

Simon Patrick.

SYMON PATRICK, Bishop of Ely, took an important part in Church life in the seventeenth century. He was born in the reign of Charles I; grew up under the Long Parliament and Commonwealth; held an important London living, after the Restoration; obtained a bishopric at the Revolution, and lived well into the reign of Anne. His autobiography, written near the close of his life, but based on many earlier notes and memoranda, is of great value. It gives a very favourable impression of the writer—a sincerely religious man, of sound learning and judgment, strongly attached to the Church of England, but no bigot.

He was born in 1626, at Gainsborough, where his father was in business. Both his parents were thoroughly godly. His mother used to make him read to her three chapters of Scripture every day, whereby, reading six Psalms when their turn came, the whole Bible was read in the course of a year. His father constantly prayed with his household night and day, if at home; if he were absent, his wife did so. He was undeservedly called a Puritan, because as there was no sermon in their church on Sunday afternoons, he used sometimes to go to a neighbouring church, or else would read a sermon at home—but they were Sanderson's sermons! "Being thus educated," says their son, "I had an early sense of religion, blessed by God, implanted in my mind, which was much increased by my attending to sermons." He had learnt shorthand as a schoolboy, and his father made him take down the sermons in church and read them over when he came home.

His father suffered a good deal in the Civil War at the hands of both sides, so that his son's education was a difficulty. But in 1644 he took him to Cambridge, having letters of introduction to Cudworth and Whichcote of Emmanuel, two of the leading "Cambridge Platonists." They, however, said they were full, but recommended Queens', which was newly filled with Fellows from Emmanuel. It had been a strong Royalist College, and there had been many ejections. Here Patrick entered as a sizar, but before long attracted the attention of the Master (President), Herbert Palmer, of whom he speaks highly. He gave him some copying to do, and made him College scribe, which added considerably to his

income. He was soon after made a scholar, and afterwards a Fellow, taking his M.A. in 1650-1. He came greatly under the influence of another Fellow, John Smith, the youngest of the Cambridge Platonists. Among other things he spoke to him about absolute Predestination, which he had always felt a difficulty, saying that he could never answer the objections against it, but was advised by divines to silence carnal reason. Smith told him that his objections were good and sound, and as he says, "made such a representation to me of the nature of God, and of His goodwill to men in Christ, as quite altered my opinion, and made me take the liberty to read such authors as settled me in the belief that God would really have all men to be saved, of which I never after made a question, nor looked upon it as a matter of controversy, but presumed it in all my sermons." Smith died in 1652, at the age of thirty-two. Patrick preached his funeral sermon.

The College statutes required the Fellows to take Holy Orders when two years Masters of Arts. Patrick, having occasion to go to London, "knew no better" than to go to a classis of presbyters there and be ordained by them. But not long after he met with Hammond's book on "Ignatius' Epistles," and Thorndike's "Primitive Government of the Church," and was fully convinced of the necessity of episcopal ordination. Finding that Bishop Hall was still living in retirement near Norwich, he and two other Fellows, taking another friend as a witness, went over there and "were received with great kindness by that reverend old Bishop," who examined them and gave them many good exhortations, and then ordained them in his own parlour at Heigham, near Norwich, April 5, 1654. Such private ordinations cannot have been uncommon during this period, though we generally hear of them only when those so ordained afterwards came to distinction, such as Lloyd, Bull, Dolben, Tenison.

About 1655 Patrick left Cambridge, taking a chaplaincy in the house of Sir Walter St. John (grandfather of the future Lord Bolingbroke) at Battersea, where he was very happy. But, some time after, the living of Battersea, which was in Sir Walter's gift, fell vacant. There was some delay in filling it; several men came to preach trial sermons. But finally Lord Chief Justice St. John, Lady St. John's father, told her they could not do better than offer it to their chaplain. The outgoing vicar also favoured him. But

Patrick himself was in great fear of being rejected by the "Triers"—the commissioners who had to be satisfied that any man nominated to a benefice was able and fit to preach the Gospel. He knew that he was not exactly an orthodox Puritan, but he was persuaded to accept, and a London minister he knew promised to persuade the "Triers" to be very favourable. And truly they asked him no hard questions, but chiefly what evidence he could give of his conversion; and being satisfied that he was a good man, they admitted him. He at first, however, felt the care of souls so heavy a burden as to think of giving up; but he found the assistance of God beyond his expectation.

