

DEFENDING OURSELVES AND OUR CHURCH  
FROM ANIMAL MAGNETISM

or

(What does animal magnetism have to do with my parakeet?)

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Thank you for inviting me back to be with you again. As you know, in my last talk with you, I touched upon the subject of “Animal Magnetism” as the basic error underlying every imposition, restriction, or claim for interference. And as a result, you invited me to speak to you more fully on this subject.

Selecting a title for this talk presented somewhat of a challenge. You see, a title, by rights, should really describe the subject to be discussed. Right? But somehow all the titles we could come up with sounded heavy and ponderous. I even thought of the title: “Animal magnetism: Why do we have to talk a out that?” (That’s usually the response we get when this subject arises.)

No, I wanted the title to be serious but not overwhelming. We know that even our dear Leader realized that the tendency of the human mind is either to make too little of it, or to make too much of it; because, when she introduced this subject in her own classes, she often prefaced the discussion with this statement: “Today we are going to talk something up in order to talk it down.”

Well, finally we came up with the title you have all been given - "DEFENDING OURSELVES AND OUR CHURCH FROM ANIMAL MAGNETISM - or what has animal magnetism got to do with my parakeet?" I have a great story I will share with you later about a parakeet - and I loved the title because it conveys the fact that, indeed, animal magnetism has to do with every aspect of our lives, our churches - yes, even our parakeet. Many times we are tempted to believe that we are not handled by animal magnetism; and occasionally we are convinced that animal magnetism never bothers us; or that, yes, animal magnetism was something Mrs. Eddy and her students had to contend with, but it is not a problem today.

But let me tell you about the parakeet. In 1972, I was asked by The Mother Church to speak at a Spiritual Goals meeting on the subject of animal magnetism. They furnished the title for my talk, and it was this: "Our Defense against and Safety From Animal Magnetism." Some of you here may have been at that meeting and heard the talk. It started like this: (I'll read you the first few pages.)

- A young man sat at his desk early one morning reading the Lesson-Sermon. About halfway through the second section, he remembered he should go into work early to drop off his car at the garage for a lube job. If he got there early enough, he wouldn't need an appointment. So he closed his books, and hurried on his way.
- A young mother said goodbye to her school age children as they left for the day, and settled down to do some quiet praying for herself. It occurred to her that a load of clothes could be washing while she prayed, so she went to the basement, sorted some clothes, pretreated some for stains, and started that load of clothes. She returned upstairs to pray. Then she remembered the roast for that evening's meal. She jumped up, went to the freezer, removed the roast to thaw, and again returned to her prayers. After a few moments of quiet, she remembered she had to prepare the readings for a committee meeting that evening. She got out her books, and made her selections. After returning to pray again, the telephone rang. She answered it, and concluding her call, realized it was over two hours since the children left for school, and felt she really must get on with the chores of the day. She would do some really good praying tomorrow.

- A Christian Scientist of many years finds the Lesson-Sermon no longer seems vital and meaningful to him so he dozes in church and he has not studied for weeks.
  
- A young college student, really seeking the Truth, found himself mentally arguing every statement in the textbook, becoming more and more confused, and has finally stopped studying altogether.
  
- A longtime student of Christian Science, who has a genuine love for the Truth, and who urgently needs healing, falls asleep every time she starts to study, or pray.
  
- A friend of mine had several days of feeling uneasy, and irritable, for no apparent reason. She became sharp with her husband and impatient with her children, and soon began feeling guilty because she could not explain why.
  
- An older teenager I know really intends to do some good studying of Christian Science, every evening; but when his younger brother turns on the television, he finds himself irresistibly drawn to watch the program.
  
- A second reader, ordinarily very well organized, had three small children, and found a series of difficult Sunday mornings coming to a climax with:
  - misplaced car keys at the time to leave for church,
  - the two-year-old's left shoe was nowhere to be found,
  - hot chocolate spilled on the front of a fully dressed five-year-old when it was almost time to leave,
  - the zipper stuck on her own dress, it wouldn't go up or down,
  - a car that often refused to start.

These are all true stories. Are there any that sound vaguely familiar? Have you noticed the one factor they each have in common?

But, let me finish that last story. That Sunday morning this young mother saw the picture - clearly. She stood in the middle of the kitchen, fighting tears and the temptation to give up altogether. She looked at the clock, and then at her cocoa drenched child and spoke out loud - almost vehemently.

“Animal magnetism – you have worked all the mischief you can. But hear this! I am second reader. And it is my place to be at church in ample time to prepare for the service. And I will be there. I will be there if the children are barefooted, or stocking-footed, if they are in stained clothing, and even if I’m in my housecoat. The car will start because God will see that it starts and we will be there because that’s where God wants me to be and NOTHING can oppose, or overpower God!”

The children were quickly made ready, the shoe found, the car started, and I got here just in time. And I never had another Sunday morning like that, and was never late. The children always looked fine, and the car was soon replaced.

