

earth, you must have the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and be made a partaker of the redemption purchased by Christ, if you would be educated for heaven. The religion which will save us is the religion of the Cross—the religion of a broken heart and contrite spirit—the religion which is fed by the sincere milk of the word—which is sustained by daily meditation and prayer—which sinks in dust and ashes, and rises to set its affections on things above. In the absence of this, all your other acquirements, however varied or perfect, will be but as the garland, fragrant and beautiful, as it may be, which adorns the victim led forth to the sacrifice.”

MARY ELIZA.

Hamilton, June 29, 1849.

From Hogg's Weekly Instructor.
The seven Sages of Greece and their sayings.

No country ever produced so many illustrious men in so short a time as Greece. It was a land of great warriors and of sublime poets—of matchless orators, statesmen, and philosophers. And though delighting in athletic accomplishments and the excitements of war, though dazzled by the beautiful creations of their painters and their sculptors, and fascinated and enraptured by the sublimest and the sweetest strains that ever poet sang, it must yet impart a high idea of the innate strength of mind of the lively Greeks, that wisdom was ever regarded by them as possessing the highest claim to their admiration. They considered the title of Sage as the noblest distinction they could confer. Seven men were thus ennobled by the united voice of their countrymen; and the “Seven Sages of Greece” have become familiar almost as a household word. Who and what they were, it will be the object of this and a succeeding paper to explain more fully than has yet been done.

They were all cotemporaneous; and they flourished in the sixth century before the Christian era. The great object of their studies was human nature—its duties, and its principles of action; to benefit mankind was their great aim. Few of them attained celebrity in philosophy, as we now understand the term—Thales and Solon, indeed, alone seem to have applied themselves to any of its branches; but the benefits which, by their wisdom, they conferred on their nation, and the moral and useful precepts which they have bequeathed to us, will do more to perpetuate their fame than the greatest amount of scientific knowledge to which at that early period they could possibly have attained. One, and one only, of their number must be excepted from the greater part of this eulogy—the name of Periander of Corinth will ever be a by-word of reproach in the mouths of men—an enduring monument of the evil effects of undue ambition—a warning to bad princes that tyranny is its own punishment—a mournful picture of great talents perverted to an unworthy end.

THALES.

Thales was the first who obtained from his countrymen the high title of “sage;” and in his attainments in science and philosophy he far surpassed the other six. He was of Phœnician extraction, and was born at Miletus, in Ionia, 640 years before the Christian era. In science and philosophy Greece was still ignorant; and in order to prosecute these studies to advantage, the young Milesian spent several years in travel, residing for some time in Crete and in Phœnicia, in the latter of which countries, from the great commerce it carried on with foreign lands, Thales became acquainted with the habits and knowledge of various nations. But it was to Egypt in particular that the young Greeks of good family usually proceeded, as it was at that time the great fountain-head of knowledge to all the nations bordering on the Mediterranean. To Egypt, accordingly, Thales also proceeded, visiting the chief cities of that highly civilized country, and receiving from the priests of Memphis varied and important information in geometry, astronomy, and the other sciences, which for centuries they had successfully studied. It was doubtless from them that he adopted the leading tenets of the Ionic school of philosophy, of which he was the founder,

namely, that water was the first principle in matter, the chief agent in the convulsions which agitate the surface of the globe. There were many inducements for the priests to adopt this theory. Shortly before the time of Thales' visit, the Egyptians had acquired a considerable tract of land by the retiring of the waters of the Mediterranean; they found shells in the heart of their mountains, even in the substance of their metals; from most of their wells and fountains they drew a brackish water like that of the sea; and they depended for subsistence on the fertilizing inundations of the Nile.

On his return to his native country, Thales imparted the knowledge he had acquired to his fellow-citizens. It was probably about this time that he was intrusted with a chief place in the administration of his country; and in this he displayed much zeal and ability, henceforth devoting to the study of nature only such time as he could spare from affairs of state. He was resolutely opposed to matrimony; or, more probably, he seems to have considered the cares of the married state as likely to encroach too much on the little leisure he had to devote to his favorite philosophical pursuits. His mother was so pressed him much to choose a wife—but to this he at first pleaded that he was too young; and afterwards, on her entreaties being renewed, that he was too old.

Thales made considerable attainments in geometry; and on visiting the Pyramids in Egypt, he was able to measure the proportions of one of the largest from the extent of its shadow. But it was in astronomical science that Thales chiefly distinguished himself. He advocated the division of the year into 365 days; and studied the motions of the heavenly bodies with so much success that he was the first Greek who accurately calculated and foretold an eclipse of the sun. Like most men of a contemplative turn of mind, fits of abstraction were not unusual with him. One night, it is narrated, when, as was his wont, he was walking with his eyes fixed on the starry skies, he stumbled into a ditch. “Ah! served him right!” cried a Thracian girl, who was attending him; “he would read the skies, and yet doesn't know what is at his feet!”

Thales as we have mentioned, was the founder of the Ionic school of philosophy—the speculations of which upon the nature of man and the structure of the universe, though often ingenious, and in some points far in advance of the age, were in the main very absurd and erroneous. This school, however, obtained much celebrity, and many of its philosophers stood high in the estimation of their countrymen. Some of the theories held by members of this school were very singular. Some fancied that the sun was a rim of fire—others that the heavens were a solid concave, on which the stars were nailed—that earth was cylindrical-shaped—that it was a level plain—that earth and sky were of one—that the moon was inhabited—and that man was originally formed by the union of earth and water, to which the sunbeams imparted the spirit-fire of life. Thales was free from many of the absurd doctrines of his followers, very much, doubtless, in consequence of his attainments in astronomy; and as his leading doctrine, he regarded the intelligence, or God, as the author and soul of the world, and water, as we have said, as the principle of everything. None of the philosophical writings of Thales have come down to us; but we have several pithy aphorisms, exemplifying his knowledge of human nature. He lived to the advanced age of ninety-six, dying about 545 B. C.

SAYINGS OF THALES.

Nothing is more ancient than God, for he was not created; nothing is more beautiful than the world, and it is the work of God; nothing is more active than thought, for it traverses the whole universe; nothing is stronger than necessity, for everything yields to it; nothing is wiser than time, for to it we owe every discovery.

Which is the happiest of governments? That in which the sovereign can without danger take the most repose.

Hope is the only good which is common to all men; those who have lost all still possess it.

Do not do yourself what offends you in others.

Know your time, and do not publish beforehand what you pur-