**The Church at Corinth**

**A Church Facing Inner Problems – #38 Bonus**

**1 Corinthians 15 – Ancient Commentaries**

***The Gospel in Which You Stand***

*NOTE - George collected this amazing array of commentary on 1 Corinthians 15 from several ancient sources and presents it in a verse-by-verse format with subtitles. It is quite long – 30 pages in this 12 point, Times Roman type – so we were unable to copy it as a class handout. But there is a lot of great content here. I read through it with a Bible opened to chapter 15, first reading the verse and then George’s notes. To print it out and save paper, it is about 17 pages if you drop it down to 9 point type, and suggest you highlight the text and switch it to a more-readable two-column format. – Bob Walters*

15: *1.Gospel in which you stand*

 The Gospel Received. Ambrosiaster: Paul is showing the Corinthians that if they have been led away from his teaching, especially from belief in the resurrection of the dead on which it is based, they will lose everything they have believed. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 The Message of the Gospel. Chrysostom: When Paul calls the Corinthian Christians his brothers, he establishes the basis for most of his subsequent assertions. For we became brothers through the work of Christ in his earthly life and death. After all, what is the gospel but the message that God became man was crucified and rose again? This is what the angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary, what the prophets preached to the world and what all the apostles truthfully proclaimed. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.2.15:2

A Reminder. Chrysostom: The Corinthians did not need to learn the doctrine, which they already knew, but they had to be reminded of it and corrected from their errors in understanding it. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.2.

15:3 *Christ Died for Our Sins*

 In Accordance with the Scriptures. Ambrosiaster: The prophet Isaiah said: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter” [Is 53:7] and so on. Revelation [13:8] adds that he was slain from before the foundation of the world. And Deuteronomy [28:66] says: “You will see your life hanging before your eyes, yet you will not believe.” This is expressed in the future tense, to prevent the wicked from claiming that it does not apply to Christ. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 The Justice Wrought in His Death. Cyril of Jerusalem: The iniquity of sinners was not as great as the justice of the One who died for them. The sins we committed were not as great as the justice he embodied, when he laid down his life for us. Catechetical Lectures 13.

 For Our Sins. Chrysostom: How could Christ die for sinners if he were a sinner himself? If in fact he died for our sins, then it is clear that he himself must have been sinless. Therefore he did not die the death of sin but the death of the body. This is what the Scriptures everywhere proclaim. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.3.

 No Loss in Giving. Ambrose: The Son loses nothing when he bestows upon all, just as he also loses nothing when the Father receives the kingdom, nor does the Father suffer loss when he gives what is his own to the Son. The Holy Spirit 1.3.49.

 One Died for All. Cyril of Alexandria: He made his life be an exchange for the life of all. One died for all, in order that we all might live to God sanctified and brought to life through his blood, justified as a gift by his grace. Letter 41.11.

15:4 *Buried, Raised on the Third Day*

 He Was Buried. Chrysostom: This serves to confirm that Christ died a genuine human death and points us once more to the Scriptures for proof. Nowhere does Scripture mean the death of sin, when it makes mention of our Lord’s death, but only the death of the body, and a burial and resurrection of that same body. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.4.

 In Accordance with the Scriptures. Hilary of Poitiers: Paul reminded us that we are to confess the manner of the death and resurrection not so much by literally naming these things but strictly according to the testimony of the Scriptures, so that our understanding of his death might be in accord with the apostles… . He did this in order that we might not become helpless or to be tossed about by the winds of useless disputes or hampered by the absurd subtleties of unsound opinions. On the Trinity 10.67.

15:5 *He Appeared to the Twelve*

 Who Was the Twelfth? Origen: Evidently Matthias was chosen to replace Judas before Jesus ceased appearing to the disciples after his resurrection. Commentary on 1 Corinthians 4.77.

 The Time Unspecified. Chrysostom: The gospel tells us that he appeared first to Mary. But as far as men were concerned, he appeared first to those who most wanted to see him. But which of the apostles are meant here? For Matthias was not added to their number until after the ascension. However, it is likely that Christ appeared even after his ascension into heaven. Paul does not specify the time but merely records the experience. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.5.

 Matthias Included? Oecumenius: Note that he does not say “to the eleven,” and neither does John (Jn 20:24), who writes that Thomas was “one of the twelve.” We should probably say that either he has included Matthias with the other apostles by anticipation or else that he is still thinking of Judas, even after his betrayal and hanging. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:6 *Appearing to Five Hundred*

To Five Hundred. Ambrosiaster: This is not recorded in the Gospels, but Paul knew it independently of them. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 The Compelling List of Unbiased Witnesses. Cyril of Jerusalem: “He appeared to Cephas; and after that to the twelve.” So if you disbelieve one witness, you have twelve witnesses. “Then he was seen by more than five hundred people at once”—if they disbelieve the twelve, then listen to the five hundred. “After that he was seen by James,” his own brother and the first overseer of this [Jerusalem] diocese. Since so noteworthy a bishop was privileged to see the risen Christ, along with the other disciples, do not disbelieve. But you may say that his brother was a biased witness. So then he continues: “He was seen by me.” But who am I? I am Paul, his enemy! “I was formerly a persecutor” but now preach the good news of the resurrection. Catechetical Lectures 14.22.

 Some Have Fallen Asleep. Chrysostom: Paul does not say that some have died but that they have fallen asleep, thereby confirming the truth of the resurrection. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.5.

15:7 *Appearing to James*

 He Appeared to James. Chrysostom: This must be James, the Lord’s brother, whom he ordained as the first bishop of Jerusalem. The apostles mentioned here would include the seventy and others besides the Twelve.23 Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.5.

What We Confess. Basil: We believe and confess that, rising on the third day from the dead, according to the Scriptures, he was seen by his holy disciples and others, as it is written. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father when he will come at the end of time to raise up all men and to render to each according to his works. Concerning Faith.

 Then to All the Apostles. Ambrose: By this he makes it clear that there are other apostles besides those eleven. Homilies on Numbers 27.11.

15:8 *As One Untimely Born*

 Untimely Born. Ambrosiaster: By “untimely” Paul means that he was born again outside time, because he received his apostleship from Christ after the latter had ascended into heaven. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 The Last but More Illustrious. Chrysostom: Paul may have been the last but he was certainly not the least, since he was more illustrious than many who were before him, indeed, more illustrious than them all. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.5.

 Unformed. Theodoret of Cyr: Paul compares himself here to an aborted fetus which is not even regarded by some as fully born. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 266.

15:9 *Least of the Apostles*

 Last in Time. Ambrosiaster: Paul is least because he was the last in time, not because he was inferior in any way to the others. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 Unfit. Chrysostom: Paul says this because he was a humble man and also because it is what he really thought about himself. He was forgiven for having persecuted the church, but it was a shame he never forgot. It taught him the greatness of God’s grace toward him. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.6.

 Why So Fragile? Jerome: These words apply to those who complain: Why wasn’t I created such that I would be free from sin forever? Why was I fashioned such a vessel that I could not endure hard like metal instead of being fragile and easily broken whenever touched? … Let us blush and say what those say who have already obtained their rewards. Let us, who are sinners on earth and encased in this fragile and mortal body, say what we know the saints are saying in heaven. Against the Pelagians 2.25.

 The Just Accuse Themselves. Jerome: If the apostle makes such a confession, how much more should the sinner? Scripture says: “The just man accuses himself when he begins to speak.” If the just man is prompt to accuse himself, how much more should the sinner be? Homily 47 on Psalm 135 (136).8

 Paul Humbled Himself. Chrysostom: He who endured imprisonment, wounds and beatings, who netted the world with epistles, who was called by a heavenly voice, humbled himself, saying, “I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle.” On Repentance 5.27.

 The Greater Victory. Augustine: The Enemy is more completely vanquished in the case of a man over whom he holds fuller sway. Confessions 8.4.

15:10 *Grace Not Given in Vain*

Grace Not in Vain. Ambrosiaster: Paul says all this in order to show that despite his great sins and unworthiness, the grace of God was not given to him for nothing. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

15:10 *Working Harder Than Others*

 The Labors Imposed by Virtue. Basil: He who spends his time in softness and all laxity because of his luxurious living, who is clothed in purple and fine linen and feasting every day in splendid fashion and who flees the labors imposed by virtue has neither labored in this life nor will live in the future, but he will see life afar off, while being racked in the fire of the furnace. Unto the End 19.5.13

 I Worked Harder Than Any. Chrysostom: If Paul was so humble, why did he call attention to his labors? He had to do this in order to justify his right to be a trustworthy witness and a teacher. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 38.7.

 Grace Did Not Find Him Inactive. Chrysostom: You are familiar with Paul, who labored so much and erected so many trophies in combat with the devil. He physically marched throughout the known world. He orbited the earth, ocean, air—he circled the world as if he had wings. He was stoned, beaten and murdered. He suffered everything for the name of God, called from above by a heavenly voice… . We know, we understand, he said, the grace we have received, and it did not find me inattentive. Concerning Almsgiving and the Ten Virgins 3.22.

 The Athlete of Christ. Augustine: Gladly and with the eyes of faith do all in the City of God look up to this great man, Paul, this athlete of Christ, who was anointed by Christ and instructed by him. With him he was nailed to the cross, and through him made glorious. This man was made a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. He lawfully carried on a great conflict in the theater of this world and strained forward to the prize of his heavenly calling. City of God 14.9.