Now, what had all these true stories in common? One thing. Unhandled animal magnetism. Deterrents, delays, diversion, obstructions, intrusions, detractions are never what they seem to be. They are always animal magnetism. Sickness, hurry, confusion, dullness, drowsiness, trouble, all find their roots in the same source - animal magnetism.

But just as I found, when serving as second reader, animal magnetism can be handled effectively. How? By detecting the source of the trouble, uncovering it, denying it any presence or power, and insisting on God as the all power. After that one good powerful treatment, the trouble was removed. Animal magnetism can always be handled and its so-called effects destroyed.

This is what we mean by our defense against animal magnetism:

(1) detecting it, (2) denying it, and (3) affirming God's omnipotence.

Now that is how my talk started out in 1972. It continued in the discussion, defining the term, giving many examples of healings that resulted from the clear and decisive handling of animal magnetism. The response in letters gratifyingly shared many healings that individuals had experienced in using some of the things shared in that talk.

However, the healing regarding the parakeet is one that I did not hear about until several years later. After I had given another talk for The Mother Church, a young mother approached me and told me that she had been in the audience at the Spiritual Goals meeting only because her mother had absolutely insisted. She did not want to be there. She felt rather "out-of-it" in church matters. She had young children, and she had found it impossible to organize her life in order to get the children to Sunday School and herself to church. Every Sunday morning something almost catastrophic happened. The dog got loose, or sick, or messed up the house. Or one of the children got lost, or sick, or messed up the house. Urgent phone calls came up. Or important school or social events for the children were scheduled; or the car had a flat tire – etc., etc., etc.

She said after she heard my talk it all became clear, so in her prayers she put animal magnetism on notice. She and the children were going to church, and none of its tricks could ever interfere again. And sure enough, the next Sunday she felt her prayers had been totally effective. The children were all pressed and clean, and they were actually going out the door on time. In fact the children were already in the car, as she walked by the parakeet's cage.

Her parakeet was her joy because it was always so cheerful and companionable and was so very little bother. And now in the cage, what did she see? Her beloved pet, on the floor, feet up - looking like there was no life there. Her first thought was, "I can't leave him like that!" That was her first thought. But her second thought was this: "Pretty tricky, animal magnetism. But I am not giving in to this. We are going to church, and nothing you can present will interfere. And that's that!" And she closed the kitchen door, and they all went to church.

Returning from church, opening the kitchen door, she was greeted by an alert, alive, chirpy, perky parakeet – chattering on his perch. What a happy moment – a moment that was a turning point because she and the children had been regularly attending church ever since. “What has animal magnetism got to do with my parakeet? Absolutely everything! So – let’s talk about animal magnetism – what it is, and what is our defense?”

We will examine the methods of animal magnetism – what it claims to do, and some of the ways it operates, exposing some of its lying suggestions.

We will look at the effective methods of defense – both in work for ourselves and for our churches. And we will discuss the hindrances to this work. After all, when we know what animal magnetism is, and how it works, and how to defend ourselves, why are we not doing it better?

Now one of the first things we should do in any talk is to define the terms being used. So before we go further, let’s determine together just what they mean. Mrs. Eddy tells us: “Animal magnetism or hypnotism is the specific term for error, or mortal mind.” (S&H 103: 18-19) Note the important word here: that animal magnetism is a “term” – not a thing, not a person, not a place, simply a term. She further states it is a “false belief” and a “fable” and a “pretention.” Then regarding the synonym for error, i.e., mortal mind is “Nothing claiming to be something...” – a supposition. (S&H 591:25-27) Every time we see the word “error” we can correctly substitute its specific term, animal magnetism, but we clearly see that animal magnetism is not a thing – rather it is a no thing – nothing.

Now, this leads up to an obvious question. Why is it necessary to defend ourselves against animal magnetism, if it is nothing?

Let’s consider this analogy. Suppose you received a notice from the bank. You are considerably overdrawn in your checking account, yet your records show a generous balance. Somewhere there is an error. You examine your records and find that you mistakenly added a deposit of

\$200 to \$100 showing a balance of \$400, or “2 plus 1 is 4.” Now the statement 2 plus 1 is 4 is a mistake, an error. It is not true, and it has no power, but the error surely messed up your balance and would continue to do so, unless you would detect the error, remove it (deny it) and replace it with the correct statement and proceed from there.

Because error always claims to mess up our lives, our businesses, our relationships, the harmony in our churches, etc., we have to defend ourselves against mistakenly believing the errors of mortal mind, or animal magnetism, as real, correct, substantial, or powerful.

In our daily experience, undetected and unhandled, animal magnetism can claim to throw things out of balance. In fact, every instance of an unhealed problem, whether physical, mental, human relations or supply – all dullness, resistance, apathy, lack of inspiration – all distractions or disturbances, all inharmonies are simply the seeming results of unhandled animal magnetism. The one deterrent to increasing our spirituality is unhandled animal magnetism.

