



# John Locke - *The Second Treatise of Government (edited)*

1       Sec. 4. To understand political power right, and derive it from its original, we must consider,  
what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their  
actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of  
the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man.

5       A state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having  
more than another; there being nothing more evident, than that creatures of the same species  
and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature, and the use of the same  
faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection,  
unless the lord and master of them all should, by any manifest declaration of his will, set one  
10       above another, and confer on him, by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right  
to dominion and sovereignty.

15       Sec. 6. But though this be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of license: though man in that  
state have an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not  
liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some  
nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it. The state of nature has a law of nature to  
govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who  
will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in  
his life, health, liberty, or possessions: for men being all the workmanship of one  
20       omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the  
world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they

1 are, made to last during his, not one another's pleasure: and being furnished with like  
faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such  
subordination among us, that may authorize us to destroy one another, as if we were made  
for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours. Every one, as he is  
5 bound to preserve himself, and not to quit his station willfully, so by the like reason, when  
his own preservation comes not in competition, ought he, as much as he can, to preserve the  
rest of mankind, and may not, unless it be to do justice on an offender, take away, or impair  
the life, or what tends to the preservation of the life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of  
another.

10  
**Sec. 7.** And that all men may be restrained from invading others rights, and from doing hurt  
to one another, and the law of nature be observed, which wills the peace and preservation of  
all mankind, the execution of the law of nature is, in that state, put into every man's hands,  
whereby every one has a right to punish the transgressors of that law to such a degree, as may  
15 hinder its violation: for the law of nature would, as all other laws that concern men in this  
world 'be in vain, if there were no body that in the state of nature had a power to execute  
that law, and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders. And if any one in the state  
of nature may punish another for any evil he has done, every one may do so: for in that state  
of perfect equality, where naturally there is no superiority or jurisdiction of one over another,  
20 what any may do in prosecution of that law, every one must needs have a right to do.

**Sec. 8.** And thus, in the state of nature, one man comes by a power over another; but yet no  
absolute or arbitrary power, to use a criminal, when he has got him in his hands, according  
to the passionate heats, or boundless extravagancy of his own will; but only to retribute to  
25 him, so far as calm reason and conscience dictate, what is proportionate to his transgression,  
which is so much as may serve for reparation and restraint: for these two are the only reasons,  
why one man may lawfully do harm to another, which is that we call punishment. In  
transgressing the law of nature, the offender declares himself to live by another rule than that  
of reason and common equity, which is that measure God has set to the actions of men, for  
30 their mutual security; and so he becomes dangerous to mankind, the tie, which is to secure  
them from injury and violence, being slighted and broken by him. Which being a trespass  
against the whole species, and the peace and safety of it, provided for by the law of nature,  
every man upon this score, by the right he hath to preserve mankind in general, may restrain,  
or where it is necessary, destroy things noxious to them, and so may bring such evil on any  
35 one, who hath transgressed that law, as may make him repent the doing of it, and thereby

1 deter him, and by his example others, from doing the like mischief. And in the case, and  
upon this ground, EVERY MAN HATH A RIGHT TO PUNISH THE OFFENDER,  
AND BE EXECUTIONER OF THE LAW OF NATURE.

5 **Sec. 9.** I doubt not but this will seem a very strange doctrine to some men: but before they  
condemn it, I desire them to resolve me, by what right any prince or state can put to death,  
or punish an alien, for any crime he commits in their country. It is certain their laws, by  
virtue of any sanction they receive from the promulgated will of the legislative, reach not a  
10 stranger: they speak not to him, nor, if they did, is he bound to hearken to them. The  
legislative authority, by which they are in force over the subjects of that commonwealth, hath  
no power over him. Those who have the supreme power of making laws in England, France  
or Holland, are to an Indian, but like the rest of the world, men without authority: and  
therefore, if by the law of nature every man hath not a power to punish offences against it, as  
15 he soberly judges the case to require, I see not how the magistrates of any community can  
punish an alien of another country; since, in reference to him, they can have no more power  
than what every man naturally may have over another.

