John Donne Journal
Vol. 11, Nos. 1 & 2 (1992)

Donne's Political Intervention in the Parliament of 1629

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> Embrace a Sun-beame, and on it
> The shadow of a man beget.
> . . . . . .
> Tell me what the Syrens sing,
> Or the secrets of a King,
> Or his power, and where it ends,
> And how farre his will extends.
> —Anonymous[1]

When John Donne preached at Whitehall on February 20, 1628/9, he did so in the midst of the greatest parliamentary crisis of his generation. With Parliament determined to assert the liberties of the subject and to affirm its own ancient liberties, and with King Charles just as determined to claim the superior authority of the royal prerogative, fears ran rampant that the king intended to dispense with Parliaments altogether. These fears were confirmed just a few weeks later after a tumultuous session in the Commons when the speaker, Sir John Finch, torn between his loyalty to the members who had elected him and his loyalty to the king who ordered him not to allow further speech in that chamber, was forcibly held in his chair so that Parliament might not be silenced. These famous events caused Sir Henry Wotton to comment, "Never was there such a morning as that which occasioned the dissolution since Phaeton did guide his father's chariot."[2] As tension mounted toward this dramatic conclusion to the parliamentary session which initiated the decade of personal rule, Donne spoke in terms that supported the traditional role of Parliament and cautioned the king against arbitrary rule, even though he was a royal chaplain indebted to the king's favour. Of course, given the conditions of censorship and the restrictions placed on authorized speech, Donne could only make such pronouncements obliquely, using analogies between kingship and divine governance, making implicit comparisons between recent histori-

cal events and scriptural examples, and by employing theological language that had political overtones.[3] However, although he used measured rhetoric, Donne spoke in a way that must have disconcerted Charles's increasingly absolutist Arminian advisers and offered comfort to those in favour of a balanced constitution.[4]

In providing this advice to Charles' court, Donne followed a pattern established in his *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* of promoting values obviously contrary to royal inclination such as the rule of law, counsel based on free and unflattering speech, as well as openness and accessibility in government.[5] As a member of the Addled Parliament of 1614, Donne would have understood that many of the issues then considered had only intensified.[6] A close examination of the Whitehall sermon adds to the increasing body of evidence that the view of Donne as a sychophantic supporter of divine right is dubious.[7] Donne could, as Marotti claims, *subvert* as well as show deference towards the Establishment.[8] Moreover, he could speak his conscience at risk to his own position.[9]

Unquestionably, Donne's text from the epistle of James would have aroused the political instincts of his auditory: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."[10] The terms *law* and *liberty* were crucial in the testy interactions between king and Parliament both in current and previous parliamentary sessions. J. H. Hexter summarizes the situation when he says of the King:

> He not only might rule lawlessly, he had ruled lawlessly. And the courts of law had not stopped him. Only the High Court of Parliament might be able to do that. By 1628, not fools and fanatics but every Englishman who was not sleepwalking or an interested party associated the king and extended prerogative with lawless rule, Parliament and its privileges with the rule of law.[11]

The almost automatic linking of any discussion of liberty with recent political developments can be seen in Joseph Hall's introductory comments in a 1628 Whitehall sermon on Christian liberty:

> As if my tongue and your ears could not easily be diswonted from our late parliamentary language, you have here, in this text, liberty, prerogative, the maintenance of both: liberty of subjects that are freed; prerogative of the King of glory that hath freed them;

> maintenance of that liberty which the power of that great prerogative hath achieved. . . .[12]

Hall's words not only illuminate the topicality of Donne's own text, they suggest the currency of the rhetoric of "theological politics" in sermons preached to the court.[13]

One key political issue raised in Donne's sermon is the nature of law. Many of Charles's absolutist-leaning policies, such as the forced loan, arbitrary imprisonment, billeting of soldiers, and martial law, had led parliamentarians to attempt to secure the fundamental liberties of all subjects, once and for all, in the Petition of Right. Yet even this bulwark quickly began to appear an illusory protection, since even as Charles passed the Petition, he ominously asserted that "you neither mean nor can hurt my prerogative."[14] The definition of "lawful" was hotly debated in the Commons before the Petition was granted. Sir John Eliot, complaining of the royal imposition of taxation without consent of Parliament protested:

> The ancient law of England, the declaration of Magna Carta and other statutes, say the subject is not to be burdened with loans, tallages, or benevolences. Yet we see them imposed. Doth not this contradict the law? Where is law? Where is *meum et tuum*? It is fallen into the chaos of a higher power. (*Proceedings* 2: 57)

