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KING CHARLES I DURING HIS TRIAL AND EXECUTION:
HIS PERSONAL LIFE AND THE ALTERATION OF HIS PERSONALITY

By Jonathan H. Poston
European History Honors
University of Richmond
April 1976

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PREFACE

The "martyrdom" of Charles I has been a subject of controversy by historians, amateur and professional, since the moment the King's head was severed on the block at Whitehall. The purpose of this paper is not to recount events repeated throughout a large array of books on the subject, but to examine a possible reason for the martyred reputation of Charles and to examine his personality.

Dates used in this paper reflect a need for uniformity. The English Calendar in 1648-1649 was still the Julian (or Old Style) Calendar, which was ten days behind the rest of Europe. Also, although England celebrated New Years Day on January 1, the previous year was used in the dates of official papers until March 24. The dates herein included retain the days of the Julian Calendar, but feature a change of the year on January 1.

During his imprisonment by Parliament in 1648 and 1649, King Charles I wrote a poem about his fate which closed with a prayer:

But sacred Saviour! with Thy words I woo
Thee to forgive, and not be bitter to
Such as, Thou knowest, know not what they do

Augment my patience; nullify my hate;
Preserve my issue, and inspire my mate,
And though we perish, bless this Church and State!

This poem exemplifies the state of mind of King Charles during this troubled period of his life. His personality underwent a marked change during his final weeks on earth, and the change gave him such spirituality and composure as to account for his eventual reputation as a martyr. This change may be verified by an examination of the personal life of King Charles I from the beginning of his trial on January 20, 1649 through his execution on the scaffold at Whitehall several days later. Such an examination requires an analysis of five areas: the basic events leading up to the trial of the King; the trial itself; the relationship of the King to his family, captors, and attendants; the personal state of mind of the King during his confinement; and his demeanor at the execution. Through such an analysis an attempt will be made to portray the inner thoughts of this controversial monarch.

A brief summary of the events leading up to the trial of King Charles I by the High Court of Justice is necessary. The defeated Charles fled in 1648 to Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight, from his original confinement by Parliament at Honeby

Holmbury

House and Hampton Court, and there he was captured and again confined. Prior to his flight, there had been an opportunity for peace. The Commissioners had proposed a treaty, and "there was no man, except Sir Harry Vane, who did not desire that a peace might be established by that treaty."¹ Now, however, renewed Royalist uprisings were occurring, and soldiers had begun to mutter "betrayal."² On November 16, 1647, the Army had presented Charles with a final proposal that would have allowed ~~for~~ a Council of State to oversee the militia and ~~for~~ Crown officers to be appointed by the King from a list approved by Parliament.³ The monarch rejected the proposal, since he "preferred to lose his life rather than part with his regal power."⁴ The radicals who had been debating his seizure for months finally had gained the upper hand.⁵

While the King was at Carisbrooke, a plan for his escape was arranged by the Duke of Hamilton, a leading Scottish peer. Since it was believed that Charles was in complicity with the plot, action was demanded by the radicals of the Army. King Charles was moved by soldiers under the command of Colonel Ayres on December 7, 1648 to Hurst Castle. Soon afterwards Pride's Purge of Parliament occurred, and all those members who were Presbyterians, or who were sympathetic to the King were eliminated by the Independents. The remaining group on December 27, 1648, passed an ordinance establishing the High Court of Justice, consisting of 135 persons. The formal act against King Charles I was passed on January 6, 1649 declaring:

That Charles Stuart, the now King of England, not content with those many encroachments which his

predecessors had made upon the people in their Rights and Freedoms, had a wicked Design totally to subvert the Ancient and Fundamental Laws and Liberties of this Nation, and, in their place, to introduce an Arbitrary and Tyrannical Government; . . . Whereas also, the Parliament well hoping that the Restraint and Imprisonment of his person, after it had pleased God to deliver him into their hands, would have quieted the distempers of the Kingdom, did forbear to proceed Judicially against him, but found by sad Experience that such their remissness served only to encourage him and his Complices in the continuance of their evil practices and in raising of new Comotions, Rebellions and Invasions; for prevention therefore of the like or greater Inconveniencies, . . . Thomas, Lord Fairfax, Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, . . . shall be and are hereby Appointed and Required to be Commissioners and Judges for the Hearing, Trying, and Adjudging of the said Charles Stuart.⁶

The King, meanwhile, had been moved from Hurst Castle by Colonel Thomas Harrison, a butcher's son and former law clerk upon whom Oliver Cromwell greatly depended.⁷ Charles was conducted by a party of 1,200 to 1,400 "horse" through Winchester and Bagshott until he reached Windsor Castle on December 23, 1648.⁸ At Windsor, which was under the jurisdiction of Colonel Whitchcott, Charles received news of his impending trial from Miles Corbet, known among Royalists as 'bull-headed, splay-footed, bacon-faced Corbet.'⁹ At first, the Court was to convene at Windsor, but the location was changed to the Painted Chamber of Henry III in Westminster Hall.

Those who brought King Charles to trial defended their action on the principles of religion and patriotism and were proud of what they did. For this reason they chose for the place of his trial not the enclosed precincts of Windsor but the most famous and public place of the whole Kingdom, Westminster Hall¹⁰

On January 19, 1649, King Charles I was conducted by coach

from the Keep of Windsor through Brainford and Hammersmith ~~and~~ to St. James Palace.¹¹ He remained there for a night and after going briefly to Whitehall, he was conducted to his lodgings at the home of Sir John Cotton. This house was chosen partially because of its proximity to Westminster Hall.¹² Charles was carried up the Thames past the stairs to Westminster Hall in a covered barge surrounded by soldiers in open boats, and he disembarked at the private landing of Cotton's house.¹³ The King had been well-treated by Governor Whitchcott and the troops while at Windsor, but at this point the ceremony and manner towards him began to change.

