

Newspaper Articles-1905-06

Newspaper Articles

1905-06

Revised March 16, 2017

Newspaper Articles for 1905-06

About

The Church Without a Name, The Truth, Two By Twos, *Two by Twos*

February 16, 1905 – Impartial Reporter – **McClung states "Our mission was started by Wm. Irwin some 7-8 years ago."**

March, 1905 – Irish Presbyterian

March 23, 1905 – Impartial Reporter

May 2, 1905 p5 – The Irish Independent

May 5, 1905 – Kilsyth Chronicle (Scotland)

June 10, 1905 p4 – Fermanagh Herald (**John West–convention owner–performs baptism**)

December 30, 1905 -The Anglo-Celt, Cavan – Dippers House Burned

January 6, 1906 – The Leitrim Observer – Baptism at Eddy Trotters

May 5, 1906 – The Anglo-Celt

June 9, 1906 – Morning Leader, London – **Wm. Irvine is FOUNDER; Alice Pipe, Missioner**

June 11, 1906, p. 1 – Morning Leader, London – **Our mission was started by Wm. Irwin some 7-8 years ago.**

June 10, 1906 – Sunday Independent, Dublin

June 12, 1906 – Morning Leader, London

June 15, 1906 – Morning Leader, London – **Re: Lizzie Coles' Father gives history of Workers first going to London; Bill & Maggie Carroll**

NOTE: May 13, 1913 The Morning Leader and The Daily News merged under the title of The Daily News.

June 21, 1906, p. 3 – Impartial Reporter

McClung states "Our mission was started by Wm. Irwin some 7-8 years ago."

June 28, 1906, p. 8 – Impartial Reporter

July 8, 1906 p22 – Buffalo Times, NY – Tramp Preachers, A New Religious Sect **NEW**

July 19, 1906, p. 5 – Impartial Reporter

August 14, 1906 – Irish Independent

August 17, 1906 – The Irish Independent

December 6, 1906 – Stowmarket News

December 9, 1906 – Lloyd's Weekly

December 21, 1906 – East Anglian Daily Times (Ipswich) **About eight or nine years...A man named Irvine was the first to step out.**

December 23, 1906 – Lloyd's Weekly News – Cooneyites Founded 1897-98; Mission hall wrecked by Wilson

February 16, 1905
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER
 Established 1808.
 Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

SUNDAY WITH THE PILGRIMS
SCENES AT BALLINAMALLARD.
OPENING OF A NEW HALL
METHODIST CHURCH ATTACKED

SENSATIONAL PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS
CONVERTS MOVED TO TEARS.
FILLING HELL AND EMPTYING HEAVEN.
A CONVERSATION WITH THE DEVIL.

The customary sleepiness of the village of Ballinamallard was awakened on Sunday afternoon by a party of religious enthusiasts variously called Cooneyites, Tramps, or Pilgrims, who entered the village on brakes and cars singing hymns. The occasion was the opening of a **wooden hall** erected on what is known as 'The Commons.' It is a comfortable building possessing four windows, lighted by two lamps, and heated with a suitable stove. Seating accommodation is commensurate with the intended requirements, and the hall is nicely boarded inside, but the entire structure is unadorned with paint, the principal thing which enhances it being the clean entrance thereto and the ample ventilation.

When the hall was about being erected a good deal of discussion ensued amongst the people, some of whom strongly resent the intrusion of the Tramps to the village. Now it is announced that Mr. H. A. Burke has given leave for the erection of the hall, and it is not unlikely that the question of right to do so and the title involved may form the subject of legal argument.

Meantime, the house has been erected, and on Sunday last was filled to overflowing by Pilgrims. Evidently the promoters did not believe they would have so large an audience, for during the devotional proceedings chairs, &c., were hurriedly brought in and every effort courteously made to provide seating accommodation.

It was noticeable that the pilgrims had much improved as regards dress and cleanliness, compared with that of last summer. However religiously democratic they may be, there was a desire to have more respectable or influential persons seated at the front. When eight hymns had been rendered **Mr. Thomas Betty** announced that they would 'sing' another, and as the audience had been sitting so long he advised them to stand 'and stretch your legs a bit.' This was done and the hymn having been concluded prayer was asked for: Some time elapsed and there was, to use a homely phrase 'solemn silence.'

Then a member of the meeting fervently prayed, in which he expressed the hope that the time had they spent in the hall would be a heart-searching one. He hoped that God would lead all who had done wrong in their lives to do that which was right. Frequently 'Amens' were interjected in approval.

Mr. Betty announced that they were not now in bondage but were doing the good work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the tenth hymn was sung, Mr. Betty remarking that they were glad the time had come to serve the Lord and by so doing and by proclaiming His word they would spread His truth, and blessing would result. (Amen.)

A MESSAGE FROM THE LORD

'There is a message from the Lord,' said Mr. Betty. A pin could be heard falling on the floor. Several minutes elapsed: no one moved; not a sound. Mr. Betty rubbed his forehead. The meeting looked like that of Quakers where the spirit moved members to pray. Then he said they would read a psalm: 'I am glad to go into the House of the Lord.' 'Ah,' he exclaimed, shaking his head, 'it is well to be glad to go into the House of the Lord.' (Amen.) In going into the House of the Lord it's not going into bondage. David was right in his heart when he said this, and you must also be right in your heart to be with God.' (Amen.)

He implored them to be made right with God; to be right in their hearts, for unless God helped them to be such through Jesus they would not be able to overcome the World and the Devil. To be right with God means speaking through the mouth the truth and their personal testimony. Glad was he that morning to be able to do so at Letterbreen. They should live the life Jesus lived and that would please God: nothing else would. How—(here he looked heavenward)—glad was he that God had led him to the way of truth and to his loving Saviour; yes and enabled him to throw off by his lips all that stuff and rubbish he had believed!

METHODISTS ATTACKED.

'Well do I remember,' said Mr. Betty, fervently looking upwards, 'when I used to attend the Methodist Church.' He paused and continued—'Yes, I thought I was doing right, but I found I was only following the things of hypocrisy and that which was contrary to Christ.'

He paused again, and the room was as silent as the tomb. 'These were the men,' he declared who

FILLED HELL AND EMPTIED HEAVEN.

Thank the Lord, he was not amongst the ungodly now! His heart was with God; he gave his heart to God; he gave his life to God, and the Lord Jesus, and praise the Lord he was now saved. He knew what he had to suffer for the Lord. He hesitated. But the Lord was with him and helped him, and praise God now he was with the Lord Jesus. (Looking upwards.) Oh, let them come away from the ungodly, from the hypocrisy, and the worldliness, for all were against the Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Ah, ' he sighed, 'Thank the Lord for my deliverance.' (And he paused and looked to Heaven, while there was deadly silence in the room.) 'Yes' he added, 'The Lord gave me that blessing to be in fellowship with Jesus.' (Amen.)

WHAT HE SAYS GOD WANTS.

God wanted, he said, all men to speak out by their lips when they had their hearts made right. Ah, but he had the difficulty to make his heart right! How he suffered. He was saved now! Thank the Lord! Near Letterbreen, a poor man turned his heart to God. He gave a little outside house to the despised people who come to preach for the Lord Jesus' sake. And what happened. Think of it. (A girl was now in tears and sobbed). The Lord had that man now, for he was the second convert and was

NOW GOING TO HEAVEN INSTEAD OF TO HELL!!!

And the girl buried her weeping face in her hands, at this announcement.

REGENERATION WANTED.

'The Lord wants men regenerated,' concluded the speaker, with a gesture which could not be unnoticed. Salvation was wanted and no hypocrisy, and might the Lord have his blessing on them that night for Christ's sake. (Amen.)

When **Mr. Dickson**, Forthill Street, Enniskillen, arose to address the meeting there was hushed silence. 'Brethren,' said he expressively, 'there was a time I was afraid to get up and to bear my testimony to God. I am now not afraid as I used to be, praise the Lord in His house this Sabbath afternoon. Why was I afraid? Because my life was not a consistent life. I remember coming to Enniskillen. It is now over six years ago. I came from Belfast and with a desire to give my life for Jesus Christ. When leaving Belfast a brother told me that I was coming to the

HEART AND LIFE OF METHODISM.

Yes, that brother told me '**Now take wife and boy with you**; you are going to the best place of Methodism; they will help you in every way. True, one man sent a messenger to the Great Northern Railway station for my luggage and brought me to his house and tried to find lodgings for me. Not getting any, I would not leave his house, saying I would sleep anywhere, and I said this because I saw a

LITTLE SPOT OF CHRIST IN THE FAMILY.

Then they put me to sleep in the garret, and I was quite comfortable. I was given all the warmth of so-called Christianity! One man warmed up to me. But by-and-by this faded away and I could not see any act which would make me enjoy the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Amen.) Then I said

I MUST COME OUT FROM AMONGST THE UNGODLY.

I said these words. (Amen.) But what could I do; I was in fellowship with the world, and if I followed what my heart told me I must not do, or I would be a lonely man. But I wanted to give my heart to the Lord: I did indeed. (Amen.) For six years I attended

ENNISKILLEN METHODIST CHURCH.

To their shame, praise the Lord, I now say, that during that time, not one of the men who wear garb and are the leaders ever stretched out the hand and said to me, 'Brother I will help you.' No, not even one. When church was over, all went together according to their different stations in life. I used to sit and read or fall asleep. And Oh, how I wished some one to come in and talk to me about the Lord Jesus and the God I longed to be with! Yet no one came, no not even one!

NOTHING ABOUT GOD.

They often came and talked about many things, but never a word about the business of their heavenly father. Praise the Lord (and he looked upwards) I am turned from all that now. (Amen). Many a time—yes, many a time when passing through the streets of Enniskillen I used to hear the people of the Lord at the Diamond. I used to stand a bit off. I used to say I could not go with them: still my heart was with them, for I loved to be with Christ. Praise the Lord I am with Him now! Those, I used to say, are not in my line. Then I read in the paper about **Brother Cooney**—may the Lord bless him this day as he is working for Christ in some part of the vineyard, for His sake. I came down to Ballinamallard and I heard him. He gave me the words of eternal truth. It was close by here where the little tents was cut down by the

ANGELS FROM THE DEVIL'S CAMP!

Then I used to go to Crocknacrieve, and the Lord spoke to me there. So strongly was I taken with all this that I said the brethren should hold a mission in Enniskillen, and my heart so prayed for it that the Lord granted it. (Amen). I attended all the meetings and was impressed with all that had been said; yet I struggled within myself as to how I would give my heart to the Lord. I was a steady sober man, but when I came to look at myself I found I was empty, low, and a miserable man. (Amen.) I said I would take a step to be with Christ. I did. (Amen.)

