

CHAPTER II

College and Career



Meanwhile there was the matter of Bliss's further education. In a letter written to a friend (May 20, 1955) he recollected:

When I was a boy, I thought that I did not want to go to college, and I was able to persuade my parents to send me to a school which prepared for business. Then Mrs. Eddy intervened, and without consulting me, expressed the wish that my parents should send me to college. Not until my Freshman year in college was I convinced of the rightness of that decision. I have since learned to know that the superior wisdom of the parents must decide on whether their child shall be a Christian or a heathen, shall be educated or illiterate. In other words, the parents have to decide what kind of a career their child is to have and then see that he does it.

Bliss was admitted to Harvard College on July 19, 1897, at the age of twenty, by virtue of having taken, in June 1896, two years after he graduated from high school, a series of entrance examinations. The interim was a costly one, but he passed enough of the exams with sufficiently high grades (English, A; German, A; Physics, B; History, "Passed") to balance out those subjects with which he experienced difficulty, mathematics and Latin. Many years later, he wrote to a friend: "You know Latin was my weakest point and I admire anyone who can shine at it." (Aug. 31, 1922)

He also told one of his students (May Bess Everitt) that when he obeyed Mrs. Eddy's decree that he should go to college he was without *any* Latin, a subject required for entrance to Harvard. He said he had had a short summer period to learn enough Latin to fulfill the requirements and that the experience was too intensive for him to look back upon with pleasure. Actually, he took the examination three times before he passed, first in September 1897, then in June 1899, and finally in September 1899, at the beginning of his junior year. His bout with Latin certainly speaks for his persistence!

It is a tribute both to his persistence and to his demonstration of the practicality of Christian Science in meeting scholastic problems that he finished his senior year with a majority of honor grades. His course of studies included, among the humanities, English, German, Semitic (Hebrew), fine arts and history (6 courses); among the social sciences, government (2 courses) and economics (2); in the physical sciences, astronomy (2), geology (2), and physics (2). His inclination was definitely towards history, economics and government, apparently, and it was in these courses that he succeeded consistently in making B's.

At this time books obviously played a large part in Bliss's life. That he respected them is evident. Despite neatly penciled notes, his textbooks are still in practically mint condition. Among them are a number of classics, such as:

George Pierce Baker, *The Principles of Argumentation*

John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*

John Richard Green, *A Short History of the English People*

Charles Seignobos, *A Political History of Europe Since 1814*

Freeman Snow, *Cases and Opinions on International Law*

Charles A. Young, *Lessons in Astronomy*

The large memento book, as well as his college textbooks, indicates the range of Bliss's interests and activities. He was a member of the Harvard Republican Club, of the Athletic Association; he served as an usher at football games, particularly at the Harvard-Yale game at Soldiers Field, November 18, 1899, and at the Harvard-Penn game, November 3, 1900. Probably of more significance to him, however, were the facts

that he was serving as an usher in The Mother Church (for which he received a check in the amount of \$25 on October 3, 1900, from the Church Treasurer), and that he presented to the University Library (on October 4, 1900) a gift of three volumes and five pamphlets by Mary Baker Eddy.

Regarding the gift of books to the library, Eloise Knapp has an interesting corollary, which she included in an address to the A. Frances Kraner Association in Los Angeles in October 1934. She told of Mrs. Eddy's concern to get *Science and Health* into the hands of readers immediately after the first edition came off the press. "The first edition appeared on October 30, 1875, and on December 9, just forty days later, we find Mrs. Eddy presenting a copy to Harvard University through her publisher, Daniel H. Spofford!" She continues:

About the year 1900, an undergraduate at Harvard who was a Christian Scientist, decided that he would test the value which the authorities placed upon that early gift of Mrs. Eddy's, so he offered to replace it with the then latest revision of *Science and Health*. The librarian looked sharply at him and replied, "Young man, our copy is a First Edition and the gift of the author, and we will keep it." That copy is now in the Rare Book section of The Widener Library in Harvard University.

Another link to The Mother Church was forged by a letter, which must have made Bliss's heart glad, as it elevated him to the same type of special membership held by his parents. William B. Johnson, Clerk of Church, informed Bliss that upon Mrs. Eddy's recommendation and the Church Board's unanimous vote, he had been made a First Member of the Church. The letter was dated March 18, 1901.

A letter from Bliss Knapp to his sister-in-law, Bella Mabury, November 3, 1933, contains these reminiscences of his Harvard days:

You ask me if I ever visited Professor Copeland in his aerie two flights up in Hollis 15. Yes, I had "Copey" in Freshman English at Harvard. I think it was the first week of my pupilage that

Copeland invited me personally to meet with some others in Hollis 15 one evening, so I climbed the famous creaking stairs and entered into his aerie with its clouds of tobacco smoke which really didn't seem very inviting to me. However, I enjoyed to the full the experience of meeting the gentleman at home, surrounded by congenial spirits with the stacks of books lining the walls of his room. The experience has left a lasting impression on me and although I was invited very cordially to repeat the experience, that first visit proved to be also the last.

You see I had Copeland three times a week regularly in Sever 11, besides some conferences, and the consensus . . . with the boys at that time was his jokes got rather stale after frequent repetitions. They were stimulating at first but paled with the repetition. However, he was a character; he always had to have everything just so, the lamp shade had to be adjusted always before he could begin a lecture, the door had to be closed, everything had to be quiet, and he was such a martinet on those little details they ceased to be interesting after the novelty was removed.

