

ἜΤΕΡΟΝ VS. ΠΛΗΣΙΟΝ: WHAT'S IN A WORD?  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CANONICAL AND MARCIONITE  
VERSIONS OF ROMANS 13:8

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Thesis

The change made to Romans 13:8 will be shown to reveal the nature of a major, underlying doctrinal struggle in the second century church. It will be shown which version of Romans 13:8, canonical or Marcionite, and in what form, was earlier. Carrying the analysis forward, we will be able to show the impact of this revision on the rest of chapter 13 in Romans as well as its implications for the Synoptic Gospel story known as 'The Rich Young Man' and its relationship to the parallel story known as "A Tricky Question." Further, some evidence will be hinted at for a literary relationship between Galatians chapter 5 and Romans chapters 12 and 13, but will not be explored deeply, as this is beyond the scope of the primary thesis.

Introduction

One of the many differences between the Canonical Apostolikon and its Marcionite counterparts is the word rendered "neighbor" (ἕτερον in Greek) by most English Bible translations.<sup>1</sup> Surprisingly this translation is rather interpretive, as the word literally means "other" as in "another," and is not used in conjunction with the Love Commandment elsewhere in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The NRSV, MKJV, NASB, NIV, ASV, and WE all rend ἕτερον as "neighbor." But the KJV (and NKJV) version is correct: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" – The editors' dilemma is to decide whether to match the preceding sentence in Romans 13:8 with "love *others*" or to match 13:9 and Leviticus 19:18 with "love *thy neighbor*," with the consensus appearing to be toward the latter. I feel this is clearly incorrect, as the connection to Leviticus 19:18 has been broken, and so should be reflected in the translation. Had the writer/editor of this verse intended to say neighbor he would have written πλησίον as is done throughout the NT. [see footnote 2 for example of ἕτερον usage]

<sup>2</sup> Curiously, ἕτερον is used in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13 with love, but in conjunction with serving two masters; paraphrased "hate one, and love the other ... for you cannot serve God and Mammon" (mammon is from the Syrian 'riches' – harking to Qumran-like language).

By contrast, Marcion's version, as attributed by Epiphanius, substitutes πλησίον, the same and exact word for "neighbor" (Hebrew, literally "countryman") used everywhere else in the New Testament in conjunction with the Love Commandment or Royal Law from Leviticus 19:18. A quick look at the complete difference in Romans 13:8 implies that the canonical verse strayed from Leviticus 19:18 by using "other" (ἕτερον) with "to love" in place of "neighbor" [πλησίον] to match "one another" (ἀλλήλοισι) used in the lead in sentence with "to love" as well. This choice seems more reasonable in light of the fact that Leviticus 19:18 (LXX) is explicitly quoted in the canonical verse 9 — a verse that, as we shall see later, is redundant in Marcion's Romans.<sup>3</sup>

*Romans 13:8*

Canonical:

μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλοισι ἀγαπᾶν; ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκε.

*Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one loving **the other** has fulfilled the Law.*

Marcion:

ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν πλησίον νόμον πεπλήρωκε.

*For the one who loves **his neighbor** has fulfilled the Law.*

The above comparison shows us that very likely Marcion's Romans 13:8, despite the apparent awkwardness of his verse in respect to the following canonical verse — which will be accounted for later — when considered in isolation, is the more primitive. It uses language that maps directly to the Septuagint (LXX) and matches closely the wording in Galatians 5:14. But the canonical verse has broken those direct connections, showing instead the most paraphrased usage of the Love Commandment in the New Testament.

The primitiveness of Marcion's version is attested by the testimony of Marcion's early critics, Tertullian and Epiphanius, in their efforts to show that Marcion corrupted the text. Analyses of the Pauline Epistles, going all the way back to W.C. van Manen, have consistently resulted in the Marcionite Apostolikon being considered earlier.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Marcion's versions are quotations from Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 1.2.42.

