

# The Triumph of the "Arminian" Party in the Church of England

By KIRK R. McCLELLAND

" . . . but for the Church at home, you see the  
Lord hath begun to make a breach upon us."

Dr. John Preston, from  
*A Sermon preached . . .*  
*before the Commons-House,*  
2 July 1625.

In the third decade of the seventeenth century, a small group of vocal and active divines—generally known as the "Arminians"—emerged in the Church of England, whose doctrinal, ceremonial, and ecclesiastical polity differed significantly from the mainstream Protestantism which dominated both the Church and society.<sup>1</sup> Although decidedly a minority group, by the end of the 1620's, this "party" of churchmen had assumed control of the ecclesiastical establishment. The reasons for this remarkable ascendancy are complicated. The foundation of their power rested ultimately on the official backing of Charles I and his first minister, the Duke of Buckingham.

Viewed with suspicion and held in deep contempt by a majority of the men who sat in the House of Commons, the promotion of this group to power must be regarded as one of the most conspicuous examples of that implacable royal insensitivity to the expressed opinion of a large section of the governing class which so characterized the reign of Charles I. The King's obstinate support of the Arminian churchmen, which the opposition considered a particularly pernicious alliance, added not a little to that general "crisis of confidence" and moral gulf between court and country which made men revolution-

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1. Although the great majority of Englishmen in the early seventeenth century were Protestants, there were a variety of different Protestant attitudes and positions. "High-Church" Anglicans and extreme Puritans were both Protestant and existed side by side in the Church. Most Englishmen, inside and outside the Church, probably leaned toward the "Low-Church" Anglican or moderate, Episcopalian Puritan posture. Basically content with the broad outlines of the Elizabethan settlement, they wanted the Church of England to be more Protestant than it was, as they believed traces of Catholicism still lingered in it. Deeply suspicious of any tendencies towards Rome, they wanted to minimize the role of the hierarchical priesthood, the sacraments, the liturgy, and ceremony, while emphasizing prayer, sermons and the Bible.

aries against the royal authority. To trace the rise of the "Arminian party" within the Church of England, and their role in the political crisis of the late 1620's, is the purpose of this study.

### I. *English Arminianism*

The term "Arminian" presents the historian with a difficult problem of definition. In the strictest theological sense, Arminianism, which derived its name from the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, represented a reaction to the rigidities of Calvinist predestinarianism: "a softening of the rigor of predestination in the interests of God's universal charity."<sup>2</sup> To most historians, Arminianism is taken to mean a rejection of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination in favor of a belief in "the efficacy of man's will to seek and achieve salvation."<sup>3</sup> Arminians, in short, were believers in man's free will. As J.F.H. New's recent study makes clear, such a definition is an oversimplification. The doctrine of predestination, as New explains, had a two-way application: God elected some to eternal bliss, and relegated the rest to eternal damnation. A man technically became an Arminian by rejecting the reprobative aspect of predestination, that is, that God had decreed the non-elect to damnation. Instead of this doctrine of absolute *double* predestination, the Arminians maintained that "grace flowed in all men, and salvation was proffered to all if not conferred on all."<sup>4</sup> If some men missed the opportunity of salvation it was due not to "God's inexorable will but to human obstinacy" which man could control. Arminianism, therefore, stressed the universality of Christ's atonement and the efficacy of man's will to seek, although not to achieve, salvation. Man was free only in the sense that he could destroy his opportunity to have salvation conferred upon him by God. For the Arminians, like the strict Calvinists, believed that God and God alone supplied the grace necessary for salvation.

In England, this was the doctrinal position taken by William Barret, Peter Baro, John Overall and Lancelot Andrewes. It was the theological position of these men—especially Andrewes—which was adapted by William Laud, Richard Montague, Richard Neile and other prominent "Arminians" who rose to power under Charles I. Of interest to the historian is the fact that, though all technically Arminians, to a man these churchmen repudiated this appellation.

2. J.F.H. New, *Anglican and Puritan* (Stanford, 1964), 13.

3. Charles and Katherine George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation, 1570-1640* (Princeton, 1961), 67.

4. New, *Anglican and Puritan*, 13.

To understand why this was so, we must turn to a consideration of Arminianism in a historical rather than a theological context.

By the 1620's, it was evident to many Protestant Englishmen that those churchmen who were in the strict theological sense Arminians were on the ascendancy in the Church of England. The new emphases in the Church, for which these divines were held responsible, were viewed with increasing alarm by the majority of moderate Puritans, not to mention the extremists. Not only were these churchmen anti-Calvinist on crucial points of doctrine; their entire ecclesiastical posture seemed a repudiation of the religion of the Reformation fathers. Their belief in decorous ceremony, their advocacy of absolute uniformity, their defense of a strict hierarchical polity was, to good Protestant Englishmen, nothing short of Romanism. When the opponents of these churchmen called them "Arminians," the term was one of abuse, a smear implying heterodoxy.

As Professor New points out, events in Holland contributed significantly to the baneful connotations of this epithet. In 1618, the Dutch Arminians (or Remonstrants), were expelled by the Synod of Dort, "so the epithet, by association, linked English Arminians with heresy."<sup>5</sup> Being associated with one heresy made it easy to associate the High Churchmen with another, more appalling, heresy: Popery. As the religious conflict waxed during the 1620's, the association of Arminianism and Popery became axiomatic. The link between these two "heterodoxies" became even more inseparable in the public mind by reason of the Arminians' close identification with the court and policies of Charles I. The King's marriage to a Papist; the conviction on the part of the government's critics that Charles was lenient toward recusants;<sup>6</sup> the pro-Papist sentiments of many of his top ministers; the eventual *rapprochement* with Spain and France: all coincided with his promotion of the Arminian churchmen into key positions in the Church. That the Protestant enthusiast should see here a monstrous "Popish plot" to straighten the True Faith is understandable. In this context, to be called an "Arminian" was to be called a potential traitor and a heretic.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the High Churchmen should repudiate the name. New's contention that the term "Arminianism" had, by the 1620's, "lost trace of its theological origin" is not, however, altogether true.<sup>7</sup> The rejection of the doctrine of predestination

5. *Ibid.*, 14.

6. This was an erroneous belief. See M. J. Havran, *The Catholics in Caroline England* (Stanford, 1962).

7. New, *Anglican and Puritan*, 15. On the purely theological issue of the doctrine of predestination, Puritans (like many modern historians) failed

was still pernicious in itself, although it is quite true that the Romish and other anti-Protestant practices associated with theological Arminianism were of far greater importance. The indignation of churchmen thus maligned was quite justifiable. They felt much like a loyal Anglican of a moderate Calvinist posture would feel if he were dubbed a "Puritan." For in reality, even the most notorious "Arminians" were loyal Protestants. The difference between these churchmen and their more militant brethren was one of degree, not of kind<sup>8</sup>—a distinction which is easy enough for the twentieth century scholar to make, but hardly one likely to be grasped by the seventeenth century Protestant enthusiast. The writings and utterances of the Arminian churchmen did more to confuse than to enlighten their opponents.

