

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. XX.

JULY, 1916.

No. 3.

“HOW OLD IS MAN?”

The antiquity of man is discussed in an article recently contributed by Theodore Roosevelt to the *National Geographic Magazine*.¹⁾ The article purports to give a brief summary of that which has been ascertained by anthropological science in answer to the question, “How old is man?” and by reason of the distinguished name of its author has received wide attention. Mr. Roosevelt intends to trace the prehistory of man, “the history of his development from an apelike creature struggling with his fellow-brutes.” He refers to a past geologic age, when “man was slowly developing from the half-human to the wholly human,” “from a strong and cunning brute into a man having dominion over all brutes, and kinship with worlds lying outside and beyond our own,” and intends to summarize “all that has been discovered and soundly determined” since Darwin wrote his *Descent of Man*. Mr. Roosevelt refers with undisguised disdain to those who once “disbelieved in the antiquity of man,” and his article leaves no doubt in the reader’s mind that in the opinion of Mr. Roosevelt this disbelief in the evolutionistic thesis concerning the origin and ancestry of man has been amply proven unfounded by the facts. His assertions are made with a calm emphasis, which cannot fail to impress the unsophisticated reader. We are invited to consider “man as he was up to the end of paleolithic times.” “*The records show that man has lived in France for at least 100,000 years.*”

The illustrations which accompany the article add to the

1) February, 1916: “How Old Is Man?”

SENECA AND NERO.

(Continued.)

The Emperor Claudius is uniformly by the ancient historians described as the awkward and blundering imbecile, who was a mere tool in the unscrupulous hands of his wives and his freedmen, Narcissus, Pallas, Polybius. The Senate, once so proud, cringed and crawled at the feet of Pallas, the former Greek slave (Pli., *Ep.*, 7, 29; 8, 6), who amassed an enormous fortune, and whose brother Felix, procurator of Palestine, we know from the Acts of the Apostles. The point of greatest vanity in the make-up of the emperor was his literary ambition and his scholarship. In this sphere the freedman Polybius was his chief secretary. Our exile of Corsica therefore adroitly seized the opportunity which presented itself to him: Seneca heard of the death of a brother of Polybius, and thereupon composed an essay of consolation inscribed to the powerful freedman. It is still in our hands. It abounds in beautiful embroidery of the Stoic commonplaces, it is humble, it is full of dexterous flattery, it often reminds us of Ovid at Tomi, but it does not seem to have accomplished its real purpose, *viz.*, the restoration of its author. Nay, even to the Empress Messalina he is said to have written a composition: to her, who was the chief cause of his exile, a piece of literature which, they say, he afterward suppressed. If he really did so, what must have been the abasement of that haughty mind, what, indeed, the hypocrisy of that keen intellect, in which psychological penetration was coupled with lofty principles of his sect.

The abrupt reversal of the brilliant exile's misfortunes came about through the catastrophe of the unspeakable Messalina. Her monstrous lust had reached a point where she was ready not merely to deceive her imperial spouse as she had done so often before, but even to stake her unbridled passions bound up with the contingency of destroying both the throne and the life of Claudius, if that should prove needful (Tacit., *Annals*, 11, 26). After her execution the imperial widower was promptly ensnared by his niece, the widow Agrippina,

daughter of Germanicus, great-niece of Tiberius and, above all, mother of a boy of eleven, Nero, about whose other names and paternity history now has none but an antiquarian concern. The temptation to unfold more explicitly the character and career of Nero is great, but I must limit myself in these readings. It is this curious and unique association which must be presented here, the most lofty and vigorous morality of the classic world as presented by Seneca: and the same Seneca first the educator of the future emperor and the tool of Agrippina's deep ambition; later the chief minister of state of the same, the literary mouthpiece and apologist of Nero's most indefensible crime, and, after some years of retirement and incessant devotion to noble letters, a victim of his own imperial pupil. All this is quite without parallel in the annals of our humankind.

It was Seneca whom Agrippina caused to be recalled from his Corsican exile (*Tac., Ann.* 12, 8) to take charge of her son's education. It was, as Tacitus puts it, a very popular measure to restore the leader of Roman culture to freedom and to Rome; it was still more cordially approved that the same foremost luminary should take charge of Nero's education, which, indeed, hitherto had been more than neglected. We may assume and presume as we may be inclined: records of that preceptor's activity and that influence there are none left us. We must be content here with the larger aspect of things. In 54, when the lad was in his seventeenth year, and Seneca some sixty-one, and the imperial imbecile Claudius in his sixty-fourth, the criminal ambition of Agrippina essayed the last, fearing that Claudius, after all, might place his own son Britannicus in the line of succession and not his adopted son Nero. It was at Sinuessa, to whose milder climate the imperial invalid had been removed. A poisoned mushroom was resorted to, and the Greek physician in ordinary hastened the departure of Claudius, "being well aware that the greatest crimes were undertaken with danger, but accomplished with reward." (*Tac., Ann.* 12, 67.) On October 13, 54, Agrippina's son was swiftly transported from the Palatine to the

barracks of the Praetorian guard, whose commander, Burrus, must have been secured in advance, and there proclaimed emperor. Seneca and Burrus, for the next five years, were indeed the chief advisers of Nero; we may say that they were largely responsible, during that period, for the administration of the Roman Empire, to which, under Claudius, the greater part of Britain had been added, and which extended from the Euphrates to the Straits of Gibraltar. Did Seneca and Burrus equally know of the crime through which Agrippina had opened the way for her son? Did they consider this succession the smaller of evils? Were they aware that this succession meant for themselves high places and great power?

