

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

gard to the gods. The instant he has rejected the belief in the efficacy of sacrifice man claims to deliver himself. Soon the cult of the Buddhas was developed, and humanity was in danger of being subjected to new gods; the philosophers tried to eliminate this menace: the critical spirit suppressed by denial all the supports which man seeks for outside of himself. Nevertheless, this nihilism was not the end; it was an intermediate stage, at which was elaborated the mysticism of the Great Vehicle. Doubtless the majority of believers could never reach the summits whither the doctors sought to guide them. They still honoured relics and sacred trees. To-day in many a province the mass of the faithful is given over to superstitious excesses. But the tradition is not forgotten. Already there is a prospect of revival, for which European activities are perhaps responsible. Asia, uneasy, deceived by modern civilization, returns once more to question the ancient sages. A regenerated Buddhism will perhaps calm troubled souls and guide the peoples towards a new destiny.

JEAN PRZYLUKI.

(NOTE.—We are indebted to the kind offices of Professor F. W. Thomas for the translation of the foregoing article.)

A NEGATIVE FORM OF THE GOLDEN RULE IN THE DIATESSARON?

‘It is recorded in the Babylonian Talmud, in the tract on the Sabbath (fol. 31 a), that a heathen once came to Shammai to be made a proselyte on condition that he might be taught the whole Law whilst he stood on one foot. Shammai drove him away, and he went and put the same question to Hillel, who promptly replied: “What to thyself is hateful to thy neighbour thou shalt not do: this is the whole Law, and the rest is commentary.”’¹

The famous saying attributed to the Jewish Rabbi is in Aramaic, that is Jewish Aramaic. I wonder if it has ever been pointed out that precisely the same negative form of the Golden Rule which the saying contains was current among Christian writers in the sister dialect of Syriac. In his edition of the Old Syriac Gospels Professor Burkitt quotes it from Aphraates under Matt. xix 19,² but there was no occasion there to mention Hillel. The only example from a Syriac writer given by Gotthold Resch in his large collection of texts of the negative Rule is one from the Armenian version of St Ephraim’s commentary on the Pauline

¹ Dr Charles Taylor *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (1886) p. 9. Hillel is said to have lived at Jerusalem c. 30 B.C.—10 A.D.

² *Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe* i 110, 111.

Epistles: 'aut ipsam legem docere mansuetudinem et fidem; ut exempli gratia quum dicit: *Quod tibi malum videtur ne aliis feceris*'.¹ In the saying of Hillel the text stands thus:

דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד

That is literally: *What unto thee is hateful, to thy comrade (or fellow-man) thou shalt not do.* The corresponding Syriac form is:

ܘܥܒܝܕ ܠܗܘܝܢܐ ܘܥܒܝܕ ܠܗܘܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܗܘܝܢܐ

These are the same words, and in the same idiomatic order and construction, the only difference lying in the method of expressing 'what' at the beginning. If we represent this difference by translating 'whatsoever', we have: *Whatsoever unto thee is hateful, to thy comrade thou shalt not do.*

The Golden Rule in this form is found once in Aphraates (c. 345 A.D.) and four times in the Discourses of Philoxenus (c. 500 A.D.). It occurs also with but slight variation (ܘܥܒܝܢܐ ܘܥܒܝܢܐ for ܘܥܒܝܢܐ ܘܥܒܝܢܐ at the beginning, and the order 'is hateful unto thee') in a heading to the first chapter of the Didascalia in the Mesopotamian MS called H, or h, after its discoverer Dr Rendel Harris. And Professor Burkitt (*loc. cit.*) gives a reference to Land's Syriac *Anecdota* i 69, where the saying is ascribed to Menander in the form: '*That which unto thee is hateful, thou to thy comrade shalt not wish to perform.*'

Hillel has been introduced here chiefly for the interest of the fact that the negative form of the Golden Rule attributed to him is identical with that found in Syriac writers; but also for the sake of another coincidence: he is made to utter the Rule in answer to a question about the Law, and in four of our Syriac passages it has a similar setting. What significance, if any, may attach to these points I leave it to others to discuss, and so pass on to the immediate object of this note, which is to suggest the possibility (if no more) that Aphraates and Philoxenus found the negative Golden Rule, in the form quoted above, in the Diatessaron of Tatian: not as a substitute for the positive form of the Rule in the Sermon on the Mount, but at a much later point.