THE DEVIL SAID TO ME

'You can't afford to do that. The whole town will be talking about you; they will laugh at you and work you, and then you are in a nice fix.' But the Lord said 'Come unto me.' (Amen.) I often thought of it. I used to think of it at night, and be determined to give up in the business to be with Christ. Then in the morning when I would go down to the shop, I would pass over it and things would go on as usual. For six or seven weeks this went on. The devil pictured to me what was to become of **my wife and boy**; were they to be left on the street?

CONVERT MOVED TO TEARS.

'My heart is full,' said Mr. Dickson, 'as I think of it. (He shed tears then.) But—but—I said I'd give my heart to God. (Amen.) Since then I am rejoicing that I am saved. No longer has the devil a hold on me. Praise the Lord that He has made me throw out the dross and the filth I had within me. (Amen.) I am happy. (Amen.) Praise the Lord for giving us this hall, this building; and may the Lord bless us and keep us so that we may all live for Christ's sake. (Loud amens.)

A hymn was then sung, being the eleventh that evening.

March, 1905 THE IRISH PRESBYTERIAN.

A NEW SECT By Scrutator.

A few years ago a religious movement was started in the North of Ireland by a few former members of the Scotch organization—the Faith Mission. These "Pilgrims," or "Tramp Preachers," as they are commonly called, being dissatisfied with the quieter methods of Christian work advocated by the parent Society, seceded from it, and developed what may best be described as a **New Sekt**, distinguished for its bitter hostility to all existing Churches, and to a regular paid ministry of any kind, reminding one not a little of the attitude of the Plymouth Brethren on these and other points. It is believed that the originator of this somewhat erratic development was a Scotchman called Irwin, who at an early stage of this work enlisted the sympathy and help of an earnest young man, a native of Enniskillen, Mr. Edward Cooney, formerly an Episcopalian, who devoted himself to evangelistic work in various parts of Ireland, and a member of a most respectable family, several of whom have long been distinguished for their zeal in many branches of religious and philanthropic work.

Last autumn these propagandists held a convention near Ballinamallard, County Fermanagh, and assembled there to the number of about 150 for mutual edification, and for the evangelization of the neighbourhood. At the open-air services held on Sabbath evenings, in the latter days of autumn, hundreds gathered to hear the speakers, and to see the novel baptismal scenes, the "dipping" of their converts in the river, sometimes even in the most unsuitable and inclement weather. Since then Mr. Cooney has been carrying on an evangelistic campaign in the town of Enniskillen, and as the writer has had several opportunities of discussing religious questions with him, and of hearing much regarding his work, the readers of The Irish Presbyterian may be interested in learning something about it. As to the Evangelist himself, it is admitted on all hands by those who know him best that he is an exceedingly earnest and devoted man, who has relinquished fine business prospects to occupy his whole time and energies with Christian work. He is an attractive and forcible speaker, well-educated, and gentlemanly in his manners, and overflowing with zeal and enthusiasm. Indeed, one is tempted to fear that his zeal and ardour in a good cause are at times greater than his prudence and discretion. Being naturally a man of strong will and considerable mental gifts, he exercises a great influence over those whose minds are weaker than his own, and over those who have not hitherto had any very definite or settled religious convictions.

Perhaps the most notable feature of his teaching is its **uncompromising hostility to all existing Churches**.

The old cry of the Plymouth Brethren that the Churches are "cold, corrupt, and dead," is reiterated on their platforms *ad nauseam*, and the speakers seem to take special delight in making frivolous charges of the most uncalled-for and uncharitable nature against ministers of the Gospel, forgetful that the apostolic circles and churches were not perfect; that no Protestant minister or Church now claims perfection, and that it is only the old gentleman who sits on the Papal chair at Rome claims infallibility! The strange and inconsistent thing about their conduct, however, is that their most persistent efforts are made, not as we would expect, to gather in the outcasts, but to gain over to their side the best workers of the various Churches, surely an unintentional compliment to these much maligned institutions, as showing that they have the best and most desirable people within their ranks. They also denounce a paid ministry in the strongest possible terms, asserting that no workman in Christ's vineyard should have more than a *living wage*, and that this should only be given by *the faithful*, presumably those who see eye to eye with them in their religious opinions. When reminded of the facts that most modern ministers have very slender incomes; that a great apostle laid down the principle that those who preach the Gospel have the right to live by the Gospel; and that Paul himself allowed the Philippian church to minister once and again to his needs, they reply that they too accept the offerings of their followers. In some cases it is reported these have been very substantial, and have been given by members of various Churches for the evangelists' support, and for the carrying on of their work. Surely all this is largely a distinction without a difference. In both cases those who preach the Gospel are living by the Gospel.

March 23, 1905

THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER

Established 1808.

Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland**THE TRAMPS OR PILGRIMS****A PRESBYTERIAN COMMENT**

In the current issue of *The Irish Presbyterian* there appears an interesting article concerning the new religion, of which a good deal was recently heard in the North-West. Under the heading of 'A New Sect' the writer—'Scrutator'—states:—

A few years ago a religious movement was started in the North of Ireland by a few former members of the Scotch organisation—the Faith Mission. These 'Pilgrims,' or 'Tramp Preachers,' as they are commonly called, being dissatisfied with the quieter methods of Christian work advocated by the parent society, seceded from it, and developed what may best be described as a new sect, distinguished for its better hostility to all existing Churches, and to a regular paid ministry of any kind, reminding one not a little of the Plymouth Brethren on these and other points. It is believed that the originator of this somewhat erratic development was a Scotchman called Irwin, who at an early stage of this work enlisted the sympathy and help of an earnest young man a native of Enniskillen, Mr. Edward Cooney, formerly an Episcopalian, who devoted himself to evangelistic work in various parts of Ireland, and member of a most respectable family, several of whom have long been distinguished for their zeal in many branches of religious and philanthropic work.

Last autumn these propagandists held a convention near Ballinamallard, Co. Fermanagh, and assembled there to the number of about 150 for mutual edification, and for the evangelization of the neighbourhood. At the open-air services held on Sabbath evenings, in the latter days of autumn, hundreds gathered to hear the speakers, and to see the novel baptismal scenes, the 'dipping' of their converts in the river, sometimes even in the most unsuitable and inclement weather. Since then Mr. Cooney has been carrying on an evangelistic campaign in the town of Enniskillen, and as the writer has had several opportunities of discussing religious questions with him, and of hearing much regarding his work, the readers of *The Irish Presbyterian* may be interested in learning something about it. As to the evangelist himself, it is admitted on all hands by those who know him best that he is an exceedingly earnest and devoted man who has relinquished fine business prospects to occupy his whole time and energies with Christian work. He is an attractable and forcible speaker, well-educated, and gentlemanly in his manners, overflowing with zeal and enthusiasm. Indeed, one is tempted to fear that his zeal and ardour in a good cause are at times greater than his prudence and discretion. Being naturally a man of strong will and considerable mental gifts, he exercises a great influence over those whose minds are weaker than his own, and over those who have not hitherto had any very definite or settled religious convictions.

Perhaps the most notable feature of his teaching is its

UNCOMPROMISING HOSTILITY TO ALL EXISTING CHURCHES.

The old cry of the Plymouth Brethren that the Churches are 'cold, corrupt and dead,' is reiterated on their platforms *ad nauseam*, and the speakers seem to take special delight in making frivolous charges of the most uncalled-for and uncharitable nature against ministers of the Gospel, forgetful that the apostolic circles and churches were not perfect; that no Protestant minister or Church now claims perfection, and that it is only the old gentleman who sits on the Papal chair at Rome claims infallibility! The strange and inconsistent thing about their conduct, however, is that their most persistent efforts are made, not as we would expect, to gather in the outcasts but to gain over to their side the best workers of the various Churches, surely an unintentional compliment to these much maligned institutions, as showing that they have the best and most desirable people within their ranks. They also denounce a paid ministry in the strongest possible terms, asserting that no workman in Christ's vineyard should have more than a living wage, and that this should be given by the faithful, presumably those who see eye to eye with them in their religious opinions. When reminded of the facts that most modern ministers have very slender incomes; that a great apostle laid down the principle that those who preach the Gospel have the right to live by the Gospel; and that Paul himself allowed the Philippian Church to minister once and again to his needs, they reply that they, too, accept the offerings of their followers. In some cases it is reported these have been very substantial, and have been given by members of various Churches for the evangelists' support, and for the carrying on of their work. Surely all this is largely a distinction without a difference. In both cases those who preach the Gospel are living by the Gospel.

Another remarkable tenet of the New Sect is their view of what the imitation of Christ means. We have been accustomed, in common with other Evangelical Churches, to hold that the thing to be aimed at is an

IMITATION OF THE MIND AND SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus'. They go a step further and insist on a literal and slavish copying of Christ's earthly life. They say, for instance:—'Jesus and His Apostles were all poor men. Hence every Christian labourer ought now to be poor also.' They also advise their converts to sell their earthly possessions, and share the proceeds with their fellow believers, in Pentecostal fashion; and in justice to Mr. Cooney it should be stated that he has freely given away his own money to his needy brethren. Indeed, to hear him talk, one would suppose he considered there was some special merit in poverty, whereas we were always accustomed to exclude it from among the virtues, and to classify it rather with the misfortunes of life. It is not the possession of the good things of this world that is in itself wrong, but it is their misuse and abuse that is hurtful to the believer's religious experiences.

Their views on baptism are perhaps better known than any of their other beliefs. All infant baptism is, in their opinion, useless, and worse than useless, and adult baptism—by immersion, of course—is insisted on, as well as complete separation from the Churches,

before full membership can be granted, and the fullness of Gospel blessing, of which they apparently claim a monopoly, can be enjoyed.

These are but a few of the crude and strange notions these well-meaning but ill-informed teachers are propagating in various parts of the country. There are others even more grotesque—such as declining to read the Scriptures at their public Sabbath gatherings, refusing to share the ordinary comforts of home life, forbidding to marry, and insisting on the most primitive and simple kind of dress, without personal adornment of any kind—some even going so far as to refuse to wear the ordinary white collar or cuffs!

As to the results of the work in County Fermanagh, it would seem that they have achieved most success in the country districts among the farming and serving classes, whereas in the town of Enniskillen they have made little permanent headway, though large numbers attended their Sunday night meetings, chiefly through curiosity, and with an Athenian desire to hear 'some new thing.'

In the writer's opinion, it is a great pity a gentleman of Mr. Cooney's special gifts had not submitted himself to a course of training at such an institution as that of the late D. L. Moody, at Northfield, U.S.A., before setting himself up as a self-constituted critic of other people who have grown grey in their Master's service. In such an event, we doubt not, many of his peculiar opinions would have been so modified that he might, like most other evangelists of our time, have learned to regard the existing Churches as his allies and friends in all his vigorous contests with the powers of darkness.