<sup>4</sup> A brief summary can be found in Hermann Detering's article "The Dutch Radical Approach to the Pauline Epistles" (*JHC* 5/2 [fall 1996], 163-193), starting

So as we begin our investigation, we are set to ponder two questions: why the revisions, and how does this relate to Marcion? We have luckily a wealth of sources to pursue. Since the revisions were made to the canonical Romans it is reasonable to assume that similar revisions would have been made to other books of the Canon, including the Gospels. It is also reasonable to presume that these were not all done by accident or as mere enhancements, since the Love Commandment and its competing parallel, the Negative Commandments, were central to Christian theology then, just as they are now. Our presumption of deliberate revision is reinforced by the knowledge that neither Romans 13:8 nor the related passage in Galatians 5:14 is dealing with a story, but rather are part of naked theological discussions, and this would not invite any later hands to provide us juicy details.

#### Analysis

1) The first thing to note is the close relationship between the wording of Galatians 5:14 canonical and Marcion's version below. What becomes apparent is that Marcion's version is direct and personal: ὑμῖν ("you") instead of the more generic ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ ("in one statement") of the canonical version. The simplicity and personal directness of Marcion's version argues for the primitiveness of its form. The canonical revision changes the emphasis from the personal to one that places Torah Law subject to, *and inferior to*, the Love Commandment.

#### *Galatians 5:14*

Canonical version:

ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ Ἀγαπήρεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

*For the entire Law has been summed up in the one statement, "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Marcionite version:

ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ὑμῖν πεπλήρωται, Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς [σ]εαυτόν.

***For you***, the entire Law has been summed up, "Love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>5</sup>

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with his section on W.C. Van Manen, that includes an excellent bibliography in the footnotes.

<sup>5</sup> I am assuming that Marcion's version reads σεαυτόν not εαυτόν as Dindorf's quotation from Epiphanius reads, which appears to be an obvious corruption;

2) As we note the close relationship between the wording of Marcion's versions of Galatians 5:14 and Romans 13:8, it becomes obvious that Romans 13:8 is a conflation of Galatians 5:14, paraphrasing the verse. Thus we can conclude Galatians 5:14 is the earlier, more primitive version. It is more complete, quoting Leviticus 19:18 from the Septuagint exactly. In comparison, Romans 13:8 is a paraphrase, with every word also found in the Galatians version, even in the same word order.<sup>6</sup>

Marcion's versions:

*Galatians 5:14*

ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ὑμῖν πεπλήρωται. Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς [σ]εαυτόν.

*Romans 13:8*

ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν πλησίον νόμον πεπλήρωκε.

3) Next we must consider Romans 13:9 against the canonical Galatians 5:14. This verse is one of the most critical in the New Testament as it binds Deuteronomy 5:16-21 with Leviticus 19:18. The only other occurrence of this binding (which we will consider after this comparison) is in Matthew 19:18-19, not shared in the parallel synoptic versions of Mark and Luke.

A quick examination of the canonical versions reveals again a relationship between Romans and Galatians 5:14. A relationship that is stronger than with Marcion's version of Galatians. In many respects Romans 13:9 duplicates Marcion's 13:8, quoting more completely Leviticus 19:18. The carryover of wording from the canonical Galatians is remarkable. The canonical Galatians 5:14 starts ὁ γὰρ then inserts ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ, and finally appends ἐν τῷ to the sentence before quoting Leviticus 19:18. Remarkably Romans 13:9 starts τὸ γὰρ and includes both inserts as well: ἐν τῷ λόγῳ (only τῷ substituted for ἐνὶ) and in some manuscripts appends ἐν τῷ before quoting Leviticus 19:18 as well. The choice of such like-worded phrasing is apparent, and common to both through what appears to be a single redactor. We see with Galatians 5:14 and Romans 13:8 that Marcion's versions are clearly more direct and primitive. In Romans 13:9 the restatement

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otherwise this would be divergent from all other NT quotations of LXX Leviticus 19:18

<sup>6</sup> Something we might have missed had we ignored Epiphanius' testimony, and rendered Romans 13:8 with the Canonical wording ἕτερον ("other[s]") instead of Marcion's πλησίον ("neighbor"); a subtlety lost in nearly all English translations, which 'accidentally' render this "neighbor" (see footnotes 1 and 2).

of the Love Commandment in a more complete form became necessary since the changes to Romans 13:8 broke the direct connection with Leviticus 19:18.

