

Ch. Hy.
17
48
287

6th In Essentials in Character,
Ambition

Christian Ambition. Phil. 3^d-11

"Howbeit what things were gain
to me, these have I counted loss
for Christ: Yea, verily, and I
count all things to be loss for
the excellency of the knowledge
of Christ Jesus my Lord: for
whom I suffered the loss of
all things, and do count them
but refuse, that I may gain
Christ, and be found in him,
not having as my righteousness
that which is of the law, but
that which is through faith
in Christ; the righteousness
which is from God by faith.
That I may know him, and the

power of his resurrection, and
the fellowship of his suf-
ferings, ~~being~~ becoming con-
formed unto his death; if
by any means I may attain
unto the resurrection from the
dead."

Ambition, literally a going around
to solicit-votes, has primary ref-
erence to the award or approval
of others. The awards are, ad-
vancement, fame, honor and the
like. There is a noble, wise and
righteous ambition, and an
ignoble, selfish and harm-
ful ambition. To have an en-
nobling ambition you must

(2)
have in view a worthy object
and must use right means
to attain. Ambition to
acquire riches for selfish
ends is ignoble, foolish. It
dwarfs the soul and
hardens the heart. An am-
bition to acquire riches for
the good you can do with
wealth is a most ~~worthy~~
commendable providing leg-
itimate means are used.

Ambition to be President
of the U.S. for the honor it implies,
and an ambition to be President
for the privilege it gives a man
for worldwide service in the

The betterment of nations, are
two different things. An am-
bition to become a xtian in order
to better my own condition and to
further my own interests - be those
interests, social, moral or
political, and an ambition to
become a xtian in order to serve,
to grow downward in the eyes of
the world and upward in the
eyes of God, "to know Christ
and the power of his resurrection
and the fellowship of his suffering
becoming conformed unto his death"
are as far apart as the
East is from the West.

To obtain the title of a church

member is the ambition of a majority of people, to know Christ is the ambition of the few. How do I know this?
1st The study of the book which reveals Christ to us is neglected. Most xtians do not study their Bible. They feel they have done a commendable duty if they read the Bible through once. No one can learn facts of mere history, nor comprehend any problem of science or mathematics by ~~of~~ one or two hurried readings. And here is a book dealing with vital history, with deepest solutions

of eternal things, a book
that has on its every page
the imprint of God's hand, re-
cording what God thinks about
us and has promised to do,
giving us guide-posts to direct
us along our perilous journey.
And the newspaper, novel, maga-
zine, books of philosophy, ^{of theology} of science
of art and literature - which are
all right in their place - but these
thoughts of men, bedeviled by
sin, ^{the same} as ~~we are~~ - have usurped
the place of God's Book in our
study. Tell me that the Christian
ambition is to know God! It
is, in the majority of the cases, to

(4)

know society, to know the
latest fads of Paris, to know
of all the crimes committed
whether in Africa or America
whether in his own town or in
Borneo, to know all science,
philosophy, history, it is
to know everything and
then if there is time to study
^{something of} Christ. Tell me their
ambition is to know Christ!
when they place such a
preponderance of their time
and energy on other things
and neglect Bible study!
Do you tell me that that man's
ambition is to be a doctor

while you find him always
studying law with lawyers?
~~Tell me,~~ is or a scientist
when you find him rejoicing in
the continual study of music. - ?

No, no, our real ambition will express
itself in what we are and ^{the way} we
doing things.

The 2^d reason why the statement
true is seen
is, from the fact that nearly
2000 years have passed and the
church has always gone forward
by the effort of a few. The whole
world could hear of Christ in
three years if all nominal
church members were obedient.
But they do not act because they do not know.

This particular knowledge of

which Paul speaks is

1. Knowledge of God's gift in X.

The sinless man who came to
redem ^f a sinful world. Of all
characters that has graced this
globe, Christ's character is
the most brilliant, original,
refined and beautiful. The
cross that lifted his body
lifted the man with the
biggest heart the world ever
knew. He was a truly man.
He wept, hungered, & was tempted.
He was also truly God. Before the
world was he could say "I am".
He is the God-man, God
revealed in the flesh. He could

worry at the death of a friend
and he could also say: "Lazarus,
come forth" and the dead would
awaken.

To know X is to have assurance
of our calling in Christ: "For the
gifts and calling of God are without
repentance" Rom 11:29. To know X
is to find and to see in X access
to God. "For through X we both
~~both~~ have access, by one Spirit-
unto the Father." Eph 2:18. This
gives us the assurance that
underneath are the everlasting
arms of God and by his strength
we are lifted into the presence
of God and have access to God. It is

to know Christ - as the ~~fully~~ faithful
One - "He is faithful that prom-
ised." Heb. 10²³. To know X is to
see in Him that which demands
all my strength of body & soul,
all my thought and time
both now and forever, and
to resign my all to Him
saying "make me, use me for
Thy glory." This is what
made Paul such a force in
the world. He had one passion &
that passion to know X consumed him.

2. How is this knowledge
attained? By winning X. What
costs or loss of all things.
To Paul it meant hardships

in place of ease, persecutions
in place of praises, poverty
in the place of riches. ~~But~~
It is not the trampling under
foot of knowledge & wisdom &
talent but the directing all
knowledge and talent toward
the one purpose - "to know X".
"To count all things but loss"
~~It~~ is not the quitting of work
but the putting of a new motive
into work. It will make a
better lawyer, a better doctor
a better preacher, a better
merchant, a better student
and teacher.

