'Harden not thy heart': 'Antinomian' appeals to rulers in Restoration England

"Harden not thy Heart": "Antinomian" Appeals to Rulers in Restoration England

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Concern with the condition of England, its people and its rulers, was one feature of the published writing that was a key output of the nascent Quaker movement, and an element of women's public-spiritedness. In the years directly following the Restoration, Quaker women strove to reach those with the power to affect local and national decisions over matters of worship, resulting in texts such as Anne Gilman's *An Epistle to Friends*, which advises the ruler to "harden not [his] heart" (1662, 8). Gilman indicates that she is worried about what the future holds for Quakers if rulers became deaf to the pleas for clemency, compassion, and the freedom to worship. Her letter is just one of a number of post-Restoration texts addressed directly to a ruling person or body, aiming to touch the conscience of people with authority in contemporary society (Foxton 1994; Runyan 1973, 568-69). When looking across the output published by women in a variety of genres, addressing secular authorities as defined in the broadest possible sense (Magistrates, Parliament, and Monarch), it is clear that a generous corpus of writing responded to the change in the political order in the early years of the Restoration, following the coronation of Charles II that had been widely celebrated in print. [1] This published work follows in the wake of what Joad Raymond has observed in relation to pamphleteering, when explaining why written matter was "useful to 1640s radicals because it was not a transparent vehicle of political ideas, but a lively, witty, fractious, sinewy, self-conscious, often unfocussed mode of address" (2003, 247).

This characterisation also holds for the 1660s, which was a period during which Quaker writers tried to insinuate that the prejudices of people in power were responsible for severe restrictions on their right to worship. This chapter assesses in particular the first five years after the Restoration, when the Quaker Act (1662) promulgated the message that

Friends were likely insurgents, and indefatigable law breakers. Writers' engagement with "public politics" (Peacey 2015) was not only motivated by the state's clamp-down on religious dissent. Public-spirited writing was often driven by the need to inform others, correct misunderstandings, accelerate change, mobilise support, or circulate proposals: in short, one of the key reasons that could be put forward by writers seeking to air their views in the public sphere of print was that they were driven by necessity. In their works, which I will call "public-focussed" writing, Quaker women often sought to convey the urgency of their message by representing Friends as obeying their consciences and the dictates of their faith in times of intense persecution. They would often contrast their own obedience to their God, to whom, as Rebecca Travers observed, "every knee must bow," with the intransigence of rulers led by "earthly" principles (Travers [1659b], 4). The emergence of public-focussed, reader-ready texts by Quaker women on the state of the nation is a result of this conflux of factors.

Feminist critics have consequently been drawn to the distinctive features of sectarian women's public writing for what it reveals about women's engagement with contemporary debates. This includes, but also goes beyond, the specific example of Quaker women to analyse the imperatives directed to rulers from those within Independent or Baptist churches, or the Fifth Monarchist movement, as well as individuals working more autonomously, such as the prophet Eleanor Davies.[2] The evidence relating to women's petitionary activities has received particular attention, prompted in no small part by the pioneering work of Patricia Higgins on Leveller women which stimulated further analysis of this print-centred, activist-led movement (Higgins 1973; Hughes 1995; McEntee 1991, Whiting 2015). Leveller women typically drew up a series of grievances in order to make recommendations for reform, their work in this respect being a contribution to the development of "participatory" politics that became more insistent in the wake of the civil wars, and to the honing of the conventions of collaboratively-authored petitions (Peacey 2015). However, despite the prominence of female

Levellers, and even when looking at all of the petitions of the post-1642 era, whether by individuals or by groups, women wrote only a "tiny minority" of the petitions.[3] The petition is too narrow a category to analyse if the aim is to understand how women reflected on contemporary events, though two Quaker petitions can profitably be examined in order to explore the conventional approach of women seeking redress from the government in the years following the Restoration (Fell 1664; Whitehead [1670]). Indeed, owing to the fact that Quaker women's most common approach was to interweave questions of national interest into texts, a range of works including dedicatory addresses to the monarch, epistles, lamentations and warnings, comments on persecution, and even works primarily about aspects of theology add to an understanding of the discussion of how Quaker women responded to the new monarch and the era he ushered in.

Correspondingly, a more extended focus on the gendered aspect of women's public-spirited writing is made possible as a result of looking at varied genres, even while attending to the acute questions feminist scholars have asked of women petitioners' agency. In particular, this chapter is a contribution to the exploration of how women could authorise their interventions in public discourse in terms that resonated within established gendered paradigms. Patricia Higgins (1973), Anne Hughes (1995), Anne-Marie McEntee (1991) and Amanda Whiting (2015) have demonstrated that through highlighting their plight as women, petitioners were attempting to force the initially resistant ruler to empathise with the conditions of the so-called "weaker" sex. The female speaker is particularly authoritative when delineating the perceived failure of the nation's rulers to attend to the needs of families owing to the severity of arbitrary, self-interested, or even tyrannical government; women's discourse is hence licensed by their socially-constituted roles as daughters, wives, or widows (Gill 2005, 77-111). The feminisation of discussion could also inject considerable pathos and

urgency into debates, calling rulers to account for their sluggishness or contemptuous neglect of the people on whose behalf they governed.

