

# Milton's Political Ideas and *Paradise Lost* as a Political Allegory



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I dedicate this book to my wife, Semiha, and my daughter, Gülce;  
amare et sapere vix deo conceditur.



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## INTRODUCTION

John Milton has traditionally been studied with reference to his poetry rather than his prose writings within the contexts of theology, epic tradition and classical humanism. Yet, Milton was not only a poet but also a passionate political activist and a dedicated republican. This aspect of his work has come under focus only recently. Some Milton scholars have taken a serious interest in his political pamphlets since the 1960s (Schulman ix). Accordingly, although a great deal of studies have concentrated on Milton's life and works, particularly his poetry, also some close attention has been given to his prose writings in order to link them with his poetry. So, as Zagorin has stated, "besides the limited treatment of Milton's politics in many literary studies, in biographies, and in various editions of his prose, a few works exist that are heavily concerned with his political thoughts" (*Milton: Aristocrat and Rebel: The Poet and His Politics* ix). In this respect, among the critics who have studied Milton's poetical works in the light of his prose works and of historical and political background of his time, Don M. Wolfe was the first to study Milton with reference to his political ideas and thoughts in his book *Milton and the Puritan Revolution* (1941). A systematic approach to Milton's political works was made by Arthur E. Barker in his *Milton and Puritan Dilemma 1641-1660* (1942), which was extensively concerned with the connection between Milton's politics and his major poems (Barker xi-xii). Christopher Hill also studied Milton's radical political vision and his "participation in the seventeenth century English Revolution" (*Milton and the English Revolution* 1). Robert Fallon, Stevie Davies, Peter Zagorin, David Norbrook, Barbara Lewalski, Blair Worden, David Armitage, Joan Bennett and Nigel Smith, among other eminent Milton scholars, have also studied Milton's poetical writings in terms of his revolutionary and republican radicalism. In this regard, Hill states that "Milton was not just a writer. He is the greatest English revolutionary who is also a poet, the greatest English poet who is also a revolutionary" (*Milton and the English Revolution* 4). Although Milton wrote several poems and sonnets in his earlier career, he became known as a revolutionary and passionate political activist, beginning his political career with the pamphlets he wrote on the current politics of his time during the period between 1641 and 1660. And through his political pamphlets he vehemently attacked Stuart absolutism and

autocracy, and defended instead antimonarchical rule and republicanism, giving particular attention to the religious and civil liberties of the people. However, following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, he had to stop his pamphlet career due to the censorship imposed during this period that made it impossible to express his political thoughts freely, and he embarked on a literary project which included his major poetical works, *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) and *Samson Agonistes* (1671). Although these poems have generally been situated and studied in the epic tradition and classical humanism, they have also been studied historically and politically. Likewise considering his earlier reputation and active political life, one can state that Milton could not detach himself from the political controversies of his time. In this respect, it can be claimed that Milton composed *Paradise Lost* particularly as a political poem in which he voiced his political thoughts and ideals in an allegorical manner. So, the main concern of this dissertation is to re-read Milton's major poem, *Paradise Lost* as a political allegory, especially as reflected in Books I-VII and IX-XII of the poem, which mostly reveal Milton's political views and statements already expressed in his political pamphlets. Hence, the study will be an extensive political reading of the poem in the context of Milton's own time, the political figures of his age, and the political arguments that he put forth earlier in his pamphlets. In other words, through the study of *Paradise Lost*, this dissertation will try to demonstrate to what extent and in what ways Milton embedded his political ideas in this poem.

Historically, Milton lived at a time when Britain was undergoing a political crisis which ultimately led to the Civil War. The country drifted into this political crisis which involved an irreconcilable and unmanageable clash between Parliament and monarchy, or the Republicans and the Royalists. Within this 'tumultuous' period and chaotic environment, Milton emerged as a seriously dedicated republican and also an anti-monarchical activist like his puritan contemporaries. He strongly supported the policies of Parliament and, hence, of Cromwell, later on against Charles I's absolutist and autocratic policies and practices. In this regard, David Loewenstein has stated that

for nearly twenty years of his career, during the 'tumultuous times' of the English Revolution, Milton invested his exceptional literary talents in polemical prose as he struggled with urgent issues of ecclesiastical, civic and domestic liberty. Scholars have sometimes divorced the writer of occasional, fiercely, polemical tracts during the Revolution from visionary author of sublime, lofty poetry. The two, poet and revolutionary polemicist, were, however, closely connected. Milton contributed actively

– and imaginatively – to the vital textual dimension of the English Revolution and its crises. (“Milton’s Prose and the Revolution” 87)

As Milton wrote in his political pamphlet *Defensio Secunda* (*The Second Defence of the English People*) in 1654, he attempted to “devote [to] this conflict all [of his] talents and all [of his] active powers (CPW<sup>1</sup>, IV, 622). Therefore, in the years between 1649 and 1660 he published a series of polemical pamphlets in which he attacked both absolutism and autocracy unconditionally represented by Charles I and the leaders of the Church of England, while he strongly defended the civil, religious and political liberties of the people and upheld the principles of republicanism, which emerged in the seventeenth century in Europe. Actually, the question of absolutism and autocratic rule emerged in England during the early Stuart period. By way of an introduction to Milton’s republicanism and indeed to the development of the political crisis under the Stuarts, it would be appropriate to give an account of the underlying causes whereby the traditional cooperation between Parliament and the Crown was broken.

