***James Otis, “*The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved”, 1764**

Let no Man think I am about to commence advocate for *despotism,* because I affirm that government is founded on the necessity of our natures; and that an original supreme Sovereign, absolute, and uncontroulable, *earthly* power *must* exist in and preside over every society; from whose final decisions there can be no appeal but directly to Heaven. It is therefore *originally* and *ultimately* in the people. I say supreme absolute power is *originally* and *ultimately* in the people…Tyranny of all kinds is to be abhor’d, whether it be in the hands of one, or of the few, or of the many.–And tho’ “in the last age a generation of men sprung up that would flatter Princes with an opinion that *they* have a *divine right* to absolute power”; yet “slavery is so vile and miserable an estate of man, and so directly opposite to the generous temper and courage of our nation, that ’tis hard to be conceived that an *englishman,* much less a *gentleman,* should plead for it.”

…It is evidently contrary to the first principles of reason that supreme *unlimited* power should be in the hands of *one* man. It is the greatest “*idolatry,* begotten by *flattery,* on the body of *pride*“, that could induce one to think that a *single mortal* should be able to hold so great a power, if ever so well inclined. Hence the origin of *deifying* princes: It was from the trick of gulling the vulgar into a belief that their tryants were *omniscient,* and that it was therefore right, that they should be considered as *omnipotent*…

The *end* of government being the *good* of mankind, points out its great duties: It is above all things to provide for the security, the quiet, and happy enjoyment of life, liberty, and property. There is no one act which a government can have a *right* to make, that does not tend to the advancement of the security, tranquility and prosperity of the people. If life, liberty and property could be enjoyed in as great perfection in *solitude,* as in *society,* there would be no need of government. But the experience of ages has proved that such is the nature of man, a weak, imperfect being; that the valuable ends of live cannot be obtained without the union and assistance of many. Hence ’tis clear that men cannot live apart or independent of each other: In solitude men would perish; and yet they cannot live together without contests. These contests require some arbitrator to determine them. The necessity of a common, indifferent and impartial judge, makes all men seek one; tho’ few find him in the *sovereign power,* of their respective states or any where else in*subordination* to it.

Government is founded *immediately* on the necessities of human nature, and *ultimately* on the will of God, the author of nature; who has not left it to men in general to choose, whether they will be members of society or not, but at the hazard of their senses if not of their lives. Yet it is left to every man as he comes of age to chuse *what society* he will continue to belong to…

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