

## **Bishop Robert Pursglove**

*Transcript of the entry for Robert Pursglove in the Directory of National Bibliography (DNB), 1909, Smith, Elder & Co. Editor - Sidney Lee.*

### **Directory of National Bibliography, vol. 1-20, 22, page 1076.**

Pursglove, Robert, otherwise Sylvester (1500 ? – 1576), bishop suffragan of Hull; educated at St. Paul's School, London, and Corpus Christi College, Oxford; was the last prior of the Augustinian priory, Guisborough; consecrated bishop of Hull, 1538, and installed archdeacon of Nottingham, 1550; deprived of his offices for refusing the oath of supremacy, 1559.

### **Directory of National Bibliography, vol. 1-20, 22, page 491-492.**

PURSGLOVE, ROBERT, otherwise SYLVESTER (1500 ? – 1576), bishop suffragan of Hull, born about 1500, is said to have been the son of Adam Pursglove of Tideswell, Derbyshire. His mother was a Bradshawe, probably of the family of Bradshawes of the Peak, to which the regicide belonged. By the maternal uncle William Bradshawe, the boy was sent to St. Paul's School, London: presumably that founded by Dean Colet in 1509, and not the cathedral or choir school. He would thus be one of the earliest pupils of William Lily, the first head-master. After remaining at St. Paul's for nine years, he spent a short time in the neighbouring priory of St Mary Overy, and then entered the newly founded college of Corpus Christi at Oxford. He resided fourteen years at Oxford, probably until 1532 or 1533. Joining the great Augustinian priory at Guisborough, or Gisborne, in Cleveland, Yorkshire, he rapidly rose to be its twenty-fourth (and last) prior as early, apparently, as 1534. In the following year the act, suggested by Cranmer, for the appointment of bishops suffragan with English titles was passed; and in 1538 Richard Langrigge and Pursglove were presented by Archbishop Lee of York to Henry VIII, who chose the latter to be bishop suffragan of Hull. The patent is dated 23 Dec. 1538 (Lansdowne MS.980. f. 127), and Pursglove was consecrated on 29 Dec. (STUBBS, Registrum). On 1 Oct. in the same year he had been collated to the prebend of Langtoft in the cathedral church of York. This stall he exchanged for Wystowe in the same church on 2 May 1541.

In 1540 Pursglove surrendered to the king the great house of Guisborough of which he was prior. It was said that he had kept great state there, being served only by gentlemen born (Cotton MS., quoted in GRAINGE, Castles and Abbeys of Yorkshire, p. 307). He received as pension £166. 13s. 4d., a sum representing about £2,000 of our money. He is also said to have persuaded other heads of religious houses to surrender.

In 1544 (26 June) he was made provost of Jesus Collage, founded at Rotherham by Archbishop Scott, and held this office till the suppression of the collage at the beginning of Edward VI's reign. On 29 Jan. 1550 he was installed archdeacon of Nottingham, in succession to Dr. Cuthbert Marshall.

His tenure of the bishopric of Hull continued under Holgate and Heath, the successors of Archbishop Lee, and the registers at York contain entries of numerous ordinations by him. But he was deprived of the office, as well as of his archdeaconry, in 1559 for refusing to take the oath of supremacy. Privy council commissioners under Elizabeth represent him as 'stiff in papistry and of estimation in the country'. He had no successor as bishop suffragan of Hull till the consecration of Archdeacon Blunt in April 1891.

In 1559, the year of his deprivation, Pursglove obtained letters patent from Elizabeth to found a grammar school at Tideswell, dedicated, like St. Paul's to the child Jesus. Some of his statutes contain provisions resembling those of Colet, and a work of Erasmus is appointed as one of the textbooks. In the 'return of Endowed Grammar Schools', 1865, the income of this school is stated to be £206. On 5 June 1563 he also obtained letters patent to found a similar school, bearing his name, and also a hospital, or almshouse, at guisborough. His deed of foundation, probably in his own hand, is dated 11 Aug. in that year. He placed both institutions under the visitatorial power of the archbishop of York, proof, apparently, that he finally acquiesced in the Elizabethan settlement of religion.

Pursglove resided in his last years partly at Tideswell and partly at Dunston in the same county, from which are dated a number of deeds of gift to his school and hospital at Guisborough (Hist. MSS. Comm. 9<sup>th</sup> Rep. App. pp. 348-9). He died on 2 May 1579, and he was buried in Tideswell church, where a fine brass marks his resting-place, and bears a long biographical inscription in doggerel verse.

[Wood's Athenae (a confused account); Lansdowne MS. 980, f. 127; Ord's Cleveland, 1846, pp. 189 sqq.; Hist. MSS. Comm. 9<sup>th</sup> Rep. App. pp. 348-9; Le Neve's Fasti; Tiskell's History of Hull, p. 157; Pursglove, by R. W. Corlass, Hull, 1878; Gent. Mag. 1794, ii. 1101; Notes and Queries, 1<sup>st</sup> ser. vii. 135, 5<sup>th</sup> ser. v. 11, 12, 8<sup>th</sup> ser. x. 210; Church Times, 28 July and 4 Aug. 1882 (containing two valuable letters from J. R. Lunn); letter in Morning Post, 8 April 1899; information from R. C. Seaton, esq., and from Rev. Canon Andrew, vicar of Tideswell.]

J. H. L.