

AN ATTEMPT TO ASSESS THE PART  
PLAYED BY PURITAN UNREST  
IN THE CAUSES OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR.

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by

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The problem is: What were the causes of the Civil War? There are three interpretations: (1) The Religious, which has given it the name 'Puritan Revolution; (2) The Political, which has two opposing theories - the 'Whig' against the 'Tory'; (3) The Class or Economic - this includes the 'Marxist' theory. Many modern historians regard the Civil War as having its origin in a combination of these three - the religious, political and economic. The intention of this thesis is to re-assert the religious interpretation, without rejecting the other two.

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Definition of the term 'Puritan'. There are three stages in its development: (1) It was a nickname loosely applied to all who opposed Elizabeth's Religious Settlement; (2) At the turn of the century it applied to a definite party, who sought to reform both the externals and the government of the Church; (3) Under James I and Charles I it was used to describe the religious and the constitutional opposition to the Crown, both within and without Parliament.

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Elizabeth asserts the Protestantism of the Church of England, and herself as Governor of things 'spiritual' and things 'temporal'. She desires one thing - conformity to, and uniformity within, her Religious Settlement.

This roused the opposition of the Puritans, who wanted a reform of the externals of the Church.

1563 is a very important date - after their defeat in Convocation, the Puritans turned to Parliament for support (i.e. - they no longer worked within the Church), and opposed not only the externals, but also the government of the Church.

The representative leader of this second stage of Puritanism is Thomas Cartwright. He is responsible for 'an Admonition to Parliament' - this marks the adoption of the presbyterian platform by the Puritans. Puritanism is now growing. Local classes and prophesyings are established. Elizabeth and her bishops impose stricter conformity.

Throughout her reign Elizabeth shows that she is in full control of the situation.

Puritanism is more than a scheme of Church government, it is a way of life. And so despite the rejection

of its demand for reform, it continued, strengthening its hold on the nation.

b) Under James I. ..... 24

New hope of the Puritan reformers at the accession of a Scot to the throne. They present to James their 'Millenary Petition'. James calls the Hampton Court Conference, to allow the Puritans to air their grievances. Dr. Reynolds and his deputation are too radical. James demands that they conform, or he would "harry them out of the land". Puritanism is still flourishing - the preachers are mainly responsible for this. James is not altogether out of sympathy with them.

James' first Parliament support the Puritans - but for political advantage. This alliance is ominous for the crown. Puritan hopes for reform diminish. James' policies are unpopular with his people.

Puritans, however, increasingly active - 'lectureships' springing up - tracts and pamphlets multiplying. Already the Clergy of the Church aligning themselves with the Crown, against the Puritans and the Commons.

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Main business of the first Parliament was her Religious Settlement and her attempt at comprehension. Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy are passed. Before ordination all clergy obliged to take an oath acknowledging the supremacy of the Crown. In 1563 Puritans begin to work through Parliament. Parliament of 1566 is their first attempt at reform by this means. In 1572 they made another attempt, issuing 'An Admonition to Parliament'. The years 1569-72 are important for Elizabeth because of the 'Catholic Threat.' There is a double feeling within Parliament - fear for the future of the country, and a passionate devotion for the crown.

Attempts of Peter Wentworth to gain freedom of speech for Parliament. He is Reprimanded by the Crown and by the members of both Houses.

By the turn of the century Parliament is growing in stature, conscious of the power it could wield. But Elizabeth proves that she can rule Parliament.

b) James I. ..... 43

James is challenged by his very first Parliament. His political thought is coloured by the doctrine of the Divine

Right of Kings. The clergy are his main supporters. The Puritans present their 'Millenary Petition' to him. He calls the Hampton Court Conference. Although the 'Petition' is very moderate, their demands are too extreme at the Conference, and James enforces strict conformity. The other disturbing question before James' first Parliament met, was his proclamation regarding who could and who could not stand for election to Parliament. Sir Francis Goodwin is test case. 'The Form of Apology and Satisfaction' is presented by the Commons - it asserts the House's constitutional rights, and its support of the Puritans. James refutes these claims. Religious questions continue to be raised in his Parliaments. James' Roman Catholic policies rouse the opposition of his people and his Parliament. During his reign the ecclesiastical courts also attempt to maintain their judicial independence of the secular law courts. They fail. The question of finance is the other main source of controversy between James and his Parliaments. His financial position is precarious. The system of 'impositions' is introduced - it stirs up opposition. The Commons presents its famous 'Protestation' in 1621. The stage is now set for the great ecclesiastical and constitutional clash between Charles and his Parliament.

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The attack on Calvinism and Puritanism is redoubled. The Arminian party is growing within the Church. Parliament attacks them for their 'Catholic' tendencies. The party finds its only ally in the Crown - the split between these two ~~parties~~, and the Puritans and the Commons, widens. The case of Dr. Montagu. The Doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings' is a source of great disagreement between Charles and his Parliament. The clergy preach this doctrine from their pulpits. The foes of episcopacy tend to become the enemies of monarchy, and vice versa. The death of Buckingham and the Crown's agreement of the 'Petition of Right' in 1628, in no way lessens the tension between Charles and the Commons. The questions of religion and of 'tonnage and poundage' were still not solved. The Parliamentary leaders ally themselves with the Puritan reformers - for tactical purposes. The Puritans now definitely have a representation within the Commons. Parliament's support of them is seen in 1629. 1629 marks the dissolution of Parliament by Charles, and the beginning of his eleven years of personal rule. The two main figures are Strafford and Laud, and their policy of 'Thorough'. Laud and his ecclesiastical policy. .... 66  
 The Arminian party is growing. Laud is an Arminian, and on becoming Archbishop of Can-

terbury, adopts an anti-Puritan policy. He cares greatly for ceremonies and therefore works for the uniformity of ceremony and worship throughout England. Laud makes full use of the disciplinary machinery at his disposal - the system of 'Metropolitcal Visitation', and the Court of High Commission. He strictly controls the press and the pulpit. 'Conventicles' are suppressed. All clergy are required to take the 'Et Cetera' oath. The conflict between Laud and the Puritan leaders is intensified. Pamphlets and publications increase. The most famous pamphleteer is William Fyenne - his prosecution wins sympathy and support for the Puritan cause.

Charles and his constitutional conflicts. .... 73

The financial question is the most important. Charles introduces 'forced loans' and 'ship-money'. Opposition is intensified, and leads to the case of James Hampden.

In 1640 Charles summons the 'Short' Parliament. He needs supplies and an army to meet the Scottish threat. Pym and the Commons demand the redress of grievances, before supply is granted. Charles dissolves Parliament.

Charles is forced to summon the 'Long' Parliament. Religious grievances have now come to the fore. But the attitude of the Commons is 'unclerical'. The Commons is no longer prepared to compromise. The arbitrary government of the Crown is first attacked. Strafford and Laud are convicted. Eight acts are passed preventing the re-establishing of arbitrary government.

With the constitutional reform accomplished, the Commons turns to the religious grievances. They are unanimous that the present Settlement must be destroyed, but are divided on what is to replace it. There is a split within the Commons - into the extremist 'root-and-branch' Puritans, and the moderate 'Episcopalean' Puritans. The former gain the ascendancy. This can be seen in the voting on the 'Grand Remonstrance'. War is now inevitable.

The Parliamentary forces triumph and the Church of England becomes Presbyterian - the Puritans have triumphed.

CHAPTER V: IN CONCLUSION. .... 83

Religion played an important part in 17th century England. The Church was a political as well as a religious organization.

Three interpretations have been presented as to the causes of the Civil War. We have asserted the religious interpretation - without rejecting the other two.

What, then, is our conclusion? Religious and Political discontent joined hands.

Elizabeth created a religious opposition, but controlled it effectively. James and Charles created a political opposition.

They were unable to assert the authority of the Crown, and thus the political and religious opposition joined hands. There were a number of reasons why the Puritans aligned themselves with the Commons. There were not only religious causes of the Civil War, but religious effects as well. Puritanism was not only a scheme of Church government, it was a way of life. As such it won great support, eventually inspiring one army against the other in the Civil War.

## CHAPTER I:

### THE PROBLEM.

The problem which confronts us at the outset, is the problem which has been facing historians for the past three hundred years: What were the causes of the English Civil War? What matters were responsible for the decisive split between Crown & Parliament into two distinct parties, and which ultimately led to civil war?

Many theories and interpretations have been given. In this chapter, we will find that there are three major interpretations. The first is that it was a religious struggle - and so the Civil War became known as the 'Puritan Revolution'. The second is that it was a purely political conflict between the Crown and its Ministers, on the one hand, and the House of Commons, which had by then become the 'mirror' of the Puritan element in the country, on the other. And the third is that it was a class, or economic, war.

Contemporary historians tended to regard it as a twofold struggle - a conflict over religion on the one hand, and the constitution on the other. It was they who coined the phrase 'Puritan Revolution'. This interpretation, however, has subsequently been challenged, in the light of the detailed research which has been conducted - especially in the field of economic history. And so the Civil War has been interpreted in terms of a social and economic conflict - it is said to be a class war. The social and economic factors have tended to become emphasized while the religious have been pushed into the background - often excluded altogether.

It is my intention in this thesis, therefore, to **assert once again the very** real part played by religious matters in the origins of the English Civil War.

Various interpretations have been given to the Civil War. At one time, as we have seen, it was popularly known as the 'Puritan Revolution'. That is, a religious interpretation was given to it. Lucy Hutchinson, an extreme

Puritan, in her biography of her husband (a prominent Parliamentarian who was imprisoned after the Restoration for his part in the 'trial' of Charles I) represents this point of view. Philip Taylor, who has gathered together in book form a number of essays on the origin of the Civil War, has entitled the extract taken from Mrs. Hutchinsons' biography: "Puritanism and Liberty versus Prelacy and Despotism". He writes: <sup>1</sup>

She sees priestcraft and tyranny inextricably mingled on the one side, true spiritual religion and the defence of legal rights on the other. To her, Puritans were people who wanted a truly religious Reformation; not the mere political change presided over by Henry VIII. To her, Charles I and his advisers seemed sympathetic towards Rome and watched with envy the growth of absolutism in Europe.

The origin of the Civil War for her, then, can be seen in this basic struggle between 'Puritanism and Liberty' on the one hand, and 'Prelacy and Despotism' on the other.

S.R. Gardiner, in his 18 volumes on the history of England between 1603-56, was the greatest propounder of this theory.<sup>2</sup> He interpreted the Civil War as being basically a struggle for religious and constitutional liberty.

William Shaw, who wrote at the beginning of this century, gives a very similar interpretation. The Civil War became a necessity, he argues, once the twofold progress of constitutionalism in civil life and of Puritanism in the religious life, could no longer be contained and controlled by the old civil and religious forms and institutions. He writes:<sup>3</sup>

In the domain of the civil as well as of

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- 1) The Origins of the English Civil War - Edited by A.M. Taylor, p. viii.
  - 2) C. Hill - Puritanism & Revolution - p.4.
  - 3) W.A. Shaw - A History of the English Church 1640-60, p. 1.

the religious agitation, there is noticeable an extraordinary accentuation of feeling as the breach between King and Parliament widened, and it was this accentuation of feeling that led to the revolution itself.

Shaw hesitates to refer to it as the 'Puritan Revolution', though.<sup>1</sup>

The general idea of Church reform that obtained in November 1640, had become insufficient and useless in June 1641, and the scheme of June 1641 was swept away by the events of 1642 and 1643. It is such a desertion of its original basis that makes one hesitate to speak of this as the Puritan Revolution, for the forms of Church discipline and government that were finally adopted were not contemplated by - did not grow out of - Puritanism proper.

It is important for us to remember, however, that a rejection of this term 'Puritan Revolution' does not necessarily imply a complete rejection of the religious interpretation of the Civil War; for, as we shall see, the religious and constitutional motives played an important part in the causes of the Civil War.

A second interpretation of the Civil War is that it was a political struggle - the outcome of a political conflict between the King and the House of Commons. This is the most usual explanation of this 17th century revolution. It was first put forward by the leaders of the Long Parliament of 1640 in their propaganda statements and appeals to the people.<sup>2</sup> They argued that the Parliamentary armies were fighting for the liberty of the individual and his rights in law, against a tyrannical monarch. This argument has been repeated, with additional details and adornment, by those historians who have been referred to as 'Whig' ever since.

Page 4/ .....

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1) Ibid., p. 2.

2) The English Revolution 1640 - Edited by C. Hill - p.10.

T.B. Macaulay is the most famous of these. He points out that James I and Charles I were far more extreme and outspoken in their claims than Elizabeth had been, but that there had been no national crisis or peril to check the opposition. The natural enemy of royal claims, he argues, was Puritanism both within and without Parliament. And so in 1640, when Charles was forced by financial difficulties to summon Parliament once more, its leaders at once devoted their energies to limit his power.<sup>1</sup>

"Increasingly distrustful of the king's intentions, Parliament refused him control of the armed forces needed to suppress rebellion in Ireland. Charles' retaliation in attempting to arrest five members of the Commons, made inevitable a war to limit the royal prerogative".

Another school of historians, which in opposition to the 'Whigs', has come to be known as 'Tory', holds that the royal policy was not tyrannical, but rather that Charles I, as he told that Court which sentenced him to death, spoke<sup>2</sup>

not for my own right alone, as I am your King, but for the true liberty of all my subjects.

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, the greatest contemporary historian who lived through the events about which he was writing, developed this in his several volumes of 'The History of the Great Rebellion'. This theory has come to be known as the 'Conspiracy theory'. Clarendon admits that Charles I was badly advised and made mistakes, but he is equally sure that the majority of the moderate members of Parliament were led astray by Pym, Holles, Vane, and - the most formidable in his opinion - Hampden. These men he flatly accuses of aiming at rebellion. Charles I and his

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1) A.M. Taylor, op. cit., p. vii.

2) Quoted in C. Hill, op. cit., p. 12.

advisers were really trying to protect the nation from economic exploitation by a small group of men seeking power and wealth. The opposition which faced Charles in the end had been organized and inspired by these men who identified their interests with the House of Commons in politics and with Puritanism in religion.

It is interesting to note here that G.E. Aylmer, in discussing these two major interpretations - the religious and the political conflicts - as causes of the Civil War - says:<sup>1</sup>

these constitutional and ecclesiastical beliefs were probably only held strongly enough to have caused a resort to armed force by relatively small numbers on each side.... These differences could scarcely have produced a civil war dividing the country against itself. More important perhaps are the role of personality and the unfolding logic of the crisis: Charles' temperament and outlook, the fears and chronic mistrust which he generated in others, and on the opposite side the apparently aggressive intentions of Pym and his party. The war would hardly have come about when it did but for a whole sequence of events partly unrelated in themselves....

The third major interpretation of the Civil War is that it was a class war. The central controversy here concerns the part played by that class which is rather vaguely called the 'Gentry'. In 1941, the distinguished economic historian, R.H. Tawney, in an article entitled 'The Rise of the Gentry', explained the Civil War in these terms:<sup>2</sup>

in a period of rising prices, and of great transfers of land because of the economic squeeze on the old aristocracy, a decisive economic advantage was gained by the gentry.... who acquired land on favourable terms, while both the small men who lacked resources

Page 6/ .....

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- 1) G.E. Aylmer - The struggle for the Constitution 1603 - 89, p. 114.
  - 2) A.M. Taylor, op. cit., p. ix.

and the aristocracy with their antiquated methods and lavish display, lost ground. Because the Crown too had lost much of its economic power, the Civil War could be provoked and carried to a successful conclusion by the gentry, who aimed in this way to bring their political influence into line with their economic power.

In other words, the origin of the Civil War can be seen in the rise to power of the 'Gentry' class.

In 1953, Professor H.R. Trevor-Roper produced his own rival interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Criticizing Professor Tawney's use of the concept 'Gentry', he argued that the Civil War was caused not by the rise, but by the decline of a section of the Gentry. According to him, the really big profits at that time were made not by farming, but by holding court office and practising law. The Gentry - those who enjoyed none of these sources of income - then, inevitably got into financial difficulties. And so the Civil War was the attempt by the declining gentry to regain power and position. And extreme Puritanism, Trevor-Roper argues, was the means by which they obtained their goal.

Christopher Hill also regards the Civil War as a class war, but he gives a Marxist interpretation to the events. In the introduction to his book 'The English Revolution', he states that he intends proving:<sup>2</sup>

the English Revolution of 1640-60 was a great social movement like the French Revolution of 1789. An old order that was essentially feudal was destroyed by violence, and a new and capitalist social order created in its place. The Civil War was a class war, in which the despotism of Charles I was defended by the reactionary forces of the established Church and feudal landlords. Parliament beat the King because it could appeal to the enthusiastic support of the trading and industrial classes in town and countryside, to the yeomen and progressive gentry, and to wider masses of the population whenever they were able, by free

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1) C. Hill - Puritanism & Revolution, p. 12.

