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Good Works.

Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Rechtfertigung*, Part IX.

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(Concluded.)

This is the simple sense of Jas. 2, 14—16. So also the Fathers have always understood it. All other interpretations either clearly violate God's Word, or they are refuted by the clear words of the texts. For example, some say that James contradicts Paul.¹⁾ If that were true, God's curse would rest upon him, for Gal. 1, 8. 9 we read: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." The fact is, however, that James did not preach another gospel than Paul. For he taught regeneration by the Word (1, 18) and that we apprehend salvation, *i. e.*, justification, by receiving, *i. e.*, believing, the Word (1, 21).²⁾ It would indeed be well to remember what St. Augustine said in reply to those who declared that the Old and the New Testament contradicted each other. He says, if that were admitted, some might be so insane as to assert that also the New Testament contradicted itself. For just as the former critics place Moses in opposition to John, so the latter might easily make the simple believe that John and Paul are in conflict with each other. However, just as the pure and genuine Christian faith confesses that Paul and John are in harmony, so it also confesses that John and Moses agree with each other.³⁾

1) De Wette, *Kommentar zu Jakobus*, 239.

2) Here James teaches, first, that the Word of God saves; secondly, that this saving Word must be accepted, *i. e.*, believed; thirdly, that it is not sufficient to have received it once [in Holy Baptism] as a noble graft. One must believe it continually.

3) *Nam si esset alius, cujus item dementissimus furor ipsum Novum Testamentum sibi contrarium apud imperitos conaretur ostendere, quid aliud ageret, nisi quemadmodum isti Moysen et Johannem, ita illi Paulum et Johannem tanquam inimicos rixantesque proponeret? Sicut autem sincerissima et verissima fides commendat Pauli Johannisque concordiam, sic Moysi et Johannis pacem intuens ... amplectitur.* (Augustinus, *Sermones*, Classis I, Serm. I, § 5.)

The Great School of Natural Science.

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Under this name is parading, not a new sect of the Christian Church, not a new religion, but an organization which claims that it has reached the very bottom of the wells of religion, philosophy, psychology, and psychoanalysis. These claims are most extravagant. Nevertheless, the teachings of the Great School of Natural Science are made to appeal to those in the higher educational circles of our country and others (for its scope is world-wide). Therefore a warning is here in place in order that especially the youth of our Church may be preserved from the pitfalls of this seductive organization.

“The Great School of Natural Science is a legal personality, organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of California, and its headquarters is in the city and county of Los Angeles of that State.” J. E. Richardson, of Hollywood, is the American representative and “Great Teacher of the School.”

As its name implies, the Great School of Natural Science bases its teachings on the scientific laws of Nature. Its master and guide, then, is Nature. But the school claims that its teachings were derived from, and built upon, the “most profound wisdom of the ages” as given by the “Great School of the Masters” from 10,000 to 100,000 years ago! Bold, yet interesting, isn’t it?

Now, who are these Great Masters? Here comes the appeal to the superintelligent, involving blasphemy of the Savior. Some of these Great Masters who are supposed to have discovered the Light of Truth and handed down the Gift of Knowledge to the peoples of their respective ages were the Orientals Krishna and Buddha, Zoroaster the Persian, Confucius, Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Melchizedek, Christ, and, in more recent times, Bulwer Lytton, Shakespeare, and (little to be wondered at) J. E. Richardson himself, writer of some of the text-books of the Great School, to be found in most public libraries of our country.

The School of the Great Masters is supposed to have originated in India, and Christ Himself is said to have gone to India in His thirteenth year and studied under the Great Masters! All the Great Teachers are alleged to have received their profound wisdom either by mental telepathy, communion with the spirits of the departed masters, or if they were contemporaries of each other, by exchange of doctrines and direct teaching!

The teaching of these Great Masters is claimed to have resulted

in world movements of a moral nature, such as Primitive Brahmanism (now paganized), the Order of Melchizedek, Buddhism (especially lauded), Magianism (School of Sun-worshippers), Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Operative Masonry, the Order of the Essenes, and Christianity!

