

### Synopsis Of Lecture On Christian Science Given January 16th

A lecture on Christian Science by Gavin W. Allan, C.S.B. of Toronto, Canada, was given Monday evening, January 16th at Elm Place school auditorium. The speaker, is a member of the Board of Lectureship of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass. Following is a brief resume of the lecture.

Whether one is affiliated with one of the Christian denominations or not, whether one accepts, is indifferent to, or rejects the teachings of Christianity, one thing is almost certain — he has prayed. He may not have called his mental attitude or effort prayer; he may not have thought of it as prayer; he may represent any implication that he has ever prayed; and yet it is almost certain he has prayed.

**Crying — Listening**  
In its most primitive form prayer is doubtless a cry for help — just a cry. Let me illustrate. Suppose a child has been warned by his father not to do a certain thing. Suppose the child disregards this warning and gets into a predicament from which he cannot free himself, his first impulse is to cry for help. It may be just a cry, a cry addressed to no one in particular; or, it may be a cry to his father, the very person whose warning he disobeyed. In other words, when the child becomes aware that he is in trouble, when he feels or fears he cannot get out unaided, his first impulse is to cry for help.

So it is with us, children of a larger growth; when we find ourselves in difficulty and see no way of extricating ourselves, we cry for help. This is illustrated a number of times in the one hundred and seventh Psalm. You may remember the Psalmist's description of the wanderers in the wilderness: "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble." Also his description of the sailors in a storm: "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble."

Is not this all too frequently the case, that men pray only when they are driven to it by fear? Men who, when their affairs are running smoothly, when their business is flourishing, when their health is good, attribute their successes to themselves and rarely acknowledge the presence of a higher power; when reverses come, when courage fails, when they are "at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord." This has ever been the experience of humanity; that reverses, troubles, distresses, and misfortunes which shake men out of the ruts or habits of living and back to their native impulses, almost invariably drive men to prayer of some sort. Such being the case, prayer must be regarded as one of the native impulses of humanity, and as such is more primitive than the most primitive creed, because, you see, the creed only attempts to formulate or explain what prayer instinctively assumes.

But there is a higher form of prayer than the self-pitying cry for help. Let us turn to the illustration used a few moments ago. Suppose the child had listened to the warning of his father. Suppose that he really desired to comprehend his father's point of view and to bring himself into complete harmony with it. Would not such a desire of itself illustrate a kind of prayer? Indeed, would it not illustrate a higher form of prayer than the impulsive cry for help? Would not an eager listening on our part for the voice of God to direct us be a higher form of prayer than an impulsive cry for help when we find ourselves in trouble? Would not a yearning on our part to understand good be a higher form of prayer than a cry to be extricated from the meshes of evil? In other words, would not listening for God's voice be a higher form of prayer than crying to God?

Now the fact of the matter is that each one of us is always in the

attitude of listening. Two streams of thought seem to be ceaselessly coming our way: one erroneous, the other true; one unreal, the other real. One presents suggestions of fear, poverty, sickness, unhappiness, or sin. The other offers peace, abundance, health, happiness, and purity. To which are we listening? Which group of qualities would we prefer to experience? The good, of course. How can we make these experiences ours? We may begin by listening. And then our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, tells us the next step. In the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (p. 261), she writes, "Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts;" that is, listen for the good, "hold thought steadfastly" to the good, and you will experience the good. Could anything be more reasonable?

But someone may say: Does God really speak to men? Can we hear His message? Just here let me say that there is a hearing that is keener than that of the human ear, a mode of hearing each of us possesses; and the message of Truth can always be heard if we but listen. It may come to us through the counsel of a friend, the words of a book we are reading, a remembered poem, or a passage of Scripture. How frequently have men been lifted out of the darkness of despair by the words of Elihu, as recorded in Job, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life!" What numbers of people have been brought back from invalidism to health and vigor through heeding the message of truth in the "scientific statement of being," as given in our textbook (p. 468): "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. There-

fore man is not material; he is spiritual!"

In the Christian Science textbook (p. 323) Mrs. Eddy speaks of Christian Science as "the 'still, small voice' of Truth uttering itself," and adds, "We are either turning away from this utterance, or are we listening to it and going up higher." And in one of her poems (Poems, p. 14) she has pointed out the true attitude, one which she herself maintained through many years. She says:

"I will listen for Thy voice,  
Lest my footsteps stray;  
I will follow and rejoice  
All the rugged way."

It was this listening attitude which enabled our Leader to fulfill her mission as the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science and unfolded to her the By-Laws of The Mother Church which continue to safeguard the Christian Science organization. One lone New England woman's listening for the voice of God and willingly obeying! With what result? Effects beyond the power of the human mind to compute.

**Unceasing Prayer**  
In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians he exhorts his readers to "pray without ceasing." If prayer necessitated a repetition of words, unceasing prayer would be an impossibility; but since prayer is a mental or spiritual attitude, Paul's command can be obeyed. In this connection let me quote a sentence from our textbook (Science and Health, p. 4): "The habitual struggle to be always good is unceasing prayer." You see, the mental attitude of always desiring good, always striving for it, always willing to obey its demands — such an attitude is, of itself, prayer.