2) The English Revolution 1640 - Edited by C. Hill, p. 9.

discussion, to understand what the struggle was really about.

The rise of Puritanism and the rise of Capitalism then, went hand-in-hand, for the Civil War was the means whereby Puritanism triumphed and England became a capitalist society.

R.H. Tawney, writing later in his life, illustrates this line of thought in an article entitled 'Religion and the Rise of Capitalism':<sup>1</sup>

Puritanism had its own standards of social conduct, derived partly from the obvious interests of the commercial classes, partly from its conception of the nature of God and the destiny of man. These standards were in sharp antithesis, both to the considerable surviving elements of feudalism in English society, and to the policy of the authoritarian State, with its ideal of an ordered and graded society, whose different members were to be maintained in their traditional status by the pressure and protection of paternal monarchy. Sapping the former by its influence, and overthrowing the latter by direct attack, Puritanism became a potent force in preparing the way for the commercial civilization which finally triumphed at the Revolution.

These three, strictly speaking, are the main interpretations put forward as the causes of the English Civil War. There have been, of course, many adaptations made to them, but most historians have interpreted the War in terms of a religious, or a political, or an economic struggle. A number of historians, writing in the last decade however, have argued against isolating these three factors so rigidly from one another. They have tended to regard the Civil War as being the result of a combination, or a working together, of these three factors.

Christopher Hill, in a later work 'The Century of Revolution (1603-1714)', demonstrates this impossibility of shutting off the religious, constitutional, political and economic causes of the war from one another.<sup>2</sup> These, he

Page 8/ .....

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1) Protestantism & Capitalism - Edited by R.W. Green, p.49.

2) C. Hill - The Century of Revolution 1603-1714, p. 101.

argues, correspond to the complexity of life in 17th Century England. The Civil War, for him, while being a religious and a political struggle, was something more - for what men were really fighting about was the whole nature, and future development of English society. Allen French, in his book on the Puritan migration to the Americas, interprets the Civil War as a religious, political and financial struggle.<sup>1</sup> Philip Taylor also represents this standpoint. He points out how necessary it is to break down these factors and influences into their component parts for the purpose of analysing the origins of the Civil War; but he does warn against the tendency to separate them so radically<sup>2</sup>

"as to lose sight of the 'forest' in concentrating too much on individual 'trees'".

The separate institutions which must be studied he argues further - for example: the Church and law courts, bishops and the king, Parliament and the constitution, property and the rights of men - were all closely linked. So much so, that any attack on, or desire to change, one institution was certain to involve others.

It is for this reason, therefore, that contemporary historians, in their interpretations, hesitate to apply what we may call the 'either/or' system, preferring the 'both/and'. In other words, they hesitate to speak of the rebellion as having any one single cause - it is rather the result of a number of factors, all of which were closely interrelated. It is interesting to note, in this connection, G.M. Trevelyan's comparison of three of the great national rebellions in history:<sup>3</sup>

The French Revolution was a war of two societies; the American Civil War was

Page 9/ .....

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- 1) A. French - Charles I and the Puritan Upheavel, p. 320.
  - 2) A.M. Taylor, op. cit., p. xiii.
  - 3) G.M. Trevelyan - England under the Stuarts, p. 190.

a war of two regions; but the Great Rebellion was a war of two parties.

The war of two parties, divided on political, economic and religious grounds.

As I have already stated, the purpose of this thesis is to re-assert Puritanism and the religious factors as a very definite cause of the English Civil War. We shall be considering the Puritan reformers and the Puritan Movement itself, then, and their relation to the Church, to the Crown, and to the House of Commons - attempting throughout to assess the part they played in the events leading to the Civil War.

CHAPTER 2:

THE RISE OF PURITANISM UNDER ELIZABETH I AND JAMES I.

"Like many another name afterwards carried with pride," writes Martin, "... Puritan was first a nickname, given in scorn and bitterness and hotly repudiated by those to whom it was applied."<sup>1</sup> Fuller says that the term came into use in 1564, in connection with the resistance offered to the stronger action then being taken by Elizabeth to enforce conformity:<sup>2</sup>

The English Bishops, conceiving themselves impowered by their Canons, began to show their authority in urging the Clergy of their Diocess to subscribe to the Liturgie, Ceremonial and Discipline of the Church, and such as refused, the same were branded with the odious name of Puritans.

Whatever the date of its origin might have been, we can be sure of one thing; and that is, that this term was in full currency by 1572, when the writers of the '1ST Admonition to Parliament' protested against those<sup>3</sup>

"who slanderously charge pore men (whom they have made pore) with greevous faults, calling them Puritans, worse than the Donatists".

Whitgrift, in answering the Admonition, argued:<sup>4</sup>

This name Puritan is very aptely given to these men, not bycause they be pure no more than were the Heretiks called 'Cathari', but bycause they thinke themselves to be 'mundiores caeteris', more pure than others, as Cathari dyd, and separate themselves from all other Churches and congregations as spotted and defyled. Bicause also they suppose the Churche whiche they have devised, to be without all impuritie.

Page 11/ .....

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- 1) H. Martin - Puritanism & Richard Baxter, p. 11.
  - 2) Quoted in F. Paget - An Introduction to the Fifth Book of Hooker's Treatise of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 10.
  - 3) Quoted in ibid., p. 11.
  - 4) Quoted in Ibid.

The term 'Puritan' in Elizabeth's time, then, was used merely as a nickname, and scornfully at that. At this stage, however, it is important for us to realize that, when using this term, their opponents did not think of these 'Puritans' as constituting a definite or official party. They were rather referring to a group of like-minded men who desired the reform of the Church of England to be taken a step further than Elizabeth had allowed. Miss Wedgwood illustrates this clearly,<sup>1</sup>

it was a term of abuse, merely. It might be applied equally to a devout cobbler expounding the scriptures according to a theory of his own, or to a dutiful member of the Anglican communion who had done no more than hazard the opinion that the surplice was a remnant of Rome.

Lucy Hutchinson, wife of a colonel in the Parliamentary army, also illustrates the diversity with which this term could be used, and how it was impossible to regard these Puritans as forming a definite party:<sup>2</sup>

If any are grieved at the dishonour of the kingdom, or the griping of the poor, or the unjust oppression of the subject by a thousand ways invented to maintain the riots of the courtiers and the swarms of needy Scots ... brought in to devour like locusts the plenty of the land, he was a Puritan, .... if any gentleman in his county maintained the good laws of the land, or stood up for any public interest, for good order or government, he was a Puritan. In short, all that crossed the views of the needy courtiers, the proud encroaching priests, the thieving projectors, the lewd nobility and gentry ... all these were Puritans.

At the change of the century, however, we find the 'Puritans' being looked upon and regarding themselves, as a party. But the nature of their opposition had changed - for they were no longer seeking reform in vestments

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- 1) C.V. Wedgwood - The King's Peace 1637-41, p. 95.
  - 2) Quoted in C. Hill - The Century of Revolution 1603-1714, p. 105.

and ceremonies alone, but rather a change in polity and Church government. In other words, episcopacy itself was becoming the target of their attacks. This is clearly brought out by James I himself, when he addressed Parliament soon after his accession:<sup>1</sup>

Puritans and Novelists, who do not so far differ from us in points of religion as in their confused form of polity and parity, being ever discontented with the present government and impatient to suffer any superiority, which maketh their sect unable to be suffered in any well governed commonwealth.

The term 'Puritan' then, referred to a party, which had definite aims and aspirations.

And so it was, that, during the first few years of James' reign, with Bancroft as Archbishop of Canterbury, the Established Church finally set its face against any further Calvinist reform, forcing the Puritans to turn their energies from agitation within the Church (that is, through Convocation), into bringing pressure to bear upon the Crown, through Parliament. The term can now no longer be said to have purely religious connotations, for the Puritan movement was allying itself with Parliamentary reform. And so, concludes Pearl:<sup>2</sup>

there arose that momentous alliance between the constitution opposition in Parliament and the Puritan movement in the Church. This alliance assumed a recognizable form in the sixteen-twenties when the leaders of the Puritans, John Preston and his clerical friends, became associated with the Parliamentary opposition led by John Pym ....

By the time of Charles I and the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640, these religious and political overtones attached to the term 'Puritan' had come to be so completely identified with one another, that the name now

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2) V. Pearl - London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, p. 160.

meant those who supported Parliament in its conflicts with the Crown. As John Davenport defined Puritans - as being those<sup>1</sup>

"who secretly encourageth men in opposition to the present government".

Martin sums up this change in meaning:<sup>2</sup>

In the 16th century the word meant the left wing of the Reformers, who wanted to carry the Reformation a stage further than the powers in Church and State thought desirable. In the 17th century the word mainly applied to those on the side of Parliament against the Crown.

Puritanism at this stage had gained complete ascendancy in the House of Commons. During the opening sessions of the Long Parliament, the Puritan element had been united in their attack on Laud and Arminianism.<sup>3</sup> But no sooner had these reforms been accomplished, and an alternative system of Church government had to be found, than a split emerged within this party - the term 'Puritan' could now be used to describe two opposing parties. On the one side, were the extreme anti-episcopalean Puritans, the so-called 'Root-and-Branch' party, who sought to destroy the system of Church government by bishops, and replace it with the Presbyterian model of government. And on the other side, were the more moderate Puritans, often referred to as 'Episcopalean' Puritans, who wished to remove the abuses of the Laudian era, without changing the basic system of the Established Church and its government by bishops.<sup>4</sup>

Thus at the outbreak of the Civil War, the term Puritan can be used to describe the religious and political opposition to Charles I and his government - despite this

Page 14/ .....

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1) Ibid, p. 161.

2) H. Martin, op. cit., p. 13.

3) See - infra, p. 79.

4) See infra, p. 79-80.

split within the Puritan movement itself.

Having discussed the meaning of the term 'Puritan', let us turn to consider the rise and development of Puritanism as a whole, keeping in mind this change in the nature and character of the movement itself.

Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, and the situation which confronted her was one of exceeding difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

"Her father may be said to have seized the Church. Her brother and sister before her had, in contrary ways, and with unhappy results, tried to reform it. She perceived that she must govern it or be ruined."

The people of England, however, were divided in faith - the majority, especially in and around London, were Protestants, while a considerable number were still Catholics. What made it even more confusing was that there were differences and divisions within the ranks of these two parties.

So Elizabeth made herself safe, by affirming the independence and Protestantism of the Church of England. As head of the nation, she asserted her control over the state and over the Church, insisting that her bishops be men she could depend upon to uphold not only their own authority, but her's as well. The only religious test she unfailingly insisted upon, was that her subjects should be willing to swear allegiance to herself as the Church's governor.<sup>2</sup> What Elizabeth desired above all else was uniformity. Men must conform or be persecuted. But, and this is the interesting point, at no time did she demand uniformity of belief; for she is recorded as saying so often:<sup>3</sup>

"I do not desire to open windows into men's hearts and secret thoughts".

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1) W. Haller - The Rise of Puritanism, p. 6.

2) Ibid., p. 7.

3) S.B. Babbage - Puritanism & Richard Bancroft, p. 2.

For example in her famous 'Apologia', she said:<sup>1</sup>

We know not, nor have any meaning to allow that any of our subjects should be molested either by examination or inquisition.. as long as they profess the Christian faith, not gainsaying the authority of the Holy Scriptures and the articles of our faith contained in the creeds Apostolic and Catholic; or for matters of ceremonies ... as long as they shall show themselves quiet and conformable...

It was inevitable therefore, that Elizabeth's handling of the religious problem was not acceptable to many - the Protestant element more so than others. Elizabeth, to their dismay, did not reform or purify the Church, she merely<sup>2</sup>

"swept the rubbish behind the door."

"The Puritan movement," concludes Haller,<sup>3</sup>

"may be said to have sprung out of the shock of that disappointment."

Or as Martin puts it,<sup>4</sup>

"Puritanism began as a reform movement, within the Church, of those not satisfied with the way the political break had worked out ecclesiastically."

To be sure, there was much that needed to be reformed, as the income and property, the organization, authority and prestige, and the learning and morality of the Church was in confusion and decay. Milton illustrates this belief of the early Puritans that the Church system was inherently corrupt, in his work 'Reason of Church Government

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1) Quoted in ibid, p. 3.

2) W. Haller, op. cit., p. 8.

3) Ibid.

4) H. Martin, loc. cit., p. 15.

urged against Prelaty':<sup>1</sup>

They (that is, the Clergy), admire and dote upon worldly riches and honours, with an easy and intemperate life to the bane of Christianity; yea, they and their seminaries shame not to profess to petition, and never leave pealing in our ears that unless we fat them like boars and cram them as they list with wealth, with deaneries and with pluralities, with baronies and stately preferments, all learning and religion will go under foot.

But Elizabeth did little or nothing to rectify these abuses, being more concerned with maintaining the structure and balance of things as they were. And so it was that the less moderate opponents of the Crown grew more and more impatient at these half measures and political compromises, and thus aligned themselves together in opposition, demanding that the long-anticipated reforms be at once accomplished. The desires of these men, who were branded with the odious and scornful name of 'Puritans', were understandable from a religious point of view. They wished to purge from the services what they believed to be the remnants of Roman superstition, and procure in every parish a 'preaching' ministry that was both earnest and spiritual-minded. In particular, they objected to the prescribed clerical dress; to kneeling at the reception of the Lord's Supper, as implying adoration of the physical presence of Christ therein; to the use of the ring in marriage, as continuing the estimate of matrimony as a sacrament; and to the sign of the cross in baptism, as superstitious. This, then, was the purification they desired in the Church.

William Haller writes of these early years of the movement:<sup>2</sup>

Popular unrest was the soil in which the Puritan Movement arose, but its formal

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- 1) Quoted in H.O. Wakeman - The Church and the Puritans 1570-1660, p. 59.
  - 2) W. Haller, op. cit., p.10.

and conscious inception took place not among the populace but among members of the academic intellectual class.

And so it was at Cambridge that impatience with Elizabeth's failure to satisfy the most extreme Protestant hopes, found its earliest and most explicit statement. Led by men like Lawrence Humphrey and Thomas Sampson, the earliest Puritan discussion was over the use of the prescribed garments for the clergy - called the 'Vestiarian Controversy'. In 1572, for example, a tract entitled 'A View of Popishe abuses yet remaining in the Englishe Church, for the which Godly Ministers have refused to subscribe', was attached to the famous document, 'An Admonition to Parliament'. This tract illustrates the controversy by showing that vestments were dregs of popery:<sup>1</sup>

Copes, caps and surplusses, and such lyke baggage, the preaching signes of popysh priesthode ... are as the garments of the Idole, to which we ... say, avaunt and get thee hence. They are as the garments of the Balamites, of popish priestes, enemies to God and all Christians. They serve not to edification, they have the shewe of evyll ... they worke discorde... they bryng the ministerie into contempte, they offend the weake, they encourage the obstinate.

In this matter, however, the queen's policy was strongly opposed to modification. And with the gradual triumph of Elizabeth and her bishops, the Puritans began to realize that they would not be allowed to overturn or disrupt the established order of the Church, at will. It is for this reason that Elizabeth's second Parliament is important - as it marks a change in the method of their attack on the Establishment. Convocation met at the same time, and, as the supporters of the papal supremacy had been removed by the rigid application of the Oath of Supremacy, the representatives of reform were firmly entrenched. During this meeting of Convocation a series of six

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1) Quoted in S.B. Babbage, op. cit., p. 12.

articles were debated.<sup>1</sup>

- i) That all the Sundays in the year and principal feasts of Christ be kept holy days; and all other holy days to be abrogated.
- ii) That in all parish churches the minister in common prayer turn his face towards the people; and there distinctly read the divine service appointed, where all the people assembled may hear and be edified.
- iii) That in ministering the sacrament of baptism, the ceremony of making the cross in the child's forehead may be omitted, as tending to superstition.
- iv) That forasmuch as divers communicants are not able to kneel during the time of communion, for age, sickness and sundry other infirmities, and some also superstitiously both kneel and knock; that order of kneeling may be left to the discretion of the ordinary within his jurisdiction.
- v) That it be sufficient for the minister, in time of saying divine service and ministering of the sacraments, to use a surplice; and that no minister may say service or minister the sacraments but in a comely garment or habit.
- vi) That the use of organs be removed.

After a heated debate, and with proxies being invoked, these articles were defeated by one vote.

This brought it home to the Puritan reformers, more than anything else, that victory would only come through an organized hostility to the existing order. And so we have the beginnings of what we may call a Puritan party - though it must be remembered that it was only many, many years later that the 'Puritan' party can be regarded as being organized and fully constituted.

