

American Minute with Bill Federer Montesquieu: 3 Types of Governments & What Makes Them Work

Society ... must repose on principles that do not change" -- wrote **Montesquieu**, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748, Book 24.

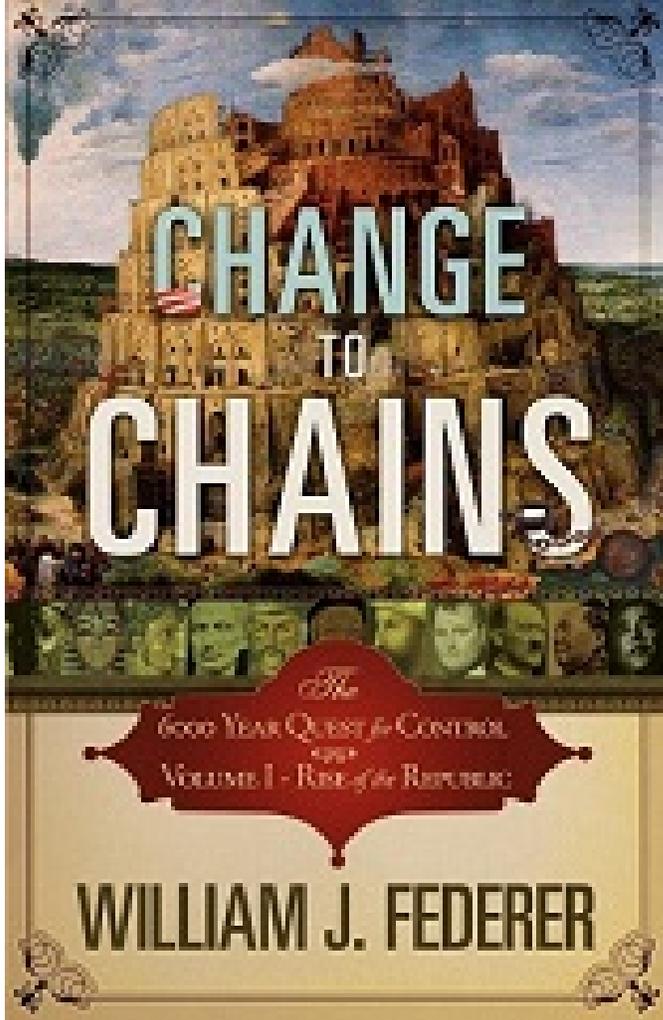
Montesquieu was a French political philosopher whose books were read by Catherine the Great of Russia, praised in England, and banned by Louis XV of France.



He greatly influenced America's founders, with **Thomas Jefferson** even translating *Destutt de Tracy's Commentary on Montesquieu*, August 12, 1810.

[Read as PDF ...](#)

[Change to Chains-the 6000 year Quest for Global Control](#)



In 1984, the *American Political Review* published an article titled **"The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late 18th-Century American Political Thought,"** written by **Donald S. Lutz** of the University of Houston, and **Charles S. Hyneman**.

The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought

DONALD S. LUTZ
University of Houston

Drawing upon a comprehensive list of political writings by Americans published between 1760 and 1805, the study uses a citation count drawn from these 916 items as a surrogate measure of the relative influence of European writers upon American political thought during the era. Contrary to the general tendencies in the recent literature, the results here indicate that there was no one European writer, or one tradition of writers, that dominated American political thought. There is evidence for moving beyond the Whig-Enlightenment dichotomy as the basis for textual analysis, and for expanding the set of individual European authors considered to have had an important effect on American thinking. Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Hume are most in need of upgrading in this regard. The patterns of influence apparently varied over the time period from 1760 to 1805, and future research on the relative influence of European thinkers must be more sensitive to this possibility.

After reviewing nearly 15,000 items written between 1760 and 1805, **Lutz** and **Hyneman** discovered that **the writers of the Constitution quoted Montesquieu more than any other source, except the Bible.**

Different political philosophers classify

governments
different ways.

Montesquieu
classified
governments in
three categories,
and described
what **motivating force** caused each to run.



There are three species
of government:
republican,
monarchical, and
despotic.

Charles de Montesquieu

He called the **motivating force** a "**spring**," as in the internal workings of a wind-up clock:

- **Republics**, most prevalent in **northern European Protestant countries**, relied on moral **Virtue**;
- **Monarchs**, most prevalent in **southern and western European Catholic countries**, relied on **Honor** and **Shame**; and
- **Despots**, most prevalent in **Islamic countries**, relied on **Pleasure** and **Fear**. The Muslim Sultan Balban of Delhi, India (1266–1286) declared: "Fear of the governing power ... is the basis of all good government."

Just as man is a three-fold being with a **spirit**, **mind**, and **body**, so do **republics**, **monarchies**, and **despotisms** have **three different motivations**.

Montesquieu's Philosophy

- ▶ *Three types of government:*
 - *Monarchy.*
 - *Republic.*
 - *Despotism.*
- ▶ *A separation of political powers ensured freedom and liberty.*

- The motivating spring in a **republic** is **virtue**, which is more in the **spiritual** realm. Citizens exercise more **self-control**

when they are aware that **they will be rewarded or punished in the next life.**

- The motivating spring in a **monarchy** is **honor and shame**, which are more in the realm of the **mind -- mental and emotional rewards or punishments.** Saul Alinsky wrote in ***Rules for Radicals***, 1971, of the motivating power of shame: "ridicule is man's most potent weapon."
- The motivating spring in a **despotism** is **pleasure and fear**, which is more **physical** realm. If one obeys the Sultan, they can be rewarded with a harem, and if one offends the Sultan, they may lose their hand or their head.

"Politics" is derived from the Greek word **"polis,"** which means **"city."**

Politics is the business of the city.



"Citizen" is a Greek word which means **"co-ruler."**

Where **kings** and **despots** have **"subjects"** who are **subjected to their will**, **democracies** and **republics** have **"citizens"** who are **"co-rulers."**

A "popular government" is where the **"population"** of **citizens** govern themselves.

