

ARISTOTLE, PROEMIUM, N. ETHICS, BOOK I, READING 2

If there is some end of what we do that we will for itself and other things for it, and we do not choose all things for the sake of something else (for thus it would go on without end so that desire would be empty and foolish), clearly this will be the good, and the best.

Would not then the knowledge of this weigh greatly upon life; and just as archers having a target, will we not hit more upon what is right?

If this is so, we ought to try to get hold of in outline what this is and to which of the sciences or powers it belongs.

It would seem to belong to the most authoritative knowledge or science and the one that is most of all a chief art; and such is clearly political knowledge. For this sets in order which sciences are needed in cities, what sort each shall learn and up to what point; and we see the most honored of powers are under this, as the military art, the household art, and the art of speech. Thus using the rest of the practical sciences, and further ordaining by law what one ought to do and what stay away from, the end of this science must embrace those of other sciences, so that this will be the good of man.

For if it is the same for one man and the city, nevertheless it is better and more perfect to achieve and preserve that of the city. For it is worthy of love when done for one man only, but it is more beautiful and god-like when done for a nation and cities.

The knowledge then aims at these things, being something political.