**Sec. 13.** To this strange doctrine, namely, that in the state of nature every one has the  
executive power of the law of nature, I doubt not but it will be objected, that it is  
20 unreasonable for men to be judges in their own cases, that self love will make men partial to  
themselves and their friends: and on the other side, that ill nature, passion and revenge will  
carry them too far in punishing others; and hence nothing but confusion and disorder will  
follow, and that therefore God hath certainly appointed government to restrain the partiality  
and violence of men. I easily grant, that civil government is the proper remedy for the  
25 inconveniencies of the state of nature, which must certainly be great, where men may be  
judges in their own case, since it is easy to be imagined, that he who was so unjust as to do  
his brother an injury, will scarce be so just as to condemn himself for it: but I shall desire  
those who make this objection, to remember, that absolute monarchs are but men; and if  
government is to be the remedy of those evils, which necessarily follow from men's being  
30 judges in their own cases, and the state of nature is therefore not to be endured, I desire to  
know what kind of government that is, and how much better it is than the state of nature,  
where one man, commanding a multitude, has the liberty to be judge in his own case, and  
may do to all his subjects whatever he pleases, without the least liberty to any one to question  
or control those who execute his pleasure and in whatsoever he doth, whether led by reason,  
35 mistake or passion, must be submitted to. Much better it is in the state of nature, wherein

1 men are not bound to submit to the unjust will of another. And if he that judges, judges  
amiss in his own, or any other case, he is answerable for it to the rest of mankind.

5 **Sec. 16.** The state of war is a state of enmity and destruction: and therefore declaring by  
word or action, not a passionate and hasty, but a sedate settled design upon another man's  
life, puts him in a state of war with him against whom he has declared such an intention, and  
so has exposed his life to the other's power to be taken away by him, or any one that joins  
with him in his defense, and espouses his quarrel; it being reasonable and just, I should have  
10 a right to destroy that which threatens me with destruction: for, by the fundamental law of  
nature, man being to be preserved as much as possible, when all cannot be preserved, the  
safety of the innocent is to be preferred: and one may destroy a man who makes war upon  
him, or has discovered an enmity to his being, for the same reason that he may kill a wolf or  
a lion; because such men are not under the ties of the common law of reason, have no other  
15 rule, but that of force and violence, and so may be treated as beasts of prey, those dangerous  
and noxious creatures, that will be sure to destroy him whenever he falls into their power.

**Sec. 17.** And hence it is, that he who attempts to get another man into his absolute power,  
does thereby put himself into a state of war with him; it being to be understood as a  
20 declaration of a design upon his life: for I have reason to conclude, that he who would get me  
into his power without my consent, would use me as he pleased when he had got me there,  
and destroy me too when he had a fancy to it; for no body can desire to have me in his  
absolute power, unless it be to compel me by force to that which is against the right of my  
freedom, i.e. make me a slave. To be free from such force is the only security of my  
25 preservation; and reason bids me look on him, as an enemy to my preservation, who would  
take away that freedom which is the fence to it; so that he who makes an attempt to enslave  
me, thereby puts himself into a state of war with me. He that, in the state of nature, would  
take away the freedom that belongs to any one in that state, must necessarily be supposed to  
have a foundation of all the rest; as he that in the state of society, would take away the  
30 freedom belonging to those of that society or commonwealth, must be supposed to design to  
take away from them every thing else, and so be looked on as in a state of war.

**Sec. 18.** This makes it lawful for a man to kill a thief, who has not in the least hurt him, nor  
declared any design upon his life, any farther than, by the use of force, so to get him in his  
power, as to take away his money, or what he pleases, from him; because using force, where  
35 he has no right, to get me into his power, let his pretence be what it will, I have no reason to

1 suppose, that he, who would take away my liberty, would not, when he had me in his power,  
take away every thing else. And therefore it is lawful for me to treat him as one who has put  
himself into a state of war with me, i.e. kill him if I can; for to that hazard does he justly  
expose himself, whoever introduces a state of war, and is aggressor in it.