As a matter of fact, ever since the thirteenth century England had been ruled through a kind of constitutional monarchy; in other words, the English monarchy from the time of Magna Carta to the Elizabethan period had always formulated and put into effect their policies in consultation with Parliament (Coward 101). Therefore, there had developed a kind of political cooperation between Parliament and the Crown. However, there had been times such as Henry VIII’s rule when Parliament had been manipulated and forced by the monarch to pass such acts that the monarch demanded (Servini 87). Such a close cooperation between Parliament and the Crown led to relative political stability in the country and it was this stability which was jeopardized by James I’s accession to power in 1603. The accession of James I to the English throne brought about the breakdown of the Elizabethan constitution because he largely ignored the role of Parliament as the chief advisor of the monarch (Coward 105). It was the Stuart dynasty that brought about the concept of absolutism and the personal rule of the monarch into the mainstream politics of the period, because, as Glen Burgess suggests, “early Stuart political discourse can indeed be read as containing defences of absolutism” (19). In this regard, the rise of Puritan power in Parliament in the seventeenth century made the friction in the country worse because there began a power struggle between the Crown and Parliament. As Coward has remarked, Parliament had been growing “from early sixteenth century infancy to later sixteenth

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<sup>1</sup> Milton, John. *Complete Prose Works*. Hereafter the work will be cited as CPW.

century adolescence and early seventeenth century maturity” (102). The English Parliament adopted the Magna Carta in their restriction of the monarchical powers and in controlling the Court. Hence, in the seventeenth century England Parliament’s reference to the Magna Carta was an attempt to exercise its power and to control the Crown’s finances and ministers (Coward 102). James, however, had grown up in the Scottish tradition of monarchy, which was far different from the English tradition in terms of constitutional monarchy. The Scottish Parliament had very limited powers of control over the monarch when compared with the English one. Furthermore, the idea of ruling in Scotland was based on the absolute powers and divine right of kings. Hence, James’s belief in the absolute powers of the monarch, which were inherited from his Scottish rule based on absolute monarchy, increased the political instability in England (Trevelyan 70). James I was the first king of the Stuart line to practise the idea of absolute monarchy and to introduce the concept of the divine right of kings to the English court. His practice of absolute monarchy stems from his hatred of Parliament, which he dissolved three times during his reign. The first Parliament of England under the reign of James I lasted from 1604 to 1610. In 1610, James dissolved it due to the failure of negotiations over the Great Contract. From 1610 to 1614, he ruled without Parliament (Miller, *The Stuarts* 52). He felt the need to call Parliament in 1614 for budgetary reasons, but this Parliament became known as “the Addled Parliament” since it lasted only eight weeks as a result of the conflict between the king and the House of Commons over Parliament’s refusing to grant him ‘Benevolence’, which is a form of taxation, and a grant of £65,000 (Willson 348). The third Parliament, which was called in 1621, was dissolved again over a dispute of foreign policy between the Crown and Parliament (Trevelyan 79). Accordingly, James’s dispute with Parliament was the result of seeing the Crown as an absolute power over Parliament and considering Parliament as an unnecessary institution. For him, Parliament should not interfere in the political matters of the country; it was mostly useful for raising money for the monarch. As Miller states, James

wondered aloud how his predecessors had allowed an institution like Parliament to come into being. The answer, of course, was that they had actively encouraged it, as a means of mobilising consent. It had helped the Tudors to enhance their power over church and state. But James could see no useful purpose in such an institution. He tended to see truculence as defiance and to take rudeness personally. (*The Stuarts*, 53)

James's idea of monarchy was based on the belief of "the divine rights of kings", which he defended in his two books, *Basilicon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*. Especially, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* is regarded as the most vigorously absolutist of all James's writings. Accordingly, Coward has stressed that

the stability of later sixteenth-and early seventeenth-century England was constantly threatened by tensions that arose from the existing political, constitutional and religious situation [...] the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 and the eruption of a severe economic crisis in 1621-3 intensified the tensions that had long threatened to destabilize the early Stuart state. As in an earlier period of war and economic crisis in the 1590's, England in the 1620s underwent a period of intense political instability. (151)

In this regard, the stable political atmosphere in England during the Elizabethan period, which resulted from a close cooperation between Parliament and the Crown, started to deteriorate over the problems of

ruling multiple kingdoms, which grew more serious with the accession of monarchs who were rulers of Scotland as well as England, Ireland and Wales; the state's financial weakness; and differing views about the nature of the Post-Reformation English Church. (Coward 91)

Furthermore, the instability was also increased by James's clash with Parliament in social, political and economical matters of the country, which led to relative deterioration in the relations between the Crown and Parliament (Brice 5). In the Tudor period, Parliament had a significant function as the advisor and executive body of the monarch. As soon as James ascended the throne, he began to implement absolutist policies ignoring the traditional role of Parliament. Among the Stuarts James I and Charles I attempted to "extend the powers of the crown beyond limits that their Parliaments considered tolerable, tempted as they were to take up the absolutist position that they saw successfully maintained by the kings of France and Spain and by the Holy Roman Emperor" (Parry 9). Hence, the extension and the rise of the power of the monarchs, and disregarding the function of Parliament, can be considered as the absolutist trends and tendencies of both James I and Charles I. Thus, it can be stated that the stability of the Elizabethan period was gradually transformed into instability both in domestic and foreign policies as a result of James's implementation of these policies without the advice of Parliament. James I and Charles I's strict adherence to the theory of divine right and attempts at royal absolutism led to a conflict between the Parliament and the king.

The King replaced himself “legally, morally, and magically above all human law and restraint” (Parry 214). Furthermore, as pointed out both James I’s and Charles I’s reliance on the theory of divine rights of kings strengthened their confidence in the exercise of royal prerogative, which was considered as the right of the monarch to assert his authority without interference by Parliament or the law. Hence, in accordance with the doctrine of royal absolutism, the king is not compelled to summon the Parliament, and the Parliaments are in practice called to assembly only when the king needs them to vote for supplies. In this respect, “the King and his ministers could make policy and impose it by proclamation, relying on the magistracy for enforcement” (Parry 215).

