1659 was the year Quakers and other English radicals came face to face with history. The army was restive, republicans quarrelled with each other and with Commonwealthmen, while monarchists bided their time and the protectorate stumbled toward its denouement. The inexperienced, weak, and indecisive Richard Cromwell, since the previous September successor to his father Oliver as Lord Protector, watched helplessly as the loyalty and allegiance of his personal bodyguard ebbed away. Anxious Presbyterians and Independents made common cause lest their feared sectarian opponents gain the upper hand; before long they were championing return of the monarchy as the only solution to these radical challenges and widespread disorder.\(^1\)

As the climax moved inexorably closer, champions of the revolutionary “Good Old Cause” found themselves confronting the increasing likelihood that their hopes might well be shattered and swept into the trash heap reserved for such failed experiments.\(^2\) The Quakers, an enthusiastic sect that emerged in the Midlands at about the time the execution of King Charles I dramatically ended the monarchy a decade before, had become the spiritual refuge of many who wanted to impel the revolution forward.\(^3\) Radicals as notorious as John Lilburne, the Leveller, and possibly even Gerrard Winstanley, principal spokesman for the communal Diggers, found their way into Quaker ranks.\(^4\) Army officers and ordinary soldiers, as well as Baptists and other dissident sectarians, including some feared as antinomian “Ranters”, gravitated to the side of those who proclaimed that harkening to the leadership of the inward Christ could lead to the establishment of a just and righteous social order, a new world indeed. Some of these refugees now seemed prepared to take up arms to defend the cause for which so much had been sacrificed.

As the year went by and prospects drew increasingly dark for the Good Old Cause, Quakers confronted not only the same political situation as its other supporters, but they also had to bolster their own standing and credibility. Hoping against hope, George Fox, founding organizer of the Religious Society of Friends, as Quakers later came to be known, relieved himself of a last-ditch, detailed proposal to revitalize lost dreams by an open letter to law makers in 1659. It contained 59 suggestions for the “Regulating of things.”\(^5\) Then toward the end of the year, discouraged, he slipped under a deep depression that isolated and
totally immobilized him for ten crucial weeks. Edward Burrough, another leading Friend and a youthful evangelist for the Truth, authored two broadsides indicating that he was pondering the use of force to forestall a counter-revolution aimed at returning the Stuarts to the throne. Other Quakers, their exact number unknown but certainly more than a dozen, accepted parliamentary appointments as commissioners of militia, thus committing themselves to finding men to rise to the defence of the Good Old Cause. In Scotland, the royalists’ man on horseback, General George Monck, tried to halt Quaker infiltration but watched as his officers succumbed to the appealing spiritual blandishments offered by the Friends.

Of course Quakers could not elude Clio, history’s muse, and look into the future, so they did not know the final outcome of the developments they apprehensively saw unfolding. One, however, reflected on his past experiences and made a studied attempt to use the past as a way to gauge the future: Richard Hubberthorne (1628-1662) must thus join Fox and Burrough as Quakers who mounted sustained efforts to forestall the inevitable. A native of Yealand in Lancashire, who had served as a cavalry captain, he published four pamphlets and a broadside in 1659; these served to place the events of that pivotal year in the context of the previous two decades of English experience. What made his contribution so striking was that, unlike all the other Quakers who faced the impending threats to the Good Old Cause, Hubberthorne approached the problem with a clear sense of history. As one who had personally fought for the cause at Dunbar and Worcester, he took pains to inspire his readers by demonstrating that people had history in their grasp and that in making decisions in the present they could create the future. In October 1659 he styled himself a member of God’s army ‘who makes war with the sword of his mouth.’ Sharing the millenarian convictions of his fellow-believers – that, as Fox phrased it, because ‘Christ has come to teach his people himself,’ his followers had little need of outward teachers, guides, or rulers – Hubberthorne was not content simply to await a new regime imposed by supernatural intervention. He understood, in other words, that followers of this ever-present Christ had ample leeway to fashion their own new world just as the forces of Parliament had endeavoured to do during the Civil War.

