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THE MISSIONARY RECORD

OF THE

Free Church of Nova Scotia.

VOL. I.

HALIFAX, N. S., JUNE, 1852.

No. 18.

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 intimate 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

more than they all;" not more absolutely, but more relatively to her means.—The rich gave "out of their abundance," contributed to an extent which scarcely diminished their ample stores, and subjected them to little or no inconvenience, and called for no great exercise of self-denial. But the poor widow gave "out of her penury," out of very scanty means. She had no husband to provide for her, and when he died, he had left her in deep poverty; so that all she had in the world was a single farthing, which she may have earned by her labour. But she gave it cheerfully to God, although it was "all the living that she had," all that she had to subsist upon at the time. She trusted in the good providence of God, and depended on his blessing for the success of her industry and the supply of her daily bread. How few have ever manifested such generosity and piety as this! how few could willingly give up *all* that they have for God! If this widow had been of a selfish spirit, she would have thought that she had more need to get than to give; and worldly-wise men would say that her conduct exhibited the greatest folly. But the Saviour approved of her deed, and that was sufficient. He pronounced the highest commendation upon her, and he holds her forth to the admiration and imitation of all succeeding generations, as one who scorned to ask charity, but felt it more honourable and blessed to give, for supporting the worship of God, and maintaining the celebration of his appointed ordinances.

There are three leading topics suggested by this narrative, to which we would solicit the attention of our readers.

1. *The duty of giving to the cause of God.*

The duty is incumbent upon all, of every rank and station. The Jewish temple indeed has been destroyed, and all its ceremonial rites have passed away; but the obligation to contribute, according to our ability, "unto the offerings of God," remains in all its force. If it was the duty of God's ancient people to contribute of their substance, to repair and enlarge the temple, and to maintain the worship and ordinances of God's house, is it not also our duty to contribute, as he has prospered us, in order to maintain and extend that purer and more spiritual worship, which he has established in these latter days? If God expressly reserved the *tithes*, or the tenth part of the produce of the land of Israel,

to maintain the appointed ministers of religion—if he complained that those who withheld these tithes were guilty of "robbing God" will he now hold those guiltless who refuse to give any part of their substance, to maintain the preaching of the gospel, and the celebration of Christian ordinances? No man indeed has a right to dictate to his brother, as to how much he must give to "the offerings of God;" of this, every man, who knows his own circumstances best, must be the best judge. But still, every man is bound to consider and decide, as in the sight of God, looking to his individual circumstances and obligations, what proportion of God's gifts to him he ought to give back to God. And though the same rule may not be applicable to every case, yet, as it is well known that, in our own Church not a few are giving a tenth part of their whole income to the "offerings of God," surely it is at least desirable, if not incumbent, that others should endeavour to come as near as possible to this standard. And if this were done, then doubtless the cause of God would be greatly advanced, and the Saviour's kingdom widely extended.

But what is more important than the amount contributed, is the *spirit* in which our contributions are given. We must give, not in a grudging or grumbling spirit, but willingly and cheerfully: not for the sake of appearance, but from a sense of duty; not as an act of mere charity, but as a matter of imperative obligation; not by fits and starts of alternate generosity and narrowness, but according to a stated and definite rule. "Do ye not know," says the apostle Paul, "that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? *Even so* hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." And they are as much entitled to this as the labourer is entitled to his hire; and entitled to it, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of their people, in order that, being set free from worldly cares and anxieties, they may be enabled to "give themselves wholly," and without distraction, to the duties of their sacred office.

And while it is our duty to support the gospel in our own land, it is also our duty to extend it to our fellow-creatures, at home and abroad, who have never heard its joyful sound. No man liveth unto himself; but every man, and especially

every Christian, is bound to live and labour for the conversion of sinners, and the advancement of the glory of God—Loud and affecting are the calls which are addressed to us from almost every part of the world, to send the heralds of the cross, and save souls from death.—Dare we then refuse compliance with these calls, and suffer immortal souls to perish for lack of knowledge, while we have it in our power to send them the knowledge of Christ, whom to know is eternal life? Shall we shut our ears and our hearts to the cry of perishing millions,—"Come over, and help us," and coldly and selfishly say like Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We could not stand by, and see a brother dying of hunger, if we had bread to give him. The feelings of our nature would revolt from such a spectacle. And is it nothing then for the *soul* to die eternally, of spiritual hunger,—“a famine of the Word of God?” and shall we, who have it in our power to send the bread of life, shut up our bowels of compassion, and refuse our help to those who are living without God and without hope, and hastening onward to a miserable and undone eternity? "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

