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RELATIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHER SENECA TO CHRISTIANITY.

The last number of the *Westminster Review* contains an article on the Philosopher Seneca. He is one of the very few heathen teachers whom the champions of revelation have been fond of mentioning as rivals of Christian writers. Undoubtedly, there is much that is admirable in his writings, lofty in sentiment, and admirably expressed. Sometimes, indeed, he seems to speak almost like a Christian, and to have left the old heathen morality far behind. It is scarcely strange, that an inveterate scepticism should wish to press him into its service. We can scarcely doubt, from some things in the article above mentioned, that this was the animus of the writer.

Speaking of the Philosopher, he remarks, "Freed from the superstitions of the populace, exalted above the illusions of Stoical orthodoxy, replacing the multiplicity of gods by the unity of the divine nature, and substituting for external worship, the spiritual adoration which lies in the knowledge of God, and the humble imitation of his perfection, Seneca, as a competent authority observes, holds a foremost rank among those who represent in its highest purity the elevated moral conceptions which classical antiquity attained."

It is very natural, that putting forth this claim in behalf of "classical antiquity," the writer should be very reluctant to admit, that Seneca owed anything to Christianity. Although he touches on the resemblance at some points between the teaching of the Philosopher and the great Apostle of the Gentiles—a resemblance that is indeed striking, and has been often noted—he is unwilling to allow that the Roman derived anything from the Jew. He sets aside the opinions of Henry, Troplong and others, to commend the view of Zeller, that Seneca was not acquainted with Paul, or indebted to him for his peculiar views. We are not prepared to maintain that he is in error here, but we must say, that it seems to us a matter concerning which he has no right to be confident. Seneca was Nero's teacher. His closing years—the very period of Paul's residence in Rome—may well have made him acquainted with the views which were daily disputed in "the School of one Tyrannus," and a man of Seneca's literary and philosophical taste, would scarce fail to avail himself of the opportunity to understand something of the teachings of a man, who, in a religious cause had appealed to Caesar.

But we are not disposed to attach so much importance to this fact—inasmuch as some of Seneca's writings were of an earlier date—as to the statement that there were Christians in Caesar's household. It will not answer to say, as some have said, that "Christianity was in the air," for if so, why did not other noble Romans, breathing the same atmosphere, place themselves in the same moral line with Seneca? "Christianity in the air!" But how came it there? It was diffused abroad undoubtedly by Christian teaching. For thirty years the man that "turned the world upside down," had made noise enough to be heard by one who sat at that focus of the world's whispering gallery, the imperial court of Rome! Would it not have been strange, that Seneca should never have heard of Christ or Christian doctrine? And taking a review of the best heathen authors, does it not appear almost, if not quite, incredible that such writings as those of Seneca should have been produced by one who was indebted only to learned heathen, or to his own reasonings?

But granting all that the reviewer is disposed to claim—that Seneca represents "the elevated moral conceptions which classical antiquity attained,"—what a force does it give to the denigration of Paul, concerning those who, having not the law, were a law to themselves, their thoughts, meanwhile, accusing or else exalting one another!

The foremost heathen writer of his day, the loftiest moralist, the most profound philosopher approximates to the Christian standard of duty! What a testimony to the divine truthfulness of the scriptural code, produced, not in the world's metropolis, but in the provincial region, of Uvada, among a people isolated among the nations!

But as if forced to overthrow his own idol,

the reviewer finds himself under the necessity of confessing, that Seneca, did not live up to his own standard. There was a glorious correspondence between the creed and the life, the faith and the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul. We feel that he is not merely a teacher. He lives what he teaches. But how was it with Seneca? If his writings were a fragrant "pot of ointment," his life dropped many a dead fly into it. The reviewer says, "Seneca's position was equivocal. He was immensely rich; and he professed to admire poverty. He was so unscrupulous; Dion says, that his exactions in Britain were the occasion of the insurrection under Caractacus. How had he accumulated all this fabulous wealth? In his frequent eulogiums on poverty, we do not think Seneca was wholly insincere, though we regret that he did not recommend his theory by his practice. After all abstemiousness, we allow that Seneca was inconsistent and ungracefully rich."

