

Christ as Life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45) in Ancient Christian Reception

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Keywords: *Patristic exegesis, Valentinianism, 1 Cor 15:45, Patristic Christology*

Abstract

In Paul's chapter on the resurrection of the dead we read, "Thus it is written, «the first human, Adam, became a living being»; the last Adam became life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45, my trans.). This paper deals with the reception of the last words of this text in ancient Christianity. Generally, they were understood to regard the spiritual vivification of human beings who had come to believe in Christ, so that he, as life-giving Spirit, brought about this regeneration. Several authors relate this clause also, or in the first place, to the final resurrection. Moreover, Origen and Didymus apply it to believers who became a "lifegiving spirit" themselves. 1 Cor 15:45c was also quoted in the Christological debates as a proof text either of Christ's humanity (Adam) *and* his divinity (Spirit), or of his humanity, without downplaying his divinity, or of his divinity without denying his humanity, or of his divinity exclusively (Apollinaris). Theodore of Mopsuestia conceives it as a reference to Christ's own resurrection. To several ancient authors this rare expression must have been puzzling.

1. *Introduction*

In Paul's chapter on the resurrection of Christ as an anticipation of the eschatological resurrection (1 Cor 15) we find many contrasts, for instance, between dying with Adam and vivification in Christ (vs 22), heavenly and earthly bodies (vs 40), a psychic and a pneumatic body (vs 44), the first Adam who became a living being (ψυχή) and the last Adam who became life-giving spirit (vs 45), etc.¹ This paper focusses on how the last two words of the fourth example were understood from circa 150 to 450 AD. In Greek the full text of 1 Cor 15:45 reads, οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται, Ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. First, however, I will make a few exegetical remarks in a present-day perspective.²

The text under discussion comes after Paul's distinction between a psychic and a pneumatic (or spiritual) body (εἰ ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν, 1 Cor 15:44b), which refers to the natural human body in one's earthly life and the spiritual body that believers may expect in the future resurrection. Apparently it is to underpin this distinction that Paul quotes Scripture, "Thus it is written", viz. in Gen 2:7 LXX. This text first says that God formed the human with dust from the earth and blew the breath of life (πνοὴν ζωῆς) into his face; then follows the quotation, to which the apostle added at least the word "first" and perhaps "Adam"; the Septuagint reads καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, "and the human became a living soul".³ The translation of the

- 1 Abernathy, *Christ as Life-giving Spirit* (2002), 12, lists fifteen contrasts in this chapter.
- 2 See the expositions by e.g. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2000), 1281-1290; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (2001), 302-313; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2014²), 870-880; Gerber, *1 Corinthians* (2025), 520-521.
- 3 According to John Philoponus, *De officio mundi* VI,21 (ed. Reichardt, 273-274), Theodotion and Symmachus translated ⲓⲛ in Gen 2:7 as the doublet Ἀδὰμ ἄνθρωπος. If this was an older tradition, Paul may not have added Ἀδὰμ off his own bat. Also in Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, vol. 1 (1964²),

Lexham English Septuagint, “and the human came into being as a living soul”, is acceptable if one takes “soul” in the sense of a living being as in, e.g. “a parish of 500 souls” and “Save Our Souls”.⁴ Henceforth I will adopt this translation because it demonstrates the link with the term ψυχικός and other instances where ψυχή only means “soul”.

After this quotation from Gen 2:7 we might expect some other words from Scripture, given the introduction “Thus it is written”. Instead, Paul goes back to his previous contrast between Adam and Christ, introduced in 1 Cor 15:22 (“For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ”, *NRSV*).⁵ In this vein 1 Cor 15:45 concludes, with reference to Christ, “the last Adam [became] a life-giving spirit” (I will soon come back to this translation). In 1 Cor 15:47 he formulates the contrast between humans and Christ in other words, “The first human [was] from the earth, of dust, the second human [is] from heaven” (ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ). Paul’s point is that in the resurrection believers will share the condition of Christ. Therefore, he says in 1 Cor 15:48, “As the one of dust (i.e. Adam), so also those of dust (i.e. humans), and as the heavenly one (i.e. Christ), so also the heavenly ones (i.e. the risen believers)” (οἷος ὁ χοϊκός, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἷος ὁ ἐπουράνιος, τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι). This is confirmed by 1 Cor 15:49, which reads in the authoritative present-day editions, “And as we have borne the image of the one of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one” (καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ). However, many patristic interpretations of this passage read the conjunctive φορέσωμεν, “let us bear”, instead of φορέσομεν (“we shall bear”).⁶ If the

13, who printed Ἀδὰμ [ἄνθρωπος], but does not justify the square brackets; cf. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture* (1992), 207-209.

4 Penner – Brannan (eds.), *The Lexham English Septuagint* (2019), 2.

5 This contrast between Adam and Christ also occurs in Rom 5:12-21.

6 For φορέσωμεν the 28th edition of Nestle and Aland’s *Novum Testamentum Graece* only gives the manuscripts B, I, 6, 630, 945^{v.l.}, 1881, and the Sahidic version. Aland

preference of most text-critics for the future *φορέσομεν* as the original reading is correct, it would neatly correspond to the preceding verses, where Paul contrasts the physical life on earth with the future of the resurrection anticipated by Christ. Yet the preference for *φορέσομεν* is not unanimous and is weakly attested by the manuscripts. Therefore, Gordon Fee, for instance, considers the exhortation *φορέσωμεν* to be the original reading.⁷ This would imply that Paul did not announce the heavenly condition of life in the resurrection but exhorted the believers to display the image of the heavenly Christ in their present life. This paper will demonstrate in which ways the different textual readings of the ancient authors relate to their interpretations of 1 Cor 15:45.

As said, attention should also be paid to the translation—and so to the meaning—of the words *ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν*, especially to the absence of the article before *πνεῦμα* and the significance of *ζωοποιοῦν*. That *πνεῦμα* is anarthrous does not imply that it should necessarily be translated as “a spirit”, with an indefinite article.⁸ Still, in English “a life-giving spirit” seems the usual translation, although some scholars opt for a capital S, “a life-giving Spirit”, which clearly

– Black – Martini – Metzger – Wikgren – Aland – Karavidopoulos (eds.), *The Greek New Testament* (2001⁴), gives more witnesses to this reading, but even far more to the reading *φορέσωμεν*. Remarkably, the reprint of the *Textus Receptus* in *The New Testament: The Greek Text Underlying the English Authorised Version of 1611* (1976) reads *φορέσομεν*. In agreement with most ancient manuscripts, Jongkind – Williams (eds.), *The Greek New Testament* (2017) read *φορέσωμεν*.

7 Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2014²), 871, 878-880. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1953), 389 also reads *φορέσωμεν*, but he interprets it as a future.

8 Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (1934), 761, 795; Blass – Debrunner – Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (1990¹⁷), § 257,2 (including note 4).

refers to God's Spirit but curiously retains the indefinite article.⁹ Most French translations also read the indefinite article, "un esprit";¹⁰ exceptions are *Bonnes Nouvelles Aujourd'hui*, "l'Esprit qui donne la vie", and Christophe Senft, "Le dernier Adam Esprit vivifiant".¹¹ German translations exhibit variations as well. The 1912 revision of Martin Luther's translation reads the definite article, "zum Geist, der da lebendig macht", but in 1966 the Zwingli Bible translated "zu einem lebendig machenden Geiste".¹² Like Senft, the *Einheitsübersetzung* of 1980 opts for a translation without article, "lebendigmachender Geist".¹³ We shall see what light the patristic interpretations shed on this matter.

- 9 "a spirit" is found in the *New American Standard Bible* (1960), the *New English Bible* (1961), the *New International Version* (1979), the *New Revised Standard Version* (1989), and the *Contemporary English Version* (1995). The *King James Version* also has the indefinite article, "a quickening spirit", which agrees with William Tyndale's translation of 1526, "a quickenyng sprete", in Cooper (ed.), *The New Testament Translated by William Tyndale* (2000). Orr – Walther, *The First Corinthians: A New Translation* (1976), 341 has "a life-making spirit". Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2014), 870 follows the *New International Version* and confirms it on p. 872. "a ... Spirit" in Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1971²), 369, 374; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2000), 1258, 1283; and Garland, *1 Corinthians* (2003), 735.
- 10 Segond (trans.), *La Sainte Bible* (1910); *La Sainte Bible traduite en français sous la direction de l'École Biblique de Jérusalem* (1956); Grosjean – Léturmy – Gros (trans.), *La Bible: Nouveau Testament* (1971); *Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible* (1972); *La Nouvelle Bible Segond* (2002); *La Bible Segond 21* (2007); Gerber, *1 Corinthiens* (2025), 514, 520.
- 11 *Bonnes Nouvelles Aujourd'hui* (1971); Senft, *La première épître de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (1990²), 207.
- 12 Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (1969), 332 ("zum lebenspendenden Geist"); Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (2001), 269, 304 ("zum lebensschaffenden Geist").
- 13 *Die Bibel. Altes und Neues Testament. Einheitsübersetzung* (1980).