15:10 *The Grace of God with Him*

God Grants Efficacy to Our Labors. Basil: This is the perfect and consummate glory in God: not to exult in one’s own righteousness, but recognizing oneself as lacking true righteousness, to be justified by faith in Christ alone. Paul gloried in despising his own righteousness. In seeking after the righteousness by faith which is of God through Christ, he sought only to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, so as to attain to the resurrection from the dead… . It is God who grants efficacy to our labors. On Humility 20.

 A Larger Measure of Help. Chrysostom: Did you see how he reaped the benefit of God’s liberality and then how abundantly he contributed his own share, by his zeal, his fervor, his faith, his courage, his patience, his lofty mind and his undaunted will? This is why he deserved a larger measure of help from above. Baptismal Instructions 4.10.

 Grace and Labor. Augustine: *Paul did not labor in order to receive grace, but he received grace so that he might labor*. Proceedings of Pelagius 14.36.

 Nothing Accomplished Without God’s Help. Augustine: How, then, is God’s commandment accomplished, even with difficulty, without his help, since if the Lord does not build, the builder is said to have labored in vain. Letter 186, From Alypius and Augustine to Paulinus.

15:11 *We Preach, You Believed*

 Paul’s Credentials. Chrysostom: Paul does not expect the Corinthians to choose between him and the other apostles. He justifies his own credentials as a teacher but at the same time affirms the others as well. There is no difference between them, since their authority is the same. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.1.

15:12 *Denying the Resurrection*

 Christ Is Preached as Raised from the Dead. Chrysostom: Paul grounds his argument for the resurrection of the dead on the fact of Christ’s resurrection. The reality of the latter guarantees the reality of the former. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.2.

 The Pivot of Christian Testimony. Ambrose: How grave an offense it is not to believe in the resurrection of the dead. If we do not rise again, Christ died in vain and did not rise again. For if he did not rise for us, he did not rise at all, because there is no reason why he should rise for himself. On His Brother Satyrus 2.103.

 How Can You Say There Is No Resurrection? Augustine: When the apostle says to the Corinthians, “How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?” he shows plainly that not all of them were claiming this but that some were, and that it is clear they were not outside but among them… . If we had not read in the same letter that “the testimony of Christ is confirmed in you so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace,” we might otherwise have concluded that all the Corinthians were carnal-minded and sensual, not discerning the Spirit of God, “quarrelsome, envious, walking according to man.” Letter 93, To Vincent.

15:13 *If There is No Resurrection*

 We Are Raised. Severian of Gabala: Christ died and rose again for nothing if we are not to rise again as well. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:14 *Preaching and Faith in Vain*

 Otherwise Faith Is in Vain. Chrysostom: Logically Paul would have said here that if Christ had not been raised, historical facts would have been denied, but instead he says something which is much more relevant and indeed frightening to the Corinthians. For if Christ had not risen from the dead, then Paul’s preaching would have been useless and their faith would have no meaning. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.3.

15:15 *God Raised Christ*

False Witness. Augustine: If a lie directed against the temporal life of another is detestable, how much more so is one prejudicial to his eternal life. Such is every lie voiced in the teaching of religion. On that account, the apostle terms it false witness if anyone lies about Christ, even in what might seem to pertain to his praise. On Lying 13.

 15:16 *If the Dead are Not Raised*

 We Shall Rise Also. Pelagius: In other words, if you accept that Christ rose from the dead, believe that we shall rise again also. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 15.

15:17 *Futile Faith, Still in Sins*

 The Chain of Illusion. Cyril of Jerusalem: If the cross is an illusion, the resurrection is an illusion also, and “if Christ has not risen, we are still in our sins.” If the cross is an illusion, the ascension is also an illusion, and everything, finally, becomes unsubstantial. Catechetical Lectures 13.

 If Christ Has Not Been Raised. Chrysostom: If Christ did not rise again, neither was he slain, and if he was not slain, our sins have not been taken away. If our sins have not been taken away, we are still in them, and our entire faith is meaningless. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.4.

15:18 *Those Who Have Fallen Asleep*

Their Dead Taken from Them. Ambrosiaster: Paul says this because the Corinthians will not want to listen to the false prophets once they realize that if they do so their dead, whom they love, will be taken from them. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 Not Dying in Vain. Pelagius: Paul has the martyrs in mind above all. They would have lost their lives in vain if there was no other life to look forward to. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 15.

15:19 *Most to Be Pitied*

If for This Life Only. Ambrose: Paul says this, not because to hope in Christ is miserable but because Christ has prepared another life for those who hope in him. For this life is liable to sin. The life above is reserved for our reward. On His Brother Satyrus 2.124.

 Hope in Christ. Ambrosiaster: It is clear that we hope in Christ both for this life and for the next one. Christ does not abandon his servants but gives them grace, and in the future they will dwell in eternal glory. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 If the Body Does Not Rise. Chrysostom: Even if the soul remains, being infinitely immortal, without the flesh it will not receive those hidden blessings. If the body does not rise again, the soul remains uncrowned with the blessings stored up for it in heaven. In that case, we have nothing to hope for, and our rewards are limited to this life. What could be more wretched than that? Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.4.

 The Folly of Hoping Only in This Life. Maximus of Turin: Therefore Christ is not to be hoped in for this life only, in which the bad can do more than the good, in which those who are more evil are happier, and those who lead a more criminal life live more prosperously. Sermon 96.1.

15:20 *Christ the First Fruits*

 Christ Has Been Raised. Ambrosiaster: Paul says this in order to get at the false prophets who claimed that Christ was never born and thus cannot have died. The resurrection from the dead proves that Christ was a man and therefore able to merit by his righteousness the resurrection of the dead. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

The Head, Then the Body. Pelagius: If the head has risen, then the rest of the body will follow in due course. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 15.

The Power of Death Destroyed. Cyril of Alexandria: For the sake of all he tasted death. Although by nature he was life and was himself the resurrection, he surrendered his own body to death. By his ineffable power he trampled upon death in his own flesh that he might become the firstborn from the dead and the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep… . Even if the resurrection of the dead may be said to be through a man, the man we know it is through is the Word begotten of God. The power of death has been destroyed through him. Letter 17.11.

God Assumed Flesh That Suffered. Cyril of Alexandria: The Word does not suffer insofar as he is viewed as God by nature. Yet the sufferings of his flesh were according to the economy of the dispensation. For in what way would he be “the firstborn of every creature, through whom have come to be principalities and powers, thrones and dominations, in whom all things hold together,” and in what way would he become the “firstborn of the dead” and the “first fruits of those who have fallen asleep,” unless the Word, being God, made his own the body born to suffer? Letter 50.14.

15:21 *Death Came by a Man*

 By A Man. Athanasius: For by the sacrifice of his own body he both put an end to the law which was against us and made a new beginning of life for us, by the hope of resurrection which he has given us. For since from man it was that death prevailed over men, for this cause conversely, by the Word of God being made man has come about the destruction of death and the resurrection of life. On the Incarnation 10.

 Suppose the Word Did Not Become Flesh. Basil: If the sojourn of the Lord in the flesh did not take place, the Redeemer did not pay to death the price for us. He did not by his own power destroy the dominion of death. If that which is subject to death were one thing and that which was assumed by the Lord another, then death would not have ceased performing its own works, nor would the sufferings of the God- bearing flesh have been our gain. He would not have destroyed sin in the flesh. We who had died in Adam would not have been made alive in Christ. Letter 261, To the Citizens of Sozopolis.

 By A Man Came the Resurrection. Ambrose: Man arose because man died. Man was raised up again, but it was God who raised him. Then he was man according to the flesh. Now God is all in all. Now we no longer know Christ according to the flesh, but we have the grace of his flesh. We know him as the first fruits of those who rest, the firstborn of the dead. Unquestionably the first fruits are of the same species and nature as the rest of the fruits… . Therefore, as the first fruits of death were in Adam, so also the first fruits of the resurrection are in Christ. On His Brother Satyrus 2.91.

He Suffered in His Human Flesh. Cyril of Alexandria: He tasted death on behalf of every man in his flesh, which was able to suffer without him ceasing to be life. Accordingly, even though it is stated that he suffered in his flesh, he did not receive the suffering in the nature of his divinity but in his flesh which was receptive to suffering. Letter 55.34.

 By a Man Came Death. Chrysostom: The very human nature which was cast down must itself also gain the victory. For it was by this means that the reproach was wiped away. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.5.

15:22 *Dead in Adam*

 In Adam All Die. Tertullian: If Adam is a type of Christ then Adam’s sleep is a symbol of the death of Christ, and by the wound in the side of Christ was typified the church, the true mother of all the living. On the Soul 43.10.

 Who Is Included? Augustine: This does not mean that all who die in Adam will be members of Christ, since the majority will be punished in eternity by a second death. The apostle uses the word *all* in both clauses because as no one dies in a natural body except in Adam, so no one is made to live again in a spiritual body, except in Christ. City of God 13.23.

 Man and the Son of Man. Augustine: Man indeed brought death to himself and to the Son of Man. But the Son of Man, by dying and rising again, brought life to man. Letter 140, To Honoratus 9.