Many parliamentarians had been discouraged by a number of legal decisions that ruled in favour of the king's residual power, including the Five Knights' Case, where the judges had determined that five knights, imprisoned over refusal to pay the forced loan, had no right to *habeas corpus*. Sir Robert Phelips angrily proclaimed:

> Oh improvident ancestors! oh unwise forefathers! to be so curious in providing for the quiet possession of our lands, and the liberties of parliament, and to neglect our persons and bodies, and to let them lie in prison, and that *durante bene placito* remediless. If this be law, what do we talk of our liberties? . . . what may a man call his if not his liberty? (*Proceedings* 2: 63)

The king's apparent unwillingness to govern according to law was an alarming development for parliamentarians. Several times the king was

rebuked with his own father's sacred memory (*Proceedings* 2: 130; 3: 126; 4: 108). After all, James had proclaimed that, "a king governing in a settled kingdom, leaves to be a king, and degenerates into a tyrant, as soon as he leaves off to rule according to his laws" (*Proceedings* 4: 108). Also, those who persuade a king otherwise are "vipers and pests" (*Proceedings* 4: 108). Charles's very word was at stake. When the king's promises did not match his actions, he was open to censure, as when Sir Nathaniel Rich succinctly declared: "He promises he will govern us by his laws, or the confirmation of the laws. We have nothing thereby but shells and shadows. The King and the Council did commit men against the law" (*Proceedings* 3: 270). The situation did not improve after the passage of the Petition of Right, either, since an initial act of the new session of 1629 was to investigate violations of the Petition since the last session.[15] Suspicion also arose that the king's sympathy with Arminianism, often seen as disguised Catholicism, was intimately linked with his absolutist stance (*Commons* 12).[16] Sir Benjamin Rudyard declared that "reason of state" or royal resort to the *arcana imperii* "has eaten out almost not only the laws, but all the religion of Christendom" (*Proceedings* 3: 128-29).[17] Sir Dudley Digges considered this link portentous since he observed, "When the romish church triumphed here they pretended to make kings above the laws, but it was to draw them to their own ends" (*Proceedings* 3: 405). The undermining of English protestantism was one of the overriding concerns of the Parliament of 1629.

What was Donne's response to lawful rule when he preached at Whitehall? Donne reiterated the need for law to authorize all actions.[18] With a worldly recognition of political realities, Donne explains that a state must justify its actions with at least the appearance of legality: "No Judgement, no Execution, without the name, the colour, the pretence of Law; for still men call for a Law for every Execution" (8: 344). Tellingly, Donne first cites the example of Jesus's execution being carried out with a pretence of law. The underlying implication is, of course, that law must be more than pretence if it is not to destroy truth. The divine judge provides the most worthy example of imitation: "Shall God judge us, condemn us, execute us at the last day, and not by a Law? by something that we never saw, never knew, never notified, never published, and judge me by that, and leave out the consideration of that Law, which he bound me to keep?" (8: 344-45). If God is to condemn and punish, such judgment is carried out only in accordance with a manifest and open law. The implication for God's representative is clear: imprisonment by royal command without reasons and without recourse to law is ungodly. The

logic that Donne uses is remarkably similar to that which Archbishop Abbot used when favorably considering the Petition of Right in the House of Lords. Abbot, who had fallen out of royal favour, reasoned: "No man committed, but a clear cause to be expressed. . . . *Per verbum Dei* no man punished but a reason given, from Genesis to the Revelation etc., and cited them. To imitate God herein. The end of castigation is for information and reformation. Not possible unless the cause be shown" (*Proceedings* 5: 439). Donne, like Abbot, understood that God's acts, and the godly imitation of those acts, should be according to declared law, not secret intent.[19] Theologically, Donne affirmed that God, according to his secret will, would never predestinate any person to damnation contrary to the actual godly thoughts and actions of that person (8: 348-49).[20] The political corollary of this belief is that the *arcana imperii* should not be invoked to justify illegal and indiscriminate use of the royal prerogative to crush opposition: "All, upon all sides, is still referred to Law. And where there is no law against thee . . . God will never proceed to execution by any secret purpose never notified, never manifested" (8: 348).

