



The Rights of Man

An Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution

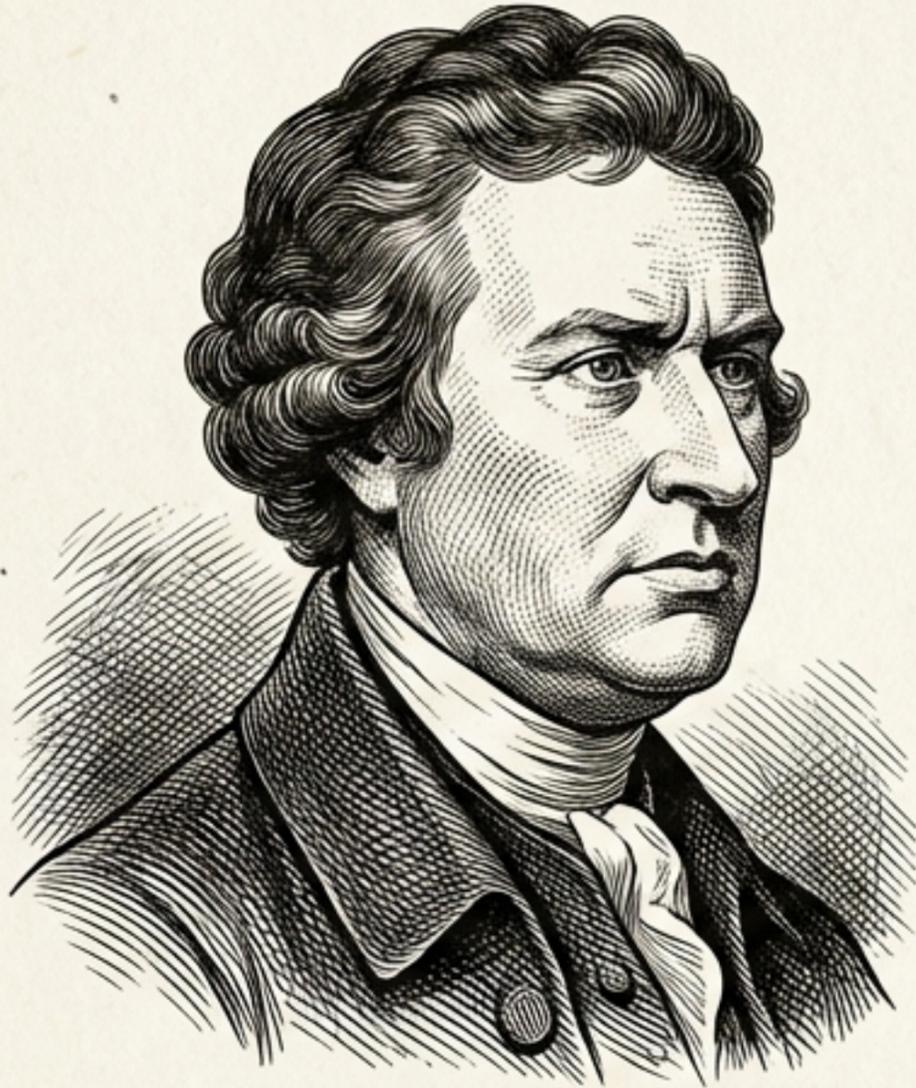
Source Serif Pro

Based on the writings of Thomas Paine (1791).



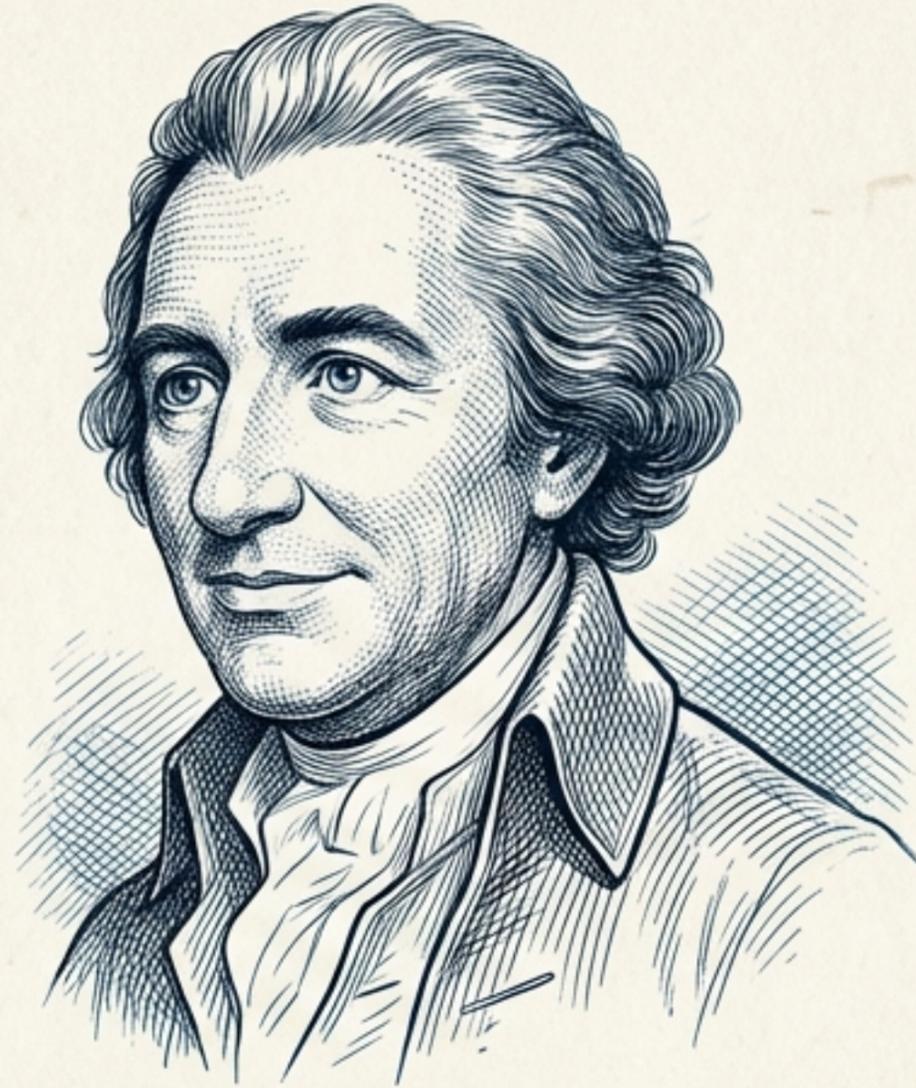
Ignorance is of a
peculiar nature: once
dispelled, it is **impossible**
to re-establish it.

