

the gospel of Christ. There is probably not a man in America to-day who has been so constantly and so viciously lied about by the orthodox clergy as Col Ingersoll has been. The stories that have been told have so uniformly been proved to be false, that I must hesitate to accept this one, unless it is supported by some respectable and reliable authority.

It has been stated over and over again that one of Colonel Ingersoll's daughters has been "converted" and has joined the Presbyterian church; that he had a cancer in his throat, evidently a "judgment upon him by God for his blasphemy;" that in 1882 he had prophesied that in ten years there would be more theatres than churches in the United States; and that he himself had renounced his unbelief and intended shortly to join the church. Although these wild and baseless assertions have been denied and refuted times without number, still the "religious" newspapers—*The Christian*, for example—seem never to tire of repeating them. It was also stated that his "son," having been reared in an atmosphere saturated with infidelity, had become insane, and was confined in a lunatic asylum; and this in spite of the fact that he never had a son.

But suppose any or all of these stories to be true; suppose he did surrender to a lad of sixteen summers, would that tend to prove the inspiration of the Bible? At best, it would only show that the Colonel was unfortunate and this boy brave and lucky; but have not Christians been cowards? Your effort to glorify the Bible at the expense of Mr. Ingersoll only serves to exemplify that passage of scripture which speaks of certain people who have "a zeal which is not according to knowledge," and also a saying of Ingersoll's—"The meek are often malicious."

I have every reason to believe that Col. Ingersoll is a most exemplary man in public as in private life—a patriot in the truest sense, and that the destinies of the American people might safely be committed to his care. I believe that, but for the orthodox bigotry which has followed him like his shadow and watched him day and night, he would before this have received the reward of his services to his country, military and civil, by being placed at the head of the greatest republic the world has ever seen; but, after all, if it could be proved he,