

## CHAPTER XI

# “Noontide Glory”



October 22, 1945, was another of those “red-letter” days for Eloise. First, Mr. Knapp’s new article, “The Importance of Church Membership,”<sup>1</sup> was delivered to the Editor of the Christian Science periodicals. Next, that was the day that 7 Chatham Street was sold. Third, Mrs. Elizabeth Tomlinson came for a visit at four o’clock to show the Knapps a copy of her husband’s book, *Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy*.

The Knapps read the Tomlinson book with genuine appreciation, for their letters at this time make generous reference to it. Mr. Knapp wrote to one of his students:

We are very much blessed by this most recent biography of Mrs. Eddy written by Mr. Tomlinson. We have been reading it and gaining real spiritual food and drink from its fountains of loving appreciation and understanding of our dear Leader. It is by far the best biography of Mrs. Eddy we have, and it is capable of feeding and inspiring our best students. I am especially grateful to Mr. Tomlinson for knocking in the head the belief that Mrs. Eddy took drugs. He is also to be commended for indicating so clearly Mrs. Eddy’s place in prophecy. His chapter on Mrs. Eddy’s healings reads like the Gospels. Certainly we are blessed by having this book at this time, for it will heal so many unsolved problems that are agitating the field. (November 2, 1945)

Mr. Knapp's class of 1946 met in the Studio at Longwood Towers during the first two weeks of May. Between class and the Annual Meeting there were several interesting guests, including Mr. Jandron ("a quiet, restful visit") and General Spencer Holland, of London, "Christian Science Officiating Wartime Minister," who was in this country to give an address at the Tuesday Evening Meeting in The Mother Church following the Annual Meeting. General Holland was an impressive man, very tall, with a keen eye and humor and a delightful personality. He was well acquainted with all the top-ranking British officers, including Allenby and Montgomery — but the most impressive fact about him to the Knapps was that when he was a young officer he had been healed by reading *Science and Health* through three times in five or six weeks — "healed wholly by reading S&H *only*." He shared the platform that evening with other impressive individuals: Mr. E. C. Sherburne of New York, who had been 48 years with the Publishing Society, and Mrs. Clara McKee, who had known Mrs. Eddy well and who gave an intimate picture of her in a reminiscent paper.

The summer of 1946, at the beach, was pleasantly punctuated, almost daily, by callers from far and near. In early August, when Bliss and Eloise went shopping one morning, they were surprised to see the battleship U.S.S. *Missouri* anchored just outside Marblehead Harbor — "a lovely sight," which had special significance as this was the ship on which the Japanese peace treaty had been signed the previous September. As "dear Bella" had come on from California, there were lots of drives to see the homes where Mrs. Eddy had lived, including Chestnut Hill, as well as visits to the Longyear Museum and several Mother Church offices.

Bella was a guest at the Association meeting on August 24, then left for California the next day, after attending The Mother Church service at which Harry Browne, substituting for Adair Hickman, read with Helen Elwell.

October brought several guests from abroad. One, Mrs. Violet Hay of London, was treated by Eloise to a reading of an account of the meteorological phenomena of the year 1866, the aurora borealis which occurred in February and the fact that there were two full moons in January and March and none in February! On Sunday the thirteenth, two guests from Paris were entertained at dinner: Mrs. Caroline Getty, a practitioner and teacher, now 84, who had spent six weeks in a German concentration camp, and Miss Eleanor Jones, who had been imprisoned by the Germans for four years.

The Knapps spent the month of December, including Christmas, at their favorite resort, Mission Inn in Riverside, California, with Eloise's sisters. During their absence from Boston, Sprague's wife, Gertrude Martin Knapp, passed on. But even this event, the only negative note, could not dampen Eloise's joy in having together in one place "the three dearest people on earth." During their rides around Southern California the Knapps tried to have dinner Wednesday evenings in localities where there were Christian Science churches in which they could offer their testimonies of gratitude. The visit, with the exception of Gertie's passing, was a perfect one. Sprague was their first guest when they returned home.

Mr. Knapp continued to preserve his interest in the activities of the Christian Science College Organization at Harvard. Twice in the early months of 1947, the Knapps attended functions of the organization; one a reception in Phillips Brooks House in February, and the second, a lecture sponsored by the organization, delivered by Clayton Bion Craig.

A five-day visit to Washington at the end of March was an anniversary treat, the high point of which, for Eloise, was the inscription on the base of a statue in front of the beautiful Archives Building: "What is past is prologue." In addition to the usual sights, the Knapps took in Fort Myers, where they saw the house formerly occupied by Generals Spaatz and Eisenhower. They also hired an automobile and drove to Annapolis in order to hear the Readers in the church, Mrs. Edith Lazenby and Mrs. Mildred Duvall, both Knapp students.

