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# Catholic Education Beyond the School: Sodalities and Public Lectures

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## Introduction

The Education (Scotland) Act of 1918 is predominantly perceived to be associated with Catholic *schools* but there is a broader contextual background to the Act which can be drawn across the decades previous to its passing and which highlights the value bestowed on broader aspects of education by influential members of the Scottish Catholic community. In short, education in the Catholic community before 1918 was *not* confined to the school years. Though for most Catholics adulthood brought little contact with formal higher (academic) education, representatives of a burgeoning middle class as well as aspirational working-class individuals can be found attending lectures and presentations, both public and private, which touched on a wide range of issues. This chapter offers some snapshots from a still much under-researched area of Scottish Catholic life before 1918. While focusing on some key illustrative areas in the interests of concision and focus, the chapter seeks nonetheless to establish

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more generally that many in the Catholic community actively sought knowledge of new discoveries in science, archaeology and other subjects of the moment.

In recent times, historians have become increasingly aware of the complexities involved in trying to understand and articulate the evolution of individual and community identities amongst Scottish Catholics, particularly in Glasgow and its environs in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Education informed character and a sense of identity. What might be termed 'non-formal education' could be encountered outside the school: in associations, such as the Catholic Young Men's Society (CYMS) and the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP), and in attendance at public lectures.[1] The CYMS had been founded by Dean Richard Baptist O'Brien of Limerick, Ireland, in 1849 and had not long afterwards, in 1855, established its first branches in Scotland in Kilmarnock and Greenock. Its purpose was to educate and provide libraries in the interests of avoiding 'leakage' from the co-religionist community. The SVDP had its origins in the desire to promote Christian charity in the midst of irreligious polity in France (founded in Paris in 1833). It arrived in Edinburgh in 1845 and quickly planted itself in the Scottish missions over the ensuing years, gaining a reputation for its attentiveness to individuals' pressing welfare needs.[2] Both the CYMS and the SVDP (the latter predominantly in an effort to raise funds through collections) promoted lectures for adults. Systematic investigation of the sponsorship of lectures by these sodalities is essentially still work in progress in Scottish historical circles.[3] Building on the pioneering work of Bernard Aspinwall, Karly Kehoe has in recent times underlined the need for more research on such sodalities which increasingly characterised the social and devotional life of Catholic missions throughout Scotland.[4] Indeed, as long ago as 1996, Stathis Kalyvas' portrait of the rise of Christian democracy in Europe had already argued the case for the defining nature of associational culture in the life of the nineteenth-century Church.[5] A key purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to begin to ask questions of the role of 'non-formal education' in forming subtler shades of community identities amongst those Catholics who were active in the associational culture of the period. In so doing, one is mindful of the work of Jonathan Rose in opening up possibilities for situating groups such as the CYMS within a broader movement of Victorian

self-improvement.[6] Indeed, in terms of making an important contribution to Scottish (Catholic) historiography more generally, there is a certain urgency in a study such as that which follows below, particularly if the analysis of the Scottish experience is not to fall behind comparative work being done elsewhere.[7] Studies of Catholic associational life elsewhere in Europe, such as the investigations of the German experience by Raymond Chien Sun and Margaret Stieg Dalton, serve to prompt reflection on similarities of outlook and purpose in the Scottish context despite differences in immediate political and socio-religious environments.

The principal source for the chapter which follows is the *Glasgow Observer*, a weekly newspaper published continuously from its beginnings in April 1885 and a significant mouthpiece of the Irish Catholic diaspora in the Central Belt and beyond. Indeed, particularly in its first couple of decades of existence, the *Observer* provided richly detailed sketches of activities in missions *throughout* Scotland. Historians have 'dipped' into this material over the years, but it remains true to assert that it is still largely 'unmined' (and is likely to remain so until the material can be digitised). In its early years, the *Observer* reflected the interest of its readership in Irish affairs. However, Charles Diamond, the newspaper's proprietor from 1887, eschewed Catholics' traditional support for Gladstone's Liberals in becoming an early Catholic member of the embryonic Independent Labour Party.[8] He was not shy in addressing topical issues of the day: on 4 October 1890, as part of a series of editorials on 'The Church and Society', he mused on the nature of education and its role in the modern state.[9]

After a brief consideration of a contemporary presentation of the purposes of the CYMS and a preliminary overview of lectures advertised over the course of some months during a single year (1885), this chapter will continue with a focus on two disparate, but connected, snapshots with a view to offering correctives to any temptation to view the late nineteenth-century Scottish Catholic community as universally limited in its intellectual horizons, essentially focused on a single issue, namely Irish Home Rule. The first theme—the so-called Roman Question—illustrates an interest in continental affairs and allows for discussion of public lectures, illustrated particularly by the career of the Rev. John Stewart McCorry, an inveterate representative of the genre. The second snapshot offers a

glimpse of an engagement with contemporary scientific questions and developments which might strike some readers as unexpected. As a consequence of the nature of the principal source materials and the strictures of word count, the chapter concentrates primarily on the male experience of adult learning. The experience of women will receive more focused attention in a future study.

