

Reciprocity.

BY D. G. CROW.

"Come, let us reason together." Reciprocity, the law of social obligation, is a most important factor with regard to our relations to each other.

Next to the words home, friends and loved ones, it should be ever near our hearts, for a neglect or disregard for this law is as fatal to happiness as the disregard of a promise is to business. This word and its meaning should be learned in youth, and carried through life as a safeguard against evil. It would be a scapula worth wearing, a protection more efficient than all the dirks or firearms. Let us realize that when we associate ourselves together for mutual protection, comforts, and other benefits, each must sacrifice some individual right or privilege. Each concession should bring a corresponding benefit, each obligation an obligation or service in return. To fail in rendering such obligation, to refuse to make such concession yet receive the benefits thereof, is to break the law of reciprocity. When you have conceded such obligations as may be required and fail to receive the benefits therefrom, then society has broken this law against you.

It is between individuals, however, that this law finds its greatest use. Let us not omit to reciprocate favors, kindnesses, courtesies, leaving no reason for suspicion of our loyalty. The overlooking of small obligations is destructive to true happiness; conversely, attention to the fulfillment of these small obligations brings forth a well-spring of good cheer. It is not the fulfillment of large obligations that gives character to our lives, for these we do not often have; but it is the close attention to the small concerns that makes up life's accounts. We can all agree that it is just and right to return good for good received. It is not so easy to determine how evil should be treated. There is some difference of opinion on this point. Our municipal laws seem to say every injury should be compensated by the evil doer. The Buddhas have said: "Recompense evil with good." Christ confirmed this policy when he said: "Return good for evil." Confucius said: "Recompense evil with justice." The latter policy seems to leave a breadth of opportunity for the exercise of judgment, the which may result in returning good, but justice at all hazards; besides, the criminal laws of all civilized countries are based upon this principle. Experience has also taught it. The universal law of reciprocity, as stated by Confucius, "Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you;" or, as confirmed by Christ, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," with the use

of judgment and conscience, is a most excellent rule of conduct. According to this principle we should counteract evil from whatever source it may come; we should likewise give credit for good from whatever source it may spring.

We should lay aside prejudice and let in the sunshine of truth, if it withers the dearest idol upon which our hearts are set.

He who thinks freely and speaks fearlessly is not conforming to this law, unless he grants to others the same liberty he himself enjoys, whether he be father or son, teacher or pupil. This right should not only be respected, but guaranteed and defended; else the law of reciprocity is not being fully carried out. We should be glad that this golden rule is not the exclusive property of any one nation, people or sect, but the property of the world.

Let me implore you, Christian, Jew, Moslem, believer, to regard it. Be tolerant; be just; exercise patience and charity toward him or her who cannot accept your peculiar faith.

Let me implore you, Freethinker, Theosophist, pagan, unbeliever, to be gentle, forbearing and regardful of the convictions and opinions of those who are sincere, though they may be in error, for this is the law of reciprocity. Each desiring the love and respect of others, should give it freely, but not at the sacrifice of honor and self-respect. Each should expect consideration and regard from the other, but neither can afford to purchase it at the price of honesty and fidelity.

The loss is too great to neglect these priceless obligations. He or she who permits dogma to blind the judgment, or selfishness and prejudice to rule the heart, not only loses the esteem and love of society, but is deprived of much happiness. A hearty reciprocation of gentle words and kind deeds is the greatest security to peace and love. Like the soft breeze and sunshine, they bring the May days of joy and sweet contentment.—[Progressive Eclecticism.

A Relic of Ignorance.

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to manhood as though he were not God at all—this history, full of absurd wonders, devils, magicians, and evil spirits, rather fit for an Arabian Night's legend than the word of God to his people—this history, with its miraculous raisings of the dead to life, disbelieved and contradicted by the people among whom they are alleged to have been performed; but, nevertheless, to be accepted by us today with all humility—this history, with the man-god subject to human passions and infirmities, who comes to die, and prays to his heavenly father (that is, to himself) that he will spare him the bitter cup of death—who is betrayed, having himself, before he laid the foundations of the world, predestined Judas to betray him, and who dies, being God immortal, crying with his almost dying breath, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"—[A Few Words About the Devil.

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