

22.

A STUDY OF SENECA'S  
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES.

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the  
graduate school of the University of  
Minnesota in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Arts.

by

May Gibson

June, 1911.

A STUDY OF SENECA'S  
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES.

A THESIS FOR THE A. M. DEGREE.

106129

MAY GIBSON.

SEP 15 1911

## OUTLINE.

I Life of Seneca.

II Condition of Religion and Philosophy.

III Seneca's Religion.

A. Nature of God.

B. Man's Relation to God .

C. Death and Future Life.

IV. Seneca's Moral Doctrines.

A. Aim and Conduct of Life.

B. Means to attain Happiness.

V. Summary and Conclusion.

## A Study of Seneca's Religious and Moral Doctrines.

### I. LIFE OF SENECA.

Spain furnished the Roman Nation many noted men:- three Emperors; Trajan, Hadrian, Theodosius; the writer Quintilian; the poet Martial. And from Cordova, Spain, came the philosopher Seneca, one of the most illustrious and most inconsistent men of the Empire. His father was M. Annaeus Seneca, a Roman Knight by rank, a teacher of Rhetoric but of no great eminence. Seneca's mother, ~~1. 2. 3.~~ Halvia, was Spanish by birth. The picture of her that her son has left us in his writings is that of a loving mother, virtuous and modest, intelligent and noble. We must mention too Seneca's maternal aunt to whose loving care he tells us that he owes his life. Two brothers, Marcus - known as Gallic (Acts XVIII - 12) - older than Seneca and his favorite brother and Lucius, the father of the poet, Lucan, complete the family group.

The exact date of Seneca's birth is not known; the best we can say is that he was born a few years before the Christian era. As a young child he was brought to Rome to ~~live~~<sup>live</sup> and doubtless enjoyed all the educational advantages of a prosperous Roman's son, learning arithmetic, Greek, Latin and the study of the poets.

~~When he was~~ When he was ready for his higher education, Seneca left the paths followed by his father and older brother, left Rhetoric and Eloquence and chose Philosophy, a very characteristic choice, too, for the latitude and originality allowed in pursuance of this study would naturally appeal to his impulsive nature. Two teachers held in high regard:- Sotion, the Pythagorean and Attalus, the Stoic. Under Sotion he was tutored in the doctrine of the transmigration of

souls and consequently the wrong of eating meat. The youth immediately became a vegetarian but soon gave it up at his father's desire lest he fall into political difficulties, ~~but~~ <sup>as</sup> Stoicism offered no objectionable practices, Seneca became a Stoic, and doubtless under the teaching of this sect were developed the noblest and purest ideas he ever held.

Urged on by his father, Seneca adopted the profession of advocate and entering into politics gained the quaestorship. During the reign of Tiberius, he avoided any personal relation with the Emperor and was busy publishing treatises on Natural Phenomena and some tragedies. Having been criticized severely, however, by Gaius Caesar, throughout the remainder of the reign Seneca, with discretion <sup>he</sup> withdrew from public life and devoted himself to study and writings of a moralizing character.

On Jan. 25th 5 A.D. Claudius succeeded Gaius. While Seneca does not discuss the murder of Gaius and the succeeding events, he did resume his conspicuous position in public life, only to fall under the vindictive dislike of Messalina, the fourth wife of Claudius. Having been accused of intrigue with Julia, the Emperor's niece, he was banished to Corsica. Deprived now of home, wife, children, public life, Seneca devoted himself to philosophy in real earnest. Yet into his letters of this period finally creeps a fretful longing for the old life and a servile flattery of men unworthy of mention but influential at court. After the death of Messalina, Seneca was recalled thru Agrippina, first, by his friendship to gain popularity for the princess, and secondly, to tutor her young son, Nero.