The Duel for the Soul of Europe



THE DEFENDER OF TRADITION.

Burke argues that the wisdom of the past binds us. He asserts that the Parliament of 1688 bound the English people to the monarchy “for ever,” submitting heirs and posterities to the end of time.

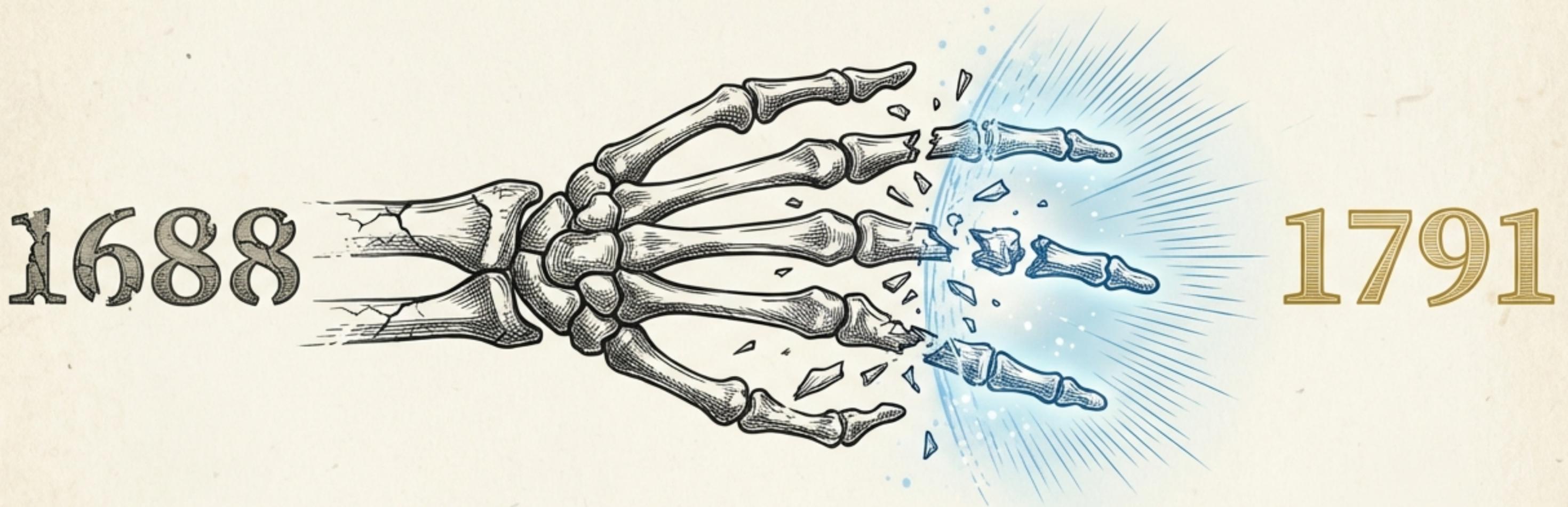


THE ARCHITECT OF LIBERTY.

“There never did, there never will, and there never can exist a power of binding and controlling posterity to the end of time.”

The fundamental question: Do the living belong to the dead?

The Authority of the Living



“The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies.”

Burke claims we are subjects of our ancestors' will. Paine counters that every age and generation must be as free to act for itself as the ages which preceded it. “Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow.”

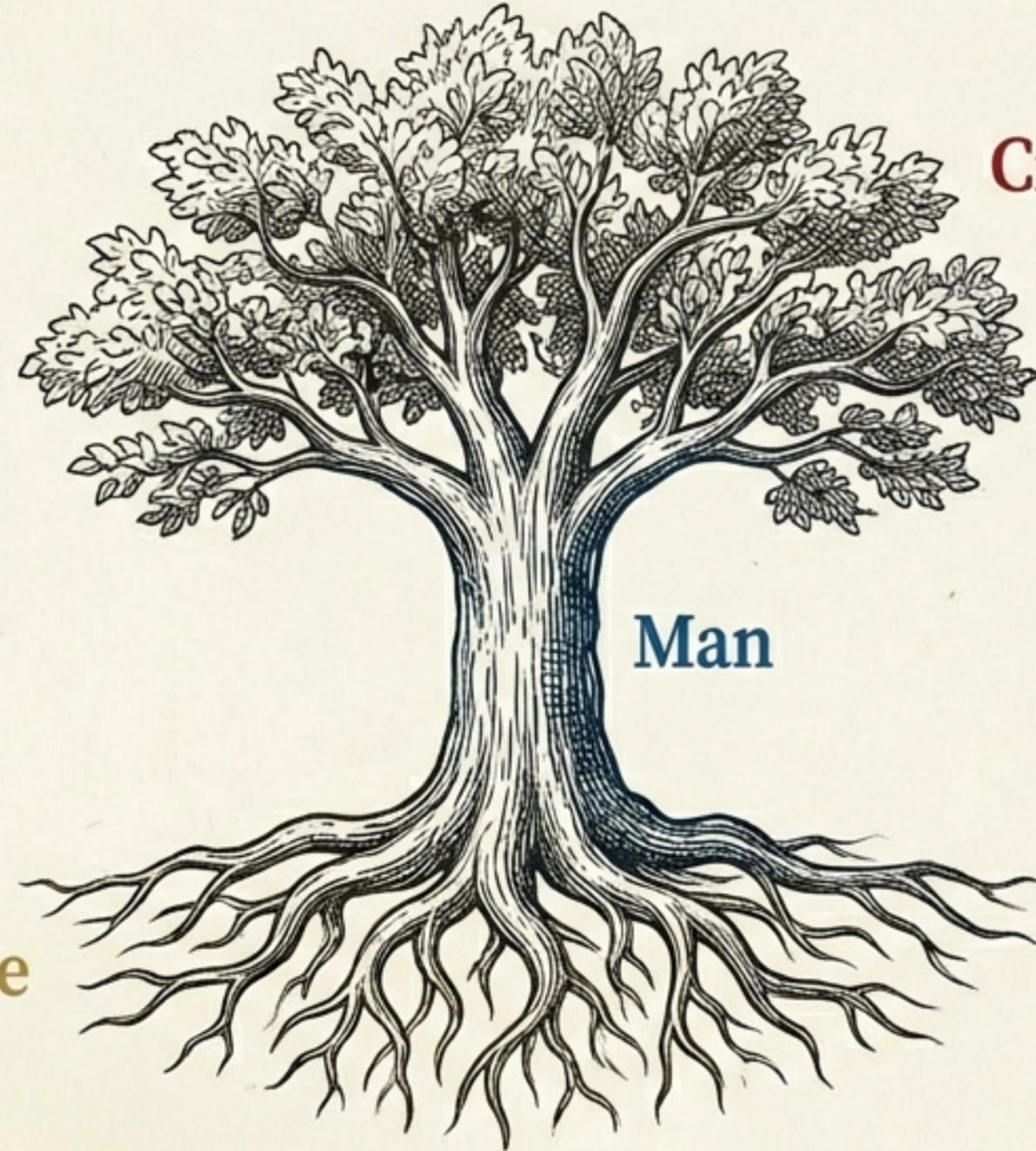
Antiquity is Not Authority

Civil Rights

THE UNITY OF MAN:

Whether biblical or historical, the origin of man is singular. Men are all of one degree; born equal and with equal natural rights.

