

Luke: 10:25–37

From Catena Aurea:

25. And, behold, a certain Lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. For there were in fact certain men who then went about the whole country of the Jews bringing charges against Christ, and saying that He spoke of the commands of Moses as useless, and Himself introduced certain strange doctrines. A lawyer then, wishing to entrap Christ into saying something against Moses, comes and tempts Him, calling Him Master, though not bearing to be His disciple. And because our Lord was wont to speak to those who came to Him concerning eternal life, the lawyer adopts this kind of language. And since he tempted Him subtly, he receives no other answer than the command given by Moses; for it follows, He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

AMBROSE. For he was one of those who think themselves skilled in the law, and who keep the letter of the law, while they know nothing of its spirit. From a part of the law itself our Lord proves them to be ignorant of the law, shewing that at the very first the law preached the Father and the Son, and announced the sacraments of the Lord's Incarnation; for it follows, And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.

BASIL. (in Ps. 44.) By saying, with all thy mind, he does not admit of any division of love to other things, for whatever love you cast on lower things necessarily takes away from the whole. For as a vessel full of liquid, whatever flows therefrom must so much diminish its fulness; so also the soul, whatever love it has wasted upon things unlawful, has so much lessened its love to God.

GREGORY OF NYSSA. (de Hom. Opif. c. 8.) the soul is divided into three faculties; one merely of growth and vegetation, such as is found in plants; another which relates to the senses, which is preserved in the nature of irrational animals; but the perfect faculty of the soul is that of reason, which is seen in human nature. By saying then the heart, He signified the bodily substance, that is, the vegetative; by the soul the middle, or the sensitive; but by saying the mind, the higher nature, that is, the intellectual or reflective faculty.

THEOPHYLACT. We must hereby understand that it becomes us to submit every power of the soul to the divine love, and that resolutely, not slackly. Hence it is added, And with all thy strength.

MAXIMUS. To this end then the law commanded a threefold love to God, that it might pluck us away from the threefold fashion of the world, as touching possessions, glory, and pleasure, wherein also Christ was tempted.

BASIL. (Reg. fus. ad int. 2.) But if any one ask how the love of God is to be obtained, we are sure that the love of God cannot be taught. For neither did we learn to rejoice in the presence of light, or to embrace life, or to love our parents and children; much less were we taught the love of God, but a certain seminal principle was implanted in us, which has within itself the cause, that man clings to God; which principle the teaching of the divine commands is wont to cultivate diligently, to foster watchfully, and to carry on to the perfection of divine grace. For naturally we love good; we love also what is our own, and akin to us; we likewise of our own accord pour forth all our affections on our benefactors. If then God is good, but all things desire that good, which is wrought voluntarily, He is by nature inherent in us, and although from His goodness we are far from knowing Him, yet from the very fact that we proceeded forth from Him, we are bound to love Him with exceeding love, as in truth akin to us; He is likewise also a greater benefactor than all whom by nature we love here. (ad int 3.). And again. The love of God then is the first and chief command, but the second, as filling up the first and filled up by it, bids us to love our neighbour. Hence it follows, And thy neighbour as thyself. But we have an instinct given us by God to perform this command, as who does not know that man is a kind and social animal? For nothing belongs so much to our nature as to communicate with one another, and mutually to need and love our relations. Of those things then of which in the first place He gave us the seed, He afterwards requires the fruits.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. 32. in 1 Cor.) Yet observe how, almost to the same extent of obedience he requires the performance of each command, For of God he says, with all thy heart. Of our neighbour, as thyself. Which if it were diligently kept, there would be neither slave nor free man, neither conqueror nor

conquered, (or rather, neither prince nor subject,) rich nor poor, nor would the devil be even known, for the chaff would rather stand the touch of fire than the devil the fervour of love; so surpassing all things is the constancy of love.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. When the lawyer had answered the things contained in the law, Christ, to whom all things were known, cuts to pieces his crafty nets. For it follows, And he said to him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

ORIGEN. From these words it is undoubtingly gathered, that the life which is preached according to God the Creator of the world, and the Scriptures given by Him, is life everlasting. For the Lord Himself bears testimony to the passage from Deuteronomy, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; (Deut. 6:5.) and from Leviticus, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Lev. 19:18.) But these things were spoken against the followers of Valentinus, Basil, and Marcion. For what else did he wish us to do in seeking eternal life, but what is contained in the Law and the Prophets?

