



**THE ‘SECOND REFORMATION’ IN IRELAND, 1798–1861:  
CASE STUDY OF REV. ROBERT WINNING AND THE  
KINGSCOURT DISTRICT**

by

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## Abbreviations: General

<i>ADB</i>	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>
ADV	Association for Discountenancing Vice
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives
<i>DIB</i>	<i>Dictionary of Irish Biography</i>
ESU	Evangelical Society of Ulster
HBS	Hibernian Bible Society
HC	House of Commons
ICM	Irish Church Missions
IS	Irish Society
KPS	Kildare Place Society
LAIS	Ladies' Auxiliary to the Irish Society
LHS	London Hibernian Society
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no page
NFC	National Folklore Collection
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NUI	National University of Ireland
OS	Ordnance Survey of Ireland
PHSI	Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland
PPS	Priests' Protection Society
PRONI	Public Record Office Northern of Ireland
QUB	Queen's University, Belfast
RD	Registry of Deeds
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TNA	The National Archives of the United Kingdom
UCD	University College Dublin
WRO	Warwickshire Record Office

## **Abbreviations: Newspapers**

<i>AH</i>	<i>Achill Herald</i>
<i>AS</i>	<i>Athlone Sentinel</i>
<i>BCC</i>	<i>Belfast Commercial Chronicle</i>
<i>BCWG</i>	<i>Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Belfast Mercury</i>
<i>BNL</i>	<i>Belfast News-Letter</i>
<i>BLLSC</i>	<i>Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle</i>
<i>BNWM</i>	<i>Bell's New Weekly Messenger</i>
<i>BNL</i>	<i>Belfast News-Letter</i>
<i>BS</i>	<i>Blackburn Standard</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>Belfast Telegraph</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Clonmel Herald</i>
<i>CC</i>	<i>Cork Constitution</i>
<i>CE</i>	<i>Cork Examiner</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Carlow Post</i>
<i>CT</i>	<i>Catholic Telegraph</i>
<i>CWH</i>	<i>Chutes Western Herald</i>
<i>DA</i>	<i>Drogheda Argus</i>
<i>DCJ</i>	<i>Drogheda Conservative Journal</i>
<i>DD</i>	<i>Dundalk Democrat, and People's Journal</i>
<i>DDE</i>	<i>Dublin Daily Express</i>
<i>DEM</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Mail</i>
<i>DEP</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>
<i>DEPC</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent</i>
<i>DJ</i>	<i>Drogheda Journal, or Meath &amp; Louth Advertiser</i>
<i>DM</i>	<i>Dublin Monitor</i>
<i>DMA</i>	<i>Dublin Mercantile Advertiser, and Weekly Price Current</i>
<i>DMR</i>	<i>Dublin Morning Register</i>
<i>DR</i>	<i>Downpatrick Recorder</i>
<i>DS</i>	<i>Derry Standard</i>
<i>DWN</i>	<i>Dublin Weekly Nation</i>

<i>DWR</i>	<i>Dublin Weekly Register</i>
<i>EC</i>	<i>Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet</i>
<i>EF</i>	<i>Evening Freeman</i>
<i>FJ</i>	<i>Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser</i>
<i>GJ</i>	<i>Gloucester Journal</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Hampshire Advertiser</i>
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Hereford Journal</i>
<i>IEG</i>	<i>Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette</i>
<i>IJ</i>	<i>Ipswich Journal</i>
<i>KEP</i>	<i>Kerry Evening Post</i>
<i>KG</i>	<i>Kentish Gazette</i>
<i>KJ</i>	<i>Kilkenny Journal, and Leinster Commercial and Literary Advertiser</i>
<i>LCEG</i>	<i>London Courier and Evening Gazette</i>
<i>LES</i>	<i>London Evening Standard</i>
<i>LG</i>	<i>Lancaster Gazette</i>
<i>LIN</i>	<i>London Illustrated News</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>London Standard</i>
<i>MA</i>	<i>Morning Advertiser</i>
<i>MC</i>	<i>Morning Chronicle</i>
<i>MCLGA</i>	<i>Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Morning Post</i>
<i>MPCWC</i>	<i>Meath People, and Cavan and Westmeath Chronicle</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Newcastle Courant</i>
<i>NDJ</i>	<i>North Devon Journal</i>
<i>NELA</i>	<i>Newry Examiner and Louth Advertiser</i>
<i>NG</i>	<i>Nottinghamshire Guardian</i>
<i>NS</i>	<i>Northern Standard</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>Newry Telegraph</i>
<i>PA</i>	<i>Perthshire Advertiser</i>
<i>RWM</i>	<i>Roscommon Weekly Messenger</i>
<i>SDCR</i>	<i>Statesman and Dublin Christian Record</i>
<i>SNL</i>	<i>Saunders's News-letter</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier</i>



<i>TV</i>	<i>Tipperary Vindicator</i>
<i>WC</i>	<i>Wexford Conservative</i>
<i>WDWM</i>	<i>Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail</i>
<i>WFJ</i>	<i>Weekly Freeman's Journal</i>
<i>WG</i>	<i>Westmeath Guardian</i>
<i>WM</i>	<i>Waterford Mail</i>
<i>YG</i>	<i>Yorkshire Gazette</i>

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## Introduction

We, my Reverend Brethern, are placed in a station, hemmed in by two opposite descriptions of professing Christians: the one possessing a Church without what *we* can properly call a Religion; and the other, possessing a Religion, without what *we* can properly call a Church<sup>1</sup>

The Evangelical Revival was a powerful religious movement that spread across Europe and Britain in the eighteenth century. It had its origins in German Pietism, British Puritanism and English Methodism,<sup>2</sup> and was a reaction to a perceived threat posed by ideology in the wake of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. It extended beyond geographical borders ‘from the Urals in the East to the Appalachians in the West’<sup>3</sup> and crossed religious denominations. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, it extended into Ireland.

The Evangelical Awakening was concerned with a spiritual revival within Protestantism. At first, the movement in Ireland focused on the spiritual ‘conversion’ of its members through emphasis on personal piety.<sup>4</sup> To drive this ‘conversion’, some leading Anglican churchmen embarked on large-scale efforts to re-organise and reform the Irish Church both structurally and spiritually. Prominent among these were two succeeding archbishops of Cashel, Charles Agar (1799–1801) and Charles Brodrick (1801–22), the bishop of Meath, Thomas Lewis O’Beirne (1798–1823),<sup>5</sup> and the archbishop of Dublin, William Magee (1822–31).

When Magee delivered his inaugural address to his clergy in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin on 24 October 1822, he stressed the need for internal reform in an archdiocese too long deprived of ‘effective Episcopal control’.<sup>6</sup> Declaring that the ‘discipline of this Diocese may be said to be totally neglected’, he charged his clergy to reside in their parishes, provide for the education of the youth and repair and build

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<sup>1</sup> William Magee, *A charge delivered at his primary visitation in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1822* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, 1822), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> A. R. Holmes, ‘Covenanter politics: evangelicalism, political liberalism and Ulster Presbyterians, 1798–1914’ in *The English Historical Review*, cxxv, no. 153 (2010), pp 340–69, p. 346.

<sup>3</sup> David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740–1880* (London, 1992), p. xii.

<sup>4</sup> Janice Holmes, ‘The reform of piety in Ireland, 1780–1920’ in Anders Jarlert (ed.), *Piety and modernity: the dynamics of religious reform in northern Europe, 1780–1920* (Leuven, 2012), pp 65–98, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Magee, *A charge delivered at his primary visitation*, p. 36.

churches.<sup>7</sup> When he referred to the Roman Catholic Church as ‘possessing a Church without what *we* can properly call a Religion’, he triggered a phenomenon that came to be known as the ‘Second Reformation’ in Ireland.<sup>8</sup>

### **Thesis aims and structure**

This thesis examines four decades and two distinct phases of the ‘Second Reformation’ in Ireland through a case study of Rev. Robert Winning and the Kingscourt District with which he was closely associated. The Kingscourt District defines the geographical parameters of this study; the period between 1798 and 1861 its chronological limits. The early date, 1798, is preferred as the starting point. It marks the beginning of the episcopacy of Thomas Lewis O’Beirne and his programme of reform and improvement in the Church of Ireland diocese of Meath, which left many of the Meath diocesan clergy ready for the ‘Second Reformation’ in 1822. The year 1861, and the death of Rev. Winning, is chosen as the closing date.

This thesis fills particular gaps in the historiography of the Second Reformation in Ireland. The first is the hitherto unexplored field of the ‘Protestant crusade’ in the Kingscourt District.<sup>9</sup> While some work has been done on a national level, notably by Desmond Bowen and Irene Whelan,<sup>10</sup> no research has been undertaken at the local level of north-Leinster and Ulster on the detail of this phenomenon. Though both Kingscourt and the leading proponent of the ‘Second Reformation’ there, Rev. Robert Winning, have been mentioned by historians, neither has been researched to date.<sup>11</sup>

The Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language (IS), established 1818, and the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics (ICM), established 1849, were the two evangelical societies operating in the Kingscourt District under Rev. Winning. Pádraig de Brún

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> The ‘Second Reformation’, hereafter Second Reformation.

<sup>9</sup> Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800–70* (Dublin, 1970).

<sup>10</sup> Desmond Bowen, *Souperism: myth or reality, a study in souperism* (Cork, 1970); Irene Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland: the ‘Second Reformation’ and the polarization of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800–1840* (Dublin, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Whelan, *The Bible war*, pp 172–82, 188, 235, 237, 258, 261; Pádraig de Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827* (Dublin, 2009), pp 50–4; Donald Harman Akenson, *Discovering the end of time: Irish evangelicalism in the age of Daniel O’Connell* (London, 2016) p. 219.

devotes a chapter to the Irish Society's origins in *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827*, a major database on the teachers it employed during its first nine years.<sup>12</sup> De Brún's focus was on the Irish language, and its cultivation by the Society that employed Irish-speaking scribes, poets and scholars and ends in 1827.<sup>13</sup> This thesis extends to 1853.

The Irish Church Missions (ICM) in the west of Ireland has been comprehensively covered by Miriam Moffitt in *The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950*, and *Soupers and Jumpers: The Protestant Missions in Connemara 1848–1937*.<sup>14</sup> This thesis highlights the nineteenth-century missionary ventures in Kingscourt identified by Moffitt as needing research. It further complements Moffitt's work by unravelling the connections between the IS and the ICM and locates the ICM in the heart of the IS Kingscourt mission.<sup>15</sup> It explores for the first time the consequential alliance between the two societies. It also bridges the twenty-year period from 1827, the cut-off point of de Brún's work on the Irish Society, to 1848, and the starting date of Moffitt's study on the ICM.

Chapter one establishes that it was within the larger international context of the 'Evangelical Awakening', that the 'Second Reformation' got underway in Ireland. Chapter two shows why the Kingscourt District was ripe for the introduction of one particular evangelical society, the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language in 1822. It traces the origins and growth of the IS both at national level and locally in the Kingscourt District. It introduces the key personalities and core sectors during the first three years of its existence, from 1822 to 1825.

The focus of chapter three is the emergence of the Kingscourt District and Rev. Robert Winning as influential forces within the Irish Society. The thesis dates this pivotal event to December 1825 and the promulgation of the Greaghmarogue Resolutions. The ensuing sectarian controversy necessitated the publication of a further series of resolutions in 1827, and merits a separate chapter at this point in the thesis.

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<sup>12</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v.

<sup>14</sup> Miriam Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950* (Manchester, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Moffitt notes that the Kingscourt missionary ventures had not been examined in Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions*, p. 2.



Chapter four continues with an exploration of the IS from 1822 to 1853 and identifies four key aspects of its mission: the ‘mechanical’ work, moral ‘amelioration’, missionary work, and provision of an Irish-speaking ministry. It shows that following the publication of the Greaghnaologue Resolutions, decisions made and policies introduced by the Irish Society were suggested and implemented first by Rev. Winning in the Kingscourt District. Kingscourt thus became the template for other IS districts and Rev. Winning emerged as the model superintendent.

Chapter five evaluates the Irish Society’s relationships with other evangelical societies, the Ladies’ Auxiliary to the Irish Society, the Irish Society of London, and the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics. It highlights the central role played by Rev. Alexander Robert Charles Dallas (1791–1869), vicar of Wonston, Hampshire, England, in the Irish Society’s interaction with all three bodies. It examines the alliance between the IS and the ICM that resulted in the division of the missionary work in Ireland between the two societies.

Chapters six and seven consider how the evangelical crusade of the Second Reformation affected the target group in the Kingscourt District, the Roman Catholic population. Since conversion to Protestantism was the objective, chapter six considers the subject of conversions to the Established Church in the Kingscourt District. Chapter seven investigates how the foot soldiers of the IS and the ICM, its teachers, scholars and converts, suffered at the hands of popular sectarianism engendered during the Second Reformation and questions who and what fuelled it.

The work of the IS during the Second Reformation corresponded with the Irish Roman Catholic Church’s emergence and establishment as ‘a major religious, political and social force’ in Irish life.<sup>16</sup> The Irish Church Missions’ crusade was matched by an equally vigorous religious revival within the Catholic Church and a ‘devotional revolution’ among its adherents that was to prove a powerful antidote to ultra-Protestant proselytism.<sup>17</sup> It is in this context that the Roman Catholic counter-mission in the Kingscourt District, 1822–1861, is discussed in chapter eight. The final short chapter analyses the impact of the Second Reformation on the religious denominational make-up of the area. It examines its consequences for the local

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<sup>16</sup> Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Tomás O’Riordan (eds), *Ireland 1815–1870: Emancipation, famine and religion* (Dublin, 2011), p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Ó Corráin and O’Riordan, *Ireland 1815–1870*, p. 13.

economy and its effect on the language and literary tradition of the Kingscourt District, and considers how the central character of the movement, Rev. Robert Winning, is remembered.

### **Methodology: landscape and language**

This thesis is a detailed investigation of a single phenomenon, namely the ‘Second Reformation’ in the distinctive region of north Leinster and Ulster, the Kingscourt District, under the superintendence of Rev. Robert Winning. Although the personality of Winning looms large throughout, it is not a biographical study. Evidence uncovered during close, archival research across a variety of sources, all with their biases, strengths and weaknesses, was pieced together and the gaps were filled in. The evidence was then analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively to answer the central research questions. Why was the Kingscourt District ready for the Second Reformation in 1822? Who drove the movement there? What difficulties did it encounter? Was it successful?

Although this study is embedded in a national and international context, its focus is on the origin, growth and decline of one community over six decades in time, the Kingscourt District. It looks at the dynamics of local and parish community, establishing links, familial connections and networks, and the roles played by its local leaders and pastors. It looks at the wider community of Rev. Winning’s Second Reformation evangelical mission. In this thesis, the physical and human geography and landscape of the Kingscourt District matter in terms of isolation and inaccessibility, distances, connectivity, plantation history, religious denominational make-up, language and culture. Since this thesis considers how these local factors shaped the tone and context of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District, methodologically, a local history research focus is not only justified, but essential.<sup>18</sup>

Language and terminology matter, and above all, perhaps, where history and theology intersect. This thesis pays close attention to the language employed in the

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<sup>18</sup> See Jo Guldi, ‘Landscape and place’ in Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (eds), *Research methods for history* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edinburgh, 2016), p. 77; W. G. Hoskins, *The making of an English landscape* (London, 1955); for Ulster landscape under study in this thesis, see Estyn E. Evans, *Mourne country: landscape and life in south Down* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., Dundalk, 1989); Raymond Gillespie, ‘An historian and the locality’ in Raymond Gillespie and Myrtle Hill, *Doing Irish local history* (Belfast, 1998); Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran, *‘A various country’: essays in Mayo history 1500–1900* (Westport, 1987), pp 11–23; P. J. Duffy, *Landscapes of south Ulster* (Belfast, 1993).

documentary evidence, being cognisant that nineteenth-century religious protagonists created their own story in their own words. The nuanced difference between the language in which the writers clothed their concepts and contemporary understanding of the language is encountered repeatedly and needs respectful handling. As Donald Harman Akenson pointed out in *Discovering the end of time* (2016), ‘the definition of words has been so important in the development of Christianity,’ that ‘entire communities have been wiped out for getting the words of a creed wrong’.<sup>19</sup> Jacinta Prunty encountered similar language issues in her recent work, *The monasteries, magdalen asylums and reformatory schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland* (2017).<sup>20</sup>

The terms employed most often in this study are ‘evangelical’ and ‘evangelicalism’, proselytism, ‘convert’ and ‘popery’. ‘Evangelicalism’ comes from the Greek, *euangelion*, meaning the good news, or the gospel. This thesis employs Bebbington’s definition of the terms.<sup>21</sup> Akenson also uses the same understanding for individuals and ‘their institutional affiliation’,<sup>22</sup> in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Proselytism, from the Latin *proselytus* and Greek *prosēlytos*, meaning new ‘convert’, was how attempts to convert the Irish Roman Catholic population to scriptural Protestantism were described.<sup>23</sup> ‘Popery’ was a deliberately offensive term used by evangelicals of Roman Catholicism.

Personal and statistical data embedded in original manuscripts and across published reports is collated and presented in tabular format. A number of original manuscripts, too long for inclusion in the body of the thesis but invaluable to further research, are transcribed and included as Appendices.

## Primary sources

The social scientist, John Scott, in *A matter of record: documentary sources in social research* has identified four criteria for assessing all primary and secondary sources:

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<sup>19</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Jacinta Prunty, *The monasteries, magdalen asylums and reformatory schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), pp 52–3

<sup>21</sup> Bebbington’s criteria were: biblicism, crucicentrism, conversion and activism, David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Boston, 1989).

<sup>22</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, pp 11–14.

<sup>23</sup> See Eileen O’Byrne, *The convert rolls* (Dublin, 1981).

authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.<sup>24</sup> The application of Scott's theory is especially necessary in this thesis where the widely-reported successes of the Second Reformation need to be balanced by the equally vigorous counter-claims of Catholics that the movement had little effect.

The internally-produced manuscripts and printed reports of Irish Society and Irish Church Missions are the most significant resources for this research. The surviving manuscript minute books of the IS are held in Trinity College, Dublin, and ICM, Bachelor's Walk, Dublin.<sup>25</sup> The most assiduous period of record keeping was from 1818 to 1827 when the Society was still small and every detail of its activity was recorded in one manuscript.<sup>26</sup> As the Society expanded from 17 August 1827, separate account books<sup>27</sup> and letter books were created; sub-committees were formed which had their own minute books. Regrettably, these three latter records are no longer extant. The education subcommittee printed rules and directions for its key personnel that survive. These include directions for schoolmasters,<sup>28</sup> application forms for claiming payment for teaching Irish and instructions for its circulating masters<sup>29</sup> and superintendents.<sup>30</sup>

The Society's printed annual reports from 1819 until 1853 provide statistical and anecdotal information on its operations from around the districts in Ireland.<sup>31</sup> A small number of printed periodicals and quarterly reports contain longer and more detailed letters and correspondence. Although invaluable as resources, these have several limitations. Statistics concerning numbers of districts, teachers, schools and scholars in Ireland were not presented in a consistent or identifiable format between 1819 and 1830. While the data is very full from 1830 to 1853, yet, even within that time range, comparison across any one sector is difficult due to the variations in data layout and in the categories of information recorded. The reports followed a format

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<sup>24</sup> John Scott, *A matter of record: documentary sources in social research* (Cambridge, 1990), pp 1–2.

<sup>25</sup> The minutes' books for Irish Society meetings from June 1818 to Oct. 1832, (TCD, MS 7644, MS 7645) are in Trinity College, Dublin; the minutes' books from 4 Oct. 1832 to July 1848 are in Irish Church Missions, Bachelor's Walk, Dublin (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, MS ICM/0183); the minutes' books from 13 Mar. 1851 until the end of the study period for the Kingscourt District are held in Trinity College (TCD, MS 7646, MS 7647).

<sup>26</sup> Irish Society minutes' books (TCD, MSS 7644–5).

<sup>27</sup> The annual printed reports for 1854, 1855 and 1856, three pivotal years for the Kingscourt District as argued in this thesis, have not been discovered to date in any repository, probably extant.

<sup>28</sup> IS meeting, 8 Aug. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 156 (b), p. 157 (a)).

<sup>29</sup> IS meeting, 4 Feb. 1825 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 20 (b)).

<sup>30</sup> IS meeting, 8 Apr. 1825 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 28 ((a)–(b)).

<sup>31</sup> Copies of the IS annual reports, 1819–53, and some quarterly reports are preserved in the Halliday Collection in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

used by other missionary societies at the time and were partisan in nature. They highlighted the Society's success and the zealotry of its teachers. They emphasised the resultant 'moral amelioration' of the population and the expectation that much more could be achieved if greater financial resources were available.

The fullest description of the Kingscourt District and its Irish Society schools is that given by Thomas Russell, the district's chief inspector to the Commissioners of Education Enquiry in December 1834.<sup>32</sup> The annual reports of the Ladies' Association, Auxiliary to the Irish Society (LAIS)<sup>33</sup> demonstrate the national and international network of benefactors that supported the IS and include names, addresses, donations and subscriptions.

Rev. Winning and the Kingscourt District came under the umbrella of the ICM in 1853. The ICM archives are held in Bachelor's Walk, Dublin.<sup>34</sup> The leaves of its minute books are interspersed with letters from Rev. Alexander Dallas, its founder, and from other correspondents.<sup>35</sup> The annual agency books, 1856–69, detail the names of Mission personnel, superintendents, inspectors, Scripture Readers and teachers, and the wages each received per month. The 1868 agency book records Kingscourt's closure in April.<sup>36</sup> The complete annual printed reports are also available separately and include accounts from selected Missions Stations, Kingscourt's among them, from 1857 to 1861. These are augmented by abstracts of Winning's reports to the ICM published in its monthly journal, *The Banner of the Truth in Ireland and Erin's Hope*.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Russell's account of the Kingscourt District, 'Extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of Education Enquiry' from copy (RIA, OS Memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan (edited version in Angélique Day and Patrick McWilliams (eds), *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* 40 (Belfast and Dublin, 1998), pp 26–9.

<sup>33</sup> Ladies Association, Auxiliary to the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish, through the Medium of their own Language, 1826, appendix v of above Irish Society document.

<sup>34</sup> Miriam Moffitt has catalogued some of the ICM material in an appendix to her PhD study, 'The Society for Irish Church Missions', pp 291–300, however, a wealth of material remains uncatalogued.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Irish Church Missions' meeting, 19 Dec. 1856, minute no. 2439 regarding 'statement paper' has the report for 1856 pasted onto the same page; minute no. 2448 is followed by a printed letter from Rev. Alexander Dallas from Wonston Rectory, Dec. 1853; minute no. 2449 which discussed Archdeacon Wigram's letter to the ICM and decided to print it for circulation is pasted on to the page following the resolution.

<sup>36</sup> ICM, Mission Department, Agency Book, 1868 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0013, p. 68).

<sup>37</sup> *The Banner of the Truth in Ireland, monthly journal concerning the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholic; Erin's Hope; Ireland's Juvenile Magazine; Priests' Protection Society*

## Private papers

Some of the evangelical benefactors who sponsored the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District were wealthy Protestant landowners who had the influence to drive the movement among tenants on their estates. The Tisdall private papers contain a series of pamphlets exchanged between the Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Michael Branagan, and the local landlord, Charles A. Tisdall, over the proselytising nature of Tisdall's estate school in Ardraccon County Meath.<sup>38</sup> These documents, held privately in Ascot, England, provide an early example of the 'pamphlet war' during the Protestant crusade in the Kingscourt District in the 1820s. They portray in vivid detail the reality of the tensions and antagonism experienced at local level.<sup>39</sup>

The personal correspondence between Lord and Lady Farnham include compelling evidence of the religious philosophy that permeated the lives of this evangelical family. They also preserve a detailed list of converts alleged to have converted in Cavan town in 1826/7. The Farnham private papers are divided between the Public Record House of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and the National Library of Ireland (NLI), Dublin.

The central importance of the Second Reformation on the evangelical Shirley family's Irish estate in Farney, County Monaghan, is witnessed by the survival of several Irish Society inspectors' diaries from the 1830s. Farney was part of the Kingscourt District. One IS diary contains the names, addresses and comments on thirty-four IS teachers, information not available elsewhere. A separate document gives the names and addresses of ninety ICM scholars on the estate in 1856 and displays the continuance of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District under two different evangelical societies. The Shirley papers in Warwickshire County Record Office, England, also show how Shirley's influence extended among his evangelical network to Leamington Spa near his ancestral home in Ettingham, England, where a branch of the Irish Society, London, was established.<sup>40</sup>

Rev. Robert Winning, the central personality in this thesis, left no private papers. This lack is overcome somewhat by research across a wide variety of

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<sup>38</sup> Letters from Charles A. Tisdall to Rev. Michael Branagan 1823, in possession of Anthony Tisdall, Beech House, London Road, Ascot Berkshire, SL5 7EH.

<sup>39</sup> Charles A. Tisdall, *To the congregation of Cortown Chapel* (Dublin, 1823), pp 29–43; Charles A. Tisdall to Rev. Michael Branagan, in private possession.

<sup>40</sup> Irish Society papers: papers [concerning the Leamington branch of the Irish Society of London](#), 1837–1839 (WRO, CR1567/54, box 16/2).

disparate sources, some of which are described above. Minimum biographical detail on his birth-place, his father's name and occupation and his university education is available in Glasgow University.<sup>41</sup> Evidence that he was 'licenced Tyrone presbytery 1810', 'able to preach in Irish' and appointed to Ervey and Carrickmaclim congregations in 1812 survives in the Presbyterian *Fasti*.<sup>42</sup> The records of the Registry of Deeds, Henrietta Street, Dublin show that he inherited family property.<sup>43</sup> His brother William's will in The National Archives in Kew details £30 lent to buy a gig.<sup>44</sup> Rev. Winning was Moderator of the Synod of Ulster in 1830 and attended all synods except one in 1839.<sup>45</sup> His 'successful exertions in connexion with the Irish Society' were acknowledged at the 1834 synod.<sup>46</sup> Winning conformed to the Established Church in 1842. He was ordained and appointed Church of Ireland rector in Kingscourt in 1843. By 1858, he held a considerable number of tenements in Kingscourt as well as small farms in the vicinity, detailed in the Primary Valuation of Ireland.<sup>47</sup>

Rev. Winning's life is visible almost exclusively through his work for the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions in what might be best described as memoirs or witness statements. He is seen through the eyes of two founding members of the Irish Society, Robert Daly (1783–1872),<sup>48</sup> and Monck Mason (1778–1858),<sup>49</sup> both of whom underline the pivotal role he played in the Society. Rev. Winning's son-in-law, curate and Irish Church Missions' missionary colleague, Rev. Hugh Gelston,<sup>50</sup> highlighted Winning's evangelical zeal for the ICM.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Addison, W. Innes, *The matriculation albums of the University of Glasgow, from 1728 to 1858* (Glasgow, 1913), p. 209; Addison, W. Innes, *A roll of the graduates of the University of Glasgow from 31st December 1727 to 31st December 1897* (Glasgow, 1898), 656, p. 209, entry 6625, A.D. 1804.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Winning, James McConnell (ed.), revised by S. G. McConnell, arranged by F. J. Faul and David Stewart, *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church, 1613–1840* (Belfast, 1951), entry no. 1,014.

<sup>43</sup> William Winning to William Holmes concerning property in Coagh that Rev. Robert Winning had inherited (RD, 1838-9-46).

<sup>44</sup> Will of William Winning, Prerogative Court of Canterbury (TNA, PROB 11/1618/321).

<sup>45</sup> PHSI, *A history of congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1610–1982* (Belfast, 1982), pp 345–6.

<sup>46</sup> *Report of the Presbyterian missionary Society for Ireland, in connexion with the general synod of Ulster, presented to the Synod at its annual meeting in Cookstown, June, 1833* (Belfast, 1833), p. 19.

<sup>47</sup> The Primary Valuation of Ireland, commonly called Griffiths' Valuation is fully searchable online (<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>).

<sup>48</sup> Mrs Hamilton Madden, *Memoir of the Right Rev. Robert Daly, D.D., Lord Bishop of Cashel* (London, 1875).

<sup>49</sup> Henry Joseph Monck Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish society, established for promoting the education of the native Irish, through the medium of their own language* (Dublin, 1846).

<sup>50</sup> ICM, Mission Department, Agency Book, 1861 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0006), p. 165.

## Church records

Rev. Winning's Kingscourt District of the Irish Society extended into the eight dioceses of the archdiocese of Armagh. The surviving Catholic Church records are meagre. The papers of the nineteenth-century Meath bishops are no longer extant and the best available substitute is Anthony Cogan's three-volume diocesan history.<sup>52</sup> Letters concerning the Clogher bishops, James Murphy (1783–1823)<sup>53</sup> and Edward Kernan (1824–44),<sup>54</sup> and material pertaining to building projects in the diocese<sup>55</sup> are preserved in the Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library and Archives in Armagh. Although the archdiocese of Dublin is outside the scope of this study, the correspondence of bishops and priests to Daniel Murray (1823–52), John Hamilton (1800–62) and Paul Cullen (1852–78) in the Dublin Diocesan Archives pertaining to proselytism are most relevant of all.<sup>56</sup>

The Presbyterian publication, *A history of congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1610–1982*, is essential to understanding its structure, presbyteries and congregations.<sup>57</sup> The reports of the annual Synod of Ulster record Rev. Winning's attendance and include speeches he delivered at these annual general meetings. They are held in the Presbyterian Historical Society's archives in Belfast.

## Records of central government

The parliamentary papers of Great Britain and Ireland are one of the most essential and comprehensive sources for the study of Irish social, political and economic history in the nineteenth century, both at local and national level. *The first report of*

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<sup>51</sup> ICM, *Twelfth annual report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics (with which is incorporated the late Irish Society of London), read at the annual meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1861* (London, 1861), pp 88–9.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony Cogan, *The diocese of Meath, ancient and modern*, (3 vols, reprint, Dublin, 1992 of 1867).

<sup>53</sup> Eighty letters concerning James Murphy, 1783–1823, including his administration as bishop of Clogher (Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library & Archive, DIORC/1/4).

<sup>54</sup> Eighty-five letters concerning Edward Kernan, including his administration as bishop of Clogher, 1772–1847 (Cardinal Ó Fiaich Memorial Library & Archive, DIORC/1/5).

<sup>55</sup> Thirty-eight letters, architects' plans, account book, and receipts pertaining to building projects in the diocese of Clogher, including the diocesan seminary at Monaghan (Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library & Archive, DIORC 1/7).

<sup>56</sup> For example of Meath diocesan clergy's involvement of politics, see Nicholas McEvoy, parish priest, Kells to Paul Cullen, 19 Jan. 1853, inviting Cullen to a meeting on religious equality in Navan on 21 Jan. 1853, emphasising that the meeting had been originally called to deal with recent proselytism in Kells (DDA, CU 353/8/9).

<sup>57</sup> PHSI, *A history of congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1610–1982* (Belfast, 1982).



*the commissioners on education in Ireland* in 1825 enquired into the nature and extent of the instruction afforded by the various institutions in Ireland established for education purposes.<sup>58</sup> The question and answer examination under oath of Henry Monck Mason, secretary of the IS, covers the Society's work in Ireland and in Kingscourt. The appendix to the report details the Society's schools operating at the time.<sup>59</sup> *The second report of the commissioners*, 16 September 1826, is equally valuable.<sup>60</sup> *The first report of the commissioners of public instruction, Ireland* of 1835 contains replies from the clergy of the denominational churches regarding education in their parishes.<sup>61</sup> The 1834 and 1861 census material allows for a comparative study of religious denominational strength at two distinct moments in time and is used to assess the success of the 'Second Reformation' to convert Catholics to Protestantism.<sup>62</sup> The population explosion in Ireland pre-Famine and the resultant sub-division of land often went hand-in-hand with poverty and misery, which in turn led to immorality and crime. The Devon Commission inquired on the occupancy of land in Ireland.<sup>63</sup> The reports on public order, crime and outrage, the Orange Order and its lodges,<sup>64</sup> and murders committed<sup>65</sup> are used to investigate other contributory reasons for the persecution of Irish Society teachers in the Kingscourt District.

These parliamentary resources are complemented by the Outrage Reports and reports of petty crimes settled in the Petty Sessions courts from 1828 held in the National Archives of Ireland. Serious crimes were tried at the Assize courts and the Cavan Assize Book 1809–1851 is preserved in the Johnston Library, Cavan. The National school records are also held in the National Archives of Ireland. These identify when initial applications for grants to establish schools were made, when

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<sup>58</sup> *The first report of the Commissioners on Education in Ireland*, HC 1825 (400), xii. 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 742–8.

<sup>60</sup> *The second report of the commissioners of education inquiry*, HC 1826–7 (12), xii.1.

<sup>61</sup> *First report of the commissioners of public instruction, Ireland*, HC 1835 [45] [46] [47], xxxiii.1 829, xxxiv.1.

<sup>62</sup> *Enumeration abstracts of number of inhabitants in Ireland, 1841, 1851 and 1861; religious profession, 1861; number of houses and families, 1841, 1851 and 1861* Command papers [C 2865], HC 1861, 1, 1 885. xxx.

<sup>63</sup> *Royal commission of inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland, report; minutes of evidence, part I* [605] [606], HC 1845, xix.1, 57, 929.

<sup>64</sup> *Report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange lodges, associations or societies in Ireland*, HC 1835 (475) (476), xv.501, xv.1, appendix A, 294.

<sup>65</sup> *A return of all murders that have been committed in Ireland since the 1st day of January 1842, specifying the county and the barony of the county where such murder had been committed, the name and condition of the person so murdered* HC 1846 (220) xxxv.293.

existing schools ‘came under’ the jurisdiction of the Board and when new national schools were opened. They contain names of patrons, teachers and inspectors; some contain valuable abstracts of inspector’s reports. They are essential to appreciating the state of the educational opportunities existing in Rev. Robert Winning’s Kingscourt District in the first half of the nineteenth century when he established his scriptural schools.

Many of the Irish Society personnel in the Kingscourt District, including Rev. Winning, were tenant farmers. The Tithe applotment books (1823–38) recorded the names and addresses and size of taxable land holdings. It is easy to identify where the concentration of IS teachers named in IS minute books were located. A later survey, the Primary Valuation of Ireland, Griffith’s Valuation (1848–64), provides information on where people lived and the property they occupied or possessed at the time of the survey. Together with the tithe records these allow individuals and families to be exactly located.

## **Newspapers**

The annual reports of the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions were delivered orally at their anniversary meetings. The societies employed newspapers to report on the proceedings in their efforts to promote their missions. These extensive newspaper accounts contain greater detail than the Societies’ printed reports. They gave the names of the dignitaries on the platform, and those who proposed and seconded resolutions. In many instances, they quoted *verbatim* some of the speeches. The Roman Catholic opposition was equally prolific in using newspapers in its counter-attack. A wide-ranging spread of local, provincial, national and international newspapers supplement sources for this thesis and, in many instances, these contain the only information available. While they add colour and vibrancy to otherwise dry arid sources, cognisance is taken of bias and exaggeration, and Marie-Louise Legg’s advice to treat them with caution is heeded.<sup>66</sup> However, the problem can be lessened by using sources from both sides of the debate.

Kingscourt was on the evangelical tourist trail from the mid-1820s. Two travel writers wrote accounts of the district during the period of this study and

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<sup>66</sup> Marie-Louise Legg, *Newspapers and nationalism: the Irish provincial press 1850–1892* (Dublin, 1999), p. 1.

described the work of Rev. Winning and the Irish Society schools. Other visitors included reports in their published memoirs.<sup>67</sup> While undoubtedly written with a specific agenda in mind, all provide insight into the Irish Society's operations, and the prevailing economic, social, cultural, and religious contexts, both local and national.

## Literature review

The gospel calls on all who term themselves Christian, to evangelise,<sup>68</sup> and most Christian denominations have organisations expressly devoted to missionary work. In 1792, Baptist minister, William Carey, set out to prove that the obligation on Christians to 'Go teach all nations' was as binding in the late eighteenth century as it was at the time of Christ. Carey's foundational text, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the Heathen*,<sup>69</sup> provided a template for all missionary societies to follow. David Bosch's comprehensive work, *Transforming mission: paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, shows that the Christian faith is inherently missionary. It traces the development of mission concepts and shows how the understanding and practice of Christian mission have shifted over the centuries.<sup>70</sup>

A wealth of recent scholarship sets out the larger historiographical context for this study. The first eleven chapters of Jacqueline Hill's and Mary Ann Lyons' *Representing Irish religious histories: historiography, ideology and practice* (2017) cover topics as diverse as confessional rivalry and church-building, religious practice and preaching. The use of the Irish language to further the objectives of Bible Societies is a particularly useful study.<sup>71</sup> Mark Empey, Alan Ford and Miriam Moffitt (eds), *The Church of Ireland and its past history, interpretation and identity*

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<sup>67</sup> James Glassford, *Notes on three tours in Ireland in 1824 and 1826* (Bristol, 1832); Baptist Wriothlesley Noel, *Notes of a short tour through the midland counties of Ireland in the summer of 1836 with observations on the condition of the peasantry* (London, 1837); Mrs Hamilton Madden, *Memoir of the late Right Rev. Robert Daly, D.D., Lord Bishop of Cashel* (London, 1875), pp 42–51.

<sup>68</sup> [Matthew 23:15](#); [Acts 2:11](#); [6:5](#).

<sup>69</sup> William Carey, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the Heathen, in which the religious state of the different nations of the world, the success of former undertakings, and the practicability of further undertakings are considered* (Leicester, 1792).

<sup>70</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming mission: paradigm shifts in theology of mission* (New York, 1992).

<sup>71</sup> Jacqueline Hill and Mary Ann Lyons (eds), *Representing Irish religious histories: historiography, ideology and practice* (London, 2107); Barbara McCormack, 'Using the Irish language to further the aims of Bible Societies: an analysis of Irish Bibles in the Russell Library, Maynooth' in Hill and Lyons (eds) *Representing Irish religious histories*, pp 165–80.

(2017) contributes to an understanding of the Church of Ireland since the Reformation.<sup>72</sup>

The theology that underpinned the ‘Second Reformation’ in Ireland was evangelicalism. It pervaded all aspects of life. The subject has received attention, most notably in David Bebbington’s scholarly work, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s*. Bebbington identifies evangelicalism as quadrilateral: biblicism, crucicentrism, conversion and activism, and shows how it adapts to suit the needs of each era.<sup>73</sup>

The millennial eschatology of evangelicals drove their mission for their own conversion and the conversion of others. Premillennialists believed that Christ would physically return to earth before the millennium; postmillennialists believed that the Second Coming would occur after the millennium. Millennialism is discussed from different perspectives in Crawford Gribben and Andrew Holmes (eds) *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society 1790–2005*.<sup>74</sup> The millennialism of the 1820s and 1830s is investigated in Donald Harman Akenson’s recent publication, *Discovering the end of time: Irish evangelicals in the age of Daniel O’Connell*. The book deals mainly with John Nelson Darby (1800–82), connected with the Plymouth Brethren, ‘one of the dominant religious influences of evangelical thought’.<sup>75</sup> Akenson’s theory that ‘Dalyland’ centred on the world of the evangelical Robert Daly (1783–1872) is a key concept used in this thesis.

Robert Winning (c.1791–1861) was born an Ulster Presbyterian during the period when a new evangelical awakening had reached Ireland. The recognised standard work on Ulster evangelicalism is Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740–1890* published in 1992.<sup>76</sup> Ulster Presbyterian evangelicalism is explored comprehensively in Andrew Holmes’ 2006 work, *The shaping of Ulster Presbyterian belief and practice, 1770–1840*.<sup>77</sup> Holmes examines Presbyterian millennial thought in ‘Millennialism and the interpretation of prophecy

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<sup>72</sup> Mark Empey, Alan Ford & Miriam Moffitt (eds), *The Church of Ireland and its past history, interpretation and identity* (Dublin, 2017).

<sup>73</sup> David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Boston, 1989).

<sup>74</sup> Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Holmes (eds), *Protestant millennialism and Irish Society, 1790–2005* (Basingstoke, United Kingdom, 2006).

<sup>75</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*.

<sup>76</sup> David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740–1890* (London, 1992).

<sup>77</sup> A. R. Holmes, *The shaping of Ulster Presbyterian belief and practice, 1770–1840* (Oxford, 2006).<sup>77</sup>

in Ulster Presbyterianism, 1790–1850’.<sup>78</sup> One Ulster Presbyterian contemporary of Robert Winning’s saw no reason to suppose that Christ would ‘literally live on earth again’; ‘there is no sort of probability that the youngest of us will ever live to see the millennium.’<sup>79</sup>

This thesis shows that geography matters. It highlights Kingscourt District’s close identification with the Oriel District of north Leinster and Ulster in terms of denominational structure and cultural make-up. The region is well served by respected historical society journals: *Breifne*, Cavan, *Clogher*, Monaghan and Tyrone, *Creggan*, *Louth*, *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, Armagh, *Ríocht na Midhe*, Meath and Westmeath and *The Bell*, Tyrone. The journals contain many scholarly essays on the local scribes and scholars, agrarian unrest and sectarian tensions useful to this research.

Nothing has been written on Kingscourt apart from some local general works.<sup>80</sup> An undated sketch, ‘Church of Ireland historical sketches of St David’s Church, Syddan and St Ernan’s Church, Kingscourt’, focuses on the Church of Ireland parish of Kingscourt, its churches and ministers. It provides some local detail on Rev. Winning preserved in the oral tradition of the parish not available elsewhere. Rev. Brian Savage’s short, unpublished ‘Spotlight on Ervey’ is the most valuable local resource. Compiled for his Presbyterian congregation in Ervey c. 2010, Savage analysed Winning’s resignation from Presbyterianism to the Established Church from his perspective as Winning’s successor in Ervey.<sup>81</sup>

The Second Reformation in Ireland and the religious controversy during the period is investigated in Desmond Bowen’s foundational study, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland 1800–70* (Dublin, 1978).<sup>82</sup> Bowen’s *Souperism: myth or reality, a study in souperism* (Cork, 1970), examines the efforts of evangelical Protestant proselytizers during the Famine in the west and south of Ireland.<sup>83</sup> Irene Whelan’s major work, *The Bible war in Ireland: the ‘Second Reformation’ and the polarization*

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<sup>78</sup> Andrew Holmes, ‘Millennialism and the interpretation of prophecy in Ulster Presbyterianism, 1790–1850’ in Crawford Gribben and T. C. F. Stunt (eds), *Prisoners of hope?: aspects of evangelical millennialism in Scotland and Ireland, 1800–1890* (Carlisle, 2005), pp 150–76.

<sup>79</sup> Rev. Mr [–], ‘On the millenium’ in *Presbyterian Penny Magazine*, i, no. 5 (Belfast, Sept. 1835).

<sup>80</sup> John Gilmore, *Kingscourt, a history* (Kingscourt, 2012); Venerable Archdeacon Corrigan (ed.), ‘Church of Ireland historical sketches of St David’s Church, Syddan and St Ernan’s Church, Kingscourt’ (Kingscourt, n. d. c. 1980) are general studies.

<sup>81</sup> Brian Savage, ‘Ervey in the spotlight’ (Kingscourt, n. d. c. 2010), in private possession.

<sup>82</sup> Desmond Bowen, *Protestant crusade*.

<sup>83</sup> Bowen, *Souperism: myth or reality*.

*of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800–1840* (2005) provides an overview of the Second Reformation pre-Famine. Whelan correctly identifies Kingscourt as ‘the mecca of the Reformation movement’,<sup>84</sup> and the prototype of the movement in operation at the local level.

Whelan incorrectly credits the fifth Baron Farnham, John Maxwell (1767–1838), and his ‘moral agent’ William Krause with the success of the Kingscourt mission.<sup>85</sup> Kingscourt was not on the Farnham estate. The Pratts were the Kingscourt landlords from the end of the seventeenth century. However, since many commentators, including Whelan and Akenson, have argued mistakenly that the Second Reformation began on the Farnham estate in Kingscourt, it is perhaps appropriate to set the record straight at this juncture. Rev. Winning’s and the Irish Society’s evangelical work began in 1822 and was centred on Nobber in north Meath. The largest landlords in north Meath were the Roman Catholic Viscount Gormanston, the marquess of Headfort, Kells and Thomas Cherbourg Bligh (c.1761–1830) of Brittas. Bligh was a son of Robert Bligh, Anglican dean of Elphin. Robert Jocelyn (1788–1870), the third earl of Roden, was Bligh’s nephew. Bligh’s nieces, Frances Theodosia Jocelyn, and Theodosia Howard, both married Richard Wingfield (1790–1823), the fifth Viscount Powerscourt.<sup>86</sup> Members of the Jocelyn and Wingfield families were heavily involved in the Evangelical Awakening that preceded the Second Reformation in Ireland.<sup>87</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Bligh of Brittas was involved in evangelical work. Rev. Winning was not connected with the Farnham family; a trawl of the Farnham private papers confirms this. It was through his involvement with the Irish Society that he became acquainted with Rev. Robert Daly, Lady Farnham’s nephew. Whelan’s placing of Kingscourt on the Farnham Estate has been used by Akenson, making this misunderstanding more difficult to dislodge.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*, p. 173.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 173–4.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Cherbourg Bligh’s sister, Frances Theodosia Bligh, married the second earl of Roden, and was mother of Robert Jocelyn, the third earl of Roden. Bligh’s niece, and the third earl of Roden’s sister, Frances Theodosia Jocelyn (1795–1820), married Richard Wingfield, the fifth Viscount Powerscourt, and became Lady Powerscourt. On the death of Frances Theodosia, the fifth Viscount Powerscourt married her younger cousin, Theodosia Howard, daughter of Thomas Cherbourg Bligh’s sister, Catherine Bligh.

<sup>87</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 19.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

The major study to date on the Irish Society is Pádraig de Brún's, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827*.<sup>89</sup> His detailed annotations are invaluable. The more aggressive evangelical and proselytising society during the Second Reformation was the Irish Church Missions. The most important scholarship on this is Miriam Moffitt's, *The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950*, and her earlier publication, *Soupers and Jumpers: The Protestant Missions in Connemara 1848–1937*.<sup>90</sup> Moffitt's focus is on the ICM in the west of Ireland for ninety years from 1848. This study's spotlight is on a different geographical region, over a shorter time-frame, 1853 to 1868, which facilitates comparison and contrast.<sup>91</sup> Moffitt credits Lord Farnham with establishing a mission colony on his Kingscourt estate.<sup>92</sup> It was Winning's regret that one had never been established, and he laid the blame on the indifference of the local Protestant landlords.

Religious conversion and activism were two integral elements of evangelical theology. Evangelical Protestants were committed to striving for their own personal conversion and the conversion of others during the 'Second Reformation'. Lewis Rambo in *Understanding religious conversion* explores seven stages in the dynamics of conversion and is essential reading for appreciating the complex motives of converts in the Kingscourt District considered in chapter six.<sup>93</sup> Also relevant is Andrew Holmes, 'Personal conversion, revival, and the Holy Spirit: Presbyterian evangelicalism in early nineteenth-century Ulster'.<sup>94</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church's response to the Second Reformation was a religious revival within its own church. The nineteenth century saw the emergence of the Irish Catholic Church as a significant force in religious, political, economic and social life in Ireland. Kingscourt District was in the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Armagh. Ambrose Macauley, *William Crolly, archbishop of Armagh, 1835–49*,<sup>95</sup> and

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<sup>89</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*.

<sup>90</sup> Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions*.

<sup>91</sup> Miriam Moffitt, *Soupers and Jumpers: The Protestant Missions in Connemara, 1848–1937* (Dublin, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions*, p. 56

<sup>93</sup> Lewis Rambo, *Understanding religious conversion* (Yale, 1992).

<sup>94</sup> Andrew Holmes, 'Personal conversion, revival, and the Holy Spirit: Presbyterian evangelicalism in early nineteenth-century Ulster' in J. Coffey (ed.), *Heart religion: evangelical piety in England and Ireland, 1690–1850* (Oxford, 2016), pp 181–201.

<sup>95</sup> Ambrose Macauley, *William Crolly, archbishop of Armagh, 1835–49* (Dublin, 1994).

Paul Connell, *The diocese of Meath under Bishop John Cantwell 1830–66*,<sup>96</sup> explore the lives of two ecclesiastical personalities central to this study. They show that Croll and Cantwell combined the dual roles of spiritual and political leaders at national as well as diocesan level.

This thesis agrees with Desmond Keenan and Emmet Larkin that the revival of the Irish Roman Catholic Church began in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and with Keenan's argument that it was consolidated in the second half.<sup>97</sup> Larkin places the 'beginnings' of revival to the early date of 1825 and the parish missions, 'The beginnings of the devotional revolution in Ireland: the parish mission movement, 1825–1846'.<sup>98</sup> Larkin's earlier work attributed the 'devotional revolution' of the Catholic laity to Cardinal Paul Cullen (1852–78) and his efforts post Synod of Thurles 1850.<sup>99</sup> Thomas McGrath contributed to the Larkin debate on the 'devotional revolution'. In 'The Tridentine evolution of modern Irish Catholicism: a re-examination of the 'Devotional Revolution' thesis', he purports that the process towards modern Catholicism was gradual, an argument that this thesis also upholds.<sup>100</sup>

The decline of the Irish language from the mid-eighteenth century to mid-nineteenth is well analysed in Garret Fitzgerald's paper 'Estimates for baronies of minimum level of Irish-speaking amongst successive decennial cohorts: 1771–1781 to 1861–1871'.<sup>101</sup> The most relevant secondary sources on the decline of the Irish language and culture in the Kingscourt District were the various local histories on the distinct Oriel district. Most useful were Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin's, *A hidden Ulster*, especially the first chapter which focuses on the decline of the Irish language in

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<sup>96</sup> Paul Connell, *The diocese of Meath under Bishop John Cantwell 1830–66* (Dublin, 2004).

<sup>97</sup> Desmond Keenan, *The Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland: a sociological study* (Dublin, 1983).

<sup>98</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'The beginnings of the devotional revolution in Ireland: the parish mission movement, 1825–1846' in *New Hibernia Review*, xviii, no. 1, *Spring/Earrach* (2014), pp 74–92.

<sup>99</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75' in *American Historical Review*, lxxvii, no. 3 (1972), pp 625–52, pp 639–40, 644; Emmet Larkin, *The historical dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington, 1984).

<sup>100</sup> Thomas McGrath, 'The Tridentine evolution of modern Irish Catholicism: a re-examination of the 'Devotional Revolution' thesis' in Réamonn Ó Muirí (ed.), *Irish Church history today* (Armagh, Cumann Seanchais Ard Mhacha, 1991), pp 84–99.

<sup>101</sup> Garret Fitzgerald, 'Estimates for baronies of minimum level of Irish-speaking amongst successive decennial cohorts: 1771–1781 to 1861–1871' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: archaeology, culture, history, literature*, lxxxivC (1984), pp 117–55.



south Armagh,<sup>102</sup> and Fionntán de Brún's, *The Fadgies*, Irish-speaking migrants who departed Omeath for Belfast.<sup>103</sup>

This thesis is a close and detailed study of evangelicalism in action. While it may appear to be an intimate local analysis of one particular person and place during the period in Ireland known as the Second Reformation, it is grounded in the national and international evangelical movement of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The thesis considers the factors in the Kingscourt District that left it ripe for the agency of the Irish Society in 1822. It identifies the publication of the Greaghnarogue Resolutions of December 1825 as the catapult that projected Rev. Robert Winning and the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District on to the national and international stage. It analyses aspects of the Society's mission from 1822 to 1853 to uncover the reasons behind its increasing reliance on Rev. Winning and Kingscourt, post-Greaghnarogue, to drive initiatives and proffer solutions to difficulties. It investigates the Irish Society's relationship with other evangelical societies, including its alliance with Irish Church Missions. It questions why and by whom it was decided to hand the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District over to the Irish Church Missions in 1853. It assesses the success of the evangelical societies in securing the conversion of the Roman Catholics and highlights the religious controversy that resulted. The thesis explores the measures adopted by the Roman Catholic Church to counter the proselytising efforts of evangelical missionary societies in the 'battle for souls'. The final chapter examines the legacy of the Second Reformation and that of its evangelical promoter in the Kingscourt District, Rev. Robert Winning.

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<sup>102</sup> Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster: people, songs and traditions of Oriel* (Dublin, 2003).

<sup>103</sup> Fionntán de Brún, *The Fadgies: 'an Irish-speaking colony' in nineteenth-century Belfast* (Dublin, 2006).

## Chapter 1

### From the 'Evangelical Awakening' to the 'Second Reformation', 1800 to 1823

'No outbreak of missionary zeal, unless it be the Jesuit mission of the late sixteenth century, has ever paralleled the missionary developments resulting from the Evangelical Awakening between 1790 and 1820'<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

Rev. Robert Winning's missionary undertaking in the Kingscourt District of north-Leinster and Ulster in Ireland, although a local mission with specific geographical parameters and a definite chronology, was not an isolated, stand-alone occurrence. It occurred in the context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries transnational religious Evangelical Awakening. The Evangelical Awakening was a powerful religious movement concerned with a spiritual revival within Protestantism. It had its origins in German Pietism, British Puritanism and English Methodism.<sup>2</sup> It extended beyond geographical borders 'from the Urals in the East to the Appalachians in the West'.<sup>3</sup> It spread into Great Britain at the end of the eighteenth century, and into Ireland in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It reached across the Atlantic to the United States and Canada. It was not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that the zeal, engendered by the revival, expressed itself in increased and unswerving Protestant global missionary expansion. Although Protestant missionary societies had been working on foreign missions during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Protestant missions were not extensive until the 'Awakening'. As Brian Stanley observed, there had been 'no consistent acceptance of the missionary obligation by either Anglicanism or Dissent'.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter examines the theology that underpinned the Evangelical Awakening, and explores the missionary developments that followed as a

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<sup>1</sup> David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society, 1740–1890* (London, 1992), p. 47, citing R. Rouse and S. C. Neill, *A history of the ecumenical movement 1517–1948* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, 1967), p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> A. R. Holmes, 'Covenanter politics: evangelicalism, political liberalism and Ulster Presbyterians, 1798–1914' in *The English Historical Review*, cxxv, no. 153 (2010), pp 340–69, p. 346.

<sup>3</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society*, p. xii.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag* (Leicester, 1990), pp 55–6.

consequence of the Awakening between 1790 and 1820. It looks briefly at the movement at international level and in the British Isles, the evangelical societies involved, and the influential personalities at its core. How did the evangelical revival manifest itself in Ireland? To what extent did the committed well-off Protestant gentry, who had the power, influence and financial resources to promote evangelicalism, contribute to its advance? How did the ‘Evangelical Revival’ unfold in the Anglican diocese of Meath where Kingscourt was located, and in the adjoining counties of Leinster and south-Ulster? This chapter clarifies some erroneous assumptions concerning the Second Reformation on the Farnham Estate in County Cavan.

### **The ‘Evangelical Awakening’ at international level**

Evangelicalism as understood in this study pervaded social thought and drove the actions of its followers. It affected how people lived in the social and intellectual world of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The historian, David Bebbington, identified the ‘quadrilateral of evangelicalism’ as biblicism, activism, conversionism and the centrality of the cross (crucicentrism).<sup>5</sup> The movement was bibliocentric, firmly based on the belief that the Word of God in the Bible was God’s revelation of eternal truth to mankind. Evangelicals held the death of Jesus Christ on the cross in atonement for man’s sin to be at its heart. They believed in the centrality of their own personal conversion. This personal conversion would, in turn, lead to activism, which included good works and the preaching of the Gospel to all, including those outside the Protestant faith.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, the movement was concerned with internal reform, the revitalization of the churches and the spiritual ‘conversion’ of its members.<sup>7</sup> This in turn generated many voluntary evangelical and charitable societies, driven by zealous key individuals, dedicated to foreign mission and domestic evangelism.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society*, preface.

<sup>6</sup> David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Boston, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Janice Holmes, ‘The reform of piety in Ireland, 1780–1920’ in Anders Jarlert (ed.), *Piety and modernity: the dynamics of religious reform in northern Europe, 1780–1920* (Leuven, 2012), pp 65–98, p. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society*, p. 47.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an overseas missionary society of the Church of England under Royal charter, had been founded in 1701 to send missionaries to the American colonies.<sup>9</sup> The year 1792 can be taken as the date when the Evangelical Awakening and missionary obligation was jump-started in Britain by the shoe-maker and Baptist minister, William Carey (1761–1834). Carey exerted a major influence on the Protestant missionary movement worldwide from 1792. His missionary zeal and optimism were driven by a postmillennial theology. Postmillennialists believed that Jesus Christ would return to earth after a period of time, though not necessarily 1,000 years, when Christians had established Christ’s kingdom on earth.<sup>10</sup> Carey articulated this in his foundational manifesto, published in 1792, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the Heathen*, where he calculated that more than half the world was still ‘in heathen darkness’.<sup>11</sup>

Using Scripture to support his argument, Carey set out to prove that the obligation on Christians to ‘*Go teach all nations*’ was as binding in the late eighteenth century as it had been at the time of Christ. He argued that the spread of the gospel would, in turn, lead to the civilization of its hearers and transform its converts into useful members of society. He set out a blueprint for the formation and logistical organisation of voluntary missionary societies. In 1792 also, the Particular Baptist Society, later the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), was the first Protestant Society established expressly for the purpose of overseas missions. ‘An important feature of BMS’, argued Brian Stanley, ‘was the setting up of subgroups and auxiliaries,’ an initiative imitated by succeeding missionary societies both in Britain and Europe.<sup>12</sup> Its first mission to Bengal in India was led by Carey, Joshua Marshman (1768–1837) and William Ward (1769–1823) in 1793. The BMS was followed by the interdenominational London Missionary Society (1795) and the Church Missionary Society (1799). Missionaries were part of the colonial structure

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<sup>9</sup> F. L. Cross (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London 1957), p. 1280; for mission to South Carolina, see Shawn Comminey, ‘The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and Black education in South Carolina, 1702–1764’ in *The Journal of Negro History*, lxxxiv, no. 4 (Autumn, 1999), pp 360–9.

<sup>10</sup> For postmillennial theology, see Crawford Gribben and Timothy T. F. Stunt, *Prisoners of hope?: aspects of evangelical millennialism in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1880*, (Milton Keynes, 2004) (Carlisle, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> William Carey, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the Heathen, in which the religious state of the different nations of the world, the success of former undertakings, and the practicability of further undertakings are considered* (Leicester, 1792) p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> See Brian Stanley, *The history of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792–1992* (Edinburgh, 1992).

of the nineteenth century and colonization was frequently conceived of in missionary terms. As Tadhg Foley pointed out, ‘the original function of missionaries was to service the colony, that is, the settlers,’ and missionaries saw themselves ‘as being adjuncts to secular colonization’.<sup>13</sup> The overseas missions also fitted well the prevailing interest in geography and scientific explorations. The publication of travelogues and travel diaries, the great adventure stories of the time, created an enormous interest in overseas native populations, and fuelled a desire for travel. More popular and more acceptable than novels, they were widely disseminated. David Livingstone (1813–73), the Scottish Protestant missionary and explorer, wrote that in his youth he read everything that he could lay his hands on except novels. His ‘especial delight’ was reading ‘scientific works’ and the travel books ‘of missionary enterprise’.<sup>14</sup> Religion was not incompatible with travel and science. Livingstone’s father, Neil, believed that ‘religion and science were friendly to each other’.<sup>15</sup>

Although William Carey conceded that there was a need for a ‘home’ mission, he argued that ‘the South-Sea savages’ were in greater need. They had no Bible, no written language in many cases, and neither ministers nor civil government to guide them.<sup>16</sup> Overseas missions were more popular with the evangelically-minded than ‘home’ missions, even allowing for all the associated problems of distance, the danger of being killed, the difficulties of procuring the necessities of life, and the barriers of language.<sup>17</sup> As late as 1853, Rev. W. M. O’Hanlon wrote of Belfast: ‘Any public meeting held to promote the extension of Christianity in foreign lands attracted a multitude of persons, while it was next to impossible to secure a large attendance when the cause of home and city missions was to be advocated.’<sup>18</sup>

The foundation of the missionary societies in England triggered the extension of the movement into Scotland. By 1796, the Scottish Missionary Society was established. In 1802, the Edinburgh Missionary Society sent two pioneering

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<sup>13</sup> Tadhg Foley, ‘From Templelantine to the Golden Temple: religion, empire and Max Arthur Macauliffe’ in James H. Murphy, *Evangelicals and Catholics in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp 197–208, pp 197–8.

<sup>14</sup> David Livingstone, *The life and African explorations of Dr David Livingstone: comprising all his extensive travels and discoveries as detailed in his diary, reports and letters including his famous last journals with maps and numerous illustrations* (New York, 2002 ed. of St. Louis Missouri, 1874), pp 31, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Livingstone, *The life and African explorations of Dr David Livingstone*, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Carey, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians*, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Carey, *An enquiry into the obligations of Christians*, p. 67.

<sup>18</sup> W. M. O’Hanlon, *Walks among the poor of Belfast and suggestions for their improvement* (Belfast, 1853), p. 159.

missionaries, Rev. Henry Brunton and Rev. Alexander on an ‘exploratory mission to the countries lying between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea’.<sup>19</sup> In Germany, there was German Mission Society (1815) and the Rhenish Missionary Society (1828), an amalgam of earlier missionary associations working in the Rhine valley from 1799.<sup>20</sup> Europe’s ‘Evangelical Awakening’ inspired a ‘Second Great Awakening’ in America which saw the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810), and the Baptist American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1814) being established.<sup>21</sup>

Evangelicals were to the forefront of the formation of Bible societies whose purpose was to publish and disseminate the Word of God as freely and widely as possible. Among these societies were the Religious Tract Society (1799) and the non-denominational British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) (1804), aimed at delivering affordable Bibles and extracts to all Christians, firstly in Great Britain and Ireland and afterwards in more remote regions, as finances and urgency dictated.<sup>22</sup> The Prayer Book and Homily Society was formed in 1812. The Hibernian Bible Society (HBS), the Irish equivalent of the BFBS, was established in Dublin (1806).<sup>23</sup>

### **From the Evangelical Awakening to the ‘Second Reformation’ in Ireland, 1800–1823**

The central objective of the ‘Evangelical Awakening’ in Ireland, as elsewhere, was a spiritual revival of Protestantism through internal church reform and the individual conversion of its members by adherence to personal piety.<sup>24</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Church of Ireland was recognised as being badly in need of reform. An early attempt to advance the Scriptural education of his clergy had been instigated in the diocese of Ossory between 1795 and 1798 by the Anglican bishop, Thomas Lewis O’Beirne (c.1747–1823). After his departure for the diocese of Meath

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<sup>19</sup> David Brewster, *The Edinburgh encyclopaedia, conducted by David Brewster, with the assistance of gentlemen eminent in science and literature* (18 vols, Philadelphia, 1832), xiii, 615.

<sup>20</sup> Hendrik, Rudolf Jjibeda, ‘The history of the Rhenish Mission Society in Namibia with particular reference to the African Methodist Episcopal Church Schism’ (PhD thesis, Faculty of Humanities, School of Religion and Culture, University of Durban-Westville, 2003), p. 47.

<sup>21</sup> David W. Kling, ‘The New Divinity and the origins of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions’ in *Church History* (Dec. 2003), pp 791–819.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76; John Owen, *The history of the origin and first ten years of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (New York, 1817), p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Some of the Hibernian Bible Society reports are held in John Paul library, Maynooth University, in Special Collections.

<sup>24</sup> Holmes, ‘The reform of piety in Ireland, 1780–1920’, p. 76.

in 1798, the practice ceased. It was revived two years later when the Ossory Clerical Society was founded by Rev. Peter Roe (1778–1841), minister of St Mary’s, Kilkenny, and Rev. Hans Hamilton, O’Beirne’s successor, son of Bishop Hugh Hamilton. The Society held monthly meetings, consisting of divine service, and a sermon followed by discussion on some fundamental Christian doctrine.<sup>25</sup>

Clerical Societies were a feature of the Irish evangelical movement. While Power Le Poer Trench (1770–1839) was bishop of Elphin, a Clerical Society operated in the diocese. When he was translated to the archdiocese of Tuam, he initiated the practice there. Rev. Peter Roe’s papers reveal that an early unsuccessful attempt was made in the south-west of Ireland to promote regular clerical meetings, while in the north of the country in Rathfriland, County Down, Rev. William Matthias’ clerical meetings had flourished for many years.<sup>26</sup>

The spiritual transformation of its members ‘*a religious and moral Transformation of Character [sic]*’,<sup>27</sup> was, in turn, expected to lead to missionary zeal, commitment to a Christian activism and the conversion of others. In Ireland, where evangelicals were operating among an overwhelmingly Catholic population, conversion came to mean the conversion or proselytizing of Catholics. The London Hibernian Society outlined what ‘conversion’ meant for Catholics: ‘The conversion of a Roman Catholic necessarily means the Abandonment of the Roman Catholic Religion; the Conversion of a Protestant means the Abandonment of any Errors he may have been subject to, but does not necessarily imply a Change of Church.’<sup>28</sup>

Desmond Bowen has pointed out that to achieve this conversion, ‘evangelical tactics called for unrelenting proselytising’.<sup>29</sup> Most great religions, convinced that they are entrusted with a divine message of salvation, feel morally bound to propagate that message by making converts or proselytes. Yet, because of the sharply contrasting ways in which it is perceived, proselytism has always been a sensitive issue: ‘What one religious group regards as praiseworthy missionary activity the

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<sup>25</sup> See Samuel Madden, *Memoir of the life of the late Rev. P. Roe, rector of Odagh, and minister of St Mary’s, Kilkenny: with copious extracts from his correspondence, diaries, and other remains* (Dublin, 1842), p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> Madden, *Memoir of the life of the late Rev. P. Roe*, p. 94; Irene Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland: the ‘Second Reformation’ and the polarization of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800–1840* (Dublin, 2005) p. 60.

<sup>27</sup> *First report of the commissioners on education in Ireland*, HC (1825) (400), xii.1, 70.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 75–6.

<sup>29</sup> Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800–70: a study of Protestant-Catholic relations between the Act of Union and disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978), p. 83.

opposing group perceives as immoral poaching, often, indeed, as little short of demonic.<sup>30</sup> Some evangelicals lamented the fact that there were people in Ireland totally neglected by the evangelical movement and believed that charity should begin at home. Irish peasants were ‘in as much physical misery as the slaves in the colonies, but their spiritual destitution was, perhaps, even greater because of the power of Rome in Ireland’, states Bowen in a succinct summary of contemporary feeling at the time.<sup>31</sup>

The Established Church in Ireland in the nineteenth-century ‘was not itself evangelical’, D. H. Akenson holds, ‘but it increasingly held evangelicals with its ranks’.<sup>32</sup> The Church of Ireland bishops and clergymen were opposed to evangelicalism, initially, and there were only twenty-nine evangelical clergymen altogether in Ireland in 1797.<sup>33</sup> The Honourable Power Trench, while bishop of Elphin (1810–19), preached down evangelicalism.<sup>34</sup> But later, as archbishop of Tuam, he was to become one of the ablest promoters of the Second Reformation in the west of Ireland. In the aftermath of the 1798 Irish rebellion, it became clear to Irish evangelicals, just as it had to European evangelicals in the wake of the French Revolution, that Ireland was ripe for missionary endeavours. The evangelicals’ proselytising was intended to result in large-scale conversions of Catholics to Protestantism, and the completion of the unfinished first Reformation in Ireland three centuries earlier.<sup>35</sup>

There were three main religious denominations in Ireland in the nineteenth century, Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism and Presbyterianism. Although the Anglican Church of Ireland represented a little more than a tenth of the population it was the official state church. As such, it was responsible for its entire people, their education and religion,<sup>36</sup> and was sustained by an extensive system of endowments

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<sup>30</sup> Dónal Kerr, *‘A nation of beggars’: priests, people, and politics in Famine Ireland, 1846-1852* (Oxford, 1994), p. 205.

<sup>31</sup> Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> Donald Harman Akenson, *Discovering the end of time: Irish evangelicalism in the age of Daniel O’Connell* (London, 2016), p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> Maiben Cunningham Motherwell, *A memoir of the late Albert Blest* (Dublin, 1843), p. 64.

<sup>34</sup> Alan Acheson, ‘The evangelical revival in Ireland: a study in Christology’ in *Churchman*, cviii, no. 2 (1994), pp 143–53, p. 143.

<sup>35</sup> Motherwell, *A memoir of the late Albert Blest*, p. 64.

<sup>36</sup> Gerald Parsons, ‘Irish Disestablishment’ in Gerald Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain* (5 vols, Manchester, 1988), ii, *Controversies*, p. 128.



and tithes.<sup>37</sup> Education was the main vehicle for promoting religious change. Therefore the control of education was a core objective of the churches and was a fundamental issue in the evangelical crusade. The scarcity of educational provision in early nineteenth-century Ireland offered an ‘opportunity to combine instruction with vital religion which zealous evangelicals were determined to grasp’.<sup>38</sup> The late eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century saw a multiplication and extension of evangelical activity in Ireland, and a new enthusiasm for mission, which manifested itself in the network of voluntary religious education societies established.<sup>39</sup>

The Association for Discountenancing Vice (ADV) was founded in 1792 by three members of the Established Church, Rev. Singleton Harpur, Dr O’Connor of Castleknock and Dublin bookseller, William Watson. It was distinctly Anglican. Its management was restricted to members of the Established Church, as were its teachers. Dr C. R. Elrington reported that 164 ADV schools had been established in Ireland by 1822, where 6,200 Protestants and 5,334 Catholics were educated.<sup>40</sup> According to the *First report of commissioners on education*, the number of ADV schools had increased to 211 by 1825.<sup>41</sup> Another Bible society was the Hibernian Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge in Ireland, more commonly known as the London Hibernian Society, (LHS), founded in London in 1806. It had, according to its own literature, three objectives: the promotion of education, the circulation of the Scriptures, and the employment of itinerant Scripture readers.<sup>42</sup> Mr Donelan, a Roman Catholic inspector with the Kildare Place Society (KPS), gave evidence to the commissioners on education in Ireland inquiry of 1825 that Catholics considered that the principal underlying motive of the LHS was proselytism. As an officer of the KPS, Donelan disapproved of the connection between the KPS and the LHS.<sup>43</sup>

The ADV was opposed to the idea of instruction in the vernacular, stating that English was the universal medium of instruction, even in Irish-speaking areas. In

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<sup>37</sup> Janice Holmes, ‘Irish evangelicals and the British evangelical community, 1820s–1870s’ in James H. Murphy, *Evangelicals and Catholics in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), p. 211.

<sup>38</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society*, p. 52.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>40</sup> *First report on education in Ireland* HC 1825 (400), xii, appendix. no. 198.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 708.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 51.

1818, some of the society's disaffected members founded the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their own Language (IS). It was the third evangelical organisation concerned with Scriptural instruction in Irish; its predecessors were the London Hibernian Society (1806), and the Baptist Irish Society (founded in London in 1814).<sup>44</sup> The Irish Society had the same objective as the Gaelic School Society in the Scottish Highlands and the Welsh Scriptural School in Wales, namely, the imparting of Scriptural instruction in their own language,<sup>45</sup> 'with the sole view of leading them to, and assisting them in, the reading of the Bible'.<sup>46</sup>

As early as 1822, the IS claimed that it had totally united in a very extraordinary fashion 'the objects of every moral and religious association in the kingdom' (except that of converting the Jews).<sup>47</sup> The Society's main suppliers of books and tracts were the British and Foreign Bible Society and its Irish counterpart, the Hibernian Bible Society, and the Religious Tract Society. The Scriptures were read in its schools 'without note or comment', a practice that was abhorrent to Catholics. Unlike the ADV, the Irish Society's agents did not have to be Anglican churchmen. Two of its leading promoters, and honorary members of the Society's committee, were Rev. Robert Winning, a Presbyterian minister and superintendent of the Kingscourt District, and Rev. J. B. McCrea of the Independent Congregation who was associated with the Kerry Mission.<sup>48</sup>

Rev. Robert Winning was an Ulster Presbyterian of Scottish descent.<sup>49</sup> There was 'an indigenous tradition of piety and revivalism' within the Scots-Irish Presbyterianism of Ulster, as Hempton and Hill have shown.<sup>50</sup> This stretched back to the Six Mile Water revival of 1625 in County Antrim in Ulster.<sup>51</sup> This revivalist tradition continued into the eighteenth century and Ulster Presbyterians began to get involved in increasing numbers in the inter-denominational networks and voluntary

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<sup>44</sup> Pádraig de Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827* (Dublin, 2009), p. v.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Russell's account of the Kingscourt District, extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of education enquiry, 20 Dec. 1834, pp 26–9 (copy of Russell's letter in RIA, OS memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan).

<sup>46</sup> IS, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, pp 27–8.

<sup>48</sup> IS meeting, 21 Jan. 1825 (TCD, MS 7644, p.19 (a)).

<sup>49</sup> Religious census 1766, Ardrea, diocese of Armagh (NAI, parliamentary returns 650, bundle 76, 2/436/2).

<sup>50</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society*, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> See W. D. Bailie, *The Six Mile Water revival of 1625* (reprint, Belfast, 2013 of 1976).

societies associated with evangelicalism.<sup>52</sup> Presbyterianism in Ireland underwent a period of religious reform and revitalisation in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It sought to bring the denomination back to the Scottish Second Reformation (1638–48) of the mid-seventeenth century as expressed through the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643).<sup>53</sup>

Robert Winning might well have been stirred by the evangelical spirit of Ulster Presbyterianism in his youth. Presbyterianism in Ulster ‘underwent a far-reaching process of religious reform and revival that saw the triumph of a distinctive form of Presbyterian evangelicalism’ in the first half of the nineteenth century, Andrew Holmes has pointed out.<sup>54</sup> Winning was seven years old in October 1798 when the short-lived Evangelical Society of Ulster was established in direct response to the 1798 Rebellion. When the London Hibernian Society decided to concentrate on education and establishing schools, the Irish Evangelical Society was formed on 17 May 1814.<sup>55</sup> It was composed of ministers and members of the Presbyterian and Independent churches as well as the Established Church. The evangelical ‘spirit’ saw the formation of the Home Mission (1826), the Presbyterian Belfast Home Mission (1827). Among those established later in the mid-nineteenth century, were the Jewish Mission (1841), Irish Presbyterian Missionary Society (1840), the Colonial Mission (1848) and the Continental Mission (1856).<sup>56</sup>

### **The network of evangelicals centred on Trinity College, Dublin, and Bethesda Chapel**

The evangelical movement permeated many spheres of Irish Society. One institution that was central to the movement was Trinity College, Dublin, and ‘a succession of evangelical fellows, graduates and students, clerical and lay’ there.<sup>57</sup> Just as William Wilberforce (1759–1833) and the Clapham Sect, an Oxford group of activist,

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<sup>52</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society*, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> See Andrew Holmes, ‘The experience and understanding of religious revival in Ulster Presbyterianism, c. 1800–1930’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiv, no. 136 (Nov. 2005), pp 361–85, p. 365

<sup>54</sup> Andrew R. Holmes, ‘Presbyterian religion, historiography, and Ulster Scots identity, c. 1800–1914’ in *Irish Historical Journal* (Sept. 2009), lii, no. 3, pp 615–40, p. 620.

<sup>55</sup> Minute book of the London Committee of the Irish Evangelical Society, 17 May, 1814 (PRONI, CR7/2/A/1/1).

<sup>56</sup> Andrew Holmes, ‘The shaping of Irish Presbyterian attitudes to mission, 1790–1840’ in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, lvii, no. 4 (Oct. 2006), pp 711–37, p. 712.

<sup>57</sup> Acheson, ‘The evangelical revival in Ireland’, p. 143.

evangelical Christians, were influential in England, the Trinity College set has been identified as the dominant body in Ireland. Irene Whelan named it ‘the nursery of the revival’ in the Church of Ireland.<sup>58</sup> The majority of Church of Ireland clergymen trained for the ministry in Trinity College. Donald Harman Akenson has argued, however, that ‘evangelicalism was something they usually embraced after leaving Trinity’, that it was not the ‘formal curriculum’ or any ‘faculty indoctrination’ there that made them evangelical.<sup>59</sup> James Spencer Knox (1789–1862), son of the Anglican bishop of Derry, Rev. William Knox, a Trinity student, stated that the divinity lectures ‘were all but a farce’, and ‘young men were hurried into the ministry totally unprepared by any academic instructor’.<sup>60</sup>

The students and graduates of Trinity College, living in the environs of Dublin, were ‘situated in the one place in Ireland where evangelicalism was a social and economic reality of the first importance,’ Akenson has pointed out.<sup>61</sup> In Bethesda Chapel on the fashionable north side of Dublin city, they found an outlet for their evangelicalism and also enjoyed the fellowship of like-minded Christians. Founded and funded by William Smyth (Smythe) Bethesda was opened in 1784.<sup>62</sup> It was one of many proprietary chapels in the city,<sup>63</sup> established as a direct result of the Evangelical Revival need for more spiritual teaching than was obtainable in most parish churches. Evangelicals, unable to secure appointments to ‘the more important parishes’, used powers under eighteenth-century Acts of Parliament to build churches independent of the parochial system.<sup>64</sup> Dublin had many such churches, ‘preaching houses as they were rudely described’, built ‘to provide platforms for evangelicals’ ‘on the fringes of the Established Church’ ‘deliberately excluded from parish pulpits.’<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 134.

<sup>60</sup> W. D. Killen, *The ecclesiastical history of Ireland from the earliest period to the present times* (2 vols, London, 1875), ii, n. 4, 383.

<sup>61</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 134.

<sup>62</sup> Bethesda Chapel was destroyed by fire in the morning of 7th January 1839 at 2 o’clock, when all the records, accounts, and other property were consumed, together with the Orphan School and Lock Penitentiary connected with the Chapel, The accounts of the Bethesda Orphanage for girls from 1787–1854 (viewed in History Dept., Maynooth University, prior to deposit in RCBL), unpaginated, first page.

<sup>63</sup> For example, a church in Gardiner Street, Dublin, was built for the evangelical Rev. John Gregg (1798–1878), later bishop of Cork; a church in Hatch Street Dublin, was built for Rev. Maurice Day (1816–1904), later bishop of Cashel.

<sup>64</sup> R. B. MacCarthy, *A short history of the Church of Ireland ancient & modern* (Dublin, 1995), p. 47.

<sup>65</sup> Grayson Carter, *Anglican evangelicals: Protestant secessions from the via media, c. 1800–1850* (Oxford, 2015), p. 68.

Bethesda Chapel was run by evangelical trustees and soon became the hub of the Irish evangelical movement. It attracted such well-known preachers as Scottish high Calvinist, James Alexander Haldane (1768–1851). Lawyers, physicians, gentry, and nobility, as well as many of the humbler classes flocked to Bethesda.<sup>66</sup> Because of the excellence of the preachers, attendance at divine service on Sundays was ‘extremely numerous and respectable, and it was difficult for a stranger to find a seat’.<sup>67</sup> It was these preachers who were largely responsible for promoting Bethesda and Irish evangelicalism in general.<sup>68</sup>

Prominent among Bethesda’s chaplains was Rev. Benjamin William Stewart Mathias (1772–1841), son of Benjamin Mathias and Anna Stewart (daughter of William Stewart of Wilmont (1810–41)).<sup>69</sup> Under Mathias’s ministry, ‘those earnest men who left Trinity College, to take Orders in the Episcopal communion, were nearly all brought to a knowledge of the truth, and taught to preach it with effect.’<sup>70</sup> Lawyers, physicians, gentry, and nobility, as well as many of the humbler classes flocked to Bethesda.<sup>71</sup> It was denied an episcopal licence under the Church of Ireland until 1825.<sup>72</sup>

This study is concerned with what Acheson called the ‘second generation’ of reformers.<sup>73</sup> Among the ‘second generation’ of reforming clergymen relevant to this study was Robert Daly, co-founder of the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language in 1818.<sup>74</sup> Another was Joseph Henderson Singer (1786–1866), Regius Professor of Divinity, and later Anglican bishop of Meath in 1852. He was co-secretary of the Church Mission Society (1814) in Ireland, an off-shoot of the Church Mission Society (1799), formed to promote the abolition of the slave trade, social reform and global evangelisation. Both were major players in the Irish Society throughout their lives. Another alumnus of Trinity College among the ‘second generation’ was Edward Nangle (1800–1883),

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<sup>66</sup> Killen, *The ecclesiastical history of Ireland*, ii, 383.

<sup>67</sup> George Newenham Wright, *An historical guide to the city of Dublin, illustrated by engravings, and a plan of the city* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, 1825), p. 120.

<sup>68</sup> Carter, *Anglican evangelicals*, p. 68

<sup>69</sup> The foundation of the Hibernian Bible Society was largely inspired by Mathias, see Dean of Cashel, *Some early Irish evangelicals*, vol. 71, no. 2 (1957), pp 58–64, p. 60.

<sup>70</sup> Killen, *The ecclesiastical history of Ireland*, ii, 383, citing *Brief memorials*, p. 226.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 383.

<sup>72</sup> Carter, *Anglican evangelicals*, p. 68.

<sup>73</sup> Acheson in ‘The Evangelical Revival in Ireland’, p. 143.

<sup>74</sup> For Robert Daly, see Eugene Broderick, *Waterford Anglicans: religion and politics, 1819–1872* (Cambridge, 2009).

founder of the Achill Mission. So, too, was Hyacinth D'Arcy (1806–1874), who assisted Rev. Alexander Dallas (1791–1869) in establishing the Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics in Connemara in the west of Ireland.<sup>75</sup>

The wide network of family ties and acquaintances was a significant factor in the spread of evangelicalism. Whelan has suggested that the involvement of Irish gentry-families in evangelical Protestantism could be traced to the attendance of the younger sons in Trinity College, Dublin, while training for a ministry in the Church of Ireland.<sup>76</sup> Church of Ireland clergymen were 'typically younger sons of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and landed gentry'.<sup>77</sup> The 'Bible gentry' included the Farnhams of Cavan, the Jocelyns, earls of Roden of Louth and Down, and the Wingfields of Powerscourt; all related through marriage.<sup>78</sup> Alan Acheson has correctly claimed that the evangelicals 'harnessed' the 'allegiance, energy, wealth and authority' of these families.<sup>79</sup> Akenson narrowed this network further by suggesting that the early nineteenth-century evangelicals belonged to what he himself termed, 'Dalyland', and the world of Rev. Robert Daly: 'Dalyland was a state of mind, a religious mentality, and it was also a network of real-world geographic coordinates, a web of complex social relationships, regulated mostly by the gentry and above'.<sup>80</sup>

Daly's influence was felt from the time he was appointed rector of Powerscourt, County Wicklow, in 1814, and became an intimate member of the Roden-Powerscourt circle. A contemporary, James Godkin, claimed that Daly 'became not only *primus inter pares* among the Evangelical clergy, but ultimately assumed the position and bearing of a Protestant Pope.'<sup>81</sup> Daly has been acknowledged by Akenson as 'the most energetic and widely effective power broker for evangelicalism in the Church of Ireland.'<sup>82</sup> Together with Henry Joseph Monck Mason, Daly established the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language. Dalyland extended beyond the geographical limits of Powerscourt in County Wicklow, into the wild highlands of counties Cavan and Meath and the Kingscourt area.

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<sup>75</sup> See E. J. Whately, 'Mission work in Ireland: with memorials of two chief mission workers', in *The Sunday at home: a family magazine for Sabbath reading*, xxii (London, 1875), pp 102–6, p. 108.

<sup>76</sup> Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*, p. 163.

<sup>77</sup> Carter, *Anglican evangelicals*, p. 60.

<sup>78</sup> See Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*.

<sup>79</sup> Alan Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland, 1691–1996* (Dublin, 1997), p. 124.

<sup>80</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 11.

<sup>81</sup> James Godkin, *Ireland and her Churches* (London, 1867), p. 322.

<sup>82</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 14.

Non-clerical graduates of Trinity College, prominent in the legal and business world, also emerged as key personalities in evangelical societies.<sup>83</sup> They included Henry Joseph Monck Mason, barrister, and librarian in Kings Inns, who was co-founder with Robert Daly of the Irish Society. Another Trinity-educated barrister, the Huguenot, Thomas Langlois Lefroy (1776–1841), later Chief Justice of Ireland (1852–66) was on the committees of several evangelical organisations.<sup>84</sup> Members of the Huguenot banking family, La Touche, were auditors of many of the evangelical societies, including the Irish Society.<sup>85</sup> Another Huguenot family involved with the Irish Society was the Metges family from Navan in County Meath.<sup>86</sup> Dr Charles Edward Orpen (1791–1856) who founded the Claremont Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb near Glasnevin in Dublin in 1819 served on the Irish Society’s committee from 1821.<sup>87</sup> This was typical overlapping of membership.<sup>88</sup>

The evangelical spirit which permeated these families extended to female relatives too, first in their own personal piety.<sup>89</sup> This personal godliness is evident in the letters of Lady Lucy Farnham to her husband, as one typical extract shows: ‘Nothing can satisfy an Immortal Spirit but God. Nothing can bring solid peace of heart-felt comfort but an entire and cordial surrender of ourselves (all that we are & have) to his service.’<sup>90</sup> Lady Lucy was the eldest daughter of Arthur Annesley, first earl of Mountnorris, a member of the Gosford family, County Armagh, distant cousins of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.<sup>91</sup> The earl of Gosford was president of the Armagh Church Missionary Association in aid of the Hibernian Auxiliary Church Missionary Society.<sup>92</sup> Lady Lucy had been involved in many evangelical organisations before her marriage to John Henry Maxwell, the fifth baron

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<sup>83</sup> For more detailed information on these Trinity graduates in the evangelical movement, see Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*, pp 63–5.

<sup>84</sup> Among the societies in which Lefroy was involved were, Kildare Place Society, Hibernian Church Missionary Society, Sunday School Society for Ireland, Irish Society, Scripture Readers’ Society, and Irish Auxiliary to the Jews Society.

<sup>85</sup> La Touche family were auditors of the Irish Society, Irish Society minute books 1818 to 1853.

<sup>86</sup> IS meeting, 6 Apr. 1822 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 116 (a)).

<sup>87</sup> See Rachel Pollard, *The Avenue: a history of the Claremont Institution* (Dublin, 2006).

<sup>88</sup> For example, see IS, *Third annual report*, 1821, p. 5.

<sup>89</sup> For philanthropic women, see Margaret Preston, *Charitable words: women, philanthropy, and the language of charity in nineteenth-century Dublin* (London, 2004); IS, *Third annual report*, 1821, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham, 19 March 1824, Farnham papers (PRONI, D3975/A/1/16), emphasis in manuscript.

<sup>91</sup> Janice Cavell, ‘Lady Lucy Barry and evangelical reading on the first Franklin expedition’ in *Arctic*, lxiii, no. 2 (2010), pp 131–40.

<sup>92</sup> *Missionary register*, 1814, p. 286.

of Farnham, in 1823.<sup>93</sup> In 1812, she became a patroness of the Dublin Ladies' Auxiliary Bible Society, and, by 1814, she was vice-president of the Dublin Ladies' Association of the Missionary Society.<sup>94</sup> Farnham, as Member of Parliament for County Cavan (1806–24), Colonel of the Cavan Militia (1797–1823) and a large landowner was a busy man. Lady Lucy cautioned him: 'I hope you will not suffer any press of business to prevent your reading of at least one chapter of 'the blessed book daily''.<sup>95</sup> She chastised him for the extravagance of the High Sheriff's dinner, 'Oh my Love, what an unchristian scene',<sup>96</sup> but expressed her delight 'at your having distributed the Tracts'.<sup>97</sup>

The staunch evangelical Protestant Jocelyn family, earls of Roden, owned extensive lands in Bryansford, near Newcastle in County Down. They also owned an estate which included the town of Dundalk in County Louth. The diary of Lady Anne Jocelyn of Roden (1800–1822) illustrates how her personal piety extended to involvement in good works on her father's estate during her short life. She visited the 'School'<sup>98</sup> regularly and read to local poor women. She died aged twenty-one.<sup>99</sup> Akenson has called this female involvement 'the soft aspect of Irish evangelicalism', as opposed to the 'harsher, male-dominated confrontation with Catholicism'.<sup>100</sup> The 'soft' aspect involved establishing ladies' auxiliaries, charities and schools in support of their evangelical, clerical and lay, husbands, brothers and male relatives. Female members of the Mathias, Guinness, Newenham,<sup>101</sup> Shirley,<sup>102</sup> and Browne families

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<sup>93</sup> John Maxwell Barry, the fifth baron had inherited the estate from his cousin, John James Maxwell, the second earl of Farnham, on whose death the earldom became extinct.

<sup>94</sup> Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians: the age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 280.

<sup>95</sup> Fragment of a letter from Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham, not dated, Farnham Papers (PRONI D3975/A/1/27), emphasis in manuscript.

<sup>96</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham 5 Aug. 1824, Farnham Papers (PRONI D3975/A/1/15).

<sup>97</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham 20 Aug. 1823, Farnham Papers (PRONI D3975/A/1/17).

<sup>98</sup> Lady Anne Jocelyn visited the 'School' on 21 June 1822, *Diary of Lady Anne Jocelyn* (NLI, MS 18,430, unpaginated). This might have been the Irish Society school. Lord Roden signified his intention to have a schoolhouse appointed at his estate at Tollymore Park, Newcastle, County Down, under the Irish Society in April 1822, IS meeting, 23 Mar. 1822 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 113 (a)).

<sup>99</sup> *Diary of Lady Anne Jocelyn* (NLI, MS 18,430, unpaginated); see Irene Whelan, 'The Bible gentry: Evangelical religion, aristocracy, and the new moral order in the early nineteenth century' in Crawford Gribben and Andrew R. Holmes (eds), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish Society, 1790–2005* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp 52–82, pp 63–5.

<sup>100</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 21.

<sup>101</sup> For Sir Edward Newenham (1784–1814), see James Kelly, *Sir Edward Newenham (1784–1814 MP, 1734–1814)* (Dublin, 2003).

<sup>102</sup> Possibly Alicia Newenham (1774–1855), daughter of Sir Edward Newenham, married Rev. Walter Augustus Shirley (1768–1859), cousin of Selina Shirley (1707–91), Countess of Huntingdon, related to Shirley of Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, and Ettington, Warwickshire, England; Selina founded the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, a 'tireless Christian leader'; for Countess of Huntingdon, see A. H. New, *Memoirs of Selina, countess of Huntingdon* (New York, 1858).



were among the governesses of the Bethesda Chapel orphanage which opened with six children on 24 June 1787.<sup>103</sup> Eyre Crowe Evans, *Old and New Light*, painted a vivid picture of female involvement in one evangelical household near Drogheda in County Louth, one that also highlighted the romantic liaisons between females and visiting clergymen.<sup>104</sup> There was nothing ‘soft’, however, about the organisational role that the evangelical Fanny Bellingham (1808–54) played in assisting the English evangelical, Alexander Dallas, to set up the Irish Church Missions in 1849. Neither was Henrietta Pendleton (1792–1875) pursuing the ‘soft’ aspect during her many years as secretary of the Island and Coast Society.<sup>105</sup>

The year 1822 was a benchmark year for Irish Protestant-Catholic relations. On 24 October 1822, William Magee, Anglican archbishop of Dublin, delivered his inaugural address in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin. He virtually declared war on the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches.<sup>106</sup> He articulated in uncompromising fashion his view of the duty of the Established Church to make converts from Rome. He outraged the Roman Catholic community by referring to the Church of Ireland parson as the ‘true’ parish priest of the people, instructor of their children, affording spiritual aid where and when needed.<sup>107</sup> Initially confined to intellectual debate, the movement evolved into a bitter struggle for religious ascendancy in Ireland. Evangelicals believed that they were at war with Roman Catholics and that it was their Christian duty to free Roman Catholics from ‘popish superstition’ and the authority of the Anti-Christ in Rome.<sup>108</sup> Hostility between the two major denominations, Catholics and Protestants, accelerated leading to conflict, allegations of proselytism, persecution and, in some instances, murder. Although this missionary movement had been gathering momentum for some time, the beginning of this new concerted phase in Ireland is dated from Magee’s episcopal sermon in 1822. The ‘Bible war’ had begun.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Bethesda Orphanage for girls from 1787–1854, unpaginated, first page.

<sup>104</sup> Eyre Crowe Evans, ‘Old and New Light’, *Today in Ireland* (3 vols, London, 1825), iii, 1–258.

<sup>105</sup> For Henrietta Pendleton, see Alfred Clayton Thiselton, *A memorial sketch of the life of Mrs Henrietta Pendleton* (Dublin, 1875).

<sup>106</sup> Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 88.

<sup>107</sup> William Magee, *A charge delivered at his primary visitation in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1822* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, 1822), p. 22.

<sup>108</sup> Bowen, *The Protestant crusade*, p. xii.

<sup>109</sup> Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*.

## **From the ‘Evangelical Awakening’ to the ‘Second Reformation’ in the diocese of Meath, 1798–1823**

To diffuse piety and holiness through his diocese, by guiding and directing his Parochial Clergy in the Performance of the awful duties incumbent on them as ministers of the United Church.<sup>110</sup>

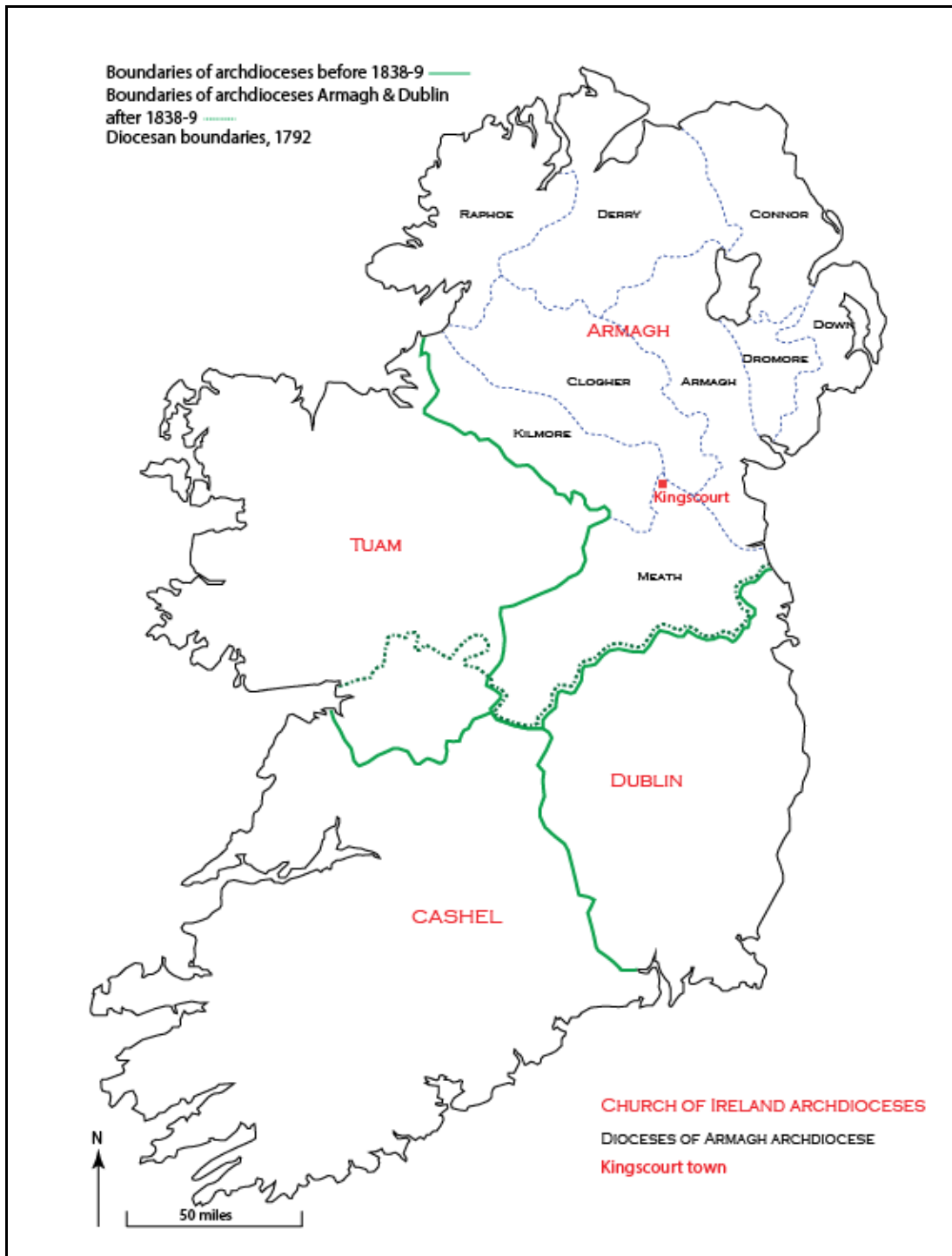
As early as 1693, the Anglican bishop of Meath, Anthony Dopping, had identified the need for internal reform and revitalization in his diocese. Many of the reforms proposed by Dopping were later implemented by Thomas Lewis O’Beirne. Although outside the time frame for this study, it is perhaps appropriate to include a brief description on the state of the diocese as Dopping found it at the end of the seventeenth century. In his report for a Royal Visitation in 1693, Dopping wrote that the majority of Church of Ireland buildings were ruinous. The diocese had a large number of parishes, and few parish clergy. Of these, many were pluralists, that is, holding a number of parishes in various parts of the country. Pluralism led to absenteeism with little hope of clerical duties being administered in many parishes to what was a small and scattered Protestant congregation. The ruined state of the few manse houses, another excuse used by the clergy for absenteeism, was a further cause of concern during Dopping’s tenure. The appointments of rural deans had gone out of use.<sup>111</sup> Over one hundred years later in 1798, the same issues alarmed Bishop O’Beirne.