May 2, 1905, p5
The Irish Independent

Cooneyites Assailed
A Quaint Baptismal Ceremony
Remarkable Scenes in County Tyrone

The appearance of the new sect known as the Cooneyites is Ballygawley, County Tyrone, has been responsible for some remarkable scenes in that usually quiet little town.

Baptism by immersion is one of the cardinal beliefs of the Cooneyites, and the carrying out of this quaint ceremony was witnessed by the inhabitants, who turned out almost en masse a few days ago. The leader went into the river breast deep, and several ladies in flannelette gowns were passed over to him. Each in turn was plunged under the water, and the throng of spectators shrieked with laughter as the shivering "converts" were escorted to a house close by.

Although the new sect have secured a house for their services, they frequently indulge in open air preaching, and when the hymn singing is begun, the juvenile spectators generally start some airs, such as "Dolly Gray," which largely detract from the solemnity of the proceedings.

ORTHODOXY QUESTIONED

The preachers generally secure some point of vantage on a Sunday evening when the Presbyterian and Episcopalian congregations are returning from worship but the climax was reached on Sunday when the Rev. Thomas Nash, accompanied by a large crowd, confronted the new evangelisers.

A warm controversy took place as to the orthodoxy of their religious tenets. A leading Presbyterian sought to defend the doctrines of the Cooneyites, and this created heated scenes. The Cooneyites endeavoured to throw oil on the troubled waters by breaking into a hymn, which was scarcely distinguishable from the general tumult which prevailed.

Several policeman were present, but they evidently looked on with amusement at the rival gospel propagators.

June 10, 1905, p4
The Herald (Fermanagh Co.)
"DIPPERS" AT HOME
Some Laughable Scenes at Enniskillen
Shivering "Converts" Soused in Lough Erne
The New "Evangelist" on His Own Mission
...A CHILLY FUNCTION

Now had arrived the time for the actual ceremonial. The "Dippers" formed in two lines from the tent to the water's edge, leaving a passage for the candidates to pass through. The spectators waited with eager expectancy, which gradually developed into a mild form of impatience, as the minutes sped by and none emerged from the tent—the candidates being, evidently, unwilling to face an ordeal which certainly did not seem inviting, as the wind blew cold and old Erne's smile was treacherous and bleak.

Suddenly the tent curtain was drawn aside and there stepped forth three women, one being escorted by the other two. The central figure, who is well-known locally, was a candidate for baptism. She presented a grotesque appearance, being attired in a flowing waterproof, and on her head was a lady's bathing cap. At the water's edge she was received by Mr. Cooney and handed over to **Mr. John West**, who had divested himself of his coat, and vest and boots. Mr. West and the candidate waded hand in hand some fifteen

yards into the lake, until the water was well above the knees. Turning round to face the spectators the poor woman folded her arms. Placing his right hand on her folded arms, Mr. West supported her backwards into the water until she was completely immersed, meanwhile offering up a form of prayer. In her efforts to rise, the woman struggled and almost wriggled herself out of the protecting arms of Mr. West, and altogether the sight was so ludicrous that the spectators burst into hearty roars of laughter, above which could be heard many ribald jests—a feature of the proceedings which was deplorably in evidence all through.

The next convert was also a woman, and the same formula was again observed. Evidently the sudden immersion in the cold water affected the silly person, who waded to the bank only with the greatest possible difficulty, while the contortions of her face, though bearing evidence to discomfort she was enduring, amused the crowd immensely. Next came a man, and he also was a source of amusement, as after leaving the water, he hurried off at full speed in his wet clothes to a house some distance away. The fourth candidate was a woman and several minutes elapsed before her appearance, during which the hymn was changed to one commencing, "The sunshine in my soul today." As the convert entered the water, Mr. Cooney made strenuous protests against the jests that were being indulged in by several in the audience. Two other men also took a bath. In the evening the "Pilgrims" held another open air meeting.

The Buffalo Times, New York
July 8, 1906, page 22
TRAMP PREACHERS, A NEW RELIGIOUS ENGLISH SECT

Husky Looking Men and Half a Dozen Rather Pretty Girls Made Their Appearance in Suffolk Three Weeks Ago. Cause of Trouble. Special Cable to *The Times*, London , July 7.

A new religious sect is now startling England. St. Paul the Second has appeared according to one William Irwin [Irvine]. At present, the "Tramp Preachers," as the new Sect is called, has confined its operations to the eastern counties of England, but so much success has been met with that the work may spread all over the country.

The "Tramp Preachers," consisting of William Irwin [Irvine], the Chief Baptiser, also St. Paul the Second, as he announced last week, with about a dozen other husky looking men and some half-dozen rather pretty girls, made their appearance at Suffolk three weeks ago. They only visited country places, avoiding towns and large villages. They live in camp under canvas, and hold their meetings at night. Usually they do not break up till midnight, and then they ask the girls at the services to stay a while and join the penitents.

Farmers have been complaining that their daughters are being kept out all night, and they fear evil will befall them. But the girls continue to attend the meetings and stay in mysterious tents till all hours of the night. The "Tramps" subsist on voluntary contributions, but any one who joins them is bound to turn all their worldly possessions into the common fund. Recruits to the new sect have flocked to it in large numbers, particularly the women. Young and old maids, married women and widows alike seem to think it a charming form of religion. There have been some strong attacks on it, but these have helped it rather than otherwise!

Last week the "Tramps" got a new lease of life when a Mr. Cooney from the United States arrived and announced that he was John the Baptist No. 2. He is also the supreme head of the new sect. He has issued an appeal for missionaries, preferably girls to go out to the United States and convert the millions of ungodly there. He has a large number of offers.

The Rev. W. Coles, a missionary attached to the London City Mission, in a letter to the newspapers, declares that the "Tramps" have done a lot of good work, and that Mr. Cooney has won the respect of the whole United States in the missionary field. He denies that the "Tramps" decoy girls away from their homes for immoral purposes and prevent their friends knowing their whereabouts. Mr. Cole's daughter went to the United States for the "Tramps" a few months ago, and writes that she is doing good work for the cause.

December 30, 1905
The Anglo-Celt, Cavan

Fermanagh News – Enniskillen Jottings

Cooney again! Tuesday last was an interesting day in Enniskillen. Home from the foot ball match, we were entertained by Mr. Edward Cooney, the leader of the "dippers" who, having preached in the Orange Hall, at the head of several hundred converts four abreast, marched through the town singing hymns. Crowds of people lined the streets as this unique procession passed along.

On the Diamond, the "Nineteenth century religious novelty," expressed the pleasure it gave him to be once more in "holy Enniskillen." He told them of the banking accounts of the Pope, of the huge piles of "brass" hidden away by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the thousands of pounds which were held in closed fists by the merchants of the town.

To be rich is the fore most sin according to the Cooneyite calendar of sins. The prophet of the "dippers" spoke of the great blessings of being poor, which made things so easy to remain in a state of grace—compulsory it is, I fear, with a good many of us, and with most of Mr. Cooney's followers, too. Several of the "pilgrims" gave testimony to the efficacy of the teachings of their new religion and many of them had tramped upwards of ten miles. In knots of four and five they trudged home again.

May 5, 1905
KILSYTH CHRONICLE
9 Market Chambers
Kilsyth G65 OAZ Scotland

BAPTISMS IN BANTON LOCH

On Sabbath afternoon curiosity tempted several hundreds of people to face the cold easterly breeze and showers on a pilgrimage to Banton Loch where a number of adults, converts to Edward Cooney, who styles himself 'the tramp preacher,' were immersed. For several weeks, Cooney, a native of Enniskillen in the North of Ireland, has been conducting in Kilsyth a mission in connection with the evangelistic body occupying the Wooden Hall, in West Burnside Street. The scene of Sunday's proceedings was on the North side of the Loch where at the water side a canvas structure had been erected as disrobing room. The spot selected, whether advisedly or merely coincidentally, was at the spot from which it will be remembered a boy named Wilson, about two years ago, went in to bathe and was drowned. A goodly number sought vantage spots on the rubbish bin from the old Riskend Pit, while numerous others lined the West Bank and also the North bank, in the immediate vicinity of where the tent was erected.

Prior to the immersion proceedings, a religious service was held, and thereafter, females were the first to brave the cold water. They were conducted down the bank by one man and led out to where another (Mr. W. Abercrombie, Queenzieburn) was standing waist deep, who received them and dipped them beneath the water. The varying expressions on the faces of the immersed as each came to the surface, in some cases gasping and to all appearances chilled with the experience, gave room for much caustic comment and humorous remark from the spectators. The crowd was, however, of the most tolerant nature and beyond giving audible expression pretty freely to their opinions, in no way interfered with the ceremony. While the males were preparing for the baptism, Cooney held forth upon the rite of baptism, avowing himself a believer in adult baptism and giving an account of the rite as performed by the ancients and in the various religious bodies of the world. Afterwards, the men were dipped and interest in the proceedings, so far as the crowd was concerned, was at the end. While the ceremony was going on the Hall followers sang hymns. In all, eleven women and eight men underwent immersion.

January 6, 1906
The Leitrim Observer, Saturday
Manorhamilton News

THE DIPPERS

The Dippers are stopping at Eddy Trotter's, Stone Pound, Manorhamilton.

Now outward bound for Trotter's Pound
 To get a holy dip.

Repenting all, out there we'll call,
 Our souls of sins to strip.

To wipe us dry in vain we try,
 For drying makes up drip.

So day by day we pass that way
 And strip and drip and dip.

NOTE: Alfred Trotter stated his "*native place: Tullys Kearney, **Manorhamilton**, Co. Leitrim.*"

May 5, 1906, p. 1
The Anglo Celt

Aggressive Dippers – Cooneyites in Irvinestown.

On Sunday evening the Cooneyites were holding forth in front of Mr. John Aiken's, just a short distance from the Methodist place of worship, as the members of that denomination were leaving the building. A large crowd had collected to listen and the speaker was directing his attention against clergymen in general and Methodist clergymen in particular.

Some of the local Methodist stopped to listen to the diatribe, and incensed by the Cooneyite's extreme language they approached him and asked him to desist. He declined to do so and matters were assuming a serious aspect when the police arrived. The Cooneyites then moved away and the incident closed. The townspeople as a whole are thoroughly disgusted with the unseemly language which these "dippers" have been indulging in every Sunday evening for a considerable time past.

NOTE: On May 13, 1913 The Morning Leader and The Daily News merged under the title of The Daily News.

