Augusta E. Stetson, C. S. D., continues her defense of Christ's Christianity

as taught her by her Leader and Teacher, Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, and resists the removal of her wrought iron fence by her opponents, which they purpose to replace with a fifteen foot stone wall. She appeals to the Court of Justice and prays for deliverance from continued persecution for her defense of genuine Christian Science, which her Leader enjoined her to defend, assuring her of her approval of her (Mrs. Stetson's) work, in the letter reproduced below, which Mrs. Stetson received at the time she built her house.

Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.
(II. Chronicles xv., 7).

Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like:

He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.
CHRIST JESUS. (Luke vi., 47, 48).

The real house in which "we live, and move, and have our being" is Spirit, God, the eternal harmony of infinite Soul. The enemy we confront would overthrow this sublime fortress, and it behooves us to defend our heritage.
MARY BAKER EDDY. (Pulpit and Press, p. 2).

In the dark hours, wise Christian Scientists stand firmer than ever in their allegiance to God. Wisdom is wedded to their love, and their hearts are not troubled.

. . . Truth is speaking louder, clearer, and more imperatively than ever. Error is walking to and fro in the earth, trying to be heard above Truth, but its voice dies out in the distance. Whosoever proclaims Truth loudest, becomes the mark for error's shafts. The archers aim at Truth's mouthpiece; but a heart loyal to God is patient and strong. Justice waits, and is used to waiting; and right wins the everlasting victory.

. . . Love is especially near in times of hate, and never so near as when one can be just amid lawlessness, and render good for evil.

. . . . . .

Those only who are tried in the furnace reflect the image of their Father.

"The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice."
MARY BAKER EDDY.
(Miscellaneous Writings, pp. 276-278.)

Letter to Mrs. Stetson from First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, of August 24th, 1921:

Dear Mrs. Stetson:

First Church is now ready to add the much needed and long contemplated improvement to its property at the northwest corner of Ninety-sixth Street and Central Park West, this improvement consisting of the erection of a covered passageway at the southwest corner of our Church property.

This will necessitate utilizing the land owned by the Church up to the dividing line between your property and that of the Church.

According to the recent survey in our possession, the fence now existing between the two properties is over on the Church property about eight or nine inches. The coping on which the fence is erected is entirely on the Church property. As it is necessary to utilize this coping it will be necessary to remove the fence.

Some years ago you stated in writing that you would, on reasonable notice, remove this fence, whenever the Church was ready to extend the westerly wall of the garage in a southerly direction. Nothing was done at that time. The Church is now ready to proceed with the planned improvement.

Unless you are ready to start removing this fence within three weeks from the date hereof and complete the work within one week thereafter, First Church is ready to do it and is willing to bear the entire expense of its removal.

Of course the westerly wall of the passageway which we shall erect in connection with the improvement of the Church property will be as near the exact division line as possible, but will not extend across, or encroach upon, the easterly line of your property.

Upon making this improvement it will be unnecessary to re-erect the fence on the dividing line as the westerly wall of the Church improvement will serve as a fence, and if the fence be re-erected on line, it would have to be against the westerly face of the proposed wall of the passageway.

We shall be glad to have a reply from you at your early convenience stating what disposition you wish us to make of the fence in case the Church is to remove it.

Yours very truly,
Board of Trustees,
JOHN B. TILLOTSON,
Clerk.

Mrs. Stetson's Reply of September 12th, 1921:

Board of Trustees,
Mr. John B. Tillotson, Clerk,
First Church of Christ, Scientist,
New York City.

Dear Sirs:

I have your letter of August 24, 1921, in which you ask my permission to allow the Church to remove the fence along my easterly property line, which you state the Church is ready to do, and is also ready to bear the entire expense of its removal, unless I am prepared to start removing this fence within three weeks from the date of your letter, and that I complete the work within one week thereafter. I also quote the following from your letter:

"Some years ago you stated in writing that you would, on reasonable notice, remove this fence. whenever the Church was ready to extend the westerly wall of the garage in a southerly direction."

I also acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 2, 1921, refusing my written request of August 29, 1921, that I be supplied with a copy of my written statement, mentioned in the above quotation.

My statement, to which you refer, was an immediate reply to a communication from a former board of trustees, and was written before I recalled a contract between myself and the trustees who built the Church and dedicated it in 1903, and which mutually involves their and my honor and interests. Therefore I cannot give my consent to your proposition.