Historians divide the Stuart period into three separate parts. The first period covers the years 1603 to 1618, which was a time of conflict between the king and Parliament, principally over financial matters but also it concerned James’s desire for the union between England and Scotland (Brice 1). However, though considered as troubled years, the period was regarded as a time of stability in the country because James consulted Parliament in financial and political matters. The next period covers the years from 1618 to 1629, in which the beginning of the Thirty Years War proved the ineffective foreign policy of the monarch and the Duke of Buckingham (Brice 1). Hence, this led to a serious reaction within the House of Commons, criticizing the policies of the monarchy, which widened the gap between Parliament and monarchy. The third period covers the years from 1629 to 1640, known as the personal rule of Charles I since he decided to rule without Parliament because of the ideological conflicts between himself and Parliament. Brice states that “there was little opposition during this time, but when Parliament met again in 1640 the accumulated grievances of the previous eleven years united virtually the entire political union against the king” (2). Therefore, from the beginning of Stuart period to the outbreak of the civil war, the conflict between Parliament and the monarchy was strongly felt, and led the country into political, social and economic instabilities, culminating in the civil war between the Parliamentarians and Royalists.

Considering the reasons and the nature of the initiation of the conflict between Parliament and the Crown, it can be claimed that it rests on political, economical, and religious or ecclesiastical reasons. Accordingly, Christopher Durston has asserted that “the early days of James’s first Parliament in 1604 were dominated by a tussle over parliamentary privilege” (38). Respectively, the quarrel between Parliament and the King began over the question of Parliamentary powers and privileges, in which

James I “started his reign by setting forth in explicit terms his claims to the Divine Right (Rayner 190). Comparing James I’s reign with that of Queen Elizabeth’s, Rayner has pointed out that

the great Queen was too practical-minded to demand a formal recognition of her supremacy so long as she was left to govern in her own way: and Parliament was equally ready to let the subject sleep, so long as she carried on the government cheaply and effectively, and kept the Spanish danger at bay. But circumstances were now changed. The classes from which Parliament was mostly drawn—country gentlemen and prosperous merchants—had been growing rapidly in importance and self-confidence throughout the latter half of the last century; all fears of invasion were now past and the new King had none of the claims to the nation’s respect and affection possessed by his predecessor. (190)

Similar to the Stuart rulers, the monarchs in the Tudor period had authority and power over Parliament, which can also be termed as royal absolutism; however, most of the time they achieved a balance of this power and tried to maintain harmony and peace between Parliament and the Crown through considering and respecting the advice of Parliament in many of the state affairs. In this manner, Elton claims that Tudor monarchs ruled in accordance with the theory of the divine right of the king, however the House of Commons in those times existed as a powerful political institution and consultative body which represented the nation as a whole (22). Likewise, it can be claimed that, although the Tudor monarchs considered themselves as the only power, Parliament still exercised its authority and felt its influence on political affairs, which reveals the authority and dominance of Parliament over the monarchy. However, this practice and procedure, though not entirely, was reversed when James came to the English throne because of the fact that, from the beginning of his reign to the end, he adopted the doctrine of the divine rights of the kings.

As stated by Lockyer, James supported the strong monarchical power in order to prevent the political and sectarian division in society and to maintain the stability and order in the country (34). Accordingly, James I adopted the idea that a monarch possess “a monopoly of political power” that he derives from God alone (Sommerville, “Introduction” xvii). In accordance with this doctrine, any resistance to the monarch was considered as sinful. As Sommerville has pointed out,

if our king commands us to do things which contravene the law of God,  
we must disobey him, for we should always obey God rather than man.  
But if the monarch calls us to account for our disobedience, we should

meekly accept whatever punishment he inflicts upon us. ("Introduction" xvii)

Likewise, James I accepted that kings had a duty to rule in the public interest and through the law of the country; however, he claimed that no one had the power to force them to perform these duties (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 35). In this respect, what James stresses is that Parliament cannot have a forceful power over the kings because the kings derive their power only from God. In his *Basilicon Doron*, which was completed in 1598, James I reveals his ideas about monarchy and the divine rights of kings in the form of advice to his son, Henry. Therefore, the *Basilicon Doron* is considered as a book of practical advice. As Sommerville stresses "the emphasis in the *Basilicon Doron* was on the authority of the King and the obedience owed to him. Little or nothing was said about the rights and liberties of the subject, even though these were of prime concern to the English political nation" (36). Indeed, in the preface of the *Basilicon Doron*, James I reveals his intention in composing such a political treatise

[he] wrote for exercise of mine owne ingyne, and instruction of him, who is appointed by God (I hope) to sit on my Throne after me. For the purpose and matter thereof being onely fit for a King, as teaching him his office; and the person whom-for it was ordained, a Kings heire, whose secret counsellor and faithfull admonisher it must be. (*JPW*<sup>2</sup> 4)

Hence, James I strongly argues in the *Basilicon Doron* that kings alone have the rights to make all final decision on both foreign and domestic policy. Besides political affairs, kings also have supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs (*JPW* 4). While he was ruling in Scotland prior to 1603, he strongly opposed Presbyterian ideology which prevailed in the Scottish church, the Kirk, since he believed that Presbyterianism undermined the authority and absolutist control of the monarchy. Presbyterianism, as a religious thought was modelled on Calvinist theology, and required a form of church government with a council of elders or presbyters replacing the Episcopal Church government (Potter 96). Therefore, rejecting the Presbyterian doctrine, James I believed in the rule of the ecclesiastical system by the monarchs since he adopted the belief that kings should control both secular and religious institutions as well, which is the power derived from God (Hill *A Century of Revolution* 6-7).

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<sup>2</sup> King James VI and I. *Political Writings*. Hereafter the book will be cited as *JPW*.



