

**SPIRITUAL LAW IN
NATURAL
FACT, PP. 1-126**

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BY
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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is an effort to collect facts and theories more or less familiar to everybody, and to put them into a particular combination for confirmation or illustration, especially of spiritual truth. In this sense the field is somewhat new to the author. He finds peculiar delight in discovering new and wider likenesses between things spiritual and things material, and he is confirmed in the view that it is quite as correct to speak of spiritual law in the natural world as to speak of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." Maybe we are yet to learn that the laboratory is, after all, as sacred as the altar, and that spiritual forces are as definite in their combinations and actions as those other forces which we have arbitrarily put on the other side of an imaginary line and labeled as simply physical.

To help any devout heart to this conception, and to win the favorable attention of any who may be skeptical toward God's written thoughts, is the chief reason for writing this book. Nothing like scientific order or theological sequence has been attempted in the arrangement of topics, and certainly no claim is set up for either extensive or intensive cultivation of the field which is opened. We come

upon our topics much as we meet the facts of nature in daily life, and much as we find various forms of religious truths mixed together in the Scriptures. Our readers are invited to take their Bibles with them and walk through the valleys and groves and fields. We look at the flowers, the fruits, the leaves, and the rocks. There we see footprints and finger-marks which we know are those of our Father, for we have become acquainted with them in his book. It is more than a fancy with us that Jesus was walking this very path we are in, when he gave those wonderful parables. Here are the vines which taught the lesson of a soul's fruitfulness when it abides in him. Here are the flowers God paints and the sparrows he feeds, just as he clothes the soul of a saint or tenderly cares for his children. We handle the flowers he made out of mud, and we see how heaven came down in sunshine and put celestial colors into them. We eat of the fruit which he compounds in mysterious laboratories to nourish the life he has created and loves. Wheat and tares grow together, out of the same soil and under the same sunlight; nor do we fail to note that though they are so near each other and so much alike, he remembers all the time which is the wheat, and he is not mocked at harvest-time.

Then we go to a sick-room and see one of his unordained ministers, but none the less his minister, giving remedies he has made to cure the ills of the flesh. We only have to remember that he is the

Great Physician. In a ward of the hospital we see a skilful surgeon, who has studied the delicate bodily structure which has been built after the divine plan, as he presses the knife along the path God has marked out with infinite precision. Because that path has been followed in the making, it can and must be followed in the mending. We stand breathless, because this man is a sort of high priest ministering in the most holy place. It is a service of sacrifice and suffering for one form of salvation. We go into a laboratory, and the devout man who is at home there assures us that he has not created nor decided anything; he is merely finding out how God has done and still does his work. We go into a factory and find men who have called in God's forces of steam and electricity—forces which they cannot see nor understand—to do their bidding and minister to human progress. These material machines are efficient just in proportion as they are orthodox.

In all these studies we are impressed with two or three very significant facts: In the first place, all these operators produce nothing of matter or force, but simply accept what is provided for them. Everything which they take hold of is a revelation from without themselves, is inspired. In the next place, there are definite rules which they must follow to secure the good which they seek and which seems to have been made for their beneficent use. In other words, they work under unfailing and in-

violable authority. The light which guides them to useful action is not light from within, but light from without. Investigation and reason have their office in comprehending the will of the Lord, but it is his light and his law that governs and guides. Last of all, it is plain that he who made nature made it for the welfare and the delight of his creatures. Wisdom and love are written large. True, one could ignorantly or wilfully violate the rules, but he does so to his own hurt. There is perfect freedom, but unquestioned responsibility.

As to the amount of significance to be given to the comparisons which are made in these studies, there will be difference of opinion. To some there may seem to be almost absolute identity between the facts of nature and the facts of grace, where others will see only a likeness more or less distinct. The writer does not undertake to weigh the evidential value of each case. He has tried to use discretion all along, and leaves to each reader the privilege of suggesting values. He has refrained from straining facts or twisting theories to make them fit any view he may hold as to nature or grace. He has no sympathy with reckless spiritualizing processes. On the other hand, he is profoundly convinced that the plans of God are as nearly the same throughout all creation as the conditions allow, and that where the laws of revelation and those of science border upon each other or meet in a common field, they are in close partnership. God does not change the