What of Enoch and Elijah? Severian of Gabala: Strictly speaking, not everyone has died. Enoch and Elijah, for example, never did. Some will be found alive at the second coming of the Savior. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:22 *Made Alive in Christ*

 Raised in Christ. Ambrosiaster: Adam died because he sinned, and so Christ, who was without sin, overcame death, in that death comes from sin. Everyone, the righteous and the unrighteous alike, dies in Adam, and everyone, believers and unbelievers alike, will also be raised in Christ. But the unbelievers will be **handed over for punishment**, even though they appear to have been raised from the dead, because they will receive their bodies back again in order to **suffer eternal punishment** for their unbelief. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.15

 No Eternal Life Except in Christ. Augustine: No human enters into death except through Adam and no one into eternal life except through Christ. This is the meaning of that repeated phrase *all,* because as all men belong to Adam through their first or carnal birth, so all men who belong to Christ come to the second or spiritual birth. Therefore he says “all” in both places because as all who die die only in Adam, so all who will be made alive will not be made alive except in Christ. Letter 167, To Jerome 21.

The Resurrection of the Wicked Not Included. Augustine: Notice how he emphasizes “one” and “one,” that is Adam and Christ, the former for condemnation, the latter for justification… . Obviously he is speaking of the resurrection of the just where there is life eternal, not of the resurrection of the wicked where there will be eternal death. Those who “shall be made alive” are contrasted with the others who will be damned. Letter 157, To Hilarius.

 None Except Through That Door. Augustine: We commonly say that all enter a certain house through one door, not because all humanity enters that house but because no one enters except through that door. It is in this sense that as all die in Adam so do all those who live live in Christ… . Aside from the one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, there is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved. Against Julian 24.

15:23 *Each in Order*

 Variable Sequences of Maturation in Faith. Origen: Although all are contained within the one faith and washed in the one baptism, the process of maturing in faith is not the same for all, but rather “each one in his own order.” Homilies on Genesis 2.

 Each in Order. Ambrose: The fruit of divine mercy is common to all, but the order of merit differs. On His Brother Satyrus 2.92.

 Punishment and Benefit Occur in Differing Degrees. Chrysostom: Just because everyone will be raised from the dead, do not imagine that all will enjoy the same benefits. Even just thinking of punishment, there is a great difference in the degrees of suffering which will be inflicted. How much more then will there be a difference between the fate of sinners, on the one hand, and the righteous on the other. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.5.

15:24 *Destroying All Rule*

The Kingdom Delivered. Origen: When Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, then those living beings, because they have before this been made part of Christ’s kingdom, shall also be delivered up along with the whole of that kingdom to the rule of the Father, so that, when “God shall be all in all,” they also, since they are a part of all, may have God even in themselves, as he is in all things. On First Principles 1.8.

The End. Basil: For us the end for which we do all things and toward which we hasten is the blessed life in the world to come. Homily 19 on Psalm 48.

Then Comes the End. Chrysostom: What rule and power will Christ destroy? That of the angels? Of course not! That of the faithful? No. What rule is it then? That of the devils, about which he says that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the principalities, the powers and the forces of darkness in this present age. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.6.

When He Delivers the Kingdom to God the Father. Cassiodorus: The faithful deserve to be at his right hand. They will judge in company with the Lord. They will pass into eternal peace and joy, so that they are rightly said to be exalted, for through the Lord’s wondrous devotion they attain contemplation of the Lord himself. Explanation of the Psalms 14.

5:25 *All His Enemies Under His Feet*

 He Will Reign. Jerome: Will the Lord rule only until he has put all his enemies under his feet? Will he then stop ruling? Obviously it is only then that he will really begin to rule in the full sense of the word! Against Helvidius 6.

Until What? Gregory of Nazianzus: “He must reign” till such and such a time … and “be received by heaven until the time of restitution” and have the seat at the right hand until the overthrow of his enemies. But after this? Must he cease to be king or be removed from heaven? Why, who shall make him cease, or for what cause? What a bold and very anarchical interpreter you are, and yet you have heard that of his kingdom there shall be no end. Your mistake arises from not understanding that “until” is not always exclusive of what comes after but asserts up to that time, without denying what comes after it. To take a single instance, how else would you understand “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”? Does it mean that he will no longer be so afterward? Theological Oration 30.4.

 All the More King After His Victory. Cyril of Jerusalem: Some say that when his enemies have been put under his feet, he will no longer be king, a bad and stupid thing to say. For if he is king before he has finally defeated his enemies, must he not be all the more king when he has completely mastered them? Catechetical Lectures 15.29.

 The Continuing Conflict. Augustine: He reigns forever. However, in respect to the war waged under him against the devil, this conflict will obviously continue “until he has put all his enemies under his feet.” But afterward there will be no conflict, since we shall enjoy an everlasting peace. Questions 69.8.

 Until His Enemies Confess His Reign. Augustine: It is necessary for Christ’s kingdom to be manifested to such a degree until all his enemies confess that he does reign… . That is, the apostle says, it is necessary for him to make his reign so clearly evident until his enemies dare not at all deny that Christ reigns. Questions 69.5.

 Beggaring Description. Cyril of Jerusalem: This body shall be raised but not in its present weakness. It shall be raised the very same body, but by putting aside corruption it shall be transformed, just as iron becomes fire when combined with fire, as the Lord who raises us knows. This body therefore shall rise, but it will not abide in its present condition, but as an eternal body. No longer will it, as now, need nourishment for life nor stairs for its ascent. It will become spiritual, a marvelous thing, beggaring description. Catechetical Lectures 18.

 Christ’s Reign Fulfilled. Theodoret of Cyr: The final victory will be the fulfillment, not the end, of Christ’s reign. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 270.

 Rendered Powerless. Oecumenius: The principalities and powers will be abolished and will be left powerless. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:26 *The Last Enemy, Death*

 The Alienated Will. Origen: For the destruction of the last enemy must be understood in this way: not that its substance which was made by God shall perish, but that the hostile purpose and will which proceeded not from God but from itself will come to an end. It will be destroyed, therefore, not in the sense of ceasing to exist but of being no longer an enemy and no longer death… . We must not think, however, that it will happen all of a sudden, but gradually and by degrees, during the lapse of infinite and immeasurable ages, seeing that the improvement and correction will be realized slowly and separately in each individual person. On First Principles 3.6.5.

 “Be Exalted in the Borders of My Enemies.” Jerome: As the psalmist pleads that God be glorified in the borders of his enemies, so do we. When they have ceased to be enemies, then you, O Lord, will be exalted among them. Homily 3 on Psalm 7.11

 The Last Enemy. Chrysostom: In the beginning death entered last, after the counsel of the devil and our disobedience. Similarly, death will be the last thing to be destroyed. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.6.

 Without Adversary. Augustine: It is one thing to fight well, which is the case now when the struggle of death is resisted. It is something else not to have an adversary, which will be the case when death “our last enemy” is destroyed. On Continence 3.6.

 The Mastery in Love by Vision. Augustine: The new life begins now by faith and is carried on by hope, but then will come the time when death shall be swallowed up in victory, when that “enemy, death, shall be destroyed last,” when we shall be changed and become like the angels… . We have now mastered fear by faith, but then we shall have the mastery in love by vision. Letter 55, To Janarius.

Their Prize in Peace, Their Strength in Battle. Augustine: In this house God’s people shall everlastingly dwell with their God and in their God, and God with his people and in his people, God filling his people, his people filled with God, so that “God may be all in all”—the very same God being their prize in peace who was their strength in battle. City of God 17.12.

15:27 *All Things in Subjection Under Christ*

 The Readiness to Receive God. Origen: Christ the Lord himself will instruct those who are able to receive him in his character of wisdom, after their preliminary training in his holy virtues, and will reign with them until such time as he subjects them to the Father who subjected all things to him. When they have been rendered capable of receiving God, then God will be to them “all in all.” On First Principles 3.6.9.

 All Things in Subjection.. Origen: By this fact Christ teaches the rulers the techniques of government. On First Principles 3.5.6.

 Christ Takes Our Infirmities Upon Himself. Basil: He makes your subjection his own, and because of your struggle against virtue, he calls himself subjected… . He calls himself naked, if any of you are naked… . When one is in prison, he said that he himself was the one imprisoned. For he himself took up our infirmities and bore the burden of our ills. And one of our infirmities is insubordination, and this he also bore. Therefore, even the adversities which happen to us the Lord makes his own, taking upon himself our sufferings because of his fellowship with us. An Apology to the Caesareans, Letter 8.

 Conformable to His Body. Hilary of Poitiers: Hence the first step in the mystery is that all things have been made subject to him, and then he himself becomes subject to the One who subjects all things to himself. Just as we subject ourselves to the glory of his reigning body, the Lord himself in the same mystery subjects himself in the glory of his body to the One who subjects all things to himself. We are made subject to the glory of his body in order that we may possess the glory with which he reigns in the body, because we shall be conformable to his body. On the Trinity 11.36.

Answering Arian Objections. Theodoret of Cyr: The Arians and the Eunomians love to play with this and the next verse, claiming that it proves that Christ is not God. But here they are confusing two different things. The apostle is not speaking about Christ in his divinity but about his humanity, since the whole discussion is about the resurrection of the flesh. It is in his humanity that he will be subject, because all humanity is subject to the divine. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 271–72.

