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IMAGES OF KINGSHIP IN SELECTED SERMONS OF JOHN DONNE

by

Wendy E. Johnson

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Introduction

As chaplain-in-ordinary to James I (1615-21) and as Dean of St. Paul's in London (1621-31), John Donne occupied a post of more than ordinary significance throughout a crucial decade leading up to the English revolution. His published sermons, most notably his own "funeral sermon" Death's Duell, have been more frequently read for their connections with his poetry than with his political views. A careful reading of selected sermons, however, reveals a truly politic man who spoke the warnings of a Hebrew prophet in the ambiguous accents of a Greek oracle.

John Donne the preacher had good reason to speak carefully. Particularly in the reign of Charles I and in the emerging ascendancy of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and then London, William Laud, the pulpit was an extraordinarily precarious political platform. Censorship was rigorously imposed. Even parliamentarians, such as the gifted orator Sir John Eliot, criticized royal ministers and policies at peril of their lives. For leading impeachment proceedings in 1626 against the Duke of Buckingham, who was Laud's patron and Charles's minister, Eliot languished for several years in the Tower and died of consumption. Donne himself was brought to his knees before Charles (and Laud) on suspicion of having become a political partisan in a single sermon preached 1 April, 1627.

The experience would not have been reassuring in view of his family history. Donne's brother Henry, a Catholic, had died in the Tower in 1593 for harbouring a Jesuit. His great-grand Uncle, Sir Thomas More, was one of the most celebrated martyrs of the faith,

dying for his refusal to moderate his public stand against Henry VIII. The man John Donne had already shown a decided inclination to be moderate, anyway, in his conversion to the Anglican faith. Now as a priest of that Church, he was evidently not inclined to be so outspoken as family habit had taught him to be. Prophets ended up as martyrs, while oracles lived to speak another day.

Both Donne's attachment to the idea of monarchy and his unique depiction of the abuse of the office still stand in stark contrast to the views of other royalist clergy who preached the Stuart party-line of the Divine Right of Kings. During the reigns of James and Charles an important group of the clergy supported the royalist cause and a considerable number of them played an active and vital part in setting forth doctrines of monarchical power more significant in the general history of political thought than the ideas of royalist councillors and lawyers. In view of the history of the previous century, it was perfectly natural for the English clergy to support the king. For almost seventy years before James ascended to the English throne, the clergy had known and accepted the king as supreme head on earth of the church in England. Under the leadership of the monarch all ties with Rome had twice been broken and an Anglican form of worship set up. Before Elizabeth died, a truly national church existed in England. For a bishop or clergyman to accept the monarch's supremacy in both church and state had become the conventional pattern to follow.

The monarch was viewed as God's agent on earth and, as ruler, he must not be resisted. The international situation during the

reign of Elizabeth had given added support to such views. Each crisis brought out more clearly that resistance to her meant civil dissension, foreign war, and possible conquest, whereas obedience afforded the best guarantee of that order and security which was regarded as an ideal. By the time that the Stuarts came to the throne, these beliefs had become firmly established. At this time Englishmen were divided on many issues but not on the supremacy of God in human affairs. They believed that man was ruled by God who had decreed that kings should rule on earth. Belief in the Divine Right of Kings meant belief in God.

Roger Manwaring is probably the best known of the royalist clergy advocating extreme views of the king's power in the period before the Civil War. His two sermons, "Religion" and "Allegiance," preached before the king in July 1627, brought down upon him the wrath of the parliamentary opposition, for in those sermons he asserted that the penalty for disobeying the King is eternal damnation and that tribute was due princes by natural law, and consequently Parliament had no right to deny money to them. In those sermons, Manwaring set forth many of the leading ideas of the clergy: That the king's power comes from God, that man had no part in it, and that the obedience of subjects to a king was enjoined not only by God but by nature (Judson 171-215).

Manwaring also identifies the king's power with the omnipotence of God and views the king's decrees as commands: "That sublime Power therefore which resides in earthly Potentates is . . . a participipation of God's own Omnipotence, which hee

never did communicate to any multitudes of men . . . but only and immediately to his own Vicereagents All the significations of a Royall pleasure are and ought to be, to all Loyall Subjects, in the nature and force of a command And for his Sovereigne will which gives a binding force to all his Royal Edicts . . .) who may dare resist it without incurable waste and breach of conscience" (qtd. in Judson 214-16). The possibility that a king might not always act as he should towards his people--that he might become a tyrant--was generally ignored (Hill 51).

Immediately upon ordination and appointment as James's chaplain-in-ordinary, Donne was confronted with a monarch who adhered rigorously to an absolute form of this Theory of the Divine Right of Kings. According to one of the elements of the theory, the moral duty of passive obedience to authority had become a legal claim on the part of the king to unconditional obedience. It transmuted the sacramental consecration of the king into a mystical tabu that made the monarch inviolable and a quasi-spiritual person. It exempted him from the authority and disciplinary powers of the Church, and at the same time manifested him to the people as a real and incarnate God on earth, against whom every rebellion would be blasphemy (Kern 138). The Homily of Obedience of 1547 expressed the whole doctrine of obedience and non-resistance: "We may not resist, nor in any wise hurt an anointed king, which is God's lieutenant, vice regent and highest minister in the country where he is king" (qtd. in Judson 138). The concept of the exalted position of a king is not at all surprising in view of the long

history of the idea. The general view that kings received their authority from God, the giver of all authority, reached back at least to the early Middle Ages when kingship began in England. Thus, when James I wrote and talked of the Divine Right Theory of Kings, he was not introducing an entirely new concept, even though he interpreted and extended it in ways many Englishmen came to doubt and distrust (Judson 18-20).

A review of James's political writings and speeches in Parliament reveals his continually iterated identification with, and demand for, divine status. For example, contrary to the view of Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke and the Parliamentarians that "The King is under God and the law," (qtd. in Bowen 254), James asserted in his Speech in Star Chamber of 1616 that the King is "above the law by his absolute power General laws made in Parliament, may by the King's authority be suspended upon causes known only to him" (McIlwain, Pol. Works 327)¹. James insisted that "Kings are called Gods . . . because they sit upon God his Throne in the earth" ("Trew Law" 54), and that the King is a "God to rule over men" and a "God to sit on his Throne" ("Basilikon" 12).

Perhaps John Carey's caustic observation best exemplifies the dilemma of John Donne and his fellow Englishmen, faced with a glaring dichotomy between the concept of ideal kingship implicit in the Theory of Divine Right, and the stark reality of kingship

¹All subsequent references to James's political writings and speeches are from Charles H. McIlwain, ed. The Political Works of James I. References to James's individual works will be by a shortened title and page no. in McIlwain (e.g., "Basilikon" 4, for "Basilikon Doron" p. 4)

as personified by James and, later, Charles Stuart and the corrupt Jacobean court. As Carey states, "To think of the prurient, owlsh James I, with his weakness for pretty boys and his notoriously low standards of personal cleanliness as god . . . must have called for a heroic effort of imaginative detachment on Donne's part Resolute self-deception is the first requirement of any absolutist" (115).

John Donne's entry into holy orders was a long, agonizing and equivocal process. Donne scholarship to date has not significantly addressed the ways in which Donne's personality, personal history, and contemporary situation as political appointee to the Deanship of St. Paul's may have influenced his expositions of biblical texts in the sermons which he preached during the period 1615-30.

Thus, the aim of the present study is to test the hypothesis that the circumstances in which Donne was forced into the Anglican ministry by King James would finally not be conducive to his maintaining emotional, intellectual and political loyalty to the Divine Right Theory of Kingship taught by James and practiced with increasing rigor by Charles Stuart. Consequently the politics and theology of Divine Right Theory, and particularly the Stuart monarchs' espousal of an absolute form of Divine Right, may have had a negative influence upon Donne's idea of kingship. For this reason, a careful reading of the sermons with an eye to assessing Donne's selection of texts and his presentation and interpretation of them will cast new light upon this most important part of his thinking as a prose-writer and preacher. Moreover, the fourteen-

year period during which the sermons were preached provides a sufficient timespan for an assessment of whether Donne's ideas of kingship changed significantly during this portion of the Stuart monarchy.

Consequently, I will attempt in my first chapter, which is primarily synthetic, to place Donne's biography as squarely as possible within the framework of contemporary religious and political developments and issues, particularly those having to do with the accession of the Stuart monarchs and Donne's own relationship to these kings.

The second chapter examines the sermons of the period 1615-21, consisting of Donne's earliest statements from the pulpit and those of the period of his readership at Lincoln's Inn. In this chapter, I perform a close reading of selections from certain sermons, and of certain other sermons selected on the basis of the following criteria: (i) a delineation of the monarchical principle, and the exercise of the king's power in the divine and the earthly realm; (ii) the presence of a subversive biblical subtext inconsonant with the orthodox presentation of monarchical power of the surface text of the sermon; concomitant with this latter element, there emerges a typological commentary which points to the differences between the Divine Monarchy and the reality of rule by the Stuart monarchs; (iii) the suggestion of analogies between the corrupt Israelite biblical kings and the Stuart monarchs; (iv) the suggestion of analogies between the courageous stance of certain biblical figures, e.g., Esther or Jael, and that

of John Donne in opposing the political policies of the Stuart monarchs; (v) Donne's own explicit political protest which reinforces (ii), (iii) and (iv) in pointing to the naked basis of force underlying the contemporary politico/religious scene, and which also suggests Donne's difficulty in presenting the gospel according to James and Charles Stuart.

Consequently, I establish characteristic ways in which Donne deals with the standard biblical kingship texts: the Books of Samuel, Kings, Job and Psalms as well as portions of the New Testament, and the ways in which he presents the Israelite kings, for example, Saul, David, Solomon, Ahab, and such Roman absolutists as Nero, Romulus and Constantine I. Throughout the chapter, the implicit and explicit thematic content of the sermons, in conjunction with Donne's own explicit commentary, is correlated as closely as possible with contemporary religious and political events. Chapters 3 and 4 utilize the same methodology; Chapter 3 considers the period 1621-25, from Donne's assumption of the Deanship of St. Paul's to the death of James I, and Chapter 4, the period 1625-31, from the ascent of Charles I to the throne to Donne's own death.

Donne's treatment of the kingship theme over the period 1615-31 is examined with relation to all three time periods to ascertain whether his attitude to monarchy is constant or whether it changed with Charles's escalating political power.

Donne's concern with the abuse of monarchical power has already been documented in a very narrow sense by J. Gleason in an

article which evaluates the marginalia of Donne's copy of St. Thomas More's Utopia. According to Gleason, examination of these marginalia suggests "Donne's own caustic private comment on the court of King Charles I" (599). After relating the marginalia as closely as possible to political and religious events of Donne's time, Gleason concludes that "without the evidence of the marginalia to the Utopia, we could not know that the delicate balance between Donne's conception of his duty as preacher and his continuing need of the royal favor had proved too difficult for him to maintain The only testimony that the eloquent preacher could give was the silent record of these few pages, with their neat and deliberate annotations" (612).

It is my hope that the present study, based on a reading of the complete sermons, will provide much broader testimony of Donne's true feelings about kingship, and in so doing will demonstrate his courageous and distinctive response to the Stuart monarchs' version of the Divine Right Theory of Kings.

Chapter I

Kingship: The Divine Right Theory of Kings,
and Aspects of John Donne's Biography
Suggestive of His Attitude to Power.

Subjection therefore we owe, and that by the law of God; we are in conscience bound to yield it even unto every of them that hold the seats of authority and power in relation unto us. Howbeit, not all kind of subjection unto every such kind of power. Power is then of divine institution when either God himself doth deliver, or men by light of nature find out the kind thereof. So that the power of parents over children, and of husbands over their wives, the power of all sorts of superiors, made by consent of commonwealths within themselves, or grown from agreement amongst nations, such power is of God's own institution in respect of the kind thereof . . . subjection therefore is due unto all such powers (Hooker 584-85)

Thus wrote Richard Hooker, sixteenth-century Anglican theologian and proponent of hierarchical orthodoxy. In his view, Church and State are divinely ordered aspects of one society, united, however, in an unstable equilibrium, with the monarch head of the State and of the Church, though without any spiritual power (Greenfield 132). Hooker rejects all theories of resistance and tyrannicide, emphasizing the divine origin of power. He also insists on the necessity for the freedom of reason, not authority, to differentiate and assess the origin of that power (Booty 216). What is important here is Hooker's emphasis upon the two key tenets forming the conceptual underpinning of his theory--that of the origin of power, and of its necessary concomitant, subjection. Within his hierarchically ordered concept of society all authority

emanates from God as Transcendent Being, or through the authority of the clergy responsible for promulgating God's Word, or from the magistrate responsible for interpreting the law.

This hierarchical view of the universe had its origins in Greek philosophy and was transmitted from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Of the different metaphors commonly used to express the order and rationality of the universe the most familiar is the Chain of Being. According to this view the universe is composed of an immense number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the most meager kind of entities, which barely escape non-existence, through every grade up to the *ens perfectissimum* or, to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite--every one of them differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it by the least possible degree of difference. The consequence of eliminating even one link in the chain would be a general dissolution of the cosmical order. The essential unity of the universe was apparent from the fact that the same principles of order operated on every plane of existence. That is, just as one God ruled the universe, so it followed that one man must rule the state. To the medieval mind a king was to be seen as God's deputy on earth, ruling with the same loving care that a father showed for his family and expecting in return the obedience and respect of his subjects (Lovejoy 59-63).

Moreover, the stability of this system entailed the necessity that people accept their subjugation, which involved the subjection

of each rank under all the levels above it, with the monarch at the top. It has been emphasized that "there is no more universal characteristic of the political thought of the seventeenth century than the notion of non-resistance to authority To bring the people to obedience is the object of writers of all schools" (Figgis 221).

Similarly, as Walter Ullmann observes in his study of the status of the individual in the Middle Ages: "Society was one whole and was indivisible, and within it, the individual was no more than a part: but what mattered was the well-being of society and not the well-being of the individual parts constituting it" (26). The stratification of medieval society into its estates resulted in a "petrification of society and the ossification of the individual's status within it Subjects were the mere recipients of the law given them and because the law was a gift of God made known through the mouth of the King . . . any incipient opposition smacked of sacrilege because these basic conceptions were of a theocentric Pauline pedigree What all forms of theocentric government made clear was that man was to be subjected to a power which was outside and above man himself" (28-42).

In addition, the evolution of Power is accompanied by the birth and growth of Sovereignty; the Sovereign Will is conceived as capable of exercise on every subject matter whatsoever without limitation by any subjective right. It is a command from on high which its form validates whatever its substance, and which has neither limits nor rules governing its subject matter. The first

stage in the development of the modern idea of sovereignty came with the transition from the limited feudal monarchy to the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth century (De Jouvenel 169-70).

The theory of sovereignty by Divine Right, that is, the Divine Right of Kings "belongs to an age in which not only religion but theology and politics were inextricably mingled" and in which "all men demanded some form of Divine authority for any theory of government" (Figgis 11). The seventeenth century was a highly revolutionary time in which "Jacobinism, by overturning the rule of law . . . emancipated the sovereign. Liberty for the sovereign was the badge of the seventeenth century . . . it meant he was no longer bound by the rules . . . and that thenceforth he made the rules as he saw fit . . ." (De Jouvenel 186). One must still compare the reality of despotic Jacobinism with the ideal concept of sovereignty in which "the sovereign will is not in the least the subjective will of the sovereign It is rather, an objective will, the product of reason of which the sovereign should be the bearer The perfect sovereign is, therefore, perfectly unfree . . . at every moment he is tied down to doing whatever maximises the common good . . ." (De Jouvenel 210-11).

The Stuart monarchs, James and Charles, espoused the Divine Right Theory of Kingship to explain and justify the source of political authority in the State. In order to understand the political thought of both kings, it is necessary to consider the tenets of the theory, and the circumstances of the rise of Anglicanism. The Divine Right Theory of Kingship includes the

following propositions:

(1) Monarchy is a divinely ordained institution.

(2) Hereditary right is indefeasible. It rests upon legitimism, the inborn right to rule which frees the possessor from all human dependence. The succession to monarchy is regulated solely by the law of primogeniture. The right acquired by birth cannot be forfeited through any acts of usurpation, by any incapacity in the heir, or by any act of deposition.

(3) Kings are accountable to God alone. Monarchy is pure, sovereignty being entirely vested in the king, whose power cannot be legally limited. All law is a mere concession of his will, and all constitutional forms and assemblies exist entirely at his pleasure. The King cannot limit or divide or alienate the sovereignty so as in any way to prejudice the right of his successor to its complete exercise. A mixed or limited monarchy would be a contradiction in terms.

(4) Non-resistance and passive obedience are enjoined by God. Under any circumstances resistance to a king would be a sin and would ensure damnation (Figgis 4-6).

The theory was supported by a number of biblical texts, especially David's refusal to touch "the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:10), and the command by both St. Peter and St. Paul of obedience to constituted authority: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has

appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Rom. 13:1-7).

Sir Robert Filmer, a seventeenth-century Absolutist, defended Divine Right Theory in his work, Patriarcha: A Defence of the Natural Power of Kings against the Unnatural Liberty of the People, on the grounds that the political order in Stuart England had evolved from the family; magistrates were entitled to the same filial obedience that children owe to their fathers. Filmer emphasized that this hierarchy of power was sanctioned by God, and fortified his argument by tracing all legal authority back to the divinely ordained fatherly power of Adam. He cited the commandment "Honour thy father and thy mother" as the Divine Pronouncement of the necessity for obedience. It was in terms of the patriarchal family that all forms of social obedience were construed, from submission in the nursery and in the school to the deference required by magistrates and the king himself. This traditional interpretation of the scripture was adopted as a dogma of the Church of England at the very outset of the Reformation (Laslett 23-26). Discussing Samuel's description of a king and the power ascribed to kings, Filmer alluded to King James's "majestical discourse," The True Law of Free Monarchy, emphasizing that there "it is evidently showed that the scope of Samuel was to teach the people a dutiful obedience to their King For, by telling them what a King would do, he instructs them what a subject must suffer" (Filmer 97).

Although the Divine Right Theory of Kingship is a critical component of seventeenth-century political thought, the origin of

the importance of the theory is to be found in the earlier conflicts of Pope and Emperor. The necessarily theological character of politics, so long as the Pope's claims to supreme political authority were a main factor in the situation, make it plain that the history of the theory must be largely concerned with the political side of the Reformation struggle (Figgis 14-15).

In Philip Hughes' view, the Reformation in England originated, primarily in the demand for conformity with "the king's proceedings" The Reformation in England was just that it was the king who initiated all, who first willed that there should be changes . . . the theme of loyalty to the king as . . . the protector of the realm from the destruction to which the pope was dooming it was the very heart of the first Reformation propaganda" (195). Furthermore, it was "out of this strife between the adherents and the opponents of Henry VIII's ecclesiastical policy that English political theory arose Strictly English modern political theory begins with Henry's Act of Supremacy" (McIlwain, Introduction 20). The king then became the most important element in the State; in the case of Henry VIII, especially after the Act of 1539, the idea of sovereignty was almost completely realised in his person. Thus, the Reformation left upon the statute book an emphatic assertion of unfettered sovereignty vested in the king. That complete sovereignty is to be found in some person or body of persons in the State is a necessity of effective anti-papal argument. Wearied of ecclesiastical interference, Englishmen felt the need of relying

upon one central power and of asserting its universal jurisdiction (Figgis 88-91). With the achievement of the Royal Supremacy, the King became in theory as well as practice head of Church and State.

The Reformation nationalized the Church of which all Englishmen were members. Early Protestant reformers could hope to spread their teaching only with the backing of the secular sovereign and advocated absolute submission to the king. England was now free from Papal interference, if only she could maintain her position. The battle was not won yet, and in this fact lies the justification of men's passionate faith in the Divine Right of Kings. The English state must also assert a claim to Divine appointment. Politicians came to appreciate the political significance of the Church (Figgis 88-90). As Charles I was to assert, "People are governed by the pulpit more than the sword in time of peace . . . Religion it is that keeps the subject in obedience" (qtd. in Hill Century 77).

By the end of the sixteenth century, events had done much to strengthen the monarchy, but the conflict was still only between King and Pope. There was as yet no question of conflict between Crown and Parliament.

The Tudor dynasty gained enormous power by means of the Reformation. During the reign of Elizabeth I, "the supreme power could be truly conceived as belonging to the Queen alone . . ." (Figgis 92). In the latter years of Elizabeth's reign, however, there arose signs of profound change which pointed forward to the great political and religious upheaval of the reigns of James I

and Charles I. In spite of the apparent supremacy of the Crown, Parliament was engaged in an escalating power struggle with the Queen in the assertion of its own rights (Ashley 25).

The contest between the royal prerogative and the privileges of Parliament was to be sharpened by the character of Elizabeth's successor, King James VI of Scotland, James I of England. In 1598, five years before his accession to the English throne, James published "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies" which contains his whole political theory and in which he argued that kings were answerable only to God. McIlwain points out that "The stubbornness with which, throughout all the vicissitudes of his later struggles with the English Parliament, James held to all points of the doctrine there laid down explains much From the opinions there stated no new situations or conditions could ever shake him and this must be considered one of the fundamental causes of the constitutional revolution of the next three quarters of a century" (37).

James emphasized the doctrine of legitimism, insisting on the hereditary character of his title because his own claim to the throne rested upon descent alone and succeeded in spite of the two Acts of Parliament excluding his house. The whole of James's doctrine concerning the powers of kings is deducible from the legitimist principle (Fraser 86). He stated that allegiance is due not only to the reigning king, but also to his "lawfull heires and posterity, the lineall succession of Crowns being begun among the people of God, and happily continued in divers Christian

common-wealths For as hee is their heritable over-lord, and so by birth . . . commeth to his crowne, it is a like unlawful . . . to displace him that succeedeth, as to eject the former" ("Trew Law" 69). James asserted that "Monarchie is the trew paterne of Diuinitie Kings are called Gods by the propheticall King David, because they sit upon God his Throne in the earth" Emphasizing the King's patriarchal role in order to defend his absolutist doctrine, he stated that "By the Law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his coronation" In citing scriptural authority for his description of the nature of Kingship, James's essential concern was to emphasize absolute power; he quoted the classic description of a king by Samuel, in 1 Sam. 8:11-18, where he warned the Hebrews of the tyranny they must expect to endure under a monarch. Significantly James stresses the need for obedient submission: "This speech of Samuel to the people was to prepare their hearts . . . to the due obedience of that King which God was to give unto them And therefore in time arme your selues with patience and humilitie . . . bearing with these straits that I foresheew you, as with the finger of God which lieth not in you to take off" (53-57).

The Divine Right Theory of Kingship continues to inform James's later political writings. In the "Basilikon Doron" he urged Prince Henry to love God, first because He has made him a man, "and next, for that he made you a little God, to sit on his Throne and rule over other men" (248). James's view of the law is

a further synthesis of The Divine Right Theory, the Kingly Judges of the Old Testament and the Roman law of Scotland. In his view kings made the law, and a king, having made the law, could unmake it at his pleasure (Willson 257). Thus, he stated that though the king should not take his subjects' lives "without a cleare law, yet the same lawes whereby he taketh them, are made by himself, or his predecessours . . . and so the power flowes alwaies from him selfe" (63). The royal prerogative is a sacred thing. James warned the Judges in 1616: "Incroach not upon the Prerogative of the Crowne: If there fall out a question that concernes my Prerogative or mystery of State deale not with it, till you consult with the King . . . for they are transcendent matters . . ." (332).

Though he would not codify his views in writing, James's son, Charles I demonstrated by his reign that he shared the same obsessive concern with the absolute powers inherent in kingship, to a greater degree even than James. In all of his Speeches to Parliament his absolutist style was apparent, as for example, in the following: "Parliaments are altogether in my power for the calling, sitting and dissolution . . ." (qtd. in Hill, Century 73). The despotic, patriarchal, aloof style of Charles's court reflected the image of the King, as he withdrew himself from the familiarity which had characterized the reign of James into "concocting fantasies of a monarchical Elysium" (Sharpe 62). Charles found it necessary to reform the Court because it was "the temple of God's lieutenant on earth"; he found it necessary to order the Church because "it was the palace of an invisible King

. . . an ordered Church was the foundation of the perfect commonwealth which was the King's grand design" (Sharpe 63). When his Parliament of 1629 proved contentious, Charles dispensed with Parliament, commencing his "Eleven Years Tyranny of Personal Rule." The Earl of Strafford, the chief agent of the "tyranny" observed that "the prerogative must be used as God doth His omnipotency upon extraordinary occasions . . ." (qtd. in Ashley 28).

In his recent study of Divine Right Theory, G.R. Elton evaluates the Stuart monarchs' attitude toward the royal prerogative; furthermore, he interprets the flaw inherent in the medieval system of kingship which results from the double authority of kings:

There could be no theoretical resolution of the dualism. The king either held a descending power, in which case he looked only upwards for control over his actions . . . as he is solely responsible to God . . . or he held an ascending power in which case he was . . . responsible to his people . . . He cannot touch their lives or property outside the established processes of the law . . . This dualism is exemplified by the meaning given to the royal prerogative. At heart this is nothing but those special rights . . . which the king enjoys by virtue of his office . . . Commonly they were divided into the two categories . . . the ordinary and absolute prerogative . . . The ordinary power of kings is that which is laid down in the law . . . His absolute power . . . is that to which the law does not apply because it cannot: these are the rights of free action unknowable until the occasion arises which any ruler must possess if he is to deal with the crises of the body politic. His ordinary power he enjoys . . . by contract . . . with his people . . . His absolute, because he is God's chosen instrument for the governance of His people. The problems which arise in defining the borderline between the two, or in

discovering whether the king is exercising a proper or improper 'absolute' power are a special case of the general dilemma which arises from the dual basis of royal authority The Tudors regarded the two kinds of prerogative as co-ordinate The Stuarts held the absolute to be in control of the ordinary Stuart divine right was revolutionary because it dispensed with the contract and attacked an existing mixed sovereignty The kings of the house of Stuart failed to accept the dual nature of their authority and to use the political weapons of persuasion and management upon which the Tudor reconciliation of the irreconcilable had so successfully rested.

