Penington and Politics: Three Pamphlets Considered.

Isaac Penington is revered as one of the great Quaker writers on spiritual matters; his spiritual writings were brought to our attention anew in 2005 in the inspirational account of Keiser and Moore.[1] However it is easy to overlook the significance of his contribution to political thought at a crucial moment of the British revolution of 1650-1653. While James Nayler's involvement with the parliamentary army has been acknowledged - for example in David Neelon's contribution to *Quaker Studies* in 2001[2] — I am not aware of any similar appraisal of Isaac Penington's contribution from within the parliamentary side's political wing. Even the substantial and authoritative work of Kate Peters, also published in 2005, fails to give credit to Penington, one of the highest placed early recruits to the Quaker movement, yet Penington's religion sprang from his politics just as much as his politics sprang from his religion.[3] His political career effectively came to an end when he advocated waiting in the Light, waiting for God's instructions, at a time when circumstances seemed to dictate immediate and decisive action.

Penington not only advocated a division of powers between legislature, executive and administration but was possibly the first 'modern' Englishman to suggest that the head of state might be elected by the representatives of the people. His proposals were the critical bridge between a monarchy headed by a king by right of inheritance and a republic headed by an elected president. During the years of their publication, the younger Isaac was clearly and identifiably working on behalf of his father, a key figure in the revolution and a crucial member of the Council of State then setting out to rule the British Isles. In this article I will describe Isaac Penington's position, outline the pamphlets, place them in the context of the constitutional debates and show the moment of separation between Penington and Cromwell's pragmatic advisers. I will show that Penington's background and activities prior to his marriage to Mary Springett should not be ignored by any who hope to understand the later Quaker or the roots of the anger with which he was persecuted by cavaliers restored to power.

Penington's father is too easily dismissed from his son's story.[4] Isaac Penington senior inherited considerable wealth but he also added to it through both trading activities and judicious marriages. He served a political apprenticeship as political secretary to his kinsman Admiral Sir John Penington at the opening of Charles I's reign; it was a role that brought him into close contact with those developing and implementing political policy and which consolidated Penington's views on the importance of the king working closely with parliament, something Charles conspicuously failed to do.

Penington senior acquired The Grange, Chalfont St. Peter, a place later to be made famous by his son as a centre for Quaker evangelism.[5] Chalfont was a community with a history of dissent dating back to Lollard times. It was at Chalfont that the new owner began a lasting dispute with Archbishop Laud. Laud objected to Penington's appointment of a radical preacher, one not to Laud's liking. Penington senior became an implacable political and religious opponent of the Archbishop. He saw Laud as someone intent on using his closeness to the king to hold back if not to turn back the still-flowing tide of protestant reformation. As Keeper of the Tower of London, Penington senior was to lead Laud out onto the scaffold for execution.

As a member of parliament for the City of London, Penington senior was to help precipitate the civil wars. He, with the backing of Cromwell, Pym and others, refused Charles access to City money until he accepted their radical demands. When Charles tried to arrest five leading MPs, it was to Penington's parish - and probably his home - that they fled for refuge.[6] It was Penington who led an armed mob thousands strong out onto the streets of London and Westminster to 'protect' MPs so that they could accept the Root and Branch petition calling for the abolition of bishops.[7] Penington became Lord Mayor of London in an internal coup and personally led the defence of the city against Charles's troops.[8] To pay for the work and for money to support the Parliamentary army, Penington devised and implemented levies on all who could pay; he sequestered 'Royalist' estates and assets within the City and became recognised as the leader of the War Party within the city.[9] Royalist pamphlets branded him a traitor. The king himself was said to have condemned 'the pretended lord mayor' as 'the principal author of those

calamities'.[10] He denied the charge, vehemently insisting he had no quarrel with the king, only his advisers. It was a denial in a standard form but it may, in the mid-1640s, have had some substance.[11]

