

Youth's Department.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

X. AHAZ.

71. Whose son was Ahaz? was he King of Israel or of Judah? and how long did he reign?—(2 Kings.)
 72. What was the general character of Ahaz?—(2 Kings.)
 73. What happened connected with the sun-dial of Ahaz? at whose request and on what occasion did it take place?—(2 Kings.)
 74. Which of the Prophets prophesied in the days of Ahaz?—(See the Prophets.)

XI. ANANIAS.

75. What happened to Ananias the husband of Sapphira? and what was his sin?—(Acts.)
 76. Who was that Ananias who was sent to Saul when at Damascus? and can you relate the whole transaction?—(Acts.)
 77. Who was the third person of the name of Ananias? and what did he command to be done to Paul?—(Acts.)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF POORASHOTAM DEB, A MINDOO CONVERT.

By Rev. John Reid, A.M. Missionary at Bellary.

While yet an infant my parents sent me to school. In this School I obtained some knowledge, and grew up to the state of youth. At this period I used to observe my father, and others of his acquaintance who professed the same religious tenets with him, manifesting considerable zeal in the service of the God called Vishnoo, in serving whom they hope to obtain salvation. They, in the time of making their ablutions, meditated on and prayed unto him, and they also fasted in his name. Observing these things while in my youth, I also made my ablutions, praising Vishnoo; and I, moreover, fasted in his name, and repeated his name on the mala (necklace or rosary) made of the wood of the sweet basil tree; I also worshipped the sun by prostrations, and repeated Stanzas to his praise.

When I arrived at man's estate, my heart was distracted with carnal desires; "I abounded in wicked inclinations and wicked works," yet contrived pretty much to secrete them, and I appeared gentle and devout in the eyes of the people.

My father now became anxious that I should improve in knowledge, and to effect this sat by my side, and made me read books of various descriptions, explaining the meaning of them himself as he went on; the people around listening to his expositions. One effect of these exercises was, to excite in me a great desire to be esteemed learned, both in the Telooogo and Sanscrit languages; that I might become acquainted with the purport of all kinds of Shasters, and that people might say, "What a learned man he is!" To accomplish this design, I applied day and night to the study of these languages; and afterwards determined on repairing to Benares, to finish my education there. With this intention I set out in company with two youths of the class of cullingas; but after proceeding a few miles my two companions having declined to follow me, I returned also. From this period my desire for knowledge subsided, but still, by my own application, I had acquired sufficient knowledge to enable me to compose a book of Hymns and Praises, which I dedicated to those idols which I supposed to be Gods. I became acquainted with a book which contained a full account of the religion of Juggernaut, and imbibed the sentiments which were therein contained. I at this time also wrote a book myself, in three parts, which I filled with unheard of and unseen prodigies; this met the approbation of some learned men, which circumstance transported me with joy.

[After describing his progress for some time, Poorashotam continues—]

One thing I now clearly saw by the truth of the Shastrum, viz. that the soul was different from, and not a part of the body. The soul is immortal, and the body is corruptible; the body has a shape and is composed of elements, but not so the soul. There is an Almighty God who created them both. However, I did not know the proper way to serve God, and was much perplexed; but being stricken in my thoughts by bigotry, I could not obtain light. I do not exactly recollect the date, but I think it was six or seven years before the period I am now speaking of, that I obtained a printed book from a Cullinga boy of my own country, entitled "An address to the inhabitants of this part of the world by the Missionaries." This book I read, but not fully labouring to understand the excellent things in this book, and not discerning the way to save the soul clearly, I laid it aside in a box.

