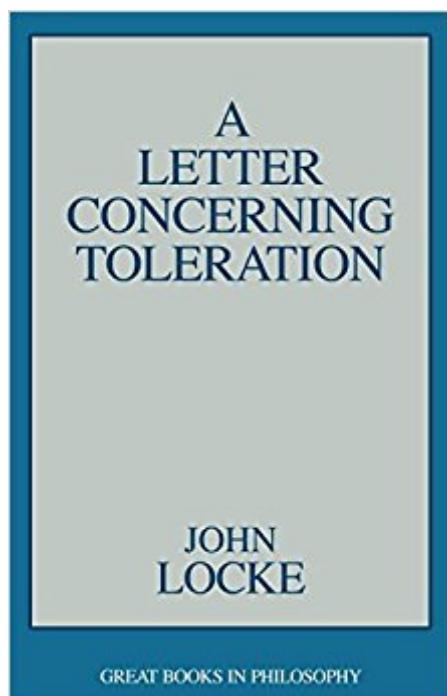


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A Letter Concerning Toleration (Great Books In Philosophy)



Synopsis

Ever since humankind raised its head toward the heavens in search of universal understanding and spiritual fulfillment, wars, pogroms, persecution, prejudice, and contempt have been the means of resolving the many and varied disagreements that have arisen over matters religious. In his Letter Concerning Toleration, Locke offers a compelling plea for freedom of conscience and religious expression. He outlines the limits of social and political incursion into the realm of personal belief or non-belief, discusses the dangers of mixing church and state, and strikes hard at those who would use the power of the state to fulfill religious or political goals. Rational persuasion is always to be encouraged in the hope that wayward souls may find a moral direction in life, but the use of force in such matters is unwarranted and unacceptable. Locke also addresses the question of denominational infighting and relations among the major religions. Talk of heresy and schism should be set aside in favor of understanding and cooperation to achieve mutually desirable social ends.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Latin (translation) --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Library of Liberal Arts title. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Publication date: 1689 Locke very eloquently argues for a common sense position, one that was

very influential, particularly in America, where it 'held' for a couple of centuries.... I will not here tax the pride and ambition of some, the passion and uncharitable zeal of others. These are faults from which human affairs can perhaps scarce ever be perfectly freed; but yet such as nobody will bear the plain imputation of, without covering them with some specious colour; and so pretend to commendation, whilst they are carried away by their own irregular passions. But, however, that some may not colour their spirit of persecution and unchristian cruelty with a pretence of care of the public weal and observation of the laws; ... in a word, that none may impose either upon himself or others, by the pretences of loyalty and obedience to the prince, or of tenderness and sincerity in the worship of God; I esteem it above all things necessary to distinguish exactly the business of civil government from that of religion and to settle the just bounds that lie between the one and the other. If this be not done, there can be no end put to the controversies that will be always arising between those that have, or at least pretend to have, on the one side, a concernment for the interest of men's souls, and, on the other side, a care of the commonwealth. "Toleration" is out of favor in these more enlightened times, alas, and I suspect the people who could learn the most from this short, cogent pamphlet are the most likely to shut their ears against it. Given the contentiousness of debate in Locke's day, I think I may plump for the edition with more context: [A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings \(The Thomas Hollis Library\)](#) But the "Letter" by itself is well worth reading, even foundational.

I like the brevity of this work. Locke gets down to business from the outset and remains laser focused throughout. Well made arguments. Would recommend.

Locke's A Letter Concerning Toleration is key for many reasons, not least of which is its startling relevance to contemporary society. Locke sees tolerance as fundamentally a "live and let live" situation, a state which must be achieved to avoid the endless relativity of a regime fueled by religion; as each man is orthodox to himself and heretical to others, he argues, religious tolerance *must* be a basic societal tenet for the state to function. Excellently argued and written, Locke's A Letter Concerning Toleration is an "inevitable read" for most students that should be welcomed with open arms and minds.

The work is a classic, but this is a poor edition. Specifically, some pages were out of order (pages 13-14 are located after page 38). I would choose a different edition from a different publisher.

Liked this one but so hard to keep your attention because it's hard to read. Like the philosophy though. Had to read for my Master's.

Good edition and interesting read. I believe there is more than one letter but this is easy to read and a very good reprint.

If it were not for college class reading requirements would anybody actually buy these books? I know I certainly wouldn't have this on the top of my reading list

Locke's Letter on Toleration is one of the greatest defenses of religious liberty and libertarian ideals ever written. Locke calls for complete freedom of conscience and restricts the state to what concerns men civilly in their property, lives, liberty and protection against fraud and violence. The conscience of men and the rituals and ideals of each particular religion and not the purview of the state. Civil society is not the concern of government. The state has limited duties and the prescribing the faith of people is not one of them. His argument today applies to issues of polygamy, gay marriage, etc as issues for INTERNAL matters of a church, whom and how they decide membership while the state must treat all fairly before the law. Locke argues that unless the church is violating general rules of society, their rules of membership are not the purview of government. He is a true advocate for the separation of religion and government

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