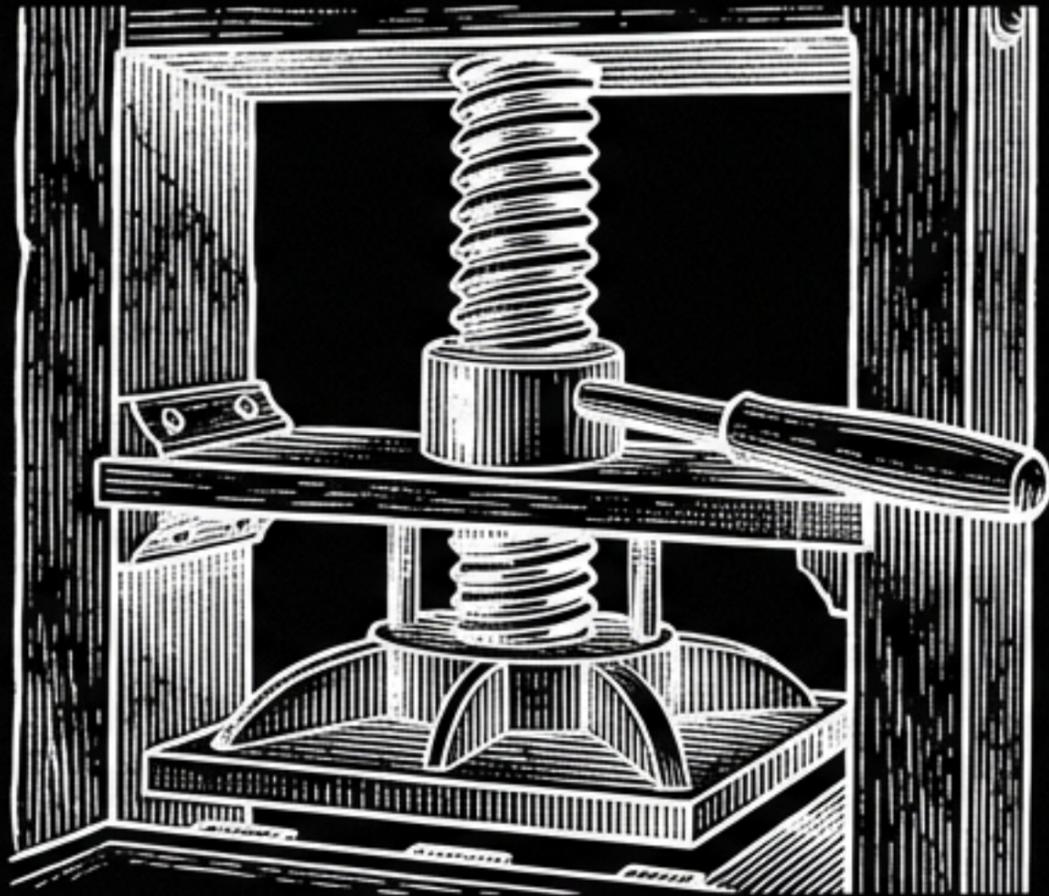


A SPEECH FOR THE LIBERTY OF UNLICENSED PRINTING

TO THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND



“This is true liberty, when free-born men, having to advise the public, may speak free.” — Euripides



Books Are Not Absolutely Dead Things.

Milton argues that books preserve the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. They are lively, vigorously productive, and possess a life beyond life.

“They do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are.”

A MASSACRE OF THE MIND



KILL A MAN

You destroy a reasonable creature, God's image.



