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THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER

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THE TWO TRAMP LEADERS

MESSRS WM. IRVINE & EDWARD COONEY

ANALYSIS OF THEIR CHARACTERS

BY ONE WITHIN THE CAMP

GOSPEL OF GLOOM AND DEPRESSION

OLD FRAGMENT OF TRUTH IN NEW GUISE

The IMPARTIAL REPORTER last week gave a sketch by a stranger, or one without the camp of the Tramps, Mr. W. Young, B.A., of the impression produced on him by a visit to the Convention of the Tramps at Crocknacrieve, Ballinamallard.

We now give a study of the two leaders of this sect by one within the camp, who has therefore had abundant opportunity of judging both those men. We must say that we are profoundly impressed by the accuracy of both these studies. The writer possesses a keen analytical sense, with the power of expressing it, and we believe his sketch to be lifelike.

In one of his most famous novels, Sir Walter Scott draws a picture of a Scottish Covenanter seated in a cave with his open Bible across his broad sword on his lap. The figure we are about to study in this article was born 300 years too late. In an age of bloodshed and disorder, he would have found his place and at the right hand of a Calvin or a Knox, would have done yeoman service. But in an age of religious tolerance and tranquillity he comes like a thunderbolt with lightning in his train.

WILLIAM IRVINE

was born about fifty years ago, of humble Scottish peasant stock. In appearance he is a veritable Bosnages, and his attitude towards life is that of St. Peter with sword in hand cutting off Malchus's ear. With clenched fists and beetling brows, he compels his hearer's attention by the power of his intense individuality. His sincerity is ferocious, and his passion for truth has become a fury for his own conviction. Fifteen stone of dogmatism and intolerance, we can hear a casual observer remark. But to do our study justice we must go deeper in our

ANALYSIS OF HIS CHARACTER.

Without bias or prejudice let us approach him and try to discover his philosophy of life. His nature has evidently been strongly influenced by his early environment. The rugged mountain, the fierce east winds, the hail-storms, have all left their mark upon him. His God is like the elements of his native moors, stern, forbidding, relentless and unswerving in his vengeance. Truly a Hebrew conception such as Elijah or John the Baptist worshipped. We can imagine the holy glee with which William Irwin would have fallen

on those priests of Baal on Mount Carmal. His imagination is coloured by the flames of Hell, his dreams are of Dante's Inferno, and his Devil is the one of Milton in Paradise Post. Nothing is more pathetic than the way in which William Irwin views life. To him everything is upside down, the times are out of joint, the natural profane and the human unholy.

THE CHIEF ENEMIES OF HIS CAUSE,

he says, are formality, materialism, clericalism, and Pharisaism. And yet it is into these very snares he tends to fall. For in his worship of poverty and simplicity he becomes dangerously near a formalist; in his hatred of materialism he does homage to the power of possessions by over-emphasising their influence; in his vehemence against clericalism he has set up a hard and fast rule of life, with a creed, doctrine, and law as rigid as that of the Medes and Persians, and in his onslaught on Pharisaism he has come suspiciously near being self-righteous and exclusive. Though calling himself a Christian Socialist, yet his spirit is intensely personal and individualistic. We can imagine his fellow-countryman, the sage of Chelsea, pouring forth his soul thus—'Eyes on thine own navel, centred in thyself, thou stumblest on in tragic sincerity. Look away from thine own self; look up, look out, preach to thyself, do thy duty, serve God in thy daily work; thy words are froth and foam and fury.' **William Irvine's** emblem is a thistle; so, too, is his teaching prickly and without fragrance. What we miss in him is the sweet reasonableness of Him he calls his Master. He obtrudes his conscience on others; his embittered spirit has soured the milk of human kindness in his own breast. With his back to the sunlight he

SEES ONLY THE FAULTS IN HUMANITY,

and is blind to the thousand and one acts of grace and love which are ever being done around him. The very strength of his personality has warped his vision and hardened his heart, and the backbone of his character has become as unbending as cast iron. As a leader of dragons or a lion tamer he would have made his mark, but as a wooer of men to light and love he has sadly missed his vocation. Perhaps when he sees more of life he may recover that touch of nature which makes the whole world akin, and again have the heart of a child. Till then he will march uncompromisingly against brick-walls, bringing indeed not peace but a sword, and that one not of the spirit and of love but of

ABUSE AND DENUNCIATION.

Before the writer is a hymn book such as is used by the brotherhood, and among them is to be found a line which we only wish he would take to heart:

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's grief:
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
Is it a mockery or is it irony?

MR. EDWARD COONEY.

In one of his essays Macacalay remarks that the Puritans opposed bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the animal, but because it gave pleasure to the onlookers. It is a point of view such as this which sustains and feeds the virulence and vehemence of Edward Cooney's attack on current christianity. By nature he is

UTTERLY DIFFERENT FROM WM. IRVINE.

He has more warmth and humanity, and shows at times the charm and winsomeness of a St. Francis. No one could be kinder and more hospitable to strangers than he is, and yet he is fettered to a creed which far surpasses that of Athanasius in its damnation classes. It would be hard to doubt the sincerity of **Edward Cooney's** convictions. They have become his very bone and flesh, and have given him a power and forcefulness which none can deny. We do not intend to attack the subject of this study, but to analyse the nature of the man and to find out what good there is in his teaching. How is it that a disposition once so buoyant and joyous, and a mind so elastic and tolerant could have so changed? Where is gone that optimism, that note of gladness, that genial laugh? Let us try to

TRACE THE REASONS FOR

their disappearance. We think that the root of this declension is to be found in three false theological positions—Firstly, in the morbid idea that matter is essentially evil, and that nature is opposed to God. Secondly, in the idea that man's heart is totally depraved, and that human love and natural goodness are both opposed to Divine goodness. Thirdly, in the idea that man was made for religion and not religion for man. These three ideas working on a naturally sensitive and introspective mind have caused a loss of balance and right judgment. In spite of himself **Edward Cooney** now has come to see beauty not in nature but in religious self-immolation.

