

I feel my grasp of a doctrine first taught me by our Calvinistic Catechism at my mother's knee, tightening instead of relaxing. "The decrees of God are his eternal purposes," I was told, "according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory He hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass." And what I was told early I still believe. The programme of Creation and Providence, in all its successive periods, is of God, not of man. With the arrangements of the old geologic periods it is obvious man could have had nothing to do: the primæval ages of wondrous plants and monster animals ran their course without counsel taken of him; and in reading their record in the bowels of the earth, and in learning from their strange characters that such ages there were, and what they produced, we are the better enabled to appreciate the impressive directness of the sublime message to Job, when the "Lord answered him out of the whirlwind, and said, Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding." And I can as little regard the present scene of things as an ultimate consequence of what man had willed or wrought, as even any of the pre-Adamic ages. It is simply one scene in a fore-ordained series,—a scene intermediate in place between the age of the irresponsible mammal and of glorified man; and to provide for the upward passage to the ultimate state, we know that, in reference to the purposes of the Eternal, He through whom the work of restoration has been effected was in reality what He is designated in the remarkable text, "The Lamb slain from the *foundations* of the world." First in the course of things, man in the image of God, and next, in meet sequence, God in the form of man, have been equally from all eternity pre-determined actors in the same great scheme.

I approach a profound and terrible mystery. We can see how in the pre-Adamic ages higher should have succeeded