Man



To find the true rights of man, we must look beyond musty parchments and history to the creation.

The Divine / Nature

“The illuminating and divine principle of the equal rights of man relates, not only to the living individuals, but to generations of men succeeding each other.”

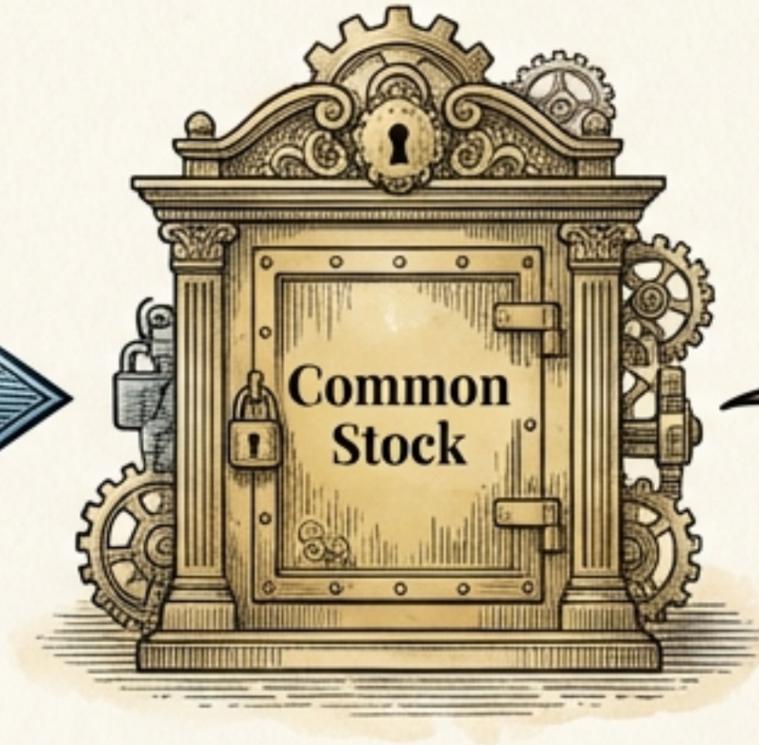
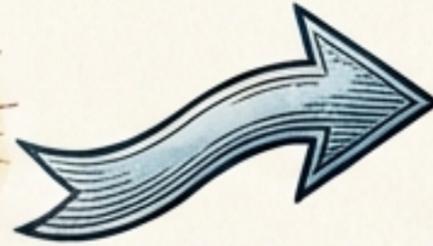
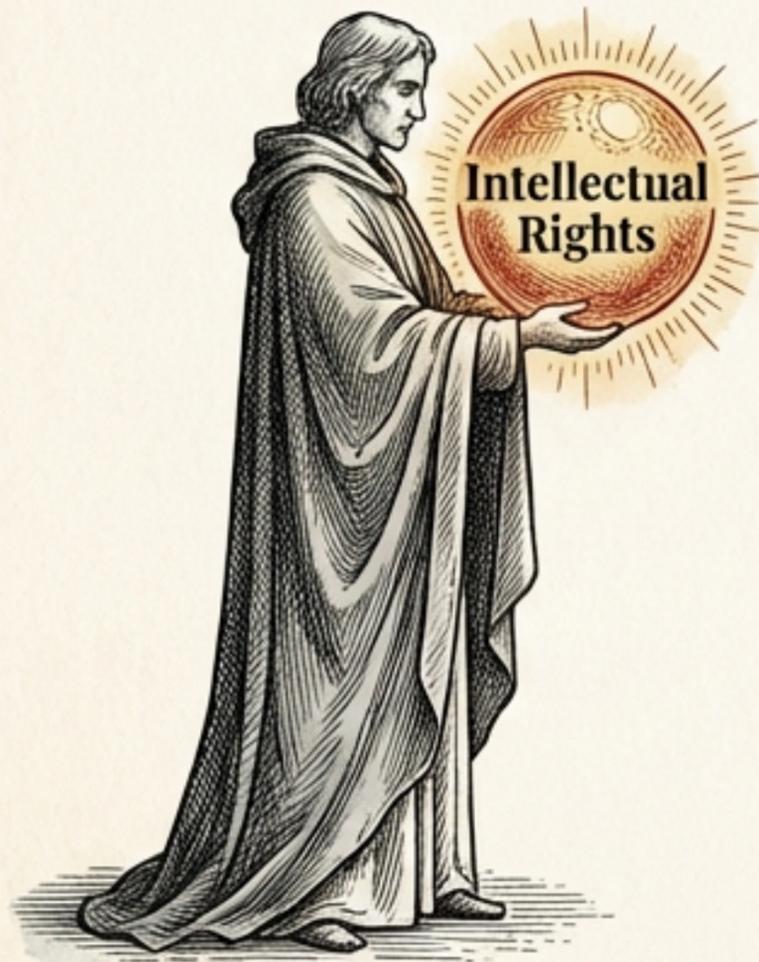
The Exchange of Rights

- **NATURAL RIGHTS (RETAINED):**

Intellectual rights, rights of the mind, and the right to act for one's comfort. These are never surrendered.

- **CIVIL RIGHTS (EXCHANGED):**

Rights where the individual has the right but not the power to enforce them (e.g., judgment in one's own cause).



