

Wisdom in Mystery Keely's Progress - Part 1

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[The advance of science which for a time overshadowed philosophy, has brought men face to face once more with ultimate questions, and has revealed the impotence of science to deal with its own conditions and pre-suppositions. The needs of science itself call for a critical doctrine of knowledge as the basis of an ultimate theory of things. Philosophy must criticise not only the categories of science but also the metaphysical systems of the past.

— Prof. Seth]

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals and forts.

As long as men remain "demons of selfishness and ignorance", so long will they fight for their turn to tyrannise over their brother men. Instruction and education can alone prepare the way for a peaceful solution of the greatest problem that mankind has ever had to deal with; for, before we can hope to enter into a "brotherhood of humanity", the earth must be "filled with the knowledge of the Lord".

— H. O. WARD, in The Nationalization News.

As for myself I hold the firm conviction that unflagging research will be rewarded by an insight into natural mysteries such as now can rarely be conceived.

— PROF. WM. CROOKES.

Though "it is the spirit that quickeneth, and the flesh profiteth nothing", the grand reign of the Spirit will not commence until the material world shall be completely under man's control.

— ERNEST RENAN, Future of Science. [Page 3]

THEOSOPHY interprets the often-quoted Scripture passage of "the seven Spirits which are before His throne", as the cosmical, creative, sustaining, and world-governing potencies, the principles of which God avails himself as his instruments, organs and media. This is what the Kabbala implies with its seven

"Sephiroth", what Schelling means by the "potencies", or principles in the inner life of God; and it is by their emergence, separation and tension that they become cosmical potencies. If we stop short at these general considerations, this is precisely the idea of Theosophy. When it is asked what special activities are to be ascribed to each of the seven Spirits, striving to apprehend more closely the uncreated potencies through which the Deity works in its manifestation, and to which Scripture itself makes unmistakable allusion, revelation is silent, intimating only by veiled suggestions. It is here that Theosophy leads the way to the open Book of Nature: the title-page of which we have only begun to turn.

Theosophy, says Bishop Martensen, signifies wisdom in God: Church Theology is not wise in assuming a hostile attitude towards Theosophy because it hereby deprives itself of a most valuable leavening influence, a source of renewal and rejuvenescence, which Theology so greatly needs, exposed as it is to the danger of stagnating in barren and dreary scholasticism and cold and trivial criticism. In such a [Page 4] course no real progress can be made in the Christian apprehension, of truth. Jacob Boëhme, who was the greatest and most famous of all Theosophists in the world, [See Jacob Boëhme, *His Life and Teaching, or Studies in Theosophy*, by Dr. Hans Lassen Martenson.] said of philosophers and other disputants who attack not only Theosophy, but also theology, and even Christianity itself, in the name of modern science; — "Every spirit sees no further than its mother, out of which it has its original, and wherein it stands; for it is impossible for any spirit, in its own natural power to look into another Principle, and behold it, except it be regenerated therein". This is what Christ taught: "Ye must be born again". Only those who are regenerated by the principle of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus, can understand the quickening of the Spirit which comes only from Him who gives this new birth to all who seek it, and in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden: — "hidden, not in order that they may remain secret, but in order that they may ever increasingly be made manifest and appropriated by us".

Jacob Boëhme, who was born in 1575, "brought to the birth", an idea, which three centuries later is developing into a system of pure philosophy which promises to "cover the earth with wisdom and understanding in the deep mysteries of God."

Boëhme gave birth to an idea. Keely is giving birth to a system. Both are exceedingly imperfect in the expression of their views; yet, in points of detail each possesses a firm dialectical grip. In their writings, both seem overwhelmed by the vast extent of the realm they are exploring. Both find in harmony the object and the ending of the world's development. Conflicting with modern science at very many points, visionary as both appear to be, powerful expression is given to an idea of life both in the macrocosm and the microcosm, the validity of which can be questioned only by materialism. The idea of the one and the system of the other teach that when Nature is affirmed in God it is in a figurative and symbolical sense; — that it is, in comparison with what we call nature, something infinitely more subtle and super-material than matter; that it is the source of matter; a plenitude of living forces and energies. This system teaches, as "Waterdale" has expressed it, "the existence of a Great Almighty, as being in virtue of the perfect organization of the Universe, even as the existence of man is incidental to the organic structure of his body"; and that the attribute of Omniscience is represented by "the perfect conveyance of signs of atomic movement in vibratory action through the length and breadth of our universe". We are led by it to look from nature up to nature's God and to comprehend the [Page 5] attributes of Deity as never before, in any other system. It lays hold, with a giant's grasp of the heart of the problems which science is wrestling with. It answers the question asked by Prof. Oliver Lodge in his paper, read at Cardiff, last August, — "By what means is force exerted, and what definitely is force?" It was a bold speculation of Prof. Lodge, who is known as "a very careful and sober physicist", when after admitting that there is,

herein, something not provided for in the orthodox scheme of physics, he suggested that good physicists should carry their appropriate methods of investigation into the field of psychology, admitting that a line of possible advance lies in this direction. Without speculation, science could never advance in any direction; discussion precedes reform; there can be no progress without it. It required rare courage for a physicist to step from the serried ranks, that have always been ready to point their javelins at psychologists, and to show, with the torch of science, the hand on the sign-post at the cross-roads pointing in the right direction. It is the great high road of knowledge; but those who would explore it must do so with cautious tread until the system of sympathetic association is completed which Keely is bringing to birth, for the road is bordered with pitfalls and quicksands and the mists of ignorance envelope it.

