

From this brief vignette, Manchester follows various threads that lead her to both sides of the Atlantic, and to the heart of many of the most urgent political and spiritual debates of the mid-seventeenth century. She argues that Joshua and Jane's case – the first example, she claims, of 'a wife's liberty of conscience, independent from her husband's' to be 'upheld in the English colonies' (p. 1) – contains 'in microcosm the forces at work in Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay during the 1630s' (p. 144). She seeks to learn more about 'the larger puritan and/or English narrative' of the period, and how questions of liberty of conscience, organisation of society and Church and gender relations were dealt with outside of prescriptive texts such as those of William Gouge or Robert Cleaver (both of which she cites).

As important and attractive a task this is, it is also fraught with challenges. Early on, Manchester admits that Jane Verin has left us no diaries or letters with which to understand her perspective or position; the book is therefore full of 'must haves' or 'would haves' – assumptions, in other words, which whether sturdy or otherwise cannot quite be proved. Manchester ranges widely, from Cotton Mather and Anne Hutchinson to John Locke and Edward Coke; occasionally the Verins become a little lost in the flood.

Manchester is aware that 'puritans were not a homogenous group' (p. 111) and traces the various influences on Providence's inhabitants as well as the sources available about them allow; on the other hand, the difference between a Perkins or a Cleaver, or between England and New England, are not always clear. Nevertheless, there is something exciting about the book, and it should be read generously. It opens inquiries into the histories of domestic violence and women's piety and religious liberty in this period, and should inspire others to investigate the conditions of Puritan women with a closer and keener attention paid to their own lived experiences, and the way in which elite discourse interacted – or did not – with those. Indeed, in her comparison of Jane with other Puritan women, both well known and less so, Manchester's book often hits its mark. Work such as this can deepen, enliven and broaden our appreciation of how spirituality was imagined, implemented and governed in the past – and this book offers a good guide to how we might do so, as well as to the perils such work must overcome.

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*Catholics during the English revolution, 1642–1660. Politics, sequestration and loyalty.* By Eilish Gregory. Pp. xii + 234. Woodbridge–Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2021. £75.978 1 78327 594 6  
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This study of Catholics and sequestration processes from the beginning of the Civil Wars to the Restoration is based on extensive archival research, surveying an impressive number of sequestration cases, along with a detailed description of the legislation and processes under which they functioned. In this, the author makes a very decent fist of comprehensively describing a thoroughly confusing, and frequently changing, process. Features worth noting include the role of print in publicising the sequestration legislation and changes to it, which sequestered delinquents and Catholics needed to negotiate in order to compound for their estates. Gregory also sensibly places Civil Wars sequestrations in the

context of the policy of sequestrations for recusancy which had begun in Elizabeth's reign. The content on sequestration is also complemented by discussion of Catholic attempts to negotiate toleration between 1647 and 1660, as well as some coverage in the final chapter of how Catholics fared after the Restoration.

Sometimes the wood seems lost for the trees, as the heavy detail on individual cases is not always successfully shaped into a clear exposition of the main trajectory. There are occasional imprecisions: the terms 'confiscation' and 'sequestration' (surely different things) sometimes seem to be used interchangeably, or at least without being distinguished sufficiently clearly. It is also stated that the Toleration Act of 1650 left Catholics in an 'ambiguous position' where they might be (legally) in the clear, because it abolished recusancy penalties; but (as the author notes) the Catholic mass remained forbidden – therefore Catholics could not obey the act's new requirement to attend some form of public divine worship (pp. 59–60). The treason statutes against Catholic priests and reconciliation to Catholicism were also left standing until Cromwell's Treasons Act of 1654 explicitly retained them. The Catholics' legal position thus remained pretty much what it had been since the 1580s; any toleration would be of the *de facto* sort.

The book's chief archival sources are of course the records of sequestrations and compositions in State Papers 23, as well as other record classes at the National Archives, and the papers of Catholic families. Good use, for example, is made of the Constable family collection (held at Hull History Centre) in examining the Constables' strategies for preventing permanent loss of their lands during the 1650s. The study chooses counties with contrastingly high (Yorkshire, Lancashire, West Sussex) and low (Cornwall, Kent, Essex) numbers of Catholics, and the author has clearly based this monograph on close study of a large number of cases, and thorough archival research.

