**Part 1 Causation To what extent did religious differences continue to divide the kingdom in the period 1625-49?**

**Factors to consider :** Religious divisions in each of the three periods 1625-49

**Introduction**. Religious difference certainly made a significant contribution to divisions within the kingdom in the period 1625-49, both between Catholics and the Church of England and within the Church of England. After the Reformation of the 1530’s and the Elizabethan Settlement It is argued that division intensified in the reign of Charles I, with the Laudian Reforms of the Church of England from 1633 onwards and Charles desire to establish uniformity within his kingdom. This would ultimately contribute significantly to the emergence of a civil war by 1642 and the exploration of religious radicalism within the New Model Army which emerged victorious by 1649. This caused further religious polarisation in the kingdom and ultimately led Britain from being a Confessional State to a more tolerant one after the Acts of Toleration in 1689.

**Part 1** Religious differences intensified during the reign of Charles I and such division accelerated from 1633 onwards with the appointment of the Arminian Laud as the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Church of England had always been divided between those who sought to maintain significant aspects of Catholic organisation and ceremony and more radical Protestants (Puritans) who contested such organisation and practises, and advocated a more direct relationship with God rather than one controlled by Bishops. By 1625 this already fragile alliance within the Church was further splintered by the growth of Arminians who challenged the Calvinist doctrine of Predestination and wished to elevate the status of the clergy thus challenging the accepted Protestant belief that all men are spiritually equal before God. Charles I accession had witnessed a drift in policy that favoured Arminians culminating in the appointment of William Laud first as Bishop of London in 1627 and then as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Such reforms intensified divisions caused by perceived Catholic influence on the Monarchy and Court and widespread anti-catholicism in the country at large. The reaction was to witness the alliance of those who wished to assert Parliamntary accountability on the monarchy with those advocating Presytarianism or other form of more radical Puritanism. Especially Intensifying divisions could be found in Scotland with the emergence of the National Covenant in 1638 to resist the Laudian reforms, and the defeat they inflicted on England in the First and Second Bishops War 1639-40. The Scottish wars resulting in Charles recalling the English parliament and from this the emergence of the Long Parliament in 1640, which brought a flood of petitions against Charles religious policies and eventually the impeachment of Laud and Strafford in November 1641. The rejection of Arminianism by the Long Parliament 1640-44 particularly through the Root and Branch Petition and the advocacy of the abolition of episcopacy resulted in the  introduction of a Bill to establish a new Church along Presbyterian lines. Furthermore the divisions caused by growing panic over Irish Catholic Rebellion of 1641 and the landing of a force in North West England provoked  the crisis in Parliament which resulted in the issuing of the Grand Remonstrance and the Militia Bill to contest the extent of Charles power over matters of religion amongst others. The overall contribution of intensifying religious differences in the period 1625-42 was to provide an important stimulus to the Scottish invasion, the Irish Rebellion and the emergence of civil war in England by 1642 between a largely Arminian Monarchy and a Presbyterian/Puritan Parliament.

**Part 2**. Religious differences intensified further during the First civil war as the English Parliament increasingly encouraged Presbyterianism within the Church of England, and the Laudians/ Arminian influence was purged. Furthermore anti-catholicism began to intensify as did explorations of religious radicalism within the New Model Army who were not content with the religious settlement that Parliament offered to Charles. The First civil war was at least in part a war of religion with the Scots wishing to consolidate their Presbyterianism  and the English Parliament their increasing puritanism, in the wider context of an increasingly bitter feud with Arminians within the Church of England and anti-catholicism more generally in England. By late 1643 Pym succeeded in persuading the Commons to sign a Solemn League and Covenant with the Scots thereby uniting Calvinist/Presbyterian opposition to Charles I during the First Civil War and this was instrumental in the parliamentary victory at Marston Moor in July 1644. In 1645 Parliament officially resolved that the Government of the Church of England should be Presbyterian in form. In 1646 they passed resolutions confirming the collapse of episcopacy and the commitment to a form of Presbyterianism, but this support was itself divided especially because of the growing desire amongst some that the rights of the Godly to set up their own independent churches be supported and protected. Furthermore the formation of the New Model Army in early 1645 resulted in the rise of Fairfax and Cromwell and also the emergence of more religiously radical elements of the Puritan dissenters. Laud who had been impeached in November 1641 was finally executed in 1645. The NMA became a breeding ground for religious radicalism and they encouraged the flourishing of existing independent Churches and movements of the Godly around the country, much to the dismay of the Presbyterian leaders in Parliament. Charles continued to fight against the Scots but surrendered in April 1646. Whilst he was held by the Scots at Newcastle Charles received separate proposals for a settlement because the Scots had been left dissatisfied by the English Parliament who had only offered disappointing religious settlements. Charles delayed and they handed him over to the English in February 1647. The English Parliament now dominated by the “political Presbyterians”  wanted to restrict religious freedom within the Church of England and bring more radical elements under control and offered Charles a settlement in the Newcastle Propositions. Whilst Charles delayed his response radical religious dissenters like the Levellers began to develop their own political programme and they had increasingly widespread support within the NMA. This further complicated the search for a settlement by further accentuating religious divisions by the proliferation of new denominations. The overall contribution of religious divisions was to provide an important barrier to finding a settlement with Charles in the period. The resulting proposals for peace by both the Scots and English Parliament in 1646 resulted in the consolidation of differences, and also the proliferation of denominations in the growing context of anti-Catholicism which took hold in the NMA.

