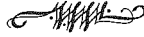


CHAPTER I

Heritage and Home



The name Knapp is of Anglo-Saxon origin, *cneop*, signifying a summit or hilltop.¹ Biographically speaking, it still bears its original significance.

The direct line leading to Bliss Knapp is traceable at least as far back as 1540 when, at a tournament held in Norfolk, Roger de Knapp unseated three knights of great skill and bravery and for so doing was presented with his coat of arms by the king, Henry VIII. The coat of arms shows a shield bearing a lion passant (bravery) surmounted by three helmets (apparently those of the downed knights). The shield is surmounted by a still larger helmet, apparently that of the victor. The crest is a mailed arm holding a broken sword, with a wreath of victory on the hilt. The motto is “*Spes Nostra Deus*,” “God is our hope.”²

Aaron Knap, an immediate ancestor of Bliss, arrived in this country about 1638, with the second Plymouth colony. He settled in Taunton, had five sons and two daughters by his wife Elizabeth, and died there in 1674. His will was recorded at Plymouth and proved November 2 of that year. The direct line continues through his grandson Nathaniel (died 1746) and Nathaniel’s third son Jonathan, who married Mehetabel Tucker in February 1735.³ Their third son Abial, Bliss’s great-great-grandfather, was born in Norton, September 3, 1738, was married to Kezia Cheney, January 9, 1766,⁴ and became one of the first settlers of Lyman, New Hampshire, later the birthplace of Bliss. The town of Lyman, first surveyed in 1760 under George III, was so called because eleven of the land grantees bore

that name. It embraced a chain of ponds leading to the Ammonoosuc River: Long, Round, Dodge, Cowen and Young's (now Ogontz Lake).⁵ In 1765 (before Abial's marriage) the Knapps and the Hodges moved from Taunton to Lyman and attempted to settle and build a mill on what was then called Burnham's River, afterwards the site of the old Dodge mill. But the Indians drove them off and, forced to leave their new homes, they returned to Massachusetts where they stayed during the Revolution. "This attempt at settlement in 1765 is the earliest of which we have any record, and no doubt they were the first people who located in town."⁶

After his marriage Abial moved to Richmond, New Hampshire, where his three children, Elijah, Betsey, and Mehitable were born. He served in the Revolution as a soldier in Colonel F. Doolittle's regiment, at Winter Hill in October 1775; in Alex Samuel's regiment (John Gregg's company), June 1777; in Colonel Baldwin's regiment (John Houghton's company), September 1777; and in Colonel S. Peabody's regiment, June 1778. In 1781, when the war was over, he took possession of 100 acres of wilderness which were given to him on condition that he would become a permanent settler. The donor of the land was Abraham Wendall who at that time owned nearly the whole township. Accordingly, Abial and his son Elijah, then twelve years old, pitched their tent in the wilderness where the Lyman Town Hall now stands. They cleared the land and established a farm which remained in possession of the Knapp family for 103 years. Their first residence was a log house; for supplies they had to journey fifteen miles by foot to a settlement now called North Haverhill. Only four other families lived within the borders of Lyman township;⁷ the Cloughs and the Hodges (who with the Knapps had attempted the earlier settlement) were two of these.

Although the Knapps were not named in the original charter of Lyman, granted by George III, November 10, 1761, the names of Jonathan and Abial do appear in a petition for abatement of taxes addressed to the Representatives and Counsel of the State of New Hampshire in 1777.⁸ Their names also appear in another petition dated January 19, 1786, relative to the number of soldiers furnished for the Revolution by Lyman.⁹ In a paper calling on a Justice of the Peace, Jacob Hurd, to call a meeting for the election of town officers, dated December 20, 1785, are the names of Ephraim (eldest son of Nathaniel), Jonathan (third son) and Abial (Jonathan's son). At the subsequent meeting, on January 5, 1786, Jonathan was one of the three selectmen elected, and Abial was appointed constable.¹⁰

Although a small man, Abial was very athletic. One evening he entered Lemuel Parker's store where several men were sitting around an open fire. As he joined the circle, one of the party, in a playful mood, snatched his hat from his head and threw it into the fire. Abial quickly seized the joker, flung him onto the burning logs and placed his foot upon him. He was rescued before he suffered injury but he "added to his stock of knowledge the fact that it was a wise policy to allow Abial's hat to remain in its proper place."¹¹ It was, perhaps, for such traits as this anecdote reveals that Abial was chosen constable!

The population of Lyman, a few families in 1781, grew to 202 in 1790.¹² The growth must have been due as much to the size of the families as to emigration. Although Abial had only three children, his son Elijah fathered twelve over a period of 22 years. He married, September 29, 1796, Miss Sally Elliott, who was born in Parsonsfield, Maine, but who was living in Lyman with the family of Job Moulton, on what was called Moulton Hill. From here Elijah took his bride on horseback, with all her household goods in a basket, strapped on the horse behind her. Their seventh child Jehial, born June 18, 1807, was Bliss's grandfather. He married Daphne Bartlett on January 21, 1836. Her mother, Mindwell Hoskins Bartlett, lived to her hundredth year. To Jehial and Daphne were born three children, Salome (August 29, 1837), Ira O. (June 7, 1839), and Arial (February 1, 1843). Of his family Ira was later to write: "This family of Knapps and their descendants have, most of them in their day, united with some form of church discipline. And it may be truly said that all have lived good moral lives and proved good citizens, many of them holding positions of trust and confidence."¹³

Ira was educated in the schools of Lyman and attended, also, for four terms, Peacham and Newbury Academies. He turned to teaching as a profession, rising to the post of superintendent of the Lyman schools. As a responsible citizen he held practically every municipal office in Lyman at one time or another. His knowledge of the laws relating to town matters was so profound that on one occasion when he was made a defendant in a suit against the town, he conducted and won the case.

As for Mary Baker Eddy, so for Ira Knapp, 1866 was a signal year. The previous year, as school superintendent, he had met and examined for a position Miss Flavia F. Stickney, a native of Lyman who had attended Newbury Seminary in Vermont in preparation for teaching. Of Puritan descent, she was the daughter of Ethan F. Stickney,¹⁴ a successful farmer.

Flavia became the wife of Ira in her father's home on May 1, 1866. They were married by the Rev. C. Cowing at nine in the morning.

In that same year of 1866 Ira invested in an oil well and lost his money. A more serious loss, that of a much-loved brother, turned him to a searching study of the Bible. He and his wife took an active interest in religion, as did most of the townspeople. Because the town was not large enough to support two churches, the Methodists and the Universalists agreed upon a union meetinghouse in which the preachers alternated every six months. Although the ministers were often entertained in the Knapp home, and although Ira led the church choir, he never became a member of the church, or of any other organization, until he joined the Christian Science church in 1888.

The Knapps had four children, Sprague Ariel (June 18, 1867), Daphne Salome (January 30, 1870), Ralph Hastings (February 23, 1875) and Bliss (June 7, 1877). One supposes that the early boyhood of Bliss Knapp was much like that of thousands of boys who were growing up on farms all over America. The most significant events in the lives of the family occurred when Bliss was seven, in 1884. At this time, his mother, who had suffered thirteen years of ill health, was a helpless invalid and his brother Ralph had contracted a serious disease. Ira Knapp himself was unwell and in need of healing. The physicians could do nothing. At this juncture Mrs. Knapp's sister heard about the healing work of a Christian Science practitioner, Miss Julia Bartlett, and reported this to Mrs. Knapp. Mr. Knapp, although dubious of "one more humbug," went to Littleton, New Hampshire, to ask Miss Bartlett for treatment. When she replied that she was so busy that she could take no more patients, Mr. Knapp wrote immediately to Mrs. Eddy, who sent his letter on to Mrs. Mary E. Harris (later Curtis) of Boston with a request that she take the case. Mrs. Harris wrote that she would begin work at once. A week later Mr. Knapp wrote that he and his wife were worse off than before and that the treatment should be discontinued. The practitioner, however, realized the need of continuing and she shortly received word of the improvement of Mrs. Knapp and the complete healing of Mr. Knapp.

