

his Biblical principles of interpretation with the help of Spinoza. This presentation, however, can only be a prelude to a fuller development of his theory of interpretation as it is presented first in contrast to the (lack of) principles underlying Greek texts, and second, in the final section which draws upon the thought of Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard to support Polka's position. Basically, Polka maintains in a convincing fashion that reading, as an expression of communication and community, involves the interrelationship of interpretation and existence as illustrated in the Bible (p. 5). Where the Greeks are trapped in the seductive coils of dualistic thought, the Bible is built upon dialectical principles allowing supposed opposites to fruitfully co-exist in harmony, freeing man and permitting authentic communication.

The Dialectic of Biblical Critique is not an easy book to read. The author deals with complex issues. Like Hegel, he aims for a synthesis of history of philosophy. His writing is finely nuanced and demands careful thought and attention. But Polka's book has the potential to generate a healthy and valuable debate among scholars on the significance of the Greek age. It would be unfortunate if his often brilliant but controversial work is either passed over in silence or attacked for daring to challenge our customary views on the Greeks.

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T.H. Green, Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation and Other Writings, ed. Paul Harris and John Morrow (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1986), 372 pp., H.C. £27.50, P.B. £9.95.

As well as the well-known lectures which give the book its title this selection contains the lecture on 'Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract'; four lectures on the English Revolution (reminiscent of Hegel's shorter political writings); an essay on the different senses of freedom; brief selections from the *Prolegomena to Ethics*; three of Green's undergraduate essays (providing plenty of evidence of Green's later moral fervour); and, finally, some fragments on moral and political philosophy (which are suitably fragmentary). The whole provides an excellent overview of Green's political philosophy. Students of political philosophy and Green enthusiasts are greatly in the debt of Cambridge University Press and the two editors for providing this new edition of Green's writings, although the paperback price at over nine pounds sterling is perhaps pitched a little too high to make the book a bestseller amongst undergraduates.

T.H. Green is among the greatest of England's political theorists. He deserves this accolade not only because of the breadth of his vision, which spans both the British and continental traditions of political thought, but also because of the care which he and his followers took to ensure that his political doctrines became an influence in society. Green created a school of admirers and followers who carried his doctrines into government, both directly through the Liberal Party, and indirectly through the hold it gained over a whole generation of civil servants and administrators. This was a great achievement, the more so since Green's doctrines (except perhaps his more zealous temperance activities) on the whole helped change society for the better. Green and his followers played a crucial part in the movement for social improvement and the amelioration of the conditions of the poor in Britain which influenced its rulers for three generations or more. In this century the great economic and social reformers Keynes and Beveridge were his spiritual heirs. It is only with the radical government of Margaret Thatcher in recent times that the spell of Green's reforming liberalism has been broken and its hold over British ruling circles dissolved. Whether the tradition can be resurrected in a post-Thatcher era is a

question whose answer is crucial to the future of British society.

Green's profound influence is often not recognised by political theorists. This is so for a number of reasons. Green's very strength as a first-class teacher and propagandist has counted against him. Green's influence spread most effectively by word of mouth, and his involvement as a town councillor in Oxford and his participation in innumerable reform movements demonstrated the priority he was prepared to give practical politics over the written word. Unlike Hobbes or Locke, Green never published a *magnum opus* which summarised for the world his political beliefs. Green's work is mainly transmitted to us through these lecture notes and the occasional article. The notes evince the characteristic weaknesses of lectures. In places, they are concise to the point of obscurity; they are full of digressions, the style is not uniform and repetition often works its way in. The guiding theme which would be provided in the lectures through Green's own personality is of course missing and the effort of thinking which goes into drawing the major conclusions is too frequently apparent. Such idiosyncrasies and deficiencies would no doubt have been ironed out had Green devoted himself in his brief life to producing a masterpiece.

What we have of Green's work is not, though, inconsiderable. Green tries to steer a course midway between Kant's position and Hegel's position in order to adapt both to English circumstances. Like Gramsci, Green recommends a long march through the institutions of civil society not, however, to establish socialism but rather to bring the laws and institutions of the land into accord with his liberal moral ideals. Green's moral and political philosophy represents a penetrating attack on individualism. Although for Green the highest value is personal worth and the perfection of the individual, he stresses constantly the dependence of this value upon the existence of a secure community for its realisation. The existence of respect for persons and the free pursuit of their individual projects depends on a like respect for social institutions and the values they embody. Like Hegel, Green's concept of freedom is not simply one of the absence of restraint but rather one of the carrying out of emancipatory duties. These duties are a product of our social position and our personal moral conviction. Green agrees with Kant that latitude must be given for allowing the individual's duty occasionally to clash with social norms. However, where such a clash occurs the individual who dissents or disobeys must be sure of his ground. Green will countenance only civil disobedience which has the good of the social whole as its basis. In most respects Green follows Kant in thinking that the highest priority should be given to the maintenance of social order and the prevention of anarchy so, even with Green, the scope for civil disobedience is limited.

Overall Green is a meticulous, painstaking analyst of the problems of political theory. He has no quick answers and the overriding theory allows for a great deal of variation in its application. Throughout Green's writings what is most apparent is the earnestness with which he tackles the issues. Here all the doubts and ambiguities of modern English liberalism are set before us. We get to see why Green was such an inspiring teacher.

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