A **"democracy"** is a **"popular government"** where **"citizens"** rule themselves

directly by being **personally present** at the city government meetings.



As a form of government, **"democracies"** have only ever worked on a **small, city-wide basis**, where **every citizen was physically present everyday** at the city meetings.

Any larger than a city, **democracies ceased to function**, as everyone could not logistically be present everyday.

During the Cold War, the word **"democracy"** came to have a second, more **generalized meaning** of a **"popular government."**

A **"republic,"** is a **"popular government"** where citizens rule indirectly through **"representatives"** who attend the government meetings in their place.



This allowed **"republics"** to function over **larger areas**, such as **nations**.

In **Montesquieu's** definition of the **popular government** of a **"republic,"** each **citizen** acts as a **co-king**, being conscious of the fact that each will be held individually accountable to God, who wants them to be fair. This results in citizens having moral and virtuous behavior.

Montesquieu described a "**monarch**" as a **king with strings attached**, being limited by a class of powerful noblemen, laws, traditions, Judeo-Christian beliefs, and having a conscience -- reminded that he will be held accountable the King of kings in the next life.

Montesquieu described a "**despot**" as a **king with no strings attached**, who rules **without a conscience**, according to his whims and caprices, exercising **absolute** and **arbitrary power** through **executive orders**:

- **absolute** power, means the moment he says something it is the law; and
- **arbitrary** power, means no one can predict what he will say next.

Montesquieu understood that **man's nature** was **inherently selfish** and, opportunity provided, **any person** could be **tempted to accumulate power** and become a **despot**.



St. Augustine called this "**libido dominandi**" -- the **lust to dominate**.

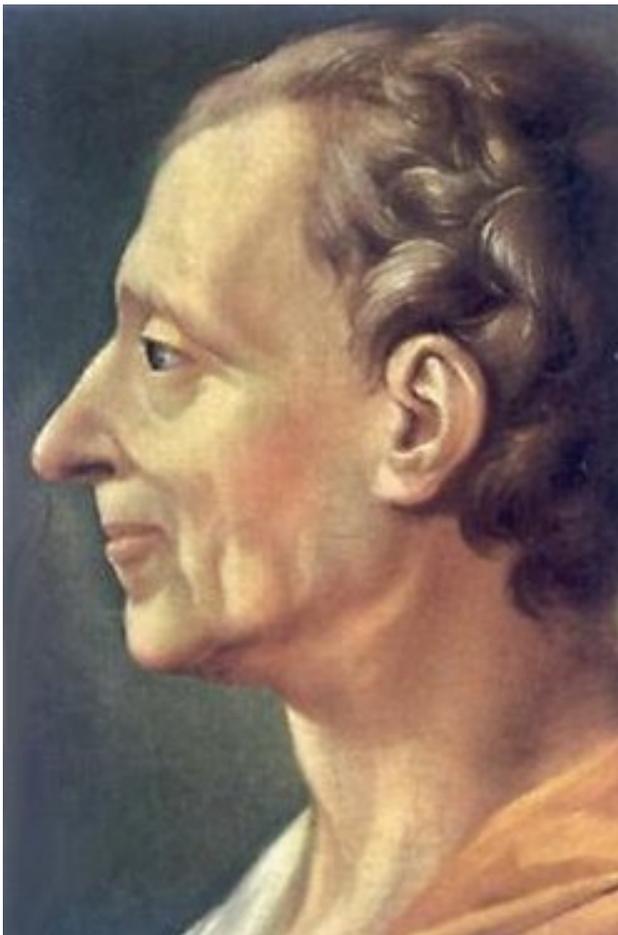


Montesquieu explained that **once virtue is gone, a republic will become lawless.** The resulting **insecurity for life and property** causes individuals to beg for someone to restore order.

The **power** of governing will then **gravitate from the**

many to the few.

Popular government will be usurped by a **despot**, who will reward his supporters with pleasure, and dominate the rest of his subjects through **fear.**



Montesquieu wrote:

"It is the nature of a **Republican government** that ... the collective body of **the People** ... should be ... the **Supreme Power** ...

In a **Popular state**, one **spring** more is **necessary**, namely, **Virtue** ...

The politic **Greeks**, who lived under a **Popular government**, knew no

other support than **Virtue** ...

When Virtue is banished, ambition invades the minds of those who are disposed to receive it, and avarice (greed) possesses the whole community ...

When, in a **Popular government**, there is a suspension of the laws, as this can proceed only from the **corruption of the republic**, the **state is certainly undone.**"



James Monroe warned in his Inaugural Address, 1817:

"It is only **when the people become ignorant and corrupt**, when they degenerate into a populace (mob), that **they are incapable of exercising the sovereignty.**

Usurpation is then an easy attainment, and a **usurper soon found**. The people themselves become the willing instruments of their own debasement and ruin."

Ancient Israel functioned as a **republic** during its first four hundred years in the promised land -- before they demanded a king.

Enoch Cobb Wines wrote in *Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews, with an Introductory Essay on Civil Society & Government* (NY: Geo. P. Putnam & Co., 1853):

