

## CHAPTER H12

## THE POWER OF PREACHING

Having examined the philosophical, educational, and legal climate that contributed to the Enlightened ideology of Christians in the American British colonies, let's now turn our attention to what was going on in the churches those Christians attended.

Early in the 1700s a religious revival known as the Great Awakening took place in the colonies. It was nothing sudden or dramatic, it was more of a gradual increase in church attendance than anything else. The reason for the increased interest in "Christianity" was the ideological war of words going on in politics, on street corners, and in pulpits. As we have already seen, the Protestant Reformation was driven primarily by nationalism fostered by geographic differences – not by Biblical doctrine. Protestant rebellion had been in the air and the prospect of giving the Italian pope a black eye was appealing. Because the Protestant Rebellion was justified by philosophy rather than Bible doctrine, the early Protestant preachers delivered many sermons that "justified" rebellion against forward rulers. Instead of quietly deciding to *Take a hike!* like Joseph and Mary and the Pilgrims, Protestant Christians chose rebellion, which, if they were interested in justifying their actions with Scripture, was the single worst course of action they could have taken. Rebellion is antichrist. Rebellion is Satanic. Rebellion is witchcraft. Oh, rebellion is in the Bible – but it's always bad. Therefore the Bible had nothing to do with the Protestant Reformation, the English Civil War, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, or the American Civil War. In each of those conflicts you may pick and choose whatever side you like and/or agree with all you want, but from a Biblical and Christian perspective the side that rebelled against authority was the most wrong it is possible to be: No matter what God does and no matter what you and Lucifer think or want, it is always wrong to rebel against Him in any way. And that basic, fundamental principle of authority is supposed to govern the way all Christians think and act – according to the Bible – because *all* authority is of God.

Because the Bible condemned their actions it was Natural for Protestants to embrace the Enlightenment so they could justify themselves before men. After all, hadn't Reason been an official part of Christianity since Aquinas?

The preachers in the British colonies in America were merely doing what is routinely done today in pulpits across the country; they combined Enlightened politics with a Bible sermon in order to dress their political agenda, which in this case was rebellion of all things, in Christian garb. It worked: Christian attendance was down when just the Bible was the topic, but when the topic was world events Christians flocked to church (**1 Jn 4:5**).

The Rev. Charles G. Finney – just like his Protestant forefather, Martin Luther – believed and preached that political involvement was part of serving God: "Politics are a *part of* religion, and Christians must do their duty to their country as a *part of* their duty to God." For another example of preaching that came from Greek philosophy rather than the word of God, read the following points made by a New England minister in 1717: "...origin of civil power is *the people* in a Natural state...the purpose of government is *the will of the people*...the sovereign is not to deprive them of their Rights and Liberties, and the prince who strives to do so is the traitor and the rebel and not the people who are merely defending what is theirs...the objective of all government is to cultivate Humanity, promote Happiness, preserve Rights, life, estate, and honor."

For a full Bible-based sermon, which outlined the doctrinal position of the Protestant churches using chapter and verse, we review the following famous and popular sermon preached by Rev. Jonathan Mayhew in 1750. Mayhew was a graduate of Harvard College (which, as we have seen took stern measures against any students who showed signs of "enthusiastic Christianity") and was the pastor of Boston's West Church. Mayhew is the one who invented the popular slogan used to clamor against the government and to incite an armed rebellion, *No taxation without representation!* Our f-ing father, President John Adams, called Mayhew a "transcendent genius." After Rev. Mayhew had everybody stand for the reading of **Ro 13:1-7**, he began his sermon. Let's open our Bibles and pull up a pew: (The notes I made sometimes do not contain paragraph breaks. Either they didn't appear in whatever source I used, or I neglected to include them. If that is an inconvenience, I am sorry.)