It costs also the endurance
of all things. Right here is

(7)

where the test of our sincerity is made. Permissless Paul made tents to buy the necessities of life; absent from the churches he had established and knowing that deceivers were destroying the faith of many of the weak, he gave himself to prayer; in prison and chained down he sang hymns of praise because the fetters of his soul had been broken and he was a free man in Christ. He could say, "I am persuaded that neither ^{death} life nor ^{life} death, nor any

nor principalities, nor powers, nor things
present, nor things to come, nor height
nor depth, nor any other creature shall
be able to separate us from the love of
God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Paul never complained of his trials
nor hardships. His ambition was to
win Christ, ~~to know~~ to know Him.

The method by which Paul attained
unto this knowledge of Christ was "not
having as my righteousness that which
is of the law, but that which is thro
faith in Christ; the righteousness
which is from God by faith." It
was not a righteousness awarded
because of benevolent deeds or self-
sacrificing service. The method

8

on his back from the beatings and
stonings; the whips, the
sufferings, the loss of all things
the ~~best~~ ^{best} advice as a missionary,
— This was not the righteousness
which Paul craved. He will
want no review of his own
Trials that he suffered in
attaining unto righteousness.
He does not set himself as an
object of pity before the judge.
has many stripes on his back ^{but}
ment seat. Paul will keep ^{his}
his coat on in Heaven. And
over top of all will be the righteous-
ness of Christ. All the sword will
cry out in joy as Paul comes
by the judgement seat. ~~A witness~~
"Here comes the great Apostle

Paul." Paul will answer "I am here, not by works of righteousness that I have done. I am a sinner saved by grace." His righteousness was not the cutting off part of Christ's robe and giving it to Paul, but the holding up of that robe between Paul and his sin, separating sin from Paul; so Paul could stand upright.

2. The second method Paul employed was by going through similar experiences to those of Christ:

Christ was born in a manger, reared among the shavings of a carpenter shop when he was not fleeing from the face of an

(9)

angry king, walked the
stony paths of Palestine,
always followed by his
enemies who were seeking
his destruction, preached
the gospel of salvation
for which he was crucified.
Why did Paul wish to go thro
all that? Because Paul knew
that ease and comforts of life
do not develop strong character.
He knew that to be like Jesus
he must go through similar
experience. You know that
the mutual burdens you
have carried, the mutual sor-
rows you have undergone, the

mutual bereavements that you
have suffered are the things
that have cemented your
lives into one life. No strong
character is developed outside
the furnace of hard struggle.
There is no true union between
any two lives till they ^{both} can
look on life through the same
or similar experiences, and es-
pecially the experience of suffering.
Paul was no ascetic, he suffered
not for suffering's sake. He chose
the life that Jesus ^{lived} ~~lived~~ which
led him through opposition
of the most bitter type, and
suffering was incidental while

(10)

joy filled his soul for
he was traveling over
thorns, through darkness
to the sunrise of eternal
joys. Suffering is the
finest and best way to unite
two hearts. It is watching
by the bedside in faces
of the worst that parents'
heart are drawn together.
It is not the wedding march,
nor the promises plighted,
nor the good wishes of friends,
nor mansions with large
bank accounts, nor rills of
laughter that fills the halls
of splendor, no, not these

That unite two hearts. It is in
some room where with cur-
tains drawn and lights low
parents kneel together and
sobs come between petitions
of prayer - away from the
crowd - away from the muni-
ciment - alone with God in
the face of some tremendous
event - in such places
souls are united. Paul speaks
of Christ's suffering and wishing to
enter into suff. with Christ. The
greatest sufferings of Christ were
not of body nor of material things.
It was a suffering at seeing men
lost and unwilling to be saved,

(11)

at seeing God's church corrupt
and unwilling to be cleansed;
at seeing the multitude as
sleep having no shepherd;
at seeing men deliberately choose
~~to walk in~~
darkness rather than light.

Paul felt all this keenly and it
brought him to ^{know} Christ better.

Paul wished to go further and to
be conformed to the death of X,
to have no will but God's will, &
fulfil His commands. "I die
daily" he says, which seems
to imply that Paul had to con-
tend with his flesh all the time
and to daily surrender anew to
God. When Paul could say, "I am

willing to spend and to be spent. xxx
I become all things to all men, if
by any means I may win some.
He was being conformed to X's death.
To have no will but Christ's, to be lost
in that will till my one passion
is to save men — this is being
conformed to Christ's death.

Paul was eager to go further
still, that "I may know the
power of His resurrection." At
first this would seem that Paul
wished to understand how X
was raised from the dead. But
not at all. It is a further
experience ~~but~~ not of sorrow,
trial & affliction but of

(12)
redeemed manhood, the
coming out of night into
noonday, the putting off
of the old man and on of the
new man, the entering
upon a path lighted up
by the glory of God - a
resurrected life in Jesus,
a life that is held secure
and attached to the Throne
of God. What an ambition!
To know Christ! It takes us
out of petty things and lifts
us into royal surroundings,
out of the common place into
the transcendental. The
treasures of earth become

payment for our feet instead
of objects of our struggle.

The honor and praises of
man become what they were
meant to be, ^{beautiful} roses that
perish with the day. To obtain
whose ambition it is to know
Christ all things are means
in the attainment of that knowledge.
And he can say with Paul, "I
count all things but loss for
the excellency of the knowledge
of Christ ^{xx} that I may know
Him." Can you say as
much?