Seneca, therefore, with Burrus as a loyal second, took up the training of Nero, a difficult task. When Nero ascended the throne he was a young man of fair promise and this speaks well for Seneca's teaching. But with the ascendancy of his pupil, Seneca's star began to wane. From now on we can discover no attempt on Seneca's part to urge upon Nero the fulfillment of his duty and gradually he sinks to a mere accomplice of vice. By degrees Nero and his mother came to open enmity and history records the shameful details of her death by her son's design. Close upon her death came a letter to the Senate, extenuating the deed by foul lies fairly clothed in rhetorical phrases. The author of this document was Seneca and this was his last prominent act; he had reached the height or rather the depth of his moral fall.

The death of Burrus and the growing unpopularity of Seneca closely followed. Conscious of it, he withdrew into complete seclusion, hugging a life that hung on the whim of a Nero. Soon he was charged with complicity in the conspiracy of Piso, and was ordered to take his life. He obeyed promptly and cheered his last hours and comforted his family by discoursing on Stoic precepts. Thus died Seneca, the Pagan philosopher, whom Cannon Farrar has termed a "Seeker after God" and whose moral convictions, or at least, precepts, we are about to consider.

## II CONDITION OF RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE 1st CENTURY.

At the time of Seneca's birth the world was going through a great religious and philosophical crisis. The Romans of the old school and the magistrates were vainly endeavoring to re-establish the old Pagan religion; the great mass of people were in

a state of unrest and uncertainty as to religious principles but superstitious in the extreme. The country was ~~governed~~ with foreign cults which were all tolerated in this age of remarkable freedom of thought. Opposed to the old religion and new superstitions alike, the philosophers of all schools united to condemn the existing religions and offer as a panacea a life of reason based on a study of nature. As Mr. Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" sums up the situation;- " The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were considered by the people as equally true, by the state as equally useful, by the philosophers as equally false;" It was a time well calculated to inspire in the youth doubt and scorn of gods and men, for aside from the struggles of religion and thought, the Empire was passing through its most horrible and monstrous epoch; when the vices that had begun under Augustus had reached their zenith; when the virtues he had sought to revive, had retired overwhelmed. It was an age of wealth and poverty; ~~the~~ <sup>2</sup> Atheism and ~~vulgar~~ vulgar superstitions; of unrestrained profligacy; of brutal cruelty. The rays of good in Seneca's life and doctrine, therefore, stand out all the more brilliantly against the dark background of the times.

### III SENECA'S RELIGION.

It is with many misgivings that one turns from the contemplation of his life and environment to study his moral and ethical doctrines. We have seen that they were not strong enough to guide his own steps ~~aright~~ and therefore we cannot hope to fall back on his actual practice to support the conclusions we gain from

his words. Therefore, his life and acts will not herein be considered nor judged but the ideas he expressed in his prose works.

#### A. NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD:-

Seneca's idea of the first cause of the universe, of the "Creator and Preserver of all mankind," of GOD, is not clear and fixed. In this he is a true representative of his times. His thoughts of God are best stated in his own words. In Epis. 65(12) he says; "Do we ask what is the first cause? Truly, it is God." "Wherever we go, two things follow ; our own nature and our own virtue: this is the work of him, whoever he was, that was the creator of the universe; whether he be an omnipotent deity, or a bodyless mind that effects great works, or a divine spirit diffused equally through the greatest and least of things, or Fate and the unchangeable sequence of connected events (Dial. XII. 18.) In De Ben. IV (6) - (7), we read,- "The true God is he who - - - - has implanted in us the seed of all ages, of all arts, and God, our master, brings forth our intellects from obscurity. But nature - says my opponent gives me all this. Do you not perceive, when you say this that you merely speak of God under another name? For what is nature but God and divine reason which pervades all the Universe? (Fragment 122.) "Wiser than all the Stoics is he who sees that nature is nothing else but God." Again in De Ben. IV 8 (12); " There is no God without nature; no nature without God - they are both the same thing but differ in function " Epis. 92 (30) - "Why should you not believe that something divine exists in that which is a part of God. The whole universe by which we are surrounded is both one and God." Epis. 65 (2-3) " Surely the universe is made of material and