As the years of strife went by, Alderman Penington struggled to help find a settlement to the conflict. He was closely in touch with Cromwell throughout this time supporting Oliver's opposition to both the far left and the Royalist right. Getting the balance 'right' was a life and death affair. He was selected by the Cromwellians to take control of London once more after an abortive counter coup against the New Model Army and subsequently retained his parliamentary seat when the Army purged it of those thought to be unacceptable to the regime.[12] After the second civil war collapsed, Alderman Penington served on the commission which tried the King. He seems to have supported the idea of the trial but he did not sign the death warrant. He was not, quite, the regicide which resurgent cavaliers were to call him. Despite this, following the execution of the king and the abolition of the House of Lords, he was elected by what was left of Parliament to serve on the first Council of State. Within the Council he took a special responsibility for financial affairs and relations with the City of London, critical matters if the beleaguered republic was to survive. Detailed analysis of references to Penington in the Calendar of State Papers, reveals him to have been the government's specialist in sequestering estates and assets from 'Royalists' and wringing the last penny in levies and taxes from City magnates, all skills he had honed as Lord Mayor.[13]

There is also evidence that he promoted support for the new Commonwealth in the pamphlet wars that were a feature of the war years. One particularly influential pamphleteer was the radical cleric, John Goodwin. Penington had been responsible for giving him his London base when he recruited him to his home parish of St. Stephen's Coleman Street in the 1630s. Penington's hand can be seen behind Goodwin's dismissal from the parish when Goodwin's independent views became politically unacceptable in the mid-1640s. Now, in 1649, Goodwin published support for the new regime in *Right and Might Well Mett* and Penington found a way to accommodate the exile back within St. Stephen's.[14] There is no evidence that the Penington/Goodwin

dispute was over a split between them over the relative merits of Calvinism and Arminianism or that Penington junior backed the cleric against his father. Relations between Penington senior and Goodwin were complex and fraught but the overwhelming reason for both dismissal and the subsequent recall was political.

Despite his contribution to the revolution, or rather, because of it, Alderman Penington was subjected to a cruel, anonymous, libel, *Hosanna: or a Song of Thanksgiving sung by the Children of Zion and set forth in three notable Speeches at Grocers-Hall on the late Solemn Day of Thanksgiving, Thursday June 7, 1649.*[15] This pamphlet purports to set out the three main speeches given at a City of London civic banquet on 7 June 1649. That the event was planned and happened is attested by the Calendar of State Papers.[16] The three speakers were the radical cleric Hugh Peters, Alderman Thomas Atkins and Alderman Penington. It had been intended that both the Aldermen should be knighted by the Speaker of Parliament using the Ceremonial Sword of the City of London. Whether the dubbing of the knights actually happened we do not know. Penington is described as Sir Isaac in all British Library records; Lindley in the ODNB agrees that Penington was knighted but puts the date at 1657 for reasons he does not explain and post-Restoration authorities at the City of London insist that no-one could have been knighted because the Commonwealth regime did not have the authority to do such things.

Nevertheless, the dinner was an important state occasion, probably the first such since the execution of the king. Reginald Sharpe interprets the event also as a celebration of the suppression of the Levellers[17] but the event was primarily the City of London's endorsement of the legitimacy of the regicidal regime. The choice of Atkins and Penington as guests of honour at such an event underlines the importance of the roles they had played in the revolution since its beginning.

The Libel clearly saw nothing to celebrate but plenty to mock. Alderman Penington is portrayed as a stereotypical pious puritan and a bit of a buffoon. He is also made to declare, 'Moses was a man slow of speech, yet he was a great leader and so have I been'. If he indeed was 'slow of speech', the politician Penington may well have welcomed his son Isaac as an Aaron at this crucial moment in state affairs.

