
Arnulf Zweig (1967)

GOGARTEN, FRIEDRICH

(1887–1968)

Friedrich Gogarten, the German theologian, was born in 1887 at Dortmund. After serving as a pastor in Thuringia, in 1927 he became professor of systematic theology at Jena and in 1935 moved to the corresponding chair at Göttingen. He was early associated with the new dialectical theology and its revolt against liberalism and idealism. Within this movement he stands nearer to Rudolf Bultmann than to Karl Barth, but he worked out a distinctive position of his own. His thought shows the influence of existentialist philosophy, but he claimed that it also continues the insights of Martin Luther, on whom Gogarten was a recognized authority.

Gogarten believed that Luther delivered Christian theology from the hold of metaphysics. This achievement was obscured in the period of Protestant orthodoxy following the Reformation, but it is now time to revive his insights, which can be restated in terms of current existentialist philosophy. According to Gogarten, the major Christian doctrines were formulated under the domination of metaphysical categories, in an age when history was understood as a process that takes place within a stationary metaphysical framework and when the course of history was supposed to be determined by metaphysical factors. Deliverance from metaphysics makes it possible to take history with a new seriousness. Man is responsible for history and creates it by his decisions. So far are we from having an obligation to interpret history in the light of metaphysics that we must rather view metaphysical systems themselves as products of history. Christianity is not dependent on any metaphysical system but is rather the summons to a historical self-understanding, in which we accept responsibility for our own historical existence under the word of God, which addresses us in Christ.

These emphases, which Gogarten relates as much to the sola fide of Luther as to modern existentialism, are developed into a secular interpretation of the Christian gospel. The Christian faith brings man to maturity and strips the world of every mythical or numinous property. The world is deprived of its religious power and is handed over to man as the son who has come of age, the heir to whom God has entrusted the creation. These views are related by Gogarten especially to the teaching of St. Paul in Galatians 4:1–11.

See also Barth, Karl; Bultmann, Rudolf; Idealism; Liberalism; Luther, Martin; Metaphysics, History of.

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John Macquarrie (1967)

GOLDEN RULE

One early use of the word golden in English is “most excellent, important, or precious.” With reference to rules or precepts it was used to mean “of inestimable value,” and the expression “the golden rule” was often specifically used with reference to the precept in Matthew: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (7:12). Thus, the principle that has come to be known as the golden rule has been so called presumably...
because it has been regarded as being of inestimable value or importance. This regard was not derived solely from the fact that it was set forth in the sermon on the mount. The golden rule has been widely accepted, in word if not in deed, by vast numbers of greatly differing peoples; it is a basic device of moral education; and it can be found at the core of innumerable moral, religious, and social codes. So far as can be determined from available records, it was probably first formulated by Confucius some five hundred years before Christ—"What you do not like when done to yourself do not do to others"—and the multitude of different formulations testify to its widespread acceptance and influence.

There is probably no principle which has been so widely accepted and remained so controversial. Nonetheless, the golden rule has been the subject of comparatively little philosophical discussion. It is usually mentioned, when it is mentioned at all, only in passing, and it has generally received more attention in theological and inspirational literature. However, there are signs of increasing philosophical interest in it.

One of its commonest formulations today is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It is commonly supposed that there are significant differences between this, the positive formulation, and the negative formulation, "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you," and that the positive formulation "marks a distinct advance" since it "prescribes positive services rather than mere abstinences" and "sets forth an ideal which is higher and therefore more difficult to realize." It can be argued, however, that this is an error resulting from faulty analysis and perhaps also from theological bias. In connection with a specific action or object of desire, there is a considerable difference between a positive desire, a desire to do it or have it done to oneself, and a negative desire, a desire not to do it or not to have it done to oneself. But in the abstract, so the argument runs, there is only a difference in formulation, and a want, wish, or desire formulated in negative terms can always be reformulated in positive terms. For example, there is no difference between not wanting others to lie to oneself and wanting them not to lie to oneself, wanting them to tell one the truth and wanting them not to fail to tell one the truth. In general, "A wants x to happen" is equivalent to "A does not want x not to happen," and "A does not want x to happen" is equivalent to "A wants x not to happen." Thus, according to this line of argument, every desire formulated negatively, which would come within the scope of the negative golden rule, can be reformulated positively and will then come within the scope of the positive golden rule. It would follow, then, that there is no logical or moral difference between the negative and positive formulations, only a psychological or rhetorical one.