Joining the New Model Army only in 1648, the impressionable 20-year old Hubberthorne came late to the ideology that poured from the Parliament’s revolutionary fighting force, but the zealous officer drank deeply from it, occasionally preaching to his troopers. Convinced of the truth of Quakerism in 1652, he was one of Fox’s
earliest converts. Within two years, on an evangelistic tour into the south, the itinerate found himself incarcerated in Chester. From that time on he emerged as a veritable bulldog of the faith, answering numerous accusations against the Quakers. In his pamphlets of 1659 he resurrected the broad goals of the New Model and exuded his commitment to what some dared to call the Good Old Cause: liberty of conscience, popular government, opposition to the monarchy, the abolition of church taxes or tithes, which amounted to a levelling attack on property. Yet Hubberthorne’s writings soared beyond these grand ends to suggest creation of an even more fundamentally egalitarian regime, one that would found ways to assure that true Christians would act, as he put it, ‘so there may not be a beggar in England’.

In his first 1659 pamphlet, one aimed at 24 London baptists who had signed a statement to disassociate themselves from perceptions that they were opposed to the magistrate, the resourceful Hubberthorne responded to unfriendly critics. He used his response to castigate supporters of the revolution who seemed ready to renge on their former commitments. Refusing to give any regime an advanced blank check, he reminded them that some among them had once taken a different position. ‘For you to give up yourselves willingly and peacefully unto whatsoever government is or shall be established in this nation,’ he thundered in his first line, ‘without any limitation, and to submit unto any power or magistracy that does or shall rule, as the ordinance of God, without any limitation or qualification, is far below that spirit which was once in some of you ...’ Submit only to a government based on equity, advised Hubberthorne, refusing to believe that a restored monarchy could meet that high standard. ‘And what did you bear arms or fight for,’ the former captain bluntly demanded, ‘if not for a government according to truth and that righteousness may establish the nation?’ ‘And if now you resolve to live peaceably and submit to whatever government is established, then your fighting is at an end,’ he concluded more sadly than bombastically.

Hubberthorne, of course, could hardly restrict himself to such generalities and hope to garner support for his position. A constant theme was his attack on a ministry paid with money collected from tithes. In the period of the Interregnum this Quaker appeal was a popular one. It came couched as excoriation of those who ministered because they were paid and officials who forced people to render a tenth to support clergy with whom they disagreed. Unfortunately Hubberthorne saw the hope of abolishing tithes disappearing as more and more former supporters defected to the opposition or sat by silently while the forces of reaction massed their challenge. The impending change of
government he insisted would fasten on everyone, regardless of conviction, support of a state church.\(^\text{19}\)

On the matter of tithes, as on other issues of the time, Hubberthorne was grievously torn between reality and his faith. He believed a mass rallying to the cause could prevent it from slipping into the darkened recesses of the past, but he also saw Baptists and others like them falling away faster than autumn leaves on a rainy day. Hence he fell back on his faith in divine intervention, even as, hope against declining hope, he wrote his appeals to muster others to the cause. Christ's great work, he penned wistfully, observing the growth of reaction, 'is so upon the wheel that man is not able to stop it though he should fight ever so fiercely against it.'\(^\text{20}\) Let faithful people be contrite, let them not grow slack or tempt God by losing their patience, he advised in another piece, and God would revive their hopes and redeem the promise of liberty that had grown in England since the execution of the king ten years before.\(^\text{21}\)

Hubberthorne moved easily from this point to broader millennial themes, for early Quakers imbibe the spirit of millenarianism so endemic to the age. He and his fellow believers were convinced that Fox's seminal teaching that Christ had returned to teach his people had transported them to a glorious time ere the first parents fell in Eden. The hallmarks of the corrupt world would erode away. Confident that an age was possible when money could no longer divide humans, Hubberthorne believed that God would give judges, counsellors, and priests as they were originally, that is, they would discharge their obligations freely, without requiring payment. Then, coming back again to ministers who lived on tithes, Hubberthorne explained 'everyone now will be given to love and freeness one to another, for he that has spiritual things will minister them freely, and he that has carnal things will minister them freely.' All would then live without resort to law, in a kind of heaven on earth that needed few laws. "Christ's spirit," he emphasized, 'will be found among all sorts of people, ministers of the law, ministers of the gospel, and subjects of the nation,' 'then every man will not seek his own but everyone another's good.'\(^\text{22}\) His vision was as worthy as any uttered in favour of the Good Old Cause.