Although Army sources have insisted that Charles was always maintained with dignity, Royalist sources have insisted that during the move to Cotton House "as he passed along, some in defiance spit upon his Garments" ¹⁴ Although the soldiers under Colonel Tomlinson which conducted him from Windsor, were probably well-disciplined, it is likely that the troops under Colonel Hackers and the uneducated Colonel Hercules Huncks, which were to guard him during the trial, were permitted to be disrespectful. Charles was surely aware that his days of receiving kingly reverence were ending and that the days ahead would be demeaning to his concept of regality.

The actual trial began on January 8, 1649 in the Painted Chamber of Westminster Hall with fifty-three members present.¹⁵ Mr. Aske, Mr. Cook, Mr. Seale, and Dr. Dorislaus were appointed as counsel for the Commonwealth, and John Bradshaw, Serjeant at

VANE - HARDY on ARISTOCRAT

Law, was selected Lord President. Bradshaw was a member of a prominent family of ^{Cheshire} Cheshire, but he had become most noted for his denunciations of the King, in which he had compared him to Nero and Caligula.¹⁶ Bradshaw was appointed only after the first four choices for the position had refused to serve, including Algernon Sydney, son of the Earl of Leicester.¹⁷ Therefore Bradshaw received great authority, wearing a gown and being preceded in Westminster Hall by Serjeant Dendy carrying a mace on his shoulder.¹⁸ Among other men serving on the Court of Justice, there was a noted absence of the most aristocratic members of the Army and Parliament including Lord Thomas Fairfax, who only came to the first meeting, and Sir Harry Vane. The Royalist charge, though, that the judges present were all incompetent because they were "Cobblers, others Brewers, one a Goldsmith, and many of them Mechanicks" ¹⁹ is not supported by extant evidence. C.V. Wedgwood has shown that the men on the Court of obscure origin were a minority, and that most of the judges, even those from the New Model Army were country gentlemen and substantial landowners.²⁰

As for the setting of the trial, Westminster Hall had a recognized place in the judicial system of the time, and it had been the scene of other monarchical tragedies.²¹ On January 20 the Court made its final preparations and set the appearance of the King for the next day. Among the particulars established for the trial, it was decided that no more than twenty commissioners (members of the Court) were required for a quorum.²²

Charles entered the Court on January 20, 1649 after the

clerk had read the act of the House of Commons creating the body now assembled. After "a stern looking" at the crowd, he was seated, with hat on, with his servants on his left and Cook on his right.²³ *(one of his friends)* The courtroom, according to Sir Thomas Herbert, the King's chief attendant, had "upwards of threescore, some of them members of the House of Commons, others were commanders in the army, and others some citizens of London, some of whom he (Charles) knew but not all."²⁴ A disguised Lady Fairfax had already caused some disruption by crying out from the gallery when her husband's name was called that he had more "wit" than to be there.²⁵ This prominent Presbyterian lady would cause more interruptions during the rest of the trial.

Although many of the events and specific speeches by Charles at the trial will not be discussed, those germane to this study will now be included. The King sat motionless through the reading of the charges, but when Cook came to that part which denounced him as a "Tyrant" and "Traytor," he laughed.²⁶ When an answer was demanded of him by the Court, he made the reply which he would continually reassert: "He said that He stood more for the Liberties of the People, than any of the Judges there sitting, and again demanded by what authority he was brought thither."²⁷ The King was determined not to give any credence to the authority of the Court, so "he consulted the interest of his reputation for dignity and consistency and certainty without sacrificing any chance of acquittal."²⁸ To that aspect of the charge that he had betrayed the

elective trust of the people, Charles answered that "England was never an Elective Kingdom, but an Hereditary Kingdom for near these thousand years."²⁹ As the crowd became unruly with some soldiers crying "Justice! Justice!" and many others crying "God save the King!" Bradshaw adjourned the session.³⁰

The next day, the commissioners met in private and decided that if the King should continue to deny the authority of the Court, his answer would be taken "as a Contumacy, and that it shall be as Recorded."³¹ The next day was Sunday and the members of the Court of Justice heard three sermons, including one by the radical Hugh Peter on "To bind their Kings with Chains."³² When the King was brought to the body again on Monday afternoon, he refused to answer the charges, saying: "My reason why in Conscience, and the Duty I owe to God first and my people next for the Preservation of their Lives, Liberties and Estates, I conceive I cannot answer this, till I be satisfied of the Legality of it" ³³ After being interrupted and declared to be in contempt of court, Charles was again told that the High Court had the authority to bring him to trial. The monarch, after taking some notes, then began to speak on the lack of legal precedent and asked for a previous time when the House of Commons had served as a "Court of Judicature."³⁴ Bradshaw, who was unable to answer this question, demanded him to answer the charge and finally ordered him removed. Charles continued to demand the precedent, and finally, in answer to Bradshaw's rejoinder that he had taken up arms against the liberties of his people, he said, "I never took up arms against the people, but for the

