

imbedded in the ascension of Christ. And until the restitution of all things when He shall come again, the ascension of Christ is God's sign in the heavens, above the dust and the din of earth, to be seen by all eyes, to be heard by all ages, beckoning to men, and even calling loudly to them, in all lands, in all eyes, "cease to grovel ye sons of earth; look up ye sons of men; seek the things that are above ye sons of God."

IV.—1. And thus it is evident that every fundamental doctrine of Christianity has its root in some event in the life of Christ. In like manner, all our *life on earth* is fed by the same events in the life of Christ. Here we are in danger of narrowing our conceptions too much. No one can doubt the supreme importance of the death of Christ. In it is imbedded the pardon of our sins, our reconciliation with God, and all our hopes for the life to come. But we may fix our thoughts too exclusively upon that and lose sight of other important facts; for we must not forget that there is merit in every important act in Christ's life as well as in His death. There was healing in the hem of His garment as well as in the touch of His gracious hand.

2. There is e.g. abundant merit and saving power in His *Incarnation*; for that was the great act of self-annihilation, and without it the cross itself would have been impossible. In the incarnation Christ has touched our human nature. In the incarnation we can feel and be assured of His sympathy and love. In it He offered to God the sacrifice of a self-surrender as complete as that of the cross.

3. So, too, there is merit in His *Circumcision and Baptism*; for in them He obeyed the law and fulfilled all righteousness. In them He became our great example, and offered to God the sacrifice of an obedience as perfect, as acceptable, and as necessary as that of the cross.

4. In like manner there is merit in His *Temptation* in the wilderness, and in His *agony* in Gethsemane. There, His human will and human weakness were tested to the full. There, He wrestled with the whole stress of the burden put upon Him. There, He withstood the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and offered to God perhaps the greatest sacrifice of all—that of an entire self-denial and self-control.

5. It is well to remember this; for it enlarges our view of the perfections of Christ, of the fulness of His work, and of the richness and variety of the sources from which our Divine life is fed. It should give us greater hope and confidence in drawing near to God; and it should give us the assurance that Christianity, as a system, if we can only work it properly, contains a cure for all our suffering, a comfort for all our sorrow, an inspiration for all our efforts, an abundant supply for all our needs, and a full satisfaction for all our longings and desires. We may, therefore, use, with a fuller sense of their meaning, the profound words of the