## Prologue: Contemporary Presentations of the Role and Purpose of the CYMS

Archbishop Charles Petre Eyre of Glasgow, an Englishman appointed in 1869 mainly in order to bring resolution to potential Irish-Scottish conflict within the Catholic community in the West, set down some (undated) thoughts in advance of a lecture on the purpose of the CYMS. The duties of young men, he noted, included the aim of 'constant self-improvement, self-education and keeping abreast of the times'.[10] There are echoes of Archbishop Eyre's aspirations for the CYMS as an agency for self-improvement in a lecture given by the Rev. Michael Maginn to the St Mary's, Greenock, branch of the Society on 25 January 1886. The *Glasgow Observer*'s detailed report provides one of the best *theoretical* outlines of the purpose of the CYMS to be sourced in Scotland from this contemporary period.[11] Michael Maginn (1848–1890), priest-in-charge at St Alphonsus', Glasgow, was quick to appeal to the increasingly confident self-image of his audience of fellow Irishmen, outlining the growth of Catholicism in Glasgow and extolling the fact that CYMS meetings provided a necessary safe haven from political in-fighting over the future of the Emerald Isle. To criticisms that the CYMS was guilty of watering down commitment to identification with an Irish nationality, Maginn was to the point in stating that 'if he thought for a moment that membership of these societies made an Irishman a worse Irishman or a worse lover of his country, he certainly would have nothing to do with them', adding that 'outside the societies, every man could take whatever side he liked in politics, because they lived in an age of politics when every man should have his own views on public questions.'[12]

For Maginn, however, the key role of the CYMS was educational, understood in terms of preparing Catholic young men for the antagonisms of the workplace. Out of a seemingly defensive mentality, therefore, sprung an openness to knowledge transfer by means of reading and discussion. 'It was necessary', stated Maginn, 'not only to have their Catholic children, when leaving school, well educated, but also to keep them together after leaving school, and by means of Catholic surroundings and sound instruction, to strengthen them in faith, and cause them to remain firm and true in their religious principles.' There was no excuse, Maginn argued, for not keeping oneself informed of current issues: 'Then there was another most advantageous purpose served by these young men's societies—they were the means of communicating a vast amount of useful information and instruction to the members. All the societies were provided with libraries and, what was more, their societies provided for lectures on the most interesting questions that engaged men's minds in these days. Hence the societies fostered among the members a taste for a more enlarged and more varied education than was given at school.' These comments were applauded throughout. Of course, Maginn's extended treatment of his theme—'Catholic Societies and their power for good at the present time'—embeds the almost eschatological expectations of such literature in this period (the belief, for instance, that Scotland would eventually be won back for the 'old faith'). But his broad-brush overview of the purposes of the CYMS provides a most instructive window into the attitudinal contexts in which a broad range of subjects would have been discussed.

The *Observer* report also evidences a developing openness to a more complex range of community connections and identities. Nowhere is this more apparent, perhaps, than in the vote of thanks to Maginn which was extended by Mr Neil Brown who, in the course of his own lengthy discourse, acknowledged the fact that numbers were down at the meeting because it coincided with the 'celebrations of the birth of Robert Burns (25 January)'. The full significance of this statement, in an age when Burns' Masonic connections increasingly posed barriers to Catholic celebrations of the bard, is impossible to state. But there is certainly a broadening of mind on display with Brown's appeal that the libraries of the

CYMS, already replete with works of Irish literature, should 'introduce a little of Scotch literature into their libraries'.

Having noted the claims (or aspirations) of Maginn, it is natural for the historian to wish to find a window into the meeting rooms of the CYMS in late Victorian Scotland in order to assess whether Maginn's expectations are, indeed, borne out in the range of topics being addressed. In the absence of a scholarly longitudinal study of CYMS meetings, it is nevertheless illuminating to sample the notices of lectures for the CYMS and other groups in the pages of the first months of publication of the *Glasgow Observer* (April–July 1885) (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1** Examples of lectures advertised in 'Glasgow Observer' (April–July 1885)

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| 25 April | CYMS St Mary's, Greenock | *The Church and Her Persecutors* | Fr Gaul |
| 23 May | Greenock Young Ireland Society | *Young Ireland* | Mr John Tooley |
| 6 June | Springburn Literary Association (St Aloysius) | *Secular Combined with Religious the Only True System of Education* | Mr Stephen J. Henry |
| 13 June | Irish Literary Society (Gallowgate, Glasgow) | *The French Revolution* | Mr P. Martin |
| 20 June | St Joseph's Literary and Debating Society | *Danish Invasion of Ireland* | Mr Dunn |
| 27 June | St Laurence CYMS, Greenock | *Love of Holy Church* | Brother Askin |
| 27 June | Greenock Young Ireland Society | *Hours with Irish Poets* | Mr McGrath |
| 27 June | St Patrick CYMS, Edinburgh | *Rome During Christmas of 1879* | Rev. Curhane |
| 27 June | Glasgow Young Ireland Society | *Agitation and Agitators* | Mr Reilly |
| 11 July | St Alphonsus' Young Men's Guild, Glasgow | *A Talk About the Romans* | Mr Thomas Colvin |
| 11 July | CYMS Edinburgh (Catholic Institute) | *Mary, Queen of Scots* | Rev. Glasheen |
| 18 July | St Alphonsus' Young Men's Guild, Glasgow | *Curious Epitaphs* | Mr David |
| 18 July | St Alphonsus' Young Men's Guild, Glasgow | *Origin of Railways* | Mr Thomas McConnell |

Even this brief quarterly selection from 1885 is sufficient to suggest that the range of topics was broad. Irish themes, not surprisingly, feature prominently, but there are moreover such diverse foci as education, epitaphs (possibly Irish burial stones?), the French Revolution and *Scottish* history. The picture emerging is certainly not one of a community with a single-focus (Ireland) but, rather, one which mirrors their contemporaries' thirst for knowledge and broadening of mind more generally—in other words, self-improvement. However, in the interests of concision, it is the 1885 listing of two particular themes—on the Romans (seemingly both Ancient and Modern) and on the origins of railways—which this chapter proposes to take forward in providing two dedicated snapshots on, first, the post-*Risorgimento* 'Roman Question' and, secondly, on the worlds of science and technologies.