Under date of April 19, 1920, I wrote a letter to Mrs. Sheldon, then Clerk of the Church, in response to her letter of April 15, 1920, in which a somewhat different request, regarding my fence, was made of me. In my reply to her letter I stated:

"The entire land, the Church edifice which stands upon it, and the home are one demonstration—a gift from my Father-Mother God, and He will protect and defend it, until the day of the restitution of all things. My dear Mrs. Sheldon, this is my final reply to any further communications. I leave it all with God."

I feel that you do not have before you my letter of April 19, 1920, to Mrs. Sheldon, or that you have not read it *understandingly*, and I am therefore appending a copy of it for your information.

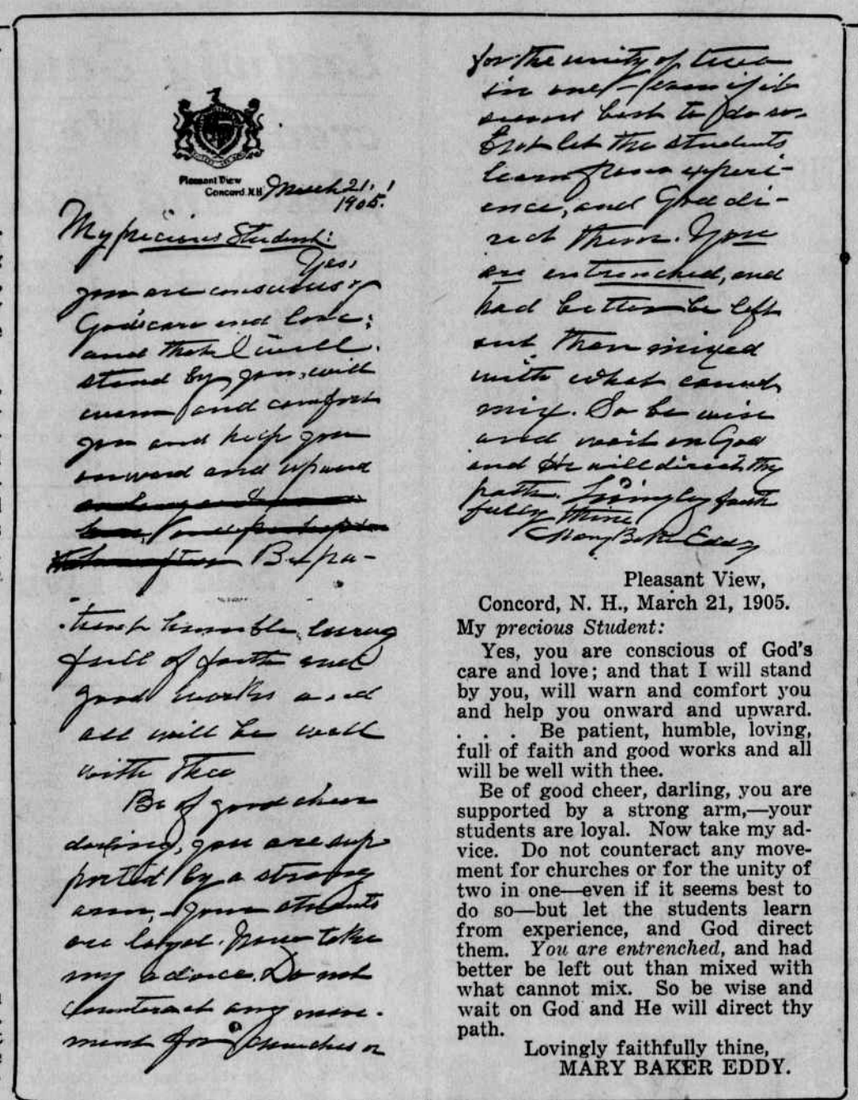
I am advised, and your letter to me of August 24, 1921, intimates, that you are also cognizant of the fact, that the Church cannot legally compel me to remove the fence, which was properly placed in its present position by me and my students, who erected the tribute to Mrs. Eddy.

The present members of First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, cannot, without my consent, remove the fence, nor build such a wall as they propose, on the easterly side of my home, by means of which the openings, to which the Church agreed before I consented to build, would be closed. The proposed action would violate the express terms of the agreements entered into between myself and the Church at the time my home was built, and would greatly decrease the value of my property.