As a case in point, let us consider the Arminians' attitude toward the Roman Catholic Church. Universally the Arminians rejected the Roman Church as corrupt and false, albeit without the vigor of their Pope-damning Puritan brethren. But their attitude toward Rome was subtle, and certainly we must sympathize with their less urbane and less sophisticated contemporaries who were unable to grasp—or did not try to grasp—the essential differences between the Arminian conception of the Church and the Roman Church itself. In the Arminian view the Church of England was set to "stand," as Richard Montague expressed it, "in the gapp against Puritanism and Popery, the Scylla and Charybdis of ancient piety."<sup>9</sup> Unlike the Puritans who rejected the historic Church, the Arminian High-Churchmen were anxious to stress the historic continuity between the Church of England and the primitive Church. As such, the English Church had been merely reformed and not, as the Puritans maintained, created *anew* in the sixteenth century. The Church of Andrewes and Laud was the same Church without the grave cor-

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to comprehend the real Arminian position. To their minds, Arminians were believers in free will as a means to achieve salvation; and this was a grievous error. "An error," as Francis Rous declared in Parliament in 1629, "that maketh the grace of God lacky it after the will of man, that maketh sheep to keep the shepherd, that maketh mortal seed of an immortal God." [*Commons Debates for 1629*, ed. W. Notestein (Minneapolis, 1921), 12-13.] New's contention that "variations over predestination had little to do with the matter [i.e., the hostility to Arminianism]" does not square entirely with the repeated condemnations of this aspect of Arminianism in the Parliament of 1629. However, I would agree with New, that theological Arminianism was not the main bone of contention.

8. It should be noted that there were also Arminians (in the strict theological sense) among the Puritans—e.g. Richard Baxter.

9. Quoted in F.M.G. Higham, *Catholic and Reformed: A Study of the Anglican Church, 1559-1662* (London, 1962), 97.

ruptions which had formerly much obscured, though they had never destroyed, the essential features of "the faith once delivered to the Saints." In the same spirit, the Arminians attributed authority not only to the writings of Luther and Calvin and the Scripture, but also to patristic literature and the early Church councils.<sup>10</sup>

It was from such a comprehensive view of their Church that the High Churchmen viewed the position of the Roman Church. They believed that Christian orthodoxy was maintained by a sincere belief in the minimum of indispensable *fundamental* points. Rome, they felt, had jeopardized the very life of these fundamentals by adding illegitimate accretions to the faith. "But, in so far as Rome had not directly denied the fundamentals, it must be reckoned a 'true Church', though certainly not a *sound* one."<sup>11</sup> This posture was a far cry from the violence of the Puritan attack upon the Roman Church as Anti-Christ. It is little wonder that such a moderate attitude toward Rome could easily be misinterpreted as being pro-Papist, or at least dangerously "soft" on Catholicism.

Perhaps the most provocative feature of English Arminianism was the churchmen's devotion to decorous ceremony. The ceremonial revival encouraged by the Arminians probably did more to give credibility to the popular equation of Popery and Arminianism than did their doctrinal "novelties." Believing in the "supernatural origin and endowments of the Church, considered as the 'visible' and historically continuous *Body of Christ*,"<sup>12</sup> the Arminian High-Churchmen put renewed emphasis on the traditional ceremonial usages of the Church "which they valued as materially symbolizing the 'beauty of holiness'."<sup>13</sup> In short, an adequate doctrine must be given an adequate ceremonial expression in public worship.

Their emphasis on liturgy and ceremonial was in large part due to the high importance the Arminians put on the sacraments as the principal means of grace,<sup>14</sup> which proved not the least of the points in which the Puritans (and many other of their Anglican contemporaries) saw evidence of Popery. To the Puritans, this emphasis on the sacraments meant nothing less than a reversion to the pre-

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10. See W. R. Fryer, "The 'High Churchmen' of the Earlier Seventeenth Century," *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, V (1961), 114.

11. *Ibid.*, 118.

12. *Ibid.*, 134.

13. *Ibid.*, 117.

14. Fryer explains: "What distinguishes them on this point from their Puritan opponents . . . is not so much their views about the nature of the sacraments as the importance they attached to the reception of the sacraments." *Ibid.*, 134.

Reformation doctrine of a mediating priesthood and the religion of the middle ages.

Indeed, "clericalism" was a central plank in the Arminian platform. The Arminians firmly believed that they had received from above, and by "divine right" (*jure divino*), the governmental succession of bishops and priests.<sup>15</sup> This claim to episcopacy by "divine right" drove a serious theological wedge between the Anglicans and Puritans.<sup>16</sup> Few of the Arminian divines went to the extreme of Richard Montague, who maintained that "there is no priesthood except in the Church, and no Church without a Priestly order."<sup>17</sup> That a highly placed divine in the Caroline Church could hold such a view at all was disconcerting in the extreme to almost all Englishmen, save the recusants.

Such, briefly, were the essential features of doctrinal and ecclesiastical polity espoused by that minority group within the Church who were called "Arminians" by their opponents. The Puritan belief that the Arminians represented nothing less than a sinister plot to overthrow the work of the Reformation (which for some of the more radical Protestants had not yet gone far enough) was as exaggerated and false as it was inevitable. With some justice, however, it might be said of the Arminians that, if they did not violate the "letter" of the reformed religion, they certainly violated the "spirit."

We must now turn from this discussion of Arminianism and move to an assessment of the historical fortunes of the Arminian churchmen and of their role in the political crisis of the late 1620's.

## II. An "Arminian Party"?

The existence of Arminianism in England antedated its emergence as an active force in the 1620's. Arminianism had been the subject of a controversy at the University of Cambridge as early as 1595.<sup>18</sup> Lancelot Andrewes, that seminal theologian and ecclesiastic of the early seventeenth century, must be considered an Arminian. To a

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15. This position was not original with the Laudian Arminians; Bishops Bilso, Overall and others had earlier asserted episcopacy *jure divino*. Andrewes likewise held it to be by divine appointment.

16. See New, *Anglican and Puritan*, 55. Also see W. M. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne* (London, 1963), for an excellent discussion of the Anglican/Puritan conflict incited by the claims of *jure divino* which came to a head in the 1630's. Lamont also emphasizes the incongruity of the marriage between royalism (Charles) and clericalism (Arminians).