Laws."³⁵

The next session at which the King was present occurred on Wednesday, January 24. ~~The monarch~~^{Charles} again denied the authority of the Court, and after Bradshaw pointed out, "This is the third time that you have publicly disowned this Court and put an affront upon it," the clerk recorded a default against him.³⁶ The next several days were occupied with private sessions of the High Court of Justice. Due to constant attacks on the body from Major Francis White, a leader of the Levellers, and from leading Presbyterians, the Court had decided to hear testimony against the King. The judges heard some thirty-three witnesses including a painter who had executed the design on the standard pole which the King had raised at Nottingham.³⁷ Finally, on January 26, it was adjudged that the King as "A Tyrant, Traitor, Murderer, and a publick Enemy shall be put to death by the severing of his Head from his Body."³⁸

The final day began with Bradshaw's entrance in a red robe and the King's entrance, accompanied by shouts from the soldiers for "Justice!" now coupled with shouts for "Execution!" The only other major interruption of the day was from Lady Fairfax, who, after crying that Oliver Cromwell was a traitor, hurriedly left because of a threat by a guard.³⁹ Charles reaffirmed his feelings to the Court and said:

. . . Now Sir, I conceive, that an hasty Sentence once passed, may sooner be repented of than recalled; And truly, the self-same desire that I have for the Peace of the Kingdom, and the Liberty of the Subject more than my own particular Ends, makes me now at last desire, That I having

something to say that concerns both, before Sentence be given, that I may be heard in the Painted Chamber before the Lords and the Commons. Therefore . . . I do conjure you, as you love that that you pretend, (I hope it is real) the Liberty of the Subject, the Peace of the Kingdom, that you will grant me this Hearing, before any Sentence be past.⁴⁰

Although the High Court of Justice attempted to immediately pass over this request, the reluctance of some members was expressed by John Downes, an MP for Arundel, who tried to speak for the King and was restrained by Oliver Cromwell.⁴¹ The Court did retire briefly and hear Downes' arguments, but they were unmoved by his arguments. The judges returned in a half-hour and Bradshaw announced the reading of the sentence. King Charles requested more time for a new agreement, and some historians believe that he intended to announce his intention to abdicate in favor of his son.⁴² Lord President Bradshaw then gave a forty-minute oration with the usual comparison of Charles to Caligula. After this speech, the clerk Andrew Broughton read the sentence and when the Lord President said, "This sentence now read published is the sentence, judgement, and resolution of the whole Court. Here the Court stood up as asserting what the Lord President had said."⁴³ When the King asked to respond, Bradshaw ordered him to be taken away. Angered by the inability to even speak, Charles pleaded again and as he was removed cried, "I am not suffered to speak: expect what Justice other People will have."⁴⁴

The warrant was barely read and Charles dragged from the Court before preparations for the execution were begun.⁴⁵

Five soldiers were chosen to make the preparations including Sir Hardress Waller, Colonels Harrison, Dean, and Okey, and General Ireton. The only remaining problem was the signing of the warrant for Charles' execution. Apparently the signing was begun on Friday, January 26, but the date on the document was altered to Monday, January 29, because few appeared to sign on the appointed day. This is evident because fifteen of the fifty-nine who signed the warrant were not recorded as present on January 29.⁴⁶ Some of those members of the Court who did sign later insisted that it was under Cromwell's pressure. The execution of King Charles I was now set for January 30, 1649.

With this understanding of the basic historical events it is now easier to examine Charles and his relationships with others during the trial, including his family, attendants, and captors. Charles was more alone during the trial than he had ever been in his life. His beloved wife Queen Henrietta Maria was now in Paris, having been forced to depart in July of 1644, just two weeks after the birth of her daughter Henrietta Anne. King Charles had been worried about his wife, since, as her Capuchin~~x~~ Father Cyprien recalled:

On her passage, this afflicted princess was several times at the point of death from extreme weakness, from violent apprehensions for her infant, abandoned to the fury of those tygers, and from a very serious and distressing accident, which divine Providence permitted to try the firmness of her courage, and to heighten her virtues.⁴⁷

The period of the royal couple's separation had not been without some argument in the ciphered letters which they exchanged.

The Queen in her Catholic outlook on the similarity of all Protestants recommended that Charles embrace Presbyterianism to facilitate a treaty. Charles replied firmly that he could not accept Presbyterianism and said, "With what patience wouldst thou give ear to him who should persuade thee, for worldly respects, to leave the Communion of the Roman Church, for any other."⁴⁸ Despite his refusal on this matter, Charles' love for his wife also caused him to depend on her opinions on most matters, even on the selection of attendants for his bedchamber.⁴⁹

However, with the Frondeur rebellion raging in Paris during January of 1649, the French court had gone to St. Germain and Henrietta was barricaded inside the Louvre. The Queen was again in a depressed state, as she had no money or jewels with which to buy fuel to heat her rooms.⁵⁰ The King himself was depressed because he could not successfully send letters to the wife on whom he was so dependent. He did not even realize that the Queen on January 3, 1649 had requested safe conduct to visit her husband, and that the House of Commons had put the letter aside.⁵¹ Charles was forced to find a replacement for his dependency upon Henrietta.