Canonical versions:

*Galatians 5:14*

ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

*Romans 13:9*

τὸ γὰρ οὐ μοιχεύσεις, οὐ φονεύσεις, οὐ κλέψεις, οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἕτερα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται [ἐν τῷ]<sup>7</sup> ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

4) Let's now consider some secondary evidence by examining the Synoptic Gospel story of the "Rich Young Man" and the parallel story of a "Tricky Question," which asks the same question but answers differently. This story needs to be examined because Romans 13:9 bears a specific relationship to Matthew 19:18-19, as these are the only verses in the New Testament which bind the Love Commandment from Leviticus 19:18, with the five negative commandments from Exodus 20:13-17 and Deuteronomy 5:17-21. Every other occurrence of either of these sets of commandments is referentially independent of the other. This section of Matthew will be examined in context to the parallel synoptic stories in Luke and Mark, as well as the second parallel story found in Matthew 22:34-40 (paralleled in Luke and Mark as well) that answers the same question of eternal life in terms of the Love Commandment of Leviticus instead of the negative commandments of Exodus and Deuteronomy.

The relationship of the "Rich Young Man" and the "Tricky Question," which appear to be the same story but with divergent answers for the attainment of eternal life, will not be examined more than superficially here, as fascinating a subject as that is. The table below shows the usage of Leviticus and Exodus/Deuteronomy in the New Testament.

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<sup>7</sup> The majority text, reflected in the KJV, supports a literary dependence between Galatians and Romans, reading ἐν τῷ, suggesting an authentic redaction as it were. However, the majority texts reading οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις clearly is a harmonization with Exodus 20:16

New Testament Contextual Usage  
of Leviticus and Exodus/Deuteronomy Commandments

Leviticus 19:18	Exodus 20:12-17 or Deuteronomy 5:16-21	Comments
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The Rich Young Man Synoptic Gospel Stories

Matthew 19:16-22	Matthew 19:16-22	The context is Leviticus 18:5, the only exact LXX quote of Deuteronomy
	Luke 18:18-23	Luke's version appears the most primitive
	Mark 10:17-22	Lucan form, but creates an unpar- alleled commandment from Leviticus 25:14

A Tricky Question Synoptic Gospel Stories

Matthew 22:34-40		Leviticus 19:18 associated with Deuteronomy 5:6
Luke 10:25-28		(again Luke's version appears the most primitive)
Mark 12:28-31 (ff to v.34)		Lucan form but extended, adds anti- Marcionite Deuter- onomy 6:5 reference

Other New Testament References

James 2:8-13	James 2:8-13	Leviticus 19:18. Love Commandment is discussed as incomplete without following the negative commandments of Deuteronomy 5:16-17/ Exodus 20:13-14, but they are not tied together and without reference to Leviticus 18:5
Matthew 5:43-44		"Love your enemies" An unrelated application, that none the less offers some insight into the development of the application of the Love Commandment (note, Luke 6:27-28 is more primitive, matching closer to the Didache version; suggesting that Matthew was reworked here)
	Matthew 5:21	Similar to James in context of Matthew 5:17-25, offering some more evidence for the development of application the Exodus/ Deuteronomy references

	Romans 7:7	Unrelated passage condemning the Law, however Tertullian reports the verse sans Exodus 20:17 or Deuteronomy 5:21 quote, indicating that it was most likely not in Marcion's version, but perhaps also not in the canonical either
	Ephesians 6:2	Unrelated passage concerning only "honor your mother and father"

Galatians and Romans Sections Under Examination  
(no additional comments here)

Galatians 5:14		
Romans 13:8-10	Romans 13:9	

For the context of this passage, we will examine Matthew 19:16-22 in English first. The versions of Luke/Marcion and Mark are nearly identical, except for Mark's interesting addition to the negative commandments *μὴ ἀποστερήσης* ("do not defraud" — which parallels some DSS usages of Leviticus 25:14, such as in the Damascus Document), and Luke/Marcion's questioner being the Ruler (of a Synagogue) instead of a young man, cueing us to a tight relationship with the tricky question.

