

Pk's Perspectives ... The Struggle Is Real!

Sometimes the struggle is real! Certain days it is a challenge to keep on when we do not seem to be making any progress; keeping on is exponentially more difficult when it appears as if we're losing ground!

The French Revolution: A History was written by the Scottish essayist, philosopher, and historian Thomas Carlyle. The three-volume work, first published in 1837, charts the course of the French Revolution from 1789 to the height of the Reign of Terror (1793-94) and culminates in 1795. When Carlyle had finished the first volume of his book, he gave the finished manuscript to his friend John Stuart Mill and asked him to read it. It took Mr. Mill several days to read the manuscript and as he read, he realized that it was truly a great literary achievement. Late one night as Mr. Mill finished the last page, he laid the manuscript aside by his chair in the den of his home and retired to his bedroom. The next morning the maid came; seeing those papers on the floor, she thought they were simply discarded. She threw them into the fire, and they were burned. Totally destroyed.

On March 6, 1835 – he never forgot the date – Mr. Mill paid a visit to Thomas Carlyle's home. In deep agony, Mr. Mill told Carlyle that his manuscript had been irrevocably destroyed by fire and related the details of how such a calamitous happening had come about. Carlyle replied, "It's all right. I'm sure I can start over in the morning and do it again." Finally, after great apologies, John Mill departed and returned to his home. Carlyle watched his friend walking away and said to his wife, "Poor Mill. I feel so sorry for him. I did not want him to see how crushed I really am." Then heaving a sigh, Carlyle said, "Well, the manuscript is gone, so I had better start writing again." It was a long, hard process especially because the inspiration was gone. It is always hard to recapture the verve and the vigor if a man has to do a thing like that twice. But he set out to do it again and finally completed the work.

Thomas Carlyle walked away from disappointment. He could do nothing about a manuscript that was destroyed in a fire. So it is with us: there are times when we must find the resolve to get up, get going, and begin taking the first difficult steps away from the thing that has knocked us down. In the final verse of the poem Keeping On, the unknown author penned these words:

I've drained the cup of disappointment and pain,
I've gone many days without song.
But I've sipped enough nectar from the rose of life
To make me want to live on.

God shares this wisdom in 1 Corinthians 15:58: "With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort." Have you been dispirited in some area of your life; is that which you pursue a worthy goal? Yes? Then get up and get after it! The depth of our character is revealed in our own Thomas Carlyle-type moments of crushing disappointment. Here's a life motto you might want to consider adopting: "Knocked down seven times; get up eight." Cya in Sunday School and Worship, PK.