

THE HEART  
*of* THE BIBLE

Where the Prophets Prophecy  
Falsely, and the Priests Bear  
Rule By Their Means

*by*  
MARSHALL J. GAUVIN



*The*  
Truth Seeker Company  
49 Vesey Street : New York



## **"THE HEART OF THE BIBLE."**

BY MARSHALL J. GAUVIN.\*

I am going to do what I have never done in my life—I am going to base my address upon a Bible text. You will find my text in the thirty-first verse of the fifth chapter of Jeremiah; "The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" And just to show you that I might have two texts, if I needed that many, I will call up as a witness a verse which stands in the next column—the thirteenth verse of the sixth chapter: "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely."

"The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means." False prophets prophesied and by means of these false prophecies the priests controlled the people. Hence, both prophets and priests dealt falsely with their fellowmen. So says the Bible. I thoroughly believe in these parts of the Bible. I believe, moreover, that not only in ancient Judea did priests control their fellowmen by appealing to false prophecies; I am satisfied that in America, today, priests still fool the people with the same superstition based upon the same false prophecies. The evidence of this will become clearer as we proceed.

Charles Foster Kent, one of the greatest biblical scholars of the English speaking world, a man who because of his great learning is Wolsey Professor of Biblical Literature at Yale University, recently came to Minneapolis, on invitation, to deliver several addresses on the modern scientific conception of the Bible. Assuming that the world has advanced somewhat since the dark ages of Christianity Professor Kent came to this city believing, doubtless, that thoughtful people here would pay respectful attention to the conclusions of science concerning one of the most important questions that can be of interest to the human mind—the question of the origin and value of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The eminent scholar received, for the most part, the courteous hearing he deserved. So far, good. The time has come to tell the truth, and the whole truth, about the Bible and religion, and the man who is unwilling that the truth should be told is the enemy of his fellowmen.

But one man in Minneapolis made himself conspicuous by the adverse attitude he assumed towards Professor Kent and his message. Dr. Riley, the man who advertises his name in large letters and his subjects in small print, the man who expounds a theology that is barbaric, our leading pulpit reactionary—Dr. Riley got the idea that by means of a barrage of religious smoke he might obscure the light of reason which the master of biblical learning was diffusing in the intellectual atmosphere of this city. He therefore engaged the Auditorium, and invited us all to hear his great sermon on "Professor Kent, or Cutting the Heart Out of the Bible."

I heard Dr. Riley's sermon, and this morning I

want to tell you something about it. But before the reply to that strange pronouncement, a word of explanation.

I should have preferred to answer Dr. Riley's attack on truth—for that is what it was—when face to face with him on the same platform. I accordingly sent him a courteous and friendly challenge to meet me in joint debate at the Auditorium, on the question, "Is the Bible the Inspired and Authentic Word of God?" I was satisfied when I wrote my letter that Dr. Riley would not debate. Therefore I was prepared for his refusal when, in referring to my challenge in his sermon at the Auditorium last Sunday night, he said: "Of course, I'll not debate with him. I'm here to preach to those people, but I'll debate this question with any woman who is teaching my child evolution in school." Later in his sermon, with characteristic logic the good man told of having once enjoyed witnessing a fight in which a big boy, who had beaten a little one, was in turn soundly beaten by another little fellow who asked: "Why don't you take somebody your own size." So the gentleman who would not debate with me thinks that to debate with a school-ma'am would be to take somebody his own size! But I am sure his argument would suffer disaster at the hands of any intelligent school teacher who has spent a little time in the study of religious questions.

Professor Kent holds that the Bible is not a supernatural book. He holds that it is a collection of myths and legends interwoven with various elements of more or less historical and moral value. This at once reduces the Bible to a human book, and by the same token it reduces Dr. Riley's religion to

a superstition. It is therefore because Professor Kent throws away as myths the virgin birth, the miracles, the resurrection and the blood atonement of Christ, along with all the miraculous features of the Old Testament, that Dr. Riley charges him with "cutting the heart out of the Bible." The heart of the Bible, therefore, according to Dr. Riley, is its supernatural character. And so in reply to Dr. Riley, I ask today: Is the heart of the Bible sound? That is to say, Is the alleged supernatural character of the Bible a reality or a myth?