Contrast with the Revolt of Zeus. Oecumenius: Paul is writing to converted Greeks, because the Greeks worshiped Zeus, who revolted against his own father in order to seize his kingdom. He was concerned lest they should imagine something similar in the case of Christ and his Father. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:28 *All Things Subjected to Him*

 Subjection to the Father. Origen: As long as I am not subjected to the Father, neither is he said to be “subjected” to the Father. Not that he himself is in need of subjection before the Father, but for me, in whom he has not yet completed his work, he is said not to be subjected, for “we are the body of Christ and members in part.” Homilies on Leviticus 7.4.

 When All Things Are Subjected. Ambrosiaster: The subjection of Christ to the Father means that every creature will learn that he is subject to Christ, who in turn is subject to the Father, and will thus confess that there is only one God. But Christ’s subjection to the Father is not the same thing as our subjection to the Son, because our subjection is one of dependence and not the union of equals. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

Source of the Son’s Power. Oecumenius: The things of the Son belong to God as Father, and everything which the Son can do is attributed to the Father, for he who begot him outside time is the source of the Son’s power. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:28 *The Son Subjected to Him*

 Subjection the Crowning Glory of the Son’s Work. Origen: But the heretics, not understanding (I cannot tell why) the apostle’s meaning contained in these words, deprecate using the term *subjection* in regard to the Son… . Such men do not understand that the subjection of Christ to the Father reveals the blessedness of our perfection and announces the crowning glory of the work undertaken by him. On First Principles 3.5.7.

 Speaking About God as Substance. Marius Victorinus: Therefore God is also Being, both existing and substance, although he is above all that because he is the Father of all. We should not be afraid to use the word *substance* of God, because when words are lacking to describe the highest realities, it is not inappropriate for us to take terms borrowed from what we do know and understand and use them in this special sense. Against Arius 2.2.2.

 The Subjection of the Father and the Son. Gregory of Nazianzus: As the Son subjects all to the Father, so does the Father to the Son, the one by his work, the other by his good pleasure. Theological Oration 30.5.

The Son Willingly Subjected to the Father. Chrysostom: Why does Paul talk about the subjection of the Son to the Father, when he has just finished speaking about the subjection of everything to Christ? The apostle speaks in one way when he is talking about the Godhead alone and in another way when he is speaking about the divine dispensation. For example, once he has established the context of our Lord’s incarnation, Paul is not afraid to talk about his many humiliations, because these are not inappropriate to the incarnate Christ, even though they obviously cannot apply to God. In the present context, which of these two is he talking about? Given that he has just mentioned Christ’s death and resurrection, neither of which can apply to God, it is clear that he is thinking of the divine dispensation of the incarnation, in which the Son has willingly subjected himself to the Father. But note that he introduces a corrective by saying that the one who put all things under him is himself excepted from the general rule. This is meant to remind us that Christ the Son is also truly God. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 39.7.

 Whether the Father is Greater Than the Son. Augustine: If the Son is equal, how is the Father greater? For the Lord himself says: “because the Father is greater than I.” However, the rule of Catholic faith is this: when the Scriptures say of the Son that he is less than the Father, the Scriptures mean in respect to the assumption of humanity. But when the Scriptures point out that he is equal, they are understood in respect to his deity. Questions 69.1.

15:28 *God Everything to Every One*

 God Will Be All in All. Origen: God will be all things in each person in such a way that everything which the reasoning mind can feel or understand or think will be all God. When purified from all the dregs of its vices and utterly cleared from every cloud of wickedness, the mind will no longer be conscious of anything besides or other than God. That mind will think of God and see God and hold God. God will be the mode and measure of its every movement. In this way God will be all in all. On First Principles 3.6.3.

Finishing the Work God Gave the Son. Origen: When “he shall have completed” his “work” and brought his whole creation to the height of perfection, then he is said to be “subjected” in these whom he subjected to the Father. In these “he finished the work that God had given him that God may be all in all.” Homilies on Leviticus 7.6.

 The Maturity Toward Which We Speed. Gregory of Nazianzus: “God will be all in all” at the time of restoration—“God,” not “the Father.” The Son will not revert to disappear completely in the Father, like a torch temporarily withdrawn from a great flame and then joined up again with it—Sabellians must not wrest this text. No, God will be “all in all” when we are no longer what we are now, a multiplicity of impulses and emotions, with little or nothing of God in us, but are fully like God, with room for God and God alone. This is the “maturity” toward which we speed. Theological Oration 30.7.

 The Whole Choir of Virtues. Jerome: God will be all things in all, so that there will not be only wisdom in Solomon, meekness of soul in David, zeal in Elias and Phineas, faith in Abraham, perfect love in Peter … , zeal of preaching in the chosen vessel [Paul], and two or three virtues each in others. But God will be completely in all. The whole number of the saints will be glorified in the whole choir of virtues, and God will be all things to all. Against the Pelagians 18.

The Vision of His Own Form. Augustine: The vision itself is face to face, which is promised to the just as their supreme reward. This will come to pass when he shall deliver the kingdom to God the Father. There, he wants it understood, will also be the vision of his own form, when the whole creation, together with that form in which the Son of God has been made the Son of Man, has been made subject to God. According to this form, the Son himself will be made subject to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all. On the Trinity 1.12.28.

 All Will Share. Augustine: God will be the consummation of all our desiring—the object of our unending vision, of our unlessening love, of our unwearying praise. And in this gift of vision, the response of love, this paean of praise, all alike will share, as all will share in everlasting life. City of God 22.30.

All Things Subjected to Him. Augustine: Even if there is no chance of manumission, slaves are now to make their slavery a kind of freedom by serving with love and loyalty, free from fear and feigning, until injustice becomes a thing of the past and every human sovereignty and power is done away with, so that God may be all in all. City of God 6.15.

 From Shadows to Light. Augustine: The allusion here is to the transformation of the saints when they pass from the old shadows of time into the new lights of eternity. City of God 20.22.

Filled with God. Augustine: In heaven we shall not experience need, and on that account we shall be happy. We shall be filled, but it will be with God. He will be for us all those things which we here look upon as being of great value. Easter Sermon 255.8.

 15:29 *Baptized on Behalf of the Dead*

 Reason for Baptizing the Dead. Ambrosiaster: It seems that some people were at that time being baptized for the dead because they were afraid that someone who was not baptized would either not rise at all or else rise merely in order to be condemned. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

The Marcionite Practice. Didymus the Blind: The Marcionites baptize the living on behalf of dead unbelievers, not knowing that baptism saves only the person who receives it. Paul-ine Commentary from the Greek Church.

Baptism Meaningless Without Resurrection. Chrysostom: Sin has brought death into the world, and we are baptized in the hope that our dead bodies will be raised again in the resurrection. If there is no resurrection, our baptism is meaningless and our bodies will remain as dead as they are now. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 40.2.

15:30 *In Peril Every Hour*

 Theme. Ambrosiaster: The theme here is that unless there is such a fact as the resurrection of the dead, all this is pointless. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

Taking Risks for Faith. Didymus the Blind: If the soul is not immortal, if the body does not rise from the dead, there would be no point taking risks on behalf of the faith. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

Why in Peril? Chrysostom: Who would choose a life of constant danger if there was no point to it? Some people do this kind of thing in a moment of vain boasting, but that is not the same as dedicating one’s whole life to it over a number of years. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 40.3.

15:31 *Dying Every Day*

The Fruit of Sufferings. Chrysostom: Paul rejoices in his sufferings because he sees what wonderful results they produce in people like the Corinthian Christians. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 40.3.

The Greatness of Providence. Theodoret of Cyr: Here Paul outlines both the magnitude of the problems he faces and the greatness of God’s providential care for him. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 275.

15:32 *What Do I Gain?*

Dead Already. Clement of Alexandria: They are in fact dead, not tomorrow but already—dead to God. Christ the Educator 3.11.81.

A Prophetic Quotation. Chrysostom: Paul quotes Isaiah [22:13–14] in order to mock this suggestion. Isaiah after all was speaking about hard and reprobate people who were in the habit of talking like this. If they could find no forgiveness under the law, how much less will they be ready to be pardoned by the gospel of grace! Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 40.4.

The Epicurean Illusion. Ambrose: If all hope of the resurrection is lost, let us eat and drink and lose not the enjoyment of the things present, for we have none to come… . The Epicureans say they are followers of pleasure because death means nothing to them, because that which is dissolved has no feeling, and that which has no feeling means nothing to us. Thus they show that they are living only carnally, not spiritually. They do not discharge the duty of the soul but only of the flesh. They think that all life’s duty is ended with the separation of the soul and body. Letter 59

15:33 *Do Not Be Deceived*

Blind Guides. Cyprian: The Lord teaches and admonishes that we must withdraw from such. “They are blinded guides of the blind. But if the blind man guide a blind man, both shall fall into a pit.” Such a one is to be turned away from, and whoever has separated himself from the church is to be shunned. Such a man is perverted and is condemned by his very self. Does he seem to himself to be with Christ, who acts contrary to the elders of Christ, who separates himself from association with his clergy and his people? That man bears his arms against the church; he fights against God’s plan. The Unity of the Church 17.

 Good Corrupted by Evil. Origen: We see quiet and respectable men who, when they have become associated with turbulent and shameless people, have their good manners corrupted by evil conversations. They are turned into men of the same sort as those who are steeped in every kind of witness. This sometimes happens to men of mature age, who prove that they have lived more chastely in youth than when advanced years had granted them the opportunity of a freer life. On First Principles 3.1.5.