By the time the three 'Penington' political pamphlets

appeared, Isaac Penington junior was already in his prime and had published a number of religious tracts. His background and maturity at this time were perceptively commented on by Joseph Gurney Bevan in his *Memoir of Isaac Penington.* Isaac had been 'heir [...] to a fair inheritance'. He had benefited from a good education 'as well as such arose from the conversation of some of the most knowing and considerable men of the time.' Isaac senior had, continued Bevan, been 'a violent partisan' in the 'civil commotions'. The son 'might probably soon have arisen to eminence in the republic' but chose religion instead. In his pre-Quaker tracts 'he looked for the cause of the evil rather in the depraved state of man's heart in general than in any particular party or set of men.' When Isaac wrote *Fundamental Right* etc, says Bevan, he 'was more than thirty years of age. They are not, therefore, to be considered as the mere effusions of an ingenuous youthful mind but as the result of observation and judgement, operating as a mind amply endowed with philanthropy and piety'.[18] As we shall see, Isaac's mind was also endowed with considerable knowledge and understanding of politics.

Born to Isaac Penington senior and his first wife, Abigail, in 1616, Isaac junior entered the Inner Temple in 1634 and was called to the Bar in 1639; in between he studied at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, though he appears not to have taken a degree. What did Isaac junior do next? His brother, William, became a merchant like his father, Isaac did not. It is probable that he contributed his legal skills to the family project: documents held at Shropshire Archives show him acting in a legal capacity on behalf of his father in Hilary Term, 1650. The Shropshire business involved negotiations over a marriage contract with Richard More, a leading puritan landowner and MP from Shropshire.[19] Isaac junior's own marriage - on 13 March 1654 - was not at St. Stephen's Coleman Street, the family church, but at the parliament church of St. Margaret, Westminster.[20] The implications are that Isaac junior was indeed involved in his father's business, the business of politics. Certainly this would help to explain the very different discourse apparent in his 'political' pamphlets from that in his works of spiritual

searching. How much those political pamphlets were his own and how much merely work produced on behalf of his father is open to question. But Isaac junior was prepared publicly to acknowledge authorship of those pamphlets. Equally there can be no doubt that the first two pamphlets at least would have met with his father's approval and served his political needs. They would also have met with approval in the government circles in which Isaac senior operated; the pamphlets used a language which not only reflected Cromwellian concerns and attitudes but promoted a constitutional proposal which would legitimise assumption of supreme power by a Cromwell-figure.

The first of the 'political' pamphlets to appear under Isaac Penington's name was *A Word for the Common Weale*.[21] The printed date of publication is 1650.[22] Authorship is ascribed to 'Isaac Penington, esquire'; British Library catalogues assert the author is 'Sir Isaac Pennington' and Quaker historian Douglas Gwyn omits the work from Isaac junior's canon. However Isaac junior himself includes the piece (marked 'out of print'), in a list of his works published in *Divine Essays* in 1654. The piece contrasts in every way with a collection of sermons, *Light or Darknesse* dated 22 May 1650 which credits the author as 'Isaac Penington (Junior) Esquire'.[23] A larger question than who actually wrote the text is who the reader of *A Word for the Common Weale* was expected to assume the author to be. At that moment, Isaac Penington junior may already have acquired a following for his spiritual writings but it was his father who was the famed politician. Alderman Penington was deeply and publicly embroiled in the dispute over the future of The Rump and over constitutional reform. These are precisely the issues tackled in *A Word to the Common Weale*.

The major theme of *A Word for the Common Weale* was shaped by the dispute between parliament and the government, that is, the Council of State. Alderman Penington, a member of the Long Parliament since its first election and a leading Parliamentarian for nearly a decade, was nevertheless clearly identifiable as a man of the Government.

In the traumatic weeks after Pride's Purge, there had been a general expectation that the Rump would be dissolved and

new elections held by 30 April 1649. Instead it was still there and still arguing. 'This nation was very sick, a Parliament much desired to cure it, many hopes and expectations fastened upon their endeavours, but now most men are grown sick both of the Physicians and the cure', says the writer of *A Word.*[24]

Penington castigates the Rump for its 'Multitude of affairs, Prolixity in your motions, and want of an orderly Government of your own body'. It was tempted to tackle or do things 'which might be better managed by other hands'. Like the country itself, it was riven by party and faction. Can we not be happy, he asks, unless someone sits on a throne and makes others sit as slaves underneath?