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<sup>110</sup> Inscription on Thomas Lewis O’Beirne’s tombstone now in Trim Cathedral.

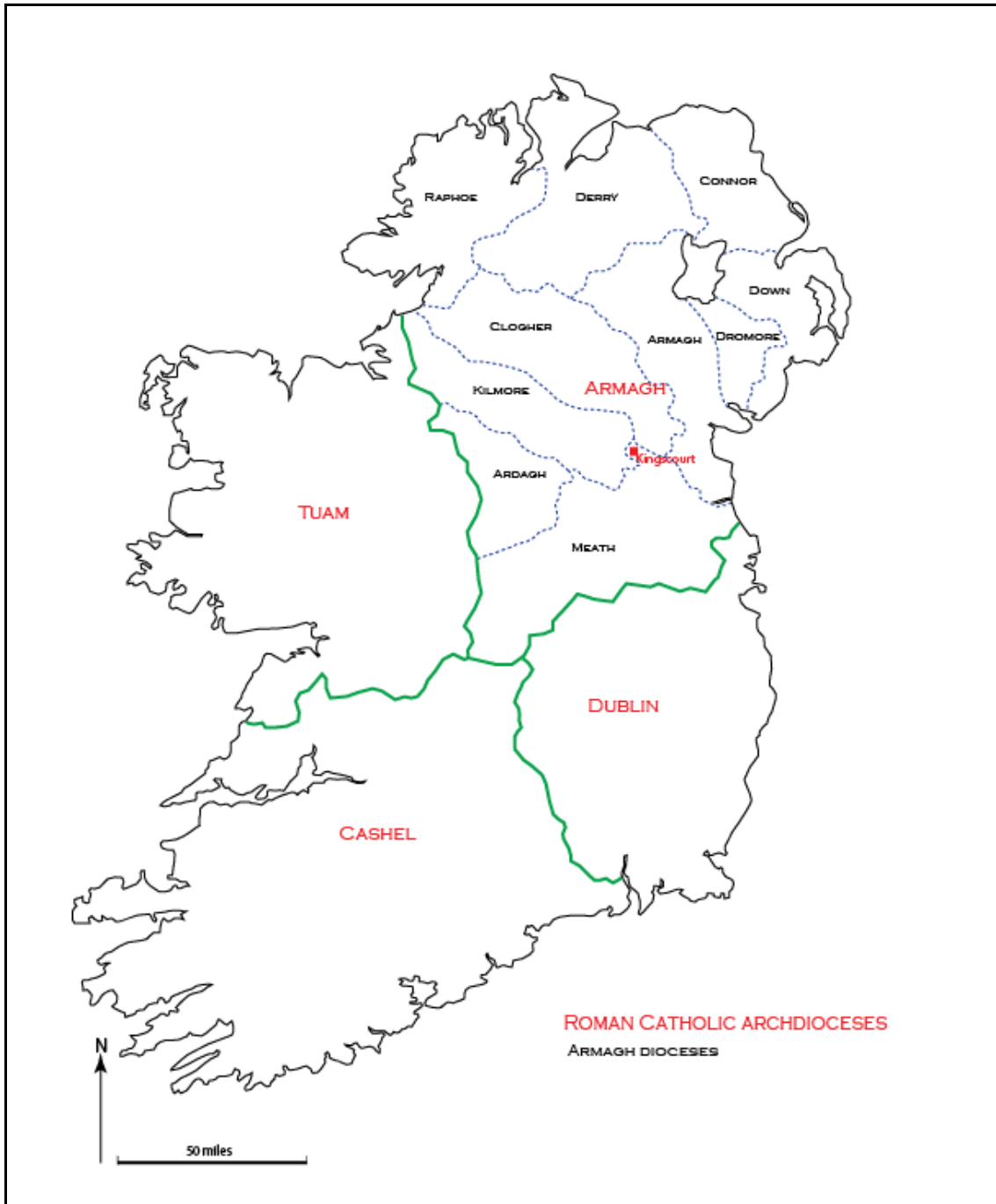
<sup>111</sup> John Healy, *History of the diocese of Meath* (2 vols, Dublin, 1908), ii, 20.

**Map 1.1 Dioceses of the Church of Ireland 1800–1974, showing boundaries of the provinces of Armagh, Cashel, Dublin, and Tuam**



Compiled by Marion Rogan, based on T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland* (9 vols, Oxford, 1984), ix, plate 67, p. 60 (map by K. M. Davies)

**Map 2.2 Dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church 1831-1974, showing boundaries of the provinces of Armagh, Cashel, Dublin, and Tuam**



Compiled by Marion Rogan, based on Moody, Martin and Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland*, ix, plate 68, p. 60 (map by K. M. Davies)

Thomas Lewis O'Beirne was born at Farnagh, Co. Longford, son of Lewis O'Beirne, a Roman Catholic farmer, and Margaret O'Beirne (*née* O'Meagher). Educated locally and at Saint-Omer in Flanders, he and his brother, Denis, were intended for the priesthood. Thomas' deteriorating health (he was 'menaced' with consumption) forced him to leave the Irish College of the Lombards in Paris without

completing his studies.<sup>112</sup> O'Beirne had been a pupil of Rev. Patrick Plunket, later Roman Catholic bishop of Meath, when Plunket was a professor in the Irish community in Paris.<sup>113</sup> On his homeward journey from college to recover his health, O'Beirne conformed in England to the religion of the state.<sup>114</sup> He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and became an Anglican priest in 1773. He was transferred from the diocese of Ossory to the see of Meath, the largest diocese in Ireland, in 1798. The temporalities of the Meath diocese were £8,000 per annum at the time.<sup>115</sup> O'Beirne lived in Ardraccon House near Navan in County Meath, the seat of the Anglican bishops of Meath from the fourteenth century.<sup>116</sup> Ardraccon was to become an important focus for the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District.

O'Beirne embarked immediately on a large-scale church-building and restoration initiative. The early years of his episcopacy saw the coming together of circumstances which facilitated this. The Act of Union in 1800 united the Irish Church with the Church of England. First Fruits funds and enlarged government grants facilitated the purchase of glebe lands, the erection of glebe houses and the building or rebuilding of churches. It gave archbishops and bishops certain powers of appropriation and deprivation. Clerical residency could be enforced. When O'Beirne was transferred to Meath in 1798, church life in the diocese was at a low ebb. During O'Beirne's episcopacy, eighty-two churches (including the twenty-five identified by Caroline Gallagher) and seventy-two glebe houses were built.<sup>117</sup> He was not enamoured by the training given to divinity students, and aimed to promote a high standard of preaching among his clergy. He admonished his clergymen to establish schools in their parishes and insisted on them giving religious instruction to Church

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<sup>112</sup> Bishop Plunkett met with Rev. Mr O'Beirne on 8 June 1782, when O'Beirne was secretary to His Grace, the duke of Portland. While a student in Paris, O'Beirne fell into ill-health and was advised to spend time in the south of France. One of his superiors, Father Plunket, later to become Roman Catholic bishop of Meath, advanced him the necessary money. Plunket befriended him again when, having become ill a second time, O'Beirne was sent home to Ireland with the admonition to return with a letter from his parish priest certifying his good conduct and attendance at sacraments. Returning without the letter, O'Beirne was refused admittance to the college. Fr Plunket pleaded his cause in vain and advanced him £6. See Anthony Cogan, *The diocese of Meath, ancient and modern*, (3 vols, reprint, Dublin, 1992 of 1867), ii, n. 185–7.

<sup>113</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, n. 185–7.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 467.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 187.

<sup>116</sup> Christine Casey and Alistair Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster* (London, 1993), pp 113–5.

<sup>117</sup> Mary Caroline Gallagher, 'Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne and his church-building programme in the diocese of Meath 1798-1823', unpublished PhD thesis in History, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2009.

of Ireland children.<sup>118</sup> He also advised them ‘if you want to convert the Roman Catholics you must get to know them, visit them inside their humble roofs, attend their sick’.<sup>119</sup>

In 1821, already an old man, O’Beirne urged his clergy to counteract the work of ‘sectaries’, dissenters from the Established Church who, though few, were increasing. O’Beirne’s strategy was ‘energetic counter organization’. He admonished them to match the opposition in their zeal, assiduity and earnestness. He did, however, warn them that it might be more prudent to ignore them rather than draw attention to them by preaching against them.<sup>120</sup> The ‘sectaries’ in question were the agents of the Hibernian Bible Society (1806).<sup>121</sup> Under pain of severe strictures and episcopal chastisement, O’Beirne directed each rural dean to form a deanery branch of the Diocesan Bible Society. Affiliated with the Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge, it was a Protestant proselytising educational society founded in 1792. Children from all denominations were welcome but all, if literate, had to read the Scriptures in school. The controversy lasted a considerable time, but eventually the Meath Bible Society, which had been formed in direct opposition to the Hibernian Bible Society, became an auxiliary to that institution.

According to the *First report of the commissioners of education*, 1825, there were 211 schools throughout Ireland supported by the ADV. Twenty-seven, almost 13 percent, were in the diocese of Meath, (Table 1. 1). Ten lay in County Meath, while six of the ten were in the north-western corner of the diocese in the immediate vicinity of Kingscourt, the geographical focus of this study. By 1822, another evangelical society, the IS had arrived in this end of the Meath diocese.

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<sup>118</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese of Meath*, ii, 143–177.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas Lewis O’Beirne, *The charge of Thomas Lewis O’Beirne, Lord Bishop of Ossory to the clergy of his diocese, in his annual visitation, 1796* (Dublin, 1796), p. 52.

<sup>120</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese of Meath*, ii, 160.

<sup>121</sup> Sectary was a term commonly applied to a Protestant Dissenter, while the Seceders were a group of conservative Scottish Presbyterians who had broken away from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1733.

**Table 1.1 Schools in connection with the Association for Discountenancing of Vice and Promoting the Practice of the Christian Religion in the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland dioceses of Meath, 1823**

Parish	School	Teacher (where stated)	Rev. superintendent	Aid first vested	Paid towards building (where stated)	Present annual grant
Ardbraccan	Oatlands	Mary Boynage	Archdeacon Pakenham	10 Jan. 1805	£43 6s. 8d.	£12
Clonard	Clonard	John Young	Edward Nixon	5 June 1823		Not certified that conditions have been performed
Clongill	Clongill	Robert Boylan	Thomas Sutton	27 July 1815		£12
Donaghpatrick	Donaghpatrick	Wm. Bentley	Geo. O'Connor	6 Aug. 1807	£20	£12
Dunboyne	Dunboyne	H. Kingsmill	A. Staunton	28 Sept. 1815		£12
Galtrim	Dunboyne	John & L Myrth	J. Lowe	31 Jan. 1805	£50	£12
Kilbeg	Carlanstown	James Plant	W. Shields	6 May 1819	£50	£12
Kilmore	Kilmore	Thomas Hornibrook	Thomas Smith	6 Aug. 1807		£12
St Mary's	Drogheda	John McKee	James Crawford	14 Feb. 1822		£10
Syddan	Mooretown	Not stated	Mr Disney	20 Nov. 1806		£12
Enniskeen	Kingscourt	Samuel Corbett	Mr Hearne	21 Feb. 1822		£10
Kilbride	Ballycan	Christopher Nugent	Thomas Knipe	5 June 1823		£10
Ardmurcher	Horseleap		G. L. Gresson	5 June 1823		£12
Durrow	Durrow	William Murray	J. Lever	14 May 1818		£10
Rynagh	Banagher	Jeremiah Parker	J. Burdett	12 Dec. 1816	£50	£12
Wheery	Wheery	Henry Knoulton	H. Mahon	3 Oct. 1816	£50	£12
Athlone	Athlone	Henry Marshall	J. R. Moffatt	29 Nov. 1821		£12

Clonfadforan	Tyrrellspass	Robert Francis	W. Eames	5 June 1823		£10
Drumcree	Drumcree	George Bonyngue	Dr De Courcy	3 Dec. 1818	£43 16s. 11d.	£12
Enniscoffy	Gaybrook	Robert Strong	John Hales	24 Jan. 1822	£35 6s. 8d.	£12
Kinnegad	Kinnegad	John Kerr	R. Noble	5 June 1823		£12
Mayne	Mayne	John & J. Bower	Thomas Smyth	30 Dec. 1819		£12
Mount Temple	Mount Temple	James Evans	W. Peacocke	26 Feb. 1818	£50	£12
Mullingar	Mullingar	William Shugar	W. Sturrock	15 Nov. 1821		£12
Rathconnell	Knockdrin	William Crawford	Rev. R. Ryan	1 May 1817		£12
	Reynella	Pat Gallagher & E. Neal	Richard Ryan	5 Feb. 1824		£10
Rathgraff	Castlepollard	Charles Dobbin	R. F. Handy	31 Jan. 1822		£10

Source: *First report on education in Ireland* HC 1825 (400), xii, appendix no. 198

**The ‘Bible-bit gentry’ of Ardraccan and their private schools ‘as proselytising as their patrons wished them to be’<sup>122</sup>**

Ardraccan was the seat of the Anglican bishops of Meath. It was also the residence of Henry Pakenham, who was rector of Ardraccan parish and archdeacon of Meath (1818–23) during the latter years of Thomas Lewis O’Beirne’s episcopacy. Pakenham continued to live in Ardraccan while he was archdeacon of Emly (1823–43).<sup>123</sup> Pakenham was son of the second Baron Longford, Pakenham Hall, County Westmeath, and brother-in-law of Arthur Wellesley, first duke of Wellington (1769–1852). He was a central figure in the Second Reformation in Ireland. His twenty-five year domicile in Ardraccan would prove significant in the unfolding of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District of the Irish Society.

Anthony Cogan in *The diocese of Meath* stated that the penal laws had been rigorously enforced in Ardraccan because of its proximity to the residence of the

<sup>122</sup> ‘Bible-bit gentry’ was expression used in *DEP*, 9 Oct. 1824, p. 3; Brian McNamee, ‘The ‘Second Reformation’ in Ireland’ in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, xxxiii, no. 1 (1996), pp 39–64, p. 51.

<sup>123</sup> It was only in 1843, when Pakenham was appointed to the double deanery of St. Patrick’s and Christ Church in Dublin, that he departed Ardraccan.



Anglican bishop and the ‘bigotry of many of the neighbouring gentry’.<sup>124</sup> The same reasons might be proffered for the establishment of a charter school in Ardraccan by the Incorporated Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland for forty pupils under the patronage of the bishop of Meath in 1747.<sup>125</sup> Charter schools were seen as ‘an agent of improvement’ for Ireland’s economic needs and Catholics were admitted on condition that they were educated as Protestants. The Society’s aim was to establish a school in each province that would serve as a model for private schools.<sup>126</sup> Ardraccan Charter School was still operating during Thomas Lewis O’Beirne’s episcopacy; it did not close until 1828.<sup>127</sup> O’Beirne and the Church of Ireland rector Richard Moore (1780–1818) also supported a parochial school for both sexes in Ardraccan with capacity for eighty students.<sup>128</sup>

The two most senior and evangelical Anglican Church figures in the diocese of Meath, Thomas Lewis O’Beirne and Henry Pakenham, resided in Ardraccan in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It is not surprising that evangelicalism flourished among their ‘neighbouring gentry’, as an examination of three Protestant estates within a six-mile distance of their residences reveal.<sup>129</sup> There were ‘few Protestant families in Ireland that are not Bible-bit’, the author of *Conversion of Ireland to Christianity* wrote in 1824.<sup>130</sup> The ‘Bible-bit’ Protestant gentry of Ardraccan, the Thompsons, Wallers and Tisdalls, inspired by the charter school ideology and model, kept three private schools on their respective estates at Oatlands, Allenstown, and Charlesfort in 1814.<sup>131</sup> The three other schools were Catholic pay schools, Bohermeen, Dunderry-bridge and Gainstown.<sup>132</sup>

The Thompsons maintained a Protestant school for girls on their Oatlands estate in 1814. The school accommodated ten boarders and twenty day pupils. The ADV (Table 2.1) paid the schoolmistress’ salary of £10 with a further premium of £5 for attention and good behaviour.<sup>133</sup> Like the Charter School in Ardraccan,

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<sup>124</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 272.

<sup>125</sup> Marion Rogan, *Charles Tisdall of County Meath 1740–1751: from spendthrift youth to improving landlord* (Dublin, 2014), pp 55–6.

<sup>126</sup> For charter schools, see Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter Schools 1730–1830* (Dublin, 1997).

<sup>127</sup> Milne, *The Irish Charter Schools*, p. 347.

<sup>128</sup> William Shaw Mason, *A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland drawn up from the communication of the clergy* (3 vols, Dublin, 1814), i, 97.

<sup>129</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 272.

<sup>130</sup> *DEP*, 9 Oct. 1824, p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> Mason, *A statistical account of Ireland*, i, 98.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

Oatlands supplied skilled Protestant-educated servants for the Protestant gentry. The Roman Catholic parish priest of Ardraccon, Rev. Michael Branagan (1746–1833), claimed that the Thompsons' school was a proselytising school. A Catholic girl, Mary Byrne, aged six or seven, had been '*brought to church against her will*' along with several other destitute servants from Dublin, he accused.<sup>134</sup> Rev. Henry Mungo Waller's (1759–1831) wife provided a school on the Waller estate of Allenstown for the tenants' children. She paid the teacher's salary and provided her with a free house and a cultivated garden.<sup>135</sup>

Charlesfort, the home of the Tisdall landlords, adjoined the Waller estate. Michael Tisdall IV (1776–94) was an early proponent of the evangelical movement and led the first Temperance Movement in Meath in 1788.<sup>136</sup> This well-intentioned Protestant evangelical landlord established a private school in Charlesfort for his tenants and others sometime before his death. It was one of those private schools discussed by Brian McNamee that was judged to be 'as proselytising as their patrons wished them to be'.<sup>137</sup> Michael's son, Charles Arthur Tisdall (1803–35), took over the 3,000-acre family estate and the school in 1803. Like all Protestant evangelicals Tisdall was convinced that the only way to salvation was through the Scriptures. As a magistrate, he saw at first hand the seedier side of life. He wished to acquaint his tenants and workers with the Word of God so that they might become better men and better Christians; the 'moral amelioration' of Irish Catholics was a common objective of evangelicals. It was one of the 'exclusive' objectives of the IS.<sup>138</sup> Charles A. Tisdall was one of the Irish Society's earliest supporters and contributed £1 2s. 9d. in 1822 which entitled him to a year's membership.<sup>139</sup> Irish was the vernacular language of many of Tisdall's tenants. The language spoken by the poorer classes in the area was described as 'a jargon of Irish and English and perhaps Welsh and Saxon', by the rector of Ardraccon, Rev. Richard Moore.<sup>140</sup> Rev. Michael Branagan

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<sup>134</sup> Michael Branagan, *A letter from the Rev. Michael Branagan to Charles A. Tisdall of Charlesfort in the County Of Meath Esq. containing strictures on the circular letters of that gentleman addressed to the congregation of Cortown Chapel* (Dublin, 1823), p. 14.

<sup>135</sup> Mason, *A statistical account of Ireland*, i, 97–8.

<sup>136</sup> Healy, *History of the diocese of Meath*, ii, 61.

<sup>137</sup> McNamee, 'The 'Second Reformation' in Ireland', p. 51.

<sup>138</sup> Rule I of the Irish Society, Irish Society minutes, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a)).

<sup>139</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts etc.*, no. 5 (Dublin, 1822), p. 39.

<sup>140</sup> Mason, *A statistical account of Ireland*, i, 95.

usually explained the Gospel first in Irish and then in English to his Catholic congregation.<sup>141</sup>

Charles A. Tisdall was also one of the Irish Society's earliest beneficiaries. The Society supplied Charlesfort School with a Catholic schoolmaster in 1821 and gave it twelve Testaments in June the same year with a further twenty-five portions in May 1822.<sup>142</sup> Two Church of Ireland evangelical societies supported it. The ADV, a Protestant proselytising society, gave it financial aid. Tisdall's school received assistance from the Kildare Place Society to 5 January 1824.<sup>143</sup> By February 1823 Tisdall was superintendent of three schools for the Irish Society in north Meath, inspecting and reporting not only on his own school but also on Carlanstown Sunday School and Bective School.<sup>144</sup>

On 17 March 1823, five months after William Magee delivered his charge in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Charles A. Tisdall precipitated his own public religious controversy in Ardraccon. He penned an open letter to the Catholic congregation of Cortown Chapel defending the teaching of the Scriptures in Charlesfort School without note or comment, a practise greatly opposed by the Roman Catholic Church and by the parish priest, Rev. Branagan. Branagan might well have been under pressure in 1823 from Bishop Patrick Plunkett (1778–1827), to suppress Charlesfort School. When Plunkett had visited Ardraccon six months previously on 22 September 1822, he noted in his episcopal diary that some children were 'sent to forbidden schools'.<sup>145</sup> The parish of Ardraccon had been beleaguered with proselytism in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Gideon Ouseley (1762–1839), the chief itinerant Methodist preacher in 1820s Ireland had, according to Branagan, preached to the Catholics in Cortown Chapel.<sup>146</sup> One of the *New Lights* had targeted a parishioner with a 'book of dangerous tendency', *The advocate of the primitive church*,<sup>147</sup> although no evidence other than Branagan's has been unearthed

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<sup>141</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 274.

<sup>142</sup> IS meeting, 11 May 1822 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 116 (b)).

<sup>143</sup> Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, *Twelfth report of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland to which the accounts for the year, ending January 5<sup>th</sup> 1824; an appendix, containing extracts of correspondence, etc.; and a list of donors and subscribers are adjoined* (Dublin, 1824), pp 70–1.

<sup>144</sup> IS meeting, 7 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 138 (a)), the Bective school may have been on the Headfort estate, Kells, which was close to Charlesfort and near where Lord Bective was landlord.

<sup>145</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, iii, 442.

<sup>146</sup> Charles A. Tisdall, *To the congregation of Cortown Chapel*, dated Charlesfort, 12 Nov. 1824, p. 1.

<sup>147</sup> No author stated, *The advocate of the primitive church* (Dublin, 1823).

to substantiate this.<sup>148</sup> As the Catholic parish priest, it was Branagan's pastoral duty to protect his flock from being seduced from their religion. 'I conceive it my duty to oppose such schemes, and to preserve from straying the flock entrusted to my care.'<sup>149</sup>

Tisdall's letter to the congregation of Cortown was in response to Branagan's constant haranguing of Charlesfort School. He stated that Branagan's only objection was the reading of the Scriptures in the school without note or comment. In his letter, Tisdall recalled the 'considerable expense' that he, personally, had incurred in erecting and fitting out Charlesfort school-house and the 'great pains' he had taken to secure a proper Roman Catholic Master. He alleged that Branagan called the words of Scripture 'stuff and nonsense', and not a 'fit book for children', or 'unlearned men'.<sup>150</sup> Branagan publicly accused Tisdall of proselytising his Catholic parishioners 'under the mask' of educating them.<sup>151</sup> He charged him with tyranny and persecution and threatening his tenants with dismissal from their employment if they did not send their children to the school. Branagan advised Tisdall that it would fit him better to improve the conditions of his tenants and labourers 'and leave the choice of schoolbooks and moral instruction to the pastors, who are as well qualified to decide on such matters as yourself.'<sup>152</sup>

The bitter debate between Tisdall and Branagan was carried out in a series of published pamphlets. Branagan was a scholar and a theologian with a 'felicitous mode of communicating', 'pithy and pointed';<sup>153</sup> Tisdall was a magistrate and an able debater. The pamphlets were ridden with invective and counter-invective, allegations of name-calling and superstitious practices. Charles A.'s father, Michael Tisdall IV, was accused of breaking the holy water bottles of the Catholic women returning from chapel. Particularly vitriolic was the insinuation that his sudden premature death was as a consequence of his being cursed for burning Roman Catholic catechisms.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Michael Branagan, *A letter from the Rev. Michael Branagan to Charles A. Tisdall of Charlesfort in the County Of Meath Esq. containing strictures on the circular letters of that gentleman addressed to the congregation of Cortown Chapel*, 30 Aug. 1823 (Dublin, 1823), p. 14.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Charles A. Tisdall, *To the congregation of Cortown Chapel* (Dublin, 1823), pp 29–43.

<sup>151</sup> Branagan, *A letter from the Rev. Michael Branagan to Charles A. Tisdall*, p. 14.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>153</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 273.

<sup>154</sup> Branagan, *A letter from the Rev. Michael Branagan to Charles A. Tisdall*, p. 14.

Gideon Ouseley, the Methodist preacher, entered the ‘pamphlet war’, in support of Tisdall. W. J. Battersby, a leading Catholic activist supported Branagan, the parish priest, in a series of pamphlets. He had started his own printing press that year. Battersby went on to become the voice of Irish Catholics in 1836 when he initiated, published and edited *A complete Catholic registry*.<sup>155</sup> Two others identified as broom-makers, became embroiled in the controversy that lasted for five and a half years. A ‘Protestant besom-maker from Ongherstown’ defended Tisdall; a ‘Catholic besom-maker from Jamestown’ supported Branagan.<sup>156</sup>

Charles A. Tisdall was quite adamant that he had no interest in converting Catholics from their religion. Nevertheless, he claimed that three Catholics on his estate, Rooney, ‘the fat weaver of Martry’ and Lynch had converted to Protestantism, with the resultant moral improvement of the converts.<sup>157</sup> The Tisdall free school was still in operation in 1835 and catered for forty-four of the estate’s labourers’ children.<sup>158</sup>

The activity of the three ‘Bible-bit’ gentry-families in Ardraccan parish represents an early evangelical mission in action in the diocese of Meath. The first-hand account of the religious controversy over Charlesfort School, portrayed in the Tisdall-Branagan pamphlets, shows the bitter nature of the struggle for souls on both sides of the religious divide.

### **From the ‘Evangelical Awakening’ to the ‘Second Reformation’ in counties Cavan, Louth and Down (1823-25)**

In County Cavan, the Evangelical Awakening was identified with the powerful and influential evangelical Farnham family. The fifth baron of Farnham, John Maxwell Barry (1767–1838), was son of Henry Maxwell, bishop of Meath, Thomas Lewis O’Beirne’s predecessor. The Maxwell family was part of the ‘Bible gentry’, linked by marriage and friendship with other evangelical families, the Rodens of Tollymore,

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<sup>155</sup> William J. Battersby, *The Catholic Directory, Almanac and Registry of the whole Catholic World: With Complete Ordo in English, by the Catholic Priest Approved of for that Purpose* (Dublin, 1836–c.1870); Robin J. Kavanagh, ‘Religion and illustrated periodicals the 1830s’ in James H. Murphy (ed.), *The Oxford history of the Irish book in English 1800–1891* (Oxford, 2011), iv, 342–56, 355.

<sup>156</sup> A besom was a broom made out of broom or heather tied around a stick and was used for sweeping. Ongherstown and Jamestown were both situated on bog-land where broom was plentiful.

<sup>157</sup> Letter from Charles A. Tisdall to Rev. Michael Branagan (in private possession of Anthony Tisdall, Ascot, Berkshire, England).

<sup>158</sup> *First report of the commissioners of public instruction, Ireland*, HC 1835 [45] [46] [47], xxxiii.1, 829, xxxiv. 1, 141.

the Wingfields of Powerscourt in County Wicklow and the Dalys in County Galway. The second baron of Farnham's only surviving child and heir, Lady Harriet, married Denis Daly of Galway. Their son was the leading evangelical, Robert Daly, 'Protestant Pope', founder of the Irish Society, and later bishop of Cashel.<sup>159</sup> The Farnham base was centred on Cavan town. From the Catholic point of view the Farnhams were fanatical proselytisers or, as the Cork politician and Catholic convert, William O'Neill Daunt (1807–94), described them rather ungraciously, 'victims of a spiritual insanity derived from an infernal source.'<sup>160</sup>

John Maxwell Barry, the fifth baron of Farnham<sup>161</sup> took over the 29,000-acre Farnham estate in 1823.<sup>162</sup> The Bible was the foundation of Farnham's principle of estate management as he explained in *A statement of the management of the Farnham estate* published in 1830. His chief motivation was 'the moral and religious character and improvement of the tenantry'.<sup>163</sup> While the seeds for the Second Reformation were sown on the Farnham estate in 1823, the Second Reformation proper did not commence there until 1826 and is outside the time frame of this chapter. Hempton and Hill argue that apart from in County Cavan, the Second Reformation had little impact in Ulster, other than on the earl of Roden's estates in Counties Down and his Louth estate which was in Leinster.<sup>164</sup> Robert Jocelyn, the third earl of Roden, was a staunch evangelical Protestant and prominent figure in the Second Reformation at national level, and at local level. In 1822, he was president of the Sunday Schools Society of Ireland. Like other evangelicals of his social standing, he was involved with a number of religious and charitable institutions which promoted the Second Reformation — the Hibernian Bible Society, the Evangelical Alliance, the Protestant Orphan Society, and the Irish Society, of which he was vice-patron. The Jocelyn home at Tollymore Park, County Down, was run on strongly spiritual lines with the earl leading services in his private chapel and teaching in Sunday schools on his estate. Along with Charles A. Tisdall, Charlesfort, and Mrs A.

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<sup>159</sup> James Godkin, *Ireland and her churches* (London, 1867), p. 322.

<sup>160</sup> Daniel Gallogly, *The diocese of Kilmore 1800–1950* (Cavan, 1999), p. 31.

<sup>161</sup> John Maxwell Barry, the fifth baron had inherited the estate from his cousin, John James Maxwell, the second earl of Farnham, on whose death the earldom became extinct.

<sup>162</sup> Edmund Lodge, *The peerage of the British Empire as at present existing arranged and printed from the personal communications of the nobility to which is added the baronetage* (London, 1840), pp 218–9.

<sup>163</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p. 84.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Thompson, Oatlands,<sup>165</sup> he was among the first landlords to secure Irish Society teachers for schools on his estate. Lord Roden built a schoolhouse in Fofany in the parish of Kilcoo, County Down, which he superintended for the IS. He also superintended the IS school in Dundalk.<sup>166</sup>

Evangelicalism and the work of God were integrated into daily matters of estate management on estates in County Armagh also.<sup>167</sup> George Montagu (1799–1855), Viscount Mandeville until 1843, married Millicent Sparrow. She was niece of Arthur Acheson (1776–1849), the second earl of Gosford, Markethill, County Armagh. Gosford was a leading figure in the Irish Society from 1818.<sup>168</sup>

Hempton and Hill also contend that the Second Reformation acted ‘as a stimulus to other, less controversial, aspects of evangelical enthusiasm’.<sup>169</sup> These less controversial aspects included membership of Bible societies. The McClintocks of Drumcar and the Fortescues of Stephenstown, County Louth, mixed in the same evangelical circle as the Roden family. John McClintock, junior, and Chichester Fortescue were secretaries of the Louth Bible Society in 1826; Roden was president.<sup>170</sup> The McClintocks and Fortescues intermarried; Marianne McClintock (1767–1849), Henry McClintock’s sister, married Matthew Fortescue. The diaries of Marianne and John, sister and brother, afford a glimpse at the religious practices of two families that moved in the same social and evangelical circles as Lord and Lady Jocelyn of Dundalk House, County Louth, and Tollymore, County Down.<sup>171</sup> Attending sermons was a frequent and socially suitable pastime among the evangelical gentry of the nineteenth century. The McClintocks attended Gideon Ouseley’s sermons in Dundalk on three occasions in 1827. Henry’s wife, Bessy, took Louis, Marianne, and Louisa to hear Ouseley preach against Popery on Sunday 4

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<sup>165</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, pp 467–70.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 185, 187, 230, 540.

<sup>167</sup> See John R. R. Wright, ‘An Evangelical estate, c. 1800–55: the influence of Evangelicalism on the Manchester Estate Co Armagh with particular reference to the moral agencies of William Loftie and Henry John Porter’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Ulster College, the Northern Ireland Polytechnic [Jordanstown], 1982), chapters four and five, pp 43–208.

<sup>168</sup> IS, *First annual report*, 1819, p. ii.

<sup>169</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p. 87.

<sup>170</sup> *DJ*, 26 Aug. 1826, p. 1.

<sup>171</sup> Noel Ross (ed.), ‘The diary of Marianne Fortescue, 1797–1800’ in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, xxiv, no. 3 (1999), pp 357–379; Noel Ross (ed.), ‘The diary of Marianne Fortescue, 1797–1800’ in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, xxiv, no. 3 (1999), pp 357–79; Pádraig Ó Néill (ed.), *Journal of Henry McClintock* (Dundalk, 2001).

February 1827 where they met Lord and Lady Jocelyn.<sup>172</sup> The McClintocks heard Ouseley twice more that year when he preached on extreme unction on 19 March<sup>173</sup> and against the Popish doctrine of purgatory on 27 May.<sup>174</sup> In March 1828, they heard the archbishop of Armagh, Lord John George de la Poer Beresford (1822–62) speak on the same platform as Mr Bardin who preached against Transubstantiation.<sup>175</sup> They attended two more of Bardin’s church lectures the same month.<sup>176</sup> These were probably Lenten lectures as Easter Sunday fell on 6 April in 1828.

## Conclusion

The Protestant pan-evangelical revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was the framework within which the evangelical missionary movement in Ireland operated.<sup>177</sup> Initially, evangelicals were concerned solely with the internal reorganisation and the revitalization of their own church and its members. This was typified by one early proponent of evangelical revival, the reforming Anglican bishop of Meath, Thomas Lewis O’Beirne, in whose diocese the Kingscourt District was situated. His large-scale reforming programme saw eighty-two churches built and parish schools established. By 1825, the Meath diocese had twenty-seven schools supported by the (ADV).

The influence of the wealthy and influential Bible-bit gentry, the Trinity College, Dublin, set of clergy and laity alike and those who preached in or flocked to Bethesda Chapel contributed to the explosive success of evangelicalism in Ireland in the early decades of the nineteenth century. These fashioned its particular character and content. The evangelical mission was reflected in the many voluntary societies they established in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. They extended its mission to the conversion of those outside the Protestant faith. Education was the conduit through which this conversion would be achieved. The organisational cells of evangelicalism were the proselytising bible societies which were to the forefront in

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<sup>172</sup> Ó Néill (ed.), *Journal of Henry McClintock*, p. 493.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 496.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 500.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 524.

<sup>176</sup> Ó Néill, *Journal of Henry McClintock*, pp 524–5.

<sup>177</sup> See Holmes, ‘Irish evangelicals and the British evangelical community’, pp 209–34.



establishing free schools where the Scriptures were read without note or comment.<sup>178</sup> The ensuing inter-denominational religious controversy was intense. It is powerfully displayed in the five-and-half-year pamphlet war between Charles A. Tisdall and Rev. Michael Branagan in Ardraccan parish in the diocese of Meath in the 1820s and sets the scene for the next chapter.

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<sup>178</sup> Holmes, 'The reform of piety in Ireland', p. 76.

## Chapter 2

### **Kingscourt ready for the ‘Second Reformation’: the early pivotal years of the Irish Society 1822 to 1825**

#### **Introduction**

The year 1822 is chosen as the starting date for this chapter. The year 1822 marked the beginning of the Second Reformation in Ireland. It was also the year that a circulating master from the Irish Society met with the Presbyterian minister, Rev. Robert Winning, a local event that would have repercussions for forty years.<sup>1</sup> The chapter closes in December 1825 at what was to prove a pivotal date in IS operations in Kingscourt. It marked the end of its early, low-key phase and heralded the entry of Winning and the Kingscourt District onto the national and international stage.

Andrew Holmes has shown that evangelicalism ‘developed within specific geographical, cultural and denominational contexts that shaped the tone and content of the movement.’<sup>2</sup> The first section of this chapter looks at the geographical, denominational space and culture of the Kingscourt District. The aim of this section is to determine the extent to which these factors left the Kingscourt District ready for the Second Reformation in 1822, and why the ‘tone and content’ of one evangelical society, the Irish Society, was particularly suited to the region. The second section explores the origin, structure and growth of the IS. The final section concentrates on the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District between 1822 and 1825. It concludes with a note on the economic cycle and natural disaster that caused famine, disease and death in Ireland in the early nineteenth century. It introduces the Society’s driving force there and the key personality across the thesis, Rev. Robert Winning.

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<sup>1</sup> HBS, *Extracts from minutes etc.* (1823), p. 19 cited in Pádraig de Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827* (Dublin, 2009), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> A. R. Holmes, ‘Covenanter politics: evangelicalism, political liberalism and Ulster Presbyterians, 1798–1914’ in *The English Historical Review*, cxxv, no. 153 (2010), pp 340–69, p. 347.

## Geographical and religious denominational space: the Scottish Presbyterian community in the area

Geographical and religious denominational make-up was intertwined in the area around Kingscourt because of its particular settlement history. Kingscourt town is situated in the barony of Clankee (Clanchy) (Map 2.1) in east Cavan near the Meath-Cavan border. Kingscourt lies on the boundaries of counties Louth, Meath and Monaghan.

Map 2.1 The Baronnie of Clanchy c. 1609



Source: The Baronnie of Clanchy c. 1609, Papers relating to a Plantation Survey of 1609, (TNA, SP 64/1, MPF 1/54), courtesy TNA

Topographically, Kingscourt and the surrounding area lie in the drumlin belt of north-Leinster and south-Ulster, which stretches from Moynalty, Castletown and Lobinstown in north-Meath across the county boundaries of Cavan, Monaghan and Louth. The drumlin belt is bisected by the Kingscourt Rift Valley, a deep geological rift in the landscape occupied by a number of lakes and wide stretches of bog land and floodplains.<sup>3</sup>

The barony of Clankee occupied a marginal position on the southern borders of Ulster and was included in the Plantation of Ulster. The land was confiscated and

<sup>3</sup> See, Robert Meehan, *The making of Meath: the county's natural landscape history* (Navan, 2012).

granted to English and Scottish settlers in 1609 who undertook to settle an agreed number of English or Scottish families. In 1618, Nicholas Pynnar was appointed a commissioner to survey and to make a return of the proceedings and performance of conditions of the undertakers, servitors, and natives planted in the six escheated counties of Armagh, Tyrone, Donegal, Cavan, Fermanagh, and Derry.<sup>4</sup> Pynnar's Survey shows that 286 families were planted in County Cavan. Cavan was divided into seven 'precincts' corresponding to the seven baronies when the commissioners mapped the counties of Ireland. The precincts were further divided into 39 'proportions', ranging in acreage from 1,000 to 2,000 acres. Four of these proportions were in the precinct of Clankee, which was allotted to the Scottish settlers, William Bailie, John Rolleston, William Dunbar and Lord d'Aubigny. The latter three sold their lands to three Hamilton brothers, sons of the vicar of Dunlop in Ayrshire. The eldest Hamilton brother, James, had received large tracts of land previously in Ards in County Down. He invited other Scottish Presbyterians to occupy his lands as tenants. Sir Hugh Montgomery and Sir Arthur Chichester in south Antrim also received lands thus establishing a strong Scottish Presbyterian presence in the north-eastern corner of Ireland.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Hall in *The history of Presbyterianism in east Cavan and a small portion of Meath and Monaghan* has suggested that following the 1641 rebellion the old Scottish Presbyterian community in Clankee died out. Some returned to their homeland or emigrated. The area was replanted with Presbyterians of Scottish descent from the north-eastern counties of Down and Antrim. Hall holds that 'this congregation takes its place in the first rank of the post-revolution [1641] erections in the midland and southern counties of Ulster'.<sup>6</sup> The first Presbyterian congregation in the area was formed in Breakey in 1700, in the civil parish of Moybologue and the barony of Lower Kells in County Meath. It lay on the Meath-Cavan border on the Kells-Kingscourt road, about three miles from Kingscourt. The congregation was known as Breachy (Banbreaky, later Breakey) and Kells. In 1700, the Tyrone

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Harris, *Hibernica: or some ancient places relating to Ireland* (Dublin, 1770), p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> R. J. Hunter, *The Ulster Plantation in the counties of Armagh and Cavan, 1608-41* (Belfast, 2012), p. 399; George Hill, *An historical account of the Plantation in Ulster at the commencement of the seventeenth century, 1606-1620* (Belfast, 1877) includes details from Pynnar's Survey for barony of Clanchy, pp 451-74.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Hall, *The history of Presbyterianism in East Cavan and a small portion of Meath and Monaghan* (Dublin, 1912), chapter VI, section I, p. 1.

Presbytery supplied ‘Breachy’ with preaching.<sup>7</sup> From Breakey, the Presbyterian religion spread to Bailieborough and Ballyjamesduff in County Cavan and the regions all around.<sup>8</sup> In 1804, the congregation was registered as Ervey and Carrickmaclim.<sup>9</sup> It is likely that the focus of the Presbyterian congregation was transferred from Breakey to Ervey, a short distance away, and nearer Kingscourt in 1807. The date corresponds with the completion of a fine complex of buildings in Ervey (Figures 2.2, 2.3), comprising a church, a meeting hall and a house during the incumbency of the Kingscourt native, Rev. William Moore (1768–1811).

**Figure 2.1 Ervey Presbyterian Church and house, completed 1807**



Source: 1807 is date over door, Marion Rogan, May 2014

**Figure 2.2 Ervey Presbyterian meeting-hall, completed 1807**



Source: Marion Rogan, May 2014

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

Carrickmaclim, near Carrickmacross in County Monaghan, was situated on the Shirley estate in the civil parish of Magheross and the barony of Farney and was nine miles from Kingscourt (Map 4.3). Like Ervey, Carrickmaclim was an old and settled Presbyterian community. Evelyn Shirley (1812–82), the local landlord wrote that in 1695 Carrickmaclim, along with twenty townlands ‘was rented by Mr George Maxwell, a middleman, who seems to have brought a colony from Scotland with him, the ancestors of many of the tenants in this neighbourhood.’<sup>10</sup> The Synod of Ulster recorded in 1840 that ‘memorialists and their ancestors had worshipped at Carrickmaclim for the last century’.<sup>11</sup>

### **Culture, language and literary tradition in Oriel**

Culturally, and linguistically, the drumlin belt of north-Meath and south-Ulster belonged to the Oriel district, where a sub-dialect of Oriel Irish was spoken into the early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The early seventeenth-century plantations, a limited one in Antrim and Down in 1606, and the more extensive Plantation of Ulster in 1609, saw Ulster planted with English and Scottish settlers from the Anglican and Presbyterian faith traditions. The Irish-speaking Roman Catholic population was squeezed into the poorer, more remote region of Oriel, where it was isolated by the planted counties to the north, and the Pale on the south.<sup>13</sup> ‘Traditional Gaelic learning, supported for centuries by Ulster chieftains in the elite bardic schools, was displaced. Elements of it were pushed into Oriel by the calamitous impact of the Nine Years’ War, defeat at Kinsale, the Flight of the Earls and the Plantation of Ulster, also.’<sup>14</sup> The ‘classic bardic poetry of the professional poets demanded several years of careful training’, and was no more.<sup>15</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century, the literary centre of gravity had shifted to Oriel. Oriel produced a large number of Irish poets, scribes and scholars. ‘Ceantar na

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<sup>10</sup> Evelyn Shirley, *The history of the county of Monaghan* (n. p., 1845), p. 528.

<sup>11</sup> *NT*, 14 July 1840, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster: people, songs and traditions of Oriel* (Dublin, 2003), p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Morris, ‘The modern Irish poets of Oriel, Breiffne, and Meath’ in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, i, no. 1 (July, 1904), pp 54–9, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> Séamus Mac Gabhann, ‘A people’s art: the great songs of Meath and Oriel’ in *Ríocht na Midhe*, ix, no 4 (1998), pp 103–20.

<sup>15</sup> Morris, ‘The modern Irish poets of Oriel, Breiffne, and Meath’, p. 55.



n-amhrán' (the district of the song) on the slopes of Sliabh Gullion in south County Armagh included Creggan, the home of the O'Neills of the Fewes from the fifteenth century. Art Mac Cumhaigh (c.1738–1773) immortalised Creggan in his vision poem, *Úrchill an Creagáin*.<sup>16</sup> The county continued to be a hive of literary activity into the early nineteenth century,<sup>17</sup> where Art Bennett (Art Mac Bionáid) (1793–1879), Ballykeel<sup>18</sup> and Rev. Patrick Lamb (c. 1790–1860), some of Art Mac Cumhaigh's descendants, continued the tradition.

Concentrated around north-Meath in the early nineteenth century were the poets, Peter Galligan, James Tevlin, Peter Daly, Matthew Monaghan, Peter Coalrake, Philip Thornton, Michael Clarke, Aodh Mac Domhnaill,<sup>19</sup> James Martin and Rev. Paul O'Brien, Cormeen, first professor of Irish in St Patrick's College, Maynooth.<sup>20</sup> They wrote in both Irish and English; some wrote in macaronic verse where they combined both the Irish and English languages in the same poem.<sup>21</sup> Unlike the sponsored poets of the bardic schools, this new age of poets came from the ordinary working-class poor and, as Douglas Hyde claimed, 'poetry became the handmaid of the many, not the mistress of the few.'<sup>22</sup> Gallegan and Mac Domhnaill received patronage for a period from the Gaelic revivalist and Belfast industrialist, Robert Shipboy MacAdam (1808–95). Other patrons included Edward Augustus Maginnis (1821–77)<sup>23</sup> Newry, Arthur Brownlow, Lurgan, Patrick Lambe, Cullyhanna, and

<sup>16</sup> Éinrí Ó Muirghease (ed.), *Abhráin Airt Mhic Chubhthaigh, agus abhráin eile* (Dundalk, 1916); Tomás Ó Fiaich, 'Art MacCooey and his times' in *Éigse Oiriaila* (1973); for more recent literary tradition in Oriel, see Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster*.

<sup>17</sup> See A. J. Hughes, 'Gaelic poets and scribes of the south-Armagh hinterland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' in A. J. Hughes and William Nolan (eds), *Armagh history and society* (Dublin, 2001), pp 505–57.

<sup>18</sup> See Tomás Ó Fiaich and Liam Ó Caithnia (eds), *Art Mac Bionaid: dánta* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1979).

<sup>19</sup> Fionntán de Brún suggests from a study of Mac Domhnaill's *Fealsamhnacht* (Philosophy) that it is likely that Mac Domhnaill's ancestors arrived in Oriel as part of the population displacement after the plantation of Ulster in 1609, Fionntán de Brún, 'Expressing the nineteenth century in Irish: the poetry of Aodh Mac Domhnaill (1802–67)' in *New Hibernia Review/Irish Éireannach Nua*, xv, no 1. (Earrach/Spring 2011), pp 81–106, p. 83; Colm Beckett, *Aodh Mac Domhnaill: poet and philosopher* (Dundalk, 1987); Colm Beckett, *Aodh Mac Domhnaill: dánta* (Dublin, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Séamus Mac Gabhann, 'Forging identity: Michael Clarke and the hidden Ireland' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, ix, no.2 (1996), pp 73–95; 'Continuity and transition in the poetry of James Tevlin (1798–1873)' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, xvi (2005), pp 83–104; 'Fr. Paul O'Brien of Cormeen (1763–1820), folk-poet and Maynooth professor' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, x (1999), pp 125–51; 'Salvaging cultural identity: Peter Gallegan (1792–1860)' in *Ríocht na Midhe* ix, no. 1 (1994–5), pp 70–87.

<sup>21</sup> E.G.F. and Henry Morris, 'Peadar Ó Geallacain: a great Irish scribe' in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, vi, no. 4 (1928), pp 167–80; Mac Gabhann, 'Continuity and transition in the poetry of James Tevlin (1798–1893)', pp 83–104.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas Hyde, *The literary history of Ireland* (London, 1899), p. 542.

<sup>23</sup> Diarmuid Breathnach agus Máire Ní Mhurchú, 'Mac Aonghusa, Éamann, Augustus (c. 1821–1877), ainm.ie (<https://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=1104>) (14 May 2018).

Samuel Coulter, Dundalk.<sup>24</sup> Many like Peter Gallegan were obliged to take up teaching in hedge schools as a livelihood.<sup>25</sup>

Printed works in Irish were few at the time. Only the Protestant edition of the Bible, sponsored by Bishop Bedell of Kilmore around 1640, and some Protestant religious works were available in print. In an effort to convert the Irish-speaking Catholic population on Rathlin Island off the Antrim coast to Protestantism in 1722, the Anglican bishop of Down and Dromore, Francis Hutchinson, commissioned a bilingual catechism in phonetic script in 1722.<sup>26</sup> Commonly called the Rathlin Catechism, the oldest Irish language book printed in Ulster, produced little results in terms of converts at least. Roman Catholic bishop, James Gallagher's *Sixteen sermons in Irish in an easy and familiar stile, on useful and necessary subjects* (Dublin, 1736), and John Heely's *seanmóirí* [sermons] in phonetic script in 1797 were used by Catholic priests to preach to their congregation.<sup>27</sup>

Manuscripts in Irish, on the other hand, were plentiful in the Oriel district. These were being transcribed by Irish scholars in the locality who purchased or borrowed them for that purpose. Rev. Robert Winning wrote that 'in several places, we find them, from acquaintance with manuscripts in the Irish character, capable of reading an Irish book, though they have never seen an Irish word in print'.<sup>28</sup> The strong scribal tradition and the network of scholars, translators and hedge school teachers in south Ulster and north Leinster would prove important to the progress of the Second Reformation and to Rev. Winning.

## Economy

Described as 'the year without a summer', 1816 heralded a three-year global cycle of extreme weather conditions following the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia

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<sup>24</sup> Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster*, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Mac Gabhann, 'Salvaging cultural identity', pp 70–87.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Hutchinson, *The Church catechism in Irish, with the English placed over against it in the same karacter. together with prayers for sick persons, and some texts of Scripture and a vocabulary explaining the Irish words that are used in them* (Belfast, 1722).

<sup>27</sup> Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, 'The Catholic Church and the Irish language in the eighteenth century' in James Kelly and Ciarán Mac Murchaidh (eds), *Irish and English: essays on the Irish linguistic and cultural frontier, 1600–1900* (Dublin, 2012), pp 162–217, p. 185.

<sup>28</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts* 20 (1 Apr. 1826), pp 55–6.



in April 1815.<sup>29</sup> Famine, disease (typhus and cholera), and death devastated Ireland as elsewhere. The failure of the 1816 harvest saw grain shortages in 1817. Provisions were in short supply and ‘remarkably dear’, the County Cavan poet and scholar, and later an Irish Society teacher, Francis Brennan, recorded.<sup>30</sup> There was a food riot on the Navan-Nobber road in north-Meath.<sup>31</sup> The many partial failures of the potato crop during the period 1816 to 1822 aggravated the distress caused by the economic downturn that followed the ending of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The domestic linen industry which had supplemented the income of small farmers and cottiers in the locality had also collapsed and money was scarce. The downturn in the economy coupled with the network of Irish-speaking poets, scribes, scholars, and hedge school teachers in north-Meath and south-Ulster would prove an important fillip to Winning and the evangelical Irish Society in 1822.

**Rev. Robert Winning, ‘indefatigable superintendent’<sup>32</sup>**

The geographical, physical, denominational, cultural and economic space that was the Kingscourt area in 1822 created an environment within which an evangelical crusade might prosper. It would take an individual or individuals, however, to harness the favourable conditions and drive such a crusade. When Rev. Moore, minister of Ervey and Carrickmaclim, died in 1811, the united congregations requested the Presbytery in Ballybay, County Monaghan, to supply them with a minister ‘in the usual manner’ in July.<sup>33</sup> The ‘usual manner’ included preaching before the congregations for a certain number of Sundays. Robert Winning (c. 1791–1861) was despatched on trial for four Lord’s days. Winning impressed the church elders, and at a meeting in February 1812, a ‘unanimous call had been drawn up’ for him ‘to be their constant employer’. In June 1812, the congregations requested the Presbytery to proceed with his ordination.<sup>34</sup> Winning was ordained 9 June 1812 at the age of twenty-one.

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<sup>29</sup> See Gillen D’Arcy Wood, *Tambora: the eruption that changed the world* (Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>30</sup> Francis Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland; wherein is contained a brief view of the evils that proceed from connecting with the Irish Society; also, the rise and fall of the Irish language; and the effects of Bible reading, in the most ancient dialect of the Celtic tongue* (Belfast, 1844), p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> *LCEG*, 16 June 1817, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, p. 9

<sup>33</sup> Ballybay Presbytery, like other presbyteries, was responsible for a number of Presbyterian congregations in a specific geographical area.

<sup>34</sup> Hall, *Presbyterianism in east Cavan*, chapter VI, section I, p. 19.

Figure 2.3 Robert Winning c. 1791–1861

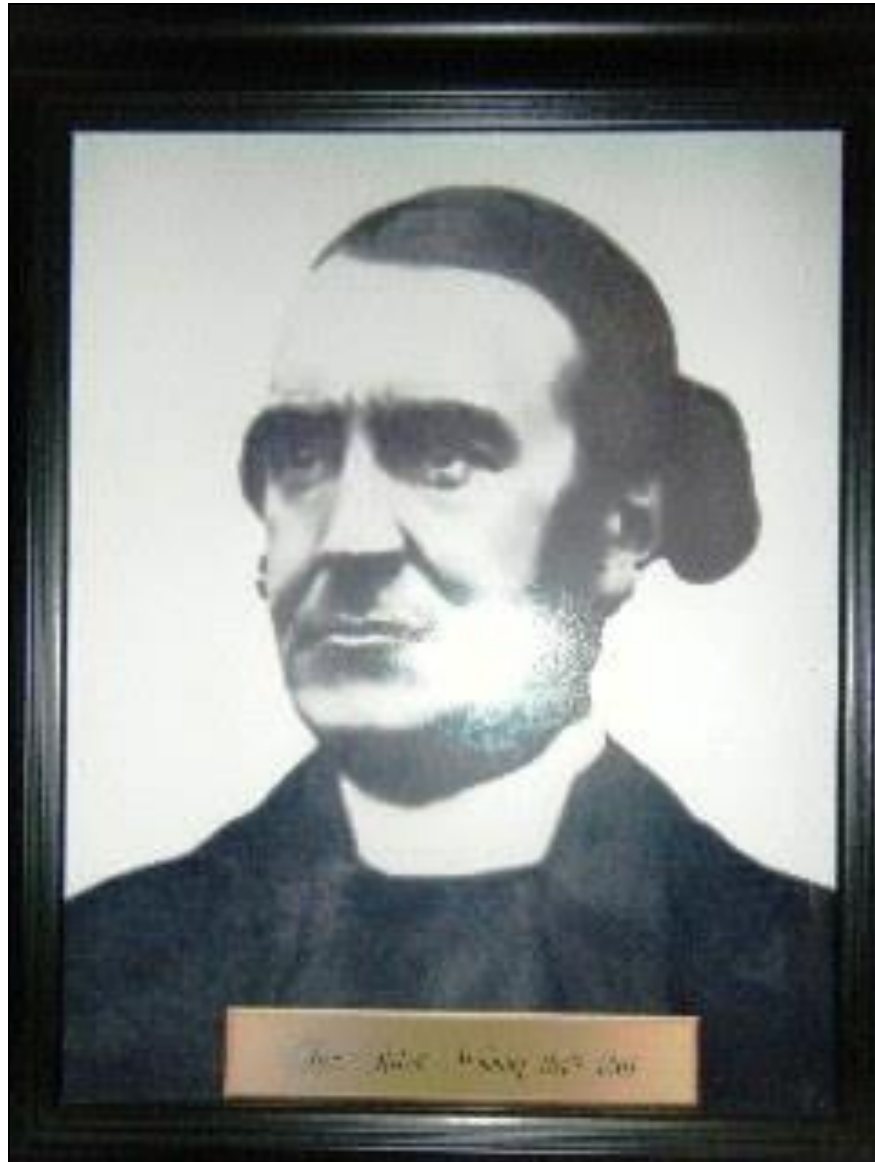


Photo by Marion Rogan, courtesy of Rev. William Stacey, St Erman's Church of Ireland, Kingscourt, July 2014

Robert Winning was born c. 1791 in Broomhill, Stewartstown, County Tyrone, the first son of Robert Winning, a farmer.<sup>35</sup> His residence in 1810 was given as Knockingrow, Stewartstown.<sup>36</sup> It does not appear that the Winning family came to Tyrone with the first wave of Scottish Presbyterians in 1611.<sup>37</sup> Neither does the name

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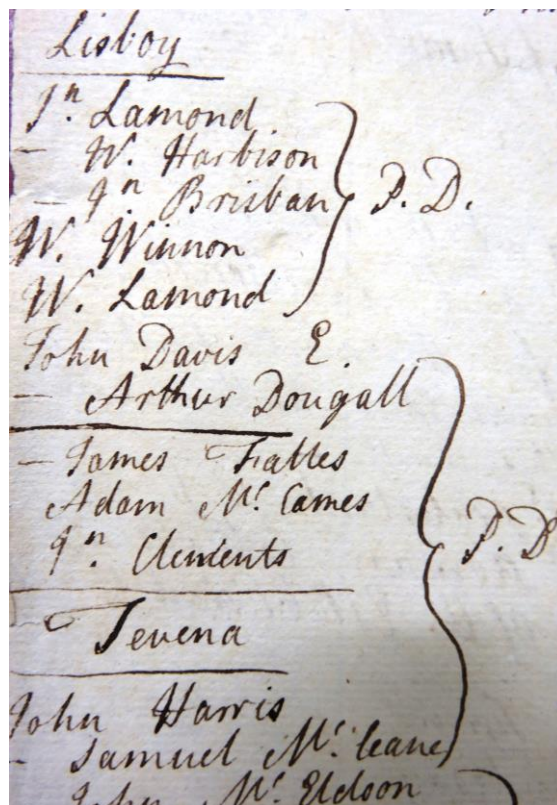
<sup>35</sup> W. D. Killen, *History of the Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and biographical notices of eminent Presbyterian ministers and laymen, with introduction and notes* (Belfast, 1886), p. 143

<sup>36</sup> *BCC*, 5 Feb. 1810, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Hill, *An historical account of the plantation of Ulster*, pp 185–6. It does not appear that Winning was among the first wave of Scottish Presbyterians that came to the Stewartstown area of Tyrone with

Winning appear in the Hearth Rolls for 1664 or 1666.<sup>38</sup> The Winnings might have come to Tyrone during the reign of William III of England, Scotland and Ireland, William of Orange (1650–1702), when 50,000 to 80,000 arrived in Ulster from Scotland.<sup>39</sup> Robert’s grandfather, W[illiam] Winnon [Winning], was described as a landholder living in Lisboy in the parish of Ardtrea, County Tyrone, in the Religious census of 1766 (Figure 2.4).<sup>40</sup>

**Figure 2.4 Religious census 1766 for the parish of Ardtrea, County Tyrone, showing W. Winnon [Winning] Protestant Dissenter living in the townland of Lisboy, County Tyrone, 25 April 1766**



Source: Religious census 1766, Ardtrea, diocese of Armagh (NAI, parliamentary returns 650, bundle 76, 2/436/2)

Winning himself stated that he had been born and educated a Presbyterian, and was always destined for the Presbyterian ministry by ‘godly and pious parents’.<sup>41</sup> Nothing is known of Winning’s early education. However, a contemporary and

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Lord Ochiltree and his son in 1611, who, as an undertaker, received the two proportions of Revellinowtra and Revellineightra (3,000 acres).

<sup>38</sup> Hearth money rolls for County Tyrone 1664 (PRONI, MIC 645/1); Hearth money and subsidy rolls for Counties Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone, Londonderry and Donegal (PRONI, T 307).

<sup>39</sup> W. McAfee and V. Morgan ‘Population in Ulster, 1660–1760’ in Peter Roebuck (ed.), *Plantation to partition: essays in Ulster history in honour of J. L. McCracken* (Belfast, 1981), pp 46–63, p. 58.

<sup>40</sup> Religious census 1766, Ardtrea, diocese of Armagh (NAI, parliamentary returns 650, bundle 76, 2/436/2), not paginated.

<sup>41</sup> *BNL*, 19 September 1843, p. 1.

neighbour, later a Presbyterian minister, Rev. J. D. Gibson, wrote that sometime in 1806 when he was fifteen years old, he attended ‘a tolerably respectable school’ connected with the Presbyterian Church in Brigh, run by a Mr William Gillen form Cuilly [Quilly], Moneymore (eight miles north of Stewartstown).<sup>42</sup> Brigh, founded in 1630, was the nearest Presbyterian Church to both Winning and Gibson.<sup>43</sup> At a meeting of the Tyrone Presbytery in Cookstown in August 1809, Gibson, along with other young candidates for the Presbyterian ministry, was examined in Greek, and approved of prior to his going to college in Glasgow.<sup>44</sup> It is possible that Winning followed the same course of education; he might have been among the young candidates examined with Gibson in August 1809. There were no facilities in Ireland to study for the Presbyterian ministry at the time. The Presbyterian Church had always insisted that its ministers should have a university degree in an academic discipline other than Divinity, and Irish students were sent to universities in Scotland until the founding of the Belfast Academical Institute in 1814.<sup>45</sup> Winning was educated at Glasgow University and conferred with the degree of Master of Arts in 1810.<sup>46</sup>

A determining factor in Winning’s appointment to Ervey and Carrickmaclim in 1812 was likely to have been his ability to ‘preach in Irish’.<sup>47</sup> William Conner, agent to the Irish Society, who visited Kingscourt in mid-December 1823, described Kingscourt as a ‘very Irish country’ and ‘heard of several who can read Irish’.<sup>48</sup> Whitley Stokes (1763–1845), physician and professor of medicine in Trinity College, Dublin, wrote earlier in 1806 that ‘it is said that in Meath Irish was mostly spoken’. He also calculated that half the population of Winning’s native County Tyrone was still Irish-speaking in 1806.<sup>49</sup> Yet, contrariwise, John McEvoy wrote in his statistical

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<sup>42</sup> Family memoirs of Rev. J. D. Gibson and Mrs Gibson their ancestors and other relatives, 1865 (PRONI, MS T3716/1): for Brigh Presbyterian Church, see Laurence Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland: an illustrated history* (Holywood, 2006), p. 348; Robert Shaw Fisher, “*The Brigh*”: *worship and service over 375 years* (Brigh, County Tyrone, 1990). Scotsman Rev. William Dyal ministered to Scottish planters as early as 1614. A new stone church was built in The Brigh in 1783.

<sup>43</sup> James Glendinning, *On the meeting house steps: two hundred years of Presbyterianism in Stewartstown, 1788–1988* (Stewartstown, 1988), p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> PRONI, MS T3716/1, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> James G. Ryan, *Irish Church records* (Dublin, 1992), p. 75.

<sup>46</sup> *BCC*, 19 May 1810, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> James McConnell (compiled), S. G. McConnell (revised), F. J. Faul and David Stewart (arranged), *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church, 1613–1840* (Belfast, 1951), entry no. 1,014.

<sup>48</sup> William Conner, *A journal for the information of the committee of the Irish Society, written from Kells, 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1823* in *Quarterly extracts* 11 (Jan. 1824).

<sup>49</sup> Christopher Anderson, *Memorial on behalf of the Native Irish, with a view to their improvement in Moral and Religious Knowledge, through the medium of their own language* (London, 1815), pp 28–

study of Tyrone (1802) that English was the language spoken in Tyrone, ‘except through the wilds of Munterloney’ in the Sperrin Mountains.<sup>50</sup> Winning’s native Stewartstown lay approximately sixteen miles from Munterloney.<sup>51</sup> The Irish language survived in parts of Tyrone until the 1950s.<sup>52</sup> The dialect spoken was a sub-dialect of Oriel Irish, the same dialect as that in Kingscourt.<sup>53</sup> An Irish-speaking tradition existed among both clerical and lay Ulster Presbyterians, Roger Blaney claimed, and the Irish Presbyterian church could communicate with the Catholic Irish-speaking population.<sup>54</sup> It is likely then that Winning was not only able to preach in Irish,<sup>55</sup> but also fit to communicate effectively with the native Irish-speaking population of north-Meath. Whether he spoke Scots Gaelic, Irish or a mixture of both is not known.<sup>56</sup>

### **Rev. Winning, Presbyterianism and the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District**

The townland of Ervey and the town of Kingscourt were in the Church of Ireland and the Roman Catholic diocese of Meath. Rev. Winning, an Ulster Presbyterian, was under the episcopal jurisdiction of neither. The Presbyterian Church in Ulster was a self-regulating community and virtually independent of the wider structures of church and state. It was ‘in effect a state within a state’, Hempton and Hill stated.<sup>57</sup> Desmond Bowen identified ‘the rivalry’ between the Established Church and the

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9, citing Whitley Stokes, *Observations on the necessity of publishing the scriptures in the Irish language* (Dublin, 1806). For Whitley Stokes, see Joseph Liechty, ‘Irish evangelicalism, Trinity College Dublin, and the mission of the Church of Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century’ (PhD thesis in History, St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, 1987), chapter 7; for more recent scholarship, see Jacqueline Hill, ‘Whitley Stokes senior (1763–1845) and his political, religious and cultural milieu’ in Elizabeth Boyle & Paul Russell (eds), *The tripartite life of Whitley Stokes (1830–1909)* (Dublin, 2011), pp 14–28.

<sup>50</sup> John McEvoy, *Statistical survey of the county of Tyrone, with observations on the means of improvement; drawn up in the years 1801, and 1802 for the consideration, and under the direction of the Dublin Society* (Dublin, 1802), p. 201.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Gabrielle Maguire, *Our own language: an Irish initiative* (Clevedon, Avon, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Éamonn Ó Tuathail (ed.), *Scéalta Mhuintir Luinigh: Munterloney folk-tales* (Dublin, 1933), p. xiv.

<sup>54</sup> See Roger Blaney, *Presbyterians and the Irish language* (Ulster Foundation Society, 1996); Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, *Hidden Ulster, Protestants and the Irish language* (Belfast, 1995).

<sup>55</sup> *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church*, no. 1,014.

<sup>56</sup> Séan de Bhulbh in *Sloinnte na h-Éireann: Irish surnames* (Limerick, 1997), p. 373, stated that the surname Winning, (rare in Ireland, except in Belfast and Antrim), is an abbreviation of Mac Gile Winnin of Galloway in western Scotland.

<sup>57</sup> David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740–1890* (London, 1992), pp 35–6.

Presbyterian Church as ‘intense’ in *The Protestant crusade in Ireland*.<sup>58</sup> Winning himself remarked that Ulster Presbyterians scorned the Episcopal Church and prided themselves as being the true defenders of Protestant and British culture in the north of Ireland.<sup>59</sup>

In January 1816, Winning opened a boarding and day school, Kingscourt Licensed Classical and Commercial School, at his residence in Corrinchego (Corrinshigo) House, near Kingscourt. Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, History, Elocution, Composition, Stenography, Latin, Greek, French, Hebrew, Geography and the use of the Globes, were on the curriculum.<sup>60</sup> The income from boarders generated between thirteen and fourteen hundred pounds annually, Winning declared in 1822. The annual income from day pupils realised about another hundred pounds.<sup>61</sup> The examinations in Corrinshigo were ‘attended by several respectable Gentlemen and Clergymen of the neighbourhood’.<sup>62</sup> The ‘respectable’ men in 1817 were three Trinity College Dublin graduates, Reverends William Pratt, Kingscourt, Brabazon Disney, Syddan, and Patrick Cummins, Magheraclone. Reverends M. de Courcy, University of Oxford and Patrick White (1785–1862), Glasgow College, also attended.<sup>63</sup> Many of the students, who received premiums and certificates in December, were sons of the gentry or clergymen; some were local, others came from further afield in Ireland. It is likely that they attended Corrinshigo in preparation for entry to Trinity College, Dublin; two of the prize-winners, Cornelius Caleb Barnes and Arthur Radcliffe, later entered Trinity College (Table 2.1).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800–70: a study of Protestant-Catholic relations between the Act of Union and disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978), pp 29–30.

<sup>59</sup> *BNL*, 19 Sept. 1843, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> *DEP*, 16 Dec. 1815, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> *DEP*, 22 June 1822, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> *DEP*, 1 Jan. 1822, p. 1

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, *DEP*, 25 June, 1822, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> G. E. Burtchaell and T. U. Sadlier (eds), *Alumni Dublinenses* (3 vols, Dublin, 1935), i, 41, ii, 690.

**Table 2.1 Prize-winners in Rev. Winning's Classical and Commercial School, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, December 1817**

Student's name	Address (where given)	Comment
J. M. Atkin		Possibly day pupil
W. Fleming		Possibly day pupil from Bawnbreakey
J. Kellit		Possibly son of Rev. William Kellett, Church of Ireland, Moynalty, or John Kellett, Kilmainhamwood, day pupil
J. Sheils		Possibly day pupil
T. Battersby		Possibly day pupil
W. Owens	Stephenstown, Co. Louth	
Cosby Adams	Northlands, Kingscourt, County Cavan	Church of Ireland Minister in 1834
C[ornelius] C[aleb] Barnes	Mahonstown, Kells. Co. Meath	Church of Ireland
T. Battersby	Bobsville, Kells	
J. Barnes	Westland, Moynalty, Co. Meath	
J. Disney	Syddan-Hill, Co. Meath	Became rector of Slane
T[homas] Barnes	King's County [Offaly]	
A. Radcliff	Skyrne Glebe, Co. Meath	
J. Battersby	Bellany, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath	
R. Godby	Dundalk, Co. Louth	
C. Gr[e]sson	(Rectory)	Son of rural dean of Mullingar, Meath diocese
R. Battersby		Possibly day pupil
F. Brady		Possibly day pupil
F. B. O'Reilly		Possibly day pupil
W. Cowan		Possibly day pupil
F. McNeal		

Source: Compiled by Marion Rogan 2016 from *Dublin Evening Post*, 22 June, 1822, p. 2; 25 June, 1822, p. 4, G. E. Burtchaell and T. U. Sadlier (eds), *Alumni Dublinenses* (3 vols, Dublin, 1935); Samuel Percy Lea, *The present state of the Established Church, or Ecclesiastical registry of Ireland, for 1814* (Dublin, 1814)

By 1817, Winning had established a network of acquaintances in the Established Church through his Corrinshigo School. It is likely that it was through these contacts that Winning's 'unjust prejudices' against the Established Church first began to fade. In common with other Presbyterians, Winning viewed the Established Church as 'a mere civil institution' and Presbyterianism, 'the only Scriptural form of Church government'. However, 'acquaintance with Episcopal ministers entirely removed all his prejudices and led him to a quite contrary conclusion'.<sup>65</sup>

In 1822, Henry Pakenham, a rural dean in the diocese of Meath, visited Kingscourt to examine the Sabbath School and other scholars.<sup>66</sup> This was probably a

<sup>65</sup> *BNL*, 19 Sept. 1843, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

catechetical examination for the Association for Discountenancing Vice. There were a number of ADV schools in the north-Meath part of the diocese by 1822 (Table 1.1). Pakenham had examined 133 scholars at the ADV catechetical examination in Kingscourt in 1821.<sup>67</sup> Winning attended the 1822 examination. He marvelled at Pakenham's familiarity with his Bible. He adjudged him an excellent clergyman, in whom he found 'a zeal, a devotedness' and 'greater attention to parochial duties', than he had expected in a Church of Ireland clergyman, which 'partially removed his imbibed prejudices'.<sup>68</sup> The qualities which Winning recognised in Pakenham might be partially attributable to Thomas Lewis O'Beirne's reforming work during his episcopacy in the diocese (1798–1823).

Hearing the Home Missionary Society preachers in Kingscourt removed the last of Winning's doubts, and led him to agree with a fellow Tyrone Presbyterian clergyman who commented: 'Winning compared with these men, we are at the Zero point.'<sup>69</sup> The timing of the sea-change in Winning's attitude towards the Established Church in 1822 is noteworthy. It coincided, by chance or deliberately, with the launch of the Second Reformation in Ireland. It also coincided with Winning's decision to advertise the Corrinshigo School for sale in June 1822. The reason given was that he was 'intending to with-draw from School-Teaching'.<sup>70</sup> It is difficult to unravel if he had other motives for selling. Despite its income of between fourteen and fifteen hundred pounds a year, perhaps the venture had proved unprofitable in the harsh economic conditions prevailing in Ireland from 1816 to 1822, the years of the school's existence. Evidence would suggest, however, that Winning had decided to devote his energies and expertise more explicitly to the evangelical mission.

Robert Winning was seven years old at the time of the 1798 Rebellion, when, in response to the crisis, the Methodist Missionary Conference initiated an itinerant Irish-speaking mission to the Catholic population. The Irish-speaking Charles Graham preached in Stewartstown in Winning's youth in 1802.<sup>71</sup> In the immediate

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<sup>67</sup> Charles R. Elrington, *A sermon preached before His Excellency, Richard, Marquess Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant, President, and the members of the Association Incorporated for Discountenancing Vice and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion, appendix v* (Dublin, 1822), p. lxxi.

<sup>68</sup> *BNL*, 19 Sept. 1843, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *DEP*, 22 June 1822, p. 2; 25 June 1822, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Whelan, Irene, *The Bible war in Ireland: the 'Second Reformation' and the polarization of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800–1840* (Wisconsin, 2005), p. 88, citing Charles Graham to Thomas Coke, 11 Sept. 1802 (SOAS/MMSA [Ireland] 1802–25, box 74).



aftermath of the uprising Seceder Presbyterian ministers established the short-lived (1798–c.1804) Evangelical Society of Ulster (ESU) in Armagh city, 10 October 1798.<sup>72</sup> Modelled on the Church Missionary Society, the ESU was an interdenominational, ecumenical and evangelistic society. It ‘urged ministers, regardless of affiliation, to unite in a common cause to preach the gospel to the lost.’<sup>73</sup> Although the ESU movement was local and short-lived, it was part of an international pan-evangelical movement and underlined the evangelical efforts of Presbyterians on-going in Ulster during Winning’s formative years.<sup>74</sup> The Society provided a template for one of its founders, Glasgow University graduate and Presbyterian, Rev. Thomas Campbell (1763–1854), to set up the Christian Association of Washington, as part of the Second Great Awakening of the United States of America.<sup>75</sup> Was Robert Winning’s evangelical zeal inspired by the evangelical societies of his childhood?

By 1818, Winning was one of eight vice-patrons and vice-presidents of Bailieborough Hibernian Bible Society. Rev. Patrick White,<sup>76</sup> Presbyterian minister of the neighbouring congregation Corglass, Bailieborough, was one of two secretaries.<sup>77</sup> It was also in 1818 that the IS was established. In his early days as a Presbyterian minister, Winning wrote that he had been ‘prejudiced against the Irish Society from ignorance’.<sup>78</sup> Sometime in August 1822, two months after Winning announced the sale of his Classical and Commercial School,<sup>79</sup> James Reilly, a circulating master for the Irish Society, visited Winning. Winning decided to give Reilly a fair trial, and gathered together a ‘number of very ignorant Catholics’ to hear him preach.<sup>80</sup> The effect that Reilly’s reading of the Irish Scriptures had on his audience convinced Winning of the worth of the Society’s operations, and prompted

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<sup>72</sup> See Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, pp 37–40.

<sup>73</sup> Douglas A. Foster, Anthony L. Dunnevant, Paul M. Blowers, D. Newell Williams (eds), *The encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell movement*, (Michigan, Cambridge 2004), pp 314–5.

<sup>74</sup> Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p. 37.

<sup>75</sup> See Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and address* (centennial ed., Pittsburgh, 1908 of Pennsylvania, 1809).

<sup>76</sup> For brief biographical note on White, see Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland*, p. 287.

<sup>77</sup> HBS, *The twelfth report of the Hibernian Bible Society* (Dublin, 1818), appendix, p. 55.

<sup>78</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, p. 51, citing HBS, *Extracts from the minutes of the Committee* [20 Nov. 1823], and *abstract of the report of a subcommittee relative to the printing of the Bible in the Irish language and character* ([Dublin], (1823), p. 19.

<sup>79</sup> *DEP*, 22 June 1822, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, p. 51, citing HBS, *Extracts from minutes etc.* (1823), p. 19.

him to approach it for help in establishing schools in his area.<sup>81</sup> Winning became convinced that the Irish language was likely to be a popular and effectual instrument in the scriptural instruction of the people.<sup>82</sup> In his history of the Irish Society, Henry Joseph Monck Mason later wrote that James Reilly was cheerful, zealous and indefatigable and was incapable of perceiving Irish language as ‘a medium of heresy’. Reilly spoke of religion with all the ‘bigotry of Romanism’ and then ‘enthusiastically and unsuspectingly read, from the Irish Testament, texts the most opposed to its errors’.<sup>83</sup>

Was Reilly’s serendipitous meeting with Winning a chance encounter though? It would appear not. Evidence suggests that Reilly’s arrival on Winning’s doorstep was deliberate on Reilly’s part. One James Reilly had been teaching in Charlesfort School on the Tisdall estate near Kells in 1822. Tisdall sent him to Dublin to be examined by Thaddeus Connellan (c.1780–1854).<sup>84</sup> Connellan found Reilly competent, and sent him back to County Meath to open a Sunday School at Balrath, near Kells, for which Reilly completed an appointment form 17 September 1822.<sup>85</sup> More significantly, the IS had also appointed Reilly as a circulating master on a salary of £10 per annum, on condition that Winning and J. O. Cuffe esq. would superintend his circuit. Reilly would not have had an IS circuit to manage had he not secured an approved superintendent.

### **The Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language: Kingscourt, 1822 to 1825**

The precursor to the IS in the Kingscourt area was the ADV (Table 1.1). The ADV opposed the idea of instruction in the vernacular, holding that English was the universal medium of instruction even in Irish-speaking areas. Its principal objection

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Henry Joseph Monck Mason, *Reasons and authorities and facts afforded by the history of the Irish Society respecting the duty of employing the Irish language*, etc. (Dublin, 1832), p. 21.

<sup>83</sup> Henry Joseph Monck Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish society, established for promoting the education of the native Irish, through the medium of their own language* (Dublin, 1844), pp 24–5.

<sup>84</sup> For Connellan, see Lesa Ní Mhunghaile, ‘Connellan, Thaddeus (Thady)’ in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *D IB* (9 vols, Cambridge, 2009), ii, 750. Between June 1820 and 1822, Connellan was involved with the Irish Society School at 16 St Stephen’s Green, Dublin, where Irish schoolmasters could be examined, any deficiencies in their qualifications addressed, and recommendations made.

<sup>85</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, p. 433, citing IS scrapbook, with list of duties, ICM.

was ‘that too many people in Ireland would, if it were possible, stop the progress of the Irish language towards total disuse, in order to give increased likelihood of some future plan of separation and independence.’<sup>86</sup> In 1818, the IS was established in Dublin by some ADV members whose proposal to set up Irish schools and distribute Irish Scriptures had been rejected by the ADV. The disaffected members, among them Rev. Richard Wynne (1762–1835), Rev. Robert Daly (1783–1872) and Henry Joseph Monck Mason resolved to form a separate voluntary society, but modelling it as far as possible on the ADV.<sup>87</sup> The IS was established on the same basis as the Gaelic School Society in the Highlands of Scotland and the Welsh Scriptural School in Wales. Both of these imparted scriptural instruction to the native population through the medium of their own language.<sup>88</sup>

The founding members of the IS spent two years attempting to quell the prevailing prejudice against scriptural education in the Irish language, collecting corroborating evidence, and canvassing support. In order to justify to its many opponents the rationale for using the Irish language as a medium for Scriptural instruction, the Society published the results of its research. In 1818, William Sankey’s, *A brief sketch of various attempts which have been made to diffuse a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, through the medium of the Irish language*, was printed at a cost exceeding £100.<sup>89</sup> It highlighted the successes of similar societies in Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man that used the vernacular as the medium of scriptural instruction, which gave a much-needed fillip to the fledgling Irish Society. It distributed 2,000 copies of the book which traced the principle on which the Irish Society was formed to the Act of Uniformity of Elizabeth I of England. It was demonstrated then that the idea of preaching the Scriptures in the unknown language of English to an Irish-speaking population was as pointless as teaching them the Scriptures in Latin.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5, citing ADV minutes, 7 May 1807.

<sup>87</sup> Joseph D’Arcy Sirr, *A memoir of the Honorable and Most Reverend Power Le Poer Trench, last archbishop of Tuam* (Dublin, 1845), pp 549–50; Sirr was the Irish Society’s first honorary secretary.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas Russell’s account of the Kingscourt District, extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of education enquiry, 20 Dec. 1834, pp 26–9 (copy of Russell’s letter in RIA, OS memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan).

<sup>89</sup> [William Sankey], *A brief sketch of various attempts which have been made to diffuse a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures through the medium of the Irish language* (Dublin, 1818); this work was published anonymously. However, the IS thanked William Sankey ‘for his very able work’ at the Society’s first annual meeting, 17 Mar. 1819, IS, *First Report*, 1819, p. vi.

<sup>90</sup> IS, *First annual report*, 1819, p. 3.

The ADV was not alone in its objection to the vernacular policy. Almost all of ‘the pious and reflecting gentlemen of the country .... were opposed to us originally’, Monck Mason told the commissioners of education inquiry in 1825.<sup>91</sup> Sir John Newport, Newpark, Waterford, baronet and graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, refused to be associated with an institution that was formed with the intention of instructing the Irish poor through the medium of their own language.<sup>92</sup> Charles Edward H. Orpen (1791–1856), member of the Irish Society’s first committee,<sup>93</sup> was obliged to rebut twenty commonly-held prejudices against teaching Irish speakers to read the Bible in Irish in 1821.<sup>94</sup> Orpen refuted charges that the Irish language was in decline, that it was a ‘barbarous language’, difficult to learn, with a number of dialects. Other opponents proclaimed that the IS system was ‘a novel scheme, unsanctioned by great, wise, or good men of past ages’. It was seen by some to be promoting the Irish language, although its primary objective clearly ‘disclaimed at all time, all intention of making Irish a vehicle for the communication of general knowledge.’<sup>95</sup>

The Irish Society was not the first evangelical society to use the vernacular policy, but it was the most important expression of this policy in Ireland.<sup>96</sup> The London Hibernian Society (1806), which concentrated on education from 1814, and the Baptist Irish Society, founded in London (1814),<sup>97</sup> were also involved with scriptural instruction in Irish. However, the teaching of Irish was only one part of these societies’ work. The Baptist Irish Society had three aims; to employ itinerant evangelists, establish schools and distribute tracts.<sup>98</sup> Its efforts were directed

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<sup>91</sup> Examination of Monck Mason, 22 Jan. 1825, *First report on education in Ireland*, HC 1825 (400), xii.1, appendix no. 250.

<sup>92</sup> IS meeting, 27 Nov. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 8 (b)).

<sup>93</sup> IS meeting, 23 June 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 1 (a)); IS, 1821, p. 5; Orpen, a medical doctor, was inspired by evangelical and educational zeal and established the Deaf and Dumb school in Claremont [Claremount], Glasnevin, Co. Dublin, see Rachel Pollard, *The Avenue: a history of the Claremont Institution* (Dublin, 2006); ‘Deaf and Dumb Institution, Claremount’, *Dublin Penny Journal*, iv, no. 196 (2 Apr. 1836), pp 313–5.

<sup>94</sup> Charles Edward H. Orpen, *The claim of millions of our fellow-countrymen of present and future generations to be taught in their own and only language; the Irish* (Dublin, 1821).

<sup>95</sup> Rule 1 of the Irish Society’s general rules, IS, *First annual report*, 1819, pp iii–iv.

<sup>96</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 3–9.

<sup>98</sup> See Baptist Irish Society, *The Baptist Irish Society; its origin, history, and prospects: with an outline of the ecclesiastical history of Ireland, and a lecture, enforcing its claims to the sympathy and efforts of Christians in Ireland* (London, 1845); G. W. Rusling, ‘The schools of the Baptist Irish Society’ in *The Baptist Quarterly: The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society*, xxii, no. 8 (1968), pp 429–42, p. 429.

particularly at Irish-speaking populations in the south and west of Ireland.<sup>99</sup> The IS, on the other hand, concentrated entirely on enabling illiterate Irish speakers to read the Scriptures in Irish, while providing them with the opportunity to learn the ‘more civilised language’, English. No other Society, it held, did or could do what it endeavoured to accomplish among upwards of two million ‘perishing souls of our nearest neighbours’.<sup>100</sup> The Society’s stated ‘exclusive objects’ in 1818 were:

to instruct the native Irish, who still use their vernacular language, how to employ it as a means for obtaining an accurate knowledge of English ... and for this end, and also their moral amelioration to distribute among them the Irish version of the Scriptures by Archbishop Daniell and Bishop Bedell, the Irish Prayer Book, *where* ACCEPTABLE, and such *other* works as may be necessary for school books<sup>101</sup>

### **Administration of the Irish Society at national level**

The Irish Society comprised a patron, president, vice-patrons, vice-presidents, treasurers, secretaries and committee members. The office of patron was reserved for members of the Royal family or His Majesty’s representative in Ireland. Vice-patrons were drawn from among the temporal and spiritual peers of the realm.<sup>102</sup> Not all of the prominent personages who were invited to become patrons and vice-patrons accepted the Society’s offer. Prince William Frederick, duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh (1776–1834), declined the office in 1819 pleading the many applications he received to support public institutions as his excuse.<sup>103</sup> The Church of Ireland archbishop of Tuam, William Beresford (1743–1819), however, accepted and became its first patron.<sup>104</sup> The Society had greater difficulty filling the offices of vice-patron. The bishop of Gloucester (1815–24), the Honourable Henry Ryder, refused the position in 1818 since ‘it might be regarded as an intrusion, as no Irish Prelates were as yet placed at the head of the Society.’<sup>105</sup> So, too, did the Lord Primate of Ireland, William Stuart, who was determined ‘not to lend his name to any

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<sup>99</sup> Rusling, ‘The schools of the Baptist Irish Society’, p. 431.

<sup>100</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, pp 27–8.

<sup>101</sup> Rule I of the general rules of the Irish Society, IS meeting, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, pp 1 (a)–1 (b)).

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule IX.

<sup>103</sup> IS meeting, 15 Jan. 1819 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 10 (a)).

<sup>104</sup> IS meeting, 6 Nov. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 6 (b)).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

Society whose proceedings he was unable to attend'.<sup>106</sup> Robert Henry Herbert Pembroke (1791–1862), twelfth earl of Pembroke, declined until he knew more about the organisation.<sup>107</sup> The 2nd Earl of Clare, John FitzGibbon (1792–1851), also declined vice-patronage.

The first vice-patrons of the IS were John Chambré Brabazon (1772–1851), tenth earl of Meath (1797–1851), Archibald Acheson (1776–1849), second earl of Gosford, James Hewitt (1750–1830), second Viscount Lifford and dean of Armagh (1796–1830) and Robert Edward King, first Viscount Lorton (1773–1854). The inaugural committee meeting was held in 16 Sackville Street, Dublin on 23 June 1818<sup>108</sup> at the Committee House for Charitable Institutions.<sup>109</sup> The address was shared over the years by many other bible and religious societies.<sup>110</sup> The IS applied to the trustees of the Committee House for a room for an office in October that year at an annual rent of £20 and fitted it up with the 'least expensive manner'.<sup>111</sup> It needed an assistant secretary by 24 October 1818,<sup>112</sup> and successfully petitioned John Lees, secretary to the Post Office in Ireland, for free postage for its correspondence.<sup>113</sup>

The Society was managed by a treasurer, secretary, three auditors, and a committee of twenty-one members of the Church of England, resident in Dublin or its neighbourhood, elected each year at its annual meeting on 17 March.<sup>114</sup> Country members would be co-opted to the committee when needed.<sup>115</sup> Initially, the committee meetings were held fortnightly, but by August 1823, the increasing workload necessitated weekly meetings. The attendance of three members constituted a quorum. Prominent committee members included Rev. Robert Daly,

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<sup>106</sup> IS meeting, 13 Nov. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 8 (a)).

<sup>107</sup> IS meeting, 18 Dec. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 9 (a)).

<sup>108</sup> IS meeting, 23 June 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, pp 1 (a)–1(b)).

<sup>109</sup> IS, *First annual report*, 1819, p. 10.

<sup>110</sup> Societies with offices at 16 Upper Sackville Street, Dublin in 1844, were: the Established Church Home Mission, Irish Auxiliary to the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, of Irish Evangelical Society, Sunday School Society of Ireland; next-door at 15 Upper Sackville Street were the Hibernian Missionary Society, Auxiliary to the London Missionary Society, Religious Tract and Book Society, at 9 Upper Sackville Street was the Hibernian Bible Society, James Fraser, *A handbook for travellers in Ireland, descriptive of its scenery, towns, seats, antiquities, etc., with various statistical tables, also with an outline of its mineral structure, a brief view of its botany, and information for anglers* (Dublin, 1844), p. 37.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3 (a)).

<sup>113</sup> IS meeting, 6 Nov. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a)).

<sup>114</sup> Rule XIV; if 17 March fell on Sunday the meeting was deferred to Monday 18 March.

<sup>115</sup> Rules XIV, XVI, of general rules of the Irish Society contained in minutes of IS meeting, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, pp 1 (a)–(b)).

rector of Powerscourt, County Wicklow, and later bishop of Cashel, Emly, Waterford and Lismore, Henry J. Monck Mason and Robert Jocelyn, third earl of Roden, Tollymore, County Down and Dundalk, County Louth. Other leading figures were Dr. Charles Edward Herbert Orpen, Major Henry Charles Sirr (1764–1841), and Rev. Joseph D’Arcy Sirr (1794–1868), the Society’s secretary in the early years.

In its first year, the committee of the IS sought and received advice, financial support and books from bible societies and auxiliary societies in England and Scotland. Bath Irish Education Society in England forwarded a copy of its regulations in September 1818.<sup>116</sup> In November of the same year, Mr Robert Paul (1788–1866), a member of the committee of the Gaelic Society for circulating schools in the Islands and Highlands of Scotland, travelled from Edinburgh (1811) to share information about its schools in Scotland.<sup>117</sup> ‘Scotland is busy with her pen, and her purse, and her example to support you,’ the IS told its audience at the anniversary meeting on 17 March 1822. England offered her ‘patronage and contribution’.<sup>118</sup> Yet the Society’s total income for its first two years to 17 March 1819 amounted to a mere £316 0s. 8d. of which Edinburgh Society in Scotland donated £21 14s. and Bath Irish Society, England donated £58 2s. 6d.<sup>119</sup>

Since the IS proposed to teach the Roman Catholics to read the Bible in Irish, it needed primers and bibles. The first year of the Society’s work was pre-occupied with acquiring books for its ‘mechanical’ work, namely teaching Irish-speakers to read the Irish language.<sup>120</sup> It decided to distribute among them Irish-language primers, Bibles, extracts from the Scriptures of the version of Archbishop Daniell and Bishop Bedell, and where appropriate, without giving offence, the Book of Common Prayer. It determined to print these books itself, or, if granted them by other Societies, to become the medium for their distribution.<sup>121</sup>

The IS sought books from the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS).<sup>122</sup> The BFBS was established in London in 1804 in response to an increased demand for Bibles from the many evangelical societies in early nineteenth century Britain.

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<sup>116</sup> IS meeting, 24 Sept. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644), pp 2 ((a)–2 (b)).

<sup>117</sup> IS meeting, 13 Nov. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 7 (a)), p. 7; Society for the Support of Gaelic schools, *The annual report of the Society for the Support of Gaelic schools: with an appendix respecting the present state of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1811).

<sup>118</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, p. 6.

<sup>119</sup> IS, *First annual report*, 1819, p. 17.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 3–4, 6–7, 14.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 25–6.

<sup>122</sup> IS meeting, 8 Jan. 1819 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 10 (a)).

The Society's sole purpose was the distribution of the Scriptures. In Ireland, the Hibernian Bible Society (HBS) in 1808 evolved from the earlier Dublin Bible Society, established in 1806.<sup>123</sup> The purpose of the HBS, like its parent society, the BFBS, was to increase the number of Bibles in circulation.<sup>124</sup> The BFBS donated 100 copies of part of the new Irish-language edition of the New Testament, to the Irish Society.<sup>125</sup>

The IS petitioned the Prayer Book and Homily Society (PBHS) for copies of its edition of the Book of Common Prayer in Irish to distribute among the Church of England clergymen in Ireland.<sup>126</sup> The objective of the PBHS, founded in London in 1812, was to print and distribute the Book of Common Prayer in languages needed by missionaries. It granted the 100 copies to the IS together with a further fifty which they were to try and sell.<sup>127</sup> The IS purchased 12,000 Proverbs in quires (26 Proverbs bound), and 900 spelling-books in quires in the Irish language and character from a surplus stock of the Dublin printer, Graisberry. Graisberry had them printed in the expectation that they might be needed for Irish schools.<sup>128</sup> His ledgers reveal runs of one to five thousand copies of schoolbook titles printed from the 1770s to the early 1800s, and from six to ten thousand *Catechisms*.<sup>129</sup>

The IS applied to KPS to publish a spelling and reading book in sheets,<sup>130</sup> and wrote to the BFBS for a grant of Irish Testaments in the Irish character.<sup>131</sup> The outstanding 1,280 copies of a 5,000 order from the BFBS were received in November 1824.<sup>132</sup> The demand for these was so great, Monck Mason told the commissioners of education inquiry, that the IS was 'compelled' to divide a large number of unbound copies into five portions for the use of its scholars.<sup>133</sup> It applied to the Prayer Book and Homily Society in London for copies of the Irish Prayer

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<sup>123</sup> For HBS, see Dudley Levingstone Cooney, *Sharing the Word: a history of the Bible Society in Ireland* (Dublin, 2006); Barbara McCormack, 'Using the Irish language to further the aims of Bible Societies' in Hill and Lyons (eds), *Representing Irish religious histories*, pp 165–76.