All right then. How do we handle animal magnetism? The answer is so simple that we sometimes lose sight of its simplicity. Our Leader states it thus: “You must find error to be nothing: then, and only then, do you handle it in Science.” (Mis 334:16-18)

Well then, if handling animal magnetism is so simple, why are we not doing a better job of it? We should be doing a better job of it, but the failure exists because error first needs to be detected.

Let’s refer again to the unbalanced checking account. If one did not know the science of mathematics as expressed in simple addition and subtraction, he would be unable to find his mistake and make his correction. Or if he were unwilling to take the time, or the effort to apply the facts of mathematics, and to find the mistake, and correct it, he would continue to be in trouble.

This is just as true in our daily experience. We must know the Science involved, the Science of Being – Christian Science. We do this by our daily prayerful study. We realize that the more we study, the more we understand the Science of the Christ: thus the more alert we will be in detecting the errors of the senses. Next, we must apply the facts of our Science, detect any errors, deny them, remove them. We must be willing to take the time and effort to do so. And this constitutes our prayers and our defense.

The allness of God can be fully demonstrated and understood only as the nothingness of evil is seen, and proven. Although Christian Science defines evil as an unreality, let me assure you, that a superficial rejection of evil, or animal magnetism, - as nothing – gives a false sense of security that fails to heal in times of need.

Scientific prayer breaks evil's hold on the human consciousness, because scientific prayer is more than a passive pleading to God for help. It is metaphysical work that requires that we reason intelligently on the allness of God, and the nothingness of evil. It is the prayer of affirmation and denial, through which we argue for the good and against the evil in our own thinking.

The more we understand of God (His nature), and of man (His reflection), and of the universe (His creation) the more alert we will be to detect the suggestions that anything other than good, God, can exist.

You know what suggestions I mean: "you are sick, you are tired, you are busy, you don't understand." Do these ever knock at the door of your consciousness? Do they ever gain admittance? Probably not. But animal magnetism claims to be subtle, so instead, we find ourselves thinking: "I'm unhappy. I'm lonely. I feel angry. I am too old. I am too young. I don't have any inspiration. I don't need church – not this week anyway. I don't really know how to pray. I'm too busy." And because the aggressive mental suggestions sneak in as first person pronoun, we are fooled, and we fail to detect their true nature as being miserable lies about God and His reflection, man. Do you see that they are not correct, or that they are not true?



And even when they have seemed to have gained admittance, do you still see them as a mistake, as an error? “Like 2 plus 1 is 4?”

Now, as I said, animal magnetism claims to be subtle but once you’re on to it, it is about as subtle as a two-ton truck!

One of the most helpful sentences I use is this, and I have used it for years. “That’s not my thinking. My thinking is God.” It’s not a very impressive statement, and my husband told me it is not even too grammatically correct. But it is powerful. When suggestions attempt to pound at the door of consciousness, or whisper in my ear, such as – to be hurt, to be vain, to be critical, to be impatient, or self-righteous, or indifferent, or to procrastinate – how helpful, how powerful – to recognize them as “not my thinking.” And then to refuse to let those thoughts have one more word in my consciousness.

Remember Mrs. Eddy’s admonishment? “Watch your thoughts, and see whether they lead you to God and into harmony with His true followers.” (My 213:20-21) If the thoughts claiming to operate in your consciousness do not lead you to God, they are not your thinking! If they are not thoughts of Love, of good, of God – if they are not coming from God and leading to God, they are not your thinking!!

When someone has called me for help, and they tell me of: confusion, or continuous irritability, or pouring out volumes of criticism of family members or church friends, or critical business problems; they often lament that they don’t know why these errors continue to fill their experience. But after they have told me of the work they have done, often it becomes obvious that there has not been a persistent, consistent denial of evil in whatever form it presents itself. What is patently obvious is that there has been no contending with evil as hypnotic suggestion. There has been no denial of evil’s presence, or claim of power. Yes, it is possible to heal through the affirmation of Truth alone. This is instantaneous healing – it is spiritual realization. And I have seen it happen countless times. But I also have had the experience, over and over, that the

way has been cleared for healing only after a thorough denial of the specific error is made – with understanding and conviction.

A bland denial of evil leaves untouched its more destruction energies. And the healing does not take place. If we are ignorant of evil's nature, we are not protected from its harmful influence. Doesn't our Leader tell us plainly? "A knowledge of error and of its operations must precede that understanding of Truth which destroys error..." (S&H 252:8-10)

So what is our defense? Animal magnetism must be denied fearlessly and in depth. A thorough prayer that includes both the affirmation of what is true, and denial of evil is such an intelligent form of spiritual metaphysics that it can heal the most stubborn problem.

You see, animal magnetism cannot make man do anything. It has no body. It has no intelligence. It has no power. All it can ever do is to suggest: suggest we are sick, suggest we are tired, suggest we are not interested in church, or don't have time, or the inclination to pray. And if we refuse those suggestions, right at the moment they are offered, we are free. Free to accept the health, the joy, the dominion, the inspiration, and the ability that is already ours by nature of our being the reflection of God.

