

advocated as "in accordance with Hebraistic use," absolutely fails on Jewish grounds of interpretation. This much may suffice on a point which has, curiously, been put forward by Roman Catholic writers, and which, if unchallenged, might seem open to discussion. On the other hand, it is perfectly certain that no Jewish writer would in this connection have so expressed himself if he had intended to indicate a sacrificial act.

We conclude this brief notice by coupling our acknowledgment of the obligation under which English students are laid by this volume, with the sincere wish that its continuation may not be long delayed.

A. E.



### ART. III.—ST. PAUL AND SENECA: THE APOSTLE AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

#### A CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

I WISH to take one, the highest in this world's wisdom, and compare him with a contemporary guided by the Holy Ghost. In Seneca, the philosopher, we have a man very favourably circumstanced for influencing the world by his teaching. They lived about the same time, being born about four years B.C., and both died under the Emperor Nero—the Apostle a Christian martyr, and the philosopher an enforced suicide.

Seneca, the favourite of fortune, was the tutor of the Emperor and the manager of the State, so to say, to the approval of everyone during the first five years of Nero's reign. The teaching of his "Treatise on Pity,"<sup>1</sup> dedicated to Nero, was fairly well put in practice. The social state of such a teacher and writer at the Court of Rome was certainly very different from that of the Apostle working as a tent-maker at Corinth. The travelling missionary, shipwrecked, gathering a bundle of sticks to make a fire for himself and other shipwrecked passengers, "because of the present rain, and because of the cold,"<sup>2</sup> on the island of Malta, is far removed in the things of this world from Seneca with his "500 tables of cedar with ivory feet to them, all alike and of equal size." Even allowing a margin for over-statement as to the number, the contrast is still sufficiently marked.

The Apostle, after his shipwreck, was taken on to Rome, and—permitted to labour as a missionary there, as we are told in the end of the Acts of the Apostles—he may have met the

<sup>1</sup> "Ad Neronem Cæsarem de Clementia, liber primus et secundus."

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxviii, 2.

great philosopher, for his "bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the prætorian guard,"<sup>1</sup> and they of Cæsar's household salute the Christians at Philippi to whom the Apostle writes. Be this as it may, the Apostle met Gallio, the brother of the philosopher, at Corinth, a clever, amiable man; and the lordly indifference with which he treated the whole dispute between St. Paul and the Jews, his persecutors, has passed into a proverb, for Gallio cared "for none of these things."

The teaching of Seneca on moral subjects in his letters to his friend Lucilius is often very admirable. From the first letter, "On the Value and Use of Time," to the hundred and twenty-fourth, "Against the Epicureans; that Good consists in Reason and not in Sense," one finds a seeming likeness to several of the Apostle's words and thoughts. "Where will you find," says he in his opening letter, "a man who sets any value on time,<sup>2</sup> or seems to understand that he dies daily?"<sup>3</sup> In his eighth letter, "On Temperance and the Benefit of Philosophy," he says: "Maintain therefore this sound and salutary way of living: so far only to indulge the body as to preserve it in good health. It must be treated more roughly, if you would have it obedient or serviceable to the soul. Think there is nothing admirable in thee but the soul."<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, some of his teaching is such as to have led to the belief that he was a Christian. In Epistle X., "On Solitude and Prayer," he advises Lucilius: "Cease not to pray and ask particularly for wisdom, a sound mind, and health of body. Why should you not often pray for these blessings? Fear not to importune a gracious God." In this one finds almost a Christian ring. The philosopher cannot, however, have grasped this valuable thought very firmly, for in another place<sup>5</sup> he denies the good of prayer.

It is certainly strange in the surroundings of Nero's Court to hear the philosopher teaching that nothing better can be desired than "a soul that is truly just and good and great,"<sup>6</sup> and also stating "Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est." This last thought seems to be an echo of St. Paul's: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The agreement is merely on the surface; underneath, the two thoughts are very far apart. Seneca teaches that God is the soul of the world, "Anima mundi," and therefore every soul must be a part of this, and God must be in each.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 13. Commentary by the Bishop of Durham.

<sup>2</sup> See Eph. v. 16.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 31.

<sup>4</sup> See 1 Cor. ix. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Epistle xli., quoted in "The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics," by Dr. Zeller, translated by Oswald Reichel.