King Charles and his ^{eldest} son, the Prince, corresponded much more frequently during this period, but the communication with the Prince did not give Charles the security that his wife's letters had normally given him. Charles used the opportunity, however, to advise his son upon his duties. Charles, as early as November of 1648, advised the future monarch:

Shew the greatness of your mind rather to conquer your Enemies by pardoning, than by punishing. If you saw how unmanly and unchristianly this implacable disposition is in Our ill-willers, you would avoid that spirit. Censure us not for having parted with too much Our Own Right; the price was great, the Commodity was Security to Us, Peace to Our People; and we are confident another Parliament would remember how useful a King's Power is to a People's Liberty.⁵²

The father was conscious of his son's position and he was ever mindful to advise him of what he considered the proper course. Prince Charles, meanwhile, prevailed upon the Dutch Estates to send envoys to delay the trial of the King. The Estates sent a Mr. Paw and Albert Joachimi as diplomats, but they did not arrive until late January when a decision by the Court had already been reached.⁵³ In a last attempt to obtain news of his father, Prince Charles dispatched Thomas Seymour to see him on January 23, 1649.⁵⁴ King Charles spoke with Seymour in the presence of Colonel Hacker and Sir Thomas Herbert, his chief attendant. He gave him letters to the Queen and the Prince, and commended his guard Colonel Tomlinson to them.⁵⁵ In the letter King Charles told the Prince:

And if God will have disloyalty perfected by my destruction, let my memory ever, with my name, live in you; as of your father, that loves you, and once a King of three flourishing kingdoms; whom God thought fit to honour, not only with the scepter and government of them, but also with the suffering many indignities and an untimely death for them; while I studied to preserve the rights of the Church, the powers of the Laws, the honour of my Crown, the privilege of Parliaments, the liberties of my people and my own conscience, which I thank God, is dearer to me, than a thousand kingdoms.

I know God can, I hope he will restore me to my rights; I cannot despair either of his mercy, or my peoples love and pitty.⁵⁶

Thus King Charles had much hope left for his son's future.

In his last hours the King also had a few moments with two of his other children, Princess Elizabeth, aged thirteen, and Henry, Duke of Gloucester, aged eight. These children had lived tragic lives due to their six-year imprisonment by Parliament, and neither would live to full adulthood. Sir Thomas Herbert recalled:

The Princess being the elder was the most sensible of her royal father's condition, as appeared by her sorrowful look and excessive weeping, and her little brother seeing his sister weep, he took the like impression, though by reason of his tender age, he could not have the like apprehension.⁵⁷

Certainly Charles wanted this meeting to be remembered and, although accounts were written by several persons, he specifically instructed the Princess to write down later what he said to her.⁵⁸ According to Lady Elizabeth, as he was unable to write to her, he desired to tell her in person that she was not to grieve and torment herself for him since it "would be a glorious Death that he should die, it being for the Laws and Liberties of this land, and for maintaining the true Protestant Religion."⁵⁹ In addition, the King told her to forgive his enemies, read several books including Bishop Andrewes' Sermons, Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, and "Bishop Laud's Book against Fisher," and he commanded the children to be obedient to their mother.⁶⁰ The monarch admonished the young Duke to prevent the family from being divided:

. . . Sweet Heart, now they will cut off thy Father's Head (upon which words the child look very steadfastly on Him), Mark, Child, what I say, They will cut off my Head, and perhaps make thee

a King; But mark what I say, You must not be a King, so long as your Brothers Charles and James do live; for they will cut off your Brothers Heads (when they can catch them), and cut off thy Head too at last; and therefore I charge you not to be made a King by them.⁶¹

The King then proceeded to give the children the last of his jewels. He had sent his attendant to a woman (some sources say Lady Wheeler, some Jane Whorwood) on King Street with an emerald and diamond ring which was exchanged for a little sealed cabinet containing diamonds and jewels, mostly "broken Georges and Garters."⁶² After presenting the jewels and placating another tearful outburst by Elizabeth, Charles walked quickly into his bedchamber and lay down on the bed. His legs were trembling and he was filled with emotion by his last meeting with any of his family.⁶³

These members of his family were those who Charles probably thought most about during his last days. As for his relatives on the various thrones of Europe, they "viewed his fate with silent apathy."⁶⁴ Charles' nephew, the Prince-Elector Louis, and his cousin the Duke of Richmond, and several other noblemen attempted to visit him, but Charles had no desire to see Prince Louis, who had hovered about Westminster for the past four years hoping to be offered the crown.⁶⁵ As Charles told his chief attendant about his refusal of the visit, "My time is short and precious, and I am desirous to improve it the best I may in preparation."⁶⁶

Thus Charles had almost no companionship with his family during these last, trying days. He had several significant attendants, both secular and religious, but many fewer followers

than he had usually retained. He had a great many secular attendants until the movement to Whitehall for the trial. While the monarch was at Windsor, Oliver Cromwell ordered the number of servants to be cut back:

We desire you also out of the chief of the King's servants last allowed (upon advice with Lt. Col. Cobbett and Captain Merriman) to appoint about the number of six (such as are most to be confided in, and who may best supply all officers to stay with and attend the King for such necessary uses and the rest we desire you to send away⁶⁷

This letter was sent to Harrison and further recommendations, for separation of the King from Royalists and prohibition of public worship, were also sent. These conditions apparently were not carried out at first, for Herbert recalled no hardships during the early part of the stay at Windsor, and remarked on the excellent civility of the Governor. Furthermore the nobles were allowed to come and worship with King Charles at St. George's Chapel where the chaplain of the Governor preached on Sunday.⁶⁸ While at Windsor the King dined in his usual ceremonial manner which consisted of the attendance of a large number of servants performing their duties on bended knee.⁶⁹ He had Sir Fulke Greville as carver, Captain Preston as sewer and keeper of the robes, Mr. Ansty as gentleman usher, Captain Joiner as cook, Mr. Babington as barber, Mr. Readington, as page of the back-stairs, and three other attendants.⁷⁰ But about a fortnight after Charles had regained these servants, they were removed and the ceremonial dining procedure was abolished.⁷¹ By the time the King reached Whitehall and Cotton House, he was left with only a few secular followers, including the ever faithful Sir