When Dr. Riley began his sermon by declaring that his objective was to reach the teachers and students in the university and in the high schools, I thought he might have something really worth while to tell us—something of sound fundamental value. When a man presumes to teach teachers and serious-minded students, he ought to have something to say.

What, then, did Dr. Riley tell the teachers and students—whom he asked to show their presence by rising—as well as the others of us who made up his vast audience of twenty-five hundred people? Let us begin with his text. He read the thirty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah. That chapter says that Jeremiah dictated certain words to a scribe who wrote them down in a roll; that Jeremiah had received the words from God; that the words were read to Jehoiakim, the king, and that the king, disapproving of the document, cut it up with his penknife and threw it into the fire, where it was consumed. The statement that Jehoiakim cut up the word of God Dr. Riley took for his text, and with the act of Jehoiakim who cut up God's word, the reverend gentleman compared the work of Profes-

sor Kent who has cut the heart out of the Bible.

A clever comparison. But let us examine it. If the words in the roll were God's words, how does it happen that *Jeremiah* dictated them to the scribe? Why did not God dictate them himself? Could he not speak to the scribe as well as to Jeremiah? How is it that we can never get the words of God except through some self-appointed prophet or priest? If God wished to convey a message to me, why did he first tell it to somebody else? Moreover, if the words in question really came from God, the king must have known it, or must have had good reason to believe it. Why, then, did he mutilate and cast into the fire what he must have regarded as a divinely inspired manuscript? Is it not the fact that the king destroyed the roll evidence amounting to proof that he did not believe the claim that the document contained the words of God? The logic of the situation certainly implies that. And if the king of the Jews was satisfied that Jeremiah was a false prophet, why should we believe otherwise? Unwittingly, Dr. Wiley gave his case away by resting it upon a story whose logic testifies against his claims.

But this is not all. The Bible itself proves—if it proves anything—not by implication alone but by fact, that the story read by Dr. Riley is false—that Jeremiah was a false prophet. In the same thirty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah, at the thirtieth verse, it is said that God made the following prophecy concerning the punishment he was going to inflict upon Jehoiakim for destroying a part of the Bible: "Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah; he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the

day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." It is here stated that Jehoiakim was to have no successor upon his throne, and that his unburied body was to remain exposed to the weather. But 2 Kings xxiv, 6, shows that neither of these things happened. The book of Kings says. "So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his stead." The Bible itself, I repeat, proves Jeremiah's prophecy false; and this false prophecy, mark you, is a part of the story Dr. Riley took for his text. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means."

Dr. Riley insisted that the Bible is the word of God because, in numerous places in it, you may find such declarations as this: "Now the word of the Lord came unto the prophet saying," and "Thus saith the Lord." But does Dr. Riley not know that Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Mrs. Eddy, and numerous other religious people, some of them frauds and some of them mistaken, have claimed that their notions came from God? And does he not know his Bible well enough to know that a vital part of the story from which he took his text is shown by the book of Kings to be false?

Dr. Riley told us that Moses went up into the mountain, and that God, with his own finger, wrote the decalogue on tables of stone. But if God is a spirit, as Dr. Riley believes, what sort of a finger can he have? Fancy God using his spiritual finger as a chisel with which to carve letters on flat stones. In imagination I can see the stone chips flying in all directions as God's finger ploughed through the granite. Let me tell you the truth—which Dr. Riley did not tell—about this God-writing-the-decalogue - on - tables-of-stone-with-his-own-finger