The reader may be surprised to see that Operative Masonry is included in the category of world-wide moral movements. The revelations of J. E. Richardson, himself a Mason, in this connection are of interest. Masonry, he states, is of three classes: Practical Masonry, Operative Masonry, and Speculative Masonry. Practical Masonry, construction by means of rock, mortar, etc., existed soon after the beginning of man and reached a higher state of perfection in the past than in the present. The pyramids are correctly referred to as proof.

Organized Operative Masonry, an organization having a definite set of altruistic teachings, sprang from Practical Masonry and made use of many of its tools as symbols. Operative Masonry was in accord with the teachings of the School of the Great Masters. However, it became paganized, gradually degenerated, and finally ceased just before the birth of Christ. With its cessation was lost the "Word" of instruction for which the present order of Speculative Masonry has ever been seeking. This "Lost Word" of instruction, teachings identical with those of the Great School of the Masters, Mr. Richardson claims to have discovered and is ready to impart to all who will follow the Great School of Natural Science, whether Brother Masons or non-Masons.

The modern order of Freemasonry is "a Progressive Moral Science, Veiled in Allegory and Illustrated by Symbols." It is modeled on the plan of the Ancient Mysteries, hence the name "*Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons.*" "Modern Freemasonry honors as its ancient teachers Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Plato, etc., and in some of its degrees gives a brief summary of their doctrines." The modern Esoteric Masonry — not the common Exoteric Masonry of the masses — is in accord with the teachings of the Great School of the Masters, but is known only to the select few.

To go back to the Great Moral World Movements, Operative Masonry was a conveyor of the Great Word of Instruction of the Masters. But the Grand Masonic Word was lost to Operative Masonry about the time of the birth of Christianity, because Operative Masonry failed of its mission. "Now," states J. E. Richardson, "Christianity has been given every opportunity to justify itself as a message-bearer of 'the Word,' but has been found

wanting." Christianity is losing ground, is becoming paganized, egoistic rather than altruistic. Therefore the Great School of Natural Science has come into existence and is a new and Modern World Movement, through which the Great School of the Masters now seeks to make to the children of men the gift of its great "Word of Instruction."

And what is this "Word of Instruction"? Not the true Word of God, which tells us that man is saved alone by the sacrificial suffering and death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and only Savior of the world, but that man is rewarded in the spirit world according to the way he has led his life in the present world. It is the age-old doctrine of work-righteousness. Mr. Richardson would be correct if he excepted Christ and said that all the Great Masters and Great Schools of old have taught salvation by works. But that he identifies Christ with these Masters and World Movements is blasphemy. That Christ taught altruism is true; He taught the only true altruism. But never did He teach *salvation by altruism*. Christ taught: "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." John 8, 24. To the Christian, altruism follows as a natural result of the new birth through Christ.

But of this Mr. Richardson knows nothing. On the other hand, he promises that all those who follow the instructions of his school to the end will attain "spiritual perfection." And, like the Theosophists, he promises that those attaining spiritual perfection will in this life be able to communicate with the spirits of the dead. In this respect he points to Sir Alfred Wallace, Sir William Crooks, and Sir Oliver Lodge as some of the great men believing in the "finer world of spirits." To all those attaining spiritual perfection through the Great School of Natural Science Mr. Richardson promises that he will "scientifically demonstrate that there is life after death," thus solving the great problem, "If man die, shall he live again?" As a bait for the novice he holds out the well-worn Utopian idea of the Universal Brotherhood of Man. He says: "The great body of humanity has been moving forward on an upward incline, leading onward toward Morality, Spiritual Life, and Psychic Illumination. Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness is the great and definite message of spiritual truth and soul knowledge."

In the last days the deceivers are indeed waxing worse and worse, professing to command all the wisdom of the ages. But "where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. 1, 20. 21. Let us, then, preach Christ Jesus and Him crucified, who alone is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," that many may believe and be saved. And let us never cease to warn the youth under our care against the wiles of the deceivers. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to naught the understanding of the prudent." 1 Cor. 1, 19.