In May 1659, the army's command was galvanized into believing that bringing back the Rump Parliament, gone now six years, would renew the radical cause. As it turned out, this hope was as unlikely as some of the cavalryman's dreams, but the future hid both these conclusions. The same month Hubberthorne produced his most important exploration of the history of the two previous decades, *The Good Old Cause Briefly Demonstrated*.\(^\text{23}\) Nothing else he wrote better illustrated the early
Quakers’ attitudes toward that crucial period, the hopes they remembered having for it, and the historical background they found for their political programme in 1659. With Fox’s relatively better known open letter to Parliament and Burrough’s two broadsides, all the same year, this document fills in the picture of activist Quaker attitudes during the crisis year 1659. Neither Burrough’s posters or Hubberthorne’s booklet hinted that, within the short space of two years, Quakers would renounce all war and outward conflict – to the contrary, these publications assumed the legitimacy of struggle, particularly for a righteous end, which to their authors the Good Old Cause clearly was.

Quakerism for Hubberthorne represented the spiritual culmination of the Cause, and he condemned Commonwealthmen who contended with the sword for one religious opinion or another and never recognized that ‘the light of Christ in the conscience, in the soul, a spiritual hearing [of] the voice of the beloved son of God, the true teacher.’ Whenever any ruler or group attempted to govern without this true religion, they marred whatever they touched, as any could see by glancing backwards at Oliver Cromwell’s regime. But in the right hands the sword was never borne in vain but to be wielded, he stressed ‘soberly in the fear of the Lord for the punishment of evil doers and praise of them that do well, ... to take off the heavy burdens, to quiet men’s spirits, and thereby prevent their inclinations to seek outward help any other way.’

Then Hubberthorne launched into a Quaker summary of the history of England’s civil wars and the Interregnum, the period of the English revolution. The conflict, he explained, began to defend the people’s ‘rights and liberties (also called the privileges of Parliaments and liberties of the subjects)’ and was initiated because the king and his party took up arms. The army the people called into existence, he went on, had been filled with ‘choice spirited men,’ seeking liberty of conscience and religion, men who risked their outward bodies, and freely brought their horses, plate, arms, and ‘other habiliments of war’ to the struggle. The royalist enemy naturally could not prevail against a force so imbued with God’s presence and power and accordingly ‘split themselves upon that rock’ and fell back shattered.

The victors, however, had lately permitted themselves to be sullied and would no longer, Hubberthorne decided, ‘hear tell of our rights and liberties,’ the very thing they had sacrificed so much for. Worse: the overlords ‘made laws to punish us for using them.’ Of course, the former calvaryman was thinking of the plight of his fellow believers, many of
whom had had their property distrained for refusing tithes or had been jailed for eschewing oaths of allegiance. Hence his warning was a bit sect-serving, especially when he told his compatriots to ignore those who advised that the nation’s main problem was the need to suppress heresies and the dissidents bedeviling the church. Yet he could hardly overlook the general principle: it was deceitful when supporters of the Good Old Cause were told that they ‘must be sure to satisfy your own consciences by taking care of [other] people’s souls.’ Hubberthorne affirmed that a human soul was simply ‘too great, too high, too weighty’ for another person to meddle with.28

The English revolution was a bourgeois revolution, one reflecting the hopes and aspirations of a rising middle class, a class conscious of its wealth and potential power but convinced that they had been denied the prerogatives they deserved.29 Like a revolving wheel Hubberthorne’s essay came round again to the utopian hope that the Good Old Cause had promised but had not delivered: ‘only settle us in our external rights and liberties, establish them in us, and defend us therein from fraud and violence.’ ‘We have not had our liberties in our persons or estates,’ he spoke using the tones of the middle class, ‘nor are we in any better condition than slaves, bondsmen, and bondswomen; our bodies, and what else, we hold and labour for at the will of other men.’30