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1) Quoted in J.R. Tanner - Tudor Constitutional Documents 1485-1603, p. 164.

J.B. Black warns us not to read too much into this Puritan unrest at this early stage:<sup>1</sup>

Naturally the whole sweep of the puritan objection to the Establishment did not manifest itself at once, it was a slow development, stimulated by conflict and nurtured by persecution...

Strype shows what the result of this defeat of the Puritan reformers, in the 1563 meeting of Convocation, was:<sup>2</sup>

Hitherto the quarrel was only about wearing the cap and the surplice and such-like apparel, and the posture in receiving communion; but now they attempt to move another and a more dangerous matter in assaulting the hierarchy of the Church, and disproving and condemning the ancient, wholesome government used in it by archbishops and bishops, deans and archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers.

In other words, the Puritans were beginning to attack the Royal Supremacy itself. With this shift in the battleground there came a change in the method of attack - for the Puritan attack is now made not within the council chambers of the Church, but without. It disappears from Convocation and appears in Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

"From 1566 onwards Convocation is regarded as hostile, and the hopes of ecclesiastical revolutionaries are concentrated in the House of Commons".

This change is significant as from this time on, the Puritans can be said to have sought to obtain their will by purely civil legislation.

This, however, was an unconstitutional method of procedure, which soon brought the wrath of the queen down upon them. The reason for this is that interference by Parliament between her and Convocation was as unacceptable as Convocation interfering between her and Parliament.

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- 1) J.B. Black - The Reign of Elizabeth I 1558-1603, p.154.
  - 2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 166.
  - 3) Puritan Manifestoes - Edited by W.H. Frere & C.E. Douglas, p. xiv.

She, as Supreme Governor of 'things spiritual' and 'things temporal', stood in direct relation to one on the ecclesiastical side and to the other on the civil side. In other words, it was she who assented to the canons of Convocation on the one hand and to the acts of Parliament on the other. Therefore we find all parliamentary intrusions or interference in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical, being ruthlessly crushed by Elizabeth. For example, in 1566 the first of a series of ecclesiastical bills, initiated by the Puritans in the House of Commons, after being passed both in the Lower and Higher Houses, was 'stayed' by the queen's special command.<sup>1</sup>

The representative leader of this second stage of Puritanism, during the reign of Elizabeth, was Thomas Cartwright, who was Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. Church government, for him, was to be presbyterian and not episcopalian. In 1569, in fact, he advocated the appointment of elders in each parish for discipline; the election of pastors by their people; the abolition of such offices as archbishop; and the reduction of the clergy to essential parity. The issue between the defenders of the Establishment and the Puritan reformers, then, could not have been more clearly drawn.

Cartwright soon roused the opposition of Archbishop Whitgift, the great defender of the Establishment, and anti-Puritan. It was he who was instrumental in Cartwright's eventual expulsion from the University.

The changes advocated by Cartwright were later presented in an extreme but popularly effective pamphlet, entitled 'An Admonition to Parliament', in 1572.

"Its significance",  
writes Babbage,<sup>2</sup>

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1) See Ibid, p. xv.

2) S.B. Babbage, loc. cit.

"cannot be overestimated. This masterly document marked the explicit adoption of the presbyterian platform by the Puritan reformers."

It was thus not only concerned with an attack on the Prayer Book and vestments, but also on the more fundamental question at issue - the polity and government of the Church. This is clearly illustrated in the additional note which was added in the second edition:<sup>1</sup>

Neither is the controversie betwixt them and us as they would beare the world in hand, as for a cap, a tippet, or a surplesse, but for great matters concerning a true ministrie and regiment of the churche, according to the word, which things once established the other melt away of them selves.

Puritanism was now growing. A voluntary local classis - a kind of presbytery - was organized by Puritan ministers in Wandsworth near London, in 1572. Similar organizations soon sprang up elsewhere. Bancroft gives us insight into these 'classes', when he describes the manner in which a classis was conducted:<sup>2</sup>

The manner of every particular classis is this: At their meeting (which is always in some private house, but yet in their Mother Cities) first a Moderator is chosen in this sort: One of them conceiveth a Prayer for God's Direction in that Choice. Then he that conceived the Prayer, sitteth alone in Scrutiny, and every one giveth his Voice secretly unto him. He that hath the most Voices is chosen.

Meetings of ministers for the purpose of preaching and discussion - the so-called 'prophesyings' - were also established about the same time.<sup>3</sup>

"The ministers, within a precinct", says Bacon in describing them, "did meet upon a week day in some principal town where there was some ancient grave minister that was president, and an auditory admitted of gentlemen or other persons of leisure. Then every minister successively,

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1) Quoted in ibid.

2) Ibid., p. 37.

3) Quoted in H.O. Wakeman, op. cit., p. 43.

beginning with the youngest, did handle one and the same part of scripture, spending severally some quarter of an hour or better, and in the whole some two hours; and so, the exercise being begun and concluded with prayer, and the president giving a text for the next meeting, the assembly was dissolved. And this was, as I take it, a fortnight's exercise; which, in my opinion, was the best way to frame and train up preachers to handle the word of God as it ought to be handled, that hath been practised."

It is interesting to note here that some of the bishops even encouraged the establishing of these 'prophesyings', as a means of defence against what they called the 'seductions of Rome'. Many others, however, were very wary of these gatherings. This suspicion is reflected in a letter written by Bishop Scambler of Peterborough to Burghley. He asked Burghley:<sup>1</sup>

Vouchsafe ... to look upon theis scheires of Northampton and Rutland .. and ayde me with your counsaile ... Those whom men doe call puritans and their fautours ... are growen apparentlie to neglecte, if theie doe not abhorre, the devine service sette owte by publique authoritie ... To their purposes they have drawen diuers yonge ministers, to whome it is plausible to have absolute authoritie in their parishes. In their waies theie be verie bolde and stowte, like men that seme not to be without great frendes.

Or again as Strype wrote in his 'Annals':<sup>2</sup>

These prophesyings were in danger of degenerating into controversies and contentious disputings. And the Puritans took their advantage of it by broaching their doctrines.

Archbishop Whitgift, with Elizabeth's full support, promptly issued articles imposing the use of the Prayer Book, prescribing clerical dress and forbidding all private meetings. From this time onwards, the

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1) Quoted in ibid., p. 11.

2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 182.

hand of repression can be said to have rested heavily upon the Puritans.

When we consider Elizabeth and her relation to her Parliaments, we find the voice of the Puritans beginning to sound in opposition to the queen and her policy.<sup>1</sup> Parliament expressed its opinion most vigorously on ecclesiastical affairs -- especially when the Puritan element began to challenge Elizabeth's Church Settlement. In fact, the Commons seems generally to have favoured the Puritan desire for further religious reform. Douglas Nobbs, in his general history on England and Scotland, comments on the relation between Crown and Parliament:<sup>2</sup>

"All Elizabethan Parliaments were difficult to manage, and called for all the queen's ability to carry her policy by mingling threats and coercion with appeals to her success and to her popularity". He continues: "The Puritan ideal led the Commons to develop an alternative policy to the queen's and to prescribe the course of her government. Naturally, she was but confirmed in her conviction that Puritanism involved a political issue ..... The Puritans, desperately aggressive, went too far in the logical exposition of their programme, and were defeated; but the alliance of crown and gentry was shaken".

During the reign of Elizabeth, therefore, the Puritan programme presented by Cartwright both in the House of Commons and in Convocation was rejected. But it is necessary that we realize that Puritanism, as such, was far more than a scheme of Church government. And<sup>3</sup>

"it is in this larger sense that Puritanism can be said to have continued uninterrupted, to strengthen and extend its hold upon the English imagination."

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- 1) See - infra, pp. 37 sqq. for elaboration.
  - 2) D. Nobbs - England and Scotland 1560-1707, p. 64.
  - 3) W. Haller, op. cit., p. 18.

Cartwright left behind him at Cambridge, many friends and disciples who, despite their failure to purify the Church, devoted their energies to the task of converting the people to the Puritan ideals and of training them in the Puritan way of life. And thus, even though Elizabeth and her bishops would not permit them to transpose Calvinism directly into legal enactment, it did not prevent them from converting the nation - country gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, and many of the humbler folk - to godliness.

Wakeman illustrates this great influence Puritanism exerted over the English nation, when he writes:<sup>1</sup>

Religious England, outwardly Catholic, was inwardly Puritan. The best, the purest, the noblest of Elizabethan heroes were Puritans. The more energetic of the great Universities were steeped in Puritanism.... If we inquire where the strength of this great movement lay ..., we shall find it in two great principles - the insistence upon the personal relationship between God and man, and the hatred of a professional religion.

Now and then a Puritan preacher would be drawn out in an attack upon the Established Church and its rulers, but by and large most of them were content to<sup>2</sup>

"devote themselves, under cover of law, to preaching the doctrine of faith and the sacred epic of man's fall and redemption."

These Puritan preachers, then, won more and more converts to the Puritan way of life by the publication of their sermons and more important, by the example of their own conduct. In this way, they became the chief animating force for the spread of Puritanism among all classes of society.

Elizabeth died in March 1603, and was succeeded by James I, the son of Mary Stuart, 'Queen of Scots'.

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1) H.O. Wakeman, op. cit., pp. 55-6.

2) W. Haller, op. cit., p. 19.

"The accession of a king who had been reared in the Church of John Knox", writes Haller,<sup>1</sup>

"gave the Puritan reformers fresh hope. They prepared once more to advance their cause by frontal attack."

James had no sooner crossed the frontal border as the new King of England, than he was presented with a petition - the so-called 'Millenary Petition' - signed by several hundred Puritan ministers. It read:<sup>2</sup>

"... we, the ministers of the Gospel in this land, neither as factious men affecting a popular parity in the Church, nor as schismatics aiming at the dissolution of the State ecclesiastical, but as the faithful servants of Christ and loyal subjects of your Majesty, desiring and longing for the redress of divers abuses of the Church, could no less, in our obedience to God, service to your Majesty, love to his Church, than acquaint your princely Majesty with our particular griefs... And although divers of us that sue for reformation have formerly, in respect of times, subscribed to the Book, some upon protestation, some upon exposition given them, some with condition, rather than the Church should have been deprived of their labour and ministry; yet now we, to the number of more than a thousand of your Majesty's subjects and ministers, all groaning as under a common burden of human rites and ceremonies, do with one joint consent humble ourselves at your Majesty's feet to be eased and relieved in this behalf. Our humble suit then unto your Majesty is, that of these offences following, some may be removed, some amended, some qualified:

- 1) In the Church Service. That the cross in baptism, interrogatories ministered to infants, confirmation, as superfluous, may be taken away; baptism not be ministered by women, and so explained; the cap and surplice not urged; that examination may go before communion; that it be ministered with a sermon; that divers terms of 'priests' and 'absolution', and some other used with the ring in marriage, and other such like in the Book, may be corrected; the

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1) Ibid, p. 49.

2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I 1603-25, pp. 57-60.

longsomeness of service abridged; church songs and music moderated to better edification; that the Lord's Day be not profaned, the rest upon holy-days not so strictly urged; that there may be an uniformity of doctrine prescribed; no Popish opinion to be any more taught or defended; no ministers charged to teach their people to bow at the name of Jesus; that the canonical Scriptures only be read in Church.

- 2) Concerning Church Ministers. That none hereafter be admitted into the ministry but able and sufficient men, and those to preach diligently, and especially upon the Lord's Day; that such as be already entered and cannot preach, may either be removed and some charitable course taken with them for their relief or else to be forced, according to the value of their livings, to maintain preachers; that non-residency be not permitted; that King Edward's Statute for the lawfulness of ministers' marriage be revived; that ministers be not urged to subscribe but, according to the law, to the Articles of Religion and the King's Supremacy only.
- 3) The Church Livings and Maintenance. That bishops leave their commendams - some holding prebends, some parsonages, some vicarages with their bishoprics; that double-beneficed men be not suffered to hold, some two, some three benefices with cure, and some two, three or four dignities besides; that impropriations annexed to the bishoprics and colleges be demised only to the preachers incumbents, for the old rent; that the impropriations of laymen's fees may be charged with a sixth or a seventh part of the worth to the maintenance of the preaching minister.
- 4) For Church Discipline. That the discipline and excommunication may be administered according to Christ's own institution - or, at least, that enormities be redressed; as namely, that excommunication come not forth under the name of lay persons, chancellors, officials, etc; that men be not excommunicated for trifles and twelpenny matters; that none be excommunicated without consent of his pastor; that officers be not suffered to extort unreasonable fees; that none having jurisdiction or registers' places put out the same to farm; that divers Popish canons (as

for restraint of marriage at certain times) be reversed; that the long-someness of suits in ecclesiastical courts, which hang sometimes, two, three, four, five, six, or seven years, may be restrained; that the oath 'ex officio', whereby men are forced to accuse themselves, be more sparingly used; that licenses for marriage without banns asked be more cautiously granted.

These with such other abuses yet remaining and practised in the Church of England, we are able to shew not to be agreeable to the Scriptures, if it shall please your Highness farther to hear us, or more at large by writing to be informed, or by conference among the learned to be resolved.... Thus with all dutiful submission referring ourselves to your Majesty's pleasure for your gracious answer as God shall direct, we most humbly recommend your Highness to the Divine Majesty, whom we beseech for Christ's sake to dispose your royal heart to do herein what shall be to his glory, the good of his Church, and your endless comfort. Your Majesty's most humble subjects the Ministers of the Gospel, that desire not a disorderly innovation but a due and godly reform."

These Puritan grievances, embodied in this petition, were not very radical. In fact, many of them<sup>1</sup>

"would have been endorsed by the Bishops, and indeed by anyone with the interests of the Church at heart."

Almost everyone agreed, for example, that pluralism should be abolished and that a 'preaching' ministry should be established. With regard to the rest of the petition, the reformers asked mainly for small modifications of ceremonial, which could be applied at the discretion of each parson in his parish.

James, following Bacon's advice, called a Conference at Hampton Court in 1604, to allow the Puritans to air their grievances against the Establishment.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately for these Puritan reformers at Hampton Court,

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1) W. McElwee - The Wisest Fool of Christendom, p. 132.

2) See infra, p.45.

Dr. Reynolds, the leader of the deputation, grew tired of James' delaying tactics and demanded that all clergy be allowed to meet every three weeks 'within prophesyings'. This brought the full wrath of James down upon him - and he replied:<sup>1</sup>

If you aim at a Scottish presbytery, it agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the devil. Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet and censure me and my council and all our proceedings.... Therefore I reiterate my former speech 'Le Roy s' avisera': Stay, I pray, for one seven years, before you demand, and then if you find me grow pursy and fat, I may, perchance, hearken unto you, for that government will keep me in breadth, and give me work enough.

He then turned to the Puritan delegates and said:<sup>2</sup>

If this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves or else I will harry them out of the land or else will do worse.

James then stormed out of the Conference.

What he was here demanding was strict uniformity and conformity - and this taken with his phrase 'No Bishop, No King', merely emphasized his belief in the interdependence of episcopacy and monarch.

Haller's conclusion of the Conference is that:<sup>3</sup>

If the success of Elizabeth in maintaining herself in that position had been due to tacit recognition of the expediency of toleration, the ill-success of the Stuarts was to be due in large measure to their failure to realize the inexpediency of intolerance ineffectually applied.

James' rebuffal of the reformers at Hampton Court, resulted in the silencing ~~of~~ <sup>and</sup> deprivation of numbers of non-conformists of their posts in the Church. In this way he hoped to prevent the Puritans from being able to put their ideas of Church government into effect.

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1) Quoted in C. Williams - James I, p. 191.

2) Quoted in ibid.

3) W. Haller, loc. cit.

Nothing, however, could now have completely silenced them, and so all James really succeeded in doing was to persecute many of their preachers just sufficiently to make enemies of them and thus heighten their personal prestige in the eyes of the nation. Unwary Puritans were brought before the prerogative courts - ecclesiastical and civil - and often deprived of their livings, and commanded to be silent. But, on the whole, these Puritan preachers maintained the great influence they had been wielding during Elizabeth's reign, by means of their pulpits and of their publications.

It would be misleading, however, if we were to say that James was completely out of sympathy with the Puritans - for having been brought up as a member of the Church of Scotland, he cared nothing for ritual, and was a Calvinist in doctrine. But the one point on which he did differ radically from the Puritans, was the relative authority of the bishops and their clergy. G.M. Trevelyan says of this disagreement:<sup>1</sup>

It was in fact not for speculative or religious, but for political, reasons that he disliked the Puritans. He saw in them the sect that in Scotland had made his youth one long humiliation, his manhood one long struggle - men who would take the Lord's Anointed by the sleeve and call him 'God's silly vassal'. The English Puritans were at this stage of their career of a milder temper: but the policy of suppression by which James thought to 'harry them out of the land' served to arouse in them the instincts which he most feared, and led them indeed to abolish Bishops and to put his son to death.