business. In the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, you will find a list of ten commandments. These commandments are said to be an exact reproduction of those which were on the tables of stone which Moses broke, and which are reported to have been written by the finger of God. Now if you will examine this decalogue you will find that it deals largely with feasts and sacrifices, and that it contains not a word against stealing, or killing, or adultery, or bearing false witness; not a word in favor of honoring father and mother. Indeed it does not deal with moral questions at all; it deals solely with religious observances. Yet this set of ten commandments, although it is scarcely known at all to ordinary Christians, is the Bible's original decalogue. The popularly known version of the decalogue, found in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, is the one which deals with moral principles; but the Bible nowhere represents this series of commandments as having been written by the finger of God. In saying that the decalogue was written by the finger of God, Dr. Riley, who was thinking of course of the ethical commandments, misrepresented the Bible. The commandments which the Bible says were written by the finger of God are wholly worthless; for those that have value, no other authorship than that of man is claimed. These two strikingly different versions of one of the outstanding landmarks in the Bible go to prove the soundness of Professor Kent's conclusion that the Bible is a product of evolution—that it gradually grew into its present form.

Dr. Riley ought to know that the whole story of Moses's dealings with God on Mount Sinai is a myth; he ought to know that biblical scholars have

shown that the earliest parts of the Bible were not written until about 500 years after Moses is supposed to have died, and he ought to know that there is not a bit more of evidence for the existence of Moses than there is for the reality of an individual named Jack Frost.

Dr. Riley quoted, without mentioning any name, "a great professor" who said that "eight solid centuries passed before any theologian questioned the plenary inspiration of the Bible." Such a statement, coming from a man who pretends to be educated, is quite amazing. Is Dr. Riley not aware of the fact that the Jewish priests edited and changed their writings for centuries and that the question as to which books should be included in the Old Testament was not settled until the close of the first century of the Christian era? Does he not know that for centuries Christian theologians differed from one another as to which books, selected from a large mass of Christian writings, should be considered as belonging to the New Testament and regarded as inspired? Has he not heard that church councils tried to decide by a majority vote that certain books were inspired and that others were not, and that, with respect to different books, the verdict of one council was reversed by the vote of another? Is he not aware that today the Catholic version of the Bible contains several books which Catholics hold to be inspired but which Protestants reject as uninspired? In a word, does he not know that the dogma of inspiration is a human invention, built up and foisted upon the world by priests? "The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means."

But suppose it were true that the doctrine of

inspiration was not questioned by any theologian during a period of eight hundred years. That certainly would not prove that the Bible is inspired; rather, it might prove no more than that no theologian was willing to risk his life at the hands of a persecuting church; for in those awful centuries, the murderous Christian church was ready to strike with death the man who dared to oppose her creed.

This religious "champion" who will not defend his superstition in public debate, but who is perfectly willing to argue against science with a schoolma'am, has the audacity to say that the practice of calling the inspiration of the Bible in question "did not curse the Christian centuries," that it "belongs to the twentieth century." According to this man, therefore, it is an accursed thing to question a religious fiction that was invented by priests. But let us examine a little more closely the reverend gentleman's peculiar notion as to this matter. The centuries when the Bible filled the world with its authority were centuries of religious persecution—centuries of tortures inflicted and agonies endured in the precious name of Christ. Let me give you one illustration. A few years ago I saw in the Eden Musee, in New York, a wax representation of one of the tortures of the Inquisition. By means of an iron band around one of his wrists, a man was suspended from a chain attached to the ceiling of a dungeon. Around one of the man's ankles there was another iron band to which a chain was secured, and dangling from the end of that chain was a weight of some twenty-five or thirty pounds. Let me hasten to say that where the iron bands cut into the flesh—at the hand and foot—blood was flowing; while the features of the martyr bore the awful

impress of agony and grim despair. Crouching behind this victim of the church, in a corner of the dungeon, were his wife and children with swollen hearts and eyes inflamed with tears. Perhaps that man was suspected of having expressed the charitable view that God would not burn a good unbeliever forever, and for that mild heresy the church had fallen upon him. And he was to endure that frightful torture until he confessed, and then he was to be burnt alive.