On either account the negative formulation of the golden rule is to be distinguished from the denial of the golden rule: "Do not do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Obviously, this is not a formulation of the golden rule at all but is, rather, its total rejection. The denial of the golden rule is usually supported by the claim that the golden rule presupposes a uniformity of human nature, in the sense of a uniformity of tastes, interests, needs, and desires, and the attendant claim that there is no such uniformity. One way of meeting this objection is to deny that the golden rule involves any such presupposition. It has been argued that it is necessary to make a distinction between the particular interpretation and the general interpretation of the golden rule. The particular interpretation implies that whatever in particular one would have others do to or for him, he should do to or for them. It is in the particular interpretation that, to take some of the standard objections, the golden rule "authorizes the quarrelsome person who loves to be provoked, to go about provoking others, and the person who hates friendliness and sympathy to be cold and unsympathetic in his dealings with others" (L. J. Russell). But these consequences, it has been claimed, do not follow from the general interpretation. On this interpretation what one has to consider is not what in particular one would have others do to or for oneself but, rather, the general ways in which one would have others act in their treatment of oneself. If one abstracts his general wishes from his particular desires, what one would have others do is to take account of his interests, needs, and desires, which may be quite different from theirs, and either satisfy them or not willfully frustrate them. What the golden rule requires a person to do, then, is to take account of the wishes of others and accord them the respect and consideration he would want them to accord to his. In other words, what the golden rule requires of each of us is that we should treat others in accordance with the same principles or standards that we would have others apply in their treatment of us. Thus, the golden rule, if this argument is sound, is compatible with differences in interests, needs, tastes, wishes, and desires and does not presuppose that human nature is uniform in the sense specified.

Another principle which should be distinguished from the golden rule is what might be called its inversion: "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them." The inversion of the golden rule has received some sup-
port, and it has even been urged that it replace the golden rule as a guide to conduct, mainly as a consequence of the same sort of objection as the distinction just outlined is intended to eliminate. It has been claimed that the inversion of the golden rule has “the merit of stressing the need for an understanding of other people as a basis of our behavior toward them” and does not presuppose any uniformity or identity of nature in the beings it is intended to govern.

One counterargument to this is that the implications of the inversion of the golden rule are more absurd than the alleged implications of the golden rule itself and that it is tantamount to a rule that would require everyone always to do whatever anyone else wants him to do, a rule it is impossible to follow in a world of conflicting interests. Once it is recognized, the argument runs, that the “uniformity of human nature,” in the sense of an absolute identity of interests, needs, and desires, is not a presupposition of the golden rule, any temptation to substitute the inversion of the golden rule for the golden rule itself should disappear. For in its general interpretation the golden rule does require us to take account of and accord respect to the differing needs, interests, and desires of others, and it is just this that the inversion of the golden rule is intended to bring about. However, the question remains whether the inversion of the golden rule cannot be rescued from at least some of the more obvious objections to it by means of a distinction similar to that made between the particular and the general interpretation of the golden rule.

In the course of time a number of anomalous interpretations of the golden rule have found strong support. On the one hand, it has been said that the golden rule comprehends all the requirements of morality in a single formula; on the other, it has been said that the golden rule is only a guide, that it is far from complete, that it requires rules, a sense of justice, or even a whole system of morality for its proper interpretation and application. Again, the golden rule has been said to be not only consistent with but actually to comprehend all of utilitarianism; it has also been said to provide just that element, the requirement of justice or fairness, that is alleged to be most lacking in a utilitarian theory. On this interpretation the golden rule is regarded as being the basis of justice, sometimes also the basis or equivalent of Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative. Finally, it has been claimed that the golden rule is a perfect guide to conduct and that the only thing needed to make the world perfect is for everyone to follow it; at the same time it has been claimed that the golden rule leads to paradoxes and is misleading, false, or absurd.

