

matrimony can make a virgin out of the woman whom the cleric corrupted and then married—Is he eligible for promotion to higher orders as one who has been married only *cum unica et virgine*?)

Those who are seeking the origins of such modern concepts as “the rights of children” or “the best interests of the child” will not find them here. Because premodern Western law did not conceive of children as a separate legal topic, we do not find any elaborated themes or policies concerning them. The harsh consequences of their parents’ sin were visited on illegitimate children for centuries. And yet, the ebb and flow of the doctrines and practices concerning paternity and legitimation by subsequent matrimony suggest that at least in some periods there were those who sought to mitigate these harsh consequences, and occasionally they say that that is what they are trying to do. The absorption by the secular courts in the early modern period of actions that had previously been in the ecclesiastical courts did not, at least initially, bring much change in doctrine. Ultimately, however, whether because the concerns of the state were not the same as those of the church or because of a hardening of sentiment that may be associated with Jansenism, the results were less favorable to children (and to their unmarried mothers) than seem to have prevailed in previous centuries.

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Jane E. Calvert, *Quaker Constitutionalism and the Political Thought of John Dickinson*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv + 382. \$99 (ISBN 978-0-521-88436-5).  
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This is an important book, but it is blemished by the author’s exclusion of key evidence and concepts. Following passage of the Townshend Acts in England, John Dickinson (1732–1808) wrote *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer* and galvanized a movement that resulted in the American Revolution. Yet in 1776, he refused to sign the Declaration of Independence. Jane Calvert transforms this enigmatic narrative into a revelation: Dickinson’s decisions followed Quaker political thought, explicitly what Calvert calls Quaker Constitutionalism, which she identifies and delineates as a major, if forgotten, body of American political thought and practice. Calvert argues that partly through Dickinson, the United States Constitution was, and continues to be, beneficially shaped by Quaker political precepts.

Her major contribution—and a valuable one it is—is her delineation of Quaker Constitutionalism. Calvert argues that there was really no distinction between the ideas and practices of Quaker politics and the Quaker

ecclesiastical system; and that Pennsylvania was the last true theocracy in America. In Pennsylvania, authority in both church and politics rested in the inner Christ exposed in silent meetings of worship when revelation surfaced. These revelations were transmitted up and down the line by worthy delegates or vessels of the truth through a hierarchy of business meetings in a great bureaucracy of the Holy Spirit. As she shows, following Alan Tully, the Pennsylvania Assembly was almost identical in membership to Quaker religious leadership. Outsiders were excluded from both venues thanks to ruthless political organization. Speech acts in worship and business meeting and the Assembly were identical. Thus, Pennsylvania, diverse in culture, was ruled by a single set of people with a narrow range of speech acts.

Calvert largely approves of this system and ignores historians like William Offutt, Jack Marietta, Peter Silver, Billy Smith, and Simon Newman, who describe the Pennsylvania Constitution as a disaster socially, politically, and religiously, if not economically. Although Calvert insists that religion be considered in constitutional thought, she leaves out political economy except to admit that Pennsylvania was ruled by Quaker oligarchy. There is nothing here about the Quaker labor system, immigration, or how Quaker-led economic policies led to Delaware Indians attacks on frontiersmen or how the Quaker marriage discipline and its material standards for Quaker families pushed poor members out of the Society by 1760. Her description of Pennsylvania society is largely an uninformed vision of loveliness. The best writing on constitutions from Madison to Stephen Elkin have included political economy as an indispensable focus. It was the preoccupation of Dickinson's *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer*.

Calvert's construction of Dickinson as a pacifist reformer is also problematic. It omits contradictory facts. Calvert argues that "Dickinson's thought and action up to the point of independence situates him in the tradition of Gandhi and King as the first advocate and leader . . . of a national peaceful protest movement" (20). Calvert affirms that Dickinson's refusal to vote for the Declaration of Independence confirmed a tenet of his Quaker political belief system that forbade and delegitimized revolution. Yet, in contradiction to the thesis of this book that Dickinson thought any constitution inviolable, Dickinson continually legitimated violent revolution in his *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer*, in his "Declaration on the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms (1775)," and in his vindication of his own political behavior (1783). In 1775 Dickinson became a revolutionary military officer, a colonel. Insofar as Calvert discusses these events and speech acts, she sees them as evidence of Dickinson's trimming, an effort to use political speech to move revolutionary protest and tense political negotiations along a hidden agenda of Quaker thought toward a peaceful resolution. Yet, in the last decade of his life, at a time when Dickinson had little political involvement and when he attended Quaker meeting frequently and followed Quaker testimonies in

speech, Dickinson openly supported the French Revolution, the bloodiest and most traumatic event of his age, noting in a poem that “the cause of France is freedom’s cause.” And according to Dickinson’s biographer, his favorite maxim was “that an armed people and an armed magistracy was the best security for freedom.” Characteristically, neither the maxim nor the French Revolution is mentioned in this book. Nor does Calvert bother to chart or explain the many references in Dickinson’s writings to Tacitus, Montesquieu, and others, and the lack of reference to Quaker authors.

Calvert ends the book with an interesting discussion of pacifistic reform and Quaker icons in popular culture. She fails to note that the icons are all about private domesticity: references to Quaker maids and family consumer products. Absent are the negative Quaker political icons—Herbert Hoover and Richard Nixon. Yet they prove Calvert’s main point that Quakers had a heavy hand in the shaping of contemporary American political culture from the American Friends Service Committee to the Hoover Institution.

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Robert McCluer Calhoun, *Political Moderation in America’s First Two Centuries*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. 310. \$24.99 (ISBN 9780521734165).  
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“American men and women gravitated toward the moral center of politics to acknowledge their humility in the face of the past” (268). It was this humility, Robert Calhoun argues, that characterized early American conceptions and practices of moderation. Moderation was not about timidity and caution, but a historically grounded “compound of principle and prudence.” Calhoun’s story begins in Greece in an attempt to build up the intellectual strength of the ethic. Rejecting the notion that weakness is a quality of moderation, he traces its origins to the Greek term “sophrosyne,” in which the idea of moderation grew out of the knowledge and respect combatants held for one another but was also linked to shame and the fear of reproach (2–3). In Aristotle’s hands, moderation was turned into a broader moral virtue that moved between excess and deficiency. “Viewed from this perspective,” Calhoun argues, “moderation defined the very nature of humanity itself as a striving to measure up to the highest potentiality in relation to variables of time and circumstance” (4).

The book’s core is four chapters on moderation in America, with separate chapters on colonial and revolutionary moderates, moderation in the back-country, and religion. Each chapter, except the last, consists of a series of