Mrs. Harris requested that Mrs. Knapp write to her about how she was feeling. The handwriting and Mrs. Knapp's response led Mrs. Harris to think that she must be a very old woman and Mrs. Harris agreed to come see her. Arriving at the Lisbon train station, she asked whether Mrs.

Knapp was there to meet her. The agent replied that Mrs. Knapp's health was so bad she would never be able to come to town again. As Mrs. Harris was arranging a way to leave for the Knapp farm, a young, vibrant looking woman inquired whether anyone had seen a Mrs. Harris. Mrs. Harris acknowledged her name and asked if the inquirer was Mrs. Knapp's daughter. Imagine her surprise when the woman told her that she was Mrs. Knapp.

During Mrs. Harris's four-day stay with the Knapps, they had long talks with her about Christian Science and sent away for the textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Mrs. Harris's prayer healed Ralph of a problem as well. The family gained a much better understanding of the Science that brought such joyful healing to them. Mrs. Knapp was able to take walks and do many things she had been not able to do for years. After her visit, Mrs. Harris went back to Lisbon where she healed many more patients, a number of them instantaneously.¹⁵

The record is enhanced by the following two items. The first is part of a historical sketch which Judge Clifford P. Smith, Historian of The Mother Church, wrote for the August 1934 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*, p. 257. It is the record of the healing of Mary E. Harris by Miss Julia Bartlett:

About March 1, 1884, a physician having a patient at Littleton in Northern New Hampshire whom he and other physicians had not been able to heal sent the patient to Miss Bartlett for Christian Science treatment. Nine days later the patient returned to the physician perfectly well. For his assurance, she remained in his house for two weeks before going on to her own home. When her neighbors learned what Christian Science had done for this sufferer, some of them arranged with a correspondent to ask Miss Bartlett to visit their town as a Christian Scientist. This she did for eleven days in April 1884.

The second is a letter from Mrs. Mary E. Goodall (formerly Harris) who had lived in Littleton:

1307 Montecito Drive
Los Angeles, California
March 31, 1936

My dear Mr. Knapp:

You no doubt will be surprised to hear from me. I have been over to Pasadena to the Mrs. Keeley Library, and I have had the privilege of looking at and reading a little of your book. I very much desire to own one. Will you sell me one?

Your father always said that it was through me that they first heard of Christian Science. I was the one healed by Miss Bartlett that Mr. Smith [Clifford P.] speaks of in the August 1934 Journal. She [Miss Bartlett] was living in Charlestown [Mass.] at the time — 1881 or 1882. I married in about a year after being healed. And Miss Bartlett wrote me in 1883 if I could get a hundred subscribers for the Journal, she would come to Littleton, N.H. and talk to us. I interested Mrs. Weller, and we together got the subscribers, and Miss B. came to our house and stayed while in L.

Your father came to see her, I don't remember whether your mother came or not. We had a great many callers. My healing caused many to come for treatment, and many were healed. Miss B. came twice to my home, taught two different classes there. Mr. Goodall and I always used to go to see your Father and Mother, when we went to Boston. In 1889 we went out to Spokane to live. We started the church there in our Parlors, in due time Mr. Goodall and Mrs. Snodgrass read for eight years after our church was formed and the Quarterly used. I have always enjoyed your lectures very much, and hope to hear you again.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Mary E. Goodall

The healings experienced by the three Knapps transformed the life of the family as they began serious study of Christian Science. Ira Knapp gradually gave up participation in public affairs and, leaving the labor of his farm to others, sat studying the family Bible and a copy of *Science and Health* under a great butternut tree. That same year, 1884, Mrs. Eddy

called Mr. and Mrs. Knapp to Boston to receive Primary Class instruction in Christian Science. The class convened on December 22 and continued for three weeks. The Knapps found Mrs. Eddy's teaching thorough and demanding. Each student was required to find a patient, heal him and report the healing the next day. Being strangers to Boston, the Knapps did not know people who might become their patients. Mr. Knapp mentioned this challenge to the landlady at his boarding house, who told him he could heal her, as she was totally deaf in one ear. Overjoyed at finding a patient, Mr. Knapp bounded up the stairs to his room and declared, "In all the realm of the real, there is no such thing as deafness."¹⁶ The landlady quickly followed him, telling him she was completely healed.

Mrs. Knapp hadn't felt that she was good enough to heal someone and had mentioned that fact in class, but after class as she was walking through the hall of the boarding house she heard groaning. In the room the sound came from, Mrs. Knapp found a woman who had been suffering for a good while and who eagerly accepted any help Mrs. Knapp could give her. The woman was healed in one treatment. The next day in class Mrs. Knapp told of the healing. Mrs. Eddy said, "And you are the little woman who said you were not good enough to do that!"¹⁷

One other brief anecdote of that class experience was mentioned in a letter written by Bliss Knapp years later:¹⁸

When my father asked Mrs. Eddy in class, "Where did error begin?" her reply was, "It never did begin." Inasmuch as she realized what she said, that settled the question for all time with my father.

The Ira Knapps, now engaged in healing work, returned to Lyman and began to heal their friends and neighbors. They discovered that their championing of the Christly method of healing aroused much opposition. Ira spoke with the resident preacher, who evinced much interest in Christian Science and even read *Science and Health*. Then, having attended a Methodist camp meeting, he returned to preach a sermon hostile to Christian Science. Ira, who was present at the service with his daughter Daphne, requested the opportunity of replying. This was granted, and "in a speech tense with restrained feeling, which electrified the staid congre-

gation, he answered the preacher point by point, and then sat down.”¹⁹ Later he followed the minister into his Sunday School class where he pursued his defense of Christian Science “until he had silenced the opposition.” Bliss reports with satisfaction that the minister publicly apologized to his congregation for having attacked Christian Science, and added that he did not blame Mr. Knapp for his reaction. Mr. Knapp’s attendance at the Lyman church ended with this eventful defense. Though threatened by some townsfolk with tarring and feathering, he continued his healing work. When patients were intimidated, too, he and his wife visited them by night and by back doors.²⁰

While the parents were engaged in learning and practicing Christian Science, the children were growing up. During a tour of New Hampshire with Mr. and Mrs. Bliss Knapp in 1955 (July 23–26), two of his students, Mr. and Mrs. John Holbrook, of Weston, Massachusetts, took pictures of a number of places of interest in Lyman connected with Bliss Knapp’s youth, such as various views of the old Knapp farmhouse and barn, and, behind, the site of the old butternut tree, the spring house, with Mt. Washington in the distance, John Young’s Pond which, in the winter, was the conclusion of a long slide down a hill; the Pond District and the Clough District Schools, and the Parker Hill District Church, a fine example of New England church architecture. They also took careful notes of anecdotes related by Mr. Knapp when the party stopped for the night at Sunset Hill House, at Sugar Hill.

The following are several of these stories as the Holbrooks recorded them in their notebooks:

One winter day Ralph and Bliss went down to the sawmill on the River Road to get a load of slabs to burn in the kitchen stove. They hitched up two yokes of oxen and one yoke of ox calves in front (six oxen in all). There was a lot of snow on the ground. They filled up the sledge to the top of the stakes — a big load — then went home across the frozen pond. Sprague (their elder brother) saw them and came running down to make them stop; he said they were killing the calves. So he unhitched the calves and brought another yoke of oxen down to pull the load home.

Another story involving the farm animals was this: Sprague and the boys were logging on the wooded hill toward the river when the

nigh ox toppled over the hill and slid down. Sprague realized the yoke was choking him — and a nigh ox was a valuable creature, almost human; it could understand the English language and work right along with man. So Sprague slid down after him, took the ax and drove the pins down, freeing the ox from the yoke. The ox looked a bit dazed, shook its head, got up and started to work again.