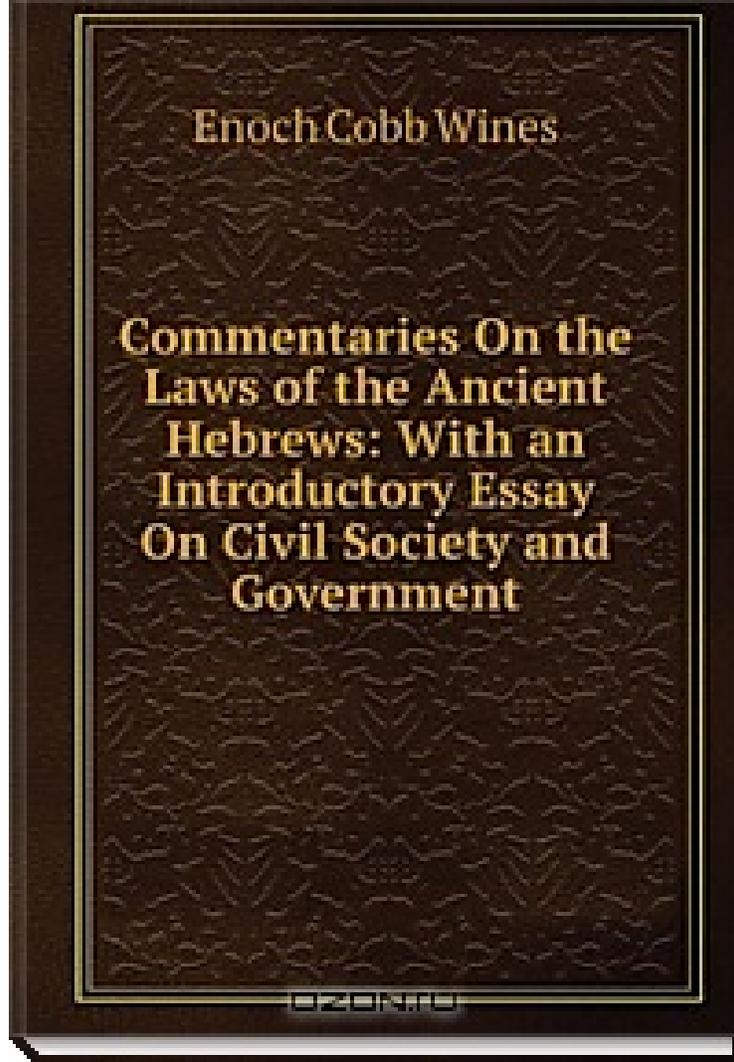
"A fundamental principle of the Hebrew government was ... the **education of the whole body of the people**; especially, in the **knowledge of the constitution, laws and history of their own country.**

An ignorant people cannot be a free people. Intelligence is essential to liberty.

No nation is capable of **self-government**, which is not **educated** to understand and appreciate **its responsibilities** ...

Maimonides, in his treatise on the study of the law, says: '**Every Israelite**, whether poor or rich, healthy or sick, old or young, **is obliged to study the law** ... ' He asks, 'How long ought a man to pursue the study of the law?' and replies, 'Till death ...'"

E.C. Wines
continued:



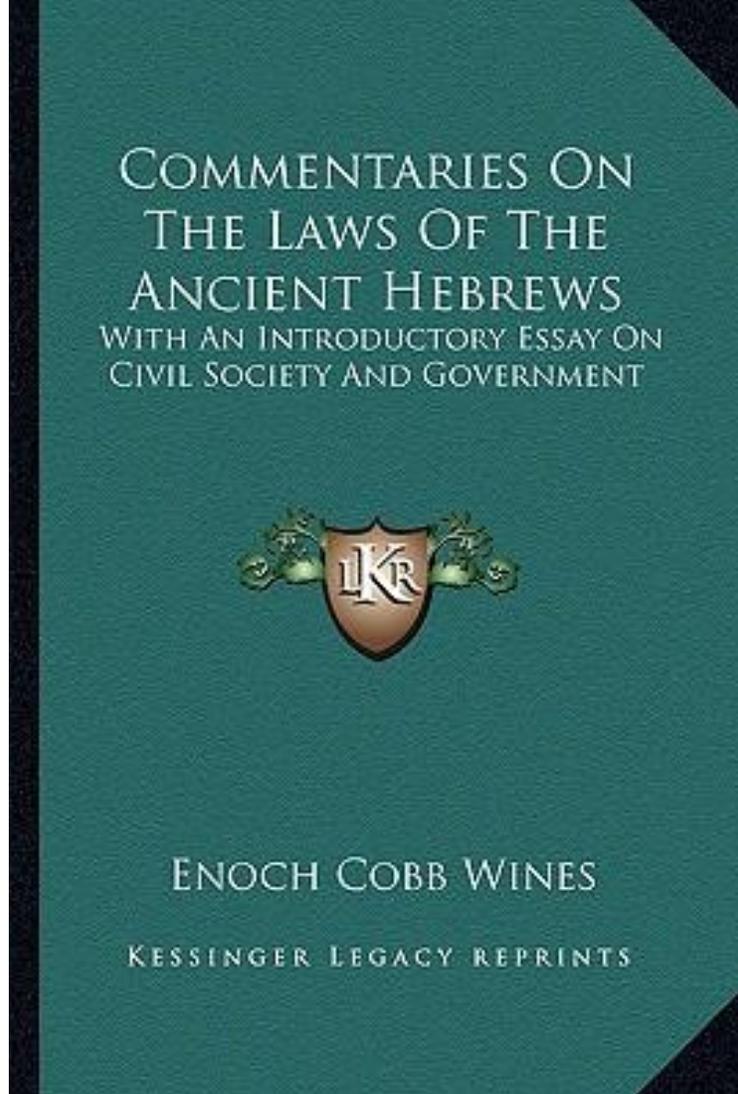
"Moses ... intended, that all his **people should share in the management of the public affairs.** He meant **each** to be a **depository of political power** ... as a solemn trust ...

On the subject of education, he appears chiefly anxious to have his **people instructed in the knowledge of ... their duties as men and citizens.**

He ... (did not) desire to see the mass of the people shut out from all political power ... nor ... to see the power of the masses increased, irrespective of their ability to discharge so important a trust beneficially to the community.

In his educational scheme, **power and knowledge went hand in hand.** The possession of **the latter** was regarded as essential to the right use of **the former** ...

In proportion as this idea enters into the constitution of a state, tyranny will hide its head, practical equality will be established, party strife will abate its ferocity, error, rashness, and folly will disappear, and an enlightened, dignified, and venerable public opinion will bear sway ...



It is **political ignorance alone**, that can reconcile men to ... **surrender of their rights**; it is **political knowledge alone**, that can rear an effectual **barrier** against the encroachments of **arbitrary power and lawless violence.**"

Montesquieu continued in *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748:

"As **Virtue** is necessary in a **Republic** ...

so **Fear** is necessary in a **Despotic** government: with regard to Virtue, there is no occasion for it ...

