



John W. Doorly: A Spiritual Pioneer

Max Kappeler

All those students of Christian Science who have followed my work over a long period of time know that I have been deeply committed not only to the work of Mary Baker Eddy, but also to that of my teacher, John W. Doorly, C.S.B., London. I base my work completely on these two great pioneers in the realm of Spirit. I have written this article for those who are interested in the spiritual evolution of the *Science* of Christian Science. It is an opportunity to express my extreme appreciation to these two spiritual giants. Just as Mrs. Eddy gave us the revelation of scientific Christianity directly from God in the form of the textbook of Christian Science, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," John Doorly gave us the initial understanding of Christian Science as Science. Mrs. Eddy reduced divine metaphysics to a system that is adapted to thought in a scientific age. (S&H 146) However, no one was able to see this *system* in the Textbook until it was revealed to Doorly. His great pioneering

achievement was that he was open to the Science of Christian Science and he asked the right questions at the right time. His intensive study of the Bible and the Textbook and his successful practice over decades enabled him to identify this system in our Textbook. He was also able to discover the system in the Bible and thus decode its scientific message. Mrs. Eddy allowed herself to be used by the Christ-idea. As a spiritual pioneer she listened to the revelation of the divine Being and by devoting her life to the work of recording this revelation in a book that she continually revised over a period of more than 40 years in order to express her revelation as precisely as possible. John Doorly let himself be used by the same Christ-idea. He, too, was a spiritual pioneer. It was his task to analyze the inner systematic meaning of this revelation spiritually and scientifically, and to discover the divine system of ontological categories.

Neither the Textbook nor the system of divine categories were thought out through the



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human mind. Are we aware of the fact that both Mrs. Eddy and John Doorly were under divine dictate? For the first time, after thousands of years during which mankind searched for the nature and essence of divine Being, we are able to systematically understand God through Science. All human attempts to find an answer finally yielded to the explanation that divine Principle, God, gives of itself. This is the central point of the teaching of Christian Science and answers the most important question Mrs. Eddy raised, “What is God”?, with the *scientific definition*, “God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love.” (S&H 465)

This definition for God is an incredible revelation. Are we aware of this miracle of grace or that we live in an age in which a transparent consciousness such as that of Mary Baker Eddy could receive this self-revelation of God? And should we not be astounded anew every day that there was a transparent consciousness such as that of John Doorly, who possessed so much love for Science that he devoted his life to discovering its system within the Christian Science textbook?

The revelation of the divine nature of Being in its pure Science brought forth new discoveries that came to light in accordance with Science. This is possible because a science includes trustworthy methods for the discovery of new truths within its own domain (according to the definition of “science” in the Oxford Dictionary).

The next question was raised by Doorly: What are the *specific characteristics of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love?* In other words, what are *the ideas* through which each synonym can be described? What distinguishes each synonym from the other even though they all relate to God. Without understanding the differentiation of the synonyms, we cannot find the treasures of the Textbook. Further insights are necessary. The ensuing development made

it very clear that many deeper insights were concealed in the Textbook. Mrs. Eddy said that it would take centuries to fully understand the Textbook because of its inexhaustible topics and interrelated meanings.

The Textbook is a revelational book. Science and Health cannot be understood without its immanent categories of meaning that compose the system of divine metaphysics. All attempts to study the Textbook without first spiritually understanding its system of categories and becoming intimately acquainted with it, must fail. “Belief is virtually blindness, when it admits Truth without understanding.” (Ret. 54) On the other hand, once one has understood this divine frame of reference, all of the interrelationships of the text become clear. Through its structure, the Textbook reveals to us the way of Life that becomes our individual way of life, leading us safely to the goal of *true manhood*.

