

Newspaper Articles-1908 July

Newspaper Articles

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March __ ?, 1908

THE TRAMPS

Girls and Slaves

ALLEGED TRAFFIC IN GIRLS

Reward Offered in San Francisco

Alleged Selling of Girls by Missionaries

We take the report we give below from the **San Francisco Call**, of **March 9, 1908**, omitting the charges indicated in the heading over it. The report is palpably untrue in some of the particulars such as the purchase of women for barter in China, or that the chief of Enniskillen police has had anything to do with the reward offered, which we suspect comes from Mr. Wilson, of Suffolk. We expect the reward will not produce the evidence required, as the allegations are, we believe, without any foundation. The following is the report referred to:–

Acting on advice received from Enniskillen, Ireland, the local police began an investigation of an obscure religious organization last night in an effort to locate one particular sect which, they have been informed, was making use of its religious methods to win over unsuspecting girls for the Chinese slave trade.

The band was driven out of the British Isles last December. Chief Buggy received information yesterday from John A. Belfast, chief of police of Enniskillen, Ireland, stating that the organization had won over three English girls and was taking them to China through San Francisco with the avowed purpose of making them missionaries to their cause. Since their departure additional information was brought to light indicating that the mission was a mere guise and that the sole intention of the movement was to get the girls into China, where they would be sold as slaves. How many girls this sect has won over in the United States can only be conjectured.

The sect is now said to be in San Francisco, and the instant chief Buggy received the advices (sic) from Ireland he ordered out details of police to investigate every religious meeting of a doubtful nature. The official name of the sect is unknown, but it occasionally travels under the alias of 'Go Preachers of No-Sect Sect.' The ambiguous appellation gives but little idea of the dogma embraced by the organization.

July 9, 1908

THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER

Established 1808

Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

**THE 'TRAMP PREACHERS'
CONVENTION AT CROCKNACRIEVE
TO EXCEED FORMER GATHERINGS .**

At present the Tramp Preachers, more popularly known as 'Pilgrims,' or Cooneyites,' are holding their annual convention at the residence of Mr. John West, Crocknacrieve, Ballinamallard.

Last year about this time a similar convention was held, and some thousands in the course of a few weeks attended.

The arrangements which were remarkable in every detail will be superceded in excellence this year. The large tent in which the services are held daily is far larger, the sleeping accommodation more comfortable and roomy.

At present there are about 400 'tramps' in residence, and it is anticipated that at the end of the week about 1,000 will be present.

Mr. Wm. Irvine, and Mr. Edward Cooney, and the other leading lights of this body are all present and give addresses at the services, of which three are held daily.

Belfast Telegraph

July 15, 1908

With the "Cooneyites"

International Convention in Fermanagh

Some Interesting Facts

What might be correctly described as an international convention is, at the present time, being held at Crocknacrieve near Enniskillen, in connection with the strange religious sect known as "The Pilgrims," and more popularly in Fermanagh as the "Cooneyites" on account of the fact that one of the chief leaders is Mr. Edward Cooney, of Enniskillen.

The sect which is founded on somewhat original interpretations of the Holy Scriptures was established some four or five years ago, and like many another new sect, had a meteoric growth enlisting the sympathies of both sexes, but unlike other new fads of religion, the body has continued to grow until now the brotherhood is numerically large and the ramifications extend throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and even across the sea to America , South Africa and the far distant Antipodes.

Mr. Edward Cooney, or just plain "Edward," as he is familiarly termed by his coherents, was at one time a commercial traveller and the story of his conversion has oft-times been told. He was at a revival meeting in a remote country town, and the earnestness of the evangelist conducting the service so appealed to him that he forthwith threw himself heart and soul into the work, which he has since presented with such wondrous zeal. Associated with him is a Mr. Wm. Irvine at one time an engineer, and one who has travelled in nearly all parts of the world. As stated, their teachings, which are based on simple interpretation.

Of the life and work of Christ when on earth attracted a good deal of attention, and converts were soon made. At the present time, the members include many well-to-do people, some of whom—as did Mr. Cooney and Mr. Irvine—have given up a life of luxury and like the Apostles of old, have devoted themselves to a humble advocacy of the Christian principles they embraced on conversion. One of the chief characteristics of the "Pilgrims" belief is the principle of immersion in a running stream. Fermanagh people well remember the deep interest aroused a few years ago, when every Sunday these immersions of men and women were carried out in solemn form in Ballycassidy river and subsequently in water nearer to Enniskillen.

Some baptismal services were and are still being held in other places. Two years ago the shore at Sydenham within a couple of miles of Belfast was a favourite rendezvous every Sunday afternoon, and there as elsewhere the "Pilgrims" were subjected to a good deal of taunting and ridicule. Yet in spite of hostility, sometimes of the most violent description, they continued to prosecute their propagandist work, resenting not the jest of the crowd, but giving a soft answer to angry criticism.

This year a great revival or convention is taking place at Crocknacrieve, which is not actually the birthplace, might be well described as the nursery of the "Pilgrim" sect. Crocknacrieve, some two or three miles distant from Enniskillen, is a delightfully situated old world farmstead in the occupation of Mr. West. The holding stands half a mile so far from the main road, and is approached by a drive through avenue of stately trees which at this season of the year are looking at their best. From all parts of the United Kingdom

Evangelists have foregathered, and converts have travelled even from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, America and other distant lands to participate in the daily services which are a chief feature of the reunion. Passing along the drive one catches glimpses of "Pilgrims," either in groups or singly walking about the spacious grounds deeply concerned in perusing the Bible; an opening in the trees and there is revealed to view two large sheds, which are used as the temporary abodes for some of the "sisters," while in a field adjacent to the lawn are spacious tents for the men.

In fact, the quiet old place has been transformed as though by magic into a little colony. In the house is a dormitory containing fifty beds, and all other available space is utilized for the convenience of the fraternity. Where so many people are congregated the commissariat department is of vital importance, but here, as in all the arrangements, the minutest detail has been carefully attended to. There is a spacious cook-house in which are two large boilers; then there is dairy fitted up with modern appliances for separating milk and making butter; the wine cellar has been turned into a bakehouse and the numerous outhouses are used as workshops of all descriptions.

All the manual labor is done by the "Pilgrims." The females discharge domestic duties and dressmaking, while the men undertake cooking, cycle repairs, carpentry, painting, tailoring, watch repairing, boot repairing, stable duty and other occupations incidental to a large community. There is also a "post-office" with its appointed officials, and a public office.

As already stated, religious meetings are held daily, but Sunday is specially set apart for general devotional exercise, and these services are attended by from a thousand to fifteen hundred people. Those who are not in temporary residence at Crocknacrieve journey thither by foot, car or bicycle. Many of these latter travel long distances in order to attend the service. The general place of assemblage is the large marquee erected on the lawn, wherein has been fitted up a large platform. Ordinarily the marquee is used as a dining tent and for social intercourse. It is liberally supplied with seating accommodation, and at last Sunday's gathering there was an attendance of over a thousand people.

The principal speaker was Mr. Irvine, and for there and a half hour he held his audience spellbound. Mr. Irvine has an eloquent style and a wonderful flow of language, and his racy anecdotes are most entertaining. He can quote Scripture with easy facility and has the ability to impart to his theories apparently convincing truth.

At one portion of his addresses, he departed from the purely scriptural, however, and attacked clergymen in general, irrespective of creed and indulged in some strong criticisms of the Orangemen and the then approaching 12th of July demonstrations. Underlying all, however, was deep devotional fervour, which could not but fail to impress even those who were inclined to scoff. Earnestness is indeed, the keynote of the success of the sect.

BELIEVE IN BEING POOR.

Four years ago, there were only some 150 workers; now their number can only be conjectured. It would, perhaps, not be out of place to refer to the account of an interview with Messrs. Irvine and Cooney, which appeared in these columns in 1904. There had been a baptism or "dipping" as the ceremony is derisively termed, at Ballinamallard, and afterwards, the two leaders courteously consented to give particulars of their beliefs.