5  
**Sec. 19.** And here we have the plain difference between the state of nature and the state of  
war, which however some men have confounded, are as far distant, as a state of peace, good  
will, mutual assistance and preservation, and a state of enmity, malice, violence and mutual  
destruction, are one from another. Men living together according to reason, without a  
10 common superior on earth, with authority to judge between them, is properly the state of  
nature. But force, or a declared design of force, upon the person of another, where there is no  
common superior on earth to appeal to for relief, is the state of war: and it is the want of  
such an appeal gives a man the right of war even against an aggressor, though he be in society  
and a fellow subject. Thus a thief, whom I cannot harm, but by appeal to the law, for having  
15 stolen all that I am worth, I may kill, when he sets on me to rob me but of my horse or coat;  
because the law, which was made for my preservation, where it cannot interpose to secure my  
life from present force, which, if lost, is capable of no reparation, permits me my own  
defense, and the right of war, a liberty to kill the aggressor, because the aggressor allows not  
time to appeal to our common judge, nor the decision of the law, for remedy in a case where  
20 the mischief may be irreparable. Want of a common judge with authority, puts all men in a  
state of nature: force without right, upon a man's person, makes a state of war, both where  
there is, and is not, a common judge.

**Sec. 22.** The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not  
25 to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his  
rule. The liberty of man, in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that  
established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or  
restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it.  
Freedom then is not what Sir Robert Filmer tells us, Observations, A. 55. A liberty for every  
30 one to do what he lists, to live as he pleases, and not to be tied by any laws: but freedom of  
men under government is, to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that  
society, and made by the legislative power erected in it; a liberty to follow my own will in all  
things, where the rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain,  
unknown, arbitrary will of another man: as freedom of nature is, to be under no other  
35 restraint but the law of nature.

1       **Sec. 23.** This freedom from absolute, arbitrary power, is so necessary to, and closely joined  
with a man's preservation, that he cannot part with it, but by what forfeits his preservation  
and life together: for a man, not having the power of his own life, cannot, by compact, or his  
own consent, enslave himself to any one, nor put himself under the absolute, arbitrary power  
5       of another, to take away his life, when he pleases. No body can give more power than he has  
himself; and he that cannot take away his own life, cannot give another power over it.  
Indeed, having by his fault forfeited his own life, by some act that deserves death; he, to  
whom he has forfeited it, may (when he has him in his power) delay to take it, and make use  
of him to his own service, and he does him no injury by it: for, whenever he finds the  
10       hardship of his slavery outweigh the value of his life, it is in his power, by resisting the will of  
his master, to draw on himself the death he desires.

**Sec. 25.** Whether we consider natural reason, which tells us, that men, being once born, have  
a right to their preservation, and consequently to meat and drink, and such other things as  
15       nature affords for their subsistence: or revelation, which gives us an account of those grants  
God made of the world to Adam, and to Noah, and his sons, it is very clear, that God, as  
king David says, (Psalm cxv. 16.) has given the earth to the children of men; given it to  
mankind in common. But this being supposed, it seems to some a very great difficulty, how  
any one should ever come to have a property in any thing: I will not content myself to  
20       answer, that if it be difficult to make out property, upon a supposition that God gave the  
world to Adam, and his posterity in common, it is impossible that any man, but one  
universal monarch, should have any property upon a supposition, that God gave the world  
to Adam, and his heirs in succession, exclusive of all the rest of his posterity. But I shall  
endeavor to show, how men might come to have a property in several parts of that which  
25       God gave to mankind in common, and that without any express compact of all the  
commoners.