(210-13)

From the outset of his reign James I experienced conflicts with his Parliaments due to the rigidity of his absolutist doctrine coupled with Parliament's growing self-assertion. According to Tanner: "The controversies between the first two Stuart Kings and their Parliaments turn mainly on the two great questions of Taxation and Religion . . . but ecclesiastical grievances were the more important for religion furnished far more powerful motives for action than did finance" (8-9). It was in the sphere of religious conflict that the life of King James intersected with that of the desperately aspiring courtier, John Donne.

Although James was plagued by the controversy between Arminianism and Calvinism, the Catholic question proved to be the more serious source of public conflict. He had begun with a tolerant attitude, acknowledging the Catholic Church to be the mother Church although defiled by corruption. After the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, one of his first actions was to impose fresh penalties on Roman Catholics and exact from them the Oath of

Allegiance. By this oath Catholics were to acknowledge James as their lawful sovereign and to deny that the Pope had any power to depose him, to authorize any foreign sovereign to invade his dominions, or to free his subjects from their allegiance.

Within the oath, there was one clause whereby the Catholic was forced to swear that he did "from his heart abhor, detest and abjure as impious and heretical, this damnable doctrine that princes which be excommunicated or deprived by the Pope may be deposed or murdered by their subjects," phrased in such deliberately offensive terms, that it resulted in a solid body of opposition to the Oath (Bald 212-13). In 1606 the Pope issued two breves condemning the Oath, in conjunction with the support of Cardinal Bellarmine, and subsequently that of many eminent Jesuit writers. In reply James issued in 1607 the "Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance", in order to prove that the oath was "merely civill."

Thus began James's pamphlet war with the papacy. The background of the pamphlet war is found not only in the Oath of Allegiance but in the King's fondness for theological discussion. James surrounded himself with learned churchmen in order to expound his own views, and the resultant interchange of ideas had a bearing on his writings in the Catholic controversy (Willson 228-29). He confided in a favourite that "the state of religion through all Christendom, almost wholly under God, rests now upon my shoulders" (qtd. in Willson 230).

The situation facing Catholics must have been thoroughly

familiar to John Donne who had, as we shall see, formerly shared many of their difficulties. Anxious to capture the favour of the King, Donne composed his Pseudo-Martyr wherein, "out of certaine Propositions and Gradations this conclusion is evicted [sic], that those which are of the Romane Religion in this Kingdom may and ought to take the Oath of Allegiance" (47). Izaak Walton in his life of John Donne gives an account of how the book came to be written. The King, much impressed with Donne's arguments against refusing the oath, "commanded him to bestow some time in drawing the arguments into a method" The result was the Pseudo-Martyr, and it was so satisfactory, that James "persuaded Mr. Donne to enter into the Ministry," having stated, "I know Mr. Donne is a learned man, has the abilities of a learned Divine and will prove a powerful preacher and my desire is to prefer him that way" (45-46).

However, James's attitude must have been a bitter disappointment for John Donne who, up until this time, had resisted the King's advice to take holy orders because he clung to a dream of worldly success by means of state employment. Furthermore, he knew that the clerical profession was despised and considered unfit for gentlemen; he did not want to be thought of as a cassocked pedant but as an alert and resourceful courtier (Carey 87). Thus, during 1614-15 he continued to press for a secular appointment.

The foregoing emphasis upon Donne's resolute determination to succeed in a secular career suggests the importance of a scrutiny of his story, especially up to the time in 1615 when he was

ordained a priest of the Church of England and appointed royal Chaplain to King James. Some critics cite this event as the tentative line of demarcation between the poetic works of the dissolute youthful Donne and the prose works of the grave Dean of St. Paul's, and as indicative of a personality change correlated with his entrance into holy orders. However, as John Carey states,

. . . there weren't two people. The more we read the poems and sermons the more we can see them as fabrics of the same mind controlled by similar imaginative needs. That's not to deny that Donne changed. At the level of opinions and social attitudes he changed a great deal. He grew repressive, as people generally do with age and success The poet of 'Going to Bed' having entered the pulpit became a devout advocate of virginity
(10-11)

Reading through Donne's poetic and prose works one is struck with his intensely individualistic style, reflective, no doubt, of an incisive, nonconforming intellect; and as we examine his story in order to understand his mentality, it becomes apparent that this individualistic bent derived from his ancestry, parentage and early life experiences.

Donne's father was a London businessman who rose to become a warden of the Ironmongers Company and whose success enabled his son to have the advantage of education at the Universities and at one of the Inns of Court. Examination of the father's career suggests "a prosperous citizen advancing steadily in his trade and in the esteem of his fellow ironmongers . . . whose estate at the time of his death was estimated at close to £3500 which is an indication of the poet's father's industriousness . . . "

(Bald 36-37). It also suggests a link between John Donne senior and the rise of economic individualism. Lawrence Stone asserts that, "although there was a growing movement towards individualism, the prevailing temper of the age was the antithesis of twentieth century Western values; even so, the authoritarian attitudes were having to compete with the concept of individualism and the gradual erosion of respect for kings, bishops . . . fathers of families" (Crisis 35-36). One might thus identify John Donne senior with this individualistic ethic which entailed the rejection of governmental paternalism and political absolutism inherent in hierarchical society.

Donne's mother was a member of one of the most celebrated Catholic families in the land. She was the youngest daughter of the poet and playwright John Heywood; her mother--Donne's grandmother--was Joan Rastell, the niece of Sir Thomas More. So, on his mother's side, Donne was descended from the More circle, the foremost intellectuals in early sixteenth-century England, internationally famous and devout Catholics (Bald 22).

The Catholic aspect of Donne's heritage and early upbringing informs much of his thinking. He was born at a time of extreme danger for Catholics, and witnessed at an early age public executions; on one occasion he accompanied his mother to nurse her brother, the Jesuit Jasper Heywood, condemned in the Tower of London (Carey 18-20). Among the direct descendants of More who were contemporaries of Donne, at least eight were members of Roman Catholic orders (Bald 23). John Donne's brother Henry died in 1593

of fever contracted in the Tower to which he had been condemned for concealing a Jesuit priest (Carey 24). These biographical facts accentuate the peril of Donne's situation due to his kinship with prominent Catholics. In addition, anti-Catholic legislation made it impossible to play a role in public life, and Catholics were debarred from taking a university degree by the requirement that graduates should subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles (Bald 66).

The fact that Donne's mother adhered tenaciously to her faith all her life suggests the gravity of his decision to leave the Church--but leave he did. Donne stated in the preface to Pseudo-Martyr:

I had a longer worke to doe than many other men; for I was first to blot out, certaine impressions of the Romane religion and to wrastle both against the example and against the reason by which some hold was taken . . . both by Persons who by nature had a power and superiority over my will and others who by their learning and good life seem'd to me justly to claime an interest for the guiding and rectifying of mine understanding in these matters
(49)

It was not a decision made lightly, and he did not act until he had "survayed and digested the whole body of Divinity, controverted betweene ours and the Romane Church" (50). Perhaps Donne's problem with Catholicism derived from his experience with the Jesuits and the philosophy of their founder St. Ignatius of Loyola: "Take Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my entire will." It is a sign of Donne's intellectual independence that he was unable to conform to a doctrine demanding complete self-effacement in the subjugation of

mind and will to absolute authority. In later life, "Donne developed what seemed a personal grudge against the Jesuits In the end he came to feel that they alone were to blame for the slaughter and suffering They demanded total loyalty to the Faith" (Carey 21).

Donne was nonetheless proudly aware of his More ancestry, referring in Pseudo-Martyr to Sir Thomas More and his "firmnesse to the integrity of the Romane faith" (qtd. in Carey 15). He owned and made marginal notations in a copy of More's Lucubrations which included the Utopia (Gleason 599). More's concern was also with a type of absolute authority, the tyranny of the monarchy, "the destructive caprice of unchained sovereignty." The danger of tyrannic rule provided the theme of the Utopia because it is among the evils which More's imaginary commonwealth is designed to annihilate (Fenlon 453).

John Donne was sent in 1584 to Oxford where he remained for three years, and was then transferred to Cambridge where he spent another three years, being unable to take a degree at either university due to the religious difficulty about the Oath required for graduation. He was admitted as a law student at Thavies Inn in May 1591, and was transferred to Lincoln's Inn in May 1592. It was at this time that Donne was at the height of his religious crisis, just prior to his abandonment of Catholicism. The time would have been particularly grave due to the death of his brother Henry in 1593, after his imprisonment for Catholic activities. His "Satire III" is a product of this period and reflects the growing

scepticism of his maturing intellect. In admonishing the reader to search for the true religion Donne's persona states that people too readily capitulate in acceptance of the traditional authority of King, Pope or parents, without engaging in the incisive, independent reasoning process that is necessary for the individual, in order to win "hard knowledge" (Grierson 157:86).

It was also about this time that Donne wrote the earlier satires, and composed most of the elegies and some of the love lyrics. In these works, "there is a more explicit revolt against conventional attitudes, which extends beyond a mere celebration of sexual infidelity in such poems as 'Womans Constancy' or 'The Indifferent' . . ." (Bald 71). The poems "bear the stamp of self more than those of any other English poet." The essence of these "prickly and individual" early productions is the power principle (Carey 97-99). Donne's poetic voice is remarkable in echoing the domineering rhetoric expressed by James I in his political writings. This implies that Donne identified with and appropriated royal absolutism for his own private domain. The guiding theme in several of the poems is the demand for obedient submission by the female, who represents the sex of powerlessness. The poet's persona seeks a dominance in the sexual relationship which, in affairs of state, is replicated by James's absolutist political ideology. For example, in his desire for supremacy in "Elegy XIX, To His Mistress Going To Bed" (Grierson 119), the despotic lover orders his submissive partner to strip; there is no sense of individuality for the female who is addressed as object and

represents a subject-in-subjection by assuming a role of silent submission. In "The Sunne Rising" (Grierson 11), Donne's poetic voice explicitly adopts the principle of monarchical absolutism in his sexual politics. In the final stanza, the speaker makes the declaration toward which the entire poem tends: "She's all States, and all Princes, I / Nothing else is" (21-22). If we recall James's equation of kingship with the image of the sun in the prefatory sonnet to the "Basilikon Doron" where he suggests that the king shines in "Princely vertues" (3), then Donne's lover challenges and reverses the traditional political hierarchy in castigating the "unruly Sunne", ordering him away. The sun's sphere and purpose, now defined only in relation to his role in the private world of the lovers, is totally inverted: "This bed thy center is, these walls, thy spheare" (30).

Formally rejecting the conventions governing the use of the sonnet form (Leishman 146), Donne likewise challenged the existing political order in society, especially when one sees the rules bounding the sonnet form as replicating the ideological rules bounding hierarchical seventeenth-century society. Within the Elizabethan sonnet form there is freedom of expression only inside the confining boundaries of the form; there is no freedom to break with the convention itself. Examination of Donne's early sonnet, "The Flea" (Grierson 40), suggests a disruption of the normal chain of being in which woman is subservient to man who occupies the position of power and dominance. The flea inhabits the lowest level of the animal domain, yet defines and diminishes the

male/female love relationship. Thus, Donne's strategy in the sonnet undermines any Petrarchan idealized sacred notion of love, and jars the reader from the underpinning ideology of the Jacobean political system. The lady in the poem, perceiving herself as an individual, refuses to love and obey, and thus to subject herself to the manipulative poetic speaker as an object to be dominated. The lady's resistance to being exploited may replicate and define the underlying civil unrest amongst the masses in resistance to the monarchical absolutism of the time. Both women and, by analogy, the lower class are tired of being subjugated. Viewed from this standpoint, these two poems can be construed as microcosms of the larger religio/political macrocosm.

In 1597, having returned from the English expedition against the Azores, Donne became Secretary to the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Sir Thomas Egerton, reputed to be the most distinguished living member of the Inn. Egerton had acquired a reputation for picking out young men of talent and advancing their interests. Donne had every expectation of rising as high in the services of the state as his abilities could take him, and for a time it appeared that he was destined for a great secular career (Bald 94-95). In 1601, however, Donne contracted a secret marriage with a girl called Ann More. When the news of the marriage broke, Sir George More, Ann's wealthy Surrey-landowner father exploded in fury and Donne was dismissed from Egerton's service and thrown into prison. Even later, when Sir George More relented and tried to get Donne's job back for him, Egerton remained adamant. Donne, in his

view, had betrayed his trust, and so shown himself unfit for confidential employment. Though it took Donne many years to reconcile himself to the fact, his hopes of a public career had vanished beyond recall (Carey 70-71).

Donne must have realized he was taking a serious risk in marrying without her father's consent a girl of prominent family who was still a minor. Not only did it involve a specific offence against Canon Law, it was a serious breach of the social code. The widely held patriarchal view of the family and of the authority of the father in Stuart England was that householders ruled their dependents with absolute power (Schochet 57). Sir George More was no mere country squire, but a wealthy landowner, a powerful patriarch and political figure "often employed by the King, and by Queen Elizabeth . . . in commissions and to work the Parliament House to such things as they desired to have effected . . ." (Bald 129). The disastrous consequences of Donne's marriage, which can be construed as yet another indication of his powerful and defiant ego, highlight just how strong the sanctions against it were. Although Donne did suffer initially in the face of the irascible Sir George's "Choler", nonetheless the tone of his letters to More inform the latter that what was done could not be changed and that he should accept the *fait accompli*, an attitude scarcely calculated to assuage the anger that Donne had every reason to anticipate (Bald 134-35). In effect, Donne violates the rules of the same social system within which he hopes to succeed.

Izaak Walton's account of Donne's behaviour in dealing with

the irate patriarch is suggestive of Donne's manipulative cunning: "It is observed that silence and submission are charming qualities . . . and it proved so with Sir George . . . a general report of Mr. Donne's merits, together with his winning behaviour (which when it would intice, had a strange kind of elegant irresistible art) . . ." (30). The end result was that in January 1601 John Donne and Ann Donne were declared lawful man and wife (Bald 139). It was at this time that "Donne penned his famous sad letter to his Wife . . . and, after the subscription of his name, writ,

John Donne, Ann Donne, Un-done,
and God knows it proved too true" (Walton 29).

In 1603, when James I assumed the throne of England, there was a flurry of appointments, and Egerton became Baron Ellesmere, which may have been particularly galling for Donne in the knowledge that he could have accompanied Egerton's rise in political stature.

The times following Donne's marriage in 1601 to his entrance into holy orders in 1615 were difficult ones, filled with the escalating pressures of familial responsibilities, illness, debt, and the galling necessity to "court" influential individuals in hopes of gaining political preferment. In the early years the Donnes lived in poverty. The pressure on Donne can be realized in the following excerpt from a letter written in a state of illness and depression: "I stand like a tree, which once a year bears, though no fruit, yet this mast of children". In another letter of 1607, written while Ann was in labour, he states that had she died he would have committed suicide (qtd. in Gosse I:154). Since he

had no regular employment, simply giving his children enough to eat was at times an acute problem.

An examination of his letters written at this time shows that he never expressed the natural joy in children or in his wife's love that one might expect of a young father. All that part of his life was blighted by want and by the galling consciousness of failure (Carey 74). It was at this time that Donne prepared a treatise on suicide entitled Biathanatos in which he defended the thesis that "self-homicide is not so naturally sin that it may never be otherwise" (25). The subtle intellectual caste of Donne's mind, ever challenging hierarchical authority, is evident in this exercise in religious casuistry, in which Donne argued that because the law is not perfect there are differences among formulations of the truth; thus the casuist must join the rights of the unique individual to the general law without denying the validity of either. Donne's conclusion was that in some circumstances the individual might lawfully kill himself if the glory of God remained his guiding motive (Cathcart 8-9).

Although in 1608 Donne's fortunes changed with the generous settlement of Ann's dowry, it remained essential that he attract the notice of someone at court because the kind of employment he wanted lay entirely at the disposal of the court circle. This was the basis of his frantic attempts to flatter or cajole persons of elevated social standing, such as Lucy Countess of Bedford and Mrs. Magdalen Herbert, to bestir themselves on his behalf. The noblemen whose assistance Donne solicited during these worrying years were

not an attractive group and Donne's parasitic dependence upon them is evident in the many cloying, obsequious letters which he wrote to them. In 1611 Donne wrote to Robert Ker, the Viscount Rochester and intimated that the Spirit of God had inspired him to become a clergyman; in that capacity he would be at Rochester's disposal (Bald 272). The bid was successful. Though he dissuaded Donne from taking holy orders, Rochester took him into his employment. Donne's ensuing letters to his new patron express abject dependence: "It hath pleased your Lordship to make another title to me, by buying me . . . I have lived upon your bread" (qtd. in Gosse 2:23, 41).

Donne was specific about the posts which he wished his patrons to secure for him. In 1608 he asked for a secretaryship in Ireland, through his intermediary Lord Hay. In 1609 he asked to be given a secretaryship with the Virginia Company. Hay urged the King to appoint Donne, but the King was familiar with Donne's story and felt that the circumstances of his marriage counted against him. He accordingly urged Donne to enter the Church (Bald 161).

The year 1614 was one of the darkest in Donne's life. He and his family were ill; Ann had a miscarriage. Little Mary's death in May was followed in November by the death of his son Francis. Expenses had increased with the move to London, for in order to improve his chances of advancement Donne had to keep up appearances. The begging letters he sent to Somerset and to the Countess of Bedford were obsequious and shameless, and must have been humiliating to write (Gosse 2: 5-12). In April he became a

Member of Parliament, but the 1614 parliament was a fiasco--the only recorded parliament which passed no legislation whatsoever. It occupied itself with violent discussions of the King's abuse of the royal prerogative. When members turned their attention to James's Scottish favorites and the vast sums of money they consumed, James lost patience and dissolved Parliament.

Whatever Donne's opinion of James and the royal prerogative, he kept silent. However, his tact during the session did him no good, for the King made it very clear that he continued to prefer Donne to take holy orders. By December 1614 Donne had capitulated, and he was ordained in January 1615 (Carey 86-88). Thus Donne's life during his last eighteen months as a layman do not present a particularly edifying spectacle. There is a vein of worldliness in him that pervades all of the letters written from this period. From the time of his first letter to Somerset he had known that he would be forced into the Church unless some secular employment was forthcoming, yet at no period since his marriage do his letters show so little sense of spiritual issues. He appears as one who had mastered the arts of the courtier, and it is clear when he finally was forced into the Church that he intended to rise by them. At no period in his life does he appear more self-seeking. The truth may be that these qualities in him were not essential and permanent traits of his character; rather they were symptoms of his despair--not the despair of one who feels that he has been denied salvation, but that of one whom success eludes in spite of all his efforts (Bald 301).

Donne composed a poem "To Mr. Tilman after he had taken orders" which reveals something of his own feelings at that particular time. Tilman, Donne avers, has braved "Lay-scornings of the Ministry" and he goes on to ask

if thy gayning doe surmount expression,
Why doth the foolish world scorne that
profession,
Whose joyes passe speech? Why do they think
unfit
That Gentry should joyne families with it?

Donne then asks whether Mr. Tilman feels that ordination has changed him in any way:

Dost thou finde
New thoughts and stirrings in thee?

But for this question he suggests an answer:

Art thou the same materials, as before,
Only the stampe is changed; but no more?
And as new crowned Kings alter the face,
But not the monies substance; so hath grace
Chang'd onely Gods old Image by Creation,
To Christs new stampe, at this thy Coronation.
(qtd. in Bald 304-5)

In these passages Donne seems to be projecting his own feelings because he was only too conscious of the meagre social prestige which attached to his new profession (Bald 304). In the view of A. Marotti, this poem also reveals Donne's continued preoccupation with status and place as he engages in the kind of self-persuasion that would justify his own decision to take orders. As an ambitious courtier who had engaged in the very activities named in the poem, Donne argues too insistently that the ministry is a socially acceptable profession (231-33).

When we think of Donne's life in review as he enters into holy

orders, we should bear in mind the two constant elements informing his life to this date. The first is his driving ambition, a theme which links the young soldier, the civil servant, and the young man ruined by an ambitious marriage, with the mature divine. The second is his fierce, uncompromising individualism which pervades every facet of his thought and work. This latter is evident in his rejection of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, in the circumstances of his marriage, and in his poetic and prose works which challenge the patriarchal structure of seventeenth-century England. As Donne assumes responsibilities as Chaplain-in-Ordinary to King James I, it is also important to remind ourselves of James's adherence to monarchical absolutism in his determination to rule in "the stile of Gods." In 1609-10 James spoke to parliament expounding his most famous pronouncement on royal power:

Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of power upon earth: For if you wil consider the Attributes to God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a King. Kings . . . make and unmake their subjects: they have power of raising and casting downe: of life, and of death. Judges over all their subjects and in all causes yet accountable to none but God onely
 (308)

Given King James's assertion of absolute power, and the knowledge we have of John Donne's habitual response to authority, one can only conjecture how Donne would respond to James, and whether he would be able to assume the necessary intellectual posture of subservience inherent in the dictum with which we began -- It is subjection we owe.

Chapter II

Images of Kingship in Donne's Sermons: 1615-1621

Power on Display: "for as
his name is, so is he;" (1 Sam. 25:25)

Because James I habitually identified royal power with divine power, presenting "king" and "God" as interchangeable concepts, and because he espoused the view that "kings are the breathing Images of God upon earth" and can "with a wry or frowning looke crush these earth-wormes into pieces" ("Defence of Kings" 248), it is essential to be aware of some of the attributes inherent in the concept of God from which both Stuart kings derived and legitimized their claim to monarchical absolutism.

For example, and with regard to the perception of God which inheres in Divine Right Theory, it has been observed that "as opposed to an earlier liturgical kingship, the late mediaeval kingship by 'divine right' was modelled after God the Father in heaven rather than after the Son on the Altar, and focused in a philosophy of the Law" (Kantorowicz, King's 93). What need concern us here is an awareness of that particular dimension of the model of God which anticipates and hence comments on the type of monarchical absolutism demanded by the Stuart kings.

According to John Calvin, God's justice must always be considered in conjunction with the exercise of His power. For example, Calvin assails the "Sorbonnist dogma that ascribes to God absolute power" dissociated from justice. "One might more readily

take the sun's light from its heat or its heat from its fire, than separate God's power from his justice" (Institutes I, 17n7).

In the Bible God's hierarchical relationship with His worshippers is one of King/subject because He is the original King of Israel (Nm 23:21; Dt 33:5; Jgs 8:23; 1 Sam. 8:7; 12:12). He is King of all nations (Ps 22:29). He is the King Savior who vindicates His Kingship by His saving deeds on behalf of Israel (Ps 145:11-13; Is 33:22). In the royal Psalms Yahweh is King and Conqueror of nations (Ps 47), King of Israel (Ps 95), Creator and King and Judge of nations (Ps 96). Earthly kingship derives from the Divine Authority (1 Ch 28:5). Although Israel adopted royal display to apply to its God, it did not draw any implications for its political institutions: Yahweh reigned over Israel by virtue of the Covenant (Ex. 19:6).

After the institution of the monarchy in Israel (1 Sam. 8:22), the Hebrew king did not belong in the area of things divine as was the case in surrounding civilizations. Like other men, he remained subject to the exigencies of the Covenant and the Law, a fact which the prophets did not fail to remind him of on occasion (1 Sam. 13:8-15; 2 Sam. 12:1-12). From the time of David, the king's position with respect to God gained in precision. God made the king His adopted son (2 Sam. 7:14), depository of His powers, and virtually established as the head of all the kings of the earth (Ps. 89:28). As the words of the king of Israel reveal--"Am I God, to kill and make alive?" (2 Kings 5:7)--the kings did not assume their own divinity. It is significant that the prophetic

denunciations of the kings never censured the monarchs for any misappropriated claim to divinity.

God promised His protection for the king if he were faithful. In a manner, the ideal of the faithful king (Ps. 101), just and peaceful, crowns the whole national ideal. The exercise of the kingly power should make this ideal issue in deeds. However, the historical and prophetic books bring out the ambiguity of the experience of kingship. Bad kings were numerous in Israel (1 K. 16:25); the glory of Solomon was equivocal (1 K. 11:1-13); and the constant temptation of Israelite royalty was that of aligning itself with the example of surrounding pagan monarchies. This took the form of imitating their despotism. At the time of Samuel, when the people requested a king, the prophet delivered a severe lecture on the evils of kingship before finally yielding to their demand (1 Sam. 8:1-18).

The foregoing is of particular concern because, although the king of Israel was close to God, his proximity to the deity in his role as God's unique instrument must not be interpreted in terms of identity, either metaphysical or functional; the corollary to this is that the earthly Israelite kings did not claim the same degree of absolute sovereignty demanded by Yahweh or, later, by the Stuart monarchs.

The kingship theme occurs in Donne's sermons of 1615-31. That he intended to focus on the flawed and equivocal nature of the Hebrew monarchy is suggested by the presence of a pervasive matrix of images of vitiated kingship in a significant number of the

sermons. For example, he frequently dwells on the brutal dimension of King David's character; this is a Hebrew king who "sinned vehemently, in the rage of lust and violently, in the effusion of blood, and permanently, in a long and senselesse security" with the result "that the entire nation had broken with him" (2:95-6).

Furthermore, Donne wrote the following in a sermon composed in 1619 (later revised for publication in 1630 and thus indicative of his earlier as well as later mind):

The way of Rhetorique in working upon weake men, is first to trouble the understanding, to displace, and to discompose, and disorder the judgement . . . to empty it of former apprehensions and opinions and to shake that believe with which it had possessed itself before, and then when it is thus melted, to poure it into new molds . . . to stamp and imprint new formes, new images, new opinions in it.