Mr. Irvine, who it might be said in passing, was originally connected with the Scottish "Faith Mission," and was addressing a meeting in Co. Tipperary when Mr. Cooney was first attracted to him, in the course of the interview and: "I was convinced there were certain practices observed in the Church that were wrong; they were not in accord with the Scripture which ought to be the true guide of our lives and work."

Mr. Cooney at the same time uttered the following statement: Christ was poor; we believe in being poor. Christ had not a certain dwelling place. He sent forth his apostles to live as he lived—dependent on God, and we believe in living the same way. The term "Cooneyite" is abhorrent to the sect; the name they believe in being: "Christian."

There are no class distinctions, for all work together for the cause they espouse and almost daily their ranks are being recruited. The meetings at Crocknacrieve will be continued throughout the summer and then the workers will return to their different spheres of labour. Mr. Irvine was recently in America where he has carried on an extensive propagandist movement. Mr. Cooney himself travels a good deal.

July 16, 1908

THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER

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'TRAMP' PREACHERS' CONVENTION UNPRECEDENTED GATHERING AT CROCKNACRIEVE

The annual convention of the 'Tramp' Preachers which is still in progress at the residence of Mr. John West, Crocknacrieve, has assumed very large proportions.

Numbers leave and arrive daily, and up to the present over 1,500 have attended the convention, 300 arriving on last Saturday evening. There are now sleeping at Crocknacrieve 600 souls, and the manner in which such a big army of religious enthusiasts is fed and housed is nothing short of marvelous. Every detail is looked after and all arrangements are carried out like clockwork under supervising hands.

On Sunday last 1,000 persons attended the services which were conducted by **the leader and adviser of the 'Tramp' Preachers, Mr. Wm. Irvine**, whose eloquence as a speaker and influence over his hearers, is already well-known and felt. On the week day

services speakers were also present from South Africa, New Zealand, United States, Scotland and England, and their addresses were listened to with interest by the large concourse of people present. .

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CONVENTION OF 'TRAMPS'
HELD AT CROCKNACRIEVE
DENUNCIATIONS OF CLERGY
EXTRAORDINARY VENOMOUS LANGUAGE
CHURCH COLLECTIONS SAID TO BE 'DEVILRY'
CHURCH BUILDINGS FOUND FAULT WITH

The great convention of the Tramp preachers is still in progress at Crocknacrieve, and as anticipated, has surpassed in extent all previous similar gatherings. Each day the numbers show no sign of diminishing. As soon as one party leaves another arrives to take its place, and on Sunday last the convention may be said to have reached its pinnacle.

Sunday might be termed the chief day. There were some thousands of persons in attendance, the speakers at the meetings were the two most prominent 'preachers' and the further attraction was the baptism by total immersion of some 25 'converts.' One feature was noticeable—that the objectionable placards posted around Enniskillen, warning people against going to Crocknacrieve, served the opposite purpose to what was intended. They excited men and women to flock from all sides; vehicles of all sorts were in requisition.

Every visitor was surprised at the methodical manner in which all the arrangements for the care and comfort of those in residence, were carried out. To judge by their appearance, the Tramps are benefiting greatly by their holiday.

As usual, the call for volunteers for work in distant lands met with a response, a large number offering their services for America, South Africa, and Australia.

On Sunday morning the usual service was held; and after dinner the Tramps met at an artificial pool in the valley to the north side of Crocknacrieve house for the baptism service. It was a strange scene. Hymn after hymn was sung, and the ceremony, now no longer novel to Fermanagh people, was gone through.

After the baptismal ceremony all present congregated in the large tent which is capable of holding 1,800 people. In a short time it was packed full, some hundreds standing on the outskirts listening to the addresses delivered.

The speakers at this service were the two leaders of the movement, Mr. Wm. Irvine and Mr. Edward Cooney. Both speakers denounced the various churches and the clergy in no unmeasured words.

Mr. Cooney spoke first, and referred in the course of his address to his early life and to his attending the services in the Church of Ireland, where the clergyman often read out passages which he (the clergyman) did not understand. Since then he (**Mr. Cooney**) did, because he had an honest heart and found out what the true way and what the truth was. He advised every man and woman to do what he did—forget their father, their mother, their brothers and sisters, their clerical and individual training, and try and get at the truth. In his youth he began to be bound by the chains of tradition before he knew that he was being bound. He had been brought when an infant to a clergyman who

SPRINKLED HIM

with water, in the sign of the cross, and made a member of the Church of Ireland before he cut his teeth. It was very easy to make them Methodist, Roman Catholics or Church of Ireland, by sprinkling water over them, and he believed there was some ceremony whereby children were made members of the Salvation Army by the waving of a red flag over them. Had God anything to do with that devilry. Certainly not. Christ did not say 'Peter, run away for a bowl or can of water and we will baptise them and make them disciples.' They (the tramp preachers) taught and rightly taught that if followers of Jesus had children, they should train them up in the way of Jesus, not in the

WAY OF CLERGYMEN:

They talked about Protestantism. Why, the Protestants of Fermanagh were rank Papists at heart; because they run away to the clergymen to act Jesus and have their babes blest. Some say because there is good in Methodism, Presbyterianism, the Salvation Army, in Quakerism, that they are of God. In their hearts they were deluded and blinded by the devil. It was good to begin at the

beginning. The first three words they read in the Bible were 'In the beginning God, &c.' If they were perplexed as to what the truth was they should go back to the beginning and go to God. Their perplexity would then vanish and the light of God would shine into their hearts.

HOW THE DEVIL TEMPTS

It was a fact, **Mr. Cooney** said, that women were less influenced by their judgment than men. Colour or music weighed a good deal with the feminine sex. When the devil tempted Eve, he tempted her through her senses. Why did the Roman Catholics go in such crowds to penance? because the spirit of God was dealing with their hearts and making them long to be right. The spirit of the Devil was speaking in their hearts and showing them how to be right in the wrong way. If God moved in the hearts of men and made them desire to be right, the Devil was just as active to persuade them that there was some other way to act right than that laid down in the Scriptures. Some people imagined that the Devil was horrible to look upon, quite an ugly character. The Devil always came in the most attractive form he could possibly assume. Probably, he would put on a clerical collar and assume the holiest possible tone of voice.

FAMOUS DIVINES NOT IN HEAVEN

After further remarks **Mr. Cooney** said that people wondered why they said that Spurgeon, Moody, and Wesley were not in heaven. He held that anyone who did as Jesus did would be in heaven. If anyone could prove to him that Wesley went to heaven the same way as Jesus taught, he would follow Wesley. If they said General Booth would go to heaven the same as Jesus, he would follow General Booth and be General Cooney. He did not want to be fooled, he wanted to be sure that he was on the right road. Why, they said, those men were not in heaven was because they had not walked the way Jesus walked. It was very simple, if they examined the scriptures.

WHY THEY ATTACK THE CLERGY.

Mr. Cooney said it had been stated that there were 666 different ways of going to heaven. If they did not like the Roman Catholic way they could try the Church of England way, whose Archbishop had £15,000 a year. If they did not like that they could follow the Methodist way, the clergy of which had £3 a week, a free house, £12 for every child they had, and a superannuation when they got stiff in the joints. (Laughter.) There was very little hope for people who went to church or chapel. There was some hope for those who stopped outside. It was only the hypocrites who went to church and the head hypocrite was the clergyman. 'You say,' continued the speaker 'why do we speak so much against the clergy? Because we want you to get saved. If you go to the preacher you will go to hell. But, if you go to the right sort of preacher you will go to heaven.'

'COONEYITES' GO TO HELL.

Mr. Cooney then referred to people talking about such and such a person joining **the Cooneyites or the Pilgrims or the Irvinites**. If they became pilgrims that would never bring them to heaven. If they became Cooneyites they would go to hell. When he was a Cooneyite he was going to hell. He was not a Cooneyite now, he was a Christian. It was by the religious people he was opposed. The religious people were those who fought hardest against the truth.