Interestingly, in discussing God's liberty, Donne makes no reference to the special reserve power by which God overrides his natural laws as in cases of miracle. As Francis Oakley has shown, God's two modes of action—ordinary providence and extraordinary providence—were often assumed to be analogous to kings' actions either in their ordinary powers as executed in law, or absolute powers, as executed in prerogative.[21] Donne, in fact, seems deliberate in explaining that the "Mystery of Godliness" (recalling the *arcana imperii*), is "to believe that God hath given us a Law, and to live according to that Law" (8: 345). While God's actions are free, God has limited his power within certain bounds: "Not at liberty to judge against his Gospel, where he hath manifested it for a Law; for he hath laid a holy necessity upon himself, to judge according to that Law, where he hath published that law" (8: 349-50). What enfranchises the Christian as opposed to the natural man is that the Christian, not free from law, is enabled to perform its requirements; Christian liberty "gives him an ease, and a readier way to perform those duties; which way the natural man hath not, and yet is bound to the same duties" (8: 350). Donne's language recalls that used in the Commons when King James was quoted to refute Roger Manwaring, who had been called before Parliament to answer the charge that (among other misdeeds) he sought "to seduce and misguide the conscience of the King, touching the observation of the laws of the realm and liberties of the subject" through preaching. King James was quoted as saying, "all kings that are not tyrants,

or perjured, will be glad to bound themselves within the limit of their laws" (*Proceedings* 4: 104, 108).

Donne's plea for broadly-based counsel in governance can also be read in his politically encoded discourse. As early as 1626 Charles said that "he did abominate that name" of Parliament.[22] For its part, Parliament feared that the king had isolated himself with "wicked ministers" (*Commons* 61), "time pleasers" (*Proceedings* 2: 56) and clergy willing "to change their conscience for a bishopric and flatter by keeping truth from a prince" (*Proceedings* 2: 67). Charles grew increasingly distrustful of both the House of Commons and his subjects in general, and concern that the king might stage a military *coup d'état* escalated.[23] Donne insisted that these two foci of authority needed to communicate with each other. Donne makes his analogy of kingship with divinity explicit by referring to kings as those "whom God hath call'd Gods" (8: 339) and makes the point that God "loves to hear us tell him, even those things which he knew before; his Benefits in our Thankfulness, And our sins in our Confessions, And our necessities in our Petitions" (8: 339). By implication, then, if the king can expect to be honoured with thanksgiving and submission in the admission of error, he must also be willing to hear the needs of his people, such as those continually presented in Parliament. On the other hand, those charged with advising the king have a duty to speak to him without flattery, even when it is difficult. The record shows that offering Charles advice was an extremely onerous task, especially when the advice was displeasing.[24] Among these advisers Donne may have intended members of Parliament since he speaks of such advisers as "Mediators" who act "between Princes and People" (8: 339). Parliament was considered by many to be the most representative body of the realm since in it all estates were assembled; it was, in Sir Francis Seymour's opinion, the "great council," "a true glass," (*Proceedings* 2: 55) of the kingdom. Donne therefore warns:

> As Religious Kings are bound to speak to God by way of prayer; so those who have that sacred office, and those that have that Honorable office to do so, are bound to speak to Kings by way of Counsel. . . .Even in those things, wherein, in some emergent difficulties, they may be afraid they shall not, these Mediators are graciously and opportunely heard too, in the due discharge of their offices. (8: 339-40)

Furthermore, Donne advises, one must judge oneself and not act upon "the judgement of flatterers, that depend upon us" (8: 344). If one considers the fact that the Commons was outraged that the king had pardoned or preferred

those whom it had considered sycophants, or those whom it had disciplined by law (Neile, Laud, Montague, Sibthorpe, Cosin, Manwaring), Donne's words must have seemed particularly relevant (*Commons* 37, 57, 61).[25] In contrast to such sychophants, Sir Robert Phelips asserted of the Commons, "His Majesty shall find that it is we that are his faithful counselors" (*Proceedings* 2: 63).

While Donne advised those in a position to counsel the king to do so courageously, without flattery, he also suggested that the nobility speak to "Men of condition inferior to your selves; for they also are Images of God . . ." (8: 340). Donne wished to uphold the godly virtue of accessibility. Effective communication between all social ranks would relate the whole kingdom to its spiritual and temporal head. Access to the king's person, along with freedom of speech and freedom from imprisonment, was a traditional privilege of Parliament requested by the Speaker each session (*Proceedings* 2: 18). Donne was encouraging the nobility to undertake that which was expected of a king during the sitting of Parliament:

> But it is a precept of Accessibleness, and of Affability; Affability, that is, A civility of the City of God, and a Courtship of the Court of heaven, to receive other Men, the Images of God, with the same easiness that God receives you. God stands at the Door, and knocks, and stays our leisure, to see if we will open, and let him in. . . . God is no in-accessible God, that he may not be come to; nor inexorable, that he will not be moved, if he be spoken to; nor dilatory, that he does not that he does, seasonably." (8: 340-41)

Surely Donne was speaking to the breakdown in communication evident throughout the nation. In his study of the news reports sent to the country from the court, Richard Cust concludes:

> Politics was generally presented as a process involving conflict, and this was nowhere more apparent than in the references to the king. Once again what is striking is the way in which Charles was brought into the analysis and assumed to be personally responsible for many of the actions hostile to the subject.[26]

Meanwhile, the king, according to another of Cust's studies, viewed "the Commons's proceedings against Buckingham and their refusal to grant him supply as a symptom of something more sinister, a concerted attempt to

undermine the monarchy."[27] In this increasingly distrustful atmosphere, Donne's plea for accessibility invited a return to the traditional relationship between king and Parliament. Like Abbot in 1626, Donne could understand both the king's need for money and Parliament's willingness to grant it, if only the king would listen to its grievances; Abbot had then commented, "It still ran in my mind that the old and usual way was best; that in Kingdoms the harmony was sweetest where the Prince and people tuned well together."[28] In turn, Donne realized that while the king deserved his due, the people's needs must not be neglected: "so do good to them, whom God hath called Gods, in reall seconding their religious purposes . . . so do good to the Images of God, in reall relieving his distressed Members . . ." (8: 343).

Donne again countered the king's tendency to insularity and secrecy by using the divine analogy:

> . . . Christ sayes, *Henceforth call I you not servants, but friends.* Wherein consists this enfranchisement? In this; *The servant knoweth not what his master doth* (the Jewes knew not that) *but I have called you friends,* sayes Christ, *for all things that I heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* (8: 351)

The godly king should not hide his design, but share it with those who participate in its destiny and inheritance. This radical concept, safely expressed in words of scripture rather than commentary, was remarkably levelling in Charles' administration, the objective of which Lawrence Stone has described as "a deferential, strictly hierarchical, socially stable, paternalist absolutism."[29] Indeed, the sermon initially expresses the sense that believers, no matter what their social rank, must imitate God in the same way. The day's biblical text, Donne affirms, is not "directed upon any company, or any Degree of Men: for the Apostle does not say, Ye Princes, nor ye people: but ye, ye in general, to all . . ." (8: 335). Clearly Donne was warning that the king must listen to diverse elements in the kingdom, and he was encouraging his counsellors, in the broadest sense, to speak truthfully, without flattery.[30]

Urging the nobles to speak out was particularly poignant at the time. For many parliamentarians, the mark of their humanity or at least their status as free Englishmen was their ability to exercise freedom of speech, particularly in the "great council" of the realm. This parliamentary privilege was closely linked in their minds with the proper responsibilities of kingship, beyond

which lay tyranny. When the king had decided to collect the forced loan or use martial law without consent of Parliament, he had effectively taken away the voice of the people.[31] Sir Dudley Digges observed: "That king that is not tied to the laws is a king of slaves" (*Proceedings* 2: 66). The Parliament of 1628 was shaken when the speaker, commanded by Charles, would not allow members to name the king's ministers as guilty of misdeeds. If Parliament was to correct the kingdom's ills, how could it act if it could not name names? Such muzzling was a kind of enforced flattery removed from truth. The speaker's action stunned the House. Sir Dudley Digges rebuked the speaker by saying: "The message you have delivered has taken away the fundamental liberty of parliament, which was freedom of speech" (*Proceedings* 4: 129). Sir Robert Phelips wept openly. After a "sad silence," Sir Nathaniel Rich commented gravely, "This is the weightiest action that ever came within these walls," but warned that members ought not "sit still and do nothing and so be dissolved and scattered like sheep" (*Proceedings* 4: 114, 123). Sir Edward Giles tried to encourage his fellows: "We sit as men daunted; let us put on the spirits of Englishmen and speak to purpose" (*Proceedings* 4: 123).[32]

Donne appears to address these issues in his sermon. In a long passage, he warns that not to make use of the divine gift of discourse is to sink to a bestial level:

> fair speaking prepares an acceptation before, and puts a value after, upon the best actions. God hath made other Creatures *Gregalia,* sociable, besides man; Sheep, and Deer, and Pigeons, will flock, and herd, and troup, and meet together; but when they are met, they are not able to tell one another why they meet. Man onely can speak; silence makes it but a Herding: That that makes Conversation, is speech . . . says *Tertullian.* He that uses not a benefit, reproaches his Benefactor. To declare Gods goodness, that hath enabled us to speak, we are bound to speak: speech is the Glue, the Cyment, the soul of Conversation, and of Religion too. (8: 338)

Donne's contemporaries familiar with recent parliamentary events could only wonder if they were more like the timid beasts that could gather but not raise their voices or like human beings, and more particularly, like free-born Englishmen, who could. Further, as if to challenge the Stuart culture which easily divided loyal from disloyal, Donne also warns that "The silent and reserv'd Man, that makes no play, but observes, and says nothing, may be

more dangerous then" the man who "speaks over-freely to me" (8: 337).[33] The submissive adviser is often more treacherous to the commonwealth than one who speaks out, even when the speech is difficult to hear. It was a theme of parliamentarians that "we cannot help his Majesty without opening our grievances . . ." (*Proceedings* 2: 63).

Donne's encouragement of free speech and his condemnation of flatterers and silent observers are particularly significant since Donne himself has been charged with sycophantic behaviour towards the king.[34] David Norbrook, in an attempt to check this view, reasons: "one would expect the careerist, absolutist Donne of current critical orthodoxy to have aligned himself unequivocally with the High Church party at this stage. But the record . . . does suggest a more complex picture."[35] Indeed, Laud's sermon preached at the opening of the 1628 Parliament shows, in contrast, the degree of Donne's resistance to the absolutist paradigm. Laud spoke on the text "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 6: 3).[36] Throughout, Laud counsels against breaking unity in Church and State and makes it clear that one must not be deceived by the wrong kind of unity, which is really only "faction" led by the proud and disobedient. Not to keep unity is tantamount to driving away God from the kingdom.[37] Furthermore, while unity is best preserved in peace, Laud defines *peace* very precisely:

> The "peace" then here spoken of, differs not much from the virtue of meekness. Only it adds above meekness towards others, quietness with them. . . .It is an ancient rule for kingdoms and a good . . . they are kept in subjection, order, and obedience, by the same virtues by which they were first gotten.

The safety and preservation of the commonwealth lies, contrary to Donne's assertion, in meekness, quietude, and obedience. Such unity requires that "the governors . . . carry a watchful eye over all such as are discovered, or feared, to have private ends." Laud therefore warns against enemies who would deceive by using a virtuous pretext: "but they would not have the knot [of unity] too hard. Take heed. Their aim is, they would have a little more liberty that have too much already."[38] Whereas Donne was promoting responsible speech and action to invite mediation between disparate elements in the kingdom, Laud was encouraging submission to authority as the only preservative against disorder.

In the course of his sermon, Donne insists that responsible speech must be translated into actions that match the words. As we have seen, Parliament

did not always trust the king to perform promised acts. Although the king agreed to obey the law, his actions seemed to contradict his assertions. Sir Nathaniel Rich illustrates the frustrating situation in which members of Parliament found themselves:

> If we come to one that owes us 100*l.*, and he say, "I owe you nothing, but I pray you trust me", will this be good satisfaction? Let the King assure us of his power, what it is, and then we shall trust him. I would be glad to hear the King say he may not by law billet soldiers or lay loans. Let the point of trust be but agreed on, and then we shall trust the King." (*Proceedings* 3: 270)

In this political context, Donne's injunction to his auditory to embody true speech in action appears more than a pious and general instruction to abandon sins of omission. Donne states:

> And when that which is well spoken, was well meant, and hath been well expressed in Action, that's the Husbandry of the righteous Man; then his Harvest is all in. It is the way of God himself . . . that the people are said to have seen the noise, and the voice of God; because, whatever God says, it determines in Action. . . . (8: 342)

God creates by means of his Word; accordingly, act and word are inseparable and indistinguishable. God's promises are always transformed into history. This attribute forms the basis of God's faithfulness, which inspires trust among believers. For parliamentarians, the analogy was all too clear: let the king deliver on his promises, and then the people will trust him.

One final instance of political advice that Donne offers in his sermon is that governors must fulfil the utmost demands of their positions. The misguided belief in "Compensation" was a temptation to scrimp morally on whatever a vocation demanded at a particular time and place. This temptation is the belief that "by doing well in one place, our ill doing in another is recompenced." Donne asks the Court pointedly, "Hast thou doubled the hours of thy Prayers, when thy Preferments are doubled; and encreased thine Almes, according as thy Revenues are encreased? . . . this law will not be answer'd so . . . " (8: 353). The dramatic change in court style following the accession of Charles was not far from Donne's thoughts.[39] The chaster, more moderate, and more serious style, whatever its value, could not replace

vigorous attention to virtue in public office. Anything else would be a falsification of the incarnation (8: 338).

