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THE RELIGION OF SIR ROGER TWYSDEN (1597-1672): A CASE STUDY IN GENTRY PIETY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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If piety is characterized by a habitual reverence and obedience to God, then the baronet, Sir Roger Twysden, squire of East Peckham, is seen today as a fine example of this virtue. Alongside those attributes of integrity, diligence and an enquiring mind, which he ascribed to Sir Roger in his biography, Jessup included the qualities of a Roman citizen: *pietas*, *gravitas* and *prudentia*.¹ Such qualities, allied to a temperament containing a 'certain slow-moving, deep-thinking element',² have led historians such as Everitt to cast him as a conservative, moderating influence on extreme religious opinions. Within the wide spectrum of differing religious beliefs of the seventeenth century Sir Roger Twysden is now seen as holding the middle ground – the *via media* – of Anglicanism between the extreme positions of Presbyterianism and Catholicism. There seems to be a general consensus amongst his biographers that he was ahead of his time in both promulgating moderation and shunning doctrinal dispute in his writings. It is the moderation of Sir Roger which is seen as exceptional at a time when a serious commitment to faith was far more commonplace than today.

Little has been written about the piety and personal beliefs of individual laymen who lived in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart period. Contemporary historians have engaged their energies instead in discussion about the dominant theological issues. At one end of the scale Acheson³ described the growth of the various groups of separatists amongst radical puritans, whilst at the other Nicholas Tyacke⁴ traced the rise of Arminianism from a strong Calvinist base, arguing that religion was a major contributory cause to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642.⁵ A broad overview of the early Stuart Church has been provided by Dr Fincham, which serves to highlight the building tensions in the years leading up to 1642 between those attached to the authority of the church and those attached to the authority of



Portrait of Sir Roger Twysden painted in 1648. It hangs alongside other Twysden portraits at Bradbourne House. Reproduced by kind permission of the Kent Archaeological Society

scripture.⁶ Such studies use books and sermons published by university-educated clergy and amateur theologians to explore doctrinal arguments.

Where laymen were involved in theological debate, studies have tended to concentrate on men who wished to reform the established church and its practices rather than on conformist believers. This is because those who were prosecuted for not conforming left behind more archival evidence than those who did not.⁷ In his trilogy on the

puritan gentry, Cliffe followed the course of the puritans as they struggled against what they saw as an increasingly papist influence on the church which undermined their vision of a 'godly' church freed from a corrupt clergy and over-elaborate rites.⁸ The religious beliefs of those Protestants who were not involved in publicly attacking the established Church are less easy to ascertain. Biographers have concentrated on prominent figures like Sir Robert Cecil,⁹ Viscount Scudamore¹⁰ and the Earl of Dorset¹¹ whose well-documented lives have enabled writers to piece together their spiritual development. The public standing of men such as Edward Sackville, Earl of Dorset allow a biographer to utilize official material including his speeches and legal judgements to supplement other more ambiguous or biased documentation like contemporary opinions. In the case of Viscount Scudamore his actions in rescuing Abbey Dore (Herefordshire) and his presentation there of church goods (including chalice, plate and damask altar cloth for the High Altar) provide firm evidence for his attachment to Laudianism with its emphasis on the importance of ceremony and a sacrament-centred piety.¹² Biographical studies of this kind have not been replicated to the same extent for the gentry, although individual cases of their piety are included in contributions by Heal and Holmes.¹³

What follows is an examination of the piety of a member of the Kentish gentry, Sir Roger Twysden, and his attitude, seen through his writings and actions, to the developments and changes suffered by the Church during his lifetime. His life spanned the rise of Arminianism, the polarization of puritan and conformist views under Charles I leading to the Civil War and the reinstatement of the episcopacy at the Restoration. Twysden's contribution to any study of gentry piety lies in his compulsion to methodically note down his thoughts and historical researches on religious issues. He was a prolific writer and recorder of events whether in his official capacity as Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant of Kent or as scholar, linguist and amateur theologian. The Twysden archive contains a wide range of documentation including common-place books, diaries and correspondence all written in a small, distinct and legible hand. They date from 1628 when, after his father's death, he set out to record those things 'wch may here give light to those who shall succede me in matters of ye Estate'.¹⁴ In fact the common-place books include a wide range of topics from musings on heretics to firsthand accounts of the deaths of close family members. Amongst other archival sources to shed light on the general piety of the Twysden family is a testamentary letter and collection of prayers written by Twysden's mother, Lady Anne Twysden.¹⁵ The diaries of his wife, Lady Isabella,

written between the years 1645-1651, although often dealing with trivial household happenings, provide useful insight into the close bonds of the extended family.¹⁶ Twysden's brother-in-law, Sir Hugh Cholmley, often brought his family to stay at Roydon Hall and left a record of his wife's wisdom and piety in his *Memoirs*.¹⁷

The writer's study of all these sources has been handicapped by a modern failing to match Twysden's facility to switch from English to Latin and even into Italian and Greek during the course of his writing. A further limitation in assessing Sir Roger's religious convictions is that despite being the parish squire, he had no influence in the choice of vicar since East Peckham was a Peculiar of Shoreham Deanery and the advowson lay with the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury. Despite these limitations, this study sets out to gauge Sir Roger Twysden's piety by first examining his reputation as recorded by contemporaries and then looking for evidence in his library and the scholars with whom he associated. A detailed assessment of his family members and his education should reveal those influences on his spiritual development, but above all it is in his own writings, both in published work and in private correspondence, that his piety will be sought and analysed. Finally his dealings with the clergy and his attitude towards innovations in his parish will be looked at along with the evidence from his will.

Sir Roger Twysden's character and reputation recorded by his contemporaries

Sir Roger Twysden is seen today as a moderate and conservative Anglican – 'a man who abhorred extreme positions and shunned doctrinal dispute'.¹⁸ But three centuries earlier was this how he was seen by his contemporaries? Seventeenth-century references to Sir Roger's reputation can be gleaned through comments in correspondence around the time of the 1640 election, though these shed little light on his religious convictions. In 1639 Twysden was urged to represent the County in the House of Commons in a flattering letter by his cousin, Sir Edward Dering.¹⁹ Dering referred to the high regard in which Twysden was held within the county writing 'you are better beloved then your modesty will suffer you to believe'. In the same vein Theophilus Higgons, vicar of Hunton, wrote saying that as the county 'shewed their loves to you, so you will shew your care for them: according to your knowledge, judgement, integrity & moderation which are observed in you'.