In another of his political works, entitled *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, James further reflects his concept of monarchy and kingship. In fact James I composed *The True Law of Free Monarchies* directly from his experience “as King of Scotland, having its origin in his repudiation of the teachings of his tutor, George Buchanan, who has been described as by far the most radical of all the Calvinist revolutionaries” (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 37). As clearly stated at the beginning of *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, James I regarded the monarchy as “the trew paterne of Diuinitie” (JPW 64) which is derived from “the fundamental Lawes of our owne Kingdome” and from the “law of Nature” (JPW 64). Likewise, according to James I, monarchy is a “forme of gouernment, as resembling the Diuinitie, approacheth nearest to perfection, as all the learned and wise men from the beginning haue agreed vpon; Vnitie being the perfection of all things” (JPW 63). Furthermore, in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, James I defended the concept of a free monarchy by stating that kings are not constrained by any human institution since they are only responsible to and appointed by God to govern people (JPW 64). He further claimed that kings should think of the interest and well-being of their subjects, and also that there are mutual duties between kings and people within this concept of kingship (Thrush 84). Accordingly, the book, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* has the subtitle, *The Reciproock and Mutual Duty betwixt a Free King and his Natural Subjects*. However, although James believed in mutual duties between kings and people, he insisted on the authority and the absolutist right of kings. As stated above, James I’s concept of absolutist monarchy is based on the divine rights of kings. In this respect, James I takes his support and sources from the Old Testament. As James I states,

Kings are called Gods by the propheticall King David, because they sit vpon GOD his Throne in the earth, and haue the count of their administration to giue vnto him. Their office is, To minister Iustice and Iudgement to the people, as the same Dauid saith: To aduance the good, and punish the euill, as he likewise saith: To establish good Laues to his people, and procure obedience to the same as diuers good Kings of Iudah did: To procure the peace of the people, as the same Dauid saith: To decide all controuersies that can arise among them, as Salomon did: To be the Minister of God for the weale of them that doe euill, as S.Paul saith. And finally, As a good Pastour, to goe out and in before his people as is said in the first of Samuel: That through the Princess prosperitie, the peoples peace may be procured, as Ieremie saith. (JPW 64)

On the other hand, James I likened kings to fathers of their people. As pointed out, kings “enjoyed the same authority over their subjects that the

law of nature gave to fathers over their families” (Lockyer 40). In accordance with this doctrine, since children have certain duties and must be obedient to their fathers, then respectively, subjects have duties and obedience to their kings. Therefore, any disobedience to kings would be recognized as rebellion against the sovereign, hence it would be recognized as “monstrous and unnatural” (*JPW* 77). In this respect, James I claimed that the subjects do not have any right to act against or resist their rulers or kings. However, he also claimed that there are some exceptions to the absolutism of kings in that if a king becomes lawless and turns out to be a tyrant, in which case this rule harms the state, and subjects have the right to get rid of such a tyrant (*JPW* 77). However, although James I stated the accountability of kings to their subjects, he asserted that subjects do not have any right or authority to judge their kings since “the wickedness therefore of the King can neuer make them that are ordained to be judged by him, to become his Iudges” (*JPW* 78). It is for this reason that subjects cannot judge their ruler but only God can. Moreover, James I claimed that any rebellion of the subjects leads to the destruction and disruption of the state and Commonwealth because he believes that “a bad king is better than no king at all, and the only alternative to royal rule is anarchy” (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 41). In order to verify this statement, James I gave reference to the poet Du Bartas, who reveals that “better it were to suffer some disorder in the estate, and some spots in the Common wealth, then in pretending to reforme, vtterly to overthrow the Republicke (qtd. in *JPW* 79). Therefore, in the *Basilicon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* James I defended divine-right monarchy (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 41). Correspondingly, in his speech to Parliament on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1610, James I also stressed his doctrine of kingship as follows:

the state of Monarchie is the supremest thing vpon earth: For Kings are not onely GODS Lieutenants vpon earth, and sit vpon GODS throne, but euen by GOD himselfe they are called Gods. There bee three principall similitudes that illustrate the state of MONARCIE: One taken out of the word of GOD; and the two other out of the grounds of Policie and Philosophie. In the Scriptures Kings are called Gods, and so their power after a certaine relation compared to the Diuine power. Kings are also compared to Fathers of families: for a King is trewly Parens Patriae, the politike father of his people. And lastly, Kings are compared to the head of this Microcosme of the body of man. (*JPW* 181)

When he came to the English throne, he could not apply this theory of kingship practically because he was confronted with many difficulties both politically and economically in the country. Yet, he insisted on his

doctrine of divine right of kings. In terms of the relation of authority between monarchs and parliament, according to James I, kings are

before any estates and rankes of men within the same, before any Parliaments were holden, or lawes made: and by them was the land distributed (which at the first was whole theirs) states erected and decerned, and formes of gouvernement deuised and established: And so it followes of necessitie, that kings were the authors and makers of the Lawes, and not the Lawes of the kings. (*JPW* 73)

James I, furthermore, pointed out that Parliament does not have the function of making laws but it is only responsible for giving advice to kings in making laws. As he stated,

in the Parliament (which is nothing else but the head Court of the king and his vassals) the lawes are but craued by his subjects, and onely made by him at their roagation, and with their aduice: for albeit the king make daily statutes and ordinances, enioying such paines thereto as hee thinkes meet, without any aduice make any kinde of Law or Statue, without his Scepter be to it, for giuing it the force of a law. (*JPW* 74)

Hence, James tried to exercise these absolutist practices, denying the laws of Magna Carta, which had brought limitations to the rights of the kings (Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* 77). His practice of such lawless ruling sometimes ended with dissolution of the Parliament, as happened on 31 December 1610, in which James dismissed the Parliament over the disagreement resulting from economical matters (Croft 79). Furthermore, another friction that led to the dissolution of Parliament in 1621 stemmed from James's following pro-Spanish foreign policies and the prospects of the marriage between Charles, Prince of Wales, and the Spanish Infanta, a Catholic princess, Maria, which was harshly criticized by the Protestant Parliament because this was the display of the introduction of Catholic practices and policies into England once more (Willson 357). Thus, Parliament offered a petition asking for Prince Charles to marry a Protestant, for the enforcement of the anti-Catholic laws, and a war with Spain, supporting the Protestant Bohemians against the Catholic Holy Roman Empire (Wilson 421). In this regard, while James I stated in his first Parliament that "all its power depended on his good will and it was sedition for the members even to discuss the limits of his prerogative", the Parliament later protested that "we [they] hold it an ancient and undoubted right of Parliament to debate freely all matters which properly concern the subject" (qtd. in Rayner 190). The King replied in anger that their claims could not be accepted, which led to a

