

## Parish and Home.

A monthly church magazine, published for the promoters by THE BRYANT PRESS, 20 Bay Street, Toronto.

### SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

50 Cents per Annum, in Advance,			
10	copies to one address, for one year,	\$3.50	
20	" " " " " "	5.00	
40	" " " " " "	11.00	
50	" " " " " "	13.50	
100	" " " " " "	25.00	

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THE BRYANT PRESS,  
20 Bay St., Toronto, Canada. PUBLISHERS.

### SOMETIME, SOMEWHERE.

UNANSWERED yet? The prayer your lips have pleaded

In agony of heart these many years?

Does faith begin to fail; is hope departing,  
And think you all in vain those falling tears?  
Say not the Father hath not heard your prayer;  
You shall have your desire sometime, somewhere.

UNANSWERED yet? though when you first presented  
This one petition at the Father's throne,

It seemed you could not wait the time of asking,  
So urgent was your heart to make it known.  
Though years have passed since then, do not despair,

The Lord will answer you sometime, somewhere.

UNANSWERED yet? Nay, do not say ungranted;  
Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done.  
The work began when first your prayer was uttered,

And God will finish what He has begun,  
If you will keep the incense burning there,  
His glory you shall see sometime, somewhere.

UNANSWERED yet? Faith cannot be unanswered,  
Her feet were firmly planted on the Rock,  
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,  
Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.  
She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,  
And Cries: "It shall be done!" sometime somewhere.

—Robert Browning.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

### SEEKING FOR LIGHT.

#### SENECA.

THERE is no rest for man, except he find rest in God. The longings of the heart are all for a Being who is greater than man, who can bring order out of apparent chaos, peace out of turmoil.

Before the Saviour of the world came men were groping in thick darkness, and yet with all that darkness we read of some who, in their morals and philosophy, seemed to have almost caught a glimpse of the light which was soon to dawn upon a dark world.

One of these was Seneca. He was born in Cordova, in Spain, about 11 B.C., but when he was a mere child his father and all his family moved to the city of Rome, where, amid its sin and shame, most of his life was to be lived, a broken, chequered life, and yet, in the main, in quest of truth.

Perhaps no period of the history of the world presents to us such a lurid picture of wickedness as the period in which Seneca lived. Millions of slaves were at the very lowest point of human life, without friends, possession, or God. At the other extreme were the wealthy and noble, who were ready to squander a fortune at a single banquet, and who were feasting on the brains of peacocks and the tongues of nightingales, the greatest delicacies which a Roman could have. Highest of all stood the emperor, who, the historian Gibbon tells us, "was at once a priest, an atheist, and a god."

We know little about the early life of Seneca. It was a characteristic of the age that the great men should tell very little about their childhood. Childhood among the ancients was thought very little of, and was often much less happy than with us. Domestic life was of little account. Public life was everything.

His father was a wealthy and cultivated man of literary tastes, and endowed with a prodigious memory. Helvia, his mother, was a sweet and lovely woman. "She never was infected with that plague spot of her age, immodesty." Unlike many of the other women of her day who dressed luxuriously, gems and pearls had little charm for her. Many years afterwards, when Seneca was in exile, he wrote the following to her to console her: "You never stained your face with walnut-juice and rouge. . . . Your single ornament was a loveliness which no age could destroy; your special glory was a conspicuous chastity."

Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, spoken of in Acts xviii. 19, was a brother of Seneca.

Perhaps the nearest contact which the heathen philosopher Seneca ever had with Paul, the Christian apostle, was when Paul was dragged a prisoner before Gallio, but the dim-eyed, insignificant-looking apostle would scarcely have much effect upon the philosopher, who would look upon him as some unknown troublesome fellow who once tried to inflict upon him a harangue. Little did Gallio know that this ordinary-looking man was destined to become one of the greatest characters which has ever graced the pages of history.

Little also is known about the education

of Seneca. It seems, however, that he early became an enthusiastic student of philosophy.

For a time he was most abstemious in his habits, refraining altogether from meat; but later on he revived his custom of eating meat, lest he might "incur the horrible suspicion of being a Christian or a Jew." Poor Seneca did not know that the very truths for which he was seeking were to be found in the "sect" called Christians, which he so heartily despised. Yet he was a good man. Although surrounded by vice of the worst kind, we are told in his writings that he made a daily self-examination. Every night when he betook himself to rest he would ask himself the question: "What evil have I cured to-day? What evil have I resisted?" Then he would carefully consider in his heart everything he had done during the day, and, as far as he could, make a correct estimate of his deeds and words. What about ourselves, who "profess and call ourselves Christians"? We into whose hearts the light of heaven has shone, are we better, nay, are we as good, as the heathen philosopher who was as

"An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry?"

Unconsciously, Seneca was reaching out for a power outside of himself and greater than himself. Had he come into contact at this period of his life with the Saviour whom we love, we might have a very different story to tell of him.

There was much in the nature of Seneca which would have made him a strong Christian like his contemporary St. Paul, and would have placed his name high among Christian saints; but he did not know Christ as the Saviour of the world, and therefore his powers were soon turned into a different channel, until at last we find his life ending in disgrace.

The tendencies of the age have always a great deal to do with the moulding of a character. The general tone of thought, the habits of society, and the great questions which present themselves to a nation to a certain extent determine a thinking man's future, unless he has some offset to all these by a firm trust in God.

To Seneca God scarcely seemed to be a reality, although in his own mind he was trying to work out some solution for the many mysteries of life. His age was one of atheism and superstition. These two things generally go together. Seneca wrote a book entitled "Against Superstition," but where could he turn for light?