Hubberthorne’s protest against dismissal from the army and civilian service of numerous Quakers must be read in this same light, fear of a concerted effort to turn the state over to enemies of the people’s rightful liberties. He explicitly gave these arguments an economic twist in his complaints about excessive tolls, foreign traders, monopolies – ‘not permitting such as have served the Commonwealth in their ways to exercise their trade’ – and what he deemed ‘slavish land tenures.’ He dipped his pen in sarcasm when it came to such conditions: if some wanted to continue in their state of bondage, ‘because so kept from their youths up,’ he said, ‘be pleased to have that their liberty, under Antichrist, until they shall be willing to be otherwise free, but let it be by their own act and will.’ So long as people were permitted to enjoy the fruits of their own labour and land, he believed people would favour using public funds to buy impropiated tithes and pay the army’s arrears.31

Hubberthorne concluded with a barely veiled warning, one calculated to speak to an age expecting the ready appearance of Christ. Take heed, he wrote, ‘when the Lord Jesus Christ, with thousands of his saints, rides on gloriously, conquering, and to conquer, treading down all rule and all authority, contrary to him, under his feet.’32 No earthly authority – no king, no prince, no monarch, no potentate – could
survive who attempted to set himself up as defender of the faith and sought to command a particular type of worship. Hubberthorne clearly believed the Lord of Hosts and his army of righteousness would take special umbrage at any attempted restoration of an English monarch who styled himself, in the fashion of all King Henry VIII’s successors, “Defenders of the Faith.”

In a series of queries published the following month, June 1659, Hubberthorne went so far as to raise the spectre of a shadowy, manipulating conspiracy of ministers that had succeeded from the beginning in 1642 in arraying the party of the King against the party of Parliament. Although he very carefully did not name names, he implied that they were Presbyterians motivated by a desire to slip into vacant parishes and sweep up tithes as their opponents conveniently killed each other off. Then as the government tottered, these same men found ways to use the Committee for Plundered Ministers to take by force the cattle, money, and goods of their loyal fellow citizens. At the same time these Presbyterians stirred up Londoners against the leaders of the militia, calling them sectaries and not to be trusted, thus driving a wedge between the people and Parliament’s army. And once the New Model Army was established, they tried to undercut it by sneering about “rawheads” in the “New Noddle.” Hubberthorne alleged that spies all over the nation had supplied Presbyterian Thomas Edwards with news of serious believers so that he could compile his well-known *Gangraena* of 1646, "stuffed with mistakes, forged inventions, and filthy lies." Fearful that Parliament might prevail and the nation be set on a path of righteousness, they stirred up so-called “Clubmen,” rustics supposedly trying to defend themselves and their land from being plundered but in fact people sowing divisions.

Although Hubberthorne did not charge these Presbyterians, the same kind of manipulators who were trying in 1659 to restore the Stuarts, with responsibility for Charles I’s execution, he implied as much. In their sermons they deluded the monarch into refusing to agree to some of the reasonable proposals from Parliament and hence prevented a reconciliation to forestall his trial and conviction. Knowing he aspired to absolute rule, they twitted him by asking ‘whether he would make himself a subject.’ Charles’ negative response, sure and foreknown, brought him straightway and inevitably to the scaffold. These sly, fox-like men, Hubberthorne said as he closed, lurked in their dens, now beholden to one authority, now to another, ‘at some times crying out against authority and at other times to authority to help them and defend them.’ He deigned not to say what they deserved, leaving that task to the Judge of the universe who ‘had already taken his people’s cause into his
Hubberthorne’s broadside, dated 24 October and designed for easy distribution among his former army comrades, was his final public statement on the crisis year 1659. It reads yet like a cry from the heart, a wounded heart its owner feared was about to be stabbed again by an unfaithful remnant. The people of England, sighed the afflicted one, ‘have by deep and sad experiences not only seen the falseness and pretences, whereby they have been betrayed ..., but they also through their deep sufferings have learned to know the spirits of men.’ While not ready to disinter and behead Oliver Cromwell, whom he tagged a ‘covenant breaker and betrayer of the people’s liberties,’ he was hardly sad to have him gone. He reminded his readers that the Protector had many times professed his support of liberty of conscience and had prayed before Dunbar that if God would deliver him he would sweep away tithes. Yet Cromwell permitted “murdering” magistrates and priests to lord it over people of tender conscience and enforced laws requiring payment of tithes. ‘For the elect’s sake,’ exalted Hubberthorne, ‘his days were shortened.’ The lawmakers of Richard Cromwell’s time had promised the same things, but, refusing also to grant ‘liberty and freedom to the army and to the people of God,’ they too had been swept away. The Rump Parliament was a bit better: it had freed those who refused tithes and swearing, however much it had avoided making the nation a free commonwealth, ‘not in name but in nature.’ But it corroded its reputation when it harkened to the so-called plundered ministers, loosing them on the nation to extract the goods of innocent people.