2 The rule of giving.

The rich man must give "out of his abundance," and the poor man out of his poverty,—each according to his means, and in proportion to his ability. Both classes alike are bound to support gospel ordinances in our own land, and missionary operations in foreign lands; and for the prosecution of these "works of faith and labours of love," the rich and the poor must "meet together," in friendly and active co-operation. "The Lord is the Maker of them all," and the Giver of all they possess; and they are bound to give back to God a portion of his own, to spread the gospel, and save souls from death. No one has a right to say, "I can do what I will with my own." Nothing is our own, with respect to God: but all we have is his property, and we are merely his stewards, to whom he has given the solemn charge, "Occupy till I come." No man indeed is expected to give according to what he hath not, but every man is expected and commanded to give according to what he hath. This rule of proportion is obviously accordant,

not only with reason, but also with Scripture. A man to whom God has given much, ought plainly to give much to God;—not an unmissed mite or a trifling contribution, such as might be expected from a poor man, but a contribution bearing a fair and just proportion to his means and ability. This rule was laid down by Moses, when he said, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. xvi. 17). And the apostle Paul says to the same effect—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2).—But while the rich ought to give largely and liberally "unto the offerings of God," the poor are not exempted from the obligation. Even the poor widow must not be deprived of the luxury of doing good; but if she has the ability and the desire to share in the work, she is encouraged to put her hand to it. And the working man, whose lot is a life of toil, is not only to provide for his own subsistence: but he is also enjoined by the apostle to "labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have is given to him that needeth" (Eph. iv. 28); "remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35).

In acting according to this rule, the poor man has no reason to be ashamed of his small offering, and the rich man has no reason to be proud of his costly offering; for if they give in proportion to their respective means, then they are discharging their several duties, and there is a perfect equality between them. For example, if a generous friend gives me £100, and gives my neighbour only 100 shillings, and commands us both to devote a tenth part to the promotion of his interest;—then, if I give my £10, while my neighbour gives only his 10 shillings, I have no reason to glory over him, but in that case he stands on a footing of perfect equality with me. It was on this principle, that our Saviour approved so highly of the conduct of the poor widow. He had seen the rich contribute large and munificent offerings; but they had made no sacrifice in doing so, and they had not given to God in proportion to what God had given to them; and therefore he bestowed his commendation, not on them, but on the poor widow—"Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in MORE than

they all;”—not a larger sum absolutely, but a larger sum in *proportion to her means*. “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not, that other men be eased, and you burdened; but by an *equality*, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want; that there may be equality; as it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack” (2 Cor. viii. 12-15).—This equality is secured, by maintaining a fair and just proportion between our *givings to God, and our receivings from God*. By acting on this principle, “the rich and poor meet together” on a footing of perfect equality; and if this principle were generally and uniformly carried out by the members of the Church, there is no doubt that, without burdening any one, far more than we have yet attempted might easily be done for the cause of God, and the extension of his blessed kingdom.

3. *The MOTIVE for giving.*

The motive presented in this narrative is, that *Christ is our witness*. He still, as in the ancient temple, “sits over against the treasury, and beholds how the people cast money into the treasury” (Mark xii 41). He observes, not only the amount of our contributions, but also the *spirit* in which they are given.—We may escape the notice of our fellow-men, and they have no right to judge of our circumstances, or to question our generosity—but we cannot elude the glance of that All-seeing eye, which observes, not only the outward action, but also the secret motive that prompts it. If we could all realize this solemn truth,—the presence and inspection of a heart-searching Witness,—would it not increase our liberality? and would it not also render us more careful to give from a right motive, in simplicity and godly sincerity, with a single eye to his glory, and a sincere regard to the welfare of precious souls? When we cast our offerings into the Lord’s treasury, his piercing eye is upon us; and he knows whether or not we are giving in proportion to our means,—whether we are giving grudgingly or cheerfully,—whether for the sake of appearance or from a sense of duty to him. Does he behold any poor widow shewing practically, from week to week, or from month to month, that she is resolved rather to deny herself, than that the Lord’s treasury should be empty?

If so, then, whatever worldly men may think or say, the Son of God looks upon her with high satisfaction and approval, and says, “*She hath done what she could*”—“Of a truth I say unto you, she hath cast in more than they all.” Or, does he behold another, in better circumstances, who, though once slightly impressed with a sense of his duty in this matter, now feels it weighing upon his conscience, with all the force of an imperative obligation, and who is resolved henceforth to give more liberally to God, out of that which God has given to him:—then to such the Lord says, “If ye know these things, happy are ye *if ye do them*.” Consider your obligations to redeeming love and mercy.—“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” Therefore imitate his example.—“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;” “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;” and remember, that the least act of kindness to a brother, even the cup of cold water given from love to Christ, shall in no wise lose its reward. And though the true reward is not of debt but of grace, yet that reward shall be proportioned to our services here. “This I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor. ix. 6).