**Sec. 26.** God, who hath given the world to men in common, hath also given them reason to  
make use of it to the best advantage of life, and convenience. The earth, and all that is  
30       therein, is given to men for the support and comfort of their being. And tho' all the fruits it  
naturally produces, and beasts it feeds, belong to mankind in common, as they are produced  
by the spontaneous hand of nature; and no body has originally a private dominion, exclusive  
of the rest of mankind, in any of them, as they are thus in their natural state: yet being given  
for the use of men, there must of necessity be a means to appropriate them some way or  
35       other, before they can be of any use, or at all beneficial to any particular man. The fruit, or

1 venison, which nourishes the wild Indian, who knows no enclosure, and is still a tenant in  
common, must be his, and so his, i.e. a part of him, that another can no longer have any  
right to it, before it can do him any good for the support of his life.

5 **Sec. 27.** Though the earth, and all inferior creatures, be common to all men, yet every man  
has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labor of his  
body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes  
10 out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labor with, and  
joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him  
removed from the common state nature hath placed it in, it hath by this labor something  
annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other men: for this labor being the  
unquestionable property of the laborer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once  
joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good, left in common for others.

15 **Sec. 28.** He that is nourished by the acorns he picked up under an oak, or the apples he  
gathered from the trees in the wood, has certainly appropriated them to himself. No body  
can deny but the nourishment is his. I ask then, when did they begin to be his? When he  
digested? Or when he eats? Or when he boiled? Or when he brought them home? Or when  
20 he picked them up? And it is plain, if the first gathering made them not his, nothing else  
could. That labor put a distinction between them and common: that added something to  
them more than nature, the common mother of all, had done; and so they became his  
private right. And will any one say, he had no right to those acorns or apples, he thus  
appropriated, because he had not the consent of all mankind to make them his? Was it a  
robbery thus to assume to himself what belonged to all in common? If such a consent as that  
25 was necessary, man had starved, notwithstanding the plenty God had given him. We see in  
commons, which remain so by compact, that it is the taking any part of what is common,  
and removing it out of the state nature leaves it in, which begins the property; without which  
the common is of no use. And the taking of this or that part, does not depend on the express  
consent of all the commoners. Thus the grass my horse has bit; the turfs my servant has cut;  
30 and the ore I have dug in any place, where I have a right to them in common with others,  
become my property, without the assignation or consent of any body. The labor that was  
mine, removing them out of that common state they were in, hath fixed my property in  
them.

1       **Sec. 31.** It will perhaps be objected to this, that if gathering the acorns, or other fruits of the  
earth, &c. makes a right to them, then any one may engross as much as he will. To which I  
answer: Not so. The same law of nature, that does by this means give us property, does also  
bind that property too. God has given us all things richly, 1 Tim. vi. 12. is the voice of  
5       reason confirmed by inspiration. But how far has he given it us? To enjoy. As much as any  
one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils, so much he may by his labor fix  
a property in: whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others. Nothing  
was made by God for man to spoil or destroy. And thus, considering the plenty of natural  
provisions there was a long time in the world, and the few spenders; and to how small a part  
10       of that provision the industry of one man could extend itself, and engross it to the prejudice  
of others; especially keeping within the bounds, set by reason, of what might serve for his  
use; there could be then little room for quarrels or contentions about property so established.

15       **Sec. 32.** But the chief matter of property being now not the fruits of the earth, and the beasts  
that subsist on it, but the earth itself; as that which takes in and carries with it all the rest; I  
think it is plain, that property in that too is acquired as the former. As much land as a man  
tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by  
his labor does, as it were, enclose it from the common. Nor will it invalidate his right, to say  
every body else has an equal title to it; and therefore he cannot appropriate, he cannot  
20       enclose, without the consent of all his fellow-commoners, all mankind. God, when he gave  
the world in common to all mankind, commanded man also to labor, and the penury of his  
condition required it of him. God and his reason commanded him to subdue the earth, i.e.  
improve it for the benefit of life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his  
labor. He that in obedience to this command of God, subdued, tilled and sowed any part of  
25       it, thereby annexed to it something that was his property, which another had no title to, nor  
could without injury take from him.