A divine revelation cannot be explained in its entire infinite meaning. New discoveries within the domain of Science are continually necessary. For these discoveries to occur, it is necessary to have spiritual pioneers who have a transparent

John W. Doorly, C.S.B., London, England (1878-1950), was the first to pioneer into the Science of Christian Science. Well-known practitioner and teacher in the Christian Science organization for nearly 40 years, one time President of The Mother Church in Boston and official lecturer for the Movement, traveling all over the world in this capacity for fifteen years, he left the lectureship in order to devote his time to a deeper research into the Science of Christian Science. This progressive research freed him from church affiliations and latterly he shared the rich fruits of his work through lecture series in London, summer schools in Oxford, and his many books amounting to some 6,000 pages. His findings have formed a solid basis for the continual unfoldment of the Science of Christian Science.



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consciousness that is open to further revelations. This applied to John Doorly. For many years, he was a successful practitioner, teacher, and lecturer in Christian Science before he realized that the Science of Christian Science must include much more than was generally taught and practiced. Thus, he was led to discover the Science and the system of Mrs. Eddy's revelation. In this context, he found the method for discerning the specific ideas of each synonym in the text of the Textbook. Besides the *seven synonyms* of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love (7) that describe the nature of God, he was able to discover their *fourfold modus operandi*: Word, Christ, Christianity, Science (4). Additionally, he was able to recognize the *four levels of spiritual consciousness of Science*: Science itself, divine Science, absolute Christian Science, Christian Science (4), which grounded the divine system universally and that subsequently have led us to the *model of Being* and its laws (7+4+4).¹ He could also see that the fundamental orders of Christian Science could be represented in a *matrix* form. This led to the use of many diverse matrices as the form of presentation of spiritual structures of meaning. He gave us the general basis for this *scientific method of text analysis* and, in so doing, he prepared the way for a higher scientifically structured interpretation of the Textbook. The later discovery of the *scientific nature of the Textbook*² is founded on the basis of this knowledge, as is the discovery of the *structured oneness of Being and its laws*.³ Likewise, the formulation of Christian Science as *divine cybernetics*, is "the Science which governs these changes,"⁴ (S&H 224) because it contains a self-organizing system that follows an entirely new *one-valued logic*.⁵

Doorly devoted almost 50 years of his life to the study, research, practice, and teaching of Christian Science. His life's work, comprising 16 volumes, is a witness to the depth of inspiration and vision Doorly received from divine Principle. Anyone who had the privilege of experiencing

his summer schools had the feeling of standing under a spiritual "Niagara Falls," for the powerful flow of new knowledge and insights into the work of Mary Baker Eddy came so unceasingly and spontaneously. Since 1937, I had received over 160 letters from him and had close contact through countless conversations. Thus, I was able to experience how the development of the system of Science proceeded. Just as Mrs. Eddy continually changed and improved her explanation of the idea, during the unfolding years of Science, John Doorly, also made corrections that must be viewed correctly according to the circumstances at the time.

Through the newly discovered system, the unfolding Science caused an entirely new method of study. How were the Bible and the Textbook studied up until the time of Doorly? The text was read, verse by verse, sentence by sentence. One attempted to understand the spiritual meaning in order to find a spiritual answer. Among such a large number of verses and single sentences, sometimes a particularly impressive statement was found that was kept in mind as a favorite saying and was clung to in everyday life-experience. Further, one was especially interested in trying to understand clearly, the meaning of the single terms that appeared to be important, using the concordances of both the Bible and *Science and Health* for this purpose. This manner of reading was considered to be scientific study. Is this type of access to the Bible and the Textbook truly scientific? No! It is an accumulation of single facts, *an atomistic method*, fragmenting the whole, the one Being, into separate truths. This is *the opposite* of a *modern concept of science* that always considers the whole of the theme and is in accordance with the scientific concept as presented by John Doorly.

