Church Courts and the People in Seventeenth Century England. Ecclesiastical Justice in Peril at Winchester, Worcester and Wells. By **Andrew Thomson**. London: UCL Press, 2022. Xvi + 251 pp. £25 paper.

Andrew Thomson's impressive study of church courts in three dioceses in the seventeenth century is one of decline and a missed opportunity at the Restoration in 1660 to reform them. To the returning bishops, reestablishment of the Church of England meant a return to how the church courts operated before the Civil War. Thomson's argument is that this brought back their "inherent and systematic failings" (181) as well as their benefits. As a consequence, the moral disciplinary cases fell into decline while the cases of defamation held up for just a bit longer. Thomson dismisses scholars such as Evan Davies, Anne Tarver, and Bill Jacob who have argued that the church courts continued to be busy and effective after Thomson calls time on them. His claim is that Davies, Tarver, and Jacob cannot deny the decline in the number of cases—something on which Thomson can supply considerable data for the three dioceses in the appendices for this book. Nor have they compared the pre-Restoration courts with those after 1660 as he has. Thomson therefore stands with Houlbrooke, Ingram, Outhwaite, and others who argue that the church courts were eclipsed in the period after 1603. The present reviewer has tended toward Davies, Tarver, and Jacob's view, and certainly there is evidence of church courts operating—albeit not on the scale of the seventeenth century—well into the eighteenth century. Evidence of the work of chancellors and officials such as John Audley in York diocese and Henry Prescott in Chester in the eighteenth century suggest that there is some mileage in Jacob's claims to the "busyness" of the courts. This issue might raise the question of the nature of Thomson's sample: are Winchester, Worcester, and Bath and Wells representative of the Church of England as whole? Almost certainly not, and evidence from the north of England is most strongly suggestive of the continuation of the church courts into the eighteenth century.

Thomson's identification of concerns about the courts are various. First, and reasonably, he argues that they were dependent on a system of surrogates and deputies who stood in for the chancellors and officials, many of whom were pluralists and absentees. This worked tolerably while the system was not under strain, but by the mid-seventeenth century it fell apart. Moreover, Thomson sees the courts as evidence of the Church's attempt to "control society" (79) and is frustrated by the absence of a pattern or trend in the religious and moral offenses brought in the three dioceses. Inevitably, perhaps, the lens through which the church courts is viewed is one of the conflicts between the defendants and the courts, rather than the goal of social reconciliation and the settlement of moral and religious quarrels. This latter role of church courts is often overlooked, in part because it is absent from the surviving evidence of court records.

A key element in Thomson's study is the impact and extent of church discipline. He shows that court attendance was low, presentations were declining, and verdicts were often ignored, from which he concludes that the courts were "moribund" by the 1670s (113). The data for his three dioceses clearly shows this. But, of course, the qualitative impact of the existence of church courts and their work is not easily measurable. The fact that the Church made clear statements about fornication, adultery, bastardy, and the rest had an impact on society beyond the actions of the courts. Thomson's

explanation for the erosion of church courts are many and complex. From the ineffectiveness of excommunication, the nature of oaths in the courts, popular resistance to penance as a sentence, the class divisions apparent in the processes, and concerns about corruption and fees to the use of the civil courts to assume some business, which tended to be a more secure way to a verdict—all of these eroded confidence in the courts. As Thomson makes clear, after 1660 there was connivance by some bishops and clergy in transferring church courts' business to secular courts—that was certainly the case in Lincoln diocese in the last decade of the seventeenth century. But this suggests that demand for moral justice was still alive and found a more effective route to prosecution. The work of the societies for the reformation of manners from the 1690s relied heavily on the use of magistrates' courts to hear moral offenses.

At the heart of Thomson's study is a notable compilation of data on personnel, court business and processes and outcomes, which is the product of considerable endeavor and labor, for which he is to be commended. Without such data analysis, historians fall back on generalizations. But, of course, data is limited and sometimes lacks qualitative evidence to enable us to interpret it. While applauding this remarkable study, there remain some reservations about the representative nature of the three dioceses chosen and the interpretation that can be drawn for the popular response to ecclesiastical discipline in society as a whole.

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George Whitehead and the Establishment of Quakerism.
By **Rosemary Moore**. Brill Research Perspectives: Quaker Studies.
Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2021. vi + 124 pp. $94.00 paperback.

In this careful, informative, and highly readable study, Rosemary Moore traces the life, thought, and legacy of early Quaker leader George Whitehead. Such an examination is overdue: Whitehead was present and leading at many of the formative episodes in the initial development of the movement but has often remained in the shadows of Quaker history. His writing is perceived as "monumentally dull" (5), yet he was often the example of choice and was quoted by both Friends and their opponents. As Moore notes, "It could be argued that he was the most important figure after George Fox in the development of English Quakerism in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries" (4)—yet he has attracted no dedicated major study of his own.

Moore's own analysis is divided into five main sections, moving through Whitehead's life, writings, and legacy. In section one, Moore traces his early life and convincement, and the beginnings of his public Quaker career to 1662—including his first imprisonments and ministry in East Anglia, and his lobbying in defiance of the Quaker Act. Whitehead's influence grew over this period as other key figures either died or were disgraced, culminating with the death of Edward Burrough in prison in 1663, at which point Whitehead found himself the "leading Quaker minister at liberty" (24). Section two moves from Burrough's death to the end of the reign of Charles II—a period during which Moore notes Quakers "began to adapt their faith" (25) and