of God (ex Deo) , God rules it (the universe) and it obeys him as its director and leader. But God is more powerful and richer than the material that yields to him " But near the end of his life so far has he progressed in the knowledge of the spiritual nature of God that he can say, ( Epis 4J, I) We need not stretch out our hands toward Heaven nor entreat the oracles to grant us access to the attention of a statue as if it could listen to us - God is near us, is with us, is within us. A sacred Spirit dwells within us, the observer of all our good and bad actions and our Guardian"- almost the words of St Paul to the Corinthians (I Cor. III 16; VI 19) Frag. 24 " For he in whose sight we live knows all things and if we could hide from all men we cannot hide from God - from whom nothing can be hidden or concealed." Nat. Quaes. 30 (3-4): "He himself who does all this, who established and founded everything is greater and better than his work - he is invisible to the eye, he is invisible only to thought."

Judging from his words, tho he was a pantheist he was not one in a wholly material sense. For while he unites God and Nature, he makes God rule all, superior to his work, and a divine Spirit. But I am inclined to think that he never arrived at any conclusion here that was satisfactory even to himself.

Of this unknown God after whom he was seeking he tells us, (De Ben. IV 7 (I-2) " You may call the author of our world by as many names as you will. You will call him rightly Jove, Best Greatest. ----- you may call him also Fate, --- He has as many names as qualities ---- (8, 2-3) Whithersoever you turn you will find him meeting you; nothing is void of him, he fills his world. --- You may call him nature, fate, Fortune; his names are all suggestions

of his powers. Justice, honesty, wisdom, courage, frugality are the qualities of that one mind. ." What a typical Roman list of attributes. Altho he came so near the truth of the eternal existence and nature of God he attributes to him only attributes that were given to Jupiter, excepting the vices. That he did not entertain the popular superstition that God was wont to indulge in human weaknesses we know from De Ira II.27-(I): "The immortal gods neither wish to do harm nor are they able, and their disposition is naturally gentle and tranquil." Throughout these references I judge Seneca referred to his own conception of one God when in the phraseology of his times he says "the gods" To be sure he may have had in mind the lesser deities recognized in the Stoic philosophy - subservient to God, the personification of natural phenomena.

POWER and GENEROSITY seem to be the predominant characteristics of this God. Frag I23. ----- think of God as MIGHTY and calm, to be revered because of his gentle majesty, a friend ever nigh, to be worshipped not by sacrifice and bloodshedding - for what pleasure is there in the slaughter of innocent things - but by a pure mind and a good honorable life? No lofty temples of stone need be erected for him; let him rather be enthroned in each one's heart." Compare Psalm 51 (16-17) De Ben. Vii(7) "Thus the whole world is a temple of the immortal gods and, indeed, the only one worthy of their greatness and splendor." (De Ben. Iv (3) "Who is there so poor who had not felt the GENEROSITY of God? he gives all living creatures everything upon earth, he buries treasures in the earth." 28 (3) "God has likewise bestowed certain gifts upon all the human race from which no one is excepted."

Seneca seems to believe that God; in addition to being all powerful, is really a loving, tho exacting deity for he tells us in De Prov. II (6), "God entertains a FATHERLY care over men and LOVES them with a strong affection" (IV (7-8)) "In like manner God hardens, selects and trains those whom he afflicts and loves, --- God has thought us worthy subjects on whom to try how much suffering human nature can endure.----- (I2) Why then should we wonder if God tries noble spirits severly?" "Be sure that God acts in like manner (like a father)He does not pet the good man; he tries him, hardens him; fits him for Himself." "Deus" to Seneca was one, spirit, omnipresent, the creator of the universe and man, incapable of doing wrong, powerful, generous, loving.

