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The Laws of Christ and Nature: The Biblical Interpretation of John Locke

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The Laws of Christ and Nature: The Biblical Interpretation of John Locke

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An abstract of
a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

The Laws of Christ and Nature: The Biblical Interpretation of John Locke
By William C. Love

In this dissertation, I explore the biblical interpretation of John Locke in his published works and theological manuscripts, especially his annotated study Bibles. I argue that Locke's biblical theology interlaced the revealed law of the church with the natural law of the state, demonstrating that lawfulness was Locke's main concern in his writings on politics and theology. Further, I argue that Locke's concern for lawfulness was bolstered by his belief in the individual's active capacity to comply with both canons of law simultaneously without contradiction. Such a legalistic view persuaded Locke to minimize core tenets of the Christian church, such as the mystery of Christ's incarnation and resurrection, in order to argue for faith as compliance with Christ's law. This legalistic view also enabled Locke to downplay Christianity's universal claims to account for the growing awareness of non-European cultures unfamiliar with Christianity. However, I argue that Locke never sought to undermine Christianity, as some scholars claim, but rather bring the politics of the state into harmony with the theology of the church by demarcating the legal boundaries of both while reconciling them with the expanding worldview of the seventeenth century.

I have divided this dissertation into five chapters with an introduction and conclusion. In Chapter 1, I review the three common historiographical paradigms that have most obscured Locke's place as a biblical theologian. In Chapter 2, I explore how Locke's epistemology influenced his biblical theology while in chapters 3, 4, and 5, I investigate how he interpreted the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Epistles of St. Paul.

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Acknowledgments

When one has spent over fifteen years as a student within the American university system, he acquires a number of debts that exceed the space of an acknowledgements section. Yet, certain individuals stand out as being especially deserving of recognition for their contributions both to my undergraduate and graduate studies and the research and writing of this dissertation.

My initial interests in the academic pursuit of history would have remained nascent without the guidance of Harry Laver, Miriam Davis, and Bo Morgan during my undergraduate years at Delta State University. Harry Laver's honors level American History class as well as his academic guidance first awakened me to the richness of historical inquiry which was further developed by Miriam Davis who introduced me to the application of the historical method to Christian studies, as well as Bo Morgan, who taught me that historical writing should be neither tedious nor uninteresting but artistic in style while rigorous in application. While not historians, Bill Spencer augmented my capacity for formal writing while Jim Tomek instilled in me an appreciation for the poetic and imaginative aspects of language that extend beyond description and analysis.

As an M.A. student at the University of Memphis, I learned much from my studies and conversations with Jim Blythe, Jonathan Judaken, and Kevin Martin, but the greatest praise is reserved for my mentor Walter (Bob) Brown. Bob's seminars and conversations not only substantially influenced my writing and thinking as a budding early modern European historian but taught me the importance of collegiality within the academy. Without his guidance as both a teacher and a friend, the intellectual growing

pains of a conscientious but immature 24-year old student might have engendered a different professional path, altogether.

At Emory University, I am indebted to professors Don Seeman, Gary Laderman, Steve Tipton, Ursula Goldenbaum, Vernon Robbins, Rudolf Maakreel, David Eltis, Jill Robbins, Brooks Holifield, Paul Kelleher, and Anthony Briggman for their contributions to my growth as a student of intellectual history. I am especially indebted to Jaime Melton, Jonathan Strom, and my advisor, David Pacini. Jaime has pressed me for greater clarity of writing while displaying patience for a young student often clumsily finding his way in the field of early modern European history. Jonathan and David have provided the most help and guidance. I especially thank Jonathan for all of the wonderful professional direction I have received since my early days in Candler and David for being both an inspiring professor of philosophical theology and a ceaseless advocate on my behalf. Indeed, without David's willingness to see potential where others saw shortcomings, my graduate career would have been much shorter.

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These individuals have my utmost thanks and appreciation. One individual, though, stands above all as most deserving of recognition, my mother, Sarah Love. When raised in the rural Mississippi Delta, where young boys run with one foot in the tilled dirt of cotton fields and the other in the sands of ancient Jerusalem, the eyes can become crossed and the mind confused. Out of such confusion emerges an intellectual imperative to understand the harmony and dissonance of such contrasting worlds, even as that imperative redefines and reshapes the very worlds one seeks to understand. Such an endeavor is not without its costs, both personally and materially, and she has often shared the burden of both, far exceeding the obligation of a mother to her son more than 15 years into his adulthood. The contents of this dissertation, especially its shortcomings, are my own, but without her support, it would not exist at all. And for that and so much more, she has my endless gratitude.

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Introduction

On a late evening in October of 1704, the Masham family gathered for nightly prayer beside an elderly and diminishing John Locke in their joint residence, Oates manor house. Due to chronic swelling in his legs and stomach, Locke was mostly incapacitated, but the family, wanting to include him, gathered by Locke's bedside. The warmth of the family brought ease to the suffering Locke, compelling him to pray aloud:

> Of the goodness of God. . . exalted the love which God showed to man, in justifying him by faith in Jesus Christ. . . . He exhorted all about him to read the Holy Scripture attentively and to apply themselves sincerely to the practice of all their duties; adding expressively that by this means they would be more happy in this world, and secure to themselves the possession of eternal felicity in the other.[1]

The next day while Lady Damaris Masham, his longtime friend and one time romantic interest, read aloud to him from the Psalms, Locke passed away at the age of 72, sitting in the study he employed to write the *Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures*, its two vindications, and his notes and paraphrases of the epistles of St. Paul.

The image of a praying Locke, proclaiming justifying faith in Jesus Christ and the propriety of Scripture study is typically peripheral to the modern studies of John Locke. Instead, it is the picture of a philosopher inventing modern theories of knowledge or a political theorist teasing out the implications of natural law within the secular state. Even when scholars examine Locke's Christian theology, it often remains abstract, arguing for the congruities (or incongruities) of Locke's philosophy with his general understanding

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[1] John Locke, Prayer; quoted in Roger Woolhouse, *Locke: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 459. Woolhouse does not provide the reference for this quotation, but it most likely stems from the writings of Locke's colleague, Jean Le Clerc.

of Scripture and revelation. Locke's specific understanding of Scripture, i.e. his engagement with actual passages that he saw as formative for the Christian life remains a nascent, if not totally neglected, aspect of Locke's thought.

The neglect is, to some extent, understandable. Locke never wrote a systematic treatise on biblical interpretation and wrote extensively on the Bible only in the last decade of his life, having already composed what even his contemporaries saw as his most important works. In these works that remain Locke's most studied, i.e. the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the *Two Treatises of Government*, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education,* and the *Epistola de Tolerantia,* Locke referenced Scripture only secondarily to bolster claims about political sovereignty, human knowledge, or the role of the church in society. Focusing primarily on these writings, scholars have often concluded that at worst, Locke referenced the Bible only for rhetorical reasons and at best, Locke was only secondarily interested in biblical theology.[2]

The first of these viewpoints is simply incorrect. Locke's education at Westminster School under Richard Busby armed him with the language skills necessary to engage with Humanist biblical scholarship,[3] skills that he honed further as a student at the University of Oxford's Christ Church. Indeed, Locke utilized these skills throughout his adult life. Even if some scholars have found curious ways to interpret the theological

[2] The next chapter will outline the three paradigms of interpretation that have most engendered this train of thought and their disciples who have expanded their interpretations. It is especially common among students of Locke's political theory who, as will be shown, argue for the irreligious nature of Locke's political philosophy.

[3] As a student at Westminster, Locke was well trained in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew grammar, and while he seems to have abandoned Hebrew study after graduating from Westminster, he retained enough of it to engage in basic, though not highly advanced, Old Testament scholarship. He remained engaged in the study of Greek throughout his adult life.

claims of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*,[4] Locke's interleaved Bibles, particularly his 1648 Bentley Bible and Polyglot New Testament, demonstrate his engagement with biblical languages and the leading biblical scholars of the seventeenth century. Locke's correspondence, especially during and after his exile in Holland, attests to his interest and engagement with Arminian, Socinian, Calvinist, and Catholic debates on Christian theology. Further, Locke's writings from 1690 to 1704 are primarily on biblical topics. To argue that Locke employed biblical arguments only to make his secular and philosophical arguments more palatable to a religious audience is untenable.[5]

The second of these viewpoints, while more defensible, also proves untenable. This viewpoint stems from an analysis of Locke's *Second Treatise* and the first three books of the *Essay*, where scholars note that references to the Bible are sparse. It claims that Locke intended to separate his views of epistemology and political theory from the Bible in order to show that neither should be grounded on Scripture. One can make a strong case for this viewpoint. Locke, unlike many of the classical reformers, did not demonstrate the scriptural foundations of his political and epistemological views. However, this does not mean that he saw biblical theology as somehow of secondary importance to epistemology and political theory. Indeed, Locke's companion James Tyrrell wrote that the *Essay* was intended to ground the possibilities for morality and

[4] For one influential example, see Michael S. Rabieh's "The Reasonableness of Locke or the Questionableness of Christianity," *The Journal of Politics* 53:4 (November 1991), 933-957. Rabieh believed that Locke composed the *Reasonableness* in such a way that he could hide its true intent from ordinary readers: to clothe Hobbes' political hedonism in a religiously palatable system of theology. Rabieh was especially influenced by the political philosopher Leo Strauss who argued in the same fashion.

[5] As noted above, the political philosopher Leo Strauss in *Natural Right and History* has espoused this view most influentially. Strauss argued that Locke was a "cautious" writer who esoterically undercut the Law of Faith to bolster Natural Law. This view will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

revealed religion.[6] Further, while Locke's political theory did not rest on an explicitly scriptural foundation, Locke believed Christianity to be compatible with the principles of a commonwealth, a view he expressed quite clearly in his *Epistola de Tolerantia*. In short, Christian theology was always in the background of Locke's mind when composing his works, and one of my principles aims in this dissertation is to demonstrate that Locke's biblical interpretation was compatible with and informed by his writings on politics and epistemology.

An Overview of the Thesis:

I state the thesis of this dissertation as follows: 1) Locke's interpretation of the Bible rested on his belief in the active capacity of the mind to suspend judgement when immediate perception resulted in uncertainty, including literary and interpretative uncertainty. 2) Based on this principle, Locke's reading of the Bible sought to reconcile the uncertainty that emerges when competing sets of laws come into tension with one another, specifically secular/commonwealth law, positive Judaic law, and the Law of Faith revealed in the Gospels and articulated in the letters of St. Paul. 3) Locke's solution to this problem was to demonstrate that the Old Testament contained both lawful and historical principles that laid the foundation for natural equality while also demonstrating the Old Testament's positive laws and revelations that were superseded in the New Testament. For Locke, natural equality equated to universal potential of human beings to live according to the dictates of natural law, 4) while the Law of Faith represented a

[6] See Peter Nidditch's forward to John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), vii-xxvi.

privileged and unique law for Christian believers who assented to belief in Jesus as the Messiah, a belief that exempted them from the perfect compliance demanded by God in positive Judaic Law and natural law. 5) Such an exemption from perfect compliance was the common thread of St. Paul's first churches and continues, according to Locke, into the churches of the modern era.

1) *Locke's interpretation of the Bible rested on the active capacity of the mind to suspend judgement when immediate perception resulted in uncertainty, including literary and interpretative uncertainty*:

In Chapter 2, I elucidate how Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* influenced his reading of the Bible by demonstrating that Locke's philosophy sought to distinguish the mind's active capacities from its passive ones. While interpreters of the *Essay* typically highlight its anti-innatist viewpoints, it is the passive/active distinction that most defined Locke's endeavors in the *Essay*, a distinction found in the most fundamental of Locke's theses that all knowledge derives from a combination of sensation (passive) and reflection (active). Found within the active capacity of the mind, is the power that Locke called "indifferency." For Locke, indifferency is the mind's active capacity to recognize when its perception lacks sufficient information to make an informed judgment. Indifferency, for Locke, does not necessarily equate to arbitrariness or unknowability, though at times it could. Rather, it means the mind's capacity to avoid hasty conclusions. Indeed, Locke's famous distinction between faith and reason, I will argue, relied on indifferency as did his biblical interpretation, especially the epistles of St. Paul.

2) *Based on this principle, Locke's reading of the Bible sought to reconcile the uncertainty that emerges when competing sets of laws come into tension with one another, specifically secular/commonwealth law, positive Judaic law, and the Law of Faith revealed in the Gospels and articulated in the letters of St. Paul:*

My foundational claim in this dissertation is that Locke's biblical interpretation, indeed his entire corpus, was articulated in legal and/or lawful terms. Locke's intellectual world was formed in the contentious political climate of post-restoration England, a climate that Locke was immersed in as the personal secretary and friend of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the First Earl of Shaftesbury. As many scholars, especially Richard Ashcraft, John Marshall, J.C.D. Clark and J.A.I. Champion have demonstrated,[7] this political climate was exacerbated by fierce debates revolving around the relationship of the church and state, clergy and magistrates. Given that many interpreted the destructive English Civil War as religious enthusiasm run amuck,[8] the political debates turned on to what extent civil authorities should compel religious conformity. Further, they debated whether or not religious toleration would dissolve the fabric of English society, allowing for authoritarian Catholicism to gain traction, or whether religious toleration would promote English societal union by allowing its citizens to worship according to their own conscience. Thus, Locke saw his task as reconciling how the civil law of the state could exist peacefully with the revealed law of the church and how

[7] See Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), John Marshall, *John Locke: Resistance, Religion, and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and J.A.I. Champion *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[8] This is especially the claim of Clark's *English Society* who notes that a primary interpretation of the English Civil War during the Restoration rested on perceptions of Presbyterianism as an extreme position that had caused needless political turmoil in England (46). Thus, questions concerning the relationship of the church and its structure to the Crown were of central importance during the Restoration period.

individuals had the capacity to comply with both sets of law as to avoid both religious authoritarianism and religious decay. This aim of Locke's had profound consequences for how he interpreted the Christian scriptures. I explore the issue of lawfulness throughout the chapters of this dissertation.

3) *Locke's solution to this problem was to demonstrate that the Old Testament contained both lawful and historical principles that laid the foundation for natural equality while simultaneously demonstrating the principles of positive law and revelation superseded in the New Testament. For Locke, natural equality equated to universal potential of human beings to live according to the dictates of natural law . . . :*

In Chapter 3, I explore how Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, his only work published or unpublished to deal extensively with the Old Testament, laid the foundation for both his biblical and political views concerning equality. For Locke, the Old Testament had a historical character that chronicled the history of the Jewish people, including their development of positive laws. Yet, Locke saw no reason to interpret the story of Genesis as demonstrating a natural hierarchy that culminated in the modern Divine Right of Kings. Instead, Locke argued that the Old Testament demonstrated the capacity of all human beings to recognize natural law, translate it to positive law, and strive, though always imperfectly, to live according to such laws as reason dictates. It also demonstrated an account of God's unique revelations to his chosen people. In this regard, the Old Testament represented both one idiosyncratic manifestation of divine law (Jewish positive law) and a historical chronicle of a chosen people finding their way within the pre-Christian ancient world. Thus, the Old Testament both served as a necessary propaedeutic to the New Testament and a history of human beings in their natural and pre-commonwealth state of existence.

4) . . . *while the Law of Faith represented a privileged and unique law for Christian believers who assented to belief in Jesus as the Messiah, a belief that exempted them from the perfect compliance demanded by God in positive Judaic law and natural law:*

In Chapter 4, I elucidate how Locke's reading of the Gospels in the *Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures* argued for belief in Christ the Messiah as the only condition of the Law of Faith revealed in the Gospels. For Locke, the Law of Faith was revealed for the privilege of those who encountered the Gospel and assented to its propositions. Such a reading of the Gospels persuaded Locke to minimize the spiritual, incarnational, and ontological aspects of Nicene Christology in order to emphasize, almost exclusively, Christ's Messianic office. Such a reading also persuaded Locke to minimize issues of holiness/sanctification within Christian theology to argue, almost exclusively, for belief as a lawful, not ontological, condition of Christian justification. While this reading of the Gospels emboldened his detractors to accuse him of Socinianism, it mostly showed Locke's commitment to bolstering his theology only on premises found explicitly in the Scriptures, a point he raised many times in his first and second vindications of the *Reasonableness*.

5) *Such an exemption from perfect compliance was the common thread of St. Paul's early churches and continues into the churches of the modern era:*

In Chapter 5, I demonstrate how Locke continued his lawful interpretation of Christianity into his reading of St. Paul in his *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul.* While Locke called attention to several themes in his paraphrases of Paul, Locke mostly commented on how Paul encouraged his churches to supplant conformity to Judaic positive law with the new Law of Faith revealed in Christ. Locke admitted that

Paul's letters presented interpretative challenges to the modern reader, challenges that he unpacked explicitly in his prefatory essay to *A Paraphrase*. Yet, Locke believed that if one employed one's active capacity of indifferency to read Paul's letters patiently, attuned to their literary challenges, one finds within Paul's letters a system of thought that is coherent with the Gospels and with themselves. As Locke studied Paul, and Locke's manuscripts demonstrate more active engagement with St. Paul than any other aspect of the Bible, he found little to contradict either his theological views in the *Reasonableness* or his philosophical views in the *Essay*.

An Overview of the Sources:

Before the mid-twentieth century, the primary sources available to the students of John Locke were found in the nineteenth-century editions of Locke's corpus. *The Works of John Locke* were first published in three volumes in 1714, ten years after his death, and contained the works that all students of John Locke recognize, including the *Two Treatises of Government* which Locke only formally acknowledged as his in the codex of his last will and testament. This format continued into the eighteenth century and was expanded to four volumes by Bishop William Law, the mid eighteenth-century Anglican divine who greatly admired Locke's work and wrote positive reviews of Locke's philosophy. The last iterations of this format were published between 1801 and 1856 and were expanded to ten volumes that included selections of Locke's correspondence and

modest critical apparatuses.[9]

In 1947, the terrain of Locke scholarship shifted when the Bodleian library at the University of Oxford purchased John Locke's private manuscripts known as the Lovelace collection. This collection, along with a major portion of Locke's personal library, established the Bodleian as the premier library for the study of Locke's unpublished works. The Lovelace collection has enabled Locke scholars to open new areas of inquiry into the mind of John Locke. With regard to his political philosophy, Mark Goldie, using the Lovelace collection, published *Locke: Political Essays* with Cambridge University Press in 1997. Among its most significant contributions were two unpublished tracts on Government and a series of Latin *Essays on the Laws of Nature*, both written by Locke while working as an instructor at the University of Oxford in the 1660s.[10] With regard to his philosophy, Peter Nidditch and G.A.J. Rogers published Locke's earliest drafts of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, showing how it grew in complexity and length over twenty years and how the refutation of innatism was not in Locke's first draft. E. S. DeBeer published eight volumes of Locke's correspondence between 1976 and 1989. Indeed, the material contained in the Locke archive is so vast that Oxford University Press has sponsored the Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke, a project that has already witnessed the publication of eighteen volumes of Locke's works, with another

[9] "John Locke Bibliography, Part one, Works by Locke," last modified March 23, 2016, accessed February 10, 2017, https://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/locke/bib/ch0m.html#Complete. This is a website updated by Pennsylvania State University that keeps a working bibliography of secondary literature on Locke and updates on the Clarendon Locke project. It also outlines the general bibliographic history of Locke's writings.

[10] Goldie's main achievement was to compile these works into a single volume, as Locke's *Essays on the Laws of Nature* were first translated from the Latin and published by W. Von Leyden by Oxford University Press in 1954. In addition to these essays, Goldie makes accessible many of Locke's notebook entries that pertain to his views on the combination of religion and politics.

twenty in preparation. Their aim is to edit and print all of Locke's unpublished manuscripts, as well as produce fresh critical editions of his published works that are properly contextualized by the unpublished manuscripts.

Specific to theology, the Lovelace collection contains many items that are important to scholars of religion. The eighteen folios that focus on theology include reflections on biblical interpreters Robert Boyle (MS Locke c. 27), Richard Simon (MS Locke f. 32), and William Lowth (MS Locke d. 1), a short treatise on divine revelation in the Old Testament (MS Locke c. 27), and a notebook of theological reflections entitled *Adversaria Theologica* (MS Locke c. 43). Within Locke's personal library are also two important Bibles, his 1648 interleaved edition of the King James Bible[11] that he studied and annotated for over fifty years and his interleaved polyglot New Testament[12] that he purchased in Paris and annotated for over twenty years.

In addition, the Lovelace collection has inspired the Clarendon Locke project to publish critical editions of Locke's already published theological works, namely *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures* and *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*. The first was published by John C. Higgins-Biddle in 1999 and included appendices of some of the Lovelace theological manuscripts mentioned above. Mostly, though, it provided scholars of Locke with a new and full critical edition of the *Reasonableness* that demonstrated the depths of Locke's biblical scholarship. The Stanford publication of I.T. Ramsey's edition of the *Reasonableness*

[11] John Locke, Bentley Bible, Locke Library 309, Shelf Mark 16.25, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. Referred to hereafter as Bentley Bible.

[12] John Locke, *Le Nouveau Testament,* Polyglot New Testament, Locke Library 2862, Shelf Mark 9.103-107, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. Referred to hereafter as Polyglot New Testament.

published in 1955, while a useful introduction to students, edited out many of Locke's scriptural references to make the text more readable. *A Paraphrase* was edited and published in two volumes by Arthur Wainwright in 1987. Wainwright's edition called attention to the vast amount of biblical scholarship that Locke had read in preparation for his work on St. Paul. In addition, in 2003, Victor Nuovo published *John Locke: Writings on Religion* through Oxford University Press, a selected collection of Locke's Lovelace theological materials, as well as a new and unredacted version of Locke's *Reasonableness*. Nuovo has also committed to publishing the *Theological Manuscripts of John Locke* for the Clarendon Locke project that will bring into public view even more of Locke's theological writings and reflections.

For scholars interested in Locke's theology, the sources available in the Lovelace collection are something of a mixed blessing. Their main advantage may be in their very existence, as Locke's constant engagement with theological issues demonstrates beyond a reasonable doubt that Locke took Christianity seriously on both an individual and a scholarly level. However, they also demonstrate somewhat sporadic engagement and are often inadequate to recreate a previously unthinkable assessment of Locke's theology beyond what is revealed in his published works. They do, however, help demonstrate the consistency and extent of Locke's engagement with biblical theology.

The two best sources for augmenting his biblical theology are his two study Bibles mentioned above. Locke used his Bentley Bible primarily for commonplacing the sources that he studied to understand Scripture. While Locke took notes in his own voice and those notes will be highlighted in the body of this dissertation, the majority of his notes are summaries of scholarly opinion. What these notes show is that Locke spent

much time in the scholarly company of figures with whom he is not often grouped. While the philosophical tradition has often associated Locke with such figures as Thomas Hobbes, Baruch Spinoza, Renes Descartes, and Nicolas Malebranche, the Bibles demonstrate that at least on theological matters, he preferred the company of John Lightfoot, Joseph Mede, Gerardus Vossius, Jean Le Clerc, and many others. These notes help scholars understand that, unlike Spinoza or Hobbes, he did not think of Christianity in exploitative and corrupting terms but rather in the terms of seventeenth-century Protestant Humanism.

Locke's Polyglot New Testament is a five-volume publication he purchased in France sometime in the late 1670s. It contains three columns per page lining up the original Greek next to Latin and French translations. Locke also had these five volumes interleaved, and they are useful in understanding Locke's study of St. Paul. They demonstrate how Locke compiled scholarly sources on St. Paul and offered his own renderings of New Testament Greek into English and Latin translations. They provide scholars with an extra layer of context to Locke's *A Paraphrase* and at times go beyond the points of *A Paraphrase* to show the subtle but important ways Locke squared his epistemological views with the writings of St. Paul.

While these sources do not often reveal new ideas foreign to Locke's published works, though as will be demonstrated, a few do exist, their main importance is to demonstrate the sophisticated layers and contexts of Locke's theological thought that situate Locke within the right paradigmatic frameworks. To give two specific examples, Locke's notes on John Lightfoot's interpretation of the Old Testament demonstrate that portions of Locke's *First Treatises of Government* were indebted to Lightfoot's

methodologies. It also shows that Locke's views on soteriology were more indebted to Joseph Mede than Faustus Socinus, though as will be demonstrated, Socinus did have at least some influence on Locke's thinking, even if Locke's alleged Socinianism is inconclusive.

Thus, while I focus the core of this dissertation on Locke's published works, namely the *Two Treatises of Government, The Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Epistola de Tolerantia, The Reasonableness of Christianity,* and *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, I, when possible, fill the interpretative gaps of these works with the notes that emerge from Locke's theological manuscripts, especially his study Bibles. This method of interpreting Locke accepts the sincerity of Locke's arguments in his published works while acknowledging that Locke did not always reveal the fullness of his thinking in drawing such conclusions. As revealed in the opening quotation above, Locke sincerely believed that the study of Scripture leads to a fuller and happier life and was becoming of all serious Christians.

As a final word on sources, I note that all biblical citations in this dissertation are drawn from the King James translation of the Bible and when necessary, quoted in their entirety in the body or, when appropriate, footnotes. I have used the King James translation even when discussing a biblical text that Locke did not directly quote. While it took almost a half-century for the King James Authorized Version to become the popularly accepted translation of the Bible in England, all of Locke's quotations of Scripture are from the Authorized text in both his *Reasonableness of Christianity* and his *A Paraphrase and Notes on St. Paul*. While Locke at times diverged from the KJV in his own notes and renderings of passages, he always deferred to the KJV when quoting a

passage in the main text of his works. Indeed, Locke's theology attests to the widely accepted use of the KJV by the time of his theological writings in the later part of the seventeenth century.

A Preliminary Note on the Subject of Interpretation:

Since the rise of German critical philosophy in the nineteenth century, biblical interpretation, within the academy at least, has become a philosophically loaded subject, as modern scholars often prefer to think of biblical interpretation in terms of hermeneutics instead of exegesis.[13] Such emphasis on hermeneutics has often emphasized the role of subjectivity in the process of interpretation while downplaying objective guiding rules in the exegesis of Scripture. Thus, many readers may wonder why a work on biblical interpretation has no discussion of the discipline of hermeneutics or its ramifications for understanding Locke's biblical theology.

The simple answer is that Locke's interpretation existed at a historical intersection: an intersection between what David Steinmetz once described as "pre-critical Exegesis"[14] and the critical hermeneutics mentioned above. Locke had a sincere

[13] A good introduction to the rise of critical hermeneutics is Anthony C. Thiselton's *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009). While Thiselton's work is a general survey of biblical interpretation from the early church to present times, it is the critical turn in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics that most interests Thiselton. As he says, after Schleiermacher, "hermeneutics has involved more than one academic discipline" and became thought of more as an art than a science (1-2).

[14] David Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis" *Theology Today*, 37:27 (April, 1980): 27-38. Steinmetz's main aim is to elucidate early church and medieval exegesis which was based upon Paul's dictum that "The letter kills but the spirit makes alive." Steinmetz notes that certain theological and intellectual predispositions were thought to be central to the proper interpretation of Scripture which he contrasted to the historically minded critical exegesis of the nineteenth century. For Steinmetz, the first was superior to the more modern form.

belief that one neither needed a firm theological predisposition nor a philosophically grounded conceptual framework to interpret the Bible responsibly. This does not mean that Locke found no place for the assistance of belief in interpretation. Indeed, Locke explicitly stated the centrality of belief in his prefatory essay on understanding St. Paul. However, for Locke, belief functioned more as a motivating force than a theological or conceptual predisposition. Belief did not render the Bible transparent in meaning, but belief could provide the perseverance needed to overcome the challenges of biblical interpretation. Still, Locke believed that the mind was innately equipped with the tools, not to say knowledge, needed to interpret the Bible coherently, and thus, Locke never appealed to an outside authority, theological position, or philosophical system when interpreting the Bible. Doubtless, modern critics could and do accuse Locke of naively failing to account for his own biases. However, the point remains that Locke believed in the mind's capacity to raise awareness of such biases and suspend them in light of reading the Bible, needing only the guidance of reason to interpret it correctly. As we will see, such a belief was not without its costs, as Locke was often forced to jettison certain central biblical principles, most notably mystery, when he was unable to square certain passages with his legalistic framework.

Nevertheless, it is my belief that Locke's biblical interpretation should be of interest to biblical scholars and historical theologians of the early modern Protestant tradition as well as Locke specialists, as one cannot help but admire Locke's willingness to grapple with Scripture on its own terms using nothing but the tools of philology and deduction. Indeed, it is possible that Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* did more to expose the extra-biblical components of Protestant theology than any other theological

work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After a review and critique of the historiographical tropes that have most obscured Locke's legacy as a biblical interpreter, I will explore the specifics of Locke's endeavor into such a biblical interpretation.

Chapter 1

Beyond Hegel, Stephen, and Strauss: The Departure of Theology from Philosophy and Political Theory in the Writings of John Locke

Introduction:

When one thinks of the European Enlightenment, John Locke comes to mind as one of its formative thinkers. Whether as a critic of Cartesian innatism or the Hobbessian natural state of war, Locke is heralded as one of the founding fathers of a movement that rethought crucial aspects of philosophy and political theory.[1] Locke's place in the Enlightenment has become so vaunted that recent historians, such as Jonathan Israel and Gertrude Himmelfarb, have argued for the exaggerated influence of Locke on the eighteenth century.[2] In spite of debates regarding the degree of Locke's influence on the eighteenth century, that he influenced it and continues to influence modern thought is rarely disputed.

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[1] The three classical studies of the Enlightenment are Ernst Cassirer's *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Kelly and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), Paul Hazards' *The European Mind, 1680-1715*, trans. J. Lewis May (Middlesex: Penguins University Books, 1973) and Peter Gay's *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966).

All three interpreters have a prominent role for Locke, especially Cassirer and Hazard. They both elucidate the importance of Locke's natural theory of knowledge and its influence on the rise of natural religion and political theory. Gay also pays much attention to Locke but in an introductory fashion, as for Gay, Locke was among the first generation of Enlighteners to lay the foundation for the eighteenth century but did express its most important components found in the French Encyclopedists and David Hume.

[2] Gertrude Himmelfarb has suggested that Locke's philosophy was in many ways more influential on French thought than English, as the Third Earl Shaftesbury perhaps wielded the most influence on Anglo-Scottish moral thought which, to her, defined the English Enlightenment. See her *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004). Jonathan Israel has downplayed the influence of Locke even more by noting that a large and significant number of early Enlightenment figures were unimpressed with "the overall architecture of Locke's system as such, that is towards his epistemology, theological premises and theory of toleration, let alone his politics" (39). See his "Locke and the Early Enlightenment" in *Eighteenth-Century Thought*, vol. III, ed. James G. Buickerood (New York: AMS Press, 2007), 37-55.

The emphasis on Locke as a seminal figure in the Enlightenment is not without its costs in the scholarship, especially on Locke as a religious thinker. While historians have continuously acknowledged that Locke wrote on religion, that he wrote anything of **importance** on religion is often downplayed and continues to be understudied.[3] While a few important studies have demonstrated the importance of Locke's theology, the overwhelming perception of Locke continues as a philosopher/political theorist who, as an after-thought, turned to theology in the later stages of life when upon retirement from public life could explore more leisurely endeavors. The belief is often, I caricature a little here, that a thinker as astute as Locke would only turn to the Bible after the projects of founding empiricism and modern liberalism were completed.

While a more cautious examination of Locke's theology must be the foundation of understanding Locke as a biblical interpreter, it is also important to understand the historiographic tropes that have diminished Locke's influence as a biblical interpreter. This does not mean arguing against Locke's indebtedness to other philosophers who argued outside the purview of scriptural authority. Much epistolary and notebook evidence verifies that as a student and teacher at Oxford, Locke was influenced by

[3] In an important but never published dissertation on John Locke, Donald Smith remarked that Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* has often only been studied in the twentieth century because Locke is important, not because the work, itself, is important. See his "John Locke's Concept of a Reasonable Christianity" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1997), 1-3.

Descartes' writing.[4] It is also not necessary to undermine the contributions that Locke undoubtedly made to epistemology and political theory. It is necessary, however, to understand Locke as Victor Nuovo has recently suggested, a Christian virtuoso, i.e. a man who believed that the study of many disciplines was becoming of a Christian gentleman. Locke was a polymath, well read in multiple disciplines, and recovering this aspect of Locke is of crucial importance to understanding him as a biblical theologian.[5]

In this chapter, I aim to elucidate three of the most influential tropes in the interpretation of Locke. These tropes stem from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and are often saturated with modernist assumptions about Locke's aims as either a philosopher or a political theorist. I aim to clarify both the main influencer of each trope and the incompleteness (at times inaccuracies) of their interpretation in regard to Locke's Christian and biblical theology. The first trope is that of Locke as the founder of a popular and physiological theory of epistemology which continues to influence the

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[4] It is doubtful that Locke's *Essay* was originally intended as a critique of Cartesian philosophy. While Locke's first book of the *Essay* is a refutation of innatism, it does not equate innatism with the position of Descartes, and further, the first book was not part of the original draft of the *Essay*. However, Locke showed consistent engagement with Descartes throughout his career, dating back to his time as a Censure at Oxford University and many specific arguments that Locke addressed in Book II of the *Essay* were implicitly against Descartes. Thus, while it is wrong to say that Descartes was Locke's main concern in the *Essay*, Locke often used Descartes' philosophy as something of a negative orientation point to elucidate Locke's own views. For a recent and brief overview of Locke's views on Descartes, see Lisa Downing, "Locke and Descartes" in *A Companion to Locke*, ed. Matthew Stuart (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 100-119.

[5] See Victor Nuovo's "A Portrait of John Locke as a Christian Virtuoso," in *Christianity, Antiquity, Enlightenment: Interpretations of John Locke* (New York: Springer, 2011), 1-19. For Nuovo, Locke was very influenced by his friend and mentor Robert Boyle who most explicitly outlined the role of a Christian virtuoso as an experimental natural philosopher. When Boyle used the phrase Christian virtuoso, he meant to imply, according to Nuovo, that "The Virtuoso is able to progress farther in natural philosophy because of his Christianity, and his understanding of the Christian revelation is rendered more comprehensible and sure by his virtuosity" (3). It is this portrait of Locke that best describes Locke's manifold of interests that included chemistry, medicine, epistemology, monetary theory, political theory, and biblical theology. Locke held no suspicion that the study of one detracts from the other. Rather, they all mutually influence and inform a sharper understanding of each other.

tradition of Analytic philosophy, posited most influentially by G.W. F. Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. The second trope is that of Locke as the prime influencer of the Deist controversy of the eighteenth century, posited most influentially by Leslie Stephen in the *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. The third trope is that of Locke as the founder of a "cautious" political philosophy which paved the way for natural right while quietly undermining the principles of revealed religion, posited most influentially by Leo Strauss in *Natural Right and History*.

G.W. F. Hegel and the Analytic Tradition on Locke as a Popular Philosopher:

In an essay describing the influence of John Locke, the English Analytic philosopher Gilbert Ryle recalled a train ride he once shared with Bertrand Russell sometime in the mid-1950s. At some point over lunch, the conversation turned to the philosophy of Locke, and Ryle asked "Why is it that, although nearly every youthful student of philosophy both can and does in about his second essay refute Locke's entire Theory of Knowledge, yet Locke made a bigger difference to the whole intellectual climate of mankind than anyone had done since Aristotle?" Russell, after pondering the question and agreeing with Ryle's assessment responded "Locke was the spokesman of Common Sense." Unsatisfied with this answer, Ryle retorted facetiously "I think Locke invented Common Sense," to which Russell replied "By God, Ryle I believe you are right. No one ever had Common Sense before John Locke—and no one but Englishmen have ever had it since."[6]

[6] Gilbert Ryle, "John Locke" in *Collected Papers, Volume I* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 154-155.

Russell's retort to Ryle concerning Locke's common and English approach to philosophy is shared widely in the history of modern philosophy, especially in the analytic tradition. Ryle's own assessment of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* supposed that Locke's main contribution to philosophy was not a theory of knowledge but rather a theory of opinion. For Ryle, Locke's *Essay* reads as outlining the development of common sense which requires that individuals "learn to harness their opinions between the shafts of evidence and clarity."[7] Further, Locke's technical and, to use Ryle's phrase, "quasi-chemical account" of the human understanding is primarily a heuristic tool designed to sharpen individual attentiveness to the complex processes of idea formation so that when distinguishing between knowledge and opinion, individuals exercise caution when forming judgements.[8]

Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* gave an even less charitable read of the epistemological merits of Locke's *Essay*, arguing that Locke's positions concerning knowledge, if drawn to their full conclusions, engendered paradoxes, even if Locke refrained from overtly drawing them. Locke, on this read, was prudent in his philosophy even if sloppy in his theory, demonstrating that errors in logic can produce solid results in practice. As Russell wrote, Locke's philosophical style "to a logician is

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[7] Ryle, John Locke, 159. Ryle gave a lecture in 1932 on "John Locke and the Human Understanding" where Ryle posited that Locke had outlined more of a "theory of the sciences" than a theory of knowledge. Thus, Ryle seems to have changed his mind over the years as to the real weight of Locke's philosophy as the before cited essay stemmed from 1965. A case could be made that a theory of science and a theory of opinion are two sides of the same coin, as both require verification in determining true knowledge. What seems clear in both essays is that Ryle believed that Locke's chief contributions were not to modern philosophy but to scientific methods and everyday knowledge formation. See Gilbert Ryle's "John Locke on the Human Understanding" in *Collected Papers, Volume I* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 153.

[8] Ibid., 160.

irritating, to a practical man, is proof of sound judgment."[9] Thus, Locke's theoretical philosophy was quite lacking and deserved the criticisms given to him by Berkeley and Hume when Hume, especially, chided him for overemphasizing the "way of ideas."

Locke's place in the history of philosophy is thus controversial, as philosophers almost unanimously agree that Locke was important and influential even if they sometimes puzzle over how such philosophical imprecision could be so influential. Much of this stems from methodological bias. Nicholas Wolterstoff once facetiously characterized the method of studying the history of philosophy in the analytic tradition as "Some thoughts that occurred to me one day while reading an English translation of Descartes," noting that the results, unsurprisingly, were premodern philosophers thinking like analytic philosophers, albeit confused ones.[10] Much stems, however, from a view borrowed from the German idealist tradition that portrayed Locke's *Essay* as posing a physiological and popular view of philosophy that perhaps laid the groundwork for the proper direction of philosophy but passed over in haste its most crucial elements. To see this idea most clearly, we turn to G.W. F. Hegel's *History of Philosophy*.

Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* were written between 1819 and 1830 in preparation for the courses he offered on the history of philosophy during his tenures at Jena, Heidelberg, and Berlin. Most of the material stems from his early years at Jena with modern editors at times modifying certain entries with notes made from later notebooks. The *Lectures*, in this regard, do not represent a polished final product in the

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[9] Bertrand Russell, *The History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 606.

[10] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *John Locke: The Ethics of Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), ix-xxi.

mode of Hegel's two most studied works *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic*; however scholars believe that Hegel likely wrote them in preparation for a future publication. Much of the material also stems from Hegel's reading and synthesis of the histories of philosophy in circulation during the late eighteenth century.

In modern form, the *Lectures* are presented in three volumes with an opening preface and introduction where Hegel unpacked his "Notion" or "Concept" of history before embarking on an exposition of philosophy from the Greeks to his own philosophy that he shared with his once colleague but eventual rival, Friedrich Schelling. The majority of the exposition, however, pertains to Greek thought, with the first two volumes focusing on the Hellenistic world of both classical Greek and Latin thought. The third volume covers the time from Christian Rome to modern philosophy.

Hegel's history of philosophy represents what might be called the historical sense of philosophy, namely the notion that philosophy's truth cannot be divorced from its unfolding in history. Hegel outlined this thesis explicitly in the preface and introduction to the *Lectures*. Hegel believed that the proof for this understanding of the history of philosophy was imbedded within the concepts of history and philosophy. It was not that Hegel disliked or denied the nobility behind an interpretation-free history. In fact, Hegel's opening remarks in the prefatory note argued that "the demand that a history, whatever the subject may be, should state the facts without prejudice and without any particular object or end to be gained by its means, must be regarded as a fair one."[11]

[11] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, trans. E. S. Haldane (New York: The Humanities Press, Inc., 1955), xiv.

However, Hegel continued "the history of a subject is necessarily intimately connected with the conception which is formed of it."[12]

The core challenge in interpreting the history of philosophy, Hegel would argue, involves reconciling the concept of history as a manifold of events, thoughts, cultures, and individuals with the singular notion of philosophy as absolute truth. For Hegel, the solution rested on the notion of the history of philosophy as an introduction to the goal of philosophy itself, and thus such history involves "the nature of the Becoming of Philosophy."[13] Further, such a becoming stems not from accidents or passive happenstances but from an organic subjective process striving to realize itself objectively. To quote Hegel, "The history of philosophy is itself scientific, and thus essentially becomes the science of philosophy."[14]

To ground such a view of the history of philosophy, Hegel noted that we must discard certain confusions about it. For one, we must not confuse it with the history of religion, as religion embraces truths that transcend space and time outside the developmental stages of history and thus, truths established by religion are qualitatively distinct from particular manifestations in history. From the standpoint of essence, religion and history simply have nothing to do with one another. Further, we have to discount the notion of philosophy as an "accumulation of Opinions."[15] If the history of philosophy represented only a sequence of opinions, "it would be a most superfluous and

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., 4.

[14] Ibid., 6.

[15] Ibid., 11.

tiresome science, no matter what advantage might be brought forward as derived from such thought-activity and learning."[16] Such a view would contradict the very foundation of philosophy which is the "objective science of truth, it is science of necessity, conceiving knowledge, and neither opinion nor the spinning out of opinions."[17] Thus, the diversity of philosophical systems seen from a scientific and processional view of history becomes a necessity, not an enemy, to the existence of philosophy at all.

It is not necessary to retrace all of Hegel's notions on the history of philosophy as potentials becoming actuals in the unified unfolding of subjective to objective truth. It is, however, important to understand that it is within this process that Hegel understood the modern philosophical tradition, Locke included. Hegel argued that Locke posed a middle stage between Descartes and Spinoza, whose uncritical metaphysical views asserted "the unity of being and thought" and Leibniz's monadology which represented "the world viewed as a totality."[18] These three stages represented the period of modern philosophy which first realized the unity of metaphysics and reason but had not yet critically grounded it. In this regard, Locke represented the clearest expression of a group of thinkers, mostly English, who argued for "sensuous Being" as the fundamental mode of discovering truth.

Unsurprisingly, while Hegel acknowledged the value and influence of Locke's philosophy on modern thought, Hegel had a low opinion of its philosophic value relative to itself. On the one hand, Locke had helpfully shed the unverified definitions and

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[16] Ibid., 12.

[17] Ibid.

[18] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. III, trans. E. S. Haldane (New York: The Humanities Press, 1963), 220.

axioms that hampered Spinoza, emphasizing the more ordinary method of investigation first posited by Francis Bacon and commonly adopted by the empirical sciences. Thus, Locke's investigation which focused on the interaction of the mind and world in the formation of ideas was the correct path. Locke understood that without the experience of objects in consciousness, no concepts of any kind are discoverable, and thus Locke's system quite helpfully demonstrated the flaws in the more metaphysically minded works of Spinoza and Descartes.

On the other hand, even if Locke did recognize the impetus of experience in the process of consciousness, Locke's method allowed for no dialectics capable of deducing the concepts necessary to understand the universal principles of philosophy. As Hegel remarked in his opening remarks on Locke, "All dialectic considerations are utterly and entirely set aside, since the universal is merely analyzed from the empirical concrete."[19] Such a method includes an overemphasis on the psychological foundations of thought, giving no place for the question of "whether these thoughts and relationships have truth in and for themselves."[20] Thus, Locke's philosophy dealt only with the process of forming simple and complex ideas but left aside entirely the need for grounding such a process, including the difficulties of consistency and accuracy found within the process of reason, itself. As Hegel asked about Locke's way of thinking, "How does thought overcome the difficulties which itself has begotten? Here with Locke none at all have been begotten and awakened."[21]

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[19] Ibid., 300.

[20] Ibid., 310.

[21] Ibid., 312.

Hegel concluded that Locke's philosophy is "certainly very comprehensible, but for that very reason it is likewise a **popular** philosophy . . . This is an important moment in culture; the sciences in general and specially the empiric sciences have to ascribe their origin to this movement." (emphasis mine)[22] As Locke's philosophy remained within the domain of what appears in thought while never considering the fundamental nature of cognition, Locke's philosophy was only the next stage toward the development of Kant's transcendental method. Hegel acknowledged that Locke's emphasis on thinking experience had profound impact on the development of political economy in the eighteenth century, however as a method for discovering the absolute truth of philosophy, it fell short.

Hegel's conception of history as an unfolding unified process has, of course, been downplayed if not outright dismissed by modern philosophers. However, many analytic philosophers, including Ryle and Russell, embraced Hegel's argument that Locke represented a turning point in modern philosophy when knowledge rooted in a popular conception of "sensuous being" became a primary object of study.

Furthermore, Richard Rorty in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* argued that "we owe the notion of a 'theory of knowledge' based on an understanding of 'mental processes' to the seventeenth century, and especially to Locke."[23] Rorty believed, as did Hegel, that Locke's method left aside crucial questions, even if Rorty made the same argument about Kant. Moreover, while Rorty does not use the language of "common

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[22] Ibid., 312-313.

[23] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 3.

sense" and "popular philosophy" found in Ryle and Hegel, he clearly sees a common approach in Locke, in that Locke's empiricism rested on the belief that knowledge consists of "knowledge of" rather than "knowledge that."[24] By "knowledge of," Rorty means Locke's assumption, shared with Aristotle, that knowledge consists of the relationship between persons and objects rather than persons and propositions. In this regard, Locke's philosophy held no room for "knowledge as justified belief,"[25] and represented a transitional moment in which Locke's conception of mind opened up a chasm in the traditional view of appearances which David Hume, Thomas Reid, and Immanuel Kant would examine for differing purposes.[26]

Because Locke had fundamentally confused explanation with justification, Rorty believed that Locke's philosophy had little merit as a legitimate system for explaining the relationship between the mind and knowledge. In this assessment, Rorty is in agreement with Hegel even if Rorty—writing from a twentieth-century standpoint—believed that Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein would make similar justified attacks on Hegel, himself. However, Rorty demonstrates an on-going bias against Locke as a negative example of good philosophy. Locke pointed the way to foundational philosophy but misunderstood it himself.

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[24] Ibid., 142.

[25] Ibid., 141. It is worth noting that while Rorty exemplifies the analytical tradition's biases against Locke, his contention that Locke never grounds knowledge as justified belief is simply untenable. For Locke, the justification of belief had less to do with its logical consistencies than the mind's capacity to actively organize it into intelligibility. Wolterstoff's above mentioned quotation about analytic philosophers judging the history of philosophy based on the premises of the analytic tradition is well exemplified by Rorty. Rorty's Locke is a confused analytic philosopher rather than a seventeenth-century theorist of knowledge.

[26] Ibid., 144.

G.A.J. Rogers has recently suggested that Locke's main contribution to philosophy was defining the subject matter of philosophy that is still with us today in both the Anglophone world and the broader European tradition.[27] Thus, it was Locke and not Descartes that founded the modern viewpoint of philosophy. Such a claim defies any standard of proof, as there is no agreement on "what philosophy is taken to be as a subject by the Anglophone world, and by much but perhaps not all of European culture," let alone that Locke uncovered it.[28] Yet, Rogers argues for the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* as a piece of natural philosophy more than epistemology, further demonstrating the practical aspects of the *Essay* over and above its abstract claims that future philosophers down to the present day continue to criticize and defend.

It is not my contention that this paradigm of interpretation concerning Locke's philosophy is incorrect. Anyone who reads Hume, Reid, or Kant can surmise that Locke's project was at the forefront of their minds when embarking on their own, including their many critiques of his common and perhaps popular method. It is my contention, however, that this paradigm has influenced many philosophers to consider Locke's philosophy as having little to do with theology. However, if the *Essay* is read as a theory of personhood and obligation that encompasses a popular epistemology but is not defined by it, then one sees Locke's philosophy as compatible with his Christian theology.

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[27] G. A. J. Rogers, "Locke's Philosophical Legacy," in *Eighteenth Century Thought*, vol. III, ed. James G. Buickerood (Brooklyn: AMS Press, Inc., 2007), 170.

[28] Ibid.

To give a snapshot of this argument, I highlight a notebook entry of Locke's entitled *Sacerdos* in 1698. Writing a critique of Pierre Bayle's *Pensees Diverses,* Locke argued that the principle of Jesus Christ's revelation was to reunite "religion and morality, as the inseparable parts of the worship of God, which ought never to have been separated."[29] Locke continued that this reuniting was necessary to enable individuals to remember that "the chief part of what man could do consisted in a holy life, and little or nothing at all was left to outward ceremony."[30] On the surface, it might seem that such an entry had little in common with the aims of the *Essay.* However, we must recall that James Tyrell remarked that the initial subject of Locke's *Essay* was the "Principles of Morality, and reveal'd Religion."[31] Thus, the *Essay* in aim had a core commonality with Locke's writings on theology, namely the connections of belief, right living, and the agency of human beings to unite them.

My next chapter on Locke's *Essay* will unpack this connection more thoroughly, but the emphasis on Locke as a popular philosopher has overshadowed Locke's *Essay* as something of a propaedeutic to his theology. If Locke was a popular philosopher, he was also a popular theologian and it was this common goal, not flaws in his logic or inevitable confusion that engendered the creation of the *Essay*.

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[29] John Locke, *Sacerdos*, in *Political Essays*, ed. Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 344.

[30] Ibid., 345.

[31] James Tyrell, Report of Initial Meeting, quoted in Peter Nidditch's critical Foreward to the *Essay*, xix.

Leslie Stephen and the Secular Tradition on Locke as Foregrounding the Deists:

Scholars of modernity have argued for the English Deist controversy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a primary agent of modern secularization. Two scholars to emphasize this process, especially, are Charles Taylor and Jonathan Israel. Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* portrayed the Deists in a process of change in the West "which takes us from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others."[32] For Taylor, this process was more than the creation of new spaces that marked a decline in religious beliefs and practices; it was also a shift in the epistemology of belief structures. The defining feature of this new epistemological context was the ending of "the naive acknowledgement of the transcendent, or of goals or claims which go beyond human flourishing."[33] While not philosophically inevitable, such a transformation between 1500 and 2000 marked a time when exclusive humanism replaced the religious worldview of enchantment, cosmology, and political theology.

For Taylor, what he calls "providential Deism" was the first part of the intermediary stage between the religious and the secular. Taylor argues that Deism contributed three facets to the transition to secularism: an anthropocentric shift in cosmology, the "primacy of impersonal order," and natural religion.[34] By the first, Taylor means a retraction of religious cosmology to an economistic view in which God's

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[32] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 3.

[33] Ibid., 21.

[34] Ibid., 222.

goal for man encompasses only the "order of mutual benefit he has designed for us."[35] In this regard, humankind's place in the cosmos is reduced to the achievement of its own good but without need for grace, mystery, or spiritual transition. By the second, Taylor means a polite society in which individuals are seen as independent of traditional institutions. In this regard, polite society engenders "a set of normative limits on the action and intervention of churches, and the playing out of religious differences."[36] By the third, Taylor means an original natural religion where religion envelopes the preceding principles and expresses itself in terms of nature and reason alone. In this regard, religion has no need for immediate communication from God and only requires reason to discern the validity of religious claims. These tropes, Taylor argues, staged the emergence of the "modern moral order," which Taylor unpacks in the rest of his quite lengthy tome.

The equally loquacious Jonathan Israel has identified the Deists as participating in the "Radical Enlightenment," a process set into motion by Spinoza whose radical monist theory of the world emboldened a series of thinkers to both defend and attack Spinoza's radicalism. Such a process was so shattering and transformative that even "ordinary folk could not be shielded from the philosophical revolution transforming the outlook and attitude of Europe's elites."[37] On his telling, the Deists were part of the "clandestine progress of the Radical Enlightenment" in parts of England and Ireland. Spinoza, Israel argues, was a constant focus of discussion by Anglophone intellectuals, mostly to refute

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., 238.

[37] Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

his alleged atheism, and it was against this backdrop that the Deists emerged. The Deists were not, as is often argued, primarily influenced by "homegrown" English intellectuals such as Herbert of Cherbury or Thomas Hobbes but rather by Spinoza. The true father of English Deism, Charles Blount, was known as Spinoza's "English Disciple," and thus for Israel, the English Deists from Blount down to Charles Mandeville participated in advancing Spinoza's philosophy.[38] This advancement was in constant tension with the moderate Enlightenment that aimed to blend the new science with traditional forms of religion. Such tension eventually gave way to the Radical Enlightenment, as its emphasis on republicanism, rejection of divine-right rule, and anti-aristocratic/pro-democracy tendencies came to dominate thought in the modern West.

To varying degrees, both Taylor and Israel admit that Locke influenced the Deists either as their antagonist (Israel) or as a conversation partner they would eclipse (Taylor). However, both argue that Deism more than the philosophy of seventeenth-century England engendered the creation of modernity. It is thus not uncommon for scholars to talk about John Locke's philosophy and theology as laying the groundwork for more radical thinkers like John Toland to exploit. The influence of Deism on modernity is, itself, a complicated question and by the middle of the eighteenth century, Deism as a philosophical movement within English thought more or less faded away.[39] Further,

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[38] Ibid., 602.

[39] In 1790, the Irish Whig Edmund Burke presented a series of reflections on the disconcerting events of revolutionary France. While no Monarchical absolutist or advocate of religious conformity, Burke was eager to demonstrate that England had jettisoned the radical "Atheists and Infidels" corroding the voices of liberty in neighboring France. Burke asked, "Who, born within the last forty years, has read one word of Collins, and Toland, and Tindal, and Chubb, and Morgan, and that whole race who called themselves Freethinkers?" See his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, volume VIII, ed. L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 140.

many of Locke's own contemporaries worried that his philosophy might be used to empower Deists, atheists, Socinians, and other heretics of the Anglican Church. Thus, Locke's connection to Deism was suspected even in his own time. However, it was Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* that most influentially described Locke as a necessary and important precondition to the Deist controversy.

Born into a Scottish evangelical family in 1832, Stephen throughout his adult life was fascinated with the critique of agnosticism and natural religion against Christian apologists. In one of his last essays entitled *An Agnostic's Apology,* Stephen compared and contrasted agnosticism to its literal opposite, Gnosticism:

> The Gnostic holds that our reason can, in some sense, transcend the narrow limits of experience. He holds that we can attain truths not capable of verification, and not needing verification, by actual experiment or observation. He holds, further, that a knowledge of those truths is essential to the highest interests of mankind, and enables us in some sort to solve the dark riddle of the universe.[40]

Agnosticism, on the contrary, aimed to understand the world devoid of such vain endeavors and strove to "restrain the human intellect from wasting its powers on the attempt to galvanise into sham activity this *caput mortuum* of old theology."[41] If human reason respected the level of its inevitable ignorance, it could avoid the controversy that has plagued philosophical theology from the time of the ancient Greeks.

It is not surprising, then, that Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* was at its core, an elucidation of the "deistical controversy" which he

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[40] Leslie Stephen, *An Agnostic's Apology and Other Essays* (London: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1903), 2.

[41] Ibid., 4.

thought was "the chief product of eighteenth-century theology."[42] The first volume begins with Cartesian philosophy and ends with the "infidels" Edward Gibbon and Thomas Paine. The second volume includes the thought of overt Christian theologians such as John Wesley and William Law, yet for Stephen, Wesley and Law must succeed Blount and Toland in exposition, as eighteenth-century Christian apologists could only write their theology in the shadows of the Deist controversy. Doubtless, Christianity continued to express itself in both the vein of traditional Athanasian Christology and newer evangelical fervor. Yet, it was the Deist's call for a pure and natural religion that fundamentally shifted the center of gravity of theology.[43]

In some ways, Stephen's exposition on the history of modern philosophy was as progressive as Hegel's. Stephen acknowledged that the history of philosophy consists of one philosopher passing the torch to the next, a process where "each philosopher discovers some of the errors of his predecessor, and advances to some closer approximation to the truth."[44] Stephen continued that while a cursory study of the history of thought might conclude philosophers to be antagonists to one another, a closer examination reveals that "each great man has contributed some permanent element of truth, and that there is thus a continuous, though a very tortuous, advance in

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[42] Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. I (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962), x.

[43] Many historians have, of course, taken issue with this claim, most notably Jonathan Clark, who has posited that the time period from 1660-1832 represented a time of hegemony in English history, where church and state were unified around traditional forms of Anglican theology and worship. For Clark, the Deists were something of a parentheses in an otherwise stable time of theology within what he called "the long eighteenth century" in England. See his *English Society, 1688-1832*.

[44] Stephen, *Eighteenth Century*, 2.

speculation."[45] While eschewing Hegel's dialectical view of history and embracing a cultural form of intellectual history, Stephen believed that the history of thought did, in fact, represent progress. It was simply that history progresses in a spiral curve. Often perceived superstitions do not so much disappear but reemerge in new forms as superficial revivifications of old ideals.

For Stephen, this tension in the progress of thought rests not in the antithetical nature of progressive idealism, but in the distance between the philosopher and the ordinary person. The philosopher must continuously navigate the imperfect state of his knowledge to compromise between the accuracy of understanding the particular and the symmetry of understanding the world. It is possible, admits Stephen, that at some point, a universal theory will be discovered that unites the understanding of particulars into symmetry but such a time is "doubtless distant."[46] However, it is distant because the vast majority of human beings have no interest in undertaking such an endeavor. For the majority of human beings, the love of speculative truth is a very weak impulse, even if it is of the highest importance.

Thus, Stephen's "spiral curve" of historical progress occurs when the ideas produced by "minds of exceptional activity" interact with the trial and error mentality of ordinary people. It is not just logical rigor that determines progress but how those ideas improve and influence the lives of ordinary people. The two ideals work in a symbiotic relationship with one another, as practical scientific innovation breeds confidence and belief in science as a prudent and beneficial pursuit.

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 5.

While his history explicates the logical and philosophical developments that defined the English eighteenth century, he believed that philosophical developments need social reception to make a difference. The spiral curve and ebb and flow of progress occurs between the inevitable gap of extraordinary individuals to discover innovative ideas that improve upon old ideas and the capacity of society at large to adapt to such innovations. Locke paved the way for Hume not just by presenting a system of ideas for Hume to critique and amend but also by influencing the social situation in which Hume's skepticism was received.

This approach to intellectual history allowed Stephen to argue that it was the Deists that most influenced the eighteenth century. It is true, Stephen admits, that the Deist controversy had subsided almost entirely by the middle of the eighteenth century. However, it was the Deists that reduced the truths of religion to those notions commonly found throughout all humanity. And such an endeavor fundamentally changed the nature of Anglican Christianity on both an intellectual and cultural level, diminishing it as a creedal religion.

Stephen saw the Deist controversy as having both a constructive and a critical component to it. The constructive side sought largely to express Deistic aspirations in the "old-fashioned phraseology" of Christianity.[47] It was interested less in discarding or defeating Christianity as rescuing it from the irreconcilability of its foundational principles with its controversial dogmas. It also tended to believe that the problem could be fixed internally, i.e. a nascent logic was waiting to be discovered within the texts and creeds of Christianity. Doubtless, much would be discarded as many traditional

[47] Ibid., 76.

arguments rested "on historical assumptions long since dispersed into thin air."[48] Yet, this form of Deism was more a friend to Christianity than an enemy.

Critical Deism, however, was more brazen and antagonistic in its approach. Following Shaftesbury's dictum that "ridicule was the test of truth," it believed that controversy was a necessary tool against intractable dogmatism.[49] It preferred sarcasm to incisive criticism, as it recognized that it was given an uneven burden of proof. The Christian apologists believed that to demonstrate Christianity as free of contradiction was equal to proving its truth; whereas the Deist was expected to remain silent unless he could prove the impossibility of Christianity. To use Stephen's metaphor, a judge may not imprison a man for forgery without sufficient evidence even if he reasonably suspects his forgery; yet a critic would be prudent to reject the allegedly forged document under the same circumstances.[50] Since many Deists intuited this unfair standard, they saw no reason to compromise with religion but instead sought to undermine its principles. In this regard, the Deists sometimes allowed religion its basic phenomena, such as miracles and church laws, but stripped them entirely of their divine content, ascribing them instead to men.

While Locke conversed with the latter, it was the former that Stephen believed Locke most influenced. Locke's philosophy initiated what Stephen called the "national character" of English thought in the eighteenth century.[51] When future philosophers

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[48] Ibid., 77.

[49] Ibid., 157.

[50] Ibid., 160.

[51] Ibid., 28.

talked about "Locke, liberty, and philosophy," they referred to Locke's refutation of innate ideas, as to use Stephen's phrase, Locke properly exorcized "the spirit of false philosophy" by placing experience and verifiability above the "logomachy" of previous philosophers, including Descartes who while taming scholastic philosophy, left open the possibility of non-experiential methods.[52] Such a perspective opened the door to materialism and common sense which the Deists exploited for the purposes of critiquing and/or attacking revealed religion.

Stephen juxtaposed Locke with his alleged disciple John Toland, though Locke after the publication of Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* in 1696, distanced himself from Toland, publicly disavowing their acquaintance. Still, for Stephen, Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* set the stage for Toland's Deist interpretation of the Bible. Stephen never doubted Locke's sincere belief in the double authority of reason and the Bible, nor his belief in their compatibility. However, it was Locke's method that opened the door for Toland and others.

Appealing to reason alone, Locke's theology "entirely ignores the aspects of the faith which have in other days been most prominent."[53] It instituted what Stephen calls a "legislative reform." He continues, "the law was codified, published, and enforced by adequate sanctions, but not materially altered."[54] Such a view ascribed to the notion that God's revelation in Christ had engendered "new authority to the dictates of reason."[55]

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[52] Ibid., 29.

[53] Ibid., 83.

[54] Ibid., 84.

[55] Ibid.

And while Locke stopped short of denying specific tenets of Christian doctrine such as the Incarnation and Trinity, he clearly opened the door for others to take such a step. It was this door that Locke opened wide and that John Toland other successive Deists stepped through with much delight.

Stephen's description of Locke as paving the way for the Deists is not incorrect, although the above-mentioned Jonathan Israel would certainly dispute the degree of Locke's influence on the Deists. In fact, of the tropes discussed in this chapter, Stephen's interpretation shares many themes with this dissertation, namely Locke's sincere belief in Christianity and his emphasis on lawfulness. What is misleading about Stephen's interpretation, however, is the degree of novelty he ascribes to Locke's philosophy and theology. To Stephen, Locke instigated a new paradigm where reason became the standard interpreter of Christianity and thus began a momentous shift in Christian theology. To a great extent, this perspective has been validated by contemporary scholars, as scholars have demonstrated how Locke influenced the climate of Anglican theology, as well as dissenting Deists.[56]

What Stephen ignores by focusing solely on the eighteenth century is the moral and legal character of protestant Christianity that predates Locke. I will address this topic more fully in the chapter on Locke and the Gospels. However, it is important to note that while the moral and legal character of Christianity dates back to the writings of St. Paul

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[56] The two best examples are Alan Sell's *John Locke and the Eighteenth-Century Divines* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997) and B. W. Young's *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Both Sell and Young argue that eighteenth-century theologians had something of a tortured relationship with Locke. Some agreed with his views on the connection of faith and reason, while others jettisoned it completely. However, by the early eighteenth century, English theologians all recognized Locke as an authority that must be grappled with in both epistemology and theology.

and has always been crucial to the Christian tradition, it emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in direct response to main stream Catholic and Protestant theology, where the disputes centered as much on church authority as doctrine. Both magisterial Protestants and Catholic apologists agreed on the tenets of Nicene Christianity, even if they disagreed on who best represented it. However, an important movement that emphasized the humanity of Christ and the moral/rational character of Christianity emerged alongside this dispute and was equally distrusted by both. It was this movement that best characterizes Locke's Christianity and demonstrates that the pursuit of a rational Christianity was not a Lockean innovation. It simply sought to place Christianity on sustainable and universal grounds but with no intention to discredit or downplay Christianity altogether. Thus, Stephen and those who argue in this vein, by over determining the novelty of Locke's rational Christianity, leave little room for understanding Locke as heavily engaged in the theological debates that defined Protestant Christianity since the sixteenth century.

Leo Strauss on Locke as a Cautious Political Philosopher:

The two previous paradigms epitomized by Hegel and Stephen do not so much misrepresent Locke as they overemphasize certain components of his thought to the detriment of understanding his religious thought. By emphasizing the popular components of his epistemology and the critiques of Christianity within his theology, little room is left for understanding Locke as a faithful Christian engaged in Protestant debates. However, the last paradigm that is epitomized by the writings of Leo Strauss does overtly misrepresent and misunderstand Locke as a theologian. In fact, Strauss'

influence has perhaps damaged Locke's reputation as a serious theologian more than any other writer of the past two centuries.

Trained in the tradition of German Idealism and phenomenology by Ernst Cassirer, Leo Strauss immigrated to the United States in 1937 where his interests shifted to political philosophy, especially in classical Greece. Most of Strauss's interest during his time in America centered on Greek and Roman thought, often interested in how it was received and transformed in the medieval and early modern period. As a political philosopher at the University of Chicago, Strauss gave the Walgreen Lectures in 1949 which he expanded into a full monograph entitled *Natural Right and History* in 1953. While Strauss authored dozens of books and articles on political philosophy, including an in depth and widely read study of Spinoza's critique of Christianity, *Natural Right and History* remains one of Strauss's most influential works on political philosophy and has influenced an entire generation of political scientists who argue in its fashion.

Natural Right and History is a famously fun read, and its introduction and opening chapters could be framed as an anticipation and refutation of the Postmodern movement of the later twentieth century. For Strauss, the American Declaration of Independence constituted the apex of Western political thought, as its declaration of "inalienable Rights" signified the culmination of a political tradition in which self-evident truths are claimed with objective validity. However, with the emergence of the "historical sense" in the German philosophical tradition, such objective validity had come into question in the twentieth century, even in America. Strauss with his tongue clearly in his cheek opined that the aftermath of World War II marked an all too familiar moment in history when a defeated nation deprived the victor of its spoils by "imposing on them

the yoke of its own thought."[57] It was the relativism of the historical sense that Strauss believed signaled the starkest and most imminent danger to the philosophy of natural right.

For Strauss, the main villain in this story was the German sociologist Max Weber whose methodological principles separated facts from values. For Strauss, Weber's position leaves no room for natural right, as Weber believed that "there is a variety of unchangeable principles of right or of goodness which conflict with one another, and none of which can be proved to be superior to the others."[58] It was not that Weber believed that social science provides no satisfactory and objective answers to its questions. Rather, it is that the questions, themselves, are socially and historically contingent, making the answers to them, however valid, also historically contingent. Thus, in spite of Weber's talk of "timeless values," Weber's uncompromising distinction between the "Ought" and the "Is" regressed to the inevitable conclusion that no absolute "Ought" is discoverable:

> He [Weber] denied to man any science, empirical or rational, any knowledge, scientific or philosophic, of the true value system: the true value system does not exist; there is a variety of values which are of the same rank, whose demand conflict with one another, and whose conflict cannot be solved by human reason.[59]

Strauss, thus, sought to argue for the objective value of natural right, as Weber's thesis leads to the nihilistic conclusion that "every preference, however evil, base, or insane, has to be judged before the tribunal of reason to be as legitimate as any other preference."[60]

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[57] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 2.

[58] Ibid., 36.

[59] Ibid., 41-42.

[60] Ibid., 42.

It is against the view of Weber that Strauss interpreted the tradition of natural right, including Locke. In fact, while Locke was influenced by the natural right tradition that began with Socrates in classical Greece, Locke is the hero of Strauss' narrative. For Strauss, Locke is "the most famous and the most influential of all modern natural right teachers."[61] Locke was also the most innovative of all the natural right thinkers and marked the true transition to a modern form of natural right. While Locke was deeply influenced by Richard Hooker, Hooker's thought was, at base, that of St. Thomas, who followed the Patristics, who followed the Stoics, who followed Socrates. Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* fundamentally shaped modern politics, insofar as Locke maintained the objective nature of natural right while situating it within a new paradigm of political thought.

Strauss noted that from a cultural perspective, Locke's thought reflected the profound changes that occurred in natural science between the time of Hooker and Locke. The influence of a new natural philosophy on political philosophy is seen most vividly first in the work of Thomas Hobbes. Strauss surmised that Hobbes fancied himself the founder of political philosophy as a science rather than a "dream." Hobbes believed, according to Strauss, that the tradition that predated Hobbes believed as follows:

> The noble and the just are fundamentally distinguished from the pleasant and are by nature preferable to it; or, there is a natural right that is wholly independent of any human compact or convention; or, there is a best political order which is best because it is according to nature.[62]

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[61] Ibid., 165.

[62] Ibid., 167.

Further, Hobbes believed that the tradition before him was thoroughly idealistic in nature and had failed in its aim, even if it correctly surmised the direction. In this regard, Strauss argued that Hobbes intended "to do adequately what the Socratic tradition did in a wholly inadequate manner."[63]

Hobbes' principle innovation was to argue that the political state of man does not exist because human beings naturally possess a political and social nature. Rather, human beings are in their most primitive state a-social and a-political and conflate the good with the pleasant. Thus, by arguing that the political state is antithetical rather than natural to human beings, Hobbes conflated the tradition of political idealism with hedonism.

Such a view of politics meant, by necessity, stripping it of any teleological character. Hobbes' political philosophy sprang from his mechanistic worldview where motion and force dictated by imperceptible mathematical rules were the essence of nature, not rational beings seeking rational and natural ends. In other words, political life is entirely artificial, created by human beings only from a desire to escape the war like atmosphere of apolitical life. Human beings are pushed negatively into political life rather than pulled positively into it. Such a view had profound negative consequences for understanding the inherent character of human nature, but it had positive consequences for understanding political life. If political life is artificial, it is manmade and can be understood as such. There is no need to understand political life as a rational entity and work backwards but rather as a pragmatic necessity and work forward.

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[63] Ibid., 168.

Such a worldview might engender a rather pessimistic view of the world, and there is much pessimism to deduce from Hobbes. But for Strauss, Hobbes took pessimism and stood it on its head by demonstrating that if self-preservation is the fundamental axiom upon which political life turns, then the fundamental moral fact of political life must be the "fundamental and inalienable right of self-preservation."[64] Thus, it is the right, not duty, of all citizens within a polity to preserve themselves, since rights, by definition, are constitutive. Thus, while political life is artificial, its effect on human beings is no less real. In line with Machiavelli before him, Hobbes stripped politics of its teleological character while simultaneously infusing it with human natural right, as without the right of humans to self-preserve, polities are unsustainable.

It is within the context of Hobbes' innovations that Strauss situated Locke's philosophy of natural right. However, Strauss argued that Locke's intentions were not always obvious. According to Strauss, when the *Two Treatises* are put into conversation with Locke's theology in the *Reasonableness*, contradictions emerge as the natural law theory of the state is shown to be inaccessible to pure reason. Divine law is communicated to man in the form of immediate revelation in the New Testament, with all its commands for rewards and punishments intended to surpass the weak faculties of men. Based on the innovations of the *Two Treatises* and Locke's own dictum that actions are the proper interpretation of their thought, however, Locke's composition of the *Two*

[64] Ibid., 181.

Treatises demonstrates Locke's capacity for cautious composition.[65] After all, if Locke had been serious about the compatibility of Scripture and natural law, why not write an explicit treatise on the proper role of Scripture in directing the polity?[66]

For Strauss, the answer lies not in Locke's own disbelief in such a possibility, but in his doubt that readers would believe such a project possible. Thus, Locke by necessity was forced to tacitly divorce natural law from scriptural foundations as much as possible. For one, Locke's entire foundation of natural right stems from a view of nature found nowhere in Scripture, a fact made apparent by Locke's *First Treatise* that explicitly

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[65] This method of reading Locke is indebted to a view expressed in Strauss' earlier work entitled *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1952). Here, Strauss argued for a "sociology of philosophy" where philosophers form a class with each other that transcends their immediate context. In this regard, philosophers write to and for each other in an esoteric way, as freedom of expression is a new phenomenon predated mostly by persecution of free thought. Thus, philosophy is often written not "to all readers, but to trustworthy and intelligent readers only. . . . Therefore an author who wishes to address only thoughtful men has but to write in such a way that only a very careful reader can detect the meaning of his book" (25). It is possible that certain philosophers may very well have adopted this method, in particular Spinoza. However in my judgment, such a perspective engenders bad readings of Locke.

[66] On this point, Strauss is correct that Locke's omission of Scripture from the *Second Treatise* is quite curious, as is his general silence on religion at all within the polity. Much ink has been spilled in the literature on Locke's political thought to understand this dilemma. It is entirely possible that the pages on religion, Scripture, and religious toleration have been lost to history. Locke remarked in his preface to the *Two Treatises* that large portions of them were lost to "fate" and that they constitute only the "Beginning and End of a Discourse concerning Government" (137). Thus, Locke may very well have included sections on the role of scriptural rule in the polity and simply lost it in the scurry to flee England in 1683. However, it is also possible that Locke purposively eschewed including Scripture in the *Second Treatise*.

Richard Ashcraft in his *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government*, noting the context of the 1680s that surrounded Locke's composition argued that "the 1680s in England was a decade marked by a pervasive fear of Catholicism, a widespread belief that a conspiracy existed to reestablish that religion in England, and the practice of severe repression directed against political and religious dissidents" (9). This point of view has been affirmed by J.A.I Champion's *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken* and Roger D. Lund's "Introduction," in *The Margins of Orthodoxy: Heterodox Writing and Cultural Response, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Thus, it is quite possible that Locke sought to elucidate his political theory in as non-controversial a manner as possible, and appealing to the religious foundations of politics, no matter the argument, would have engendered controversy. This is largely the perspective of Jeremy Waldron in the seventh chapter of his *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in John Locke's Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Waldron admits that no hypothesis is conclusive on this matter, but the strong possibility remains that it was the hyper partisan and even dangerous political atmosphere of the 1680s that persuaded Locke to remain silent on the Christian foundations of the polity, rather than any underlying suspicion that such a foundation was impossible to establish.

refutes Robert Filmer's biblical justification for the Divine Right of Kings. In Locke's *First Treatise,* he interprets natural law on biblical terms while abandoning the Bible entirely when discussing his own first principles of natural law in the *Second Treatise*. One sees other specific examples where in the *First Treatise*, Locke is quite content to condemn adultery, incest, and sodomy as sins on biblical grounds and yet in the *Second Treatise*, appeals to the necessity of conjugal society on rational and natural foundations.

Such contradictions led Strauss to the conclusion that the *Second Treatise* represents Locke's "civil" presentation of political doctrine, not his philosophical one. His true philosophical view of politics must be found within the assumptions of the *Treatise* and not the literal text itself. Using this method of interpretation, Strauss believed that Locke refuted Hobbes explicitly only to affirm Hobbes implicitly and make his political philosophy more palatable. If moral imperatives are not stamped on the minds of men, as Locke argued, and morality is fundamentally known through demonstration, then Locke must have believed that no attainment of natural law in a pure state of nature to be possible. Rather, it is the right of self-preservation that governs the natural state, and thus, natural right of self-preservation by definition precedes natural law.

While Locke sincerely opposed some of Hobbes' prescriptions for a sustainable polity, i.e. Locke wanted limited government in place of absolutist government, Locke affirmed all of the foundational principles of the *Leviathan*. Property rights, contractual rights, and family rights all reinforce the core principles of natural right of self-preservation found within Hobbes, even if Locke's philosophy engendered a new "spirit of capitalism." In fact, it is Locke's proclamation that property is not only justified but

also a prerequisite for the sustainability of political life that marked one of Locke's main contributions to modern political thought. It was Locke who identified human ends as not the immediate alleviation of misery but in the accumulation of "those things which produce the greatest pleasures."[67] Thus, Locke cautiously but sincerely began in the same place as Hobbes, while transforming Hobbes' philosophy into a modern and capitalist form of politics.[68]

In some ways, Strauss holds much in common with what Stephen identified above. If Locke's philosophy sought universal ends in both politics and epistemology, how much could it really square with the Christian doctrine of revelation? Was it not inevitable for Deists and secular political philosophers to highjack his thought and use it as a weapon against biblical principles? In other ways, Strauss' interpretation has yielded a singular influence over political philosophers especially and has emboldened a long line of scholars who argue for the "irreverent" Locke whose theology was only a mask for secular and capitalist liberalism.[69]

One of the central themes of this dissertation is that Locke's epistemology, political philosophy, and theology are consistent with one another and thus, Strauss' interpretation leaves much to be desired. Some of Strauss' errors may be attributed to

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[67] Strauss, *Natural Right*, 251.