While I was having Freshman English with Copeland he invited me one day to join a voluntary class of reading aloud. I accepted his invitation and I enjoyed very much the brief period during which I attended those helpful lessons. I remember Copeland one day reading an extemporaneous lecture on public speaking, which had been taken down in shorthand and transcribed. He would pause at every mistake and explain the meaning for it, and I was very much helped by his statement that an extemporaneous speech free from errors was simply a human impossibility and that a good speaker would not correct himself at the moment unless it was a glaring error but seek to correct the situation subsequently in an unobtrusive way.

Well, suffice it to say, I have learned a great deal from Professor Charles Townsend Copeland and I appreciate the fact that I could be a student under such a celebrated character as he has grown to be.

I really am very grateful for many outstanding men I had at Harvard University. You have heard doubtless more or less of late about Professor O.M.W. Sprague, who was adviser to the Bank

of England and then taken over by President Roosevelt to be a member of his brain trust. Well, Dr. Sprague is another man whom I had as an instructor in banking at the University, and I value very much all that I gained from him. Perhaps the outstanding historian hereabouts is Professor Albert Bushnell Hart. One day I met him in the Consolidated Ticket Office downtown and hastened to introduce myself by saying that he had taught me more about the methods of study in his course known as History 13 than I had gained from any other course in college. Whereupon he promptly said, "I am glad to meet one of my instructors." The professor who used the most artistic language, in the most artistic way, was Mr. Edward Robinson in Fine Arts 3, which covered the early Egyptian and Phoenician period. Mr. Robinson later became director of the Metropolitan Museum in New York City.

You will be interested to know that one of the group of American portraits, in the book you sent me (*Fire under the Andes* by Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant), is Mr. Robert Frost, the poet. He was a pupil of Professor Copeland and a member of my class. I have heard him speak occasionally, especially at class reunions, and he is really a wonderful man. In this sketch it relates that he asked his class at Amherst College, "How many things can you do to a poem besides read it or write it?" The class found 108.

. . . Well, you see I am going to have a very happy experience with the book.

Another outstanding member of my class is Reverend Samuel Drury, Rector of St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire. You remember that is a famous preparatory school situated about a mile beyond Pleasant View at Concord. It was during one of the intermissions at the Boston Symphony when Eloise and I stepped out for a little stroll that I encountered Dr. Drury likewise having a stroll, and when he asked what I was doing, he had a good laugh when I told him I was a Christian Science lecturer. However, he seemed very much interested and urged me to visit him whenever I might be in Concord and he promised to show me about the school. Perhaps some day I may avail myself of that opportunity. . . .

About another aspect of his Harvard days, perhaps the most important, Mr. Knapp reminisced years later:

When I was a student at Harvard, I became aware that there were several students in the University who were more or less interested in Christian Science. I thought it advisable to take steps to get these students together. After securing a list, I extended invitations to them to meet in William B. Turner's* rooms on Westland Avenue, Boston, on a certain date, for the purpose of learning something about Christian Science.

Several young Christian Scientists who were not students at Harvard were also invited. The occasion, which took place on November 24, 1899, was not only to meet and talk but also to listen to Judge William G. Ewing, who was a member of The Christian Science Board of Lectureship. As this first meeting was fruitful, it was repeated.

Mr. Knapp's reminiscences continue:

The next three years similar receptions were held in the rooms of Mr. William P. McKenzie at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. The time was selected soon after the opening of the college each year in order to get the new students who were interested in Christian Science acquainted with upper classmen. The meeting was conducted about the same way each year, taking the form of a reception to Christian Scientists, with a designated speaker of prominence and refreshments at the close. Mr. Kimball came the second year, and after that we were addressed by Mr. Tomlinson and Mr. McKenzie who were both members of the Board of Lectureship.

The last year I was in college our reception was so successful that we decided to give a second reception later in the year which should be open to college students who were Christian Scientists from all the neighboring colleges, — Technology, Tufts, Boston University, Wellesley, and Radcliffe. The meeting was held in the home of Mrs. D. A. Easton, a student of Mrs. Eddy, who lived on

*William B. Turner, afterwards an active practitioner in Boston, had been a graduate student at Harvard from 1894 to 1896.

Mt. Auburn Street adjoining Longfellow Park in Cambridge. There were no speakers arranged for at that meeting, and the reception proved to be purely social with little, if anything, about Christian Science. Consequently, it was considered a failure, inasmuch as it did not fulfill the purpose desired, and no more meetings along that line were held.

That year concluded my connection with the University, and I turned over my list of names and other data to Mr. Edwin C. Johnson,* in order that he might call a similar meeting the next year.

Although Bliss Knapp had had no difficulty recruiting speakers, probably because he knew them personally at headquarters, Johnson found this aspect of his new responsibility not so easy. When he invited Hermann S. Hering, First Reader of The Mother Church, and Alfred Farlow, Manager of the Committees on Publication, both questioned the propriety of holding such meetings without the sanction of the Church By-Laws.

In order to solve this problem, Edwin Johnson wrote to Mrs. Eddy, explaining that meetings of Harvard students interested in Christian Science had been held for several years, that they had been addressed briefly by prominent Christian Scientists, and that he understood from Bliss Knapp that she had approved such gatherings. She replied that, so far as she understood the intentions of the meetings, they had her approval.

No meeting was held in 1903, but on February first of the following year, Mr. Wilfred G. G. Cole, a student in the Law School who had been attending the meetings and who was then First Reader in the Christian Science Church in Cambridge, was inspired to write to Mrs. Eddy. He explained to her what Christian Science could mean to college students if it were made accessible to them through organizations of their own.

