 **VINDICIAE CONTRA TYRANNOS** or Concerning the Legitimate Power of a Prince over the People and of the People over a Prince written under the pseudonym of Stephen Junius Brutus but probably written by Philippe du Mornay

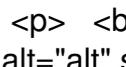
For the past several weeks, we have been reading both *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* and *Lex Rex* and making notes to accompany our family's subsequent study of these significant works. Yesterday, God led us to the following article, *The Reformation Roots of Social Contract* by David Hall, not only to direct our family to study the other three tracts that David reviews in this excellent summary, but we believe to encourage you to do so, as well. For it is imperative that our children fully understand the foundation of our liberty through Christ; God's Sovereign administration of family, church, and state; the biblical concept of civil government; our Christian republic's covenant; freedom of conscience and our responsibility to resist anything contrary to God's Law.

Since God is Creator of all things, His authority extends over all men; therefore, as His possessions, all must honor Him through their obedience to His laws. Consequently all things raised up against Christ our Sovereign Lord must be resisted because of its violation of His superior authority. Our founders understood this most basic truth because they made it a priority to study God's Word.

Please consider our sense of urgency in this matter. Families, you know how very busy we are with all our responsibilities, yet, we, too, make it a priority to diligently study these foundational truths each day. And even though we have already studied these truths from well over 200 books that we already possess, we are adding these other significant works to our collection because it is our paramount obligation to our Creator and Redeemer to know Him fully and fully understand our duty to Him.

Study! Study! Study!

THE REFORMATION ROOTS OF SOCIAL CONTRACT

 by David W. Hall

Contrary to much secular thought, the historic emergence of a social contract that guarantees human liberty stems from the seedbed of Geneva's Reformation. To be sure, a different social contract, the humanist one, had its cradle in the secular thinking of the Enlightenment. The one I refer to as the social covenant (to distinguish) has resisted tyranny, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism with consistent and irrepressible force; the other has led to oppression, large-scale loss of life, and the general diminution of liberty, both economic and personal.

Following is a brief review of five leading tracts from the Reformation period that had wide and enduring political impact in support of liberty: *The Right of Magistrates* (1574) by Theodore Beza, *The Rights of the Crown of Scotland* (1579) by George Buchanan, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1579) by Phillippe du Plessis Mornay, *Politica* (1603) by Johannes Althusius, and *Lex Rex* (1644) by Samuel Rutherford.

A Signal and Unique Contribution

To view these comparatively reveals a common fabric of political ideas that have evolved from this unique basis of thought. Much antecedent Western political thought is hopelessly confused if this lacuna is not illuminated. Moreover, it is not too much to claim that Western society owes many of its best political advances to the theology emanating from Geneva.

The evolution of resistance against monopolism had its root uniquely in Reformation thought. There were, to be sure, seedling precursors to Reformation thought that cannot be developed in this essay. For example, Augustine and Aquinas, along with the best of Roman Catholic theology of the state, provided earlier and enduring support for this social covenant and resistance to tyranny. Antedating the Reformation teaching in *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, Aquinas argued that Christians are

