

[PDF] The Great Agnostic: Robert Ingersoll And American Freethought

Susan Jacoby - pdf download free book

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Description:

Review "A must-read book." —Bill Moyers, from "Moyers & Co" interview
(Bill Moyers *Moyers & Co.*)

"Jacoby succeeds in capturing Ingersoll's remarkable appeal across sectarian and political boundaries. His warmth, humor, tolerance, and rhetorical skill are vividly conveyed, and they are validated by much contemporaneous testimony from figures who would ordinarily have been expected to shun an infamous blasphemer."—Frederick Crews, University of California, Berkeley (Frederick Crews)

"As someone who did brave battle with narrow-minded fundamentalists in his own day, Robert

Ingersoll would surely be appalled at the political influence of their heirs today. But their very rise makes Susan Jacoby's fine, compact and judicious account of Ingersoll's life and ideas all the more important. She has given us a splendid intellectual portrait of an American who deserves to be far better known."—Adam Hochschild, author of *Bury the Chains* and *To End All Wars*
(Adam Hochschild)

"Robert Ingersoll used his wit to blast the absurdities of religion, while his warmth kept him close to his audiences. He has found his perfect biographer in Susan Jacoby, who uses his story to provide deep insights not only into Ingersoll's century but our own."—Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, author of *36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction*

(Rebecca Newberger Goldstein)

"Susan Jacoby has written a necessary, informative, and intelligent survey of the life, times, and writings of a most neglected figure in American history. A serious and thoughtful reflection on a topic of interest to historians, humanists, and social scientists, let alone general readers, *The Great Agnostic* will deepen one of the most important of contemporary debates."—Alan Wolfe, author of *The Future of Liberalism*
(Alan Wolfe)

"Jacoby's goal of elucidating the life and work of Robert Ingersoll is admirably accomplished. She offers a host of well-chosen quotations from his work, and she deftly displays the effect he had on others. For instance: after a young Eugene V. Debs heard Ingersoll talk, Debs accompanied him to the train station and then — just so he could continue the conversation — bought himself a ticket and rode all the way from Terre Haute to Cincinnati. Readers today may well find Ingersoll's company equally entrancing." —Jennifer Michael Hecht, *The New York Times Book Review*
(Jennifer Michael Hecht *The New York Times Book Review*)

"Jacoby writes with wit and vigor, affectionately resurrecting a man whose life and work are due for reconsideration."—Kate Tuttle, *The Boston Globe*
(Kate Tuttle *The Boston Globe*)

"In this persuasive biography, Jacoby makes the case that Americans are dearly indebted to Ingersoll, and would be well-served to revisit his life and writings at a time when religious thought continues to be a divisive force in American civic life. . . . In this important volume, Jacoby illuminates a mind worth celebrating and the story of a life well lived."—Mythili Rao, *The Daily Beast*
(Mythili Rao *The Daily Beast*) --This text refers to the edition.

About the Author Susan Jacoby is the author of numerous books, including *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*, *The Age of American Unreason*, *Alger Hiss and the Battle for History*, and *The Last Men on Top*, a recently published eBook. She lives in New York City.

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