

A NEW TRUSTEE

At the recent Spring Meeting, trustees extended a very warm welcome to a newly-appointed trustee, Mr. Jeremy Dowding, of Abegavenny. To many of those who have regularly attended pilgrimages at Capel-y-ffin, Jeremy Dowding will already be a familiar figure. He has joined us on those occasions and assisted with the event for the past eighteen years. Now an ordinand of the Church in Wales, he has been accepted for a two-year theological course at St. Stephen's House, Oxford. This begins in September this year. Successful completion of his studies will then lead to his ordination as a deacon in the Diocese of Monmouth.

REPAIRS TO THE ABBEY CHURCH

Our grateful thanks go to all those who responded so readily to our appeal for financial help in repairing the damage

caused by the partial collapse of one of the church walls. Thanks to the energetic and whole-hearted co-operation of Mr. and Mrs. Knill of the Monastery and their son, Andrew, this major task was completed in time for last year's pilgrimage. A long-term solution for stabilising the fabric of the walls in perpetuity, however, remains to be found. This is due to inherent structural problems and the lack of sufficient funds to permit any further major works. A good deal of the tiling on the tomb of Fr. Ignatius in the chancel floor has also, over the years, become fractured and broken by frost damage. We hope that we can get work put in hand this year to renew the surface with weather-proof tiles of much more durable quality. Financial help from all our friends and supporters therefore still continues to be urgently needed, please, so that we can continue to maintain the Abbey Church as a dignified memorial to its founder and as a place of peaceful pilgrimage.

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO CAPEL-Y-FFIN - 1989

This will be held on **SATURDAY, 26th AUGUST**

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| 11.30 a.m. | The Holy Eucharist at St. David's Church, Llanthony. |
| 12.00 midday | Roman Catholic Mass in the private chapel at The Monastery, Capel-y-ffin. |
| 2.30 p.m. | Procession leaves Capel-y-ffin church for The Monastery where the sermon at Evensong will be given by The Revd. D.T.W. Price of Lampeter College, Dyfed. |

Please note that this is the week-end of the Late Summer Bank Holiday. Car parking arrangements will be as usual in the field at Chapel Farm by kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd. Visitors are especially asked to avoid parking their vehicles at The Monastery, please, to avoid congestion there.

Please join us for the pilgrimage if you possibly can.

WILFRED DAVIES

Hon. Secretary for the Trustees.

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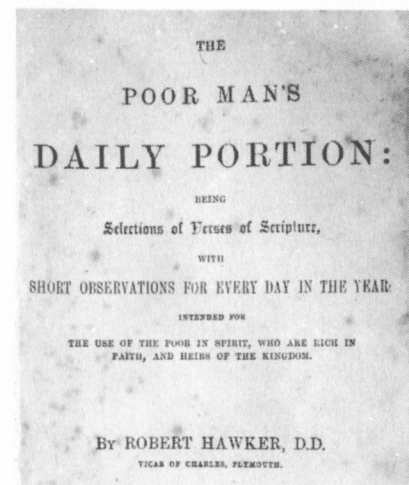
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NEWSLETTER NO. 17 - APRIL 1989

HAWKER'S DAILY PORTION AND FATHER IGNATIUS by Canon Stanley Luff

Among the Archives of the Ignatius Trust is a manual of devotional reading rather unctuously titled 'The Poor Man's Daily Portion'. It consists of reflections (the title page calls them observations) on brief passages - even mere phrases - of Scripture. The copy that belonged to Father Ignatius is a 'new edition' brought out by George Routledge of London and New York, with no date, nor indication of the earlier editions. There appear to be two identical title pages, but in the second one a word changes - it is a 'Morning Portion'. Half way through the book a third title page introduces the 'Evening Portion'. It totals 760 pages.



The title page of the Revd. Robert Hawker's book.

This book became a cherished *vade mecum* to Father Ignatius over the last years of his life. Eventually he made a habit of entering in pencil against each day's portions the year and place in which they were read,

and sometimes by whom. Normally, one presumes, he read them himself. The earliest date is 1893, but mere undated crosses may refer to earlier use. The Portions were read frequently, but not with absolute regularity, till close to his death in October 1908. I have the impression it was not a community exercise at Llanthony. Where the few Llanthony entries occur they seem to have been read by the Father in his cell or by companions attending him in his declining health.

