

Its False Christs Compared With the Christ of God

by Catherine Booth

The sermon emphasizes the need for a real, living, and present Saviour, and critiques false views of Christ that do not meet humanity's needs.

Scripture: Matthew 28:18, John 14:6, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 2:6, Colossians 1:19, 1 John 4:14

Topics: "False Idols", "Divine Savior"

Description

Catherine Booth preaches about the universal need for a Christ, emphasizing humanity's struggle with moral evil and the realization of helplessness without divine intervention. She highlights the failure of human efforts and the observation of fruitless attempts in others, leading to the cry for an Almighty deliverer. Catherine Booth contrasts false representations of Christ in the modern age with the true Christ of the Bible, who meets humanity's need for pardon, enlightenment, and purification. She emphasizes the divinity of Christ, His sacrificial atonement, acceptance by God through resurrection, embodiment of righteousness, and claim as the sovereign over those He saves.

Transcript

The Christs of the Nineteenth Century

I suppose there will be no division of opinion in my audience as to the fact that humanity needs a Christ, -- that everywhere and in all ages, men and women have been, and are still conscious of a strife with evil; not merely physical evil represented by thorns and thistles, but with moral evil -- evil in thought, in intention, in action, both in themselves and in those around them. This consciousness of wrong has thrust upon men the realization of their need of help from some extraneous power, or being. In all generations men have seemed to feel that without such help there must be a perishing.

This sense of need has been forced upon men, first, by the failure of their own repeated efforts to help and save themselves.

Secondly, by their observation of such fruitless efforts in others.

What man or woman who has thought at all, who has not stood on the edge of this human whirlpool, and watched the struggling multitudes as they have risen and sunk, striving and struggling by resolutions, by

the embracing of new theories, by taking of pledges, and making new departures, to escape from the evil of their own natures and to save themselves? Who has watched the struggle without realizing the need that some Almighty independent arm should be stretched out to deliver and to save? Who can read history or contemplate the experience of humanity at the present time, without realizing that it needs a Saviour, whatever idea may be entertained as to the kind of Saviour required?

Further, this sense of need is the outcome of the filial instinct born in every human soul, which cries out in the hour of distress or danger to an Almighty Father, -- a God, a friend somewhere in the universe, able to help and to deliver. This instinct is at the bottom of all religions, and more or less embodied in all their formulas, from that of the untutored savage up to the profoundest philosopher the world has ever produced. Perhaps the cry of humanity, destitute of a Divine revelation, could not be better summed up than in the following words of Plato, who, speaking of the soul and its destiny, says:

"It appears to me that to know them clearly in the present life is either impossible or very difficult; on the other hand, not to test what has been said of them in every possible way, not to investigate the whole matter and exhaust upon it every effort, is the part of a very weak man. For we ought in respect to these things, either to learn from others how they stand, or to discover them for ourselves, or, if both these are impossible, then taking the best of human reasonings, that which appears the best supported, and embarking on that, as one who risks himself on a raft -- so to sail through life -- unless one could be carried more safely, or with less risk, on a secret conveyance, or some Divine Logos."

In this confession, and in that of many others similar, we see, as it were, a mighty soul praying through the gates of life, striving to fathom the mysteries of being and to unlock the unknown future, -- in fact, crying out for a Christ, a Divine Word, or Logos, a something or somebody who should guide him, taking him up where human reason and philosophy failed him. It is also worthy of note that it has always been the highest type of man in all ages who has cried out most persistently for an extraneous deliverer. The more conscious of his own powers and the higher in his aspirations man has become, the more vehemently has he sought, outside of himself, for light and deliverance. . Surely this universal cry of humanity, in all its phases and throughout all ages, betrays a great want, casting its shadows before -- the cry of the creature responding to the purpose of the Creator to send a Saviour able to save to the uttermost of . man's necessity. The great realized want of humanity was a deliverer who could take away its sense of guilt, enlighten its ignorance, and energize it for the practice of all goodness and truth, -- a being who could not only stand without and legislate as to what men were to do, but who could come within and empower them to do it. Heathen philosophies and ancient religions could say, "Love thy neighbor," but they could none of them inspire the man to do it, much less enable him to love his enemy none of them even aspired to command that. That was beyond humanity. Here, then, was the great need of a power to come inside and rectify the wrong, making the spring right, so that its outcome might be right.