Fear must therefore depress their spirits, and **extinguish** even the least sense of **ambition** ...

Of a **Despotic** government, that a single person ... **rule according to his own will and caprice** ...

He who commands the execution of the laws generally **thinks himself above them**, there is **less need of Virtue** than in a popular government ..."

Montesquieu added:

"Such are the principles ... of government ...

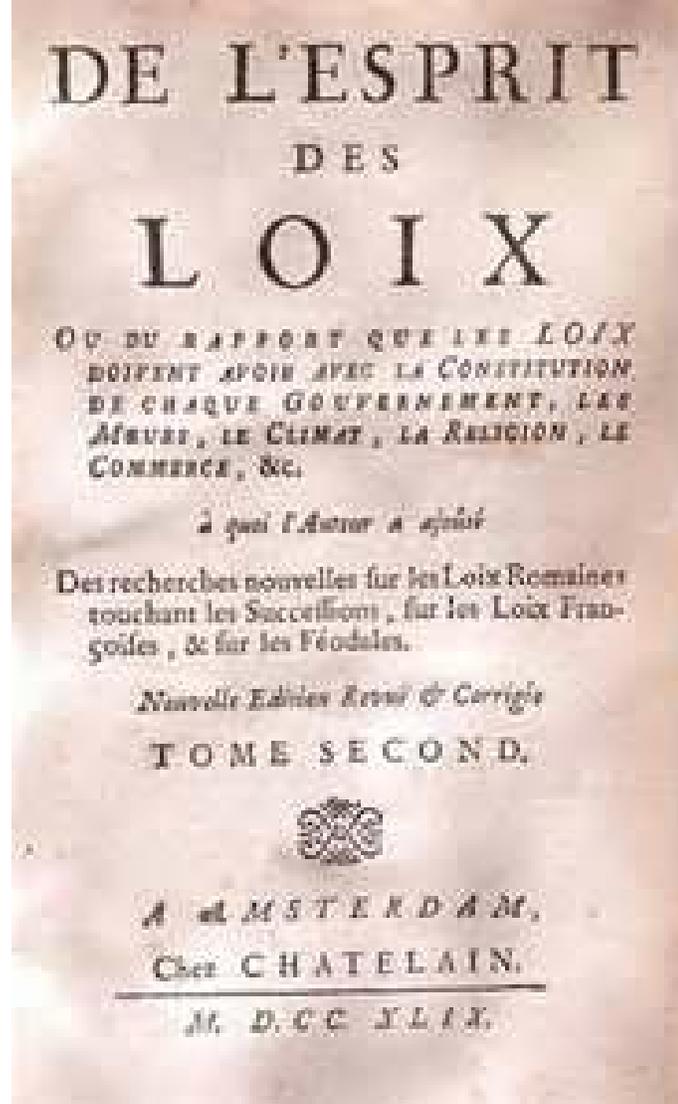
in a particular **Republic** they actually are ... **Virtuous** ...



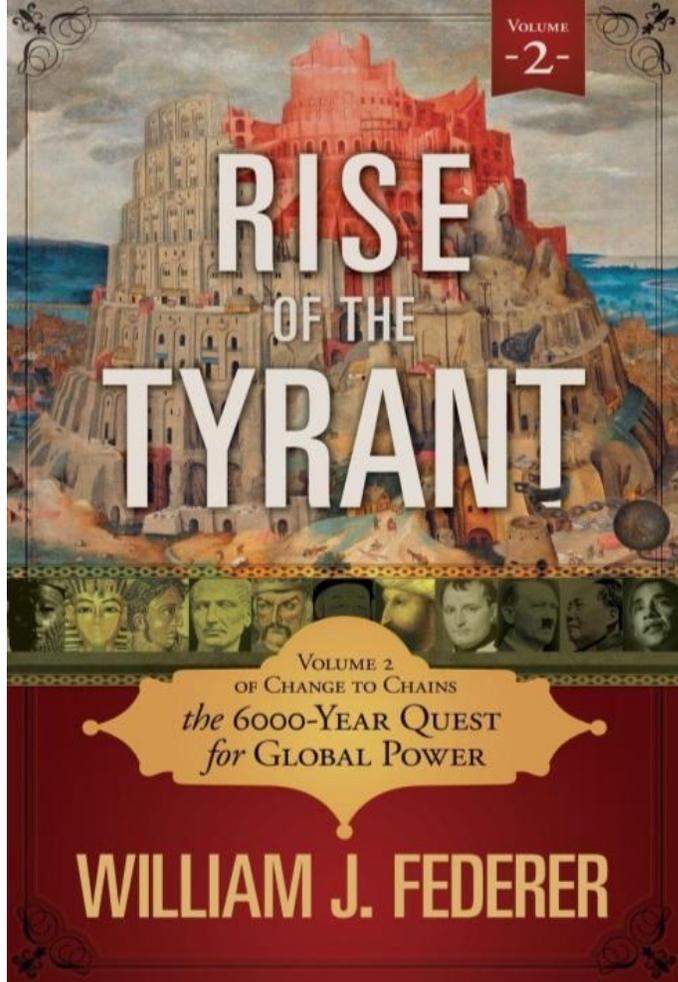
BARON DE MONTESQUIEU

- I know that some systems and laws fit some factors of people
- I am believing that the word liberty is a peace of mind that comes from being protected or safe
- I am trying to ensure the king wouldn't become too powerful and so the government will not turn into a tyrannical
- I am hoping that laws of the government will reduce problems of society and improve many people lives