[68] This view has been expressed in even more controversial terms by C. B. Mcpherson in his *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

[69] The primary followers of Strauss are, unsurprisingly, in the field of political scientists. For a few of the most influential examples of this mode of interpretation, see especially Michael S. Rabieh "The Reasonableness of Locke or the Questionableness of Christianity," *The Journal of Politics* 53:4 (November 1991), 933-957, Thomas Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 131-140, Michael Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 247-288 (Zuckert only argues for Locke's tacit refutation of transcendent natural right rather than his irreligion, altogether), Andrzej Rapaczynski *Nature and Politics: Liberalism in the Philosophies of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau* (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1987), 113-125, Ross J. Corbet, "Locke's biblical Critique," *The Review of Politics*, no. 74 (2012): 27-51.

lack of sources. Strauss appears to be wholly ignorant of Locke's writings on St. Paul. At the very least, he sees no need to cite them, a curious omission as Strauss does appeal to Locke's Vindications and his reply to Bishop Worcester on the authority of Scripture. Further, Strauss was almost certainly unaware of some of Locke's earlier writings on theology and his study Bibles which demonstrate Locke's long engagement with biblical themes. However, much of it is stemmed on what, in my view, is a fundamental misunderstanding of Locke's way of thinking.

A fundamental strand of Locke's thought in all of his writings deals with the pragmatics of implementation. For Locke, it was not enough to outline the proper principle of government but also proscribe corrective mechanisms for when government inevitably goes astray, and it is this component of Locke's thought that Strauss misses. It is not that Locke believed natural law to be undiscoverable in the original state of nature. It is that Locke separated the apprehension of law through reason with the execution of such laws in real time. For Strauss, rational apprehension of law, apparently, leads to the implementation of law as that which is reasonable will occur naturally without resistance. However, Locke is clear that in real time, no state of human beings is that simple.

For one thing, while Locke declares reason as the principle interpreter of the law of nature, Locke did not believe that reason, alone, dictates the actions of men. In a small note written in May of 1681, the time Locke began composing the *Two Treatises*, Locke made the following remarks:

> The three great things that govern mankind are reason, passion, and superstition. The first governs a few, the two last share the bulk of mankind, and possess them in their turns; but superstition most powerfully and produces the greatest mischiefs. JL[70]

[70] John Locke, "Reason, Passion, Superstition," in *Political Essays*, ed. Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 280.

Thus, it is clear that while all human beings have the capacity for reason, it does not govern all human beings equally. Rather, passion and superstition also govern the majority of human beings as a rule of practice.

For another, Locke firmly distinguished reason from execution. One of the little recognized distinctions between Hobbes and Locke is the distinction between the Sovereign and the Executive. Hobbes, throughout the second book of *Leviathan* on the commonwealth, refers continuously to the monarch as the Sovereign. Locke in the *Second Treatise* refers to the monarch as the Executive. For Locke, the most important aspect of the Law of Nature is not its conformity to reason but its execution by competent human beings:

> The *Law of Nature* would, as all other Laws that concern Men in this World, be in vain, if there were no body that in the State of nature, had a *Power to Execute* that Law, and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders, and if any one in the State of nature may punish another, for any evil he has done, every one may do so. For in that *State of perfect Equality*, where naturally there is no superiority or jurisdiction of one, over another, what any man may do in Prosecution of that Law, every one must needs have a Right to do.[71]

Thus, what defines Locke's political philosophy is not the intelligibility of Natural Law to reason, a point he takes as a given, but the capacity of individuals to implement it in real time. It is the **consistency** of the application of the Law of Nature that distinguishes the state of nature from the commonwealth, **not the knowability** of the Law of Nature. And while the prerogative of executing the Law of Nature is most sustainable in a single competent executive, this does not guarantee its competency. Thus, Locke both

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[71] Locke, *Two Treatises*, 271-272.

proscribed the executive functions of the Law of Nature to the monarch while also recognizing that on occasion, the need to replace the monarch might present itself.

Once we are clear on the practical implications of the Law of Nature, Strauss' contradiction between Locke's Law of Faith and Law of Nature resolves itself. The Law of Faith becomes a privilege of the Christian believer to substitute for strict compliance with the Law of Nature. It is not that the Law of Faith contradicts the Law of Nature, it is that the Law of Faith bridges the gap between God's demand for perfect compliance with the Law of Nature, and the inevitable incompetence of human beings to properly execute it in real time. Thus, Strauss' mistake, in my judgment, does not concern the consistency of reason between Locke's theology and political thought, but the issue of practice. The Law of Nature requires certain practical checks and balances to maintain its efficacy, and the commonwealth provides such things. The Law of Faith, however requires only belief as substitute for perfect compliance.

It would be a mistake to think that Strauss' interpretation has run riot, without criticism, even in the world of political theorists. John Dunn's *The Political Thought of John Locke*, published in 1969, argued for the exclusive Christian character of Locke's political thought, a point reaffirmed, though substantially modified by Jeremy Waldron's

God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in Locke's Political Thought.[72] Thus, as the field advances, Strauss' interpretation may very well turn out to be a minor tangent within the field of Locke studies and not a lasting mode of interpretation.[73] Much of the endurance of Strauss can also be attributed to the disciplinary nature of the modern academy. As political theorists study Locke more than theologians, secular interpretations of Locke become something of an inevitability. Nonetheless, many scholars who argue for the compatibility of Locke's canon must do so in the shadow of Strauss' influence. However, as noted above and will be argued in more detail, Locke espouses a cogent interpretation of the Christian Bible that in no way contradicted his theory of Natural Law.

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[72] John Dunn and Jeremy Waldron agree on the Christian foundations of Locke's political theory, though they disagree on the implications. For Dunn, such a conclusion means that Locke's political theory has little to offer a modern, more secular approach to politics; whereas for Waldron, such a conclusion means that for Locke's views on equality tenable and sustainable for modern politics, we should not carelessly cast aside the worldview that made such conclusions possible.

Waldron was highly critical of both historians who reduce Locke's philosophy to the parochial interests of the seventeenth century and political theorists who carelessly shed off the context of the seventeenth century to make Locke a modern theorist of liberalism. For Waldron, there was a middle ground which identified the basic theory of equal rights alive and cogent within Locke's canon and which identified the constitutive aspects of such a theory, namely certain Christian assumptions about human beings, while also mindful that our own practical and political interests are quite different from Locke's. See especially Waldron's introduction in *God, Locke, and Equality*, 1-20. For a brief, but also superficial, account of Waldron's place in the scholarship of Locke's political philosophy, see Paul E. Sigmund's "Jeremy Waldron and the Religious Turn in Locke Scholarship," *The Review of Politics*, 67:3 (summer, 2005) 407-418.

[73] Ian Harris has recently remarked that "the question for students of Locke is no longer about whether he gave God a place in his political thinking, but *what* roles He performs for Locke." For Harris, that question was largely settled by John Dunn. While I agree with Harris' assessment, the contemporary literature suggests that the influence of Strauss on secular minded political scientists has cast a long shadow. See Ian Harris' "The Legacy of *Two Treatises of Government*," in *Eighteenth Century Thought*, vol. 3, ed. James G. Buickerood (New York: AMS Press, 2007), 148.

Conclusion:

The three tropes outlined in this chapter of Locke as a 1) popular philosopher, 2) anticipator of the Deists, and 3) cautious secular philosopher are, of course, not the only interpretative frameworks used to understand Locke. One can find philosophers and historians of all stripes arguing for the implications of this or that passage found in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* or *Two Treatises*, what Locke meant by it, and how it is informed by/breaks with a previous philosophical tradition. The *Essay*, especially, like all capacious works of philosophy has engendered a variety of opinions on the correct interpretation of Locke. Sometimes he is a Spinozist,[74] sometimes an Augustinian.[75] Sometimes he is an Essentialist; sometimes an anti-Essentialist.[76] Indeed, the tinkering with Locke's abstractions has no end in sight.

What is important about these three tropes is how they have obscured the connection between Locke's political and epistemological philosophy and his theology. There is no doubt that Locke's most serious engagement with theology occurred after his other works had been published, though he continued to amend the *Essay* until 1700. However, when Locke did turn to the Bible, while he amended, nuanced, and expanded his previous thinking on epistemology and natural law, he in no way shed them completely or concluded that biblical theology occupied another realm of inquiry

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[74] Joanne Tetlow, "Separate But Unequal: Theology and Philosophy in Locke and Spinoza" (paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 1, 2006).

[75] David Ramsey, "Augustine and Locke on Christianity," (paper presented at the Midwestern Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, no date).

[76] Nigel Leary, "How Essentialists Misunderstand Locke," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 26:3 (July 2009): 272-292.

entirely. Rather, Locke's biblical theology sprang from the same well which made his earlier writings possible. After first outlining the specific implications of the *Essay* on Locke's theology, we will see how Locke squared his philosophical writings with his views on the Old Testament, Gospels, and Letters of St. Paul.

Chapter 2

Locke's Philosophy of Mind: Anti- Essentialism, Active Indifferency, and the Provinces of Faith and Reason

Introduction:

Locke composed the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* over the course of many years from the early 1670s to the late 1680s and continued to revise it over the duration of his life, including a fourth and final edition in 1700. According to Locke's introductory "Epistle to the Reader," the *Essay* was conceived when "five or six friends meeting in my Chamber, and discoursing on a Subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand by the Difficulties that rose on every side."[1] The remote subject, his colleague James Tyrell reports, was the "the Principles of Morality, and reveald Religion,"[2] and Locke and his friends agreed that only an investigation into the Understanding and "what objects our Understandings were, or were not fitted to deal with" would properly ground the principles of morality and revealed religion.[3]

As mentioned in the previous chapter, many modern philosophers view the *Essay* uncharitably, as it was too uncritical in its method and epitomized the naïve Enlightenment view that philosophy explores the contours of human knowledge.[4] Yet, Locke was not interested in epistemology for its own sake. Rather, he believed that with the erosion of traditional forms of authority within the European landscape, a new

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[1] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 7.

[2] James Tyrell, Report of Initial Meeting, quoted in Peter Nidditch's critical Foreward to the *Essay*, xix.

[3] Ibid.

[4] See the preface to Nicholas Wolterstorff's *John Locke: The Ethics of Belief*, ix-xxi. Wolterstorff in particular challenges typical interpretations of Locke's philosophy by analytic philosophers, Richard Rorty chief among them.

foundation was required to demark the contours of practical conduct, especially within the religious domain. Considering that Locke composed his *Essay* alongside his works on toleration and that the *Essay* ends with reflections on the connection between faith and reason, we can safely surmise that the relationship of religious belief and human reason is never far from Locke's mind, even when charting the more technical and complex aspects of the Understanding.

Locke made little use of Scripture in the *Essay,* even when discussing the existence of God and the faith/reason connection. Yet, since once of Locke's aims was to ground the parameters of revealed religion, he utilized the philosophical principles of the *Essay* when developing his biblical theology and grounding the authority of biblical authors. Thus, understanding Locke's biblical interpretation must begin with a responsibly nuanced read of the *Essay*. While the *Essay* exemplifies Locke's mature views on epistemology, he began reflecting on the principles of knowledge as early as 1663, when he composed the *Essays on the Law of Nature*. In these essays, Locke was already arguing that we access natural law only through observation of the natural world.[5] Yet, only in the *Essay* does Locke conduct a thorough investigation into the principles of the Understanding that make such observable knowledge possible.

[5] John Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature,* ed. W. Von Leydon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954). Locke composed these essays in Latin as a requirement for his position as Senior Censor at Christ Church, University of Oxford. Locke's second essay entitled "Can the Law of Nature be known by the Light of Nature? Yes" reads as a pithy refutation of innate knowledge and tradition as the foundations of natural law. Instead, Locke argued that sense-perception is "the basis of our knowledge of the law of nature" (131). Locke argued that while many people do not appropriate their sense-perception to comprehend the law of nature, that potential lies within everyone. To quote Locke, "our mental faculties can lead us to the knowledge of this law, nevertheless it does not follow from this that all men necessarily make proper use of these faculties" (133).

For the purposes of understanding his biblical theology, I make three claims about the *Essay*: 1) The *Essay* is an ontologically anti-essentialist text. 2) It argues for the powers of the understanding that exercise their greatest **active** power through the practice of indifferency. 3) Indifferency enables reason simultaneously to verify faith and withdraw from the domain of faith. All three of these points profoundly influenced Locke's biblical theology and interpretative principles.

Locke and anti-Essentialism: "The Workmanship of the Understanding"

When Locke announced in the opening pages of Book II of the *Essay* that all knowledge is grounded first in experience, i.e. the "several distinct *Perceptions* of things, according to those various ways, wherein those Objects do affect them [the senses],"[6] and second in reflection, i.e. the "the *Perception of the Operations of our own minds* within us,"[7] he was hardly revolutionary. Since at least the time of Aristotle, certain Western philosophers had argued that sensation was the beginning of all knowledge, rather than ideas native to the human mind. To quote Aristotle, "Experience seems to be very similar to science and art, but really science and art come to men *through* experience."[8] This emphasis on sense experience would be emphasized in the medieval world by St. Thomas and then again in the early modern world by such thinkers as Francis Bacon,

[6] Locke, *Essay*, 105.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W.D. Ross in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. II, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 1552. It should be pointed out that Aristotle did not base his metaphysics on a crude sensory experience of the world. He argued that one attains true wisdom from an investigation into first causes and first principles, an investigation that both accounted for and searched beyond the "knowledge of particulars" furnished by the senses. In this regard, Locke's project was more modest than Aristotle's.

Herbert of Cherbury, Robert Boyle, Pierre Gassendi, and to a certain extent, Thomas Hobbes.[9]

The implications, however, that Locke both drew and did not draw from his emphasis on sense experience were more novel. From an **epistemological** standpoint, the aims of the *Essay* were remarkably ambitious. Locke states three: 1) to "enquire into the *Original* of those *Ideas*, Notions, or whatever you please to call them, which a Man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his Mind; and the ways whereby the Understanding comes to be furnished with them."[10] 2) "to shew, what *Knowledge* the Understanding hath by those *Ideas*; and the Certainty, Evidence, and Extent of it."[11] 3) to "make some Enquiry into the Nature and Grounds of *Faith*, or *Opinion*: whereby I mean

[9] As noted in the previous chapter, while Locke emphasized sense experience, it is a mistake to see the *Essay* purely as a refutation of Cartesian innatism. The first drafts of the *Essay* do not contain the early chapters that explicitly refute innatist principles. Further, when Locke included his refutation in the opening book, he did so on the grounds of "common notions," a term he borrowed from Lord Herbert of Cherbury explicitly in the third chapter on "No innate Practical Principles" (77). In fact, Cherbury is the only thinker that Locke explicitly refuted in his introductory chapters. Locke largely made the general argument that no innate principles can exist, as there is no universal consensus of common notions found in the world. Thus, the innatism that Locke sought to refute is rather different from that found in Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz which saw the mind containing innate potentials but not universally recognized propositions. Leibniz once compared this form of innatism to a block of marble before it becomes a statue.

Contrasting his views to Locke explicitly, he wrote, "If the soul were like an empty page, then truths would be in us in the way that the shape of Hercules is in an uncarved piece of marble that is entirely neutral as to whether it takes Hercules' shape or some other. Contrast that piece of marble with one that is veined in a way that marks out the shape of Hercules rather than other shapes. This latter block would be more inclined to take that shape than the former would, and Hercules would be in a way innate in it, even though it would take a lot of work to expose the veins and to polish them into clarity. This is how ideas and truths are innate in us—as inclinations, dispositions, tendencies, or natural potentialities, and not as actual thinkings, though these potentialities are always accompanied by certain actual thinkings, often insensible ones, which correspond to them." See his Preface to the *New Essays on the Human Understanding*, trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 4.

Thus, while Locke's critiques of Body and other forms of natural philosophy were indebted to Descartes, the general aim and scope of the *Essay* was probably not.

[10] Locke, *Essay*, 44.

[11] Ibid.

that Assent, which we give to any Proposition as true, of whose Truth yet we have no certain Knowledge."[12]

When Locke talked of "original ideas" "*knowledge," "Faith,"* and the "Understanding," he did so in universal terms; as he intended the *Essay* to diagnose the processes of the understanding that all human beings possess, a diagnosis Immanuel Kant would later call the "**physiology** of the human understanding."[13] While Locke argued at length, especially in his third book on language, that no ideas receive universal recognition, Locke took as axiomatic that all human minds work according to the same principles. In this regard, Locke saw himself as embarking on a philosophical journey of true discovery, a discovery that, to use Locke's analogy, would hold a candle beside the Understanding and demonstrate its advantages.[14]

While differing in method, Locke's inquiry was epistemologically broader than even that of Descartes, who posited in the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* that a "Universal Mathematics," would provide a "general science to explain that element as a whole which gives rise to problems about order and measurement, restricted as these are to no special subject matter."[15] To be sure, Descartes' vision of a "general science" was quite capacious, but it never claimed to explicate the processes of the entire understanding, only the grouping of its ideas using the principles of *scientia*. Locke, on

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 100.

[14] Locke often used analogies of candles and sunlight throughout the *Essay*. For example, see the introduction, 46.

[15] Renes Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes: Volume* I, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 13.

the contrary, wished to account for the origination of all ideas, even the arbitrary ones that extend beyond scientific classification.

However, if Locke's *Essay* was epistemologically ambitious, it was **metaphysically** quite limited. From the beginning of the *Essay*, Locke noted that "I shall not at present meddle with the Physical Consideration of the Mind; or trouble my self to examine, wherein its Essence consists . . ."[16] Rather, Locke stated repeatedly that his inquiry centered on the *ideas* manifest within the mind. For Locke, the term "idea" stands for "whatsoever is the Object of the Understanding when a Man thinks . . . or whatever it is, which the Mind can be employ'd about in thinking."[17] By focusing on ideas and their physiological origination, Locke employed a method of inquiry that extracted ontology from epistemology, and he demonstrated this commitment in both Book II and Book III, the sections of the *Essay* dedicated to explicating the Understanding's perception and its ties to language.

When Locke argued for an anti-essentialist view of knowledge, he did not mean that the mind has no access whatsoever to essential qualities in the objects of its perception. When discussing primary and secondary qualities in Book II, Locke argued that certain fundamental qualities reside in bodies divorced from perception. For example, the qualities of "*Bulk, Figure, Number, Situation,* and *Motion, or Rest* of their solid Parts; those are in them, whether we perceive them or no; and when they are of that size, that we can discover them, we have by these an *Idea* of the thing, as it is in it self, as is plain in artificial things."[18] For Locke, these are the primary qualities found in all

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[16] Locke, *Essay*, 43.

[17] Ibid., 47.

[18] Ibid., 140.

bodies and provide the raw essence for the world of objects. Yet, Locke argued that these qualities are fundamentally imperceptible and that our senses perceive the qualities of bodies not through the primary qualities themselves, but through the **powers** bodies posses "to operate after a peculiar manner on any of our Senses, and thereby *produce in us* the *different Ideas* of several Colours, Sounds, Smells, Tasts, etc" and "to make such a *change* in the *Bulk, Figure, Texture, and Motion of another Body*."[19]

Thus, we know with a fair amount of assurance that bodies possess necessary primary qualities, but we only form our ideas of them when bodies modify those primary qualities through their own powers. Since only the **modifications** of bodies are perceptible to us, our ideas of bodies are necessarily distinct from the primary quality of bodies as they are relative to themselves. Locke even rejected the Cartesian definition of body as extension as the modifications of bodies often contain no notions of extension. For example, the ideas of taste, smell, hunger, and thirst contain nothing of extension, and since these ideas stem from the affections of bodies, they are often our only sensible experiences of bodies. Thus, our senses cannot attest to the "pure Essences of Things" based on the modifications we experience.[20] And Locke made similar observations concerning duration, number, infinity, and other notions he referred to as "simple modes." Simple modes are the first modification of bodies made upon the senses, and in the reception of simple modes, the mind is passive, serving only as a blank slate[21] for nature to inscribe itself upon. When the mind combines simple modes into mixed modes,

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 179.

[21] It is worth noting that Locke used many terms throughout the *Essay* to describe the emptiness of the mind, including *tabula rasa*, blank slate, blank paper and empty cabinet.

it exhibits active powers of combination. And in Book III on language, Locke described this process as the "Workmanship of the Understanding."

Of course, Locke addressed the active powers of the mind in Book II, arguing that the Unity of thought stems from "an Act of the Mind combining those several simple *Ideas* together, and considering them as one complex one, consisting of those parts; and the mark of this Union, or that which is looked on generally to compleat it, is one name given to that Combination."[22] And while Locke suggested many times in Book II that language is the primary catalyst behind complex combinations, he only thoroughly unpacked the implications of language for thought in Book III.

Locke's philosophy of language was mostly straightforward and rested on similar fundamental propositions outlined in Book II. Language was a natural part of man's sociability, and was given to him by God to act as the "common Tye of Society."[23] The specific components of language, namely words, however, emerged from the world of experience. As Locke argued, "I doubt not, but if we could trace them to their sources [Words], we should find, in all Languages, the names, which stand for Things that fall not under our Senses, to have had their first rise from sensible *Ideas*."[24] As Locke would outline in his chapter "Of the Signification of Words," Locke remarked that words are the "sensible Marks of *Ideas*" and serve the function of bringing ideas into the understanding through the process of signification.[25] It is thus not surprising that Locke's philosophy of language embraced the same anti-essentialism that rested on mental processes rather than

[22] Locke, *Essay*, 289.

[23] Ibid., 402.

[24] Ibid., 403.

[25] Ibid., 405.

metaphysical foundations. Indeed, Locke's chapter "Of Mixed Modes" in Book II is the first chapter to mention language and suggests that for Locke, any active combination of complex ideas is linguistic in nature.[26]

In his chapter entitled "Of the Names of mixed Modes and Relations," Locke wrote extensively on the relationship of language, mixed modes, and essence. Locke argued that the "abstract *Ideas*, or . . . the Essences of several Species *Of mixed Modes are made by the Understanding*, wherein they differ from those of simple *Ideas*: in which sort, the Mind has no power to make any one."[27] Locke extrapolated on this basic idea extensively throughout the chapter. For example, the linguistic signs attached to mixed modes by the understanding demonstrate their arbitrary essences, as some languages make a distinction between murder and parricide, while other languages collapse them into one general category. Locke argued that it is "evident then, that the Mind, by its free choice, gives a connexion to a certain number of *Ideas*; which in Nature have no more union with one another, than others that it leaves out."[28] He went on to argue that arbitrariness does not equate to randomness, as languages draw on cultural norms to signify complex ideas and thus, relative to themselves, languages possess logical distinctions between words. However, the manifold of languages found in the world defies the possibility of a unifying essence that transcends history, custom, and idiom.

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[26] Ibid., 289. To quote Locke, "Indeed, now that Languages are made, and abound with words standing for such Combination, *an usual way of getting these complex Ideas, is by the explication of those terms that stand for them*."

[27] Ibid., 429.

[28] Ibid., 431.

Thus, essential mixed modes are the "Workmanship of the Understanding" and not the "Workmanship of Nature."[29]

For the most part, Locke throughout the *Essay* equated the Understanding with the process of perception, but in his chapter on mixed modes, Locke adopted the verbiage of **conception**, noting that language functions to "dispatch general Conceptions; wherein not only abundance of particulars may be contained, but also a great variety of independent *Ideas*, collected into one complex one."[30] And Locke also argued that even the "Species of mixed Modes are made by the Understanding" as well as is the idea of "sort," which Locke believed differ only in word, not in substance.[31] Because species are supplied by the mind, Locke argued that names of mixed Modes "*always signifie . . . the real Essences of their Species*" but only because the species themselves are a product of the Understanding.[32] In this regard, the distinction between a nominal essence and a real essence would be superfluous, as without the mind, a species would not exist at all. When signifying species, nominal and real collapse into one essential category.

Locke made largely the same points in the following chapter on the "Names of Substances." In Book II, Locked had defined substance as "being nothing, but the supposed, but unknown support of those Qualities, we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist, *sine re substante,* without something to support them them, we call that Support Substantia . . . in plain *English, standing under,* or *upholding.*"[33] And in Book

[29] Ibid., 433.

[30] Ibid., 432.

[31] Ibid., 434.

[32] Ibid., 436.

[33] Ibid., 296.

III, Locke continued this line of argumentation, noting that substances are nothing more than nominal essences assigned to things for the purposes of classification and differentiation. Further, the varieties of experience manifest across human beings meshed with the varieties of language show that universal essences within substances cannot be claimed. For example, Locke posited that someone with experience of a frozen climate would make a substantive distinction between ice and water, but a man from Jamaica who had never encountered ice might only describe it as "harden'd water" and make no substantive distinction between ice and water.[34] Thus, we classify objects into species based on ideas of them, and someone living in a tropical climate would have no idea of ice.

Locke did argue that the organization of substances was more logical than that of mixed modes. Locke believed that mixed modes were often defined in an arbitrary fashion, dealing only with the immediate perception of the modification of objects, but the substances are classified more predictably. In this regard, all languages contain a universal logic, even if they employ different vocabularies and syntax, for if no logic existed among the manifold of languages, human thought would be unintelligible across languages. To use Locke's metaphor, languages would like *"Babel*; and every Man's Words, being intelligible only to himself, would no longer serve to Conversation . . . if the *Ideas* they stand for, be not some way answering the common appearances and agreement of Substances, as they really exist."[35]

[34] Ibid., 448-449.

[35] Ibid., 456.

It is important to recall, however, that substances exist only as an artifice of the mind; thus when he argued for substances "as they really exist," he meant a nominal realism that fundamentally resides within the mind. The substance really does exist in the mind; it is not a fantasy, even though it does not subsist in nature apart from the mind. Further, its "realness" leads to the classification of objects according to *Genus* and *Species.* According to Locke, species is determined through "organiz'd Bodies, which are propagated by Seed; and in these, the Shape is that, which to us is the leading Quality, and the most characteristical Part."[36] Locke argued that often, color is closely associated with species, in the case of gold and silver. Still, species are groups of sensible substances determined by common characteristics. Genus, while also a sensible substance, accounts for the imprecise number of simple ideas that compose a species. While size, shape, and color are often the defining characteristics of species, men are never in total agreement as to the total number of simple ideas that compose a species. Genus, thus, is a more general category of comprehensive *Classes*.[37] To quote Locke, "These are complex *Ideas* designedly imperfect: And 'tis visible at first sight, that several of those Qualities, that are to be found in the Things themselves, are purposely left out of *generical Ideas*."[38] Genus comprises a broader category of substance that uses partial conceptions of species, i.e. employs one or two qualities of species, while leaving the others aside, to denote more general substances. What is more, species go a step further and take the partial conceptions of individuals to make those ideas more general. Thus,

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 459.

[38] Ibid.

Locke posited a three-part division of substances: *Genera* (the most broad), *Species* (still widely recognized but less broad), and individuals/particulars.

Still, Locke insisted that none of these categories relate to pure essences, as all categories are fundamentally a product of language intended to communicate notions. *Species* and *Genera* emerge when humans group objects by shared qualities and "*range them into Sorts, in order to their naming,* for the convenience of comprehensive signs."[39] For Locke this grouping is the "whole business of *Genus* and *Species*."[40] Locke even argued that the complex modes of *Species* and *Genus* cannot be conceived as universal archetypes that reside within the minds of men, as complex ideas only exist within the words used to express them, and the mind creates words without any regard to archetypes or innate patterns. Locke, of course, conceded that words can be translated on some level, but the act of translation itself shows the mutability of such complex ideas, as without explication, they are unintelligible to other human beings.

In sum, Locke, throughout the entirety of the *Essay*, argued for the unknowability of essence(s). He often varied his nomenclature, referring to essence as the "real Constitution of Things" or the "I know not what," but the point remained consistent. The mind through its employment of language actively modifies the sense material it passively receives into complex modes and by doing so, ontologically severs itself from the essential qualities of objects. Ultimately, only God knows the true essence of the universe. To quote Locke:

> The Workmanship of the All-wise, and Powerful God, in the great Fabrick of the Universe, and every part thereof, farther exceeds the Capacity and Comprehension of the most inquisitive and intelligent Man, than the best

[39] Ibid., 462.

[40] Ibid.

> contrivance of the most ingenious Man, doth the Conceptions of the most ignorant of rational Creatures. Therefore we in vain pretend to range Things into sorts, and dispose them into certain Classes, under Names, by their *real Essences,* that are so far from our discovery or comprehension.[41]

Our only access to essences comes via the "Workmanship of the Understanding," a workmanship conditioned by language and severs us from the real constitution of the universe divorced from human understanding. But while we have no access to the real constitution of things, we can understand the limits and advantages of the mind's powers to conduct itself and expand our knowledge to the fullest extent possible.

Locke and the Powers of the Mind: Liberty and the Power of Indifferency

In the second book of the *Essay,* Locke employed 33 chapters to delineate the processes of perception that encompass the Understanding and the limits and advantages of those processes, but chapter 21, entitled "Of Power" stands as the longest and most in depth. At first glance, it appears interruptive, as it bridges Locke's chapters on the "Modes of Pleasure and Pain" and "Of Mixed Modes" and takes on a different mode of analysis from Locke's other chapters. To understand its necessity, one must view the larger arch of Book II to see that underneath Locke's complex analysis stands the aim to understand the mind's passive and active powers. The chapters that precede chapter 21 mostly outline the mind's passive and simple powers, i.e. the way nature imprints itself

[41] Ibid., 444.

on the mind;[42] whereas the chapters that follow 21, outline the mind's active and complex powers, i.e. the way the mind shapes its perception of nature according to its own powers, what was defined above as the "Workmanship of the Understanding" and how these active powers shape our sense of accountability and responsibility. Thus, "Of Power" stands as a paramount chapter in the *Essay*, as Locke addressed in very concrete terms the minds capacity to express itself.

In this chapter, Locke described both the passive and active powers of the mind in order to determine its freedom, in terms of its relationship to the will, volition, and practical conduct. Indeed, chapter 21 is one of Locke's most important expositions of practical reason; however, as with essence of the understanding, Locke ultimately argued for a **limited freedom** of the mind, with its most powerful freedom stemming from the suspension of judgment, what Locke called the power of indifferency.

Adopting a polemical tone, Locke argued against free will, as the will does not constitute an independent faculty of the understanding (thus, cannot be free) but rather constitutes a power of the understanding. To be a faculty, the will would have to

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[42] By passive and simple, I do not mean to imply that Locke saw the mind as impotent in the preceding chapters. Chapter 12 "Of *Complex* Ideas" in many ways begins Locke's excurses into the activity of the mind. He argues that "hitherto considered those *Ideas*, in the reception whereof, the Mind is only passive, which are those simple ones received from *Sensation* and *Reflection*" (163). Locke went on to note that the combination of simple ideas into complex ideas demonstrated that "the Mind has great power in varying and multiplying the Objects of its Thoughts, infinitely beyond what *Sensation* or *Reflection* furnished it with" (164). However, in his chapter on "Of Mixed Modes," he notes that "the mind, in respect of its simple *Ideas*, is wholly passive, and receives them all from the Existence and Operations of Things, such as Sensation or Reflection offers them, without being able to make any one *Idea*" (288).

Locke, in many ways seems to contradict himself by arguing for the passive nature of the mind's active formation in the process of discerning simple modifications. However, what I think Locke has in mind with this distinction is to distinguish the processes that are universally common to human beings, namely the very simple arrangement of the mind's first encounters with the world of objects, from the complex forms of arrangement that are linguistically and temporally situated with each individual. It is no accident that Locke first makes mention of language in chapter "Of Mixed Modes." Locke believed that the processes of simple idea formation work the same for all human beings, but complex idea formation works according to the rules of language.

generate its own active powers, which Locke argued stem only from the understanding. To quote Locke, "I suspect that this way of Speaking of *Faculties,* has misled many into a confused Notion of so many distinct Agents in us."[43] Rather, the genesis of our agency emerges from the understanding, and to speak correctly, we must ask if the understanding is free, not if the will is free. To quote Locke again, "'Tis plain then, that the Will is nothing but one Power or Ability, and *Freedom* another Power or Ability: So that to ask whether the *Will has Freedom,* is to ask, whether one Power has another Power, one Ability another Ability."[44] Having established the will as a power of the Understanding rather than an independent faculty, Locke set out to determine the freedom or "*Liberty"* of the Understanding.

Locke argued that in most ways, the Understanding is not free, as volition as expressed in its will often has no efficacy. For example, Locke argued that "A Man's Heart beats, and the Blood circulates, which 'tis not in his Power by any Thought or Volition to stop; and therefore in respect of these Motions . . . he is not a *free Agent*."[45] Further, a person is never free **not** to will. When a thought of potential action enters into the mind, it is impossible for a person to delay the process of volition. He or she must choose whether or not to act, and the declination of action constitutes an act of volition. To quote Locke, "he cannot avoid willing the existence, or not existence, of . . . Action; it

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[43] Ibid., 237. It is worth noting that Locke, in a later passage, characterized the will as an "*elective Faculty*," meaning that the will exists because the understanding is capable of willing. (243-244) This is a confusing passage that is circular in logic, but it appears that Locke is assuring his readers that he is not undermining the importance of the will or arguing for the arbitrariness of the will. The will is a natural extension of the understanding and constitutes a major power of the understanding. To eliminate the will would, in a logical sense, eliminate the expressive powers of the understanding. It is simply that the will cannot be viewed in any kind of independent sense, only in relationship to the understanding, the only source of rational agency.

[44] Ibid., 241.

[45] Ibid., 239.

is absolutely necessary that he *will* the one, or the other. . . . for if he did not *will* it, it would not be."[46] In short, a person is incapable of forbearing willing. When a decision for action announces itself within the understanding, a decision must be made. This line of argumentation led Locke to his first definition of Freedom:

> *Freedom consists in the dependence of the Existence, or not Existence of any Action, upon our Volition of it, and not in the dependence of any Action, or its contrary, on our preference*.[47]

Further, Locke argued that the mind is often determined to act out of desire, what he called an "*uneasiness* of the Mind for want of some absent good."[48] It is this uneasiness that often prompts the greatest changes of mind and acts of volition. When people are happy with their states of life, their minds cannot help but will the continuation of that state. By contrast, uneasiness often leads to decisive changes in action, if only temporarily. For Locke, this explains why God chose to "put into Man the *uneasiness* of hunger and thirst, and other natural desires, that return at their Seasons, to move and determine their *Wills*, for the preservation of themselves."[49] Indeed, negative impulses often provide stronger impulses than positive ones, as negative impulses typically provide the most impetus for tangible action.

Locke also argued, though, that individuals often sacrifice long term happiness for short term happiness, as individuals succumb to the immediacy of present desires at the expense of a distant "absent good." To quote Locke, "The greatest present *uneasiness* is the spur to action, that is constantly felt; and for the most part determines the *will* in its

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[46] Ibid., 245.

[47] Ibid., 247.

[48] Ibid., 251.

[49] Ibid., 252.

choice of the next action."[50] Further, it is the experiences of pain and pleasure that fundamentally condition our capacity to desire.[51] He defined happiness in its full extent as "the utmost Pleasure we are capable of" and misery as "the utmost Pain."[52] These experiences of happiness are, for Locke, what humans define to themselves as the *Good* and what produces pain in us, humans call *Evil*. But we also define them in relationship to one another, as it is the comparison between good and evil that allows us a full experience of either.

As these and many other passages demonstrate, Locke used much of this chapter to outline the passive powers of the mind. We cannot say that we have free will; we cannot suspend the processes of volition; we cannot transcend the experiential boundaries of pleasure and pain; we cannot transcend the temporal and spatial boundaries that dictate the immediacy and intensity of pleasure and pain. These limitations, according to Locke, often lead to unwise decisions. To quote Locke, "*when we compare present Pleasure or Pain with future*, (which is usually the case in the most important determinations of the Will) *we often make wrong Judgments* of them, taking our measures of them in different positions of distance."[53] Locke called these limitations "*the weak and narrow Constitution of our Minds*,"[54] which for Locke accounted for why people relieve

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[50] Ibid., 258.

[51] Ibid. During this exposition, Locke described *Happiness* and *Misery* as the "two extremes, the utmost bounds whereof we know not," and then appositionally quoted I Corinthians 2:9 "'tis what *Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, nor hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive*." This quotation is an extraordinary glimpse into the extremity of Locke's adherence to an eudemonic theory of practical conduct, as I Corinthians 2 is Paul's exhortation to Corinth on the secret wisdom of God that the Spirit imparts to us through our communion with the mind of Christ. Locke appears to argue, if only tacitly, that our sensations of pain and pleasure, happiness and misery are the window to the vastness of God's mind.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., 275.

[54] Ibid., 276.

immediate uneasiness at the expense of greater future uneasiness, as the "absent good" is something our minds often do not attain. He defined an "absent good" as simply a "future pleasure," and that we have yet to experience.[55] Locke went on to describe this deficiency as "*Ignorance"* and "*Inadvertency*," the former applying to misinformed judgments based on deficient knowledge, the latter applying to the misappropriation of knowledge we have attained.

It is easy to conclude, based on these examples, that Locke held a rather pessimistic view of freedom, and in many regards, he did. However, Locke believed that our greatest capacity for positive freedom came from our powers of suspension. Locke defined the "principal exercise of Freedom" as the capacity to "stand still, open the eyes, look about, and take a view of the consequence of what we are going to do, as much as the weight of the matter requires."[56] Thus, the process of deliberation, itself, was humankind's greatest power. It allows us to suspend our judgments until we have appraised all possible outcomes and judged the consequences both of our actions, and the possibility for better alternative actions.

Further, the process of deliberation often tame the tastes and impulses that lead to negative consequences. Locke argued that we are mistaken to assume that we "cannot change the displeasingness, or indifferency, that is in actions, into pleasure and desire. . . . A due consideration will do it in some cases; and practice, application, and custom in most."[57] We are, thus, capable of changing the objects of our desires, the ends of our appetites, and the disposition of habits. Locke, though, is clear about the genesis of these

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[55] Ibid., 277.

[56] Ibid., 279.

[57] Ibid., 280.

changes, if they do occur. They must stem from the promise of reward, a vision of a perfected future in which happiness increases and misery/pain diminish. It is not, as say Shaftesbury and then later Kant would argue, that we must perfect our moral capacity by living according to principal for the sake of principal. For Locke, to divorce principal from experience would defy the very limits of epistemology he claimed to elucidate throughout the *Essay*. And the desire for future experiences of happiness must be the ultimate goal of upright moral conduct.