Further, I want to remark that in the Bible a Christ is offered that meets this need. This is the great distinguishing boast of our faith the only religion on the face of the earth in which the idea of a Christ has ever been conceived. The Bible offers this Christ. The golden chimes of great joy that rang out on the day when He was heralded by the angels, were to be glad tidings to all people of a Saviour which was Christ the Lord, a mighty deliverer, able to cope with man's inability, with the disadvantages of his circumstances, and the consequences of his fall. Now we contend that this Christ of the Bible, the Christ who appeared in Judea 1800 years ago is now abroad in the earth just as much as He was then, and that He presents to humanity all that it needs; that He is indeed, as He represented Himself to be, the Bread of Life come down from heaven, the Light, and the Life, and the Strength of man, meeting this cry of his soul which has

been going up to God for generations. Here I stand and make my boast, that the Christ of God, my Christ, the Christ of the Salvation Army, does meet this crying need of the soul, does fill this aching void, and does become to man that which God sets Him forth as being in this book. Guilty humanity He promises to pardon, and He does pardon. Ignorant humanity (with respect to God and the things of God) He promises to enlighten, and He does enlighten it. Degraded, sunken, impure humanity (in the very essence of its being) He promises to purify, and He does purify it. We make our boast of this Christ, and we say He is able to save to the uttermost, and that He does this now as much as ever He has done in the 1800 years that are past, -- that He is a real, living, present Saviour to those who really receive and put their trust in Him.

I know that many may answer, "This is not the Christ that is generally presented in the preaching and teaching of this age, or that is generally professed and believed in by the Christians of this age; neither do we see such results as you depict in their characters or lives." Granted. The skeptics and the infidels say: "We do not see these results, and therefore we do not believe in your Christ." And I say, looking at the question from their standpoint, I should feel just as they do, because they have a right to have these results proved to them. It is useless telling of wonderful things having transpired a long time ago and a long distance away. They say, Show them now; show us the men in whom this change is wrought, and then we will believe that this Christ always does these things. I say Amen, and that because they do not see these signs in the popular Christianity of this day, therefore they reject its Christ, and there is great excuse for them, -- not such excuse as will justify them at the bar of God, because they ought to have found out Christ for themselves, -- nevertheless, an excuse to themselves and to their fellow-men.

I say, I grant that this is not the Christ exhibited in these days.

I will now try to give to you, as I perceive them, those modern representations of Christ which, instead of drawing all men unto Him, have driven the great mass away from Him, and disgusted many of the ablest minds with the whole system of existing Christianity.

False Christs

The first imaginary Christ of this age seems to be a sort of religious myth or good angel -- a being of the imagination who lived in the long distance, and who does very well to preach, write, and sing about, or to make pictures about, with which to adorn people's dwellings -- a kind of religious Julius Caesar, who did wonderful things ages ago, and who is somehow or other going to benefit in the future those who intellectually believe in Him now; but as to helping man in his present need, guilt, bondage, or agony, they never even pretend that He does anything of the kind. This Christ makes no difference in them or their lives; they live precisely as their neighbors do, only that they profess to believe in this Christ while their neighbors do not.

Now this is not the Christ represented in the New Testament. The Christ of God was a real veritable person, who walked about, and taught, and communicated with men; who helped and saved them from their evil appetites and passions, and who promised to keep on doing so to the end of the world; who called His followers to come out from the evil and sin of the world to follow Him, carrying His cross, obeying His words, and consecrating themselves to the same purposes for which He lived and died; seeking always to overcome evil with good, and to breast the swelling tide of human passion and opposition with meekness, patience, and love; promising to be in them an Almighty Divine presence, renovating and renewing the whole man, and empowering them to walk in His footsteps.