Thomas Herbert and Clement Kinnersley. Herbert slept on a pallet in the King's chamber while he was at Whitehall and Cotton House, and he roused Charles each morning. One morning while at Windsor, though, Herbert overslept, and as an aid and reward for his faithfulness, Charles ordered a gold alarm clock for him from his watchmaker in Fleet Street, Mr. East. But a guard who was supposed to deliver the clock stole it before it ever reached Herbert at Whitehall.⁷²

One group which King Charles assuredly missed during his latter confinement were admiring women. Clarendon pointed out that he was a great example of conjugal chastity and he had directed "his bishops to prosecute those scandalous vices in the ecclesiastical courts against persons of eminence, and near relation to his service."⁷³ Nevertheless, women other than his wife were of great help to Charles. Not only were aristocrats and court-beauties such as Lady Wheeler, who kept his jewels, faithful to him, but so were women of lesser station. Early in his imprisonment the Army had become concerned:

We are also informed that the King hath constant intelligence given him of all things, which he receives by the hands of a woman, who bringeth it to him, when she bringeth his clean linen; of which we thought fit to give you this information
⁷⁴

The King's greatest helper was probably the good-natured daughter of his father's stable surveyor, Jane Whorwood. Mrs. Whorwood aided in Charles' escape to Carisbrooke and then attempted to secure his release from there by attempting to raise the population of the island against the garrison:

But though it never proved possible to assemble the necessary forces to put the project to the test, this stout-hearted woman not only managed to keep up a correspondence in cipher with the

King, but even -- in the teeth of Hammond's precautions and spies -- to get admitted to his presence. She was in fact the most trusted of his helpers to the very end, and one is tempted to think that if the arrangements had been in her hands from the first, that end might have been averted.⁷⁵

Mrs. Whorwood was extremely helpful to the King. Puritan insinuations of illicit relations between her and King Charles are ridiculous. Even discounting Charles' strict chastity, Mrs. Whorwood was of matronly age and had "a round visage, and pockholes in her face."⁷⁶ Obviously there were some attempts by her to communicate with Charles during his last days, but, due to greater security and isolation, Charles spent January of 1649 without direct contact with this kindly woman.

The King in his last days, though, gained the most satisfaction from his spiritual advisor. Charles spent a great deal of his moments privately, a fact which will be dealt with later. However, he had some spiritual guidance from others. Shortly after his arrival at St. James on January 19, 1649, the King, who had been without a personal chaplain for an extended period, requested the attendance of Dr. William Juxon, Bishop of London. Whitelocke recalled that "upon a conference betwixt the King and Mr. Hugh Peter~~s~~, and the King desiring that one of his own chaplains might be permitted to come to him for his satisfaction in some scruples of conscience, Dr. Juxon, Bishop of London, was ordered to go to his Majesty."⁷⁷

Juxon, a native of Chichester in Sussex had been a Fellow and President of St. John's College, Oxford and there he had

become acquainted with Archbishop Laud. David Lloyd recalled:

. . . When he preached (saith one that heard him) of Mortification, Repentence, and other Christian Practicks, he did it with such a stroke of unaffected Eloquence, of potent Demonstration, and irresistable conviction, that few Agrippaes, Festaes, or Felixes, that heard but must needs for the time and fit, be almost perswaded to be penitent and mortified Christians.⁷⁸

Juxon was also important to the King because ^{in 1641} he had advised him not to sign the death warrant of the Earl of Strafford, a move which Charles made and thereafter regretted.⁷⁹ Bishop Juxon was constantly with the King in prayer and reading scripture, and an evidence of his excellence was the monarch's retention of him and refusal to see other divines who offered their services including the ministers Calamy, Vines, Carryl, Dell, and John Goodwyn.⁸⁰ Dr. Juxon preached to Charles at St. James on his last Sunday on the words "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of all men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospell."⁸¹ Since the King loved him for his virtues, he requested that " he might attend him in the final preparation for death."⁸²

Finally, King Charles' relations with his captors should be noted. The position of Charles with these men has been distorted in Royalist publications. However, the cruelty of a few was enough to irritate and frighten a monarch. Even during his first confinement in 1646, Charles wrote to the Queen, "I never knew what it was to be barbarously baited before and these five or six days last have much surpassed, in rude pressures against my conscience, all the rest" ⁸³

The Scottish troops, though, probably treated the monarch with

the greatest dignity and he preferred them to the English soldiers.⁸⁴ Many of the first, isolated breaches of conduct angered the King, such as the instance when a guard named Rolfe attempted to ride in his coach on the way from Carisbrooke to Hurst Castle and Charles said, "It is not come to that yet, Get you out"⁸⁵ However, it was not long afterwards that Charles resigned himself to having sentinels around his chamber and discomfort from "the smoak of their matches."⁸⁶