From time to time, Mr. Knapp was asked to read the manuscript of some student who wished to have an article published in the Christian Science periodicals. A bit of advice he offered them was something he had once heard Ian Hay say: "Hard writing, easy reading; easy writing, hard reading." Also, whenever one of his students felt impelled to send a criticism of a published article or editorial to the editors, Mr. Knapp recalled that he had once read a letter written by Mrs. Eddy to her student, Mrs. Anna B. White Baker; Mrs. Eddy advised Mrs. Baker to read the periodicals carefully, taking particular notice of any errors of statement but warning her not to write to the editors about the errors. Rather, must she make the correction in a very thorough manner in her own mind — and drop it there. More than one of his students received such advice. And many received his encouragement to write for the periodicals.

Even at this time, when Mr. Knapp was concerned over the disposition of his book, the twinkle never disappears from his correspondence. To a

student who wrote from Harvard College that the institution was acquiring a new president, he wrote:

. . . I hope your new President . . . measures up to his predecessors. President Briggs was a grand man in more ways than one. He used to lecture for my class in freshman English. One day he told us about going to the football game with Edward Everett Hale. The game was between Harvard and Yale, and when someone asked Briggs where he was going, he replied, "I am going down to yell with Hale."

In a more serious vein he wrote to congratulate another student who had decided to become a practitioner:

Your decision reminds me of the one John Dunn made at the time he went into the practice of Christian Science. At the time of the San Francisco fire and earthquake, he was located there in the Customs service of the government. With that experience, the government gave him a vacation until things could be straightened out. Mr. Dunn went to St. Louis where his parents lived, and decided to devote his time to the practice while . . . on leave. He had some good success, and one case in particular was that of an old lady whose impoverished circumstances made it impossible for her to pay for her treatments. She soon came to report her complete healing, and Mr. Dunn was overjoyed . . . Right there, before the woman left his office, a telegram was handed to him. It was from Washington, ordering him back to San Francisco, with an increase of salary. He was in the "valley of decision." Then and there, he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" and he made his decision to remain in St. Louis as a Christian Science practitioner. Such decisions are not made lightly; and you can now see the value of his decision, even if one, at the moment, has to walk by faith. (April 9, 1947)

A Sunday School meeting at The Mother Church, to which all the local congregation and all workers in the church offices were invited by ticket, was held on April 14. A Navy captain presided and told of how, during the war, young Christian Scientists in the Navy held services in the South Pacific. Miss Emma Shipman, who was a student in Mrs. Eddy's

last class, read a paper on aspects of the Discoverer of Christian Science. Mr. Knapp also read a paper about proper outlining, handling aggressive mental suggestions, and finding more about Mrs. Eddy in the Bible.

Mr. Knapp's class of 1947 (April 30 to May 13) met in the Studio in Longwood Towers, as had several previous groups. This one included nine second-generation Bliss Knapp students among the complement of thirty. "Another *successful* voyage over the sea of metaphysics," was Eloise's grateful footnote.

Six hundred of Bliss Knapp's students assembled in the Original Edifice for the Association meeting on August 30. Among other things he told them that he had revised his book and he read them one chapter on prophecy. A great wave of appreciation swept over the audience. The unified reaction of gratitude prompted Mr. Knapp to feel that the book should be preserved for posterity, whether it was published by The Christian Science Publishing Society or not. Having prayed over the problem for many months now, he finally decided to have the book privately printed, even as his first volume had been, and he turned the manuscript over to a printer, Horace Martin, at the University Press in Cambridge, on September 16, 1947.\*

An "extraordinary" event in the Knapp family occurred on October 4; on that day Sprague Knapp married his second wife, Olga Dahl, in a ceremony at which only a few guests were present. The wedding dinner was held at Longwood Towers and was a happy occasion for all.

Among the many guests to call at this time was Miss Edith Gresham, a Christian Scientist who was playing the role of Aunt Eller in the musical *Oklahoma!* Several days after her visit, Bliss and Eloise were her guests at a performance, which they enjoyed. Their principal enjoyment during this autumn season, however, was rides through the country to see the foliage, to buy Macintosh apples, cider and Hubbard squash. Eloise quoted Keats in her diary: "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness . . . "!

Although Mr. Knapp was willing to set down in writing his understanding of Mary Baker Eddy's place in Bible prophecy, to record it for the future and to defend it, he advised his students frequently, orally and in letters, to be wise in their expression of gratitude for Mrs. Eddy when giving testimonies in Wednesday evening meetings.

