

(Mobile pdf) Blue Windows: A Christian Science Childhood

## Blue Windows: A Christian Science Childhood

Von Barbara Wilson

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**Von Barbara Wilson : Blue Windows: A Christian Science Childhood** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blue Windows: A Christian Science Childhood:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Painful Memories, But Untenable AllegationsVon Ein KundeThis is Barbara Wilson's memoirs about her childhood years. Much of the story involves some tough circumstances surrounding her mother, Ellen. These do not make for easy reading; there were mental problems and suicide attempts, and she eventually died from cancer. Barbara also had her

share of problems. She also tried to commit suicide, and she was sexually abused by her uncle. Her's was an unhappy childhood, and she has my deepest sympathies. She certainly deserved better than this, and that makes it all the more difficult for me to assign this book with a low two-star rating. I can assure the reader that I do not find pleasure in criticizing someone who has been through such trying experiences, but there really is little other choice. You see, Barbara's memoirs are more than just her family's history. They also contain a significant amount of critical commentary about the religion Christian Science, and I find most of her opinions about it to be untenable. One of the editorial reviews pointed out that Barbara Wilson has also written a novel called "If You Had a Family" (1996) that is loosely based off of these same childhood experiences. In the novel, "the protagonist's mother relies too long on her faith, postpones seeing a doctor, and dies of cancer." It is important to differentiate between the novel (fiction) and the memoirs (her real-life experience), because in this book, Barbara Wilson stops short of blaming Christian Science for the death of her mother. She writes, "Did [Ellen] die because she didn't go to the doctor? Yes, and no. It's very likely that my mother would have died of breast cancer anyway in 1963. It's also possible that she could have been healed, either through medicine or prayer. The issue is more complicated than that. My mother, raised in the Christian Science church by devoted Christian Science parents, suffered a crisis of faith. It is also possible she was predisposed to madness. Her brother has spent most of his life in mental institutions, diagnosed as paranoid-schizophrenic." (p. 7)

Ellen originally relied on Christian Science prayer to treat her cancer, up until the point when her mental problems began and she tried to commit suicide. Then she was taken to the hospital, where the doctors also discovered her cancer. She spent most of the remaining two years of her life in a sanitarium receiving radiation treatment for the cancer and electroshock therapy for her mental illness. (p. 164) The book is imprecise about actually how long it was that Ellen knew of the cancer without going to a doctor, but if you comb through the memoirs and try to piece the facts together, you will find that it may have been as little as a handful of weeks. Because of the uncertainties involved, as well as the state of cancer treatment in the early sixties, it is problematic to discuss whether Ellen's life would have been saved had she gone directly to a doctor. Wilson has some experience working in a hospital in order to help make ends meet, and she never said that her mother would have lived had she gone directly to the hospital. Therefore, I think that it is unfortunate that some reviewers have come away with the opinion that Ellen's death is an open-and-shut case against Christian Science. Surprisingly, this book really does not really dwell on it all that much, either. Wilson's main hypothesis is that Christian Science caused her mother to go insane. Because of the fact that Ellen's brother also had mental problems--and he was not a Christian Scientist--Wilson has a tough sell ahead of her in order to prove that Ellen's mental illness was caused by her faith, rather than by her genetic makeup, as one would naturally be inclined to assume. To attempt this, Wilson devotes a lot of energy to discussing Christian Science beliefs. Unfortunately, Wilson, who is primarily known as a lesbian writer, has based much of her material about Christian Science teachings and history off an incorrect secondary source by another (closet) lesbian, Willa Cather. Cather's book "The Life of Mary Baker Eddy The History of Christian Science" (1909) has not held up well to scrutiny, over the years. Although Barbara attended a Christian Science Sunday School up until the age of 13, she does not have an adult understanding of the religion. For instance, Wilson tells how she had memorized the famous Christian Science teaching--that most all Christian Science Sunday School students also know by heart--called the "Scientific Statement of Being." (p. 69) If the reader is willing to do some homework, they will find that this is actually the "Definition of Man" and not the "Scientific Statement of Being." But, this is just the tip of the iceberg as far as the inaccuracies of this book go. It may surprise some that Wilson's father does not agree with her about the cause of Ellen's mental illness--and he is not a Christian Scientist! Wilson disclosed, "Whenever I tried to talk to my father, the person who had lived through that time by [Ellen's] side, he proved resistant to my hypotheses." (p. 326) "To my father, my mother's religion and her mental illness seem unrelated. He has talked about cancer metastasizing to the brain." (p. 167) Barbara was young when the most crucial events of the story took place: "My mother developed cancer when I was nine and died when I was twelve." (p. 6) Hence, Barbara's youth also needs to be taken into consideration when considering her personal view of the events. In conclusion, I feel genuinely sorry for Barbara Wilson over her painful childhood, but I do not value what she has written about Christian Science. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Lengthy Von Ein Kunde I got through approximately three-fourths of this book. However, what I read of Barbara's experiences growing up in Christian Science was thought provoking. I was not raised in Christian Science but became interested in it as a teenager. I did attend the local Church of Christ, Scientist for 2+ years but never joined. I did see other children in this congregation physically suffering due to their parent's strict adherence to Eddy's edicts. And around the time I left Christian Science before going to college was when a few Christian Science children died in Florida due to meningitis. Also, I never experienced a "healing" in Christian Science. I can remember calling the practitioner for prayer one Saturday evening due to a severe sore throat and cold. The following morning in Sunday School, I was told by the practitioner that I either should apply Christian Science or get out of it. So, I did the latter! Barbara's book added a new dimension to my understanding of this religion. It should be read by any persons interested in this faith as well as by those in it (although that would be a mute point with devout Christian Scientists). My only complaint is that the book is VERY LONG, and Barbara seems to digress into topics which are unrelated to the subject of her book. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Blue Windows: A Christian Science

