcionites when he takes their text as a basis for his argument. However much is in this shared space, the argument remains *his* and moves toward the ends he finds appropriate.

As these dynamics illustrate, differences large and small are always already in place before they erupt into conflict (Gadamer 1977, pp. 8–10; 2013, pp. 278–398), and once conflict arises, neither side can engage the other or their mutual conflict in any other way than through its own differentiated horizon. During the conflict, horizons may shift closer together or farther apart; their incommensurability may soften or harden. Sufficient hardness will foster continued conflict. Greater softening of incommensurability on only one side may lead to a conflict ending in the absorption of one side by the other (e.g., “you have convinced me; I now agree with you”). Mutual softening may resolve conflict in a newly forged mutual horizon (e.g., “we each were partly wrong; we now agree with each other”). But the seeds of resolution to any conflict are only ever available within and between the differentiated perspectives that themselves supply the initial conditions for the conflict.

Difference implies commonality, and the expression of difference in conflict implies no less a mutuality of harmony between the parties in conflict (Gadamer 1977, pp. 8–10). Of course, wherever conflict persists, at the point where it does so, the parties to the conflict are not in harmony. Yet their very conflict attests to their mutual, though differentiated,

harmony in respect to that toward which they stand in conflict (e.g., warring nations' mutual acceptance of a mandate to self-preservation from external threats; [Gadamer 1977](#), pp. 8–10), and any reconciliation worth its name that is to come about otherwise than by the force of one party against another must grow from the seeds of commonality that provide the conditions for the conflict ([Gadamer 1977](#), pp. 8–10; see also [Volf 2019](#)).

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Notes

- ¹ Eznik of Kolb references how 1 Cor 15:29 addresses both Marcion and Mani (*Deo* 427). But Eznik's subsequent discussion mentions only the Marcionites in connection with the practice of proxy baptism (*Deo* 427, 432). Consequently, Eznik gives no positive indication of a Manichaen practice of proxy baptism and only invites consideration of a more general opposition between 1 Cor 15:29 and Mani.
- ² There is some ambiguity in Epiphanius's comments (*Pan.* 28.6.4) about whether he wants to relate proxy baptism as a practice of the Cerinthians or as a practice of another group operating in the same area as the Cerinthians. Epiphanius's comments run, ἐν ταύτῃ . . . τῇ πατρίδι, φημὶ δὲ Ἀσίᾳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ Γαλατίᾳ πάνυ ἤκμασε τὸ τούτων [i.e., the Cerinthians] διδασκαλεῖον, ἐν οἷς καὶ τι παραδόσεως πρᾶγμα ἦλθεν εἰς ἡμᾶς . . . ([Holl 1915–1922](#), 1:318). Here, οἷς could be construed ad sensum (masc. for fem.) with an additional metonymy (the places of Asia and Galatia for the people in those places) and refer to Asians and Galatians (e.g., Asian and Galatian Marcionites) as the individuals whose teaching Epiphanius is about to report. But this reading introduces unnecessary complexity into the interpretation of οἷς. In addition, a possible metonymic antecedent in Asian and Galatian people is less in step with Epiphanius's general focus in this section, which is the Cerinthians and not Asia and Galatia. Given these factors, the better interpretation is that Epiphanius does indeed intend to portray the Cerinthians as practicing the baptismal rite he describes.
- ³ For comments on Cerinthus's teaching prior to Epiphanius, see Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.26.1–2; 3.11.1; Tertullian, *Haer.* 3; Hippolytus (ca. 170–236), *Haer.* 7.21–23, 10.17–18; Hippolytus, *Noet.* 11; Dionysius (ca. 170) and Gaius (early 3rd c.) as preserved by Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.28, 7.25; Victorinus (d. ca. 304), *Comm. Apoc.* 21.16; and *Const. ap.* (ca. 350–380) 6.8 ([Cross and Livingstone 2005](#), pp. 91, 487, 652, 778, 1706).
- ⁴ This discussion focuses solely on sources that describe Marcion's views explicitly as such. Judith Lieu (2015, p. 124) suggests that Marcion's views of resurrection may also have been consistent with those of Bardesanes. Lieu's rationale for this suggestion is that Adamantius addresses Marinus (a follower of Bardesanes) about the resurrection, while Megethius (a follower of Marcion) listens on without anything to contribute to the dialog, and apparently also simultaneously falling under Adamantius's reproach. In this suggestion, Lieu may be correct, but which views of Bardesanes can be imputed to Marcion is hardly certain, since Bardesanes is known to have differed from Marcion on some points ([Adamantius 1997](#), pp. 7–8).
- ⁵ Translations of Greek texts are the author's.
- ⁶ Monica Blanchard and Robin Young's translation suggests that Eznik's reference is to Marcionite "children" ([Eznik of Kolb 1998](#), pp. 212, 214). But this rendering appears less precise than that of J. Michael Schmid ([Eznik of Kolb 1900](#), 1:202, 204) or of Mariès and Mercier ([Eznik of Kolb 1959](#), pp. 686, 688).
- ⁷ Gerald Bray's translation is generally based on the critical edition of Ambrosiaster's commentary by H. J. Vogels but adds the reflections preserved by Rabanus as further comments on 1 Cor 15:29 before introducing the lemma for 1 Cor 15:30 ([Ambrosiaster 2009](#), pp. xxii–xxiii, 196).
- ⁸ Theophylact also rejects this reading, but the focus here remains on this group of these five earlier interpreters.
- ⁹ The explicit reference to "another" person in this text in the Ante-Nicene Fathers series is a byproduct of the translation process and neither a clear nor a probable element in Tertullian's Latin text (contra [Paulsen and Mason 2010](#), p. 32; see [Foschini 1951b](#), pp. 68–70; [Migne 1844–1864](#), 2:864–65; [Roberts and Donaldson \[1885–1887\] 1994](#), 3:581).
- ¹⁰ Chrysostom's οὐκ ἐτι may differentiate the post-baptismal expectation of the new Christian (participation in the resurrection of the righteous) not from the complementary expectation of a resurrection also for the wicked (e.g., *Hom. Jo.* 45; *Hom. 2 Tim.* 5) but from a pre-conversion expectation of non-resurrection.

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