10:29–37

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31. And by chance there came down a certain Priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37. And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. The lawyer, when praised by our Saviour for having answered right, breaks forth into pride, thinking that he had no neighbour, as though there was no one to be compared to him in righteousness. Hence it is said, But he willing to justify himself said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? For somehow first one sin and then another takes him captive. From the cunning with which he sought to tempt Christ, he falls into pride. But here when asking, who is my neighbour, he proves himself to be devoid of love for his neighbour, since he did not consider any one to be his neighbour, and consequently of the love of God; for he who loves not his brother whom he sees, cannot love God whom he does not see. (1 John 4:20.)

AMBROSE. He answered that he knew not his neighbour, because he believed not on Christ, and he who knows not Christ knows not the law, for being ignorant of the truth, how can he know the law which makes known the truth?

THEOPHYLACT. Now our Saviour defines a neighbour not in respect of actions or honour, but of nature; as if He says, Think not that because thou art righteous thou hast no neighbour, for all who partake of the same nature are thy neighbours. Be thou also their neighbour, not in place, but in affection and solicitude for them. And in addition to this, he brings forward the Samaritan as an example. As it follows, And Jesus answering him said, A certain man went down, &c.

GREEK EXPOSITOR. (Severus) He has well used the general term. For He says not, "a certain one went down," but, a certain man, for his discourse was of the whole human race.

AUGUSTINE. (de Ev. l. ii. q. 19.) For that man is taken for Adam himself, representing the race of man; Jerusalem, the city of peace, that heavenly country, from the bliss of which he fell. Jericho is interpreted to be the moon, and signifies our mortality, because it rises, increases, wanes, and sets.

THEOPHYLACT. Now he says not "descended," but "was descending." For human nature was ever tending downwards, and not for a time only, but throughout busied about a life liable to suffering.

BASIL. This interpretation corresponds to the places, if any one will examine them. For Jericho lies in the low parts of Palestine, Jerusalem is seated on an eminence, occupying the crest of a mountain. The man then came from the high parts to the low, to fall into the hands of the robbers who infested the desert. As it follows, And he fell among thieves.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. in loc. Ed. Lat.) First, we must needs pity the ill fortune of the man who fell unarmed and helpless among robbers, and who was so rash and unwise as to choose the road in which he could not escape the attack of robbers. For the unarmed can never escape the armed, the heedless the villain, the unwary the malicious. Since malice is ever armed with guile, fenced round with cruelty, fortified with deceit, and ready for fierce attack.

AMBROSE. But who are those robbers but the Angels of night and darkness, among whom he had not fallen, unless by deviating from the divine command he had placed himself in their way.

CHRYSOSTOM. (ubi sup.) At the beginning of the world then the devil accomplished his treacherous attack upon man, against whom he practised the poison of deceit, and directed all the deadliness of his malice.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) He fell then among robbers, that is, the devil and his angels, who through the disobedience of the first man, stripped the race of mankind of the ornaments of virtue, and wounded him, that is, by ruining the gift of the power of free will. Hence it follows, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, for to that man sinning he gave a wound, but to us many wounds, since to one sin which we contract we add many.

AUGUSTINE. (de q. Ev. l. ii. q. 19.) Or they stripped man of his immortality, and wounding him (by persuading to sin) left him half dead; for wherein he is able to understand and know God, man is alive, but wherein he is corrupted and pressed down by sins, he is dead. And this is what is added, leaving him half dead.