<sup>124</sup> Cooney, *Sharing the Word*, p. 28.

<sup>125</sup> IS, *Second annual report*, 1820, p. 17.

<sup>126</sup> IS meeting, 15 Jan. 1819 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 10 (a)).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> IS, *First annual report*, 1819, p. 14.

<sup>129</sup> Máire Kennedy, 'Reading print, 1700–1800' in Raymond Gillespie & Andrew Hadfield (eds), *The Oxford history of the Irish book*, iii, *The Irish book in English, 1500–1800* (Oxford, 2006), pp 146–68, p. 151.

<sup>130</sup> IS meeting, 6 Nov. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 6 (b)).

<sup>131</sup> IS meeting, 8 Jan. 1819 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 10 (a)).

<sup>132</sup> IS meeting, 5 Nov. 1824 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 14 (b)).

<sup>133</sup> Mason, *First report on education in Ireland*, HC 1825 (400), xii.1, appendix no. 250.



Book in 1819.<sup>134</sup> The Religious Tract Society of London (RTSL) placed 2,300 Irish-language tracts at its ‘disposal’ in the year 1823/1824. These were, however, in the Roman character.<sup>135</sup> The IS itself printed an elementary book and, by 1825, was printing a Book of Common Prayer for the Prayer Book and Homily Society (1812). Henry Joseph Monck Mason, James Digges Latouche, Robert Newenham and other IS members had also printed, at their own expense and for free distribution, a selection of Anglican Church collects and prayers.<sup>136</sup>

The Society used other publications such as the Hibernian Bible Society’s *The book of Psalms* (1825) until the Old Testament became available in Irish type in 1827.<sup>137</sup> It relied heavily on Irish books on religious and linguistic subjects published by Thaddeus Connellan, a Sligo Roman Catholic and an Irish scholar, who had converted to Protestantism.<sup>138</sup> The pocket-sized book, *An English Irish dictionary*,<sup>139</sup> which carried Connellan’s name on the title-page, was used by IS teachers. *The proverbs of Solomon in Irish and English*, and *The first two books of the Pentateuch*, were Connellan’s also.<sup>140</sup>

In its early years, the Society followed similar paths to other evangelical societies in Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. The IS schools were initially established on the ‘circulating system’, successful in Wales and in the Highlands of Scotland.<sup>141</sup> The system was advocated by the Scottish theological writer, Christopher Anderson (1782–1852), secretary to the Society for promoting Gaelic schools in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. When a school was about to be set up, due warning should be given that it would continue for a limited period of between six and eighteen months, during which time the young and old who attended

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<sup>134</sup> IS meeting, 15 Jan. 1819 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 10 (b)).

<sup>135</sup> Religious Tract Society, *The twenty-fifth annual report of the Religious Tract Society* (London, 1824), p. xiii.

<sup>136</sup> Mason, *First report on education in Ireland*, HC 1825 (400), xx.1, appendix no. 250.

<sup>137</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, pp 15–16.

<sup>138</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, p. 15; for a contemporary, scurrilous and somewhat inaccurate account of Thady Connellan’s teachers, see Philip Thornton, ‘Teague Connellan and his volunteers’ in Énrí Ó Muirgheasa (ed.), *Amhráin na Midhe* (Dublin, 1934), pp 137–9.

<sup>139</sup> [Thaddeus Connellan], *An English Irish dictionary, intended for the use of schools; containing upwards of eight thousand English words, with their corresponding explanation in Irish* (Dublin, 1814).

<sup>140</sup> *Seanraite Sholaim a Ghaoidheilge agus mBearla, the proverbs of Solomon in Irish and English* (Dublin, 1815); Thaddeus Connellan (ed.), *The first two books of the Pentateuch of books of Moses: in Irish character* (Dublin, 1822).

<sup>141</sup> Rule V of general rules of the Irish Society contained in minutes of meeting, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a)).

would be taught *gratis*.<sup>142</sup> Anderson recommended that since the targeted areas were sparsely populated, young children, while fit to learn, would not be able to travel long distances to school. Initially, the IS intended that its schoolmasters should, 'if possible, be instructed in the late improvements in education'.<sup>143</sup> The Lancaster or monitorial system involved older pupils 'teaching' younger children the basics of reading and writing. The 'circulating system' of moving from one area to another in such a short time frame would appear to have been anathema to these trained teachers, however, and the strategy was discontinued in 1824.

The IS reconsidered its policy regarding day schools in 1822, except in cases where local patronage could be secured. It abandoned the idea of regular teaching hours and advised its schoolmasters to establish Sunday schools instead. This new arrangement would facilitate the poor who could not be spared from work during the busy farming seasons, it argued. It was lack of funds, however, that forced the Society to curtail its work.<sup>144</sup> By December 1822, the Society's coffers were so depleted that it was obliged to appeal to the recently-established Irish Society of London (1822) for financial support.<sup>145</sup>

For the first four years of its existence from 1818 to 1822, the IS, by its own admission, struggled to make much headway. Although it was gaining some ground, it was 'with a very slow pace indeed'.<sup>146</sup> The devastating weather and economic conditions, 1816 to 1822, was one reason, as the earl of Gosford (1776–1849), one vice-patron explained. He attributed the 'exclusive claim upon public charity which famine and pestilence created' as the reason for the Society's 'unfavourable' year March 1821 to 1822. Landlords had to use their resources to relieve the 'temporal misery' of the poor.<sup>147</sup> The Society felt that a further reason for its sluggish start might have been that it had 'lagged along the old track, which it had already traced'. It had not extended into 'the mountains and the bogs, the fastness of the ancient tongue'.<sup>148</sup> It decided to adopt a new 'more appropriate pathway of its own', dictated by geography and topography. When the Society received a 'pressing application'

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<sup>142</sup> Anderson, *Memorial on behalf of the Native Irish*, p. 64.

<sup>143</sup> Rule IV of the general rules of the Irish Society contained in minutes of meeting, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a)).

<sup>144</sup> IS meeting, 23 Mar. 1822 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 113 (a)); O'Brien, an IS teacher, would have received half of his remuneration from a local patron if he went to Navan in County Meath.

<sup>145</sup> IS meeting, 20 Dec. 1822 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 181 (a)).

<sup>146</sup> IS, *Fifth annual report*, 1823, p. 5.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 23.

from Rev. Robert Winning to establish some schools on the Meath-Cavan boundary, the area fitted perfectly the Society's new preference. Winning's district was 'altogether rude and uncultivated'.<sup>149</sup> The Society acceded to Winning's request and allowed him salaries for nine masters.<sup>150</sup> Monck Mason acknowledged that the IS had made little progress until it 'commenced in connexion with Kingscourt', which subsequently 'led to important results'.<sup>151</sup>

The IS made a number of key decisions in 1823, which would prove significant later, both nationally and locally in the Kingscourt District. In May 1823, the Irish Society 'gladly availed themselves of the assistance of a most respectable Presbyterian clergyman in the neighbourhood of Kingscourt', Rev. Robert Winning.<sup>152</sup> Winning, who was particularly thanked for his 'exertions', agreed to undertake the position of general superintendent of the IS schools in his locality.<sup>153</sup> It was unusual, though not prohibited by the Society's constitution, for a Presbyterian minister to occupy such a role.<sup>154</sup> The Society's management was confined to members of the Anglican Church, but membership was not a mandatory requirement for its local agents. Thomas Russell served as the IS inspector under Winning's superintendence.<sup>155</sup> Russell had been appointed assistant inspector of any Irish Society schools established in the Nobber vicinity of County Meath a month earlier. His remuneration was £1 for each of the first four schools set up, and ten shillings for each subsequent school.<sup>156</sup> A further duty entailed submitting quarterly reports of teachers and schools in his district to the IS. For organizational purposes, the IS areas were divided into 'districts'. The Nobber or Meath schools hereafter came under the general umbrella of the Kingscourt District since Kingscourt was the post town of its superintendent, Winning. Winning gained a reputation quickly within the Irish Society. Kingscourt was deemed the 'metropolis of our district'.<sup>157</sup>

In August 1823, the IS appointed an overall agent, William Connor on a salary of £80 per annum to make an 'actual personal inspection' and assess the 'real

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<sup>149</sup> IS, *Sixth annual report*, 1824, p. 11.

<sup>150</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 23.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 23–8.

<sup>152</sup> IS, *Sixth annual report*, 1824, p. 11.

<sup>153</sup> IS meeting, 16 May, 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 147 (a)).

<sup>154</sup> Winning was formally invited to become an honorary member of the Irish Society committee on 21 Jan. 1825, having 'afforded most material assistance to the Society', IS meeting, 7 Jan., 21 Jan. 1825 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 19 (a)).

<sup>155</sup> IS, *Seventh annual report*, 1825, p. 3.

<sup>156</sup> IS meeting, 4 Apr. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 147 (a)).

<sup>157</sup> *SDCR*, 29 Nov. 1842, p. 3.

state' of the Society's schools.<sup>158</sup> By 1822, the Society found that its organisation up to then had left it open to abuse. Its schools were situated in the remotest part of the country. School inspection was unsatisfactory and was carried out by a local clergyman, Protestant or Roman Catholic, or some respectable person in the neighbourhood who examined the scholars in their translation of the Irish Testaments into English. Therefore, in 1822, the Society set up a subcommittee to examine all aspects of its schools and to devise a more rigorous inspection system.<sup>159</sup> The subcommittee found that in many cases the Society's rules were being violated. Scriptures were not being read. Scholars who could already read English were being taught to read Irish, which was in breach of the Society's rules. Edward N. Hoare, the Society's assistant secretary suggested in February 1823 that some of its Meath schools were redundant following his examination of schools in counties Meath and Cavan. In Gormanlough, near Slane in County Meath, the scholars could already speak English; Hoare recommended its closure. The master in Cruisetown could 'not read very well.' In Kilbride, the master had ceased teaching and was himself a scholar in Kells. In Oldcastle, there was no Sunday School. Hoare concluded that he did not think that 'this part of the Country calls for the exertions of the Irish Society.'<sup>160</sup> Rev. Joseph D'Arcy Sirr expressed similar suspicions about the schools in the Nobber parish of County Meath in July the same year, describing them as 'totally unconstitutional and inefficient'.<sup>161</sup>

It was in light of such reports that the Society underwent a radical restructuring. It introduced a wide range of remedial measures including the appointment in August 1823 of William Connor. Connor from Clonmellon in County Meath travelled extensively throughout Ireland following a route laid out by the Society's committee (Table 2.2) which began in Dundalk in County Louth and ended in Connemara in County Galway.<sup>162</sup> The Society supplied him with a horse and gig and travelling expenses not exceeding 10*d.* per day.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> IS meeting, 8 Aug. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 156 (b)), emphasis is in original manuscript.

<sup>159</sup> IS meeting, 6 Dec. 1822 (TCD, MS, 7644, p. 129 (b)).

<sup>160</sup> IS meeting, 7 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, pp 130–8).

<sup>161</sup> IS meeting, 4 July 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 151 (a)).

<sup>162</sup> IS meeting, 28 Nov. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 173 (a)).

<sup>163</sup> IS meeting, 8 Aug. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 156 (b)).

**Table 2.2 William Connor’s tour of inspection as laid out by the Irish Society, with names of districts and district superintendents, November 1823**

<b>IS district</b>	<b>Superintendent</b>
Dundalk	Roden [Robert Jocelyn III]
Kingscourt	Mr Winning
Longford	Mr Brougham
Boyle	Mr Wilson
Sligo	Mr Blest
Dromahaire	Mr Whilken Dr Johnston
Gerib [Skreen]	Mr Philben
Achonry	Mr Golden
Ballina	Rev. Mr McKeig
Crossmolina	Rev. Mr Jackson
By Foxford	[-] Durkin
Castlebar	Rev. Mr Smith Rev. Mr Seymour Rev. Mr Hargrove
Westport	Rev. Mr Walker
Ballinasloe	Rev. Mr Potter
Clare	Rev. Mr Galbraith
Tuam	Rev Mr Syngé
Galway	Rev. [J.T.] Daly
Connemara	Rev. Thomas

Source: IS meeting, 28[6] Nov. 1823 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 173 (a))

Kingscourt was the earliest and most successful of the Irish Society’s districts. Winning, its superintendent, submitted detailed and lengthy reports to the Society’s headquarters in Dublin. Much of what he wrote appeared in the quarterly and annual reports of the Society, which were read aloud and reported in the newspapers. They were printed, published in pamphlet form, and disseminated to interested evangelicals in Ireland and abroad. In an attempt to reform the Irish Society, it set up an education subcommittee.<sup>164</sup> It, too, formulated, printed and circulated rules and directions for its key personnel; directions for schoolmasters,<sup>165</sup> application forms for claiming payment for teaching Irish, instructions for its circulating masters<sup>166</sup> and suggestions for its superintendents.<sup>167</sup>

The role of the district superintendents, though not salaried positions, was central to the success of the Irish Society’s work. Their authority devolved directly from the IS committee. In a scathing broadside delivered in July 1823, the committee vented its frustration with the calibre of many of its superintendents: ‘[They] require

<sup>164</sup> IS meeting, 6 Dec. 1822 (TCD, MS, 7644, p. 129 (b)).

<sup>165</sup> IS meeting, 8 Aug. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 156 (b), p. 157 (a)).

<sup>166</sup> IS meeting, 4 Feb. 1825 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 20 (b)).

<sup>167</sup> IS meeting, 8 Apr. 1825 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 28 ((a)–(b)).

as much training as the masters, are quite ignorant of our principles and are rarely able to understand or appreciate them, tutor them as you will.’<sup>168</sup> Mindful of the problems identified by Hoare and Sirr in 1823, the IS urged its superintendents to oversee the ‘circulating’ masters with ‘zeal and vigilance’ to obviate any misuse of the trust placed in them.<sup>169</sup> They were expected to direct their routes throughout the districts; to investigate any deviation from the planned routes and, if not satisfied with the proffered explanation, to refer the matter to the IS committee. On the completion of each circuit, superintendents were obliged to meet with the circulating masters immediately, examine their journals, ascertain their adherence to instructions and receive any duplicate forms of appointments made. They were to keep school registers in which to enter appointments of local teachers made by circulating masters and submit the information to the IS in Dublin and scrutinise all orders placed for books. In the event that districts had not a sufficient number of competent teachers, superintendents were authorised to employ ‘circulating’ masters to train local people to read and translate the Irish Testament to supply the need. At some time prior to 10 February, May, August and November, they were required to forward all documentation received from the ‘circulating’ masters together with their observations on the masters’ conduct, competency, success, and the progress of education within their districts to the Society’s headquarters.

‘Circulating masters’ were paid a salary ranging from £4 4s. to £6 18s. 6d. per quarter in 1826.<sup>170</sup> They had to be ‘trustworthy’ Irish scholars, and were engaged at local level under the immediate authority of the superintendent; they had no direct contact with the IS. Their role was to seek out individuals who were competent to work as teachers for the Society. They examined the scholars once a quarter, and reported each teacher’s entitlement to remuneration to the superintendent.

In each locality, the business of teaching ‘school’ was conducted by a resident farmer, labourer, English teacher or tradesman, who was expected to be of good moral character. The educational competency required was only an ability to read and translate the Scriptures in Irish and a willingness to instruct the neighbours ‘in their own tongue wherein they were born’.<sup>171</sup> There was no regular schoolhouse or designated building in which to hold classes. Classes were held in a teacher’s

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<sup>168</sup> IS meeting, 18 July, 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 154 (a)).

<sup>169</sup> IS meeting, 8 Apr. 1825 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 21 (a), (b)).

<sup>170</sup> IS meeting, 17 Feb. 1826 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 55 (a)).

<sup>171</sup> Russell’s account of the Kingscourt District.

house, a pupil's residence, or under some hedge in the open air. There were no desks, forms or tables; no writing, arithmetic or geography taught. The 'school' had no regular school hours. Three quarters of the pupils were adults who attended school on Sundays or Holy Days or after their day's work was done. This arrangement suited the teacher also, since he could continue with his regular employment. The teachers were supplied with some elementary books and portions of Testaments in the Irish language and character, at much reduced prices.<sup>172</sup> The substantial order of 508 items of reading material sent to Kingscourt by the IS in July 1823 (Table 2.3) indicates that Winning had, or expected to have, a corresponding number of scholars.<sup>173</sup>

<b>Table 2. 3 Books sent to Rev. Mr Winning, Kingscourt, 4 July 1823</b>						
Primers	Testaments	Prayer books	Proverbs	Pentateuchs	Portions of New Testament	Psalms
140	12	6	20	10	120	200
Source: IS meeting, 4 July 1823(TCD, MS 7644, p. 151 (a))						

Supplying teachers presented no problem for Winning in the Kingscourt District. In 1822, there was a plentiful supply of local Irish scholars, poets and hedge school teachers to staff the schools. 'Many more teachers than could be employed offered their services but the funds were not sufficient to engage them.'<sup>174</sup> In the harsh economic situation obtaining in the area at the time, they were grateful for the opportunity to earn any income. Francis Brennan, a teacher in the Kingscourt District, clearly stated his reason; it meant ten pounds a year.<sup>175</sup> The salary of an IS Sunday School master was £2 12s. per annum in 1822, representing one shilling for each Sunday he taught.<sup>176</sup> A seventy-year old adult scholar in Nobber, County Meath, intended setting up a Sunday School himself, adding that he was too old for any other employment.<sup>177</sup>

In 1823, the IS committee approved a salary of £10 per annum to three teachers in the Kingscourt District; Owen McDaniel at Carrickleck, and Thomas

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> IS meeting, 4 July 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 151 (a)).

<sup>174</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 66.

<sup>175</sup> Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland*, p. 3.

<sup>176</sup> IS meeting, 13 Aug. 1822 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 123 (b)).

<sup>177</sup> From the report of a schoolmaster in County of Meath, June 1822, IS, *Seventh annual report*, 1825, pp 35–6.

Reilly and Michael Farrelly wherever Winning decided to send them. In the Society's reforms of 1823 to 1825, the granting of fixed salaries to Irish teachers and Sunday School teachers, which had obtained prior to 1824, was ended. A loophole was left, however, where the most deserving teachers could be awarded a small salary of between £1 and £5 per annum, 'as an encouragement to exertion'.<sup>178</sup> From 1824, payment was by results only; 'no work, no pay' became the norm, and teachers were paid according to their pupils' demonstrable ability. Consequently, every four months or thereabouts, the 'circulating master' called to a central location in an area where local teachers presented as many of their pupils as they could gather together for the examination. He assessed the pupils' competency in the reading of Irish, their ability to translate it, and their comprehension of its contents. He entered on a pre-prepared roll the name, age and residence and proficiency or improvement of each pupil. The rolls were signed by him, countersigned by the teachers, and deposited with the superintendent. The superintendent's abstract and report were forwarded to the IS committee who, on receiving same, awarded the teachers' gratuities. Before being remunerated the teachers, too, underwent a strict examination which assessed their own improvement in knowledge. Cognisance was also taken of their good conduct and any local difficulties which they might have encountered.<sup>179</sup>

The first reference to an examination or 'Irish School' being held in the Kingscourt District was that held in December 1823 in Breakey in the parish of Moybologue in County Meath, about four and a half miles from Kingscourt. Breakey was the epicentre of the first Presbyterian congregation in the area in the heart of the strong Irish literary district of north-Meath. Mr Fleming, a friend of Winning's, provided his schoolroom for the sixty masters and pupils who attended. Nine teachers presented forty-two scholars for examination. Two of the teachers, James Martin and Philip Clarken, had been examined by Edward N. Hoare when he visited the Nobber area on his inspection tour of IS Meath and Cavan in February 1823. On that occasion, Hoare gave application forms to those interested in establishing IS schools. He subsequently forwarded three completed forms to headquarters for

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<sup>178</sup> IS, *Sixth annual report*, 1824, p. 27.

<sup>179</sup> Russell's account of the Kingscourt district, 20 Dec. 1834.



processing.<sup>180</sup> This confirms Winning's statement that there were only three or four schools in his district in 1822 instructing about seventy-five scholars.<sup>181</sup>

The IS agent, William Conner, and Rev. Winning spent Saturday 13 December 1823 in Breakey examining pupils. Twenty-three passed the reading examination (Table 2.4). Conner claimed that the scholars had never seen any portion of the Bible until a few months previously when they first started to learn Irish.<sup>182</sup> Conner spent the following day garnering information about the IS schools from masters who called to see him. Within days of the examination at Breakey in December 1823, Winning forwarded a 'most satisfactory' report to the Irish Society in Dublin.<sup>183</sup> Winning wrote that the Meath and Cavan schools had twenty-one teachers or schools with 525 scholars although only nine teachers presented 234 scholars at the quarterly examination in Breakey.

**Table 2.4 Teachers, schools and number of scholars presented for examination, 13 December, 1823, at Breakey, Co, Meath**

Master	School	Parish	County	Pupils		
				Total	Presented (where stated)	Passed (where stated)
Francis Farrelly	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	26	4	3
Michael Owens	Cortubber	Aughnamullen	Monaghan	37	8	6
Thomas Reilly	Clonturkin	Enniskeen	Cavan	42	14	14
Owen McDaniel	Carrickleck	Enniskeen	Meath	21	3	
James Martin	Nobber	Nobber	Meath		1	
Michael Conlan	Cornaville	Moynalty	Meath	26	5	
Michael Clooney	Shanco	Carrickmacross	Monaghan	21		
Joseph Power	Mayo	Moynalty	Meath	35	4	
Philip Clarken	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	26	3	
				234	42	23

Source: IS, *Quarterly extracts etc.*, no. 12 (Apr. 1824), pp 99–101; *Logan-Winning correspondence* (Dublin, 1827), p. 26

More importantly from Winning's and the Society's perspective was the fact that 2,625 souls had heard the Scriptures read during the previous six months through

<sup>180</sup> IS meeting, 21 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 139 (b)).

<sup>181</sup> IS, *Seventh annual report*, 1825, p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> IS meeting, 7 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 130 (b)).

<sup>183</sup> IS, *Seventh annual report*, 1825, p. 2.

the agency of these teachers.<sup>184</sup> The news was heartening for the Society which until then had been expanding very slowly.<sup>185</sup> The six-month time-frame corresponded with Winning's tenure as IS superintendent from May 1823,<sup>186</sup> and Winning's letter was published in the Society's *Quarterly extracts* in January 1824.<sup>187</sup> Winning explained how he calculated the number of souls at 2,625. When examining his teachers, he found that on average each teacher taught twenty-five pupils. By multiplying the number of schools (twenty-one) by the average number of scholars (twenty-five) presented for examination by the number of members in a family (five), Winning arrived at the figure 2,625.<sup>188</sup> 'Were I to add double this number, I would not exaggerate', he concluded.<sup>189</sup>

Winning's report for 1825 summarised the Kingscourt District's progress from its small beginnings in 1822 with two or three teachers and schools to March 1825 when it had eighty-three schools. Through the influence of the schools, a strong desire for scriptural knowledge has been excited among the peasantry in the district, according to the IS reports.<sup>190</sup> A total of 1,919 scholars had been taught to read the Scriptures; many of the 1,919 had, in turn, instructed others and Winning expected that the remaining thousand or so would be enabled to read in a few quarters.<sup>191</sup> During the three-year period, 3,090 scholars had been under instruction. Winning calculated that: 'through these 3,090 pupils bringing home the Irish Scriptures, large numbers of persons had heard, in this short space of time, and in this one district, 'the gospel's gladdening sound'.<sup>192</sup>

It was little wonder then that the IS wrote in reference to the Kingscourt District that Winning 'forms the head as well as the heart of the entire' movement in the district.<sup>193</sup> There were daily applications for more schools in the area, but because the district's local inspectors were taken up with those already established, as well as the precarious state of the Society's funds, the Kingscourt District had not 'latterly

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<sup>184</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 11 (Jan. 1824), p. 94.

<sup>185</sup> IS, *Fifth annual report*, 1823, p. 5.

<sup>186</sup> IS meeting, 16 May, 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 147 (a)).

<sup>187</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 11 (Jan. 1824).

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> IS, *Seventh annual report*, 1825, p. 3.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts etc.*, no. 16 (1 Apr. 1825), p. 4.

given much encouragement'.<sup>194</sup> The Society was in dire financial straits by late 1825. Its expenses to March 1825 had exceeded the previous year's by £400, a direct consequence, it claimed, of its phenomenal success following the reforms made it 1823.<sup>195</sup>

## Conclusion

The year 1822 marked the beginning of the Second Reformation in Ireland. It also signalled the beginning of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District, and the introduction there of one evangelical society, the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language. Kingscourt was ready for the evangelical IS in 1822. Its location in the drumlins of north Meath and south Ulster fitted perfectly the Society's mission among the isolated, rural, Irish-speaking, Roman Catholic populations. Irish was still the spoken language of the majority of the people in this Oriel region and a strong Irish scribal and literary tradition had survived there.

The timing, too, was favourable. By 1822, Rev. Robert Winning had overcome his prejudices against the clergy of the Established Church. Winning, who was able to preach in Irish, was impressed with the objectives of the Anglican Irish Society. He recognised the need for scriptural education in the vernacular among the Irish-speaking Roman Catholic illiterate population of his locality. He closed his private Classical School and invited the IS to establish schools in his locality. He threw himself wholeheartedly into the work of setting up and administering the Society in his area. Winning had no difficulty securing teachers in the harsh economic climate of the 1820s. The IS afforded the many Irish-speaking scholars and hedge school teachers in the area in 1822 the opportunity to supplement their income by working as teachers.

The IS enjoyed little success during its first five years. It was not until 1823 when it undertook a series of reforms and made some key changes in administration, including the appointment of Winning as superintendent of the Kingscourt District, that the Society began to expand. The Society experienced phenomenal expansion from 1823; its greatest successes were in Kingscourt District. The drain on the

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>195</sup> The Society was £354 5s. 1d. in debt, IS, *Quarterly extracts, etc.*-no. 20 (1 Apr. 1826), p. 50.

Society's financial resources was enormous. The 'rapid increase of pecuniary demands' could not be sustained and threatened its very survival.<sup>196</sup> Much of the expansion occurred in the Kingscourt District. It consequently had most to lose if funding were not forthcoming.

Winning and the Irish Society's teachers and scholars in the Kingscourt District rose to the challenge. They promulgated the Greaghnaogue Resolutions on 28 December 1825,<sup>197</sup> a pivotal event for the Irish Society not only locally but nationally and internationally, which is discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>196</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 27.

<sup>197</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts etc.* 20 (1 Apr. 1826), pp 53–4.

## Chapter 3

### The Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions, 1825 to 1828

‘The most important document that ever came before a British public’,<sup>1</sup> or ‘a stupid, paltry, ill-contrived fabrication’?<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction

On 28 December 1825 in the depths of winter in the townland of Greaghnarogue in County Monaghan, 113 Irish Society (IS) teachers and 262 of their adult scholars signed a document on behalf of at least 5,000 other adults from the Kingscourt District. The document came to be known as the Greaghnarogue Resolutions. A resolution is defined as ‘a formal expression of opinion or intention agreed on by a legislative body or other formal meeting, typically after taking a vote’.<sup>3</sup> The document set out five resolutions or motions and dealt with two central issues that affected the Irish Society teachers and their scholars in the Kingscourt District.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter interrogates the creation, content and context of the Greaghnarogue Resolutions and suggests why their promulgation was a critical event in the history of the Irish Society and the Kingscourt District. It examines the controversy which their publication precipitated that necessitated a further series of Resolutions, the Kingscourt Resolutions, in 1827. It analyses the fall-out from both sets of Resolutions that saw the Roman Catholic clergy and laity, and the Irish Society and Rev. Robert Winning, pitted against one another in a bitter newspaper war. Finally, it asks what happened to the key personnel in the Kingscourt District in the immediate aftermath of the controversy.

#### The creation, content, and context of the Greaghnarogue Resolutions

Three years after James Reilly first encountered Rev. Robert Winning, the Kingscourt District of the Irish Society had extended into the counties of Armagh, Monaghan and Louth as well as Cavan and Meath (Figure 4.3). There were 115

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. Robert Winning, the Irish Society superintendent of the Kingscourt District, concerning the Greaghnarogue Resolutions, *DEP*, 3 Apr. 1826, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *DEP*, 6 Apr. 1826, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Judy Pearson (ed.), *The new Oxford dictionary* (Oxford, 1998), p. 1,579

<sup>4</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, pp 30–1.

teachers working there under Winning's superintendence by November 1825.<sup>5</sup> One month later on 28 December, 375 of its masters and adult scholars signed the Greaghnarogue Resolutions. The Irish-speaking signatories appended their names in English to the English-language document (it was later translated into Irish for dissemination).<sup>6</sup> A 'respectable deputation of Irish Masters' carried the Greaghnarogue Resolutions to Dublin for formal presentation in person to William Richard, 3rd Earl Annesley (1772–1838) at the IS anniversary meeting in Dublin on 17 March 1826. The 'respectable deputation' comprised Michael Owens, a local Irish Society inspector, and IS masters James Byrne, Pat McGahon, Thomas Farrelly and Thomas Munkittrick (McKittrick). Each of these, the Society's minutes recorded, received £1 for attending the meeting.<sup>7</sup> To ensure maximum exposure, the Greaghnarogue Resolutions had been printed and published in the *Dublin Evening Post* on the previous day, 16 March 1825.<sup>8</sup> They were incorporated into the Irish Society's annual report, printed, and made available at the IS office at 16 Upper Sackville Street, Dublin and distributed at home and abroad to benefactors and potential supporters.<sup>9</sup> The quiet pre-Greaghnarogue phase, 1822 to 1825, of the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District was over with this public demonstration.

The Greaghnarogue Resolutions were named after the 232-acre townland in which they were created. Greaghnarogue is situated in the parish of Magheross in the barony of Farney, County Monaghan, about three miles west-north-west from the town of Carrickmacross on the boundaries of counties Cavan, Meath, Armagh and Louth. It might have been chosen because of its central location in the Kingscourt District. It was one mile from Rev. Winning's Presbyterian Church in Carrickmaclim, and was on the Shirley estate, the largest estate in County Monaghan.<sup>10</sup> The meeting is likely to have been held in the home of the Irish Society school teacher, Thomas McKittrick. Three McKittricks lived in Greaghnarogue in 1823, according to the Tithe applotment books. One, Thomas McKittrick, held five acres and paid a half-yearly rent of £2 16s. 1d. to the landlord, Evelyn Shirley of Farney. The remoteness of Greaghnarogue on Corduff Mountain might also have

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<sup>5</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 30–1.

<sup>7</sup> IS meeting, 30 Mar. 1826 (TCD MS 7645, p. 61 (b)).

<sup>8</sup> *DEP*, 16 Mar. 1826, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, pp 31–3.

<sup>10</sup> George McKittrick, Greaghnarogue, Magheross, County Monaghan, 1823 (NAI, Tithe applotment books, 1823).

proved attractive. The event there could be denied, confirmed, downplayed or exaggerated, depending on who was posing or answering the question.

The first resolution passed was ‘their right as men, their duty as Christians, and their privilege as Roman Catholics’ to read the Scriptures. The second was to deny publicly allegations made by the Irish Society’s opponents that they were guilty of insincerity and hypocrisy and prompted by selfish motives and financial gain. If they were never paid for their work, they would continue to teach their fellow Irishmen, who were ‘thirsting for such knowledge’, the signatories declared. They believed that the Scriptures were the source of all spiritual knowledge and the basis for all moral instruction. The Irish Society schools had promoted virtuous habits through reading the Scriptures. The Sabbath was being spent in the IS teacher’s house learning lessons from the Bible. Heretofore, it had been spent at football matches, dances and card-playing, and in whiskey-houses.

The third and fourth resolutions dealt with objections made to their reading of the Irish Testament because it was not a ‘proper translation’. The Irish Society signatories had gone through the Irish translation of the Bible, ‘individually and collectively’ with dictionaries in their hands. The Kingscourt masters possessed at least fourteen copies of Edward O’Reilly’s *Irish-English dictionary*.<sup>11</sup> The Society had sent Winning a copy in April 1824.<sup>12</sup> Thomas McKittrick, Joseph Power and Francis Brennan were given copies at an IS meeting 3 September 1824.<sup>13</sup> The Society forwarded twelve more copies to Winning for his masters in January 1825.<sup>14</sup> It is understandable that the many scribes and poets among the IS teachers in the Kingscourt District, who wrote both in Irish and English, would want the dictionary. Thomas McKittrick (Tomas Mhac Cetrú, Greagh na Ruag) was an excellent scribe.<sup>15</sup> The Irish Society teachers, having compared the Irish translation with other Protestant and Rhemish translations, found it satisfactory and accurate, apart from some orthographical and typographical errors. The Irish translation did not need

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<sup>11</sup> Edward O’Reilly, *Irish-English dictionary, containing upwards of twenty thousand words that never appeared in any former lexicon .... To which is annexed, a compendious Irish grammar* (new ed., Dublin 1821).

<sup>12</sup> IS meeting, 23 Apr. 1824 (TCD MS 7644, n. p.). The dictionary cost 16s. 3d.

<sup>13</sup> IS meeting, 3 Sept. 1824 (TCD MS 7644, n. p.).

<sup>14</sup> IS meeting, 7 Jan. 1825 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 18 (a)).

<sup>15</sup> Thomas McKittrick was scribe of part of Verses and tales in Irish, transcribed 1799–1819 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Ir. e 4, ff 121v–124v); another scribe was Matthew Kennedy, Irish Society teacher in the Kingscourt District, signatory of the Kingscourt Resolutions, 5 Sept. 1827 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Ir. e 4, ff 167v–179r).

notes or comments, they claimed; such notes would only lead readers astray. They agreed with the Roman Catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Dr James W. Doyle, (1786–1834) who, in the House of Lords on 21 March 1825, declared that notes and comments could be objectionable and carried little weight since they were often the work of unknown writers.<sup>16</sup> Their reading of the Irish Bible without note or comment was understood as demonstrating that the Irish Society’s only objective was the promulgation of the Divine Word. The fifth resolution argued that the Roman Catholic Church had never forbidden the reading of Scriptures to any who read them with reverence or sincerity.<sup>17</sup> Some Popes had granted indulgences,<sup>18</sup> the remission of the temporal punishment in purgatory still due for sins after absolution, as an inducement to read the Bible.<sup>19</sup> If the head of the Catholic Church rewarded the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the Greaghnaogue signatories questioned how the Irish Society’s opponents could consider it displeasing to their Creator.

What was the immediate motive behind Rev. Robert Winning’s 375 masters and adult scholars signing the Greaghnaogue Resolutions at that particular moment in time? The Society’s rapid growth since 1823 had exhausted the Society’s funds, according to the Society’s internal manuscripts and published reports.<sup>20</sup> It was forced to convene a special meeting, on 9 December 1825. ‘Increased exertions, increased success, and increased expenditure’ had left the Society bereft of funds.<sup>21</sup> Despite ‘a rigid economy’, ‘trifling saving’ was not sufficient, and the Society could no longer wait for ‘the slowly, gradual increase in popular favour and support’, it explained. The Society needed to adopt a more immediate, proactive plan. The seven committee members and two visitors who attended the meeting ‘had been informed of its

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<sup>16</sup> *Select committee of House of Lords to inquire into state of Ireland with reference to disturbances minutes of evidence*, HC 1825 (181), ix.1, 237.

<sup>17</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Those who taught the word of God were granted 100 days’ indulgence. Those who heard and listened to it with an inward intention of heart earned 100 days’ indulgence. Clement V (1305–14) granted one year’s indulgence to all who recited the Gospel of St John. John XXII (1316–34) granted a further forty days’ for the same reading, IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826), p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> See James Byrn, *The Spiritual treasury, or, Sacred diary, [electronic resource] : Of the favours, graces, priviledges, and perpetual indulgences, granted by the vicars of Our Lord Jesus Christ on earth to the arch-confraternity of the brethren and sisters of the holy cincture of our glorious parents, St. Augustine, and St. Monica, his pious mother ....* (Dublin, 1753), p. 136. In 1967, Pope Paul VI modified indulgences from the satisfaction of punishment to the inducement of good works; he reduced the number of plenary indulgences and eliminated the numerical system associated with partial indulgences.

<sup>20</sup> The Society was £354 5s.1d. in debt, IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 20 (1 Apr. 1826), p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 27.



purpose': 'the rapidly extended scale of the Society's operations, and the inadequacy of the present funds to carry on the great work, in which it is engaged.'<sup>22</sup>

One of the visitors, and the only district superintendent present at the meeting of 9 December 1825, was Winning. He had been made an honorary committee member in January, but had not attended any previous IS committee meetings.<sup>23</sup> Winning was highly regarded by the IS, as the nine references to him at the Society's committee meetings show.<sup>24</sup> It is likely, then, that the 'indefatigable superintendent', had been invited, perhaps even summoned, to the December meeting.<sup>25</sup> The IS directed its members at the meeting to 'urge our cause upon the liberality of the Christian public'.<sup>26</sup> It was their duty 'at this crisis, to come forward to the public, with a strong appeal to them for extraordinary patronage and assistance on its behalf.'<sup>27</sup> Kingscourt and its 'prosperous colony' featured heavily in the Society's published account of the special meeting. 'We can best exhibit our progress in the district about Kingscourt'.<sup>28</sup> It recounted the vast numbers of schools established and masters employed there. It concluded with Winning's rallying but telling cry: 'But what of the funds? If we were to appoint only one-half of those making applications to become masters, we would break you ourselves.'<sup>29</sup>

Kingscourt was the largest Irish Society district, and had the greatest number of teachers and scholars in December 1825. It was making the heaviest demand on the Society's resources (Table 3.1). In the payment quarter to 17 February 1826, during which period the special meeting was held, seventy-one teachers, more than forty-one per cent of all IS teachers in Ireland, were working in the Kingscourt District. The £118 6s. 6d. that the Kingscourt teachers received in remuneration represented almost half of the Society's total outlay on teacher payment (Table 3.1).

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Emphasis is in manuscript.

<sup>23</sup> IS meeting, 9 Dec. 1825 (TCD MS 7644, p. 48 (a)).

<sup>24</sup> The Irish Societies' meetings record nine references to Rev. Robert Winning at Irish Society meetings, 1823–25, IS meeting, 1818–25 (TCD, MSS 7644–5).

<sup>25</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts* no. 20 (1 Apr. 1826), p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts* no. 20 (1 Apr. 1826), p. 50.

<sup>29</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 29.

**Table 3.1 Irish Society teachers' remuneration for quarter ending 17 February 1826**

District	Number of IS teachers	Total teachers' pay for district, £ s. d.
Kingscourt	71	£118 6s. 6d.
Connaught	14	£8 19s. 6d.
Clare	10	£1 6s. 6d.
South Cork	20	£62 13s. 7d.
Leitrim	18	£36 10s. 9d.
Tipperary	7	£11 13s. 9d.
Kilkenny	6	£7 0s. 5d.
Total	146	£246 11s. 0d.

Source: IS meeting, 18 Feb. 1826 (TCD MS 7645, p. 53 (a))

The Kingscourt inspectors and masters had most to lose financially if the Society did not raise sufficient money to keep it afloat. Was it this that triggered the Irish Society masters and adult scholars in the Kingscourt district to initiate, pass, and sign the Greaghnaogue Resolutions less than three weeks later? It is reasonable to assume that Winning, who had attended the special meeting on 9 December 1825 and whose 'prosperous colony' had been held up as the 'shining beacon' of the Society, would take decisive action.<sup>30</sup> The Greaghnaogue Resolutions were Winning's and Kingscourt's direct response to the IS appeal, their contribution to drumming up 'extraordinary patronage' for the Society at home and abroad.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 3.2 Resolutions passed by teachers and scholars in Irish Society districts, 1825–27**

District	Year	Signatories	
		Teachers	Scholars (where stated)
Kingscourt	1825	113	262
Tipperary & Limerick	1826	12	
Kerry	1826	33	
Youghal	1827	22	
Kingscourt	1827	133	0

Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS minutes' books, 1825 to 1827 (TCD, MSS 7464, 7465)

The presentation of the Greaghnaogue Resolutions to the IS anniversary meeting in Dublin on 17 March 1826 and their publication in newspapers in Ireland and abroad set an example for other districts in Ireland to do likewise. Similar resolutions were signed by twelve Irish masters in Tipperary and Limerick on 3 June 1826. Rev. J. B. McCrea, who along with Winning were the only two independent members of the IS committee, forwarded resolutions from thirty-three of his teachers in the Kerry District on 21 October 1826. Twenty-two IS teachers in the Youghal

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

District on 3 February 1827, allegedly signed resolutions too (Table 3.2).<sup>32</sup> It was only in the Kingscourt District, though, that resolutions were signed by scholars.

**Extraordinary controversy: ‘Polemics are literally the rage’<sup>33</sup>**

The publication of the Greaghnarogue Resolutions in March 1826 triggered a period of bitter controversy between the Irish Society personnel and the Roman Catholic clergy and laity. The Resolutions occupied much of the agenda of the Irish Society’s weekly committee meetings during the following eighteen months. The Roman Catholic archbishop of Armagh and primate of Ireland, Dr Patrick Curtis (1819–32), called the Resolutions a ‘fabrication’ in a letter published in the *Dublin Evening Post* in April 1826.<sup>34</sup> To disprove Curtis’ allegation, the IS committee extended an open invitation to examine the Resolutions on public view in the Society’s room at 16 Upper Sackville Street, Dublin. The document would be available there every day except Sunday between one and two o’clock in the afternoon until the end of April. No one was permitted to take a copy of any part of it and was obliged to sign: ‘The undersigned, having had the privilege of reading the original resolutions of the School masters and seeing the signatures thereto annexed, and the affidavits respecting the same, promise that we shall not directly, or indirectly make known or publish the names signed to said resolutions.’<sup>35</sup>

The committee decided not to publish the names at that juncture in order to preserve the anonymity of the signatories, it stated. It convened a special meeting on 28 April 1826, ‘for the special purpose of maturely considering the Resolutions’ by which date it had received sworn affidavits from IS master, Thomas McKittrick, and the inspector, Michael Owens.<sup>36</sup> The Society published the affidavits, with an explanatory letter, in *Saunders Newsletter*, *Dublin Evening Post*, *Dublin Evening Mail*, *Morning Register*, *The Patriot*, *Freemans Journal and Warder*.<sup>37</sup> The controversy had begun in earnest. McKittrick voluntarily swore his affidavit before justice of the peace, John Forbes, Chanitee, Aughnamullen, County Monaghan, on 4

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<sup>32</sup> IS, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, pp 26–9.

<sup>33</sup> *MC*, 29 Mar. 1827, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> *DEP*, 6 Apr. 1826, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> IS meeting, 30 Mar. 1826 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 62 (b)).

<sup>36</sup> IS meeting, 28 Apr. 1826 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 63 (b)).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

April 1826, according to the Society's published records.<sup>38</sup> The notion for the meeting originated with the Irish Society teachers themselves without any influence, 'direct or indirect, individual or collective' from Protestants. McKittrick was the chief organiser; the document was in his handwriting, and many of the signatures were made in his presence. He believed them to be genuine, 'voluntarily affixed, without the influence, knowledge or presence of one single Protestant'.<sup>39</sup> Michael Owens swore his affidavit on 10 April 1826 before George Foster, the chief magistrate of Dundalk, County Louth.<sup>40</sup> Owens, like McKittrick, avowed that the Resolutions were the genuine work of the Irish masters, and that they originated solely and voluntarily from them. All 375 names were affixed to the original document in his presence, without the knowledge, as far as he could determine, of any Protestant connected with the Irish Society.

The Society appointed a subcommittee to deal with the controversy and to authenticate publicly the resolutions and signatures of the masters. It included the IS secretary, Henry Monck Mason, barrister and librarian to the King's Inns, and two members who were later elevated to the episcopacy, Dr J. H. Singer, Church of Ireland bishop of Meath (1852–66) and Rev. Robert Daly, Church of Ireland bishop of Cashel, Waterford and Lismore (1843–72).<sup>41</sup> Its role also entailed contradicting whenever it could 'every false assertion with respect to them, that may be made in the public newspapers'.<sup>42</sup> They were assisted ably by Rev. Joseph D'Arcy Sirr, the Irish Society's assistant secretary, and Robert Winning.

'Religion is Politics, and Politics is Religion', the Anglican archbishop, William Magee, observed of nineteenth-century Ireland.<sup>43</sup> The Roman Catholic clergy had a formidable ally, the Roman Catholic political organisation, the Catholic Association, on its side. Established in 1823 by Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847), barrister, politician and nationalist leader, and Richard Lalor Sheil (1791–1851), politician, writer and orator, this political organisation was restructured as the New Catholic Association in 1826. O'Connell accused the Irish Society of falsehoods and

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<sup>38</sup> Chanitee, Forbes' residence, was approximately five miles from Greaghmarogue, so was within walking distance for McKittrick.

<sup>39</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> Dundalk was within Owens' reach since the Irish Society had permitted Robert Winning to purchase a pony for him in May 1825, on account of the number of schools he had to inspect, Irish Society minutes, 20 May 1825 (TCD, MS7645, p. 20 (b)).

<sup>41</sup> IS meeting, 28 Apr. 1826 (TCD, MS7645, p. 63 (b)).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *MC*, 29 Mar. 1827, p. 3, citing William Magee, archbishop of Dublin.

lies in 1826,<sup>44</sup> and vowed to donate £50 to the IS if he did not prove that the Resolutions were a forgery.<sup>45</sup> Among the Catholic Association's staunchest members were the editors of two Dublin newspapers, Frederick Conway (1781/2–1853) *Dublin Evening Post*,<sup>46</sup> and Michael Staunton (1788–1870) *Dublin Morning Register* and *Dublin Weekly Register*.<sup>47</sup> They ensured that any correspondence concerning the Greaghnaogue Resolutions was published and commented on favourably (from the Roman Catholic Church's stand-point) in the columns of their daily and weekly publications (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3 Controversy concerning the Greaghnaogue and Kingscourt Resolutions played out in a selection of newspapers, March 1826 to February 1828**

Newspaper	Date	Author (where stated)
<i>Saunders's-Newsletter</i>	18 Mar. 1826	Irish Society annual report
<i>Morning Register</i>	29 Mar. 1826	Editor
<i>Evening Post</i>	6 Apr. 1826	Dr Carolan
<i>Cork Constitution</i>	8 Apr. 1826	Dr Curtis
<i>Dublin Morning Register</i>	19 Apr. 1826	Editor
<i>The Patriot</i>	26 Apr. 1826	Mr O'Reilly, Irish scholar
<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	29 Apr. 1826	Catholic Association
<i>Cork Constitution</i>	13 May 1826	Affidavits of McKittrick & Owens
<i>Dublin Morning Register</i>	20 May 1826	The Irish Society
<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	30 May 1826	Catholic Association
<i>Dublin Evening Mail</i>	2 June 1826	Irish Society
<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	3 June 1826	Rev. Robert Winning
<i>Dublin Morning Register</i>	7 June 1826	'Maolcholuim'
<i>Dublin Morning Register</i>	10 June 1826	'Maolcholuim'
<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	3 July 1826	Rev. Winning
<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	15 July 1826	Michael Farrelly, IS inspector, Nobber
<i>Dublin Morning Register</i>	11 Apr. 1827	Dr Logan, RC bishop of Meath
<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	10 Nov. 1827	Dr Logan's 2 <sup>nd</sup> letter
<i>Evening Post</i>	28 Aug. 1827	Dr Logan
<i>Evening Post</i>	9 Sept. 1827	Rev. Winning
<i>Evening Post</i>	20 Sept. 1827	Rev. Winning
<i>Dublin Morning Register</i>	27 Sept. 1827	'Maolcholuim'
<i>Dublin Weekly Register</i>	27 Sept. 1827	'Maolcholuim'
<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	21 Feb. 1828	Rev. Winning

Compiled by Marion Rogan

The Kingscourt District of the Irish Society lay in the ecclesiastical northern province of Armagh where Patrick Curtis was Roman Catholic archbishop. Curtis

<sup>44</sup> IS meeting, 19 May 1826 (TCD, MS7645, p. 65 (b)).

<sup>45</sup> *DEP*, 3 June 1826, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> C. J. Woods, 'Conway, Frederick William', in McGuire and Quinn (eds), *DIB* (9 vols, Cambridge, 2009), ii, 796–7.

<sup>47</sup> Bridget Hourican, 'Staunton, Michael', in McGuire and Quinn, *DIB* (9 vols, Cambridge, 2009), ix, pp 25–6.

received a copy of the Greaghnarogue Resolutions on 19 March and replied to the document in a letter to Frederick Conway, editor of the *Dublin Evening Post*, eleven days later.<sup>48</sup> Curtis had been assured by his ‘zealous friends’ following the ‘strictest inquiry’ that there were no such ‘Resolutionists’ in that part of the country.<sup>49</sup> The ‘extraordinary’ document ‘ought to be unmasked’; ‘the whole affair, from beginning to end, [was] a stupid, paltry, ill-contrived fabrication’.<sup>50</sup> He disowned the remonstrating schoolmasters, pupils and their 5,000 associates until ‘they assume a language and sentiments more becoming and worthy of Catholics’, and would not consider them in his ‘communion’.<sup>51</sup> Curtis interviewed Thomas McKittrick on 18 April 1826 and was satisfied that no such assembly took place and that McKittrick was, by his own admission, the ‘chief getter-up’ of the Resolutions.<sup>52</sup>

Many of the teachers who signed the Resolutions were from the Kingscourt, Nobber and Moynalty parishes in Bishop Robert Logan’s (1827–30) Meath diocese (Map 1.2). Logan considered that it was his duty to establish the facts surrounding the resolutions; he was most likely under directions from Dr Curtis. He wrote to the parish priests of twenty parishes where he knew that Irish was the language most used by the people, seeking every possible item of information on the IS schools and teachers. Logan did not name the parishes. Apart from Kingscourt, Moynalty and Nobber, Irish was the spoken language of the majority in Athboy, Bohermeen, Carnaross, Castletown, Clonmellon, Kilbeg, Kilskyre, Lobinstown, and Slane.<sup>53</sup> Logan included two partially completed forms with his letter. One form declared that the signatory had never signed the Greaghnarogue Resolutions. The other stated:

I--- the undersigned schoolmaster of the parish of ---, do hereby declare, with deep regret, that I was induced to allow my name to be affixed to certain resolutions, entered into at Greaghnarogue, on the subject of spiritual education. I did not then see the impropriety of my signing such resolutions; but at present convinced of their insidious and dangerous tendency, and fully sensible of the great scandal I have given to my Roman Catholic brethren, I make the only atonement left me, a public retraction of my signature.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Curtis to editor *DEP*, 30 Mar. 1826, published *DEP*, 6 Apr. 1826, p. 3; *CC*, 8 Apr. 1826, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *DEP*, 6 Apr. 1826, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Curtis to editor *DEP*, *CC*, 8 Apr. 1826, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *DEP*, 4 May 1826, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Anthony Cogan, *The diocese of Meath, ancient and modern*, (3 vols, reprint, Dublin, 1992 of 1867), ii, 257–345; John Brady, *A short history of the parishes of the diocese of Meath 1867–1940* (Navan, 1940), pp 255–78.

<sup>54</sup> *Correspondence between the Rev Dr Logan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath and the Rev Robert Winning Superintendent of Irish Schools in the Kingscourt district; with the resolutions of one*

Seventy-one out of seventy-four masters in the twenty parishes signed one or other of the formulae, Logan claimed. Of those who confessed to appending their signature to the Greaghnarogue Resolutions, some alleged that they were prevailed to do so in ignorance, since they neither saw the resolutions nor heard them read. Others were led to believe that they were signing a petition to two neighbouring Catholic Prelates, seeking permission to join the Society, most likely the bishops of Kilmore and Clogher, Farrell O'Reilly (1807–29) and Edward Kernan (1824–44), respectively.

The controversy began in Nobber, the original core of the district, and where Edward N. Hoare examined the Society's schools in 1823.<sup>55</sup> The three dissenting masters were from Nobber where Rev. John Halpin was Catholic parish priest (1812–48). The parish was near Ervey, where Rev. Winning ministered to his Presbyterian congregation. The education report of 1826 showed that there were two schools in the parish, Rahood and Kilbride, financed by the Irish Society.<sup>56</sup> Michael Farrelly held a school at Rahood in May 1823. He had earlier been appointed Sunday schoolmaster with the IS at Cruisetown in the same parish in 1822.<sup>57</sup> Philip Clarkan held a school at Kilbride. James Martin, Halpin's cousin and tenant, had a school in Nobber. Rev. Halpin had encouraged Martin to become an Irish reader, because of 'his love for the Irish language'.<sup>58</sup> Martin and Clarkan had presented pupils for the first examination of pupils in Breakey in to William Conner in December 1823 (Table 2.4). By 1823, Martin found himself 'much opposed by the priest',<sup>59</sup> and Halpin waged open war on the Irish Society teachers in the summer of 1826. He publicly condemned Farrelly, Clarkan and Martin on 11 June 1826,<sup>60</sup> for refusing to dissociate themselves from the Greaghnarogue Resolutions,<sup>61</sup> and turned Farrelly's parents and brothers out of Nobber chapel.<sup>62</sup>

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*hundred and twenty-five teachers therein* (Dublin, 1827), p. 3 (hereinafter, *Logan-Winning correspondence*).

<sup>55</sup> IS meeting, 21 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 139 (b)).

<sup>56</sup> *Second report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry*, HC 1826–7 (12), xii.1, 748–9.

<sup>57</sup> IS meeting, 7 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, pp 136–8).

<sup>58</sup> Baptist Wriothsley Noel, *Notes of a short tour through the midland counties of Ireland in the summer of 1836 with observations on the condition of the peasantry* (London, 1837), p. 102.

<sup>59</sup> William Conner's report 13 Dec. 1823 in *Logan-Winning correspondence* (1827), p. 26.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Farrelly, *A letter addressed to the Rev. John Halpin, parish priest of Nobber, County Meath, By Michael Farrelly, inspector of Irish schools* (Dublin, 1826), p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, pp 2–3, 6, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Farrelly, *Letter to the Rev. John Halpin*, pp 96–9; *DEP*, 15 July 1826, p. 4.

Michael Farrelly retaliated by penning a damning letter to the bishop of Meath, Robert Logan, six days later.<sup>63</sup> When Edward N. Hoare examined Michael Farrelly early in 1823 for the Irish Society, he reported that Farrelly ‘does not read very well; might be competent to teach in about 3 months’.<sup>64</sup> Three years later, Farrelly was able to compose a scholarly letter to Bishop Logan, worthy of publication. Perhaps it was Irish that Farrelly did not read very well, and that his command of the English language, as his letter demonstrated, was excellent. Perhaps, Farrelly was assisted in his composition by Winning?

The letter was later published in *Dublin Evening Post*. The Irish Society also published 1,000 copies of the letter.<sup>65</sup> Farrelly accused Halpin of declaring that the IS teachers had ‘sold their immortal souls for ten pounds per year’ (their annual salary from the IS). Following the receipt of Farrelly’s letter, Logan interviewed Farrelly, Martin and Clerken. He found them ‘obstinately determined to continue in connection with the Irish Society and to read the Bible, though unaccompanied with note or comment’. The bishop went to Nobber on the following Sunday, and publicly excommunicated the three IS teachers.<sup>66</sup> From his investigation, Logan concluded that there was not one single IS school, and only the three itinerant masters, who had no fixed scholars, connected with the Irish Society in County Meath.

The Nobber controversy heralded a fresh outbreak of polemics. Using Michael Farrelly, ‘an interested schoolmaster’, as his source, Mr Carlile from Newry, County Down, declared at an Irish Society meeting in Liverpool that Logan opposed the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. Bishop Logan responded. He quoted from a solemn declaration of the Roman Catholic archbishops and bishops on 25 January 1825, which was published and circulated extensively throughout the United Kingdom. Irish Catholics ‘of mature years’ were permitted to read ‘authentic and approved translations’ of the Scriptures with explanatory notes, he stressed. They were exhorted to ‘use them in the spirit of piety, humility and obedience’.<sup>67</sup> Bishop Logan availed of the opportunity to launch a fresh tirade on Farrelly, Nobber and the Irish Society. He warned English benefactors that he was: ‘desirous to communicate to the English people some matters relative to the operations of the Irish Education

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Edward N. Hoare’s report, IS meeting, 7 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, pp 130–8).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, pp 3–4.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 1.



Society, which may guard them against the impositions too often practised on their credulity, by persons affecting to have for their object, to ameliorate the condition of the Irish poor.’<sup>68</sup> Winning immediately counter-attacked, accusing Logan of speaking about the Irish Society in ‘very unmeasured and disrespectful language’, and posed three significant questions.<sup>69</sup> He queried whether or not Logan conceded that the Roman Catholic laity had a right to read the Scriptures. He further probed that if the Bible could be translated into English, Latin or Greek why it should not be translated into Irish? He also questioned why instruction through that medium should not be communicated to the two million Irish speakers.

### **The Kingscourt Resolutions**

That Scriptural knowledge ‘reach our most remote valleys, Scriptural light illumine our darkest mountains – and the Bible of God become the ornament of the Irish Cabin’.<sup>70</sup>

The Irish Society had been operating in the Kingscourt District for five years in September 1827. The masters and scholars had already held what became a highly-publicised and contentious event less than two years earlier in Greaghnarogue. Why did the IS teachers court further controversy by publishing more resolutions in Kingscourt on 5 September 1827? It was in response to the ‘calumnies’ in Bishop Logan’s letters and to refute some of his allegations, Winning stated.<sup>71</sup>

The Kingscourt meeting, unlike Greaghnarogue, was a formal one and was for teachers only. Kingscourt had learned its lesson from the controversy following Greaghnarogue, which caused the Society’s assistant secretary, Rev. Joseph D’Arcy Sirr to proffer a generalisation retrospectively to fit the particulars of what had occurred. The Irish peasantry was unfamiliar with the ‘best mode of conducting meetings’, he wrote. It was not its wont ‘to convene public meetings, to appoint Chairmen, Secretaries and Officers, nor to arrange, beforehand, the Resolutions to be proposed.’<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> *DEP*, 3 July 1826, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> The Kingscourt signatories’ prayer, 5 Sept. 1827, IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 33.

<sup>71</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 10.

<sup>72</sup> Editor, *DMR*, 19 Apr. 1826, p. 3, citing Rev. Joseph D’Arcy Sirr, *Patriot*, 15 Apr. 1826.

The Kingscourt meeting appointed Michael Farrelly as chairman. He had been promoted ‘circulating master’ of the district in June 1827.<sup>73</sup> Michael Crosby was allocated the role of secretary, and formally recorded the names of those in attendance and their roles. It formed a subcommittee and published the members’ names. It asked ‘the best Scholar amongst them to put their opinions in the best language he can – and they afterwards put their names to it, as time, place, and opportunity permit.’<sup>74</sup> The 125 teachers present passed nine resolutions. Again, all swore their loyalty to the IS. They lauded the beneficial effects that the IS had on its scholars, where ‘not merely the young, but the middle-aged, and the old, have been taught to read in their own Language, of the wonderful works of God.’<sup>75</sup> They vehemently denied the charge of proselytism laid against the Irish Society, arguing that since all its teachers and ‘circulating masters’ were Roman Catholics, it could not reasonably be accused of proselytism.

In essence, the first six resolutions re-stated what had been set down in the Greaghnarogue Resolutions. Three resolutions dealt with the right of the laity to read the Scriptures. The Kingscourt IS teachers were constantly endeavouring to obtain scriptural knowledge and trying to ascertain if, by reading the Scriptures, they were breaking God’s law, they claimed. They were men of ‘intelligence, and understanding, classically educated’. They were ‘intimately acquainted’ with Church history, and could ‘read the writings of the Fathers in their original language’. They concluded, as they did at Greaghnarogue, that not only was the reading of the Scriptures not forbidden, it was ‘most strenuously enjoined by Fathers, Popes and Councils’. They quoted Roman Catholic theologians from St. Clement in the first century to Theophylact, Greek archbishop of Ohrid, in the eleventh century to support their argument. The signatories declared that financial reward was not their motivating factor in reading or teaching the Scriptures. Some had taught without any remuneration for years, and would continue even if the IS ceased to exist.

The seventh resolution concerned the local, internal organisation of the IS teachers in the Kingscourt District. A twenty-six member regulating committee was

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<sup>73</sup> IS meeting, 7 Sept. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 116 (a)).

<sup>74</sup> Editor, *DMR*, 19 Apr. 1826, p. 3, citing Rev. Joseph D’Arcy Sirr, *Patriot*, 15 Apr. 1826.

<sup>75</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 31.

set up ‘to prevent immoral or unfit persons becoming Irish teachers, in effect a Teaching Council (Table 3.4).<sup>76</sup>

**Table 3.4 Committee appointed to supervise entry into profession as Irish Society teachers in the Kingscourt District, 5 Sept. 1827**

James Sherry	Eugene Duffy
Patrick Nevin	James McEnany
Patrick McEntyre	Michael Cooney
Arthur Bennet	James Ryder
Anthony Leonard	Thomas Keenan
James Martin	Pat Whelan
Philip Callan	Thomas Farrelly
Pat Farrelly	Peter Galligan
James Smith	Patrick Smyth
James McEntyre	Francis Farrelly
Pat Corrigan	Thomas Brady
Arthur Branagan	Philip Cassidy
Philip Clerken	James Farrelly

Source: The Kingscourt Resolutions, IS, *Quarterly extracts of the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language*, no. 26 (Oct. 1827), pp 107–9

The prestigious group included the poet and scribe, Peter Gallegan.<sup>77</sup> Anyone who wished to become an IS teacher would first have to submit character references to the committee. The committee would examine his qualifications, and recommend him, or not, to the district superintendent, Robert Winning. This Kingscourt initiative was a departure from the existing policy, where it was the ‘circulating master’ and superintendent alone who approved the appointment of a teacher.<sup>78</sup> The weeding-out process would ensure that no disreputable character could become an IS teacher. The committee would work in conjunction with the inspectors, Michael Farrelly, James Farrelly and James Reilly and meet with them quarterly in Kingscourt. The meetings were probably held in Michael Farrelly’s ‘apartments’. Three months previously, the IS had allowed Farrelly five pounds per annum ‘in consideration of permitting visiting masters and scholars to occupy his apartments’. Farrelly was advanced a further five pounds ‘to purchase beds for visitors to sleep in, if it were agreeable to Winning’s suggestion’.<sup>79</sup> The teachers established a private lending library, the ‘Kingscourt Irish Society Library’ to provide continuing education for those anxious for ‘knowledge and improvement’.<sup>80</sup> A farthing per

<sup>76</sup> The Kingscourt Resolutions, IS, *Quarterly extracts* no. 26 (1 Oct. 1827), pp 107–9.

<sup>77</sup> For Gallegan, see Séamus Mac Gabhann, ‘Salvaging cultural identity: Peter Gallegan (1792–1860)’ in *Ríocht na Midhe*, ix (1994/5), pp 71–87.

<sup>78</sup> Instructions to circulating master, IS meeting, 4 Feb. 1825 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 20 (b)).

<sup>79</sup> IS meeting, 29 June 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 109 (b)).

<sup>80</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 33.

shilling, over two per cent, was deducted from their salaries for its upkeep. As a mark of respect to the Society, the Kingscourt committee resolved to send three of its members to its annual meeting in Dublin on 17 March.

The penultimate resolution addressed what was probably the most grievous and pressing issue, the damaging public allegations of forgery and fraud laid against the Irish Society's inspectors and managers in the Kingscourt District. In the fall-out from the Greaghnarogue Resolutions, the inspectors had been publicly accused of providing false returns to the Irish Society. They were further charged with making returns for schools which they had not inspected or which had in fact, in some cases, ceased to exist. Some of the IS teachers were accused of forging the signatures of teachers to the Greaghnarogue Resolutions, teachers who were not even present on the occasion, including the signature of a Protestant. They had been accused of soliciting and accepting bribes from teachers so that they, the 'circulating masters', would credit the teachers with having greater numbers of scholars in order to receive a larger salary. The teachers in turn were accused of bribing the inspectors with money and buying them alcohol to persuade them to return greater numbers of scholars than they actually had.

Both Winning and Thomas Russell, the IS inspector, knew that suspicions of fraud hung over the IS schools in Nobber, County Meath as early as July 1823. It was Russell who first alerted Sirr, the Society's secretary, that the Nobber schools were 'totally inefficient and unconstitutional'. The numbers attending were very small, between six and eight scholars. All were able to read English before they started school, a flagrant breach of the Society's policy, not to mention an 'extravagant expenditure of our very limited means'. Sirr reasoned that the IS masters had been in Nobber long enough, that they should be discontinued, and 'circulated' to 'Connemara, Erris or wherever may be desired best'.<sup>81</sup> The IS considered that it was 'inexpedient' to adopt Sirr's resolution at that time.<sup>82</sup> Winning and Russell were asked to let the Nobber masters know that the Irish Society 'experiment had failed' there.<sup>83</sup> The masters at the time were, Michael Farrelly, James Martin, and Philip Clerken.

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<sup>81</sup> IS meeting, 4 July 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 152 (a)).

<sup>82</sup> IS meeting, 11 July 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 153 (a)).

<sup>83</sup> IS meeting, 4 July 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 152 (b)).

The Kingscourt masters would have been concerned over the loss of income to the Society's largest district if allegations of fraud were proved. They investigated the numbers in the General Report Book for the quarter ending 17 May 1827 (Table 3.5) and concluded that 'we think and believe' the reported number to be 'accurate and correct', and the allegations 'entirely false and unfounded'.<sup>84</sup> It was only to be expected that the numbers in the General Report Book tallied with those in the printed annual reports. They were merely transcribed from one into the other. Only typographical errors could be discovered by comparing the two. If fraud or bribery had taken place, as the Society's detractors alleged it had, then it occurred privately between the master and his 'circulating master' or local inspector, and would never have got into the General Report Book.

**Table 3.5 Numbers and categories of Irish Society scholars in Kingscourt District, verified from quarterly returns, May 1827**

Spellers	Readers	Translators	Repetitioners	Adults	Juniors	Total	New scholars
1,027	1,764	2,204	73	4,297	771	5,068	1,802

Source: IS, *The tenth report of the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language, for the year ending 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1828, with an appendix, and list of subscribers* (Dublin, 1828), p. 33

The final resolution advised critics that they should be thanking Kingscourt's Mr Russell, Rev. Winning, the friends of the Society in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the IS committee in Dublin, instead of finding fault with them.

A larger number of IS masters, 135 of them, issued a second document in 1827 with their names attached, again refuting the charges of 'forgery and imposition', and affirming the 'honesty and integrity' of the inspectors. They declared that not only were the numbers of scholars not exaggerated, they represented but a fraction of those taught. Many scholars were afraid to turn up at the quarterly inspections because of the persecution of the priests.<sup>85</sup>

Winning produced a further document to refute 'the calumnies of Dr Logan',<sup>86</sup> *Testimony of several of the Gentlemen residing in the Kingscourt District, to the value of the Irish Society*. The *Testimony* had no names attached, which was unusual for Winning and Kingscourt at this stage. The gentlemen had investigated the allegations of fraud that emerged from the Greaghnaarogue Resolutions inquiry,

<sup>84</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 33.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

and found them, too, ‘most unjust and unfounded’. The Society was ‘highly deserving the confidence, patronage, and support of every true friend of his country.’<sup>87</sup> Winning further used the *Testimony* as evidence that another, ‘entirely unexpected’ outcome from the Society’s detractors, was ‘a more extended patronage in the Christian world’.<sup>88</sup>

### **Fall-out from Kingscourt Resolutions**

Bishop Logan of Meath was satisfied after his enquiries into the Greaghnarogue Resolutions that that there was not one single Irish Society school in County Meath. There were only three IS itinerant masters without any fixed scholars in Nobber, and he had excommunicated them. When the Kingscourt masters drew up the Kingscourt Resolutions on 5 September 1827 to refute Logan’s ‘calumnies’, as they stated,<sup>89</sup> Logan was forced to make further investigations. He submitted the full extent of both his inquiries in a letter to Edward Dywer secretary of the Catholic Association on 28 September 1827. It was the Catholic Association who had been pressing him for the information.<sup>90</sup> Logan apologised for his delay in forwarding the requested documents, explaining that it was because of the time taken to obtain some ‘additional material’.<sup>91</sup> His letter, which included declarations from seventeen deponents, was read at the Association’s meeting the following day, and published in a supplement to the *Dublin Weekly Register* on 6 October 1827.<sup>92</sup> Between July 1826 and September 1827, Logan had assembled seventeen declarations from IS teachers and scholars in nine parishes (Table 3.6): Carnaross (2), Castletown-Kilpatrick (1), Clonmellon (2), Kells (2), Kilbeg (1), Kilmainhamwood (1), Kilskyre (1), Moynalty (1), and Mullagh (1). Apart from Clonmellon, the parishes were concentrated in north Meath and south-east Cavan. Kilmainhamwood and Mullagh were in the Roman Catholic diocese of Kilmore.

Eight of the seventeen declarations were sworn before the administrator of Moynalty parish, Rev. Patrick Kiernan (1822–31). Two of the eight schools in Moynalty in 1824, Tullipole and Carnaville, were financed by the Irish Society.

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<sup>87</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 26 (Oct. 1827), pp 107–9; IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 35.

<sup>88</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 35.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>90</sup> *DWR*, 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8

<sup>91</sup> Bishop Robert Logan’s letter to New Catholic Association, in *DWR*, 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Francis Farrelly was a Sunday schoolmaster in Tullipole under Rev. Winning on 16 May 1823, and taught one Protestant pupil and eighteen Catholic pupils in his own dwelling house. Michael Conlon taught thirty-four Catholic pupils in Carnaville in his father's dwelling-house.<sup>93</sup> The Scriptures were read in Irish. Conlon and Farrelly were signatories to the Greaghnarogue Resolutions. On 9 July 1826, Rev. Kiernan obtained their declarations stating that they were Irish Society masters (Table 3.6). Conlon declared that Michael Owens, the Society's inspector, induced him to sign the names of at least four persons who were not present in Greaghnarogue and who knew nothing of the resolutions. In a separate statement made with Francis Farrelly, Conlon stated that the contents of the document had scarcely been read for them. Both signed what they supposed to be an innocent document. Their motives were purely self interest: to protect salaries for which they did no work. Both also realised by the summer of 1826, six months after they signed the resolutions that the sentiments contained in them were contrary to their Catholic religious beliefs. They debunked the third resolution, passed at Greaghnarogue, which stated that the Irish Society masters had examined the Irish Testament, compared it with the Protestant and Rhemish translations and found it to be an accurate translation, as a 'base scandalous falsehood'. The teachers were not capable of comparing the various editions of the English and Irish versions and had never made such a comparison; therefore they were unable to give an opinion on its accuracy. They retracted their signatures and expressed their abhorrence of Michael Owens' conduct, who, they alleged, obtained their signatures by deception. They also vowed to have no further correspondence with the IS whose agents brought such scandal to the Irish Catholic masters. Significantly, it was not until 7 September 1827 and after the Kingscourt Resolutions had been published, that Rev. Kiernan swore the two declarations before C. Cusack, Rathaldron Castle, Navan.

Bishop Logan interviewed four IS masters personally, John Gilligan from Clonmellon, and Thomas Smyth, James Farnan, and James Reilly from his own mensal parish of Kells.<sup>94</sup> James Reilly's declaration was the most damning of all. Reilly had first introduced Rev. Winning to the Irish Society in 1822. As an IS inspector, he frequently doubled and trebled the numbers of Irish Scholars that he returned in expectation of receiving money from the masters, he stated. Sometimes

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<sup>93</sup> *Second report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry*, HC 1826–7 (12), xii.1, 108–9.

<sup>94</sup> Logan to editor, *DEP*, 28 Sept. 1827, p. 3.

he got 2s. 6d. from the masters, but generally he received one shilling. He believed that all the inspectors did likewise. In 1823, Reilly accompanied William Conner, the Society's agent at the time, on his visitation of the schools in the five counties in the Kingscourt District. Connor, Reilly believed, made a fair return of the Irish Scholars, but as it did not give satisfaction, Winning appointed Reilly a few days afterwards to re-inspect the same schools. Reilly returned about 400 or 500 scholars, even though the real number did not exceed fifty. Winning complimented him on his returns, and called him 'the father of all'.<sup>95</sup>

**Table 3.6 Declarations of teachers and scholars of the Kingscourt District concerning the Greaghnarogue Resolutions, 28 December 1825, and Kingscourt Resolutions, 5 September 1827**

Teacher/ scholar	Parish	Inspector/ master	Deposition before	Date (where stated)
Michael Conlon, Francis Farrelly		Michael Owens	Rev. Kiernan	9 July, 1826
Francis Farrelly		Not stated		9 July, 1826
Peter Sheridan	Kilskyre	Michael Farrelly	Rev. Kiernan, Rev. Flood	
Patrick Bradly	Carnaross	Not stated	Rev. Kiernan, Rev. Sheridan	
Simon Flood	Carnaross	Not stated	Rev. Kiernan, Rev. Sheridan	11 Sept. [1827]
Peter Gilligan	Moynalty	Not stated	Rev. Kiernan, Peter Cassidy, farmer	12 Sept. 1827
Matthew Clarke	Kilmainham [wood]	Not stated	Rev. Kiernan, Rev. O'Reilly	12 Sept. 1827
James Rider	Mullagh (diocese of Kilmore)	Not stated	Rev. Kiernan,	12 Sept. 1827
Thomas Duffy	Kilbeg	Not stated	Rev. Kiernan, Rev. Ward	15 Sept. 1827
Sylvester Gibney, scholar		Patrick Whelan, master		21 Sept. 1827
John Murphy				
George Winslow	Kilallon, Clonmellon	Thomas Farrelly	John Battersby, Justice of the Peace	21 Sept. 1827
John Gilligan	Kilallon, Clonmellon	Not stated	Bishop Logan, John Battersby, Justice of the Peace	21 Sept. 1827
Thomas Smyth	Kells	Michael Farrelly	Bishop Logan, C. Cusack	26 Sept. 1827 at Rathaldron Castle
James Farnan	Kells	Michael Farrelly	John Barnet Bishop Logan,	22 Sept. 1827
James Reilly	Kells	James Reilly	Bishop Logan,	22 Sept. 1827
Peter Monaghan (on behalf of his deceased son, Daniel)	Knightstown, Castletown- Kilpatrick	[ ] Farrelly, [Mathew] Clarke	John Barnet	22 Sept. 1827

Source: *DWR*, supplement 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*



Eight of the fifteen deponents were at the Irish Society meeting in Kingscourt on 5 September 1827. Seven, Murphy, Rider, Flood, Peter Gilligan, Clarke, Sheridan and Bradly, were there to collect their payments for the quarter ending 17 August, the latter two received £2 12s. 6d. and £2 12s., respectively. Duffy was only one month with the IS at that time. He heard the resolutions, did not understand them, but signed them anyway. He since regretted it. The signatories, Winslow, Gilligan, Smyth, Farnan, and Peter Monaghan accused the IS inspector, Michael Farrelly, of fraudulent reporting and bribery. The scholar, Gibney, gave damning evidence against the IS master, Patrick Whelan.

In his letter to the Catholic Association, Bishop Logan outlined the measures that he had taken to investigate the work of the Irish Society in Meath, following the publication of the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions. He had examined William Conner's statement, one time IS agent,<sup>96</sup> which was published in the *Dublin Evening Post* on 13 July 1826.<sup>97</sup> Conner claimed that he had visited every part of Ireland in his role as the Society's agent. Although the IS declared that there were 100 schools in its 1822 annual report, Conner did not find in August 1823 'one person taught to read Irish' when he visited the parts of the country where the IS was said to be active.<sup>98</sup> Conner's statement corroborated that of James Reilly which Logan had already obtained. So much for the veracity of the Committee from 1816 to 1823, Conner remarked.<sup>99</sup> Conner was not the most reliable source, however. He had his own issues with the Society at the time. He had been dismissed, unfairly he believed, in October 1824<sup>100</sup> because 'much evil has been done to the Society' by his taking a controversial part in the public meetings in Cork.<sup>101</sup>

The Catholic clergy, Logan said, was unanimous in its hostility to the Irish Society and to other anti-Catholic societies formed under the pretence of educating the Irish poor and improving their condition. They abhorred the system of bribing masters to become hypocrites in religion for the execrable purpose of seducing their

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<sup>96</sup> Examination of Captain George Pringle, 7 Jan. 1826 in *Appendix to first report of the commissioners on education in Ireland*, HC 1825 (400), xii.1, 681–706.

<sup>97</sup> *DEP*, 13 July 1826, p. 4.

<sup>98</sup> Statement of William Conner, *DEP*, 13 July 1826, p. 4; see IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 11 (1 Jan. 1824), p. 95; IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 12 (1 Apr. 1824), pp 95–101 for William Conner's journal, of 1823.

<sup>99</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, pp 3–5.

<sup>100</sup> Statement of William Conner, *DEP*, 13 July 1826, p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> IS meeting, 5 Nov. 1824 (TCD, MS, 7644, p. 14 (b)).

scholars from that religion handed down to them from the Apostles.<sup>102</sup> Logan was convinced that the Society was intent on proselytism. The people were ignorant of this; many supposed that the IS goal was to preserve and perpetuate the Irish language. Logan had no hesitation ‘in pronouncing the masters and managers of the IS as persons whom the world would deem guilty of fraud, deceit, and a gross imposition on the public’.<sup>103</sup> He believed that the Roman Catholic school masters were ‘deceived, and cruelly imposed upon’ and that they never meant to renounce their faith. They did not suspect that the Irish Society was in any way connected with the various other Bible Societies.<sup>104</sup> It was to satisfy its benefactors that the system was working well and to secure their continued patronage and support, that the IS asserted that 125 masters had ‘renounced their faith’ and signed the Kingscourt Resolutions on 5 September 1827.<sup>105</sup>

Other correspondents were drawn into the controversy. One stout defender of the Catholic Church’s position wrote under the pseudonym ‘Maolcholuim’.<sup>106</sup> He challenged Rev. Winning’s letter in the *Dublin Evening Post* 3 June 1826, re-stating all the facts hitherto expounded by the Catholic protagonists.<sup>107</sup> He took up the fight where Bishop Logan had left off and continued the attack on Rev. Winning and the Irish Society. He commented scathingly on Winning’s delay in attempting a refutation of Logan’s argument: ‘after a four months’ parturition, and a difficult labour [Winning] at length brought forth the brat in the shape of a letter to the editor of the *Dublin Evening Post*.’<sup>108</sup>

The Irish Society was a ‘system of humbugging’.<sup>109</sup> The people of England had been ‘most egregiously gulled and money has been extorted from them’ to support a system, which has ‘produced nothing but dishonesty and immorality of the worst description’.<sup>110</sup> He restated at length what Logan had already alleged. The ‘pretended resolutions’ were ‘a bungling fabrication’, and ‘virtually forgeries

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<sup>102</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> Logan to New Catholic Association published in *DWR*, 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *DWR* supplement, 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

<sup>106</sup> The identity of ‘Maolcholuim’ remains unknown. It is likely that he was a member of the 11-man committee set up by the Catholic Association to refute every false allegation made by the Irish Society, and perhaps the editor and proprietor of *Dublin Morning Register* and *Dublin Weekly Register*, Michael Staunton.

<sup>107</sup> *DEP*, 3 June 1826, p. 4.

<sup>108</sup> *DMR*, 27 Sept. 1827, p. 4; *DWR*, 29 Sept. 1827, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> *DWR*, 29 Sept. 1827, p. 4.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 Oct. 1827, p.1.

inasmuch as several of the names signed to them were written on loose slips of paper'.<sup>111</sup> They were fraudulently obtained, under the pretence that the names were intended to be attached to a petition to the Roman Catholic Primate, Dr Curtis. Rev. Winning, Maolcholuim alleged, was 'generally supposed to be the inventor of the [Greaghnarogue] Resolutions', and 'the chief director in affixing the signatures to those resolutions'. Winning was 'not one of those "Reverends" that are blessed with the green acres' (he was a Presbyterian minister).<sup>112</sup> Motivated by fear that his income from the Irish Society would be considerably diminished, Winning's letters to the *Evening Post* on 9 and 20 September 1827 were 'an expiring effort' made by the master, inspectors and superintendent of the Kingscourt District to counteract the effects of Bishop Logan's letters. Maolcholuim was wrong. The Irish Society in the Kingscourt District under Rev. Winning's superintendence survived for almost thirty further years.

It is difficult to ascertain the reliability of the statements of any of the seventeen men whose declarations Bishop Logan submitted to the Catholic Association in September 1827. It would appear that many deponents adjusted their story depending on who was asking the questions. Logan was their Roman Catholic bishop. He could excommunicate them, as he did Farrelly, Martin and Clerken in Nobber in 1826. The Irish Society was their employer; the work was lucrative. John Gilligan, Clonmellon, received 35s. for thirty-five scholars, even though he only taught five.<sup>113</sup> Thomas Smyth from Kells had realised that 'the whole system was a complete hum-bug'.<sup>114</sup> It was in expectation of receiving his quarterly payment on 5 September 1827 that he apologised to Winning on the 4 September for the false information he had previously given about the Society. He told Logan, however, that he had no scholars. He never taught Irish or English, either publicly or privately, but he received three quarters' salary of approximately 30s. per quarter from the Irish Society. He recalled how two persons visited him sometime around Candlemas (2 February) 1827:

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<sup>111</sup> *DMR*, 27 Sept. 1827, p. 4.

<sup>112</sup> *DWR*, 29 Sept. 1827, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> Logan to editor, *DEP*, 28 Sept. 1827, p. 3; *DWR* supplement, 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> *DWR* supplement 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

M[ichael Farrelly], the inspector, asked me if I had many scholars? You know very well, Farrelly, said I, that I have none; that I would not teach under that Society, but that if they gave me the money I would not refuse it. He laughed, and said, we will return some Scholars at any rate.<sup>115</sup>

Smyth learned later that Farrelly returned thirty scholars for him.<sup>116</sup> None was as direct as Peter Gallegan (1792/3–1860), schoolmaster, scribe, and poet. He decried the Kingscourt Resolutions and withdrew his name from the teachers' superintending committee. He was 'rather poor to give up the quarterly gratuities', however, and intended to remain a Catholic.<sup>117</sup> He was determined to continue teaching for the IS until he was convinced that by so doing he was acting contrary to the Scriptures or the Roman Catholic Church Fathers, Popes and Councils.<sup>118</sup>

### **The fate of the key Irish Society personnel in the Kingscourt District, post Greaghnaogue and Kingscourt Resolutions**

Following the publication of the Greaghnaogue and Kingscourt Resolutions, the Kingscourt District became the model for other Irish Society districts, and Rev. Robert Winning rose to prominence within the Society. Winning's plan, detailed in letter number 2987 (no longer extant), was acceded to on 21 September 1827.<sup>119</sup> What his plan was might be deduced from what followed. He was appointed general superintendent of three Irish Society districts, Kingscourt, Louth and Newry, and Trim and Athboy (Table 3.7). His offer to devote more of his time to the Society was accepted gratefully in October 1828.<sup>120</sup> He was allowed £75 per annum to pay for an assistant to minister to his congregations whilst he was absent on IS duties.<sup>121</sup> The payment continued annually until 17 May 1852.<sup>122</sup>

Winning's trusty inspector, Thomas Russell, was appointed as Winning's general inspector. Russell rose quickly through the ranks within the IS, and in 1827, the Society invited him to make himself available during a 'fixed portion of the year' for visiting districts that might require a more detailed examination than the local

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Logan to editor, *DEP*, 28 Sept. 1827, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> *DWR* supplement, 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

<sup>118</sup> Breandán Ó Buachalla, *I mBéal Feirste cois cuain* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1975), lth. 125.

<sup>119</sup> Winning's plan, detailed in letter number 2987 is no longer extant, IS meeting, 21 Sept. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 167 (a)).

<sup>120</sup> IS meeting, 19 Oct. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 118 (a)).

<sup>121</sup> IS meeting, 30 Nov. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 155).

<sup>122</sup> IS meeting, 27 May 1852 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 155).

superintendent was able to provide.<sup>123</sup> By 1834, Russell was senior inspector of the Kingscourt District.<sup>124</sup> He continued to work with Winning as an inspector in the Irish Society in Kingscourt, receiving his final payment on 5 May 1853.<sup>125</sup>

**Table 3.7 Irish Society key figures and their roles in the Kingscourt District, 21 September 1827, following the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions**

	General superintendent	General inspector	'Pioneer'
Kingscourt District	Robert Winning	Thomas Russell	James Reilly
	Local superintendent	Local inspector	
Kingscourt	Robert Winning	Michael Farrelly	
Louth & Newry Louth Newry	Mr Finney Richard Benson	Francis Farrelly Francis Farrelly	
Trim & Athboy Trim Athboy	[] Black Mr Chambers	Pat Farrelly Pat Farrelly	
Louth & Newry or Trim & Athboy		James Reilly	

Source: IS meeting, 21 Sept. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 116 (a))

James Reilly, who first introduced Winning to the IS, was initially assigned a roving role as an Irish Society inspector, to be sent to Newry or Athboy, or wherever else Winning thought fit. According to the testimony he gave to Bishop Logan in 1827, Reilly had ceased his position as inspector on 16 August 1826, having admitted that he had accepted bribes from the IS teachers to falsify their returns.<sup>126</sup> However, he was still on the Society's pay roll in 1829 when his salary was reduced to £10 per annum, 'the continuance of it hereafter to depend on his own conduct'.<sup>127</sup>

Michael Conlon and Francis Farrelly expressed their abhorrence of the conduct of Michael Owens, the IS inspector, who had obtained their signatures for the Greaghnarogue Resolutions by deception, in a statement to Rev. Patrick Kiernan, Moynalty.<sup>128</sup> Owens was transferred from Kingscourt to the Youghal District in County Cork, 200 miles distant, in July 1826 under Rev. William Hallaran's superintendence. The Society allowed him £2 to defray removal expenses for his

<sup>123</sup> IS meeting, 2 Mar. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 94 (a)).

<sup>124</sup> Thomas Russell's account of the Kingscourt District, extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of education enquiry, 20 Dec. 1834, pp 26–9 (copy of Russell's letter in RIA, OS memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan).

<sup>125</sup> IS meeting, 5 May 1853, (TCD, MS 7645, p. 301).

<sup>126</sup> Logan to editor, *DEP*, 28 Sept. 1827, p. 3.

<sup>127</sup> IS meeting, 24 Apr. 1829 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 155 (b)).

<sup>128</sup> *DWR* supplement 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

wife from Kingscourt to Youghal.<sup>129</sup> He was suspended from his position as inspector on 17 August 1827.<sup>130</sup> His salary was reduced to £24 per annum, the £4 reduction to go ‘towards paying his debts in Youghal’.<sup>131</sup> The decision to reduce his salary was moved by Rev. Winning.<sup>132</sup> He was sent to Clones under Taylor’s superintendence and Winning’s general superintendence on 7 December 1827 and was dismissed as an IS teacher on 27 March 1835.<sup>133</sup>

Four deponents had accused the IS inspector, Michael Farrelly, of bribery.<sup>134</sup> Farrelly alternated between the two districts, Kingscourt and Youghal, in what would appear to be three-month blocks, between the years 1825 and 1832. He was in Nobber in the Kingscourt District in 1826 where he was denounced by his parish priest in June. Farrelly’s retaliatory letter was published and widely disseminated the following year.<sup>135</sup> Probably on foot of his display of public loyalty to the IS, Farrelly was immediately appointed IS inspector in the Kingscourt District. His ‘apartments’ were to be used for IS visitors.<sup>136</sup> He was signatory to Kingscourt Resolutions, 5 September 1827, and appointed chairman of committee to regulate teacher appointments. In February 1830, he was sent to Youghal and Cork City District, seemingly permanently, on a salary of £30 per annum with expenses.<sup>137</sup> He was appointed inspector of Youghal and Cork City District on an increased salary of £40 on 16 April 1830 and, in addition to his salary, he was allowed expenses for removing his family there.<sup>138</sup> Two years later, the Society suspended Farrelly with a threat of dismissal pending the outcome of an examination into his inspector’s journal. Although not stated in the Society’s records, merely implied, it was probably on foot of fraudulent activities that were uncovered in Mr Jordan’s re-inspection of the Youghal District.<sup>139</sup> Thomas Smyth, IS master in the Kingscourt District, alleged, but later retracted that ‘it was usual to give some money to Farrelly the Inspector’; he had offered Farrelly 2s.<sup>140</sup> Farrelly was charged with intoxication the following

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<sup>129</sup> IS meeting, 20 July 1826 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 113 (a)).

<sup>130</sup> IS meeting, 17 Aug. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 119 (a)).

<sup>131</sup> IS meeting, 7 Dec. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 122 (b)).

<sup>132</sup> IS meeting, 2 Nov. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 119 (b)).

<sup>133</sup> IS meeting, 27 Mar. 1835 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 52).

<sup>134</sup> *DWR* supplement, 6 Oct. 1827, p. 8.

<sup>135</sup> Farrelly, *Letter to the Rev. John Halpin*, pp 96–9.

<sup>136</sup> IS meeting, 29 June 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 109 (b)).

<sup>137</sup> IS meeting, 19 Feb. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 175 (b)).

<sup>138</sup> IS meeting, 16 Apr. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 177 (b)).

<sup>139</sup> IS meeting, 6 Apr. 1832 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 207 (b)).

<sup>140</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, pp 18, 29.

month, and the charges proved.<sup>141</sup> The IS could either dismiss him for fraud or drunkenness. It dismissed him for ‘drinking with the people of the country’ and ‘engaged in quarrels disgraceful to his character’,<sup>142</sup> ‘without entering into any of the accusations of Mr Jordan’s journal.’<sup>143</sup> Drunkenness was anathema to the Society. However, it was personal to Farrelly and, unlike fraud, would not reflect negatively on the Society, if the Society were seen to act appropriately. The IS suspended its work immediately in the Youghal District for a ‘season’, probably a three-month period.<sup>144</sup>

Thomas McKittrick who admitted that he was the chief perpetrator of the Greaghnarogue Resolutions left Greaghnarogue and the Kingscourt District.<sup>145</sup> The fact that it was claimed that he had been a tithe proctor at one time, might have been a contributory factor.<sup>146</sup> McKittrick was murdered sometime before September 1833.<sup>147</sup>

## Conclusion

The Greaghnarogue Resolutions were passed in response to a crisis within the Irish Society. The Society was on the verge of plunging into ‘perhaps inextricable, difficulties of debt’ in December 1825.<sup>148</sup> The Resolutions were delivered by the largest district in Ireland at the time, operating under the zealous evangelical, Rev. Robert Winning. They represented the first public demonstration of the success of the Irish Society’s work anywhere in Ireland. They marked the end of the early formative and quieter phase of the Society’s operations in the Kingscourt District. The Society had been operating below the radar there until then, when its schools and masters could well be described as invisible.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> IS meeting, 6 Apr. 1832 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 207 (b)).

<sup>142</sup> IS meeting, 6 July 1832 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 210 (b)).

<sup>143</sup> IS meeting, 6 Apr. 1832 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 207 (b)).

<sup>144</sup> IS meeting, 18 May 1832 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 209 (a)).

<sup>145</sup> Thomas McKittrick affidavit, sworn 4 Apr. 1826 in IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 32.

<sup>146</sup> *DEP*, 4 May 1826, p. 3.

<sup>147</sup> Rev. Robert Winning’s speech delivered to Synod of Ulster in Dublin, *Missionary sermons and speeches delivered at a special meeting of the General Synod of Ulster held in Scots’ Church, Mary Street, Dublin, in September 1833* (Belfast, 1834), p. 162.

<sup>148</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts, etc.* no. 20, 1 Apr. 1826, p. 50.

<sup>149</sup> Rev. Robert Winning, IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 20, 1 Apr. 1826, p. 61; Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, pp 45–6.

Taken at face value, the fact that 113 teachers and 262 adult scholars signed the Greaghnarogue Resolutions on behalf of at least 5,000 others exposed the extraordinary success of the Society in the Kingscourt District by 1825. This transformation event, though barely remembered beyond its own time, reverberated well beyond the boundaries of the obscure Monaghan townland of Greaghnarogue. The widespread promulgation of the Greaghnarogue Resolutions, followed by the publication of the Kingscourt Resolutions and the resident gentlemen's *Testimony* two years later thrust the Irish Society, the Kingscourt District and Rev. Robert Winning into national, even international prominence. The Kingscourt District became 'the mecca of the Reformation movement in Ireland'.<sup>150</sup> Rev. Robert Winning became the 'model' superintendent and a leading figure in the Irish Society. The Society deferred to him more and more to devise plans and find solutions to problems, which they were happy to adopt.<sup>151</sup>

The evangelical missionary work of the Irish Society, the Kingscourt District and Rev. Robert Winning became intertwined following the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions; one cannot be discussed without the other. This thesis is substantiated in the next chapter.

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<sup>150</sup> Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*, p. 173.

<sup>151</sup> Winning's plan, detailed in letter number 2987, is no longer extant, Irish Society meeting, 21 Sept. 1827 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 167 (a)).



## Chapter 4

### The Irish Society 1822 to 1853

The Irish Society was a ‘Bible Society, a Missionary Society, a Tract Society, a Society for the education of the poor children, a Sunday School Society, and a Society for the education of poor adults’<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

The conversion of the Irish Roman Catholic population to the Reformed Protestant faith became an increasingly urgent concern for committed evangelical Protestants during the first two decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> ‘A fully-fledged missionary incentive was needed’ as Irene Whelan pointed out. To this end evangelicals established Bible societies, missionary societies, Sunday Schools, Scriptural Schools for adults and children. Teaching the illiterate Irish-speaking Roman Catholic population to read the Bible in their vernacular language, was the approach employed by the Irish Society in its particular mission.

Henry Joseph Monck Mason, one of the founders of the Irish Society, boasted in 1822 that the Irish Society incorporated the combined objectives of all other evangelical societies in one multifunctional organisation. This chapter questions whether Monck Mason’s assertions were justified. It investigates key elements of the Society’s evangelical work under three main headings, its ‘mechanical work’, its ‘missionary work’ and its initiatives to provide for an Irish-speaking Church of Ireland ministry. It considers the Irish Society’s ‘mechanical’ work as a Bible Society, a Tract Society and an education society for adults and children. It looks at its efforts to secure Irish Bibles, Testaments and primers for its teachers and schools. It analyses its ‘mechanical’ work as an education society by examining the Irish schools and districts that it established and the scholars that it taught to read the Irish Bible. The Irish Society’s focus was the ‘moral amelioration’ of its Irish Catholic scholars through reading the Scriptures, first in Irish and then in English. It was never intended to be a purely educational institution. This chapter also looks at the

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<sup>1</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> See Miriam Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950* (Manchester, 2010); Irene Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland: the ‘Second Reformation’ and the polarization of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800–1840* (Wisconsin, 2005)

direction and scope of the Society’s ‘missionary’ efforts while the final section investigates the various attempts made by the Irish Society to provide an Irish-speaking ministry for its converts.

### ‘Mechanical work’

The Irish Society was a ‘Bible Society, a Missionary Society, a Tract Society’.<sup>3</sup> Its ‘exclusive’ objective was, according to its 1818 constitution, ‘to instruct the native Irish who still use their vernacular language, how to employ it as a means for obtaining an accurate knowledge of English’. The Society devoted its early years’ work from 1818 to 1834 exclusively to this ‘mechanical’ work of teaching the native Irish-speaking population to read the Bible in the Irish language.<sup>4</sup> To achieve this objective it planned to ‘distribute among them the Irish version of the Scriptures’.<sup>5</sup> To this end, it distributed Bibles, portions of Bibles, Testaments, Prayer Books, primers, dictionaries and grammars to the IS superintendents, inspectors, teachers, and scholars.