Mrs. Eddy's response, dated February 12, included a copy of a proposed By-Law which she was considering sending to the Board of Directors, and inviting suggestions. After some changes were made, the new By-Law, Section 8, "Privilege of Members," of Article XXIII of the *Church Manual*, was published in the *Christian Science Sentinel* of March 12, 1904, and in *The Christian Science Journal* the following month. As a direct result of this

*A cousin of Mr. Knapp's, who graduated from Harvard in 1904; he was later prominent in Boston, serving at one time as President of the Boston Chamber of Commerce.

addition to the By-Laws, a Christian Science Society (later Organization) was formally organized on May 11, 1904, with Bliss Knapp as its single alumnus charter member. The other charter members were four Law School students, one graduate student and one undergraduate.

Although this account of the founding of the first Christian Science College Organization has carried the record beyond Bliss Knapp's college days, it is important to recognize at this juncture his part in this development. To complete the record, it is necessary to add that Bliss Knapp attended the meetings which resulted in a constitution for the Society and that he was on the committee to elect the first officers. Also, the first lecture given by the Society was delivered by Judge Septimus J. Hanna, in December 1905, and the second by Bliss Knapp in March 1907. Mr. Knapp's interest in and support of the Organization continued throughout his lifetime.¹

Bliss lived at his home in Boston during his college years. According to the Class Book of 1901, "He took no active part in athletic games, but relied upon wheeling and boating for his exercise." One of his Harvard pictures, however, shows him holding a tennis racket. He was graduated in June 1901, attending all the commencement events, including Class Day, the Graduation Ball on June 21, and the Senior Dinner at the Hotel Vendome on the 24th. The next day he visited Mrs. Eddy at Pleasant View to report on the successful completion of his college work — and there, in the lawn, he found and picked a five-leaf clover (still preserved in the memento book).

Immediately upon graduation, Bliss Knapp entered the public practice of Christian Science, with office hours daily in his home at 4 Batavia Street, telephone Back Bay 2052. It must have been a rare home in Boston, or any other city, that housed three Christian Science practitioners in 1901. Bliss certainly applied himself during this year to acquiring the background and experience needed to make himself a reliable practitioner. He had written encouragement from Mrs. Eddy. She wrote him from Pleasant View on January 12, 1902, thanking him for a recent letter, recalling the little boy in Lyman all those years ago, and comparing him with the college graduate now contributing to the Cause of Christian Science.²

On June 21, 1902, he was appointed to his first official duty in The Mother Church, as Assistant Superintendent of the "Children's Sunday School," by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors.³

In October 1924, in an address to the A. Francis Kraner Association,

Mrs. Knapp spoke of a letter Bliss Knapp wrote to Mrs. Eddy in 1902:

In 1902, Mrs. Eddy replaced the Index in *Science and Health* by the chapter entitled "Fruitage." This chapter contains one hundred pages of testimonies by those who have been healed of all manner of diseases by the perusal or study of the Christian Science textbook. Soon after "Fruitage" appeared, an earnest student of Christian Science [Bliss Knapp] wrote to Mrs. Eddy, telling her that this chapter, comprising pages 600 to 700 in the textbook, seemed to him to typify the opening of the Seventh Seal prophesied in the Apocalypse, for they proved that "The Little Book" was freeing mankind from sickness and sin. Mrs. Eddy answered him most lovingly, commending him for the spirituality of his thought.⁴ What an inspiration to know that we have in our possession the book which is breaking the seventh and last seal of error!

Bliss's next step in preparing himself for lifelong service to the Cause was to apply for instruction in the Metaphysical College. On November 12, 1903, he was notified that he had been selected for the Primary Class being conducted from December 1 to 14. Other well-known Christian Scientists were members of this class, including Judge W. G. Ewing, Mr. and Mrs. Archibald McLellan, Judge and Mrs. Clifford P. Smith, and Mr. and Mrs. William R. Rathvon. The class was taught by Edward A. Kimball, C.S.D.*

The year 1904 was a very significant one, for it launched the young Bliss Knapp on a career of publicizing Christian Science as a lecturer, a career which was to last, with a couple of intervals, until 1931. A letter

*Edward Ancel Kimball became interested in Christian Science in 1887 when his wife was healed of a long-time illness. When he too was healed, both began studying. They went through Mrs. Eddy's classes in 1888 and 1889; later they were taught a third time by Mrs. Eddy in the class convened in Concord. Mr. Kimball, now C.S.D., retired from business and gave himself completely to healing and teaching. Mrs. Eddy sent him as representative of Christian Science to the World's Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair of 1893. When the Board of Lectureship was established in 1898, he was made Chairman. When in 1899 the Board of Education succeeded the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, he was made one of its three members, conducting the Normal Classes until 1902. He passed on August 13, 1909. See *CS Sentinel*, Vol. XII, p. 10, for Mrs. Eddy's reference to his teaching as correct and clear.

from Pleasant View, dated January 12,* was delivered to Bliss at his home. In it Mrs. Eddy indicated her desire that he accustom himself to speaking and so get ready to become a lecturer.⁵ Years later, Bliss Knapp recalled:

Mrs. Eddy knew that I had an extreme case of bashfulness when she decided to put me on the Board of Lectureship. Calvin Frye told me later he warned Mrs. Eddy she was making a mistake in placing one who was so fearful and timid on the Board, but she waved his objections aside. When I got her letter telling me what she proposed to do, I could have said with Job, "The thing I greatly feared hath come upon me." Then I aroused myself from that and realized that Mrs. Eddy would never think of appointing me to the Board of Lectureship unless she believed that I could do it. Then what would hinder me but a belief of *self* and a *wilful* determination to be *afraid*, both of which are unlovely and unworthy of a hearing. So I went forward until I achieved enough to win Mrs. Eddy's unqualified approval of my work.⁶

A follow-up letter from the Secretary of The Mother Church, dated May 5, confirmed the appointment. Bliss was joining distinguished company, for the Board of Lectureship at this time was composed of such well-known healers and teachers as Dr. Francis Fluno, Judge Septimus J. Hanna, Professor Hermann S. Hering, Edward A. Kimball, Annie M. Knott, Rev. William P. McKenzie, Mrs. Sue Harper Mims and Bicknell Young.