17. Quoted by New, 56.

18. *Ibid.*, 14.

large degree the Arminians of the 1620's looked to Bishop Andrewes as their spiritual master. In contrast to his younger disciples, however, Andrewes was a man of moderation, "content," as Thomas Fuller tells us, "with the enjoying without the enjoining" of his "private practices and opinions on others."<sup>19</sup> The younger group of High Churchmen were men of a different temperament who shared a more active and determined desire to build up the reformed Church of England along the lines of Andrewes' "private practices and opinions"—a Church as free from the tyranny of Geneva as from the errors of Rome.

To view them, as the Puritans did, as a coherent party working to one sinister end—the subversion of the Church—is to be quite mistaken. But it is likewise a mistake to reject, out of hand, the notion that they made up something of a "party." Although there is little evidence that they possessed much of a sense of "party," they shared a closer connection than merely a mutual theological bias. It would probably be an exaggeration to attribute to them a conscious common program; that they consciously shared common *aims* is open to little doubt.<sup>20</sup> It is also true that William Laud, the most vigorous representative of this group, was a poor party man,<sup>21</sup> a fact which would prove deleterious to party unity and purpose, as he was the admitted leader of his fellow Arminians.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Laud seems to have carefully promoted those of his own persuasion to the key positions in the Church; he even exerted some influence getting ecclesiastics appointed to offices in the State.<sup>23</sup>

In the final analysis, it was the fortunes of Laud which determined the fortunes of the Arminian grouping. In no sense the founder of the Arminian interest in the Church, and contributing very little to the theological basis of the movement, Laud rose to dominance in the 1620's by dint of his zeal, political adroitness, and his close connection with two prominent Jacobean High Churchmen: John Buckeridge and Richard Neile.

John Buckeridge was a fellow in St. John's College, Oxford, when Laud began his university career at St. John's. He was one of the early anti-Calvinist Anglicans who shared Andrewes' opposition to

19. Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain* (3 vols.; London, 1868), III, 391.

20. This disagrees with W. R. Fryer, "The 'High Churchmen' of the Earlier Seventeenth Century," who sees no cohesion.

21. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne*, 22.

22. H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud* (Hamden, Conn., 1962), 64-65.

23. For example, Laud made Juxon, Bishop of London, Lord Treasurer in 1636.

Romanism and Puritanism. A skilled disputant and theologian, Buckeridge became Laud's tutor, instilling in his pupil his High Church doctrines. Buckeridge's ability attracted the attention of Archbishop Whitgift, who introduced him to James I. Buckeridge was soon solidly in the royal favor. Being appointed a royal chaplain in 1604, he rose rapidly from one rich living to another, until in 1611 he was made Bishop of Rochester.<sup>24</sup> Having vacated his post as President of St. John's College, Buckeridge secured the office for Laud. The new Bishop had previously introduced the young Laud to Bishop Neile, to whose support Laud was to owe much of his official career.

Richard Neile, though no scholar, was also a product of St. John's College, becoming, under James and Charles, one of the most influential ecclesiastics of his day. An ardent High Churchman and a strong supporter of the royal prerogative,<sup>25</sup> Neile was "the practical leader of the Arminians during the reign of James I."<sup>26</sup> Early in his career, Neile enjoyed the patronage of the Cecil family, thus rising high in the royal favor, being appointed Bishop of Rochester in 1608. In that same year he took Laud into his service as his personal chaplain. From 1608 on, Laud's star rose with Neile's. In 1610, the unsatisfactory and dilatory George Abbot became Archbishop of Canterbury. Neile was translated to Lichfield and Coventry, the see vacated by Abbot, with Buckeridge succeeding Neile at Rochester. This reshuffling of office left the presidency of St. John's College open; the position was secured for Laud by the incumbent Buckeridge. Laud's election was confirmed (only after considerable opposition had been overcome), thus insuring that St. John's would remain the stronghold of Arminianism at Oxford. (The ecclesiastical polity spawned at St. John's was soon to spread throughout Oxford.) Soon after his election, Laud, through the influence of Neile, was appointed one of the King's chaplains.<sup>27</sup>

It is around the figure of Richard Neile that we see the gathering of the more prominent Arminian churchmen of the 1620's and '30's. In 1617, Neile attended James I on his progress to Scotland; on his return Neile was translated to Durham. One of the many ad-

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24. Buckeridge's career establishes something of a pattern for the other rising Arminians.

25. In 1614, Neile made a violent attack on the Commons in a speech urging the Lords not to confer with the House upon a bill to abolish James I's new Impositions.

26. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 39.

27. See account of Neile, *D.N.B.*, XIV; for Buckeridge, *D.N.B.*, II. For relations between Neile and Laud, see Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 39-45.



vantages of holding this bishopric was the right to reside, while in London, at Durham House, located on the Strand. According to Laud's future chaplain, Peter Heylin, Durham House gave Neile great content,

. . . not only because it afforded him convenient room for his retinue, but because it was large enough to allow sufficient quarters for Buckeridge, bishop of Rochester, and Laud, dean of Gloucester, which he enjoyed when he was bishop of St. David's also; some other quarters were reserved for his old servant, Doctor Lindsell, and others for such learned men of his acquaintance as came from time to time to attend upon him, in so much that it passed commonly by the name of Durham College.<sup>28</sup>

Permanent rooms were also kept in Durham House for Richard Montague and John Cosin, both men enjoying the patronage of Neile and both prominent Arminians. In fact, the occupants of Durham House formed the hard core of the Arminian movement, all of them taking an active part in the crisis of the late 1620's. That they should be thus assembled together in one residence, all closely connected by bonds of patronage and a common theological bias, suggests that they formed something of a party. Professor Trevor-Roper explicitly calls Durham House "the party headquarters."<sup>29</sup> Durham House remained an "Arminian palace" until 1625, when it became the residence of the French Ambassador.

### III. *The Arminian Ascendancy*

It was during the Arminian residence at Durham House that William Laud emerged as the acknowledged leader of the party. Early in 1620, Laud gained the favor of the Duke of Buckingham, who pressed the reluctant James to give Laud a bishopric. We are not clear as to what exactly prompted Buckingham to support Laud, but the result was Laud's nomination to the See of St. David's in June, 1621.<sup>30</sup> In the following year, Laud consolidated his position in Buckingham's favor by rescuing the Duke from the seductive influence of a Jesuit, Father Fisher, who would have had the Duke join his mother in the Roman camp. In a famous conference with

28. From Heylin's *Cyprianus Anglicanus*, quoted in the *D.N.B.*, XIV, 172.

29. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 56.

30. Laud, not being allowed to keep the presidency of St. John's, handed the office over to his colleague William Juxon who could be trusted to continue his policies.

Fisher, Laud turned the Popish tide by his skillful exposition of the Anglican position, winning the King's favorite back to the Protestant fold. Laud's success won him the thanks of James. Laud's biographer, Trevor-Roper, claims that "as a result of the conference, Laud's ascendancy over the mind of Buckingham was complete."<sup>31</sup> The fact that the mid-1620's was the period of Buckingham's close association with Dr. Preston and the Puritan lords would seem to modify this assertion.