At the Restoration many ministers began at once to use the Prayer Book. Some of Patrick's parishioners wanted him to do the same, but he thought it best to prepare the way by a few sermons on the lawfulness and usefulness of forms of prayer. He took to using the Prayer Book on July 22, 1660. This caused no trouble, as he had won the good opinion of some of the best people in the parish, who knew previously something of his mind; for from his first coming to be their minister he had always personally received the Communion kneeling.

In 1662 he was elected President of Queens' College; but a Crown nominee, Dr. Sparrow, finally secured the post, after a troublesome lawsuit, in which Patrick had all sorts of difficulties thrown in his way.

Patrick had, of course, no difficulty about accepting the new Prayer Book. He was offered in September the living of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, vacant by the ejection of Dr. Manton. He got a dispensation to hold Battersea also, not knowing how the air of London would agree with him, or how acceptable he would be to the parish. He, however, put his brother, afterwards Master of the Charterhouse, into Battersea, allowing him all the stipend.

In 1664-5 there was a very hard frost, lasting from Christmas to the month of April; soon after it broke, the plague broke out. In May, Patrick went into the country for his health, and to see his parents; on his return in July he found that the plague had already reached his parish. He, however, kept to his post, and found himself mightily supported and assisted in doing his duty cheerfully. When his well-to-do parishioners, who had all left London, returned, they thought most highly of his devotion. He did a good deal of

reading at this time, which was interrupted by the Great Fire, when a friend of his insisted upon his sending his books to Battersea for safety, and he was a long time getting them back. In 1668 he wrote a controversial book against the Nonconformists. Within the next few years he became a Royal Chaplain, Canon of Westminster, and Dean of Peterborough. In 1675 he married, after a courtship with a strong element of romance.

They had some difficulty at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, in disposing of the large offerings at the Communion. After providing for all who were sick and in great need the surplus was allowed to accumulate, till at last it reached £400. Patrick consulted the churchwardens about its application to some pious or charitable use according to the rubric. They wanted it given to the poor, but he said this meant relieving the poor rate, and so giving to the rich. He proposed the purchase of £20 yearly to be settled on the curate who should read prayers morning and evening, for ever. They objected to this, but gave way when he talked of appealing to the Bishop's decision. Prayers were already maintained by a voluntary contribution at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., to which the gentry and better sort resorted; but according to this trust prayers were to be read also at 6 a.m and 7 p.m. in summer, that servants might resort to them.

Patrick was offered the vicarage of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, but declined it, recommending Dr. Tenison, who was duly appointed. From this time Tenison and Patrick were hand and glove.

In 1681, at the Archbishop's request, they began a weekly Communion at Peterborough Cathedral. Patrick, as Dean, preached several sermons persuading to frequent Communion, which he afterwards turned into a treatise answering the common objections to it.

He came to the front during the controversies of James II's reign. In 1686 he and Dr. Jane, Dean of Gloucester, took part in a controversy with two Roman priests in the presence of the King and Lord Treasurer Rochester, whom the King was pressing to change his religion, and who insisted on first hearing arguments on both sides. Of course neither side convinced the other.

In the same year Tenison and Patrick were called upon to assist at the deprivation of Samuel Johnson, Vicar of Corringham in Essex, who had been chaplain to Lord Russell, and had done his

best to refute the current Church doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance to royal commandments, which had been held even by Tillotson and Burnet. He had now just written an appeal to the soldiers in camp at Hounslow, not to fight against the religion and liberties of their country. He was brought to trial and sentenced to be deprived of his orders, set in the pillory, and flogged at the cart's tail; this was duly carried out. The commission for depriving him consisted of Bishops Crewe, White, and Spratt, Bishop Compton of London having been suspended. Stillingfleet, Dean of St. Paul's, declined to have anything to do with the matter. Twelve London clergy, including Tenison, Patrick, and Williams, were called upon to assist. These three excused themselves on various grounds; Crewe wanted them sent for, but the others thought it unnecessary. The commissioners failed to strip Johnson of his cassock, which was afterwards held to invalidate their action. The new vicar intruded into his living was driven out by the parishioners. At the Revolution Parliament declared both sentence and deprivation to be illegal; Johnson waited for no legal rehabilitation, but, in Newcourt's words, "restored himself both to his orders and to this living, which he enjoyed till his death."