Matthew 19:16-22

*And behold, one came up to him, saying,  
"Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?"*

*And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good?<sup>8</sup> One there is who is good.*

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew reads "Why do you ask me about what is good?," but the Gospel of the Nazaraeans reads the same as the versions of Luke and Mark, which I believe was the original proto-Synoptic text, including placing "good" before "teacher," as this appears to be more primitive, since otherwise Jesus' response in Matthew is almost nonsensical as stands (see Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr. *Gospel of the*



*If you would enter life, keep the commandments.*” [concept from Leviticus 18:5]

*He said to him, “Which?”*

*And Jesus said,*

*“You shall not kill,*

*You shall not commit adultery,*

*You shall not steal,*

*You shall not bear false witness, [LXX Exodus 20:13-16]*

*Honor your father and mother, [Exodus 20:12]*

***and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.***” [LXX Leviticus 19:18]

*The young man said to him, “All these I have observed; what do I still lack?”*

*Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, And you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.” (RSV)*

What one quickly sees is that the Leviticus 19:18 stands alone in Matthew’s account. Further, the young man’s reply does not take into account this catch-all commandment, but makes sense only for the accounts of Mark and Luke. Further, this passage is directly derived from the application of Leviticus 18:5 (“You shall therefore keep my [God’s] statutes and my ordinances, by doing which a man shall live” RSV), and would not have been alien to the young man. But the stronger messianic assumption of spiritual circumcision being as important if not more important than the physical circumcision, would have been a novelty for the young man. In short Leviticus 19:18 does not belong in this story.

We are not dealing in the canonical Matthew story with an original source, and so such an insertion should not be surprising. That Matthew’s story has been heavily worked can be readily seen in the mixing of MT and LXX sources, as can be seen with earlier usage of Massoretic source in the preceding stories about divorce and about children.<sup>9</sup>

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*Nazaraeans*, at <http://talkcity.com/ParadiseDr/nkueh/Nazaraeans.html>). Textual evidence does not however support this, as early Western and Alexandrian mss.,  $\aleph$  B D L, support the given reading, although C K W and most vg. do not. For the proto-Synoptic source to read as I suggest, then this divergence needs to be explained.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Lee Campbell’s summary of Matthew’s OT Citations and Allusions at <http://www.crossrds.org/OnlineJournal/issue3/mtappa.htm>.

No matter which Synoptic model you choose to apply, the Love Commandment would have to be regarded as a later insertion. The two source hypothesis (= "Q") would postulate Mark or proto-Mark first, as would FH (Farrer) ?, in which case the Love Commandment would have been inserted upon Mark's account by Matthew; conversely the Two-Gospel Hypothesis would have Mark redacting Luke or proto-Luke (i.e., Marcion's Gospel) and proto-Matthew, adding storyline. In this scenario, Leviticus 19:18 was more important than the Torah by the time of Mark's writing to the Gentile Christians and it would therefore be nonsensical to delete it, and thus it can be assumed that it was not present. In effect we have now decoupled the Love Commandment of Leviticus from the negative commandments of Exodus/Deuteronomy in Matthew 19:18.

In the parallel story "A Tricky Question" we see a lawyer asking the setup question of the application of Leviticus 18:5, as seen here from Marcion's account.

Marcion's version of Luke 10:28

*And Behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "What shall I do to inherit life?"* (RSV)<sup>10</sup>

The response is to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5) and to love one's neighbors, our Leviticus 19:18 again, but there is no mention of the negative commandments. Clearly we have an application turning the Leviticus 18:5 question toward the messianic spiritualism over Torah legalism. It seems probable that this account is a retelling of the earlier account. We see this in the response of the questioner who declares "You have answered right" in Luke 10:28, affirming the position, as opposed to the un-accepting response in The Rich Young Man story. This story perhaps represents a post-Synagogue reinterpretation, fully in line with second century Marcionite views. The position can be seen as taken further in Mark's redaction (where the anti-Marcionite quotation of Deuteronomy 6:4 is pre-pended to the story and added to the scribe's response) where the question posed is changed to "Which commandment is the first of all?" giving greater stature to Leviticus 19:18 by equating it with the Torah and the Ten Commandments. Matthew's account is similar,

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<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that by leaving out "eternal" Marcion's version more closely approximates the language of Leviticus 18:5 than the canonical version (cf. Tertullian, *AM* 4.25.).

sans the anti-Marcionite tract, and with a cleaner storyline. Matthew's account directly ties the Torah as being derived from the Love Commandments, and thus subservient, but still fully in force.

