



STATEMENT DC605

## Why I Left Christian Science: The Personal Testimony of Carolyn Poole

Christian Science was my whole life. I was a third-generation member of both a local church and the Mother Church in Boston. As well, I was “class taught” — that is, I received special advanced instruction. I wholeheartedly practiced Christian Science by reading my lesson every day, by not going to doctors or taking medicine when I was sick, and by serving on various committees. I even served as president of the Executive Board.

During this time, I did not know my religion was a cult, or that it was not considered Christian. I was convinced Christian Science had the truth — that God is Infinite Mind and all is mental. I believed that Jesus was simply a human being who demonstrated the “Christ Truth,” just as you and I can when we become as spiritually advanced as He was. Jesus was not so unique, I thought; He was simply a Way-Shower.

In 1969 I went (alone) to hear Billy Graham preach in the Anaheim Stadium in California. I was curious about him because he was so famous. I don’t know why I did it, but at the end of the service I went forward and received prayer.

After I sat back down, an evil presence came to me. It told me I would be dead before the night was over. I nearly panicked. I asked God to forgive me for my being there and for my disloyalty to Christian Science. The evil thing left me, and I blamed it all on Billy Graham. After that, I forgot the whole affair.

Since my religion was supposed to be based on the Bible, I tried to read the Bible and understand it, but I found much of it too difficult. Then, in 1975, it occurred to me to form a Bible study group using Christian Science materials. I proposed this to my church, but nothing came of it.

By this time I was old enough to be a grandmother, yet I had never been invited to a Bible study. So I was pleasantly surprised when two women, whom I did not know, knocked on my door one day and invited me to a home Bible study with the Christian Women’s Club. I later learned that God had prompted these two women (separately) to go door-to-door in my neighborhood. I was the only one to accept their invitation.

After many months of study, I started seeing verses in my Bible that I had read and yet had never really been aware of. My conception of God and His plan for man started to change. It began to dawn on me that Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, the founder and leader of Christian Science, had taken the place of Jesus for those involved in her religion.

In the Christian Science *Church Manual*, Mrs. Eddy had said she was the only one to be called Leader. In Matthew 23:10 (NAS), however, Jesus said *He* was the only one to be called Leader. I was faced with two different individuals — *both* claiming to be my *only* leader.

I had been taught that Christian Science was the “Revelation,” that Mrs. Eddy was the “Revelator,” and that we cannot know the Revelation unless we know the Revelator. And, of course, we *have* to know the Revelation in order

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to know God. What this ultimately meant was that the only way we could know God was by going *through* Mrs. Eddy.

Contrary to this, I saw in my Bible study that Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6). So, Mrs. Eddy and Jesus *both* claimed to be the way to God.

One day during our home study, we came to Matthew 16:15 where Jesus asked His disciples who they said He was. The disciples answered, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." But Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). Jesus responded, "This was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven" (v. 17).

After the women in the home Bible study left, those words kept ringing in my mind. It was as though Jesus was asking me personally. "Who do you say I am?" He seemed very stern about it. Poring over Mrs. Eddy's statements, it became clear that she *denied* that Jesus is Christ (*see*, for example, her book entitled *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 84). But Jesus said He *is* Christ. Jesus was asking me in my heart, Do you believe *her* or *Me*?

At first, I didn't know. I cried. I threshed it about in my mind. I came to the decision that if Jesus could do the miracles He did, He certainly should know who He is. I concluded that Jesus *must* be the Christ.

The Holy Spirit also revealed to me through Scripture that Jesus, far from being just a man (as Christian Science teaches), is, in the Incarnation, *God in human flesh*. John's gospel proclaims, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...[and] The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:1, 14). In the Incarnation, Jesus was perfect humanity and perfect deity.

After Jesus was crucified for our sins and gloriously resurrected from the dead, "doubting" Thomas put his hand in Jesus' side and called Him, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). If Thomas had been wrong in his assessment of Jesus' true identity, Jesus certainly would have corrected him. Thus, through my Bible study, I had learned that Jesus is the *Christ*, and that He is *God* — something that is denied by Mrs. Eddy.