So let's talk a bit about daily prayer – because it is one of the most important points in our defense against animal magnetism. Daily study and prayer.

Mrs. Eddy laid great stress on the importance of this daily work for ourselves. You've all read her words in Miscellaneous Writings: "One thing I have greatly desired, and again earnestly request, namely, that Christian Scientists, here and elsewhere, pray daily for themselves; not verbally, nor on bended knee, but mentally, meekly, and importunately." (Mis 127:7-10) And in Miscellany, we find this instruction by Mrs. Eddy: "Watch, and pray daily that evil suggestions, in whatever guise, take no root in your thought nor bear fruit. Ofttimes examine yourselves, and see if there be found anywhere a deterrent of Truth and Love, and 'hold fast that which is good.'"  
" (My 128:30-2)

And we find this clear instruction in the Manual of The Mother Church, “The members of this church should daily watch and pray to be delivered from all evil, from prophesying, judging, condemning, counseling, influencing or being influenced erroneously.” And also from the Manual: “It shall be the duty of every member of this Church to pray each day: “ ‘Thy Kingdom come;’ let the reign of divine Truth, Life, and Love be established in me, and rule out of me all sin; and may Thy Word enrich the affections of all mankind, and govern them! ” And once more from the Manual: “It shall be the duty of every member of this Church to defend himself daily against mental suggestion, and not be made to forget nor to neglect his duty to God, to his Leader, and to mankind.” (Manual, Art. VIII, 1, 2, 6)

“Not be made to” – doesn’t this imply the hypnotic suggestive nature of animal magnetism?

On the basis of the Manual provisions alone, there can be no question of the absolute necessity of daily prayer. So what hinders one from fulfilling this duty, this necessity, this imperative?

The most often used arguments of the carnal mind are: 1. I don’t know how to pray effectively. 2. Is it really so important to do all this every day? 3. I know I should, but I just don’t have the time. What about these “arguments” are they valid? Well, let’s consider them, one at a time.

First, “I don’t know how to pray effectively.” (May I say here, that I am convinced most of us already know far more about praying than we are putting into practice.) Let me tell you a true story of a friend of mine who is a C.S.B. because in his practice, he had encountered so many patients who were not doing their daily work and who said they didn’t know how – he determined as a new teacher that no one who went through class with him would ever be able to say he didn’t know how to give a treatment or work for themselves daily. And he was so conscientious to cover this very thoroughly each year in class. He knew he had done a good job. So during one of his later Association addresses, some five or six years later, he asked how many of the pupils knew how to give a good thorough treatment and could do confident daily work.

He beamed - as he expected every hand to go up. But to his surprise and dismay, only one or two hands were raised.

How could this be? What is it that suggests I don't know how?" God is not telling you that you don't know how. (1) You know, for example, that you can start with the instructions in the three items just read from the Manual and use those as a basis for our prayers. (2) Also, the Lord's Prayer, with its spiritual interpretation. (And let's not just say the Lord's Prayer, we need to pray the Lord's Prayer.) Then, of course, (3) the daily study of the Bible and the Textbook, and Mrs. Eddy's other writings are treasure chests of examples and instruction on how to pray better.

A simple basic in this prayer, whether for ourselves or for others, is that we recognize what is true about man. (1) We should, therefore, affirm, declare, claim, - yes, insist upon, - health, orderly accomplishment, ability, love and inspiration. These are natural to God's man. (2) We then deny those things that are unnatural - fear, discouragement, inability, inadequacy, division, rivalry, suspicion, hurt feelings, resentment, personal sense. We become alert to these suggestions or errors, - these "2 plus 1 are 4's" and heal them quickly, before they have a chance to manifest themselves in sickness and sin.

And as we discussed in the talk in June, Mrs. Eddy indicates in her writings that our prayers should be specific; that is, our prayers must correct each specific lie with a specific truth. For instance, if we are grappling with fear, we will insist upon confidence, assurance, and peace.

If we feel confused, we must claim as our mind the one Mind which is not the author of confusion, but of clear thinking, perception, understanding, inspiration, ability and spiritual poise.

If resentment is troubling us, we must work with forgiveness, love, compassion.

And discord must be replaced with the deep conviction that harmony, gentleness, and grace are the spiritual facts - operating right where the discord seems to be.

Discouragement is always the result of looking at the error instead of focusing on the Truth.

We must insist upon healing – not willfully; but with our insistence based on spiritual fact. If healing doesn't come immediately, we recognize, detect, and deny all further suggestion such as:

- (1) "Christian Science doesn't heal"; or that
- (2) "it heals others, but not me"; or
- (3) "it can heal some things, but not this"; or that
- (4) "my understanding just isn't great enough now to expect healing"; or
- (5) "that it used to work for me, but it's harder when you get older."

