

the moral bankruptcy of some one who has gone before, he knows not whom or where. There is no consciousness of identity, no remembrance, no possible sense of guilt, or notion of responsibility. It is not the same soul that suffers, for in either case there is no soul—there is only a bundle of so-called skandas, certain faculties of mind and body whose interaction produces thoughts and emotions. Yet there is conscious suffering.

Scoffers have long pointed with indignation at the Christian doctrine that a child inherits a moral bias from his parents, but nowadays agnostic biologists carry the law of heredity to an extreme which no hyper-Calvinist ever thought of, and the cavillers at "original sin" have become eloquent in praise of Buddhism, which handicaps each child with the accumulated demerit of preëxistent beings with whom he had no connection whatever. The Christian doctrine imputes punishable guilt only so far as each one's free choice makes the sin his own; the dying infant who has no choice is saved by grace; but upon every Buddhist, however short lived, there rests an heirloom of destiny which only countless transmigrations can discharge.

If we turn to Mohammedanism we find a doctrine of fate, clear, express and emphatic. The Koran resorts to no euphuism or circumlocution in declaring it. Thus in Sura lxxiv : 3, 4, we read: "Thus doth God cause to err whom He pleases, and directeth whom He pleases." Again Sura xx : 4, says: "The fate of every man have we bound around his neck." As is well known, fatalism as a practical doctrine of life has passed into all Mohammedan society. "Kishmet" ("It is fated") is the exclamation of despair with which a Moslem succumbs to adversity, and often dies without an effort to recover.

The late Rev. Gerald F. Dale once found a Mohammedan village on the Lebanon wholly paralyzed with despair during a cholera epidemic. Under the fatalism of their creed men resigned themselves and each other to death with no preventive means, and only the cry of Kishmet (fated). J. W. H. Stobart, in speaking of the causes which have retarded Mohammedan civilization, says: "A blind belief in inevitable fate, fostered by the national faith, has been a fertile source of evil. Its natural antagonism to liberty of thought and action has destroyed all true national life, has rendered reform next to impossible, and has rendered the future hopeless." If such is the effect of a real fatalism, then surely the energizing force of Calvinism ought to be called by some other name.

With the lower forms of religious belief—fetich worship, animism, serpent worship, demon worship—the case is still worse. The only deities that are recognized in these rude faiths are generally supposed to be malevolent beings, who have not only fixed an evil fate upon men, but whose active and continued function it is to torment them.