I have examined the Scripture in order to lay it before you, not doubting but you will judge upon everything with the same Spirit of Freedom and Liberty with which it is spoken... It is God's will that rulers are vested with authority for the well-being of society, and the sole end of government is the Happiness of society. Disobedience to rulers is not merely a political sin but a heinous offense against God and religion. The true ground and reason for our subjection to the higher powers is that it assists magistracy in its function of being subservient to the general welfare. Obedience is required only to those rulers who comply with the sole end of all government – the good of society. There is one very important point which remains, namely the extent of that subjection to the higher powers, which is here enjoined as a duty upon all Christians. Some have thought it warrantable and glorious to disobey the civil powers in certain circumstances and, in cases of very great oppression, to rise unanimously against even the sovereign himself in order to redress grievances; to vindicate their Natural and legal rights; to break the yoke of tyranny and free themselves from servitude and ruin... Although this Scripture is delivered in absolute terms without any exception or limitation, it is Reasonable to *suppose* that the apostle directed these verses *only* against those vain persons who imagined that they as Christians owed *no* allegiance *at all* to civil governments, but only to church governments. And, agreeably to this supposition, we find that he argues the usefulness of civil magistracy *in general*, and so deduces the *general* obligation of submission to it. Therefore, the duty of specific and unlimited obedience *cannot* be argued from the general scope of the passage. And the apostle here we find to be *not* in favor of submission to *all* rulers, but only to those who actually rule properly by exercising a Reasonable and Just authority for the good of human society. This is a point which it will be proper to enlarge upon because the question before us turns very much upon the truth or falsehood of this position. It is obvious that the rulers whom the apostle here speaks of, and obedience to whom he presses upon Christians as a duty, are *only* the good rulers, such as are benefactors to society. But how does this argument conclude for paying taxes to such princes as are continually endeavoring to ruin the public, when such are not God's ministers but Satan's? They have no Natural and Just claim to obedience. It is hoped that those who have any regard to the apostle's character and Common Sense, will not represent him as Reasoning in such a loose, incoherent manner and drawing conclusions which destroy the public welfare and are a common pest to society. Thus, upon a careful review of the apostle's Reasoning, his arguments

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enforce submission *only* to rulers which rule for the good of society. Common tyrants and public oppressors are not entitled to obedience. If, for example, our king turns tyrant, we are bound to throw off our allegiance to him and resist according to the tenor of the apostle's arguments in this passage. Not to resist would be to join with the sovereign in promoting the slavery and misery of society. It is true the apostle puts no case of such a tyrannical prince, but it is *plain* he implicitly authorizes and even *requires us to make resistance* whenever this shall be necessary to the public Safety and Happiness. The divine right of kings and the so-called Biblical doctrine of nonresistance are altogether as ridiculous as transubstantiation. A people really oppressed by their sovereign have, like the Hesperian fruit, a dragon for their keeper, and would have no reason to mourn if some Hercules should appear and violently dispatch him. [Mayhew is here using a story in Greek mythology to make a point: The Hesperides (daughters of a Greek god) represent us Christians who are entrusted with preserving the magic fruit, which represents the sacred principles of Greek philosophy like Reason and Happiness. If the evil dragon guarding the fruit (King George taxing the colonists) were violently slain by some Hero, Happiness would return.] For a nation thus abused to resist the prince, even to the dethroning him, is not criminal but a Reasonable way of vindicating their Natural Liberties and Rights: it is making use of the means God has provided for self defense, and it would be highly criminal *not* to make use of this means. And in such a case it would be more Rational to suppose that they who did not resist would receive to themselves damnation. To conclude, let us all learn to be Free. Let us not profess ourselves vassals to the lawless pleasure of any man on earth. But let us remember at the same time that Fair government is sacred and not to be trifled with. Let us prize our Freedom but not use our Liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. Extremes are dangerous. And while I am speaking of loyalty to our earthly prince, suffer me just to put you in mind to be loyal also to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe by whom kings reign and princes decree justice [**Pv 8:15**]. To which King, even to the only wise God be all honor, praise, and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