The other question to be considered here is less consequential. How should we translate the term ζωοποιεῖν? Literally it means ‘vivifying’, ‘making alive’. In this contribution I will adopt ‘life-giving’ because it is the common and well-suited English translation of this term in 1 Cor 15:45c. For ζωοποιεῖν I will also use ‘to vivify’ instead of ‘to bring to life’.¹⁴

In addition, concerning ζωοποιεῖν it may be noted that twice Paul had used ζωοποιεῖν previously in his chapter on the resurrection. As we saw above, in 1 Cor 15:22 he writes, “For as all die in Adam, so also all will be made alive (ζωοποιηθήσονται) in (or: by, ἐν) Christ.” Next, in 1 Cor 15:36 Paul says, as an introduction to a simile about seed, “What you sow does not come to life (ζωοποιεῖται) unless it dies” (*NRSV*). We may conclude that 1 Cor 15:45 clarifies that the last Adam, i.e. the risen Christ, in his capacity of πνεῦμα, is the one who will vivify all those who belong to him.¹⁵

However, in Rom 4:17 Paul says that it is God who vivifies the dead (κατέναντι ... θεοῦ τοῦ ζωοποιούντος τοὺς νεκρούς). With reference to God’s Spirit this is also expressed in Rom 8:11, “If the Spirit of him (i.e. God) who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will vivify (ζωοποιήσει) your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.” Here God and his Spirit are said to be involved in the future resurrection. For Paul this hardly makes any difference; likewise, in Rom 8:9-10a “Spirit of God”, “Spirit of Christ”, and “Christ” are interchangeable.

14 Montanari – Goh – Schroeder (eds.), *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (2015), 897, translate ζωοποιέω as “to bring to life, give life to, vivify, animate”.

15 For the last Adam as the risen Christ see Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (2001), 304; Fee, *First Corinthians* (2014²), 874. I do not agree with Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (2001), 161-166, who holds that πάντες in 1 Cor 15:22 can only be interpreted in a universalistic sense. Even Schrage correctly admits “daß das Schicksal der Ungläubigen bei Paulus ganz im Hintergrund steht, wenn denn überhaupt daran gedacht ist” (163).

2. Ancient Christian interpretation: methodological observations

As said above, my investigation of ancient interpretations of the last two words of 1 Cor 15:45 concerns the authors from circa 150 to 450 AD. After the fifth century new, original patristic interpretations of scriptural texts are rare. I will focus on Greek works and translated works originally written in Greek and include two Latin authors who were well acquainted with the Greek language.

The relevant works will be presented more or less chronologically. I will not discuss other New Testament passages that include the verb ζωοποιεῖν, but sometimes I will refer to a few of them. In John 5:21 Jesus says, “just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life (ζωοποιεῖ), so also the Son gives life (ζωοποιεῖ) to whomsoever he wishes”. In John 6:63 he says, “It is the Spirit that gives life (ζωοποιεῖ); the flesh is useless.” Paul says in 2 Cor 3:6, “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (ζωοποιεῖ)”. 1 Peter 3:18 reads that Christ “was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit (ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι)” (quotations from *NRSV*). Unlike Paul’s uncontested epistles, the author or authors of Ephesians 2:5 and Colossians 2:13 situate being made alive together with Christ (συζωοποιεῖν) in the past, using the aorist συνεζωοποίησεν.

I will leave aside uncertain allusions to 1 Cor 15:45c, with one exception, viz. the revised Nicene Creed of the 381 Council of Constantinople, which says that we believe εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν, “in the Spirit, holy, lordly, and life-giving”.¹⁶ I will consider whether the gathered bishops may have been inspired for this tenet by 1 Cor 15:45c among other scriptural texts.

16 E.g. in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (1990), 24. The article in τὸ κύριον demonstrates that κύριον is an adjective neuter, not the noun κύριος. The participle ζωοποιεῖν and the adjective ζωοποιόν are synonymous.

3. *The Coptic Book in Berlin*

The first witness of 1 Cor 15:45 may be thought inconspicuous and hardly interesting, but I include it as a testimony and tribute to the numerous ancient Christian works that are lost. One such work was the extremely fragmentarily preserved “*Coptic Book*” kept in Berlin since the beginning of the twentieth century, and finally edited and translated by Gesine Schenke Robinson in 2004.¹⁷ She concludes that the original work, written in Greek, may originate from the beginning of the second half of the second century. She suggests that the author might have been Pantaenus, the teacher of Clement of Alexandria, but that is merely an educated guess.¹⁸ In her tentative reconstitution of the book from 1786 papyrus fragments the words “last Adam” are relatively well readable. Since 1 Cor 15:45 is the only text in the present New Testament that reads “last Adam”, a short note on this passage in the *Coptic Book* may be justified. On a page consisting of eleven fragments the author mentions Adam’s disobedience, the subsequent curse, and Christ’s redemptive death through which he defeated the devil. In the last three fragments of this page we read, “[through] the last Adam we [came to life] again” ([ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙ]ΤΜ ΠΖΑΕ ΝΑΔΔΑΜ ΟΝ Ν[ΤΑΝΩΝΣ]).¹⁹ To be sure, the term for “we came to life”, ΝΤΑΝΩΝΣ, apparently informed by ζωοποιούν in 1 Cor 15:45, is a reconstruction of a lacuna, but it is convincing because the designation “last Adam” immediately precedes the gap.²⁰ Although the argument may seem

17 Schenke Robinson – Schenke – Plisch, *Das Berliner “Koptische Buch”*, CSCO 610-611 (2004).

18 Schenke Robinson – Schenke – Plisch, *Das Berliner “Koptische Buch”* (2004), CSCO 610, xv-xviii; CSCO 611, xiv-xv.

19 Schenke Robinson – Schenke – Plisch, *Das Berliner “Koptische Buch”* (2004), CSCO 610, 324-325, 32-33; CSCO 611, 164.32-33.

20 It is a lucky coincidence that the remains of the Ν, the first letter of Ν[ΤΑΝΩΝΣ], are visible, thus the Perfect II prefix ΝΤΑΝ is most likely and the Future I prefix ΤΝΝΑ (“we will come to life”) is excluded.

circular, if the reconstruction is correct, the passage understands ζωοποιούν in 1 Cor 15:45 as denoting salvation by Christ in the present life. We shall see that this interpretation is shared by contemporaneous and later authors.

4. Mark the Valentinian

In the Rhône valley Irenaeus of Lyons came to know a community founded by a Valentinian named Mark. Because of the so-called “magic” he practiced he was dubbed “the Magician” (Μάρκος ὁ μάγος). Around 180 Irenaeus discussed Mark’s doctrines and activities in his work known as *Against heresies*, so that the appearance of this teacher may be dated between circa 160 and 180.²¹ This account was copied and expanded in an anonymous work from the early third century, entitled *Refutation of all heresies*. It has been ascribed to Hippolytus of Rome, but this attribution has also been doubted and denied to him.²² While Irenaeus’ account has survived in a Latin translation, the *Refutation* has preserved his Greek text, which includes an allusion to 1 Cor 15:45.

According to Mark’s opponents, he saw a correspondence between the creation of the human being (ἄνθρωπος) on the sixth day (Gen 1:26-31) and the “dispensation of the suffering” (οἰκονομία τοῦ πάθους) on the sixth day, which refers to Jesus’ crucifixion. About this Friday Mark said, “on which the last human appeared for the rebirth of the first human” (ἐν ἧ τὸν ἔσχατον ἄνθρωπον εἰς ἀναγέννησιν τοῦ πρώτου ἀνθρώπου πεφηνέναι).²³ The New Testament writings offer the combination of “last human” (in fact: “last Adam”) and “first

21 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* I,13-21 (SC 264, 188-309).

22 See Marcovich’s introduction to Hippolytus’ *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (1986), 1-17 as well as Litwa’s introduction to his translation of the *Refutation of All Heresies* (2016), xxvii-liii.

23 *Refutatio omnium haeresium* VI,47,2-4 (Patristische Texte und Studien 25, 265-266); without τοῦ πάθους Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* I,14,6 (SC 264, 224-225).

human”—though in the opposite order—only in 1 Cor 15:45. Clearly, by the “first human” Mark meant the human being created on the sixth day, and by the “last human” Christ, to whose suffering on the sixth day he alluded in the same sentence. The term ἀναγέννησις, “rebirth” or “regeneration”, corresponds with the appellation πνεῦμα ζωοποιού, “life-giving Spirit”, in 1 Cor 15:45c. We may conclude that Mark was thinking of Paul’s words when he taught that the first human and his descendants may receive the true and new life through the last human who is Christ. Because it is unthinkable that Mark, a Valentinian, was hinting at Paul’s theme of the eschatological resurrection, we may infer that he interpreted ζωοποιού in terms of spiritual resurrection.²⁴

5. Irenaeus of Lyons

Irenaeus uses Paul’s contrast between Adam and Christ for his theology of Christ’s new start or recapitulation (cf. Eph 1:10) after Adam’s fall and its consequences. For this concept of salvation history (οἰκονομία, Eph 1:10) he calls in Rom 5:12, 14, and 19, including the designations “first Adam” and “second Adam” inspired by 1 Cor 15:45 and 47.²⁵ In his later exposition of the *eschatological* resurrection of physical bodies, Irenaeus draws on 1 Cor 15:36, 42-44, 50-55, but there his interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45-49 has another focus.²⁶ There Paul’s designation of the last Adam who became life-giving Spirit does *not* relate to Christ. There Irenaeus considers the last Adam to be the first

24 See Förster, *Marcus Magus* (1999), 259-261. Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 141-142, erroneously ascribes Mark’s use of 1 Cor 15:45 to Hippolytus, the presumed author of the *Refutation of all heresies*.