Donne, as a royal chaplain, speaking publicly, knew the dangers of "compensation," the temptation of playing down the demands of the gospel and justice, and speaking conventional and safe truths instead. When, at the end of his sermon, he summed up the Christian religion, Donne knew that this auditory would be looking to him to embody what he preached and would have measured his performance against his advice. The sum of religion, he said, is "to speak aright, and to doe aright; to profess the truth, and not be afraid nor ashamed of that; and to live according to that profession . . ." (8: 354). By addressing the current parliamentary and court crisis, albeit in the politically encoded rhetoric required of one who did not wish to lose his voice altogether, Donne enacted a model necessary to heal the body politic. Moreover, Donne would have recognized the irony of a defense of free speech contained within a politically encoded discourse required by a repressive society. Reading his great ancestor's work *Utopia* at precisely this time, Donne may have found support in a fictionalized "More" for his strategy: "you must with a crafty wile and a subtle train study and endeavour yourself, as much as in you lieth, to handle the matter wittily and handsomely for the purpose; and that which you cannot turn to good, so to order it that it be not very bad."[40] Donne's rhetorical strategy at court, an oblique attack on Charles's absolutist policies, assumed that more direct speech would neither be tolerated nor heard. However, despite Donne's deference towards the office of king, his auditory, familiar with recent political events, could appreciate his tactics. He was using his reputation to affirm the supremacy of law, to encourage broadly-based counsel, to warn against the vice of flattery, to celebrate accessibility, to support the value of free speech in a subject, and to remind courtiers of their duty in providing their sovereign with honest advice. He had demonstrated to these courtiers, in the sermon itself, how "to handle the matter wittily and handsomely" so that their efforts might prevent political disintegration.

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Notes

[1] The lyric, which is reminiscent of Donne's "Song" beginning "Goe, and catche a falling starre . . ." was attributed by William Camden (1637) to Donne's

friend John Hoskins. Louise Brown Osborn places the poem among Hoskins's "doubtful verses." Hoskins, who served with Donne in the Addled Parliament of 1614, was sent to the Tower by King James after having spoken in favor of the liberties of Parliament and against the extravagances provided by the king to his Scottish courtiers. See *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns 1566-1638* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 298-99; 36-47.

[2] *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, ed. Logan Pearsall Smith. 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 2: 319.

[3] Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 92-105 and "All Donne," in *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, eds. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 37-67; Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Arthur F. Marotti, *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (London and Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986); Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets" in his *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 21-65.

[4] I use the term *Arminian* in its political as well as its theological sense. As Lawrence Stone comments: "Arminian theology became associated with clerical self-assertion and the royal prerogative, and the laity were forced to take sides." See *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529-1642* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 127. Parliament, particularly in 1629, took up the traditional Calvinist position against Arminian innovations in church and state. See Conrad Russell, *Parliament and English Politics, 1621-1629* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 390-416; L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 58-98.

[5] Robert M. Cooper, "The Political Implications of Donne's *Devotions*," in *New Essays on Donne*, ed. Gary A. Stringer (Salzburg: Institut für Englishe Sprache und Literatur, 1977), pp. 192-210; Dave Gray and Jeanne Shami, "Political Advice in Donne's *Devotions*: No Man Is an Island," *Modern Language Quarterly* 50 (1989): 337-56.

[6] Issues common to the Addled Parliament of 1614 and the parliamentary sessions in 1628 and 1629 include the question of parliamentary privilege, the imprisonment of members of Parliament, and the king's ability to levy impositions without Parliament's consent. See R. C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 284-90; Patterson, "All Donne," pp. 49-61. The crisis atmosphere was also common to both periods. In 1614, Sir Thomas Roe warned, "That this is a Dissolution, not of this, but of all parliaments" (quoted in Patterson, "All Donne," p. 60). In 1628, Sir Benjamin Rudyard expressed a similar sentiment: "This is the crisis of parliaments. We shall know by this if parliaments live or die";

see *Proceedings in Parliament 1628*, eds. Mary Frear Keeler, Maija Jansson Cole, William B. Bidwell, and Robert C. Johnson 6 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977-78), 2: 58; hereafter cited as *Proceedings*. Christopher Hill suggests that the "evidence for continuity of memory from 1604 to 1640 seems . . . incontrovertible" and that M.P.s expressed their fear of royal absolutism "in every parliament of the two reigns [those of James I and Charles I]"; see "Parliament and People in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 92 (1981): 109 and 123.