The new ministers at least, a thing rare in the association of power, as Tacitus says (*Ann.* 13, 2), acted in complete harmony. The funeral eulogy of the deceased emperor was delivered by the lad Nero, the new emperor. It was a brilliant and splendid performance, but every one knew that Seneca had written it (*ib.* 13, 3). And when the discourse dwelt on the deceased emperor's foresight and philosophical excellence, the distinguished audience found it difficult to maintain sober faces. Indeed, Seneca's imperial pupil had cultivated favorite tastes, which ran to other things than higher studies and serious oratory. His deepest fondness and strongest predilections were to emboss metal in sculptured forms, to paint, to sing, and to manage horses, and sometimes to try his hand at versification. We may at once say Seneca's loftier and wholesome principles never succeeded in endowing that mind with his own ideals, let alone with his own philosophy, while a passion for all things spectacular, and the vanity of an actor or singer, and an utter contentment with the surface of things, filled his soul. We cannot pass on without speaking of the bitter satire which Seneca composed on the death of Claudius, composed, we may fairly assume, about the same time when he wrote for the young emperor's lips the funeral eulogy, and soon after the wise and weighty state-paper with which the stripling opened

his public career in addressing the Senate. Did Seneca write his *Ludus de Morte Claudii* to gratify his deep feeling of revenge for his Corsican exile? Did he strive to please Agrippina? It is quite unthinkable that so pungent a pasquinade could be published so soon after the official mourning of the new court. At all events, it lies before us a historical document, the triumph of the brilliant author over the imperial imbecile, and a revelation of a soul whose philosophical tenets, then at least, had small room for forgiveness. It is a scene in heaven, where the hapless Claudius, after struggling some sixty-four years with his breath, appears before Jove. The general trend of that council seemed to be favorable to resolve upon the newcomer's deification, until Augustus arose to enter a protest, and to move that Claudius be banished from heaven in thirty days and from Olympus in three. This was adopted, and Mercury at once entrusted with the mandate to deliver him to the infernal regions. As the two passed over the Forum, Claudius beheld his own funeral pageant, and then for the first time realized that he was dead. In the lower world he felt quite at home; for he found there a large company of friends whom through the executioner he had sent before. Aeacus, the judge of souls departed, finds him guilty. One may be tempted to suggest that the minister and courtier produced this satire for the young emperor or even for the emperor's mother, Agrippina; but it is more likely that Seneca wrote it for himself, to gratify himself. After a year or so (55 A. D.) the philosopher, courtier, preceptor, and author composed, and probably published, an essay on *Clemency*, dedicated, and in a peculiar sense addressed as a political and administrative memoir, to his sovereign and imperial pupil. And we may fairly add that it was no less addressed to, and meant for, public opinion and that generation, to show the world what principles the minister sought to inculcate, what ideals to recommend to the practise of the ruler, and that a new and better era had dawned for mankind. And he sought also to stir in young Nero a lofty ambition to excel by noble

qualities, and to invite comparison with the most eminent administrators of the past. The spirit of this monitory essay is wholly admirable, and it abounds in suggestive and precious bits of historical illustration and parallels. Little doubt that, if Seneca's counsel and influence had moved and determined that reign for good, Nero would now be classed with the wiser and nobler emperors, such as Augustus, Trajan, Antoninus Pius, and the Stoic on the throne, Marcus Aurelius. We realize, too, from the very introduction, how, from the semirepublican ways of Augustus, things had been leading more and more towards the genuine autocracy and a despotism, but slightly, if at all, checked either by any political power inherent in Senate or people, or in any sentiment of inherited freedom. We are told indeed by Seneca (*Clem.* 11, 1) that on one occasion, when Burrus had presented to the young prince for his signature a paper ordering the execution of two highway robbers, Nero exclaimed, "Would that I could not write!" It was, at the threshold of his power, a mere mood of kindness. Later, when his monstrous and insatiable passions and appetites made sport of all human and divine law, and destroyed whoever stood in his path, the same Nero became the most cruel and blood-thirsty of tyrants. In this state-paper, by the by, the minister of the emperor by no means denies or masks his deeper Stoic convictions. What now in the young prince (*Clem.* 11, 2, 2) was mere nature and impulse must become deliberate judgment. Seneca does not shrink from condemning utterances of Caligula and Tiberius, though he names them not. Here, then, we see the philosopher-statesman at his best, and we are almost tempted to imagine him a kind of spiritual confessor as they were in the latter Christian times. But there is another side also, and we cannot find fault with some modern students (like Hicks in *Encycl. Britannica*, 11th ed.), who compare the man from Corduba with a Wolsey or Mazarin of modern history.