(2:282)

This suggests that Donne's method may have been to challenge the sensibilities of his auditors and readers by inserting a subtextual commentary which is not always consonant with the surface meaning of his sermons.

As an example, in a sermon of December, 1619, Donne preached against the dangers of "seditious whispering" against King James; such "libellers are seditious Absaloms" who "murmer" that "Your cause is good, but the King hath appointed none to heare it; Money brings them in, favour brings them in, it is not the King; or, if it must be said to be the King, yet it is the affection of the King and not his judgement, the King misled, not rightly informed" (2:278). While Donne's citation of 2 Sam. 15:3-4 does refer to

Absalom's treacherous behavior at the King's gate, it also provides a larger subtextual commentary on Absalom's father, King David. The story of Absalom suggests the weaknesses both in David's character, and in his government. Nathan, as Yahweh's mouthpiece, rebuked David: "Why have you despised the word of the Lord to do what is evil in his sight? You have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites." The prophet subsequently predicted that, as a result of David's sin, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me Behold I will raise up evil against you and of your own house" (2 Sam. 12:9-11).

Given the volatile socio-political situation, and Donne's new role as Chaplain-in-Ordinary to James I in the Established Church, it would of course have been necessary that he pursue a strategy to conceal any explicit attack upon kingship within a seemingly orthodox exposition of the biblical texts. However, even during the earliest period of his preaching, 1615-21, Donne had already formulated an explicit statement of the tension inherent in his position. In a sermon preached at Whitehall on 3 March 1620, with James I not in attendance, Donne chose a somber text from the prophecy of Amos 5:18. The background of the text suggests that Donne may have identified with Amos's onerous mission, for the latter was summoned by God from a shepherd's task to the difficult responsibility of preaching harsh words in a smooth season. Amos denounced Israel for grave injustice in social dealings, abhorrent immorality, and shallow meaningless piety. Amos's forceful,

uncompromising preaching brought him into conflict with the religious authorities of his day. His personal confrontation with the priest Amaziah remains one of the unforgettable scenes in the Hebrew prophecy. The book falls into three parts; chapters 3-6 describe the indictment of Israel for sin and injustice (May and Metzger 1107).

Donne's sermon on this text (i.e., Amos 5:18) is replete with images of political corruption as he, like Amos, holds a mirror before his audience. Donne recalls that the prophet Amos was threatened by the high priest Amaziah for meddling with affairs of state: "Eate thy bread in some other place, but prophecy here no more, for this is the Kings Chappell and the Kings Court" (2:348). Although Donne tactfully asserts that James I is no King Jeroboam to forbid outspoken preaching at his court, and denies implying a likeness between the corrupt Israelite court and that of the corrupt and extravagant court of James, his mind turns inward as he declares in an arresting statement that "every man that comes with Gods Message hither, brings a little Amaziah of his owne, in his owne bosome, a little whisperer in his owne heart, that tells him, This is the Kings Chappell, and it is the Kings Court and these woes and judgements and the denouncers and proclaimers of them are not so acceptable here" (2:348-49). Although Donne's statement suggests his effort to comprehend the inner nature and function of his position as priest and preacher, it also points to the conflict inherent in his ministerial role. The sermon does not offer a satisfactory resolution of his problem. It is apparent

that he was considering the Amos and Amaziah within himself, and alluding specifically to "the little Amaziah" in his own personal bosom.

Donne also undercuts his earlier assurance of the integrity of King James by his subsequent sardonic observation that "God expressed his anger twice upon the people First he expressed it in giving them a King . . . he gave them their King in anger. Secondly, he expressed his anger in giving them two Kings" (2:352)! Furthermore, his citation of 2 Kings 20:12-17 may contain an implicit warning to James that, despite his external manifestation of "outward righteousness" and piety, "He that publishes his good works to the world, they are carried into the world, and that is his reward When Ezechias shewed the Ambassadors of Babylon all his Treasure and his Armour, the malediction of the Prophet fell upon it; that all that Treasure and Armour which he had so gloriously shewed, should be transported to them, to whom he had shewed it, into Babylon" (2:357).

In the period 1615-21 the most complex image to emerge in John Donne's sermons is that of Donne's God, whose ubiquitous presence broods over the texts in a manner reminiscent of the spirit of God of Genesis 1:1-2. An examination of the image of Donne's God is important given what we know about James's insistence on the correspondence between God and the king. According to James, "kings exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power upon earth: for if you will consider the attributes of God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king" ("Trew Law" 55). This suggests

James's perception that within the microcosm of his realm, the king's power is analogous with that of God in the macrocosm of the universe. Conversely, the theme of many of Donne's sermons of this period is that "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom," for He is a God "who can cast soul and body into hell" (1:233).

Although Donne refers to the "love" of God for man, it is the wrathful dimension of the concept of God that emerges in the early sermons, and that seemingly suggests an image of God as a tyrant. For example, the authority of Donne's God is such that "he has the power to do absolutely what he will with that which is his: And so, God as absolute Lord, may damn without respect of sin, if he will, and save without respect of faith, if he will . . . the fear required here is to fear him as God . . . as presented in this name, Elohim . . . a name primarily rooted in power and strength . . ." (1:235). However, Donne repeatedly reassures his audience of "the merciful promises of God to repentant sinners, in his Word" (1:232).

Donne's focus on the necessity to "fear God" concurs with the view of John Calvin who stated that God's angry chastisements should be considered as necessary adjuncts of the exercise of His justice and mercy. As Calvin stressed, "there is no contradiction in the fact that the Lord is said quite often to be angry toward his saints when he chastens them for their sins. As in Isaiah: 'I shall confess unto thee O Lord, although thou wert angry with me; thine anger turned away and thou didst comfort me' [Isa. 12:1p] Likewise, Habakkuk: 'when you are angry, you will remember mercy'

[Hab. 3:2p]" (Institutes 3.4.32).

Similarly, in a sermon of 20 January, 1620, based on Job 13:15, Donne points out that God's very name in the Bible, Shaddai, means, "spoyle and violence and depredation. In the prophet Jeremy, the word is carried farther, there it signifies Destruction, and utter Devastation, though Shaddai be the name of God: yea . . . Dishonor and Disreputation, force and depredation, Ruine and Devestation, Error and Illusion, the Devil and his Tentations, are presented to us, in the same word as the name and power of God is . . . " (3:191). However, Donne suggests that his audience emulate the confidence of Job "who says, though He kill me, yet I will trust in him . . . even then, when his hand is upon me, in a calamity, his hand is under me, to raise me up againe . . . " (3:193).

In 1618/19, Donne preached a series of six sermons at Lincoln's Inn, all based on Psalm 38. The theme of this text is the psalmist suffering "under God's wrath." These sermons depict Yahweh as a divine marksman, and align his imperious might with the symbol of the arrow. Donne stresses man's vulnerability because these arrows "are shot from others, they are not in his [i.e. man's] power . . . and they are swift in coming . . . and there is required a quick eye and an express diligence to discern and avoid them These arrows that are shot and this hand that presses them so sure are the arrows and is the hand of God" However, Donne concludes with the assurance that these arrows do however "Bring their comfort with them . . . that Balsamum of

mercy" (2:51).

Donne also preached during this time, (i.e. 1618/19), on a text from Ezekiel 33:32. This prophet had a divine commission to warn the wicked to repent, and lamented that his "lessons go unheeded." (2:166). Donne's chosen text warns that the day is approaching when the people will be reminded that with the words of God's love are also the words of God's justice (May and Metzger 1042). Donne also suggests, by means of a "metaphore" of a musical instrument, God's foreordained creation of man: "If we shall say that Gods first string in this instrument was reprobation, that Gods first intention was for his glory to damn man; and that then he put in another string, of creating Man so he might have somebody to damn; and then another of enforcing him to sin, that so he might have a just cause to damne him; and then another, of disabling him to lay hold upon any means of recovery: there's no musick in all this, no harmony" (2:170). He subsequently reassures his listeners that "if we take this instrument when Gods hand tun'd it the second time, in the promise of a Messiah and offer of love and mercy of God to all that will receive it in him, then we are truly . . . a love song, when we present the love of God to you" (2:170).

The foregoing examples of Donne's delineation of the exercise of God's power, in conjunction with the assurance of His mercy and justice, are significant because in a number of sermons of this time Donne explicitly links God and the King. For example, in a sermon of November 1617, he states that, "Though as Princes are

Gods, so their well-governed Courts are copies and representations of Heaven" (1:223). He also refers to the correspondence between "God, his Government" and that of our ". . . Government as being to us a Type and Representation of the Kingdom of heaven . . ." (1:235, emphasis mine). On this note, W.G. Madsen's definition of a type, which in the traditional sense of typology implies an anti-type, remarkable for its difference, is illuminating. As he points out, "it is essential to the whole system of typology that the type be different from as well as similar to the antitype" (187, emphasis mine). It is thus possible that Donne deliberately focused on a specific dimension of the God concept, i.e., the operation of God's power in conjunction with the assurance of His justice and mercy, in order to comment typologically on monarchical power in contemporary politico/religious events. Donne's method is thus very ironical for, as he capitalizes on James's insistent claim that "the attributes of God . . . agree in the person of a king," he subtly turns it against him in highlighting what is essentially a glaring dichotomy between the exercise of almighty God's power and justice, and that of James.

There was a crisis of authority at this time between crown and parliament. Between 1610 and 1614, the parliamentary orator, Sir John Eliot spoke of the king's role, in which capacity he should be "shepherd, pastor, physician, ship's pilot . . . one who actively guided the ship of state and positively encouraged actions that would profit the commonwealth" (qtd. in Judson 220). James fell far short of this ideal, and his erratic and arbitrary

behaviour gave rise to a fear of despotism, which was expressed, and discussed in the parliament of 1610 (Hinton 57). For James, the conflation of heavenly and earthly kingship, as well as power and law (divine and human) is central to the iconography of "Basilikon Doron", and to Jacobean kingship. Donne's image system re-defines James's icon, however, by suggesting the incongruity between God and James, and thus Donne may actually reinforce the escalating fear of James's despotism.

Donne's allusive method of censuring Jacobean kingship is evident in a sermon derived from Ecclesiastes 8:11 and preached at Whitehall 21 April 1616. His chosen text concerns the failure of retribution to overtake the wicked which is an anomaly one must accept (May and Metzger 811). Donne begins with the startling Senecan paradox that, "There is no such unhappiness to a sinner, as to be happy" before citing the example of "Constantius the Arrian Emperour, in whose time first of all, the Crosse of Christ suffer'd that profanation, as to be an Ensign of War, between Christian and Christian" (1:168). This "Arrian Heretick . . ." in conjunction with "Magnentius, an usurping Tyrant . . . forfeited their interest in the Cross of Christ . . . and both brought the Cross to cross the Cross, to be an Ensign of War, and of Hostility." Ultimately, this "Heretical Emperour" was "transported to a greater sin, a greater insolence, to approach so near to God himself as to call himself . . . the eternal Emperour . . ." and to finally command his followers "to salute himself by that name, Eternum Caesarem, The eternal Emperour" (1:168).

Donne may have had an ironical intent behind the introduction of this theme, because the Roman imperial motif suggests a complex network of associations. The Roman emperor Constantius II was the son of Constantine I. Weak and suspicious, he was responsible for the murder of rival members of the Flavian dynasty in 337. He pursued a vigorous religious policy as an Arian, and after 350 strove to force the heresy on the West. He died leaving Arianism triumphant everywhere ("Constantius II"). Donne does not hesitate in his sermon to show Constantius as a heretic, a despot and a blasphemer, and as such to exemplify that "so venomous, so deadly is the prosperity of the wicked to their own souls, that even from the mercy of God, they take occasion of sinning" (1:169). This allusion to the abusive Roman emperor and heretic is hardly favourable to James who welcomed representations of himself as the British equivalent of a Roman emperor, and who was hailed on assuming the throne as "England's Caesar" (Kantorowicz, "Mysteries" 70). From the start of his reign James presented himself in the Roman image, stamped with the Roman stamp. He generated his style of gods in a Roman matrix, and claimed deity as the Roman emperors had done before him (Goldberg 46).

In addition to Donne's subversive comment on James's proud Roman identification, there is a royal echo in Donne's admonition against questioning "the secret purposes of God" for "how unsearchable are his Judgements, and his ways past finding out!" This comment mirrors James's preoccupation with "my Prerogative, the mystery of State . . . the mysterie of the King's power" ("STAR

CHAMBER 1616" 333). A trope crucial to all James's writings is that of state secrets, and the necessity for silence, and a clothing of royal actions in announcements of inscrutability. The trope of state secrets declares all territory as the king's (Goldberg xii). By citing the divine inscrutability, Donne's strategy can be construed on one level as reinforcing James's demand for secrecy. But Donne's imitation of the royal language has the potential for subversion built into it. There was great concern amongst James's contemporaries about his demand for royal inscrutability, and concomitant hiding behind his divine status. This is accentuated by an awareness of the incongruity and ambiguity between James's status and that of Almighty God.

In the view of Gale Carrithers, Donne occupies a middle ground of caution in exploiting typological possibilities. His typological constructions extend beyond strict usage in the prefiguration of New Testament events by Old Testament events, but the extension is never vague or careless. Biblical situations figure more or less current situations, but there is some ambiguity in the relationship (23). According to this view, the biblical Yahweh of Donne's sermons has definitive exemplary status, and in that sense is the fulfillment, or the antitype; yet the type, in this instance the current situation as is figured in James and his divine identification, only serves to highlight the difference between the divine inscrutability of Almighty God and that of James's demand for secrecy in order to rationalize his abuse of power. Donne thus imaginatively extends the strict construction

of typology in order to capitalize on James's ruling contradictions, with the ironic effect that he suggests the defects and limitations of the earthly king.

Within this sermon Donne also alludes to the situation where an inscrutable Yahweh repents of having made a king (i.e. 1 Sam:15). Speaking of the assurance of the justice of God's judgements, Donne refers to "the case of Saul . . . who did but reserve some of the spoil and that purchased with the blood of the people, and that pretended to be reserved for Gods service, for sacrifice; and yet Saul heard that judgement, Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and transgression is idolatry: because thou hast cast away the word of the Lord, therefore he hath cast thee away from being king" (1:176). In this particular text chosen by Donne, although Saul is king and wins a moral and religious victory, he is depicted as a reprobate unworthy of the position he holds (May and Metzger 351).

In addition to the example of Saul, Donne cites the prideful presumption of King Herod: for "when Herod took a delight in that flattery and acclamation of the people, It is the voice of God, and not of man; the angel of the Lord smote him immediately, and the worms took possession of him" (I:177). The foregoing are two ominous examples of the fate of perverse and prideful kings "whose hearts were fully set in them to do evil" (I:178). Thus Donne's subtext contains a warning for rulers who possess the title but not the soul and morality of true royalty. The divine punishment of Kings Saul and Herod implies a warning for King James and places

his situation in jeopardy.

While Donne does comment in this sermon on the nature of Jacobean kingship by means of the Roman and divine motif, and the biblical subtext with its subversive equation for James, he does not counsel rebellion. On the contrary, he closes the sermon with the admonition that his countrymen can be confident of the ultimate exercise of God's justice. Although it appears that tyrants do continue to thrive, nevertheless his listeners must not expostulate "wherefore do the wicked live, and become old, and grow mighty in power?" (I:182). Rather, the punishment of the unjust ruler remains with Almighty God, a reassuring conclusion consonant with his chosen text from Ecclesiastes 8:11.

In a sermon preached 20 February, 1618, at Whitehall the Roman imperial motif recurs in a consideration of the words of one of the thieves executed with Christ for breach of the Roman law. As Michel Foucault observes in Power/Knowledge, "the Roman law had . . . a technical and constitutive role to play in the establishment of the authoritarian, administrative and in the final analysis absolute power of the monarchy" (94). The Roman law also informed James I's absolutism (Kantorowicz, "Mysteries" 68). Within the sermon Donne refers to the "horror of examination by the king," an experience reputed to be "worse than the rack" (1:265), before implying the dichotomy between the brutality of the Roman law, and the justice inherent in the execution of God's law. The "ordinary proceeding" of the conduct of "God's justice" is done by means of his "common Law" and "his Chancery", by "his chief Justice

Moses, that denounced his Judgements upon transgressors of the Law" and by "his chancellor Christ Jesus, into whose hands he had put all Judgements, to mitigate the rigor and condemnation of the Law." Thus, "for Gods prerogative, what he could do of his absolute power . . . it should scarce be disputed of . . . in every popular pulpit to curious and itching ears" (I:255). Donne points out that although the good thief "preaches nothing but the fear of God", we are nonetheless to anticipate a God "of power, but not of force" and therefore "he will be feared not as a wilful Tyrant but as a just judge" (I:262). In contrast, the brutal efficiency of the Roman law is evident in the reviled figure of the innocent Christ whom "Pilate . . . brought out to them . . . scourged and scorned" as "a worm and no man, a shame to men, and the contempt of the people" (I:263).

Donne's citation of Dan. 11:38 may imply a warning to James of the certitude of God's punishment for the abuse of power. This biblical text concerns Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the contemptible person who attained power by guile. He abandoned the gods of his fathers, being interested in Zeus Olympius and claiming divine honors for himself (May and Metzger 1085). According to Dan. 11:36-38, "the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods He shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all He shall honor the god of fortresses . . . with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts." In referring to

the above text, Donne warns "that no man may be so secure . . . as to forbear to work out his salvation with fear and trembling: for God saves no man against his will" (I:261). However, as Donne wryly observes, "where there is not the fear of God in great persons, other men dare not proceed clearly with them, but with disguises and modifications" (I:263). Significantly, he then draws again on "the particular case of David" and his subsequent confrontation with Nathan. In this case, Nathan "worked upon David" with the result that he realized that "I have sinned against the Lord." Donne's own purpose evidently mirrors that of Nathan, for Donne wished that "every man may find some such particular condemnation in himself . . . if he will but read his own history in a true copy" (I:266).

Donne's observation regarding the brutality of the Roman law (with the implied commentary on the exercise of the law according to James I) may have reinforced the growing concern about James's abuse of prerogative law. As Hinton observes, "With the king's high place went equally high duties . . . as fountain of justice, to maintain the law . . . as governor, to govern. Just as subjects were not slaves, so the absolute king was no autocrat. He was bound by his duties The rule of the king was limited by the rule of law However . . . in some exceptional cases he was not restrained by the ordinary course of the law But under the Stuarts . . . this principle . . . gave dangerous legal sanction to acts of . . . royal stupidity, arrogance, shiftiness and stubbornness . . . and so brought about an intolerable

situation of which civil war was a natural consequence" (48-9).

In a sermon preached at Lincoln's Inn in 1618, Donne expounds on the nature of temptation by means of a "Metaphore of arrows"; he suggests that "Gods quiver and the Devils quiver . . . furnish arrows to gall and wound us" (2:56). He then presents an image suggestive of a collaboration (albeit unwilling on the part of Satan) between God and Satan for the soul of man with God in control of Satan, for "from what instrument of Satan so ever thy affliction come, Gods hand is upon their hand that shoot it and though it may hit the mark according to their purpose, yet it hath the effect and it works according to his . . . in afflictions Gods hand and the Devils are but one hand . . ." (2:67).

Donne reassures his listeners that "these tentations and tribulations are to advance our spiritual edification" and that "they (i.e. these "arrows") bring their comfort with them, because no arrows from him, no pressing with his hand, comes without that Balsamum of mercy, to heal as fast as he wounds" (2:51).

Donne's elaboration of God's control of Satan in order to accomplish His divine purpose provides a suggestive link to, and concomitant ironic contrast with, King James's preoccupation with Satan and the Dark monarchy. David Mathew observes that perhaps James viewed the prince of Darkness as "another kind of ruler who could exercise his sway" over the king's subjects (78-79). In 1597 James composed his own treatise on Daemonologie, and in the second book he makes it clear that it is always in solitude that Satan

approaches. He (i.e. Satan) "findes the time proper to discover himself unto them . . . either upon their walking solitarie . . . or else lying panning in their bed and he . . . by a voyce . . . inquires of them what troubles them, and promiseth them a suddaine and certaine waie of remedie upon condition that they follow his advise . . ." (qtd. in Mathew 79). There is an echo between the foregoing passage by James, and that of a sermon of this time (i.e. 1618) in which John Donne depicts God's death bed reclamation of a lost soul. Almighty God "will come to the beds side . . . to hisse softly for his childe, to speake comfortably in his eare, to whisper gently to his departing soule, and to drowne and overcome with this soft Musick of his, all the clangor of the Angels Trumpets, all the horror of the ringing Bell . . . and all the triumphant acclamations of the Devill himselfe; that God should love a man thus at his end and returne to him then . . . is a great testimony of an unspeakable love" (2:182).

Donne's aim may be to suggest the difference between God's use and control of Satan to accomplish His divine purpose, (e.g. as in the story of Job, to whom Donne refers in this sermon), and James's use of Satan to accomplish his demonic sway over his realm in his exercise of the "King's right" to ensure the subjugation of the masses. James's determination to be master of his kingdom and of all classes within it appears vividly in his writings, as for example, in "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies" in which his purpose is to teach the people the nature of their duty to the king, and the obligation of obedience. He states that as King he is "Master

over every person that inhabiteth the whole land, having power over the life and death of every one of them . . . " (63).

Within the sermon, Donne defines the preacher's role as one wherein he acts as "Gods archer . . . His word in his servants mouth The Preacher is . . . the deliverer of Gods arrows" (2:68). He offers a warning to those who do not abide by the preacher's directives in alluding to the fate of those biblical kings who did not obey the prophets. God acted through the prophets for "it was the way by which God declared the deliverance of Israel from Syria; Elisha bids the king open the window Eastward, and shoot an arrow out. The king does shoot: And the prophet says . . . the arrow of the Lords deliverance: He would deliver Israel, by shooting vengeance into Syria" (2:56). God is also capable of employing a lying spirit "who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead" (1 Kings 22:20). Donne alludes to 1 Kings 22:34 in which God's wish was fulfilled when Ahab died in battle, and subsequently "was brought to Samaria . . . and the dogs licked up his blood" (1 Kings 22:37).

Donne also interprets the example of 2 Kings 13:18, 19 wherein, "when Joash the King of Israel came to visit Elisha upon his sick bed, and to consult with him about his war, Elisha bids the King smite the ground, and he smites it thrice and ceases: Then the man of God was angry, and said, Thou shouldst have smitten thine enemies, till thou hadst consumed them" (2:64). Donne's message is that God's ministers warn of the consequences of disobedience by the king as a "Catechism and Instruction

So when thou hear'st Nathans words to David, The Child that is born unto thee, shall surely die . . . so when thou hear'st Gods word to David, Choose famine, or war, or pestilence for the people, (let that signifie, those that depend upon thee, shal perish)," so it is critical that the King hear and obey "all the judgements of God, as they lie in the body of the Scriptures . . . and the applications of those judgements by Gods Ministers" (2:68). Donne warns that a consideration of "David's history" illustrates "the anger of God hanging over our heads" as is evident in "the foul and infectious diseases, in his (i.e. David's) body, derived by his incontinence . . . the incest of Amnon upon his sister . . . the murder upon Amnon by Absalom . . . or in many other occasions of sorrow that surrounded David . . ." (2:55).

Furthermore, God as Divine archer stands in contrast to King Darius to whom Donne alludes and who, "to shew his greatnesse that he could wound afar off, as an Archer does" (2:56). Calvin describes King Darius as an example of "royal incapacity and misgovernment" for "Darius yields to the counsels of evil and designing nobles" (On God and Political Duty xxi).

The sermons of this period, i.e., 1618-19 are replete with images of evil kings. However Donne repeatedly provides his listeners with the assurance of Almighty God's punishment of corrupt monarchs, for, as he warns, "when God who is all mercy grows angry, he becomes all anger" (2:85). Throughout these sermons, Donne also develops the image of God as Divine Patriarch, and in so doing describes the paradox of God's nature--His anger

and his beneficence--in a kind of diptych, the one side dark, elemental, and tending to punishment and destruction, the other a celebration of birth and cheerfulness. In an undated sermon of this time, preached upon Trinity Sunday, Donne counsels for example that "God is . . . our Father . . . the Father of lights, of all kinds of lights . . . and is the light from which all the lights which we have . . . of nature, or grace, or glory, have their emanation" (3:276). However, he admonishes that, "If God be a Father, feare him, for naturally we acknowledge the power of a Father to be great over his children, and consequently the reverent feare of the children great towards him" (3:281).

Within this sermon Donne depicts patriarchal authority in the earthly realm as well, for "as in Nature man is a little world, so in nature, a family is a little State, a little Commonwealth, and what power the Magistrate hath in that, the Father hath in this . . . The power of a King, if it be kept within the bounds of the nature of that Office, is onely to be a Father to his people . . . And . . . authority is presented in a more acceptable name, when I am called a Father, then when I am called a Master" (3:282).

James I repeatedly identified himself as the father-king of his people in order further to define the king's power. He utilized the ideology of patriarchy, and frequently represented himself by means of biblical images for patriarchal power. For example, he claimed in a Speech of 1603, "I am the husband and all the whole Isle is my wife" (272). In a Speech to Parliament of 1610, he identified royal power with that of God and of the natural

father as well: "In the scriptures, Kings are called Gods and so their power after a certaine relation compared to the Divine Power. Kings are also compared to Fathers of families: for a King is trewly Parens Patriae . . . " (307). James's perception of authority recalls Robert Filmer's Patriarcha, and his thesis that the ideal state imitates the patriarchalism of the family. For Filmer, the king is literally the father of his country, and kings simply act within the "natural law of the father" (103) in making their absolute claims to obedience. As James used the term in his political writings, he of course stressed his own protective role based on the natural, nurturing relation between a king and his people, rather than suggesting any tyrannical or autocratic function.