## Snapshot 1: The Roman Question

It has already been asserted that it was through meetings of the CYMS and SVDP, as well as 'ad hoc' arrangements such as public lectures, that adult Catholic males were educated in the wider issues of the day. Amongst these continuing issues was the 'Roman Question' which was a shorthand for discussions concerning the future of the papacy after the fall of the Papal States and, ultimately, Rome itself to the forces of Italian *Risorgimento* in 1860 and 1870, respectively. The Roman Question was only finally resolved with the successful negotiation of the *Treaty of the Lateran* and the creation of the Vatican City State in 1929.[13] Consideration of the 'Roman Question' inevitably prompted minds to consider issues touching on continental Europe. Increasingly in recent years, one of the most discussed issues in the history of the Catholic community in nineteenth-century Scotland has been the extent to which the Church which had emerged by the end of the century could be described as 'ultramontane'. The scholarship of Bernard Aspinwall, for example, pointed to a policy of increasing the cohesion of a disparate community through the appointment of 'ultramontanist' bishops, such as Archbishop Charles Petre Eyre of Glasgow, and the promotion of 'ultramontanist' attitudes.[14] More recently, Karly Kehoe has highlighted the role of 'ultramontanes'—

led by middle- and upper-class converts—in seeking to infuse a sense of British identity, mixed with loyalty to Rome, amongst the wider Catholic community. The significance of Kehoe's important analysis is that the 'ultramontanes' are seen to constitute, alongside Irish immigrants and recusant Scots, a sort of third force in Catholic development.[15]

Defining 'ultramontanism' and its antonym, 'gallicanism', is thwart with difficulty.[16] Nevertheless, a shorthand summation might be that 'ultramontanism' represented an emphasis on the executive power of the papacy with an accompanying cultivation of a popular 'cult' of the pope's person by way of, for example, display of lithographs in the home; 'gallicanism' emphasised the autonomy of local ecclesiastical jurisdictions (while acknowledging a papal primacy of honour), particularly as defined by the borders of developing nation states, most characteristically (but not exclusively) in France. Such ready definitions, however, run the risk of being unsatisfactory. Like all attitudes it was subject to development over time, offering myriad faces and articulations. In Eamon Duffy's celebrated history of the popes, the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903) was encapsulated as 'ultramontanism with a liberal face' *precisely* in order to emphasise a distinctiveness from the reign of his predecessor, Pius IX, whose pontificate had seen the ostensible 'victory' of ultramontanism at the First Vatican Council.[17]

The key focus here, however, must be to gain some impression of the extent to which ultramontane attitudes were transmitted to lay people who were not associated with pontifical universities, seminaries or learned libraries but, rather, attended public lectures or meetings of their local sodalities. Certainly, it has already been recognised that churches, ever more ornate, reflected an ultramontane mindset which portable items such as prayer cards and pamphlets allowed to be transported to domestic environments.[18] There remains the question, however, of how 'ordinary people' learned to *interpret* their sketch-drawing of Leo XIII or the words of Cardinal Wiseman's *Full in the Panting Heart of Rome*.[19]

There are certainly examples of lectures being delivered on the Roman Question and the position of the Pope as 'prisoner of the Vatican'. There are extant reports, for instance, of two talks delivered in the mission of St Joseph's in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. The first, in August 1861, saw John Bradley make the twenty-odd mile journey from Glasgow to address the

members of the CYMS on 'The Temporal Power of the Pope'.[20] Interestingly, Bradley touched on the works of Voltaire (1694–1778), Claude Fleury (1640–1723) and Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) during the course of his lecture, as well as making mention of Raphael and other Renaissance artists. This cultural referencing would seem to reflect the social aspirations of the 'self-improved gentlemen' of the Society. Another lecture, delivered some fourteen years later on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the fall of Rome to Garibaldian troops, was delivered by the Rev. Donald Carmichael, on 'The Pope: What he is and how he came to be it'.[21] It was sponsored not by the CYMS but by the SVDP. Carmichael, from St Mary's in the Calton in Glasgow but previously himself the priest-in-charge in Kilmarnock, was destined to become, in 1896, rector of Archbishop Charles Eyre's Glasgow seminary.[22] Educated in France, it is tempting to speculate that Carmichael would consequently have been able to bring a breadth of European references to his listeners. Reviewing the *Glasgow Observer*'s report of the proceedings, it is certain that he sought to communicate an impression of Catholic *reasonableness* in addressing pressing contemporary issues.

A decade on, there is a glimpse of a lecture in Aberdeen in 1886 where Rev. James McGregor addressed the Catholic Association on 'The Papacy and Leo XIII', but it is a frustratingly brief reference.[23] On 2 May of the previous year (1885), a more detailed report is provided of the Rev. Patrick Gaule lecturing on 'The Church and her Persecutions' in the Mechanics' Hall, Greenock.[24] The narrative, however, has no obvious Irish overtones—though Gaule himself was a young twenty-eight-year-old Irishman—for it is not vicissitudes in Ireland which are the focus. Instead, like Carmichael in Kilmarnock in 1875, Gaule laid claim to a chronologically extended European heritage in looking back at history and the challenges to papal authority. What requires to be noted is that, while reference to the likes of Martin Luther may have been unsurprisingly negative, the treatment is in no way vitriolic during the course of this lecture. Given the context in which the lecture was being delivered, it is the *lack* of simplistic prejudice which is telling of a more sophisticated approach to history than might otherwise have been expected. Indeed, Gaule's engagement with the *German* Reformation and its complex ramifications declares an independence from the transference of