**Table 4.1 Distribution of Irish Society books by a circulating master in eleven unnamed schools in his circuit of schools, 1820 to 1821**

School ID no.	No. scholars	Primers	Gospels	Proverbs	Testaments	Pentateuchs
1	56	5	11	2	3	1
2	28	2	8	0	1	0
3	9	3	3			0
4	14	3	3	3	1	0
5	5	1	1	2	1	0
6	26	9	14	1	1	0
7	50	9	12	2	8	0
8	55	10	28		Some*	0
9	22	16	11	2	6	3
10	Not known	2	1	0	0	0
11	16*	14	6	1	2	1

Source: IS, *The third report of the Irish Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Native through the Medium of their Own Language for the year ending 17<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1821* (Dublin, 1821), p. 34

One IS circulating master detailed how he distributed his allocation of the Society’s books among the eleven unnamed schools in his circuit during the year 1820 to 1821 (Table 4.1). The fifty-six scholars in School number 1 shared twenty-

<sup>3</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, p. 27.

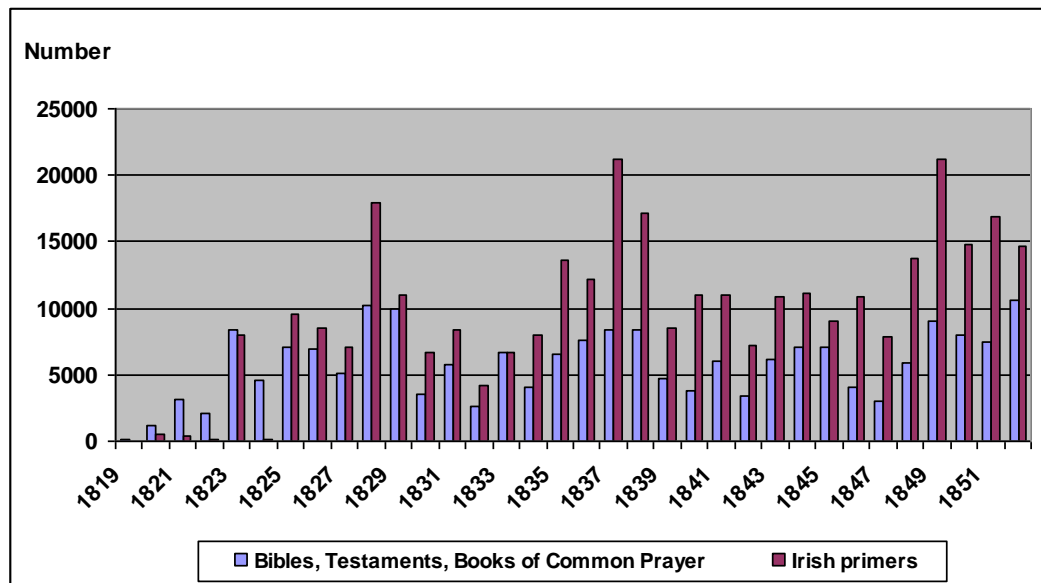
<sup>4</sup> IS, *Annual printed reports*, 1819–34.

<sup>5</sup> Rule 1 of the Irish Society’s general rules adopted at meeting, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a)).

two items of reading material. The five primers were used for those learning to read. The Irish Society masters paid for any books they received by having the amount debited from their remuneration.<sup>6</sup> Rev. Winning assured the Society in 1824 that he kept an accurate account of the large issue of books which he received.<sup>7</sup>

In 1819 during its first year of operation, the Irish Society circulated 100 Bibles, Testaments and Prayer Books. By 1853, that number had increased more than a hundred-fold to 10,663. It distributed Bibles, Testaments, and Books of Common Prayer in the Irish language from 1819 until 1848. It was not until 1849 that the first despatch of English Bibles was recorded in the Society's annual report.<sup>8</sup> It also circulated Irish primers or elementary books from 1820, and Irish dictionaries and grammars from 1826 (Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 Bibles, Testaments and Books of Common Prayer distributed by the Irish Society, 1819–53**



Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS annual reports, 1819–52

The Society explained the diminution in the number of books distributed in some years to supplies running out or the edition being out of stock. The number of primers circulated consistently surpassed that of religious material from 1820 until 1852, and in 1847 was almost three times larger (Figure 4.1). Either the demand for literacy was greater than the demand for the Word of God or the primer was easier to read than the dense text of the Scriptures. The Society set up depositories to which its books could be delivered and stored until collected. There was a depository in

<sup>6</sup> IS, *Third annual report*, 1821, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 11 (1 Jan. 1824), p. 94.

<sup>8</sup> IS, *Thirty-first annual report*, 1849, p. 29.

Kingscourt, most likely in Winning's home, which led one local Church of Ireland historian to give Winning's position as that of 'colporteur' or a distributor of books, for the Irish Society.<sup>9</sup>

A proportion at least of the large quantities of Bibles and religious books distributed must have been replacements for those destroyed by Roman Catholic clergy and laity from the 1820s to the 1850s. The 'indiscriminate' reading of the Scriptures was opposed by the teaching authority of the Catholic Church up to the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Pope Leo XII (1823–9) cautioned against the 'the flood of evil books' circulated by the Bible society, which was 'boldly spreading throughout the world' in 1824. The Society, in order to seduce the minds of the simple, was 'careful to sell them in one place, while elsewhere it wants to give them as a gift with calculating generosity'.<sup>11</sup> Leo XII restated the papal briefs and letter of his predecessor, Pius VII (1800–23), in *Postremis Litteris Nostris* to Ignatius, archbishop of Gniezno,<sup>12</sup> and in *Magno et Acerbo* to Stanislaus, archbishop of Mohilif, both in 1816.<sup>13</sup> The Society, Leo XII stated, delighted in printing its own translations of the Bible in the vernacular, the reading of which would 'cause more harm than good'.<sup>14</sup> He advised his patriarchs, primates, archbishops and bishops to try every means possible to keep Roman Catholics from 'those deadly pastures' and to ensure that they observe strictly the rules of our Congregation of Index (1571–1967), which listed prohibited books. He quoted St Augustine: 'Heresies and other wicked teachings .... arise only when the good scriptures are badly understood and when what is not well understood in them is affirmed with daring rashness.'<sup>15</sup>

The urging of Leo XII to try every means possible to keep Catholics from reading the Bible in the vernacular was most likely the cause for an outbreak of Bible-burning activity, and was not confined to Ireland.<sup>16</sup> The superior of Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne in Beauvais, France, burned a quantity of Bibles deposited in his school during his absence by one of the Bible Societies of London. A Roman

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<sup>9</sup> J. B. R., 'Church of Ireland historical sketches of St David's Church Syddan and St Ernan's Church Kingscourt' ([Kingscourt, 1980]), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> See in particular, John Venn, *Assertions of a Roman Catholic priest examined and exposed: or the correspondence between Rev. John Venn M. A. and Rev. James Waterworth* (London, 1845), pp 6–14.

<sup>11</sup> *Ubi Primum*, 5 May, 1824.

<sup>12</sup> *Postremis Litteris Nostris*, 4 June, 1816.

<sup>13</sup> *Magno et Acerbo*, 3 Sept., 1816.

<sup>14</sup> *Ubi Primum*, 5 May, 1824.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *BCWG*, 10 Dec. 1835, p. 4.

Catholic Jesuit priest, Rev. Telman, burned Bibles in Plattsburgh and Champlain, New York, America.<sup>17</sup> So too, did Rev. Joseph Greaves in Birmingham, England.<sup>18</sup> Bible-burning in Scotland rivalled ‘in atrocity an account of fiendish activity in Ireland’, where a Roman Catholic husband in Glasgow burned his Protestant wife’s Bible.<sup>19</sup> Bible-burning was an offence. Many were prosecuted and taken to court. The Redemptorist, Rev. Vladimir Petcherine, was imputed for the crime in Kingstown, County Dublin in 1855, but was acquitted.<sup>20</sup>

According to the Irish Society, Dr James Warren Doyle (1786–1834), bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, encouraged Roman Catholic priests to burn Bibles,<sup>21</sup> whereas the Catholic political leader, Daniel O’Connell, rebuked those who disrespected the Word of God in such a way.<sup>22</sup> Richard Benson, superintendent of the Newry branch of the IS in the Kingscourt District, heard how in 1839 the local priests incited Catholics to place all the Irish Society’s Bibles, Testaments and elementary books ‘into one pile on the top of Thangullian and there in the face of heaven to make one glorious bonfire of the whole’.<sup>23</sup> Thangullian, Sliabh Gullion, in south Armagh was the highest point in the locality and the public bonfire would have been seen for miles around.<sup>24</sup>

Clashes between Bible teachers and Roman Catholic opponents occurred all over Ireland; nowhere more so than in the Kingscourt District of the Irish Society. Irish Society teachers were particularly vulnerable to attack when they were found carrying Bibles and religious tracts. Probably spurred by the exhortations of their parish priest, Rev. John Halpin, the Bibles of IS teachers in Nobber were strewn on the road and ditches in Carrickleck near Kingscourt during an assault on teachers in March 1828.<sup>25</sup> Another Nobber IS teacher, James Martin, was waylaid and murdered when he was returning from Kingscourt to Nobber with a parcel of books, probably

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<sup>17</sup> *SDCR*, 1 Sept. 1843, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> *NDJ*, 21 Dec. 1848, p. 4

<sup>19</sup> *LG*, 6 Feb. 1836, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *BM*, 10 Dec. 1855, pp 3–4.

<sup>21</sup> *CH*, 26 Nov. 1836, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *John Bull*, 27 Nov. 1836, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Alan R. Acheson, ‘The evangelicals in the Church of Ireland, 1784–1859’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen’s University, Belfast 1967), p. 247.

<sup>24</sup> Thangullion may be from ‘táin’ a trail as in Táin Bó Cuailgne, the Cattle raid of Cooley, and Gullion, a townland. Sliabh Gullion, Sliabh na gCuilinn, the mountain of Gullion.

<sup>25</sup> Deposition of Thomas Reilly, Carrickleck, parish of Enniskeen, County Meath at inquest into death of Owen McDaniel, Irish Society teacher, Kingscourt District, 30 March 1828 (NAI, MS CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/9 (1).

Bibles or other religious tracts.<sup>26</sup> In Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, ‘miscreants’ broke into two school houses and burned all the Bibles and Testaments on 16 January 1834. The ‘contagion’ of Bible-burning reached the gaol in Tullamore in County Offaly in 1834.<sup>27</sup> Rev. Healy, Roman Catholic priest Castletown, when burning a Bible on 22 June 1843, allegedly shouted ‘Paddy come up and warm yourself, there’s a Protestant Bible burning here’.<sup>28</sup>

Was the Irish Society ‘a Society for the education of the poor children, a Sunday School Society, and a Society for the education of poor adults’, as Henry Monck Mason had at first declared? <sup>29</sup> In 1827, the Society admitted that its claims in 1822 to be an education society were somewhat inaccurate.<sup>30</sup> The public were ‘deceived by the name of Education Society’.<sup>31</sup> The uneducated Irish peasantry who gathered together in the Society’s schools on Sabbaths, Holy-days and after work were not taught ‘history, geography, writing, or accounts, but to read the word of God in the only language they can comprehend.’<sup>32</sup> The Society’s great object was to enable the Irish peasant to peruse the Scriptures in his own tongue.<sup>33</sup> Its claims to teach both poor adults and poor children were valid. Some idea of the spread of ages, gender and marital status of the Society’s scholars can be gained by a review of Denis McMahon’s school in 1819. McMahon was one of the first Irish Society teachers.<sup>34</sup> Nineteen of the scholars, seventy-six per cent, were aged over fifteen years. These were later classified as adult scholars by the IS from 1830.<sup>35</sup> Six were children (Table 4.2).

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<sup>26</sup> Baptist Wriothsley Noel, *Notes of a short tour through the midland counties of Ireland in the summer of 1836 with observations on the condition of the peasantry* (London, 1837), pp 102–3.

<sup>27</sup> *LES*, 27 Jan. 1834, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *BNWM*, 9 Mar. 1845, p. 1, citing *DEM*.

<sup>29</sup> *IS*, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> *IS*, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> *IS*, *Eleventh annual report*, 1829, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> *IS*, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> *IS*, *Eleventh annual report*, 1829, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> *IS* meeting, 8 Jan. 1819 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 10 (a)).

<sup>35</sup> The *IS* adopted the *KPS* policy of classifying those over fifteen years of age as adults in 1830.

**Table 4.2 Twenty-five scholars under Denis McMahon, received from Edward William Burton Esq., dated Clifden, 2 January 1819**

Name of scholar	Age (where stated)	Observations (where stated)
David Slattery	17	None
Thomas Dynan	18	None
Nicholas Dynan	14	None
Martha Dynan	20	None
Mary Loughlin	22	Married, read manuscript & script very well
William Foley	29	Read well
Martin Foley	26	Read well
Thomas McMahon	28	Married, read well
Richard Faghy		Schoolmaster, read well
Patrick Donoghue	19	Read tolerably
Michael Halloran	18	Read tolerably
Patrick Dagherty	17	Read tolerably
Michael Fitzpatrick (Sen.)	20	Read tolerably
Beginners		
Patrick Dynan	30	
Mary Dynan	11	
Michael Fitzpatrick (Jun.)	13	
John Fitzpatrick	11	
Patrick Halloran	16	
John Halloran	13	
Robert Kelly	32	Married
James Harkin	40	Married
James McMahon	17	
John Lysaght	27	
John Hallinan	12	
Patrick Barrett	25	

Source: IS meeting, 8 Jan. 1819 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 10 (a))

It is likely that the Irish Society provided the only schooling available in some places, as Pádraig de Brún has suggested.<sup>36</sup> The National School System was not established until 1831. The first school in the immediate hub of the original Kingscourt District's Irish Society to apply for aid was Moynalty, where Rev. Patrick Kiernan had waged war with the Irish Society teachers in the late 1820s. Rev. Patrick Farrelly applied for aid for a Male school in 1833. Mrs Farrelly applied for aid for a Female school in Moynalty on the same day.<sup>37</sup> Cormeen in the same parish submitted its application for both Male and Female schools three years later in

<sup>36</sup> Pádraig de Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827* (Dublin, 2009), p. 41.

<sup>37</sup> Initial application from Moynalty for aid to establish a Male school, roll no. 880, and a Female school, roll no. 881, 19 Sept. 1833 (NAI, ED 1/67, no. 210).

1836.<sup>38</sup> Rev. Nicholas McEvoy did not apply for aid for schools in Kells until January 1844.<sup>39</sup> It was not until December 1844, that Nobber applied for a Male school.<sup>40</sup>

The National School system came too late to benefit the large numbers of adult scholars in the Kingscourt District.<sup>41</sup> The poor born before 1817, that is, those aged fifteen or over in 1832 when the first National Schools in the district were established in the area, had no access to education. Although most of the schools in the north-eastern portion of the diocese of Meath had come under the board of the National School system in the 1830s and 1840s, it was much later before some of the schools in the heart of the original Kingscourt District were built.<sup>42</sup> It was not until the end of the 1850s that some schools in the Kingscourt parish came under the board.<sup>43</sup> Carrickleck in the heartland of the original core of the Kingscourt District of the Irish Society did not come under the Board until 19 May 1858.<sup>44</sup> Though neither a town nor a village, it had 100 inhabited dwellings in 1858 due to the ‘fine stone quarries’ in the townland which provided employment.<sup>45</sup> Paul Connell has concluded from his examination of County Meath schools that few applications for aid were refused.<sup>46</sup> The fact that the local community had to contribute one-third of the cost of providing the school was one factor that delayed their establishment.<sup>47</sup> Mary Daly has shown in her study of Cavan, Cork, Kilkenny and Mayo schools that there was

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<sup>38</sup> Initial application from Cormeen for aid to establish a Male school, roll no. 2088, Female school, roll no. 2089, 20 Sept. 1836 (NAI, ED 1/66, no. 55).

<sup>39</sup> Initial application from Kells for aid to establish a Female school, the Convent, roll no. 4085, 20 Jan. 1844 (NAI, ED 1/67, no. 16). Kells Female school (NAI, Register 2/34, i,

<sup>40</sup> Initial application from Nobber for aid to establish a Male school, roll no. 4284, 10 Dec. 1844 (NAI, ED 1/67, no. 21).

<sup>41</sup> Seventy-three per cent of the IS scholars in the Kingscourt District for the quarter 17 Nov. 1825 to 17 Feb. 1826 were adults, IS, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 16. Eighty-eight per cent of the Society’s scholars in the Kingscourt District in 1840 were adults, IS, *Twenty-second annual report*, 1840, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> See Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish education experiment: the national system of education in the nineteenth century* (London, 1970); John Coolahan, ‘The daring first decade of the Board of National Education, 1831–1841’ in *The Irish Journal of Education*, vii, no. 1 (1983).

<sup>43</sup> Leiter, Kingscourt Male, Kingscourt Female schools in Kingscourt parish came under the Board in 1857 and 1859 respectively (NAI, ED 2/103).

<sup>44</sup> Carrickleck school came under the Board in 1858 (NAI, ED 2/103).

<sup>45</sup> Initial application for establishment of a National School in Carrickleck (NAI, ED 1/67, no. 108, ED/1/68/no. 33).

<sup>46</sup> Paul Connell, *Parson, priest and master: national education in Co. Meath, 1824–41* (Dublin, 1995), p. 41.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.



some flexibility regarding the local contribution, and that it was paid sometimes by labour in kind.<sup>48</sup> This was still a prohibitive cost on local communities, however.

Anyone born in Carrickleck before 1843 had no opportunity to avail of the National School system. Catholic pupils who wished to be educated were obliged to attend the Protestant parish pay schools, three miles away in Kingscourt, Ervey or Nobber,<sup>49</sup> or the hedge or pay schools, if they could afford the payment. As Cormac Ó Gráda pointed out, ‘the weekly penny or two per child charged by most rural schoolteachers in the 1820s would have been a burden on households trying to survive on a few shillings a week.’<sup>50</sup> In the parish of Enniskeen, Kingscourt, there were eleven Roman Catholic pay schools, and four free schools in connection with the Irish Society.<sup>51</sup> The parish of Moynalty had ten schools; three of them were free schools assisted by the Irish Society.<sup>52</sup>

In short, the IS schools presented the first opportunity for most adults and some children to achieve literacy, initially in Irish and then in English, at no financial cost whatsoever to its scholars. It is not surprising then that the Irish Society’s ‘mechanical’ schools’ flourished in the Kingscourt District 1823 to 1840s. The number of its schools increased from 9 schools and 48 scholars in 1819 to a record 908 schools and 23,850 scholars in 1837,<sup>53</sup> with some fluctuations in between (Figure 4.2). Between 1822 and 1845 the Kingscourt District had established a total of 1,751 schools. These schools were not concurrent and existed at different times and for shorter or longer periods. The largest number of schools operating at the same time in the Kingscourt District was 498 in 1837 (Figure 4.2). On the occasion of Monck Mason’s only visit to Kingscourt in November 1845, the Irish Society’s teachers presented him with a map, no longer extant, showing the locations of the 1,751 schools.<sup>54</sup> The aggregate total of 1751 schools was impressive and was most

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<sup>48</sup> Mary E. Daly, ‘The development of the national school system, 1831–1840’, in Art Cosgrove, Donal McCartney (eds), *Studies in Irish History* (Dublin, 1979), pp 150–163, p. 152.

<sup>49</sup> Nobber had a parish school where the stipend was paid by the scholars, *Accounts and papers relative to schools and education in Ireland*, HC 1824 (179), xxi.383, p. 524.

<sup>50</sup> Cormac Ó Gráda, *School attendance and literacy before the Famine* (University College Dublin, 2010), p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Second report of the commissioners of education inquiry*, HC 1826–7 (12), xxii.1, appendix, 308–9.

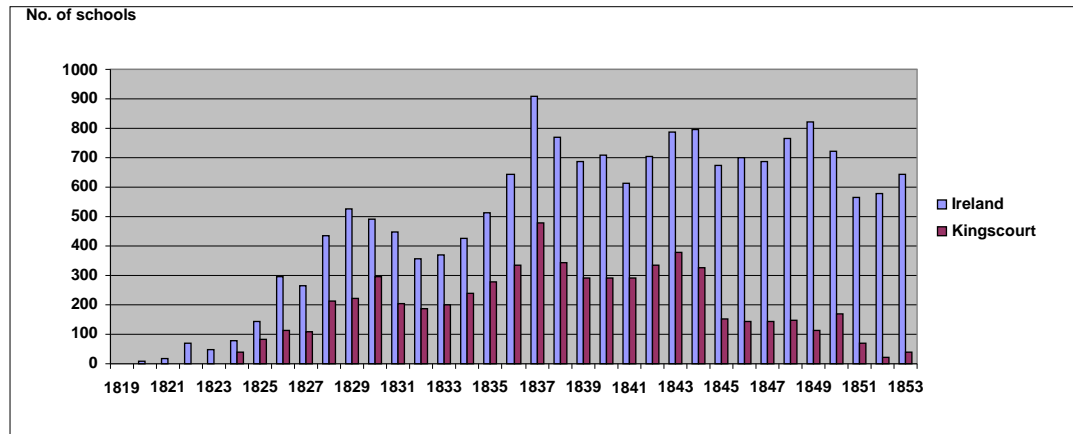
<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 734–5.

<sup>53</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Henry Joseph Monck Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish society, established for promoting the education of the native Irish, through the medium of their own language* (Dublin, 1844), p. 116.

often used when referring to the Kingscourt District and used in Monck Mason's history of the Irish Society.<sup>55</sup>

**Figure 4.2 Irish Society schools in Ireland and Kingscourt District, 1819 to 1853**



Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS annual reports 1819 to 1853

When the IS established a school it allocated an identity number to the teacher and the school beginning with number 1 (Appendix 1). The number was particular to the teacher, so that when the IS teacher, Peter Ward, emigrated from the Kingscourt District in 1844, his school number, 434, ceased to exist. If another IS teacher established a school in Ward's area, the school would be allocated the next available chronological number. Monck Mason explained that 'one number only was wanting, that of 666, which none of the teachers were content to be known by.'<sup>56</sup>

If the number of schools and scholars is the only bench-mark used for assessing its growth and success, the Society reached its apex in 1837 not only nationally, but also in the Kingscourt District. These numbers declined over the following fifteen years to 9,515 by 1852,<sup>57</sup> with a surge again in 1853 to 645 schools and 11,186 scholars (Figure 4.2).<sup>58</sup> By 1853 however, the Society's schools had decreased in number by almost thirty per cent nationally from its halcyon days in 1837. The decline was much steeper in the Kingscourt District (Figure 4.2). From a record 480 schools and 8,379 scholars in 1837,<sup>59</sup> the number plummeted to 40 schools and 428 scholars in 1853.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. The number 666 is the number of the Beast or the Antichrist in the Bible, Revelation 13:18.

<sup>57</sup> IS, *Thirty-fourth annual report*, 1852, p. 23.

<sup>58</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 21.

<sup>59</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 18.

<sup>60</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 21.

## A new plan for Kingscourt<sup>61</sup>

It was never the absence of zeal that prohibited the Irish Society's expansion.<sup>62</sup> Its perennial problem was lack of money. It was £444 1s. 6d. in debt in 1829, its largest deficit ever.<sup>63</sup> It could not afford to invite any additional teachers to its anniversary meeting in Dublin on 17 March. These annual events presented unrivalled opportunities for the Society to showcase its success. The most competent teachers were invited to attend. They were examined publicly before the assembled audience in their ability to read and translate the Irish Bible and answer scriptural questions on the passages read. Six IS teachers from Kingscourt had attended the previous year's anniversary meeting when the Greaghnaogue Resolutions were presented. Each received £1. Michael Farrelly, who travelled from Youghal received £2 6s. 8d.<sup>64</sup>

In January 1829, the Society consulted its district superintendents to ascertain whether the money expended in their districts represented a 'return from the work performed' and invited suggestions on how to reduce expenses.<sup>65</sup> When the Irish Society encountered a similar dilemma in December 1825 and its future was in doubt, the Kingscourt teachers and adult scholars published the Greaghnaogue Resolutions, followed by the Kingscourt Resolutions in September 1827. Again, it was the Kingscourt District and its superintendent, Rev. Winning that offered a solution. Winning proposed that teacher payment periods should be reduced from four a year to three. He had already implemented the system successfully in the Kingscourt District, evidence of the autonomy he enjoyed. His teachers also contributed ten pence in the pound of their 'scanty' earnings as a 'voluntary and unsought for donation' to the Society's funds.<sup>66</sup> The 'three-period' system which reduced the teachers' incomes by one quarter together with the paring back of the Society's expenditure to 1826 level and the restriction on the establishment of new schools amounted to a savings of about £400. Teacher-pupil numbers were capped at sixty pupils per teacher, with teachers receiving only half-payment for any pupils

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<sup>61</sup> IS meeting, 17 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 189, (b)); IS meeting, 17 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 191 (b)).

<sup>62</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> IS, *Eleventh annual report*, 1829, n. p.

<sup>64</sup> IS meeting, 30 Mar. 1826 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 61, (b)). The Kingscourt teachers were: Mr Owens £1, Michael Farrelly £2 6s. 8d. (he came from Youghal), Thomas Munkittrick (McKittrick) £1, James Byrne £1, Thomas Farrelly £1, Patrick McGahan £1.

<sup>65</sup> IS meeting, 16 Jan. 1829 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 149 (b)).

<sup>66</sup> IS, *Twelfth annual report*, 1830, p. 9.

over that quota.<sup>67</sup> It was not enough. The IS was even further in debt to the tune of £664 5s. 3d. the following March 1830 and needed a new plan.<sup>68</sup>

The Irish Society's finances could not sustain the rapid growth of schools and teachers in its largest district, Kingscourt. Rev. Winning suggested a further cost-cutting initiative.<sup>69</sup> He believed that 100 'well selected' schools would probably do as much good as the entire number of 294 then in his district.<sup>70</sup> A compromise was reached and the number of Kingscourt teachers was reduced to 150, with two inspectors (Figure 4.2).<sup>71</sup> Any future teaching vacancies were to be filled from among the masters not retained.<sup>72</sup> The 'outskirts of the districts [were] to be particularly attended to', the 'twilight circle' as the IS called it in 1834.<sup>73</sup> The Society insisted that, although cost-cutting was not its primary objective, nevertheless the new plan would ease its immediate financial crisis without affecting its mission.

It would appear from the tone of the Irish Society's meeting on 17 December 1830 that it was Winning who was expected to raise the funds to ease the Society's 'present resource' at that time. The committee proposed that Winning be sent 'to stir up Scotland'.<sup>74</sup> Since the Kingscourt District's phenomenal success was the greatest drain on the Society's money, perhaps it was perceived that it was only fitting that its superintendent, Winning, should be engaged in the fund-raising efforts.

**Table 4.3 Irish Society branches, schools and scholars in the Kingscourt District, 1830**

Branches	Schools	Scholars	Of whom adults	Adults over 50 years old	Female
Kingscourt	239	7,370	5,839	259	1,036
Louth	41	1,724	1,435	42	324
Killeshandra <sup>75</sup>	14	743	502	98	85
Total	294	9837	7,776	399	1,445

Source: IS, *The twelfth report of the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own language for the year ending 17<sup>th</sup> March 1840* (Dublin, 1830), p. 12

<sup>67</sup> IS meeting, 2 Jan. 1829 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 149 (a)).

<sup>68</sup> IS, *Twelfth annual report*, 1830, appendix v, n. p.

<sup>69</sup> IS meeting, 19 Nov. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, pp 187–8).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 188 (a)–(b).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> IS meeting, 17 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 189 (b)).

<sup>73</sup> IS meeting, 19 Nov. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, pp 188 (b)).

<sup>74</sup> IS meeting, 17 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 190 (b)).

<sup>75</sup> A district had been established in Killeshandra in County Cavan under the superintendence of Rev. Francis Saunderson and the general superintendence of Rev. Winning in 18 July 1828 but was disbanded sometime before 1836; see *Abstract of inspection returns for the period ending 17 January, 1836* in Angélique Day and Patrick McWilliams (eds), *Ordnance Survey memoirs of Ireland, 1830–40* (40 vols, Dublin, 1995), (xl), pp 29–30.

The reduction in the number of IS teachers in the Kingscourt District eased the Society's immediate financial problems. To compensate for the reduced income in Kingscourt, the IS proposed to award £300 annually in premiums, £100 in each of the district's three branches, Kingscourt, Louth and Killeshandra (Table 4.3) for compositions on Scriptural subjects and *viva voce* examinations.<sup>76</sup>

This initiative was seen as the Society 'proceeding in a middle course' which would 'leave teaching secondary' and would encourage an increase in Scriptural knowledge.<sup>77</sup> The scriptural compositions would provide an opportunity for teachers to hone their debating skills in preparation for the more controversial work of Scripture Readers in the future. One IS master burned upwards of 100 rosin candles while he was writing his essay for the competition.<sup>78</sup> Although forced on the Society by its lack of finances, this represented the first step in the Irish Society's shift towards more 'missionary' focused work. Once again, the scheme was piloted in the Kingscourt District.

The scale of premiums and the composition subject matter would be prepared by the Society's sub-committee and finally settled in consultation with Winning. A local committee of twelve, clergymen or gentlemen, would be appointed in the Kingscourt District, four from each branch, who would meet the schools every third month, hold the examinations annually, and generally manage all the affairs of each of the respective branches.<sup>79</sup> Rev. Winning would continue as general superintendent of all the schools and examinations; Thomas Russell would remain the district's general inspector. The IS would economise but with the ultimate view of extending its operations into 'new scenes of action' and missionary-focused work.

It was difficult to keep rein on the Irish Society's expansion in the Kingscourt District. Winning wrote in October 1832 that his district extended sixty miles northward from Kingscourt, 'the metropolis of the district', ten to fifteen miles southward, eastward to the 'North Sea' and westward into Leitrim.<sup>80</sup> By 1833, the Society was anxious once again to 'diminish' its expenses in the original Kingscourt District', but to increase the schools 'in its borders'.<sup>81</sup> The Society limited the district to an allowance of £1,000 each year between December 1834 and February 1837, to

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<sup>76</sup> IS meeting, 19 Nov. 1830 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 187 (b)).

<sup>77</sup> IS, *Twelfth annual report*, 1830, p. 14.

<sup>78</sup> IS. *Quarterly extract, etc.*, no. 36 (1 Jan. 1831), p. 178.

<sup>79</sup> IS meeting, 17 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 189 (b)).

<sup>80</sup> IS. *Quarterly extract, etc.*, no. 43 (1 Jan. 1833), p. 252.

<sup>81</sup> IS meeting, 5 Dec. 1833 (ICM, MS ICMGA/0182, p. 27).

be managed by a local committee which had complete autonomy.<sup>82</sup> By March 1836 the Society's 'funds were favourable' again and the embargo on setting up new schools was lifted (Table 4.4).<sup>83</sup> By the following February, Winning was found to be exceeding the Kingscourt District's expenses' limit by £50 and was told to keep his spending 'within more moderate bounds'.<sup>84</sup> Winning remarked that his district 'could multiply Scriptural schools to an indefinite extent' if the Society 'could furnish the means'.<sup>85</sup> Encouraged by an increase in its finances in 1837, the Society started expanding again, and the Kingscourt District spent in excess of £2,000. The peak in numbers, both nationally and in Kingscourt, that year was due to the removal of the previous years' restrictions (Figure 4.2).<sup>86</sup>

**Table 4.4 Irish Society finances, 1834–53**

Year ending	Balance in Irish Society's account
17 March 1834	-£65 9s. 0d.
17 March 1835	£87 3s. 4d.
17 March 1836	£1285 9s. 9d.
17 March 1837	£587 7s. 11d.
17 March 1838	£1 16s. 11d.
17 March 1839	£207 5s. 6d.
17 March 1840	£277 11s. 8d.
17 March 1841	£341 15s. 4d.
17 March 1842	£915 11s. 10d.
17 March 1843	£466 5s. 5d.
17 March 1844	-£223 7s. 2d.
17 March 1845	£615 4s. 10d.
17 March 1846	-£261 9s. 9d.
17 March 1847	£214 17s. 1d.
17 March 1848	£1541 3s. 5d.
17 March 1849	£1503 0s. 3d.
17 March 1850	£1139 4s. 7d.
17 March 1851	£1243 2s. 19d.
17 March 1852	£1806 5s. 1d.
17 March 1853	£10,415 0s. 7d.

Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS annual reports, 1834–54

By 22 December 1837, there was £66 9s. 4d. left in the Society's accounts.<sup>87</sup> Three months later on 17 March 1838, there was a paltry £1 16s. 11d. (Table 4.4). Again the committee felt compelled to restrain its 'lavish increase of expenditure',<sup>88</sup>

<sup>82</sup> IS meeting, 5 Dec. 1833 (ICM, MS ICMGA/0182, p. 24).

<sup>83</sup> IS meeting, 11 Mar. 1836 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 73).

<sup>84</sup> IS meeting, 16 Feb. 1837 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 96).

<sup>85</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 6.

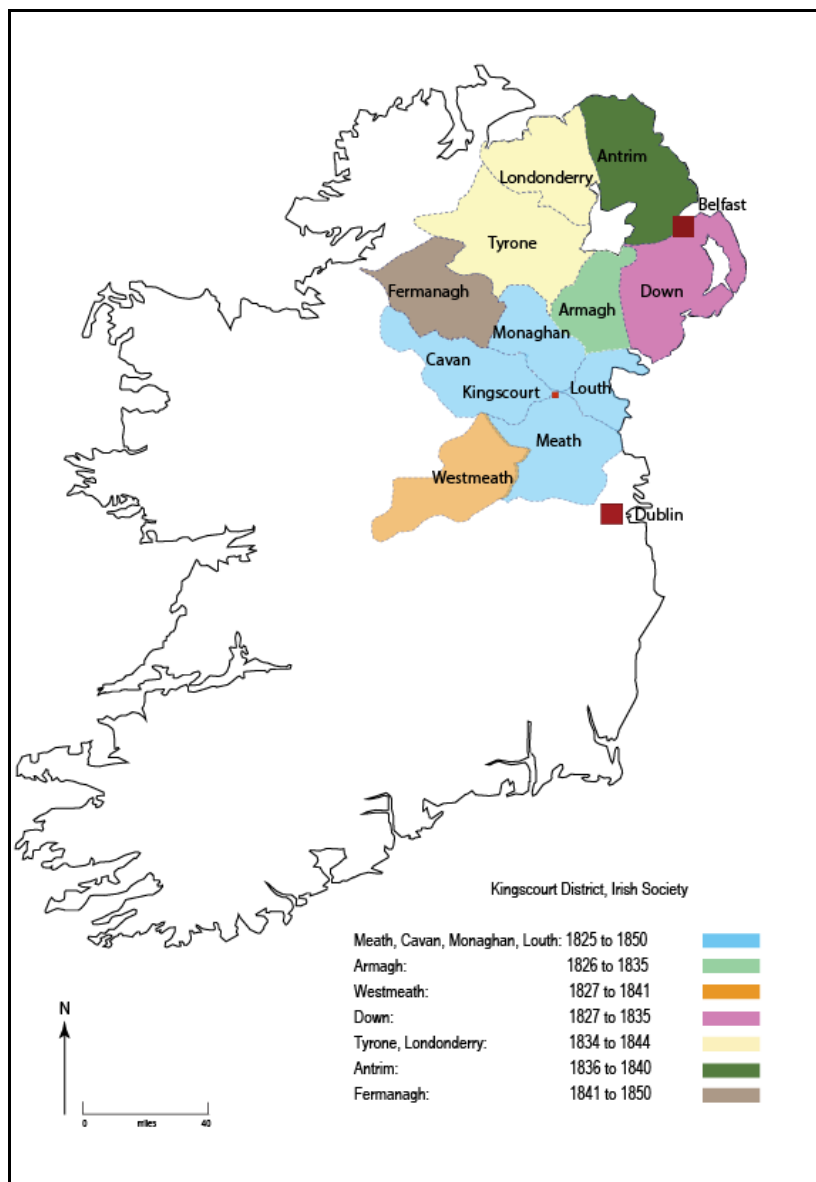
<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> IS meeting, 22 Dec. 1837 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 116.)

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

and cuts were reflected in the reduced number of schools in 1838.<sup>89</sup> Winning offered three explanations for ‘an *apparent*, though not a *real* decrease in the number returned in 1841,<sup>90</sup> the inclemency of the weather, the opposition of the priests, and the persecution meted out to the IS teachers.<sup>91</sup> The Kingscourt District’s funds were limited in 1844. By March 1845, less than ten per cent of the total 14,472 scholars in Ireland were from the Kingscourt District; Winning’s account in the Society’s annual published report that year was unusually brief and general.

**Map 4.1 Kingscourt District, Irish Society, 1825–50**



Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS annual reports, 1825–50

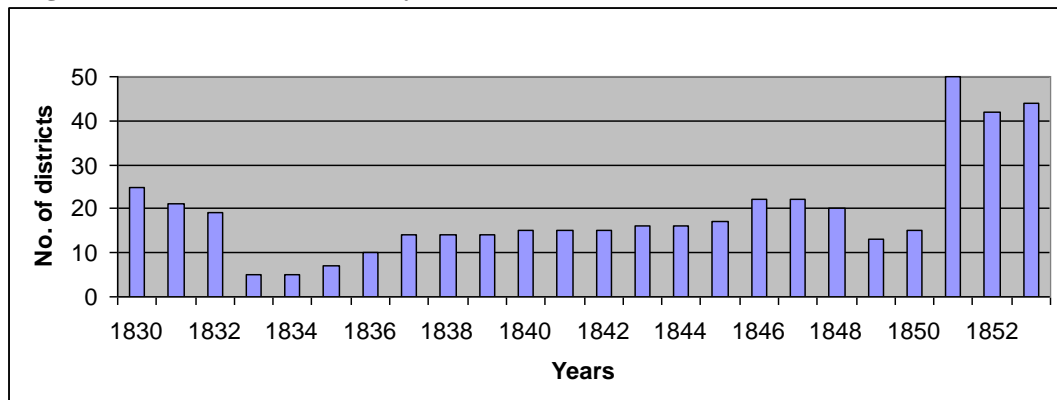
<sup>89</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 6.

<sup>90</sup> IS, *Twenty-third annual report*, 1841, p. 6, italics in manuscript.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 6–8.

By 1846, the Kingscourt District had slumped from its position as the Irish Society District with the greatest numbers of schools and teachers; Kingscourt was not listed in the 1851 annual statistical returns.<sup>92</sup> It was this diminution that led Pádraig de Brún to conclude that the Kingscourt District had ‘begun to decline in importance from 1844’.<sup>93</sup> If the number of schools in the Kingscourt District is the only benchmark used for assessing the strength of the Irish Society there, then de Brún’s conclusion is correct. However, not taken into account was the fact that districts were fluid entities and were liable to change in size and geographical extent; they did not remain constant (Map 4.3). Some were sub-divided; others were amalgamated. When districts became ‘so extensive and important’, they were divided ‘into smaller and more manageable fields of Missionary labour’ as evidenced by the peak in their number in the 1850s (Figure 4.3). These would probably have been called ‘branches’ or ‘walks’ in earlier years.<sup>94</sup>

**Figure 4.3 Number of Irish Society districts in Ireland, 1830–53**



Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS annual printed reports, 1830 to 1853

Such was the case with the Kingscourt District. A ‘North-eastern Association’, originally part of the district, established in 1835,<sup>95</sup> became a district in its own right centred on Armagh and Newry, County Down, from 1838.<sup>96</sup> A short-lived branch was established in Rathmolyon, County Meath, in 1838, with two schools and seventeen adult pupils.<sup>97</sup> In 1840, the Kingscourt District extended into eleven counties. It had twelve branches in 1844, with 324 schools and 3,400 pupils.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>92</sup> IS, *Thirty-third annual report*, 1851, p. 24.

<sup>93</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, p. 54.

<sup>94</sup> IS, *Thirty-fourth annual report*, 1852, pp 14–15.

<sup>95</sup> IS, *Eighteenth annual report*, 1836, p. 9.

<sup>96</sup> IS, *Twenty-second annual report*, 1840, p. 9.

<sup>97</sup> IS, *Twentieth annual report*, 1838, p. 20.

<sup>98</sup> IS, *Twenty-sixth annual report*, 1844, p. 21.



A year later, in a rationalization of the geographically unwieldy district,<sup>99</sup> it surrendered three branches in its most northerly extremity, Draperstown and Garvagh in County Derry, and Tyrone. Sometime between 1845 and 1846, these formed a new and separate district, Moneymore Auxiliary.<sup>100</sup> Moneymore too had grown ‘too large for the supervision of the most active and zealous superintendent’ by 1851, and was itself sub-divided.<sup>101</sup> In 1845, the Kingscourt District was limited to counties Cavan, Monaghan, Louth and Meath and the mountainous areas of Fermanagh, not because the district had declined but because, on the contrary, the district had grown unmanageable, and too extensive, at least geographically. The Meath branch was one of five branches found ineffective by the Society during the year 1848 to 1849, and was broken up. The teachers and pupils were incorporated into other districts.<sup>102</sup>

### **Irish Society and ‘moral amelioration’<sup>103</sup>**

The Irish Society’s objective was the ‘moral amelioration’ of Irish Roman Catholics. This was impossible without ‘Divine knowledge’. This ‘cannot be conveyed to them without teaching them to read their own language’, the Society believed.<sup>104</sup> Rev. Winning concurred. The Scriptures in Irish was ‘the only medium, through which they will ever be induced to read the English Scriptures,’ he told the Hibernian Bible Society in 1823/4.<sup>105</sup> Thaddeus Connellan (1741–1831), author of the earliest elementary books used by the Society, believed that ‘anyone who could speak both languages could learn to read Irish in two months and English afterwards in one’.<sup>106</sup> Thomas Russell, the Irish Society inspector in the Kingscourt District from 1823 to 1853, believed it could be achieved in less than three months, even with only occasional lessons.<sup>107</sup> William Conner claimed that ‘anyone who read English and

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<sup>99</sup> IS, *Twenty-seventh annual report*, 1845, p. 24.

<sup>100</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 17.

<sup>101</sup> IS, *Thirty-third annual report*, 1851, p. 16.

<sup>102</sup> IS, *Thirty-first annual report of the Irish Society, established 1816*, 1849, p. 13, ‘established 1816’ was a typographical error, and is incorrect. The Society was established in 1818.

<sup>103</sup> Objective no. 1 Irish Society, adopted 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a)).

<sup>104</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, pp 5–6, citing Charles to BFBS, 5 Sept. 1807, in extract BFBS archives, miscellaneous Book 2, pp 107–8.

<sup>105</sup> Rev. Robert Winning, in *Eighteenth report of the Hibernian Bible Society* (Dublin, 1824), p. 15.

<sup>106</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular*, pp 22–3, citing motion of Rev. J. D’Arcy Sirr, Sunday School Society minutes, 12 Feb. 1817.

<sup>107</sup> Thomas Russell’s account of the Kingscourt District, extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of education enquiry, 20 Dec. 1834, pp 26–9 (copy of Russell’s letter in RIA, OS memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan).

spoke Irish, might read the latter with little, or no assistance in a few days'.<sup>108</sup> The IS was more realistic. 'The teaching of a pupil is generally completed within a year from his first commencing with the Primer'.<sup>109</sup>

Peter Daly was an IS teacher and inspector in the Athboy Branch of the Kingscourt District. It is clear from his 1839 journals that the scholars on his circuit learned to read the Scriptures in Irish and to translate them into English. So while achieving literacy in Irish, they acquired an English vocabulary at the same time.<sup>110</sup> Daly outlined one teacher's methodology. Patrick Grogan's school was 'unquestionably the best Irish Scriptural School I ever saw: perhaps it is the best now in the North'. Ten small children in one of Grogan's classes were 'spellers'. Grogan first made them spell a word in Irish, give the meaning in English, and afterwards spell it in English. Thus, they acquired knowledge of both Irish and English without trouble. 'Then, when they come to read the Testament they have no trouble at all in translating', Daly concluded.<sup>111</sup> Daly required each scholar<sup>112</sup> at the Irish school in his home to translate the verse that he read.<sup>113</sup> On Sunday 16 December 1838, Daly read three chapters of St. Paul to the Hebrews along with his scholars, and 'made every man translate his verse as he read, which enabled them to understand what they read much better than if they did not.'<sup>114</sup>

The IS emphasised that reading the Irish Scriptures led to a demand for the Scriptures in English and the resulting 'moral improvement' of the Irish Catholics. Such was the 'unusual desire' for the English Scriptures in the Kingscourt District, a district well supplied by Irish Scriptures,<sup>115</sup> that an English Bible Association was established there in September 1828.<sup>116</sup> The first grant of Bibles by the Hibernian Bible Society (HBS) at reduced prices was exhausted within one month.<sup>117</sup> Roman Catholics had purchased 1,200 copies of Bibles and Testaments since the establishment of the Kingscourt Bible Society.<sup>118</sup> The Society was short-lived and by

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<sup>108</sup> William Conner statement in *DEP*, 13 July 1826, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> IS, *Eleventh annual report*, 1829, p. 28.

<sup>110</sup> IS journal of Peter Daly, (WRO, Shirley Papers, CR 0229, box 16/2).

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> James Farrelly, Patrick Gartland, Patrick Smith, Peter Moore, Michael Bennet, William Bennet, Paddy White, James Callan.

<sup>113</sup> IS journal of Peter Daly.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> HBS, *Twenty-seventh report of the Hibernian Bible Society* (Dublin, 1833), p. xxxix.

<sup>116</sup> IS, *Eleventh annual report*, 1829, p. 30.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

1833 was only ‘nominal’.<sup>119</sup> Rev. Winning blamed the lack of an efficient committee, an unusual complaint for such a zealous evangelical district. The widespread circulation of Irish Scriptures by the Irish Society from 4 July 1823 (Table 2.3) would have left Kingscourt saturated with Irish Bibles. The Irish Society’s objective was to lead its scholars to reading the Bible in English, and English Bibles had become as acceptable as Irish by 1835.<sup>120</sup> Rev. Winning continued to sell HBS Irish Bibles at the Irish Society’s quarterly examinations in Kingscourt, however, and he sold 114 on one day at the July meeting in 1834.<sup>121</sup>

The moral amelioration of those exposed to the reading of the Irish Bible was described by an Irish Society schoolmaster in County Meath in June 1822. One of his adult scholars, aged seventy, told of his ‘miserable life’ until he learned to read the Irish Scriptures. Instead of going to church on Sunday, he had previously spent the day and any money he had in some public house, perhaps drunk all day. His health and strength had improved since reading the Irish Bible, and he derived more pleasure from reading a chapter of the Scriptures than he had ever got while playing sport. He received better entertainment, too, everywhere he went, on account of the pleasure the old men and women took in listening to him reading the Scriptures in Irish.<sup>122</sup> Dancing was abandoned in favour of reading the Scriptures in another unnamed location in 1822.<sup>123</sup> Winning noted the positive effects that the Society had on the teachers and scholars in the Kingscourt District by 1823: ‘the *whiskey house* is forsaken on the Sabbath, *the patron collects not*, the *sound of the Irish Gospel* is preferred to the *sound of the fiddle*.’<sup>124</sup>

Drunkenness was a common social problem in the first half of the nineteenth century and was an anathema to the Protestant Irish Society.<sup>125</sup> It was also abhorred by Irish Presbyterians who understood temperance as total abstinence<sup>126</sup> and ‘mounted a crusade to outlaw alcohol in the community as far as possible’.<sup>127</sup> Not

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<sup>119</sup> HBS, *Twenty-seventh annual report*, 1833, p. xxxix.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> HBS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1834, p. xlii.

<sup>122</sup> Report of a schoolmaster in County of Meath, June 1822 in IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 5, 1 July 1822, 1822, pp 35–6.

<sup>123</sup> Report of a schoolmaster 1822, *ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>124</sup> Rev. Robert Winning, HBS, *Eighteenth annual report*, 1824, p. 15, emphasis in original.

<sup>125</sup> Elizabeth Malcolm, ‘*Ireland sober, Ireland free*’: *drink and temperance in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1986); J. F. Quinn, *Fr Matthew’s crusade: temperance in nineteenth-century Ireland and America* (Massachusetts, 2002).

<sup>126</sup> Finlay Holmes, *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland: a popular history* (Dublin, 2000), p. 122.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

surprisingly, the IS masters in the Kingscourt District under Winning's superintendence founded a Temperance Society with a twenty-four man committee in March 1836,<sup>128</sup> two years before Rev. Theobald Matthew (1790–1856) established the Total Abstinence Society.<sup>129</sup> By April, 219 men had enrolled.<sup>130</sup>

A marked improvement 'in the habits, tempers, and views' was reported by 1827.<sup>131</sup> In the Castlepollard branch in 1835, the Sabbath was spent reading the Word of God or singing hymns in the Irish language.<sup>132</sup> Gambling at cards was forsaken in Dromahair, County Leitrim, and the former card-players became the best Irish scholars in 1836.<sup>133</sup> The Society's teachers and scholars were 'more improved and liberal than their neighbours', 'more loyal, and amenable to the laws', by 1831. They set up a fund for the orphans and widows of IS masters in 1833 to which they subscribed four per cent of their IS remuneration.<sup>134</sup>

Not a single teacher was involved in an illegal organisation in Skea [County Fermanagh], notorious for illegal organisations, according to Winning. Only three Irish Society persons were connected with rioting in Kingscourt 14 August 1830 where 20,000 armed men had assembled following a riot in Muff.<sup>135</sup> They were 'the only class of Catholic' not involved in illegal organisations in 1833. Thirty or forty families refused to join the Ribbonmen, a nineteenth-century Roman Catholic agrarian secret society movement predominant in the northern half of Ireland.<sup>136</sup>

### **'Missionary work'**

The original 'core' of the Kingscourt District had begun a shift from mere 'mechanical' teaching towards more 'missionary' work in the early 1830s with the enforced cut in its teacher numbers from 200 to 150. The Society had been operating

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<sup>128</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 53 (July 1836, 1836), pp 330–1.

<sup>129</sup> J. F. Quinn, *Fr Matthew's crusade*; Moira Lysaght, 'Fr Theobald Mathew Apostle of Temperance' in *Dublin Historical Record*, xxxvi, no. 4 (Sept. 1983), pp 140–52.

<sup>130</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 8.

<sup>131</sup> IS, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 9.

<sup>132</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 49 (Jan. 1835), p. 315.

<sup>133</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 53, July 1836 (Dublin, 1836), p. 34.

<sup>134</sup> IS, *Fifteenth annual report*, 1833, pp 7–8.

<sup>135</sup> IS, *Thirteenth annual report*, 1831, p. 7.

<sup>136</sup> For overview of agrarian violence, see A. C. Murray, 'Agrarian violence and nationalism in nineteenth-century Ireland: the myth of Ribbonism' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, iii (1986), pp 56–73; for the immediate neighbourhood of Kingscourt, see Terence Dooley, *The murders at the Wildgoose Lodge* (Dublin, 2007); Brian Gilmore, 'Ribbonism in Tyholland Parish (1820–1840)' in *Journal of the Clogher Historical Society*, xxii, no. 2 (2015), pp 22–42.

in the area for eight years. It is likely that the pool of interested, illiterate adults had diminished by then. Teaching the Irish to read the Bible was not a ‘continuing work of education’; the ‘ground thus broken’ should be left ‘for others to cultivate.’<sup>137</sup> When every adult in an area had had a fair opportunity to learn to read Irish, the Society moved its teachers elsewhere. It had never been its intention to continue its schools in any one district indefinitely. The ‘mechanical’ phase had been completed in the original central part of the Kingscourt District. Kingscourt was ready for the next stage and direct ‘missionary’ work. Rev. Robert Winning’s ‘interesting’ statement in May 1833 that the Kingscourt teachers were ‘anxious’ for ‘further teaching’ prompted the idea of sending Scripture Readers to follow up the work of the Irish Society’s teachers.<sup>138</sup>

The IS felt duty-bound to provide further scriptural instruction for those whom it had led to Scriptural knowledge through reading the Irish Bible.<sup>139</sup> That work required Scripture Readers, missionaries and preachers.<sup>140</sup> The IS was prohibited by its 1818 constitution from ‘direct missionary work’ and was restricted to ‘educational methods’. Its function was merely ‘to break up the fallow ground and prepare it for Scripture Readers’. Winning likened the IS teachers to a ‘machine carrying on the mechanical work’, but it was they who ‘opened the Irish heart for the visits of the Scripture Readers’.<sup>141</sup>

It was in the provision of Scripture Readers for the IS that women came to the fore. The male committee of the Irish Society looked to its own specific, ‘efficient’ Ladies’ Auxiliary (LAIS)<sup>142</sup> for assistance. The LAIS was established in 1822 (Table 4.5) in response to the Society’s appeal for patronage, funds and women: ‘[A]re there any ladies likely to become interested in promoting, in a way consistent with their situations in life, education through the instrumentality of this Society?’<sup>143</sup>

The voluntary religious associations in the early decades of the nineteenth century offered opportunities for women to become involved in the work of their male relatives and friends, albeit in a supportive role. Whereas ‘all Christian denominations stressed the importance of charitable conduct’, ‘none gave greater

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<sup>137</sup> IS meeting, 19 Nov. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 187 (a)).

<sup>138</sup> IS, *Sixteenth annual report*, 1834, p. 19.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>141</sup> IS, *Twenty-second annual report*, 1840, p. 6.

<sup>142</sup> IS meeting, 15 Dec. 1826 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 89 (a)).

<sup>143</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, pp 32–3.

emphasis to it than the evangelicals'.<sup>144</sup> Lady Olivia Sparrow, daughter of the evangelical first earl of Gosford, ensured that her daughter Millicent was well provided for in her pre-nuptial settlement to George Montagu, sixth duke of Manchester in 1822. This was so that she could 'perform the great duty which devolves on all possessed of large means, liberally to give what God has largely bestowed.'<sup>145</sup>

The 'select band of pious ladies'<sup>146</sup> who devoted their lives to the Ladies' Auxiliary were sisters, wives, daughters and friends of the evangelical gentry or clergymen.<sup>147</sup> The vice-patronesses of the Ladies' Auxiliary's were Viscountess Lifford, the Honorable Mrs Hewitt and Honorable Mrs Gore. Its first secretary was Mrs Connolly Coane, daughter of Major Sirr, an IS committee member, and sister of Rev. Joseph Sirr who with Henry Monck Mason were the Society's secretaries that year. Mrs Connolly Coane's second marriage in 1823 was to another IS committee member, Charles Edward Herbert Orpen.<sup>148</sup> Monck Mason's wife was also on the committee.<sup>149</sup> They were part of the network of landed and clerical families that D. H. Akenson termed, 'Dalyland'.<sup>150</sup> Their sphere of work was dictated by the Irish Society's male committee members. At first the LAIS provided financial assistance for the 'parent' Society through membership fees, collections, donations, penny-a-week subscriptions, bazaars, and sales-of-work. In 1833 the LAIS was permitted to undertake the supply and payment of Scripture Readers and Missionaries for the Society's 'missionary' phase.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> F. K. Prochaska, *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth-century England* (Oxford, 1980), p. 8.

<sup>145</sup> John Richard Reavie Wright, 'An Evangelical estate, c. 1800–55: the influence of Evangelicalism on the Manchester Estate Co Armagh with particular reference to the moral agencies of William Loftie and Henry John Porter' (unpublished PhD thesis, Ulster College, the Northern Ireland Polytechnic [Jordanstown], 1982), p. 132.

<sup>146</sup> *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* (London, 1820), p. 358.

<sup>147</sup> See Madden, *Memoir of Rev. Robert Daly*; Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*; Midori Yamaguchi, *Daughters of the Anglican clergy: religion, gender and identity in Victorian England* (Basingstoke, 2014).

<sup>148</sup> John Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic history of the landed gentry; or, commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, enjoying territorial possessions or high official rank, but uninvested with heritable honours* (4 vols, London, 1838), iv, 286.

<sup>149</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 48.

<sup>150</sup> 'Dalyland' as a concept is discussed in Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, pp 10–85.

<sup>151</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, p. 21.

**Table 4.5 Ladies' Association, Auxiliary to the Irish Society, officers and committee members, 1822**

Vice-patronesses	Committee	Hon. Committee	Secretary and sub-treasurer
Viscountess Lifford	Mrs Barrett	Miss Brennan	Mrs Connolly Coane
Hon. Mrs Hewitt	Mrs Fox	Mrs Coane	
Hon. Mrs Gore	Mrs W. L. Guinness	Mrs Admirable Drury	
	Mrs J. Hoare	Mrs Hepenstall	
	Mrs A. Hamilton	Miss Hoare	
	Mrs H. M. Mason	Mrs Mason	
	Mrs Mathias		
	Mrs Lannigan		
	Mrs Robt. Newenham		
	Mrs Sirr		
	Mrs John Synge		

Source: IS, *The fourth report of the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language for the year ending 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1822* (Dublin, 1822), p. 44

The Scripture Readers were a ‘connecting link between the poor Roman Catholic who has learned to read, and the minister of the Established Church’.<sup>152</sup> Without them, it was highly improbable that a Roman Catholic would ever apply to a Protestant clergyman for instruction, Rev. Winning observed.<sup>153</sup> Scripture Readers had to be ‘men of the same grade as the Irish peasants themselves, and men of morals, intelligence and scriptural education,’ Monck Mason wrote in 1846.<sup>154</sup> They read and examined the Scriptures with the IS teacher; went alone or with a teacher to the houses of the IS scholars and their families, especially former scholars who had been taught to read but who were no longer on IS roll books.<sup>155</sup> They opened day schools and night schools.<sup>156</sup> They offered spiritual instruction above what IS schools could offer.<sup>157</sup>

By 1834, the LAIS had sufficient funds to employ four ‘pious men’ as Scripture Readers at an annual salary of £10; twelve of the thirty-nine collections which the LAIS made in 1834 were specifically for the Kingscourt Scripture Readers and raised £87 3s.<sup>158</sup> The ‘early districts’ of the Society were ‘specially requiring their zealous attention’.<sup>159</sup> ‘It is only in districts where your schools have been for

<sup>152</sup> IS, *Twenty-fifth annual report*, 1843, appendix no. 1.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Mason, *History of the Origins and Progress of the Irish Society*, p. 65.

<sup>155</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 20.

<sup>156</sup> IS, *Eighteenth annual report*, 1836, p. 21.

<sup>157</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, pp 20–21.

<sup>158</sup> IS, *Sixteenth annual report*, 1834, p. 45.

<sup>159</sup> IS meeting, 17 Mar. 1834 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 30).

some time in operation that the services of a Scripture Reader have been found useful.<sup>160</sup> The LAIS sent two Readers to County Cork, one to County Sligo and one to County Meath in the Kingscourt District.<sup>161</sup> It amended its title to add the words, ‘promoting by other means’, to reflect the extended scope of its work in 1834. It allocated part of its finances to train suitable IS masters and scholars as Scripture Readers, those whom they believed to be ‘converted characters’.<sup>162</sup> Conversion to the Established Church seems to have been a pre-requisite for appointment. Seven of the fifty converts that the LAIS had received into the Established Church in Kingscourt in 1836, were deemed competent enough to be approved as Scripture Readers. Passing a stringent examination was also obligatory. During the Society’s periodical examinations in Kingscourt in October 1835, teachers and scholars, who might prove suitable Scripture Readers, underwent a more intense examination than the others.<sup>163</sup> Successful candidates were placed under Church of Ireland ministers in Kingscourt and Connemara for ‘further instruction’.<sup>164</sup> The former ‘mechanical’ teachers became ‘moral and spiritual instructors’,<sup>165</sup> and were, by 1839, ‘truly moral agents’, ‘effecting a spiritual work’.<sup>166</sup>

The numbers of Scripture Readers engaged in the missionary work of the Irish Society increased from four in 1834 to sixty-four in 1853. The LAIS employed twelve Scripture Readers in the year ending March 1836; seven were in the Kingscourt District.<sup>167</sup> A Scripture Reader was appointed to the Tyrone and Derry branch of the district in 1840 at £5 per annum.<sup>168</sup> The Scripture Readers in the Kingscourt District, like the IS masters, were proficient at drawing up resolutions, making public presentations, and writing speeches, which were published in the Society’s printed annual and quarterly publications. Among those who thronged the town of Kingscourt for the periodical examinations in November 1842 were three visitors from the Ladies’ Auxiliary, Miss Alicia Mason, Miss Alexander and Miss Fanny Bellingham. They were welcomed to Kingscourt, ‘the metropolis of our district’, by nineteen Scripture Readers from the district and presented with a copy of

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<sup>160</sup> IS, *Thirty-third annual report*, 1851, p. 19.

<sup>161</sup> IS, *Sixteenth annual report*, 1834, p. 19.

<sup>162</sup> IS, *Eighteenth annual report*, 1836, p. 24.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 27–8.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>165</sup> IS, *Twentieth annual report*, 1838, p. 8.

<sup>166</sup> IS, *Twenty-first annual report*, 1839, p. 32.

<sup>167</sup> IS, *Eighteenth annual report*, 1836, p. 21.

<sup>168</sup> IS, *Twenty-third annual report*, 1841, p. 32.



the Book of Common Prayer in the Irish language (Table 4.6).<sup>169</sup> They thanked the LAIS for affording the reading of Scriptures to their families and to the wider Catholic population, and regretted that they had not been more successful. They lamented ‘the apathy and discouragement’ of Protestant landholders as perhaps greater impediments ‘than even the open hostility the Romish priesthood’, a regular complaint from Kingscourt.<sup>170</sup>

**Table 4.6 Irish Scripture Readers from the Kingscourt District who addressed members of Ladies’ Auxiliary, 6–7 November 1842**

Scripture Reader	Address
B. Connor	Kingscourt, Co. Cavan
P. Smyth	Tullywalter [Tullywaltry], Co. Cavan
John Keegan	Drumconra [Drumconrath], Co. Meath
Patrick Nugent	Keady, Co. Armagh
Ed. Traynor	Dromore, [Co. Down]
J. Traynor	Mountainlodge, Co. Meath
Peter Caragher	Kilcomme [Co. Mayo?]
Michael McCabe	Tonagh, Co. Cavan
John Cadden	Cavan
Patrick Clarke	Coolkill, [Co. Monaghan]
John Marshall	Collon, Co. Louth
Michael Mc Daniel	Monsterboyce [Monasterboice], Co. Louth
John Conerney	Hayes, Co. Meath
P. Lydon	Castletown KP, Co. Meath
M. Sheridan	Pamstown
John M’Ardle	Lisserrell, Co. Monaghan
Arthur Gawley	Mayo
T. Campbell	Drumgill, Co. Meath
Hugh D’Arcy	Castlebellingham, Co. Louth

Source: IS, *The thirty-fourth report of the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language for the year ending 17<sup>th</sup> March 1842* (Dublin, 1842), pp 33–4; *Statesman and Dublin Christian Record*, 29 Nov. 1842, p. 3

In 1842, the IS admitted that after the rapid successes and improving prospects of the early years of the Society, its 1818 rules were ‘far too confined’.<sup>171</sup> Their limiting nature did not allow the Society to carry out missionary work itself.<sup>172</sup> It enlarged Rule 1 to include the clause: ‘but also to promote, by every means consistent with the principles and discipline of the Established Church, the Scriptural instruction of the Irish-speaking native Irish.’<sup>173</sup> Public perception of what the Irish

<sup>169</sup> *SDCR*, 29 Nov. 1842, p. 3.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish society*, p. 63.

<sup>172</sup> IS, *Twenty-fourth annual report*, 1842, p. 23.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Society was about became very important. The public needed to be enlightened as to its ‘proper character’ and its orthodoxy as a religious institution attached to the Established Church, as expressed in amended Rule 1. The 1843 annual report focussed on the Society’s ‘moral operations’ as opposed to the working of its ‘mechanical’ schools. Reports from the districts were abridged to make room for deliberation on this more important moral objective.<sup>174</sup>

Although the Society’s rule change of 1842 would seem to have rendered the missionary work of the LAIS redundant, ‘no change appears to have taken place in the relation of that Auxiliary and the Parent Society’, the IS concluded.<sup>175</sup> The employment of Scripture Readers was still under the LAIS jurisdiction in 1848. By 1849, the IS inspectors were qualified to act both as Scripture Readers and inspectors, as circumstances required.<sup>176</sup> Therefore the IS decided to take the Scripture Readers under its immediate control in 1850 to ensure that the work of the Society is to be efficiently carried on.<sup>177</sup> By 1853, the inspector performed the duties of the Scripture Reader, ‘as much as possible’.<sup>178</sup> The rule change of 1842, it argued, placed the Society in a far more responsible and important position than previously. It obliged the Society ‘to propose to itself higher objects’ of mission and an Irish-speaking ministry. This was a further important shift in emphasis for the Society.<sup>179</sup>

### **An Irish-speaking Church of Ireland ministry**

If the operations of the Irish Society be continued without providing for the church such a ministry (an Irish-speaking one) to receive the converts, and to preserve them to the Church, Romanism may indeed for a time be weakened, but it will be by the introduction of dissent in some other form.<sup>180</sup>

The IS needed Irish-speaking clergymen to minister to and sustain its new converts from the Church of Rome if the ultimate objective of the Second Reformation were to be achieved. Winning declared that the greatest mistake ever made by the English Government was in ‘sending English bishops and English clergy to Ireland who

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<sup>174</sup> IS, *Twenty-fifth annual report*, 1843, p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> IS meeting, 29 Mar. 1849 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0183, p. 54.)

<sup>176</sup> IS, *Thirty-second annual report*, 1850, pp 20–21.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>178</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 17.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>180</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, pp 74–5.

could not speak a word of the native language'.<sup>181</sup> Most Protestant ministers had little knowledge of the Irish language though the Ulster-born Winning could preach in Irish. The IS had realised from its earliest days the need for an Irish-speaking Protestant ministry to serve the Irish-speaking population. Trinity College, Dublin, had been established as a university in 1592, 'chiefly for the education of a Protestant ministry', but despite initiatives by various personnel had never realised an Irish-speaking ministry.<sup>182</sup> The Roman Catholic seminary in Maynooth College was set up two centuries later in 1795 to provide education in Ireland for Roman Catholic seminarians intended for the priesthood. A chair of Irish had been founded there in 1804 when Rev. Paul O'Brien (1763–1820) became the first professor of Irish.<sup>183</sup> Catholic priests were trained to preach in Irish; there was no such facility for Church of Ireland clergymen. In spring 1829, Trinity College introduced Irish language classes, which assisted one ordained gentleman and four students for the ministry to improve their Irish language skills.<sup>184</sup> One of the four students was Thomas Moriarty (1812–94), a native Irish speaker from near Dingle in County Kerry, and a convert from Roman Catholicism.<sup>185</sup>

The IS had been anxious for some time to procure, at any expense, someone who would 'devote his entire time' to preaching in the Irish language.<sup>186</sup> As early as December 1830, as part of its 'new plan for Kingscourt', the Society consulted Winning if he considered it an appropriate time to send an Irish preacher to the Kingscourt District.<sup>187</sup> According to IS reports, the successful experiment was first tried out in Kingscourt and Kilkenny.<sup>188</sup> While it was awaiting the ordination of native Irish-speaking ministers, it invited ministers and students for the ministry who could preach in Irish to deliver sermons and undertake missionary tours.

On 1 November 1834, Thomas Moriarty, while still a student in Trinity College, began working as an Irish Society agent in the Kingscourt District, at a salary of £100 per annum, exclusive of travelling expenses. He was paid an

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<sup>181</sup> *NG*, 10 Apr. 1851, p. 7; *FJ*, 24 Dec. 1851.

<sup>182</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 6.

<sup>183</sup> See Séamus Mac Gabhann, 'Fr. Paul O'Brien of Cormeen (1763–1820), folk-poet and Maynooth professor' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, x (1999), pp 125–51.

<sup>184</sup> *IS, Twelfth annual report*, 1830, p. 25.

<sup>185</sup> For Moriarty see Gabriel Fitzmaurice, *Ventry calling* (Dublin, 2001).

<sup>186</sup> *IS, Twelfth annual report*, 1830, p. 23.

<sup>187</sup> *IS meeting*, 3 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 188 (b)).

<sup>188</sup> *IS, Twelfth annual report*, 1830, p. 24.

additional £10 per quarter for his expenses up to then.<sup>189</sup> His duties from 1834 until 1838 were to oversee the work of all the Scripture Readers and the Irish teachers in the Kingscourt District, visit the people, and ‘build up’ the teachers and those that are instructed in ‘their most holy faith’.<sup>190</sup> By March 1835, Moriarty was supervising ten Scripture Readers and two inspectors,<sup>191</sup> all were funded by the Ladies’ Auxiliary to the Irish Society at a cost £360 for that year.<sup>192</sup>

Moriarty attended the periodical examinations in Kingscourt, from 21 March until the beginning of April in 1836,<sup>193</sup> with directions to stay there as long as his ‘collegiate avocations’ would permit.<sup>194</sup> He was sent to the June examinations in Kingscourt in 1836, and then to Dromahair, County Sligo, or anywhere else the Society might send him.<sup>195</sup> He was back again in Kingscourt in June 1837.<sup>196</sup> Moriarty was ordained four months later (the IS contributed £10 towards his ordination expenses),<sup>197</sup> and was appointed assistant curate to St Ernan’s Church of Ireland, Kingscourt.<sup>198</sup> The newly-ordained Moriarty preached the sermon in Syddan when twenty-five converts were received into the Protestant Church in 1837.<sup>199</sup> He departed Kingscourt in 1838, when Rev. Charles Gayer (1804–48), superintendent of the IS West Kerry District, successfully petitioned the Society to have Moriarty transferred to Dingle and Ventry to assist him as curate. Moriarty, later dean of Ardfert (1879–84), and Gayer were to become pivotal figures in an Irish Society proselytising campaign in County Kerry.<sup>200</sup>

By 1843, the IS had employed two Irish-speaking agents, Rev. Moriarty and Rev. Edward Norman (1809–41).<sup>201</sup> Moriarty was a native Irish speaker. Norman was not, but had been ‘indefatigable’ in learning the Irish language.<sup>202</sup> Both Moriarty

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<sup>189</sup> IS meeting, 16 Oct. 1834 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 40).

<sup>190</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, p. 6.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 45–7. The ladies collecting specifically for the Kingscourt Scripture Readers were: Miss Alexander, Lady Elizabeth Brownlow, Mrs Boyd, Mrs Bourke, Miss Duncan, Rev. J. Kirkpatrick, Mrs Mason, Miss Noble, Mrs J. Nicholson, Mrs Nicholson, Mrs Rothwell, and Miss E. Wright.

<sup>192</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, p. 6.

<sup>193</sup> *Report of the LAIS* in IS, *Eighteenth annual report*, 1836, p. 24.

<sup>194</sup> IS meeting, 11 Mar. 1836 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 73).

<sup>195</sup> IS meeting, 23 June 1836 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, pp 81–2).

<sup>196</sup> IS meeting, 22 June 1837 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 106).

<sup>197</sup> IS meeting, 21 Sept. 1837 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 110).

<sup>198</sup> IS, *Twentieth annual report*, 1838, p. 5.

<sup>199</sup> *KG*, 21 Nov. 1837, p. 4

<sup>200</sup> *GJ*, 11 Oct. 1862, p. 5; *HA*, 11 Oct. 1862, p. 2.

<sup>201</sup> IS, *Twenty-fifth annual report*, 1843, p. 3; George James Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadlier (eds), *Alumni Dublinensis, a register of the students, graduates, professors and provosts of Trinity College in the University of Dublin, 1593–1860* (3 vols, Dublin 1835), ii, 622.

<sup>202</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 86.

and Norman, the first two full-time agents for the Society, spent their formative years in Kingscourt as Church of Ireland curates. It is credible that Winning's dedication to the Society in Kingscourt might have inspired them to the 'Advanced agency' work they undertook with the Society.<sup>203</sup> Three Irish-speaking ministers were engaged in missionary labour by 1848, Moriarty, Rev. Timothy Hamilton (c. 1814–82), and Rev. T. de Vere Coneys (1804–51).<sup>204</sup> Moriarty and Hamilton were in charge of the 'large Congregations of Converts' in County Kerry (Hamilton was 'one of the Dingle converts').<sup>205</sup> Rev. Thomas de Vere Coneys (c.1804–51) was engaged in 'Missionary labour'.<sup>206</sup> Rev. Daniel Foley (1815–74) had joined the team by 1849 and boosted the number of 'clerical agents' to four.<sup>207</sup>

The IS introduced a new layer of hierarchy into the management structure in 1848 with the employment of inspecting agents. These were lay teachers, generally young men preparing for an Irish-speaking ministry in Trinity College, Dublin. They were termed re-inspecting agents from 1849.<sup>208</sup> Their duties, as indicated by their title, were to verify the returns of the local inspectors,<sup>209</sup> examine pupils in every school in each district, inquire into the efficiency of the inspectors and Scripture Readers and report back to the IS committee.<sup>210</sup> When ordained, these agents were called 'clerical agents'. They assisted local clergy to conduct the examinations of teachers and scholars at the Society's periodical meetings throughout the various districts.<sup>211</sup> Rev. Robert Winning was included for the first time as one of four 'clerical agents' in 1852,<sup>212</sup> a position he retained in 1853.<sup>213</sup>

The London Irish Society, for promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their own Language established in 1822 supported four Irish-speaking clergymen 1851 to 1852 (Table 4.7).<sup>214</sup> It allocated grants to employ others in the still Irish-speaking areas of Doura, County Leitrim, Kilmaclassar, County

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<sup>203</sup> *SDCRS*, 20 Aug. 1841, p. 3.

<sup>204</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 3.

<sup>205</sup> *HA*, 22 Nov. 1845, p. 2.

<sup>206</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 16; for Coneys, see David Murphy, 'Coneys' in McGuire and Quinn, *DIB*, ii, 736; Catherine Jennings, 'Thomas Coneys: first professor of Irish in TCD' in *Journal of the Clifden and Connemara Heritage Group*, ii, 11, no. 1 (1995), pp 78–95.

<sup>207</sup> IS, *Thirty-first annual report*, 1849, p. 2.

<sup>208</sup> IS, *Thirty-second annual report*, 1851, p. 9.

<sup>209</sup> IS, *Thirty-first annual report*, 1849, p. 24.

<sup>210</sup> IS, *Thirty-third annual report*, 1851, p. 17.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> IS, *Thirty-fourth annual report*, 1852, p. 2.

<sup>213</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 3.

<sup>214</sup> IS, *Documents and observations explanatory of the relations between the Irish Society and the Committee of the Irish Society of London* (Dublin, 1853), p. 4.

Mayo, Milltown Malbay, County Clare and places where ‘this advanced Agency’ was needed. However, it could not find suitable clergymen to fill the appointments.<sup>215</sup>

**Table 4.7 Irish-speaking clergymen appointed and funded by the Irish Society of London, to minister to Irish-speaking congregations of converts to Protestantism, 1851 to 1852**

Clergyman	Congregation
Rev. M. Haynes Jeffers	Taughmacconnell, Co. Roscommon
Rev. Robert Mollen	Cong, Co. Mayo
Rev. James Goodman	Skibbereen, Co. Cork
Rev. W. Bourke	Crossmolina, Co. Mayo
Rev. Denis O’Sullivan	Bandon, Co. Cork

Source: IS, *The thirty-fourth report of the Irish Society, established 1818, for promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious Instruction of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1852* (Dublin, 1852), p. 16

The establishment of a professorship of Irish in Trinity College, Dublin, had been on the Irish Society’s agenda as early as 1836.<sup>216</sup> The Society had received ‘little encouragement’<sup>217</sup> and no financial assistance from the ‘rulers’ in Trinity towards funding the professorship, and the tedious process of raising money had devolved on the secretaries of the Irish Society, mainly Monck Mason.<sup>218</sup> There was no financial aid forthcoming from England either, since it was generally held that it was Trinity College’s obligation to fund such a venture.<sup>219</sup> The chair of Irish was founded in 1840, and on 1 January 1841 the first Professor, Rev. Thomas de Vere Coneys, was appointed on a two-year tenure.<sup>220</sup> It was with considerable satisfaction that the Society announced the news at its annual meeting in 1841.<sup>221</sup> Coneys, a Church of Ireland clergyman and a Trinity College graduate, was a leading member of the Irish Society and had worked alongside Archbishop Power Le Poer Trench of Tuam on the Galway and Achill missions.<sup>222</sup>

The appointment of a professor of Irish in Trinity College, Dublin, was only the first step towards providing an Irish-speaking Church of Ireland clergy for the native population.<sup>223</sup> It would take a number of years before any Irish-speaking ministers from that initiative would be ordained. Considering the demand that existed

<sup>215</sup> IS, *Thirty-fourth annual report*, 1852, p. 16.

<sup>216</sup> IS meeting, 17 Mar. 1841 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 167).

<sup>217</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, pp 90–1.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, pp 27–8.

<sup>221</sup> IS meeting, 17 Mar. 1841 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 167).

<sup>222</sup> See Catherine Jennings, ‘Thomas Coneys: first professor of Irish in T.C.D.’, *Connemara: journal of the Clifden and Connemara Heritage Group*, i, no. 2 (1995), pp 78–95.

<sup>223</sup> IS meeting, 17 Mar. 1841 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 167).

in 1842 for native Irish-speaking ministers to follow up on the work of the IS, the Society decided on an interim measure. It would identify at an early age suitable Irish-speaking candidates who might opt for a life in the ministry and provide free pre-university education for them. The young men would be accommodated with Established Church ministers where they would have an opportunity of attending classical schools.<sup>224</sup> There they would be prepared for their entrance into Trinity College, Dublin now that a professorship of Irish had been established.<sup>225</sup> The Society would defray all expenses.<sup>226</sup> To this end it established what it termed ‘Collegiate’ schools.

The Irish Society’s ‘first and small attempts’ were in Kingscourt and Ventry.<sup>227</sup> Rev. Winning’s protégé, Rev. Thomas Moriarty, had established a ‘collegiate’ school under the Irish Society in Ventry, County Kerry.<sup>228</sup> The ‘Ventry Collegiate Irish School’<sup>229</sup> was conducted in Moriarty’s study which ensured that the students were constantly under his watchful eye and that of his family.<sup>230</sup> Irish was the vernacular language of the school and the Moriarty household. Apart from studying Irish, the students also studied the Scriptures and the doctrines and precepts of the Established Church. Formal lessons began at seven o’clock in the morning, and the bell rang for prayers or psalms, during which time Moriarty asked a ‘few pertinent questions,’ and did his utmost to ‘keep up their religious instruction without interruption’. Secular studies followed; Greek and Latin, Ancient and Modern History, Euclid, Algebra and Composition.<sup>231</sup>

By 1844 Rev. Winning had established a ‘Preparatory School’ in Kingscourt.<sup>232</sup> Winning was able to preach in Irish, so perhaps Irish was the vernacular language of the Winning household in 1845. He was an educationalist and was well qualified to superintend such an institution. He had prepared students for entry to Trinity College Dublin for both the ministry and for the professional life in his private Classical School in Corrinshogo, Kingscourt from 1816 until 1822.

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<sup>224</sup> IS meeting, 1 Dec. 1842 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 195).

<sup>225</sup> IS meeting, 16 Mar. 1843 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 204).

<sup>226</sup> IS meeting, 1 Dec. 1842 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 195).

<sup>227</sup> IS, *Twenty-sixth annual report*, 1844, p. 23.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 20.

<sup>230</sup> When Rev. Moriarty was appointed as curate in 1838, there was neither a church nor a school at Ventry; by 1843, both had been erected, *Churchman; a monthly magazine in defence of the venerable Church and constitution* (London, 1843), vii, 126.

<sup>231</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 20.

<sup>232</sup> IS, *Twenty-sixth annual report*, 1844, p. 24.

Henry J. Monck Mason called to the ‘Juvenile College’ when he visited Kingscourt in November 1845.<sup>233</sup> The school commenced with three ‘promising’ young men. They were offered a course of ‘higher instruction’ in preparation for entering Trinity College, Dublin, in the hope that they would serve as ministers to the Irish-speaking population when qualified. The Society’s minutes recorded that an Irish dictionary should be given to the school that year.<sup>234</sup> The school was still operating in 1848 when Winning was granted £21 12s. 6d. expenses for the school.<sup>235</sup> A third ‘collegiate’ school was opened in Ballinasloe, County Galway, in 1847 under the auspices of the rector, Rev. J. C. Walker and Professor de Vere Coneys. Lack of funds prevented the IS from affording it the assistance it would have wished.<sup>236</sup> The Society proposed setting up many more such seminaries as feeder schools and supply Trinity College with a cohort of Irish-speaking students for training for a Church of Ireland ministry.

The most prestigious and enduring Collegiate School in Ireland was founded in May 1843 at Stackallen, near Slane in County Meath. Rev. William Sewell (1804–74), an Englishman and a fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, Windham-Quin, second earl of Dunraven (1782–1850), James Henthorn Todd (1805–69) and William Monsell (1812–94)<sup>237</sup> established the Irish Collegiate School of St Columba.<sup>238</sup> Although not established by the Irish Society, it was inspired by the Society’s success in Ventry and in the Kingscourt District, which it described as ‘the well-known centre of the operations of the Irish Society’.<sup>239</sup> In the autumn of 1840, Sewell visited Kingscourt on a fact-finding mission. In an address on the opening of the seminary, Sewell admitted that: ‘It was at Kingscourt in this neighbourhood, that, as an Englishman, I myself was first amazed by the power of the Irish language’.<sup>240</sup>

The aim of the Stackallen Collegiate School was to solidify the work already undertaken by the Irish Society and bring it a step further. It was ‘to take up the Irish

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<sup>233</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 9.

<sup>234</sup> IS meeting, 6 Nov. 1845 (MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 258).

<sup>235</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, pp 19–21.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>237</sup> For William Monsell, see Matthew Potter, *William Monsell of Tervoe 1812–1894: Catholic Unionist, Anglo-Irishman* (Dublin, 2009).

<sup>238</sup> For Columba’s College, Stackallen, see William Sewell, *Journal of a residence at the college of St Columba, in Ireland* (Oxford, London, 1847); G. K. White, *History of St Columba’s College* (Dublin, 1980); Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, pp 74–6, 93.

<sup>239</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 75.

<sup>240</sup> William Sewell, *Journal of a residence at the college of St Columba, in Ireland* (Oxford, London, 1847), p. 13.



Society at the terminus, and to carry on its passengers by a new and orthodox train.<sup>241</sup> Although the IS was piqued that Sewell had not approached it directly for information and assistance, it welcomed the setting up of the school. The first three boys arrived in August 1843. By December there were seven boys, and by March 1847, there were thirty-six.<sup>242</sup> The lease on Stackallen was for seven years. In 1849, the college relocated to Rathfarnham, County Dublin, as St Columba's College.<sup>243</sup>

In an initiative especially welcomed by the Irish Society,<sup>244</sup> the Governors of Stackallen funded five Irish scholarships to Trinity College, Dublin, for candidates to the Church of Ireland ministry, one candidate to be selected each year.<sup>245</sup> Daniel Foley (1815–74), Rev. Moriarty's student in Ventry Collegiate School obtained one of the St Columba's Scholarships.<sup>246</sup> Foley was later a professor of Irish in Trinity College (1852–61).<sup>247</sup> Ventry Collegiate Irish School and St Columba's College outlived the Kingscourt School. However, Kingscourt provided the inspiration for St Columba's, and Ventry's driving force, Rev. Thomas Moriarty, spent his formative years in Kingscourt working under Rev. Winning's superintendence.

### **The Bedell scholarships**

In a further effort to promote an Irish-speaking ministry, and in a show of support for the Irish professorship, the Irish Society allocated £1,000, part of a legacy,<sup>248</sup> to establish exhibitions in Trinity College, Dublin, for young men studying the Irish language.<sup>249</sup> The exhibition for the sons of the clergy to be called the 'The Bedell Exhibition'<sup>250</sup> would, it believed, be the best means of promoting an Irish-speaking ministry throughout Ireland.<sup>251</sup> The scholarships were in honour of William Bedell (1571–1642) an English Anglican clergyman who was appointed provost of Trinity

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<sup>241</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 74.

<sup>242</sup> Sewell, *Journal of a residence at the college of St Columba*, p. 42.

<sup>243</sup> Ernie Shepherd, *Behind the scenes: the story of Whitechurch district in south County Dublin*, (Whitechurch, 1983), p. 35.

<sup>244</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 74.

<sup>245</sup> Richard Gilbert, *The parent's school and college guide; or, liber scholasticus; being an account of all the fellowships, scholarships, and exhibitions, at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, and Dublin; etc.* (London, 1848), p. 171.

<sup>246</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 20.

<sup>247</sup> Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh, 'Foley, Daniel (Ó Foghludha, Domhnall)' in McGuire and Quinn, *DIB*, iii, 1037–8.

<sup>248</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 91.

<sup>249</sup> IS meeting, 16 Mar. 1843 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 204).

<sup>250</sup> IS meeting, 19 Mar. 1844 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, pp 222–3).

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

College, Dublin in 1627 at what Gamble, his biographer, called the ‘unattractive salary’ of £100 per annum. Bedell, while young, ‘secluded himself in the North of Ireland’ to learn the Irish language.<sup>252</sup> As provost, Bedell’s aim was to turn out an Irish-speaking ministry. He ensured that there was an Irish lecture on the College syllabus, and insisted on Prayers in Irish being read in the chapel and a chapter of the Irish New Testament being read at dinner each day.<sup>253</sup>

When he resigned as provost, he was appointed bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh. Bedell was ‘obsessed with the conversion of the Irish people to the Reformed faith’;<sup>254</sup> the only hope of converting them, he believed, was through reading the Scriptures. To this end, he set about the translation of the Old Testament into Irish, and commissioned Murtagh King [Muircheartach Óg Ó Cíonga] (c.1562–c.1639),<sup>255</sup> a native, a good Irish scholar and a convert from Roman Catholicism to collaborate with him.<sup>256</sup> He published a catechism in English and Irish for use in his diocese and compiled an Irish grammar.<sup>257</sup> He urged his clergy to promote Irish schools in their parishes, and appointed Irish-speaking clergy to minister in Irish-speaking parishes. On the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion, Bedell refused an offer of a safe passage to England. He was arrested on 18 December 1641 and died in 1642.<sup>258</sup>

In 1843, the Irish Society allocated £1,200 towards providing Irish exhibitions at Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>259</sup> The sum needed to be doubled before the foundation could be properly made.<sup>260</sup> It obtained the sanction of the provost of Trinity College, Franc Sadlier (c.1774–1851) for four scholarships, denominated Bedell scholarships, and under IS trustees in 1845.<sup>261</sup> The trustees were Rev. W. H. Krause, Bethesda Chapel, Dublin, Robert Jocelyn III, earl of Roden, Dr Joseph Singer and the Society’s honorary secretary, Henry Monck Mason.<sup>262</sup> The scholarships were designed for students who had a reasonable hope of being competent on their ordination to preach to the native Irish in their own language. One

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<sup>252</sup> NG, 10 Apr. 1851, p. 7.

<sup>253</sup> R. W. Gamble, *William Bedell, his life and times* (privately printed by the author, n. d), p. 32.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>255</sup> Bernadette Cunningham, ‘King, Murtagh (Ó Cíonga, Muircheartach)’ in McGuire and Quinn, *DIB*, v, 209–10; see also Terence McCaughey, *Dr Bedell and Mr King: the making of the Irish Bible* (Dublin, 2011).

<sup>256</sup> Gamble, *William Bedell*, p. 51.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>259</sup> IS, *Twenty-sixth annual report*, 1844, p. 23.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> IS meeting, 6 Mar. 1845 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 241).

<sup>262</sup> IS meeting, 11 Mar. 1845 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 244).

scholar would be elected each year.<sup>263</sup> The declaration to be signed by candidates applying for a Bedell scholarship read:

I A. B. do hereby declare that it is my intention and desire to enter into the Ministry of the Established Church of Ireland and England when arrived at the age (unless prevented by circumstances now unforeseen by me) with the object of preaching the Gospel to the Irish speaking portion of the people.<sup>264</sup>

Criteria for the selection of candidates (Appendix 2) and the curriculum to be covered for examinations in each of the four years of the scholarship (Appendix 3) were drawn up.<sup>265</sup> The first Bedell Scholarship examination was held on 3 June 1845.<sup>266</sup> The examination consisted of three parts; an examination in Irish grammar, the translations of the Gospels from Irish into English and *vice versa*, and the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments in Irish, by heart, and proved from Scriptures. Dr James Henthorn Todd agreed in March 1845 to abridge an Irish grammar for the purpose of the examinations, in accordance with the wishes of the Irish Society.<sup>267</sup> The Society offered a prize of £20 for best answers in Irish grammar in January 1845.<sup>268</sup>

The total annual cost of the scholarships to the Irish Society when the scheme would become fully operational in 1848 would be £80. This would require a doubling of the Society's funds or an enlargement of about £1,000 to ensure its continuity.<sup>269</sup> By 17 March 1845, the Irish Society found that its coffers had little more than half of the sum necessary for their support, and was forced to approve the opening of a special fund in Ireland to finance the venture.<sup>270</sup>

By 1848, it was supporting three Bedell scholars and assisting, to some degree, ten young men in Trinity College.<sup>271</sup> Trinity College had also come on board by 1854. It donated £20 towards premiums for students who distinguished themselves in the Irish language and granted an annual maintenance grant for the same purpose. It financed a Bedell prize to the value of £10 for the runner-up in the

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<sup>263</sup> IS meeting, 6 Mar. 1845 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 242).

<sup>264</sup> IS meeting, 29 May 1851 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 28).

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 242–3.

<sup>266</sup> *SDCCS*, 6 May 1845, p. 2.

<sup>267</sup> IS meeting, 11 Mar. 1845 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 244.)

<sup>268</sup> IS meeting, 16 Jan. 1845 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 239).

<sup>269</sup> IS meeting, 17 Mar. 1845 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, pp 245–6.)

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 245–6.)

<sup>271</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 19.

Bedell scholarships examination. At the end of the year, the Irish professor had the discretion of awarding prizes of £20, courtesy of the Irish Society, to each of the best students attending his classes during both terms.<sup>272</sup>

The numbers of Irish speakers studying for the Church of Ireland ministry in Trinity College, Dublin, were not sufficient to satisfy the needs of the country in 1851, the Irish Society claimed.<sup>273</sup> It was finding it difficult to attract students for the Irish course, Professor Coneys explained. Trinity College needed to assist those students. Studying an additional Irish course ‘materially interfere[d] with their exertions in other departments’, without the promise of ‘present honour or emolument’. Students were attracted to courses to which the ‘highest honours are rewarded’.<sup>274</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The first phase of the Irish Society’s work from 1818 to 1834 was ‘mechanical’. It was concerned with distributing copies of the Bible, the Testaments, the Book of Common Prayer in Irish, and elementary primers to teach the illiterate Irish-speaking Roman Catholics to read. The Irish Society’s ‘mechanical’ schools in the Kingscourt District under Rev. Robert Winning’s superintendence flourished from 1822 to the 1840s, and provided the model for Irish Society schools throughout Ireland. They provided free access to literacy in Irish for impoverished illiterate Irish-speaking Catholic adults and children alike, which was not available in the years before the National Schools were established. By the mid 1840s, the number of schools and scholars in the Kingscourt District, once the largest and most influential in Ireland, had begun to decline. The need for instruction through the medium of the Irish language had diminished and Irish was no longer the vernacular language of a large cohort of its people. Many had learned to read Irish through the aegis of the Society, so the Society’s ‘mechanical’ work had outlived its usefulness in the area.

As the Society’s ‘mechanical’ mission was completed its ‘missionary’ work took over and Scripture Readers were employed. ‘Collegiate’ schools were established to prepare Irish-speaking students for entry to Trinity College. The

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<sup>272</sup> *DEM*, 14 Nov. 1853, p. 4.

<sup>273</sup> *IS*, *Thirty-third annual report*, 1851, pp 16–17.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Society campaigned successfully for the establishment of an Irish professorship in Trinity College, Dublin and funded Bedell scholarships there to sustain Irish-speaking students for an Irish-speaking ministry in the Church of Ireland. It engaged Irish-speaking preachers, and missionary agents to sustain its new converts to Protestantism.

The Irish Society's plans adapted and changed as circumstances dictated, and were often suggested and pioneered by Rev. Winning and the Kingscourt District. The Society's venture into a more 'missionary' role was a direct result of the completion of the 'mechanical' phase of its work in the Kingscourt District. It was in response to Winning's teachers' plea for 'further education' in 1833 that the first Scripture Readers, financed by the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Irish Society, were employed and sent to Kingscourt. Irish-speaking ministers were sent to preach in the Kingscourt District from 1834 onwards. Clergymen, Thomas Moriarty and Edward Norman, spent the formative years of their ministry as curates in Kingscourt, where they worked with the Irish Society under Rev. Winning's superintendence, preaching to Scripture Readers, IS teachers, and scholars. Both later occupied prominent roles as Irish Society agents for the 'large Congregations of Converts' in County Kerry, where their work was possibly influenced by their experiences working with Winning in Kingscourt.<sup>275</sup> St Columba's Collegiate College, Stackallen, modelled its Irish-speaking college on what Sewell, one of its founders, observed in Rev. Winning's Kingscourt District. Kingscourt had its own Collegiate College, too, established to prepare Irish-speaking youths for entry to Trinity College, Dublin, and an Irish-speaking ministry in the Church of Ireland.

The Irish Society's work was always determined by the sufficiency or dearth of its funds. This dictated its expansion or curtailment and forced the Society to adapt its plans and amend its focus. The Society was reliant on the whims and vagaries of individual benefactors and evangelical societies, auxiliaries and associations who had a variety of other evangelical and charitable causes to support. Its dependence on its alliances with other evangelical societies reached a crisis point in 1853 in what was to prove a watershed year for the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District and which is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>275</sup> IS, *Twenty-fifth annual report*, 1843, p. 3.

## Chapter 5

### **The Irish Society's alliances with other evangelical societies, including the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1822 to 1861**

#### **Introduction**

'The evangelical mission to the Irish Roman Catholic population' was part of a wider pan-evangelical effort to convert the heathen in foreign lands, and the Jews and Catholics to Protestantism.<sup>1</sup> Ireland, with its majority Roman Catholic population, was high on the 'evangelical agenda' in the latter years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. While their varied titles suggested their nuanced differences, the many voluntary evangelical societies operating in Ireland in the nineteenth century had the same objective, the moral reform of the Irish Roman Catholic population and their conversion to scriptural Protestantism. All were dependent on and drawing from the same pool of evangelical supporters to finance their missions.

Two separate time periods can be identified in the Protestant evangelical mission during the 'Second Reformation', the pre-Famine phase in the first half of the century and the campaign that began with the onset of the Famine in the mid-1840s. The missionary activities in the Kingscourt District were synonymous with the Irish Society (1818) during the first period and with the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics (1849) from the mid-century.<sup>2</sup> In the years immediately following the establishment of the Irish Society, the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Irish Society (LAIS) and the Irish Society of London (IS London), (1822) were formed. Each of these in turn generated county and local branch societies, auxiliaries, and associations in Ireland and further afield.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter asks: what associations did the Irish Society forge with other like-minded societies in Ireland and England during the two phases of the Second

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<sup>1</sup> Whelan, Irene, *The Bible war in Ireland: the 'Second Reformation' and the polarization of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800–1840* (Wisconsin, 2005), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> See Miriam Moffitt, *The Society of the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849–1950* (Manchester, 2010), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> For some examples, Bath Irish Society in 1819, IS, *First annual report*, 1819, p. 30; Bath Auxiliary Society, Bristol and Clifton Association, Exeter and Devon Union Society in 1834, IS, *Sixteenth annual report*, 1834, p. 29.