June 9, 1906
Morning Leader

**Tramp Preachers in East Anglia
Strange Sect Converts Villagers
Weird Meetings
Homes Divided Through Zeal for the New Faith**

From Our Special Correspondent
Framlingham (Suffolk), Friday Night

Very significant charges are being made in various districts of rural Suffolk against the "Tramp Preachers:—a mysterious body of men and girls who have been hawking their own particular "religion" among the simple souls of East Anglia for two or three years past.

The railway ends at Framlingham. Beyond lies rural England, peaceful as Heaven, and much more easy of attainment; populated by soft-voiced, heavy-bearded men of the soil and dreamy women.

A Perfect Little World.

Hamlet after hamlet shows the same quiet picture under the cheerful sun. No disturbing element, no worry, no need for haste! Surely a perfect little world of its own.

So I thought until I met an oldest gentleman farmer with a long, curly beard just tinged with grey, an eagle eye, restless as quicksilver, and a hard, bony fist, which shook the sweet may blossom out of the hedge as he punched it viciously and cried: "The Devil is among us! The Devil turned parson!"

And then he told me all about the "Tramp Preachers," and as he pointed to little villages nestling among the hills and valleys: "Go there, and there, and there; and see the farmers and the laborers; and you will find houses divided among themselves, husband against wives, children—girl children—against their mothers and fathers, deacons against parsons! And all through those cursed Trampers—men and women with no names, full of mystery and seduction, with wonderful voices—tongues sweet enough to charm a sty of hogs!"

**A Public Meeting
To
WOMEN STEALERS!**

In this village the "Tramp Preachers" had struck oil—and departed. They had made hash of the Rev. Mr. Bedcock's Congregational chapel there, had "converted" several of the girls, and had annexed a deacon with such success that he deserted the calm waters of the Congregational chapel, and fled to Ireland some time ago, to be trained into a full-blown Tramp. He is now back in Debenham, as Tramp-in-Charge Extraordinary, and running a mission whither come converts from a wide district once a week to keep their hand in.

Stalwart Anti-Tramps.

At Cretingham, another small village, I discovered Mr. W. D. Wilson, a rich farmer, who is the most stalwart anti-Tramp in the whole district. His family has only one object in life just now. It is to sweep the Tramps out of the country as completely as he has swept them out of Cretingham.

According to him, the Tramp Preachers—or the "No Sectors"—began their mysterious work in Cretingham about three years ago. First of all came a pretty girl—**Alice Pipe** by name. She visited many houses in the district, and telling how she came as the forerunner of a marvelous mission, made eyes at the young men, and said sweet things to the young women with encouraging results.

A hard-faced Scotsman followed in about nine months. **He was William Irwin, the founder of the Tramps, and Chief Baptiser.** Alice, with her sweet voice and wily ways did the converting, and William lured the victims to the nearest brook or horse pond and completed the business.

" St. Paul the Second."

One night Irwin announced, "I am St. Paul the Second!" And then the great white bird circled over his head and flew (so) they say straight to Heaven! That was good enough for the rustics (?) who were too much flabbergasted at the supreme holiness of St. Paul II to recognize quite a common object of the High Suffolk countryside when they saw it—a white owl!

Things boomed after this. Alice and William, and another missionary, held evening meetings; and certain good-looking girls who attended them did not get home until long after midnight!

What was the attraction? Alice could pipe like a bullfinch. She was "a second Jenny Lind." William—now St. Paul II—had a tongue sweeter than honey in the honeycomb. As a matter of fact, the pretty girls, and some of the pretty boys, were absolutely and thoroughly hypnotized by these seductive Tramps.

The Weeding Out Process.

Their system was simple. There was a sort of penitence form by the "pulpit," and when the general meeting was over Alice would announce, "We will now sing a hymn, and after it those who don't want salvation may go. Others stay behind." Thus, night after night, a careful weeding out process went on and the sheep and the goats were separated. The sheep being mostly girls—the more attractive the better!

What happened at these secret meetings between ten o'clock and midnight I have not the slightest idea. I tried to worm it out of some of the converted maidens in the Debenham district yesterday. But though they would talk sanely and frankly on all other subjects, this

particular point struck them dumb.

After tea in a charming old farmhouse near Earl Soham this evening I was chatting with my hostess—the farmer's elders daughter. I knew her to be a recently converted "Tramp," and presently I asked her what was the mysterious attraction of these midnight services. Her face flushed scarlet in an instant, she stammered some incoherent words, jumped up from the table and scuttled away like a scared rabbit.

Will Tell Nothing.

Her father looked after her, and the tears ran down his brown cheeks. "She's just like that to us," he said. "And so is her sister. They will tell us nothing—nothing! The sect is cleared from this village, thank God, and the nearest place of meeting is Debenham, miles and miles away. I miss my girls for a whole day and half the night, and I know they're at Debenham with those cursed Tramps! Latterly I have had them watched and followed by some of my most trusted farm hands, for I am haunted by the fear that they will be spirited off to America or Australia, or New Zealand one of these days, like so many others have been.

"They go nominally as 'missioners,' with no gold or silver, according to the old Bible reading. Who looks after them on the journey, or where the money comes from, I cannot understand, for the No Sect people never ask for money, and tell us that the Lord sends all they want. You know, we can't stomach that, even in rural Suffolk!"

Suspicion, Hatred, and Anger.

In other places I found the same suspicion, and hatred, and anger against the "Tramp Preachers." From one man I got a lurid tale of how some too-confiding country girls, after being converted and baptized, had been shipped to China and sold for wives to a rich, fat Chinaman!

Confirmatory details, I may add, are abundantly lacking. Though China was mentioned by the siren Alice in the early days of the mission in Cretingham, she was denounced so roundly by Mr. Wilson (in public meeting) that she never referred to it again.