THEOPHYLACT. Or man after sin is said to be half dead, because his soul is immortal, but his body mortal, so that the half of man is under death. Or, because his human nature hoped to obtain salvation in Christ, so as not altogether to lie under death. But in that Adam had sinned death entered in the world, (Rom. 5:12.) in the righteousness of Christ death was to be destroyed.

AMBROSE. Or they stripped us of the garments which we have received of spiritual grace, and so are wont to inflict wounds. For if we keep the unspotted garments we have put on, we can not feel the wounds of robbers.

BASIL. Or it may be understood that they stripped us after first inflicting wounds; or wounds precede nakedness, as sin precedes the absence of grace.

CHRYSOSTOM. (ubi sup.) Here then was man (that is, Adam) lying destitute of the aid of salvation, pierced with the wounds of his sins, whom neither Aaron the high priest passing by could advantage by his sacrifice; for it follows, And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Nor again could his brother Moses the Levite assist him by the Law, as it follows, And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) Or by the Priest and the Levite, two times are represented, namely, of the Law and the Prophets. By the Priest the Law is signified, by which the priesthood and sacrifices were appointed; by the Levites the prophecies of the Prophets, in whose times the law of mankind could not heal, because by the Law came the knowledge not the doing away of sin.

THEOPHYLACT. But He says, passed by, (Rom. 3:20; 8:3.) because the Law came and stood till its time foreordained, then, not being able to cure, departed. Mark also that the Law was not given with this previous intention that it should cure man, for man could not from the beginning receive the mystery of Christ. And therefore it is said, And by chance there came a certain priest, which expression we use with respect to those things which happen without forethought.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 171.) Or it is said, passed by, because the man who came down from Jerusalem to Jericho is believed to have been an Israelite, and the priest who came down, certainly his neighbour by birth, passed him by lying on the ground. And a Levite also came by, likewise his neighbour by birth; and he also despised him as he lay.

THEOPHYLACT. They pitied him, I say, when they thought about him, but afterwards, overcome by selfishness, they went away again. For this is signified by the word, passed him by.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) A Samaritan coming by, far removed by birth, very near in compassion, acted as follows, But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came where he was, &c. In whom our Lord Jesus Christ would have Himself typified. For Samaritan is interpreted to be keeper, and it is said of him, He shall not slumber nor sleep who keeps Israel; (Ps. 128:4.) since being raised from the dead he dieth no more. (Rom. 6:9.) Lastly, when it was said to him, Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil, (John 8:48.) He said He had not a devil, for He knew Himself to be the caster out of devils, He did not deny that He was the keeper of the weak.

GREEK EXPOSITOR. (Severus.) Now Christ here fully calls Himself a Samaritan. For in addressing the lawyer who was glorying in the Law, He wished to express that neither Priest nor Levite, nor all they who were conversant with the Law, fulfilled the requirements of the Law, but He came to accomplish the ordinances of the Law.

AMBROSE. Now this Samaritan was also coming down. For who is he that ascended upon into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven (John 3:13.).

THEOPHYLACT. But He says, journeying, as though He purposely determined this in order to cure us.

AUGUSTINE. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, therefore 1 near to him, as it were, in likeness.

GREEK EXPOSITOR. Or He came by the way. For He was a true traveller, not a wanderer; and came down to the earth for our sakes.

AMBROSE. Now when He came He was made very near to us by His taking upon Himself our infirmities, He became a neighbour by bestowing compassion. Hence it follows, And when he saw him he was moved with compassion.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 171.) For what so distant, what so far removed, as God from man, the immortal from the mortal, the just from sinners, not in distance of place, but of likeness. Since then He had in Him two good things, righteousness and immortality, and we two evils, that is unrighteousness, and mortality, if He had taken upon Him both our evils He would have been our equal, and with us have had need of a deliverer. That He might be then not what we are, but near us, He was made not a sinner, as thou art, but mortal like unto thee. By taking upon Himself punishment, not taking upon Himself guilt, He destroyed both the punishment and the guilt.