A careful reading of the sermon suggests, however, that Donne may have begged to differ with James's exalted depiction of himself as a loving and compassionate father-monarch. Donne begins by citing the example of King David who "sinned against the Father, and his nation . . . in abusing his power and kingly authority, to a mischievous and bloody end in the murder of Uriah" (3:275). Donne also depicts, by drawing on the Roman emperor motif so popular with James I, the ominous power of the father figure under Romulus, first King of Rome. He implies, by means of this image, the possibility of brutality inherent in the exercise of fatherly authority. For example, Donne points out that under Roman law "the father had a power over the life of his child, he might have killed his childe . . . " (3:281). He offers the questionable and

ambiguous solace, by means of sarcastic understatement, that although "by the Law, the Father might punish the Son with death, he might not kill his Son before he was passed three years in age, before hee was come to some demonstration of an ill, and rebellious nature and disposition" (3:281-82). These words provide an ironic echo of James's assertion that in his role as "father" of his kingdom, "all the power" over his "children . . . flowes from himself [i.e. the king]" ("Trew Law" 71). This suggestion of the possibility of brutality inherent in the performance of fatherly authority stands in counterpoint to the exercise of the same by the Divine Patriarch who, as Donne reassures, "will do thee no harme if thou feare him, as a Father" (3:283).

Furthermore, Donne refers to examples of conscientious resistance to kingly authority in the dissenting actions of Moses' parents, and Queen Esther. Moses' parents overcame their "fearfulnesse" and "they hid him" for "they feared not the Proclamation of the King, because it was directly and evidently and undisputably against the manifest will of God." Similarly, Queen Esther overcame her "fearfulnesse; she fasted and prayed . . . and then she entered the King's Chamber against the Proclamation, with that necessary resolution . . . If I perish, I perish" (3:280).

Early in this sermon, Donne cautions against "abusing those limmes and branches, and beames of that power which he hath communicated to thee, in giving thee power and authority . . . over others" (3:275). His theme is basically that "To abuse that power which the Father hath given thee over others" is a sin against the

Father "who is power" (3:277). In concluding this sermon Donne formulates an explicit statement admonishing against the abuse of patriarchal power: "Art thou great in Civill Power? . . . why boasteth thou thy selfe in mischiefe, O mighty man. Haat thou a great body because thou shouldest stand heavy upon thine own feet and make them ake? Or a great power because thou shouldest oppresse them that are under thee? Use thy power justly . . . " (3:291).

Donne's warnings about the abuse of patriarchalism should be compared to the general Renaissance idea of patriarchy. Although Laurence Stone acknowledges that patriarchy was being challenged by the time of James I, he also states that "patriarchy was deliberately encouraged by the Renaissance State on the traditional grounds that the subordination of the family to its head is analogous to, and also a direct contributory cause of subordination of subjects to the sovereign" (Family 152). It is Donne's particular emphasis on a brutal element in his depiction of patriarchalism which surfaces in a significant number of the sermons of this period. The domination and subjugation motif may suggest Donne's perception of James's espousal of patriarchal power for his own political advantage, in order to rationalize his claim to autocracy. While Donne does uphold the necessity to obey the office of the King, he seems to suggest that the exercise of absolute power, whether of fathers or of kings, is not the same thing as capriciously and irresponsibly exercised power. Ironically, James himself took pains to make the distinction

between an absolute king "who acknowledgeth himselfe ordained for his people," and a tyrant who "thinketh his people ordained for him, a prey to his passions and inordinate appetites." Thus in James's view, "A good King as a natural father . . . employeth all his studie and paines to procure . . . the well-fare and peace of his people" ("Basilikon" 18).

Donne's address to the King as "father" parodies the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread, for thou hast given us stones and scorpions, tribulations and afflictions . . ." (2:54). Donne thus suggests a "loving" father monarch who is quite capable of chopping off unruly anarchic filial heads! This cynical entreaty also provides a contrasting allusion to Donne's Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, composed after his life-threatening illness of 1624. In the devotional prayers Donne "celebrates" the image of God in James I: "I look upon the King, and I aske whose image and whose inscription he hath; and he hath thine (42) . . . I hear the echo of that voice whereby thou, through him, hast spoke to me" (Dev. 8:44). Then Donne describes the circumstances in which James forced him to enter the ministry:

I who was sicke before, of a vertiginous giddiness, and irresolution . . . was by this man of God and God of men put into the poole and recovered: when I asked a stone he gave me bread, when I asked . . . a Scorpion, he gave me a fish; when I asked a temporal office, he denied not, refused not that, but let me see, that he had rather I took this.

(Dev. 8 Expo., 44, emphasis mine)

This passage from Donne's Devotions underscores the irony of James's position with regard to his minister. James appointed

Donne with a view to control of the pulpit, and would have anticipated his minister's unqualified support for the King's claim to rule by an absolute form of Divine Right. However, James's demand for, and obsession with his divine status may have recoiled on him, for it now entailed enduring Donne's ambiguous and highly suggestive depiction of the real exercise of the King's power. It is thus ironical that Donne's image system actually accentuates the absence of a spiritual similarity between God and the King.

James's reaction to Donne's habitual propensity for peppering his sermons with allusions to corrupt monarchs, and inconvenient examples of rebels executing God's will upon unrighteous princes, can only be speculation. Perhaps he was flattered in hearing the echo of his own words. For Donne did not ever advocate or attempt to justify the act of revolt. It is possible that James's self-contradictions prevented his recognition of Donne's implied larger political commentary. The very inconsistencies of James, the disparity between his outward appearance and his inner reality, boxed him in. He and his court were characterized by the pleasure-seeking pursuits of wine, hunting, sexual promiscuity, and great financial extravagance. To safeguard his "divine right" to act improperly and to exercise his prerogative, the king needed to recognize in Donne's sermons the version of himself he wished the English populace to see, a mirror of divine virtue before their eyes.

However, the reader and auditor of Donne's time would have been presented with a two-way traffic in ideas, given the glaring

dichotomy between James's public rhetoric and his private virtue. James rationalized his claim to the king's right in the rhetoric of sovereignty, and the concomitant need for absolute obedience. The essential function of James's discourse was to efface the domination intrinsic to his exercise of power. Donne, however, represents James's position by means of a domination and subjugation motif which is hardly a quietistic mode for satisfying those who harbored conscientious scruples about royal policies. As the great Tudor writer on government, Sir Thomas Smith had put it, "the frailtie of mans nature . . . cannot abide or beare long that absolute and uncontrolled authoritie, without swelling into too much pride and insolencie" (qtd. in Judson 277).

In addition to the presence of a typological commentary which capitalizes on the differences between the Heavenly King and the Stuart monarchs, Donne formulates an image of kingship at the human level in his depiction of the far-from-ideal earthly kings of the Israelite monarchy. Donne's method may derive from the concept of the dual nature of kingship utilized by the Tudor judges who, whenever they argued about the king as an individual or the king as King, drew on a concept first delineated in the Plowden Reports that

the King has two Bodies, the one whereof is a Body natural . . . and in this he is subject to Passions and Death as other Men are; and the other is a Body politic and the Members thereof are the subjects and he and they compose the corporation, and he is incorporated with them and they with him, and he is the Head, and they are the Members; and this Body is not subject to Passions and Death or as to this Body the King never dies

(qtd. in Kantorowicz, "Mysteries" 91)

Donne focuses on the vanity of wealth in a sermon preached at Whitehall 2 April 1620 from the text Ecclesiastes 5:13-14. In the sermon Donne observes that "Things in stories we do but hear; things in the Scriptures we see The Scriptures are as a room wainscotted with looking-glass, we see all at once. But this evil sickness of reserving riches to our own evil, is plainer to be seen; because it is daily round about us" (3:56). Emphasizing the assurance of God's wrath on those in power who tyrannize their people, Donne refers to "That destruction which God kindled in Sennacheribs army for oppressing his people" and he subsequently condemns "this sickly sin, the sinful gathering of riches" (3:57). Donne then focuses on King Solomon to whom God gave "Naturall and civil and heavenly wisdom" (3:47), and he cites the authority of St. Augustine that we are to "follow Solomon's way." However, Donne also knew that St. Augustine wrote the following in The City of God: "Solomon . . . after good beginnings made a bad end. For indeed the prosperity which wears out the minds of the wise hurts him more than the wisdom that profited him . . . the story begins with wisdom but ends with folly" (602). When the Israelite people requested a king (1 Sam. 8), and Samuel delivered a severe lecture on the evils of kingship before yielding, the evils he prophesied were mainly those of the reign of Solomon. It is probable that the resentment against the monarchy arose at this time and never ceased, becoming a part of the thought of many of the prophets (May and Metzger 340). Solomon

laid a crushing burden of taxation on his subjects, and his efforts to make his realm a true political unit ended with failure: "His was a world in which power is coercion In Solomon is depicted kingly power and luxurious appetite" (McKenzie 828).

James I was repeatedly identified with King Solomon, having been referred to, for example, as "a lively statue of King Solomon" and "our Brittish Solomon" (qtd. in Goldberg 41). Donne may have intended to imply an analogy between James I and the evil side of the Hebrew King's life for, as he wrote, "The Scriptures are as a room wainscotted with looking-glass, we see all at once" (3:57). The association is not a flattering one in view of what we know of the extravagance of Solomon's court. Furthermore, Donne's hurried citation of Ecclesiastes 5:13 ("And those Riches perish by evil travail: And he begetteth a son and in his hand is nothing" [3:52]) is significant if one recalls the financial burden inherited by Charles I due to James's "voracious appetite for money." For example, David Thomas wrote: "James was unable to restrain his desire to spend money on himself, his followers and his friends Expenditures increased 33% over that of Elizabeth's reign . . . and, as a result of this extravagance the crown rapidly got into extreme financial difficulty . . ." (104-05).

In this sermon Donne also refers to 1 Kings 21 and the stoning of Naboth (3:54), whose vineyard was coveted by Ahab and Jezebel. In 1 Kings 16:33 it is written that "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who

were before him." When Naboth refused to yield his vineyard, Jezebel had him falsely accused, with the result that he was stoned to death, ostensibly for "blaspheming God and king" (1 Kings 21:13). Naboth was victimized by the cunning abuse of power by King Ahab and Jezebel. Thus, although the explicit meaning of the sermon is the condemnation of the misuse of riches, Donne's subtext secretly attacks the destructive caprice of irresponsible and unchained sovereignty as mirrored in the despotic reigns of Kings Solomon and Ahab.

The sermons from 1615 to 1621 are thus characterized by ambiguous, if prophetic warnings of the Biblical history of kings and their growing alienation from God and His Chosen People. Donne, in the period from 1615-21, did not preach solely at Whitehall; he also had occasion to speak more directly to God's people. In 1616, he had received a preferment in his appointment as Reader in Divinity to the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn. This involved preaching nearly fifty sermons a year to a learned and critical audience, many of whom had been the friends and companions of Donne's youth and had known him in his wildest days as a law-student (Simpson 34). This appointment also provided Donne with the opportunity to renew his association with those of his friends, for example, Christopher Brooke, who had been present at the Addled Parliament of 1614, at which time Donne had been a member of several of its most important committees.

During the debate in 1614 over James's extravagance and the necessity for confining the royal prerogative, and in which a

number of Donne's closest friends took the lead in upholding the privileges of the Commons, Donne had remained silent about his own opinion regarding the King's right, or abuse of it. No doubt in his frantic hopes at the time for state preferment, he did not wish to run the risk of expressing his own views (Bald 287-89). It is perhaps safe to surmise, however, that Donne's close friends among the learned Benchers at Lincoln's Inn would now discern the caustic subtextual commentary implicit in many of the sermons of this period of 1615-21 which allude to the abuse of absolute power, and would hence appreciate the cynicism inherent in Donne's acerbic comment relating to his new calling, and made in a sermon preached in 1618 at Lincoln's Inn:

Is there no being a Lawyer without serving the
passion of the Client? . . . or, no being a
Divine, without sowing pillows under great
mens elbows? (2:10)

Chapter III

Images of Kingship in Donne's Sermons: 1621-1625

"Were they ashamed when they
committed abomination? No, they
were not at all ashamed; they did
not know how to blush." (Jer. 6:15)

In December 1621 John Donne was promoted to the Deanship of St. Paul's by James I. As Donne's biographer R.C. Bald notes:

After Donne became Dean there was a change in the tone of his preaching Donne seems now to speak with the authority of the Church behind him; and he strives to make sure that what he says will be intelligible to the simpler minds among his auditory At Lincoln's Inn he had been addressing a highly trained audience, at Court a compact and civilized social group; he had been able to appeal to both congregations by addressing himself to their knowledge of law, of politics, or of letters, and sometimes to their subtler intellectual capacities. At St. Paul's he was addressing a real cross-section of Londoners and he had to make his message clear to them all (407-08)

Notwithstanding this observation, an examination of the sermons of the period from 1621 until the death of James I in 1625 suggests that Donne continued to grapple with his response to the politics and theology of Divine Right Theory, as well as with his ever growing awareness of his pastoral responsibility; hence there is a tension inherent in his position because he identifies himself with God's "prophetic watchmen bound to see, and bound to hear, and bound to be heard" (6:92).

By the year 1622 royal policy had become widely unpopular,

especially because of the Spanish match projected for Prince Charles which was bitterly opposed by all Protestants. James, who was in a threatened and testy mood, and outraged at criticisms from the pulpit, issued Directions to Preachers which forbade preachers of any rank to "meddle with matters of state and the differences between prince and people" (qtd. in Mueller 215). The pulpit, however, had become a rallying point for public opinion, so that to forbid meddling with matters of state was, in effect, to stifle opposition. James's orders stimulated public unrest still further, and Donne was instructed to explain the King's prohibitive royal missive from the pulpit at Paul's Cross--which of course entailed defending it (Bald 434). It is noteworthy that a contemporary diarist, R. Chamberlain recorded in The Chamberlain Letters that "Dr. Donne gave no great satisfaction, or as some say spoke as if himself were not so well satisfied" (4:34). Although Donne made no mention whatever in the sermon of James's list of forbidden topics, the King was apparently satisfied for he commanded the publication of the sermon and it thus became the first of all Donne's sermons to see print--a fact which must have been of great significance to him. This was a time of great danger to preachers: the Bishop of London incurred the royal displeasure by including certain topical references in his sermons, and the Prince's chaplain was committed to the Tower for the same reason (Bald 434).

Before assessing this sermon, it is instructive to examine the epistle dedicatory to "George, Marquesse of Buckingham" (4:178).

There Donne distinguishes carefully between the first section of the sermon (the high office of preaching) and the second section (the circumstances when that office may be limited by the royal prerogative); he states: "For the first part of the Sermon, the Explication of the Text, my profession, and my Conscience is warrant [sic] enough, that I have spoken as the Holy Ghost intended. For the second part, the Application of the Text, it will be warrant enough, that I have spoken as his Majestie intended" (4:178-79). This discrimination implies that, for John Donne, James's claim to divine right did not carry the same authority as that of the Holy Spirit.

Donne chose for his text a passage from Judges 5:20 where Yahweh is depicted as a mighty warrior--a God who "marches before his people" (Judges 4:14) to ensure the Israelite victory. (The whole episode is clearly concerned with the moral lesson that loyalty to God is the first requisite for national success, and disloyalty a guarantee of disaster--May and Metzger 293). Donne begins the sermon by stating that "the words of God are alwayes sweete in themselves," an assurance he reinforces with an allusion to "the Song which Deborah and Barak sung after their great victory upon Sisera" (4:179). He juxtaposes the latter with "another Song God himself made Moses" wherein God vows "the children of Israel . . . will forget my Law; but this song they will not forget" (4:179). The Song of Moses presents God's wrathful indignation with His people, whose propensity for backsliding is evident throughout the Book of Judges. Thus, Yahweh promises, "I will make

my arrows drunk with blood/and my sword shall devour flesh" (Deut. 32:42). Although such language exemplifies the devastating curses that buttress the book of the Law, there are many blessings (e.g. Deut. 28:1-14) which also serve as God's reminder of "what I have done for them" (4:180). This tension between the exercise of divine justice and mercy is one of the central themes in the Book of Judges (Gunn 110).

According to John Donne, the purpose of this Song of Moses is "that all Murmurers, and all that stray into a diffidence of God's power, or of his purpose to sustaine his owne cause . . . might run and read . . . the wonderfull deliverances that God hath given to his people, by weake and unexpected meanes" (4:180). Donne refers to Yahweh's ability to "effect his purpose by so weake an instrument, by a woman, but by a woman which had no interest, nor zeale to the cause, by Jael: And, in Jaels hand, . . . [and] with a hammer she . . . nayles him [i.e. Sisera] to the ground, as he lay sleeping in her tent". Donne's allusion to "this Song of Deborah" in which Jael is praised for her valor as "Blessed above women" (Judges 5:24), and his subsequent declaration that "God by weake meanes doth mighty workes" (4:181), suggest a contrast between the divine realm and that of the hierarchically-ordered world of seventeenth-century England where women were viewed as being powerless. Donne's text may thus ironically imply a warning for "the divine" James, by suggesting that just as God inspired Jael to destroy Sisera, in some instances He may sympathize with, and align Himself with, the lower orders against an abusive and

despotic monarch. For Jael's heroic stance most clearly exemplifies a situation wherein it is permissible to resist authority. Furthermore, Donne may intend to imply an analogy between his own priestly role as critic of despotic Jacobeanism, and that of Jael, when he points out to his audience that "the words . . . spoken then . . . may be applied now" because "God . . . lookes for assistance, for concurrence of second causes, and subordinate meanes" in order "to establish and settle them, that suspect Gods power or Gods purpose to succour those who . . . grone under heavie pressure and . . . to doe great workes by weake meanes" (4:183-4).

Donne appears nonetheless to speak "as His Majestie intends" when he explicitly refers to James as "one of they of whom God hath said, yee are Gods" (4:187). James had demanded divine status, for example, in his Speech to Parliament of 1609: "In the Scriptures Kings are called Gods, and so their power after a certaine relation compared to the Divine power" (307). Thus, in James's view, his kingly authority is a metaphysical fact (he is called God), and in his self-deluded perception of the sacredness of his person he allows no legitimate form of authority other than his own. However, Donne's explication of this text suggests not only the contrast between the exercise of divine justice and mercy, and that of King James, but also God's challenge to the abusive exercise of sovereign power. For the phrase, "Ye are gods," is taken from Psalm 82 where "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods." And that judgement is anything but

reassuring to the mighty: "I have said, 'Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes'" (Ps. 82:6-7). Princes who flatter themselves as gods are thus ripe for judgement, having failed to heed their true responsibilities: "How long will ye judge unjustly and accept the persons of the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy" (Ps. 82:2-3). Donne's allusion serves as a dire warning to absolute monarchs who have taken for granted their divine right.

Another allusion to "the Kings of the Earth They goe in their Mediation for Peace; They goe in their Example, when from their sweetness and moderation in their Government at home there flowes out . . . a persuasion to Princes abroad" (4:187) is obviously undercut by contemporary circumstances. For the incongruity between this statement and the reality of the political scene is evident in Antonia Fraser's depiction of James's difficulties with the Parliament of January 1621. She writes:

James said that in ten years he had not received a single subsidy He opened Parliament with a long and rambling speech in which he said he resented his financial dependence The Commons, outraged by the sort of financial expedients which had been employed in its absence, pounced on royal policies. The granting of patents and monopolies to private persons constituted an outstanding grievance. James found these grants to be an excellent method of rewarding his favourites, or even paying his own debtsthe prime favourite Buckingham was also involved in this murky trade
(195)

Thus, Donne's admonition against "ambition of precedence . .

. greatness of heart and a lothnesse to be under the commaund of any other" (4:191) is an implicit rebuke to James, juxtaposed as it is to Habukkuk 1:16. This biblical text also refers to a complaint of the prophet against violence and oppression from above (McKenzie 329). Men are "like the fish of the sea" whom the oppressor "brings up with a hook By them he lives in luxury and his food is rich." Moreover, Donne's reference to Isaiah 37.36 and the fate of Sennacherib is significant if one recalls that the Assyrian King was challenged by the prophet Isaiah who reminded him that he had defied the God who, determining history's course, will thus frustrate Sennacherib's plans (May and Metzger 866). As predicted by Isaiah, Sennacherib's army was devastated, and the king later assassinated by his sons. Thus, the theme of the text of this sermon, i.e., that disloyalty to God guarantees disaster, is above all a mirror for magistrates and a warning to "the congregation of the mighty."

Donne's method is thus complex and daring. If the royalist clergy also drew on the image of the "King" as a "picture of God," they generally ignored any suggestion that the King had become a tyrant (Judson 180). But Donne evidently sees his role as analogous to that of the Judges who were conceived as charismatic leaders and who functioned to restore righteousness, to vindicate and therefore act as deliverers (McKenzie 465). While Donne ironically reinforces James's divine identification, his image system also defines, and thus reveals, the fatal brutality of the King's power. His strategy thus confirms the escalating concern

of his countrymen to impose limits on the exercise of such absolute power. The alert and informed auditor may then have experienced the further incongruity between King James and the monarch referred to in the prayer of Psalm 21, with which Donne concludes the sermon: this is "a Psalme of confidence in a good King, and a Psalme of Thanksgiving for that blessing" (4:209).

Approximately eight weeks after the date of Donne's sermon "defending" the royal Directions to Preachers, Donne preached again on the kingship theme on 5 November, 1622 "being the Anniversary celebration of our Deliverance from the Powder Treason" (4:235). He chose for his text Lamentations 4:20. The biblical context of this passage is the horror of the siege and sack of Jerusalem; the specific text refers to King Zedekiah who, as revealed in 2 Kings 24:19, "did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" (May and Metzger 492). King Zedekiah is also mentioned in Jeremiah 24:8 where ". . . thus says the Lord: Like the bad figs which are so bad they cannot be eaten, so will I treat Zedekiah the king of Judah, [and] his princes . . . I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a reproach, a byword, a taunt and a curse" (RV).

The sermon is a daring one, and is replete with ambiguous ironies. Donne begins by remarking that "the Booke is certainly the prophet Jeremies The text then is as the Booke presented to Ezekiel; In it are written Lamentations, and Mourning and Woe; and all they are written . . . are applicable to us . . . historically . . . and Prophetically" (4:238-39). He then

refers to the specific contemporary situation (i.e. the Gunpowder Plot) in which, in blessed contrast to the fate of the biblical king, "the anointed of the Lord was almost taken in those pits" (4:239, emphasis mine), which implies an equation between James I, and King Zedekiah of Lamentations 4:20. McKenzie describes the biblical king as follows: "Zedekiah was installed as king by Nebuchadnezzar, who gave him the throne name of Zedekiah, doubtless as a sign of his vassalage to Babylon. Zedekiah is prominent in Jeremiah; he appears as well intentioned but weak and vacillating and unable to resist the pressure put upon him by his courtiers Not all his subjects regarded him as a legitimate king since he had been installed by a foreign power He was not an unbeliever, but was totally unable to control the fanatics of the patriotic party" (950-51).

For the informed reader the similarity between this biblical king and James I is remarkable. For example, Figgis writes concerning one facet of the resemblance: "There were many reasons why James I should hold the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings in its strictest form. His claim to the throne of England rested upon descent alone; barred by two Acts of Parliament, it could only be successfully maintained by means of the legitimist principle" (137).

Donne nonetheless tempers the implied relationship between James and Zedekiah by suggesting that possibly the prophet Jeremiah laments the death "of a good King, of Josiah" rather than an "ill King, of Zedekiah (as is more ordinarily and more probably held by

the Expositours [sic])," but that on this point we should "argue not" for "both good Kings and bad Kings . . . are the anointed of the Lord" (4:239). As the sermon develops, however, Donne makes a series of provocative statements which echo the accusations of malcontents against James I and his court and thus reinforce the association between James and Zedekiah.

For example, Donne dares to suggest:

That man must have a large comprehension that shall adventure to say of any King, He is an ill King; he must know his Office well and his actions well, and the actions of other Princes too who have correspondence with him before he can say so Many times a Prince departs from the exact rule of his duty, not out of his own indisposition to truth, and clearnesse, but to countermine underminers Hee [i.e. the king] is a most perfect Text-man, in the Booke of God (and by the way, I should not easily feare his being a Papist, that is a good Text-man) But, that King, that exercises his Prerogative without just cause That King that vexes his Subjects . . . that King that gives himselfe to intemperate hunting . . . in such cases . . . we proceed not so in censuring the actions of Kings. (4:249-51 emphasis mine)

Donne then piously asserts: "we remit the judgement of those their actions which are secret to God; and when they are evident and bad, yet we must endeavour to preserve their persons" (4:250). He cautions his auditors and readers in ambiguous terms that "a man may make a prayer a Libell So wee have seen of late, some in obscure Conventicles institute certain prayers, That God would keep the King, and the Prince in the true Religion" (4:253).

Donne emphatically warns "That the cause of this Lamentation [within the sermon] was . . . the diminution of the Kingdome . .

. . . A declination in the body of the Kingdome . . . was such an Earth-quake as could leave nothing standing," before pointing out that "Of all things that are, there was an Idea in God, there was a Modell . . . which God produced and created Of all things God had an Idea . . . but of Monarchy . . . God is the Idea; God himselfe, in his Unity, is the Modell, He is the type of Monarchy" (4:240).

However, Donne's delineation of the Divine Model of kingship only serves to highlight how far James falls short of this ideal, and thus heightens the irony implicit in James's own interpretation of his "miraculous" escape from death. As Wilson observes,

His [i.e. James's] speech to Parliament was an astonishing exhibition of vanity and egotism. The principal reason . . . why all should rejoice was that he himself had not been destroyed. After reminding Parliament that kings were gods, adorned . . . with sparkles of divinity, he compared his escape to that of Noah from the flood [Still,] the Gun Powder Plot . . . sprang directly from his broken promises to Roman Catholics.
(223-5)

Donne's more telling allusion to the reign of the "Tyran" Nero (4:247), although judiciously presented in conjunction with his discussion of the attributes of the good King Josiah, suggests his own awareness of the remarkable similarity between James's view of the status of the King and that of Nero. As Caird writes: "In Rome itself only the three paranoiacs, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, demanded divine honours during their lifetime" (196). Very carefully then, this allusion links the Emperor Nero with James I in their insistent claim to a status synonymous with the

divinity of godhead.

