

Karma.

The tissue of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of Destiny
We reap as we have sown.

Still shall the soul around it call
The shadows which it gathered here,
And painted on th' eternal wall
The past shall reappear.

O, no! We live our life again;
Or warmly touched, or coldly dim,
The pictures of the Past remain,
Man's works shall follow him.

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

THE RATIONALE OF REINCARNA- TION.

While there seems to be a unanimity of opinion that human life is subordinate to a definite purchase, the popular concepts of what that purpose may be are extremely diverse. If predicated from the motives which actuate the western mind, it might be money-making, the gratification of ambition, the indulgence of voluptuousness, the mere perpetuation of the human species, material or mental progress, or a probation which determines the everlasting weal or woe of each human soul.

Admitting a purpose, and that an intelligent and benevolent one, reincarnation under Karmic law, is postulated as the only rational hypothesis that is applicable to every phase of the question—Why and for what purpose was I born?

In a condensed outline of so momentous a subject, it is only possible to cite the salient points as a basis of investigation. To the earnest enquirer, who seeks a more than cursory knowledge, an intimation that a voluminous literature, both elementary and abstruse, may be consulted, will encourage him to go deeper into the matter before dismissing the subject from his mind as insufficiently sustained by conclusive argument.

Reasoning by analogy, if one should ask Why and for what purpose did I awake from sleep this morning? his commonsense would suggest an answer that would be also applicable to the question, Why and for what purpose was I born? I was alive yesterday, he would probably say, and, feeling tired, I fell asleep, awakening this morning refreshed in order that I might do some things that were left undone at the close of the previous day and undertake others equally important. Where were you when you were asleep? You really do not know. To say that you were in

bed is to beg the question. There was nothing to indicate that you were in bed with your body all the night. What about respiration and the circulation of my blood? An engine once started will run for a certain length of time in the absence of the engineer. If he does not come back soon enough the engine will stop. This is the rationale of Reincarnation in a nutshell.

The Theosophical position with regard to Reincarnation is, briefly, this: The man spiritual is the immortal Ego, without beginning and without an end—an emanation from the Deity, individualized and identified with a corporeal body in order to gain a specific experience which nothing but actual contact with gross physical matter can afford. The man carnal is the human organism, with its complex functions, appetites and instincts, up to the highest point of evolution. And evolution is but a conscious effort of Nature to adjust itself to the needs of Spirit involved and active in all grades of Matter. In other words, it is the adaptation of objective environment to the conditions generated by the subjective soul of all things.

In the physical body the involved Spirit functions. When the body is discarded at death, the Spirit—or Ego—withdraws successively to higher planes of consciousness, where it assimilated all the experience gained in earth-life that it can. As it retires to its native sphere the bodies or vehicles which it discards disintegrate on their several planes of being. After the Ego has had sufficient repose it enters again into a body exactly prepared to suit its requirements; and this process continues until it has outgrown the necessity of Reincarnation.

But the proof—give me the proof, say you. I cannot give you the proof; this journal is not large enough to contain the matter that might be written to prove the truth of so far-reaching and intricate a subject. If you are at all solicitous or even curious to know what may be said to substantiate the foregoing and the following statements, you should, in fairness to yourself and the question at issue, be willing to investigate to the extent of the means provided—and they are ample.

If these seventeen statements are true then Reincarnation can be ignored only at the expense of the stultification of one's reason:—

1. Eight hundred millions of people believe in Reincarnation.