This *Preface* has a prophetic ring to it that is, on the whole, missing from the document itself; it shares with *Light or Darknesse* a sense of the apocalyptic. Do people expect God to come along and sort everything out? If that happens, it will not just be those that disagree with you that will be judged but you yourself, warns Penington. God – described as 'the unknown Potter' in *Light and Darknesse* – may well be shaking up all things, destroying all certainties, so that people might rediscover the need to love each other. But beyond this *Preface*, Penington bases his comments and proposals on a view of constitutional foundations based on natural law; the People have a duty based on their duty of self-preservation to set up sound Government and require accountability for the trust placed in it.[25]

The main text reviews the struggles of the past ten years or so and tries to set out a pattern of government that will resolve issues. The strife had been about recovering rights and liberties with the aim of achieving 'a righteous administration of Government'. To meet that aim, three things were needed: good laws; proper hands to exercise those laws; and 'an exact rule or way' to guide those hands. The laws were to set 'the proper bounds of right and liberty' and the proper balance between individual rights and public welfare. Those laws needed to be certain, open, accessible and easily understood. But 'execution is the life of the law'. It is not the law that affrights or encourages but execution of it.[26]

The threat to liberty and safety was now, as it had been under the king, from arbitrary rule. To prevent arbitrary government creeping in, legislative and executive powers must be separated.

'The late King' may have gone astray because there was not a clear Rule within which the Government was required to work. Now the danger was of arbitrary rule by Parliament. A Parliament 'may far more easily err in Government' even than the King and Council. Parliament was now trying to 'intermeddle' with matters of government. Its task was not to try to run things itself but to settle government in good hands and within fixed boundaries and to make laws only to fill in gaps to meet unforeseen situations. The 'Safety of the People' rested in the government set up to protect their welfare. But the safety of the government rested in its having strict limits and abiding by them, otherwise government became 'burdensome and Tyrannous'. Parliament unbounded would 'cut out all but its own Sovereignty'.[27] It is no use simply getting rid of what seems a heavy hand, suggests Penington; each time it takes a stronger hand to get rid of the lesser: the stronger the hand the weightier the burdens it can impose. There is no trusting any man or any sort of man; you must look into the basic problem - the lack of a Rule and boundaries. Government and Parliament must allow themselves to be chained up like a lion or a wolf. Calling people to any office, investing them with power, without setting clear and distinct limits to that power will 'sow the seeds of Tyranny'. And if the People had omitted to set such limits then Parliament had a duty to do the job for them. Parliament is accountable to the People through natural right 'which nature teacheth all'. But how could people know whether 'Privileges of Parliament' are sweeping up their own 'Rights and Liberties' unless those privileges are clearly set out?

Penington warns of a crisis of trust between people and parliament equal to that between king and parliament. And he asks: will the People rise up against Parliament or will Parliament use the Army to 'Stop the mouths of the people'?[28] Penington's prescription is clear: separation of powers and a clear Rule to guide all. The time was ripe for 'the true foundations of freedom and righteousness to be laid' but Penington is left with the conundrum that change seemed to be dependent on the very Parliament that was threatening to abuse its trust.[29]

Fundamental Right, Safety and Liberty of the People, by far the most extensive of the three Penington political tracts, exists in two editions. The first appeared in 1651. This, with a new cover but

otherwise unchanged, was re-issued in 1657. The one difference between the two editions is the name of the printer: in the first edition, attribution is to 'Printed by John Macock and are to be sold by Giles Calvert at the West end of Paul's'. In 1657 this reads 'Printed for Giles Calvert and are to be sold at the Black-spread Eagle at the West end of Paul's.'[30] The year 1657 was a significant one in Alderman Penington's political and private lives but how the re-print relates to either is not clear.