puerile opinion to his listeners. Gaule's comment that 'the old faith in *these* lands (Britain) is springing into new life again' might once have been interpreted in superficial fashion as only typical of the apologetical intent of such a lecture, tinged as it might be perceived with a certain expectant triumphalism. However, a revisionist approach, much more sensitive to the inherent complexity of identities, must see such a statement for what it actually is: identification with a British context. What Gaule's lecture, perhaps, suggests is that, with an independent Scottish Hierarchy restored by Leo XIII in 1878, there is a basic fact of Catholic life now made manifest: the Catholic Church in Scotland is *not* an extension of the Irish Church. The members of the CYMS who attended Gaule's lecture—and others like this one in Glasgow, Edinburgh and elsewhere—were being urged to think in broader terms of who they were and what their aspirations might be in their relationship with the wider citizenry.

However, it is the Glasgow-born priest, Rev. John Stewart McCorry (1812–1880), who must stand out in this period as an inveterate invited lecturer to various Catholic associations in Scotland and, indeed, beyond. McCorry clearly had an eye towards posterity in that he published his lectures shortly after delivering them and several have survived. Indeed, at least one of his works was translated for publication in France—an almost unheard of achievement for a Scottish priest of this period.[25] They deal with a whole range of topics from purgatory to church decoration. He had a Roman background, having studied at both the *Propaganda Fide* and Pontifical Scots Colleges, before returning to Scotland to begin a singularly peripatetic career (even by the standards of the age), serving for a time in all three of the ecclesiastical Districts of Scotland (Northern, Eastern and Western) before leaving in 1870 for London and, eventually, Rome itself where he lived out his final years.[26] There is mystery in all this moving around which might be explained through further research. Moreover, there is an aspect of the 'street-fighter' about McCorry which emerges from his writings. Yet there is evidence too that he instilled loyalty in the communities he served and it is, moreover, difficult for us now to discern what impact in terms of motivation towards further learning his lectures may have had on his listeners whom historians must certainly not patronise.

On 19 February 1860 in St Andrew's, Glasgow, McCorry lectured on 'The Trials and the Triumphs of the Church as illustrated in the Person of the Roman Pontiff'.[27] He dedicated the text to the 'Young Men of Glasgow by their friend and former fellow-citizen, the Author'. This affirmation of shared bonds of citizenship towards the city of McCorry's birth is noteworthy. The lecture is, in its own way, erudite, with long sketches of ancient history, as well as quotations in Latin which go untranslated in the printed text. It is not scholarship as such—McCorry has too many axes to grind and one wonders whether he would have offered an impression of being well-read or simply garrulous and entertaining—but what of its effect in terms of triggering curiosity and interest in members of the audience? The 'Advertisement' or Preface to the printed edition of McCorry's lecture is revealing of his voice and intentions:

> The following discourse was delivered in the Cathedral Church, Glasgow, on Quinquagesima Sunday, by request of the St Andrew's Conference of St Vincent de Paul's Society. As it handles, however imperfectly, a subject of intense interest at the present moment, it is given to the press, as a small proof that here, in Scotland, the children of the Church are as devoted in their spiritual allegiance to the common Father of the faithful, as are their brethren in more favoured lands. They also have beheld, with bitter pain, the indignities to which the Roman Pontiff has been wantonly exposed, and the spoliation of the ancient territories of the Holy See, which has been systematically attempted. In union with their brethren throughout Christendom, they likewise raise the shout of indignation against such atrocious deeds of sacrilege as, under the abused name of liberty, have been committed; while, at the same time, they tender to the great and glorious Pius IX their loving obedience, and are ready to prove, by their acts, their undying gratitude to him who is the Head of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church.[28]

Again, on 30 December 1862, a lecture delivered in the City Hall, Glasgow, was an opportunity to range over the issue of the 'Temporal Power of the Sovereign Pontiff'.[29] The references here are to major continental contributors to the contemporary debate: Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), Félix Dupanloup (1802–1878), Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802–1861); he addresses the arguments of such as Luigi

Alamanni (1495–1556), Johann Georg Graevius (1632–1703), Louis Thomassin (1619–1695) and Giuseppe Agostino Orsi (1692–1761). He ends, perhaps significantly, without any identification with Ireland, addressing, rather, 'my fellow citizens of Glasgow, children of the Church', declaring that Rome is 'the home of every Catholic, for every Catholic is a Roman'. If the majority of his listeners were, indeed, of Irish origin, then this final salutation provides yet another hint of the complex interplay of the plural identities of Catholics in Scotland which so often slips through unarticulated in other discourses—particularly journalistic—of the period.[30]

A final example from 10 September 1865 finds McCorry lecturing on 'Pius IX and the Nineteenth Century' in St Vincent's, Glasgow, on behalf of the funds of the SVDP.[31] While apologetical in tone, closer reading finds broad conceptualisations which listeners might use in clarifying their thoughts on issues: ideas of novelty in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rationalism in the eighteenth, fanaticism and indifferentism in the nineteenth. There is something very important to be said about the way in which such lectures provided new vocabulary and concepts (or, indeed, challenged old concepts) which those in attendance might take away in order to make sense of the politics and cultures of the world around them. This sharing in a 'language of the intellect' could potentially lead men just as equally *away* from involvement in radical movements as onwards to embrace them. Establishing and illustrating that link by way of proving such a thesis is, however, very difficult and will require further forensic research in local newspapers and archives. But it is intriguing to think that a vital aspect of these embryonic Catholic communities' self-understanding in relation to the wider Scottish community and the great questions of the day might be on the cusp of being revealed more fully to us.