These qualities were not endorsed by Twysden's Great Chart neighbour and staunch Parliamentarian, Sir John Sedley, who wrote to Dering of the 'malevolency of Sir Roger Twysden who turns all the

teeth he hath, though but few and those ill, upon you' in supporting a rival candidate.²⁰ Sedley never forgot his defeat by Twysden in 1629 over an inherited legal dispute concerning the removal of the Twysden church pews by the Sedleys 'on ye North side of ye South Isles of ye parish Church of Great Chart'.²¹ Sedley, 'the hottest of the partisans of the Parliament in Kent',²² was an unstable and spiteful character, constantly feuding with his tenants and neighbours. During the Civil War Twysden's moderation and neutral stance did little to protect him and his family from persecution by the County Committee who instigated the sequestration of his estates and illegal felling of his woods. Sedley was a member of this local Committee along with Sir Anthony Weldon, the Chairman, who was also seeking revenge for defeat in a family feud with Twysden and was principally responsible for the harsh and unjust treatment of the family and their estates during the 1640s. In 1644 a letter was sent through Weldon's influence to Twysden accusing him of being 'refractory to all proceedings of Parlyament' and naming him a notorious delinquent. In his diaries Twysden claimed Weldon was 'revenging that by power, he failed of doing by justice'.

His scholarship and library

It is clear that these slurs on Sir Roger Twysden's character can be discounted, leaving his reputation as a scholar and his library to be investigated for indications of his piety. Sir William Twysden, himself a scholar and 'great Hebrician' left his son a library at Roydon Hall, which Sir Roger expanded over the years. In addition Sir Roger used his brother William's visits to the Continent to acquire specific books. He was able to read these books in the original since besides Latin, Greek, French, Italian and Spanish he had a working knowledge of Hebrew and Anglo-Saxon. Reading original texts without the bias or inaccuracy of a translator was an important innovation for scholars and divines of the period who, like Twysden, were concerned for accuracy in their search for precedents to defend and justify points of doctrine or dispute. Sir William Twysden had used his mastery of Hebrew to read the Old Testament thus by-passing the unreliability of the Latin Vulgate translation. Some intimation of the range of Twysden's books can be obtained from a nineteenth-century sale catalogue which lists books covering the religious spectrum from Jesuit: Owen's *Speculum Jesuiticum, or the Jesuit's Looking-Glasse*, through works by Archbishop Ussher on episcopacy, to Presbyterianism: *The Doctrine & Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*.²³ Twysden had a habit of working methodically through texts underlining and making meticulous notes in the margin

of those which interested him. The catalogue lists those books annotated or uncut giving an indication of his interest in the subject: a book on German Anabaptists remained uncut whilst Hooker's *A Christian Letter of certaine English Protestants unto Richard Hooker requiring Resolution in certain Matters of Doctrine in his Ecclesiasticall Pollicie* was annotated. He valued his library as an 'Earth-loome, or Heyrloome as wee call it'²⁴ and warned his son not to dispose of any of the books, even those in unfamiliar languages or when there is more than one edition, since future generations may esteem them as much as he does (see Plate II, p. 143).

Sir William Twysden had considered only two subjects worthy of study 'the law of God, to teach [a man] the way to heaven [and] the law of the nation to direct him how to deport himself in this life and to manage his civil affairs'.²⁵ Following this advice his son used the time of his imprisonment (for involvement in the Kentish petitions) at Lambeth Palace in 1644 to develop his knowledge of civil affairs by studying records and charters. With regard to the study of God's law, Twysden admitted he preferred history to bible study and devoted his energies to verifying the historical precedents for Protestant rites and doctrine by analysing the writings of the primitive fathers and later theologians like Baronius and Bellarmine. To further these studies Twysden borrowed chronicles from cathedral libraries at Rochester and Canterbury, Sir Robert Cotton's collection and other scholars, sometimes not returning them for years, as he admitted in a letter to his son Charles in 1669: '...my Lord Canterbury lent me Becketts epistles 5 year before I could make it for ye presse...'.²⁶ As early as 1619 he had assisted John Phillipot in his *Visitation of the County of Kent* and was commended as 'both a gentleman and a scholar'.²⁷ He continued to exchange ideas with antiquarians including D'Ewes, Selden, Spelman, Somner and Dugdale, chiding the latter for not having noticed that some of the charters included in the first volume of *Monasticon* were forgeries.²⁸ He also shared his books and thoughts with local gentry like his neighbour Thomas Whetenhall who writes to Twysden in 1659 asking to delay their discussions 'till we meet once again in your closet, the properest place to examin bookes wherewith you are so excellently furnished'.²⁹

The influence of family on his piety

Since the chief preoccupation of medieval scholars in the seventeenth century was religion, Sir Roger Twysden's library cannot be held as sole evidence of his piety. The structure of formalized piety within seventeenth-century gentry households was governed by private meditation, bible reading, family prayers and public worship. Twysden's

I would not have them come after me sell any of my ²⁸⁵ books, my thought is y^e find I have two of one and y^e some sort assure myself there was somewhat why I kept them. Key if it so for have I have y^e same edition twice as certain works of Padre Paolo and others printed at Venice 1606. and 1607. During the time y^e Republicke was Interdicted by Paolo V^{to} yet put them not away for they are such books as are not to be got, at least of y^e edition, nor never will be printed again wth equall authority by y^e approbation of y^e State, see the Trattato del l'interdetto. printed at Venice in 1606. not only by y^e allowance of y^e Reub. but wth y^e Armes of that state, and I have two of them of y^e impression w^{ch} I keep fearing I may lose one of them, or it might have some mischance. and one or more of another.