I am afraid there are thousands who sit in our churches and chapels and hear the modern Christ descanted on, who, if asked their idea of Christ, would be utterly at a loss to give it. They have no definite conception of what His name or being means. They would not like to say whether He is in heaven or on earth. If asked whether He had done anything for them personally, they cannot tell; the most they say is that they hope so, or that they hope He will do something some day. He is to them a mere idea.

Another false but very common view of Christ in these days is that He is a sort of divine make-weight. You will hear people say, when spoken to about their souls, "Yes, I know I am very weak and sinful, but I am doing the best I can, and Jesus is my Saviour; He will make up what I lack." In these instances there is not even the recognition of the necessity of pardon, much less of the power of Christ to renew the soul in righteousness, and to fit it for the holy employments and companionships of heaven. This Christ is simply dragged at the tail, not only of human effort but of human failure, and offered, as it were, in the arms of an impudent presumption, as a make-up in the scale of human deserts. And yet how many thousands of church and chapel-going people, it is to be feared, are deluded by supposing that this imaginary Christ will meet the needs of their souls before the judgment bar of God.

To others this imaginary Christ is only a superior human being, a beautiful example -- the most beautiful the world has ever seen; not Divine, yet the nearest to our conception of the Divine which even they think possible, but only human still. This Christ is held up as the embodiment of all that is noble, true, self-sacrificing and holy -- an example of what we are to be, but supplying no power by which to conform ourselves to the model.

I frequently find that the people who make so much ado about the example of Christ are the furthest from following it. They say it is not intended to be followed literally. But how else can you imitate anyone? How can an example be followed figuratively? Alas! the admirers of this human Christ make it sadly manifest in their lives and experience that humanity needs not only a model, but an inspiring presence to restore its lost balance, energize its feeble faculties, and rekindle its spiritual aspirations. Conceiving only of a human model, the paralyzed soul finds no higher source of strength than its own desires and resolutions, and after the oft-repeated experiment at self-deliverance, sinks at length overwhelmed with a sense of failure and despair. It is not in man or angel, however sublime, to free the human soul from its fetters of realized guilt, or to empower it for the reconquest of that Eden of righteousness and peace from which the avenging angel of justice once expelled it. A human Christ is only a phantom of the imagination, an ignis fatuus.

Another modern representation of the Christ is that of a substitutionary Saviour, -- not in the sense of atonement merely, but in the way of obedience. This Christ is held up as embodying in Himself the sum and substance of the sinner's salvation, needing only to be believed in, that is, accepted by the mind as the atoning Sacrifice, and trusted in as securing for the sinner all the benefits involved in His death, without respect to any inwrought change in the sinner himself.

This Christ is held up as a justification and protection in sin, not as a deliverer from sin. Men and women are assured that no harm can overtake them if they believe in this Christ, whatever may be the state of their hearts, or however they may, in their actions, outrage the laws of righteousness and truth.

In other words, men are taught that Christ obeyed the law for them, not only as necessary to the efficacy of His atonement for their justification, but that He has placed His obedience in the stead of, or as a substitution for, the sinner's own obedience or sanctification, which in effect is like saying, Though you

may be untrue, Christ is your truth; though you may be unclean, Christ is your chastity; though you may be dishonest, Christ is your honesty; though you may be insincere, Christ is your sincerity.

The outcome of such a faith only produces outwardly the whited sepulchers of profession, while within are rottenness and dead men's bones. The Christ of God never undertook to perform any such offices for His people, but He did undertake to make them "new creatures," and thus to enable them to perform them for themselves. He never undertook to be true instead of me, but to make me true to the very core of my soul. He never undertook to make me pass for pure, either to God or man, but to enable me to be pure. He never undertook to make me pass for honest or sincere, but to renew me in the spirit of my mind so that I could not help but be both, as the result of the operation of His Spirit within me. He never undertook to love God instead of my doing so with "all my heart and mind and soul and strength," but He came on purpose to empower and inspire me to do this. The idea of a substitutionary Christ accepted as an outward covering or refuge, instead of the power of "an endless life," is a cheat of the devil, and has been the ruin of thousands of souls. I fear this view of Christ, so persistently preached in the present day, encourages thousands in a false hope while they are living in sin, and consequently under the curse not only of a broken law, but of a Saviour denied and abjured. Let me ask you, my hearers, what sort of a Christ is yours? Have you a Christ who saves you, who renews your heart, who enables you to live in obedience to God, or are you looking to this outside and imaginary Christ to do your obeying for you?

