

Two Treatises of Government: In the Former, The False Principles and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer, and His Followers, are Detected and Overthrown. ... Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government

John Locke

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Originally published: London: Printed for Awnsham and John Churchill, 1698. [6], 358 pp. Reprint of the third edition. John Locke's Two Treatises of Government was written during the period of Whig opposition to Charles II and James II in the 1680s. Published a year after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 brought William and Mary to the throne, it offers a theory of natural law that distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate governments and argues for the legitimacy of revolt against tyrannical governments. Important contributions to Enlightenment thought, these ideas remain influential today. Reprint of the third edition (1689), the last edition published during Locke's lifetime. In these two treatises the political philosopher John Locke espouses radical theories that influenced the ideologies of the American and French revolutions, and became the basis for the social and political philosophies of Rousseau, Voltaire and the United States founding fathers. In the first treatise Locke aims to refute the doctrine of the patriarchal and absolute right of the divine right of kings doctrine put forth by Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha. He examines key Biblical passages to prove that scripture does not support Filmer s premise. The second treatise offers Locke s positive theory of government, in which he establishes a theory that reconciles the liberty of the citizen with political order. His basic premise is founded on the independence of the individual. He declares that men are born free and equal in their rights and that wealth is the product of labor. In his revolutionary theory of the social contract he proposes that a legitimate civil government must preserve the rights to life, liberty, health and property of its citizens, and prosecute and punish those in violation of those rights.



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