The Chastisement of God. Cyprian: An enemy of the altar, a rebel against Christ’s sacrifice, a traitor to his faith, a blasphemous renegade, a disobedient servant, an undutiful son, a hostile brother, he scorns the bishops, turns his back on God’s priests and dares to set up another altar, to offer another prayer in unlawful words, to profane the true offering of the Lord with false sacrifices. Does he not know that the presumption which strives against the ordinance of God is punished by the chastisement of God? The Unity of the Church 17.

 Discretion. Jerome: You despise gold; someone else loves it. You spurn wealth; he eagerly pursues it. You love silence, weakness and privacy. He takes delight in talking and effrontery in the public square, and streets, and apothecary shops… . Do not remain under the same roof with him. Do not rely on your past continence. You cannot be holier than David or wiser than Solomon… . If in the course of your clerical duty you have to visit a widow or a virgin, never enter the house alone. Let your companions be persons who will not disgrace you… . You must not sit alone with a woman secretly and without witnesses. If she has anything confidential to disclose, she is sure to have some nurse or housekeeper, some virgin, some widow, some married woman. She cannot be so friendless as to have none except you to whom she can venture to confide her secrets. Letter 52.

 The Rebuke of Bad Company. Chrysostom: Paul says this both in order to rebuke their past conduct and to show that he makes some allowance for them, in the hope that they will now repent and return to the right path. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 40.4.

15:34 *Sin No More*

Awaking from Ignorance. Didymus the Blind: The wise are on the lookout for wrongdoing and have awakened from the sleep of ignorance. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

Come to Your Right Mind. Chrysostom: Paul sounds here as if he were talking to drunkards and madmen, for it is people like that who are in the habit of making sudden changes of behavior. Those who have no knowledge of God are those who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 40.4.

15:35 *What Kind of Body in the Resurrection?*

 The Mystery of the Growing Seed. Ambrose: Some may wonder how decayed bodies can become sound again, scattered members brought together, and destroyed parts restored. Yet no one seems to wonder how seeds softened and broken by the dampness and weight of the earth grow and become green again. Such seeds, of course, are rotted and dissolved by contact with the earth. But when the generative moisture of the soil imparts life to the buried and hidden seeds by a kind of life-giving heat, they receive the animating force of the growing plant. Then gradually, nature raises from stalk the tender life called the growing ear, and, like a careful mother, wraps it in a sheath as a protection against its being nipped at this immature stage by the frost or scorched by the sun when the kernels are emerging, as it were, from early infancy. On His Brother Satyrus 2.55.

 Argument and Reason. Chrysostom: Why does Paul argue like this, instead of simply referring his hearers to the power of God as he does elsewhere? Here he is dealing with people who do not believe in what he is saying, so he gives them reasons for it. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 41.2.

Healed Bodies. Pelagius: Everything wrong with our bodies in this life will be healed in the resurrection. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 15.

15:36 *Life Through Death*

Seeds and Human Bodies. Chrysostom: Notice how Paul utilizes language appropriate to seeds and plants, yet talks instead about life and death in a way more appropriate to our human bodies. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 41.2.

 The Naturalness of Rising Again. Ambrose: We must not doubt what is more in accord with nature than against it. For it is as natural that all things living should rise again as it is unnatural that they should perish. On His Brother Satyrus 2.57.

15:37 *Sowing a Bare Kernel*

The Grain Restored from Corruption. Origen: The power which exists in a grain of wheat refashions and restores the grain, after its corruption and death, into a body with stalk and ear. On First Principles 2.10.3.

Not the Body Yet to Be. Ambrosiaster: If a seed dies and comes back again with so much additional benefit to the human race, why is it incredible that a human body should rise again, by the power of God, with an equally improved substance? Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

15:38 *To Each Kind of Seed*

God Transcends the Standards of Nature. Gregory of Nyssa: It seems to me that here Paul is refuting those who ignore the particular standards of nature and assess the divine power in the light of their own strength. They think that God can do only as much as man can comprehend. They think that what is beyond us also exceeds the power of God. On the Soul and the Resurrection.

 God Gives As He Has Chosen. Augustine: He did not say God “gave” or “ordered” but God “gives,” that you may know how the Creator applies the effective power of his wisdom to the creation of things which come into existence daily at their appointed times. Letter 205.

15:39 *Not All Flesh is Alike*

Differing Types of Resurrection. Chrysostom: Here Paul distinguishes different kinds of resurrection. Do not suppose that just because grain is sown and it all comes up as ears of corn that therefore every resurrection will be the same in honor. For even in the world of seeds, some are more valuable than others. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 41.4.

God’s Power Demonstrated. Ambrosiaster: Let the Sophists explain this if they can! All the philosophers of this world are unwilling to submit their minds to the law of God in order to believe in him. Instead they confound one another with diverse and mutually contradictory theories, none of which can be proved. God, on the other hand, does not argue. Instead, he demonstrates his power by raising Christ from the dead. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 Every Nature Is Wholly Created by God. Augustine: Whatever bodily or seminal causes may play a part in reproduction, by the intermingling of the two sexes, or in animals, or even by the influence of angels, and whatever longings or emotions of the mother may affect the features or the hue while the fetus is soft and pliable, nevertheless every nature as such, however affected by circumstances, is created wholly by the supreme God. It is the hidden and penetrating power of God’s irresistible presence that gives being to every creature that can be said to be, whatever its genus and species may be. For without his creative act, a nature would not only not be in this or that genus. It simply could not have being at all. City of God 12.26.

 An Immortal Body. Theodore of Mopsuestia: In the resurrection a better body is constructed, one which is no longer flesh and blood as such but which is an immortal and indestructible living being. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:40 *Celestial and Terrestrial Bodies*

 Differences Among Earthly Bodies. Origen: Even among earthly bodies there are no small differences. Take the human race, for example. Some are Greeks and some are barbarians, and among the barbarians, some are wilder than others. Some have higher laws. Some lower ones, and some follow savage customs which are not laws at all. On First Principles 2.9.3.

 Convince by Gradual Steps. Augustine: If any man does not believe that common flesh can be changed into a nature of this sort, he is to be convinced toward faith by gradual steps. If you ask them whether earth can be changed into water, that will not seem to him incredible because there is no great distance between these two elements. Again if you ask whether water can be changed into air, he will agree that that is not absurd because these two elements are close neighbors. Faith and the Creed 10.24.

 Whether the World Itself Is Eternal. Augustine: Porphyry says: “You praise the body to me without good reasons. No matter what kind of body it is, you must escape from it if you wish to be happy.” Philosophers say this, but they are wrong. They are raving… . I read your books where you say that the world is animated, that the heavens, the earth, the seas, all the huge bodies which exist, all the immense elements of all times, this whole universal body which consists of all these elements—all this, you say, is a vast living thing and has its own soul. But you claim that it does not have the senses of the body because outside of it there is nothing which can be perceived. Nevertheless you say it has intelligence, and that it leads to God, and that the soul of the world is called Jupiter… . You claim that the same world is eternal, that it will always exist, that it will not have an end. If then the world is eternal and remains without any end, if this world is a living thing and if its soul is always held in the world, then as a matter of fact, must we then flee every kind of body? Easter Sermon 241.7.

15:41 *Star Differs from Star*

 Another Glory for Stars. Jerome: The members of the one church are different. Just as the sun has its own brilliance, and the moon also tempers the darkness of the night. And the five other stars called the wandering stars traverse the sky, differing both in their courses and in their brilliance. There are other countless stars that we see shining in the firmament. The brilliance of each of these is different, and yet each and every star is perfect, according to its own standard, to the degree that, in comparison with a greater star, it lacks perfection… . So the eye cannot say to the hand: “I do not need your help.” Against the Pelagians 16.

 Differences in Honor. Chrysostom: Paul switches metaphors in order to underline the fact that although there is only one resurrection, there will be great differences of honor from one body to another. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 41.4.

 The Eye Needs the Body. Augustine: In the body the eyes are held in high esteem. But they would be less esteemed if they were all alone or if there were no other members of seemingly less worth. In the heavens the sun outshines the moon but does not scorn it, and “star differs from star in glory” but is never measuring itself through pride. The Excellence of Widowhood 6.8.

 Creatures Exist Locally. Fulgentius: The diversity of corporeal natures demonstrates that each one of them is not what it is because of what it could always have had all by itself. Rather it is what it is because of what it has received from the plan and working of the one omnipotent, unchangeable and all-wise Creator. If any corporeal creature whatsoever were of one and the same nature as the holy Trinity, which is the one God, it would not exist in any place locally, nor would it ever undergo change because of passage of time, nor would it move from one place to another, nor would it be circumscribed by the fact of its mass. To Peter on the Faith 26–27.

15:42 *Raised Imperishable*

 What Is Raised Is Imperishable. Didymus the Blind: Just as the rational soul is not good or bad in itself but is capable of becoming either of these, so our body is neither perishable nor imperishable by nature but acquires these immanent, essential qualities in due course. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

 Whether Believers Continue to Struggle with Sin. Augustine: In due time I yielded to better and more enlightened minds, or rather, to truth itself, as I heard in the words of the apostle the groaning of the saints in their battle against carnal concupiscence. Although the saints are spiritually minded, they are still carnal in the corruptible body which remains a weight upon the soul. They will, however, be spiritual also in body when the body sown animal will rise spiritual. They are still prisoners under the wall of sin, in as much as they are subject to stimulation by desires to which they do not consent. Thus I came to understand this matter as did Hilary, Gregory, Ambrose, and other holy and renowned teachers of the church, who saw that the apostle, by his own words, fought strenuously the same battle against carnal concupiscences he did not wish to have yet in fact did have. Against Julian 70.

