



ONE DOLLAR A-YEAR.]

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## Poetry.

MRS. GILMOUR.

Sweet silent one, thy gently breathing gales  
Touches the finest movements of the soul;  
Wafts o'er each chord of feeling, the dear tales  
Of joys that once o'er the wrapt bosom stole.

Season serene, I hail thy smiling beams,  
Sinking all lovely o'er the west:  
And drop a tear, while all alone I dream  
O'er scenes forever, now forever past.

Yet oft methinks, borne on the softest sighs,  
Like cadence dying on the ambient air,  
The distant strains of heavenly minstrelies,  
Serenely steal upon the listening ear,  
Wafting the soul to yonder happy shore,  
Where sighs shall mingle with our songs no more.

## Doctrine and Duty.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER]

CHRISTIANITY AND OUR ERA.

There may have occurred within the observation of every one of our readers, instances of the idle, dissolute, and worthless, who have been brought under the saving and sanctifying influence of the gospel; and who straightway manifested an improvement in their manners, habits, and external circumstances. The comforts of their homes—their peaceful, orderly, and industrious demeanor, and the general air of respectability and humanity which extended over the whole man, might arrest the attention of a statesman, for example, or legislator, or mere social reformer. And it may be that the facts might extort from such observer, an eulogium of Christianity; perhaps it might determine the man of property to patronize the preaching of the gospel—or the statesman to provide for the establishment of religion—or the philanthropist to lay hold of “the Christian system,” as the most efficient instrument of civilization and enlightenment. In the spirit of those *enlightened* heathens, who, superior to the delusion themselves, inculcated on the ignorant, a superstitious reverence for all their gods, these modern enlightened philosophers might not only be disposed to recommend Christianity, but to boast of its superiority. They might look

around them with pride, and demand, “Why have we here on this continent such mighty and rapid changes going on? Why are our rivers and lakes ploughed by magnificent steamboats, instead of being skimmed by the tiny canoe of the red man? Why have we on spots, that a few years ago were forests or swamps, the noble street, instead of the Indian trail—and the elegant mansion, instead of the rude and frail wigwam? Why have we busy commerce, fertile fields, and political and educational advantages unsurpassed on the globe? Why have the howl of the wolf, and the warwhoop of the Indian ceased? And why are security and peace enjoyed, and plenty crowning the industry of the population. The reply is simple, it is obvious. Civilization has been at work, but still civilization is nothing more than a consequence of christianity.” And he might ask, in his enthusiasm, “what other system of religion has had, or from its principles could have such beneficent consequences?” and he might answer confidently, “All others have produced the very contrary.”

All this may be a correct representation of this secondary influence of truth, both on the individual and society. The conversion of the individual first alluded to, may have transformed his home and his habits. We should have little confidence in his conversion if it left him idle, slovenly and rude. And even the most remote influence of truth may have disenthralled, animated, and elevated society. But we can conceive no greater insult to Christianity than to boast of these as its triumphs; and no greater injury to men, than to keep such results before their minds, as if they were the ends and aims of Christianity.

We might accept of such statements as admissions from an enemy; but we cannot but regard the gospel as outraged by such boasts on the part of its professed teachers and friends.

One of the most melancholy signs of our times is, that such insulting panegyrics are finding their way from the closets of philosophers (who condescend to patronize the Bible, and from the pulpits of Socinians, who dare to run flattering parallels between Jesus of Nazareth and the Stagyrite) into their sermons and writings of men who claim to occupy the place of Knox, Erskine and Boston. It is difficult to say where this disposition is most lamentably exhibited

in the offensive self-flattery of the American pulpit, or the shallow boasting of the English platform. In both, there is a sad forgetfulness of the true aim for which God sent his Son into the world, and of the mission on which the Son of God has sent his church.

If ancient civilization has, by the enemies of Christianity, been surrounded by a halo of false glory; and if, spite of all the ostentation of ancient art, literature and philosophy, the description of the abominations that underlaid that refinement, contained in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, be divinely true; it may, with equal truth, be claimed that a certain class of Christian advocates have exaggerated the claims of modern civilization; and that underneath all our political, social, commercial and mechanical progress, the old corruption festers as destructively as ever it did. Men in elegant mansions, as much as men in frail wigwams, are dead in trespasses and sins—along noble streets, as much as along Indian trails, men may be following the bent of a depraved heart. And busy commerce, fertile fields, and the enjoyment of all political and educational advantages, may after all prove the most deadly snares by which the god of this world beguiles his victims. Nor can any better proof be found of their perilous tendency, than the extent to which the teachers of religion have been carried away by the delusion.

This civilization of which even Christian ministers have been bewitched, is, after all, so shallow, that if we stake the credit of Christianity upon it, thoughtful enemies of the gospel, will rise up and expose the sham, they are already crying out against in bitter despondency. A distinguished British Statesman, a few days ago, used the following language:—

“I remember that Adam Smith and that Gibbon had told us that there would never again be a destruction of civilization by barbarians. That flood, they said, would no more return to cover the earth; and they seemed to reason justly, for they compared the immense strength of the civilized part of the world with the weakness of that part which remained savage, and asked from whence were to come those Huns, and from whence were to come those Vandals, who were again to destroy civilization. Alas! it did not occur to them that civilization itself might engender the barbarians who should destroy it—it did not occur to them that, in the very heart of great capitals, in the very neighbourhood of splendid palaces, and churches, and theatres, and libraries, and museums, vice and