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## LOCKE ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION\*

For all his limitations, no one did more to advance the cause of religious toleration than John Locke. He had a huge influence, not only on later philosophical advocates of toleration, but also on the political leaders who began to implement regimes of toleration within a century after his death. Some of his limitations are well known. His friends regret and feel obliged to apologize for the fact that he denied toleration to Catholics and atheists.<sup>1</sup> More se-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. John LOCKE, *Epistola de Tolerantia: A Letter on Toleration*, ed. Raymond Klibansky, trans. J. W. Gough (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 131–35. Since the *Letter* has not yet appeared in the Clarendon Edition of Locke's works, I will make page references to this edition, citing it as *Epistola/Letter*, and following up with a page reference to the first edition of the English translation William Popple published in 1689. The Klibansky/Gough edition has the advantage of giving a carefully edited version of the Latin text and a good English translation on facing pages, with much helpful annotation and comment. Its disadvantage is that it is not as easily accessible as the numerous inexpensive reprints of the Popple translation, which are more commonly cited. Of those many reprints, none stands out as the obvious one to cite. But the first edition of Popple's translation is easily available in the *Early English Books Online* portal (*A Letter concerning Toleration Humbly Submitted &c.*).

In quoting from the *Letter* I treat Popple's translation as the default version of the text. But I take the liberty of modifying it when I think a more literal translation would be preferable, often following suggestions from Gough. Though Locke denied that he had any hand in Popple's translation, I don't entirely trust his denial. Still, we know that Locke wrote the Latin *Epistola* and we don't know that he supervised or approved Popple's translation. So I don't think we can assume that it has an authority equal to that of the Latin text. (On this issue see Mario Montuori's edition of the *Letter* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963], and Gough's discussion, pp. 43–51 of his edition).

Setting aside differences of style, I find Popple's translation to be generally pretty accurate. It has the advantage of being the version of Locke's *Letter* to which his critics responded and of

rious, in my view, is a limitation less frequently noticed: when he argues for the toleration he is prepared to endorse, his arguments are often deeply flawed. It's surprising, I think, that they should have persuaded as many people as they did.

My first task in this paper will be to analyze the arguments of his *Letter concerning Toleration* and explain why I think they don't work. I shall argue that Locke's religious commitments made it difficult for him to mount the kind of argument for toleration which would have been necessary for him to overcome the powerful arguments which can be made—from within that religious perspective—for intolerance. But though I think the arguments of the *Letter* are flawed, I also think the epistemology Locke developed in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* made a more constructive contribution to the case for toleration. Locke's epistemology, I shall argue, had consequences which he himself would not have accepted, but which his successors did accept, and which they developed into a more powerful argument for toleration than any he explicitly made. That's part of the explanation for his positive influence on the rise of toleration.

Locke's problem is that he was a Christian who took Christianity to be, not just *true*, but *the true* religion. He was not a very orthodox Christian, I think, by the standards of his time and place. But he was near enough to orthodoxy that he would have had a hard time replying to the kind of argument Augustine made for intolerance, for using the power of the state to bring people into conformity with orthodox belief. What did Locke take himself to be committed to by his view that Christianity is the true religion?

First, of course, the existence of God, where the term "God" is understood to refer to the kind of being Christian philosophers in the 17th century typically had in mind when they used that term: a personal agent possessing all perfections, existence, power, wisdom, goodness, and infinitely many other excellences, each of which God possesses without limitation.<sup>2</sup> That

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being widely available. Moreover, when Locke is replying to his critics, he usually seems happy to treat Popple's translation as a satisfactory expression of his thought. On the one occasion when he discusses a translation issue, he acknowledges that the translation is rather free at that point, but insists that the translator is not to be blamed for sacrificing literal accuracy to liveliness. See his *Second Letter Concerning Toleration* (London, 1690), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> John MARSHALL, in his *John Locke, Resistance, Religion and Responsibility* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 141–42, cites a note in Locke's journal in 1680 which reads: "Whatsoever carries any excellency with it and includes not imperfection that must needs make a part of the idea we have of God." Specific perfections mentioned there include existence, duration, power, wisdom and goodness. Cf. *Essay II*, chap. 17, 1. *Essay II*, chap. 23, adds that God is immaterial (§ 21), and a pure spirit who is only active (§ 28). In the Third Meditation Descartes embraces essentially the

such a God exists was one of the things Locke claimed to have demonstrated in Book IV of his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, using a version of the argument from the need for a first cause of the universe:

From the consideration of ourselves, and what we infallibly find in our own constitutions, our reason leads us to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth, that there is an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing being; which whether anyone will please to call God, it matters not. The thing is evident... (*Essay IV*, chap. 10, 6)

Evident, but not *self*-evident. Locke acknowledges that this proposition requires argument, and that those who have not attended to the argument may not have reached its conclusion. But if they haven't, they are at fault. Not only does the argument from a first cause demonstrate that atheism is false, the argument from design is also powerful, and quite obvious:

the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a Deity. (I, chap. 4, 9)

So atheists, if they are rational, must have failed to reflect seriously on the clear evidence for God's existence. This is not the reason Locke gives for denying them toleration. He thinks that

promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon or sanctity for an atheist. The taking away of God, even if only in thought, dissolves all.<sup>3</sup>

But Locke's belief that theism is not only demonstrable, but also obvious to anyone who reflects seriously, probably did not dispose him to regard atheists as people who deserved much consideration.

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same conception of God when he defines God as a supremely perfect being. In his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § 1, Leibniz writes that "the most widely accepted and meaningful notion we have of God is expressed well enough in these words, that God is an absolutely perfect being."

<sup>3</sup> *Epistola/Letter*, 135; POPPLE, 48. Locke adds: "Furthermore, one who by his atheism undermines and destroys all religion cannot, in the name of religion, claim the privilege of toleration for himself." This is odd in at least two ways: it treats toleration as a privilege rather than a right; and it seems to beg the question by assuming that a claim to toleration can be based only on religion.