As with *A Word to the Common Weale* the central theme is the need to find and establish 'proper bounds of right and liberty'.[31] Penington again takes a providentialist view of the turmoil of the preceding decade and acknowledges that only God can bring about righteous government. But he insists that in the meantime people had to press 'as near towards righteousness as possibly ye may'.

Though he addresses 'the sorrowing People', Penington shows he has no great hopes from 'The common people [...] who receive things by rumors and common reports, without examining or scanning whether things be so or no.' This is a passage that reflects Penington's experiences in the tumultuous events of 1647. He continues: it is not simply that governors do not govern righteously, their inferiors 'doth not obey righteously' either. The People, therefore, were as capable of error as any parliament, government or king. The People's task was to choose governments and governors. That responsibility rested in 'every people' and was theirs of right. However, no single form of government could fit all societies and any constitution would require amendment. The form of government appropriate to any society must be determined by men guided by 'the true light of Reason'. At the heart of a just society was the Law. A free people did not have laws imposed upon it but voluntarily submitted to laws that were for their welfare. Those laws were made and amended by the men chosen by the people to sit in parliament. Those parliamentarians must be as subject to the laws they made as everybody else; governments and governors (including kings, implies the pamphlet) should not be above the law but must suffer the consequences of their decisions.

Parliament, the representative of the people, must be free and freely elected. The pamphlet expresses concern about the role of the Army and the extent to which it had made it difficult for

Parliament to reach independent decisions. There is a curious ambivalence about the extent to which the Army could purge parliament before the latter lost its credibility. The difficulty for the older Penington was that he both approved of and had benefited from Army interventions in Parliamentary affairs. The son's pamphlet sets out the need for bounds and limits for people and parliament and ruler alike but shuns the task of defining such rules for the Army. Did he assume that the Army would not feature in the longer term future of the country or did he feel that it was beyond his - or anyone else's - capacity to set limits to its role? Either way Penington's silence on the issue is significant.

Penington did feel able to set rules for parliaments: they must not be over-long because MPs would forget where they came from and pursue their own interests. Parliament would become a standing power in its own right - who then would protect the people? How could Parliament act properly as 'Judges on behalf of the Commonwealth'? If it became the standing power itself, how could it be a curb for itself? 'The people are in as much danger of them, as they were of the Power of Kings: for it is not the person simply, but the power, wherein the danger or benefit lieth.'

Penington insists that there should be a separation between religious and secular government: no parliament could be so assured that it represented the wishes and will of Christ as to be able to rule the church. But while warning Parliament against 'medling with spiritual affairs' Penington equally warns religious factions to keep their hands off Parliament. 'The Presbyterian is now engaged indissoluably to use his utmost strength and endevor towards the advancing of Presbytery, which is God's instituted way of worship in his eye; and so the Independent of Independency which is Christ's Institution in his eye.'[32]

There must be a clear distinction between parliament, government and administration to provide the checks and balances necessary for the safety of the people. There must be clear distinction between administrative, executive and judicative powers with distinct limits and responsibilities for each. Within this new constitution there might be a place for 'kingly government' a single governor presiding over government and parliament. 'For my part, though I shall not plead for the resettlement of Kingly Government [...] yet I would have a fair

and friendly shaking hands with it, and not any blame layd upon it beyond its desert.'

Penington calls for a legal inquiry (undertaken by learned lawyers like Penington junior) into kingly government, to see where it went wrong and where its limits ought to be. A similar inquiry might be held into parliamentary government. The problem, says Penington, is not kingly versus parliamentary government but keeping them both within clearly defined limits. The King had had experience on his side but there had to be a way to resolve disputes between King and People.[33]