During the period of increasing intimacy with Laud (who was made the Duke's personal chaplain), Buckingham was in the midst of reversing English foreign policy away from King James' ineffectual "peace policy" and toward a strongly anti-Spanish posture. By late 1624, England was virtually at war with Spain and Buckingham was paying serious attention to the Puritan militants, whose support he needed to strengthen his position against James' disapproval of the war policy.<sup>32</sup> In particular, Buckingham courted the allegiance of Dr. John Preston, who, as the leader of the Puritan party, was "able to steer it to what point he pleased; which made the duke as yet much to desire his favor."<sup>33</sup> For a short time, the influence of Preston—who suggested the abolition of deans and chapters, and the confiscation of their lands as a solution to the Crown's financial problem—threatened to supplant the interests of the Church altogether. The only victim of the business, however, was Bishop John Williams, the Lord Keeper, whose devious attempts to usurp the Duke's influence misfired. Caught up in the spokes of his own trickery, Williams was soon dismissed, leaving the field clear for his enemy Laud. Preston, however, still remained a serious obstacle. For with the dismissal of Williams, Buckingham offered the Great Seal to this indefatigable Puritan divine.

Laud did not have to wait long to see the Preston threat dispersed. The death of King James in March, 1625, signalled the beginning of the end of Preston's influence with Buckingham. The Great Seal was offered to Sir Thomas Coventry, while Buckingham's backing of the anti-Spanish policy and the designs to "reform and plunder the Church" wavered.<sup>34</sup> Buckingham's relations with Preston and the Puritan lords remained uneasy, yet intact. As Fuller explains: "The doctor and the duke were both unwilling to an open breach,

31. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 60.

32. See James F. Maclear, "Puritan Relations with Buckingham," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, XXI (1958), 111-132.

33. Fuller, *Church History*, III, 242.

34. See Christopher Hill, "The Political Sermons of John Preston," in *Puritanism and Revolution* (London, 1958), 242f.

loved for to temporise and wait upon events."<sup>35</sup> The events which finally precipitated the formal breach were directly connected with the emergence of Arminianism as a national issue, in the case of Richard Montague, shortly after the death of King James.

On June 18, 1625, Charles I met with his first Parliament. The atmosphere was far from congenial. Tempers were short over the general mismanagement of the war against Spain, and the misuse of money which had been raised for the conflict. Laud's sermon on the opening of Parliament, glorifying and exalting the kingly power did nothing to alleviate the tension. It was onto this turbulent sea that the issue of religion surfaced. Initially upset over the excessive leniency of the Crown's treatment of recusants,<sup>36</sup> the House of Commons moved to attack the Arminian clergy in the person of Richard Montague. "Of all the Arminian clergy at the time," writes Trevor-Roper, "Montague seemed to the layman to be the most dangerous. One of the Durham House party which acknowledged the leadership of Neile and Laud, he had controversial dexterity, which Neile and Laud had not."<sup>37</sup>

Richard Montague's offense was born in a controversy which had begun to attract attention some years before the meeting of Charles' first Parliament. As Rector of Stamford Bridge in Essex, Montague had become involved in a sharp controversy with Matthew Kellison, the President of the College of Dourai, who had attacked the Calvinism of the Church of England in a pamphlet called *A Gag for the New Gospel*. To this, Montague had replied with a satiric and trenchant rejoinder, *A New Gag for an Old Goose* (1624), containing some forty-seven propositions which Montague attributed to the Church of England. Unfortunately, Montague "had gone about this business of goose-gagging in too Christian a spirit,"<sup>38</sup> repudiating Roman doctrine and practice not from a Calvinist, but from an Arminian point of view. The *New Gag* was a showcase of Arminian sentiments: the Roman Church was simply an old goose without being Anti-Christ; it was accorded a legitimate berth in the Church of Christ, albeit sagging sadly under the burden of corruption and false doctrine; the Pope was not a man of sin; auricular confession, although not condoned, could be sought by those who wanted it.

35. Fuller, *Church History*, III, 390.

36. It was already suspected that the King's marriage treaty with France secretly promised that the penal laws against the English Catholics would not be enforced. During the recess before Parliament reconvened at Oxford in August, these secret terms came to light.

37. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 73.

38. Esme Wingfield-Stratford, *Charles King of England, 1600-1637* (London, 1949), 142.

Montague even compromised on the potent issue of transubstantiation, implying that Christ was present in the bread and wine in some mysterious way. And, naturally, he rejected the doctrine of predestination. Far from an attack on Rome in defense of the reformed Church of England, Montague's pamphlet appeared to the Protestant enthusiast to be a frontal attack on the very religion they held to be the true doctrine of the Church. Montague was ostensibly defending. If the propositions of Montague were the true doctrine of the English Church, the Puritans were at a loss to see the differences between Canterbury and Rome. Montague's simultaneous publication of his *Immediate Adresse unto God Alone . . . a Just Treatise of Invocation of Saints*, which conjured up all manner of Popish superstitions in the eyes of his opponents, only served to exacerbate the rift.

While the press was busy pouring out rejoinders to Montague's "heretical" writings, two Ipswich lecturers, John Yates and Samuel Ward, complained to the committee of the Commons in James' last Parliament "against him [Montague] for dangerous errors of Arminianism and Popery, deserting our cause, instead of defending it."<sup>39</sup> The Commons immediately protested to Archbishop Abbot; Abbot protested to Montague. And Montague went to King James, who is reported to have declared: "If that is to be a Papist, so am I a Papist."<sup>40</sup>

Secure in the King's support, Montague published another book, *Appello Caesarem. A Just Appeal from Two Unjust Informers* (1625), which reiterated his central propositions, declaring in no uncertain terms that his was the true doctrine of the Church: "What that Church [the Church of England] believeth, I believe; what it teacheth, I teach; what it rejecteth, I reject; what it doth not tender, I am not tied unto."<sup>41</sup> Montague professed his earnest hope to "live and die in the Faith and Confession" of the English Church, the Church which he claimed to be in "all points more conformable unto purest Antiquity in the best times."<sup>42</sup> He also said some very harsh things about Puritans, vowing to make his Church "good

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39. Fuller, *Church History*, III, 377. Contrary to what most historians claim, Yates and Ward did not inform on Montague for his *New Gag*, but rather delated to the Commons from his *Immediate Adresse*.

40. Quoted by S. R. Gardiner, *A History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War* (10 vols.; London, 1886), V, 354.

41. *Appello Caesarem. A Just Appeal from Two Unjust Informers* (London: printed by H. L. for M. Lownes, 1625), 48.