The picture represented one of the practices of triumphant Christianity as exemplified in the ferocious Inquisition, in Spain, in Italy, in France, in Germany and in other Christian countries, during the frightful centuries when the man who dared to question the authority of the Bible forfeited his life. But thanks to the blessed influence of skepticism, which Dr. Riley denounces, the time came when the red hand of the church was wrenched from the throat of a suffering world; and the religious liberty of our time is the glorious child of that rationalistic spirit which says to the Christian: "You shall not persecute your fellow man on the strength of your belief that the Bible is the word of God." In denouncing as a curse the spirit which questions the authority of the Bible, Dr. Riley is denouncing as a cure the fact that increasing culture and advancing civilization have come to protect the sane man from the fanaticism of believers drunk on that priestly concoction—the inspiration of the Bible.

"History," says Dr. Riley, "is consistently illustrating the permanency of the Bible." Is that statement true? It certainly is not. I assume, of course, that by the "permanency of the Bible," Dr.

Riley means the unimpaired authority of the Bible. As to that, let us see. Only a few centuries ago the Bible was regarded as the final authority which proved that the earth is flat; that this is the only world in existence; that it is the center of the universe; that the sun travels around it every day; and men who differed with this ignorance were, on the authority of the Bible, burnt alive. Until a little while ago the Bible upheld the Inquisition, burnt women as witches, championed the despotism of kings, fanned the flames of religious wars, and bound shackles to the limbs of millions of slaves. Dr. Riley is from the South, and he knows that many of his relatives fought in the greatest of civil wars in defense of human slavery, because, among other reasons, slavery is upheld by the Bible. But we have advanced, and the man who would today quote the Bible in defense of any of the follies or crimes I have mentioned, would be laughed at by thoughtful people.

Assuredly, the Bible as a book is relatively permanent; so is the book of *Æsop's Fables*; so are the tales of the *Arabian Nights*; but the authority of the Bible in matters of science and history and morals has gone from the cultured world forever.

Voltaire, Paine and Ingersoll, and the other men who have criticised the Bible, Dr. Riley avers, "are dead and forgotten, and yet the book abides." But Voltaire is not forgotten; his works are read throughout the world; and the glory of the Rationalistic civilization of modern France is destiny's tribute to the genius of the greatest mind ever produced by the French race.

Thomas Paine forgotten! He has more readers today than he ever before had; his influence against

superstition is a growing influence; and only a little while ago the man who fought on two continents for the liberty of body and mind came very near being elected to America's Hall of Fame, where, in a little while, he will be honored with this country's immortals.

Ingersoll forgotten! Ingersoll, whose rich humanity, touched with poetry, gave pathos and music to human speech; Ingersoll, who glorified all the virtues of life and love and home; Ingersoll, whose logic reaved the heavens of a heartless phantom who would gloat forever over the victims of his revenge; Ingersoll, whose radiant personality diffused a magnetic charm, whose home life was as beautiful as the most ideal heaven realized, and whose twelve volumes of eloquence, wisdom and humanity constitute a Bible infinitely more noble than that which Christians worship as the word of God! Ingersoll forgotten? But why argue the point? The giants of Freethought are surely not forgotten when even Dr. Riley has to mention them.

Dr. Riley was good enough to mention a number of theologians—Kuenen, Wellhausen, Driver, Kirkpatrick and others—who have produced and systematized the evidence that the Bible is a human book, and then with a wave of the hand he brushed aside the scholarship of these mighty men as a worthless thing. Then, railing against "modernism," which is the scientific view of religious questions, the progressive intellectual spirit of today, this sensational preacher, who would debate with a school ma'am, dared to refer to these masters of modern culture as "these fool professors."

But is Dr. Riley a scholar? Does he know the questions involved in biblical study in a funda-

mental way? Is not his knowledge circumscribed within the narrow limits imposed by Baptist theology? I judge from what I heard him say. But the men he sneeringly calls "fool professors" *are* scholars; they have studied the Bible in the languages in which it was written; they are familiar with the history, the institutions and ideas out of which the Bible was born; and they have traced through various changes the growth of the myths and legends of which that book is largely composed. Yet Dr. Riley, with that confidence which is strong in proportion as knowledge is lacking, or with a less admirable mental disposition, would label these men as "fools" and banish them from the world's seats of learning. Well, he cannot succeed, and it is encouraging to remember that no fact ever yet was destroyed by the mere noise of a bagpipe.