AUGUSTINE. (Quæst. Ev. ii. 19.) The binding up of wounds is the checking of sins; oil is the consolation of a good hope, by the pardon given for the reconciliation of man; wine is the incitement to work fervently in spirit.

AMBROSE. Or, He binds up our wounds by a stricter commandment, as by oil he soothes by the remission of sin, as by wine he pricks to the heart by the denunciation of judgment.

THEOPHYLACT. Or else, intercourse with man is the oil, and intercourse with God is the wine which signifies divinity, which no one can endure unmixed unless oil be added, that is, human intercourse. Hence

he worked some things humanly, some divinely. He poured then in oil and wine, as having saved us both by His human and His divine nature.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. in loc.) Or, he poured in wine, that is, the blood of His passion, and oil, that is, the anointing of the chrism, that pardon might be granted by His blood, sanctification be conferred by the chrism. The wounded parts are bound up by the heavenly Physician, and containing a salve within themselves, are by the working of the remedy restored to their former soundness. Having poured in wine and oil, he placed him upon His beast, as it follows, and placing him upon his beast, &c.

AUGUSTINE. (de Quæst. Ev. ii. q. 19.) His beast is our flesh, in which He has condescended to come to us. To be placed on the beast is to believe in the incarnation of Christ.

AMBROSE. Or, He places us on His beast in that He bears our sins, and is afflicted for us, (Isai. 53:4, LXX) for man hath been made like to the beasts, (Ps. 49:12) therefore He placed us on His beast, that we might not be as horse and mule, (Ps. 32:9.) in order that by taking upon Him our body, He might abolish the weakness of our flesh.

THEOPHYLACT. Or He placed us on His beast, that is, on His body. For He hath made us His members, and partakers of His body. The Law indeed did not take in all the Moabites, and the Ammonites shall not enter into the Church of God; (Deut. 23:3.) but now in every nation he that feareth the Lord is accepted by Him, who is willing to believe and to become part of the Church. Wherefore He says, that he brought him to an inn.

CHRYSOSTOM. (ut sup.) For the Inn is the Church, which receives travellers, who are tired with their journey through the world, and oppressed with the load of their sins; where the wearied traveller casting down the burden of his sins is relieved, and after being refreshed is restored with wholesome food. And this is what is here said, and took care of him. For without is every thing that is conflicting, hurtful and evil, while within the Inn is contained all rest and health.

AMBROSE. But as the Samaritan had not time to stay longer on the earth, he must needs return to the place whence he descended, as it follows, And on the morrow he took out two pence, &c. (Ps. 118:24.) What is that morrow, but perchance the day of our Lord's resurrection? of which it was said, This is the day the Lord hath made. But the two pence are the two covenants, which bear stamped on them the image of the eternal King, by the price of which our wounds are healed.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) Or the two pence are the two commandments of love, which the Apostles received from the Holy Spirit to preach to others; or the promise of the present life, and that which is to come.

ORIGEN. Or the two pence seem to me to be the knowledge of the sacrament, in what manner the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, which is given as a reward by the Angel to the Church that she may take more diligent care of the man entrusted to her whom in the shortness of the time He Himself had also cured. And it is promised that whatever she should spend on the cure of the half dead man, should be restored to her again, And whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) The inn-keeper was the Apostle, who spent more either in giving counsel, as he says, Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment; (1 Cor. 7:15.) or, in working even with his own hands, that he might not trouble any of the weak in the newness of the Gospel, (2 Thess. 3:8) though it was lawful for him to be fed from the Gospel. (1 Cor. 9:14.) Much more also did the Apostles spend, but those teachers also in their time have spent more who have interpreted both the Old and New Testament, for which they shall receive their reward.