Your proposed changes pertain only to the delivery, or service entrance to the Church, which I, with the trustees and members who built First Church, and who were all my students, made as a delivery, or service entrance for the convenience of the employees of our Church. The four entrances—three on Central Park West and one on Ninety-sixth Street—were intended for the congregation, and the delivery, or service entrance was for the employees, or *church officials, if they preferred to enter* by the service door. There already is a suitable entrance to the Church from Ninety-sixth Street, and this is only a few feet distant from the site of the proposed new entrance, or covered passageway, mentioned in your letter.

Again I repeat, the execution of the plans you propose would greatly injure me, by closing openings previously consented to by the Church, and by cutting off my enjoyment of light and air, the right to which belongs to me by agreement and purchase; and the permission you ask cannot be granted.

Your proposed plans form a parallel case to an attempt of some members of the material organization to take down, or change the architecture of the original edifice of The Mother Church in Boston, or to erase, by another structure, Mrs. Eddy's first demonstration, or type and symbol of The Mother Church, the Church Triumphant The great Leader of Christ's Christianity, or Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, forbade this. Spiritual sense revealed to her, and to her advanced students, that nothing could be taken from. nor added to a scientific demonstration. or revelation of a spiritual idea. The same spiritual animus that enabled her to defend her spiritual concept will prevent any desecration of this tribute to Mary Baker Eddy—First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City—or punish the offenders.



Pleasant View,
Concord N.H.
March 21, 1905.

My precious Student:

Yes, you are conscious of God's care and love; and that I will stand by you, will warn and comfort you and help you onward and upward. . . . Be patient, humble, loving, full of faith and good works and all will be well with thee.

Be of good cheer, darling, you are supported by a strong arm,—your students are loyal. Now take my advice. Do not counteract any movement for churches or for the unity of two in one—even if it seems best to do so—but let the students learn from experience, and God direct them. You are entrenched, and had better be left out than mixed with what cannot mix. So be wise and wait on God and He will direct thy path. Lovingly faithfully thine,
Mary Baker Eddy

Pleasant View,
Concord, N. H., March 21, 1905.

My *precious Student:*

Yes, you are conscious of God's care and love; and that I will stand by you, will warn and comfort you and help you onward and upward. . . . Be patient, humble, loving, full of faith and good works and all will be well with thee.

Be of good cheer, darling, you are supported by a strong arm,—your students are loyal. Now take my advice. Do not counteract any movement for churches or for the unity of two in one—even if it seems best to do so—but let the students learn from experience, and God direct them. *You are entrenched,* and had better be left out than mixed with what cannot mix. So be wise and wait on God and He will direct thy path.

Lovingly faithfully thine,
MARY BAKER EDDY.

It is obvious that the building of the wall you propose would so disfigure the Church property and my own, that, observing the situation, no right-minded person could fail to see that the primary object sought is to injure me. Every genuine Christian Scientist in New York City would spare the Cause of Christian Science the stigma of a spite wall. Therefore *I* cannot be a party to a project that would only bring public reproach upon this Church—First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City.

I would be derelict in my duty to the Cause of Christian Science, which I have defended and demonstrated for more than thirty years, and to the great and beloved Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, whose standard of Christian Science is love for God and for our brother man, and who, with "precept upon precept, line upon line," urged her followers to obey the Golden Rule and to "love thy neighbor as thyself"—I repeat, I would be derelict in my duty if I failed to use all the means within my power to protect this Church, which I, with my students, erected as a tribute of love and gratitude to our Leader—not another student of Mrs. Eddy's having contributed one dollar to the erection of this edifice, First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City. Scientifically, it had to be *my* demonstration, with my own students; and I recognize my God-given right to defend this tribute to the Leader.

Again I repeat, I would be false to the charge reposed in me by Mrs. Eddy, if I did not forbid an addition which would alter the architectural symmetry and mar this finished tribute. The birth and delivery of this spiritual idea, or church edifice—type and symbol of the Church Triumphant—was approved and publicly endorsed by my Leader and Teacher, Mary Baker Eddy. Such an excrescence upon the edifice, upon which is inscribed her name, in a testimonial of love and gratitude, would be an open reversal of the teaching of Christ Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy.