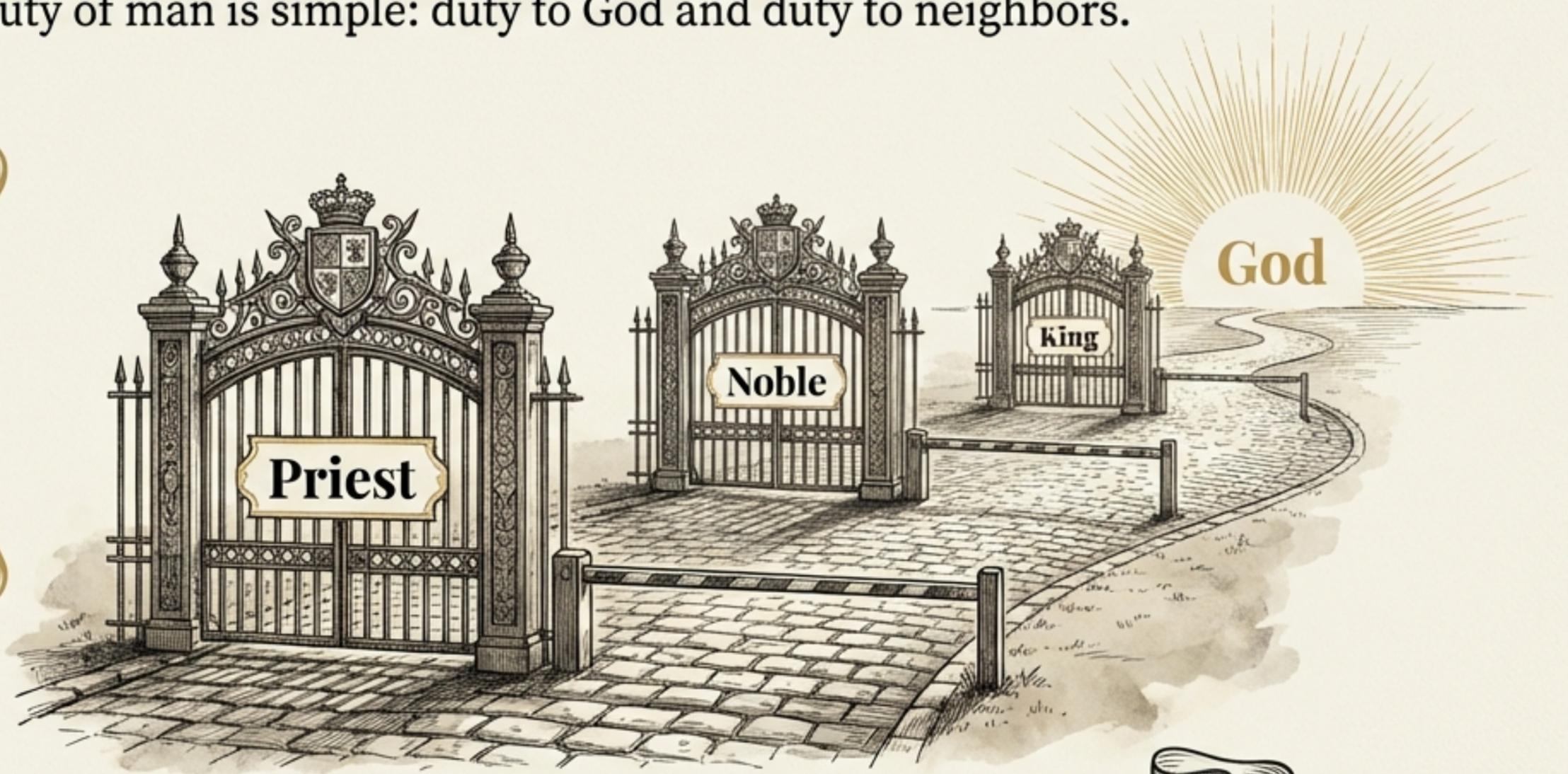
The Mechanism: Man deposits this class of rights into the "common stock" of society. In return, he gains the arm of the law. Society grants him nothing; he is a proprietor drawing on his own capital.

The Wilderness of Turnpike Gates

The duty of man is simple: duty to God and duty to neighbors.

THE CRITIQUE:

Mr. Burke sets up a heraldic barrier between Man and Maker: "We fear God, we look with awe to kings, with affection to Parliaments, with respect to nobility."



Paine's Verdict: This is an artificial chasm. The duty of man is not to pass through these tickets of authority. These are inventions of "Superstition" and "Power" that have thrust themselves between man and his right to exist.

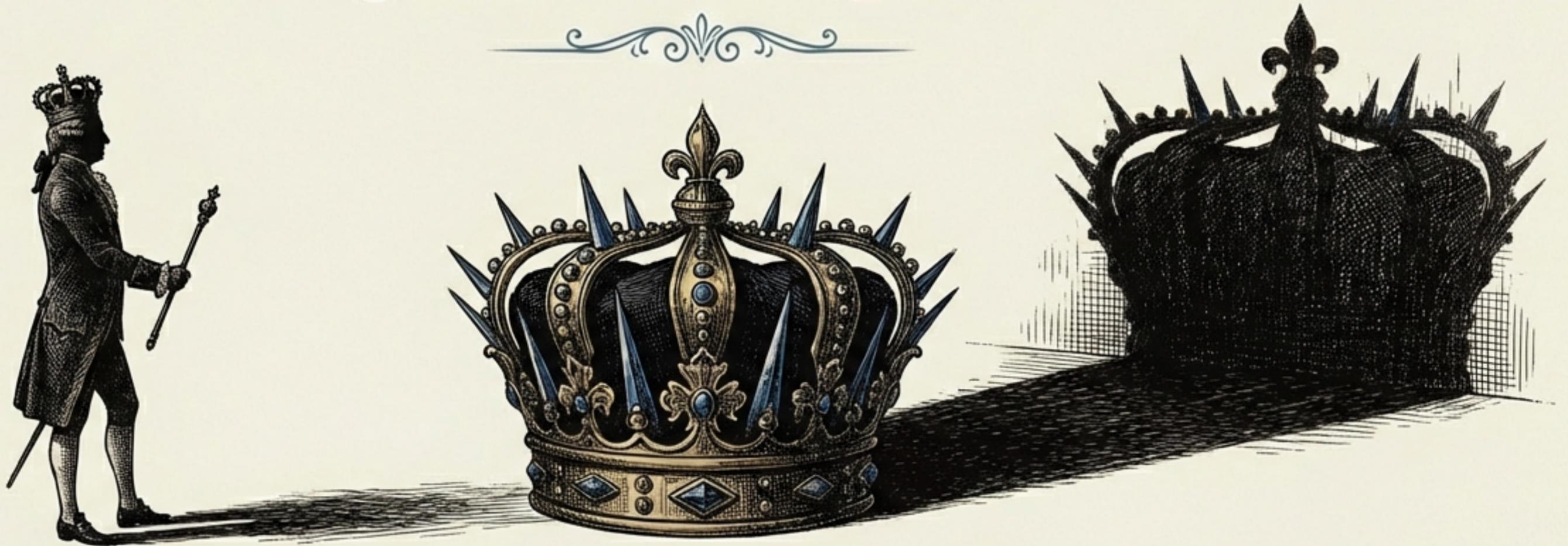
Truth vs. Theater

**He pities the
plumage, but
forgets the
dying bird.**

Burke mourns the decline of
“Chivalry” and the insults to the
Queen. Paine mourns the centuries
of victims rotting in the Bastille.
Burke writes a tragedy for the stage;
Paine writes a history of reality.