IN AN EARLIER AGE HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED

to the monastic ideal, or become an enthusiastic Lollard and supported with his whole heart the democratic movement of that day. Instead of using the Bible as a guide for men, he has become the slave of it. Though gifted with a strong emotional nature he has stifled it and now feeds a hungering humanity with stones instead of bread. His life is an honest, but misguided tragedy; reckless of his own personal comfort and advancement and with his face towards the light, he is merely marking time while his hands beat the air. With calm assurance he confounds the outward acts of Christ with His inner teaching. Thus

BAPTISM TO HIM IS AN ELABORATE RITUAL

involving entire immersion. In a different environment and with a wider training Edward Cooney might have become one of the strongest spiritual forces of his day. As it is however, we can only bitterly regret the onesidedness and narrowness of his ideal, and lament that his energies and oratory are not put to nobler uses.

A CONCLUSION

A witty French writer once remarked that Englishmen took their pleasures sadly. What would he have said had he been able to study the religious extravagances which are causing such a stir in our midst. Let us approach our subject with common sense and a large and tolerant spirit. Here we find men from all grades of society giving up houses and lands, forsaking father and mother and all that men hold dear, and living in fellowship and having all things in common. As we look at their faces we see self-denial on every brow, and yet there is a heaviness about the atmosphere and a melancholy in the eye which makes us pause for a moment. The

EXPLANATION OF THIS CURIOUS PHENOMENON

lies, we think in the following fact:—Have not these perfectly sincere people mistaken the Gospel of brightness and cheerfulness for that of gloom and depression? Are they not taking their religion sadly and themselves too seriously? Instead of taking for their watchword the angels' song of peace and goodwill towards men, they cry 'Woe unto thee, Woe unto thee.' The writer of this article is one who has travelled far in the realms of religious thought and studied movements of the human spirit varying from Christian science to the Welsh revival. His advice is, let us oppose the present outburst of religious zeal with the weapon of tolerance and patience; let us pour coals of fire on their heads by smiling at their extravagances, and let us not add fuel to the fire of their fanaticism by slander of persecution.

IN A VERY FEW YEARS

we shall see what fruit is produced by their new gospel. But perhaps the word new is rather out of place here, for like the new theology this movement traces its descent from past ages and is only an old fragment of truth in modern guise. The workings and manifestation of the spirit are widely diverse.

EVERY OUTBREAK OF RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM

has many a germ of truth hidden from the eye of the superficial observer; and the more passionate and intense the persons, the more various and exclusive their movements seem to become. In the present instance we think that the zeal for the Lord has become confused with a zeal for biblical detail and literal observance thereof. Let us hope that time and experience will enlarge our friends' horizon, and that their originality and initiative will lead them to a wider and more tolerant view of truth and christianity.

CONVENTION AT AN END

The Tramps' Convention, which has been in progress during the past month at Crocknacrieve, near Ballinamallard, Co. Fermanagh, was brought to a conclusion on Sunday night. The concluding services commenced with a testimony meeting at ten o'clock in the morning, at which most of the members of the sect spoke. An interval was then allowed for dinner, and at 2:30 o'clock a baptismal service was conducted on the banks of the river running close by Crocknacrieve House. Here some eight persons who had been converted during the convention were immersed in the water, while those on the bank kept singing all the time. The baptism was witnessed by a crowd of people numbering close on 2,000, who had travelled on bicycles and cars and even by train from all the neighbouring towns and country districts. A large meeting was held in the tent from 3 to 5:30 o'clock. Tea was then partaken of, and the closing meeting commenced at seven o'clock, and was continued till a late hour.

The principal speakers during the day were Mr. Edward Cooney and Mr. Wm. Irvine, the leaders of the movement. The services during the convention were characteristic for orderliness and good conduct, and the speakers had a most attentive hearing at all the meetings.

**August 8, 1908, page 5
Fermanagh Herald**

**Close of the Pilgrim Convention
Mr. Irvine and the "Enniskillen Reporter."
Mr. Cooney Speaks of his Family.
(From a Correspondent)**

The convention which the Pilgrims have been holding at Crocknacrieve, Ballinamallard, came to an end on Sunday evening last. Some remarkable speeches signaled the closing ceremony.

There were present fully five hundred of the preachers. The numbers of the general public might be estimated anywhere between two and three thousand, but not all of these were present during the entire day. They came and went from early morning till late night on bicycles, on cars, traps, and on foot. The main roads leading to Crocknacrieve were filled with people all the time.

At the early day meeting one of the speakers dealt with some articles which have been appearing in the "Enniskillen Reporter." The audience followed his words with great interest. Link by link he pulled in pieces the chain of argument put forward by the writers. Whether those present believed in the speaker's tenets in other respects, they certainly showed little sympathy with the newspaper. To go over the points argued would take a good deal of space; it was a scriptural argument in which the public cannot be deeply interested. One point, however, may be given at showing the complete way in which the "Reporter's" case was demolished by the speaker. The "Reporter" had said that to be strictly consistent (fancy the "Reporter" discussing consistency!) the Pilgrims ought to clothe themselves in the way Christ was attired—in long flowing robes.