In the meantime, 50 years have passed. Doorly's work introduced a vast, and entirely new scientific era into the field of Christian Science. His lectures have been studied seriously,



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commented upon, and often quoted. Countless numbers of his students and others indirectly influenced by him have taken the path toward the *pure Science of Christian Science* as he called it. But have these students actually found the pure Science? Today, many decades after Doorly's new insight into the Science of Christian Science, this question becomes even more pressing. Do students know the system of the teaching that they have come to trust? Do they know the spiritual tonality of the seven synonyms that characterize the nature of God? Do they know the fourfold operational method of God and the fourfold dimensional Science? Furthermore, have they prayerfully cultivated the divine categories as spiritual tones within their consciousness? Have they cultivated scientifically "the atmosphere of God" (No. 9) in their consciousness? Is the divine system of reference truly their frame of reference and is it expressed in each and every situation? If not, they are building on sand; they are building towers of Babel. The result, as shown in the Bible, is an inundation of human words, instead of the Word; a self-willed mind, rather than the Mind of Christ; blind and arbitrary actions, rather than Christ's Christianity; and misunderstandings upon misunderstandings, rather than the scientific understanding of genuine Christian Science.

My more than 60 years of experience with Doorly's legacy has shown that not all students have succeeded in truly understanding Doorly's intent. I know that human history repeats itself, as emphasized by Mrs. Eddy. (My. 58) Her work was not understood. It was torn apart into single statements that destroyed its spiritual context of meaning because it could not be seen in its divine systematics and wholeness. The *divine frame of reference* (7+4+4) was needed before the Textbook could be understood in its scientific structured wholeness. A revelation is always something whole that can only yield its true meaning when approached as a whole. Today, we know that it is not sufficient to understand Mrs. Eddy's work through detached statements that are

quoted to prove a certain theory. The Bible also suffered this fate, resulting in a lack of understanding of its message to this day.

The text of the Textbook was revised with attention to the smallest detail. For the most part, this does not apply to the literary work of John Doorly. The presentation of the idea as a system of divine categories occurred primarily in the form of the *spoken* word and was hardly revised. In only five years, 14 volumes of "Verbatim Reports" of his freely spoken and inspired lectures appeared. For this reason, it is of particular importance not to attempt to understand separate statements without knowledge of the context, or even individual books or themes without knowledge of his entire work. As with every great visionary, for John Doorly there were completely different points of view dependent on the specific situation in which he found himself as a speaker. One should not isolate or make absolute, separate statements or even longer explanations of Doorly. In the year 1908, even Mrs. Eddy said of her early explanations: "What I wrote on Christian Science some twenty-five years ago I do not consider a precedent for a present student of this Science. The best mathematician has not attained the full understanding of the principle thereof, in his earliest studies or discoveries." (My. 237)

John Doorly was a lively, open, and active Christian Scientist. Doorly took an active part in everything: in politics and in current events; he quoted the press, letters, popular books, or his own experience. Much in his lectures must be interpreted according to what was important to him at the time in his arguments with the Church. Anyone who knew Doorly personally, knows that he was continually inspired. From one day to the next, he constantly showered everyone in his surroundings with his thoughts and ideas, confronting them with new spiritual insights. He was a true pioneer, who like a bulldozer (as he called himself), first plowed a rough path in the incomprehensible thicket of Christian Science of



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the time, not caring that bushes or stones might lie at the edge of the path, possibly causing his followers to stumble. Anyone who cannot see the vast and general direction pointed out by the pioneer, cannot keep up.

John Doorly's genuine concern, the true greatness of his pioneering achievement, can be understood only by someone who approaches his work with an expanded *present* knowledge of Science today. What was so totally new at his time has been scientifically developed in the past 50 years. The system of the divine ontological fundamental categories as we see it today, with all of its far-reaching implications, unlocks the pioneering work of both Mary Baker Eddy and John Doorly. Doorly's "Verbatim Reports" must be viewed *systematically*, if we wish to understand and appreciate his immense contribution to the Christian Science idea in its pure scientific aspects. It is not sufficient to merely read his work or to "study" his writings with good intentions. We must push forward to the roots, to the source of his work and the Textbook. But this means we must understand the 15 root notions of the divine frame of reference! Whoever really wants to go to the root in order to comprehend the deep structure behind the Bible and the Textbook must know the spiritual system of divine categories. John Doorly spent his whole life in this pursuit. Whoever does not study the seven synonyms for God (7), their four modes of operation (4), and the four levels of Science (4), whoever does not study the foundations of the divine frame of reference more than once (I myself have studied and pondered them in a prayerful way and in more depth many times throughout my entire life), will not understand Doorly's work. Reading his lectures, quoting separate passages from them, and using them for one's own purposes is easy. However, *to truly understand* Doorly, in the complete frame of his greatest concern, we must polish and understand the divine fundamental categories better and make them our own. We must allow

