

Natural Rights in Locke's Second Treatise of Government

Please read the selection from John Locke's Second Treatise of Government and consider the following questions while you read.

1. What is the "natural" "state of perfect freedom" Locke describes? What are its characteristics? Is there a government? Can people do whatever they want?
2. Why do you think he begins with this idea?
3. What does the idea of the natural state of freedom imply about rights? What, in particular, does it suggest about the relationship of rights to governments?
4. What rights does Locke suggest people have in the state of nature?
5. Why do people have rights according to Locke? What is their ultimate source?
6. Why do people create governments, on Locke's account?
7. What limits are there to the rights we can surrender to government, if any?
8. How does the involvement of God affect the relevance or usefulness of Locke's account of rights today?