

Subject: Honestly Seeking

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Hymns: 305, 64, 448

Introduction: The topic is a play on the phrase Mary Baker Eddy used when she dedicated her textbook to "honest seekers for Truth."

The Bible

(The Message)

Mark 10:17-27

17 As he went out into the street, a man came running up, greeted him with great reverence, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?"

18 Jesus said, "Why are you calling me good? No one is good, only God.

19 You know the commandments: Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't lie, don't cheat, honor your father and mother."

20 He said, "Teacher, I have—from my youth—kept them all!"

21 Jesus looked him hard in the eye—and loved him! He said, "There's one thing left: Go sell whatever you own and give it to the poor. All your wealth will then be heavenly wealth. And come follow me."

22 The man's face clouded over. This was the last thing he expected to hear, and he walked off with a heavy heart. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and not about to let go.

23 Looking at his disciples, Jesus said, "Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who 'have it all' to enter God's kingdom?"

24 The disciples couldn't believe what they were hearing, but Jesus kept on: "You can't imagine how difficult.

25 I'd say it's easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for the rich to get into God's kingdom."

26 *That* set the disciples back on their heels. "Then who has any chance at all?" they asked.

27 Jesus was blunt: "No chance at all if you think you can pull it off by yourself. Every chance in the world if you let God do it."

Proverbs 3:5-12

5 Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own.

6 Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.

7 Don't assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil!

8 Your body will glow with health, your very bones will vibrate with life!

9 Honor God with everything you own; give him the first and the best.

10 Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over.

11 But don't, dear friend, resent God's discipline; don't sulk under his loving correction.

12 It's the child he loves that God corrects; a father's delight is behind all this.

John 9:39-41

39 Jesus then said, "I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

40 Some Pharisees overheard him and said, "Does that mean you're calling us blind?"

41 Jesus said, "If you were really blind, you would be blameless, but since you claim to see everything so well, you're accountable for every fault and failure.

John 10:1-16

1 "Let me set this before you as plainly as I can. If a person climbs over or through the fence of a sheep pen instead of going through the gate, you know he's up to no good—a sheep rustler!

2 The shepherd walks right up to the gate.

3 The gatekeeper opens the gate to him and the sheep recognize his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

4 When he gets them all out, he leads them and they follow because they are familiar with his voice.

5 They won't follow a stranger's voice but will scatter because they aren't used to the sound of it."

6 Jesus told this simple story, but they had no idea what he was talking about.

7 So he tried again. "I'll be explicit, then. I am the Gate for the sheep.

8 All those others are up to no good—sheep stealers, every one of them. But the sheep didn't listen to them.

9 I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture.

10 A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

11 "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary.

12 A hired man is not a real shepherd. The sheep mean nothing to him. He sees a wolf come and runs for it, leaving the sheep to be ravaged and scattered by the wolf.

13 He's only in it for the money. The sheep don't matter to him.

14 "I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own sheep and my own sheep know me.

15 In the same way, the Father knows me and I know the Father. I put the sheep before myself, sacrificing myself if necessary.

16 You need to know that I have other sheep in addition to those in this pen. I need to gather and bring them, too. They'll also recognize my voice. Then it will be one flock, one Shepherd.

Psalms 23:1-6

1 God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.

2 You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from.

3 True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.

4 Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

5 You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies. You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.

6 Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life. I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.

Science and Health

(The first citation is from "Fruitage" – I found an interesting account of an individual who was also a seeker. It's titled "Born again" and was in April, 1904.)

667:20-668:26

It was in April, 1904, that I first heard the "still, small voice" of the Christ and received healing through Christian Science; and the blessings have been so many since, that it would take too much space to name them. Reared from childhood in an intellectual atmosphere, my paternal grandfather having been an orthodox minister of the old school for forty years, and my father a deep student, ever seeking for the truth of all things, I began early to ponder and to study into the meaning of life, and came to the conclusion before I was twenty that though God probably existed in some remote place, still it was impossible to connect Him with my present living. My highest creed, therefore, became, "Do right because it *is* right and not for fear of being punished." Then began the suffering. Sorrow after sorrow followed each other in rapid succession; for ten long years there was no rest, the road was indeed long and hard and had no turning, until finally the one thing that had stood by me all through the trials, namely, my health, gave way, and with that went my last hope. But the last hour of the night had come, the dawn of day was at hand; a dear friend left Science and Health upon my piano one day, saying that I would gain much good by reading it.