"That is nonsense," exclaimed the speaker. "When Christ lived in Jerusalem He dressed in the garb common to the poorer people of that day. To-day we clothe ourselves like the common people—the poor people. Do the clergy, for whom the "Reporter" speaks, dress in the garb of the poor? From whom do they get the frock coats, silk hats and Roman collars? Will the "Reporter" tell us of any instance in which either the Master or the disciples went about dressed in that way?"

Again in the afternoon, Mr. Irvine touched on the "Reporter," which he said was dishing up lies about them every week, misrepresenting them by taking out isolated sentences from their discourse and setting up arguments upon them. "Did you read the letter of the Reverend Young B.A.?" he asked the audience. "Is the Reverend Young here to-day?" he went on; "if he is, let him come upon the platform."

The speaker paused. The audience rose to their feet expecting to see the figure of the Methodist preacher rise up, but he was not there. The people were disappointed.

Mr. Irvine then went on to deal with the "Reporter" and the absent cleric. "Fancy a man like that wanting to get on the platform; he had no such desire." He passed on to some of Mr. Young's arguments.

Calvin was mentioned. The "Reporter" was indignant that the memory of John Calvin should be traduced. "Calvin was of the devil," the speaker said with emphasis, "because he caused a man to be seized, imprisoned and consigned by his council to a cruel death. That is Calvin the head of Presbyterianism, whose name the 'Reporter' desires us not to speak of but in a reverential whisper!" "The Editor of the 'Reporter' believes in the dollars," he went on. "Why do I know that? Because he came around with a plate one evening in the Presbyterian Church in Enniskillen, and took a shilling from me—to feed one of the false prophets. Why a hundred years ago the Presbyterians would not let their little innocent children pray, because forsooth, they were not certain whether they were in the Covenant or not. 'The Reporter' is trying to please the clergy, and the people with money. If the tramp preachers had the dollars they would have the advocacy of the 'Partial Reporter.'"

Mr. Edward Cooney, however, is the speaker in whom the public is most interested. He is exceedingly lucid in his discourse and introduces personal incidents to point his morals. He was in excellent form.

Starting out with a definition of what a tramp preacher is, he said—"He is a man who delivers his body to Christ." He passed on at once to days when he left Enniskillen to go preach the Gospel.

"My father," he continued, "wanted me to go to college and become a clergyman, and get the letters B.A. or M.A. tacked to my name, and become an honour to the Cooney family. Instead of that, I am a disgrace to it. And the 'Impartial Reporter' says I am getting worse—becoming more disgraceful every day. Well, thank God for that," he added amid laughter.

"I well remember my last conversation with my father. It was in the wareroom in Enniskillen. I went up to the tailors—they were mostly Roman Catholics—and I spoke to the twenty of them, and the girls. I told them I was going to follow the Master. They were sorry; some of the women cried. My father called me into the office and said: 'If you're going to preach cannot you go without turning the whole house upside down?' For by this time there was a regular uproar all over the place. He reasoned with me and said—'Why cannot you become a clergyman instead of going about in this disgraceful fashion? You are giving away your money, and going out to live on poor people, to be dependent on others for food and shelter?' I replied—'I am going to do that because Christ does it.' Before then I was regarded as a model young man by the holy, holy clerics. Since then," added the speaker, beating his hand upon the Testament, "I am the scorn of the holy, holy frauds of Fermanagh. My father," he went on, "is not a bad man; he is the best of the Pharisees."

Mr. Cooney proceeded at some length to explain why the tramp preachers had the true fellowship—because they worked and lived as the Master did. The other churches wanted money, and they would do anything for the rich. Christ was always the friend of the poor and the sinners; the clergy were always after the rich.

The Methodists came in for some criticism. He proceeded to imitate the words and gestures of the Methodists as they sing a certain hymn, acknowledging their willingness to give God "their life, their all." "And all the time they are repeating that their hearts are fixed upon Number One. They are the greediest and the worldliest people I know. I don't approve of drunkenness, but prefer a drunkard any day to one of these holy, holy Methodists. The drunkard knows in his heart that he is going to hell, but these whitewashed Pharisees fancy they are going to heaven."

He next related some experiences in connection with the mission which he held a few years back in Burgess's shop in Down Street, Enniskillen. He lived in the garret at the top and held the meetings in a back room in the basement. His father or mother, brothers or sisters would not come near him. He could make them uncomfortable. "My father," the speaker said, "was much more comfortable in another church than he would be at my meetings. Why? Because he could loll in an easy seat and think, 'If that man is going to heaven, I am pretty sure of it anyhow!'" The speaker created some laughter by imitating some Church of Ireland clergymen quoting Scriptures in the proverbial solemn tones. "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor;" "If you have two coats, sell one." "Ask the blind, and the halt and the maimed." were some of the texts he quoted. "No wonder," he went on, "that people don't believe, when the clergy themselves don't believe in the words of the Scripture. You can keep all, grab all, rob all and still remain in fellowship with the clergy. As for the blind and the lame, you can see the latest Paris fashions at the churches on Sundays."