Those are not facts. They are lies! Mistakes! Misconceptions! They are all "2 plus 1 is 4."

The truth is Christian Science heals. Period! It heals everything, for everyone, at any time! When faithfully and persistently applied, Christian Science heals.

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Another aspect of animal magnetism is termed "personal sense" and is one that always needs to be honestly and fearlessly dealt with. It is so important that we daily let go of a mortal, material sense of selfhood and acknowledge and understand and demonstrate our true spiritual selfhood – that selfhood which is the pure reflection of God, the Christ consciousness.

So many of our problems, our limitations, our weaknesses are the result of personal sense undetected and unhandled, and which often operates as specific malpractice. Being alert to the claim of personal sense, we can more readily detect animal magnetism as malpractice at work.

Remember, it can only find expression through a person. It has no body, no mouth, no mind. It has to work through a person. We can and must refuse to do animal magnetism's work for it.

With every passing year as a maturing Christian Scientist, I become more alert in the handling specifically of this claim. We must deny the reality of evil in order to destroy it. Our Leader assures us, "It is scientific to abide in conscious harmony, in health-giving, deathless Truth and Love. To do this, mortals must first open their eyes to all the illusive forms, methods, and subtlety of error, in order that the illusion, error, may be destroyed; if this is not done, mortals will become the victims of error." (Ret 64:24-29)

To illustrate this, I would like to read an experience from a patient who has given permission to share it. She writes:

A coworker in my office decided she wanted my position. She began a campaign to get me out in any way she could. She did everything she could to sabotage my work. I couldn't believe it! I had always endeavored to practice the Golden Rule. There had been no unpleasant arguments between this coworker and myself. As the severity of these actions increased, terrible physical problems ensued which were obviously a vicious attack. I called for prayerful practitioner support. A beautiful complete healing of the physical condition followed. But I found I had more to learn.

Animal magnetism and hypnotism were so aggressive that my supervisor became falsely convinced and I was given a poor Performance Appraisal. Then I was told my job would be eliminated, and I was to be let go, although my workload had increased tremendously. I spoke with both the Vice President of my department, and the Vice President of Personnel. No one had any evidence of wrongdoing on my part nor could they give me specifics on how to improve my performance.

Then I was told I would not be let go, but that I would be kept on as a “gratuity” due to my previous good record. I explained that was not an acceptable situation to me; and with all integrity I couldn’t do that, and I asked for a transfer to another position in the company.

Then other painful physical symptoms developed. Mortal mind was trying to convince me that this was an insurmountable situation. The severity of the physical symptoms seemed unbearable at times. Through the steadfast work of the practitioner again I was completely healed.

The work helped me realize, more clearly than ever before, that since God is All, evil is nothing. There is NO animal magnetism or hypnotism that can rob me of anything that is rightfully mine. With this, and the fuller understanding of my dominion, as His image and likeness, I saw that animal magnetism and hypnotism could not use me or anyone else to interfere with my career, my supply, or my relationships. I am about my Father’s business.

After much persistent work, the following adjustments have taken place:

1. The coworker that wanted my position so badly is settled into a broader sense of her job.
2. My job has not been eliminated, much to everyone’s surprise.
3. My excessive workload was recognized. Two people were hired and assigned to an excess portion of my job.

All this was wonderful, but most wonderful is this – the greatest adjustment has been my spiritual growth. I had unknowingly entertained a very naive, mistaken concept regarding evil’s purpose toward man. The mistaken concept was this – since I had no wrong intentions towards anyone, how could they be entertained toward me? Through this new understanding, I have grown to realize that in our human experience, the SUGGESTIONS of animal magnetism are always trying to convince us of their illusions. With my new understanding, I am no longer buying into its guises. Now, I know where to GO when evil tries to use its tactics – straight to God. By getting closer to Him in the understanding of His goodness, His Allness, evil becomes so blatantly obvious.

Each of the symptoms, one by one, fell away into nothingness. Destroyed by good! What a concept, destroyed by good. Error was just obliterated from consciousness AND as a result, from human experience. It happened so silently, noiselessly that I knew through spiritual sense, error is, and always has been, no one and no thing.

Our Leader instructs: “Christian Scientists, be a law to yourselves that mental malpractice cannot harm you either when asleep or when awake.” (S&H 442:30-32) Be that law! Malpractice is not power. “Mal” is a little prefix that means bad. “Malpractice” is simply bad practice – bad thinking. Bad thinking is “not your thinking.” And bad thinking is non-thinking, because it does not come from God. Bad thinking is always the work of animal magnetism. If God is not doing the thinking, no one is, - because there is only one Mind. Know this, and you are then being that law to yourself.