25 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III,21,9-10 (SC 211, 422-431). See Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret* (1994), 430-463; VanMaaren, *The Adam-Christ Typology in Paul* (2013), 281-285.

26 See Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 84-92; Roukema, *The Resurrection according to 1 Corinthians 15,35-55* (2016), 37-39.

one who has *received* (προσλαβόμενος) the life-giving Spirit and will thus find life (i.e. in Christ). This happens when someone strips off the old self (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9) and is renewed by God's Spirit during his earthly life.²⁷ This interpretation corresponds to Irenaeus' exhortative reading φορέσωμεν in 1 Cor 15:49. Since he read this verse as an appeal to Christians to bear the image of the heavenly Christ in the present life, this affected his understanding of the preceding verses, not as indications of the final resurrection, but as touching the spiritual transformation due to conversion to Christ and baptism.

So we see that to Irenaeus the term ζωοποιούν in 1 Cor 15:45c is about the spiritual renewal of humans who have come to believe in Christ and are ready to leave their previous lifestyle behind them. In this sense he also writes that the Lord came to vivify (ζωοποιῶν) the human flesh which had received only the breath of life (πνοήν ζωῆς, Gen 2:7; 1 Cor 15:45b) and had died. To Irenaeus this means that

as we all die in Adam because we were psychics, we will all live (ζήσομεν) in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15:22) because we are pneumatics. We do not put away [the fleshly body] shaped by God, but the desires of the flesh (Gal 5:16), having received the Holy Spirit.²⁸

Irenaeus' quotations from Rom 8:11 and allusions to it establish that in this verse he interprets the verb ζωοποιεῖν as regarding both the spiritual vivification in the present life and the eschatological resurrection of mortal bodies, but in 1 Cor 15:45 he reads it only as a term for renewal by the Holy Spirit.²⁹

27 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V,12,2-4 (SC 153, 142-157).

28 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V,12,3 (SC 153, 150-151; my trans.).

29 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V,4,1; 7,1; 10,2; 15,1 (SC 153, 56-57; 130-131; 200-201).

6. *Clement of Alexandria and Theodotus the Valentinian*

Clement of Alexandria refers once to “the resurrection of the flesh”, which he considers a spiritual process that starts with baptism, continues in leading a spiritual life in a spiritual body, and continues in the purification after death.³⁰ In his extant works Clement quotes 1 Cor 15:40, 44, 49-50, 52-55, but not 1 Cor 15:45.³¹ However, his *Excerpts from Theodotus*, a Valentinian teacher, include two passages that remind us of the last text. It is hardly possible to date this work more precisely than somewhere at the end of the second century. Clement describes what happened, according to Theodotus (as it seems), when Jesus commended his spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46). At that moment—in the Valentinian’s view—Jesus entrusted to the Father the spiritual seed (σπέρμα) he had received from Sophia, which includes all the elect. Apparently, Clement then inserts his own reflection whose first words read, “We call the elect seed also «spark, vivified» (σπινθήρα ζωοποιούμενον) by the Logos.” A little further on Clement quotes the Valentinians saying that when the Saviour had come, he woke up the soul and ignited the spark (σπινθήρα). After the Saviour’s resurrection he blew the Spirit upon the apostles (John 20:22), blew away the dust (Gen 2:7), ignited the spark and vivified (ἐζωοποιεί) it.³²

Although the allusions to 1 Cor 15:45 are faint, these are still interesting passages. The term ‘spark’ is not frequent in Clement’s extant works; except for the cited texts it is only found in a quotation from the *Wisdom of Solomon* and in an allusion to it.³³ However, the

30 Clement, *Paedagogus* II,41,4 (SC 108, 90-91); cf. Schmöle, *Läuterung nach dem Tode* (1974); Roukema, *The Resurrection according to 1 Corinthians 15,35-55* (2016), 45-46.

31 See Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 98-103.

32 Clement, *Excerpta e Theodoto* 1,1-3; 3,1-2 (SC 23, 52-59).

33 *Wisdom of Solomon* 3,7, in *Stromateis* IV,104,2 (SC 463, 228-229), “they (i.e. martyrs) will shine like sparks” (my trans.); *Eclogae prophetae* 41,2 (Bibliotheca Patristica 4, 76-77), “the righteous one shines ... like a spark” (my trans.).

source of Theodotus' and Clement's reference to the 'spark' is not Scripture but an interpretation of Plato's *Timaeus*. According to Plato, God created and sowed souls destined for the material bodies.³⁴ In later works these souls were considered sparks; this term is found e.g. in Philo of Alexandria and in "Gnostic" works and testimonies.³⁵ When Theodotus said that the Saviour ignited this spark and gave life (ἐζωοποιεῖ) to it, this recalls Paul's words about the last Adam who became life-giving Spirit. Although this is a Valentinian testimony, Clement confirms that in his tradition too "we call" (φαμέν) the elect seed "spark, vivified by the Logos", i.e. Christ. This nod to 1 Cor 15:45 suggests that Clement as well as the Valentinians read Paul's designation of Christ as life-giving Spirit in terms of the awakening of the human soul to new life.³⁶ Although Clement's theology differs significantly from Irenaeus and Theodotus, their interpretations of ζωοποιεῖν in 1 Cor 15:45 are similar.

7. Exegesis on the Soul

Yet another Gnostic echo of 1 Cor 15:45 is attested in the treatise *Exegesis on the Soul*, which seems Valentinian as well or is close to Valentinianism in any case. It has been preserved in the Nag Hammadi Codices in a Coptic translation from the Greek. Possibly dating to the late second century or to the beginning of the third century and probably stemming from Alexandria, it describes the vicissitudes of

34 Plato, *Timaeus* 41e; 42d.

35 Philo, *Quis rerum divinarum heres* 308 (LCL 261, 442-443); Saturninus, in Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* I,24,1 (SC 264, 332-333); *Paraphrase of Shem* (NHC VII,1 33,30-32; 46.13-29; NHMS 30, 122-123); with reference to the Saviour, *Apocryphon of John* (NHC III,9 10; NHMS 33, 40). More references in Tardieu, *ΨΥΧΑΙΟΣ ΣΙΙΙΝΘΗΡ* (1975).

36 For the term 'seed' see σπορά in 1 Pet 1:23 and Merkt, *1. Petrus*, vol. 1 (2015), 129-132.

a virginal soul that lapsed into prostitution. She then turned to the Father who “sent her from heaven her man, her brother, the firstborn”. They entered the bridal chamber and had spiritual intercourse. She “received from him the seed, which is the life-giving Spirit ([λ]C χ I $\overline{\mu\pi\epsilon\sigma\pi\epsilon\rho\mu\alpha}$ $\overline{\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda}$ $\overline{\sigma\iota\tau\omicron\omicron\tau\acute{\epsilon}}$ $\overline{\epsilon\tau\epsilon}$ $\overline{\pi\eta\eta\lambda\alpha}$ $\overline{\pi\epsilon\epsilon\tau}$ $\overline{\tau\eta\eta\sigma\omicron}$)”. Thus the soul “received the divine ($\overline{\pi\theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu}$, viz. nature) from the Father, that she might be restored and returned to where she was before. This is the resurrection from the dead.”³⁷

Given this reference to the resurrection and the notion of the seed (cf. 1 Cor 15:36-37 and Theodotus’ view quoted above by Clement) it is more likely that we find here an allusion to 1 Cor 15:45 than to John 6:63, “It is the Spirit that gives life.” Like the Valentinians Mark and Theodotus, the author of this treatise understands the resurrection of the soul thanks to the life-giving Spirit as her spiritual regeneration. This also agrees with Irenaeus and Clement, notwithstanding their different theologies.

8. *Tertullian of Carthage*

In two of Tertullian’s works written between 206 and 212, his reception of 1 Cor 15:45 is determined by his opposition to Marcion and other teachers who held that Christ was a spiritual being sent by the high God and not by the inferior Creator, the God of the Jews. In his work *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* Tertullian emphasizes that Paul’s designation of Christ as “the last Adam” in 1 Cor 15:45 demonstrates that the Saviour, coming from heaven (1 Cor 15:47) as for his spirit (*secundum spiritum*), was human as for his body (*secundum carnem*). This implies to him that Christ had a fleshly body like the

37 *Exegesis of the Soul* (NHC II,6 132.7-9; 133.35-134.2; 134.9-12; NHS 21, 154-155; 158-159, trans. Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* [2007], 229-231, slightly adapted).

first Adam. In Tertullian's view, the difference between the first and the last Adam does not concern their bodies; they are distinguished in that the first one became a living soul and the second one life-giving Spirit (*in spiritum vivificantem*).³⁸ In his previous treatise *On the Flesh of Christ* Tertullian says that Christ, being the last Adam, was revealed by God as life-giving Spirit from a virgin mother. The drift of his lengthy argument is that Christ was both Son of God and Son of man, both divine and human.³⁹

In his extant works Tertullian does not pay any particular attention to the description of Christ as *vivificans*, the one who gives life, but he only quotes 1 Cor 15:45 as a proof that Christ, called Adam and life-giving Spirit, is both human and divine, both corporeal and spiritual.

