



Towards the Light: A Fifth Generation Baptist Minister's Journey from Religion to Reason

John S. Compere

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Towards the Light describes the agonizing journey of a devout fifth-generation Southern Baptist clergyman from unassailable belief to utter and complete atheism. The book lays out in detail why he outgrew the religion of his ancestors and moved towards the light of reason. After leaving the ministry, Dr. Compere went back to graduate school where he received a PhD in Clinical Psychology. Thus, his book includes psychological explanations for many religious phenomena including being born again, believing in the efficacy of prayer, and why religion continues to be so ubiquitous in an otherwise modern society. Dr. Compere is convinced that many people of faith have entertained serious doubts about the religion they inherited and should be supported in their search for how to live a good life without a belief in the supernatural. He examines many of the essential tenets of the Christian faith including an explanation of their origin while providing cogent reasons for no longer accepting the myths upon which they rest. "Growing up a minister's son, the church was not just a part of my life -- it WAS my life. Everything in my world revolved around the church and its teachings. From my earliest memories, Christian dogma was relentlessly drilled into me until I believed that my only purpose on earth was to glorify God. Anything short of that was failure. I got the message. I gave my first sermon at age fifteen and became an ordained minister in the Southern Baptist Church at eighteen. Although serious theological doubts began in college, I set them aside and managed to continue in the ministry until I had completed a seminary degree and served two pastorates. After a decade of denial, I finally admitted to myself that I was becoming publicly phony and privately cynical. I couldn't live with that so I left the ministry which had been my whole life, and struck out in a new direction, one which would allow me to live with integrity. This is the story of my journey Towards the Light and of the inescapable, but heretical, conclusions about religion which occurred along the way."

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