Again the personal notes was struck when he mentioned that his brother, Mr. Alfred C. Cooney, solicitor, recently came to see him. He had on his worst suit. "People never come to us in their Sunday best." His brother made it clear that his business was a law matter; the tramp preachers had nothing to offer lawyers. He mentioned an interview with his mother too, and said his father recently called him 'a waster' because he had earned no money for two years. "Then," said Mr. Cooney, "I replied that Jesus had been a waster, too, for it is not on record that he earned any money. More than that, he had not a penny at the last, for Christ was buried out of the charity of Joseph of Arimathea."

From local matters he passed to the Welsh Revival which, he said, used to be described as such a blessing in the "Enniskillen

Reporter." Well he recently met Evan Roberts, the preacher. The latter had an artistic face, and all the ladies went crazy about him (laughter). He heard that a millionaire had left the fellow £5 a week for life, and he asked Roberts if that were so? The latter said, (Mr. Cooney imitated the Welshman's accent)—"My dear brother, if the Holy Spirit leads you to live in poverty, that is right; but if the Holy Spirit leads me to live in this way, I am satisfied." "Are there two Holy Spirit," the speaker said, "one that gives five pounds a week, the other a Holy Spirit that gives nothing?" He quoted the example of the rich young ruler who wanted to preach, who appealed to Christ, who replied that he must sell all that he had first.

Mr. Irvine made a reference to Dean Ovenden and Edward Cooney, by way of contrasting the spiritual good which they were doing, respectively. Already Edward Cooney's words were being carried to the four winds of the world. Dean Ovenden had been drawing a big salary for a lifetime, and nobody repeated a word of his discourses outside Enniskillen, and not many even inside it.

At the conclusion of the different services, food and drink was supplied. Everybody is made welcome to the table, and there is no distinction in the quality of the victuals supplied. Preachers and public sat side by side.

On Monday morning the Pilgrims began to leave Crocknacrieve, with a bicycle each, a railway ticket, and from five to twelve shillings each in his or her pocket. Some of them go to America, where two other conventions, similar to the Ballinamallard one, are to be held; others return to different centres of England, Scotland and Ireland.

The tramp preachers will have some hundreds of pounds left over after defraying all expenses. This money they have received from sympathizers all over the world. They purpose distributing what is left amongst the poor and giving a donation to Fermanagh Co. Hospital. "We want no reserve," one of the leaders said, "not one penny."

August 13, 1908, p.8
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TO CORRESPONDENTS:

Several letters to hand respecting the Tramps. We very much regret, more than we can well express—that Mr. Wilson of Framlingham, Suffolk, has dared to issue as a placard a reference to a letter (one among many) addressed to the Editor of the IMPARTIAL REPORTER, and which its pages did not publish. It is an almost unpardonable act of effrontery, for it conveys to the public that we published a foul communication which we would not permit to soil our pages. The poor man, however, is so demented on this subject, perhaps owing to the fact that three of his daughters have left his home for the Tramps, that he seems to have lost all control of his reason, and is as much to be pitied, perhaps, as blamed. We need hardly say, also, that Colonel Doran's name, which was also introduced into the placard, was used without authority from that gentleman, who would be only too ready to disavow any connection with a person who could publish such a shameless calumny.

A few letters held over for consideration.

'A Joiner'—If **Mr. Irvine** said that there was no authority for holding that our Lord worked as a carpenter (in answer to one of our points), it is like other mistakes of his. Our Lord is specifically referred to by the Apostle Mark in the 6th chapter and 3rd verse in these words—'Is not this the carpenter?' Now a carpenter is a tradesman, and one who works, not one who loafs. Joseph, his earthly father, was, according to tradition, a carpenter whose work was principally that of fashioning yokes for oxen, ploughs for the field, and stalls for oxen—in fact, the ordinary work that would fall to a village carpenter in a pastoral community. And our Lord was subject to his parents. In that home at Nazareth we may reasonably infer that our Lord learnt his father's trade; and that he knew it and practised it long before he reached the age of 30, at which he commenced His ministry, as proved by the fact that the people who knew him, and knew his daily life, spoke of Him as the carpenter. Our Lord did work at His trade, and we may be certain He was not a botch, but a competent journeyman, and that He dignified labour; and Paul worked at his trade, so as not to be dependent on any one. And the man who would, through either ignorance or pride of empty birth sneer at a trade, would sneer at the Saviour of mankind. For he worked as 'a carpenter.' And Peter, who, we all believe, informed Mark of his story, knew what he was talking about when he quoted the remark in question.

CORRESPONDENCE
THE TRAMP PREACHERS
PLEA FOR THEIR OVER-ZEAL

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER.

Dear Sir—Your articles and letters on the Tramp preachers are opportune, though they may have no effect in quenching this flame of wild enthusiasm that pervades many parts and parishes in the dioceses of Clogher and Kilmore, especially in the Protestant parts of them. It is doubtful whether opposition in press or pulpit dulls or brightens the flame in such cases. In the days of Burns there used to be great annual religious conventions in the part of Ayreshire where he had settled. He often attended those gatherings and wrote upon them his memorable satire—"The Holy Fair." The result of the satire was that the gatherings died out; were laughed out. However, we have no Burns around Enniskillen to satirize:—

'Moodie who speers the holy door
 Wiv' tidings o' damnation'
 or
 Smith who opezs out his cauld harangues
 On practice and on morals
 or on 'Black Russell'
 Whose piercing words like highland swords
 Divide the joints and marrow,
 And talk of hell where devils dwell
 Our vera souls does harrow.

