

For the Torch of Reason.

The Golden Rule.

BY G. W. MOREHOUSE.

Ask the best and most exemplary Christian to name the most valuable text in the Bible and it will indubitably be the one known as the Golden Rule. This is the essential, and all the other precepts and commandments merely subsidiary. Yet, this moral principle arose among men, not from revelation, theology or religion, but from practical experience, formulated in time by philosophers, and adopted by moral and religious reformers.

Thousands of men, from the earliest dawn of civilization, have independently thought, spoken, and to a considerable degree practiced the Golden Rule. The principles of justice came to be recognized as necessary rules of conduct, through the every-day intercourse and social and commercial needs of men. Experience is the great teacher.

Five centuries before the Christian era the great Chinese practical philosopher, Confucius, taught: "Do not do to others what you would not have done to you by others." When asked if there was one word which would serve as a rule of conduct, Confucius replied: "Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others."

When questioned about returning good for evil, he said: "What then will you return for good? Recompense injury with justice, and return good for good." In this respect it is safe to say that the doctrine of Confucius has more followers than the submissive doctrine of Christ, and that in any part of the world. A doctrine that advises "turning the other cheek," and does not punish evil-doing, has not been found safe in practice.

In the latter half of the first century before Christ, Hillel, president of the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, declared that: "What thou wilt not have done to thee, do not thou to others." He used such expressions habitually. Replying to a pagan he said: "Do not to others what you do not like others to do to you is the essence: everything else is but comment."

When the early Christians proclaimed the Golden Rule it must have been already familiar to many of their hearers, and when it was put in the New Testament it was a new revelation only to the ignorant. To those who had heard of Confucius or Hillel, the saying ascribed to Christ had a familiar sound: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" or as Luke has it: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

As, therefore, the Golden Rule is of human origin, all the other scriptural sayings being inferior to it

must be surely so recognized. All that is of permanent value in the Bible is a part of the common knowledge accumulated by the race through thousands of years of experience, and has, perhaps with a few exceptions, found better expression elsewhere. It is sinful waste of fleeting time to search for wheat in a stack of well-threshed straw.

Some have questioned whether the Golden Rule reaches the sublimest height of moral teaching, but the fact remains that notwithstanding its early and often repeated promulgation it is still a comparative stranger in everyday life throughout the world. It is probably far enough advanced for the present stage of semi-civilization.

There are many good people who habitually confound this precept with religion—with Christianity—and often this is all of their religion. We can have no quarrel with them—only a little misunderstanding in the matter of names. Some of these friends retain a few meaningless forms and observances, that help to keep up their illusion that the good has been brought about by faith instead of works, and as a product of evolution. A little more knowledge of science and real history, with exercise in freethought, will give promise of final cure in such cases.

So far from the fundamental principles of immorality and justice being dependent upon religious belief for origin and support, it will be found after impartial study that the reverse comes nearer the truth. The claims of enthusiastic or interested advocates that the rules of right conduct are dependent upon any religious faith are not supported by facts. Investigation will show that we owe much to the accumulated common sense of humanity and precious little to bibliolatry.

A good beginning toward emancipation from error is made when we fearlessly give credit for the Golden Rule to the source from whence it emanated. Why not admit the fact that we owe all to nature and nothing to phantoms among the clouds.

Strength in Old Age.

Dandoro, when past ninety and utterly blind, stormed Constantinople. Titian was painting his finest pictures when he died in his 100th year. Sir Isaac Newton was president of the Royal Society at the age of eighty-three; and Landor furnished his "Imaginary Conversations" at the age of eighty-nine. Brougham was a strong debater at eighty; and Lyndhurst, when over ninety, spoke in the House of Lords. Franklin was the Governor of Pennsylvania at eighty-two. Gladstone (the grand old man), hale and hearty at the age of eighty-three years, was a power in the English Parliament. Elizabeth Cady Stanton has just celebrated her eighty-fourth year, hale and hearty, with all her mental faculties as bright as ever.

THE LIBERAL UNIVERSITY

OREGON.

The Only Institution of the Kind!

Faculty---1899-'00.

J. EARL HOSMER, Ph. D., B. S. D., PRES.,
Superintendent Department of Cosmology,
Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Dynamics.

ABEL A. LEONARD, M. D., M. E.,*
Superintendent Department of Biology,
Anatomy, Physiology, Animal Electricity,
Physiological Psychology, Microscopy.

THADDEUS B. WAKEMAN,
Superintendent Department of Sociology and Law,
General History, Sociology, Law, Linguistics,
Ethics.

MINNIE P. HOSMER, L. S., B. S. D.,
Superintendent Preparatory Department,
History, English Grammar, Botany, Vocal
Music.

PEARL W. GEER, M. G. H., SECRETARY,
Business Methods and Correspondence.

MINNIE PRESTON,
Kindergarten and Primary Classes.

SOPHIE WOLF,
Piano Music, Elocution, English Literature.

CLARA WAKEMAN,
Drawing and Painting.

ALICE DAVENPORT,
Stenography, Typewriting.

LOUIS RAUCH, Assistant,
Bookkeeping, Commercial Arithmetic.

LORA AMES, Assistant,
Physiology, Hygiene.

KATIE MATTESON,
Librarian.

PROFS. HOSMER, WAKEMAN, GEER,
Lecturers on Religion of Science and Humanity.

EMILY L. WAKEMAN,
Matron.

*Dr. Leonard has consented to take this chair until some one can be found to fill it permanently.

STUDENTS MAY ENTER AT ANY TIME.

We are now in our New building, which gives us room for increased attendance and much better facilities for teaching. For terms and further particulars, address,

Pearl W. Geer, Sec'y,
SILVERTON OREGON.

FRIENDS OF LIBERAL AND SECULAR EDUCATION

are earnestly reminded that the above University is in active and harmonious operation, but that it must be provided with sufficient means to finish its building, now approaching completion and partly occupied, so that a paying number of students can be accommodated. Please to subscribe, or obtain subscriptions, for our Stock, and send memoranda of property, books or apparatus you can furnish.

J. EARL HOSMER, President of Faculty.
T. B. WAKEMAN, President Board of Directors.
P. W. GEER, Sec'y Board and Business M'gr.