Childhood Von Melanie Oldham Barbara Wilson's writing style is brilliant. She tells a profound and sad story that is probably more common than we know. I had to laugh when I read the review from the 29 year old man whose life has been improved "ten-fold" by Christian Science. I too was born into the religion. Luckily I had the "presence of mind" (CS Lingo) to insist upon medical care beginning at a young age. I am all for religious/spiritual freedom of expression. But Christian Science is not about freedom of expression. It is about denying the existence of ANYTHING unpleasant. There is nothing scientific about it. It's followers have a strict and paranoid code of secrecy about their beliefs which seeps into their daily lives and affects all relationships. Wilson's book is a must-read for anyone trying to understand a friend of loved one's negative experience with Christian Science.

Kurzbeschreibung 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. deFrequently caricatured as the religion that rejects medical treatment, Christian Science gets a balanced, nuanced appraisal in this memoir by a writer who grew up within the faith. Barbara Wilson appreciates Christian Science's unusual openness to women, who gained self-respect and status as its practitioners and healers, but she bares its inadequacies in a wrenching account of her mother's battle with cancer, suicide attempt, and eventual death. Her precise, unsentimental prose delineates a decades-long journey toward self-knowledge and peace with her past: it's a very American saga, sensitively told. Pressestimmen "Wonderfully lucid . . . scrupulously fair-minded . . . The best sort of childhood memoir: It reaches beyond the troubled family . . . to illuminate a whole society . . . Like a pebble tossed into a pond, "Blue Windows" resonates in ever-widening circles." --Francine Prose, "New York Newsday" "A memoir of exceptional sensitivity and intelligence." --"The New Yorker" "Graceful, superbly written . . . In an age when the memoir has become transcendent, *Blue Windows* is among the best" --Donn Fry, "The Seattle Times" "Painfully searching, honest, and, ultimately, inspiring . . . [this] courageous and moving memoir evokes a world of childhood faith and healing." --Cynthia Schrager, "The Women's of Books" "A brave memoir . . . Wilson movingly explores [her childhood]." --Ruth Coughlin, "The Cleveland Plain Dealer" "Wonderfully lucid . . . scrupulously fair-minded . . . The best sort of childhood memoir: It reaches beyond the troubled family . . . to illuminate a whole society . . . Like a pebble tossed into a pond, "Blue Windows" resonates in ever-widening circles." --Francine Prose, *New York Newsday* "A memoir of exceptional sensitivity and intelligence." "The New Yorker" "Graceful, superbly written . . . In an age when the memoir has become transcendent, *Blue Windows* is among the best" --Donn Fry, *The Seattle Times* "Painfully searching, honest, and, ultimately, inspiring . . . [this] courageous and moving memoir evokes a world of childhood faith and healing." --Cynthia Schrager, *The Women's of Books* "A brave memoir . . . Wilson movingly explores [her childhood]." --Ruth Coughlin, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*