<sup>6</sup> Epistle xxxi.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;  
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,  
As full, as perfect in a hair as heart.<sup>1</sup>

Paul, in his address to the Athenians on Mars Hill, adopts the words on the Fatherhood of God as Aratus of Tarsus, or rather of Soli, in Cilicia, had taught it—"for we are also His offspring"—and shows them that God is very near each of them, and that "in Him we live and move and have our being."

Paul, as a citizen of Tarsus, was no doubt familiar with the commonplaces of moral teaching in the schools of that place, "no mean city." As in his great speech at Athens, so in his epistles: the Apostle often refers to the forms of expression usual among the philosophers, giving them a Christian turn and making them a living power.<sup>2</sup> The Apostle, as everybody knows, was well acquainted with the current teaching of the poets and philosophers of his time.

I wish now to show the shortcomings of Seneca's teaching, as a reforming and a transforming power, with all its merits, which it undoubtedly had.

(a) It is a great shock to our moral nature to pass from his writings to the social life of his day. Never has there been a more corrupt state of society. It is but fair to him to conclude that his feelings and judgment were always on the side of what was right and good; but he was a weak, timid man in practical life.

Banished for eight years to the isle of Corsica for an alleged crime, he wrote the most excellent of all his moral tracts, "On Consolation,"<sup>3</sup> to his mother Helvia in the first or second year of his exile, pointing out to that cultivated lady that she should not grieve for him either for her own or for his sake; for the evils of life as commonly regarded, such as change of place, poverty, disgrace, contempt, are not really calamities at all.

In the third year of the exile we have another moral tract "On Consolation," addressed to Polybius, a very influential freedman, about the Emperor Claudius making abject efforts for pardon. In the edition of his works published at Antwerp, A.D. 1632, in a short abstract of the tract, the criticism on it is most severe: "One is much ashamed of it; whoever was the publisher of it, was certainly the enemy of Seneca and of his fair fame."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "An Essay on Man," Alexander Pope.

<sup>2</sup> This subject has been treated by the Bishop of Durham in a scholarly and exhaustive dissertation attached to his Commentary on the Philippians.

<sup>3</sup> "Ad Helviam matrem de consolatione liber."

<sup>4</sup> "Pudet, pudet, inimicus Senecæ fuit et gloriæ ejus quisquis vulgavit."

His teaching, as impotent to influence practical life, is in marked contrast to that of St. Paul. The Apostle was an exile in Arabia for a good part of three years; he suffered the loss of all things; he had to bear every form of hardship from Jew and Gentile, persecuted in every possible way, passing through countless perils by sea and land; and all this he bore for thirty years of his own free will, that he might preach the Gospel and win souls to Christ. His state of mind was, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."<sup>1</sup> If we wonder how he did all this, he tells us from his prison in Rome, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."<sup>2</sup>

(b) In that time of abandoned luxury Seneca's abstinence was most praiseworthy. He and a friend appear to have made a little tour. He writes to Lucilius about the journey, the subject of the letter being frugality:

With no more servants than one carriage could hold, and no manner of luggage, not the least thing but what was on our backs, have my friend Maximus and I spent two most agreeable days. A mattress lies upon the ground and I upon the mattress; of two cloaks, one serves for an under blanket, the other for a coverlid. Our repast was such that nothing could be spared from it, nor did it take up much time in dressing. I am satisfied with a few dried figs and dates. When I have any bread, the figs serve me for a dainty dish; when I have no bread they supply its place.<sup>3</sup>

In the society of his day, Seneca is a teetotaler among drunkards. The brief description of the Roman intemperance is very disgusting. They eat that they may vomit, they vomit that they may eat.<sup>4</sup> The fair profligate Poppæa, a sort of American skunk, the mistress and afterwards the wife of the Emperor Nero, kept five hundred she-asses in attendance to supply her milk bath.

In the time of Seneca, some of the rich people played at poverty, and had in their mansions what has been called a chamber of poverty—"la chambre du pauvre,"<sup>5</sup>—to which they could retire on certain days, and in their listless life of jaded satiety indulge the sentiment of poverty. Seneca would turn this into a real thing. With all his wealth he had a true sympathy with the poor. He often conversed with his slaves; at times dined with them, in order to know their feelings and their way of looking at things. "He regards a slave as a friend of lower rank."<sup>6</sup> He felt no doubt, quite truly, that the rich in his day were too rich, and that the poor were too

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. iv. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Letter lxxxvii., "On Frugality."