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\* Two copies, "Privately printed for preservation," were sent to the Library of Congress in order to secure copyright.

What is the purpose of expressing gratitude to Mrs. Eddy when giving a testimony . . . ? One purpose is to indicate that we understand the inseparability of messenger and message . . . But there are other reasons . . . Chief of these . . . is to heal the thought of the public of any malice toward Mrs. Eddy. If the manner of your reference to Mrs. Eddy in your testimony intensifies the resentment against her, then the method is incorrect. That puts you on the spot to discover how best to heal that opposition, and not increase it. . . .

I think I have said enough for you to know that you will defend your Leader best by not always giving audible expression to what you know is true in the sight of God. (November 14, 1947)

The book, *The Destiny of The Mother Church*, was not accepted for publication by The Christian Science Publishing Society as Mr. Tomlinson's had been.\* Although this constituted a major disappointment, it did not affect the unswerving devotion of Bliss and Eloise Knapp to their church or to its governing board. They made a large monetary gift to The Mother Church in August 1948 ("a love gift to Mary Baker Eddy's Church," Eloise called it); and they followed, with undiminished interest, every development, at headquarters, through attendance at the Annual Meetings. At his Association meeting on August 28 — as always, in the Original Edifice — Mr. Knapp saw fit to tell why he was taking no more classes of students.\*\* ("Profound attention — tears — applause!" Eloise wrote.) He cautioned his students to exercise the utmost of wisdom in discussing the matter of "The Destiny." In a letter to a student he wrote: "Suppose we leave these troubled issues in God's hands, for His will shall be made clear." (October 11, 1948) His own wisdom characterized his continued contacts with the church and set an example for the members of his Students' Association.

On the last Saturday of September, Mrs. Knapp addressed the Association of Mrs. Julia D. Prescott, C.S.D., "in the dear stone church at Reading, Massachusetts. The church was well filled and E. felt perfectly at home in that pulpit, delivering three papers."

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\*In 1991, on the authorization of The Christian Science Board of Directors, The Christian Science Publishing Society published *The Destiny of The Mother Church*.

\*\*Although Mr. Knapp did not teach a class during his last years, he continued to be an authorized teacher of Christian Science listed in *The Christian Science Journal* until his passing.

The papers were on the subject of protecting one's God-given endowments; on issues of the day, including communism; and on the Leader. In the last paper, Mrs. Knapp included Miss Shannon's account of Mrs. Eddy's first visit to The Mother Church on April 1, 1895. This was Mrs. Knapp's tenth Association address and a most happy one, but, as she later wrote, because the "wave of false metaphysics had begun to descend," this was the last request she would accept.

Mr. Knapp's immense correspondence continued at an unabated pace; if anything, it grew more voluminous. Some of his students expressed a sense of heaviness. Mr. Knapp's replies were characteristic:

In her will Mrs. Eddy protected herself from imposters by the qualifying statement "Christian Science as taught by me," or Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science. And it is Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science and our understanding of it that needs daily protection from the bland denial of it. That will prove to be the remedy for all sense of heaviness. (October 23, 1948)



Mrs. Eddy once told Mrs. Annie M. Knott to recall to memory her good cases of healing whenever she might be in need of cheering up, because the reminder of such evidence of God's nearness and goodness will dispel the shadows of illness and discord. When Mrs. Knott was at the C.S.B.A. [Christian Science Benevolent Association] with a serious illness, she told me that is what she did at night when she couldn't read or be read to, and that reminder of the greater works always broke the gloom. (November 30, 1948)



. . . Science and Health teaches that there is but one school of Christian Science, and that is Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science. To classify yourself with her Christian Science, I recommend that you attach her name to it, even as she does in her deed of trust, Manual p. 130, end of Section I, and also end of Section V. (March 23, 1949)

During the annual trip to California (December–January), Eloise accomplished a good deal of business with her two sisters (stockholders in the H. and J. Mabury Company), but the number-one accomplishment in her eyes was getting Bliss to sit for his portrait at Mission Inn. It was painted by Penrhyn Stanlaws.

Mr. Knapp had never worked harder than he did in 1949 to prepare references for study to send out with his Association Notice. The task absorbed weeks in the early part of the year. The references were finished before the end of March and given to the Secretary, Mrs. Holbrook, to have printed. Mr. Knapp thought so much of that set of references that he mentioned them repeatedly in subsequent years as being worthy of review.