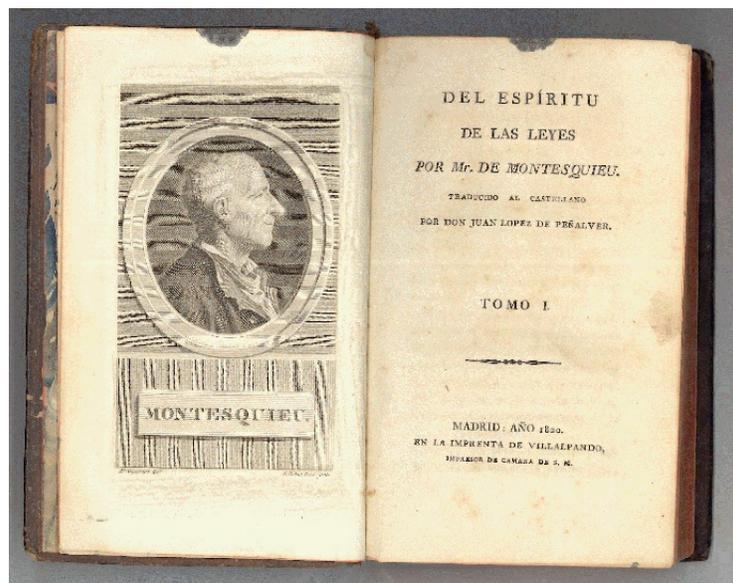
in a particular
Despotic government
by **Fear.**"



[Rise of the Tyrant -
How Democracies
and Republics Rise
and Fall \(Vol. 2 of
Change to Chains\)](#)



In contrasting which religion supports a moderate **Monarch** or **Republic**, and which supports a **Despot**, **Montesquieu** wrote in *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748:



"A moderate Government is most agreeable to the **Christian Religion**, and a **despotic Government** to the **Mahometan ...**

The **Christian religion** is a stranger to mere despotic power.

The **mildness** so frequently recommended in the **Gospel**

is **incompatible with the despotic rage** with which a prince punishes his subjects, and exercises himself in cruelty.

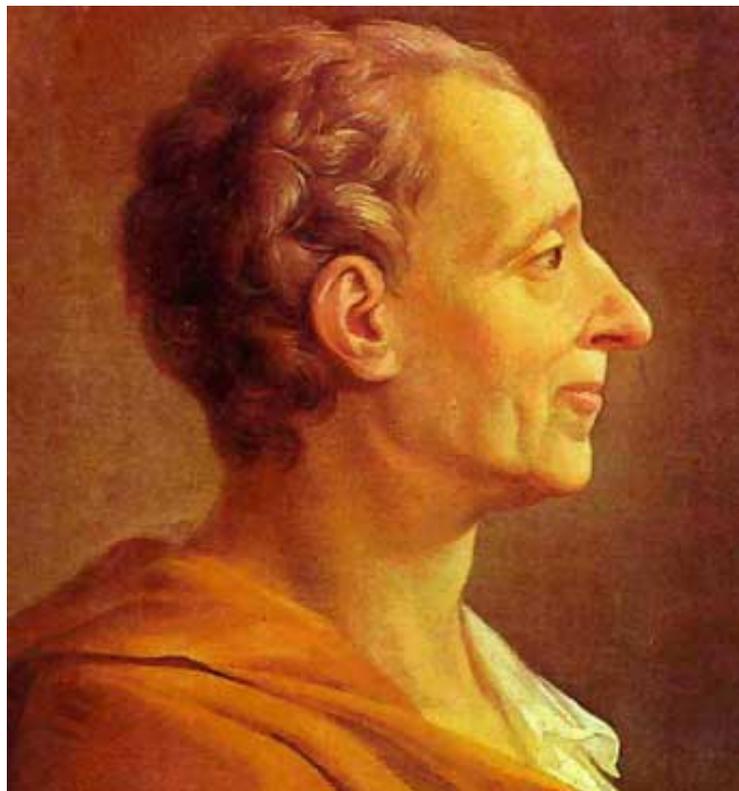
As **this religion forbids the plurality of wives**, its princes are less confined, less concealed from their subjects, and consequently **have more humanity**: they are more disposed to be **directed by laws**, and more capable of **perceiving that they cannot do whatever they please**.

While the **Mahometan princes incessantly give or receive death**, the **religion of the Christians renders their princes ... less cruel**. The prince confides in his subjects, and the subjects in the prince.

How admirable the religion which, while it only seems to have in view the felicity of the other life, continues **the happiness of this!** ... It is the **Christian religion** that ... has **hindered despotic power.**"

Montesquieu
continued:

"From the characters of the **Christian and Mahometan religions**, we ought, without any further examination, to **embrace the one and reject the other**:



for it is much easier to prove that **religion ought to humanize the manners of men** than that any particular religion is true.

It is a misfortune to human nature when religion is given by a conqueror.

The **Mahometan religion, which speaks only by the sword, acts still upon men with that destructive spirit with which it was founded."**

Of the Christian religion,
Montesquieu examined:

"When the **Christian religion**, two centuries ago, became **unhappily divided into Catholic and Protestant**, the people of the **north** embraced the **Protestant**, and those of the **south** adhered still to the **Catholic**.

The reason is plain: the people of the **north** have, and will forever have, a **spirit of liberty and independence**, which the people of the **south** have not;

and therefore a **religion which has no visible head is more agreeable to the independence** of the climate than that which has one ...

When a religion is introduced and fixed in a state, it is



commonly such as is most suitable to the plan of government there established."

Montesquieu compared Lutheran and Calvinist countries:

"In the countries themselves where the **Protestant religion** became established, the revolutions were made pursuant to the several plans of political government.