Nor on **Mr. Irvine**, 'The Veritable Boanerges, with sword in hand cutting off Malchus' ear,' even if on a small scale we had a Burns to describe and satirize **Irvine, Cooney & Co.**, it is just doubtful whether it would lessen or swell the dow of wild religious zeal and intolerance that has been saturating the soil around Crocknacrieve. We remember the grand passage in Moore's Lalla Rook about fanatic faith.

The lover may
 Distrust the look which steals his soul away.
 The babe may cease to think that it can play
 With heaven's rainbow; alchymists may doubt
 The shining good their crucible gives out;
 But faith, fanatic faith once wedded fast
 To some near falsehood hugs it to the last.

As a watchman on the walls of Zion, but without the camp, I have been observing for a long time the doings in Crocknacrieve and elsewhere, and again and again I have been forced to ask myself, is there not a cause? Is there not a cause for it in the settled routine forms of worship (Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist) that obtain amongst us. We cannot do now with the services that satisfied our parents and grand parents. The sad white washed walls, the cold services, and the long sermons, and the old psalm singing and hymn singing that satisfied the religious needs of a century or half century ago, do not satisfy the present age. It must be allowed that there is an endeavour made all round to have our services brighter and shorter. Yet the feeling all round, is that our ministers are wanting in earnestness, that our religion is growing to be somewhat like the religion The Divine Master denounced—a religion without heart, a religion as dry as dust, full of infantile forms, that satisfied no longing of the soul. Our people, even in places and parishes by lonely lakes and mountains, are growing tired of this heartless religion, and so it is coming to pass that our settled congregations are growing small, while those at Crocknacrieve are growing large.

Priestism, or rather the aping of priestism, is becoming a marked feature with all our ministers. It would be well for themselves and their congregations if they would remember that there was never less priest than Jesus. He who in a certain sense wrote the grandest life of Christ has truly said—'Never has there been less of a priest than Jesus, never more an enemy of the forms which stifle religion under pretext of protecting it.'

Then, alas, as time and years go on, our ministers have less of a 'draw.' They have more style, they have more dress. They have more of 'the gay clothing and the gold ring and the goodly apparel' of St. James, but less of the workman of St. Paul 'who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' The staggering school boy reading has too often to be listened to; the rambling 'ramshackle' sermon without bodily parts or passion has too often to be endured. In some churches we can say of the sermon, as Johnston said of his dinner at a way side inn, 'Ill fed, ill cooked, ill kept, ill served.'

In other Churches thoughtful people have to put up with striplings in ecclesiastical fractions, and when they read a little script no one listens, but all try not to listen. The result of all is, when the services are ended, our people leave such places of worship dull and heavy, far less scriptural in heart, less cheerful in soul than when they entered. It is no marvel that many of our young and middle aged people are glad to find some other meeting place to satisfy their religious needs and longings. See ye to it, for over many churches may be written, 'Behold your house is left unto you desolate.'

But it is easier to blame than to praise—easier to find fault than to find a remedy. It is not easy for congregations, elders, Presbyteries, nominators, bishops, &c., to improve very much on the material they have; those with whom the power of appointment lies are often confined to a narrow circle, where there is little light or learning; and as time goes on the inducements are becoming less for able men and able minds to seek the sacred office of the ministry.

However, one or two things could be done that would tend to more life and spirituality in our churches. First, there could be a more frequent interchange of pulpits, and this would be a large benefit to the ministers as well as to the congregations. Secondly, in every diocese there could be a few itinerant preachers—able men, the memories of whose voice and presence and thoughts would remain

long with the congregations. Such are the Redemptorist Fathers in the Roman Catholic Church. They come into parishes and hold their mission for a week or fortnight. They are all gifted men as preachers, and so the memories of them remain long after they leave, and there is a longing for their return.

Watchman.

MR. EDWARD COONEY AND HIS TRAMP FOLLOWERS.

Mount Temple, Clontarf, Dublin, 3rd August, 1908.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER.

Dear Sir:—I have indeed been shocked at the blasphemous statements **Mr. Edward Cooney** and his Tramp followers as reported in your last issue.

As I read, my these thoughts go back to the days when we were boys together, and I vividly remember the consistant and honourable lives of such leading Methodists as Messrs. James Coalter, Hamilton, Morrison, Robert Gordon, the Rev. Benjamin and Mrs. Bayly, the heroic death of Rev. John Dwyer, the saintly life and death of **Mr. Edward Cooney's** own grandmother who left him an example, which alas, he has not followed, and his brother Willie, at whose bedside I stood shortly before his spirit passed away, all now long years ago.

I think, too, of my own brother William's death, and so recently the illness and death of my own beloved saintly and devoted mother, one of the best women ever breathed; all followers of Wesley who not only followed his teachings, but whose ancestors heard him preach and entertained him as an Angel unawares.

I go to that hallowed spot the old Churchyard of Enniskillen, where so many loved and honoured in Enniskillen lie there to await the last call of their Saviour, who died that they might live, and standing where I so recently laid that loving mother's dust to rest, I think of her last hours with me here, when repeating the 23rd Psalm, 'the Lord is my Shepherd,' and coming to the verse 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,' she replied 'I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me, Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies, Thou annointest my head with oil and my cup runneth over, surely goodness and mercy has followed me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

How I ask, in the face of such facts, dare **Mr. Edward Cooney** say those blessed saints are in Hell? Truly it is heaven where such spirits dwell, and only hell in **Mr. Cooney's** diseased imagination.