Reformation in Ireland? What was the fundamental nature of those alliances? To what extent did financial concerns play a part? This chapter examines the nature of the Irish Society's relationships with three main bodies, the Ladies' Auxiliary, the Irish Society of London and the Irish Church Missions. It analyses the role that Rev. Alexander Robert Charles Dallas (1791–1869), vicar of the parish of Wonston, Hampshire, England, occupied in the unfolding fortunes of all four societies from the 1840s. It considers how alliances made by the IS with the ICM affected the focus of Rev. Winning's evangelical mission in the Kingscourt District during the second phase of the Second Reformation there from 1853.

### **The Irish Society's own efforts to finance its mission**

The Irish Society was a voluntary evangelical organisation. It was neither church nor state-sponsored. Although its committee members and district superintendents gave their services free, the Society needed money to finance its work. The Society's assistant secretary, its agents, teachers and inspectors had to be remunerated. Bibles and primers for its schools had to be purchased and the Society's reports and publications printed. Monck Mason, the Society's secretary 1823 to 1847, swore under oath that he, himself, had collected the 'principal part' of £1,000 to secure the editing of the Irish Scriptures by the Hibernian Bible Society himself.<sup>4</sup> In its early years, it relied entirely for funding on its members' annual and life subscriptions, donations, and sundry collections made in Ireland, England and Scotland.

The Society's finances fluctuated throughout its existence and consequently financial problems were never far from the committee's concerns. Management was necessarily reactionary, since it was difficult to engage in any long-term planning when the receipt of monies was so precarious. The irregularity of income flows forced the Society into adopting fundraising and cost-cutting measures as the need arose. One of the 'staples of fundraising' throughout Ireland and Britain' in the early nineteenth century was sermon-preaching,<sup>5</sup> and a 'rousing' sermon was considered a

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<sup>4</sup> Examination of Henry Monck Mason, 22 Jan. 1825, *First report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry*, HC 1825 (400), xii.1, appendix no. 250, 742.

<sup>5</sup> Jacinta Prunty, *The monasteries, magdalen asylums and reformatory schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland 1853–1973* (Dublin, 2017), p. 282.

‘good day’s entertainment’.<sup>6</sup> Popular preachers were in great demand and attracted a devoted and loyal following. The Irish Society held a charity sermon in March each year in a Dublin church.<sup>7</sup>

Rev. B. W. Mathias, minister of the Bethesda Chapel, Dublin, addressing the Society’s anniversary meeting on 17 March 1827, observed that the Society’s operations had expanded significantly in the previous year (Figure 4.2).<sup>8</sup> Mathias stressed that £1,200 over and above what it had received in the previous year was needed to sustain it; the subscription from Dublin had been a mere £300 in the previous year. Mathias warned that if the Society’s friends ‘did not come to their assistance, they would have to go begging again’.<sup>9</sup> One form this ‘begging’ took was preaching or fundraising deputations. Whenever funds were low, the IS sent willing and able evangelical preachers on mission tours to England, Scotland and the north of Ireland. Rev. Robert Winning from the Kingscourt District was one of those preachers. While Rev. Robert Daly, the Society’s corresponding secretary for Scotland and England, was advised to send a ‘strong letter’ to London appraising them of the Society’s straits,<sup>10</sup> Winning was dispatched ‘to stir up Scotland’ in December 1830. This was most likely on account of his network of Presbyterian connections established during his time in Glasgow University.<sup>11</sup> Winning, a native of County Tyrone, had toured there in 1825, and he regularly toured in the north of Ireland also. He undertook three such tours in 1836 on behalf of the Society for which he received £46 11s. 10d. in expenses.<sup>12</sup> Winning also travelled to England and the Channel Islands (Appendix 4).

The IS managed to remain in credit in most years by reducing its level of activity and keeping its outgoings low. When finances were particularly low, the IS also juggled its funds, occasionally transferring money from one account to another and later reimbursing it when finances allowed. In 1830, it was reduced to borrowing £300 from the Bible fund to pay for 1,000 ‘minion’ bibles which were ready to be

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<sup>6</sup> Don S. Browning, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (eds), *Children and childhood in American religions* (London, 2009), p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Rev. Robert Daly preached the sermon for the Irish Society in St. Peter’s Church Dublin, probably Aungier Street, which raised £60 9s. Arthur Guinness of the brewing family contributed £2, IS meeting, 18 Feb. 1841 (MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 165).

<sup>8</sup> For Mathias, see William Curry, *Brief memorials of the Rev. B. W. Mathias, late chaplain of Bethesda Chapel* (Dublin, 1842).

<sup>9</sup> *MC*, 29 Mar. 1827, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> IS meeting, 18 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 190 (b)).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> IS meeting, 18 Feb. 1841 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 165).



delivered, noting that ‘some peculiar effort must be made both, for present resource and for future saving.’<sup>13</sup>

### **The Ladies’ Auxiliary to the Irish Society**

The *great* and the *weighty* business of life devolves on *men*, but important business belongs to *women*.<sup>14</sup>

As early as 1821, the IS realised that its solo efforts to finance its evangelical mission would not be sufficient. It circulated a general appeal for the patronage of evangelical women to advance its cause and the Ladies’ Auxiliary to the Irish Society (LAIS) was founded in 1822.<sup>15</sup> The LAIS donations increased from £70 9s. 1½d. in 1822 to £621 9s. 11d. in 1832.<sup>16</sup> When the IS was in debt to the tune of £314 16s. 2d. in April 1831, it contributed £268 18s. 4d.<sup>17</sup> Branches were established throughout Ireland to support the IS. The Dublin Ladies’ Auxiliary was founded by 1835.<sup>18</sup> There was an auxiliary branch in the English royal spa town of Bath, where the ‘leisured wealthy’,<sup>19</sup> spent a whole summer season taking the waters in the early nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Bath Ladies’ raised more than £250 for the IS from its sale-of-work on 17 March 1828.<sup>21</sup> The sale of work, the poorer relation of the bazaar, was ‘unanimously praised as a noble effort of giving time to a charity when an individual had little money to give’.<sup>22</sup> The specially-composed ballad for the Bath sale-of-work set out the Ladies’ motives:

And hope t’ instruct the infant and the old  
In Pure religion, purchased by your gold.  
The motive generous, and the act how kind,  
To free from error’s clouds the darken’d mind  
In aged hearts well-founded hopes to raise,  
And children teach to hymn a Saviour’s praise!<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> IS meeting, 17 Dec. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 190 (b)). Minion was a typeface.

<sup>14</sup> Rev. John Gregg, *Women: a lecture delivered in Trinity Church* ..... (Dublin, 1856), reprinted in Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland 1800–1918: a documentary history* (Cork, 1995), pp 12–13.

<sup>15</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, pp 32–3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30; IS, *Fourteenth annual report*, 1832, appendix.

<sup>17</sup> IS meeting, 22 Apr. 1831 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 194 (b)).

<sup>18</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge social history of Britain, 1750–1950: regions and communities* (Cambridge, 1990), i, 21.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> *BCWG*, 20 Mar. 1828, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Sarah Flew, *Philanthropy and the funding of the Church of England, 1856–1914* (London, 2015), p. 117.

<sup>23</sup> *BCWG*, 20 Mar. 1828, p. 2.

Although the Irish Society gratefully acknowledged the financial assistance it received from the Ladies' Auxiliary, it was fastidious about how the funds were raised. Reflecting the control that the IS male committee exercised over the female auxiliary, it advised that, although the Dublin bazaar had raised £52 for the IS in 1825/6,<sup>24</sup> receipts from bazaars were no longer acceptable.<sup>25</sup> The Church of England frowned on bazaars, too, 'for being fashionable, lavish in scale, and morally suspect' as Sarah Flew has pointed out.<sup>26</sup> The IS permitted the LAIS to finance the employment of Scripture Readers in 1835. However, its male committee forbade the ladies to raise any funds publicly, and authorized private collections only.<sup>27</sup> Typical of such private collections was the £51 14s. raised by Mrs C. Gardiner in Bath 1842 for the Kingscourt Scripture Readers. One of thirty-six subscribers in Bath in 1842 was the evangelical countess dowager of Roden,<sup>28</sup> widow of Robert Jocelyn II, vice-president of the IS in 1819.<sup>29</sup> The countess was mother of the Robert Jocelyn III, who became vice-patron of the IS on his father's death in 1821.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Irish Society of London**

The Irish Society of London for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language was founded in 1822 following a meeting at Mr Newman's, 21 Cockspur Street, London, on 12 March.<sup>31</sup> In a characteristic overlapping of membership of evangelical societies, two of its first vice-patrons were Irish, the earl of Gosford and the earl of Roden. The early nineteenth century saw large-scale emigration from Ireland to London and other cities in England and Scotland due to the economic downturn following the ending of the Napoleonic

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<sup>24</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> IS meeting, 21 Apr. 1826 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 63 (a)).

<sup>26</sup> Flew, *Philanthropy and the funding of the Church of England*, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> Alex. Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I, an account of the providential preparation which led to the establishment of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics in 1849* (London, 1867), p. 41.

<sup>28</sup> IS, *Twenty-fourth annual report*, 1842, p. 68.

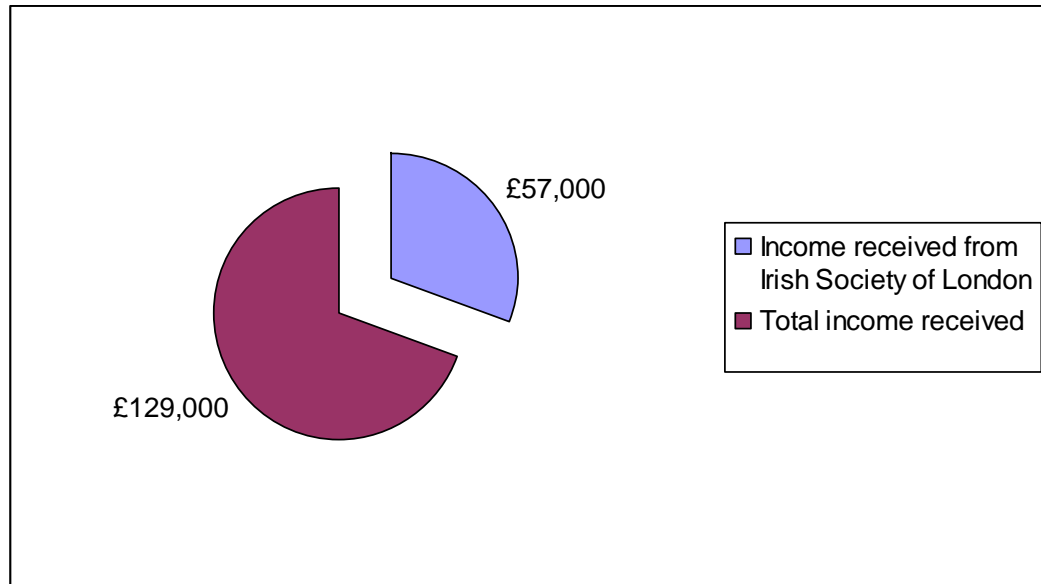
<sup>29</sup> IS, *First annual report*, 1819), p. ii.

<sup>30</sup> IS, *Third annual report*, 1821, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> IS of London, *Irish Society of London for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their Own Language instituted 25<sup>th</sup> March 1822* (London, 1822); IS, *Documents and Observations explanatory of the relations between The Irish Society and the committee of the Irish Society of London* (Dublin, 1853), p. 4.

wars. Irish families in the parish of St Giles (near present-day Oxford Street) were so numerous that the area became known as ‘Little Dublin’.<sup>32</sup>

**Figure 5.1 Proportion of Irish Society’s income received from Irish Society of London, relative to total income from all sources, 1834–53**



Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS annual reports, 1834 to 1853

Although the main objective of the IS of London was the education of the Irish in London,<sup>33</sup> it also saw itself duty-bound to contribute the large portion of assistance, ‘so justly due’ and ‘so loudly demanded’, to Ireland. It contributed the greater proportion of its funds to the IS in Dublin from 1823 until 1853.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Ladies’ Auxiliary to the Irish Society, the Irish Society London and Rev. Alexander Robert Charles Dallas**

The year 1845 saw a number of what were insignificant events at the time coalesce to bring about a shift in the relationships between the Irish Society, the Ladies’ Auxiliary and the Irish Society London. The visit of the evangelical, Rev. Alexander Robert Charles Dallas, to Dublin in 1845 marked the beginning of a period of momentous change in the unfolding of the Second Reformation in Ireland, both

<sup>32</sup> Tony Murray, ‘The Irish in London: a brief history up to the Second World War’ in Tony Murray, *London Irish fictions: narrative, diaspora and identity* (Liverpool, 2012), pp 21–38, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> IS of London, *Reply to a pamphlet entitled ‘Documents and observations, explanatory of the relations between the Irish Society and the committee of the Irish Society of London’* (London, 1853), p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

nationally and in the Kingscourt District. Dallas had experienced an evangelical conversion in 1824. Initially, it was the conversion of the Jews that held Dallas' interest. The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews had been established in London in 1809, and it was an invitation from Rev. Anthony Thomas, the Society's secretary in 1822, that first brought Dallas to Dublin in 1839.<sup>35</sup> During the early 1840s, Dallas preached to the 'cream' of the Irish evangelical clergy at the annual April meetings in Dublin on behalf of the Church Mission Society.<sup>36</sup> He met the Irish Society committee members, Denis Browne (1795–1864) dean of Emly, Horace Newman (1814–64) dean of Cork, Rev. Arthur Wynne (–1854) and the brewer and philanthropist, Arthur Guinness.<sup>37</sup> By 1843, Dallas was convinced of the need to bring the Gospel to the Irish Roman Catholics. He became familiar with the work of the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Irish Society (LAIS) in April 1845.<sup>38</sup> He became a member of the Irish Society of London in April 1846.<sup>39</sup>

Dallas visited Dublin in April 1845. Arthur Guinness, the 'kind, clear-headed and large-hearted friend' he declared, introduced him to Fanny Bellingham (1808–54).<sup>40</sup> Dallas' meeting with Bellingham was the first of these pivotal occasions. Dallas later wrote that it was 'the hair on which depended great events'<sup>41</sup> and 'opened an entire change in the course' of Dallas' missionary story. The biblical reference, 'the very hairs on your head are all numbered', was the text of the Irish Church Missions, Dallas subsequently explained.<sup>42</sup>

Bellingham was niece-in-law of the evangelical Rev. B. W. Matthias, chaplain of Bethesda Chapel (1810–41).<sup>43</sup> Her aunt, Anna Stewart (1770–1848), had married Rev. Matthias. Nine daughters of William Stewart, Wilmont (Wilmott) House, Fanny's mother's family, had been 'converted' to evangelicalism by a maidservant.

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<sup>35</sup> Dallas and Rev. Anthony Thomas spent a week together in Bath, England when Dallas was there on a deputation for the Jews' Society in 1840, Alexander Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 9; *The story of the Irish Church Missions [by A.R.C. Dallas, abridged and] continued to 1869* (London, 1875), p. 6; see William Thomas Gidney, *The London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews: from 1809 to 1908* (London, 1908); see Kathleen Villiers-Tuthill, *A colony of strangers: the founding & early history of Clifden* (Clifden, 2012), p. 220.

<sup>36</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> See Moffitt, *The Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics*.

<sup>39</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, pp 167–8.

<sup>40</sup> The inscription on the grave slab in Christ Church, Clifden, County Galway; Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 46.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35; Matthew 10:30, Luke 12:7.

<sup>43</sup> The foundation of the HBS was inspired largely by Rev. W. B. Matthias. See Dean of Cashel, 'Some early Irish evangelicals' in *Churchman*, vol. lxxi, no. 2 (1957), p. 60.

She had heard Rev. Matthias proclaim ‘the good tidings of salvation to listening thousands’ on ‘the neighbouring mountains’, while he was a curate in Rathfriland Church, County Down. Wilmott House became an open house ‘for the preaching of the Gospel’. ‘Clergymen of the Church of England, the preachers in Mr Wesley’s connexion, Moravian ministers and ministers of other denominations’ found a welcome there.<sup>44</sup> Three Stuart sisters afterwards married evangelical clergymen.<sup>45</sup>

Bellingham was a committee member of the Ladies’ Auxiliary from 1841 to 1846.<sup>46</sup> With the older, Alicia Mason,<sup>47</sup> these ‘buoyant and quixotic spirits’ (Dallas called them)<sup>48</sup> were driving forces in the LAIS. Dallas was impressed with the ‘missionary’ aspect of their work which supplied and funded missionaries and Scripture Readers for the Irish Society.<sup>49</sup> He considered that Scripture Readers were ‘a step in advance’ of the work of the Irish Society and discussed the topic of extending the number of Scripture Readers with Bellingham in 1845.<sup>50</sup> Dallas’ objective at this stage was not to form a new organisation. It was to excite ‘these incredulous gentlemen’ of the Irish Society to a combined and energetic effort for the conversion of the Romanists by sending more Scripture Readers into the field.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Famine and the ‘Special Fund for the Spiritual Exigencies of Ireland’**

The year 1845 saw the start of the calamitous Irish Great Famine which lasted from 1845 to 1849.<sup>52</sup> Ireland had experienced many famines throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Seasonal bad weather caused crop failures and triggered periodic food shortages. The great frost of 1739 to 1741 and the years following the ‘year without a summer’, 1816 to 1822, resulted in famine and death. But the Great

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<sup>44</sup> Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour, *The life and times of Selina, countess of Huntingdon* (London, 1840), ii, pp 215–6.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, n., p. 215. The three evangelical clergymen were Rev. Mathias, who married Anne Stewart, Rev. Blayne Mitchell and Rev. Edward Hoare, curate of St Mary’s at Leicester.

<sup>46</sup> IS annual reports, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1845, 1846.

<sup>47</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 33.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>49</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, pp 20–21.

<sup>50</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, pp 33, 46.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>52</sup> See Christine Kinealy, *This great calamity: the Irish Famine 1845–52* (Dublin, 1995); Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger, 1845–1849* (London, 1962); James S. Donnelly, *The great Irish potato-famine* (Sutton, 2001).

Famine was unparalleled in nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>53</sup> Many perceived afflictions such as the Famine as coming from ‘the hand of God’, and saw them as opportunities to bring salvation to the Roman Catholics in Ireland through their conversion to Protestantism.<sup>54</sup> Some members of the Irish Society of London, including Rev. Alexander Dallas and the wealthy business-man, Enoch Durant (d. 1848), formed a separate committee in 1846, and invited the evangelical clergymen Rev. Edward Bickersteth (1786–1850) and Baptist Wriothlesley Noel (1798–1873) to join.<sup>55</sup> They established a ‘Special Fund for the Spiritual Exigencies of Ireland’ towards the end of the year to aid evangelical societies, among them the IS, to meet the spiritual needs of the Irish.<sup>56</sup> The fund was ‘entirely unconnected with any plan for temporal relief whatever’; it was for ‘the care of the soul’, according to Bickersteth.<sup>57</sup>

The ‘Special Fund’ donated £300 to the Ladies’ Auxiliary to extend the Irish Society’s ‘missionary’ work in January 1847. This donation resulted when an allocation of money, proposed by the IS of London in 1846, was not confirmed at a subsequent meeting.<sup>58</sup> The LAIS believed ‘the peculiar circumstances of the time’, the Great Famine, presented an opportunity for employing more Scripture Readers. Bellingham, Dallas and the Irish Society of London were of one mind regarding the need for direct ‘missionary’ work and were disillusioned at the Irish Society’s reluctance. Alicia Mason, the LAIS secretary, was also disenchanted. Although she was ‘closely allied to the most eminent of those good men’<sup>59</sup> (she was Henry J. Monck Mason’s sister), the undertaking of more missionary work was a step she could not persuade the Irish Society to take.<sup>60</sup>

The IS was not impressed when it learned that the £300 was to be used for ‘the general operations of the Irish Society’ and the employment of more Scripture Readers, work that was carried on by Ladies’ Auxiliary.<sup>61</sup> By bypassing the Society’s

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<sup>53</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *I mbéal and bháis: the Great Famine & the language shift in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Quinnipiac, Connecticut, 2015), p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> T. R. Birks, *Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, late rector of Watton, Herts.* (2 vols, New York, 1851), ii, 318.

<sup>55</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 169.

<sup>56</sup> See Miriam Moffitt, *The Society of the Irish Church Missions*, pp. 46–69. Among the societies which the ‘Special Fund’ aided were: the Additional Curates’ Society; the Irish Scripture Readers; the Hibernian Female Schools; the Cork Pastoral Aid; the Achill and Dingle Missions; Irish Islands Society, Birks, *Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth*, ii, 321.

<sup>57</sup> Birks, *Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth*, ii, 319.

<sup>58</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 170.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>61</sup> IS meeting, 21 Jan. 1847 (ICM, ICM/GA/0183, p. 284).

male committee in Dublin, London had set an improper precedent and left the already testy relationship between the IS and the Ladies' Auxiliary even worse. Internal differences between them, on-going for some time, came to a head. In a set of resolutions to the IS, the LAIS outlined its demands regarding the employment of Scripture Readers using money from the 'Special Fund'. It required the IS to agree that any further money granted to it from the 'Special Fund' would be spent immediately to enable clergymen to take on probationer Scripture Readers for a six-month training period, at a salary of £15.<sup>62</sup> It sought authorization to correspond directly with clergymen on the matter. Following an exchange of letters between the IS and the LAIS, the IS convened a 'Special Meeting' on 28 January 1847. Rev. Dallas, who was on a deputation to Dublin on behalf of the IS of London, presented the Ladies' resolutions.<sup>63</sup> Dallas' intervention appeared to have been futile, and no change occurred in the relationship between the two bodies.<sup>64</sup>

It might not have been IS contrariness or a desire to assert its authority over the deployment of LAIS finances that saw the Society reluctant to agree to the LAIS spending £300 on extending its 'missionary' work. The IS was struggling for financial survival in January 1847. The Famine had crippled the religious societies of Ireland 'at the very time when the spiritual necessities of the country were most urgent.' The IS did not expect to raise any money in Ireland that year on account of the 'alarming' state of the country. It had no resources to fund a scheme for probationary Scripture Readers. It had a mere £6 3s. 2d. in its account and was totally dependent on financial aid coming from the Irish Society of London.<sup>65</sup> It would require at least £1,500 to defray the Society's current expenditure and so 'owing to the forementioned failure in their funds they will be utterly unable to meet without prompt & generous aid from their friends in England.'<sup>66</sup> The use of £300 to employ probationer Scripture Readers might have seemed a luxury to the IS at the time, and explains its displeasure at what it considered much-needed money being diverted to the LAIS.

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<sup>62</sup> IS meeting, 28 Jan. 1847 (ICM, ICM/GA/0182, p. 285).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Birks, *Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth*, ii, 316.

<sup>65</sup> IS meeting, 28 Jan. 1847 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 286).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 285.

Dallas' meetings with the IS (he had attended meetings in September and November 1846)<sup>67</sup> caused him 'to relinquish in despair all hope' of ever persuading the IS to enlarge its work into missionary operations.<sup>68</sup> Dallas' widow, Anne, later recalled that although he worked with earnest zeal for the Society, his efforts were received with 'a cautious suspicion of his enthusiastic notions.'<sup>69</sup> Dallas eventually, and reluctantly, ceased liaising with the IS. He directed all his future communications on the subject of missionary work and Scripture Readers in Ireland to Fanny Bellingham.

The relationship between the Irish Society and the Ladies' Auxiliary became even more fractious in 1848 when the LAIS sought autonomy to operate as an independent body.<sup>70</sup> The IS deemed it 'ineligible' to do so;<sup>71</sup> the IS was the 'Parent Society' to the LAIS.<sup>72</sup> Whereas the LAIS considered the Scripture Readers as its own special 'sphere of labour', the IS held that the LAIS had no particular area of work. The Ladies' duties extended to every department to which the IS assigned it.<sup>73</sup> When it first authorized the LAIS to employ and superintend Scripture Readers, it permitted it to do so as an auxiliary to, and not independent of, the Society. Despite the fact that the work of the LAIS had expanded greatly over the years, its place within the 'Parent Society' remained unaltered.<sup>74</sup> In 1849, the Irish Society decided that the IS and the Ladies' Auxiliary should have separate offices and officers. Previously, they had shared both.<sup>75</sup> In a terse announcement, the IS proffered its increasing workload which required the undivided time and attention of the assistant secretary, as one reason. The second rationale it offered, 'the inconvenience arising from confusion which sometimes occurs in the working of two', was closer to the reality.<sup>76</sup>

It was most likely in frustration with the Society's stance over Scripture Readers that in 1848 Fanny Bellingham set up the Dublin Visiting Mission with

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<sup>67</sup> IS meeting, 3 Sept. 1846 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 280); IS meeting, 21 Nov. 1846 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 282).

<sup>68</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 43.

<sup>69</sup> Ann Dallas, *Incidents in the life and ministry of the Rev. Alex. R. C. Dallas, A. M., rector of Wonston* (London, 1872), p. 333.

<sup>70</sup> IS meeting, 14 June 1849 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0183, p. 76).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>72</sup> IS meeting, 8 Mar. 1849 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0183, p. 47).

<sup>73</sup> IS meeting, 14 June 1849 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0183, p. 79).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>75</sup> IS meeting, 22 Feb. 1849 (ICM, ICM/GA/0183, p. 42).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*



another of Rev. Dallas' friends and IS committee member, Arthur Guinness. Independent of the Irish Society, its mission objective was to send 'the best scripture readers' into the houses of the people teaching them 'the way of Salvation through Jesus Christ'.<sup>77</sup>

Dallas had a dual purpose in attending the Irish Society's meeting in Dublin on 28 January 1847. In addition to presenting the Ladies' Auxiliary resolutions, he also presented a proposal from the Irish Society of London about embarking on a new branch of operations and increasing the number of its Irish-speaking missionaries. The Great Famine was at its height, and London saw this as an 'extraordinary opening' for preaching the Gospel to the Roman Catholics'.<sup>78</sup> It wanted the Irish Society to establish a Diocesan Irish Mission and was ready to donate a sum of money, 'hereafter to be named', at the disposal of the IS for such work.<sup>79</sup> The IS acceded 'cheerfully' to London's request when, and if, its financial and personnel resources allowed.<sup>80</sup> Starvation, disease, survival, emigration and death were more pressing issues for the IS in 1847. London, however, did not procrastinate. In June 1847, and without any further consultation with the IS in Dublin, it decided to undertake missionary work in Ireland, using funds from the 'Special Fund'.<sup>81</sup> Dallas again pressed the 'missionary' cause with the IS at another meeting in Dublin on 30 September 1847. The IS valued Dallas' 'constant and earnest desire' 'to promote the spiritual good of Ireland' and prayed God for its success. Nevertheless, it was not prepared to 'entertain on any sanguine expectation of the probability of carrying out this plan'.<sup>82</sup>

The Irish Society of London had an even more fundamental issue to debate with the IS in Dublin at the 30 September meeting. It centred on whether the IS of London was an auxiliary or an independent society entitled to make its own decisions, the same issue as the Ladies' Auxiliary was having at the time. Again, this

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<sup>77</sup> *Dublin Visiting Mission in Connexion with Society for Irish Church Missions, report for 1869*, published 1870, p. 3; see Jacinta Prunty, *Margaret Aylward: lady of charity, sister of mercy* (Dublin, 2011), p. 48; Christine Kinealy, *Charity and the Great Hunger in Ireland: the kindness of strangers* (London, 2013), p. 273.

<sup>78</sup> IS of London, *Reply to a pamphlet entitled "Documents and observations explanatory of the relations between the Irish Society and the Committee of the Irish Society of London"* (London, 17 Jan. 1853), p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> IS, *Documents and observations explanatory of the relations between the Irish Society and the Committee of the Irish Society of London* (Dublin, 1853), p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, pp 174–5.

<sup>82</sup> IS meeting, 30 Sept. 1847 (ICM, ICM/ 0182 p. 305).

controversy centred on London's decision to send £300 from the 'Special Fund', directly to the Ladies' Auxiliary. The IS of London argued in its printed fifth annual report that it was 'acting in this manner as a concurrent, though not as an Auxiliary Society', to the Irish Society.<sup>83</sup> The inclusion, and later deletion, of the word 'auxiliary' in its title proved to be the crux of the matter. The debate 'produced much and difficult correspondence', which lasted a considerable time<sup>84</sup> and occasioned the convening of a special meeting in Dublin in September 1847.<sup>85</sup> The IS of London at its initial meeting in 1822 had named the society, 'The London Auxiliary Irish Society for promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their own Language'.<sup>86</sup> Two weeks later, it removed the word 'auxiliary' so that the Society could retain some of its funds for the 'Irish who inhabit London', retaining the rest for advancing the cause of National Education there.<sup>87</sup>

London had grown tired of the Irish Society's tardiness by November 1847 and adopted a number of resolutions regarding its relationship with IS. It recorded how it had informed the IS officially of its intention to act 'differently and more independently in future'. The IS took no notice, it alleged.<sup>88</sup> The differences of opinion between the two societies on the direction each should take on financial matters and missionary work in 1847 were recounted in detail in pamphlets published in 1853. The IS defended its 1847 actions in *Documents and Observations*, appended to the Society's annual report in 1853.<sup>89</sup> The IS London promptly answered in *Reply to a pamphlet entitled "Documents and Observations."* This latter communication was marked 'For Private Circulation only,' so presumably only a limited number was printed for distribution among the Society's members.

The principal argument of the IS in Dublin was that the Church of Ireland clergymen ought to have their own Irish Society.<sup>90</sup> The IS could not be expected to 'consent to their extinction as a National Society'. Following lengthy negotiations concerning the 'best means of conducting operations for the future', a compromise was agreed for harmony's sake, and adopted in June 1848. The IS conceded the right

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<sup>83</sup> IS, *Documents and observations*, p. 4 citing IS of London, *Fifth report*.

<sup>84</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Mission, part I*, p. 170.

<sup>85</sup> IS meeting, 30 Sept. 1847 (ICM, ICM/GA/0182, p. 305).

<sup>86</sup> IS, *Documents and observations*, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> IS meeting, 20 Jan. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 254).

to undertake missions in Ireland to the London committee. Significantly though, the agreement had a three-year limit set to expire in June 1851. The relationship struggled on for four and a half more years but was eventually dissolved on 6 December 1852. London ceased its financial aid to the IS the following March: ‘At the end of the present financial year, 31st March, 1853, our connection with the Dublin Committee, both with respect to labour and funds must cease.’<sup>91</sup>

### **The Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics**

The Society for Irish Missions ... was better adapted for the changed state of things, pursuing as it does a more open course; presenting the broad front to the enemy; marching with its peculiar and varied machinery, like a regular army, and in very many places following up successfully the work prepared for it by the Irish Society, which, like the Sappers and Miners, had opened the road through the trackless desert.<sup>92</sup>

The split from the Irish Society in London in 1853 left the door open for an alliance with the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics (ICM). The ICM was formally established in 1849 by Rev. Dallas, and supported by wealthy backer, Edward Durant.<sup>93</sup> It was an English Society financed by English evangelicals and had its headquarters in London. It grew out of the ‘Special Fund’ which in turn had evolved from the Irish Society of London. Its first president was the duke of Manchester, Kimbolton Castle, England and County Armagh. Its patrons and committee comprised many who also patronised the Irish Society, including the earl of Roden, Robert Jocelyn III and Rev. Robert Daly, then bishop of Cashel.<sup>94</sup> It was a missionary movement and its main objective was to promote church missions to the Roman Catholics of Ireland through the Established Church. It operated on the

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<sup>91</sup> IS of London, *Reply to a pamphlet entitled “Documents and observations explanatory of the relations between the Irish Society and the Committee of the Irish Society of London”* (London, 17 Jan. 1853), p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> ICM, *Twelfth report of the committee of the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics of Ireland (with which is incorporated the late Irish Society of London), read at the annual meeting, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1862; with a list of subscribers, etc., etc., etc.*, (London, 1861), p. 88.

<sup>93</sup> For ICM, see Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions; Soupers and Jumpers*.

<sup>94</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 231.

principle of opening the Scriptures to the Irish Catholics in a controversial aspect with a view to the fulfilment of the call, ‘Come out of her my people’.<sup>95</sup>

The Irish Church Missions’ policy of ‘kindly controversy in open aggression on the doctrines of Rome’ was at odds with the more softly-softly IS method of circulating the Scriptures and teaching the peasantry to read them in Irish.<sup>96</sup> Dallas was convinced that the IS plan had not worked. It was the fact that so many Roman Catholics had been taught the Scriptures by the Irish Society during its forty years’ existence and yet remained in Rome that led him to establish the ICM, he wrote.<sup>97</sup> He claimed that IS Romanist teachers benefitted financially from the Irish Society ‘while they avoided the spiritual benefit’ which its founders ‘hoped to convey by engaging them’. Many ‘never left the Mass’ but continued to work as teachers for years.<sup>98</sup>

As their frustration with the Irish Society increased, two members of the Ladies’ Auxiliary, Fanny Bellingham and Alicia Mason, became more and more involved with Rev. Alexander Dallas’ plans for a new missionary crusade in Ireland. They played central roles in assisting him set up the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics. They became his ‘fellow-workers’.<sup>99</sup> While the LAIS supplied Dallas with a Scripture Reader for his first Mission Station in Ireland at Castlekerke, funded by Edward Durant,<sup>100</sup> Bellingham made two important contacts for him in Connemara, County Galway. She introduced him to Captain and Mrs Blake who lived in the Irish-speaking Doon region of County Galway.<sup>101</sup> Mrs Blake operated a Scriptural school for girls there, supported by Rev. Edwin Moore of Cong. Castlekerke was followed by Missions throughout Connemara. Fanny Bellingham also introduced Dallas to Hyacinth D’Arcy, Clifden, whom she had met on a visit to Achill in 1845.<sup>102</sup> When Bellingham married D’Arcy, by then the ordained minister

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<sup>95</sup> Alexander R. C. Dallas, *A letter from the Rev. Alex. R. C. Dallas, M. A. honorary secretary, to the secretary of the society*, Dec. 1856, p. 3, included in minutes’ book of ICM meeting, 19 Dec. 1856.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 36.

<sup>100</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, continued to the year 1869, dedicated to the younger clergy of the Church of Ireland* (London, 1875), p. 28.

<sup>101</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, part I*, p. 88.

<sup>102</sup> For the Connemara Missions, see Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions; Miriam Moffitt, Soupers and Jumpers: The Protestant Missions in Connemara 1848–1937* (Dublin, 2008).

of Omev and Clifden, in 1850, she threw herself whole-heartedly into the ICM Connemara Mission.<sup>103</sup>

On 28 February 1853 the IS and the ICM entered into what Dallas later emphasised was an alliance. It was not a *union*, a term to which the IS objected.<sup>104</sup> Rev. Robert Winning was on the alliance committee, a reflection of his standing in the IS. The committee also included Winning's ecclesiastical superior, the bishop of Meath, Dr Joseph Singer; Winning's long-time spiritual guru and friend the bishop of Cashel and Waterford, Robert Daly; and brewer and philanthropist, Arthur Guinness. The latter three were trustees.<sup>105</sup> The agreement, comprising thirteen clauses, was signed into effect by John Campbell Colquhoun (1803–70), chairman of the ICM committee, and Rev. Joseph Henderson Singer (1786–1866), chairman of the IS committee. Clause thirteen set a time frame for the alliance. Perhaps in light of its earlier experiences with the LAIS and the Irish Society of London, it was cautious about entering into any long-term agreement without an opt-out clause. 'It would be wise that a specified term be fixed, at the end of which this agreement might be reconsidered, with a view to such alterations as may be called for by altered circumstances.'<sup>106</sup> It was agreed that the amalgamation between the two Societies should continue 'for the period of three years, until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 1856, unless previously terminated by the mutual consent of the two Societies.'<sup>107</sup>

The 1853 alliance necessitated significant alterations to the Irish Society's title, although the latter referred to them as 'a very slight modification'.<sup>108</sup> The amended title read: 'The Irish Society for Promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious Instruction of Irish Roman Catholics, chiefly through the Medium of their Own Language'.<sup>109</sup> The inclusion of 'Religious Instruction' indicated the more directed 'missionary' aspirations of Dallas. The addition of 'Irish Roman Catholics' was probably a nod to the ICM whose full title was The Irish Church Missions to the

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<sup>103</sup> E. J. Whately, 'Mission work in Ireland: with memorials of two chief mission workers', in *The Sunday at home: family magazine for Sabbath reading*, issue no. 1088, 6 Mar. 1875 (London, 1875), pp 154–8, p. 157.

<sup>104</sup> Dallas, *A letter from the Rev. Alex. R. C. Dallas*, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> IS meeting, 24 Mar. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 283).

<sup>106</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report of the Irish Society established 1818 for promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious Instruction of Irish Roman Catholics chiefly Through the Medium of their Own Language for the year ending March 31, 1853* (Dublin, 1853), p. 13. Note amended title due to the alliance with ICM.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

Roman Catholics. The word ‘chiefly’ left the door open for the Irish Society to adopt other methodologies.

The ‘territorial division’ of Ireland and money were the two most important concerns during the 1853 alliance negotiations. The anticipated enlargement of the ‘teaching’ and ‘missionary’ work necessitated apportioning the country between the two societies. They ‘amicably’ resolved to divide the work on the geographical basis proposed by the bishop of Cashel and Waterford, Robert Daly. The ‘allotment of territory’ met with ‘cordial sanction’, according to the IS.<sup>110</sup> Suggestive perhaps of a less ‘cordial’ arrangement, Dallas wrote that the two societies merely agreed not to ‘work in the same district’.<sup>111</sup> It was agreed that the IS ‘should take as its peculiar charge the very large portion of the Irish-speaking province of Munster’, which included Robert Daly’s diocese of Cashel. The ICM would take over the provinces of Ulster and Connaught. Kingscourt was identified with Ulster. Leinster was not mentioned.<sup>112</sup> Dallas described the geographical expanse of the projected missionary field:

Thus a line running from south-east to north-west all across Ireland, and from West Galway to Wexford on St. George's Channel, would bring a large extent of country under direct missionary work; and as between the Roscommon Mission and the Drogheda Mission, Local Committees were actively at work in Longford, West Meath, and Meath, the Society's operations would thus be extended over the whole breadth of 1852.<sup>113</sup>

This represented a large reduction in the Irish Society’s field of operations. Three years earlier in 1850, the IS had ‘laboured in sixty districts embracing twenty counties’ covering all Irish-speaking parts of Ireland except west Galway. The missionary work there was conducted by the Irish Church Missions.<sup>114</sup> Arguably the Irish-speaking parts of Ireland had shrunk by 1853.<sup>115</sup> By 1852, the IS had begun to concentrate its efforts on Irish-speaking districts ‘in the south and west of Ireland’.<sup>116</sup> The shift from Irish to English as the vernacular had begun in the first three decades

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<sup>110</sup> IS meeting, 18 Nov. 1852 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 218).

<sup>111</sup> Dallas, *A letter from the Rev. Alex. R. C. Dallas*, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 11.

<sup>113</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, continued to the year 1869*, pp 106–7.

<sup>114</sup> IS, *Irish Society Record*, (Dublin, 1850), p. 24.

<sup>115</sup> See Garrett Fitzgerald, ‘Irish-speaking in the pre-famine period: a study based on the 1911 census data for people born before 1851 and still alive in 1911’ in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ciii, no. 5 (2003), pp 191–283.

<sup>116</sup> IS meeting, 6 May 1852 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 144).

of the nineteenth century,<sup>117</sup> and was accelerated by the Famine.<sup>118</sup> The IS conceded that the spread of the English language throughout several of its Irish-speaking districts rendered its 1818 ‘exclusive’ objective (the promotion of literacy in Irish through the Irish Bible as a tool to acquire English), out-dated in 1853.<sup>119</sup> It seemed to: ‘point out the propriety, if not absolute necessity, of engrafting this auxiliary of English-speaking agency upon that hitherto employed by your Society.’<sup>120</sup> The Society was prepared to enlarge its constitution and embrace English-speaking as well as the Irish-speaking Roman Catholics in its operations. It believed that its alliance with the ICM would not fundamentally affect its constitution, and promoted it as an expansion of its operations, requiring ‘more Agents of a high class’.<sup>121</sup> It would suit the progressive state of its work, and serve the needs of the English-speaking population not previously addressed in the Society’s labours.<sup>122</sup> To accomplish this great scheme would require more money, more suitable agents, and above all, fervent prayer.<sup>123</sup>

Fervent prayer would be forthcoming, suitable agents would be found, but money, as always was the crux. Under the terms of the alliance with the ICM, the Irish Society was prohibited from fundraising anywhere in England or Ireland. The exception was Munster which was within the IS newly-allotted sphere. Consequently, the question of compensation for loss of income ‘engaged the serious attention’ of the IS in its negotiations with the ICM. Under the terms of the alliance, the IS stood to lose about £3,000 annually, which would ‘seriously embarrass our operations’.<sup>124</sup> It argued that thirty-nine per cent, £3,157 15s. 10d., of its total income of £8,174 8s. 10d. in 1852 came from English benefactors.<sup>125</sup> The ICM offered to collect funds in Ireland ‘ostensibly’ for the ICM and ‘transfer them really’ to the Irish Society, an arrangement that the IS understandably found questionable. The IS

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<sup>117</sup> For a recent discussion on the vernacular shift, see Ó Tuathaigh, *I mbéal an bháis*; Lesa Ní Mhunchaile, ‘The Irish language in County Meath, 1700–1900’ in Arlene Crampsie and Francis Ludlow (eds), *Meath history and society* (Dublin, 2015), pp 547–72.

<sup>118</sup> Ó Tuathaigh, *I mbéal an bháis*, p. 35.

<sup>119</sup> Rule 1 of the Irish Society’s general rules, Irish Society meeting, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a)).

<sup>120</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 10.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>123</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, continued to the year 1869*, p. 107.

<sup>124</sup> IS meeting, 10 Feb. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 254).

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

proposed that £3,000 compensation would be a fair sum which the ICM agreed to pay by monthly instalments of £250.<sup>126</sup>

The IS was anxious that its benefactors would not perceive the dissolution of its union with the Irish Society of London unfavourably, and that they would contribute to its cause by now supporting the ICM. It pointed out that the IS had at one time hoped that the IS of London would have amalgamated with the ICM and that there would have been ‘one great Society’. This hoped-for amalgamation was ‘not likely to happen now’.<sup>127</sup> It rightly reminded its sponsors that when London was first established that almost all the funds London collected were sent’ and ‘expended’ by the IS in Ireland (Figure 5.1). It appealed for assistance and elaborated: ‘by now giving your contribution, or a large proportion of them to the ICM who are prepared in connexion with us to do all the missionary work in this country.’<sup>128</sup>

Tensions which appeared during negotiations between the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions erupted into disagreement almost immediately. Six weeks after the alliance commenced, the IS accused the ICM of encroaching on its financial territory. It had apparently collected funds in districts in Ireland which had hitherto supported the IS.<sup>129</sup> The IS resolved to write ‘AT ONCE’ [*sic*] to the ICM pointing out this transgression of agreed rules.<sup>130</sup> It would appear that the ICM also attempted an encroachment on the IS missionary district of St Luke’s Parish in Dublin.<sup>131</sup> Although the parish was in Leinster and Leinster was within the ICM territory, the IS had retained St Luke’s ‘according to & in perfect keeping with the articles of Union’. The IS needed a base in Dublin city, it explained, to train its Scripture Readers, hold a model Inquiring class and maintain ‘an open pulpit’ for training the Society’s Controversial Missionaries’.<sup>132</sup> Although the IS was anxious to avoid any appearance of opposition to the ICM work, it was unwilling to resign its interest in St Luke’s Parish. ‘Such resignations’ would ‘cripple’ its operations throughout Ireland, the IS complained.<sup>133</sup> Yet, four weeks later on 4 August 1853, the IS capitulated and

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<sup>126</sup> IS meeting, 17 Mar. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 275).

<sup>127</sup> IS meeting, 8 Apr. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, pp 285–6).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> IS meeting, 16 May 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 306).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Possibly St Luke’s Without near the Coombe, an ICM stronghold, see Prunty, *Margaret Aylward*, p. 52.

<sup>132</sup> IS meeting, 7 July 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 331).

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*



conceded St Luke's to the ICM 'for the maintenance of union and good will between the two Societies'.<sup>134</sup>

The alliance between the IS and the ICM 'expired' on 31 March 1856.<sup>135</sup> Protracted dialogue on whether or not to renew it followed. Both committees were 'impelled instinctively by a sense of self-preservation'. The IS concluded, after mature and 'prayerful' deliberation, that it was better to 'sunder the connexion, to cast off our fetters, and once more to start as the independent old Irish Society.'<sup>136</sup> Speaking at its annual meeting on 2 April 1856, committee member, Rev. John Alcock, Frankfield, County Cork, rationalised the disbanding of the alliance, explaining that it was only ever an experiment and as such was far from perfect. 'It contained within itself the elements of dissolution'.<sup>137</sup> 'Things which appear very beautiful in theory, when we come to put them into operation, will be clogged with impediments, for which there had not been previous calculation,' he concluded.<sup>138</sup>

The alliance had three inherent flaws, namely, the restrictions imposed on the Irish Society regarding the collection of funds, the division of the field of labour between the two bodies and, what the IS termed, 'unity of action'. Under the 1853–56 alliance, the IS was limited to collecting in Munster, the poorest part of the country. The ICM was permitted, unfairly the IS believed, to solicit funds from a much larger and wealthier pool throughout the rest of Ireland and all over England. The ICM sometimes encroached on the limited financial territory of the IS as it did in May 1853.<sup>139</sup> If the reason for the alliance was the 'evil' felt in England by the many appeals coming from Ireland from different societies with the same object, then it was also an 'evil' to have two organisations in Ireland seeking money from the Irish people for the same object, Alcock rationalised.<sup>140</sup>

The division of the field of labour was another contentious issue, unforeseen when the alliance was formed. The IS had to concede districts where its 'distinct' principle of using the Irish language as a vehicle for its work was more 'specially fitted'. The result was that these districts had been neglected for three years and gains

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<sup>134</sup> IS meeting, 4 Aug. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 340).

<sup>135</sup> Abstract of the report of the thirty-eighth annual meeting of the Irish Society, *IEG*, 1 May 1856, p. 25.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>139</sup> IS meeting, 16 May 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 306).

<sup>140</sup> Report of thirty-eighth annual meeting of the IS, *IEG*, 1 May 1856, p. 25.

previously made by the IS were in danger of being lost. The third flaw in the alliance was that ‘unity of action’ was imposed on both societies, a factor with which the IS did not appear to be overly-concerned in 1853. The ICM rules stated that the ICM would aid lectures ‘on the great subjects of the great Roman controversy’ in the principal towns of Ireland, and that it would ‘adopt any measures’ that would lead to the conversion of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland.<sup>141</sup> While the IS also hoped for the eventual conversion of the Irish Catholics to Protestantism, it never proclaimed that objective openly. For the IS, conversion was a long-term and gradual project; for the ICM, it was immediate and urgent. Their methodologies were also poles apart, although Dallas maintained that the ICM used the same methods as the IS and carried on all the same operations. Because of the unbridgeable differences between the IS and the ICM, the alliance was not successful. The IS regretted that ‘their mode of action was altered, and experience has now taught them that the alteration was not an improvement.’<sup>142</sup>

Although the IS offered three grounds for the non-renewal of its alliance with the ICM, there was only one reason: money. Money was the principal motive for the alliance in the first place. Dallas summed it astutely: ‘the IS was never *‘united’* to the ICM; the only work which the two committees had together was that ICM had to pay £3,000 a year, and the Irish Committee had to receive it.’<sup>143</sup> Following the severance of the alliance in 1856, the IS was ‘at liberty to re-occupy those districts in which it formerly carried on its elementary teaching’.<sup>144</sup> It could once again solicit funds from benefactors throughout England and all of Ireland and revert to its original, quiet and easy:

simple progressive way of circulating the Scriptures among the peasantry in their own tongue, free to roam through the hills and the valleys of our native country, and again to enter the cottages and the cabins, and to sit down by the firesides of the poor Irish people, and tell them that story for which many have been sighing in secret since the Irish Society withdrew from their locality.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, p. 6.

<sup>142</sup> Thirty-eighth annual meeting of IS, *IEG*, 1 May 1856, p. 7.

<sup>143</sup> Dallas, *A letter from the Rev. Alex. R. C. Dallas*, pp 3–4.

<sup>144</sup> Thirty-eighth annual meeting of IS, *IEG*, 1 May 1856, p. 26.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

**Rev. Robert Winning, Kingscourt and the Irish Church Missions, 1853 to 1861: 'a newer, fitter, and fresher society'<sup>146</sup>**

When the Irish Church Missions and the Irish Society divided the missionary work in Ireland between them, a clause was included that allowed some leeway in deciding their respective boundaries.<sup>147</sup> The IS could include any missionary district in any other part of Ireland where there was a 'strong disposition on the part of your friends and agents' to continue under the Irish Society.<sup>148</sup> Rev. J. C. Walker, Dr Trench, Rev. H. Young (Forkhill, County Armagh) and Rev. Isaac Ashe requested that their districts should be considered exceptional to the agreement with the ICM. Their applications were denied. Although Winning was a member of the alliance negotiating committee,<sup>149</sup> there is no evidence that he made any effort to retain the Kingscourt District within the Irish Society. Kingscourt came under the jurisdiction of the ICM in 1853.

Winning might well have recognised that the Kingscourt District had outgrown the Irish Society's original purpose by 1853. The IS had been established in 1818 to spread the Scriptures to those who used Irish as the vernacular language. There were few in Winning's district who needed the 'elementary' work of the IS in 1853. According to Rev. Hugh Gelston, Winning's son-in-law and curate in Kingscourt, 'the Irish language had passed away from this district' and the population had learned to speak English. Consequently Winning 'saw no difficulty in changing the entire agency, in joining the newer, and fitter, and fresher society, the Society for Irish Church Missions, seeing it was better adapted for the changed state of things.'<sup>150</sup>

After thirty-one years of the Irish Society's labours in the Kingscourt District (1822–53), the ground had been well prepared for 'the newer, and fitter, and fresher society', the Irish Church Missions. The IS, like 'Sappers and Miners', 'had opened the way through the trackless desert'.<sup>151</sup> Gelston reported that Winning loved the ICM, which was particularly suited to the Kingscourt Mission. It pursued a 'more

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<sup>146</sup> ICM, *Twelfth report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics (with which is incorporated the late Irish Society of London) with a list of subscribers, etc. etc.* (London, 1861), p. 88.

<sup>147</sup> IS meeting, 10 Feb. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, pp 252–5).

<sup>148</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 11.

<sup>149</sup> IS meeting, 24 Mar. 1853 (TCD, MS 7646, p. 283).

<sup>150</sup> ICM, *Twelfth report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1861, p. 88.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

open course; presenting the broad front to the enemy; marching with its peculiar and varied machinery, like a regular army, and in very many places following up successfully the work prepared for it by the Irish Society.’<sup>152</sup>

In the IS set-up, the organisational unit was the ‘District’ which contained a number of branches or ‘walks’. In the ICM set-up, the unit was the ‘Mission’. Each Mission contained a number of Stations, consisting of a school, with one or two teachers, and at least one Scripture Reader (Table 5.1).<sup>153</sup> The Kingscourt Mission had one Station based in Kingscourt which covered parts of counties Cavan and Monaghan.<sup>154</sup> Winning was the superintending missionary. Gelston was named as missionary. Winning described the ICM Kingscourt Mission as ‘extensive’ in 1855.<sup>155</sup> In March 1856, Gelston forwarded the names and addresses of eighty scholars who passed an ICM examination in the barony of Farney to E. P. Shirley, the major landowner. However, more than 150 others had been instructed, Gelston assured Shirley (Appendix 8).<sup>156</sup> Geographically, the Kingscourt ICM Mission was much more confined than the Kingscourt District of the IS, although the latter had been reduced in size over the years (Figure 4.3) and its IS schools had decreased in number (Figure 4.2).

The ICM units were smaller and more manageable. The Meath, Kells and Moynalty ICM Missions of 1854,<sup>157</sup> and the Louth, Forkhill and Antrim Missions of 1858<sup>158</sup> had been part of the Kingscourt District’s Irish Society at one time. By May 1858 there were twenty-four ICM Missions in Ireland. Some, such as Dublin, Iar Connaught, Connemara and Ballinakill had a number of Stations (Table 5.1). By 1861, there were only eight IS schools in Ireland; three in Londonderry, one in Mayo, two in Limerick and two in Kerry with a total of 483 pupils in attendance, according to the 1861 census records. There were no IS schools in counties Meath, Monaghan or Cavan, the Society’s first most successful district.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Moffitt, *Soupers and jumpers*, p. 28.

<sup>154</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Mission*, 1857, p. 84.

<sup>155</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, 1855, v, 129.

<sup>156</sup> Scholars in the barony of Farney passed at the last inspection under the Irish Church Missions, Rev. Hugh Gelston, 13 March 1856 curate of Kingscourt, to E. P. Shirley Esq., with Mr Winning’s kind regards (WRO, MS CR229/Box 16/2).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., pp 78–80.

<sup>158</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1858, pp 81–8.

**Table 5.1 Irish Church Missions' Missions and Stations during year ending May 1858**

Mission		Station	County
Dublin	Including	Monkstown	Dublin
Portarlington			Queen's County
Kilkenny			Kilkenny
Borris			Carlow
Bandon			Cork
Fermoy			Cork
Aughrim			Galway
Galway			Galway
Tuam			Galway
Headford			Galway
Balla			Mayo
Iar Connaught		Spiddal	Galway
		Inverin	Galway
		Killeen	Galway
Castlekerke			
Connemara		Clifden	Galway
		Errislanon	Galway
		Errismore	Galway
		Moyrus	Galway
		Ballyconnee	Galway
		Sellerna	Galway
Ballinakill	including	Renvyle	Galway
Killery			Sligo
Lough Mask			Mayo
Bunlahinch			Mayo
West Sligo			Sligo
North Sligo			Sligo
Antrim			Antrim
Forkill			Armagh
Kingscourt			Cavan
Louth			Louth

Source: ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, read at the ninth annual meeting, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1858, with a list of subscribers, etc. etc. etc.* (London, 1858), inside back cover

Winning's reports to the ICM were in the same tenor as his previous reports to the Irish Society. He appreciated the work of the ICM, the 'wisdom of its appliances and the efficiency of its operations'. He assured the ICM that in his experience he had never met any Catholic who having read the Scriptures had failed to imbibe Protestant principles. This, in turn led the Catholics first to 'doubt *some* of the dogmas of Rome' and then to 'give up them *all*'. The reports contained anecdotes about converts, and stories demonstrating the 'breaking down of prejudices' and the 'increasing liberality of mind' in the town of Kingscourt. The people showed an increasing desire for the Scripture Readers to visit them, and 'were anxious to obtain controversial tracts, prayer-books and copies of the Scriptures'.

Winning began his 1857 report by expressing the hope that with ‘Divine blessing’ the ICM would realise its objective and effect a ‘Bible reformation’ in Ireland.<sup>159</sup> He concluded with his wish that through the ICM, Ireland might be restored to the position it occupied ‘before Popery blighted her beauty’ as ‘the Island of Saints’.<sup>160</sup> Hard facts were more difficult to establish from Winning’s reports. The Kingscourt Mission had two schoolmasters, a schoolmistress and four Scripture Readers according to Winning’s report in 1856. Winning was superintendent and Rev. Hugh Gelston was a missionary. It had a number, not specified, of Irish and English Scripture schools in counties Monaghan, Cavan and Meath (Table 5.2).<sup>161</sup>

**Table 5.2 Personnel in Kingscourt Irish Church Missions’ Station, 1856–68**

Year	Superintendent	Missionary	Scripture Reader	School master	School mistress	Bill Distributor (where stated)
1856	Rev. Winning	Rev. Gelston	4	2	1	
1857	Rev. Winning	Rev. Gelston	3	1	1	
1858	Rev. Winning	Rev. Gelston	3	1	1	
1859	Rev. Winning	Rev. Gelston	3	1	1	
1860	Rev. Winning	Rev. Gelston	4	1	1	
1861		Rev. Gelston	3	1	1	
1862		Rev. Gelston	3	1	1	
1863		Rev. Gelston	2	1	1	
1864		Rev. Gelston	2	2	1	1
1865		Rev. Gelston	1	1	1	
1866		Rev. Gelston	2	1	1	1
1867		Rev. Gelston	2	1	1	1
1868		Rev. Gelston	1	1	1	1

Compiled by Marion Rogan from ICM Agency Books and printed annual reports

Through these schools, 700 or 800 Catholics had been taught to read and know the Scriptures.<sup>162</sup> If all those instructed in the ICM day schools, industrial schools, and Sabbath schools, and those visited daily by its Scripture Readers were included, the numbers would run to three or four thousand. This was resonant of Winning’s earlier calculation methods, based on presumptions, which he explained to the Irish Society in 1824.<sup>163</sup> In 1857, Winning reported twenty-nine Irish-English Scriptural Schools, with 465 scholars on the roll; 351 had passed examination. This number did not include those taught in the ICM male, female and Sabbath Schools. Neither did it include those who received tracts or those visited by Scripture readers.

<sup>159</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1857, p. 87.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>161</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1857, p. 89. The ICM Agency Books survive for 1861, 1864–9, but are not extant for 1857–60.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 11 (Jan. 1824), p. 94.

‘A reformation in Ireland has commenced and has extended further than either its friends or enemies are yet aware’, Winning observed.<sup>164</sup> This would seem a strange statement from Winning, since the ‘reformation’, under the aegis of the Irish Society had been active in Kingscourt since 1822.

The ICM schools in Kingscourt continued to prosper, according to Rev. Winning. 1,760 Irish Scriptural scholars passed examinations during 1858. This was four times greater than the 428 Irish Society scholars who were successful in examination in the Kingscourt District during the year ending March 1853.<sup>165</sup> This was despite the fact that the ICM Kingscourt Mission was smaller in geographical spread than the IS District. The low number of 228 who passed in July 1858 was due to the effects of the 1858 Jubilee Year on the Roman Catholics<sup>166</sup> and the visit of Roman Catholic missionaries to the neighbourhood, Winning explained.<sup>167</sup> The almost equally low numbers who were successful in September the same year was possibly due to harvest-time when attendances at all schools dropped.<sup>168</sup>

In addition to Scriptural school scholars, a total of 106 males and females were enrolled in the Mission day-schools, where the average daily attendance was eighty-two. Kingscourt’s ‘populous and extended district’ presented problems for its Scripture Readers, since some of the ICM schools were thirty miles apart. Consequently the Readers spent all their time travelling, and no extension of the Mission was possible. The Kingscourt Mission needed more Scripture Readers.<sup>169</sup> Winning continued his report with an anecdote about a convert on his death-bed, ‘poor Trainer’.<sup>170</sup> He included the same story with his report the following year.<sup>171</sup>

Ten new schools had been added to the Kingscourt Mission during 1860. One Irish Church Missions teacher had died; another had emigrated, leaving thirty-four schools with more than 600 scholars on the rolls, and an average attendance of 293

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<sup>164</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1858, p. 86.

<sup>165</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 21.

<sup>166</sup> On 25 September 1857, Pope Pius IX (1846–78) published a Jubilee year for 1858 for the whole of Christendom to be promulgated at the will of each ordinary for any time before the end of 1858; in the diocese of Armagh, the Jubilee commenced on 17 Mar. 1858 and ended in July, during which time a plenary indulgence could be gained under certain conditions, *WFJ*, 13 Feb. 1858, p. 5; *NELA*, 10 Feb. 1858, p. 2.

<sup>167</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1859, p. 82. No evidence has been uncovered to date to show that Roman Catholic missionaries visited the Kingscourt Mission area in 1858; they visited Dundalk and Drogheda, both some distance away.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>171</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1860, p. 82.

for examination for the year. For Rev. Robert Winning, Kingscourt's transfer from the Irish Society to the ICM would appear to have been seamless. The few extant accounts show that his methodologies changed little from those he employed during his thirty years with the Irish Society. The only nod to the ICM *modus operandi* was that the Scripture Readers, on their 3,000 visits throughout the Kingscourt Mission in 1860, scattered 20,000 handbills on the public roads, posted them in the churches and handed them directly to individuals.<sup>172</sup> From 1864, the ICM employed a Bill Distributor in Kingscourt to distribute handbills (Table 5.2).

Rev. Winning's evangelical zeal, too, remained undiminished. He worked as tirelessly for the ICM as he had for the IS. Winning delivered fund-raising sermons for the ICM, just as he had done for over thirty years for the IS. He travelled throughout Ireland from County Antrim in the north to County Cork in the south. In 1857, he preached for over an hour in Downpatrick Cathedral in County Down. The collection raised about £5.<sup>173</sup> The tone of the sermon was similar to that of his earlier sermons for the IS where he was effusive about the large numbers of conversions. 'Ten thousand Roman Catholics had left the Church of Rome, within the last few years in Ireland, and two millions of those who had emigrated to America.'<sup>174</sup> Sometime in 1860, Winning was in Bandon in County Cork 'speaking in favour of, and preaching also on behalf of' the ICM. The third earl of Bandon, Francis Bernard (1810–77), who was present, recalled how impressed he was with the manner in which Winning, 'the old champion of the old Irish Society', had moved from working for the IS to working for the ICM 'without one feeling of regret, coming forward to support and applaud the more brilliant, although not more useful labours of the sister society.'<sup>175</sup>

In October 1860, three months before his death, Winning preached twice one day in aid of ICM funds in Lisburn in County Antrim, once at noon in the Cathedral, and later at Evening Service in St Anne's Parish Church.<sup>176</sup> 'The sermons were able and eloquent, and the contributions liberal'.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> ICM, *Twelfth report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1861, p. 89.

<sup>173</sup> *DR*, 19 Dec. 1857, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> *WDWM*, 6 Apr. 1861, p. 2.

<sup>176</sup> *BNL*, 25 Oct. 1860, p. 2.

<sup>177</sup> *BNL*, 29 Oct. 1860, p. 2.



Rev. Winning wrote his final report for the ICM in 1859.<sup>178</sup> He devoted one-third of the report to the Ulster revival of 1859 which had begun near Kells in County Antrim in late 1857 and centred round prayer meetings and Bible study. The revival was seen as a result of thirty years of evangelical renewal in Ulster Protestantism.<sup>179</sup> Winning's curate, Rev. Gelston, became interested in the movement when he visited the north of Ireland for the Irish Church Missions. On his return, Winning and Gelston set up revival meetings in Kingscourt which were 'regularly and numerous attended'.<sup>180</sup> When Rev. Ellis, ICM Deputation-Secretary for Ireland, preached the ICM annual sermon in Kingscourt in 1859, he addressed a 'most interesting' revival meeting in the evening lasting several hours. The large gathering included seventeen or eighteen clergymen, eight or nine of whom addressed the meeting, and three prayed. Rev. Mr Bickerdike concluded with a prayer. The meeting was attended by upwards of 200 Protestants, converts and Roman Catholics and 'all seemed impressed' though there were 'no physical prostrations'.<sup>181</sup> That Winning was enthused about the Ulster revival is evident from his 1859 report to the ICM. Had he lived (he died in January 1861), it is likely that he would have been a driving force for the Ulster revival too, just as he had been for the IS and the ICM. One commentator wrote earlier in 1843 that the Presbyterian community regarded Winning as 'a rather *flighty* and impressible' person, though 'well meaning'.<sup>182</sup> That Winning was 'impressible' and 'well-meaning', as the commentator suggested, was correct in so far as his commitment to evangelicalism was concerned.

Rev. Hugh Gelston submitted Kingscourt's 'hasty' report for 1860. Gelston stressed that, notwithstanding the sadness accompanying Winning's death, the ICM work had carried on as usual. The only concession was that it was considered 'unseemly' to hold St. Patrick's Day demonstration 'with its accustomed decorations and festivities' in 1861.<sup>183</sup> Despite Winning's efforts and reports of continued success, Rev. Dallas dismissed the Kingscourt Mission as not having sufficient

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<sup>178</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1860, pp 77–8.

<sup>179</sup> See Andrew R. Holmes, 'The Ulster Revival of 1859: causes, controversies and consequences' in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, lxiii, no. 3 (2012), pp 488–515.

<sup>180</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions*, 1860, pp 77–8.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.* ICM, pp 77–8.

<sup>182</sup> *Derry Journal*, 26 Sept. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>183</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, 1861, pp 63–4.

converts ‘to constitute a separate congregation’ in 1860.<sup>184</sup> This was in sharp contrast to Winning’s claims of years earlier when, under the Irish Society, the converts in the Kingscourt District were so numerous that only financial constraints prohibited Winning from setting up a colony of converts there.<sup>185</sup> The ICM decided to close the Kingscourt Mission on 25 June 1863 in order to reduce its expenses in light of what was a perennial problem, its diminished income.<sup>186</sup> It would inform Gelston, and at the same time ‘offer back to the Irish Society that portion of the Mission field which the Society for Irish Church Missions relinquishes.’<sup>187</sup> It proffered Kingscourt’s ‘local position and other circumstances’ as the rationale for the closure. Whether Winning’s death two years previously in January 1861 had anything to do with ‘its local position and other circumstances’, is not known, but it might very well have.

Although the ICM decided to discontinue the Kingscourt Mission in 1863, it was not until 22 January 1868 that it was finally closed.<sup>188</sup> In May 1867, the ICM refused Rev. Gelston a grant to repair the Kingscourt School, calling the school ‘a parochial charade’, of a ‘parochial character’, an indication that the ICM Mission School had been subsumed, perhaps, into the parochial school.<sup>189</sup> The ICM agents continued to be paid until April 1868. Rev. Gelston received £6 per month; John Higgins, a Reader, £3 10s.;<sup>190</sup> Mrs Higgins, schoolmistress £2; James Rogers, schoolmaster £5; William Jones £1 5s. Thomas Russell, who was an inspector in the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District under Rev. Winning from 1823,<sup>191</sup> continued to receive money from the ICM until April 1869, when he was awarded a final gratuity of £20, six years after the ICM first decided to quit Kingscourt.<sup>192</sup>

From its foundation in 1849, the ICM received substantial funds to support its Irish missionary crusade. However, the alliance between the ICM and the IS ‘planned at the height of the ICM’S popularity, became a great financial burden on

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<sup>184</sup> Alexander Dallas, *A Mission Tour in Ireland: Showing how to visit the Missions in Dublin, Connemara, Etc.* (London, 1860), p. 25, cited in Prunty, *Margaret Aylward*, pp 45–6.

<sup>185</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 24.

<sup>186</sup> ICM meeting, 25 June 1863, minute no. 3847 (ICM, MS, n. p.).

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> ICM, Council for Missions Minute Book, 22 Jan. 1868 (ICM, MS, not catalogued, n. p.).

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> One John Higgins, parish Enniskeen, union of Bailieborough, barony of Clankee, was occupier of a house, yard and garden in Church Street, Kingscourt, lessor, William Winning (lawyer and son of Rev. Robert Winning), Griffith’s Valuation of Ireland [Primary valuation of tenements], 1850–58.

<sup>191</sup> IS meeting, 21 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 139 (a)).

<sup>192</sup> ICM, Agency Book 1869, (ICM, MS ICM/CF/0014, p. 70).

the ICM as its finances began to decline sharply' as Moffitt has shown.<sup>193</sup> The ICM income decreased progressively from a high of £40,039 in 1854 over the succeeding years.<sup>194</sup> In 1862, its total mission expenditure was just over £20,000.<sup>195</sup> Moffitt credited the decline in income to the decreasing interest among English Protestants, the Society's principal benefactors.

During the first half of the century, English Protestant evangelicals had been committed whole-heartedly to the conversion of the Irish Roman Catholics to Protestantism. In the 1850s, however, it was missions to the far-flung parts of the British Empire, the Crimean War in 1854–6<sup>196</sup> and the Indian Mutiny<sup>197</sup> that engaged the philanthropy and evangelical zeal of English Protestants. The year 1869 witnessed the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland as the state church,<sup>198</sup> and the death of Rev. Alexander Dallas. It saw the ICM pay its last gratuity to Tomas Russell, the ICM agent in the Kingscourt Mission.<sup>199</sup> The Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District had ended.

## Conclusion

Many evangelical societies played a role at different times, and with different emphases, during the Second Reformation in Ireland. The two prominent societies in the Kingscourt District were the Irish Society (1822–53) and the Irish Church Missions (1853–68). The more enduring society in the district and the most numerically successful, in terms of funds expended, schools established and teachers employed, was the Irish Society. The IS was reliant on the philanthropy of supporters in Ireland, England and abroad to fund its mission. Its finances fluctuated throughout its existence and consequently financial problems were never far from the committee's concerns. It enjoyed a dependent but fractious relationship with its main benefactors, the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Irish Society (1821) and the Irish Society of London (1822). It accepted their money gratefully, but clung to its right

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<sup>193</sup> Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics*, p. 135

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>195</sup> ICM, *Fourteenth report ... report for 1862* (May 1863), n. p.

<sup>196</sup> See John Sweetman, *The Crimean War 1854–1856* (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>197</sup> For a discussion on the Indian Mutiny, see Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *The Indian Mutiny: 1857–58* (London, 2007); Saul David, *The Indian Mutiny: 1857* (London, 2003).

<sup>198</sup> Irish Church Act, 32 & 33 Vict. c.42.

<sup>199</sup> ICM, Agency Book 1869, (ICM, MS ICM/CF/0014, p. 70).

to disperse these funds as it alone wished. It guarded its position as the ‘parent society’ to what it considered these ‘auxiliary’ societies and was not prepared to concede an inch of its autonomy. It resented any display of independent thought or activity by either. It jealously protected its original objective of elementary teaching to illiterate Irish-speaking Roman Catholics, and was reluctant to pursue the more ‘missionary’ aspect proposed by the LAIS and the IS London.

The year 1847 was the third year of the Great Famine. It was a seminal year for the IS and marked the beginning of a sea-change in its relationships with both the LAIS, and the Irish Society of London. The latter two societies believed that the Famine presented a God-given opportunity to extend the missionary work of the Irish Society more directly towards the conversion of the Irish Roman Catholics to Protestantism. The IS was reluctant to press ahead. Rev. Alexander Dallas was the central figure in the shifting nature of all the three societies’ relationships from 1845. When the LAIS committee members Fanny Bellingham and Alicia Mason were introduced to Rev. Dallas, they became his fellow-workers and helped him launch the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics which was formally instituted in 1849. The three-year experimental alliance between the IS and the ICM soon ran into difficulties. Funding and differing methodologies led to a parting of the ways in 1856.<sup>200</sup> The IS lost territory during the alliance. Winning’s Kingscourt District was one such territory lost in 1853. From 1853 until 1868, the evangelical work of the Second Reformation in Kingscourt was carried on under the auspices of the ICM.

The Ireland of 1818 when the IS was established was very different to the Ireland of three decades later in 1849 when the ICM was founded. Many of Rev. Dallas’s observations about the IS were accurate. He was correct in his belief that the IS was especially suited to the time when it was first conceived in 1816, and established in 1818.<sup>201</sup> Its plan to engage those who could read Irish to teach others who could not was ‘an admirable device as far as it goes’, Dallas agreed. The Famine had decimated the impoverished Irish Catholic population. Irish was no longer the language of the majority by 1849. English was the language of emigration. Dallas’ suspicions that the IS harboured ‘a secret feeling’ that the ICM might take the place of their ‘favourite scheme’, elementary teaching, were perceptive.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Thirty-eighth annual meeting of IS, *IEG*, 1 May 1856, p. 25.

<sup>201</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, continued to the year 1869*, p. 31.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Throughout the shifts and changes, regardless of which evangelical society was involved, Rev. Robert Winning remained true to the evangelical cause and worked indefatigably for them all. He introduced the IS to the Kingscourt area in 1822 and was its superintendent until 1853. He acted in the same capacity for the ICM. He introduced Ulster revival meetings to Kingscourt as soon as the Ulster revival took off in 1859. Rev. Robert Winning was the driving-force of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District from 1822 until his death in 1861.

## Chapter 6

### ‘Conversions’ and ‘perversions’ in the Kingscourt District, 1822-61

The first third of the nineteenth century saw an unprecedented attempt to convert Irish Catholics, not by the power of established churches or coercion by the state, but by the voluntary religious zeal of evangelical societies.<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

The common and ultimate objective of the many evangelical societies in Ireland during the nineteenth century was the conversion of Irish Roman Catholics to Scriptural Protestantism. The conversion of the Irish Protestant meant ‘the Abandonment of any Errors he may have been subject to’ but did not ‘necessarily mean a Change of Church’. For the Irish Roman Catholic, conversion meant conversion to Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> This chapter asks how successful was the evangelical mission of conversion? It looks at the numbers of reported conversions from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism in Ireland. It examines those conversions alleged to have occurred in the Kingscourt District and the dynamics that brought them about. It interrogates the conversions of the Roman Catholic laity, a Roman Catholic priest and, the central figure in the evangelical movement there, Rev. Robert Winning. This chapter attempts to determine, as far as it is possible to do so, whether the converts’ motives were theological or economic. It asks if the converts remained converted or if they returned to the church of their baptism at a later stage.

Evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Church reported publicly on religious conversions and perversions with equal triumphalism. In 1827 Rev. Nicholas John Halpin (1790–1852),<sup>3</sup> Church of Ireland curate in Oldcastle County Meath (1827–

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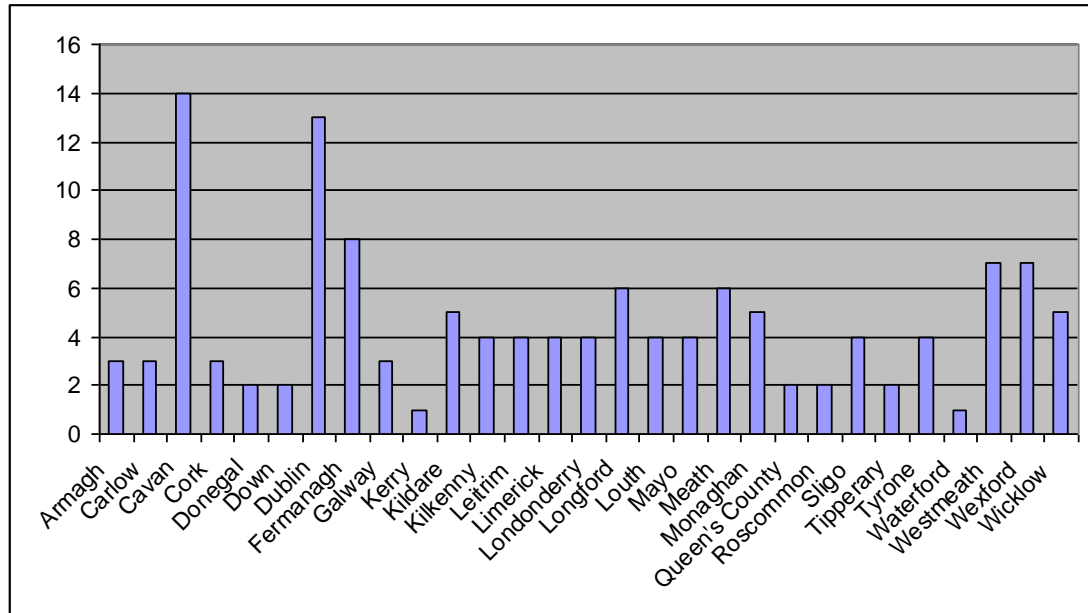
<sup>1</sup> David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740–1890* (London, 1992), p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *First report on education in Ireland*, HC (1825) (400), xii, 75–6.

<sup>3</sup> Halpin was a member of the Royal Irish Academy council; he pursued a literary career, and was editor of the *Evening Mail*, the chief Protestant newspaper in Ireland, see Paul Rouse, ‘Halpin, Nicholas John’ in McGuire and Quinn, *DIB*, iv, 373.

33), published the numbers of Roman Catholic conversions to Protestantism which occurred between October 1826 and 15 April 1827, reportedly (Table 6.1).<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 6.1** Number of churches in twenty-nine counties where Roman Catholics delivered public recantations, 1826–7, according to Rev. N. J. Halpin, 1827



Source: N. J. Halpin (ed.), *Authentic report of the speeches and proceedings of the meeting held at Cavan on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1827, for the purpose of forming a society for promoting the Reformation to which are added notes and an appendix, containing many interesting documents* (Dublin, 1827), pp 23–4, 66–7

Halpin included only those who had read their recantation publicly in church. Others, he claimed, had conformed in private or by simply partaking of Holy Communion in Protestant churches.<sup>5</sup> The County Meath Roman Catholic poet, Bernard Joseph Madden, substantiated Halpin’s assertions, but with a sardonic addendum to the tale:

But we have converts more than these  
 who have the pope forsaken;  
 whom we supply with bread and cheese,  
 with stirabout and bacon.<sup>6</sup>

The 1,712 conversions recorded by Halpin took place in 134 churches in 29 counties throughout Ireland. Counties Antrim, Clare and King’s County alone recorded no converts (Figure 6.1). Since the majority of the converts were heads of families, it

<sup>4</sup> N. J. Halpin (ed.), *Authentic report of the speeches and proceedings of the meeting held at Cavan on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1827, for the purpose of forming a society for promoting the Reformation to which are added notes and an appendix, containing many interesting documents* (Dublin, 1827), pp 23–4. Halpin had published *The impossibility of Transubstantiation; containing an answer to the Rev. Richard Hayes’s sermon on “the possibility of Transubstantiation from reason”* in 1825.

<sup>5</sup> Halpin, *Authentic report*, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Joseph Madden, *Farnham Hall, or the Second Reformation in Ireland* (Dublin, 1827), p. 3.

was generally supposed that their children were also raised as Protestants, Halpin elaborated.<sup>7</sup>

### **‘The New Lights of Askeaton’<sup>8</sup>**

The first reported Roman Catholic conversions to Protestantism during the Second Reformation occurred in June 1825 in the ‘very fountain of Second-Reformation imposture’, Askeaton, ‘the most miserable of all the villages of Ireland’.<sup>9</sup> Rev. Richard Murray (1777–1854), Dungannon, Church of Ireland evangelical clergyman, began his ministry as curate in Aughnacloy, County Tyrone, where he established a very large Scriptural Sunday School.<sup>10</sup> He spent fourteen years in Dungannon where he had the exclusive management of all the schools.<sup>11</sup> In 1817 he retired to his private property nearby and was without a parish for five or six years during which period he built many schools at his own cost and taught the Scriptures full-time.<sup>12</sup> In 1824 through the patronage of Sir Matthew Blakiston (1782–1863), he was appointed to Askeaton.<sup>13</sup> Murray was one of the secretaries of the West Limerick Bible Society in 1826, an auxiliary to the Hibernian Bible Society.<sup>14</sup> He established three Scripture schools in Askeaton, one with the help of the Kildare Place Society. He supported the other two schools<sup>15</sup> courtesy of his wife’s £200-a-year bequest which she had received for charitable purposes, especially the education of the poor.<sup>16</sup> He also established an adult school.<sup>17</sup> Two families in Askeaton withdrew

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<sup>7</sup> Halpin, *Authentic report*, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas Hyde, *Abhráin atá leagtha ar an Reachtairé or songs ascribed to Raftery, being the fifth chapter of the Songs of Connaught now for the last time collected edited and translated* (Dublin, 1903), p. 115. New Lights, a term first used during the Great Awakening of the 1730s and the Second Great Awakening of the 1800s. Protestants who were influenced by evangelicalism were referred to as New Lights in Canada and North America. For Ireland, see Finlay Holmes, *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland; a popular history* (Dublin, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> *DMR*, 7 May 1828, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. Richard Murray, Church of Ireland dean of Ardagh, in evidence, 1 June 1837, *Report from the select committee on the new plan of education in Ireland; together with the minutes of evidence, an appendix and index* HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), pt. 2, 93.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 93–116.

<sup>14</sup> Gerald Curtin, ‘Religion and social conflict during the Protestant Crusade in west Limerick, 1822–49’ in *The Old Limerick Journal*, xxxix (Winter, 2003), pp 43–54, p. 44 (hereafter, Curtin, ‘Religion and social conflict’).

<sup>15</sup> Murray evidence, *New plan of education in Ireland*, HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), pt. 1, 99.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Forster, *The life of John Jebb, bishop of Limerick, DD FRS, bishop of Limerick, Ardfert, and Aghadoe, with a selection from his letters* (2 vols, London, 1836), ii, 438 (hereafter, Forster, *John Jebb*).



from the Church of Rome in 1825 as a result of exposure to scriptural instruction, and the parish had forty regular converts by 1825. Rev. N. J. Halpin recorded 154 converts in 1827. In 1837, in evidence to the select committee on the new plan of education in Ireland, Murray gave the number at 160 or 170, and 300 children.<sup>18</sup> John Jebb, Murray's ecclesiastical superior, concluded in his investigation into Askeaton that Murray had not set out as 'a maker of proselytes'. It was the violent opposition of the Roman Catholic priests to the education of Catholic children in Murray's private and parochial schools that forced it.<sup>19</sup> Rev. Michael Fitzgerald, the Roman Catholic priest, had warned his congregation not to send their children to Mrs Murray's school on two occasions although no attempt had been made to proselytise them, Murray stated.

The Askeaton conversions were credited to Murray's and his wife's zeal and commitment to the evangelical cause. There is no indication that Murray enjoyed the sponsorship or co-operation of any landlord other than Blakiston who initially secured his appointment. Blakiston was an early proponent of the Irish Society and held the title of vice-president or vice-patron from 1821 onwards.<sup>20</sup> There is some evidence that Murray was acquainted with, if not working alongside, the Irish Society in Askeaton. He admired the evangelical IS supporter Robert Jocelyn, the earl of Roden, 'the tried friend of Protestantism, and of truth', and dedicated a book to him.<sup>21</sup> The IS was operating in Askeaton by 1825 and Askeaton was a district in June 1826.<sup>22</sup> Thomas Gibbings (1788–1861), vicar of Ballingarry, was its superintendent on 29 June 1827.<sup>23</sup> Three Irish Society teachers worked in Askeaton between 1825 and 1826. Richard Fahy was paid £17 17s. 4d.; 5s. of which was at Rev. Murray's request. Fahy was allowed £5 in June 1826 for 'his extra trouble' inspecting Askeaton.<sup>24</sup> John Conway was employed for two quarters to May 1826, and to August 1826,<sup>25</sup> and Patrick Maley received 14s. 9d. [16s.] to August 1826.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Murray evidence, *New plan of education in Ireland*, HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), pt. 1, 99.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Forster, *John Jebb*, i, 311.

<sup>20</sup> IS annual printed reports, 1821 to 1853.

<sup>21</sup> Rev. Murray dedicated his book, *Ireland and her church in three parts*, to 'the uncompromising supporter of the best interests of his country, the tried friend of Protestantism, and of truth, the earl of Roden', Richard Murray, *Ireland and her church in three parts* (London, 1845).

<sup>22</sup> Pádraig de Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827* (Dublin, 2009), p. 229.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

Askeaton had 201 Irish Society scholars in 1827, 122 of whom were adults.<sup>27</sup> By 1828 the numbers had halved to three schools and 105 scholars, sixty-four of whom were adults, due to ‘great opposition here’. The Askeaton District of the IS became independent of Clare, and was placed under the Limerick District some time afterwards.<sup>28</sup> The Limerick District had four schools with 104 scholars in 1829, eighty-two of whom were adults.<sup>29</sup> It is not unreasonable to assume that at least some among Murray’s converts in Askeaton might have been Irish Society personnel.

How reliable was the reported number of converts? Rev. Baptist Wriothlesley Noel’s evidence to the select committee on a new plan of education was plausible. Some parents were ‘anxious for Scriptural Instruction, and the children too.’ Others ‘would have sent their children to the Schools because they were anxious for Education, for Reading and Writing, and they did not care about the Prohibitions of their Priesthood against reading the Scriptures.’<sup>30</sup> Gerald Curtin attributed the increased numbers attending the Established Church’s religious services in Askeaton to the large numbers of soldiers and police brought into the area during the agrarian Rockite Insurrection. This ‘gave the appearance of an invigorated Protestant church in west Limerick.’<sup>31</sup> Rev. Murray departed Askeaton in 1830 when the duke of Northumberland, Hugh Percy (1785–1847), lord lieutenant of Ireland (1829–30), presented him to the deanery of Ardagh.<sup>32</sup> Was it a coincidence that from Murray’s departure in 1830 onwards, the Limerick Irish Society District was not mentioned again in Irish Society reports?

Evangelical landed families were in a privileged position to advance the cause of moral reform and conversion among their tenantry. Two such families were the Le Poer Trench and Dillon family in Ballinasloe in east County Galway.<sup>33</sup> William Le Poer Trench (1803–72), the third earl of Clancarty, and Robert Dillon (1807–1893), the third Baron Clonbrock, were the principal landholders there in the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

<sup>27</sup> IS, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> IS, *Eleventh annual report*, 1829, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Rev. Baptist Wriothlesley Noel in evidence, 2 June 1837, *Report from the select committee on the new plan of education in Ireland; together with the minutes of evidence, an appendix and index*, HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), pt. 2, 121.

<sup>31</sup> Curtin, ‘Religion and social conflict’, pp 43–54, p. 44.

<sup>32</sup> Murray evidence, *New plan of education in Ireland*, HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), pt. 2, 101.

<sup>33</sup> For a recent study of evangelicalism and proselytism in east-Galway, see Brian Casey, *Class and community in provincial Ireland, 1851–1914* (London, 2018), especially chapter 3, pp 63–90.

mid-nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> The Clancarty seat was at Garbally Park, Ballinasloe. Dillon's was nine miles distant at Clonbrock House, Ahascragh.<sup>35</sup> Clancarty was a staunch evangelical Protestant. He was committed to the 'moral welfare' of his tenants as Brian Casey's recent work has shown.<sup>36</sup> As well as setting up a farming society and the Ballinasloe October Fair in 1833, he set up a loan fund and a dispensary.<sup>37</sup> It was the zeal of Clancarty's uncle, Power Le Poer Trench (1770–1839), bishop of Waterford and Lismore (1802), Elphin (1810) and archbishop of Tuam (1819)<sup>38</sup> that drove the Second Reformation and the Irish Society in the area. He accepted the role of president of the IS on his elevation to Tuam in 1819.<sup>39</sup> He took on the responsibility for its overall organisation in the diocese, advocating the Society to his clergy on his episcopal tour in June 1827.<sup>40</sup> Another prominent member of the IS, Rev. J. D. Sirr, the IS joint secretary in 1818,<sup>41</sup> was superintendent of the IS in Tuam diocese.<sup>42</sup> The Society was 'remarkably effective' in the area and 'hundreds of scholars, mostly adults were collected within a few weeks to learn their native language', Sirr reported.<sup>43</sup> There were 121 conversions in Ballinasloe. In Ahascragh, where Robert Dillon, Baron Clonbrock, was landowner, there were twenty-four, according to Rev. Sirr. Sirr does not supply specific dates.<sup>44</sup>

The Clancarty and Clonbrock families were unique in that their estates were outside the geographical spread of the 'Bible gentry' of Ulster.<sup>45</sup> Among the Ulster gentry, none was more committed than John Maxwell-Barry (1767–1838), the fifth Baron Farnham and his wife Lucy Annesley, daughter of Arthur Annesley. The desire to spread the evangelical word to the tenantry seems to have come as much

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<sup>34</sup> See Pauline Scott, 'Evictions on the Glinsk Creggs estate of Allan and Margaret Pollack in the 1850s' (PhD thesis in History, NUI, Galway, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> For Clonbrock House, see Terence Dooley, *Clonbrock: history of a Big House* ([http://www.aughty.org/pdf/clonbrock\\_history\\_bighouse.pdf](http://www.aughty.org/pdf/clonbrock_history_bighouse.pdf)) (3 Apr. 2018).

<sup>36</sup> Casey, *Class and community*, p. 68.

<sup>37</sup> *Slater's directory of Ireland, 1846*, pp 106–7.

<sup>38</sup> *Debrett's peerage of the United Kingdom of Ireland and Great Britain* (2 vols, London, 1831), Scotland and Ireland, ii, p. 800. Killala and Achonry were added to his charge in 1834 under the provisions of the Irish Church Temporalities Act, when the number of Church of Ireland bishops was reduced, Church Temporalities Act, 1833 (3 & 4 Will. IV, c. 37, amended by 4 & 5 Will. IV, c. 90).

<sup>39</sup> IS, *Second annual report*, 1820, p. ii.

<sup>40</sup> IS, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 11; Rev. J. D. Sirr, *A memoir of the Honorable Power le Poer Trench, last archbishop of Tuam* (Dublin, 1845), p. 563 (hereafter, Sirr, *Power le Poer Trench*).

<sup>41</sup> IS, *First annual report*, 1819), n. p.

<sup>42</sup> Sirr, *A memoir of Power le Poer Trench*, p. 536.

<sup>43</sup> Rev. J. D. Sirr was the Irish Society's joint secretary with Mathias Woodmason in 1818, and with Monck Mason until 1822, Sirr, *A memoir of Power le Poer Trench*, p. 536.

<sup>44</sup> Sirr, *A memoir of Power le Poer Trench*, p. 539.

<sup>45</sup> Casey, *Class and community*, p. 36.

from Lady Farnham as from Lord Farnham. On the 23 July 1823, the day on which Colonel Maxwell-Barry succeeded to the Farnham title and estates, the new Lady Farnham wrote to her husband:

we have much more work bringing the enemies of the Lord to the bible standard which we have openly chosen. Nothing is unimportant which we say or do at this moment. Even our manners and tone of voice will be subject of criticism where you are now, you may essentially issue or greatly edify the family lists and others, and the worldings who all consider you as a man of sense and integrity in you will look for a model of the Christian character.<sup>46</sup>

In an undated letter to Lord Farnham, Lady Lucy wrote, 'I am quite delighted at you having distributed the tracts and trust some of these crumbs of bread thus cast upon the waters will be found again after many days in the wilderness.'<sup>47</sup> She chastised Farnham for attending the extravagant County Cavan Sheriff's dinner, 'Oh my Love, what an unchristian scene!'<sup>48</sup>

Lord Farnham's primary objective as landlord was the 'moral and religious improvement' of his tenantry, he stated.<sup>49</sup> To this end, he introduced a new management system on his estate, dividing it into five sections, with two agencies, a land agency and a moral agency, in each. The 'moral agent'<sup>50</sup> was 'the keystone' of Farnham's new system.<sup>51</sup> His duties included checking 'immorality and vice', such as cursing and the distillation or consumption of alcohol, promoting 'religion and virtue' and establishing 'an efficient system of education for youth'.<sup>52</sup> The moral agent was expected to encourage parents to train their children in the habits of industry and strict sobriety and to withdraw them from such scenes of dissipation as dances and cock-fights, and to keep the Sabbath Day holy.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham, 23 July 1823, Farnham Papers (PRONI, D/3975/A/1/13).

<sup>47</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham (undated), Farnham Papers (PRONI, D/3975/A/1/15).

<sup>48</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham, 5 Aug. 1824, Farnham Papers (PRONI, D/3975/A/1/17).

<sup>49</sup> John Maxwell, Baron Farnham, *A statement of the management of the Farnham estates* (Dublin, 1830), p. 33.

<sup>50</sup> The term was not employed until c. 1826, John Wright has claimed, John R. R. Wright, 'An Evangelical estate, c. 1800–55: the influence of Evangelicalism on the Manchester Estate Co Armagh with particular reference to the moral agencies of William Loftie and Henry John Porter', unpublished PhD thesis, Ulster College, the Northern Ireland Polytechnic, 1982, p. ii (hereafter Wright, 'An evangelical estate').

<sup>51</sup> Farnham, *A statement of the management of the Farnham estates*, p. 20.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

The Moral Agents sally forth  
And cry throughout the land,  
'Come all ye vagrants of the north,  
Salvation is at hand!'<sup>54</sup>

Estate depots were established which stocked such necessities as blankets, rugs, locks, hinges, screws, window-glass, paint, oil, brushes, wheels, and reels; depots also sold Bibles and prayer books to the tenantry at reduced rates.<sup>55</sup> Farnham appointed William Henry Krause (1796–1852) to the position of moral agent in 1826. Krause was born in the West Indies in 1796 but spent most of his childhood in England. He experienced a religious conversion when a serious illness ended his army career.<sup>56</sup> Commentators have credited Krause with contributing to the success of the Second Reformation on the Farnham estate. However, Lady Farnham was worried about his commitment at one time when she wrote to her husband:

It is an odd circumstance that Mr Krause does not give us the slightest assistance or appear to feel much interest in what is going on, which increases my apprehension, that this [Farnham] House will be no shelter to the poor people when once we are known to have left it for the Winter.<sup>57</sup>

Krause's dedication must have improved later, since John, Baron Farnham, left him £1,500 in his will, one of the largest legacies. This bequest was 'in testimony of the obligations I owe to him for the faithful and zealous manner in which he has executed the office of secretary to me and moral agent to my county Cavan estate'.<sup>58</sup> On his ordination in 1838, Krause relinquished his duties as moral agent, and became curate of Cavan Parish Church.<sup>59</sup> He was later incumbent of Bethesda Chapel from 1840 to 1852.<sup>60</sup>

Farnham printed an abstract of his management system, *A statement of the management of the Farnham estates*, in 1830 and offered to supply detailed

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<sup>54</sup> Madden, *Farnham Hall*, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Farnham, *A statement of the management of the Farnham estates*, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Myrtle Hill, 'Investigative History: a case study Lord Farnham and the Second Reformation' in Brian S. Turner (ed.), *The debateable land: Ireland's border counties* (Downpatrick, 2002), p. 78 (hereafter, Hill, 'Lord Farnham and the Second Reformation').

<sup>57</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham undated, Farnham papers (PRONI D3975/A/1/20).

<sup>58</sup> Will of John, Lord Farnham, died 1838 (TNA, PROB 11/1909).

<sup>59</sup> Hill, 'Lord Farnham and the Second Reformation', p. 78.

<sup>60</sup> John Venn and J. H. Venn (eds), *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (2 vols, Cambridge, 2011), ii, 71.

information on his system to other interested noblemen and landed proprietors.<sup>61</sup> The great evangelical landlords who followed Farnham's lead and employed a 'moral agent' were inter-connected through kinship or friendship. All contributed generously to a host of philanthropic evangelical societies, including the Society for the Education of the Poor, the Protestant Servants' Registration Society, the Irish Islands Society, the Clergy Daughters' School, and the Church Missionary Society.<sup>62</sup> They were prominent in the Irish Society, founded by one of their own, Rev. Robert Daly, grandson of the first earl of Farnham. Gosford in Armagh, Lord Lorton in Roscommon and Sligo, the earl of Roden in Down and Louth like Farnham in Cavan, were all vice-patrons of the Irish Society.<sup>63</sup> They were part of 'Dalyland', centred on Daly's parish in Powerscourt, the Wicklow seat of the Wingfield family, and 'the pivotal parish in the Irish evangelical revival', according to Akenson.<sup>64</sup>

It was through the ministry of Rev. Daly that Lady Powerscourt, wife of the fifth Viscount Powerscourt, converted to evangelicalism.<sup>65</sup> She employed Rev. Robert McGhee (1789–92) as a moral agent on the Powerscourt estate.<sup>66</sup> The Wingfield family of Powerscourt also owned estates in Wexford and Tyrone. They employed Captain George Darley Cranfield (an army officer on half pay) as a moral agent on the Tyrone estate for two years during the minority of Richard Wingfield (1815–33), later sixth Viscount Wingfield. Cranfield was charged with looking after the moral conduct of the tenants, 'the treatment by parents of the children, and *vice versa*', to ensure that they attended places of worship and sent their children to school.<sup>67</sup>

William Montagu (1771–1843), the fifth duke of Manchester on the Annesley estate in Down, was a relative and an 'intimate friend' of Rev. Robert Daly.<sup>68</sup> George Montague (1799–1855), third Viscount Mandeville and later sixth duke of Manchester, introduced moral management on his estate in Tandragee, County Down, in 1832. Montague, who was influenced by his mother-in-law, Lady Olivia

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<sup>61</sup> Farnham, *A statement of the management of the Farnham estates*, pp 37, 42.