When James' first Parliament met in 1604, the House of Commons sympathized with the 'Millenary Petition'. Their interest here was mainly constitutional, for they

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1) G.M. Trevelyan - England under the Stuarts, p. 65.

hastened to deny that they had<sup>1</sup>

"any Puritan or Brownist spirit".

That their support was moderate and restrained can be seen in the articles which they presented to the House of Lords for their acceptance. They also affirmed their agreement with and belief in the general principle of enforcing uniformity, and the necessity to prosecute those who refused to conform.<sup>2</sup> But, and here we come to the very reason why they gave their support to the Puritan Petitioners, they maintained that they, and not Convocation, should do the prosecuting.<sup>3</sup>

"The Royal Supremacy for them meant the supremacy of the King in Parliament, and they recognized no legislative power in Convocation at all."

Thus, we are led to conclude that the Commons' support of the 'Millenary Petition' - though a minority probably did so for definite religious reasons - was because it was a means of striking at James in their conflict with him.

It escaped the king, however, how ominous this alliance between the Commons and the Puritans was, for it was an alliance between the constitutional and ecclesiastical opposition in the country. And so we find him lecturing Parliament on<sup>4</sup>

"Puritans and Novelists, who do not so far differ from us in points of religion as in their confused form of policy and parity ...."

"In that sentence",  
concludes Trevelyan,<sup>5</sup>

James summed up the mistake of his life. Because the Puritan leaders of the previous generation had desired a Presbyterian 'policy' of Church government,

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1) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 226.

2) See infra, p. 49.

3) W. McElwee, op. cit., p. 156.

4) Quoted in G.M. Trevelyan, loc. cit.

5) Ibid, pp. 65-6.

and a parity of clergy with their Bishops, therefore the services and merits of all Puritans were to be overlooked, they were at once to be deprived of their benefices, and finally, together with all their lay adherents 'harried them out of the land'. James did not perceive that if ... they were driven out by Bishops, the Presbyterian 'policy' would revive, with the arm of the House of Commons for its support."

The bishops who believed that uniformity was necessary, if not essential, for unity, and that no uniformity was possible except by means of the strong hand of compulsion, welcomed this statement of James, 'No Bishops, no King' - that they were the surest supports of his throne. Wakeman interprets this alliance between episcopacy and monarchy as being the <sup>1</sup>

"beginning of the rift between the Church and people, which was in a few years to grow into a chasm large enough to engulf both monarchy and Episcopacy in a common ruin."

Puritan hopes for the immediate reform of Church government during this period, then, did diminish, but the setting forth both by precept and example of a moral temper and a way of life, did not. In fact, the preachers and writers of the tracts and publications under James increased in number and influence at a faster rate than before, finding a growing audience ever more willing to listen.

"For James",  
writes Haller,<sup>2</sup>

"made the fatal error of alienating the pulpit at a time when he was alienating a public which was already habituated to turning to the pulpit for inspiration and guidance".

All the time, opposition to James and his policies was growing. Generally speaking, the man in the

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1) H.O. Wakeman, op. cit., p. 73.

2) W. Haller, op. cit., p. 50.

street bitterly disapproved of the proposed Spanish marriage of Prince Charles, and of the failure to support Protestantism on the Continent. Members of the nobility, on the other hand, whose families had risen to greatness under the Tudors, did not look with favour on the elevation of the many favourites at court, or on the intrusion of leading Churchmen into high political office. More and more people were also disapproving of the extravagance and corruption of the court, the great influence of the current court favourites, the pride of the prelates, the corruption of the judges, and the extortion practised by monopolists. And so, Haller concludes,<sup>1</sup>

"step by step the Stuarts and their creatures alienated subjects of all classes... Consequently the more the Church fell under the control of the prelates, the more the prelates identified the Church with the Crown, and the more royal policy fell into popular disfavour, so much the readier became all elements in the population to listen to the Puritan preachers."

During the reign of James I, therefore, the Puritans were increasingly active. In many parishes they established 'lectureships' for Sunday afternoon preaching. In fact, they used this to great advantage.<sup>2</sup>

"When the lecturer was paid, as he frequently was, by a local corporation themselves holding Puritan views, his own convictions were fortified by the assurance of their protection; as he was not required to read divine service, but only to deliver a sermon, there was no guarantee that he even conformed to the Prayer Book; and as he held no ecclesiastical preferment, there was not the same means of exerting pressure upon him as upon the beneficed clergy."

These 'lecturers' began to be used so effectively by the Puritans, as a platform for their beliefs and demands, that James was eventually forced to instruct his bishops

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1) Ibid, p. 51.

2) H.R. Trevor-Roper - Archbishop Laud 1573-1645, p.106.

to suppress these afternoon services, replacing them with elementary catechisms.

At the same time there was an increase in the number of tracts. And the main targets of abuse were the bishops. For example, an anonymous petitioner complained that James had:<sup>1</sup>

been all moeste three yeares King of Ing-  
land, and yet had nott abollished the  
false waies of antichriste yet Remain-  
inge with false worshippe and false offi-  
cers thereof with their maintenance.

These tracts and pamphlets, then, were yet another effective means adopted by the Puritan leaders to expound their beliefs. And, what was more, this was all carried on despite the strict censorship with which James and his bishops sought to control the press.

The Puritans were also, as we have seen, a growing force in Parliament, where their voice could frequently be heard in opposition to James. And as a result of James' arbitrary treatment of Parliament, he drove the Commons into a steadily growing political sympathy with Puritanism. It is at this stage that the term 'Puritan' can be said to have acquired very definite political overtones, and was often used - in the words of John Davenport - of those<sup>2</sup>

"who secretly encourageth men in opposi-  
tion to the present government".

Therefore, when James died in 1625, the situation was such that the Church can definitely be said to have sided with the Crown in its battle against the Puritan and Parliamentary opposition. In fact, writes Davies,<sup>3</sup>

"a position was created in which the

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1) Quoted in S.B. Babbage, op. cit., p. 142.

2) Quoted in V. Pearl, loc. cit.

3) G. Davies - The Early Stuarts 1603-60, p. 69.

Puritan found that any opposition to the Church was regarded as sedition at court, and any criticism of the monarchy as blasphemy in the pulpit."

It was thus inevitable that the religious and the political discontent joined hands and presented a united front in opposition to James' policies towards the Church and State. With the accession of his son, Charles, to the throne this conflict between the two sides rapidly came to a head.

CHAPTER 3:

ELIZABETH I AND JAMES I AND THEIR PARLIAMENTS.

Elizabeth's first Parliament met in January 1559, and the main business was the Religious Settlement and her attempt at comprehension. Sir Anthony Cooke defined the issues at stake:<sup>1</sup>

We are now busy in Parliament about expelling the tyranny of the Pope, and restoring the royal authority, and re-establishing the true religion. But we are moving too slowly; nor are there wanting at this time sanballats and Tobiases (a reference to the bishops) to hinder and obstruct the building of our walls... The zeal of the queen is very great, the activity of the nobility and people is also great; but still the work is hitherto too much at a stand.... But the result of this meeting of Parliament will, as far as I can judge, confirm my hope.

This hope of Cooke, for the establishment of Protestantism in England, was the hope of most Englishmen, especially after the bloody persecution of the Roman Catholic queen, Mary. His extremist views might not have been acceptable to many, but even among these radicals there was a willingness to settle for less than extreme measures.

Elizabeth, when summoning this first Parliament, made it clear that the issue had to be decided by<sup>2</sup>

"Acts of Parliament or the Crown in Parliament."

But she was both cautious and conservative. J.E. Neale, in his book "Elizabeth I and her Parliaments",<sup>3</sup> brings this out when he shows how, in the first session of Parliament, she favoured the passage of an Act repealing the papal and restoring the royal, supremacy, with the further authorization of communion in both kinds, thereby postponing to

Page 36/ .....

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- 1) Quoted in C.S. Meyer - Elizabeth I and the Religious Settlement of 1559, p. 23.
  - 2) Ibid, p. 24.
  - 3) J.E. Neale - Elizabeth I and her Parliaments (1559-1581), pp. 53 sqq.

a later date the vexed problem of the Prayer Book. This attempt, however, was defeated by the resolute determination of the radicals in the House of Commons, with the result that the 'Act of Uniformity' was finally passed at the same time as the 'Act of Supremacy'. The 'Elizabethan Settlement' thus came into being - it consisted, first of all, of an 'Act of Supremacy' which enforced the renewed break from Rome and the queen's position as supreme governor of things spiritual and temporal; and secondly, of an 'Act of Uniformity' which enforced Protestantism once again in England. In terms of this Act an oath was to be taken by<sup>1</sup>

all and every archbishop, bishop, and all and every other ecclesiastical person, and other ecclesiastical officer and minister .....

The oath read:<sup>2</sup>

I, ....., do utterly testify and declare in my conscience, that the queen's highness is the only supreme governor of this realm, and of all other her highness's dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal, and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate, has, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm; and therefore I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign jurisdiction, powers, superiorities, and authorities, and do promise that from henceforth I shall bear faith and true allegiance to the queen's highness, her heirs and lawful successors, and to my power shall assist and defend all jurisdictions, pre-eminences, privileges, and authorities granted or belonging to the queen's highness, her heirs and successors, or united and annexed to the imperial crown of this realm. So help me God, and by the contents of this book.

All such who refused to take this oath, were deprived of their office. Elizabeth thus became the 'Supreme Governor',

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1) Quoted in C.S. Meyer, op. cit., p. 38.

2) Quoted in ibid, p. 39.

of the Church.

Elizabeth summoned her second Parliament in 1563, with Convocation meeting simultaneously. This meeting of Convocation, as we have seen, was the scene of a battle between the Puritans and the defenders of the Settlement.<sup>1</sup> The Puritans began by attacking the Prayer Book, and then put forward their claims for reform. A heated debate ensued, and when the vote was taken it was found that the articles presented by the Puritan leaders were defeated by one vote. This was a bitter disappointment to the radical Puritans, and from this time on they sought to work for reform through Parliament, and not Convocation. Neale comments:

having failed to mould their own assembly to their wishes and thus exploit the proper constitutional machinery, the left wing of the clergy was driven back, for future occasions, on the irregular expedient of 1559 - on organizing its agitation through the House of Commons. In consequence, not only the quality of Elizabethan parliamentary history... but the whole future of English constitutional development was profoundly affected.

With this change in the method of attack of the Puritan party, there came a change in its battle-ground - the controversy no longer centred on vestments, but now on polity; the Prayer Book and the episcopal government of the Church.<sup>3</sup>

Elizabeth's third Parliament of 1566 was the scene of the first attempt made by the Puritan element in the House of Commons to achieve their desired reform of the Church through Parliament. A series of ecclesiastical bills were passed, in all three readings, in the Commons, but after only one reading in the Lords, Elizabeth "stayed" it; dissolving Parliament soon afterwards. When the next Parliament met in 1571, the Puritan leaders were better prepared.

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1) See - supra, p. 19.

2) J.E. Neale, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

3) See - supra, p. 19.

They now had a more dynamic leader in Thomas Cartwright. He attacked the Prayer Book and the hierarchy of the Church, directly. Those ecclesiastical bills which had failed five years earlier were once again presented, only to be rejected by the Queen once more. During this meeting of Parliament, Elizabeth and her bishops aroused the indignation of the more Puritan-minded members by rigidly enforcing the 'Act of Uniformity' and the clerical subscription to the service book. Thus in May 1872, a bill was introduced to legalize the Puritan disorders in worship. Frere and Douglas give a summary of this bill:<sup>1</sup>

Of the Prayer Book it was said that it had a soundness in substantial points of doctrine, but yet contained concessions to superstition which the progress of the Gospel had made superfluous. Of the puritan ministers it said that they, for the better instruction of their congregations, had given up the strict observation of the book and followed the lead of the apostolic church and the best reformed churches in Europe in conducting the worship. Their grievance was that malicious adversaries of the truth prevented these godly illegalities: they therefore asked that the Act of Uniformity might be enforceable only against papistical services or superstitious use of the Prayer Book; that a minister who was a preacher with cure of souls might be set free by episcopal leave to disregard the Prayer Book altogether and conduct service as he pleased....

The House finally compromised and agreed to a recasting of the bill, with the more objectionable features toned down. Elizabeth once again acted swiftly - the Speaker revealed:

Her Highness' pleasure, that from henceforth no more bills concerning religion shall be preferred or received into this House unless the same should be first considered and liked by the clergy.

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- 1) Puritan Manifestoes - Edited by W.H. Frere and C.E. Douglas, pp. xv and xvi.
  - 2) Quoted in *ibid*, p.xvi.

Before Parliament dissolved, however, a pamphlet entitled 'An Admonition to the Parliament' had been published. Neale comments:<sup>1</sup>

'The admonition to Parliament .. is one of the important tracts - perhaps, indeed the most important, in the history of Elizabethan Puritanism. It marked the definite adoption by the party, or at least by its clerical leaders, of a Presbyterian platform and therefore of a revolutionary policy.

It affirmed, among other things, that:<sup>2</sup>

'the offices of a Church are chiefly three, ministers or pastors, elders and deacons' - 'the outward marks whereby a true christian Church is knowne, are preaching of the word purely, ministering of the sacraments sincerely, and ecclesiastical discipline which consisteth in admonition and correction of faults severellie.'

While the Prayer Book was described as 'an unperfected booke, called and picked out of that popish dunghill, the Masse Boke, full of all abominations.'

Whitgift was given the task of answering this challenge and of defending the episcopal government of the Church - he did so in 1573 in a publication entitled 'An answer to a certain Libel entitled an Admonition to Parliament'. The queen intervened by issuing a royal proclamation, which denounced all religious dissent in general, and the publications of the Puritan press in particular.

The years 1569 - 1572 are also important in the reign of Elizabeth for another reason. They mark the most dangerous years of, what has been called, the 'Catholic threat'. The first positive reaction to the English schism from Rome in 1559, was the bull 'Regnans in Excelsis (1570)', in which Pope Pius V proclaimed Elizabeth's excommunication and deposition. It also called upon all

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1) J.E. Neale, op. cit., p. 296.

2) Quoted in S.B. Babbage - Puritanism & Richard Bancroft, p. 12.

those faithful to the church to remove her from the throne and absolved Englishmen from their oath of allegiance. This was a direct threat to Elizabeth's position, and thus ended the long years of compromise, for it had the effect in England of involving all Catholics in a dreadful dilemma.<sup>1</sup>

"It was no longer possible to be at the same time a Roman Catholic and a patriot, for loyalty to the Papacy was now brought into conflict with loyalty to the Queen".

From 1570 onwards, therefore, all Roman Catholics in England can be said to be those who have chosen Rome and their religion deliberately.

The Parliament of 1571 led the attack against this Catholic element in the country. An act was passed making it treasonable to introduce or publish any papal bulls in England, while another act deprived all those who had fled abroad and failed to return within a year, of their property. The law of treason was reinforced by yet a third act which included in the offence, any affirmation that Elizabeth was not queen or was a heretic and schismatic. Throughout the fifteen-seventies and fifteen-eighties the persecution of Catholics went on with growing vigour, so much so that Elizabeth's policy of comprehension was endangered.

It is at this stage of Elizabeth's reign that we find members of Parliament - despite the presence of a Puritan faction - filled with a curious double feeling: their fear for the future of the country, and their passionate devotion to the Crown. This can be seen when the House of Commons reassembled in 1576. Peter Wentworth, one of the Puritan leaders, immediately opened with an oration on the freedom of speech. He complained that in the last two sessions he had attended at Parliament, he had seen free speech infringed - he argued that the Commons was duty

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1) J.R. Tanner - Tudor Constitutional Documents 1485-1603, p. 143.

bound to discuss those points of<sup>1</sup>

"ecclesiastical legislation and affairs of state which Elizabeth determinedly reserved for the prerogative .... He elaborated these points at length, indulging in so much of his own desired freedom of speech that the house sat aghast".

He is quoted as saying:<sup>2</sup>

Certain it is ... that none is without fault: no, not our noble queen. Since then her majesty has committed great faults ....

Such language was unheard of in the Commons. Wentworth had clearly gone too far; and the House was both angry at his attack on the queen who had by then become the idol of the nation, and apprehensive of what she might do. They finally committed Wentworth to the Tower for a period of four weeks, without Elizabeth bringing any pressure to bear on them.