“obliged to obey authority that comes from God but not that which is not from God.... Whoever seizes power by violence does not become a true ruler and lord, and therefore it is permissible when the possibility exists for someone to reject that rulership....”
Turning points prior to the Reformation, however, were few and far between. The quantum advances in the doctrine of resistance during the years 1550-1650 were so monumental as to deserve notice as a signal and unique contribution. This Reformation evolution of a social covenant was subsequently manifested writ large in the origin of our Republic—despite the massive secularist *mythos* to the contrary.
Though medieval sources contained precedents for resistance, the Genevan paradigm especially animated the pursuit of theological foundations for greater democratic expression. In *The Cultural Significance of the Reformation* (1911), Karl Holl described the Reformation as initially setting “a rigid limit to the absolute power of the state.” Further, he conceded “to the Reformation respect for being the first of all in modern times to have prepared the way for freedom of conscience in the state. All further victories with respect to tolerance rest on this first step....”
Everywhere Geneva’s Calvinism went, so did its views of putting government in its place by opposing tyranny. Calvinism “placed a solid barrier in the path of the spread of absolutism.” Even though Holl admits that some precursors of human rights were found in the Middle Ages, the normalization of universal human rights did not arrive except as a consequence of the Reformation impetus. Further, this advance was not merely the modification of a single point but “included in itself the transformation of the whole concept of the state.” Planting the seeds that would eventually bear fruit in the American Revolution, Protestants generally laid the foundation for the motto on Thomas Jefferson’s seal: “Resistance to Tyrants Is Obedience unto God.”
The Corporate Body of People Is Above the King
The second generation of reformers briskly articulated a theology of the state. Calvin’s disciple, Theodore Beza (1520-1603), made considerable comments on political matters, much of which reflects the shock of the 1572 Saint Bartholomew’s Day massacre of the Huguenots. Beza’s *The Right of Magistrates* (1574) justified armed resistance led by intermediating magistrates against a king. The limitation of the magistracy is seen in Beza’s assertion that the power of the lawful magistrate is neither infinite nor unconditional. If corruption is present, then resistance may be allowed. Beza’s rule was: “On every occasion when we cannot obey the command of men without offending the majesty and despising the authority of the King of kings and the Lord of lords,” then Christians must not submit.
Much of Beza’s thought on these matters was further developed in the 1579 *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, commonly attributed to Philippe du Plessis Mornay. Writing within the same decade as the Saint Bartholomew’s Day massacre, Brutus (the pseudonymous author of the *Vindiciae*) denounced the arrogance of a state that assumed unlimited power unto itself, and maintained that the corporate body of the people is above the king. The argument—radical for its day—put the government in its place as an agency accountable to the citizens. *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* raised and answered these strikingly anticipatory questions that are as germane as the latest Independent Counsel’s investigation:
• Are kings themselves above the law?
• May the prince make new laws, or are they made by the people?
• Does the ruler have power of life and death over his subjects?
• May the king ignore the law in granting pardon to those found guilty?
• Does the property of the people belong to the king?
• Is the king the lawful owner of the kingdom?
• May the king use the property of the people for his own ends?
Notwithstanding, this powerful tract did not so much explicate a raw populism (the absolutizing of populism came later with Hobbes and the children of the

Enlightenment) as it demonstrated “the impossibility of an absolute state.” Since God had made a covenant with the king, the king also was to make a covenant with the people. If he violated his covenant, then this king could rightly be seen as having forfeited the right to rule. Thus, resistance would be vindicated in a case of covenant abdication. Whereas Beza had defended the right of the intermediate magistrates to resist a ruler based on the fundamental rights of the people (“Everyone can resist those who in the violation of their official duties assume a tyrannical power over the subjects.”), and whereas the Scottish theologian George Buchanan advocated that citizens were “relieved of their obligation of obedience if the ruler damages” the ruler’s covenant, Brutus went so far as to advocate, in the words of Jurgen Moltmann, that “the traditional right of resistance of the estates against the crown is no longer defended, but rather a new federalistic-democratic idea of the state is propagated.”

One of the earliest systematic treatises of matters of state was George Buchanan’s *The Rights of the Crown of Scotland*. This 1579 work—perhaps the most influential political essay of the century—was an integrated Protestant argument for limited government. This early Protestant asserted that, “it was much safer to trust liberties to laws than to kings... confine them to narrow bounds, and thrust them, as it were, into cells of law... circumscribe [them] within a close prison.” Buchanan viewed the constitution as the means toward that end and thought it an egregious mistake to suppose that “nations created kings not for the maintenance of justice, but for the enjoyment of pleasure.” He maintained that, “the people from whom he [the king] derived his power should have the liberty of prescribing its bounds; and... he should exercise over the people only those rights which he has received from their hands.” Buchanan noted: “The law then is paramount to the king, and serves to direct and moderate his passions and actions.”

According to this emerging consensus, a king exercised power on behalf of the people, whereas a tyrant wielded authority on behalf of himself: “For to make everything bend to your own nod, and to center in your own person the whole force of the laws, has the same effect as if you should abrogate all the laws.”