At Windsor, it has been noted that the guards and governor treated the King in a regal manner, but after his arrival in London for the trial, Charles again found guards constantly outside his door.⁸⁷ Since the men assigned to this guard were changed every day, there was no opportunity to build up a rapport with them. As Clarendon pointed out, "The same men were never suffered to perform the same monstrous duty."⁸⁸ This change also lessened any possibility of bribery.⁸⁹ Although Royalists claimed that the soldiers were constantly in the King's chamber permitting him no privacy for prayer and meditation,⁹⁰ conditions were not as unbearable as might have been allowed. Oliver Cromwell and several other leaders defeated a provision which would have forbidden Charles even to converse with anyone except in the presence of soldiers.⁹¹

Charles had varied relations with the officers of the Army. Colonel Matthew Tomlinson who guarded him during his conveyance from St. James to Whitehall, and at certain times during the trial was basically respectful of the King. Clarendon put Tomlinson in the same category as the other captors

who treated the monarch with "rudeness and barbarity,"⁹² but, according to Herbert, the King considered this officer a friend and gave him his gold toothpick case before his death.⁹³

Tomlinson in his own defense said years later that "People would take tobacco before him, and keep their hats on before him. I always checked them for it. He was pleased to have a consideration for that care that I had in that capacity I then stood."⁹⁴ However, as previously noted, the guards within the monarch's lodging during most of the trial, Colonels Hacker and Huncks, did not discourage their soldiers ill-behavior. As for other officers, Charles had few dealings with them. He had entertained some fears of Thomas Harrison before he arrived at Windsor Castle because thoughts of assassination had been constantly on his mind. His relationship with Harrison was a cool, courteous one. Harrison was strict and efficient in the care of his royal prisoner "and was not to be approached by any address, answering questions in short and few words, and when importuned with rudeness."⁹⁵ As for Oliver Cromwell, almost no direct relations occurred between this Army leader and the King during the trial. The only mention of Cromwell in the King's journals during this period was an entry dealing with his authorization for Dr. Juxon to continue in service.⁹⁶ Charles had distrusted Cromwell from the time of their earliest negotiations, and Oliver Cromwell grew to distrust the monarch because of his continued attempts at escape. Royalist sources claimed that Cromwell had a fear of Charles, which was manifested in his going "white as a wall" upon witnessing the arrival of the monarch at Cotton House,

and his laughing hysterically during the signing of the death warrant.⁹⁷ These stories were probably exaggerated, but they emphasize the mutual evasion between the King and Oliver Cromwell during January of 1649.

Also, the members of the High Court of Justice, were arrogant towards Charles and, although he showed great composure, many thought the King returned the arrogance by denying the authority of the Court. Bradshaw was particularly obnoxious towards Charles by refusing to remove his hat, and pointedly calling him Sir instead of Majesty.⁹⁸ According to Clarendon, the only two men in the Hall that Charles really knew before the trial were Sir Harry Mildmay, master of the jewel-house and a "great flatterer," and Sir John Danvers, "a proud, formal, weak man."⁹⁹ Therefore, Charles was without his closest loved ones and confidants during January of 1649. The presence of his enemies and the absence of the people on whom he depended caused an alteration in the personality of King Charles I.

King Charles, during his confinement at various places in London in January, underwent a marked change in personality. Although this change may have been developing for a longer period of time, it is most obvious during this month. The alteration may be proven by examining his political thought and his spirituality. Charles refused to admit that the Court of Justice had any authority, but he did not make a simple, flat denial of the power of the body, he analyzed the problem legally. Sources often mention that he had a "legalistic way of thinking."¹⁰⁰ He used his knowledge often during the trial and

and he caused Bradshaw many embarrassments by pointing out legal irregularities.

Charles, though, was not at first disposed to examine his position legally. The fact that he was to be tried at all was a great shock to him. The monarch constantly considered that he would be murdered in a fashion similar to Edward II. He was aware that many had plotted his death from the time he was imprisoned on the Isle of Wight, and during the journey from Carisbrooke Castle he told Harrison of his apprehension that he would be murdered. King Charles did not imagine that the Army would ever "produce him in the sight of the people, under any form whatsoever of a public trial."¹⁰¹ Until the trial he was wholly occupied with "melancholy ideas" about his fate.¹⁰²

But knowledge of the upcoming trial, after the initial shock had worn off, seemed to give him renewed confidence and an incentive to defend his position intellectually. His composure and excellent oratory were not in continuity with his character. Bishop Burnet asserted that "the king himself showed a calm and composed firmness, which amazed all people; and that so much more because it was not natural to him."¹⁰³ This calmness enabled him to sit through the more violent parts of the trial with a "Majestick and unmoved countenance."¹⁰⁴ The more amazing phenomenon was the King's fluent oratory. As a child, he had a speech impediment and constantly stammered.¹⁰⁵ Even the Royalists would admit that as a child he was weak, "inclining Him to retirements, and the imperfection of His speech rendring discourse tedious and unpleasant, . . ."¹⁰⁶

There is no evidence that this condition was completely improved in later life, and Charles' words still "came difficultly from him which rendered him indisposed to speak much."¹⁰⁷ Despite this imperfection, and his resulting shyness, Charles was able to speak impressively in the High Court of Justice and he consistently denied the authority of the Court with great determination. His letters to his son reveal an assuredness and a calm over events which would have sent other men into unspeakable rages. He believed in his cause "with a high religious fanaticism which was perfectly unamenable to any sort of argument."¹⁰⁸

The spirituality of the King was the most important feature of the last days of his life. While at Windsor and thereafter at other places of confinement, Charles would spend most of the morning in prayer.¹⁰⁹ He had always been religious and had been thoroughly trained in theology by his childhood tutors, including the Scottish Presbyterian, Sir Thomas Murray.¹¹⁰ Although some feared that as a result of his tutoring he was close to Presbyterianism,¹¹¹ he never embraced it. He was a staunch defender of episcopacy, and he was horrified by his wife's categorical dismissal of Anglicans along with other Protestants. In the last days, though, separated from his family and former, close religious advisors, he became even more caught up in his religion. Bishop Juxon was a great aid to him, but Charles soon began to depend only upon himself and God. Bishop Burnet remarked:

Bishop Juxon did the duty of his function honestly but with a dry coldness, that could not raise the

king's thoughts: so that it was owing wholly to something within himself that he went through so many indignities with so much true greatness without disorder or any sort of affectation.¹¹²

Therefore, although the King greatly respected Bishop Juxon, he did not rely on him completely for his religious needs.

