

# Christian Mirror,

AND GENERAL MISSIONARY REGISTER.

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL XII. 4.

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## POETRY.

### FOR THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR. THE TOLLING BELL.

BY MRS. J. R. SPOONER.

O SOLEMN sound! that ever and anon,  
Is mingled with the city's busy hum,  
Thou hast a meaning in thy dull deep tone  
That thrills the inmost heart. Dost thou not speak,  
And tell the world that one of us is gone  
To that far country whence none e'er returns?  
And though unknown his nation, name, or state,  
He claimed a child of fortune, or of want,  
His maker God, and ours his Saviour too.  
But yesterday, perchance, he walked the earth,  
In youth, and health, anticipating life,  
With joyful hopes of happy days to come.  
Now, weeping friends stand round the bed of death,  
And mourn the contrast! Contrast O how sad!  
The heart that late with warm affection glowed,  
Now beats no more—the hand is cold and stiff,  
And the pale lips have closed. The sight is gone  
From the once beaming eye now fixed in death.

O 'tis an hour,  
Fraught with such woe that poor humanity  
Dish oft-times envy him who feels no more.  
A heavy tax our best affections pay,  
When dearest friends are called upon to part!  
Despair would cloud the soul, did not the hope,  
The blessed hope of life immortal rise,  
To soothe the mourner with the blessed thought  
That severed streams again shall reunite.  
And in one tide shall blend to part no more.

What though the daily funeral knell be felt  
So common an occurrence, that the world  
 scarce heeds the solemn warning voice that speaks,  
And tells the living that they too must die—  
That youth, and innocence, and health, and joy,  
No barriers prove against the hand that may  
E'en now be raised to strike our dearest friends,  
And crush our fondest hopes to rise no more.  
How feeble is the tenure of man's life!  
Uncertain all the happiness of earth—  
Where all is changing, nothing sure but death.  
O could we learn to fix our thoughts on high,  
Where pain, and sorrow, death, are all unknown,  
And wear our hearts on earth to rest on heaven,  
Then might the tolling bell not preach in vain.

## GENERAL LITERATURE.

### AUTO-BIOGRAPHY OF DANIEL, A HINDOO CONVERT.

*His Parentage, and early attachment to Heathenism.*

THE glorious God, who rules all things in heaven and in earth, and who guides the affairs of individuals as well as of whole nations, ordained in his mysterious providence that I should be born in a heathen land. Like the great majority of my countrymen, I attended to the rules and ceremonies of the Hindoo religion, without ever once inquiring whether my religious performances were either acceptable to God, or consonant with the common sense of mankind. I was always taught to cherish the memory of my forefathers with the greatest veneration, and the simple fact that

their religion was also mine, sufficiently proved to my mind that I was doing right; and, alas! it still does to my poor mother and the rest of my relatives.

I never thought any thing about the evil nature of heathenism and idolatry before I heard of the religion of Jesus Christ. But when I was informed that a teacher of religion had come from England, teaching the people that the idols which I and my countrymen worshipped were nothing more than things made of stone, copper, brass, and the like materials; that the worshipping of them was a sin which would prevent our entrance into heaven; I exclaimed, "Oh, what is that! does he speak so of our gods? is it true what he says?" Whilst I thought thus, I became desirous of being made acquainted with Christianity.

### *First comparison of Heathenism and Christianity.*

As soon as I acquired a little insight into the nature of the Christian religion, I thought within myself, "Well, if this be true, mine is a false religion—a mixture of truth and error; a religion which has been fabricated by the perverse understanding of men; the things contained in it do not comport with the character of a holy God; the histories of our gods, as recorded in it, are disgusting even to be heard. Such a religion, therefore, must certainly lead to destruction." Moreover, I was afraid that if I continued in it, and walked after the example of these false gods, I should, in the first place, be punished in the present world, even as Braham was, who, for his lustful desires, was cursed with the loss of one of his heads; as Vishnu, who, for his great sin, was doomed to be deprived of his reason, and as Siva, who, for his sin of murder, was subjected to the curse of becoming a fool and a vagabond on earth; and worse than all this, that I should hereafter be exposed to the wrath of a holy and just God, and cast into hell there to remain forever.

### *Convictions resisted and overcome.*

I thought with pity on myself and others, that it was doubtless through ignorance that our forefathers continued in heathenism, and brought up their children in it with the impression that it was the true religion. I thought, moreover, that Christianity must be the true religion, and that the salvation of the soul must be through Jesus Christ, who knew no sin. But then the thought struck me, that if I desired to follow such a religion, and really did so, my mother, brothers, relatives, companions, and countrymen, would view me with a burning jealousy and utter detestation; yet I was partly convinced, that if I did not yield myself to God, through Christ the Saviour, I should be cast into the lake burning with fire, there to endure endless torments. Still I continued in abominable heathenism, and was confirmed in it in the following manner. Some of my townsmen put to me very perplexing questions, the sophistry of which I was, at that time, unable to detect and refute. Thus, after my former convictions of the evil of idolatry, and my partial relinquishment of it, I again returned to its foul delusions.

### *Conviction and hostility to heathenism.*

My friends, still fearing that I might become a Christian if I continued at Coimbatore, sent me to Madras, where I was placed under the tuition of the college moonshere, [Hindoo instructor,] who instructed me in various Hindoo books relating to idolatry, by means of which I furnished my mind with many arguments against the Christian religion, and returned to Coimbatore with a high testimonial to my character from the celebrated moonshere.

After my return to Coimbatore, I firmly believed that Christianity was altogether false, that I could not enter heaven if I embraced it; and I pride myself on possessing sufficient skill to prove that my religion was true, and to confute the arguments of any one who adhered to any religion opposed to the one I held.

### *Conviction revived, but indecision continued.*

In Divine Providence, the Rev. F. Lewis came to this place, and employed me as a Tamil moonshere. Whilst engaged in instructing him, I was in the habit of bringing forward many objections to the religion of Christ; but I was quickly put to shame and silence by the answers which he returned to each of my objections; and I became convinced that all my disputes were vain. After this I gave myself up to thought and meditation, and during the few months I was considering the superiority of Christianity, and the inferiority of heathenism, my mind was in a state of extreme perplexity, sadness, and disquietude.

At this period a gentleman put into my hand a book called the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which I read. Partly by reading this book, and partly by the remembrance of all the faller which had been expended on me at Coimbatore, I began to feel that the Christian religion was the only true religion, and Christ was the only sinless Saviour. My mind was in a most distressing and miserable state. My confidence in Vishnu was shaken, whilst my faith in Jesus Christ was very weak. Vishnu pulled me by the one hand, and Christ by the other; and not knowing who to worship, Vishnu or Christ, I went out to the river side, sat down, and wept. To rid myself of so much misery, I was nearly on the point of putting an end to my life; but then I thought that to do so would be a sin.

### *Conversion to Christ.*

I then went to the house of the Rev. Mr. Lewis, and wishing him to think me still a heathen, I put Vishnu's mark upon my forehead. Mr. Lewis received me kindly, spoke to me for a long time on the subject of religion, and exhorted me to trust in God through Jesus Christ, and then my expectations would never be disappointed. A few days after this I felt it impossible to continue a heathen any longer, and determined, whatever might be the consequence, to make a profession of Christianity.

In March 1841, I was enabled to renounce idolatry, and felt a strong desire to deliver up