I’ve had so many examples of the necessity of doing this work. Let me share a simple one of my own experiences. I have five children, two of whom were born after I was Journal listed. At one point I was dealing with an overwhelming sense of fatigue. I thought it was simply a matter of all the work I had to do. However, one day a friend of mine, who was also a practitioner, called me and told me that he had heard friends discussing me and my “large” family and one had said, “She must be tired all the time.” And the others agreed. Their reasoning was, “If I am tired with just one child, she must be 5 times as tired.” Wrong!! I started handling (“nothingizing”) personal sense directed at me, and the tiredness lifted.

When I am defending myself from malpractice – whether innocent or whether in the form of envy, malice, jealousy, whatever – I use this analogy. Suppose someone sent a letter bomb to Nola Cook, C.S.B., with my correct street address and city – but to the wrong state. What would happen? Well, if I live in Aurora, Ohio and if it is sent to Aurora, Nebraska, the Post Office would stamp it “Return to Sender, Addressee unknown.” Well, in truth I live in the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven, and all malpractice, alias animal magnetism, operates in the mortal realm



and can never leave that realm. Any malice directed at me is always stamped “Return to sender” and therefore, it can’t find me.

Think of it – a hand grenade with its pin pulled does not destroy anything really. It destroys itself, and all that surrounds it. Mrs. Eddy tells us that, “The only power of evil is to destroy itself.” (S&H 186:19) Error, in any form, is like a hand grenade with the pin pulled. It only destroys itself, and if we don’t hold it close – cherish, excuse or condone error, when it destroys itself, we are far away and safe.

Therefore, it is helpful daily to know that what others may seem to think about us can have no power. It is what God thinks about us that counts. And it is our knowing what God is thinking about us that counts.

I recently saw a title of a book that I just love. I really don’t need to read the book, because the title says it all for me. It is this: “What you think about me is none of my business.”

Second: Now what about the next argument, “I know prayer helps, but is it really necessary to do this every day? I did it quite thoroughly yesterday.”

Our Leader states it plainly. “Daily” – every day! Let me give you a very simple illustration. If you had to leave very early while it was still dark to drive to work, you would put on the car headlights. You would need the light to penetrate the darkness, and illumine the way. And each morning it was dark, you would turn on the headlights while driving.

As long as we are in this human experience, we are in the midst of thought that claims darkness in varying degrees. Our daily prayers are like the light. We need to turn this light on every day, to penetrate the so-called darkness of mortal thought and illumine our way. Just as we cannot use the light from the car headlights from yesterday, we need to realize we need the light of our spiritual prayers today, and every day.

Third: What about the question, “I don’t have enough time?” Daily prayers do not take time! It does take persistence, obedience, and a realization of its importance. We actually find that the result of our daily work is not that it has taken time, it has given us more time. Again, using the previous illustration. Which would take longer, to drive to work in the light of the headlights, or to find your way in the dark?

I heard a wonderful story several years ago that speaks effectively to this point. It seems there was a lumber camp, and a new wood chopper had been hired on. Well, he was amazing. The first day he chopped down more trees in a single day than anyone had ever seen before. And the next day the same. He was incredible! But by the end of the week he had slowed down to about the production level of the other good wood choppers in the camp. But by the next week, his production continued to lag noticeably. Well, the camp boss decided to have a talk with him. And as the lumberjack entered the little trailer that was the field office, the boss noticed the axe that the lumberjack carried with him. As he stared at it, he asked, incredulously – “Man, when did you last sharpen that axe?” And the lumberjack answered – “Not since I started working. I’ve just been too busy chopping trees to take the time to sharpen my axe.”

We realize that it is only mortal mind’s deceptive suggestion that we do not “have time.” We always have time for those things which we realize are really important. As we realize the importance of this solid prayerful work, its illumination will reveal hidden obstacles and deterrents to our progress that will end up saving far more energy and time than it takes.

Think of this. Who had more to do than our Leader? Her workload was very demanding. In establishing the Cause of Christian Science, building a church, healing patients, teaching students, giving lectures, establishing the periodicals and the Christian Science Monitor, writing the textbook, preaching sermons, conducting association meetings, granting interviews, etc. – she did it all and did it all so very well. Yet, it is recorded that she found time to retire three times a day to work for herself.

In a letter to the Board of Directors of The Mother Church, Mrs. Eddy wrote this, “Watch and pray that God directs your meetings and your lives, and your Leader will then be sure that they are blessed in their results.” And another time she wrote: “Attempt nothing without God’s help. Pray for your meetings – attempt nothing without prayer.”

Where do you start with your prayers for Church? Simple. Start with the Truth about Church. What Church? There is only one Church. The only Church there is. The one we find on page 583 of our beloved textbook.

One of the challenges we face when engaged in a “joint” church activity, or even committee work, is that animal magnetism suggests that others are doing the praying. Each of us needs to be praying about our church work – and our outreach to others through Joint Broadcast Committees.

Make it a rule never to pray about Church without first establishing in your own thought just what Church really is. “The structure of Truth and Love; whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle.” (S&H 583:12-13) If whatever is disturbing your thought about Church does not rest upon and proceed from divine Principle, it is no part of Church. It is not really going on. It is unreal, nothing. It must never interfere with the real purpose of Church.

