

(5) It was a provision secured *through obedience to the great command*: "Seek ye, first, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." This is the Sovereign law of the Gospel. It is the divine order of seeking and, corresponding to it, is the divine order of provision: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him also, freely give us all things." The multitude sought *first* the kingdom of God and, in their seeking, forgot 'all these things.' But Christ did not forget them. He provides the lower good for those who seek the higher. And it is just as literally true to-day as it was then. All our blessings come through obedience. Make Christ all and in all, and you will never want. Put God first and highest and you will be provided for.

And, the reason—even apart from the positive guarantee in the promise—is plain. We are urged to seek first God's kingdom. What then? What is a kingdom? A kingdom is the realm of a king. A kingdom implies government, and government implies law. Therefore, when we seek and find God's kingdom, we come under the laws of that kingdom. And what are the laws of that kingdom. They are such as require honesty, industry, temperance, chastity, economy. They are such as promote comfort, thrift, and the confidence of our fellow-men. They teach us to "provide things honest in the sight of all men;" to "labor, working with our hands that which is good;" to be "diligent in business" as well as "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." So that, "seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness" is the very best way to get on in the world. The connection between the command and the promise is not arbitrary, but natural. The sequence of things described in the third chapter of the book of Malachi is in the natural order. For the Bible nowhere says that it is a sin to be rich; neither does it say that it is a sin to be poor. The sin is in not putting God first; it lies in loving pleasure, wealth, fame or anything else more than God.

(6) Once more, *the distribution of this provision did not exhaust it*. In all that vast crowd there was not one unfed, and there was more left than was furnished by the lad at first. There was more than enough. The people were satisfied and there was enough over for another feast. They were royally, munificently fed. That is God's way. "Exceeding abundantly" is God's measure. It is we who are small and narrow and niggardly: it is not God. In giving, above all things, God's ways are not our ways, neither are his thoughts our thoughts. We may well imagine the glad astonishment of that hungry multitude as, gazing wonderously, they saw the bread grow as it was touched, first by Jesus; then by the distributors. The little crumb, broken off, was instantly a loaf. Wonderingly would they partake of it. It grew, they knew not how. It was unexhausted by the numbers who were fed. And so it is with all God's mercies. The streams of salvation never run dry. They have poured their floods of healing and joy over this lost world for