But the act of waiting for an "absent good" requires the capacity to suspend judgment in order to weigh present experiences with imagined future experiences, and this act, Locke defined as "***indifferency***." Locke argued bluntly that "Liberty is plac'd in *indifferency*: but 'tis in an *indifferency* that remains after the Judgment of the Understanding; yea, even after the determination of the *Will*: And that is an indifference not of the Man . . . but an *indifferency* of the operative Powers of the Man, which remaining equally able to operate . . . may be called *indifferency.*"[58] Locke, here, argued that *indifferency* is an **active** power of the mind. It is an operative power and one of the most important liberties the mind has at its disposal. It is the capacity to suspend one's thought ever **after** one has sensed, reflected, and judged a situation.

In a later shorter treatise entitled "Of the Conduct of the Understanding," Locke devoted an entire section to the definition of indifferency.[59] He argued that the most effective method of scientific inquiry centered on "enquiring directly into the nature of the thing it self without mindeing the opinions of others or troubleing himself with their

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[58] Ibid., 283-284.

[59] Locke originally intended "Of the Conduct of the Understanding" to be included as a chapter in the 1700 edition of the *Essay* but was unable to compose it to his satisfaction, and thus did not include it.

questions or disputes about it but to see what he himself can sincerely searching after truth finde out."[60] Locke then continued that the "surest and safest way is to have **noe opinion at all** till he has examined and that without any the least regard to the opinions or Systems of other men about it (emphasis mine)."[61] While this is not the easiest and fastest way to opinions, it is the "right way to truth" for those who deal most comprehensively with the Understanding.[62]

Thus, Locke believed that while the Understanding was ultimately quite limited in its operative powers, it had a great capacity to diagnose its own limitations and suspend its judgment until it had thoroughly investigated all possible solutions. And Locke would expound upon this notion even more in his Fourth Book of the *Essay*, when he outlined the relationship of faith and reason.

Locke and the Domains of Faith and Reason:

Locke's final book IV consists of 21 chapters, all of which, in one way or another, discuss the limits and advantages of knowledge in general. Books 1-III, largely diagnostic, sought to explicate the processes of the Understanding and their relationship to language, but in book IV, Locke became more proscriptive. While still providing epistemological diagnoses at times, Locke mostly focused on the practical implications of the previous books, namely the limitations of the Understanding and the expansion of the Understanding through the means of reason and faith.

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[60] John Locke, "Of the Conduct of the Understanding," in *John Locke: Writings on Religion*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 5.

We must recall that in the introduction, quoted above, Locke listed the issue of faith or "opinion" as one of his chief concerns of the *Essay*. Locke in book IV defined faith as "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."[63] Locke proposed this definition in chapter eighteen, but when considering the totality of Book IV, one sees that this definition of faith does not constitute a turning point of the final Book but rather an inevitable consequence of its arguments. When we examine the individual components of his definition, we see that Locke addressed them individually, namely the degrees of knowledge, reason, assent, and the credit of the proposer. To understand Locke's view on faith, we must investigate Locke's thoughts on each.

In chapter two on the "Degrees of Knowledge," Locke presented a threefold hierarchy of knowledge, each of which varied in source and certainty. The first and most certain form of knowledge Locke called "intuitive" knowledge, "for in this, the Mind is at no pains of proving or examining, but perceives the Truth, as the Eye doth light, only be being directed toward it."[64] Intuitive knowledge needs no verification relative to other ideas and announces itself as clearly as bright light on a sunny day. The next degree of knowledge Locke called "demonstrative knowledge" where the "Mind perceives the Agreement or Disagreement of any *Ideas*, but not immediately."[65] Demonstrative knowledge exists within the realm of proofs and as such, doubt precedes demonstrative knowledge. For this reason, Locke argued that demonstrative knowledge, while reliable,

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[63] Locke, *Essay*, 687.

[64] Ibid., 531.

[65] Ibid.

never resides as assuredly in the mind as intuitive knowledge. Demonstrative knowledge stems from the comparison of intuitive ideas, and thus while demonstrative knowledge possesses an "intuitive certainty" does not equate to the steadfastness of intuitive knowledge. The final degree of knowledge is "sensitive knowledge" which he defined as the "existence of particular external Objects, by that perception and Consciousness we have of the actual entrance of *Ideas* from them."[66] Locke believed this last degree to be the least certain as it was the most particular in nature and held captive to the imprecision of memory.

Locke largely employed the same threefold division in his diagnosis of Assent several chapters later. Locke argued that "the grounds of Probability . . . are the Foundations on which our *Assent* is built; so are they also the measure whereby its several degrees are, or ought to be *regulated*."[67] As probability contains no "intuitive Evidence," the most certain of all knowledge, we must verify it using proofs to investigate the grounds of probable scenarios. Much knowledge of Assent stems from mere opinion and relies on inaccurate memories and testimonies. Though, Locke also admitted that memory is often the only recourse in the verification of opinions. Yet, Locke also noted that memory is impeded more by erroneous judgments than inaccurate memory itself. In other words, people often remember with a great amount of accuracy their interpretations and judgments of previous situations, but people so often misjudge their conclusions, the memory of those conclusions succumb to errors and mistakes.

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[66] Ibid., 536-537.

[67] Ibid., 657.

In spite of its shaky grounds, Locke argued that in certain cases Probability is the only ground of knowledge we have, and thus, we must dissect it so that we can employ it most effectively. In this vein, Locke noted that Probability is typically of two sorts: matters of fact, capable of observable verification (even if only in the past), and non-sensory based propositions.

Regarding matters of fact, we assent to this via reports, and we typically test its reliability based on the number of reports available. Thus, a past event attested to by many reporters receives a higher degree of assent than an idiosyncratic report. Further, phenomena reported by all people in all ages receive the highest degree of assent. Locke argued that "these *Probabilities* rise so near to *Certainty*, that they govern our Thoughts as absolutely, and influence all our Actions as fully, as the most evident demonstration . . . our Belief thus grounded, rises to *Assurance*."[68] Locke went on to argue, though, that some characteristics of men and nature often receive treatment by past authors and when those treatments mesh with one's own reason, we have what Locke called a *Confidence* knowledge. It is not assured knowledge because many people remain silent on these characteristics and thus do not claim universal recognition. The same is largely true for what Locke called indifferent matters where the reports are so inconsequential, we may take the reports at their word, as we find no reason for men to err in these judgments.

While we can, in varying degrees, rely on reports, Locke argued that individual reports which conflict with more general opinions are those which defy proper assent and further, conflicting reports are damaged by historical procession. As reports pass through varying historical times, they become further and further removed from the original

[68] Ibid., 662.

report and become less authentic with each successive step. Locke, of course, argued that this does not mean we discard history; it only means we must approach it cautiously and not vault it supreme above other forms of knowledge more reliable in nature.

Regarding non-sensory based propositions, Locke noted that only the principle of *"Analogy*" could render such knowledge possible. He noted that these propositions were incapable of testimony and included such things as "The Existence, Nature, and Operations of finite immaterial Beings without us; as Spirits, Angels, Devils . . . Or the Existence of material Beings; which either for their smallness in themselves, or remoteness from us, our Senses cannot take notice of."[69] By "Analogy," Locke meant a comparison of two observable phenomena to understand a linked phenomenon unverified by experience. Locke gave the example of comparing people and "brutes" to see that on a case by case basis, the intelligence of certain people and brutes is not so wide, which indicates to us, by analogy, that "there are several ranks of intelligent Beings, excelling us in several degrees of Perfection, ascending upwards towards the infinite Perfection of the Creator, by gentle steps and differences, that are every one at no great distance to the next to it."[70] We have no experience of all ranks of intelligent beings but by comparison of two ranks, we can infer more ranks within the hierarchy of intelligent beings.

In spite of these levels of assent, Locke argued that one of the highest forms of assent comes from "*Revelation*" as "the Testimony is of such an one, as cannot deceive, nor be deceived, and that is of God himself. This carries with it Assurance beyond Doubt, Evidence beyond exception."[71] While Locke does not yet spell out specifically

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[69] Ibid., 665.

[70] Ibid., 666.

[71] Ibid., 667.

the contours of *"Faith*" at this point, he argued that to doubt a revelation from God would equate to denying our own being. Rather, a true revelation leaves no room for doubt, provided we are sure it is truly divine revelation.

How does one receive assurance? To answer this question, we must understand Locke's definition of reason. We must recall that Book II and III discussed above largely do not deal with the domain of reason but rather the processes of the Understanding. For Locke, all humans largely understand the same way, which is to say they use sensation and reflection to understand the world. It is a universal process that often reveals a manifold of results depending on the linguistic and cultural situation of individuals. However, reason for Locke is something that not everyone exercises. It is that which enlarges knowledge and regulates assent, as it deals "both in Knowledge and Opinion, and is necessary, and assisting to all our other intellectual Faculties, and indeed contains two of them, *viz. Sagacity and Illation*."[72] Locke goes on to note the four degrees of knowledge as related to reason: the discovery of proofs, the exposition of proofs, the connection of proofs, and finally the drawing of conclusions.[73] Reason, thus, for Locke is a regulating principle. It is that which extends the powers of the understanding to its utmost capacities in order to attain the highest conclusions that the understanding may attain.

Still, Locke was clear that reason has limits and if not properly checked, can lead into error. Locke argued that the failure of reason typically stems from the inadequacy of ideas. Reason uses ideas to orient itself and deduce conclusions. If ideas are confused,

[72] Ibid., 668.

[73] Ibid., 669.

disordered, imperfect, absent, or simply false, the reason will inevitably fall into error as reason, while it can regulate ideas, has no capacity to transcend them. Further, reason, being made of proofs and conclusions, cannot surpass the certainty of intuitive knowledge that stands as the clearest form of knowledge possible. In this vein, Locke made a third distinction within the faculty of reason, that of judgment. Locke had previously addressed Judgment in chapter XIV, a short two-page chapter that argued for Judgment as "*Assent* or *Dissent*."[74] He would a few lines later and then again in the chapter on Reason that judgment occurs when the mind takes two ideas to agree or disagree without perception but "hath observed to be frequent and usual."[75] If two ideas are joined or disjoined by the intervention of a third that is non-perceptible, the agreement or disagreement of ideas falls into the category of judgment.

While he does not say so explicitly, the definition of judgment squares with his understanding of faith quoted above. Locke noted that the foundations of faith rely on the "credit of the Proposer" and in "some extraordinary way of Communication."[76] The communication one receives from divine revelation cannot create new simple ideas. It can only create new complex ideas, but these complex ideas must still be "judged" by reason to determine the degree of assent within faith-based knowledge. For example, Locke differentiated between "*Traditional Revelation"* and *"Original Revelation*" with the former being "those Impressions delivered over to others in Words, and the ordinary ways of conveying our Conceptions one to another" and the latter being "that first Impression, which is made immediately by God, on the Mind of any Man, to which we

[74] Ibid., 653

[75] Ibid., 685.

[76] Ibid., 689.

cannot set any Bounds."[77] In this regard, the first sparks of knowledge are themselves a form of revelation and belong to the realm of intuitive knowledge. However, traditional revelation is couched within culture and history and constitutes a lower tier of knowledge. To quote Locke, "The Knowledge we have that this *Revelation* came at first from God, can never be so sure, as the Knowledge we have from the clear and distinct Perception of the Agreement, or Disagreement of our own *Ideas*."[78]

So understood, many forms of knowledge need no assistance from Revelation. And further, revelation can never demand us to believe what our reason contradicts. To quote Locke, "*No Proposition can be received for Divine Revelation,* or obtain the Assent due to all such, *if it be contradictory to our clear intuitive Knowledge*."[79] Locke argued that this is true both of original and traditional revelation, but especially true of traditional revelation where we must employ our reason to assess the veracity of traditional knowledge to ensure it conforms to reason. One can suspend judgment and conclusion, but for Locke, the suspension of reason, itself, is impossible. Reason will always have priority over revelation, as the mind can attain truth without revelation but can never attain truth without reason. Thus, Locke argued that it is not only necessary for reason to judge the merits of revelation, but reason **must** by definition judge the merits of revelation. To quote Locke, "I must come to an Assent, to only by the use of my Reason, which can never require or enable me to believe that, which is contrary to it self."[80]

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[77] Ibid., 690.

[78] Ibid., 691.

[79] Ibid., 692.

[80] Ibid., 693.

Locke argued that since reason must be the only true guide, faith is fundamentally restricted to our "very imperfection Notions," those things "of whose past, present, or future Existence, by the natural Use of our Faculties, we can have no knowledge at all."[81] These things are above reason and thus beyond the discovery of reason. Still, Locke is clear. Reason judges the probabilities of revelation and if any revelation contradicts the "plain Principles of Reason, and the evident Knowledge the Mind has of its own clear and distinct *Ideas*; there *Reason* must be hearkened to, as to a Matter within its Province."[82] When properly employed, however, faith serves as a capacity to expand and lift reason to "new Discoveries of Truth, coming from the Eternal Fountain of all Knowledge."[83]

Locke, in distinguishing faith from reason, saw them as two separate forms of knowledge achievement. Reason, as it influences our everyday understanding and conduct, must be the primary province of our decision making, but faith, while limited, has its place in the achievement of knowledge, as the past and future (and certain things in the present) do not correspond to our sensation and the discursive notions used to make sense of the world of objects. This kind of knowledge resides within the domain of faith. And when properly employed and checked, extends our knowledge above the limits of reason. In this way, faith and reason are negotiating partners of unequal footing. Reason must keep faith in check so that it does not overstep its limited boundaries.

The negotiation between faith and reason is often fractious, as he tacitly admits by employing the language of judgment. To repeat, judgment is the capacity of reason to

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[81] Ibid., 694.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., 695.

assess the agreement or disagreement of ideas by intervention of another idea or set of ideas it does not perceive but knows to be frequent. Thus, when Locke talked of reason as the "judge of revelation," it is evident that he means it literally in accordance with his definition of judgment. Reason judges the credibility of revelation based on ideas it cannot perceive, as such things as future events and the existence of God defy our perception.

It is not always easy to follow Locke's argument on the connection of faith and reason, as at times, it seems contradictory. On the one hand, Locke argues for assent to revelation and faith based on the least exact way of knowing, i.e. judgment. In this regard, the knowledge we receive from faith as validated by reason would appear to be the lowest form of knowledge we can have. Yet, Locke also argued that faith allows for reason to expand itself and make "new Discoveries of Truth" reason could not possibly achieve on its own.[84] Thus, at times, Locke suggested that faith-based knowledge is very inexact knowledge, and at other times, he suggested faith-based knowledge expands reason to higher and nobler levels it cannot achieve on its own.

To make sense of this seeming contradiction, we must return to Locke's concept of indifferency. We must recall that Locke, in the *Essay*, does not talk about faith in Christ but rather faith as an abstract category applicable to all people, regardless of their religious tradition. Yet, Locke was clearly employing a Christian eschatological concept of faith. Implicit within Locke's definition of faith is the concept of suspension, as the objects of faith's knowing are above the notions of common reason, i.e. "Things, of whose past, present, or future Existence, by the natural Use of our Faculties, we can have

[84] Ibid., 695.

no Knowledge at all; these, as being beyond the Discovery of our natural Faculties."[85] Thus, reason cannot verify the truths of faith, it can only verify the source of faith and determine whether or not the source conforms to reason. As Locke argued, "Whatever God hath revealed, is certainly true; no Doubt can be made of it. This is the proper Object of *Faith*: But whether it be a divine Revelation, or no, *Reason* must judge."[86] Thus, reason only comes to the aid of faith to verify that a revelation is in fact a revelation and not a product of imagination or fancy. But the **content** of faith, reason cannot judge as certain or uncertain knowledge but only determine whether or not faith-based knowledge contradicts ordinary common notions.

Thus, Locke provided a method for affirming the verification of revelation's source but remained mostly silent on how to interpret the content of revelation once its source is confirmed as reasonable. The only word he consistently used when interpreting the content of revelation is "probability." Revelation by definition stands against the "*probable Conjectures of Reason*" and thus revelation appeals to the mind on those matters that the mind cannot possibly know. On these matters, the mind can only "give up its Assent to such a Testimony, which, it is satisfied, comes from one, who cannot err, and will not deceive."[87] Still, faith never moves within the realm of certainty, as reason can never confirm with certainty the assent of the mind to faith-based propositions.

Thus, Locke's definition of faith rests on indifferency, i.e. an inevitable suspension of reason. Indeed, reason is employed voraciously throughout many aspects of the faith process, including the examination of the sources of revelation and the

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[85] Ibid., 694.

[86] Ibid., 695.

[87] Ibid., 694.

probability of revelation's content. But in the final moments of assent, the moments that reside primarily within the domain of belief, a concept Locke would explore thoroughly in the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, reason must suspend itself as not to encroach on the domain of faith. Reason must remain indifferent, according to its powers of suspension.

Conclusion:

Considering that the *Essay* was conceived at the intersection of morality and revealed religion, it should be no surprise that the *Essay*, in spite of its abstract and plodding prose, has much to say about the capacity of human beings to engage practically with the challenges of revealed religion. While the *Essay* largely belongs to the canon of Western Philosophy, in many ways, it is a work of structural anthropology. Locke believed that all human beings understood the world according to the same principles, even if the results of those understandings spawn a manifold of interpretations of the world. The mental equipment of human beings remains the same, even if they use that equipment to varying ends.

In this regard, one might call the *Essay* an arrangement theory of epistemology, i.e. Locke sought only to demonstrate how the mind passively and actively arranges its ideas, with very little to say about their constitution. Locke acknowledged that such a constitution exists with his phrase the "Workmanship of the Understanding," but he made no attempt to deduce its components or categories, a task that Immanuel Kant would make central to his own Critical Philosophy.

If the mental equipment of human beings remains constant throughout the processes of acquiring knowledge, the implications of the *Essay* for the specific tenets of Christian doctrine were quite profound, and many of his critics attacked him for this very reason.[88] For one, it raised the issue of positive commandments in the Old Testament. If we cannot know the essence of objects, how can we say with any assurance that the Mosaic covenant exemplifies the essence of divine law? How can we know that it corresponds to natural law? Further, how does anti-essentialism inform our understanding of Christ's ontological status? If human beings are fundamentally incapable of knowing the essence of objects, as well as other human beings, how can one claim the divine nature of Christ? If revelation does not reveal the divine nature of Christ, what is the central purpose of the Christian revelation? Further, how does this viewpoint influence our understanding of St. Paul? How can we claim that Paul was divinely inspired if reason cannot attest to it?

As we turn to Locke's specific understanding of the Old and New Testament, we will see that Locke employed many of the same themes of the *Essay*, i.e. anti-essentialism, indifferency, and negotiation of faith and reason to interpret the Christian Scriptures. We will see that Locke's lawful and legalistic interpretation of Scripture, largely jettisoned the metaphysical and ontological concerns of Christian theology just as he jettisoned the metaphysical and ontological concerns of epistemology. Further, we will see that Locke emphasized reason assisted faith to comply with scriptural law, just as emphasized the role of reason assisted faith in belief formation in the *Essay*. Using these

[88] Bishop Stillingfleet and Gottfried Leibniz were among Locke's main critics who worried that Locke's anti-essentialist tendencies would render fundamental Christian beliefs arbitrary and unsustainable.

principles, Locke would cultivate both a method of reading the Bible and a defense for the compatibility of Natural Law and Positive Law with the Law of Faith of the New Testament.

Chapter 3

Locke and the Old Testament: Equality, Chronology, Revelation, and the Covenantal Foundations of the New Testament

Introduction:

When compared to his writings on the New Testament, Locke wrote relatively little on the Old Testament. Most of Locke's major works and theological notebooks engage peripherally, if it at all, with the Old Testament,[1] and the notes that do survive in his Bentley Bible demonstrate sporadic and interrupted engagement rather than focused attention. Locke's only written work to engage exclusively with the Old Testament is the *First Treatise of Government* where Locke sought to refute the biblical and political claims of Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*. While the *First Treatise* reveals many of Locke's interpretative tendencies with the Old Testament, it was Filmer's appropriation of the Old Testament, rather than the Old Testament itself, that consumed Locke's focus. Thus, there is no Old Testament equivalent in Locke's corpus to the discussion of the Gospels in the *Reasonableness* or his discussion of St. Paul in *A Paraphrase and Notes*. Still, Locke's *First Treatise* combined with his limited notes on the Old Testament do demonstrate substantive interpretative themes, even if those themes were primarily in service to other theological and political interests.

[1] The one exception is MS Locke f.32, a small folio housed in the Bodleian Library in the Lovelace collection. However, the folio is largely sporadic commonplacing on the Old Testament in the vein of his Bentley Bible. It is possible that Locke decided to readdress the Old Testament after reading Richard Simon's *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, first published in 1678. The opening pages contain sporadic summaries of Simon's argument about public officers in ancient Israel and their relationship to the Major Prophets. There are few, if any, original notes by Locke and only give indication of who Locke read most on the Old Testament with little insight into Locke's own thoughts.

When Locke focused on the Old Testament, he primarily did so with an eye for two principles: Sacred and Natural History and the covenantal foundations of the New Testament. Regarding history, Locke viewed the Old Testament as both natural and secular history that demonstrated the capacity of God to intervene on behalf of his chosen people. Thus, the Old Testament spoke to the general history of the world and the special capacity of the Israelites to determine and receive God's revelations to them. Indeed, while these two notions of history could often conflict, this view of the Old Testament allowed Locke to make both universal claims about human equality alongside restricted claims about biblical revelation. Regarding the covenantal foundations of the New Testament, Locke's account of the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul in his later theological writings relied heavily on the Hebrew parameters of both. Locke was often exercised by how the New Testament covenant both carried out and replaced the positive law of the ancient Israelites with respect to both atonement and the governance of the church.

I make four claims about Locke's interpretation of the Old Testament that will be supported from the *Two Treatises of Government, Reasonableness of Christianity*, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* and theological notebooks as well as the works of Robert Filmer and John Lightfoot: 1) Locke in the *First Treatise* used the book of Genesis to elucidate a basic theory of equality that is consistent with his natural theory of equality in the *Second Treatise*. 2) Locke in the *First Treatise,* used biblical chronology, a method elucidated by John Lightfoot, the premiere English Hebraist of the 17th century to disavow the connection between Adam and monarchical absolutism. 3) Locke's conception of Old Testament revelation rested on the principles of knowledge he had

described in the fourth book of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 4) Locke viewed Old Testament law as the Jewish positive revelation of natural law, a law that Christ would both fulfill and replace in the Gospels.

Locke's *First Treatise of Government* and the Genesis of Equality in the Old Testament:

Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* were composed between 1680 and 1683 before Locke fled to Holland to escape possible imprisonment over accusations of Sedition and conspiracy to commit regicide amid the Exclusion Crisis of the 1680s, a crisis that erupted when Anthony Ashley Cooper, the First Earl of Shaftesbury introduced the "Exclusion Bill" in the House of Commons in 1679. The bill was meant to exclude Charles II's son James from the throne on the grounds that as a confessing Catholic, James was unfit to inherit the English Crown, especially since the English monarch was also the head of the Protestant Church of England. This crisis intensified the political climate of the 1680s which culminated in the "Glorious Revolution" when three years

after succeeding a deceased Charles II, James was dethroned and William of Orange's reign ushered in the established Constitutional Monarchy of the English Commonwealth.[2]

As Shaftesbury's personal secretary, confidant, and apologist, Locke composed the *First Treatise* to discredit the work perceived as being most dangerous to Shaftesbury's cause, Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha or the Natural Power of Kings*. Originally written between the 1620s and the break out of the English Civil War in 1642, Filmer's *Patriarcha* was published posthumously in 1680 by members of the Royalist cause to persuade the English public to the Royalist side of the Exclusion Crisis.

It is not clear why Locke focused so intensely on Filmer in his *First Treatise*. As Richard Ashcraft has noted, the degree to which Filmer's work influenced Royalist ideology is unclear, though what is clearer, Ashcraft argues, is that Filmer's *Patriarcha* shifted the political argument to the terrain of natural law theory more than any other work released during the early 1680s.[3] Thus, Locke, as well as his colleagues James

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[2] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss Locke's role in the ideology of the revolution. However, it must be noted that most scholars see Locke's influence on the revolt against James II as being secondary at best, if not wholly irrelevant, in spite of Locke's claim in the Preface of the *Two Treatises* that it is a discourse intended to "establish the Throne of our Greater Restore, Our present King William; to make good his Title, in the Consent of the People, which being the only one of all lawful Government, he has more fully and clearly than any Prince in Christendom. . . ." (137). John Pocock has noted that the ideology expressed against James between 1685 and 1688 has little parallel in Locke's *Two Treatises*. Locke's *Second Treatise* is a discourse on how a **legitimate** monarch might be dethroned in the aftermath of gross abuse of power, an argument never used against James II, as his detractors claimed he had no legitimate claim to power in the first place. The debates preceding the revolution were largely concerning legitimacy, not the violation of natural law and social contracts. Thus, deciphering Locke's specific motivation in publishing the treatises in the aftermath of the revolution has proven an enormous challenge to Locke specialists. Richard Ashcraft has even noted that in the aftermath of its publications, many Whigs distanced themselves from the "dangerous opinions contained in the *Two Treatises*" (Ashcraft, 184). For Pocock's views, see his "Negative and Positive Aspects of Locke's Place in Eighteenth-Century Discourse, in *John Locke und Immanuel Kant : historische Rezeption und gegenwärtige Relevanz*, ed. Martyn P. Thompson (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1991), 45-61.

For a recent overview of the English Revolution interpreted in modernist and Tocquevillian terms see Steven Pincus' *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[3] Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, 186-190.

Tyrrell and Algernon Sidney, found a perfect villain to contrast their own natural law views with and argue for the natural law foundations of a Commonwealth with limited monarchical authority.

Still, if one were to only use Locke's *First Treatise* to understand Filmer, one would get a distorted picture of Filmer's views. In the, perhaps redacted, 1680 publication, Filmer's *Patriarcha* reads as a pamphlet engaged in both natural and biblical political philosophy. The main aim of the work is to answer the question whether rights and liberties "were derived from the laws of natural Liberty or from the Grace and bounty of Princes."[4] For Filmer, it was the latter and not the former, and yet Filmer was quite exercised to cast the "Grace and bounty of Princes" not as a source of dependence and slavery but of liberty. It was the "Grace and bounty of Princes" that **constituted** the grounds of English liberty.

To make this point, though, Filmer drew from more than the Bible. Of its three chapters, the last two are devoted mostly to non-scriptural political philosophy, drawing on Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, and other classical philosophers to argue against the more biblical arguments of Francisco Suarez. The only chapter to engage principally with scripture is the first chapter which aims to refute the writing of St. Bellarmine (1542-1621), the Spanish and Jesuit neo-Thomist. St. Bellarmine had argued that in civil society, natural law is first contained democratically with the people who then may choose to grant power to a single prince. However, the rule of divine law is only given to a prince first by consent of the people and can claim no direct authority from God that bypasses the governed. In Filmer's words, St. Bellarmine declared that "*Democracy* be

[4] Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha; or the Natural Power of Kings* (London: Westminster Hall, 1680), 6.

the Ordinance of God."[5] Filmer went on to demonstrate how Adam, in the story of Genesis, bequeathed power to his successors going on down the line with the Kings of the Israelites, showing that democracy cannot be the foundation of Divine law, since God first granted power over nature to Adam.

Other references to both the Old Testament and St. Paul certainly appear in Filmer's work and to say it is a secular argument for the Divine Right of Kings would be unjust to the text. However, biblical references are mostly interspersed among other classical and contemporary references, making the *Patriarcha* anything but a *sola scriptura* argument. However, it is the biblical argument, namely Adam as the first possessor of natural and divine law that Locke chose to attack plainly and aggressively in the *First Treatise*.

Filmer's *Patriarcha* made three central claims: 1) Monarchs descend from the fathers of families who were the first natural kings. 2) Human nature does not dictate that "the People" ought to govern themselves or choose their governors. 3) No human law, or "positive law," detracts from the natural and fatherly rule of kings. Thus, while Adam as the first father in the Garden of Eden was crucial to Filmer's argument, it was not his only argument. Still, it was Adam and the book of Genesis that most consumed Locke's focus, and he sought to refute Filmer by demonstrating the inherent equality among human beings based on the stories of the Old Testament.

Before pursuing this line of thought in Locke, two important qualifications must be made. It is a mistake to think that Locke believed in the equality espoused in

[5] Ibid., 10.

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of liberalism.[6] One of Locke's first duties as secretary for Shaftesbury was to draft the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, a draft for the English colony of Carolina's constitution. While this document predates the *Two Treatises* by over ten years and was perhaps edited more than composed by Locke, within the *Constitutions* one finds alive and well the established class structures of England, with seigniors, barons, and councillors structuring society along traditional lines reinforced by heredity.[7] Thus, Locke almost certainly accepted the established class structures of seventeenth-century England as necessary in a sustainable commonwealth.

I also note that Locke knocked down a fair amount of straw men when arguing against Filmer's *Patriarcha*, as Locke characterized Filmer as depicting human beings in a natural state of slavery. Locke interpreted Filmer as arguing that "we are all born Slaves, and we must so; there is no remedy for it."[8] However, Filmer's point was not that contemporary society is born into slavery but that, in fact, it is born free into a society

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[6] Locke's connection to the modern tradition of liberalism is rather hotly contested, even if many political scientists are unaware of the contestation. The terms "Lockean liberalism" or "Locke's liberalism" are common in the writings of political scientists, as they often assume a paradigm between Locke and J.S. Mill and the modern liberal tradition. Such a connection, though, while plausible is not abundantly clear. The reception of the *Two Treatises* in the 18th and 19th centuries was often muted, and Locke's *Two Treatises* was largely unstudied in English universities, unlike his *Essay* or *Reasonableness of Christianity*. Scholars have even begun to question the degree of Locke's influence on the Declaration of Independence. Locke's emphasis on natural right, equality, and natural liberty may well have been in the intellectual atmosphere of the American fathers and other 19th century liberals. But the explicit connection remains contested. For a good overview of the reception of the *Two Treatises*, see Ian Harris' "The Legacy of *Two Treatises of Government*," 160-167.

[7] John Locke, *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* in *Political Essays*, ed. Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 160-181. Some modern scholars opine that the text is too full of "antiquated feudalism" to be written by Locke; however even if Locke were only the editor, it still reflects the general worldview of Shaftesbury who most influenced Locke's views on toleration and limited monarchism. It is highly unlikely that Locke in ten years' time shifted his political philosophy from a class based society to egalitarian based society.

[8] Locke, *Two Treatises*, 142.

where monarchical rule constitutes the grounds of civil freedom.[9] No doubt, even with this point Locke would have disagreed, but it is clear that Locke composed the *First Treatise* in such a way that no reader could believe Locke had an honest disagreement with Filmer. Rather, it was to prove the underpinnings of divine right philosophy as so grossly off-putting, that to argue for the divine right of kings is to argue for the enslavement of civil society.

What Locke did argue for, however, is the natural equality of human beings in their pre-Commonwealth state of being, and Locke's main rhetorical strategy was to undercut Filmer's interpretation of the book of Genesis and Adam's place in the natural ordering of society. Locke interpreted Filmer's argument as resting on two premises: 1) God had granted sovereignty to Adam through creation, donation of title, subjection of Eve, and rights of fatherhood. 2) Adam had passed on such rights of sovereignty to rightful monarchical heirs who rule with the same natural authority as Adam. The second of theses premises will be discussed in the next section, but it is in the refutation of the first premise that Locke first established his views of natural equality.

The crucial biblical texts used to support the first premise were all found in Genesis, and Locke's rebuttal rested on a straightforward reading of the text. For Filmer, when God "formed man of the slime of the earth; and breathed into his face the breath of

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[9] Filmer, *Patriarcha*, 79, 6-7. Filmer's third chapter entitled "Positive Laws do not infringe the Natural and Fatherly Power of Kings" demonstrates Filmer's belief that established patriarchal hierarchies enhance freedom, rather than restrict it, He argued that "every Father is bound by the Law of Nature to do his best for the preservations of his Family; but much more is a King always tyed by the same Law of nature to keep this general Ground, that the safety of the Kingdom be his Chief Law" (79). While Filmer disliked much of Hobbes' views, since Hobbes argued for the artificial nature of the commonwealth, Filmer echoed Hobbes' belief about absolute sovereignty as crucial to the sustainability of a commonwealth. As Filmer argued in the opening pages of the first chapter, the sovereignty of the monarch "is the *Magna Charta* of this kingdom, all other shews or pretexts of liberty, are but several degrees of *Slavery*, and *Liberty* only to destroy *Liberty*" (6-7).

life," and further "planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning: wherein he placed man whom he had formed" as Genesis 2:7-8 reports, Adam's creation became fused with his appointment of sovereignty over nature. As Locke quotes Filmer, "as soon as Adam was Created he was Monarch of the World, though he had no Subjects, for though there could not be actual Government till there were Subjects, yet by Right of Nature it was due to Adam to be Governor of his Posterity: though **not in act, yet at least in habit**, Adam was a King from his creation." (emphasis mine)[10]

According to Locke, neither the literal Scripture nor reason grants that Adam could be a "Governor in Habit, and not in Act."[11] Such an interpretation relies on a sloppy interpretation of Genesis. For one thing, even Filmer admitted that the "original Grant of Government" was not given to Adam until after the fall, demonstrating that Adam could not have been created as governor.[12] For another, on purely logical terms the argument makes no sense as the best one could say is that Adam had the possibility to be a governor, just as men have the possibility to be fathers, but that only the realization in practice warrants such a title.

Filmer further argued that Adam received his title from donation, citing Genesis 1:28 where God granted Adam "dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth." Locke conceded that such a passage made Adam the "General Lord of all Things" but that it granted Adam no claim of property over nature, much less absolutist claims over the rest of mankind. Locke argued further that if Adam had bequeathed sovereignty to future fathers, it is odd

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[10] Locke, *Two Treatises*, 151-152.

[11] Ibid., 153.

[12] Ibid.

that there is no mention of it in the story of Noah, since the grant of dominion of nature was given to Noah and his sons jointly, not solely to Noah as the father. Thus, Locke concluded that it was "impossible for any sober Reader, to find any other but the setting of Mankind above the other kinds of Creatures, in this habitable Earth of ours."[13]

Locke conceded that God's creation of Adam constituted human rights to property and nature. However, while God granted mankind rights to property, it was not an absolutist or arbitrary right to the monopoly of property by one person, even a monarch. To make such a conclusion would justify that one's monopoly of property could starve another without violating any natural or moral law. Rather, Locke argued that "as Justice gives every Man a Title to the product of his honest Industry, and the fair Acquisitions of his Ancestors descended to him; so Charity gives every Man a Title to so much out of another's Plenty."[14] Thus, God did not grant Adam private or absolute dominion over all property and to do so would have violated the very sanctity of natural law.

Locke also discredited Filmer's other premises for Adam's sovereignty, namely the subjection of Eve and Adam's title to Fatherhood. In regards to the first, Filmer's argument rested on Genesis 3:16, "And thy desire shall be to thy Husband, and he shall rule over thee" where Filmer believed we find the "Original Grant of Government."[15] Locke argued that the time of this passage occurred after the fall from paradise when Adam could have expected no granting favors from God. God had given Adam "a Spade

[13] Ibid., 168.

[14] Ibid., 170.

[15] Ibid., 171.

into his hand, to subdue the Earth" rather than a "Scepter to Rule over its Inhabitants."[16] Locke also argued that the weight of Genesis 3:16 was not directed toward Adam but toward Eve as a mark of her punishment for eating the forbidden fruit. Mostly, however, Locke was dismissive of Filmer's arguments to the point of being flippant as according to Locke, Filmer's argument rested on a sloppy confusion of King for husband and an erroneous conclusion that "Adam has presently Absolute Monarchical Power over Eve, and not only over Eve, but all that should come of her, though the Scripture says not a word of it, nor our A. a word to prove it."[17]

With regard to the second, Filmer had argued that the "Subjection of children being the Fountain of all Regal Authority" had further emboldened Adam as the first monarch, since Adam was the first father.[18] Fathers have dominion over their offspring and thus no person can ever be born free, as Fathers "give them Life and Being."[19] However, Locke countered that to bring life into being, a father would have to assemble the essences, parts, and characteristics of their children. Such a "workmanship" quality, though, is found nowhere in the human capacities for reproduction, and only the "Incomprehensible Works of the Almighty" could give way to human life.[20] Further, such an argument would give the mother equal authority over children, as the mother plays as much a role in the creation of children as men. On the whole, while Locke gave other examples of how fatherhood could not equate to absolutism, Locke concluded that

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[16] Ibid., 172.

[17] Ibid., 175.

[18] Ibid., 176.

[19] Ibid., 178.

[20] Ibid., 179.

Filmer's entire line of argumentation based on Adam's creation and titles was full of errors and spurious logic. To quote Locke, "This first erroneous Principle failing, the whole Fabrick of this vast Engine of Absolute Power and Tyranny, drops down of it self, and there needs no more to be said in answer al all that he builds upon so false and frail a Foundation."[21]

While Locke spelled out his theories of natural equality more explicitly in the *Second Treatise*, one finds that Locke found ample evidence in the stories of Genesis. When Locke spoke of equality, he did not mean it in the egalitarian sense. He meant it strictly in the natural sense, i.e. men at their essential base are equal even if class structures and property rights inevitably lead to practical inequality. However, while society may appropriate the position of human beings based on ability and utility, the ultimate source of authority stems from the freedom of human beings to contract into such a society. In this regard, the appropriation of human beings stems not from regal authority but from consent of the people.

Locke's primary biblical justification for this position stemmed from a commonality he saw with Adam and the rest of humankind. As Locke argued when addressing the issue of God's donation of regal authority to Adam, "The Text will be only the more directly against him [Filmer], and shew that God in this Donation, gave the World to Mankind in common, and not to Adam in particular."[22] Locke justified this view with Genesis 1:16 where God says "Let us make man to our image and Likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the

[21] Ibid., 190.

[22] Ibid., 161.

beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth." It is the "them" that Locke thought dealt a decisive blow to Filmer and proved the natural equality of all human beings. As Locke argued, "even those who were to have the *Image* of God, the Individuals of that Species of *Man* that he was going to make, for that *Them* should signifie *Adam* singly, exclusive of the rest, that should be in the World with him, is against both Scripture and Reason."[23]

Locke's emphasis on the Image of God was crucial to his theory of equality. It was the Image that gave human beings their joint and capable dominion over one another and over nature. To grant human beings as being made in the image of God was to grant them all as "Intellectual Creature[s]"[24] It was to testify to the general intellectual nature of mankind. Locke cited the 8th Psalm where David says "Thou hast made him little lower than the Angels, thou hast made him to have Dominion." For Locke, such a passage could have been idiosyncratic to King David but must have been a declaration about the "Species of Mankind."[25] The Image of God which resided in all human beings, Locke would use again in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, to demonstrate that while all human beings have equal potential for moral living under the natural and positive laws of God, only a minority of privileged humans who encounter the Gospel receive the benefits of the Law of Faith.