Tonight I traced the No Sect leaders to their lair. How they tried to convert me I will describe Monday. (to be continued)

~~~~~

**NOTE:** Wm. Irvine's name is often misspelled as "Irwin" in newspaper articles.

---

**June 10, 1906**

**Sunday Independent, Dublin, Ireland**

### THE TRAMPS

**Glorified into a New Sect**

**WEIRD WORKERS**

The performance of the "Cooneyites" **most recently formed of sects**, which mysteriously sprung into existence under the leadership of an Enniskillen man named Cooney, have caused a good deal of commotion in various parts of the North of Ireland.

"Tramp Preachers" identified with the Cooneyites have been hawking their own particular "deligion" among the \_\_\_\_ goals of East Anglia also...A hardfaced Scotsman followed in about nine months. **He was William Irwin, the founder of the Tramps** and Chief Baptizer...One night Irwin announced, "I am St. Paul the Second!" (illegible)...

### THE WEEDING OUT PROCESS

Their System was simple. There was a \_\_\_\_ of penitance form by the "pulpit," and when the general meeting was over, he would announce: "We will now sing a hymn and after it those who don't want salvation may go. Others stay behind." Then night after night, a careful weeding out process went on, and the sheep and the goats were separated....What happened in these secret meetings between 10 o'clock and midnight I have not the slightest idea.

---

**June 11, 1906**

**Morning Leader, London**

**East Anglian Tramp Missioners**

**Irish Leaders in Rural England**

**Sect's Genesis**

**Chief Missioner Explains the New Order's Claims**

Our special correspondent, writing from Ipswich on Saturday says: I have tracked the Tramp Preachers to their latest hunting ground. After having stormy and troublous times at Framlingham, Cretingham, Debenham, Needham, Stow, Upland, and Stowmarket (where, in spite of tremendous energy, they were only moderately successful in their "converts"), they have settled down on the outskirts of Ipswich.

Chapels and schoolrooms having been denied them, they appealed to headquarters in Belfast, with the result that Belfast sent them **a collapsible, portable chapel big** enough to hold 60 souls. That chapel now stands on a waste corner of ground near the Derby Rd. station. It is a black shed, with a tin roof, and its doors are ornamented with big posters announcing that

**JESUS**

**Will be preached in**

**THIS HALL NIGHTLY.  
COME, HEAR, AND THINK!**

The chief missioner is a bearded Irishman named McClung, who is assisted by his wife and one or two newly-made Tramps. I found McClung in a small lodging near his temple. He is a handsome man, with magnetic eyes, a rich voice, and very nice white shapely hands.

**An Hour of Religious Discussion.**

I struck him at a soothful time—after dinner, and, as I was sympathetic and he was communicative, we had a nice long hour of deep religious discussion. We exchanged texts, and I kept my end up fairly well.

Presently we got to personalities, and McClung grew eloquent over 'a madman named Wilson of Cretingham,' (mentioned in Saturday's Leader") and rated him soundly for 'queering the Trampers' pitch' all over the wide district of Suffolk.

"He says that we are women stealers, that we lure girls to America, and sell them to the Mormons, that we entice them to China, where they are sold as wives to the rich yellow men! It is all a lie—a disgraceful lie.

**What Other Prophets Say**

"We are simply mission folk, and we go out into the world at the instruction of Jesus to preach the Bible. In all the dozen of religions and scores of sects we are the only Christians who preach the Bible as it should be preached. The State Church does not, the Roman Catholics do not, the Nonconformists do not—"

"That," said I, "is exactly what John Alexander Dowie, Brother Prince, Johanna Routhcote, Smyth-Pigott, King Solomon of Arregosobah, and Mrs. Eddy say."

McClung shrugged his shoulders. 'Anyway, we are honest! At least I am!'

"And who are 'we' !"

"We have no name," he replied, "but the ribald multitude give us many. Some call us Cooneyites, some call us Tramps, Faith Missionaries, No Secters, Women-Thieves, and so on. Well, we are Cooneyites. We are also McClungites, for Cooney is no greater than I. We have no established leader in this world."

**Extent of the Mission**

**"Our mission was started by William Irwin, a Scotchman, seven or eight years ago. Others followed him.** I myself was a Civil Servant in Dublin. I resigned my post, sold all that I had and gave to the poor, and went out to preach.

"The mission has grown gradually. Fifty men and women are now carrying the Word to the unenlightened in eight counties in England—rural England. There are as many in Scotland, more in Ireland. We ask for no money. We have no collections. The Lord provides everything."

"Even to the fares for sending young girls far away in distant countries?"

"Even to that. We have recently sent girls to America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa—"

"China?"

"What's the use of sending them to China if they don't know the language?"

**Objections Sometimes**

I agreed; and asked if these girls went with their parents' consent, and whether they went unprotected.

McClung admitted that there were objections sometimes. But he assured me that the girls were excellently looked after, "by the Lord." And at the present moment the devout Mr. Irwin, "St. Paul II.," was touring Canada and the States on a sort of official inspection—and no doubt having a good time of it, with Providence paying his fare, and feeding and clothing him.

**Nothing to Do with Mormonism.**

I ventured a remark about the salubrity of Salt Lake City. Mr. McClung was deeply pained. He assured me vehemently that the firm of Cooney and Co., or McClung and Co., (as you will) had absolutely no connection, business or otherwise, with the Mormon establishment.

But even he could not explain away the deep-rooted disgust and hatred of the Tramp Preachers which exists in rural Suffolk, which has brought clergymen out of their quiet vicarages, hotly protesting, which has set by the ears High Churchmen, Low Churchmen, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists of all shades, which has stirred local authorities to action, and which has made suspicious farmers lock their daughters in their rooms at night, and set sturdy bailiffs and grooms to patrol the farmhouse until day-dawn in case of attempted escape!

**Invention of the Devil.**

McClung considers all this unhallowed suspicion of the Tramps the invention of the Devil, and what not. He doesn't like Ipswich, and already his portable chapel is much too large for his audience. He thinks about leaving presently and coming to London—where, if he joined the Burning Bush American High-kickers at Camberwell, he might create a decent sensation. Suffolk is getting a little too hot for him.

June 12, 1906

Morning Leader, London

**TRAMP PREACHERS.  
PROTEST AGAINST THEIR PROSELYTISING.  
MINISTERS CONDEMN DECOYING ABROAD OF GIRLS.**

We have received a mass of correspondence arising out of the articles in yesterday's and Saturday's Morning Leader on the subject of the mysterious "Tramp Preachers," who have been seriously shaking-up the good people of Suffolk recently; and we have been asked to publish the following appeal:

*We would respectfully ask all ministers of religion and others really interested in religious efforts to make full inquiry and satisfy themselves of the genuine missionary character of certain parties of men and women who describe themselves as being of "No Sect," and having "no name," before giving them any encouragement.*

*It is known that some 36 persons, mostly girls, have been sent away by these people, ostensibly for missionary purposes to foreign countries, and that requests for information as to their whereabouts, and the conditions under which they are living, have been refused.*

*While making no charge, we wish to express our opinion that, unless full publicity is given to the movements of such companies of young persons, and proper supervision is provided, as in the case of the Church Army and Dr. Barnardo's emigrants, there must, whatever the ostensible purpose, always be a danger of some of them becoming the VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCES and especially must this be the case when they are told to follow the Apostolic commission, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats," etc.*

*We would suggest that unless definite information be given as to the present condition of these young people, no encouragement or assistance be given to these professed missionaries.*

Geo. Allan, Vicar of Kenton.

J. Haskell, Free Church Methodist minister, Framlingham.

R. Abbey, Rector of Earl Soham.

M. Allen, Vicar of Winston.

Geo. W. Jones, Vicar of Tannington & Brundish.

W. Batcock, Congregational minister, Debenham.

Richard Newell, The Manse, Framlingham.

F. D. Brown, Rector of Winesham.

E. F. Randolph, Vicar of Mendlesham.

Geo. Cakebread, Congregational minister, Needham Market.

C. Gale Rew, Vicar of Cretingham and Framsdon.

P. Rogers, Canon, Rector of St. Pancras Roman Catholic, Ipswich.

C. B. Dundas, Vicar of Needham Market.

J. Davies, Vicar of Charsfield & Letheringham.

S. Stubbings, Primitive Methodist minister, Stowmarket.

W. G. H. Ellison, officiating clergyman, Debenham.

E. S. Finch, Vicar of Laxfield.

H. A. Todd, Congregational minister, Framlingham.

C. S. Flynn, Priest-in-charge, Stowmarket, Suffolk.

J. F. Walker, Curate of St. Pancras Roman Catholic, Ipswich.

A. H. McGachen, Rector of Monewden.

**A STILL STRONGER PROTEST.**

From Cretingham (near Framlingham) comes a still stronger protest, signed by the school managers, the chairman of the parish meeting, and other influential inhabitants, warning the public, especially mothers and daughters, to guard against danger of being taken unawares in carefully concealed nets; to watch against craftily hidden traps; to beware of privily laid snares by WOMEN AND MEN (some of them from America), going from house to house under the cloak of a Religion new and mysterious, calling themselves "Missioners," giving out: "We are going to win souls All over the world, As sheep in the midst of Wolves!"

They reverse this quotation in practice, having ensnared on this suspicious errand, for shipment abroad, several young women, utterly regardless of their parents' or Guardians' consent or wishes.

**THIRTY DELUDED GIRLS.**

About thirty of these deluded girls have been exported from Londonderry in one day to New York, Montreal or Quebec, at a cost of about £300. How many before or since, we have been unable to find out. Neither will the names of these girls, nor the addresses of their parents or guardian, be vouchsafed to us.

If this trade is fair, square and aboveboard, why should it be necessary for them to conceal all records of their TRANSACTIONS IN WOMEN AND MONEY?

N.B. It is known that fallen women set to work to ruin others.

**NOTE:** "Mr. Irwin" in the following article is William Irvine. His name is often misspelled in newspapers. Lizzie Coles is shown on the 1905 Workers list entering the work in 1903. Mr. Coles in the following article is Lizzie Coles' Father John Coles. [Click to read Lizzie Coles Account.](#)

**June 15, 1906**  
**The Morning Leader**

**TRAMP PREACHERS' DEFENCE**  
**DECOYING GIRLS ABROAD STOUTLY DENIED.**  
**FOLLOWING APOSTOLIC METHODS IN ALL THINGS**

Some fresh light was thrown on the sect of Tramp Preachers yesterday, concerning whom several articles have recently appeared to these columns. The gentleman who volunteered the information was Mr. Coles of Leytonstone, a missionary belonging to the London City Mission, whose daughter has for three years been one of the "tramps."

Mr. Coles himself is a devout believer in the Sect, and offered an emphatic defence of their methods.

At the outset he denied indignantly the charge that girls are decoyed away by the "Tramp Preachers," and cannot be heard from after. His own daughter, now in America, communicated regularly with him, giving full details of her life, and her accounts had been confirmed from an independent source.

By way of proof Mr. Coles placed a batch of the correspondence in the hands of the "Leader" representative, which showed the young lady to be in a happy frame of mind. Moreover, Mr. Coles stated that the girl has an uncle in the United States—a deacon of a church—who also reported favorably about her.

**Indignant at the Allegation**

Mr. Coles was indignant at the allegation that Mr. Irwin—one of the leaders of the sect—had declared himself to be "*St. Paul the Second*." Both Irwin and his fellow leader Cooney had stayed with him at his house in Leytonstone alone and he had apparently formed a big opinion of them.

"Three years ago," he continued, "**Mr. Irwin, Mr. Cooney and five others** held meetings at my mission hall under the auspices of the London City Mission. One of my parishioners had suggested it. He said that they would preach the gospel, and they did preach it. **It was as a result of this three weeks' mission that my daughter joined them.**"

Mr. Coles gave some interesting details concerning the chief dramatis personae of the tramp preaching movement.

It was under the Rev. John McNeill, he said that Irwin was converted. He looked out on the big salaries of the Christian ministers, and came to the conclusion that the parsons taught one thing and followed another. He therefore, left a splendid situation in a large warehouse and started what he calls "following the Saviour in preaching the gospel."