A new feature, however, does begin to emerge in the House of Commons, and that is that, although the Commons had been aghast at this attack on the queen, many members were becoming increasingly and uneasily aware that there was much in what Wentworth had said. But, says Elton,<sup>3</sup>

"the problem of how to provide free speech for those who thought it their duty to oppose, without ruining the co-operation of crown and parliament on which English government rested, was yet far from solved."

In the Parliament of 1586, Wentworth revived his agitation for free speech. He got his opportunity when Anthony Cope introduced his "bill and book", whereby he sought to replace the Prayer Book with a Puritan book of discipline and worship; but Elizabeth soon suppressed it. Wentworth in following up Cope, emphasized the position of

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1) G.R. Elton - England and the Tudors, p. 317.

2) Quoted in ibid.

3) Ibid, p. 318.

the House of Commons, concluding that anyone who<sup>1</sup>

"infringed the liberties of the House  
was to be regarded as an enemy to God,  
the prince, and the state."

This sounds more like a pronouncement of a Stuart parliament, and not an Elizabethan. It shows how even at the end of the 16th century, the Commons was growing in stature and influence, and was conscious of the power which it could wield. Elizabeth in her relationship with her Parliaments, however, continually refused to listen to any of these claims, and if ever a voice was raised demanding constitutional or even religious reform, she silenced it immediately. One factor in the international scene which she used shrewdly and to her advantage, in this respect, was that the threat of a Spanish invasion hung over England. This threat had the effect of uniting the nation, and further strengthening her position as 'Governor' of a Protestant Church and State. She thus found herself able to defend her position and power over her Parliaments, which, as we will see later, the Stuart Kings proved so inept at achieving during the next century.

Despite this strict control she kept over all 'spiritual' and 'temporal' affairs, the question of religious reform and of the nature and position of the Church of England raised its head continually during the reign of Elizabeth. The main opponents of her settlement were the Puritans, whose voice was coming more and more to the fore in the House of Commons. In 1584, for example, both Houses of Parliament fully supported a bill for the stricter observance of the Sabbath, and the queen was compelled to intervene. Later in 1589, there was similar enthusiasm in

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1) Quoted in ibid, p. 319.

the Commons for a bill against pluralities, and on this occasion the queen intervened to stop its progress in the Upper House. Or again, in 1601, Elizabeth's last Parliament, the same two bills came up for discussion before the Commons, with the queen once more exercising her right of authority in "staying" it. There was thus not a session in which there was not some sort of conflict between the queen and her Parliament over the question of the Establishment. And yet, throughout her dealings with her Parliaments, Elizabeth showed that she could control them. In fact, her Parliaments<sup>1</sup>

"called for the queen's ability to carry her policy by mingling threats and coercion with appeals to her success and to her popularity."

With the death of Elizabeth in 1603, James I came to the throne of England. And the first thing that strikes us is the difference between Elizabeth and James, especially in their relations with their Parliaments. In contrast to Elizabeth and her domination, James was unable to exercise this control and authority of the Crown. Right from the beginning he was challenged by Parliament, who began to demand not only religious but also constitutional reforms.

The first point to note about James I is that his political thought was coloured by the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings.<sup>2</sup> James himself illustrated this doctrine in his 'True Law of Free Monarchies', when he claimed an independent legislative power for the Crown. He argued:<sup>3</sup>

For albeit the King make daily statutes and ordinances, enjoining such pains there-to as he thinks meet, without any advice of Parliament or estates; yet it lies in the

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- 1) D. Nobbs - England and Scotland 1560-1707, p. 64.
  - 2) See - infra, pp. 59sq- for an exposition of the development of this doctrine.
  - 3) Quoted in J.R. Tanner - English Constitutional Conflicts of the 17th century 1603-89, p. 20.

power of no Parliament to make any kind of law or statute without his sceptre be to it, for giving it the force of a law.

Charles in 1628 is also recorded in this vein saying:<sup>1</sup>

I must avow that I owe the account of my actions to God alone.

This affirmation of their ruling by 'divine right' could not help but alienate the Stuarts from their Parliaments.

The developments of the principles of 'Divine Right' and 'absolute power' was the special business of the clergy, who were always convinced and earnest supporters of authority. As Fuller puts it,<sup>2</sup>

In all state alterations, be they never so bad, the pulpit will be of the same wood with the Council Board.

Or as Goldwin Smith says:<sup>3</sup>

Severed from the Roman centre of ecclesiastical authority they had no support but the throne, to which they clung with a loyalty often servile, giving to the King... more than a Catholic in the middle ages would have given to the Pope. Jesuitism, with a centre of support above monarchies, had preached tyrannicide: Anglicanism, having no centre of support but the monarchy, preached passive obedience and Divine Right.

The clergy, then, fervently preached this doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings to rule, and vociferously supported the Crown against Parliament.

Before the first Parliament of James met in 1604, there were signs of an estrangement between the Crown and the Commons - trouble was brewing over religious questions. The Puritan party within the Church of England had, by this time, a hold upon the nation. No sooner had James crossed the border into England, than he was presented with the 'Millenary Petition', which was an attempt by the leading clergy of this party to obtain a further reformation of the

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1) Quoted in G. Davies - The Early Stuarts - p.32.

2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 23.

3) Quoted in ibid, p. 24.

Church in doctrine and worship<sup>1</sup> - something which Elizabeth had stoutly denied them.

This Petition is important as it was presented by men who did so<sup>2</sup>

neither as factious men affecting a popular parity in the Church, nor as schismatics aiming at the dissolution of the State ecclesiastical, but as the faithful servants of Christ and loyal subjects of your Majesty, desiring and longing for the redress of divers abuses of the Church ...

Their demands were more moderate than Puritan demands had been for the past 20 years, and much more moderate than they would ever be again. McElwee argues that<sup>3</sup>

to have conciliated them before they became embittered with episcopacy and all its works would not only have robbed the nonconformists movement later in the century of most of its strength but would also have deprived the government's political opponents in the House of Commons of the powerful support of Puritanically inclined laymen, who were particularly numerous in those classes directly represented in Parliament.

Bacon, who saw the danger that lay in a breach between the Crown and the Commons, was in favour of granting concessions to the Puritans in order to preserve the unity of religious life in England. And so James called a Conference at Hampton Court in 1604, to enable the Puritans to voice their demands and grievances.

Dr. Reynolds, the leader of the Puritan deputation, unfortunately antagonized James, who thereupon refused to meet the petitioners on any of the main points, and demanded that they conform or else he<sup>4</sup>

"would harry them out of the land".

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- 1) See - supra, pp. 25 sqq.
  - 2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I 1603-25, p. 57.
  - 3) W. McElwee - The Wisest Fool of Christendom, p.136.
  - 4) See - Supra, p.28.

This Conference, if it did little else, showed these Puritan clergymen how little they could expect from James, especially after some three hundred clergy were ejected from their livings for refusing to conform.

Yet another question arose, before James called his first Parliament, which was to disturb the relationship between Crown and Parliament. Before the elections, James issued a proclamation, in which he described the type of persons to be chosen - he required, in particular,<sup>1</sup>

that an express care be had that there be not chosen any persons bankrupt or outlawed, but men of known good behaviour and sufficient livelihood, and such as are not only taxed to the payment of subsidies and other like charges but also have ordinarily paid and satisfied the same.

If any such person was elected he would be rejected as unlawful and the electorate would be fined. One, Sir Francis Goodwin, an outlaw, was duly returned. James immediately declared this null and void, in accordance with the terms of his proclamation, and Sir John Fortescue was chosen to replace him.

When Parliament met in March, 1604, the House of Commons questioned this ruling of James, and finally declared that Goodwin had been lawfully elected. James replied to the effect that the Commons derived all their privileges from him, and that they ought not therefore to meddle with the returns. And furthermore, he argued, he, as an absolute king, desired and commanded this. The reaction of the Commons to this pronouncement is recorded by G.W. Prothero:<sup>2</sup>

Upon this unexpected message there grew some amazement and silence: but at last one stood up and said, 'The Prince's command is like a thunderbolt, his command

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1) Quoted in J.R. Tanner - English Constitutional Conflicts of the 17th century, 1603-89, p. 28.

2) Quoted in ibid, p. 29.

upon our allegiance like the roaring of a lion; to his command there is no contradiction'.

The Commons thus surrendered to this argument of James.

In June, 1604, their differences and dissatisfaction with the Crown led the Commons to draw up, what has often been called, one of the most remarkable political documents of English history - 'The Form of Apology and satisfaction to be presented to His Majesty'. It was, in fact, the first real constitutional document of James' reign. It was very respectful in form; but<sup>1</sup>

"there could have been no clearer warning to the king of the danger of starting legalistic disputes with a body the majority of whom had been trained in the law, and of falling back on large general claims to power and privilege to avoid some minor defeat.... The issue of ultimate sovereignty, so skilfully kept out of debate in Tudor times, had been thrust by three months of tactlessness into the forefront of political debate".

The Commons argued:<sup>2</sup>

Now concerning the ancient rights of the subjects of this realm, chiefly consisting in the privileges of this House of Parliament, the misinformation openly delivered to your Majesty hath been in three things: First, that we held no privileges of right, but of grace only, renewed every Parliament by way of donation upon petition, and so to be limited. Secondly, that we are no Court of Record, not yet a Court that can command view of records, but that our proceedings here are only to acts and memorials, and that the attendance with the records is courtesy, not duty. Thirdly and lastly, that the examination of the return of writs for knights and burgesses is without our compass, and due to the Chancery. Against which assertions, most gracious Sovereign, tending directly and apparently to the utter overthrow of the very fundamental privileges of our House, and

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1) W. McElwee, op. cit., p. 153.

2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I 1603-25, pp. 220-1.

therein of the rights and liberties of the whole Commons of your realm of England which they and their ancestors from time immemorable have undoubtedly enjoyed under your Majesty's most noble pregenitors, we ....., do expressly protest, as being derogatory in the highest degree to the true dignity, liberty, and authority of your Majesty's High Court of Parliament, and consequently to the rights of all your Majesty's said subjects and the whole body of this your kingdom: And desire that this our protestation may be recorded to all posterity.

Though this 'apology' was not principally concerned with matters of religion, it does show that the sympathies of the Commons lay with the Puritan ministers in their conflict with the King and his bishops. The religious grievances arising out of the failure of the Hampton Court Conference to meet the 'Millenary Petition' demands, seemed important to many of them. And so in this document they also stated their view clearly and bluntly.<sup>1</sup>

For matter of religion, it will appear by examination of truth and right that your Majesty should be misinformed if any man should deliver that the Kings of England have an absolute power in themselves either to alter Religion (which God defend should be in the power of any mortal man whatsoever), or to make any laws concerning the same otherwise, as in temporal causes, by consent of Parliament.

Here, again, the Commons were making a larger claim than their predecessors, which was subsequently to lead both sides to irreconcilable extremes.

James' decisions at the conclusion of the Hampton Court Conference were embodied by Convocation in a 141 Canons which enforced stricter discipline and uniformity on the clergy and laity alike, with the penalty of excommunication for all who challenged the authorities. Power thus

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1) Quoted in ibid, p.226.

lay in the hands of Convocation. The Commons reacted violently against this.<sup>1</sup>

"Their interest for the moment was purely constitutional",

and they hastily asserted:<sup>2</sup>

we have not come in any Puritan or Brownist spirit, to introduce their parity or to work the subversion of State ecclesiastical as it now stands.

Their sympathy with the Millenary Petitioners, then, was moderate and restrained, for they wished to make only some of the points in dispute optional - for example: the sign of the Cross in baptism, or the use of the ring in marriage. Thus they wholeheartedly agreed with the general principle of enforcing uniformity, and of the necessity of prosecuting offenders. But, and here we come to the crux of the matter, Parliament and not Convocation must do the prosecuting. The Royal Supremacy for them<sup>3</sup>

"meant the supremacy of the King in Parliament, and they recognized no legislative power in Convocation at all."

There was, naturally enough, no possibility of James' accepting these claims of Parliament, and so this protest of the Commons had little practical significance, except as a rallying force.

This religious controversy between James and his Parliaments did not come to an end with his refutation of the 'Apology' of 1604. Soon after the dissolution of his first Parliament, James issued 'A Proclamation enjoining conformity' whereby all non-conformists were to be deprived

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1) W. McElwee, op. cit., p. 155.

2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, loc. cit.

3) W. McElwee, op. cit., p. 156.

of their benefices and silenced. The Council issued a letter, 'Proceedings against clergy who refuse to conform' in which it refers to James' Proclamation:<sup>1</sup>

Forasmuch as the time is now expired by which his Majesty's late proclamation, dated the 16th day of July last, was prescribed and limited to all those of the clergy for the conforming of themselves unto the laws and orders of the church you established within this realm, that have heretofore, under a pretended zeal of reformation but indeed of a factious desire of innovation, refused to yield their obedience and conformity thereunto; by means whereof all such as persist in that wilful disobedience are subject to the penalty of deprivation from their benefices and other church livings, of deposition from their ministry, and other censures of the church which were, as well at all times heretofore as presently, in vigour and force.

In 1610 the House of Commons took up the cause of those ministers who had been deprived and silenced, in a 'Petition concerning Religion'. Again in 1614 the Commons showed that many of its members were Puritan-minded, when they insisted on going as a body to receive Communion at St. Margaret's, Westminster, instead of the Abbey,<sup>2</sup>

"for fear of 'copes and wafer cakes.'"

In fact, the King's attitude towards the puritans generally aroused the opposition of his Parliaments, with their grievances and ill-feeling over the question of ceremonies, adding fuel to the fire.

If James' policy and attitude towards the Puritans roused the hostility of his Parliaments, his attitude towards the Roman Catholics did even more so. On his accession to the throne he assured his 'Roman' subjects of his goodwill - in fact, priests were allowed to enter and leave the country at will and all lay households went unfined.

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1) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 73.

However, James soon found the<sup>1</sup>  
"results of toleration intolerable",  
and by 1605 his whole attempt at peace and comprehension  
broke down. Roman priests were expelled and all non-  
conforming households persecuted. In 1605 there was the  
'Gunpowder Plot', whereby, it is thought, the Catholics  
hoped that in the resulting confusion they might be able to  
seize the reins of government. Their plot, however, failed  
completely and<sup>2</sup>

"it inevitably deepened the national  
hatred against them, and increased the  
severity of the penal code".

As a means of further strengthening his position,  
James authorized the drawing up of a new oath of allegiance.  
Those who took the oath promised, among other things:<sup>3</sup>

And I do further swear, that I do from  
my heart abhor, detest, and abjure as  
impious and heretical, this damnable doc-  
trine and position, that Princes which be  
excommunicated or deprived by the Pope,  
may be deposed or murdered by their sub-  
jects or any other whatever.

This was the extreme limit of anti-Catholic legislation in  
the reign of James.

No sooner was the immediate danger over, however,  
than James relaxed ~~his~~ <sup>the</sup> severity of his administration. This,  
once again, involved him in a fresh quarrel with his Parlia-  
ments, and heightened the enstrangement which already ex-  
isted between the two sides.

These religious questions which arose in the early  
years of his reign, then, all contributed to destroy<sup>4</sup>

"that good understanding between Crown  
and Parliament which had made the Tudor  
constitution workable".

Page 52/ .....

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- 1) J.R. Tanner - English Constitutional Conflicts of the  
17th century 1603-89, p. 31.
  - 2) C. Williams - James I - p. 194.
  - 3) G. Davies, op. cit., p. 7.
  - 4) J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 34.



In the beginning, we saw how James and the clergy became allies; the result of which was that James' treatment of purely religious matters, in becoming constitutional, brought the clergy into collision with Parliament. For example, in 1604 an attempt was made by the clergy to exercise legislative power, by issuing a code of 141 canons, passed in Convocation and approved by the king. This question was again raised in 1606, and also in 1607, the sequel of which was the passing of a bill by the Commons to prevent the enforcement of ecclesiastical canons which had not been passed or confirmed by Parliament. These attempts of Convocation and the clergy to legislate thus failed.

In the same way, the attempt of the ecclesiastical courts to maintain their judicial independence of the secular law courts failed in 1605. This conflict between the ecclesiastical courts and the courts of common law was nothing new, but it was during the reign of James that it came to a head.

The courts of common law claimed superiority, for it had been their right since the time of Henry VIII to decide what were the limits of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and whether a certain case raised a spiritual or a temporal question.

In 1605 Archbishop Bancroft formally protested to the King. In exalting the authority of the Crown, his argument went as follows:-<sup>1</sup>

All jurisdiction flowed originally from the king, it flowed in two separate streams. The king possessed in his own person all spiritual and all temporal jurisdiction; the one he delegated to the bishops and the other to the judges. Thus if there were any dispute as to what was and what was not a matter for the spiritual courts, the proper arbiter was the king.

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1) Ibid, pp. 35-6.