The first part of this chapter will explore how Quaker women utilised these historically long-standing rhetorical modes to construct subject positions that resonate in the biblical or prophetic tradition. Rather than looking solely at petitions to Parliament, my focus is on shifting attitudes to Charles II, charting how muted support soon gave way to bruising criticism of the power that monarchy commanded. In the second part of this chapter, self-interest is compared to self-abnegation, through theology. Here, I seek to combine insights into the democratisation of petitioning with scholarship on seventeenth-century Antinomianism, a position at the extreme end of seventeenth-century religiosity discussed most extensively by David Como (2004b), and Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier (2002).[4] My line of argument attempts to fuse the insights of these two fields of enquiry through the paradigm that is assumed to be central to women's commentaries on monarchy: that the authority to comment on the ruler's sins of self-love is predicated on the speaker's comparative selflessness, or even dissolusion of self when in unity with the divine. One writer's comment on the parlous condition of the unbeliever's soul was combined with the promise "The Lord will Plead with you … inwardly," which shows considerable temerity (Morey [1664], 5). This author, Dewans Morey, advances an incisive critique of Charles, his rule and his person, based on her own profound sense of the inwardness of her faith. The Antinomian position that Quakers most often extrapolated was their belief that perfection could be achieved by the spiritually righteous (Moore 2000a, 98-111, 110). I suggest that cognate ideas can found in a pamphlet justifying rebellion against earthly power and authority in terms of the more pressing need to attend to the commands of God than man. This shows the political dimension of Antinomianism. My account subsequently links Quaker

politics, gender and theology, explaining how matters of salvation can be integrated into a discussion of public politics through the framework provided by Antinomianism.

I: Constructing Female Authority in Addresses to Rulers

Assigning to women subordinate roles, conventional gender norms of the period might be thought to have lessened their impact in the public sphere. There is much evidence from the mid-century of rulers dismissing women petitioners on the basis of their supposed inferiority, and some records show that authority figures believed women to be acting truculently or insubordinately, rather than in the public interest (Higgins 1973; Whiting 2015, 35-42). Yet the new modes that in the Civil War and Commonwealth periods ensured both "public acceptance of the ministerial authority of women" and the emergence of "political practice integrating female praxis" meant that such conventionalised ideas did not go unchallenged (Trubowitz 1992, 129; Holstun 2000, 267). Dorothea Gotherson's *To all that are Unregenerated*, which opens with a section "to the King," and situates him as the implied reader, denounces the tendency of those with high status to consider themselves superior to women:

> Let not the King think it below him to read that which many think above me to write, in respect to my sex: but in that will which would limit the holy One in any sex or person, I write not, neither can the thoughts of that minde judge of the matter. (1661, A2v)

There is little sense in this passage that Gotherson wants to parse the deferential mode and humble position of the lowly woman; rather, it appears that she is raising the problem of her gender in order to ensure she has a fair hearing. Her strategy is therefore to postulate that the King will want to distinguish himself from people who are contemptuous of women's advice, to praise his discernment, and then, in a final twist, dismiss the terms of the debate itself.

People of “that minde” (presumably anti-female bigots) are not fit to judge. Gotherson understands the importance of acknowledging differences in status and in gender between the supplicant and the addressee, yet quickly exceeds the expectations of her as a humble woman. Her directness is evident in the message, too. Charles is given the benefit of the doubt, set up as a man above common prejudice, but such honour as Gotherson bestows on the King is moderated by a sense of forewarning, already implicit in her acknowledgement that the instructions of the godly are deleteriously unheeded by the ungodly. In that, she was not alone.

Just as Gotherson had attempted to make Charles II an ally by recommending that he take an open-minded approach, the Quaker Hester Biddle also appealed to her enemies for righteous judgement. Having been taken prisoner at a meeting while speaking, an act that was punishable by imprisonment, Biddle was brought to trial in 1662. With the memory of the greater religious freedoms of the Commonwealth years still green, Biddle recognised an old acquaintance sitting as judge over her. She consequently invited him to remember “Oliver’s dayes” ([Anon] 1662, 35). Addressing her accuser intimately by his first name, Biddle makes him recall the times before the Quaker Act:

> *Richard*, Dost not thou remember that thou Prayedst in the Camp by *Abingdon*, and was that an unlawful Meeting? Was not that a good Day with thee? I am afraid thou wilt never see such another. ([Anon] 1662, 37)

“Richard” (addressed elsewhere by his surname, Brown) should recall his former allegiances, and take note. Biddle makes a concise point, but the main focus of her message is a sophisticated observation about how the legal system could be seen as enforcing codes that were just a matter of time and circumstance. This is why she reminds Richard that he would have suffered the same fate as she, had the Quaker Act been in place when he found comfort praying with co-religionists at Abingdon. The sense conveyed in this mimetic dialogue is in

contrast to the convention of "negative representations of women's speech with their subtexts of social disorder," which defined women's political and public speech acts (Freist 1997, 6-7).[5] The measured way Biddle calmly produces her oratory, then, may be important, as well as the content of her message. Biddle's composure is part of a bid to gain acceptance in the public sphere, which is something Gotherson also seemed to be consciously aiming for. .

The two women are similar in other ways, as well. Biddle remembered vividly her prosecutor's former way of worshipping because it gave her leverage over him; Gotherson had employed similar tactics, though to the King, by inserting a detail about the Civil War that immediately made her seem much closer to Charles: during the wars, she was a Royalist (Gotherson 1661, 89). Both women therefore recognised the effectiveness of addressing non-Quakers as possible allies, and of situating themselves as women whose counsel should be credited.