One day the Knapps' bull got loose, went down to the River Road and stopped traffic. Someone sent word to Ira. He dispatched Ralph and Bliss. As soon as the bull saw the boys he went right along with them, back to the farm.

When the children were attending the Pond District School, they were involved in a spelling bee that went on for days. Bliss and one of the Travina girls were the last two. When Bliss won, she burst out crying, thus creating a situation which Bliss never forgot. Once when Sprague drove the children to the school he upset the sleigh on purpose to dump them out in the snow. Lunch pails flew, and Bliss remembered that Daphne took the incident very ill. The school was only 1.4 miles from the house and featured, behind, a pool above the falls in the river where the boys swam at recess. Later the children all had to go to the Clough District School (in 1955 the Travina home), back over the hill, on the main road from Lisbon. According to Bliss, the school committee made them transfer, the result of a grudge paid off to his father.

Bliss missed only one day of school in his whole experience and that was the day his mother discovered that he was broken out with measles. His father treated him and although he had his healing quickly it did not seem wise to the parents to send him to school that day. As everyone was busy and no one could stay home with him, he was more troubled by loneliness than by measles. The next morning, completely well, he returned to school and never missed another day.

Another healing of a different nature, constitutes in part the autobiographical section of his parents' biography: His father having discovered from his report card that Bliss was not performing up to his capacity in school, he turned the boy over to his mother for help. Using her understanding of Christian Science Mrs. Knapp began her treatment. The next morning she spoke to Bliss and asked him why children go to school and

why people learn. She explained that the purpose of schooling wasn't just to learn facts, but to develop abilities such as, "perception, reason, memory, and application."²¹ She acknowledged that there are other important abilities but the vital point was that they were not humanly derived, rather the abilities of divine Mind, and all of God's children could express them. By helping Bliss see that his ability did not come from himself, but from Mind, his mother helped him elevate his thought about this issue. Bliss saw he was to claim intelligence as his divine right and to know that he reflected God's intelligence and he would know all that he needed to know.

Bliss went off to school that morning feeling God's dominion. Mrs. Knapp repeated the explanations to Bliss for many mornings until he truly understood the source of his intelligence. His schoolwork improved. But more important, Bliss saw what constituted a Christian Science treatment. He later expressed his gratitude that his mother's treatment had not only helped his schoolwork improve, but had furthered his understanding of Christian Science practice.*

Writing to one of his students on May 23, 1935, Mr. Knapp said:

Now in regard to that group of children of low standards, I think those cases should be handled in just the same way that my mother healed me when I was in Grammar School and was having difficulty in reciting correctly. . . . They should be taught that those faculties of perception, reason, memory, application, and judgment are God-bestowed . . . and they are expressed in God's children alike. As one makes it clear . . . that each child is inseparable from God . . . the thought or mind of the child is thus open to receive more of that divine afflatus. . . . They do not come to these higher standards when left alone. They must be led and led aright. . . .

Daphne, Bliss's only sister, wrote an account of one of the most memorable events in the history of the Knapp family, published as Chapter II of *Ira Oscar Knapp and Flavia Stickney Knapp*, "Mrs. Eddy's Visit to the Knapp Farm." The highlights of that visit are still well remembered by Bliss Knapp's students. In the summer of 1888, shortly after her trip to Chicago (see *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 98), Mrs. Eddy retired for a short time to

*A detailed account of this healing in Mr. Knapp's words can be found in *The Destiny of The Mother Church*, by Bliss Knapp, 1991, pp. 109-112. It is also in *Ira Oscar Knapp and Flavia Stickney Knapp*, by Bliss Knapp, 1925, pp. 122-125.

White Mountain House in New Hampshire, which was then run by Christian Scientists. Dr. E. J. Foster, one of her students and later her adopted son, wrote to Ira Knapp on July 18, indicating that Mrs. Eddy might come to visit the Knapps, so Mrs. Knapp quickly sent an invitation to Mrs. Eddy to spend a few days at their farm. Mrs. Eddy responded that if Mr. Knapp would meet her the next day at the Lisbon railroad station, she would tell him then whether it was God's direction that she make the visit. When the Knapps met Mrs. Eddy and her party at the station, she informed them that she was going to visit them at their farm. They loaded into two carriages and traveled the four and a half miles through the beautiful mountain scenery to the house where Mrs. Eddy was given Mr. and Mrs. Knapp's room on the first floor.

A little later, Mrs. Eddy was talking with the family in the parlor. Bliss, a shy boy, went up to Mrs. Eddy and put a little chick in her lap and she talked to him about the chick though he remained silent. He took the chick away and returned with a kitten that he put in her lap. She talked to him about the kitten and he later carried it away. After this, Bliss's shyness melted. Mrs. Eddy loved to recount this story to Bliss when he was grown.

Not long before Mrs. Eddy's visit, Mr. Knapp had begun to see a vision as he sat on a rock and studied his books under the big butternut tree behind their barn. Each time the vision came to him he would see a brightly lighted city street.²² Early in Mrs. Eddy's visit he told her about his vision and also mentioned their planned trip to Roslindale, near Boston, to see a house as they wanted to move. Mrs. Eddy told him that she understood his vision and insisted that the Knapps make the trip and that she would stay until they returned. They left for Boston the next morning leaving Daphne in charge.*

The rest of the family enjoyed Mrs. Eddy's company, listening to her tell stories of her childhood. She also took a walk around the farm and showed interest in the family activities. One morning, after Mr. and Mrs. Knapp had returned home, Mrs. Eddy did not come to breakfast as usual; she had been praying all night about a serious matter. Daphne began to play gospel hymns and everyone else joined in and sang along. After they had

*Years later (September 19, 1939), on the basis of Daphne's experience, Bliss wrote to one of his correspondents: "It is right that your daughter should have that experience in house-keeping. You might remind her that when my sister was 18 years old she had charge of our household for several days while Mrs. Eddy was a guest in our home during the absence of our parents."

sung, "Joy cometh in the morning," Mrs. Eddy requested that they should sing it again. They did and Mrs. Eddy soon came out of her room, ready for the meal, having received the answer to her prayer through the song.

After five days, Mrs. Eddy and her party departed. Just before leaving, she paused and looked at the four Knapp children. Then, taking a seat in the carriage, she said to Mrs. Knapp, "I have taken all your children with me into Mind."²³ The Knapp family took great comfort from her words.

The Knapp's trip to Roslindale had been successful and in the next two weeks they had exchanged their farm for a house there. Mr. Knapp later said that God had directed the trade because everything, including the sale of crops, animals, and tools, was effortless and fair.

After concluding some of this business in New Hampshire, Mr. Knapp had taken the train to North Station in Boston on a Saturday evening. From there he had to walk across Boston Common to another station. At one point he caught a glimpse down Columbus Avenue with its street lamps and there was the street he had seen in his vision. It wasn't long before he opened an office on it for his healing practice.*

From their instruction with Mrs. Eddy, Mr. and Mrs. Knapp learned the practicality not only of healing but of living Christian Science as well. So convinced was Ira of the validity of Christian Science as the truth that he wrote his teacher several letters which she had printed in *The Christian Science Journal*.²⁴ More and more Mrs. Eddy came to trust them as most valued workers. In 1885 her secretary assured the Knapps that Mrs. Eddy would take them as students in subsequent classes. Flavia mentions their courses of study in a letter written to a friend (apparently Mary E. Harris) published in *The Christian Science Journal* for March 1886:²⁵

My dear Friend:

You have no idea how pleased we were to hear from you again. We should like to see you so much! To-day we were speaking of how much you had done for us, in leading us to the Truth, and how grateful we were to you. We hope you are very busy, and helping many, as you helped us, and others in this vicinity. We have had quite an experience since a year ago last July. Only think of it, — to

*A longer and more detailed account of Mrs. Eddy's visit to the Knapp farm and of the Knapp's move to the Boston area may be found in *Destiny*, pp. 23-30; and *Ira Oscar Knapp and Flavia Stickney Knapp*, pp. 21-36. A briefer account is in *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Volume I, The Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, 1943, pp. 57-59.

be healed of troubles of thirteen years standing, when given up by regular physicians.