If we keep in mind Donne's chosen text of Lamentations 4:20 and the dereliction of Jerusalem's religious leaders whose failure to assume their pastoral responsibilities resulted in the fall of Jerusalem, there may be a suggestion that Donne was experiencing great tension in his own ministerial role as he reacts to the corruption he perceives about him at court. This tension surfaces in his allusive commentary, and in the suggestive biblical subtext of the sermon. Of particular relevance to its composition is a letter Donne wrote to Sir Thomas Roe in 1622. Here Donne refers to his three most recent sermons on great occasions, the first defending James's Directions To Preachers. He then goes on to state, "Some few weeks after that I preached another sermon at the same place: upon the Gun-powder day. Therein I was left more to mine owne liberty . . ." (qtd. in Bald 440). It appears that he did indeed take his "owne liberty" in this sermon and it is not surprising that James I omitted to command its publication especially at this most volatile time in England's political relations with Spain.

It is possible to further represent Donne's attitude to kingship by comparing the two sermons just examined with an undated sermon (Potter and Simpson suggest 1622/3 as the most likely date of composition) Donne preached on the text of Romans 13:7, concerning the Christian's civic duty. Calvin compiled a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans in which he stated that ". . . the Apostle intended . . . to take away the . . . curiosity of men, who

are wont often to inquire by what right they who rule have obtained their authority; but it ought to be enough for us that they do rule; for they have . . . been placed there by the Lord's hand." However, he also points out that "Magistrates . . . must learn what their vocation is, for they are not to rule for their own interest, but for the public good; nor are they endued with unbridled power, but what is restricted to the well-being of their subjects; in short, they are responsible to God and to men in the exercise of their power" (84-6).

Martin Luther also warns of the possibility of abuse in the exercise of temporal authority. He cautions that "[it is subject to abuse] when it is influenced by flattery In these circumstances the government is led by the nose and rides rough shod over the common people. It turns into the kind of government a heathen once described in the saying, 'The spider webs catch the little flies all right, but the millstone rolls on through.' So the laws, ordinances, and government of one and the same authority keep a hold on the little men while the big fellows go scot-free. And in those cases when the prince is himself so wise that he needs no advice from his people . . . there will be . . . a childish government" (175).

It is with an apparent awareness of the foregoing teachings and warnings of Calvin and Luther that Donne begins his sermon. He recalls Christ's answer to tempting Pharisees that we have an obligation to "Render therefore to every man his due" (4:303), and he then divides his text into a consideration of "our debts to man

. . . and our creditors [who] are persons above us, and persons below us, superiours, and inferiours . . . " (4:304). His depiction of the character and quality of "our superiours . . . at court" (4:304) is disconcerting in its daring and explicit condemnation of the abuse of power. In citing, for example, the Davidic Psalm 148:2, a hymn of praise to God, he evokes the contemporary situation:

He [David] calls upon old men, and young men . . . to praise the Lord, and we spend all our praises upon young men which are growing up in favour, or upon old men who have the government in their hands He calls upon Kings and Judges, and Magistrates to praise God and we employ all our praise upon the actions of those persons themselves Though I spend my nights, and dayes . . . preaching and writing upon Princes . . . and their praise, yet my intention determines in that use which I have of their favour . . . I have not praised God . . . but I have praised them I have flattered them, and they have taken occasion by that to thinke that their faults are not discerned and so they have proceeded in them.

(4:308-09)

His cynicism is evident when he goes on to say "it is not towards God, as it is towards great persons under whom we have risen, that we should be afraid to let the world know, how rich we are, lest they that raised us, should borrow of us . . . " (4:309)! It is interesting to recall here Bald's observation that at this time in Jacobean England, "although the poor were growing poorer and the rich were getting richer Donne [in his new appointment as Dean] was obviously no longer one of the poor" (426).

In considering the plight of the masses who are suggestively aligned with the figure of Job of 19:25 in Donne's depiction of the

stark reality of conditions in Jacobean England, Donne sarcastically points out that the "obligation" of "the inferiours" is to a "chearfull paying of those debts, those tributes and customes . . . which belong to the King" (4:313), before going on to make a statement about those whose "sin" is responsible for the plight of "the poore." Donne cites John 9:2 wherein Christ replies to the disciples' query about who is at fault: "Neither he sinned, nor his parents, sayes Christ; neither excesse, nor play, nor wantonnesse hath undone this man, but thy prevarication in his cause, thy extortion, thy oppression. And now he starves, and thou huntest . . . now he freezes . . . and thy train shines in liveries out of his Wardrobe; every Constable is ready to lay hold upon him for a rogue, and thy son is Knighted with his mony . . . fame may be silent, but famine will be not . . . those poore wretches that starve by thy oppression . . . cry out . . . " (4:318).

The allusion to James is unmistakable. For example, David Thomas writes concerning James's compulsive need to gratify his own pleasures: "His enthusiasm for hunting involved an increase in the number of keepers of the buck hounds from nine to thirty-eight and a corresponding increase in the bill for their wages The creation of Henry as Prince of Wales . . . cost James £48,000 a year" (106). Catherine Bowen also remarks upon James's passion for "that most noticeable of kingly characteristics, a manly appetite for hunting the stag . . . James would not stay in London . . . but moved from one to another of his country seats . . . pursuing game" (198). She goes on to relate an incident when James's favorite

hound Jowler returned after having been lost out hunting; "there was a paper tied about his neck on which was written; 'Good Mr. Jowler, we pray you speake to the King (for he hears you everyday and so doth he not us) that it will please his Majestie to go back to London, for else the country wilbe undone; all our provision is spent and we are not able to entertain him longer.' For he hears you, Mr. Jowler, everyday, and so doth he not us . . . [and] it was so true" (198).

Although Donne echoes the warnings of Calvin and Luther in suggesting the possibility of brutality inherent in sovereign power, he also invokes the memory of "John Baptist who submitted himself to Herod . . . and . . . Christ Jesus who submitted himselfe to Pilate" (4:313). He does not, however, advocate that the citizens of Jacobean England must suffer martyrdom in order to line the coffers of James and his henchmen. At this time parliament had expressed great concern about "patents and monopolies in which they found gross abuses that pointed directly at the favourite" (Wilson 418). Sir Edward Coke demanded that the citizens of England had a "God-given right to fundamental liberty and a guarantee of fundamental property," and that the subjects' "safety and liberty" be protected against James's encroaching prerogative (Bowen 252). Donne joins the cry for justice and liberty for the individual, when he rebukes the "prodigall . . . and wastful man . . . who is prodigall of that which is not your own but ours We whose goods you wast are poor and miserable . . . and whatever you spend wantonly and vainly upon your selves

. . . is cruelly and bloodily drawn out of our bowels . . . sacrilegiously so because we are Temples of the Holy Ghost" (4:318-19).

Thus, this sermon stands as one of Donne's blunter statements about the corruption of the Jacobean court, and as evidence of his sense of responsibility to speak out; he admonishes his listeners that "I speak not all this, as though a man should be so ceremonious with his superiour . . . as to accompany him or to encourage him in his ill purpose for that is . . . too transcendent a complement to be damned for his sake by concurring with my superiour in his sins" (4:316-17).

Though Donne upholds the Christian's duty to respect civil authority, one should not confuse the distinction between Donne's attitude towards the king as an individual, and the office of Kingship. He does support the sacrosanctity of the institution of Kingship in this sermon; for example, he states that "the Sovereaigne is the roote of all . . . and to him we consider a Reall, and substantiall, and then a circumstantiall and ceremoniall debt" (4:313). However, he depicts for his auditors and readers the abuse of the office when monarchical authority, as demanded by James I, over-extends itself for repressive and brutal purposes in order to cow and potentially to control rebellious subjects.

Another undated sermon, concerned with the Book of "This Heroical Woman, Esther" (5:217), offers a further qualification and examination of the duty of obedience to the civil authority. Donne examines "what she did in a perplexed and scrupulous case, when an

evident danger appeared, and an evident Law was against her action; and from thence consider, what every Christian soul ought to do, when it is surprised and overtaken with any such scruples or difficulties to the conscience" (5:217). Donne's chosen text is Esther 4:16: "Go and assemble all the Jews that are found in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and eat not nor drink in three days, day nor night: I also and my maids will fast likewise: and so I will go in to the King, which is not according to the law: And if I perish, I perish" (5:216). Esther determines to approach the King, her husband, despite his order that no one is to enter without being summoned. In doing so, even though she acts upon the counsel of Mordecai that she must use her influence with the king to save her people, she nonetheless violates two laws: "She neglects both that particular Law, that none might have access to the King uncalled, and that general Law, that every Man is bound to preserve himself; and she exposes her self to an imminent and (for anything she knew) an unescapable danger of death: If I perish, I perish" (5:217).

Donne explicitly emphasizes Esther's careful "preparation." Her decision to violate the law to save her people was not done "upon any precipitation, upon any singular or seditious spirit" but only "after due consideration of the matter" (5:226). He does caution that "if two Laws be upon me, and it be impossible to obey both, I must obey that which comes immediately from the greatest power, and imposes the greatest duty" (5:225-26). Donne concludes that Esther's decision to break the King's law is justified because

the law of "God's glory" was in the balance, a view which concurs with that of John Calvin. Pointing out that God is actually the only lawgiver, Calvin states that "we must obey rulers for conscience sake [However] There is [but] one lawgiver . . . who is able to save and destroy God claims this one prerogative as his very own - to rule us by the authority of laws of his Word The Lord is our king . . . our lawgiver . . . our judge We ought therefore to acknowledge God as sole ruler of souls" (Institutes 4.10.7).

According to Donne's interpretation of Esther's actions, she can be assured that "if that Law were now to be made, that case which he hath presently in hand, would not be included by him that made that Law, in that Law" (5:226-27). Thus Donne is seemingly able to justify Esther's action, and he states that Esther's breach of the King's Law was not a sin in this case for the reasons he has put forth. He concludes that Esther was a "provident and religious soul" (5:229) who, in her ultimate "choice" of disobedience, provides an example of a courageous and heroic decision made for the "glory of God," rather than of a seditious assertion of her self-will. And, in dwelling on the startling paradox of the mystery of God's ways, in His mysterious choice of Esther to execute His will, Donne again explodes the hierarchical Renaissance world view in which women were relegated to the lower strata of society and were regarded as the powerless sex.

It is possible that Donne implies much more than this straightforward presentation suggests. In glossing The Book of

Esther, D.R. Dumm points out that "Esther has been preserved in two different forms: A Hebrew text, assumed by most scholars to be original; and a Greek text which freely translates the Hebrew and adds to it six large (deutero canonical) sections" (628). Within the sermon Donne refers to, he translates phrases both from the original (i.e. the Hebrew text) and the Greek text of Esther. For example, he compares the translation of "Esther's vow It is all one though I perish; or as it is in the Original . . . whether I perish in my estimation and opinion with men, whether I perish in my fortunes . . . it is all one" (5:229).

One of the Additions appends Mordecai's final soliloquy of Esther 10:3. According to Dumm's gloss of the Addition, "this Epilogue" is "a summary of the theological message of the Greek author . . . Esther [i.e. as "the river"] symbolizes the weak and unpromising instrument that God delights to employ for the dramatic accomplishment of his purposes" (632).

In this sermon, as throughout his preaching, Donne thus focusses on God's apparent desire to align Himself with the humble in order to prevail against the might of evil. For example, as Donne points out in a sermon of 1619, "God will alwayes have so much weaknesse appeare in the Instrument, as that their strength shall not be thought to be their owne. When Peter and John preached . . . the people marvelled The insufficiency of the Instrument makes a man wonder naturally; but the accomplishing of some great worke brings them to a necessary acknowledgement of a greater power working in that weake Instrument" (2:275).

Donne's inclusion of text from the Addition (i.e. Est. 10:4-11:1) also suggests the necessity for faith in the higher law of Almighty God, which in some instances permits disobedience of the authority of the king. In the story of Esther, God associates Himself with a member of the lower orders (i.e. a woman) against the king. As McKenzie states, "the whole story [of Esther] exhibits the providence of God which preserves His people from annihilation. The means by which His providence operates in this book are human plans and actions; the divine action is hidden The figure of Esther is modeled in some respects after that of other OT heroes who reached high places in foreign governments and were thus in a position to assist their people in times of crisis" (247).

John Donne may have identified with the courageous stance taken by Esther, and if so, would have espoused a view similar to that expressed by John Milton in his "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates," when he cautions "that to say kings are accountable to none but God is the overturning of all law and government. For if they may refuse to give account, then all covenants made with them at coronation, all oaths are in vain . . . all laws which they swear to keep, made no purpose" (Hughes 755).

Though Donne would never have shared Milton's republican sentiments, his sermon on Esther does suggest his deepest doubts about royal authority: "If a man have nothing in his contemplation but dignity, and high place; if he have not Vertue and Religion, and a conscience of having deserved well his country . . . but only

to tower up after dignity as a Hawk after a prey . . . " (5:228), then, it would seem, the monarch as hunter is a terrible danger to his people. As D.H. Wilson writes of James's passion for hunting, "The King hawked a good deal . . . and kept cormorants to dive for fish" (182). This "hawking" allusion is suggestively juxtaposed in the sermon with the citation of Isaiah 14:12, a passage from a dirge against a tyrant who may be a king, wherein the latter, aspiring to divinity, falls to the anonymity of Sheol.

Donne also manages in this sermon to insert a caustic allusion to the Law according to James I; speaking of the necessity when approaching the King of emulating Esther's example, he recalls "Esthers resolution to go in to the King, though it be not according to the Law; though that Law be, That neither fornicator, nor adulterer nor wanton, nor thief, nor drunkard, nor covetous . . . shall have access into the Kingdome of Heaven: yet this soul thus prepared shall feel a comfortable assurance, that this Law was made for servants, and not for sons . . . " (5:229). Donne thus implies the double standard of James's prerogative law, and may refer explicitly to the King's favourite "son," Buckingham. By 1620, the favourite had gained control of patronage. As Wilson writes, "His monopoly of patronage acquired . . . sinister aspects . . . he developed a vicious system of spoliation and blackmail . . . exerting pressure . . . and promises of advancement and threats of ruin; and though his promises were illusory, his threats were very real. The King entered into these machinations . . . " (386-87). Esther's courageous example thus seems to have inspired

Donne's own desire to confront the King.

As the sermon concludes, Donne emphasizes the contrast between the corrupt contemporary scene and the divine kingdom, in his reassuring description of "heaven." There, in the hands of Almighty God, "Though I perish, I do not perish; though I die, I do not die; but as that piece of money which was but the money of a poor man, being given in Subsidy becomes a part of the Royal Exchequer; So this body . . . being given in Subsidy as a contribution to the Glory of God . . . becomes part of Gods Exchequer; and when he opens it, he shall issue out this money . . . that body . . . which in me was but a grain of Wheat, he shall multiply into . . . Angels food" (5:230).

This suggestion of a contrast between the corrupt political scene and the perfection of the divine realm is continued in an undated sermon (No. 15, volume 5) containing an explicit reference to "Arcana Imperii, the secrets of State, by what wayes and meanes, publike businesses were carried . . ." (5:298). In Donne's time, the term described generally the royal prerogatives of the king. Donne's reference to the term, and its Roman origin, is significant because of the ongoing constitutional argument about the right of the king to act in private, and to its reversal in the political position of the parliamentarian, Sir Edward Coke. In 1620 Coke defended *arcana imperii* on behalf of the monarchy, but altered his stand completely by 1628 under the menace of the king's ever-widening power (Judson 32).

In contrast to his depiction of the royal "inscrutability" and

concomitant suggestion of James's obstinate refusal to be held accountable for his actions, Donne provides his listeners with the comforting solace that "God is best found when we seek Him" because "God gives audience, and admits accesses in his solempne and publike and out-roomes, in his Ordinances Wee seeke God and because we seeke him, where he hath promised to be, we are sure to find him" (5:298-9).

Donne repeatedly highlights the fallaciousness of James's pretense to divinity and thus utterly refutes the King's insistent claim that "the Attributes of God . . . agree in the person of a King." As a result of Donne's strategy, James becomes the victim of his own proclamations, due to his facility for self-deception, and half self-conscious hypocrisy. The irony lies in James's being blind to his own blindness, and in his apparent failure to suspect where it will lead him.

Most courageously, Donne then introduces in this sermon on political corruption the figure of King David who, as representative of earthly kingship, can "discover to us the slippery wayes into sin" (5:299). Donne's citation of 2 Samuel 13 alludes to the belief that David's sins of lust and murder were closely connected with the sequence of events in his family. The family history of David makes this the turning point of David's life. He sins and is rebuked by Nathan; but the death of the child is only the beginning of his punishment. From this point his life is one unbroken series of misfortunes: Amnon's rape of Tamar and incest with her (2 Sam. 13:1), the murder of Amnon by Absalom in

revenge for the rape (2 Sam. 13:21), and, finally, the exile of Absalom ended by the intercession of Joab. But Absalom, who now expected to succeed his father, planned to usurp power before David died (2 Sam. 15:1), and succeeded by political manoeuvring in winning a sufficient number of the people so that David had to flee from Jerusalem when the rebellion was proclaimed. The sudden and wide success of the rebellion suggests that there were less agreeable features of David's rule, something like the "heavy galling yoke" of Solomon (McKenzie 178). Throughout all these narratives, David appears as an indulgent father who could have avoided much of his troubles by an exercise of discipline. For example, David is angry at hearing of Amnon's rape of Tamar, but he does nothing; the ancient versions of the story add that "he did not punish Amnon his son, for he loved him because he was his first-born. This is a sad commentary on King David who was unable to govern his emotions" (Maly 42-43).

The likeness to James who frequently referred to himself as "a King as just as King David" (Willson 172), and his relationship to his son Charles, inherent in the biblical account, is remarkable, given the political events of 1623, when negotiations for the Spanish marriage had reached their climax. Willson describes the circumstances of Charles's and Buckingham's proposed journey to Spain to fetch the Spanish Infanta as wife for Charles. Without considering the danger of their plan, James initially gave his "sweet boys" the permission they had asked for. Later, changing his mind but unable to dissuade the two from going, James

burst into tears, throwing himself on a bed. Hoping to find an ally, he summoned Cottington, a diplomat friend: "Cottington," screamed the King, "here are Baby Charles and Steenie who . . . go by post to Spain to fetch home the Infanta . . . I am undone . . . I shall lose Baby Charles" Writing later to the "sweet boys" in Spain he stated, "Alas! sweet hearts . . . I want the sweet comfort of my sweet boys' conversation . . . my sweet Baby, for God's sake and your dad's . . . take heed of being hurt if ye run at tilt . . ." (qtd. in Willson 430-33).

James, it seems, is as foolish a father as King David, who is just as likely to bring his house to ruin. But Donne could not have foreseen the extent to which history would bear out the parallels, with "Absalom" condemned to death at Whitehall, and the Kingdom "divided" in civil war.

Finally, in this sermon on the failures of King David, Donne sums up something of his own role in the figure of Nathan the prophet. The citation of 2 Sam. 12:1-25 recalls Nathan's rebuke to David for his adultery and murder, and his threat of divine judgement on an unjust monarch. Donne most explicitly assumes his own prophetic function when he says that "God sends Nathan to thee, with David in his hand," admonishing his listeners not to "return to their own vomit . . ." (5:304-05). This story, which openly illustrates the freedom which the Biblical prophet exercised in speaking to the King (McKenzie 606), also announces the liberties taken by the Jacobean prophet.

Throughout these sermons of 1621-25, Donne seems to have been

thinking of his own office in terms which recall the prophet. In a sermon preached 11 April 1624, he considers the nature of familial responsibility by means of a "Mariage metaphor" which represents "the union of Christ to the whole church" (6:82). Donne extrapolates from this image to a depiction of his onerous responsibility to his flock. He suggests that just as Christ assumed "the burden of the sinnes of the whole world . . . the sinnes of this Parish, will ly upon my shoulders if I be silent, or if I be indulgent, and denounce not Gods Judgement upon those sinnes Isaiah felt and grieved under this burden, when he cried . . . O the burden of Babylon" (6:85).

If we assume that Donne was sincere in this pronouncement and in his repeated explicit and implicit identification of his ministerial role with that of the prophets Ezekiel, Nathan, Isaiah and Jeremiah in the sermons of this period, it is little wonder that he experienced difficulty with a monarch who espoused the Theory of Divine Right to such an autocratic degree as did James I. In a sense, then, Donne's own role serves to recapitulate the tension-filled relationships between the prophets and kings of the Israelite monarchy. It is also worth recalling that no Biblical prophet before him ever faced an Israelite King claiming divinity in the manner of James I.

Preaching at Whitehall 4 March 1624/5 at a time close to the death of James, and echoing Jeremiah 6:15, John Donne finally left little to his reader's and auditor's imaginations in his depiction of James and his court:

It is true that the Holy Ghost doth say . . . few noble men come to heaven . . . There cannot come many noble men to heaven because there are not many upon earth . . . such is often the corrupt inordinateness of greatnesse, that it only carries them so much beyond other men, but not so much nearer to God; It only sets men at a farther, not God at a nearer distance to them; but because they are come to be called gods they think they have no farther to go to God but to themselves . . . Great and small are equall, and equally nothing in his sight . . . and so are all men, one kinde of dust. (6:228)

Chapter IV

Kingship 1625-1631: "I must avow
that I owe the account of my actions
only to God alone." What does Kingship
Mean for Charles I as opposed to
What it Means for an Englishman?

On the morning of 23 August 1628, the Duke of Buckingham, the detested favourite of Charles I and formerly of James I, was assassinated. The assassin, one John Felton, had evidently been influenced by the general public opinion that the Duke was a tyrant (Gardiner 63). When Charles became king, Buckingham's position at court was more dominant than ever before. Disliked and distrusted by the old nobility as a parvenu who had encouraged the sale of honours, the Duke, increasingly from 1625 until his assassination in 1628, prevented other councillors from getting close to the king. Buckingham thereby not only blocked a valuable channel of patronage but also a means by which royal decisions could be influenced at court. Buckingham became complete master of the young king and was in reality the governor of England far more than Charles himself (Coward 137). As a result of the favourite's powerful influence, Charles I functioned in a habitual posture of indecisive stasis.

At the time of Buckingham's demise, England was at war with France, the Duke having just further demonstrated his incompetence by unsuccessfully commanding the British fleet against the Isle of Rhé. John Bowle, a biographer of Charles I, remarks that

"Buckingham was so detested that when it became known in London that he had failed, the people were so delighted that to vent their hatred, they forgot the honour of the nation . . ." (102).

The character of Buckingham, and his peculiar intimate relationship with Charles I, recalls the observation made by the sixteenth-century French thinker, Jean Bodin, in his description of the contrast between a just ruler and a tyrant: "The greatest difference betwixt a king and a tyrant is . . . that the one [i.e. the king] advanceth unto the highest degrees of honour the best and most virtuous of men; whereas the other [i.e. the tyrant] promoteth the greatest thieves and villains, whom he may use as sponges to suck up the wealth of his subjects" (qtd. in Allan 412). The assassin's deed testifies to the festering resentment at Stuart despotism manifest in the remaining six years, 1625-31, of John Donne's life and ministry. Felton's action suggests one solution to the problem of how to deal with a tyrant. It remains to examine Donne's sermons of this period to ascertain how he perceived and responded to monarchical despotism as practised by Charles Stuart.

Donne's reaction to Charles I's espousal of a model of kingship, by means of which he demanded unbounded sovereignty, should be evaluated in conjunction with De Jouvenel's definition:

The conception of sovereignty in absolute monarchy is at the antipodes to arbitrariness. The definition of arbitrariness has been given by Juvenal The will of the sovereign takes the place of reason. Arbitrary government . . . is that in which there is no law other than the will of the sovereign The perfection of absolute monarchy may be defined as . . . a government in which the sovereign will is absolute, but in which every

precaution . . . has been taken to ensure that this will coincide with reason The perfect sovereign . . . is tied down to doing whatever maximises the common good The entire conception breaks down if we say . . . that nothing is good except what is desired It is then the reign of arbitrariness . . . of a despotic authority without guiding rule.

(209-11)

King James's most significant legacy to his heir was a propensity for the exercise of an "arbitrary and despotic sovereign authority" (Coward 21). Thus, both monarchs evidently chose to ignore the essentially dual basis of their royal authority whereby "the king was king by right divine, *dei gratia*, enjoying . . . a power descending upon him from above. But he was also a king chosen by his people, and bound in a relationship of mutual duty" (Elton 210, emphasis mine).

The very metaphor of kingship set forth by King James in the "Basilikon Doron" to instruct his son suggests the widening gap between the "absolute monarch" and the "despot" in the two reigns. In the second section of this work, James counsels his son: "Let your owne life be a law-booke and a mirror to your people; that therein they may read the practise of their own lawes; and therein they may see, by your image, what life they should leade" (30). Thus, in studying his father's work, the Prince is to learn to be himself "a textbook" for the edification of his subjects. James's own claim to divinity, however, makes his view of himself as "a law-booke" somewhat suspect. So it is not surprising that James's bequest to Charles should result in far more spectacular lapses into royal self-indulgence and arbitrary rule.

In fact, during the last two years of James's reign, Charles and Buckingham had already assumed the management of all the country's business. Willson notes that "James was however well aware that the sceptre was being wrested from his grasp" (441). On hearing the news of his father's death on 27 March 1625, Charles I remained for nearly a week in seclusion with Buckingham. During this time, he ordered Donne to preach a sermon before him on the Sunday after James had died (Le Comte 198).

