

touch the keyboard of causes with his finger today, so as to effect our highest good a score of years in the future. And God works at long range. He is no day-laborer planning only from sunrise to sunset. We believe that our pious grand-mothers praying and studying their Bibles in the lonely cottage among the hills had much to do in shaping our Christian characters. And when now we pray for success upon our labors we seem to hear the Lord saying; "Before thou callest I answered: and before thou knewest me I girded thee." And we don't believe that God can make all things work together for good to his people unless he begins very far back and looks very far ahead. And prophecy is an overwhelming answer to the denial which we have quoted. God has foretold and he must therefore have foreknown. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, the fall of Tyre, the rise and fall of the four successive world empires, Persia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, and innumerable other events which have literally come to pass. Let who will believe that all these predictions and fulfillments are only the result of happy guess-work. We cannot believe it. To foretell is to have foreseen. Light travels faster than sound. You can see the flash of fire from the cannon's mouth a mile away, considerably before the noise of the discharge reaches the ear. God flashed the light of prediction upon the pages of his word, and we see it; wait a little and we can see the event itself. But both were *one* in the mind of God, for he spake and it was done.

#### BLAMELESS BEFORE GOD.

BY H. F. WICKERBY.

WHEN Jacob fled from his father's tent with a fearful spirit and condemning conscience, he came to a desert place, where night overtook him. His only possession was his staff, and laying his head upon a stony pillow, the solitary wanderer fell asleep. Then God showed him His mercy — opened His heavens above Jacob, and discovered to him a ladder set up from the earth, the top of which reached to heaven. Upon this shining way the angels of God ascended and descended, and "behold the Lord stood above it

and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Having promised, God declared that He would perform. He assured Jacob that He would be with him, and keep him, and not leave him until all the word of His grace had been fulfilled.

Thus was Jacob blessed with the promise of earthly blessings in earthly places, and all was secured to him in the Seed — Christ.

Let us turn to a ladder of blessings, another shining way even more excellent than that which Jacob saw, and upon which the angelic company communicated between earth and heaven. We, like Jacob, are by nature ready to perish. We are wandering across the desert world, possessed, in self, of not one single good thing. Darkness surrounds us. Sleep wraps us in insensibility; but God is rich in mercy. Of His own great love He loves us, even as we are, dead in our sins. He opens His home above to us, and shines upon us in His own love. He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ." All is God's own doing, all His sovereign grace, and He Himself secures every blessing to us irrevocably in Christ.

The ladder Jacob saw was set up upon earth and reached to heaven; the shining way of spiritual blessings, which God presents to the Christian's eye in the opening verses of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, is let down from heaven, and reaches us, just as we are, on earth. Its stay is the very heart of God, and from the heart of God it descends to us, and by it we reach to the heart of God.

CHOSEN in Him before the world's foundation.

HOLY —

BLAMELESS — "Holy and without blame before Him in love."

ADOPTED — "Predestinated unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the GLORY OF HIS GRACE."

ELECT ACCORDING TO THE FORE-  
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

BY THE EDITOR.

Is it true that all the future lies open to the eye of God as distinctly and completely as all the past? If it be so, that presence and prescience exactly correspond we must answer yes. God not only fills all space with his presence but he fills all time also. "God is a circle whose circumference is everywhere and whose centre is nowhere," is a very ancient saying. And all eternity past and future, lies within that circle, as truly as all space. Therefore God knows the future because he is in the future. Motion and succession are alike unknown to the Almighty. That is, God has not to go to any place in order to be there: for he is omnipresent or everywhere. So he has not to wait till the next century in order to know what will happen in it; for he is omniscient or all knowing. It is sometimes a good thing to have an old and accepted doctrine challenged that we may be set to thinking about it. Dr. James Martineau, one of most eminent living thinkers, has recently denied in the most explicit terms the foreknowledge of God. He says "The belief in the divine foreknowledge of our future has no basis in philosophy. We no longer deem it true that even God knows the moment of our moral life that is coming next. Even he does not know whether I shall yield to the secret temptation at midday. To him life is a drama of which he knows not the conclusion." If this be so then we can think of nothing so dreary and dreadful as to be living under the direction of such a God. Would we like to ride upon a train whose engineer can know nothing of what is before him, and who carries no locomotive headlight to throw a single ray of illumination upon the track that stretches on into the darkness of midnight? What a torture of perpetual foreboding would it be to travel on such a route! And as we are moving on through time is it possible that we are under the escort of one who knows nothing of what may happen tomorrow? "Then let me off this train," one might reasonably say, "I had rather walk than ride under such circumstances. I prefer to trust to my own

finite tact, than to commit myself to omniscient ignorance."

But what relief to turn from this opinion of a great man to the clear testimony of the word of God "Whom he did foreknow he did also predestinate." "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Such is the language of Scripture.

And as all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, this is God's own testimony to himself on this great question of foreknowledge. And cannot we see even with our short sighted wisdom how necessary it is that it should be so? Foreordination of course is impossible without foreknowledge. You may manage your little retail business, without knowing what a day may bring forth, and get on fairly well; but we are bold to say that God could not manage the universe on these conditions. All the celestial trains have to be run on schedule time, or God's business and man's business alike will be thrown into inextricable confusion. Suppose the sun were an hour late in getting in tomorrow morning; or suppose that on account of some celestial storm blocking up the roads, it were two or three days behind time, what a panic it would bring on in business, and what a wreck would result in the universe. We cannot conceive it possible that the unvarying order which we see all about could be present, without a perfect knowledge of God's part of all the future. When God sends forth the train of the ages from his presence, all the track over which they move must be foreseen or wreck and collision will be the consequence.

Providence is equally impossible without foreknowledge, "All things work together for good to them that love God," says the Scripture. How do they work? By the guidance of infinite chance? Wheels within wheels, and wheels playing into wheels in the vast system of human circumstances and all permitted to move according to their own sweet will; Is this the way in which all things work together for good to God's saints? We know it cannot be so. There must be a divine Superintendent directing all: and he can direct all only as he knows all things from the beginning to the end. Here is a cause; and yonder, twenty years hence, is the effect. Unless God sees the relation of the two, how can he

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