Secondly, Locke thinks that once we have demonstrated the existence of “an eternal, most powerful, and most knowing being,” we can easily deduce from that idea “all the other attributes we ought to ascribe to this eternal being,” provided that we consider our idea of God properly (IV, chap. 10, 6). Crucial among God’s attributes is one we might call veracity: *whatever God has revealed is certainly true* (IV, chap. 18, 10). The reliability of divine revelation opens up the possibility, not exactly of further religious *knowledge*—Locke is quite strict in his use of the term “knowledge”—but at least of well-grounded religious belief which can be as certain as what we know by intuition or demonstration.

Locke treats revelation as a form of testimony, testimony which comes ultimately from a source possessing the highest credibility, God, who “cannot deceive nor be deceived”:

This [testimony] carries with it an assurance beyond doubt, evidence beyond exception. This is called by a peculiar name, *revelation*; and our assent to it, *faith*, which as absolutely determines our minds, and as perfectly excludes all wavering, as our knowledge itself; and we may as well doubt of our own being, as we can, whether any revelation from God be true. So that faith is a settled and sure principle of assent and assurance, and leaves no manner of room for doubt or hesitation. (IV, chap. 16, 14)

Though Locke distinguishes here between faith and knowledge, he clearly regards faith as the functional equivalent of knowledge.

But there is a catch. To give the highest degree of assent to something we believe on ‘faith,’ that is, on the basis of divine revelation, we must first

be sure that it be a divine revelation, and that we understand it right, else we shall expose ourselves to all the extravagancy of enthusiasm, and all the error of wrong principles, if we have faith and assurance in what is not divine revelation. And therefore, in those cases, our assent can be rationally no higher than the evidence of its being a revelation, and that this is the meaning of the expressions it is delivered in. If the evidence of its being a revelation, or that this is its true sense, be only on probable proofs; our assent can reach no higher than an assurance or diffidence, arising from the more or less apparent probability of the proofs. (IV, chap. 16, 14)

This raises the question what we must do to be sure that what we think God has revealed to us is indeed something he has revealed. Here we need to note a distinction which is fundamental to Locke's treatment of this topic.

Sometimes people may have God's testimony directly from God; Locke calls that *original revelation* (IV, chap. 18, 3). At other times they may have it only through an intermediary, a prophet, say, who has received a revelation directly from God and speaks to us on God's behalf. Locke calls this *traditional revelation*. Although he initially defines faith as the assent we might give to any revelation, later, when he's discussing the relation between faith and reason, he limits faith to beliefs we form on the basis of traditional revelation:

Faith... is the assent to any proposition, not thus made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God, in some extraordinary way of communication. (IV, chap. 18, 2)

Locke's ambiguous usage requires us to distinguish between two different forms of faith: that based on an original revelation and that based on traditional revelation. Of course, faith based on traditional revelation must depend, ultimately, on faith based on an original revelation.

How can someone who has received an original revelation be sure that his belief is a response to a direct communication from God? Locke is vehemently opposed to those who would say that the belief itself, by its strength, provides its own warrant. He calls that *enthusiasm*, and he has no use for it. The enthusiast—the person who claims, simply because of the strength of his conviction, to have been the recipient of an original revelation<sup>4</sup>—is not to be trusted. He may be sincere, but unless he has some ground for thinking that God has communicated directly with him, a reason which goes beyond the strength of his belief, he should be dismissed as an arrogant and dangerous fool. If we accept the enthusiast's claim, we accord him great power. To

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<sup>4</sup> "Reason is natural revelation, whereby the eternal father of light, and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties: Revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, *which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives, that they come from God.* So that he that takes away reason, to make way for revelation, puts out the light of both..." IV, chap. 19, 4, my emphasis. "This is the way of talking of these men: They are sure, because they are sure: And their persuasions are right, because they are strong in them. For, when what they say is stripped of the metaphor of seeing and feeling, this is all it amounts to: And yet these similes so impose on them, that they serve them for certainty in themselves, and demon-stration to others" IV, chap. 19, 9.

reject what he says will be, in our eyes, to reject God. Who would dare do that? But accepting his claim is no less risky:

Though the odd opinions and extravagant actions enthusiasm has run men into, were enough to warn them against this wrong principle, so apt to misguide them both in their belief and conduct, yet the love of something extraordinary, the ease and glory it is to be inspired, and be above the common and natural ways of knowledge, so flatters many men's laziness, ignorance, and vanity, that when once they are got into this way of immediate revelation, of illumination without search, and of certainty without proof, and without examination, it is a hard matter to get them out of it. Reason is lost upon them, they are above it... (IV, chap. 19, 8)

The enthusiast is vain, ignorant, lazy, and to be suspected of ulterior motives: the love of glory, and the desire to make others subservient to him by claiming that he represents God.

But of course there can be no traditional revelation if there is not first an original revelation. How does the genuine prophet, who has in fact received a direct revelation from God, escape the charge of being an enthusiast? If we consult Scripture, we find that

the holy men of old, who had revelations from God... were not left to their own persuasions alone, that those persuasions were from God, but had outward signs to convince them of the author of those revelations. And when they were to convince others, they had a power given them to justify the truth of their commission from heaven, and by visible signs to assert the divine authority of a message they were sent with. (IV, chap. 19, 15)

So when God first spoke to Moses, he caught his attention with a miracle: a bush that was blazing, yet not consumed.<sup>5</sup> And when God commanded Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, and Moses asked how he could expect them to believe in his divine mission, God granted him miraculous powers so that he could persuade them. When he threw his staff on the ground, it became a snake. When he picked the snake up by its tail, it became a staff again in his hand.

We can consider later whether such signs provide a satisfactory basis for someone to believe that he has had a divine revelation, or for others to believe that about him. For now let's assume that these signs can be sufficient

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<sup>5</sup> Locke gives this example in Book IV, chap. 19, 15. It comes from Exodus 3.

to ground a rational conviction that the prophet is inspired. That's what Locke assumes. Otherwise revelation could not provide us with the very great assurance it can give. On this basis Locke takes the Christian scriptures to contain a divine revelation.