Locke worked out his views on equality much more fully and on purely reasoned grounds in the *Second Treatise*, but his opposition to Filmer's views on Adam's regal authority demonstrates that Locke believed the Old Testament, and specifically Genesis,

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[23] Ibid., 162.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

to be compatible with a theory of equality if not properly ground it.[26] Thus, while the *First Treatise* exemplifies the literary techniques typical to a political pamphlet, namely hyperbole and straw man attacking, the *First Treatise* also shows that the Old Testament at least informed Locke's views on equality and toleration if not wholly shaped them. The Old Testament in this regard could elucidate the anthropological conditions of all human beings and account for their commonalities, even if woven into a larger narrative about ancient Israel and its special relationship to God and the world.

Locke's *First Treatise of Government* and the Chronicle of the Old Testament:

If one of Locke's central aims in the *First Treatise* was to establish the equality of human beings by refuting that God had first granted sovereignty over human beings to Adam, Locke also sought to refute that Adam had bequeathed that power to successive kings including the current monarchs. As shown above, the refutation of the first premise relied on straight forward reading of Genesis, showing where Filmer had taken unwarranted liberties with his interpretation of the creation story and Adam's place within created nature and human society. To refute the second premise, Locke relied on the method of John Lightfoot who had demonstrated how one might properly chronicle the Old Testament history in spite of its canonical order often distorting its historical chronology.

[26] As noted in the previous chapter when discussing the work of Leo Strauss, political scientists are often torn on whether or not Locke's political philosophy simply squares with certain biblical interpretations or rests on them. Jeremy Waldron and Ian Harris have more or less, in my view, settled the debate on this but certain political scientists continue to insist that Locke's political philosophy owes nothing to his Christian worldview. See Jeremy Waldron's *God, Locke, and Equality* and Ian Harris' *The Mind of John Locke: A Study of Political Theory in Its Setting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

John Lightfoot (1602-1675) was considered to be one of the leading English Hebraists of the seventeenth century, devoting much of his life to interpreting Talmudic and Rabbinic writings alongside the Hebrew Bible, as well as demonstrating the Talmudic theological threads of the New Testament.[27] In some regards, it is remarkable that Locke engaged so heavily with Lightfoot as the two had somewhat different political and theological leanings. Lightfoot was a crucial member of the Westminster Assembly, a council convened before and during the English Civil War by the "Long Parliament" of Charles I to determine how closely the Church of England would imitate the Church of Scotland in creed and structure. Lightfoot was one of the only councilmen to uphold the Erastian position that advocated for the Episcopal structure of Bishop governance with civil magistrates enforcing the governance of Bishops. In short, though Lightfoot sided with the Presbyterians over and against the dissenters to maintain a degree of church hegemony, he believed in a more authoritarian and Royalist view of the Church of England than Locke could have possibly preferred.[28] Lightfoot was also an explicit Trinitarian, a position that though Locke never refuted, saw no reason to defend in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*. Still, Locke's Bentley Bible shows more

[27] John Lightfoot has received relatively little attention in the history of both seventeenth-century England and the history of biblical interpretation. The only two full-length works to discuss John Lightfoot are a dissertation by Chaim Eliezer Schertz entitled "Christian Hebraism in 17th century England as Reflected in the Works of John Lightfoot," (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977) and Jace R. Broadhurst's *What is the Literal Sense? Considering the Hermeneutic of John Lightfoot* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012).

[28] This outline of Lightfoot's positions is reported in the opening preface by John Pitman in *The Whole Works of John Lightfoot* vol. I, ed. Rev. John Rogers Pitman (London: J.F. Dove, 1815), v-c.

commonplacing of John Lightfoot than any other author and the method of argumentation in the *First Treatise* shows Lightfoot's influence on Locke.[29]

Lightfoot's scholarly corpus is quite large, with the 1815 edition of Lightfoot's "Whole Works" spanning twelve volumes, over 400 pages a piece. Lightfoot's most influential work was his *Horae Hebraica et Talmudicae*, a work that demonstrated the Hebrew and Talmudic influences on the New Testament, and Locke's interleaved Bibles show sporadic engagement with the *Horae* in Locke's studies of the Gospels. Yet, another work that influenced Locke was Lightfoot's *A Chronicle of the Times, and the Order of the Texts of the Old Testament*, and it was this work that influenced Locke's historical understanding of the Old Testament. By the standards of modern biblical studies, the *Chronicle* has a rather banal aim, to arrange the Old Testament passages in such a way that they reflect the chronological history of the ancient Israelites. Lightfoot noted a Jewish maxim and belief that "the order and place of a text, as it stands in the Bible, doth not always infer or enforce the very time of the story . . . nay, it occurreth very oft,--stories are laid out of their natural and chronical place, and thing are very frequently related before, which in order of time, occurred after."[30]

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[29] Jace Broadhurst notes that Lightfoot's hermeneutical principles had a "pre-critical" dimension to them in that Lightfoot's reading principles involved straightforward and somewhat common sense approaches to Scripture while acknowledging certain authoritative aspects of interpreting Scripture. As Broadhurst notes, Lightfoot's hermeneutic incorporated five key elements, "1) reading logically and reasonably, 2) reading slowly and carefully (even perhaps critically), 3) reading historically and chronologically, 4) reading ecclesiastically, and 5) reading Christologically" (17).

While Locke in his own interpretation eschewed the ecclesiastical and Christological dimensions of interpretation, he certainly accepted the first three aspects of interpretation, and agreed with Lightfoot that the challenge of biblical interpretation revolved around the paradox of the Bible being both a fully human and fully Divine book. Thus, Locke most likely found himself impressed with Lightfoot's erudition and careful approach to the Scripture while remaining agnostic on the Christological and ecclesiological dimensions, especially since Locke had studied Lightfoot well before Locke had worked out his own mature Christological and ecclesiological positions.

[30] John Lightfoot, *A Chronicle of the Times, and the Order of the Texts of the Old Testament* in *The Whole Works of John Lightfoot* vol. II, ed. Rev. John Rogers Pitman (London: J.F. Dove, 1815), lxi.

Unlike some modern interpreters, though, Lightfoot did not see this disordering of texts as stemming from political, textual, or scribal circumstances in the reception history of the Old Testament. Rather, the "dislocations" were part of the "majesticknesses" of the Scriptures, validated by the Gospels which were also written with historical inconsistencies between them.[31] It was one of the spiritual challenges of the "Holy Ghost" who "marcheth and passeth through the Scriptures" that serious students of the Scripture should "take up the Bible before him in the proper order of its times and stories; and to be acquainted where the method of it is direct, and where transposed, and how and where to place those transpositions."[32] Thus, Lightfoot's *Chronicle* set out to "harmonize" the texts of the Old Testament so that their proper historical order was plain to see for all readers, though in keeping with the tradition of scholarly humility, Lightfoot recognized the inevitability of his own errors and encouraged other students to embark on their own quests for harmonization.

Lightfoot's chronicle is long and in many respects outdated, as he assumed the world, corresponding to the Old Testament, to be approximately 2300 years old. The exposition was also, at times, rather technical, noting, for example, the cubic parameters of Noah's ark or the specific months of the Israelite jubilees. Lightfoot's chronicles also expanded into the New Testament, as he sought to harmonize the "evangelists" as the "continuance and chronicle method of the history doth require."[33] However, what united Lightfoot's work was a belief that the Bible contained a continuous narrative embedded

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[31] Ibid., lxii.

[32] Ibid.

[33] John Lightfoot, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists, Among Themselves, and with the Old Testament* in "The Whole Works of John Lightfoot" vol. V, ed. Rev. John Rogers Pitman (London: J.F. Dove, 1815), 93.

within the historically fractured canon, and that the chronicle method enabled readers to see the unfolding of the narrative in clear and logical ways.[34] Lightfoot's aim, thus, was to make the central messages of the Bible plainer and transparent.

It would be a mistake, of course, to think that Lightfoot invented the Chronicle method of biblical history. In fact, Lightfoot was not even the most well-known chronicler of his day, with that distinction belonging to James Ussher, the Irish archbishop who wrote a chronicle of the Old Testament entitled *Annales veteris testament, a prima mundi origine deducti,* published in 1650.[35] Ussher's chronology was on the whole more influential than Lightfoot's and was even used in the marginalia of subsequent Authorized editions of the King James Bible to denote the historical timeline of the Genesis stories. Ussher's chronology, like Lightfoot's, owed much to Egyptological and Greek sources in addition to Judaic sources. Peter Laslett in his footnotes to Locke's *First Treatise* points out that Locke often relied on Ussher's chronology and often followed it with "startling exactness."[36]

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[34] Lightfoot, in his *Harmony of the Four Evangelists* listed four aims for the chronicle method: 1) "to lay the text of the evangelists in that order, which the nature and progress of the story doth necessarily require." 2) "To give a reason of this order, why the text is so laid, more largely or more briefly, according as the plainness, or difficulty, of the connexion, doth call for it." 3) "To give some account of the difficulties in the language of the original . . . either being naturally so in the Greek itself;--or being made difficulities when they were not so by . . . some expositors." 4) "To clear and open the sense and meaning of the text all along as it went,--especially, where it was of more abstruseness and obscurity" (94).

[35] One reason for Ussher's superior legacy to Lightfoot's stems from Ussher's overall theological impact on the seventeenth century. Lightfoot primarily engaged with historical analysis of the Scripture and while they reveal theological positions, they were tertiary to his desire to show more plainly the chronicle of the Old Testament and the Judaic influences on the New Testament. Plus, Lightfoot's Erastian preferences had fallen out of favor with large parts of the scholarly community by the time of the Restoration. Ussher, however, was both an influential Calvinist theologian and a chronicler. For a good and recent account of Ussher's theological positions, see Richard Snoddy's *The Soteriology of James Ussher: The Act and Object of Saving Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[36] Locke, *Two Treatises,* 253.

Yet, when we account for Locke's Bentley Bible, it is clear that while Locke used dates that corresponded with Ussher's chronology, Locke was more heavily influenced by Lightfoot than Ussher. Locke's notes on Genesis, especially, are almost entirely devoted to Lightfoot, for example Genesis 8 (the story of the flood) using Lightfoot's dating to understand the months and seasons of the flood.[37] By contrast, no references to Ussher are found in Locke's Old Testament notes. Thus, while Locke never names Lightfoot, or Ussher for that matter, when critiquing Filmer's use of biblical history, one sees the composite influence of Lightfoot on Locke.

The last three chapters of Locke's *First Treatise* were devoted to refuting Filmer's claims on the hereditary succession of monarchical power. Locked opened his eighth chapter on the "conveyance" of Adam's Power arguing that Filmer "having not been very happy in any Proof he brings for the Sovereignty of *Adam*, is not much more fortunate in conveying it to future Princes, who, if his Politicks be true, must all derive their Titles from that first Monarch."[38] To refute this point, Locke incorporated elements of his earlier strategy, a straightforward reading of Genesis based on simple deductions. Locke argued that if Adam bequeathed power to his progeny, then like all inherited claims, both in title and possessions, the power would be split among all its inheritors, as Adam had no one son but many. Further, there is no contractual relationship between father and son, only father and mother. Thus, Filmer displayed a lapse in logic by claiming succession of power through "begetting" while leaving the contractual aspects

[37] Locke, Bentley Bible, 8.

[38] Locke, *Two Treatises*, 199.

of family life entirely alone, a curious lapse as contracts, not biological imperatives, bestow the formal transfer of power.[39]

However, when criticizing Filmer's historical understanding, of monarchical transfer of power, he relied on the Chronicle method of biblical history to undercut Filmer, especially in Locke's final chapter XI "Who Heir?" Locke's use of chronology can be rather tedious, and we can surmise that some of Locke's chronological arguments have been lost to history. Laslett notes that when Locke makes the chronological argument central, the Treatise comes to an end, noting that chronology "presumably occupied the early part of the missing portion."[40] Further, Locke's exposition is at times, and ironically, out of chronology as he often interrupts an exposition on established Israelite society to discuss the Flood or other parts of early Genesis. Still, Locke gives many examples of chronology in his critique of Filmer and the best and most exhaustively argued is his chronological exposition of the Israelite Kings.

Locke acknowledged that questions concerning political power turned not on whether or not concentrated power was acceptable, but who should be entrusted with it and it was within this framework that he framed the debate of heredity and biblical chronology. Locke quoted Filmer as saying "When God gave the Israelites Kings, he re-established the ancient and prime Right of Lineal Succession to Paternal Government."[41] Yet Locke demonstrated that Filmer's reading of the text and chronological understanding were wrong. However, Locke argued that no such law decreeing the "re-

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[39] Ibid., 213.

[40] Peter Laslett, Footnote, in John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 262.

[41] Locke, *Two Treatises*., 257.

establishment" of Kings is found, only laws that establish new forms of authority within ancient Israel. Further, the chronology of authority in the Old Testament gives no indication of succession. Locke argued that Saul, who was the first king of Israel, was from the tribe of Benjamin, whereas David, the next king, descended from the posterity of Judah.[42] One could make similar arguments about Solomon and Jeraboam, showing that no such chronology in the Old Testament demonstrates a successive right of kings, a process of one king passing the torch to another. What one finds, instead is a constant state of interrupted authority in the Old Testament, and while it is true that men are always the wielders of power, they quite often never directly succeed from their predecessor.

Locke's final way of proving this viewpoint was to focus on the war between the Levite and the Benjamites in the book of Judges. Locke argued that "when he finds, that the *Levite* appeals to the People for Justice; that it was the Tribes and the Congregation, that debated, resolved, and directed all that was done on that occasion, he must concluded, either that *God* was not *careful to preserve the Fatherly Authority* amongst his own People," or Locke continued that "*Fatherly Authority* may be preserved, where there is no Monarchical Government."[43] Locke concluded that these premises invalidate the chronological argument that power had been passed successively to other kings. It either severs fatherly authority from monarchical authority or it raises the question how fatherly authority squares with the rule and consent of the people, described in the book of Judges that lasted for "400 years after."[44]

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[42] Ibid., 258.

[43] Ibid., 261.

[44] Ibid.

Locke finished the *First Treatise,* or at least his published *First Treatise*, with his strongest appeal to chronology noting that Filmer can give no direct evidence how fatherly authority was passed from "their coming into *Egypt*" to when "God gave the *Israelites* a King about 400 years more."[45] As Locke concluded, "So that of 1150 years Year that they were God's peculiar Pepole, they had Hereditatry Kingly Government amongst them, not one thif of the time, and of that time there is not the least Footstep of one moment of *Paternal Government, nor the Re-establishment of the Ancient and Prime Right of Linel succession to it,* whether we suppose it derived . . . from *David, Saul, Abraham,* or . . . from *Adam."*[46]

While it is clear that Locke used chronological methods to refute Filmer, he did so more on negative than positive grounds. Locke rarely takes the time to offer a counter and more plausible chronicle of the Ole Testament sovereignty but only offers enough chonology to show the implausibility of Filmer's account. Locke's negative use of chronology rather than his positive use may explain why Locke never directly cited Lightfoot or Ussher in the *First Treatise*. Locke's only goal was to expose the fallacies of Filmer's position without introducing new, and perhaps controversial, historical perspectives in the *First Treatise*. Considering that both Ussher and Lightfoot were known as much for their ecclesiological positions as chronological ones, Locke may have, for rhetorical reasons, let them stay quietly in the background. It is also possible that direct references appear in the materials lost to history.

[45] Ibid., 263.

[46] Ibid.

What is clear is that while it is difficult to draw direct comparisons to Locke's *First Treatise* with Lightfoot and Ussher, the chronological methods employed in their works influenced Locke's understanding of Old Testament history. Only a responsible historical understanding of the Israelites from the time of Adam to the establishment of their kingdom could properly contextualize modern debates on sovereignty and when viewed in this manner, Filmer fell quite short of proving his positions.

Locke on Old Testament Revelation:

As demonstrated above, Locke's main writing on the Old Testament in the *First Treatise* was concerned with refuting Filmer's positions concerning the connection of patriarchs and monarchs on both the grounds that the Old Testament demonstrates no absolute hierarchies nor does its chronology validate the succession of monarchical authority from Adam. Yet, Locke also understood that the Old Testament spoke to the issue of revelation, and while Locke wrote no extensive treatise on Old Testament revelation, his notes reveal that he strove to account for it, especially in regard to squaring Old Testament revelation with the revelation of the Gospel in the New Testament.

When thinking through the parameters of Old Testament revelation, Locke's views of revelation were epistemologically straightforward. Locke, unlike say Spinoza,[47] had no sense that revelation and reason were often at odds with one another. Rather, Locke believed that the Old Testament accounted for the revelations granted to men from God, or his messengers, and it was information that was as valid as information drawn from the sensory world.

We must recall that Locke had discussed the general boundaries of revelation in his *Essay*, in his chapter "Of Faith and Reason, and their distinct Provinces." Here, Locke argued that revelation is an "extraordinary way of communication" that comes from God whose validation depends on the "Credit of the Proposer" not the "Deductions of Reason."[48] Further, this communication cannot contain new simple ideas that transcend the boundaries of sensation and reflection. Rather, it can only communicate new complex ideas that while are not created through the deductions of reason, do not contradict reason. Thus, revelation works as something of a short cut rather than a foundationally new way of knowledge. Revelation reveals information that theoretically is attainable by reason alone, but revelation provides instantaneous information when the frailty of the human mind fails to grasp it by reason alone.

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[47] Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Michael Silverthorn, ed. Jonathan Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Two of Spinoza's most controversial claims in the TTP were that prophecy reveals no new knowledge but only makes knowledge accessible to those without the capacity to reason for themselves and that prophets, when interpreting revelation, rely on the symbolic forms of the imagination and not pure reason. Thus, Spinoza's concept of revelation was highly restrictive and made no room for the imparting of new knowledge or parameters of reason. While Locke, as argued in the previous chapter in regard to faith and reason, shared Spinoza's commitment to the compartmentalization of faith and reason, Locke had no sense that faith and reason are assigned to different faculties. Locke, throughout his life, maintained his commitment to the principle that reason works with faith and revelation and that faith and revelation are both verified and withdrawn from the faculty of reason, not the imagination.

[48] Locke, *Essay*, 689.

Locke carried over this straightforwardness when discussing Old Testament revelation. Two entries in his theological manuscripts particularly unpack his views of Old Testament revelation. The first stems from MS Locke c. 27 from a sheet of parchment entitled "Revelation its several ways under the old testament." Locke listed six forms of revelation found commonly in the Old Testament. The most common is the direct voice of God speaking to his people, as found in the creation story and in the books of Samuel and Kings where God literally calls out to his people. Locke equated this kind of calling out to "Prophetik languages," noting that the voice of God could manifest itself in a variety of mediums.[49] Locke noted that in addition to the voice of God, revelation could come through apparitions, visions, dreams, angels, prophets, and on occasion, the spirit of God.[50] Along with these forms of revelation, Locke compiled some of the common verses in the Old Testament where these revelations were reported.

Another entry stems from MS Locke c. 30, a small folio where Locke continued to commonplace scholarly opinion on the New Testament. Locke penned a long entry on the Gospel of John 3:34[51] where Locke noted a similar division of revelation in the Old Testament but reduced them to four forms of revelation:

> There seems to me to have been 4 ways whereby god revealed himself to his people. 1. The lowest way was by Urim and Thummim by which he gave orders to his vice generals the rulers of Israel. After Moses in extraordinary cases when they consulted him. The next degree of Revelation was by visions and dreams . . . by God special commissions to princes or peoples or particular persons to reform their manners and advise them of things to come. was by an audible voice as a man speaks to his friend Ex XXXIII. 9.11 Num. VII.89 But this was still by measure. For Moses had not this voice to direct him in every thing he said and he had this revelation but sometimes and on some occassions 4 the last and highest

[49] John Locke, MS Locke c. 27, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 138.

[50] Ibid., 139-140.

[51] "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words for God. For God giveth not the spirit by measure into him."

> degree or revelation was that given to our saviour and pressed here by the spirit given not by measure. there was noe stint of it, noe intervals wherein our saviour had not the presence and assistance of this spirit. Where every thing has was of divine authority every thing he did was according to the will of god. and by this I think we may understand that expression of St. Paul Col. II.9 for in him dwelleth all the fullnesse of the Godhead bodily. viz. that the spirit of god without stint or measure was as certainly and constantly in him to be the source of all his words and actions, as our souls are annexed and tied to our bodys as the principle of action in us. The context will lead us to this sense, for the Apostle there is perswading the Col. to rest satisfied in the truth and wisdom of the Gospel revealed by Jesus Christ. JL[52]

In this note, we see Locke not only reducing the revelation to four forms but ranking them in order. The lowest form was having vice-generals speak on God's behalf with the second degree coming from visions and dreams. The second best form of revelation stemmed from "audible voices" with the fourth and best coming from "our savior" and "pressed here by the spirit."

Locke argued accordingly that Jesus Christ did not represent an epistemologically new form of revelation but rather was the best and most pure revelation when put in context with the Old Testament. This form of revelation is compatible with the forms of knowledge outlined in the fourth book of the *Essay*. We recall that Locke had discussed a threefold hierarchy concerning the degrees of our knowledge: intuitive knowledge, demonstrative knowledge, and sensitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is knowledge that is self-evident and cannot be reasonably doubted. Demonstrative knowledge relies on proofs and propositions, and sensitive knowledge depends upon verifiability and is prone to the weakness of memory.[53] Intuitive knowledge is the strongest form of knowledge with sensitive knowledge being the weakest.

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[52] John Locke, MS Locke f. 30, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 42. JL was Locke's way of marking a note written in his own voice.

[53] Locke, *Essay*, 531-537.

Locke argued for revelation along the same epistemological parameters as knowledge in general. Revelation could either be self-evident as it was to Jesus Christ and St. Paul, or it could be sensitive as it was in the Old Testament. Further, experiencing the voice of God through the medium of a vice-general constitutes a lower form of revelation than revelation from the voice of God as one now has an extra layer of sensory material (two voices, God and the vice-general) which inevitably creates less precise and accurate information. Still, Locke had no suspicion that revelation works according to a separate form of logic or signifiers.

To give an analogy to Locke's sense of revelation, we might imagine a set of raw materials and tools set before us with the task of building a sailboat. We would concede that with no instruction and perhaps even no training, an individual might very well using nothing other than his deductive reasoning assemble a sail boat, perhaps even a stellar one. Nevertheless, while such results are theoretically possible, it would be much easier if we found an instruction manual on how to assemble the boat. It would be even better, though, if the original designer stood beside us instructing us step by step on how best to assemble the boat. And finally, we would be helped best if we suddenly were granted a flash of inspiration in which the skills and direction were implanted within us so that at the most intuitive level, we could assemble the boat.

The first of these might correspond to receiving directions from an inspired vice-general; the second might come from hearing the voice of God directly; and the third would come only from immediate inspiration, found in Jesus Christ and St. Paul. Thus, like Locke's political philosophy, the crux of the divide comes not in the essential difference between knowledge and revelation but in between the theoretical potential of

natural knowledge and its inevitable shortcomings once applied by real human beings in real time. Revelation works to bridge these two poles and assist human beings when frailty prevents them perfecting their own knowledge from deduction alone. And Locke was consistent on this principle when interpreting both the Old and the New Testaments.

The Covenantal Foundations of the New Testament:

Beyond the historical and political arguments of the *First Treatise* and the explications of Old Testament revelation, Locke also engaged with the Old Testament on the same legal and lawful grounds that he engaged with the New Testament. In fact, Locke saw the Old Testament as providing the legal foundation for the New Testament, even if the law of the New Testament would replace significant, if not entire, portions of Old Testament law according to the Gospels and St. Paul.

I will discuss this connection at length in the next chapters on Locke and the Gospels and St. Paul, but Locke in the *Reasonableness of Christianity* would describe Judaic law as a positive manifestation of natural law that contained both idiosyncratic ceremonial laws and universal moral laws. Locke called this the "Law of Works" and was first delivered to Moses in the book of Exodus.[54] A condition of the law of works was that it demanded perfect obedience as God's nature demanded it. Locke contrasted this to the Law of Faith that substituted belief for perfect conformity. Yet, Locke stated clearly that "were there no *Law of Works*, there could be no *Law of Faith*."[55] This

[54] John Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures*, in *John Locke: Writings on Religions*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 98.

[55] Ibid., 99.

understanding of the Law of Works versus the Law of Faith would be crucial to his arguments in the *Reasonableness*.

Further, as I will show in Locke's analysis of St. Paul, Locke believed that the Law of Faith replaced the moral components of Judaic Law and rendered the ceremonial aspects of Judaic Law arbitrary and perhaps even dangerous. Locke was clear that to exert ceremonial laws as fundamental to the Christian church represented a flawed and destructive view of Christianity, a point he made abundantly clear in his study of St. Paul's letters, especially the letter to the Galatians and to the Ephesians.

Conclusion:

Locke's overall understanding of the Old Testament was as a canon of texts that had important ramifications for both ecclesiological and civil society. On the one hand, Locke clearly believed that the Old Testament played a vital role in the proper interpretation of the New Testament, as the Old Testament laid the groundwork for both the revelation and the laws of the New Testament. Indeed, while Locke never focused on the Old Testament with the same intensity and focus as he did the New Testament, Locke clearly accepted the Old Testament as of fundamental importance to contextualizing and understanding the New Testament and thus, Locke ascribed as much divine authority to the Old Testament as he did the New.

On the other hand, Locke recognized that the Old Testament represented a pre-Christian world, where human folly falling short of divine and natural law was on full display throughout its stories. The ancient Jews were not privy to any Law of Faith to guide them through the challenges of living up to principles of natural law. In this

respect, the Old Testament also spoke to the historical precedents of the challenges of civil society as outlined in the *First Treatise*. It told the story of a people who were charged with the task of incorporating their religion into their society instead of incorporating their religion into churches that were distinct from the larger society. It is true that in Locke's own time, the Church of England remained woven into the fabric of every day English life; yet Locke's views on toleration expressed in the *Epistola de Tolerantia* demonstrate that Locke, at least conceptually, viewed the church and state as two separate entities.[56] One finds no such conceptual distinction in the Old Testament, and thus it spoke to the problems of civil society as much as ecclesiological society. Locke could articulate a view of equality based on Old Testament sources that would carry over to his reasoned and secular arguments about natural equality. As demonstrated, Locke was constantly balancing the Old Testament as both a source of sacred *and* natural history.

It is difficult to know why Locke never gave the same theological attention to the Old Testament that he gave to the New. After all, this endeavor was one of the chief aims of John Lightfoot who he studied in depth. One possible explanation is linguistic. While Locke had basic training in ancient Hebrew and his notes and treatises show engagement with the original Hebrew, he doubtlessly found himself in uneasy territory when compared to the Hebraic skills of Lightfoot, Ussher, and others. However, while

[56] Locke had different but overlapping definitions of a commonwealth and a church in his Letter on Toleration. He defined a commonwealth as "a Society of Men constituted only for the procuring, preserving, and advancing of their own *Civil Interests*" (12). Whereas he defined the church as a "free society of men who voluntarily come together to worship God in a way that they think is acceptable to Him and effective in saving their souls" (15). Thus, while Locke thought that they had different ends, they both involve consent and freedom and as he would argue are capable of living conterminously with one another without one intruding on the freedoms of the others. See John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings*, ed. Mark Goldie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010).

some of his critics did criticize his Greek translations, especially in his work on St. Paul, Locke felt at home enough with the Greek to engage with the New Testament at the level of the Renaissance Humanists.

It is also possible that as Locke only devoted exclusive attention to biblical topics in the last years of his life, he simply ran out of time. If Locke had been younger, he may very well have turned to a more in depth study of the Old Testament upon completing his paraphrases and notes of St. Paul. What can be said with certainty, however, is that when Locke did engage with the Old Testament, he did so with the same care and attention he gave to all of his studies, including the New Testament which will the subject of the next two chapters.

Chapter 4

Locke and the Gospels: Christ as the Messiah, The Justification of the Believer, and The Law of Faith

Introduction:

John Locke composed his most mature writing on theology, *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures*, in the winter of months of 1694 and 1695. In a letter to Philip Limborch, a Dutch theologian whom Locke befriended while exiled in Amsterdam, Locke reflected on his *Reasonableness of Christianity* noting that "From an intent and careful reading of the New Testament the conditions of the new covenant and teaching of the Gospel became clearer to me, as it seemed to me, than the noontide light, and I am fully convinced that a sincere reader of the Gospel cannot be in doubt as to what the Christian faith is."[1] Locke's *Reasonableness*, although not his only writing on the Christian faith, presented his most expansive interpretation of the Gospels of the New Testament.

Justin Champion has remarked that Locke's *Reasonableness* is something of an "historical enigma," as its reception has existed at the convoluted intersection of reason and scripture in the modern era.[2] Further, Champion argues that reason, rather than Scripture has most defined the reception of Locke's *Reasonableness*, even though Locke sought to make reason and Scripture equally authoritative in his work. While twentieth-

[1] John Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, Volume V. ed. E.S. de Beer (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1979), 370.

[2] Justin Champion, "' A Law of Continuity in the Progress of Theology': Assessing the Legacy of John Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695-2004" in *Eighteenth-Century Thought*, ed. James G. Buickerood (New York: AMS Press, 2007), 112.

century scholars have often seen the *Reasonableness* as something of an afterthought in Locke's corpus, Champion notes that it circulated quite widely in Locke's own time and immediately after. By the 1750s, the *Reasonableness* had undergone ten printings in English, German, and French, and according to one French reviewer, caused quite a stir among the French theological intelligentsia.[3] Champion quotes one reviewer as arguing that in the pages of the *Reasonableness*, one finds that "*la religion Chrétienne est tres reasonable mais en voulant établir que la Christianisme est raisonable, il le reduit presque a rien."*[4] Yet, by the late eighteenth-century, orthodox minded Anglicans referenced the *Reasonableness* in order to undermine the "contagion of infidelity" promoted by atheists and Deists.[5] Thus, Champion notes that Locke's *Reasonableness* could be employed from both sides of the debates regarding orthodoxy in the eighteenth century, perhaps demonstrating Locke's unique place within the history of the English Church.

Many modern scholars, as Champion notes and was discussed in the introduction and chapter 1, have employed the *Reasonableness* as a litmus test to determine Locke's theological character.[6] One of the main preoccupations, and this dissertation cannot claim exception, is to determine whether or not Locke was indeed a sincere Christian and if so, what kind of Christian he was. That some modern scholars have labeled Locke as a dissenter or a Socinian, Locke would have doubtless found unsurprising, as his own

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[3] Ibid.

[4] "The Christian religion is very reasonable but in trying to establish its reasonableness, it reduces it to almost nothing." Champion, here, is quoting Jorn Schosler's "*Le Christianisme raisionable et le debat sur le 'Socianism' de John Locke dans la presse Francaise de la premiere moitie du XVIIIE siècle," Lias* 21 (1994): 311-312. Translation is mine.

[5] Champion, "The Legacy," 114.

[6] Ibid., 120.

contemporaries made similar accusations. However, that some have accused Locke of being clandestinely opposed to Christianity *in toto*, one can only imagine the extent of Locke's horror.

Some of this misconception may stem from the modern sources. One of the standard modern editions of the *Reasonableness* is I. T. Ramsey's edition published by Stanford University Press in 1958. While the text accurately renders Locke's own words, Ramsey edited out many of Locke's scriptural references in order to make the prose more accessible to students. Thus, studying only the Ramsey edition leaves readers with a distorted view of Locke's commitment to grounding his views plainly in Scripture, often to the point of repetition and tedium. However, much of this misconception stems from all too many readers uninterested in Locke's theology, preferring instead to dissect his political and philosophical thought and when it suits them, throw in a reference or two from the *Reasonableness* for context. However, a close read of the *Reasonableness* reveals a coherent and consistent theological system that is well founded in Scripture.

I make three claims about Locke's interpretation of the Gospels that will be supported primarily from the *Reasonableness* and *Vindications* but also from Locke's Bentley Bible, theological manuscripts, and the works of Joseph Mede: 1) While often labeled a Socinian, Locke's Christology emphasized Christ's office of Messiah while downplaying, though not dismissing his incarnational status as begotten from God. 2) Locke's Messianic interpretation of Christ, in turn, emphasized the justification of the believer and eschewed notions of original sin and sanctification that were part of the Anglican tradition and the broader Protestant tradition. 3) In conjunction, Locke's interpretation of the Gospels was lawful in nature, as it turned on the Law of Faith.

Locke's Christology: Jesus as the Messiah

Shortly after its publication in the summer of 1695, Locke's *Reasonableness* became a work of controversy. John Edwards, an Anglican clergyman, penned *Some Thoughts Concerning the Causes and Occasions of Atheism* in the late months of 1695. Edwards' treatise was not written as an overt rebuttal of Locke's *Reasonableness* but as a refutation of the *"Atheistical* Spirit prevailing in the World."[7] Edwards took many thinkers to task over the limits of philosophical inquiry, and Edwards only addressed Locke secondarily on the issue of the Trinity. Edwards accused Locke of being "all over Socinianized" as Locke sought to prove that "the believing of Christ to be the Messiah is the only Point of Faith that is necessary saying."[8] According to Edwards, this claim regresses to the inevitable conclusion that all other doctrines must "fall a sacrifice to the Darling Notion of the Antitrinitarians, namely that Christ is not the true God, and coessential with his Father."[9]

In spite of these charges, Edwards praised the "Gentleman who is suppos'd to be by some the author of this Treatise" (meaning Locke) and opined that Locke's other works were so perspicacious, that surely the *Reasonableness* had been wrongly attributed to him. Still, the charges by Edwards against the *Reasonableness*, if not Locke, set off a debate between Edwards and Locke on the foundational tenets of Christianity, the nature

[7] John Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Causes and Occasions of Atheism* (London: J. Robinson, 1695), 2.

[8] Ibid., 114.

[9] Ibid.

of Christ, and its central role in Christian theology.[10] While Locke addressed many interpretations of Christianity beyond Christology, the paranoia of Socinian theology in the late seventeenth-century placed Christology at the center of the debates concerning Locke's *Reasonableness*.

An amorphous yet pejorative category within seventeenth-century political theology, Socinianism typically referred to theologians who questioned or denied the divinity of Christ. It took its name from the sixteenth-century Italian theologian, Faustus Socinus, who questioned the orthodox doctrine of Christ's satisfaction and emphasized his earthly offices over and against his ontological status.[11] Socinus's theology, while always heterodox, influenced many theologians, including seventeenth-century English Arminians and Dutch Remonstrants. While few theologians explicitly denied Christ's divinity in the late seventeenth century, orthodox Anglicans frequently employed the term Socinianism—along with deism and atheism—to condemn what they viewed as theological heresy.

In seventeenth-century England where church and state knew no separation, Socinianism represented two main threats to Anglican orthodoxy.

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[10] Locke would write both the First and the Second Vindications of the Reasonableness as direct responses to Edwards' attacks on him. As Victor Nuovo has suggested in his critical introduction to the Vindications, it is hard to know why Locke attacked Edwards with such vigor. It is possible that Locke saw Edwards as an easy target to clear himself of any Socinian charges. Regardless, Locke's invectives against Edwards in the first Vindication only increased the vitriol of the rhetoric. See Nuovo's section on "Locke's First Vindication" (xlvi-xlix) in John Locke, *Vindications of the Reasonableness*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012) for a full overview of this controversy.

[11] For a good introduction to Socinus, see Alan, Gomes, "Faustus Socinus 'De Jesu Christo Servatore,' Part III: Historical Introduction, Translation, and Critical Notes," (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990). Gomes notes that denials of the trinity were only a by-product of a larger concern for Socinians, namely that Christ had merited human salvation with his death. Socinus and others like him feared the antinomian consequences of such a doctrine, and emphasized Christ as a figure to be imitated, not just believed in.

First, if Christ were merely human, it rendered the doctrine of Atonement meaningless. Athanasius, the great fourth-century defender of Nicene theology, had argued that God revealed himself in the incarnation of Christ and that God's incarnate self-disclosure conquered death and sin in the world.[12] Thus, from an orthodox Nicene perspective, to reduce Christ to mere man would deprive him of his salvific function. Second, if Christ were merely human, he could not institute an earthly priesthood, rendering Anglican clerical claims to ecclesial authority via apostolic succession arbitrary. In this vein, Socinianism represented not only a soteriological crisis but also an institutional one, as arguments for the Anglican Church as THE representation of Christ on Earth were married to Trinitarian theology. While Trinitarian dissent dated as far back as the fourth-century writings of Arius, theologians like Arthur Bury at Oxford, whose 1694 *The Naked Gospel* argued for the mystery of Christ's essence,[13] sparked paranoia that the Anglican church, still healing from the divisions of the English Civil Wars and the Revolution of 1688, would be further torn apart by a minority of anticlerical radicals who implemented Unitarian theology to emphasize the importance of

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[12] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. C.S.M.V. (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1944), 41. "And how could this [the restoration of God's image in mankind) be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? . . . The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father Who could recreate man made after the Image. In order to effect this re-creation, however, He had first to do away with death and corruption. Therefore he assumed a human body, in order that in it death might once for all be destroyed, and that men might be renewed according to the Image."

[13] Arthur Bury, *The Naked Gospel* (London: 1690). See especially Chapter VI "Of Faith in Christ, as Savior of the World" and Chapter VII "Of Belief with mere Respect to the Person of God. Inquisitiveness concerning his Incarnation censured; First because Impertinent." Bury, it should be noted, was not explicitly anti-Trinitarian (as few were), but he did emphasize the fusion of the Word with the "Person" of Jesus Christ, implying that Christ was God's great representative on Earth but not necessarily of God's essence. Bury then argued in the seventh chapter that Christ's ultimate essence was irrelevant to saving Grace. To quote Bury, "With mere respect to his [Christ's] Person, it is no more necessary that we understand what he is, than it is for a traveller to understand the features of the sun" (40).

human reason and agency rather than dependence on divine sovereignty and grace.[14]

In spite of accusations of Socinianism, John Locke's own place in the history of Socinianism is highly controversial.[15] Many of Locke's contemporaries agreed with John Edwards that Locke's *Reasonableness* was "all over Socinianized," and modern historians have often concurred that even if clandestinely, Locke was sympathetic to Socinianism.[16] Yet, Locke never, privately or publicly, identified with Socinianism, and in a private notebook, seemingly endorsed a biblical proof for the divine status of Christ.[17] While Locke owned and read Socinian works (despite his claims to the contrary), there is no evidence that he valued them over other theological treatises, as many of his most prized biblical commentators (e.g. John Lightfoot) were firmly Trinitarian. When pressed privately and publicly on the roots of his Christology, Locke insisted that

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[14] For more on the issue of Socinianism and heresy, see J.C.D. Clark *English Society*, 318-422, J.A.I. Champion *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, and Nigel Smith, "'And if God was one of us': Paul Best, John Biddle, and anti-Trinitarian heresy in seventeenth-century England," in *Heresy, Literature, and Politics in Early Modern English Culture*, eds. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 160-184.