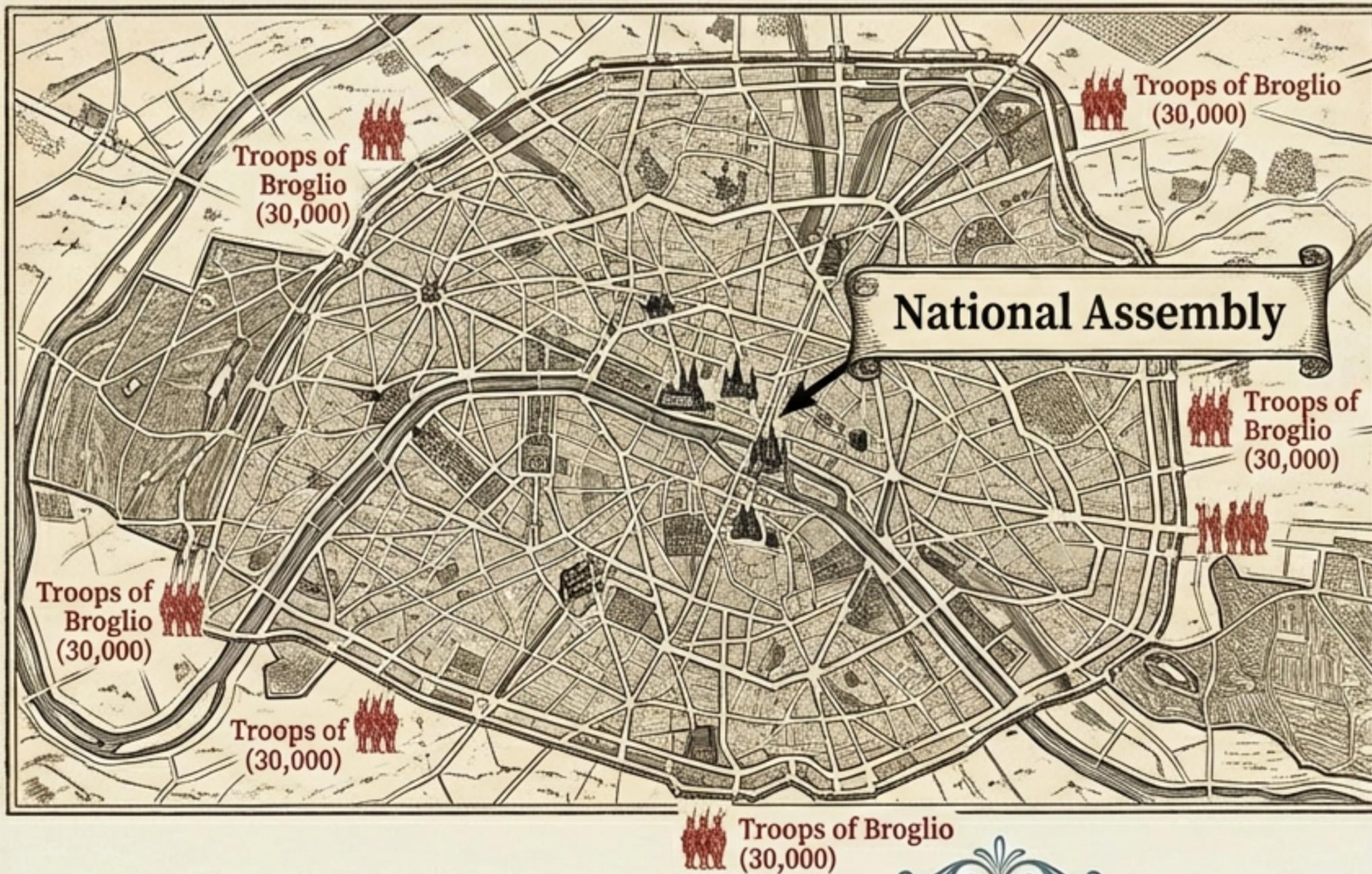
A Revolt Against Principle, Not Person



The French Revolution is unique because it was generated by a rational contemplation of the Rights of Man, distinguishing between the man and the office.

Key Insight: Louis XVI was a moderate man, but the mechanism of despotism (arbitrary imprisonment, secret ministries) was independent of his personal virtue. "A casual discontinuance of the practice of despotism, is not a discontinuance of its principles."