#### B. MAN'S RELATION TO GOD:-

No one realized better than did Seneca the failings of age, and the needs of the people; and he preached to them a closer relationship with God and virtuous living as the only means to earthly happiness and calls upon them to look to God as an example. He says in Epis. 95 (50) "The first service to the gods is to BELIEVE in the gods" This was a new note in the vain empty forms into which religious exercises had fallen and the vaunting skepticism of the times. Despite his practices, Seneca admired truth and despised hypocrisy in others and so he urged upon men a frank and earnest relation with their deity. Next to believing in the gods, he advises IMITATING them (De Ben. VII 3I (2) ) "I ought to imitate the gods, those noble dispensers of all events, who begin to bestow their benefits on those who know them not, and persist in bestowing them on those who are even ungrateful (Epis. 95. 50 )" "Do you wish to propitiate the gods? Be good: whoever imitates them loves them.

De Clem. I (I9. 9) "Does not that man come very near the gods who is beneficent, open handed and powerful for the good." Seneca, himself, knew the trials that beset a good man amid the luxury and vice of his times, and the mental torment to which he must be subjected; for that reason he tried to tell men of the vanity and uselessness of riches, luxury, and high position. In Epis 3I, IO he says, "Money will not make you God-like, - God has nothing; dress will not do it, - God is clothed not; - reputation will not do it nor display, nor the fame of your name among the people:- No one knows God; many even think ill of him WITH IMPUNITY." Again (3I (II) "One may reach heaven from his own little corner; only arise and be worthy of God. But you will not accomplish this with gold or silver. The spirit of God cannot be expressed in material things."

And yet the bond that Seneca would have established between man and God is not, contrary to the Christian idea, one of prayer and communion. Although he recognizes that prayer is a natural attitude he does not especially commend it. He says, in De Ben. V 25 (4) " We pray to the gods whose knowledge nothing escapes; our prayers do not influence them, but merely remind them. " Also II I (4) " Nothing is so dear as that which is bought by prayer, ----- even when addressing the gods, before whom we can with all honor bow our knees, we would rather pray silently and to ourselves. (De Ben. IV 4) "The one who says this (that God is unmindful) does not hear the voices of supplicants who with hands outstretched to heaven pray privately and in public; And this certainly would not be the case, neither would all men consent to pray to inexorable powers and powerless gods if we did not know that their gifts were often given unasked and that in answer to prayer many seasonable gifts were granted that by their intervention averted threatening

dangers. Epis 95 (48) gives us a more spiritual view of prayer, "One will never be thru (petitioning) unless God, who owns all, shares all and bestows gifts to grateful people, be worshipped spiritually as he ought to be." Be godlike and remind the gods of what they owe to you in return seems to be his idea..

One finds no idea of REPENTANCE entering into his view of the relationship of man to God, for he believes man, in himself, is too exalted for this. (De Prov. I (5) "Between good men and the gods there is a friendship which is brought about by virtue - friendship do I say? Nay, a relationship and similarity, for a good man differs from God in time alone, he is His pupil, and rival, and true offspring." and De Con. Sap. VIII (2) ---- and the wise man is near, very near to the gods, being like a god in every way save that he is mortal." If however he does not believe in accounting to God for our actions, he does advise daily selfexamination and tells us that he himself practiced it. I do not think he advocated this as a means to repentance thru a realization of one's sinfulness but rather as a means to a more calm, enjoyable life thru the feeling of self satisfaction. In commending to his friends the example of his own life, he says, De Ira III 36 (I-2): "What can be more admirable that this habit of going over the whole of the day's events? how sweet is the sleep that follows self-examination, how calm, how deep, how free is it when our spirit has received either praise or censure? I make use of this habit ----- and pass the whole day in review before me and repeat all I have said and done. I conceal nothing and admit nothing; for why should I be afraid of any of my mistakes when it is in my power to say " I pardon you now, don't ever do it again." This thought brands him the pagan and

is an example of the idea of self-sufficiency of man, the ideal of Stoic philosophy. Naturally, too, the Christian ideals of humility and unselfishness could hold no ~~more~~ place in the man who likens his condition to that of God and says, De Prov. V. 6: "I am under no compulsion, I endure nothing against my will, I do not serve God, I only agree with him because I know that all things are ordained and proceed according to a law that abides forever. -- -- Whatever command is laid upon us to live or die, the same is binding upon the gods. The Creator of the universe has, indeed, ordered the Fates but follows them: he always obeys now, tho he commanded at one time.