The evidence of our Saviour's mission from heaven is so great, in the multitude of miracles he did before all sorts of people, that what he delivered cannot but be received as the oracles of God, and unquestionable verity.<sup>6</sup>

And he thinks that it can be evident enough that a particular truth has been revealed that this can "determine our assent, even against probability" (IV, chap. 18, 9). That is, the evidence that God has communicated some truth to one of his prophets can be strong enough to override whatever probabilistic arguments we may have against it, though not, Locke thinks, strong enough to override intuitive or demonstrative knowledge against the supposedly revealed truth (IV, chap. 18, 5). Locke gives the following example of the latter: we have clear intuitive knowledge that the same body cannot be in two places at once. So even if revelation seemed to support a view which held that a body could be in two places at once, we would have to reject the purported revelation.

This is evidently directed against the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, which locates the body of Christ in all the many places where different priests are saying mass each Sunday. But the principle might have a wider application. If we had clear intuitive knowledge that one and the same person cannot be both fully human and fully divine, we would presumably be required to reject the doctrine that Christ had this unique status, which was defined as orthodox Christian doctrine in the Council of Chalcedon in 451,<sup>7</sup> and was still common to Catholicism and the mainline Protestant denominations in the 17th century. Locke does not make this application of his principle, but thoughts along these lines may have played some role in his doubts about the doctrine of the Trinity. We'll come to those doubts later.

So far, then, we have Locke committed to the existence of a God who possesses all excellences, including extraordinary power and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, and who has revealed certain truths to us through his prophets and through his son. Among the most important of

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<sup>6</sup> John LOCKE, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. John C. Higgins-Biddle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 142–43.

<sup>7</sup> See "Controversies on Christology (Patristic)," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed.

these truths is the immortality of the soul. Locke apparently did not think, at any stage of his development, that the immortality of the soul could be proven by natural reason. He was familiar with the most common argument for immortality, which says that because matter cannot think, the soul must be an immaterial being, which is therefore not susceptible to destruction by any natural means.

Locke rejected that argument, for different reasons at different times. In the early 1680s he reckoned that although the soul, as an immaterial being, might continue to exist after the destruction of the body, it would not follow that it must have sensation or perception. It might continue to exist without any sensibility. But an immortality of that kind would be of no interest. The reason the doctrine of immortality was important to Locke was that terrestrial rewards and punishments do not seem to be distributed equitably enough to motivate virtuous conduct. The doctrine of immortality could, in principle, give people a reason to hope for a reward in the afterlife, and to fear punishment. And that might give them the incentive they need to be virtuous. But the prospect that after death the soul might continue to exist without sensibility, without experiencing either pleasure or pain, could not motivate good behavior.<sup>8</sup>

In an unpublished note written in 1676 and reprised in the *Essay* Locke tried to give doubters of the afterlife extraterrestrial reasons to be good by deploying a version of Pascal's wager. Here's the way the argument goes in the *Essay*. Anyone who is rational must concede that it is at least possible that the Christian doctrine of the afterlife is true, i.e., that those who live a good life here will be rewarded with infinite happiness there, whereas those who live a bad life here will have to endure infinite misery there. The stakes are so high that a rational man will bet on the Christian doctrine being true by behaving well, even if he thinks its truth is no more than a bare possibility. If he chooses the virtuous life and is right, he will enjoy infinite happiness, which will make any pain he has had to endure in this life negligible. If he chooses that life and is wrong, the worst that will happen to him is that after death he will cease to exist. But that's the best that can happen to the man who bets against Christianity by choosing a life of vice. If he *is* right, he will be annihilated after death. But if he's wrong, he faces infinite misery.

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<sup>8</sup> In this paragraph I rely on John Marshall's account of a note Locke wrote in February 1682, in Locke Mss. f6 and d10, in the Bodleian Library; see his *John Locke, Resistance*, 150–51. Locke's persistent commitment to a hedonistic psychology is a major theme in Marshall's book.



When infinite happiness is put into one scale against infinite misery in the other; if the worst that comes to the pious man, if he mistakes, be the best that the wicked can attain to, if he be in the right, who can without madness run the venture? Who in his wits would choose to come within a possibility of infinite misery, which if he miss, there is yet nothing to be got by that hazard? Whereas on the other side, the sober man ventures nothing against infinite happiness to be got, if his expectation comes to pass. (II, chap. 21, 70)

There are, of course, problems with this argument, which Locke seems to have recognized after he published the *Essay*. For one thing, it assumes that Christianity teaches a doctrine of infinite punishment for the wicked in the afterlife. That was a common enough Christian doctrine in the 17th century, and Locke seems to have been committed to it in what he wrote up to and including the *Essay*. But support for it was fading in the 17th century,<sup>9</sup> and by the time Locke wrote *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, he seems to have become doubtful that Christianity really taught eternal punishment for the wicked.<sup>10</sup> The wicked can expect to suffer “exquisite torment” as punishment for their sins, and they will suffer it in a fire which is eternal. But though the fire may be eternal, the punishment itself will be finite, and end in annihilation.<sup>11</sup>

For that matter, he also came to doubt that Christianity taught that the path to eternal happiness requires leading a good life. His position in *The Reasonableness* seems to be that the moral law is so hard to keep that no one between Adam and the apostles ever kept it.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately God does not demand perfect compliance:

<sup>9</sup> See D. P. WALKER, *The Decline of Hell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

<sup>10</sup> See *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, chap. 1, pp. 7–8: “Nobody can deny, but that the doctrine of the Gospel is, that death came on all men by Adam’s sin; only they differ about the signification of the word *death*. For some will have it to be a state of guilt, wherein not only he, but all his posterity was so involved, that every one descended of him deserved endless torment, in hell-fire. I shall say nothing more here, how far, in the apprehensions of men, this consists with the justice and goodness of God, having mentioned it above. But it seems a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery. Could any one be supposed, by a law, that says, ‘For felony thou shalt die,’ not that he should lose his life; but be kept alive in perpetual, exquisite torments? And would any one think himself fairly dealt with, that was so used?”

<sup>11</sup> See MARSHALL, *John Locke, Resistance*, 415. This was also Hobbes’ view. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 38, 14 (p. 309 in my edition of *Leviathan* from Hackett [1994]).