This proposed infringement concerns those who, in love for the Cause and for their Leader, Mrs. Eddy, sacrificed their money and their time, and united with Mrs. Eddy and with me, in erecting this Church. Therefore I feel obliged scientifically to consider *their* protection, and shall appeal to my God, whom I serve continually, to defend them and me, through avenues whom He, God, may choose to execute His law of justice and equity.

Mrs. Eddy declares: "God's law is in three words, 'I am All:' and this perfect law is ever present to rebuke any claim to another law." (*No and Yes*, p. 30.). To all who are building "on a wholly spiritual foundation," (*) or consciousness, there is but one God and one law. To God I appeal, and I shall trust Him to find His representatives, or executors of His law, who, though not yet perhaps having accepted Christian Science, have developed Christly qualities, which respond to His just and righteous mandates. There are not *two* laws, *two* judges, *two* courts, to those who are building "on a wholly spiritual foundation." God is the righteous Judge, and throughout generations He has defended all who put their trust in Him. There is but one Judge, the Judge of all the earth, who never fails to establish, through honest, truthful, and just men, the rights of His people, who love and obey His law of Truth and Love. There is but one court, the Court of Justice, which to material sense seems to be a material court, with a material judge and a material law. Spiritual sense admits but one God, one law, one court, where Supreme Wisdom finds executors of Her law, to defend the righteous.

I am ready at any moment to defend the tribute, which I, with my students, erected as an expression of love and gratitude to our great Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, and in the cornerstone of which are placed her words:

Pleasant View, Concord, N. H.
To Mrs. A. E. Stetson:

Beneath this corner-stone, in this silent, sacred sanctuary of earth's sweet songs, pæans of praise and records of Omnipotence, I leave my name with thine in unity and love.
MARY BAKER G. EDDY.
November 30, 1899.

For such as have had no part in the design or construction of this Church, First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, or have not risen to respond to Mrs. Eddy's call to begin to "build . . . on a wholly spiritual foundation," would it not be better to discontinue efforts to reconstruct, or remodel this Church, and to build and occupy an edifice, according to their own conception?

First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, is the first-born branch of Mrs. Eddy's Church, The Mother Church, "The structure of Truth and Love." (*Science and Health*, p. 583). Mrs. Eddy passed upon it, accepted its design, and commended it in her published letters. It is finished. Nothing can be added to it, nor taken from it, even as nothing can be added to, nor taken from the Bible, nor from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.*

(*) *Miscellany*, p. 357.

To First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, apply these words:

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (*Revelation* xxii., 18, 19).

Faithfully in Christian Science,
AUGUSTA E. STETSON

Letter to Mrs. Stetson from First Church of Christ, Scientist. New York City, of September 21st, 1921:

Dear Mrs. Stetson:

Your letter of September 12th was presented to the Board of this Church at a regular meeting. In reply to the same, we would say, that at no time have we asked your permission to remove the fence on the westerly line of the Church property, but have given you the opportunity to *honor your written word* to the Board of this Church, that you would remove the fence, which is on the Church property, whenever the Church was ready to extend the garage building, or asked you to inform us what disposition you wish made of the fence in case the Church removed it from its property.

It is neither the desire nor the intention of this Church or its Board to injure in any way its neighbors, but rather to bless and heal them. The proposed alteration to the Church originated in the Board of this Church a number of years ago. At that time your letters to the Board evidence that this plan had your approval and this Board expected that you would honor your written word, and we know of no contract between you and this Church that would prevent us from making the proposed alteration.

Like every other Branch of The Mother Church, this Church is the demonstration of and belongs to the loyal members who are sincerely following the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy as set forth in Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures and the Church Manual, and one whose name has been dropped from the roll of membership of The Mother Church for disobedience to the By-laws of this Manual may no longer be considered as having any part in any Branch of The Mother Church.

May we say in all love, that when you have in meekness and honesty confessed and corrected the faults for which your name was dropped as a member of The Mother Church, you may rise to the concept that our revered Leader had of you when she united her name with yours in the corner stone of this Church, and then you may begin to build on a wholly spiritual foundation, as the members of this Church are loyally, honestly and meekly striving to do. We believe that every Christian Scientist would rejoice to learn that you had heeded the admonition of our revered Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, to you, as expressed in her letter of July 23, 1909, found on page 359 of Miscellany, and as follows:

"My dear Student:

Awake and arise from this temptation produced by animal magnetism upon yourself, allowing your students to deify you and me. Treat yourself for it and get your students to help you rise out of it. It will be your destruction if you do not do this. Answer this letter immediately.