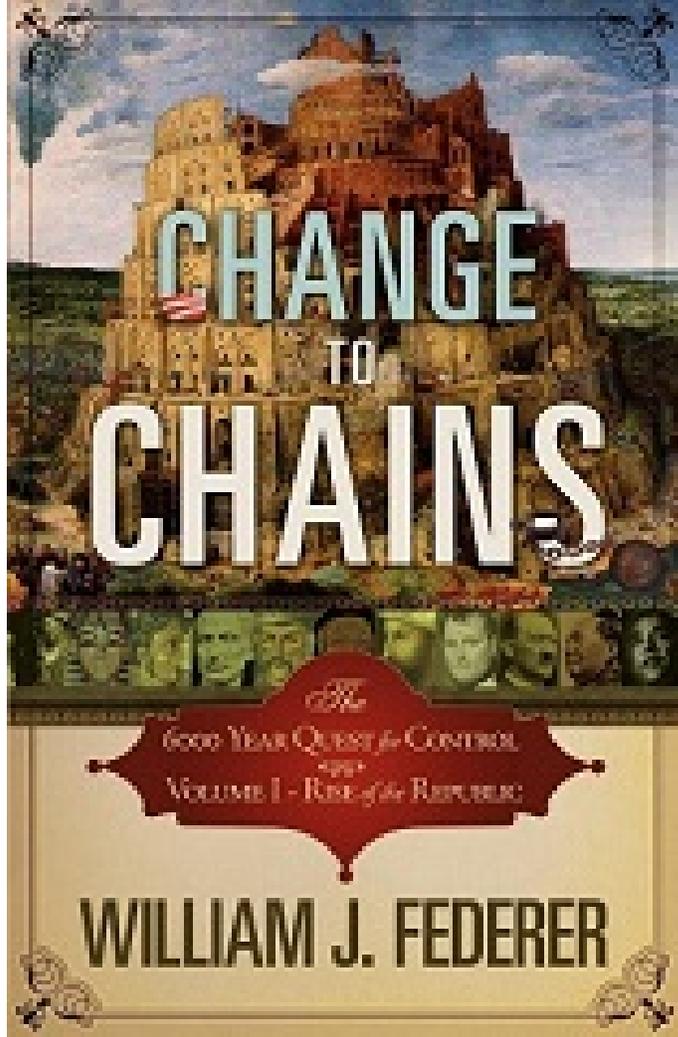


Luther having great princes on his side ... **an ecclesiastical authority** ... while **Calvin**, having to do with **people who lived under republican governments**

...

Each of these two religions was believed to be perfect; the **Calvinist** judging his most conformable to what **Christ had said**, and the **Lutheran** to what the **Apostles had practiced**."

[DVD Change to Chains - the 6,000 Year Quest for Global Control](#)

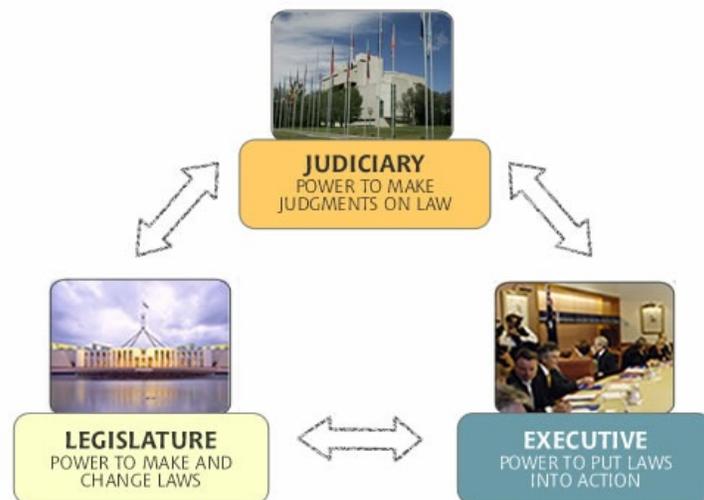


Warning of the abuse of power when concentrated, **Montesquieu** introduced the revolutionary concept of **separating the powers of ruling** into **three branches**:

- **legislative,**
- **executive,** and
- **judicial.**

These **three branches** would selfishly pull against each other to prevent one from overpowering the others -- thus

SEPARATION OF POWERS



using selfish power to selfish check power.

The brilliance of this is equivalent to a Sunday school teacher giving an assignment -- "design a system of government where sinners keep other sinners from sinning."

An indirect reference to the three branches was made at **New Hampshire's Convention to Ratify the U.S. Constitution**, June 5, 1788.



Harvard President Samuel Langdon gave an address titled, "**The Republic of the Israelites an Example to the American States**," in which he referenced Isaiah 33:22, "For the Lord *is* our **Judge**, the Lord *is* our **Lawgiver**, the Lord *is* our **King**; he will save us":

"This being the **ninth State** which has acceded to this **form of national Union**, it will be **carried into effect**; and there is no reason to doubt of the speedy **accession of all the other States ...**

May all rejoice in **the Lord**, who has formed us into a nation, and honor Him as our **Judge, Lawgiver, and King**, who hath saved us."

Montesquieu wrote:

"Nor is there liberty if the power of **Judging** is not



separated from **Legislative** power and from **Executive** power.

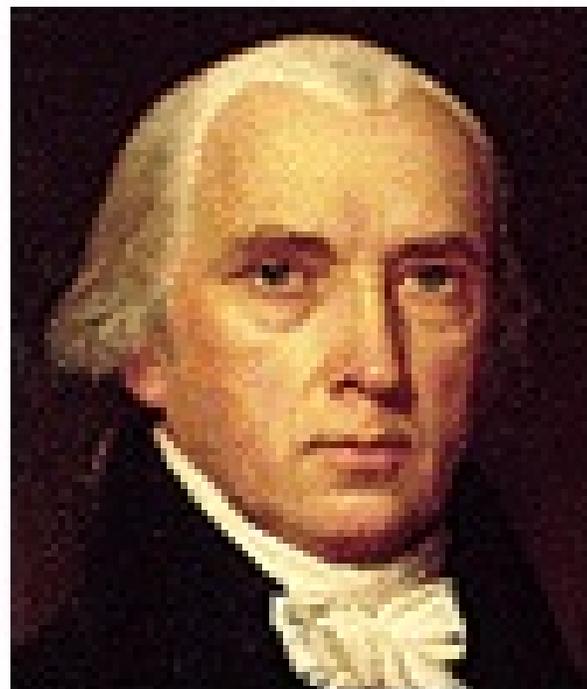
If it were joined to **Legislative** power, the power over life and liberty of the citizens would be arbitrary, for the **Judge** would be the **Legislator**.

If it were joined to **Executive** power, the **Judge** could have the force of an **oppressor**.