<sup>12</sup> See *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, chap. 2, p. 13–14: “Perhaps it will be demanded, ‘Why did God give so hard a law to mankind, that, to the apostle’s time, no one of Adam’s issue had kept it? As appears by Rom. iii. and Gal. iii. 21, 22.’ Answ. It was such a law as the purity of God’s nature required, and must be the law of such a creature as man; unless God would have

The moral part of Moses's law, or the moral law (which is everywhere the same, the eternal rule of right), obliges Christians, and all men, everywhere, and is to all men the standing law of works. But Christian believers have the privilege to be under the law of faith, too, which is that law whereby God justifies a man for believing, though by his works he be not just or righteous, i.e. though he come short of perfect obedience to the law of works. God alone does or can justify, or make just, those who by their works are not so, which he doth, by counting their faith for righteousness, i.e., for a complete performance of the law. (*Reasonableness*, 20–21)

So righteousness is not absolutely necessary for salvation. You might have thought that, given these reservations about the assumptions of his wager argument, Locke would have omitted it from later editions of the *Essay*. But he didn't.

By the time he published the *Essay*, however, Locke had found other grounds to reject the standard argument for immortality. He had become doubtful of the immateriality of the soul. In Book IV of the *Essay* he argued that for all we know God might have endowed matter with the power to think (IV, chap. 3, 6). There does not seem to be any contradiction in supposing that a material being might be able to think. If it's logically possible for a material being to think, it would not be beyond the power of an omnipotent being to endow matter with that capacity, any more than on the dualist hypothesis it would be beyond the power of omnipotence to conjoin an immaterial thinking substance to a material non-thinking substance. So for all we know, the soul might be material.

Locke does not seem to think it probable that the soul *is* material. But he insists that it does not matter whether it is or not:

All the great ends of morality and religion are well enough secured, without philosophical proofs of the soul's immateriality; since it is evident that he who made us at the beginning to subsist here, sensible intelligent beings, and for sev-

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made him a rational creature, and not required him to have lived by the law of reason; but would have countenanced in him irregularity and disobedience to that light which he had, and that rule which was suitable to his nature; which would have been to have authorised disorder, confusion, and wickedness in his creatures: for that this law was the law of reason, or, as it is called, of nature, we shall see by and by; and if rational creatures will not live up to the rule of their reason, who shall excuse them? If you will admit them to forsake reason in one point, why not in another? Where will you stop?"

eral years continued us in such a state, *can and will* restore us to the like state of sensibility in another world, and make us capable there to receive the retribution he has designed to men, according to their doings in this life. (IV, chap. 3, 6, my emphasis)

Clearly an omnipotent being would have the power to restore us to sensibility in the afterlife, whether we are material thinking things, or immaterial thinking things. But Locke does not say why he thinks it is evident that God *will* restore us to a state of sensibility in the next life. And it's hard to see what reason he could have had for this claim about God's future actions if he did not base it on divine revelation. Certainly by the time he wrote *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) he was prepared to argue on scriptural grounds for post-mortem rewards and punishments.<sup>13</sup>

Let me sum up the argument to this point. Locke was a Christian, but not a very orthodox Christian by the standards which prevailed in 17th-century England. He thought God's existence was demonstrable, and thought it was demonstrable that God had the attributes his Christian contemporaries ascribed to him: that he is a personal agent possessing all perfections, including eternity, infinite power and knowledge, and perfect goodness. He believed with strong conviction, but did not think it demonstrable that God had revealed certain important truths to man in the Christian scriptures (both the Old and the New Testaments), and that we could have a confidence approaching certainty in the most important of these truths, including the proposition that if we find favor with God,<sup>14</sup> we shall enjoy unending happiness in the afterlife. If we don't find favor with God, we may be punished severely in the afterlife, but will not be punished for eternity. Eventually the wicked will be annihilated.

Except for the denial of eternal punishment for the wicked, all this would be pretty standard doctrine for a Christian in 17th-century England. But the denial of eternal punishment is not the only respect in which Locke is unorthodox. He has doubts about the immateriality of the soul. And although he sometimes seems to think that no one has obeyed the moral law so perfectly that they deserve eternal happiness, he is firm, by the time he writes *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, that they are not sinners simply because they have inherited Adam's corrupt nature. "Everyone's sin is charged upon him-

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<sup>13</sup> See *Reasonableness of Christianity*, chap. 2, pp. 11–16.

<sup>14</sup> "Find favor with God" is a deliberately ambiguous phrase which I use to cover the two main possibilities: that we find favor with God through righteous conduct or that we find favor with him through our faith.

self only.”<sup>15</sup> So Locke denied the doctrine of original sin, as it was understood in the Church of England.<sup>16</sup>

The denial of original sin is connected with another of Locke’s heresies, his apparent rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity. Locke never openly denies that Jesus was divine. But although he evidently started out believing in the Trinity, at some point he seems to have developed doubts.<sup>17</sup> Considering the trouble he brought on himself by what he did say and refused to say—he insisted that he had never publicly denied the doctrine of the Trinity, but declined Stillingfleet’s invitation to affirm it—we can understand why he was cautious about expressing these doubts. But when he undertakes in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* to explain what we must believe in order to be saved, he fastens on the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah, a doctrine which, as he understands it, does not commit him to affirming the divinity of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> And since he has denied original sin, he has also denied a major theological ground for the doctrine of the Trinity: that humans are so corrupt that they could only be redeemed by the sacrifice of a savior whose divinity insured his perfect innocence.

So Locke is unorthodox enough to stand in need of a broader toleration than his society afforded, but orthodox enough that he has difficulty justifying toleration. We can see how his religious position limits him if we examine the arguments he makes for toleration in his *Letter concerning Toleration*. Locke begins the *Letter* by suggesting that religious intolerance is inconsistent with fundamental Christian values:

I appeal to the consciences of those who persecute, torture, rob, and slaughter other men on the plea of religion, whether they do it out of friendship and kindness. And then indeed, and only then, will I believe that they do so, when I see those zealots correcting, in the same manner, their friends and familiar acquaint-

<sup>15</sup> *Reasonableness of Christianity*, chap. 1, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> See Article 9 of the *Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*: “Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation,” available at <http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/39articles.html>.

<sup>17</sup> John Marshall has traced Locke’s development on this issue very persuasively in his *John Locke, Resistance, Religion and Responsibility*. See particularly, pp. xv, 23, 64–65, 138, 140–41, 336, 342, 347, 350, 413, 416, 419–27.