Coke the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas answered Bancroft, asserting the legislative supremacy of Parliament, and thus of the common law courts.

Again, in 1607 Bancroft raised the question of prohibitions. This time he carried his argument a step further - he argues that, as James was the source of all jurisdiction, spiritual as well as temporal, it was therefore within his power to withdraw spiritual causes from the jurisdiction of the judges, and to hear and determine them himself as the supreme judge of the realm.<sup>1</sup> This argument naturally attracted James, but when he referred it to the judges, he met with firm resistance from Coke. Coke's avowed intention throughout James' reign was, in fact, to establish 'the Bench' as an independent authority, arbitrating between the Crown and his subjects. Coke attempted this in two cases - 'Peacham's Case' in 1615, and the case of 'Commendams' in 1616 - but failed. This led to his ultimate dismissal.<sup>2</sup>

"From then on," writes Aylmer, "Coke's attempt to erect the common law into a kind of independent 'third force' collapsed. Common lawyers either supported the Crown, or they tended to work with the parliamentary opposition".

Another factor which was a source of controversy between James I and his Parliaments was over the question of finance. The financial position of James on his accession to the throne seemed hopeless. He appointed Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, as Lord Treasurer, and he succeeded in almost halving the Crown's debts. He did so as a result of his system of 'New Impositions'. Impositions were the additional customs levied at the ports for the

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1) Ibid, p. 36.

2) G.E. Aylmer - The Struggle for the Constitution 1603-89, p. 51.

purpose of protecting native trade from the competition of foreign merchants - and the regulation of this had always been regarded as being vested in the Crown. This increase in impositions aroused the discontent of the merchants, and their voice of protest was soon heard in the Commons.

In 1610 this question was finally debated. Hakewill in a speech outlined the ways in which the Crown could raise revenue, and ended on a challenging note, saying in effect, that if the money derived from these sources was insufficient, the king should come to Parliament for more. This left no room for supreme sovereignty or absolute power, and James opposed Hakewill vehemently. The fact was, at this stage, that many Members of Parliament were reluctant to vote any regular tax for the Crown, fearing that the king would thereby become independent of Parliament altogether. The outcome of this debate was that, in an arrangement, James undertook to remit the more burdensome of the impositions, while the Commons agreed to grant him the remainder<sup>1</sup>

"on condition that it should be declared illegal by statute to levy impositions in the future without consent of Parliament."

In 1611, however, fresh disputes arose over this matter, and James decided to dissolve Parliament. During the next three years the financial position of James went from bad to worse, until he was compelled to call his second Parliament. He tried to continue his policy of bargaining, but the Commons refused and raised the question of impositions once again, and at the same time demanded the reinstatement of those clergy who had been deprived of their livings in 1604. James replied by dissolving his second Parliament. Lionel Cranfield then became James' financier, and he was so successful in reducing expenditure, that by 1621 and the meeting of the third Parliament, James' finan-

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1) J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 45.

cial position was almost stable.

The attitude of James' third Parliament was affected considerably by foreign policy. James' plan to try and recover the Palatinate for his son-in-law by diplomatic representation at the Spanish Court, and of his scheme for a Spanish marriage for his heir, roused popular animosity and provoked Parliament. The Commons then drew up a petition on matters of foreign policy. James replied by asserting the position of the Crown and by stating that the Commons derived all their privileges from him. This, in turn, resulted in the House of Commons presenting its famous 'Protestation' in December, 1621.<sup>1</sup>

That the liberties, franchises, privileges and jurisdictions of Parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England; and the arduous and urgent affairs concerning the King, State, and defence of the realm and of the Church of England, and the maintenance and making of laws, and redress of mischiefs and grievances which daily happen within this realm, are proper subjects and matter of counsel and debate in Parliament: and that in the handling and proceeding of those businesses every member of the House of Parliament hath, and of right ought to have, freedom of speech to propound, treat, reason and bring to conclusion the same.

James was so incensed by this, which he regarded as the effrontery of the Commons, that he tore the documents from the Journals. Tanner's conclusion is that, whether the king tore this page from the Journals or not,<sup>2</sup>

he could not alter the fact that the Commons.... had now thrown over all the Tudor limitations which warned them off matters of State or the forbidden ground of the Royal Supremacy in matters of religion, and had brought within the scope

Page 56/ .....

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- 1) Quoted in J.R. Tanner - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I 1603-25, pp. 288-9.
  - 2) J.R. Tanner - English Constitutional Conflicts of the 17th century 1603-89, p. 49.

of their survey all 'arduous and urgent affairs concerning the king, State, and defence of the realm, and of the Church of England'.

The stage was now set for the great constitutional and ecclesiastical clash between the Crown and Parliament. And with the death of James I in 1625, his son Charles I came to the throne, and it was he who had to try and hold together the power and prestige of the Crown, in face of the growing demands of the Commons.

CHAPTER 4:

CHARLES I AND THE PURITAN UPHEAVAL.

When Charles I ascended to the throne of England in 1625, the attack on Calvinism, and puritanism in particular, was launched with redoubled fury. In fact, right from the very first session of his first Parliament in June there was trouble over religious questions.

The Arminian movement had been gathering strength among both the educated clergy and the promising young men at the universities, bringing with it a tide of reaction against the Calvinism of the Church of England. This movement - which must not be equated with the Arminian party in Holland - got its name from the Dutch theologian Arminius. Its most important tenet was its objection to Calvin's doctrine of predestination. Thus the Arminian party in England stood for the anti-Calvinist, or rather the anti-predestination, party in the Church of England. The Arminians were attacked in the House of Commons for their allegedly 'catholic' leanings in matters of doctrine and liturgy - for, in general, they put emphasis on the role of the priesthood, and of the Sacraments, and were mainly concerned with a revival of reverence and devotion in public and private worship. Their unpopularity stemmed from the fear and hatred aroused by popery, and was intensified by their political views.<sup>1</sup>

"Some Arminians exalted royal power and prerogative in their sermons and writings, magnifying the powers of the king as against the traditional laws of the land and the place of Parliament."

The weakness of Arminianism on the political side, lay in the fact that it was not a movement which

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1) G.E. Aylmer - The Struggle for the Constitution 1603-89, p. 67.

could command either the support of the Parliament or of the populace. Tanner writes,<sup>1</sup>

"A position 'halfway between two infallibilities' - the infallibility of Geneva and the infallibility of Rome - appealed only to an educated minority; and the artistic and ceremonial revival with which it was associated, created in the popular mind an inevitable confusion between Arminianism and Rome."

Thus the Puritan members of the House of Commons, who were profoundly suspicious of Roman Catholicism, were disposed to regard Arminianism as a<sup>2</sup>

"peculiarly subtle and dangerous form of the Roman poison".

The Arminian party found its only ally in the Crown, and this alliance inevitably resulted in the further widening of the gulf which already separated the Crown from the Commons on the one hand, and the Crown from the Puritan party, on the other.

On his accession to the throne, Charles soon disclosed his religious position and sympathies, to his Parliament. He did so in the famous case of Dr. Montagu, a leading Arminian divine. In a pamphlet entitled 'A Gag of the Reformed Gospel', Matthew Kellison had attacked Calvinism in the Church of England. Montagu replied to this in a pamphlet entitled 'A new Gag for an old Goose'. His reply, however, was not to the liking of the Commons, who immediately presented a petition complaining that Montagu's book smacked of Popery. While this controversy had been raging, Charles had appointed Montagu as a royal chaplain, obviously with the intention of protecting him from the wrath of the Puritan element. Thus when the Commons summoned

Page 59/ .....

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- 1) J.R. Tanner - English Constitutional Conflicts of the 17th century 1603-89, p. 52.
  - 2) Ibid.

Montagu to the bar, to answer for his views, set forth in his pamphlet, Charles sent a message to the House, saying that:<sup>1</sup>

"the things determined concerning Montagu without his privity did not please him, for that he was his servant and chaplain in Ordinary, and he had taken the business into his own hands."

Montagu was liberated. The King's second Parliament, however, reopened the matter, on the grounds that Montagu's books disturbed the peace of the Church, set the King against his subjects, and tended to draw the people to Popery. They prepared to impeach him before the House of Lords. Charles replied by immediately dismissing Parliament.

The result of all this was that the alliance, which had first been formed by James, between the Crown and the Arminians, was firmly cemented by Charles. What made matters worse at this time, and which made Charles' Arminianism more significant than it might otherwise have done, was his marriage to the Roman Catholic princess, Henrietta Maria. The Crown and the Arminian majority within the Church of England, then, had drawn together, in opposing the House of Commons and the Puritan element in the country.

Another factor which drove a wedge between the Crown and Parliament, and which was also responsible for the House of Commons and the Puritans allying themselves against the Arminian Crown and Church, was the theory of the 'Divine Right of Kings' postulated by both James I, and his son, Charles I. This doctrine coloured the political thought of these two monarchs.

In order to understand 'Divine Right', however, we must first of all discuss the term 'prerogative'.<sup>2</sup>

".... The royal prerogative", writes

Page 60/ .....

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1) Ibid, p. 53.

2) J.R. Tanner - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I 1603-25, p. 5.

Tanner, "is neither more nor less than the legal exercise of the royal authority".

This included the powers of legislation and taxation, of summoning and dissolving Parliaments, and, under the Tudors, the control of the Church. Thus it only required a<sup>1</sup>

"few touches to convert the Tudor doctrine of 'royal prerogative' into the Stuart doctrine of 'absolute power'."

It was James I, himself, who first tampered with this idea of prerogative. In a speech to the judges in 1616, he said of his position in the state:<sup>2</sup>

That which concerns the mystery of the King's power is not lawful to be disputed; for that is to wade into the weaknesses of Princes, and to take away the mystical reverence that belongs unto them that sit in the throne of God.... As for the absolute prerogative of the Crown, that is no subject for the tongue of a lawyer, nor is lawful to be disputed. It is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do; good Christians content themselves with His will revealed in His words: so it is presumption and high contempt in a subject to dispute what a King can do, or say that a King cannot do this or that, but rest with that which is the King's revealed will in His law.

The doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings' is closely connected with this doctrine of extraordinary prerogative. In its earlier 17th century form it was little more than a right of inheritance - the right of James to succeed Elizabeth, and Charles to succeed James. But it wasn't long before this doctrine of Divine Right of inheritance was brought to bear upon the doctrine of extraordinary prerogative and absolute power. The argument then became<sup>3</sup> -

"the state of monarchy was the supremest thing on earth, because kings are not only God's lieutenants here below and sit on God's thrones, but even by God Himself are called gods."

Page 61/ .....

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- 1) Ibid.
  - 2) J.R. Tanner - English Constitutional Conflicts of the 17th century 1603-89, p. 20.
  - 3) G. Davies - The Early Stuarts 1603-60, p. 31.

Therefore just as it is blasphemy to dispute what God can do and as all good Christians should content themselves with His will revealed in His word, so it is presumptuous and contemptuous for anyone to dispute what a king can do and thus a good subject should cheerfully abide by his king's pleasure revealed in his law.

This claim to absolute power and of his right to rule by 'divine right' was made all the easier because of similar reasoning in the Middle Ages. In the Middle Ages, the Pope had claimed sovereignty by divine right, and thus disobedience was a mortal sin. But it wasn't long before the Emperors of Europe issued a counter-claim to this -<sup>1</sup>

"that their authority existed by divine right and had come to them, not by the grace of the Pope, but by the grace of God alone."

This was the claim of both Henry IV in France and James I in England, for they both obtained their thrones by the right of birth alone, and without the sanction of the Pope.

James I and Charles I, however, were not very successful in persuading their subjects to accept this doctrine. Parliament, in fact, remained wholly unconvinced. This is well illustrated in a comment written in 1610 by an observer after one of James' many speeches on this subject:<sup>2</sup>

I hear it bred generally much discomfort, to see our monarchiall power and royal prerogative strained so high, and made so transcendent every way, that yf the practise should follow the positions, we are not likely to leave to our successors that freedome we received from our forefathers.

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- 1) J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 23 - this is the argument of J.N. Figgis in his book 'The Divine Right of Kings.'
  - 2) Quoted in G. Davies, loc. cit.

This, in time, gave rise to a feeling of frustration in many who were in turn forced to formulate their own views of the limitation of the monarchy and of the rights of parliament.

The arminian clergy, on the other hand - whom many modern writers call 'Laudian' - adopted this doctrine wholeheartedly and preached it fervently from their pulpits.<sup>1</sup> For example, Laud, himself before the ~~meeting~~<sup>meeting</sup> of Parliament in 1625, preached on this dependence of Parliament upon the king and on the sacred character of the kingly office:<sup>2</sup>

The King is God's immediate lieutenant upon earth, and therefore one and the same action is God's by ordinance and the King's by execution, and the power which resides in the King is not any assuming to himself nor any gift from the people, but God's power as well in as over him.

It was inevitable therefore that the enemies of monarchy and the foes of episcopacy became one and the same, especially in the light of the Crown's affirmation: "No Bishop, no King." The conflict between Crown and Parliament on this point is revealed in the Protestation of both Houses of May 26th, 1642; which reads:<sup>3</sup>

... this erroneous maxim being infused into princes that their kingdoms are their own, and that they may do with them what they will, as if their kingdoms were for them, and not they for their kingdoms.

This doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings', then, was a very definite factor in the alienation of Crown from Parliament, and in the eventual siding of Crown and Church against the House of Commons and Puritanism.

We may sum up the position of Charles I, there-

Page 63/ .....

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- 1) See - supra, p. 44.
  - 2) Quoted in H.O. Wakeman - The Church and the Puritans 1570-1660, p. 113.
  - 3) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 22.

fore, in the words of Mackie:<sup>1</sup>

Incapable of appreciating any other point of view, he came to believe that all opposition to the royal will was sin, and that any concessions which he might make to opposition were but political surrenders to 'force majeure', to be repudiated without shame as soon as opportunity arose. The two great forces which moved the thinking part of his subjects, constitutionalism and Puritanism, were to him incomprehensible. In the arbitrary power of the Crown, ... he saw the only true form of government. In the Church of England, as represented by the divines of the Arminian school, he saw the only true form of Church.

With the death of Buckingham, Charles' chief advisor, in 1628, and with the royal assent being given to the 'Petition of Right' (which dealt with the two main grievances of arbitrary taxation and arbitrary imprisonment), it might have been expected that the relations between Charles and his Parliament would improve. There were, however, too many unsettled questions. Not only had Parliamentary consent not yet been given to the levying of tonnage and poundage - a great source of disagreement between Crown and Parliament - but the religious question was once more coming to the fore. Dr. Montagu, who had so recently caused an uproar in the Commons, was appointed to the Bishopric of Chichester in 1628. Charles had also issued pardons to those ministers who had fallen under the displeasure and censure of Parliament; indulgences were being granted to Roman Catholic priests; and Arminian ceremonies were being revived in the Church. All these contributed to the rising tension in the Commons, especially among those of Puritan sympathies.

Belloc argues that it was at this stage that the Parliamentary leaders determined finally to ally themselves more closely with Puritanism. Those leaders, he argued,

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1) J.D. Mackie - Cavalier and Puritan, p. 164.

were for the most part indifferent to theology, but they had an unflinching sense of tactics and saw how an alliance with the Puritan minority would add driving power to their plans.<sup>1</sup> Whether Belloc is correct in his assumption or not, there is one thing of which we can be sure, and that is that the Puritans now had a very definite representation in the House - albeit a minority - where their voice could be heard amidst the many other demands for reform.

This can be seen when Parliament met again in 1629. The Commons, influenced by this Puritan minority, prepared resolutions on religion, declaring that Popery and Arminianism were spreading. Mr. Rouse, in a speech to the Commons, said:<sup>2</sup>

For an Arminian is the spawn of a Papist,  
... and if you mark it well, you shall  
see an Arminian reaching out his hand to  
a Papist, a Papist to a Jesuit, a Jesuit  
gives one hand to the Pope and the other  
to the King of Spain.

He demanded that those who attacked the Orthodox position should be punished, and their books be suppressed. Holles, despite the King's attempts to silence all opposition, then delivered a protestation to the Commons, which was carried by acclamation: It read.<sup>3</sup>

- 1) Whosoever shall bring in innovation of religion, or by favour or countenance seem to extend or introduce Popery or Arminianism or other opinion disagreeing from the true and orthodox Church, shall be reputed a capital enemy to this kingdom and commonwealth.
- 2) Whosoever shall counsel or advise the taking and levying of the subsidies of tonnage and poundage, not being granted by Parliament,

Page 65/ .....

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- 1) H. Belloc - Charles I King of England, p. 149.
  - 2) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit. p. 68.
  - 3) Quoted in The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-60 - Edited by S.R. Gardiner, p. 82.

or shall be an actor or instrument therein, shall be likewise reputed an innovator in the government and a capital enemy to the kingdom and commonwealth.