#### C. DEATH AND FUTURE LIFE:-

Such is a man's relation to God in this world; and in the next world, what? I have read, - I do not remember where - that Seneca, following the teaching of Pythagoras was a firm believer in the IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL. I do, indeed, find a suggestion of this in such words as: (Epis IO3, 23) "When that <sup>day</sup> comes which divides the mixture of the human and the divine, I shall leave the body here where I found it, I shall return to the gods,----- Another beginning awaits me, another state; Death is not the end of the soul, but of the body." And in Ad. M. Con. 24 (5) we read: "He (her son) is immortal and is in a better state now, freed from the burden of what was not his own, and left to himself.----- the body chains and darkens the soul, which ever strives to rise up again to that place whence it was sent down to earth ----- everlasting rest awaits it there, it will behold, what is pure and clear in place of what is dark and impure. ( 25 II ) He has tarried a little above us while his soul was being cleansed and purified from

the evil and decay which all mortal lives gain, and from which he will rise to the high heavens and join the souls of the blessed; a glorious company will welcome him there (3) he will be glad to gaze back down upon the earth, for it is delightful to look down from above to what one has left behind." But particularly in the same epistle of consolation (Chap I9, 4.) we have a very clear expression of Seneca's idea of death, showing too, the Stoic teaching of scorn and repudiation of the popular unphilosophical superstitions of the times. He says: "Reflect that the dead suffer no evil that all those stories that cause us to fear the other world are only fables, that he who dies need not fear darkness, prison, blazing streams of fire, the river Lethe, a judgmentseat before which he must appear; and death is such absolute freedom THAT he need fear no more despots. All that idea is the imagination of the poets who have unreasonably terrified us. Death is a release from all pains and an end of them; beyond it our sufferings cannot extend; it restores us to the peaceful rest in which we lay before we were born. If any one pities the dead he ought also to pity those who have not been born. Death is neither a good nor a bad thing, for that only which is something can be good or evil.; but that which is nothing and REDUCES ALL THINGS TO NOTHING does not give us either fortune because good and evil require something to work upon." Epis 36, 12: "Neither infants, nor children nor feeble minded people fear death and it is surely base if reason cannot gain for us the same freedom from dread of death as foolishness displays. " Again speaking of great men who were forced to die he says, (De Tran Animi I6 IV) "All these men found how at the cost of a little time they might gain immortality and by their deaths they gained eternal life."

But that he really meant what his words imply to us, that he had any conception of the immortal life, of Heaven, or Paradise, or "The Kingdom of God" is far from likely as those words "reduces all things to nothing" quoted just above show. And he repeats that idea in substance in Epis 36, (9): "Death has in it nothing unpleasant for there must be something to be unpleasant." So he may discuss death and the future state of the soul for the comfort of another as a perfectly natural phenomenon; but I believe he came nearest to an honest expression of his belief when he uttered the words of De Prov. VI (6); "Despise death, it either makes an end of you or takes you elsewhere." And Epis 36(8). "One does well to scorn death, which, no doubt has something terrible in it to so offend our souls, which Nature formed to love her." The question and the doubt are quite characteristic of his life and doctrine.

