

ROBERT HAWKER, D. D. - Dictionary of National Biography, Vol XXV.

HAWKER, ROBERT, D.D. (1753-1827), Calvinistic divine, born at Exeter on 13 April 1753, was son of Jacob Hawker, a surgeon of that city. After passing through the Exeter grammar school he became a pupil of Mr. White, surgeon, of Plymouth, and in 1772 he married Anne, daughter of Lieutenant (afterwards Captain) Rains, R.N. After walking the London hospitals, he was for about three years assistant-surgeon in the royal marines. On 27 May 1778 he was matriculated in the university of Oxford as a member of Magdalen Hall. He took holy orders, and became curate of St. Martin, near Looe, Cornwall (20 Sept. 1778), and curate to the Rev. John Bedford, vicar of Charles, near Plymouth (December 1778), succeeding to the Vicarage of Charles on Bedford's death in 1784. A volume of 'Sermons on the Divinity of Christ' procured for him the diploma of D. D. from the University of Edinburgh, 5 July 1792. He accepted the deputy-chaplaincy of the garrison at Plymouth in 1797. In 1802 he founded The Great Western Society for Distributing Religious Tracts among Poor in the Western District, and in 1813 established the Corpus Christi Society in his parish. In doctrine he was a high Calvinist, and he was one of the most popular extemporaneous preachers in the kingdom, his voice was powerful yet harmonious, and a pulpit orator he was impressive and fascinating. For many years he paid an annual visit to London, and preached to crowded congregations in the principal churches. He died at Plymouth on 6 April 1827, and was buried in his church of Charles, where a tablet, surmounted by a marble bust, was dedicated to his memory.

By his wife Anne Rains (who died on 3 April 1817) he had eight children. One of his sons, the Rev. Jacob Hawker, was the father of Robert Stephen Hawker [q. v.]

His principal works are:

Sermons on the Divinity of Christ, London, 1792.

Sermons on the Divinity and Operations of the Holy Ghost, Bath, 1794.

An Appeal to the People of England on the . . . French Revolution, 1794.

Paraclesis, or Conflations for a Dying Hour, from a review of the evidences of the renewed life, London, 1797.

Zion's Pilgrim, Falmouth, 1801. Another edition, 'to which is now first added *Zion's Pilgrim past seventy*', London, 1829.

Zion's Warrior, or the Christian Soldier's Manual, 1802.

The Sailor Pilgrim, 2nd edition, London [1806?].

Life and Writings of the Rev. Henry Tanner of Exeter, London, 1807.

The Poor Man's Morning Portion, being a selection of a verses of Scripture, with short observations, for every day in the year, 2nd edition, London, 1809.

The Poor Man's Evening Portion, 4th ed. 1819. These last two works have been frequently reprinted and were published together in 1842 and 1854.

The Poor Man's Commentary on the New Testament, 4 vols., London, 1816.

Visits to and from Jesus upon the most interesting occasions, and in the most hallowed moments of life, London, 1816.

Lectures on the Person, Godhead, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost, Plymouth [1817].

The Poor Man's Commentary on the Old Testament, 6 vols., London, 1822.

The Portrait of an English Bishop of the Sixteenth Century, 2nd edition, London, 1829.

Life of Dr. T. Goodwin, 1838.

A Concordance and Dictionary to the Sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, new edition, London, 1846.

The list of Hawker's writings in the British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books occupies six columns.

His Works, with a Memoir of his Life and Writings, by John Williams, D.D., minister of Stroud, Gloucestershire, appeared in 10 vols., London, 1831. Prefixed to the first volume is a portrait of Hawker, engraved by K. Woodman from painting by G. Patten.

[Life by Williams; Funeral Discourse by Henry Dowling, 1827; Dixon's Autobiog. of a Minister of the Gospel; Darling's Cycl. Bibliographica; Lowndes Bibl. Man. (Bohn) p.1013; Gent. Mag. 1827. pt.ii. 87; Davidson's Bibl. Devonienis pp. 146, 167, 168, 200, Suppl. pp. 9, 33; Boase and Courtney's Bibl. Comub. pp. 219, 497, 510, 515, 1116, 1316, 1417.]
T. C.