30       **Sec. 33.** Nor was this appropriation of any parcel of land, by improving it, any prejudice to  
any other man, since there was still enough, and as good left; and more than the yet  
unprovided could use. So that, in effect, there was never the less left for others because of his  
enclosure for himself: for he that leaves as much as another can make use of, does as good as  
take nothing at all. No body could think himself injured by the drinking of another man,  
though he took a good draught, who had a whole river of the same water left him to quench  
his thirst: and the case of land and water, where there is enough of both, is perfectly the  
35       same.



1       **Sec. 49.** Thus in the beginning all the world was America, and more so than that is now; for  
no such thing as money was any where known. Find out something that hath the use and  
value of money amongst his neighbors, you shall see the same man will begin presently to  
enlarge his possessions.

5  
10       **Sec. 50.** But since gold and silver, being little useful to the life of man in proportion to food,  
raiment, and carriage, has its value only from the consent of men, whereof labor yet makes,  
in great part, the measure, it is plain, that men have agreed to a disproportionate and  
unequal possession of the earth, they having, by a tacit and voluntary consent, found out, a  
15       way how a man may fairly possess more land than he himself can use the product of, by  
receiving in exchange for the surplus gold and silver, which may be hoarded up without  
injury to any one; these metals not spoiling or decaying in the hands of the possessor. This  
partaking of things in an inequality of private possessions, men have made practicable out of  
the bounds of society, and without compact, only by putting a value on gold and silver, and  
20       tacitly agreeing in the use of money: for in governments, the laws regulate the right of  
property, and the possession of land is determined by positive constitutions.

25       **Sec. 51.** And thus, I think, it is very easy to conceive, without any difficulty, how labor could  
at first begin a title of property in the common things of nature, and how the spending it  
upon our uses bounded it. So that there could then be no reason of quarrelling about title,  
nor any doubt about the largeness of possession it gave. Right and convenience went  
together; for as a man had a right to all he could employ his labor upon, so he had no  
temptation to labor for more than he could make use of. This left no room for controversy  
about the title, nor for encroachment on the right of others; what portion a man carved to  
30       himself, was easily seen; and it was useless, as well as dishonest, to carve himself too much, or  
take more than he needed.

35       **Sec. 95.** Men being, as has been said, by nature, all free, equal, and independent, no one can  
be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without his own  
consent. The only way whereby any one divests himself of his natural liberty, and puts on the  
bonds of civil society, is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community for  
their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of  
their properties, and a greater security against any, that are not of it. This any number of  
men may do, because it injures not the freedom of the rest; they are left as they were in the  
liberty of the state of nature. When any number of men have so consented to make one

1 community or government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make one body  
politic, wherein the majority have a right to act and conclude the rest.

5 **Sec. 96.** For when any number of men have, by the consent of every individual, made a  
community, they have thereby made that community one body, with a power to act as one  
body, which is only by the will and determination of the majority: for that which acts any  
community, being only the consent of the individuals of it, and it being necessary to that  
10 which is one body to move one way; it is necessary the body should move that way whither  
the greater force carries it, which is the consent of the majority: or else it is impossible it  
should act or continue one body, one community, which the consent of every individual that  
united into it, agreed that it should; and so every one is bound by that consent to be  
concluded by the majority. And therefore we see, that in assemblies, empowered to act by  
positive laws, where no number is set by that positive law which empowers them, the act of  
15 the majority passes for the act of the whole, and of course determines, as having, by the law  
of nature and reason, the power of the whole.

20 **Sec. 97.** And thus every man, by consenting with others to make one body politic under one  
government, puts himself under an obligation, to every one of that society, to submit to the  
determination of the majority, and to be concluded by it; or else this original compact,  
whereby he with others incorporates into one society, would signify nothing, and be no  
compact, if he be left free, and under no other ties than he was in before in the state of  
nature. For what appearance would there be of any compact? What new engagement if he  
were no farther tied by any decrees of the society, than he himself thought fit, and did  
25 actually consent to? This would be still as great a liberty, as he himself had before his  
compact, or any one else in the state of nature hath, who may submit himself, and consent to  
any acts of it if he thinks fit.