A somewhat serious admission, when Seneca is to be held up by the side of those who counted all things but loss for Christ's sake, and were, at least, the consistent followers of Him who had not where to lay his head! We are not disposed to note other failings of Seneca, which the reviewer admits; it is enough to observe, that his words are golden, but his deeds are lead. The two do not correspond. But what would be said of an Apostolic writer against whom an analogous charge could be brought? Let Seneca stand as the noblest Roman of them all, but let it be simply to show more conclusively, that "the Christian is the highest style of man."

BE JUST AND FEAR NOT.

In all the history of popular governments, it would be difficult to find a party so purely one of principle, as is the Republican party of our day and country. Popular governments—ours among the rest—from time immemorial, have been the prey of demagogues; and parties have, for the most part, been under the control of men without aim beyond their own aggrandizement; their "principles" have too often been mere declarations of prejudice, or passion, or narrow self-interest,—sometimes of positive hostility to truth, morality, and religion,—which political aspirants have thrown into shape and have advocated in the hope of gaining the popular favor. But it is the most encouraging sign in the history of our country, that a great party has arisen and for nearly eight years has controlled its destinies, whose principles are aimed directly against the base prejudices, the narrow selfishness, the material, grovelling, short-sighted policy which have hitherto formed the chief material for the construction of party platforms. The Republican party was the embodiment, originally, of the Christian purpose of the nation to restrict the progress of slavery. It was soon educated to the purpose to destroy slavery, by the war of the slave-holders against the life of the nation. Its endurance through four years of dreadful war; its patience under enormous burdens of taxation; its persistence in spite of the assassination of its leader at the head of the government, and of the unexampled treachery of his successor and trusted associates in office; its perseverance and progress on the high road of equal rights, raising a whole race from slavery not only to freedom but to citizenship, giving to the nation a reinforcement of half a million loyal voters, and to Protestant Christianity an accession of strength such as Romanism vainly seeks to gain in Ireland; are among the most remarkable facts in the history of our government and of the progress of freedom in the world. The triumph of Prussia and Italy over Austria, the progress of liberty in Austria itself, the disastrous repulse of France and Austria with their anti-republican aims, from the heart of the new world, and the grand success of the Reform movement in England, form a class of facts in which the triumph of the Republican Party in America holds a position of the highest honor and influence.

The Republican party of our country is perhaps the first great instance of party success in an appeal to the moral instincts of a people. The high moral tone of the party has drawn to its support the best spirits, the philanthropists, the religious people, the churches almost in a body, the solid, substantial, educated, thinking people of the land. Leaders of the party, either already

were, or, like Henry Wilson and Governor Geary, have since become, religious men. Among them are the friends of Temperance and the pledged adherents of its principles. President Johnson deserted the Republican party in the fit of drunkenness which made his inauguration infamous. The disgrace of returning common drunkards and professed pugilists and gamblers to the National Legislature belongs notoriously to the Democratic party.

We believe the people, with their advancing intelligence, and with the wider spread of religion through revivals and Church Extension, have reached a point where party organization for the mere sake of party, for the elevation of a set of party leaders, and for securing the spoils of office, will simply disgust and repel them. We believe, the late terrible and costly struggle has endeared and exalted their country in their esteem so that they will no longer consent to see its higher interests overlooked and its policy and very existence become a matter of mere wrangling between men absolutely without character, gifts or insight; beyond the bare management of party machinery and the clap-trap of demagoguism. We are thoroughly surfeited with the cant of professed politicians about keeping moral subjects out of politics as unsuitable. Republican politicians, especially, who utter such sentiments, must be charged with extraordinary obtuseness as to the principles, origin, and success of their own party. That is the grand embodiment of the national will that moral principles shall guide the destiny and shape the policy of the Republic. One annual or biennial election, that purpose by party trickery and the members of the party will stay at home and leave their corrupt leaders in the lurch, as they have just done in California. The Republican party may undergo vicissitudes, may suffer temporary defeats; we must be prepared for that—but its vast ground is the strongest in the whole world—the conscience of the people. The shortest sighted politician might, by some means, have learned the expediency, if not the wisdom, of maintaining this impregnable position.

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE. II.

AMSTERDAM, Aug. 28th, 1867.