Aphraates.

The twenty-third and last of the Homilies of Aphraates is dated at the end equivalently 345 A.D. Towards the end of it he writes:

As the beginning of all good works it is required before God that a

¹ *Das Aposteldecree* (Texte u. Unters., N.F. xiii 3) p. 136; and *S. Ephraem Syri commentarii in Epp. D. Pauli* (the Mekhitarists' Latin trans.) p. 9. Resch refers the words to Christ, but the context seems to require that the subject of 'dicit' be the Law: possibly Tobit iv 15 was in the writer's mind.

man believe that God is one.' But if a man confess that God is one and transgress His commandments and do them not, it is not surely believed by him that God is one. . . . God commanded: 'Keep my commandments and do them.' But if one keep not the commandments of God, it is manifest that he denieth God, because the Lord of the commandments is not surely believed by him. God said: *Thou shalt not kill, and thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt not steal, and thou shalt not bear false witness: honour thy father and thy mother;*² *AND WHATSOEVER UNTO THEE IS HATEFUL, TO THY COMRADE THOU SHALT NOT DO.*³

Here, though Aphraates appears to be quoting from Our Lord's answer to the rich man in the Gospel (where 'honour thy father and thy mother' stands after, not before, the other four commandments, as in Exod. xx 12), yet his manner of citation is apt to suggest that he is thinking rather of the Old Law. It is to be observed also that in another Homily (xx 18) he quotes the story of the rich man at some length, without the Golden Rule and with 'and love thy neighbour as thyself' after 'honour thy father and thy mother' (as in Matt. xix 19): 'And to that *rich man* also who came unto Our Lord and said to Him: *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* Our Lord said: *Thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt not steal, and honour thy father and thy mother, and love thy neighbour as thyself.*'⁴ Hence, if the above passage from Hom. xxiii stood alone, we should not be justified in inferring that Aphraates had there taken his negative form of the Golden Rule from any Gospel text. But in the light of other evidence such an inference seems less arbitrary.

Philoxenus.

The Monophysite Philoxenus was bishop of Mabbogh or Hierapolis (near the Euphrates, between Antioch and Edessa) from 485 to 519. He was a distinguished biblical scholar, and in 508 produced the revised Syriac translation of the whole Bible which is called by his name. His thirteen Discourses on the Christian Life were edited, with translation in a second volume, by Dr Budge in 1894. In the passages to be quoted I give an independent translation which differs in a few points from that of Dr Budge.

The ninth Discourse, which continues the subject of the eighth, is on Poverty. The author contends that an entire renunciation of earthly goods is essential in order to a perfect fulfilment of the teaching of

¹ Cf. *Hermas Mand.* i 1.

² Matt. xix 18-19, Mk. x 19, Lk. xviii 20. Matt. alone adds here 'and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'.

³ Ed. Wright p. 498, ed. Parisot ii coll. 128-129.

⁴ Ed. Wright, p. 392.

Christ. The following passages occur in the latter part of the Discourse:

1. And to another, who with the desire of a perfect manner of life wished to follow Jesus in a fashion agreeable to himself, Jesus shewed this way of perfection,—even to this *teacher* also. There drew nigh unto Him, it saith, (a certain) one as he was teaching *in the temple*,¹ and said to Him: *Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* And what said Jesus unto him? *Why callest thou me good? There is none good save one,—God. Thou knowest the commandments: Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.*² Behold, I have (now) taught thee the refraining from evil, and that thou shouldst turn aside thy desire from the paths of sin. But if thou wouldst yet go forward from this and from not doing evil come to do good and keep the commandments of the Law: *Honour thy father and thy mother*,³ and observe all things answerable to this (commandment). But if further thou wouldst be above the compulsion of the Law by the power of thy righteousness, and live virtuously of thy free will above the fear of punishment: *Love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind*; ⁴ *AND WHATSOEVER UNTO THEE IS HATEFUL, TO THY COMRADE THOU SHALT NOT DO.* This is the manner of life of the just, which is above the compulsion of the Law; and this righteousness Moses and the prophets taught (pp. 332–333).