WORSE THAN THE LOVE OF WHISKEY.

The love of whiskey, said **Mr. Cooney**, was not as bad as the love of money. Money, the scriptures said, was the root of all evil. The Scriptures did not say whiskey was. The people of Fermanagh were going to hell through the love of money. If they go to the Methodist Church, the Church of Ireland, or the Presbyterian Church, they have the love of money. Who got the foremost seats in the Methodist Church? Those that had the money bags. Who got them in the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Church? Those that had the money bags. Those were the men who were exalted in those churches. In the Salvation Army they would 'God bless you' if you put a sovereign in their cap. They also had a silver 'God bless you' and a copper one. (Laughter.) The rich man was always made a church warden or a select vestryman. And he who had no money and was poor was put into the shade.

Mr. Cooney concluded his address by appealing to all those present to walk in the Jesus way, to take Him for their pattern and to follow His teachings as they were found in the New Testament.

WHAT WAS FILLING HELL.

Mr. Wm. Irvine next spoke. This gentleman had originally belonged to the Presbyterian Church, and in the early passages of his address he stated that Presbyterianism was not Roman Catholicism—it was white-washed Popery. Where they saw the clergyman, there they saw Rome. Where they saw collections they saw Rome. Where they found men worshipping in a building put up for that purpose, that was devilry. That was what was filling hell. How was it he did not believe in men paid for preaching? Because Christ, Moses, Elijah were not men like that. Why did he not believe in making collections? Because Jesus never did so. Whenever that was done it was the Devil who did so. The Devil's work was the building of churches with stone and lime throughout the world's history. And every church was a monument to the power of the Devil over the hearts and lives of men.

CLERGY AND THE WORLD.

Most people today, continued **Mr. Irvine**, prided themselves, saying that they were Presbyterians. Poor blind fools! People said they were Methodists. Poor blind fools! Poor blind fool, with the mark of the Devil to go down to Hell. It was the

CLERGY WHO WERE FILLING HELL.

The publicans were blamed for making the drunkard, but many a drunkard was saved. No one could believe in a clergyman and get to heaven, and if any of them had friends who had gone down to Hell through belief in the clergy, let them stop and think. The clergy were filled with pride and worldliness and the desire to get on in the world as ever they were. But God changed their hearts, and they were now as much opposed to Presbyterianism and other clericalisms as they were opposed to Popery. He saw a priest and his brother shaking hands the other day at a railway station, and the priest was almost offended because his brother was so rough a man. The brother was the gentleman, and the priest a mean scamp to be ashamed of his own flesh and blood. And yet they found Protestant clergymen dressed well to liken the poor blind Roman priest. God pity any man who did so! Some of them dared question their right to speak against the clergy, lest it should affect their pocket or their good name. The clergy were men sitting in a manse fattening and destroying their fathers and mothers, their brothers and sisters. And yet some said unkind things about them because they dared speak against the clergy.

NORTH AND SOUTH COMPARED.

From Rome to the Salvation Army they had a great choice. Put an Orange sash on a man and he would go to hell with one on, when he would not go in company with a Ribbonman! Poor honest North of Ireland man! In the south they had the Pope and priest stirring up strife against the British Government. In the north they had them stirring up strife for the British Government, and all the time the clergy were pocketing the proceeds. Where did they put the money? They were building more churches and multiplying their organizations, so that it would be impossible for a man to live in Ireland without suffering from them.

A CHALLENGE.

Mr. Irvine delivered a strong address against the clergy and mentioned some in particular. One, whom he mentioned by name, and whom he alleged had sat beside his (the speaker's) mother and had broken her heart, he described as a dirty, greasy man, a devilish fellow, and a fat, lazy, good for nothing man. That man was going to hell, and his (the speaker's) relations were following him gladly on. 'I will give you my head,' said **Mr. Irvine**. 'If I can't prove that there is not the slightest chance of a clergyman being in heaven by the way set forth in the Bible. You say that these are strong words. They are not half as strong as the occasion demands.'

METHODIST CLERGYMAN'S VISIT.

The speaker stated that on the previous Sunday a Methodist clergyman had visited them and also on some days during the week, and when spoken to had not a word to say for himself. It showed the mean contemptible spirit of the man when he was afraid to go to the platform to defend his position. When he looked to Jesus he had no foundation for saying that he was right in the position he was in. False prophets had always been fond of money, and always went down most assuredly to the pit. There was more tyranny in the world from the clergymen than anything else. They were worse than wolves, lions or tigers. They were the most deadly creatures on God's earth.

ALLEGED IRVINESTOWN BOYCOTT

Reference was then made by the speaker to an alleged boycott of a lady in Irvinestown, who had left the Methodists, as he said, to follow Jesus in the true way, by the Methodists there. 'If you will not be a Methodist' quoted **Mr. Irvine**, 'I will boycott you,' and he described them as

'DIRTY DEVILISH METHODISTS.'

The speaker also made frequent use of the adjectives, 'dirty,' 'mean,' 'lazy loafers' regarding clergymen in his address. He also referred to a case of a Christian school teacher who was expelled by a Church of Ireland clergyman from the school because he refused to teach the 'prayer book and devilish lies.'

GOD'S MESSAGE TO CLERICALISM.

'How do I know Methodist preachers are wrong?' said **Mr. Irvine**. 'Because they fight against me. They fight against all who preach the Jesus way. They speak behind backs. Let them come and stand on this platform and speak out, and then we will know what to answer. Christ said to the clerics: "Ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of Hell." That is the eternal message of God to clericalism. **Mr. Irvine** added that any man capable of courting the patronage of the clergy was inviting a part of the Devil on his shoulder on his way to Hell.'

CONSECRATED BURIAL GROUND.

With regard to the burial of a true Christian woman in the Co. Wicklow, the speaker said that her body was refused burial in the churchyard. Better to bury her in a dung heap. He would rather be buried there than in consecrated ground. In the consecrated ground there was marked off a spot for drunkards, harlots, and unbaptised babies—babies not sprinkling with dirty, devilish hands. When he said 'dirty and devilish' he meant it, for the clergy were the servants of the Devil. Every time they looked at a spire they beheld the work of the Devil, or at the church clock. He believed in the Town Hall clock not in the church clock, because the latter never told the right time nor never could. (Laughter.) In the whole world no country suffered so much from clericalism as Ireland. 'You don't believe in Rome.' He added, 'Why do you then believe in clericalism? It is not in the Book. You will not find priests or

clergymen in the New Testament.'

1,200 DINNERS SERVED.

Mr. Irvine's address was listened to throughout by the vast crowds present with attention. After he concluded tea was served to all present. No conception can be had of the way in which such a large concourse of people are fed. On Sunday 1,200 dinners were served, and at tea time fully 2,000 received the welcome cup. 'The tramps' were eager and attentive. No one was allowed to wait longer than was possible. Plates after plates of bread appeared on the tables and before they half finished more arrived, cut and buttered, in addition to some fancy bread. Of tea there was an abundance. Their hospitality and kindness was such that everyone partook of it and felt thankful for it.

After tea, another service was held, at which both **Mr. Cooney and Mr. Irvine** again spoke. The latter chiefly referred to clergymen preparing their sermons and reading them. He said that if God were in the pulpit there was no need for a written sermon; that a man who was filled with the Glory and Spirit of God had no need to trust to notes or manuscripts to preach the Word of God.

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THE TRAMPS

The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The 'Impartial Reporter' is the only paper which circulates throughout the Diocese of Clogher, in counties of Fermanagh, Donegal, Tyrone, and Monaghan. It is the only paper which circulates throughout the Diocese of Kilmore in Cavan and Leitrim; and it issues five copies for two copies of the local paper nearest in position.