As ever, lovingly your teacher,
MARY BAKER EDDY."

We rejoice in the understanding that God is infinite Love, as revealed by our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, and as she states in First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, page 12, "In Christian Science, the law of Love rejoices the heart; and Love is Life and Truth. Whatever manifests aught else in its effects upon mankind, demonstrably is not Love."

Sincerely yours,
Board of Trustees,
JOHN B. TILLOTSON,
Clerk.

Mrs. Stetson's Reply of September 28th, 1921:

Board of Trustees,
Mr. John B. Tillotson, Clerk,
First Church of Christ, Scientist,
Central Park West and 96th Street,
New York City.

Dear Sirs:

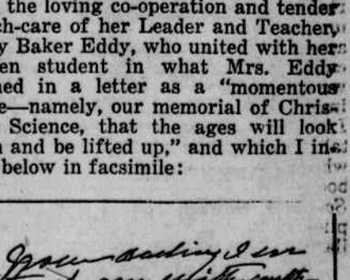
Your letter of September 21st, 1921, in acknowledgment of my communication to you of the 12th instant, is before me. It is now ten years since I received the first letter from your board expressing their intention of extending the westerly wall of the garage to the lot line, thus making the approach to my front entrance a dark alley, and shutting out the air, the light, and the view on the easterly side of my home. At that time I was stunned by the ingratitude and vengeful animus evidenced by such a proposed action on the part of those who had then only recently gained control of First Church; and in a moment of crushing discouragement and without having in mind my rights, I wrote my reply, which was not accepted nor acted upon by you. I was weary of the struggle with the materially minded, which seemed endless and hopeless. But now, having come through the surging sea; having met the waves of opposition to my emergence from the material organization, in response to my Leader's request to begin to "build . . . on a wholly spiritual foundation," (*) I am strong to press on towards the redemption of my birthright. Since that time, as stated to you in my letter of the 12th instant, I have recalled that my fence was placed in its present position, and the openings left on either side of it, pursuant to definite agreements, mutually entered into by me and the trustees of First Church of Christ, Scientist, after formal approval by the congregation and the court, when I purchased my plot of land from the Church and built my home.

As to your statement that your proposed plan had my approval, I here declare that the wall which you propose to erect on the easterly side of my home, cutting off my enjoyment of light and air, and closing an opening agreed upon before I consented to purchase my land from the Church and build my home, has never had my approval, nor can my previous letters to the board be so construed, nor can I ever approve of a structure that would seriously damage my property, disfigure the church edifice, and bring public reproach upon the Cause of Christian Science, as an open reversal of the teaching of Christ Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy.

The third paragraph of your last letter to me reads as follows:

"Like every other Branch of The Mother Church, this Church is the demonstration of and belongs to the loyal members who are sincerely following the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy as set forth in Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures and the Church Manual, and one whose name has been dropped from the roll of membership of The Mother Church for disobedience to the By-laws of this Manual may no longer be considered as having any part in any branch of The Mother Church."

By no process of reasoning can the scientific demonstration of a church edifice, made by a student of Mrs. Eddy, as the fruit of long years of pioneer work in establishing and upbuilding the Cause of Christian Science in New York City, and who was chosen by her Leader and Teacher for that purpose; a church over which Mrs. Eddy appointed her as Pastor; a church whose pulpit she occupied for seventeen consecutive years; for whose present magnificent edifice she raised the sum of one million, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars among her own students exclusively, and into which she put her time, thousands of dollars of her own money, and her advanced spiritual understanding; a church edifice conceived by her and brought forth under her constant spiritual guidance, with the loving co-operation and tender watch-care of her Leader and Teacher, Mary Baker Eddy, who united with her chosen student in what Mrs. Eddy termed in a letter as a "momentous move—namely, our memorial of Christian Science, that the ages will look upon and be lifted up," and which I insert below in facsimile:



Now darling I entrust you with another momentous move namely Our memorial of Christian Science, that the ages will look upon and be lifted up.

I repeat, by no process of reasoning can this church edifice become the demonstration of others, as suggested by your letter. That Mrs. Eddy, whose word on such matters is accepted as law by every genuine Christian Scientist, forever settled this question, is attested

(*) *Miscellany*, p. 357.