dispute that continued through the six years of the life of the first Parliament of King James I (Rayner 190). Another political disagreement between the monarch and Parliament started with a particular dispute over an election of Buckinghamshire, which itself started with friction between the King and Parliament in “the Goodwin Case” (Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts* 44). In the election, Sir John Fortescue, a privy councillor, had been defeated by Sir Francis Godwin; however, the Chancery Office had declared the election invalid on the grounds that Sir Francis Goodwin had been outlawed for the failure to pay his debts (Coward 134). Parliament, however, held the idea that they were “traditionally the judges of disputed election returns and they immediately reacted to this threat to their independence” (Brice 34). Thus, the Commons insisted that they were the one and only judge of the validity of election returns, reversed this decision and demanded that Goodwin take his seat. However, rejecting the claim and decision of the Parliament, James I intervened by stating that the Parliament “derived all matters of privilege from him and by his grant” (qtd. in Smith, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1603-1707: The Double Crown* 32). Another clash between Parliament and the monarchy stemmed from James’s desire for union between his two kingdoms, Scotland and England. As James I, in his speech to Parliament in 1604, said, “I am assured that no honest subject of whatsoever degree within my whole dominions is less glad of this joyful union than I am” (qtd. in Brice 34). However, Parliament opposed James I this idea of fearing that the union of the kingdoms would bring about the supremacy of the Scottish people over the English people (Ashley 44). The friction and clash between Parliament and the King over the union widened and increased during meetings of Parliament from 1604 to 1607 (Durstun 38). As stated, the disputes between Parliament and the monarch resulted from political matters. On the other hand, in essence, the conflict between Parliament and the monarchy originated mainly from financial matters. Accordingly, as Katherine Brice claims “James I had problems with his parliaments almost from the start. He was extravagant and crown finances were inadequate at the best of times” (2). Therefore, it has been stated that the financial problems of the king deteriorated the relations with Parliament, leading to its dissolution finally. Dietz points out that “the fundamental weakness of James’s position, which made the irritation of various groups and individuals among his subjects important, was that he had insufficient resources under his own control to carry on his government and meet its expenses” (250). As a result, it is stated that when coming to the English throne the economical conditions of the court directed James I to look for different financial resources such as levying taxes and exerting new

impositions without the approval and consent of Parliament. Another source of revenue for the monarchy was Parliamentary taxation, which the English monarchs claimed from Parliament in return for some concessions and privileges (Durstun 26). In order to meet the expenses of the court and to support the army related to his foreign policy, James tended to seek new sources of revenue. As Kimmel states

the sources of revenue that were available to the king included the sale of crown lands, feudal rights such as fines for recusancy, first fruits and tenths, and the sale of wardship, and a series of indirect taxes that had become part of the ordinary revenues. These duties on imports and exports, tonnage and poundage, and customs were especially important because they kept pace with inflation, increasing as trade increased. Finally, the crown also had access to a series of extraordinary taxes, such as military subsidies and fifteenths and tenths, an irregular income from sale of monopolies and patents, and small profits from judicial administrations (fees for writs), the right of purveyance (the compulsory purchase of food from royal officials), loans from corporate bodies, loans from private individuals, and "benevolences," another euphemistically named loan. (141)

Although these fiscal resources were at the disposal of James, they were not even adequate to meet the ordinary needs of the king in peacetime, let alone to finance James's foreign policy against the Habsburgs (Kimmel 141). Therefore, the monarch's ineffective financial policies, and especially his imposition of unlawful and arbitrary taxes deepened the gap and the conflict between Parliament and the monarchy in England.

Another occasion of clashes between the King and Parliament was on account of the religious controversy, particularly between Catholics and Protestants in England, which dates back particularly to the reigns of Edward VI and Mary I. Godfrey Davies reveals that in England during James I's reign "disagreement on religion was greater than on any question" (7). In fact, in the past, until the emergence of the Protestant doctrine in 1517 with Martin Luther, England was totally a Catholic country. Furthermore, most people had adopted the Roman Catholic faith, and the Pope in Rome was considered as the head of the church. When Henry VIII broke away from Rome, the official religion of the country was transformed from Catholic to Protestant. He set up the Anglican Church of England declaring himself as the head of the Church of England, which marked the rise of aggravated religious conflicts in England. His succession to the English throne he adopted the Elizabethan church settlement, by practicing a Presbyterian system of ministers and

favouring bishops in the English Church, although James I was brought up in the Calvinist faith. In this manner, James I believed that through adopting a Presbyterian Church system, which was based on the hierarchy of ministers, he would strengthen his position as a king. His attitude towards Catholics and Puritans was not very tolerant since he regarded these groups as passing the threat of religious conflict in the country (Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* 96). Thus, the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, proved him right in considering Catholics as a danger to the unity of the state (Parry 11). On the other hand, James regarded the Puritans as more dangerous than any other religious groups or sects because of their rejection of “the hierarchical system of church government or the control of the State over the affairs of the spirit” (Parry 11). In fact, the Puritan demand for the reformation of the Protestant religion led eventually to civil war in England. Hence, the English revolution has been considered by many historians and scholars as a “Puritan revolution” (Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* 96). Rejecting the Protestant and Catholic Church settlement and services, Puritanism gave importance to the individual conscience against the dogmas of priests. Hughes points out:

In the English context, Puritans held that the Elizabethan settlement of the church was not adequate, and worked from 1560s against the ecclesiastical establishment for further reformation. They were often harassed or persecuted by authority and their religious sufferings, plus their sturdy individualism, meant they also led the struggle against political oppression and arbitrary government. (*The Causes of the English Civil War* 96)