A tirade of abuse of the clergy formed the chief spiritual diet for those who assembled at Crocknacrieve on Sunday to hear the Tramp preachers. It is probably without parallel in the history of Billingsgate, and it is remarkable for the absence of the spirit of the greatest distinguished Christian virtue,—charity, or love. The Pharisee of old not only appears to find his fitting successor in the Tramp, who is always 'praising God' that he is not as others, who are going to hell, and that he alone possesses the renewed life; but the Apostle Paul would perhaps find here today a living example of the warning he administered to Timothy in the last chapter of his Pastoral Letter, when he said—(Twentieth Century Testament version):

"Avoid the profane prattle and contradictions of what some call 'theology,' (for there are those who, while asserting their proficiency in it, have yet, as regards the faith, gone altogether astray.)"

No one alleges that all the clergy are as they ought to be. Some of them are just as uncharitable as **Mr. Irvine** himself, and as narrow-minded, and would unchurch all who do not belong to their own particular communion. Others of them have fallen from grace, and others have been unfrocked. What else could one expect from poor human nature? Even Our Lord had one Judas in his Twelve Apostles. But one case of default, or one hundred cases, do not invalidate the order of Teachers. **Mr. Irvine** had examples in his own band of some who, while they preached distribution of their goods to the saints, when they did come into the possession of money, did not distribute it but hoarded it up, and were not examples of that which they professed, and were in consequence parted with. Even **Mr. Irvine** himself, we should say, is a standing example of what we generally conceive a true Christian should not be. **Mr. Irvine** is so uncharitable towards others in his public utterances that we naturally shrink from his egotistic holiness, and we shudder at his denunciations.

With our own ears we have heard him describe the people of Enniskillen, with their Bibles in hand on a Sunday, 'going to hell;' and when a modest young girl of 16 rose to leave one of his meetings in the Protestant hall near 10 o'clock, p.m., to be in her lodgings in proper time, he said that he saw the Devil in her eyes, and that the Devil was leading her out. What shocking ideas! how repulsive the language! and how uncharitable such a conception of one's neighbours.

Viewing **Mr. Irvine** in the most charitable light, we can only view him as suffering from religious hysteria—from a craze which has totally upset his mental balance—especially towards his neighbours. Fortunately for us, he does not possess the keys of either heaven or hell; and if he did, we fear very few would obtain admission to the former when men like John Wesley would not be found there (according to **Mr. Irvine's** dictum.) Yet these fanatics at all times have found credulous people, generally of weak mind, ready to receive their extraordinary views, and Enniskillen has witnessed many phases of these hysterical and emotional phases of religious excitement, and they have all passed away in time, as this Tramp craze will also vanish. But parents cannot be too careful,

meanwhile, in allowing their children, and especially their daughters, to attend the services; for unhappily the Tramp movement has sundered and ruptured many families.

AUTHORITY AND ORDER.

We will be told that our Lord denounced what was wrong. Our Lord was Our Lord. He had both the power to discriminate and the authority to proclaim. And the self-inflated vanity of any religious zealot to suppose that he is thereby warranted in saying that he and he alone is right in voicing the teaching of our Lord, and possesses His authority for denouncing those who differ from him, is so apparent that we wonder any sensible person can be imposed upon by such a shallow pretense.

All Christianity rests upon a sense of order. Jehovah himself prescribed the Levitical rites and ceremonies, and limited those who should take part therein. Every ignorant rustic bumpkin who conceived that he was 'called' was not allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. By Divine authority our Lord came, also, with a due sense of order, by human parentage; and He, in that manner became subject to the law of Moses and to his earthly father and mother, and as their son worked as a carpenter. He by His own authority, given Him by the Father, likewise gave authority to the Disciples; and the continuity of teaching authority has come down to us through these nineteen centuries. Because of their office, these spiritual guides or teachers have received respect, for Paul gave instructions in the fifth chapter of his letter to Timothy—"These officers of the Church who fill their office well should be held deserving of especial consideration, particularly those whose work lies in preaching and teaching."

And so particular was Paul to shield the officers of the Church from reckless and wanton charges, that he warned the early Church not to receive a charge against an officer of the Church unless it was supported by two or three witnesses. He also left Titus in Crete to 'appoint officers of the Church' in the various towns, and described the qualities which these officers should possess, and he warned Titus against 'great talkers who deceive themselves and as far as anything good is concerned they are utterly worthless.' We quote from the 20th Century Testament.

RELIGIOUS BICKERING.

Paul went further. He laid great stress upon doing good. Does anyone suppose that the Kingdom of God on earth is advanced by these wild tirades of Crocknachie in public and in private against those who have been set apart for the christian ministry, even though some of them, as we all admit, may, being human, fall by the way? Paul seems to have had a foresight of these divisions when he wrote to Titus (3rd chapter) 'to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be forbearing, and under all circumstances to show a gentle spirit in dealing with others, whoever they may be.'

Therefore it was that Paul advised—"Have nothing to do with foolish divisions . . or controversy . . They are useless and futile. If a man is causing divisions among you, after warning him once or twice, have nothing more to say to him. You may be sure that such a man has forsaken the Truth, and is in the wrong; he stands self-condemned."

THE MINISTRY.

No one requires to defend the order of the Christian ministry. As we have shown, it is produced by a fitting sense of order and authority, and the necessity for a teaching order. The Tramp cries out that there were no clergy in our Lord's day, and that we should follow His example. He himself was the chief of the teaching order; he ordained teachers and authorized them to ordain others; and we, in these days, by the best ways and means we can devise, provide for the education and ordination of those who according to human foresight and we hope by Divine guidance are intended for such teachers, as God himself first appointed.

The Tramps cry out that there is no title of 'Reverend' in the Bible. No, and there is no necessity for it; and many of our greatest preachers such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon did not use it; and we frankly confess we do not like to see Bishops using the earthly title of 'lord' when they have no temporal barony, when they are not really 'lords bishops' and when the title of 'Bishop' is more elevated than any earthly distinction. The early church did not devise titles for its Bishops, but the respect of mankind for the office which Paul declared to be worthy of esteem led men to give the title of Reverend, which has as feeble or as good a foundation as 'Saint,' but which the common feeling of mankind has rendered by usage to those who teach in spiritual things. **The language of courtesy in the 20th century is different from what it was in the first century.**

The Tramp himself, who professes his desire to follow our Lord literally, does not do so and cannot do so. He does not wear one garment without seam but one of tweed; he does not wear his hair long, but cut short; he does not walk a journey along the highway or ride upon an ass, but upon a bicycle or in a railway train. He does not sleep upon a pallet on the floor, but on a hair mattress on a bedstead; nor is his house provided with a flat roof but a diagonal one of thatch or slates. But he who possesses no authority, apes authority; and while warned not to judge others, proceeds to judge others, foully declares that clergy and holy men whose names are revered like those of John Wesley not only have gone to hell but have led others to hell, and seems to revel in a series of the most vile and slanderous charges against their fellow-men and charges which we feel intuitively to be grossly false—not, viciously false, as in the sense of a lie, but false in the sense of an incorrect statement the outcome of a disordered mind brooding upon a particular subject, and producing a sort of wild hysteria which has induced the reckless fanatic to believe what he has so wildly asserted.

COLLECTIONS.

Complaints are made against paid clergy, that there is no warrant for salaries nor for collections. In the 9th chapter of his first letter to the Church at Corinth Paul expressly said that the Master had appointed that those who proclaimed the gospel should get their living from the gospel. But if this authority did not exist, the very necessity of the case would have compelled it to be so. In the early Church the Christians were few and scattered; and the heathen numerous. Now-a-days it is the very contrary in Christendom; and just as James, the brother of our Lord became the chief Teacher or Pastor at Jerusalem, and was held in respect as such, so the necessities of population, of districts, of towns, demanded an organization of Teachers, and of trained Teachers.