It is now, here, almost at the end of the document, that Penington makes his most revolutionary comments. The closest Britain had come to a achieving a lasting peace settlement between Charles I and the Army that opposed him was set out in a document known as *Heads of Proposals*.[34] That settlement was destroyed by the renewal of armed conflict. The *Heads of Proposals* had suggested that the King should become a constitutional monarch ruling through a council and parliament. Isaac Penington now revived, and modified, this proposal. Neither birth right nor divine right, were required characteristics of the One Man who would rule with a council and parliament as set out in the *Heads of Proposals*. The One Man would be qualified by his ability to serve. The qualities of a good governor were the ability to manage his trust with all care and fidelity and to settle the foundations of society. Powerful non-royals had ruled England frequently in the past as regents and Lords Protector. Penington's vision went beyond this: his elected One Man might not be simply a stop-gap until a young prince became old enough to rule as Monarch; the post might be a perpetual feature of a constitutional republic.

There is much detail of interest in *Fundamental Right*: those interested in Penington junior's subsequent career as a leader of Quakers will be interested in the lack of enthusiasm for decision-making by voting and surprised to see the enthusiasm for oath-taking - many of Penington junior's years in prison were the consequence of his refusal to take oaths of any kind.

The last of the 'political' pamphlets here ascribed to Isaac Penington junior makes no attempt to offer practical solutions to constitutional problems. It has an air of expectant desperation about it. *A Considerable Question about Government* carries the date

1653 and seems to have been published in the spring of that year in the wake of Cromwell's dismissal of the Rump Parliament. The question it asks is set out on the title page: 'Which is better both for the Good, Safety and Welfare, both of the Governors and Governed, Absolute or Limited Authority'.[35]

Absoluteness is defined as 'a full power of Government without interruption, without rendering an account, residing in the Brest, Will or Conscience of the Governor or Governors' adding 'Limitation is a circumscribing of this power within such bounds as the people for whose sake and benefit government is, shall think fit to consine it unto for their good and safety'.

'Now without controversie', writes Penington, 'great is the advantage of Absoluteness both to the Governors in the execution of their Duty and to the People towards the reaping of the fruits of Government'. All will be well so long as those who govern are 'men of knowledge and integrity, whose judgements and consciences are not liable to be deceived or perverted'. But 'because of man's corruption [...] it is impossible this should be rightly ordered and administered. And we find dayly that by Absoluteness in Government the People are exposed to slavery, their liberties, yea their very lives, subjected, not to righteousness in another but to the corruption of another. So Absoluteness of Government, take it as the state of things now stands, is no other then a giving up of estates, liberties and lives of the People into the jaws of unrighteousness, into the hands of a selfish power.'

By now, Penington has low expectations of any government: Parliament had sprung up undertaking 'to rectify that which was crooked in the foregoing Government'; then 'the Army seemeth to rise up with a more excellent Spirit than they' but who knew what their intentions were? He warns the governed to expect nothing of their Governors but to rest in the belief that 'The Lord will deal with those that oppress you [...] Who hath shaken this State? Is it not the Lord?' Almost at his conclusion he writes: 'There is indeed a great truth now held forth: that the Saints shall govern the world'. Even here Penington can see little cause for hope: if those Saints are 'not in the truth' or should take on the responsibilities of government before the Millennium actually arrives then the country would see 'the greatest unrighteousness established by the strongest and most unrighteous Law.'

'Oh, that this so long-captive-nation could lift up their eyes

towards, and wait for, the Salvation of God.' This waiting on God was an approach Penington might well have expected to have been shared by Oliver Cromwell. As J.C. Davis has pointed out 'Cromwell was saturated in the providentialism of his contemporaries [...] The Cromwellian regime has frequently been criticised for an absence of clear policy objectives and of management strategies for their realization. But such criticism overlooks the fact that reliance on providence implied, in one sense, the absence of policy[...]' [36]

In later years, especially immediately before and immediately after the Restoration, Penington would publish further pamphlets addressed to Parliament, Army, King and other secular authorities. They were invariably appeals for freedom of conscience and religious toleration. Never again would they be written from the inside of politics or offer practical proposals: the new regime, or at least that element within it articulated by Marchmont Nedham, in *The True Case*, had little time for those who stood by and waited for things to be resolved. 'If we falter, or be mis-led through phantisie, or if that fail through our default, we are immediately swallowed up by Tyrannie, and have nothing left to do but to put our mouths in the dust, and sit down in sorrow and silence for the glory of our nation.'[37] Events then, as now, dictated action.

