

ould give place to energy and united action. When the Synod makes an injunction, I hold myself highly culpable if I neglect to attend to it; for I am a Presbyterian Kirkman, and not an Independent. I trust, then, that no minister of our Church will refuse to give his people an opportunity of bringing their contributions on the day appointed. When the matter is put off to some other Sabbath, it is generally forgotten, or it is then found to interfere with some other collection. And I think that it is unnecessary for me to press the peculiar claims of this Scheme upon our people. They know that it is impossible for us to make provision out of our small stipends for more than present necessities; and even if we could, they dislike the idea of a minister hoarding up money, and they even object now-a-days to our doing what ministers of the former generation had to do—buying farms, as too much time is thus taken away from our more important duties. If a minister with us has a wife and family, what a terrible weight upon him, in addition to all his other anxieties, must be the thought that if he were snatched away from his labors, there is absolutely not the smallest provision made for the dear ones who will mourn him most. It is not right, it is not christian-like, brethren, that we should remain much longer in this position. Let all our congregations, then, and our mission stations, also, such as Truro, Musquodoboit, Barney's River, Lochaber (for these two last are also at present in the position of mission stations), make this collection. And it is surely not too much to ask that in the Church plates, on the first Sabbath of the year, the silver and the gold (unusual sight!) will be seen predominating over the coppers.

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THE HOME MISSION AND THE LAY ASSOCIATION.

In the last number of the *Record* there is an able paper by John Mackay, Esq., referring to my previous letter on the above subject. Both in his first sentence and throughout his paper, he takes for granted that my letter was about the Lay Association, and merely expressing a preference, on my part, for a Synodical scheme, instead of it or Presbyterian action. That is not my difficulty at all. I desire to see Lay Associations and Presbyterian and Synodical action in the matter, but the one in harmony with the other. At present, the one clashes with the other, and when our people ask what are the respective provinces of each, we are unable to define them.

Then, again, my letter did not indicate any preference for Synodical Associations over Presbyterian. Both of those kinds of Association are regular, and can work harmoniously; but the Lay Association is not Presbyterian. Thus, for example, the Pictou Presby-

tery, at their last meeting, authorized their Clerk to grant a supplement out of the Home Mission Fund to one of their weak congregations: but this is the work that the Lay Association has taken in hand to perform; and I suppose that if another weak congregation did come forward asking supplement, it would have to go out of the Presbytery and ask it from the Lay Association. Now, does it not strike every one as absurd to see one and the same object thus taken in hand piecemeal by two independent administrations? I do not care which does the work, but let us know which is responsible for the doing of it, or by what rule a division of the work is made. Is the Lay Association going to look after the eastern portion of the Presbytery of Pictou, and the Home Mission to take the western under its protection? Or what other divisions of that labor have they agreed upon? I have no mistrust of the Lay Association. If it is appointed to do the work, and does it, I will rejoice, for the name is to me a matter of indifference, and even the channels through which the funds are administered is a matter of little moment in comparison with the getting of the work done. But I wish to know definitely how this matter is to be in the future; for if the work is to be given over to the Lay Association, it is surely superfluous for the Synod to appoint another organization for the same purpose.

I think that there can be no mistake now as to what I mean. If a general Home Mission Committee,—all its members, lay and clerical, appointed by the Synod, and collecting funds from Sabbath-day collections and Missionary Associations in every congregation,—is to do the work, I will be pleased. That will combine local effort with freedom from local prejudices. That is the plan adopted in every other Presbyterian Church. But, if "extra Presbyterian" Lay Associations are to do the work, why, let them do it, and so that the work be done I will be pleased. But let it be agreed upon by us if they are to do it, and not let us, in that case, keep up the farce of having also a general Home Mission. Or still another plan: if you wish two independent organizations, ruled independently of each other, let us know what part of the work is to be done by the one, and what part by the other. If you like, let the one take in hand the supplementing of weak congregations, and the other the securing of a decent provision for home missionaries. You see I am not wedded to one plan in particular. Any plan at all is better than the no-plan under which we confessedly struggle along at present.

As to the "Halifax Missionary Association," it is well known that it was originated, and only recently, by the Rev. Mr. Martin, and he claims to be pretty much of a Church Court in himself. But I have not the slightest grounds for imagining that a true Kirkman like Mr. Martin would refuse to give his