**Part 3** Religious differences further intensified during the Second Civil War of 1648 with the flourishing of radical puritanism within the NMA resulting in the collapse of Presbyterianism in Parliament and the Church of England, the further consolidation of Presbyterianism in Scotland, and Cromwells repression of Catholics in Ireland in 1649. The NMA began to emerge as a political force itself after Parliament voted to disband it without pay, electing their own spokesman known as Agitators. The Army held Charles at Hampton Court and by June 1647 a General Council of officers and Agitators was established. By mid June a document was made called “The Representation of the Army” demanding the expulsion of 11 Presbyterian MPs and reasonable religious toleration and presenting Charles with the Heads of Proposals for Charles consideration. Leveller influence in the Army had became increasingly pronounced and by October 1647 Leveller influenced soldiers offered an alternative proposal in “The Case of the Army Truly stated”. In the ensuing debates at Putney the gulf between radical Puritans and leading officers prepared to contemplate the continued use of Bishops in the Church became more pronounced. The debates were brought to an end by news that Charles had escaped from his captivity at Hampton Court. The Agitators returned to their regiments and Cromwell chose this opportunity to begin to punish their leaders. Meanwhile Charles had signed a secret Engagement with the Scots where he promised to establish a Presbyterian Church in England for three years in return for military assistance. Parliament prepared for a second civil war and voted no more negotiations with Charles. The Presbyterian Scots entered in England in April 1648 but were easily defeated by Cromwell in August. Parliament sent Charles four bills which consisted of slightly modified versions of the Newcastle Propositions, which Charles indicated that he would consider and Parliament reciprocated that this would be a basis for further negotiation of a settlement. However leading Agitators in the Army including Ireton were now set on punishing the King and wished to forestall any further negotiation with parliament. On 5th December the Commons was surrounded by the soldiers from the regiment of Colonel Thomas Pride. He excluded 186 MPs who supported negotiations with the King and arrested another 45 who had been active in promoting discussion. This left a Rump house of 240, of which 71 would become active in the trial and execution of Charles in January 1649. Religious divisions had made a significant contribution to the lack of settlement because of the fundamental divisions between Catholicism, Laudism, Presbytarianism and flourishing radical Puritanism.

**Conclusion** Religious divisions continued to divide the Kingdom throughout the period 1625-49, and such divisions intensified throughout the period as religious intolerance took hold between the different Christian Churches and movements. The period began with the strains and stresses of the Reformation and Elizabethan settlement still evident, strains that James I had sought to avert through compromise but had essentially left to manifest deeper. Charles’s Catholic marriage and Arminian influenced court antagonised Calvinists and Presbyterians who felt a whiff of Popery and began to organise and stand their ground. This was further accentuated by Laudian reforms of the Anglican Church from 1633, which were to result in war with the Scots, a Catholic rebellion in Ireland and the emergence of a determined English Parliamentary opposition largely allied to Puritan resistance to Charles’s religious policies. From 1642 then religion was to play a key role in causing and sustaining two civil wars within the Kingdom, the emergence of Puritan radicalism in England and a massacre of Irish Catholics by 1649.