9. Origen of Alexandria

In 231 Origen started to write his *Commentary on John*, which he finished at chapter 13 some fifteen year later.⁴⁰ In his comments on the term ἀρχή (“beginning” or “principle”) in John 1:1, he distinguishes between Christ's ἀρχή, which is his divinity, and his humanity. In principle Christ is God's Wisdom and power (1 Cor 1:24), but to those who cannot understand this—Origen even writes: “to us”—his humanity is preached as “the Logos who became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14) and as Jesus Christ crucified (1 Cor 2:2). In support

38 Tertullian, *De carnis resurrectione* 53,12-17 (SC 638, 582-587). In *Adversus Marcionem* V, 10,7-8 (SC 483, 212-215) he notes that Marcion replaced “last Adam” by “last Lord” in 1 Cor 15:45 to avoid the impression that “last Adam” refers to the God of the first Adam. See Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 136-137, 139.

39 Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 17,4-18,3 (SC 216, 280-285).

40 Nautin, *Origène. Sa vie et son œuvre* (1977), 377-380.

of Christ's human identity Origen quotes 1 Cor 15:45.⁴¹ He writes, "Therefore, perhaps, he is not only «the firstborn of all creation» (Col 1:15), but also Adam, which means «human being» (ἄνθρωπος). For Paul says that he (i.e. Christ) is Adam, «the last Adam [who became] life-giving Spirit»."⁴² It is noteworthy that to Origen, apparently, in this context the designation "last Adam, life-giving Spirit" refers to Christ's humanity during his incarnate life. Further on, still in his comments on John 1:1, Origen explains that Christ is also the beginning (ἀρχή) in Adam, the human (ἄνθρωπος) that he took upon himself, and the end during his appearance on earth (ὡς δὲ τέλος ἐν τῇ ἐπιδημίᾳ), as it is said, "the last Adam [became] life-giving Spirit".⁴³ We see that in this exposition of Christ's double, pre-existent and human identity Origen interprets the clause ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν as a testimony to Christ's human, incarnate side. This chimes with Origen's interpretation of the closely related words in 1 Cor 15:47, "the second human is from heaven" (ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ). In his view this is the believer converted to Christ and led by the Spirit. For Origen, 1 Cor 15:46-49 deals mostly with the Christian's life in this world. Correspondingly and like Irenaeus, he reads φορέσωμεν in 1 Cor 15:49, "let us bear the image of the heavenly one".⁴⁴

Origen's later homily (from the 240s) on the delimitation of the "holy land" in Num 34:1-7, preserved in Rufinus' Latin translation, sets different accents. In his spiritual approach the land promised to the people of Israel symbolizes the heavenly kingdom for which those who believe in Jesus as their Saviour are destined. In fact, according

41 Origen, *Commentarii in Joannem* I,18,107 (SC 120bis, 116-117). For Origen's interpretation of 1 Cor 2:2 see Roukema, *La prédication du Christ crucifié* (1995), 523-529.

42 Origen, *Commentarii in Joannem* I,18,108 (SC 120bis, 116-117).

43 Origen, *Commentarii in Joannem* I,31,225 (SC 120bis, 170-171). See Bammel [Hammond], *Adam in Origen* (1989), 79.

44 See Hannah, *The Text of I Corinthians in the Writings of Origen* (1997), 166-167.

to their respective merits, they live in different sections of heaven already.⁴⁵ Moreover, if in the beginning God dispersed the sons of Adam over the world (Deut 32:8 LXX) either according to their merits or because of Adam (i.e. his fall), the reverse will happen to the sons of the last Adam, who did not become a living soul but life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45c). Then, Origen says, at the end of the world, God's goodness will not disperse but arrange (*dispensare*) them, not as those who "all die in Adam", but as those who "are all made alive in Christ" (1 Cor 15:22)—although differences will remain among them, due to their different merits.⁴⁶ This interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45 by means of 1 Cor 15:22 suggests that to Origen this vivification refers to the eschatological resurrection, which he considers a process of the soul's purification after the death of the body, when it will receive a spiritual body.⁴⁷ In other words, Christ, the last Adam, as life-giving Spirit, will accomplish this vivification in the future, although in Origen's view Christ also gives life prior to the end of the world, when in a spiritual sense believers on earth live in heaven already.

Similar references to 1 Cor 15:22 and 45 are found in Origen's comments on Rom 5:12-14, Paul's unfinished sentence on Adam's sin, its consequence for mankind, and the final designation of Adam as "a type of the one who was to come", i.e. Christ. Origen wrote his *Commentary on Romans* in 243.⁴⁸ This work too has been preserved in Rufinus' translation, in ten volumes, which is a considerable abridgement of the fifteen Greek volumes. Origen first quotes 1 Cor

45 Origen, *Homiliae in Numeros* 28,1-3 (SC 461, 352-365). For the idea of living in heaven already Origen alludes to Phil 3:20, "our πολιτευμα is in heaven". See Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure* (1986), 96-100 about "the organizing principle in Origen's exegesis" of Numbers.

46 Origen, *Homiliae in Numeros* 28,4,1 (SC 461, 364-367). See Bammel [Hammond], *Adam in Origen* (1989), 78; she translates *dispensare* as "distribution".

47 See Roukema, *Origen's Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15* (2010).

48 Nautin, *Origène* (1977), 385-386, 407-408.

15:22, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” In line with his reading *φορέσωμεν* in 1 Cor 15:49, “let us bear the image of the heavenly one”, he interprets the foregoing verses on the present life of Christians. He explains,

he (i.e. Paul) encourages us to bear the image of the heavenly one after casting off the image of the earthly; that is to say, by living according to the Word of God we are to be renewed and remade in the inner human after the image of God.⁴⁹

To Origen, believers “have died with Christ and have risen with him” (Rom 6:8; Col 2:20; Eph 2:6). Each human was first “from the earth” (1 Cor 15:47) and had carnal thoughts (Rom 8:5), but “then, in the end, it is (*et uix aliquando est*) that one turns to the Lord (2 Cor 3:16), is led by the Spirit of God (Rom 8:14) and, made spiritual, becomes a last Adam, life-giving spirit”.⁵⁰ Again, in these comments Origen reads “last Adam” in 1 Cor 15:45 as the identity of the Christian who becomes spiritual and even a life-giving spirit. It would not be right to capitalize “spirit” in this case, since *πνεῦμα* here does not refer to the Spirit of Christ or to the Spirit that is Christ.

So, Origen read the clause *ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζῶσσοιοῦν* in 1 Cor 15:45 in several ways: first, as a testimony to Christ’s human, earthly

49 Origen, *Commentarii in epistulam ad Romanos* V,1,203-204, 211-214 (ed. Hammond Bammel, 368-369; trans. Scheck, 311-312, slightly adapted).

50 Origen, *Commentarii in epistulam ad Romanos* V,1,224-232 (ed. Hammond Bammel, 369-370). See also Bammel [Hammond], *Adam in Origen* (1989), 82; Roukema, *Origen’s Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15* (1995), 338, 341-342. Erroneously Scheck, 312 translates line 230, “and very seldom it is that he is converted to the Lord...” Apparently he follows Heither, 49, who translates “Und ganz selten geschieht es, daß einer sich zum Herrn bekehrt.” According to Blaise – Chirat, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des auteurs chrétiens* (1954), 854, *uix* as a conjunction can mean “dès que, à peine que” (“as soon as”). Correspondingly, Cocchini, 241, rightly translates “e finalmente una buona volta accade che si converta al Signore”. Likewise, but with another nuance, Brésard, 369, reads “et enfin, après bien des efforts, il arrive qu’il se tourne vers le Seigneur”.

life alongside his divinity; second, in terms of the believers' spiritual renewal by Christ in the present life so that they become life-giving spirit themselves; third, as a reference to the believers' eschatological—and spiritual—resurrection by Christ. This threefold interpretation need not surprise us, for Origen held that Scripture should be read on several levels, literally and spiritually, morally and eschatologically.⁵¹

10. Apollinaris of Laodicea

After Origen, whose latest known use of 1 Cor 15:45 in his *Commentary on Romans* dates to 243, we have to wait for some 120 years before we find another Greek-writing author who used this text for his view of Christ or for a comment on Scripture. This author is the Nicene bishop Apollinaris of Laodicea in Syria (nowadays Latakia in Turkey; ca. 310-392). However, because his Christology and his interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45 were met with resistance, many of his works are either lost or have been preserved fragmentarily, in quotations by unfriendly authors, and in *catenae* commentaries. Hans Lietzmann collected Apollinaris' dogmatic and polemical works and fragments.⁵² So, all in all, we can work out how Apollinaris thought about Christ and how he used 1 Cor 15:45.⁵³

51 Origen, *De principiis* IV,2-3 (ed. Behr, 484-561).

52 Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* (1904), 165-270. Apollinaris' *catenae* fragments on the Psalms, the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, and Paul's epistle to the Romans have also been published. Although the topic of vivification is found in the *catenae*, there are no clear references to 1 Cor 15:45.