<sup>18</sup> *Reasonableness of Christianity*, chap. 4, pp. 22–23.

ance for the manifest sins they commit against the precepts of the Gospel—when I see them persecute with fire and sword their own followers, who are corrupted with vices, and unless they mend their ways will surely perish<sup>19</sup>... if it is out of charity, as they pretend, and care for men’s souls, that they deprive them of their property, mutilate their bodies, torment them in noisome prisons, and in the end, even take away their lives, all to make them believers and procure their salvation, why then do they allow whoring, fraud, malice, and other vices, which, as the apostle testifies (Rom. 1), so plainly reek of paganism, to run riot among their own people?... If anyone wishes to make a soul, whose salvation he heartily desires, expire in torments, and that even in an unconverted state, I shall be greatly surprised, and so, I think, will others also. But nobody, surely, will ever believe that such behavior can proceed from love, goodwill, and charity.<sup>20</sup>

This tends to suggest that the forcible repression of religious difference proceeds not from love, and a concern for our neighbor’s salvation, but from a prideful desire that everyone else should adopt our own views. If the persecutor *really* cared about the salvation of his fellow men, he would try to correct their conduct, bringing it into line with the precepts of the gospels. He would not try to change their beliefs, or at any rate, not only their beliefs.

This early passage from the *Letter* may give the impression that the only thing which matters for salvation is conduct, that having correct beliefs is not necessary. Locke’s wager argument in the *Essay* suggests the same thing. But in the *Letter* Locke is careful not to go so far as that, writing that:

These, and other things of this kind [whoring, fraud, malice, and similar vices], are certainly *more contrary* to the glory of God, to the purity of the church, and to the salvation of souls, than any conscientious dissent, however erroneous, from ecclesiastical decisions, or separation from public worship, whilst accompanied with innocency of life.<sup>21</sup>

This does not deny that erroneous dissent may imperil your salvation. It just suggests that wicked conduct poses a greater danger to your salvation than

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<sup>19</sup> *Et sine mutatione in meliorem frugem certo perituros*. Popple’s version—“and without amendment are in danger of eternal perdition”—is in one way too weak. Locke’s claim is not merely that these sinners are in danger of a bad end; they will surely come to a bad end. In another way it may be too strong. If by “perdition” Popple means eternal punishment, as he might, that’s not what Locke says. He says (consistently with his position in the *Reasonableness*) that they will perish.

<sup>20</sup> *Epistola/Letter*, 59–61, 63; POPPLE, 2–4.

<sup>21</sup> *Epistola/Letter*, 61; POPPLE, 3. As Gough notes, Popple omits the phrase here translated “however erroneous” (*erronea quaevis*).

erroneous belief. I presume Locke thinks this is because we are more apt to err in conduct than in those relatively few beliefs which are really essential for salvation.<sup>22</sup>

A later passage strikes a similar note. The problem with the persecutors, as far as their imposition of doctrine is concerned, is that they insist on imposing belief about controversial matters where our salvation does not clearly require correct belief:

Why, I ask, does this zeal for God, for the church, and for the salvation of souls—a zeal which actually burns men alive—pass by, without reprimand or censure, those wickednesses and moral vices which everyone confesses are diametrically opposed to the profession of Christianity, and bend all its energies either to introducing ceremonies, or to correcting opinions, which for the most part are about subtle matters that exceed the ordinary man's grasp?<sup>23</sup>

Locke does not deny that there are some beliefs which are necessary for salvation. Later in the *Letter* he will write:

Every mortal has an immortal soul, capable of eternal happiness or misery, whose salvation depends upon the fact that in this life he has done those things which must be done, *and believed those things which must be believed*, and are prescribed by God as necessary to win his favor.<sup>24</sup>

But he is quite vague about precisely what we must believe to obtain God's favor.

I think that's because when he wrote the *Letter* he hadn't made up his mind what beliefs were necessary. He was convinced that *some* non-evident belief about Jesus was necessary for salvation. Various passages in the gospels made that clear.<sup>25</sup> But those passages did not make it equally clear *what* belief was necessary. Deciding that was the task he set himself in *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, as he explains in his subsequent defense of that work:

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<sup>22</sup> In this I take it that Locke agrees with Sebastian Castellio. See my "Sebastian Castellio's Erasmian Liberalism," *Philosophical Topics* 31 (2004): 47–73.

<sup>23</sup> *Epistola/Letter*, 61; POPPLE, 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Epistola/Letter*, 123, my emphasis; POPPLE, 41. Note that this suggests the possibility of eternal punishment for the wicked, without actually committing to it.

<sup>25</sup> Or at least various passages in the gospel of John made it clear, notably John 3:16–18, 36, 5:23–24, and 14:6. Support for this view is much less clear in the other gospels, which seems to me an important point, to be discussed elsewhere.

The beginning of the year in which it was published [1695], the controversy that made so much noise and heat amongst some of the dissenters, coming one day accidentally into my mind, drew me, by degrees, into a stricter and more thorough inquiry into the question about justification. The Scripture was direct and plain, that it was faith that justified. The next question then was, What faith that was that justified; what it was which, if a man believed, it should be imputed to him for righteousness. To find out this, I thought the right way was, to search the Scriptures; and thereupon betook myself seriously to the reading of the New Testament, only to that purpose. What that produced, you and the world have seen.<sup>26</sup>

The belief he fastened on as necessary—at least for those to whom the gospel had never been preached—was the belief that Jesus was the Messiah.<sup>27</sup> And this has the advantage, by comparison with belief in the Trinity, that it does not make a claim about some subtle matter which exceeds the ordinary man's grasp, and is not clearly stated in Scripture, but was decided by a church council. Even in the *Letter* Locke probably did not think God would require belief in the doctrine of the Trinity for salvation. But that would have been a dangerous thing to say, and Locke is a cautious man.

Locke is clearly contemplating an opponent who claims to be persecuting religious dissenters out of love, for the sake of their salvation. And he is suspicious of the persecutor's motives. But what would he say to a persecutor like Calvin, who used the power of the civil magistrate to enforce both correct belief and correct conduct? *Must* we think that the persecutor's professions of love are a cover for something more sinister? Is it so clear what Christian love requires?