On June 16, Bliss was asked to introduce his future teacher, Judge Hanna, at a lecture for First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Marlboro, Massachusetts, held in the Universalist Church at 8 p.m. As this was his first introduction, Bliss used the opportunity for getting accustomed to the platform and his new activity. He said:

Ever since the children of men first began to call upon the name of the Lord, there has been evidence of a need which the

*An item in Bliss's diary for January 11 reads: "Coldest period for fifty years just broken." On January 13, Bliss gave his second testimony in The Mother Church. He records: "Thunder and lightning accompanied heavy rain today. Lots of slush. Father and I spoke in tonight's meeting. The thunder occurred during the meeting."

world has been unable to supply. Jesus Christ supplied that need, as the Wayshower to all mankind, and his words and works invite us to obey his call, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When he went away, he prayed to the Father that He should send us another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, that this new Comforter might teach us all things.

In seeking for this comfort and protection, it has been the experience of a majority of the Christian Scientists to go the rounds of religion and medicine before coming into Christian Science. They know what the ordinary methods have to offer, what inducements they hold out. Therefore, as Christian Scientists, they must necessarily know something of both sides of the question. Because they once believed as you do, and regarded Christian Science as you do now, there is evidence of a general misunderstanding of this subject. But even as a juror must know both sides of the case, to decide in fairness as to its relative merits, so the investigator of Christian Science is given the opportunity here to consider an authoritative statement of its case. If words are unavailing, we make the reply as of old, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." And if you are unable at present to believe in Christian Science, we ask you to believe its works.

Bliss then introduced the speaker as one who had edited, for about ten years, the official publications of Christian Science, who had served as First Reader of The Mother Church, and who enjoyed close personal acquaintance with Mary Baker Eddy. A newspaper account describes Judge Hanna as a man of "very fine appearance," with a good voice, who commanded the closest attention of his audience for an hour and a half. The audience was described as "large and representative."⁷

Bliss's own first lecture was delivered in First Church of Christ, Scientist, at the White Mountains in the town of Fabyans, New Hampshire. He was introduced by a friend, Miss Emma C. Shipman, C.S.B.,* a student of Mrs. Eddy. Miss Shipman, a former Reader in the White Mountain church, and, at that time, a member of its executive board, told something

*Miss Shipman told the author that she had known Bliss Knapp from his boyhood. She remembered staying with Daphne at the Knapp home and engaging in a pillow fight with Bliss.

of the history of Christian Science in the area. She said that the only lecture on the subject previously delivered was given by Mrs. Eddy herself, August 19, 1888. Miss Shipman quoted from a paper called *Among the Clouds*, which recorded that Mrs. Eddy spoke in the parlor of Fabyan House on Sunday morning at eleven. Her audience was small but attentive. Miss Shipman said: "Some of those who heard her, tell me that they have never forgotten the impression of the 91st Psalm as she read it on that occasion and that it has made their lives holier and less fearful." Miss Shipman further stated that on August 22, 1897, a few Christian Scientists, assembled at the White Mountain House, started a church building fund as a love offering from grateful hearts to their Leader. Other Scientists joined in this expression:

. . . and August 7th, 1898, just six years ago today, the first church edifice of this denomination erected in New Hampshire, the edifice in which we now are, was dedicated. In the message sent by Mrs. Eddy she speaks of the mission of this church in these beautiful words, "Though neither dome nor turret tells the tale of your little church, its song and sermon will touch the heart, point the path above the valley, up the mountain, and on to the celestial hills, echoing the Word welling up from the infinite and swelling the loud anthem of one Father-Mother God, o'er all victorious!"⁸

The little church, which was at that time maintained by the Christian Science field at large, was filled with an audience from the nearby towns and hotels, as well as a number of well-known businessmen and their families from Boston, people who had come up to the mountains especially for the lecture. The lecture was described by the reporter for the *Republic-Journal* as a "most able and dignified presentation." It began with the uniqueness of Jesus' birth and final disappearance as evidence that life is resident in God. Mr. Knapp spoke of healing as evidence of the existence of a sentient Being "which reforms and elevates the human sense of mankind." He noted the need for restoration of faith in the Bible; Mrs. Eddy's "Key to the Scriptures" helps to restore this faith. He spoke of the need of challenging materialism. Even in this first lecture he made the point that one could no more separate Christian Science from its Founder than one could separate Moses from the Commandments or Christ Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. He spoke warmly of Mrs. Eddy:

My own relations with Mrs. Eddy have indeed been interesting. Not that I have seen much of her, for she gives very little time to society or personal interviews, devoting her untiring energies to perfecting this grand work for mankind. I first met Mrs. Eddy in my own home, while yet a small boy; the circumstance of that meeting is one of the choicest experiences within the chain of my recollection. The impression of her life gave to me a lasting desire to work in the Master's vineyard to the uplifting of humanity into the beauty of holiness: to enable them to understand the Scriptures, that they may be well through the grace of God. It is not in the sense of hero worship that my regard for Mrs. Eddy has intensified with a more intimate knowledge of her Christian life and work. But if I love her, it is in the sense of the Scripture: "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" We should be grateful to anyone who can successfully make the Bible consistent with its promises.