Now for books y^e it may be my sonne cannot understand, yet put them not away for some may come after us y^e will highly esteem them: my father was a great Hebrician and left many books of y^e tongue, w^{ch} though I have little knowledge of, yet I never parted wth any of them though I could have sold them will. So perhaps I have books of Italian French Spanish, and some Manuscripts w^{ch} my sonne will not regard: perhaps can not read, yet let them not be sold for perhaps his sonne may esteem them as much as I do.

In short I would have my Library be an Earthloom or Hypoloom as we call it, to the family of Twysdens for ever.

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Extract from Sir Roger Twysden's Notebook Vol. 1 (MS. Add.34.163 f.99.
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parents' values and form of worship would have shaped his early beliefs. He made detailed entries of the deaths of close family members in his common-place book revealing their devotion to the Protestant faith. He respected his father as a man of great integrity and uprightness of life. After witnessing Sir William's death Twysden recorded that his father 'made an excellent confession of his faith' and even when he could no longer speak 'wee could perceive he prayed almost continually, be ye lifting up of his hands'.³⁰ Maltby asserts that even after the Reformation the sick desired communion

and this was so in the case of Isabella, Twysden's wife, who received the *viaticum* before dying.³¹ Twysden wrote 'I never saw any receive ye Eucharist wth more reverent devotion'.³² Before her marriage, Lady Isabella had been lady-in-waiting to his mother and would have participated in the family devotions. She died 'fearing god, praising hym always in spirit and truth, after ye auntient manner of th'English Church, as it was reformed by queen Eliz. and King James'. These were the conformist Protestant beliefs of the Twysden family and are underlined by the actions of Twysden's sister, Lady Elizabeth Cholmley, who when she lay dying in London refused to receive the ministrations of a Presbyterian divine, waiting until her son-in-law brought Archbishop Ussher. After her death in 1655, Sir Hugh Cholmley, described his wife as dying 'in the possession of that faith, both in doctrine and discipline, here established and practiced since the reformation in the time of Edward the Sixth'.³³

Sir Roger Twysden's mother, Lady Anne, was both devout and literate (she knew Latin, French, Spanish and Italian) and she influenced her children's spirituality. Twysden admired his mother's skill with words noting 'indeed it might be incredible should I say I never saw man indite better letters then I have read of hers'.³⁴ Her mastery of English can be seen in the moving prayers she wrote and which Twysden devotedly collected together after her death in 1638. The prayers are prefaced by a collection of verses from the Bible – 'certayne comfortable places of scripture'³⁵ – which were designed to be used as strengthening prayers like those used after absolution in the Book of Common Prayer: 'Hear what *comfortable* words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him'.³⁶ The first of Lady Anne's prayers is a humble address to Christ beseeching him to fill her soul with the water of life, stressing her unworthiness, praising him for washing her sins in his blood and enabling her 'even to be saved'. Her plea is based on Calvin's teachings on the possibility of redemption through Christ's death on the cross. She also begs Christ to make her hate all things in which she delights but are offensive to him, in so doing she is renouncing the joys of this world for those of the next. Her belief in predestination and her own powerlessness to control her salvation forms the end of her prayer: 'O Lord thou fillinge apace the blessed number of thy elect I beseeche thee haste and fill that day the end of this World, when we shall be with thee'. It is characteristic of Twysden's respect for his mother that he wrote an introduction to each prayer, presumably to identify it for future generations. Above the second prayer he praises it as an excellent one and adds that Lady Anne usually repeated it to her maid in her private chamber. This prayer is shorter and follows similar

lines to the first asking Christ for deliverance and beseeching him once again to 'teache us to contemne the world and all in it'. These prayers surely suggest that Lady Anne, after the death of her husband, took responsibility for the spiritual welfare of her household and we can perhaps assume that Sir Roger grew up under a regime of regular, truly devotional worship. A few months before her death Lady Anne composed a testamentary letter for her son and attached it to her will. It is partly an apology for not having lived more thriftily, although she justifies this by saying it was not in her 'disposcion' to be so, but it is also a supplication to Christ asking him to safeguard her family. Her children recognised her piety and after her death John Twysden wrote a memorial in which he referred to his mother as a living saint in heaven.³⁷ The legacy of Lady Anne's piety lies in the manner in which her descendants chose to conduct their lives. Her daughter Elizabeth's way of life was so exemplary that local men were keen to send their daughters to serve her so that they too might absorb some of her good qualities. Another daughter Anne, who married the puritan Sir Christopher Yelverton, was acknowledged to be so virtuous that a book by a well-known London preacher was dedicated to her.³⁸

The most singular member of the Twysden household was Mr Johannes Hind, a German who had been engaged by Sir William as a general factotum and who stayed until his death thirty-two years later. According to Isabella's diaries he never disclosed his real name but was 'a right good religious gentell man'. Although born a Lutheran after considerable study and discussion he accepted the tenet of the Church of England concerning the Eucharist and regularly took communion with the family. Twysden described him as an Arminian in belief in all respects except that he held fast to the view that there should be no graven images (the second Commandment). Twysden surely discussed religious issues with Hind, although there is no record of this. He certainly trusted Hind's religious views since in a letter dated 1634 from London he asked Hind to speak to a dying man (either a servant or a tenant) about Christ's mercies as he was not able to be present. This shows Twysden's awareness of his duties to those under his protection and that those duties extended to ensuring the salvation of their soul.

His education and its influence in the evolution of his beliefs

In 1614 at the age of seventeen Sir Roger was sent with his younger brother Thomas to Emmanuel College, Cambridge. All universities at that time encouraged the study of ancient and historic authorities to

provide precedents on which to base solutions to contemporary problems. There seems to be no particular reason for the choice of college since Emmanuel had no special links with Kent, however it was renowned for its extreme Calvinism. In 1603 puritan disregard for the sacraments there was so marked that it resulted in students receiving Communion 'sitting on forms about the Communion Table & [they] doe pull the loafer one from another'.³⁹ Such attitudes seem at odds with Twysden's religious upbringing in Kent and he never stayed to take his degree. Whilst at Cambridge, Twysden may have overlapped with the puritan divine Thomas Jackson who returned to Emmanuel in 1615 to receive his Doctor of Divinity. Ten years previously Jackson had become prebend at Canterbury Cathedral through the influence of Twysden's uncle Thomas and later preached at Great Chart church (where Twysden's estate at Chelmington lay), basing his style of preaching on the fervent puritan William Perkins. Twysden certainly studied Perkins' Calvinist works since he refers to Perkins' commentary on 'ye Epistle to ye galatyons' in his commonplace book *Theologica* in the late 1650s.⁴⁰ In 1627 Thomas Jackson published *A Treatise of the Holy Catholike Faith and Church*,⁴¹ referring in a marginal note to the Venetian friar Paolo Sarpi whose works Twysden also revered. His formal education was completed between 1622-23 at Grays' Inn, which was closely associated with Kent, having been responsible for the education of over one third of Kent's JPs by 1636. Although he did not go on to become a lawyer the good general legal training equipped him well for the future management of his estate and as a magistrate.