In order to see if this Harvard-educated Protestant preacher really was the “transcendent genius” when it comes to the Bible that President Adams said he was, let's examine a single sentence from his sermon that sums up his position: “And the apostle here we find to be *not* in favor of submission to *all* rulers, but only to those who actually rule properly by exercising a Reasonable and Just authority for the good of human society.” The Pharisees were rulers of human society (**Jn 3:1**). Christ knew they were evil vipers (**Mt 12:34**) who transgressed the Bible, worshipped God in vain, and were blind rulers leading human society into the ditch (**Mt 15:3,9,14**) with false doctrine (**Mt 16:6,12**). These evil rulers ruined the earthly lives of people, took people to hell with them, and were full of extortion, excess, uncleanness, hypocrisy, and iniquity (**Mt 23:14,15,25-28**). They murdered their own people, were of the devil, and were liars (**Jn 8:40,44,55**). Knowing how bad these rulers were, the Lord commanded the Christian multitude (**Mt 23:1**) to submissively and obediently **do all and whatsoever the evil rulers said** (**Mt 23:3**). The second word in v.3 will tell you why it was right for Christians to submit to evil rulers; the word *therefore* refers to v.2, which says the evil rulers were to be obeyed because they were in positions of authority. All authority is of God and is to be obeyed. And then Christ went on to teach people to *obey* those evil rulers but not to be *like* them. Obviously, Rev. Mayhew and his theology teachers missed/ignored verses like these that destroy the arguments for and the revolutionary tenants of democracy. And so have all the preachers and pewsters since. That is why Mayhew's false doctrine of just-cause clamoring and rebellion (which springs from *covetousness*) has survived, thrived, and become gospel to all modern churches – including the one you attend. In order to not be like evil preachers we must “search the Scriptures daily, whether their teachings be so” (**Ac 17:11**), because not only does God punish false prophets (**Je 14:14,15**), He also punishes those who hear them (**Je 14:16**).

Rev. Mayhew's treatment of Romans 13 was no different from that in many other sermons around the thirteen small colonies that were preached in support of the hot issue of rebellion. In fact, the f-ing fathers owned reprinted copies of *A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants* by Junius Brutus, which also twisted Romans 13 in order to bring it into agreement with the overriding Natural Law. I don't know who this “Junius Brutus” was. The real Junius Brutus was the Roman who despised Julius Caesar's monarchy and became a leader of those who assassinated Caesar (“Et tu, Brute?”) in order to install a republican government. Because it was usual during the buildup to rebellion to use an assumed name when publishing treasonous material, it is probably correct to assume the Christian author of *Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants* chose this clever pen name.

In order to be “fair”, we'll also examine the arguments of those unenlightened Christians who espoused “enthusiastic religion” and rejected the new Rational approach to the Bible. One such preacher who refuted the revolutionary spirit of the Great Awakening “revival” was Rev. Jonathan Boucher. On this hot topic he declared “to suffer grievances nobly is proper, while to disobey the established government is simply to resist the ordinances of God.” His preaching was offensive to the f-ing fathers, who had nothing charitable to say about him. Boucher responded to the threats of physical violence against him by preaching his sermons armed with a brace of loaded pistols. But he was finally driven from the colonies in September 1775 by elements allied with the Sons of Liberty. In other words, the “freedom of religion” so cherished by the majority of colonists only applied to *Enlightened* religion – and Christians like Rev. Boucher who dared to preach the unpopular truth of the Bible and to call upon God's people to repent were openly despised, reviled, rejected, and not welcome in America.

Rev. Boucher's sermons used the same Scripture commonly used to justify Enlightened principles, but he tried to show that the verses did *not* do so. In addition to Ro 13:1-7, he used **Ga 5:1** because Republican Christians *loved* the fact that it says, “Stand fast, therefore, in the **liberty** wherewith Christ has set us **free**.” There's a preacher striding up to the podium now with a King James Bible and two guns. That must be Boucher – let's listen:

The liberty here spoken of denoted an exemption from the burdensome services of the ceremonial law, manumission from the bondage of the weak and beggarly elements of the world, and an admission into the covenant of grace. It means freedom not from *servitude*, but from the *servitude of sin*. The only true liberty is the liberty of servitude to God; for His service is perfect freedom. Ga 5:1 cannot, without infinite perversion and torture, be made to refer to any other kind of liberty, much less to that liberty of which every man now talks – though few really understand it. The word *liberty*, as meaning *civil liberty*, does not occur in all the Scriptures. The liberty in the Scriptures is wholly of the spiritual or religious kind. This liberty is the result of the new religion of the New Testament, which certainly gave them no new civil privileges. They remained subject to the governments under which they lived just as they had before they became Christians, and just as others who never became Christians, with this difference only: The duty of submission