According to *Among the Clouds* for Monday, August 8, the weather of the day before had been perfect, and the lecture had apparently had a salutary effect upon the writer.*

On August 14, Mrs. Eddy wrote Bliss from Pleasant View that she was pleased with the excerpts he sent her from his first lecture, that they were "clear, logical, and high-toned." She also told him she had ordered a book on elocution and was sending it to him. And, in a whimsical play on words, she wrote, "I trust you have gained the bliss of achievement and the achievement of Bliss." Then, remembering him as a child presenting her a gift with little

*The little church lasted until 1913, when changing times left it isolated from the main avenues of travel. Services were discontinued with the approval of The Christian Science Board of Directors and the church was dismantled. The *Monitor* for August 23, 1939, recorded the placing of a permanent marker on the site to "counteract false rumors concerning the original site of the first Christian Science church to be dedicated in New Hampshire." Bliss Knapp bought the lot on which the church stood, and wrote the inscription on the stone, which was furnished and installed by the Board. The inscription reads: "Mary Baker Eddy, Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, visited in this vicinity in the summer of 1888. She addressed an audience in a nearby hotel and foretold the 'little church to be in the midst of the mountains' for which she furnished a message when it was dedicated in 1898." (See *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 184)

open hands, assured him that God would open “the hearts of the people to thee; and your lectures will prove to be the bread of Life. . .”⁹

The work on elocution which Mrs. Eddy sent was *The Essentials of Elocution* by Alfred Ayres, published in New York and London by Funk and Wagnalls in 1897. It was received on August 20, and the inside of the cover was stamped “Compliments of Mary Baker Eddy.” Like all of Bliss Knapp’s other books it is in mint condition, except that certain passages are underlined. A survey of these passages may provide a key to what the young lecturer thought important. Ayres was a Shakespearean actor and in speaking of former great actors such as Edwin Forrest and Charlotte Cushman he pointed out (p. 10) that they never left anything to chance and everything they did had a reason. “Their minds were ever occupied with the thought, the sentiment and the spirit of their author, never with the tones they employed.” (p. 12) Speakers were enjoined to be chary of emphasis. (p. 15) The thesis of the book was given in two places:

The primary object of reading, of reciting, and of declaiming is not to make our listeners understand the words, but to make them comprehend the thoughts the words express. (p. 17)

Elocution is the art of speaking language so as to make the thought it expresses clear and impressive. (p. 51)

Other passages underlined were:

Overdoing in articulating, as in manners, is always far more objectionable than underdoing, as nothing else is so objectionable as self-consciousness and affectation.

No other one thing [letting the voice die out] is so destructive to the sense, except the old-fashioned practice of varying the tones in order to avoid being monotonous . . . (p. 18)

If the sentiment does not change them [tones] let them remain unchanged. If the reader allows himself to be occupied with the tones of his voice, the listener will do likewise, and will soon become wearied. (p. 19)

The worst of faults is tameness. . . . let your deliberation appear in the time you consume in your pauses . . . not in any drawling or dwelling on the words, for they must come clean cut and sharply defined. (p. 20)

If a speaker from nervousness loses his voice he has only "to pull himself together," take a deep, full breath, and speak from the abdomen, to find his voice instantly return to him. (p. 23)

Natural tones are the tones of truth and honesty, of good sense and good taste. (p. 26)

No other one thing so quickly betrays the novice as fidgeting, and fumbling, and trying to hide the hands . . . (p. 45)

No man's delivery can be wholly bad if he have thought to utter that is worth the uttering, if he be master of the thought . . . and if he be intent on impressing his auditors. (p. 48)

. . . we profit more by being made to see our faults than by being blinded to them. (p. 62)

Anyone who ever heard Bliss Knapp lecture, or read in *The Mother Church* or in his Association meetings could vouch for the fact that he had learned these lessons well.

Later that year (October 11, 1904), Mr. Bliss Knapp, C.S.B., received notice from William B. Johnson, who seemed to be writing him frequently, that he had been made a member of the General Association of Teachers. Enclosed was a card of admission to the meeting being held in First Church of Christ, Scientist, Chicago, on October 24.*

*"The General Association of Teachers in the United States" was formed in 1903, and in all held three meetings. The executive committee consisted of twelve members, namely, the five Directors of *The Mother Church*, the four teachers who up to that time had served on the Board of Education, and three laymen. The executive committee prepared the programs of the meetings. Sue Ella Bradshaw, Eloise Knapp's teacher, was a member of this committee. — Eloise Knapp, "Biographical Sketch of Sue Ella Bradshaw, C.S.D."

Bliss's second lecture was delivered in St. Croix Opera House, Calais, Maine, on Thursday, November 3, at 8 p.m., for First Church of Christ, Scientist, of that city. It was reported in *The Weekly Journal* (Calais) of November 10, as follows:

Bliss Knapp, C.S.B., of Boston, lectured on Christian Science in the opera house, last Thursday evening, to a representative and highly appreciative audience. He was introduced in a most fitting and graceful manner by Mr. Ralph A. Barker of this city. "Christian Science," said the speaker, "is not supported by human will-power. This human will, blind and stubborn, is not susceptible of scientific application, but is at the sport of circumstance. The theology of Christian Science, on the other hand, is the exercise of the divine mind over the human mind and body. In the language of Jesus, 'I can of mine own self do nothing because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father.'" Referring to the mental nature of disease and its cure, Mr. Knapp said: "We must learn that sickness rests entirely within the precincts of mortal mind. Plato once said, — 'The office of the physician extends equally to the purification of mind and body;' — but he fails to explain how to effect a cure. His pagan philosophy could not distinguish between the divine mind and the erring human mind. The divine mind needs no correcting, and the human mind cannot be corrected through the philosophy of will-power. One selfish mortal once said, 'There should be one mind, and that should be my own.' But that philosophy could never save him, nor ennoble that selfishness. That very selfishness would tend to produce bodily ailments. When we learn there is but one mind, and that mind is God, thought is already being purified of many degrees of evil motives that ordinarily make for disease. Christian refinement and scientific influence attribute all to divine mind, and nothing to physical prowess or will-power."