Ernest Renan, in "The Future of Science", illustrates the thesis that, henceforth, the advancement of civilization is to be the work of science; the word science being used in its largest signification as covering intellectual achievement in every direction open to the mind, and the coordination of the results in a progressive philosophy of life. The fundamental distinction which is expressed or implied, on every page, is that the earlier processes of civilization belong to an age of spontaneity, of unreflective productivity; an age that expressed itself in myths, created religions, organized social forms and habits in harmony with the spontaneous creations; and that we have now entered upon the critical, defining, intellectual age; in short, as Nisbet has said, that "the evolution of the human race has passed from the physiological into the psychical field; and that it is in the latter alone, henceforward, that progress may be looked for toward a higher civilization". Philosophy, that is to say rational research, is alone capable of solving the question of the future of humanity, says Renan. "The really efficacious revolution, that which will give its shape to the future, will not be a political, it will be a religious and moral revolution. Politics has exhausted its resources for solving this problem. The politician is the offscouring of humanity, not its inspired teacher. The great revolution can only come from men of thought and sentiment. [Page 6]

It does not do to expect too much from governments. It is not for them to reveal to humanity the law for which it is in search. What humanity needs is a moral law and creed; and it is from the depths of human nature that they will emerge, and not from the well-trodden and sterile pathways of the official world." In order to know whence will come a better understanding of the religion which Christ taught, "the religion of the future, we must always look in the direction of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity". Not the French: Commune liberty to cut one another's throats (an equality of misery and a fraternity of crime) but that liberty to know and to love the truth of things which constitutes true religion, and which when it is bestowed, without money and without price, as it will be, "humanity will accomplish the remainder, without asking anyone for permission. No one can say from what part of the sky will appear the star of this new redemption. The one thing certain is that the shepherds and the Magi will be once more the first to perceive it, that the germ of it is already formed, and that if we were able to see the present with the eyes of the future, we should be able to distinguish, in the complication of the hour, the imperceptible fibre which will bear life for the future. It is amid putrefaction that the germ of future life is developed, and no one has the right to say: "This is a rejected stone": for that stone may be "the corner-stone of the future edifice. Human nature is without reproach", continues Renan (in *The Future of Science*), "and proceeds toward the perfect by means of forms successively and diversely imperfect. All the ideas which primitive science had formed on the world appear narrow, trivial and ridiculous to us after that which progressive research has proved to be true. The fact is that science has only destroyed her dreams of the past, to put in their stead a reality a thousand times superior; but were science to remain what it is we should have to submit to it while cursing it, for it has destroyed and not built up again; it has awakened man from a sweet sleep, without smoothing the reality to him. What science gives us is not enough, we are still hungry. True science is that which belongs neither to the school nor the drawing-room, but which

corresponds exactly to the want of man. Hence true science is a religion which will solve for men the eternal problems, the solution of which his nature imperatively demands. Herein lies the hope of humanity; for like a wild beast, the uneducated masses stand at bay; ready to turn and rend those who are willing to keep them in their present condition, in order to be able to make them answer their own purposes." . . . "I am firmly convinced", says Renan "for my own part, that [Page 7] unless we make haste and elevate the people, we are upon the eve of a terrible outbreak of barbarism. For if the people triumph in their present state, it will be worse than it was with the Franks and Vandals. They will destroy of their own accord the instrument which might have served to elevate them; we shall then have to wait until civilization once more emerges spontaneously from the profound depths of nature. Morality like politics is summed up, then, in this grand saying: To elevate the people. If I were to see humanity collapse on its own foundations, mankind again slaughter one another in some fateful hour, I should still go on proclaiming that perfection is human nature's final aim, and that the day must come when reason and perfection shall reign supreme".

Sailing, sailing in the same staunch ship —
We are sailing on together;
We see the rocks and we mark the shoals,
And we watch for cyclone weather.

The perils we run for one alone
Are perils for all together, —
The harbour we make for one alone,
Makes haven for all, through the weather.

Stand by your ship: be brave, brothers mine!
Be brave, for we'll stand together!
We'll yet reach the port for which we sail
In this black and stormy weather.

Sailing, sailing the same stormy sea,
We are sailing all together;
There are rocks ahead and shoals beneath,
And 'round us hurricane weather.

I see in the West a star arise,
That will guide us all together —
Stand firm by our helm and trust in God
Who pilots us through this weather.

"*The dawn*" of morning breaks in the skies
Which will bring mankind together; —
To havens of peace, to havens of bliss,
We'll ride through this cyclone weather.