The author, Richard Hawker, DD, is described as Vicar of Charles, Plymouth. He was grandfather to the more celebrated priest and poet of Morwenstow in Cornwall, whose eccentricity was such that the Cornwall volume of Pevsner's *Buildings of England* observes of the Vicarage, which he built, that its chimneys 'are in imitation of the towers of the various churches he had been concerned with - the kitchen chimney is reminiscent of his mother's tomb.' I do not think there was much flippant about Dr. Hawker. His oddly named church is a seventeenth century Gothic building named after King Charles I, 'the Martyr', without prefixing 'Saint' to his name. It was severely damaged in an air raid and is no longer used. As the young Joseph Lyne's first curacy was at Plymouth there is doubtless some connection. There is another Charles Church at Fowey.

What becomes immediately evident is the time Ignatius spent away from his community, not even troubling to return for the major feasts of Christmas, Easter or Pentecost, nor his favourite Feast of the Ascension, but it does look as if he made a point



The Revd. Robert Hawker DD

of being back at the monastery every year for the anniversaries of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin in August and September, because there are no other places marked for those weeks. His frequent absences have been noted by critics. Donald Attwater has four pages on why Ignatius failed to hold on to his monks. He gives several reasons, and concludes with the long absences of 'at least five months in every twelve' - toward the end they were more than that. They were not always, as Attwater seems to suppose, and as Ignatius appears to have alleged in a speech made at Bristol, because he had to be about preaching and raising funds. His long stays at Kilpeck, a remote Herefordshire village, and at Virginia Water and elsewhere, were hardly missionary expeditions. Arthur Calder-Marshall, writing of the last four years, observes that 'they had little in them but failure: failure of health, failure of eloquence, failure of finance.' He quotes from the Father in 1904: 'All I pray is that I may be allowed to work for Jesus to the last, and die glorifying His Holy Name.' But it was not just health that mattered. Over these years Ignatius accepted that his monastic foundation was a failure. Although I cannot now trace my source for this, he acknowledged that he hardly displayed the signs of monastic vocation himself. Writing of the nineties, Attwater mentions a time when the community was down to one. Calder-Marshall writes of a community of two (perhaps the same; Ignatius-plus-one). When Ignatius died there were four. At one point he had decided to admit no more

novices and to admit no one to final profession. However he seems not to have kept these pessimistic resolutions. He took pains to ensure that the abbey he had built remained a monastery, even if this entailed handing it over - after his death - to the Roman Catholic Abbot of Buckfast.

Maybe he decided the young Father Asaph Mary, who in effect became his legate, could make a better show at running the household than he could himself, and for the last few years he lived virtually as a superior retired for reasons of health and enjoyed long absences at pleasant watering places like Brighton, Hastings, Ramsgate, Bournemouth, Weston-Super-Mare, Aberystwyth, Llandudno, and many minor resorts in between, as well as stays inland. So it is that the pages of the 'Daily Portion' are annotated not so much by an observant Benedictine monk as by a devout Anglican nourishing that Catholic spirituality which he judged to be the great need of the institutional Church of England - not a spirituality of soaring mysticism, nor one of petty devotion, but that personal attachment to 'Jesus Only' which, I believe, can still draw so many to him. Perhaps there is a significance in his published 'Sermons and Orations' (1886) styling him, not Abbot of Llanthony, but 'Evangelist Monk of the Church of England.'

In fact in 1899 he published a manifesto in the **Church Review** declaring his intention of 'retiring into lay communion with our Church' and even asserting. 'I make it a rule now to refuse all requests made to me to preach.' It would be interesting to verify whether he kept that 'rule'.

I cannot imagine a publisher trying to reprint Hawker, although some other period writers of spirituality still find a public. I must say that when I settle down to the Daily Portions I am soon caught up in a spiritual atmosphere entirely centred on Jesus and inspired by Scripture - Ignatius's attachment to Hawker is understandable. He frequently underlined passages - it would be laborious to transcribe them but I think they will be found to stress consistently this personal relationship with our Lord.