The Knapps' fun of the spring of 1949 included an anniversary outing to Roslindale to see the house where Mrs. Eddy lived briefly and to the Arnold Arboretum near Hemlock Hill, "where my Bliss gave me my amethyst bow-knot brooch before we were married." Also, Bliss was "as pleased as a boy" over the new Cadillac, delivered in May; it was painted two shades of gray, with red wheels and wine-colored seat covers!

Four months of intense heat and quiet seclusion at Little's Point were followed by the usual events of the Association meeting on October 10 (with 550 present), and the jaunt to California, this time via a vista-dome train-trip through Feather River Canyon. Their journey was just a month long; "at divine direction," they were back at home by mid-December. At the Wednesday evening meeting in The Mother Church on the twenty-first, Mr. Knapp spoke about how Mrs. Eddy had been prepared by God for her mission and how she had written *Science and Health* and the *Manual* from divine dictation. "It was worth coming home early to have B.K. give this most opportune testimony," Eloise concluded.

Mrs. Knapp was constantly giving valuable gifts to her friends, but there were several periods in her experience when she apparently felt inclined to dispose of treasures she had purchased in various parts of the world. Early 1950 was such a period; she called in the curator of the Asiatic Department of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and gave him some very fine Chinese and Japanese brocades. She also sent to the European Department a seventeenth-century Venetian brocade, two lace tablecloths and a lace runner. The Museum also accepted two Chinese jewel trees in cloisonné and a fine eighteenth or nineteenth-century Celadon plate. Some of her antique silver pieces she sold to a dealer — but many of her guests at this time were the happy (and surprised) recipients



of lovely pieces of jewelry, fine linen — and even a marble bust of Hermes!

Despite a rumor being spread that Mr. Knapp had passed on, a rumor which he chuckled over, he could write a student, “Mrs. Eddy once said concerning such rumors, ‘When they cease to bless, they will cease to be.’” (March 30, 1950)

To another he wrote:

We are getting along beautifully even though Herod is not dead as yet. But when our Board of Directors can bring out such a wonderful and heart-consoling book as this second volume of *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, we know that our redemption is nigh. This precious book is all that one could wish for. Also the new history of the Christian Science Organization at Harvard University is now finished. I have read it and I feel that too is all that one could wish for. It is an inspiring piece of work by Robert Peel and Benjamin Pray. . . . (April 6, 1950)

It was natural, in light of his conviction, that Mr. Knapp came to be looked upon as a leading proponent of Mrs. Eddy in her role as the divinely appointed Leader of the Christian Science Church and that his students, sharing this view, would have invitations to address associations of deceased teachers. To one such student, Mr. Knapp wrote:

I was glad to learn that you are going to address Miss Jennie Bryan’s Association. She was a loyal, alert, and very progressive student of our Leader, a CSD. She made it a practice to visit Boston annually and gather whatever of merit that would benefit her students. I looked forward to her annual visits with keen delight, for she was awake to Mrs. Eddy’s place . . . You can speak freely to her students . . . In fact their committee wanted one of my pupils to address them this year, to be safe and secure. (July 24, 1950)

Another letter, written the same day to another student, offered some good advice, based upon Mr. Knapp’s own experience:

. . . Whatever we do in Christian Science must be the result of demonstration of the divine law — a manifestation of Soul and not of sense. I learned that a lecturer can give a certain number of

lectures annually, and make it a spiritual experience with signs of healing, but beyond a maximum number within the realm of demonstration, one can continue on his belief in physical endurance, but not for long. Please read I Cor. 9:25–27 and then decide to keep within the bonds of your present ability to demonstrate the divine power, with signs following.

Two other letters written during these years related to his experience as a lecturer and provided instruction by example:

Years ago, at the time of the Dayton, Ohio flood, I was in New York. My next engagement was in St. Louis. The direct route via New York Central or the Pennsylvania Road would take me through Dayton. The morning headlines gave very little information about the situation, so I asked the ticket agent at the New York Central office if their trains were having any difficulty getting through Dayton . . . The agent assured me all was moving normally through Dayton and that I would meet with no difficulty. Instantly my intuitions began to operate . . . and I said, “Give me a ticket for Chicago via Detroit.” Thus I went around the location and reached St. Louis in time for my lecture. But President Wilson’s daughter had to go from New York to St. Louis for a singing engagement, and she accepted the advice of the ticket agent and was marooned for two days near Dayton, thereby losing her engagement. You will have plenty of opportunity, in your present position, to use the instruction given in Mis. 347:13 many times. By making it a rule to do first things first at all times, you will keep your spiritual sense always clarified and always ready to “Go forward” in obedience to it. (April 11, 1951)