#### IV SENECA'S ETHICS.

##### A. AIM OF LIFE:

In respect to his precepts for a virtuous life as well as in his religious ideas, one must acknowledge that Seneca was a remarkable man for his age. It is here that we find him uttering commands and warnings that in words at least, come so near scriptural teaching and explain the interest with which Christian men have read him. Like all Philosophers he believed that the aim and end of a well lived life was true happiness and peace of mind for all time. (De Beata Vita VII (4); "The highest good is immortal; it knows no ending and does not allow either satiety or regret." Ibid XVI.) True happiness therefore, consists in virtue." (IX. 3) "The



highest good lies in the act of choosing her (virtue), and in the attitude of noblest minds which, when they have fulfilled their function and bounded themselves within their own limits, have attained the highest good and need nothing more." Just what this "highest good" is he tells us in the same treatise - De Vita Beata IV (2) "Thus (considering all definitions) it will mean the same thing if I say that the HIGHEST GOOD is a mind that despises the accidents of Fortune and takes its pleasure in virtue; or, we may call him happy for whom good and evil exist only in good and evil minds, who cultivates virtue, is satisfied with his own virtue, whom fortune can neither elate nor depress, who knows no greater good than that which he can bestow upon himself, whose real pleasure lies in despising pleasure." De Constantia Sap. V (4-5) "Virtue is free, inviolate, immovable, firm and so hardened against misfortunes that she cannot be bent, much less overcome by them. She looks on unfaltering while tortures are being prepared for her and does not change countenance if trouble or pleasure be given to her. The wise man therefore can lose nothing and be sensible of the loss for he is the property of virtue alone, from whom he can never be taken away."

#### B. H.B. HOW TO OBTAIN HAPPINESS:

And the ability to do all this lies, Seneca would have men realize, in the proper exercise of man's REASON, reason which he calls "God in man" for which WILL must discipline the mind and body, and all emotions must be suppressed. The subjects of Seneca's moral treatises suggest the virtues that he would have men acquire, such as constancy, freedom from anger, tranquillity of soul and compassion, as well as the habits of using one's leisure properly, for

bestowing and receiving gifts in the right spirit and of showing mercy to all men. And his epistles as their title (Epistulae Morales) implies teem with maxims for a better life. . To understand his ethics in all these details one ought to read these treatises in full. I shall quote however, only a few of the various means he suggests for attaining happiness. But note that he does not mean pleasure in the commonly accepted meaning of the word, nor does he urge virtuous living as a means but as an end in itself.(De Vita Beata IX 2.) "Pleasure is not the reward nor the cause of virtue but comes in addition to it; we do not choose virtue because she gives us pleasure but she does give us pleasure if we choose her. " Throughout all his precepts for a happy life runs the Stoic principle of following nature. (De Vita Beata VIII (I) ) "For it is Nature whom we ought to make our guide - let our reason watch her and be advised by her. Then, to live happily is the same thing as living according to Nature." (Ibid. III (3)) "So I follow Nature which is a principle on which all Stoic philosophers agree,---- A happy life, therefore, is one which follows ~~in~~ its own nature ---- (4) thus we gain a great, unchanging, level happiness, and peace, calmness, broadness of mind and kindness."

And for man's relation to his fellow men he advises Epis. 83 (I) "We certainly should live as if in clear sight of all men. We must think as if someone could see into our hearts, and one can do this, for what does it profit a man to do anything in secret? Nothing is secret to God. He is present in our minds and in our thoughts."

Epis X 5; "Live with your fellow men as if God were looking on; pray to God as if all men were listening." In short, according to Seneca, a man given to philosophy at peace with nature

and man, caring not overmuch for material luxuries that he may not be crushed if he lose them, restraining all passions and emotions, all sufficient unto himself, will attain the surpreme happiness of this world.

#### V. SUMMARY:

This study of Seneca's expression of his belief leads us to the following conclusions:

✓ A. As to Nature of God:- Seneca, with the Stoics, was a pantheist but not in a merely material sense, and attained a more spiritual conception of the Deity, tho he made God and Nature and moral mind one. Power, love and protection mark the activities of God in the Universe. He seems to me to acknowledge the existence of inferior deities but I cannot determine just what nature and power he would assign to them.

