

size of our United States quarter dollar (about the size of a dime). It was considered to be a standard wage for a day's work by an unskilled laborer. If this is translated into today's economy, and if a standard wage for an unskilled laborer for a day's work is \$40.00, then the amount that the Samaritan gave the innkeeper would be \$80.00.

### The Interpretation of the Parable (verses 36-37a)

This parable was given on the occasion of a question of interpretation—that of the true and full meaning of the second Table of the Mosaic Ten Commandments, summarized by the words, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The word translated "neighbor" means "near one, fellow (as in fellow man), companion."

When we use the English word "neighbor" we usually think of a person who lives near another, as in "my next-door neighbor" or "my neighbor across the street." Or we may think of a person who is near another, as in "the man who works next to me," or a thing that is near another, as in "the neighboring lot."

Is this what the Law meant when it said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"? Is this what Jesus meant when He said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"? Is my neighbor a person who lives near me or happens to be near me?

Upon the interpretation of the word "neighbor" this parable turns. There is a more obvious interpretation of the term and a more subtle one.

The more obvious interpretation is as follows. The lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor; i.e., whom should I love?" Jesus answered, "Who was the wounded man's neighbor?" The lawyer said, "The one who showed mercy; i.e., the one who loved the wounded man!" Jesus then said, "Well, there's your neighbor. Anyone who shows mercy to you, anyone who loves you, is your neighbor. He is the one whom you are to love as yourself!"

But is this really what Jesus was saying to the lawyer? Was He saying, "Go, and just as the wounded man loved a Samaritan who had shown love to him, so you love any man who shows love to you, even one who is not an Israelite?" (Note that in this interpretation the assumption is made that the wounded man loved the Samaritan, even though Jesus did not say this).

At first glance, this interpretation would appear plausible, especially in view of the fact that in the story the two men who passed by the wounded men were both Jews, whereas