Hence, although the emergence of the Puritan reformation movement dates back to Henry VIII's time, it increased its effect and arrived at a more radical dimension during the reigns of James I and Charles, and it led to the Civil Wars. When Charles I ascended to the English throne in 1625, he turned out to be more aggressive than his father about the powers of Parliament, and deliberately followed a policy of autocracy and absolute monarchy. Following his father's theory of divine right and royal absolutism, Charles, in a sense, extended these powers and began to practice the theory in a more radical extent. As Rayner claims, Charles I “had imbibed the Divine Right theory from the cradle, and clung to it with dull obstinacy. He was convinced that people who resisted his will were either fools or knaves, who it was lawful to outwit by any trickery” (203). According to Sommerville, the main cause of friction between the King and Parliament was due to Charles's following strict royal policies of his own such as “taxation without consent, imprisonment without cause

shown, and the government of the church without Parliamentary advice” (*Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-1640* 5). Therefore, according to Somerville, this is evidence that “Charles was a far less able politician than his father and that his policies resulted in hardening of opinion on many issues” (*Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-1640* 5). As Lee claims, Charles I was not apt at kingship because “he had great dignity and a high sense of his position as king but no practical ability” (27). Furthermore, Charles adopted the idea that “parliament had a place in the constitution, but one theoretically and practically inferior to his own as hereditary monarch” (Lee 28). James I had been more successful than his son in maintaining the harmony between the King and the Parliament. In comparing the ideas of kingship and personality of both James I and Charles I, Coward points out that:

James’s innate political shrewdness and flexibility enabled him to ride out political storms in a way that was later characteristic of Charles II; Charles I, on the other hand, had little of his father’s political ability and proved to be inflexible and uncompromising to the point of ineptness. Second, whereas James I tried (not always with total success, as will be seen) to act as an impartial arbitrator between different factions within the English Church, his son abandoned any such attempt with the result that religion became a serious divisive issue for the first time in early Stuart England. Thirdly, unlike his father, Charles I failed as ruler of his multiple kingdoms. The contrast between father and son as kings of Britain is clearest in the case of Scotland. Charles’s blundering policies north of the border had the catastrophic consequences of uniting against him not only most of his English subjects but also many of his Scottish ones. (152)

With Charles’s accession to the English throne in 1625 the conflict and disputes between Parliament and the monarchy deepened due to economic, political and religious reasons. When the first Parliament during the reign of Charles I was summoned in 1625, over the supplies for the forthcoming war with Spain, the members accepted to make a grant of £140, 000 for war expenses (Dietz 256). However, although Parliament’s grant for the war expenses could be considered a positive attitude in return for the grant Parliament expressed their complaints about the king’s marriage to a French Catholic princess that may pose the threat of increasing tolerance for the Catholics in England. However, Charles rejected Parliament’s claim and disregarded their concern over his marriage, and further, began to make concessions to the Roman Catholics, which initiated the first crisis between Parliament and the king (Ashley 55). On the other hand, although protesting to Charles’s marriage and his favouring the Catholics in England, his first Parliament granted Charles I the Customs Duties in

1626, known as Tonnage and Poundage - but for one year only. For centuries, the Customs Duties had been granted to kings for the duration of their reigns (Trevelyan 147). As Sommerville states "since 1414, Parliament had voted every monarch the right for life to collect duties on every *ton* (cask) of wine and *pound* (£ value) of imports" ("1625-1629: the first crisis of Charles I's reign"). As a result of this unexpected attitude of Parliament and the inadequate special subsidy, the king dissolved his first Parliament (Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts* 232). Another reason was that the Parliament demanded the dismissal of Charles's chief minister, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, because the Commons thought he was giving the king bad advice. Accordingly, as Rayner points out "the king felt that if he gave way and dismissed the favourite, he would be admitting that Parliament had the right to control the conduct of the war and the appointment of ministers. Not for a moment would he allow such a claim" (205). Therefore, Charles rejected Parliament's demands to dismiss his favourite. The second Parliament was called as a result of the financial requirements of the king due to the ongoing war with Spain. What Charles expected from the new Parliament was to collect the duties regularly, which would heal the wounds that the previous Parliament inflicted by refusing the granting of Tonnage and Poundage for the lifetime of the king. However, the Commons again had their grievances such as the role and politics of Buckingham, who was considered a threat to the common interests of the Parliamentarians. The failure of the war against Spain in Cadiz led the Commons to react strongly against the king and the Duke of Buckingham in a way that "Eliot launched a bitter attack on those he held responsible for the failure" (Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts* 233). Likewise, the Commons demanded the impeachment of the Duke of Buckingham, who was now charged with the failure of the military expedition to Spain. In this respect, as Parry states

foreign policy was the special preserve of the monarch, who exercised here the secret wisdom with which God endowed his kings. Against such claims of divinely guided policy, Parliament made slow but persistent headway. Opposition to acts of royal prerogative was a feature of all the Parliaments of the two reigns, personified in the time of James by the legal conflicts between Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor, who was disposed to uphold royal prerogative, and Edward Coke, the Chief Justice, who was determined to use all the resources of common law to defeat the King's desire to rule by proclamations and prerogative. (215)

Thus, as a result of the failure of the foreign policy of Charles I, Parliament refused to give extra grants for the supplies of the war, and Charles decided to dissolve the Parliament (Morril, "The Stuarts" 99). The



dissolution of Parliament left the king with no additional income and no adequate resources for financing the war expenditures. Ignoring the act of the previous Parliament which had rejected the king's request to grant him customs duties for his life time, the king began to collect customs duties through raising forced loans and threatening those who refused to pay with imprisonment (Smith, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1603-1707: The Double Crown* 88-89 ). Thus, Charles decided to finance the war independent of Parliament (Rayner 207). As Brice states, the loan itself was seen as the attacking liberties of Parliament, and especially when "Charles's subsequent actions made fears about the imposition of absolutism much more acute" (75). On the other hand, Charles was faced with opposition, which was led by Sir John Eliot, who was arrested and thrown into the Tower. Moreover seventy gentlemen, twenty-seven of whom were the members of Parliament, were imprisoned for they refused to contribute to the loan (Smith, Lacey 227). Unlawful taxes and arbitrary arrests of members of Parliament caused opposition to the policies of both Charles and the Duke of Buckingham. As a response to these reactions and oppositions, Charles argued that "in a national emergency he was entitled to raise taxes 'for the common defence' without Parliament's agreement" (Smith, *A History of the Modern British Isles* 71). This claim was supported with a series of sermons, which argued that the king had divine power, thus only God could judge or punish him (Smith, *ibid*). Thus, refusing to pay the forced loan was considered a rebellion against God, as stated in these sermons and speeches made by the king. Smith has stated that "all these sermons developed a theme originally suggested by Laud" (*ibid*). Charles also implied that he had a right of levying taxes in case of emergency, taking its basis from the prerogative rights and powers of kings. However, the imposition of the forced loan, in this respect, can be regarded as the king's abuse of his prerogative rights and power because the Commons believed that Charles, under the pretext of his right of levying taxes in case of emergency, was abusing his power. Considering the abuse of power which exceeded the Common Law, many people believed and began to fear that the common law no longer offered adequate protection of their lives, liberties and property. Charles later had no option but to summon another Parliament in March 1628 due to campaigns and reactions against the Forced Loan and the urgent need for money to fight the war (Gardiner xix). The Commons, taking the advantage of the king's need for money, passed the Petition of Right, which was designed to redress Parliament's grievances by curbing Charles's absolutist acts, including imposing the Forced Loan on his subjects, the imprisonment of people without trial and quartering troops in

