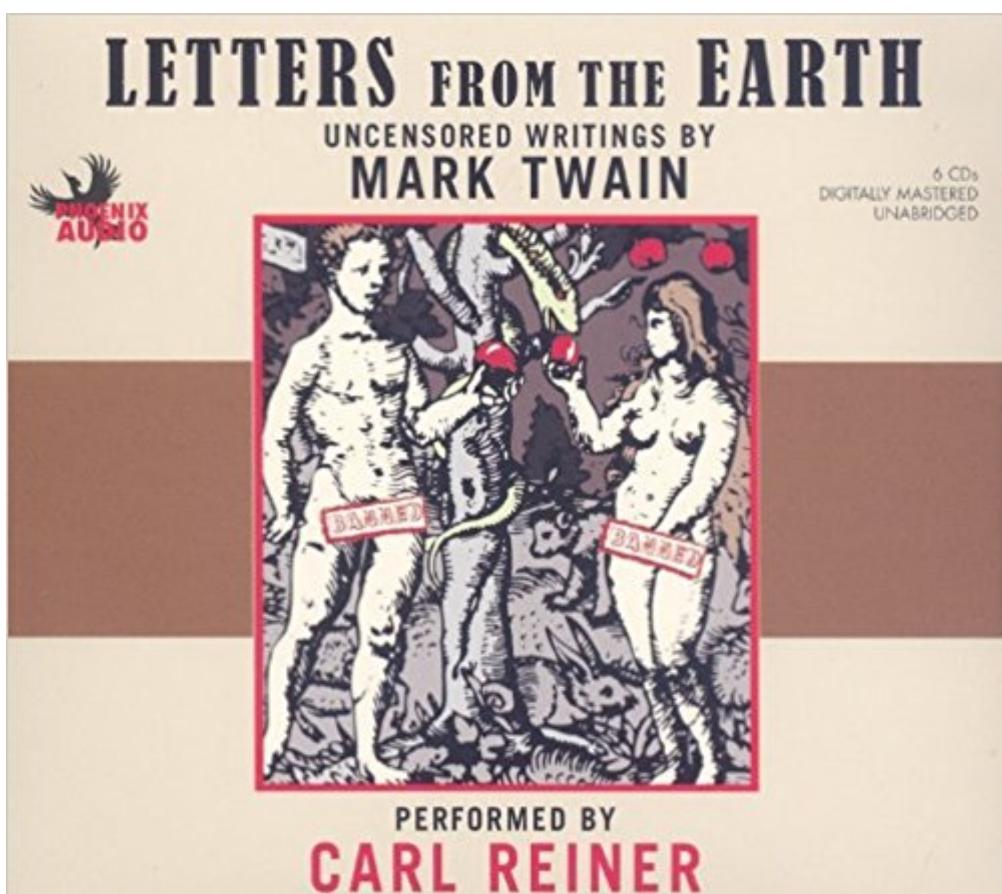


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Letters From The Earth: Uncensored Writings



Synopsis

Letters from the Earth is a collection of short stories written during a downtrodden period in Twain's life and published posthumously. Here we see Twain on a somewhat personal level. Penniless and having just lost his wife and one of his children, Twain turns to writing about God, Christianity, and the many curious natures of man. This collection was so controversial that his daughter prohibited its publication until 52 years after his death.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you're already familiar with Finn and Sawyer, perhaps this collection of fragments, short stories, and essays--assembled posthumously some few decades ago now, but still fresh--will enhance your sense of Twain's true range. A particular favorite: his essay "The Damned Human Race," wherein he proves, rather convincingly, that an anaconda snake is a higher form of life than an English Earl.
--This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Twain sentimentalists will gasp, Bible-belters will turn purple, austere stylistic purists will raise eyebrows -- but dyed-in-the-wool Twain enthusiasts will grab hungrily for what amounts to a new volume by the 'Lincoln of our literature' ... The pages in this volume range from furious to funny, from deadly earnestness to frothy wordplay. --Library Journal

This "Letters from the Earth" is only "Letters from the Earth" itself. Let me explain: The full volume titled "Letters from the Earth" is [was?] a full-sized book containing not only "Letters from the Earth"

itself -- which is, itself, absolutely marvellous and will never be forgotten by anyone who reads it -- but also a number of other small masterpieces by Twain, all discovered posthumously and edited and published by one Bernard DeVoto. THAT's what I thought I was buying [my own old copy has disappeared]. What a disappointment. So I'm sending this on as a gift for someone, and trying once again to find the real thing. And THIS thing doesn't even have page numbers!

A favorite gift of mine to my friends. The book should be re read with an open mind. After all it is just Lucifer writing letters back to Gabriel in Heaven telling him how screwed up the world we live in has become, and what he thinks of humans.

For me this was a revisit to a book I first read many years ago. Some of what I remembered was not included but overall it was well worth the re-read. Mark Twain's sense of humor and ability to prod some thought from his readers is showcased. It might horrify some of the deeply religious (I am not) but if you can't laugh at Twain's work that is your loss.

Letters from the Earth came close to never being published - so controversial were Twain's views on the negative aspects of organized religions. His daughter Clara, executor of her father's estate, refused to allow the manuscript to see the light of day, thinking she was protecting Twain's reputation. Fortunately, she was finally persuaded, 50 year's after Twain's death, to change her mind after a family friend convinced her that "Mark Twain belonged to the world" and that by the 1960's the public's opinions about religion were changing. It was only then that the 1939 manuscript edited by Bernard DeVoto was made available to the world. Letters from the Earth confirms Twain's world-class status as an acute and objective observer of the human condition - particularly for the hypocritical aspects of institutional religions whose goals Twain saw were to control mankind, not serve it. Letters from the Earth should be required reading for every high school-er (and adult who hasn't yet read it); I can think of no better text to stimulate critical thinking about religion in both its beneficial and self-serving aspects - especially in this era when Christianity has been conflated by some with greedy Capitalism. Twain himself described his writing in this work as "sarcastic" - but it was sarcasm with well-deserved purpose. One of my favorite quotes (and there are many) describes the Creator's view of his own handiwork: "He took a pride in man; man was his finest invention; man was his pet, after the housefly"

This is probably one of the best writings of Samuel Clemons. His clever thinking and perspectives

have really make the reader see theology in a different light, both with insight and with humor.

I am a long time fan of Mark Twain. This was actually a re-read of the book which I originally read decades ago. There have been few of the level of wit and wisdom as e. I highly recommend this book to anyone with an open mind.

A must read. A friend recommended this and I wish I had read it years ago; would have prevented a lot of angst. I suspect that this book wouldn't have been well received when Twain wrote it. Today is a perfect time for this book to be in the mainstream.

This book is a fun, satirical look at humans from a different perspective. Fairly controversial, and definitely anti-religious, one page will get you thinking and questioning different societal things that you may have taken for granted and the next page will have you laughing out loud.

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