Some of the conceptual analysis could have been pursued more fully. For example, the Oath of Abjuration demanded of Catholics by the Parliamentary and then republican regimes is repeatedly brought up, but not discussed in depth, and its significance is (arguably) missed. The author suggests that this oath was a new departure because it required recusants 'to swear obedience to Parliament' (p. 36), which of course it did, but more profoundly it was an explicitly doctrinal oath. Subscribers denied chief theological tenets of Catholicism: papal supremacy (of all and any sort), transubstantiation in the eucharist, the existence of purgatory, veneration of saints and images. You could have a discussion, between Catholics, about the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance; about the Oath of Abjuration you could not. Thus, it did not really 'ascertain the loyal from the disloyal among the English Catholic population' (p. 37): anyone who took it had ceased to be a Catholic or was committing perjury. Yet, as Gregory shows, it is not hard to find Catholics swearing the oath in order to be admitted to composition; but apart from brief comments that despite the rejection of 'fundamental points of the Catholic faith', some Catholics 'believed that it was possible to take these oaths with a good conscience', the opportunity to discuss how Parliamentary and republican governments induced numerous Catholics to swear to so radical a rejection of their religion is not taken. More thoroughly-enforced penalties? Contempt for the regime(s) such that no oath to them was

regarded as valid? A sudden spate of genuine conversions? Perhaps the sources do not exist to answer, but a more sustained attempt to consider the question would have been worthwhile.

Similarly, increased measures against Catholics from 1655 to 1657 are described as a consequence of royalist risings at that time (pp. 61–5), but the question of how far such resistance was especially Catholic in nature (and if not, how does that complicate the causal link?) is not really pursued. The author also discusses cases in which persons accused of being both ‘papist’ and ‘delinquent’ argued, occasionally with success, that they had not been royalists in arms (only Catholics) when applying to compound. The story tended to be that they had been in royalist garrisons not as soldiers, but as refugees from anti-Catholic persecution (generally by Parliamentarians) (pp. 110–11, 125–31, 155–7). In 1660 such people naturally proclaimed that they had absolutely been fighting in royalist armies, as is noted (pp. 190–1); but neither manoeuvre is really explored conceptually. While the material is interesting, it is not fully exploited to understand Catholics’ thoughts on the Civil Wars and on the questions of religious and political allegiance they produced.

Although it might have benefitted from more thought on using the archival material for imaginative conceptual analysis, this study is a valuable contribution to our knowledge both of mid-seventeenth century Catholicism and of the Civil Wars and their impact.

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*A forgotten Christian deist. Thomas Morgan.* By Jan van den Berg. (The Enlightenment World.) Pp. x + 239. New York–London: Routledge, 2021. £96. 978 0 367 76526 2  
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This book is an erudite, well-researched, accurate study of the life and work of Thomas Morgan (d. 1743), an eighteenth-century English deist who ‘has been called a modern Marcion’ (p. 39) because of his contemptuous view of the Old Testament and Judaism. A Presbyterian minister turned deist, Morgan indeed distinguished between ‘Jewish Christianity, or Christian Judaism’ and ‘Christian deism’ in his most famous book, *The moral philosopher* (1737), in which he described the New Testament as restating the religion of nature while rejecting the Law of Moses and the Old Testament altogether. Having authored several excellent articles on Morgan, now Jan van den Berg has offered us a comprehensive monograph on this author, which examines not only *The moral philosopher* but also Morgan’s life and other writings, thereby reconsidering his ideas against the background of English deism and the theological controversies of Enlightenment England. Thus, the book provides a thorough, painstaking, original scrutiny of Morgan’s *oeuvre*, explaining the development of his theological and philosophical position from Presbyterianism to ‘Christian deism’.

After an introduction discussing the ongoing historiographical debate on English deism, the first chapter of this volume presents a meticulous reconstruction of Morgan’s life, focusing on his activities as a Presbyterian minister; his controversial relationship with the Dissenting community of Marlborough, which dismissed him for heresy at some point in the mid-1720s; and his last two