There is a criticism of Father Ignatius that while claiming a Catholic integrity he had some ideas supposed to be characteristic of extreme Protestantism, mainly his assurance

of salvation based on a conviction of personal conversion and easily equated with a Calvinistic theory of predestination. It is as if, once believing oneself to be saved, one could never thereafter incur one's spiritual loss. What Father Ignatius himself identified as his moment of 'conversion' was his experience on the Isle of Wight, to be described later. He explains the difference it made to him in words quoted by J.V. Smedley, editor of his **Sermons and Orations**, 1886; 'I loved our Lord all my life, but did not **know**, so did not trust. His love to me.' The orthodoxy of this may be verified by turning to St. John the Apostle's First Letter: 'We love because he first loved us'. It is my view that what in Ignatius may look like an overweening confidence in this predestination is in fact that dimension of his faith more easily recognised in St. Paul and in the Gospels than in, say, the Athanasian Creed.

Although a particular value of Father Ignatius's use of Hawker will be to trace his movements over the last decade of his life, the marginal comments, though few, are significant. To begin with non-religious items, he notes at Llanthony in December 1896 that 'at 5.25 during Prime a great meteor fell with a rushing sound and then shook the valley twice, or was it an earthquake?' While at the Queen's Head (which I suspect was at Clifton, Bristol) in December 1906 he again noted: 'Earthquake or great meteor fell.' Distance was no object. In April 1907, staying at Thorpe near Norwich, he records: 'Awful earthquake at San Francisco.' Secular interests on a par with these phenomena were Queen Victoria's Jubilee and the postponement of Edward VII's coronation. On the 21st June, 1897, he noted the eve of the Jubilee, adding: 'London almost mad with enthusiasm.' On the morrow London was 'wild with joy'. He must have been out to view the crowds. For the King's illness in 1902 he was at Danbury in Essex, noting on the 24th June: 'Coronation stopped, King very ill!!!', on the 25th: 'King taken ill,' and on the 26th: 'Coronation Day - But, as the whole world had made ready, God touched our King; the whole Grand Affair collapsed. The nation is prone with grief.' On the 27th: 'Our King rather better,' and on the 28th: 'The King no worse, thank God, last night.' But there is no subsequent note for the eventual Corona-

tion. Edward VII was suffering from appendicitis.

There were other illnesses to record, notably the last days of Sister Annie. It was in Dover in June 1903 that he wrote in the margin, 'Sister Annie very dangerously ill in London,' and in the evening of the same day, 'Sister Annie worse again tonight.' We have Sister Annie 'sinking', then 'revived'; at last, entered in London, where he had no doubt gone to be with her, 'Dear Sister Annie died at 7.45 am.' That was the 28th of June. Some kind of telephone system was available at that date. It was Annie who accompanied Father Ignatius to America. A Boston newspaper reporter described her as a woman of about thirty-five 'wearing a black dress and white muslin cap, and in appearance resembling a hospital nurse.' Arthur Calder-Marshall calls her a 'mission sister' and Donald Attwater an 'extern sister' at Llanthony Convent. They were both right. The Baroness says that a 'bright light' of the year 1881 was 'the entry into the Extern Sisterhood of one of the most familiar figures of the Reverend Father's entourage - Sister Annie, the faithful friend and benefactress of Llanthony, who until a week before her death was an unflinching pillar of the Monk's Missions. I dare say her benefactions were substantial, but she had also an eye for domestic detail, for in '**Llanthony and Mission News**' of April to June 1894 she is on record as donating 'a handsome mowing machine', 'a splendid heating apparatus' and 'a beautiful kneeler for the Father's cell.'

There was the Father's own declining health, though he seems to have had plenty of energy for the road. In 1899, under March 26th, staying at Weymouth, he enters all round the margin, 'Preached three times, after a month of fearful illness, at Preston - thought I was dying as I brought up blood - agonies of pain.' This Preston is a village near Weymouth. In 1906, at Llanthony, he wrote, 'Terrible day of trial in body and soul.' In 1908 there are only six entries, with notes that he was ill. Just once it was recorded that he was read to by Father Asaph, to whom he was to leave Llanthony and who, persevering through a long life, was buried in 1960 as a monk of Pluscarden Abbey in Morayshire, in the simple graveyard by the thirteenth century church.