B. As to Man's relation to God:- He tells men simply that obedience to divine laws and the thoughts of a pure heart should mark their gratitude to the benign Power that he has made them and established a shrine within them and abides there in the form of Reason. Men may call upon the gods in prayer, just to jog their memories, as it were, but with the understanding that they are equal to God in their common subjection to the Fates; and tho a man ought to live as he knows God would have him, this obedience is not one of service but of preference, thus no idea of repentance or responsibility to God enters into man's relation to him.

C. As to Death and the Future Life:- He believed that death is a natural change that comes to everything and therefore has nothing painful or fearful in it. This change will do one of three things; it will either bring one back to another beginning of life in this world, as the seasons ever return with their recurring phenomena; or it will end all, body and mind will decay together; or it will usher one into a life vaguely peaceful and beautiful. In spite of the mystery surrounding it, death and the future state must have seemed preferable to Seneca to life with unpleasantness for he approves of suicide, mentioning with commendatory words examples of suicides and even advises it as in Epis 70, (15) "Why should I wait for the sufferings of disease or harm of man when I can escape discomfort and evade my enemies? This is one reason why we cannot complain of life, it holds no one --- If it pleases you live: if not, return from whence you came. " and, too in Epis 58 (37), "It is weak and base to die on account of grief, but still it is too stupid to live for the sake of grief."

D. As to the aim and conduct of life:- For men in their daily life and social intercourse Seneca held up a lofty ideal. He would have all men devout students of Nature and obedient to her laws; avoiding anger, jealousy, passion and cultivating calmness, generosity and self-restraint. The goal was perfect contentment of mind; He acknowledges that the way therto is difficult and full of hindrances and that few attain it. In men's business relations he preaches honesty and square dealings. Seneca himself sums up his ethical doctrines nicely in Epis 92. (3) "And what is a happy life? It is freedom from every worry and lasting peace ---- And how is one to attain it? By maintaining in his daily life, order, method,

propriety, a good and helpful purpose, an inclination toward reason, never deflection from it, by being at once lovable and remarkable. To give you a short rule of life, the character of the wise man ought to be all that befits a god. "

CONCLUSION: This study of Seneca's Doctrines reveals him as a remarkable man for his times. He cannot be associated with any definite school of philosophy - he openly confesses that he is an eclectic, (De Vita Beata III "2): "When I say "ours", I do not bind myself to any of the teachers of the Stoic school, for I have a right to form my own opinion. Therefore I shall follow the authority of some of them and require others to defend their points." Nor yet can he be associated with the Christians. He entertained no sordid views of the deity nor did he approve of the rites and sacrifices offered to them by most men. He agreed with all philosophers in regarding Nature as a guide; with the Stoics in particular as to the nature of God, but seems more spiritual in his conception of the Deity, relegates the "inferior gods to a less important position and gives God a closer relationship to man. This better idea of God and his wholesome precepts of life suggest at times Christian influences at work in him, but closer study reveals that he differed too much in the fundamentals to have given the Christian religion his serious attention. Indeed, his mission seems to have been to link the gap between Christianity and Paganism, for he shows marked departures from the Pagan ideas, yet he lacks the fulness of Christian ideals.

Aside from his general doctrines already noted three characteristics of his thought are noticeable. He was strongly a

18.

fatalist - through all his discourse runs that idea of the finality of Fate - sometimes separate from the power of God. (De Prov. I 6) (quoted above) sometimes identified with God. He was in the second place, an advocate of the BROTHERHOOD OF MAN." We are members of a great body - Nature made us all brothers"; he says in (E. 95.(52). In this belief he urged consideration, sympathy, toleration toward all men, slave and inferior particularly. And lastly, he was an independant seeker after truth. Using the experience of all other philosophers he went on and formed his own opinions. For this very reason we cannot assign him to any exact place among religious or philosophical sects but must call him simply Seneca, a devotee to Truth, working alone thru that mysterious land between the boundaries of Paganism and Christianity.

( The End.)