Donne evidently experienced great apprehension at the prospect of the new regime under Charles. Donne's biographer, R.C. Bald states that "Donne had learned to feel at ease in the presence of James and had become sufficiently familiar with Buckingham to have some confidence that his standing with both King and his favourite was secure But so far his contacts with the new King had been formal ones, and he had little notion what Charles's attitude to him would be" (467). Gosse also stresses "Donne's sense of insecurity before this new reserved and unfamiliar patron . . . so complete a despot in all church discipline was a monarch in those days" (221).

Donne preached his first sermon at such short notice to King Charles at Saint James's Palace on 3 April 1625. As Le Comte observes regarding the delivery and subsequent reception of the sermon, "Charles listened palely with an air 'very attentive and devout.' Did he approve what he heard? Who could read those aquiline inscrutable features? . . . Donne's nervousness was soon relieved. The King found the sermon so much to his liking that he

commanded it be printed as it promptly was" (198).

An examination of the sermon reveals Donne's explicit treatment of several topical themes in an apparently orthodox manner that would commend it to Charles. For example, after admonishing his auditors to be grateful that they "professe one and the same Religion," Donne then rails against the dangers of Catholicism, condemning in particular the church's teaching on tyrannicide: "If wee should believe their Sacrificium incruentum, their unbloody Sacrifice in the Masse, if we did not believe their Sacrificium Cruentum too, that there was a power in that Church, to sacrifice the Blood of Kings, wee should be sayde to be defective in a fundamental Article . . . for who can tell when there is an ende of Articles of Faith, in an Arbitrarie and in an Occasionale Religion." Donne probably knew that Charles was soon to marry a French Catholic princess and he thus went on to suggest tactfully that "Except it were in fundamentall Articles of Faith, our selves should not bee so bitter towards one another . . ." (6:250).

The scriptural text upon which the sermon is based is Psalm 11.3: "If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous doe?" Throughout the sermon, Donne reiterates the consolation that "The foundation is God . . . [and] the foundation of God stands sure . . . [for] that foundation can never be destroyed" (6:258). In affirming that "In this House, the State, the Commonwealth, the King hath his hand in, and upon the foundation and . . . is a foundation" (6:254), Donne echoes the view expressed by the

Royalist clergy that the king should be the foundation of the people's welfare, and that justice should flow from him as water from a fountain upon which the whole superstructure of the commonwealth might safely be built (Judson 194).

Donne also upholds the authority of "The State, the Kingdome, the Commonwealth; and of this House, the foundation is the Law . . . The Law is the mutuall, the reciprocall Suretie betweene the State and the Subject . . . The Lawe is the States Suretie to mee, that I shall enjoy my Protection" (6:253). He reinforces the Divine origin of the law by citing Deut. 4:7-8, an appeal by Moses for faithful obedience to the law; Donne then asserts that "therein did the Jewes justly exalt themselves above all other Nations, That God was come so much nearer to them than to other Nations" (6:253). In Donne's repeated emphasis that his auditors should "Studie to be quiet, Labour to bee quiet . . . [and] let many injuries passe over" for "till Foundations be destroyed, the righteous should be quiet" (6:243), he seemingly defends the privileged position of those at the top of the hierarchical structure of his society.

It should be obvious from the foregoing that the sermon was sufficiently orthodox to please the King. Still, there are numerous ironies seeded into the matrix of this sermon which become apparent in an examination of the many biblical images referring to the exercise of power, and which imply an oblique critical commentary on the abuse of same by King Charles.

According to one gloss of Donne's text (Psalm 11:3), the psalmist expresses confidence in God's concern for justice (May and

Metzger 662). But, according to L.E. Toombs's gloss of this same text, "The wicked are on the warpath and his [i.e. the psalmist's] friends advise him to flee . . . because justice and right dealing, the foundations of stable society are destroyed (cf. Amos 5:7), and the persecuted righteous, of which he is perhaps a leader are helpless" (264, emphasis mine). Toombs's allusion to Amos is significant, for as J. Mays glosses Amos 5:7: "The courts are being used to exploit the weak The justice administered in the courts has been changed by the alchemy of greed to bitter calamity" (90-91). Thus Donne's text for this sermon has as its pretext a biblical situation wherein "foundations" of Church and State exist in chaotic lawlessness due to corruption, particularly in the judicial process.

From the outset of the sermon, Donne's reiterated theme is that although "The Lord tryeth the Righteous . . . the wicked and him that loveth violence, his soule hateth." And therefore, Donne counsels his auditors to "fixe upon certain Foundations, confidences and Assurances of Deliverance from thee" (6:242, emphasis mine). There is surely an ironic thread in his pointed juxtaposition of this consolation with an extended address to kings. While, on a literal level, his remonstrance is orthodox in reinforcing hierarchical power, there is nonetheless an implicit political commentary which becomes obvious, given an awareness of Donne's contemporary political scene. For example, he cautions that "God hath said of all into whose hand hee hath committed power, you are Gods. Now they are not Gods, but Idoles if . . .

they have Eyes and see not, eares and heare not . . . if they smell not out a mischievous practise before it come to execution Those . . . of whome God hath said, they are Gods must have their eyes . . . upon the actors of mischiefe and not upon the act onely" (6:244, emphasis mine). Donne likewise stresses the necessity for a just discharge of the duties of higher office: "There is no phrase oftner in the Scripture, then that God delivered his people, in the hand of Moses . . . and the hand of the Prophets: all their Ministeriall office is called the Hand, and therefore . . . must wee ever exhort the Magistrate, that hee would plucke his hand out of his pocket, and forget what is there, and execute the Lawes committed to him . . . for God hath commended our Spirits . . . our civil peace . . . into the hand of the Magistrate" (6:245, emphasis mine). Surely there is irony and perhaps satire in his comment appended to the foregoing statement, that "when private men spend all their thoughts upon their Superiours actions, this must necessarily disquiet them" (6:245).

Donne further complicates his argument by referring to eight more scriptural texts, six of which refer to corruption in high office. For example, to consider three of the texts, he cites Psalm 115:6, a reassurance that God alone is omnipotent in contrast to the heathen gods who are idols (May and Metzger 746); Habakkuk 1:13, a text wherein the prophet confronts the profoundly disturbing problem of why a just God is seemingly silent when the wicked swallow up the man more righteous than he. To this perennial question the prophet receives an eternally valid answer:

God is still sovereign and in his own way and at the proper time will deal with the tyrant. The divine justice is thus inexorable (May and Metzger 1136-37). The third text, Psalm 94:9, is a prayer for deliverance from evil men wherein the psalmist sees his misfortune as typical of the corruption of his age; his [i.e. the psalmist's] enemies were persons in high official position in the state (May and Metzger 729).

Thus, Donne persists in this first half of the sermon in suggesting an idol of despotism which he juxtaposes with an undisguisedly critical condemnation of the abuse of power: "If the Magistrate stop his Eares with . . . staple bribes, profitable bribes and with . . . perfumes of pleasure and preferment in his bribes, hee falsifies Gods word, who hath said, they are Gods, for they are Idoles and not Gods if they have eares and heare not" (6:244).

The second half of the sermon is devoted to a "Survay [of] some such Foundations as fall within the . . . possibilities of this Text, that they may be destroyed . . . the Church . . . the State . . . the Family and . . . every man who is his owne House Of all these four houses . . . God is the Foundation, and so foundations cannot be destroyed" However, in spite of offering this solace, Donne proceeds to examine how the "Foundations of these four houses" may fall "within the possibility and danger of the Text of being destroyed" (6:251). Considering "the first House . . . the Church, the foundation is Christ and . . . the Instructions of Christ, the Doctrine of Christ, the Word of Christ

. . . are the Foundation of the House" (6:252). Donne's view is consonant with that of G.W. O'Brien who in his Renaissance Poetics and the Problem of Power states that the interpretation of Christ as God's omnipotence is central to Renaissance aesthetics (10). However, it appears that in keeping with the thematic architecture of this sermon, Donne has to mediate between the view of Christ as "foundation stone" and "the foundations that Solomon layde" (6:252).

Donne begins his consideration of King Solomon by referring to 2 Chronicles 3:3, a text concerned with the details of Solomon's building plan. The Book of Chronicles presents Solomon as an ideal figure, second only to David in importance. For example, the chronicler conveniently passes over Solomon's machinations and murders of 1 Kings 1-2, and his marriage alliance with Egypt of 1 Kings 3:1-2 (May and Metzger 530), to consolidate his power. So it is a "laundered" text which Donne uses in order to refer to "the foundations that Solomon layde." However, after this beginning in Chronicles, Donne abruptly switches to 1 Kings 5:27, apparently in order to describe the true nature of Solomon's building program: "In the building of the Material Temple, the King commanded and they brought great stones and costly stones . . . to lay the foundations of the House; the care of the King, the labours of men conduce to the foundation" (6:253, emphasis mine).

According to J.L. McKenzie, Solomon's great building program was impossible without heavy taxes; in the ancient world the most common tax upon the general population was forced labor. Forced

labor was foreign to Hebrew customs and traditions, and it was deeply resented by the Israelites. Jeroboam, who was prefect of the forced labour corps under Solomon, actually had to flee Israel due to rebellion at the heavy taxes and forced labour imposed by Solomon. The traditions are nonetheless at variance on this question; 1 Kings 5:27 [sic] says that Solomon imposed forced labor on all Israel; 1 Kings 9:20-22 limits the forced labor to the Canaanites, as does 2 Ch. 8:7-9. The petition of the Israelites at the accession of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:4) would suggest that 1 Kings 5:27 is still accurate and that the other passages are an interpretation intended to remove this odious trait from Solomon (McKenzie 828).

Historically, as well, the excess of Solomon's reign had far-reaching consequences. When his son Rehoboam became king, the people begged to be spared: "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke upon us, and we will serve you" (1 Kings 12:4). However, King Rehoboam subsequently accepted the tragically wrong advice of "the young men who had grown up with him" and who advised Rehoboam to reply as follows to the entreaty of his people: "And now, whereas my father laid upon you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12:11). In his clumsy attempts to assert autocratic authority, Rehoboam alienated most of the Israelite tribe (McKenzie 726). The similarity to the bitter conflicts between Charles and Buckingham and Parliament is unmistakable.

Charles's excessive demands for funding engendered a state of chaos in the financial tug-of-war between Crown and Parliament (Coward 138). The "foundations that Solomon layde," in the historical and not the allegorical sense, were thus ruinous.

It seems that Donne, then, deliberately chose a safe version of the biblical text on Solomon's "foundations," but that he soon switched to the "real" story of the great builder's despotism, thus representing the "founding" king as a parody of Christ the King. Significantly, the far-reaching consequences of the dark side of Solomon's reign worsen in the rule of his son King Rehoboam; the parallels between the biblical scene and Donne's contemporary scene, between James "the British Solomon" as Solomon, Charles as Rehoboam, and Buckingham as the counsellors, are surprisingly obvious. The irony implicit in the sermon is heightened even further if one recalls that the "foundation theme" of this sermon is that "the Lord hateth violence"!

The irony of King Solomon's example recurs, as a reflection of royal policy, in Donne's consideration of "the second House, the State, the Kingdome, the Commonwealth; and of this House, the foundation is the Law" for, "the evacuating of the Law, [is] . . . this destroying of foundations The Lawe is the States Suretie to mee that I shall enjoy my Protection" (6:253). For Donne reverts to the biblical scene wherein "as it is sayd of the Foundation of . . . the Temple . . . the King had his hand in the Church, so it is also in this House, the State . . . the King hath his hand in and upon the foundation here also which is the Lawe"

(6:254). In light of Donne's earlier statement that "Solomons [sic] hewed Stones, and costly stones, may in a faire accommodation be understood to be the Determinations and Resolutions, Canons and Decrees of general councils" (6:253, emphasis mine), the King appears to have an equal role in laying the foundations of both Church and State. Donne thus ascribes law-making power, and hence true sovereign power, to the King. But, as we have already observed, Donne also implies a criticism of the monarch's abuse of sovereign power, for the biblical subtext suggests a degradation of what should be a stabilising authority into an arbitrary power. Donne would even appear to replicate De Jouvenel's definition of sovereignty, wherein "the perfect sovereign does whatever maximises the common good," when, in the sermon, he states that the Law should be executed "not upon colourable disguises, nor private respects; but truly for the Generall good" in order "that the whole Bodie may be the better supported" (6:254). Here, his view closely anticipates John Milton's assertion that "the power of kings and magistrates is nothing else but what is only derivative, transferred and committed to them in trust from the people to the common good of them all" (M.Y. Hughes 755).

In contrast to Solomon's abuse of power, Donne carefully recalls the Divine origin of the law, and hence of sovereignty, by referring to Deut. 4:7-8, Moses' appeal for faithful obedience to the highest law: "For what great nation is there that has a God so near to it as the Lord our God is to us . . . and . . . that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law which I set

before you this day?" But the sad contrast between the Divine law and the exercise of human law again highlights the prevailing ironic mode of the sermon; the irony, in turn, suggests the stance Donne assumes towards his political environment. His apparent acknowledgement of the King's accountability to his people, and hence of the ascending nature of the King's sovereignty, is significant, for, as Judson writes: "During the twenties the conviction that the king's authority was limited by law, and that government rested on man's consent as well as the king's authority was developing rapidly Royalist clergy denounced such views and . . . did their best to keep people submissive and to induce people to pay money to the king" (207).

As for the foundations of "the third House that falls into our present Survay . . . the Family," Donne states that the "foundation of this house is Peace, for Peace compacts all the pieces of a family together." The old hierarchy seems to be maintained as he counsels the necessity for "Master and Servant, [to live] in Discipline and in Obedience . . . obedience is one ingredient in all Peace" (6:254). However, there are shadings and qualifications in his discussion at this point which convey his awareness of and attitude toward the destructive effect of arbitrary, abusive authority: "But . . . if the Fathers wastfulness amount to a Disinheriting because hee leaves nothing to be inherited . . . or . . . if the Master make Slaves of Servants, and macerate them . . . in these cases . . . there is a wrinching [sic], a shrinking . . . a destroying of the foundations of the third House, which is

the family, Peace" (6:255).

The third and final section of the sermon, which begins with the query, if "in some cases some foundations . . . be shaken . . . what can the righteous do?", now reads like a call of the righteous to action. But for now, Donne counsels that his auditors emulate the example of Christ, who in His martyrdom prayed "for the removing of the persecution" and then "he prays for them who inflicted the persecution . . . Father forgive them" (6:257). Like Christ, "we . . . can pray . . . and can suffer" (6:258).

Donne's further reference to Dan. 3:17, a text which shows how martyrdom is preferable to apostasy (May and Metzger 1070), contrasts his historical analysis with his current political quietism. For, when threatened with martyrdom in the furnace, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had answered the king: "Our God is able to deliver us and he will deliver us; but if not we will serve no other Gods" (6:258). Within the scriptural text, King "Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated" (Dan. 3:19 RV). As J.L. McKenzie states, King Nebuchadnezzar is the adversary not only of Daniel but of Yahweh in Dan. 1-4, and the scene is specifically laid at court (610). In addition, Calvin's "Commentaries on Daniel" dwell on King Nebuchadnezzar "the invader and destroyer of others" in order to teach that a wicked ruler is a judgment of God and that "If anyone could enter into the hearts of kings, he would find scarcely one in a hundred who does not despise everything divine Although they confess to enjoy

their thrones by the grace of God . . . yet they wish to be adored in his stead" (On God and Political Duty 91-2). Thus, although in one sense, Donne does uphold the necessity to obey the monarch, even a "wicked tyrant," his admonition can hardly be construed as flattering to Charles!

Donne's strategy, in which he uses biblical images to reorient his auditory, offers a clever and ironic contrast to that of the Royalist Clergy who attempt to reflect the Stuart monarchs' self-proclaimed image of godlike Kings back to them. Charles I, like James insisted on the immutable quality of his Divine Right to rule: "Divine Right [for Charles] was an article of faith imposed by God's will; hence any rationalization was unnecessary . . . all demand for explanation seemed blasphemous to this political mystic . . . Charles . . . unimaginative in appeal and unsubtle in his theory, held only to his obsolete weapon of Divine Right" (Hughes and Fries 189-90). But at least one of his chaplains, it would seem, recognized the face of the King as a Babylonian enemy to God and His people.

Approximately four weeks after this first sermon before Charles I, Donne preached at St. Paul's on 8 May 1625 from the text of Psalm 62:9: "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter then vanity" (6:292).

At the outset of the sermon Donne considers "the dignity of the Book of Psalmes It is abundantly enough that our Saviour Christ himself cites the Psalmes, not onely as Canonically

Scripture, but as a particular, and entire, and noble limme of that Body; all must be fulfilled of me (saith he) which is written in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Psalmes" (6:292).

According to Donne, the essence of this particular Psalm (and Donne refers to the view of Athanasius here), is that "against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soule, thy fame, tentations, tribulations, machinations, defamations, say this Psalme" because we can "Trust in God at all times, for he is a refuge for us . . . [He is] my expectation, my salvation, my rocke, my defence, my glory, my strength . . . " (6:296).

Donne organizes the sermon in order to examine, in a descending and hence theocratic order, the roles of God, King, and mankind, in a strategy that suggests the hierarchical structure of the Chain of Being. That is, after his initial assurance "that God is always so present and so all-sufficient that we need not doubt of him" (6:295), he then considers the office of the king and delineates the king's sublime status (in conjunction with a reference to Psalm 82.6): "And as though one God were not enough for the administration of this world, God hath multiplied gods here upon Earth, and imparted, communicated, not onely his power to every magistrate, but the Divine nature to every sanctified man . . . He hath also made the Prince and the secular Magistrate, a god . . . able to doe the offices and the works of God" (6:297-98). Donne cites Exodus 7:1 in highlighting the superiority of the king as secular head of the Church and State: "As we see in the first plantation of those two great Cedars, the Secular and the

Ecclesiasticall Power which . . . God planted in those two brethren, Moses and Aaron, There, though Moses were the temporall, and Aaron the spirituall Magistrate, yet God says to Moses, I have made thee a God to Pharoah (but not only to Pharoah) but Aaron thy brother shall be thy Prophet for . . . Thou shalt be to him instead of a God." Kings, in this view, are accountable only to God, for as Donne states, "The Princes of this world must give God an account . . . for that Church which Christ had committed to their protection" (6:298). He refers to the need for the stabilising influence of higher authority, for "God sends man to the Priest, to the Prince, to the Judge, to the Physitian . . . that all that man needs might be communicated to man by man" (6:299). He accompanies this passage with a reference to Deut. 16:18: "You shall appoint judges and officers . . . and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice . . . you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous."

Donne then presents an exalted and ideal view of man's place in this hierarchy, as indicated by God's love for man: "When we see Man made The Love of the Father, The Prince of the Sonne, The Temple of the Holy Ghost, the Signet upon Gods hand, The Apple of Gods eye, Absolutely, unconditionally we cannot annihilate man, not evacuate man . . . to the nullity of this Text (Surely men altogether, high or low, are lighter than vanity)" (6:297). Thus, Donne's attitude appears to be fundamentally optimistic, rather than morbid (as is the pessimistic tone of Psalm 62.9), for he

presents an abiding image that suggests that we are safe and secure in the awareness that "The nearer we come to the consideration of God, the farther we are removed from all contingencies, and all inclination to Error" (6:301).

Thus far, Donne's hierarchizing exposition resembles that of the Royalist clergy, particularly with regard to his allusion to Psalm 82:6: "I say, 'You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you'" (RV). According to Judson, and Baumer, a widespread use of this text, as indicative of God's confirmation of the Divine Right of Kings, is a mark of Elizabethan and Stuart preaching (176-77; 197). Similarly, King James refers to this text in "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies" when he states "Kings are in the word of God itselfe called Gods" (54). John Donne also frequently refers to Psalm 82.6 in order to assert that this verse is God's confirmation of the Divine Right of Kings (e.g., *Sermons*, 2.15.313; 4.7.288; 4.13.346; 5.3.284-287; 8.15.236). However, it is significant that in the sermon under consideration Donne omits this assertion.

May and Metzger gloss Psalm 82.6 as "a Liturgy of the Lord's judgement on pagan gods: Making use of a conception common to the ancient near East, that the world is ruled by a council of gods, the poet . . . sees in a vision, the God of Israel standing up in the midst of the council and pronouncing judgement upon all the other members. Because they govern the earth unjustly, they shall all perish like mere human beings (Ezekiel 28.9)" (720). The reference to Ezekiel replicates and reinforces the implied theme

that God will punish tyrannical kings (i.e. the "council of gods") who dare to profess to rule in the divine image, but in reality fail to do so. Ezekiel 28.9 refers to the Oracle against the pride of Tyre and warns that pride leads one to regard himself as God. Thus, the King of Tyre sat in the seat of the gods, but he will be slain by the most terrible of the nations, Babylonia, and come to an ignominious end in Sheol (May and Metzger 1035). Calvin also interprets this companion text (i.e., Ezekiel 28.9) as an ominous warning for despotic kings: "Just as He tamed the pride of Tyre by the Egyptians . . . the Lord . . . broke the bloody sceptres of insolent kings and overthrew their intolerable dominations. Let princes hear and be afraid" (Institutes 4.20.31, emphasis mine).

With reference to Psalm 82.6, May and Metzger recall that this text is also quoted in John 10:34, and the latter sheds additional light on the meaning of the Psalm. When Jesus is about to be stoned by the Jews because He claims to be the Son of God, Jesus answers their charge as follows: "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came . . . do you say of whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming', because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:34-38 RV). May and Metzger interpret this passage as delineating two arguments: (a) In the light of Psalm 82.6, titles are less important than realities; (b) Jesus' works authenticate

him, for they are the kind which God does" (1303, emphasis mine); hence the Divine Image is reflected perfectly in Christ.

Thus, although Donne does allude to a text (i.e., Psalm 82.6) frequently used to attest to the Divine Right of Kings and, as such, calculated to please the Stuart monarchs, when it and its companion texts are examined in their entirety, Kings who are called "gods" might tremble if they fall short of the Christly ideal.

As the sermon evolves, Donne's choice of biblical texts suggests that he wishes to encourage his auditors to seek God first, rather than adore "the idol of monarchy." For example, Donne states, with regard to the law, "for the businesses of this world, Rights and Titles, and Properties, and Possessions, God sends us to the Judges . . . Judges to try between man and man; And the sword in battaile tryes between State and State, Prince and Prince; And therefore God commands and directs the levying of men to that purpose in many places of the history of his people; particularly God appoints Gideon to take . . . a certaine number of souldiers" (6:299). The allusion to Judges 7:7 refers to a test, or arbitrary device, for reducing the number of Gideon's warriors (and to Gideon's obedience to divine command), and it bristles with latent significance. As Christopher Hill writes in Milton and the English Revolution, "[Milton] had . . . considered writing a tragedy to be called 'Gideon Iconoclastes, based on the story of Gideon who at one time thought the Lord had forsaken him, but nevertheless overthrew the altars of Baal . . . smote the

Midianites and Amelekites, and then refused to rule [as King] over Israel, preferring that the Lord should rule" (173, emphasis mine).

Donne's own reference to the anti-royalist Gideon is juxtaposed with citations of Jeremiah 8:22, and 2 Chronicles 16:12. In the former, Jeremiah is distressed to denounce his people for their indifference; Israel forgets God's law. In verses 8-9, of this text, Jeremiah contrasts his proclaimed word of the Lord with the written tradition (law) misinterpreted by those who administer it (May and Metzger 922). In an earlier verse (i.e. Jeremiah 8:19), the prophet asks "Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with their foreign idols?" Donne's use of 2 Chronicles 16:12 further alludes to King Asa's apostasy, punishment, and death. According to May and Metzger, King Asa is rebuked by the prophet, and the unrepentant attitude of Asa was introduced by the Chronicler to explain the later illness of the king. Here, a text which previously related Asa's story (1 Kings 15.23-24a) has been expanded (i.e., in 2 Chron. 16:12) to emphasize the culpability of Asa and the grandeur of his funeral in spite of his son (545-46). Within the expanded text, King Asa, angered by the rebuke of the seer, "was in a rage with him And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time" (2 Chron. 16:10).

Elsewhere, John Donne had referred to 2 Chron. 16:12 and "the case of King Asa" in a revealing way in the fourth Expostulation and Prayer of his Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions. Donne's particular concern is with "hee [who] falls into the hands of the

Physician, that casts himself wholly, entirely upon the Physician, confides in him, attends all from him and neglects that spirituall phisicke So . . . to fall into the hands of the Physician is a sinne Asa fell, who in his disease, sought not to the Lord but to the Physician God's Method is . . . pray unto the Lord, and hee will make thee whole" (21-22, emphasis mine). Thus, the scriptural texts in the sermon, when considered in conjunction with Donne's exposition in the Devotions, highlight the primacy of God's sovereign power over that of earthly powers; Donne thus affirms the divine sovereignty while condemning earthly powers who, as "idols or false gods," command that their image be worshipped, but do not reflect in reality the divine image of Him in whose stead they reign.

Donne also extrapolates from the chosen text of his sermon to cast aspersions on his contemporary setting, and to underline the corruption in the moral order at the centre of England's political scene. He considers "that which the Holy Ghost presents here . . . that men of low degree are vanity, and that men of high degree are a lie It is true that it admits a Discourse . . . whether men of high degree or of low degree be worst, whether riches or poverty . . . occasion most sinnes" (6:302). He begins by taking care to warn that "all degrees of poverty are dangerous and slippery even to a murmuring against God . . . but especially the lowest, the desparate degree of beggary . . . contracted by our owne laziness or our owne wastfulness" (6:304-05). Then he focuses on "men of high degree" who, according to the psalmic text,

"are a lie"; to them he offers a scathing indictment because as he points out, the condition of "men of high degree who are of power" is such that "there is a tacit promise . . . of protection and assistance flowing from them When men of high degree do not perform the duties of their places then they are a lie of their own making" (6:306).