Then Hubberthorne turned to address the army directly, but he evinced almost no hope. ‘And now you, the army, have your day from the Lord, wherein you will be tried and proved.’ He proffered little specific advice. Use your power, he averred, to choose men who feared God and hate covetousness, pride, honour, and ambition. Mentioning a Quaker who was not heard the day before in a Westminster court because he would not swear, he admonished the army to see that no such actions occur in its name. And he again harped on the inconsistent evil of requiring former soldiers who had sacrificed their money for horses and arms to pay tenths to support a church they opposed. ‘So both the law and priesthood are joined together in oppression of the people,’ he signed off. The lack of specificity in this broadside suggested that the author had grown tired and expected little to come of his effort; it seemed too much like a protest for the record.

Richard Hubberthorne did not again inform the public of his disquiet in 1659, but he groused privately about the endless and fruitless policy
debates engaged in by army officers. He was especially irritated that they never seemed able to unite on a policy involving tithes, even while they responded to his lobbying by promising, as he phrased it, 'to stand for good things.' His understandable frustrations no doubt led him to abstain from further overt political activity. His writings thus focused nevermore on history, the former cavalry officer turning away to tilt at safer doctrinal and theological windmills. In his more neutral political stance, a new one for him but one he weened necessary in the world of the Restoration, he mirrored the experience of his fellow Quakers, both then and later. After Charles II returned to a happy London in May 1660, his regime presently bolstered by stringent laws against dissenters of all stripes. Quakers prepared to sow the seeds of pacifism that had lain almost completely dormant among their ideological stock. Hubberthorne, hat firmly clapped on his head, visited the restored King to plead for release of his Friends, a hardly threatening chore that foreshadowed the retreat from politics they embodied in their famous "Peace Testimony" of 1661.

Written by Hubberthorne and Fox, this statement grew most immediately out of the public excitement and fears occasioned by the uprising of a band of millenarian Fifth Monarchists in London on 6 January, 1661. Committing the sect formally to forsake war and plotting, it was carefully crafted to answer shrill attacks on the Friends, the most troubling one in the King's recent proclamation on the rising. But the statement's only use of history was to misread it, for it asserted that in the past members of the Society of Friends had rejected the use of arms and implied that they had always been non-political and thus unconcerned with "carnal" matters. 'Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace,' they announced. 'All bloody principles and practices, we, as to our own particulars, do utterly deny ... for any end or under any pretence whatsoever.'

The Testimony marked the transformation of the Society of Friends into a sect markedly different from the creative, exuberant, and confrontational company of the turbulent and exciting 1650s, the one Hubberthorne spoke for in his 1659 review of that period's history. Leaving behind their earlier enthusiastic and ecstatic improvisations, they gradually withdrew to concern themselves with internal problems, some reminiscent of more compelling days, true, but many involving separation from the outside world, with a stolid attention to what became quaint practices. The Restoration raised the curtain on a sober second scene, "the second period of Quakerism," in which the Society of Friends matured and assured its survival after its heady earlier act. Richard Hubberthorne had tried to get others to join the sect in
rewriting the script and thus refashioning the ending. Instead he and his fellows had to be content to exit right. They would get no chance at an encore.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES


4 The evidence is not finally in on Winstanley’s convincement. For the latest, see J.D. Alsop, 'Gerrard Winstanley: Religion and Respectability,' Historical Journal, 28 (1985), 705-09.