After the publication of *A Considerable Question*, Isaac Penington senior assumed a back seat in politics. Did he do so because he shared his son's view that it was better to do nothing than to act before one was convinced about the direction God wished one to go? The Alderman was nominated to the Parliament of Saints - Barebones Parliament - but absented himself from the elections. Despite many years of close working with Cromwell, no new role emerged for him under the Protectorate. Penington senior lost his main political power base when he lost his Aldermanic seat on the City Corporation. His income had fallen below the required level. The causes of his financial situation were undoubtedly complex. He was old by contemporary standards; he had settled considerable assets on his son Isaac and presumably on his other children, too. His problems may not have had anything at all to do with the accusations made against him that some of the Royalist assets had stuck to his own fingers during the sequestration process.

The accusations were pursued through the courts and Penington appealed to the Council of State for protection but there is no evidence that his fears that he would be bankrupted by the actions were ever realised. Penington senior did not hide away. He did not retire from politics. In 1649 he had been placed on the body which took over Westminster Abbey and Westminster School from the old Dean and Chapter. He was still active on that body in 1657 when he signed papers relating to the school,[38] and when the Long Parliament was recalled in 1659, he again took his seat.

Isaac Penington's 'political' pamphlets of the early 1650s reveal him to be very much a child of his time and, in the eyes of the rest of the political community, a colleague and associate of his father. Isaac junior shared the conviction, almost universally held in Britain at the time, that God was actively shaking the foundations of society and rebuilding the nation. He may also have shared the widespread belief in an imminent Millennium when either God would return to rule his earth or his selected saints would begin a thousand year rule to prepare the way for his coming. There is evidence that Isaac was in touch with religious radicals but sceptical about their wilder speculations; a fragment of a letter to one such, Abiezer Cop(pe), is in the John Penington collection at Friends House Library London.[39] His *Considerable Question about Government* is hardly a ringing approval of Saintly rule.

Whatever his subsequent relationship with his father, it was clearly a close, working one at the time of the British revolution. Isaac junior was closely identified with his father and his father's politics. Penington senior's death in custody in the Tower of London after the Restoration was deemed to be sufficiently significant for parliamentary proceedings to be interrupted so members could be informed of the news. Thus cheated of the opportunity to try and execute the father, who had plundered, allegedly to his personal benefit, so many Royalist estates, there must have been a temptation for aggrieved cavaliers to vent their retrospective anger on the son who had so publicly and so recently associated himself with the regicide's politics.

Isaac Penington's political views deserve serious consideration in their own right and in our own time. He had interesting and challenging things to say about the rule of law, democracy,

tyranny, constitutional checks and balances, and the practical problems of incorporating religion and religious commitment into the business of government. And his final dilemma is increasingly relevant today: with all sides of a fundamental conflict believing that God is remaking the world, how do you discern where the truth lies? How do you decide how to act?

