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Bertrand Russell : Philosophical Essays (Classic Reprint) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Philosophical Essays (Classic Reprint):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy AmbroseGreat read, though I disagree with much of Russell's philosophy.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Basic understandingBy Krzysztof KotarskiI wish that Bertrand Russell would be read by everybody. His thoughts are the basic and clear in their core.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. AN ldquo; EARLYrdquo; COLLECTION OF RUSSELLrsquo; S ESSAYS ON PHILOSOPHICAL SUBJECTSBy Steven H ProppBertrand Arthur William Russell (1872-1970) was an influential British philosopher, logician, mathematician, and political activist. In 1950, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, in recognition of his many books such as A History of Western Philosophy, The Problems of Philosophy, The Philosophy of Logical Atomism, The Analysis of Mind, Our Knowledge of the External World, Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits, Mysticism and Logic, etc.He wrote in the Preface, Idquo; The volume to which this is a preface is essentially a reprint of a book, with the same title, published in 1910. However, two essays in that volume, namely lsquo; The Free Manrsquo; s Worshiprsquo; and lsquo; The Study of Mathematicsrsquo; were reprinted in lsquo; Mysticism and Logicrsquo; and are therefore not included in the present volume. They are replaced by an article on history and one on Poincarersquo;s lsquo;Science and Hypothesis.rsquo;rdquo;He wrote, ldquo;Some have contended that lsquo;goodrsquo; means lsquo;desired,rsquo; others that lsquo;goodrsquo; means lsquo;pleasure,rsquo; others again that it means lsquo; conformity to Naturersquo; or lsquo; obedience to the will of God.rsquo; The mere fact that so many different and incompatible definitions have been proposed is evidence against any of them really being definitions; there have never been two incompatible definitions of the word lsquo; pentagon.rsquo; None of the above are really definitions; they are all to be understood as substantial affirmations concerning the things that are good. All of them are, in my opinion, mistaken in fact as well as in form, but I shall not undertake here to refute them severally.rdquo; (Pg. 20)He argues, ldquo; among physically possible actions, only those which we actually think of are to be regarded as possible. When several alternative actions present themselves, it is certain that we can both do which we choose, and choose which we will. In this sense all the alternatives are possible. What determinism maintains is that our will to choose this or that alternative is the effect of antecedents; but this does not prevent our will from being itself a cause of other effects. And the sense in which different decisions are possible seems sufficient to distinguish some actions as right and some as wrong, some as moral and some as immoral.rdquo; (Pg. 42)He observes, ldquo; If we really believed that other peoplersquo; s actions did not have causes, we could never try to influence other peoplersquo;s actions; for such influence can only result if we know, more or less, what causes will produce the actions we desire. If we could never try to influence other peoplersquo;s actions, no man could try to get elected to

Parliament, or to ask a woman to marry him: argument, exhortation, and command would become mere idle breath. Thus almost all the actions with which morality is concerned would become irrational, rational actions would be wholly precluded from trying to influence peoplersquo; s volitions, and right and wrong would be interfered with in a way in which determinism certainly does not interfere with them. Most morality absolutely depends upon the assumption that volitions have causes, and nothing in morals is destroyed by this assumption.rdquo; (Pg. 43-44)In an essay on Pragmatism, he quotes William James: ldquo: If I say, lsquo: Either accept this truth or go without it, rsquo; I put on you a forced option, for there is no standing place outside of the alternative.rsquo;rdquo; But Russell then comments, ldquo; This statement appears to us to be contrary to many of the plainest facts of daily life. If, in walking along a country road, I come to a fork where there is no signpost and no passer-by, I have, from the point of view of action, a lsquo; forcedrsquo; option. I must take one road or other if I am to have any chance of reaching my destination; and I may have no evidence whatever as to which is the right road. I then ACT on one or other of the two possible hypotheses, until I find someone of whom I can ask the way. But I do not BELIEVE either hypothesis. My action is either right or wrong, but my belief is neither, since I do not entertain either of the two possible beliefs. The pragmatist assumption that I believe the road I have chosen to be the right one is erroneous.rdquo; (Pg. 84)He later states, ldquo; We have thus the following objections to the monistic theory of truth: (1) If no partial truth is quite true, this must apply to the partial truths which embody the monistic philosophy. But if these are not quite true, any deductions we may make from them may depend upon their false aspect rather than their true one, and may therefore be erroneous. (2) It is a consequence of the monistic theory that the parts of a whole are not really its parts. Hence there cannot be any genuine whole on this theory, since nothing can really be a whole unless it really has parts. (3) The theory is unable to explain in what sense one partial judgment is said to be true and another false, though both are equally partial. (4) In order to prove that there can only be one coherent whole, the theory is compelled to appeal to lsquo;experiencersquo;, which must consist in knowing particular truths, and this requires a notion of truth that the monistic theory cannot admit.rdquo; (Pg. 138-139)This book will be of keen interest to anyone studying Russellrsquo;s ldquo;earlyrdquo; philosophy.

Excerpt from Philosophical EssaysPostscript - The death of William James, which occurred when the printing of this book was already far advanced, makes me wish to express, what in the course of controversial writings does not adequately appear, the profound respect and personal esteem which I felt for him, as did all who knew him, and my deep sense of the public and private loss occasioned by his death. For readers trained in philosophy, no such assurance was required; but for those unaccus tomed to the tone of a subject in which agreement is necessarily rarer than esteem, it seemed desirable to record what to others would be a matter of course. About the PublisherForgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.comThis book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

`We have nothing but praise for these essays. It is rare for a man of great learning to come down into the philosophical arena and dispute with such lucidity, and above all with such sympathy, the views that he is criticising.' - The Oxford Magazine`In the manner of self-restraint, clear statement and rigorous argument these essays are models of what such essays should be.' - The Glasgow Herald`A serious and important contribution to philosophical literature' - The Hibbert JournalAbout the AuthorBertrand Russell (1872ndash;1970) was one of the most formidable thinkers of the modern era. A philosopher, mathematician, educational innovator, champion of intellectual, social and sexual freedom, and a campaigner for peace and human rights, he was also a prolific writer of popular and influential books, essays and lectures on an extensive range of subjects. Considered to be one of the most controversial figures of the twentieth century, Bertrand Russell is widely renowned for his provocative writings. These definitive works offer profound insights and forward-thinking perspectives on a changing western society progressively shaped, most significantly, by two world wars, the decline of British imperialism and an evolving moral landscape.

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