



Christ Jesus ... hath broken  
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—Ephesians 2:13, 14



Christian Science Sentinel  
**Bible Lens**

**Doctrine of  
Atonement**

**October 14–20,  
2019**

# Doctrine of Atonement

## from the Responsive Reading

### Ephesians 2:13, 14

*Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.*

Walls of division—both physical and symbolic—were typical of Jewish tradition. Gentile worship in the Temple was limited. Jews who weren't part of the priestly class were separated by a curtain from the sacred inner space of the Temple. And wrong thinking and action were seen as partitions between God and His people.

Here the writer proclaims that separation between individuals, and between individuals and God, is dissolved through Christ. "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners," he continues, "but fellow-citizens ... of the household of God" (v. 19).

### Ephesians 2:18

*Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

*Prosagōgē*, the Greek noun rendered *access* in this verse, refers to acceptance or admittance—usually into the presence of a powerful ruler or benefactor. Christ provides direct access to God's presence, access that binds the faithful in fellowship "by one Spirit." A translation has, "It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father."

## from Section 2

### 6 | Matthew 5:23, 24

*If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

In the Master's teachings known as the Sermon on the Mount, he presents several lessons—about anger, adultery, swearing, retaliation, and love for enemies (see verses 21–48). Each begins with words about an early Hebrew law or tradition—for instance, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time."

The hypothetical example in verses 23 and 24 amplifies the Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). Jesus enlarges the focus from outward violence to the mental nature of hostility, and makes reconciliation a prerequisite to worship.

### 6 | Matthew 5:44

*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*

The instruction to love one's enemies dramatically expanded the Hebrew injunction to love one's neighbors—primarily fellow Jews (see Leviticus 19:18)—and went well beyond kindness to foreigners (see Leviticus 19:18, 34). Christ Jesus taught all-inclusive love that embraced even the most hostile adversaries.



# An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“...a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

## 8 | Matthew 18:21, 22

*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

Forgiving someone seven times must have seemed remarkably generous. But Jesus' multiplication of this by seventy—seen by some as a reference to the threat in Genesis 4:24—amounts to limitless forgiveness.

from **Section 4**

## 12 | John 15:13

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

“Courageous, heroic and honorable death was an ancient Mediterranean virtue,” writes a researcher. Listeners would have understood and accepted the idea of giving up one's life for someone else. Jesus' ultimate sacrifice, his death on the cross, is explained in these terms—for example, in Romans 5:8, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

from **Section 5**

## 18 | Hebrews 10:24, 25

*Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.*

In this counsel, believers are being asked to stir one another to Christly action. Provoking, in this sense, isn't an incensing or irritating activity—it's a call to rouse fellow

church members to express love in both individual and community outreach.

## 19 | Romans 16:1, 3

*I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.... Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.*

Paul concludes his letter to the Roman Christians with greetings to over two dozen fellow believers.

Priscilla and Aquila, a married couple, were tentmakers with whom Paul had worked earlier (see Acts 18:2). Phebe, one of only a few women leaders in the early Christian churches, was a deaconess or minister in Cenchrea (a port in Corinth) and may have been carrying Paul's epistle to Rome. These three individuals had apparently been of substantial help to Paul, though details about this are not given in the letter.

### Clarifications:

In the Bible Lens for “Soul” (August 12–18, 2019) the note on Matthew 17:24 should have made clear that the tax for support of the Roman temple was levied many years later.

In the Lens for “Substance” (September 9–15, 2019) the note on Matthew 8:14, 15 spoke about Jesus' final charge *from the cross*.

### Resources quoted in this issue

**RR:** Good News Translation in Today's English Version—Second Edition Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

**Cit. 12:** Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

# 'For Atonement, Exit Here'

By Harriet Barry Schupp

From the October 1992 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*

**T**he sign on the highway said, "For Atonement, Exit Here." Ahhh ... I thought. If it were only that easy!

As I began to think about atonement, it occurred to me that exiting of another sort is certainly necessary to achieving atonement. This is the exodus that takes place when we pray and strive to lead more spiritually based lives. We are departing from a purely material sense of ourselves toward a knowledge of our true being, which is inseparable from God.

Christ Jesus' life enlarged and uplifted this whole concept of atonement. He taught of God as a loving, patient Father, and through his healing works demonstrated that this Father is immediately and unassailably present.

Step by step his patient instructions lead us to see that the sacrifice of the mortal self—the belief that we are material, not spiritual—is necessary in order to reconcile ourselves to God. This enables us to understand one of his most wonderful statements: "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). Our true spiritual selfhood and oneness with God are right here. They are not something we obtain in a distant future or after death.

From a human standpoint, mankind is far from God and there is much reconciling to do. The pervasiveness of mortal thought, material beliefs, and human doctrines would have us believe that this universe of mortality is all there is.

But this illusion of materiality that would separate us from God is a lie about the nature of God and man. And it was the mission of Jesus to free us from this lie, to show us the Christ, the true nature of God and man. The action of Christ in our lives

forever breaks this belief that materiality is real or powerful.

We will never really understand our atonement with God while believing we are basically material or while thinking of ourselves as aging, vulnerable mortals living in material bodies. For it is largely this belief that separates us from knowing God.

We must gain the realization that we are fully spiritual, and then we must work out from that standpoint. We all know that we can't exit from and stay on a highway at the same time. But isn't this what we sometimes try to do on the road to atonement? We think we are willing to be present with the Lord, but we're not so sure about being absent from the body.

We can defend ourselves from this kind of thinking through prayer that affirms our oneness with God and rejects the belief that we are mortals worshiping a distant deity. In speaking of our path to finding atonement, Mary Baker Eddy writes: "If the disciple is advancing spiritually, he is striving to enter in. He constantly turns away from material sense, and looks towards the imperishable things of Spirit. If honest, he will be in earnest from the start, and gain a little each day in the right direction, till at last he finishes his course with joy" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 21). This joy that never goes stale and that nothing can take from us is ours, because we are seeing for ourselves and for mankind man's unbreakable unity with Love.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to [jsh.christianscience.com/for-atonement-exit-here](http://jsh.christianscience.com/for-atonement-exit-here).