Peter Smith

END NOTES

1. R. Melvin Keiser and Rosemary Moore's *Knowing the Mystery of the Life Within: Selected Writings of Isaac Penington in their Historical and Theological Context* (London: Quaker Books, 2005) was published after most of the work on which this article is based had been completed.
2. David Neelon, 'James Nayler in the English Civil Wars' *Quaker Studies* Vol.6 No.1 September 2001 pp. 8–36.
3. Kate Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
4. For biographical details of Isaac Penington, senior, I have drawn on Keith Lindley's article 'Isaac Penington c1584-1661, local politician and regicide' in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* on-line; on Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625-1643* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961); D. Brunton and D.H. Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1954) and extensive reading in the *House of Commons Journal*; other primary sources are listed below. Earlier biographies referred to are listed in the bibliography below. Reference was also made to Andrew Thrush, 'Sir John Penington c1583-1646' in the *ODNB*
5. Pearl, p. 181.
6. Lindley in *ODNB*
7. Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution 1625–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 169.
8. Pamphlets issued by Penington as Lord Mayor attest to this, see: Thomason/E.118 [29] and of 23 September 1642 and a broadside of 12 November 1642 Wing/L2878A. to supplement reports by Lindley in *ODNB* and others, for example, Pearl.
9. Valerie Pearl is particularly strong on Penington's role at this stage, see Pearl, particularly pp. 179-181 and 198-206.
10. J. Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London, 1721) Vol. 5, p. 111.
11. 'Mr.Fowke' *The Declaration and vindication of Isaack Pennington, now Lord Mayor of the citie of London etc* [...] (London, 1643) Thomason/15.E.89[11].

12. *House of Commons Journal* Vol. 6, p. 254.
13. *Calendar of State Papers,* volumes for 1649-50; 1651; 1651-52; 1652-53 and 1655.
14. John Goodwin *Right and Well Mett* (London, January 1649); Thomason/E536 [28] and Tai Lui *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1986) p. 45.
15. Thomason/E.559 [11].
16. *CSPD* Vol. 1649-50 p175.
17. Reginald R. Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom: A History Derived Mainly from the Archives at Guildhall in the Custody of the Corporation of the City of London* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1894) Vol. 2 p. 312.
18. Joseph Gurney Bevan. *Memoirs of the Life of Isaac Penington* (Philadelphia, USA: T. Kite, 1831) pp. 13-14.
19. Shropshire Archives: The More Collection, mortgages and marriage settlements, ref. 1037/10/30 and 31 (1650-51).
20. Richard L. Greaves and Robert Zaller *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the seventeenth century* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982-84).
21. Isaac Penington, *A Word for the Common Weale* (1649) Thomason/E.593 [10].
22. This has been amended in the British Library copy which bears the date Feb 15, 1649, presumably the date the copy was acquired by Thomason. In 'Old Style' dates, the difference is of only a month.
23. *Divine Essays* Wing/P1162; *Light or Darknesse* Thomason/E.602[1]
24. Isaac Penington, *A Word for the Common Weale* p. 1.
25. Ibid., p. 13.
26. Ibid., p. 7.
27. Ibid., p. 11.
28. Ibid., p. 15.
29. Ibid., p. 18.
30. Isaac Penington (Junior) Esq., *The Fundamental Right, Safety and Liberty of the People* (1651). Thomason/E.629[2] and (1657) Wing/P1169A. Calvert was in trouble in Newgate briefly in 1652. He had first published a pamphlet by Isaac Penington junior in 1648. Calvert's list of authors (as listed by the *ODNB*) in the years immediately before 1651 included

Walwyn, Lilburne and Peters; Gerrard Winstanley; Coppe, Coppin and Clarkson. Calvert was associated with a group called 'My one flesh' and was instrumental in introducing Clarkson to this group. By 1657 he was the printer of preference to the people called Quakers. Penington's first Quaker publication is usually given as 1658.

31. Ibid., Sheet A3.
32. Ibid., p. 18.
33. Ibid., p. 36.
34. S.R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889, 1947 3rd edition revised) pp. 316–326.
35. Isaac Penington (Junior) Esq., *A Considerable Question about Government* Thomason/E.694 [6].
36. J.C. Davis on 'Cromwell's Religion' in David L. Smith (ed.) *Cromwell and the Interregnum* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003) p. 147.
37. Marchmont Nedham, *A True State of the case of the commonwealth* (London 1653/4; Exeter, The Rota, 1978). Nedham, who had published newspapers in the royalist cause before the King's execution was by this stage editor of the regime's official journal and the Government's chief 'spin doctor'.
38. British Library mss Add.637888 ff. 128-129.
39. Friends House Library, London: J. Penington mss collection, mss Vol.2.254

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