In another passage in our textbook (p. 15) Mrs. Eddy has written, "Self-forgetfulness, purity, and affection are constant prayers." Here Mrs. Eddy has named three qualities which the human mind is not eager to adopt. But qualities which, outstandingly characterized our Master: "Self-forgetfulness." How well does this word describe our Master's attitude! "Not my will,

but thine, be done" was his prayer. He forgot self in remembering God and his fellow men. It may not seem easy to drop our sense of self, to lay down all sense of self-importance, or self-depreciation, all desire for self-ease or self-gratification. The carnal mind seems to insist upon the necessity for a selfhood apart from God. That is its only dwelling place, and it is disinclined to move out. But it is doomed to ejection from human consciousness. And in the measure that we put off the old man and put on the new, in the measure that mortal mind gives place to that "mind . . . which was also in Christ Jesus," we shall acquire self-forgetfulness, and our prayers will be increasingly efficacious.

"Purity." This is a spiritual quality, and it is not difficult to see the very close connection which exists between it and prayer. On page 150 of Miscellaneous Mrs. Eddy describes a phase of prayer which would be beneficial to each of us. She writes, "In speechless prayer, ask God to enable you to reflect God, to become His own image and likeness." Is not this what we really desire, when we take time to think quietly? If it is our real desire to be a pure reflection of God, it ought to have more than a momentary place in our thought. Let us keep it before us more and more until it becomes our dominant desire, our constant prayer.

"Affection." Let us not be backward about adopting, or shamed of manifesting, the tender qualities of Mind: affection, kindness, forgiveness, and love. In I John 3:18 we may read, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." No writer in the Bible has more of love than John, and you remember his answer to the argument that it is possible for a person to love God and hate his fellow man. He said "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Impossible!

What an affection Jesus had for mankind! How he yearned to bless his fellows! His affection went out to all to gather them to the truth of their spiritual manhood, and this pure affection was a constant prayer. As we come to know,

through Christian Science, what we are, and what our neighbor really is, that pure affection will develop and be manifested in us — an affection which may properly be called prayer.

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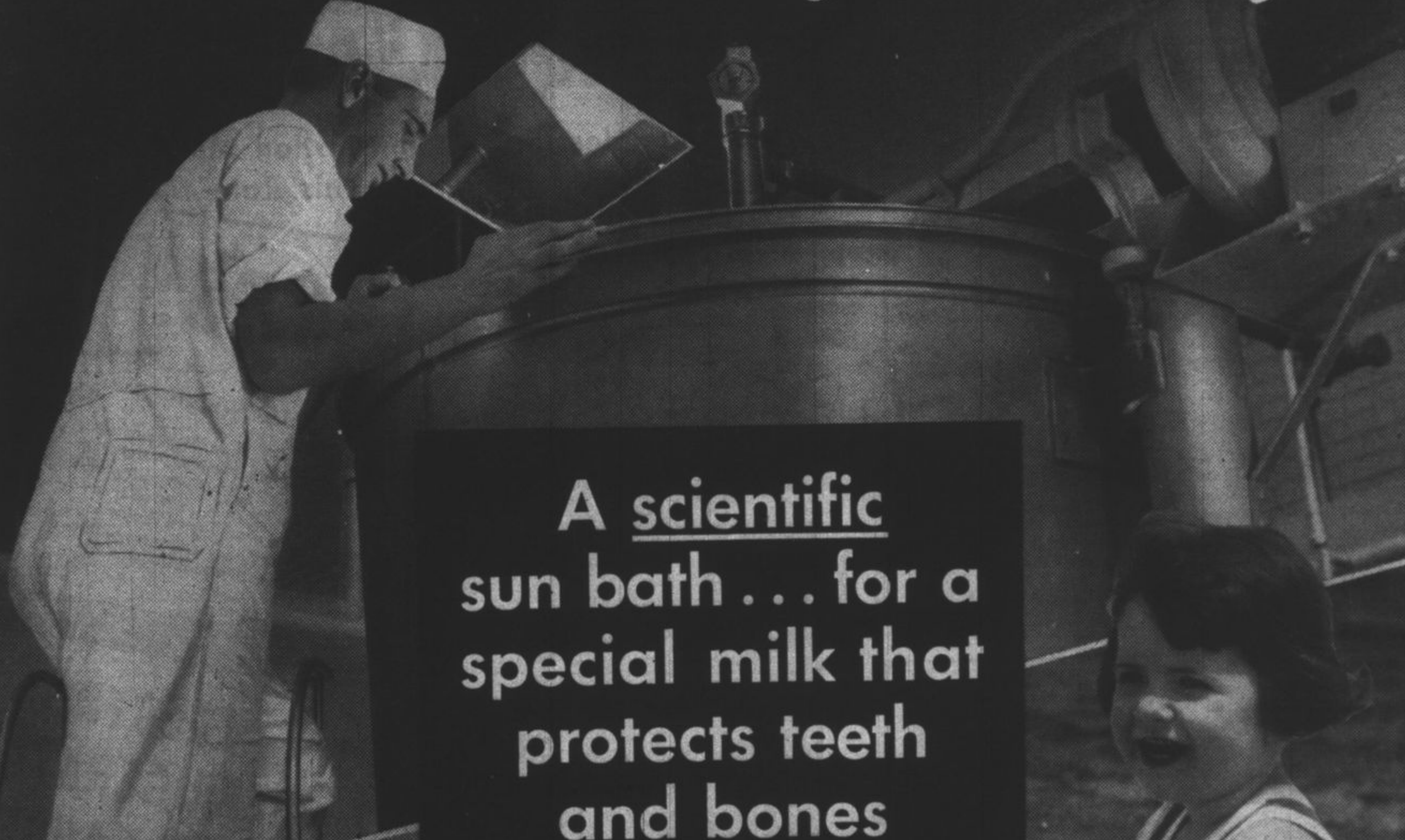
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