53 See Greer, *The Man from Heaven* (1990). He states, "There can be little doubt that these words (i.e. 1 Cor 15:45-47) were central to Apollinaris' understanding of Christ" (165); but 1 Cor 15:45 is used less often than 1 Cor 15:46-47. Valuable analyses of Apollinaris' views are e.g. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (1977), 289-295; Bienert, *Dogmengeschichte* (1997), 207-211; Orton, *St. Gregory of Nyssa: Anti-Apollinarian Writings* (2015), 45-58.

Apollinaris conceives of Christ as a unity, not in two natures, divine and human, but in one (μία φύσις).⁵⁴ He assumes that in the incarnate God-man Jesus Christ the divine Logos had the role of the human mind and the animating soul, so that it was the Logos—and not a human soul—that animated his fleshly body, which, therefore, shared in his divinity. He observes that John wrote, “The Logos became flesh” (John 1:14), without adding “and soul”. Thus Apollinaris considers Jesus Christ an undivided person (πρόσωπον) in the *likeness* of humans (cf. Rom 8:3), “the human from heaven” (1 Cor 15:47).⁵⁵ He quotes Paul’s clause, “the last Adam [became] life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor 15:45), as a testimony to the divinity of Christ in his capacity of servant.⁵⁶ This implies that Apollinaris read the expression πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν as evidence of Christ’s divinity thanks to his Logos during his ministry as “last Adam” on earth.

Elsewhere Apollinaris infers from Gabriel’s words to Mary, “what was begotten in you will be called holy, Son of God” (Luke 1:35), that Jesus’ body was not like other human bodies since it came down from heaven and was divine. Here too Apollinaris quotes John 1:14, “The Logos became flesh”, and 1 Cor 15:45, “the last Adam [became] life-giving Spirit” as proof-texts of the divinity of Christ which permeated his fleshly body coming from heaven.⁵⁷ These passages suggest that to Apollinaris Christ was not truly human. This is confirmed by a

54 Apollinaris, *Ad Jovinianum* 3; *Ad Dionysium* 1,2 (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* [1904], 253, 257).

55 Apollinaris, *Fragment* 2; 25 (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* [1904], 204, 210, from Gregory of Nyssa, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium* [GNO 3,1, 143]); *Ad Dionysium* 1,10 (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* [1904], 260); Rowan, *The Man from Heaven* (1990), 169.

56 Apollinaris, *Ad Dionysium* 1,11 (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* [1904], 261).

57 Apollinaris, *De unione corporis et divinitatis in Christo* 1-2 (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* [1904], 185-186); cf. Rowan, *The Man from Heaven* (1990), 168.

fragment that says, “If Christ’s nature is the same as ours, then he is the old human, «a living soul» (ψυχὴ ζῶσα) and not life-giving Spirit, and such a one will not vivify (ζωοποιήσει). But Christ does give life and is life-giving Spirit. Thus, he does not have our nature.”⁵⁸

In these testimonies Apollinaris does not pay attention to the precise meaning of the participle ζωοποιούσιν in 1 Cor 15:45c. In the remains of his works, however, he often uses the verb ζωοποιεῖν, though without alluding to this text. One of his fragments reads,

His (i.e. Christ’s) flesh vivifies (ζωοποιεῖ) us by the divinity that it inherent in it (συνουσιωμένη αὐτῆ). The life-giving [principle] (τὸ δὲ ζωοποιόν) is divine. The flesh (i.e. of Christ) is divine because it is joined (συνήφθη) to God. This is that which saves, but we *are* saved, participating in it as in food.⁵⁹

This demonstrates that Apollinaris interprets the verb ζωοποιεῖν in the sense of salvation by Christ.⁶⁰ As far as I have seen, he hardly ever uses this term for the eschatological resurrection.⁶¹ Yet we may conclude that in his view this resurrection in a spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44) was destined for those who were already saved and vivified by Christ during their lives on earth.⁶²

58 Apollinaris, *Anacephalaisis* 23 (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* [1904], 244-245); cf. Rowan, *The Man from Heaven* (1990), 167.

59 Apollinaris, *Fragment* 116 (Lietzmann, *Apollinaris von Laodizea* [1904], 235; my trans.).

60 Rowan, *The Man from Heaven* (1990), 166-167.

61 Searching in Apollinaris’ works for the proximity of ἀνασταξ* and ζωοποι* within ten words in the digital *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* I found one text, the *catenae* fragment 224 *In Psalmos* 118:50 (Patristische Texte und Studien 15, 88.9-10), which mentions “the power of the life-giving God” and after seven intermediate words the “resurrection”. But note that the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* does not include all of Apollinaris’ fragments collected by Lietzmann.

62 Rowan, *The Man from Heaven* (1990), 173. According to my search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, Apollinaris’ fragments do not quote 1 Cor 15:49, about bearing the image of the man from heaven in the present life (φορέσωμεν) or in the future (φορέσομεν).

In conclusion of this section, I note that Apollinaris' interpretation of πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν in 1 Cor 15:45 as a reference to Christ's divine identity differs substantially from Origen, who in his *Commentary on John* used this expression as a designation of Christ's humanity, in his capacity of last *Adam*.

II. Gregory of Nyssa

In the 380s Gregory of Nyssa wrote a refutation of Apollinaris in which he succinctly gave his own interpretation of the clause about Christ as life-giving Spirit.⁶³ He says slightly tautologically, "he who energizes us with his vivifying Spirit *is* indeed life-giving Spirit" (ὁ τῷ ζωοποιῷ πνεύματι ... ποιῶν ἐφ' ἡμῶν τὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ πνεῦμά ἐστι ζωοποιῶν).⁶⁴ Apparently, this points to human beings vivified by Christ as the Spirit during their lives on earth, not to the eschatological resurrection.⁶⁵

12. Didymus of Alexandria

Didymus the Blind, who lived in Alexandria from 310/313 to 398, interpreted 1 Cor 15:45 in his *Commentary on First Corinthians*, from which only fragments on 1 Cor 15-16 have been preserved in the *catenae*.⁶⁶ There and in other works he explains in Origen's vein that in the ultimate resurrection the perishable, psychic bodies of the

63 For the date, see Orton, *St. Gregory of Nyssa: Anti-Apollinarian writings* (2015), 35-38.

64 Gregory of Nyssa, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium* (GNO 3,1, 213.14-20, trans. Orton, slightly adapted).

65 In 378, Gregory wrote a *Dialogue on the soul and the resurrection* (*Dialogus de anima et resurrectione*, GNO 3,3). There he discusses several passages from 1 Cor 15, but not verse 45.

66 Staab (ed.), *Pauluskommentare* (1984²), 6-14.

righteous will be imperishable and spiritual (1 Cor 15:42, 44), even spirit and mind, but not flesh like Adam's "psychic" body (1 Cor 15:44). He affirms that the Christians' resurrection body will be similar to Christ's body after his resurrection.⁶⁷ In support of it, Didymus refers to 1 Cor 15:45, saying:

Therefore, the life of the first Adam [who became] a living soul enabled the human to live (ἡ μὲν οὖν τοῦ πρώτου Ἀδάμ ζωὴ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν παρεσκεύαζε τὸν ἄνθρωπον ζῆν), but life in accordance with Christ [is] not [to become] a living soul but a life-giving spirit. The spiritual vivification is inherent in those who are raised from the dead (ἡ δὲ πνευματικὴ ζωοποίησις συμφυῆς ἐστὶ τοῖς ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγειρομένοις).⁶⁸

This interpretation is congenial with Origen's, since it applies the expression πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν to the believer who has become a life-giving spirit thanks to being incorporated in Christ. This vivification is called συμφυῆς with those who are raised from the dead, which resurrection is expressed by the present participle ἐγειρομένοις, not by a future tense. This means that those who have become a life-giving spirit are raised from the dead already. Since this exposition of 1 Cor 15:45 ties in closely with Didymus' interpretation of the preceding verses dealing with the resurrection in a spiritual body, we may conclude that in his view the resurrection of believers starts on earth and continues after the death of the body and in the final resurrection. It is probably no coincidence that in keeping with this fluid view of the resurrection as a process, Didymus knows both the reading φορέσομεν, "we shall bear" and φορέσωμεν, "let us bear the image of the heavenly one" in 1 Cor 15:49.⁶⁹

67 Didymus of Alexandria, *Fragments on 1 Cor 15,44-46* (Staab, *Pauluskommentare* [1984²], 10, 14-29). See further Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 152-160; Roukema, *The Resurrection according to 1 Corinthians 15,35-55* (2016), 44-47, 51-53.