That brings us to another basic point in our prayers for church. What is the purpose of Church? Let’s consider together the second part of the definition of Church. It states the purpose of Church, and this applies to every activity including our broadcast work, as: to afford “proof of its utility...”, to elevate the race, rouse “the dormant understanding from material beliefs to the apprehension of spiritual ideas and the demonstration of divine Science, thereby casting out devils, or error, and healing the sick.” (ibid)

Therefore, the purpose of Church is: to prove; to demonstrate; to uplift, awaken; heal! Again, just as we must never let animal magnetism make us lose sight of what Church is, we must likewise never lose sight of the purpose of Church.

I'd like to tell you something that really happened. A friend of mine, really a quite dedicated and conscientious student of Christian Science, called one Monday morning in tears. She had been disturbed ever since the Sunday morning church service. Finally in the night, after hours of being unable to sleep, she composed a letter to the Board of Trustees of her church. When she called me, she still had not slept, and wanted to read the letter to me before mailing it.

I was amazed as I realized what had disturbed her so deeply. The color of the First Reader's tie. It clashed with the color of the Second Reader's dress.

What was going on here? Well, have you all heard the story of the new little imp who had just gotten a job with the Devil. Even if you have, it bears repeating. His first assignment was to attend a Christian Science membership meeting and create a division, or disturbance. He really tried hard, but returned to the Devil totally defeated. The Devil questioned him as to his tactics. And he answered, "Well, I tried to get them to disagree on the nature of God, but they were all of one mind. Then I tried to get them to disagree on the subject of the Christ, but they were all of one mind. I tried to get them to deny the Bible, or Mrs. Eddy, but I got nowhere. I just tried everything." The Devil just chuckled and said, "Don't worry. You can get them next time. Don't bother with any theological issues. Just get them to discuss the color of the walls, or the drapes, or the rugs, or the hours of the services, the music, or the location of the Reading Room, the choice of Readers, or musicians or board members. That will work every time."

Now, it's our job to see that it doesn't work at all. And it won't if we keep before us the real and only purpose of Church – healing. Every single church activity exists for that reason only. Let us always include in our prayers for Church a firm establishment of the success of the healing purpose of Church.

Now, back to the telephone call from my friend about the color of the Reader's tie. I asked if the color could interfere with the healing message being read in the service. She answered, "No, but shouldn't Christian Scientists express perfection?" Again, I asked her about the healing

purpose of Church, and asked this question, “Which is more conducive to a healing atmosphere – a perfectly matched tie – or a perfectly harmonious thought?” With a little more discussion my friend soon realized she didn’t have to change the color of the tie, but she could change the quality of her thinking. And that is what would contribute to the healing atmosphere of the church service. The letter was never sent.

I could see so clearly that this was not my friend’s thinking. It was that little imp or animal magnetism at work. And if the imp can keep each one of us stirred up, or critical, or angry, or disturbed, or discouraged, or preoccupied in even some little way – who then would be supporting the healing message of the readings, the healing atmosphere of Church, the healing presence of the Christ, the healing purpose of the broadcast work.

Now I’m not implying that many of these human things may not need correcting. What I am saying is that being disturbed or discouraged does not heal them. Praying heals them. Before we do or say anything critical about church, we need to pray, and pray, and pray.

Now, often our deep consecrated prayers, lead us to action – action in obedience to the Manual and our beloved Leader’s teaching. But our action must be based on Principle, filled with Christly love, and never personal in nature.

The well-loved statement from the textbook, “A spiritual idea has not a single element of error, and this truth removes properly whatever is offensive.” (S&H 463:12-13) is just as true and applicable to a church as it is to man. The idea of God, called Church, your church, my church, the structure of Truth and Love in reality, has not a single element of error, and holding to this prayerfully, persistently, humbly will properly remove whatever is offensive.

Included in our prayer for Church, should be the firm handling of the suggestions of lack: lack of workers, lack of willingness, lack of inspiration, lack of supply, lack of love, lack of alertness, lack of commitment. These can never be facts about Church. They are again suggestions – lies, illusions, mistaken concepts. They are all “2 plus 1 is four.” By knowing and insisting upon the

specific truths about each lie of lack we can see God's law of abundance manifested right where the illusion of lack seems to be.

For example: I belong to a church housed in an exceptionally large, beautiful edifice built in the '20's – truly an exquisite architectural gem. I had heard from some of our members that for some time they rarely had anyone speak to them, and they felt "outside" somehow. I have a 40 minute drive to church and this gives me a wonderful opportunity to do solid uninterrupted work for Church. So the following Sunday morning, during my drive, I addressed this imposition in my prayers. I denied any possibility that animal magnetism could influence anyone with stolidity, or cool indifference. I pondered deeply Church as being the structure of Love. Oh, I literally basked in an all-embracing sense of the divine Love that fills all space; that settles on each attendee like a gentle love mantle. I recognized the incredible healing power of that love. I rejoiced in the comforting power of that love. I saw it penetrating deep into the inner parts of every heart in the house.