What of people who are so committed to ill-treating others that they might, in fact, derive actual enjoyment from supressing religious people? Rebecca Travers utilized a stylistic method not often found in Quaker writing to make her opponents' attitudes contemptible: verse parody. Her poetry is deliberately upbeat, when in terms of subject matter it should be most serious. The characters whose voices she mimics uphold persecutory laws, and speak thus:

> We will supress them all, they shall no longer be:
>
> Away (they cryed) with Holiness, and worship in the Spirit,
>
> For we'l [sic] enjoy our lust in flesh, what else would we inherit? (1664, 12)

Here, Travers is speaking in a double voice in order to convey the attitudes of a group of persons who "work wickedness," and whose perspective she despises (1664, title page). Writing in prose rather than verse, earlier in the same text, Travers was no less effective when she punctured the ego of the powerful by posing the following question: "what if the Papists

or Turks had power, would you be thus used by them?" (1664, 7). The answer to this rhetorical question must be "no." The significance of her stylistic choices therefore becomes clear: she is assuming a position above the prejudice of persecutors, which, she understands, can parody and dissect logically.

All of these examples are indicative of the Quaker practice of refusing the charges of sedition that were levelled against them, as separatists and as women. Though none of these women's works were explicitly petitionary documents, going by their titles and general subject matter, they nevertheless addressed national questions, such as imprisonment, in their bid to diagnose pressing cultural concerns.[6] More than that, these authors were using reverse identification as a method of reaching the Quaker enemy: did they want to be associated with the attitudes promulgated by the woman-hater, the conventicle-suppressor, the Turk or Papist? These pamphlets by Gotherson, Travers and Biddle from early-Restoration England were mobilizing sophisticated rhetorical techniques in support of their cause, and inscribing the acuity of their voices in the public sphere.

Biblical allegory is both an element of Quaker women's political writing, and a prominent feature of the concourse of debate more widely. John Dryden's 1681 *Absalom and Achitophel* tapped into the public's appetite for stories based on biblical precedent, as this poem was widely read, judging by the volume of contemporary comments it provoked (Zwicker 1993). Long before Dryden's Exclusion-crisis poem on Shaftesbury's malign influence was published, Quakers writing at the beginning of the Restoration period could also characterise bad counsellors as Amalek, Hamen, or Achitophel. Already, they saw corrupting figures at work in the nation, misleading the monarch (Wollrich 1661, 15; Wollrich n.d., 7; Mason 1660b, 1).[7] Biblical allegory had the potential to be piercingly insightful, yet when it came to addressing the monarch himself, some discretion might be

used. Though Dryden's portrait of Charles II did not leave him unblemished (he stands accused of political naiveté), he was, at least, equated with the largely admirable ruler, David.

In contrast to Dryden's work, writers wishing to alert Charles Stuart to disturbing precedents in biblical history of megalomania could do so through biblical allegory. Catherine Gray has argued that, when putting forward a religio-political agenda to their monarch, women highlighted that their interventions in print were necessary. She terms the persona created an "embattled" speaker: someone angry at being marginalised, or ignored (2007, 22). Though mindful of the social distinction between subject and King, women maintained that they were duty-bound to speak in ways that were that unpalatable to the ruler when a matter of conscience was at stake (Gray 2007, 37-66). Though written very early in the Restoration period– before Charles had even landed in England, in fact – the Quaker Anne Clayton's *A Letter to the King* similarly used the trauma of the previous years as justification for her printed address. In reminding the monarch of his duty, the biblical model she had in mind was Saul, the people's choice of ruler and first king, who took office because the populace had tired of being led by the prophets. Clayton directs Charles to his Bible in a similar mode of public protest and authority to that outlined by Gray: as an "embattled" woman, she understood that God "rents the Kingdom from men" ([1660], 1). She then reminds Charles of his precedents: "mind the fear, and remember how he [God] rent the Kingdoms from *Saul* because of his Disobedience" ([1660], 1; 1 Samuel). Hence, while she was practicing the art of delivering a warning to the monarch through allegory, like Dryden, she was also part of a godly agenda. She drew on contemporary history, and biblical allegory, but also her own status as an "embattled" woman to make this point that God will judge Charles as he had Saul.

In addition to Clayton's *A Letter to the King*, Margaret Fell's *To the Magistrates and People* shows how Quakers attributed their actions in the public sphere to having been

"moved of the Lord to forewarn you" (Fell 1664, 1). While the denominator "Magistrates" can include the monarch, Fell seems more directly critical of those responsible for putting into practice the punitive legal policies. Her petition to the men overseeing the laws to enforce religious conformity shows how registering specifically female concerns could be a strategic advantage. As Amanda Whiting has demonstrated, the Parliament's duty to respond to pleas and grievances was in part paternalistic. The assumption that just laws should protect the vulnerable could therefore work in women's favour, as drawing attention to it might lead to sympathy (2015). Fell registers this through conveying her own blighted condition when signing off as "a Prisoner of the Lord." She also accesses this conventional trope when complaining that injustice in 1660s England fell disproportionately on the down-trodden, "making Children fatherless, and Wives Widows" (Fell 1664, 1). She speaks authentically here because she articulates individual, gendered, and collective grievances, being able to embody them all as a prisoner, a woman, and a Quaker. Fell deploys the register of the Bible further through analogous linking of the fate of the Quakers and herself to the "afflicted in *Egypt*" (1664, 1). It is from her understanding of unjust, "unchristian" laws that she is able to represent, in language strikingly similar to earlier protestors like the Levellers, the rights of "free-born English men and women" (Fell 1664, 1). Her petition exhibits many of the same traits that lead Whiting to confirm an "insistent voice or posture that was gendered feminine" in petitionary writing (2015, 191). Her gender throws the abuses of legal prerogative into relief.