Another false idea of Christ, entertained, I fear, by multitudes of sincere souls, is that of a Divine condemnation.

This class of people seem to think that they ought to spend all their lives bewailing and bemoaning their sins, and are forever crying out, "Oh, wretched man that I am," "Christ have mercy on us, miserable sinners"; and they go on crying this every day of their lives. They forget that He of whom Moses and the prophets did write, is come. They forget that the deliverer is here that pardon is offered, and that he is ready to witness it and fill their souls with peace and joy. If Christ be only for condemnation, what are these poor souls advantaged by His coming? what has He done more than the law did, for them? The law made them realize their bondage, writhe under a sense of their Sins, and set them longing after freedom and deliverance. It was their schoolmaster (or should have been) to bring them to Christ -- Christ, the Son, who was to make them free; but alas! in this case He is made a much harder schoolmaster than the law itself, for these poor souls get no deliverance, no peace, no joy, or power. They are always piping Paul's bewailing notes, in which he personified a convicted sinner, struggling under the fetters of condemnation. But they never get into his triumphant notes, where he declares, "there is now no condemnation."

This false view of Christ has led to most of the idolatries, penances, and lacerations of Catholicism.

The exhibition of a Christ too unsympathetic and implacable to be approached without a second intercessor -- a far-off, austere judge, rather than a pitying, pardoning Saviour, -- has kept millions of poor souls in bondage all their lives. I must say, however, that I have more sympathy with such souls, because they are sincere, and earnest, and willing to deny themselves, in order to find the right way, than with those who thoughtlessly take refuge under any of the false representations of Christ to which we have referred. It is to be feared, however, that the same spirit of worldliness which has so largely destroyed the power of Protestantism, has, to a great extent, extinguished this groping after Christ in the Catholic Church. I confess that I cannot see sufficient cause for congratulations such as are common in Protestant circles over the decadence of Popery, seeing that everybody knows that it is not in consequence of a growth of real heavenly light, but only the further spread of a careless, godless, take-it-easy spirit, putting

out the earnest desire for purification which formerly led to so much self-sacrifice in the Church of Rome. There can be no doubt that it is through the loss of this true spirit of devotion that the evils which have crept into that Church have so completely overshadowed the good, and prevented the multiplication of St. Bernards and others who got through the self-despair into the purest light and joy. Still, there are many earnest souls left, who continue to cry over their sins as though no deliverer had come. The Christ of God came not to bring condemnation but pardon, peace, and gladness to every penitent sinner on the face of the earth. I heard, the other day, a story which beautifully illustrates this: A poor Catholic woman, who had been in bondage all her life to a sense of guilt, and had earnestly sought by all the methods prescribed by her Church, especially by devotion to the Virgin Mary, to find peace and deliverance, when on her death-bed was brought into contact with one who had in reality found the Christ of God, and who was enabled to show to this poor trembling soul the sufficiency of His sacrifice, and His willingness to pardon and to purify. Through the influence of the Spirit of God which accompanied this exhibition of the true Christ, she was enabled to rest her soul on Him, and immediately entered into rest. Shortly afterwards her priest presented himself at her bedside, when she accosted him with the words, "Oh, you are too late, too late, I have found a better Priest than you, and He has absolved me. I am happy, happy, happy!"

The Christ of God is not a condemnatory Christ, but a pitying, pardoning Saviour, calling to His bosom the weary and heavy laden in all ages.

Another of these false views of Christ is that which presents Him as a future deliverer, without being a present Saviour.

It is to be feared that thousands are looking to Him to save them from the consequences of sin that is, hell, -- who continue to commit sin; they utterly misunderstand the aim and work of the Christ of God. They do not see that He came not merely to bring men to heaven, but to bring them back into harmony with His Father; they look upon the atonement as a sort of make-shift plan by which they are to enter heaven, leaving their characters unchanged on earth. They forget that sin is a far greater evil in the Divine estimation than hell; they do not see that sin is the primal evil. If there were no sin there need be no hell. God only proposes to save people from the consequences of sin by saving them from the sin itself; and this is the great distinguishing work of Christ to save his people from their sins!