Another issue I had to grapple with is the Christian Science teaching that man is perfect and sinless. When a person dies, Christian Science teaches, only his belief of *matter* dies. Man is *spiritual*, and at "death" he goes on doing whatever he was doing, for death is simply an illusion. Moreover, since all is "mind," hell and heaven are only states of mind.

The Bible, however, repeatedly affirms that all men are sinners. They cannot come to God without a blood atonement. And, according to Scripture, Jesus — the Lamb of God — became the perfect and final blood sacrifice for the atonement of man's sins (Matt. 20:28).

If man is sinless, like Mrs. Eddy taught, then Jesus suffered on the cross for nothing. In fact, it would appear as if Jesus was too stupid to know why He died. I read in my Bible, however, that when Jesus was eating with the disciples, He took a cup and handed it to them and said, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). I cannot believe that Jesus was either stupid or a liar. He *knew* what He was saying and He meant it.

I also read in Hebrews 9:27 that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." So death is *real*, and sinful men will one day appear before God at the judgment seat and be judged for sins and cast into eternal damnation (hell) — *unless they trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins* (Acts 16:31).

I hated the thought of anyone going to hell. As a Christian Scientist, I didn't think it could possibly be true. But as disturbing as I felt it was, I now realized that Jesus Himself had taught it. I also realized that if it were *true*, it would

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be even *more* disturbing if Jesus didn't warn people about eternal damnation. Though I had had trouble believing that a good God could allow such a condition to exist, I also realized that I didn't make the rules and God didn't ask me my opinion. As God said in Isaiah, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (Isa. 55:8).

I came to see more and more clearly that Christian Science flatly contradicted what Jesus said about the state of our existence after we pass on from this life. Up until now, I had always read past Jesus' words about hell, thinking that He was speaking in a parable, and that Mrs. Eddy's spiritual interpretation explained it all. It suddenly occurred to me, as chills ran up and down my spine, that maybe the Bible actually meant what it said.

From a human viewpoint, some of Mrs. Eddy's ideas *may* sound appealing (e.g., there is *no sin, no death, no judgment day, and no hell*). But a study of Scripture shows that her teachings are *permeated* with error. The more I studied, the more I found this to be true.

I had been believing in Mrs. Eddy to guide me for my eternal life, and I came to see that she didn't know any more (really) than I did. She was only another mortal. Moreover, when she died, her body *stayed in the grave*. She didn't come back. Therefore, she can't really testify as to what goes on after death because she had never been there when she wrote her book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Jesus had been to the grave and back; He resurrected from the dead. To me, that gives Him a lot more credibility than Mrs. Eddy.

Mrs. Eddy had said that she based her teachings on revelation, reason, and demonstration. Her "revelation" was Christian Science, which I discovered to be neither Christian *nor* scientific. She didn't "demonstrate" very much because she didn't overcome death (like Jesus did). As for "reason," Isaiah 55:9 says, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my (God's) ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." I would not want to gamble my future in eternity on one woman's reasoning.

I read in the Bible that in the end times false prophets and false Christs would arise (Matt. 24:23-28). Mrs. Eddy had denied that Jesus is the Christ and *put herself in His place* as being the only Leader and the only way to God. So, I concluded, *Mrs. Eddy was a false prophet*.

I resigned from the Christian Science church. As a result of my Bible study, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and my God. He is the *only* way to salvation. (And let me emphasize, He did not come to *show* the way; rather, He *is* the way.) I will confess Him and *Him alone* as Lord and Savior.

There is so much more to say. But I pray that the Holy Spirit will use this brief testimony to show people involved in the Mind Sciences — whether it be Christian Science, Religious Science, Divine Science, Unity, or one of the others — that Jesus is truly God come in the flesh, and that He died for us on the cross. If we do not believe in Him, we will not spend eternity with God; rather, we will be cast into outer darkness (2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 1:13).

I now belong to a group of ex-Christian Scientists who are all born again Christians. We have a ministry called "Christian Way." Our primary goal is to share the salvation message with those in the Mind Sciences. If we can help you, please don't hesitate to write.

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