The most influential early Christian philosopher to argue for using force in support of religion was St. Augustine, who asked this question about what Christian love requires quite forcefully, and came to a different answer:

What, then, does brotherly love do? While it fears the transitory fires of furnaces for a few, does it hand over all to the eternal fires of hell? Does it abandon to ev-

<sup>26</sup> *A Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity* (London, 1697), sig. A7<sup>v</sup>, cited in Higgins-Biddle's introduction to *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, xvii.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, chap. 4. In this too he agrees with Hobbes. See *Leviathan*, chap. 43. The exception for those who have "never heard the promise or news of a saviour" is made in *Reasonableness*, chap. 14. But does this mean that those who have never heard the gospel preached must be saved by works if they are to be saved?

erlasting destruction all those who are now willing and were previously unable to come to perpetual life by means of the Catholic peace? (Letter 185, 14)

I suggest that we reconstruct this argument—I'll call it *Augustine's master argument for intolerance*—along the following lines:

- (1) Christianity requires us to love our fellow men.
- (2) Love requires acting for the well-being of the beloved.
- (3) Acting for the well-being of another may require the use, in the present, of measures in themselves harmful, which, in the long run, will lead to the other's overall benefit.
- (4) There is no greater good than salvation; no greater evil than damnation. All temporal goods and evils pale by comparison with those goods and evils.
- (5) So someone who genuinely loves his neighbor will strive with all his power to procure his neighbor's salvation.

So far it's hard to see anything in this argument Locke could reasonably disagree with, given his beliefs about the afterlife.<sup>28</sup> The differences emerge when we consider the second stage of the argument.

- (6) Achieving salvation requires correct theological beliefs.<sup>29</sup>
- (7) So someone who genuinely loves his neighbor will do everything in his power to insure that she has correct theological beliefs.
- (8) Insuring that your neighbor has correct theological beliefs may sometimes require the use of force, the infliction in the present of temporal harms, to be compensated, in the long run, by eternal goods and the avoidance of eternal harms.
- (9) Therefore, Christian love sometimes requires us to use force against our neighbors.

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<sup>28</sup> I assume that Locke can accept (4) even if he eventually denies—contrary to Augustine—that damnation does not involve eternal punishment.

<sup>29</sup> Since I wrote the earlier versions of this paper, I have come to think that Augustine would probably have formulated this step in terms of salvation requiring membership in the true church. This was the primary issue between him and the Donatists. But I think he would have regarded being a member of the true church and having correct theological beliefs as extensionally equivalent. The formulation in terms of correct belief has the advantage of being easier to argue from scripture and easier to defend in an age when the Catholic Church no longer has so privileged a position.



Although Locke might be tempted to deny step (6), in the end I think he would grant it. No doubt he would disagree with Augustine about *which* theological beliefs are required for salvation. Augustine would insist that belief in the Trinity is essential; Locke would deny that. They might disagree about other matters as well. Locke seems to have been deeply worried by the problem of reconciling human freedom with God's omniscience and omnipotence, and never satisfied with any solution he saw.<sup>30</sup> I suspect Augustine would have viewed him as a Pelagian, and thus a heretic on that ground also. But these are matters of detail. Reluctant though he may be to do so, Locke will concede that *some* beliefs are necessary for salvation.

So what Locke will challenge, in Augustine's master argument for intolerance, is step (8), the claim that sometimes we need to use force to try to bring it about that our neighbor has the theological beliefs needed for salvation. Locke will insist that force is useless in changing people's beliefs. This is a crucial part of his argument that the care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate:

The magistrate's power consists wholly in compulsion. But true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And such is the nature of the understanding that it cannot be compelled [to the belief of anything] by outward force. Confiscation of estate, imprisonment, torments, nothing of that nature can have any such efficacy as to make men change the inward judgment that they have framed of things.<sup>31</sup>

As I reconstruct it, this argument goes as follows:

- (1) Believing is not the kind of thing we can do at will. We cannot decide whether or not we will believe something.
- (2) But only things we can choose or decide to do are susceptible to the [positive and negative] incentives implicit in a situation where we are responding to a command.
- (3) Therefore, belief is not the kind of thing which can be commanded.
- (4) So, you cannot, by using force or the threat of force, compel someone to embrace a saving faith; all you can compel is external conformity, which has no salvific value.

<sup>30</sup> On this see MARSHALL, *John Locke, Resistance*.

<sup>31</sup> *Epistola/Letter*, 69. The phrase in brackets comes from Popple's translation. There is nothing in the Latin to explicitly warrant the added phrase, but it seems to me a useful clarification of Locke's meaning.

(5) If you use force or the threat of force to try to get someone to adopt a religious belief for the sake of her salvation, you will be inflicting harm on her for no good reason.

(6) We should not inflict harm on people for no good reason.

(7) So we should not use the coercive power of the state to try to compel correct religious belief.

Now I agree, with one important qualification, with the psychology of the first premise of this argument: belief is not something which is under the *direct* control of the will, and therefore, not an action a person can perform on command, or in response to threats of punishment for not believing.

But this reflection on the nature of belief does not settle the matter of the effectiveness of compulsion in producing genuine belief. Though we may not be able to believe at will, there are things we can choose to do which may have a high probability of affecting what we believe. We can choose to expose ourselves to a particular religious teaching—say, by attending church regularly. And we can choose to read books which may persuade us of the truth of that religion, and not to read other books which might dissuade us. We can choose to associate only with believers and shun non-believers. Since these are all things we can choose to do, they are also things someone can command us to do, things which the threat of punishment for disobedience can motivate us to do.

This is essentially what Locke's contemporary critic, Jonathan Proast, replied to the argument from ineffectiveness. He insisted that he did not assume force *alone* would yield genuine conviction. What he assumed was that force might be useful in getting non-believers to listen to those rational arguments which would produce genuine persuasion if people gave them proper attention.<sup>32</sup> He thought most non-believers simply hadn't given the arguments a fair hearing. He might grant—I think he would grant—that these methods are not foolproof. The prohibition of a book may only increase our desire to read it. The minister's sermons may induce boredom, or laughter, rather than belief. Going to church may just remind you of all the things you don't like about the religion you're trying to get yourself to believe. Still, what we hear and read, and what we don't hear and don't read, can powerfully affect what we believe. So can the people we associate with, or don't associate with.