15:43 *Raised in Glory*

 Raised in Power. Didymus the Blind: When the body formed by the copulation of male and female is sown, dishonor and weakness will be in it because it is the body of a perishing soul and shares its characteristics. But when it rises again by the power of God, it appears as a spiritual body, having imperishability, power and honor. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

Dishonor Will Vanish. Ambrosiaster: The body is sown in dishonor because it is placed in a coffin where it rots and is eaten by worms. But when it rises again, it will do so in glory, and all trace of this dishonor will vanish. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

Vivified by the Spirit. Augustine: We will still be bodies, so vivified by the spirit, however, as to retain the substance of the flesh without suffering the accidents of sluggishness and mortality. City of God 13.22

15:44 *Physical and Spiritual Bodies*

The Same Body Will Rise. Origen: In regard to our bodily nature we must understand that there is not one body which we now use in lowliness and corruption and weakness and a different one which we are to use hereafter in incorruption and power and glory. Rather this same body, having cast off the weaknesses of its present existence, will be transformed into a thing of glory and made spiritual, with the result that what was a vessel of dishonor shall itself be purified and become a vessel of honor and a habitation of blessedness. On First Principles 3.6.6.

The Whole Creation to Be Delivered. Origen: The quality of a spiritual body is something such as will make a fitting habitation not only for all saints and perfected souls but also for that “whole creation” which is to be “delivered from the bondage of corruption.” On First Principles 3.6.4.

Raised a Spiritual Body. Origen: It is from the natural body that the power and grace of the resurrection calls forth the spiritual body, when it changes it from dishonor to glory. On First Principles 2.10.1.

 Resurrection Signified in the Miracle of the Seed. Macrina: The seed does not germinate unless it is dissolved in the earth, rarefied and made for us, so that it is mixed with the moisture nearby and dust changes into root and sprout, and it does not stop there but changes into a stalk with sections in between which are surrounded by chains, as it were, so as to be able to hold the grain in an upright position… . Thus the apostle says that the mystery of the resurrection is pre-signified before us in the miracles performed in the seeds. The divine power in its surpassing excellence not only gives back to see but adds many great and more wonderful features with which nature is magnificently adorned. [The Teaching of Macrina] On the Soul and the Resurrection.

Growth in Due Season. Ambrose: You are sown as are all other things. Why, then, do you wonder whether you will rise again like the rest? You believe the seed because you see it. You do not believe the rising again because you do not see it. “Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.” Yet, before the proper season arrives, not even the seed is believed. For not every season is suitable for seeds to grow. Wheat is sown at one time and comes up at another time. At one time the vine is grafted. At another shoots begin to grow, foliage becomes luxuriant, and grapes take form. At one time, the olive tree is planted. At another, as though heavy with child and burdened with a progeny of berries, it is bent low in the abundance of its own fruit. But before the proper time arrives for each, production is restricted. Neither the tree nor the plant has the time of bearing within its own power. On His Brother Satyrus 2.60.

The Spirit Will Dwell Permanently. Chrysostom: Is our present body not spiritual as well? Yes it is, but then it will be more so. For now the grace of the Holy Spirit often leaves people who commit great sins, and even if he remains, the life of the flesh depends on the soul, with the result that the Spirit plays no part. But after the resurrection this will no longer be so, because then the Spirit will dwell permanently in the flesh of the righteous and the victory will be his, even while the soul is also alive. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 41.5.

 The Spiritual Body. Augustine: As the Spirit, when it serves the flesh, is not improperly said to be carnal, so the flesh, when it serves the spirit, will rightly be called spiritual—not because changed into spirit, as some suppose who misinterpret the text, “What is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body,” but because it will be so subject to the spirit that, with a marvelous pliancy of perfect obedience, it will accept the infallible law of its indissoluble immortality, putting aside every feeling of fatigue, every shadow of suffering, every sign of slowing down. This “spiritual body” will not only be better than any body on earth in perfect health but will surpass even that of Adam or Eve before their sin. City of God 13.20.

 The Lord and the Spirit. Oecumenius: Christ had a spiritual body, because he had received the full presence of the Holy Spirit when the dove rested on him. So the Lord had the power of the Paraclete in his humanity in a way distinguishable from his divinity, since he was himself the Spirit. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.37

 15:45 *A Living Being*

 The Hope of Better Things. Chrysostom: The apostle said these things so that we might learn that the signs and promises both of this present life and of that which is to come have now come upon us. He sets out the better things as matters for hope and indicates that they have already begun, because their root and their source have been revealed. If that is the case, there is no need to doubt that the fruits will appear in due course. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 41.6.

 The Natural and the Spiritual Body Distinguished. Augustine: The first man, Adam, was made into a living soul … but of all the animals it was said: “Let the earth bring forth the living creatures.” We understand, then, that the natural body is said to be like the other animals because of the dissolution and corruption of death. It is daily renewed by food, and when the bond of life is broken it is dissolved. But the spiritual

body which is now with the Spirit is immortal. Letter 205, To Consentius.

15:46 *Physical Death, Then Spiritual*

 Lesser and Better Things. Chrysostom: In God’s plan, things keep getting better. This is why Paul says that the lesser things have already come to pass and that the better ones are on the way… . For the farmer, seeing the grain dissolving, does not mourn. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 41.6.

 The Clay Becomes Gradually Molded. Augustine: First comes the clay that is only fit to be thrown away, with which we must begin but in which we need not remain. Afterward comes what is fit for us, that into which we can be gradually molded and in which, when molded, we may remain. City of God 15.1.

 Readiness for Celestial Habitation. Augustine: The spiritual body is understood as a body so subject to spirit that it may be suited to its celestial habitation, all earthly weakness and corruption and being changed and converted into celestial purity and stability. Faith and the Creed 6.13.

15:47 *A Man from Heaven*

 Present Life and the Life to Come. Chrysostom: The previous difference was between the present life and the life to come, but this difference is between life before grace revealed and the life after grace is revealed. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.1.

 The Heavenly Man. Ambrose: It is not the spiritual that comes first but the physical, and then the spiritual… . The last one is like the sum of the whole. It is he alone who, like the cause of the world for which all things were made, dwells in all the elements. The second man from heaven, the resurrected, heavenly man, lives amid beasts, swims with fish, flies above the birds, talks with angels, dwells on earth, does battle in heaven, ploughs the sea, feeds in the air, is a tiller of the soil, a traveler on the deep, a fisher in streams, a fowler in the air, an heir in heaven, a joint heir with Christ. Letter 49.

 First the Natural Body, Then the Spiritual. Augustine: First comes in the natural body such as Adam was the first man to possess. Had he not sinned, he would never have died. Such a body we too possess, except that its nature as a result of sin has become so changed for the worse that it is now faced with inexorable death. Such a body Christ also deigned to assume for our sakes, not indeed by necessity but in virtue of his power. Afterward, however, comes the spiritual body such as that which Christ, our head, was the first to have been, but which we, his members, will have at the final resurrection of the dead. City of God 13.23.

 The Second Man. Theodoret of Cyr: Paul is referring here to the second coming of Christ. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 279.

15:48 *Those of the Dust*

 The Man of Dust. Origen: If you remain in what is of the earth, you will be turned away in the end. You must be changed yourself, you must be converted, you must be made “heavenly.” Homilies on Genesis 9.

Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin. Hilary of Poitiers: The first man was made from the slime of the earth. The second man came from heaven. By using the word *man,* he taught the birth of this man from the virgin, who in fulfilling her function as a mother acted in accordance with the nature of her sex in the conception and birth of the man. And when he asserted that the second man was from heaven, he testified that his origin was from the appearance of the Holy Spirit who came upon the virgin. Thus precisely while he was a man, he was also from heaven. The birth of this man was from the virgin. The conception was from the Spirit. On the Trinity 10.

 Formed from Mire. Maximus of Turin: Adam is formed from mire by the hands of God. Christ is formed in the womb by the Spirit of God. Sermon 50.2.

15:48 *Those of Heaven*

The Man of Heaven. Chrysostom: The man of heaven indicates a lofty and severe life on the one hand, with something quite different [man of dust] on the other. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.1.

 The Image of the Earthly and the Heavenly. Augustine: If you do not like the Christian faith, say so. But you will not find another Christian faith. There is one man unto life; there is one unto death. The one is only man; the other is God and man. Through the one the world was made the enemy of God. Through the other those chosen from the world are reconciled to God. For “As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” Therefore even as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly. Whoever tries to undermine these foundations of the Christian faith will himself be destroyed, but they will remain firm. Against Julian 4.

The Heavenly Became Earthly to Make the Earthly Heavenly. Augustine: The Lord who was heavenly became earthly that he might make heavenly those who were earthly. From immortal he became mortal by taking the form of a servant, not by changing the nature of the Lord, that he might make immortal those who were mortal by imparting the grace of the Lord, not by retaining the offense of the servant. Letter 205, To Consentius.