I should like to invite Dr. Riley's attention to this alternative. He either knows the facts which are found in the writings of the scholars he condemns, or he does not. If he does not know these facts, he is presuming on his ignorance; if he does know these facts, he is presuming on the ignorance of his supporters; for the culture of today is a challenge to the intelligent brain to know the truth about the Bible and remain an orthodox believer in it.

What would you think of one who would dare to sneer at physiologists, calling them fools, and then triumphantly deny the circulation of the blood? What would you think of a man who professed to be well informed in mathematics, and yet argued that a part is equal to the whole? Yet that precisely is the attitude of Dr. Riley in religion. If Dr. Riley had a little more logic and a few more facts, he

might qualify as a teacher; as it is, he is only a D. D.—a Dispenser of Darkness.

Why does Dr. Riley despise, or pretend to despise, the modernists? I will tell you. He is against them because they have shown that the Adam and Eve story is a myth; that man never fell into sin by disobeying God—never brought upon himself the curse of eternal damnation; that civilization was never destroyed by a universal flood; that God never turned the river Nile into blood, never filled the houses of the Egyptians with frogs; that God never put himself on record as being in favor of slavery, polygamy, religious persecution and wars of extermination; that no prophet ever ascended into heaven in a chariot of fire; that 50,070 persons were not killed, in one grand slaughter, for the crime of looking into a wooden box; that a fellow named Daniel did not live all night unharmed in a den with hungry lions; and that scores of other such pious tales are not a bit more true than the sermons of Baptist preachers. In brief, Dr. Riley fights the critics because they have shown, and conclusively shown, that the supernatural character of the Bible is a myth; that the heart of that book is unsound; that Dr. Riley's religion is built on fallacies and fables.

Dr. Riley's quarrel with Professor Kent arises chiefly from the fact that Professor Kent, in his "Shorter Bible," rejects the alleged virgin birth of Christ, and explains away the resurrection, the miracles, the blood atonement. Christ is represented as having been a man—an entirely human being—and all the supernatural embroidery of the Gospel story is accounted for as the product of evolution in religious thought. This makes the story natural,

human, and fits it, or tries to fit it, into the procession of historical events.

But Dr. Riley will not have Jesus the man. He knows that on any human foundation the Baptist religion must perish as a superstition. So he wants a God who died to save us from the hell he himself had made after we have been properly baptized by immersion!

The dear Doctor complained bitterly that the Professor has "mutilated" the account of the virgin birth. The virgin birth!—a miracle that all nature denies. Dr. Riley should know that not only is there no evidence whatever for the virgin birth of Christ, but that there is not a line of evidence to prove that Christ ever lived at all. But taking the story as it stands in the Gospel, he ought to know that according to the first chapter of Matthew, Joseph and Mary were husband and wife when it was discovered that Mary was to become a mother. He ought to know, further, that both Matthew and Luke try to show that Christ was of the house of David, and accordingly trace the descent of Joseph through the royal line, thus plainly implying their belief that Joseph was Christ's father. Nothing can be clearer than that it was the intention of the writers of the genealogies of Joseph to show that Jesus was the son of Joseph. That is common sense. But Dr. Riley does not want common sense; he wants religious dogma. Ah, but he would appeal to common sense if he were brought face to face with a virgin birth story today. Suppose a young woman of Minneapolis were to declare that the father of her child was a Holy Ghost, do you think Dr. Riley would believe the story? It is only when you go back far enough into history, to the foun-

dation of a religion, that a plain fiction becomes a pious fact!

And the resurrection and ascension of Christ—what of these miracles? Dr. Riley classes Professor Kent among the fools because he does not believe these fairy tales. Well, suppose a devout member of his congregation came to Dr. Riley and told him that while passing through the cemetery yesterday, he saw the door of one of the vaults gently open, and lo! as he looked, a Christian gentleman who died and was buried some time ago walked out of the vault in his grave clothes, alive and apparently well. Do you think, once more, that Dr. Riley would believe the story? What would be regarded as a deliberate untruth, or as an evidence of mental derangement, when viewed at close range becomes divine inspiration when placed in the hazy distance of religion's dawn.