After a few lines Philoxenus continues:

2. These things Jesus taught that *proud teacher* to do, though he was unwilling to be held in restraint by them and with boastful mind was seeking things greater than these. But what He did not (i.e. failed to) teach him ought for us to be sure doctrine, and we are to learn from the same discourse how to depart from evil and ascend step by step and grow in the cultivation of virtues. For that which He said unto him: *Thou shalt not kill*, and *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, and *Thou shalt not steal*, and *Thou shalt not bear false witness*, agrees with that which David said: 'Depart from evil, and do good,' and with that which Paul said: 'Let not evil overcome you.' But *Honour thy father and thy mother*, and *WHATSOEVER UNTO THEE IS HATEFUL, TO THY COMRADE THOU SHALT NOT DO*, is equivalent to 'Do good', and 'Overcome evil by good'. And *Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself*, is equivalent to 'The law is not set for the just'; for these commandments are above the fear of the Law (pp. 333–334).

¹ This, with the description of the questioner as a 'teacher', implies Matt. xxii 34 ff. and parallels the story of the lawyer or scribe at Jerusalem. Further on he is again called a 'teacher', then a 'scribe', but finally a 'young man', i.e. the rich man (ὁ πλούσιος, Matt. xix 20, 22).

² Mk. x 17 ff., Lk. xviii 18 ff. (cf. Matt. xix 16 ff.). We are here with the story of the rich man.

³ Mk. x, &c.

⁴ Matt. xxii 37 and parallels: the lawyer or scribe again.

Here again there is a combination of the answers given to the rich man and to the lawyer or scribe. But here the negative Golden Rule is added (where we found it in Aphraates) after the answer to the rich man, whereas in the former passage it took the place of the words 'and thy neighbour as thyself' in the answer to the lawyer. Two pages further on, in the course of an elaborate classification of the various 'orders' of righteousness, which is not very easy to follow, the negative Rule is again quoted in the same words, but without indication of its context.

3. These three things, then, Our Lord taught that just men should do, even they who are (yet) in the world ; in the which things are comprised all virtues which are exercised by kindness, and which by those who have somewhat are performed by means of their riches towards those who are in want ; and therein is set the whole force of that commandment : *WHATSOEVER UNTO THEE IS HATEFUL, TO THY COMRADE THOU SHALT NOT DO*. As the Master Himself explains, *This is the law and the prophets*¹ (p. 336).

Then several pages are devoted to a discussion of the further orders of righteousness contained in the counsel to sell all and in the concluding invitation to follow Christ (quoted in the form 'Take up thy cross and follow me'); after which the writer recapitulates his former exposition, beginning thus :

4. Now let us see Our Lord's answer to that *young man* who drew nigh unto him and asked to learn the lesson of perfection, that we also may receive perfect knowledge and be born (again) from one manner of life to another. When therefore he asketh, in order to learn : *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* Jesus saith to him : *Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness* ; which things are the avoiding of evil. And after them (He taught) the cultivation of good works by that which He spake : *Honour thy father and thy mother ; AND WHATSOEVER UNTO THEE IS HATEFUL, TO THY COMRADE THOU SHALT NOT DO* (p. 345).

What are we to think of these passages? Here is an eminent Scripture scholar confusing, or at any rate combining, two distinct narratives of the Gospel which have only this in common that they both involve questions about the Law ; and four times he quotes the Golden Rule in a negative form as if it were part of the Gospel text. In seeking an explanation of this it seems necessary to keep two questions distinct : (1) had Philoxenus any textual authority for his harmonization of the two

¹ Matt. vii 12, where the words immediately follow the Golden Rule in its positive form. But compare also the similar words at the end of the answer to the lawyer : 'On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets' (Matt. xxii 40).

Gospel passages? (2) did he find the negative Golden Rule in a text of the Gospels, and was that text a copy of the Diatessaron?¹

(1) To the harmonization no support is lent by the Arabic Diatessaron, nor—which is of more weight—by St Ephraim's commentary on the Diatessaron. Nor is there anything in Aphraates which would suggest that the questions of the rich man and of the scribe were brought together in the Diatessaron. We seem, therefore, to be driven to the conclusion, unexpected in the case of so learned a writer, that the combination which appears in Philoxenus is due to himself alone. He found both Gospel passages apt for the subject of his discourse, but it is surprising that he should have put them together in such a way as to imply that they belonged to a single context.