<sup>62</sup> Wright, 'An Evangelical estate', p. 27.

<sup>63</sup> For example, see IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Donald Harman Akenson, *Discovering the end of time: Irish evangelicalism in the age of Daniel O'Connell* (London, 2016), p. 147.

<sup>65</sup> See Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*.

<sup>66</sup> Mrs Hamilton Madden, *Memoir of the late Right Rev. Robert Daly, DD, Lord Bishop of Cashel* (London, 1875), p. 144.

<sup>67</sup> *Royal commission of inquiry into the law and practice in respect of occupation of land in Ireland, report; minutes of evidence*, pt 1 Command Paper 605 606 xix.1, 5 (Dublin, 1845), 911.

<sup>68</sup> Madden, *Memoir of Robert Daly*, p. 142.

Sparrow (1799–1863), eldest daughter of Arthur Acheson, first earl of Gosford, displayed ‘a certain religiosity’.<sup>69</sup> The moral agent on the Manchester estate was Henry John Porter, one time engaged in a clerical capacity with the Church Missionary Society, but more recently Lord Farnham’s private secretary. Porter’s system was, not unexpectedly, Wright suggests, very similar to that which had been successfully operating in Farnham.<sup>70</sup> He was responsible for the management of the estate schools for the children of the poorer tenantry. Porter also managed the distribution of blankets and clothing for the poor, either gratuitously, or at reduced terms.<sup>71</sup> He was expected to disseminate evangelical views on education whenever and wherever the opportunity arose.<sup>72</sup>

Robert Edward King (1773–1854) first Viscount Lorton (1806), owned vast estates in County Roscommon and parts of County Sligo.<sup>73</sup> Rev. Matthew James Shaw, a clergyman of the Established Church, had been forced to leave his parish (cure) in Kilmactranny, County Sligo, after being threatened by an intruder.<sup>74</sup> Lorton employed him as a moral agent on his estate in 1829, when Shaw resigned his living.<sup>75</sup>

Lady Lucy Farnham’s father was Arthur Annesley, then Viscount Valentia (1744–1816). The Annesleys of Castlewellan, County Down, were distant cousins of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.<sup>76</sup> When Lady Lucy Farnham’s distant cousin, William Richard Annesley (1772–1838) third earl of Annesley, died during his son’s minority in 1838, Rev. John Robert Moore, the earl’s brother-in-law, chaplain and land agent, was appointed resident co-trustee of the estate.<sup>77</sup> Moore engaged John Lees as a moral agent in 1839. The appointment was disastrous.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Wright, ‘An Evangelical estate’, p. 44.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>71</sup> Murray evidence, 19 June 1837, *New plan of education in Ireland*, HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), pt II, 340.

<sup>72</sup> Wright, ‘An Evangelical estate’, p. 149.

<sup>73</sup> Isaac Weld, *A statistical survey of the county of Roscommon* (Dublin, 1832), pp 241–3.

<sup>74</sup> File of papers relating to attack made on the home of Rev Matthew James Shaw, Kilmactranny (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1829/700).

<sup>75</sup> Weld, *A statistical survey of the county of Roscommon*, pp 241–3.

<sup>76</sup> Janice Cavell, ‘Lady Lucy Barry and evangelical reading on the first Franklin expedition’ in *Arctic*, lxiii, no. 2 (June, 2010), pp 131–40, p. 132.

<sup>77</sup> Annesley Papers, out-letter books 1830–50 (PRONI, D1854/6). Having acted as estate agent since 1838, Moore was officially appointed to the position 16 Sept. 1842 (PRONI, D1854/6/5). Moore’s father, grandfather and great-grandfather had been agents on the Annesley estate.

<sup>78</sup> Wright, ‘An Evangelical estate’, pp 75–7.

‘Lees spent most of his time womanizing and drinking’ and left an unexplained debt of £500.<sup>79</sup> He was dismissed in 1842.

Robert Jocelyn (1788–1870), third earl of Roden, took the moral welfare of his tenantry in Tollymore, County Down, and Dundalk, County Louth upon himself.<sup>80</sup> He was ably assisted by Rev. A. W. McCreight, McCreight’s mother, and McCreight’s sister, Mrs Isabella Keown, Tollymore.<sup>81</sup> Evelyn P. Shirley (1812–82), the largest landowner in County Monaghan, and vice-president of the Irish Society, intended to employ a retired army colonel as moral agent on his estate in 1839.<sup>82</sup> Rev. Daniel Boylan, Roman Catholic priest, Magheraclone, stated in evidence to the commissioners of inquiry into land occupation in 1844 that Shirley had had a moral agent some time previously connected with the schools, who gave the children some tracts and books.<sup>83</sup> Boylan might have been referring to estate agent, Sandy Mitchell (1829–43), who carried out many of the duties associated with a moral agent, though not formally appointed one.<sup>84</sup>

It is not surprising then that many of the 1,712 reported conversions in Ireland by Halpin in 1827 occurred in areas connected with these aristocratic families.<sup>85</sup> The evangelical Protestant ethos promoted by committed landlords and disseminated at their behest by their moral agents contributed to a tenantry used to hearing (and heeding) the evangelical message. Thirteen conversions were reported in Newtownbarry in County Wexford, estate of the Maxwell family of Farnham. There was one conversion in Templemichael in County Longford, where Henry Maxwell (1774–1838), Church of Ireland clergyman and younger son of Henry Maxwell, bishop of Meath, and sixth baron Farnham in 1838, was vicar.<sup>86</sup> The

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>81</sup> J. Christopher Napier (ed.), *The Castlewella court book 1824* (2004), p. 7 (<http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/~oduibhin/alecban/ccb1.pdf>) (8 Apr. 2018). It is likely that this is Rev. McCreight, who was a chaplain to Lord Farnham, Francis Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland; wherein is contained a brief view of the evils that proceed from connecting with the Irish Society; and also, the rise and fall of the Irish language; and the effects of Bible reading, in the most ancient dialect of the Celtic tongue* (Belfast, 1844), p. 4. McCreight died in 1868 while rector in Belturbet, Co. Cavan, *BNL*, 11 May 1868, p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> Patrick J. Duffy, ‘Colonial spaces and sites of resistance: landed estates in nineteenth-century Ireland’, p. 381 ([http://eprints.maynoothuniversity.ie/5594/1/PD\\_Colonial.pdf](http://eprints.maynoothuniversity.ie/5594/1/PD_Colonial.pdf)) (14 June, 2018).

<sup>83</sup> *Royal commission of inquiry into the law and practice in respect of occupation of land in Ireland, report; minutes of evidence*, pt 1 [605 606], HC 1845, xix.1, 972.

<sup>84</sup> For Sandy Mitchell’s work on the Shirley estate, see Lorcan Ó Mearáin, ‘Estate agents in Farney: Trench and Mitchell’ in *Clogher Record*, x, no. 3 (1981), pp 405–13.

<sup>85</sup> Halpin, *Authentic report*.

<sup>86</sup> Correspondence from the archbishop of Tuam regarding non-residency of Rev. Henry Maxwell in Templemichael (NLI, MS 41,147/16).



Wingfield family estate in Powerscourt, County Wicklow, saw forty conversions between 1826 and 1827. The rector there and driver of the religious movement was Rev. Robert Daly.

The largest concentration of conversions occurred in County Cavan, as Halpin has shown (Figure 6.1).<sup>87</sup> Most of the recantations were read in the church in Cavan town where 531 persons converted to Protestantism between October 1826 and February 1827 (Table 6.1).<sup>88</sup> This led many commentators to conclude that the Second Reformation or, what Thady M’Blab sardonically named, *The Farnham Farce* began in Cavan.<sup>89</sup> The schools established on the Farnham estate, as on the Annesley, Manchester, Gosford and Roden estates and by Richard Murray in Askeaton, were for children. So what led the 531 adults to recant and convert in Cavan?

**Table 6.1 Number of converts recorded weekly in Cavan Church, 8 October 1826 to 18 February 1827**

Week ending	Number	Farnham’s tenants	Other landlords’ tenants
8 Oct. 1826	17	13	4
22 Oct. 1826	20	13	7
29 Oct. 1826	10	8	2
5 Nov. 1826	15	11	4
12 Nov. 1826	8	8	0
19 Nov. 1826	20	8	12
26 Nov. 1826	44	20	24
3 Dec. 1826	61	38	23
10 Dec. 1826	58	18	40
17 Dec. 1826	48	13	35
24 Dec. 1826	11	5	6
31 Dec. 1826	37	10	27
7 Jan. 1827	21	7	14
14 Jan. 1827	24	14	10
21 Jan. 1827	36	12	24
28 Jan. 1827	33	9	24
4 Feb. 1827	26	13	13
11 Feb. 1827	22	7	15
18 Feb. 1827	20	11	9
Total	531	238	293

Compiled by Marion Rogan from manuscript journal entitled ‘Names and descriptions of persons of the Roman Catholic persuasion who conformed to the Protestant Religion in Cavan Church’ (PRONI, MS D3975/A/8/1)

<sup>87</sup> Halpin, *Authentic report*, pp 23–4, 66–7.

<sup>88</sup> Manuscript journal entitled ‘Names and descriptions of persons of the Roman Catholic persuasion who conformed to the Protestant Religion in Cavan Church’ hereinafter cited as Farnham papers, ‘Roman Catholic Converts Cavan’ (PRONI, MS D3975/A/8/1).

<sup>89</sup> Thady M’Blab, *Reformation the third, or, the apostate of N-l-n, and the perverts of Athboy: a poem in four cantos with notes* (Dublin, 1838), p. 6.

Protestant evangelical landlords supported a number of societies involved in scriptural education, forming schools and establishing Bible societies. The Farnham network of family and friends, Daly, Wingfield, Gosford, Maxwell, Roden and Lorton were all promoters of the Irish Society. As already stated, the IS schools were comprised mainly of adult scholars. Three Irish Society Roman Catholic schoolmasters from Killinkere in County Cavan converted at the parish church in Cavan town on 8 October 1826,<sup>90</sup> a surviving Farnham manuscript shows. The manuscript, which supplies the names and addresses of the converts, includes only those who read their recantation publicly.<sup>91</sup> Farnham claimed that the converts ‘received their conviction from reading the Irish Scriptures’.<sup>92</sup>

The first three converts named in Cavan were IS masters, Brennan, Valentine Smith and Michael Sheridan. There is some confusion over Brennan’s Christian name in the manuscript. Thomas has been crossed out and James inserted. All other evidence, including Brennan’s own, indicates that this was Francis Brennan. Brennan, ‘*an steallradh bréag*’ [the pourer forth of lies], according to an IS fellow teacher, Aodh Mac Domhnaill,<sup>93</sup> had been an IS teacher in the Kingscourt District from 1822.<sup>94</sup> Smith and Sheridan received their first remuneration for the Kingscourt District in November 1825.<sup>95</sup> The Kingscourt District had 115 teachers and 8,681 scholars by February 1826, the year of the Cavan conversions.<sup>96</sup> The fourteen other converts in Cavan that day were described as labourers, a maid servant, a carpenter’s wife and Thomas Farrelly, ‘Inspector to Lord Farnham’.<sup>97</sup>

Francis Brennan had been teaching for John Maxwell (1759–1823) second earl of Farnham when he was approached by the Irish Society in 1822 to start an IS school there.<sup>98</sup> The IS work would fit in with his regular teaching job, since the IS work took place in the evening. The IS was ‘a year or two established’ in the Kingscourt district under the superintendence of the Rev. Robert Winning at the time, Brennan explained. According to Brennan, writing more than twenty years later

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Farnham papers, ‘Roman Catholic Converts Cavan’ (PRONI, D3975/A/8/1).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Colm Beckett, ‘Príomhstair an stocáin le Aodh Mac Domhnaill (1802-1867)’ in *Éigse* 14/4 (Geimhreadh, 1972), pp 283-96, p. 293.

<sup>94</sup> Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland*, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> De Brún, *Scriptural instruction*, p. 46.

<sup>96</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, p. 9.

<sup>97</sup> Farnham papers, ‘Roman Catholic Converts Cavan’ (PRONI, D3975/A/8/1). It may be suggested that Thomas Farrelly was one of the district inspectors on the Farnham estate.

<sup>98</sup> Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland*, p. 3.

when he had returned to the Roman Catholic faith, Lord Farnham's secretary, Blakely, assured him that he would be 'well rewarded by Lady Farnham.'<sup>99</sup> 'Tempted by the love of gain', Brennan not only taught, but 'sought out others who became teachers, and brought them to Winning'. When Brennan defied the exhortations of the Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Fitzsimons, to desist from teaching for the IS, Lady Farnham praised and entertained him. When she requested him to go to Church, 'to see their manner and form of worship', he yielded, 'knowing it was the only way to gain her Ladyship's friendship':<sup>100</sup>

She told me to exert myself amongst Roman Catholics, and to get as many as I could to renounce the Catholic religion, and that she would give me a sovereign in money for every convert I would bring to Farnham; and on my parting with her, she gave me a 30s. note. His Lordship gave me a double barrell'd pistol to be my protector.<sup>101</sup>

Brennan described how he commenced his proselytising efforts 'oftener with gold and silver offers, than with gospel tidings'. He targeted 'the poor and needy', and his first converts were 'two perishing starving families, Protestant and Presbyterian, Flanagan and Little'. He 'palmed them upon her Ladyship for Roman Catholics'. Brennan's boast would concur with that of the Roman Catholic bishops who investigated the conversions in Cavan, and concluded that if 'names and places be specified... it will be found that many of the new converts are old Protestants.'<sup>102</sup> The Flanagan and Little families were clothed by Lady Farnham, and on their return home each family received £2, 'which made their faith like masonry.' The following week, Brennan enlisted three recruits on the Farnham depot and brought them down on Friday, where they got plenty of bacon to eat, and a converting sermon from the Rev. Andrew McCreight, Farnham's chaplain.<sup>103</sup> Brennan continued his 'trade of jobbing' from October 1824 to March 1826. In May, 1826, he was compelled to read his recantation in Cavan Church, together with his friend, Joseph Reilly, and a

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> George Ensor, *Letters Showing the Inutility and Showing the absurdity of what is rather fantastically termed 'The New Reformation'* (Dublin, 1828) quoted in Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism*, p. 89

<sup>103</sup> Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland*, p. 4.

Thomas Ferally’, Brennan recalled twenty years later.<sup>104</sup> The Farnham manuscript dated Brennan’s recantation five months later, on 8 October 1826.<sup>105</sup>

The Roman Catholic parish priest of Cavan and vicar general of Kilmore diocese, Rev. Patrick O’Reilly, stated that the ‘recanters’ were not from Cavan ‘as is commonly supposed, but from various other parts of Ireland.’<sup>106</sup> O’Reilly’s claims are confirmed by the Farnham document: only 238 converts were direct tenants of Lord Farnham, the remaining 293 were tenants of other landowners. They came from Ballybay in County Monaghan, Kells, Ardraccon, Moybologue and Oldcastle in County Meath, and the earl of Gosford’s estate in County Armagh, areas where the Irish Society’s Kingscourt District was operating. The district had extended into Counties Armagh, Cavan, Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Westmeath by then (Map 4.1).<sup>107</sup> The *British Critic* supports O’Reilly’s statement. It declared that half of the 2,357 converts in all of Ireland in September 1827<sup>108</sup> resided in the Kingscourt District.<sup>109</sup>

There were several school teachers named among the Cavan converts. It is likely that at least some of them, like Brennan, Smith and Sheridan, were also Irish Society teachers in the Kingscourt District. It is also likely that some converts were IS scholars. Six members of the Sullivan family from Taghart in the Kingscourt District, where Henry Martin taught an IS school,<sup>110</sup> read their recantations in Cavan Church in 1826.<sup>111</sup> Cavan lay twenty-seven miles from Taghart, an indication of the distance that converts travelled to read their incantation. William Nowlan travelled from Ardraccon, forty miles distant, to convert on 21 January 1827.<sup>112</sup> Another from Winning’s Kingscourt District, was Thomas Pollaghan from Kilgrif, in the parish of

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> Farnham papers, ‘Roman Catholic Converts Cavan’ (PRONI, D3975/A/8/1).

<sup>106</sup> *DMR*, 3 Mar. 1827, p. 3.

<sup>107</sup> IS, *Ninth annual report*, 1827, p. 8.

<sup>108</sup> *British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record* (London, Jan. 1828), iii, 53, section entitled ‘The Irish Reformation’.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>110</sup> *Second report of the commissioners of education inquiry*, HC 1826–7 (509), xiii, 308–9.

<sup>111</sup> Farnham papers, ‘Roman Catholic Converts Cavan’ (PRONI, D3975/A/8/1). John Sullivan, together with his eldest daughter, Mary, and son, Patrick, conformed on Sunday, 28 November 1826. John’s wife, Mary, and two younger daughters, Rose and Anne followed suit on Sunday, 3 December.

<sup>112</sup> For Nowlan family, masons, see Marion Rogan, *Charles Tisdall of County Meath: from spendthrift youth to improving landlord* (Dublin, 2014); ‘The manor courts of Martry: law and order on the Tisdall estate 1789–91’ in Brian Casey (ed.), *Lords, land and labourers: the big houses and landed estates of Royal Meath* (Dublin, 2016), pp 71–91. Nowlan was probably influenced by Charles Arthur Tisdall’s proselytising efforts at Charlesfort. Tisdall, an early proponent of the ‘Second Reformation’ was one of the Meath ‘Bible-bit’ gentry in the vicinity of Ardraccon, who engaged in a bitter pamphlet war with the Roman Catholic parish priest, Fr Michael Branagan.

Moybologue, on the Meath-Cavan border.<sup>113</sup> The conversions on Farnham continued past 17 February 1827, the last date recorded in the Farnham journal. In a letter to her husband in March 1828, Lady Farnham related: ‘Farrelly tells me Henry Chamber’s two cottagers will conform on Sunday and also John Bailey’s wife.’<sup>114</sup>

In 1827, the Reformation Society agreed that all Roman Catholics ‘who could be got to renounce their religion’ should do so in their local parish churches. This, according to Francis Brennan, put stop to the Reformation of Cavan ‘as no Roman Catholic could be got’ to do so, while Protestants and Presbyterians were ‘ashamed to come before their ministers’.<sup>115</sup> It might also explain the dearth of contemporary records of Roman Catholic conversions to Protestantism from 1827 onwards. Local newspapers reported that two Roman Catholic priests converted in County Clare in 1837.<sup>116</sup> Rev. Thomas Moriarty reported that 200 people converted in Dingle, County Kerry in 1839, including several members of Moriarty’s family.<sup>117</sup>

The next account of converts was not until 1846 (Table 6.2). It was published by the Priests’ Protection Society (PPS), an Anglican society established in Ireland in 1844 to protect and support ‘priests of good character’ who had defected from the Catholic Church.<sup>118</sup> It reported that 203,864 persons had renounced Popery in Germany and Ireland by 1846. Twenty thousand Roman Catholics in Germany converted when Johannes Rongé (1813–87), a German Roman Catholic priest, started a new reform movement. Rongé had publicly condemned the commercialism surrounding the exposition the Holy Coat of Jesus<sup>119</sup> in Trèves Cathedral, 18 August to 7 October 1844.<sup>120</sup> He claimed that when Archbishop Wilhelm Armaldi of Trèves (1842–64) exposed the relic, he granted full indulgences to pilgrims who put money in the collection box placed strategically beside the relic on the altar, money used to

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<sup>113</sup> Farnham papers, ‘Roman Catholic Converts Cavan’ (PRONI, D3975/A/8/1).

<sup>114</sup> Lady Farnham to Lord Farnham 2 March 1827, Farnham Papers (PRONI, D/3975/A/1/21).

<sup>115</sup> Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland*, p. 5.

<sup>116</sup> *DCJ*, 5 Aug. 1837, p. 4.

<sup>117</sup> *KEP*, 6 Nov. 1839, p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> Priests’ Protection Society, *The first annual report of the Priests’ Protection Society for Ireland, founded 5<sup>th</sup> May 1844; the day on which Rev. Solomon Frost renounced Popery in St Audoen’s Church, Dublin with extracts of correspondence, abstract of cash account and a list of subscribers, etc.* (Dublin, 1845), p. 11.

<sup>119</sup> Seamless coat said to be worn by Jesus during Crucifixion; the cloak was seamless, woven in one piece from head to toe, John 19: 53.

<sup>120</sup> For a recent discussion on Rongé’s reform movement, see Stan Michael Landry, *That all may be one? Church unity, Luther memory, and ideas of the German nation, 1817–83* (University of Arizona, 2010).

repair Trèves Cathedral.<sup>121</sup> Books, mementoes, rosaries, chaplets were manufactured to provide souvenirs for pilgrims.<sup>122</sup> ‘Money was collected for masses, rosaries, indulgences and the like’.<sup>123</sup> When Rongé was excommunicated on 3 December 1844, thousands forsook the Roman Catholic Church and joined Rongé’s ‘New Catholics’ sect, reputedly.<sup>124</sup>

**Table 6.2 Converts in Germany and Ireland to 1846, according to the Priests’ Protection Society**

Germany		200,000
Dingle	Co. Kerry	800
Kilgarven, Feale-bridge, other parts of Kerry	Co. Kerry	400
Achill	Co. Mayo	500
Kingscourt	Co. Cavan	2,000
St. Audoen’s 1833–47	Co. Dublin	164
Total		203,864

Source: Priests’ Protection Society, *The second annual report of the Priests’ Protection Society for Ireland, founded 5<sup>th</sup> May 1844; the day on which Rev. Solomon Frost renounced Popery in St Audoen’s Church, Dublin with extracts of correspondence, abstract of cash account and a list of subscribers, etc.* (Dublin, 1846), appendix, p. 36

The 3,068 converts reported in Ireland came from five locations. Dingle, where Rev. Moriarty, Irish Society activist, had set up a Protestant colony for converts, accounted for 800 conversions. Achill, where Rev. Edward Nangle (1800–83) had also set up a colony in 1834, had 500. County Kerry had 400 and St. Audoen’s, Dublin, during Rev. Thomas Scott’s ministry 1833–47, reported 164.<sup>125</sup> Cavan was a noteworthy absentee in the PPS report. The Kingscourt District, on the other hand, through the aegis of the Irish Society and Rev. Robert Winning, topped the Irish list with 2,000 converts (Table 6.2). As Akenson correctly pointed out regarding the earlier Farnham conversions, ‘it is hard to verify’ the accuracy of the Kingscourt District convert numbers.<sup>126</sup> Conversions were not recorded systematically in the Irish Society’s minutes’ books. Neither were they tabulated in the Society’s annual published reports. The reports of conversions in the Kingscourt District came principally from Rev. Winning himself, who submitted fulsome

<sup>121</sup> A. Andresen, *Luther revived: or a short account of Johannes Rongé, the bold reformer of the Catholic Church in Germany* (London, 1845), p. 16.

<sup>122</sup> Andresen, *Luther revived*, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> English resident in Germany, *A German Catholic’s [J. Rongé’s] farewell to Rome; a short account of the religious movement taking place in Germany, by an English resident, with a memoir of J. Rongé* (London, 1845), p. 19.

<sup>124</sup> Andresen, *Luther revived*, p. 19.

<sup>125</sup> See, ‘A list of Persons who renounced the errors of Romanism in St Audoen’s Church and who afterwards subscribed the roll of converts, 1827–47’ (RCB, P116/1/4). The list was begun by a convert from Roman Catholicism, Mortimer O’Sullivan (1791–1859), while he was in St Audeon’s, and included the names of several Roman Catholic priests who had converted.

<sup>126</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 219.

accounts of the Society's work in his district to the Dublin committee. Instances and anecdotes of conversions were scattered throughout his quarterly and annual reports. These were included in the Society's annual reports, read at its annual meetings, printed, circulated, copied by the Ladies' Auxiliary and the Irish Society of London, and appended to their annual reports too. The claims were repeated in sermons and fundraising sermons on mission tours in Ireland and Britain, and were copied and re-copied in newspapers.

Although three IS teachers and several others from the Kingscourt District were among the converts in Cavan Church 1826–7, no conversions had occurred in churches in the immediate hub of the district centred in Kingscourt until 1835. This was despite the fact that the IS had been active there for twelve or thirteen years. This 'peculiar' situation peeved Rev. Robert Daly. When he attended the four-day quarterly examination of the Kingscourt IS masters in October 1834, Daly remarked that though the masters had rejected the 'Popish Church, no other had as yet received them' into the Protestant Church.<sup>127</sup> Winning was a Presbyterian minister, therefore it was not within his authority to receive the converts into the Established Church.

Rev. Daly's barbed observation was heeded. Twenty-five selected masters wrote to Rev. Winning two months later to 'intreat' him to request Rev. Radcliffe, Rev. Daly or Archdeacon Pakenham to administer the sacrament to them during the 'solemn season' of Christmas. The IS accepted the reception of the sacrament in the Church of Ireland by a Roman Catholic as evidence of conversion to Protestantism. In their letter, the masters confirmed that they no longer believed in the Catholic Church's teaching on transubstantiation that the consecrated bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ during the mass; the bread and wine were merely 'emblems', they held.<sup>128</sup>

The Kingscourt masters' plea to receive the Lord's Supper was successful. The bishop of Meath, Nathaniel Alexander (1823–40), agreed to let the Irish Society use any pulpit in his diocese for the occasion.<sup>129</sup> On 4 January 1835, according to Irish Society reports, Rev. Daly administered the sacrament to twenty-five IS masters in Syddan Church in County Meath (Table 6.3).<sup>130</sup> Syddan was the parish church of Rev. Anthony Blackburn. Blackburn was an ardent promoter of the IS and had

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<sup>127</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, pp 6–7, 24.

<sup>128</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, p. 24.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*; Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, p. 60.

attended the IS examination in October 1834 when Daly made his pointed observation on the absence of converts in the Kingscourt District.<sup>131</sup> Thomas Russell, the IS chief inspector in the Kingscourt District, was also a Syddan native.<sup>132</sup> Rev. Daly recorded that, even though there were about 100 around Syddan who were anxious to receive the sacrament, because of the persecution that the masters might expect to suffer, it was decided that only ‘a few tried men’ would convert on that occasion. The twenty-five men who received the Lord’s Supper drew up a letter and signed it, which Daly then forwarded to the IS committee in Dublin. The letter no longer survives.<sup>133</sup> However, the abjuration from popery document of Richard Murphy, a schoolmaster in nearby Kells in 1823, shows the format that it might have followed (Appendix 6). Murphy renounced the sacrifice of the Mass as celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church, the doctrine of purgatory, the practice of praying to the Virgin Mary and the angels and saints. He promised to do his ‘best for the turn of, as many Papists as I can to the Protestant Belief, Profession & Practice.’<sup>134</sup>

On the occasion of the Syddan conversions in January 1835, a decision was made, probably by Daly, to hold a quarterly Sacrament for the Kingscourt District’s Irish Society masters, scholars and Scripture Readers. It would most likely coincide with the Society’s three-day quarterly examination meetings in Kingscourt when the masters were paid. Daly expressed the hope to ‘receive many more’ (into the Church) at the ‘next communion’. Daly was back in Kingscourt for the three-day examination in October 1835 and administered the Sacrament to more Irish Society converts. He was gratified ‘that the first batch of twenty-eight converts was led by Mr. Winning himself’ to the communion and presented by him ‘as the first fruits of a Church Society’s efforts.’<sup>135</sup>

Winning sometimes distinguished between ‘new’ converts and ‘old’ converts in his reports, further complicating any accurate assessment of the numbers who allegedly converted. Of the fifty-two converts ‘from Popery’,<sup>136</sup> who received the sacrament in St. Ernan’s Church, Kingscourt on one Sunday in October 1836,

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<sup>131</sup> Thomas Russell’s account of the Kingscourt District, extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of education enquiry, 20 Dec. 1834, pp 26–9 (copy of Russell’s letter in RIA, OS memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan).

<sup>132</sup> IS meeting, 4 Apr. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 139 (b)).

<sup>133</sup> The twenty-five men who received the sacrament were likely the same twenty-five who had written to Rev. Winning, 23 Dec. 1834, IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, pp 6, 24.

<sup>134</sup> The abjuration of Popery of Richard Murphy, schoolmaster, Kells, 1823 (RCBL, D7/10/21/4).

<sup>135</sup> Madden, *Memoir of Robert Daly*, p. 209.

<sup>136</sup> *FJ*, 5 Aug. 1837, p. 2.



twenty-two were ‘new converts’, thirty were ‘old converts’.<sup>137</sup> Was Winning, perhaps, referring to the same fifty-two converts again in his 1837 report when he stated that ‘about fifty’ men had ‘been received into connection with our Church’ during the previous year?<sup>138</sup> On another occasion, thirty-six persons in Kingscourt were anxious to join the ‘Protestant communion’. All were ‘*new* converts from the Church of Rome, except 12 or 14 who had received the Sacrament before.’<sup>139</sup>

A further twenty-five converts, whether ‘old’ or ‘new’ was not stated, received the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in Kingscourt in October 1837 from Rev. James Wolff Charlton, the local Protestant minister. Rev. Thomas Moriarty, the curate and IS agent whose usual duties included the ‘oversight’ of the men who had converted,<sup>140</sup> preached an appropriate sermon on the occasion in Irish.<sup>141</sup> There were no reported incidents of women converts at this stage, since it was men who were employed as Irish Society teachers, men who became inspectors and men who were employed as Scripture Readers.

A common practice of the Kingscourt masters and scholars from 1825 onwards was the formulation and publication of resolutions. They drew up the Greaghnarogue Resolutions<sup>142</sup> when the Irish Society was in financial crisis in 1825; they backed them up with further resolutions in the ensuing fall-out in 1827.<sup>143</sup> On 28 November 1839, they produced yet another series of resolutions.<sup>144</sup> In addition to promoting the work of the IS and its valuable institutions,<sup>145</sup> these had the signatures, addresses, parishes and post towns of 6,026 individuals who testified that they had been originally Roman Catholics appended to them.<sup>146</sup> Even allowing that the signatures might have been obtained at quarterly examinations over a period of time, the securing of 6, 026 signatures would still have been a staggering logistical undertaking. The Kingscourt District had eleven branches which were scattered throughout seven counties at the time (Map 4.1).

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<sup>137</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 8; *FJ*, 5 Aug. 1837, p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> IS, *Eighteenth annual report*, 1836, p. 21.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>141</sup> *BS*, 1 Nov. 1837, p. 3; *KG*, 21 Nov. 1837, p. 4; *WM*, 30 Sept. 1840, p. 3; *KG*, 21 Nov. 1837, p. 4; for Rev. Thomas Moriarty, see Gabriel Fitzmaurice, *Ventry calling* (Dublin, 2001).

<sup>142</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826, pp 30–31.

<sup>143</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, pp 31–33.

<sup>144</sup> IS, *Twenty-second annual report*, 1840, pp 29–30.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* The institutions established included the Temperance Institution, the Loan and Widows’ Fund and the Irish Teachers’ Protection Fund.

<sup>146</sup> IS, *Twenty-second annual report*, 1840, p. 30.

The Kingscourt District had a combined total of 290 teachers and 2,869 adult scholars in 1840 which might explain 3,159 of the signatories.<sup>147</sup> It is difficult to account for the other 3,000 converts from the available evidence. Perhaps Winning had a list compiled over the years which was used. Since the manuscript document is no longer extant, the sole evidence that 6,026 Roman Catholics in the Kingscourt District converted is contained in an appendix to the Society's annual report of 1840. It is surprising that the PPS did not include these numbers in its 1846 report (Table 6.2). The 2,000 Kingscourt converts reported by the PPS, though considerable, paled into insignificance compared with the 6,026 which the IS claimed in Kingscourt District alone in 1839.

The Society's report of 1842 told of 'thousands of nameless converts in remote rural districts'.<sup>148</sup> Converts were 'as thick as midges in a sunny land', the *Freeman's Journal* mockingly commented the same year.<sup>149</sup> Of the 300 Romanists who were being examined in Scriptural doctrine in 1843, the majority, 'not only went to the parish church, but knelt around the Lord's Table, and received Holy Communion from the hands of Protestant ministers'.<sup>150</sup> Winning testified that 'hundreds had been brought out of Romanism' in 1845, without giving specifics.<sup>151</sup> Hundreds had 'come out' in the Athboy Walk of the Kingscourt District in 1846, the Society recorded.<sup>152</sup> It was for 'clothes and bread' that some Athboy converts had converted eight years previously in 1838, the pseudonymous Thady M'Blab alleged:

half-starved Taylors, Tinkers, Pimps,  
Bawds, Pickthanks, Knaves, Informers, Crimps,  
And worn-out harlots, came in shoals,  
For clothes and bread to risk their souls!<sup>153</sup>

Many also renounced Romanism in Cavan Branch, while in the Farney Branch in County Monaghan, 'they have conformed to our church'.<sup>154</sup> In 1849, 'several' of the fifty-six people connected with the Irish Society in the Kingscourt

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>148</sup> *FJ*, 18 Mar. 1842, p. 3.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> IS, *Twenty-fifth annual report*, 1843, p. 7.

<sup>151</sup> IS, *Twenty-seventh annual report*, 1845, p. 8.

<sup>152</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 46, appendix no. 2.

<sup>153</sup> M'Blab, *Reformation the third*, p. 40.

<sup>154</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 47, appendix no. 2.

District who underwent examination ‘were prepared to come out of *her*’, and convert to the Established Church, Winning reported.<sup>155</sup>

Kingscourt came under the auspices of the Irish Church Missions in 1853. Charles Perry (1807–81), the first Anglican bishop of Melbourne, Australia,<sup>156</sup> visited Kingscourt in 1855 to observe the work of the ICM. The ICM Scripture Readers and teachers invited him to a meeting on 22 August when he examined ninety-two of its scholars.<sup>157</sup> As was the practice in Kingscourt when evangelicals visited the town, the ICM personnel presented him with an address of welcome with their names and residences affixed. They, too, assured him that they were ‘once Romanists, but are now Protestants; were once entirely ignorant of God’s word, but are studying and imbibing its sacred truths fully convinced that in making this change we withdrew from a church that has long ceased.’<sup>158</sup>

What did conversion mean to the Irish Society, Rev. Robert Winning and the Irish Society teachers and scholars? The IS accepted the reception of the Sacrament in the Church of Ireland by a Roman Catholic as evidence of conversion to Protestantism. What did Rev. Winning understand by conversion? In 1847, at the height of the Great Famine, Winning’s understanding was in conflict with the perceived notion at the time. In his reply to an IS query concerning converts in his district, he elaborated: ‘If you mean, one who has formally renounced Romanism, and publicly goes to Church, I do not think there are many such Converts, within last year.’<sup>159</sup> Winning would appear to see conversion in the ‘evangelical’ sense: ‘If you mean one who, by reading or hearing the Scriptures read, has been brought to view them as God’s Holy Words, .... , then I believe there is a large number of such Converts in this district during the past year.’<sup>160</sup>

What did conversion mean to the IS masters and Scripture Readers in 1835? According to Thady M’Blab the Irish masters who converted were Catholic in name only. They rarely went to Mass or partook of the sacraments. Yet they were the first to take bribes and ‘swell’ the numbers of ‘perverts’.<sup>161</sup> There was a formal procedure,

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<sup>155</sup> IS, *Periodical paper being an extract from the correspondence and reports of superintendents and other friends of the Society, during the period ending Aug.1 1849* (Dublin, 1849), p. 616.

<sup>156</sup> A. De Q. Robin, ‘Perry, Charles (1807–1891)’, *ADB* (6 vols, Melbourne, 1974), v, 432–6.

<sup>157</sup> *BCC*, 28 Aug. 1855, p. 4.

<sup>158</sup> *DEPC*, 28 Aug. 1855, p. 3.

<sup>159</sup> The IS letter is no longer extant, but Winning’s reply, dated 9 Feb. 1848 was printed in IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 23.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> M’Blab, *Reformation the third*, p. 35.

however, to be followed when converting from Catholicism to the Established Church. Proof of conformity was mandatory for converts under the *Act to prevent the further growth of popery* (1703).<sup>162</sup> The person read his renunciation of Catholicism in front of a clergyman and congregation at a public service, got a certificate from the bishop of the diocese saying that he was a convert, and enrolled it in the Court of Chancery. It was sufficient during the period under study to receive the Sacrament from a minister of the Church of Ireland, take the oath, and file a certificate in the Court of Chancery, the bishop's certificate was no longer necessary. The calendared convert rolls named seventy-three Catholics who converted to Protestantism in Ireland between the years 1800 and 1838. The absence of any from the Kingscourt District is understandable. Only those whose landed or professional interests rendered it advantageous complied and obtained the certificate of conformity.<sup>163</sup> None of the teachers or scholars in the Kingscourt District was in that category.

**Table 6.3 Irish Society masters and Scripture Readers who converted to Protestantism in the Kingscourt District, 1835–61**

Date	No. of converts	Location (where stated)	Receiving minister (where stated)
Jan. 1835	25 (100 anxious to convert)	Syddan, Meath	Rev. Robert Daly
1836	36 (12 or 14 'old converts')	Kingscourt, Cavan	Rev. Robert Daly
Oct. 1836	52	Kingscourt	
Mar. 1836–37	50 men	Kingscourt	
Oct. 1837	25	Kingscourt	Rev. J. W. Charlton
1834–37	97 families	Kingscourt	
1839	6,026	Kingscourt	
1840	'Poor Connolly'		
1842	8 of 13	Ballybay, Monaghan	
1843	Majority of 300	Not stated	
1846	100s	Athboy, Meath	
1846	20	Not stated	
1848	Sufficient for a colony	Kingscourt District	
1848	Large	Kingscourt District	
1849	Several of 56	Kingscourt	
1849	40	Not stated	

Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS reports, memoirs and newspapers

<sup>162</sup> *An act to prevent the further growth of popery*, 2 Ann c.6 (1703).

<sup>163</sup> Brown, McGrath & Power (eds), 'Introduction' in Brown, McGrath & Power (eds), *Converts and conversion*, p. 16, citing S. J. Connolly, *Religion, law and power: the making of Protestant Ireland 1660–1760* (Oxford, 1995), p. 298.

Winning explained that while ‘formal renouncements of Popery, and publicly going to Church’ had not been as many in the Kingscourt District in 1847, conversions ‘were numerous, and frequent’.<sup>164</sup> This was at the height of the Great Famine. Did Rev. Winning view the distressed state of his district during the Famine as an opportunity to entice Catholics seeking relief to convert to the Established Church? ‘Souperism’, the practice of offering material benefits in return for religious conversion, was allegedly used by Nangle in Achill and Moriarty in Ventry.<sup>165</sup> In return for receiving food, Catholics were required to attend Protestant service or Bible class.<sup>166</sup> Winning, according to one commentator, held ‘Friday Feasts’ in Ervey, using bacon and ‘pelf’ (money) to bribe Irish Society masters and scholars to break the Catholic law of abstinence from meat products on Fridays.<sup>167</sup> Was Winning tempted to resort to ‘souperism’ as a tool for conversion when distress was high and starvation an everyday reality in 1847? It would appear not. Not a week passed in 1847, he reported, without many Catholics calling on him, anxious to reform. Winning was aware that survival was their main preoccupation. Some were ‘actuated entirely by low motives’.<sup>168</sup> He told of an IS teacher of long standing who wished to be placed with his seven children under the care of the Protestant minister where they would be instructed in the Holy Scriptures.<sup>169</sup> Others, though, sought Scriptural instruction for themselves and their families: ‘both parties would have gone to Church; the former I could not receive, the latter I would willingly, but if I did so, they must be supported, or they might perish.’<sup>170</sup>

If Winning had the wherewithal to support the converts in 1847, he would have established a Protestant colony there.<sup>171</sup> A ‘colony’, in this context, was a settlement of houses located together in close proximity to accommodate converts to Protestantism. Such Protestant colonies were not new in Ireland and Rev. Robert

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<sup>164</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 24.

<sup>165</sup> Miriam Moffitt, *Soupers and Jumpers: the Protestant Missions in Connemara 1848–1937* (Dublin, 2008).

<sup>166</sup> For souperism, see Desmond Bowen, *Souperism, Myth or Reality* (Cork, 1970)

<sup>167</sup> Philip O’Connell, *The schools and scholars of Breiffne* (Dublin, 1942), p. 573.

<sup>168</sup> Extract of letter from Rev. Robert Winning, 9 Feb. 1848, IS, *Thirtieth annual report* (Dublin, 1848), p. 23.

<sup>169</sup> Extract of letter from Rev. Robert Winning, IS, *Periodical paper being an extract from the correspondence and reports of superintendents and other friends of the Society, during the period ending 1 Aug. 1849*, no. 87 (Dublin, 1849), pp 616–7.

<sup>170</sup> IS, *Thirtieth annual report*, 1848, p. 23.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24. The Oxford Dictionary defines colony as a place where a group of people with the same occupation or interest live together; from Latin *colonia*, meaning a settlement outside Rome (Cologne), *colonus* meaning farmer, colonist.

Winning had precursors to emulate. The Protestant Colonization Society (PCS) had been set up in Belfast in November 1829, following a Grand Orange Lodge in Ireland meeting.<sup>172</sup> Its rules and constitution were adopted in December 1830 and its headquarters were at 15 Dame Street, Dublin.<sup>173</sup> The main objective of the PCS was to halt the large-scale emigration of impoverished Irish Protestants. An estimated 94,000 Protestants had emigrated from Ireland between 1829 and 1832.<sup>174</sup> A great number of converts to Protestantism in Askeaton, County Limerick, were forced to emigrate to America for protection, the Church of Ireland rector of Askeaton, Rev. Richard Murray, claimed.<sup>175</sup>

There were approximately 13,000,000 acres of wasteland in Ireland at the time, three quarters of which was capable of cultivation. The Protestant Colonization Society planned to lease uncultivated land, select and employ Protestant families contemplating emigration to develop it. Through scriptural education and a ‘sound and pious ministry’, these colonies would promote loyal and religious habits among their residents.<sup>176</sup> Rev. J. B. McCrea was the leading promoter of the Protestant Colonization Society and one of its honorary secretaries.<sup>177</sup> It is likely that that Winning was cognisant of McCrea’s work. Both were honorary members of the Irish Society committee from January 1825<sup>178</sup> and had worked with the Ulster Evangelical Society and the Irish Evangelical Society.<sup>179</sup> By 1831, the PCS had acquired the lease of 1,000 acres from Sir Edmond Hayes of Drumboe Castle in Aughkeely, near Convoys in County Donegal. By 13 June that year, five houses were ready for occupation, each with a ten-acre farm holding, and twenty other sites had been laid out. The first PCS colony had been established.<sup>180</sup>

Another acquaintance of Winning’s with practical experience of colony work was Rev. Edward Nangle. He had established a Protestant colony on Achill Island in

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<sup>172</sup> *BNL*, 27 Nov. 1829, p. 2; see also The Protestant Colonization Society of Ireland, *Report of the general committee* (PRONI, T864/8).

<sup>173</sup> *KEP*, 3 Feb. 1830, p. 4; *CWH*, 7 Feb. 1831, p. 1.

<sup>174</sup> *CWH*, 9 July, 1831, p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> *Report from the select committee on the new plan of education in Ireland; together with the minutes of evidence, an appendix and index* HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), p. 100.

<sup>176</sup> J. B. McCrea, *Protestant poor, a conservative element of Society, being a sermon preached in Ebenezer Church, Dublin, for the Protestant Colonisation Society of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1832), p. 31.

<sup>177</sup> *CWH*, 7 June 1831, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> IS meeting, 21 Jan. 1825 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 19 (b)).

<sup>179</sup> *The tenth report of the committee of the Irish Evangelical Society for the year 1825; with a list of subscribers, etc. presented at the general meeting of the Society held in Dublin, June 21, 1825* (Dublin, 1825), p. 19.

<sup>180</sup> *CWH*, 9 July, 1831, p. 1.

County Mayo in 1831. Nangle was one of the many evangelical tourists who visited Kingscourt to observe the work of the Irish Society there<sup>181</sup> and Winning supplied him with books for his four schools in Achill in 1832.<sup>182</sup> Another clergyman in Winning's immediate circle, Rev. Thomas Moriarty, curate in Kingscourt in 1837, had opened a colony in nearby Ventry and 'a whole congregation of converts had sprung up there' by 1842.<sup>183</sup>

Lord Farnham was also interested in establishing Protestant colonies as a letter from George Moore in 1829 indicated.<sup>184</sup> He contributed to the Kilmeague colony near Clane in County Kildare set up in 1835 by Rev. Arthur John Preston (c.1840–93), Church of Ireland clergyman.<sup>185</sup> Preston expressed his gratitude to Farnham for his 'liberal donation to our refuge for Protestants.'<sup>186</sup> The colony had fifty houses in 1844.<sup>187</sup>

In 1836, Winning, together with seven of his clerical associates and one layman from the Kingscourt District, planned to lease a small portion of land, erect slated cottages, and allocate at least one acre of ground to each cottage. These were to be temporary refuges to protect individuals or families as 'were peculiarly exposed to persecution for following the dictates of their own conscience'. Winning received £52 in donations towards the venture. They founded the Christian Asylum Association, but the Kingscourt colony never materialised.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> For Rev. Edward Nangle and the Achill colony, see Henry Sedall, *Edward Nangle: the apostle of Achill* (London, 1884); Mealla Ní Ghiobúin, *Dugort, Achill Island – the rise and fall of a missionary community* (Dublin, 2001); Irene Whelan, 'Edward Nangle and the Achill Mission, 1834-1852' in Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran (eds), *Mayo, a various county, essays in Mayo history* (Westport, 1987), pp 91–112; Patricia Byrne, *The preacher and the prelate: the Achill Mission colony and the battle for souls in Famine Ireland* (Newbridge, 2018); for letter from Edward Nangle to Christopher Anderson concerning the Achill colony, see Hugh Anderson, *The life and letters of Christopher Anderson* (Edinburgh, 1854), pp 140–2. Nangle's first wife, Eliza née Warner, was from Marvelstown House in the parish of Kilbeg near Nobber, where the IS Kingscourt District had its first schools in 1822/3.

<sup>182</sup> IS meeting, 24 Aug. 1832 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 211 (b)).

<sup>183</sup> *FJ*, 18 Mar. 1842, p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> George Moore to Lord Farnham, 4 January 1829 regarding some problems which needed to be sorted with regard to the Protestant Colonisation Scheme, Farnham Papers (NLI, MS 18604 (2)).

<sup>185</sup> *Report from the select committee appointed to enquire into Orange lodges: a supplemental review, principally consisting of passages from the evidence of witnesses summoned for the inculcation of those societies* (London, 1836), p. 21.

<sup>186</sup> Rev. A. J. Preston to Lord Farnham, 30 November 1835, Farnham Papers (NLI, MS 18612 (27)).

<sup>187</sup> *FJ*, 14 Sept. 1844, p. 4.

<sup>188</sup> *DEPC*, 8 Sept. 1836, p. 3. The clergymen were Reverends George Brabazon, Paynestown, Richard Radcliffe, Skyrne, Robert Noble, Athboy, Edward Nixon, Castletown, James Charlton, Kingscourt, Anthony Blackburne, Clongill. Payne Garnet was the only layman involved.

The LAIS, too, lamented the lack of a colony in Kingscourt to shelter converts in 1846.<sup>189</sup> It had set up an orphanage there which, in 1845, catered for ten converts' orphans.<sup>190</sup> Establishing a colony in Kingscourt would be simple, the LAIS maintained, and could be established in a very short time if land owners could be persuaded to employ converts of good character on their estates.<sup>191</sup> Kingscourt had the nucleus of such a colony already. A titled, unnamed, gentleman had given employment to a number of converts and sought more:<sup>192</sup> '[It] will constitute a little colony of I think nine or ten families. This costs us nothing, yet it provides for, and protects our poor people.'<sup>193</sup>

Winning and his associates and the Ladies' Auxiliary echoed the sentiments of Preston concerning his Kilmeague colony where converts would be 'socially and economically independent' and 'protected from ostracism and persecution by their local communities'.<sup>194</sup> A colony in Kingscourt would encourage 'others who are already virtually Protestants, but halting in their course,' to leave Rome. The LAIS was confident that in a very short period it 'could form a Church, of a thousand Converts'.<sup>195</sup> Winning had petitioned the IS to consider establishing an Irish Church in Kingscourt as early as 1833, but was asked to defer his 'request' and 'forward on some other more favourable opportunity.'<sup>196</sup> Winning might have been encouraged by the fact that in 1830 it was expected that the Meath landowners, Mr Napper of Oldcastle and Mr Preston, son of Lord Gormanston, would start a colony of forty houses in County Meath.<sup>197</sup> Later in 1844, the PCS identified 300 acres vested in the Roman Catholic bishop of Meath for Catholic uses that would make a desirable site for a 'settlement' in Kells.<sup>198</sup> None was ever established. Pratt, the Kingscourt landlord whose family built the town in the late 1700s, attended and chaired some of the quarterly examinations in Kingscourt. There is no evidence that he was proactive

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<sup>189</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 36.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35. The ten orphans were named: Patrick Donnelly, Michael McDaniel, two Connollys, two Keegans, Biddy Box, Mary Rafferty, James Clarke, Anne Clarke.

<sup>191</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 36.

<sup>192</sup> Perhaps, Sir John Young (1807–76), Bailieborough Castle, MP for County Cavan (1831–55) who had intervened with the workhouse for 'poor Connolly'; for short biography of Young, see John F. Ward, 'Young, Sir John (1807–1876)' *ADB*, vi, 455-6.

<sup>193</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 36.

<sup>194</sup> *FJ*, 14 Sept. 1844, p. 4.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> IS meeting, 17 Jan. 1833 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0182, p. 7).

<sup>197</sup> *CWH*, 28 June 1830, p. 4.

<sup>198</sup> *FJ*, 19 Nov. 1844, p. 2.



in the Irish Society, least of all in the protection of converts or the provision of a colony.

The fact that a colony was never established in Kingscourt must have proved disappointing for Winning. Historically, he had been to the forefront in suggesting and implementing projects with the Irish Society. His was the largest of the IS districts for many years, and the prototype for other districts. Winning regularly expressed his frustration at the indifference of the landed owners in the Kingscourt District. Rev. Richard Murray, Askeaton, felt the same: ‘very often the liberal Protestants are very illiberal in that respect, and they will not do anything for him.’<sup>199</sup>

### **Converting back, ‘backsliding’ to Roman Catholicism**

A Roman Catholic who converted to Protestantism and later reverted to Catholicism was often unkindly referred to as a ‘backslider’.<sup>200</sup> Rev. L. J. Nolan and Rev. Winning remained members of the Established Church. What about the others who allegedly converted from Roman Catholicism nationally and from the Kingscourt District? Did they remain faithful until death? Just as evangelical Protestants published instances of conversions, Roman Catholic adherents countered with reported cases of ‘backsliding’. Both were equally biased. At least twenty of the thirty-six converts in Askeaton in County Limerick fell away ‘when they found nothing could be gained from a change of creed’.<sup>201</sup> Walsh, ‘who some time since conformed to the Established Church’ repented. His return to the faith of his ancestors on Sunday last, at Stone Hall chapel, near Newmarket-on-Fergus, was proclaimed.<sup>202</sup> Rev. Patrick O’Reilly wrote that thirty-seven of the 349 Roman Catholics, who converted on the Farnham estate in County Cavan between 8 October and 31 December 1826, had returned from a ‘temporary apostasy’.<sup>203</sup> The temporary nature of the ‘apostasy’ and a glimpse into one person’s motive is seen in the reported declaration of Bridget Grown of Curraghclogher [Curraghcloghan], Virginia, County Cavan, who was alleged to have recanted in Cavan Church in 1827. She was persuaded to go to Farnham by one Mary Ann Parr, with the aliases the

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<sup>199</sup> *New plan of education in Ireland*, HC 1837 (543-I, 543-II), p. 100.

<sup>200</sup> *DMR*, 3 Mar. 1827, p. 3.

<sup>201</sup> *DMR*, 23 July 1827, p. 3; for discussion of Askeaton see, Curtin, ‘Religion and social conflict’, pp 43–54.

<sup>202</sup> *DMR*, 30 Jan. 1827, p. 2.

<sup>203</sup> *DMR*, 3 Mar. 1827, p. 3.

‘Dandy Maid’, the ‘Tin-Ware Lass’, Margaret Macauley and Mary Brady, and also by ‘Real Smyth, agent for converts’ for Farnham’. Grown was given a dinner of beef and potatoes, a handkerchief, cap, apron, bonnet, and shoes in Farnham on Saturday. She went to Church on Sunday, heard the recantation read, but said nothing. On her return from Protestant Church, she was given dinner, a Bible and a Testament. On the following Sunday, she returned to her Catholic Chapel and publicly atoned, an atonement she repeated in Lurgan Catholic Church.<sup>204</sup> Only one parishioner, ‘a rotten branch’, was lost to Protestantism in the parish of Templeport, County Cavan, the Roman Catholic priest, Hugh de Lacy, wrote in November 1827.<sup>205</sup>

Some Irish Society teachers who converted to Protestantism later returned to the faith of their youth. John Connor ‘returned to the bosom of the mother church’ after some years spent as an IS inspector in the parish of Brosna, Abbeyfeale.<sup>206</sup> Two of Winning’s teachers, Francis Brennan, one-time IS teacher on the Farnham estate, ‘after the long mis-spent time of 21 years’, had reverted to Roman Catholicism by 1844.<sup>207</sup> So, too, had Peadar Dubh Ó Dálaigh, IS teacher and inspector in Athboy branch.<sup>208</sup> Yet, Rev. Robert Winning testified in 1845 that, in his years connected with the Irish Society in Kingscourt, he did not know a single individual of the hundreds brought out of Romanism who returned to Rome’.<sup>209</sup> The Kingscourt Roman Catholic Church records also contradict Winning’s assertion, and show that seventeen ‘converts’ were re-united with the Catholic Church between 9 January 1841 and 7 September 1852 (Table 6.4). To have been re-united, they must at one time have converted to the Established Church. These names were recorded in a prominent position at the beginning of the parish Baptismal Registry; they were not listed in chronological sequence as other baptisms were, indicating the importance that the Catholic clergyman attached to their re-union in the parish. No such lists occur in surviving baptism registers, for parishes Nobber, Moynalty, Carrickmacross, or Magheraclone in the Kingscourt District.

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<sup>204</sup> Declaration of Bridget Grown of Curraglogher, in the parish of Lurgan, *BLLSC*, 18 Feb. 1827, p. 3.

<sup>205</sup> *DWR* supplement 8 Dec. 1827, p. 5.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland*, p. 19.

<sup>208</sup> IS journals of Peter Daly, inspector of the Athboy branch of the Kingscourt District for the period ending the 17<sup>th</sup> day of January 1839, period ending the 17<sup>th</sup> day of May 1839 (WRO, CR 229, Box 16/2).

<sup>209</sup> IS, *Twenty-seventh annual report*, 1845, p. 8.

**Table 6.4 Persons re-united with the Roman Catholic Church in Kingscourt parish, 9 January 1841 to 7 September 1852**

Name	Address (where stated)	Religion (where stated)	Date	Celebrant (where stated)	Witness (where stated)
Francis Jonston	Muff		9 Jan.1841	P. Newman curate	Connor Lynch James Martin John Purcele
Justin Donnelly	Bracklin		10 Nov.1841		
Jane McManus			25 June 1845	Nicholas Duff	Mary Matthews
James J. Johnson			17 Dec. 1846	Nicholas Duff	Patt Realan
John Wheatly			6 Jan. 1847	Patrick O'Sullivan, curate	Bernard Farrelly Patrick Murphy
Anne Beg			7 Oct. 1849	Patrick O'Sullivan, curate	Catherine Gargan Rose McDaniel
Jane Beg			7 Oct. 1849	Patrick O'Sullivan, curate	Catherine Gargan Rose McDaniel
Mary Beg			7 Oct. 1849	Patrick O'Sullivan, curate	Catherine Gargan Rose McDaniel
Berry Smyth	Kingscourt [Fever] Hospital	Protestant Baptised Communion Extreme Unction	28 Aug. 1847	T. Timmons curate	Nurse Brady Mrs Coyle
Mrs Macomber	Irvey		Feb. 1849	Nicholas Duff PP	
Mrs Magorman	Corryholman		Feb. 1849	Nicholas Duff PP	
Margaret Young					
Ann Young				T. Timmons curate	
Arthur Gore	Newcastle		20 Nov. 1851	Nicholas Duff PP	
Witness	Kingscourt		31 May 1852	T. Timmons curate	Frank Crosby Rose McKeever
[Mrs] Owen Gology	Moyre	Re-united with RC Church	13 June 1852	Nicholas Duff PP	
Thos Young	Kingscourt		7 Sept. 1852	T. Timmons curate	Frank Crosby

Source: Registry of baptisms 16 Oct. 1838 to 13 Aug. 1854, Enniskeen parish, diocese of Meath, microfilm 04183/03 (<https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000635174#page/1/mode/1up>) (14 June, 2018)

## Conversion of Rev. L. J. Nolan, Catholic curate, to the Established Church

I sing of the *Third Reformation*,  
Not the *reform* of the nation,  
But of that *farce*, which slugs employ,  
T'increase the *law* church in Athboy;  
And of th'Apostate *N-l-n*'s fall!  
From *faith*, from *priesthood*, *truth*, and all!<sup>210</sup>

The most celebrated conversions to the Established Church of Ireland were those of clergymen. Two Kingscourt clergymen converted to the Established Church during the period under study. One was the Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Lawrence J. Nolan (?-1839).<sup>211</sup> Nolan, a native of Mullingar, County Westmeath, was regarded as a 'highly talented and interesting personage'.<sup>212</sup> The Meath poet and contemporary Thady M'Blab in his vitriolic poem, *Reformation the third or the apostate of N-l-n, and the perverts of Athboy*, asserted that Nolan:

From childhood, in his parents' mind,  
He for the priesthood was designed.  
It was not God's intent,  
That to the Priesthood he'd be sent;  
More fitting for a Dandy Spark,  
A servant, or Attorney's Clerk!<sup>213</sup>

Nolan's character was publicly discussed as 'volatile' and unsteady'. He had encountered difficulties throughout his time in Maynooth College and Dr Logan, Roman Catholic bishop of Meath, repeatedly refused to ordain him.<sup>214</sup> It was only when Nolan appeared to have grown more serious by 1826 and the parish priest of his native Mullingar pleaded his cause with Logan that he was eventually ordained.<sup>215</sup> Nolan was ordained in Kells in 1826 by Dr Patrick Plunkett (1778–1827) for the diocese of Meath.<sup>216</sup> He served as a curate in Tullamore, County Offaly, then in Kingscourt. M'Blab's epithet, 'Attorney's Clerk', referred to Nolan's

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<sup>210</sup> M'Blab, *Reformation the third*, 1838, p. 5.

<sup>211</sup> See L. J. Nolan, *A third pamphlet by the Rev. L. J. Nolan, lately a Roman clergyman, but now a curate of the established church at Athboy* (Dublin, 1838); L. J. Nolan, *A second pamphlet* (Dublin, 1836); *SNL*, 16 Feb. 1835.

<sup>212</sup> *WM*, 2 Dec. 1835.

<sup>213</sup> M'Blab, *Reformation the third*, p. 10.

<sup>214</sup> *British and Irish Magazine* (Mar. 1837), pp 303, 109.

<sup>215</sup> It is unclear who the parish priest of Mullingar was in 1826; Rev. Eugene O'Rourke was appointed in 1823 for a short time, then Rev. John Coughlin succeeded, Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 480.

<sup>216</sup> William John Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Memoirs of Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin: with a glance at his contemporaries & times* / (London, 2 vols., 1864), i, 274.

successful defence of his Roman Catholic Kingscourt parishioners when they were accused of murder in a Catholic-Orange affray in Muff, near Kingscourt, in 1830.<sup>217</sup> Irene Whelan suggests that Nolan was obliged to leave the area as a result.<sup>218</sup> Whether the attending publicity was instrumental in the bishop removing Nolan to Delvin parish in County Westmeath is not clear. He was transferred sometime later to another Westmeath parish, Collinstown, and while there was suspended and ‘unfrocked’ by his bishop Dr John Cantwell in August 1834. Nolan signed a pre-prepared disavowal of his faith, which he had written weeks earlier in the presence of the protestant rector of Delvin, and handed it to the bishop.<sup>219</sup> Nolan had converted to the Established Church.<sup>220</sup>

Nolan’s decision was not a momentary ‘whim’ or ‘caprice’, he wrote, but resulted from ‘reflection’.<sup>221</sup> He had not been a believer ‘these few years back’,<sup>222</sup> although his ‘open disavowal’ of the Catholic faith did not take place until January 1834.<sup>223</sup> He had revealed his misgivings privately to some clergymen and to a relative,<sup>224</sup> who had dissuaded him, temporarily, from perverting.<sup>225</sup> He detailed his reasons for converting in a pamphlet published in 1835.<sup>226</sup> It was his doubts about the Roman Catholic Mass that first induced him to study the Scriptures and compare the Roman Catholic Bible with the tenets in the Church of Rome. He concluded that ‘the Mass was perfectly unscriptural’.<sup>227</sup> Sprinkling of holy water, the lighting of candles, the ringing of bells, the Mass in Latin, incense at High Mass, and transubstantiation all became irreconcilable with his understanding of scriptural truth.<sup>228</sup> He also had great difficulties with the secrecy of the Roman Catholic confessional. He narrated a

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<sup>217</sup> ‘It is asserted in the *British and Irish Magazine* for March, 1837, p. 303, that Mr Nolan was rejected in Maynooth, and that to avoid expulsion he left it, and although a number of friends interested themselves with the Right Rev. Dr Logan, R.C. bishop of Meath, he repeatedly refused to ordain Mr Nolan, “as he was considered a volatile, unsteady “character” (p. 190); but having appeared to grow more serious he was at last ordained priest at Kells in 1826, “on the earnest solicitation of the then parish priest of Mullingar”, cited in Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Memoirs of Richard Whately*, i, 296.

<sup>218</sup> Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland*, p. 188.

<sup>219</sup> *CH*, 2 May 1835, p. 1.

<sup>220</sup> M’Blab, *Reformation the third*, p. 17. For Cantwell see Paul Connell, *The diocese of Meath under Bishop John Cantwell 1830–66* (Dublin, 2004).

<sup>221</sup> *BNL*, 13 Mar. 1835, p. 1.

<sup>222</sup> *DEPC*, 30 Apr. 1835.

<sup>223</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Richard Whately*, i, 294.

<sup>224</sup> *DEPC*, 30 Apr. 1835, p. 3.

<sup>225</sup> *BNL*, 13 Mar. 1835, p. 1.

<sup>226</sup> L. J. Nolan, *Reasons for leaving the Church Rome by the Rev. L. J. Nolan, of the diocese of Meath: lately a Roman Catholic clergyman, but now of the Established Church* (Dublin, 1835).

<sup>227</sup> L. J. Nolan, *The second pamphlet of the Rev. L. J. Nolan, lately a Roman clergyman, but now a curate of the Established at Athboy* (Dublin, 1836), p. 18.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 18–45.

number of cases in which he had been made aware in advance of assassinations, parricides and ‘diabolical conspiracies’, all of which were carried out. Yet: ‘from the ungodly injunctions of secrecy in the Romish creed, .... I dared not give the slightest intimation to the marked-out victims of slaughter.’<sup>229</sup>

Nolan was not the only Roman Catholic priest to have converted to Protestantism. The PPS supported twenty-four Roman Catholic priests who converted from 1844 to 1853.<sup>230</sup> But Nolan was exceptional in the Kingscourt District where most priests vigorously opposed the Irish Society. The IS saw Nolan’s conversion ‘indirectly, at least’ as a ‘noble’ triumph both for the Scriptural cause and for Rev. Robert Winning, ‘the successful advocate’.<sup>231</sup> Winning regarded ‘even the Romish priest himself’ as part of his mission, Winning’s son-in-law and Church of Ireland curate in Kingscourt, Hugh Gelston, recalled.<sup>232</sup> It is likely that Nolan’s immersion in the Scriptures began while he was a curate in Kingscourt, a hive of Scriptural activity during his time there. The three- and four-day quarterly examinations attracted many evangelical clergymen to the town (Appendix 5) who, as well as examining Irish Society masters and scholars, preached sermons in the evenings in the local churches. The two young clergymen, Winning and Nolan, probably knew each other well, since both ministered in or near Kingscourt.

Thady M’Blab attributed much less scriptural motives to Nolan’s conversion; it was ‘itching for a *spouse* that made him first the Priest degrade’.<sup>233</sup> Yet, it was not until some years later on 22 December 1837 that Nolan married Eliza, daughter of Captain Nixon of Muppy, County Wicklow, in Coolkenna Church, in a ceremony conducted by Rev. R. Fishbourne.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> L. J. Nolan, *A third pamphlet by the Rev. L. J. Nolan, lately a Roman clergyman, but now a curate of the established church at Athboy* (Dublin, 1838), pp. 22–27; W. Hogan, *Auricular Confession and Popish Nunneries* (London, 2 vols., 1854).

<sup>230</sup> Priests’ Protection Society, *The seventh report of the Reformed Romanist Priests’ Protection Society for the years 1852 & 1853* (Dublin, 1854), p. 11.

<sup>231</sup> *BNL*, 13 Mar. 1835, p. 1.

<sup>232</sup> Rev. Hugh Gelston’s report on the Kingscourt Mission Irish Church Missions, *Twelfth report of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics (with which is incorporated the late Irish Society of London), read at the annual meeting, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1861; with a list of subscribers, etc’, etc.’ etc. report for 1860 published May, 1861* (London, 1861), p. 88.

<sup>233</sup> M’Blab, *Reformation the third*, p. 27.

<sup>234</sup> *SR*, 28 Dec. 1837, p. 2.

## Rev. Robert Winning's conversion from Presbyterianism to Prelacy

The progress of his conversion, which commenced upwards of twenty years ago, was exceedingly slow; and that it was accomplished by a hop, step, and jump in the long run.<sup>235</sup>

Robert Winning was ordained Presbyterian minister of Ervey and Carrickmaclim in 1812. He resigned the Presbyterian Church thirty years later in December 1842, and conformed to the Established Church. Unlike Rev. L. J. Nolan's conversion, there are no published, theological writings detailing Rev. Winning's conversion experience. Winning was a prolific letter-writer, however, and he rationalised his decision in a letter published nine months later to the moderator of his local Bailieborough Presbytery, 'the official and direct organ of the Presbytery'. He accounted for his nine-month delay, explaining that, at the time of his resignation, he was moderator of the Bailieborough Presbytery, so he could not write the letter to himself. Instead, he claimed that he wrote a brief note at the time to a member of Ervey congregation, stating 'his intention of resigning, and afterwards of assigning reasons.'<sup>236</sup>

Winning credited 1822 as the year when the first seeds were sown that led to his eventual conforming to the Established Church. It was the experience of working closely with three significant individual promoters of the Irish Society that led to his decision: the Honourable Henry Pakenham, rural dean of Meath, Rev. Robert Daly, rector of Powerscourt, County Wicklow, and Horatio Townsend Newman (1781–1864). Pakenham, later dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (1843–63) and dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin (1846–64) visited Kingscourt in 1822 to examine the scholars of Sabbath school established by the Association for Discountenancing Vice.<sup>237</sup> Winning found in Pakenham 'a zeal, a devotedness' which 'partially removed his imbibed prejudices' against the Established Church.<sup>238</sup> Winning then met Rev. Daly through the Irish Society. They travelled together on deputations for the Irish Society and Winning was struck by Daly's 'godly example'.<sup>239</sup> On a deputation to Cork for the Irish Society, Winning met Rev. Newman, whose grasp of scriptural education impressed him. Daly and Newman were brothers-in-law

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<sup>235</sup> *DJ*, 26 Sept. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>236</sup> *BNL*, 19 Sept. 1843, p. 1.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

(Newman was married to Rev. Daly's sister, Charlotte). Winning's friendship with Pakenham, Daly and Newman convinced him of the 'scriptural character' of the Established Church.

Winning proffered two issues that had been causing him spiritual difficulties for some time. The first was the theology of paedobaptism. Winning entertained grave misgivings about the practice of infant baptism, as did some other Presbyterian clergymen at the time.<sup>240</sup> His son-in-law, Samuel Boyd (1815–1901), Presbyterian minister in Drogheda (1838–42), published a pamphlet outlining his difficulties with infant baptism. On foot of his dilemma, Boyd resigned from the Presbyterian ministry on 4 May 1842<sup>241</sup> and gave up his 'handsome living', seven months before Winning resigned his.<sup>242</sup> On 30 June 1841, Rev. Winning attended a confirmation ceremony in Kingscourt when the Anglican bishop of Meath, Charles Dickinson (1840–2), confirmed (among others) about twenty Irish Society adult converts from Romanism.<sup>243</sup> Winning, a Presbyterian with no episcopal background, had never been at a confirmation previously. He was very impressed with the bishop's 'lucid and scriptural exposition' of the significance of confirmation and was convinced of its 'necessity and usefulness in the Christian church.'<sup>244</sup> The Anglican Church, while preserving the rite of infant-baptism, also provided an occasion for the baptised to make a public profession of faith, Winning concluded.<sup>245</sup> Following the confirmation ceremony, Winning came to the conclusion that Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents should either 'adopt adult-baptism or the rite of confirmation'.<sup>246</sup>

Winning's second difficulty concerned the constitution of the Christian Church, the number of sects within the Protestant Church and the divisions that separated 'Protestants from each other'.<sup>247</sup> Roman Catholics were united in one church. 'Why not unity among Protestants, as well as among Romanists', he asked?

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<sup>240</sup> John West, *Remains of the Most Reverend Charles Dickinson, DD, Lord Bishop of Meath, being a selection from his sermons and tracts, with a biographical sketch* (London, 1845), pp 483–5.

<sup>241</sup> Samuel Boyd, *Reasons for leaving the Presbyterian Church; being a statement of the Scripture doctrine on baptism, the eldership, and discipline; with an appendix, containing correspondence between James Carlile, minister of the Scot's Church, Mary's Abbey, Dublin and the author, on baptism* (Belfast, 1842).

<sup>242</sup> *BCC*, 25 Feb. 1843, p. 4.

<sup>243</sup> *WDWM*, 17 July 1841, p. 6; *Anglo-Celt*, 21 Aug. 1846, p. 6. For a contemporary sketch of Dickinson, see West, *Remains of the Most Reverend Charles Dickinson, DD, Lord Bishop of Meath*.

<sup>244</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 21 Aug. 1846, p. 6.

<sup>245</sup> Brian Savage, 'Ervey in the spotlight' (Kingscourt, c. 2007), p. 44.

<sup>246</sup> Charles Dickinson's extended obituary reproduced four years posthumously, *Anglo-Celt*, 21 Aug. 1846, p. 6.

<sup>247</sup> *BNL*, 19 Sept. 1843, p. 1.



Having studied the constitution of the different churches, he was convinced that the Protestant Episcopal Church bore ‘the most satisfactory marks of an Apostolic, Catholic Church’. Whereas Romanism was ‘a new and sectarian Church’, the Protestant Episcopal Church in Ireland was ‘scriptural in *ordinances, orders, and worship*’. ‘I feel it my duty to join the communion of that Church’, he unequivocally stated.<sup>248</sup>

While Winning traced the genesis of his conversion to 1822, a Presbyterian, who signed himself ‘Lisnegarvey’, dated Winning’s disaffection with Presbyterianism to the later date of 1830.<sup>249</sup> Winning was Moderator of the Synod of Ulster in 1830 and, as the Presbyterians’ public representative, might have expected to be called to Presbyterian vacancies with a higher profile than Ervey and Carrickmaclim. Presbyterian ministers were granted a sum of money towards their financial support, the *Regium Donum* or royal bounty, in 1672. In 1803, Presbyterian clergymen were granted aid in accordance with the size of their congregation. Class one received £100, class two, £75, and class three, £50 per annum. Ervey and Carrickmaclim, class three, received £50. The classification system was abolished in 1838 and the *Regium Donum* was equalised at £75.<sup>250</sup>

‘Lisnegarvey’ claimed that Winning had been an unsuccessful candidate for Killyleagh, County Down, which became vacant in October 1829 when Rev. Henry Cooke (1818–29) moved to May Street, Belfast.<sup>251</sup> Killyleagh was one of the largest rural congregations at the time.<sup>252</sup> Ervey and Carrickmaclim was one of the smallest, ‘an outpost congregation’, as Winning’s successor, Rev. James Armstrong, remarked. It was ‘not even in, although on the verge of Ulster’.<sup>253</sup> Winning’s failure to secure Killyleagh (Rev. Andrew Breakey of First Keady succeeded<sup>254</sup>) was ‘because of his unsoundness as regards many of the grand doctrines contained in the

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> *BCC*, 6 Mar. 1843, p. 4.

<sup>250</sup> Robert Allen, ‘The Regium Donum: its political implications’ in *The Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii (2018), pp 10–25, p. 10.

<sup>251</sup> For Rev. Henry Cooke, see Finlay Holmes, *Henry Cooke* (Dublin, 1981); J. L. Porter, *Life and times of Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D.* (Belfast, 1875).

<sup>252</sup> Laurence Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland: an illustrated history* (Holywood, 2006), p. 222.

<sup>253</sup> *Banner of Ulster*, 4 July, 1843, p. 3. The *Banner of Ulster* had been founded in June 1842 by Rev. William Gibson, minister of Rosemary St Church, Belfast. George Troup, a Scotsman, was both publisher and editor 1842–52.

<sup>254</sup> James McConnell and Samuel G. McConnell (eds), *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church 1613–1840* (Belfast, 1951), *Fasti* reference 764.

Westminster Confession of Faith’, according to ‘Lisnegarvey’.<sup>255</sup> ‘Lisnegarvey’ concluded that Winning ‘ceased to take an interest in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church’ after he was passed over for Killyleagh, and ‘a sign of lukewarmedness’ set in.<sup>256</sup> The Irish Society’s records show that at the time of the Killyleagh vacancy Winning was heavily involved with the Society’s work. From 1827, he needed a substitute Presbyterian clergyman to minister to his congregation while he was away on Society business. The £75 a year with which the IS reimbursed Winning to pay the substitute<sup>257</sup> was greater than the £50 *Regium Donum* (1827–38) and equalled the increased grant from 1838. This would indicate that Winning’s absences were considerable (Appendix 4). The ‘Lisnegarvey’ allegation that Winning ‘exhibited remissness as a Pastor of the Presbyterian Church’ might have had some foundation because of this Irish Society involvement.<sup>258</sup>

Winning’s absences from his congregation on evangelical missionary work continued while he was Church of Ireland incumbent of Kingscourt from 1843 until his death in 1861. Kingscourt’s parish registry (1845–61) shows that Winning officiated at only twenty of the ninety-nine marriages there during a sixteen-year period. Two of these were his children’s marriages; significantly, perhaps, one other marriage was that of the Irish Reader, Patt Smyth, to Bridget Sheridan, the daughter of another Irish Reader, Michael Sheridan.<sup>259</sup>

The subject of Winning’s conversion was debated in the columns of the *Banner of Ulster*, a Presbyterian publication.<sup>260</sup> ‘An Observer’, teased out the possible motives for Winning’s ‘sudden and erratic movement’, noting that rumours about his possible resignation had been circulating for some time,<sup>261</sup> though Winning had quashed these in a letter to a friend.<sup>262</sup> Winning’s clarification of his twenty-year conversion journey was written in 1843 in the immediate public fall-out from his conversion. He might have been ‘afterwards assigning reasons’, as he wrote to a

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<sup>255</sup> *BCC*, 6 Mar. 1843, p. 4.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> IS meeting, 30 Nov. 1827 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 121 (b)).

<sup>258</sup> *BCC*, 6 Mar. 1843, p. 4.

<sup>259</sup> Registry of marriages 1845 to 1863, Kingscourt (RCBL, p. 0359.03.1).

<sup>260</sup> *Banner of Ulster*, 30 Dec. 1842, p. 2, 10 Jan. 1843, p. 1, 13 Jan. 1843, p. 2, 28 Feb. 1843, p. 2, 17 Mar. 1843, p. 3, 15 Dec. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 Dec. 1842, p. 2.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 Jan. 1843, p. 2.

member of his congregation.<sup>263</sup> If Winning's conversion were accomplished in a 'hop, step, and jump in the long run' as the editor of the *Derry Journal* purported,<sup>264</sup> then the 'hop' was made in 1822 when Winning became acquainted with some of the most prominent and powerful evangelical members of the Established Church. His failure to be called to Killyleagh congregation in 1830 marked the 'step'; and in 1842, Winning completed the final 'jump' and converted to the Established Church.

What precipitated that final 'jump'? 'An Observer' suggested that the fact that the Irish Society's affairs had been 'lately managed in a sectarian spirit' might have prompted the rumours. The 'sectarian spirit' was a reference to the Society's amended rule in 1842. It included the additional clause, 'by every means consistent with the principles and discipline of the established church'.<sup>265</sup> The amendment meant that all superintendents and inspectors would have to belong to the Established Church. Therefore Rev. Winning, as a Presbyterian, could not continue as an Irish Society superintendent.<sup>266</sup> Was it a causal factor in Winning's conversion to prelacy at that particular moment in time? His resignation from his Presbyterian ministry in Ervey on 13 December 1842, nine months after the amendment was passed, would seem to indicate that it was.<sup>267</sup>

Winning's meeting with Bishop Dickinson at confirmation in Kingscourt and his attendance at dinner afterwards with Dickinson and the Kingscourt rector, Rev. James Wolfe Charlton (c. 1810–51), were also pivotal moments in his conversion.<sup>268</sup> Dickinson was particularly interested in the Irish Society's work, Winning wrote.<sup>269</sup> The two corresponded regularly during the remaining months of Dickinson's life, and Dickinson supplied Winning with books for the Society. Perhaps, sometime between Winning's meeting with the bishop in Kingscourt and the bishop's death in July 1842, the question of Winning's conformity to the Established Church was at least mooted, if not set in train.

Edward Stopford (1842–50) who succeeded Charles Dickinson as bishop of Meath December 1842, ordained Winning as an Anglican deacon nine months later

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<sup>263</sup> Charles Dickinson's extended obituary reproduced four years posthumously, *Anglo-Celt*, 21 Aug. 1846, p. 6.

<sup>264</sup> *DJ* 26 Sept. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>265</sup> IS meeting, 17 Feb. 1842 (ICM, ICM/GA/0182, p. 181).

<sup>266</sup> IS meeting, 14 Mar. 1842 (ICM, ICM/GA/0182, p. 200).

<sup>267</sup> *Churchman's monthly review* (London, 1844), p. 948

<sup>268</sup> Rev. James Wolfe Charlton was an ardent Irish Society promoter.

<sup>269</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 21 Aug. 1846, p. 6.

in Ardraccan on 24 September 1843, and a priest on 24 December.<sup>270</sup> Did Stopford create a vacancy in the Church of Ireland parish of Kingscourt for Rev. Winning as soon as he was ordained? It seems plausible that he did. Stopford transferred the Kingscourt incumbent, Rev. Charlton, to Clonmacnoise as vicar in 1843. Clonmacnoise was united to the diocese of Meath and was in the gift of the Meath bishop.<sup>271</sup> The way was clear to appoint Winning since there were no clergymen from among the local landlord Pratt family to succeed in 1843. If Charlton's removal were not a deliberate move on Stopford's part, then it was a convenient coincidence.

Some doubted the purity of Winning's motives. In an article copied from the *Derry Standard*, it was alleged that money was his motivation. It suggested that Winning had exchanged his small Presbyterian pastoral charge of Ervey for a fat benefice from the 'Prelatic Establishment,' with £1,000 for his services to the Irish Society.<sup>272</sup> The writer agreed with the *Banner of Ulster* that such splendid presents and prospects might have the effect of blinding a wiser man than Mr Winning.<sup>273</sup> Winning's 'predilections for Prelacy' though were 'of very old standing', the *Derry Standard* correctly pointed out: 'the only wonder is that he has not long since gone over to that persuasion as formally as he has done it virtually.'<sup>274</sup>

Winning's conversion coincided with the elevation of his three influential Irish Society evangelical friends in the hierarchy. Rev. Robert Daly was appointed to Cashel on 12 January 1843; Henry Pakenham to the deanery of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin 1843, to replace Daly; and Horatio Townsend Newman, Daly's brother-in-law, to the deanery of Cork. The *Banner of Ulster* hazarded the opinion that Daly's elevation to the bishopric might have accounted for Winning's 'sudden' move.<sup>275</sup> The *Derry Journal* commented that people who were 'more cynically inclined' than they, might remark that his 'conversion was strictly coincident' with Daly's promotion.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Canon B. Leslie (compiled), and W. J. R. Wallace (revised, edited and updated), *Clergy of Meath and Kildare* (Dublin, 2009), p. 847; *SDCR*, 26 Sept. 1843, p. 3; *MP*, 4 Oct. 1843, p. 3. The *Morning Post* mistakenly or, perhaps, deliberately, gave Winning's MA degree as being awarded from Trinity College, Dublin, not Glasgow University, Scotland;

<sup>271</sup> *The Irish Penny Magazine*, 16 Feb. 1833, p. 49.

<sup>272</sup> *PA*, 12 Jan. 1843, p. 2, copied from *DS*.

<sup>273</sup> *PA*, 12 Jan. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> *Banner of Ulster*, 10 Jan. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>276</sup> *DJ*, 26 Sept. 1843, p. 2.

A letter from ‘An Observer’ to the *Banner of Ulster* raised three pertinent and reasonable queries concerning the role of the Presbyterian Church throughout Rev. Winning’s ministry and his subsequent conversion. It questioned its ‘propriety’ in allowing him to ‘secularise his talents’ in the service of the Irish Society. It asked how faithful the Presbyterian Church was to its trust when it permitted him to fund-raise in Scotland for the Established Church’s Irish Society (Appendix 4). Such work defeated its own efforts to raise money for the Presbyterian Home Mission. More importantly, it wondered why it allowed Winning remain in his Presbyterian congregation while he was handing over Roman Catholic converts to the Established Church.<sup>277</sup> It was Winning himself who led the first group of converts to the altar to receive communion in St Ernan’s Church of Ireland, Kingscourt, in 1835. Why did he not lead them to Communion in his Presbyterian Meeting House in Ervey nearby? This might well have been the first public indication that Winning’s own conversion to the Established Church was in process.

In contrast, the esteem with which Winning’s Presbyterian congregation of Ervey regarded him was unwaveringly high. The local Presbyterian elders and congregation stoutly defended his move to the Established Church, and sought to quash insinuations that he was motivated by financial gain or job dissatisfaction. John Dyas, a member of the congregation, ‘very nearly related’ to Winning,<sup>278</sup> refuted the allegations in the *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*.<sup>279</sup> Winning’s successor in Ervey, Rev. James Armstrong lauded Winning’s ‘talents’, his ‘estimable character’ and his ‘high standing’ for more than a quarter of a century in Ervey and acknowledged that he himself faced a daunting task following in Winning’s ministry.<sup>280</sup> One Ervey congregation member recalled that Winning had repeatedly stated that ‘the best of my days have I spent, as I hope to spend the last of them in Kingscourt’.<sup>281</sup> Winning did spend the rest of his days in Kingscourt. His resignation from the Presbyterian ministry did not involve leaving Kingscourt. It entailed a move to the Church of Ireland Glebe House in Larchfield.

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<sup>277</sup> ‘An Observer’, *Banner of Ulster*, 10 Jan. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>278</sup> *BCC*, 28 Feb. 1843, p. 2.

<sup>279</sup> *BCC*, 25 Feb. 1843, p. 4.

<sup>280</sup> *Banner of Ulster*, 4 July, 1843, p. 3.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 Feb. 1843, p. 2.

## Conclusion

Conversions to and defections from religious denominations occurred throughout the centuries for many different and often complex reasons. Like other evangelical societies during the Second Reformation, the Irish Society's objective was to save the souls of Irish Roman Catholics from eternal damnation by converting them to Scriptural Protestantism. The Society's Kingscourt District reported the largest number of converts to Protestantism in Ireland during the period under study. As Akenson remarked concerning the Cavan converts, 'this is hard to verify'.<sup>282</sup> Convert numbers varied from the 2,000 published by the Priests' Protection Society to 6,026 reported by the Irish Society masters in the Kingscourt District in the period to 1846. Rev. L. J. Nolan's conversion and Rev. Robert Winning's conformation to the Established Church can be substantiated from sources other than the PPS and IS publications. The reception of seventeen other converts back to Catholicism is recorded in Kingscourt's Baptismal Register. No supporting evidence has been uncovered to verify or contradict the other reported conversions. All of these alleged conversions occurred during the Irish Society's tenure in the Kingscourt District 1822–53 and most were attributed to its influence. There are no such reports of conversion during the ICM time there.

The term 'convert' was understood differently by the IS evangelicals, Daly and Winning, and the Catholic IS masters and inspectors. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity, accuracy or sincerity of Rev. Robert Daly's letter that twenty-five Roman Catholic masters converted in Syddan Church in 1835. He had administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to them himself, and he believed what he witnessed. His was a first-hand account, written four days after the event, so his recall was not blurred by the lapse of time.<sup>283</sup> Although the original letter no longer survives, it is implausible that Daly, who was on the IS committee, would allow a forged copy to be published in the annual report.

This chapter also considered whether the reported conversions were 'authentic', or whether financial gain was the principal motivating factor. It concluded that it was beyond the realm of the historian to establish the accuracy of

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<sup>282</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, p. 219.

<sup>283</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, appendix no. iv, letter from Rev. Robert Daly, 29 Oct. 1835, pp 27–8.

the numbers or the sincerity of the converts. It concurred with Winning's son-in-law, Rev. Samuel Boyd's summation: 'I pronounce no qualification to pronounce any man absolutely converted; I leave that reverently to God.'<sup>284</sup> The most incisive summation might be that of Francis Brennan, the Cavan Roman Catholic who worked as an IS teacher under Winning from 1822, converted to Protestantism in 1827 and was reconciled to the faith of his youth twenty-one years later. Referring to the dilemma of conversion and the IS teachers, Brennan wrote:

are they not like raging waves of the sea, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine - this year a Protestant, next year a Presbyterian, and the third year a Unitarian, or Methodist; has not their head superintendent, Mr Winning, set the example for them, he being a Presbyterian minister, is now turned minister of the Church of England.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Boyd, *Reasons for leaving the Presbyterian Church*, p. 106.

<sup>285</sup> Brennan, *A letter addressed to the Roman Catholics of Ireland*, pp 21–2.

## Chapter 7

### Tensions and conflict, persecutions and murder in the Kingscourt District, 1820s to 1850s

#### Introduction

The first half of the nineteenth century saw rapid and dramatic changes across the agrarian, economic, social, religious and political life in Ireland. Demographic pressures intensified the competition for land. The falling-in of leases made many tenant farmers fearful of dispossession. Agrarian unrest, always simmering beneath the surface, periodically boiled over during these years of agricultural depression. The Kingscourt locality of north-Leinster and south-Ulster experienced severe economic crises following the collapse of the once-profitable domestic linen industry there.<sup>1</sup> Famine, cholera and typhus struck in the 1820s and 1830s. The 1798 rebellion was fresh in the memory and a repeat uprising was feared. Fear of a mass uprising had both political and theological underpinnings. The Anglican rector of Killanny, County Monaghan, Sir Harcourt Lees (1776–1852), wrote that the events of the 1798 rebellion had hardened his belief that a future ‘popish rebellion was inevitable’.<sup>2</sup> Adding to this taut atmosphere was the Irish Roman Catholic-held millenarian belief that a utopian society would emerge following revolutionary action.<sup>3</sup> Tithes imposed by the Church of Ireland for the upkeep of the Established Church were resented, especially by Catholics who regarded it as an unjust tax.<sup>4</sup> Church cess, similarly required of all resident within the civil parish, was a further imposition. Pastorini’s prophecy that Protestant supremacy of state and church in Ireland would be obliterated at the beginning of 1825 saw secret societies, anti-tithe and anti-Protestant campaigns spurred into increased activity.<sup>5</sup> The Kingscourt District had

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<sup>1</sup> See Terence Dooley, *Murders at Wild Goose Lodge: agrarian crime and punishment in pre-famine Ireland* (Dublin, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Dooley, *The murders at Wildgoose Lodge*, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> See James S. Donnelly Jr., ‘Pastorini and Captain Rock: millenarianism and sectarianism in the Rocktite movement of 1821–4’ in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr., *Irish peasants: violence and political unrest, 1780–1914* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1983), pp 111–14.

<sup>4</sup> See Gerard Curtin, ‘Opposition to the payment of tithes in west Limerick, 1821–1838’ in *The Old Limerick Journal* (1989), xlii (Winter, 2006), pp 26–8.

<sup>5</sup> Brian McNamee, ‘The ‘Second Reformation’ in Ireland’ in *Irish Theological Review*, xxxiii, no. 1 (Mar. 1966), pp 39–64, p. 46.



added sectarian tensions. The Protestant Orange Order, founded in County Armagh in 1795, was most active in the northern half of Ireland. Its Catholic counter-agent, Ribbonism, further added to sectarian tensions. Both had their lodges, oaths, passwords, banners, sashes and parades and were militant in their ethos and activities.

The Catholic Association proved a powerful political pressure group for securing Catholic rights.<sup>6</sup> When it set up an associate membership to raise funds in 1824, the so-called Catholic rent, the low membership fee of a penny a month ensured that even the poorest could affiliate. Parish-based, it was the Roman Catholic priests that collected subscriptions and organised meetings in their parishes. It campaigned against tithes and the tolerance shown to perpetrators of Orange outrages. Its most successful campaign was for Catholic Emancipation. The Brunswick clubs (1828–9) which replaced the Orange Order were established to counter the Catholic Association, and continued until 1829 when emancipation was granted. As the agitation for Catholic Emancipation grew, the tensions between the Protestant Orangemen and Brunswickers on the one side, and Catholic Ribbonmen on the other, accelerated.<sup>7</sup>

It was into this melting pot of social, agrarian, sectarian and political instability that the Second Reformation in Ireland was launched and that the Irish Society was introduced to the Kingscourt District in 1822. As the Society's district superintendent from 1823, Winning returned comprehensive accounts to the Society's headquarters in Dublin.<sup>8</sup> These were disseminated widely and used by others in evangelical work.<sup>9</sup> Winning's reports were typical of nineteenth-century reportage of philanthropic work in terms of language, content, structure and tone. The success of the Society's Protestant mission, the moral 'amelioration' of the Roman Catholics and the breaking down of their prejudices towards the Scriptures was highlighted. The zeal of the Irish Society teachers, prepared to work for a

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<sup>6</sup> For recent work on Catholic Emancipation, see Ambrose Macaulay, *The Catholic Church and the campaign for emancipation in Ireland and England* (Dublin, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> For Brunswick clubs, see Alan Phylan, 'The Brunswick clubs: rise, contradictions and abyss' in *The Old Limerick Journal*, Winter ed. (2004), pp 25–34; for Brunswick clubs and Catholic Emancipation in Armagh, see Gerard MacAlasney, 'Brunswick bloodhounds and itinerant demagogues': the campaign for Catholic Emancipation in County Armagh, 1824–29' in *Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society*, xxii, no. 2 (2007–8), pp 165–231.

<sup>8</sup> IS meeting, 16 May 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 147 (a)).

<sup>9</sup> Baptist Wriothsley Noel, *Notes of a short tour through the midland counties of Ireland in the summer of 1836 with observations on the condition of the peasantry* (London, 1837).

pittance, was underlined. The persecutions endured by its teachers, another constant refrain in Rev. Winning's reports, showed that 'way-laying, abuse, and blood could not wrest the Irish Bible from the hands of the Irish peasants.'<sup>10</sup> These reported successes of the Irish Society's mission made for inspirational reading material for its philanthropic supporters and benefactors at home and abroad. In equal measure, they exacerbated already heightened sectarian tensions in the Kingscourt District.

Many of the 900 or so Irish Society teachers who had been employed in the schools had been persecuted. Some had been murdered, the evangelical Rev. Baptist Wriothlesley Noel wrote in 1837 after his visit to Kingscourt the previous year.<sup>11</sup> This chapter considers the veracity of these claims. Were the IS teachers in the Kingscourt District ostracised, persecuted, assaulted, and murdered? Were they targeted because they were Irish Society teachers or were other factors at play too? To what extent, if any, did the teachers themselves contribute to the maelstrom of persecutions in the Kingscourt District? It also looks at the Roman Catholic clergy's reaction to the Irish Society's work and the extent, if any, to which they bore responsibility for the alleged sufferings, ostracisms, and persecutions perpetrated on the Irish Society teachers.

The 1820s and 1830s were particularly violent decades for the Irish Society's Kingscourt District which had by then extended into ten counties (Figure 4.3).<sup>12</sup> Many of the IS teachers in the rural Kingscourt District were also farm labourers and small tenant farmers.<sup>13</sup> Between 1828 and 1835, agrarian tensions erupted into warfare in County Meath.<sup>14</sup> The clashes were not only between landlord and tenant but between the larger farmers and the classes below them. Thirteen labouring reapers from Kingscourt were attacked in Derrypatrick, County Meath, because they were outsiders and were taking local jobs.<sup>15</sup> The Nobber poet, Peadar Mac Ualgairg, composed a comical poem which illustrated the local hostility towards such seasonal

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<sup>10</sup> IS of London, *Report of the seventeenth anniversary of the Irish Society of London* (London, 1830), p. 10 cited in Philip O'Connell, *The schools and scholars of Breiffne* (Dublin, 1942), pp 554–5.

<sup>11</sup> Noel, *A short tour*, pp 90–117.

<sup>12</sup> The Kingscourt District included at various times all or part of the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Down, Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Westmeath, and had extended into Tyrone, Derry, and Fermanagh during the 1830s.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Russell's account of the Kingscourt District, extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of education enquiry, 20 Dec. 1834, pp 26–9 (copy of Russell's letter in RIA, OS memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan).

<sup>14</sup> Desmond Mooney, 'A new order established — agrarian violence in Meath 1835–1844' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, viii, no. 3 (1990/1991), pp 118–33, p. 118.

<sup>15</sup> *NT*, 21 Aug. 1829, p. 3.

migrant workers during harvest-time in Meath in *Seoladh an Spailpín* [*Directing the Spailpin*].<sup>16</sup> By the end of 1830 the parishes in north Meath in the heart of Rev. Winning's IS Kingscourt District: Kells, Mullagh, Moynalty, Nobber, Syddan, Drumcondra and Slane, were worst affected by agrarian violence, Desmond Mooney claimed. Mooney based his research on areas chastised by priests in sermons.<sup>17</sup> The Nobber agricultural labourers' strike in February 1831 was mainly economic.<sup>18</sup> Tithe outrages followed in Meath as elsewhere throughout 1832.<sup>19</sup>

County Cavan was in a 'dreadful state' in 1829.<sup>20</sup> Several Roman Catholics and Protestants sustained personal injury during a serious party riot in Kilmainhamwood on the Cavan-Meath border on 5 May 1830. The Protestants were saved only by the intervention of the Catholic priest. A notice headed 'Killing is no murder' threatened every Protestant who attended the market in Bailieborough.<sup>21</sup> County Armagh, also in Winning's district, experienced agrarian disturbances across two decades of the Second Reformation from 1835 to 1855. At least twenty-five murders were committed within ten miles of Crossmaglen in south Armagh, north Louth, and north Monaghan during the twenty-year period. Three further murders were attempted and there were hundreds of 'assaults, burnings, conspiracies, shootings and threats.'<sup>22</sup> Another of the Kingscourt District branches, Castlepollard, County Westmeath, was equally disturbed. A row erupted in a public house during a fair on 23 May 1831. In the ensuing mêlée with the constabulary, thirteen civilians were killed. Nineteen policemen were jailed following the inquest, but were later discharged. The massacre was probably tithe-related, Paul Connell has suggested.<sup>23</sup>

It was against this backdrop of tension and conflict in the Kingscourt District that Winning told of the 'difficulties, persecutions, and sufferings' that the IS teachers endured from 1826 onwards. The persecutions varied in intensity from

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<sup>16</sup> Philip Mac Dealgáin, *Seoladh an Spailpín i Lesa Ní Mhughhaile, Amhráin na Midhe le hÉinrí Ó Muirheasa* (Baile Átha Cliath, cuid a haon, 2015), lth, 236–42.

