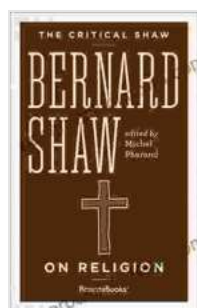


# Bernard Shaw On Religion: The Critical Shaw

Bernard Shaw was one of the most prominent and influential playwrights, novelists, and essayists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was also a vocal and often controversial critic of religion. In his plays, novels, and essays, Shaw attacked the hypocrisy, superstition, and intolerance that he saw as characteristic of organized religion. He also developed his own unique and idiosyncratic religious views, which he outlined in his book *Androcles and the Lion* (1912).



## Bernard Shaw on Religion (The Critical Shaw)

by Ken Davenport

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3521 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 279 pages
Lending	: Enabled
X-Ray for textbooks	: Enabled
Paperback	: 216 pages
Item Weight	: 13.6 ounces
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In *Bernard Shaw On Religion: The Critical Shaw*, editor Dan H. Laurence brings together a collection of Shaw's writings on religion, including essays, speeches, letters, and interviews. These writings provide a comprehensive overview of Shaw's complex and often contradictory views on religion.

Laurence also provides a helpful to Shaw's life and thought, as well as annotations to the texts.

## **Shaw's Early Atheism**

Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1856. He was raised in a Protestant family, but he rejected Christianity at a young age. In his early twenties, Shaw moved to London, where he became involved in the socialist movement. He also began to write plays and novels, in which he often attacked the hypocrisy and superstition of organized religion.

In his 1898 play *The Devil's Disciple*, Shaw portrays a young man who is falsely accused of murder and is sentenced to death. The young man's mother, a devout Christian, prays for her son's salvation. However, Shaw suggests that the young man's salvation comes not from his mother's prayers, but from his own courage and determination. In his preface to the play, Shaw wrote:



***“The Devil's Disciple is a tract against the Salvation Army and all the Salvation Armies in the world. Its object is to shew the dangers and evils of the Salvationist religion.”***

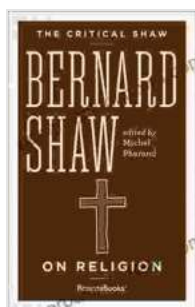
## **Shaw's Later Spiritualism**

In his later years, Shaw became increasingly interested in spiritualism. He attended séances and claimed to have communicated with the spirits of the dead. In his 1933 play *Too True to Be Good*, Shaw portrays a group of characters who are haunted by the ghosts of their past. The play suggests

that the ghosts are not real, but are instead manifestations of the characters' own guilt and remorse.

In his 1944 play *Buoyant Billions*, Shaw portrays a group of characters who are transported to a utopian future. In this future, there is no religion, but there is a strong sense of community and social justice. Shaw suggests that this future is possible if we can overcome our religious differences and work together to create a better world.

Bernard Shaw was a complex and contradictory figure, and his views on religion were no exception. He was a vocal critic of organized religion, but he also had a deep sense of spirituality. In his writings on religion, Shaw challenged conventional wisdom and encouraged people to think for themselves. His work remains relevant today, as we continue to grapple with the challenges of religious belief and unbelief.



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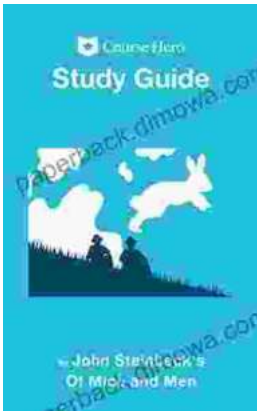
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