We conclude by putting the following case:—Suppose that a wealthy and generous monarch were to distribute a great part of his royal treasures among a thousand of his subjects;—giving to one man £10 a year, to another £20, to another £50, to another £100, and to another £1000—“to each man according to his several ability.” Surely it might be expected that the recipients of his bounty would feel gratitude for the boon, and would strive, by every means in their power, to give practical evidence of their love and loyalty. Suppose, farther, that this generous monarch is threatened with a foreign invasion, which renders it necessary for him to increase his army, and send forth ambassadors of peace; then to whom might he be expected to apply for the requisite aid in such an emergency? Surely his first application would be made to those whom he had supported and enriched; and it might reasonably be expected that they would be the very first to come to their soc-

reign's help "against the mighty," and that they would give liberally to put down his enemies, and promote his interests. But suppose, either that they refuse to give any aid whatever, or that they give inadequately to their means; suppose, for instance, that those who had received £100 or £1000 a year, could not find it in their hearts to give more than a few shillings or a few pounds, would not every right-hearted man be shocked by such conduct? and if the stones had a voice, would they not cry out, in the language of indignant reproof, against those who could take so much of their sovereign's money, and yet refuse to give back more than a wretched pittance, to serve him in the season of pressing danger?

God is our Sovereign. We are his subjects and his property, and all that we have belongs to him; for "what have we that we did not receive," and what gift can we obtain without his blessing? Has he then given us a right to dispose of his temporal gifts, according to our own pleasure and caprice? Are we at liberty, either to hoard up our Lord's money like the miser, or to waste it on trifles like the spendthrift? On the contrary, does he not enjoin us to occupy every talent, *till he come*? Does he not hold us responsible, as stewards, for the use we make of our Master's goods, and command us to employ them for advancing his glory in the world, and for promoting the good of our fellow-men? Does he not call upon us to be fellow-workers with himself, in spreading the gospel, in sending forth ambassadors of peace, and in turning to flight the armies of the aliens? Does he not enjoin us, as soldiers of the cross, to take part in that great conflict which has been carried on, since the fall, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, and to lend our aid to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, and to establish on its ruins that kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"? If this be the call which God is addressing to us—and who can doubt or dispute the fact?—then what must be thought of us, if we either refuse our aid altogether, or give so small a proportion of our means, as to shew that we prefer our own selfish indulgence to the call of God and the interests of his kingdom? No doubt, he could easily defeat and destroy all his enemies without our feeble help, and evangelise the world without our contributions. But in his infinite wisdom, he

chooses to employ human instrumentality in this great and good work. He has committed not to angels, but to men, the ministry of reconciliation; and by requiring us to support a gospel ministry, he puts us to the trial, as to whether we really approve of the Saviour's cause, and are willing to advance it according to our ability. Let us not then refuse to be fellow-workers with God, lest we incur that fearful woe:—"Curse ye Me-roz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, TO THE HELP OF THE LORD AGAINST THE MIGHTY."

REMARKS

ON THE

"Reply of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, to the Letter of the Free Church Synod declining the Union."

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR KING.

TWELFTH ARTICLE.

[ERRATUM, in the Eleventh Article, P 268, Col. 1st. Line 12th, for "the sins of men," read, "the sins of all men."]

The Eleventh Article presented clear evidence that, in dealing with what has been called the "New Theology"—a theology which is, not less than the "New Light" doctrine concerning the duties of the civil magistrate, inconsistent with what the original Seceders pledged themselves to maintain, the United Secession failed to do justice to the case; inasmuch as they declared the charges against Dr. Brown to be groundless, without ever coming to a finding upon the relevancy of the Libel.