With such thoughts as these we can afford to be charitable and brand his statements as the ravings of a fanatic, but these should not be tolerated by any Fermanagh man, I care not to what religion or denomination he may belong.

In conclusion, I would earnestly ask **Mr. Edward Cooney** and his followers, instead of maligning the dead and insulting the living, to learn themselves the first commandment with promise, 'Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long,' again 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' and yet again, 'Let him that is without sin cast the first stone,' and finally the dying prayer of our Blessed Lord Himself, as he hung in agony on the Cross of Calvary, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.'

—Yours Faithfully, T. PICTON BRADSHAW.

THE PILGRIMS AND THE TRUTH

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER.

Dear Sir:—In a recent account of the 'Convention' at Crocknacrieve, **Mr. Irvine** is reported to have said that one of the pilgrims was dismissed from his position as school teacher for 'refusing to teach, devilish doctrines,' will you kindly allow me as the clergyman concerned, to give the true facts of the case.

A young woman is appointed to instruct the children in a small country school, part of her duty consists in teaching the Church Catechism, her appointment is in the hands of a gentleman who, out of kindness to his tenants and their children, provides for this school paying the teacher's salary, giving her a house and certain allowances; undoubtedly she holds this appointment during his pleasure. This gentleman is well known for his many acts of kindness to all who come in contact with him.

The pilgrims come into the parish, and this young woman becoming infected with their teaching, is advised by me to resign her position as teacher in this school, it being pointed out to her that she cannot consistently teach the Church Catechism, and hold these views. She declined to resign, in fact gave me to understand that she did not see anything dishonourable in accepting payment to teach the Church Catechism, and at the same time controvert its teaching to the children.

I distinctly told her that if she did not resign she would be dismissed; she had time to think over her position, she was not treated harshly, her treatment was the same as would be meted out to anyone who violates a trust. She was dismissed, but she ought to have resigned.

It is not surprising that capital should have been made by the leaders of the pilgrims out of this matter, when one considers their attitude towards the clergy, but this young woman herself has repeatedly asserted that she had no fault to find with my action in the matter, which was to advise the patron of the school to dismiss her. If my statement of the case is wrong let the young woman, who will easily recognise who this is from, come forward with her version of the case, if on the other hand my statement of the case is right, then let **Mr. Irvine** cease from scattering his misrepresentations broadcast.

With regard to the familiarity with hell, and its contents displayed by these people, one cannot but wish that more of that charity which 'suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not itself,' were to be seen and heard.

For the sake of other people I withhold my name, but you, sir, have my permission to disclose it to any who may desire it

—Yours faithfully, DIDASKALOS

August 13, 1908
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER
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THE TRAMP PREACHERS.
MR. WM. IRVINE GONE TO AMERICA.
TO OPEN ANOTHER CONVENTION.

Crocknacrieve presented a lonely appearance on Sunday after the crowds who had attended that place for the past four weeks.

Almost all the tramp preachers have gone away during the past week with the exception of about 50, including dressmakers, tailors, and shoemakers, who are working for the need of their fellow workers.

Mr. Wm. Irvine, the leader of the movement, has set sail for America, and is to open a convention in Halifax, on Sunday, 16th last. Altogether he has to attend nine conventions until he returns to Crocknacrieve again next year.

August 20, 1908, p. 8
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THE RECENT TRAMP CONVENTION.
HELD AT CROCKNACRIEVE.
WHAT THE TRAMPS BELIEVE
A REPLY FROM WITHIN

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER.

SIR:—I have read a great deal in your newspaper during past weeks regarding the recent Christian Convention at Crocknacrieve, and I have been compelled to write, much as I dislike newspaper controversy in matters of this sort, to try and remove a few of the many false impressions made by the reports and criticisms written apparently by people who either deliberately misrepresent facts, or are so blinded by tradition that they are incapable of understanding Scriptural truths. I will only trouble you with a few items.

Last week a clerical writer (Didaskatos) writes to try and excuse himself for dismissing a poor school teacher, who dared to believe what Jesus taught in preference to the tradition of men. Let me tell this cleric that it was by accident the cap fitted, as his is not an isolated case by any means. We greatly rejoice in the fact that in this selfish 20th century a number of school teachers who have come in contact with and believed the truth as in Jesus, through the lives and testimonies of those who have left all to follow Him, have gladly let their bread and butter go from them, rather than teach the Popish and unscriptural doctrines contained in the catechisms of sects. Be it remembered all these teachers were paid out of the public purse, and not by the clergy.

Mr. Irwin did not refer to any case in particular, but commented on the present intolerable state of affairs that exists in matters educational, which permits the priests of all the sects to meddle with and dominate over the rising generation in this matter, which is purely secular and none of their business. We are glad, however, that signs are not wanting of the dawn, when this nation will also give its verdict against priestcraft in all secular affairs.

.. The time and space at my disposal will not permit my going into all the other controversial matters that have been touched upon. To summarize them all, I may say that almost all the newspaper comment upon this convention and its teaching, has been founded upon a wrong basis. We make no secret of the truth that has been taught. We believe in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all that it means to man. We hold and proclaim to the world that Jesus is God's pattern preacher for every age, and we do not believe in any other pattern: we believe that what He lived out and taught is for the 20th century, as well as for the first: we hold that His plan for the regeneration of mankind was made in heaven—perfect—and should never have been departed from by man. We are compelled to speak strongly against those who teach the traditions of men, and prefer blind clericalism to truth and righteousness as revealed in God's word. We are called uncharitable because we speak against error and traditional teaching, yet no one can say we speak our own words. Jesus while on earth had a continual warfare with the clerical and religious people of that day, because His life and teaching was such a contrast to their pride, selfishness, and love of gold, and if He came again today, He would find the same influences at work in the world, but much worse than then.