68 Didymus, *Fragments on 1 Cor 15,44-46* (Staab, *Pauluskommentare* [1984²], 10.29-32; my trans.).

69 Didymus, *Commentarii in Genesim 104,23-25* (SC 233, 244-247); *Commentarii in Zacchariam II,340* (SC 84, 596-597).

13. *Ambrose of Milan*

From the Greek-speaking Church we move to the Latin bishop Ambrose of Milan (ca. 339-397), since he had a good knowledge of Greek.⁷⁰ In his *Commentary on Luke* (376-390) he twice quotes 1 Cor 15:45 without any other interpretation of the terms *spiritus vivificans* than that they apply to Christ who comes from heaven (1 Cor 15:47).⁷¹ A third passage has a little more to say about Ambrose's understanding of the text under discussion. In his exposition of the passage about the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9) he says about Jews who did not live in accordance with their own religion that, being excluded from God's kingdom, they were (merely) "a living soul" (*in animam viventem*). When the second Adam came, he looked for fruits of virtue, i.e. life in obedience to God's will. Ambrose argues that this second Adam "was life-giving Spirit" (*in spiritum vivificantem*), and that it is by the Spirit that the fruit of virtue is produced and the Lord is adored.⁷² Here he does not say explicitly that the second (or last) Adam is Christ, but this is evident anyway, given his two previous quotations of 1 Cor 15:45 and since Ambrose appears to be thinking of the story about a barren fig tree in Matt 21:18-19, in which it is not "someone" (τις/*quidam*, Luke 13:6) but Jesus who searches for figs. This implies that for Ambrose someone who does not adhere to Christ is merely "a living soul", i.e. is not regenerated by the Spirit, and that those who lead fruitful, virtuous lives thanks to the coming of the second (or last) Adam have been vivified by his Spirit. So, in this *Commentary* Ambrose conceives of this vivification as taking place in the present life without any explicit reference to the eschatological resurrection.

70 It would have been interesting to include Jerome's interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45, since having Latin as his native language he too knew Greek well, but his two quotations of it (*Commentarii in epistolam ad Ephesios* III,5,31 [PL 26, 569.2-3]; *Adversus Iovinianum* I,37 [PL 23, 275.24]) are not followed by an interpretation.

71 Ambrose, *Expositio in Evangelium secundum Lucam* II,86; V,31 (SC 45, 113; 195).

72 Ambrose, *Expositio in Evangelium secundum Lucam* VII,164-165 (SC 52, 69-70).

In his work *On the instruction of a virgin and the perpetual virginity of the holy Mary* from 392 Ambrose maintains, however, that Christ is both the first human from the earth and the second human from heaven (1 Cor 15:47) and likewise both the first and the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45).⁷³ He glosses,

Look at Christ's mercy. He is the first and the last. He who was the first, made himself the last because of us. The first, because through him everything [exists], the last, because through him [there is] resurrection. For he came down and rushed forward so that he fell, making himself lower than all, in order to lift up all who lie down (*ut omnes iacentes levaret*).⁷⁴

Here Ambrose relates Christ, being the last Adam and *spiritus vivificans*, to the resurrection, which suggests the eschatological resurrection of the dead, but which, according to his own works, is anticipated in redemption by Christ in the present life.⁷⁵ That the sense of "realized" resurrection in the present life may be meant in this quotation is confirmed by Ambrose's subsequent characterization of Christ as lifting up all people who lie down. This does not signify their graves but their poor mental and spiritual condition, since Ambrose regularly uses the verb *levare* in this sense, but not for the final resurrection.⁷⁶

73 Ambrose, *De institutione virginis et sanctae Mariae virginitate perpetua* 72-73 (Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera 14,2, 162-165).

74 Ambrose, *De institutione virginis et sanctae Mariae virginitate perpetua* 73 (Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera 14,2, 164; my trans.).

75 Ambrose, *De paradiso* 15,76 (CSEL 32,1, 335,5-10); *De Cain et Abel* II,3,11 (CSEL 32,1, 387.21-25); *Expositio de Psalmis* 48,23,3 (CSEL 64, 375.19-20); 118,12,45 (CSEL 62, 278.4-5). For Ambrose's view of the resurrection of the dead see Roukema, *The Resurrection according to 1 Corinthians* 15,35-55 (2016), 54-56.

76 Ambrose, *De fuga saeculi* 5,29 (CSEL 32,2, 187.20-21); *Expositio de Psalmis* 43,11,3 (CSEL 64, 269.3); 118,4,3; 118,4,9; 22,32,2 (CSEL 62, 69.11-12; 72.1-4; 504.15-16);

So we may conclude that in his *Commentary on Luke* Ambrose's designation of Christ as last Adam and *spiritus vivificans* refers to the spiritual vivification of humans during their earthly lives, and that this is also the main thrust of his address *On the instruction of a virgin*, though it may glance at the final resurrection as well. The interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45c regarding spiritual vivification in the present life tallies with Ambrose's usual reading (with one exception) of 1 Cor 15:49 as an exhortation, *portemus et imaginem huius caelestis*, "let us bear the image of this heavenly one".⁷⁷ This interpretation is further confirmed by the fact that in his address on the death of his brother Satyrus, in which he elaborately discusses the final resurrection, he draws on many verses from 1 Cor 15, but without quoting 1 Cor 15:45-49.⁷⁸

14. John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom served as a priest in Syrian Antioch in one of its two Nicene churches from 386 to 397. In this period, he preached on the first and second epistles to the Corinthians, verse by verse, so that he also expounded 1 Cor 15:45. Having observed that the introduction, "Thus it is written", does not apply to the words on "the last Adam [who became] life-giving Spirit" while they are still true, he explains how to read this clause. He says,

Expositio in Evangelium secundum Lucam VII,209; X,84 (SC 52, 87-88; 184-185);
De fide ad Gratianum II 2,25 (CSEL 78, 65.29-30).

77 *Expositio in Evangelium secundum Lucam* VII,194 (SC 52, 82-83); also *De fide ad Gratianum* V,14,176 (CSEL 78, 280.53-281.1); *De interpellatione Iob et David* III,8,24 (CSEL 32,2, 261.24-262.1); *Expositio de Psalmo* 118,12,12 (CSEL 62, 257.26-27). Yet in *Epistula* 29,7 (CSEL 82,1, 198.81-82) Ambrose reads 1 Cor 15:49b as, *ita portamus et imaginem caelestis*, "thus we bear also the image of the heavenly one". This too refers to the believers' present lives.

78 Ambrose, *De excessu fratris Liber II: De resurrectione* II,54-123 (CSEL 107, 174-199) quotes 1 Cor 15:13, 15, 19, 21-23, 28, 36, 42-44, 52-53.

He (i.e. Paul) said these things so that you may learn that the symbols and promises of both the present life and the future one have come already (ἔφθασε); [first,] Adam of the present life, and [second,] Christ of the future life. For since he presents the better things as to be hoped for, he demonstrates that [their] beginning has already started (ἤδη ἐκβεβηκυῖαν) and the root and the fountain have come to light (φανεῖσαν). ... Therefore he says, “He will vivify your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwells in you” (Rom 8:11). So it falls to the Spirit to vivify.⁷⁹

John’s interpretation holds that vivification of Christians by the Spirit is twofold, as it regards their present life, symbolized in Adam, and the future life in Christ. In the present life they are vivified by the Spirit that has come to dwell in them already, but in the future that they hope for, viz. in the final resurrection, their vivification will be completed by the same Spirit. Neither here nor elsewhere, however, does John feel the need to explain in what sense Christ, the last Adam, is Spirit.⁸⁰

John gives the same twofold interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45 succinctly in his homily on John 3:5, where Jesus says, “Unless one is born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Chrysostom underlines that a living soul cannot give life to someone else, while “the Spirit not only lives for himself but supplies (παρέχει) this to others too”. While at the creation of the world humans were created last (Gen 1:26-28), now the contrary happens, “for prior to the new creation the new human is shaped (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ νέος δημιουργεῖται). For this one is born first, and then the world is transformed (μετασχηματίζεται).”⁸¹ Here Chrysostom hints at the initial regeneration or spiritual vivification of

79 John Chrysostom, *Homilia in primam epistulam ad Corinthios* 41,4 (PG 61, 359.43-54; my trans.).

80 For John Chrysostom’s view of the resurrection see Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 194-204; Roukema, *The Resurrection according to 1 Corinthians 15,35-55* (2016), 53-54.

81 John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Joannem* 25,2 (PG 59, 150.10-19; my trans.).

humans by the Spirit, which anticipates the final resurrection in the new world.

In John's time the interpretation of Christ as the life-giving Spirit in the process of vivification or regeneration in the present life was traditional, as we saw in the previous sections. John shares it, which is confirmed by his reading *φορέσωμεν*, "let us bear the image of the heavenly one", in 1 Cor 15:49, as this exhortation too applies to the present life.⁸² However, as a keen exegete he not only transmits the traditional interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45 but—with Origen, for that matter—he also sees that Paul points there to the final vivification or resurrection, which is the theme of the whole chapter. Yet this does not lead him to exclude the common, traditional interpretation.