Now aligning himself with the prophet of Isaiah 58:11, Donne asserts that "when I over-magnifie them . . . ascribe more to them then I should, then they are a lie of my own making . . . [who] canonize them and make them my God" (6:307). This statement seemingly supports his earlier assertion within this same sermon, warning that

popularity is vanity. At how deare a rate doth that man buy the peoples affections that pays with his owne head for their hats? How cheaply doth he sell his Princes favour, that hath nothing for it but the peoples breath How many men upon confidence of that flattering gale of wind, the . . . applause of the people, have taken in their anchor, [Donne's seal was a device of Christ crucified to an anchor], departed from their . . . safe hold . . . the favour of the Prince And, as it is in Civil, and Secular, so it is in Ecclesiastical . . . things too. How many men by a popular hunting after the applause of the people in their manner of preaching . . . have made themselves incapable of preferment in the Church. (6:305-06, emphasis mine)

The tension inherent in Donne's position is evident in the rationalizing, albeit realistic and cynical depiction of his ministerial role. Donne refers to the prophet of Habakkuk 1:16 who condemns the corruption of the powerful man living at the expense of the poor, before issuing his own pragmatic warning: "If

therefore thou have the favour of great ones, the applause of the people, confidence in thy selfe, in an instant; the power of those great ones may be overthrown, or their favour to thee withdrawne from thee, (and so that bladder is pricked, upon which thou swommest). The applause of the people may be hushed and silenced (either they would not, or they dare not magnifie thee) Confidence in the things or persons of this world . . . will bring us to that state wherein we would faine be nothing and cannot" (6:309). In addition to explicating Donne's own position, this passage also provides an eerie predictive allusion to the forthcoming fate of Charles I, and may also point (via the bladder image) to the detested favourite, Buckingham, who has been referred to by H.M. Gwatkin as "an unhappy exhalation drawn up from the earth not only to cloud the setting but the rising sun" (qtd. in Tanner 51).

Donne closes this sermon with a resonant, reverberating reiteration of his previous foundation theme, that of our assurance of the immutability of Almighty God: "Turn onely to the onely invisible and immortall God He onely is my Rocke God is my salvation, God is my Defence . . . and . . . God is my Refuge . . . God is my Glory . . . God is . . . my Anchor . . . God is my sanctuary . . . " (6:310). This finale, in its entirety, resembles John Donne's finest spiritual poetry. In addition, the closing passage exemplifies Sidney's The Defense of Poesy, and the poet who " . . . maketh you . . . see God coming in his majesty . . . " (607).

In the last lines of the sermon, Donne nonetheless reverses himself again, jolting his auditors back to their immediate political reality. He refers to Micah 7:5, a text expressing the pessimism experienced by the prophet due to corruption in high places; not only the king and the judge, but all of Jerusalem's inhabitants were corrupt; there was thus no basis for confidence due to the covetousness, violence, venality and breakdown in family relations (King 288). This latter biblical allusion can only be considered in conjunction with Hill's depiction of the appalling economic conditions amongst the poor at this time in England:

Since the harsh Poor Law placed the propertied classes in complete control of those who produced their wealth, they viewed with grave suspicion any government attempt to upset their local dominance Even Laud never effectively helped the lower classes A great deal of nonsense has been talked about the good done to the poorer classes by Charles I and his ministers, whereas in fact the Poor Law was most efficiently administered in areas which were to support Parliament in the Civil War There is a permanent background of potential unrest throughout these decades A naked basis of force underlay social relations. The prevention of peasant revolt was the monarchy's job; in this it had the support of the propertied class. Problems arose only when royal policy hit the pockets of those on whose behalf law and order were being maintained So there was a steady undercurrent of fear (26-28)

For the informed reader or auditor attentive to such a matrix of biblical and political allusions, there can be little wonder that Donne's sermon ends on a pessimistic note. He echoes the prophet Micah in denouncing the evil perceived on all sides--"Trust ye not in a friend, put not your confidence in a guide"

(6:310) --by virtue of the arbitrary sovereign power exercised by the Stuart government. Thus, John Donne risked a great deal for his sermons. Hill refers to the strict censorship particularly of the pulpits at this time and comments, for example, that "Under Charles I positive attempts to dictate the contents of sermons were more frequent. For example, in 1626 the clergy were instructed to preach that refusal of financial support for the King was sinful" (76). But Donne dared, through skillful allusions to biblical examples of abuse of power, to question the presumed foundations of royal authority.

By the time Donne preached in December 1627, English troops led by Buckingham had been defeated by the French on the Isle of Rhé. Gardiner summarizes the defeat wherein "mismanagement completed the ruin which an evil policy had begun Since England was England it received not so dishonorable a blow. The fault that had occurred was laid upon Buckingham" (58-59).

Donne's chosen text for this sermon after defeat is Psalm 66:3: "Say unto God, how terrible art thou in thy works! Through the greatnesse of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee" (8:110). Although Donne's exposition of this text is consonant with May and Metzger's gloss that "the Psalm is a hymn in praise of God's might and his care for his people" (703), the mood of the sermon is, nonetheless, anxious and circumspect; the dark tone duplicates the morale of Stuart England where, according to Coward, "between the dissolution of the 1626 parliament and the end of 1627 opposition to the Caroline court

reached a peak it was not to reach again until the late 1630's" (139). Christopher Hill also discusses "contemporary expressions of alarm . . . [and] expectations of God's heavy judgement for . . . 'these dead and declining times' John Donne had a sense of impending doom" (Collected Essays I 18).

Throughout the sermon Donne repeatedly defines the nature of God's power; for example, he explains that the word "terrible" actually means "Reverend, majesticall, though never tyrannicall, nor cruel" (8:126), and he refers to Abraham's vision of God in Genesis 15:12 "Not onely a feare of God must, but a terror of God may fall upon the Best. When God talked with Abraham, a horror of great darknesse fell upon him He is a terrible God, I take him so . . . our God is a consuming fire. There is all his terribleness" (8:123-24). Donne advises that the Divine power be understood as revealed in "The works of God, (How terrible art thou in thy works!) It is not . . . Arcana ejus, The secrets of his State the wayes of his government, unrevealed Decrees, but those things in which he hath manifested himself to man" (8:113). This is the God of "Absolute Power . . . It is his power that does all" (8:128). Donne also registers his awareness that the sixty-sixth Psalm is interpreted as a prophecy of God's most potent assertion of his sovereign power--the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, before offering the consolation: "Consider how powerfully God hath, and you cannot doubt, but that God will give them a Resurrection in this world, who rely upon him . . . whensoever any calamity hath dejected them, ruined them, scattered them in the

eyes of men" (8:112).

In addition to his depiction of the nature of God's power, and the concomitant solace that God always exercises His power for "the reliefe of his oppressed servants" (8:112), Donne organizes the two parts of the sermon as Retrospect and Prospect, or History and Prophecy: what God has done argues what he will do. In describing this division, Donne refers to "Noah", whom "We call . . . Janus, because hee had two faces . . . hee looked into the former, and into the later world; he saw the times before and after the flood" (8:112).

After Donne's explication of Divine sovereign power, he then links God's sovereignty with that of the King in a strong explicit statement of the King's prerogative. The King, he assures his congregation,

is King of men; not of bodies onely, but of soules too . . . God hath called himselfe King, and he hath called Kings Gods. And when we looke upon the actions of Kings we determine not our selves in that person, but in God working in that person . . . it is not the King that commands but the power of God in the King.
(8:115)

He observes that

even God himself hath enemies . . . and these enemies nothing can mollifie, nothing can reduce, but Power; faire meanes and persuasion will not worke upon them; Preaching, disputing will not doe it; It must be Power, and greatnesse of power, and greatnesse of Gods power. The Law is Power and it is Gods' Power . . . One Act of this Power . . . will not serve; there must be constant continuation of the execution thereof; nor will that serve, if that be done onely . . . to raise money, and not rather to draw them, who are under those

Laws to the right worship of God . . . and
 they shall submit themselves . . . how? . . .
 They shall dissemble . . . they shall yield a
 fained obedience, they shall make as though
 they
 were good Subjects, but not be so. (8:114)

Donne's explicit attributions of divine power to the office of the king here (and in a significant number of the sermons of this period) invests the monarchy with a tremendous responsibility to attempt to reflect the immutable Divine Image and to thus serve as an anchor, and as a guiding source of order and stability. But, as the sermon develops, Donne refers to scriptural texts that serve as mirrors reflecting royal policy, and as such add a perverse and ironic twist to his explicit statement of support for the royal prerogative; for his implied subtextual message seems to be that the enemy lies within, because the source and catalyst for England's current dark and troubled times is the king himself!

For example, if we revert to Donne's statement near the beginning of the sermon that "We call Noah Janus because hee had two faces and . . . looked into the former and into the later world" (8:112), the reference to Janus may signal the careful listener/reader to the possibility of ambiguity, and multiple levels of meaning in the text of the sermon, given an awareness that Janus is the two-faced and hence deceitful "Roman god of lies" who is, seemingly antithetically, "the god of both war and peace" (Gayley 60). Moreover, the necessity to be alert to the presence of double entendres of political significance is heightened by the knowledge that John Donne also uses the Janus reference for the same purpose in The Progresse of the Soule; the reference is

inserted into this early composition (i.e. 1601) by Donne as a cue for those individuals of similar mind and ideological commitment, his inner circle of friends, that he is actually satirizing certain target figures of the Tudor monarchy. For example, K.J. Hughes describes Donne's Metempsychosis as a "work of political propoganda designed beneath its surface cover to define reality by naming the Tudor monarchy as the villain for a discerning group of Donne's radical bourgeois friends" (37-8, emphasis mine).

Thus, Donne may have utilized a similar subversive strategy within the sermon under consideration, for there are several possible levels of meaning associated with the figure of Noah; he serves not just as the demarcation point for history before and after the deluge, but also as an image conjuring up the theme of idolatry as the causative factor for God's punishment of His people with the deluge. Calvin discusses idolatry and the deluge, and describes how "there was a kind of renewal of the world at the deluge, but before many years elapse, men are forging gods at will Whether it be God or a creature that is imaged, the moment you fall prostrate before it in veneration, you are . . . fascinated by superstition So stupid are men that whenever they figure God, there they fix him, and by necessary consequence . . . adore him" (Institutes 1.XI8, emphasis mine). Although Calvin does not specifically warn that kingship may be subject to the danger of idolatry, nonetheless, he does, for example, refer to 1 Kings 12:28 where "the Israelites are condemned for having too readily obeyed the impious edict of the king. For, when King

Jeroboam made the golden calf, they forsook the temple of God, and in submissiveness to him, revolted to new superstitions. With the same facility posterity had bowed before the decrees of their kings. For this they are severely upbraided by the Prophet (Hosea 5:11) I know the imminent peril to which subjects expose themselves by this firmness, kings being most indignant when they are condemned" (Institutes 4.20.32). Within the sermon Donne explicitly states his own concern for the danger of idolatry, for, as he warns, "Idolatry will be, but there needs be none amongst us. Idolaters were round about the children of Israel in the land of promise" (8:117, emphasis mine).

The critical point here is, as shall become apparent in examining the scriptural texts associated with this comment, that those individuals guilty of idolatrous practises and subsequently punished for idolatry were the kings themselves! Moreover, Donne's warning about the danger of idolatry is ironically predictive of that expressed by Milton, who at a later date in his "Eikonoklastes" will condemn another type of idolatry, the idolatry of monarchs by an "image doting rabble . . . [who] are prone to idolatry in idolizing their kings" (M. Hughes 339). Within the sermon, Donne dwells on the responsibility of the King, and of "all to whom any power is committed" to "propagate Gods truth to others", a duty ideally performed if they "themselves be the Example" (8:119). In conjunction with this directive, he refers to Joshua 10:12, and "That standing of the Sunne and Moone, which gave occasion to the drawing of so much blood of the Amorites"

(8:119).

This sermon is based upon Psalm 66.3, a description of God's power, Donne's inclusion of the figure of Joshua in this and several subsequent scriptural allusions is significant because Joshua, in God's name, commands the sun and the moon to stand still, and demonstrates His power in battle: "The Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life" (Joshua 4:14 RV). According to May and Metzger, "the story of Joshua is the story of the conquest [of the Promised Land] In this book Israel's God appears as . . . a God of Battles, whose power is chiefly manifested in the prosecution of Holy War" (263). The larger context of the scriptural text cited by Donne (i.e. Joshua 10:12) is Israel's victory over five kings who are guilty of idolatry in serving foreign, false gods: "When Adonizedeh, King of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king . . . he feared greatly Then the five kings of the Amorites . . . gathered their forces . . . against Gibeon, and made war against it." The Lord promised Joshua, " . . . I have given them into your hands; there shall not a man of them stand before you" (Joshua 10:1-8 RSV, emphasis mine).

Later, after the "great slaughter at Gibeon" when the Lord intervened and "threw down great stones from heaven, Joshua summoned the five kings and put them to death and he hung them on five trees" (Joshua 10:11-26 RSV). Alluding to the fate of these

kings, Donne's subsequent warning to authority figures that "if they be silent, command not, pray not, avow not Gods cause, the case is dangerous" (8:119), ought to be carefully heeded! However, in conjunction with the promise of divine retribution on idolatrous kings, Donne also cautions that "it is not the duty of the private man . . . to come to actions . . . that Gods cause might be advantaged by those actions of his All they that take the sword (that take it before it be given them by Authority) shall perish by the sword" (8:120).

In conjunction with the directive that "all the world might concur in one manner of serving God" (8:113), Donne returns to Joshua. His text is taken from chapter 24:15: "My house shall serve the Lord, sayes Joshua; But it is . . . I and my house; himselfe would serve God aright" (8:113); the text refers to the covenant at Shechem where the generation which had conquered Palestine now takes upon itself a covenant with the Lord similar to that which their fathers entered into at Sinai (May and Metzger 291). In the biblical text, God reviews what he has done for Israel, including the routing and destruction of idolatrous kings: for example, when Balak "King of Moab arose and fought against Israel . . . I delivered you out of his hand . . . [And] I sent the hornet before you which drove . . . out . . . the two kings of the Amorites." Based on the history of God's saving acts, Israel is directed to "fear the Lord and put away the gods which your fathers served" (Joshua 24:9-14).

Donne holds up again the example of Joshua when he considers

that " . . . there are enemies of God, whom no power of Armies or Lawes can bring any farther then that, to hold their tongues, and to hold their hands, but to withhold their hearts from us still. So the Gibeonites deceived Joshua in the likenesse of Ambassadors; Joshuah's power made them lie unto him. So Pharaoh deceived . . . Moses and Aaron; Every act of Power brought Pharaoh to lie unto them" (8:128). There is surely verbal irony in Donne's cautious assertion in conjunction with this statement that "I direct not your thoughts upon publique considerations; It is not my end; It is not my way" (8:128-29); nevertheless, the allusions to Pharaoh, and to Joshua's subjugation of the idolatrous Egyptian tyrant are significant for they link Charles with Pharaoh. For example, in an earlier passage in this sermon, Donne directs his listeners to " . . . stay not in your selves, if you will heare him [i.e. God] Come not home to your selves . . . not in a confidence in your own power and wisdom, but . . . go forth, go forth into Egypt, go forth into Babylon, and look who delivered your Predecessors . . . " (8:122, emphasis mine). He thus implies that England's current state of subservience parallels the Egyptian bondage, and by analogy, Charles parallels Pharaoh. Although Donne does not specifically refer to Ezekiel 29.3 in this particular sermon, he does cite this scriptural text in several other sermons of this period, and the explicit message bodes ill for the Egyptian tyrant: "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers" (RV).

If Donne intends to reorient his auditors and to thus suggest

that Charles is the visible representative of an idolatrous king, he may also imply that Charles is an idolatrous and narcissistic self-worshipper who by his actions profanes the divine image he claims to represent. Moreover, the reference to Pharaoh links Charles with the matrix of biblical allusions in this sermon depicting the fate of idolatrous kings, who are subjugated and destroyed by Yahweh. If the people are to perceive a despotic sovereign as a scourge of God to punish their sinfulness (as in the teaching of Calvin, for example), then the implied message, or, in Donne's words, "the sermon within the sermon" may be the vow that God will scourge the scourge. Donne's sermon is thus a powerful warning against idolatry, or dealing falsely with Yahweh; in a type of ironic reversal, the power of Almighty God, meant to reside in a virtuous king, may redound against that same king if he abuses power and hence profanes and desecrates the Divine Image. For example, near the close of the sermon Donne again warns about idolatry in his reference to King Jeroboam who led his people into apostasy in building the golden calf: "Jeroboam suffered idolatry, and God let him alone; that concerned but God himselfe. But when Jeroboam stretched forth his hand to lay hold on the prophet, his hand withered. Here is a holy league, Defensive and Offensive; God shall not only protect us from others, but he shall fight for us against them" (8:127). Here is a final warning for the "uxorious Charles" who idolized his Roman Catholic Queen, described by Hill as "the disastrously popish and arbitrary Henrietta Maria" (Century 74). (Milton refers to her as the "idol Queen" in "The Ready and

Easy Way" [M.Y. Hughes 898]). Charles can also be described as idolatrous in his relationship with his favourite, Buckingham, and, if covetousness is idolatry, (as Milton declares, in "The Tenure"), then Charles is guilty again.

To sum up: As is the pattern in a significant number of the sermons of this period, there emerges in this sermon a model of earthly monarchy which, although it rigidly defines itself in terms of the Divine Model, emerges nonetheless as an utterly opposed and unequal "copy." The vital commitment of the Divine Model is emphasized by the covenant between Yahweh and His people, where a pact is endorsed and safeguarded by Joshua; Charles I, in contrast, evidently feels little sense of commitment to his implicit "contract" with the English populace concomitant with the "ascending" responsibility of his sovereignty. The true quality of Charles's exercise of power becomes more and more apparent in the Forced Loan of 1626, the dissolution of Parliament of 1628, the Trial of the Five Knights, the imposition of martial law, to cite but a few examples.

Still, most men of good will were, like Donne, more inclined to ask God to judge wicked tyrants than to rebel against authority. But events which led up to the Petition of Right made quiescence (and patience) intolerable: "Although they [i.e. the parliamentary opposition] moved to checkmate the king, most were at heart good monarchists . . . Both rulers by their stupid blunders . . . and high-handed policies showed so little perception of the tide of events . . . that they drove men, few of whom were natural rebels,

into an opposition which eventually brought on an unnatural civil war" (Judson 219).

By the time Donne preached from a text from Matthew 6:21 in 1629, several political events had transpired which may have influenced the text of the sermon. Based on the perceived manipulation of the law by the King who was accused of "cheating and abusing . . . the law for purposes of which it had not been designed . . . and following the lead of . . . Sir Edward Coke . . . the Lords and Commons now devised a Petition of Right . . . in which their grievances were set out . . ." (Bowle 103). Judson summarizes the significance of this document:

The Petition of Right can best be evaluated from the point of view of the ideas and principles stated in it In the Petition of Right . . . the concept of the absoluteness of the subjects' rights was stated as unequivocally guaranteed by the law and constitution For one brief moment the realm was united and united on the basis of men's rights . . . no such direct, complete, comprehensive and formal a statement on behalf of the subject's rights had been put forward and agreed upon by the whole realm since Magna Carta (267-68)

In spite of the great victory in the realm of ideas and principles which inheres in the Petition of Right, royalist concepts and policies of government prevailed for the next eleven years. On 2 March 1629, after a stormy final session, Parliament was adjourned until 1640, a time referred to as the "Eleven Years Tyranny" of the Personal Rule of Charles I (Gardiner 72). Tanner describes the financial measures of the Crown which gave all classes a common grievance:

Tonnage and poundage continued to be levied upon the royal authority alone, and those who refused to pay were imprisoned either by the Council or by the Star Chamber. Nevertheless there was general resistance One Richard Chambers refused to pay . . . and in presence of the council . . . did utter seditious words - 'That the merchants are in no part of the world so screwed and wrung as in England; that in Turkey they have more encouragement'. The Star Chamber in turn held 'that the words spoken were a comparing of his Majesty's government with the government of the Turks, thereby to make the people believe that his Majesty's happy government may be termed Turkish tyranny'. Chambers remained in prison for six years.
(73-74)

John Donne's own view of the sovereign will is evident in a sermon of 12 February, 1629, preached against a background of violent political and theological controversy. At this same time, it is also worth noting, William Laud, the "staunch champion of royal authority" (Judson 50), was made Bishop of London.

Donne's chosen text for the sermon is Matthew 6:21: "For, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (9:173). In Donne's view the text "stands as that Proverbial, that Hieroglyphical Letter, Pythagoras his Y; that hath first a stalk . . . and then spreads into two Beams And then opens this Symbolical . . . Letter, this Y into two Horns . . . one . . . on the left hand, denoting the Treasures of this World . . . the other . . . on the right hand, Treasure laid up for the World to come. Be sure ye turn the right way" (9:174, emphasis mine).

Donne begins by stating that God requires "a firmness and fixation of the Heart," for when "God sayes . . . My Son, give me thy heart; God means the whole man." Against this affirmation

Donne counterpoises the "double heart, the doubtful . . . distracted Heart . . . a wandering, a wayfaring . . . Heart" before cautioning that "He that makes no use of a Benefit, despises the Benefactor. And therefore, a rod for his back . . . that is without a heart, without consideration what he should do; nay, what he does" (9:177-78). Donne juxtaposes this pointed warning with a reference to 1 Kings 3:9, and King Solomon's prayer: "Give thy servant an understanding heart . . . a heart able to conceive counsel . . . but that is not all . . . a heart willing to listen to counsel Solomon asks there a heart to discern between good and evil" (9:178). It is true that initially Solomon's request "pleased the Lord" (1 Kings 3:10); nonetheless, according to May and Metzger, "one might say that the story begins with wisdom (ch. 3) but ends with folly (ch. 11)" (419).

Within the sermon, Donne seemingly contrasts the equivocation inherent in the "outer" spiritual image of King Solomon's piety (in light of the ultimate political reality of his reign) with the images of Joshua and Esther, and their total commitment to enacting the will of God. Both biblical figures "served the Lord with one heart and one soul" (9:179). For example, with reference to Esther, Donne states that "If Esther had forbore to press for an audience to the King . . . till nothing could be said against it, when would Esther have come to that protestation, I will go; and if I perish, I perish" (9:179).

In addition to citing the courageous stands of Joshua and Esther against corrupt and idolatrous biblical kings, Donne

reinforces the suggestive link between Kings Solomon and Charles in both monarchs' covetous idolatry of money. For example, he warns that "God asks [for] a heart, a single heart But when it is . . . a heart for God and a heart for Mammon . . . the odds will be on Mammons side against God because he presents Possessions" (9:179-80). Furthermore, Donne subsequently cautions that "God complains in Ezekiel . . . which hath occasion'd this neglecting of Gods judgements? Their hearts went after idols" (9:180). Thus, Donne's subversive political mesasage highlights the parallel between the "sins" of Charles and the corrupt biblical kings, particularly those correlated with the abuse of subjects' rights. The wealth attributed to Solomon and his court did not permit much to slip down into the general population. The contemporary existence of a small class of extremely wealthy people and the grinding poverty of the majority has its roots in the covetous reign of Solomon (McKenzie 829).

At one point, Donne extrapolates from his implied equation between Charles and corrupt biblical kings to an explicit description of the depravity of the royal court. Drawing on Job's declaration that "The treasures of wickedness profit nothing," Donne cites Micah 6:10 where the prophet denounces the wickedness of Jerusalem which must therefore be destroyed, in order to ask:

Are there not yet treasures of wickedness in
the house of the wicked? Is there not
yet supplantation in the court and
misrepresentations of men? Is there
not yet oppression in the country? A starving
of men and pampering of dogs Is there
not yet Extortion in Westminster?
(9:182-83)

Furthermore, there is striking irony in Donne's subsequent declaration, derived from the text of Amos 8.5, and reflective of the reality of Stuart royal policy: "When Solomon, who understood subordination of places which flowed from him . . . says experimentally for his own and prophetically for future times, If a ruler . . . hearken to lyes, all his servants are wicked Is there not yet . . . a swallowing of the needy . . . a buying of the poor for a pair of shoes . . . a justifying of the wicked for a reward . . . Collusion and circumvention in the City?" (9:183, emphasis mine). There can be little doubt what Donne meant, then, in his linking of "hearts" with their "treasures," though rich men, as Matthew had said elsewhere, might find it harder to enter the Kingdom of God than "for a camel to go through the eye of a needle" (19:24).

Donne's reference to Amos as background for his explicit condemnation of grave injustice in social dealings should recall an earlier sermon preached at Whitehall on 3 March 1620 from the prophecy of Amos 5:18. In this previous sermon, Donne discusses Amos's forceful uncompromising preaching and the resultant conflict between the prophet and the religious authorities of his day. Here, Amos's personal confrontation with the priest Amaziah has helped Donne to clarify the conflict he perceives in his own role as priest and preacher:

Yet every man that comes with Gods Message
hither, brings a little Amaziah of his owne,
in his owne bosome, a little wisperer in his
own heart, that tells him, This is the Kings
Chappell, and it is the Kings Court, and these
woes and judgements, and the denouncers and

proclaimers of them are not so acceptable here
(2:348-49)

In the later sermon, it appears that Donne has finally overcome "the little Amaziah" in his own personal bosom in order to condemn the political corruption he observes around him. Thus, in this particular sermon, preached after the Petition of Right, Donne, like Amos, holds a most unflattering mirror before his audience who "lay up" their "treasures" in the wrong place.