The very men who cry out against a paid clergy receive payment themselves from their own community, else they could not exist. They may not receive stipulated salaries, but they receive the good things of life in the best houses at their disposal, as they are entitled to; they deserve and they obtain the emoluments of the office to maintain the necessities of life. We must not be supposed to impute to them that they receive fixed salaries, or that they hoard up treasure: quite the contrary; we admit that several of them have maintained their principles, just as others outside their pale have maintained their principles; and we know that some of them have parted with their means for the good of others, as many other Christians, who do not loudly proclaim it in the market places, are doing today. Many men in the Christian ministry spend all their public income upon the poor and on the maintenance of the gospel: but they do not, like the Tramp Pharisee, cry it aloud in the market place or on the Diamond.

IDLE BREAD.

But these Tramps who talk of following Biblical example do not follow it themselves. Paul refused to eat idle bread. He was a tent-maker, and in the 2nd and 4th chapters of his first letter to the Church at Thessalonica (modern Salonica) he related that he had worked night and day at his trade, 'so as not to be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you God's good news.' 'We worked hard,' he said, 'toiling with our own hands.' He states plainly in the 9th chapter that while those who teach the gospel should get their living by it, yet he did not avail himself of the privilege. We do not know that any of these Tramp preachers continue to work at their trades, like Paul, or like our Lord, at the carpenter's bench. We do not reproach them for it, because we hold in these days a minister should be free to devote himself to God's work wholly; but it does not lie in their mouth to rebuke others—especially when these others are not loafers. It is another case of 'Judge not that ye be not judged.' 'Who are you,' wrote Paul, 'that you should pass judgment on the servant of another? His falling or standing concerns his own master.'

COLLECTIONS.

Collections, we are told by Mr. Irvine, are the work of the Devil. Paul's command in the 16th chapter of First Corinthians is plain—'On the first day of every week each of you should put by what he can afford, so that no collection need be made after I come;' and in Romans we learn that the churches in Macedonia and Greece had been glad to make a collection for the poor among Christ's people at Jerusalem—'glad to do so,' and, wrote Paul, 'it is a duty which they owe to them.' Since it was a 'duty' then it is more than ever a duty now.

But if we were never authorized to have collections, the very necessity of humanity would prompt it—so that by the givings of the many the burden might be lessened on the few. And the Tramps themselves give donations, according to their ability, and no one reproaches them for it. What the public complain of is their vile abuse of those who think differently from them.

CHURCH BUILDINGS.

Perhaps the greatest absurdity of these Tramps is an objection to a special building in which to worship God. **Mr. Irvine and Mr. Cooney**, who manifest such an extraordinary familiarity with hell by acquainting us so frequently with what is filling it, assert that it is devilry to worship in a building in which collections are permitted; and that erecting such buildings is the Devil's work. Really, one loses patience with such fantastic absurdity. It does not deserve even recognition, it is so manifestly absurd. Yet there are some simple-minded folk who do not see that during the three brief years of our Lord's ministry on earth His time was wholly occupied with spiritual instead of temporal matters; that in the climate of Palestine, where fine weather conditions prevail, the hillside or the lake shore suited His purpose with the 'multitude' better than a building; and that such a conversation as He had with the woman of Samaria could not have occurred in a house but at a well of public resort.

Then, in subsequent years, the early Christians would not be permitted to erect churches: they were persecuted, and their religion proscribed; so that it was not possible for them to provide common meeting places, and recourse had to be made to each other's homes. But when Rome looked on Christianity in a new light, through Constantine the Great, in the second or third century, the buildings came; the temples of heathen deities became converted into Christian chapels: Jove and Apollo gave way to Christ, and the recognition of Christian public worship came in due course. These Tramps would have us now-a-days assemble in one another's private houses, unfitted for the purpose, unsuited both in ventilation and in space; and with a mean and scurvy miserliness use free private dwellings, tainted with the odour of daily life, instead of dedicating special buildings to the worship of Almighty God, as in the case of the Temple at Jerusalem, so that the injunction of the Apostle might be fulfilled—'Forget not the assembling of yourselves together.' It is certainly difficult to have ordinary patience with these grotesque ideas of the founders of this latest religious craze.

PURE GOSPEL AND SOAP.

Every one is disposed to give toleration in this free country to the Tramps to hold their own ideas; but they are not warranted in denouncing in the abominable language which they employ the beliefs and practices and faith of others. Such a manifestation of want of charity proclaims the child of the world instead of the child of God, and the self-inflated egotist and Pharisee, vain in his own self-righteousness, who has the bare-faced effrontery to doom to hell all who disagree with him, and, with an air, too, as if he had the power to enforce it. It is any wonder that Paul, with the gift of prophecy in his pen, warned in his letter to the Hebrews the Christian Church 'not to be carried away by various novel forms of teaching;' but, said he, referring to the Spiritual Pastors of the Church—'Obey your Leaders, and submit to their control for they are watching over your souls, as men who will have to render an account.'

Space does not permit of writing fully to refute the follies and absurdities of these untidy and unclean-looking persons, who might use cold water and soap with more advantage to the cleanliness that is said to be next to Godliness. Who could ever picture the Redeemer as an untidy mortal? or the Virgin Mother as a slovenly, plain-looking woman, without comeliness or neatness? Holiness was reflected from her countenance, we may safely assume, in a garb of neatness and cleanliness, even if that garb were plain and homely. Religion abhors a gospel of dirt. God strews his beauties about with lavish hand—in the million sparkling jewels in the sky; in the myriad flowers of the field; in the rich colouring of the mountain side, the blue of the rolling sea, and the green of the undulating plain. Woman is endowed with physical beauty as well as mental charm; man with nobility and strength: and these are not to be shrouded in woeful countenances as affected by those of the so-called 'Jesus way'; when it was not His way; nor in dark and forbidding dress, as if one must be antagonistic to the voices of Nature and the upspringing in our hearts of the joyousness of the Christian life.

IGNORANT ASSURANCE.

We have the Tramps, and we must put up with them. There have been cranks at all times, and fanatics at all periods. These Tramps for the most part belong to the uneducated and to the impressionable; is there one among them who could read the New Testament in the original tongue and show the beauty or meaning of the language spoken by our Lord, whether it was in Aramaic or Greek, or Hebrew? Education, we admit, is not everything. The Apostles were poor and some of them perhaps, unlettered, but they were 'called,' and we have no Divine Being on earth today to quicken the mind with celestial fire or to renew the tongues of Pentecost, though the power is always on High. But we have provided education for those who desire to study.

The Tramp will go to a doctor for medicine; to a carpenter for joinery; to a plumber for sanitary improvement, and to others for the skill of their trade, who have served years to acquire it. But when it comes to that most perplexing thing of all, to read God's purpose and harmony between all the Apostles and Epistles, to exercise the mind upon what has puzzled and stirred the greatest minds, of all times, the unravelling of some of the hidden meanings of sacred Writ, any ploughboy or shop-assistant who perhaps cannot write his own tongue, or impart a lesson in elementary knowledge, who has not served an apprenticeship as a student as he has served one in business, who has not given one month to study, is filled with the conceit that he can prattle on things of God, reveal His Divine will, denounce those who do not agree with him, and freely cast into hell those whose shoes he is unworthy to loosen.

NO HALL-MARK.

Out upon all this humbug which is preached in the name of Religion! As we say, let those who believe in their own self-righteousness hug this Pharisaism to their bosoms. Let **Mr. Irvine** preach, denounce, dam, and fume,—but in all conscience, let no more silly women and unthinking youths be led away by the clap-trap, because of the apparent sincerity of the speakers. Mohammedans are sincere. So are Buddhists. Sincerity is not everything.

Some of these Tramps have made self-sacrifices, we are told. So have many, many others who have never played the Pharisee by saying so, and who have preferred that the right hand should not know what the left hand has done. These zealots may divide, as they say, with one another; so have others before them, and so do others today; and many others give what they can afford, and do not glory in egotism because of their benevolence. Finally, in the words of Paul to Timothy, we have good advice—'Shun foolish and ignorant discussions, for you know that they breed quarrels, and a servant of the Lord should never quarrel. He ought on the contrary, to be courteous to every one, a skilful teacher, and forbearing,' and 'instruct his opponents in a gentle spirit.' The Tramps do not bear this hallmark of Christianity; and the general public should therefore beware.