The Conspiracy Against the Nation

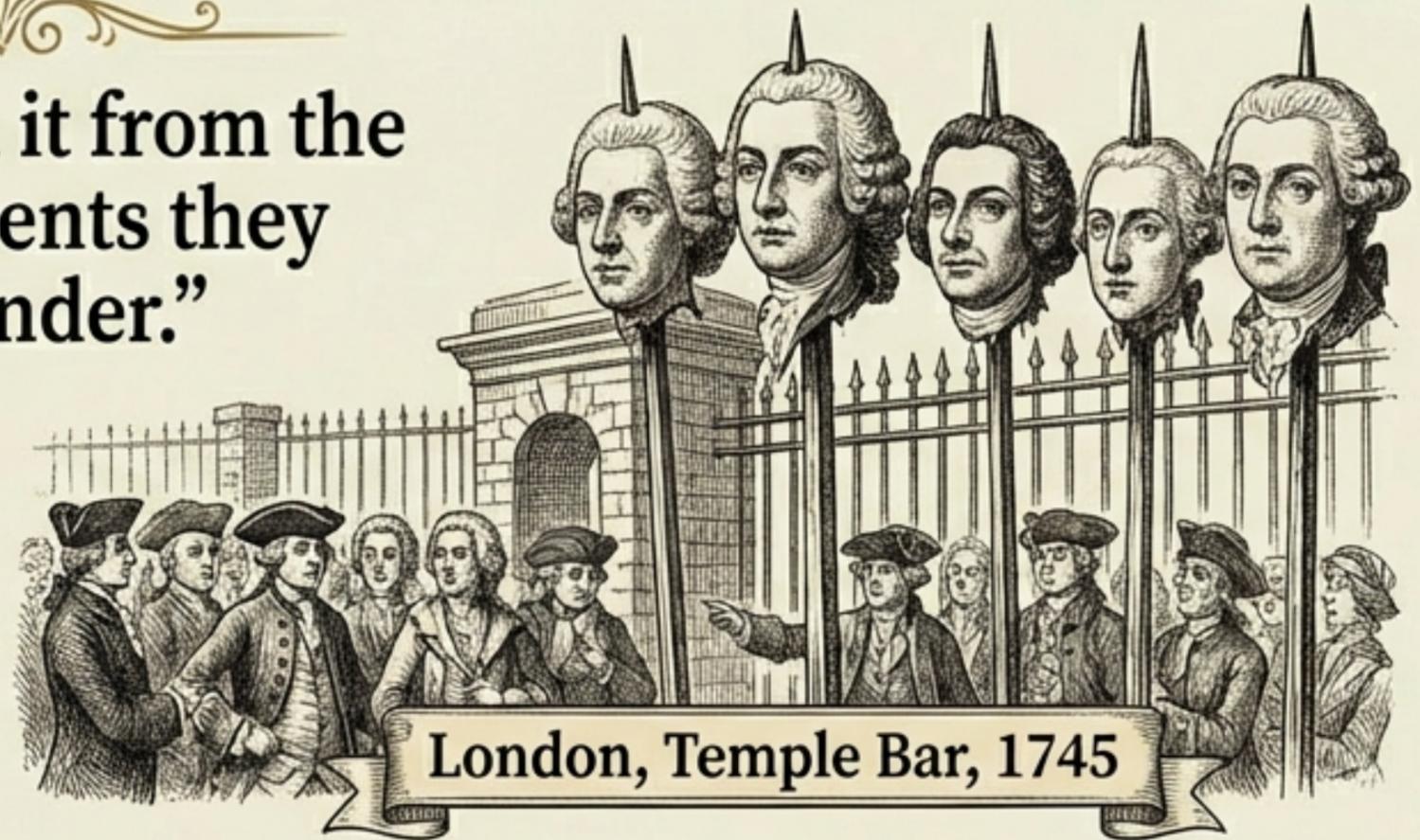
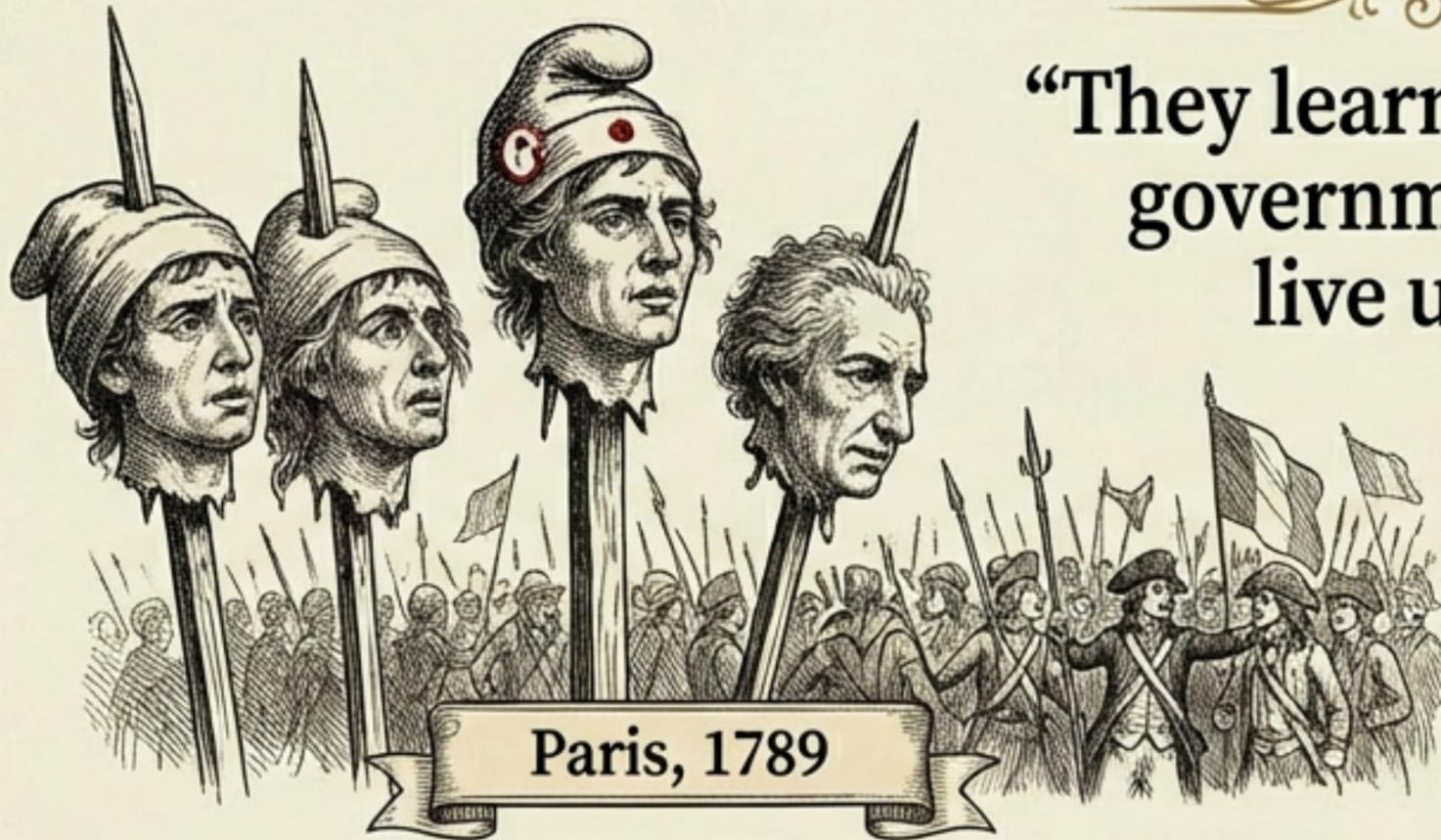


The Plot: Before the Bastille fell, the Court had surrounded the National Assembly with foreign mercenaries to crush the new constitution. The Ministry was dismissed; a coup was imminent.

The Response: The taking of the Bastille was the city's desperate defense to save the National Assembly. It was the "high altar and castle of despotism," and its fall marked the defeat of the conspiracy.

Who Taught the Mob **Cruelty**?