Having chosen against serving "mammon" himself, Donne also rebukes seekers after honors, in another sermon preached at this time (i.e. 1628/9), on the text "To whom much is given, of him much shall be required":

Hast thou considered every new title of Honour, and every new addition of Office, every new step into higher places, to have laid new Duties and new obligations upon thee? Hast thou doubled the hours of thy Prayers, when thy Preferments are doubled; and increased thine Almes, according as thy Revenues are increased? (8:353)

In another sermon of the same period (i.e., Nov. 1628/29), he refers to the "inevitable tentations" which are "in every Calling"; he utilizes images which, though derived from another time and another royal court, are remarkably vivid and suggestive:

If a man of those times, had heard a song of Nero's making, and had been told that it was his, (as that Emperour delighted in compositions of that kind), he would not, he durst not have said, that it was a harsh, an untunable song. If a man saw a Clock or a Picture of his Princes making, (as some Princes have delighted themselves with some manufacturers) he would not, he durst not say, it was a disorderly clock, or a disproportioned picture. (8:284)

Notwithstanding this admission, Donne expresses his conviction that the ministerial office demands that he emulate Amos's stance of fearless preaching; for example, in a Sermon of Jan. 1627/8, Donne states that "The Pulpit is more than our death-bed He that mingles falsehood with his last dying words, deceives the world inexcusably, . . . but he that mingles false informations in his preaching, does so much more, because he speaks in the person of God himselfe" (8:171). The anxiety he evidently experiences, due to the paradoxical nature of his position as political appointee to the Deanship of St. Paul's, surfaces again in a sermon of Feb. 1628/9:

Who knows, whether thou beest not brought to this place for this purpose? [i.e., To chastise the King] To speak that, which his sacred and gracious ears, to whom thou speakest, will always be well pleased to hear, when it is delivered by them, to whom it belongs to speak it So let them, whom Kings trust, speak to Kings. (8:340)

These relevant excerpts from sermons preached at approximately the time of the sermon under question underscore Donne's living dilemma--whether to yield to the instinct for self-preservation and the desire for material success and position, or to maintain and uphold the family heritage derived from the courageous example of Donne's martyred Great-Grand uncle, St. Thomas More, and his challenge of a despotic and irresponsible monarch.

Most clearly in the sermon on "treasures," Donne has, in the manner of Amos, decided to condemn the political corruption of his society; yet he is not above waffling over a direct and explicit attribution of culpability to Charles I. For example, when

condemning the corruption of the court, he hastens to add that these scandals occur despite "the power of a vigilant Prince executed by just Magistrates, . . . the Piety of a Religious Prince, seconded by the assiduity of a laborious Clergy" (9:182). However, the subversive biblical subtext condemns Charles by linking him with the worser tendencies of King Solomon, and the corrupt monarchs overthrown in Joshua's campaign on the side of justice.

If we reconsider now Donne's chosen text for this sermon, and the choice between treasures of this world and treasures of the world to come, and his accompanying admonition, "Be sure ye turn the right way," it is clear that he accuses Charles of choosing the wrong way by abusing his subjects' rights. Furthermore, if Donne's image system comments by analogy on Charles's despotism, the sermon depicts an autocratic sovereign power which is at the antipodes to its ideal function as a stabilising and peace-making authority; thus, the sermon's subtext points ironically, albeit realistically, to the actual rights achieved by the subjects of Stuart England as a result of the Petition of Right.

A year later, the man who had overcome his own personal "little Amaziah" would preach the last, and most famous, of his sermons against a still greater antagonist within his own bosom. On 25 February, "at White Hall, before the Kings Majesty, in the beginning of Lent, 1630" (10:229), he undertook "Death's Duell." According to the prefatory address to the Reader, "This Sermon was, by Sacred Authority, stiled the Authors owne funeral Sermon . . .

. It was preached not many dayes before his death; as if, having done this, there remained nothing for him to doe, but to die A dying Mans words . . . do usually make the deepest impression, as being spoken most feelingly and with least affection" (10:229). Taking as his text Psalm 68:20, Donne's theme is "And unto God the Lord belong the Issues of Death. i.e. From Death" (10:230).

As has been his strategy in a significant number of his sermons, Donne contrasts the Power of God with that of earthly monarchs. For example, Donne assures "That unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death, . . . it is in his power to give us an issue and deliverance, even when we are brought to the jawes and teeth of death, and to the lippes of that whirlpoole, the grave . . . The God of power, the Almighty Father rescues his servants from the jawes of death" (10:230). In contrast to the omnipotence of Almighty God, Donne emphasizes that ultimately "King David's Idols [e.g., lust for Bathsheba] are dead" and that "The Womb which should be the house of life, becomes death itselife, if God leave us there" (10:232). The Power of God finally destroys that of corrupt earthly monarchs, as for example in Donne's reference to the story of King Ahab and Jezebel of 1 Kings 19:4. Donne points out that Elijah was initially perplexed and "impatient" with Almighty God: "Elijah himselfe, when he fled from Jezebel, and went for his life . . . requested that he might die . . . and God asked him, doest thow well to be angry for this" (10:235).

However, as the story of the prophet and King Ahab and his

queen unfolds, the latter will be destroyed by the Power of God for their worship of "idols." For example, according to J.L. McKenzie, the judgement of the compiler of 1-2 Kings on King Ahab is extremely harsh. Ahab permitted Jezebel to patronize the cult of the Baal of Tyre. To him, Elijah was "the troubler of Israel" because he made an issue of whether Israel should worship Baal or Yahweh (16). Similarly, Donne refers to Dan. 3:19 and 6:22 to stress that "God is the God of revenges, he would not pass over the sin of man unrevenged, unpunished" (10:243). In the text from Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar "made an image of gold" and commanded all "to fall down and worship the golden image . . . and whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace" (Dan. 3:1-6). The three youths faithful to Israel's God, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were unharmed although, as Donne states, "the oven could be seven times heat" and yet "not burn them" (10:243).

This pervasive awareness of the fate of corrupt biblical kings enhances the irony of Donne's subsequent observation that "Moses and Elias talked with Christ of his death . . . at that time when he was in the greatest height of glory that ever he admitted in this world, his transfiguration. And we are afraid to speake to the great men of this world of their death, but nourish in them a vain imagination of immortality and immutability" (10:245). The foregoing statement should be considered in conjunction with Donne's depiction, earlier in this sermon, of the irony that inheres in death, the great equalizer. Referring to Isaiah 14:11,

a dirge against a tyrant, Donne seems to suggest that it is only in death that man can experience "justice" and can escape the imposition of arbitrary, hierarchical, sovereign power:

When those bodies that have beene the children of royall parents, and the parents of royall children, must say with Job, to corruption thou art my father, and to the Worme thou art my mother and my sister . . . when my mouthe shall be filled with dust, and the worme shall feed . . . upon me, when the ambitious man shall have no satisfaction . . . nor the poorest receive any contentment in being made equall but in dust The worm covers them in Job, and in Esay There's the Mats and the Carpets that lye under, and there's the State and the Canopye that hangs over the greatest of the sons of men That Monarch who spred over many nations alive, must in his dust lye in a corner of that sheet of lead God seems to have caried the declaration of his power to a great height, when he sets the Prophet Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones and says . . . can these bones live . . . and . . . they did.
(10:238)

In closing the sermon Donnes urges his auditors and readers to contemplate, meditate and "hang on to Christ" in a state of "blessed dependency" (10:248), and in so doing offers the hope and consolatory assurance of the assertion of the Divine Sovereignty evident in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, he concludes that monarchs, even the most mighty ones, return to dust, but the power of Almighty God endures forever. And so, apparently, does the word of the prophet endure. The concluding promise of a resurrection in Jesus Christ is already anticipated in the image of the prophet Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones. Finally, it is clear, Donne sees his own power as a prophet of the Word as being proof against the power of Kings and other tyrants, including

Death, since the Word will raise these "dry bones" to live. But magistrates, such as Pilate and Herod, who abuse their duty, vainly imagine their immortality (10:245). The judgement of history, much less of God, will be against them.

Conclusion

John Donne on Divine Right: "Every man
that comes with Gods Message hither
brings a little Amasiah of his
owne . . . a little whisperer in his
own heart, that tells him, This is the
Kings Chapel, and it is the Kings
Court, and these woes and
judgements . . . and the proclaimers
of them are not acceptable here" (2:348-49).

John Donne introduces this assertion with the qualifier "yet," and in so doing subtly highlights the themes which inform the sermons considered in this thesis: those of the pressures intrinsic in his ministerial role, deriving from his initial reluctance to seek and accept ordination in the Anglican Church, and his subsequent scepticism and resistance to the Divine Right Theory of Kingship taught by James I and practiced with increasing rigor by Charles I. I have demonstrated that Donne evidently accepts the notion of the exclusive rightness of the monarchical form of government (i.e., the monarchical principle), and of the sacral character of the king due to his divine consecration; however, Donne specifically challenges other elements inherent in that complex of rights which is comprised under the name of "Divine Right." For example, he questions the assertion of the non-accountability of the king, together with the corollary that his

power is unlimited.

In order to represent the real exercise of power by the Stuart monarchs, Donne focuses on their habitual identification of royal power with divine power and insistence that "kings are the breathing Images of God upon earth." Donne's response to the politics and theology of Divine Right Theory as utilized by James I and Charles I is best evaluated with an awareness that the method of typology can attest to the differences between the type and the antitype, i.e., between God and the Stuart monarchs.

Furthermore, although there is a definite line of distinction in the biblical context between divine and royal power, Donne deliberately blurs the borderline between the two in the sermons, in order to concentrate on the dichotomy between the Divine Power and the exercise of kingly power in contemporary politico/religious events.

In what is essentially a descending analysis of the monarchical hierarchy of power, I have examined the complex web of biblical allusions which is refracted into the many different images of political corruption reinforcing Donne's depiction of arbitrary sovereign power. For example, Donne focuses on the limitations of the far from perfect Israelite kings, and on such corrupt Roman absolutists as Nero, Romulus, and Constantius I, in conjunction with an ubiquitous network of biblical texts delineating the nature and consequences of raw despotism. At the base of this triangular depiction of hierarchically ordered society "the subject in subjection," who is represented most frequently in

the sermons by the figure of Job, groans under the imposition of an absolutist authority which admits no sovereign right of the individual. However, Donne repeatedly offers his listeners the solace of the final outcome of Job's story, while reminding them that the fate of the tyrannical kings lies in the hands of Almighty God.

Donne buttresses the biblical texts with his own explicit and condemnatory statements, all of which political commentary is presented by means of his complex allusive/elusive rhetorical strategies employing irony, satire or the judicious juxtaposition of contradictory images and statements which subvert the pious orthodox assertions of the surface text. In this way he succeeds in his stated desire to provoke and challenge the sensibilities of his auditors and readers with his "Rhetorique" and thus to "work upon weake men . . . to trouble the understanding, to displace, and to discompose and disorder the judgement . . . to empty it of former apprehensions and opinions . . . to stamp and imprint new forms, new images, new opinions in it" (2:282).

I have demonstrated by means of an assessment of the sermons preached in this sixteen-year period, that although Donne's ideas of kingship did not change, he did become more outspoken in his explicit censuring of the Monarchs. His tendency to condemn the Stuarts' rationalization of their abuse of power by recourse to Divine Right Theory is particularly evident in his sermons after James's death. When in 1624 Donne survived instead of succumbing to relapsing fever, his work became a pledge of renewal and final

confirmation in his calling. After an absence of several months occasioned by his fever, Donne returned to the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral in London at Easter 1624. Donne now spoke like a man brought back from the dead for he felt that he had been granted a personal Easter. Donne's illness midway in his ministry led to a new clear-sightedness of the soul. His conviction was that his life was restored so that he could preach (Mueller 1-2). Furthermore, Donne's editors stress that "after his enforced retirement during the plague epidemic of 1625, he set to work with renewed vigour during the first half of 1626" and that it is at this time that "we find Donne at the summit of his power as a preacher Donne was now at home in the pulpit as he had not been in earlier years He no longer found it necessary to check the flow of metaphors and images which rose so naturally to his lips It seemed that 'Golden Chrysostome' was alive again" (7:1). Donne's renewed commitment to his ministerial role is particularly significant when his "Hymn to God the Father," composed during his life-threatening illness is examined:

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
 My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
 Swear by thyself that at my death thy sun
 Shall shine as it shines now, and heretofore;
 And having done that, Thou hast done.
 I have no more. (Baker 86)

Donne's own statement, in a sermon preached 18 April 1626, suggests that he may have come to identify his own ministerial role with kingly/divine power, and in so doing, ironically, to echo the absolutist stance which his poetic speaker assumes in his early love poetry (e.g., "Elegy XIX"; "The Sunne Rising"). In this

sermon, he defines his role in terms which allude to that of Christ in Matthew 9:20:

What a Coronation is our taking of Orders, by which God makes us a Royal Priesthood. And what an inthronation [sic] is the coming up into a Pulpit, where God invests his servants with his Ordinance, as with a cloud, and then presses that cloud with a vae si non, woe be unto thee, if thou do not preach That God should appeare in a cloud, upon the Mercy Seat, as he promises Moses he will do, That from so poore a man as stands here God should drop raine, pour down his dew give every soule consolation by me; That when I call to God for grace here, God should give me grace for grace, Grace in a power to derive grace upon others, and that this Balsamum should flow to the hem of the garment, even upon them that stand under me; That when mine eyes look up to Heaven, the eyes of all should look upon me, and God should open my mouth to give them meat
 . . . That I should not only be able to say, as Christ said My son be of good comfort but My Lords and my King be of good comfort, your sins are forgiven you.
 (7:134 emphasis mine)

In another sermon of this time (1627) Donne tells his congregation that "his Ordinance of preaching [i.e., as God's minister] batters the soule His Ministers are an Earth-quake, and shake an earthly soule; They are the sonnes of thunder, and scatter a cloudy conscience; They are as the fall of waters, and carry with them whole congregations; 3000 at a Sermon They are as the roaring of a Lion of the tribe of Juda [i.e. Jesus in Apc. 5:5] cries down the Lion [i.e., the devil of 1 Peter 5:8] whom he may devour" (7:396). This latter sermon also in part echoes James's life-long identification with lions (Wilson 188; Fraser 111); it is possible to hypothesize that Donne perceives his own

ministerial power as a means to challenge the "king of beasts" and thus, he uses the subversive power of his pulpit to "beard the lion in his den."

It is evident that, although John Donne's idea of kingship resembles that of the royalist clergy in refusing rebellion or the overthrow of the monarchy, he departs from them in his implicit suggestion of the dichotomy between the ideal of kingship inherent in the monarchical principle and the stark reality that the Stuart monarchs were men who fell far short of their supposed divine mission. He can thus be said to instruct through negative example.

Donne's implicit challenge of the Stuart monarchs' abuse of power can be viewed as particularly daring when one reviews the mounting crisis of authority and the fate of some of Donne's outspoken contemporaries. For example, Hill observes that "the decades immediately before the Civil War were years of a literary as well as an economic divide The censorship . . . brought authors, the whole commonwealth and all the liberal sciences into bondage The idea that court patronage benefited literature under Charles I is a ludicrous travesty Until 1641 the publication of home news of any sort was a legal offence. There were no printed newspapers This added to the political importance of the pulpit" (Century 97-9). Moreover, Donne's use in the pulpit of Biblical texts for consciously subversive political purpose was not entirely unique. For example, Germano describes the famous Edinburgh Riot of 1596 as an example of how a Scriptural reference could be wielded with great force. On that

occasion, Scottish ministers, discontented with James's powerful financial ministers, preached sermons focusing on the wickedness of Haman. The congregation became so aroused that they streamed into the street, weapons in hand, in search of the king and his advisors. Thus, the dour world of sixteenth-century Scotland could be ignited by the skillful use of the Bible (20-1).

Furthermore, according to C. Hill, the godly had begun to take their Bibles with them to church, so that they could check the preacher's references. For example, in a sermon of Thomas Hooker in 1626, Hooker prayed that God would "set on the heart of the King" Malachi II 11-12. He did not quote the text: "an abomination is committed; Judah hath married the daughter of a strange God. The Lord will cut off the man that doth this." Hooker could hardly have more openly urged Charles I to repudiate his new French bride, Henrietta Maria. Similarly, Winstanley, Selden and Hobbes were masters of the art of using Biblical texts to make a wholly unorthodox point. As the Bible became available in English after the Reformation, and as literacy moved down the social scale, so men and women began to take literally the more subversive texts of the Bible which their betters preferred to read allegorically (Collected Essays I 55-7).

As an example of the strict literary censorship of the time, Ben Jonson was cited before the Privy Council in 1603 on a charge of treason for the politically explosive thematic material of his play Sejanus. The play depicts a government tyranny establishing itself through the use of informers, and presents the spectacle of

a whole nation turning into a race of spies and eavesdroppers (Kernan and Young 16).

In the political sphere the great Parliamentary orator, Sir John Eliot, castigated Buckingham for betraying England (in the Cadiz expedition), and led the House of Commons in presenting a remonstrance to the King asserting its right to question the highest subjects of the Crown. He subsequently led the impeachment proceedings against Buckingham. Speaking on the impeachment of Buckingham, Eliot compared him to Sejanus, and was committed, in 1629, to the Tower for words used in his speeches (Tanner 58-59). Eliot later refused to acknowledge the right of the judges to examine him on statements made in the Commons. In 1632, having refused to acknowledge any fault, and consoling himself by writing a work of idealistic political theory, The Monarchy of Man, he died of consumption in the Tower. Charles, who considered him Buckingham's bane, refused to release him on grounds of health, and even refused him burial at Park Eliot. "Let Sir John Eliot," he minuted on the petition, "be buried in the parish in which he died" (Bowle 111).

The best example, however, of the perilousness of the preacher's position is an incident which occurred as a result of a sermon preached by Donne 1 April 1627, and which brought him to his knees before Charles I. Bald summarizes events:

At the time Archbishop Abbot was out of favour with the King who was more and more dominated by Laud's ecclesiastical policies. Abbot had not only incurred disfavour by his refusal to license, first, Montague's *Appello Caesarem*, with its advocacy of High Church doctrines,

and more recently, a sermon preached by Robert Sibthorpe, which carried the Prerogative to an unwarrantable length, but in addition he had preached a sermon that had given offence to the King. Accordingly authority was highly suspicious, and from some remarks of John Donne [in the sermon under question] it had looked as if he were deliberately following Abbot's lead and taking sides against the policies of LaudThere were also certain passages that could have been held to reflect on the Queen. (492)

Almost immediately afterwards, Donne received a warning from Sir Robert Ker, and then a letter from Laud demanding in the King's name a copy of the offending sermon. In a letter to Ker, Donne explains that he deliberately turned the pulpit to the use of court intrigue. He writes:

I have now put into my Lord of Bath and Wells' hands the sermon I beseech you be pleased to hearken farther after it; I am still upon my jealousy that the King brought some disaffection towards me, grounded upon some other demerit of mine and took it not from the sermon In this sermon I expressed those two points, which I take so much to conduce to his service, the imprinting of persuasibility and obedience in the subject and the breaking of the bed of whisperers, by casting in a bone of making them suspect and distrust one another So the best of my hope is that some over bold allusions, or expressions in the way, might divert his Majesty from vouchsafing to observe the frame and purpose of the sermon When he sees the general scope, I hope his goodness will pardon collateral escapes

(qtd. in Gosse 2:244-45)

Donne further explained, in another letter on the same sermon, that he had brought partisan politics into it because he was "studious" of the King's "service" (7:39-40). As Bald states, in reviewing the circumstances of this frightening encounter between

Donne and Charles, Donne "had also taken the precaution of enlisting the aid of his powerful friend [Buckingham] The next day brought the matter to an end. Laud had evidently read the sermon and reported on it to the King, and Donne was admitted to a special audience Donne did not clear himself of guilt, but . . . the King forgave him, so there is no doubt that Donne had to show penitence and ask for forgiveness. Then . . . the King . . . turned to Laud and thanked him warmly for his zeal in checking anything that might be thought to reflect on himself" (493-94).

This experience must also have been a humiliating one for Donne, who in his ministerial role had the responsibility of admonishing the court to a life of righteousness. In this particular situation he was reduced to seeking the assistance of that very court, even of the detested Buckingham for a precarious continuance in the royal favor.

The painful paradox of Donne's position is evident in significant but glancing allusions, in the sermons of 1627, to his "feare of losing the favour of those great Persons upon whom we depend, and so [we] accompany, or assist them in their sins" (7:337). Preaching later the same year, he acknowledges:

When will we wake any Master any upon whom we depend, and say, Master, carest not thou, though thou perish? We suffer others, whom we should instruct, and we suffer our selves to passe on to the last gaspe and we never rebuke our Consciences, till our Consciences rebuke us at last, Alas, it is otherwise and you never told us. (7:137)

The overwhelming complexity of Donne's position should now be

be addressed: (1) a definition of Donne's ministerial role and (2) an interpretation of his final statement on kingship.

If we extrapolate from Donne's own suggestion that "every man that comes with Gods Message hither, brings a little Amasiah of his owne . . . a little whisperer in his own heart . . ." (2:348-49), then it is possible to locate Donne's position as falling somewhere close to the median on the spectrum of ministerial commitment between that of the prophet Amos, and that of the King's high priest and puppet/mouthpiece, Amaziah.

The fate of the prophet Amos would have been an ominous reminder to a man denied political preferment and tempted by his ministerial office to prophesy. Amos was "the prophet of judgment" (McKenzie 27), denouncing the political oppression he perceived about him and, as such, may be construed by some as a rugged individualist in his heroic dedication to his prophetic role. As a result of his outspoken and sarcastic condemnation of the kingly abuse of power by Jeroboam, and resultant confrontation with Amaziah, Amos was forced to withdraw into Judah, and according to some legends, may even have been martyred due to the machinations of Amaziah. The clash with Amaziah brought Amos's prophetic activity to an abrupt conclusion (Mays 4).

A familial reminder of the dangers of the prophetic role also came from Sir Thomas More, Donne's own martyred kinsman who resembles Amos in his outspoken criticism of the abuse of power. According to Erasmus, More "always had a special loathing of tyranny" (Fenlon 453), and was prepared to die on the scaffold

rather than submit to the dictates of what he perceived as monarchical despotism. The examples of the fate of Amos and More (and also that of Donne's contemporary Eliot) illustrated the consequences of speaking out openly and fearlessly, and attested to the danger implicit in one of the options (i.e. the explicit and outspoken prophetic stance) open to Donne.

At this point, Carey's reminder that Donne did not originally wish to become "a cassocked pedant," but instead "an alert and resourceful courtier" (87) may be of some relevance to an understanding of Donne's reaction to the Stuart monarchs, and his subsequent attitude to their exercise of kingship. As Carey observes, "the pearly gates that he wanted to pass through were those of Whitehall What Donne really wanted to be was Ambassador to Venice, not to God and destiny" (109).

Although I have demonstrated that Donne apparently grew into an intense dedication to his ministerial responsibility in addition to earning the reputation as "the greatest preacher of his age" (Potter and Simpson X, xii), his commitment did not extend to dying for his cause. On the contrary, it appears that Donne probably felt that rather than oscillate to the opposite end of the spectrum of ministerial commitment, in assuming the role of an Amaziah or royal mouthpiece (as did many of the royalist clergy), he could best undermine the corrupt contemporary political system by remaining alive, and at the scene. He was thus enabled to use his pulpit, his political acumen, and his unique, subversive image system of vitiated kingship, to comment typologically on the

reality of the exercise of monarchical power beneath the Stuarts' rationalizing camouflage of The Theory of the Divine Right of Kings. And the sincerity of his commitment to his ministerial role appears to be reflected in the following inscription recorded by Donne on many of the books he owned, including his copy of St. Thomas More's Lucubrationes: Per Rachel ho servito e non per Lea (i.e., I have served Rachel and not Lea) (qtd. in Gleason 599).

Donne's final sermon, "Death's Duell," can be viewed as his closing statement on kingship and, as such, is not only a stark replication of the apparently hopeless state of contemporary politico/religious events but also is predictive of the bloodbath of the English Civil War to come. It seemingly expresses Donne's apprehension about the future of king and kingdom. As he cites, for example, the text of Job 21:23, in juxtaposition with that of Isaiah 14:11 depicting the fall of a tyrant to the anonymity of Sheol, he suggests that, ironically, it is only in the realm of the "miserable riddle" of unkinging death that men will experience equality, for the "poorest" will be "made equal to Princes" and all "lye down alike in the dust and the worms covere them" (10:238).

Given that the fundamental political problems not only remained unsolved, but that the gravity of the situation was escalating, it is little wonder that Donne's final sermon is replete with horrifying images of blood, and of the closed womb, symbolic of death, which are suggestive of the fate of many of Donne's contemporaries at the hands of the great. Even in this final sermon, preached just weeks prior to his death, he inserted

an allusion to his dilemma, and to that of his fellow countrymen: "And we are afraid to speak to the great men of this world of their death, but nourish in them a vain imagination of immortality and immutability" (10:245). However as is his custom in all his sermons, and with an echo of his own statement in another context that "No man is an island No man hath affliction . . . that is not matured and ripened by it, and made fit for God by that affliction" (qtd. in Baker 552), John Donne urges his auditors to anchor their hopes and hearts on the Power of God and the promise of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Although we know little of Donne's innermost feelings during these last years of his life because he became progressively more secretive in his letters (Simpson 339), a pragmatic statement made by his martyred kinsman, Thomas More, might hold the key to Donne's final view of the problem of monarchical tyranny:

But there is another philosophy more practical for statesmen, which knows its stage, adopts itself to the play in hand, and performs its roll neatly and appropriately. This is the philosophy which you must employ . . . So it is in the deliberations of monarchs. If you cannot pluck up wrongheaded opinions by the root, if you cannot cure according to your heart's desire vices of long standing, yet you must not on that account desert the commonwealth. You must not abandon the ship in a storm because you cannot control the winds.

(Complete Works, IV. 98-9)

It is with this philosophy in mind, and an awareness that for John Donne the possibility of resistance by means of rebellion and overthrow of the monarchy was not even an option, that we should

understand his final exhortation, in which he echoes Romans 13, and Richard Hooker, in admonishing his auditors and readers--It is subjection we owe.

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