We hold that God only sends one kind of preacher—those whose hearts and lives are so won by Him that they are willing to sacrifice their worldly possessions and worldly prospects for His sake and the Gospel's. We are told we do not preach love. We reply: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* This is our conception of love. The Pharisee talks about love, and could even shed tears for love, but as the Poet said—

'Tis easy to talk Love and put the money by,
But those who follow Jesus
Lay treasure up on high.'

It is this sort of love that pleases men today, but in reality it is hypocrisy and done to win the smile of men for selfish ends. Jesus so loved that he gave His life for the world, and the religious people hated and crucified Him because He spoke the truth. The marks of a God-sent preacher are, 'He has no home' (Matt. viii.20, and xix.21 and 29); 'No reputation' (Phil.ii.6,7; Luke vi.22.); 'Is a gazing stock and a fool to worldly people' (1 Cor. iv.13); 'He is accused of being a dishonourable person, of wronging, corrupting and defrauding people' (2 Cor. vi.6,8; vii.2). The marks of a preacher approved by the God of Heaven are found in 2 Cor. vi.4, to 18. The seal of their apostleship can be seen through their converts.

The marks of a false prophet are equally clear in the scriptures. They talk about the suffering, self-denying life of Christ; and his apostles and prophets, but do not believe in experiencing it. Read Matt. xxiii. (the whole chapter deals with them). They preach another Jesus (2 Cor. xi.4). They seek the patronage of the rich rather than the poor. They make sure to have everything provided for them such as salary, pensions, &c., all in direct contradiction to God's divine plan and command (Matt. x.; Luke ix and x). They seek place, power and honour of men and live by their reputation. When a better job offers itself they pretend they have got a call from the Most High, and go through the farce of expressing sorrow at being severed from their 'beloved' flock, when in reality its the mammon of unrighteousness that's behind it all. They seek the greetings in the market places, and love to be called Rabbi. They are blind leaders of the blind (Matt. xxiii. 16); by receiving the praise of men they brand themselves false prophets (Luke vi.26.) Matt. 19 verse, to end, gives us the provision that God makes for his preachers in every age, and is a condemnation on everyone who dares to take any other way in His name.

Over 600 preachers in this 20th century have proved that this is the plan for today—and their testimony has been owned and blessed by God in every land and clime. They have proved that His provision for His sent ones is all sufficient—without salary, reserve fund, collecting card or lottery. Their God supplies their every need, so that they do not lack anything. Jesus never sent a preacher with a salary or a title. The 12, the 70 and all the others, left on record in the New Testament, were sent in the same way, and everything he taught the first preachers is for today—*"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever."* (Heb. 13, 8). Therefore, we do not believe in any preacher who refuses to walk even as He walked (1 John ii-6). Jesus said all the preachers who came superior to Him were thieves and robbers. We therefore look for the marks found in the New Testament, before we believe in any preacher, no matter how holy he may profess to be. In a word we believe in Jesus and every preacher who has His Testimony, and we believe in no other. *"We esteem all His precepts concerning all things to be right, and we hate every false way."* Psalm cxix, 128.

—Yours faithfully, Within

Our comment on the foregoing letter is unfortunately crushed out. In our next.—ED. I.R.

August 27, 1908
THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER

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THE 'TRAMPS'

We gladly extended the use of our columns last week in the spirit of fair play, to one within the camp of the Tramp Preachers, to reply to various criticisms upon them. We much regret if, as he says, anyone has misrepresented them; but, so far as we know, these men have been judged like others, by their sayings; several of these sayings have been commented upon, and to several comments our correspondent 'Within' offers no defence whatever. He offers no defence or apology for those points in which the public are most deeply interested.

As to the case of the school teacher referred to, we entirely disagree with our correspondent. The rector was quite justified in dismissing the school teacher. She had some qualifications for the post she had obtained, and the one indispensable qualification was that she should be a Member of the Church of Ireland; and therefore be qualified to teach its doctrines to its children. She, of her own volition, and knowing the consequences, became a Tramp. She was fully entitled to act according to her conscience: but by doing so she herself disqualified herself for the post she occupied by being no longer able to instruct her pupils in the religion of which she had been a member, and in which the children required instruction. It, therefore, became an impossibility to retain her services, when she of her own free will had unfitted herself to discharge the full duty for which she was paid. And, if she lost her situation for conscience sake, she suffered no more than hundreds of others have done who have said little about it. Moreover, it would have been a dishonourable act on her part to have remained as teacher, if she had been unable to fulfil the duties to which she was appointed; and she herself, unfitted herself, and caused her own dismissal, as she had a right to do, but which she had no right to magnify into a martyrdom.

Every year the Editor of the IMPARTIAL REPORTER suffers heavily from a pecuniary point of view, for having the courage to express his opinions on questions that other newspapers, influenced or controlled by religious or political organizations, dare not touch,—no more than they would express an opinion now upon the Tramp Preachers. But since the IMPARTIAL REPORTER suffers thus for its independence, we do not cry about it, nor have it held up as suffering for conscience sake to an admiring audience. Numbers of people suffer for their opinions.