- 3) If any merchant or person whatsoever shall voluntarily yield or pay the said subsidies of tonnage and poundage, not being granted by Parliament, he shall likewise be reputed a betrayer of the liberties of England, and an enemy to the same.

Charles immediately dissolved Parliament, and from 1629 - 1640 we have the eleven years of his personal rule - often referred to as the 'Eleven Years' Tyranny'. And the two main figures associated with this period, who helped mould and implement Charles' policies, are Wentworth (later Earl of Strafford), and William Laud.

From the correspondence of these two there comes that name which has subsequently been given to the policy practised by Charles and his government - the policy of 'Thorough'. Laud, writing in September 1633, said:<sup>1</sup>

For the State indeed, my Lord, I am for Thorough; but I see that both thick and thin stays somebody where I conceive it should not, and it is impossible for me to go through alone.

A contemporary writer said of Laud and Wentworth, and their policy of 'thorough':<sup>2</sup>

They struck a league like sun and moon to govern day and night, Religion and State.

This system of 'thorough', of the eleven years of Charles' personal rule, has two aspects - the financial-cum-constitutional, and the ecclesiastical. And it was in these two aspects that both Wentworth and Laud roused the opposition of the Puritan element in Church and Parliament.

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1) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit. p. 72.

2) Quoted in ibid., p. 73.

We must first turn to Laud and his ecclesiastical policy.

As we have seen, it was about this time that the Arminian party was gaining more support in the Church, and was thus consolidating its position in the government. From the time that Charles had succeeded his father in 1625, it may be said that the chief administrator in the Church had been William Laud - even though Abbott was still Archbishop of Canterbury. Abbott's support of Puritanism was not acceptable to Charles,<sup>1</sup>

"While Laud was not only his personal friend but also one in heart with him in matters religious and ecclesiastical."

In fact, his influence with the new king soon manifested itself in his being commanded to supply him with a list of the leading churchmen in the land, with 'O' (Orthodox) and 'P' (Puritan) against their names, so that the king could be guided in dispensing Church-patronage. It was inevitable, therefore, that at the death of Abbott in 1633, Charles put forward Laud - the most distinguished member of the Arminian school - to succeed him.

Laud immediately reverted to the anti-Puritan policy of Whitgift and Bancroft. Almost from the beginning he wielded great influence in the affairs of the country.<sup>2</sup>

He completely won over the ear of the king, and became in effect the Chief Minister of the Crown, with a finger in every political pie. The inextricable mingling of politics with ecclesiastical affairs prevented even the good features of his Church policy from bearing fruit. When the people were at last driven into revolt the cause of King and Church had become one and indivisible.

Laud was pre-eminently occupied with the questions of ceremony, ritual and church discipline, rather than with the 'High Church' doctrines of the Arminians. He

Page 67/ .....

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1) W.L. Mackintosh - Life of William Laud, p. 74.

2) H. Martin - Puritanism and Richard Baxter, p. 22.

called this outward ceremonial the "beauty of holiness."

He wrote:<sup>1</sup>

But all that I laboured for in this particular was that the external worship of God in this Church might be kept up in uniformity and decency and some beauty of holiness. And this the rather, because I found that with the contempt of the outward - worship of God the inward fell away apace.

It is true that the Puritans did care little for ceremonies. Milton brings this out clearly, when he described the ancient ceremonial of the Church as:<sup>2</sup>

deformed and fantastic dresses, ... fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe or the flamen's vestry, by means of which the soul given up justly to fleshly delights, bated her wing apace downward, and finding the ease she had from her visible and sensuous colleague, the body, in performance of religious duties, her pinions now broken and flagging, shifted off from herself the labour of high-soaring any more, forgot her heavenly flight and left the dull and droiling carcase to plod on in the old road and drudging trade of outward conformity.

But whatever the Puritans might have thought of uniformity of worship and ceremony, they cared greatly about unity and uniformity of belief. Thus, while Laud used the power at his disposal, in the King's Supremacy, to enforce ceremonial uniformity, the Puritans in Parliament sought to obtain the power which they did not as yet possess, to enforce a doctrinal unity.

In his attempts to secure outward uniformity in religious affairs, Laud made full use of the disciplinary machinery at his disposal - this machinery consisted of the system of visitation of dioceses, the ecclesiastical courts, and, at the very centre, the Court of High Commission.

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1) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 80.

2) Quoted in ibid.

By using this system of 'Metropolitcal Visitation', Laud was reviving the claim of his Medieval predecessors to visit, in person, every parish in the whole province of Canterbury. He was thus able to establish his personal authority throughout most of England, seeing that his bishops ruled their dioceses as he desired.

The Court of High Commission, his other chief weapon, was a body of clergy and laity, to whom the King delegated his ecclesiastical power; thus making it<sup>1</sup>

"erastian not only in origin but in spirit". And so we find authors, printers, lecturers, clergymen, conventicles, and even whole congregations, being forced to appear before this court and punished.

Between 1634 and 1637 Laud conducted a visitation of the whole of the Southern Province, with the Archbishop of York doing likewise in the North. Any clergyman who refused to conform to the Prayer Book, or who resisted the removal of the Communion Table to the east end of the Church, or who objected to bowing at the name of Jesus during the services, for example, were summoned before the Court of High Commission. The aid of this Court was also sought to maintain a censorship of all theological writings, and especially to prevent the importation of any Calvinist literature from the Continent. This censorship, then, was in episcopal hands, and not civil, and Laud was thus able to prosecute all Puritans who attempted to speak in print.

In those days the pulpit was of as great importance as the press. The Sunday afternoon sermon was used with most vigour by the Puritans. This was the system, as we saw,<sup>2</sup> whereby leading Puritan preachers were appointed as 'lecturers' to various parishes to deliver these sermons.

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1) G.M. Trevelyan - England under the Stuarts, p. 139.

2) See - supra, p. 32.

In order to suppress these Puritan 'lectures', Laud issued instructions in 1629, to the effect that bishops should suppress these Sunday afternoon services in their dioceses, replacing them with elementary catechisms. In addition, all 'lecturers' were to read divine services from the Prayer Book in surplices, thereby affirming their 'orthodoxy'.

What made these restrictions all the more onerous for the Puritans was the freedom, both to preach and publish, enjoyed by the Arminian faction. This can be seen in the case of Montagu, for example. A Puritan, in such a position, would have run the risk of severe punishment had he replied to Montagu in an unlicensed pamphlet, (not that this prevented them from doing so). Thus, while the Puritans were forbidden to preach against the prerogative and ~~an~~ <sup>the</sup> establishment, the Arminian was permitted to support it at will, and with vehemence at that.

Another practice which Laud ruthlessly suppressed was that of the meeting together of non-conformists or separatist bodies for the purpose of worship. These little groups, known as 'Conventicles', met secretly in private houses, or even out-of-doors. Bancroft, though writing many years earlier, shows what these 'conventicles' were like:<sup>1</sup>

They have brought the people in manye places to sorsake theire parrishe Churches, and to frequent Conventicles, sometyme in howses, sometymes in fields and woods (as though the word of God might not be preached syncerelie and publiquelye in theise dayes) to forsake theire owne Pastors, and to folowe them up and downe the Contrye, and to leave theire trades and occupations, almost every daye in the weeke (to theire great impoverishing), for the attendance of theire novelties.

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1) Quoted in S.B. Babbage - Puritanism and Richard Bancroft, p. 23.

This was soon forbidden, however, as the law only permitted services which were conducted in the parish churches and by licensed clergymen.

Yet another means by which Laud sought to enforce uniformity within the Church, was by insisting that every clergyman, before being ordained by the bishop, should take the 'Et Cetera Oath'. In doing so, every clergyman expressed his approval of the doctrine, discipline and government of the Church, in its existing shape. He promised:<sup>1</sup>

"I, ....., do swear that I do approve the doctrine, and discipline, or government established in the Church of England as containing all things necessary to salvation: and that I will not endeavour by myself or any other, directly or indirectly to bring in any popish doctrine contrary to that which is so established; nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of this Church by archbishops, bishops, deans and archdeacons, etc., as it stands now established, and as being right it ought to stand, nor yet ever to subject it to the usurpations and superstitions of the see of Rome. And all these things I do plainly and sincerely acknowledge and swear, according to the plain and common sense and understanding of the same words, without any equivocation, or mental evasion, or secret reservation whatsoever. And this I do heartily, willingly, and truly, upon the faith of a Christian. So help me God in Jesus Christ.

This was all part of Charles' and Lauds' attempt to stereotype the existing order, and to impose uniformity upon the Church. Any attempt at non-conformity was met ruthlessly by means of the prerogative courts. The inevitable result being that the unpopularity of these courts was greatly increased. Aylmer writes,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Perhaps more important still, not only

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- 1) Quoted in Documents illustrative of English Church History - compiled by H. Gee and W.J. Hardy, p. 536.
  - 2) G.E. Aylmer, op. cit., p. 89.

among the clergy but also among laymen, middle-of-the-road Protestants came to join the Puritans in opposition. Their disapproval of Laud's insistence on alters being raised and railed off at the east end of the Churches, and his other changes in the ordering of such matters, merged in their deeper fears of Catholicism."

In the late sixteen-thirties the religious conflict between Laud and the leaders of the Puritan party was intensified. The trickle of Puritan pamphlets and publications became a flood, despite Laud's attempts to control the press, and prosecute offenders.

The most famous of these pamphleteers was William Prynne.<sup>1</sup>

Prynne's powerful intellect and massive learning were constricted within the rigid bonds of his fanatical prejudices. He had no interests outside the study, no wife, few friends, and he advocated his Calvinist convictions with the glum ferocity of the professional pedant. He was an exasperating, unloved, unlovable man but his single-minded and ill-placed courage were to make him over the years, into a popular public character.

Between 1627, the date of his first publication, and the assembling of the Long Parliament in 1640 - six of these years being spent in prison - he issued almost a score of tracts, most of them unlicensed and of prodigious length. The vividness of his language can be seen in one of his 'epistles', where he describes how the bishops climb:<sup>2</sup>

little by little from the miserable state of poverty, unto the highest seats of power, and there greedie starvelings hungrier than ever suppress the poore, scratch and rake together all that comes to hand, ... make lawes and keepe not the same, .... justifie the wicked for reward and take away the just mans desert from him.

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1) C.V. Wedgwood - The King's Peace 1637-41, p. 109.

2) Quoted in W. Haller - The Rise of Puritanism, p. 223.

His aim, then, was to overthrow everything established in the Church, and the immediate implementation of the Puritan claims. His method was simply to provoke his opponents.<sup>1</sup>

"If the authorities ignored him, he was outraged. If they noticed him, he grew clamorous. If they proceeded publicly against him, he embraced the opportunity to make a louder outcry before a larger audience."

This is brought out in the series of prosecutions, initiated by Laud and Charles, against three of the most influential of these Puritan pamphleteers - Frynne himself, Henry Burton and John Bastwicke. They were charged to appear before the Star Chamber, and subsequently sentenced to be branded publicly. Instead of discouraging the populace, as was intended, these prosecutions won a great amount of support for the Puritans, especially from those who would not otherwise have been inclined to their cause. What roused popular indignation more than anything else, was that the very bishops who sought these prosecutions, sat as judges at this court.

Laud, then, by enforcing his discipline indiscriminately over clergy and laity alike, had, in the words of Wakeman:<sup>2</sup>

the political result of turning what had been a constitutional opposition in alliance with Puritanism, into a religious opposition in alliance with constitutionalism.

The prosecution of the Puritans, the ever-increasing role of the bishops in political office, and the allegedly pro-catholic, but undoubted Arminian, tendencies of the Crown, all came together in these years, to give a great additional strength to Puritanism. Thus men in the House of Commons, who in 1630 had been content merely to assert the

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1) Ibid, p. 219.

2) H.O. Wakeman, op. cit., p. 134.

right of Parliament to inquire into ecclesiastical abuses, were by 1640 prepared to attack Episcopacy and the Church establishment itself.

Having considered the ecclesiastical conflicts during Charles' personal rule, let us now briefly discuss the financial and constitutional conflicts, in so far as they affected and drew support for the Puritans now exerting their influence in the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup>

The most serious cause of the administrative weakness of the Crown, and which was responsible more than anything else for Charles having to recall Parliament, was lack of money. This had been the problem confronting the Crown throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, especially since taxation was not large. The ordinary revenue, even in peacetime, was insufficient for the running of the government. And thus it became the custom for the Crown to provide the necessary supplement by means of Parliamentary grants. As these were no longer available to Charles since he had dissolved Parliament, he had to find money elsewhere. And it was in these efforts that he alienated all classes in the country against him.

He introduced the system of 'forest loans', appealing to all sorts of medieval precedents to impose various taxes and levies - the most notorious of these being 'ship-money'. By law, the Crown was allowed to raise this levy from the coastal towns and counties in time of war or in obvious national emergencies. By 1636, however, Charles had extended this tax from the coastal areas to the whole country, and it was thus becoming a regular and permanent form of revenue. It was this issue that led to one of the great constitutional law cases during Charles' reign - namely, that of John Hampden.

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1) Not that we are here discounting the importance and significance of these financial and constitutional matters.

Hampden had refused to pay the small amount of 'ship-money' for which he was assessed. His case was heard before all twelve of the common law judges. In giving their decisions, some of the judges advanced the doctrine of royal prerogative, while others spoke up for the liberties of the individual and of Parliament. The verdict, given in 1638, resulted in a victory for the Crown by the narrowest of margins - seven to five.<sup>1</sup>

"Characteristically Charles took this result as a complete justification of his policy, but to everyone else it was obvious that a constitutional crisis was imminent."

This decision naturally caused a general loss of confidence in the courts of law - especially by the Parliamentary leaders. The summoning of Parliament now became a necessity for them, as they had nothing to hope for from the judges, regarding the constitutional reforms they desired.

We must now turn to the year 1640 - the year in which Charles' personal rule came to an end. In April of that year the Earl of Strafford advised Charles to summon Parliament. The reason for this was that the Scots had rejected Laud and his policy of 'thorough', whereby he had tried to impose uniformity in England upon the Church of Scotland. This had led to the uniting of the Scots nation in the signing of the 'National Covenant', and of the subsequent mobilization of the Scottish army and the threat of invasion. By recalling Parliament, Charles hoped to obtain supplies for another attempt to defend Episcopacy in Scotland, and coerce the Scots. He had thought, naturally enough, that he could depend upon the patriotism of Parliament to grant these supplies to protect England from invasion - especially in the light of the traditional attitude of England towards the Scots.

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1) J.D. Mackie, op. cit., p. 210.

Pym, had by this time, emerged as a leader of the House of Commons. To him the threat of invasion from the north, did not seem as of great importance as the common hatred of Arminianism and the common grievances against the Crown, now so widespread throughout the country. Thus, although Charles offered to abandon 'ship-money' if the Commons would grant him supplies, Pym succeeded in convincing the House that the redress of grievances must precede all supply. Seeing no hope forthcoming, Charles dissolved the 'Short' Parliament

In November of that year, however, by the irresistible march of events, Charles was forced to summon the 'Long' Parliament, which was to require of him an account of his eleven years of non-parliamentary government.<sup>1</sup> At the opening of the Long Parliament we find as much stress being laid upon religious as upon civil grievances. But the attitude of the House of Commons was essentially what we may call 'lay' or 'unclerical'. This was because in the past years the clergy, under the leadership of Laud, had meddled in secular affairs, with bishops often holding high political office. The clergy, and bishops especially, then, had to be restricted to their purely spiritual function. But the members of the House were resolved to assert and foster Puritanism, of which Charles and his bishops had shown themselves so intolerant. Pym demonstrates this feeling of the House in a speech which he delivered soon after Parliament had been summoned. After speaking of the danger from the Papists, Pym alludes to the corrupt part of the clergy:<sup>2</sup>

Favourites such as for preferment  
prize not conscience,... and, worse

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1) J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 90.

2) Quoted in W.A. Shaw - A History of the English Church 1640-60, vol. 1, p. 11.

than Papists, these are willing to run into Popery; and these, though several, aimed at one end, and to its achievement walk on four feet - at first slowly, now by strides - and are near their ends if they be not prevented. The first foot is ecclesiastical courts - their action in discountenancing of preachers and virtuous men whom they persecute under the law of purity - their countenancing of preachers of a contrary disposition... and their frequent preachings and instructions to preach up the absolute monarchy of kings.

These, then, were the principles underlying the first legislation of the Long Parliament, concerning religious and ecclesiastical affairs. Shaw shows how, as the breach between the two conflicting parties in the struggle widened,<sup>1</sup>

"so did the bounds of these principles, and finally episcopacy itself, the machinery of the Church of England, was called into question."