The observations above are not without support. Clement of Alexandria supplies Patristic evidence that, at least in Africa, there was still no binding of the Love Commandment and the Decalogue in Matthew's account of the Rich Young Man even toward the end of the second century. He shows a deep understanding of the issue here, by alluding to the two instances where eternal life is concerned in *The Instructor*.<sup>11</sup> Although quoting in a sort of free form from the Synoptics, or alternately an earlier version of Matthew, he specifically equates the Decalogue (albeit a somewhat wild listing) and Love Commandments. Salient was his need to quote both stories to include the Love Commandment. Further, he repeats this observation of a missing Love Commandment in a completely separate work. Through quoting Mark's Rich Young Man, he makes it clear that his reading is the same in all the Synoptics.<sup>12</sup> Thus we are reassured in our analysis to this point.

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<sup>11</sup> Clement of Alexandria in *The Instructor* (3.12) comments as follows on the two instances where eternal life question is asked. What is worth noting is that he quotes Lucan verses from what appears to be Marcion's Gospel, or possibly the earlier Matthew that it redacted: "We may comprehend the commandments in two, as the Lord says, '*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thyself*' (= Luke 10:27). Then from these he infers, '*on this hang the law and the prophets*' (= Matt. 22:40). Further, to him that asked, '*What good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?*' (= Matt 19:16). He answered, '*Thou knowest the commandments?*' (Luke 18:20, Marcion's version; cf. Tertullian, *AM*, 4.36). And on him replying Yea, He said, '*This do, and thou shalt be saved.*' Especially conspicuous is the love of the Instructor set forth in various salutary commandments, in order that the discovery may be readier, from the abundance and arrangement of the Scriptures. We have the Decalogue given by Moses, which, indicating by an elementary principle, simple and of one kind, defines the designation of sins in a way conducive to salvation: '*Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not worship idols* (a wild addition; cf. Deuteronomy 5:8-9/Exodus 20:4-5). *Thou shalt not corrupt boys* (another wild addition). Thou shalt not steal. Thou shall not bear false witness. *Honor thy father and thy mother*' (Matthew 19:18-19; from Deuteronomy/Exodus). And so forth. These things are to be observed, and whatever else is commanded in reading the Bible."

<sup>12</sup> Clement of Alexandria again refers to this story, but this time from Mark, in *Who is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved*, Chapter IV. He quotes Mark 10:17-22 verbatim (but adds an interesting variant: "If thou wouldest be perfect"; cf. Matthew 19:21). The comment that follows in Chapter V is striking, "These things are written in the Gospel according to Mark; and in all the rest correspondingly; although perchance the expressions vary slightly in each, yet all show identical agreement in meaning." But no Love Commandment is cited. In fact the only

5) Turning now to the negative commandments in Romans 13:9, we see immediately that they match the LXX form οὐ (“You shall not”) of Deuteronomy in the same way that Matthew 19:18 matches the LXX form of Exodus. What we do not see is the Lucan paraphrased style of μὴ (“Do not”) present in Luke 18:20 and Mark 10:19.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, in Luke 10:26, common with Marcion’s version, we see uniquely the paraphrasing of Leviticus 19:18, in contrast to Mark, Matthew — both occurrences — and even James 2:8, where the LXX of the verse is quoted verbatim. This paraphrasing is in common with Marcion’s Romans 13:8, but not the canonical Romans 13:9.

Now examining the contextual usage of the Love Commandment in Galatians and Romans we see below:

Marcion’s Galatians 5:14-15

*For you, the entire Law has been summed up, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

*But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another. (RSV)*

Marcion’s Romans 12:21, 13:8b<sup>14</sup>

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

*For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. (RSV)*

We see remarkable parallel between Galatians and Romans passages in the Marcionite versions. In Galatians the Love Commandment is followed by an admonition against consuming one another (one assumes allegorically here for conflict), while Romans is preceded by a tract not to repay evil with evil — or “consuming” again. This parallel context continues more profoundly when we examine the verses which follow. In Galatians, 5:16 continues with “I say, walk by the spirit, do not gratify the desires of the flesh,” while Romans 13:14 puts in “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh,” an

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reference to it comes much later in Chapters 27 and 28 concerning the “Tricky Question” story of Matthew 22:36-39.

<sup>13</sup> The translations for οὐ [“You shall not”] and μὴ [“Do not”] are done only to emphasize the textual difference for this discussion.