He used this training when researching contemporary religious issues. From the time of his sequestration and imprisonment in 1642, he tested the ecclesiastical doctrine of his day against earlier writers and traditions. Although he made no direct reference to Richard Hooker's works, he annotated a copy of *A Christian Letter of Certaine English Protestants unto Richard Hooker requiring resolution in certaine matters of doctrine in his Ecclesiasticall Pollicie*, and in his own great published work *An Historical Vindication of the Church of England. In point of Schism, As it stands separated from the Roman, and was reformed I Elizabeth*, published in 1657, he followed Hooker's idea that the Church of England had never broken with Rome, but was a 'reformed continuation' of it. Following the efforts of the puritans to abolish the episcopacy in the 1640s, Twysden's main concern was to discover the best form of government for the Church of England. In the *Vindication* Twysden used a series of arguments based on historical fact, quoting all his authorities, to prove that the Pope had no legal claim to have authority over the English Church and that this had only come about through custom. He

shows how papal power grew under the Saxons and Normans and finally usurped that of the English monarch in ecclesiastical matters. Twysden believed in the supremacy of the state in ecclesiastical affairs and supported the King's role as supreme governor of the Church of England in matters of ecclesiastical polity as it had been reaffirmed under Queen Elizabeth. He was never a fervent Royalist or subscriber to Sir Robert Filmer's absolutist theories in his *Patriarcha*, but recognised the part played by the monarch in maintaining stability and authority in the kingdom. In an earlier work on constitutional history he wrote 'monarchical rule, when temperd with democraticall...is in my judgment the best of all others, as that which can hardly fall into tyranny, yet avoids the ills of popular government'.⁴² Twysden says in his preface that his purpose in writing is to discover the truth and goes on to say that the book is a historical narration and is not intended to provide answers to theological disputes. In it he succeeded in proving that the changes carried out in England at the time of the Reformation could be justified by precedent and that there had been no departure from the old faith, only a rejection of all corrupt practices.

His dealings with Catholics

In the first chapter of *Vindication* Twysden refers to the many conversations he had with Sir Basil Brook on papal power and the dissolution of the monasteries. Because of his involvement with the Kentish petition Twysden had been imprisoned at the *Three Tobacco Pipes* in Charing Cross in August 1642 with Sir Basil Brook and Sir Kenelm Digby, who made the prison 'a place of delight, such was their conversation and so great their knowledge'.⁴³ Both men were Catholics and had moved in Court circles but of the two perhaps Digby would have been the most intriguing to Twysden. His father had been executed for his part in the Gunpowder Plot and yet during the early 1630s Digby left the Catholic faith for Protestantism under the influence of his friend Laud. His flirtation with Laudianism ended in 1635 and he reverted to Catholicism. By 1640 he was in Rome negotiating with the Pope about collecting money from English Catholics to support Charles I's army in Scotland. Twysden later devoted a section in the *Vindication* to the subject of the treatment of heretics and may have recalled his conversations with his two companions when he concluded that heretics should be treated with tolerance since 'men's various capacities might easily lead them to different opinions and perceptions'.

Throughout the period of his enforced withdrawal from public life Twysden had continued to debate and discuss his ideas on religious

issues privately. In 1652 he was in correspondence with a Mr Lee from Rochester and kept a copy of his draft letter written in the September of that year.⁴⁴ The identity of Richard Lee is somewhat difficult to trace since both father and son shared the same name⁴⁵ although one of them was certainly Member of Parliament for Rochester from 1640 until he was excluded in 1648. A Captain Richard Lee held the bridge at Rochester for Parliament during the 1643 Kentish rebellion⁴⁶ and it might be assumed that the family were both staunch Parliamentarians and Puritans.⁴⁷ However there are indications that either the family pragmatically disguised their views in order to continue in public life as magistrates and bridge wardens at Rochester,⁴⁸ or that they abruptly changed sides, for in 1652 Richard Lee was voted out as bridge warden along with all the other Royalist sympathisers.⁴⁹ By 1655 Richard Lee was part of an unsuccessful uprising by Kentish Cavaliers and by 1657 he was in prison at Lambeth where he was reported as calling the Lord Protector 'a knave, Traytor, Murtherer, and that the blood of those that were murthered in ye late Warres would be charged upon the Lord Protector'.⁵⁰

At the beginning of his letter to Richard Lee, Twysden finds himself troubled to find that his correspondent no longer holds the same opinions as formerly and wonders 'if we could not be both brought to be yet agreed again in thinking one thing'. The entire letter, which runs to four closely written pages, examines religious issues and each point in his argument is meticulously referenced in the margin with the name of the authority he quotes. He starts by proving that the articles of faith are derived from divine authority and quotes St Augustine as saying that everything which 'conten faith or manners of life' are to be found in scripture. St Augustine's view is compared with that of the Italian theologian Cardinal Bellarmine, whose *Disputationes* was the authoritative statement of Catholic doctrine. Twysden goes on to refute Calvin's argument that salvation lies outside the control of the individual and takes responsibility for his own soul by not following the clergy's teachings unquestioningly since 'it being possible a blind man leaning on his guide may fall into a ditch'. In order to follow this path he advises that firstly the scriptures should be studied then the writings of the orthodox fathers of the Primitive Church and gives as his authority the Archbishop of Canterbury's visitation charge of 1571. Midway in his letter he describes how to choose those fathers who can be relied upon and includes Vincentius Lerinensis and St Epiphanius, both of whom argue in favour of tradition where the Scriptures are unclear. He then turns to consider the practices of the Primitive Church regarding the sacraments, dealing firstly with baptism, writing in explanation 'I know no point of moment in the Church of Rome wherein we differ

from them, but where they differ from antiquity, or otherwise I should be glad to be shewed it'. On the sacrament of the Eucharist and, no doubt remembering with distaste the puritan edict listing those transgressions which made some ineligible to take communion, he cites St Paul who invites *all* men to partake of the bread and wine.

