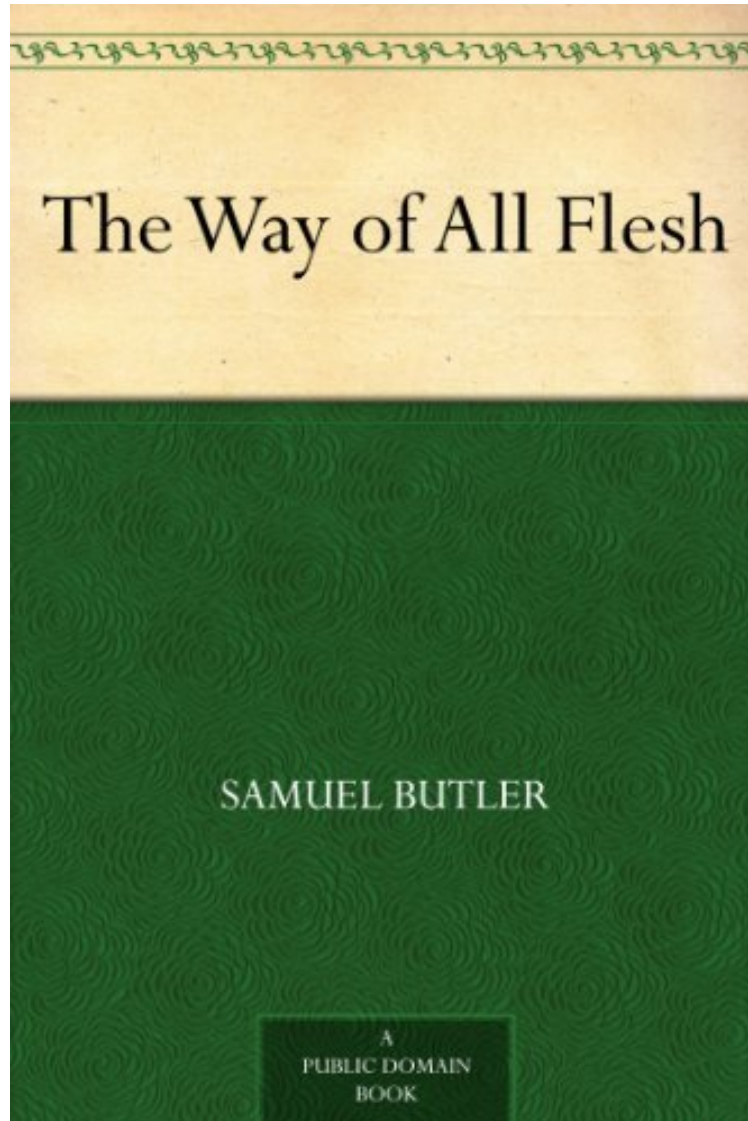


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## The Way of All Flesh (English Edition)

*Von Samuel Butler*

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**Von Samuel Butler : The Way of All Flesh (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Way of All Flesh (English Edition):

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An indictment of Victorian society and Christianity Von Ein Kunde This is a book written ostensibly by a godfather, chronicling the family history and the unusual life of Earnest Pontifex, the only son of a very upright and religiously correct Christian minister. It is reportedly an almost autobiographical account of the author's own life and reflects his own lifetime revelations with regard to society, religion and morality. It goes extensively into the lives of his parents

and their parents, allowing the reader to fully appreciate the inevitable life into which Ernest is born. *The Way Of All Flesh* explores the difficult struggles of a naive young man coming to terms with his parents' and society's expectations of him while he endeavors to find his place in the world. His life begins as an avalanche of yesteryear--Victorian and Christian values are laid out, explored, tried, tested, examined and rejected as Earnest muddles his way to true happiness and a life worth living. If it were published during Samuel Butler's life, it would surely have resulted in some kind of social or legal censure as a shocking indictment of the establishment of the day. In many respects, it is still as revealing, shocking and valid as it was when it was written.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Outdated social commentary - lousy fiction  
Von Ein Kunde  
Though beautifully written, *The Way of All Flesh* is pathetically lacking in aesthetic appeal. The plot is only mildly interesting at its peak moments, and usually not even that. What is worse though, is the lack of sympathetic characters. The closest thing Butler manages is the kindly wealthy spinster aunt - who appears but briefly, and then for the sole purpose of providing the necessary "inheritance" which will later set Ernest Pontifex (our "hero") free from his poverty. This good fortune is presented as a great injustice finally being righted... as if Ernest was somehow entitled to explore his own naive, narrow-minded, reclusive habits at leisure. The highlight of Ernest's life is when he begins to succeed in business on his own merit - but Butler clearly does not see that. Butler is lauded as a "radical" social critic, but apparently clung to the belief that working as a merchant could bring joy to commoners but not to the "gentle born." Am I mis-reading this text? I must believe that the book's high critical acclaim comes from its historical position as one of the first novels to present an apparently "fair" or "rational" position of secular humanism. Butler seems to be saying: "If we get free of all this religious nonsense we might have a chance at a little happiness in life." How naive. How reactionary. Worse, how utterly boring.

P.S. I was delighted to see that other reviewers did not feel compelled to praise this useless historical curiosity.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The classic strawman  
Von Kelly Whiting  
For some inexplicable reason, Samuel Butler has received rave reviews for his study of the life of poor Earnest Pontifex. What struck me most clearly about the book, however, was the inartful way Butler led Earnest to his renunciation of Biblical truth. The straw man is, of course, the easiest method for a novelist to use to attack Biblical truth since he can construct the entire context himself without having the unhappy events of surprise, or maybe a competent expositor of scripture, burst upon his well-laid scheme. His attack upon the four gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus is, quite simply, childish. By requiring a harmony of accounts, without allowing his hero the opportunity of finding one (it is quite simple, and anyone who desires such a harmony can find one in the back of any decent study Bible--try Thompson's Chain Reference Bible, Ryries Study Bible or the footnotes in the Scofield Bible) lays poor Earnest in the pitiful situation of accepting the defeat of the Gospel that isn't really defeated. It reminds me of the question about Lot's wife, or laughter at the story of Jonah, when both are not only easily answered, but have nothing to do with a real attempt to find truth. It is shameful that such poor attacks pass as something profound, and the only reason Mr. Butler gets a four is because he writes well.

-Kelly Whiting

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**Synopsis**Samuel Butler was one of the Victorian era's greatest iconoclasts. Once, he said that after reading Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, that the theory of evolution had replaced Christianity for him. And this -- after Butler had originally studied for the clergy. Darwin also praised Butler for his clear understanding of Darwin's scientific work, as expressed in a series of popular articles contributed to the Canterbury Press. Butler's first literary success came in the form of the 1872 novel *Erewhon*, a work that was originally published anonymously, but which was an immediate popular and critical success in its satire of Victorian English mores and customs ("*Erewhon*" is "Nowhere" spelled backward). After *Erewhon*, Butler began writing the first draft of *The Way of All Flesh*, but put it aside after realizing that the scathing, autobiographical nature of the story would deeply hurt other family members. *The Way of All Flesh* was eventually published in 1903. It tells the story of Ernest Pontifex, based upon Butler himself, and his struggles with Victorian mores, his restrictive, highly-religious family, and Victorian society itself. Butler is remembered as one of the greatest of the anti-Victorians, whose ideas reflected accurately the new, more liberal society that was to come following the death of England's great Queen, and the beginning of a new era.