KILL A BOOK

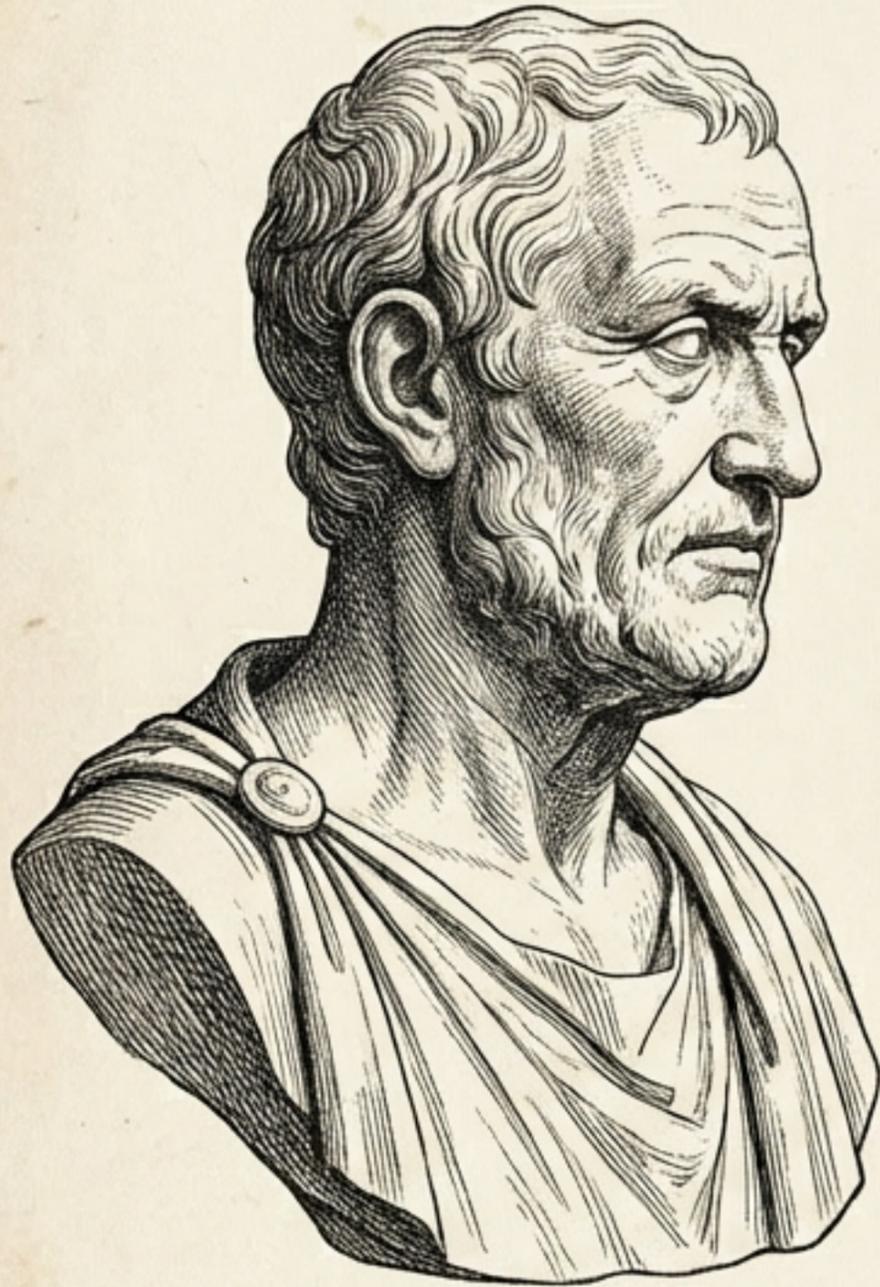
You destroy reason itself, killing the image of God in the eye.

THE CONSEQUENCE

Revolutions of ages cannot recover a rejected truth. Whole nations fare the worse for it.

“A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.”