The third lecture was delivered in the York Theater, St. John, New Brunswick, on Sunday, November 6. Newspaper notices called Mr. Knapp a distinguished member of the Board of Lectureship, "an earnest, thoughtful speaker of much platform ability." One account went on: "The rapid and phenomenal spread of Christian Science on the North American continent in a few years has amazed the religious world. In 1897 the whole

denomination contained only 360 churches and now it contains 850. In 1897, 'Science and Health,' the denominational textbook, written by Mrs. Eddy, had only passed its 130th thousand, and now it has reached its 315th thousand, and more copies of it were sold in the last twelve months than were sold in the previous ten years."

Subsequent lectures were given in Lynn, Massachusetts (November 13), Chelsea, Massachusetts (December 8) and Braintree, Massachusetts (December 13). For all these lectures Bliss apparently depended to some degree upon notes. By the tenth lecture, in Minneapolis, the following year, he no longer used notes. In the notice of that lecture he was referred to as "one of the younger lecturers in the field; a forceful and virile speaker . . ."

Two letters from Mrs. Eddy in these years related to his lectures. The first, dated at Concord, New Hampshire, February 16, 1905, recalled again the dear little hands that clasped the chick and referred to the good that he would accomplish on earth through the wings of his thoughts — his lectures.¹⁰ The second, dated February 27 the following year, in answer to one of his, indicated that his Mother looked for this hour of his demonstrated wisdom and growth in Christian Science and, with Mrs. Eddy, rejoiced over it. Mrs. Eddy assured him that her love and prayer for him would continue.¹¹

On September 10, 1906, Mrs. Eddy was writing to him again, saying that she had read his lecture carefully and pronounced it "*excellent*." She desired him to publish the lecture in a pamphlet and to "send it over this planet."¹²

This lecture, "Christian Science: Its Nature and Purpose," was edited by Mrs. Eddy in her own handwriting and was published by The Christian Science Publishing Society (then located at 250 Huntington Avenue, Boston) before the end of the year. It was the lecture Bliss delivered during his tour of the Pacific Coast in 1906, and the one which the Riverside, California, *Enterprise* for September 26 referred to as having come from a "master hand."

Bliss wrote to Mrs. Eddy from Boulder, Colorado, on October 5, 1906:

My beloved Teacher,

I am sending you herewith a Riverside, California, paper containing my lecture in full and embodying the changes which you sent me. That you should invest so much of your precious time in perfecting my lecture awakened in me more than thoughts of

gratitude, for it caused me to ponder, what is it that enables one to follow your writings both in the letter and in the Spirit but the import of Jesus' words, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Your words of appreciation made me glad, and brought to me the secret joy that if I have done well, all that is right and proper is but one's duty to God, and I hope this "bread cast upon the waters" may yield all that you prophesy of it.

When I return home about the middle of October I shall publish the lecture, though perhaps you may have some further suggestion about the method of circulation.

Lovingly and sincerely
Your student, Bliss Knapp

When he arrived home, he reported again:

4 Batavia Street
Boston, Mass.
October 23, 1906

Beloved Teacher,

The Trustees of the Publishing House are carrying out your wish, in having my lecture printed in pamphlet form, for distribution. But Mr. Armstrong has raised the point that, because the edition number to Science and Health is no longer printed, for like reasons it might be objectionable to state the average sale of Science and Health in my lecture. I think he said, moreover, that this change has come out since you passed upon the lecture; and he strongly urged me to call your attention to this point, that you may determine whether or not it should remain. I have marked the sentence under discussion.

I hope, dear Mrs. Eddy, that when next you call upon me for any assistance, I may be at home to respond to it. Just now, however, I am preparing to leave on Friday for another lecture trip, to be gone until Thanksgiving time.

Very sincerely,
Your friend,
Bliss Knapp

Mrs. Eddy returned his letter with her penciled permission at the end allowing him to keep the references to Science and Health in the lecture as he had written them.

The changes made by Mrs. Eddy were eleven in number, all in the body of the lecture, and all but one in the section called "Christian Science not Will Power." They are virtually all changes in diction, for the sake of clarity. For example, in the following sentence Mrs. Eddy changed "is" to "gives." "This wonderful textbook, which heals the sick and sinning whenever Christianly entertained, gives the ideal of Truth discovered by Mrs. Eddy." Where Mr. Knapp had used "refined," in the following sentence, Mrs. Eddy preferred "hidden." "The educated and more hidden use of will power is exploited in hypnotism . . ." And where the lecturer quoted Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," his teacher added "and free to do Good's will." The fact that Mrs. Eddy herself corrected the lecture is very significant; it means that she approved what Mr. Knapp had written as pure Christian Science. And she apparently approved all that he had to say of her, which was considerable:

There has never been a woman in the world's history who has accomplished the good that Mrs. Eddy has. As a Leader of a great religious movement, no other woman in the world has been the direct exponent, as she has, of actively engaging so many thousands of intelligent men and women to search the Scriptures and seek to draw nearer to God through the redemptive power of Christian and scientific prayer. . . . The Scriptures say, "There is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." It follows that as truly that no one can lightly speak evil of the author of Science and Health and expect to understand her ideal.*

*In a personal letter (January 26, 1948) Bliss Knapp wrote: "As I read your letter, telling about standing for your convictions, I was reminded how our dear Leader would bless you, and so long as you earn her blessings, what do you care about what others may say or think? It was her approval of one of my early lectures that cured me of sensitiveness of others' criticism. So long as I knew she was backing me, nothing else mattered."

