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CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY ;
THE DUTY, THE RULE, AND THE MO-
TIVE, AS SET FORTH IN THE CASE
OF THE POOR WIDOW.

[The following discourse, from the pen of the Rev. John Thomson, Paisley, appeared, under the above title, in the Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church for December last; and has, since that, been printed and circulated as a Tract.]

"And Jesus looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury: And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."—Luke xxi. 1-4.

The occurrence here related took place immediately before our Lord's final departure from the temple. As the Lord of the temple, he had taken formal possession of it, three days before: and during that interval, he had been employed daily, in teaching the people, and proclaiming the gospel. But he had seen little there to call forth his approbation. Instead of a "house of prayer," it had become a "den of thieves;" and therefore he was now about to depart from it for ever. But, before this, he took a last sorrowful view of its sacred and magnificent courts, and sat down opposite the treasury, where at length he observed a manifestation of moral principle, which awakened in his mind intense interest, and called forth his highest approbation.

The treasury was situated in that part of the temple which was called the

"court of the women," and which was immediately adjacent to the "court of the Gentiles," or the outer court. On the right and left sides of the "court of the women," there was placed a number of large chests, to receive the offerings of the people, some of which were appointed by law, and others were free-will offerings. The money contributed was applied to repair the temple, to relieve the poor, to maintain the public services of religion, and defray the expenses connected with the daily sacrifices, and the other things necessary for the stated worship of God. Josephus informs us that, in his day, there were thirteen of these chests placed in the treasury, each having its appropriate inscription, to indicate the purpose to which the contributions of the people were applied. And one reason, evidently, why these chests were placed in the "court of the women," was, in order that the women, as well as the men, might have access to them, and might also give their contributions to maintain the services of God's house. If they had been placed in any of the inner courts, such as the "court of Israel" or the "court of the priests," the women could not have had access to them.

It is related in Mark's gospel, that "many that were rich cast in much;" gave large sums and liberal contributions, as their circumstances and means demanded. But there was one, clothed in the garments of poverty, who manifested greater liberality, greater love to God, and more implicit dependence on His providential care, than all the rest. The sum she gave was small in itself; and yet Jesus said, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in