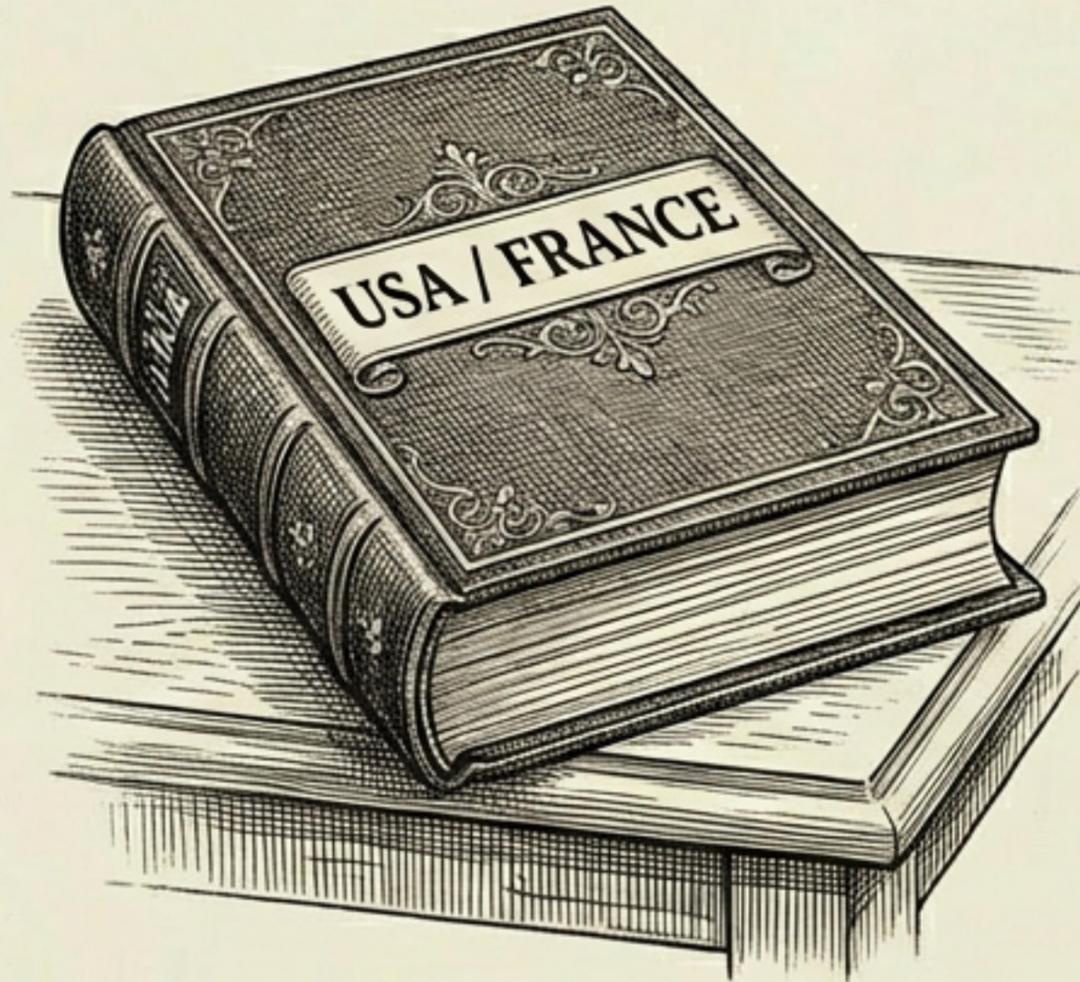
“They learn it from the governments they live under.”



Burke is horrified by the Parisian crowds. Paine retorts that the English government cuts out the hearts of traitors; the French monarchy used the wheel and rack. Sanguinary punishments corrupt mankind.

Lay then **the axe to the root**, and **teach governments humanity**.

A Thing in Fact, **Not in Name**



VISIBLE, REFERABLE
CONSTITUTION.

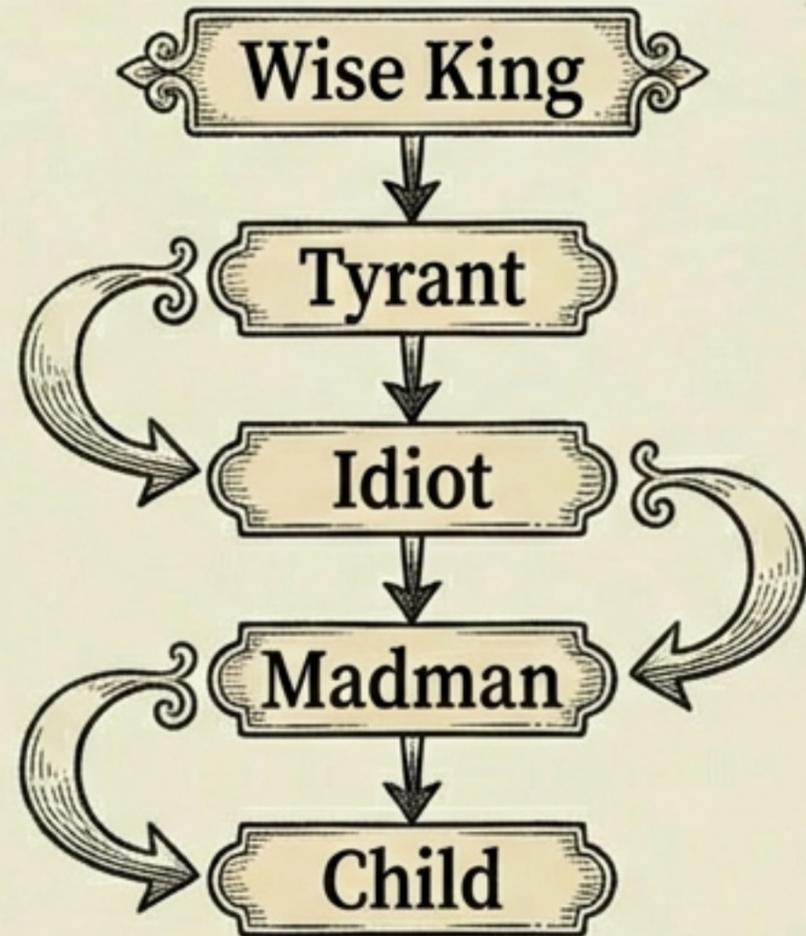
A constitution is not an act of a government; it is the act of a people constituting a government. It must be visible, referable, article by article.

Verdict: Can Mr. Burke produce the English Constitution? No. England has only a government based on conquest and laws accumulated over time. It has no constitution to limit the government's power.



UNWRITTEN,
EVANESCENT.

The Lottery of Monarchy



“Wisdom is not hereditary.” To establish hereditary succession is to risk the nation’s fate on a fool or a tyrant.

