

ONTOLOGY SEEN THROUGH THE LENS OF SCIENCE

In her writings Mary Baker Eddy introduces the subject of ontology. Webster's Dictionary Second Collegiate Edition defines ontology as: "the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being, reality, or ultimate substance." In the chapter Science, Theology, and Medicine in the Christian Science textbook *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* page 129 beginning on line 21 Mrs. Eddy admonishes us:

We must abandon pharmaceuticals, and take up ontology, — "the science of real being." We must look deep into realism instead of accepting only the outward sense of things. Can we gather peaches from a pine-tree, or learn from discord the concord of being? Yet quite as rational are some of the leading illusions along the path which Science must tread in its reformatory mission among mortals. The very name, *illusion*, points to nothingness. S&H 129:21-29.

Nota bene: The marginal heading for this paragraph is *Ontology needed*.

In a following chapter, Teaching Christian Science, there is another similar marginal heading, *Ontology defined*. On page 460 beginning on line 3 Mrs. Eddy writes:

Ontology is defined as "the science of the necessary constituents and relations of all beings," and it underlies all metaphysical practice. Our system of Mind-healing rests on the apprehension of the nature and essence of all being, — on the divine Mind and Love's essential qualities. Its pharmacy is moral, and its medicine is intellectual and spiritual, though used for physical healing. Yet this most fundamental part of metaphysics is the one most difficult to understand and demonstrate, for to the material thought all is material, till such thought is rectified by Spirit. S&H 460:3-13.

At the end of the Genesis chapter page 556 in the textbook is another marginal heading: *Ontology* versus *physiology*. Here the commentary reads beginning on line 25:

Ontology receives less attention than physiology. Why? Because mortal mind must waken to spiritual life before it cares to solve the problem of being, hence the author's experience; but when that awakening comes, existence will be on a new standpoint. S&H 556:25-30.

Accordingly, Mrs. Eddy gives this practical instruction in the 88th Edition of the *Church Manual* on page 46 under the heading: *Duty to Patients*:

Duty to Patients. SECT. 23. If a member of this Church has a patient whom he does not heal, and whose case he cannot fully diagnose, he may consult with an M.D. on the anatomy involved. And it shall be the privilege of a Christian Scientist to confer with an M.D. on Ontology, or the Science of being.

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