THE OTHER EXTREME.

The wild fanaticism of the Tramps is no justification for the abominable and vile charges made against them in indecent placards posted in town and country, charging them with seducing women from homes for improper purposes. We cannot conceive more base and revolting allegations than these foul placards convey, and they are, we believe, without a particle of foundation,—have not even a shadow of justification.

We regret that the influence of the Tramps has led several girls to leave their parents and homes, to disobey the fifth commandment, and to break up the family circle without any justification more than the craze for the last religious novelty. These girls could have exercised their religious views equally well in their own homes, without wandering abroad. But no one except the author of these abominable placards has even once suggested that these poor girls left home for any but a good purpose; and no one has the faintest proof that even one of them has strayed from the path of virtue.

We regret that the boardings of the town of Enniskillen should have been defaced by such indecent placards, and in the interest of the community at large we think the author of them should be discovered and placed in the dock on a charge of criminal libel for his vile charges. Mental aberration is no excuse for such filth; if the writer be unfit to demean himself decently according to the rules of civilized society, he should be placed under restraint; and we hope some steps will be taken to put an end to the exhibition of such placard literature.

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#### INDECENT PLACARDS

Several placards, imputing immorality, sensuousness, and Mormonism to the Tramps, which were posted in prominent positions in Enniskillen, have been torn down by the police on account of their indecent nature. While there is at present no proof of the author, his identity is strongly suspected, as this particular person has never concealed his views on the subject; and it is quite possible that if sufficient proof can be obtained, law proceedings may follow.

July 30, 1908, p. 8

THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER

Established 1808

Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

TRAMP PREACHERS CONVENTION

MORE ABUSE OF THE CLERGY.

WORSE THAN THE BIGGEST DRUNKARDS

MR. W. D. WILSON'S DAUGHTERS TESTIFY

On Sunday last there was no diminution in the interest of the public in the great convention of Tramp preachers at Crocknacrieve. Early in the afternoon hundreds journeyed thither, some, no doubt, being attracted by the possibility of a baptismal service. But, there was no baptism. The usual services were held in the large tent, and it was filled to the uttermost extent, while outside it numbers sat on the grass and listened to the addresses of the 'Saints.'

At the afternoon service the first speaker was **Mr. William Irvine**, who, as he did on a previous Sunday, again attacked the clergy and the churches in general. He challenged anyone to give him a text to prove that a man should be a clergyman or to get a college education to become one. Paul, he said, went to college and he came out a persecutor of Jesus and his way. The clergymen of the present also went to college, and came out a persecutor of Jesus and his way. Why did they believe, said **Mr. Irvine**, that John Wesley, Spurgeon, the Archbishop of Canterbury and John Calvin were in hell? Was it out of their own imagination? No. He would give an honest reason. Because it was the same kind of men like John Wesley and those others that led men and women to believe they were going to heaven, when they were going to hell, because they let them love steeples and church buildings. It was to such men that Jesus said:—'How can ye escape the damnation of hell?' That Book taught them what kind of man went to hell. No man need make the slightest mistake as to what kind of man a preacher sent by God was.

**Mr. Irvine** complained that the IMPARTIAL REPORTER of last issue had published some statements he made and left out others. It did not report his statement for the people of Fermanagh to know that Calvin who was a Presbyterian, had been instrumental in putting people on the scaffold. Calvin, he said, belonged to Presbyterian Popery. He (the speaker), did not see any difference between a Presbyterian pastor and a Roman Catholic priest. God made no difference between a clergyman of one kind and one of another.

The speaker in his addresses also referred to **Mr. W. D. Wilson, of Framlingham**, whom he described as a poor old clerical fool and a supporter of the clergy. Mr. Wilson's two daughters were sitting in the tent that day, and he (Mr. Wilson) was wasting his time and his money in scattering literature against them and hindering in every way he could the word of God. **And clergymen were even willing to put their names to those papers he published,** which contained the dirtiest and filthiest lies. Some people said that the clergy had nothing to do with it. They would publish them on the church steeple if they could prove one of the statements that that poor deluded fool (Mr. Wilson) published.

**Mr. Edward Cooney** next spoke. **He had been over at the great ministerial convention at Keswick**, and everyone expected to hear much from him concerning his visit and what had happened there. But, generally, he was silent on the matter and only referred to it for a few moments and told one or two tales about his controversies with clergymen. One of the clergymen wore a gold ring and

**Mr. Cooney** attacked him for it. The clergyman replied, and, said **Mr. Cooney**, (mimicing) his defence was: 'It was a "de-ah" brother that gave it to me, and it always reminds me when I look at it of the purity of the Gospel.' (Laughter.)

'Would to God' cried **Mr. Cooney**, 'that Dean Ovenden would come out on this platform. We would willingly give him a whole hour. If he can prove according to the New Testament that he is right, I will then become Dean Cooney and wear knicker-bockers.' Needless to say this statement was received with loud laughter on the part of the Tramps. Later in his address, **Mr. Cooney** again referred to the Dean.

**Mr. Cooney** told his hearers that he used to preach for the Methodists, and once he actually preached in an Episcopalian pulpit, and the reason why he was allowed to preach in those places was because he was considered a reformer. Poor blind foolish fool that he was. If he were to go amongst the Methodists and knock off a few twigs, they would say 'God bless you.' He and his friends were open to preach in any Church, whether it be Methodist, Church of Ireland or Roman Catholic. And they would preach free of cost, and give their listeners four hours, for nothing. (And they would be mighty dear at the price.—ED. I.R.) Did they imagine that they would be allowed to do so! No, because they would lay the axe at the root of the tree. That was why John the Baptist was not allowed to preach in the synagogue, and he had to go to the banks of the Jordan. They wanted to put the axe of truth at the foot of every tree.

Every town he (**Mr. Cooney**) visited he could divide it into two classes. It was a case of for or against. When he went to Keswick, there were only two sects, one for and the other against. The Salvation Army, the Presbyterians and the Methodists and the Roman Catholics would all be joined together, again. When Jesus went forth to preach there were a large number of sects, and he divided the country into two camps, one for and the other against Him. As God looked down on this assembly today, he saw the sheep and the goats. The sheep were those who believe in the Shepherd, and proved their belief in the Shepherd by standing by Him.

**Mr. Cooney** during his address referred to private conversations in the family circle, and remarks made by different members in it. He also referred to the IMPARTIAL REPORTER as showing them as saying such awful things, but it had made many come out four miles to hear them and that was something.

**Mr. Irvine** again spoke at the conclusion of **Mr. Cooney's** address, and referred to the article in last week's IMPARTIAL REPORTER. He noted the texts quoted in the article and gave his interpretations of what they meant, and said that the meaning taken from them by the Editor was not correct.

After tea another service was held and it was a pleasant change to listen to the musical voice of **Miss P. Barton**, as she told the story of her conversion to the true way and the opposition that she met with from her friends.

#### MR. W. D. WILSON'S DAUGHTERS' TESTIMONY.

**Mr. Irvine** then called on the **Sisters Wilson, daughters of Mr. W. D. Wilson, of Framlingham**, Suffolk, who, he alleged, was circulating all the nasty literature about. Every member of that gentleman's family were saved except two, and from those two they received no opposition, and who did not fight with or wrong them. It would do them good, he added, to hear those that were here to give their testimony of the vile, dirty devil that the clergy and all that are in sympathy with them fight for.

**Miss Nellie Wilson** first told how she was led to the Jesus way, and then followed her sister, who in answer to **Mr. Irvine** said she lived at home. **Mr. Irvine** stated that this Mr. Wilson was writing away and denouncing them till he was almost mad. The clergy gave him (Mr. Wilson) encouragement all around the district. They were a dirty set of mean fellows, for they would not say they were at Wilson's back, because it would not pay them. But they were at his back, they would to God what Wilson had said was true, but it was hard to get the whitewash off their faces so to see their look of hatred.