Petitioning was a highly conventionalised mode of address, and because of that, linguistic features that are repeated or recur are suggestive of the petitioner's understanding of the expectations on her as a supplicant. Other than a pamphlet by Dorothy White to the Parliament that I will discuss later, Fell and Clayton's broadsides are the only female-authored petitionary works of the early Restoration.[8] The most redolent example of women's

participatory politics, however, is *For The King and both Houses of Parliament* (Whitehead [1670]). In being collectively authored (by 36 female signatories), in beginning with an address to those in power (the "right honourable"), in defining clearly the reason for writing (the ending of mass imprisonments), and in recommending a future path to the powerful (to "shew mercy"), it is the most conventionalised female-authored petition of the period (Whitehead [1670], 1).[9] What can be established by looking at it very briefly, as a presage to examining the early-Restoration petitions that are of central concern here, is that petitioning is a form of writing in which the cry of the oppressed is embedded. This trope encapsulates how the female petitioner could ameliorate her circumstances through supplication.

For the King and both Houses of Parliament [1670] is a petition of averred collectivity, where the few (36 signatories) represent the wider movement: "many Thousands [are] of our mind with us, that cry day and night, that Liberty of Conscience may be given" (Whitehead [1670], 1).The Parliament men's ability to cause disquiet and anger, in turn, makes Quaker women register the effect of the "cry," as they importune as though to pre-empt disappointment: "O, that you would hear" (Whitehead [1670], 1). These petitioners recognise that Parliament has the power to ignore their pleas. The voice raised up in supplication becomes a trope in other texts, too. In *To the Magistrates*, Fell had explained how God both "saw the afflictions of his people" and "heard their cryes," in times of persecution (1664, 1), while Clayton's *A Letter to the King* says that those in the spirit are "joyned to it, for it ever lives to make intercession with sighs and groans" ([1660], 1). This "cry" is a public intervention with a rich scriptural and religious context. In the biblical tradition, prophets such as Isaiah spoke a message of "woe" when they encountered oppression.[10] By extension, as Whiting has demonstrated, there is little difference between the way that petitioners addressed rulers, and how believers prayed to their God: both were an intercession to the powerful to attend to the supplicant (2015, 160-70). Quaker women

wanted their words and advice to be heeded, as they raised up their voices in a "cry" that is gendered as protest, or anguish, or both.

An aligned term to the cry, no less relevant for identifying the tone of political auditory, is the lamentation – a rhetorical mode conveying the emotional extremity of the speaker of God's word (Whiting 2015, 179, 224, 233, 264). Margaret Fell writes reflectively in *To the Magistrates* about the Restoration settlement: "Oh take up a Lamentation for *England*? Surely, there is some heavy, sad, and grievous Judgement waiting upon it" (1664, 1). The writers who addressed England's land itself (all, or small regions of it) employed the lamenting voice when discussing the state of the nation, the infelicities of rulers, or the abject condition of the people.[11] Their focus was securing the nation's repentance before the castigating force of the all-powerful God broke forth. The tears or cries of the speaker's lament function as a synecdoche of the suffering they feel on behalf of the nation. Indicating that "such Tribulation and anguish of Soul shall come as hath not been known since the beginning," Dorothy White's *Friends, You that are of the Parliament* is a judgement on a corrupt nation ([1662b], 5).[12] White declares that the "Lords unresistable power causeth us to cry," and craves "harden not your hearts lest the Lord destroy you" ([1662b], 5, 6). White's *A Lamentation to this Nation* (1660a) is "a *Message* and a *Warning*" (1660a, 8), and so demonstrates that the female lamenting voice on occasion goes beyond entreaty.

The lamentation, which can invoke that the female prophet has a searing sense of purpose in addressing their unjust nation, was re-designated by anti-sectarian writers as intransigence rather than moving testimony. Sectarianism's association with the tumult of social disorder left female participants in public-sphere debates exposed to intense criticism (Nevitt 2005, 26-41). The parodic "Phanattick's lamentation" in *A Full Relation or Dialogue between a Loyallist and a Converted Phanattick* perjures the contemporary adoption of the lamenting mode. That fanatic who speaks the lament declares that he wants to end all

government, laws, and the church ([Anon.] 1660, 13). Readers are meant to see that the only thing the fanatic laments is not having the opportunity to destroy the established social order.[13] Writers of satire also pressed the point that sectarian pamphleteers were emotionally unstable, as well as enemies of the social order. This is the case in the "Third Advice to a Painter," which was part of a series of poems that sketched out key failures in policy and leadership; and one of the most caustic of the messages delivered to the crown was by a Presbyterian woman. [14] The Duchess of Albermarle speaks despairingly from a prophetic state; her epiphany, or moment of understanding the failures of government, conveys rage in an untempered form and is strangely affecting. It is written as delivered from above:

> From scaling ladder she began a story,
> Worthy to be had in me(mento) mori,
> Arraigning past, and present, and future;
> With a prophetic (if not spirit) fury.
> Her hair began to creep, her belly sound,
> Her eyes to startle, and her udder bound.
> Half witch, half prophet, thus she-Albermarle
> Like the Presbytarian sibyl, out did snarl. (Marvell 2007, 350; lines 194-201)

The misogyny of this depiction of excess is evident. Yet, what follows is a highly personal rebuke of those in power's mismanagement of the four days' battle, in the Dutch wars of 1666, where the emotion fits the scale of the betrayal and "renew[s] the causes of their [the Royalists'] first exile" (line 234). The "Third Advice to a Painter" hence shows the confusion that could attend the female envoy, as Albermarle's views are supported in the text even though she is vilified in this portrait of female excess.