private homes. Gardiner claims, “the Petition of Right is memorable as the first statutory restriction of the powers of the Crown since the accession of the Tudor dynasty” (xx). The Petition of Right, which takes “natural liberties and natural law as the rhetorical sources of opposition to absolutism” (Kimmel 160), was intended to limit the powers of the monarch taking its source as the Magna Carta. As Rayner shows, there are two chief laws in the Petition of Right, referring to “the clause of Magna Carta (1215) which said that no free man could be imprisoned without trial; and the ‘Statuta de Talligio non Concedendo’ (1297), according to which no gift, loan or benevolence could be exacted without consent of Parliament” (209). Furthermore, in its final form, the petition declared that what Charles did was illegal as he employed practices such as “Martial Law”, “the Billeting of Troops”, “non-Parliamentary and Arbitrary Taxation”, and “Arbitrary Imprisonment without cause” (Brice 209). According to Trevelyan, billeting of troops and martial law caused distress in British society (135). The billeting of troops and martial law, arbitrary taxation and arbitrary imprisonment gave rise to agitation among the subjects. These attitudes and practices were considered systematic despotism. Thus, in the context of levying arbitrary taxes, the Petition of Right demanded that “no man hereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such like charge, without common consent by Act of Parliament” (qtd. in Trevelyan 136). On the other hand, the Petition also demanded that “no freeman, in any such manner as before mentioned, be imprisoned or detained” (qtd. in Trevelyan 137). Significantly, the main purpose of the Petition of Right was the recognition of the liberty of the subject (Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England* 145). Sommerville states that Parliament is the most essential entity embodying the ancient and fundamental right of liberty. It enables the discussion of all matters freely and without enforcement of the monarch (*Politics and Ideology in England* 180). The Petition was approved by the House of Lords in May 1628 and the Commons later presented it to Charles on 2 June. Initially Charles’s attitude was not affirmative and constructive; however he had to assent because of his dire need for money that Parliament would supply in return for acceptance of the Petition. With the money that Parliament granted, a new expedition set out to help La Rochelle. But, during the expedition, the Duke of Buckingham was murdered, which pleased the Commons and upset Charles, and after this “the distance between Charles and his subjects increased” (Brice 2). The Petition is considered to have failed due to the disagreement between Charles and leaders of Parliament on two fundamental points. The first point is that in the Petition there was no

certain explication of the impositions, and Charles in this was able to claim a right to levy customs duties without the consent of Parliament. Secondly, the Petition did not include a direct obstruction to Arminianism in the Church, thus Charles attempted to appoint Arminian bishops as William Laud and Montague (Coward 164). Following the failure of the second La Rochelle expedition and the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham, Charles became more radical in political, economic and social matters of the country, following strict Arminian policies in religious affairs by altering the character of the Church of England, appointing Arminian clergymen, and continuing to collect customs duties without consent of Parliament, which increased the gap between the monarch and Parliament. As a result, the Commons agreed on three resolutions "high churchmen and anyone suspected of popery should be branded as 'capital enemies' of the commonwealth; the king's advisers who had urged him to collect taxes without parliamentary consent would be similarly judged; and anyone who paid customs charges would be a betrayer of the liberties of England" (Smith, "Politics in Early Stuart England" 229). Thus, Parliament linked Arminianism with the paying or collecting of 'Tonnage and Poundage' as treason. The resolutions were passed, which increased the struggle between the King and Parliamentarians because the Commons, through passing these resolutions, rejected the theory of royal absolutism and adopted a new theory of parliamentary absolutism (Dietz 259). Charles immediately decided to dissolve the parliament. Kishlansky describes the second session of the third parliament as a 'pandemonium', in which

the Speaker of the House of Commons was restrained from dissolving Parliament while members usurped his authority and adopted three resolutions in contravention of King's instructions. In this one tumultuous moment the worst fears of both Charles I and the leaders of the Commons were realized. The King feared that if he held another session of Parliament, members of the Commons would encroach on his prerogatives and openly question his authority. (113)

Eventually, in the second session of the third parliament in 1629, the Commons began to discuss the condition of king's unending and persistent absolutist policies on arbitrary imprisonment, taxes and religious matters, and hence the king had to intervene in the discussions, which resulted in his dissolution of Parliament for eleven years (Trevelyan 146-147). Between the years 1629 and 1640, Charles ruled England without summoning Parliament. During the absence of Parliament, which was considered as "eleven years of tyranny," Charles adopted absolutist policies both in conducting financial affairs and in domestic politics