No Power Is Absolute

Some scholars associate the pinnacle of Reformation political thought with the mature work of Johannes Althusius (1557-1638). Daniel Elazar asserts that the road to modern democracy was fueled “particularly among those exponents of Reformed Protestantism who developed a theology and politics that set the Western world back on the road to popular self-government, emphasizing liberty and equality.”

The reformers saw all institutions under the sovereign administration of Christ. Thus, the power of the state could never be ultimate nor complete; it was inherently limited. It, too, was always *sub Deo*. Althusius and others spoke of the power of the state as limited and qualified by some objective standards outside itself. The state, if it failed to heed these, forfeited its legitimacy. State legitimacy was always contingent upon conformity to an objective, supra-national, and unchanging standard. Far from being totalitarian, the power of a ruler is, at best, relative to other absolutes. “All power,” noted Althusius, “is limited by definite boundaries and laws. No power is absolute, infinite, unbridled, arbitrary, and lawless. Every power is bound to laws, right, and equity. Likewise, every civil power that is constituted by legitimate means can be terminated and abolished.” Althusius argued that the people could exist without a magistrate but not vice versa.

Law Is King

Shortly thereafter, the Scotsman Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) echoed similar sentiments. In *Lex Rex* (Law Is King), Rutherford maintained that the people create the king; notwithstanding, true sovereignty belongs primarily to God, not the people. Upon the election of rulers, the people do not so much surrender the liberties and rights as delegate the authority to govern to the governor. Rutherford also

recognized that people may resume their power at times, particularly if the king has become tyrannical. Rather than being above the law, the prince is under the law and subservient to the ends of the state; he is a servant, or executor (hence, executive power). Rutherford viewed civil governors not so much as dominating lords but as ministerial fiduciaries analogous to tutors, husbands, patrons, ministers, or fathers.

Rutherford maintained that the “law has a supremacy of constitution above the king,” for a king is one not by nature, but only by virtue of a constitution: “therefore, he must be king by a politic[al] constitution and law; and so the law, in that consideration, is above the king, because it is from a civil law that there is a king....” The king is under law, in regard of some coercive limitation; because there is no absolute power given him to do what he listeth, as man.”

Old World Theology, New World Politics

Puritan theologies like these loom large as the ideological predecessors of the New World that cultivated the strongest democracies to date. All sides, sympathetic to Puritans or not, admit that the Puritan faith was at the foundation of the New World colonies. Since this New World led to such paramount developments of government, the locus of the underlying root is not unimportant. Systemic features such as limited terms, balance of powers, citizen nullification, and interpositional magistracies were at the heart of New World government, all concepts that were popularized by the Reformation. One hundred years prior to the American Revolution, most of the major ideas were set, and they did not originate properly from Enlightenment social contract thought so much as from Buchanan/Rutherford’s social covenant, ensconced in its distinctly Biblical moorings.

For example, James Madison, who in his early days at Princeton was educated by John Witherspoon in the paradigm of John Knox, reflected this theology when he said, “But what is government but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary.” A Genevan theological belief, the doctrine of human depravity, animated his politics.

Abraham Kuyper summarized the political impact of God’s sovereignty as a political faith which may be summarily expressed in these three theses:

“1. God only—and never any creature—is possessed of sovereign rights, in the destiny of nations, because God alone created them, maintains them by his Almighty power, and rules them by his ordinances. 2. Sin has, in the realm of politics, broken down the direct government of God, and therefore the exercise of authority, for the purpose of government, has subsequently been invested in men, as a mechanical remedy. And 3. in whatever form this authority may reveal itself, man never possesses power over his fellow man in any other way than by the authority which descends upon him from the majesty of God. Calvinism protests against state-omnicompetence, against the horrible conception that no right exists above and beyond existing laws, and against the pride of absolutism, which does not recognize constitutional rights....”