One year ago we were in class at the College, and have taken another course since. Still we are striving upward and onward, never desiring to turn back, although it requires so much cross-bearing. No one but a Christian Scientist knows the meaning of the word *watch*. Just think where we should be in a short time, if we neglected to watch and pray unceasingly. We thank God, and Mrs. Eddy, and you too, for our leading.

Your loving friend,
F.S.K.

Certificates were issued by the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, which had been chartered in 1881 by Mrs. Eddy, as follows:

Oct. 31, 1887: "Ira O. Knapp has taken the degree C.S.B. in good standing with the Massachusetts Metaphysical College and [is] a member of the Christian Scientist Association."

May 23, 1888: "Mr. Ira O. Knapp has passed the Primary and Normal Class and taken the Degree C.S.D. at the above College."

April 1, 1889: "Mrs. Flavia S. Knapp has passed the Primary and Obstetric Class and taken the Degree C.S.B. at the above College."

November 1890: "Mrs. Flavia S. Knapp has passed the Primary, Obstetric and Normal Classes and taken the Degree C.S.D. at the above College."

All the certificates were signed "Mary B. G. Eddy," above the word "President."

A paragraph from a letter written by Flavia to Mrs. Laura Burt of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, gives a brief but striking impression of Mrs. Eddy at this time:

Lisbon, New Hampshire
November 12, 1887

My dear Friend:

Ira and I went to Boston and were gone eight days. We went to the College and had a good talk with our Teacher, Mrs. Eddy. I do wish you could see her and study with her. I will quote a line from

a lady friend who is now in her class. She says of Mrs. Eddy, "She is wonderful, *wonderful, wonderful!*" Well, she ought to be, if as we understand, she is the Prophet of this age — showing us *the Way* to God. While in class we seemed to be brought so near God and the real, and see the powerlessness of everything unlike Him, and the way to meet and destroy all sense of sin. . . .

The move of the Knapp family to Roslindale proved to be a real trial of Ira's faith in Christian Science. No income was available as he was not known in the area and, at the beginning, had no patients. At this time Mrs. Eddy requested him to rent an office on Columbus Avenue for his practice. This he did immediately — but for six weeks he sat in his office daily without a single patient making a call. Then patients began to appear; they were healed; the news of their healings brought others — and for twenty years, until his passing, Ira was constantly in the healing business, and never without patients. His faith that God would meet the needs of his family was as staunch as his understanding that God would heal the sick. At this time, while he was establishing himself as a practitioner in Boston, Mrs. Knapp kept the home, doing her own housework and taking patients as she could. Daphne was attending normal school in Plymouth, New Hampshire; Sprague was working at a store; Ralph and Bliss were attending school in Roslindale.

Ira's pioneer experience as a Christian Science practitioner helped reduce opposition to this type of healing. Shortly after he was established on Columbus Avenue, Mrs. Eddy required practitioners to display signs at the ground-floor entrances to their offices. Landlords objected; Mr. Knapp's did, and it was necessary for him to search out a new location. Finally, with several other practitioners, he secured quarters where the signs could be displayed, and opposition to the words "Christian Science" gradually began to crumble.

Devotion to their religion was evident in the Knapps' attendance at Sunday services, which were then held in Chickering Hall on Tremont Street near West Street in Boston. Sunday School (for all, of whatever age) began at 1:45; church services began at 3 p.m., making it possible for members of other denominations to attend. The congregation at this time numbered about 250. The Knapps' attendance was typical of many devotees. They walked a mile and a half, from Roslindale to Forest Hills, where

they took the horse car to Boston, a two-hour journey.

Another excerpt from Mrs. Knapp's letter to Mrs. Burt, quoted above, provides an impression of the Sunday School and the Wednesday evening meeting:

We were in Boston over Sunday and attended Sabbath School. I had to whisper to Ira and ask him to look around and notice the interest by all that large school, from children to old gray-haired men and women, all so eager to get a few crumbs of Truth, and such harmony. The teachers explain the scriptures according to their understanding of C.S., and it is very helpful, and we feel that we are receiving *spiritual food which satisfies*, and not being fed on husks. Then there is plenty of time taken for the Sunday lesson and no appearance of being in a hurry to leave. After the lesson Mrs. Eddy spoke a little while; then a sermon was written and read by one of the students which was *good*, and I do hope it will be printed in the Journal. Then Mrs. Eddy spoke again, and I heard a lady exclaim, who had never been to a C.S. Meeting before, (when Mrs. Eddy finished speaking), "Isn't that beautiful!"

Then another way in which I was very happy to meet so many true friends and classmates: Wednesday P.M. we attended our Christian Scientist Association Meeting, meeting the dear ones interested in the work and cause of Truth (Christ). Many of the old students spoke, and Mrs. Eddy was present and addressed the meeting and it was a feast of spiritual things, and I felt it was good to be there, and feel well paid for going, and such harmony as there prevailed seemed a good symbol of heaven, or that all were advancing away from minds many and gods many to reflect the one Mind. We must deny self and put off sin before we can all be of one Mind and awake in His image and likeness, then we can "love thy neighbor as thyself."

As we see, the services were occasionally conducted by Mrs. Eddy, but shortly after the Knapps' move to the Boston area, Rev. Lanson P. Norcross began preaching the sermons.

On Christmas Day, 1888, Mrs. Knapp wrote her friend, Mrs. William P. Dillingham, who was the wife of one of the U.S. senators from Vermont.

In her letter she told of the previous Sunday's service in which over 50 new members were taken into the church, including her and her husband. She told of how Mrs. Eddy looked "perfectly lovely," and how those present felt real spiritual uplift. Mrs. Eddy, she said, walked through the aisles after the service talking to many of those present. Mrs. Knapp also mentioned that Bliss and Ralph had received Christmas cards from Mrs. Eddy.²⁶

The following year, on September 1, the services were rescheduled at 10:30 a.m., with Sunday School following at noon, attended by virtually everyone who attended church. Mr. Knapp was assigned a Sunday School class of adults which soon numbered 80. Later, when the services were held in Copley Hall, Mrs. Knapp's class enrolled nearly 100. It is significant that much healing was accomplished in these classes. The Knapps continued to teach until Sunday School pupils were restricted to those under twenty years of age.*

In December 1889, Mr. Knapp was appointed by Mrs. Eddy to a newly formed committee which would prepare the Christian Science Bible Lessons, then based upon the International Bible Lessons, which were used in the Sunday School, as in other Protestant churches at that time. The other committee members were Rev. Norcross, William B. Johnson, and Miss Julia Bartlett. The committee prepared lessons in which the Bible texts were explained by other Bible references and by cited passages in *Science and Health*. This format for the lessons was continued until July 1898, when the lessons assumed the form they presently have, on the twenty-six subjects established by Mrs. Eddy. The committee members worked on the lessons individually and approved them collectively. Ira's familiarity with the Bible acquired during his four years of intensive study in Lyman now qualified him for his new function. The group met first in Miss Bartlett's apartment in West Rutland Square, later in an unfurnished storeroom of the Hotel Boylston, at Boylston and Tremont Streets, where The Christian Science Publishing Society had rented temporary quarters. Here the committee did its work on a rough table, with packing crates as chairs. As there was at that time no concordance for *Science and Health*, their work necessitated a complete intimacy with the contents of the textbook.