and obedience to government was enjoined on the converts to Christ with new and stronger sanctions. The doctrines of the Gospel make no alteration in the nature or form of civil government, but rather enforce afresh upon all Christians that obedience is due to the respective governments of every nation in which they may happen to live. Obedience to government is every man's duty, but it is particularly incumbent on Christians because it is enjoined by the positive [written] command of God; and, therefore, when Christians are disobedient to *human* authority they are also disobedient to *God*. Liberty is not in making our own wills the rule of our actions; it is in *being governed*. It is often laid down as a settled maxim that the end of government is "the common good of mankind." I am not sure that the position itself is indisputable, but if it were it would by no means follow that government must therefore be instituted by common consent. There is an *appearance* of Logical accuracy and precision in this statement, but it is only an appearance. The position is vague and loose and is made without an attempt to prove it. This popular notion that government was originally formed by the consent or by a compact of the people rests on, and is supported by, the notion of Equality. The position is false. Kings and princes, far from deriving their authority from any supposed consent of men, receive their commission from God, the source and origin of *all* power. No matter how obsolete either the sentiment or the language may now be deemed, it is with the most perfect propriety that the supreme civil magistrate, whether called an emperor, a king, an archon, a dictator, a consul, or a senate, is to be regarded, venerated, and obeyed as the vice regent of God. As Christians we owe civil obedience to our civil rulers even though they should happen to be oppressors, just as we owe religious obedience to the King of kings whether or not we always agree with Him. This inquiry concerning the divine origin and authority of government might have been deemed rather curious were it not for some popular dangerous inferences to the contrary. One of these dangerous inferences comes from the assumption that government is a mere human institution, the inference being that "rulers are the servants of the people", which validates resistance and rebellion. It really is a striking feature in our national history [Great Britain] that, ever since the Revolution [the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in Britain], hardly any person has preached or published a sermon without taking a stand *against* the previously common doctrine of passive obedience and nonresistance. And even though the new "right of resistance" has incessantly been delivered from the pulpit, insisted on by orators, and inculcated by statesmen, the contrary position is still the dictate of religion and is certainly still the doctrine of the established church. All government is absolute and irresistible. The injunction to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's is very comprehensive, implying that unless we are good *subjects* we cannot be good *Christians*. However, our paramount duty is to God, to whom we are to render the things that are God's. If, therefore, a case should occur in which the performance of both these obligations becomes incompatible, it is our duty to obey God rather than men. Our obedience to civil government in that case is to be passive rather than active. Active obedience is required when duty may be performed without offending God; passive obedience is required when that which is commanded by man is forbidden by God. In passive obedience the Christian disobeys civil authority only by not doing, while obeying God by not rebelling against civil authority and by passively submitting to any penalties incurred by his disobedience to man as Christ [and Daniel and Joseph in Egypt] did when accused and tried unjustly. It will afford you no pleasure to be reminded that it is on account of an insignificant duty on tea, imposed by the Parliament, and which may or may not be constitutionally imposed that people resist and rebel! Let it be supposed, however, that the three pennies a pound upon tea laid on by Parliament is a grievance. What, in such a case, would I advise you to do? Advice, alas, is all I have to give. My brethren, what better can you do than, following the apostle's commands, to submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness but as the servants of God. Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the King.

Amen, brother! That's good preaching! Although doctrinally Boucher's sermon was as straight as his gun barrels, it lacked the ear-tickling appeal of this popular 1774 newspaper article entitled, *On the Depravity of Kings and the True Sovereignty of the People*. At the end of the article notice the open hostility towards conservative Christians who rejected the unscriptural ideology of the Age of Reason:

Has the Impartial God of the Universe given power, wisdom, justice, and mercy to kings only, and denied the least portion of them to every other class of mankind? [How any Christian can write that sentence without thinking of **Nu 16:3** is beyond me. We covered this exact situation/Scripture on page H2-5.] Let history decide that question: The history of kings is nothing but the history of the folly and depravity of human nature... The American Continental Congress, however, derives all its power, wisdom, and justice not from kings but from you the people. A more august and equitable legislative body than you never existed. Congress is founded upon the Principles of the most perfect Liberty. A man by honoring and obeying the Congress, honors and obeys himself. The man who refuses to honor Congress is a Slave who rejects the Dignity of Human Nature by refusing to govern himself. *Sell him and send him to plant sugar with his fellow slaves in Jamaica, and let not the pure air of democracy be contaminated with his breath!*

And now we'll examine a report made by British statesman Edmund Burke (Burke was an influential member of Dr. Samuel Johnson's inner circle. Johnson published his famous *Dictionary* in 1755, and was the dominating literary figure of his time.) to the House of Commons in 1775 about the ideological outlook of the colonists. His report is a favorable one: He is saying the colonists, like the people of England, are motivated by a love for Natural Liberty. But three things in his report are of interest to us. One is his analysis of Protestantism – that its true birthplace and foundation is *philosophy*, which makes it *unalterably opposed to monarchy* (also called absolutism and arbitrary government). The second is the zeal among colonists to learn the philosophical tenets of Nature's Law contained in Blackstone's *Commentaries*. And the third is the fact that morality and religion are believed to be the same. Let's don our powdered wigs and listen to this Parliamentary report:

...Religion...their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this Spirit of Freedom. The people are Protestants, which is the *most adverse to all implicit submission* of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion [religion] not only favorable to Liberty, but *built upon it*. I do not think, Sir, that the reason for this *averseness* in the Protestant churches *to all that looks like absolute government* is so much to be found in their religious tenets, as in history... The Protestant interests have sprung up in *direct opposition to all the ordinary powers* [of civil and religious government] of the world and *can justify that opposition only on a strong claim to Natural Liberty*. Their *very existence depended*

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on the powerful and unremitted assertion of *that claim*. All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. The religion most prevalent in our colonies is but a refinement on the principles of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations, agree in nothing but in the communion of the Spirit of Liberty.

Permit me, Sir, to add another circumstance in our colonies which contributes no mean part towards the growth of this spirit. In no country perhaps in the world is the Law so general a study. All who read – and most do read – endeavor to obtain some smattering in that science. I have been told by an eminent bookseller, that in no branch of his business, after tracts of popular devotion, were so many books as those on the Law exported to the colonies. The colonists have now fallen into the way of printing them for their own use. I hear that they have sold nearly as many of Blackstone's *Commentaries* in America as in England. General Gage [Commander of British forces in North America and Governor of Massachusetts] marks out this distinction very particularly in a letter on your table... In order to prove that the Americans have no right to their Liberties, we are every day endeavoring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own Liberties. To prove that the Americans ought not to be Free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of Freedom itself for which our ancestors shed their blood. We cannot falsify the pedigree of the colonists and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of Freedom circulates... There is not one of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. Man acts from motives relative to his interest, and not on religious speculations. Aristotle, the Great Master of Reasoning, cautions us with great weight and propriety against delusive moral arguments as the most fallacious of all sophistry.

By now you should have a pretty good idea why so many sermons dealt with tenets of Greek philosophy and used so many allusions to Greek and Roman mythology. And you should understand that the foundation of Protestantism is the wicked belief that protesting, resisting, clamoring, and rebelling against evil authorities such as the Pharisees, Pharaoh, Herod, and Nebuchadnezzar is pleasing to God. In other words, the main tenant of Protestantism – indeed, the very tenant that gave Protestantism its name – came from Roman Catholicism's acceptance of pagan philosophy. Philosophy did not become the cornerstone of Western civilization's legal systems and governments by accident; it appeared first in the church. Christians first heard (and still hear today) Enlightened principles from the pulpit and took them to work with them. The role of Enlightened preachers cannot be overstated in the development of Western civilization in general and the American Revolution in particular. The Western fires of modern Freedom were kindled by Ambrose and Augustine, kept alive by Abelard and Albertus Magnus, spread across Europe by Aquinas, incorporated into Protestant political activism by Luther and Calvin, and used by American Great Awakening pastors to start a Revolution that would produce the greatest, most influential and far-reaching secular democracy in the history of the world.