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<sup>32</sup> Jonathan PROAST, *The Argument of the Letter concerning Toleration, Briefly Consider'd and Answer'd*, published anonymously in London in 1690.

Commands and threats can have an effect on people's beliefs, even if they can't directly determine them. Earlier I quoted from a letter of Augustine in which he explained his initial resistance to the use of imperial power to suppress the Donatists partly by his concern that it might yield only a pretended acceptance of Catholic Christianity. "We might have as false Catholics those whom we had known to be obvious heretics" (Letter 93). I think this must always be a concern, whenever force is used to promote any kind of orthodoxy. But Augustine reports that the result was not the one he had feared:

This opinion of mine was defeated, not by the words of its opponents, but by examples of those who offered proof. For the first argument against me was my own city. Though it was entirely in the Donatist sect, it was converted to the Catholic unity out of fear of the imperial laws, and we now see that it detests the destructiveness of this stubbornness of yours<sup>33</sup> so that no one would believe that it was ever a part of it. And it was the same with many other cities...

Possibly Augustine was deceived in his eventual belief in the effectiveness of force. But it was not a belief he was predisposed to hold. It was a belief apparently forced on him by his experience.

When Locke contended, in his *Letter Concerning Toleration*, that the nature of the understanding is such that it cannot be compelled by outward force, he did not offer any arguments for that view. In his early, unpublished *Essay on Toleration* he made a two-fold appeal to experience, both historical experience and introspection:

What efficacy force and severity hath to alter the opinions of mankind, though all history be full of examples, & there is scarce an instance to be found of any opinion driven out of the world by persecution but where the violence of it at once swept away all the professors too. I desire nobody to go farther than his own bosom for an experiment whether ever violence gained anything upon his opinion, whether even arguments managed with heat do not lose something of their efficacy, & have not made him the more obstinate in his opinion, so chary is human nature to preserve the liberty of that part wherein lies the dignity of a man, which could it be imposed on would make him but little different from a beast. I ask those who in the late times so firmly stood the ineffectual persecution them-

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<sup>33</sup> Augustine is writing to Vincent, the Rogatist bishop of Cartenna. The Rogatists were a splinter group from the Donatists, which had broken with the rest of the Donatists over the issue of armed resistance.

selves & found how little it obtained on their opinions, & yet are now so forward to try it upon others.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately history does not support Locke's thesis that force must be ineffective in altering men's opinions. One of the most dramatic experiments in this area was made in Spain in the late 14th century. As early as the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) the Catholic Church had encouraged legislation against the Jews. Among other things, this legislation required them to wear distinctive dress, forbade them to appear in public during Holy Week, and forbade them from exercising any public function involving power over Christians.<sup>35</sup> Although Church doctrine opposed attempts to forcibly convert the Jews,<sup>36</sup> the legislation this Council approved encouraged anti-Semitic feelings which often resulted in violence and attempts at forced conversion. Here's one historian's description of what happened in Spain:

In the mid-fourteenth century the civil wars in Castile gave rise to excesses against the Jewish community in some towns. Religious fanaticism, stirred up in southern Spain in the 1370s and 1380s by Ferdinand Martinez, archdeacon of Ecija, lit the spark to this powder keg. In June 1391, during a hot summer made worse by economic distress, urban mobs rioted, directing their anger against the privileged classes and against the Jews. In Seville hundreds of Jews were murdered and the aljama [the Jewish quarter] was destroyed. Within days, in July and August, the fury spread across the peninsula. Those who were not murdered were compelled to accept baptism... From this time the *conversos* [Jews converted to Christianity] came into existence on a grand scale.<sup>37</sup>

Before these mass "conversions" Spain had had a substantial Jewish minority. After the conversions many towns had only a fraction of their original Jewish population, if any.

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<sup>34</sup> John LOCKE, *An Essay concerning Toleration and Other Writings on Law and Politics, 1667–1683*, ed. J. R. Milton and Philip Milton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 293–94. I have taken the liberty of modernizing the spelling.

<sup>35</sup> See "Lateran Councils," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

<sup>36</sup> Canon law prohibited compelling the Jews to believe. See the 12th-century *Decretum Gratiani*, I, 45, 5, cited by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa theologiae*, II-II, Q. 10, Art. 8. The tradition that Jews are to be protected from forcible conversion goes back to Augustine's *City of God*, bk. 17, chap. 46. See the interesting discussion of this passage in James Carroll's *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), chap. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Henry KAMEN, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 10.

Locke would no doubt say that merely going through the ceremony of baptism, without being persuaded that Christianity is true, does not make you a Christian. If you hold a knife to my throat and threaten to cut it if I do not accept baptism, I will accept baptism. But I will not thereby become a Christian. The so-called *conversos* were not truly converted. They might have conformed externally, but in their hearts they must have remained Jews.

Many historians of the Inquisition would agree. Here's a representative passage from Henry Charles Lea's classic history of the Spanish Inquisition:

The circumstances under which the mass of conversions was effected—threats of massacre or the wearing pressure of inhuman laws—were not such as to justify confidence in the sincerity of the neophytes, nor, when baptism was administered indiscriminately to multitudes, was there a possibility of detailed instruction in the complicated theology of their new faith.<sup>38</sup>

That many of these *conversos* or “New Christians”—or *marranos*, as they were sometimes contemptuously called—were insincere was also the assumption of the Inquisition, founded some 90 years later, to root out what many Christians suspected might be a “fifth column” within the Church, the existence of which might undermine the beliefs of faithful Christians.<sup>39</sup>

More recent scholarship, though, has taken a different view. Netanyahu's investigation of the origins of the Inquisition in Spain has argued that, although it may have been true in the years just after the mass conversions that most of the *conversos* secretly remained faithful to Judaism, by the middle of the 15th century:

most of the conversos were conscious assimilationists, who wished to merge with the Christian society, educate their children as fully fledged Christians, and remove themselves from anything regarded as Jewish, especially in the field of religion ... this situation resulted from a long-lasting, ongoing process, so that the number of the Christianized Marranos was rising from generation to generation, while the number of clandestine Jews among them was rapidly dwindling to

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<sup>38</sup> Henry C. LEA, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 1:145. See also Yitzhak BAER, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966), chap. 12.