'Within' is quite at liberty to hold the views he expresses in his letter, and no one will take him to task for them. This is a country of toleration—so long as the Union Jack floats over it. We are all used to sects without and quoting Scripture to justify its own position, and no doubt, quite sincerely. The very Mormon is quite sincere. The anomalous position of the Tramp, however, is this—that he takes his stand by the authority which was translated for him by the very class whom he says have gone to hell, and whom he has consigned to hell; which has been revised by another set of 'clericals' filled with 'devilry,' as **Mr. Irwin** put it; and without whose 'devilish' work in this respect the Tramp would not have a Bible today. So that 'Within,' in following what he conceives to be the 'Jesus way,' follows what he has learned from the 'devilry' of the 'clericals,' the translators and revisers of the Bible. If he argue, translating the Bible was not 'devilry,' then how is he competent to decide what was or what was not 'devilry' on their part?

And while the Tramps denounce John and Charles Wesley as having gone to hell, they sing the very 'devilry' written by Charles Wesley in some of his immortal hymns.

His reference to literal interpretation of the Scriptures reminds us of one revivalist well known in Belfast, who has had great influence with the working classes. He also believes in the literal interpretation of Holy Writ. He interprets the words 'And when thou goest into thy closet, and pray, &c.,' literally. It is of no use to tell him that the word 'closet' meant in the 16th century a small room or ante-chamber; he will only pray in one place, and he will insist on praying there. We assure our readers this is an absolute fact. And the Tramps are like this man.

Mr. Wm. Irvine, too, stopped a Sabbath School conducted by some of his followers, because such a thing was not mentioned in the Bible!! He will not find a railway train mentioned in it, either, or a bicycle, yet the Tramps use both.

The Tramps say they have no collections. In strict parlance this may be correct, but it is not the whole truth. They may not 'collect,' but they receive donations. At the houses in which they hold meetings a bag is placed for the receipt of the gifts, and the donations are much more generous than when given to the churches. There was a large surplus from the Convention at Crocknacrieve last year, and there likely was another large surplus this year. So that while **Messrs. Irvine & Co.** do not 'collect,' they receive; and the receipts are sufficient to send the 'preachers' to America, Scotland, Keswick, and elsewhere, and to take **Mr. Irvine** to South Africa and other places abroad. The regular clergy could not afford these trips. The Tramps can afford it, but they go another way about it. They obtain the money.

Our correspondent, it will be noticed, avoids all allusion to withdrawing girls from the houses of their parents, to vilification of the dead, to uttering damnation to the living, to casting aside the symbol of marriage, and to the pride that apes humility in the untidy dress of the 'brethren' and 'sisters.' All this is certainly not the Jesus way.

There may be, as our correspondent says, 600 of these so-called 'preachers!' Most of them may know something of planting seed in a potato ridge, or measuring a yard of calico, to which they have served a time; but of 'preaching,' of which they are ignorant, they know nothing. Ask most of these young men and women from rural parts what was meant in the Bible by such single passages as—'I am Alpha and Omega,' or rolling away the stone from the sepulchre; inquire the conditions of the eastern caravanserai or how that our Lord was born in a manger; or how the Magdalen could wash the feet of our Lord or dry His feet with her hair, or what were the water pots kept for referred to in the story of the marriage at Cana in Galilee? or the imagery that Paul referred to when writing of being tied to the 'body of this death'; and they know nothing about them—absolutely nothing. They know little or nothing—the most of these so-called 'preachers,' of the Scriptures they profess to teach. 'Preachers,' forsooth! The class of 'preacher,' whom we have heard on Enniskillen Diamond required first to go to school to learn to speak. Their 'sermons' were rambling, abusive tirades, full of ignorant egotism, Pharisaical effrontery, and an audacious declaration of intimacy with the Almighty that one could hardly get outside of Bedlam.

Bedlam! We have met four ladies in our time each of whom asseverated positively that she was Queen Victoria; and we would as soon credit their statements as many assertions of some of the 600 'preachers.' All these cranks 'prove' to their own satisfaction that what they think is right, that the Almighty sends them His approval, and that He will consign to hell those whom they denounce. But no one else believes them. There was a Dr. Cumming one time persuaded thousands to believe that the Second Coming of the Lord would take place in 1865. But the Lord did not come!

If the Tramps be so strong in faith, let them give an example. They are death on clericals. Tibet is the most priest-ridden country in the world. It has monks and monasteries without number. Suppose the whole battalion of 600 'preachers' visit the Grand Llama, and baptise him in one of the streams of the Hindu Kush! Or try their hand on China, with its teeming millions! Japan has a veneration for the spirit of its ancestors. 'Preach' an exordium in Japanese, consigning all the ancestors to eternal torment, and note results! There are abundant opportunities for these people in Asia, and in Central Africa; but they prefer to poach on the work of others, and to weaken the cause at home by division and disruption.

There are a number of religious faddists and fanatics. We allow them all to enjoy the liberty of their opinions—that is a matter between them and their God; but we will not allow the Tramps or any other set of Pharisaical fanatics to vituperate our honoured dead, to defame the name and reputation of those who were honoured in life; or to insult the memory of our dear ones; and it is well for these people to learn in time that it will not be permitted in the County Fermanagh, except perhaps within the shelter of private grounds at Crocknacrieve; and that if they want to traduce those whose shoes they are not fit to blacken, they must go to another sphere; for while the living may bear with insult, they will not suffer it to be extended to their beloved dead.

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