[15] For the full context of Locke's alleged Socinianism, see John Higgins-Biddle's "Introduction" to the critical edition of *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), xlii-lxxiv and Victor Nuovo's "Introduction" to the critical edition of the *Vindications of the Reasonableness of Christianity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012), xvii-lxxvii.

[16] John Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Several Causes and Occasions of Atheism* (London: London Gazette, 1695), 113 and John Marshall, *John Locke: Resistance, Religion, and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 384-413.

[17] John Locke, *Adversaria Theologica*, in *John Locke: Writings on Religion*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 27. The *Adversaria* was Locke's private notebook of theological reflection. While Locke wrote out seven proofs for Christ as "*merus homo*," he borrowed all of them from the Unitarian theologian, John Biddle. The one proof for Christ as *"non merus homo,"* Locke deduced on his own and endorsed with his initials. He derived this proof from I Peter, writing that Christ was not a mere human, "because his spirit was in the ancient prophets."

he drew on no theological traditions to develop his arguments in the *Reasonableness*; his only source was "Holy Writ."

While it is impossible to demonstrate the extent of Locke's Socinian commitments, a careful reading of the *Reasonableness* illuminates a clear picture of Locke's Christology. What **is** clear is that Locke argued for a Messianic interpretation of Christ. As Victor Nuovo has noted, Messianic Christianity while always prominent within the Christian tradition is neither the only nor even dominant mode of interpretation of Christ in previous theologians. The other dominant mode of Christology emphasizes Christ's incarnational nature:

> Although both make Christ the centre of salvation, a Messianic Christ achieves this goal through deeds, and he being a king, the benefits of his saving activity are distributed to whose who become his subjects after a judicial process; an incarnational Christ, although not inactive, accomplishes salvation through the communication of his divine being, which he makes available to his beneficiaries by becoming human."[18]

While Nuovo notes that other forms of Christology have also influenced the Christian tradition, namely Christ as an intercessor and Christ as founder of a new race, it is the Messianic and incarnational that have most influenced Christian theology. We also should not see these views of Christ as incompatible, as many theologians have especially interwoven the Messianic and incarnational into one another. However, for Locke the incarnational receives little, if any treatment, and gives way to a thorough Messianic understanding of Christ in the Christian narrative.

Locke demonstrated his commitment to a Messianic Christology early in the *Reasonableness*. Locke noted that the central tenet of Christian belief consisted in what

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[18] Victor Nuovo, "Locke's Christology as a Key to Understanding his Philosophy" in *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment* (New York: Springer, 2011), 77.

the Scriptures note in John 3:36, namely that "believing on the Son is the believing that Jesus was the Messiah; giving Credit to the Miracles he did, and the Profession he made of himself."[19] And Locke noted the many passages of the Scripture that denoted Christ's office as Messiah such as John 6:69, where Peter said "And we believe, and are sure thou art the Messiah, the Son of the Living God," and Matthew 16:16-18, where Peter again said "that Jesus was the Messiah, son of the living God."

Locke then spent much time demonstrating how the Gospels authenticated Jesus as the Messiah. For example in Luke 2:11, the Angel told the shepherds, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; For to you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah the Lord." Further, Jesus told Martha in John 11:27 that "whosoever believe in me shall never did . . . She said unto him, Yeah, Lord, I believe that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Locke noted other examples of this attestation in John 1:41,[20] John 20:30.[21]

According to Locke, the Gospels proclaimed a three-fold declaration of Jesus's status as a Messiah. The first was by Miracles. Locke argued that Jesus represented a historical actualization of Jewish expectations during a time of forsaken prophesy. Locke argued that as prophesy no longer occurred, the Jewish commonwealth under the subjection of Roman law now expected an "extraordinary Person who should have the

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[19]John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Deliver'd in the Scripture*, in *John Locke: Writings on Religion*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 102.

[20] "He findeth first his brother Simon and saith to him: We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

[21] "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book."

Power of doing Miracles."[22] And Locke noted that his followers and believers largely legitimated through testimonials of his miracles as in John 8:31,[23] 10:24,[24] 5:36,[25] and 11:45.[26]

Second, Jesus hinted at his Messiah status through his "phrases and Circumlocution."[27] The most common of these were the Kingdom of God and Heaven. Locke noted the overt political language of Jesus, drawing on the tradition of Isaiah IX that declares "The Government shall be upon his shoulders; he shall be called the Prince of Peace: of the increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no end."[28] Locke noted other passages such as Micah 5:2 that talked of the "Ruler in Israel," and the many passages in the Gospels that referred to the Kingdom of God, such as Luke 16:15[29] and 17:20.[30]

Third, the Apostles declared the doctrine of the Messiah using "plain and direct words."[31] Locke argued that Christ himself never openly and plainly declared himself to be the Messiah as one would have expected. In fact, Locked showed that Christ

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[22] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 113.

[23] "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him: If you continue in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed."

[24] "The Jews therefore came round about him and said to him: How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

[25] "But I have greater testimony than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect, the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me."

[26] "Many therefore of the Jews, who were come to Mary and Martha and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him."

[27] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 114.

[28] Ibid.

[29] "And he said to them: you are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts. For that which is high to men is an abomination before God."

[30] "And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answering them and said: The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

[31] Locke, *Reasonableness*,114.

specifically forbade it in Mark 8:27-30 when he asked the disciples "whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered, and said unto him, Thou art the Messiah. And he charged them **not** to speak, that they knew him" (emphasis mine).[32] Further, Locke cited Luke 4:41 where Jesus specifically rebuked the devil who cried "thou art the Messiah, son of God" and he "suffered them not to speak, that they knew him to be the Messiah," and Mark 3:11 where Christ specifically "charged" the unclean spirits who testified to him being the son of God that they not reveal such knowledge widely.[33]

Locke acknowledged that the self-concealment of Christ was counterintuitive and perhaps strange, but Locke noted the reasoning for this:

> We shall be of another mind, and conclude this proceeding of his according of Divine Wisdom, and suited to a fuller Manifestation and Evidence of his being the Messiah; when we consider, that he was to fill out the time foretold of his Ministry; and after a Life illustrious in Miracles and Good Works, attended with Humility, Meekness, Patience, and Suffering, and every way conformable to the Prophesies of him, should be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and with all quiet and submission be brought to the Cross, though there were no guilt nor fault found in him. This could not have been, if as soon as he appeared in Publick, and began to Preach, he had presently professed himself to have been the Messiah.[34]

Locke argued that the struggles of Jesus's life demonstrated the trouble a full admission of his Messiah status would have caused Jesus, as evidenced by the opposition Jesus encountered from the chief priests and rulers of the Jerusalem for simply proclaiming the Kingdom of God. When he did preach, many Jews in Jerusalem were "the forward men, zealous to take away his Life."[35] Thus, a full admission in Jesus's

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[32] Ibid., 115.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 116.

[35] Ibid.

early life would have prevented a time for miracles and preaching, as it would have inexorably hastened Jesus's impending execution.

Locke next showed that even after Jesus's arrest, the main issue at stake in Christ's trial before Pilate involved his Messianic status. Locke argued that the entire plot against Jesus before Pilate turned on an attempt to provoke him into claiming his status as Messiah, a statement that "might offend the *Roman* Power, and render him Criminal to *Pilate*."[36] Locke showed how in Luke 20:21 and Matthew 22:19, Jesus's detractors tried to trap him into admitting that tributes to the Roman Caesars were unnecessary if truly committed to God, and Jesus rebuked them with the often quoted passage of "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's."[37] This, according to Locke, set off a chain reaction of events that led to the eventual indictment of Christ and his crucifixion. Jesus, himself, even questioned his detractors on the nature of the Messiah, and while they answered correctly that it would be the Son of David, Jesus rebuked their "Hypocrisie, Vanity, Pride, Malice Covetousness, and Ignorance, and particularly tells them, v. 13 [Matthew 22], 'Yet shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men: For ye neither go in your selves, nor suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.'"[38] Thus, it was failure to believe in the current Messiah and his current kingdom at hand that separated the Scribes and Pharisees from true believers.

This insult led to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and further inquisition of Jesus before the Jewish council on whether or not he had declared himself to be the Messiah.

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[36] Ibid., 145.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 146.

Jesus declared in John 28:13 and 19 that he had spoke "openly to the World; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret I have said nothing."[39] For Locke, this showed that even in private, Jesus had never overtly claimed to be the Messiah. He continued to deny outright admitting his claim as Messiah, as in Luke 22:67, when Jesus said "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go."[40]

Locke even showed that if one compares the acts of denial across the Gospels, one sees that Jesus only answered the question "are you the son of God" in the affirmative while evading the issue of being the actual Messiah. One sees this clearly in Mark and Matthew but especially in Luke where Jesus directly affirmed himself as the Son of God but not the Messiah. However, as his Jewish detractors conflated the question and took one to be the other, they believed they had enough evidence to bring him before Pilate on the accusation of treason to the Roman republic, as they believed Jesus claimed to be the one true King, over and against the claims of Caesar.

Locke noted four fundamental turning points in the dialogue between Pilate and Jesus. First, while Jesus did admit to being the "King of the Jews," Jesus also proclaimed (in the gospel of John) to make no earthly claims. His Kingdom being "not of this world," he posed no threats to earthly establishments, even though his followers would in fact take up arms if he so wished to use force. Second, Pilate was indeed satisfied that Jesus made no political claims with his kingship, but Pilate was still confused that a man "in that poor Garb, without Retinue" could claim any authority at all.[41] Third, Jesus

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 147.

[41] Ibid., 148.

responded that his only earthly business was to make known the great truth that was a king, the Messiah. Finally, Jesus proclaimed that "whoever were followers of Truth, and got into the way of Truth and Happiness, received this Doctrine concerning him . . . That he was the *Messiah* their king."[42]

When Pilate said that he was satisfied that Jesus was of no consequence to the Roman authority, the Jews became enraged and Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, as Jesus was from Galilee. When Herod, also, found Jesus without guilt, he was returned to Pilate, where Jesus was again exonerated, but the Jews being unsatisfied, demanded the releases of Barabbas so that Jesus might be crucified. Still, Locke noted that while Jesus inferred his status as the Messiah throughout these exchanges with Pilate and Herod, Jesus still never claimed it outright as the Jews wanted. Thus, after being "chastised" by Pilate (whipped), the Jews demanded that if he could not be crucified under Roman law, he should be crucified under Jewish Deuteronomistic law as a false prophet. This, in turn, led to Pilate to washing his hands of the situation and the eventual crucifixion of Jesus.

Locke noted that much of Jesus's adult life demonstrates a cautious and careful navigation through difficult inquisitions, all without outright admission of his place as Messiah. Locke highlighted several reasons for this. For one, if one considers the context of the Roman Empire during Jesus's adult life, one finds in the writings of Tacitus, Seneca, et al. that the reign of Tiberius represented a time of extreme oppression of dissenters. As Locke argued, "It behoved an Innocent Man, who was taken notice of

[42] Ibid., 149.

for something Extraordinary in him, to be very ware under a jealous and cruel Prince, who encourage Informations, and filled his Reign with Executions for Treason."[43]

Another reason for Jesus's constant demurring involved the plan for the promulgation of Christ's message on Earth. In Locke's opinion, the coming of God's kingdom and Christ as his Messiah was simply beyond the scope of traditional Jews to grasp. To quote Locke, "The Jews had no other thoughts of their Messiah, but of Mighty Temporal Prince, that should raise their Nation into an higher degree of Power, Dominion, and Prosperity than ever it had enjoyed. They were filled with expectation of a Glorious Earthly Kingdom."[44] Jesus, knowing they would never accept a sudden revelation of God's kingdom and Jesus as his Messiah, understood that the Jews could only be "prepared for the Truth by degrees."[45] Thus, one sees a progressive narrative unfolding in the Gospels from the first decrees of John the Baptist to the Apostles after his death declaring in plain language that Jesus is the Messiah, even if Jesus himself avoided such overt proclamation.[46]

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[43] Ibid., 151.

[44] Ibid., 151.

[45] Ibid.

[46] A telling note about Locke's view of Christ is found in his Bentley Bible. When studying Matthew 28:18 which reads "And Jesus spoke to them saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." Locke made the following note on the phrase "all power:" "By this and several other texts of the N.T.: it is plain that God has given his kingdom into the hands of his son and invested him in it as his resurrection. hence arises the necessity of beleiving in Jesus i.e. receiving him for the Messiah and lord by all to whome the gospel is preached because we cannot now enter into the kingdom of God without entering into the kingdom of the Messiah who is in possession of the kingdom of God and declared lord of all things. Whereas before this to return into the kingdom of God form the kingdom of Sathan it was enough to return to him by an acknowledgment and dependence on him and an obedience to his law in whose hands the kingdom then was. JL" (694).

As with the note mentioned in his *Adversaria Theologica*, Locke used his own initials here to demonstrate that this is his own thinking. This note demonstrates that Locke had most likely been contemplating his Messianic interpretation of Christ for quite some time, as in this note, Locke describes Jesus almost entirely in political terms, as he did in the text of the *Reasonableness*.

While Locke primarily stressed and argued for a Messianic interpretation of Christ, this does not mean that Locke ignored other important aspects of Christ's place within Christian theology. For example, while Locke never ascribed overt divinity to Christ, he did argue for Christ's *"Likeness*" with God, in the tradition of Adam. Adam, also being the son of God, in his most pure state maintained the "*Image* of the Father" in his immortality but after falling from grace, incorporated mortality into his being. And thus, the "likeness" of Adam was bestowed to his progeny in the form of mortality. The coming of Jesus and the establishment of his kingdom reaffirmed the "Likeness" of human kind, as Jesus Christ showed himself to be the "*Image of the Invisible God*."[47] Christ himself affirmed his image and likeness with God in John 10:18 where speaking of his life he said "No one taketh it form me, but I lay it down of my self: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." According to Locke, Jesus could not have made such a proclamation about himself "if he had been a Mortal Man, the Son of a Man, of the Seed of *Adam*; Or else had by any Transgression forfeited his Life."[48] While Locke maintained his silence on the metaphysical nature of Christ, Locke here did show the biblical foundation for a common quality between the person of Jesus and God.

Further, while Locke maintained the preeminence of Christ's place as a king and the establishment of his kingdom, Locke also noted that Scripture does in fact make the

[47] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 170.

[48] Ibid., 171-172.

proclamation for Christ as a Priest and Prophet, in addition to his title as King.[49] It is simply that Jesus never refers to himself as a Priest and only as a prophet "very sparingly, and once or twice."[50] Thus, when one considers the weight of the Gospels, their narrative structure, and the words and sayings of Jesus himself, it is clear that the Gospels are primarily about "the Good News of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*" and that this message is "what he Preaches every where, and makes it his great business to publish to the world."[51]

Locke's continued emphasis on Christ as the Messiah inundated much of the *Reasonableness*, and it is easy to understand why Edwards accused Locke of reductionism in his Christology. Indeed, Locke never cited the scriptural grounds for Jesus as an incarnation of God or Christ's place in a triune deity. Much of this stems from the fact that the first half of the *Reasonableness* is largely a detailed life of Jesus, and much of the Gospel account describes Christ only in Messianic and political terms.

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[49] In Locke's annotated Polyglot New Testament is a loose sheet of notes made on the Epistle to the Hebrews which Locke assumed was Pauline. In this set of notes, Locke when commenting on the third chapter of Hebrews wrote that Paul encouraged the Hebrews to perseverance "by shewing that Jesus was only worthy of more glory than Moses in that being an **high priest** he is entered into the rest into which they who persevere in beleiving shall enter to him who is by the appointment of god an high priest forever after the order of Milchisidec (emphasis mine)."

While Locke made hardly any mention of Christ as a priest in the *Reasonableness* and in fact explicitly denied Christ's priestly office in relationship to the Gospels, this note shows that as Locke advanced in his study of the Bible, his views on Christ continued to evolve. While it is difficult to know, this note was probably made in preparation for Locke's Notes and Paraphrases on Paul, which he began composing a couple of years after the *Reasonableness*.

Still, while Locke did not attempt to nuance or downplay Christ's function as priest in relation to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Locke continued to use rather legalistic and political language when outlining Christ. For example, when addressing the issue of "perfect atonement" when is found in the latter part of Hebrews, Locke noted that Christ's sacrifice saves the believers "to perpetuity" and Locke, quite interestingly in this note, crossed out the word "forever" to replace it with perpetuity. While it is perhaps incidental, perpetuity in the context of late seventeenth-century England, carried the connotation of a legal extension of property beyond an originally established legal appropriation of property. Thus, even when discussing Christ's priestly function in a highly theological fashion, Locke preferred to cast Jesus's role in largely legal and political terms.

[50] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 175.

[51] Ibid.

Theologians have long recognized that in the Gospels, Jesus never once referred to himself directly as a member of a triune God or as being consubstantial with the Father, central theological tenets that the Council of Nicaea would codify four centuries after the death of Christ. Thus, it is entirely plausible that Locke's Messianic interpretation of Christ is simply an honest reaction to searching the Gospels for an explanation of Christ's proper role in the Christian faith. However, when defending himself to Edwards, Locke did not simply recapitulate his biblical evidence for the Messiah, but rather argued that his interpretation maintained and perhaps even bolstered Christ's central function in Christianity, i.e. justifying and saving faith.

Locke on Justification, Original Sin, and Sanctification:

When Locke defended himself from the attacks of Edwards in the First and Second Vindications of the Reasonableness, Locke exposed what he saw to be the main weakness in Edwards' attacks, the issue of salvation and satisfaction. Locke, after spelling out the attacks of Socinianism launched at him by Edwards, quite mockingly asked, "But what will become of me, that I have not mentioned *Satisfaction?*"[52] Locke argued that instead of upholding canonized beliefs found in traditional "systems" of theology, he aimed to unlock the tenets of Christianity as found in Scripture and Scripture alone:

[52] John Locke, *A Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 10. The editor, Victor Nuovo, mentions in a footnote to this passage that it was commonplace of Socinian theologians to deny the issue of satisfaction, as it Jesus's place in the trinity, which they did not accept. The traditional doctrine of satisfaction had turned on the notion that God, due to his perfect nature, was unable to forgive sins through pure volition. Thus the voluntary sacrifice of Christ was needed "to compensate for the sin of all humankind and to satisfy divine justice." Locke, however, believed that this doctrine was implied by what he had written in the *Reasonableness*.

> Convince but Men of the Mission of Jesus Christ; make them but see the Truth, Simplicity, and Reasonableness of what he himself Taught, and required to be believed by his Followers; and you need not doubt, but being once fully perswaded of his Doctrine, and the Advantages which all Christians agree are received by him, such Converts will not lay by the Scriptures; but by a constant Reading and Study of them, get all the Light they can from this Divine Revelation; and nourish themselves up in the words of Faith, and of good Doctrine, as St. Paul speak to Timothy.[53]

Thereby, Locke argued that the point of the *Reasonableness* was both to shed light on the most fundamental doctrines of the Scripture and to encourage others to search the Scriptures in order to uncover further truths beyond the foundations. In this way, the *Reasonableness* was not meant to say all there was to say about the Scripture, but to lay its proper foundations so that further study might proceed accordingly, having the most foundational doctrine established, i.e. belief in Jesus as Messiah.

Locke, in the Second Vindication, did take on the issue of satisfaction more thoroughly and admitted, after much demurring on the issue of proper interpretation of the Scripture, that he did not address satisfaction because it is unestablished plainly in the Bible. He wrote on the charge that he did not believe in Satisfaction, "If you will have the truth of it, Sir, there is not any such word in any one of the Epistles, or other Books of the New Testament, in my Bible, as *Satisfying* or *Satisfaction* made by our Saviour; and so I could not put it into my Christianity as deliver'd in the Scripture."[54]

Locke then argued that if it is true that while the Scriptures do not explicitly argue for satisfaction, it is implied from many passages pulled together, and the same is true for the central premises of the *Reasonableness* itself. Locke's theology called attention to

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[53] Ibid., 11-12.

[54] John Locke, *A Second Vindication of the Reasonableness*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 103.

such passages that discussed the issue of "redemption" and "offering" but charged that if he were accused of denying the doctrine of satisfaction and therefore being a "*Betrayer of Christianity*" one must say the same of the Holy Apostles, as they do not directly address satisfaction either.[55] Locke, boldly, concluded that since Jesus himself did not mention the issue of satisfaction, it simply was irresponsible to claim it as indispensable to the foundation of the Christian faith.

In spite of Locke's hesitation involving the traditional Christian doctrine of satisfaction, Locke did argue for a clear effect of Christ's death. Christ's death made possible the justification of believers. As illustrated above, much of the *Reasonableness* was dedicated to the life of Jesus as outlined in the Gospels, specifically the narrative of Jesus's revelation of himself as Messiah in both his life and the aftermath of his crucifixion. Further, the narrative of the Gospels demonstrated how Jesus sought to establish himself as the Messiah so that belief in him as Messiah would properly ground the Christian faith. Yet, Locke was aware of the consequences of this belief on the forgiveness of sin and its efficacy on the salvation of the believer.

Locke in 1692, two years before drafting the *Reasonableness*, wrote a short reflection on the issue of original sin entitled *Peccatum Originale*.[56] The manuscript, only two pages long, is a series of logical extensions about the question of Adam's

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[55] Ibid., 103.

[56] John Locke, *Peccatum Originale*, in *John Locke: Writings on Religion*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 2002. Nuovo, in his critical introduction, notes that this manuscript is not written in Locke's hand but that the notes are prescribed to him. In following one of Locke's common practices, he most likely dictated the text to his amanuensis. Why Locke decided to reflect on this issue at this particular time is difficult to say with certainty. He was currently in the middle of a public dispute with Jonas Proast on the issue of toleration, which revolved around the capacity of human beings to self-direct themselves away from sin. This was also during the beginning of Locke's dedicated study to Scripture and thus may have decided early on that the issue of original sin was the most foundational theological issue to solve before working out a "reasonable" form of Christianity.

imputation of sin. Locke asked the question of "whether it may be truly said that God imputes the first sin of Adam to his Posterity."[57] For Locke this question led to two options: either the imputation of sin is taken "properly and fformally" or as "*Effectively*."[58] By this, Locke meant that the imputation of sin means that either Adam's descendants participated in the committing of Adam's sin or that they are subjected to the same evils as Adam as a result of the sin. Locke then proceeded to draw out the implications of the argument for participation. If it be concluded that Adam's descendants have real participation in Adam's sin, it begs the issue of temporality, as no one was alive during the time of Adam's sin. It also raises the issue of selectivity, and if a descendant is accountable for the first sin, perhaps they are also accountable for all successive sins of both Adam and other successors.

Locke continued that if we say that a man is accountable for all previous sins of his forefathers, can it not also be said that a man participates in all previous acts of faith and repentance as his forefathers. While he does not say so explicitly, the implication is that if one is held accountable for the sins of ancestries, then they must be equally be the beneficiary of previous acts of faith and repentance.

Locke then pivoted to the question of how original sin equates with God's free determination. How can it be said that God can hold the "Posterity of Adam" accountable for actions that they neither produced by their own volition or really even their own being?[59] Secondly, can it be said that God "with the safety of his Attributes" created man as subjected to all future evils which follow from man's share in Adam's

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[57] Ibid., 229.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 230.

original sin? Locke continued that if we grant that God does not "repute the Posterity of Adam to have committed that sin in him but only Subject them for the sake of that Sin committed by him alone, this begs three questions. What evils did Adam incur from his sin? Does God subject Adam's posterity to "all the evils he incurred by committing it or to some only?"[60] Do the evils that God subjects to Adam's posterity "make it more Eligible for them not to be than to be?"[61] If we conclude that it is as equally possible for the evils to not be as to be, then there is no reason that God could not have created man as subject to the same evils in original form as he did to the Posterity of Adam for sins they did not themselves commit.

Even though this short essay is a rather tedious and poorly written thought experiment, Locke's main design was to demonstrate that on pure logic, the concept of original sin does not demonstrate the determinative efficacy of Adam's original sin. Further, one cannot by pure logic demonstrate the establishment of an inherent condition from the moment of Adam's original sin. Locke also posited that Adam's original sin constituted a kind of compartmentalized condition to his posterity; it had a specific affect that can be located in "some" aspect of human nature but does not define it completely.

In the opening pages of the *Reasonableness*, Locke largely left aside the logical and historical problems with original sin but did address the compartmentalized effects of original sin on Adam's posterity, i.e. the condition of mortality. Locke's opening passages of the *Reasonableness* states, "'Tis obvious to any one who reads the New Testament, that the Doctrine of Redemption, and consequently of the Gospel, is found

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

upon the Supposition of *Adam's* fall."[62] However, we need to understand what was lost in Adam to understand what is restored. According to Locke, it cannot be the case that all of Adam's posterity is "doomed to Eternal Infinite Punishment" as many have never heard of Adam, his transgressions, or were his representative. Rather, if we investigate how the New Testament treats Adam's first state of obedience, it equates to *Justice* and *Righteousness*, and by his fall, he lost paradise which was "Tranquility and the Tree of Life, *i.e.* he lost Bliss and Immortality."[63] The penalty for this transgression, as we learn in Genesis II, was and is death.

The state of mortality, therefore, is the only condition that Adam imputed consequently to his posterity. Locke continued that many have posited inherited mortality as "a state of Guilt, wherein not only he, but all his Posterity was so involved, that everyone descended of him deserved endless torment in Hell-fire."[64] However, there is no reason to assume that death means "eternal life in Misery."[65] If we take this rather expansive view of death, one could only assume that every human action provokes God in a negative way. Otherwise, such a condition could never be squared with a rational and benevolent God. Further, the Scriptures never affirm such a harsh view of death and the consequence of Adam's first sin. Instead, the Scriptures only affirm that as a consequence of the fall, "all men should die, and remain under Death for ever, and so be utterly lost."[66]

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[62] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 91.

[63] Ibid., 92.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 95.

What restores human beings to life again is justification through belief in Jesus Christ as Messiah, the Second Adam. Locke is clear also that justifying faith is a saving faith if it incorporates repentance, as is evidenced by John the Baptist in Mark 1:4, where John the Baptist "Preached the Baptism of Repentance for the remission of sins."[67] In fact, it is faith and repentance that stand firmly as the condition of justification. Locke argued that the logic of restoring life to human beings followed from God's "Infinite Mercy, willing to bestow Eternal Life on Mortal Men, sends Jesus Christ into the World; Who being conceived in the Womb of a Virgin . . . by the immediate Power of God, was properly the Son of God."[68] Further, justification in Christ restores the *Image* of God within us which grants eternal life.

By emphasizing the issue of justification as saving faith, Locke entirely ignored another important aspect of typical Protestant theology, sanctification. In fact, sanctification is never once addressed in the *Reasonableness* at all, even negatively, let alone as crucial to the Christian faith.[69] Locke's theological manuscripts give us a clue as to why Locke felt no need to incorporate sanctification into his theology, specifically in his Bentley Bible and in a later theological common placing notebook. In a note he made in his Bentley study Bible on Matthew 6:9, the beginning of the Lord's Prayer. Locke noted the term "hallowed be thy name" and the Greek word *hagiastheto* (*Ἁγιασθήτω*), which the King James translators render as "hallowed" and which in the latin vulgate is rendered *sanctificetur*. Indeed, sanctification is the English translation for *sanctus*. Thus,

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[67] Ibid., 167.

[68] Ibid., 169.

[69] It is worth remember that the connection between sanctification and justification was a key dividing line between not only the Classical reformers themselves, but the Protestants and the Council of Trent.

hallowed, holy, and sanctified are synonymous for Locke, which he demonstrated in the following note on *Hagiastheto*:

> Sanctity consists in a discretion and distinction from other things by way of exaltation and preeminence . . . To sanctify then is either to put a thing into the state which is called consecreateing or if it be such already to use and doe unto it according to its holyneese i.e. according to that dignity it hath by its separation from things of ordinary and common rant. The holyneess of God is the incommunicable eminency of the divine majesty exalted above all and divided from all other eminencies. Holiness in general imports a state of eminency and separation and the holiness of God consists in a state of peerless and incommunicable majestio."[70]

Thus, for Locke, sanctification, by definition, denotes eminency and separation. And this quality is only found in God, not in human beings.

It is difficult to know exactly where or how Locke developed this notion of sanctification, but a telling clue is found in another one of Locke's notebooks. In a small notebook that follows the same common placing methods of Locke's annotated Bible, Locke made another note on Matthew 6:6 that uses identical language to the note above, only in this note, Locke gave credit to Joseph Mede:[71]

> name ie God himself or Divine majestie and also such things as his name is called upon ie such as are his by a peculiar right ie sacred things Hallowed be thy name ie Let god be served and glorified by a singular separate and incommunicable worship and let things that are his by a peculiar relation be separate as far as they are capable from common use. and also by the lives of his people who are set a part from the world to himself by a peculiar forme of life holynesse being always a state of separation and eminence. Mede B.1.D.2 [72]

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[70] Locke, Bentley Bible, 671.

[71] Joseph Mede (1586-1639) is most popularly remembered for his interpretation of the Apocalyptic books of the Bible, i.e. the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation and Mede predicted that the world might end sometime in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. However as a scholar primarily of the Old Testament, Mede made significant contributions to chronological interpretations of the Old Testament and while at Cambridge, gave many lectures on the compatibility of the Old Testament and New Testament on common theological topics.

[72] John Locke, MS Locke f. 30, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, 6.

The reference to Mede specifically refers to a series of lectures that Joseph Mede gave at Cambridge in the early seventeenth century (published in 1652) entitled *Diatribae: Discourses on the sundry texts of Scripture: delivered upon severall occasions.* The goal of the lectures was to explain how the Scripture speaks in a plurality of ways to single issues. The second chapter of the discourses was a treatise entitled "The Sanctification of Gods Name" which analyzed the specific uses of God's name in Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2.[73] In this series of reflections, Mede set out to explain the nature of how God's name is sanctified and what it tells us about His nature.

Mede argued that God's name is expressed in relationship to "eminency and dignity."[74] Further, whenever we see in either the Old or New Testament a claim to represent or be associated with God's name, it denotes a kind of separation and right in which something or someone can be said "To be His."[75] This separation takes on two different types of characters and two only: "*To be made holy,* or *to be used and done unto according to,* or *as becommeth its holinesse."*[76] Mede believed that to understand God's holiness, we must understand that God can in no way correspond with the first, but only the second. That is, God can never be made holy (as He by definition is holy) but God can bring events and people into the fold of his already existent holiness. To do so,

[73] "And he said to them: When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come."

[74] Joseph Mede, *Diatribae: Discourses on the sundry texts of Scripture: delivered upon several occasions* (London: J.F. for John Clark, 1652), 13.

[75] Ibid., 20.

[76] Ibid., 24.

however, requires that sanctity be a term of discrimination. Sanctity consists in "*discretion* and *distinction* from other things, by way of exaltation and preeminence."[77]

Further, if sanctity means to separate, it also has an antithesis of unholy or as the Scriptures relate so often, "common."[78] Accordingly, things which God calls "his" do belong to the proper classification of sanctification, but God and God alone can be called holy and sanctified. To quote Mede: ""The first originall or absolute *Holinesse* is nothing else, but the incommunicable eminency of the divine majesty, exalted above all, and divided from other . . . Eminences."[79] Accordingly, the duty of all believers when speaking of holiness is "nothing else but to acknowledge in thought, word, and worke this peerlesse preeminence of his power, of his will, of his goodnesse, and other attributes, that is, *His Holinesse*, by ascribing and giving unto him that which we give and ascribe to none besides him, that is, *To Sanctify his most Holy Name*."[80]

When we compare these words of Mede's with Locke's notations on sanctity in both his Bentley Bible and his common placing notebook, the conclusion that Locke's views of sanctification were informed by Mede is unavoidable. Indeed, their language is, at times, almost identical. It still, however, does not settle the issue of Locke's reticence on sanctification as there is biblical evidence for sanctification as a legitimate category of Christian theology. While the Gospels are silent on sanctification, except in relationship to God, Paul speaks of sanctification with a fair amount of regularity. For example in I Thessalonians 5:23, Paul closes his letter with the phrase, "And may the very God of

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., 28.

[79] Ibid., 33.

[80] Ibid., 38.

peace **sanctify** you wholly; and I pray your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (emphasis mine)." Another example is Hebrews 13:12 which reads "So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to **sanctify** the people through his own blood (emphasis mine)."[81] Thus, while Locke could safely take refuge in Scripture as eschewing issues of satisfaction and trinitarian theology, he could take no such refuge on the issue of sanctification.

In fact, one wonders why Edwards did not attack Locke specifically on the issue of sanctification as one of the starkest differences between the Westminster Confession and the Racovian Catechism, the standard creed of unitarians and Socinians, centered on the issue of sanctification. In the thirteenth chapter of the 1646 Westminster Confession, sanctification was specifically defined as a process that creates a new spirit and new heart "really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His word dwelling in them."[82] Whereas the Racovian confession, like Locke, made no mention of sanctification, only discussing justification. It is possible that one of the strongest cases for Locke's Socinianism has gone largely unnoticed by so many of his critics. Regardless of the reasons for his omission of sanctification, though his indebtedness to Mead at least partially explains this, what is clear is that Locke's emphasis on justification influenced his emphatic view of the Gospels as largely legalistic in nature.

Locke and the Lawful Interpretation of the Gospels, the Law of Faith:

[81] Most modern biblical scholars do not consider Hebrews as part of Paul's corpus, but Locke himself accepted the King James Bible's assumption that Hebrews was Pauline.

[82] *Westminster Confession of Faith*, ed. John Macpherson (Chicago: T and T Clark, 1882), 94-96, thirteenth chapter "On Sanctification."

When Locke wrote on the connection of faith and reason in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke only addressed the faculty of faith as a capacity to assent to propositions above reason. To recall Locke's definition of faith: "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. This way of discovering Truths to Men we call *Revelation.*"[83] Yet, Locke, in this chapter, was silent on the proper object of faith, i.e. what those propositions ought to be.

In many ways, Locke maintained this silence in the *Reasonableness,* as Locke never made universalist claims about Christ as the only proper object of faith. In fact, while it is easy to miss, Locke implied that he had no intention of making a metaphysically normative claim about the essence OR function of Christ. When talking about the impropriety of inherent universal sin, Locke argued that a universal claim for sin would reduce Christ to "nothing but the Restorer and Preacher of pure Natural Religion; thereby doing violence to the whole tenor of the New Testament."[84] Thus, the New Testament did not proscribe the proper role of faith on general terms but only the proper role of faith for Christianity specifically. And this is the law of faith as revealed in Christ, a law that "Christian Believers have the Privilege to be under."[85]

Locke's language of privilege is not incidental as he is clear that the Law of faith as found in the New Testament is the property only of Christians and speaks nothing of individuals who have no access to it. As demonstrated above, Locke was clear that individuals cannot be accountable to laws they have never encountered. Yet for

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[83] Locke, *Essay*, 689.

[84] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 91.

[85] Ibid., 100.

Christians, the law of faith has a unique character that applies to both their way of living on this earth and path to salvation in the next life.

Locke introduced the law of faith by juxtaposing it to the law of works. The law of works, Locked defined as "that Law, which requires perfect Obedience, without any remission, or abatement."[86] To live righteously according to the law of works, means to conform fully and completely with all tenets of the law. To violate the law of works, as we find in Levitical law typically entails the punishment of death. In fact, the positive laws of Moses as found in the Pentateuch are simply the positive translation of Natural Law into Judaic law. Mosaic law did contain historically situated law such as ritual and ceremonial proscriptions but it mostly pertained to the "Eternal Law or Right" which conforms to "Eternal Obligation" which carries over to the time and proceedings of the Gospels.

Locke argued that the law of works demands complete conformity because as manifestation of Natural Law, it conforms to God's perfect nature. To quote Locke, "it was such a Law as the Purity of God'a nature required."[87] Further, the law of works corresponds to the "*Law of Reason,* or as it is called *of Nature*," meaning that the law of works is necessary to govern the actions and responsibilities of rational creatures.[88] The implication of this, Locke continued, is that rational creatures are fundamentally capable of conforming to the rule of their own reason and thus must be held to that standard.

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[86] Ibid., 98.

[87] Ibid., 96.

[88] Ibid.

Locke argued that to disobey God in any capacity is "direct Rebellion" and "there can be no bounds set to the Lawless Exorbitance of unconfined men."[89]

Locke, of course, recognized, as does the New Testament, that human beings are incapable of following the law perfectly, even if it does accord to their own rational nature. And thus, Christ came to establish the law of faith as a privilege of the Christian church. The main difference between the law of works and the law of faith stemmed from the issues of compliance. As already noted, the law of works makes no allowance for the forgiveness of transgressions but assigns death to all transgressions. But under the law of faith, "Faith is allowed to supply the defect of full Obedience; and so the Believers are admitted to Life and Immortality as if they were Righteous."[90] Thus, the law of faith, as rooted in belief in Christ as the Messiah, allows for the capacity of belief to stand in place of perfect obedience.

What is clear, though, is that belief in Christ is not a subjective quality found internally within the hearts and minds of individual Christians. Rather, belief is a requirement of the new covenant as established in Christ. Thus, it is not that the law of faith abolishes the issue of compliance, rather belief in Christ as the Messiah IS the mode of compliance that guides Christians and the Christian church.