This sort of invective is useful context for probably the most monarchy-affronting text by a Quaker woman: Dewans Morey's *A True and Faithful Warning* [1664]. Morey is little-

known outside this text. Except for one trace in the records of "sufferings", all that exists of her biography relates to the publication of this tract.[15] Morey's intervention draws on the traditions of biblical warning, rather than petitioning, and is addressed to "*all the Inhabitants of England who are yet in your sins*" ([1664], title page). Its opening pages refer to the monarch's condition using dense, biblical allegory, so even though the title of the text does not make its relevance to Charles II clear, the theme is quickly foregrounded.[16] By absorbing direct quotation from the Bible into her work, Morey conveys that she is in the heat of "the Lords great Wrath and Indignation" (Deut 29:28; [1664], 3). This is a far fuller realisation of the scripturalism of the prophetic mode than the Duchess of Albemarle's angry rebuke, and the Quaker petitioners pronouncing a cry of "woe." The derivatively biblical quality of the writing means that this pamphlet's insightful attack on the sovereign seems to echo God's pronouncements against unjust kings.

Morey situates her message to the nation as not only protest, but a "sign unto you all" ([1664], 1). The Quaker use of signs was performed in the spirit of the holy fool, with the enactor of the sign willingly bearing the contempt or incomprehension of others who did not understand that spiritual metaphor had become literal (Caroll 1978; Eccles 1663; Simpson 1659). Morey steps into this mode when showing her message was first experienced physically: "I [have] been made to fast, hunger and pine, to groan, weep and cry bitterly for a terrible and dreadful Famine is come upon you the Inhabitants of this Nation" ([1664], 1). The experience of mortification is to inspire readers, too: "[turn] to Fasting, to Weeping, and Mourning," contributor 'C.B.' advises them in a paragraph in the middle of the text; "do you think that you shall escape?" asks Morey ([1664], 7, 3). Quaker women's religious experiences could inscribe "the intensity of [the Quaker's] spiritual and bodily experiences," and Morey's depictions fit this pattern (Mack 1992, 151). [17]

By putting herself into the account, Morey's work moves away from the disembodied element of the cry or lamentation, and compels her readers to "sit in the dust" (passim). Her account of the monarch needs to be quoted at length, with my biblical attributions, for the effect of her message to be clear:

> O let the King come down from his Throne and sit in the Dust [Ps. 103: 14; Isaiah 47:1] , and fear the Lord, because of his Judgments that are almost ready to break forth upon this Nation; let no Instruments of Musick be brought before him, nor pleasant sounds [1 Samuel; Amos 6]: let his great Attendance at his Table cease; and let not Superfluity of Meats be brought before him, as they have already been: let his honourable and beautiful Women be kept from him, lest that his heart be overtaken with them: let him shew mercy to the poor and afflicted People of God who are innocent, that are shut up in Prison in this Land only for Conscience-sake, and let him relieve them and set them at liberty; if ever he doth expect to receive mercy from the Lord, let these things be done, lest that the Wrath of God break forth upon him and there be no remedy [2 Chron 36:16, Prov 6:15, Prov 29:1]. And let also those men and women who are esteemed honourable and beautiful, who are light and wanton, leave off their adorning themselves with needless Attire, and their superfluity of Meats and Drinks, which causeth their hearts to be inflamed with Lusts, one towards another, and let them come down and sit in the dust, and fear the Lord because of his Judgment that he will speedily execute [Ezra 7:26] in this Land, And let all them that are setting up of Idols and Idolatrous Worship in this Land [Exodus 20:1-17], come down & sit in the dust, and let them cry and howl bitterly [echoing Luke 22:62, Matthew 26:75] for the Misery that is come down upon them from the Lord God of Vengeance, who will ease himself of his Adversaries [Isaiah 1:24], and he will execute his Righteous Judgment upon all the Wicked of the Land. ([1664]: 1-2)

Morey is unusual in how provocatively she engages with the reputation of Charles II's court for licentiousness, and how determinedly she attends to the condition of her ruler.[18] Here, the reference to "musick" makes clear that Morey has Saul in mind. In his depression, the king turned to music, and it is therefore the case that Saul's irreligiosity, luxury, and envy would be invoked by this parallel to 1 Samuel. The scourging voice of the woman and her God merge, and it is probably this that explains why she can write so caustically of her ruler. Her words are authorised as prophetic calling, while her bodily experiences viscerally register the key aspects of her message to the nation.

Explicitly, in the public-spirited material, Charles II becomes a corollary of the spiritually destitute, yet the writing does not stop there. The terms of women's appeal shift to different grounds, once the diagnosis of Charles's spiritual emptiness revealed how far he had transgressed. Giuseppina Iacono Lobo has written convincingly of how Quakers in the 1650s directed their addresses to the conscience of the rulers; Margaret Fell's appeals to the Commonwealth-men are especially rich in this regard. But in the 1660s, Lobo notes that Fell "never once spoke directly to the light in his conscience and only mentioned the King's conscience itself on one occasion" (2012, 123). One possible reason seems to be that Charles is reprimanded for unconscionable aspects of his behaviour, rather than being directed to the light that could illuminate him. The absence of comments on the light is also common to the public-spirited writing by other women from the first five years of the Restoration. Rather than Charles's turning, the focus is on his repenting.