**Ira Oscar Knapp and Flavia Stickney Knapp*, p. 41. For Mr. Knapp's characteristic answer to a Sunday School student's question concerning the symbolic meaning of the cross and the crown, see *CS Journal*. Vol. VIII. 1890. p. 497.

When the work of the Bible Lesson Committee was well launched, Mrs. Eddy left her home at 385 Commonwealth Avenue and moved to 62 North State Street in Concord, New Hampshire.* While residing there Mrs. Eddy wrote the last seven pages of the chapter on “The Apocalypse,” pages which would shortly appear in the revision (the fiftieth edition) of *Science and Health*. This chapter had a profound meaning for Ira Knapp, who saw his Leader as the “woman clothed with the sun . . . and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” (Revelation 12:1)

On March 29, 1955, Bliss Knapp wrote to another of his students: “My father was first drawn to Christian Science because of its works of healing. Later as a pupil sitting in Mrs. Eddy’s classroom, his spiritual sense caused him to exclaim, ‘Thou are the woman!’ Had he been in error, Mrs. Eddy would have promptly rebuked him. But she did not. Instead, she turned to him with a gracious smile of approval. The woman ‘kept secret from the foundation of the world’ had to be recognized by spiritual sense. . . .”

Mrs. Eddy was not to remain long in Concord, however, as it seemed too far from her church. She therefore asked Mr. Knapp to find her a suitable residence in the Boston area. The story of her acquisition of the most beautiful estate in Roslindale, close to the Knapps, is full of difficulties, but the purchase was finally concluded and Mrs. Eddy moved — but, again, only for a few months. During this period Mr. Knapp had the pleasant duty of occasionally taking Mrs. Eddy for her daily drive, during which she talked with him, tempering his views about politics, which he thought unendurably corrupt, and birthdays, which he refused to celebrate. Mrs. Eddy therefore sent him a present on his birthday which occurred during her stay at Roslindale (June 7, 1891). Her present consisted of a bouquet of flowers from her garden, in a beautiful glass vase with a spiral design, and her photograph in a hand-painted frame to replace an earlier one he had. She remembered that Bliss shared the birth date of his father and she had for him a canary in a fine brass cage. (Bliss later said she probably sent

* On December 5, 1955, Bliss Knapp wrote to two of his students: “We are quite happy in the thought that 62 N. State Street has been rescued by you two dear ones who are in a position to do the right thing. . . . I think we told you that it was at 62 North State Street and while Mrs. Eddy was living there, that she finished the last seven pages of the chapter on the Apocalypse in *Science and Health*. The identification of that property with the Holy City makes it significant, to say the least. . . .” This property was eventually given by these students to Longyear Museum and is open to the public.

him a canary because he had given her a baby chicken when she had come to the farm.)

The following are notes taken by the Holbrooks, July 26, 1955:

The Knapps had five other canaries, so the bird was put in with them. The following Sunday the Knapps were gone all day to church. When they returned, all the birds were dead, on their backs with their feet up, although there was no gas around or any obvious reason for disaster. Bliss attributed it to malicious animal magnetism. When Mrs. Eddy heard what had happened, she asked that the bird she sent be stuffed, but by that time the Knapps had disposed of them all. Bliss Knapp drew the conclusion from this incident that pets are often the first to be hit by animal magnetism, then children, because they are least able to defend themselves.

Mr. Knapp later (June 7, 1955) wrote to a student who had sent him a birthday present of homemade fudge: "Ever since Mrs. Eddy gave me a birthday present, I have felt that such things are not only permissible, but they teach us a needed lesson, the lesson of sharing our affections with others; and such affections bear much fruitage."

The Knapps were favored by another visit of Mrs. Eddy at this time and were especially happy to be able to thank her in person for the gifts she had sent, including black enamel bracelets for Daphne. As Ralph was silent during the expressions of thanks, Mrs. Eddy remembered that she had sent him no gift; a half hour after she returned to her home across the street, her secretary, Calvin Frye, brought to Ralph a beautiful little clock.²⁷

While Ira Knapp was aiding Mrs. Eddy in the establishing of her church, Ralph and Bliss were attending school, first in Roslindale, later in Boston. Bliss later told this anecdote: "When Ira conducted the boys to the school in Roslindale, he took them to the principal's office and left them; he seemed more scared than they! They were never vaccinated because the principal saw how countrified they were and knew it wouldn't be worthwhile to ask!" Bliss was graduated from the Charles Sumner School in Boston on Tuesday, June 23, 1891, at 2 p.m., along with thirty-eight others. On the sixth of June he had received from Alfred Lang, Treasurer of The Mother Church, a receipt for \$5, a gift which Bliss, as a "Busy Bee" (a Sunday School worker), had contributed for the building of

the “Mother’s Room” and the flower fund of the Original Edifice, which was then in process of construction. Bliss went on to the English High School in Boston, where he won a medal as second prize for military drill, as First Sergeant of Company G (May 1894). In January of that year, during a smallpox epidemic, his father had written the following note to the school:

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that I am opposed to the theory and practice of “vaccination.” Believing it to be against the true and enlightened understanding of morality, Christianity and Science, I do hereby object to this practice on the person of my son Bliss Knapp, and respectfully request that you will not enforce this unconstitutional statute requirement, which is more apt to give license to ignorance and cruelty than to benefit the human race.

Boston, Jan. 15, 1894

Respectfully,
Ira. O. Knapp

As the result of the letter, neither of the boys was vaccinated.* Bliss was graduated from English High School, with a diploma for a three years’ course, in June 1894.²⁸

Meanwhile he had taken the step of joining the church of which his parents were “First Members.” Bliss received a letter dated July 2, 1893, from William B. Johnson, the Clerk of The Mother Church, informing him that he had been “accepted as a member of the Church.” The letter also said that his membership was in “conformity” with the Tenets and Rules of the Church. As the Tenets numbered only three in those days and differed somewhat from those printed in the current *Church Manual*, the reader may be interested in their then form:

1. As adherents of Truth, we take the scriptures as our guide to eternal Life.
2. We acknowledge and adore one Supreme God. We acknowledge His Son, the Holy Ghost, and man in His image and

*Bliss told the Holbrooks that when it came time for college, Harvard did not require vaccination. On lecture trips, when he was traveling between countries, he handled the problem metaphysically — and so was never vaccinated!

likeness. We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin, in the destruction of sin, and His present and future punishment of "whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." We acknowledge the atonement of Christ, as the efficacy of Truth and Love. And the way of Salvation as demonstrated by Jesus casting out evils, healing the sick, and raising the dead, — resurrecting a dead faith to seize the great possibilities and living energies of the Divine Life.

3. We solemnly promise to strive, watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus. To love the brethren, and, up to our highest understanding, to be meek, merciful, and live peaceably with all men.

Beginning in January 1893, the Annual Meeting was held on the first Tuesday of October and quarterly meetings were scheduled on the Saturday evenings next preceding the Communion Sunday in each quarter. Members were admitted at a special meeting called for that purpose, and candidates were voted upon by only the First Members; a majority vote of those present was required to admit an applicant. The names of newly elected members were read from the pulpit on the Communion Sunday following. An applicant "must be a believer in the doctrines of Christian Science according to the Platform and teaching contained in the book, *Science and Health*, by Rev. Mary Baker G. Eddy." And the Rules end on this warning note: "If a member should depart from the Tenets, and be found having the name without the life of a Christian Scientist, his name may be dropped from the list of membership by a two-thirds vote of the First Members."