Even after the publication of the *Vindication* Twysden continued to return to the same issues in his writings and in his correspondence with his cousin Thomas Whetenhall. The passages in his common-place book entitled *Theologica* (c. 1658-9) relate to the differences between the doctrines of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches on articles of faith such as the Sacraments. In writing 'yt is they wrest from us not wee from them'⁵¹ he reaffirms his conclusion in the *Vindication* that it was the Church of Rome, which erred from the true Catholic faith not the reformed English church. He does not claim to be an infallible judge but 'having donne the best I can to certify my self of ye truth of a matter' he trusts it sufficient to rely on a combination of his conscience and the authority of 'one man whom I esteeme of Sanctyty and Learning' to reach a conclusion. Here he refers to the 1607 edition of Paolo Sarpi's *Trattato d'Interdetto*, one of two editions of the *Trattato* which Twysden cherished in his library. He left a note in his common-place book explaining that he kept both editions since 'I keepe fearing I may loose one of them, or it myghte have some mischance' and begging his son not to sell any of Sarpi's books after his death.⁵²

Sarpi was a Venetian historian and a priest of the Servite order, who had to be protected from Rome by the Doge because of his hatred of the Pope and his desire to subvert the Catholic Church. His most famous work *Historia del Concilio Tridentino* covered the findings of the various sessions of the Council of Trent between 1545 and 1563 where the Pope and Catholic clergy redefined their doctrine and instituted reforms in an attempt to counter the threat of Protestantism. In his common-place book of 1660 Twysden describes a meeting in London with Nathaniel Brent in 1627 where Brent revealed how he had been sent on a secret mission to Venice on King James's behalf (the year 1618 can be identified from correspondence between Brent and Archbishop Abbott)⁵³ in order to obtain a copy of the *Historia*. He described how it took him two months of negotiations with another Servite friar named Fulgentio before he could gain access to Sarpi, but that once he had gained the latter's trust, the manuscript was copied in Italian and sent clandestinely to England in fourteen separate packets. On his return to England Brent translated the *Historia* into English and it was published in 1620 with a dedication to King James. Twysden's passage explaining the lengths to which the King and the Archbishop were prepared to go to obtain a copy emphasizes its importance to

English theologians at the time. The Council of Trent had condemned Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone and defined transubstantiation. It also defined the Old Testament, distinguishing between the books of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, thus finally clarifying the difference between the Roman and Protestant understanding of the term scripture. All these issues would have been of burning interest to any educated clergyman or scholar-gentleman in England at the time. Two meticulously annotated copies of the *Historia* owned by Twysden bearing the date 1627 still exist. One in the British Library has each paragraph numbered and has been carefully cross-referenced. Some of these cross-references refer to the Geneva (1629) edition and it is clear from a letter from his brother William in Venice dated 1632 that the observant Twysden has found discrepancies between the two texts.⁵⁴ William was asked by him to seek clarification from Fulgentio (since Sarpi was by then dead). Fulgentio told William that 'the Geneva edition of ye Councel of Trent is ye best but that there were some faults in it though he had not had Leadsure so to reade it oure and therefore had not observed them', and agrees that Twysden's queries are valid.

After the publication in 1657 of the *Vindication*, Twysden was still barred from public office and used the time in managing his estates and engaging in correspondence with his recusant neighbour and distant relative Thomas Whetenhall. In letters written during the winter of 1658 and spring 1659 Twysden returns to many of the authorities cited in his book as he tries to demonstrate how the Catholics have strayed from the true church by following the Church of Rome. Throughout the correspondence he deals again with the three main issues clarified by the Council of Trent: the Canon of Scripture, Papal Supremacy and Transubstantiation. In so doing he marshals a formidable range of ancient sources to support his arguments including the Church Councils of Chalcedon, Sardis and Nicene, St Jerome and St Augustine together with two sixteenth-century theologians: Baronius and Bellarmine.⁵⁵ In the same letter Twysden makes clear his position over the sacrament of the Eucharist refuting Whetenhall's argument that the bread and wine change into the body and blood of Christ. He writes in Latin, using St Jerome as his authority, that the substance of the bread has no significance of any sort to the meaning of the sacrament other than as an external sign.⁵⁶ Yet again Twysden's emphasis on the Eucharist places him in the 'Anglican' tradition of Richard Hooker, who elevated the importance of the sacraments as 'moral instruments of salvation'.⁵⁷ By endorsing a sacrament-centred piety Twysden was confirming the role of the clergy in the church, in complete opposition to the puritans

who marginalized the sacraments in favour of the Word, which did not need a hierarchical clergy to interpret it. In contrast to Twysden's tightly argued and well-referenced letters, it is clear from Whetenhall's replies that he cannot draw upon a similar scholarly background and his argument is that faith should be pre-eminent and rests his case on 'a truth so universally owned ought not to be disbelieved upon probabilities'. What initiated this correspondence is unknown but Thomas Whetenhall, though a recusant, was a good enough friend of Twysden to attend Anne Twysden's wedding to John Porter in Lamberhurst the previous year. Twysden seemed genuinely concerned for his Catholic friend's salvation since he writes in his final letter in April 1659 'consider Sr it is no lesse then your owne soul is ye price at stake'.⁵⁸ Perhaps, knowing that the Whetenhall family had only left the Protestant faith some twenty-five or so years earlier, he felt there were sufficient grounds to hope they could be persuaded to revert and save their souls.

