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Preaching in Belfast, 1747-72: A Selection of the Sermons of James Saurin

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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 sermons he recycled a number of times since they were, for him, fundamental statements of belief and meaning in the contemporary world. Some 55 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 book collects some 20 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? The 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 18th century and illuminates many of the key issues of the world of provincial Ireland. [Subject: History, Irish Studies, Religious Studies]

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