During this period, 1889–1894, Ira Knapp was working closely with Mrs. Eddy towards the establishment of the church upon spiritual principles. It was, first, necessary to secure a lot upon which a church edifice could be constructed. Mr. Knapp acted as Mrs. Eddy's agent in the procurement of the land, the lot upon which the Original Edifice of The Mother Church now stands. As this responsibility was assigned to Mr. Knapp within a year of his becoming a member of the church, it was apparent to him and to others that Mrs. Eddy thought him worthy, a faithful follower. Mr. Knapp, on his part, was so convinced of his Leader's role as God's messenger to this age that he never questioned Mrs. Eddy's instructions. "In obeying her, he knew he would be doing God's will."²⁹ After the acqui-

sition of the lot, Mr. Knapp, with four other men, Joseph S. Eastaman, Eugene H. Greene, David Anthony, and William B. Johnson, was named in the Deed of Trust as one of the Directors of the church. A proviso in the deed indicated that if the land were not used for the purpose of erecting a church, it would revert to Mr. Knapp or his heirs. This provision and several other novel and curious anomalies in the Deed of Trust, turned over by Mr. Knapp, as Chairman of the Board of Directors, to three trustees, William G. Nixon, Marcellus Munroe, and Alfred Lang, led to a controversy in which Mr. Knapp experienced a good deal of opposition. He continued, however, to stand firmly and unquestioningly upon Mrs. Eddy's direction.

The spring of 1892 was a particularly trying period during which the trustees demanded reorganization of the church that Mrs. Eddy had disorganized three years previously for the purpose of reestablishing it upon a spiritual foundation. Mrs. Eddy intervened at this point to advise Christian Scientists that reorganization might result in the loss of their prosperity, their form of government and the gift of the lot. The National Christian Scientist Association met on June 1, 1892, and voted unanimously to proceed with the building of the church *and publishing rooms*. This did not alleviate the situation as the trustees refused to move unless the title to the land were cleared to the satisfaction of their legal counsel. The trustees, however, having *not* fulfilled the conditions of the Deed of Trust on two scores, namely the inclusion of publishing rooms (not stipulated in the deed) and the failure to bond the Treasurer, Mr. Lang (stipulated), the land reverted to Mr. Knapp, the trust estate was terminated, and Mr. and Mrs. Knapp conveyed the title to the lot directly to Mrs. Eddy on August 19, 1892.³⁰

Three days later Mrs. Eddy was led to invite twelve Christian Scientists to meet and incorporate an organization to be known as The First Church of Christ, Scientist. Mr. and Mrs. Knapp were among these chosen ones. A new Deed of Trust was drawn up (the one which is printed in the *Church Manual*) and a new Board of Directors named: Knapp, Johnson, Eastaman, and Stephen A. Chase of Fall River. The twelve, upon Mrs. Eddy's instructions, voted themselves First Members of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts. A new building fund was established (the money previously collected having been returned to the donors), Mr. Joseph Armstrong, of Piqua, Ohio, was appointed a Director in Mr.

Eastaman's place (the latter having resigned), and plans for the building of the church edifice went forward.

On May 21, 1894, the cornerstone was laid. Ira Knapp wrote Mrs. Eddy a letter in which he described what happened. He said that when he arrived that morning, he was told that it would be at least five days until the cornerstone could be laid. Mr. Knapp suggested to the foreman how it could be done that day and offered an incentive. The foreman agreed and he and his men worked diligently to accomplish the task, with Mr. Knapp remaining to offer direction. At around 7:00 p.m. the cornerstone, containing copies of all Mrs. Eddy's works, was in place and Mr. Knapp and the other directors "consecrated the event" as their leader had directed them. They each placed one hand on the stone and prayed silently, ending with the Lord's Prayer repeated aloud together. Referring to the cornerstone, he ended his letter to Mrs. Eddy with the words, "Thus may it rest until God's purpose is finished on earth as it is in heaven."³¹

Bliss Knapp later wrote in a letter (August 19, 1943): "When The Mother Church building was going up, and each director was carrying out his special assignment, Mrs. Eddy wrote to my father reminding him to keep his special assignment in his own hands and not to permit anyone else to interfere with it."

Joseph Armstrong's book, *The Mother Church*, describes in detail the struggles involved in bringing the construction to completeness; the task was accomplished and the first service held on the last Sunday of 1894. Dedication followed on January 6, 1895. Mrs. Eddy visited the church twice that year, on April 1 and May 26.

Eloise Knapp wrote to a friend, July 5, 1937:

On the Tuesday following Annual Meeting of The Mother Church this year there was an "Activities Meeting" in the Extension . . . at which Mrs. Annie Louise Robertson, one of Mrs. Eddy's students, gave a beautiful address about our dear Leader. Mrs. Robertson told in detail of the time, early in 1895, when Mrs. Eddy came to The Mother Church and addressed the congregation, and she told it so lovingly and so vividly that we felt the inspiration of that momentous occasion . . . Her whole address was a beautiful tribute to our dear Leader. . . .

During these years of Bliss's boyhood, the family home in Roslindale was continually entertaining and often sheltering overnight the stalwart early workers for the Cause of Christian Science. Among the visitors was Joseph Armstrong, who stayed with the Knapps the night of his arrival in Boston, December 27, 1892, and who later moved into the house across the street, formerly Mrs. Eddy's home. The Directors of the Church, Mr. Knapp's associates on the Bible Lesson Committee (Rev. Norcross and Mrs. Mary W. Munroe), Capt. and Mrs. Eastaman, Miss Julia Bartlett, Mrs. Laura Sargent, and Miss Sarah J. Clark, Editor of *The Christian Science Journal* — all were frequent visitors. The publisher of Mrs. Eddy's writings, her adopted son, Dr. Ebenezer J. Foster Eddy,* stayed with the Knapps for a year. Consequently, young Bliss knew well these pioneers, and was surrounded not only by the work of healing which was going on in the house but also by the work of church organization and church building.

Bliss provides a vignette of the Knapp family on a typical morning while recounting a visit of Mr. Stephen Chase. One morning, Mr. Stephen Chase arrived at the Knapp house to see Mr. Knapp about church business. Breakfast had just ended and, as was their custom, the family was in Mr. Knapp's office reading two sections from the Bible Lesson. Mr. Chase was welcomed and invited to join them while they listened. He was moved by the experience that tears began rolling down his cheeks. When they were finished with a prayer, he quickly left without any explanation. Mr. Knapp had to wait until the following day to meet with him.

Another facet of the life of three of the young Knapps is provided by the following letter, the first we have from Bliss's hand, and quite a lengthy one for someone who, at this time of his life, did not like to write letters!

* "If Christian Scientists, by listening to those whisperings which result in the uncovering of sin, become dissatisfied with what Mrs. Eddy founded (the church), they very easily take the next step and become dissatisfied with what she discovered. The wedge, once admitted, widens, unless there is a willingness to awaken. The poison that made a Judas should not be tolerated for an instant.

"When Mrs. Eddy's adopted son, Dr. Foster Eddy, was known to have been inoculated with or tarred by that poison, from that moment his ways definitely parted from those of my family, although he had been a very close personal friend up to that time. For our friendship with him was based on his loyalty to Principle more than on personal attachment. Therefore there was nothing in common between us, when his loyalty to Principle ceased." (Bliss Knapp, Association Paper #1, 1924, p. 10)

White Mountain House
White Mountains, N.H.
Aug. 19, 1896

Mrs. F. S. Knapp
4 Batavia St.
Boston, Mass.

Dear Father and Mother:

I must tell of my experience of yesterday.

On hearing that Daphne and the Whitcomb girls were up here I came on the first train Sunday morning. We had thirty-one at the service. Monday forenoon we all went down through Crawford Notch except Daphne. In the afternoon we all walked up Mt. Deception.

Tuesday morning we got up at 3:15 intending to take the train at 3:50 for Crawford's. As we were late about getting up we had to take what we could get for breakfast and run part of the way to Fabyans. When we arrived there we found that the train was 30 minutes late. I forgot to say that Ralph went with us thus making seven in all.