<sup>17</sup> Desmond Mooney, 'The origins of agrarian violence in Meath 1790–1828' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, viii, no. 1 (1987), pp 45–67, p. 51.

<sup>18</sup> Desmond Mooney, 'A society in crisis: agrarian violence in Meath 1828–1835' in *Ríocht na Midhe*, viii, no. 2 (1988/9), pp 102–28, p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> See Patrick O'Donoghue, 'Opposition to tithe payment, 1832–3' in *Studia Hibernica*, no. 12 (1972), pp 77–108, pp 80, 83, 84, 98, 105.

<sup>20</sup> *LES*, 25 Aug. 1829, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> 'Killing is no murder', 7 May 1830 (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1830/204).

<sup>22</sup> Kevin McMahon and Thomas McKeown, 'Agrarian disturbances around Crossmaglen, 1835–1855: part 1' in *Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society*, ix, no. 2 (1979), pp 302–32, p. 302.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Connell, 'Slaughtered like wild beasts': massacre at Castlepollard Fair, 1831' in Denis A. Cronin, Jim Gilligan and Karina Holton (eds), *Irish fairs and markets* (Dublin, 2001), pp 143–63.

ridicule to ostracism, and from physical assault to murder.<sup>24</sup> It was the IS teachers and scholars themselves in the Kingscourt District, who unwittingly precipitated the ‘difficulties, persecutions, and sufferings’ when they promulgated the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions.<sup>25</sup> Their publication and circulation catapulted the Irish Society and its teachers and scholars in the Kingscourt District onto the national and international stage (chapter three). This first public exposition of the extent and success of the Society’s work in the area and the extraordinary number of Roman Catholics involved alarmed Catholic bishops and local clergy.

Many of those who signed the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions were from the Kingscourt, Nobber and Moynalty parishes of Dr Robert Logan’s Meath diocese. Logan invoked the agency of the powerful Catholic Association on 28 September 1827 and penned his concerns about the Society’s operations in his diocese. The Association published his letter in the *Dublin Weekly Register* on 6 October 1827.<sup>26</sup> Accusations and counter-accusations were exchanged in a bitter public controversy carried out through the columns of the Catholic and Protestant partisan newspapers.

Winning dated the first attacks on the Irish Society’s personnel in the Kingscourt District to May 1827. ‘Many of them have within the last ten months shed their blood for reading the Holy Scriptures’.<sup>27</sup> The ten-month flurry of attacks coincided with the period immediately following Rev. John Halpin’s pro-active response in Nobber to Bishop Logan’s condemnation of the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions.<sup>28</sup> The attacks were three-pronged. The IS teachers were ‘vilified, denounced and murdered’. They were objects of scorn in the locality and were called ‘mad dogs’, as Terence Duffy told Cavan Assizes.<sup>29</sup> They were vilified in contemporary poetry and ballads. Its ‘host of teachers’ the ‘volunteers’, according to local poet, Philip Thornton’s, *Teague Connellan and his volunteers*, were ‘pedantic knaves’ with ‘no scruples’ who kept ‘phantom schools’. The scurrilous

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<sup>24</sup> IS, *Twenty-fifth annual report*, 1843, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Bishop Robert Logan’s letter to New Catholic Association, published in *DWR*, 6 October 1827.

<sup>27</sup> Rev. Robert Winning to Edmund Pendleton, assistant secretary to the Irish Society (NAI, MS CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/11).

<sup>28</sup> *Correspondence between the Rev Doctor Logan, Roman Catholic bishop of Meath, and the Rev Robert Winning, superintendent of Irish schools in the Kingscourt district; with the resolutions of one hundred and twenty-five teachers therein* (Dublin, 1827) (hereafter Logan-Winning correspondence), pp 2, 3, 6, 8.

<sup>29</sup> *MP*, 31 July 1830, p. 9.

poem reflected the contemptuous attitude of Roman Catholics towards IS teachers in the area at the time. Thornton was living in the Nobber area where the IS was particularly active.<sup>30</sup> The teachers were ‘pseudo teaching knaves’, according to another north-Meath poet, Thady M’Blabb (James Martin),<sup>31</sup> and ‘IMPS OF THE DEVIL’ according to the Nobber Roman Catholic priest, Rev. John Halpin.<sup>32</sup> Young women were advised to spit in their faces; old women were told to throw stones at them.<sup>33</sup>

The north-Meath poet and scribe, Peter Gallegan, taught for the IS for brief periods until 1826. He confirmed that the Society’s teachers ‘were under the greatest persecution everywhere by priests and by their hearers, as it was considered a *Protestant system*’.<sup>34</sup> Winning recapped the suffering endured by the IS teachers when he addressed the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster in Dublin in 1833. The Irish teachers had been ‘denounced from the altar, and held up to public detestation.’<sup>35</sup> If denunciation from the altar did not succeed in bringing the recalcitrant teachers back to the Catholic Church, the next step was to strike where it hurt most, at the very core of their Catholic faith, rituals and ceremonies. Upward of 300 ‘Bible-readers’ in Winning’s Kingscourt District were ‘denied any rites in their church’ in 1828/29, according to Winning.<sup>36</sup> Penance, commonly called confession, is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. One of its integral elements is the absolution of the penitent’s sin imparted by a duly-ordained priest.<sup>37</sup> In the case of mortal sin, denial of absolution meant eternal damnation, which was greatly feared.<sup>38</sup> Catholics did not dare have the Testament in their own houses as they were sure to be asked ‘at confession whether they possess one or not’. The Meath poet, Thady M’Blab, wrote that:

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<sup>30</sup> Philip Thornton, *Teague Connellan and his volunteers* in Énrí Ó Muirgheasa (ed.), *Amhráin na Midhe* (Dublin, 1934), pp 137–9.

<sup>31</sup> Thady M’Blab, *Reformation the third or the apostate of N-l-n, and the perverts of Athboy: a poem in four cantos with notes* (Dublin, 1838), M’Blab, p. 38.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Farrelly, *A letter addressed to the Rev. John Halpin, parish priest of Nobber, County Meath* (Dublin, 1826), p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> *NS*, 19 Oct. 1839, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Éamonn Ó Tuathail, ‘The contents of the Gallegan MS in the library of Edinburgh University’ in *County Louth Archaeological and Historical Journal*, vi (1931), pp 390–401, p. 170.

<sup>35</sup> *Missionary sermons and speeches delivered at a special meeting of the General Synod of Ulster*, pp 162–3.

<sup>36</sup> IS, *Eleventh annual report*, 1829, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> The four integral elements are: confession, contrition, satisfaction for sin on the penitent’s part, and absolution.

<sup>38</sup> For auricular confession, see *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (15 vols, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Washington, 2003), iv, 75–7.

The Clergy warned all Catholics,  
To shun the *Black Slugs*’ cunning trick;  
And bid them shun the baited hook,  
Concealed in each new Irish book.<sup>39</sup>

If penitents admitted they had the Testament, it could result in their being refused absolution, the IS believed. Therefore, they were content to read and study a Testament in some neighbour’s house ‘to which they may and do resort for perusal’.<sup>40</sup>

A number of the Irish-language scriptural books used by the Society were bound in blue; others were bound in black. Consequently, IS teachers were sometimes referred to as ‘blue book’ and ‘black book’ teachers.<sup>41</sup> Some young men in Kingscourt parish had been denounced by their priest for reading the ‘black book’, according to the evangelical, Baptist Wriothsley Noel, who visited Kingscourt in 1836. Wondering how they could abide by the priest’s injunction not to read the ‘black book’, and still read the Scriptures, they covered all their Bibles with vermillion paint. The priest therefore ‘could no longer charge them with reading the ‘black book’, since every copy was now become red’.<sup>42</sup> They fulfilled the letter of the law, but not the spirit.

Rev. Charlton related the IS teachers’ fear of being found with an Irish Bible on the premises when he was on a promotional tour in England for the Irish Society.<sup>43</sup> During a police search for arms in the Kingscourt neighbourhood, police uncovered an Irish Bible concealed under a large flagstone underneath the bed.<sup>44</sup> Its owner was afraid to leave it in public view in case a neighbour would report him to the priest, in which case he would be denounced from the altar on the following Sunday: ‘Oh Robert has been reading a bad book –Martin Luther’s book – I’ll tell you what I’ll do; if he perseveres, I’ll turn his face to the back of his head!’<sup>45</sup>

The IS used the Roman Catholics’ fear of being denied absolution for possessing the Bible to justify the low number of 1,686 Testaments distributed during the year ending March 1828. This was despite the fact that 14,000 scholars

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<sup>39</sup> M’Blab, *Reformation the third*, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> IS meeting, 7 Mar. 1828 (TCD, MS 7645, pp 129–130 (b)).

<sup>41</sup> The New Testament was sometimes bound in black.

<sup>42</sup> Noel, *A short tour*, pp 101–2.

<sup>43</sup> Rev. Charlton’s address, *IJ*, 24 Mar. 1838, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> For a recent discussion on the constabulary see Jim Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: a short history and genealogical guide with a select list of medal awards and casualties* (Dublin, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Rev. Charlton’s address, *IJ*, 24 Mar. 1838, p. 4.

had been returned for the previous one quarter alone.<sup>46</sup> This rationalization is likely to have emanated from Winning since the IS minutes of the meeting conclude, ‘see particularly letter 3329 from Mr Winning.’<sup>47</sup> The letter is no longer extant.

Dr Patrick Curtis, Roman Catholic archbishop of Armagh vehemently denied the allegation that Catholic clergy would persecute the Irish Society teachers and scholars for keeping and reading an Irish translation of the Douay Bible. This was just the impression that the Irish Society wished to portray to the public, he stated, and was ‘highly injurious to Catholics’. On the other hand, Curtis believed that the reading of the Bible would give the teachers great instruction and comfort, without any, the most remote danger of proselytism.<sup>48</sup>

Excommunication was severest penalty of all. Rev. John Halpin ‘threw’ Michael Farrelly and his family out of the church in Nobber in County Meath, but the Roman Catholic bishop of Meath, Dr Robert Logan, went further and excommunicated Farrelly along with two other Nobber IS teachers, Philip Clerkan and James Martin.<sup>49</sup> As late as 30 January 1831, another Meath diocesan priest, Rev. Michael Scannell, Rahan, County Offaly, excommunicated the parents of six families for sending their children to Bible schools.<sup>50</sup> They had been denounced from the altar previously, and the rites of the church denied them.<sup>51</sup>

Being an IS teacher had social draw-backs too (if one of Winning’s Irish teachers were to be believed). The marriage prospects of two women in the Kingscourt District were apparently hampered due to the hostility directed towards them because of their brother’s connection with the Irish Society, Rev. Winning was told.<sup>52</sup> Incidents such as the above were used and re-used in speeches and sermons on fundraising tours of England for years afterwards and tugged at the heart- and purse-strings of the evangelical audience. They were published and copied in newspapers in Ireland and in England and were recounted years later to a new audience.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> IS meeting, 7 Mar. 1828 (TCD, MS 7645, pp 129–30 (b)).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Letter no. 3329 is no longer extant.

<sup>48</sup> Dr Patrick Curtis in letter to editor, 30 Mar. 1826, *DEP*, 6 Apr. 1826, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Logan Winning correspondence*, pp 3–5.

<sup>50</sup> John Farrell, Thomas Healy, Michael Croneen, John Barry, Richard Barry, Edmund Dineen were excommunicated, *The Christian Examiner, and Church of Ireland magazine; conducted by members of the established church* (Dublin, Jan. to Dec. 1831), xi, 238

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>52</sup> Rev. Charlton’s address, *IJ*, 24 Mar. 1838, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> A selection of the newspapers that published the incidents were, *DCJ*, 19 Nov. 1842, p. 2; *SDCR*, 22 Nov. 1842, p. 2; *EC*, 24 Nov. 1842, p. 1; *WDWM*, 26 Nov. 1842, p. 7; *WM*, 26 Nov. 1842, p. 3; *WC*, 30 Nov. 1842, p. 4; *HJ*, 30 Nov. 1842, p. 1; *YG*, 3 Dec. 1842, p. 3.

## Physical assault and murder of Irish Society teachers in the Kingscourt District

Open hostility, denunciation, and denial of religious services were not the only sufferings experienced by Winning's Irish teachers and scholars, reportedly. Many were subjected to 'way-laying and assault', a common crime in rural Ireland frequently carried out by one religious faction on another, as Daragh Curran has pointed out.<sup>54</sup> Many were physically persecuted when popular hostility, often fuelled by the sermons and denunciations of Catholic priests at Sunday masses, took on a particularly violent form. The 'priests' hearers' were sometimes incited to torturing, even murdering, IS teachers. 'Deeds of blood followed after denunciation', an 'Observer' wrote in the *Northern Standard*.<sup>55</sup> Such was the spirit aroused by the priests against teachers on the Shirley estate in Carrickmacross, that one of them, Owen Sheridan, was attacked and nearly murdered. Sheridan had previously been denounced by Rev. Keown, who allegedly said that he was 'going grey in the works of the devil'.<sup>56</sup>

While many of the Society's teachers remained Roman Catholics, those who wished to become Scripture Readers had to belong to the Protestant faith. These converts were often the recipients of the severest assaults. Monck Mason recalled the vicious attack on one prominent IS teacher and Scripture Reader in the Kingscourt District, John M'Ardle of Liserill, County Monaghan.<sup>57</sup> M'Ardle was returning home from Kingscourt after receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the Protestant Church, a public affirmation that he had converted to Protestantism, when he was set upon. His head was cut badly and his upper lip was cut through completely, 'so that it is feared the parts will not again adhere', an injury that would deter M'Ardle from speaking the Scriptures for some time.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Daragh Curran, 'The Cootehill riot of 1833' in *Breifne*, xiii, no. 49 (2014), pp 330–7, p. 335.

<sup>55</sup> *NS*, 19 Oct. 1839, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Letter to Rev. Winning in Henry Joseph Monck, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish society, established for promoting the education of the native Irish, through the medium of their own language* (Dublin, 1844), p. 104. M'Ardle had signed the Kingscourt Resolutions on 5 September 1827. He was a member of Kingscourt Irish Teachers' Temperance Society established in 1836, and one of nineteen signatories who signed an address of welcome and presented the Book of Common Prayer in the Irish language to three visiting members of the Ladies Auxiliary, Miss Mason, Miss Alexander and Miss Bellingham, in Kingscourt in November the previous year, 1842.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*



The Roman Catholic priest in Ballytrane, Aughnamullen, County Monaghan, denounced the IS Scriptures Readers. He claimed that they were destroying the country and must be *stopped*. His parishioners took him literally. About thirty of them broke into the houses of all the Irish scholars within a seven-mile radius between Kingscourt and Ballybay and stoned the men in the most shocking manner. The stoning of the victims was most likely because of the ready availability of stones in the rural area of Monaghan. It might not have had any biblical connotations: ‘So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.’<sup>59</sup> The assailants left one man without any teeth; they drove them down his throat with their iron-shod brogues. Four of the men ‘who have suffered most will not (if they survive) be for months able to earn anything for their families.’<sup>60</sup>

Five IS teachers were murdered and two more were shot at in the Kingscourt District between 1828 and 1843. The first murder victim was Owen McDaniel. He was appointed to one of the Kingscourt District’s earliest schools, Carrickleck, on 16 May 1823 on a salary of £10 per annum.<sup>61</sup> By December 1823, McDaniel himself had taught two other IS masters.<sup>62</sup> On the night of 17 March 1828, McDaniel and Thomas Reilly were accompanying Philip Callan, part of the way home. Callan, who was ‘occasionally employed’ by the IS, lived about fifteen miles distant at Cremartin in the parish of Clontibret in County Monaghan.<sup>63</sup> He had been in Kingscourt for the IS quarterly examinations where he received his remuneration and collected Bibles for distributing. He was afraid to return home until darkness fell, having been attacked previously in Kingscourt. He spent the day in McDaniel’s house with other Irish teachers, including Carrickleck teacher, Thomas Reilly, in what would seem to have been an advanced Scriptural class, led by McDaniel.<sup>64</sup> Reilly and Callan had been signatories to the Kingscourt Resolutions, 5 September 1827.<sup>65</sup> What would

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<sup>59</sup> Deuteronomy 13:10.

<sup>60</sup> Miss Lyster to Mrs Cairns, 4 Jan. 1836 (PRONI, Roden papers, microfilm 147/reel 5, pp 16–18).

<sup>61</sup> IS meeting, 16 May, 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 147 (a)).

<sup>62</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, pp 14, 26, 27.

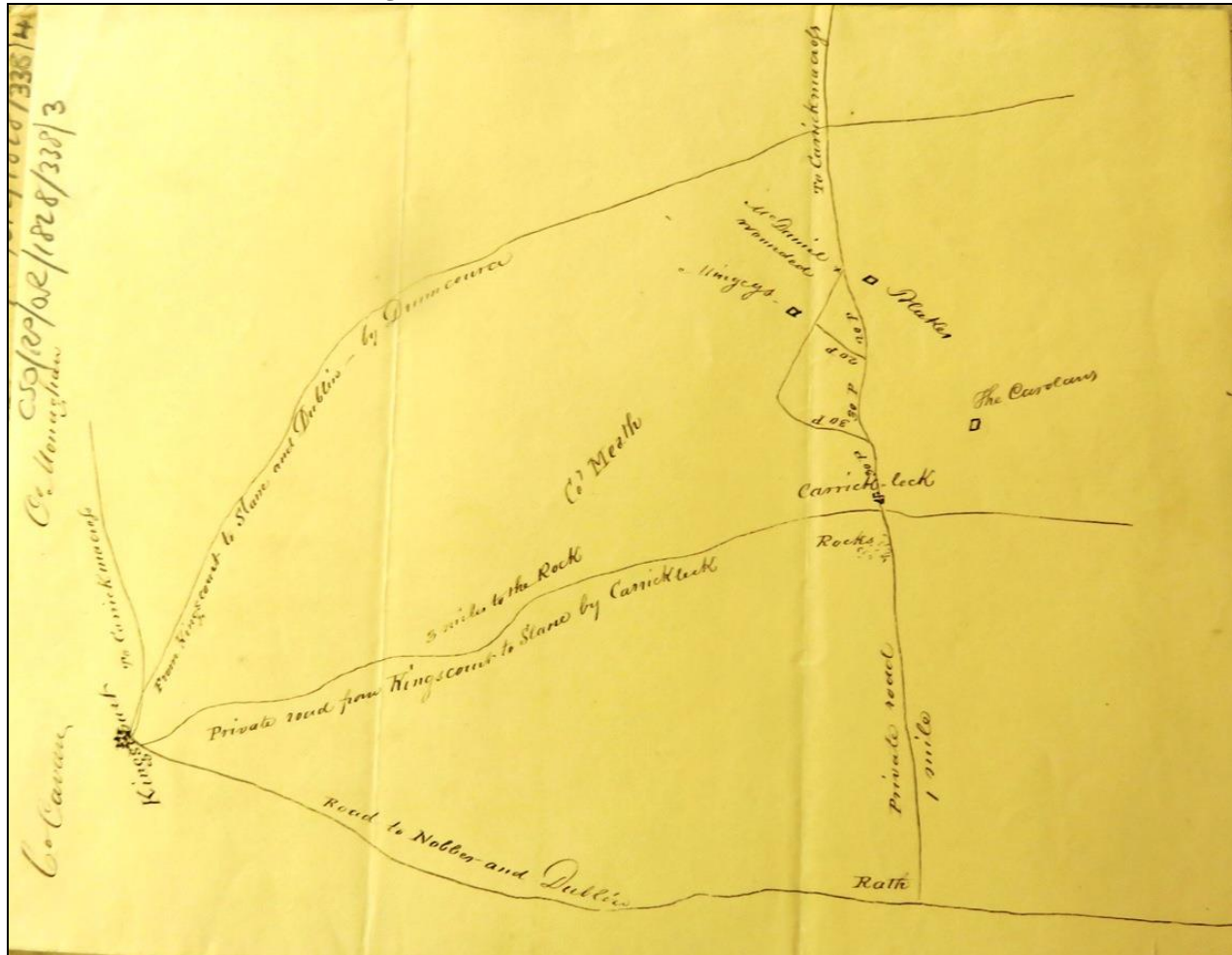
<sup>63</sup> Information of Philip Callan of Cremartin, Castleblaney, taken before John C. Graves, one of the magistrates of the head office of police (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/4).

<sup>64</sup> Letter from Rev. Robert Winning to Edward Pendleton, assistant secretary to the Irish Society, 30 Mar. 1828, respecting murder of Irish Society teacher, Owen McDaniel (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/11).

<sup>65</sup> IS, *Tenth annual report*, 1828, pp 34–5. McDaniel, Reilly, and Callan were subscribers to Michael Clarke, *Man’s final end: translated from Críoch deigeanaich don duine, dan diadha, written originally*

appear to have been an Irish ‘school’ was held later that evening and was attended by at least eight people; three English Bibles and a quantity of Irish primers had been brought to McDaniel’s house for the occasion.<sup>66</sup>

**Map 7.1 Sketch showing location of murder scene and houses of those accused of murder of Owen McDaniel, Carrickleck, Kingscourt, 17 March 1828.**



Source: *Sketch of the roads etc. leading from Kingscourt in the County Cavan, as connected with the murder of the late Owen McDaniel* (NAI, MS CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/3)

The party left McDaniel’s house at about ten o’clock that night but were attacked a short distance from the house (Map 7.1).<sup>67</sup> Callan was injured but escaped. Destroyed in the assault was a bundle of Bibles that Callan had collected for his own

in Irish, (according to the best authorities) by the Rt. Rev. J. O’Connell, bishop of Kerry, who lived in the sixteenth century (Dublin, 1824).

<sup>66</sup> Information of Philip Callan (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/4).

<sup>67</sup> Michael Farrelly, chief constable, report, 15 Apr. 1828, respecting murder of Irish Society teacher, Owen McDaniel (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/1); letters respecting murder of Irish Society teacher, Owen McDaniel (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/1–11).

Bible depository in Cremartin.<sup>68</sup> McDaniel was struck on the head by a slane which fractured his skull resulting in his death days later. Medical help did not arrive in time to save him.<sup>69</sup>

The IS in Dublin set up a subcommittee comprising Major Sirr, Dr Orpen and Mr Hardman to investigate McDaniel's murder to which Callan was summoned to give evidence.<sup>70</sup> Thomas Carolan, Luke Carolan and Lawrence Mingey were arrested for McDaniel's murder. Reilly swore in a deposition before Joseph Thomas Higgins, coroner for County Meath, that the Carolan brothers had 'a spite' against McDaniel 'because he was a Bible teacher'.<sup>71</sup> McDaniel's cousin, Matthew McDaniel, swore that the victim confirmed on his death-bed that he had been attacked 'because he was an Irish teacher'.<sup>72</sup> Thomas and Luke Carolan were sentenced to death for McDaniel's murder at Meath Assizes on 1 August 1828 and ordered for execution three days later.<sup>73</sup> Their sentence was commuted to transportation for life through the intervention of a Roman Catholic barrister and the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Anglesey.<sup>74</sup> It is not stated, but likely, that the barrister was Daniel O'Connell engaged through the Catholic Association. Lawrence Mingey, 'a comfortable farmer, and a person of rather better description than his associates', was committed to Trim Gaol for assault.<sup>75</sup>

McDaniel left a wife and 'small helpless family'.<sup>76</sup> The IS resolved that £10 'or as much as he shall think proper' be sent to Winning for the relief of McDaniel's widow and children.<sup>77</sup> Following the McDaniel murder, the IS teachers in the Kingscourt District set up a Society to support the widows and orphans of teachers who suffered the ultimate sacrifice for their involvement with the Society.<sup>78</sup>

Winning laid the blame for McDaniel's murder squarely on the shoulders of the Roman Catholic priests. 'I fear they sanction each outrage', he wrote to Edmund

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<sup>68</sup> Deposition of Thomas Reilly taken at inquest held on the body of Owen McDaniel, 30 Mar. 1828, before Joseph Thomas Higgins, coroner (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/9 (1)).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*; *NC*, 3 May 1828, p. 4. A slane is a special spade used for cutting turf on bogs; there were many bogs in Carricleck.

<sup>70</sup> IS meeting, 11 Apr. 1828 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 133 (a)).

<sup>71</sup> Deposition of Thomas Reilly (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/9 (1)).

<sup>72</sup> Deposition of Matthew McDaniel, taken at inquest held on the body of Owen McDaniel, 30 Mar. 1828, before Jos. Thomas Higgins, coroner ((NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/9 (2)).

<sup>73</sup> *DEPC*, 7 Aug. 1828, p. 3; *SNL*, 4 Aug. 1828, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Rev. Robert Winning at annual meeting of Irish Society, 17 Mar. 1839, *WDWM*, 23 Mar. 1839, p. 7.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from Darley, John C. Graves, Henry Sirr, Head Office Police, 15 Apr. 1828, respecting murder of Irish Society teacher, Owen McDaniel (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/2).

<sup>76</sup> Winning to Pendleton, (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/11).

<sup>77</sup> IS meeting, 17 Apr. 1828 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 134 (b)).

<sup>78</sup> *IJ*, 24 Mar. 1838, p. 4.

Pendleton, assistant secretary to the Irish Society: ‘the priests are enraged to Madness, they find they cannot put down the Irish scriptural schools, they are aware of the influence of them on their people and instead of restraining, I fear they sanction each outrage.’<sup>79</sup> Carrickleck, although in the parish of Kingscourt, is equidistant between Kingscourt and Nobber. The attack was most likely motivated by the exhortations of Rev. John Halpin in nearby Nobber. Halpin had already denounced three IS teachers, Michael Farrelly, Philip Clarcken and James Martin, from the altar.<sup>80</sup> The local assailants on the night of 17 March would have been aware that McDaniel’s house was a significant Irish Society location from 1823. It was an IS ‘school’, and it would appear to have been a lodging house for itinerant IS teachers, also. Thomas Reilly had been living with McDaniel for about a year in 1828, and Philip Callan had lodged in McDaniel’s house on night of 15 March, following the quarterly examination of teachers and scholars in Kingscourt.

Winning feared that Owen McDaniel’s would ‘not be the only blood that will be shed’ in Nobber. ‘I fear much that [Michael] Farrelly will one day fall a victim to their fury’; Farrelly had that ‘impression sometimes on his own mind’.<sup>81</sup> Farrelly, an Irish Society inspector in the Kingscourt District, was beaten up, but was not murdered; The IS had transferred him to Youghal District ‘until further orders’ on 24 August 1827.<sup>82</sup> However, Winning’s fears were realised. Another Nobber IS teacher, James Martin, was murdered on his way home from Kingscourt. He, too, was carrying a parcel of books for the Society, probably Bibles or other religious tracts.<sup>83</sup> Martin was one of the first IS teachers employed by the IS in the area and was examined by Edward N. Hoare in February 1823.<sup>84</sup> Like Reilly and Callan, he was a prominent figure in the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District. He had been a signatory to the Kingscourt Resolutions on 5 September 1827, and was a member of the committee to regulate teacher appointments. He had been ‘much opposed by the priest’, Rev. John Halpin, who was also his cousin and landlord. Halpin had evicted Martin from his house in Nobber village sometime before November 1827.<sup>85</sup> He had

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<sup>79</sup> Winning to Pendleton, (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/11).

<sup>80</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, pp 2–3, 6, 8.

<sup>81</sup> Winning to Pendleton, (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/338/11).

<sup>82</sup> Pádraig de Brún, *Scriptural instruction in the vernacular: the Irish Society and its teachers 1818–1827* (Dublin, 2009), p. 235.

<sup>83</sup> Noel, *A short tour*, pp 102–3.

<sup>84</sup> For Hoare’s report, see IS meeting, 7 Feb. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 136–8).

<sup>85</sup> *DEP*, 3 Nov. 1827, p. 2.

been excommunicated by Bishop Logan.<sup>86</sup> In consideration of Martin's 'particular circumstances', a reference no doubt to his eviction, suffering and excommunication, as well as his long service to the Irish Society, the Society had awarded him a gratuity of £3 in February 1828.<sup>87</sup>

Two IS teachers were shot at and one was wounded near Kingscourt on 26 February 1829. This was less than a year after the IS teacher, Owen McDaniel, had been murdered. Terence Duffy, George Beatty, Niell Caffrey and Owen Carroll were returning from Kingscourt when seven men shouted at them, calling them 'mad dogs', an epithet regularly thrown at IS teachers, surrounded them and blocked their return to Kingscourt. The teachers escaped to the house of Verdon Moore where they implored his protection. Moore, a Protestant, hearing that they were IS teachers said that 'he detested them, and wished they were all killed, and sent to h—ll, it was what they deserved.'<sup>88</sup> When Beatty changed his story and said that he was a small farmer returning from selling oats in Kingscourt, and that Carroll was his servant, Beatty and Carroll were allowed to stay. Duffy and Caffrey, 'a couple of scoundrels', were ordered to leave. They returned, later, believing that they had been beckoned back, but Moore fired on them, wounding Terence Duffy on the hip with small shot or pellets.<sup>89</sup>

The IS viewed Duffy's shooting seriously and wanted Moore prosecuted. It sent an attorney, Mr Bently, to Kingscourt petty sessions on Tuesday 9 March 1830. It directed Rev. Robert Winning to assist Bently by producing any necessary witnesses.<sup>90</sup> Both the IS and Rev. Robert Daly requested Winning to attend the subsequent trial at Cavan Assizes.<sup>91</sup> By this time, Winning, too, was very concerned for the safety of his IS teachers. He pleaded with Lord Farnham to attend the Cavan trial in his capacity not only as a 'subscriber' to the Irish Society, but also as a friend 'to the moral and religious improvement of the miserable peasantry'. He underlined the urgency of his request, stressing that all the Irish Society teachers were in danger: 'The hostility of the priesthood is incessant regarding these schools – 'The Characters of the Teachers are vilified – threats – and every Hostility resorted to –

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<sup>86</sup> *Logan-Winning correspondence*, pp 3–5.

<sup>87</sup> IS meeting, 15 Feb. 1828 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 126 (b)).

<sup>88</sup> Evidence of Terence Duffy at Cavan assizes, *FJ*, 28 July, 1830, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> *FJ*, 28 July, 1830, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> IS meeting, 5 Mar. 1830 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 175 (b)).

<sup>91</sup> Robert Winning to Lord Farnham regarding Moore firing at an Irish Master, 23 July 1830 (NLI, MS 18612/8).

three of these men have already been murdered – and if Moore now evade justice their lives will be greatly exposed.’<sup>92</sup>

Why did Winning lay the blame on the ‘hostility of the priesthood’ for the attack on the IS teachers? Why did Winning make the leap from hostility to murder? The four IS teachers were escaping from a hostile mob, most likely Roman Catholics, when they were forced to seek shelter. However, it was Verdon Moore, a Protestant, who shot at them. Perhaps, Moore perceived all Irish Society as ‘scoundrels’. Perhaps, the ‘hostility’ of the priests had filtered out to the wider community. The teachers were objects of contempt in the locality, as is clearly portrayed in the contemporary poetry of the Nobber poet, Philip Thornton, who described them as ‘pedantic knaves’ with ‘no scruples’. Judge Thomas B. Vandeleur, chief justice, court of King’s Bench, acquitted Verdon Moore of the capital felony, but found him guilty of common assault. Moore was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment.<sup>93</sup>

The IS teacher, Thomas McKittrick gained public notoriety as one of the two instigators of the Greaghnaogue Resolutions. He had been censured regularly by the Roman Catholic clergymen of Carrickmacross for two years from May 1824 for his involvement with the Society. He was ‘*deprived of the benefits of participating in the Sacraments of the Catholic Church*’, which was why he formulated the Greaghnaogue Resolutions, he swore.<sup>94</sup> They were a plea to the Catholic bishops to prevent their clergy denying them the rites of their church.<sup>95</sup> McKittrick was murdered<sup>96</sup> sometime between 1828 and 1833.<sup>97</sup> According to the pro-Catholic *Dublin Evening Post*, McKittrick had been a tithe proctor: ‘He was brought up a Stone-mason – became in process of time a Tithe Proctor – and is now Gospeller to the Irish Society, and is said to be in connection with the Hibernian and Kildare Street Associations.’<sup>98</sup> Tithe-proctors valued the crops on properties where tithes were due, set the tithes, and collected them on behalf of the tithe-owner, receiving a percentage as payment. They were resented and assaulted regularly, even murdered

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> *DEPC*, 29 July 1830, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> *DEP*, 4 May 1826, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> IS, *Eighth annual report*, 1826), p. 32.

<sup>96</sup> *BNL*, 25 July 1828, p. 4; *NS*, 19 Oct. 1839, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Winning wrote that the first teacher murdered was Owen McDaniel; McDaniel was murdered on 17 March 1828.

<sup>98</sup> *DEP*, 4 May 1826, p. 3.

on occasion. Tithe-proctors and process-servers were often driven out of their parishes or, to quote John Carney, rector of Rower parish, Co. Kilkenny, ‘hooted and pelted away’.<sup>99</sup> McKittrick was forced to leave the area after the fall-out from Greaghnarogue. If McKittrick were a tithe-proctor too, as was claimed, it might have been a contributory factor.<sup>100</sup> The ‘last’ murder victim, an ‘unfortunate man, who, with an aged mother, was driven from his cabin’, was unnamed.<sup>101</sup>

The physical torture and degradation of one IS teacher continued after death. It included cutting out the victim’s tongue, a literal interpretation of the command in Proverbs: ‘the froward tongue shall be cut out.’<sup>102</sup> Mr Cape [McCabe], ‘a denounced man, a Douay Bible reader’ was butchered in the open day close to Carrickmaclim Presbyterian church near Carrickmacross, County Monaghan.<sup>103</sup> His murderers, after dashing out his brains, cut out his tongue and, allegedly, cried: ‘The fellow will no more teach Scripture’.<sup>104</sup>

It is difficult to unravel the motives behind the murders of the five IS teachers in the Kingscourt District, due to the scant available evidence. Owen McDaniel’s murder is well documented. The murders of James Martin, Cape and one unnamed ‘unfortunate’ victim, though well publicised in newspapers at home and in Britain, all emanated from Winning’s reports. They cannot be substantiated by other sources, and so no other reasons for their killings, other than what the IS claimed, can be suggested. McKittrick’s murder was not claimed. What is clear, however, is that it was publication of the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions that set off the bitter sectarian controversy during which these murders were carried out.

### **Burials of Irish Society victims in the Kingscourt District**

The persecution and suffering of some Irish Society teachers and their families followed them to the grave. Undignified outbursts of sectarian hostility marked the burial of some Irish Society teachers and family members in Winning’s Kingscourt

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<sup>99</sup> Stephen McCormac, ‘The Tithe War: reports by Church of Ireland clergymen to Dublin Castle’ in *History Ireland*, xiii, issue 4 (July/Aug. 2005), pp 40–4.

<sup>100</sup> Curtin, ‘Opposition to the payment of tithes’, pp 26–8.

<sup>101</sup> *Missionary sermons and speeches: delivered at a special meeting of the General Synod of Ulster, held in the Scots Church, Mary's Abbey, Dublin, in September, 1833* (Dublin, 1833), pp 162–3.

<sup>102</sup> Proverbs 10:31.

<sup>103</sup> *NS*, 19 Oct. 1839, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> *Missionary sermons and speeches*, pp 162–3.

District.<sup>105</sup> One such incident was remembered in the late 1930s and related to a ‘Blue Book’ teacher in Carrickleck.<sup>106</sup> The teacher (his name had been forgotten by 1937) was ‘teaching the language for a proselytising society’, most likely the Irish Society.<sup>107</sup> He was so hated by the Catholics that when he died he was refused burial in his own graveyard, and his body remained unburied for a week or so. Eventually, some Protestants procured a grave for him in the Protestant churchyard in Ardagh, two miles distant. They coffined him and set for Ardagh on the old road past Carrickleck Rock, carrying the coffin on their shoulders (Figure 7.1). Local Catholics planned to terrorise the burial party. They loosened a large rock overhanging the road and released it when the funeral was approaching. The coffin-bearers got such a fright that they abandoned the coffin and ran for their lives. They ‘thought that God was going to blast them off the face of the earth’. They returned next day with an ass and cart and brought the body to Ardagh where they buried it.<sup>108</sup>

On another occasion, a Protestant minister, Rev. Thomas Pentland, was forced to abandon the burial of the daughter of the IS teacher, Clarke, because of the threatening behaviour of local Catholics. Clarke’s family, who lived in Bailieborough, County Cavan, was afflicted with the fever, probably typhus which was prevalent in Kingscourt in October 1841.<sup>109</sup> Clarke sent for Rev. Thomas Pentland.<sup>110</sup> By the time Pentland arrived, one of the daughters had died and Pentland was asked to officiate at her burial the following day in the family burial place in Moybologue.<sup>111</sup> Pentland was continuously interrupted during the ceremony by the ‘groaning, hissing, and cheering of the Romish mob’. They called him and his religion ‘every opprobrious epithet which they could invent’, threatened to have his ‘brains knocked out’ and warned that they would dig up the body if he persevered

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<sup>105</sup> For similar scenes elsewhere, see John A. Murphy and Cliona Murphy, ‘Burials and bigotry in early nineteenth-century Ireland’ in *Studia Hibernica*, no. 33 (2004/2005), pp 125–46.

<sup>106</sup> Anthony Kieran (68), Carrickleck, Co. Meath, collector: P. J. Gaynor 11 June 1948 (NFC, 1103:278–9).

<sup>107</sup> An Irish Society daily school had been established in Carrickleck by May 1823 when Owen McDaniel received a salary of £10 per annum for teaching there. McDaniel was violently murdered in 1828. The story recalled was not that of McDaniel, however.

<sup>108</sup> Kieran to Gaynor (NFC, 1103:278–9).

<sup>109</sup> Witness at a court case in Cootehill, County Cavan in *DCJ*, 23 Oct. 1841, p. 2.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas Pentland clerk, Lisgar Cottage, was licensed to the curacy of Bailieborough in 1827, John Caillard Erck (ed.), *The ecclesiastical register: containing the names of the dignitaries and parochial clergy of Ireland* (Dublin, 1827), p. 310.

<sup>111</sup> John A. Murphy and Cliona Murphy, ‘Burials and bigotry in early nineteenth-century Ireland’ in *Studia Hibernica*, no. 33 (2004/2005), pp 125–46, p. 142.



with the service. It was not until he retired that the burial was allowed to continue.<sup>112</sup> A worse fate befell Clarke's eldest son, when he, too, succumbed to the fever. He was 'inhumanly lifted from the grave and left on the highway', with the following brutal notice on the coffin:

Arise, ye dead, and come to Judgement. Take notice - Bring this unsanctified beast back to Winning, and let him plant him in Ervy [sic], where he'll have no more to do but call him into the Friday feast, where this unhappy wretch bartered his eternal salvation for bacon and pelf<sup>113</sup>

The assaults and murders of IS teachers in the Kingscourt District in the early decades of the nineteenth century need to be viewed in the context of crime in Ireland during the period and the society in which they took place.<sup>114</sup> Crime had increased ten-fold in Ireland between 1821 and 1828, during the first seven years of Richard Wellesley's (1760–1842), Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland: 'assassination, murder, robbery, and riot mark the increase of discontent in a tenfold degree beyond what it was when LORD WELLESLEY [sic] first went there [in 1821]'.<sup>115</sup> Even though murder carried the death penalty, 'murder was not so uncommon thing in Ireland' in the nineteenth century, Rev. J. W. Charlton, Church of Ireland minister of Kingscourt, told his audience in Pendleton and Manchester, while on a deputation there for the IS.<sup>116</sup> In 1832, about 200 of the 9,000 of the agrarian and tithe crimes committed in Ireland, one in forty-five, were murders, McNamee has shown.<sup>117</sup>

It is difficult to disentangle the assaults and murders perpetrated on the IS personnel in the Kingscourt District from the prevailing Protestant-Catholic sectarianism of this north-Leinster and south-Ulster region. The Orange Order and Ribbonism each played a part in the sectarian tensions that regularly erupted around Kingscourt during the period. Orange Order parades during the 'marching' season from 12 July, celebrating victory at the Battle of the Boyne, to 12 August commemorating the Apprentice Boys' March, saw a heightening of tensions each year. These Orange parades were a public show of Protestant 'territorial supremacy

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<sup>112</sup> WC, 30 Nov. 1842, p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, pp 106–7. Pelf, Late Middle English, from a variant of old French *pelfre*, meaning spoils of unknown origin, and denoted money or wealth acquired by reprehensible means.

<sup>114</sup> Denis A. Cronin, *Who killed the Franks family?* (Dublin, 2009).

<sup>115</sup> MA, 1 Jan. 1828, p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> MCLGA, 29 June 1839, p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> McNamee, 'The 'Second Reformation' in Ireland', p. 47.

over the Catholics in the neighbourhood’, Susanne Kingon has suggested,<sup>118</sup> and resulted in an increase in reported hostilities and assaults. Local fairs were often the occasion on which these tensions spilled over. Two Kingscourt fairs were held during this commemoration season; the monthly fair on 1 August and the ancient Fair of Muff on 12 August. These local fairs attracted large crowds. Drunkenness, associated with such occasions, was endemic, especially before the introduction of the Temperance movement by Rev. Theobald Matthew (1790–1856) in 1838.<sup>119</sup> Old disputes and grievances, personal, religious and sectarian, dormant at other times, flared when alcohol entered the mix.<sup>120</sup> As Laragy has shown in her study of County Cavan murders, alcohol might have provided the immediate context or initial spark that resulted in murder. Alcohol also acted to bring to the surface low-level political and religious tensions.<sup>121</sup>

A number of Protestants were attacked and injured by Catholics, ‘savage papists’, the *London Evening Standard* called them, when they were returning home from the Kingscourt fair on 4 August 1829. Eight days later at the nearby Fair of Muff, fifty Protestants again ‘suffered persecution’.<sup>122</sup> One of the worst riots ever occurred at the Fair of Muff on 12 August 1830.<sup>123</sup> The Muff Orange lodge marched in procession that day.<sup>124</sup> On the preceding Sunday, several thousand Ribbonmen paraded around Muff, where they were ‘harangued at length by the priest and another individual’.<sup>125</sup> The 30,000 people who attended the fair on 12 August behaved peaceably until the magistrate left. However, a riot started shortly afterwards. One of the Roman Catholic leaders shot and wounded an ‘unoffending Protestant’, George Walsh. Walsh escaped to the only other Protestant house in the neighbourhood. The mob attacked it and set it on fire with women and children inside. The occupants retaliated and were fortunate to escape alive. The women and children were ‘barbarously beaten and ill-used’, according to reports. In the ensuing riots, three

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<sup>118</sup> Susanne T. Kingon, ‘Ulster opposition to Catholic Emancipation, 1828–9’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiv, no. 134 (Nov., 2004), pp 137–55, p. 154.

<sup>119</sup> See Colm Kerrigan, *Father Matthew and the Irish Temperance Movement, 1838–1849* (Cork, 1992).

<sup>120</sup> For a discussion on the part played by alcohol in Cavan murders in the nineteenth century, see, Georgina Laragy, ‘Murder in Cavan, 1809–1891’ in *Breifne: Journal of Cumann Seanchais Bhreifne* (2009), pp 611–30.

<sup>121</sup> Laragy, ‘Murder in Cavan’, p. 625.

<sup>122</sup> *LES*, 25 Aug. 1829, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> *Poor inquiry (Ireland)*, HC 1836 [35] [36] [37] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42], xxx.35, 221, xxxi.1, xxxii.1, xxxiii.1, 427, 643, 657, 407.

<sup>124</sup> *DMR*, 2 Sept. 1830, p. 2.

<sup>125</sup> *LS*, 15 Sept. 1830, p. 3.

Roman Catholics, Reilly, E. Morris, and Owen Fitzsimons were murdered.<sup>126</sup> On 14 August 1830,<sup>127</sup> 20,000 Catholic armed offenders marched throughout the area unopposed, robbing Protestants of their arms and pillaging the town of Kingscourt.<sup>128</sup> Winning claimed that only three of the 20,000 were connected with Irish Society schools. These were ‘forced by the irresistible tide to mix with the thronging multitudes’.<sup>129</sup> Not ‘*a single Irish Master*’ of the 294 employed in the Kingscourt District was a member of an illegal association.<sup>130</sup> How could Winning know? These were all secret societies.

The County Cavan magistrates convened in Kingscourt on 13 August 1830 to inquire into the disturbed state of the county and the King’s County constabulary was despatched to Kingscourt and Muff. Patrol duty was kept up: ‘the country traversed for 40 miles every four hours. Traces of the lawless act are visible from *blood*, and the marks of bullets on the assailed houses.’<sup>131</sup> The magistrates resolved to use every exertion in their power to suppress party riots.<sup>132</sup> They petitioned Government for an investigation into the Muff riot by one of His Majesty’s King’s Counsel.<sup>133</sup> Maxwell Blacker (1773–1843), conducted the subsequent investigations with ‘precision and impartiality’.<sup>134</sup> Ruxton, High Sherriff of Meath, and Pollock, a Meath magistrate, took an active part. The Marquis of Headfort, who was the High Sherriff of the County Cavan, Messrs Napper, from Oldcastle, Pratt from Kingscourt and several other magistrates and landed proprietors attended. Rev. Plunkett, Roman Catholic parish priest of Kingscourt (1826–38), and his curate, Rev. L. J. Nolan, represented the Catholics accused so skilfully that they were exonerated. Nolan later converted to Protestantism and became an evangelical Irish Society promoter. Seven Protestant Orangemen were found guilty. George Walsh and J. Wallace were found guilty of Reilly’s murder. Walsh, William Glassford, T. Armstrong and Elias Sharp were found guilty of Morris’s murder. Walsh was also found guilty of Owen Fitzsimons’s

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<sup>126</sup> *DMR*, 27 Aug. 1830, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> *IS*, *Thirteenth annual report*, 1831, p. 17.

<sup>128</sup> *DMR*, 18 Aug. 1830, p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> *IS*, *Thirteenth annual report*, 1831, p. 17.

<sup>130</sup> *IS*, *Quarterly extracts*, no. 35 (Oct. 1830), p. 179.

<sup>131</sup> *DJ*, 24 Aug. 1830, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> *DMA*, 23 Aug. 1830, p. 2.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Reports of the riot and subsequent court case were reported in many national and local newspapers, for a sample see *DJ*, 24 Aug. 1830, p. 3; *MP*, 25 Aug. 1830, p. 3; *FJ*, Dublin, 31 August, 1830, p. 2; *DEPC*, 2 Sept. 1830, p. 3; *FJ*, 2 Sept. 1830, p. 2; *MA*, 2 Sept. 1830, p. 2; *MP*, 2 Sept. 1830, p. 2.

murder; Henry Glassford and his son, Thomas, for aiding and assisting Walsh.<sup>135</sup> The investigation concluded that ‘the distant but primary cause of the unfortunate occurrence at Muff’<sup>136</sup> was the negligence of the magistrates who failed to suppress the illegal Orange Order processions on 12 July, and the absence of a police presence at Muff.<sup>137</sup> Defending the County Cavan Orange brethren cost the Grand Lodge of Ireland £100 2s. 9d. in 1831.<sup>138</sup>

Fifty-three Orange Order processions took place throughout Ulster on the following 12 July 1831, the select committee to enquire into Orange Lodges in Ireland in 1835 showed.<sup>139</sup> In an effort to ban both Catholic and Protestant parades and processions, the government declared the Party Processions Act of 1832. It was ‘directed against party processions connected with religious subjects’, Henry Stanley explained, and made all parades illegal. It was widely ignored.<sup>140</sup> Fifteen Orange lodges paraded in Bailieborough, seven miles from Muff. At a fair in Cootehill, in the same county on 13 August 1833, four Roman Catholics lost their lives in ‘a serious political affray’ between a party of Orangemen who marched into the town and the Roman Catholics who were awaiting them.<sup>141</sup>

By 1845, Winning reported that the IS teachers in the Kingscourt District were not being ‘way-laid, beaten, or murdered’ as formally. *A return of all murders that have been committed in Ireland from 1 January 1842 to February 1846* bore out Winning’s claim. At its zenith, Winning’s district extended into all or parts of eleven counties, Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Down, Fermanagh, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Tyrone and Westmeath (Figure 4.3). The return showed that ninety-eight murders had been committed in those counties. It also gave the occupations of the victims. None was described as an IS teacher, a Scripture Reader, or a colporteur (a carrier of Bibles and religious tracts).<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> *MP*, 25 Aug. 1830, p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> *FJ*, Dublin, 31 August, 1830, p. 2.

<sup>137</sup> *DMR*, 2 Sept. 1830, p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> *Report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange lodges, associations or societies in Ireland*, HC 1835 (475) (476), xv.501, xv.1, appendix A, 294.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.1, 121–2.

<sup>140</sup> Hansard, xiii, cc717.

<sup>141</sup> The four named were George Cappy, Francis McQuillan, Phil McQuillan and William Sullivan who died four days later following injuries inflicted in the affray; see Daragh Curran, ‘The Cootehill riot of 1833’ in *Breifne*, 49 (2014), pp 330–7.

<sup>142</sup> *A return of all murders that have been committed in Ireland since the 1st day of January 1842, specifying the county and the barony of the county where such murder had been committed, the name and condition of the person so murdered* HC 1846 (220) xxxv.293.

**Table 7.1 ‘Baronies proclaimed’ in Winning’s Kingscourt District between 1847 and 1856 and reasons for proclamation**

County	Baronies proclaimed	Proclaimed	Reason	Date withdrawn
Armagh	Upper Fews, Upper Orier	31 July 1848	Ribbonism prevailed	Not stated
Armagh	Tiranny, Armagh	8 Dec. 1851	Murder of Mr Bateson	Not stated
Cavan	Clonmahaon, Tullyhunco, Upper Loughtee	23 Dec. 1847	Disturbed state of county	6 Aug. 1855, except Tullyhaw, Tullyhunco, Lower Loughtee
Cavan	Tullyhaw, Lower Loughtee	3 Jan. 1848		
Cavan	Castlerahan, Clonkee, Tullygarvey, remainder Lower Loughtee	31 July 1848		
Down	Barony/lordship of Newry	31 July 1848	Armed parties marching by night, and firing shots	21 Nov. 1853
Down	Part in Upper Iveagh	29 Mar. 1851	Firing at on-duty sheriff	
Drogheda	County of the town of Drogheda	18 July 1848	Formation of treasonable clubs	22 Mar. 1851
Fermanagh	Glenawley	3 Jan. 1848	Murder of Wm. Hassard esq. connected with Ribbonism	Not stated
Meath	Meath	22 July 1848	Confederate clubs at Trim, Navan, Kells, Dunshaughlin	6 Aug. 1855
Monaghan	Farney	31 July 1848	Manufacturing pikes etc.	Not stated
Monaghan	Clontibret, Mucknow, in Cremorne	8 Dec. 1851	Murder of Mr Bateson	Not stated
Tyrone	Not mentioned <sup>143</sup>			
Westmeath	Westmeath	31 July 1848	Disturbed state, attack on Sir P. Hopkins; attack on James Dalton in 1845	Not stated

Compiled by Marion Rogan, from *Crime and Outrage Act, &c. (Ireland). Return of the several counties and districts, and baronies of counties, in Ireland, proclaimed under the provisions of the Crime and Outrage Act, from the period of the passing of that act in 1847 to its discontinuance in 1856, specifying the particular crime or outrage for which each was proclaimed; and similar return respecting the Peace Preservation Act, passed in 1856, and to expire in 1860*, HC 1860 (195), lvii, 10–13

<sup>143</sup> Tyrone had been generally in a ‘state of tranquillity’ in 1835, the earl of Caledon told the select committee to enquire into Orange lodges, *Second report of the select committee to inquire into Orange lodges in Ireland*, appendix, HC 1835 (475) (476), xv 501, xvi.1, 121–2.

The IS was not named as a contributory reason for the disturbed state of the country between 1847 and 1856 when several counties in Winning's Kingscourt District were proclaimed (Table 7.1). One obvious reason for the cessation of physical violence against IS teachers, and one not mentioned by Winning, was that the number of schools and scholars in the Kingscourt District had declined from the mid 1840s (Table 4.2). Once the largest and most influential district in Ireland, Kingscourt returned no schools or scholars for 1851.<sup>144</sup>

Winning, however, insisted that the persecution of the IS teachers in the Kingscourt District continued after 1845. Instead of being assaulted and murdered as previously, several young men were being forced to enlist in the army, or emigrate. Entire families 'were obliged to seek asylum in a foreign land' in England, Scotland, Australia and America, due to the persecution they encountered. Winning attributed this wave of emigration of IS teachers solely to the persecution meted out to them.<sup>145</sup> In 1845, the people were on the verge of starvation; many were unemployed, eking out a subsistence existence, and living in cabins and hovels.<sup>146</sup> An examination of one branch of the Kingscourt District, Farney, shows that other factors were at play.

Some of Winning's teachers worked in the Farney branch and lived on the Shirley Estate, Carrickmacross, in County Monaghan (two of those murdered, McKittrick and McCabe, had been Shirley's tenants). William Steuart Trench, Shirley's land agent, encouraged tenants 'to part with their interest in their small farms to their richer neighbours; and either emigrate, or become cottiers (under certain regulations and conditions)'.<sup>147</sup> A 'cottier' was a labourer or landless person who rented a small plot of land from a farmer on a season-to-season basis. Trench promoted assisted emigration in a bid to improve the Shirley Estate and rid it of non-viable holdings.<sup>148</sup> The population explosion of pre-Famine Ireland saw the sub-

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<sup>144</sup> IS, *Thirty-third annual report*, 1851, p. 24.

<sup>145</sup> IS, *Twenty-seventh annual report*, 1845, pp 7–8.

<sup>146</sup> See Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger 1845–1849* (Dublin, 1991); for more recent work, see *Famine Folios* series, L. Perry Curtis Jr., *Notice to quit: the Great Irish Famine evictions* (Hamden, 2015); Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *I mBéal an Bháis: the Great Famine & the language shift in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Hamden, 2015); Michael Foley, *Death in every paragraph: journalism & the Great Irish Famine* (Hamden, 2015); Robert Smart, *The Famine in modern literature* (Hamden, 2015).

<sup>147</sup> Evelyn Shirley, letter to friends and tenants, undated (PRONI, D3531/C/1/7).

<sup>148</sup> For a general discussion on assisted emigration the 1840s, see Desmond Norton, 'On landlord-assisted emigration from some Irish estates in the 1840s' in *Agricultural History Review*, liii, no. 1 (2005), pp 24–40; for individual estate, Tyler Anbinder, 'Lord Palmerston and the Irish Famine emigration' in *The Historical Journal*, 44, 2 (2001), pp 441–69; for Shirley Estate in Winning's

letting and division of farms into economically non-viable holdings.<sup>149</sup> There was a ‘disposition’ in the area to emigrate to America, Rev. Thomas Gibson reported, ‘provided encouragement was given them’.<sup>150</sup> Trench sent eighty cottiers from the Farney estate to the United States within a few days in 1844.<sup>151</sup> Patrick J. Duffy estimated that ‘at least 1,300 people, including 160 families from the estate emigrated between 1840s to c. 1852’. Although many on the estate were getting ready to emigrate of their own accord, Trench wrote that there was little emigration until the landlord offered to pay the fare.<sup>152</sup>

Among the eighty who emigrated in spring 1844 was the Irish Society teacher, Peter Ward, his wife and seven children. Ward had been a schoolmaster in Carrickmaclim since 1817.<sup>153</sup> In his application for assisted passage in February 1844, he wrote that he could not survive on his income from the ‘regular’ school in Carrickmaclim (although he received £5 a year subsidy from Shirley), because the locals could not afford to pay for their children to attend. Ward made no reference to being persecuted or assaulted in his application. It was Trench’s improvement plan and Shirley’s offer of assisted passage (he received £15 15s. towards the family’s passage) that led to his emigration.<sup>154</sup> Another who looked for assisted passage, Thomas Connolly of Greaghlane, gave Rev. Winning’s name as a character witness in his application.<sup>155</sup>

## Conclusion

The ‘dangerous cocktail’ of tensions that obtained in the Kingscourt District in the first half of the nineteenth century frequently erupted into bitter conflicts that beset all members of society, including the Irish Society and its teachers and Scripture

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Kingscourt District, see Patrick J. Duffy, ‘Assisted emigration from the Shirley Estate 1843–54’ in *Clogher Record*, xiv, no. 2 (1992), pp 7–62.

<sup>149</sup> Patrick J. Duffy, ‘Aspects of Farney landscape’ in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, xxiii, no. 4 (1996), pp 393–404, p. 395.

<sup>150</sup> *Royal commission of inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland*, HC (1845), p. 961.

<sup>151</sup> Peadar Livingstone, *The Monaghan story* (Enniskillen, 1980), p. 297.

<sup>152</sup> Duffy, ‘Aspects of Farney landscape’, pp 397–8.

<sup>153</sup> Duffy, ‘Assisted emigration from the Shirley Estate’, p. 17.

<sup>154</sup> Appendix 1, Emigration lists 1844–50 in Duffy, ‘Assisted emigration from the Shirley Estate’, pp 19–20.

<sup>155</sup> Duffy, ‘Assisted emigration from the Shirley Estate’, p. 36.

Readers.<sup>156</sup> It was the Irish Society teachers themselves who unsuspectingly triggered the violence against them when they promulgated the Greaghnaogue and Kingscourt Resolutions in 1825 and 1827. Their resolutions could not be ignored by the Roman Catholic clergy.

The ensuing conflict between the IS teachers and their Catholic priests saw some of the IS teachers in the Kingscourt District being denounced from the altar, denied the sacraments and excommunicated. They were condemned publicly in the newspapers by the bishops and priests, the Catholic Association and Daniel O'Connell. They were vilified in the contemporary poetry of local Roman Catholic writers. The scurrilous ballads revealed the contempt with which the Irish Society teachers and converts, lay and clerical, were held by Catholics. Five Irish Society teachers from the Kingscourt District were murdered at the height of the Irish Society's activity in the district. In the absence of corroborating evidence from unbiased sources, not all of these murders can be attributed definitively to working as Irish Society teachers.

It was to escape being tortured and murdered for their work with the Irish Society that many of its teachers and converts emigrated from 1845 onwards, Winning stated. However, the records of one estate at the centre of the Kingscourt District, the Shirley Estate in County Monaghan, show that its consolidation of non-viable holdings and its 'assisted emigration' programme played a significant role in the wave of emigration from the area during the period.

Much of the information regarding persecution and the accounts of the murders came from Winning's quarterly and annual reports collated from his local inspectors and Winning's other occasional letters to headquarters in Dublin. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Winning's reports or the sincerity of the Irish Society's committee members that published and promulgated them. Neither is there reason to question the honesty of evangelically-zealous men such as Rev. Robert Daly, Monck Mason, or Rev. Baptist Noel Wriothsley who repeated the anecdotes. There is some cause for doubt concerning the accuracy of the information on which Winning himself relied. The human chain of people who supplied it to him, the Society's inspectors and teachers, was spread across a vast geographical spread of

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<sup>156</sup> This was a term used by Dooley, *The murders at Wildgoose Lodge*, p. 43.



eleven counties. By the time Winning received it, it was liable to have been less than accurate, perhaps, biased, selective or exaggerated.

It might be naïve to accept that being an Irish Society teacher, scholar or convert was the sole reason for the persecutions, assaults, murders and forced emigration during a period of sectarian tension and more general unrest in Ireland. Teaching for the Society was only ever part-time work, and occupied but a small portion of the teacher's working year, Sundays, Holydays, and evenings. As well as their involvement with the evangelical proselytising mission, the IS teachers and scholars moved in other worlds. They were scribes, hedge-school teachers, farmers, labourers, tradesmen and tithe proctors. It is likely that some of them at least were at different times throughout their lives actively involved in one or more of the many political, agrarian, sectarian and secret societies of the period too.

## Chapter 8

### Roman Catholic counter-mission in the Kingscourt District 1822–1861

#### Introduction

The two evangelical societies active in the Kingscourt District during the Second Reformation were the Irish Society (1822–53) and the Irish Church Missions (1853–68). In the organisation of and opposition to the evangelical activity of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District, ecclesiastical boundaries mattered. The Roman Catholic Church's response to the proselytising work of both evangelical societies crossed many diocesan and county boundaries. At its zenith the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District extended into eleven counties and eight dioceses: Meath, Kilmore, Clogher, Armagh, Down and Connor, Dromore, Ardagh and Clonmacnoise and Raphoe. All were under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Armagh, who was Primate of All Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The later Irish Church Missions' activity in Kingscourt was confined to counties Cavan and Monaghan and the dioceses of Meath, Kilmore and Clogher (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Timing also mattered. The Roman Catholic Church's response to the proselytising work of both evangelical societies is examined during three distinct chronological time blocks in this chapter. The three phases are separated by two defining events in nineteenth-century Irish Roman Catholicism, Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the Synod of Thurles in 1850. The first phase began with the launch of the Second Reformation and the setting up of Rev. Winning's Irish Society schools in the Kingscourt District in 1822. It extended to the granting of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The second phase began in 1829 and continued to the convention of the Synod of Thurles in 1850. The final period followed from 1850 to the 1860s and the petering out of the Second Reformation movement in Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Curtis (1819–32), Thomas Kelly (1832–5), William Crolly (1835–49), Paul Cullen (1849–52) and Joseph Dixon (1852–66) were archbishops of Armagh during the period under study.

## **Roman Catholic counter-mission, first phase, 1822 to 1829**

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Irish Roman Catholic opposition to any proselytising attempts was reactionary and localised. Individual bishops and priests countered proselytism in their dioceses and parishes, when and as it arose. Proselytism was sufficiently widespread, however, in the archdiocese of Armagh in 1819 for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome to become concerned about the proselytising schools there. Cardinal Francesco Fontana (1750–1822), its prefect, communicated Rome’s unease to Patrick Curtis, archbishop of the diocese. Curtis investigated the matter.<sup>2</sup> In response to his archbishop’s inquiry, Patrick McMullan, bishop of Down and Connor (1794–1824), assured Curtis that he was doing all he could to counter the proselytising schools.<sup>3</sup> Proselytism was still a concern for the Down and Connor bishop, McMullan, later in 1824. He appointed Rev. George Dempsey curate and administrator of the parish of Maghera (Bryansford), County Down, to assist the infirm parish priest, Rev. Bernard Murray. ‘These precautions became necessary in consequence of fanatical attempts having been made to buy over to Protestantism some of the poorer and more ignorant of the parishioners by bribing them with money and with clothes’, he explained.<sup>4</sup>

Rev. Luke Walsh, who succeeded Murray as parish priest, was credited with extinguishing the ‘Bread and Butter Reformation’ in Maghera, County Down. He was transferred by McMullan’s successor, Bishop William Crolly (1825–35) to Culfeightrin, County Antrim, in 1829, where ‘similar work awaited him’.<sup>5</sup> Archbishop Curtis also voiced his concerns about the ‘proselytism in many Bible schools’ in Meath, another of his suffragen dioceses, when he wrote to the Catholic Lord and Lady Bellew of Barmeath, County Louth, in 1824.<sup>6</sup> Proselytism had been an on-going concern for Michael Branagan, parish priest of Ardracran in the diocese of Meath, from the early 1800s on the estates of the ‘Bible-bit’ gentry families, Thompson, Waller, and Tisdall (chapter one).

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<sup>2</sup> Patrick McMullan, Downpatrick, 27 Dec. 1819 to Dr Patrick Curtis (Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library and Archive, A/8/3).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> James O’Laverty, *An historical account of the diocese of Down and Connor, ancient and modern* (2 vols, Dublin, 1878), i, 59.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., i, 63.

<sup>6</sup> Dr Patrick Curtis, Catholic archbishop of Armagh, to Sir Edward and Lady Bellew, 9 Apr. 1824 (Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library and Archive, ARCH/2/13).

There does not appear to have been any united, determined attempt by Irish Roman Catholic bishops to stamp out proselytism until 1826, even though the Armagh Province met annually for the purpose of advancing the cause of religion, the Meath bishop, Patrick Plunkett of Meath (1738–1827), recalled.<sup>7</sup> Rome disapproved of meetings of national hierarchies, fearing that they might undermine papal authority,<sup>8</sup> and had refused approval twice in the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, a national meeting was held in Dublin in 1826.<sup>10</sup> The assembled bishops were so alarmed about reports of proselytism and conversions in the Kilmore diocese centred on Lord Farnham's estate in Cavan, that they decided to visit Cavan in December 1826 to investigate. Patrick Curtis, together with the bishops of four neighbouring dioceses, James Magauran (1769/71–1829), bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, John McHale (1789–1881), archbishop of Tuam and William Crollly (1780–1849), bishop of Down and Connor, assembled in Cavan. There, they were met by the parish priest and vicar general of Kilmore, Rev. Patrick O'Reilly (1765–1843), who had convened a meeting of local clergy.<sup>11</sup>

Farrell O'Reilly (1741–1829), the bishop of Kilmore, was absent from the Cavan meeting due to old age and infirmity.<sup>12</sup> Another notable absentee was Dr Plunkett, the bishop of Meath, who had missed only one Armagh Provincial meeting between 1779 and 1790.<sup>13</sup> Plunkett, too, was old and infirm and died shortly after the Cavan meeting on 11 January 1827. Robert Logan (1784–1830), Plunkett's coadjutor from 1824, succeeded him as bishop.<sup>14</sup> Why did Logan, the coadjutor, not attend the Cavan meeting? A public pamphlet-war had raged in Ardraccon over the Protestant proselytising schools on the estates of the bible-gentry there, Thompson, Waller and Tisdall. There were converts from the diocese of Meath among the Cavan converts,

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<sup>7</sup> Anthony Cogan, *The diocese of Meath, ancient and modern*, (3 vols, reprint, Dublin, 1992 of 1867), iii, 136; for a discussion on Irish episcopal conferences, see Pádraig Murphy, 'The emergence of the Irish Episcopal Conference 1788–1882' in *Seanchas Ard Mhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society*, xxii, no. 2 (2009), pp 78–87.

<sup>8</sup> Gallicanism sought to curtail papal authority in favour of the bishops.

<sup>9</sup> Desmond Bowen, *Paul Cardinal Cullen and the shaping of modern Irish Catholicism* (Dublin, 1983), p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> N. J. Halpin, Authentic report of the speeches and proceedings of the meetings held at Cavan on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1827, for the purpose of forming a Society for Promoting the Reformation (Dublin, 1827), p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Halpin, *Authentic report*.

<sup>12</sup> See Philip O'Connell, *The diocese of Kilmore: its history and antiquities* (Dublin, 1937), pp 538–9.

<sup>13</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, iii, 136.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 468–70.

converts from Ardraccan, Kells, Moybologue and Oldcastle.<sup>15</sup> By January 1825, Plunkett's capability to administer the Meath diocese was being questioned. Archbishop Curtis wrote to Dr Michael Blake, rector of the Irish College in Rome (1826–29), to express Logan's concerns about 'various difficulties' in the diocese from 'the imbecility, and dotage of poor Dr Plunkett'. According to Curtis, Plunkett continued to 'despatch business', without consulting Logan. He was under the 'exclusive direction' of Rev. Mr Gainon, 'a very young and unexperienced [sic] clergyman, a student of Propaganda, not quite two years at home', and 'powerfully protected by His Excellency, Monsignor Caprano'.<sup>16</sup> It would appear that, as a coadjutor, Logan's hands were tied.<sup>17</sup> Plunkett's infirmity might explain why little appeared to have been done at diocesan level in Meath to counter the Irish Society's operations in Kingscourt, the north-western extremity of the diocese before 1827.

The bishops' meeting in Cavan on 14 December 1826 coincided, whether accidentally or deliberately, with the arrival of a deputation from the London Hibernian Society who challenged either the bishops, or their chosen deputies, to a discussion on the issues.<sup>18</sup> The bishops refused to engage in any such controversy. Instead they collected evidence from alleged 'converts' to Protestantism, and submitted it to the magistrates who refused to accept any affidavits unless they involved a breach of the peace.<sup>19</sup> The bishops, having exposed the sources and various schemes of proselytism, were satisfied from their own investigations that no 'fanatical exhibitions' had taken place.<sup>20</sup>

The publication of a second set of Resolutions by the Irish Society teachers in Kingscourt in September 1827 forced Logan to launch an investigation into the proselytism of the Irish Society in his diocese (chapter three). In the ensuing controversy, Logan was abetted ably by Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847), Roman Catholic barrister, politician, and nationalist leader, and by the laity of the Catholic Association. O'Connell had accused the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District of forging the signatures on the Greaghnaogue Resolutions in 1826.<sup>21</sup> O'Connell again

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<sup>15</sup> Farnham papers, 'Roman Catholic Converts Cavan' (PRONI, D3975/A/8/1).

<sup>16</sup> Likely Pietro Caprano (1759–1834), secretary of the Evangelisation Congregation 1825.

<sup>17</sup> Primate Patrick Curtis to Dr Michael Blake, rector, Irish College, Rome, 2 Jan. 1825 (Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library and Archive, Arch/2/8/1).

<sup>18</sup> Halpin, *Authentic report*, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>21</sup> IS meeting, 19 May, 1826 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 66 (a)).

denounced the ‘audacious document’ in 1827, and pledged to expose the forgeries if the names of the signatories were published.<sup>22</sup> The Catholic Association had been established in 1823 by O’Connell, and Richard Lalor Sheil (1791–1851), politician, writer, and orator, to petition parliament for Catholic rights. In 1824, W. F. Conway, the Association’s pro-secretary, argued that ‘it was more appropriate’, that the Association should be ‘the organ’ ‘of contradiction and correction of the several calumnies upon the Catholic body’.<sup>23</sup> Restructured as the New Catholic Association in 1826, it was supported by Irish priests, bishops, lawyers and other educated Catholic laymen. Until the founding of the Catholic Association, priests were unable to counteract the evangelical societies’ proselytising efforts except at a local level, as Branagan had done in the parish of Ardraccan in the 1820s.<sup>24</sup> It promoted the Catholic perspective and countered proselytism through the columns of its newspaper at every opportunity. The Association published Logan’s letters in the national newspaper, the *Dublin Weekly Register*.<sup>25</sup> Bishop Logan’s short three-year episcopacy was ‘marked by ill-health’.<sup>26</sup> He died on 22 April 1830, and was succeeded by John Cantwell (1792–1866) on 21 September 1830.<sup>27</sup> It was Cantwell who would lead the next counter-reformation phase in the Meath diocese head-on.

### **Roman Catholic counter-mission, second phase, 1829 to 1850**

The editor of the *London Evening Standard* rhetorically asked in 1851: ‘What have the alumni of Maynooth been doing since 1829?’<sup>28</sup> ‘The history of the last 22 years is the answer,’ he returned. <sup>29</sup> The repeal of the Penal Laws in the late eighteenth century, and the granting of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 (Roman Catholic Relief Act)<sup>30</sup>, meant that Catholics could sit in parliament and become members of

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<sup>22</sup> *DWR*, 27 Oct. 1827.

<sup>23</sup> *DEP*, 6 Apr. 1824, p. 3; Conway was appointed assistant secretary to deal with the increased volume of work (NAI, MS, CSO/RP/CA/1824/25).

<sup>24</sup> Irene Whelan, *The Bible war in Ireland: the ‘Second Reformation’ and the polarization of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800–1840* (Wisconsin, 2005), p. 202.

<sup>25</sup> Bishop Robert Logan’s letter to New Catholic Association, published in *DWR*, 6 October 1827. Michael Staunton, former editor of the *Freeman’s Journal*, was both editor and publisher of the *Dublin Weekly Register*.

<sup>26</sup> Curtis to Blake, 2 Jan. 1825 (Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library, Arch/2/8/1).

<sup>27</sup> For Bishop John Cantwell, see Paul Connell, *The diocese of Meath under Bishop John Cantwell 1830–66* (Dublin, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> *LES*, 29 Nov. 1851, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> 10 Geo. 4 c. 7.

municipal corporations without renouncing their faith. They were eligible for most of the higher civil and military positions.<sup>31</sup> Catholic Emancipation in 1829 ‘brought in a new world for the Catholic Church’ in Ireland.<sup>32</sup>

The long-anticipated realization of Catholic Emancipation together with an unprecedented population increase in pre-Famine years was a contributory factor in the extensive Roman Catholic church-building programme undertaken in the 1830s and 1840s. The archdiocese of Armagh maintained its church-building ‘momentum’ for more than fifty years. Between 1835 and 1846, seventeen new churches were consecrated in the archdiocese, and a further five were in the course of construction. The archdiocese would have 102 churches, shortly, William Crolly informed Dr Paul Cullen, then Rector of the Irish College in Rome.<sup>33</sup> John Gallogly, Crolly’s curate, wrote that Crolly’s ‘greatest ambition’ was ‘to build a cathedral which in its majestic proportions, would frown down upon the various conventicles, as he used to say, that represented the different shades of Protestant opinion in the city underneath.’<sup>34</sup> Crolly commenced building his cathedral in Armagh in 1840 on a hill across the valley from the Church of Ireland Cathedral.<sup>35</sup>

The extent of the building projects undertaken in the various dioceses depended not only on the enterprise of the individual bishop and his priests but also on the material wealth of the parishes. In the prosperous rural diocese of Meath, one of the priorities undertaken by many of Bishop Cantwell’s priests was the building of new churches and the restoration of older ones. The Catholic Relief Act had not yet been given royal assent when the Catholic parishioners of Mullingar, County Westmeath, held a meeting on 1 February 1829 to decide whether to renovate the old chapel or build a new one. It decided on the latter. The new church with accommodation for 6,000 persons cost £8,000 and was dedicated on 15 August 1836, feast of the Assumption.<sup>36</sup> In Ballymore, fifteen miles away, the clergy were in the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Raymond Murray, *Archdiocese of Armagh: a history* (Strasbourg, 2000), p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>34</sup> Topographical information in Catherine McCullough and W. H. Crawford, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 18, *Armagh* (RIA, Dublin, 2007), p. 7, quoting John Gallogly, *The history of St Patrick’s Cathedral: with a short reference to the state of religion in Ulster previous to and since its erection* (Dublin, 1880), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> McCullough and Crawford, *Armagh*, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> Topographical information in J. H. Andrews with K. M. Davies, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 5, *Mullingar* (RIA, Dublin, 1992), p. 10; Curran, Olive, *History of the diocese of Meath 1860–1993* (3 vols, Mullingar, 1994), i, 9–10.

throes of completing a new church in 1840.<sup>37</sup> A total of eighty-one churches were either built or re-built during Cantwell's episcopacy.<sup>38</sup> This number exceeded the seventy-seven churches built, rebuilt, or renovated by the Anglican bishop of Meath, Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, earlier in the nineteenth century, during his reform of the diocese.<sup>39</sup> O'Beirne attached symbolic importance to the building of churches. Likewise, Cantwell's building initiative was a powerful and visible indicator of the Catholic Church's confidence post-Emancipation.<sup>40</sup>

James Browne, professor of Scripture in Maynooth, was appointed bishop of Kilmore in 1827 to combat the proselytising efforts of the evangelical Protestant preachers in the diocese.<sup>41</sup> He continued the programme of building churches and schools in his diocese.<sup>42</sup> 'The priests and people in every parish in Clogher diocese set themselves to build or re-build churches.'<sup>43</sup> Forty new churches were built in the diocese of Down and Connor between the years 1810 and 1840.<sup>44</sup> In Dromore, Dr Michael Blake, late Vicar General of Dublin Diocese and restorer of the Irish College in Rome, completed the diocesan cathedral in Newry in 1829 begun by his predecessor, Dr Tomas Kelly. Between 1830 and 1860, twenty-five Roman Catholic churches, sixteen parochial houses and sixteen schools were built in Dromore diocese, not at all insignificant in this predominantly Protestant diocese of Ulster.<sup>45</sup>

The Council of Trent (1545–63) required each bishop to establish a seminary in his diocese for the education of young men intended for the priesthood.<sup>46</sup> Plunkett,

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<sup>37</sup> *DMR*, 8 Dec. 1840, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Connell, *The diocese of Meath under Bishop John Cantwell*, pp 118–20.

<sup>39</sup> Mary Caroline, Gallagher, 'Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne and his church-building programme in the diocese of Meath 1798-1823' (unpublished PhD thesis in History, Maynooth, 2009), p. 7; Michael O'Neill, 'Church of Ireland parish and church in the diocese of Meath in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' in Arlene Crampsie and Francis Ludlow (eds), *Meath history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish County* (Dublin, 2015), pp 445–80.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis of Thomas Lewis O'Beirne's work, see Gallagher, 'Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne'; Michael O'Neill, 'Church of Ireland parish and church in the diocese of Meath in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' in Arlene Crampsie and Francis Ludlow (eds), *Meath history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish County* (Dublin, 2015), pp 445–80.

<sup>41</sup> Patrick J. Corish, 'The Catholic community in the nineteenth century' in *Archivium Hibernicum*, xxxviii (1983), pp 26–33, p. 29.

<sup>42</sup> See O'Connell, *The diocese of Kilmore*, pp 529–545.

<sup>43</sup> J. E. McKenna, *Diocese of Clogher: parochial records* (2 vols, Enniskillen, 1920), i. 49.

<sup>44</sup> Charles C. Herbermann, Edward A. Pace, Condé B. Pallen, Thomas J. Shahan, John J. Wynne (eds), *Catholic Encyclopedia: an international work of reference on the constitution, doctrine, discipline, and history of the Catholic Church* (15 vols, New York), 1909), v, 148.

<sup>45</sup> For eulogy at month's mind of Dr Kelly which describes his life's work, see *Catholic Penny Magazine*, i–ii (1834–5), pp 188–9.

<sup>46</sup> Pius IV, 'Bull, *Benedictus Deus*, 26 Jan. 1564', *Bullarium Romanum* IV (1564); see Thomas McGrath, 'The Tridentine evolution of modern Irish Catholicism: a re-examination of the 'Devotional



bishop of Meath, in his decennial report to Rome, stated that in 1790 there were no Catholic seminaries in Ireland as the penal laws, still then in operation, prohibited them.<sup>47</sup> For a considerable time, Bishop Plunkett's seminary in Navan, County Meath, founded in 1802, was the only one in the archdiocese of Armagh, and many future bishops and clerical leaders were educated there.<sup>48</sup> One of the first projects undertaken by the bishops was the erection and equipment of diocesan seminaries (Table 8.1), where young men could be prepared for entry to St Patrick's College, Maynooth, established in 1795 and funded by parliamentary grant. Prior to Maynooth's foundation, those studying for the priesthood, after acquiring the rudiments of learning at home, were obliged to travel to Irish Colleges on continental Europe to acquire further necessary education and training.<sup>49</sup>

Catholic Emancipation was most likely the impetus for the Chapter meeting held in Monaghan town on 12 July 1829 to plan for a residential diocesan seminary in Clogher diocese. Earlier attempts by Dr Keenan's predecessor, Dr Murphy, to set up a diocesan college shortly after 1800 had failed.<sup>50</sup> Archbishop Crolly opened St Patrick's Seminary in Armagh as a junior seminary during his episcopacy (1835–49). James Browne of Kilmore founded the diocesan college, costing £6,000 which opened in 1839.<sup>51</sup> William O'Higgins, bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, proposed to build a seminary in 1832, and approached a numbers of landlords for a site, and sought and received subscriptions towards the same. Daniel O'Connell, too, promised to help O'Higgins in any way he could with the project, and invited him to meet him in Cloyne's on Capel Street in April 1832.<sup>52</sup>

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Revolution' thesis' in Réamonn Ó Muirí (ed.), *Irish Church history today* (Armagh, Cumann Seanchais Ard Mhacha, 1991), pp 84–99.

<sup>47</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, iii, 137–8.

<sup>48</sup> Among those educated in Navan seminary were Daniel McGettigan (1815–87), later archbishop of Armagh (1870–88), Nicholas Callan (1799–1864), who became a Maynooth College professor and scientist, Rev. John Hand (1807–46), founder of All Hallow's College, Clonliffe, Dublin.

<sup>49</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, iii, 137–8; Maynooth College was founded as a result of the French Revolution (1789) which had closed the Irish Colleges in France. At the same time, the British government relaxed the Penal laws which had prohibited the education of priests in Ireland Catholic Relief Act (1793).

<sup>50</sup> John Francis Murphy, 'An Outline of the Foundation & Development of the College' in *The St Macartan's Seminary Centenary Souvenir Book* (Monaghan, 1940), pp 13–27, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> O'Connell, *Diocese of Kilmore*, p. 543.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Daniel O'Connell, Cork, 26 Mar. 1832 (Ardagh and Clonmacnoise Archive, Papers of Bishop William O'Higgins, correspondence 1829–55, MS 1/9/4). The archive is closed, but is catalogued; twenty-three letters survive, MSS 1/9/1–23, demonstrate O'Higgins' efforts to secure land and subscriptions to build the seminary.

Hand-in-hand with investment in church-building went investment in education. Schools were often physically located beside the churches. Roman Catholic bishops encouraged female and male religious orders into their dioceses to provide primary level education for girls and boys. Cantwell was the first prelate outside Dublin to bring the Sisters of Mercy into his diocese,<sup>53</sup> when he invited them to Tullamore in 1836.<sup>54</sup> When the Charitable Donations and Bequests Act (Ireland) 1844 came into force on 1 January 1845,<sup>55</sup> the clergy were allowed to receive bequests which enabled them to build schools and charitable institutions. Catherine Dempsey from Kells in County Meath bequeathed her property for ‘the education and clothing of the poor children of the town and parish of Kells’. The legacy, worth £700 per annum, facilitated the establishment of two schools in the town. The schools were run by lay teachers until Cantwell invited the Sisters of Mercy to take charge of the girls’ school in 1844,<sup>56</sup> and the Christian Brothers to manage the boys’ school in 1845.<sup>57</sup> The Mercy Sisters founded a convent in Navan in 1853.<sup>58</sup> In 1856, Cantwell invited the Christian Brothers to run St Mary’s College, Mullingar, which had been built courtesy of James Heavy, who bequeathed his lands, valued at more than £1,000 a year, for the education of the poor children of Mullingar.<sup>59</sup>

The Roman Catholic building boom did not go unnoticed by Rev. Robert Winning.<sup>60</sup> In 1835, he reported that ‘almost every Roman Catholic Bishop in Ireland has given his *fiat* of approbation to a plan which has already been put into action by means of Colleges, Schools,....towards the attainment of its end’.<sup>61</sup> These buildings were the outward expression of a revitalized Irish Roman Catholic Church post-Emancipation. This physical manifestation of new-found Catholic confidence was a powerful counter-offensive to the proselytism of the evangelicals in Ireland.

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<sup>53</sup> Member of order of Sisters of Mercy, *Leaves from the Sisters of Mercy* (3 vols, New York 1882), i, 94–5; for Sisters of Mercy in Meath diocese, see Mary Magdalene Claffey, *History of Meath Mercy convents: the Sisters of Mercy in Meath, 1836–1994* (Tullamore, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> For Sisters of Mercy in Tullamore, see Dolores Walsh, *Grow where you are planted: a history of Tullamore Mercy Sisters 1836–1996* (Ferbane, Co. Offaly, 1996).

<sup>55</sup> *Bill, intituled, Act for the more effectual application of charitable donations and bequests in Ireland, as amended by committee*, HC 1844 (570), i, 111–20.

<sup>56</sup> Sisters of Mercy, *Leaves from the Sisters of Mercy*, i, 124–5.

<sup>57</sup> Topographical information in Annegret Simms with Katherine Simms, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 4, *Kells* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1990), p. 11.

<sup>58</sup> Sisters of Mercy, *Leaves from the Sisters of Mercy*, i, 125.

<sup>59</sup> Topographical information in J. H. Andrews with K. M. Davies, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 5, *Mullingar* (RIA, Dublin, 1992), p. 13; Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 473.

<sup>60</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*

**Table 8.1 Roman Catholic diocesan colleges and cathedrals in the archdiocese of Armagh, foundation dates and patronyms**

Diocese	College and patronym		Cathedral and patronym	
	Location	Founded	Location	Founded
Meath	Navan, St Finian	1802	Mullingar, St Mary	1836
Dromore	Newry, Dromore	1823	Newry, St Patrick & St Colman	1825
Clogher	Monaghan, St Macartan	1840	Monaghan, St Macartan	1861
Kilmore	Cavan, St Augustine	1839	Cavan, St Patrick & St Felim	1862
Armagh	Armagh, St Patrick	1838	Armagh, St Patrick	1840
Derry	Londonderry, seminary unnamed	1840	Londonderry, St Eugene	1849
Raphoe	Letterkenny, St Eunan & St Columba		Letterkenny, St Eunan & St	1851
Ardagh & Clonmacnoise	Longford, St Mel	1865 (opened)	Longford, St Mel	1840 (opened 1856)
Down & Connor	Belfast, St Malachy	1833	Belfast, St Peter (pro-cathedral, 1866)	1866

Compiled by Marion Rogan from topographical information in Irish Historic Towns Atlases and published diocesan histories

The successful outcome of their struggle for Catholic Emancipation endowed the Roman Catholic prelates, priests and people, alike, with a new sense of political power, a power that they grasped immediately. As Patrick O'Donoghue has acknowledged: 'the long fight for full civil and religious rights for Catholics had galvanised the church in Ireland and set it on its way towards a period of extraordinary growth and activity in succeeding decades.'<sup>62</sup> 'Maynooth priests had discovered *that they had political rights as well as religious duties to attend to*'.<sup>63</sup> Their campaign of passive resistance for the abolition of tithes (1830–38) saw partial relief achieved in 1838, when the tithe charge was converted into a rent payable by the landlord to the clergy of the Established Church.<sup>64</sup> The popular Catholic movements, the Precursor Society (1838) and O'Connell's Repeal Association (1840), were followed by a Tenant Right movement to secure reforms in the Irish

<sup>62</sup> Patrick O'Donoghue, 'Some thoughts on the early years of the Province' in *Colloque, Journal of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Mission*, no. 11 (Spring 1985), pp 406–11, p. 407.

<sup>63</sup> James Lord, *Maynooth College; or, the law affecting the grant to Maynooth, with the nature of the instruction there given, and the parliamentary debates thereon* (London, 1841), p. 293.

<sup>64</sup> *Tithe Commutation Act 1838 (Ireland)* (1 & 2 Vict., c.109).

land system.<sup>65</sup> All were ‘galvanised’ by the Catholic clergy. The ‘priest-in-politics’ had arrived.<sup>66</sup> Roman Catholic priests ‘joined every meeting, seconded every proposition, lent their aid to every project; they became interested in the voluntary levies, grew companions in the cause of the association, and the principal channels by which its influence was communicated.’<sup>67</sup>

No clergyman was more to the forefront than the Maynooth-educated priest and former staff member, John Cantwell, bishop of Meath (1830–66). Like many of the Irish bishops at the time, he straddled the dual worlds of bishop and political figure. Cantwell ‘conceived it was the sacred duty of every man, prelate, priest and layman, to do everything in his power in advocating the political interests of the country.’<sup>68</sup> He lent his authority to O’Connell’s Repeal Association, and became a member of the Association in September 1840.<sup>69</sup> He attended monster repeal meetings throughout his diocese, in Kells on 23 April,<sup>70</sup> and Tara on 15 August 1843.<sup>71</sup> He spoke at the banquet following the Trim meeting, 19 March,<sup>72</sup> and attended the banquet following a Mullingar meeting in May.<sup>73</sup> In a letter to Archbishop Cullen, Cantwell explained that he did not perceive participation in political meetings, which promoted the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people, to be in conflict with ‘our duty of loyalty to our beloved Sovereign’, or ‘priestly decorum’. ‘The best interests of religion, are not incompatible with the clergy taking a moderate and prudent part in meetings convened for the purpose of promoting the spiritual and temporal welfare of their flocks’, he continued.<sup>74</sup>

Cantwell along with the bishop of Ardagh, William O’Higgins (1829–53), attended a repeal meeting for the diocese of Ardagh in Longford in May 1843. Ardagh extended into counties Longford, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, King’s

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<sup>65</sup> The three reforms it sought to achieve were: fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale.

<sup>66</sup> Whelan, *The Bible-war in Ireland*, p. 193.

<sup>67</sup> *MP*, 26 Dec. 1851, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> *FJ*, 29 Dec. 1841, p. 3; for a discussion on the involvement of the Meath diocesan clergy in politics in the anti-tithe agitation, campaign for a repeal of the Union, and the tenants’ rights movement, see Paul Connell, ‘The Roman Catholic clergy and politics during the episcopacy of John Cantwell, 1830–1866’ in *Meath history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 2015), pp 523–45.

<sup>69</sup> *EM*, 9 Sept. 1840, p. 7; Michael Blake, bishop of Dromore, became a member of the Repeal Association on the same day.

<sup>70</sup> *DM*, 26 Apr. 1843, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> *LIN*, 26 Aug. 1843, pp 7–8.

<sup>72</sup> *FJ*, 21 Mar. 1843, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> *DEM*, 19 May 1843, p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> *The Pilot*, 15 Jan. 1845, p. 4.

County, Westmeath and Cavan.<sup>75</sup> Cantwell declared, at the banquet afterwards, that the Union with Britain in 1800 was a robbery, and that the clergy could not be respected, if they did not persevere in demanding a restoration of their rights. His opinions were echoed, he stated, by 250,000 faithful and 150 priests in the diocese of Meath. Many of Cantwell's clergy did indeed reflect their prelate's interests in national politics.

Rev. Peter O'Reilly, who had been curate in Kells and Trim before being appointed parish priest of Kingscourt in 1857, was typical of Cantwell's Meath diocesan clergy. He was an active member of the Repeal Association, and one of the foremost men of the Tenant Right and Independent Opposition party. 'Next to God and his Church he loved his country, and to the last days of his life he was a worker for both.'<sup>76</sup> Rev. Robert Mullen was another of Cantwell's politically-active priests. Born in Navan, where he studied before entering Maynooth College, he played a prominent role in all the political agitations from 1842 to 1867. He was especially vociferous during the tenants' rights' campaign for fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale.<sup>77</sup> Mullen argued that the land question and tenant-rights were the causes of proselytism. He concurred with Archbishop Cullen:<sup>78</sup> 'wherever the suffering of the poor is greatest': 'the wants of the body make him unmindful of the higher interests of the soul'.<sup>79</sup>

Getting the right candidate elected to parliament was the route that Mullen championed in his efforts to ensure that the tenant laws were changed. He urged the Meath electorate, clergy and laity alike, to make one great effort not to return Whigs or Tories to parliament in 1852 but to elect men who would support Sharman Crawford's bill on Tenant Rights.<sup>80</sup> Mullen's politics might have been influenced by the fate of his father, a £50 freeholder, who lost his house and land (on the expiration of his lease) for supporting Morgan O'Connell, Liberal MP for Meath 1832 to

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<sup>75</sup> *FJ*, 30 May 1843, pp 3–4; *SR*, 30 May 1843, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *DWN*, 23 Nov. 1878, p. 12.

<sup>77</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 410–11.

<sup>78</sup> Rev. Robert Mullen from New Orleans to Frederick Lucas of *The Tablet* Feb. 1852, reproduced in *CE*, 14 Apr. 1852, p. 4; Rev. Mullen, curate Clonmellon, was sent on a tour of the United States with Rev. Alexander Peyton, parish priest of Blarney, Co. Cork; Rev. Philip Devlin, Buncrana, Co. Donegal; Rev. James Donnelly, DD the College, Monaghan; Rev. Daniel Hearne, Bootle, Liverpool, to raise money for the new Catholic University in Ireland. Mullen sailed 26 Nov. 1851.

<sup>79</sup> Robert Mullen from New Orleans to Frederick Lucas of *The Tablet* Feb. 1852, reproduced in *CE*, 14 Apr. 1852, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

1840.<sup>81</sup> In 1851, Mullen was sent to America with Rev. Alexander Peyton (Rev. James Donnelly joined them later) to solicit funds for the proposed new Catholic University; they raised £16,000.<sup>82</sup> Mullen might have been despatched to America to remove him from the political scene.

The Meath clergy dominated the nomination and election process of candidates for the 1852 general election in Meath.<sup>83</sup> A correspondent to *The Times* could well have been describing the Meath Roman Catholic clergy when he observed in 1852:

now emancipated from all ecclesiastical control, mean to reassume their old position as “returning-officers” at the Irish hustings, and that a desperate effort will be made to gain a complete ascendancy over all other parties by thrusting into parliament a set of willing bondsmen, electing with a single view of strengthening the power of a foreign power.<sup>84</sup>

Nicholas McEvoy, parish priest of Kells, proposed the religious polemicist Frederick Lucas (1812–55), a Quaker convert to Catholicism and owner of the Catholic newspaper, *The Tablet*, as a candidate. Sixteen Catholic priests sat on the welcoming platform in Slane to hear Lucas’ election speech.<sup>85</sup> McEvoy urged his audience in Kells to make ‘Meath as immortal in the annals of tenant-right as is Clare in those of Catholic emancipation.’<sup>86</sup> Meath succeeded in returning two ‘willing bondsmen’, Liberal candidates, Lucas, and Matthew Elias Corbally (1797–1870) outgoing member, to parliament in 1852. As noted already, the Kingscourt District of the Irish Society extended into the diocese of Clogher, which covers all of County Monaghan, most of Fermanagh and parts of Tyrone and Donegal. The clergy and freeholders of Monaghan were unsuccessful in securing the election of their Tenant Right candidate, Dr John Gray, in the 1852 election.<sup>87</sup> Donegal and Tyrone returned two conservative Catholic candidates to parliament in the 1852 general election. Although the Cavan clergy held a meeting to secure the return of two independent

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<sup>81</sup> *WG*, 20 Nov. 1856, quoted in Connell, *The diocese of Meath under Cantwell*, p. 180.

<sup>82</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 410.

<sup>83</sup> Connell, *The diocese of Meath under Cantwell*, pp 169–98.

<sup>84</sup> *PA*, 15 Apr. 1852, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> *FJ*, 8 July, 1852, p. 3

<sup>86</sup> *FJ*, 11 June, 1852, p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> *FJ*, 18 June 1852, p. 3. Gray was proprietor and editor of the *Freeman’s Journal*.

Tenant Right members who would support Sharman Crawford's bill, they were unsuccessful; one Conservative and one Peelite were elected.<sup>88</sup>

Although the Roman Catholic clergy were hugely engaged in building initiatives and politics, they also attended to the spiritual well-being of their parishioners. Bishop Kilduff of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise prescribed the sequence for a religious revival: 'The only means, in my opinion, of causing religion to revive here, is to build a new chapel and get a Mission for the people'.<sup>89</sup> Parish missions, conducted by missionary priests, began in the 1840s in an effort to counter proselytism. They became a regular feature on the Irish Catholic calendar from the 1850s onwards 'as Catholic church life in Ireland conformed more to the European model following Catholic Emancipation in 1829', as Larkin, the authority on the topic, has observed.<sup>90</sup> The mission's twin objectives were to renew Catholic vigour, and quash proselytism. If religious fervour and zeal were revived among the Catholic population, the proselytisers would have barren ground on which to work, the argument went. Initially, the missions were conducted by the Jesuit and Vincentian orders. An unnamed Jesuit historian described the Jesuits as 'the right arm of the bishops in Ireland' [*sic*],<sup>91</sup> while the Vincentians were seen as pioneers of the parish mission.