[7] John Carey. *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), pp. 64, 113-16. For criticism of Carey's views of Donne as a conservative, sychophantic supporter of court policy as well as an investigation into the origins of these views in Donne's biographers, Walton, Gosse, and Bald, see Patterson, "All Donne," pp. 37-42; and David Norbrook, "The Monarchy of Wit and the Republic of Letters: Donne's Politics," in *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, eds. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 3-36.

[8] Marotti, p. 182.

[9] Norbrook, pp. 21-26; Gray and Shami; Shami, "Kings and Desperate Men: John Donne Preaches at Court," *John Donne Journal* 6 (1987): 9-23.

[10] *The Sermons of John Donne*, eds. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, 10 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953-62), 8: 335; hereafter cited in the text by volume and page numbers.

[11] "Power, Parliament and Liberty in Early Stuart England," in *Reappraisals in History: New Views on History in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 214.

[12] Joseph Hall, "Sermon XXVI," in his *Works*, ed. Philip Wynter, 10 vols. (1863; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), 5: 393.

[13] David Nicholls, "Divine Analogy: The Theological Politics of John Donne," *Political Studies* 32 (1984): 570-80.

[14] Quoted in Russell, p. 383.

[15] *Commons Debates for 1629*, eds. Wallace Notestein and Frances Helen Relf, Studies in the Social Sciences 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1921), p. 5; hereafter cited as *Commons*.

[16] Reeve, p. 75.

[17] Goldberg, pp. 55-112.

[18] A discussion of Donne's political advice raises the question of Donne's audience. Since the sermon title makes no reference to the king, it is unlikely that Charles was present for the sermon. Sir Philip Warwick comments that the king usually attended service on Sundays and Tuesdays; Donne preaches this sermon on the first Friday in Lent. Excepting the king's immediate entourage, one would expect that much of the royal household would have been present, given (1) court

concern for ritual and regularity evident since Charles's accession and (2) Donne's popularity as a preacher. During Charles's reign, religious observance was esteemed. Procession to chapel and seating therein were strictly regulated by rank and precedence. Obviously, Donne addressed those who had access to the king (whom Donne hoped to influence) since he identifies his audience: "it is a fair and a pious conception, for this Congregation, here present now in this place, to believe, that the first point of this Circle of our Apostle here, is a Court too; and that the Holy Ghost . . . does principally intend, ye that live in Court, ye whom God brings so neer to the sight of himself . . . for a Religious King is the Image of God . . ." (8: 336). See Sir [Philip] Warwick, *Mémoires de Sir Philippe Warwick sur le regne de Charles Ier* (Paris, 1823), p. 64; Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England: Essays and Studies* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1989), p. 158; Gervas Huxley, *Endymion Porter: The Life of a Courtier 1587-1649* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), p. 165; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series of the Reign of Charles I*, ed. John Bruce, 23 vols. (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1860), 4: 478.

[19] Donne's relationship to Archbishop Abbot has been the subject of some speculation. See Bald, p. 315; Norbrook, pp. 21, 23; and Paul R. Sellin, *'So Doth, So Is Religion': John Donne and Diplomatic Contexts in the Reformed Netherlands, 1619-1620* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), pp. 53, 55, 174. Probably the most widely reported incident in their relationship occurred when Laud required Donne to submit a sermon preached before King Charles on the grounds that it appeared to follow the approach of an offensive sermon made by the Archbishop. Donne asserted his innocence since he had never heard Abbot's sermon, though confidentially he wrote to Sir Robert Ker, "I would I were a little more guilty. . ."; see Edmund Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's*, 2 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1899), 2: 244. Donne asked, and received, forgiveness from the king (Bald, pp. 492-94). Patterson, *Censorship*, pp. 100-05, describes how this incident illustrates the anxiety caused by Donne's combining "obedience with outspokenness" (p. 105).