42. *Ibid.*

against any and all those brethren in evil, Papists and Puritans, whosoever; who looking and running to several ways do, like Samon's foxes, join together in the tail." <sup>43</sup> The strength of Montague's declaration, barbed with his biting wit, threw the Puritans into an uproar.

Montague's book was reviewed in manuscript and approved for publication by Bishop Neile and Montague's close friend, John Cosin. With an imprimatur from Dr. Francis White, dean of Carlisle, in spite of Abbot's refusal to license it, *Appello Caesarem* was issued from the press. Although originally dedicated to King James, the old King died before publication, and the book was issued with a dedication to his son, Charles.

So it was that Dr. Montague's doctrinal views, approved by the Church and the Crown, became the subject of fierce debate among the conservative lawyers and country gentlemen who made up Charles' first Parliament. Doubting its power to deal with theological beliefs, but sure of its right to interfere in matters of State, the House of Commons accused Montague of "dishonoring the late King, of disturbing Church and State, and of treating the rights and privileges of Parliament with contempt." <sup>44</sup> The first and the last charges were essentially unimportant; it was the second charge, that of threatening the peace of the nation with internal division which really concerned the House. To most of the members of the House, the tenets of Montague's book were clearly "contrary to the Articles of Religion established by Act of Parliament," <sup>45</sup> but they deferred from pressing this potentially explosive constitutional issue, contenting themselves with appointing a committee to examine Montague's books. Montague himself was committed to custody of the sergeant-at-arms, who allowed him to return to his parish on giving a bond of £2,000. At this point, King Charles intervened. He made Montague a royal chaplain, then ordered Parliament to forbear from attacking his personal servant, declaring that he "hoped one of his chaplains might have as much protection as the servant of an ordinary burgess." <sup>46</sup>

On August 1, 1625, the Parliament reassembled at Oxford, having been prorogued on account of plague in London. Montague was summoned to defend himself in recognition of his bond. Illness pre-

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43. *Ibid.*

44. Gardiner, *A History of England*, V, 361.

45. *Ibid.*, 360.

46. Quoted in the account of Montague, *D.N.B.*, XIII, 714.

venting his appearance, the House contented itself with a formal censure of the outspoken divine. Soon afterward, Parliament was dissolved. On the day that Commons was pronouncing its censure of Montague, Laud declared with Buckeridge and Bishop Howson of Oxford, in a joint letter to Buckingham, that in their opinion Montague's statements were in no way contrary to the doctrines of the Church of England. Another letter was sent to the Duke early in the new year (January, 1626)—the result of a royal conference on Montague's case, attended by the King, Andrewes, Neile, Buckeridge, Bishop Mountain of London, and Laud—in which Montague's orthodoxy was again confirmed. The letter ended with the suggestion that the future peace of the Church could be secured only by silencing all controversy by royal proclamation.<sup>47</sup> Such a proposal could but increase the alarm of the Commons, since it was clear to all that the minority views expressed by Montague had won the official backing of the King. The Arminian party headed by Laud might now be called the King's party in the Church.

The ascendancy of the Arminian party was given formal recognition as a result of two more conferences on Montague's case held at York House (February 11 and 17, 1626). The significance of the conferences was less theological than political, being in reality a "final show-down forced on Buckingham and Preston . . . by the Puritan party at court—Warwick, Saye and Sele, Sir John Coke."<sup>48</sup> The war on the Continent was proving disastrous to the Protestant cause, La Rochelle having fallen to the French King in January. Understandably, the Puritan lords were anxious to learn Buckingham's mind on the matter. Christopher Hill explains: "The Puritan lords pressed for a conference on Montague's book, at which they hoped Preston would route Montague and his supporters, and so force Buckingham to declare himself one way or the other."<sup>49</sup>

47. It is well known that both Charles and Laud detested controversy over "curious points" of doctrine. Charles' "Proclamation for the establishing of the peace and quiet of the Church of England," 16 June 1626, betrayed a certain irritation with both sides. See *The Stuart Constitution*, ed. J. P. Kenyon (Cambridge, 1966), 154-155.

48. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, 243.

49. *Ibid.* Relations between Preston and Buckingham had steadily deteriorated after the death of James I. Preston strongly disapproved of Buckingham's advocacy of the French marriage and of the concessions made in consequence to the English recusants. Relations were further exacerbated when Preston discovered that Buckingham was unhappy that he had offered his home for the conference, implying that "he [Buckingham] had placed himself in the hands of the Bishops, and was indifferent or hostile to the triumph of the Gospel truth." Gardiner, *A History of England*, VI, 65.

The first conference was held on February 11. Buckeridge, aided by Dr. White and John Cosin (a staunch High Churchman who was later to distinguish himself for his ceremonial "innovations"), supported Montague's orthodoxy against the attacks of the "Low Church" Bishop of Lichfield, Thomas Morton and the Puritan, Dr. Preston. Historians tend to dismiss the conference as unimportant, often citing the Earl of Pembroke's alleged remark, "that none returned Arminians thence, save such who repaired thither with the same opinions,"<sup>50</sup> as the best evaluation of the results of the conference.<sup>51</sup> Although Pembroke's judgment is true enough, as Christopher Hill makes clear, the conference was of critical importance in widening the breach within the Church of England. For the conference witnessed the direct confrontation between two radically different views of that most portentous of theological principles—the doctrine of grace and predestination. The political and social implications of the theological points discussed were of great significance. The Arminians were challenging the Puritan belief that the elect could not fall from grace, a belief which was at once fundamental to their religious system and a spur to political action. If the Church of England should deny this fundamental principle, the threat to the Protestant cause, at home and abroad, would be magnified a hundred-fold.

The Puritans' worst fears were confirmed when Buckingham responded to Bishop Morton's defense of the spiritual impregnability of the elect: "Teach you this divinity? God defend us from the following of it." That the Lambeth Articles of 1595 and "a catechism bound up with three out of every ten Bibles printed in England between 1574 and 1615, including the Authorized Version,"<sup>52</sup> sanctioned the principle of perseverance in grace seems not to have carried much weight with Buckingham and Montague's supporters. When the authority of the Synod of Dort (which had strongly upheld absolute double predestination) in England was broached, the Duke, echoing Montague's own denunciation of this Synod in *Appello Caesarem*,<sup>53</sup> declared: "No, no away with it; we have nothing

50. Fuller, *Church History*, III, 387.

51. See Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 77; Gardiner, *A History of England*, VI, 65; *D.N.B.*, XIII, 715.

52. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, 247.