The King's religious zeal can also be associated with his growing superstitiousness. Belief in what is now considered somewhat superstitious was not abnormal for anyone in Stuart England, not even for Cromwell, Overton, or Whitelocke who all consulted astrologers.¹¹³ Hume recalled that Charles' virtue was "tinctured with superstition"¹¹⁴ Jane Whorwood had consulted the astrologer William Lilly, at the consent of the King while he was confined at Hampton Court,¹¹⁵ and there is evidence that he was slowly beginning to put more credence in the practice. Also, certain events seemed to indicate to Charles omens of his fate and of the righteousness of his cause. The most noted event occurred on the first day of the trial when the monarch nudged Cook with his staff while the charge was being read, and the silver head of the staff fell off onto the floor. Charles was shocked at the event and waited for someone else to pick it up.¹¹⁶ The happening was looked upon as a bad omen.¹¹⁷

Thus, Charles' personality was altered by his trial and impending execution. He was now separated from all those persons and things he had depended upon. Buckingham and Laud were dead and the Queen was in a distant country. But his determined oratory in the Court is one evidence that he had not lost his will to live, as is his excellent health.¹¹⁸

Charles increasingly became an entity of his own and dependent only upon God. He even sent his beloved dogs, Gypsy and Rogue, away before his last day so that his religious concentration would not be interrupted.¹¹⁹ The dismissal of these last vestiges of an insecure child's dependence on others was a significant act. Charles was determined to go to the scaffold prepared for a valiant death and fully a martyr. He now had the inner confidence to say when spat upon, "My Saviour suffered much more for me."¹²⁰

The great test of this altered personality, though, was the actual execution of King Charles on January 30, 1649. The King awakened early on the morning of the thirtieth and found that his attendant Herbert had experienced a dream. In the dream the late Archbishop Laud had visited the King and reassured him of his righteousness.¹²¹ This occurrence reinforced the superstitious and determined attitude of Charles. The King then requested his companion to give him two shirts, saying, "The season is so sharp as probably may make me shake, which some observers will imagine proceeds from fear. I would have no such imputation."¹²² He divided up his possessions and Juxon conducted a morning service for him from the text of the Passion of Christ in the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew, coincidentally, the lesson that day in the prayerbook.¹²³

At one o'clock the King was conducted to Whitehall by General Tomlinson, attended only by Juxon since Herbert was too emotional to go to the execution. The King walked through the gallery at Whitehall, a room still hung with part of his

magnificent collection of paintings by Van Dyck and Titian. Until two o'clock Charles, still outwardly portraying martyrdom, remained in his chamber drinking a small glass of claret and eating a little bread.

The scaffold had been erected on the King Street side of the Banqueting Hall designed by Inigo Jones, and it was hung with black cloth.¹²⁴ A huge crowd of generally sympathetic people gathered to witness the execution. The block was low and equipped with ropes to pull the prisoner down if he struggled, and the masked executioner and his assistant stood nearby.¹²⁵ King Charles stepped out onto the scaffold and immediately asked if the block was high enough. He then directed his speech to the fifteen men on the platform, giving copies to Tomlinson and Juxon. He first asserted his innocence and his Christianity, and then he asked forgiveness for his enemies. Finally, he said of his people:

And truely I desire their Liberty and Freedom as much as any body whomsoever: but I must tell you, that their Liberty and Freedom consists in having of Government, those Laws by which their Life and their Goods may be most their own. It is not for having share in Government, Sir; that is nothing pertaining to them; a Subject and a Sovereign are clear different things. And therefore untill they doe that, I mean, that you do put the People in that Liberty as I say, certainly they will never enjoy themselves. Sirs, It was for this that now I am come here: If I would have given way to an Arbitrary way, for to have all Laws changed according to the power of the Sword, I need not to have come here; and therefore I tell you, (and I pray God it be not laid to your charge) that I am the Martyr of the People.¹²⁶

After finishing the speech Charles made evident his fear of incompetence by the executioner and being "hacked" to death like his grandmother Mary Queen of Scots. He said to a man

who brushed against the Axe as if to dull it, "Take heed of the axe; pray take ^{heed} head of the Axe."¹²⁷ He checked his hair several times, putting it under a white cap, and he again checked the height of the block. He said, "I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown" and in an obvious reminder to Juxon of the duty to his memory he said, "Remember."¹²⁸ With a quick movement King Charles I of England bent his head upon the block and it was cleanly severed with one blow.