The Christ of God

Now I deny that any of the representations of Christ to which I have referred are the Bible representations of the Christ of God, or that they meet the need of the soul of man. They are for the most part made to meet the ideas of a modern worldly Christianity.

Men have made up their minds that they can possess and enjoy all they can get of this world in common with their fellow men, and yet get to heaven at last. They have made up their minds that it is all nonsense about following the Christ, -- becoming a laughing stock to the world, which He made Himself every day He lived, -- and setting themselves to live a holy life, which He said if they did not they were none of His; all this they have abandoned as an impossibility, and yet, not content. without a religion, and finding it impossible to look into the future without a hope of some sort, they have manufactured a Christ to meet their views, and spun endless theories to match the state of their hearts. The worst of all, however, is that a great many of the teachers of Christianity have adopted these theories, and spend their whole lives in misrepresenting the Christ of the Gospel.

Now let me try to put before you what I conceive to be the true representation of the Christ of God. We say that He meets the whole world's need that He comes to it walking on the waves of its difficulties, sins, and sorrows, and says, "I am the Bread of Life; take Me, appropriate Me, live by Me, and you will live forever. I will resuscitate and pardon, cleanse and energize you; I am the Christ, the Saviour of the World." This is the Divine "Word," or deliverer, which philosophers have longed for, and stretched out their dying hands to embrace -- which all the heathen world have, more or less, groped after in some dim figure.

First: The Christ of God is Divine.

We admit the incarnation was a mystery, looked at from a human standpoint, but no greater mystery than many other incarnations taking place all around us, and because a mystery, none the less a necessity. Humanity must have a deliverer able to save, and no less than an Almighty deliverer was equal to the task. Here, all merely human deliverers, all philosophers and teachers of the world, had failed, because they could only teach, they could not renew. They could set up a standard, enunciate a doctrine, but they could not remove man's inability, or endue him with power to reach it. Here even the law of God failed, and that which was ordained to life wrought death. Here was the sunken rock, the bitter, maddening failure of all systems and deliverers -- they failed to rectify the heart; they could not give a new life or impart another spirit.

We saw at the outset that man needed some being outside of himself, above him, and yet able to understand and pity him in his utmost guilt, misery, and helplessness -- able to inspire him with a new life, to impart light, love, strength, and endurance, and to do this always and everywhere, in every hour of darkness, temptation, and danger. Humanity needed an exhibition of God, not merely to be told about Him, but to see Him; not merely to know that He was an Almighty Creator, able to crush him, but that He is a pitiful Father, yearning and waiting to save him. God's expedient for showing this to man was to come in the flesh. Can the wisest modern philosopher or the most benevolent philanthropist conceive a better? How otherwise could God have revealed Himself to fallen man? Since the fall, man has proved himself incapable of seeing or knowing God; he has ever been afraid of the heavenly, running away even from an angel; and when only hearing a voice and seeing the smoke which hid the Divinity, he exceedingly feared and quaked, and begged not to hear that voice again. Truly, no man, as he is by nature, can see God and live. Seeing then, that God desired that man should see Him -- that is, know Him -- and live, notwithstanding his fall, He promised a Saviour, who should reveal Him in all the holiness and benevolence of His character, and in His plenitude of power to save!

Here the Christ of God presents Himself, claiming to be this Divine Saviour. An objector may ask for proof of His Divinity. This would be far too great a subject to go into now, but we may glance at two or three considerations, which are quite sufficient, unless, indeed, Christ were an impostor.

First, those who reject His Divinity say He is the nearest to the Divine of anything we can conceive. They say He is the best of the good of our race even infidels cannot find fault with His character; they all bow down before the spotless purity, the beneficence and moral beauty of Jesus Christ. All schools grant this. Then, taking my stand here, I say that this perfect being claimed to be Divine, and He claimed it so unmistakably and persistently, that if you take it out of His teachings, you reduce them to a jumble of inconsistencies. His Divinity is the central fact around which all His doctrines and teachings revolve, so that if this be extinguished, they become like a system of astronomy without the sun, dark, conflicting, and inconsistent. Read the Gospels and eliminate for yourselves all His assumptions of Divinity, and then see what you can make of His teaching.

