

**LECTURES ON THE
PRINCIPLES OF
POLITICAL OBLIGATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649185696

Lectures on the principles of political obligation by Thomas Hill Green

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

THOMAS HILL GREEN

**LECTURES ON THE
PRINCIPLES OF
POLITICAL OBLIGATION**

LECTURES
ON THE PRINCIPLES OF
POLITICAL OBLIGATION

BY

THOMAS HILL GREEN

LATE FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE AND WHEYTE'S PROFESSOR OF
MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Reprinted from Green's Philosophical Works, Vol. II.

WITH PREFACE BY BERNARD BOSANQUET

NEW IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

1911

All rights reserved

T
E8268L
1911

8-10-27
10-29
1911

MS 5-21-59

P R E F A C E.

THE present volume consists of the late Professor Green's lectures on the 'Principles of Political Obligation,' together with a chapter on the different senses of the term 'Freedom,' taken from a course directly connected with the former. The work thus re-issued is a reprint of pp. 307-553 of Vol. II. of Professor Green's Philosophical Works, with the addition of a brief supplement (p. 248) furnished by the present writer, consisting of English renderings for some quotations which appear in the text (pp. 49-59).

The reason for this re-issue is as follows. The course of lectures in question has long been known to teachers as a most valuable text-book for students of political theory. But as a portion of a large and expensive volume, which is itself part of a set of collected works, it naturally was not accessible to members of popular audiences. In discussing the selection of a text-book for a projected course of instruction on political theory, to be given in London, it was suggested that a separate volume containing the 'Principles of Political Obligation' would be the best conceivable book for the purpose. No other recent writer, it was felt, has the classical strength and

sanity of Professor Green, who was never more thorough and more at home than when dealing with those questions affecting citizenship in and for which, it may be said, he lived. Many of the troubles of to-day reflect the distraction of minds to which a sane and balanced view of society has never been adequately presented; and the importance of the service which might be rendered to general education by the re-issue of these lectures in a convenient form appeared to justify an application to those who had the power of carrying out the suggestion which had been made.

The friends of genuine political philosophy will have good cause, it is hoped, to be grateful to Mrs. T. H. Green for her cordial assent to the proposed republication, as also to Messrs. Longman for their promptitude in agreeing to undertake it. The elaborate table of contents, reprinted from the *Philosophical Works*, was compiled by their editor, the late Mr. Lewis Nettleship. It adds very greatly to the value of the book.

BERNARD BOSANQUET.

CONTENTS.

ON THE DIFFERENT SENSES OF 'FREEDOM' AS APPLIED TO WILL
AND TO THE MORAL PROGRESS OF MAN.

	PAGE
1. In one sense (as being search for <i>self</i> -satisfaction) <i>all</i> will is free; in another (as the satisfaction sought is or is not real) it may or may not be free	2
2. As applied to the inner life 'freedom' always implies a metaphor. Senses of this metaphor in Plato, the Stoics, St. Paul	3
3. St. Paul and Kant. It would seem that with Kant 'freedom' means merely consciousness of the <i>possibility</i> of it ('knowledge of sin')	5
4. Hegel's conception of freedom as objectively realised in the state	6
5. It is true in so far as society does supply to the individual concrete interests which tend to satisfy the desire for perfection	6
6. Though (like the corresponding conception in St. Paul) it is not and could not be realised in any actual human society	8
7. In all these uses 'freedom' means, not mere self-determination or acting on preference, but a particular kind of this	9
8. The extension of the term from the outer to the inner relations of life, though a natural result of reflection, is apt to be misleading	9
9. Thus the question, Is a man free? which may be properly asked in regard to his <i>action</i> , cannot be asked in the same sense in regard to his <i>will</i>	10
10. The failure to see this has led to the errors (1) of regarding motive as something apart from and acting on will, (2) of regarding will as independent of motive	11
11. Thus the fact that a man, <i>being what he is</i> , must act in a certain way, is construed into the negation of freedom	12
12. And to escape this negation recourse is had to the notion of an unmotivated will, which is really no will at all	13
13. The truth is that the will is the man, and that the will cannot be rightly spoken of as 'acting on' its objects or <i>vice versa</i> , because they are neither anything without the other	13
14. If however the question be persisted in, Has a man power over his will? the answer must be both 'yes' and 'no'	14