## Snapshot 2: Lectures on Science

For the purposes of the second snapshot in this chapter, the camera now turns to a topic which has been chosen precisely because it challenges the anecdotal notion that Catholic societies would have been anti-science,

avoiding the subject as a threat to religious belief and practice. Although not by any means abundant, there are nevertheless references to lectures on science in the pages of the *Glasgow Observer* during the first decade of its existence. This should not be a surprise. As Don O'Leary has pointed out, the relationship between modern science and Catholicism was in no way straightforward, as if attitudes were pre-scripted, particularly during the relatively more 'open' pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903).[32] Indeed, notable Protestant writers were quick to point out that certain of their own evangelical co-religionists harboured resistance to scientific claims every bit as robust as their perceived Catholic counterparts.[33] Under-researched though the area may be, it is nonetheless rewarding to survey some of the lectures advertised.[34]

The first clear reference to science appeared in a July 1885 edition of the *Observer*, only some months after the paper's first appearance. An article glorying in the title 'Astronomy—The Geography of the Heavens—Its Analogy to Mundane Civil Divisions—Ancient Ideas about the Stars' proceeds to discuss the nature of the constellations and the stars within them, the legend of Andromeda and the origins of the signs of the zodiac, before concluding with a reflection on the vastness of the Milky Way and the Universe. This appears to be, however, a syndicated piece, with clues to an authorship in New York, but it is interesting that it merited publication in the Catholic *Glasgow Observer*.[35] Half a decade on, the paper carried a short article on the 'Meteorological Section in the New Vatican Observatory', celebrating its up-to-date resources (e.g. a Thomson-Mascart photographic electrometer) and enjoying the irony of the Observatory's accommodation being not far from the room in which Galileo had been confined. An appreciation of the irony required, of course, familiarity with the traditional narrative of the Galileo story; it also required some detachment from a strictly rigorist interpretation of Galileo's confrontation with the Church of his day. There is apparently a sub-plot in play here of the times having moved on. Presumably, readers of the *Observer* were expected to have sufficient reservoirs of such critical detachment.

Against such brief glimpses of a broader context of popular engagement with science, there are also reports of science talks to be found in the *Observer*'s pages. In December 1887, the CYMS in Kilmarnock was

addressed by a recently ordained assistant priest, Rev. Edmund J Ryan, on the subject of 'Light'. This was, however, no theological exploration of 'light' as a metaphor for the attributes of the Deity. The talk was emphatically focused on the *science* of light: 'Fr Ryan, who presided, lectured on "Light", explaining its component parts and the velocity at which it travels.' In what one presumes was a gripping finale, Fr Ryan concluded the lecture with 'some chemical experiments and ended with an exhibition of coloured fire'.[36] No doubt some of the same properties of light featured in March 1890 when members of St Alphonsus' Young Men's Guild (Glasgow) were addressed by Mr Alexander Boyle on the related topic of 'Famous Lighthouses', providing a 'very fine description of the well-known Eddystone Lighthouse, exhibiting (while doing so) some excellent plates of the same'.[37] As during Ryan's lecture in Kilmarnock, the Boyle talk had featured the use of a 'magic lantern', enhancing the learning experience of all in attendance.[38]

On occasion, one finds tantalising references which prove impossible to follow up. A February 1890 edition refers to a forthcoming meeting of the St Margaret's Young Men's Guild, Airdrie, whereupon 'a critique on Mr Graham's paper on Astronomy will be given by Canon Makintosh.'[39] It is disappointing that no report of the Canon's intervention can be traced. There is, however, more information relating to a lecture on 'Respiration', delivered later the same year to the CYMS of St John the Evangelist in Portugal Street, Glasgow. Mr T Brenna 'explained the mechanism of the respiratory organs of the human system, the agents that combine in keeping up the temperature of the body, as well as the various courses that act so destructively on the breathing functions and the influences that affect the blood through the pulmonary arteries'. This was an exercise in *useful* learning as Brenna, in 'referring to those diseases peculiar to the lungs and bronchial tubes … pointed one means whereby to protect against the deleterious effects of the atmosphere upon these organs'.[40] It would appear that Brenna was *not* a doctor. Like many of the CYMS lecturers, he may have researched his piece using the magazines and books of his branch's reading room or circulating library.

Perhaps the greatest controversy of all in the science-religion interface related to Darwin and evolution and interest in this 'hot' topic is certainly represented in the *Glasgow Observer* reports.[41] A first example is another lecture presented to the CYMS in St John the Evangelist, Portugal

Street, in July 1890. The branch's President, Mr P Corrigan, read a paper entitled 'Earth Scripture', straightaway situating this lecture within a particular interpretation of nature's (and, by extension, science's) role as a mirror of the creator. Corrigan 'explained the various factors concerned in the territorial changes that are perpetually taking place, as well as numerous instances of geological phenomena that present themselves throughout the globe'.[42] He continued in some detail to dissect the causes of the destruction of the chalk cliffs of Axmouth in Devonshire in 1839. If Corrigan made reference at any point to the narratives of creation in Genesis, it is certainly not referred to in the *Observer* report. What is striking, however, is the sense of curiosity and openness to a new area of study implied in the observation that Corrigan's paper 'threw much light on geology as affording an interesting subject for study, and one which … was only in comparative infancy [and] should repay the diligent research of the student'.