The Alliance held its closing session last evening. The interest, which has risen from the first, seemed here to ascend to a very high pitch. In the general hall of the Theological Garden, where all the members of the alliance dined in common during the sessions, there was, if possible, an increase of social and Christian enthusiasm. Numerous speeches were made, all breathing a fervent evangelistic spirit. A short address by Rev. G. Wendell Prime, formerly of Detroit, deserves special mention. He alluded to the fact that, at the creation, God put man in a garden, and that since the fall, there had always existed in the human mind a desire to again be in a garden, and he thanked God, that he had put it into the heart of the good people of Amsterdam, to arrange to bring the Evangelical Alliance not only into one garden, but into two gardens. After three or four hours in this delightful place of resort, there was a return to the Park zaal, which is also in a garden, as intimated above. The last hymn was sung from the hymn-book prepared in four languages for the use of this meeting. An earnest prayer in Dutch was offered by a Rotterdam pastor; and an address was made by Rev. Cohen Stewart, the Secretary of the Committee of the Alliance in Holland. This gentleman spoke first for about fifteen minutes in French; then turning he addressed his "friends from America and from England" in excellent English; and again he greatly delighted his German auditors by a fluent address in the German tongue, and concluded with remarks in the speech of Holland. Whatever else may be said of him, he is certainly a man of great ability. A fervent prayer in German was offered by Dr. Krummacher, and in English by Dr. E. Steane of London. Several addresses were made in various languages, and finally Dr. Prime of the "New York Observer" delivered a happy address, saying that the hour of parting was the first painful hour; and that all who had attended the meetings of the Alliance would go hence with the conviction that it was an unspeakable privilege which they had enjoyed together, to consider, as they had considered, the matters which pertain to the whole kingdom of Christ, and concluded by urging a

full attendance at the next meeting of the Alliance in New York, where, although no positive decision was practicable, there is no reason to doubt, it will be held. "We need you," he said, "for our work is great," and "your children are there, and after you have visited our shores, we know you will pray for us as you have never prayed for us before."

LORD RADSTOCK AND HIS CO-LABORERS.

This meeting has been far more largely attended, and more delightful in its circumstances, and more satisfactory in its results than the most sanguine friends of the Alliance had ventured to hope. A divine benediction seemed to descend upon it. A group of earnest, though perhaps somewhat too unphilosophical, workers from England, under the lead of Lord Radstock, contributed a pleasant influence to the meetings. So earnest were these brethren and sisters that they were not content with listening and speaking in the English tongue alone, but they set to work to evangelize the masses of Holland by preaching through interpreters; and some souls were doubtless awakened and converted through the labors of these excellent people, who are understood to be connected with the "Plymouth Brethren."

They sowed the city with tracts, and it may be hoped that an abundant harvest will spring up from this holy seed. A carriage was passing in one of the narrow streets, as the evening twilight was deepening into darkness, and I observed the hand of a lady from the window of the vehicle, beckoning to me to take a something white which seemed to be a letter. "Here," I thought to myself, "is adventure—here is a romance." I stretched forth my hand and took the seeming epistle. It was a tract, entitled the "True Way" by a good man in England, whose name translated into Dutch, is "Rijle." Not being able to read it, I gave it away to an intelligent Netherlander that it might fulfil its evangelistic mission.

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE HOBBY.

Another group of men have been pressing the idea of "systematic benevolence"—as they call it—as a device which will soon unlock the treasuries of all countries. A certain proportion, they say, must be laid aside scrupulously for the doing of good deeds, and the remainder, (say nine-tenths), will support any man better than the whole. This, they not only recommend, but insist upon and assert to be the fixed "financial law of the Gospel," which is manifestly wrong, for God requires not a tenth nor a half, but the whole. God has, and insists upon, proprietorship in the whole body, soul and substance of every believer.

But it cannot be expected that only sensible men will attend a meeting of ecumenical proportions.

One day was given up partially to missions. Rev. Dr. Hamlin of Constantinople and Rev. Mr. Green of Broosa, Rev. Mr. Mullens and others, spoke of their respective fields with great felicity.

The grave and studied papers, which, from day to day, have been presented to this body, will find their way to the public through the appropriate channels. It would be impossible to report them for a newspaper article or even to describe them, for they have been presented in every style of delivery and in four languages, and have embodied views and shades of opinion peculiar to the persons and nations to whom they belong.