Christ ascended into heaven, says Dr. Riley. Very well, but which way did he go? If he left at noon, he went in the direction we call up. If he left at midnight, he went in the direction exactly opposite. The direction we call "up" changes every moment with the continuous revolution of the earth.

Dr. Riley says Christ went "up," but science replies that there is no "up."

Dr. Riley complains that Professor Kent's theories lead straight to Unitarianism. But what of that? Unitarians are good people, and in the matter of religious common sense they come very close to Freethinkers. And among the statesmen and literary men of this country, the Unitarians are as remarkable for their number and ability as the Baptists are conspicuous for their absence. Moreover, in the Bible, Unitarians figure far more prominent-

ly than Baptists. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, were Unitarians. Christ, if he lived, was a Unitarian, and so was Paul. These men were of the opinion that one God was quite enough, and that view is the essence of Unitarianism properly so-called. Dr. Riley, of course, has a combination of three Gods in one, but that notion gets no real support whatever from the Bible. It is worthy of note that the only verse in the Bible in which the three heavenly witnesses are mentioned was thrown out as a forgery by the makers of the Revised Version.

Dr. Riley's pet aversion is the science of evolution. Over and over again in his sermon he attacked the doctrine, now accepted by the entire educated world, that all living things have developed from lower forms. And, as you will recall, this is the question he is willing to debate with the schoolma'am. Indeed, he ought to be very good in a debate on this question with a lady, particularly a young lady, for he has had some experience, and he has a victory to his credit. Yes, he once convinced a girl of nineteen, a Columbia University student, that evolution is all wrong. It happened in this way. He met the girl; the conversation turned to the subject of evolution; and the following dialogue ensued: "Do they teach evolution at Columbia?" "Oh, yes." "Do you believe in it?" "Why, yes, don't you?" "No." "You don't believe in evolution?" "No." "And you say you are an educated man?" "I have had a college education." "Well, why don't you believe in evolution?" And then for one whole hour he poured out his soul to that girl in defense of the Bible against evolution. And the girl, completely overcome—convinced if not enlightened—said to him: "I wish my father

could have been here and heard your great plea for the truth." No wonder Dr. Riley likes to argue with ladies. They flatter him and make him think he's smart!

But in his defense of the Bible against evolution, did Dr. Riley tell the girl of the numerous contradictions that are to be found in the first and second chapters of Genesis? Did he tell her that according to the first chapter the earth, in the beginning, was completely enveloped in water, and that according to the second chapter the earth was originally a dry plane? Did he tell her that according to the first chapter the trees were made before man, while the second chapter says they were made after man? Did he tell her that according to the first chapter all the beasts of the field were made before man, but that the second chapter plainly declares that the beasts were made after man? Did he tell her that if the first chapter is true the man and the woman were made together, after all other things had been formed, but that if the second chapter is to be believed, the man was made alone, and then the beasts were made, and finally the woman was manufactured from one of the man's ribs? In short, did he tell the girl, what every biblical scholar now knows, namely, that there are two completely contradictory accounts of the creation side by side in Genesis, and that both of these accounts are Babylonian myths? He certainly did not. And it is because he is unwilling to face these proofs that his creation stories are utterly without scientific value, that he writes me of his being "not at all disposed to debate with unbelieving men."

Dr. Riley does not believe in evolution, and with a pride that is truly pathetic he sneers at the most