It was joyous uplifting work. On Monday I received a call from one of the those who had felt so alienated and unnoticed in church. She told me she had never had so many members speak to her and said two individuals even gave her a hug.

I remember an Association speaker telling of taking a walk around the block one summer evening, passing a neighborhood church just as an evening service was about to start. A friendly member, standing on the steps, beckoned to him and invited him to come in. He did. It was a happy experience, as every single member spoke to him, with genuine warmth and friendliness. He was repeatedly invited to come back again. And as he was leaving the Minister was calling after him, following him down the steps to make sure he had a chance to speak to the visitor.

I can't help contrasting this to my experience when I was lecturing a few years ago. More than once when my husband and I visited as strangers, a Christian Science church, often hanging around the foyer for a while afterward, only to be nodded to, or vaguely smiled at. Sometimes

no one spoke at all. However, if I attended being known as a traveling Christian Science lecturer, everyone gathered around and spoke to me.

There is only one explanation for this. Unhandled animal magnetism. What else could so befog into indifference members of a church that is designated by its Founder as "...aflame with divine Love." (S&H 367:8) Is our motive to get more members or is our motive to uplift, rouse, prove and heal?

In our prayers, we must insist upon what is spiritually true and then stick with our insistence. We must expect and demand healing. If healing doesn't come immediately, we then recognize – and detect, and deny all suggestions such as,

"Christian Science doesn't heal"; or that

"It can heal some things, but not this"; or

"It used to work for me, but it's harder when you get older," or

"My understanding just isn't great enough now to expect healing".

Remember, these are not facts. They are lies, mistakes. Again, they are all "2 plus 1 is 4."

And when healing seems delayed, discouragement (another tool of animal magnetism) needs to be persistently resisted. There are times when error needs to be out-willed, out-waited, out-persisted. Our staying power comes from God, and is unopposable. Our beloved Leader tells us "By lifting thought above error... and contending persistently for truth, you destroy error." (S&H 400:18)

Praying heals. Let's not pray little prayers. Let's pray big prayers. Let's know the truth about all mankind. Pray to know that not only are disease and discord not real or true about us, our family, our church, our government, our patients, but that disease and discord are not true at all – for anyone, anywhere. Let's pray prayers that are big enough to break the world's hypnotic belief about whatever particular claim is at hand.

In addition, let's be alert about talking unwisely about animal magnetism's claims, discussing the errors with friends, or repeatedly mentally rehashing them. That's not handling error. That's more like massaging it. Talking doesn't heal. Praying heals.

Take our prayers deep into the spiritual truths about the real nature of man made in the image and likeness of God. Whether or not man knows it, he is always the perfect child of God. Pray to know that not only is disease and discord not real, or true about you, or your family, or your patients, your church, but that disease and discord are not true at all – for anyone anywhere.

To summarize: When acknowledging the Truth about man, his relationship to God, his present possibilities and denying everything that would oppose these glorious truths, we have a right to expect healing. In fact, we have a right to demand healing, because Christian Science heals. We have the right to expect and demand everything that we understand as true about man and about Church: our dominion, our peace, our purpose, our health, our supply, our joy.

Likewise, we have a duty to detect, deny, and destroy every suggestion that opposes our dominion, health, purpose, and joy. And we have the God-given ability to demonstrate that we "cannot be made to neglect" this imperative instruction – as our duty to God, to our Leader and to mankind. Our Way-shower, Christ Jesus, certainly left us a clear example, in his statement about church as built upon a rock against which the very "...gates of hell shall not prevail..." (Matt 16:18)

By doing our work daily, expecting to see results quickly and clearly, refusing to do error's work for it, - we find it easier and easier to live the Christ-life, expressing more of the Christ-like qualities, being more inspired, more perceptive, loving more unselfishly, reacting less and less, and yes, healing more and more.

This is good defense. And this good defense brings us a solid unwavering awareness of our safety. Safety from the claims, the tricks, the lies, the beliefs, the suggestions of animal



magnetism. They are never “my thinking” and never “your thinking”. They are always non-think. “2 plus 1 is 4.”

So what about animal magnetism? We don’t fear it: for it is nothing. We don’t hate it: how can we hate nothing? We don’t ignore it: for as our Leader says, “ignorance of its claims subject us to its abuse.” We don’t message it, or fondle it: by talking about it, or dwelling mentally upon it. We refuse to do its work for it – by making it personal in any way. We detect it. We deny it. We handle it. We know its total nothingness.

Again: we don’t hate it, we don’t fear it, we don’t massage it, - we handle it – as nothing.

And we rejoice in the marvelous all-encompassing nature of God’s ever unfolding Love, tender care, continual guidance, and abundant goodness.

Then we have handled animal magnetism. We have built our strong defense, and have insured a sure safety for ourselves and for our church.

End