A concise model of how a direct address to Charles II might offer guidance, even in the process of chastising him, is to be found in Anne Gilman's *An Epistle to Friends* (1662), advertising on the title page "also, a letter to Charles, King of England." Gilman explains that what motivated her was her duty to "clear me in the sight of my God" (1662, 8). Gilman then addressed herself to the perceived hardness of heart of the ruler who, while not

unreachable to her God, is nevertheless rather intractable. Gilman appeals to the private man: "(O King) return, return, and repent, and harden not thy heart, as in the day of provocation, against that secret witness of God, which reproves thee secretly when no mortal eye seeth" (1662, 8). She continues with the observation "to that of God in thy Conscience do I defer my Cause" (1662, 8). The Quaker method of thinking about what is internal to the spiritual health of an individual is aptly applied to the monarch. When Isaac Penington used the word "secret" in *Some of The Mysteries of God's Kingdom*, it was to draw attention to the "secret presence of the power, when it is not visibly manifest" (1663, B2r). Penington's usage of "secret" therefore supplies contemporary context for Gilman's theological message. Gilman's alerting of Charles to the "secret witness" works in a similar way, by describing the personal relationship a believer has with the living presence of God. Yet, it is also surely the case that "secret" suggests the light has been buried deep, possibly even too deep to retrieve.

Lobo's insightful analysis of the Quaker practice of appealing to a ruler's conscience is nevertheless pertinent, even to Gilman's work. Her *An Epistle to Friends* offered co-religionists some succour by assuring them of the power and efficacy of their God. When observing that "to the *hidden Word in the heart*, do I commend you, which gives victory over all that which arises contrary to it self," Gilman speaks to the addressees, "Friends," who are diligently seeking instruction from the light in their consciences (1662, 4). In the process of addressing co-religionists, she therefore summarised a seminal matter in Quaker theology (Moore 2000a). Yet it is also possible that in writing this advice to co-religionists, Gilman subtly speaks to the King. Where the missive to Charles intoned that he should attend to the "secret witness," the Epistle tailored for a Quaker readership advised they discover the "hidden" presence of God. An interested reader could cross-reference the two texts, should they wish to explore what attending the light of the conscience entailed. It was surely not

mere accident that these two texts, one inward-facing, one outward-facing by virtue of addressing the monarch, were published in the same pamphlet.

These Quaker women produced public-ready works in the early years of the Restoration that responded to a variety of pressing contemporary issues, often emphasising the responsibility of monarchs to their subjects, and to the Quaker people, in particular. They would cry, lament and prophesy in order to scourge the nation, regretting the direction that the country was taking. In so doing, they were seeking to represent the dispossessed, and through their labelling of their messages as from their God, they showed that the judgements evident in the warnings were also his displeasure. Women's prophetic authority was conveyed, in part, through textual contrasts between masculine, worldly individualism and female, spiritual self-abasement. In the fullest realisation of this paradigm, Morey registered that her body was more sacred than the body of the concupiscent King. In Quaker women's writing, uniting against the monarch is far more common than support for him. In identifying the weaknesses of Charles Stuart, which they diagnosed with great perspicuity, these writers instruct him to turn to the presence of the light within the conscience. Dubious of this prospect, Gilman noted the conscience was the most secret part of him; as Morey so memorably framed it, in the absence of conversion, the reigning monarch should "sit in the dust" ([1664], 1, 2, 4).

II: Inspiring Religious Reform

So far, the texts I have explored have been drawn from a variety of modes, including the direct address of the petition, and the admonition-fuelled writer of a warning of God's impending judgement on the nation and its ruler. Despite this spread, each had a direct bearing on constitutional issues, or the authorities' attitudes to religious matters, and many tropes were consistent. However, while these texts tell us the responses made by Quakers to

rulers, a more thorough assessment of the Quakers' interest in diagnosing the spiritual condition of the King requires that attention be given to pamphlets whose focus was primarily theological, rather than political. By way of conclusion, then, I will look at work that corroborates or extends the concerns of the public-spirited material already examined. In so doing, I hope to establish the validity of thinking of politics and an "Antinomian" aspect of perfectionist theology concurrently. I will even suggest that an author's assurance about her salvation could inform her public-spirited writing's "Antinomian" attitudes.

David Como's *Blown by the Spirit* traces the birth of the English Antinomian underground movement, as it developed over a fifty-year period, and through its articulation of the belief that God's will could be known to all. Pamphlets and manuscripts by the writers within these Antinomian circles laid emphasis on the believer's release from the moral law, the un-shackling of the Christian from a deadened state of legalism, and the animating experience of the spirit. Antinomian believers knew that the barrier between human and divine had been removed, and felt able to anticipate that they might attain a state of perfection. Believers often experienced a state of exultation when in this state. Combining insights from Puritanism and continental mysticism, Antinomianism seemed to critical outsiders to possess elements that were novel, unorthodox, or worse, heretical. The idea that contemporaries were most likely to associate with Antinomianism was the plerophoria that these believers thought themselves Christed with Christ and Godded with God through unity with the godhead (Como 2004b, 347). Antinomianism, then, became more widespread in the radical sectarianism of the mid-century, and groups like the Quakers showed this influence when they spoke of the possibility of achieving spiritual perfection. For Friends, however, morally unconscionable, or "sinful" behaviour was typically condemned. It was in escaping a deadened formalism in religious practice that Quakers most resembled Antinomians.