15. *The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*

As promised, I now give some thought to the tenet in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed of 381, *εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν*, "in the Spirit, holy, lordly, and life-giving".⁸³ Before we turn to authors who definitely wrote after 381, it is time to discuss the question whether 1 Cor 15:45c played any role in the inclusion of the term *ζωοποιόν* as an attribute of the Holy Spirit in this expanded version of the Nicene creed of 325. As yet, we have not seen any interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45c related to the pneumatological debate preceding the Council of Constantinople. A closer look at the controversy on the position of the Spirit within the Trinity bears out that Paul's typification of Christ as the last Adam and *πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν* was not used as one of the arguments in favour of the Spirit's attribute *ζωοποιόν*. For example, in 374-375 Basil of Caesarea wrote a book *On the Holy Spirit*, in which

82 John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in primam epistulam ad Corinthios* 42,1 (PG 61, 363.26.37).

83 Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (1990), 24.

he considered, among many other aspects, that the Spirit is life-giving together with God the Father and the Son. He underscored this view by quoting Rom 8:10-11, John 6:63 and 10:27-28, but not 1 Cor 15:45.⁸⁴ Likewise, in 380 or 381 Gregory of Nyssa preached a sermon entitled *On the Holy Spirit. Against the Macedonians, the Spirit Fighters*. There he discussed the life-giving grace and power of the Spirit in finding faith and in baptism, for which he quoted John 5:21 and 6:63, not 1 Cor 15:45.⁸⁵ Michael Haykin investigated the exegesis of 1-2 Corinthians in the pneumatological controversy of those decades, but in his monograph he never refers to 1 Cor 15:45.⁸⁶ So we may safely judge that the bishops who formulated the elaborated version of the Nicene creed did not have this text in mind as a scriptural basis of the Spirit's attribute ζωοποιόν.⁸⁷

16. Theodore of Mopsuestia

Theodore was ordained a priest in Syrian Antioch circa 383, and in 392 he became bishop of the church of Mopsuestia in Cilicia. He died in 428. Under his name ten catechetical homilies on an expanded version of the creed have been preserved in a Syriac translation. Its text does not completely match with the version ascribed to the 381 Council of Constantinople, but it does contain an elaboration on the

84 Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto* 56 (SC 17bis, 452-453).

85 Gregory of Nyssa, *Adversus Macedonios de Spiritu Sancto* (GNO 3,1, 105.19-106.8; 108.18-21). See also *Contra Eunomium* I,315 (GNO 1,1, 120); *Refutatio confessionis Eunomii* 201 (GNO 2,2, 397).

86 Haykin, *The Spirit of God* (1994). Likewise Staats, *Das Glaubensbekenntnis von Nizäa-Konstantinopel* (1996), 25, 76-78, 91-93, 258; Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy* (2004), 211-218, 253-260.

87 This implies that I do not agree with Kinzig, *A History of Early Christian Creeds* (2024), 352, who considers that πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν in the Constantinopolitan creed alludes to 1 Cor 15:45.

Holy Spirit, including the words *πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν*. Wolfram Kinzig argues that Theodore did not discuss the text of Constantinople but of a Meletian synod held in Antioch in 379.⁸⁸ However this may be, since the term *ζωοποιόν* figured in the version used by Theodore, he invoked 1 Cor 15:45, among other texts, in his exposition. His tenth homily reads,

After this they (i.e. the bishops) added in their teaching concerning the Spirit: Giver of Life (ⲛⲓⲥⲓ), an expression which aptly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is God like the expressions discussed above. Our Lord said: “The water that I will give will become in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life” (John 4:14). He refers by his words to the gift of the Holy Spirit which gives everlasting life to those who are worthy of it. ... And the apostle also said: “the letter kills but the Spirit gives life” (ⲛⲓⲥⲓ; 2 Cor 3:6) and showed us that he will make us immortal. And again in another passage: “The first Adam was made a living soul and the second Adam life-giving (ⲛⲓⲥⲓⲁⲛⲓⲥⲓ) Spirit” (1 Cor 15:45bc). He shows by his words that Christ our Lord was changed in his body, at the resurrection from the dead, to immortality by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁹

We see that Theodore interprets the Spirit as “Giver of Life” with respect to Christ who gives life to those who are worthy to receive the Spirit and everlasting life, which starts in the present life. He applies 1 Cor 15:45c, however, to Christ’s own resurrection and immortality thanks to the Holy Spirit. It is the first time that we encounter this interpretation.

Furthermore, Theodore wrote commentaries on the Pauline epistles which have been preserved fragmentarily. *Catena*e fragments of his *Commentary on First Corinthians* include excerpts on 1 Cor 15:45-47 and 48-49. A sentence on 1 Cor 15:45b contains two points that seem abridged

88 Kinzig, *A History of Early Christian Creeds* (2024), 339-344.

89 Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Homiliae catecheticae* 10 (ed. and trans. Mingana, 231-232; 110, trans. slightly adapted). Cf. Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 206-207.

to the extent of being incomprehensible, unless its difficulty is due to Theodore's own notoriously laborious style. The fragment says that Paul did not write (about Adam), "[he became] a life-giving soul" but "a living [soul]". Skipping the second line in Staab's edition, I surmise that the first line is explained by the next clause about "the first human" who "died and could not rise again (*ἀναστῆναι*)". In between, Theodore distinguishes Adam's "living soul" from the soul of irrational creatures that perishes with their bodies.⁹⁰ We read here that even though human souls are not irrational like animals, they cannot regain life or rise again by themselves after death. Then, commenting on 1 Cor 15:45c, the fragment says that the "second human (actually from 1 Cor 15:47) rose by himself (*ἀνέστησεν δι' ἑαυτοῦ*) because he had (a) life-giving Spirit and a soul".⁹¹ Because of the clause "rose by himself" we may safely conclude that Theodore here means Christ who rose from the dead. This is similar to his tenth homily on the Nicene creed, where he also relates the expression "life-giving Spirit" to Christ's resurrection.

In the excerpt Theodore briefly discusses regeneration and resurrection of the believers in his interpretation of 1 Cor 15:46-47, but without referring to Christ as life-giving Spirit who enables the resurrection of those who believe in him.⁹² Probably the full text of the *Commentary* said more about the relationship between the life-giving Spirit and the believers' resurrection, either in their regeneration or eschatologically. It is not known whether Theodore read *φορέσωμεν* or *φορέσομεν* in 1 Cor 15:49, but the remnants of his interpretation of 1 Cor

⁹⁰ Staab, *Pauluskommentare* (1984²), 195, 9-12. Cf. Wickert, *Studien zu den Pauluskommentaren Theodors von Mopsuestia* (1962), 104; Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 207.

⁹¹ Theodore, *Fragments on 1 Cor 15:45-47* (ed. Staab, *Pauluskommentare* [1984²], 195.12-13; my trans.).

⁹² Theodore, *Fragments on 1 Cor 15:45-47* (ed. Staab, *Pauluskommentare* [1984²], 195.13-20). See Wickert, *Studien zu den Pauluskommentaren Theodors von Mopsuestia* (1962), 104, 205 for his emendations of the *catenae* text.

15:46-49 demonstrate that he applied the passage both to the present life of the believers and to the eschatological resurrection. Most likely the few and complicated sentences of the excerpt that discuss 1 Cor 15:45c are defective in this respect.

17. Cyril of Alexandria

Cyril, bishop of Alexandria from 412 to 444, quotes 1 Cor 15:45 several times in his extant works. In the earlier years of his episcopacy, somewhere between 412 and 425, he refers to 1 Cor 15:45 in his anti-Arian *Treasury of the Holy, Consubstantial Trinity*. Under the heading “That the Son of God is life by nature” he lists several testimonies to this statement, the first of which is Jesus’ proclamation, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). A little later he quotes 1 Cor 15:45bc as another proof-text for the heading, without any further explanation.⁹³ Yet, since he associates the designation πνεῦμα ζωοποιού with Christ being life itself and God’s Son, he clearly links “life” and “life-giving” to salvation by Christ and life in communion with him.

In his comments on the Pentateuch called *Glaphyra*, from the same period, Cyril quotes 1 Cor 15:45 as a testimony to the juxtaposition of the first Adam and Christ as a second beginning who effectuates salvation and the ultimate resurrection (1 Cor 15:22).⁹⁴ With a view to the resurrection he reads φορέσομεν in 1 Cor 15:49, “we shall bear the image of the heavenly one”, whereas elsewhere he also reads the exhortation “let us bear” (φορέσωμεν), which applies to the present life.⁹⁵

93 Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus de sancta consubstantiali Trinitate* (PG 75, 649.40-42; 652.5-7).

94 Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyra* 1 (PG 69, 28.50-29.20). For the date see Cyril of Alexandria *Glaphyra on the Pentateuch* (trans. Lunn), vol. 1, 21.