Geneva’s Contribution

Geneva’s contributions to politics, constitutionalism, and the resistance to tyranny continues. In our own day the overthrow of totalitarianism has not been fueled by materialism or the love of liberty alone. Even a defense of property rights does not account for the instances of halting Leviathan in our century, nor does an abstract pursuit of liberty account for the principled resistance before the state-juggernauts of modernity. Only this distinctively biblical faith preserves the transcendental standard necessary to limit monopolism and tyrannical absolutism. The faith of the Reformation has a track record of

blessing societies.

David W. Hall is a senior fellow at The Kuyper Institute in Oak Ridge, Tennessee . His books include Savior or Servant: Putting Government in Its Place and The Arrogance of the Modern.

VINDICIAE CONTRA

TYRANNOS

Let us share a few excerpts from this work. “God rules by His own authority; kings only a delegated one.” Proverbs 8:15,16 “By Me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, all who judge rightly.” Job 12:17 “He makes counselors walk barefoot and makes fools of judges.” God’s jurisdiction is immeasurable, kings is measured. God created heaven and earth out of nothing, so by right He is truly the lord of heaven and earth. Psalm 24: “The earth is the LORD’s and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.” Isaiah 66:1 “Thus says the LORD, ‘Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool.’” Job 12:16-19 “With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are His. He leadeth counselors away spoiled, and maketh the judge fools. He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.” Daniel 2:21 “It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.” 2 Chronicles 9:8 “Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the LORD your God: because your God loved Israel establishing them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness.”

The people are the inheritance of God and “the king the administrator of His inheritance. When the covenant is ratified between God and the king, it is done on this condition, that the people should be and should remain forever the people of God...this demonstrates that God does not deprive Himself of His property and possession when He hands over the people to kings.”

“Kings should be obeyed for the sake of God, not in spite of Him; as servants of God, rather than His opponents; as guardians rather than usurpers, of His rights.” 1 Chronicles 29:11,12 “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.” 2 Chronicles 20:6 “O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You.” Daniel 2:37 [Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream] “You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory.” Daniel 2:47 “The king answered Daniel and said, ‘Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.’” Psalm 2:7-12 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’”

“So kings are the vassals of the king of kings, invested with the sword...in order that with that sword they should uphold divine law, protect the good and destroy the bad. The king receives the kingdom for God in order to judge His people and guard it against enemies.” Deuteronomy 17:18-20 “Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. If shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life,

that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his country men and that he may not turn aside from the commandments, to right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel." 2 Kings 11:17 "Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they would be the LORD's people, also between the king and the people." 2 Kings 23:3 "The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant." Deuteronomy 31:26,29 "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you. For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands." Joshua 1:7,8 "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." "The king is bound to protect this law. Both you and your king should serve and obey God. Otherwise you and your king will perish." Deuteronomy 28:15-68 "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...Curses shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock...The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me. The LORD will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land...The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies...and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth...the LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart; and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you. You shall betroth a wife, but another man will violate her; you shall build a house, but you will not live in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but you will not use its fruit. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat of it...your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you will have none to save you. Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes look on and yearn for them continually; but there will be nothing you can do. A people whom you do not know shall eat up the produce of your ground and all your labors, and you will never be anything but oppressed and crushed continually...The LORD will bring you and your king, whom you set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone. You shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people where the LORD drives you. You shall bring out much seed to the field but you will gather in little, for the locust will consume it...The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you will do down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he shall