Glad to get away from my own poor thoughts, I opened the "little book" and began to read. I had read only a short time when such a wonderful transformation took place! I was renewed; born again. Mere words cannot tell the story of the mighty uplifting that carried me to the very gates of heaven. When I began to read the book, life was a burden, but before I had finished reading it the first time, I was doing all my housework and doing it easily; and since that glorious day I have been a well woman. My health is

splendid, and I am striving to let my light so shine that others may be led to the truth.

xii:23-26

In the spirit of Christ's charity, — as one who "hopeth all things, endureth all things," and is joyful to bear consolation to the sorrowing and healing to the sick, — she commits these pages to honest seekers for Truth.

1:1

The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God, — a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love. Regardless of what another may say or think on this subject, I speak from experience. Prayer, watching, and working, combined with self-immolation, are God's gracious means for accomplishing whatever has been successfully done for the Christianization and health of mankind.

1:10

Thoughts unspoken are not unknown to the divine Mind. Desire is prayer; and no loss can occur from trusting God with our desires, that they may be moulded and exalted before they take form in words and in deeds.

4:3-26

What we most need is the prayer of fervent desire for growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds. To keep the commandments of our Master and follow his example, is our proper debt to him and the only worthy evidence of our gratitude for all that he has done. Outward worship is not of itself sufficient to express loyal and heartfelt gratitude, since he has said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The habitual struggle to be always good is unceasing prayer. Its motives are made manifest in the blessings they bring, — blessings which, even if not acknowledged in audible words, attest our worthiness to be partakers of Love.

Simply asking that we may love God will never make us love Him; but the longing to be better and holier, expressed in daily watchfulness and in striving to assimilate more of the divine character, will mould and fashion us anew, until we awake in His likeness. We reach the Science of Christianity through demonstration of the divine nature; but in this wicked world goodness will "be evil spoken of," and patience must bring experience.

8:10-30

If a man, though apparently fervent and prayerful, is impure and therefore insincere, what must be the comment upon him? If he reached the loftiness of his prayer, there would be no occasion for comment. If we feel the aspiration, humility, gratitude, and love which our words express, — this God accepts; and it is wise not to try to deceive ourselves or others, for "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." Professions and audible prayers are like charity in one respect, — they "cover the multitude of sins." Praying for humility with whatever fervency of expression does not always mean a desire for it. If we turn away from the poor, we are not ready to receive the reward of Him who blesses the poor. We confess to having a very wicked heart and ask that it may be laid bare before us, but do we not already know more of this heart than we are willing to have our neighbor see?

We should examine ourselves and learn what is the affection and purpose of the heart, for in this way only can we learn what we honestly are.

11:22-31

We know that a desire for holiness is requisite in order to gain holiness; but if we desire holiness above all else, we shall sacrifice everything for it. We must be willing to do this, that we may walk securely in the only practical road to holiness. Prayer cannot change the unalterable Truth, nor can prayer alone give us an understanding of Truth; but prayer, coupled with a fervent habitual desire to know and do the will of God, will bring us into all Truth.

21:1-5

If Truth is overcoming error in your daily walk and conversation, you can finally say, "I have fought a good fight . . . I have kept the faith," because you are a better man. This is having our part in the at-one-ment with Truth and Love.

254:24-32

If you venture upon the quiet surface of error and are in sympathy with error, what is there to disturb the waters? What is there to strip off error's disguise?

If you launch your bark upon the ever-agitated but healthful waters of truth, you will encounter storms. Your good will be evil spoken of. This is the cross. Take it up and bear it, for through it you win and wear the crown. Pilgrim on earth, thy home is heaven; stranger, thou art the guest of God.