**Another daughter of Mr. Wilson then testified, and then her brother followed** who said that he was glad that he had opposed his father, and that he meant to go on and follow God. He had seen his father write those reports which were published and there was no foundation of truth in them. He had forgiven his father for all he had said, and he hoped that he would call on the Lord and get forgiveness from Him also.

**Mr. Irvine** said that Mr. Wilson had asked him out to dine one day and asked him to tell his children to go back to the Church. 'I said' **Mr. Irvine** added 'I could not do that. I said if they serve the Lord and follow Jesus they will be saved. If they go back to their old ways they will be lost.'

The next speaker was **Mr. Thos. Betty**, who, after a few opening remarks stated he had slept the night before in Ballinamallard. For some little time he heard a noise on the street. Some people were singing 'Rescue the Perishing, care for the dying.' He knew then that there was a meeting going on and he put his head out of the window of his room and saw what was going on. He saw the man and the gospel he had professed to be converted through. After he had been sick of sin, the Devil brought him under the false gospel and he listened to the false prophets. The man he heard last night, the Rev. Wm. Moore, was the man he listened to 16 years ago,

who told him if he wanted to be saved that all he had to do was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He did that and became what many were that night—a Pharisee. He had been proselytized to be a Methodist 16 years ago. He had very little hope of seeing a clergyman in heaven or born again. From all he had learnt from the scriptures, or all he had learnt from experience, he could never see how a clergyman was to get to heaven.

**Mr. Betty** then referred to a gentleman, a Methodist class leader, Mr. James Flanagan, who came that day to Crocknacrieve with other friends from Letterbreen. Of all men in the county Mr. Flanagan stood highest, in his estimation, of the local preachers. No one could put his finger on a black spot in his life. He remembered the time he

### PROFESSED TO BE SAVED

and he encouraged Mr. Flanagan to do the same as he did. He saw Mr. Flanagan that day and he (Mr. Flanagan) was more convinced than he ever was that Methodism was right. The reason of that was that instead of turning his ear away from the false prophet, the Devil had got power over him. This man worked on his farm, he was industrious, and lived a moral life, and yet he was on the way to hell and was a child of the Devil, because there was no love of truth in the man's heart. The speaker then referred to the conversion of a Roman Catholic, who when saved brought down his prayer book, which contained everything that he had believed in, and put it into the fire and burnt it. And there were three witnesses to that act.

Some instances of the way in which he worked were given them by **Mr. Betty**, after which he stated that when he saw men like Wm. Moore, last night, in the streets of Ballinamallard, elevating and uplifting Jesus for men to believe in, he (the speaker) could see the masterpiece of the devil to deceive men for all eternity. Before concluding **Mr. Betty** referred in strong language to some family matters.

An open meeting followed, members giving their testimony, and it was a late hour when the proceedings terminated.

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### SAYINGS BY THE TRAMPS

Some read of the conversion of Constantine. What did that mean? Christianity was changed to suit Constantine, not Constantine to suit Christianity.

If Protestant clergy had the power they would be on our track red hot.

It is very easy to prove the clergy are right if they (the clergy) are drunkards, whoremongers, or adulterers.

If you wish to have power by the God of this world, then prejudice suits you well.

If you wear feathers and finery, you don't want warning to not go near the Tramp preachers.

If I didn't believe that Spurgeon, Wesley, and Calvin were in hell, I would shut up, and be quite willing to be hanged on the nearest tree.

I saw him (a clergyman) shake hands with my father, offering him two fingers, because he earned his bread by the sweat of his brow. Dirty scamp of a clergyman to go insult my father with his dirty devilish fingers.

When Roman Catholics come in touch with a heretic they always cross themselves, and if a heretic crosses their threshold they sprinkle holy water on it.

If Jesus had not sent John Wesley who did send him? It was the Devil who sent him.

When one goes to Keswick and sees the Methodists, Church of England, Presbyterian, and other ministers, all united under the name of Jesus, it shows the awful power of the Devil.

The clergy in every age were blood-shedding, if they had the power.

The older a system is the blinder it is. The Roman Catholic one is the oldest, and no preacher is more different to Christ than the Pope, and the Archbishop of Canterbury comes next.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is not as wealthy as the Pope. Why? Because he (the Archbishop) can't get it.

The stupid clergyman gets £3 a week, an average one £10, and a clever one £20. It is a case of selling their brains.

You are not going to be judged by what you think is the truth. Jesus said 'The word that I have spoken the same will judge you on the last day.'

A Methodist in Ballinamallard was so upset by what the Tramp Preacher preached, that he said 'We would never leave the Methodist Church, we have been that for three generations.'

Making clergymen is like putting meat into a machine, turning the handle and sausages coming out.

It is the sole object of a farmer to make one of his sons a priest.

Every man that makes money in the name of God is a thief and a robber. Jesus never made sixpence out of preaching.

Shame on you, friend, to fight for the clergyman, to fight for darkness. Jesus is the light and that not agreeing to Jesus is darkness.

General Booth started the Salvation Army at the instigation of the Devil. If they look at it, is it based on the New Testament? No. It is based on the British Army.

Professor Lindsay, in a chapter of his book on church history, acknowledges that none of the sects are according to the New Testament. He acknowledges that the system made by Jesus was thrown over 200 years after Christ.

The clergy in the town are worse than the drunken 'bums.' The clergy are filling hell all the time.

His Reverence whitewashes you every Sabbath day and takes up a collection. He tells you you are going to heaven while you are

going to hell.

The clergymen are more abominable in the sight of God than the biggest drunkards in Enniskillen.

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**July 30, 1908, p. 5**  
**THE IMPARTIAL REPORTER**  
Established 1808  
**Newspaper for Enniskillen, Northern Ireland**

**THE TRAMPS AGAIN**  
**IMPRESSIONS OF THE PREACHERS**  
**MR. EDWARD COONEY AND MR. WILLIAM IRVINE**  
**DRESS OF MEN AND WOMEN**  
**(By a Stranger)**

At a distance of a mile or so from Ballinamallard, at a place called Crocknacrieve, the Irvinites or Cooneyites, or as they prefer to be called the Tramp preachers, are holding their annual convention.

I had read stray paragraphs on these people and their doings in the Press from time to time, but until Sunday last had not seen or heard them. One met quite a variety of people wending their way up the path which leads to the house, behind which a large tent is pitched, in which their meetings are held. It was easy to distinguish the idle and the curious from the followers of those who profess to teach that they and they alone have possession of the truth and live according to it. Here were a couple of army officers and their lady friends, a bevy of country girls out for the afternoon, and a crowd of Enniskillen folk who had taken advantage of the fine afternoon to cycle or drive the four miles to the place of convocation.

After stacking my bicycle, I wandered around the house and grounds, and from what was seen, concluded an organiser had charge of the arrangements for the gathering. At the back of the house the outhouses were utilised for a garage for cycles, and it was amazing to see the number that was stored away. Sanitary arrangements had been provided for both sexes, and care had evidently been taken to see that everything was done decently and in order.

On arriving at the tent it was seen to be full to overflowing. Delegates, I was told, were present from both England and Scotland, and I was pointed out a man who had come all the way from South Africa. On the left hand side a platform had been erected, and from this structure the three or four leaders gave forth.

The subject under discussion—I was too late for the text—was the

**BLIND CLERGY AND**

their poor deluded hearers. The speaker a man of medium height with a brown beard and sun-tanned face, who was dressed in clothes that had seen better days, and whose cap was projecting from his pocket, was evidently on good terms with himself.

