

Poetry.

"ABBA"

Dear God, where art thou gone
I cannot see thy face—
I dare not live alone—
Lord, grant me grace
Till I find thee near
In every place!

Father, where art thou gone?
I cannot feel thy hand,
With groping steps and slow,
In a strange land,
Blindly I struggle on
At thy command.

Why dost thou leave me, Lord,
In this mine utmost need?
I trust in thy word;
In this need
Of those who follow thee
Where thou dost lead?

Dear child, foolish and blind,
Footsore and weary—lo!
Mine arms about thee twined
Feel thy heart-beating. No,
I have not left thee—
Will with thee go.

Through the dark, chilly night—
The silent right—and I
Will strengthen thee, when sight
Is gone, and with lone cry
Thou seemest God-forsaken,
Fain to die.

Behind the lonely cloud,
Through which must lie thy way,
Behind the weeping cloud,
There linger in my prayer,
The angeling aloud
In endless day!

The Fireside.

A YEXED QUESTION.

John, said Mrs. X., a little timidly, after we had returned from evening meeting not long since, "do you think that Christians ever exaggerate unconsciously, when they relate their experience?"

"Rather a delicate question, Mrs. X.," I answered, "for if I should say frankly 'Yes,' I should lay myself open to all manner of severe criticism. Mr. A. would immediately quote regarding the note and beam, Mr. B. would assert that I had not the true spirit of Christianity within me, and Mr. C. would assume an antagonistic attitude and ask if I was listening at him."

"And yet," I continued thoughtfully, "that very question rose in my own mind, when the other evening I made use of an expression relating to a desire for self-consecration. For if I understand the term, to consecrate one's self to the service of God, means to give him the best energies, the best thoughts, and the undivided affection of my heart, which I do not do, nor have ever yet done."

"I am sure, John," said my wife, "I don't see why you need say so; you try hard to do right, and you ask the helper for strength, and—"

"That's just where it is," I answered. "I try, but I make ever-concentrated failures. Now I am as you know, straining every nerve to pay up for our little home, and lay by something for the future, and I am giving my best efforts to that end, and using my best energies in that direction; yet I do not feel that I am giving God my divided heart, for I firmly believe that he who said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you,' never intended a Christian to remain on his knees asking for help in his worldly affairs. I think he intended him to first ask, and then to rise and go forth and work like a trooper."

"Not slothful in business," quoted Mrs. X. softly. "Exactly," was my answer, and that is just where I am oftentimes at a loss. I want to do my Master service, and I want to make a substantial provision for my family, and just where to draw the line between duty to God and duty to connected with my daily work, is one of the most perplexing things that occurs in my Christian life."

"I think," said my wife thoughtfully, "that our different temperaments have something to do with this. I remember hearing old Captain Stacy say, in an evening meeting—the one before I myself had become a Christian—that it had been a most heavenly day with him, that all had been a peaceful calm which nothing could disturb; and that day I had, as it happened, been over to grandma's who lived next door neighbor to the captain. Well, the old gentleman had been annoyed, and with reason, by his neighbor's hens, and he had chased them round the garden, and tumbled over the cucumber-frame and broken a pane of glass in the hot-house, and by the time he had driven them out he was so angry that it seemed as though he would burst. I was peeping over the garden wall, unknown to him, and I will remember my feeling of horror, when the old gentleman, wiping the perspiration from his brow, looked all round the garden to see if there was any one within hearing, and then said between his teeth, 'Those devilish hens!' And when I heard him that evening relating his experience as I have said, I thought very naturally that he was a hypocrite. And I see now very differently."

"Yes," I answered, "Captain Stacy is a man who had a violent temper to subdue, and probably after his fit of wrath was over he told the Lord the whole story, and the peace of mind that he did feel before and after his rage, he spoke of in the evening unconsciously as having been present with him all day. And so it is," I continued after a pause, "that Charles Goodhue, who is of a sanguine, enthusiastic temperament, always speaks of the Christian life more in the light of perpetual peace than perpetual warfare; while old Uncle Elianah Jones, who seems never to have come out from under the shadows of the Law into the bright sunlight of God's love, exhorts his hearers to self-mortification and a constant retrospect of their past sins, a view of religion that his wife, who is a cheery little soul, has been unsuccessfully combating for about thirty years."

"I," said my wife presently, "do not say part in our family prayer-meetings that I do not take part in which after thought tells me is not strictly the truth; and yet the farthest thing from my thoughts when I rise to speak of my own peculiar feeling in the divine life, is that of saying anything except that which I really feel."

"To sum it all up," I added, "I think we must come to the conclusion that when we have felt in our hearts that afterglow that comes only from the indwelling of the Spirit, and which does not come so far above the atmosphere in which our petty trials and vexations have taken place, that we seem only to breathe the purified air, and hence in speaking, we leave all else out of our narration."

"Well," said Mrs. X. softly, as she took the family Bible for evening devotion, "God understands,"—*Frank Converse, in Christian Weekly.*

NELLIE'S QUESTION.

BY G. M. POLSON.

Nellie was a bright little girl, who had never been known to sit still for a minute at a time, and yet there she sat by my side, on her little low stool, playing with her doll, but without a single word.

