

Lauren Hunter, *Leaving Christian Science: 10 stories of new faith in Jesus Christ*, Roseville, CA. Veritable Books, 2020, 156 pages with appendices, paperback. ISBN: 978-1-7351837-0-1

Ideas have consequences. Consistently held false religious beliefs damage our emotions, our intellect, our physical well-being and our relationships. Through the stories of ten former Christian Scientist, this reality is illustrated and hope-filled correctives are offered. One of these stories include the author's, herself a former fourth generation member who provides the reader a big picture of what she and others have experienced in their redemptive healing.

In the ten chapters of *Leaving Christian Science* the reader is introduced to ten former Christian Scientists alongside a synopsis of ten core beliefs empowering abuse. These key beliefs include false notion of: *Matter*, as being mere mental error, rather than physiological reality; the human *Body*, as an imagination of the mind, instead of physical being created by God; the notion of *God*, being only a set of principles, rather than a knowable personal being; *Sin*, is an illusion, instead of the moral condition of humankind revealing our need of redemption; *Mary Baker Eddy*, is seen as the revelator of biblical truth, rather than a false teacher; *Jesus*, is a divine idea highlighting humanity's immortality, instead of the Son of God and Savior who offers a personal relationship; *Prayer*, involves the exercise of Christian Science principles, rather than intimate communication with God; the *Holy Spirit*, is Mary Baker Eddy or Divine Science, instead of a member of the triune God as revealed in the Bible; *Contagion*, (the universal human problem) is a faulty mental state, rather than our own moral condition from birth and choice; and finally the *Bible*, is merely inspired, rather than also rightfully seen as infallible and authoritative.

These ten false beliefs and their biblical correctives are provided and illustrated for the benefit of the reader to consider authentic Christianity as defined in the early historic creeds (Appendix D). The reader is given both a concise history and theology of Christian Science (Appendix A); clear and concise definitions of key terms used in Christian Science (Appendix B) and a helpful resource list for further support and study (Appendix C). Throughout the book we find gentle, kind and short encouragements from the author and a broad variety of Christian leaders to consider the freedom offered in the historic Christian gospel.

As someone who has worked in the field of cultic studies for nearly four decades and myself having exited from a similar, but different background than Christian Science, this is a must-read for anyone looking for insights and recovery from false teaching and the abuse experienced in Christian Science. The book is exceedingly user friendly, compassionate and well-informed. I highly encourage it's reading for those disillusioned with Christian Science and more broadly anybody seeking to better understand how false religious ideas within any church has consequences producing abusive behavior, but that hope and healing is possible irrespective of our personal histories.

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