Blue Windows: A Christian Science Childhood
Synopsis

From Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the Church of Christian Science, to Deepak Chopra, Americans have struggled with the connection between health and happiness. Barbara Wilson was taught by her Christian Scientist family that there was no sickness or evil, and that by maintaining this belief she would be protected. But such beliefs were challenged when Wilson’s own mother died of breast cancer after deciding not to seek medical attention, having been driven mad by the contradiction between her religion and her reality. In this perceptive and textured memoir Blue Windows, Wilson surveys the complex history of Christian Science and the role of women in religion and healing.

Book Information

File Size: 1041 KB
Print Length: 356 pages
Publisher: Picador; 1st Picador USA Pbk. Ed edition (December 30, 2014)
Publication Date: December 30, 2014
Sold by: Digital Services LLC
Language: English
ASIN: B00QQ37DVE
Text-to-Speech: Enabled
X-Ray: Not Enabled
Word Wise: Enabled
Lending: Not Enabled
Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled


Customer Reviews

This book is a fairly good memoir, despite long digressions into overly detailed memories. I skimmed some chapters, especially in the first half. However, as therapy for a recovering Christian Scientist, it was a wonderful experience that I would highly recommend. Particularly in the second half of the book, when Ms. Wilson gets into the meat of her family’s troubles, her writing style hits its
stride and the insights are especially clear and penetrating. It may be flogging a dead horse to
critique Christian Science these days, as it fades away with the passing of the last generation to
grow up without antibiotics. However, those of us who were raised in it need to critique it for our own
benefit. The public image of CS has to do with shunning doctors and medicine. There’s much more
to it. In my family, as in Wilson’s, the greatest pain was caused by the avoidance of relationship
problems and mental disorders. An untreated infection may kill you quickly, but an abusive parent
can affect your quality of life, and those of the rest of your family, over many years.My father was a
third-generation Christian Scientist, First Reader of our church, and served on the board of a CS
sanitorium. He went to church twice a week and served on countless church committees. I’m sure
he never once tasted alcohol or tobacco, he never went to a doctor, and he always had one of us
sitting by the TV (in the days before remote controls) to turn down the volume when ads for
medicine came on. He was also an abuser with chronic untreated depression and suicidal
impulses. Nobody could acknowledge that my father’s abuse was happening because we had to
pretend that life was Perfect. This made us all enablers.

Barbara Wilson “was the co-founder of two publishing companies, Seal Press and Women In
Translation,” and has written other books such as If You Had a Family: A Novel. The title of this
1997 book refers to her statement that Christian Science “was about choosing to see only beauty
and happiness, no matter what, about choosing... to look at life through the rose windows, not the
blue windows.” (Pg. 7) She recalls in the first chapter, “My mother developed cancer when I was
nine and died when I was twelve... At the time she was actually sick and dying, cancer seemed the
least of her problems. Far more obvious... was the mental breakdown that had driven her to make a
suicide attempt, an attempt that disfigured her face... What was wrong with my mother was never
talked about at all, and after she died, she was almost never referred to by anyone again.” (Pg.
6) She points out, “From the start Christian Science was attractive to women. Not only was the
founder a woman and the theology of an androgynous god, but in a practical sense Christian
Science offered employment as healers for women who had been barred by men from their
traditional occupations as midwives and doctors. At the founding of the church, the ratio of women
to men practitioners was five to one. In 1926, a study showed that while 55.7 percent of the
membership of all churches was female, in Christian Science the percentage was 75 percent. In the
1950s, 87.7 percent of all Christian Science practitioners were women, and most recently a study
showed a ratio of only one male practitioner for every eight women.” (Pg.

Download to continue reading...