The lecture begins with a reference to the Declaration of Independence and man's inalienable rights, one of which, freedom, Mr. Knapp identifies with the liberation referred to by the Master when he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "This freedom means liberation from all the distresses of sin, sickness, and disease." The lecture is also notable for references to the early Christians: "The Comforter was present with such of the Christian fathers as Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others; indeed, their own writings abound in evidences of this same healing."

Mr. Knapp, in this lecture, also couples will power with animal magnetism. "Christ came to awaken the world from the evil effects of animal will, and the Comforter to-day continues this warfare. . . ." The lecture elicited letters of gratitude, as long as five years after it was delivered:

521 N. Fair Oaks Ave.

Pasadena, California

November 27, 1911

My dear Mr. Knapp:

Five years ago you lectured for us in Pasadena. About two months previous to your lecture, a very dear friend, one of our practitioners, whose strong words of counsel had helped me over many seeming difficulties, passed on. I had brought her to my home and was with her at the time, so it seemed very real to me. I was constantly asking myself *why* she had passed on — she who had done such beautiful work for others and was so strong in the Truth. I spoke to no one of this, but it was always with me and daily growing a greater burden. This is only to show you the condition of my thought when I attended your lecture, that you may, in a degree, appreciate my *great* gratitude.

During your discourse, you said something like this — "You cannot analyze error and you need not try." *You* will probably know the exact words, but the *joy* they brought to *me* is for me to know and never forget. My burden was instantly lifted and was as tangibly felt as if a material load had been taken from my shoulders and my joy was unspeakable.

All these years I have never seen your name in print, or heard it spoken, without recalling this demonstration — *always* with a great sense of gratitude to you, *but* — keeping it — *now*, I give it

to you with the earnest desire you may receive the same blessing in accepting it, that I already feel in sending it — for this, too, is demonstration.

Gratefully, your friend,
Elizabeth P. Evans

The lecture was translated into French and republished in 1909. It was delivered in Leavenworth, Kansas, and Chicago in November 1906, and at Providence; Harvard University; and Hasbrouck, New Jersey, early in 1907. Several letters, written by Bliss to his family at this time, describe his experience as a lecturer:

Leavenworth, Kansas
Nov. 12, 1906

Dear Father and all:

It is now six o'clock in the morning, and I have been writing since a quarter of three this morning, trying to get my work caught up before I leave here this forenoon. You need no further evidence to show how busy I am. Now I have the work well in hand, however, and I am taking this time to tell about yesterday's lecture.

The attendance at church yesterday gave me a glimpse of the necessity of much work to break up the mesmerism. Then, too, the sky was blackening up in great shape, as I returned to the hotel. So I got busy, with full knowledge of the need of much work, to bring victory out of defeat. I have seen things mull along just like this before. This time, however, my efforts were rewarded with such a conviction of God's healing power, that the breaking down of the error was as clean cut as the snap of a pipe stem. The result was sunshine, the biggest audience they had ever had, and the most attentive one. Many said it was the best lecture they had heard. The Congregational minister [the introducer] did well; indeed, I pronounced it excellent.

Mr. and Mrs. Howe came down from St. Joseph, and Mr. Howe remarked that he didn't suppose I had it in me to do so well. Fifteen came over from Kansas City, and now they are hot after me to lecture over there. The chairman of the joint committee has requested me to call on him at his office this noon, which I shall do. This may be the nucleus of a January trip out here.

I think the papers here will take the lecture in full, together with the introduction. I have sent away the proof sheets of my lecture this morning to the Publishing Society, and you should inquire to see if they have arrived. . . .

With love to all,
Bliss



The Up-Town Hotel
Franklin, Ind.
Nov. 16, 1906

Dear Father and all:

In all my travels, I have yet to witness a more “rocky” place than this, the best and only hotel in Franklin. I have been in some pretty bad places and have had poor dining service; but this is certainly the limit. It may be that the contrast between my last place and this enforces the apparent lack here. I am writing this just fresh from the evening meal. A palmist is the only public personage stopping here, and signs are placarded in every important place, even to the front door.

For heat, I have a coal stove in my room in which soft coal is burned. I think some of the coal must have dropped on the bed, or else “Towser” got hold of the spread. This may not be as bad as a place in which Mr. Eaton lectured in Oregon — eighty miles from the railroad station — two full days on a stage coach.

Yesterday the president of the church here, a young woman, inquired in regard to my open dates, and so I offered to lecture Sunday afternoon. She accepted the date, got the invitations printed in Indianapolis, engaged the hall, and got everything under way right off. They never had a lecture here before, — nobody here knew what to do or how to proceed, — so I offered to come down today to help them out. After arriving I found that the president had proceeded on her own responsibility, and that the others were somewhat disgruntled. But it was done, and now I am here to help them out. I had occasion to give the young lady a long talk and made her see a thing or two.

To my surprise, this proves to be a university town, with intel-

lectuality the chief stumbling block. The newspapers are so set against introducing the subject of Christian Science, that they refuse even the opposition literature so as to keep out even the name. Well, I have to butt in on them a little, and I have all day tomorrow to do it. Fun, isn't it?

Whereas I was paying a dollar a meal at my last hotel, I am paying two dollars a day here for room and board.

The lecture last evening was a success so far as I can learn. There were fully fourteen hundred people out, and they got all I said. One woman told me today that she took a gentleman to the lecture last night, and that while I was speaking on the point that Jesus is not God that he turned and squirmed and acted as if the temperature were about fifty degrees too warm for him. I think an idea must have struck him. You have heard of the walls of a room being so thin one could hear a man in the next room change his mind? I think you could hear that man change his mind, because the hinges needed oiling.

