

**Presbyterian:** a Protestant church governed by presbyters (elders)

**covenant:** agreement

**dilemma:** a difficult choice

## THE LONG PARLIAMENT

By 1637, Charles was in real trouble. He had alienated the English people on religious as well as political grounds. Now, as king of Scotland, he set about alienating the Scottish people. In 1637 he attempted to force the Scots to worship in the style of the Church of England. The Scots totally humiliated him. Thousands of Scots, who were **Presbyterians**, signed a **covenant** to resist this demand, and rose in revolt. Charles desperately needed money to pay for soldiers to quell the revolt, and he had to call parliament to get it. Called in 1640, the "Short Parliament" sympathized with the Scots, and Charles angrily shut it down within three weeks. But Charles still had not solved his money problems. He called a new parliament, blindly hoping that it would give him what he wanted. However, the new Long Parliament (so called because it sat for thirteen years) was even more unfriendly to Charles. The leaders of parliament demanded that both Strafford and Laud be removed from power and punished.



Eventually, Charles gave in to their demands and turned Laud and Strafford over to parliament, which promptly executed both. When the king wrote Strafford that he had had to sign his death warrant for political reasons, Strafford sounded a now-famous warning when he said "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, for in them there is no salvation." The execution of his trusted advisors distressed the king, but parliament went further. It was determined that the king should never again have absolute power. It planned to pass the Grand Remonstrance, which proposed to change the role of the king in government, and to remove many of his powers.

Parliament had a **dilemma**, however. Just how much power did the monarch have by right? How far could parliament go in taking away rights from the king? Magna Carta had left a number of issues about the king's rights up in the air. The king, for example, had the right to conduct foreign policy. He also had a right known as the "royal prerogative," which allowed him to act outside the law or even against the law in cases of emergency. No one knew exactly what the limitations of the royal prerogative were. Interestingly, in the seventeenth century, probably more people supported the king's rights over parliament's rights.

This became evident when parliament was debating the Grand Remonstrance. Charles learned that the Commons was badly divided. Radical members wanted to take away most of his powers, but many others just wanted guarantees that the king would rule the country in accordance with law and tradition.

**Figure 2-13** Charles I declares war on parliament at Nottingham, in 1642. Note the upward flow of movement in this engraving. How is this created? What is the artist suggesting by this upward flow? What evidence suggests that this is a military occasion?

Because of this split in opinion, the Grand Remonstrance had barely passed parliament. Charles believed that if he could arrest the radical parliamentary leaders, and punish them as traitors, he could regain control.

Leading 500 soldiers in person, Charles invaded the House of Commons—which was against the law—and tried to arrest the leaders.

Forewarned, the radicals escaped, and parliament called for an army. This was open rebellion. Charles left Westminster and went north to Nottingham, where he knew he had support. The queen, Henrietta Maria, took the **Crown Jewels** to Europe to pawn them for money to pay for an army. It was clear to everyone that the king was preparing to make war on parliament.

**Crown Jewels:** jewels used but not owned by the royal family

**militia:** citizens who are not regular soldiers, but who are trained to act as soldiers in times of emergency

## ACTIVITIES

1. Make a list of the measures that Charles I used to avoid calling parliament. Beside each entry, explain which classes of society would be the angriest about these measures and why.
2. Write the kind of pamphlet against the government of Charles I that you imagine Walter Prynne might have written.
3. Prepare a script in which you explain why you should not be prosecuted in the Court of Star Chamber.
4. If you lived in the seventeenth century, would you have supported the king's rights or parliament's rights? Explain the reasons for your answer.
5. Read the selection from the Petition of Right. With a partner, read the sections from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on page 78. What section relates directly to the selection from the Petition of Right? In your opinion, what are the three most important clauses in the Charter? Why?

## THE CIVIL WAR

**C**ivil war is a terrible kind of war because people within a country fight each other, and even family members may take different sides. When Charles raised his standard on a windy moor near Nottingham in 1642, he began a conflict that, for seven years, would tear his country apart. He probably hoped for a quick victory. There was no English army as such, and both sides had to create a fighting force. Many of Charles's supporters, called "Royalists" or "Cavaliers," came from noble families and were used to fighting and riding. Parliament's troops were local **militia**—farmers and townspeople

with almost no military experience. Charles also had experienced commanders, such as his dashing nephew Prince Rupert, who could inspire the troops. However, parliament controlled the navy, and the richest part of the country—the south and London. Unless Charles won the war in the early stages, he was doomed.

Charles was successful at first and won a number of small battles, but he could never gain a decisive victory. Parliament made an alliance with the Scots, who attacked from the north, and began to build a more modern army. The leader of this "New Model Army," was Oliver Cromwell, a