ALL WOULD BE LOST if the same ... body of principal men ... exercised these three powers."

James Madison echoed this in *The Federalist No. 51*:

"Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place ...



If **angels** were to

govern men, neither external or internal controls on government would be necessary."



In *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748, **Montesquieu** wrote:

"I have always respected religion; the morality of the **Gospel is the noblest gift ever bestowed by God on man.**

We shall see that **we owe to Christianity, in government, a**

certain political law, and in war a certain law of nations -
- benefits which human nature can never sufficiently acknowledge.

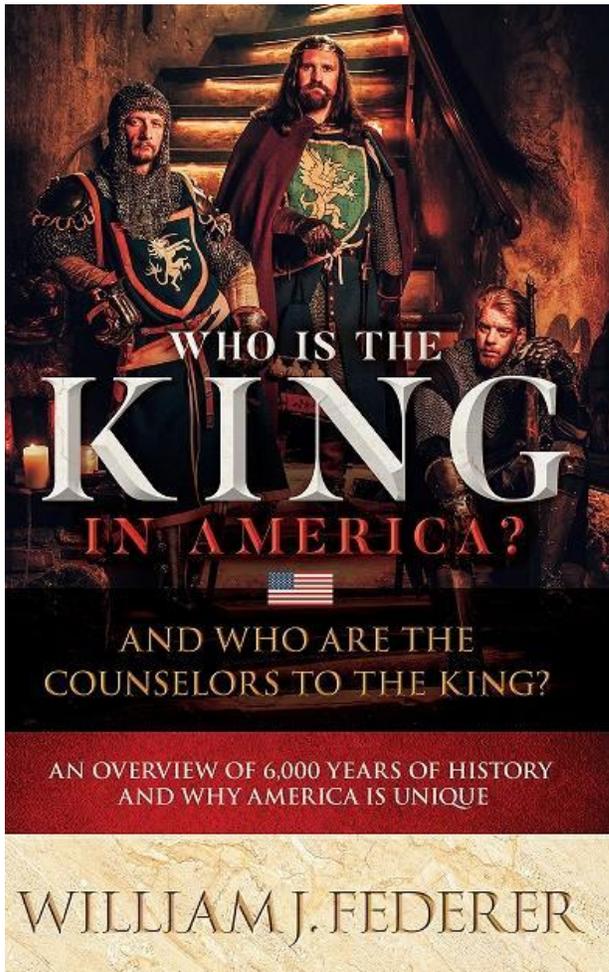
The principles of Christianity, deeply engraved on the heart, would be infinitely more powerful than the **false Honor of Monarchies**, than the **humane Virtues of Republics**, or the **servile Fear of Despotic states."**

In his *Considerations on the Causes of the Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans*, 1734, **Montesquieu** wrote:

"It is not chance that rules the world. Ask the Romans ... There are **general causes**,

moral and physical ...
elevating it,
maintaining it, **or**
hurling it to the
ground ...

If the chance of one battle -- that is, a particular cause -- has brought a state to ruin, some general cause made it necessary for that state to perish from a single battle. In a word, the main trend draws with it all particular accidents."



[Who is the King in America? \(The People\) - An Overview of 6,000 Years of History & Why America is Unique](#)

In the beginning of

*The Spirit of the
Laws*, 1748,
Montesquieu
wrote:

"God is related to
the universe as
**Creator and
Preserver**; the
**laws by which He
created all things**
are those by which
He **preserves
them ...**

But the intelligent
world is far from
being so well
governed as the
physical ...

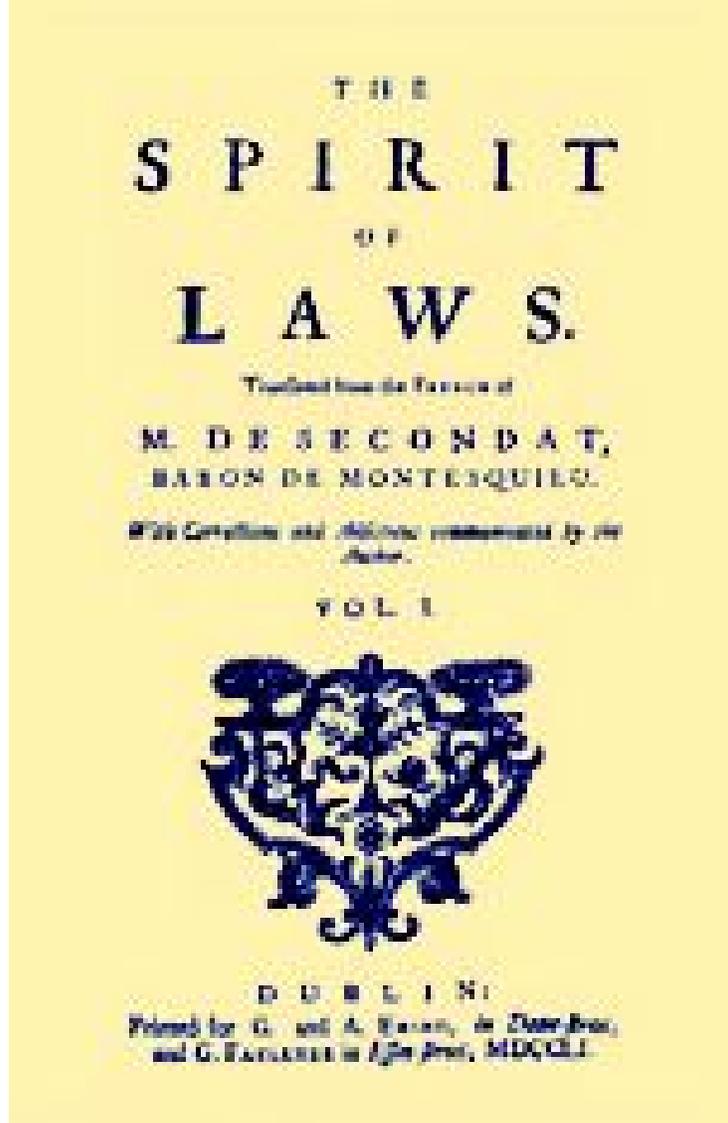
Man, as a physical
being, is like other bodies **governed by invariable laws.**

As an intelligent being, **he incessantly transgresses
the laws established by God**, and changes those of his
own instituting.