AMBROSE. Blessed then is that inn-keeper who is able to cure the wounds of another; blessed is he to whom Jesus says, Whatsoever thou hast spent more, when I come again I will repay thee. But when wilt thou return, O Lord, save on the Judgment day? For though Thou art ever every where, and though standing in the midst of us, art not perceived by us, yet the time will be in which all flesh shall behold Thee coming again. Thou wilt then restore what Thou owest to the blessed, whose debtor Thou art. Would that we were confident debtors, that we could pay what we had received!

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. After what has gone before, our Lord fitly questions the lawyer; Which of these three thinkest thou was neighbour to him who fell among thieves? But he said, He that shewed mercy on him. For neither Priest nor Levite became neighbour to the sufferer, but he only who had compassion on him. For vain is the dignity of the Priesthood, and the knowledge of the Law, unless they are confirmed by good works. Hence it follows, And Jesus saith unto him, Go and do thou likewise.

CHRYSOSTOM. (in Heb. Hom. 10.) As if He said, If thou seest any one oppressed, say not, Surely he is wicked; but be he Gentile or Jew and need help, dispute not, he has a claim to thy assistance, into whatever evil he has fallen.

AUGUSTINE. (de. Doc. Chris. lib. i. c. 30.) Hereby we understand that he is our neighbour, to whomsoever we must shew the duty of compassion, if he need it, or would have shewn if he had needed it. From which it follows, that even he who must in his turn shew us this duty, is our neighbour. For the name of neighbour has relation to something else, nor can any one be a neighbour, save to a neighbour; but that no one is excluded to whom the office of mercy is to be denied, is plain to all; as our Lord says, Do good to them that hate you. (Matt. 5:44.) Hence it is clear, that in this command by which we are bid to love our neighbour, the holy angels are included, by whom such great offices of mercy are bestowed upon us. Therefore our Lord Himself wished also to be called our neighbour, representing Himself to have assisted the half dead man who lay in the way.

AMBROSE. For relationship does not make a neighbour, but compassion, for compassion is according to nature. For nothing is so natural as to assist one who shares our nature.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

10:25 Inheriting Eternal Life

The Mystery of the Incarnation.

Cyril of Alexandria: Anyone who thoroughly understands the mystery of the incarnation may say to the lawyer, "If you were skillful in the law and in the meaning of its hidden teaching, you would not forget who he is you try to tempt. You thought that he was a mere man, only man, and not God who appeared in human likeness, knows what is secret, and can look into the hearts of those who approach him. In many ways Emmanuel is depicted to you by the shadowing of Moses. You saw him there sacrificed as a lamb, yet conquering the destroyer and abolishing death by his blood. You saw him in the arrangement of the ark, in which the divine law was deposited. In his holy flesh he was as in an ark, being the Word of the Father, the Son that was begotten of him by nature. You saw him as the mercy seat in the holy tabernacle, around which stood the seraphim." He is our mercy seat for pardon of our sins. Yes, and even as man he is glorified by the seraphim, who are the intelligent and holy powers above. They stand around his divine and exalted throne. Commentary on Luke, Homily 68.

10:26–28 Love God and One’s Neighbor

Two Wings Hold Teaching Aloft.

Ephrem the Syrian: What is the greatest and first commandment of the law? He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself.” ... All this teaching is held high through the two commandments, as though by means of two wings, that is, through the love of God and of humanity. Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron 16.23.

To Know the Law is to Know the Incarnation.

Ambrose: With these verses belongs the text that exposes those who seem to themselves to be experts on the law, who keep the letter of the law but disregard its spirit. He teaches that they are ignorant of the law from its very first chapter. He proves this immediately at the beginning of the law. Both the Father and the Son proclaimed and announced the sacrament of the divine incarnation, saying, “You shall love the Lord your God” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The Lord said to the lawyer, “Do this, and you shall live.” He who did not know his neighbor, because he did not believe in Christ, answered, “Who is my neighbor?” Whoever does not know Christ does not know the law either. How can he know the law when he is ignorant of the Truth, since the law proclaims the Truth? Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.69–70.

