

2003

# Abbott, Chijoke, Dandelion, & Oliver's "Historical Dictionmy of the Friends (Quakers)" - Book Review

Hugh S. Pyper  
*University of Leeds*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/quakerstudies>

 Part of the [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), and the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Pyper, Hugh S. (2003) "Abbott, Chijoke, Dandelion, & Oliver's "Historical Dictionmy of the Friends (Quakers)" - Book Review," *Quaker Studies*: Vol. 8: Iss. 2, Article 15.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/quakerstudies/vol8/iss2/15>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Quaker Studies by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

Heavilin's own contribution, a 43-page Introduction, starting from the book's subtitle quoting William Penn, summarises all the articles.

The Heavilins are both graduates of Indiana Wesleyan University, from which Barbara went on to teach at Taylor University, both solidly Evangelical, but via a Master's degree at Ball State. Charles had gone on to Asbury Seminary, but then to Union Theological Seminary in Virginia and clinical pastoral training.

The cover and frontispiece reproduce a quilt of Lion and Lamb lying together in a cosmic field by Emily Cooper, Wilmer's wife, which now hangs at Earlham School of Religion. It is unfortunate that the Mellen Press price for this attractive, irenic, but not heavily scholarly work, following its custom of passing on neither charges nor royalties to its authors, is \$110.

Hugh Barbour

Earlham College and Earlham School of Religion (Emeritus), USA

Abbott M. P., Chijoke M.E., Dandelion P., Oliver J.W., Jr *Historical Dictionary of the Friends (Quakers)* (Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements, no 44) Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003. pp. xxxii + 432, ISBN 0 8108 4483 4, Cloth, \$80.

This is a very welcome and useful compendium of information on Friends worldwide. The introduction stresses the fact that the size of a movement is not necessarily an index of its influence, something that the volume seeks to bring out. For this format, however, the small size of the Society is quite a boon. It means that the coverage can be comprehensive in a way that would be hard for a larger group, although that itself brings out the surprising internal variety of the Society.

It is, quite deliberately I suspect, a dictionary of Friends, rather than of 'Quakerism', reflecting the inappropriateness of trying to define some common core of belief. The welcome appendices give a fascinating overview both of the evolution and the numbers of Friends and make the point that representing the diversity while reflecting the balance of numbers of particular groups is a well-nigh impossible task. Rightly, the emphasis has been more on the former than the latter for such a historical dictionary. The entries themselves, and the contributors, do represent a fair cross-section of the diversity of the society.

One might argue that that very diversity means that ideally every single Friend since the 1650s should have his or her individual entry. That is of course impossible, although the projected Dictionary of Quaker Biography will go some way towards redressing the balance, but it serves to point up how easy a game it is for the reviewer of such a reference work to point out omissions and imbalances. In addition to the overall balance of entries, within short articles it is inevitable that similar questions can be raised, particularly where the articles touch on contentious issues or deal with well-known figures. Moreover, such a dictionary has to serve a very varied audience. It must give a clear and succinct introduction to each subject for those who know little about Friends and are using it as a first point of reference while still satisfying those who are very familiar with the Society, or at least one branch of it, and are seeking further information or a reminder of crucial facts.

In this case, I have not found any glaring gaps and much material was new to me and interesting. My impression is that the contributors have generally steered an admirable course between repeating the accepted facts for those who may be new to a topic while retaining enough critical edge to put in question a number of standard interpretations. At times, compression does mean that some of the articles could strike an uninitiated reader as somewhat cryptic when larger issues are touched upon but not explored, but here the various appendices and other aids to the use of the dictionary should prove helpful.

I was pleased to see a good and comprehensive index, which, together with a thorough system of cross-referencing, means that a great number of topics can be followed through without unnecessary repetition of information. A particularly useful feature is the extensive and well-researched bibliography which is arranged under a number of heads such as geographical regions, particular testimonies and the biographies of individual Friends. This forms an excellent starting point for further inquiry and, incidentally, a good check-list for individuals and meetings who wish to build up a comprehensive Quaker library.

All in all, this is an excellent first port of call for those who wish to understand the breadth of the contemporary Religious Society of Friends and the historical underpinnings of that diversity and a handy reference point for those who may know more, but wish to check up on specific facts. The editors are to be congratulated on bringing together such a range of contributors and for the high standard of the entries and the appendices. I hope that the volume gets the exposure that it deserves.

Hugh S. Pyper

University of Leeds, England

Spielhofer, S. *Stemming the Dark Tide* York: Sessions, 2001. pp. v + 171. ISBN 1 85072 267 6, Paper, £9

Mendlesohn, F. *Quaker Relief Work in the Spanish Civil War* (Series in Quaker Studies Vol. 1), Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002, pp. ix + 243. ISBN 0-7734-7276-2, Cloth; £69.95, \$109.95

In the age of NGO giants such as OXFAM and Christian Aid, the humanitarian enterprise is firmly fixed in the British public imagination. The politics, economics and ethics of various interventions by aid agencies are frequently discussed and written about by scholars, activists, journalists and others. There are even university courses aimed at preparing young humanitarian practitioners for more effective, responsible careers in the field (I teach on one such academic programme myself). But the two books under review here serve as a useful reminder that many of the conflicts, dilemmas and crises that provide grist to the contemporary humanitarian studies mill are anything but new. British and American Quakers engaged in humanitarian relief work between the two World Wars undertook their endeavours for good in a far less crowded field compared to today's bustling NGO marketplace. And yet the challenges they faced in riding out the political and economic storms of post-Habsburg Austria