

FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVINE SCIENCE

LESSON II

THE BEGINNINGS OF DIVINE SCIENCE

Thanks to the work of Ruth Townsend and her research assistants during the 1980s, we know far more today about the early history of Divine Science than is indicated in the textbook.

Divine Science began as a movement on May 4, 1888. On that date Malinda E. Cramer incorporated the Home College of Divine Science in San Francisco. Her express purpose was to teach that we--men, women, and children--are expressions of the living God.

In her textbook, *Divine Science and Healing*, Mrs. Cramer tells of her great illumination that occurred in 1885, at which time she was completely healed of chronic invalidism. It is also documented that in 1886 and again in 1887, she taught classes in Denver. She returned to Denver in the winter of 1889 for two months, teaching a large and enthusiastic group of students.

It is significant that Mrs. Cramer and the three Brooks sisters, Nona L. Brooks, Alethea Brooks Small, and Fannie Brooks James, met in Denver and learned from each other that they were doing similar teaching and healing work in San Francisco and Denver, and were using the same name, "Divine Science." They agreed to collaborate and, in 1898, Malinda E. Cramer ordained Nona Brooks at the Home College in San Francisco.

In August, 1888, Mrs. Cramer decided to publish a magazine in connection with the college, setting forth the teachings of Divine Science. The first edition appeared in October, 1888, and she continued to publish it on a monthly basis through April, 1906. Known as *Harmony*, a complete set of this magazine has been recovered and is now in the Federation's possession. It is a remarkable treasure-trove not only of spiritual teaching but also of information on the early history of Divine Science and of New Thought.

After Cramer's passing in 1906, the focal point of Divine Science shifted to Denver, specifically to the Divine Science Church and college under the leadership of Nona L. Brooks.

Leaders of great spiritual stature have served under the banner of Divine Science through the years. In addition to the founders already mentioned, this list includes, among many others, Herman Schroeder, Emmet Fox, Irwin Gregg, Joseph Murphy, Grace Faus, Henry Victor Morgan, and John Seaman Garns. Through the spiritual and literary influence of its leaders, Divine Science has had a positive influence out of proportion to its comparatively small membership.

THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN DIVINE SCIENCE

Divine Science is a Christian religion, basing its teachings upon the Bible, especially the teachings of Jesus. We are not, however, inclined to criticize other religions and their sacred writings. The word "heathen" is not in our vocabulary. We recognize that every religion and

each individual church, if acting in good faith, is meeting someone at his or her point of need. We trust the Spirit of Truth to lead all to an ever-expanding awareness of God.

THE VALUE OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is a book of many facets, revealing the light of spiritual understanding through its God-inspired men and women. It is without doubt the greatest book in the world, having had more influence on mankind than any other force in history:

- The Bible is great literature and wonderful poetry.
- It is the history of people who were, in the main, true to their vision of one God.
- It is a book of moral law and social responsibility.
- It is the most noble record of humanity's search for God and the good life.
- It includes the teachings, healings, and ministry of Jesus.
- It includes an account of the early Christian movement.

POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE BIBLE

There are several points to keep in mind concerning Bible study in the context of Divine Science.

- The Bible is not a book dictated word for word by God. It is a library of 66 books, written about God by many people, during different periods of history, and from a variety of viewpoints.
- The Bible may seem contradictory, but it is not when studied as a whole. It is the story of every individual. It is the record of humanity's search for God, showing the unfolding and understanding of God through the centuries. It records an advance from the belief in a vengeful tribal deity, to Jesus' realization of the universal Father.
- The Bible is the greatest psychological textbook ever written, containing the case histories of men and women who got into human difficulties and found that God was a very present help in time of trouble.
- The Bible teaches us both Law and Love. The Old Testament illustrates the Love of Law, revealing the operation of cause and effect, the law of sowing and reaping. The New Testament teaches the Law of Love, revealing the operation of Truth and Grace, the Law of Forgiving and Healing.
- The Bible is predominantly lyrical and poetic in its language. Therefore, its true interpretation is symbolic as well as historical; it cannot be limited to explicit levels of meaning.

THE USE OF THE BIBLE IN THIS COURSE

We urge you to read the Bible in connection with this course. We hope that you will take the time to look up, and meditate upon, the references given in these lessons and in the Divine Science textbook.

In the first two lessons we have briefly mentioned the history of religion in general, the history of Divine Science, its use of the Bible, and the larger purposes of this course. In the next lesson we will begin specific study of our relationship with God, the divine inherencies which are ours, and the practical application of Divine Science in everyday life.

ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON II

Study this lesson, and review Lesson I. Read “The Early History of Divine Science” (pp. 9-17), but remember that more precise information is now available on the subject. Also, review Chapter 1 in Divine Science: Its Principle and Practice.

Affirmation: GOD IS EVERYWHERE; THEREFORE GOD IS HERE.

Bible Quotation: “Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Questions:

1. Does Divine Science base its teachings upon the Bible?
2. Why do we have such varied views expressed in the Bible?
3. What does the Old Testament emphasize?
4. What does the New Testament emphasize?
5. Is revelation possible today?
6. What is the result of a narrow, limited belief about God?
7. What is the true meaning of education?