30 **Sec. 98.** For if the consent of the majority shall not, in reason, be received as the act of the  
whole, and conclude every individual; nothing but the consent of every individual can make  
any thing to be the act of the whole: but such a consent is next to impossible ever to be had,  
if we consider the infirmities of health, and avocations of business, which in a number,  
though much less than that of a common-wealth, will necessarily keep many away from the  
public assembly. To which if we add the variety of opinions, and contrariety of interests,  
which unavoidably happen in all collections of men, the coming into society upon such  
35 terms would be only like Cato's coming into the theatre, only to go out again. Such a

1 constitution as this would make the mighty Leviathan of a shorter duration, than the feeblest  
creatures, and not let it outlast the day it was born: which cannot be supposed, till we can  
think, that rational creatures should desire and constitute societies only to be dissolved: for  
where the majority cannot conclude the rest, there they cannot act as one body, and  
5 consequently will be immediately dissolved again.

**Sec. 99.** Whosoever therefore out of a state of nature unite into a community, must be  
understood to give up all the power, necessary to the ends for which they unite into society,  
to the majority of the community, unless they expressly agreed in any number greater than  
10 the majority. And this is done by barely agreeing to unite into one political society, which is  
all the compact that is, or needs be, between the individuals, that enter into, or make up a  
commonwealth. And thus that, which begins and actually constitutes any political society, is  
nothing but the consent of any number of freemen capable of a majority to unite and  
incorporate into such a society. And this is that, and that only, which did, or could give  
15 beginning to any lawful government in the world.

**Sec. 123.** IF man in the state of nature be so free, as has been said; if he be absolute lord of  
his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest, and subject to no body, why will he  
part with his freedom? Why will he give up this empire, and subject himself to the dominion  
20 and control of any other power? To which it is obvious to answer, that though in the state of  
nature he hath such a right, yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain, and constantly exposed  
to the invasion of others: for all being kings as much as he, every man his equal, and the  
greater part no strict observers of equity and justice, the enjoyment of the property he has in  
this state is very unsafe, very insecure. This makes him willing to quit a condition, which,  
25 however free, is full of fears and continual dangers: and it is not without reason, that he seeks  
out, and is willing to join in society with others, who are already united, or have a mind to  
unite, for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the  
general name, property.

**Sec. 124.** The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and  
30 putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. To which in the  
state of nature there are many things wanting.  
First, There wants an established, settled, known law, received and allowed by common  
consent to be the standard of right and wrong, and the common measure to decide all  
35 controversies between them: for though the law of nature be plain and intelligible to all

1 rational creatures; yet men being biased by their interest, as well as ignorant for want of study  
of it, are not apt to allow of it as a law binding to them in the application of it to their  
particular cases.

5 **Sec. 125.** Secondly, In the state of nature there wants a known and indifferent judge, with  
authority to determine all differences according to the established law: for every one in that  
state being both judge and executioner of the law of nature, men being partial to themselves,  
passion and revenge is very apt to carry them too far, and with too much heat, in their own  
cases; as well as negligence, and unconcernedness, to make them too remiss in other men's.

10 **Sec. 126.** Thirdly, In the state of nature there often wants power to back and support the  
sentence when right, and to give it due execution, They who by any injustice offended, will  
seldom fail, where they are able, by force to make good their injustice; such resistance many  
times makes the punishment dangerous, and frequently destructive, to those who attempt it.