(2) Philoxenus alone ascribes the Golden Rule in its negative form definitely to Our Lord, but he does so very clearly and emphatically. He is not consistent as to the point at which he introduces it; but he is consistent in regard to the Gospel words which he makes it displace. In his first passage he appends the Rule to the 'first commandment' (Matt. xxii 37 and parallels) as a substitute for the 'second' commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', which appears in all three Synoptists in the answer to the lawyer or scribe. In his second and fourth passages he places it after the commandment 'Honour thy father and thy mother' in the answer to the rich man, where in St Matthew's Gospel (xix 19) we have the addition (forming a doublet with Matt. xxii 39): 'and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' And it is here that the negative Rule is found once in Aphraates (Hom. xxiii), though in another place (Hom. xx) Aphraates quotes the answer to the rich man without the Rule and with the addition found in St Matthew (see p. 353 above). Of one thing, therefore, we may feel reasonably sure: that if a negative form of the Golden Rule found a place in the Diatessaron, it stood at the end of the commandments quoted by Our Lord to the rich man, after 'Honour thy father and thy mother'. In meaning it is practically identical with the commandment 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', which stands there in St Matthew's Gospel; and may not the double occurrence of this commandment in the first Gospel, and in that alone, have suggested to Tatian to vary it by substituting in one place (the place where it is not found in the other Gospels) a familiar and recognized equivalent? At any rate, there the equivalent appears twice in Philoxenus and once in Aphraates. It is true that in Aphraates the Rule is not given expressly as a saying of Christ; but I think the impression left on any reader of Philoxenus will be that he at least conceived himself to be quoting

¹ As the negative Golden Rule does not appear in any MS of the separate Gospels, this question really concerns the Diatessaron only.

it from the Gospel. If these writers did not draw it from copies of the Diatessaron, then we must suppose that traditional interpretation among the Syrians had so canonized the negative Golden Rule that it could be quoted as virtually a saying of Our Lord, being an accepted paraphrase of the commandment 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'¹

It is to be mentioned that St Ephraim's commentary on the Diatessaron throws no light on the text at the point we are concerned with, since in his comments on the story of the rich man he does not cite the commandments quoted by our Lord, 'Thou shalt not kill', &c. Nor does the Arabic Diatessaron exclude the possibility that the negative Golden Rule found a place here in the original; for the copy from which the translation was made was one in which the text had been assimilated in the main to that of the Peshita or Syriac Vulgate.

R. H. CONNOLLY.

POLOTSKY'S MANICHAEAN HOMILIES²

THIS very important publication belongs to the great find made in 1930 of a Manichaean Library in Egypt, of which the major part went to Berlin, but some portions were secured by Mr A. Chester Beatty.³ Through Sir Herbert Thompson's generosity and public spirit this volume, containing the Coptic text of a small volume, with a line for line German translation, has seen the light: I am sure Mr Chester Beatty will never regret its opportune appearance. As for Dr Hugo Ibscher, one has only to look at the formless bundle photographed on p. ix to realize that without his patience and skill the remains of the papyrus leaves would never have been brought into a state in which they could be read at all. Dr Ibscher's has been a wonderful achievement: I can only compare it to the refining work of the Elect Manichee, who separates the mixed and befouled portions of the Light from their hateful environment and brings them safely into the pure luminous region to which they originally belonged.

¹ Dr C. Taylor in the second edition of his *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* (pp. 142-143: no. 11 of the Additional Notes) quotes from the Targum of pseudo-Jonathan on Lev. xix 18 the comment: 'for what thou hatest for thyself, thou shalt not do to him', i. e. to thy 'comrade' or neighbour. But this Targum is said to be as late as the seventh century A. D., and therefore can hardly be cited as providing a background of Jewish interpretation to account for earlier Syriac commentary.

² *Manichäische Handschriften der Sammlung A. Chester Beatty. Band I. Manichäische Homilien* herausgegeben von H. J. POLOTSKY, mit einem Beitrag von H. IBSCHEER, Stuttgart, 1934.

³ See *J.T.S.* xxxiv 266 f.