One point we must take into consideration here is the complete change of spirit between the temper of the Short Parliament and that of the Long Parliament. Belloc, though not reliable in matters of detail, nevertheless gives a fairly accurate picture when he says:<sup>2</sup>

In that brief interval the mood had wholly changed. No longer were the wealthy country gentlemen and lawyers, many of whom had at first been new to debate, amenable to compromise; the revolutionary spirit hitherto concentrated in a few determined men had spread through such great numbers of them that the tone, of the majority at least, was becoming fervid in favour of catastrophic innovation.

Hyde illustrates this new spirit of hostility towards the Crown and its government, when he said to Hyde:<sup>3</sup>

they must be of another temper than they were in the last Parliament; that they must not only sweep the House clean below, but must pull

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1) Ibid, p. 3.

2) H. Belloc, op. cit., p. 235.

3) Quoted in J.R. Tanner, op. cit., p. 91.

down all the cobwebs which hang in the top and corners.

The Long Parliament began by attacking the system of arbitrary government. It set before itself three principal objects:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) to release the sufferers from arbitrary government;
- 2) to punish the men by whose advice arbitrary government had been established; and
- 3) to make it impossible for arbitrary government ever to be established again.

The first of these was attained when the chief victims of the two prerogative courts, the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission, were released and received compensation. The punishment of the evil counsellors was not long delayed either - as can be seen in the cases of Strafford and Laud. First of all, Strafford was impeached and sent to the Tower, and duly executed in May, 1641. Laud, the other representative of absolutism and propagator of the policy 'thorough', followed him to the block. And then with regard to the third purpose, the Long Parliament passed eight statutes<sup>2</sup>, in order to prevent the re-establishment of arbitrary government in the future. They were:<sup>3</sup>

- 1) the Triennial Act, which stated that not more than three years should elapse without Parliament being summoned, thereby preventing a recurrence of the 'Eleven Years' Tyranny';
- 2) An act which made it illegal for the Long Parliament to be dissolved by the Crown without its own consent;
- 3) The Tonnage and Poundage Act, which settled the controversy - between the Crown and Parliament concerning impositions - finally in favour of Parliament;

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1) See - ibid, p. 92.

2) See - ibid, pp. 96-99.

- 4) The act 'for the abolition of the Court of Star Chamber';
- 5) The Act 'for the abolition of the Court of High Commission' - this act abolished the High Commission by repealing the clause of Elizabeth's Act of Supremacy under which it had been constituted; and at the same time deprived the ecclesiastical courts, in general, of power to inflict fines, imprisonment or corporal punishment;
- 6) An Act 'for the declaring unlawful and void the late proceedings touching ship-money, and for the vacating of all records and process concerning the same';
- 7) An Act restoring 'the boundaries of the royal forests to their limits in the twentieth year of King James';
- 8) An Act 'for the prevention of vexatious proceedings touching the Order of Knighthood.'

"The practical effect of these statutes taken as a whole was to deprive the Crown of all the extraordinary powers which it had possessed under the Tudor sovereigns." <sup>1</sup>

Having accomplished this, Parliament had achieved all that was necessary in the way of constitutional reform. It now turned to the ecclesiastical questions, which to many of its members were the major issues.

The imprisonment of Laud and the abolition of the Court of High Commission had by no means settled the ecclesiastical controversies which divided the two sides. It was generally agreed that the drift towards Arminianism must be stopped, for most of the members of the Commons were one in their support of Puritanism. In order to do this they thought it desirable that the control of the Church should be taken out of the hands of the Crown, governing through bishops, and that it should be placed instead under statutes

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1) Ibid, p. 99.

passed by Parliament. Thus the Commons was unanimous in this policy of destruction. But when it came to the question, however, as to what system was to replace Episcopacy in the Church, a rift soon appeared, dividing the House into two irreconcilable camps. In other words, unity prevailed in the House, so long as it was concerned with a negative programme.

It is at this stage that the Puritans can be said to be in complete ascendancy in the House of Commons. At first they had been united in their attack on Arminianism and Laud, and on the constitutional and religious reforms necessary. But when most of these reforms had been accomplished, and the time came for them to draw up an alternative system of Church government, they were divided. On the one side were the extreme anti-Episcopalean Puritans, the 'Root-and-Branch' party, so-called because of the famous petition presented to the Commons and later embodied in a Bill. They sought to destroy the system of Church government by bishops 'root and branch'. This group had been maintaining close relations with the Scots, and favoured the Presbyterian model of government. On the other side, were the more moderate Puritans, often referred to as the 'Episcopalean Puritans', who wished merely to remove the abuses of the Laudian era, without changing the basic system of the Established Church, as it had grown up and endured since the Elizabethan Settlement.

The first signs of this division appeared in February, 1641. At this stage the moderate party had strong support outside Parliament. The views of this party are illustrated in a speech delivered by Lord Digby:<sup>1</sup>

There is no man within these walls  
more sensible of the heavy grievance  
of Church government than myself,  
nor whose affections are keener to  
the clipping of these wings of the

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1) Quoted in ibid, p. 102.

prelates whereby they have mounted to such insolences; nor whose zeal is more ardent to the searing of them so as they may never spring again. But having reason to believe that some aim at a total extirpation of bishops, which is against my heart, .... I cannot restrain myself from labouring to divert it - or at least to set such notes upon it as may make it ineffectual to the end.

Vane, on the other hand, illustrated the stand-point of the 'Root-and-Branch' party in a speech delivered in June, 1641. In it he asserted that the whole fabric of episcopal government was:<sup>1</sup>

"'rotten and corrupt from the very foundation of it to the top', and must be pulled down in the interest both of religion and of the civil State."

The weak point of the moderate party, however, was that it offered no satisfactory guarantee for the supremacy of Puritanism in the future. Consequently, when the King held aloof and refused to ensure the supremacy of Puritanism if he continued to reign, the conviction gained ground among those who were hesitant, that unless bishops were abolished, the Crown would merely restore them to their full authority, despite any limitations the Long Parliament might succeed in instituting for a time. Charles thus played directly into the hands of the 'root-and-branch' party, and this, more than anything else, was responsible for the eventual triumph of this party within the Commons.

The Irish Rebellion, and the necessity of raising a military force in order to keep control in that country, resulted in the final split between these two parties and their alignment on opposite sides. The moderate party - which was opposed to great ecclesiastical changes - supported the Crown in this question of raising an army for Ireland, while the 'root-and-branch' party supported the Commons. These two parties, then, can be said to have become divided not only on religious, but on constitutional grounds as well.

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1) Quoted in ibid, p. 103.

This new division of parties in Parliament is clearly brought out in the voting of the 'Grand Remonstrance' in November, 1641. This document contained a long list of the evils prevalent in the kingdom, a list of reforms already achieved by the Long Parliament, and a list of the grievances still to be redressed. It also contained a statement of the religious policy of the 'root-and-branch' party which now had the support of the majority within the Commons. It reads:<sup>1</sup>

We confess our intention is ... to reduce within bounds that exorbitant power which the prelates have assumed unto themselves... And we do here declare that it is far from our purpose or desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government in the Church, to leave private persons or particular congregations to take up what form of Divine Service they please; for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole realm a conformity to that order which the law enjoin according to the Word of God .... And the better to effect the intended Reformation, we desire there may be a general synod of the most grave, pious, learned, and judicious divines of this island, assisted with some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us - who may consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church, and represent the results of their consultations unto the Parliament, to be there allowed of and confirmed, and receive the stamp of authority, thereby to find passage and obedience throughout the kingdom.

The 'Remonstrance' was fiercely debated at every stage, and when the vote was taken it was carried by a majority of eleven.

From this time on, the resort to armed conflict between the two opposing sides - the Crown and the Church on the one hand, and the House of Commons under the leadership of the extreme Puritan wing on the other - was inevitable.

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1) Quoted in ibid, p. 109.

Charles' attempt at personal rule and his desire for uniformity throughout his kingdom, both in Church and State, had failed.

In conclusion, all that it is necessary to say is that with the triumph of the Parliamentary forces in the Civil War, the Church of England became, for the first time in its history, Presbyterian in its government and polity. The purge and reform of the Church, so long awaited and hoped for by the Puritans since the time of Elizabeth, had now been fulfilled - despite the attempts of Charles and his chief ministers, Laud and Strafford, and their rigid implementation of the policy of 'thorough'.

CHAPTER 5:

IN CONCLUSION:

On looking at the documents published during the period preceding the English Civil War, it is clearly revealed how the questions of religion and of Church government loomed large for contemporaries.

The Church of the 17th century was something very different from what we know as the Church today. It was a political as well as a religious organization. Christopher Hill illustrates this:<sup>1</sup>

It guided all movements of men from baptism to the burial service, and was the gateway to that life to come in which all men fervently believed. The Church educated children; in the village parishes .. the parson's sermon was the main source of information on current events and problems, of guidance on economic conduct. The Parish itself was an important unit of local government.... The Church, then, defended the existing order, and it was important for the Government to maintain its control over this publicity and propaganda agency.

It was inevitable therefore, that most social and economic and political conflicts tended to become religious in the end. This can be seen in the case of Oliver Cromwell and the army chaplains, who led the Parliamentary forces in the Civil War. For them, the war became primarily a religious conflict:<sup>2</sup>

"Religion was not the thing first contested for," said Cromwell in one of his speeches, "but God brought it to that issue at last; and gave it unto us by redundancy, and at last it proved that which was most dear to us."

There are three main interpretations given to the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> The first is that it was a political conflict -

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- 1) The English Revolution - Edited by C. Hill, p. 15.
  - 2) Quoted in L.F. Solt - Saints in Arms, p. 14.
  - 3) See supra, p. 2.

between the Crown on the one hand, and the House of Commons on the other. The second is that it was an economic, or class war. And the third interpretation, and this is the one which we have been considering throughout, is that it was a religious conflict.

We must not make the mistake, however, of thinking that because the purpose of this thesis has been to re-assert the religious causes of the Civil War that this necessarily implies a rejection of the other two interpretations which have been presented. There were certainly social, economic and political factors which, together with these religious questions, gave rise to the Civil War in England. In fact - in the words of Christopher Hill - these factors<sup>1</sup>

"correspond to the complexity of life in 17th century England."

What has been emphasized throughout, is that the religious factors did play a very important and significant part in the causes of the war. So much so, that if one is to come to any honest conclusion as regards the origins and causes of the English Civil War, the Puritans and the religious conflicts which they instigated, must be taken into consideration.

What, then, is our conclusion? Hugh Martin sums it up as follows:<sup>2</sup>

The significant fact is that religious and political discontent joined hands. Elizabeth had created a religious opposition. James and Charles created a political opposition. Together these made the Civil War....

It was under Elizabeth, then, that the Puritan movement originated - it sprung out of the shock of disappointment that she had not taken the reform of the Church

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1) C. Hill - The Century of Revolution (1603-1714), p.101.

2) H. Martin - Puritanism and Richard Baxter, p. 21.

of England far enough, in her Religious Settlement.<sup>1</sup> This was the religious opposition she created. Throughout her reign, however, Elizabeth asserted her position as governor of things 'temporal' and things 'spiritual'. In almost every session of her Parliament, her opponents could be heard, but she always showed that she could control them. She did so by<sup>2</sup>

"mingling threats and coercion with appeals to her success and to her popularity."

James and Charles, on the other hand, were unable to exercise this control and authority of the Crown, which had been the hallmark of Elizabeth's reign. It was they who alienated their Parliaments and created a political opposition. And it was during their reigns that the political and the religious discontent joined hands and presented a united front of opposition to the Crown and its policies.

It is important to realize that Elizabeth had attempted to prevent anything like this from happening - that is, a possible alignment between the Crown's religious and political opponents in the country. She did so by insisting that the two spheres - the religious and the political - were completely independent of each other, and thus all ecclesiastical affairs were to be under the jurisdiction of Convocation, while all political affairs fell under the control of Parliament. No interference in the affairs of either of these bodies by the other, was tolerated.

And yet, it was during her reign that the possibility of such interference was created. Up to 1563, the Puritans had used the constitutional means placed at their disposal, in attempting to work for the reform of the Church -

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1) See supra, p. 15.

2) D. Nobbs - England & Scotland (1560-1707), p. 64.

that is, through Convocation. In that year, however, they were defeated, and so it was that they turned to Parliament for support, and from then on they used the House of Commons as the mouthpiece for their religious grievances and demands. The result was inevitable - when the Crown proved itself unable to exert its authority and control, the religious and the constitutional opposition in Parliament gradually aligned themselves with one another.

Under James and Charles, therefore, the Puritans and the House of Commons - "the religious and the political discontent" - did just this. They joined hands and presented a united front of opposition to the Crown. We have already seen how, at the outset, the Puritan reformers opposed the Religious Settlement of the Crown from within the Church, but that after their defeat in 1563 they resolved to work through Parliament - this, in time, naturally resulted in an identification of their programme for religious reform with that of the Commons. The leaders of the Commons in aligning themselves with this Puritan minority did so, purely and simply, for the political advantage which could be gained from such an alliance. This can be seen in the case of the 'Millenary Petition'. By the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640, however, the religious conviction which had been absent before, is now predominant. In fact, by the time the extreme Puritan wing - 'the root-and-branch' party - had gained ascendancy in the Commons, the desire for religious reform has come right to the fore and seems to be more important than the constitutional grievances.

This alliance formed between the Puritans and the Commons was not accomplished by chance - circumstances made it unavoidable. There are a number of reasons for this. The first is that the leaders of the Church of the early 17th century were Arminian, in opposition to the strict Calvinism

of the Puritan reformers.<sup>1</sup> When the Crown rose to the defence of the Arminian clergy, finally appointing an Arminian bishop to be primate of all England, the result was that the Puritans looked to the Commons for support. Another factor which further widened the gulf between the two camps, was that the Stuarts fervently believed in the Doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, which they interpreted to mean that they had the right to rule absolutely.<sup>2</sup> By doing so, James and Charles antagonized their Parliaments who, with ever increasing urgency, demanded constitutional changes. When the Arminian clergy preached and defended this doctrine from their pulpits, the religious state of affairs and the Puritan demand for reform began to have added significance. Yet a third factor which firmly cemented the alliance between the Crown and the Church on the one hand, and between the Puritans and the Commons on the other, was the conviction that Monarchy and Episcopacy were dependent upon each other.<sup>3</sup> James I, in fact, often repeated the affirmation 'No Bishop, No King'. It was inevitable therefore that the enemies of the monarchy became the foes of episcopacy, and vice versa.

Thus it is true to say that the religious and the constitutional spheres had become so identified with one another by the outbreak of the Civil War, that any attempt at reform in one, was certain to involve the other.

This brings us to our final point - that there were not only religious causes of the Civil War, but religious effects as well. With the defeat of Charles I and his 'Royalist' forces, the whole establishment in England collapsed. Most important of all, was the destruction of the Religious Settlement established by Elizabeth in 1559;

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- 1) See supra, pp. 57 sqq.
  - 2) See supra, pp. 43 sqq, 59 sqq.
  - 3) See supra, pp. 28, 62.

and England became, for the first time in her history, Presbyterian. The government of the Church by bishops was abolished, being replaced by the Presbyterian polity of presbyteries and elders. In other words, the religious demands the Puritan reformers had been pressing for since the time of Elizabeth, were accomplished - England, and the Church of England especially, were affected 'religiously' by the Civil War.

It would be erroneous if we were to conclude from all this that Puritanism was merely a scheme of Church government, a movement bent on a further reform of the Church of England. It was more than that.<sup>1</sup>

It was a new way of life, overrunning all the divisions which from time to time seamed its surface and threatening in each of its manifestations to disrupt the existing order.

And it was in this sense that - despite its failure to achieve its desired reform because of the constant persecution by the Crown and its Ministers - it continued, strengthening its hold upon the English nation. The preachers, more than anyone else, were the true authors of its advance, by setting forth the Puritan way of life<sup>2</sup>

by precept, image and example in pulpit and press, rather than agitation against the existing government or to the effort to erect separate churches in defiance of the law.

Puritanism, then, was first and foremost a way of life, and it was as a result of this that it won so many supporters in its struggle with the Crown and the clergy of the Church over the Religious Settlement. It was so successful that, at the outbreak of the Civil War, it had gained complete ascendancy in the House of Commons. It inspired the one army against the other in the war itself. It was an ideal, therefore, for which men were willing to die.

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1) W. Haller - The Rise of Puritanism, p. 18.

2) Ibid.

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To pretend that religion was not a cause of the Civil War, then, is to ignore one of the most important aspects of the conflict, so far as the 17th century itself was concerned.

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