The Wisdom of Antiquity



ATHENS

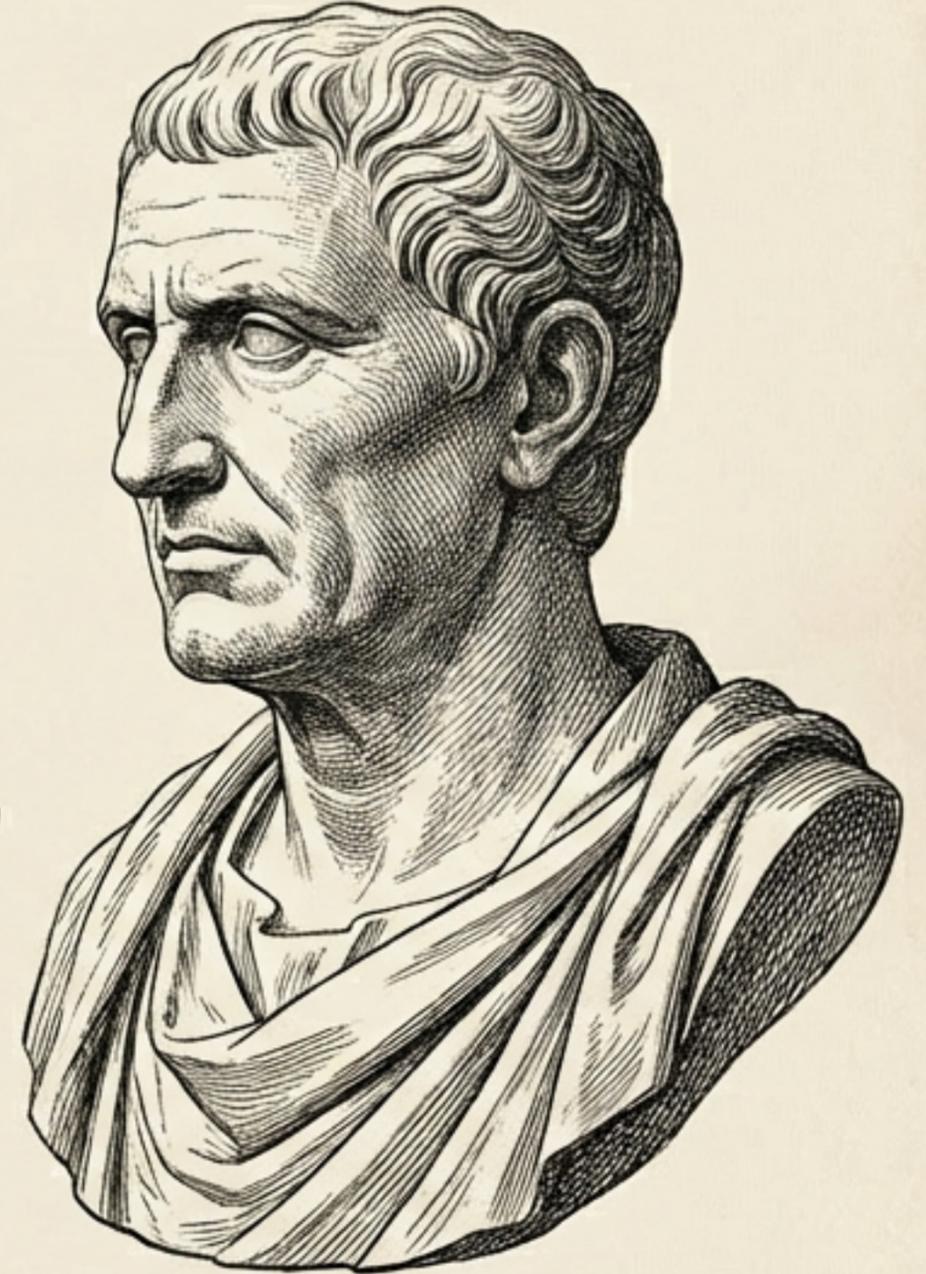
Punished only
blasphemy or libel.

No pre-publication
censorship.

ROME

Magistrates kept
no reckoning of
books except for
libel or treason.

Even 'Attic babblers'
were heard freely.



**“Books were ever as freely admitted into the world as any other birth;
the issue of the brain was no more stifled than the issue of the womb.”**

The Descent into Tyranny

The Primitive Councils (400–800 AD)

Left reading to “each one’s conscience.”