Locke's conception of a largely legalistic interpretation of the Gospels, i.e. Christianity is based on compliance with the law of faith, which is predicated on belief in Christ as the Messiah, and this grants justifying salvation to the individual Christian, has several implications for his general understanding of Christianity. For one, Locke's

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., 100.

concept of Christianity is largely moral in nature. While it is wrong to suggest that Locke's Christology reduced Christ to a kind of moral exemplar or archetype, Locke's Messianic conception of Christianity did stress Jesus's agency as a historical actor over and against his symbolic or metaphysical nature. As noted in the first and second sections on Messianic Christology and Justification, Locke did raise the issues of Christ's "Image" and occasional references to prophesy, but mostly, Locke believed that the Gospels outlined a self aware Messiah who knowingly and wittingly set about to establish a new kingdom on behalf of God. As kingdoms, both earthly and heavenly, are fundamentally governed by laws, the fundamental character of such kingdoms is to live in accordance with those laws. Indeed, Locke believed that the two primary conditions of the New Covenant of the Gospels were "Faith and Repentance, i.e. believe Jesus to be the *Messiah*, and a good Life."[91] As Locke would write in the opening of the Second Vindication:

> Going on in the Gospel History, the whole tenor of it . . . led me into a Discovery of the marvelous and divine Wisdom of our Saviour's Conduct, in all the Circumstances of his promulgating this Doctrine; as well as of the necessity that such a **Law-giver** should be sent from God for the reforming the **Morality** of the World.[92] (emphasis mine)

Not only is the Christian life largely of moral living, it was a moral failing that led to the need for Christ's coming. Locke in the closing parts of the *Reasonableness* discussed the "state of Darkness and Error" that was the world before Jesus's coming.[93] Locke argued that "though the Works of Nature, in every part of them, sufficiently Evidence a Deity; Yet the World made so little use of their Reason, that they saw him

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[91] Ibid., 169.

[92] Locke, A Second Vindication, 35.

[93] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 193.

not."[94] And Locke was clear that this failure of reason was moralistic in nature and not noetic as Calvin and his followers would argue. It was "Sense and Lust," "careless Inadvertency," and "fearful Apprehensions" that led to superstition at the hands of power hungry priests who had suppressed and banned reason from their public conceptions of proper religion.[95] Yet, Locke continued that the rational parts of humankind, as found in classical Athens, indeed discovered through pure reason the immutable concept of a one God. It was simply that they were unable to persuade the majority of people in their beliefs, as the people remained under the corruption of priests who maintained their "own Creeds and Profitable Inventions."[96]

This darkness begot a clear neglect of duty on the part of most human beings. On this point, Locke made a distinction between historical religion and virtue. All throughout the history of religion, we find that "Few went to the Schools of the Philosophers, to be instructed in their Duties; And to know what was Good and Evil in the Actions."[97] Thus we find constantly throughout history Natural Religion unguarded by Natural Reason. If this were not the case, Jesus's coming may very well have been unnecessary. Yet, history shows that it is "too hard a task for unassisted Reason, to establish Morality in all its parts upon its true foundations; with a clear and convincing light."[98] The only complete systems of morality are founded first on revelation, as evidenced by Christianity. As Locke said in regard to truth and revelation, "As soon as

[94] Ibid., 191.

[95] Ibid., 192.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 194.

[98] Ibid., 195.

they are heard and considered, they are found to be agreeable to Reason; and such as can by no means be contradicted."[99] For this reason, Locke argued that when we compare "all the Moral Rules of the Philosophers" with the "*Morality* delivered by our Savior and taught by this Apostles," we find the morality of the New Testament to be superior.[100] Indeed, the last quarter of the *Reasonableness* reads largely as a defense of the moral character of the New Testament.

Locke's legalistic interpretation of the Gospels also demonstrates fundamental compatibilities with his philosophical and political writings. As noted in Chapter 3, one of the primary aims of the second book is to denote the active and passive powers of the mind, a point Locke made clear in the 21st chapter "Of Power." The preceding chapters to the 21st chapter largely outline the passive powers of the mind, i.e. how nature imprints itself on the mind, and the proceeding chapters largely outline the active powers of the mind, i.e. how the mind actively organizes those imprints into complex and relational ideas. In the 27th chapter on Identity and Diversity, Locke gives us a definition of what it means to be a person. He writes "it is a Forensick Term appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and happiness and Misery."[101] Thus, for Locke, to be a person is by definition to be capable of a law and further "becomes concerned and accountable, owns and imputes to it *self* past Actions, just upon the same ground, and for the same reason, that it does the present."[102] When

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid., 196.

[101] Locke, *Essay*, 346.

[102] Ibid.

we consider this emphasis on lawfulness in the *Essay*, it is no surprise that Locke would elucidate the Gospels fundamentally on legal terms

Locke's emphasis on law in the *Reasonableness* also further elucidates how Locke's views on Toleration involved a legal distinction. In Locke's 1689 *Epistola de Tolerantia*, the fundamental relationship between the church and the state for Locke turned on the establishment of state law and church law, the proper boundaries of each, and allowing individuals to freely assent to those laws as dictated by their own personhood. For example, Locke's ideas on toleration involved the removal of coercive force in both civil society and religious society. Locke defined a commonwealth as a "society of men constituted only for procuring, preserving, and advancing their own civil interests" which included "life, liberty, healthy, and freedom from pain; and the possession of outward things, such as money, land, furniture, and the like."[103] A church, Locke defined as "a free society of men joining together of their own accord in order to publicly worship God in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him and conducive to the salvation of their souls."[104]

In this manner, Locke argued that the church and state are legally distinct, as Locke would argue that the aim of ecclesiastical law must appeal to "a thorough conviction and approbation of the mind."[105] Indeed, the *Epistola*

[103] John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings*, ed. Mark Goldie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010), 12.

[104] Ibid., 15.

[105] Ibid., 18.

fundamentally addressed how in civil society, Christians ought to negotiate the differing parameters of civil and ecclesiastical law in their everyday practices.

Conclusion:

Victor Nuovo in the introduction to his critical edition of *John Locke and Christianity: Contemporary Responses to The Reasonableness of Christianity*, argued that the *Reasonableness* is "one of the most important works of Christian theology produced during the Enlightenment. Perhaps its only rival is Schleiermacher's *On Religion*, published a century later . . . which, significant differences notwithstanding, owed much to Locke."[106] It is difficult to know the accuracy of Nuovo's statement. On the one hand, Locke's emphasis on the historical Jesus who preached the Kingdom of God has interesting affinities with many nineteenth-century German historians of the New Testament. One could easily write a substantive comparative analysis of Locke's *Reasonableness* with Johannes Weiss' *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, as while Weiss focused more on the eschatological nature of the Gospels and Locke on the legalistic and "reasonable" aspects, they both predicate their works on a thorough

[106] Victor Nuovo, *John Locke and Christianity: Contemporary Responses to the Reasonableness of Christianity*, Introduction (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1997), ix.

study of the life of Jesus and how he understood himself.[107] While Weiss was more immediately influenced by Albrecht Ritschl, it shows that the *Reasonableness* outlined a mode of analysis that would continue into the nineteenth-century forms of biblical criticism.

On the other hand, it is difficult to show the immediate influence of Locke's *Reasonableness* on significant debates of his time, outside the rejoinders of John Edwards. Even in Nuovo's compilation of "responses to the *Reasonableness,"* Edwards' is the only author to specifically address the arguments of the *Reasonableness,* as the other authors are largely contextual in nature, showing the extent of the Deist and Socinian controversies of Locke's time. Further, many theologians who wrote under the influence of Locke did so under the influence of the epistemology of the *Essay* more than the Christian theology outlined in the *Reasonableness*. John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious,* for example, quite clearly draws on Locke's epistemology to show the limits of miracles and mysteries but does not reference Locke's own interpretation of the Gospels. While the *Reasonableness* continued to be read into the eighteenth century, it is possible that Locke's reputation as an important

[107] Johannes Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, ed. Richard H. Hiers and D. Larrimore Holland (Chico: Scholars Press, 1971). Certainly, major methodological differences emerge between Locke and Weiss such as Weiss' indebtedness to the source critical views of the Gospels, and Weiss, more so than Locke, demonstrated the conceptual incongruities of the "Kingdom of God" as announced by Jesus. Weiss also made critical distinctions between certain unoriginal and perhaps redacted sayings of Jesus versus what he assumed were original sayings. Locke in his work largely left unchallenged the canonical and authoritative aspects of the Bible, giving as much historical weight to the Gospel of John as Mark. Still, while approaching the Gospels with different philosophical frameworks and agendas, their views of Jesus as largely a political and kingly feature have many parallels with one another.

philosopher has carried the reputation of the *Reasonableness* as much as its own contributions to Protestant theology.[108]

What should be clear, however, is that relative to Locke's other works, the *Reasonableness* stands as a continuation of Locke's thought without major incompatibilities with his previous mature writings. As Locke searched the Gospels for a clear explanation of the tenets of the Christian faith, he found nothing that contradicted what he had written in the *Essay*, *Two Treatises*, or *Letter on Toleration*. Rather, the Gospels clearly narrated that Jesus was the Messiah who came to establish God's Kingdom that would be predicated on the requirements of the law of faith. The law of faith required that individuals believe in Jesus as the Messiah and King of God's kingdom in order to be justified before the law of faith, forgiven for their sins, and granted eternal life. Further, these requirements all squared with the rational and forensic nature of human beings. Jesus's message is perhaps not the only way to salvation, as many have never heard of his message. To hold people to laws they do not know is unreasonable. But for those privileged enough to encounter the Gospels, they become members of Christ's church if they assent to its law of faith.

Locke justified this point of view with an exhaustive investigation of the Gospels that in keeping with Locke's typical style, was exhaustive to the point of tedium. This tedium, not withstanding, its literary shortcomings, demonstrates

[108] Some of this is explained by the fact that Locke in his Vindication claimed to write the *Reasonableness* as a defense of Christianity against Deists. As deism began to fade into the peripheries of English life by the early eighteenth century, it is possible that many did not see the sense in reading a self-proclaimed anti-deist work. While I have not discussed the overt connections of Locke's *Reasonableness* to deism, it is difficult to read it, on its own terms, as only or even primarily an anti-Deist essay.

Locke's commitment to understanding the Gospels on their own terms as much as possible. Whatever may be said of Locke's *Reasonableness*, it is at its core a piece of Protestant biblical theology.

Chapter 5

Locke and St. Paul: The Challenges of the Epistles, The Hermeneutic of Indifferency, The Pauline Law of Faith, and The Mind of the Spiritual Man

Introduction:

John Locke composed *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* in the closing years of his life, and it was published posthumously in 1705-1707.[1] While Locke intended to comment on all of the Epistles acknowledged by the King James Bible as Pauline, he died before he could so, completing commentaries only on Galatians, 1 and 2

[1] As of yet, there is no monograph or fully detailed study of the *Paraphrase* that rivals the many works written on Locke's *Two Treatises* and *Essay* or even the journal literature of the *Reasonableness*. The only works that have addressed Locke's biblical interpretation make little mention of it. See for example, Kim Ian Parker's *The biblical Politics of John Locke* (Canada: Canadian Corporation for Studies of Religion, 2004).

The best introduction to Locke's *Paraphrase* is Arthur Wainwright's critical introduction to John Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, ed. Arthur Wainwright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1-99. Wainwright argues that Locke's *Paraphrase* had more influence on the eighteenth century than is often recognized, though as a work of controversy. Many of the charges made against Locke's *Reasonableness* by Edwards carried over to the *Paraphrase* as more Calvinist minded commentators chided Locke for not discussing issues of atonement and the person of Christ, and deists like Viscount Bolingbroke accused Locke of abandoning the claims of the *Essay* to accommodate Pauline theology. While its influence wained in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one can still find occasional references to it. See Wainwright's "Reception of the Paraphrase and Notes" (59-73).

Wainwright also argues for the *Paraphrase* as evidence that Locke continued and amended his earlier philosophy. It is incorrect to suggest that Locke either abandoned the epistemology of the *Essay* or maintained it wholesale as he embarked on his intense study of Paul. See Wainwright's "Locke's Thought as Expressed in the Paraphrase and Notes" (28-59).

For other introductions, see Victor Nuovo's brief introduction to Locke's Prefatory Essay on Paul in his *John Locke: Writings on Religion* (xxxvii-xxxix), Nuovo's "The *Reasonableness of Christianity* and *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul"* in *A Companion to Locke*, ed. Matthew Stuart (Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 486-502, Gretchen Graf Pahl's "John Locke as Literary Critic and biblical Interpreter," in *Essays Critical and Historical Dedicated to Lily B. Campbell* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), 139-157, Justin Champion's "'Directions for the Profitable Reading of the Holy Scriptures': biblical Criticism, Clerical Learning and Lay Readers, c. 1650-1720," in *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England* eds. Ariel Hassayon and Nicholas Keene (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 221-229, and Champion's "'A law of continuity in the progress of theology': Assessing the Legacy of John Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695-2004" in *Eighteenth-Century Thought*, vol. 3. ed. James G. Buickerwood (Brooklyn: AMS Press, Inc., 2007): 111-142.

Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians.[2] Why Locke decided to focus on Paul in the closing years of his life is difficult to know. It is possible that as John Edwards had accused Locke of focusing on the Gospels to the exclusion of Paul in the *Reasonableness*, Locke sought to deepen his understanding of Paul in order to defend himself from such charges. It is more likely, however, that *A Paraphrase* was simply the next step in Locke's theological undertakings. While Locke sparingly cited Paul in the *Reasonableness,* Locke's focus on Jesus as the second Adam and the requirements for the Law of Faith are themes that emerge straight from Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Further, when we turn to Locke's two study Bibles, his Bentley Bible and Polyglot New Testament, the most exhaustive and thorough notes pertain to Paul's Epistles. Locke employed his Polyglot New Testament almost solely as a note taking apparatus on Paul, with only minor notes on the Gospels. Whatever may be said of Locke's theology, the charge that it ignores the writings of Paul is ungrounded from both a source and theological perspective.

In many respects, *A Paraphrase* strives to be uninterpretative. While Locke wrestled deeply with Paul's Greek and labored to understand the salvific, historical, and anthropological themes that Paul elucidated to the early churches, Locke did not organize *A Paraphrase* thematically as he did the *Reasonableness.* Rather, he would first introduce an epistle and its general themes in an opening synopsis. He would then quote

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[2] Modern biblical scholars since the nineteenth-century have questioned Paul's authorship of certain letters attributed to him in the biblical tradition. The undoubted letters of St. Paul include Thessalonians, Galatians, I and II Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. The other letters are presumed to be written under the influence of Paul's theology with the exception of Hebrews which scholars now assume to be neither written by Paul nor under his influence. For a good introduction to the canon and reception of Paul's letters see the introduction to *The Writings of St. Paul*, ed. Wayne A. Meeks and John T. Fitzgerald (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), xiv-xix.

series of passages followed by paraphrases, striving to avoid theological interpretation as much as possible. When Locke divided the paraphrased sections, he ignored conventional chapter and verse divisions, appealing instead to the logic of the epistles. This method, while intended to render Paul transparent, makes for difficult reading and interpretation of Locke.[3] Perhaps a main reason for the neglect of *A Paraphrase* among Locke specialists is simple equivocation on how best to make sense of its content in light of its unthematic nature.

Locke's footnotes to *A Paraphrase* are in Locke's own voice and from a purely theological perspective are the richest in content. Locke often unpacked Paul's specific Greek terms, a practice carried over from his Polyglot New Testament and made theological expositions about specific passages. These footnotes highlight the passages Locke found most exercising and give the clearest indication of how Locke continued and amended his previous views in light of his study of Paul.

Perhaps the most original component of *A Paraphrase* is the prefatory essay entitled "An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles by consulting St. Paul himself." In the prefatory essay, Locke outlined his general approach to understanding Paul's letters, including their many interpretive challenges. The prefatory essay is the only aspect of *A Paraphrase* entirely in Locke's voice and organized in a style consistent with Locke's previous writings.

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[3] Wainwright in his critical introduction notes that the paraphrase as a method of biblical interpretation well predates Locke and goes back to the Aramaic Targums of the Hebrew Bible in the second century. Further, the paraphrase became a standard method employed by Renaissance Humanists such as Erasmus, Henry Hammond Richard Baxter, and many of Locke's own contemporaries such as Jean Le Clerc. Le Clerc, one of Locke's colleagues and friends from his time in the Netherlands, wrote an unfavorable critique of Locke's *Paraphrase*, and Wainwright speculates that this stemmed from Locke failing to give proper credit to Le Clerc for the exegetical method employed in the *Paraphrase*. See Wainwright's introduction to the *Paraphrase*, 22-28.

On the whole, it is fruitless to extract an order of exposition from *A Paraphrase* where none exists, and Locke may have intended for *A Paraphrase* to model the proper study of Paul rather than provide a source of authority on Paul.[4] As will be argued, Locke specifically cautioned his readers against prioritizing outside sources over Paul and encouraged readers to make Paul the interpreter of himself. Thus, *A Paraphrase* constitutes more of a theological exercise than a theological treatise. Still, certain hermeneutical and theological themes emerge, especially from the prefatory essay, synopses, and footnotes, and when one puts *A Paraphrase* in context of Locke's previous writings, one can see how he modified and further developed the theological themes of his previous works.

I make four fundamental claims about Locke's understanding of Paul that will be primarily based on *A Paraphrase* but supplemented with the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, and unpublished theological manuscripts. 1) Locke argued that while genre, language, mindset, and tradition challenge a proper interpretation of Paul, Paul was a gifted man whose reasoned capacity was augmented by the immediacy of Revelation. 2) Locke argued that a predisposition of belief grounded on pragmatism and indifferency was necessary to overcome the "analogy of faith" separating the reader from Paul. 3) Locke continued to deepen his legalistic understanding of Christianity by strengthening the distinction between the

[4] In an earlier draft of the Prefatory Essay of *A Paraphrase*, Locke opened with "I began this work for my own private use and if I have published it, it is principaly for the help of ordinary illiterate readers of the Scripture and therefor have I declined as much as is possible all discourses built on learning and languages endeavoring to find out the Apostles meaning by the Apostle him self . . . but yet even in hits it has been utterly unavoidable . . . not to have recourse sometimes to the Greek and Hebrew and take in the assistance of criticism to clear some places" (Appendix I in Locke's *A Paraphrase*, ed. Wainwright, 665).

It seems entirely possible that Locke intended to model a study of Paul that laymen could follow and yet as a polymath well read in the tradition of Protestant biblical Commentary, Locke simply could not help himself in avoiding a more scholarly exegesis.

Mosaic Law and the Law of Faith. 4) Locke's distinction between the Spiritual man and the Animal Man found in I Corinthians rested firmly on Locke's Epistemology.

Locke's Prefatory Essay and the Problems of Genre, Language, Mindset, and Tradition in Interpretation of Scripture:

Locke's writing on scriptural interpretation well predates the mature theological writings of the 1690s and early 1700s. When serving as a lecturer at the University of Oxford (1661-1662), Locke wrote a short Latin essay entitled "Is it necessary that an Infallible Interpreter of Holy Scripture be granted in the Church? No." What prompted this essay is unclear, though it was most likely either a classroom lecture or contribution to a debate within the Oxford community.[5]

In the essay, Locke made arguments about biblical interpretation that he would follow and expand over the next forty-two years of his life. As the title suggests, Locke did not believe an infallible interpreter necessary for the church, as Locke did not believe in human infallibility since the time of the Apostles. Locke argued that even if the church appointed an infallible interpreter, the burden of proof would fall to the interpreter to demonstrate his infallibility, an impossible task.[6] Further, Scripture contains many mysteries that transcend the human mind, and since, according to Locke, "to interpret is nothing else than to bring out the meaning of obscure words and to express unfamiliar language clearly in words of everyday speech," no one can interpret what he does not

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[5] Woolhouse, *Locke*, 49.

[6] John Locke, *Infallibility* in *Locke: Political Essays*, ed. Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 207.

clearly understand.[7] Locke conceded that Scripture contains certain instructions of "a more general nature" such as Paul's dictate to the Corinthians: "Let all things be done decently and in order." Such passages demand clarity, as on their own, they are meaningless, and when local ministers interpret these passages, they can claim infallibility. But Locke noted that this infallibility is "directive not definitive."[8] In the end, Locke concluded that the issue of interpretation is complex and requires a great amount of patience, caution, proper balance of faith and reason, and the view that "the most certain interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself, and it alone is infallible."[9]

This short essay was no in way exhaustive of Locke's mature views on Scripture and was written by a young man motivated to debunk Catholic authoritarianism. Still, Locke, even as a young man, touched on some key issues that he would address later in life when focusing more exclusively on the issue of interpreting the Bible and specifically St. Paul, namely the ability of reason to self-direct in order to best outline the proper way to read Scripture.

In the *Reasonableness* discussed in the previous chapter, Locke never addressed a hermeneutic explicitly but preferred a literal reading of the Scripture; moreover, he was unafraid to jettison theological doctrines that were unsubstantiated in the Gospel. But while the *Reasonableness* was fundamentally an explication of the Gospels and of the life of Jesus, Locke left aside any issue of how genre might influence the meaning of the Gospels. Locke took the Gospels, if only implicitly, as historical narration that relayed

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[7] Ibid., 208.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 209.

the facts of Jesus's life, including how the facts illuminated Jesus's fundamental messianic message.

When introducing his interpretation of Paul in the prefatory essay, Locke called explicit attention to the issues of genre, language, Paul's mindset, and the textual tradition of Christianity in the understanding of Paul's letters. After acknowledging the great "Train of Expositors and Commentators" who had tirelessly and impressively done much work to advance the understanding of Paul, Locke admitted that his own focus on the writings of Paul had illuminated the "Causes of Obscurity" contained within the letters.[10] Epistolary writing, by definition, conceals information to strangers, as Paul's letters were written to familiar audiences about familiar circumstances obvious to Paul and the churches but not to outside readers. Thus, the churches could "easily apprehend his Meaning, and see the Tendency and Force of his Discourse" in ways that the contemporary reader cannot.[11] Too much distance now separates the reader from the "Temper and Circumstances" of Paul's writings and inevitable gaps occur, especially as Paul was responding to letters that have not survived.

In addition to their epistolary form, Paul's writing were in a language foreign to modern interpreters. Paul's Greek is a "Language dead many Ages since" and further, while its vocabulary and syntax are Greek, its idioms and colloquialisms are Hebrew and Syriac.[12] When one combines the unique literal language of the New Testament with the

[10] John Locke, "An Essay for the Understanding of St Paul's Epistles by Consulting St. Paul Himself," in Victor Nuovo, *John Locke: Writings on Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 51.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 52.

novelty of the ideas employed within the New Testament, one can only conclude that "the New Testament is a Book written in a Language peculiar to it self."[13]

It is also clear that Paul struggled to bring the full fruition of his thoughts to clear expression. While he was a "man of quick Thought, warm Temper," he was also well versed in the Hebrew tradition while simultaneously inspired by the Gospel. Thus, he had a "Crowd of Thoughts, all striving for Utterance."[14] Because his thoughts were so abounding, he had a "Posture of Mind" full intent on disclosing the truth of the Gospel. For Locke, this meant that Paul's thoughts often overwhelmed the structure and style of the letters. Thus, he often interrupted his train of thought to "let in some new Thought suggested by his own Words" and then resume the previous thought that often feels out of context or off subject.[15] Only an attentive reader willing to patiently make the connections between Paul's disjointed thoughts can ascertain the underlying logic and complete message of Paul's letters.

Locke noted other formal and linguistic challenges to reading Paul's letters. Paul's use of grammatical person often fluctuated throughout the letters as well as the reference of the person. Locke noted, for example that "sometimes by the pronoun I, he means himself; sometimes any Christian; sometimes a Jew, and sometimes any Man."[16] When Paul talked of himself in the first person plural, even more confusion could ensue

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 53.

as sometimes he meant preaching, sometimes Christians, sometimes converted Jews or Gentiles, and sometimes human beings in the general sense.

However, Locke would go on to argue that much of the difficulty with understanding Paul had little to do with Paul himself but the transmission of Paul's letters in the biblical tradition, primarily the visual presentation of the letters. Bibles now divide the letters into chapters and verses which distort the general ebb and flow of the letters. According to Locke, this leads to aphoristic readings instead of sustained and developed arguments. The challenge of reading the independent letters is especially difficult when individuals have been "constantly accustom'd to hear them quoted as distinct Sentences, without any limitation or explication of their precise Meaning from the Place they stand in, and the Relation they bear that what goes before, or follows."[17] Because of this view, readers are accustomed to reading the letters in piecemeal, or to quote Locke, "by parcels and in scraps," instead of single sittings. In short, one can easily forget that they are reading a letter.

Further, the divisions have become so engrained in biblical tradition, that if one were to print the Epistles without them, many "Parties" would see it not as a return to the originals but as a dangerous innovation, as it would disarm those who read Paul in an aphoristic manner. Locke quoted the "Learned and Judicious Mr. Selden" who compared the interpretation of the Scripture to the counting of pounds when one person instead of seeing a collection of 10 pounds, divides them into a two collections of 5 pounds. However it is no accident that this method makes Paul difficult to understand, as it also allows the "Men of establish'd Orthodoxie" to use Paul to validate their own opinions of

[17] Ibid., 54.

Scripture and twist his words to fit their theology.[18] Thus, while the letter divisions are sustained in part by the literary tradition of the Bible, they are also continuously uplifted and sustained by defenders of Orthodoxies to maintain theological control of the dialogue.

Locke also argued that aphoristic readings of Paul have penetrated the common language and "common Phraseology" which perpetuates the notion of understanding Paul when, in truth, it sustains ignorance. Filtering Paul through the conventions of common language only conforms Paul to various human systems of thinking, without any regard for the purity of Paul's message. However just as with the division of Paul's letters, the appropriation of Paul through the use of common language further emboldens the commentators, as without it, little help would be needed to understand Paul.

Locke's main proof for the arbitrariness of commentators rested on the supposition that Paul would not have composed his letters to communicate contrary meanings. Yet when one reads Paul alongside two different commentaries, one might suspect that contradictory meanings are both possible and inevitable, as differing commentators espouse quite different expositions of the text. Thus, commentaries often disorient interested readers and obscure writings of St. Paul more than they illuminate. One might understandably conclude, Locke conceded, that arriving at concrete interpretations of Paul is a hopeless endeavor. However, Locke believed that a correct approach could indeed illuminate the fullness and coherency of Paul's theology.

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[18] Ibid., 56.

Locke's Prefatory Essay and the Disposition of Belief and Indifferency in transcending the Analogy of Faith:

After spelling out the difficulties of genre, language context, and tradition, Locke proposed that a unifying and uncontroversial rule is indeed possible to discover Paul's arguments in the text. Locke admitted that he often struggled to find this guiding principle and that he labored to discover it. Indeed, Locke admitted that many parts of Scripture, and especially Paul "left me almost everywhere at a loss; and I was at a great Uncertainty in which of the contrary Senses, that were to be found in his Commentators, he was to be taken."[19]

Much of the solution, Locke argued, was highly pragmatic in nature. He realized that any letter as long as the epistle to the Romans, if broken into chapters and verses and read in multiple sittings, would lead to confusion and misunderstanding, especially if one stopped intermittently to consult commentators. Thus, Locke "concluded it necessary, for the understanding of any one of St. *Paul's* Epistles, to read it all through at one Sitting, and to observe as well as I could the Drift and Design of his writing it."[20] Locke also advised reading an entire letter several times as to avoid the temptation to make judgements based on "one or two hasty Readings."[21] Instead, one must neglect the divisions entirely in order to detect central tenets so that over time, the various layers of Paul's argument come into better view.

Aside from the sheer pragmatics of reading practices, Locke ascribed that understanding Paul properly involved an intellectual predisposition. One must put

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[19] Ibid., 58.

[20] Ibid., 59.

[21] Ibid.

oneself into the mindset and indeed belief, that Paul was "miraculously called to the Ministry of the Gospel, and declared to be a chose Vessel; that he had the whole Doctrine of the Gospel fro God by immediate Revelation, and was appointed to be the Apostles of the *Gentiles,* for the propagating of it in the Heathen World."[22] Locke believed that by assenting to this fundamental belief, one could embrace the notion that Paul did not convey his messages in shattered and incoherent ways. If Paul was truly a vessel of the "whole Doctrine of the Gospel," it could not follow that Paul would expound it in unintelligible ways. To argue this would equate the Gospel with unintelligibility, a contradiction. For God to choose Paul as his vessel for Gospel promulgation, Locke argued that God could not have "laid up such a Store of admirable and useful Knowledge in a Man, who for want of Method and Order, Clearness of Conception, or Pertinency in Discourse, could not draw it out into Use with the greatest Advantages of Force and Coherence."[23]

Locke continued, though, that this belief did not make the problems of understanding Paul vanish. It is a necessary precondition for understanding Paul but not alone sufficient. To understand the whole of Paul, one must only look to Paul, as he is the only source for both the content and the context of his teachings. Locke described this in a lengthy passage worth quoting at length:

> The Particularities of the History in which these Speeches are inserted, shew St. *Paul's* end in Speaking, which being seen, casts a Light on the whole, and shows the Pertinency of all that he says. But his Epistles not being so circumstantiated; there being no concurring History that plainly declares the Disposition St. *Paul* was in, what the Actions, Expectations, or Demands of those to whom he write, require him to speak to, we are no where told. All this and a great deal more

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[22] Ibid., 60.

[23] Ibid.

> necessary to guide us into the true meaning of the Epistles, is to be had only from the Epistles themselves, and to be gather'd from thence with stubborn Attention, and more than common Application.[24]

Hence, one can only find the meanings of Paul within Paul, himself, as his letters are so historically idiosyncratic that no outside text may be used to illuminate obscure passages. One can only attend to his "Inferences," paying close attention to the strings of his argument throughout the entirety of his writings. It is true, Locke conceded, that the letters are often quite unmethodical, incorporating "no Ornaments borrow'd from the Greek Eloquence; no Notions of their Philosophy mix'd with his Doctrine to set it off."[25] Locke noted I Corinthian 2:4 where Paul instructs the Corinthians that his own speech was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Locke concluded that Paul, quite intentionally, used no philosophical or rhetorical framework to elucidate his teachings. Both the method and the content of the letters are found only in the letters themselves.

Of course, many commentators in the Christian tradition have often misunderstood this point. Some have opined that Paul's reasoning was so elevated above ordinary man that one can only hope to attain "Flashes of Light, and Raptures of Zeal" from his message, while others have guarded against an honest interpretation of Paul to protect theological systems at odds with an authentic understanding of Paul. The only way of solving such a theological dilemma is to grant in full confidence that Paul was both divinely inspired with "Light from Heaven" and naturally equipped with the natural

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[24] Ibid., 61.

[25] Ibid. Locke believed that Paul, being of divine revelation, was relating truly novel ideas that while composed of natural simple ideas, constituted new intellectual content quite distinct from other forms of Greek/Hebrew/Syriac thought.

abilities to inform and convert others to his message.[26] If one concedes this view and verifies its veracity with the experience of understanding Paul's true aim, a misinformed interpretation, or to use Locke's words "that such or such an Interpretation," falls by the wayside, as misinformed interpretations will be proven inadequate by the text itself.[27]

Locke conceded that such a method of reading Paul does not guarantee a "perfectly clear" understanding of Paul, as literary and historical idiosyncrasies unrelated to modern viewpoints inevitably survive in the text. Instead, what one finds is understanding of "those most useful parts of Divine Revelation" verified by the "Consistency of the Discourse, and the Pertinency of it to the Design he is upon," and the achievement of this understanding, limited though it may be, occurs when we endeavor to make St. Paul the interpreter of himself.[28]

Locke closed his essay on Paul with an important distinction between the **particulars** of a system of thought and the system of thought itself. Locke believed that while the individual tenets of Paul's thought formed a coherent theological worldview, this did not mean that every aspect of Paul's letters could be equally compared. As Locke argued, "I know it is not unusual to find a Multitude of Texts heaped up for the maintaining of an espoused Proposition, but in a Sense often so remote from their true meaning, the no one can hardly avoid thinking that those who so used them, either sought nor or valued not the Sense."[29] This impulse effectively enables a jumbling together of

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[26] Locke, "An Essay," 62.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 63.

[29] Ibid., 63.

passages that often have no immediate correlation to one another. And thus one often compares apples to oranges or references theological points that are improperly grounded on a careful consideration of Scripture.

I sum up Locke's approach to reading St. Paul by citing and unpacking a complex and lengthy quotation:

> And since the Providence of God that so order'd it, that St. Paul has writ a great Number of Epistles, which tho upon different Occasions, and to several Purposes, yet are all confined within the Business of his Apostleship, and so contain nothing but Point of Christian Instruction, amongst which he seldom fails to drop in, and often to enlarge on the great and distinguishing Doctrines of our holy Religion; which, if quitting our own Infallibility in that Analogy of Faith, which we have made to our selves, or have implicitly adopted from some other, we would carefully lay together, and diligently compare and study, I am apt to think would give us St. Paul's System in clear and indisputable Sense, which every one must acknowledge to be a better Standard to interpret his Meaning by, in any obscure and doubtful Parts of his Epistles, if any such should still remain, than the System, Confession, or Articles of any Church or Society of Christians yet known, which however pretended to be founded on Scripture, are visibly the Contrivances of Men (fallible both in their Opinions and Interpretation) and is visible in most of them, made with partial Views, and adapted to what Occasions of that time, and the present Circumstances they were then in, were thought to require for the Support or Justification of themselves.[30]

This quotation not only recapitulates Locke's approach to interpreting Paul but also demonstrates Locke's capacity to construct a sentence abstruse enough to impress any German Idealist philosopher. On the one hand, Locke states here much of what has already been covered, namely that Paul must be the interpreter of himself and we must compare the particulars of Paul with the whole of Paul in order to best understand him, eschewing any preconceived notions "Confession, or Articles of any church or Society of Christians" that may have misrepresented Paul throughout the Christian tradition.

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[30] Ibid., 63-64.

On the other hand, Locke also points out the need for "quitting our own Infallibility in that Analogy of Faith." This phrase points to another clue in Locke's hermeneutic that while not always obvious, is important. Much of Locke' essay on Paul involved the dissection of Paul's letters on both historical and literary grounds, demonstrating the potential barriers found within the text. Yet, Locke stated very little about the mental predispositions necessary to overcoming such barriers. Many are, of course, implied as patience would be of the utmost key to read and reread Paul as Locke demonstrated. Further, Locke made very explicit the importance of belief as mentioned above. Yet, while not always explicit, Locke dictum on the "quitting of our infallibility" shows that Locke believed that a certain "indifferency" was needed to truly understand Paul. As noted in previous chapters, Locke addressed "indifferency" as a concept in both the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and his later work *On the Conduct of the Understanding*. To review, "indifferency," for Locke, is the active power of the understanding to suspend its judgment on matters unclear. It involved the active recognition of one's own implicit biases and prejudices and the capacity to suspend them in order for more pure meanings and truths to reveal themselves.

In this particular passage, Locke's appeal to the "Analogy of Faith" is quite telling. The concept of analogy of faith well predates Locke and in fact is rooted in Paul's letter to the Romans 12:6.[31] The word "rule," often translated as "proportion" in modern translations, is translated from the Greek *αηαλογιαν* which can be literally

[31]"And having different gifts, according to the grace that is given us, either prophecy, to be used according to **the rule of faith** . . ." (emphasis mine)

translated as analogy.[32] Locke, in his paraphrase on Romans, has a short exposition of this phrase:

> This therefore is far from signifying, that a man in interpreting of Sacred Scripture should explain the sense according to the system of his particular sect, which each party is pleased to call the *analogie of faith*. For this would be to make the Apostle to set that for a rule of interpretation. which had not its being till long after, and is the product of fallible men.[33]

For Locke, an "analogy of faith" is largely a pragmatic issue, in which fallible and artificial systems of thought create distorting space between the reader and Paul. And thus, to arrive at Paul's proper meaning, one must "quit in that infallibility" or use one's capacity for indifferency to uncover Paul's meaning relative only to his own thinking and system of thought rather than an outside system.

Some have suggested that Locke's approach to Scripture turned on an anti-interpretation interpretation of Scripture, i.e. Locke believed that no formal systems of

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[32] The "analogy of faith" has a long theological tradition beyond Paul beginning with the church fathers up to twentieth-century dialectical theology. It even to a great extent predates Paul and is found as a philosophical principle in the writings of Plato. For a good introduction to the analogy of faith in both the catholic and protestant traditions, see Joseph Palakeel's *The Use of Analogy in Theological Discourse: An Investigation in Ecumenical Perspective* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1995) and Archie J. Spencer's *The Analogy of Faith: The Quest for God's Speakability* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015). Spencer in particular focuses on the Greek and Latin contexts which first developed this level of thinking but both authors primarily are interested in the revival of analogical theology in the work of Karl Barth and his critics. Enlightenment thinkers, like Locke, receive no attention, echoing a common trend in modern theology to discuss the church fathers, medieval scholastics, and reformers while almost skipping the 17th and 18th centuries entirely before discussing the German tradition of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

[33]John Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, volume II, ed. Arthur M. Wainwright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 585.

thinking were needed to bring intelligibility to the Bible.[34] To some extent this is true, and Locke would have perhaps had little sympathy for the modern tradition of dialogical biblical interpretation. Yet, what is also clear is that Locke's approach to Paul turns on the active capacities of the mind. The agency of understanding rests with the reader, rather than with the text as Martin Luther would have argued. In this sense, Locke's prefatory Essay on Paul shows a rather robust hermeneutic that rests on an objective discovery and implementation of active agents within the understanding, and this agency can transcend received orthodoxies and systems of thought.

Indeed, one could read Locke's 21st chapter of the *Essay*, discussed at length in chapter 2 of this dissertation, as both an epistemological and a hermeneutical chapter, since human beings must use their active capacities of suspension and judgment to the same ends whether engaging with texts or the natural world. If there is an anti-interpretation stream within Locke, it is that Locke, unlike many modern interpreters, reserves no distinction between the world of language and the natural world. Language takes shape as a mirror of the natural world and thus as the natural world is constant, language also maintains a certain continuity. To be sure, discovery is an on-going

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[34] See Joel C. Weinsheimer *Eighteenth-Century Hermeneutics: Philosophy of Interpretation in England from Locke to Burke* (New Haven: Yale University, 1993), 23-45. In Weinsheimer's view, Locke's attempt at a simple religion and religious toleration was seeped in a monological epistemology that denied the role of interpretation in human understanding. Thus, Locke engendered a hermeneutic tradition but by providing subsequent interpreters with a negative example to overcome. Weinsheimer's view of Locke's epistemology, in my opinion, is misleading as Locke argued for a mode of interpretation that used the active powers of reasoning to understand Paul. It is true that Locke believed that no outside system of thought was needed to understand Paul, but Locke would have made the same argument about any literary artifact. Thus, Locke believed that Paul wrote in such a way that he intended himself to be understood by the early Greek speaking churches. When one suspends as many of the literary and historical barriers as possible, a clearer indication of Paul's thoughts will inevitably occur. However, this does not happen spontaneously or on its own but rather turns on the active capacity of the mind to suspend judgment on unclear matters. In this vein, Locke's epistemology is not "monological" but turns on the active capacity of reason to guide the understanding.

process but it is perceptions that change, not the world itself. If we become clear on the nature of perception and our ability to shape and engage perceptions, the objects become attainable and this is as true of the Gospel as outlined by Paul as it is of the natural world.