<sup>14</sup> Alternately a more radical reading of Tertullian on Marcion’s Romans suggests skipping verses 12:20-21 as well, but this would be a stretch.

almost identical thought. Continuing in Galatians 5:19-21 we get admonitions against the flesh, including fornication, licentiousness, carousing (κῶμοι), drunkenness (μέθαι), jealousy (ζήλος), and strife (ἔρις). While Romans 13:13 chimes in against a very similar (κῶμοις, μέθαις, ἔριδι, ζήλω, etc.) but shorter list! Clearly we have parallel passages, and parallel contexts. Although such admonitions pervade the Apostolikon, they are nowhere condemned on the basis of Torah Law. In the context of Marcion's Romans the negative commandments do not fit.

6) Now we shall consider the evidence of the church fathers on Romans 13:9 and the binding of the Love Commandment and the negative commandments.

First, it is worth noting that Epiphanius refers only to Romans 13:8 and not at all to 13:9-10 when describing the variance between Marcion's version of Romans and the canonical (see *Panarion*, 1.2.42). This evidence of omission can be taken as indication that Romans 13:9-10 were not extant when Epiphanius was writing. Although very weak evidence on its own — being that few verses are cited at all by Epiphanius, and the majority of those agree with the canonical verses — it does supplement our other evidence.

Tertullian, who is our best early source on Marcionism, also never mentions any of the negative commandments in respect to Marcion's system or any books of his canon. He does, in *Adversus Marcionem* 5.4, make reference to the Love Commandment, quoted in full from Leviticus 19:18, as "very properly" summing up Romans 12:17-19, including its quotation from Deuteronomy 32:35, that immediately precedes it.<sup>15</sup> This connection creates a far more logical and natural ordering, as the admonition against revenge in Romans 12:19 is itself a paraphrase of Leviticus 19:18's prohibition against revenge, that precedes the Love Commandant.

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<sup>15</sup> The matter of fact presentation of this connection between the summing up with the Love Commandment for the verses of Romans 12:9-19 as immediately preceding without reference to (or comment on) verses 13:1-7, combined with the similar omission by Epiphanius, is very strong evidence that these verses were not present in any version of Romans until the end of the second century; this work of Tertullian's is tightly dated from multiple sources, between 197 and 207 AD, when he left the Catholic fold. Romans 13:1-7 concerning obedience to earthly rulers (read Emperor) is first cited in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, 4.36.6, which is usually dated in the 180s AD. Tertullian's omission extends to verses 12:20-21 and its Proverbs 20:22 quotation.

Now, it is not completely clear if Tertullian is quoting to us Romans 13:9 or Romans 13:8 from Marcion's version, as it reads more like a paraphrase, which in fact bears its closest resemblance to Marcion's Galatians 5:14 (note the underlined words in the verse comparison below). Regardless of which he is quoting, the complete omission of the negative commandments is telling. If Marcion's own apostle Paul quoted from the Laws of the very Creator he was denying, it would prove far too tempting an opportunity for Tertullian to pass up. His silence would seem to verify the decoupling, not withstanding the inherent weakness of such an argument from silence.

Comparison of Tertullian's commentary  
and competing sources of origin

Tertullian, *AM* 5.14 (paraphrase of verse):<sup>16</sup>

*Very properly, then, did he **sum up the entire** teaching of the Creator in this precept of His: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

Canonical Romans 13:9:

*And any other commandments are **summed up** in one sentence: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* (KJV)

Marcion's Galatians 5:14:

*For you **the entire** Law has been **summed up**, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* (Literal, with KJV for Leviticus 19:18)

Marcion's Romans 13:8:

*For the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law.*  
(Literal)

7) Chapter 2 of the Letter of James gives us another perspective on the issue. This piece may or may not have been in circulation by the time that Tertullian was writing.<sup>17</sup> The evidence it provides

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<sup>16</sup> Dr. Peter Holmes translation of Tertullian's work from the Latin (*ANF*, Vol. III, p. 461).