While I was serving on the Board of Lectureship, I used to feel that I must measure up as far as possible to the standards set by our great Leader and the Mars’ Hill orator. One must realize that those two great Leaders never missed an opportunity to sow the seed of Christianity; no amount of red tape could block their purpose to save a soul wherever possible. The work of a Christian Science chaplain is along uncharted paths most of the way. And it

is just as easy for him to do the right thing under prevailing circumstances as it was for the Mars’ Hill orator. Our great Leader has made the significant dictum that one’s obedience to our Church Manual must be on the same basis as our obedience to the teachings of St. Paul. Love for the truth for truth’s sake, and nothing but the truth, is quite sufficient to bring out obedience to our Church Manual and our two textbooks. (April 12, 1952)

Meanwhile an attack on the copyright of Mr. Knapp’s first book was made from an unexpected quarter. In a letter from a friend, Mr. Knapp learned of a particular reference in a book by Norman Beasley called *The Cross and the Crown*:

I am interested in what you say about Beasley’s book. I have not seen the book yet, nor was I aware of any reference to my family in the book. I never heard of the author until the book appeared. Let us hope it will have a helpful appeal to the beginner. (October 21, 1952)

The following day Mrs. Knapp purchased a copy and Mr. Knapp read with amazement his own account of the healing of his mother. Several days later he asked one of his students, Elizabeth Smith, to undertake a comparison of Beasley’s book with *Ira Oscar Knapp and Flavia Stickney Knapp*. Her findings prompted Mr. Knapp to put the matter into the hands of a copyright lawyer, Cedric Porter.

Suit was filed in January 1953, in the Federal Court against Little, Brown and Company, the publisher of Beasley’s book. The case dragged along until November, when Mr. Knapp asked one of his students, A. Donham Owen, a copyright lawyer in San Francisco, to see what he could do about settling the case out of court. Mr. Owen insisted that the defendants, author and publishing company, admit that they had infringed Mr. Knapp’s copyright. Although they demurred, they finally yielded and agreed to the following:

1. That Mr. Knapp’s copyright was legal and valid (it had been renewed in 1952);
2. That the Beasley book did infringe the copyright;
3. That the infringed material would be deleted from the next printing.

Thus the case was quickly disposed of once Mr. Owen took a hand in it; the judge to whom the case had been assigned was glad to have it settled out of court; he signed the agreement.

The difficulties of these years were compounded by the passing, in late January 1951, of Eloise's sister Carlotta. Eloise's tribute to her, written the same day, the twenty-ninth, was touching:

Her life was one of doing for others, expressing loving-kindness in every way she knew; faithful to her study of Christian Science, attending services and lectures, even when she did not hear them; — a good life, a blameless life. She had a royal carriage and elegance about her always — a gracious hostess, a loving sister — a grand woman, rising gloriously above limitations. Her reward is sure and rich!

A motor trip taken in late July and early August of that same year, 1951, was significant for visits to places made memorable by events recorded earlier in this book. Excerpts from Mrs. Knapp's account enable us to savor these experiences along with the Knapps.

July 31—As we turned up the road to the old Knapp farm, Mrs. Birch, the owner, came down the road in her car, and we waited for her. She told us to go right into the farm house, that the back door was open. In another five minutes, we would have missed her and the privilege of entering the house. As one faces the front door, the left-hand corner room is where Mrs. Eddy slept, when she visited the Knapps in August 1888. It is a nice parlor now. The room into which that bedroom opened was the dining room, where the melodion stood, on which Daphne played while the men sang "Joy cometh in the morning" and Mrs. Eddy asked them to sing it again. The right-hand corner room, as one faces the front door, was the parlor where Mrs. Eddy entertained the children for an evening, while Ira and Flavia went to Roslindale to see about moving. The kitchen was a very large room, with perpetual running water, which Ira had brought through a "water-log" from a spring higher up than the house — and it has kept running into that kitchen sink all these years — a comfortable farm house!

Then we drove to the church in Lyman where Ira challenged

the minister who preached a sermon against Christian Science. It had been repaired and painted and was in good condition.