Locke, St. Paul, and the Lawful Understanding of Religion and Faith:

As I suggested in the previous chapter on Locke's interpretation of the Gospels, one of the central moves of the *Reasonableness* was to collapse law and belief into one another. When Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, he established a new covenant with his followers with the primary condition as belief in Christ as the Messiah of God's kingdom. Belief in Christ as the Messiah, therefore, did not become a substitute for the law or a means to attaining the law, but rather the law, itself, and constituted the covenant of Christ's church.

When we turn to Locke's study of Paul in both *A Paraphrase* and his study Bibles, we find that Locke drew much attention to this same theme. In fact, the theme is so well annotated, one wonders if Locke studied the Gospels under the influence of Paul or if he came to the conclusions of the *Reasonableness* based on the Gospels alone, as he claimed to Limborch.

Not only did Locke continue his legalistic framework into his study of Paul, but also he primarily strengthened the distinction between the Law of Faith and the Mosaic Law. In the *Reasonableness*, Locke had defined the Mosaic law as a positive manifestation of natural law curtailed to specific Jewish circumstances. Locke argued that "some of God's Positive Commands being for peculiar Ends, and suited to particular Circumstances of times, Places, and Persons, have a limited and only temporary

Obligation by vertue of God's positive Injunction; such as was that part of Moses's Law which concerned the outward Worship, or Political Constitution of the Jews."[35] In other words, laws need not be universal to accord with natural law. Only the moral components of the positive laws must be universal, even if Jewish laws proscribed both moral and ceremonial behavior. However, Locke believed that while the Law of Faith contained only moral content, there was nothing wrong with the ceremonial aspects of law if they did not conflict with the moral aspects of the law. Locke admitted that Jews considered the ceremonial law part of the Law of Nature and implies, though not explicitly, this as perfectly reasonable. He acknowledged them as "limited and only temporary" but leaves open their limitation and obligation.[36]

However, when Locke described the Mosaic law in his synopses and paraphrases of the Epistles, he used more condemning language. One sees this particularly in his commentaries on Galatians and Ephesians. Much of the strong language of Galatians comes from Paul himself. Paul, recounting his conflicts with St. Peter in Jerusalem and Antioch over the inclusion of Gentiles, spoke harshly to the Galatians about the emptiness of the Mosaical law. Paul proclaimed this in Galatians 2:15-16 and 19:

> We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the words of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**.. . . For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. [emphasis mine]

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[35] Locke, *Reasonableness*, 99.

[36] We must also recall that that Locke referred to the Law of Faith as a privilege of the Christian covenant, meaning that the Law of Faith benefits the Christian community but is not universally normative as it is unreasonable to hold individuals accountable to laws never revealed to them. Thus, theoretically, Jewish sects unfamiliar with the New Testament could claim their own ceremonials laws as both normative and moral and not in violation of Natural Law, either pre or post Christ.

Indeed, Paul in his letter to the Galatians refutes the Mosaic law more emphatically than in any of his other letters, often equating strict observance of the Mosaic law with bondage, distinguishing it from the promise of the Gospel such as in 3:14.[37]

Locke, mostly, saw no reason to interpret Galatians as anything other than a direct refutation of Mosaical law. In Locke's Polyglot New Testament, he made only one note on Galatians, an opening note that stated "The designe of the Epistle is to dissuade them from subjection to the Law of Moses. . . ."[38] Locke made a slightly more substantive note in his Bentley Bible on Galatians 3:23[39] where he noted "We were kept close and shut up under the law until faith should be revealed ie til the gospel be revealed."[40] In the opening passage of his synopsis of Galatians, Locke argued that while it differed in style and manner, Galatians mirrored the main intent of Romans, "to dehort and hinder the Galatians from bringing themselves under the bondage of the Mosaical Law."[41]

Locke throughout his commentary on Galatians largely emphasized the irrelevance and even evil nature of the Mosaical law in light of the new covenant in Christ. Locke interpreted 1:9[42] as being a pronouncement of *anathema* "wholy and soly

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[37] "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus: that we may receive the promise of the Spirt by faith."

[38] Locke, Polyglot New Testament, 139.

[39] "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

[40] Locke, Bentley Bible, 813.

[41] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 119.

[42] "As we said before, so say I now again, if any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

upon the Judaizing seducers."[43] He interpreted 2:5[44] as "the doctrine of freedom from the law,"[45] and 2:14[46] as "that freedom from the law of Moses which was a part of the true doctrine of Gospel . . . insisting on it that this doctrine of freedome form the law was the true gospel."[47] To give one last example, Locke interpreted 3:14[48] as proclaiming an almost biological distinction between the "seed" of Abraham and the "one seed which was Christ," meaning that the promise of Christ's seed applied to both Jews and gentiles who were united together only under the guise of belief; that "by faith in Jesus Christ, that they were the people of God, and heirs of the promise."[49]

In the early part of the paraphrase on Galatians, Locke even perhaps stressed the evil nature of the Mosaical law more than Paul, himself. Locke called attention to 1:4,[50] noting that *ενεοτως αιωο,* translated in the King James as "present world" must not signify the present earthly moment, as Paul was not predicting, in this passage, a removal of Christians into the "other world."[51] Thus, Locke preferred to interpret *ενεοτως αιωο* in

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[43] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 126.

[44] "To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

[45] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 129.

[46] "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel . . . "

[47] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 132.

[48] "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

[49] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 137.

[50] "Who gave himself [Jesus] for our Sins, that he might deliver from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

[51] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 122. While he does not say so explicitly, Locke means by "other world" an extra worldly domain such as heaven or hell.

light of the phrase found in I Corinthians 2:6-8[52], *αιωο ουτογ* (not of the world/age) where Locke argues that Paul clearly "signifies the Jewish nation under the Mosaical constitution."[53]

To justify this interpretation, Locke noted that "*this age"* or "*this world"* typically signifies the "Nation of Jews under the Mosaical constitution," and thus "present world" signifies it as well.[54] The Kingdom of God, by contrast, "was to be under the Messiah wherein the economie and constitution of the Jewish Church and the nation itself that in opposition to Christ adhered to it was to be laid aside as in the New Testament called *αιωο μελλων the world* or *age to come*."[55] Thus, Christ's freedom from the present world means setting his followers free from the Law of Moses. Locke event went so far as to show that *πονηρογ* (evil) as in "this present evil world" demonstrates that adherence to the Mosaical law in light of Christ's new covenant can properly be called evil, though Locke notes that Paul "out of his wonted tenderness to his nation, forbears to name them openly, and uses a doubtful expression, which might comprehend the heathen world also though he cheifly pointed at the Jews."[56]

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[52] "Howbeit we speak of wisdom among the perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, neither of the princes of this world that come to nought. But we speak of the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our Glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew. For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.

[53] Locke, *Paraphrase,* 122.

[54] Ibid., Locke here is taking his own liberty with the text and gives no compilation or index of passages where "this world" always means Jews under the Mosaic law. Rather he simply states it as fact.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., It is very possible that Locke is displaying some anti-semitic bias in this interpretation, though it is also possible that Locke is interpreting Galatians in light of the Gospel of John that strongly opposes the interest of the Jews to that of Jesus and his kingdom.

Locke continued this line of interpretation when paraphrasing and commenting on the letter to the Ephesians, in spite of its more sanguine tone.[57] In Locke's Polyglot New Testament, he softened his assessment of Ephesians as being primarily a praise of the Ephesians for their embodiment of the Gospel. In Locke's words, "The designe of the Epistle seems to be to convince the Ephesians they had a share in the Gospel as well as the Jews, of what use the Gospel was to the Heathen and what they ought to make of it."[58] Yet, in the opening Synopsis of Ephesians in *A Paraphrase*, Locke used much harsher language, noting that "Our Savior had so openly and expressly declared to his Disciples the Destruction of the Temple, that they could by no means doubt of it . . . that the *εθη*, Customs or Rites of the Mosaic Law, as they are called . . were to cease with it."[59]

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[57] It must be noted that the letter to the Ephesians is not only now disputed as written by Paul but also as not written to the church in Ephesus. Wayne Meeks and John Fitzgerald suggest that the letter was most likely a general letter written by one of Paul's disciples shortly after Paul's death. Given that many of the earliest extant editions of the letter have no salutation to Ephesus and that Paul shows little detailed awareness of a church he ostensibly spent two years building, the letter was likely written by an author unfamiliar with the Ephesian church. See *The Writings of St. Paul*, eds. Wayne Meeks and John T. Fitzgerald (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 113-115.

Wainwright notes that Locke took as a matter of fact the traditional view that Paul composed the letter to the Ephesians while imprisoned in Rome sometime around 62 CE, though Wainwright also notes that the view of Ephesians as a general letter later attributed to the church of Ephesus was held by some of Locke's contemporaries, such as Beza and Ussher, even if Locke makes no mention of the theory (803).

From a purely interpretive perspective, this demonstrates how outdated Locke's commentaries are in that, assuming a unity of authorship across the letters that is now in doubt, Locke over stresses their continuity in theme. However from a historical perspective, it shows the inevitable challenges that Locke and others faced to find a continuous message throughout the letters that may be impossible given their probable multi-authorships. Given that Locke took seriously the achievements of the Christian Humanist tradition, it is very plausible that Locke would have amended his commentaries in light of modern material discoveries concerning Paul's letters.

[58] Locke, Polyglot New Testament, 157.

[59] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 607. Wainwright notes that Locke believed the Epistle was designed to "give thanks for the Ephesian Christians' steadfastness in the faith and refusal to lapse into legalism" (803). By legalism, Wainwright means a strict adherence to Mosaic Law.

Locke continued, noting that Jesus's warning of the destruction of the Temple persuaded all of his disciples to discontinue the ceremonial aspects of the law. Yet, Locke argued that it is not at all clear that the other disciples understood this point with the clarity and force of St. Paul. The evidence rests on the fact that "we see they [disciples] had not at all instructed their Converts of the Circumcision, of their being set at liberty from that Yoke, which it is very likely they should not have forlorn to have done, if they had been convinced of it themselves."[60] Locke noted that the primary text outlining the dispute over Mosaical law, Acts 15:1-21, only addressed the issue of Gentiles and circumcision and said nothing of Jews being relinquished from the Law of Moses. Considering that many apostles, including St. James reported in Acts 21:20 that the "many thousands that believed were all zealous of the Law," Locke concluded:

> St. Paul alone, more than all the rest of the Apostles, was taken notice of to have preached that the coming of Christ put an end to the Law, and that in the Kingdom of God erected under the Messiah, the Observation of the Law was neither required, nor availed ought, Faith in Christ was the only Condition of Admittance both for Jew and Gentile, all who believed being now equally the People of God, whether circumcised or uncircumcised.[61]

Locke's opening synopsis of Ephesians, in fact, emphasized the dispute over the Mosaic Law so much that he spent very little time introducing the actual text but rather contextualizing the debate within the realm of first-century disputes over law as outlined in Acts and Paul's other letters.

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 608.

Locke continued to emphasize a break from Mosaic Law throughout the footnotes of Ephesians. At the beginning, Locke made a detailed note on Ephesians 1:1[62] noting that the word *Πιστο;ς* (faithful, referring to "Faith of Christ Jesus") must be properly contextualized by the letter to the Colossians, where Paul clearly intended to convey "faithful in Christ Jesus" as praise for standing firm in the faith of Christ which Paul never equated with those "who made Circumcision necessary to Salvation, and an Observance of Jewish Rites a requisite part of the Christian religion."[63]

As in Galatians, Locke emphasized this point over and over again, but he gave the most systematic defense of it in Ephesians 2:15.[64] Locke argued that "By abolishing. I do not remember that the Law of *Moses*, or any part of it, is by an actual Reap anywhere abrogated, and yet we are told, and in the places of the New Testament, that it is *abolished*."[65] From here, Locke began a footnote that indicated the fullness of his view that Paul stood for a full refutation of the ceremonial Mosaic law within the church.

To summarize, Locke argued that after the "general Revolt and Apostacy of Mankind," the people of Israel voluntarily became the people of God and as validation of their consent, God revealed to Moses a set of laws, which He intended to both govern the people of Israel and in time give way to the hands of a messiah to rule over His

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[62] "Paul and Apostle of Jesus Christ, by the declared Will and special Appointment of God to the Professors of the Gospel, who are in Ephesus, Converts who stand firm in the Faith of Christ Jesus."

[63] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 611.

[64] "Having abolished in his (Jesus's) flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making peace."

[65] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 633.

kingdom.[66] The members of this new kingdom would be the posterity of the Israelites as well as those would came to terms with the covenant of the New Kingdom. Yet, Locke suggested, that when the Jews rejected Christ as the proper Messiah, they rejected the premises of their own law, meaning that while their own laws continued to govern their nation, they ceased to be "the People of God, and the Subjects of God's Kingdom."[67]

Thus, Christ's coming, death, and resurrection "put an End to the Law of *Moses*," opening another direction for the People, both Jews and Gentiles to enter into the Kingdom of God, and this path was constitutively different from the Law of Moses. It eliminated the ordinances of the Law of Moses and replaced it with Faith in Jesus Christ, which became the sole admission into the church and was confirmed with one ceremony of baptism. Locke continued that the Jews fundamentally misunderstood this transformation of the law due to their hubris and forfeited their status as the "chosen People of God."[68]

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 634. This note reveals an interesting tension in Locke's theology, namely the necessity of the crucifixion in Christian theology. Locke implies that the efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection might very well have been unnecessary, as the Jews could have accepted Christ as Messiah and spread the conditions of his covenant through their own means, accepting Gentiles into the Jewish faith under the new Conditions established by Christ. Thus, Locke implies that the death and resurrection were only important for the dissemination of the New Covenant, namely the impetus of its spread by Jesus's disciples who needed the testimony of his resurrection to give credence to their claims of a new Kingdom. However, the death and resurrection did not contain the **content** of the covenant but only set in motion the agency of the New Covenant's dissemination.

It is also worth noting Locke's discussion of the resurrection in I Corinthians 15 where Locke implies that the resurrection's efficacy applied to the "Just" who preceded Christ's coming. Locke argued that "how the wicked who were afterwards to be restored to life were to be raised, and what was to become of them he here says noe thing, as not being to his present purpose which was to assure the Corinthians by the resurrection of Christ, of a happy resurrection to beleivers and thereby to encourage them to continue stedfast in the faith which had such reward" (253).

This is not a claim that Locke would have even implied in the *Reasonableness* and gives further indication that Locke's view of Christianity to be communal and legalistic in nature rather than ontological.

Locke continued in the next footnote that Christ's new covenant did not outlaw the ceremonial aspects of the law. Locke conceded that those who were circumcised before the new covenant and who had found the ordinances of the Law of Moses convenient to their own lifestyle could continue, as long as they understood the ordinances to be indifferent to the conditions of membership into the Church. It was only "the making those ritual Observances necessary to join'd with Faith in Believers for Justification" that Locke believed was "unlawful and contrary to the Gospel."[69]

Locke also continued that Paul was clear about the specifics of the Law that Christ ended by his Death, namely "*The Law of Commandments in Ordinances*" which he defined as the "positive injunctions of the law of Moses concerning things in own nature indifference, which became obligatory merely by virtue of a direct positive Command."[70] However, what was contained to be the" Rule of Right which is of perpetual Obligation" was kept entirely intact by Jesus and in fact, Locke argues, was made more plainly visible than in the Mosaic Constitution. And thus, Locke, stressing the moral act of Christ's death, argued that "Duty" and the "Rules of Morality" are now completely apparent in the new covenant of Christ.[71]

Based on his reading of Galatians and Ephesians, we see that Locke read Paul as stressing more than any other apostle the superfluous and at times evil nature of the ordinances of the Mosaic covenant in light of the New Covenant of Christ. In this regard, Locke stressed the negation of the Mosaic Law after Christ even more so than in the

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[69] Ibid., 635.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

Reasonableness. When turning to Romans, we see that Locke also continued to develop his theology about the conditions of the Law of Faith.

To be sure, Locke continued to emphasize the inadequacy of the Mosaic Law when commenting on Romans. In an opening notes on Romans 1 in his Polyglot New Testament, Locke wrote "The Jews shall not be justified by having the law but by keeping the moral part of it and moralitie shall justify the Gentiles alone."[72] In another rather lengthy note on Romans 3:20-24,[73] Locke defined the "Law" here as "the law of works which comprehends both the law of nature and the positive law given by Moses."[74] Further, by "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Locke took Paul to mean "Jews and Gentiles whose deeds reachd not to the rule of the light of nature or of the revealed law."[75]

In *A Paraphrase,* Locke reinforced the position once again interpreting Romans 3:19[76] by noting that here "law" means "that the declarations of god which he had cited out of the old testament were spoken of the Jews who were under the dispensation of the

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[72] Locke, Polyglot New Testament, 1.

[73] "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified din his sight: for by the law is ht knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; of there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."

[74] Locke, Polyglot New Testament, 11.

[75] Ibid.

[76] "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that eery mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

old testament."[77] Further, in Romans 3:20[78] when Paul spoke of the "works of the law," Locke argued that he meant "actions of conformity to a law requireing the performance of . . . *the right rule of God."*[79] Thus, as in Galatians and Ephesians, Locke made a qualitative distinction between the Mosaic Law of works and the Law of Faith.

When explicating the Law of Faith, we see that Locke primarily interpreted Paul in the same vein as the *Reasonableness,* namely the Law of Faith replacing the law of works, ending the law of works' requirement for perfect conformity, and substituting it with belief. In Locke's above mentioned note on Romans 3:20-24 found in his Polyglot New Testament, Locke defined the Law of Faith as "whereby those who beleived in J C [Jesus Christ] had the defect of their justice which came short of an exact conformity to the law, made up to them by the justice of or from god, whereby he accepted them as if **exactly and legaly** just by their own deeds and thus god justifies or makes just by grace" (bold emphasis mine).[80]

In *A Paraphrase,* Locke did not collapse law and belief into one another as neatly as he did in the *Reasonableness,* but he did continue to stress the law of faith as requiring belief. In a note on Romans 2:26,[81] Locke after retracing familiar ground on the

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[77] Locke, *Paraphrase,* 507.

[78] "Because by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before him. For by the law is the knowledge of sin."

[79] Ibid.

[80] Locke, Polyglot New Testament, 11.

[81] "Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?"

distinctions between the ceremonial and moral components of the Mosaic Law made a point almost verbatim out of the *Reasonableness:*

> The doctrine of St. paul and the New Testament there is one and the same rule of rectitude set to the actions of all man kind Jews Gentiles and christians: and that failing of a complete obedience to it in every tittle make a man unrighteous the consequence whereof is death . . . but that both Jews and Gentiles shall be saved from death, if they beleive in Jesus Christ and sincerely endeavour after righteousness though they doe not attain unto it their faith being counted to them for righteousness.[82]

Lest the connection between law and belief be unclear from this passage, Locke in a footnote on Romans 3:31,[83] argued that by "establish" Paul meant that "The doctrine of justification by faith necessarily supposeth a rule of righteousness which those who are justified by faith come short of; and also a punishment incurd, from which they are set free by being justified: and so this doctrine **establishes a law**" (emphasis mine).[84] Thus, for Locke in reading Romans, as with reading the Gospels, belief in Jesus Christ became the establishment and foundation of the law of faith, not a substitute or replacement for the law.

Locke did give layers to the law of faith unfound in the *Reasonableness,* most notably in Romans 6:15.[85] Locke argued that "under grace" could only be understood by juxtaposing it with "under the law." Locke believed that preposition "under" was the common bridge as it showed a commonality between grace and law. Under the law meant as dictated by the commands of the Mosaic Law, while "under grace" meant he

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[82] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 502.

[83] "Do we then make food the law through faith? God forbid: yea we establish the law."

[84] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 510.

[85] "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

who "haveing by baptisme, the ceremony of admittance, been received into the kingdom of Christ or the societie of Christians called by a peculiar name the Christian church owned Jesus of Nazareth to be the messiah his King professing subjection to his law delivered in the Gospel."[86] Hence, according to Locke, "*being under grace* is spoken here as *being under the law*,"[87] with the sacrament of baptism becoming the new ordinance of the law, signifying the imparting of grace to the believer.

Locke, however, did make an important similarity between grace and law, namely that as with the Mosaic law, grace was not the prerogative or privilege of a "Societie in general nor is this benefit granted nationally to the whole body of the people . . . but personally to such of them who perform the conditions required in the terms of each covenant."[88] In this regard, grace did not exempt one from obedience but rather constituted the grounds of a new form of obedience. Locke argued that those who claimed to be under grace but still "obey sin are the vassals of sin, and those who are the vassals of sin shall receive death the wages of sin." Thus, once again we find Locke arguing that the Law of Faith, as constituted through grace and obedience of belief is not *essentially* different from the Mosaic law but only **constitutively** different.

Locke, through his commentaries and notes on Galatians, Ephesians, and Romans widened further widen the gap between the Mosaic Law and the Law of Faith, moving away from language of privilege as he did in the *Reasonableness* concerning the efficacy of the Law of Faith. By focusing only on the internal dynamics of Paul, Locke saw no

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[86] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 535.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

reason to ground Christianity within the more universalist paradigms that he outlined toward the close of the *Reasonableness*. However, Locke did maintain the same basic character of the argument: The Law of Faith rested on belief grounded in grace. While it replaced the Mosaic Law, it did not upend the essential character of the Mosaic Law, to live in righteousness with God.

It is easy to miss the subtle aspect of Locke's point: the transformation of law constituted no ontological transformation of the Christian. For Locke in both his commentaries on Paul and the *Reasonableness*, the grounds of faith involve an active assent of the mind to a state of lawfulness but omits mention of the constitution of the soul. Faith becomes an active assent to conditions of law, even the Law of Faith. When turning to Locke's reading of I Corinthians, we see how Locke continued to develop a philosophy of mind that existed alongside his lawful understanding of Christianity.

Locke on the Spiritual and the Animal Man of St. Paul:

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians contains many dictums that on the surface do not square with much of Locke's theology, namely Locke's legalistic understanding of Christianity. Paul in his attempt to rectify the divisions of the Corinthian church encouraged its members to scorn the wisdom of men, instead placing their faith in the power of God. Paul in I Corinthians 2:6-16 believed that faith in the wisdom of God meant embracing a Mystery "which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Paul continued that to receive the mystery of God's wisdom, the Corinthians should become spiritual men instead of natural men in 2:14-16:

> The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual, judgeth all things, yet he himself is judge of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

In both *A Paraphrase* and his study Bibles, Locke found this series of passages to be quite exercising. What is particularly revelatory about these notes is Locke's continual commitment to the assent of a predisposed mind, as Locke had outlined in the *Essay* and the *Reasonableness*.

It is worth remembering that in the *Essay*, Locke argued that while faith and reason contained two different domains, it was reason that regulated the bounds of faith and kept it in proper check. In the *Reasonableness*, Locke had argued that the revelation of Christ constituted a new aspect of natural law, replacing the moral component of the law with the Law of Faith, a privilege of the Christian community. Yet in both of these assertions, Locke maintained an innate capacity within human beings to regulate their faith and assent to the Law of Faith based on innate capacities.

In these passages on I Corinthians, we see Locke continuing to argue for the active mind organizing and implement the reception of the revealed Gospel. One of Locke's most expansive treatments of this issue is found in a note from his Polyglot New Testament on I Corinthians 2:15[89] where Locke contrasted *Πνεγματικος* with Ψ*υχικοσ*, i.e. the "spiritual" man vs. the "animal" man. Locke noted that *Πνεγματικος* signifies "he that builds Christianity upon revelation" which he contrasted to Ψ*υχικοσ* being he "who builds only upon his natural faculties and the knowledg that it got barely by them."[90]

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[89] "But the spiritual man judgeth all things: and he himself is judged of no man."

[90] Locke, Polyglot New Testament, 60.

Thus, Locke implies that the spiritual man is the natural man who builds his natural impulses upon revelation, as Locke suggested about St. Paul in the previously discussed Prefatory essay.

Locke persisted in making a stronger distinction in the rest of the note, worth quoting in full:

> *Πνεγματικος* ie enlightened by the spirit of god in the knowledg and mystery of the gospel, opposed to *ψυχικοσ* ie the mere animal man proceeding only upon natural ie unrevealed principles . . . ie explores and can discerne what is from the spirit of god and what not. But such an one is above the discovery and judgment of others. ie I who have the spirit and mind of Christ and it cannot be examined and tried by those carnal men who pretend to tell you that I act out of crafty and carnal designs. JL
>
> *Πνεγματικος* is a an enlightened by revelation. *ψυχικοσ* one that has only the light of his natural parts. JL
>
> What man by the strength of his bare natural parts can come to the knowledge of the gospel and its wonderfull contrivance soe St. Paul understands this place of Isaiah Rom XI. 34. But the designe of the gospel is revealed to me which I could not at large deliver to you as to *Πνεγματικος* ie such as depended only on revelation for the knowledg of the gospel; but as to . . . such as depended on the natural faculties . . . II.14 JL
>
> *και αντηροποσ* doe ye not depend upon your natural abilities when you distinguish yourselves and your tenets or knowledg in Christ by your teachers. Doe ye not governe yourselves by barely humane and unreveled principles. V.IX.8[91]

Here, we see the fullness of Locke's commitment to an active view of the mind that receives the knowledge of revelation. We must notice that Locke does not say that *Πνεγματικος* represents a change in constitution nor a change in disposition. Rather, *Πνεγματικος* builds upon the light of his natural parts rather than upending it. Thus, the Gospel is equated to the reception of knowledge and affects nothing of our capacities for knowledge.

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[91] Ibid., 61.

Locke continued to develop this way of thinking in *A Paraphrase* when commenting on I Corinthians 2:6-16. When explicating the "Wisdome of this world," Locke defined this as "the knowledge arts and sciences attainable by mans natural parts and faculties. such as mans wit could find out cultivar and improve."[92] Locke also continued to define "this world" as "that State which dureing the Mosaic constitution men either Jews or Gentiles were in," continuing to distinguish the Mosaical law from the new Law of Faith.[93]

Yet, when Locke commented on the "wisdome of God," he defined it as "the doctrine of the gospel coming immediately from god by the revelation of his spirit and in this Ch: is set in opposition to all knowledg discoverys and improvements whatsoever attainable by humane industry parts and study . . . Thus distinguishing the knowledg of the gospel which was derived whole from revelation and could be had noe other way, from all other knowledg whatsoever."[94]

Thus, we see that even in this passage of I Corinthians where Paul makes a firm distinction between the "Wisdome of God" and the "Wisdome of Man" or the *Πνεγματικος* man and the Ψυχικοσ man, Locke never abandoned his position that the revelation of the Gospel works **with** the natural capacities of the understanding, filling only the content of the mind but never providing the constitution of the mind, as many of the classical reformers believed. In this regard, we can see Locke continuing to develop and strengthen the theology of the *Reasonableness* through extensive and study of the

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[92] Locke, *Paraphrase*, 174.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 175.

New Testament without abandoning the core principles of either the *Reasonableness* or the *Essay*.

Conclusion:

Navigating the synopses, paraphrases, and footnotes of *A Paraphrase* requires an enormous amount of patience, as the passages discussed above demonstrate Locke's tendency towards tedium and circumlocution. However, *A Paraphrase* demonstrates Locke's extraordinary capacity to think with St. Paul while also unpacking the many layers of Paul's theology, including the difficulties of translating Paul's Greek into accurate English. Further, we see that while Locke always maintained an open disposition to biblical discovery, Locke maintained a coherent theological viewpoint when paraphrasing and annotating the Epistles of St. Paul.[95]

The main strength of Locke's *A Paraphrase* is also its main weakness, i.e. a willingness to explicate similar themes over and over again in order to properly ground them in Scripture. On the one hand, one can see ample evidence that Locke's legalistic understanding of Christianity has many affinities with Paul's letters, especially Romans and Galatians. That Locke raised attention over and over again to the tension between the Mosaic Law and the Law of Faith in *A Paraphrase* demonstrates the legalistic tendencies of St. Paul, himself. It is one of the more unrecognized parallels in Christian

[95] In a letter to Samuel Bold in May of 1699, Locke once remarked that "I have a late Proof of this myself, who have lately found in some Passages of Scripture a Sense quite different from what I understood in them before, or from what I understood them before, or from what I found in Commentators. (Locke, *Correspondence*, vol. 6: Letter no. 2590)."

Much of the tedium of *A Paraphrase* can be attributed to Locke's striving to square new understandings of Paul with his previous theological suppositions. As demonstrated, Locke never saw any reason to abandon the core principles of the *Reasonableness* or *Essay* but did labor to make certain passages of Paul square with previously argued theses.

history that the struggles of the first century churches and the sixteenth-and seventeenth-century English church were both rooted in disputes over the interpretation and application of laws. In this regard, Locke's *Paraphrase* demonstrates the compatibility between his own concerns and those of St. Paul.

On the other hand, Locke's *Paraphrase* not only suffers from literary shortcomings but emphasizes legalistic understandings of Christianity to the detriment of other important themes of the New Testament. As demonstrated above in footnote 69, Locke understated Paul's emphasis on the mystery of Christ's resurrection to ground Christianity almost entirely in compliance of belief. Locke hardly ever discussed Paul's themes on the emptying of the intellect and the negative components of faith emphasized so heavily in the German tradition by such theologians as Martin Luther, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Karl Barth. The mystery of God, Locke argued, reveals the doctrine of the Gospel which commanded belief in Christ as the Messiah. It is rather easy to understand how such Deists as John Toland aimed to excise mystery entirely from Christianity under the influence of Locke's philosophy and theology. One looks in vain for any rigorous doctrine of mystery in Locke's theological writings.

It is difficult to know why Locke understated Paul's emphasis on mystery, though one can see a predisposition for this lack of urgency in Locke's *Essay*. We must recall that when discussing substance in Books II and III of the *Essay*, Locke continuously referred to substance as the "I know not what," feeling no need to discuss the spiritual or intellectual capacities which render the "I know not what" unknowable. Not until Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* would such an urgency find a great explicator in Enlightenment philosophical theology. In the preface to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant

explicitly attacks Locke's "Physiology of the Mind," noting that a common sense approach asks us to be indifferent to that which is impossible to be indifferent towards.[96]

Thus, perhaps Locke's unwillingness to unpack more fully Paul's theme of mystery reveals the different tastes of the rational English tradition vs. the Lutheran tradition. For Locke and others like him, the main urgency of Christianity dealt with compliance to the law, whereas for Luther, one could not be compliant to the law without surrender to the mystery of Christ's resurrection and its implication on the substance of the law.[97] Thus, a careful reading of Locke's *Paraphrase* reveals a central tension in Protestant theology, namely the tension between compliance to law and the mystery of faith in Christ's resurrection. Indeed, this tension was a central theme of Reformation theology and had many implications for how the revelation of Christ fused with morality and righteous living.

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[96] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 100. Kant argued that "It is pointless to affect **indifference** with respect to such inquiries, to whose object human nature **cannot** be **indifferent**." The editors note that Kant had in his target the works of Johann August Eberhard, J.G. Feder, Christian Garve, Christoph Friedrich Nicolai, and Moses Mendelssohn since they often were contemptuous of metaphysical questions (714. Yet, considering that Kant explicitly credited Locke with beginning this tradition of commonsense speculation, it is clear that Kant saw his own project as critically engaging with the metaphysical questions left unanswered by Locke, including the inevitability of mystery in theology.

[97] Compare Locke's commentaries with Martin Luther's *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, trans. Theodore Graebner (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1937). Luther argued in his commentary that "in this whole Epistle Paul treats of the resurrection of Christ" (8) and later adds that "Without Christ, wisdom is double foolishness and integrity double sin, because they not only fail to perceive the wisdom and righteousness of Christ, but hinder and blaspheme the salvation of Christ" (14). Thus, where Locke was eager to argue for compliance to the law, Luther was eager to argue for the inadequacy of wisdom to comprehend the righteousness of Christ.

Conclusion

As argued in the preceding chapters, Locke's biblical interpretation existed at the intersection of lawfulness and the capacity of human beings to abide by such laws. Thus, Locke's biblical theology sought to understand both how human beings encounter biblical law in the Scriptures and their capacity to live according Law of Faith of the New Testament without violating the natural law of civil society. In this regard, Locke's famous distinction in the *Essay* concerning faith and reason is only a distinction of faculties with almost no distinction forensically. We recall again that Locke's theory of personal identity turned on the notion that to be a person is a forensic term "appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and happiness and Misery."[1] Thus, to acknowledge one's own personhood is to be "concerned and accountable" and claim jurisdiction over one's own actions.[2] Both Christianity and civil life turned on a capacity for self-governance whether through the act of reason in the commonwealth or the act of reason-checked faith in the church.

If we view Locke's corpus through this lens, we see clearly the shortcomings of the interpretative paradigms of Hegel, Stephen, and Strauss. It becomes clear that Locke's corpus embodies neither a secular epistemology and political philosophy nor a radical break from the Protestant debates of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rather, Locke believed that by establishing the boundaries of reason and its regulation of faith, we can ground the capacity of human beings to interpret Scripture and live according to its tenets of revealed law while simultaneously conforming to the dictates of

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[1] Locke, *Essay*, 346.

[2] Ibid.

natural law in civil society. While human beings share these capacities in common with one another, it is the responsibility of individuals to exert their active capacities of reason and faith to live accordingly with both sets of laws without contradiction. Locke may very well have advocated a popular philosophy but only because he spoke to the capacity of all individuals to live a responsible life in both the church and society. It was this concern for individuals that drove Locke's thinking. Once we understand Locke's appeal to the capacity of individual Christian believers, Locke's importance as a biblical theologian emerges into full view.

Since, as demonstrated, Locke outlined a coherent approach to theology and Scripture, one wonders why Locke's theology has, in the modern era, remained something of an afterthought to Locke's general corpus.[3] One answer, as suggested earlier, may turn on the division of labor in the modern academy. The biblical scholars with the theological and linguistic expertise to engage Locke's theology rarely have the interest, while Locke specialists are often political theorists, historians, and philosophers with little to no training in historical theology. Thus, while Locke himself was a Christian virtuoso, few virtuosos are left in the modern world to engage with Locke as he saw himself.

Another answer, I suspect, has to do with what was discussed in the introduction, namely the rise of hermeneutics in the modern academy and its influence on widening the gap between the pursuits of academic specialists and every day Christians. On the general level, one major difference between the critical philosophers, namely Immanuel

[3] Justin Champion noted that Locke's theology was often cited, especially by Anglican theologians in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with something of a decline in frequency by the mid nineteenth century. See his "'A Law of Continuity in the Progress of Theology': Assessing the Legacy of John Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695-2004."

Kant, who birthed the hermeneutical tradition and Anglican minded philosopher/theologians like Locke is that the former felt the need to understand the unknowable. As suggested in the previous chapter, Kant felt that the metaphysical tradition before him, including Locke, asked him to be indifferent to that which he felt he could not possibly be indifferent to. For Kant, to say something is unknowable or unsayable was not enough. One needed a critical foundation to explain exactly why it was unknowable. Thus, hermeneuticists from Kant on down often wrestle with the unknowability of the unknowable or the unsayability of the unsayable. This is perhaps why critical German philosophy makes for such a difficult genre of philosophy to read and appeals mostly to philosophical specialists.

Locke, on the other hand, saw no reason to speculate on the unknowable. As demonstrated in chapter 2, Locke was content to define substances as the "I know not what" and go along his way to discuss the various forms of reason grounded in sensation and reflection. For Locke, the most critical aspect of human knowledge was its ability to delay its own judgment in pursuit of eventual higher truths. And such an endeavor had entirely practical components, as the struggle between the immediate and the eventual were found at the intersection of immediate pleasure and pain vs. eventual and steadfast pleasure and pain. While Locke and Kant shared affinities on the issues of self-governance and self-legislated reason, Locke's self-legislated reason had little to do with the content of reason and everything to do with the discipline of one's own mind and actions. This is why Locke's political theory, as noted in chapter 1's critique of Strauss, turned not on the knowability of natural law but its practical implementation in both man's natural state and civil society.

It is this practicality and concern for common individuals that may have played a role in the decline of Locke's influence on the sphere of theology and biblical interpretation. As hermeneutics replaced interpretation in the academy, the discipline almost by necessity focused more on the abstraction of thought than the conduct of the interpreter and has moved further and further away from Locke's pursuits. Locke's aims were never existential or phenomenological. Locke sought in his biblical interpretation to augment the mind of the Christian individual so that their conduct might better serve their neighbor, church, and civil society.

It is also possible that had Locke lived to see the immediate fruits of his labors and how his biblical interpretation was used to justify both dissenters and conformists in the Anglican Church, he might very well have rethought some of his positions.[4] Perhaps witnessing the decline of religious authority in the modern era would have prompted Locke to rethink his positions concerning individual self-governance in the church. Locke, after all, in his early life believed in a conformist view of the church and only moved more toward self-governance and toleration under the influence of his mentor, Shaftesbury. Locke could have shifted his position once again in light of new sociological evidence.

Regardless of Locke's influence on or legacy in the *longue durée* of the Western Christian tradition of biblical interpretation, it is clear that Locke approached his subject

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[4] Victor Nuovo, following the influence of Roy Porter, once noted that while Locke might be the most probable father of the English Enlightenment, it is highly likely that "he would not have claimed the child." See his Introduction to *Christianity, Antiquity, and Enlightenment: Interpretations of John Locke* (New York: Springer, 2011), xv.

Nuovo has also stated starkly that "if anyone deserves to be called a Christian philosopher, it is Locke." See his "The *Reasonableness of Christianity* and *a Paraphrase and notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, in *A Companion to Locke*, ed. Matthew Stuart (Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 500.

matter with the reverence and diligence of a gentleman who had no conception that to be an intellectual and a Christian were antithetical to one another, nor that the concerns of the trained theologian were different from the common and everyday Christian believer. Locke saw himself as instructing both the scholar and the common person who wanted only to know how the Bible might instruct them on deepening their faith and living a fuller life. It was a noble endeavor that perhaps has waned a bit too much in the modern era of biblical interpretation.

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