The Vincentian, Thomas McNamara (1808–93), recalled that the mission was in great demand for 'stemming proselytism'.<sup>92</sup> James Murphy has demonstrated that the Vincentian mission had become the anti-proselytising instrument *par excellence* during the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>93</sup> The Vincentians embarked on their first parish mission in Ireland in 1842,<sup>94</sup> and held seventeen missions between 1842 and the late summer

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<sup>88</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 17 June 1852, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> John Monahan, *Records relating to the dioceses of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1886), p. 256.

<sup>90</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75' in *American Historical Review*, lxxvii, no. 3 (1972), pp 625–52, pp 639–40, 644.

<sup>91</sup> *DEPC*, 18 Dec. 1858, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas McNamara, 'Memoirs of the Congregation of the Mission in Ireland, England and Scotland' (1867), p. 105 (Vincentian Archives, Dublin).

<sup>93</sup> James Murphy, 'The role of Vincentian parish missions in the 'Irish counter-reformation' of the mid-nineteenth century' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiv, no. 94 (1984), pp 152–71, p. 155.

<sup>94</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'The beginnings of the devotional revolution in Ireland: the parish mission movement, 1825–1846' in *New Hibernia Review*, xviii, no. 1, *Spring/Earrach* (2014), pp 74–92, p. 82.

of 1846.<sup>95</sup> Later the Rosminians (1848), Passionists (1849), and Redemptorists (1851)<sup>96</sup> followed.<sup>97</sup>

John Kilduff (1820–67), the Vincentian bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise (1853–67), was a firm believer in the efficacy of the mission: ‘Whoever really wishes to have the spirit of piety renewed among his people, let him get a Mission. Whoever wishes to have vices eradicated, let him get a Mission. Whoever wishes to have his people contrite, purified, sanctified here, let him get a Mission.’<sup>98</sup> The bishop of Meath, John Cantwell, too, saw the parish mission as ‘the most efficacious religious aid to promote the salvation of pastor and people.’<sup>99</sup> Rev. Philip Dowley (1789–1864), the Vincentian superior in Ireland, reported to Rev. Jean-Baptiste Étienne (1801–74), superior general of the Congregation in Paris<sup>100</sup> that Cantwell had applied to have a permanent Vincentian [mission] house established in Meath.<sup>101</sup> Cantwell might have favoured the Vincentians since Rev. John Hand (1807–46), a Meath native, and assistant superior of the Vincentians in Ireland from 1838,<sup>102</sup> had been Cantwell’s protégé in Navan Seminary, and later in Maynooth College.<sup>103</sup>

It is not surprising then that the setting for one of only two Vincentian missions held outside Dublin in 1846 was Athboy in Cantwell’s Meath diocese. The ‘zealous’ parish priest, Rev. James Rickard, applied for the mission which lasted for five weeks and was given by seven Vincentian confreres.<sup>104</sup> The holding and date of the Vincentian mission in Athboy in 1846 is significant. Proselytism had been prevalent in the Athboy environs from the early 1800s. The ‘Bible-bit’ Thompson, Waller and Tisdall families, Rev. Robert Noble, and Rev. L. J. Nolan, at one time Catholic curate of Kingscourt, and later a convert to Protestantism, were active proponents of evangelicalism and the Irish Society. The Society was sufficiently active in Athboy in October 1835 to warrant the establishment of a separate branch

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>96</sup> See Joseph Prost, *A Redemptorist missionary in Ireland 1851–1854: memoirs* (Cork, 1998); for Redemptorist missions in the twentieth century, see Brendan McConvery, ‘Hell-fire & poitín Redemptorist missions in the Irish Free State (1922–1936)’ in *History Ireland*, xiii, issue 3 (Autumn, 2000), pp 18–22.

<sup>97</sup> Larkin, ‘The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75’, pp 625–52, pp 639–40, p. 644.

<sup>98</sup> Monahan, *Records relating to the dioceses of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise*, p. 254.

<sup>99</sup> Cantwell’s Lenten pastoral, 2 Mar. 1859, in *FJ*, 4 Mar. 1859, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> James A. Murphy, ‘Philip Dowley’, in McGuire and Quinn, *DIB*, iii, pp 428–9.

<sup>101</sup> Larkin, ‘The beginnings of the devotional revolution in Ireland’, p. 87.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>103</sup> Kevin Condon, *The missionary college of All Hallows 1842–1891* (Dublin, 1896), pp 12–13.

<sup>104</sup> McNamara, ‘Memoirs of the Congregation’, pp 317–42.



of the Kingscourt District there under Noble's superintendence.<sup>105</sup> James Martin, described the Athboy proselytizers in the period 1830 to 1840 in a scurrilous doggerel. The 'perverts' there were 'the fruit of *Bob* and *Larry*'s toils', Rev. Robert Noble, and Rev. L. J. Nolan, Martin wrote.<sup>106</sup>

Significantly, the only other Vincentian parish mission held outside Dublin in 1846 was in Dingle, County Kerry where the Irish Society was also at work under Rev. Thomas Moriarty, protégée of Rev. Robert Winning and formerly curate in Kingscourt 1837 to 1838.<sup>107</sup> Dowley reported to Étienne that the Athboy mission 'remedied all these scourges'. One of the scourges was the faction fighting of two rival secret societies.<sup>108</sup> What the others were, the surviving records do not say. Either McNamara failed to mention proselytism in his memoirs, or it was not considered a problem in Athboy which, in light of the Vincentian Dingle missions, would seem unlikely. However, as Peter Daly's inspector's journal for 1839 showed, the teachers and scholars of the Athboy branch were scattered across a wide geographical spread and covered six parishes. The numbers in Athboy parish alone might not have been significant when the Vincentians delivered their mission in 1846.<sup>109</sup> The parish mission did not succeed in dampening the fervour of the Irish Society there. The Athboy 'walk' had thirteen IS schools, and 143 pupils, 112 of whom were adults, in 1846. By 1847, the year after the mission, the numbers had increased to fourteen schools and 166 pupils, with 107 adults.<sup>110</sup>

The Kingscourt District of the Irish Society, from its establishment in late 1822 until its dissolution in 1853, extended at various times into parts of all the eight suffragan dioceses of the archdiocese of Armagh.<sup>111</sup> There is no evidence of a mission being held anywhere else in the Kingscourt District until 1853. Either the Catholic clergy were not overly concerned about the IS attempts at proselytism, or they were satisfied that they could counter it without a parish mission. Individual priests might have been averse to bringing a mission into parishes, believing it to reflect negatively on their ability to minister to their congregation. The parish priest

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<sup>105</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> Thady M'Blab, *Reformation the third or the apostate of N-l-n, and the perverts of Athboy: a poem in four cantos with notes* (Dublin, 1838); O'Connell, *The schools and scholars of Breiffne*, p. 42.

<sup>107</sup> McNamara, 'Memoirs of the Congregation', pp 317–42.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>109</sup> IS journal of Peter Daly (WRO, Shirley Papers, CR 0229, box 16/2), p. 43.

<sup>110</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 17; IS, *Twenty-ninth annual report*, 1847, p. 19.

<sup>111</sup> The eight dioceses were Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, Clogher, Derry, Down and Connor, Dromore, Kilmore, Meath, and Raphoe.

and his three curates in Dingle regarded the proposed mission ‘as a dreadful reproach, implying, as they conceived an imputation, that the parochial clergy were wanting in their duties towards the faithful of the parish.’<sup>112</sup>

### **Roman Catholic counter-mission, third phase, 1850 to 1861**

In 1850, twenty-one years after Catholic Emancipation in 1829, Paul Cullen (1803–78), returned to Ireland. When the archbishop of Armagh, William Crolly, died in 1849, Pope Pius IX appointed Cullen, rector of the Irish College in Rome from 1832, as Crolly’s successor, and Apostolic Delegate to Ireland. Cullen’s brief was to reform Irish Catholicism and to bring it into line with Roman practice, or to ‘Italianise Rome’, as the anti-Catholic and Protestant *Warder, and Dublin Weekly Mail* saw it.<sup>113</sup> Cullen’s first significant undertaking was the convening of a national synod at Thurles, County Tipperary, in August 1850, the first formal meeting of the Irish episcopacy since 1642. The third phase of the Irish Catholic Church’s counter-proselytising offensive, or, what Desmond Bowen called, the ‘shaping of modern Irish Catholicism’ had begun.<sup>114</sup>

*Decreta Synodi Plenariae Episcoporum Hiberniae* (‘Decrees of the Plenary Synod of the Bishops of Ireland’) were approved by the Vatican, published in Dublin and brought into force for the Irish Catholic Church on 23 May 1851.<sup>115</sup> They were accepted in all dioceses, except Galway, by January 1852. This meant that the bishops of Meath, Kilmore, Clogher, Dromore, Derry and Armagh where Kingscourt District Irish Society schools had flourished had agreed to the decrees.<sup>116</sup> Apart from addressing the question of National Education and the new secular Queen’s Colleges, the synod also dealt with internal reform of the Irish Catholic Church, ecclesiastical and clerical discipline, the standardisation of pastoral practices, and proselytism.

Cullen’s priority, once ecclesiastical unity had been achieved, was to lead the bishops in a counter-Reformation offensive against the aggressive proselytism of the

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<sup>112</sup> McNamara, ‘Memoirs of the Congregation’, p. 318.

<sup>113</sup> *WDWM*, 22 Nov. 1856, p. 5; for a discussion on nineteenth century newspapers, see Ann Andrews, *Newspapers and newsmakers: the Dublin nationalist press in the mid-nineteenth century* (Liverpool, 2014).

<sup>114</sup> Bowen, *Paul Cardinal Cullen*, title page.

<sup>115</sup> *Decreta Synodi Plenariae Episcoporum Hiberniae apud Thurles habitae anno MDCCCL* (Dublin, 1851).

<sup>116</sup> The bishops concerned were: Dr Patrick Cantwell, Meath, Dr Charles McNally, Clogher, Dr James Browne, Kilmore, Dr Michael Blake Dromore, and Dr Paul Cullen and Dr Joseph Dixon in Armagh.

Irish Church Missions.<sup>117</sup> In 1852, he declared that he wished to ‘enrol a large missionary body before next summer to wipe out proselytizers everywhere’.<sup>118</sup> Kingscourt was allied to the ICM from 1853 until 1868. The Kingscourt ICM Mission was confined to parts of counties Cavan and Monaghan,<sup>119</sup> and the dioceses of Meath, Clogher, and Kilmore, in the archdiocese of Armagh.

Bishop Cantwell’s visitation diary reveals that missions were held in the principal towns in his Meath diocese and that he attended them.<sup>120</sup> Proselytism was rampant in Cantwell’s mensal parish of Kells between 1852 and 1854.<sup>121</sup> The bishop’s administrator there, Rev. Nicholas McEvoy, with his curates, Rev. Geoghan and Rev. O’Reilly, ‘were unceasing in their efforts to protect the flock....from the base and flagrant attempts made through their poverty to pervert them from the religion of their fathers’.<sup>122</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that the Vincentians conducted a mission in Kells in July 1854. The politically-active McEvoy even missed a meeting in Navan to arrange a testimonial to Lucas, MP for Meath, ‘champion of the Catholic Church in the British House of Commons’, because of the mission.<sup>123</sup> In November 1855, the Redemptorists conducted a mission in Kingscourt, and followed ‘a most active and well-organized course of services, sermons, and confessions, producing great excitement.’<sup>124</sup> The next extant record of a mission in Kingscourt was not until August 1862.<sup>125</sup>

The Jesuits conducted a mission in St Mary’s parish, Drogheda, in the Meath diocese in 1853, and again in 1861.<sup>126</sup> On 4 May 1856, a Jesuit Mission commenced in Mullingar which lasted three weeks.<sup>127</sup> The following year, Cantwell opened and participated in a Jesuit mission in Navan, conducted by Fathers Haly, Fortescue, Ronan and Kyan.<sup>128</sup> Castlepollard and Tullamore had missions in June and

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<sup>117</sup> Bowen, *Paul Cardinal Cullen*, p. 135.

<sup>118</sup> Emmet J. Larkin, *The historical dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington, 1984), p. 79.

<sup>119</sup> ICM, *Report of the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, read at the eighth annual meeting, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1857, with a list of subscribers, etc., etc., etc.* (London, 1857), p. 87.

<sup>120</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, iii, 492.

<sup>121</sup> *FJ*, 14 July 1854, p. 3.

<sup>122</sup> *WFJ*, 6 Nov. 1852, p. 7.

<sup>123</sup> *FJ*, 14 July 1854, p. 3; Frederick Lucas, MP for Meath,

<sup>124</sup> A. R. C. Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions continued to the year 1869* (London, 1875), p. 161.

<sup>125</sup> *DD*, 6 Sept. 1862, p. 4.

<sup>126</sup> *CP*, 30 Mar. 1861, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, iii, 492.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 494.

September, respectively, in 1858.<sup>129</sup> Cantwell opened the Tullamore mission with High Mass on Sunday 12 September 1858. In his Lenten pastoral of 1859, Cantwell urged those of his priests who had not availed of the many mission fathers, ‘distinguished for learning, piety, and zeal’, to do so, and hold a mission ‘with as little delay as possible’.<sup>130</sup>

Elsewhere in the Kingscourt Mission in the archdiocese of Armagh, the Jesuit Fathers, Haly, Fortescue and Ronayne led the three-week long mission in Clontibret, County Monaghan, in the diocese of Clogher in May 1860.<sup>131</sup> Joseph Dixon (1806–66), the archbishop of Armagh, invited the Vincentians to conduct a mission in Armagh in 1853 which lasted for four weeks.<sup>132</sup> The Rosminians held a mission in St Peter’s Church, Drogheda, in 1853.<sup>133</sup> The Redemptorists held a mission in Dundalk in June 1855.<sup>134</sup> They later established a mission house there in 1876.

The parish mission lasted from two to eight weeks typically, and drew participants from an extensive hinterland. Thus, by holding missions in the principal towns in his diocese, Cantwell might have expected that a large proportion of his flock would have had access to a mission. Some idea of the crowds that attended a mission can be gleaned from the lengthy reports published in both the Catholic and anti-Catholic newspapers. In Strokestown, County Roscommon, the unfinished church was temporarily roofed to accommodate the expected 4,000 who would attend the three-week long Jesuit mission there in October 1858.<sup>135</sup> In Charleville, County Cork, where the parish priest, Dr Croke, invited the Jesuits in 1860, where day after day, and night after night the chapel and the area immediately outside it were packed to inconvenience by immense crowds, listening in breathless silence to the burning words which fell from the lips of the rev. [*sic*] fathers.<sup>136</sup> The crowd of at least four to five thousand that attended a Redemptorist mission in Kilkenny Cathedral in December 1858 was so large that, in a rush to get closer to the Blessed Sacrament, several were injured.<sup>137</sup> A Redemptorist mission in Ennis, County Clare,

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<sup>129</sup> *MPCWC*, 26 June 1858, p. 5; Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, iii, 496.

<sup>130</sup> *FJ*, 4 Mar. 1859, p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> The mission opened on 6 May, and closed on 27 May 1860, *DD*, 2 June 1860, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> *The Ulsterman*, 16 Apr. 1853, p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> *CP*, 22 Oct. 1853, p. 4; there are two dioceses in Drogheda, the diocese of Armagh is north of the River Boyne, the diocese of Meath is south of the river.

<sup>134</sup> *EF*, 6 June 1855, p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> *RWM*, 16 Oct. 1858, p. 2.

<sup>136</sup> *CE*, 10 Oct. 1860, p. 4.

<sup>137</sup> *KJ*, 1 Dec. 1858, p. 3.

attracted a crowd of at least 5,000, the *Tipperary Vindicator* reported.<sup>138</sup> Missioners in Newtownlimavaddy, County Derry, needed to use a field to accommodate the large crowd.<sup>139</sup>

The preaching styles of the missionary team differed greatly. One preacher ‘thundered’; another ‘soothed’; one ‘disabused’ the congregation, while another reduced it to tears.<sup>140</sup> The cumulative effect was intended to win recalcitrant Catholics back to the practise of their faith and reception of the sacraments. The Jesuit mission in Athlone in September 1856, led by Dr Healy of Gardiner Street, Dublin, assisted by Reverends Dywer, Kyon, Fortescue, and Rowland was typical:<sup>141</sup> ‘the mild impressive language of Father Healy, the powerful and argumentative appeals of Father Dywer, and the scathing eloquence of Father Fortescue.’<sup>142</sup>

The missioners celebrated masses from seven until ten o’clock each morning. Throughout the day, they heard confessions. The ‘general confession’, in which the penitent confessed all sins committed from the use of reason to the present,<sup>143</sup> attracted such large congregations that often tickets had to be issued, as in Dingle in 1846.<sup>144</sup> About 12,000 went to confession, and received communion, during the three weeks of the Rosminian mission in Drogheda in 1853.<sup>145</sup> A penitent arriving at six o’clock in the morning to Killybegs mission in County Donegal had little chance of getting to confession on that day.<sup>146</sup> At the Vincentian Mission in Longford, the missioners were assisted by secular clergy in the confessional.<sup>147</sup> Likewise in Kilkenny, eight or ten local priests assisted the missioners at confessions.<sup>148</sup>

The missioners instructed children and adults for reception of the sacraments of communion and confirmation,<sup>149</sup> ‘for those whose ignorance may have escaped the vigilance and care of their own clergy.’<sup>150</sup> Whenever the Vincentians observed a

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<sup>138</sup> *TV*, 26 Mar. 1861, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> *CE*, 8 Sept. 1854, p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 Oct. 1860, p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> *AS*, 3 Sept. 1856, p. 2; *AS*, 10 Sept. 1856, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> *CT*, 13 Sept. 1856, p. 5.

<sup>143</sup> For general confession, see Andrew Donlevy, *The catechism, or Christian doctrine, by way of question and answer, drawn chiefly from the express word of God, and other pure sources* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Dublin, 1848), pp 283–87.

<sup>144</sup> McNamara, ‘Memoirs of the Congregation’, p. 322.

<sup>145</sup> John Michael Hill, *The Rosminian mission: sowers of the second spring* (Leominster, 2017), pp 254–5, citing *DA*.

<sup>146</sup> *CT*, 28 June 1856, p. 5.

<sup>147</sup> *DWN*, 11 June 1859, p. 7.

<sup>148</sup> *KJ*, 31 Oct. 1860, p. 1.

<sup>149</sup> *CT*, 13 Sept. 1856, p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> *CE*, 10 Oct. 1860, p. 4.

considerable number of adults in a parish who had not made their first communion, or been confirmed, they made special arrangements to prepare them for these sacraments.<sup>151</sup> Bishop Cantwell administered confirmation at the close of the Castlepollard mission, as did other bishops on request.<sup>152</sup>

The mission finished each day with a sermon. While the catechetical lectures were well-attended in Charleville, County Cork, ‘the evening lectures commanded a greater audience’.<sup>153</sup> The Rosary and solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament followed.<sup>154</sup> On Sundays, a religious procession was held. Girls in white dresses and veils, carrying silk banners and bouquets, wearing chains, crosses, and religious medals, scattered flowers, followed by boys in surplice and soutane, and the choir singing. On the final Sunday, the pontifical blessing was imparted.<sup>155</sup> To sustain the fervour of the mission when the missionaries had departed, the mission-cross, a permanent and physical reminder of the mission, was planted in the chapel-yard and blessed.<sup>156</sup> In New Ross, County Wexford, the Redemptorists’ mission-cross was ten feet high.<sup>157</sup> In St Mary’s, Drogheda, it stood eight feet tall.<sup>158</sup> The Passionists, at the close of their mission in Castlepollard 1858 erected a mission-cross, blessed by Dr Cantwell.<sup>159</sup> Those who recited set prayers at the cross could gain indulgences. In Kingstown [Dun Laoghaire], near Dublin, ‘adoring crowds’ visited the Redemptorist mission-cross daily.<sup>160</sup> The Irish Church Missions compared the ‘kissing and bowing down’ before the ‘red cross set up by the Redemptorists’ as idolatry, and likened it to the worshipping of the brazen serpent set up by Moses.<sup>161</sup>

The missionaries established sodalities. The Vincentians set up a male and female Christian Doctrine Confraternity in Dingle in 1846, to teach the diocesan catechism to the children on Sundays. They established branches of the Ladies’ Association of Charity and the Men’s lay organisation of Saint Vincent de Paul.<sup>162</sup> The Redemptorists set up the Confraternity of the Holy Family at the close of their

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<sup>151</sup> McNamara, ‘Memoirs of the Congregation’, p. 105.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, *MPCWC*, 26 June 1858, p. 5.

<sup>153</sup> *CE*, 10 Oct. 1860, p. 4.

<sup>154</sup> *CT*, 13 Sept. 1856, p. 5.

<sup>155</sup> *DD*, 8 June 1861, p. 7.

<sup>156</sup> *CE*, 10 Oct. 1860, p. 4. The mission cross was blessed in Clontibret, County Monaghan at close of Jesuit mission, 27 May 1860, *DD*, 2 June 1860, p. 3.

<sup>157</sup> *DEM*, 10 May 1854, p. 3.

<sup>158</sup> *CP*, 30 Mar. 1861, p. 2.

<sup>159</sup> *MPCWC*, 26 June 1858, p. 5.

<sup>160</sup> *KEP*, 12 Jan. 1856, p. 4.

<sup>161</sup> Scriptural reference to Numbers 21:9; *SNL*, 2 July 1858, p. 4.

<sup>162</sup> McNamara, ‘Memoirs of the Congregation’, pp 326–7.

mission in Strabane and Lifford in the Derry diocese in November 1852. The Strabane mission was the fifth Redemptorist mission in two years within a circumference of thirty miles there.<sup>163</sup> The Confraternity was still active seven years later, when it prepared 400 children for the sacrament of confirmation administered by Bishop Kelly on 25 July 1859.<sup>164</sup> During a month-long mission in Athlone in the autumn of 1853, the Societies of the Scapulars, Living Rosary, Sacred Heart, Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine, and Society of St Vincent de Paul were established to cater for different and overlapping groups of parishioners.<sup>165</sup>

‘Missions became marts for pious books, pictures, crosses, beads, medals, scapulars’, as dealers followed the missions with supplies of pious objects.<sup>166</sup> The missions in Kilkenny in 1858 had the carnival atmosphere ‘of a fair or a thickly thronged market’, where booths sold crucifixes, beads, and medals.<sup>167</sup> Frequently, the mission was the occasion of establishing a shop or repository permanently in the parish for the sale of such things.<sup>168</sup> The Vincentians advised penitents to read pious books so as to preserve the fruits of the mission.<sup>169</sup> *The mission book: a manual of instructions and prayers* was particularly useful for those who had attended a Redemptorist mission.<sup>170</sup> It enabled them ‘to revive at any time the feelings excited by the sermons, and thus aid them to persevere in their good resolutions.’<sup>171</sup> Catholic publications for the season of Lent included *The treasury of prayer, Catholic piety, Parson’s directory, Holy-week books, Lenten monitor, Stations of the Cross*.<sup>172</sup> The parish missions left behind them a ‘reformed religious observance’.<sup>173</sup> According to the *Catholic Telegraph and Irish Sun*, a ‘glorious’ Jesuit mission in Athlone, August to September 1856, saw the parish-mission’s twin objectives realised: ‘virtue is in

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<sup>163</sup> *CT*, 22 Oct. 1853, p. 8.

<sup>164</sup> *DWN*, 30 July 1859, p. 6.

<sup>165</sup> Monahan, *Records relating to the dioceses of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise*, pp 253–4.

<sup>166</sup> McNamara, ‘Memoirs of the Congregation’, p. 116.

<sup>167</sup> *DDE*, 9 Dec. 1858, p. 4.

<sup>168</sup> McNamara, ‘Memoirs of the Congregation’, p. 116.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Redemptorists, *The mission book: a manual of instructions and prayers drawn chiefly from the works of Saint Alphonsus Ligouri, published under the direction of the Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, with approbation of His Grace, the Most Rev. Dr Cullen, archbishop of Dublin etc.* (Dublin, 1856). The prayer book had already been published in Belgium, Austria, France, Bohemia, Holland, and America; Redemptorists, *The mission book: a manual of instructions and prayers drawn chiefly from the works of Saint Alphonsus Ligouri, published under the direction of the Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer* (New York, 1854).

<sup>171</sup> *DWN*, 2 Feb. 1856, p. 1.

<sup>172</sup> *KJ*, 20 Feb. 1856, p. 3.

<sup>173</sup> Corish, ‘The Catholic community in the nineteenth century’, p. 32.

the ascendant: vice stands aghast – no more curses and blasphemy, for drunkenness with all its myriad evils, has fled from the town.’<sup>174</sup> Proselytism had been eradicated. ‘The skulking bible-reader [was] banished.’<sup>175</sup>

The increased Roman Catholic missionary activity that followed the Synod of Thurles in 1850 marked the beginning of the third phase, and a shift in the Catholic counter-missionary approaches, to combat proselytism. It provoked the ire of both the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions. The IS remarked that ‘the hostility of the Romish clergy’ had been ‘deadly and infuriate’. Its inquirers and converts had been persecuted.<sup>176</sup> It also acknowledged that the ‘so-called Jubilee’ year, granted by Pope Pius IX to the Christian world in November 1851, *Ex aliis nostris del sommo pontefice*,<sup>177</sup> resulted in a temporary reduction in the number of its schools.<sup>178</sup> The Jubilee which lasted three months in the dioceses of Dublin and Tuam was seen as ‘a blessed time of reconciliation and repentance’,<sup>179</sup> and engendered a renewed fervour in the Catholic population.

The Irish Church Missions which was established in 1849 dated the first ‘united and determined’ Catholic counter-offensive to the later year, 1856. In its opinion, there had been no combined effort to counter the Protestant crusade, up to then, ‘individual efforts only had been made to resist the progress of truth’.<sup>180</sup> ‘These occurred randomly, at local level in reaction to a particular outburst of proselytism activity in an area, and [were] without any apparent outward combination.’<sup>181</sup> The ICM was referring to the fall-out from the pastoral letter of Paul Cullen, archbishop of Dublin on 9 June 1856 and the pastoral letters of twenty-five archbishops and bishops who followed suit and issued their own pastorals on 27 June. The ICM noted the resultant changes ‘in the neighbourhood of several of our missions’ following the bishops’ pastorals. These included the transferring of priests from one parish to another. ‘Some of the more quiet priests were removed’ and ‘others of less peaceful nature were substituted’.<sup>182</sup> Alexander Dallas, founder of the ICM, perceived these

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<sup>174</sup> *DEM*, 9 Apr. 1861, p. 4.

<sup>175</sup> *CT*, 13 Sept. 1856, p. 5.

<sup>176</sup> *IS*, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, pp 13–14.

<sup>177</sup> *Ex aliis nostris del sommo pontefice*.

<sup>178</sup> *IS*, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, pp 13–14.

<sup>179</sup> *FJ*, 2 Oct. 1852, p. 3.

<sup>180</sup> *DEM*, 9 Apr. 1861, p. 4.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*



‘desperate efforts’ of Catholics as an indicator of ‘Popery writhing on its couch’,<sup>183</sup> trying to ‘regain lost ground, and check the progress of the Reformation movement in Ireland’.<sup>184</sup>

One of the ‘less peaceful’ priests to be removed by Cantwell in the diocese of Meath was Rev. Peter O’Reilly, curate in Trim.<sup>185</sup> O’Reilly, a Kingscourt native had, with the parish priest Rev. Nicholas McEvoy (1818–60) and fellow-curate, Rev. Mr Geoghan, defeated a much-publicized proselytizing campaign by Archdeacon Stopford in Kells from 1852 to 1853. Stopford, who was a warm supporter of the ICM, introduced three Scripture Readers, (the ‘Ranters’, McEvoy called them), Rev. Joseph Bickerdyke and Messrs Love and Sharrock, who went about selling Douai Bibles and endeavouring to enter into religious conversation with the people. Some rioting took place and the whole place was for a time in the ‘greatest ferment’. Two court cases ensued.<sup>186</sup> A Meath Catholic Anti-proselytizing Association (known in Kells as the General Anti-Soupers Association) had been set up as a counter-mission sometime before 1852.<sup>187</sup> It claimed that: ‘Not a single soul has been brought over, not a single famine conversion has been effected, not one pervert has joined the ranks of the tempter.’<sup>188</sup> Bishop Cantwell transferred Peter O’Reilly from Trim to Kingscourt in October 1857 as parish priest, to replace Rev. Nicholas Duff whom he transferred to Dunshaughlin.<sup>189</sup> The ICM saw this as evidence of Cantwell’s alarm at the success of its mission in Kingscourt: ‘This priest, it is believed was especially sent by the bishop to close our Scriptural schools, silence our readers, and extirpate the Society.’<sup>190</sup>

Winning reported that O’Reilly invited Benjamin Marcus, a Polish Jew and a convert to Romanism, to Kingscourt to assist in countering the ICM. Marcus had travelled all around Ireland preaching controversial sermons.<sup>191</sup> Marcus ‘placarded’ through Kingscourt on 6 July 1858 carrying notices challenging Winning and

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<sup>183</sup> IS, *The Irish Society Record containing a general statement of the Society’s progress as shewn in extracts from the reports and correspondence of its superintendents and other friends* (Dublin, Feb. 1852), p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>185</sup> Cogan, *The diocese of Meath*, ii, 301.

<sup>186</sup> John Healy, *History of the diocese of Meath* (2 vols, Dublin, 1908), ii, 190.

<sup>187</sup> *FJ*, 3 May 1853, p. 3.

<sup>188</sup> *WFJ*, 6 Nov. 1852, p. 7.

<sup>189</sup> *MPCWC*, 17 Oct. 1857, p. 2.

<sup>190</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of Irish Church Missions*, 1859, p. 80.

<sup>191</sup> Kingstown, near Dublin, in June 1856, *CT*, 7 June 1856, p. 8; Waterford in September 1856, *WDWM*, 20 Sept. 1856, p. 6; Kilkenny, Belfast, Cootehill, Navan and Kingscourt, *MPCWC*, 9 July 1859, p. 1.

Gelston to a controversial meeting which lasted for four days.<sup>192</sup> Marcus's visit was unsuccessful, Winning assured the ICM. Not only did he lose the controversial debate, he was credited with awakening 'dormant minds' which resulted in more people reading and comparing the Protestant and Roman versions of the Scriptures. To Winning this represented success: 'The Lord had caused that which was intended to *retard*, to *hasten* onward the good work.'<sup>193</sup> There is no evidence that O'Reilly made any further attempts to 'extirpate' the ICM in the Kingscourt District, most likely because the ICM was never the force in Kingscourt that it was elsewhere.<sup>194</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has identified three distinct phases in the Catholic Church's response to the Protestant crusade of the Second Reformation, namely pre-Emancipation, post-Emancipation and post-Synod of Thurles. Pre-Emancipation, the Catholic clergy and laity in the Kingscourt District fought the proselytising effort of the Irish Society when and wherever it arose. The Catholic Association and Daniel O'Connell took on the battle in 1824 and fought proselytism on a national level. A Catholic resurgence followed the granting of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. It saw the physical landscape of Ireland transformed with the construction of impressive Catholic cathedrals and new and renovated churches. Diocesan schools were established. Monasteries and convents of male and female religious orders were erected to provide education for Catholic children. Post-emancipation also saw the emergence of the 'priest in politics' when Catholic clergy assumed a leading role in all the major, national, political campaigns such as Catholic Emancipation, the land question and Tenant Right. By alleviating the poverty and deprivation of impoverished Catholics, the conditions under which the evangelical Irish Church Missions had their greatest successes were removed.

By the time Archbishop Paul Cullen convened the Synod of Thurles in 1850, the Roman Catholic bishops and their priests had built churches local enough to ensure the faithful's attendance at the celebration of mass, the sacraments and devotions, and large enough to hold parish missions and public meetings on

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<sup>192</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of Irish Church Missions*, 1859, pp 80–82.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>194</sup> For ICM in Connemara, see Miriam Moffitt, *Soupers and Jumpers: the Protestant Missions in Connemara 1848–1937* (Dublin, 2008).

occasion. Cullen's main concern, once ecclesiastical unity had been achieved, was to lead the bishops in a counter-Reformation offensive against the aggressive proselytism of the Irish Church Missions.<sup>195</sup> Cullen encouraged the parish mission in his Dublin diocese. Cantwell did likewise in Meath, as did other bishops in the Armagh archdiocese, the geographical focus of this study. The missionaries established devotional exercises and practices which sustained Catholic religious fervour and zeal in the long-term. The 'reformed religious observance'<sup>196</sup> of an energised Catholic population was a powerful antidote to the proselytisers who were left with barren ground on which to work.

The timing of the Protestant Second Reformation in Ireland from 1822 to the 1860s corresponded with a gradually and increasingly vigorous period of religious reform and revival within the Irish Roman Catholic Church. The evangelical societies of the Second Reformation were swimming against the tide of a resurgent Catholic Church which, 'rising like a Leviathan from Ireland's eighteenth century penal laws', dominated the religious, political and social life of nineteenth-century Ireland.<sup>197</sup> The impact of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District will be examined in the next chapter.

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<sup>195</sup> Bowen, *Paul Cardinal Cullen*, p. 135.

<sup>196</sup> Corish, 'The Catholic community in the nineteenth century', p. 32.

<sup>197</sup> Akenson, *Discovering the end of time*, pp 187–8.

## Chapter 9

### The impact of the ‘Second Reformation’ in the Kingscourt District short-term and long-term

#### Introduction

The primary objective of all evangelical societies operating in Ireland during the Second Reformation was the conversion of Irish Roman Catholics to scriptural Protestantism and the completion of the ‘unfinished’ Reformation of the sixteenth century. Did the ‘Second Reformation’ societies achieve their objectives in the Kingscourt District? This short chapter assesses the short-term and long-term impact of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District. It analyses this Protestant crusade’s effect on the religious denominational balance, the local economy and the Irish language and literary tradition of the district. It looks at the legacy left by the driving force of the Second Reformation in the area, Rev. Robert Winning.

#### Religious

Rev. Robert Winning’s evangelical mission spanned thirty-nine years with the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions in the Kingscourt District. Although the societies employed different methodologies, the ultimate aim of both was to proselytise the Roman Catholic majority. Did they succeed? Did large numbers of Catholics convert to Protestantism? In 1834, a Royal Commission was set up to investigate the religious state of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> It classified religious professions by parish, and diocese. It recorded the average attendances at Roman Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan Methodist services, and whether attendances were increasing, stationary, or diminishing. Thomas Larcom, under-secretary for Ireland (1853–68), believed that, while the totals in the 1834 enumeration might not have been exact, the relative proportions ‘between the numbers of the several communions

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<sup>1</sup> *Royal Commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report*, [C 45 46 47], HC 1835, xxiii.1, 829, xxxiv.1.

may have been moderately correct.’<sup>2</sup> Twenty-nine years later, the census of 1861 also collected data on religion, the first census to do so. In contrast to an 1834 investigation, it identified the religious professions by province, city, parliamentary borough, and certain corporate towns. The two reports are not comparable. Nevertheless, they give some idea of the relative size of the Catholic and Protestant populations in 1834 and again in 1861, and cover almost three decades of Winning’s evangelical work in the Kingscourt District.

One of those who contributed to the 1834 report was Thomas Russell, chief inspector of the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District. He wrote to the commissioners on 20 December 1834, explaining why he had not included the Society’s schools in Loughbracken parish (Drumcondra, Drumconrath), County Meath) in his report. He included the names of nine gentlemen from whom further information could be had. All were actively involved with IS schools in the Kingscourt District. Six were clergymen of the Established Church, while two were members of the gentry. One of the clergymen was Rev. Robert Winning.<sup>3</sup> The parishes, in which they lived, were: Ardraccan, Skyrne, Navan, Clongill, Enniskeen alias, Kingscourt, in the Meath diocese; Drumcar and Dunleer in Armagh diocese; Newry in Dromore diocese, and Aughnamullen in the diocese of Clogher. An examination of those parishes in the 1834 report will indicate whether the Protestant congregation was ‘increasing’, ‘diminishing’ or ‘stationary’, twelve years after the IS first began in the district.

In the parish of Ardraccan, Archdeacon Henry Pakenham’s parish, the average number present at church services was 150, and was described as ‘stationary’. Syddan’s congregation of between forty and fifty was also ‘stationary’, as was Navan’s. The Church of Ireland congregation in Nobber parish, where the first IS schools in the Kingscourt District were set up, averaged between thirty and forty, and was ‘stationary’. In Dundalk, on the estate of the evangelical Lord Roden, one of the promoters of the Irish Society, 500 attended morning service and 200 evening service, but this number, too, was ‘stationary’, as it was nearby Dunleer. The

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<sup>2</sup> Malcolm P. A. Macourt, ‘The religious inquiry in the Irish census of 1861’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxi, no. 82 (Sept. 1978), pp 168–87, pp 170–171, citing ‘Observations on the census of 1861’, handwritten by Sir Thomas Aiskew Larcom, under-secretary for Ireland, 1853–68, and inserted at the beginning of his collection of papers on the census of 1861 (NLI, Larcom papers, MS 7750).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Russell’s account of the Kingscourt District, extract of a letter addressed to one of the commissioners of education enquiry, 20 Dec. 1834, pp 26–9 (copy of Russell’s letter in RIA, OS memoirs, box 19V2, parish Enniskeen, Co. Cavan).

Presbyterian meeting house in Ervey in Enniskeen, where Winning ministered, showed a ‘stationary’ attendance of 250. On the other hand, in the nearby Church of Ireland in Enniskeen, the average attendance of 135 at services was ‘diminishing’. This was despite the Irish Society’s operations in the Kingscourt District from 1822. The diminishing numbers in the published report might have been what prompted Rev. Robert Daly to remark in 1834 that although the IS masters had rejected the ‘Popish Church, no other had as yet received them’ into the Protestant Church.<sup>4</sup> It was not until October 1835 that the first twenty-five converts were led by Rev. Winning himself to the communion and presented by him ‘as the first fruits of a Church Society’s efforts.’<sup>5</sup> Numbers were also ‘diminishing’ in the adjoining Church of Ireland parish of Carrickmacross in the Clogher diocese. In Skyrne in the Meath diocese, where the battle for souls was fought by a zealous IS promoter and local Church of Ireland incumbent, Rev. Richard Radcliffe, Protestant worshippers were ‘increasing’. In Dromiskin in Armagh diocese where the landlord was the evangelically-minded John McClintock, the attendance of sixty was ‘increasing’.

The Church of Ireland congregations were increasing, too, in the diocese of Kilmore’s parishes of Bailieborough (Moybologue), Drumgoon, Denn, and Killeshandra. In 1834, the numbers attending services in the Established Church in Knockbride, near Bailieborough, averaged 200, and were ‘increasing’. Congregations were also growing in the Seceding Presbyterian, the Covenanter Presbyterian and the Wesleyan Methodists’ meeting houses in Knockbride, while both of the Roman Catholic Churches in the parish recorded ‘diminishing’ congregations. The Roman Catholic bishop of Kilmore, James Browne, was concerned about the proselytising work of the Irish Society on-going in Knockbride five years later when he publicly denounced the IS teachers at a confirmation ceremony. He warned the congregation not to let them into their houses, calling them ‘wolfes [*sic*] in sheeps [*sic*] clothing’, ‘appointed for to teach damnable doctrine’.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, pp 6–7, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. Robert Daly, IS, *Seventeenth annual report*, 1835, appendix no. 1; Mrs Hamilton Madden, *Memoir of the late Right Rev. Robert Daly, DD, Lord Bishop of Cashel* (London, 1875), p. 209.

<sup>6</sup> IS journal of Mr Henry Camble of the Kingscourt District, for the period ending the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October 1839 (WRO, CR 229/box 16/2), n. p.

The results of the 1861 census were keenly awaited by all denominations, anxious to discover the demographic strengths of Ireland's religions.<sup>7</sup> In the lead-up to the census, Archbishop Cullen had urged his Dublin clergy to exhort parishioners 'to state distinctly their own religion, and that of their servants' in the census.<sup>8</sup> He feared that 'in their anxiety to increase the number of their co-religionists', those who earned a livelihood 'by circulating lying tracts and placards, and by other vile acts of aggression on Catholics', might be induced to give a false return of the religion of their dependents and servants.<sup>9</sup> The Irish Church Missions counter-accused the Roman Catholic clergy in Connemara of ordering their parishioners to eject all converts from their houses on the night of the census in a bid to skew the census returns in their favour.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 9.1 Census of Ireland for the year 1861, enumeration abstracts showing the numbers of members of the Established Church, Roman Catholics, and Presbyterians in Ireland**

Provinces	Religious profession				
	Established Church	Roman Catholic	Protestant Dissenters	All other persuasions	Jews
Leinster	171,234	1,246,253	19,889	1,954	266
Munster	76,692	1,416,171	9,558	778	1
Ulster	390,130	963,687	551,095	5,442	54
Connaught	40,605	864,472	6,021	240	1
	678,661	4,490,583	586,563	8,414	322

Source: Enumeration abstracts of number of inhabitants in Ireland, 1841, 1851 and 1861; religious profession, 1861; number of houses and families, 1841, 1851 and 1861 [C 2865], HC 1861, l. 885, 890

The evangelicals anticipated that the census would confirm that Protestants, not Catholics, were the majority population in Ireland. They were to be disappointed. The 1861 census abstract showed that there were more than six-and-a half times as many Catholics as Protestants in Ireland (Table 9.1).

By 1861, the IS and the ICM had been labouring for almost four decades under Rev. Winning. Winning's Kingscourt District of the IS extended throughout the whole of the archdiocese of Armagh at one time or another. Catholics outnumbered Protestants by almost four-to-one in seven large corporate towns within

<sup>7</sup> Ian N. Gregory, Niall A. Cunningham, Paul S. Ell, Christopher D. Lloyd, and Ian G. Shuttleworth, *Troubled geographies: a spatial history of religion and society in Ireland* (Indiana University Press, 2013), p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Cullen, *Letter to the Catholic clergy, secular and regular of the diocese of Dublin, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1861* (Tomás Ó Fiaich Memorial Library, ARCH/6/3).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions [by A.R.C. Dallas, abridged and] continued to 1869* (London, 1875), p. 223.

the wider district of the archdiocese: Armagh, Drogheda, Dundalk, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Londonderry, and Newry in 1861 (Table 9.2). The evangelicals' expectation had not been realised, nationally, in the provinces, or in the seven major towns of north Leinster and Ulster. No details survive for the rural hinterland where Winning's IS and ICM operated. It is reasonable to assume that they had not achieved their objectives there either, despite earlier claims that several hundreds were brought 'into communion with the members of the Establishment, at Kingscourt and elsewhere'.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 9.2 Numbers in selected Ulster and north Leinster corporate towns belonging to the Established Church, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1861**

Town	Established Church	Roman Catholics	Presbyterians
Armagh	2,858	4,906	913
Drogheda	1,165	16,550	221
Dundalk	1,464	8,538	327
Dungannon	1,241	2,179	338
Enniskillen	2,161	3,199	148
Londonderry	3,499	11,954	4,498
Newry	2,411	7,803	1,874
	14,799	55,125	8,319

Source: Enumeration abstracts of number of inhabitants in Ireland, 1841, 1851 and 1861; religious profession, 1861; number of houses and families, 1841, 1851 and 1861 [C 2865], HC 1861, 1, 1.885, 900

Alexander Dallas, founder of the ICM, in *A mission tour book in Ireland*, dismissed the Kingscourt Mission as not having 'such a body of converts as to constitute a separate congregation'.<sup>12</sup> The ICM decided to discontinue Kingscourt Mission in 1863, and give it back to the Irish Society.<sup>13</sup> The ICM Mission eventually closed in Kingscourt in 1868.

## **Economic**

The evangelical societies of the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District were large employers, and brought considerable financial wealth to the area in the short-term. Irish-speaking scribes, poets, hedge school teachers, small farmers, and labourers had their subsistence incomes boosted by working as Irish Society teachers, inspectors, and Scripture Readers from 1822. The Kingscourt District had

<sup>11</sup> IS, *Twenty-fifth annual report*, 1843, pp 7–8.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Dallas, *A mission tour book in Ireland showing how to visit the missions in Dublin, Connemara, etc.* (London, [1860]), p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> ICM meeting, 25 June, 1863, item no. 3847 (ICM, minutes' book, not catalogued).



the greatest numbers of teachers employed by the Irish Society from its establishment in the early 1820s. It had a record number of 480 teachers employed there in 1837.<sup>14</sup> Even in the year ending December 1853 when the district had shrunk both geographically and numerically, it still had forty teachers on its payroll which contributed £222 to the local economy.<sup>15</sup> Thomas Russell, the district's chief inspector, from 1823,<sup>16</sup> earned £30 per annum in February 1826.<sup>17</sup> The IS recompensed Winning with £75 each year from 1827 until May 1852 to employ a substitute minister for his congregation while he was absent on IS duties; over more than a twenty-four year period, this amounted to £1,853 5s.<sup>18</sup>

Kingscourt was one of the 'must see' places on the evangelical tourist trail from the 1820s to the late 1850s. Many leading evangelicals, clergymen and gentry, flocked to the town from Ireland, England, Scotland and Australia to attend the three- and four-day quarterly examinations in the Market House and observe the Irish Society in action (Appendix 9). Visitors included many of those associated with the IS, including Henry Monck Mason<sup>19</sup> and Rev. Robert Daly. Rev. John Nelson Darby (1800–82), an influential figure in the Plymouth Brethren, visited Kingscourt in 1830.<sup>20</sup> Rev. Edward Nangle spent ten days travelling through the district in July 1832,<sup>21</sup> prior to establishing the Achill Mission Colony in the early 1830s.<sup>22</sup> Dr William Sewell, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Oxford, visited Kingscourt to examine the IS schools' system, before going on to establish the Irish Collegiate School in Stackallen, County Meath, in 1841.<sup>23</sup> The evangelical travel writer, Rev. Baptist Wriothsley Noel, was Winning's guest in the summer of 1836.<sup>24</sup> Lord

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<sup>14</sup> IS, *Nineteenth annual report*, 1837, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> IS meeting, 4 Apr. 1823 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 147 (a)).

<sup>17</sup> IS meeting, 17 Feb. 1826 (TCD, MS 7645, p. 52 (a)).

<sup>18</sup> IS meeting, 5 Oct. 1827 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 118 (a)).

<sup>19</sup> IS, *Twenty-eighth annual report*, 1846, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> IS, *Twelfth annual report*, 1830, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> IS *Quarterly extracts etc.* no. 41 (1 July 1832), p. 212.

<sup>22</sup> Mealla Ní Ghiobúin, *Dugort, Achill Island 1831–1861: the rise and fall of a missionary community* (Dublin, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Joseph Monck Mason, *History of the origin and progress of the Irish Society*, (Dublin, 1844), pp 73–6, 90–93; for St Columba's College, Stackallen, see William Sewell, *Journal of a residence at the College of St Columba in Ireland with a preface by William Sewell* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford, 1848); Armagh Diocesan Registry Papers (PRONI, DIO/4).

<sup>24</sup> Baptist Wriothsley Noel, *Notes of a short tour through the midland counties of Ireland in the summer of 1836 with observations on the condition of the peasantry* (London, 1837), pp 88–117.

Teignmouth, son of the first president of the British and Foreign Bible Society, was a visitor in 1852.<sup>25</sup>

Although some visitors might have been guests of Winning, others would have stayed in local hotels and inns, such as Wright's Hotel, Callan's Hotel, or the Coach House.<sup>26</sup> The influx of evangelical tourists, teachers and scholars boosted the town's economy. Visitors needed coaches or gigs to travel through the district. Inspectors, teachers and scholars needed the basic staples of food and drink. Quarterly examinations were also held in central locations throughout the Kingscourt District's branches in Athboy, Castlepollard, Cootehill, Castleblaney, Dundalk, Moneymore, and Dungiven, which similarly boosted the economy of those areas and attracted visitors.<sup>27</sup>

What happened to the IS personnel in the Kingscourt District after 1853 when Kingscourt became an Irish Church Missions' station? Rev. Hugh Gelston, the Kingscourt curate, continued as an ICM missionary in the Kingscourt Mission; he was salaried and received £95 16s. 6d. for the year ending January 1862. Thomas Russell, the IS inspector, was engaged as an ICM 'lay agent' on a salary of £50; this was reduced to £40 in September 1861. He remained on the ICM pay roll until the Kingscourt Mission closed in 1868.<sup>28</sup> Were any of the IS teachers retained as ICM employees after 1853? Since very few teachers' names were recorded in the Irish Society's minutes after August 1827, it is difficult to ascertain. Three of the IS signatories to the Kingscourt Resolutions in 1827,<sup>29</sup> Owen Farrelly, Pat Farrelly and Patrick Farrelly, were among the six ICM teachers in Kingscourt in 1861.<sup>30</sup> The combined incomes of the six ICM teachers amounted to £155 15s., a reduction of almost 30% on the £222 that the IS had paid to its forty teachers, Scripture Readers and inspectors in the Kingscourt District for the year ending December 1853.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> IS, *Thirty-fourth annual report*, 1852, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Wright's Hotel was situated on the Market Street across from the Market House in Kingscourt, where the Kingscourt District of the IS held its quarterly meetings. Callan's hotel was located on the southern side of the Market Square. The Old Coach House was on the Market Street close to the Market Square. The date 1777 is inscribed on a plaque on the wall, John Gilmore, *Kingscourt: a history* (Kingscourt, 2012), pp 40–6.

<sup>27</sup> IS, *Twenty-first annual report*, 1839, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> ICM Agency Book, 1861 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0006, p. 165).

<sup>29</sup> IS, *Quarterly extracts*, etc., no. 26 (Oct., 1827), pp 107–9.

<sup>30</sup> They were; Peter Connell, Owen Farrelly, Pat Farrelly, John Higgins, Mrs Higgins and Miss O'Neil, ICM Agency Book, 1861 (ICM, MS ICM/GA/0006, p. 165).

<sup>31</sup> ICM Agency Book, 1861 (ICM, MS, ICM/GA/0006, pp 165–6).

The diminution and the eventual discontinuance of the IS in the Kingscourt District was a blow to the local economy. The evangelical tourist industry, so vibrant during the Irish Society's time, would appear to have trickled out. The Anglican archbishop of Melbourne, Charles Perry, travelled to Kingscourt to see the fruits of the ICM for himself in August 1855,<sup>32</sup> as did Rev. Joseph Bickerdike,<sup>33</sup> Rev. Edward Ellis<sup>34</sup> in 1859, and Rev. Henry Cory Eade in 1860.<sup>35</sup> The Catholic priest, Rev. Marcus Benjamin, came to challenge the Rev. Robert Winning and the ICM in open controversy in 1858 and stayed for four days.<sup>36</sup>

### **Irish language and culture: 'the death knell of the Oirial Dialect'**<sup>37</sup>

The Irish Society directed its missionary work to the Irish-speaking Roman Catholic population in the mountains and the bogs. Its Kingscourt District was concentrated in the remote, isolated parts of the Oriel District of north-Leinster and Ulster from 1822. It began in the drumlins of north-Meath, Cavan and Monaghan. It spread into the Sperrins in Londonderry and Tyrone, the Glens of Antrim, Cooley in Louth, the Mourne in Down, the Fews of Armagh, the mountains of Fermanagh, and the lakelands of Westmeath

The Irish language survived as the vernacular language of Oriel until the nineteenth century. It disappeared with 'remarkable speed' among the younger generation between 1771 and 1871,<sup>38</sup> Garret Fitzgerald concluded in his in-depth analysis of language extrapolated from the 1851, 1861, and 1871 census returns.<sup>39</sup> To

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<sup>32</sup> CC, 30 Aug. 1855, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics read at the eleventh annual meeting May 8<sup>th</sup> 1860 with a list of subscribers, report for 1859* (London, 1860), p. 78.

<sup>34</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics read at the eleventh annual meeting May 8<sup>th</sup> 1860 with a list of subscribers, report for 1859* (London, 1860), p. 77.

<sup>35</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, 1860, pp 74–7.

<sup>36</sup> *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, with which is incorporated the late Irish Society of London, read at the annual meeting, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1859; with a list of subscribers, etc., etc.* (London, 1859), pp 80–2.

<sup>37</sup> Tomás Mac Cuilleannáin, 'Rev. Mr Young – converting through the medium of Irish', I May 1951 (NFC, MS 1213, pp 381–92), p. 386. For an early study on the decline of the Irish language, see Seán de Fréine, *The Great Silence* (Westport, 1966).

<sup>38</sup> Garret Fitzgerald, 'Estimates for baronies of minimum level of Irish-speaking amongst successive decennial cohorts: 1771–1781 to 1861–1871' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: archaeology, culture, history, literature*, lxxxivC (1984), pp 117–55, p. 137. A question on the Irish language was included in the 1851 census for the first time, albeit in a footnote.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

what extent, if any, did the IS contribute to the ‘remarkable speed’ of the decline in the Oriel district?

The Society’s first objective was to teach the native Irish-speaking Roman Catholics to read the Bible in Irish as ‘a means for obtaining an accurate knowledge of English’.<sup>40</sup> It was never its intention to promote the Irish language. ‘For all our nationality, and we have our share, we should not wish for the revival of the Irish language as a vernacular idiom.’<sup>41</sup> The acquisition of literacy in Irish facilitated literacy in English too; a fact acknowledged by Alexander Dallas, founder of the ICM.<sup>42</sup> When their minds were ‘roused to learn’, they ‘must learn English’, the language ‘by which profitable knowledge can be most easily obtained’.<sup>43</sup> As the IS teachers taught their scholars to read the Scriptures in Irish, they also taught them to translate them into English.<sup>44</sup> Peter Daly, the Irish scribe and poet, and IS inspector in the Athboy branch Kingscourt District’s Irish Society examined the schools in Oriel in 1839.<sup>45</sup> Daly described the process in Patrick Grogan’s class in Carrickstickin (Carrickastickin), near Forkhill in County Armagh: ‘ten small children first spell the Irish word, then give the meaning in English and afterwards spell the English, so that they acquire a knowledge of both, without trouble then when they come to read.’<sup>46</sup>

The shift from the Irish language to English was expressly noted in John McLeane’s Irish Society school in nearby Glassdrummond Chapel, County Armagh. There the scholars read the English as well as the Irish Testament.<sup>47</sup> The dictate to ‘abandon Irish’, ‘as far as possible’, was delivered by the Roman Catholic archbishop of Armagh, William Crolly (1835–49) to the parishioners of Mullaghban in County Armagh ‘on his usual visitation’.<sup>48</sup> ‘Irish was a danger to the faith’, he is alleged to have said during a particularly active Irish Church Missions’ campaign by

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<sup>40</sup> Rule 1 of the Irish Society’s general rules, IS meeting, 22 Oct. 1818 (TCD, MS 7644, p. 3 (a), (b)).

<sup>41</sup> *DEP*, 1 July 1824, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Alex. R. C. Dallas, *A letter from the Rev. Alex. R. C. Dallas, M. A. honorary secretary, to the secretary of the Society*, Dec. 1856 (Wonston Rectory, 1856), p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> IS, *Fourth annual report*, 1822, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> IS, *Thirty-fifth annual report*, 1853, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> IS journal of Peter Daly, for period ending 17<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1839, pp 19–46 (WRO, CR 0229, box 16/2 ).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Mullaghban, alias, Mullaghbawn, alias Mullaghbane, Collector: Tomás Mac Cuilleanáin, May 1951(NFC, 1213: 386).

Rev. Henry Wray Young,<sup>49</sup> its evangelical missionary in Forkhill.<sup>50</sup> The Catholic priests, following their bishop's lead, discouraged the use of Irish as the vernacular in their bid to counter the proselytising work of Irish evangelical societies. Rev. Mulligan, parish priest of Mullaghban (1837–78), a native Irish speaker from County Clare, abandoned his previous practice of preaching in Irish to his parishioners.<sup>51</sup> ‘Faoin am sin bhí dallóg iomlán ar gach aon rud Gaedhealac’. Priests, and teachers and parents too, did their best to strangle the Irish language: [bhí] ‘sagairt, múinteoirí, tuismitheoirí ar a ndícheall Gaedhalachas a thachtadh’.<sup>52</sup>

The relentless denunciations of the Roman Catholic clergy adversely affected the Irish language in the area, where Irish came to be known as the Protestant language [an teanga Phrotastúnach].<sup>53</sup> The stonemason, scribe, poet, and one-time Irish Society teacher Art Bennett (1793–1879) warned that the advice ‘to abandon Irish will be the death knell of the Oirial Dialect.’<sup>54</sup> William Jordan of Dromintee, in County Armagh, not only abandoned his Irish school when the Catholic Church *denounced all things Gaelic*, he also ceased speaking and writing the language.<sup>55</sup> The legacy of fear continued into the twentieth century in Omeath in County Louth. Irish manuscript collectors such as Peadar Ó Dubhda (1881–1971) found that the older people refused to speak to them in Irish for fear of incurring the wrath of the clergy or the schoolmasters.<sup>56</sup>

A wave of emigration pre-Famine also contributed to the rapid decline of the Irish language in the Kingscourt District. The maritime peace that followed the ending of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 ‘permitted the modern phase of Irish migration to the several new worlds’, Donald Akenson has shown.<sup>57</sup> Sean de Fréine highlighted two key factors which areas of pre-Famine emigration held in common. One was the prospect of better economic conditions and the possession of property

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<sup>49</sup> For Rev. Young's evangelical work in Forkhill, see Kyla Madden, *Forkhill Protestants and Forkhill Catholics 1787–1858* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), chapter 8, pp 144–55.

<sup>50</sup> ICM, *Report of the committee of the Society for Irish Church Missions read at the eleventh annual meeting, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1860* (London, 1860), p. 73.

<sup>51</sup> NFC, 1213, pp 381–9.

<sup>52</sup> Mac Cuilleannáin, ‘Prionsias Mac Uinseannáin’ (NFC, 1213, p. 379).

<sup>53</sup> NFC, 1213, pp 381–9.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>55</sup> Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster: people, songs and traditions of Oriel* (Dublin, 2003), pp 25–6.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22, citing Aodh Ó Cearra agus Séamas Céitinn (eag), *Peadar Ó Dubhda, a shaol is a shaothair* (Áth Cliath, 1981), p. 77.

<sup>57</sup> Donald Harman Akenson, *Discovering the end of time: Irish evangelicalism in the age of Daniel O'Connell* (London, 2016), p. 3.

elsewhere. The other was a knowledge of English. William Forbes Adams quoted a Presbyterian minister who stated that heavy emigration from the Irish-speaking mountainous regions of Cavan, Tyrone, Derry, and Antrim was linked to a knowledge of English.<sup>58</sup> These counties were all areas within the compass of the Kingscourt District of the Irish Society. Was Rev. Robert Winning the Presbyterian minister who was quoted? It would seem likely that he was.

Although many adults wanted to hold on to their Irish language, they preferred their children to speak English, the language for emigration to the English-speaking countries of England, America, Canada, and Australia.<sup>59</sup> It made ‘migration and even emigration attractive and practical possibilities for many ordinary people’, and was ‘a useful tool for any child with minimal ambition.’<sup>60</sup> As Tomás Mac Cuilleannáin recorded about Mullaghban: ‘Caithfidh an leigheann a bheith ag na páisididhe. Bheadh sé a dhith orra in America’ [The children will need the learning. They will need it in America].<sup>61</sup>

In the Irish-speaking barony of Farney in County Monaghan in the Kingscourt District between 1843 and 1854, a total of 1,350 availed of an assisted emigration package from the Shirley Estate. Among them were the Irish Society teacher, Peter Ward of Carrickmaclim, his wife and seven children in 1844, and the Scripture Reader, John McArdle of Liserill.<sup>62</sup> Migration to Belfast city after the Famine depopulated the Irish-speaking area of Omeath in the Oriel district, where the migrants settled in the Smithfield market area of Belfast selling fish and fruit. They became in effect an Irish-speaking colony, where they were known as ‘Fadgies’.<sup>63</sup>

Those who remained at home saw better financial prospects for employment in teaching, the civil service and the police force if they were fluent in English. English was the language of the administrative, legal and commercial world. Irish was the ‘language of neither court, nor city, nor bar, nor business, ever since the

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<sup>58</sup> De Fréine, *The Great Silence*, p. 154 citing William Forbes Adams, *Ireland and Irish emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine* (Yale University Press & Oxford University Press, New Haven, 1932).

<sup>59</sup> NFC, 1213, p. 379.

<sup>60</sup> Reg Hindley, *The death of the Irish language* (London, 1990), p. 12.

<sup>61</sup> NFC, 1213, p. 379.

<sup>62</sup> Patrick J. Duffy, ‘Assisted emigration from the Shirley Estate 1843–54’ in *Clogher Record*, xiv, no. 2 (1992), pp 7–62, pp 7, 21.

<sup>63</sup> Fionntán de Brún, *The Fadgies: ‘an Irish-speaking colony’ in nineteenth-century Belfast* (Dublin, 2006); for television documentary on the Fadgies based on de Brún’s work, see (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ql2xYTqTZVk>) (14 May, 2018).

beginning of King James the First's reign'.<sup>64</sup> Acquiring English enabled access to this world. Daniel O'Connell considered the 'superior utility of the English tongue, as the medium of all modern communication', and did not lament the demise of the Irish language.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the controversy surrounding 'gach aon rud Gaedhealach'<sup>66</sup> and the growing attraction of the English language for emigration and employment, the Irish language survived in some parts of the Kingscourt District into the twentieth century. It was still spoken in Aughnafarcon in the parish of Donaghmoyne in Farney in County Monaghan in the first decade of the twentieth century. Folklore collector, Séamus Breathnach, who labelled Aughnafarcon, the 'Iar-Connaught of Donaghmoyne',<sup>67</sup> offered a number of plausible explanations. The townland was isolated. With its 'poor and rocky soil', Aughnafarcon was spared the estate clearances of elsewhere in Farney. The people in the more fertile farms in nearby Broomfield looked down on the Aughnafarcon poor farmers and consequently the community was 'forced to live within itself and marry within itself'.<sup>68</sup>

Irish was spoken in Munterloney, Tyrone, in the Sperrin mountains until the 1950s. The last native speaker in the Glens of Antrim died in 1953; there were still eight native Irish speakers on Rathlin Island off the Antrim coast in 1955.<sup>69</sup> Anna O'Hanlon, the last native speaker in Omeath in Cooley died in 1969 aged ninety-six years old.<sup>70</sup> In Dromintee in County Armagh in the Fews, Michael McCrink who died in 1977 aged eighty-five years might have been the last native Irish speaker there.<sup>71</sup> These isolated pockets of Irish-speakers were far removed from sources of all-English influence, the churches, the Big Houses and the police barracks. The people lived in geographical, 'cultural social and economic isolation' as Breathnach correctly summarised.

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<sup>64</sup> Liam Mac Mathúna agus Regina Uí Chollatáin, 'Réamhaiste: bunús na scríbhneoireachta Ghaeilge I suíomh uirbeacha in Éirinn agus thar lear' in Liam Mac Mathúna agus Regina Uí Chollatáin (eds), *Saothré na Gaeilge scríofa i suíomh uirbeacha na hÉireann, 1700–1850*, (Dublin, 2016), pp vii–xxi, p. viii.

<sup>65</sup> Brian Ó Cuiv, 'Irish in the modern world' in Brian Ó Cuiv (ed.), *A view of the Irish language* (Dublin, 1969), pp 122–32, p. 123.

<sup>66</sup> NFC, 1213, p. 379.

<sup>67</sup> Notes on the survival of Irish as the spoken tongue in the parish of Donaghmoyne, County Monaghan (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4428244/4388024>) (14 May, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> John Walsh, 'The influence of the promotion of Irish language on Ireland's socio-economic development' (PhD thesis, Dublin City University, Dublin, 2005), p. 30.

<sup>70</sup> Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster*, p. 30.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp 30–1.

It was not only the spoken language that suffered in the Oriel district of south-Ulster and north-Leinster from the bitter dispute between the Roman Catholic priests and the Irish Society over the reading of the Bible in Irish. An equally significant cultural loss was the centuries-long literary tradition of compiling, collecting and transcribing manuscripts by scribes in the Oriel district. These scribes, many of whom were Irish Society teachers, saw it as their duty ‘to read, to study, to transcribe and to preserve any writings they could find in their beloved native language’.<sup>72</sup> One scribe, Thomas Hollywood, ceased collecting manuscripts when the clergy advocated ‘the abandonment of Irish in the interests of the Faith’.<sup>73</sup> William Jordan of Dromintee ceased speaking and writing the language.<sup>74</sup> Although almost 600 manuscripts from the period 1650 to 1850 from the Oriel district survive, many more were destroyed ‘through neglect or ignorance’. The manuscripts ended up on rubbish dumps or as playthings for children or wrappings for groceries. They were used for lighting fires.<sup>75</sup> As late as spring 1900, four basketfuls of manuscripts were thrown on to a dunghill in Cullyhanna, County Armagh, believing they were old Latin manuscripts.<sup>76</sup> The disregard for anything Irish (‘dallóg iomlán ar gach aon rud Gaedhealac’),<sup>77</sup> including the priceless Irish manuscripts, was one legacy of the Bible war between the Roman Catholic priests and the Irish Society in the Oriel district.

Donnchadah Ó Corráin and Tomás O’Riordan have suggested that ‘a strong indicator of the rapid decline of the language’ was that the proselytising Protestant clergy had given up using Irish in their missions by 1854.<sup>78</sup> This was nowhere more evident than in Kingscourt in 1853. Rev. Winning’s thirty-year association with the Irish Society was discontinued and, as a predominantly English-speaking area, it was allocated to the Irish Church Missions.

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<sup>72</sup> Breandán Ó Buachalla, ‘Art Mac Bionaid — Scríobhaí’ in *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, ix, no. 2 (1979), pp 338–49, p. 349.

<sup>73</sup> NFC, 1213, pp 387–88.

<sup>74</sup> Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster*, pp 25–6.

<sup>75</sup> See Hugh Kelly, ‘Voices from the grave: destruction of Gaelic MSS in south Armagh’ in *Seanchas Ard Mhacha: Journal of the Armagh Historical Society*, i, no. 1 (1954), pp 115–7, p. 115.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> NFC, 1213, p. 379.

<sup>78</sup> Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Tomás O’Riordan (eds), *Ireland 1815–1870: Emancipation, famine and religion* (Dublin, 2011), p. 83.



## **The central figure in the Kingscourt District, Rev. Robert Winning**

Rev. Robert Winning remained a committed evangelical all his life. By the time of his death in 1861, he had devoted four decades to driving the Second Reformation mission in the Kingscourt District, first as Presbyterian minister and later as a Church of Ireland minister in Kingscourt. He promoted its cause further afield throughout Ireland, England, Scotland and the Channel Islands, and was hailed as ‘the steady and persevering friend’ of the Irish Society.<sup>79</sup> Winning’s ability to preach in Irish was an important asset in his day-to-day evangelical mission among the Irish Society’s teachers and scholars. His competency in spoken Irish was sufficient in 1845 to establish an Irish-speaking Collegiate School. There students intended for an Irish-speaking ministry in the Church of Ireland were immersed in the language before going to Trinity College, Dublin. Winning was an able administrator and an impressive communicator. He brought an energy, welcome or unwelcome at times, to Kingscourt and put the town on the evangelical tourist map. He ‘wrought a work in and about Kingscourt that will prove his best and most enduring monument.’<sup>80</sup> Was it his most enduring monument? The stone monument erected to his memory survives; his memory and work are long forgotten, and, until now, written out of history.

## **Conclusion**

The Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District failed in its primary objective to convert the Irish Catholics to scriptural Protestantism as the 1861 census showed. It had little effect on the interdenominational balance of religious communities in the Kingscourt area. It boosted the local economy in the short-term through the many employment opportunities the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions afforded for to those qualified to work as teachers, Scripture Readers and inspectors. The Irish Society’s quarterly examination meetings in Kingscourt and in other central locations throughout the District brought an influx of visitors to the area.

Winning’s Kingscourt District was synonymous with the Oriel district of north-Leinster and south-east Ulster where the Irish language had survived into the

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<sup>79</sup> *BNL*, 18 Dec. 1835, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Banner of the Truth in Ireland*, 1861, p. 63.

early decades of the nineteenth century. The Irish Society prolonged the use of the language in the area in the immediate short-term through its scriptural schools. It promoted literacy in Irish and English to impoverished Irish Roman Catholics, adults and children alike, at a time when no other avenues of free education were available to them. The acrimonious Bible war between the Roman Catholic clergy and the Protestant proselytising agencies over the teaching of the Irish Bible saw Irish being regarded as a Protestant language. This inculcated a disregard for all things Irish and hastened the decline of both the spoken and written Irish in the wider Kingscourt District.<sup>81</sup> It also ended Oriel's long cultural tradition of collecting and transcribing manuscripts. The English language was perceived to be more useful particularly for the younger generation and was seen to offer better employment prospects, and was an essential tool for emigration. As for Winning, the best summation, and one that could not be challenged by friend or foe, was that delivered in the *Banner of Truth* after his death: 'few, very few, can be found of equal simplicity, energy, and singleness of purpose.'<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> NFC, MS 1213, p. 386. For an early study on the decline of the Irish language, see de Fréine, *The Great Silence*.

<sup>82</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, 1861, p. 63.

## Conclusion

The phenomenon known as the Second Reformation in Ireland might be termed more correctly the 'Unfinished Reformation'. It attempted to complete the sixteenth-century Reformation work and convert the majority Roman Catholic population to the Protestant faith. This thesis has examined the movement through a close, detailed study of Rev. Robert Winning's work in north-Leinster and Ulster over a period of four decades during the nineteenth century. It identified that the seeds for the Second Reformation were sown during the Evangelical Awakening of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as exemplified by the reforming work of some Anglican bishops, including the bishop of Meath, Thomas Lewis O'Beirne. It acknowledged that the Anglican bishop of Dublin, William Magee, personified the extreme wing of the evangelical reforming ethos when he uttered his inaugural episcopal charge on 24 October 1822 which launched the Second Reformation.

The primary aim of this research was to investigate the nature and extent of Rev. Robert Winning's role in evangelical proselytism in the Kingscourt District. Using a case study as its methodology, the thesis examined the research questions across six central themes. The stimulus that underpinned the Second Reformation in Ireland was evangelicalism. The Kingscourt District's geographical location, topographical pattern, identification with Ulster in terms of religious denominational make-up, and Oriel with regard to the language and literary tradition, dove-tailed perfectly with the objectives of one evangelical society, the Irish Society. The timing of the Second Reformation during a sustained period of economic depression in the Kingscourt District in 1822 meant that there was a ready supply of Irish speakers anxious for part-time employment as the Society's teachers.

Rev. Robert Winning and the Kingscourt District emerged as a force within the Irish Society schools when the Irish Society's teachers and scholars published the Greaghnarogue and Kingscourt Resolutions. They remained centre-stage as the prototype for other superintendents and districts to follow. There were three strands in the Irish Society's work: the mechanical work of teaching scholars to read the Bible, the missionary work of scriptural instruction and the provision of an Irish-speaking ministry to serve the needs of its converts. The Society relied on the philanthropy of others to fund its mission, and so its finances were always in a

precarious state. It was obliged to seek and accept help from other societies with similar objectives in Ireland and England. These alliances became fractious when their differing methodological approaches clashed. It was out of one of those alliances that the Kingscourt District was transferred to the Irish Church Missions.

The conversion of Irish Roman Catholics to scriptural Protestantism was the principal objective of the two evangelical societies, the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions. The campaign overall was not successful as the 1861 census demonstrated. The societies reported many conversions. However, these were often of a temporary nature and some converts ‘turned back’, as seventeen did in Kingscourt between 1841 and 1852. Others like Francis Brennan admitted that they converted for promotion to inspector for the increased remuneration. The greatest feather in the Irish Society’s cap was the conversion of Rev. L. J. Nolan, a former Roman Catholic curate in Kingscourt, to Protestantism. When an Irish Society rule change in 1842 excluded all but the Church of Ireland members from acting as its superintendents, the Presbyterian minister, Rev. Winning himself conformed to the Established Church the same year. This thesis offers a reasonable explanation as to why Rev. Winning is not remembered by either denomination.

This study shows how the foot soldiers of the two evangelical societies’, their teachers, Scripture Readers and especially their converts were singled out for verbal and physical abuse. Five were murdered across the period of this study, while the management went unscathed.

The Protestant evangelical movement of the Second Reformation was mirrored by a revival within the Irish Roman Catholic Church from the 1820s, leading to Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and gathering pace into the 1860s. The Catholic Church fought proselytism on several fronts. At first bishops and their clergy countered proselytism wherever and whenever it occurred; later the powerful agency of the Catholic Association proved a formidable ally. The establishment of Maynooth seminary in 1795 saw the emergence of an Irish-educated parish clergy. In order to secure better land and tenant rights for their Catholic parishioners, many of these Maynooth-trained priests, sons and brothers of farmers, immersed themselves in national politics. They brought their Catholic congregations along with them in their political campaigns. Prelates, priests and people united to create an impressive infrastructure of cathedrals, churches and seminaries. Bishops secured the services of male and female religious orders to establish schools in their dioceses. Many parish

clergy invited missionaries to deliver parish missions and promote devotional exercises; these sustained Catholic fervour when the formal missions were over. Roman Catholicism dominated Irish religious, political and social life and was a powerful counter-offensive to the proselytising efforts of the Second Reformation from the 1820s onwards.

This thesis has shown that what might appear to be an intimately local Irish study is grounded in the international context of the religious evangelicalism of the 'Great Awakening'. Robert Winning was an Ulster Presbyterian evangelist and evangelical, born during the 'Evangelical Awakening' in Ireland. His ability to preach in Irish was important in the Irish-speaking area around Kingscourt where he was ordained as Presbyterian minister. Winning was a central figure in Rev. Robert Daly's, 'Dalyland', and was part of the second generation of evangelicals during the Second Reformation.

The scale and vast geographical expanse that was Rev. Winning's Kingscourt District has been established by this research. Rev. Winning and the Kingscourt District were formative forces in the missionary work of Rev. Thomas Moriarty who later worked in the better-known Dingle Colony in County Kerry. The success of Rev. Winning's work in the Kingscourt District influenced the Oxford men, Sewell and Singleton, and Lord Adare to found the Church of Ireland Irish-speaking Collegiate College in Stackallen in County Meath.

No matter how zealous evangelicals were they needed money to finance their mission. Money was the reason for the alliances that the Irish Society made. It was how that money was spent that led to the parting of the ways, first with the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Irish Society, then with the Irish Society of London, and finally with the Irish Church Missions. It was an agreed alliance between the Irish Society and the Irish Church Missions in 1853 that sounded the death knell for the Irish Society in the Kingscourt District. This momentous decision which this research has established definitively has not been highlighted by other historians. It was in a territorial division of the missionary work in Ireland between the two societies that Kingscourt was allocated to the Irish Church Missions. The ICM Kingscourt Mission was not considered to be successful and was closed in 1868.

This thesis fills a considerable gap in the historiography of the Second Reformation in Ireland. Up to now, there has been a dearth of research undertaken at the local level on the Second Reformation in north-Leinster and Ulster, or on one of

its leading proponents, Rev. Robert Winning. The study complements de Brún's monumental work on the detail of the Irish Society teachers from 1818 to 1827. It clarifies that Kingscourt was not part of the Farnham Estate and that the Second Reformation in the Kingscourt District was driven by Rev. Winning and not by Lord and Lady Farnham.

The findings of this thesis give rise to a number of issues which call for further research. The Irish-language scriptural schools for Roman Catholics in Ireland and their Gaelic counterparts for Protestants in the Highlands of Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man merit a comparative study. Further research on the journals or mission diaries of the Irish Society's inspectors, only touched on in this study, would add considerably to the historiography on these itinerant teachers and inspectors. An investigation into the part played by Rev. Winning, Moderator of the Synod of Ulster in 1830, in the Synod of Ulster's Irish scriptural schools would also complete the historiography of the Second Reformation in Ulster.

In terms of the pan-evangelical transnational movement, Rev. Robert Winning was a minor player, but he was an important man in his time, in an important movement. It is right that he should be recognised. He epitomised Bebbington's evangelical; he was bible-centred and cross-centred. It was conversionism and activism that drove his missionary zeal to 'Go, teach all nations'. His commitment to evangelicalism during the Second Reformation in Ireland from 1822 until his death in 1861, first with the Irish Society, and later with the Irish Church Missions and the Ulster Revival was unstinting. The story of Rev. Robert Winning is the story of evangelical activism lived out by an exceptional clergyman in the hitherto unexplored Kingscourt District during the Second Reformation.

## Appendix 1

### Names and identity numbers of Irish Society teachers and schools in the Kingscourt District

Patt Farrelly	384	Henry Hanlon	319
Terence Duffy	317	Terence McArdle	481
Patt Nugent	366	Bernard Rock	585
Edward Traynor	298	Francis Connolly	251
Bryan Markey	654	Laurence Boyle	870
John M' Ardle	63	Frank Markey	610
Michael M'Daniel	509	Edward Traynor	298
Hugh M'Cabe	54	Patt Kiernachan	1115
Henry Campbell	196	Pat Callery	387
Phil. Clerken	2	John Maguire	364
Edward Tully	569	John Collaton	403
James Daly	378	John Collaton	403
Robert Burns	798	Owen Clarke	479
Thomas Duffy	715	Bernard Rock	585
Thomas Kennedy	215	Francis Markey	610
Michael Cooney	1	Ross McCabe	779
Michael M'Nally	618	Owen Fitzpatrick	672
Patt Smyth	665	John Traynor	991
Bartle Burns	686	Patt Cunningham	881
Felix M'Keown	285	Pat Moynagh	789
James Farrelly	195	Patt Soraghan	606
Patt Lynch	758	Edward Tully	569
Patt Ward	436	Patt Tevin	576
Patt Jones	1171	John Brady	338
Patt Murray	717	Owen Rourk	701
Peter Ward	434	Joseph Moynagh	667
Bryan McKittrick	632	Edward Owens	944
Henry Hanlon	319	Peter Moorehead	1016
Terence McArdle	481	Thomas Lynch	640
Bernard Rock	585	James McCabe	1171
No name given	1	John Gallagher	1
Laurence Boyle	870	Thomas Hay	567
Frank Markey	610	Edward Donahue	428
Patt Meehan	563	Pat Meighan	12*
Francis Connolly	251	Peter Ward	434
Patt Meehan *	12	Henry Hanlon	319
Patt Jones	1171	James Connelly	486
Patt Murray	717	Francis Connelly	251
Peter Ward	434	Frank Markey	610
Bryan McKittrick	632	George Beatty	373

Compiled by Marion Rogan from IS annual reports, quarterly extracts and inspectors' journals

## Appendix 2

### Regulations of the Bedell Scholarships

(IS meeting, 6 Mar. 1845 (ICM, ICM/GA/0182, pp 242–3))

1. The value of each Scholarship shall be £20 per annum payments shall be made half-yearly in the last weeks of October & April.
2. An examination of candidates shall be held annually at the close of Hilary term on a date to be fixed on annually with the Trustees by the professor of Irish.
3. The Scholarships shall be open to students of any standing in the University and shall be tenable by them for 4 years if they keep their names so long on the college books.
4. They shall be required to reside in or near Dublin & to attend the lectures of the professor of Irish if not specially exempted from [so] doing by the Trustees of this fund, & to attend also Divinity lectures when of sufficient standing.
5. They shall be required to pass an annual examination to be fixed by the Trustees in conjunction with the professor of Irish.
6. On the day of annual payment in April the scholars shall produce to the Trustees or their Secretary a certificate from the professor of Irish that they have satisfactorily passed the above mentioned annual examination in Irish – they shall also obtain from their tutors and at the same time present to the Trustees or their Secretary a certificate stating their judgements and honors (if any) which were given them at the term Catechetical, & divinity examinations during the previous year.
7. On failure of any of the conditions the payment then due will be withheld and on a second failure the Scholarship shall become void.
8. The names of the candidates & their Qualifications shall be returned after examination to the Trustees in whom the election shall be vested.



## **Appendix 3**

### **Examinations for the Bedell Scholarships**

(IS meeting, 6 Mar. 1845 (ICM, ICM/GA/0182, pp 242–3))

#### **Election Examination**

1. Irish Grammar
2. Translations of the Gospels from Irish into English & vice versa
3. The Lord's Prayer Creed & Ten Commandments in Irish by heart & proved [pariphr]ase

#### **First Examination**

1. Translation of the Pentateuch as above
2. Church Catechism in Irish by heart & proved as above
3. Composition in Irish

#### **Second Examination**

1. The Epistles as above
2. Irish Composition &
3. Declaration in Irish (extempore)

#### **Third Examination**

1. The Historical books of the Irish Bible
2. Composition &
3. Declaration in Irish

#### **Fourth Examination**

1. The remainder of the Bible as above
2. Composition &
3. Declaration in Irish
4. The Book of Common Prayer compared with Scripture

That as an examination in Irish Grammar is necessary in the selection of the Scholars it be referred to the Irish Professor & the Secretary to report on the subject to the committee.

## Appendix 4

### Rev. Robert Winning's preaching itinerary for evangelical societies, 1825 to 1860

Year	Date	Location	Purpose
1825	6 Mar.	Leith, Scotland Dalgeith, Scotland	Irish Evangelical Society preaching & fundraising with Mr Urwich, Sligo
	7 Mar.	Musselburgh, Scotland approx. 5 miles from Edinburgh	
	8 Mar.	Edinburgh, Scotland	Information evening
1826	Nov.	Stranraer, Scotland	Irish Society
	Dec.	Annan, Scotland	Irish Society
1827		Scotland	Irish Society
1834	Spring	Scotland	Irish Society
1835	10 Feb.	Belfast, Co. Antrim	Irish Society, examination of 5 native teachers. £300 collected for Irish Society
	5 July	Belfast, Co. Antrim	Preaching & collection
	6 Oct.	Bandon, Co. Cork	Irish Society Bandon Auxiliary Society annual meeting, £10 collected meeting
	6 Oct.	Innishannon in evening Kinsale, Co. Cork	
	7 Oct.	Cork city morning & evening	Deputation continued to Kinsale
	8 Oct.		Deputation continued to Cork city, £4 collected
15 Dec.	Derry	Irish Society teachers examined	
1836	No dates given	3 tours in Northern Ireland	Irish Society
1838	16 May	London	Irish Society of London
1839	15 May	London	Irish Society of London
1845	13 Apr.	Monaghan	Scripture Readers' Society
	24 June	Armagh	Irish Society of London
	3 Dec.	Leicester, England	Irish Society
1848	30 Aug.	Tullow, Co. Carlow	Irish Society
	31 Aug.	Carlow	Irish Society
	1 Sept.	Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow	Irish Society
	5 Sept.	Blendworth, Hampshire, England	Irish Society of London
	12 Sept.	Guersney, Channel Islands	Irish Society of London
	19 Sept.	Jersey, Channel Islands	Irish Society of London
	26 Nov.	Mill Hill, Hertfordshire	Irish Society of London
	26 Nov.	Totteridge, Hertfordshire	Irish Society of London
1851	6 Apr.	Bedford, England	Irish Society
	13 Apr.	Derby, England	Irish Society
	Dec.	Nottingham, England	Irish Society deputation
1857	13 Dec.	Downpatrick	Irish Church Missions
1860	28 Oct.	Lisburn	Irish Church Missions
		Bandon	Irish Church Missions

Compiled by Marion Rogan from newspaper reports

## Appendix 5

### **The abjuration of Popery of Richard Murphy, schoolmaster, Kells, 1823** (RCB Library, D7/10/21/4)

'The abjuration of Popery, of Richard Murphy of Scurlockstown, schoolmaster in the parish of Kells, in the diocese of County of Meath, voluntarily made by him before me this day, in the Church of Kells, May 23th 1823. Richard B. Booth, curate of Kells.

Whereas I, Richard Murphy of the Parish of Kells in the Diocese of Meath have been from a child bred up, & till of late lived in the Communion of the Roman Church, by which means I long had an inveterate prejudice against the Doctrine of Worship of the Protestants, notwithstanding that I was grossly ignorant thereof, & in a great measure of the very common Christianity, into which I was not suffered nor had advantage openly to inquire, being kept from the reading the Holy Scriptures at large, & used to the Service of the Church in an unknown tongue; & further possessed with many false & scandalous imputations of several doctrines as held by the Protestants, which I now understand they hold not, & of several practices of theirs which I perceive they abhor. Therefore being now by the Grace of God, who hath pleased to open mine eyes, made sensible of the past danger I was in, by reason of my ignorance, superstition, false worship, uncharitableness, enmity to the truth and other evils abounding & cherished in me, while in obedience to those false guides of Rome, I am come hither publicly to confess all this my guilt, & as I acknowledge & adore God's infinitive Grace & goodness to me, in bringing me out of Popish darkness & errors, & the very snares & depth of Satan; so I desire to take unto myself the shame of my own sloth, through which I was not so diligent to inform myself touching the truth as I might have been, & together of my evil & deceitful heart, by which I was unwilling a long time to be better instructed & informed.

I do therefore now utterly renounce the Sacrifice of the Mass, offered up the God in the Church of Rome for the living & the dead; & I trust to, or depend upon no other sacrifice, but that bloody one of our Lord Christ Jesus, who offered up himself upon the cross once for all; nor do I own any other merits but his alone.

I also from my heart reject the Doctrine of Purgatory, the Practice of Worshipping & Praying unto Angels, or to Saints in Heaven, and even to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I abhor the worshipping of Images or Relicks, & will pray unto & worship God alone, who alone heareth prayer, & who I am persuaded will not give his Glory to another. I profess that there are but two true & proper Sacraments of the Gospel, both of them instituted by our Lord Christ himself, & ordinarily necessary to the salvation of all men, to wit, Baptism & the Lord's Supper; & that they are each of them means by which the Holy Ghost does convey Grace.

I do not believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is by the Priests blessing the Wafer & Wine any change of that substance into the body & blood of Christ, nor that the people can without Sacrilege be denied the use of the cup in that sacrament

I do from my heart receive the English Bible of the Protestants, & faithfully promise that I will according to my power diligently read, hear or attend to the same, as I shall have opportunity both in public & in private.

I will lay aside my beads & Ave Marias, & all prayers in an unknown tongues, endeavouring daily more & more to pray with understanding in Spirit & in Truth.

**The abjuration of Popery of Richard Murphy, schoolmaster, Kells, 1823, *contd.***

And I do not believe any Priest or Bishop, or even the Pope of Rome himself, hath any power to loose me from Tie of this vow, or of this confession & Profession, which I here make sincerely; & in the faith of

p. 4 a Christian engaging myself to forsake the familiarity & intimate conversation with Popish Priests and Friars, & to do my best for the turn of, as many Papists as I can to the Protestant Belief, Profession & Practice.

So help me God

Richard Murphy

Witness present

[Walter] Keating Churchwarden

Abraham Folliott Clerk of Kells Parish

## Appendix 6

### Rules for Christian Asylum Association

(DEPC, 8 Sept. 1836, p. 3)

1<sup>st</sup>, That an association called the Christian Asylum Association, be formed, having for its object the protection from persecution of persons or families of undoubted sincerity of profession and propriety of conduct.

2<sup>nd</sup>ly, That for this purpose the association shall take (at first a small portion of) land, on which they may erect slated cottages, and allocate to each cottage at least one acre of ground.

3<sup>rd</sup>ly, That they may place in those cottages persons or families who have been subject to persecution for their adherence to the Sacred Scriptures, and who cannot be protected in their own residences, and whose removal might not be considered injurious to the spread of the truth.

4<sup>th</sup>ly, That these cottages should only be considered as temporary refuges for victims of persecution until situations similar to those of which they have been deprived can be procured for them.

5<sup>th</sup>ly, That local committees may be appointed for certain districts, with power to solicit subscriptions to take land, erect cottages, and generally to arrange all matters connected with the Asylum in these districts.

The following gentlemen and clergymen have consented to act for the Kingscourt district, where it is proposed that the first experiment shall be made, viz.:

John Payne Garnet, Esq; Rev. Robert Winning, Kingscourt; Rev. George Brabazon, Paynestown; Rev. Richard Radcliffe, Skyrne; Rev. Robert Noble, Athboy; Rev. Edward Nixon, Castletown; Rev. James Charlton, Kingscourt; and Rev. Anthony Blackburne, Clongill. Further information can be obtained from any of the Committee, who will gladly receive subscriptions for the furtherance of the above object in the Kingscourt district.'

Rev. Robert Winning acknowledges the receipt of the following sums for the Christian Asylum Association:-A County of Longford Lady, £20; Major Adams of the 36<sup>th</sup>, £1; the Lady of the Hon. And Rev. Baptist Noel, £1; the Dowager Lady Rosse, £30.

## Appendix 7

**Scholars in the barony of Farney passed at the last inspection under the Irish Church Missions, Rev. Hugh Gelston, 13 March 1856 curate of Kingscourt, to E. P. Shirley Esq., with Mr Winning's kind regards**  
(WRO, MS CR229/Box 16/2)

<b>Scholar</b>	<b>Address</b>
John Slevin	Lisdonan [Lisdoonan]
Margaret Slevin	Lisdonan [Lisdoonan]
Thomas Gartland	Lisdonan [Lisdoonan]
James Gartland	Lisdonan [Lisdoonan]
Henry McGuinness	Castletown
Pat Walsh	Lisdonan [Lisdoonan]
Anne McGuinness	Castletown
Owen McG[u]a[n]y	Castletown
Peter McGroder	Drumhu[] e
James McMahan	Drumhu[] e
Pat McMahan	Drumhu[] e
Francis Slevin	Lisdonan [Lisdoonan]
Hugh Malone	Carrickmacrosss
Margaret Carr	Carrickmacrosss
Mary Duffy	Carrickmacrosss
Henry Martin	Derryolam
Mary Warren	Carrickmacrosss
William Monaghan	Carrickmacrosss
Michael Martin	Carrickmacrosss
Nancy Fox	Carrickmacrosss
Peter Marron	Lisalertin
Thomas McNally	Dougha
[] Martin	Dougha
Pat McBride	Lisalertin
Anne McBride	Lisalertin
Mary Callen	Carrickmacrosss
Mary Conolly	Carrickmacrosss
Mary Callen Jnr	Carrickmacrosss
Arthur Callen	Carrickmacrosss
Eliza Callen	Carrickmacrosss
Bernard Reilly	Au[]lavilee
Mary Duffy	Not given
John Mohan	Carrickmacrosss
Mary Walsh	Carrickmacrosss
Pat McEnany	Carrickmacrosss
Henry Magahan	Carrickmacrosss
Pat Marren	Drumagooney
John Martin	Carrickmacrosss
George []te	Carrickmacrosss

**Scholars in the barony of Farney passed at the last inspection under the Irish Church Missions, *contd.***

Peter Marren	Carrickmacrosss
Arthur Finegan	Carrickmacrosss
James Finegan	Carrickmacrosss
Thomas Kirk	Carrickmacrosss
Pat Connor	Currygrubagh
Thomas Connor	Currygrubagh
Thomas Gilshenan	Corrybracken
Peter Guilshenan	Corrybracken
Thomas Gilshenan Jnr	Corrybracken
Michael Gilshenan	Corrybracken
Thomas Gilshenan	Corrybracken
Owen Gilshenan	Corrybracken
Mary Clarke	Corrybracken
Mary Clarke Jnr	Corrybracken
Margaret Clarke	Drumgossett
Owen Connor	Drumgossett
Catherine Connor	Drumgossett
Catherine Duncan	Drumgossett
Pat Rafferty	Drumgossett
Mary Gilshenan	Drumgossett
Owen Clarke	Drumgossett
Edward Durnin	Drumgossett
Pat Clarke	Drumgossett
Margaret Clarke	Drumgossett
Catherine Murray	Drumgossett
Laurence Keanes	Drumgossett
Peter Kearns	Drumgossett
Owen Murray	Drumgossett
Bridget Murray	Drumgossett
Catherine Murray	Drumgossett
Terence McArdle	Lisarill
Thomas McEnrue	Peaste
Daniel Colloton	Lisarill
Francis McM[ah]on	Lisarill
Michael Gartland	Drumheriff
Mary Gartland	Drumheriff
Margaret Carr	Currygurram
James Martin	Drumheriff
Patt King	Ramore
William Donnelly	Ramore
Mary Carr	Ramore

## Appendix 8

### Evangelical visitors to Kingscourt, 1826 to 1860

Date	Visitor	Country of origin (where stated)	Reason (where stated)
28 Aug. 1826	Rev. Campbell	Glasgow, Scotland	Attended IS examination
	Rev. Wm. Brown	Moy, Tyrone, Ireland	Attended IS examination
1828	Rev. Mr Carlisle	Dublin, Ireland	Attended IS examination
	Mr Synge	Tuam, Galway, Ireland	Attended IS examination
	Major Henry Charles Sirr	Dublin, Ireland	Attended IS examination
	Charlotte Elizabeth		
1830	Rev. R. T. P. Pope	Kingstown, Ireland	
	Rev. John N. Darby	Wicklow, Ireland	Powerscourt set of evangelicals
	Rev. Francis Saunderson	Kildallon, Cavan, Ireland	
	Rev. John Gregg		
	Rev. F. Thackaberry		Wesleyan minister, Kingscourt
16–26 July 1832	Rev. Edward Nangle		Founder of Achill Mission Colony in 1833
Aug. 1836	Mr Francis Marriage	Chelmsford, England	Society of Friends
Summer 1836	Rev. Baptist Wriothlesley Noel	England	To observe IS schools
Autumn 1840	Dr Wm. Sewell	Oxford, England	Professor of Moral Philosophy, Oxford, to observe IS schools
Nov. 1845	H. J. Monck Mason	Dublin, Ireland	Founder IS, to observe IS schools
1842	Rev. Wm. Pennefather	Mellifont, Louth	Pennefather, Mellifont, and Gelston, Kingscourt, exchanged curacies in 1847
Nov. 1842	Miss Alicia Mason	Dublin, Ireland	Scripture Readers' meeting
	Miss Alexander	Dublin or Ardracran, Ireland	Scripture Readers' meeting
	Miss Fanny Bellingham	Dublin, Ireland	Scripture Readers' meeting
	Rev. Edmund C. Pendleton & Mrs Pendleton	Dublin, Ireland	Ass. sec. IS, and sec. Island and Coasts' Society
	Rev. Wm. Marsh & several others	Birmingham, England	



**Evangelical visitors to Kingscourt, 1826 to 1860, *contd.***

Nov. 1845	Rev. Edward A. Stopford	Kells, Meath, Ireland	Archdeacon of Meath to give catechetical instruction to those preparing for communion
1852	Sir Harry Verney	Buckinghamshire, England	
	Lord Teignmouth	England	Charles John Shore, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Baron Teignmouth, son of 1 <sup>st</sup> president BFBS
Aug. 1855	Archbishop Charles Perry	Melbourne, Australia	To observe fruits of ICM
July 1858	Rev. Benjamim Marcus	Poland	Controversial meeting with ICM
1859	Rev. Jos. Bickerdike		London Missionary Society
	Rev. E. Ellis		ICM Deputation-Secretary for Ireland
Mar. 1860	Rev. H. C. Eade		Missionary Secretary and Inspector of Missions and Schools

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