

by one Presbytery, non-recognition by another, or such antagonisms as will place the unordained in a false position before the Church. Some of us would open our pulpits to such men; others could not do so without violence to conscience; *no minister, by a mere fiat of the Assembly, should be thrust upon the Church where the scripturality of his status is a matter of doubtful dispute.* Why, with such a large minority vote (67 to 84), the question was left in its present form, it is perhaps difficult to divine. One reason appears to crop out in the words of the Assembly's resolution, "following its course in the past." What does this mean? Apparently, that to re-ordain *now* would place the Assembly in a false position in reference to *past* action. To vote re-ordain *now* would have been a practical condemnation both of past procedure and of the scripturality of the status of priests already employed. The very discussion of the question in the light of past action, and specially the large minority vote, must of necessity leave a bad impression upon the received and future applicants. If the objects of the clause, "following its course in the past," suggest the past merely because it was procedure in the past, surely it betrays great short-sightedness to try to evade a difficulty by decreeing its perpetuation.

The Assembly's action quietly shelves the question by resolving to "deal with each case on its merits," and in cases of emergency, offering to help Presbyteries thus: first making a difficulty and then offering a doubtful remedy. Romish ordination can never be a question of "merit or demerit." It is a question of scriptural principle, affecting the entire character of a Christian ministry. One Romish *ordination* cannot have "merits" and another "demerits." In all cases the conferring power is one and the same, and so is the prescribed form. Of course, character and other qualifications are presupposed, but they form no part of the official act, which is merely a form of designation to a certain work. The Professor's resolution can have no meaning, and no bearing on "merits" or "demerits" of Romish ordination, except in answer to the simple question, was the applicant *canonically* ordained? Surely it is going too far to make the mere canonical ordination of a priest a reason for his reception, without reference to its nature and designs.

The fact that a man is a priest of Rome does not settle the question of the scripturality of his status, or the qualification to become a Protestant pastor. The point must be settled upon other and higher principles. Granted the regularity of the ordaining act by the bishop, the difficulty still remains; and I am at a loss to comprehend how the Assembly's act can be deemed a settlement, except by those who, before God, see no difference, either in nature or objects, between Romish and Protestant ordination. The question from a scriptural and Presbyterian standpoint, embracing the entire relation of a Romish priest to the principles of the New Testament Church, is left untouched by the Act of assembly. His intellectual and moral character comes to the front, while his right to *status* is quietly ignored, or covered up under minor points.

The Principal's resolution is supposed to settle the matter in the meantime, but how? Not by decisive statement, commending to the thoughtful mind the co-equal validity of Romish and Protestant orders—the conclusion to which, without one shadow of reason, he has led the Assembly—but by mixing up re-ordination with other points, on which any common-sense Presbytery is as competent to decide as the Assembly. How are his "other difficulties" to be settled while the *great* difficulty is quietly smothered up by a mere act of Assembly, or assumed to be no difficulty? This is not a ministerial, but a people's matter, affecting their convictions and comfort in the dispensation of word and ordinances. No act of Assembly will quiet conscientious scruples without such clear and exhaustive reasons as Christians have a right to demand. Not one reason has been given to our people for outraging the cherished traditions of the Church. The day has gone forever when a *fiat* of Assembly would bind the consciences of the people. As far as my knowledge extends, the act commends itself neither to the feelings nor consciences of the thoughtful of the Church. If the Principal believed his ordination no more scriptural than the Romish, why not say so? Why, without one reason given to satisfy tender consciences, has he been permitted so thoroughly to revolutionize the charter of the Church? The question is settled in the mean-

time. Other "difficulties" may not "emerge," but this *questio vexata* is sure to "emerge" and trouble the Church until settled—not by a vote, however large, but by a comprehensive, scriptural view of the whole subject. I may trouble you again ere long.

NOVA SCOTIA.

MISSIONARY NEWS.—FORMOSA.

MY DEAR MRS. HARVIE,—Your most welcome letter of April 5th reached me on May 28th, and again on the 6th of June I was very pleasantly surprised to receive yours of April 15th, enclosing the message of love and Christian greeting from the ladies of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society. What a pleasant happy thought it was, and I thank you most heartily for it. It did indeed seem to bind our hearts more closely together in Christian love and sympathy, and made me feel more than ever before that we, though so far apart, were seeking to further the same great cause, and to advance the glory of our God and Father by making known the love of Jesus to our poor heathen sisters. I felt, too, that the women of Formosa and India were not the only persons who would receive a blessing from your efforts to send to them the Gospel, but that you yourselves were being richly rewarded by being drawn more closely to Him who hath bestowed on us greater blessings than the women of heathen lands. Three weeks ago I received the report of your annual meeting, and have read it with interest. It is very encouraging to note the progress made from year to year. You have indeed done well this year, and, as your Secretary remarks in her report, if with your present organization you have done so well, what may you not be able to do when you have enlisted the sympathies and help of all the ladies in our Canadian Church? Will not all my Canadian sisters make every effort to send more messengers of mercy to those who are sitting in the darkness of heathenism, and yet are longing for the light? "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers into His harvest." I was very sorry to hear that Mrs. McLaren was obliged to resign the position of president of your Society on account of ill-health, but I trust that she may soon enjoy better health. You said that you would enclose for me a copy of your scheme of prayer, but I think you must have forgotten to do so. I shall be very glad to get it when you write again. I sometimes think we know not to what extent we are indebted to the prayers that are offered up for us at home. I very often remember you at the time of your monthly meeting and hour for prayer on Sabbath afternoon.