We would consider it insane to have a “hereditary mathematician” or a “hereditary poet laureate.” Why then a hereditary Governor?

Nature disproves it, otherwise **she would not turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an ass for a lion.**

The Monster **Aristocracy**



The Mechanism: Aristocracy is kept up by family tyranny. It sacrifices the younger children to puff up the eldest.

Cost: It creates a class of people (Nobility) who are pensioners of the state, living in idleness, distinct from the general stock of society.

Paine's Verdict: "It is a monster... The French Constitution has destroyed the law of **Primogeniture**. Here then lies the monster; and Mr. Burke, if he pleases, may write its epitaph."

Titles are But Nicknames

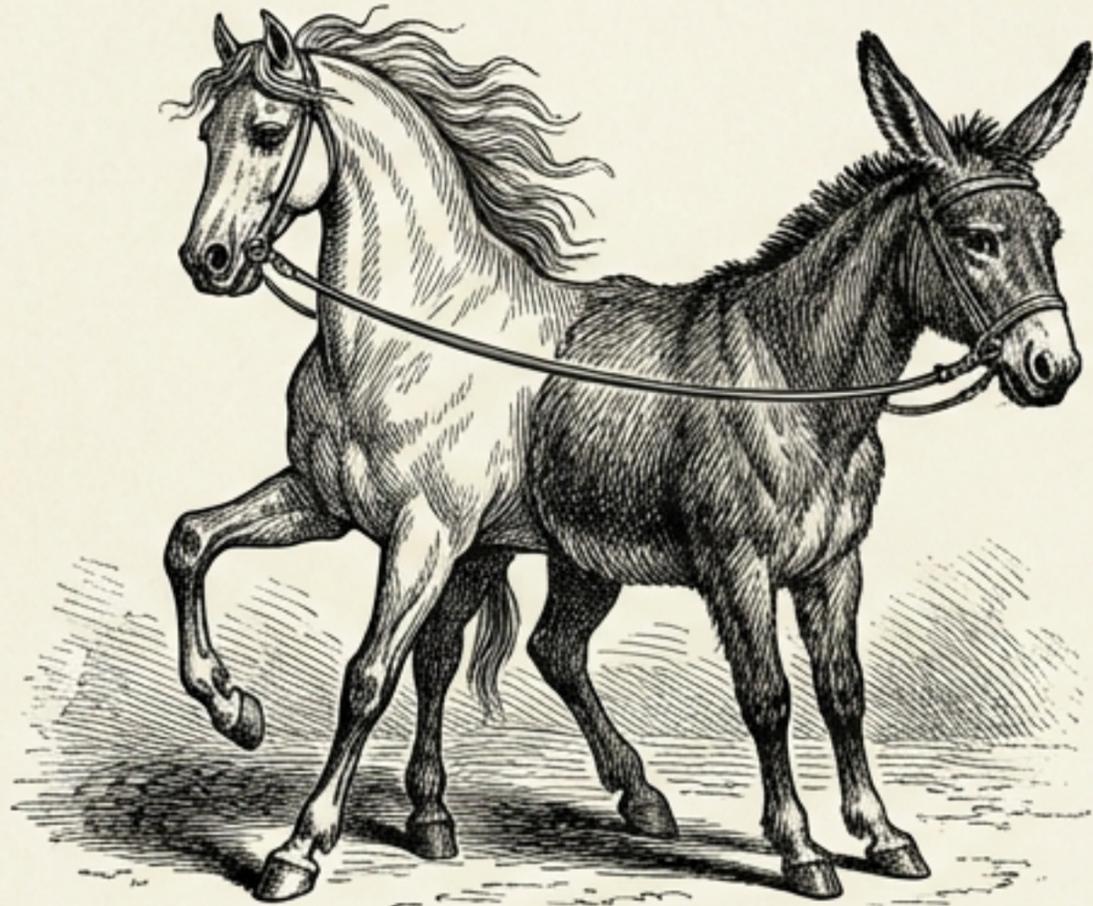


Titles mark a sort of foppery in the human character. They reduce man to the diminutive. “It talks about its fine blue ribbon like a girl, and shows its new garter like a child.”

Insight: The French Move: France has not levelled; it has exalted. It has put down the dwarf to set up the Man.

Quote: Imagination gives character to centaurs and satyrs, but titles are ‘chimerical nondescripts.’

The **Adultery** of Church and State



Union of Church & State

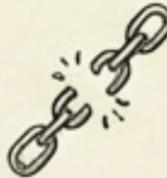
Analysis Text: '**Toleration**' is not the opposite of **Intolerance**; it is the counterfeit of it. Both are **despotisms**. The true standard is 'Universal Right of Conscience.'

Hybrid Text: The union of Church and State creates a 'mule-animal' capable only of **destroying**, not **breeding**.

Quote: '**Persecution** is not an original feature in any religion; but it is always the strongly-marked feature of all **law-religions**.'

Enlightenment Editorial

Government **by** Election and Representation

MONARCHY	REPUBLIC
Base: Ignorance 	Base: Reason 
Moving Power: Corruption 	Moving Power: Public Good 
Responsibility: None ("The King can do no wrong") 	Responsibility: Total (Agents accountable to the people) 

"The representative system takes society and civilization for its basis; nature, reason, and experience for its guide."

The War System of Taxation



The **Scam**: Old governments (like England) instigate wars to justify raising taxes.

“**War** is the common harvest of all those who participate in the division and expenditure of public money.”

Solution Text:

The **French Constitution** places the right of war and **peace** in the Nation (who pays the bill), not the King. When the people pay, they choose **peace**.

Enlightenment Editorial

Insolvency of Government vs. Wealth of Nation

England



France



The **French government** was insolvent, but the nation is rich. France possesses more **gold and silver** than England.

England's "funding system" (creeping paper debt) is a **bubble**. "It is a thing but of modern invention... and it cannot always go on."

Enlightenment Editorial

An Age of Renovation



“All the old governments have received a **shock**.” The revolutions in **America** and **France** are not local accidents; they are the beginning of a universal renovation.

“It is an age of **Revolutions**, in which everything may be looked for.”

The Vision of Universal Peace



If **Republics** replace **Monarchies**, the cause of war (dynastic ambition) vanishes.

A “**Pacific Republic**” or **European Congress** to arbitrate disputes, civilize nations, and allow commerce to replace war.

The Final Measure

When it shall be said in any country in the world, “My poor are **happy**; neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them; my jails are **empty** of prisoners, my streets of **beggars**; the aged are not in want, the taxes are not oppressive’—when these things can be said, then may that country boast its **constitution** and its **government**.