15:49 *Bearing the Same Image*

The Image of the Heavenly. Origen: You bore at that time “the image of the earthly.” But now since these things have been heard, having been cleansed from the whole earthly mass and weight by the Word of God, make the “image of the heavenly” shine brightly in you. Homilies on Genesis 13.4.

The Image of the Man of Heaven. Ambrosiaster: This means that just as we have borne the corruptible body of the earthly Adam, so we shall in the future bear an incorruptible body, like that of the resurrected Christ. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

God Dwells in the Heavenly Man. Cyril of Jerusalem: They are also a “heaven” “bearing the likeness of the heavenly man,” since God is dwelling in them and mingling with them. Mystagogical Lectures 5.11.

 By Choice, Not Nature. Chrysostom: To “bear an image” is not so much a matter of our nature as such, as of our choices and behavior. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.2.

Why Are We Made This Way? Augustine: Therefore, given that our nature sinned in paradise, we are now formed through a mortal begetting by the same divine providence, not according to heaven but according to earth—not according to the Spirit but according to the flesh. We have all become one mass of clay, a mass of sin. Since therefore we have forfeited our reward through sinning, and since, in the absence of God’s mercy, we as sinners deserve nothing other than eternal damnation, who then does the man from this mass think he is that he is able to question God and say: “Why have you made me this way?” If you want to know these things, do not be clay, but become a son of God through the mercy of him who has given to those believing in his name the power to become sons of God, although he has not so given, as you might want, to those desiring to know divine things before they believe. Questions 68.3.

15:50 *Inheriting the Kingdom of God*

Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit. Novatian: This does not mean that the substance of our flesh was condemned. On the contrary, only the guilt of the flesh is censured, the guilt which was caused by humanity’s deliberate and rash rebellion against the claims of divine law. On the Trinity 10.

 A Metaphor for Disobedience. Ambrosiaster: By “flesh” Paul means disobedience, and by “blood” he means an evil and wicked life. Not only will neither of these things inherit eternal life; both must be put under control in this life. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

Wickedness Cannot Inherit. Chrysostom: By “flesh” Paul here means willful evil deeds. The body by itself is not the obstacle; rather it is because of our wickedness that we cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.2.

Do Not Despise the Body. Jerome: Let us by no means scorn the flesh, but let us reject its works. Let us not despise the body that will reign in heaven with Christ. “Flesh and blood can obtain no part in the kingdom of God.” This does not refer to flesh and blood as such but to the works of the flesh. Homily 54 on Psalm 143.

No Further Conflict. Augustine: There will then be such a common accord between flesh and Spirit—the Spirit quickening the servant flesh without any need of sustenance from it. There will be no further conflict within ourselves. And just as there will be no more external enemies to bear with, so neither shall we have to bear with ourselves as enemies within. Enchiridion 23.91.

Clothed with Immortality. Severian of Gabala: Heretics get really mixed up about this. Paul did not say that flesh and blood would not rise from the dead but that they cannot inherit the kingdom of God. What this means is that the earthly flesh and blood which we now have is perishable, but it will be clothed with immortality, and in that state we shall enter the kingdom. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

Corruption and Incorruption. Isaac of Nineveh: By “incorruption” he means the knowledge of that other world, and by “corruption” and “flesh and blood” he designates the corrupting passions of both the soul and the body, the realm of whose motions is in the “mind of the flesh.” … And by the “kingdom of God” he means the lofty, noetic theoria of the blessed intuitions of that eternal effulgence, into which the holy soul is permitted to enter only by means of the incorruptible intuitions that are exalted above corruption, flesh and blood. Ascetical Homilies 5.

15:51 *We Shall All Be Changed*

 All Mortals. Chrysostom: Even those who do not die will be changed, because they too are mortal. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.3.

Transforming the Old Man. Augustine: The pious people will be raised as they transform the remnants of the “old man” that cling to them into the “new man.” The impious people who have kept the “old man” from the beginning to the end will be raised in order to be precipitated into the second death. Those who read diligently can make out the divisions of the ages. They have no horror of tares or chaff. On True Religion 27.50.

A Mystery. Theodoret of Cyr: Paul calls this a mystery because it is not clear to everyone but is believed only by the beloved. Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 280.

The Necessity of Change. Cassiodorus: Anyone who is not changed in this world cannot experience change in the next. Explanation of the Psalms 20.

The Radiance of the Saints. Cassiodorus: The radiance of the saints refers to when they will gleam at the resurrection like the angels of God. They will be so cleansed and radiant that they can gaze on the Majesty with the heart’s eyes. They cannot gaze on that Light unless they are changed for the better. In Paul’s words: “We shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed.” Explanation of the Psalms 3.

15:52 *The Twinkling of an Eye*

The Speed of Light in a World of Wonders. Augustine: The glance of our eye does not reach nearer objects more quickly and distant ones more slowly. Rather it reaches both with equal speed. Similarly when, as the apostle says, the resurrection of the dead is effected in the twinkling of the eye, it is as easy for the omnipotence of God and his awe-inspiring authority to raise the recently dead as those long since fallen into decay. To some minds, these things are hard to accept because they are outside their experience, yet the whole universe is full of wonders which seem to us hardly worth noticing or examining, not because they are easily penetrated by our reason but because we are accustomed to seeing them. But I, and those who join me and are striving to understand the “invisible things of God by the things that are made,” wonder neither more nor less at the fact that in one tiny seed all that we praise in the tree lies folded away. Letter 102, To Deogratias.

 No Time to Argue. Augustine: With the utterance of that cry and the resurrection of the dead, all comfort of human praise shall be taken away. There will be no doubt that the judgment is now present and at hand. Then there will be no time to argue about that one, or to judge of another, or to do a favor or offer support to another. Letter 140, To Honoratus 34. 15:52 *The Trumpet Will Sound*

The Last Trumpet. Ambrosiaster: The last trumpet is the one which is sounded when the battle is over. After a thousand years, when the antichrist has been destroyed and the Savior has reigned, Satan will be released from his prison in order to lead astray the nations of Gog and Magog, who are demons, in order that they might attack the fortresses of the saints. They will fail, and when they are defeated they will suffer the same fate as the antichrist and the false prophet. It is then that the last trumpet will sound the final victory. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.9

Then I Shall See My Brother. Gregory of Nazianzus: Why am I so earthly in my thoughts? I shall await the voice of the archangel, the last trumpet, the transformation of heaven, the change of earth, the freedom of the elements, the renewal of the universe. Then I shall see my brother Caesarius himself, no longer in exile, no longer being buried, no longer mourned, no longer pitied, but splendid, glorious, sublime, such as you were often seen in a dream, dearest and most loving of brothers, whether my desire or truth itself represented you. On His Brother Caesarius 21.

Judgment Day. Jerome: Then at the sound of the trumpet the earth and its people shall tremble, but you shall rejoice. The world shall lament and groan when the Lord comes to judge it. The tribes of the earth shall smite the breast. Once mighty kings shall shiver in their nakedness. Then shall Jupiter, with all his progeny, indeed be shown aflame, and Plato with his disciples will be marked a fool. Aristotle’s argument shall be of no avail. You may be a poor man and country bred, but then you shall exult and laugh and say: behold the crucified, my God! Behold my Judge! Letter 14.11.

A Clear Signal. Augustine: By “trumpet” he wants us to understand some very clear and prominent sign, which he elsewhere calls the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God [1 Thess 4:16]. Letter 34.

15:52 *We Shall Be Changed*

 Disbelief Brings Condemnation. Ambrose: He who has not believed will be forsaken, and by his disbelief he will bring upon himself his own condemnation. On His Brother Satyrus 2.76.

The Beginning of True Life. Macrina (as reported by Gregory of Nyssa): At her death Macrina prayed: “O Lord, you have freed us from the fear of death. You have made the end of life here the beginning of a true life for us. You give rest to our bodies in sleep, and you awaken us again with the last trumpet. The dust from which you fashioned us with your hands you give back to the dust of the earth for safe keeping, and you who have relinquished it will recall it after reshaping with incorruptibility and grace our mortal and graceless substance.” … As she said this, she made the sign of the cross upon her eyes and mouth and heart, and little by little, as the fever dried up her tongue, she was no longer able to speak clearly. Her voice gave out and only from the trembling of her lips and motion of her hands did we know that she was continuing to pray. Then the evening came on and the lamp was brought in… . When she had completed the thanksgiving and indicated that the prayer was over by making the sign of the cross, she breathed a deep breath and with the prayer her life came to an end. The Life of St. Macrina.

 Easy for God. Augustine: It is as easy for God to raise the recently dead as those long since fallen into decay. Letter 102, To Deogratias.

Real Flesh. Severian of Gabala: In saying this Paul is showing that the heretics who say that there is a resurrection of the soul but not of the flesh are wrong. These people blaspheme concerning the divine dispensation, thinking that Christ did not really rise again in his flesh but only appeared to do so. But if it was not real flesh, what do words like “died,” “was buried” and “rose again” mean? If all this did not really happen, does it mean that we shall not really die either? Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:53 *Putting on Immortality*

 Desire Educated to Self-Control. Clement of Alexandria: This nature will put on immortality when the intensity of desire that degenerates into sensuality is educated to self-control and, losing its love for corruption, allows us to practice constant chastity. Christ the Educator 2.100.