**That was about six years ago.** He went to Ireland preaching and there came across Cooney, who was doing wonders in his father's drapery business.

"Here," said Mr. Coles, "are Irwin's own words spoken, with Cooney, in this very room. 'When,' said Irwin, 'I came across Cooney first he was a professed Christian man, and said he would work in business with all the zeal that he could command, and give the money that he could earn to help to carry on the work.'"

**Not Money, but Men**

"Irwin replied, 'I don't want your money. I want you.'  
And from that time, Cooney felt, 'Well, here's a man of God.'"

In that conviction, continued Mr. Coles, Cooney gave up his business, fell out with his family, and began preaching.

"Cooney is a gentleman, although he does go about in a flannel shirt and no collar; and he is a splendid fellow. You need only be with him for ten minutes to find him a man of God.

"As for the letter to the ministers on this subject in 'The Morning Leader,' it's only jealousy with these men. When they speak of the 36 persons who have been sent away, ask them if they have sent out 36 people to evangelise and preach the gospel! If the work was not of God, would these girls go?"

"They might," suggested the "Leader" representative.

"Ah, no," replied Mr. Coles.

"Where did the money come from for the movement?"

"Oh, then Irwin did take Cooney's money after all, or rather, he took Cooney and his money?"

"Cooney spent every farthing he had."

"And he shared in the money?"



**Apostolic Distribution**

"Yes. But perhaps this will help you to understand what is done. Two years ago they had a conference in Ireland at which my daughter was present. My daughter told me that they met according to the apostolic teaching in Acts. Everybody, whether he had much or little put it into the common stock: and then the total collection was distributed equally among those present.

"So that it may have been—mind you, I am not sure—that at that time Cooney brought in several thousand pounds." The conference then separated, each going to his or her duty. "That," said Mr. Coles, "is how they work."

Mr. Coles added some further details on the financial side. When, he said, they have been on a mission for three weeks, and are about to leave, they call their converts together and say, "Now we are sitting together at the Lord's table." They break the bread together, and then they will ask for financial assistance. They will address one of the converts thus: "Mr. Smith, you spend a shilling a week in tobacco. You'll have to give up smoking, and give the shilling to the Lord's work."

Mr. Smith does give up the money, and any more he can spare. The girls sent America go about in pairs and support themselves in the way described. What the leaders of the movement say is that those people who can't collect money are failures.

Their position is: "We don't want money from the world or the devil, but from God's people who have been blessed under our work." "And that," said Mr. Coles, "is what we mean when we say that God will provide sustenance. I know one man who lost his arm while working on a railway, and he is so enamored of the work that he goes without dinner in order to be able to send the money on to the movement! And I know still another who often does the same thing."

**The Late Night Meetings.**

"What is the mystery about those secret meetings of the sect between ten o'clock and midnight?" asked the "Leader" representative. "Oh! That's not true. Of course, the preachers say that Paul sat all night teaching and preaching to those who were willing to listen, and they do the same at the night meetings."

"Then, if that be all, why do girl converts blush and run away when questioned on the subject?"

Mr. Coles scratched his head. "I can't think that is so," was all he replied. "I believe these people," he added, "are perfectly pure and innocent. They follow the teachings of the Bible exactly."

"And you consider it practical Christianity to break up homes, and separate families in this way?"

"Their main teaching is the forsaking of mother, father, home, land, affluence—for Christ's sake."

**June 21, 1906, p. 3**

**THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER**

**Established 1808.**

**Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland**

**IRISH TRAMP PREACHERS.****A MISSION IN SUFFOLK IS ACCUSED OF STEALING WOMEN.****INTERESTING INTERVIEW WITH McCLUNG**

The special correspondent of the Morning Leader, writing from Ipswich says:—I have tracked the Tramp Preachers to their latest hunting ground. After having stormy and troublous times at Framlingham, Cretingham, Debenham, Needham, Stow, Upland, and Stowmarket (where, in spite of tremendous energy they were only moderately successful in their 'converts'), they have settled down on the outskirts of Ipswich.

Chapels and schoolrooms having been denied them, they appealed to headquarters in Belfast, with the result that Belfast sent them a collapsible, portable chapel big enough to hold 60 souls. That chapel now stands on a waste corner of ground near the Derby Road Station. It is a black shed, with a tin roof, and its doors are ornamented with big posters announcing that

**JESUS**

**Will be preached in**

**THIS HALL NIGHTLY.**

**COME, HEAR, AND THINK!**

The chief missioner is a bearded Irishman named McClung, who is assisted by his wife and one or two newly-made Tramps.

I found McClung in a small lodging near his temple. He is a handsome man, with magnetic eyes, a rich voice, and very nice white shapely hands.

**AN HOUR OF RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION**

I struck him at a soothful time—after dinner, and, as I was sympathetic and he was communicative, we had a nice long hour of deep religious discussion. We exchanged texts, and I kept my end up fairly well.

Presently we got to personalities, and McClung grew eloquent over 'a madman named Wilson of Cretingham,' and rated him soundly for 'queering the Trampers' pitch' all over the wide district of Suffolk.

'He says that we are women stealers, that we lure girls to America, and sell them to the Mormons, that we entice them to China, where they are sold as wives to the rich yellow men! It is all a lie—a disgraceful lie.

#### WHAT OTHER PROPHETS SAY.

'We are simply mission folk, and we go out into the world at the instruction of Jesus to preach the Bible. In all the dozen of religions and scores of sects we are the only Christians who preach the Bible as it should be preached. The State Church does not, the Roman Catholics do not, the Nonconformists do not—'

'That,' said I, 'is exactly what John Alexander Dowie, Brother Prince, Johanna Routhcote, Smyth-Pigott, King Solomon of Arregosobah, and Mrs. Eddy say.'

McClung shrugged his shoulders. 'Anyway, we are honest! At least I am!'

#### And who are 'we?'

'We have no name,' he replied, 'but the ribald multitude give us many. Some call us Cooneyites, some call us Tramps, Faith Missionaries, No Secters, Women-Thieves, and so on. Well, we are Cooneyites. We are also McClungites, for Cooney is no greater than I. We have no established leader in this world.

#### EXTENT OF THE MISSION.

'Our mission was started by William Irwin, a Scotchman, seven or eight years ago. Others followed him. I myself was a Civil Servant in Dublin. I resigned my post, sold all that I had and gave to the poor, and went out to preach.

'The mission has grown gradually. Fifty men and women are now carrying the Word to the unenlightened in eight counties in England—rural England. There are as many in Scotland, more in Ireland.

'We ask for no money. We have no collections. The Lord provides everything.'

'Even to the fares for sending young girls far away in distant countries?'

'Even to that. We have recently sent girls to America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada South Africa—'

'China?'

'What's the use of sending them to China if they don't know the language?'

#### OBJECTIONS SOMETIMES

I agreed; and asked if these girls went with their parents' consent, and whether they went unprotected.

McClung admitted that there were objections sometimes. But he assured me that the girls were excellently looked after, by the Lord.' And at the present moment the devout Mr. Irwin, 'St. Paul II.,' was touring Canada and the States on a sort of official inspection—and no doubt having a good time of it, with Providence paying his fare, and feeding and clothing him.

#### NOTHING TO DO WITH MORMONISM

I ventured a remark about the salubrity of Salt Lake City. Mr. McClung was deeply pained. He assured me vehemently that the firm of Cooney and Co., or McClung and Co., (as you will) had absolutely no connection, business or otherwise, with the Mormon establishment.

But even he could not explain away the deep-rooted disgust and hatred of the Tramp Preachers which exists in rural Suffolk, which has brought clergymen out of their quiet vicarages, hotly protesting, which has set by the ears High Churchmen, Low Churchmen, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists of all shades, which has stirred local authorities to action, and which has made suspicious farmers lock their daughters in their rooms at night, and set sturdy bailiffs and grooms to patrol the farmhouse until day-dawn in case of attempted escape!

#### INVENTION OF THE DEVIL.

McClung considers all this unhallowed suspicion of the Tramps the invention of the Devil, and what not. He doesn't like Ipswich, and already his portable chapel is much too large for his audience. He thinks about leaving presently and coming to London—where, if he joined the Burning Bush American High-kickers at Camberwell, he might create a decent sensation. Suffolk is getting a little too hot for him.

---

June 28, 1906

Impartial Reporter and Farmers' Journal

More About the Pilgrims

Their Work in East Anglia – Converts Sent to Foreign Fields

Last week the Impartial Reporter published what was written by the special correspondent of the *Morning Leader* concerning the Pilgrims. This week we publish the following from the *Christian Herald* of Thursday last:

"A great stir has been created recently in East Anglia by a body of 'No Sect' people whose preachers have been holding meetings in that part of rural England for several years past. **This sect, if we may call it such, was started in Scotland by a William Irwin, seven or eight years ago.** It has grown gradually. Fifty men and women missionaries connected with it are now working in England. There are as many in Scotland, and more in Ireland.

The headquarters are now at Belfast. 'We have no name,' said one of their leaders, 'but some call us Cooneyites, Tramps, Faith Missioners, No Sectors, and so on.'

Alice Pipe, a pretty girl missionary, was the first of the sect to visit East Anglia. She was followed by William Irwin, **the founder**. Recently a Mr. M'Clung, one of the leaders—Mr. Cooney is now the other leader—has been holding meetings in Framlingham, Cretingham, Debenham, Needham, Stow, Upland, Stowmarket and Ipswich.

These meetings have caused many people to leave their different churches and chapels, and to identify themselves with the new sect. This has created some opposition and much hard feeling, and all manner of stories are told against the 'Tramp Preachers.'

With the exception of the fact that the 'No Sect' people oppose all 'sects,' and practice immersion only, they are quite orthodox in their belief. Many of the young lady converts are sent into the foreign mission field.

---

**The Buffalo Times, New York NEW  
July 8, 1906, page 22  
TRAMP PREACHERS, A NEW RELIGIOUS ENGLISH SECT**

Husky Looking Men and Half a Dozen Rather Pretty Girls Made Their Appearance in Suffolk Three Weeks Ago. Cause of Trouble. Special Cable to *The Times, London*, July 7.

A new religious sect is now startling England. St. Paul the Second has appeared according to one William Irwin [Irvine]. At present, the "Tramp Preachers," as the new Sect is called, has confined its operations to the eastern counties of England, but so much success has been met with that the work may spread all over the country.

The "Tramp Preachers," consisting of William Irwin [Irvine], the Chief Baptiser, also St. Paul the Second, as he announced last week, with about a dozen other husky looking men and some half-dozen rather pretty girls, made their appearance at Suffolk three weeks ago. They only visited country places, avoiding towns and large villages. They live in camp under canvas, and hold their meetings at night. Usually they do not break up till midnight, and then they ask the girls at the services to stay a while and join the penitents.

Farmers have been complaining that their daughters are being kept out all night, and they fear evil will befall them. But the girls continue to attend the meetings and stay in mysterious tents till all hours of the night. The "Tramps" subsist on voluntary contributions, but any one who joins them is bound to turn all their worldly possessions into the common fund. Recruits to the new sect have flocked to it in large numbers, particularly the women. Young and old maids, married women and widows alike seem to think it a charming form of religion. There have been some strong attacks on it, but these have helped it rather than otherwise!

Last week the "Tramps" got a new lease of life when a Mr. Cooney from the United States arrived and announced that he was John the Baptist No. 2. He is also the supreme head of the new sect. He has issued an appeal for missionaries, preferably girls to go out to the United States and convert the millions of ungodly there. He has a large number of offers.

The Rev. W. Coles, a missionary attached to the London City Mission, in a letter to the newspapers, declares that the "Tramps" have done a lot of good work, and that Mr. Cooney has won the respect of the whole United States in the missionary field. He denies that the "Tramps" decoy girls away from their homes for immoral purposes and prevent their friends knowing their whereabouts. Mr. Cole's daughter went to the United States for the "Tramps" a few months ago, and writes that she is doing good work for the cause.