The following day they drove to Peacham, Vermont, to see Peacham Academy, where Ira went to school. On Thursday, they visited the site of the White Mountain Church where Bliss gave his first lecture in 1904 and where now stood a granite boulder bearing a bronze tablet to mark the location of the church which stood from 1898 to 1913:

Then we drove on to the Fabyan House, as I wanted to see the parlor where Mrs. Eddy preached in August 1888 . . . I entered the hotel and was met by the proprietor, and I told him my errand . . . He said he thought it must have been in one end of the ball-room, a large hall, filled with the original furniture of that day, plush covered chairs and sofas, mostly of walnut, with marble-topped tables around. I told him that the greatest woman who has ever lived on this earth preached in that hotel. Immediately he brought a large ledger to me and said that was the Register of the hotel for July and August 1888. By that time a lady employee of the hotel had joined us, and she and I eagerly scanned the pages of the month of July. The task seemed hopeless, when I suddenly turned to the back of the book — and saw under date of Wednesday, August 15, 1888, the following signatures:

Rev. M.B.G. Eddy, Com. Ave., Boston  
Miss M. A. Osgood, C.S.B. Phila., Pa.  
Dr. E. J. Foster, Boston  
C. A. Frye, C.S.B., Boston

I ran out to bring in Bliss to see my find, and Charles (the chauffeur) came too, and took a photo with his camera of that page. The room for the ladies was 168 — but as it was on the top floor and the old elevator of that day had ceased to run, I did not see the actual room. . . . We thanked God for leading us to that indisputable evidence that the facts in Bliss's Book, recorded by Daphne, about Mrs. Eddy's trip into the White Mountains in August 1888, were true!

A footnote, in red ink, added later, recorded this sad fact: "N.B. On September 19, 1951, the Fabyan House burns to the ground!"

They drove on to Crawford House in Crawford Notch, overlooking a lovely little lake:

The railway depot in the foreground was where the party who climbed Mt. Washington in the early days — Mr. Tomlinson, Ethel May Whitcomb, Will Turner and Daphne Knapp and Ralph and Bliss — waited, after their perilous descent of the mountain, for Ralph, who had gone on ahead, to bring a conveyance and horses from the White Mountain House, where they all were staying, and where Mrs. Laura Lathrop and Pamela Leonard, who had been praying in Christian Science for their safety when they saw the great storm descend on Mt. Washington, greeted them.

During this period, Mrs. Knapp adopted the custom of summarizing in her guest book-diaries the main events of each year. The resumé for 1951 included, as did all the others, the annual Association meeting; in this one Mr. Knapp shared with his students the letter written to him by Mrs. Eddy in December 1906 in which she had said: "My beloved Student: I call you *mine* conscientiously for God has given you to me and some time the world will know this better even than it now does." Mrs. Knapp commented: "This statement of Mrs. Eddy's seemed to rouse the whole Association and raise the level of the thinking of all the students in a wonderful way . . ." Attendance at the meetings in the early 1950s averaged about 500, so that a goodly number of Christian Scientists learned, on this occasion, that their Leader had written prophetically of her association with their teacher.

The events of 1952 included the tragic passing of Colonel Richard E. Leary in a plane crash (April 25) as he was on his way to Boston to visit Mr. Knapp. It was also in this year that Mr. Knapp began exploring the possibility of giving his historical books and data to the Principia College Library for preservation and accessibility to students. The national election was one in which the Knapps could, for once, rejoice: Eisenhower, whom they very much admired, was swept into the office of President, with Nixon as his running mate.

The careers of his students were of constant interest to Mr. and Mrs. Knapp; incidents from these careers found their way easily into

Mrs. Knapp's records. When Erwin Canham, as representative for The Mother Church, visited Holland in May 1953 and presented Queen Juliana with a check for \$27,000 for the Dutch flood sufferers; when in September 1953 Roscoe Drummond gave up his position as Washington Bureau Chief for *The Christian Science Monitor* and became the writer of a syndicated column that would appear daily in many papers across the country;\* when Rowland Hughes was promoted to Director of the Budget of the United States — when anything of this nature occurred, Mrs. Knapp, always a faithful scribe, wrote expansively, with a second mention of the event in her annual resumé.

And then there were the reports of service to the church, and, hence, to mankind. Nothing made Mr. Knapp happier than to learn that one of his students was applying to have his card as a practitioner listed in *The Christian Science Journal*. Many of his letters convey joyous congratulations to those who have taken this step, a step in which Mr. Knapp was always involved because he, as the teacher, had to approve the application.

Another notable achievement of a Knapp student was that of Richard Stevens, a Cleveland attorney, who was employed by The Mother Church to secure an injunction in a Federal District Court against a group of disaffected church members who claimed, illegally, to be "Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Akron, Ohio." The case was successfully prosecuted in late 1955. Mr. Knapp wrote Mr. Stevens early in January congratulating him on his "magnificent defense of our Leader" and advising him to get away for a bit of a rest in order to replenish his cisterns spiritually.

The vigor of Mr. Knapp's prose in both his papers and his correspondence is notable during the last four years of his earthly experience, and undiminished, right to the end. A paper written at this time (early 1954) and presented to his Association was called "How Divinity Reaches Humanity." It was a much worked-over composition, a condensation of two papers which he had written the previous year. The redaction was a beautifully lucid exposition, knocking out the theosophical teaching that God knows nothing human.

