

THE PUMP'S SECRET

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OURS was a London family so that country life was strange to us. Once, however, when we were staying in the country my brother took me out for a walk. We passed by a farm gate where there was a pump. No sooner did we see it than we both began to feel very thirsty. It is a strange thing that you often do not realize how thirsty you are until you are suddenly given a promise [59/60] of water, and then your mouth seems to get so dry and you long for a drink. It is still more strange that when you are reminded of water but cannot actually get it, your thirst grows even stronger. This is what happened to us, for however hard we pumped the handle, nothing at all came from the spout.

I tried, my brother tried, we tried together; but all to no avail. There was just a clanking noise from the handle as we pumped it up and down, but not one single drop of water came from the spout. What made us even more thirsty was that there was a can by the side of the gate, and this had some water in it. The water did not look dirty but we were so unsure as to what it was that we dare not drink from it. How hot the day now seemed! How thirsty we were! And what a pity that the pump was mocking us by giving up no water!

As we stood there arguing, a farm worker came trudging slowly up the road, and when he reached us he asked what the matter was. We explained that the pump had run dry, but he smilingly told us that this was not the case and that there was plenty of water in the well. We explained our failure to get any, rather hoping that as he looked such a big strong man he would work the pump for us. Instead of taking the handle, however, he picked up the can, poured its water back into the top of the pump, and just said: 'Now try'! My brother just worked the handle up and down, and at once a steady stream of fresh water began to gush from the spout. All the pump needed was priming. The large amount of water was there, but it was out of reach. Just a little of the same water poured into the pump released as much as we needed.

I did not understand priming. I am not quite sure that I do now. I doubt whether that simple countryman understood either. But we got the water. We did not have to know the theory -- we just had to act. The water in the can had come from the pump. It just needed to be put back into it to release the flow.

This can teach us a spiritual lesson. There are many times when we work away at

prayer just as my brother and I had done with the pump handle, but however hard we work, nothing seems to happen. There is a secret. Perhaps God is waiting for us to put something in before He releases His flow of blessing. We cannot make it ourselves, any more than the countryman or we could make water, but we can take some of what God has already given us and -- as it were -- put it back in the pump. Surely we have some of His love to give. Surely we have some praise to offer. It just means giving back to Him what He has first given to us. This will release the flow of grace and power which we and others are so greatly needing. It was the Lord Jesus who said: "Give, and it shall be given to you" (Luke 6:38). So let us stop questioning, arguing or doubting and learn to prime the pump.

From A Witness And A Testimony 1973, London, England