Each of the points and issues mentioned here is discussed, more or less adequately, in one or more of the sources listed in the bibliography. But no one has yet dealt satisfactorily with the question of why this precept should have appeared in the codes and outlooks of so many diverse peoples and sages. The golden rule, in one version or another, has a prominent place in all the major religions and most minor ones; it has been enunciated by pagan philosophers both before and after Christ and by Sophists (Isocrates) and anti-Sophists (Aristotle). There are no detectable historical traces that could explain this, and the historical diffusion theory is worthless as an explanation here. The nearly universal acceptance of the golden rule and its promulgation by persons of considerable intelligence, though otherwise of divergent outlooks, would therefore seem to provide some evidence for the claim that it is a fundamental ethical truth.

See also Aristotle; Confucius; Ethics and Morality; Sophists.

Bibliography
knowledge, the requirement of justification is replaced by some sort of justified, true belief. While Goldman's account requires that a belief be true if it is to count as knowledge, the requirement of justification is replaced with a requirement that highlights the importance of the causal ancestry of the belief. Goldman further develops this view in “Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge” (1976) and “What Is Justified Belief?” (1979) (both reprinted in Liaisons), coming to hold, in the latter paper, that knowledge does indeed require justification, where justification is to be identified with reliably produced belief rather than with any kind of ability to produce an argument, as traditional accounts require. This style of account has come to be known as “externalist” (because the factors in virtue of which a belief is justified may be external to the knower’s mind), and is opposed to the more traditional “internalist” accounts on which the features in virtue of which a belief is justified are ones to which the knower inevitably has cognitive access. Goldman develops this view in tremendous detail in a series of papers, and ultimately in Epistemology and Cognition (1986).

Whereas Goldman’s account of knowledge is offered as an analysis of the concept of knowledge, the substance of his account places a great deal of stress on the relevance of empirical work to epistemological issues. Thus, Goldman’s approach prompts him to investigate the various psychological mechanisms by which belief is produced because it is upon the reliability of these mechanisms that people’s status as knowers depends. This concern with the ways in which empirical work—and especially work in the cognitive sciences—may be brought to bear in advancing human understanding of traditional philosophical issues is characteristic of Goldman’s work generally; his work in this area constitutes the most sustained development of naturalistic epistemology available.

Although his early work was concerned with the philosophy and psychology of individual cognition, Goldman has gone on to make seminal contributions to social epistemology. The mechanisms by which beliefs are produced and sustained include not only those inside the knower’s head, but features of the social organization of the knower’s epistemic community. In Knowledge in a Social World (1999), Goldman investigates the ways in which social structures may either contribute to, or interfere with, the discovery and dissemination of truths. This project includes work on the epistemology of testimony and argumentation, the social structure of scientific investigation, and the epistemology of education. Additionally, Goldman addresses questions about democracy, government regulation of speech, the role of truth in legal proceedings, and the economics of communication—all topics illuminated by his epistemological approach.

GOLDMAN, ALVIN
(1938–)

Alvin Goldman, an American philosopher, is best known for his contributions to epistemology, philosophy of mind, and related fields. His first paper, “A Causal Theory of Knowing,” (1967, reprinted in Liaisons) 1992), defends the view that an individual S knows a proposition p just in case p is causally related in the right sort of way to the individual’s belief that p. Thus, for example, Sam knows that there is a cat on the mat because Sam is looking at the cat, and the fact that the cat is on the mat caused Sam to have that belief. This kind of account of knowledge breaks with the tradition that identifies knowledge with some sort of justified, true belief. While Goldman’s account requires that a belief be true if it is to count as knowledge, the requirement of justification is replaced with a requirement that highlights the importance of the causal ancestry of the belief. Goldman further develops this view in “Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge” (1976) and “What Is Justified Belief?” (1979) (both reprinted in Liaisons), coming to hold, in the latter paper, that knowledge does indeed require justification, where justification is to be identified with reliably produced belief rather than with any kind of ability to produce an argument, as traditional accounts require. This style of account has come to be known as “externalist” (because the factors in virtue of which a belief is justified may be external to the knower’s mind), and is opposed to the more traditional “internalist” accounts on which the features in virtue of which a belief is justified are ones to which the knower inevitably has cognitive access. Goldman develops this view in tremendous detail in a series of papers, and ultimately in Epistemology and Cognition (1986).

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