In a few years after Nero's accession his prime minister, the eminent Stoic Seneca, had become immensely rich. One

of his enemies, Suillius, charged in a public trial (Tac., *Ann.* 13, 42) that Seneca in four short years had amassed a fortune of 300 million sesterces, in our United States money \$13,200,000, which charge is repeated by Dio Cassius (61, 10), with insinuations of an adulterous intrigue with Agrippina herself; and while Seneca censured the luxury of the times, he himself possessed 500 tripods of citrus wood with ivory feet, the most expensive furniture then known. Dio is as bitter in his arraignment of Seneca as he is of Cicero, and probably equally unreliable in his dealings with either. Whether all this is true we know not. But one thing is obvious. It was felt by his contemporaries that the lofty morality and the severe postulates of his sect and of his writings chimed but ill with the superb prosperity of his public position. It is possible that young Nero in these earlier years lavished treasures upon him with reckless profusion. In his last years, when Seneca had retired from public life, he wrote, in that proud survey of his entire career, after 63 B. C., when he was a septuagenarian (*N. Quaest.*, IV, Praef. 18): "Add now a soul invincible by gifts, and amid so great a struggle of avarice a hand that never hollowed itself under pelf" (*like the freedmen under Claudius*); "add now also the frugality of my living, the restraint of my conversation, kindness in meeting the younger, respect in meeting the older: after this enquire of yourself whether you have spoken true or falsely. If it is true, you have been praised in the presence of a great witness; if false, you have become a laughing-stock."

But we must now take up the crime of crimes in Nero's life, a crime the dark shadow of which to some extent always also must cover the figure of the imperial counselor. It was in the fashionable season of the year 59. For some time the passions of Nero, who was then twenty-two years of age, had been directed toward Poppaea Sabina, the most beautiful woman of her day. It was easy for her imperial lover to remove her husband to be governor in Spain. But Poppaea insisted, in meeting the wooing of her imperial lover, on noth-

ing less than sharing the throne with him. But there were two obstacles, the emperor's wife Octavia and his mother Agrippina. The latter was the greater bar, for he knew that his very throne was her own creation, and he saw no way to remove her but death. The awful deed was at last accomplished on that gulf of Paradise, where Capri and the superb lines of Ischia, and the loveliness of the ridge of Posilipo mark the entrancing landscape. After long estrangement Nero had invited his mother to a banquet in his villa (Tac., *Ann.* 14, 4) between Misenum and Baiae. With histrionic faculty he had assumed there the cordial and filial tone of former years, and at the conclusion of the feast he had seen her embark on a superb barge of state, taking leave from her with kisses and embraces. The vessel departed down the coast; it was a night of perfect calm, and the placid gulf was unruffled, when the ceiling fell in which was vaulted over the dowager's cabin; a ceiling made heavy with lead fell down and destroyed the life of a courtier. Agrippina was protected and saved by the projecting edges of her sofa. The program of the plotted crime further failed in this, that the barge did not go to pieces at the critical moment, and though the barge was tilted over by the crew, Agrippina, only bruised on one shoulder by the blow of an oar, reached the shore by swimming, and immediately sought the seclusion of her own villa. She was to have been the victim of an accident, a shipwreck, which Nero would have duly deplored.

Her son was frantic at this issue (*ib.*, c. 7). He had summoned at once Burrus and Seneca, "one does not know," says Tacitus, "whether even before they were without knowledge of the matter." Imagine the situation of these counselors. The general plan of the imperial parricide was to present his mother as guilty of a plot on his life and his throne, and that Nero had acted entirely to prevent this. A long time the ministers sat in silence. Finally Seneca turned to the commander of the guards, and asked him whether the soldiers could be entrusted with the execution. But Burrus

refused to take that risk; he declared the praetorians would refuse to deal thus with a daughter of Germanicus. So Anicetus, who had devised the plot of the dissolving barge, undertook the consummation of the crime. Before the morning dawned, he, attended by some naval officers, dispatched Agrippina in her bedchamber with many blows. This, Nero said, was indeed the first day of his reign. Her remains were cremated the same night.

The courtiers congratulated him for having escaped his mother's murderous designs. This, generally, was the official manner everywhere; this was the burden of the report which Nero sent from Naples to the Senate. And again, if we accept Tacitus's account (*Ann.* 14, 11), it was Seneca whom the world censured, even more than Nero, for being once more the literary mouthpiece and the author of the emperor's apology. The obsequious Senate voted thanksgivings in the temples of the gods.

After this crisis in their lives, when Nero began to arrange his own life absolutely in conformity with his whims, his passions and appetites, after he had destroyed his own mother, who had stood in the way, it is obvious that Seneca's influence for good was at an end.

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(To be continued.)

MODE OF BAPTISM.

In order to treat of the mode of Baptism intelligently, it is necessary to begin with the Old Testament. We would not expect to find the word baptism, or to baptize, βαπτίζειν, in the Hebrew Old Testament; the Mosaic rites of cleaning are denominated "purifications," and this word occurs occasionally in the New Testament.

That the word *baptism* is applicable to these Mosaic purifications is shown by Heb. 9, 9. 10: "Which [Tabernacle]