He is left to his private direction, though a limited being,
and subject, like all finite intelligences, to **ignorance and
error ...** hurried away by a thousand **impetuous
passions.**

Such a being might every instant forget his **Creator**; **God
has therefore reminded him of his duty by the laws of
religion."**

**Baron
Montesquieu** died

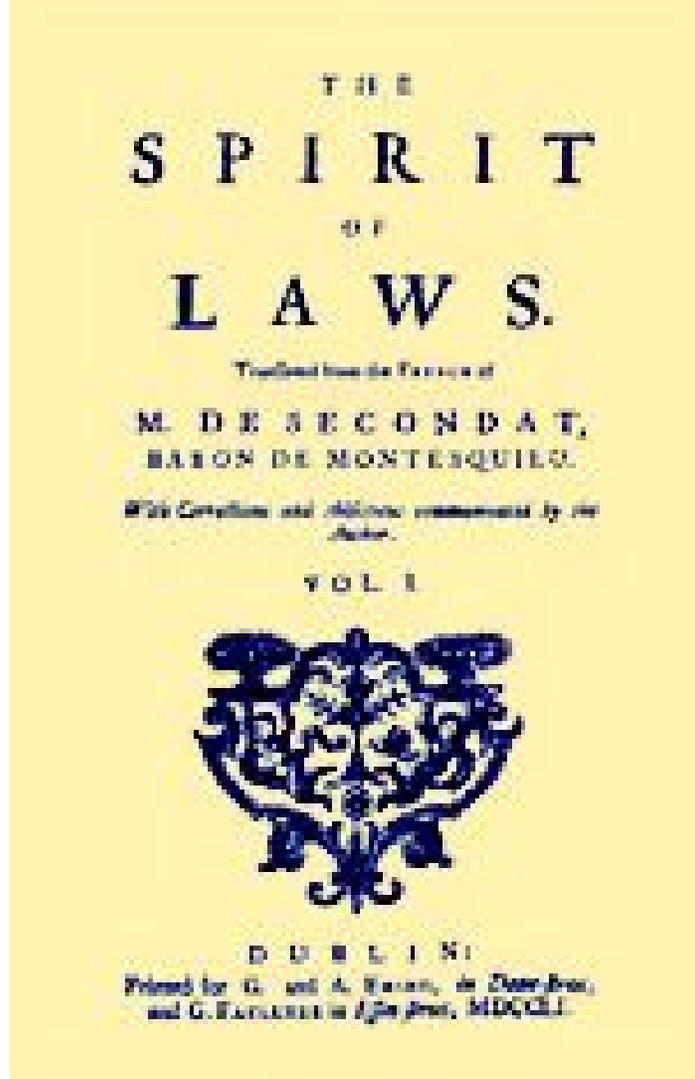


on FEBRUARY 10,
1755.

Montesquieu wrote
in *The Spirit of the
Laws*, 1748:

**"The Christian
religion, which
orders men to love
one another, no
doubt wants the
best political laws
and the best civil
laws for each
people, because
those laws are,
after (religion), the
greatest good that
men can give and
receive."**

--



[Read as PDF ... Montesquieu: 3 Types of Governments & What Makes Them Work?](#)

[Read as American Minute blog post](#)

Follow on:

[Telegram](#)

[USA.Life](#)

[Linkedin](#)

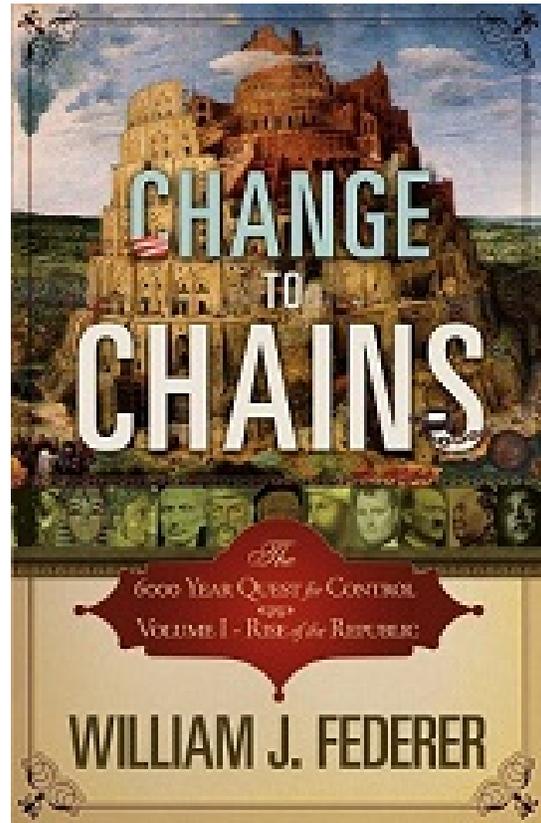
[MeWe](#)

[Gab](#)

[William J. Federer
videos](#)



[Change to Chains-the 6000 year Quest for Global Control](#)



Schedule Bill Federer for informative interviews & captivating PowerPoint presentations: 314-502-8924

wjfederer@gmail.com

American Minute is a registered trademark of William J. Federer. Permission is granted to forward, reprint, or duplicate, with acknowledgment.

www.AmericanMinute.com

[Click to shop AMERICAN MINUTE store](#)

[Donate to American Priorities. Thank you!](#)

[700 Club - Socialism \(episode 1\)](#)

[700 Club - Socialism \(episode 2\)](#)

[700 Club - Miracles in History \(episode 1\)](#)

[\(episode 2\)](#)

[\(episode 3\)](#)

Miracles in American History-Volume TWO (D.James Kennedy Ministry)

Faith in History TCT

Archives

CBN "Liberty" Special

Today's Bible reading