The Quaker woman writer Rebecca Travers offers a way of initially exploring this topic. Travers was a major figure in seventeenth-century Quakerism; her works were published over an extended period (1659-1677), and she also sustained the movement's London meetings (Mulligan 2004; Foxton 1994, 68-70). In *This is for all or any … that Resist the Spirit*, Travers writes concisely about rulers and their responsibility towards their subjects, diagnosing that the chief deficiency of monarchy was a problem of authority. Though sovereign in the earthly hierarchy, the King was obliged to be obedient to his God. Meanwhile, the monarch's subjection was likewise a model for the commoner, who was also to recognise the primacy of the spiritual ruler. The Bible had shown that where there was a discrepancy, God or prophets ought to be obeyed in preference to the earthly sovereign. Travers writes:

> *Moses*, & *Daniel* & *Paul* could obey those very Kings and Rulers in some things, which in other things pertaining to God in their Conscience, they could not, and though it were Rebellion and Gain-saying for the People to resist Moses and Aaron, that wished they had been all Prophets; yet it was not Rebellion nor Evil that Christ and his Apostles did resist the High Priests and Rulers of Israel … chusing rather to please God than Man. (1664, 4)

Travers was discussing the right of active non-compliance, since the spiritual leader Moses, the prophet Daniel, and the apostle Paul were not required to obey the earthly rulers who reneged on matters of conscience.[19] Though Travers set this problem of political authority in the distant past, she surely meant her readers to see the contemporary parallel to 1660s England and to Charles II.

This is for all or any … that Resist the Spirit also gave a very full account of salvation through faith. Travers explained that "if we have the Faith, we shall have the victory over wickedness, for against that we war" (1664, 6). Read from one angle, victory over

wickedness is exactly what Travers was urging through her account of the earthly magistrate's limitations, as she noted in the passage about Moses, Daniel, and Paul cited above. These were righteous men who could disobey earthly rulers because they were more constrained to be obedient to their God than to man. Read from another angle, "victory over wickedness" proposes that the believer is assured of her salvation. On this second theme, Travers's willingness to depict how fully God's will could be revealed to the believer emerges in her wider writing, and offers further context to this "victory." Travers had explained how faith was "written in the heart, put in the inner parts" (1659a, 32). Moreover, when describing how inwardly-felt religiosity was experienced, she wrote of the "obedience of faith, that alwayes working to the overturning of self [sic]" (1663, 10). Images of the inwardness and selflessness of faith in these two examples stand for the intensity of her religious experience.

Travers's work offers much scope for the analysis of Antinomianism.[20] For Travers, there is a connection between non-compliance to the earthly ruler, Antinomianism, and complete submission to her God. In other words, her passage about resisting oppression (cited above) has to be read in the context of how she figures the believer's innermost religious leadings. Obedience can mean being subsumed. Yet, in the state of obedience, as Travers explained to Friends, believers could be "partakers of the divine Nature" (n.d., 3). If implying oneness with God, as though in a symbiotic connection, was not enough to show Travers's tendency towards Antinomian, perfectionist expression, another statement is even more indicative. Travers said in dialogue with others, then once again in print, that "in the light, none errs" (Penn 1673, 103). For our current purposes, what matters is not the precise theological meanings of these statements–though briefly, it is the conjunction between accessing a higher state of understanding ("in the light") and being above error ("none errs") that establishes this as Antinomian. Rather, what is centrally important is the link that can be

forged between a state of inwardness as Travers describes it, a state of voluntary obedience where there is oneness with God, and the fact that in her public-spirited writing, she maintains that the godly might disobey earthly rulers. Through being obedient to her God, she embodied the sort of certainty associated with perfectionist Antinomianism, defined here as the liberty brought about through grace to those in the light. This, in turn, played a part in producing the defiant scrutiny of earthly sovereigns seen in her discussion of the disobedience of Moses, Daniel and Paul in *This is for all or any … that Resist the Spirit*.

What of this for writers on public politics? Once the extent of Charles II's irreligiosity had become clear to the writers, the trait that united the Antinomian action of these public-spirited texts was that each responded to the monarch as someone who possessed too much self-love. In the course of diagnosing his spiritual condition, their active denouncement of the fleshliness of Charles begins to be indicative of why women could so often, and so astutely, respond to the monarch. Their perspective on the ruler's sins may be traced back to the relinquishing of identity that is not only a feature of prophecy, but also conversion (which Quakers termed convincement). They indicate that Charles II has not undergone the transformation through grace and faith in his conscience that they had experienced in the light. The Quaker Elizabeth Fletcher shows how acutely Quakers regarded the insufficiency of people who have no inner guide: "my Law in your hearts you trample upon, which condemns you for so doing and if you do not speedily repent and owne *my Word* in your Hearts (*the Light*) … [I] will cut you off" (1660, 6). Quakers insist on obedience to God being followed not because it is part of the Mosaic code, but voluntarily. Mere observance of Christian codes was not enough: the inner transformation was all.

By returning to Dewans Morey one last time, in order to demonstrate that the basis of her ideas is Antinomian perfectionism, some final aspects of public-spirited writing by women can be observed. Either explicitly or implicitly, in the sections that I have already

quoted, Morey shows her aim is to impart her God's judgement to people who are out of the faith. When this comes, she makes the austere prediction on behalf of her God that people resistant to all guidance will "cry" and "howl," when judgement descends ([1664], 3). Vituperatively, she threatens a future shock termed as "breaking asunder the bonds of wickednesse" ([1664], 8). This message depends on a point of contrast between the alienated and those who have great spiritual exaltation. Morey has shown through her fasting, crying, and through the anguish she feels for the nation, the ability to submit to God's will. Quakerism blends with Antinomianism through a striking phrase that exhibits what this process leads to, as at the close of her pamphlet Morey exalts that the "Self comes to be slain" ([1664], 8).[21] *A True and Faithful Warning* therefore exhibits how the mighty must pass through the same trials that Morey endured by proposing they submit willingly, and entirely, to the annihilation of self. Only that way could Charles II emulate the ideal, godly ruler.