Referring still to the United Secession, the Free Synod in their Letter say, "Confidence in the soundness of the body, which had been impaired by a transaction such as this, was still farther weakened by the publication and industrious circulation, by influential persons in that communion, of works which no one who holds by the Westminster Confession of Faith can regard as sound." The Presbyterian Synod's reply to this is, "We are not certain to what our brethren allude, by their accusation against influential persons in that communion, of the publication and industrious circulation of works which no one who holds by the Westminster Standards can regard as sound;" but presume that they refer to

the fact, that Dr. Balmer wrote a preface to a work on the atonement, by Polhill, published by a bookseller in Berwick. If this be the matter to which they allude, it is unnecessary to expose the unfairness of attributing to several influential persons, what was the act of one. Or of attributing to him the publication and industrious circulation of it, which were the work of a bookseller. But whether or not, it is certainly strange to make the proceedings of an individual or individuals in Scotland, for which even the United Presbyterian Church were not responsible, and with which the Presbyterian Church had as little to do as the Free Church, a reason for declining the union."

In reference to the fact referred to, which is not merely, as the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod find it convenient to presume, that Dr. Balmer wrote a preface to a work on the atonement, by Polhill, it is enough for the present object to state that it is a matter of notoriety in Scotland; and no one can doubt that such a fact was well calculated still further to weaken confidence in the soundness of the United Secession Synod. The United Presbyterian Church in Scotland just consists of the United Secession in union with the Relief, in the proportion of about three fourths of the former to one fourth of the latter.—As the Free Synod, by uniting, upon the proposed terms, with the Presbyterian Synod, would have been brought into a state of union with the United Presbyterian Church, composed as it is of such materials; the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod must, in charity, be supposed to have forgotten what they were writing about when they say, "it is certainly strange to make the proceedings of an individual or individuals in Scotland, for which even the United Presbyterian Church were not responsible, and with which the Presbyterian Church had as little to do as the Free Church, a reason for declining the union." The United Secession, in their "Summary of Principles," agreed to in 1820, could, in stating "the chief reasons of Secession" from the Church of Scotland, mention as the very first, "The sufferance of error without adequate censure" In 1827, in the Testimony which they then agreed to, they could vindicate their continuance in a state of Secession by a reference to various evils of which they complained, one of which is thus stated:

"1. If errors which deeply affect the

foundations of the faith and hope of Christians, are publicly taught in a church, and if the majority of its rulers, instead of employing fit means to reclaim false teachers, shall resist the application of such means, and not only tolerate, but support the erroneous, and identify themselves with them, how can the faithful friends of the truth continue in that church with a safe conscience? Must they not recognise the corrupters of the Gospel as brethren, and give them the right hand of fellowship, as members of the same courts and of the same body? This is inconsistent with the apostolic exhortations: 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.' Paul, writing to the churches of Galatia, concerning the Judaizing teachers, says, 'I would they were even cut off which trouble you.' Nor ought the idea of breaking the unity of the church to deter any one from withdrawing. The unity is already broken. The church is in a state of schism. Its pastors, instead of teaching the same, teach opposite things on the most important subjects.—Their unity is merely nominal. The formularies which they subscribe in common, no longer indicate the real belief of the body, and have ceased to be the bond of ministerial and church communion." &c. They could, as a sufficient justification of the statements which they thus made in the text of their Testimony, append in a note what they call "a few, and only a few, specimens of doctrines inconsistent with the standards of the Church of Scotland, published by ministers in her communion." It may well appear strange that the body from whom this Testimony emanated, could manifest but little sympathy with those who, having as a minority struggled for the removal of the evils against which they here testify, became at length the reforming majority of the Church of Scotland; and that, after the Disruption, they could show as much disposition to fraternise with the ministers of the degraded Establishment as with those of the Free Church. But are the men who adhered to such a Testimony to be held as understanding, or as honestly meaning what they say, when they exclaim, "it is certainly strange to make the proceeding of an individual or individuals in Scotland, for which even the United Presbyterian Church were not responsible, and with which the Presbyterian Church had as little to do as the Free

Church, a reason for declining the union? The United Secession, in that portion of her Testimony just quoted, very properly held up the Church of Scotland as responsible for the doctrines promulgated by her ministers. The United Secession had a similar responsibility for the doctrines promulgated by the ministers of her communion. The responsibility was shared by the Relief, when these two bodies became united with each other. The Presbyterian Synod of Nova Scotia, as adhering to the United Presbyterian Church, is involved in the same responsibility; and the Free Synod would have been placed in a similar predicament, by uniting with the Presbyterian Synod, on the terms which they proposed. Under that responsibility they very properly refused to place themselves.

The next sentence in the Letter of the Free Synod is, "If we look again to the Relief, with whom the United Secession are now associated, we find them agreeing with that body, but differing from us, in refusing to subscribe the Confession of Faith without qualification; at the same time also that their doctrine with respect to open communion is what we cannot concur in."