[20] Throughout his sermons, Donne consistently warns his auditors against abstruse inquiry into God's mysteries and secrets, such as the divine decrees of election and reprobation, and refers them instead to the open, manifest, and public declaration of his will in scripture. See 5: 54, 84, 109; 7: 283; 8: 46, 121, 260, 282, 348; 9: 102, 134. The parallel between the divine secrets and royal secrets (or *arcana imperii*) is illuminating. Although the king's private and secret workings of state (like the mysteries of God), must not be pried into, the king's public acts, his laws (like God's revealed word in scripture), must be obeyed. A private standard of judgment not openly published would obviously be unfair. Donne's specific references to the phrase *arcana imperii* appear in several contexts for different purposes. Clearly, Donne realized that the *arcana imperii* could be used for arbitrary purposes contrary to law, since he sees just such operations in the

Catholic Church: "But the mystery of their Iniquity is easily revealed, their *Arcana Imperii*, the secrets of their State easily discovered. . . . because the Scriptures are constant, and limited, and determined . . . And they should be shrewdly prejudiced, and shrewdly disadvantaged, if all emergent cases arising in the Christian world, must be judged by a Law, which others may know beforehand, as well as they. . .they choose rather to lay up their Rule. . . in the breast and bosome of one man, then upon every deske in a study, where every man may lay, or whence every man may take a Bible" (7: 124-25). For Donne's other references to the *arcana imperii*, see 5: 298, 365; 9: 246; *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. Anthony Raspa (Montreal and London: McGill-Queens University Press), p. 52; *Paradoxes and Problems*, ed. and introd. Helen Peters (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 45.

[21] "Jacobean Political Theology: The Absolute and Ordinary Powers of the King," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 29 (1968): 323-46.

[22] Quoted in Richard Cust, "Charles I, the Privy Council, and the Forced Loan," *Journal of British Studies* 24 (1985): 213. Cust has amplified his views in *The Forced Loan and English Politics, 1626-1628* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[23] Cust, "Forced Loan," pp. 211, 220, 234; Russell, p. 380; Hill, p. 114.

[24] Cust, "Forced Loan," p. 234.

[25] Russell, p. 397.

[26] "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 112 (1986): 83.

[27] "Forced Loan," p. 211.

[28] Quoted in Cust, "Forced Loan," p. 216.

[29] Stone, p. 126.

[30] King Charles' habit of secrecy and its link to lawless rule can be seen in the Venetian ambassador's account of the king's behaviour after the dissolution of the 1629 Parliament: "His Majesty has administered an oath to all the councillors, enjoining extraordinary secret [sic] in whatever shall be treated, for the sole purpose of surprising the people by such resolves as he shall deem suited to his service, so that they may not have time to prepare and prevent him. It is said that the Keeper of the seal and the Privy Seal will be expelled the Court, because they are lawyers, as the king does not mean henceforth to have any other laws than those of his own will." See Alvise Contarini, Venetian Ambassador in England, "To the Doge and Senate," March 23, 1629, Document 805 in *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs. Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, ed. Allen B. Hinds. 38 vols. (London: Hereford Times, 1916), 21: 589.

[31] On the monarch's ability to silence all but authorized views, see Goldberg, p. 6; Stone, p. 118-19; Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court 1603-42* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), p. 235. After the dissolution of the Parliament of 1629, Sir Thomas Roe concluded: "that not only

all mouths are stopped, but the Parliament doors sealed for many years. . . ." Quoted in Reeve, p. 113.

[32] Parliamentary discourse linked brutishness and slavery with the loss of the traditional liberties of Parliament and the subject. This fact resonates more strongly when one realizes that "During the previous year, one in every twenty members of the House of Commons of 1628 had undergone . . . imprisonment from which he could secure no relief in law"; see Hexter, p. 213. In the Commons debates of 1628, an idea frequently expressed is that the members are only too willing to vote the king supply if he will assure fundamental liberties of the subject, for only freemen and not slaves own possessions that can be given to a superior; see *Proceedings*, 2: 68-71, 130; 6: 204.

[33] Cust, "Forced Loan," p. 223; Reeve, p. 103.

[34] Bald, p. 301; Carey, p. 64.

[35] Norbrook, p. 21.

[36] William Laud, "Sermon VI," in *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God, William Laud, D.D.* Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, No. 11, 7 vols. (1847-1860; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1975), 1: 155.

[37] Laud, pp. 164, 178, 168.

[38] Laud, pp. 173, 167, 180.

[39] Sharpe, p. 106.

[40] John B. Gleason, "Dr. Donne in the Courts of Kings: A Glimpse from Marginalia," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 69 (1970): 599-612; Thomas More, *Utopia* [trans. Ralph Robinson, 1551], (London: J.M. Dent and Sons; New York: Dutton, 1974), p. 48.