Miss Wendland came down from Champagne, a hundred and twenty-five miles just to hear the lecture. She wished to be remembered to you all.

Well, I expect to be in dreamland in another half hour: so good-by for this time.

Bliss



Claypool Hotel
Indianapolis
Nov. 18, 1906

Dear Father and all:

Hooray! I feel just like a school boy right out of school. So I am again landed in Indianapolis, and I celebrated by ordering a Welsh rarebit and an orange ice. Then I got Saturday's Boston Herald, retired to my room, and with the steam heat all on, and reclining in an exceedingly comfortable arm chair, I proceeded to enjoy yesterday's news from the "Hub." Really you can't imagine the difference in my lodgings between this place and Franklin. I took the first car out of Franklin after the lecture was over.

Then, on December 1, in her own handwriting, on her silver coat-of-arms stationery, Mrs. Eddy began a letter to Bliss, "My beloved Student: I call you mine conscientiously for God has given you to me and sometime the world will know this better even than it now does." She went on to say that he should accept lecture invitations close to home and that she would see him soon and "explain things which I should not by mail." She closed, "Lovingly yours."¹⁵

This was the period during which the newspapers were probing to discover whether Mrs. Eddy was still living and during which the so-called Next Friends were preparing a suit to separate Mrs. Eddy from her household and her fortune.¹⁶

As a lecturer, Mr. Knapp was often invited to address university audiences under the auspices of such student organizations as that at Harvard, for which he lectured in Phillips Brooks House on March 25, 1907. He was invited to lecture at the University of Illinois, at Urbana, on Sunday, February 9, 1908, and was introduced by the vice president of the University, T. J. Burrill, who justified Mr. Knapp's appearance on the basis that schools should take the privilege of discussing anything and every thing of importance to the welfare of mankind. He appealed for open-mindedness on the part of the audience because, he said, the speaker was well informed and sincerely believed in his own message. He then introduced Mr. Knapp as a scholar.¹⁷

Newspaper reports of this time often refer to Mr. Knapp as scholarly. For example, the Janesville, Wisconsin, *Daily Gazette* for October 3 and 4, 1907, describe him as "a young man of fine appearance, scholarly, a finished and eloquent speaker and a very pleasant man to meet." Again: "a handsome young man of pleasant address, an easy, cultivated and interesting speaker, with a well-modulated voice."

Impressions of Mr. Knapp's early lectures, "Christian Science: Its Healing Ministry" (1907), and "Christian Science: Its Mode of Operation" (1908), include the following qualities: (1) authority; (2) conviction; (3) strength of diction; (4) clarity of style due to clarity of understanding; and (5) logic. With a simple thrust he shatters an argument of old theology, such as that Jesus was God: ". . . was his prayer to himself, or to his Father who is God?" He dispels the belief that the healing works of Jesus are not teachable, that the disciples gained their ability to heal through the personal inspiration of the Master. "If this were true, what shall we do with Paul and the early Christians?" There is, in both lectures, a strong emphasis on

the need for spiritual understanding and a crescendo toward respect for the Leader and support of her discovery. "To understand the works is to understand the author . . . This is why Jesus said, 'No man can do a miracle in my name and lightly speak of me,' and it follows . . . that no one can lightly speak evil of the author of Science and Health and understand its teachings."¹⁸

On November 18, 1907, Bliss Knapp was notified by the Board of Education of The Mother Church that he had been designated for "admission to the College class which will be held December 4th at 10 a.m. in the original edifice."¹⁹ This was the Normal Class taught by Judge Septimus J. Hanna.* The class of 32 included students from all over the United States; there were two from England and one from Canada. Bliss Knapp sat in the second row of pews in the church along with William R. Rathvon who was later Mrs. Eddy's corresponding secretary, and still later, a Director of The Mother Church.

Fortunately, a large collection of letters which Mr. Knapp wrote recording his experiences as a lecturer was carefully preserved. One of these, to Mrs. Eddy, was printed in the *Journal*, May 1908 (Vol. XXVI, p. 106), and also in the *Sentinel*, May 2 (Vol. X, p. 692):

Boston, Mass., April 26, 1908

Beloved Teacher:

I am sending under separate cover a Lewiston (Me.) paper which contains the introduction to my lecture there, and I believe it will interest you, for it is one of the best I ever heard. At every place where I have lectured, I have been greeted with larger audiences than before. The good people are yearning for more of the healing sense of Love, and this makes me seek to rise high enough in spiritual understanding to meet their needs. Then I can ever

*Judge Hanna became interested in Christian Science in 1886 when his wife was healed of semi-invalidism. He began to study and four years later gave up his legal career. He attended a meeting of the National Christian Scientist Association in Chicago in 1890, was invited to go to Scranton, Pennsylvania, as a preacher and teacher, and in 1892 was called to Boston to edit *The Christian Science Journal*. In 1894 he was made Pastor of The Mother Church and, later, First Reader (until 1902). In 1898 he attended Mrs. Eddy's last class and received his C.S.D. He became President of the Massachusetts Metaphysical College (Board of Education) in 1898 (to 1910) and taught annual Primary Classes until 1921. —Anne H. Webb, "A Gifted Editor," *Quarterly News*, Longyear Museum, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 3.

look beyond and see the lone footprints that have gone before, marking the way for this age, to Truth and Love. As I gain a clearer glimpse of your work, this gives impulse to inquiry beyond the human, that I may gain the true estimate of you, and acquaint myself with that estimate. I suspect, sometimes, however, that your rapid progress has well-nigh taken you beyond where we may be of much benefit to you, — my own proofs of the truth seem so meager, and my vision so limited. God blesses you and keeps you in the path of peace.

Lovingly your student,
Bliss Knapp