There is no direct evidence to record the exact timing or the reasons for the Whetenhall's change of religion. During Mary's reign Thomas and George Whetenhall had fled England with Thomas Becon, the well-known Protestant cleric, and other Kentish exiles.⁵⁹ By 1617 the Calvinism of the family was evidently still flourishing since a Thomas Whetenhall endowed a lectureship in the parish church of St Swithin in London for a certain Richard Cooke to preach a sermon there every Tuesday.⁶⁰ Seven years later however all this changes and the first indications of a change in faith amongst the Whetenhalls appear when from the mid 1620s the Calendar of Assize Records lists a series of indictments against the Whetenhall family for recusancy.⁶¹ Thomas Whetenhall is accused in 1627 by the churchwardens of East Peckham and by the vicar Francis Worrall of having his son baptised covertly by a seminary priest and the same presentment states that 'several priests – Ward, Wood and Holland – resort to his house'. When Thomas died in 1630 a note opposite his name in the margin of the church registers records 'entered privately without ye minister' (presumably alluding to a secret papist burial). This reversion to the old faith by the Whetenhalls coincides with the period after the marriage of the Catholic Henrietta Maria to Charles I when conversion to Catholicism became fashionable at court (the Whetenhalls had a London house in Bow Street). Although in court circles there was a move towards toleration the law had not been changed and it was up to the Lord Lieutenant of each county to use his discretion. In Kent from 1604 until 1620, when he ceased to hold the Lord Lieutenancy of Kent, Lord Wotton, a crypto-Catholic, never enforced the laws against recusants. The numbers of papists grew in East Peckham so that by the 1640s the parish was amongst only four in West Kent

where the number of recusants reached double figures.⁶² In 1598 there had been no papist recusants listed in the Lay Subsidy Rolls for East Peckham but by 1642 there were six, all of whom it seem were Whetenhalls.⁶³ As a whole the county gentry must have felt threatened by this increase in numbers of Catholics since when they next gathered at the county assizes at Maidstone in March 1642 a clause asking for the stricter enforcement of the law against papists was included in the first draft of the Kentish Petition. Twysden was present and once again he showed himself to be both compassionate and atypical of his time by criticizing Sir John Sedley's motion that 'all Children of Papists may be brought up in the Reformed Religion [as] perhaps the hardest and least justifiable clause of ye whole'.⁶⁴ In his Journal he recalled how in 1641 the House of Commons had instructed all magistrates to collect the names of popish recusants and disarm them which he found a gross injustice calling it an attack on those with 'tender consciences who could not submit to some innocent ceremonies'. In his dealings with Catholics, Twysden above all desired unity and tolerance within the church and sought to achieve this through reasoned argument and not persecution. He took an inclusive, ecumenical stance arguing that papists still remained members of the true Church even if they have strayed.

His dealings with puritans

In his role as a magistrate Twysden was responsible for enforcing the laws against recusants but he also had to deal with radical puritans when they transgressed civil laws. Personally he was always tolerant of people with differing religious views, writing to Sir Edward Dering that 'some tyme have made a doubt to me whether a Puritane or a papist were nerer Heven'.⁶⁵ Unlike Twysden, Sir Edward Dering had been proactive in prosecuting dissenters in the 1630s.⁶⁶ Neither recusants nor radical puritans accepted the Prayer Book and by 1641 the latter were attacking its authority both in the House of Commons and in the shires. In the same year Twysden was present at the assizes in Maidstone where a man named Francis Cornewell, described as a clerk (possibly a minister), was indicted for scandalous words including the assertion that 'the whole book of common prayer is popery'.⁶⁷ Twenty years later at the time of the Restoration, Twysden was one of a group of magistrates who reprimanded four ministers for refusing to use the Prayer Book. Such refusals to subscribe to the Prayer Book or established liturgy was taken as implicit criticism of the monarch as supreme governor of the Church of England, and magistrates felt it their public duty to see that the law was upheld whatever their private feelings.

Amongst their aims for reforming the church in the early 1640s the more extreme puritans proposed abolishing the episcopacy, arguing that it had no scriptural justification, and elevating the importance of godly preaching above the sacraments. These proposals were anathema to Twysden who supported the clerical hierarchy as essential for a sacrament-based worship, arguing that it was an institution of apostolic foundation. In 1642 along with other members of the gentry he helped draft the Kentish Petition, pleading for the retention of both the liturgy (as established under Queen Elizabeth and King James) and the episcopacy. Twysden never wrote ill of the puritans whose views and political power had caused him so much suffering during the 1640s. He excused Sir Anthony Weldon, a virulent anti-episcopalian, by saying Weldon could not have fully approved of Parliament's actions but had been driven in his actions by fierce personal ambition.⁶⁸ At Lambeth a Presbyterian minister, Dr Alexander Leighton, had been his gaoler. Leighton had no love of Anglicans, having suffered mutilation under Archbishop Laud for his faith and cheated Twysden over the cost of his prison accommodation. Despite this Twysden wrote dispassionately of him as 'being no ill dispositioned person, but one who loved the Presbytery, and loved money'.⁶⁹

Twysden's personal relations with the puritan members of his own extended family were warm. His sister Anne had married a third generation puritan, Sir Christopher Yelverton, who seems to have been a tolerant, moderate man who used his influence to help ameliorate the circumstances of Twysden's imprisonment where he could. Cliffe described him as 'the type of Puritan who was no enemy to episcopacy if a good choice had been made of them'.⁷⁰ Indeed, after the abolition of episcopacy, Yelverton gave refuge to Bishop Morton of Durham and allowed him to ordain Church of England ministers. Incidentally Twysden owned a copy of Bishop Morton's book so they may have met or corresponded at the time.⁷¹ Both Yelverton and another brother-in-law, Sir Hugh Cholmley (who had spent part of his childhood in the puritan Yelverton household), and their families often stayed with the Twysdens at Roydon Hall or at the London house in Redcross Street and later at Dean's Yard in Westminster and presumably shared in family prayers. After Cholmley's death in 1657 Twysden wrote 'a wise, honest religious gentleman yt had lived many years with my father and me'.