comprehensive, illuminating and constructive science ever grasped and unfolded by the intellect of man. But stay a moment, Dr. Riley. When you have finished with your denunciation of evolution, I want you to come over here and sit down beside this anthropoid ape from the African forest, while I tell this audience some very meaningful facts in your hearing. Passing over the evolution of living things from the simplest forms of life up to this ape, I want to call your attention to the essentially human characteristics of this animal. This ape stands nearly six feet high—a powerful man-like creature. I recognize him as a relative of mine and I am satisfied that he is a relative of Dr. Riley's. This ape has two hundred bones in his skeleton; so has Dr. Riley. This ape has three hundred muscles; so has Dr. Riley. This ape's body is covered with hair; so, in lesser degree, is Dr. Riley's. This ape has a four-chambered heart; precisely the same kind of a heart beats in the breast of Dr. Riley. This ape has thirty-two teeth, set in a certain definite order in his jaws; Dr. Riley has the same number and kind of teeth correspondingly arranged. This ape's brain is built up of ganglionic cells, and consists of the cerebrum, the cerebellum, the corpus callosum, the medulla oblongata and the hippocampus minor; Dr. Riley's brain is composed of the same kind of cells and has the same parts. Indeed, bone for bone, muscle for muscle, nerve for nerve, the ape and the man agree—even to the rudiment of the tail! This ape has four or five joints at the base of his spine—the lingering relic of an ancestral tail; and at the base of his backbone, Dr. Riley carries the same conclusive proof that his remote ancestors—the primitive Baptists—swung from the

limbs of trees by their tails. In one important respect alone, relatively speaking, the man surpasses the more humble creature—in the development of the brain. But who shall say that in several hundred thousand years Nature could not raise the low forehead of this lesser brother high enough to enable him to preach sermons denouncing knowledge and praising superstition?

It is of no use for Dr. Riley to deny the truth. All the facts of animal and plant life contribute their force to prove the truth of evolution, and in the whole field of thought there is no other explanation of the rise of living things. In fighting the doctrine of evolution, Dr. Riley is like the man who thinks that by holding a straw hat before his eyes he can darken the sun. The truth is with us to abide. The creed must disappear.

Dr. Riley's sermon was delivered; the evening passed; and as I left the Auditorium, I tried to recall one unassailable truth, one conclusive argument, one striking example of healthy, rational thought, one certain indication that the man who would teach teachers has grasped the essential scope and meaning of the broad scientific culture of our time; but I could not do it. We were again told that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin"; that Freethinkers are unhappy; that skeptics should not be allowed to teach in our schools; and that the philosophy of today is the climax of foolishness. Indefensible assertions were uttered with complete ministerial assurance. But nothing was argued in a scientific way; nothing was proved; the whole sermon was inadequate, hollow, pitiful. Twenty-five hundred people listened attentively to a discourse that was so lame, so medieval, so child-

ish, so barren of cultural worth, that a lover of truth, one who knows the importance of time and knowledge in human life, might well have wept.

Dr. Riley complains that he cannot get into the University of Minnesota to address the students as often as he used to. Well, "there's a reason," and that reason is our ground for hope. The school is freeing itself from the dead hand of the church. Science is completing its divorcement from superstition. The purpose of the school is to teach what somebody knows—practical facts for the conduct of life. The church is a stranger to truth. Founded on fallacies, her teachings grope in a mirage of mythology. When education becomes completely free from the impediment of religion, humanity will surge forward upon the broad highway of intellectual and moral advance. In the school from which Dr. Riley's teachings are excluded there is hope for real education.

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\*A lecture delivered before the Twin City Rationalist Society, in the Lyric Theater, Minneapolis, Minn., Sunday morning, Nov. 20, 1921; being a reply to Dr. W. B. Riley's sermon on "Professor Kent; or, Cutting the Heart Out of the Bible."

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The Truth Seeker works for equality. When one man can build a church and make another support it, there is no equality between them. When one man does as he likes on one day of the week and forces another to do as he does also, then equality ceases, and we have master and slave. When the tyrant takes the education of the other man's children into his care and keeping, the equality still further disappears. It is The Truth Seeker's work to make the boasted equality of man actual, and not the catch phrase it now is.

The Truth Seeker constantly prints the most varied and interesting original papers.

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The Truth Seeker is published every Saturday, \$5.00 per year, by The Truth Seeker Company, who are the principal Freethought publishers of this country. To subscribers in Canada, \$5.50 per year; to other foreign countries in Postal Union, \$6.00 (£1/10/—) per year.

The Truth Seeker Co.

49 VESEY STREET

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NEW YORK, N. Y.