5 George Fox, To the Parliament of the Common-Wealth of England, Fifty-nine Particulars laid down for the Regulating of things (London: no publ, 1659). (In all quotations, I have modernized punctuation, spelling, and grammar.)


8 There were seven from Bristol, five from London, at least one in the north. Alexander Parker to George Fox, 7 Aug. 1659, LSF; Swarthmore MSS, III, 143, Robert Rich, Hidden Things Brought to Light on the Discord of the Grand Quakers among Themselves (Np: no publ, 1678), 29; Norman Penney, ed., Extracts from State Papers Relating to Friends, 1654 to 1672 (London: Headley Bros., 1913), 138.


11 Richard Hubberthorne, A Word of Wisdom and Counsel to the Officers and Soldiers of the Army in England (London: no publ, 1659), broadside.
12 *Journal*, 73. On Fox as a millenarian, see my "George Fox Millenarian," *Albion*, forthcoming.


17 Richard Hubberthorne, *The Real Cause of the Nations Bondage and Slavery, here Demonstrated* (London: no publ, 1659), 3. Fox used these words in his own pamphlet, probably basing them on the promised results of obeying divine law. See Deuteronomy 15:4 (Coverdale).

18 Richard Hubberthorne, *An Answer to a Declaration put forth by the general Consent of the People called Anabaptists* (London: no publ, 1659), 3-4. Burrough, who wrote half this pamphlet, predicted that the Baptists' 'Antichrist monarchy, the beast with all his heads and horns, shall fall.' *Ibid.*, 23.

19 But Hubberthorne was not consistent in what read like a defence of liberty of conscience. He did not think that any church should be permitted to employ ministers, for example, if they were 'enemies to the public peace' or involved themselves with civil government. Richard Hubberthorne, *The Good Old Cause Briefly Demonstrated* (London: no publ, 1659), 12.

20 *Ibid.*, 9 My "ever" corrects the obvious misprint "never."


23 The compilers of Hubberthorne's writings did not, significantly, choose to reprint this particular pamphlet. See Richard Hubberthorne, *A Collection of the several Books and Writings of that Faithful servant of God, Richard Hubberthorne* (London: William Warwick, 1663).

24 Fox, *To the Parliament* I say 'relatively better known' because, unlike many of Fox's works, this one has never been reprinted and escaped the notice of all biographers, most of whom have been content to concentrate on his *Journal*, concerned primarily with theological issues, and have shied away from such explicit political topics.

25 For a older and contrary emphasis but recently reiterated, see Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914* (York, Eng.: Sessions Book Trust, 1990), 9-23.

26 Hubberthorne, *Good Old Cause*, 10 [2]. (Four pages of this pamphlet are mispaginated: when referring to them, I have placed the correct numbers in square brackets).


28 *Ibid.*, 4-15 [7].

29 In another of his essays, Hubberthorne specifically identified himself, and presumably other Quakers, with Puritans. Attacking the church of James I's day for promoting of sports and dancing, often on Sundays, he reminded his readers of the 'grief' this policy had caused those "scornfully called Puritans" and other sober minded people. Hubberthorne, *Common-Wealth's Remembrancer* (London: no publ, 1659), 4.
It was not incidental that Hubberthorne included women among those denied their rights at the hands of others, for Quakers customarily drew few distinctions between men and women.


Hubberthorne did produce a fairly lengthy booklet that has been tentatively dated in 1659 (Smith, *Catalogue*, I, 1014), but it concerned itself entirely with doctrinal disputes. See Richard Hubberthorne, *The Quakers House Built upon the Rock Christ* (no publ, [c. 1659]). That it concentrated on safer doctrinal matters and omitted the usual publisher's information suggests that it was published late in the year as it became clearer that the monarchy would be restored.


This is, of course, the title of the second volume of the standard history of the Quaker movement: William Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1919).