The inner and outward peace of King Charles at his execution assured him of eventual reverence as a martyr. The last vestiges of his insecure personality were apparent in his continual questions about the height of the block and the sharpness of the axe, but he showed impeccable firmness and control to the end. The crowd was horrified by his death, as would be British citizens for centuries to come. The things which he did, every act of kindness, every Biblical allusion, would be remembered for generations. His confidence assured the growth of a martyr cult which would remember him in fasting and prayer every January 30 for many years.

Thus it is apparent through an examination of the personal life of Charles I during his trial and execution that he underwent a significant alteration in personality. In the period before the trial he was filled with uncertainty and he still relied upon others, especially his wife, for advice. But during his trial, through the influence of his captors and the separation from family and friends, his personality became one of more determination, more composure, and more spirituality. These

changes helped him retain his health and maintain an unbelievable calm all the way to the scaffold. Without this alteration in personality, Charles could not have easily exhibited those qualities ascribed to a martyr. Without the memory of King Charles I as a martyr, restoration of the monarchy might have been more difficult.

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³Samuel R. Gardiner, History of the Great Civil War, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), IV:241.

⁴J.R. Tanner, English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century 1603-1683 (Cambridge: University Press, 1947), p.153.

⁵Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down (New York: Viking Press, 1972), p.54.

⁶John Nalson, A True Copy of the Journal of the High Court of Justice for the Trial of King Charles I (London: Thomas Dring, 1684), p.3.

⁷Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, VI:219-220.

⁸Blencowe, R.W., Sydney Papers (London: Murray, 1825), pp.44-45.

⁹Lucifer's Lifeguard. Quoted in Wedgwood, Coffin, p.101.

¹⁰Ibid., p.104.

¹¹Thomas Herbert, Narrative, Quoted in Stevenson, Gertrude, ed. Charles I in Captivity (London: Arrowsmith, 1927), p.181.

¹²Gardiner, Civil War, IV:295.

¹³Wedgwood, Coffin, p.137.

¹⁴Eikon Basilika, The Works of King Charles the Martyr, 2 vols. (London: James Flesher, 1662), I:88.

¹⁵Nalson, Journal. pp.9-11.

¹⁶Eikon Basilika, I.101.

¹⁷Antonia Fraser, Cromwell, The Lord Protector (New York: Knopf, 1973), p.282.

¹⁸ Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, Memorials of the English Affairs (London: J. Tonson, 1732), p.367.

¹⁹ Eikon Basilika, I:81.

²⁰ Wedgwood, Coffin, p.107.

²¹ Fraser, Cromwell, p.281.

²² Blencowe, ed., Sydney Papers, p.50.

²³ Nalson, Journal, pp.28-29.

²⁴ Herbert in Stevenson, Charles I, p.189.

²⁵ Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, VI:233.

²⁶ Nalson, Journal, p.32.

²⁷ Ibid., p.33

²⁸ Lucy Aikin, Memoirs of the Court of King Charles the First (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1833), p.372.

²⁹ Nalson, Journal, p.35.

³⁰ Ibid., p.37.

³¹ Ibid., p.37.

³² Wedgwood, Coffin, p.154.

³³ Nalson, Journal, p.43.

³⁴ Ibid., p.46

³⁵ Ibid., p.46

³⁶ Ibid., p.59.

³⁷ Wedgwood, Coffin, p.170.

³⁸ Whitelocke, Memorials, p.366.

³⁹ Gardiner, Civil War, IV:300.

⁴⁰ Nalson, Journal, p.96.

⁴¹ Fraser, Cromwell, p.288.

⁴² Aikin, Memoirs, p.373.

⁴³ Blencowe, ed., Sydney Papers, p.54.

- ⁴⁴ Nalson, Journal, p.101.
- ⁴⁵ William C. Abbott, The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, 4 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1937), I: 744.
- ⁴⁶ Wedgwood, Coffin, p.201.
- ⁴⁷ Father Cyprien Gamache, Memoirs of the Mission in England of the Capuchin Friars, 1630-1669. Quoted in Thomas Birch, ed., The Court and Times of Charles the First (London: Henry Colburn, 1848), p.359.
- ⁴⁸ John Bruce, ed., Letters of King Charles the First to Henrietta Maria (London: Camden Society, 1856), p.19.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p.39.
- ⁵⁰ Quentin Bone, Henrietta Maria: Queen of the Cavaliers (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), p.227.
- ⁵¹ Gardiner, Civil War, IV:289.
- ⁵² Eikon Basilika, p.351.
- ⁵³ Blencowe, ed., Sydney Papers, p.54.
- ⁵⁴ Eikon Basilika, I:353.
- ⁵⁵ Wedgwood, Coffin, p.353.
- ⁵⁶ Letter of Charles I in Stevenson, ed., Charles I, p.276.
- ⁵⁷ Herbert in Stevenson, Charles I, p.253.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., p.254.
- ⁵⁹ Eikon Basilika, I:449.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., I:449.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., I:449.
- ⁶² Herbert in Stevenson, Charles I, pp.251-253.
- ⁶³ Christopher Hibbert, Charles I (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p.278.
- ⁶⁴ Aikin, Memoirs, p.373.
- ⁶⁵ Wedgwood, Coffin, p.193.
- ⁶⁶ Herbert in Stevenson, Charles I, p.247.

- 67 Abbott, Writings of Cromwell, I:714.
- 68 Herbert in Stevenson, Charles I, p.247.
- 69 Hibbert, Charles I, p.111.
- 70 Herbert in Stevenson, Charles I, pp.181-182.
- 71 Ibid., p.184.
- 72 Ibid., p.249.
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- 82 Burnet, Own Time, p.28.
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