

Spring Cleaning

A report by the Always-Right Reverend Doctor Isaiah J Trin (Doc Trin, for short)

Late May or early June was the time for spring cleaning. This did not have anything to do with cleaning the house. This actually had to do with cleaning the spring – or, to be technically correct, the SPRINGS – plural. We really didn't care if the house was clean. That was someone else's worry. But we needed the springs to be clean. Perhaps I should lay a little foundation here.

August was the time of year to pick the blueberry crop. That was a hot, tiresome, back-breaking, THIRSTY job. We were up at five in the morning, heading out to the fields by six. We worked until about five in the afternoon, mostly in direct sunlight. My, how we prayed for rain. It never came. They have passed laws now, so that young folks can't work like that any more. It's not healthy, they say. It's "child labor," and not right. Well, I'm not for picking on anyone or abusing a child, but perhaps if we had a little more child labor, we'd have a little less child delinquency. If you get them tired enough, they have a harder time getting into trouble. And if we wanted clothes to wear to school, we picked blueberries. When you got up in the winter, and there was snow at the foot of the bed, you were glad you had clothes, and glad you had raked blueberries. But back to the springs.

In order to provide for the general welfare of the blueberry rakers, there had to be something to take care of the thirst problem. There was no Gatorade back then, and I don't think there was even any Tang. They didn't make that until we went to the moon. But there was water. I think God created that for taking care of man's thirst problem, didn't he? And you know what? I think researchers have determined that it does a good job of that. Now they tell us that we need to drink it whether we are thirsty or not. Well, we didn't have that problem in the blueberry fields. We were thirsty.

If you were so inclined, you could bring your own water jug, and many people did that. But there was not much ice back then, either, so in the afternoon, the water had a tendency to get rather tepid. That's a fancy word for "stale." We were most fortunate in our "mountain ground" to have springs where we could get water. Nothing ever tasted as good as spring water. We had five hundred acres of ground. Most of the ground was covered by about five inches of soil. Under that was a few hundred feet of granite. Under the granite was water – a lot of water. And in some places where there were cracks in the granite, the water came to the surface just to be a help to us. And we were most appreciative. It bubbled up in springs and created streams that ran down the vales.

In the fall of the year, the hardwood trees that lined the blueberry fields would all shed their leaves. The leaves would fall into the springs. They would get all wet and settle to the bottom of the spring and turn into mud and slime. If you let the spring go for a couple of years, you wouldn't even know it was there. So along about the first of June, Dad would declare it was time for spring cleaning. That meant a couple of long, hard days. But it also meant a chance to spend a couple of days with Dad, which wasn't so bad.

We would get our boots, a pail or two, a small shovel, and maybe a rake if we could find one handy. Off we would go to do spring cleaning. It was a lot of work. First we would have to clear away all the deadwood from around the spring. We were not the only ones to use the spring, of course. The animals visited with regularity, and I am not sure they appreciated our efforts in the cleaning process. After the wood and limbs were cleared, we had to get into the water and, using the rake and the pails, remove all the old, dead, rotten soggy leaves from the bottom of the spring. I usually managed to fall completely into the water a few times during this process. I'm still not sure how Dad managed to clean an entire spring without even getting wet.

Now here is the interesting part. This cleaning process actually made the spring look worse. By the time we got done with the spring, no-one in their right mind, including the animal on-lookers, would want to even imagine ingesting any of the liquid from such a place. How could one even call this act "cleaning?" It was more like dirtying the spring. But Dad always seemed so confident that things would turn out all right. After completely destroying the spring at each sight we visited (there were about six of them) we would trudge back home, secure in the knowledge that we had accomplished our goal.

The amazing part of all this was that, two months later, when we went back for the harvest and got thirsty (it didn't take long), we would make our way to the spring and find the water crystal clear. You could see the sand at the bottom of the spring. It was begging us to come and quench our thirst with its bounty. It provided everything we could possibly want in the way of nourishment.

For all your typology experts out there, surely this is not lost on you. Sometimes, we tend to look at the short-term problems. Sometimes we stir things up and seem to leave things in worse shape than they were in when we got there. Sometimes, we take a mess and make it a worse mess. We walk away and wonder why we did it, why we went there at all, what it all proved, and if it was worth it. But if it's God's water, it will do the cleaning. We come to the Lord for cleansing sometimes, confessing our sins. All we can see is the corruption, the rebellion, the hard heart. But God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That cleansing sometimes requires a little commotion – a little stirring up. Sometimes the Lord needs to clean up the mess, and for a while, we may wonder if it will ever settle down. But the washing is God's work. He does it by the Word. And later, when we can return in retrospect, when we can calmly come back for nourishment, we find that God's cleaning was necessary. Better than that, we find that it did the job. Sometimes we can't see far enough ahead. But God still cleans the springs.

[Isa 41:18](#) I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water

[Isa 41:19](#) I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, [and] the pine, and the box tree together:

[Isa 41:20](#) That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

Doc Trin