Indeed, this was the theme of a paper written (though not delivered in person) by the Rev. John Gerard SJ of Stonyhurst College on *The Church and Science* and presented at the National (Great Britain) Conference of the CYMS held in Glasgow in August 1890, just a month after Corrigan's own contribution in his branch.[43] Gerard acknowledged initially that 'many Catholics distrust science', viewing it as 'dangerous', but his intent is clearly to inform and change attitudes. Science, he proclaims, 'does not and cannot run counter to revealed truth'. Indeed, theory, speculation or hypothesis is *not* science. Consequently, Catholics must not refuse to contemplate the claims of science but, rather, approach its study with their minds at ease. In contrast to counter-claims that religion was based on sentiment, Gerard is keen to emphasise that, in fact, it is scientists who are allowing their emotions to govern their claims. Science has certainly made great strides but 'her advance has not kept pace with the eagerness of some of her followers.' He ends in summoning a roll call of the great and the good who have attested to the complementarity of God and science, amongst them Isaac Newton (1643–1727), George Gabriel Stokes (1819–1903), Lord Kelvin (1824–1907) and St George Jackson Mivart (1827–1900). Gerard is emphatic in asserting that 'we do an injury to science when we assume towards its advances an attitude perfectly defensive.'

Does Gerard's polished paper allow us a glimpse of how science was being treated more generally in CYMS lectures? Intriguingly, the *Glasgow Observer* provides a brief description of the response to the paper by one of the delegates, a Mr Deachan: 'Brother Deachan, in some interesting remarks, said that gentlemen of the Huxley and Tyndall schools were always aiming their darts at the Catholic Church. Why was this? If these people could get her out of the way they might get on with their pseudo-science. The Church was the great barrier to error and so long as she existed the Huxleys and the Tyndalls could make but little progress. Science, properly so called, was nature and nature must ever be the support of our holy religion.'[44] Was Deachan domiciled in Scotland? It is not clear. However, he is probably representative of a more general Catholic response to the science and religion debate which must surely, if viewed in proper historical context, point towards a much more sophisticated discourse than a superficial hindsight might suggest when observed from the twenty-first century. What is significant, ultimately, is the encouragement to Catholics to *engage* with scientific issues. While defensive, Gerard's paper makes it clear that these issues cannot be interpreted in simplistic, binary terms (religion, good; science, bad). Catholics should embrace scientific study as a means to discovering more about the God-created world and cosmos. In short, there is a need to be informed—to be *educated*. In the words of Gerard's conclusion: 'Far from regarding it as the enemy let us welcome its discoveries, conscious that as on the one hand God alone can explain the mysteries of nature, so on the other every fresh truth gathered from nature is another witness to God.' Such sentiments prompt one to propose that those who attended CYMS talks on science, as in Kilmarnock in 1887 or Airdrie in 1890, were probably much more open to 'engaged wonderment' in the face of new developments in scientific thought than might previously have been supposed by many commentators in the decades since.[45]

## Conclusions

This chapter makes no claims to comprehensiveness in its treatment of its theme. What it has sought to do is to provide sketches of learning experiences in the Scottish Catholic community which are both illuminating

(to the extent that they may be unexpected) and suggestive of avenues for future scholarly research. It is certainly true that the focus has been almost exclusively male but, as alluded to previously, the female experience must be awarded similar dedicated attention in work still to be published. However, the purpose of this chapter as, indeed, of the volume in which it appears is to set out new paths which will enrich understanding of the Catholic community's learning experiences in the decades before the 1918 Act.

What, at this juncture, might be some of the conclusions to be drawn from this study? First, it would be wrong to assert that all male Catholics in parish communities took advantage of the opportunities to attend the meetings of the CYMS or other such sodalities. However, the numbers attending the CYMS in the decade of the 1890s were not insubstantial in many areas. While it is impossible without access to log-books to ascertain exactly what sort of numbers of participants were attending CYMS meetings, serendipity *has* provided scholars with a roll call of CYMS membership in a single year. A report in *The Tablet* on the occasion of the 20th Annual Conference of the CYMS in 1891 provides a teasing account of numbers involved in various branches: Dumfries, 296; Edinburgh, 500; Glasgow, 886; Gourock, 30; Greenock, 107; Kilmarnock, 73; Stirling, 178; Braemar, 58; Buckie, 65; Dumbarton, 120; Falkirk, 213; Oban, 40; Stranraer, 32.[46] Numbers alone, of course, do not tell the whole story. However, it does need to be acknowledged that amongst these numbers would be many of the leaders of community life, including schoolteachers.

Second, there was interest in topics beyond those associated with Ireland (though these were ever present and popular). Catholics were keen to discuss the great issues of the day, including the Roman Question, which touched on a great deal more than questions of religious authority but related to an entire geo-political grasp of how the modern world (and Western Europe more particularly) was to be shaped. At the same time, one notes that related themes in European art and literature were touched on. This was further reflected in, for example, the excursion made by members of the CYMS at the annual National Conference of 1885 to Rosslyn Chapel where, it was reported, 'gentlemen will have the privilege of visiting the pretty Gothic chapel and seeing the celebrated Apprentice

Pillar on presenting their tickets at the door.'[47] Such developing awareness of European culture and, as at Rosslyn in 1885, Scottish architectural history suggest a developing inquisitive mentality amongst such groups which surely demands further research. What Geoffrey Spurr pointed out in 2002 about the YMCA in London ('surprisingly little scholarly attention') still holds true for the CYMS in Scotland.[48]

Third, and most intriguingly perhaps, it is clear that science was not off-limits. When a certain Francis Quin of Ibrox Place, Glasgow, wrote to the *Glasgow Observer* on 12 August 1885, encouraging a campaign for a 'Catholic Hall and Library' for Glasgow, he did so because he believed that the 'Catholics of Glasgow would gain immensely if they had greater facilities for becoming acquainted with Catholic literature—*even including the physical sciences* expanded from a Catholic point of view.'[49] Such advocacy runs entirely counter to the view that Catholics were anti-science. This is not to say that there was not a great deal of misunderstanding and in some cases downright rejection. But, once again, it is clear that the evolution of popular Catholic attitudes towards science in this period is much more complex, less monochrome, than previously presented.

