

THE NEVER-FAILING SPRING

In a place where we once had our home there was a spring, famous in all the country round from the fact that it was never known to fail, or even to vary to any perceptible degree, either in volume or temperature. It bubbled up at the base of a very high mountain, close by the country road side. And there it may be found this day, year in and year out, through summer's parching heat and winter's biting frost, always the same, offering up to every passer-by a precious draft of clear, cold water. Other springs dry up; the water in the brooks sink away in the thirsty sand, and even the river becomes a poor insignificant thing, crawling along in the middle of its wide channel, the very shadow of its former self, but this spring—*the* spring—keeps up its steady flow in defiance of the sun's withering rays and the torrid atmosphere. It seems insensible to climatic changes, and to it all seasons are alike. And this ever-flowing spring is known far and wide in that country. Every school boy knows it well and loves it, too, and so do the laborers in the field. Many knees bow at its brink in the summer time, and hot, sunburnt, toilworn faces are often mirrored in its crystal waters. The people have great faith in this spring. They would as soon expect the mountain to be removed as not to find it giving forth its bounteous stream. And when all other sources fail them, they feel sure that they know of one that will never deny their thirst. And, as we have said, the spring's temperature never changes. It marks the same degree all the year round. For this reason its waters seem intensely cold in summer, and slightly lukewarm in the dead of winter. It does not conform itself to the state of the atmosphere. The reason of this we shall explain presently. But what an illustration we have here of constancy—this spring that never fails.

So many professing Christians are like those surface springs, that are but the mere drainings of the upper soil. They promise well in certain seasons; they gush and flow in copious streams when the air is full of rain and the ground is soaked with water. It is easy enough to be a spring then. But where are they when the dry time comes, when the sun is high and the ground is baked with heat? Men seek them, and alas! they are not to be found. When springs are needed most they disappear, and where their waters flowed is nothing found but arid sand. It is not so hard to keep up appearances of spiritual strength in times of revival, when „showers of blessings” fall around, but in times of drought, under the scorn of the world, under the burning heat of bitter opposition, of fiery trial, of persecution—how is it with the soul then? Does it remain in its place, giving out as before the gracious influences of a pure and meek and lowly spirit, or does it disappear and fade away in sin and worldliness?

Oh, how good a thing it is to be a constant Christian! A Christian through all times and seasons, in public and private, in all circumstances and conditions of life. Do you not know such souls—sweet-

tempered, gentle, gracious souls, always near to God, always with their faces shining with a light from heaven? You always know where to find them—at the foot of the cross—ready to give you, a weary, thirsty seeker, a precious draught from the overflowing chalice of their own faith-filled, loving hearts. But the reason why the temperature of the spring is always the same is *because its sources are deep*. It has its origin far down below the surface of the earth among the very foundations of the mountain itself. It is not fed by the drainage of the surface, but by an ever-living rock-hewn reservoir down in the secret places of the hills. All its constancy and sweetness and purity is owing to the fact that its sources are deep. Herein we have the explanation of a mystery in spiritual things. The faith that is firm and changes not to suit the fashion of the times, the soul that is ever full of grace and truth, the character that is Christ-like, conforming not to the ways of the world, *must have its sources deep*—deep down in the bosom of the Rock. It is no wonder that many fail who profess faith in Christ, depending, as they do, upon transitory emotions upon shallow convictions and passing excitements. They cannot endure a spiritual drouth, because they have no depth. They have no real, vital union with the only One who is able to keep them from falling, and to present them „faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”—*N.Y. Observer*.

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