The Papacy (800+ AD)

Popes began extending
dominion over men’s eyes.

Pope Martin V

The first to excommunicate
for reading heretical books.

This system of licensing
crept out of the Inquisition,
was caught up by our
prelates, and hath caught
some of our presbyters.

The Council of Trent & The Inquisition

The infection of licensing creates
the Index of Prohibited Books.

The Glutton Friars

Friar Simon Mompei d'Amelia

THE RITUAL

Five Imprimatur ducking and bowing to each other in the piazza of a title page.

As if St. Peter had bequeathed them the keys of the press also out of Paradise.

Why is the Parliament of England imitating the quadruple exorcism of the Papacy?

Vincent Rabbatta

Nicolò Gini

TRIAR YRAR DVR TRVSTS E
Agnūst Amōr Peroviniuz uor
Diamnerum floet et pablie Scri

SEEN AND
ALLOWED

NIHIL
OBSTAT

The Doom of Adam

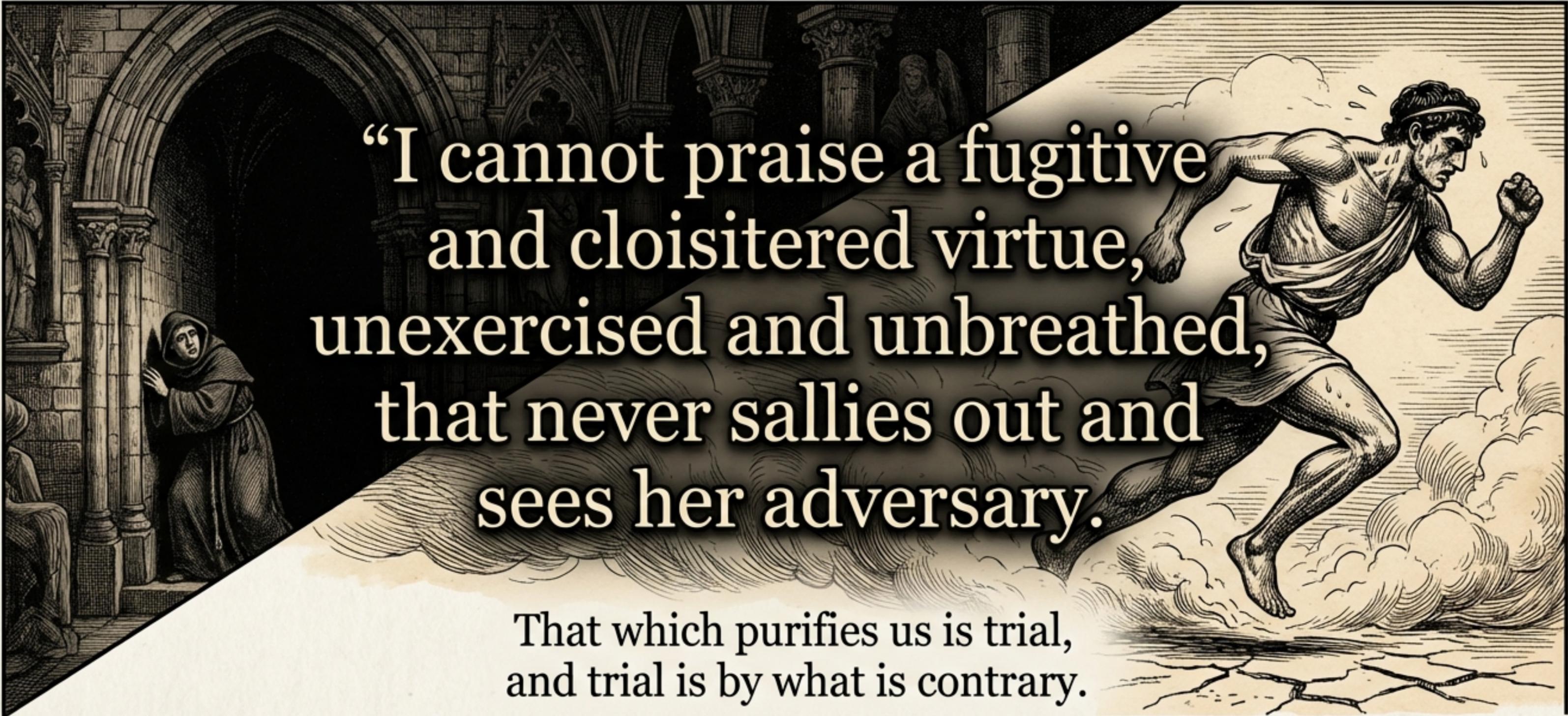
In the field of this world, good and evil grow up together almost inseparably.