(Coward 165). However, having been deprived of the financial support of Parliament, Charles had to raise extra money by expanding customs duties, taxes and royal revenues. Moreover, he had to follow a pacifist foreign policy through making peace with both France and Spain. Kevin Sharpe in his detailed study of “the Personal Rule of Charles I” points out that when Charles dissolved Parliament and ruled the country without Parliament for eleven years, the conflict between the subjects and the monarch was intensified and increased (53). In his financial policy during this period, Charles ignored the resolutions of the previous Parliament through collecting customs duties. At the same time, he managed to decrease the royal expenditures, which was realized under his Lord Treasurer William Weston. “Within four or five years this able but unscrupulous minister had liquidated a war-debt of £1,000,000, and had placed the finances of the government on a sound basis” (Rayner 214). Both the king and the Lord Treasurer searched for every manner legally to collect money and increase the royal revenues. For example, they tried to revive ancient, long-forgotten taxes and customs as well as neglected laws, so that they could “fine those who had unwittingly violated them” (Lee 29). Furthermore, the king ordered the imposition of heavy penalties for those breaking the Forest Laws. Monopolies were also a source of revenue, being indirect taxes on trade (Lee 30). ‘Ship Money’ was one of the most famous of these revenue-raising devices; however, it was a non-parliamentary tax accepted as necessary in times of emergency for the defence of the seas. Ship Money was revived in 1634 by Charles I and it was then raised every year in order to “build up a fleet to guard against the depredations of pirates who regularly raided the south coast and carried young people into slavery” (Brice 122). In 1635, Charles took a radical step by extending Ship Money to cover the non-coastal counties. Charles’s collecting Ship Money initiated oppositions and protestations, and those who refused to pay the tax were either arrested or imprisoned without their captors showing any cause. In 1637, the legality of Ship Money was brought before the law court by John Hampden, who had refused to pay it. However, the judges decided in favour of the king by declaring the collection of Ship Money to be legal (Lee 30). In fact, this was just one of the complaints against the king’s policies at the time. Graham Parry states that

there was protracted legal challenge against prerogative, culminating in the ship Money case of 1637, when John Hampden was tried on an action brought by the King before all twelve common-law judges for refusal to pay taxes levied by royal prerogative, and was found against by a majority of seven to five. (215)

The decision of the judges was questioned by the public in terms of Magna Carta (1215) and the Petition of Right (1628), which restricted arbitrary taxes under the pretext of the defence of the country.

Charles's "eleven years of tyranny" was also felt in his religious policies. Attempting to make some radical reforms within the Church of England during 1630s, Charles appointed William Laud initially as Bishop of London in 1628, and later as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. A High Churchman, William Laud became the chief adviser of the king in ecclesiastical matters. Sharpe states that it is not correct to claim that the religious reforms and enactments of the 1630s were the policy of Charles I (62). According to Sharpe, William Laud, as Archbishop of Canterbury, exerted his influence on the religious history of the decade (Sharpe 62). Perpetuating the Arminian practices and beliefs in the Church of England which had started in the time of the Duke of Buckingham and with the influence of Henrietta Maria, a Catholic princess, William Laud took a further step in the implementation of some of the Catholic and Arminian practices within Church services and in the organization of the Church government (Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts* 313-14). Brice states that "the Church of England underwent a dramatic change in the reign of Charles I, as he sought to introduce highly ceremonial worship which reminded many of Catholicism" (5). When examining the evolution of the English Church from the time of Elizabeth I to Charles I, it can be stated that there was an increased tendency to practice Catholicism during the reign of Charles I due to the fact that he was "more friendly than his father to Roman Catholics, and even more strongly opposed to Puritanism which now pervaded the House of Commons" (Ashley 55). This was realized and intensified with Charles's marriage to a Catholic wife, Henrietta Maria, who was the sister of King Louis XIII of France. The Catholic Queen, who promised to relieve the English Roman Catholics of their disabilities, promoted Catholic practices and agents in the English court (Morrill "The Causes of the British Civil Wars" 16). Thus, there began a transformation to Catholic principles and practices in the Church of England. According to Morrill "popery seemed to be implanted into the heart of the established Episcopal Church of England" ("The Causes of the British Civil Wars" 16). Likewise, the promotion of Popish and Arminian figures "transformed the agenda of the established church" ("The Causes of the British Civil Wars" 16). However, James I, unlike his son, Charles I, had attempted to construct balanced religious policies and practices, and he had refrained from disturbing both the puritans and the Catholics alike. In order to appease the English Puritans, James had even appointed a Puritan figure, George Abbot, as Archbishop of Canterbury. But when Abbot died in

1633, Charles appointed William Laud, an ardent Arminian clergyman. The promotions of William Laud to the Archbishopric of Canterbury and of Richard Neile to the Archbishopric of York show the clear revolutionary attitudes of the king in order to impose a High Church system of liturgy and discipline on the Church of England, which is called Arminianism (Kishlansky 128-129). As Patricia-Ann Lee points out

although Arminians were not Roman Catholic, many English men and women believed that they were, or at least that they were leading the church in that direction. This was a great disadvantage for Charles because hatred of popery [Roman Catholicism] was deeply embedded in English minds. To the English there was a natural connection between Catholicism, tyranny, and attempts by foreign powers to subvert and destroy their national independence. (28)

In due course, Arminianism became especially unpopular among the puritans in English society since it was considered as a threat to the free will and liberty of the conscience of the English people. Such fears appeared in the society because ecclesiastical leaders as Archbishop William Laud supported the absolutist political views of the king. William Laud believed in

the Royal supremacy and the authority of the Bishops. He insisted upon the sacred character of the clergy and of Church buildings; he required elaborate vestments to be worn; he discouraged unauthorised preaching; he had the Communion Tables moved to the east end of churches, and railed off. (Rayner 215)

As Anthony Milton asserts, Laud and his supporters brought out some innovations and reforms within the Church services in the 1630s, which “generated a radical-puritan opposition” (96).

Arminianism emerged in the Netherlands with the ideas of a Dutch theologian, Jacob (James) Arminius, who attacked the Calvinistic belief of predestination. The Arminians defended free will against predestination, and they aimed at restoring ceremony to church worship. Having read the writings of Jacobus Arminius, William Laud practised religious policies, which were basically Arminian. Laud was strongly against the Calvinist doctrine of predestination because in Calvinism “the majority of human beings were predestined to be damned regardless of the sort of lives they led, declaring that ‘it makes the God of all mercies to be the most fierce and unreasonable tyrant in the world’” (Smith, *A History of the Modern British Isles*, 94). Like Catholics, Laud believed that the sacraments