The extreme inwardness of the way that women spoke to Charles's conscience was evidence of their own alternate reality, which was predicated on selflessness and voluntarism. Ultimately, while it is worth speculating whether, in the case of Travers or Morey, this paradigm had a verifiably Antinomian dimension, it is wholly possible that other Quaker women petitioners also grasped that the obduracy of a monarch in a state of darkness was somehow best addressed by a woman and through the Antinomian impulse of their public-spirited texts. Their compassionate witnesses, shown through the lamentation and cry, are an assignation of emotion's significance in public politics, while their protests register that the needs of those usually deemed the weakest in society require to be heard; their supposed powerlessness makes them the fittest judges. Moreover, in the state of grace, while exalted in selflessness, they could pin the worldliness and self-love of social superiors to their intractability. This was especially well developed when the comparison was most defined, contrasting feminine self-annihilation and Antinomianism with spiritual indifference. When

instructing the monarch on how to repair, reform or regenerate the nation, women were often speaking from a platform where these associations between feminine yielding and Antinomian self-annihilation were combined. In this, the gendered aspects of both protest and Quaker religiosity serve as a reminder that the subject position women occupied did not impede their participation in public politics, but rather, facilitated the development of identities that both resonated within, and developed beyond, the role of humble supplicant.

[1] See especially Harris 1987. I take 'Restoration' as the dominant term for the years 1660-85, though it is a politically charged denominator (see Maclean 1995, 3-27).
[2] See, in particular, Font Paz 2016; Freist 1997; Gray 2007; Holstun 2000); Matchinske 1998); and Skerpan 1992.
[3] They wrote even fewer if some works that have routinely been included in the critical discussion are not generically petitions at all. Whiting contends that the Quakers' *These Several Papers* (Forster, 1659) is a manifesto promoting the anti-tithe agenda, not a petition (2015, 191). Whiting's work will refine the arguments of previous scholars who have foregrounded this text in accounts of women's political participation.
[4] Antinomianism is characterised by anti-literalism and anti-legalism which typically informs the approach such thinkers have to sin, perfection, grace and imputation (Como 2004b).
[5] The Judge's comments on women's preaching are worth noting for what they reveal about his opinions: "The Judge asked [Lovel] whether he took [Biddle] out of the Meeting, and what she was doing: *Lovel* said, He took her upon a form speaking: and the Judge said, *What a woman speak!* The Jury and some other of the Bench said, *They never heard of a Woman to speak before*" ([Anon.] 1662, 35).
[6] Gotherson's text is dedicated to Charles; it does not qualify as a petition. For a concise definition of the petitionary mode, see Peacey 2015, 269; and see my comments on *For the King* (Whitehead [1670]), below p. 51.
[7] On non-conformity's response to monarchy, see, in particular, Achinstein (2008). .
[8] I omit Ahivah's *A Strange Prophecy* (1660) as unlikely to be genuine. I am grateful to Rosemary Moore for this point.
[9] The Library of the Society of Friends (London) copy of this text on EEBO bears the inscription in the top right hand corner "abt 1670." For other partially female-authored petitions, see Hooten and Taylor [1670] and Fell 1660.
[10] Most extensively, Isaiah, Jonah and Jeremiah.
[11] Primarily, the Book of Lamentations, Ezekiel 26, and Psalms 5:1; 102:2. Whiting's contention that the female-centred genre of the Complaint is influential cannot be discussed here, but could be fruitful (2015, 188, 179).
[12] Except in the fact that White's text seeks the repeal of tithes, it does not address a grievance or cause; despite its titular address to rulers, it is not a conventional petition. EEBO dates it as 1662.
[13] See Erin Bell's treatment of anti-Quaker literature in this volume.
[14] Nigel Smith discusses the authorship of this poem, which cannot be attributed to Andrew Marvell with certainty (Marvell 2007, 324).
[15] Her name was also spelled Dewance. DQB cites Besse (1753), I:166 and Joseph Smith's Catalogue (1867) 2:184 as the only sources of information. She died June 19, 1684, aged 40.
[16] See below for the quotation from Morey in full, with attributions (p. 55).
[17] Anna Trapnel and Sara Wight's spiritual fasting and prophecy in London were presumably known to Morey. Scholarship about them often demonstrates that fasting is a way of performing femininity.

[18] Martin Mason refers to Charles II's "iniquities" but is less specific about them than Morey (1660a, 1-2).
[19] Travers's approach to non-compliance is a fairly common one in Quaker writing. The justification also comes from natural law theory.
[20] Her work is proof positive of a knowledge of Antinomianism. She wrote about how James Nayler should be reclaimed by the Quaker movement, and John Perrot examined; the significance of this is that both of these Quakers had been accused of being Antinomian (see Travers 1658; Nayler 1664; and Travers, 1663). Whether or not Travers was herself Antinomian remains for the present an open question.
[21] Quotations taken from the final unattributed section of *A True and Faithful Warning* are inferred to be by Morey as the text's main author.