His relations with the clergy

If Sir Roger Twysden's relations with both puritans and recusants were generally tolerant and friendly was this also the case with his

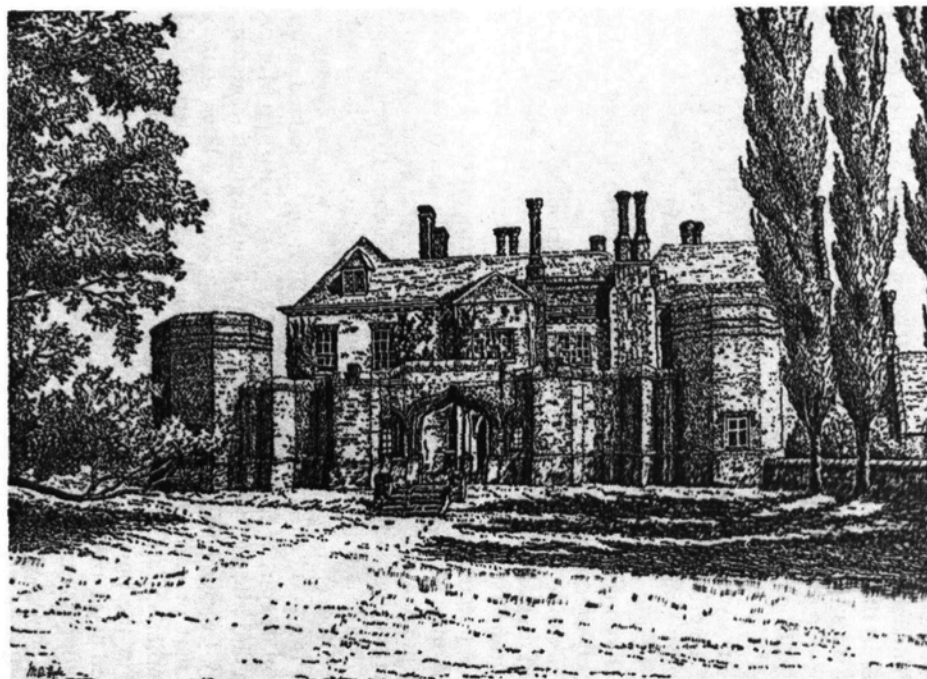


Fig. 1 Roydon in 1860 (p.55) from an etching by M.W. Hyde from *A Manor through Four Centuries* by Cook A.R. (1938). By permission of Oxford University Press

dealings with the clergy, and in particular the vicar of St Michael's, East Peckham? As mentioned earlier, Twysden had no clerical patronage and it was the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury who had presented Francis Worrall to St Michael's. Worrall had matriculated from St John's, Oxford and had been ordained in London in 1609. At the time of the death of Sir William Twysden in January 1628/9 Worrall had been vicar for almost twelve years. He was from the start the cause of a number of vexations to Twysden. In his common-place book Twysden noted down the costs for his father's funeral including the vicar's burial charge of one pound and added that the vicar had demanded the black cloth which lay on the hearse as his customary due but that he, Twysden, had refused since he knew of no such precedent: 'I made it apeere to him wee had no such custom'. Twysden's disputes with Worrall were never over the liturgy or form of worship in the church. They occurred when Worrall seemed in danger of acting in an unfair manner by attempting to establish a custom that could not be justified by precedent. At one point, Worrall tried to instigate payment in kind for his tithes rather than in the customary money. Twysden, who as a member of the Church of England accepted the legitimacy of tithes and had kept notes of tithing customs in East Peckham and Great Chart from 1628, saw this as an unjust and retrograde move and brought a chancery suit against Worrall in 1639, which he eventually won.⁷² As this was not a personal attack, Twysden paid for Worrall's dinner along with that of his own witnesses and the commissioners at the end of the case 'although I never told him so'. He later wrote disapprovingly of those canonists who said that the clergy are the lords of the first fruits (*clerici sunt Domini fructuum*) quoting his authorities to prove that this was not so in the Apostles' time.⁷³ Twysden was charitable to Worrall and was willing to give a gift of forty shillings or a quantity of cordwood to help the impoverished vicar, but only if there was nothing put in writing so that no custom would be established. His argument over precedent did not stop with Worrall for in 1653 he challenged the new vicar, William Polhill, who had been appointed by Parliament, over his claim that he had the right to nominate one of the churchwardens.

There is no personal written account by Twysden of his views on the changes brought about by Archbishop Laud in the 1630s. There is a characteristically factual entry in his common-place book noting that the communion table had been moved to the east end of the chancel and railed around at both St Michael's, East Peckham and the neighbouring church of Hadlow in 1637. He goes on to add that the cost had been met by the parishioners and not by the clergy or any one individual. This is Twysden at his most elusive and it is difficult to

say whether he is purely recording facts for his sons' information (as was his custom), or whether he is making a veiled statement against the cost of these innovations. There is no existing record of him being in correspondence with his uncle Charles Twysden, who was Chancellor of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, but he must have been aware of his uncle's personal and official support of Archbishop Laud. As early as 1636 Charles Twysden had made an order to move the communion tables in St Michael's and Trinity churches in Coventry to the east wall of the chancel and raise them up on three steps. Sir Roger Twysden made no attempt to influence the parish or the vicar to alter these changes. Neither did he endorse the petition sent to the House of commons by five East Peckham inhabitants in January 1641 complaining about their vicar, his lack of sermons and the change in position of the altar which now had a 'new wainscot at the East side of the said Table made with the picture of angels therein carved'.⁷⁴ Five petitioners is a very small proportion of the number of inhabitants living in the parish to complain and presumably the majority, including the Twysden family, accepted Laud's innovations.⁷⁵ Twysden himself did not object to going up to the altar rails to take communion unlike Sir Edward Dering and this is recorded in a letter from him to his cousin Dering in 1639.⁷⁶ Twysden may even have been responsible for paying for the new wainscot with its provocative angel carvings, believing like Hooker that churches should be places of splendour. He would certainly have been relieved when another St John's man and previously sequestered Royalist, Samuel Grimes, replaced William Polhill as vicar at the Restoration.

