



Keep on!

Janet Heineman Clements

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At one time a competition was held for the best poem on how to attain success. This was the poem that won the prize:

Keep on, Keep on, Keep on,
Keep on, Keep on,
Keep on, Keep on, Keep on,
Keep on,
Keep on!

The quality of persistence —of continuing steadfastly in a purpose despite opposition—is a key ingredient to success in our lives. It certainly played an important role in the lives of many Biblical figures. Nehemiah's persistence in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, despite repeated attempts to stop or delay the work, led to its completion. Paul persisted in spreading Christianity despite imprisonment, shipwreck, stoning, and house arrest. He lived what he wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians: "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." And in First Thessalonians he counsels, "Pray without ceasing."¹

Christ Jesus illustrated the value of persistence in prayer through two parables. One tells about a man seeking bread at his friend's door at midnight. He received the loaves, not because he was a friend but because of his *importunity*. And in another parable a judge finally brought justice to a widow because of her continual coming to him.² Jesus further instructed his disciples, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."³

"If ye continue in my word" There's that quality of persistence as it applies to spiritual healing. Wouldn't that include a firmness of conviction that God, Spirit, is All, an unfaltering affirmation of the spiritual fact that man is God's perfect expression, and a resolute denial of material misconceptions?

Why is persistence required in spiritual healing? Because of the tenacity of the common belief that physical conditions and human history determine the status and experience of man. Mrs. Eddy observes in *Science and Health*: "The refutation of the testimony of material sense is not a difficult task in view of the conceded falsity of this testimony. The refutation becomes arduous, not because the testimony of sin or disease is true, but solely on account of the tenacity of belief in its truth, due to the force of education and the overwhelming weight of opinions on the wrong side,—all teaching that the body suffers, as if matter could have sensation."⁴ This "wrong side" is a product of what St. Paul termed the carnal mind, which he told the Romans is "enmity against God."⁵ Isn't that the mentality that opposed Nehemiah in his effort to rebuild the wall?

What is it, then, that enables us to persist in prayer to God in the face of the carnal mind's claims of failure, whether they be about our business, health, relationships, or supply? Is it sheer human will? No. It is our steady yielding to the operation of the divine will, the law of God, Truth. Evil's opposition to good is overcome only by our persistent realization of the eternity and omnipresence of good, the absolute supremacy of Truth.

Persistence in prayer is not a mere repetition of certain words or Bible citations. It expresses the heart's desire and determination to be only conscious of what is really true, what God, good, has created. It is keeping thought open to the Christ, the divine healing influence in the human consciousness, which reveals the truth that frees us. To persist in claiming one's status as God's child is to be expectant of the full bestowal of God's goodness.

One of the definitions of *persist* is "to endure." What endures? Doesn't Truth? Truth, God, persists. Man, as God's likeness, expresses Truth. Man, therefore, has no option but to be that steadfast, unwavering, continuous expression of Truth.

It is related in *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy* that Mrs. Eddy once asked a woman what she would do if she were praying for a case that did not yield. The woman explained the various approaches she would take in her prayer. Mrs. Eddy then asked her what she would do if the case still did not yield. "I suppose I'd give it up," said the woman. "And that," Mrs. Eddy said, "is just what you should *not* do."⁶

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Keep on! Isn't that what she's telling us to do?

A number of years ago, two tiny growths appeared on my leg. They seemed harmless, but when a third appeared, I asked for help through prayer from a Christian Science practitioner. I felt uplifted from the help, but there was no healing. Through the years I continued to pray about the situation and had the help of a practitioner from time to time. I continued to be spiritually inspired through the study and prayer, but no progress was evident. There were additional growths that appeared. Finally it got to the point that my leg was covered with them and I had been in pain for about two years. There was evidence of a wasting away of the leg, and the other symptoms were frightening.

I had two little children at the time and wondered if I'd be able to continue to care for them. At no time did I wish to have a medical diagnosis or turn to medical treatment. Nor did I want to give up. At this point, however, I felt overwhelmed, and discouragement was putting up an intense fight.

As a very young child, though, I had gone with my mother to the Wednesday testimony meetings at a branch Church of Christ, Scientist, and had heard through those years healings of so many kinds of difficulties. Because of this unquestionable proof, I had an absolute conviction that the Science of Christ was demonstrable. Now in my moment of great need, with all humility, I reached out to my

Father-Mother God in prayer, asking Him to show me the way to demonstrate this truth. The thought came to look in *The Christian Science Journal* and call a certain practitioner for help. I didn't know her, but this was what I was led to do.

This woman's grace and compassion were very evident through our conversation. As we began to work together, two ideas dawned in my thought. The first was that I was at that very moment the perfect, flawless child of God, His spiritual image. From an absolute spiritual standpoint, I didn't need to strive for perfection; in God's sight I was at that point perfect and always had been, because that's the way He made me.

The other idea was this statement from *Science and Health*: "What we most need is the prayer of fervent desire for growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds."⁷

I saw that my primary desire must be to grow in grace, not just to have a physical healing. And I had to put that prayer for grace into action by expressing "patience, meekness, love, and good deeds." My life had to be in line with my prayer. And so I began living this prayer of grace with whomever I was with—my children, neighbors, friends, people in stores. The demand was for a reformation of character, a purification of consciousness through the acceptance of my perfect spiritual selfhood. The demand was to conform my thoughts and actions to the model of Christ. At one point I wondered if I had enough grace, but I was reassured by the Bible statement 'And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.'⁸

One morning I found that the growths were smaller. And then the complete healing came right along. All the growths disappeared without a mark. The pain left, and the leg was wholly restored to normalcy. That healing occurred a number of years ago, and it has been permanent.

The temptation to give up had been great, but the conviction of the ever-presence of Truth was greater. Isn't it the Christ, that ever-present divine influence, which persistently impels and compels us to continue praying despite material sense testimony? This saving activity of Christ awakens us to the present perfection of our being and then leads us through grace to conform our thoughts and actions to this truth. The Bible states, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."⁹

During those very challenges that require persistence and steadfast resolve, the tender presence of Christ wraps us in the mantle of Truth, cradles us in the love of God, and enables us to walk through the trial victoriously.

Keep on! Keep on!

¹ [I Cor. 15:58](#); [I Thess. 5:17](#).↑

² See [Luke 11:5-8](#) and [18:2-5](#) .↑

³ [John 8:31, 32](#).↑

⁴ *Science and Health*, [p. 396](#).↑

⁵ [Rom. 8:7](#).↑

⁶ *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy* (Boston: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1979), p. 94 .↑

⁷ *Science and Health*, [p. 4](#).↑

⁸ [II Cor. 9:8](#).↑

⁹ [Eph. 2:8](#).↑