We know good only by knowing evil.

It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world.

Fugitive and Cloistered Virtue



“I cannot praise a fugitive
and cloistered virtue,
unexercised and unbreathed,
that never sallies out and
sees her adversary.”

That which purifies us is trial,
and trial is by what is contrary.

Reason is But Choosing

God commits
the managing of
great trusts to
the demeanor
of every
grown man.



If every action
were under
compulsion,
what were virtue
but a name?

“A dram of well-doing chosen freely is worth more to God than the forced restraint of ten vicious men.”

Pounding Up the Crows

The Logic of Futility:

Sin is a huge heap. Banning books leaves the sin in conversation and thought.

Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewel left: ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness.

“He who were pleasantly disposed could not well avoid to liken it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his park gate.”



The Impossibility of Regulation

To rectify manners by licensing, you must also license:

- All recreations and pastimes.
- The prattle of guitars in every house.
- The whispering of softness in chambers.
- The mixed conversation of youth.



Who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting?

The Fallibility of the Licenser

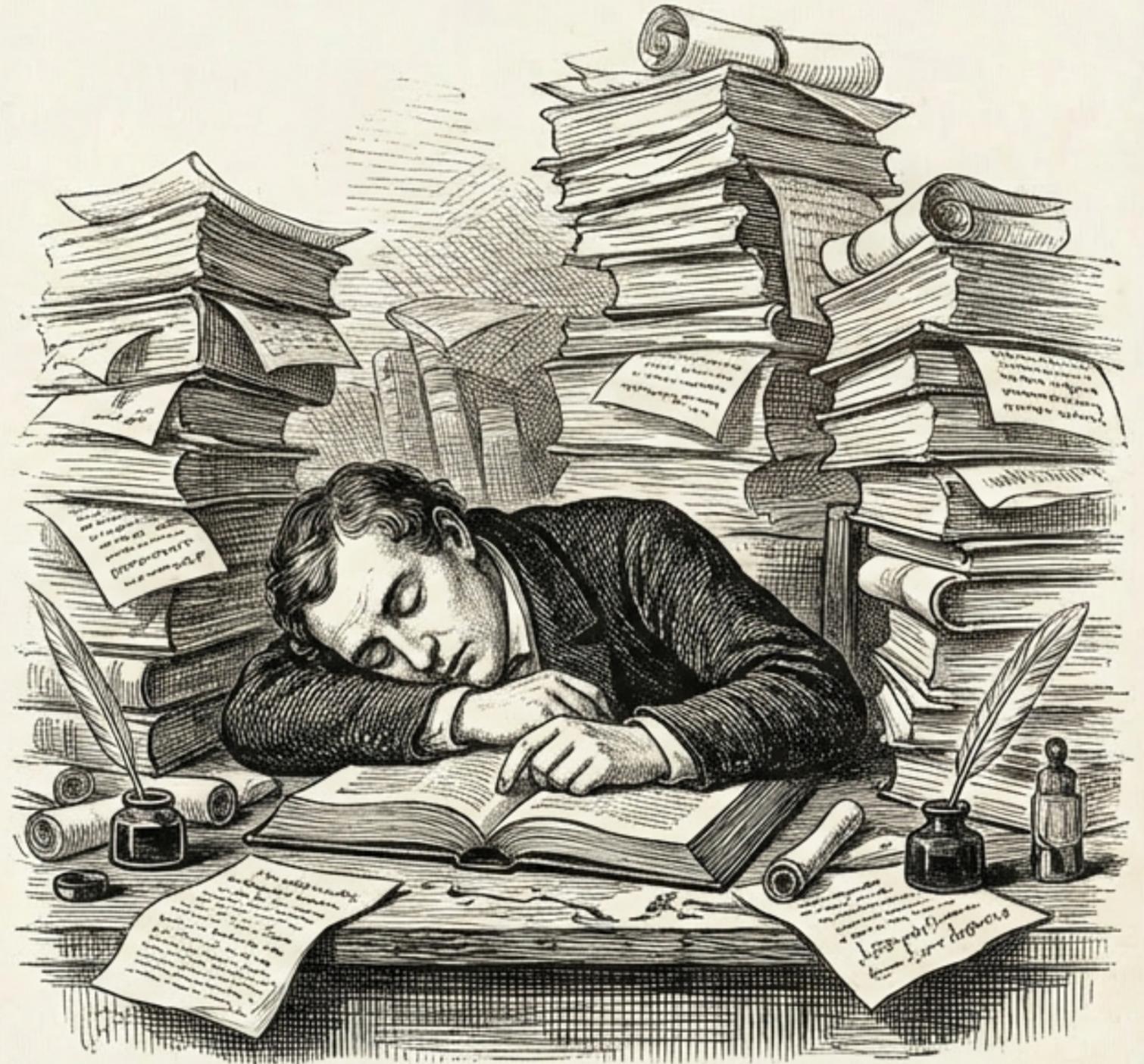
THE DILEMMA

The Requirement: A licenser must be a man above the common measure, studious, learned, and judicious.

The Reality: The job is tedious and unpleasing. No smart man would want it.

The Result: Only the ignorant, imperious, or corrupt will accept the office.

Conclusion: We cannot confer the grace of infallibility upon these men.



The Scholar as Schoolboy

It is an affront to learning to force a mature scholar to bring his midnight watchings to the hasty view of an un leisured licenser.

The author must appear like a puny with his guardian.