<sup>17</sup> See Origen on James (<http://shell5.ba.best.com/~gdavis/ntcanon.origen.html>) for the first solid reference on this much disputed Epistle. Origen's writing likely post-dates Tertullian's by at least a generation, with his commentaries on the Gospel of John, cited here, likely written in the second quarter of the third century.

is thus problematic, as Tertullian clearly indicates that the revised canonical versions of all the Marcion works were already in existence. If an earlier date can be ascribed to the document, it might give us insight into how the anti-Marcionite view of the Love Commandment was constructed before its binding with the negative commandments from the Decalogue.

James 2:8 quotes the Love Commandment in full from Leviticus 19:18, but with the caveat that if you obey the Royal Law of Leviticus 19:18 “you do well.” Curiously, this same cue, *καλῶς ποιεῖτε* in the Greek, appears in James 2:19 applied to the issue “if you believe God is one,” tying what we may see as a possible anti-Marcionite position to this commandment. That this section is specifically contra Marcion is attested to by verses 2:21-23, which invoke “our father” Abraham with respect to Genesis 22:9 and 15:6 in a similar manner as post-Marcion elements in Galatians and Romans evoke Abraham to bind the Pauline God of Marcion to the Old Testament as the God of Abraham, and so too with Torah Law.<sup>18</sup> Three verses later it invokes the first two negative commandments “Do not commit adultery” and “Do not murder”<sup>19</sup> in respect to keeping the entire Law.<sup>20</sup> The argument put forth in James 2:8-11 is that while it is fine to uphold the Love Commandment, it in no way supercedes or excuses violation of the Law on even one point, as can be seen below.

#### James 2:8-11

If you truly fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture,  
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well;

*But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted  
by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole*

<sup>18</sup> The letter of James should be compared with the writing of the second and third century Church Fathers, Tertullian in particular. Verse 2:20 with “vain man” seems almost to be a directed personal attack on Marcion, in very much the same manner as Tertullian’s cry of “O Marcion” in his sardonic lament about Marcion’s disdain for the Law: “Why then do you, (O Marcion, ) impute to the God of the law” (AM, 5.13; comments on Romans 7:7 and 7:8]

<sup>19</sup> Curiously, whether significant or not, James 2:11 quotes these two commandments using *μη* (“Do not”), as found in Luke 18: 20 and Mark 10:19 instead of *ου* “Thou shalt not”) found in Matthew 19:18 and the Septuagint.

<sup>20</sup> James 2:10 reads “all the Law” (*ὅλον τὸν νόμον*) matching Matthew 22:40 (*ὅλος ὁ νόμος*), from a verse not shared in either Luke’s or Mark’s accounts. The evidence of reworking in this story and it’s double, The Rich Young Man, hints at a possible post-Matthew redaction date, or least a contemporaneous date, for the letter of James. Surprisingly this doublet was missed by Riley in his analysis of proto-Matthew [see Riley, *The First Gospel*, pp. 7-22).

*law, and yet stumbles in one [point], he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. (NKJV)*

What is noteworthy about the relationship of the negative commandments and the Love Commandment is that they are not bound. In fact it is implied here that you can uphold the Love Commandment and yet violate the negative commandments! This argument, which I claim is more primitive, differs greatly from the binding of negative commandments in the canonical Romans 13:9. It most closely parallels the position taken by Tertullian when he states in respect to the role of the Love Commandment, "Now, if this is the recapitulation of the law from the very law itself" (AM, 5.14, immediately after Leviticus is quoted), affirming what was likely the contemporary Catholic view, namely, that the Love Commandment is part of the Law, or "the recapitulation of the law," but not the whole Law. We do not see in either Tertullian or James here a placing of the Torah Law subservient to the Love Commandment. But we do have a refutation of the position that the Law has been supplanted by the Love Commandment. The parallel arguments of Tertullian tell us that in all likelihood the Letter of James is itself from an era prior to the binding of these commandments, and yet contra Marcion in its presentation of the role of the two sets of commandments.

#### *Conclusions:*

**R**omans 13:8 may well have originally stood alone without verse 13:9 being present. We have demonstrated in this exercise that every individual element of Romans 13:9 seems unlikely to have been present in the original document. The stylistic similarities between this verse and the revised canonical Galatians 5:14 are too striking to ignore. Further, a larger possible dependency of Romans chapters 12 and 13, as they likely existed in Marcion's version, upon Galatians chapter 5 as a source is also evident. Such a relationship challenges the notion of a single writer for Galatians and Romans, and opens up the possibility of a relationship similar to that between Ephesians and Colossians.