be the head, and you will be the tail. So all the curses shall come on you and pursue you and over take you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. They shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever. Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you. The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand, a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young...It shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you...If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God...It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land...Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods...Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you will be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life..." (I fear that this is where we are today in America !) Read Nehemiah 9, The People Confess Their Sin.
 "The King also if he neglects God, if he goes over to His enemies, if he commits felonies against God, forfeits the kingdom." 1 Samuel 15:22,23 "Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.'" 1 Kings 14:7-10 "Say to Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "Because I exalted you from among the people and made you leader over my people...yet you have not...kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart to do only that which was right in My sight...therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person...'" "
 "We read in Scripture of similar fates of all the kings of Israel and Judah who accomplished similar things—that is to say, absolute destruction....The same can definitely be said of Christian kings. Herod condemned Christ...he perished wretchedly and lost his own kingdom. Julian deserted Christ for the pagans; but shortly afterwards he suffered. Although the kings of the earth conspire against Christ...in the end it is necessary for them to yield and fall at Christ's feet...to confess that the Lamb is King of kings and Lord of lords...Heathen kings...receive their power from Him alone...God rules the hearts of men and directs them where He wants...judgment is from the Lord. It is always He alone who raises up and establishes, strengthens and overthrows kings according to His own choice. For this reason Isaiah calls Cyrus the anointed of the Lord. Darius says that Nebuchadnezzar...received their power from God and Paul says all magistrates do so entirely....God formed the body and also infused the soul. Therefore He alone could use both of them with absolute right." Proverbs 16:33 "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." Daniel 2:21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings." Romans 13:1,3,4 "...there is not authority except

from God, and those who exist are established by God. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.”
“Pharaoh plunged headlong into ruin. Nebuchadnezzar wanted his statue to be worshipped and divine honors to be paid to him. God immediately checked the unbridled audacity of the wretched little man. He who wanted to appear a god ceased to be a man, and strayed through wild, deserted places like an ass until he acknowledged the god of Israel to be supreme Lord of all. His son Belshazzar abused the sacred vessels of the temple...dedicated to divine worship...he did not render glory to God...his kingdom was destroyed and he was slain the same night. Alexander the Great delighted in the words of flatterers who asserted that he was the son of Jupiter and was therefore to be adored. But a precipitate death cut off unfinished triumphs over an almost conquered world. Antiochus ordered every individual to reject God’s law and to follow his... but after suffering many calamities, slaughters, and devastations ... was overthrown...Then if we recall the manner of the death of Nero, who wickedly slaughtered the Christians...or that of Caligula who instituted sacrifices to himself, that of Domitian, who wanted to be called lord and god, that of Commodus and those of all the others, who desired either to claim for themselves the honor due to God alone...we find that theirs were always horrible deaths. Henry II died of a wound sustained in a tournament in the month following the martyrdom of Anne du Bourg, a Huguenot who had defied the king to his face. Consider also the deaths of Francois II and Charles IX.” (Think also of James I, Charles I, Charles II, Napoleon Bonaparte, Hitler, Stalin and others who defied God.)
“For if God is in the position of superior lord, and the king in that of a vassal, who would not decree that the lord should be obeyed rather than the vassal? If God commands this, and the king the opposite, who would judge that man a rebel who denied obedience to the king against God? Who would not rather condemn a man for rebellion if he were more reluctant to obey God...So not only are we not obliged to obey a king commanding something contrary to God’s law, but also if we should obey, we would be rebels.”
“If it be a crime to injure a neighbor, and it is deemed a grievous sin to attack a prince, what name shall we attribute to so great and atrocious a crime as assaulting the majesty of the supreme Lord of all? It is far more serious to injure the Creator than the creature...a much greater and more terrible punishment awaits those who violate the first table of the law rather than the second.”
“Jezebel, King Ahab ordered that the prophets of God should be killed...nevertheless, Obadiah, the master of the household, concealed and fed them. The justification is ready to hand: from every obligation, however strict, God is always exempt. This same Ahab commanded everyone to sacrifice to Baal: with undiminished zeal Elijah criticized the king and people and demanded that the priests of Baal be condemned to death for impiety. Then he tried to restore the worship of the true God, despite the resistance of the uxorious king...But if Ahab objected—as present-day princes are accustomed to do—that he was disturbing Israel, that he was a rebel and rabble rouser, which is usually said to be the crime of those who commit not crime, he answered, ‘You are the one who is disturbing Israel with your rebellion...’ In the same way Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not want to obey King Nebuchadnezzar, this was Daniel’s attitude to Darius, and Eleazar’s to Antiochus...When...the apostles were ordered to

give up the preaching of the Gospel, to obey you rather than God.” Acts 4:19,20 “But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”
Romans 13:1 “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” “It might be sufficiently concluded from these words that God is to be obeyed rather than the king.”