We started from Crawford's for Mt. Washington at 4:30 and for the first third of the nine miles walked up through nothing but woods. Before emerging from the woods, Daphne and Mr. Turner had got so far ahead that we could not hear them. By this time Ralph and I were tired hanging back and as Mr. Tomlinson and the girls wanted to wait a while to eat something Ralph and I started on the run to catch Daphne and Will. By starting off and running like that for a short distance we got rested and soon overtook Daphne and Will.

After getting out of the woods a short distance we came upon a camping party consisting of four men. They had come up the day before and intended camping round on the mountain for two weeks. They said the night before the thermometer registered 40 above.

This camp was about one third the way up and it had taken us three hours then. At this rate the party would reach the top at 1:30. Daphne suggested that we go along and not wait for the rest as they were going so slow but Ralph decided to wait for them and we went along.

So far we were all fresh and felt all right. I took my own gait and soon commenced to gain on Daphne and Will.

All this time the clouds were hanging over the peaks, but as I was going up I tried to take the right thought and as I would rise to them the clouds also rose.

As I drew near the top of Mt. Washington I ate a lunch but kept on walking just the same. I passed the lake of the clouds and soon after met two men coming down. They said they had come to that place in an hour but they had lost the path and of course a little time. From here the path was very difficult as there was nothing but rocks although the path was well marked by piles of stones and white marks and so forth. I went the distance it took those men an hour to accomplish in thirty five minutes. I arrived at the top at 9:30 thus accomplishing the trip in five hours. I went the first third in three hours and the last two thirds in two hours.

It was very cold on top and I had to wait until 10:10 before Daphne and Will arrived. I was the first one to reach the top and therefore my name headed the list in the paper printed on top and Daphne's and Will's came next. I was not tired at all when I arrived there neither were the others. When we got up there the clouds lifted and we had a very clear though windy day. Ralph, Mr. Tomlinson, and the Whitcomb girls arrived at 11:40 all safe and sound and all of us having a determination to walk back.

While we were up there it snowed and hailed a little. We started back at 1:30 and in going back we cut across lots several times in order to save distance and time. After passing the lake of the clouds a big cloud started to approach us. Of course we all worked and we saw a tent ahead of us. We tried to reach this tent before the cloud should overtake us. As we left the path to enter the tent the clouds were upon us and by the time we were all inside it was hailing very hard. The owners of this tent were the campers we met in the morning. Their tent was now about one third of the way down. They had a tent about 9 x 9 and into these small quarters were crowded together eleven people. This was the only tent on the mountain and they had just set it up. It would not have been ready for an hour but on this particular spot they found tent poles and everything necessary even to a trench around it and they didn't know anything about its being there but just stumbled on to them.

It was a very severe hail storm but we all tried to stop it and all the time the four campers tried to frighten us and have us turn back and spend a small fortune at the Tip Top House. After one and one half hours of hail, which covered the ground two inches deep it slacked up. They put a thermometer outside and it registered 33 above. When the shower stopped we all went outside and started our descent again. Almost immediately after leaving the tent, the clouds lifted and we were not bothered with them again but once and that was not bad.

We were now rather pressed for time because the last train for Fabyans left at 7:15.

We traveled over the tops of Mt. Monroe, Mt. Franklin, and soon reached Mts. Pleasant and Clinton. The path leads down the side of Mt. Clinton and it is here the woods begin. In several places through the woods the path is in a brook. After such a storm these brooks were swollen and we had to walk through this. We said that if people saw us waddling down through those brooks like that down at Boston they would say we were crazy.

When half way down through the woods Daphne, Ralph and Will went ahead and Mr. Tomlinson and I stayed with the girls. When about a mile from Crawford's Ralph started and ran. He reached the train just in time at 7:15. Daphne and Will arrived there at 7:23 and the rest of us at 7:30. We were to remain in the station until Ralph should return with a team.

On arriving at the station the agent built a good fire and we commenced to dry our soaked feet. After getting dry I went to sleep on a seat. Ralph arrived with two teams at 9:15 and at ten o'clock we were safe at the house.

I believe if Ralph and I walked up there together we could go up in four hours and not feel tired at all after five minutes rest.

You must be satisfied with this letter for some time now as I don't like to write letters.

Good-bye,
Bliss

Because the activities of Mr. and Mrs. Knapp necessitated daily visits to their office, which by now was shared by Daphne, as well as frequent visits to the church, they had begun to look for a home in the city. Mr. Knapp found a suitable house at 4 Batavia Street which he acquired in the spring of 1895. The house was so well located (only two blocks from The Mother Church) and so spacious that the family gave up the office on Columbus Avenue and took their patients into the home.

Mrs. Knapp had begun teaching, at Mrs. Eddy's request, in December 1892. Her first class was in Auburn, Maine; Dr. Foster Eddy was to have taught that class, but Mrs. Eddy stopped him and sent Flavia Knapp instead.³² The rest of her classes were taught at home, either in Roslindale or at 4 Batavia Street. Mrs. Eddy, through her letters, guided Mrs. Knapp in the selection of students and in the instruction of a Primary Class. Of her 85 Primary students, three were her own children, Daphne, Ralph and Bliss;³³ one was Sprague's wife, Gertrude.

Mrs. Knapp expected her students to become healers right away. On February 20, 1896, she wrote her daughter-in-law:

My dear Gertie,

I would like to have you commence treating these two cases whose letters I enclose. I will write to them that I can't attend to it, and have given the work to you. I would like to have you come in Town early enough Friday to call on the one living on Columbus Ave. and talk C.S. with her which will help her very much. I treated her once a long time ago. She can pay you the price five dollars a week, and I think the other one will for herself and baby. It is a very easy thing to overcome the belief for the baby, for there are no such conditions, no relaxed muscles, no rupture &c, no such thing in mind or manifestation. S&H says all these beliefs are "experiences of mortal mind (belief) and not the Truth of Being." Then they do not belong to your patients and disappear before the Truth and Light. God is for C.S. and for those striving to be C. Scientists, and for those who turn for help in C.S. "If God be for us who can be against us!" Science saith to all manner of disease, "Know that God is all power and all presence and there is nothing beside them, and the sick are healed." Ret. & In. [Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*] the chapt. The Great Revelation. There is no power

of evil, nor error, nor disease that can hinder God from healing you and others through you in Christian Science, for God is omnipotent. Take up this for yourself and your work several times a day, that is realize it. I want you to call before Friday Eve. meeting. I want to get you started with a practice.

Yours with much love,

F. S. Knapp

[P.S.] Truth, God is the healer.

Another of Mrs. Knapp's students was Rev. Irving C. Tomlinson, who records in his book, *Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy*,³⁴ how he applied for class instruction even though he was still a Universalist minister in good standing: Mrs. Knapp sought Mrs. Eddy's counsel; Mrs. Eddy consented; and Rev. Tomlinson became a class student and Christian Scientist.

From time to time, Mrs. Knapp wrote to Mrs. Eddy for advice. In a letter dated March 9, 1943, Bliss Knapp wrote one of his correspondents: "Once my mother wrote to Mrs. Eddy for some crumbs of comfort about a problem, and her reply was something like the following: Do the best you know how, under the circumstances, and leave the rest with God."