95 Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyra* 1 (PG 69, 29.6-7); φορέσωμεν in e.g. *Fragments on 1 Cor 15:47-49* (ed. Zawadzki, *Der Kommentar Cyrills von Alexandrien zum 1.*

Soon after the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy in 430, Cyril composes a collection of commented proof-texts *To the Most Pious Ladies*, most likely Emperor Theodosius' sisters Arcadia and Marina. This work is meant to refute Nestorius' Christology, which is why it was included in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus of 431. One of its sections is entitled, "That Christ is life and life-giving" ("Ὅτι ζωὴ καὶ ζωοποιὸς ὁ Χριστός). Among other scriptural texts, Cyril quotes 1 Cor 15:45-50, 52e-53. He comments on verse 45,

The first human became a living soul, for as a creature he was in need of the life-giving God (ἐδεῖτο γὰρ ὡς ποίημα τοῦ ζωοποιούντος θεοῦ). Since the last Adam, that is Christ, as God, was not in need of life (ὅτι μὴ ἐδεῖτο ζωῆς ὡς θεός), he became life-giving Spirit for us, which is the pre-eminence proper to [his] divine nature (ἅπερ ἐστὶ θείας φύσεως ἴδιον πλεονέκτημα).⁹⁶

This observation emphasizes Christ's divinity even though he was called "last Adam". Cyril's comments on the following verses, however, stress Christ's humanity, for being the Logos from heaven (cf. 1 Cor 15:47-48) he was born from a woman and became a human. In 1 Cor 15:49 Cyril reads φορέσομεν, "we shall bear the image of the heavenly one", in relation to the future resurrection announced in 1 Cor 15:51-52.⁹⁷

His *Commentary on First Corinthians*, dated to 433-438, has been preserved only fragmentarily in the *catenae*, which include excerpts on 1 Cor 15:44-45, 46, and 47-49.⁹⁸ Expounding verse 45, Cyril says that

Korintherbrief [2015], 252); *Thesaurus de sancta consubstantiali Trinitate* (PG 75, 489.7-9; 569.52-54).

96 Cyril of Alexandria, *Oratio ad dominas* 134 (ed. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, vol. I,15, 95.1.13-25; quoted comments lines 22-25; my trans.).

97 Cyril, *Oratio ad dominas* 134 (ed. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, vol. I,15, 95.25-33).

98 Cyril of Alexandria, *Fragments on 1 Cor 15,44-45, 47-49* (ed. Zawadzki, *Der Kommentar Cyrills von Alexandrien zum 1. Korintherbrief* [2015], 244-253; cf. 58-59 for the date; trans. Maxwell, 80-82).

Adam, who became a living soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$) so that he was psychic, had carnal desires and passions (even in Paradise, as Cyril clarifies later on). Next, the fragment introduces the *second* human who came from heaven (this actually derives from 1 Cor 15:47) and did not become soul but life-giving Spirit. The fragment argues that the Logos came from God the Father, was God by nature, united what was human to himself, and led a sinless life.⁹⁹ This is meant as an explanation of $\piνεῦμα ζωοποιούν$. So, according to this fragment, Cyril explains the label “life-giving Spirit” as a testimony to Christ’s divinity during his incarnation and life on earth.

In Cyril’s anti-Nestorian dialogue from the same years (435-437), entitled *That Christ is One*, he also comments on 1 Cor 15:45bc. A fictitious interlocutor asks whether “the last Adam” refers to “the Logos from God”. Cyril answers that this is true for the time when “he (i.e. the Logos) had become equal to us”, that is, during his life on earth. However, his capacity to give life does not belong to his human but rather to his divine side ($\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\kappa \ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\iota\nu\omicron\nu \ \theta\epsilon\omicron\pi\rho\epsilon\pi\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma \ \delta\grave{\epsilon} \ \mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu \ \tau\omicron \ \zeta\omega\omicron\pi\omicron\iota\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$). At the same time, he is called “last Adam” because he is “born from Adam according to the flesh”. As last Adam he was the second beginning of mankind, through whom humans may receive a new, holy, and imperishable life by the resurrection from the dead.¹⁰⁰ Here too Cyril reads $\piνεῦμα ζωοποιούν$ as a testimony to Christ’s divinity through which he confers salvific life to humans and their future resurrection. Nonetheless, during his life on earth Christ was human as well. The relationship and unity between these two aspects

99 Cyril of Alexandria, *Fragments on 1 Cor 15*, 44-45 (ed. Zawadzki, *Der Kommentar Cyrills von Alexandrien zum 1. Korintherbrief* [2015], 246.17-20; 248.16-24; 250.5-12).

100 Cyril of Alexandria, *Quod unus sit Christus* 772e-773a (SC 97, 496). The editor de Durand puts $\zeta\omega\omicron\pi\omicron\iota\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ between square brackets because, unlike the Greek codices, the Syriac and Armenian translations read *esse in spiritum vivificantum*, “to be life-giving Spirit”. For the date see SC 97, 69-80. Cf. Altermath, *Du corps psychique au corps spirituel* (1977), 164.

were at stake in the debate with Nestorius and his disciples.

We see that Cyril uses the words ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζῶσσοιοῦν both for Christ's divinity during the earthly life that he led as the last Adam, without downplaying his humanity, and as a testimony to the life he gives in his salvation of humans and in the resurrection.

18. Theodoret of Cyrus

Theodoret was born in Syrian Antioch ca. 393. In 423 he became bishop of Cyrus, north-east of Antioch, and he died ca. 458. In the mid-440s he wrote a *Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*, which has been preserved, perhaps because of its succinctness and precision.¹⁰¹ His interpretation of 1 Cor 15:45 reads,

the first assertion (viz. 1 Cor 15:45b; Gen 2:7) we read in the Scriptures, the second one (viz. 1 Cor 15:45c) we came to know through what happened (ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν). Now, he (i.e. Paul) did not call the second Adam (1 Cor 15:47) living spirit but life-giving, for he (i.e. Christ) grants everlasting life to all.¹⁰²

We recognize here elements from John Chrysostom and from Origen's homily on Num 34. The last words "everlasting life to *all*" probably alludes to 1 Cor 15:22b, "*all* will be made alive in Christ". That Theodoret hints at the eschatological resurrection, is confirmed by his comments on 1 Cor 15:46-49, which point to Christ's second coming, not to his coming as the incarnate Logos. Another corroboration of his eschatological take on this passage is his reading φορέσομεν, "we shall bear the image of the heavenly one", in 1 Cor 15:49.¹⁰³ While Didymus,

101 Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul*, vol. 1 (trans. Hill), 1-2.

102 Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio primae epistulae ad Corinthios* 15,45 (PG 82, 365C, trans. Hill, 233, adapted).

103 Theodoret, *Interpretatio primae epistulae ad Corinthios* 15,44-49 (PG 82, 365C-367A).

Theodore, and Cyril used both *φορέσομεν* and *φορέσωμεν*, the latter reading is not found in Theodoret's extant works. In fact, he selects the interpretation that—as we may assume—Chrysostom preferred.

19. *Conclusions*

What does this investigation of the reception of 1 Cor 15:45 in ancient Christianity yield for the understanding of the expression “life-giving Spirit” as a designation of the “last Adam”, Christ?

The earliest allusions to *πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν* in the “*Coptic Book*”, the Valentinians Mark and Theodotus, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, and the *Exegesis on the Soul* agree that these words point to regeneration, salvation, and spiritual vivification of humans, brought about by Christ. In fact, this became the traditional interpretation that, in various terms, is also found in Origen, Apollinaris of Laodicea, Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, and Cyril of Alexandria. This entails that, if this were accepted as the only reading of 1 Cor 15:45c, Paul would have interrupted his discussion of the final resurrection in 1 Cor 15:12-44 and 50-55. However, some of these authors perceived that Paul also—or even in particular—had the eschatological resurrection in mind. This holds for Origen, Didymus, John Chrysostom, Cyril, and Theodoret. Nevertheless, their views of the final resurrection were not all the same, for Origen and Didymus saw it rather as a continuing process instead of a specific event in the future, and they maintained that the resurrection body would be spiritual, in the sense of not fleshly.

Another application of 1 Cor 15:45c is found in Origen and Didymus, who also brought the term “life-giving spirit” to bear on the believers who, thanks to their spiritual renewal, became a “life-giving spirit” themselves. This fits with Origen's and Didymus' expectation of a spiritual resurrection body. All other authors conceive *πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν* in terms of the Holy Spirit or Spirit of Christ. They would

not have agreed with the present-day translation “a life-giving spirit”.

Furthermore, the fact that Christ was called “last Adam [who became] lifegiving Spirit” was used in Christological debates. Tertullian interpreted these two names in terms of Christ being both human and divine, both corporeal and spiritual. Origen regarded the two terms together as references to Christ’s humanity during his earthly life, alongside his divinity. On the contrary, Apollinaris read here that the incarnate Christ was divine and had a divine body, unlike other humans. Cyril read this clause as a testimony to Christ’s divinity, but like Origen and unlike Apollinaris he acknowledged his humanity too. Theodore of Mopsuestia is alone in relating the term *πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν* to Christ’s own resurrection. Also, as far as we can know, he was the first to quote this clause as a corroboration of the addition to the Nicene creed in 381 about the Holy Spirit being “life-giving”.

So, in the ancient reception of 1 Cor 15:45, especially its last clause, we see a striking divergence between the various interpretations, although they do not always exclude each other. The passage can be used for the spiritual renewal in the present life and in the final resurrection, but also in Christological arguments.

My final observation is that many authors who discussed Paul’s chapter about the resurrection in doctrinal (not exegetical) works passed over 1 Cor 15:45 in silence. This suggests a certain embarrassment with the verse. In comparison, in 2 Cor 3:17 Paul says that “the Lord (i.e. Christ) is the Spirit”. This saying was regularly quoted in contemporary Trinitarian debates, as Haykin’s monograph demonstrates.¹⁰⁴ Apparently, Paul’s phrase that the last Adam—undoubtedly Christ—was life-giving Spirit caused uneasiness and confusion.

104 See the index in Haykin, *The Spirit of God* (1994), 252.

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