53. "Who bound the Church of England, or me, a priest and a member of the Church of England, unto defence of all the Decrees and Determinations of that Synod? Hath Prince? Or Parliament? Or Convocation? Edict? Statute? Or Canon? I know none; I have heard of none; nor ever shall, I hope." *Appello Caesarem*, 107.

to do with that synod. I have been assured by divers grave and learned prelates that it can neither stand with the safety of this church nor state to bring it in." <sup>54</sup>

The implications of Buckingham's refusal to accept the doctrinal position of Morton and Preston were clear enough. No longer would it be possible for the Puritans to work with him. On the contrary, Buckingham was now allied with the worst of their enemies—the Arminians. The rejection of the Synod of Dort, which had expelled the Dutch Arminians as heretics, coinciding with the obvious alliance of the King's favorite with the English Arminians, must have been as symbolically powerful a setback to the Puritans as it was real.

Buckingham's reasons for so emphatically overthrowing the Puritans are explained by Christopher Hill: "After James' death, secure in the favor of Charles, Buckingham no longer needed the support of the Puritan party . . . and Charles unmistakably inclined to the Arminians . . . . It appears to have been the personal predilection of Charles for Laud and the Arminians that forced the less theological Buckingham to throw the Puritans over." <sup>55</sup>

At the time of the conference, Laud's influence over the King was increasing. It was to be sealed shortly by his elevation to the See of Bath and Wells in September, 1626. Likewise, after the conference, Laud's intimacy with Buckingham increased markedly. <sup>56</sup> As Hill suggests, however, we must regard King Charles as the decisive figure in passing the lead in the Church to the Arminian party. In order to more fully appreciate Charles I's role in this, a word about his religious posture will be profitable.

Charles I was unquestionably the most religious king of his line. Prince Henry, his brother, had shrewdly estimated him a potential Archbishop. Indeed, Charles, though no theologian, was devoted to his faith. As the first monarch to have been "born and bred" in the Church of England, Charles had a deep attachment to his Church. Clarendon gives us a good estimate of the King's devotion: he was a "punctual observer of all decency in his devotion, and the strictest promoter of the ceremonies of the church, as believing in his soul the Church of England to be instituted the nearest to the practice of

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<sup>54</sup>. Buckingham's replies are both quoted by Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, 247-248.

<sup>55</sup>. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, 242-243.

<sup>56</sup>. Trevor-Roper sees Laud as something of a confessor to Buckingham. *Laud*, 88.



the apostles, and the best for the propagation and advancement of Christian religion of any church in the world."<sup>57</sup>

That Charles should have had a deep affinity for Laud and the Arminians needs no emphasis. Both parties were devoted adherents to what Trevor-Roper calls "the Catholic ideal—of its unity, uniformity, infallibility, external splendor, ceremonies, and hierarchical organization."<sup>58</sup> To Charles, as to Laud, the Church was the soul of the State, the monarch of divine appointment, and, in the case of England, supreme governor of the Church. Captivated by such an ideal, it is little wonder that both shared a determination to muzzle and suppress opponents of the Church and to enforce upon all Englishmen obedience to its canons.

In this, neither was working for what he thought to be expedient, but for what he thought to be right. C. V. Wedgwood's evaluation of the King is also true of his future Archbishop: "His church policy was the outcome not of calculation but of conviction; he was ready to die for it."<sup>59</sup> For Charles to be blessed with such a compatible group of prelates and churchmen as gathered about Laud and Neile must have seemed well nigh providential.

For their part, the Arminians had good reason to be grateful for such a powerful ally. Although Arminianism was slowly spreading within the Church, it was politically weak, being a movement unable to command either parliamentary or popular support. The monarchy proved, in fact, to be its only ally. The union which they cemented during the first years of Charles I's reign was as natural as it was fatal.

As if to celebrate the alliance, the early months of 1627 witnessed the delivery of several provocative sermons by Arminian divines, exalting the royal authority. The most notorious of these were preached by Roger Manwaring, recently appointed chaplain in ordinary to Charles I. "Defend thou me with the sword and I will defend thee with the pen" had been the closing sentence of Montague's *Appello Caesarem*. Manwaring moved zealously to hold up the churchmen's end of the bargain in two sermons preached before the King. In the first sermon, delivered on 4 July 1627 at Oatlands on "Religion," Manwaring declared: ". . . if any king shall command that which stands not in any opposition to the original laws of God, Nature, Nations and the Gospel, no subject may, without

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57. Edward Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (7 vols.; Oxford, 1849), I, 115.

58. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 70.

59. *The King's Peace* (London, 1955), 91.

hazard of his own damnation, in rebelling against God, question or disobey the will and pleasure of his Sovereign." <sup>60</sup> It was for this reason that the King had the right to impose taxes and loans without consent; refusal to pay up was to hazard damnation.

In the second sermon, delivered on 29 July of the same year at Alderton, Manwaring reiterated much the same theme. Manwaring's absolutist assertions had followed hard on the heels of Dr. Robert Sibthorpe's sermon preached before the Judges at the Lent Assizes at Northampton (22 February), wherein Sibthorpe had urged a dutiful response to the royal demands for a general loan stressing the subjects' obligation to "yield a passive obedience" to all the King's commands. <sup>61</sup>

The net result of these sermons, which were all officially licensed for printing, was to further embitter the political conflict between Charles and the governing class by directly involving the religious issue. In June, 1626, Charles had been forced to dissolve his second Parliament when the House of Commons moved to impeach Buckingham. In the interim, financial necessity had dictated the King's policy of nonparliamentary loans. It was the demand for these loans that drew the Arminian churchmen, hence the religious issue, into the conflict.

As Gardiner says, it was only natural that "each theological party" should be drawn "instinctively to the side of its natural supporter." <sup>62</sup> That the Crown and the Parliament should come to belong to opposite religious parties was in the logic of Charles' early support of the Arminian party. <sup>63</sup> For their part, the Arminians, by so grossly magnifying the King's power, displayed their characteristic insensitivity to popular sympathies and their desires to buttress and enhance the royal authority. The formula to which they adhered was simple and wrong-headed: "The predominance of Charles in the State meant the predominance of their own way of thinking, and the carrying out of their own principles into action. . . . In the King's authority they saw their only refuge against the tyrannical domination of the multitude . . . ." <sup>64</sup> Unfortunately for the Armin-

60. *The Stuart Constitution*, 15.

61. Gardiner, *A History of England*, VI, 206.

62. *Ibid.*, 203.

63. Charles' support of the Arminians had been given even greater emphasis by his appointment of Neile and Laud to the Privy Council in April, 1627, followed by the suspension of Archbishop Abbot for refusing to license Sibthorpe's sermon. The control of the Church was turned over to a commission made up of Laud, Neile, Buckeridge, Howson, and Mountain—all men of the Arminian party.

64. Gardiner, *A History of England*, VI, 203-204.

ians, the predominance of Charles was subject to a growing challenge from a discontented people.