Quote: "What advantage is it to be a man, over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only escaped the ferula to come under the fescue of an Imprimatur?"



The Muddy Pool of Conformity



Truth: A Streaming Fountain.



Tradition: A Muddy Pool.

If her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken.

A man who believes the truth only because the State tells him to is a heretic in the truth.

Religion by Proxy

The Narrative: A man finds religion too complex ('entangled').

The Solution: He resigns the 'warehouse of his religion' to a divine.

The Routine: Religion comes home at night, sleeps, and walks abroad in the morning, leaving the man to trade all day without it.

Impact: Licensing encourages this dull ease and cessation of our knowledge.



The Scattered Limbs of Truth



The Myth: The Egyptian Typhon hewed the virgin Truth into a thousand pieces and scattered them to the four winds.

The Mission: We are the sad friends of Truth, imitating Isis, going up and down gathering limb by limb.

The Reality: We will not find them all until the Second Coming.

The Command: Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity, forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking.

A City of Refuge

Context: London is under siege, yet it is the mansion house of liberty.

Activity: The shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers... than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps.

Interpretation: This arguing and reading is not weakness; it is the sign of a noble and puissant nation.



Mewing Her Mighty Youth

“Methinks I see her
as an eagle mewing
her mighty youth,
and kindling her
undazzled eyes at
at the
full midday
beam.



Let Truth and Falsehood Grapple

Truth needs no policies, stratagems, or licensings to make her victorious. These are the defenses that error uses.

Who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?

Warning: Do not bind her when she sleeps.



GIVE ME THE LIBERTY TO
KNOW, TO UTTER, AND TO
ARGUE FREELY ACCORDING
TO CONSCIENCE,
ABOVE ALL LIBERTIES.

Areopagitica
John Milton, 1644