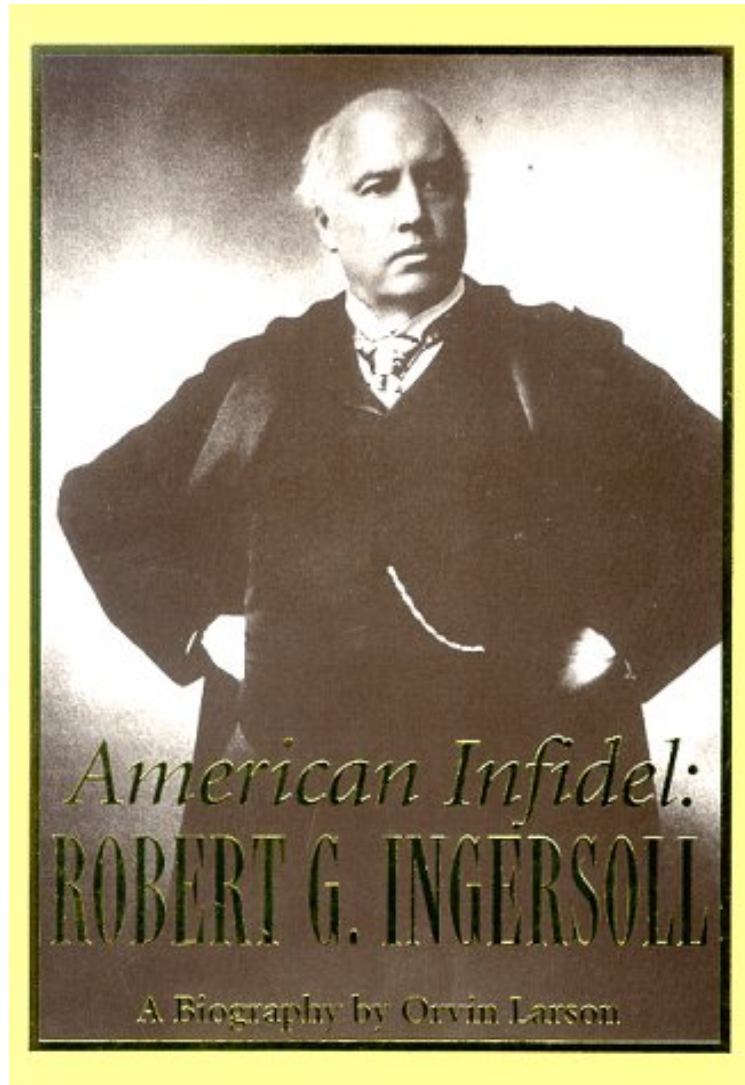


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Orvin Larson

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Orvin Larson : American Infidel: Robert G. Ingersoll before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Infidel: Robert G. Ingersoll:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Another Great EmancipatorBy Nico Brusso"American Infidel: Robert G. Ingersoll," a biography by Orvin Larson (copyrighted by him in 1962) was reprinted as a second edition in 1993 by the Freedom From Religion Foundation.The Foundation calls itself "a nonprophet nonprofit and nation's largest atheist/agnostic group, working to promote the separation of state and church." One of their public signs, erected very near a Christmas-time manger scene, as you might recall, said in part: "There are no gods, no devils, no

angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds." Larson's biography follows Ingersoll as a lawyer, Union colonel in the Civil War, anti-slavery activist, beloved family man, sometime politician, and nationally popular speaker. Ingersoll preceded by some 150 years a number of today's prominent unbelievers. Chiefly these are the so-called "Four Horsemen of New Atheism": Sam Harris ("The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason," 2004), Richard Dawkins ("The God Delusion," 2006), Daniel Dennett, ("Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon," 2006), and the late Christopher Hitchens, ("god is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything," 2007). Christopher Hitchens, who died in December 2011, was quite outspoken, seeming willing to debate all comers. He denied life after death, saying that death ends human existence, that we will feel no regret about dying, because we won't even know we are dead. We will simply be dead. After death there is no reward, no punishment. Richard Dawkins contrasts the "Strong theist" (100% believer) and the "Strong atheist" ("I know there is no God."). For himself, Dawkins says, "I cannot know for certain but I think God is very improbable, and I live my life on the assumption that he is not there." Daniel Dennett is reputedly a firm atheist. He would like people's belief in God to be examined with as much scrutiny as any other scientific subject. Orvin Larson's writing, although straightforward and clear, is a bit professorial and dated, quite unlike Ingersoll's own writing and speeches, which are available from other sources. Many outstanding contemporaries praised Ingersoll repeatedly for his oratory, intelligence, and wit. Hundreds attended his lectures. Larson's descriptions remind me of today's rock star gatherings. Some, no doubt, probably considered his lectures entertainment. If you are already familiar with the "Four Horsemen," you will appreciate Ingersoll's public persona continuing long after the Civil War, and I would encourage Googling for his lectures. Ingersoll devoted his life to freeing everyone from enslavement by governments, landowners, politicians, or clerics. He was an outstanding proponent of freedom of speech. We should all become as familiar with him as we are with Thomas Paine and "The Age of Reason." 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Insightfully inspirational By Ken A great American hero for liberty. A legacy lived that will influence for years to come. A true wordsmith and orator. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Clarifying American history By R. Baldwin As Americans have gotten more religious (65% report attending church today as opposed to 17% during the early days of this Republic), toleration for other opinions has decreased. From the last quarter of the 19th century to the 1st quarter of the 20th century has been called the Golden Age of Freethought, when the two most popular celebrities in America were Mark Twain and Robert G. Ingersoll, both agnostics. Despite the fact that the fastest growing belief system according to the PEW Foundation polls is no religious belief, the Christian right is so loud that one would never know this. The role of deists, agnostics, freethinkers, and atheists on the progress of freedom in this country has largely been ignored, as well as the fact that this is a secular state with a secular Constitution. How many Americans even know not only that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion" (First Amendment), but there is supposed to be no religious test for office (Article 6, section 3). How many Americans would grant an ear an agnostic or atheist who wants to run for office to hear his policies? Ingersoll's personal morality and family values as well as his fight for women and African-American (nor his eloquent speeches that were so popular and made him rich) should not be lost in the dustbins of history, but continually revived in the American historical consciousness. This book remains one of the few important records of this great man.

Biography of Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899)

From the Publisher Freethought flowered in the United States in the latter half of the 19th century, and its best known advocate was Robert Green Ingersoll, a lawyer and Civil War officer, who travelled the continent for 30 years, speaking to capacity audiences. Although his repertoire included lectures on Shakespeare, Voltaire and Burns, the largest crowds turned out to hear him denounce the bible, and religion. From the Back Cover Rediscover Robert Green Ingersoll. Celebrated orator of 19th century America, lawyer, Civil War officer, personal friend of three U.S. presidents, the individual most responsible for the flowering of freethought in the United States. "Freedom was what he preached; he wanted the shackles off everywhere, he wanted men to think boldly about all things; he demanded intellectual and moral courage. He wanted men to follow wherever truth might lead them. He was a rare, bold, heroic figure." (Robert M. La Follette, Wisconsin Governor, U.S. Senator, Founder Progressive Party) "His life and work have been an inspiration to the whole earth." (Luther Burbank, Naturalist) "One of the constellations of our time . . . a bright, magnificent constellation." (Walt Whitman, Poet) "No finer personality ever existed." (Thomas A. Edison, Inventor) "One of the bravest, grandest champions of human liberty the world has ever seen." (Clarence Darrow, Attorney, Civil Rights Advocate) "How handsome he looked as he stood on that table, in the midst of those 500 shouting men and poured the molten silver from his lips. What an organ is human speech when it is employed by a master." (Mark Twain, Author, Humorist, Lecturer) "No other loss, outside of my own family, could have filled me with such sorrow. The future historian will rank him as one of the heroes of the nineteenth century." (Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Feminist, Suffragist Leader) "To the lovers of liberty everywhere, but chiefly to the youth of America who did not know Robert G. Ingersoll, remember that he helped to make you free." (Edgar Lee Masters, Poet) Excerpt.

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