15 **Sec. 127.** Thus mankind, notwithstanding all the privileges of the state of nature, being but  
in an ill condition, while they remain in it, are quickly driven into society. Hence it comes to  
pass, that we seldom find any number of men live any time together in this state. The  
inconveniencies that they are therein exposed to, by the irregular and uncertain exercise of  
20 the power every man has of punishing the transgressions of others, make them take sanctuary  
under the established laws of government, and therein seek the preservation of their  
property. It is this makes them so willingly give up every one his single power of punishing,  
to be exercised by such alone, as shall be appointed to it amongst them; and by such rules as  
the community, or those authorized by them to that purpose, shall agree on. And in this we  
25 have the original right and rise of both the legislative and executive power, as well as of the  
governments and societies themselves.

30 **Sec. 128.** For in the state of nature, to omit the liberty he has of innocent delights, a man has  
two powers. The first is to do whatsoever he thinks fit for the preservation of himself, and  
others within the permission of the law of nature: by which law, common to them all, he and  
all the rest of mankind are one community, make up one society, distinct from all other  
creatures. And were it not for the corruption and viciousness of degenerate men, there would  
be no need of any other; no necessity that men should separate from this great and natural  
community, and by positive agreements combine into smaller and divided associations.

1 The other power a man has in the state of nature, is the power to punish the crimes  
committed against that law. Both these he gives up, when he joins in a private, if I may so  
call it, or particular politic society, and incorporates into any commonwealth, separate from  
the rest of mankind.

5 **Sec. 129.** The first power, viz. of doing whatsoever he thought for the preservation of  
himself, and the rest of mankind, he gives up to be regulated by laws made by the society, so  
far forth as the preservation of himself, and the rest of that society shall require; which laws  
of the society in many things confine the liberty he had by the law of nature.

10 **Sec. 130.** Secondly, The power of punishing he wholly gives up, and engages his natural  
force, (which he might before employ in the execution of the law of nature, by his own single  
authority, as he thought fit) to assist the executive power of the society, as the law thereof  
shall require: for being now in a new state, wherein he is to enjoy many conveniences, from  
15 the labor, assistance, and society of others in the same community, as well as protection from  
its whole strength; he is to part also with as much of his natural liberty, in providing for  
himself, as the good, prosperity, and safety of the society shall require; which is not only  
necessary, but just, since the other members of the society do the like.

20 **Sec. 131.** But though men, when they enter into society, give up the equality, liberty, and  
executive power they had in the state of nature, into the hands of the society, to be so far  
disposed of by the legislative, as the good of the society shall require; yet it being only with  
an intention in every one the better to preserve himself, his liberty and property; (for no  
rational creature can be supposed to change his condition with an intention to be worse) the  
25 power of the society, or legislative constituted by them, can never be supposed to extend  
farther, than the common good; but is obliged to secure every one's property, by providing  
against those three defects above mentioned, that made the state of nature so unsafe and  
uneasy. And so whoever has the legislative or supreme power of any common-wealth, is  
bound to govern by established standing laws, promulgated and known to the people, and  
30 not by extemporary decrees; by indifferent and upright judges, who are to decide  
controversies by those laws; and to employ the force of the community at home, only in the  
execution of such laws, or abroad to prevent or redress foreign injuries, and secure the  
community from inroads and invasion. And all this to be directed to no other end, but the  
peace, safety, and public good of the people.

1       **Sec. 243.** To conclude, The power that every individual gave the society, when he entered  
into it, can never revert to the individuals again, as long as the society lasts, but will always  
remain in the community; because without this there can be no community, no common-  
wealth, which is contrary to the original agreement: so also when the society hath placed the  
5       legislative in any assembly of men, to continue in them and their successors, with direction  
and authority for providing such successors, the legislative can never revert to the people  
whilst that government lasts; because having provided a legislative with power to continue  
for ever, they have given up their political power to the legislative, and cannot resume it. But  
if they have set limits to the duration of their legislative, and made this supreme power in  
10       any person, or assembly, only temporary; or else, when by the miscarriages of those in  
authority, it is forfeited; upon the forfeiture, or at the determination of the time set, it reverts  
to the society, and the people have a right to act as supreme, and continue the legislative in  
themselves; or erect a new form, or under the old form place it in new hands, as they think  
good.