

# THE WORD

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## MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*Is not the Theosophical doctrine of our suffering on earth as karmic retribution, on a par with the Theological statement of our suffering as a retribution in hell, in that both assertions have to be accepted on faith merely; and, further, one is about as good as the other to produce moral goodness?*

Both doctrines are on a par, and have to be taken on faith only while the mind is in an unreasoning or child state. The doctrines are accepted, similarly as the alphabet and the multiplication table are taken by a child—on faith.

When the reasoning mind examines the doctrines, it finds that suffering on earth is based on law and justice and evidenced by experience in life, and that the hell doctrine is an arbitrary edict framed by theological policy. The mind can find no reason for eternal suffering in hell as retribution for wrongs done largely through ignorance in one short life on earth, especially when the wrongs seem to be compelled often by force of circumstances and environment, which was not caused by the sufferer.

Reincarnation, and suffering on earth as karmic retribution, when applied to explain the facts of life, are found to work according to law, similarly as the multiplication table and arithmetic. Suffering is seen as the result of having acted against the law, and is not punishment, but the experience necessary to the learning not to so act. It is more creditable to intelligence that the world and man's place in it are the result of law rather than the result of the whim of a despot.

The theological doctrine of hell cannot truly be said to be about as good as the theosophical doctrine of karmic retribution, to produce moral goodness, for never can moral strength be born of servile fear. The hell doctrine is to compel goodness through fear of punishment. Instead it breeds moral cowardice and suggests unjust action.

The doctrine of karmic retribution through reincarnation, helps the mind to find its own place and work in the world, and shows it the true way through life. Moral goodness is the result.

There is no proof of the theological hell. The sense of justice rebels against and dispels the fear of it as the mind grows in strength and understanding. The proof of karma is the sense of justice inherent in man. The ability to see and understand it, depends on his willingness to see his wrongdoing and to right it by just action.

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