Some time after, an Engineer officer came to survey the hills and lands in my part of the district, and the sight of him put me in mind of the book which I had; I took it out once more, and by studying it, found that there was a great difference between the notions which I had imbibed and the virtuous precepts of the book. I now plainly saw that my former ways were all deception, and this book seemed to point out a better way, and I became convinced by it of my unrighteousnesses which I had committed. I shewed the book to several of my own religion, who said that doubtless the book pointed out a certain way of saving the soul, but that a reception of it was quite contrary to the order of my own religion. I anxiously longed to obtain the knowledge of salvation, and read the book with persevering application. I soon discovered that the forms of my own books and my own religion were useless inventions. I conceived that the principles of the little book were sound, and calculated to save the soul of man, and purge him from his iniquities; and greatly I wished for further instruction in the true and holy religion of Jesus Christ, for I was not well informed about the birth and wonderful works of Christ. I frequently engaged in disputes with men of my own caste, having the image of Christ impressed upon my mind. With the intent of obtaining a better knowledge of the Scriptures, I twice went over to Berhampore, to converse with some gentlemen there; but such was the shame and fear which Satan put into my mind, that I could not act to my purpose. I enquired of several persons but they informed me there was no missionary there. A little time before I went to Berhampore, when I was in a village called Too-logoo, on the east of the Chicacole district, I obtained two

books from a Telooogo boy, one was entitled "A description of the Creation," and the other "The condition of mankind." The perusal of these books was very profitable to me, and strengthened my mind in the belief and mission of Jesus Christ in whom I now rejoiced exceedingly. I carefully copied these two books on Cadjoor leaves, hoping by their means to introduce myself to some European gentleman that I might thereby accomplish my extreme wish of becoming acquainted with the religion which I was now in pursuit of. In 1832 the month of July, I went to Vizagapatam, and shewed my books to a young man, who presently accompanied me to the Rev. Mr. Dawson; but not being free from the delusions of Satan, instead of letting him know that I came to be instructed in the paths of religion, told him that I came to offer him these books as a present. The youth mentioned these things to Mr. Dawson, who said he did not require the books; and now, poor sinful wretch that I was, I became plunged in shame and hardened in heart, and did not venture to announce that my purpose was to become a disciple of Christ, and serve the Lord, but returned to my village. A few days after this, a merchant in Purla Kimdy sent for me and requested me to instruct his sons in the legends of our own books. I was unwilling to enter upon this service, but the constraint of my superiors in my own house obliged me; and during this period, the contemplation of Jesus Christ was much neglected. About this time I had another tract given me entitled "The preaching of virtuous Maxims," shewing the true way of salvation. This was the year Nundana. (1832) On reading this, the perplexities of my mind were dispelled; and this tract dispersed more of my suspicions than the three former ones had done, for from them I could not learn many excellent things which this tract taught me, and I was therefore greatly delighted; besides, there was at the end of this tract a short prayer, which I committed to memory, and totally relinquished all my former dissembled and hypocritical prayers which I had used from my infancy. I rehearsed my new prayer every day as often as I could, and disputed with my friends about the truth of Jesus Christ, who I now believed came to effect the salvation of such sinners as myself, reconciling God to such sinners by becoming himself a sacrifice. In this glorious Saviour I believed, and reposed my soul upon him. I abhorred all my former wicked practices and false Gods, as well as detested the impure practices of such duties. In order that I might be enabled to quit all my former fallacious tenets, and forget shastrums, to obey the holy scriptures, and be baptized in his name, and come near to Jesus Christ, and enjoy eternal life, I despatched a representation of my ardent desires to the Missionaries at Berhampore, where a certain man, named Francis Adam, lived, who wrote me an unsatisfactory letter, and I did not go over. (This letter was, undoubtedly, suppressed by Mr. Adam, who is a Catholic; as he knew well, though there might be no Missionary there at the time, there was a Church of Protestant Christians.)

[After mentioning another application which was equally unsuccessful, he continues—]

Now, the merchant in whose employ I was, failed, and I went home to my house, where I earnestly prayed and poured forth my complaints before the gracious Saviour, whose revelation I did not as yet well understand. To perfect myself in this knowledge I wrote down all his divine sayings in a small book, determining to go to Cuttack or to Vizagapatam, to the Missionaries. In the meantime my brother had some business to transact at Chicacole, and desired me to go and execute it for him.