Tenison and Patrick took a leading part in the opposition to the Declaration of Indulgence, May, 1688. Many meetings were held about it; at one on May 11, at the Master of the Temple's, it was agreed "that the bishops should be desired to address the King, but not upon any address of ours to them. For we judged it best that they should lead the way and we follow them." This shows clearly how the credit rests quite as much with the London clergy as with the bishops. The clergy did not wait for the bishops' lead, but pushed them in front of them. At another meeting on the 13th, it was resolved not to read the Declaration. It was arranged to sound all the London ministers; if they were of the same mind the Archbishop promised to petition the King not to exact it. Tenison and Patrick canvassed the west part of London, others taking other parts. On the Thursday, May 17, they met, and gave account of nearly seventy who promised not to read it. Patrick wrote out a fair list of these and took it to the Bishop of Peterborough, who carried it to Lambeth that night. Whereupon the Archbishop sent notice for all the bishops in or near London to come to Lambeth next day, and notified Tenison and Patrick that it was

fit that they should keep it as a day of fasting and prayer, to beg God's direction and His blessing on what was intended. Between ten and eleven they with Dr. Grove went over to Lambeth, and found Tillotson and Stillingfleet there, besides the bishops. There was considerable discussion about the right way of proceeding and the wording, and it was not till six that the bishops went to Whitehall, and as the King was out, they could not see him before nine. Patrick and his friends stayed at Lambeth till eight, but then had to leave, and did not hear the result till next day. This account shows clearly why it was that the bishops acted so late. It was not so much to assemble as many bishops as possible in London, as because they were waiting for the decision of the London clergy. Yet the "Seven Bishops" usually get all the credit, the active part taken by Compton of London being forgotten.

On the Sunday, the Declaration was not read by any considerable person; but the Dean (Bishop Spratt) sent it by one of the minor canons to read in the Abbey. (The ordinary account makes Spratt read it himself.) At St. Margaret's it was refused. In the middle of the week Patrick went to keep his residence at Peterborough, where he did what he could to prevent the reading of it, and found the clergy everywhere inclined to follow the lead of the London clergy. He says he regarded it as a great providence that the clergy were not enjoined all to read it on the same day, but those in London on May 20, those in the country a fortnight later: whereby they had opportunity to hear what those in London had done and the reasons for their refusal.

Here I detect a flaw in Mr. Balleine's "Layman's Church History." He makes the incumbents of his two parishes in Kent have no opportunity of consulting others. But it is morally certain that all clergy anywhere near Canterbury knew more than a week before of the line taken by their Archbishop, Sancroft, and their Dean, Tillotson.

Patrick was still at Peterborough when the news came of the acquittal of the bishops. "The bells rang from three o'clock in the morning till night; when several bonfires were made, with tabour and pipe and drum, and a great part of the night was spent in rejoicing."

Patrick had, unlike many old acquaintances and friends, no difficulty in taking the oath to William and Mary. In September,

1689, he was appointed, at Bishop Lloyd's suggestion, to the see of Chichester. He gives an account of his visitation in 1690—interrupted by the French fleet attacking Hastings.

He took a prominent part in the attempted revision of the Prayer Book in 1689. This has never had justice done to it, its weakest points having been attacked and its good points ignored. It was intended to meet Nonconformist objections, in hopes of bringing in many of them. The proposed changes in the Litany were mostly decided improvements. It proposed to recognize foreign Presbyterian orders, and to have a hypothetical form of reordination of English Presbyterians. But the whole thing fell through, as it was clear that the Lower House of Convocation would never accept it.

In 1691 Patrick was translated to Ely. He was one of the chief instruments in the revival of Church life which marked the latter years of the seventeenth century. He was one of the original founders of the S.P.C.K., and so strong a supporter of the S.P.G. that it is supposed to be in compliment to him that all Bishops of Ely are *ex-officio* members.

He was strongly opposed to the Bill against Occasional Conformity, holding that it had no religious object, and that "it struck at the very best of the Nonconformists, who, looking upon us as good Christians that had nothing sinful in our worship, thought they ought, upon occasion, to communicate with us ; but imagining they had something better in their way of worship, could not leave it, but adhere to their dissenting ministers. This I took not to be an argument of their hypocrisy, as many called it, but of their conscientious sincerity, and therefore thought they ought to be tolerated in this practice, which might in time bring them over to us, as I know it had done some worthy persons."

It is clear that Patrick did not regard the rubric at the end of the Confirmation Service as absolutely excluding Nonconformists from communicating in our churches.

Patrick was a great writer, best known now perhaps by his commentaries, which are still of some value. He died May 31, 1707, and is buried in Ely Cathedral.

HAROLD SMITH.