

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

RAPID CITY MISSION.

MR. EDITOR,—In accordance with my promise, I send you a few lines regarding my North-West experiences.

Mr. McCannell of Queen's and myself drove together for four days in going from Winnipeg to our respective stations—Big Plains and Rapid City—and this was our first experience of a Manitoba winter. We drove from sixteen to thirty miles without stoppage, and felt no annoyance from the severity of the cold, although the day we left Winnipeg the thermometer registered thirty degrees below zero. The drive was necessarily monotonous, for it was over prairie continuously, and one thirty miles is a facsimile of the next—varied only by a stray fox or wolf, or an occasional flock of chickens. At the end of the fifth day I reached my present location on the banks of the Little Saskatchewan. I have been driving three days in the week ever since, and I have only once been touched by frost, and that so slightly as to be scarcely worth mention. But do not let any one suppose that it is too warm here. The thermometer has ranged from twenty degrees above zero to about forty below during the six weeks of my stay here, so if there be monotony in the scenery there is none in the temperature. It is quite true, however, that we do not seem sensible of the variations. It is always cold; sometimes pleasantly so, and again otherwise. The three congregations which form the Mission here number about fifty families, or representatives of families; for you are aware, Mr. Editor, of the great number of bachelors in the North-West. In one thing the young unmarried men of this settlement differ somewhat from their brethren in Ontario—they neither forget to come to church, nor to bring the collection when they do come. In Rapid City we are going to build a church, and three young men, two of them not yet members, subscribed \$50 each towards it; and before the few members of the congregation who were present left, \$730 had been placed to the credit of the Building Fund. With men like these in this new land the Church cannot help but succeed, if she only awakes to her responsibility and occupies the field at once with earnest, energetic young men capable of enduring, and willing to endure, hardships for a year or two, until the settler begins to reap rich returns from the fertile virgin soil. There are settlements not 100 miles from Rapid City, which number thirty Presbyterian families, that have not had service from our Church for the last three months. In proportion as Ontario becomes depopulated by the exodus to the North-West, why not condense the few congregations remaining and send the available pastors to do needful work here? I purposed to say something in regard to the outfit required, and the expense incurred in procuring it, but must reserve it for a future communication.

C. T.

Rapid City, January 31st, 1882.

ROMISH ORDINATION.

MR. EDITOR,—In my last letter I gave a short sketch of the position of the Church of Scotland, and all the branches of that venerable Church, upon the question of ordinations, showing (1) that *implicitly* they required from the year A.D. 1560 re-ordination in the case of an ex-priest being called to the Christian ministry; (2) that there is no instance on record since the settled organization of these Churches of priests being thus admitted, with the exception of the Rev. W. Crotty, of Birr, popularly known as Priest Crotty. To this particular case I now refer more fully.

"The case of Mr. Crotty, of Birr," says Professor Witherow, "is the only case of the kind which, so far as I know, ever occurred in our branch of the Church. He and a considerable wing of his flock joined the Presbyterian Church of Ireland in 1839; but as he was to continue his ministrations among his own people over whom he had been appointed as priest, the Presbytery does not seem to have insisted on his re-ordination. From the minutes of the Synod of Ulster, it appears that the Presbytery of Dublin reported the case as follows: "On the 30th of May they received into connection with the Synod the Rev. W. Crotty, formerly a Romish priest; he having publicly declared, for himself and his congregation, their abandonment of

Popery, and their attachment to the doctrines, discipline, government and worship of the Presbyterian Church: that Mr. Crotty accordingly signed the Westminster Confession of Faith, according to the Synod's formula." In the margin of the minutes this transaction is described as "The Installation of Mr. Crotty." At this installation the usual induction services, without imposition of hands, were observed." The above transaction is thus spoken of by the venerable Dr. Killen also. The italics are his: "I very well remember the case of the Rev. W. Crotty. He came over to the Synod of Ulster *along with his congregation*. He scrupled to receive ordination by imposition of hands on the ground that he would thus compromise himself with his people. He had been for a considerable time acting as their minister, and he urged that by being re-ordained he would invalidate his previous ecclesiastical acts, including the marriages he had celebrated. I was then a very young minister, and had an idea that he should have been re-ordained, but the matter was settled by a kind of compromise. He was installed by the Presbytery as the minister of Birr. The installation service was virtually an ordination, but the imposition of hands was omitted. You are, no doubt, aware that in the earliest ordinations, according to the First Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, there was no imposition of hands. The essence of ordination was not in the mere imposition of hands, but in the *election* to the office and the recognition of the Presbytery. I would not throw a stumbling-block in the way of a priest and his *congregation* passing over to Protestantism by insisting on scrupulous adherence to all our arrangements."

Surely this is sufficient evidence that in all ordinary cases the Church in Ireland would require re-ordination; but in a case where a man is *de facto* pastor of a people, and applies *along with his congregation* for admission to the Church, but has scruples arising from any good cause with regard to the laying on of hands, adherence to strict rules should not be insisted upon. The keenest advocate for re-ordination will agree in this with Dr. Killen. For my own part, if election and formal recognition by Presbytery are conserved, I would dispense with laying on of hands in the case of the ordination of *any* man to the Presbytery for sufficient reasons, as we now do in ordaining our ruling elders and deacons. What I contend for is not the *form*, as if that were necessary to the apostolic succession, but the *essence*, as Dr. Killen well puts it.