The events of 1954 varied from positive to negative. Sprague Knapp's passing at the age of 85, on February 1, after two years of invalidism —

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\*It was Mr. Knapp's suggestion that Mr. Drummond include in his contract a clause permitting him to continue writing for *The Christian Science Monitor*. (Letter of January 23, 1954)

years made happy by the untiring devotion of his wife, Olga — probably prompted Bliss and Eloise to execute their wills the following month.

On May 5, Mr. Knapp spoke at the Wednesday evening meeting in The Mother Church. He told the audience that the next day would be the fiftieth anniversary of Mrs. Eddy's appointing him to the Board of Lectureship. He told of his shyness as a lad, of Mrs. Eddy's observing this when she visited his parents' home, and of her decision to heal that condition. She told him to go to college, and then she told him of her intention to put him on the Lecture Board — and to get ready, even though he had never dared to give a testimony in church! She wrote him that she would support him with her prayers, and he surely needed that support. He expressed his gratitude that this work as a lecturer over many years was blessed by the fruitage of healing. He gave thanks for the healing of his mother in Christian Science after the physicians had given her up. It was then that the family learned that *Science and Health* healed the sick, that it was inspired, and that the same Mind which "dictated" it dictated the *Manual* also. Then he related how, when it became time to found The Mother Church, Mrs. Eddy chose his father and mother as two of the twelve First Members. He concluded with the statement that for what Mrs. Eddy had done for him and his, his gratitude knew no limits.

Because people were eager to hear about Mrs. Eddy from someone who knew her, there were many appreciative reactions, not only in the church that evening but also in letters from all over the country.

It turned out, in July, that the Beasley book was not at all a dead issue. A Knapp student who was an Assistant Committee on Publication in New York State forwarded to his teacher a letter from the state Committee on Publication urging all assistants to place the book in all libraries, as gift copies. The price would be \$3.50 instead of \$6, for these gifts, and the branch church boards were to approve and produce the funds for purchase. Apparently this became something of an issue, and so many letters were sent to Boston in protest that a form reply was prepared. Mr. Knapp, in replying to one of his correspondents, indicated his willingness to lift the situation above any personal consideration and leave it in "God's disposal of events."

August and September brought hurricanes, only twelve days apart. The first was the worse. It struck in the morning and by noon the full fury broke upon the seacoast. "Bliss was in the living room when he saw the southeast double glass doors onto the porch begin to give — 2 to 3 inches



— and he threw his full weight against them while Mary, the maid, pounded the staple locks further down. Then the other double doors began to give, and they both ran and secured them." Meanwhile Eloise was upstairs in Bliss's room when the awning on his window broke loose and the iron frame began to pound the windowpanes, breaking large holes in them. "I grabbed the frame and finally got one end of it in through the hole in the window, and held it till the full fury passed." Many of the slate shingles on the roof were ripped off; four or five trees were split or driven to the ground. All power was off; the telephone lines were down. Next day, as soon as they could get someone to close the shutters over the broken window, the Knapps left the beach house and returned to Longwood Towers, which had not been damaged in any way.

In the last week in September, with the John Holbrooks, the Knapps visited the Sarah Bagley House in Amesbury, where Mrs. Eddy boarded off and on while she was studying and writing, between 1868 and 1870, "a haven of love and understanding for her." Mrs. Longyear had bought the house, which contained much furniture dating from Mrs. Eddy's time. Ralph and Ethel Knapp had given to the house the dark painted bedroom set used by Mrs. Eddy when she was a guest at Lyman. It was the set used by Ira and Flavia. As Mrs. Holbrook was now a trustee of the Longyear Foundation, as well as secretary of the Knapp Association, Mrs. Knapp began to gather together and pack up for the Foundation the photographs of Mrs. Eddy's students and other prominent Christian Scientists which the Knapps had collected over the years.

