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978-0-521-18118-1 - John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus
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John Locke's Politics of Moral Consensus

The aim of this highly original book is twofold: to explain the reconciliation of religion and politics in the work of John Locke and to explore the relevance of that reconciliation for politics in our own time.

Confronted with deep social divisions over ultimate beliefs, Locke sought to unite society in a single liberal community. Reason could identify divine moral laws that would be acceptable to members of all cultural groups, thereby justifying the authority of government. Greg Forster demonstrates that Locke's theory is liberal and rational but also moral and religious, providing an alternative to the two extremes of religious fanaticism and moral relativism.

This fresh new account of Locke's thought will appeal to specialists and advanced students across philosophy, political science, and religious studies.

Greg Forster is a senior research associate at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

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*This book is dedicated with love and admiration to
Elizabeth Ann Forster*

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Plato has no hesitation in asserting that
to be a philosopher is to love God.

It immediately follows that the seeker after wisdom
(which is the meaning of “philosopher”)
will only attain to happiness
when he has begun to enjoy God.

Augustine of Hippo

The City of God, Book VIII, Chapter 10

I want to know God's thoughts.
The rest are details.

Albert Einstein

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xi
1 "Reason Teaches All Mankind, Who Will But Consult It": John Locke and Moral Consensus	1
2 "Sit Down in Quiet Ignorance": Locke's Epistemology of Limits	40
3 "The Candle of the Lord": Locke's Rational Faith	84
4 "The Only Foundation of Faith": Reasonable Christianity	128
5 "The Only True Touchstone of Moral Rectitude": The Religious Foundations of Morality	167
6 "'Tis Reasonable to Think the Cause Is Natural": Locke's Religious Eudemonism	194
7 "The Servants of One Sovereign Master": Authority and Moral Consensus	218
8 "The Opinion of This or That Philosopher Was of No Authority": Locke and Us	259
<i>Notes</i>	273
<i>Bibliography</i>	309
<i>Index</i>	315

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Above all I am grateful to God. “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost you all you have, get understanding. . . . If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God” (Proverbs 4:7 and 2:3–5).

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this book to refer to Locke's major works. Spelling and capitalization have been updated to the current standard, but punctuation has been left undisturbed. Italics have been removed except where they are necessary to convey the meaning of a passage.

- E Followed by Book.Chapter.Section, Page (e.g., E IV.10.1, 619)
An Essay Concerning Human Understanding
Edited by Peter H. Nidditch
New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- R Followed by Paragraph, Page (e.g., R 242, 172–3)
The Reasonableness Of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures
Edited by George W. Ewing
Washington, DC: Regnery, 1965.
- L Followed by Paragraph, Page (e.g., L 37, 31)
A Letter Concerning Toleration
Edited by Patrick Romanell
Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice–Hall, 1950.
- T Followed by Treatise.Section, Page (e.g., T I.88, 63)
Two Treatises of Government
Edited by Mark Goldie
London: Everyman, 1993.

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