Finally, if not an entirely new idea, this chapter nevertheless has sought to emphasise that the history of Catholic education before 1918 has a story to tell beyond the obvious one of the schools. It is a story of the development and sustenance of interests which might variously be described as intellectual, artistic, scientific, literary, practical and so on. In short, multifarious—and multifarious was the range of personalities which attended meetings of sodalities and other public lectures and talks over the years and decades, building up circulating libraries where possible and finances would allow. Such social and learning experiences in the adult years must reasonably be considered to have had an impact on those who shaped the presentation of—and approaches to—Catholic education in the years leading up to 1918 and, indeed, beyond. This chapter having stated a case for such an albeit tentative assertion, it will be for scholarship in the future to explore the roles of the CYMS and other sodalities in helping to form the teachers who led learning in the schools as well as nurturing other members of the Catholic community with significant influence on the directions taken by Catholic education both before 1918 and since.

## Notes

1. Attempting to define terms such as 'formal', 'non-formal' and 'informal' education is to enter a conceptual minefield. This chapter refers to learning outside of a school but nevertheless *subject to planning and organisation* (e.g. at a public lecture or sodality meeting) as 'non-formal', taking its cue from Daniel Schugurensky, *The Forms of Informal Learning: Towards a Conceptualization of the Field* [SSHRC Research Network on New Approaches of Lifelong Learning (NALL) Working Paper No. 19] (Toronto: Centre for the Study of Education and Work, 2000). However, it is impossible for any of these terms to be catch-all: self-directed study (e.g. using a circulating library) was pursued by members of the Catholic community, but Schugurensky would include this under 'informal' learning.
2. Bernard Aspinwall, "The Welfare State within the State: the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in Glasgow, 1848–1920", in W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds.), *Voluntary Religion: Studies in Church History*, 23 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 445–59.
3. A helpful and concise definition of a 'sodality' is to be found in M. Massa (ed.), *American Catholic History: A Documentary Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 225: 'In the Catholic Church, sodalities are associations of laymen and women for devotional and charitable purposes.'
4. S. Karly Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church. Catholicism, Gender and Ethnicity in 19th-Century Scotland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 149–71. See also Geraldine Vaughan, *The 'Local' Irish in the West of Scotland 1851–1921* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 65–66. A seminal study in the general field, providing a scholarly template, is Brian P. Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto 1850–1895* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993). On Scottish Catholic history more generally, Peter F. Anson, *Underground Catholicism in Scotland 1622–1878* (Montrose: Standard Press, 1970), is still relevant.
5. Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), esp. 63–84.
6. Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010; 2nd ed.).

7. For what follows, see Raymond Chien Sun, *Before the enemy is within our wall. Catholic Workers in Cologne, 1885–1912: A Social, Cultural and Political History* (Boston: Humanities Press, 1999); Margaret Stieg Dalton, *Catholicism, Popular Culture, and the Arts in Germany, 1880–1933* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). Of related interest, see Julio de la Cueva Merino and Ángel Luis López Villaverde (eds.), *Clericalismo y asociacionismo católico en España* (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2005). The earlier work of Yves Marie Hilaire still provides a benchmark for historians of the period: see Yves Marie Hilaire, *Une chrétienté au XIX^e siècle? La vie religieuse des populations du diocese d'Arras (1840–1914)* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Publications de l'Université de Lille III, 1977), esp. 408–416.
8. W. M. Walker, "Irish Immigrants in Scotland: their priests, politics and parochial life", *The Historical Journal*, 15(4), 1972, 665. See, too, Joan Allen, "'Keeping the Faith': The Catholic Press and the Preservation of Celtic Identity in Britain in the late nineteenth century", in Richard C. Allen and Stephen Regan (eds.), *Irelands of the Mind: Memory and Identity in Modern Irish Culture* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 32–49.
9. *Glasgow Observer*, 4 October 1890, 1.
10. Glasgow Archdiocesan Archives [hereafter GAA] IP—E18/25/1.
11. *Glasgow Observer*, 30 January 1886, 3.
12. Maginn sought to make a distinction between the non-political mission of the CYMS and other groups immersed in the politics of Ireland which might also promote non-formal adult education but often in the context of tense relations with ecclesiastical authorities: see Terence McBride, "The Secular and the Radical in Irish Associational Culture of Mid-Victorian Glasgow", *Immigrants and Minorities*, 28(1), 2010, 31–41.
13. Frank J. Coppa, *The Modern Papacy since 1789* (London: Longmans, 1998), 175.
14. See, for example, B. Aspinwall, "Catholic Devotion in Victorian Scotland", in Martin J. Mitchell (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Irish in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008), 31. It must be noted with interest, however, that even in this same essay Aspinwall displays some doubts about the extent of the impact of ultramontanism, noting that 'aristocratic and convert self-confidence as much as ultramontanism helped to restore (the Scottish) hierarchy' (35) and 'increasingly Roman-educated clergy did not promote Ultramontane figures' (42), preferring ethnic folk culture and medieval romanticism.

15. Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, 50. Elsewhere, Kehoe has written of the growing influence of 'ultramontanism' in Canada, with implications for the visibility and survival of a Scottish Catholic community there. See S. Karly Kehoe, 'Catholic Identity in the Diaspora: Nineteenth-century Ontario', in T. Bueltmann, A. Hinson and G. Morton (eds.), *Ties of bluid, kin and countrie: Scottish Associational Culture in the Diaspora* (Guelph: Centre for Scottish Studies, 2009), 84.
16. For a discussion sensitive to the subtleties involved in the definition of both 'ultramontanism' and 'gallicanism', see the 'Introduction' to Richard F. Costigan, *Rohrbacher and the Ecclesiology of Ultramontanism* (Rome: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1980), xiii–xxx, esp. xvii. See also Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America. Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 24.
17. Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 286.
18. Bernard Aspinwall, "The Formation of the Catholic Community in the West of Scotland: Some Preliminary Outlines", *The Innes Review*, 33 (1982), 44–57.
19. T. E. Muir, *Roman Catholic Church Music in England, 1791–1914: A Handmaid of the Liturgy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 97–98, reminds the reader that Wiseman also advocated the congregational singing of plain-song in the interests of reinforcing ultramontane sentiments amongst the laity.
20. Reported in *Glasgow Free Press*, 17 August 1861, 3.
21. Lecture reported and summarised in *Kilmarnock Standard*, 25 September 1875, 3. See Raymond McCluskey, *St Joseph's Kilmarnock, 1847–1997: A Portrait of a Parish Community* (Kilmarnock: St Joseph's Church, 1997), 76–77.
22. *Catholic Directory for Scotland* [hereafter *CDS*] (Glasgow, 1903), 248–50.
23. *Glasgow Observer*, 20 February 1886, 5.
24. *Glasgow Observer*, 2 May 1885, 6.
25. John Mac-Corry, *La Suprématie de Saint Pierre et de ses successeurs les Pontifes Romains, traduit et annoté par l'Abbé Gobert* (Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1856).
26. *CDS* (Glasgow, 1881), 155–56.

27. John Stewart McCorry, *The Trials and the Triumphs of the Church as illustrated in the Person of the Roman Pontiff* (Glasgow: Hugh Margey, 1860).
28. McCorry, *Trials and Triumphs*, 3.
29. John Stewart McCorry, *Lecture on the Temporal Power of the Sovereign Pontiff* (Glasgow, 1863). Report in the *Glasgow Herald*, 31 December 1862.
30. Karly Kehoe, reflecting on the seminal work of Jane McDermid, has also highlighted the concept of a 'plurality of identities' shared across communities in Scotland. See Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, 65.
31. John Stewart McCorry, *Pius IX and the 19th Century* (Glasgow, 1865).
32. Don O'Leary, *Roman Catholicism and Modern Science* (New York-London: Continuum, 2006).
33. S. H. Haywood, "Spiritual Pirates", *Popular Science Monthly*, 6, 1875, 599–603; Andrew Dickson White, "The Retreat of Theology in the Galileo Case", *Popular Science Monthly*, 41, 1892, 145–54.
34. The need for further research into connections between science and Catholicism has been noted elsewhere: Diarmid A. Finnegan and Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, "Catholics, science and civic culture in Victorian Belfast", *British Journal for the History of Science*, 48(2), 2015, 262. See also Diarmid A. Finnegan, *Natural History Societies and Civic Culture in Victorian Scotland* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009).
35. Of related interest, see Aileen Fyfe, "Science and Religion in Popular Publishing in 19th-century Britain", in Peter Meusburger, Michael Welker and Edgar Wunder (eds.), *Clashes of Knowledge: Orthodoxies and Heterodoxies in Science and Religion* (New York: Springer, 2008), 121–132.
36. *Glasgow Observer*, 10 December 1887, 5. See McCluskey, *St Joseph's, Kilmarnock*, 96–97.
37. *Glasgow Observer*, 1 March 1890, 5.
38. Elizabeth Shepherd, "The Magic Lantern Slide in entertainment and education, 1860–1920", *History of Photography*, 11(2), 1987, 91–108.
39. *Glasgow Observer*, 1 February 1890, 5. The Canon's name is usually listed as James McIntosh in modern treatments.
40. *Glasgow Observer*, 13 September 1890, 5.
41. Of related interest, see Martin S Brennan, *What Catholics have done for Science* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1887): J. A. Zahm, *Catholic Science and Catholic Scientists* (Philadelphia: H L Kilner, 1893); J. A. Zahm, *Evolution and Dogma* (Chicago: D H McBride, 1896).

42. *Glasgow Observer*, 12 July 1890, 5.
43. John Gerard, "The Church and Science", *The Irish Monthly*, 21(235), 1893, 38–43.
44. *Glasgow Observer*, 9 August 1890, 5. The references are to Thomas Huxley (1825–1895) and John Tyndall (1820–1893), generally perceived to be the principal apostles of 'scientism'. See O'Leary, *Roman Catholicism and Modern Science*, 26–31.
45. Of related interest, see Joshua M. Moritz, "The war that never was: exploding the myth of the historical conflict between Christianity and Science", *Theology and Science*, 10(2), 2012, 113–123; J. A. Zahm, "Christian Faith and Scientific Freedom", *The North American Review*, 157(442), 1893, 315–24.
46. *The Tablet*, 8 August 1891, 13.
47. *Glasgow Observer*, 1 August 1885, 5.
48. Geoffrey D. Spurr, "The London YMCA: A haven of masculine self-improvement and socialization for the late-Victorian and Edwardian Clerk", *Canadian Journal of History*, 37(2), 2002, 275.
49. *Glasgow Observer*, 15 August 1885, 4.