The Lawyer Misses His Prey.

Cyril of Alexandria: He says, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” The lawyer repeated what is in the law. As if to punish his wickedness and reprove his malicious purpose, Christ, knowing all things, says, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” The lawyer missed his prey. He shot off the mark. His wickedness is unsuccessful. The sting of envy ceased. The net of deceit is torn. His sowing bears no fruit, and his toil gains no profit. As some ship overwhelmed by misfortune, he has suffered a bitter shipwreck. Commentary on Luke, Homily 69.

10:29 Who is One's Neighbor?

The One Who Shows Pity is the Neighbor.

Origen: He [the Lord] teaches that the man going down was the neighbor of no one except of him who wanted to keep the commandments and prepare himself to be a neighbor to every one that needs help. This is what is found after the end of the parable, "Which of these three does it seem to you is the neighbor of the man who fell among robbers?" Neither the priest nor the Levite was his neighbor, but—as the teacher of the law himself answered—"he who showed pity" was his neighbor. The Savior says, "Go, and do likewise." Homilies on the Gospel of Luke 34.2.

All People are Our Neighbors.

Jerome: Some think that their neighbor is their brother, family, relative or their kinsman. Our Lord teaches who our neighbor is in the Gospel parable of a certain man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.... Everyone is our neighbor, and we should not harm anyone. If, on the contrary, we understand our fellow human beings to be only our brother and relatives, is it then permissible to do evil to strangers? God forbid such a belief! We are neighbors, all people to all people, for we have one Father. Homily on Psalm 14 (15).

10:30–35 The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Jericho an Image of the World.

Ambrose: Jericho is an image of this world. Adam, cast out from Paradise, that heavenly Jerusalem, descended to it by the mistake of his transgression, that is, departing from the living to hell, for whom change not of place but of conduct made the exile of his nature. He was greatly changed from that Adam who enjoyed eternal blessedness. When he turned aside to worldly sins, Adam fell among thieves, among whom he would not have fallen if he had not strayed from the heavenly command and made himself vulnerable to them. Who are those thieves, if not the angels of night and darkness, who sometimes transform themselves into angels of light but cannot persevere? These first steal the clothes of spiritual grace that we have received and are then accustomed to inflict wounds. If we preserve unstained the garments that we have put on, we cannot feel the robbers' blows. Beware, for fear that you are first stripped as Adam was first stripped of the heavenly command, defrauded of protection, and divested of

the garment of faith. He received a mortal wound by which the whole human race would have fallen if that Samaritan, on his journey, had not tended his serious injuries. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.73.

Jesus is the Good Samaritan.

Ambrose: That extraordinary Samaritan did not himself shun him whom the priest and the Levite had shunned. In the name of a sect, you may not shun him whom you will admire by interpretation of the word. Indeed, "guard" is signified by the name Samaritan. The interpretation means this. Who is the Guard, if not, "The Lord preserves the infants"? Thus, as there is one Jew in the letter and another in the spirit, so there is one Samaritan in public, another in secret. Here the Samaritan is going down. Who is he except he who descended from heaven, who also ascended to heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven? When he sees half-dead him whom none could cure before, like her with an issue of blood who had spent all her inheritance on physicians, he came near him. He became a neighbor by acceptance of our common feeling and kin by the gift of mercy. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.74.

An Allegorical Interpretation of the Good Samaritan.

Origen: One of the elders wanted to interpret the parable as follows. The man who was going down is Adam. Jerusalem is paradise, and Jericho is the world. The robbers are hostile powers. The priest is the law, the Levite is the prophets, and the Samaritan is Christ. The wounds are disobedience. The beast is the Lord's body. The pandochium (that is, the stable), which accepts all who wish to enter, is the church. The two denarii mean the Father and the Son. The manager of the stable is the head of the church, to whom its care has been entrusted. The fact that the Samaritan promises he will return represents the Savior's second coming....

