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Keeble, N.H. and Geoffrey F. Nuttall  
*Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*  
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This is a major publication for seventeenth-century scholarship. The editors are masters of Baxterian studies--Nuttall has written the standard life of Baxter (1965); Keeble an analysis (1982) of Baxter's vast corpus of publications--and of Stuart nonconformity. The *Calendar*, which Nuttall has been preparing since 1950, provides a wealth of detail about the learned clergyman and Baxter's many friends and, equally legion, enemies. This is the first chronological listing of manuscript letters to and from Baxter (most, but not all, housed in Dr. William's Library in London) and the many letters which Baxter prefaced or appended to his own published works and the commendatory epistles he wrote for other writers' books.

Though editorial notes sometimes dwarf the synopses, the editors have selected judiciously from the letters. They note the topic and occasion of each, quoting only "when a letter is of more than usual biographical or historical significance" (p. x). They transcribe some letters in full, however, and severely truncate only lengthy legal wrangles and repetitious religious disputes (Quakers sent Baxter lists of doctrinal questions). Even letters printed in full elsewhere (noted in headnotes) are transcribed if significant. Headnotes usefully list each secondary work commenting on a specific letter. Some revealing letters (see I, pp. 396, 421-2) have not been commented upon previously. Headnotes also include extensive selections from *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (re-published only in abbreviated form since its posthumous publication in 1696), and clarify "exceptionally confused" passages from the often-cited autobiography (I, p. 298-9).

The volumes are a treasure trove of bibliographic and biographical information. The editors rectify mistakes in standard reference works such as *Calamy Revised*, *Wing's Short-title Catalogue, 1641-1700*, and many lesser works. Local historians should note that, according to my rough count, Baxter's correspondents wrote from at least thirty-four English counties, especially Worcestershire, home of his Kidderminster ministry (forty-one letters). In addition, there are numerous letters from the North American colonies, Wales, continental Europe, Ireland, and Scotland, and one plaintive note from a Madeiras merchant.

The volumes calendar 1,262 letters from some 350 correspondents: twenty-seven before 1650, nearly 600 during the 1650s, and above 600 from 1660 onwards. Baxter corresponded with many Independents and Presbyterians, but also with (at times engaging in controversy): Baptists (John Tombes), Quakers (William Penn), Anglicans (John Tillotson), and Catholics (William Johnson). Men and women sought Baxter's spiritual, political, moral, and even sexual guidance. That he wrote so often in return gave him the reputation "of a Person very ready at your Pen" (p. xxv, quoting I, p. 293). No brief review can indicate the letters' wealth of detail: from John Dury's attempts for European-wide Protestant accord, to the disordered state of worship in the

house of Protector Cromwell, to the "sinful Fashions" of décolletage and "monstrous Periwigs" worn by men and women in the 1670s (II, p. 197).

These volumes will be most consulted for revelations about Baxter's own life and thoughts. The letters show: his disputes with "sectaries" as a Civil War army chaplain, his emphasis on discipline and worship over preaching during his Interregnum Kidderminster ministry, his reluctant nonconformity and position in post-Restoration emerging alternative religious culture, his intermittent imprisonment for religious offenses (from the 1660s through 1686). And there is substantial evidence to show Baxter's strivings for "Church union" (I, p. 89), especially his lead in the clerical county association movement. Hopes that such "unity & Peace" would remove "the Divisions of the Godly" (I, pp. 300, 358) peaked in 1658, as does Baxter's correspondence (over a hundred letters). Substantial material exists too for Baxter's own religious beliefs: whether labelled Puritan, Presbyterian, or, as he claimed, "Episcopal-Presbyterian-Independent" (II, p. 69n.). His clarity about positions others took often led to controversy: "[w]hile I thinke I fitt words to things, I displease persons," he wrote (I, p. 319).

There are some minor quibbles. Baxter's published prefaces addressed "To the Reader" can only vaguely be considered letters, and reveal less than letters with a specific audience. References to Baxter's nearly 140 published works are solely to corresponding numbers in A.G. Matthew's chronological list, somewhat defeating the purpose of footnotes. (The list is printed in volume one.) And Maryland is not in "New England" (II, p. 72). But this is a concise, well-indexed, and stimulating work, which is relatively reasonably priced. Stuart religious and political specialists should have it in their library. Local and social historians and graduate students will find insights (and an extensive bibliography) in these vital reference volumes.