

French had neither spirit to undertake it, nor fortitude to support it, and that there is one, he seeks an escape by condemning it.

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There never did, there never will, and there never can exist a parliament any description of men, or any generation of men, in any country, possessing the right or the power of binding and controuling posterity to the "end of time," or of commanding for ever how the world shall be governed, or shall govern it; and therefore, all such clauses, acts or declarations which the makers of them attempt to do what they have neither the right nor the power to do, nor the power to execute, are in themselves null and void.—Every age and generation must be as free to act for itself, *in all things* as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow. The parliament or the people of 1688, or of any other period, had no more right to dispose of the people of the present day, or to bind or to controul them *in any shape whatever*, than the parliament or the people of the present day have to dispose of, bind or controul those who are to live a hundred or a thousand years hence. Every generation is, and must be, competent to all the purposes which its occasion require. It is the living, and not the dead, that are to be accommodated. When man ceases to be, his power and his wants cease with him; and having no longer any participation in the concerns of this world, he has no longer any authority in directing who shall be its governors, or how its government shall be organized, or how administered.

I am not contending for nor against any form of government, nor for or against any party here or elsewhere. That which a whole nation chooses to do, it has a right to do. Mr. Burke says, No. Where then *does* the right end? I am contending for the rights of the *living*, and against their being with away, and controuled and contracted for, by the manuscript assumed authority of the dead; and Mr. Burke is contending for the authority of the dead over the rights and freedom of the living.

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"We have seen," says Mr. Burke, "the French rebel against a mild and lawful Monarch, with more fury, outrage, and insult, than any people has been known to rise against the most illegal usurper, or the most sanguinary tyrant."—This is one among a thousand other instances, in which Mr. Burke shews that he is ignorant of the springs and principles of the French revolution.

It was not against Louis the XVIth, but against the despotic principles of the government, that the nation revolted. These principles had not their origin in him, but in the original establishment, many centuries back, when they were become too deeply rooted to be removed, and the Augean stable of parasites and plunderers too abominably filthy to be cleansed, by any thing short of a complete and universal revolution. When it becomes necessary to do a thing, the whole heart and soul should go into the measure, or

That crisis was then arrived, and there remained no choice but to determine vigor, or not to act at all. The King was known to be the enemy of the nation, and this circumstance was favorable to the enterprise. No man bred up in the style of an absolute King, ever possessed a little disposed to the exercise of that species of power as the present of France. But the principles of the government itself still remained the same. The Monarch and the monarchy were distinct and separate things; and against the established despotism of the latter, and not against the principles of the former, that the revolt commenced, and the

distinction between *men* and *principles* does not attend to the distinction between *men* and *principles*; and therefore, he does not see that a revolt may take place against the latter, while there lies no charge of despotism against the former. The natural moderation of Louis the XVIth contributed nothing to alter the hereditary despotism of the monarchy. All the tyrannies of former reigns, under that hereditary despotism, were still liable to be revived in the person of a successor. It was not the respite of a reign that would satisfy the enlightened as she was then become. A casual discontinuance of the hereditary despotism, is not a discontinuance of its *principles*; the former is in the virtue of the individual who is in immediate possession of the latter, on the virtue and fortitude of the nation. In the case of James II. of England, the revolt was against the personal authority of the man;² whereas in France, it was against the hereditary despotism of the established government. But men who can consign over the authority of posterity for ever on the authority of a moldy parchment, like Mr. Burke, are not qualified to judge of this revolution. It takes in a field too vast to be explored, and proceeds with a mightiness of reason they can-

not comprehend. There are many points of view in which this revolution may be considered. When despotism has established itself for ages in a country, as in France, it is not in the person of the King only that it resides. It has the nature of being so in show, and in nominal authority; but it is not so in fact, and in fact. It has its standard every where. Every office and every department has its despotism founded upon custom and usage. Every office has its Bastille,³ and every Bastille its despot. The original hereditary despotism resident in the person of the King, divides and subdivides into a thousand shapes and forms, till at last the whole of it is acted upon in a thousand different ways. This was the case in France; and against this species of despotism, proceeding on through an endless labyrinth of office till the end of it is scarcely perceptible, there is no mode of redress. It strengthens itself by assuming the appearance of duty, and tyrannises under the name of obeying.

When a man reflects on the condition which France was in from the beginning of her government, he will see other causes for revolt than those which immediately connect themselves with the person or character of the King. There were, if I may so express it, a thousand despotisms to be