

these laws—whose will is she obeying? But while we are thus conversant with invisible nature, let not the vastness of what is before us hide from our conception Him who is behind, who “made the world and all things therein,” and in whom “we live, and move, and have our being.”

Some of the laws of nature seem to be more invariable than others. Such are those which govern the system of the universe, and which regulate the revolution both of our own earth and of those heavenly bodies which are inaccessible to us but through the medium of partial observation. These, among which are found the sources of light and heat, and of our days and nights and years, have an uniform unchanging course. But there are other laws and processes of nature, which lie more upon the field of man’s habitation, and with which he is familiarly conversant—laws which he is permitted to interfere with, to deal with, and make use of for his own especial purposes. In these we see much variation, that they are susceptible of change and improvement, and that the results are dependent upon many contingencies. Thus, it is a law of nature that seed under certain conditions will germinate and bear fruit, but with what success, and in what proportion, depends greatly upon the application of human skill and science. Such a distinction in the great departments of nature accords with these words of Scripture: “All the whole heavens are the Lord’s; the earth hath he given to the children of men.”

In those processes of nature upon which the fruits of our fields and our harvest depend, while there is an average certainty, there is also a definite range of fluctuation, and there are various circumstances more or less affecting the desired results. In this is afforded room for the working of an invisible but ruling Providence. He may give or withhold “the former and the latter rains”—“a fruitful land he may make barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein:” again—“he may make the wilderness a standing water, and water-springs of a dry-land.”