

catalogued by Thomas Edward's *Gangraena* (ch. 6, p. 195). The title bluntly conveys the author's opinion that the English religious commonwealth was rotting from within. The 1640s and 1650s were years of turmoil and distraction for the bulk of ordinary citizens, and there seems to have been a collective sigh of relief when church and crown were restored in 1660.

We have chosen to close with an extract from the diary of the Presbyterian minister Richard Baxter (ch. 6, p. 199). Baxter was a conservative during the period of the Cromwellian Protectorate and a dissenter under the restored King Charles II. His relation to the shifting religious politics of the mid-seventeenth century, though fascinating, is less important from our perspective than his enduring role as the leader of a parish community. Baxter's memoirs highlight a familiar round of pastoral service, as he christened, doctored, taught, married, counselled and buried his parishioners. His experiences remind us that many aspects of everyday life remained stable and secure despite the turbulence of religious change in early modern England.

## TRADITION AND CHANGE: THE OLD RELIGION AND THE NEW

### THE STATE OF MELFORD CHURCH AS I, ROGER MARTYN, DID KNOW IT

Roger Martyn (c.1527–1615) lovingly recalled the seasonal rituals, church decorations, and devotional equipment that were lost from his parish church of Long Melford, Suffolk, in the course of the reformation. His description evokes the vitality of late medieval Catholicism before the Henrician, Edwardian and Elizabethan reforms. Martyn came from a village gentry family and served as churchwarden under Queen Mary. From the time of his childhood he relished the richness, festivity and community of the old religion, with its saints' days, processions and bonfires. Writing this memoir later in Elizabeth's reign, Martyn's nostalgia was tempered by hopes that Catholic worship might one day again be restored. He even preserved remnants of the proscribed religious equipment in case their use was sanctioned again.

Source: William Parker, *The History of Long Melford* (London, 1873), pp. 70–3.

At the back of the high altar in the said church there was a goodly mount, made of one great tree, and set up to the foot of the window there, carved very artificially with the story of Christ's passion, representing the horsemen with their swords and the footmen, etc. as they used Christ on the mount of Calvary, all being fair gilt, and lively and beautifully set forth. To cover and keep clean all the which, there were very fair and painted boards, made to shut to, which were opened upon high and solemn feast days, which then was a very beautiful show. Which painted boards were set up again in Queen Mary's time. At the north end of the same altar, there was a goodly tilt tabernacle, reaching up to the roof of the chancel, in the which there was one large fair gilt image of the Holy Trinity, being patron of the church; besides other fair images. The like tabernacle was at the south end.

There was also in my aisle called 'Jesus aisle', at the back of the altar, a table with a crucifix on it, with the two thieves hanging, on every side one, which is in my house decayed; and the same I hope my heirs will repair and restore again one day. There was also two fair tilt tabernacles from the ground up to the roof, with a fair image of Jesus in the tabernacle at the north end of the altar, holding a round ball in his hand, signifying I think

that he containeth the whole round world; and in the tabernacle at the south end there was a fair image of Our Blessed Lady having the afflicted body of her dear son, as he was taken down off the cross lying along on her lap, the tears as it were running down pitifully upon her beautiful cheeks, as it seemed bedewing the said sweet body of her son, and therefore named the image of Our Lady of Pity.

There was a fair rood loft with the rood; Mary and John of every side, and with a fair pair of organs standing thereby; which loft extended all the breadth of the church, and on Good Friday a priest then standing by the rood sang the Passion. The side thereof towards the body of the church, in twelve partitions in boards, was fair painted with the images of the twelve apostles. All the roof of the church was beautified with fair gilt stars. Finally, in the vestry where there were many rich copes and suits of vestments there was a fair press with fair large doors to shut to, wherein there were made devices to hang on all the copes, without folding or frumpling of them, with a convenient distance the one from the other. In the choir was a fair painted frame of timber, to be set up about Maundy Thursday, with holes for a number of fair tapers to stand in before the sepulchre, and to be lighted in service time. Sometimes it was set overthwart the choir before the altar. The sepulchre being always placed and finally garnished at the north end of the high altar, between that and Mr Clopton's little chapel there, in a vacant place of the wall, I think upon a tomb of one of his ancestors; the said frame with the tapers was set near the steps going up to the said altar. Lastly it was used to be set up, all along by Mr Clopton's aisle, with a door made to go out of the rood loft into it.

Upon Palm Sunday the blessed sacrament was carried in procession about the churchyard under a fair canopy borne by four yeomen. The procession coming to the church gate went westward, and they with the blessed sacrament went eastward; and when the procession came against the door of Mr Clopton's aisle, they with the blessed sacrament, and with a little bell and singing, approached at the east end of Our Lady's chapel, at which time a boy with a thing in his hand pointed to it, signifying a prophet as I think, sang standing on the turret, that is, on the said Mr Clopton's aisle door, *Eccc Rex tuus venit*, etc.,<sup>1</sup> and then all did kneel down, and then rising up went and met the sacrament, and so then went singing together into the church. And coming near the porch, a boy or one of the clerks did cast over among the boys flowers and singing cakes, etc.

On Corpus Christi day they went likewise with the blessed sacrament in procession about the church green in copes, and I think also they went in procession on St Mark's day about the said green, with hand-bells ringing before them, as they did about the bounds of the town in Rogation week,

on the Monday one way, on the Tuesday another way, on the Wednesday another way, praying for rain or fair weather as the time required; having a drinking and a dinner there upon Monday, being fast day; and Tuesday being a fish day they had a breakfast with butter and cheese, etc. at the parsonage and a drinking at Mr Clopton's by Kentwell, at his manor of Lutons, near the ponds in the park, where there was a little chapel, I think of St Anne, for that was their longest perambulation. Upon Wednesday being fasting day they had a drinking at Melford Hall. All the choir dined there, three times in the year at least: viz. St Stephen's day, mid-Lent Sunday, and I think upon Easter Monday. On St James's day, mass being sung then by note, and the organs going in St James's chapel (which were brought into my house with the clock and bell that stood there, and the organs that stood upon the rood loft) that was then a little from the road, which chapel had been maintained by my ancestors; and therefore I will that my heirs, when time serve, shall repair, place there and maintain all these things again. There were also fair stools on either side, such as are in the church, which were had away by John King's means, who was Sir William Cordell's balliff; about which chapel there was paled in round about a convenient piece of the green for one to walk in.

On St James's eve there was a bonfire, and a tub of ale and bread then given to the poor, and before my door there was made three other bonfires, viz. on Midsummer eve, on the eve of St Peter and St Paul, when they had the like drinkings, and on St Thomas's eve, on which, if it fell not on the fish day, they had some long pies of mutton, and pease cods, set out upon boards, with the aforesaid quantity of bread and ale. And in all these bonfires, some of the friends and more civil poor neighbours were called in, and sat at the board with my grandfather, who had at the lighting of the bonfires wax tapers with balls of wax, yellow and green, set up all the breadth of the hall, lighted then and burning there before the image of St John the Baptist. And after they were put out, a watch candle was lighted, and set in the midst of the said hall upon the pavement, burning all night.

### HUGH LATIMER, CONVOCAATION SERMON, 1536

Raised and educated as a Roman Catholic, Hugh Latimer (c.1485-1555) resigned the bishopric of Worcester in the reign of Henry VIII to protest against the religious conservatism of the Six Articles of 1539. He became a court preacher under Edward VI and a martyr under Mary. Latimer's preaching had a powerful impact on the early Protestant reformers and their followers. His life, memorialized by John Foxe, registers