The Samaritan, "who took pity on the man who had fallen among thieves," is truly a "guardian," and a closer neighbor than the Law and the Prophets. He showed that he was the man's neighbor more by deed than by word. According to the passage that says, "Be imitators of me, as I too am of Christ," it is possible for us to imitate Christ and to pity those who "have fallen among thieves." We can go to them, bind their wounds, pour in oil and wine, put them on our own animals, and bear their burdens. The Son of God encourages us to do things like this. He is speaking not so much to the teacher of the law as to us and to everyone when he says, "Go and do likewise." If we do, we will receive eternal life in Christ Jesus, to whom is glory and power for ages of ages. Amen. Homilies on the Gospel of Luke 34.3, 9.

God's Mercy Found in the Sacraments of the Church.

Augustine: Robbers left you half-dead on the road, but you have been found lying there by the passing and kindly Samaritan. Wine and oil have been poured on you. You have received the sacrament of the only-begotten Son. You have been lifted onto his mule. You have believed that Christ became flesh. You have been brought to the inn, and you are being cured in the church.

That is where and why I am speaking. This is what I too, what all of us are doing. We are performing the duties of the innkeeper. He was told, "If you spend any more, I will pay you when I return." If only we spent at least as much as we have received! However much we spend, brothers and sisters, it is the Lord's money. Sermon 179a.7–8.

The Physician Has Many Remedies.

Ambrose: "And bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." That Physician has many remedies with which he is accustomed to cure. His speech is a remedy. One of his sayings binds up wounds, another treats with oil, another pours in wine. He binds wounds with a stricter rule. He treats with the forgiveness of sins. He stings with the rebuke of judgment as if with wine. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.75.

The Next Day is the Day of the Resurrection.

Ambrose: "The next day," what is this next day, if not that day of the Lord's resurrection, of which it was said, "This is the day which the Lord has made"? "He took out two coins, and gave them to the host, and said, 'Take care of him.' " Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.79.

The Two Coins are the Two Testaments.

Ambrose: What are those two coins, unless perhaps the two Testaments that contain revealed within them the image of the eternal King, at the price of whose wounds we are healed? Precious blood redeemed us, that we may avoid the sores of final death. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.80.

The Innkeeper is a Steward of the Mysteries.

Ambrose: Blessed is that innkeeper who can care for another's wounds. Blessed is he to whom Jesus says, "Whatever you shall spend over and above, I will repay you." A good steward is one who also spends over

and above. Paul is a good steward, whose sermons and epistles overflow with the knowledge that he received. He followed the moderate command of the Lord with almost immoderate effort of mind and body, so that he raised many from deep sorrow by the stewardship of spiritual exhortation. He was a good keeper of his inn, in which the ass knows his master's crib and the flocks of lambs are enclosed. He feared that the way would be easy for ravening wolves howling outside the corrals to attack the sheepfolds. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.82.

10:36–37 The One Who Showed Mercy

Christ Desires to Be Our Neighbor.

Augustine: God our Lord wished to be called our neighbor. The Lord Jesus Christ meant that he was the one who gave help to the man lying half-dead on the road, beaten and left by the robbers. The prophet said in prayer, "As a neighbor and as one's own brother, so did I please." Since the divine nature is far superior and above our human nature, the command by which we are to love God is distinct from our love of our neighbor. He shows mercy to us because of his own goodness, while we show mercy to one another because of God's goodness. He has compassion on us so that we may enjoy him completely, while we have compassion on another that we may completely enjoy him. Christian Instruction 33.

Love for Christ as Neighbor.

Ambrose: Since no one is closer than he who tended to our wounds, let us love him as our Lord, and let us love him as our neighbor. Nothing is so close as the head to the members. Let us also love him who is the follower of Christ, let us love him who in unity of body has compassion on another's need. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.84.