This was a joyful event to my mind, for I immediately determined to take a route to Vizagapatam, and thence to Chicacole. This I did, therefore; and after adjusting the business as soon as possible, I inquired of the people for those whom I sought, and providentially I heard of one Mrs. Knott, to whom I in ecstasy went, and opened my heart to her; and she kindly presented me with some religious books, and persuaded me to continue steadfast in the holy faith of Jesus Christ. She recommended me, with a statement of my case, to Lieut. Evelyn, who also confirmed me by some good instruction in the new way; and the Lord Jesus Christ, through infinite grace and mercy, made my soul to thrive and strengthen in faith and knowledge; and enabled his servant within me (the soul) to resist with firmness and resolution those friends of the devil—shame and anxiety about the mortal body—which had long caused me to struggle in sin, and had often thrown me into the darkest and most dreadful apprehensions, and would have thrown me back forever, had it not been for the help thus obtained of my gracious Saviour. He has freed me from the power of these two wicked enemies.

Now, as soon as my near relatives, such as my brothers, mother, wife, several kinsmen and friends, as well as merchants who had from time to time lent me money, heard of my wonderful change, they began to afflict me, some spoke ill of me, some calumniated, some were enraged with, some gnashed their teeth at me, some intended to imprison me, and others sought in various ways to injure me.

Notwithstanding this, the Lord Jesus Christ, on whom I reposed my whole heart, and whom I followed as my revered instructor, encouraged me with sufficient patience to answer with mildness and reason, all the revilings of the persecutors, and to stand fearless, undejected and undismayed; and with firm purpose I avoided the society of such people as would annoy me. And for such mercies I with wonder and delight praised the kindness of the blessed Saviour, who delivered me thus from my persecutors. At length Lieutenant Evelyn, loving me much, gave me some travelling expenses, and sent me to Major W. T. Brett; recommending me to be sent by him to Madras to be baptized by one of the Missionaries there. I arrived at Vizagapatam in the year Vigyā 1833, month Aushada (June) Sud der Tadeya (15th). The great God, who searches all the internal and external actions of men, and who is a witness to all these things, has induced this forgetful sinner to state such particulars of his circumstances as occurred to his memory, among those that he has done before his conversion, for all those who are interested in the vouchsafements of his Holy Spirit towards his immortal soul.

(Signed)

POORASHOTAM DEB.

JUDGES viii. 4. "FAINT."

What war is there that has nothing to depress? nothing to animate? and that does not furnish a diversity of feelings in those who carry it on?

Christians resemble these followers of Gideon, and subduers of the Amalekites—faint, yet pursuing.

Yes—while engaged in this good fight of faith, they may be faint. We need not wonder at this, if we consider the enemies they have to vanquish—bodily appetites—filthiness of spirit—a depraved nature—all sin and error—the present evil world—the devil and his angels—if we also consider the qualities of their adversaries—their number—their malignity—their power—their policy—their success; for they have cast down many mighty; yea many strong men have been slain by them. O! when we think of the heroes, the statesmen, the princes, the philosophers, the divines, and all the myriads they have enslaved and destroyed, who is not ready to tremble, and exclaim, "I shall one day perish!" There is also the length of the service. It is not for a season only, but for life. We are not allowed to receive any proposals of peace. We cannot enter into a truce—no, not even to bury the dead. "Let the dead bury their dead." We are to fight on through summer and winter—by day and night, in every situation and condition. He that endureth to the end, the same only shall be saved. In conversion we throw away the scabbard; in death only we lay down the sword. While we are here, something is still to be done; something to be avoided—in company—in solitude—in health—in sickness. And is it nothing to watch in all things! To pray without ceasing! In every thing to give thanks! to be always abounding in the work of the Lord!

There are also occasional difficulties too common to be overlooked; and it is easy to suppose a few of them. What marvel if the soldier be faint—when the road is rough and thorny—and the weather warm and oppressive—and he hungers and thirsts for want of seasonable refreshments and supplies, which are interrupted, if not cut off—and he feels a loss of strength, occasioned by a wound from without, or an indisposition from within. Is this talking parables? There is not a Christian on earth whose religious experience will not easily explain it all.

If this, therefore, be our experience, let us remember that there is nothing ominous, nor even peculiar, in it. Every subject of divine grace is well acquainted with this heart's bitterness—and must be, or much of Scripture could not be applied to him, either in a way of description or comfort. And let us be thankful that to will is present with us, though how to perform that which is good we find not. If we faint, we do not flee. Faint—yet pursuing.—Jay.

R. C. C.

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