In 1752, Mr. Thomas Gillespie, minister at Carnock, was deposed by the General Assembly for refusing to take part in settling Mr. Richardson as minister at Inverkeithing, against the will of the people. In 1757, Mr. Thomas Boston, son of the celebrated Boston of Ettrick, gave in to his Presbytery his demission of the charge of the parish of Oxnam; and, in a state of separation from the Established Church, was settled in the pastoral charge of the people of Jedburgh, whose wishes had been disregarded in the settlement of Mr. Douglas as the parish minister. These two ministers agreed to assist each other in dispensing ordinances to such as might adhere to them in seeking relief from the grievance of Patronage, which had occasioned the separation of both from the National Church. The people of Colinsburgh were the first that applied to them for relief; and they gave them occasional service. That congregation built a meeting house, and chose as their pastor Mr. Collier, originally from Fife, but then settled in a charge among the dissenters of England. It was in 1761 that the "Presbytery of Relief" was first constituted, by Messrs. Gillespie and Boston with two elders.—Smith of Dunfermline, in his "Histori-

cal Sketches of the Relief Church," published in 1773, (p. 11), says, "After the presbytery was constituted by Messrs. Gillespie and Boston, with two elders who had been ordained in the Church of Scotland, the principles and constitution of the Relief Church were judicially declared; to which Mr. Collier, when admitted to be a co-presbyter, judicially adhered. The Presbytery required of him a solemn and public profession of his faith in God, his belief of the scriptures, his approbation of Presbytery, according to reformation principles, and his adherence to the constitution of the Church of Scotland, as exhibited in her creeds, her canons, confessions, and forms of worship. This profession he solemnly made unto the presbytery, before his people, and promised to abide by these, in subjection to his brethren. Thus the founders of the Relief Church, in a judicative capacity, solemnly and publicly declared their adherence to reformation principles, and the constitution of the new-testament church, as delineated by our worthy ancestors; a solemn profession of which principles, was then stated by the presbytery, and hath ever since been observed as the terms of admission."

This statement, and the fact that till a comparatively recent period the Relief body had no separate institution for training their theological students, but were satisfied that they should prosecute their studies in the Halls of the Establishment, would seem to warrant the belief that, at first, they maintained fully the principles of the Church of Scotland; and that they separated from her simply for the purpose which they themselves expressed, and which was understood to be indicated in the designation which they assumed, namely, that of giving relief from the grievance of Patronage. About twenty years ago, however, they agreed upon a set of regulations, in which, in at least a straight forward manner that contrasts favourably with the mode adopted by the New Light Seceders, they opened a door for those holding anti-establishment principles.—According to these regulations, it is provided that "previous to admission, said minister or preacher shall subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith as a declaration of his faith, *except in so far as said confession recognises the power of the civil magistrate to interfere in religious concerns*" After considering the evidence which has been produced in pre-

ceding Articles, showing that the General Assembly in 1647 received the *entire* doctrine of the Confession of Faith, that the first Seceders also maintained the entire doctrine of that Confession, and that the Free Church is pledged to it to the same extent, the intelligent reader may be safely left to form his own opinion as to the amount of knowledge and of candour displayed by the Presbyterian Synod when, in answer to the remark quoted above from the Letter of the Free Synod, they say, "Our brethren object, moreover, to the union between the Secession and Relief Churches, and the formation of the U. P. Church, because the united body receive the Confession of Faith with certain limitations, and because the Relief Synod held the principle of open communion.—But the Church of Scotland received the Confession of Faith with limitations; and as the Free Church claim not only to hold the principles of, but actually *to be*, the Church of Scotland, they must do the same, notwithstanding their assertions about receiving the *entire* doctrine of that symbol. We therefore take the liberty of warning them of the danger of pretending one thing, while they do another." Let the Presbyterian Synod take the warning home to themselves; and cease from deceiving their people, by pretending to be as much attached to the Westminster Standards as those are who maintain them in their integrity.

The Reply of the Presbyterian Synod goes on still farther to say, with regard to the Free Synod, "Their inconsistency is more apparent, in objecting to the principle of "open communion," as this is clearly taught in the Confession of Faith—chap. xxvi 2: 'Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as may tend to their mutual edification, as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities,—which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.'" Mr. Trotter had already expressed himself to a similar effect, and in what seems to be his characteristic tone of insolence, in his letter which appeared in the Guardian of Sept 21st 1849. His language there is, "She [the Relief Church], holds to all that you hold to in the Confession of Faith; for that venerable and excellent

symbol says nothing about the way in which ministers are to be supported; and she adheres to a very important article contained in chap. xxvi. sect. 2, which you deny, without having the honesty to say so publicly, notwithstanding all your loud professions about adhering to its entire doctrine." The absurdity might be amusing, were it not that the flagrant offence against very solemn professions awakens a feeling of too much sadness to admit of mirth, when men who talk with complacency of their "fathers of the Secession," would represent the 26th chapter of the Confession of Faith as laying down the doctrine of "open communion."