When Charles I's third Parliament assembled in March, 1628, the Manwaring case provided the Commons with an excellent pretext to launch an attack upon the arbitrary nature of the government and the growing menace of Arminianism. Manwaring's case was handled by John Pym, who assembled a formidable charge against the zealous divine, closely integrating the political and ecclesiastical issues at stake. Manwaring was charged with trying to infuse into the conscience of the King the "persuasion of a power not bounding itself with law," with seeking "to blow up parliamentary powers, not much unlike Faux and his followers." In short, Manwaring "was endeavouring to destroy the King and Kingdom by his divinity."<sup>65</sup> Manwaring was fined, condemned to imprisonment, and disabled from holding any ecclesiastical or secular office. A few days after the sentence was passed, Charles complied with a parliamentary proclamation calling for the suppression of Manwaring's book.

Not content with Manwaring's impeachment, the truculent House sent up a remonstrance on 11 June which, among other things, protested bitterly against "the subtle and pernicious spreading of the Arminian faction" and "Popish and Arminian innovations in doctrine."<sup>66</sup> Laud and Neile were accused by name, being the two Arminians in highest favor with the King. The greatest fear of the Commons was the rapid growth of Arminianism. The reason why this was so was not hard to pinpoint: "It being now generally held the way to preferment and promotion in the Church, many scholars do bend the course of their studies to maintain those errors."<sup>67</sup>

Having dealt their blow at the religious policy of Charles I, the Commons turned to the issues of domestic and foreign policy, which meant, of course, an attack on Buckingham. Faced with the demand to change his whole policy, Charles prorogued the Parliament. The summer and fall of 1628, during the recess of Charles I's third Parliament, witnessed the final triumph of the Arminian party.

#### IV. *The Arminian Triumph*

In the summer of 1628, the Church experienced an extensive reshuffle of bishops. In effect it was an Arminian *coup d'eglise*. By 1629, the key bishoprics in England were in the possession of the party's elite.

<sup>65</sup>. Quoted in the account of Manwaring, *D.N.B.*, XII, 989.

<sup>66</sup>. *The Stuart Constitution*, 156-159.

<sup>67</sup>. Quoted by Kenyon in his commentary, *Constitution*, 148.

This episcopal reshuffle was not the result of any Arminian master plan. Providence had simply intervened in 1628 with an "epidemic of convenient deaths."<sup>68</sup> For their part, the Arminians merely had the necessary royal backing and determination to take advantage of this windfall.

It is true that not all the churchmen elevated to bishoprics were members of the Arminian "faction." Late in 1627, Joseph Hall, a noted Calvinist, had been consecrated Bishop of Exeter. Hall, however, grew to be a good Laudian and Arminian in one respect, writing a vigorous defense of *Episcopacy by Divine Right* in 1640.<sup>69</sup> Another Calvinist churchman, Barnaby Potter, was made Bishop of Carlisle. Laud's chaplain, Peter Heylin, declared that Potter's promotion was evidence of Laud's impartiality and desire to satisfy Puritan opinion. The claim is doubtful; for "the King seems to have been personally fond of Potter in spite of his Puritan leanings, and it was to this cause probably that he owed his subsequent promotion, and not, as Heylin and others suggest, to a mere desire to satisfy Puritan opinion."<sup>70</sup> To this, must be added Trevor-Roper's observation that, as Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, Potter could do more harm to the Arminian cause than as bishop of "an out-of-the-way diocese which mattered little."<sup>71</sup> With these minor exceptions, the bulk of the bishoprics went to the Arminians.

Early in February, 1628, the redoubtable Richard Neile was translated from Durham to Winchester, which had been vacant since Andrewes' death in 1626. Mountain, the old Bishop of London, went up to Durham and thence to York, which was suddenly vacated by the death of Tobias Matthew. Mountain himself died shortly thereafter, being replaced by Samuel Harsnett, a strict disciplinarian and anti-Calvinist. The staunch Arminian theologian and champion, Dr. Francis White, filled Harsnett's vacancy at Norwich. The crucial See of London was granted to Laud, the party leader, while two of Laud's chief supporters, Buckeridge and Howson, went respectively to Ely and Durham. The controversial Richard Montague was installed in the See of Chichester. Walter Curll, who proved a close supporter of Laud, was consecrated Bishop of Rochester; the congenial and amenable Richard Corbet became Bishop of Oxford. Bristol remained in the hands of Richard Wright, an undistinguished clergyman who supported Laud willingly enough.

68. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 92.

69. For Hall's career and relations with Laud, see T. F. Kinloch, *The Life and Works of Joseph Hall* (London, 1951). Note especially, 153-160.

70. *D.N.B.*, XVI, 211.

71. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 92.

Of the important bishoprics, only Lincoln, Salisbury, Worcester, and Lichfield remained unaffected by these changes. These dioceses remained in the hands of four of the older Jacobean prelates, three of whom were anti-Arminians: Bishop Williams of Lincoln, Bishop Davenant of Salisbury, and Bishop Morton of Lichfield. Among the three, Williams was the only potential leader of an episcopal opposition to the Arminians. Unfortunately, he had been so seriously discredited by his earlier political career that he was unable to pose much of a threat. Neither Davenant nor Morton, both moderate Calvinists, were ambitious enough to thrust themselves forward in Church politics. Bishop Thornborough of Worcester and Bishop Bridgeman of Chester were neutrals. The See of Gloucester remained the possession of Godfrey Goodman who, far from being a Calvinist, was suspected of secretly practicing the religion of Rome.<sup>72</sup> The unfortunate Abbot, who hung onto Canterbury until 1633, was, by this time, little more than a cypher.

The significance of this great reshuffle was clear to all, for apart from only a few bishoprics, "all the English sees were now occupied by Laudians or neutrals, the wealthy and influential southern sees by his closest lieutenants."<sup>73</sup> The party of Durham House had risen to claim hegemony over the Bishop's Bench.

As if aware of the great alarm that this transformation of the Church's hierarchy would cause the members of Parliament, King Charles attempted to sweeten the pill by several conciliatory gestures. Abbot was restored to his archiepiscopal functions. A letter from Montague to Abbot disclaiming Arminianism effected a healthy reconciliation. To complete the detente, Charles issued a proclamation suppressing *Appello Caesarem*. Laud secured a royal declaration permitting the substance of the royal "Proclamation for the establishing of the peace and quiet of the Church of England" (1626) to be reissued. Approved by the Privy Council and the bishops, "A Declaration on Religion" was prefaced to a new edition of the Articles of Religion published in December, 1628. To be read by every minister in the realm upon entering a new cure, this Declaration prohibited dogmatic discussion on "those curious points in which the present difficulties lie" and declared that the polity of the Church was to be ordered and settled by the King and the clergy in Convocation.<sup>74</sup> Aimed at quieting the furious religious controversy, the Declaration

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72. See G. I. Soden, *Godfrey Goodman, Bishop of Gloucester, 1583-1656* (London, 1953).