The origin of a story, known to many Christian Scientists and attributed to many practitioners, is established by a letter Mr. Knapp wrote to one of his students:

. . . My mother once had a patient who was a teacher of dramatics. When she came for treatment, she sought to dramatize her problem so as to impress my mother. But at the conclusion of the recital, my mother said simply, "Well, that would be terrible, if it were true." Thinking that she had failed to impress my mother, the patient repeated her problem, with added dramatization. But again my mother replied calmly, "Well, that would be terrible, if it were true." Fully intent upon not being put aside so easily, the patient entered into a third recital, determined upon impressing my mother with the severity of her case. But after the third recital, my mother replied,

just as calmly, "Well, that would be terrible, if it were true." For the first time that patient began to sense the import of my mother's reply, and after a moment's hesitation, she burst out laughing. That was the end of her difficulty! She was completely healed; and all because my mother refused to be impressed by a bland denial of what she knew is true in the sight of God. (August 14, 1954)

Several letters provide further insights into Mr. Knapp's experience as a lecturer:

Your letter . . . reminds me of an individual who introduced herself to me at the close of a lecture which I gave at Reno, Nevada. The young woman told me that she moved from Chicago to Reno thinking that a change of climate would benefit her belief of being a consumptive. It was there that she learned of Christian Science, and realizing that a change of climate had not benefited her, she began to attend the Christian Science services and to study the textbook. She even had a practitioner's help for a while; and she said somewhat complainingly to me, "Why do I not get my healing?" I replied something like the following: If you will come to Christian Science not just to get healing, but rather to get the Truth, for Truth's sake, and nothing but the Truth, your healing will be assured. But you must learn to make first things first; and the Truth always comes first.

The next time I saw that woman was six or eight years later, at Knoxville, Tennessee. I had given a testimony at their Wednesday Meeting, and was immediately followed by this young woman who referred to the above experience, and told how angry my remarks had made her. But she floated like the pendulum of a clock between that anger and the suspicion that what I said might be right. Finally, the right overcame her anger, and she turned whole-heartedly to grasp the Truth, for Truth's sake, and nothing but the Truth. Needless to say, she was completely healed; later went through class with me, and continues to this day as a registered practitioner in a western city. (January 25, 1956)



At a lecture which I once delivered at Long Beach, California, there was a woman who had been totally blind for many years, but only in belief. When I began to amplify Mrs. Eddy's statement about gathering the rays of infinite Truth into ideas, that woman saw that she had something to do besides listen to me, and she did it. She definitely took the "rays of infinite Truth" in my lecture and made definite effort to bring them into focus. The result was she was healed at that lecture. With tears of gratitude streaming down her cheeks for that release from darkness, she came to me at the close of the lecture to thank me. I kept track of her case for two years after that and the healing was permanent. But why were not some of the lesser cases of wearing glasses healed by that same healing truth? It was as Jesus once said, "because of their unbelief." (October 20, 1956)



. . . When I once lectured at Canyon City, Colorado, I was expecting to receive much mail and reserved time to take care of it there, but none came. Later I learned my secretary had placed on the envelopes, in addition to my name, the letters C.S.B. Those letters were mistaken by the postmaster at Canyon City to be C.S.P., meaning Colorado State Penitentiary, and sent them over there. Whereupon the prison authorities stamped them "NOT HERE" and returned them to Boston. Thereafter I instructed my secretaries to omit the decorations . . . (January 25, 1955)

In other letters he clears up misconceptions:

Evidently you misunderstood what I said about bringing guests into 385 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston. The deed to Mrs. Eddy's house forbids the First Reader to introduce patients into that house. Consequently, if I needed to see a patient while serving as First Reader, I had to see him in the hotel parlor across the street, or on a park bench. Now get this clear: the only visitors excluded from that residence are the First Reader's patients. All others are given *a hearty welcome*. I hope you will accept the privilege of calling on the First Reader at his residence, whenever possible. (February 2, 1955)

prepared, as I have done for over forty years, and I ask your support for him. The Board of Directors have written that they have reserved this edifice for our meeting on October 11th, 1958.—Mr. Westman!”

Mr. Westman read wonderfully well, so selflessly, yet with a loud, strong voice and excellent emphasis. Many said they thought it was very much like Mr. Knapp’s reading. . . . The meeting closed at 12:45 p.m. The students crowded around Mr. and Mrs. Knapp for a short time. All were satisfied with one morning session, and said the papers were “the best ever.” . . .

The papers were “the best ever.” So were the lecturing over the years, and the healing, and the reading in The Mother Church, and the teaching, and the thousands of “pastoral” letters written to patients and students. “Best” is the ideal word to describe not only the aspirations, the strivings and the conviction of this outstanding Christian Scientist, but also the results that those characteristics, coupled with prayer to God, achieved. From 1918 on, every effort had the full, loyal, devoted support of Eloise Mabury Knapp, the patrician lady to whose love and admiration for her husband we owe these pages.

His Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, might have been describing Bliss Knapp and his life when she wrote:

A Christian Scientist occupies the place at this period of which Jesus spoke to his disciples, when he said: “Ye are the salt of the earth.” “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” Let us watch, work, and pray that this salt lose not its saltness, and that this light be not hid, but radiate and glow into noontide glory. (*Science and Health*, 367:17)