

religious struggles in France? Was the Thirty Years' War in Central Europe primarily a German conflict or a struggle against the predominance of Spain? How important were religious as compared with political causes of this war? Beyond the death and destruction involved, how decisive or significant was this war? What was the nature of the conflict between royal and parliamentary authority in England? How did political theory in England reflect these

conflicts? What were some of several consequences of all these struggles?

The materials in this chapter characterize this century as one of extraordinary violence—sometimes directed at women in particular—and struggle for political and religious control. The violence diminishes and a new sense of stability is gained in the second half of the seventeenth century, as will be seen in the next chapter.



Primary Sources

Civil War in France

Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq

France was one of the first areas in which the turmoil, instability, and war characteristic of the period between 1560 and 1660 occurred. There, political and religious divisions combined to produce a long period of bloodshed and sporadic civil war. The nature and effects of this turmoil are described in the following selection from a letter written in 1575 by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the Holy Roman Emperor's ambassador to France.

CONSIDER: *Busbecq's perception of the forces and grievances that were threatening to worsen the civil wars that had already broken out; the consequences of the civil wars for various segments of society.*

Ever since the commencement of the civil wars which are distracting the country, there has been a terrible change for the worse. So complete is the alteration, that those who knew France before would not recognise her again. Everywhere are to be seen shattered buildings, fallen churches, and towns in ruins; while the traveller gazes horror-stricken on spots which have but lately been the scenes of murderous deeds and inhuman cruelties. The fields are left untilled: the farmer's stock and tools have been carried off by the soldier as his booty, he is plundered alike by Frenchman and by foreigner. Commerce is crippled; the towns lately thronged with merchants and customers are now mourning their desolation in the midst of closed shops and silent manufactories. Meanwhile, the inhabitants, ground down by ceaseless exactions, are crying out at the immense sums which are being squandered for nought, or applied to purposes for which they were never intended. They demand a reckoning in tones which breathe a spirit of rebellion. Men of experience, members of the oldest families in France, are in many cases regarded with suspicion, and either not

allowed to come to Court, or left to vegetate at home. Besides the two parties into which Frenchmen are divided by their religious differences, there are also feuds and quarrels which affect every grade of society.

In the first place, the feeling against the Italians who are in the French service is very strong; the high promotion they have received and the important duties with which they have been intrusted, arouse the jealousy of men who consider them ignorant of French business, and hold that they have neither merit, services, nor birth to justify their appointment. . . .

The feuds which separate the leading families of France are more bitter than those described in ancient tragedy; this is the state of feeling which exists between the Houses of Guise, Vendôme and Bourbon, not to mention that of Montmorency, which, through its alliances and connections, has a considerable party of its own.

Political Will and Testament

Richelieu

The civil wars in France were ended under the rule of Henry IV at the end of the sixteenth century. This strong king prevailed over rival factions and strengthened the French monarchy. But religious conflict and the competition with the nobility for authority were not over in France. Rather, the monarchy was built up toward a position of absolutism under a series of powerful figures, including Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642), who served as principal adviser to the king between 1624 and 1642 and virtual ruler for most of that period. In the following selection from his Political Will and Testament, Richelieu presents his view of monarchical power.

CONSIDER: *How Richelieu justifies monarchical power; how Machiavelli might have responded to this view.*

SOURCE: From Charles Thornton Forster and F. H. Blackburne Daniell, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, vol. II (London, 1881), pp. 38–40.

SOURCE: Armand Jean du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, *Political Will and Testament*, vol. II (London, 1695), pp. 45–46.

CONSIDER: How James justifies the high position and vast powers he feels should rightly belong to kings; the limits to monarchical powers.

The state of Monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth; for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods. There be three principal similitudes that illustrate the state of Monarchy: one taken out of the Word of God and the two other out of the grounds of policy and philosophy. In the Scriptures kings are called gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the Divine power. Kings are also compared to the fathers of families, for a king is truly *paterfamilias*, the politic father of his people. And lastly, kings are compared to the head of his microcosm of the body of man.

Kings are justly called gods for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power upon earth; for if you will consider the attributes to God you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God hath power to create or destroy, make or unmake, at his pleasure; to give life or send death; to judge all, and to be judged nor accountable to none; to raise low things and to make high things low at his pleasure; and to God are both soul and body due. And the like power have kings; they make and unmake their subjects; they have power of raising and casting down; of life and of death; judges over all their subjects and in all causes, and yet accountable to none but God only. They have power to exalt low things and abase high things, and make of their subjects like men at the chess, a pawn to take a bishop or a knight, and to cry up or down any of their subjects as they do their money. And to the King is due both the affection of the soul and the service of the body of his subjects. . . .

As for the father of a family, they had of old under the Law of Nature *patriam potestatem*, which was *potestatem vitae et necis*, over their children or family, (I mean such fathers of families as were the lineal heirs of those families whereof kings did originally come), for kings had their first original from them who planted and spread themselves in colonies through the world. Now a father may dispose of his inheritance to his children at his pleasure, even disinherit the eldest upon just occasions and prefer the youngest, according to his liking; make them beggars or rich at his pleasure; restrain or banish out of his presence, as he finds them give cause of offence, or restore them in favour with the penitent sinner. So may the King deal with his subjects.

And lastly, as for the head of the natural body, the head hath the power of directing all the members of the body to that use which the judgment in the head thinks most convenient.

Power being one of the most necessary ingredients towards the grandeur of kings, and the prosperity of their governments; those who have the chief management of affairs are particularly obliged not to omit anything which may contribute to authorize their master so far as to make all the world reject him.

As goodness is the object of love, power is the cause of dread: and it is most certain, that among all the princes who are capable to stir a state, fear grounded upon esteem and reverence has so much force, that it engages everyone to perform his duty.

If this principle is of great efficacy in respect to the internal part of states, it is to the full as prevailing abroad: subjects and strangers looking with the same eyes upon a formidable power, both the one and the other abstain from offending a prince, whom they are sensible is in a condition to hurt them, if he were so inclined.

I have observed by the by, that the ground of the power I am speaking of must be esteem and respect; . . . that when it is grounded upon any other principle, it is very dangerous; in the case instead of creating a reasonable fear, it inclines men to hate princes, who are never in a worse condition than when it turns to public aversion.

The power which induces men to respect and fear princes with love . . . is a tree which has five divers branches, which all draw their nutriment and substance from one and the same root.

The Prince must be powerful by his reputation. By a reasonable army always kept on foot. And by a notable sum of money in his coffers, to supply unexpected exigencies, which often come to pass when they are least expected.

Finally, by the possession of his subjects' hearts. . . .

The Powers of the Monarch in England James I

In England friction between the monarchy and Parliament increased under the Stuart kings, starting with James I. Already the Scottish monarch, James became King of England on the death of Elizabeth in 1603. James had a scholarly background and a reputation for his strong views about the monarchy. One of his clearest presentations of these views was in a speech to Parliament made in 1610. In it, he comments on the nature of the king's power, not simply in England but everywhere.

Source: From J. R. Tanner, *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I, c.1603–1625* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 15–16. Reprinted by permission.