---

**July 19, 1906, page 5  
Impartial Reporter and Farmers Journal**

**Monster Meeting of Pilgrims  
Thousands of People Present**

The Pilgrims who have been conducting special missions in Belfast during the present month celebrated a monster baptismal service in the tide at Sydenham foreshore upon Sunday evening in the presence of a large crowd of spectators.

A number gave their testimony and at considerable length addressed the crowd of over 1,000 people. Meanwhile the Pilgrims, many of whom were females, sang hymns. The baptismal ceremony was performed, the male converts were the first to signify their acceptance of Christ by complete immersion in the sea.

The officiating Pilgrim to this instance was an elderly man who accompanied each convert into the tide until a depth of about 3? feet was obtained, and then adopting the usual formula, after having crossed the convert's hands, he completely immersed the Brother. Later some half dozen women were baptized in a similar way, the officiating missionary in this instance being a man of younger years. On the whole the demeanor of the crowd was quite respectful.

---

**August 14, 1906  
The Irish Independent  
Lively Times for the "Dippers"**

Several amusing scenes occurred at the last Sunday afternoon operations of the Cooneyites or "Dippers," on the foreshore at Sydenham, Belfast.

When the service was commenced, some unruly boys congregated at the point where the converts enter the water for baptism. Many of the youngsters waded far out into the tide, and as the converts were conducted out to where there was a sufficient depth of water, they were subjected to a good deal of ridicule, while mud and dirt was thrown at them, and water was splashed over their forms, much to their discomfort.

One of the "converts," prior to baptism, rebuked several lads, who the more vigorously splashed their unfortunate victim, especially when the "celebrant"—a powerful looking man whose turned-up shirt...(incomplete)

**August 17, 1906**  
**The Irish Independent**  
**"The Tide's Out"**

A fine of five shillings and costs was imposed on Charles Davey in the Belfast Summons Court yesterday for having on Sunday week last shouted at a procession of about 200 "Cooneyites," who were proceeding along Old Lodge road and North Street towards the quay.

"They're going to have a dip in the sea," shouted the defendant, and others cried "The tide's out." The defendant called two witnesses to prove that he did not use the expressions attributed to him, but the magistrates imposed the fine.

**December 6, 1906**  
**Stowmarket News**

**New Emigration Scheme.**

We have received the following from Mr. W. D. Wilson, of Cretingham, with the intimation that it has been sent to 73 bishops, including the Primate, and all the Church of Ireland clergymen in Belfast:—

**NEW EMIGRATION SCHEME.**

The infamous traffic in young women and girls, commonly known as "The White Slave Trade," has assumed fearful proportions of late years. Its agents, female and male, traverse the country, calling themselves Evan gelists," and making great professions of extreme piety, and in this guise, under the specious pretext of religious zeal and anxiety for their souls' good, they have obtained an evil influence over the minds of many young people, and induced them to join a pretended " Mission to China."

As soon as they are got out there, I fear they are sold to the highest bidder, or else forced to keep with these horrid band of hypocritical miscreants whom it is my earnest desire to expose and bring to justice. These wretches carry with them portable chapels, which they erect in important centres, thus gaining influence through rot outward appearance of respectability.

I. Such chapels should be by law required to be registered, and the owner's name given, and also the name of the religion they profess to teach.

II. All ports of embarkation and entry should be closely watched, and registration in detail insisted on, so that agents of this traffic might be prevented from landing, and all young women departing from any British port should have to give an account of themselves, and their reason for leaving this country, and their destination. If the authorities are not satisfied, they should have power to stop them, and restore them to their friends.

III. And the law should be altered, so that girls should no longer have freedom from control of parents at the age of 18 when attempting to leave one's country for another country across the seas, out of control of mothers and guardians, FOR UNKNOWN (?) PURPOSES.

W. D. Wilson,  
 For many aggrieved Parents,  
 Chairman of the Parish Meeting,  
 Cretingham, Framlingham, Suffolk, England. November 26th, 1906

**[Click Here](#) to read Robert McClung's report of the following event that took place in his home.**

**December 9, 1906, p. 15**  
**Lloyd's Weekly News**  
**Suffolk Girl A Prisoner in Belfast**  
**Startling Tale of an Irish Sect**

Our Belfast correspondent tells a strange story, for the truth of which he says a number of people in Belfast are prepared to vouch, that a young Englishwoman, possessed of means, has been induced to leave her home in Suffolk and go to Belfast, where she is now

not only acting as servant in the house of a member of the Cooneyite sect, but is actually to all intents and purposes a prisoner in the establishment.

A year or two ago the new sect of the Cooneyites was started in the county of Fermanagh. Among their chief tenets of belief are baptism by immersion, and a return to the apostolic methods of having all things in common. Some time ago they conducted a mission in the county of Suffolk, and among others who attended the meetings was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, who has a considerable sum of money in her own right, and has expectations of more. She became a convert to the sect and left her father's house.

The old man was almost distracted, and spared no expense to discover the whereabouts of his daughter. Eventually he traced her to Belfast, and proceeded there with the object of taking her home. She had been placed in the house of a leading member of the sect, in the northern district, and so closely was she guarded that at first it was impossible for the girl's father to obtain an interview with her. He appealed to the police, and to some of the local magistrates, but, the girl being over age, they were powerless to help him in the matter. A private detective was employed, but when this man presented himself at the house he was ordered outside.

A young woman employed in one of the newspaper offices was more successful, and she obtained admission to the house. What was her surprise to find the door opened by the girl herself, dressed in servant's costume. The young lady visitor entered into conversation with her, and while attempting to persuade her to return home to parents' house, the girl expressed her willingness to do so, but stated she was in terror of the people with whom she is at present residing, and dare not move, so great was their power over her. In the middle of the conversation the tenant of the house, who had evidently had his ear to the keyhole outside, burst into room, and abruptly terminated the interview.

---

**December 21, 1906**  
**East Anglian Daily Times ( Ipswich)**

**FURIOUS FARMER**  
**Mission Hall Wrecked – Remarkable Evidence Before Magistrates**

At Ipswich Police Court on Thursday before the Mayor (W. O. White, Esq.) the **Deputy Mayor (Bunnell H. Burton, Esq.)**, W. Alexander, Esq., J. H. Grimwade, Esq., R. D. Fraser, Esq., H. M. Jackaman, Esq., and S. R. Anness, Esq., **William Dennis Wilson**, farmer, Cretingham, was summoned for having done malicious damage to a Mission Hall in Rushmere Road, Ipswich, on December 3rd, to the extent of £4 19s. 6d. The prosecutor was **Mr. Wilson McClung**, a preacher—Mr. A. S. Leighton (Messrs. Aldous and Leighton) defended.

Police constable Newman said that on the evening of Monday, December 3rd, he was called to a Mission Hall in Rushmere Road, Ipswich, and found the place wrecked and in great disorder. All the windows were smashed and everything in the place was damaged.

A blacksmith named Syrett, who said he worked for Mr. Cook St. Margaret's Green, stated that on Monday, the 3rd December, Mr. Wilson came to his master's premises about three o'clock in the afternoon. He asked for a heavy iron or crow bar, as he wanted to burst a door open. He did not say at first what door. Witness made him two irons, and then he said they didn't seem heavy enough, because he wanted to smash a mission hall up. (Laughter.)

Mr. Leighton: Mr. McClung, the proprietor of the Hall, lodges with you?—Yes  
And you supplied Mr. Wilson with this crowbar, knowing what he was going to do with it?—Yes  
Mr. Leighton: Mr. McClung being your lodger!

Mr. Wilson McClung said he was proprietor of a Mission Hall in Rushmere Road. On Monday the 3rd December he went to the hall about twenty minutes past seven in the evening and found the outer door and porch wrenched off, the two plate glass panels of the inner door were broken, two brass lamps were broken, the end and the side of the Hall were damaged, and all the windows were broken. The stove pipe was knocked out, and the cocoanut matting was destroyed. The organ was smashed to pieces. He was content to assess the damage at £4 19s. 6d.

In answer to Mr. Leighton, witness said his native place was county Armagh, Ireland.

Mr. Leighton: Are you one of a body, or are you working by yourself?—***There are 350 in fellowship.***

[Mr. Leighton:] You might tell me what the principles are that you teach?—*We preach the Gospel according to the Scriptures.*

[Mr. Leighton:] Is it in accordance with those principles that you get girls and young men...

Mr. Jackaman: Surely you cannot go into the principles of this man's community.

Mr. Leighton: I am going to show certain circumstances, not in justification, but in mitigation of the offence, which I submit I am entitled to do.

After a consultation between the Magistrates and the Clerk, Mr. Leighton continued: Have you been successful in gaining one of Mr. Wilson's daughters and two of his sons as adherents to your cause?—*I won't answer that except in my own words.*

You must answer my question. Have you been successful in gaining one of Mr. Wilson's daughters as an adherent to your cause?—*I have exercised no influence over Miss Wilson or any other person who is working in fellowship with me, except in accordance with Scriptures.*

Have you been successful in gaining one of Mr. Wilson's daughters as an adherent?—*Oh, yes.*

As a consequence did Miss Wilson leave her home last June, and is she working in what you call your cause in Belfast?—*She has*



*been.*

Where is she living now?—*In Glasgow.*

When did she leave Belfast?—*About a week ago.*

Was she there living with a brother of yours?—*She was staying with a brother of mine.* Is it a part of the work she has to do to wear an apron and cap, and act as general servant in your brother's house?—*Nothing of the kind.*

That is not correct?—*It is perfectly untrue.*

Is it a fact that Mr. Wilson has been over to Belfast twice to try to get this girl out of your hands?—*Yes, he has been over twice in Belfast, once in July and a fortnight ago.*

Is it a fact that they would not allow the father to see his daughter except in the presence of a detective?—*Perfectly untrue.*

How long were you in Cretingham and district?—*I have never been there.*

Well, your people?—*Our women workers have been there.*

Did you persuade two more daughters of Mr. Wilson's?—*There are five altogether in sympathy.*

And in consequence of this sympathy the happiness of his home is wrecked?—*I don't know. They are not unhappy, at any rate.*

In the course of your work are you frequently sending these converts abroad?—*Not in that sense.*

Mr. Leighton: Please answer my question.

Witness: *I want to answer it intelligently. They go out as workers volunteering for the work.*

How are they paid or supported?—*According to the Scriptures. While we minister to the spiritual needs of men, they minister to our carnal needs. That is the principle.*

How are your temporal necessities met?—*We preach the Gospel and the Gospel is calculated to produce provision for the preacher.*

Preaching the Gospel won't feed them?—*I have been three years that way, and I have proved that it does.*

You receive nothing in the way of pay?—*No. I live on the produce of the Gospel.*

I hope you find it productive?—*It produces meat and clothing for the preacher.*

Do you consider any previous training is necessary?—*Well, all the workers have been more or less for years Christians at home.*

Now, Mr. McClung, is it not a fact that the more ignorant these girls are the better they suit your purpose?—*Not at all. An ignorant man or woman is no use anywhere.*

Is it not a fact that most of the people sent away are taken from the labourer's home?—*It is untrue. There are people of every class and position in life.*

Is it part of your doctrine that when young people leave home and go away on your work, they shall hold no communication with their families?—*Perfectly untrue.*

Is Mr. Penrose one of your leading lights?—*I do not know the name at all.*

Are these documents (showing papers) documents you promulgate?—*I have nothing to do with that. We have no literature.*

Nothing?—*Nothing of that kind.*

Have you any organisation?—*There are a number of experienced men in different places, supervising the work. They encourage the workers and help them, and supervise them.*

There is no organized system or headquarters?—*There is no such thing as a recognised headquarters. A number of experienced workers are working the same as I am myself.*

