

immediate cause, but *must* be referred to the beginning of time for a cause, then it is impossible to *trace them* or to deduce any standards by which to be guided in future. If they are the mere culminations of decrees issued an eternity ago, they are not certainly the result of law. If that which exists does so, not of necessity, but by external compulsion, there is no necessary relation by which we may determine that which will exist by that which now exists or has existed. All things are appointed both as to time and place. They are necessary, it is true, but they are not dependent ; each has an independent, co-ordinate existence.

Let us see what effect such a belief must have upon the pursuit of knowledge. Evidently it is incompatible with it. For vain would be the attempt to acquire knowledge if there were no necessary connection between truths. To attempt to store away in the mind any number of independent facts is found to be a most difficult task at best. What, then, shall we say of an attempt to discover all the truths of the universe where each is absolutely independent of every other ? And of what use would all this knowledge be, even if it were possible to obtain it ? What assurance would we have that similar events would occur under similar circumstances ? A knowledge of facts is of very little use to us unless by such knowledge we can establish some law. Of what use is the study of history to the statesman if he can derive no principles therefrom to guide him in framing measures for the government of men ? Yet this could not be the case if all facts were merely foreordained, since in that case, though every fact would have a cause, yet no fact would have a necessary cause. The cause of every fact would be the same, viz., the will of the foreordainer, and one effect would be as liable to result from that cause as another. There would be no clue by which effects could be traced. When the cause was reached, it would not be the particular cause of any particular effect, but a general cause of all effects. Hence every effort to acquire useful knowledge would be fruitless. Every one who really believes this doctrine feels this ; and, if there be any who profess to believe it and still advocate the pursuit of knowledge, it is because they have a certain unconscious intuition that their philosophy is unsound. They are, in fact, dualists.

But there is an intermediate school who claim that it is laws, and not facts, that are primordially established, and that these laws are thereafter never interfered with. The reply to this is, that it is not foreordination at all. It is acknowledging the laws of the universe, but assigning to them a beginning and a creation, which is unnecessary, and betrays failure to conceive of an infinite series.

Fatalism is no better promoter of intelligence than either of the other doctrines we have considered. If it be not mere chance, it is at least the same thing to men, since no one knows the origin, cause, or purpose of any event, neither can know it. Therefore, it is useless to seek this knowledge ; and here again, as before, the pursuit of knowledge is a fruitless task.

It makes no difference, therefore, which of the prevailing beliefs we take up : they all lead to this result. In depriving truth of its necessary character, and making it