<sup>4</sup> "Edunt ut vomant, vomunt ut edant."

<sup>5</sup> "Les Moralistes sous l'Empire Romain," par Constant Martha.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by Zeller, p. 330.

poor—a view forced on many in the present day. St. Paul touches the difficulty indirectly. The cure is in the *spirit* of his teaching. His first convert in Europe is a working woman, Lydia, “a seller of purple;” and the mercy of his work is seen in the relief granted to the poor slave girl, “which brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying.” From his prison he wrote in favour of the runaway slave Onesimus, “not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved.”

Seneca is very much to be thought of in that most cruel age for his teaching that, “of all the virtues, mercy was most suited to man, and was most human-like.”<sup>1</sup> His doctrine was impotent to reform the times or to redress the unequal state of society. The spirit of the Apostle’s teaching carried into practical effect is entirely in favour of the poor. It is the leaven in society, influencing it more or less, as man has more or less of its spirit.

(c) The population of Rome in the time of Seneca and St. Paul was, say, about a million. The vast number of suicides speaks very loudly of the weary spirit of the people and of their jaded dissatisfaction with life. A very large part of the population were slaves and outcasts from all nations, tossed together into the cesspool of the world. So weary of life were they that they felt themselves “past hope, past cure, past help.”

The setting forth a future state as a reality, with all its hopes for the good and all its fears for the bad, would be to these as life from the dead, and be a great lever to lift them to good things. No such lever was in the hand of Seneca. As regards the weary, wretched life around him, he says to his friend: “Nay, even when reason persuades us it would be happier for us to die, we must not be rash and hurry precipitately on a supposed relief. A truly brave and wise man ought not cowardly to fly from life, but to make a decent exit.”<sup>2</sup> In his treatise on Providence his teaching is more decided, and is in substance: “If you are weary of bearing the ills of life, who detains you at your post? The door is open; you can walk out.”<sup>3</sup> Such language is not to be looked on as a rant, as it has been sometimes called, but as the expression of despair. There is little in his teaching on the soul to counteract it either in the way of comfort or of strength. “Innumerable,” says he, “are the questions concerning the soul; whence it is; when it begins to be; and how long it shall continue in being; whether it be subject to transmigration; whether it performs no more than one service, and being set free wanders about the universe; whether it be a body or

<sup>1</sup> Zeller, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> Epistle xxiv., “On the Fear of Evils to Come.”

<sup>3</sup> “De Providentia, sive, Quare bonis viris mala accidunt.”

not; what it will be employed upon when it ceases to act in conjunction with the body." In this we have a summing-up of what learned men had thought out in the various philosophic schools of the old world. The passage shows us how much and how earnestly he had thought on the subject. With every possible effort he had tried to follow the course of the soul going out on its last great journey. His efforts, great and praiseworthy as they are, show that reason alone is not equal to the task, and that, in pursuing such a subject, it is, with it, "out of the darkness into the darkness."

These curious but unpractical questions of the philosopher are swept away by the strong, plain words of the Apostle: "to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."<sup>1</sup> This gives the weary and the heavy-laden the information so greatly needed for practical life, that the immortal spirit goes forth from the body at death, active, conscious, capable of happiness in the paradise of God. The philosopher had no teaching but "it may be:" "it may be this way; or it may be that way; or it may not be at all." The Apostle, as the mariner, with clear, steady voice, rings out the word: "The new world is before us, the world of virtue, purity and happiness." Thousands, like disheartened seamen lying in despair, leapt to their feet at the words, and the clear, plain lesson brought in converts in large numbers to the Church. St. Paul's teaching as surely met the crying wants of a sorely-tried world as Seneca's certainly did not.