Later in the 1660s Twysden set down his thoughts on ecclesiastical goods confessing that he found it scandalous how many of the recent reformers had taken lands and goods from the church and clergy rather than 'they might enrich themselves then for any true ground of Conscience'.⁷⁷ Under the commonwealth he had himself purchased church lands (Christ Church Lees which his family had rented from the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury) to maintain access to the church at Great Chart from his estate there. He would have known of Sir Henry Spelman's book *De Non Temerandis Ecclesii* (1613) in which private ownership of ecclesiastical land was condemned and he owned a copy of the Bishop of Rochester, John Warner's treatise on *Church Lands not to be Sold* (1646), in which he had made notes.⁷⁸ These works were unambiguous in their message that divine judgment would be inflicted on those who made secular use of church property. As a man of integrity and one who did not condone the actions of the Puritans in appropriating church lands, Twysden was anxious to make his position clear to his heirs by explaining in his common-place book that he holds these lands in trust for the Church

until they can be returned. In the interim he directs that the part of the rent that would have been paid to the Church should be used to 'remember some poore orthodoxall ministers or scholars'.⁷⁹ There is a later addition to the entry saying that the lands have now been returned 'to the trewe owners of wch no man is more glad then I am my self'. The importance he attaches to this is emphasized in his will where he charges his son never to buy church lands 'though on conditions never so advantageus' unless he intends to save them for the church, and then only with the involvement of the clergy.⁸⁰

It was typical of Twysden's methodical approach that he wrote a lengthy and extremely detailed will some two years before his death. Perhaps this was an acknowledgement of the problems he had inherited when dealing with the brief and hastily written will of his father. The preamble written in his own hand unambiguously states that he dies as he lived 'in the true antient Apostolick faith, now professed in the Church of England' which is the 'most conformable to gods holy word in the Scriptures, the primitive times, and the good Christian Society of any in the world'. In writing this he reaffirms the historical conclusions he had reached about the authenticity of the true Protestant church. He is penitent and places his reliance on Christ for his salvation but never assumes he is part of a godly elect. In 1649 he had argued in *Certayne considerations upon the Government of England* that it was not always wrong to take up arms against the King however this always caused more harm than good.⁸¹ Perhaps recalling this he directs his son to remain loyal to his king under all circumstances 'since God cannot long bless such as do otherwise'. The remaining five and a half pages of the will are devoted to bequests. These are not apparently determined by religious considerations but do show great love and concern for his children together with compassion and generosity towards valued servants, tenants and the deserving poor of the parish. He uses his legal knowledge to find a method of helping the poor without easing the amount of poor rate the rich have to pay by using money from the rent of a piece of land called Ducks Meadow to pay only those poor who do not claim alms from the parish. Of Twysden's three executors only one, Richard Browne, can be identified. He held a neighbouring estate at Great Chart and Twysden had supported his candidacy for the Long Parliament. As Member of Parliament for New Romney, Browne had spoken to the House in 1645 on Twysden's behalf concerning his petition for the removal of the sequestration order. It seems that Twysden's choice of executor was based on long-term friendship rather than on (or perhaps despite) religious views.

The rich and extensive archive left by Sir Roger Twysden has

FAMILY TREE OF SIR ROGER TWYSDEN OF ROYDON HALL, EAST PECKHAM

William Twysden = Elizabeth Roydon
of Chelmington, (daughter of Thomas
Great Chart Roydon)
d.1549 1523 - 1595

= (2) Cuthbert
Vaughan
m. 1550

= (3) Sir Thomas
Golding m.1564

Roger Twysden = Ann Wyatt (daughter of Sir
Thomas Wyatt of Allington Castle)
1542 - 1603 m.1562 1542 - 1592
12 children, 6 survived

Margaret = Richard
Dering of Pluckley

Sir William Twysden = Anne Finch (eldest
daughter of Sir Moyle Finch of Eastwell)
1566 - 1629 d.1638
4 sons and 3 daughters

SIR ROGER TWYSDEN = Isabella Saunder
(daughter of Sir Nicholas Saunder of Ewell,
Surrey)
1597 - 1672 m.1634/5 d.1657
3 sons and 3 daughters

Elizabeth = Hugh
Cholmley of Whitby
1600 - 1655 m.1622

Thomas Twisden =
Jane Tomlinson
1601 - 1683
m.1639

Anne = Sir Christopher
Yelverton (Lord Grey of
Ruthin)
1603 - 1670

William
Twysden
1605 - 1641

John
Twysden
1607 -
1688

Francis
Twysden
1609 -
1675

Sir William Twysden = Frances Cross
1635 - 1697 m. 1665
9 sons and 3 daughters

Anne = John Porter of
Lamberhurst
1636 - 1729
No issue

Isabella
1637 - 1725
Unmarried

Frances = Sir Peter Killigrew
of Cornwall
1640 - 1710

Roger
1642 - 1677
Unmarried

Charles
1645 -
1691
Unmarried

revealed some of his personal religious preoccupations and demonstrates how religious and secular aspects of life in the seventeenth century were inextricably linked. He lived through startling and traumatic times during which he was removed from political and judicial office, imprisoned and his lands sequestered. His scholarly inclinations led him to use the time to research into contemporary religious controversies. His writings show how desperately he sought to justify the doctrines of the reformed Elizabethan church as being the only unifying way forward for all during a time of such polarized religious attitudes and bigotry. Even after his death his published writings were well received as being both scholarly and accurate. His *Vindication* was reprinted in 1675 at a time of anti-Catholic hysteria as a cogent justification of the Reformation in England. Twysden always endeavoured to persuade (rather than coerce) others that peace and unity could only be achieved within a broad national church and in doing so showed an uncommon tolerance and modern ecumenical outlook. In his personal life he set an example of good Christian living to his children and his tenants, and not once did he allow differences of religious opinion to affect his political or personal relationships. Despite the extent of Twysden's writings there remain unanswered questions about his attitude towards several elemental themes such as Laudianism, the puritans and preaching. These limitations are perhaps due to incongruities in the survival of archival material but may, significantly illustrate those subjects on which he was reluctant to commit his views in writing either from fear of retribution or simply from a more pressing interest in other religious topics. Aside from these reservations Sir Roger Twysden's words remain a valuable record and exposition of lay Anglican piety of a member of the gentry in the seventeenth century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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