The chapter referred to treats of the communion of saints. This communion, as is shown in the first section, is founded on union, first of all with Jesus Christ, and then, through him, with one another. Being thus united to one another in love, it is said, "they have communion in each other's gifts and graces; and are obliged to the performance of such duties, publick and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man." The second section intimates that those who profess to be saints are, according to this very profession, "bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." In order that the import of this may be understood, let it be observed 1. That there are two classes of duties referred to here: first, the duties involved in the worship of God, and such other spiritual services as tend to mutual edification; and, secondly, the duty of relieving each other in outward things. 2 That it is in special connexion with this latter class of duties that the statement is made, "Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus" They who would produce this passage in support of the doctrine of "open communion" must maintain that the communion here referred to means particularly, a seat at the Lord's Table; but that the Westminster Assembly meant by it precisely the communication of those out-

ward things which had been just mentioned, will be evident to any one who will take the trouble of looking at the passages of scripture by which they prove their doctrine. These passages are Acts ii. 44, 45. 1 John iii. 17. 2 Cor viii. ix. Acts xi. 29, 30. 3. That the *direct* and evident object of this section is, not to tell the office bearers of the Church to whom it is that they are to dispense her sealing ordinances, but to show how *individuals* must act so as to discharge the duties, and to be entitled to the privileges, connected with the profession of saints. These things being considered, it will be seen, 4. that *indirectly* this does throw a very clear light on the question of Church-communion; for it indicates that it is where parties are found acting according to this rule, that the office-bearers of the Church have a scriptural warrant for admitting them to this privilege. Some credible appearance of godliness, as the foundation of a charitable opinion that the person is a Christian, is necessary to entitle him to the visible communion of the Church in her sealing ordinances; but this, even should it be an appearance that has been produced by the reality of grace in the heart, is not enough. "Saints, by profession, are," not merely upon sacramental occasions, but in the ordinary duties of ecclesiastical communion, "bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God." Church-communion formed by the mutual agreement of its members to adhere, as in Christ their head and under his authority, to one system of faith; to join in the same acts of worship; and to submit themselves to the same order of discipline and church-government:—Eph. iv. 4-6 "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." A departure from the line of conduct that accords with these principles, lays a foundation for ecclesiastical dealing with the individual, and may render it necessary to exclude him from church-privileges. The doctrine of the bible is: 1 Cor xi. 2. "Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." 2 Thess. ii. 15. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." Rom. xvi. 17. "Now, I beseech you, brethren,

mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." 2 Thess. iii. 6. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." In the case of those who, as ministers, are called upon officially to feed the people with knowledge, there ought to be both soundness in the faith, and an intelligent and cordial adherence to the principles of the Church as to worship, discipline, and church-government. According to the principles of the Westminster Standards, therefore, they are required to make a profession corresponding with the responsibility of the office which they are to fill. The case is different with respect to the members of the flock; but still even they must be willing to receive the teaching of the Church. If need be, they must be rebuked "sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" Tit. i. 13. If they show no respect for the authority of the Church, but forsake its ordinances, condemn its discipline, and follow divisive courses; they must be withdrawn from, and treated as heathen men and as publicans.

The Relief body did not, like the Seceders, publish any Testimony, or authoritative statement of their distinctive principles. From the first, however, they seem to have acted on the principle of "open communion," dispensing even the Lord's Supper to all and sundry of whom they thought that they were warranted to entertain the opinion that they were Christians; and several ministers of their communion published their defence of the practice, particularly as against the Seceders. Smith's "Historical Sketches of the Relief," formerly quoted, and Hutchison's "Compendious view of the Religious System, maintained by the Synod of Relief," published in 1779, may be referred to as instances of this. On the other hand, the Relief were very strenuously opposed and testified against both by the Burgher and by the Antiburgher branches of the Secession.