One Llanthony entry refers to the type of disorder all too typical of his monastery (and not only his). As Attwater observes, Father Ignatius was easily taken in by 'bad and equivocal characters'. He graciously compares him with St. Dominic who 'could not conceive harm in others'. Unfortunately Ignatius took them in too - into his community. The margin of Hawker records one George Price - he is not styled brother, who read the Evening Portion on January 20th, 1907, and 'next morning, when I called him at 5.30 to call the monks, went instead and stole all the house money - left £5, and ran away by wood house door.'

There was a difficulty with the Daily Portions in that, following the calendar, they did not always fit the great moveable feasts of Easter etc. This incidence of Easter seems to be the explanation for occasional readings being used on a different date, and noted accordingly. Occasionally Ignatius corrects Hawker's scriptural allusions. When the author wrote about 'war in heaven', citing the Apocalypse (subtly interpreting Michael as a type of Christ). Ignatius writes at the foot of the page: 'This is in the future.' I am not clear what he intends by this. Where Hawker says of prophets: 'No woman could exercise this province,' Ignatius adds in the margin: 'Deborah, Huldah, Anna.' But for the most part Hawker and he lived in harmony. Against a sentence for the 20th January: 'I am as sensible of the reviving, comforting, strengthening, refreshing graces of the Spirit as the earth is of the falling showers or the sweet return of light.' Ignatius writes with earnest simplicity, 'Yes, I am too.'

Finally I cite the note which first prompted my interest in making this analysis. Readers will recall that after the collapse of the Norwich foundation and all the attendant troubles Ignatius suffered from a breakdown both physical and spiritual. Dr. Pusey invited him to rest at a house above Blackgang Chine in the Isle of Wight. One Sunday evening, alone at Southlands, he left the house and went down to the beach to say Compline. As, at the end, he concluded the **Salve Regina** - 'Show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus,' he was transported in spirit to the Temple at Jerusalem at the moment of the Presentation, when Mary allowed holy Simeon to take her divine Child in his arms. In his visionary experience

the Mother took the Child from the Prophet and placed Him in the arms of Ignatius. That is the moment of the transformation - he calls it conversion - that he dictated in detail to the Baroness de Bertouch. Something similar is related of St. Anthony of Padua and of St. Cajetan. In Ignatius's life it was a turning point, and as Arthur Calder-Marshall observes, 'From that time onward he was to make a large number of sudden conversions, many of which were as enduring as his own'. Beneath a reference to the Presentation in Hawker for the 12th of March, in which he speaks of those who by faith clasp Jesus in their arms 'as truly as Simeon did in substance', Ignatius in 1906, forty years later, adds the footnote: 'This I did in August 1866 at Blackgang Chine, Isle of Wight.'



Ignatius, O.S.B.
Monk.

Then art thou *persuaded of the truths of God*, as the patriarchs were *who saw them afar off*. Once more—The faithful, whom the Holy Ghost calls upon thee to follow, *embraced them also*, as well as were persuaded of them. They clasped, *by faith*, Jesus in their arms, as really and as truly as Simeon did *in substance*. Their love to Jesus, and their interest *in Jesus*, their acquaintance by faith *with Jesus*, were matters of certainty, reality, delight; and their whole souls were, day by day, so familiarized in the unceasing meditation, that they walked by faith with Jesus while here below, as now, by sight, they are with him above in glory. Pause, my soul! Is this thy faith? Then, surely, Jesus is precious, and thou art indeed the follower of them who now, through faith and

+ This I did in August 1866, at Blackgang Chine, Isle of Wight.

The extract from Hawker's Daily Portion with pencilled footnote by Fr. Ignatius in 1906 - two years before he died.



The cliffs and beach at Blackgang Chine, Isle of Wight, scene of Fr. Ignatius's visionary experience in 1866.