73. *The Stuart Constitution*, 149.

74. Gardiner, *A History of England*, VII, 20-21.

had the opposite effect. That this was so was due largely to the Arminians recent *coup d' église*.

If the only judge of doctrine and practice was the Church, it was of great significance just exactly who the Church was. To the men who attended the parliamentary session beginning in January, 1629, it was painfully clear that the Church did not represent their interests. The pardoning and promotion of Richard Montague, that horrifying embodiment of extreme Arminianism, stood as a powerful testimony to the slight regard Charles had for the religious opinions of his Parliaments. The King had compounded the offense by pardoning Manwaring and presenting him with the rich living of Stamford Bridge, just vacated by Montague. That this wholesale evidence of an Arminian triumph over the Church should coincide with the appointment to the Privy Council of several pro-Spanish and pro-Catholic courtiers (thus insuring the impending *rapprochement* with Spain), did not help matters in the least. It is little wonder, therefore, that the House of Commons erupted into a fierce controversy over "those curious points in which the present differences lie" and the status of some of the newly elevated clergy.

It is not within the scope of this study to pursue the many complicated threads of this religious debate as it spun its way through the parliamentary session of 1629. It will be sufficient to turn to Sir John Eliot's speech of January 29 to bring into focus the issues which concern us here. With that characteristic energy of mind, Eliot penetrated to the heart of the matter:

If there be any difference in the opinion concerning the sense and interpretation, the Bishops and the Clergy in the Convocation have power admitted to them to do any thing that shall concern the continuance and maintenance of the Truth professed; which Truth being contained in these Articles, and these Articles being different in the sense, so as if there be any dispute about it, it is in them to order which way they please; and for aught I know, Popery and Arminianism may be a sense introduced by them, and then it must be received. Is this a slight thing, that the power of Religion should be left to the persons of these men? . . . There are amongst our Bishops such as are fit to be made examples for all ages . . . But, Sir, they are not all such, I fear. Witness those two, complained of in the last Remonstrance we exhibited, Doctors Laud and Neile; and you know that place they have! Witness, likewise Montague,

so newly preferred! I reverence the order, though I honour not the man. Others may be named too, of the same bark and leaven, to whose judgments if our religion were committed, it might easily be discerned what resolutions they would give; whereof even the procuring of this reference, this manifesto [the Declaration on Religion], to be made, is a perfect demonstration.<sup>75</sup>

Throughout the session of 1629, the Commons attacked every exposed limb of the Arminian party. In the end, however, their efforts came to nothing. They were unable to break the constitutional impasse in which they found themselves. As Trevor-Roper aptly puts it: "Parliament might change the foreign policy of the government by withdrawing supplies: but it could not change its ecclesiastical policy, because the Church was not dependent on parliamentary supply. It could only agitate and protest, and the government, provided that it was confident of a working majority in the country, could afford to ignore its protests."<sup>76</sup>

If Charles could have had his way, the state of religion in England would have been such as to be free from protest. In several of his public utterances on religion, the King had made it clear that he detested controversy. Nor can we doubt the sincerity of Charles' many attempts to conciliate the warring factions. But, as J. P. Kenyon says, it was men, not measures and proclamations, which mattered in the final analysis.<sup>77</sup> When Charles promoted the Arminian party into a position of dominance in the Church, he gave all his conciliatory proclamations the lie.

#### V. Conclusion

The question the historians need answered, is, why did Charles I blatantly favor and promote the Arminians against the expressed wishes of so many of his subjects? As we have already mentioned, Charles was deeply attached, as were the Arminians, to the doctrine and practice of the English Church as defined by Bishop Andrewes. It may be, as C. V. Wedgwood suggests, that Charles' attachment to the Arminian churchmen was a reflection of his penchant for turning away from unpleasing realities. In this instance, the King drew "to him the divines he liked and from them deduced that their

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<sup>75</sup>. *Commons Debates for 1629*, ed. W. Notestein (Minneapolis, 1921), 26-27.

<sup>76</sup>. Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, 94.

<sup>77</sup>. *The Stuart Constitution*, 149.

whole church was like them and that they were dominant." <sup>78</sup> Dominant they may have been, but not in the sense of representing the majority view. And one should not discount the influence of Buckingham up until his murder in August, 1628. For after the York House conference, the great Duke took an active part in the promotion of the Arminians.

S. R. Gardiner's assessment of Charles I's actions tends to emphasize the motive of calculation and expedience. As to Charles' episcopal promotions in 1628: "Unhappily he did not see in past events a reason for acting so as to regain the hearts of his people. Having the opportunity of flinging defiance in the face of the Commons, he chose to place in high positions in the Church the men whom he knew to be most unpopular." Gardiner suggests that Charles made the appointments, particularly that of Montague, deliberately to provoke the Puritans: "The Puritans must be made to understand that they had no standing ground in the Church of England; and how could that be brought more clearly before their eyes than by the promotion of a man who openly declared them to be a usurping faction?" <sup>79</sup> Regardless of the King's motives, this was exactly the impression the Puritans drew from the business. The Puritan extremists were shortly to feel the full brunt of Arminian persecution; the standing ground in the Church was soon gone.

G. E. Aylmer, in his brief history of seventeenth century England, offers a different assessment, emphasizing the element of Charles' conviction over his calculation. Aylmer admits that the wholesale promotion of the Arminian party "may look like deliberate provocation of the Puritans and other protestants," but feels "it was probably due more to insensitiveness towards public opinion than calculated defiance of it." <sup>80</sup> With this conclusion, I tend to agree. Charles I was an austere monarch whose private religious devotion and isolation in an illusory court world left him highly susceptible to that insensitivity Aylmer mentions.

It was this very insensitivity and devotion to the High-Church Arminians which made it possible for him to ignore the protests against his ecclesiastical policy for so long. The following eleven years of personal rule saw the Arminian party further entrench their power in the Church, adding to the new generation of bishops such formidable disciplinarians as Matthew Wren and William Piers.

78. *The King's Peace*, 94.

79. Gardiner, *A History of England*, VI, 329-330.

80. G. E. Aylmer, *A Short History of Seventeenth Century England, 1603-1689* (New York, 1963), 81.



It was this new generation of "innovating" bishops who, by emphasizing the theory of episcopacy *jure divino*, brought to the fore the main subject of contention between themselves and the Puritans throughout the 1630's.<sup>81</sup> These eleven years of anti-Calvinism and clericalism contributed significantly to that pervasive and fundamental, if imprecise, disapproval of the royal government which moved the nation to have done with it.

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81. Godfrey Davies, "Arminian Versus Puritan in England, ca. 1620-1640," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, V (1934), 160. Also see W. M. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne*, *passim*.