<sup>39</sup> See KAMEN, *Spanish Inquisition*, chap. 2–3, but especially pp. 11 and 17.

the vanishing point. In 1481, when the Inquisition was established, the Judaizers [*conversos* practising Judaism in secret] formed a small minority...<sup>40</sup>

I don't think we can know with any precision how many of the Marranos were genuinely Christianized and how many were Judaizers. And I will not insist that the policy of forcible conversion was as successful as Netanyahu claims. But to rebut Locke, it seems enough to say, what I think is undeniable, that within a few generations the percentage of genuinely Christianized marranos was substantial, sufficiently high to make the forcible converters feel that they had accomplished something truly significant. Unfortunately, I think this is only one among many examples where forcible conversion has worked.

Locke seeks to deny the effectiveness of coercion because he wants to defend toleration without challenging the theological assumptions on which Christian intolerance was based: that Christianity is the true religion; that acceptance of Christian teachings is necessary for salvation; and that salvation is an incalculable good, far transcending any worldly good which might be weighed against it. Someone who holds these views we would now call a "Christian exclusivist." Locke is a Christian exclusivist. And it is difficult to defend toleration within the framework of exclusivist assumptions.

But in spite of the exclusivism which hampers Locke's case for toleration in the *Letter on Toleration*, there are other aspects of his work which I think have the potential to provide a better case. Locke's epistemology in the *Essay* insists on the value of revelation as a basis for well-grounded belief, as providing an assurance approximating that of knowledge. If God has revealed something to us, it must be true. But he does caution that before we accept something on the basis of revelation, we must first make sure that God did in fact reveal it. Reason must judge that.

Locke's own application of this principle leaves much to be desired. The gospels say that Jesus performed a great many miracles before all sorts of people. That's enough for Locke to have confidence that Jesus was on a mission from heaven. He does not ask the kind of question about these reports which his own epistemology should have cautioned him to ask. It's one of Locke's great virtues as an epistemologist to emphasize the importance of the testimony of others in our processes of belief formation, and to articulate

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<sup>40</sup> Benzion NETANYAHU, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995), xvii. Kamen has adopted Netanyahu's view in the most recent edition of his *The Spanish Inquisition*.

well the criteria we normally and rightly employ in evaluating testimony: How many witnesses are there? Are they men of integrity? Do they have any motive for not telling the truth? Do they tell stories which are internally consistent, and consistent with one another? Are they men of knowledge, who would be able to detect a fraud? And so on and so forth. One criterion on which Locke puts great emphasis is the extent to which the story the witnesses tell is consistent with what we ourselves have experienced. If it is not, then that is a ground for withholding our assent. Locke illustrates this with the following anecdote:

If I myself see a man walk on the ice, it is past probability; it is knowledge; but if another tells me he saw a man in England, in the midst of a sharp winter, walk upon water hardened with cold, this has so great conformity with what is usually observed to happen that I am disposed by the nature of the thing itself to assent to it, unless some manifest suspicion attend the relation of that matter of fact. But if the same thing be told to one born between the tropics, who never saw nor heard of any such thing before, there the whole probability relies on testimony. And as the relators are more in number, and of more credit, and have no interest to speak contrary to the truth, so that matter of fact is like to find more or less belief. Though to a man whose experience has always been quite contrary, and who has never heard of anything like it, the most untainted credit of a witness will scarce be able to find belief. As it happened to a Dutch ambassador, who entertaining the King of Siam with the particularities of Holland, which he was inquisitive after, amongst other things told him that the water in his country would sometimes, in cold weather, be so hard that men walked upon it, and that it would bear an elephant if he were there. To which the king replied, "Hitherto I have believed the strange things you have told me, because I look upon you as a sober fair man, but now I am sure you lie." (IV, chap. 5, 5)

Within a couple of generations of Locke's *Essay* David Hume used this principle to deny that we could ever have adequate evidence for the occurrence of a miracle. As violations of the laws of nature, miracles must, by definition, be contrary to all our past experience. So it must always be more probable that the witnesses are deceived or deceivers, than it is that what they claim to have witnessed occurred.

Locke seems to have been incapable of that kind of skepticism about the gospel reports of Jesus' miracles. But I think his contemporaries were not. It did not take Hume to raise these doubts. Before Locke, Montaigne, Hobbes,

and Spinoza had all,<sup>41</sup> each in his own way, raised questions about the reliability of the testimonial evidence for miracles. If you combine that skepticism with Locke's insistence that we must be sure that a proposition has been revealed by God before we accept it on faith, then it's possible to generate skepticism about Christian exclusivism. The Deists of the 18th century did that. Locke would not have joined them in questioning the status of the Christian scriptures as divine revelation. But he did help to sow the seeds of that movement. That seems to me to be his most important contribution to the cause of religious liberty.

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<sup>41</sup> Like Hume, both Montaigne and Hobbes make an epistemological case against miracles. Spinoza's case is more metaphysical. I've discussed Montaigne on miracles in "Skepticism and Toleration: The Case of Montaigne," *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 2 (2005): 1–33. I've discussed Hobbes and Spinoza on miracles in "'I Durst Not Write So Boldly,' or How to Read Hobbes' *Theological-Political Treatise*," in *Hobbes e Spinoza*, ed. Daniela Bostrenghi, introduction by Emilia Giancotti, 497–593 (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1992). Both these articles are available on my website: <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/emcurley>.



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## LOCKE ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

## Summary

The paper analyses and criticizes Locke's arguments for religious toleration presented in his *Letter concerning Toleration*. The author argues that the epistemology Locke developed in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* made a more constructive contribution to the case for toleration.

**Keywords:** Locke; Augustine; religious toleration; Christian exclusivism.

## LOCKE O TOLERANCJI RELIGIJNEJ

## Streszczenie

Artykuł analizuje i poddaje krytyce Locke'owskie argumenty na rzecz tolerancji religijnej przedstawione w jego *Liście o tolerancji religijnej*. Autor argumentuje, że epistemologia Locke'a opracowana w *Rozważaniach dotyczących rozumu ludzkiego* może stanowić podstawę lepszego argumentu na rzecz tolerancji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Locke; Augustyn; tolerancja religijna; ekskluzywizm chrześcijański.