(d) The last scene in the philosopher's life is most touching, as indeed is that of the Apostle. The death of the philosopher is one of the great heroic events of the old world. As an alleged member of a conspiracy against Nero, he was condemned to death, the horrid sentence being that he should kill himself. His writings teach the horrid and unnatural doctrine of suicide, though in a hesitating way, and in some places more vigorously than in others. His wife, Paulina, insisted on dying with him, having her veins opened also. The soldiers who were to see the sentence carried out on Seneca bound up her veins in her swoon, and she survived a few years. Her pale, bloodless face, as it appeared ever after, was a more affecting monument to the worth of her great husband than any record of brass or marble. When not granted time to make his will, the philosopher's bequest to his friends was the example of his life, and the moral lessons spoken to his secretaries in his last moments. Some have thought that this last act has in it a touch of dramatic effect. I would not think so. He had been a great moral teacher all

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 23.

his life, though in that life one is grieved to say there were some great crimes. The hour of the enforced suicide was surely a most solemn one for such a purpose. Why not teach then, too? Like a grand, sombre ship he passed away into the darkness, A.D. 65. He is certainly a most commanding figure in the history of Rome, like its other great monuments. He has made little practical impress on the world. The moralist did not and could not reform mankind. He left them pretty much as he found them.

Three years after the Apostle sank into the martyr's grave, A.D. 68, being beheaded at Rome. Every Christian remembers well his inspiring words as he looked forward to such an end of his course: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."<sup>1</sup> His mark on the world was then very great, for, "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum," he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ, and that mark of his has been ever deepening. He has been the great friend of man in every quarter of the world, for the keynote of his teaching is, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all."<sup>2</sup> Being dead, he yet speaketh. His words have ever been a life-inspiring power, leading people to hate sin and to love godliness, and they will be so to the end of the world.

Of this the Apostle had himself an assured conviction. In his last Epistle, written in sight of his martyrdom, he puts the standard of missionary work, in the most solemn way, into the hand of Timothy, his own son in the faith.

In his extremity, some of his friends were failing and faithless. He had no such proof of devoted attachment as helped the dying philosopher. It is to be hoped that Timothy was able to be with him. He longs very much for his presence: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." "Do thy diligence to come before winter."<sup>3</sup> Of the labourers in the Gospel, only Luke was with him. Still, several friends—members of the Church in Rome—are remembered: "Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren."<sup>4</sup> He is himself in living union with the Lord, who stood with him and strengthened him, and who will deliver him from every evil work.

Thus the lines on which the two stood part more and more widely. The difference of the two grows broadest in the end. The teaching of the philosopher, great as it is, begins with the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 9-21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 21.

earth and ends with it. It is the wisdom of this world at its best. The Apostle's teaching had its beginning on the road to Damascus, when, with the miraculous light of heaven suddenly fallen upon him, he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"<sup>1</sup> It went on in the spirit of Him Who said: "He is a chosen vessel unto Me." As with the man in all his hardships, as an Apostle even to the last most trying scene, so with his teaching, too, the promise is true: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

THOMAS JORDAN, D.D.

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#### ART. IV.—"CLERGY AND THE MASSES."—THE CURATE QUESTION.

THE subject "The Clergy and the Masses," which the Rev. H. T. Armfield so ably brought before the readers of *THE CHURCHMAN* in June last, is one of very considerable importance, and must, ere long, be taken up vigorously by our authorities, both clerical and lay. And closely allied to this is another subject of equally great and pressing importance, viz., the "Curate Question." We are forcibly reminded by Mr. Armfield that there is a marked "drop" in the number of men ordained last year even to the extent of fifty; and it must be remembered that a diminished number of men ordained means, at no very distant day, a diminished amount of work, fewer opportunities of instruction and edification for Christ's servants, lessened influence brought to bear by the Church upon the world, and at no remote period, a collapse of much of the good which is now being effected by the active, zealous, and assiduous efforts of Christ's servants.

Before dwelling further on this point and its bearing on the "Curate Question," let it be premised that the Curate<sup>2</sup> occupies a very anomalous position in the Church. That he suffers from many disabilities, and has many disadvantages to contend with, will be granted by all. His position is uncertain; his income is precarious; his opportunities of distinguishing himself are limited; he has no voice at the Diocesan Synod, because he is denied the right of admission; he does not possess the franchise for the election of Proctors; in the

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> In using the term "Curate" it will be observed that it is not in the sense that it is used in the Prayer-Book, "Bishops and Curates." It is used in its modern popular sense, and means "an assistant" to the one in the Cure of Souls.