His main purpose was to try and raise a laugh at clergymen of all denominations by making jokes about their style and appearance. 'Did you fellows ever try to button your collars at the back of your necks?—it is a very hard thing to do?—or by picking out passages from Holy Writ?' (imitating the voice and style of those who minister in holy things) and asking the people that a text such as the following applies to the minister who makes it the subject of his discourse —'For whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.' His hearers were asked 'Can you imagine Dean Ovenden who has £12 a week or a Methodist Minister with £3 per week and a manse preaching from such a text?' The Pope—who, he said, lived in a house with 1,000 rooms and yet was a bachelor—the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Methodist Minister were all denounced as blind and leaders of the blind, there was none good, no, not one, and it was stated that hell was full of ministers and their people. All people in the world, all in this tent were divided into two classes—the sheep and the goats. There were no sheep, from his arguments, prior to the inception of Cooneyism, so needless to say hell is going to be a very big place.

Up to this time I did not know the name of the gentleman who was so sweetly discoursing until he related a family story in which his father, his mother, and his brother—who, he told us, rode to hounds—figured, and then I learned he was **Eddy Cooney**.

**A WHOPPER.**

A Scotch gentleman followed who started by reading extracts from a local paper—the IMPARTIAL REPORTER—and commenting on them, making some personal remarks about the editor of the paper. He next gave out a text and began **a la Cooney**. Holding up

his Bible in front of his face he said, 'There is no clergyman who has ever stood behind this book but is in hell, or is going there.' This was the subject matter of his discourse, but he went further, and said that all those who listened to clergymen and supported them were also on their way to the place of perdition.

Having concluded, he announced that tea was being prepared, and asked everyone to keep their seats. An invitation was given to all, both followers and lost souls, and soon tea was served in large mugs, huge plates of bread and butter being served to the diners by willing workers, and grace having been sung the meal was proceeded with. There was not room for everyone at the first tables, so along with a couple of friends I waited, and we were courteously provided for, and certainly there was nothing to be said against the quantity or quality of the fare set before us. It was noticeable the leaders did not partake of refreshment with the crowd in the tent—would it be uncharitable to surmise they were provided with better provisions elsewhere?

I had an opportunity during the recess of mixing with and studying members of the crowd. The FEMALE PORTION go in for simplicity of style, both in the clothes they wear, and in the method of dressing their hair. A white or black straw sailor hat was worn by the majority, their hair in front being plainly brushed straight up from their foreheads, whilst the back hair was simply tied in a knot or placed on the top of the head.

THE MEN mostly wear soft shirts of a dark hue with soft collars, and are of an untidy and, shall I say, uncleanly appearance, and it was noticeable the tendency to shave seemed to be in danger of dying out. They spare no trouble in showing kindness to visitors, and a feeling of good humour prevailed at the dining tables which made one feel at a home. Most of the women and a good number of the men had bibles, and the rustling of the leaves, as the vast audience—some 1,000 souls—turned them over whilst searching for the text, was like the wind whispering amongst the leaves of the trees.

During tea I had A DISCUSSION with an elderly pilgrim on something that was said during the afternoon discourse. He advanced and held on to the argument that if a man believing personally that Jesus Christ had died for him, and that his sins were under the blood, endeavoured to walk the Christ-like life daily, was going to hell simply because he went to church and worshipped God where the people and minister he argued, were going to hell and because the man worshipped with them he also was going thither. We were unable to agree. I suggested he should introduce me to **Mr. Cooney** and I would GO ON THE PLATFORM and meet their statements but nothing came of it.

Wandering amongst the crowd one had ample opportunity for a study of the human face—an ever changing study. The results were, however, disappointing. There was a listless appearance on the faces of the great majority of the men, women, and even the boys and girls who had come under the influence of 'the truth.' As I passed along I heard someone in the crowd remark, 'The

#### **FACES ARE LIKE THOSE THAT ONE WOULD MEET IN AN ASYLUM.'**

Of course the sombre dress and the way of making the toilette has a great deal of effect, but there was not much joyousness and lightheartedness visible on the faces of those who professed to have been digged from the pit of error and placed on the highway of truth.

If one has been through a large industrial establishment where those, whose parents have failed them, are provided for and trained, and noticed the mechanical and almost hopeless look on the faces of the inmates as they go about their allotted tasks, and then could be transported to the pilgrim gathering the resemblance would be startling. The Pilgrims do not think, their minds have been handed over to the tender mercies of the shepherds who do the thinking for them and lead the sheep whither they list, and the sheep hungering for they know not what.

Look up and are not fed,  
But swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly and foul contagion spread.

I was introduced to the Scotchman who made the statement in the afternoon, 'Any clergyman standing behind this book—the bible, is going to hell.' On asking him if he really meant what he said he replied in the affirmative, and though it was pointed out he must know ministers who were doing Christ's work and spending themselves for men he said HE KNEW MINISTERS, aye and priests, who had given up all for their work, but they were wrong, they were not following Christ, and as a consequence were going to hell. **There was no necessity for a church, a minister, or a manse. The saints had only to assemble themselves together for fellowship in their own house or somebody's else; this was all that was necessary.**

It was argued that a man could walk and have fellowship with Christ in the open air or his own home, which the pilgrim would not admit, stating such a man was also going to hell.

#### **EVADING THE POINT.**

He was asked if his mother, whom he knew had a personal faith in Christ and whose sins had been washed in the blood, and who by her daily life showed the Christ within her, was going to hell simply because she went and worshipped Christ in her accustomed place. He replied: 'Yes, she listened to a minister who is going to hell.'—but when stopped and told the argument was not about clericalism passed from the point and addressed the crowd about ministers and would not be brought back to the subject we were

discussing—he had not the crowd with him there. Clearly it is impossible to reason with men who veer round and will not or cannot see reason when it is pointed out to them.

#### .EVENING MEETING.

There was a crowded attendance at the 7 p.m., meeting. Nearly every seat was filled, some people having to be provided for on forms outside.

It was noticeable the great majority of the adherents were of the country type of young men and maidens. These evening services are, I think, the occasions when their feelings are worked on and aroused.

The singing by the vast audience of hymns with moving tunes and choruses was a feature of that night's meeting. The hymns appeared to be known by heart, and men and women seemed to be dead to everything outside and gave full sway to the feelings that possessed them. The singers looked straight ahead, some kept time with their feet and bodies, and it seemed to me as I listened as if I were away in a camp meeting in America, nothing being missing save the exultant Hallelujah of the saved and the groans from the unrepentant sinners to make the evening a reality.

Then a testimony or two from three girls, who appeared to have forsaken friends and all for what they believe the truth. Another hymn and then the appeal of **Mr. Cooney**. He said two things were necessary—a wish in the heart; and the outward manifestation of this wish before all present, by standing to their feet, of those who were willing to follow 'the truth,' and the truth alone.

It is hard to understand what is the belief of this new dissenting body. The names of all those who have done and suffered for Christianity are as Anathema to them. Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Knox, are all bunched together and cast into the bottomless pit.

They believe that by giving up home, worldly possessions, and by being called madmen and reviled, not going to Church, but reading and interpreting the scriptures in their own way entitles them to be sole possessors of the truth. Mahomet in his day at first was reviled, cast out by his own people, not having any save his wife to believe that he had a message from God, yet we count Mahomet a false prophet.

Anti-Clericalism is what they most delight in. As food is to a hungry man, so is the word minister to a Cooneyite when he rises to his feet. A Christian cannot exist unless he has fellowship with the true saints—the Cooneyites. I wonder what the poor eunuch did when he got home to Queen Candace after Philip had baptised and sent him on his way rejoicing!

A neglect of their personal appearance, especially the unkempt attire of the men, is noticeable. They alone are the followers of Jesus Christ, yet he had a fine garment which the soldiers cast lots for before they would cut it, and he was accustomed to personal cleanliness.

The tramp preachers entirely disregard the command uttered by the Master they profess to serve. 'Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' They arrogate to themselves the right to judge all men, forgetting there is the Judge of all the earth, who will do right, and that when they wound the heart of one of the Father's little ones, they wound the heart of God himself.

W. B. Young, B.A.

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