our consciousness to be molded by the divine system of reference so that, quite naturally and self-evidently, the practical consequences come to the fore—now *this* is something different. *This* requires our entire human life.

What makes true pioneers? Pioneers break a path through unknown, rough territory so that followers have an easier path and can cultivate the land. Scientific pioneers are, then and only then, pioneers if their fundamental contribution is broad and scientific enough for future generations to build upon. Albert Einstein was a pioneer. But he was so modest that he called himself a dwarf who was only able to see farther because he stood on the shoulders of a giant, by whom he meant Sir Isaac Newton. Mary Baker Eddy's revelation of Christian Science is such a giant. Doorly could see so much farther standing upon its shoulders, thus enabling him to discover *the system* and *Science* of Christian Science. We stand upon Doorly's shoulders. We build upon his immense vision, and this has brought us new insights into the realm of the infinite Science of divine Being. If we wish to stand solidly on his shoulders and see where his path is leading, it is not enough to read Doorly's lectures or to quote him again and again. There is nothing wrong with this, I do it too—but it is not enough, and it cannot be most important. The most important thing must be to understand the essence of his message—the divine system of reference.

Mrs. Eddy recommended that Christian Scientists study the Textbook as *self-instruction*. (Man. 34) Today, anyone can do this with the aid of the system of Christian Science. But how can students know if they are carrying on their self-instruction correctly, or if they are studying atomistically? Each student can ask herself or himself the following questions and answer them honestly:

1. Do I know at least 20 ideas for each synonym for God?



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2. Do I know the order of the 16 chapters of the Textbook?

3. Am I able to summarize the scientific meaning of each chapter in a brief statement?

When you read these lines, dear reader, stop and answer them without any outside help. If you can answer all three questions with *yes*, you can be certain of having the right foundation for beginning a systematic study in order to achieve a structural understanding of the Science of Being as it is explained in the Textbook. Be honest with yourself. If you have to answer one of the questions with *no*, take the opportunity to study the foundations again and in more depth. That will protect you from building a tower of Babel with mere words. Lacking a spiritual and scientific understanding of the “7+4+4” that are the root notions of the divine system, any attempt to attain higher insights is nothing other than self-deception. In this case, great disappointment would be pre-programmed into our life-experience.

John Doorly was one of the few great pioneers in the realm of Spirit. We honor pioneers by making their last and greatest insights our own. To follow a pioneer means to proceed forward in

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the direction he or she has pointed out. Doorly's watchword was: “And on we go, and ever on....” It should be our watchword as well.

Abbreviations for other writings by Mary Baker Eddy:

My. The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany

Ret. Retrospection and Introspection

No. No and Yes

Man. Manual of The Mother Church

Footnotes

¹Max Kappeler, *The Four Levels of Spiritual Consciousness*. (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA 1978).

²Max Kappeler, *The Structure of the Christian Science Textbook—Our Way of Life*. (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1954); New enlarged edition forthcoming (2000).

³Max Kappeler, *The Science of the Oneness of Being in the Christian Science Textbook*. (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1983).

⁴: *The Four Levels of Science: Their practical implications*, Audio Tape Recordings by Max Kappeler, Class, 1969—Braunwald, Switzerland, (D-2).

⁵Max Kappeler, *Logical Reasoning in Christian Science* (Seattle: Kappeler Institute Publishing USA, 1980).



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The Development of the Christian Science Idea and Practice

Max Kappeler

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