Secondly, these assumptions were understood and resented by the people to whom He spoke, and they surely were the best judges as to what He meant. If they had mistaken His meaning, He was bound, merely as a man of honor, to explain Himself, but He never did; so when the Jews said, "Whom makest Thou Thyself," or, "This man maketh himself equal with God," He did not demur or retract, but repeated, "I came forth from the Father, and I go to the Father." This was the one intolerable point in His teaching, which the Jews, who owned no plurality in gods, could not endure; that any other being should be one with their Jehovah, was to them insufferable, and for this they ultimately crucified Him. "What further need have we," said the high priest, "of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy."

Then, if He were so near an approach to perfection as even infidels admit, how was it that He allowed such an impression of His teachings to go abroad, if he were not Divine? How could He say, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins," if He had not known Himself to be the Christ of God?

Thirdly, His character supported His assumptions. For 1800 years millions of the best of the human race have accepted these assumptions without being shocked by them. If He be not Divine, how comes it to be that the greatest of human intellects, the sincerest of human souls, and the most aroused and anxious of human consciences, have ventured their all upon this Divine Word, and have seen nothing contradictory between His claims and the actual character which He sustained in the world; whereas, imagine the very holiest and best who ever trod our earth putting forth such assumptions, and how would they sound! Suppose Moses, who had talked with God in the burning bush, or Isaiah, whose tongue was touched with the live coal from off the altar, or Daniel, the man greatly beloved, to whom the angel Gabriel was sent again and again, or the apostle of the Gentiles, who was admitted into the third heaven, or the beloved apostle John, -- suppose any of these men saying, "I am from above, ye are from beneath," "I am not of this world," "If ye believe not I am He, ye shall die in your sins," "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." Again, "I leave the world and go to the Father; and in His prayer on the eve of His agony, "The glory which I had with the Father before the world was," and again, in answer to Philip's request, "Show us the Father," -- "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;" "believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?"

And not only does He claim this oneness of essence with the Father, but also that omniscience which enables Him not only to be with His people but to dwell in them, as shown in His answer to the question of Judas, when he asked how it was that He would manifest Himself to His own people and not to the world. Jesus answered, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Think of any creature -- a David, a Paul, a John, -- daring to claim for himself this omniscience. If this Christ were not Divine, then there is no alternative; he was altogether an impostor and a deceiver.

From such a conclusion, however, even infidels and blasphemers shrink, and therefore we must be allowed to hold to our faith in our Divine Redeemer -- our Immanuel, "God with us." I may ask here, if there is one of my hearers whose consciousness does not tell him that he needs a Divine Saviour? Would any less than an Almighty, omniscient, infinite deliverer meet the needs of your souls? If so, you must feel much better and stronger, and more able to help yourselves than I do. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

But take this mystery out of Christianity, and the whole system utterly collapses. Without a Divine Christ Christianity sinks into a mere system of philosophy, and becomes as powerless for the renovation and salvation of mankind as any of the philosophies which have preceded it. But no, our Joshua has come, our Deliverer is here; He is come, and is now literally fulfilling His promise to abide, "I and my Father will come unto you, and make our abode with you." He comes now in the flesh of His true saints, just as really as he came first in the body prepared for Him, and He comes for the same purpose, to renew and to save. He is knocking at the doors of your hearts even now, through my feeble words, and will come into your hearts if you will let Him. As he came walking over the sea of Galilee to the men and women of His own day, He comes now to you, walking over the storm raised by your appetites, your inordinate desires, passions, and sins -- a storm only just gathering, waxing worse and worse, and which, unless allayed, will grow to eternal thunderings, lightning, and billows but He is able to allay it, He offers to pronounce "Peace, be still," and end this tempest of your soul for ever. Will you let Him?

Second: The Christ of God offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sin of man.

