

Men are apt to mistake the relative importance of things. The pursuit which seems to one of the utmost value, appears to another of essentially secondary importance. Opinions are wide assunder as the poles. Who is right? or are all right, and life only what each takes it to be? Is there any golden rule by which, not only our conduct towards others, but our whole aim and motive of life, may be tested? some principle of action, some rightly overmastering purpose, which, penetrating every sphere of human activity, harmonizes all rival energies, and breathes a loftier inspiration into life?

Such a universal law we find in our lesson to-day as its central thought—"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Our Saviour recognizes the truth that the supreme purpose of a man's life gives a character to all that he does. Put the right thing first and all will be well. He who makes Solomon's choice will receive Solomon's blessing. Let the moral tendency and Godward aspect of all life stand first and foremost. Set ever before you, even in temporal matters, the grand spiritual object, and you will be led onward and upward. Your course will be a progress and its goal success.

Our Lord does not sever the sacred from the secular, but bids us sanctify the secular until that which is secondary and subordinate is wholly dominated by that which is spiritual. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." But he bids us subordinate every desire to the one aim of seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Like all the laws of the spiritual kingdom, this one rests upon the general moral order which has been established. Not only is its authority derived from the lips which uttered it, but it carries its sanction on its face. We can see that it must be true, to every man and everywhere, that he who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, has, freely added to him, these things, for which the worldly sell their souls.

1. *This is to follow the divinely established order.* All things exist for the moral ends they are to serve. They find their "reason for existence" in their relation to God and his purposes. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." "For by him

were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him."

The manifestation of the divine attribute for the admiration and moral quickening of his intelligent creatures is the one object of his self-revelation of God, both in his works and in his word. The starry heavens declare his glory, and the earth in its infinite variety showeth forth his handiwork. If he taught man more than the beasts of the earth, and made him wiser than the fowls of heaven, it was that he might, in knowledge, and righteousness and true holiness, image in creature form the infinite and uncreated source of all being.

When through man's sin the world fell out of the divine order in which it was created and resisted the moral purpose it was designed to subserve, God became incarnate, and through man's redemption he might reconquer the world once more to himself. He emphasized thus, in a manner at which the universe stands amazed, the absolute subordination of all things, from the throne of God Eternal himself to the deepest abyss of hell, to the advancement and ultimate triumph of His kingdom of righteousness and love.

To seek the selfish, the earthly, the temporal is to run counter to the whole plan of the universe. You can make the little circle of your life concentric with the divine only by causing all your purposes to revolve around the axis character, impelled by an ever growing desire to enter into the life of God.

2. *Such a course brings all the concerns of life into proper relation to one another.* Each part therefore receive its due share of attention, and all will work harmoniously together for common welfare. When the functions of physical life are deranged, sickness follows, and beyond certain point, the co-existence, with the diseased one, of other and healthy organs, is impossible, and death ensues. Demand of a part an undue activity, and, in responding, it must disturb the balance of the vital force. Abuse any part of the system, by neglect otherwise, and outraged nature will assert its authority. A miserable, aching, perishing body will pay the penalty.

This mutual dependence which we find the parts of the physical frame extends also