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Dunham Bible Museum

Junior

Artifact: *The Books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, Paraphras'd: With Argument for Each Chapter, and Annotations Thereupon.*

Word Count: 1243

Symon Patrick's Paraphrase:

A Forgotten Work of Majesty

convictions. Patrick's early childhood was during an age that "was wracked by a painful civil war, which culminated in the execution of Charles I (1649), a 'divine right monarch'" (287). Following the execution of Charles I, England temporarily became a commonwealth before the monarchy was restored. This transition in 1660, however, "meant much more than the restoration of the monarchy" (Patterson 357). It was a major shift for religion in England with "the restoration of the Church of England to its own" (357). A series of conflicts ensued, most notably between the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches. In 1661, the Anglican Church and Presbyterian ministers convened in the Savoy conference to try and reconcile differences, but "no agreement was possible between the contending parties" (358). Symon Patrick's early years were charged with major political swings and religious tensions, shaping his future paraphrases of scripture.

Symon Patrick's private life mirrored the external conflict in England. Born in 1626 at Lincolnshire, Patrick was raised by religious parents that did their best to instill their son with a love for God (Patrick 1-3). He was intelligent from youth; however, education was difficult to provide. In his autobiography, he writes: "it was thought I might be fit for the University. But the war between king and parliament breaking out, put by all those thoughts" (7). Eventually, he was admitted into Queen's College, Cambridge. Although he was comparatively raised to a place of privilege, he maintained a posture of humility, writing to himself: "consider often how long thou hast lived, and how ignorant still thou art now almost twenty-seven years old, and yet a child" (24). He continued to recognize his ignorance and pursue further understanding.

In 1654, Symon Patrick was ordained as a Presbyterian Bishop outside of Norwich (24). Despite his position, his personal theological views did not fully align with the Presbyterians of his day. The Presbyterian Church holds theological beliefs which stress God's absolute

sovereignty over man. Symon Patrick, however, emphasized God's love and desire for all to be saved (18). Later in life, he writes: "This procured me with many the name of an Arminian" (26). Arminianism, rather than stressing God's sovereignty, stresses mankind's freewill. Symon Patrick's difference in beliefs led him to be "twice ordained, first as a Presbyterian minister; some years later, when he had become convinced of the necessity of episcopal ordination, by Bishop Hall of Norwich, a moderate Anglican" (Berg 165). His life was filled with turmoil between different Christian factions, exercising his "ministry during a time of great tension between the Established Church and other parts of the reformed tradition" (Fisher 4). Despite holding controversial views, Symon Patrick remained firm in his convictions. His works are a representation of the contentiousness of his time and his bravery to remain steadfast.

Later in life, Symon Patrick wrote numerous paraphrases and commentaries on scriptural passages including the collection in the Dunham Bible Museum. Although all five wisdom books were published together, he originally wrote the works separately. His first paraphrase was on Romans which he undertook "for the satisfaction of a friend, who feared he was under the sentence of reprobation" (Patrick 59). In commentaries, authors typically go verse by verse, providing comments on the passages. Symon Patrick eventually penned multiple commentaries, but at this point, he chose to paraphrase the book of Romans. This allowed for a more accessible work that didn't require years of theological education to comprehend.

Further into his life, he wrote a