It appears that the binding of the Love Commandment or Royal Law with the negative commandments from the Torah is a product of the late second century. The revision occurred not only



in Romans but also in Matthew, but each targeted at dramatically different audiences. Second century Christianity seems to have been split on this issue, as can be see in the parallel stories of “The Rich Young Man” and “A Tricky Question” examined above. The meaning of this split can be hypothesized briefly here.

The second century saw Christians thrown out of the Synagogues.<sup>21</sup> No doubt an identity crisis ensued. Some believed that Christianity had been cut loose from the Judaism and even the Jewish God. By replacing the Torah Law with the Love Commandment, Marcion had transformed Christianity into a religion that would have mass appeal to Greeks (and other Gentiles). Paul fit his messenger requirement, and so his myth was evoked. By contrast, the Ebionite or Jewish Christians never held that the separation was valid, and considered themselves messianic Jews, observing the Torah. The Catholic critics of Marcion would adopt a divide and conquer strategy. They donned the Torah Law against the Marcionites, and the wore the Love Commandment and Pauline positions when they combated the Ebionites. Eventually the need to bind these competing commandments became necessary for Catholic universality. So they would make the Torah subordinate to Leviticus in Scripture. But this didn't happen at once. For example, the Letter of James 2:1-26 can be seen as an anti-Marcionite tract,<sup>22</sup> pre-binding, admonishing Marcionite tendencies by declaring, much as Tertullian argued, that the Law was not invalidated but rather supplemented by the Love Commandment.

In the end we are left to consider the position of the Dutch Radicals,<sup>23</sup> that Paul represents a legendary character that is not separable from Marcion, and whose writings were not attested

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<sup>21</sup> The exact date of the Christian expulsion, whether all or simply Gentiles, is a matter of speculation. The early, first century dating of the Gospels is based partly on an assumption of first century expulsion. I believe the Bar Kochba era is a better candidate, and is pointed to by the content and development of the New Testament. But this is something which only becomes apparent after establishing Marcion primitiveness.

<sup>22</sup> The contra Pauline nature of the letter of James has been long been commented on, going back all the way to Martin Luther. Robert Eisenman, in his book *James the Brother of Jesus* shows in great detail that this letter presents a polemic position vis-à-vis Paul.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed analysis see Herman Detering' “The Dutch Radical Approach to the Pauline Epistles“ (JHC 3/2 [Fall 1996], 163-193). For a contrary non-Radical view of the Pauline Epistles that takes into account Marcion and presumes a pre-Marcionite Corpus, see John J. Claubeuax's, *A lost Edition of the Letters of Paul: A Reassessment of the Text of the Pauline Corpus Attested by Marcion* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1989).

before Marcion. The adjustment of the Apostolikon, combined with the addition of the Catholic Epistles entitled Timothy and Titus, show evidence that the Marcionite view was moderated, giving motive to the canonical writers. Even so, much of the Marcion system and Gentile bias has survived even to this day.

The Love Commandment was central to Marcionite doctrine as it really existed. The notion that there were multiple Gods seems as ludicrous as the claim that the Trinity represents three separate Gods. What seems apparent is that the Love Commandment represented the supplanting of the Torah Law and Jewish regulations with a spiritual Law, as revealed, not by man or tradition, but by divine revelation to Marcion's hero, Paul. The revelation by Christ was of a God who was not of the Jewish people but all the nations, and thus more than the Creator God and more than the Jewish God. He was the God of Love. Yet he was all these three Gods in the same sense we see the trinity. There is no evidence in the Marcionite canon of such a three God system.<sup>24</sup> But there is plenty of evidence of a revealed Christ and a revealed God to the Gentiles.

The Love Commandment's dominance via Pauline Christianity has a far different and more controversial origin, that lies at the heart of second century Christianity. Its binding with the negative commandments represents something other than the original Christian concept; rather the closing chapter in the subjugation of post-Synagogue Christian factions under the foot of the Catholic Church.

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<sup>24</sup> There is strong evidence of Marcion's Docetism of Christ in Philippians 2:6-8, and also in Luke, especially in the early form the Marcionites used. For example, the missing birth story is just one of many elements supporting the notion of a non-flesh Jesus in the Marcionite formula.