

THE PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL.

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The gospel of Jesus Christ in its entirety, is the revelation of the Divine method for the salvation of men from the consequences and from the control of sin. The aim of that revelation is entirely a practical one—that of leading men through the knowledge of this method into the personal experience of salvation. We have, perhaps, no right to say that God cannot save men without giving them a knowledge of the method. Most Christians, indeed, believe in the salvation of children, dying in infancy, to whom such knowledge is altogether impossible, and we must always allow for the possibility of God finding access to the heart of man by other means than through formulated knowledge. But this seems to be the normal method in the case of those who have attained years of intelligence. And in order that it may operate as widely as possible, the church, to which that revelation has been entrusted, is bidden to proclaim it everywhere, and to invite men the world over to avail themselves of its provisions. The explanation of this method and the maintenance of such rites as are fitted to secure its actual adoption by the largest possible number of people, may be said to be the main business of the Church of Christ on the earth, and the only justification for its existence.

As to the great outstanding features of that Divine method of salvation, it may be said that there is substantial agreement among all the various branches of the Christian church, however widely they may differ in the secondary details. It is agreed on all hands, for instance, that God has made provision for the forgiveness of sins to all such as are truly penitent, through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is further agreed that to all such as are truly penitent Divine help is afforded that they may be freed from the mastery of sin and live in obedience to the law of right as they understand it. With all, therefore, the practical call of the gospel is fundamentally the same—the call to repentance. Every-