You say that my last letter aroused considerable interest in the direction of a girls' school for Formosa. I am exceedingly glad and thankful to hear this, because, as I said before, I long for the time when we shall be able to do something more specially for the women or girls in our mission than has yet been done. We think that if we had a school, we could in this way accomplish the most for them. It is almost impossible to get hold of the women to teach them anything, and Bible-women in the present state of our mission are very unsatisfactory. I think Dr. McKay is of the same opinion. I feel very distressed when I look at these poor little girls, and wish that I could do something to shield them from the sin and ignorance by which they are surrounded; there is so little brightness in the life of a Chinese girl. A little girl of eight or ten years is more like a woman made old too soon by the cares of life than a little girl. Oh, how much little girls at home have to be thankful for! I often think that if they could more fully realize the difference between them and their little sisters in heathen lands that there would be more Mission Bands formed, and that many more would be willing to give up some little pleasure for their sakes. Just a few weeks ago, a woman called a middlewoman [a middlewoman is one who makes a bargain or agreement for other persons] brought a little girl to me to see if I would buy her. She is a little slave girl belonging to a Mandarin; he has several others, but this one was the youngest—only eight years old—and not able to do the work required of her, for which she was beaten and abused by the older ones, so her master wished to sell her. My heart ached for the poor child, and I would gladly have taken her, but she is only one among many. About a month ago a child was born near here, and because it was a little girl the parents were going to put it to death, but a neighbour woman hearing this

went and took the poor little infant. You will think it was very kind of the woman—and so it was—but when you know why she took it, it loses much of the kindness. She took it because she could get it cheap, or perhaps would not pay anything for it, and then, when it is older, she can sell it for enough to repay her for her trouble. Buying and selling children in China is a very common practice. When a man has a son he must buy a wife for him, and of course the younger he buys her, the less he will have to pay for her, and the more work will he get out of her. Just yesterday a company of Chinese women came to make me a visit. One of them brought with her a little baby eight months old—very small for that age, but a bright, nice little thing. I knew that it was not her own, and asked where she got it. She said that she bought it for four dollars from another woman, who did not want it. The mother of the little one had bought another little girl baby, to be the wife of her son, and thought she could not take care of both. I cannot understand how a heathen mother can give up her own child so easily. I used to feel so sorry for these poor mothers; but the more I know of them, the less sorry I feel for them, because they do not seem to feel it themselves, but look upon it as the proper thing to do. There seems to be so little affection, as we regard it, between parent and child. About the 1st of April I gave up teaching the Bible-woman; since that time she has been engaged in work between two of our stations, Toa-kong-pong and Lun-a-teng, spending every alternate week in each place. In each she has one woman who is learning to read. She also visits the families and reads the Scriptures to them, where they are willing to have her; but most of the women make excuses, and say that they have no time to learn to read, nor even listen to her. I hope to have Chin-so, the Bible-woman, come and study with me again this winter. I would like to get her so far advanced that she would be able to assist in teaching by-and-by, if we are able to establish a school. I am happy to be able to tell you that one or two others are ready to come and learn to read, just as soon as I am able to take them. Just now I am teaching our house boy to read; I give him an hour every day. I find that is about all that I am able for this hot weather. I never felt the heat so much as I have this summer, but it will soon be over now; in another month or six weeks it will be cool and pleasant again. We expected to go up to Palm Island for a change, but Mr. Junor has not been able to get away from here. Although it has been so very warm, there has been very little fever. I had two attacks in May, but none since, and Mr. Junor has been remarkably well all summer; just now he is laid up with boils. Every person, foreigners as well as Chinese, has been afflicted with boils this summer. I had my first experience of them—they are most painful, disagreeable things. I hope I shall not have another trial of them. They seem to have been the prevailing disease this summer. I think you will have heard of the birth of our little son. He was born on the 6th of May. We think him very much like our little Frank was, but larger and stronger than he was at his age. He has not had an hour's sickness since he was born, and is such a good little fellow. We are of course very proud of him, and he is indeed a joy and comfort to us. Even now he is company for me when Mr. Junor is away from home. At present there is only one other foreign lady in Northern Formosa, and she is forty miles from here. It is, of course, very seldom that we see each other. Since baby came, I have had a great many Chinese visitors to see him. They think him a wonderful boy—so white and large compared with their babies. Chinese babies do not grow much during the first four or five months, but they would be much whiter than they are if properly washed. Three or four weeks ago I received my first letter from Mrs. McKay. It was very short, but I suppose she will have enough to talk about for a good while after she returns. We were very sorry to hear that the doctor had been so ill again. Just a few days ago we received a letter from Prof. McLaren, by which we are glad and thankful to hear that Dr. McKay is so much better. We most sincerely hope and pray that he will return to us much better than when he left us. It is a very long time since we had a letter from him, but we know that he has been very busy and unsettled. We are growing quite anxious for his return. We fully expected him next month, but Prof. McLaren writes that he would not leave Canada until some time in September. In that case it will be draw-