



Preaching in Belfast, 1747-72  
*A selection of the sermons of James Saurin*

Raymond Gillespie & Roibeard Ó Gallachóir  
EDITORS

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In 1747 James Saurin, a descendant of a prominent Huguenot family, was appointed as vicar of Belfast. One of his first acts was to write a series of sermons that he preached to his congregation over his long tenure as vicar. Many he recycled a number of times since they were, for him, fundamental statements of belief and its meaning in the contemporary world. Some fifty-five of these sermons have recently been discovered in St Anne's cathedral in Belfast, having been preserved and used by Saurin's son and his grandson for their preaching. This edition collects some twenty of the sermons. They reflect on a wide range of questions. How did one maintain social order in a rapidly changing town? What did it mean to be part of the religious establishment in a town where the Church of Ireland was a minority? What political positions might the inhabitants of radical Belfast assume and how did a preacher deal with the needs of his flock through Christmas, Easter, Confirmations and other key moments in their lives? This unique collection of sermons provides a vivid insight into the mind of a Church of Ireland clergyman in a rapidly changing provincial town at the middle of the eighteenth century and illuminates many of the key issues of the world of provincial Ireland.

**Raymond Gillespie** teaches in the Department of History, Maynooth University. Roibeard Ó Gallachóir is a recent graduate of the MA in Historical Archives, Maynooth University.

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