

Selected Ingersoll Quotations

Part 1: 22 Quotations used randomly in the Banner of the Walking Tour web site:

The man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and is a traitor to himself and to his fellow-men.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "[The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child](#)"

The liberty of man is not safe in the hands of any church. Wherever the Bible and sword are in partnership, man is a slave.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "[Some Mistakes of Moses](#),"

Our civilization is not Christian. It does not come from the skies. It is not a result of "inspiration." It is the child of invention, of discovery, of applied knowledge -- that is to say, of science.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Reply To The Indianapolis Clergy" *The Iconoclast*, Indianapolis, Indiana (1882)

"The hands that help are better far than the lips that pray."

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, Vol. 4. Title page: [The Dresden Edition](#)

In all ages hypocrites, called priests, have put crowns on the heads of thieves, called kings.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll (1884),

But honest men do not pretend to know; they are candid and sincere; they love the truth; they admit their ignorance, and they say, "We do not know."

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "[Superstition](#)" (1898)

The truth is, our government is not founded upon the rights of gods, but upon the rights of men..... It is the only nation with which the gods have had nothing to do.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Individuality" (1873)

Happiness is the only good.

The time to be happy is now.

The place to be happy is here.

The way to be happy is to help make others so.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll's creed. Vol. 12 title page of [The Dresden Edition](#)

If nobody has too much, everybody will have enough.

Robert Green Ingersoll – A lay sermon

Logic is the necessary product of Intelligence and sincerity.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll: [On Abraham Lincoln](#)

Reason is a better guide than fear

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-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: *The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child*

Reason is the highest attribute of man.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: *Some Mistakes of Moses*

In Nature there are neither rewards nor punishments – there are consequences.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: *Some Reasons Why*

The destroyer of weeds, thistles and thorns is a benefactor, whether he soweth grain or not.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: Vol. 1. Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

There can be but little liberty on Earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: Vol. 5. Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

Argument cannot be answered with insults. Kindness is strength; anger blows out the lamp of the mind.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll** Vol. 6 Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

Every brain is the field where nature sows the seeds of thought, and the crop depends upon the soil.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: Vol. 7. Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

Happiness is the only good, reason the only torch, justice the only worship, humanity the only religion, and love the only priest.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: Vol. 8. Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

He loves his country best who strives to make it best.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: Vol.9. Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

Justice should remove the bandage from her eyes long enough to distinguish between the vicious and the unfortunate.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll** Vol. 10. Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

The clergy know, that I know, that they know, that they do not know.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**: Vol. 2. Title page of *The Dresden Edition*

Ingersoll's grave page:

Nothing is greater than to break the chains from the bodies of men -- nothing nobler than to destroy the phantom of the soul.

-- **Robert Green Ingersoll** - *Gravestone in Arlington National Cemetery*

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Part 2: Other Ingersoll Quotations used in the Guided Tour:

Nothing is greater than to break the chains from the bodies of men -- nothing nobler than to destroy the phantom of the soul.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll - [Gravestone in Arlington National Cemetery](#)

If there be an infinite Being, he does not need our help -- we need not waste our energies in his defense.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll

The man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and is a traitor to himself and to his fellow-men.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "[The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child](#)"

Who can over estimate the progress of the world if all the money wasted in superstition could be used to enlighten, elevate and civilize mankind?

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "[Some Mistakes of Moses](#)"

Revisionist Christian Historians:

Orthodox Christians have the habit of claiming all great men, all men who have held important positions, men of reputation, men of wealth. As soon as the funeral is over clergymen begin to relate imaginary conversations with the deceased, and in a very little while the great man is changed to a Christian -- possibly to a saint.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "[The Religious Belief of Abraham Lincoln](#)"

An infinite God ought to be able to protect himself, without going in partnership with State Legislatures. Certainly he ought not so to act that laws become necessary to keep him from being laughed at. No one thinks of protecting Shakespeare from ridicule, by the threat of fine and imprisonment.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, , [Some Mistakes of Moses](#),

The liberty of man is not safe in the hands of any church. Wherever the Bible and sword are in partnership, man is a slave.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, , [Some Mistakes of Moses](#),

The notion that faith in Christ is to be rewarded by an eternity of bliss, while a dependence upon reason, observation and experience merits everlasting pain, is too absurd for refutation, and can be relieved only by that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance, called "faith."

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, *The Gods*

The truth is, our government is not founded upon the rights of gods, but upon the rights of men. Our Constitution was framed, not to declare and uphold the deity of Christ, but the

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sacredness of humanity. Ours is the first government made by the people and for the people. It is the only nation with which the gods have had nothing to do. And yet there are some judges dishonest and cowardly enough to solemnly decide that this is a Christian country, and that our free institutions are based upon the infamous laws of Jehovah.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Individuality" (1873)

Our civilization is not Christian. It does not come from the skies. It is not a result of "inspiration." It is the child of invention, of discovery, of applied knowledge -- that is to say, of science. When man becomes great and grand enough to admit that all have equal rights; when thought is untrammelled; when worship shall consist in doing useful things; when religion means the discharge of obligations to our fellow-men, then, and not until then, will the world be civilized.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Reply To The Indianapolis Clergy" *The Iconoclast*, Indianapolis, Indiana (1882)

We are satisfied that there can be but little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "The Gods" (1872)

I admit that reason is a small and feeble flame, a flickering torch by stumblers carried in the star-less night, -- blown and flared by passion's storm, -- and yet, it is the only light. Extinguish that, and nought remains.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, sentiments later echoed by [Albert Einstein](#) ("One thing I have learned in a long life: that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike -- and yet it is the most precious thing we have."),

Give me the storm and stress of thought and action rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Banish me from Eden when you will but first let me eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll,

Only the very ignorant are perfectly satisfied that they know. To the common man the great problems are easy. He has no trouble in accounting for the universe. He can tell you the origin and destiny of man and the why and wherefore of things.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Liberty In Literature" (1890)

But honest men do not pretend to know; they are candid and sincere; they love the truth; they admit their ignorance, and they say, "We do not know."

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "[Superstition](#)" (1898)

Every pulpit is a pillory, in which stands a hired culprit, defending the justice of his own imprisonment.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Individuality" (1873)

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In all ages hypocrites, called priests, have put crowns on the heads of thieves, called kings.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll (1884),

No man with a sense of humour ever founded a religion.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll,

Is there an intelligent man or woman now in the world who believes in the Garden of Eden story? If you find any man who believes it, strike his forehead and you will hear an echo. Something is for rent.

- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Orthodoxy" (1884)

Christianity has such a contemptible opinion of human nature that it does not believe a man can tell the truth unless frightened by a belief in God. No lower opinion of the human race has ever been expressed.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, discussing the practice of not allowing atheists to give testimony in court: "In most of the States of this Union I could not give testimony. Should a man be murdered before my eyes I could not tell a jury who did it." –

Strange but true: those who have loved God most have loved men least.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, speech (1881),

Labor is the only prayer that Nature answers.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll,

The clergy know that I know that they know that they do not know.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Orthodoxy" (1884)

This century will be called Darwin's century. He was one of the greatest men who ever touched this globe. He has explained more of the phenomena of life than all of the religious teachers. the Bible is a book written by ignorance -- at the instigation of fear. Charles Darwin conquered the intellectual world, and his doctrines are now accepted facts.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Orthodoxy" (1884)

"Labor is the best prayer"

-- Robert Green Ingersoll

"The hands that help are better far than the lips that pray."

-- Robert Green Ingersoll

As people become more intelligent, they care less for preachers and more for teachers.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll

Source for most of these quotes : <http://www.positiveatheism.org/>