Both Mrs. Knapp and her daughter Daphne were selected for Mrs. Eddy's last Normal Class of 1898. Also, when Mrs. Eddy established the Board of Education,³⁵ she made Mrs. Knapp the first teacher of that Board. Mrs. Knapp, through her metaphysical work, effected remarkable healings: one of her brother Seth, who was confined to his bed with a hernia; another of an invalid woman who was unable to walk. Mr. Stickney was completely healed in ten days, the woman in a week. Mrs. Knapp's work was not to continue for long, however; during a call upon a patient at some distance from Boston in frigid weather, Mrs. Knapp forgot to care for her own well-being and came down with the belief of pneumonia. Her patient was healed; but Mrs. Knapp passed on. When Mrs. Eddy heard of the loss, she said that Mrs. Knapp and the practitioner who was helping her had been "treating the case as pneumonia, which was only the decoy; had they handled mental assassination, they would have healed the case."³⁶

The following incident in connection with Mrs. Knapp's passing was related to Annie S. Dillaway, one of Bliss Knapp's students, by Miss J. Isabel Harrington, one of Flavia Knapp's students and the first Christian Science nurse in the world. Later she became the first registered practi-

tioner in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

On March 15, 1898 her teacher, Mrs. Knapp, passed on. Sometime later Miss Harrington received a telegram from Mrs. Eddy to come to Concord as she wished to ask her about Mrs. Knapp. Mrs. Eddy had not known of Mrs. Knapp's illness or passing. About that time Mrs. Eddy had asked her household not to bring her any messages about death. Evidently, Mrs. Eddy was engaged in important work and did not wish to be disturbed.

When Miss Harrington arrived at Mrs. Eddy's Concord home, Mrs. Eddy greeted her tenderly. They sat in Mrs. Eddy's sitting room while Miss Harrington told Mrs. Eddy of Mrs. Knapp's illness and passing.

Mrs. Eddy listened intently, and finally said with emphasis: "When will my people learn when to speak and when not to speak.* She was my best student. I needed her. Why, I could have healed her just like that," and she snapped her fingers in the air.

When the call was over, Mrs. Eddy went to the head of the stairs with Miss Harrington, kissed her cheek tenderly, and thanked her for coming and for her service in the field.

Miss Harrington told me this a number of times.

June 27, 1947

Annie S. Dillaway

Irving C. Tomlinson's tribute included this sentence: "Mrs. Eddy herself had a high regard for Mrs. Knapp and said to the writer one time in substance — your dear teacher, Mrs. Knapp, was one of my best students, and had she remained with us it was my intention to make her the teacher of the Massachusetts Metaphysical College."

On April 5, Ira and Daphne issued a joint statement "To the beloved Students of Mrs. Flavia S. Knapp, C.S.D." They indicated their lively interest in her "Dear Students," encouraged them to "hold steadfast to

*Mrs. Knapp gave a testimony in The Mother Church in February 1898. She told of her rapid healing in Christian Science of being an invalid and of other healings. She spoke of the difference between thirteen years of being an invalid and thirteen years of being in the practice of Christian Science. She sat down, but quickly arose and, "...in a tone never to be forgotten, said, 'For which of these works do ye stone me?'" (*Ira Oscar Knapp and Flavia Stickney Knapp*. n. 134)

the teachings of Christian Science,” and offered to “advise and assist, as God gives us wisdom, all her dear students, as we believe she would have us do.” Over the years the tributes continued to come in, the two following, thirty-two and thirty-eight years after Mrs. Knapp’s passing:

10 Concord Avenue
Arsenal Square
Cambridge, Massachusetts
November 4, 1930

Dear Bliss:

Two or three times I have read over your address as reported in the Monitor and always with a wonderful sense of thankfulness. Your beautiful story of your Mother’s treatment takes me back to last century and my beautiful memories of Mrs. Flavia Knapp as I remember her when I was first placed among the First Members. Always she seemed so serene and beautiful as if living in another world, and when she did leave us it seemed so intolerable to think of losing her, and if we who were just friends and acquaintances felt that, it must have been a problem for you to lose her earthly presence.* But again you bring her forward in such a living way by your story that we can see how she is not gone, but is really living and working and bringing out healing. . . .

Yours sincerely,
Wm. P. McKenzie**

*It was as though Bliss Knapp were answering Mr. McKenzie when he wrote to comfort one of his students (November 20, 1941): “At the time my mother left us, I was not yet out of college, but that experience spurred me to take the stand that I must get a better understanding of Christian Science so as to make a repetition of that experience impossible. In fact I made it my business to equip myself to take a similar case and heal it, and that should be your resolve at this time.”

**William P. McKenzie became interested in Christian Science in the early days of the movement. He served as First Reader of the Toronto Church in 1895, with Miss Daisette Stocking (who had previously been the Pastor of the church) as Second Reader. The following year Mrs. Eddy summoned Mr. McKenzie to Boston to serve on the Bible Lesson Committee. Both Miss Stocking and Mr. McKenzie were students in Mrs. Eddy’s Class of 1898; both were authorized to teach Christian Science. They were married in 1901. Mr. McKenzie taught classes annually until 1932 when he was appointed a Director of The Mother Church; Mrs. McKenzie began teaching the following year. — *Quarterly News*, Longyear Museum, Vol. 9, No. 5, Spring 1973, p. 148.

8 Washington St.,
Westfield, Mass.
Jan. 23, 1936

Mr. Bliss Knapp
7 Chatham St.,
Brookline, Mass.

Dear Mr. Bliss:

We can never be too thankful that Mrs. Knapp was the Teacher whom I was led to. You would, I think, be interested to hear the circumstances, and today it might seem strange to admit students so little known. It was on a Friday that I went to Boston to enquire about a Teacher. I knew nothing much about C.S., had owned S.&H. but a short time. I went to a listed Prac. whom I had known in my home town, and she took me to Ebeneza [sic] Eddy, who had an office in Boston at that time. Dr. Eddy . . . gave me a list of Teachers. Your mother's name was among them and I have always thot. that I selected her because the Dr. said she would take all the quirks out of me. She was to have her class on Monday, and that morning I took the earliest train, 6 o'clock, (the working-man's train) and went to Boston, and going to Young's Hotel, sent a message to Miss Richardson, asking her to meet me at the Providence Depot and go with me to Roslindale to study with Mrs. Knapp, then eating my breakfast proceeded to the Providence Station where I found Miss Richardson in a little print morning gown, who said she could not possibly go to study on such short notice, but she went, morning dress and all, and we appeared before Mrs. Knapp, perfect strangers, the class already formed in the next room, and she admitted us! I wonder if she ever found reason to regret it.

The day Mrs. Knapp uncovered the old theology, (and she did it) I sat quietly weeping, and Miss R. said in rather a severe tone, "Mrs. Patch's father was a Baptist clergyman," but, nothing daunted, your mother only dug deeper, and it was that day that she said to her, "If you desire to continue in the class, you will need to remain

quiet." That surely was a stirring up of that old belief. Miss R. was my Sunday School teacher in the Baptist Church when I was twelve years old. . . .

With best wishes, yours sincerely,
Ella F. Patch

P.S. While in class I was asked to help my cousin who had been suffering some nights with an ulcerated tooth. I told her I had not learned to treat, but the Scientific Statement came to me and she had no more trouble. I told my Teacher the next day and asked if she would say that was a treatment, and she replied, "What do you think a treatment is!" I had found out.

The heritage of stalwart pioneering in the realm of spiritual healing and regeneration, of hard work, of loyalty to his Leader was the foundation upon which Bliss Knapp built his life. His love and admiration for his mother and father, as well as his gratitude, were unceasingly expressed in the quality of his living. Could his mother's earthly experience have been prolonged, she would have been happy to see the way Bliss took hold of his responsibilities. This chapter may well conclude with another reminiscence:

October 11, 1943

Dear Mr. Knapp:

I want to send you a word of sincere sympathy in the passing away of your brother [Ralph]. . . . In thinking of you, and of him, my thought went back to your mother, who was one of the most beautiful and motherly women I ever knew. In the days when I first knew of Christian Science, I used to visit Boston, and always looked forward to seeing her.

I think now of your Father and Mother, and lovely Daphne, as having waited for our Leader, and perhaps their faces were the ones that "smiled on her," as she herself has said is possible, in the "vestibule" between two experiences. They and other faithful students must surely be working hand in hand with her for the final victory. . . .

I send you, and dear Mrs. Knapp, my loving best wishes for every blessing and consolation.

Very faithfully yours,
Daisette McKenzie