In their Re-exhibition of the Secession Testimony, the Burgher Synod having (p. 177) stated that "The several articles in the Judicial Testimony assertory of a particular form of church-government under the New Testament, and of the Divine Right of Presbytery, are a

lasting Testimony against Episcopacy, Independency, and every species of Sectarian principles," add, "They strike with equal force against those who call themselves the Presbytery of Relief, whose principles and measures have a visible tendency to lead off professing Christians, in this nation, from any steadfast attachment to the Reformation principles of the Church of Scotland.—This scheme stands upon the ruins of the grand distinguishing principles of the Reformation; in as much as all the abettors of it are animated by a spirit of uncommon opposition to the nature and design of our covenants, the national and solemn league; the moral obligation of which, they absolutely deny, and treat with the utmost contempt. Many of their ministers, contrary to the standing laws of the church, deserting their charge in the establishment, or elsewhere, without the consent or intervention of ecclesiastical authority, are chargeable with a most glaring schism, while they pretend to be still within the bosom of the established church, and actually hold communion with her; and yet have erected ecclesiastical judicatories distinct from and independent of her."—"They have evidently perverted the doctrine of our Confession of Faith, relative to the COMMUNION OF SAINTS: and their terms of communion are indeed very different from those of the Church of Scotland in her best times; and are so general and undetermined, that they will admit Protestants of every denomination. They seem to be under too little concern to keep pure and entire ALL the ordinances of Christ, according to his express command: and while they separate the privileges from the discipline of the church, not duly considering that the latter is the guardian of the former, they attempt to put asunder what God hath joined together, to the open encouragement of immorality, by neglecting the exercise of some of the most essential branches of church government and discipline."

The Antiburgher Synod, in their Narrative and Testimony which was published in 1804, and which was drawn up on New Light principles, after giving a narrative of the progressive defection of the Established Church of Scotland, say, at p. 80, "we shall subjoin a short view of the rise and peculiar principles of some of the other religious denominations in our native land, against which we are obliged to bear testimony." Among these they include the Relief, of whom they

say (p. 88), "They subsisted a number of years before they had determined with what denomination of Christians they would hold communion. At length, however, at what they call a 'consultation meeting,' held in the year 1773, they found, that 'their principles did not allow them to hold communion with such as are unsound in the essentials of the Christian faith;' but, that 'it was agreeable to their principles, to hold both ministerial and Christian communion with those of the Episcopal and Independent persuasions,' though it is said they have receded from the last part of this declaration since."

"In consequence of their still declining to give the world a full account of their principles, or any distinct declaration wherein they agree or disagree with other Churches; we are obliged to have recourse to the publications of individual ministers, who profess to give the principles of the body; and to their practice and public ecclesiastical procedure, for an account of these principles. From these, taken in connection with the above decision respecting church-communion, the following appear to be principles held by them—That though they have made a separation from the National Church, yet they have freedom to join with her occasionally, in the most intimate acts of church-fellowship—They avow the warrantableness of promiscuous hearing even in churches that are very corrupt.—They are known, with a very few exceptions, to be enemies to the duty of public covenanting; and they distinguish divine truths into what they call *essential* and *circumstantial*; by the latter of which, some of them say, are meant, those things in revelation about which men may differ, and yet be real Christians. These they hold to be of such a trivial nature, as not to be worth contending for, at least not so far as to break up communion with persons' on account of any opposition which they manage against them.

"It appears that if they adopt the Confession of Faith as a test of orthodoxy, they neglect to enforce conformity to it. Though some of them, it is hoped, preach the doctrines of the gospel, yet it appears from their publications, that some of their members are accustomed to use erroneous expressions as to some of those doctrines, which lie very near the foundation of the hopes of sinners for eternity."—In a note, this charge is sup-

ported by a reference to several publications.

These extracts from Secession Testimonies have been given at such length, not merely for the purpose of supporting what was stated about the "open communion" of the Relief, but also that the reader may the more readily apprehend the ground for the statement made in the only other passage of the Free Synod's Letter that requires to be maintained in the face of the allegations of the Presbyterian Synod. The statement in the Letter is, "While with those bodies, therefore, in their separate position, we could not have entered into communion, the principles on which they lately united are such as still farther to add to the obstacle. They professed to unite, but allow each other to hold their distinctive views, so that it is not easy to know what are the principles of the United Presbyterian Church, and the difficulty is still farther increased by intimations which were openly given in the progress to the union that farther changes in their Standards were contemplated."