"What are you thinking about, Nellie?" I asked at length; and the thoughtful face looked up into mine as she asked, "Cousin, is there a God?"

"Why, Nellie," said I, "who made you and me, and this beautiful world?"

"Little as it happened so, that it is all chance," said the child, in a low tone. Little's father was an infidel, and the children had been discussing the belief of their parents.

"Nellie," said I, "what is that you have upon your finger?"

"My thumb," she said, wondering what that had to do with her question.

"Where did you get it?"

"Aunt Jane gave it to me last summer."

"Well, Aunt Jane bought it at the jeweller's, but where did the jeweller get it?"

"Why, he made it," she was the answer.

"Nellie, the other day, as I was walking in the fields, I found a thimble. Now, how do you know but the jeweller found yours, and that they are all made just as we have them, all made by chance?"

"Why," exclaimed Nellie in astonishment, "that cannot be, for they are made on purpose, to sew with. They have little dents put on the head of the needle in, and a smooth place left for the name; and then they are of different sizes, to fit everybody. Somebody must have made them."

"You say somebody must have made them because they are just what we want to sew with, and are evidently made with a plan. Now, Nellie, I know that somebody must have made us, because all the parts of the body are exactly fitted for certain things; I can see a plan in them. That somebody must be God. Do you remember when you had the stiff neck last week?"

"O yes; when I wanted to see anything at the side, I had to turn my whole body around. I am so glad we don't always have to do so."

"Well, why don't we always have to do so?"

Nellie was very thoughtful for a moment, and then she said with a bright smile: "O, because we have a kind of a joint there, as we have in our elbow. You told me the other day it was a hinge joint, so we can bend our arm just as we can open and shut the lid of a box."

"Yes, we have such a joint where the head joins what you call the backbone; but would that make the head turn round?"

"No," said the child, "that makes us bow and lean our heads back. What does make it turn round?"

"Think again, Nellie."

She thought, and then with another bright smile she said: "O, such a joint as we have at the shoulder. You said it was like Charles's cup and ball, only the string was so short that the ball could not fall out, but was held tight in its place but yet it could turn round in the cup. Is not that it?"

"Well," I asked, "how are you going to fit the two joints? We must have two motions, up and down, and around."

Nellie's stock of knowledge was exhausted, and she appealed to me to know "how it was fixed."

"Is the backbone one long bone, or a great many little bones?" I asked.

"A great many little bones, with a soft cushion of gristle between, so they will not rub against each other," said Nellie.

"Yes," I said, "and on the top of the last little bone is the head, joined to it by a hinge joint, so we can bend our heads backward and forward. Then we want to turn them around, but we cannot have a cup-and-ball joint very well so we have another contrivance. In the upper bone to which the head is joined is a hole; now the little bone next below it has a tooth on its upper side, which is so long that it passes up into this hole, so that the upper bone and the head turn upon it as though it were a pivot. But to prevent its slipping off it is tied to its place by strong cords and tendons, which make it perfectly secure, and yet do not prevent our turning our heads as far around as we need to do. We can feel the movement of these tendons when we turn our heads, and when we take cold they swell and give us a stiff neck."

Nellie tried the experiment of feeling the tendons when she turned her head, and full of satisfaction she said: "Now I know why you asked me about my thimble. I said I *made* somebody made it, because it is just what I want to sew with; and somebody must have made all these curious joints, because they are just what we need to turn and bend our heads, but they are a great deal more curious than a thimble. God must have made them."

THE LAMP.

There was once a king who had some sons, and he promised to give each of them a kingdom. But he wished them to travel for some time. And they asked the king which way they should travel. And he said he would give them a lamp which would shed light on the right path.

They went on for some time very happy, and when they were in difficulty they took out the lamp, and it never failed to show them the road; and though it did not always point out the pleasant path, yet they were enabled to overcome the difficulties they met with, and still went on peacefully.

But after a time they began to be unkind to each other, and they forgot their father, and did not like to be guided by the lamp. So they took some clay and covered up the lamp, and the lamp, that it should only shine the way they wished; and then, at last, they covered up the lamp altogether, and they chose only the pleasant path. But there is often a thorn under the rose, and so they found it. They got into a great deal of trouble. A friend met them and told them that they were in the wrong road, and when he looked at their lamp, he saw that it was all covered up. He took off the clay, and it shone the right way as before.

Now, what does this friendly lamp mean?

Oh, the Bible; I know that in a minute. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. cxix., 105). How nicely this verse suits the parable.

Yes, dear reader, it does; but will it apply to us? Are we making God's word our guide? You are young, but you have as much need to be led in the right way as a grown-up person, for children are easily drawn aside. Take this lamp with you, and follow its light, and you will go safely through life.

But how can anybody cover up the lamp? The Jews covered it over with their traditions. "Ye have made the Word of God of none effect," said our Saviour, "through your traditions." And past sins, a view of religion that his wife, who is a cheery little soul, has been unsuccessfully combating for about thirty years."

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18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-1226-1227-1228-1229-1230-1231-1232-1233-1234-1235-1236-1237-1238-1239-1240-1241-1242-1243-1244-1245-1246-1247-1248-1249-1250-1251-1252-1253-1254-1255-1