The American Church has one instance of a priest received without re-ordination—viz., Rev. C. Chiniquy in 1860. It is not necessary to give the proceedings of the Chicago Presbytery in the case in full. They can be found in the Report on Romish Ordination, in Appendix, page cxxxv., Assembly Minutes, 1878. It is enough to state that Mr. Chiniquy was received as the *de facto* minister of a congregation of "Independent Protestants," *along with his congregation*, and was "*recognised as their pastor*" by the Presbytery. Thus in almost every respect it is similar to the case of Mr. Crotty, and not insisting on re-ordination was based on similar grounds.

Our Canadian Church, so far as I can find, stands alone among all the offshoots of the Church of Scotland in receiving ex-priests to the *ministerium vacum*, and recognising their Romish orders as equivalent to Presbyterian ordination.

But what of other Reformed Churches? In 1562, as soon as the Reformed Church of France was settled and fully organized, the Synod of Orleans decided that "if a bishop or curate desired to be employed as a minister of the Gospel, he must first be admitted to Church membership, give proof of his repentance of past sins, and be chosen to the ministry in the usual manner. The fact is, that instead of admitting the converted prelates as entitled on the ground of being prelates to exercise any authority over ministers or people, the Reformed Church *ignored their orders and treated them as mere laymen*."—Prof. Witherow, in "Foreign and Evangelical Review," October, 1878, p. 667. According to Articles II. and III. in the French Book of Discipline, "the bishops, curates, priests and friars among the Popish clergy, turning Protestant, were to be re-ordained by imposition of hands."—Pardovan, p. 189.

For the Swiss Reformed Churches Turretine and Beza may be held as good authority. The former, in his "Institutes," discusses the question, and vindicates

the practice of re-ordination at length. The latter, in a most powerful passage, too long for insertion, gives his reason for denying the sufficiency of Romish ordination, and concludes by saying that when a priest, by the grace of God, has received light and changed his mind, he will "detest the Papacy and *abjure his most disorderly ordination*; and if he abjure it, how will he, by virtue of it, have the right to teach? I do not, however (by this), deny that such men, if they honestly hold the true doctrine, if they are possessed of good moral character, if they are found apt to feed the flock of God, may be lawfully (regularly) *appointed new pastors from being false—bishops*."

Of the practice in the Reformed Church of Holland I cannot speak. That there was no decisive course prescribed I think may be fairly inferred from the following facts: In the years 1834-35 the question was carefully discussed by the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, and at length it was decided: "Whereas the right of ordaining the ministry of the Gospel belongs to the classes of the Church, therefore resolved, 'That the question of the validity of Roman Catholic ordination be left to the different classes.'" The vote stood 37 yeas, 32 nays. In accordance with this decision, the classis of Bergen *re-ordained* a Catholic priest on receiving him into the classis. Surely the weight of this Church must be cast into the scale for re-ordination.

Of other Reformed Churches I know nothing as to the position they have taken or might take. I noticed, however, some eighteen months ago, a newspaper paragraph which stated that Father Hojda, in Baltimore, had renounced Roman Catholicism and is studying "preparatory to being ordained as a minister in the Lutheran Church."

As has been objected, it is possible—nay probable—that before the Reformed Churches were settled and organized, some other priests, like Knox, were recognised as ministers (that there were hundreds such I question, notwithstanding the confident statements of some speakers). But anyone will see that during the short period of transition implied, there was no Church to which they could apply, into which they could be admitted, and by which they could be ordained. At that time re-ordination was impracticable. But who will venture to assert that a procedure which was necessary, and therefore proper, when there was no organized Church, and in extraordinary circumstances, is to be followed in all time to come by fully organized Churches in ordinary circumstances? Even if it can be shown that many of the Reformers were ex-priests and were not re-ordained, that cannot decide the question, unless it can be shown further that they and their associates, who, like Calvin, were never ordained, held that it was by virtue of prelate ordination that they were ministers of Christ; and everyone knows that that is nonsense.

On the whole, Mr. Editor, while I am prepared to receive light on the question from any quarter, and to confess myself mistaken if my position can be shown to be in opposition to the principles and practice of the Reformed Churches, I think all your readers must admit that, with the Church of Scotland in all its branches, and the French, Swiss and Dutch Churches explicitly or implicitly requiring re-ordination, the Church in Canada is not in any danger, if she insists on re-ordination, of finding herself in antagonism with the great majority of the Reformed Churches, as was stated at last Assembly, in order to prevent a decision on the question; and unless some fresh light is forthcoming, it seems to me that in June next we are prepared to take a step in the right direction, or at least to stop the course hitherto followed of receiving ex-priests into the ministry without re-ordination.

One other word before I close. Last year some of the speakers (I do not give names, as I wish the subject discussed without personalities) objected to giving any decision on "an abstract question." This attempt to avoid the issue was as ungenerous as unfair. Unfair, because the Church had already received priests without ordination, and the question was no longer in the abstract; it was a practical one, and the Church was making precedents from time to time; because in 1877, on the reception of Mr. Ouriere, discussion had been waived expressly, as declared in the minute of Assembly, on condition that the subject should be fully considered, and the discussions of the report presented in 1878 were therefore in order as a practical matter; because, further, there was last year an application before the