THE SABBATH.

It may be said, however, aside from the moral influence of this great meeting and the intellectual and social results of this international fellowship, that considerable service has been rendered to the cause of the Sabbath by conference and personal labor. A document has been circulated, and very generally subscribed to, expressing an earnest hope and desire that "governments, municipalities and masters of establishments everywhere would endeavor to secure to those under their care, the moral and spiritual advantages of rest and worship on the Lord's day." This document has been circulated and read in every language and devoutly considered.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

The interests of civil and religious liberty in every part of the world must be greatly subserved by this imposing gathering, and many a weary soul in Spain and in Turkey, and in the far off countries of the earth, will rejoice that Evangelical Christendom is

able thus to concentrate its influence for the succor of the persecuted and the deliverance of the captive.

ORGANIZATION—"E PLURIBUS UNUM."

An effort was made to give to the Alliance a Constitution and General Government, somewhat similar to that of the United States. At present it is composed of branches which possess no trunk. And for general business, and concerns which need a very speedy handling, it is an unwieldy organization or rather non-organization. It is not desired to trench upon the rights of the separate branches. They must be left at perfect liberty to originate and propose measures for the consideration of the whole, and also to take care of their own national concerns, but in cases of persecution and matters which need immediate attention, and for the easy and speedy adjustment of business which, like the Week of Prayer, concerns the whole world, a general international Committee is needed, to whom these matters may be safely entrusted.

To bring about such a change, an effort was made by Dr. McCosh, who seems to be unwearied in good works and a good friend of the United States, and others. The idea of the "E pluribus unum" was introduced with difficulty into some minds, especially those of Frenchmen, but at last an arrangement was made, which will probably result in giving to all the national branches of the Alliance a government modeled after our own general government. Meantime the British Branch is to take the initiative in all matters of the greatest importance.

K.

COMPLIMENTARY SUPPER.—The Board of Managers of the Y. M. C. A., of this city, gave a complimentary supper, September 14th, to their fellow officer, George W. Mears Esq., on the occasion of his safe return from Europe. Peter B. Simons Esq., the President of the Association, presided with his accustomed affability. There were present Messrs. Geo. H. Stuart, John Wanamaker, Thomas Tolman, Samuel Loag, Henry Pollock, Rev. John W. Mears, D. D., Rev. W. B. Culliss the Secretary, and many others. After enjoying the excellent viands, Mr. Mears was introduced by the President, and proceeded to give a rapid, but detailed and highly interesting account of his interviews with the Young Men's Christian Associations in England and on the Continent, whom he had sought as the accredited representative of the Philadelphia Association. Mr. Mears, having referred to the spiritless singing at the meetings of these bodies, and remarking that he felt strongly moved, on one occasion, to show them how we in America sing "Say brothers will you meet us," Mr. Simons proposed that we join in singing it on the spot. The whole company rose, joined hands, and poured out this thrilling chorus in true American style. In like manner, Mr. Mears describing the closing scenes on the homeward passage, which occurred on Sabbath, when the passengers, at his suggestion, united in singing, "When I can read my title clear," to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, the company again rose and joined in the same words to the same tune. Prayer was offered by Mr. Graeff, and the benediction pronounced by Dr. Mears, when the delighted company dispersed. It is proposed that Mr. Mears embody as much of his observations in Europe as may be thought appropriate, in the form of one or more lectures to be delivered before the Association this fall.

AN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL.—By Atlantic

telegraph we learn that Pius IX has resolved upon calling an Ecumenical Council, an event which the Roman Catholic Church has not witnessed since the famous Council of Trent, three centuries ago. This council was summoned to meet the exigency of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. The Pope sees a new Reformation creeping around him, and swelling to the very threshold of the Vatican, and has determined, after exhausting all other methods, to have recourse to the same expedient. It was measurably successful in the 16th century, but what it will accomplish in the 19th remains to be seen.

THE CONGREGATIONALIST AND RECORDER,

formed by the union of the two well-known Boston papers, has come out in the form of a double sheet and looks and reads well. The Boston religious papers have been very slow to assume the quarto form, *The Watchman and Reflector* having acted as pioneer only a few months ago.