As Iron Transformed by Fire. Cyril of Jerusalem: While the identical body is raised up, it will be transformed by the putting on of incorruption, as iron exposed to fire is made incandescent. This occurs in a manner known only to the Lord who raises the dead. Catechetical Lectures 8.18.

Source of Gain. Ambrose: The blossom of the resurrection is immortality and incorruption. What is richer than everlasting rest? What is a source of greater gain and satisfaction than perpetual security? Here is the manifold fruit, the harvest, whereby man’s nature grows more vigorous and productive after death. On His Brother Satyrus 2.54.

Corruption Vanishes. Chrysostom: The body remains, but its mortality and corruption vanish when immortality and incorruption come upon it. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.3.

Clad in Immortality. Chrysostom: What has been mortal will be clad in immortality. After the resurrection of our bodies he promised to grant us enjoyment of the kingdom, life with the saints, enjoyment for all eternity, and those ineffable good things “which eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor have they been imagined by the human heart.” Homilies on Genesis 36.15.22

 The Same Body Transformed. Jerome: Just as before the Lord suffered his passion, when he was transformed and glorified on the mountain, he certainly had the same body that he had had down below, although of a different glory, so also after the resurrection, his body was of the same nature as it had been before the passion but of a higher state of glory and in more majestic appearance. Homily 61 on Psalm 15.

God Is Able to Remake You. Augustine: People are amazed that God, who made all things from nothing, makes a heavenly body from human flesh. When he was in the flesh, did not the Lord make wine from water? Is it anything so much more wonderful if he makes a heavenly body from human flesh? … Is he who was able to make you when you did not exist not able to make over what you once were? Sermons for the Feast of Ascension 264.6.

 Both Sexes Will Have Distinguishable Glorified Bodies in the Resurrection. Fulgentius: The masculine and feminine sexes will remain just as their bodies were created. Their glory will vary according to the diversity of their good works. For all the bodies of both men and women, all that will exist in that kingdom will be glorious. To Peter on the Faith 237.

 Blessedly Happy. Pseudo-Dionysius: Our minds shall be freed from passion and from earth. That is how we shall be. We shall receive a gift of light from him and, somehow, in a way we cannot know, we shall be united with him and, our understanding carried away, blessedly happy. We shall be struck by his blazing light. The Divine Names 1.4.

15:54 *Death is Swallowed Up*

Despising What Is Naturally Fearful. Athanasius: For man is by nature afraid of death and of the dissolution of the body. But there is this most startling fact, that he who has put on the faith of the cross despises even what is naturally fearful and for Christ’s sake is not afraid of death. On the Incarnation 28.

Nothing Corrupt Left. Chrysostom: Incorruption will swallow up corruption, leaving nothing of the former life behind. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.4.

The Cure for Heresy. Augustine: Were our heretics capable of grasping this one truth, they would surrender their pride and become reconciled and would never again worship God anywhere but in the church. The Way of Life of the Catholic Church 30.64.

Death Exists No Longer. Augustine: Where is death? Seek it in Christ, for it exists no longer. It did exist, and now death is dead. O Life, O Death of death! Be of good heart, death will die in us also. What has taken place in our Head will also take place in his members. Death will die in us also. But when? At the end of the world, at the resurrection of the dead in which we believe and about which we have no doubt. … These are words given to those who triumph, that you may have something to think about, something to sing about in your heart, something to hope for in your heart, something to seek with faith and good works. Easter Sermon 233.4.

 This Corruptible. Augustine: The apostle Paul seems to have directly pointed his finger at the flesh when he wrote: “*this* corruptible must put on incorruption.” When he says *this,* he as good as points with his finger. That which is visible can be pointed at in this way. The soul cannot be pointed at, though it can be called corruptible, because it is corrupted by moral biases. Faith and the Creed 10.22.

Immortality Removes Earthly Desires. Augustine: There are many desires of the sick which health takes away. In just the same way as physical health undercuts those desires, so immortality does remove all other desires because immortality is our health. Easter Sermon 55.8.

No Enticements to Sin in Heaven. Augustine: Then not only shall we not obey any enticement of sin, but there will be no such enticements of the kind we are commanded not to obey. Letter 196, To Asellicus.

Made Young by Eternal Incorruptibility. Augustine: Because of the necessary activities of this life, health is not to be despised until “this mortal shall put on immortality.” This is the true and perfect and unending health which is not refreshed by corruptible pleasure when it fails through earthly weakness but is maintained by heavenly strength and made young by eternal incorruptibility. Letter 130, To Proba.

15:55 *O Death, Where is Thy Sting?*

The Devil Insulted. Ambrosiaster: “Death” here refers to the devil, who is being insulted. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 The Future as Present. Chrysostom: Like a man who is making a sacrifice in the hope of victory, Paul is inspired to see the future as something which has already happened, and he tramples upon death as if it has fallen at his feet. Death is gone, it is finished, it has vanished away. Christ has not only overcome it, he has destroyed it and eliminated it completely. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.4.

 The Victor Blessed. Augustine: Because human nature was subjected to an enemy as the just desert of sin, man must first be rescued from his power, that he might find him. Then if his life in this flesh is prolonged, he is assisted in the conflict that he may overcome the enemy. And finally the victor will be beatified, that he may reign, and at the very end he will ask: “Death, where is thy devouring?” Against Julian 20.65.38

 Death of Carnal Habits. Augustine: I think that “death” in this passage refers to a carnal habit which resists the good will through a delighting in temporal pleasures. Questions 70.

15:56 *Sin the Sting of Death*

 Baptism Destroys the Sting of Death. Cyril of Jerusalem: Baptism destroys the sting of death. For you descend into the water laden with your sins. But the invocation of grace causes your soul to receive this seal, and after that it does not lead you to be swallowed up by the dread dragon. You go down “deadly indeed in sin,” and you come up “alive unto righteousness.” Catechetical Lectures 3.11-12.

 Law Increased Punishment. Chrysostom: Without the law sin was weak. It existed, to be sure, but it did not have the power to condemn, because although evil occurred, it was not clearly pointed out. Thus it was no small change which the law brought about. First, it caused us to know sin better, and then it increased the punishment. But if the effect of the law was to increase sin when it meant to check it, that is not the fault of the law but of the way in which it was abused. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.4.

 Wounded Unto Death. Fulgentius: By that sting, the human race first wounded itself unto death in such a way that he made death also pass to and through his offspring. Letter 35, To Scarila.

15:56 *The Power of Sin*

The Power of Sin Is the Law. Augustine: Nothing could be truer. For a prohibition always increases an illicit desire so long as the love of and joy in holiness is too weak to conquer the inclination to sin. So without the aid of divine grace it is impossible for man to love and delight in sanctity. City of God 13.5.

Adding Strength to Evil Even Through a Good Law. Augustine: The prohibition increased the concupiscence. It rendered it unconquered. So transgression was added, which did not exist without the law, although there was sin… . It is not to be wondered at that human infirmity has added the strength even from a good law to evil, since in the fulfilling of that very law it trusted in its own strength. On Continence 7.

Free from the Law of Sin and Death. Augustine: Indeed, by sinning we slip down into death. For where the law forbids, we sin more seriously than if we were not forbidden by the law. However, when grace is added, we then fulfill without difficulty and most willingly that very thing which the law had oppressively commanded. We are no longer slaves of the law through fear but friends through love and slaves of the righteousness which was the very source of the law’s promulgation. Accordingly the law of sin and death, that is, the law imposed upon sinning and dying men, merely commands that we do not covet. Nonetheless, we do covet. However, the law of the spirit of life—the law which belongs to grace and sets us free from the law of sin and death—causes us not to covet. It causes us to fulfill the commands of law. Questions 66.

Dead to the Law. Augustine: Why, if the law is good, is it the power of sin? Because sin wrought death by that which is good, that it might become exceedingly sinful, that is, might acquire greater powers by becoming also transgression. Why, if the law is good, are we “dead to the law by the body of Christ”? Because we are dead to the law’s condemnation, being set free from the disposition which the law condemned and punishes… . So the same precept, which is law to those who fear it, is grace to those who love it. To Simplician—On Various Questions 1.17.

Sin Taken Along with Death. Theodore of Mopsuestia: By “law” here Paul simply means either what inheres in the flesh or what is added to it. His point is that sin is taken away along with death and that the law ceases to exist once we have become immortal and are governed by the grace of the Spirit. Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.

15:57 *Thanks Be to God*

The Victory. Ambrosiaster: Christ did not win the victory for himself but for our benefit. For when he became a man, he remained God, and by overcoming the devil, he who never sinned gained the victory for us, who were bound in death because of sin. The death of Christ defeated the devil, who was forced to surrender all those who had died because of sin. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

Grace Given When Unworthy. Augustine: The crown could not have been given to one who was worthy of it, unless grace had been given to him when still unworthy. Proceedings of Pelagius 35.

15:58 *Abounding in the Lord’s Work*

 Be Steadfast. Ambrosiaster: Those who persevere in a life of faith and good works have the assurance that they will be accepted by God and receive their reward and that they will not be led astray by wicked arguments. Commentary on Paul’s Epistles.

 Labor Abundantly in the Lord. Chrysostom: We ought not merely to labor in the Lord but to do so abundantly, to overflowing. The labor of man after his expulsion from paradise was punishment for his transgressions, but this labor is the basis for the rewards which are to come. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 42.5.

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