	PAGE
15. 'Freedom' has been taken above (as by English psychologists generally) as applying to will, whatever the character of the object willed	14
16. If taken (as by the Stoics, St. Paul, Kant (generally), and Hegel) as applying only to <i>good</i> will, it must still be recognised that this particular sense implies the generic	15
17. Whatever the propriety of the term in the particular sense, both 'juristic' and 'spiritual' freedom spring from the same self-asserting principle in man	16
18. And though the former is only the beginning of full freedom, this identity of source will always justify the use of the word in the latter sense	17
19. But does not the conception of 'freedom' as = the moral ideal imply an untenable distinction like that of Kant between the 'pure' and 'empirical' ego?	18
20. The 'pure' and 'empirical' ego are one ego, regarded (1) in its possibility, (2) as at any given time it actually is	20
21. In man the self-realising principle is never realised; i.e. the objects of reason and will only <i>tend</i> to coincide	20
22. So far as they do coincide, man may be said to be 'free' and his will to be 'autonomous'	21
23. The growing organisation of human life provides a medium for the embodiment, and disciplines the natural impulses for the reception, of the idea of perfection	23
24. The reconciliation of reason and will takes place as the individual more and more finds his own self-satisfaction in meeting the requirements of established morality	24
25. Until these come to be entirely superseded by the desire of perfection for its own sake, and his will becomes really free	25

LECTURES ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL OBLIGATION.

A. *The grounds of political obligation.*

1. Subject of the inquiry	29
2. Its connection with the general theory of morals. Ideal goodness is to do good for its own sake: but there must be acts considered good on other grounds before they can be done for the sake of their goodness	29
3. When, however, the ideal comes to be recognised as the ideal, the lower interests and rules must be criticised and revised by it	30
4. The criticism of interests will yield a 'theory of moral sentiments'; that of rules will relate (1) to positive law, (2) to the law of opinion	31
5. As moral interests greatly depend on recognised rules of conduct, and these again on positive law, it is best to begin by considering the moral value of existing civil institutions	31

CONTENTS.

ix

	PAGE
6. The condition of morality is the possession of will and reason, and it is realised in a personal character in which they are harmonised	31
7. Civil institutions are valuable so far as they enable will and reason to be exercised, and so far they answer to 'jus naturæ'	32
8. The essential questions as to the 'law of nature' are, (1) Are there rights and obligations other than those actually enforced? (2) If so, what is the criterion of them? . . .	33
9. While rejecting the theory of a 'state of nature,' we may still use 'natural' of those rights which <i>ought to be</i> , though they actually are not	33
10. Such 'natural law' is (as admitting <i>enforcement</i>) distinct from, but (as implying a <i>duty to obey it</i>) relative to, the moral law	34
11. Hence two principles for the criticism of law, (1) only external acts can be matter of obligation proper, (2) the ideal of law must be determined by reference to the moral end which it serves	34
12. Observe (a) that in confining law to 'external actions,' we mean by 'actions' <i>intentions</i> , without which there is properly no 'action'	35
13. (b) That by 'external' we mean that law, though it does supply motives to action, looks merely to whether the action is done, not to whether it is done from a particular motive	36
14. Law then <i>can</i> only enjoin or forbid certain acts; it <i>cannot</i> enjoin or forbid motives	37
15. And the only acts which it <i>ought to</i> enjoin or forbid are those of which the doing or not doing, <i>from whatever motive</i> , is necessary to the moral end of society	37
16. The principle of 'natural law,' then, should be to enjoin all acts which further action from the highest motive, and no acts which interfere with such action	38
17. This principle would condemn much legislation which has tended, e.g., to weaken religion, self-respect, or family feeling	38
18. This, and not the principle of 'laissez-faire,' is the true ground of objection to 'paternal government'	39
19. The theory of political obligation (i.e. of what law ought to be, and why it ought to be obeyed) is not a theory (a) as to how existing law has come to be what it is	40
20. Nor (b) as to how far it expresses or is derived from certain original 'natural' rights	40
21. 'Natural' rights (like law itself) are relative to moral ends, i.e. they are those which are necessary to the fulfilment of man's moral vocation as man	41
22. This however is not the sense in which political obligation was based on 'natural rights' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, previously to utilitarianism	41