The Divine law had been broken; the interests of the universe demanded that its righteousness should be maintained, therefore its penalty must be endured by the transgressor, or, in lieu of this, such compensation must be rendered as would satisfy the claims of justice, and render it expedient for God to pardon the guilty. We will not attempt to go into the various theories respecting the atonement; it is enough for us to know that Christ made such a sacrifice as rendered it possible for God to be just, and yet to pardon the sinner. His sacrifice is never represented in the Bible as having purchased or begotten the love of the Father, but only as having opened a channel through which that love could flow out to His rebellious and prodigal children. The doctrine of the New Testament on this point is not that "God so hated the world that His own Son was compelled to die in order to appease His vengeance," as we fear has been too often represented, but that "God so LOVED the world, that He gave His only begotten Son."

As Christ represented His union with the Father as perfect and entire on every point and in every particular of His humiliation, so He represents it as equally complete with respect to the sufficiency and vicarious character of His death. "THEREFORE doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. He so shows that in baring His own heart to the sword of justice, He was equally with the Father interested in the maintenance of the dignity of the law, and equally inspired with boundless and quenchless love for its transgressors.

There has been a great deal of empty talk as to the needlessness of a vicarious sacrifice, and many contend that the Father's love flows out to all His creatures independently of any such intervention; but, setting aside the requirements of the Divine law altogether, I venture to assert that there has never been a human conscience awakened in any measure to the deserts of sin, which has not instinctively felt the need of such a sacrifice. In thousands of instances, even with the strongest representations of the infinity, value, and efficacy of the atonement, it requires the utmost effort to get the trembling soul to rest its hopes on the merits of even this Divine sacrifice, and all history proves that in no other way have sinful consciences ever been able to find rest.

Third: The Christ of God is an accepted sacrifice.

This has been attested by His resurrection from the dead. God has declared to the three worlds, of angels, men, and devils, that justice is satisfied, and that henceforth no guilty son or daughter of Adam need

despair of His mercy and salvation -- the accepted sacrifice for all men, and we know not for what other beings. How far-reaching its benefits are we cannot tell, -- perhaps to distant planets and suns; any way they reach to you and to me.

In view of this sacrifice God waits to pardon your guilt, cleanse your pollution, transform your character, and hallow, and beautify, and utilize your life. You have no longer any excuse for groaning under the dominion of sin. He calls you forth from the tomb of your depravity; He calls you out of the dungeon of your guilt, and offers you a full and free acquittal, with all the resources necessary for a new life of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Fourth: The Christ of God is an embodiment of His Father's righteousness.

He will only administer the benefits of His sacrifice in accordance with the Divine standard of right. He will do no violence either to the Government of God or the nature of man. Although love was the supreme ingredient of His character, yet we hear no words of an indiscriminate charity dropping from His lips, no excuse of sin, no palliation of the guilt of enlightened transgressors of His Father's law, or impudent presumers on His Father's forbearance. He hated iniquity as supremely as He loved righteousness. The great end and aim of His coming was the regeneration and restoration of man to the mind and will of God; hence He confirmed the first and greatest commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

Fifth: The Christ of God claims to be the Sovereign of all whom He saves. He tells us, if men keep not His words -- do not obey Him -- they are none of His; and He claims absolute inward and outward obedience to His precepts every hour of every day of all the life of every one who professes to be His subject.

My friends, have you accepted this Christ? Do you know Him as your Divine Almighty Deliverer from the strength and power of sin? Have you cast your weary soul on Him as your sacrifice, claiming freedom from the condemnation of the past? Have you the witness of His Spirit that this sacrifice has been accepted by God on your behalf, and does the answering cry, "Abba, Father," go up from your soul? Are you living in the regeneration of His Spirit, carefully seeking to fulfill all righteousness, commending your every act to Him in faithful obedience? Does he reign over you as the sovereign of your heart and life, and do you hold everything you possess, -- yourself, your children, your property, your time, your influence, your reputation, your life, your death, -- - subservient to His will and interests? If so, happy are you, and your example . before men and your influence in the world will be worthy of the professed followers of the "Christ of God."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/catherine-booth/its-false-christs-compared-with-the-christ-of-god/>

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