There is no provision from headquarters for maintaining these people in case the fruits of the Gospel are not sufficient?—*We are more or less helping one another. If I have more than I require I find out who is needy.*

Who does this hut belong to?—*I was the means of getting it built, and I got it here.*

But who does it belong to?—*I paid for it when I was in Dublin. I was not preaching at all then.*

Is it your property?—*I suppose it is.*

Did you address a meeting at Stowupland about December 28?—*I was a month in Stowupland.*

Did you ever tell the people there that all the colleges could do was to teach students to be gold hungerers?—*I have said that Jesus never used colleges and schools.*

Would you mind answering my question (question repeated)?—*I don't care to put it in those words.*

Did you say that the colleges teach men heathenism and devilry?—*No, I am sure I did not.*

Did you say that they who believe in colleges believe false gospel and a false prophet, and would become more and more like him—goldly men?—*I believe I said that.*

Mr. Burton: Like a what?

Mr. Leighton: A goldly man (To witness): What is a goldly man?

Witness: *A man who loves gold more than God.*

That is a word of your own coining?—*Yes. It is a scripture word I should say.*

**Who is the head of your profession?—We have no heads.**

**Who is Mr. Cooney?—A co-worker.**

**And you, what are you?—A co-worker.**

**And Irvine—He is a co-worker.**

What about your brother?—*He is a businessman—a merchant, but he is in sympathy.*

Have you said that the Archbishop of the English Church would crucify Christ?—*No.*

Did you say that the clergy oppose the Gospel?—*I have said they refuse to live as Jesus lived.*

Did you say they damn more souls than all the whiskey sellers?—*I did not make use of those words. I don't remember touching on the thing at all.*

Is it not the effect of your recognized teaching?—*We don't believe in the clergy. We have no fellowship with the clergy.*

Is baptism an essential a part of your teaching?—*Repent and be baptized. We teach baptism by immersion.*

And that is effected by yourselves?—*Yes*

**How long has your sect been in existence? About eight or nine years.**

**Who started it?—A man named Irvine was the first to step out.**

How did he get permission to baptize?—*Read the Scriptures.*

Now, Mr. McClung, how long have you known about Mr. Wilson with reference to this trouble of his?—*Fifteen months.*

Have you done anything in your power to relieve the natural anxiety he must feel?—*In what way?*

By bringing the father and children together again?—*Anytime I have touched on family matters I have advised children to yield to their fathers and mothers as far as is consistent with the Scriptures.*

Have you ever told Mr. Wilson's daughter to go home?—*No.*

On the contrary, you encouraged her to stay away?—*I have used no influence whatever with the girl, beyond preaching the Gospel.*

Who paid her fare?—*So far as I know, she paid it herself.*

What is the age of this girl? *About 24 or 25.*

As to Mr. Wilson's two sons. Where are they?—*One is in Court and the other is at Debenham.*

Have you received any messages from the girl?—*I had a telegram from her yesterday. Saying she was coming to Ipswich. I suggested it might be for the satisfaction of the Bench if she were here.*

Mr. Leighton: I should have like to have seen her.

Wm. Samuel Mann, of 63 Schreiber Road, Ipswich, said that on Monday, the 3rd inst., he saw Mr. Wilson on Rushmere Road about four o'clock. He saw him go to the Mission Hall, and he had "a sort of iron chisel" in his hand. He smashed the door open and went inside. Witness heard him smashing things.

Mr. Leighton said that so far as he was concerned he admitted that Mr. Wilson did the damage, and, of course, he had no legal justification for it; but he was bound to put in a formal plea of not guilty, otherwise he could not have brought certain facts to the knowledge of the Bench, which he wanted them to know.

Up to 1904 Mr. Wilson, who was a farmer in a considerable way of business and was a man who he believed was generally respected by everybody in the district, had as happy a home as it was possible to conceive. He had three daughters and two sons, and all lived in perfect unity and harmony. But in 1904 this strange sect of which Mr. McClung was the apostle in Ipswich, took up their quarters in Debenham. They preached what they called the Gospel, and girls and young men in the district were won over to them, or, as Mr. Clung described it, "converted to their views."

In June, 1906, Mr. Wilson's eldest girl, who was 24 or 25 years of age, left her home, and the next thing he heard of her was that she was in Belfast. He found, after a good deal of inquiry and investigation, she was living in the house of a brother of Mr. McClung, and that although she left home apparently for the purpose of acting as a missionary she was there wearing a cap and apron as an ordinary servant when Mr. Wilson's agent went to see her.

Mr. Wilson himself went to Belfast, and naturally made every possible effort to get this girl to return to her home. She refused and wherever Miss Wilson went, a detective followed, in order that she might be protected from what was looked upon as the evil influence of her parent. From that time to this Mr. Wilson had spend all his time, and an enormous amount of money, trying to persuade the girl to return home, without effect. It did not end there.

Mr. Wilson had two sons who had also been led away, and his two daughters at home were such pronounced adherents of this so-called faith that his home was now pandemonium, and the effect of all this strain and worry was no doubt that Mr. Wilson had been close on the verge of insanity.

M. Wilson had absolutely no right to do the kind of thing he had done, and if he wished to call attention to what he considered were the wrong actions of these people, he must do it in a legal way. He recognised now that he had done what he had no right to do, and assured the Bench there would be no repetition of this class of conduct. Whatever steps he might feel called upon to take would be strictly in accordance with legal methods and legal process.

The Bench had heard from Mr. McClung that it was a recognized business to send girls abroad, which was one of the disturbing elements that had acted most strongly upon Mr. Wilson. He had cause to believe that his daughter would follow the lead of so many of these girls who had been sent abroad.

Mr. Burton: Do you mean on the Continent?

Me. Leighton: Yes. They are sent, as has been stated, to America, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

Mr. Burton: Not the Continent of Europe?

Mr. Leighton: No, sir.

He went on to say that the young people were sent to all parts of the world, and from enquiries that Mr. Wilson had caused to be made, it was a matter of extreme difficulty to get any communication with them. In dealing with this case, he asked the Magistrates to bear I mind that it was the action of a father who had been deprived of the presence of his daughter—a father whose two sons had been estranged, and whose two daughters had been absolutely led beyond his parental authority; and he thought they would not be surprised that he had taken such an extreme course, which he could not justify, but which he thought might be excused.

He did not propose to call Mr. Wilson, as he was a most excitable man, and he did not think it necessary for any purpose. He was sure that the Bench would give careful consideration to the case, and he asked also that it might be considerate, so far as Mr. Wilson was concerned.

The Bench retired for ten minutes, and on returning the Mayor said: The Bench has given very serious consideration to this case, and they feel that Mr. Wilson has been convicted. They inflict a fine of £1 with £4 19s. 6d. damage, and order him to pay the costs, £2 3s., or one month's imprisonment.

#### NOTES:

**How long has your sect been in existence? *About eight or nine years.***

~Nine years previous article Date of Dec. 21, 1906 is: 1897 or 1898.

Mr. Leighton: Are you one of a body, or are you working by yourself?—***There are 350 in fellowship.***

~By the end of the year 1906, there were 350 friends and workers all total.

---

### December 23, 1906 Lloyd's Weekly News "GO PREACHERS" IN SUFFOLK Angry Father Wrecks a Mission Hall

The strange story which appeared in Lloyds on Dec. 9 of a Suffolk girl being kept a prisoner, as was alleged, in a home at Belfast, has had a remarkable sequel at Ipswich. It was said the girl had been induced to leave her home and take up her abode with a sect known as Cooneyites. It is known in Suffolk as the "No Sect Evangelists," the Go Preachers," or more familiarly as the "Mormon preachers." They are stated to have made many converts, and local indignation was roused to a high pitch by placards stating that 36 girls had been transported from Suffolk villages to New York, and that only four had since been accounted for. This was followed by an attack on the sect's mission hall outside the town of Ipswich.

Before a crowded court at Ipswich on Thursday William Dennis Wilson, father of the girl in Belfast, was charged with wilfully damaging the mission hall. He is a prominent Suffolk farmer, and lives at Cretingham near Ipswich.

The evidence showed that about three weeks ago he obtained two crowbars from a blacksmith, saying he wanted to smash the mission hall in question, and that he wanted the work of destruction to be effectively done. Doors were wrenched off, all the windows broken, and the organ knocked to pieces. A policeman describing the appearance of the mission hall said the place was wrecked and in great disorder. Another witness with whom the head of the mission lodged with, said defendant called at the blacksmith's and asked for "a crowbar to smash up a mission hall." (Laughter) Defendant was dissatisfied in not being able to find one heavy enough.

#### A LEADER OF THE SECT

The proprietor of the hall, William McClung, a native of Armagh, Ireland said he was one of 350 people who were in fellowship to preach the Gospel according to the Scriptures.

Mr. Leighton (Mr. Wilson's solicitor) suggested that it was in accordance with those principles that he induced young men and women to leave their homes.

McClung, after declining to say that he had gained one of Mr. Wilson's daughters and two of his sons as adherents to his cause, admitted that one of the defendant's daughters had been working on behalf of the cause at Belfast. That place she had now left and was living at Glasgow with a brother of the prosecutor. Witness repudiated the suggestion that Mr. Wilson was not allowed to see his daughter at Belfast except in the presence of a detective.

Asked what the workers were paid, witness replied, "According to the Scriptures. While we minister to the Spiritual needs of men, they minister to our carnal needs." The Gospel was calculated to produce provision for the preacher.

Mr. Leighton: Preaching the Gospel won't feed them (laughter)

Witness: For three years I have proved that it does. I live on the produce of the Gospel. It produces meat and clothing for the preacher (laughter). McClung denied that the more ignorant the girls were the better it suited his purpose, and that most of the people taken away went from the labourers' homes. He had spent a month at Stowupland, a village outside Stowmarket.

Did you ever tell the people there that all the colleges teach men heathenism and devilry?

~No, I am sure I did not.

Did you say that they who believe in colleges believe in a false gospel and a false prophet and would become more and more like "goldy men"?

—I believe I said that.

A "goldy man," explained the witness, was one who loved gold more than God. It was a word he had coined. He had not asserted that the archdeacons of the English Church would crucify Christ, but he had said the clergy refused to live as Jesus did.

Mr. Leighton: Did you say the clergy damn more souls than all the whiskey sellers?

—Witness said he did not remember.

Mr. Leighton said it was the effect of his teaching, and the witness retorted that he had no fellowship with the clergy. **The sect, continued McClung, had been in existence eight or nine years, a man named Irvine being "the first to step out."**

#### MR. WILSON'S DEFENCE.

Mr. Leighton, in pleading "Guilty" on Mr. Wilson's behalf, said he lived in harmony with this three daughters and two sons at Cretingham until, in 1904, this strange sect took up in their quarters at Debenham. Defendant's eldest girl, aged 24 or 25, left home, and the next he heard of her was that she was in Belfast living in the house of a brother of McClung, not acting as a missionary, but as an ordinary servant with cap and apron. Mr. Wilson went to Belfast and completely failed to get his daughter to return. His two sons had been led away, and his other two daughters at home were such strong adherents that his house was a perfect Pandemonium.

That it was a recognised business to send girls away was one of the disturbing elements that had acted upon Mr. Wilson. He had cause to believe that his daughter would follow the lead of so many of these girls who had been sent abroad to America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The Bench fined Wilson £1 with £4 19s 6d damage and £2 3s costs, in all or one month's imprisonment.

Miss Wilson, who was in Belfast, has returned to Ipswich, and has declared her intention to remain with the "Go Preachers" and give up all worldly ideas, matrimony included. The term "Go Preachers" it should be explained is taken from the tenth chapter of Matthew. "And as ye go, preach, saying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

NOTE: "8-9 years ago" calculates back to the years 1897-1898