

impulses in Baxter. Through his late rediscovery of John Foxe, Baxter came back to the idea of a realizable and acceptable National Church, not wholly pure, and not with a saint on the throne, but still implacably Protestant. He wanted not a diocesan episcopacy but rather a system based on ministerial discipline which would be acceptable even to many Independents. Hypocrites (and of course papists) would still be excluded. Both Baxter and Coleridge saw the pope as the Antichrist but only in the sense of ‘a usurping power of magisterial rights’ (p. 347).

In the preface to *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, Collinson suggested how worn the small ‘p’ of his typewriter must have become after ‘thirteen years of devotion to the Elizabethan puritans’. The rest of us may well reflect, some 30 years later, about the frequency with which we have all typed ‘Collinson’ in our footnotes. David Lodge once facetiously remarked on the influence of T. S. Eliot on our reading of Shakespeare. A tribute to Collinson’s influence on our deconstruction of sources is Lamont’s suggestion that even Richard Baxter must have read his Collinson! Throughout, this collection offers solid research, provocative rethinking, and plentiful good ideas, too: enough both to honour a great scholar and to redefine further the culture of early modern Britain.

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Helen E. Hatton — *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland, 1654–1921*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993. Pp. xii, 372.

In the 1680s Quakers offered relief to both sides in the Williamite War; and in the 1980s one prominent Quaker family, the Bewleys of Dublin, led a resettlement programme for Irish itinerants and travellers. Between these two terminal decades came the Quakers’ trojan relief efforts in the Irish famine of the 1840s, for which they will be long remembered.

The Quakers were well informed of local conditions in Ireland through observation and reporting by fellow members. They required accurate statistics before committing funds, a precaution that has resulted in the rich archival heritage of documentation used to advantage here by Helen Hatton. A noteworthy finding of this book is the good working relationship between the Irish and English Quakers in relief efforts and fundraising.

The author sets out to chronicle the transition from Quaker persecution in the seventeenth century to an active involvement in the relief of distressed people beyond their own sect, particularly in the 1840s. Surprisingly, most of this relief was unofficial, carried out without formal approval of the ruling body of the Society. Hatton indicates in depth how specific Quaker religious beliefs influenced economic, professional, and business activity.

The central focus of the book is Quaker relief during the Great Famine of the 1840s. Although much of the analysis is predicated on the premise that the famine

was inevitable, the book serves as a useful corrective to the arguments of some modern historians who have tended to regard the Quakers as supportive of essentially conservative economic ideologies (p. 226). On the other hand, government failure to act decisively in the critical years of 1846 to 1849 is correctly but repeatedly ascribed to a rigid adherence to *laissez-faire* economics, but the author ventures little original exploration of this issue beyond that assertion. How do we classify Quaker economic philosophy as demonstrated during the famine? Was it a mixture of promoting self-help, patronage, and government funds and facilities?

The author is not very incisive in her analysis of Quaker business methods. Some calculation of incomes and disposable wealth available to a selection of Quaker families would have been useful in indicating the amount of funds they had to donate to charity and relief. It was said that in the cotton village of Portlaw, County Waterford, that the proprietors circulated their own form of money, which they used to pay workers in the mills and which could only be spent in Quaker-owned stores. Was this typical? If so, how did it facilitate the Quaker relief efforts?

The book displays some deficiencies in organization of material and style. The introduction, for instance, is disorganized and repetitive in its points and details. Similarly, chapter 2 is diffusely structured in that it flits back and forth, in no sensible sequence of treatment, between details of the history of the Quakers from 1654 to 1691, an evaluation of the usefulness of the archival records, Quakers' involvement in economic life, relief schemes, and relationships with other Protestants and Catholics. In chapter 4 there is an over-reliance on certain key sources, for example, the 1823, 1830, and 1835 parliamentary reports on Irish poverty and Elizabeth Fry's account of Irish prisons, for the purposes of documenting conditions in pre-famine Ireland. This leads to a certain disconnectedness in terms of presentation of argument and explication of issues. A thematic approach, better structured, might have been adopted to put this vital information to better use. Tighter, more disciplined writing might have eliminated some of the stylistic deficiencies and avoided excursions into areas unrelated to the main theme of Quaker relief.

Finally, there are some errors of omission. Surprisingly Hatton does not mention the initiative of the Quakers (principally the Malcolmsons) in the 1820s in founding the model village at Portlaw, County Waterford, based on cotton manufacturing. The Lecky family mentioned as shipowners in Waterford is surely an error for Malcolmson (p. 259). There is insufficient treatment in depth of the identity of interests between Irish Catholics and the Quakers, particularly on such key issues as tithe and mutual hostility towards the Anglican Church. Nothing is said about the 1741 famine and to what extent Quakers were involved. That famine may have been greater in terms of its relative impact on the population and victims than the more well-known catastrophe of the 1840s.

These points aside, however, Hatton has provided the most detailed account yet available of the nature and intent of Quaker relief in Ireland.

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