The ordinary channels of public information must here be looked to; and it is believed no one will question the general accuracy of the Reports of public transactions that are given in the *Scottish Guardian*. An account of the proceedings in the United Secession Synod, and in the Relief Synod, with respect to the union, appeared in that Journal from time to time; and few will doubt that the following extracts fully warrant what the Presbyterian Synod call the "reckless" statements of the Free Synod. On Sept. 22, 1846, the *Scottish Guardian* published a Report with respect to the proposed union from the Session of the Kirkintilloch congregation (Dr. Marshall's) which the Presbytery declined to transmit to the Synod; but which Dr. Marshall himself subsequently read in the Synod, as a part of his speech, on the 7th of the following month. Referring to the way in which the Synod had acted with regard to the libel against Dr. Brown, the Report says, "In the opinion of this Session, the majority of the Secession body who took part in these proceedings, who deliberately passed these decisions, are not entitled to the smallest credit, nor can possibly obtain the smallest credit, with impartial men, when they declare their adherence to the Westminster Confession, let that declaration be ever so solemn, till they shall have first rescinded these ob-

noxious deeds, so injurious to divine truth, and shall have publicly confessed, before God, and before all the churches, their sorrow for having enacted them." "If it is so that the Relief body are willing to unite with the Secession body in present circumstances, accepting their declaration of adherence to the Westminster Confession, in direct contradiction to their public and unrescinded deeds, this Session are constrained however reluctantly, to look upon them as equally tainted with the Secession body, and to regard their solemn protestations as having precisely the same value—that is, no value at all." According to the same Journal, of the 9th of the following October, the United Secession Synod, on Wednesday the 7th of that month, agreed upon the first and second Articles of the Basis of Union—the second Article being "That the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms are the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, and contain an authorised exhibition of the sense in which it understands the Holy Scriptures; it being always understood that we do not approve of anything in these books which teaches, or may be supposed to teach, compulsory or persecuting principles in religion." Dr. Marshall is reported to have said, in the course of the discussion with regard to this second Article "that he could not possibly reconcile with the public deeds of this body, which were referred to in the sentence he had read [from the Report above mentioned], its professions of adherence to the Confession of Faith, and he could not possibly understand how this Synod adhered consistently to this Confession of Faith, while it allowed those deeds to stand unquestioned and unrescinded.—As soon would he believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation, or anything which constituted in his mind an absurdity, as believe in the present professions of the Secession Synod, while these deeds stood unrescinded. He need only refer to the treatment of the libel which came before the Synod in July 1845, to maintain his position. By that libel the principles of this Synod were tested, according to the Confession of Faith, in many important particulars. How was that libel treated? *The relevancy was not considered*; and why was it not considered? For the very obvious reason that it might have disclosed too plainly the sentiments of the parties. 'It would never do,' said one, 'to consider the relevancy; it might divide us.' [a voice—"Who said that?"] Why, somebody said it. Very likely he was a simpleton who said it—a very great simpleton. [expressions of disapprobation] *The relevancy was not considered—ALL THE WORLD KNOWS THAT*—and why was it not considered? [Question] The man who uttered that saying—allowing there was such a man—was not aware that he was doing the very thing that he did not want

to do. By the attempts at concealment they were making a disclosure."

The Report of the meeting of the joint committees of the Secession Synod and the Synod of Relief, had recommended that the 9th Article of the Basis of Union should be, "That the United Church regard with a feeling of brotherhood, all the faithful followers of Christ, and shall endeavour to maintain the unity of the whole body of Christ, by a readiness to co-operate and hold fellowship with all its members in all things in which they are agreed." After a discussion, it was carried in the United Secession Synod that the words "and hold fellowship" should be left out: and that the Article thus amended should be enlarged by the following prefix: "That the respective bodies of which this Church is composed, without requiring from each other an approval of the rules of procedure of their fathers, or interfering with the right of private judgment in reference to this, unite in severally recommending as still valid the reasons on which they have hitherto maintained their state of secession and separation from the jurisdiction of the Established Church, as expressed in the authorised documents of the respective bodies, and in maintaining the lawfulness and obligation of separation from ecclesiastical bodies in which dangerous errors are tolerated in the discipline of the Church, or the rights of her ministers or members are disregarded." The import of this Article seems to be that while, on the one hand, the Secession were not required to approve of the rules of procedure of the fathers of the Relief, nor the Relief to approve of the rules of procedure of the fathers of the Secession; on the other hand, neither were they required to renounce the principles on which they had been hitherto acting, not merely as separate, but, as has been shown, as antagonistic bodies. The Article thus far seems to speak only of continued distinctness and separation.—At length, however, the word *unite* appears. These respective bodies, without interfering with the right of private judgment in the matters of difference just referred to, *UNITE*—yes unite; but in doing what? Why, they unite in *severally*, that is, *separately*, recommending the authorised documents of the respective bodies. This United body does not unite in recommending the authorised documents of the Secession, for these would be spurned at by the Relief; nor do they unite in recommending the authorised documents of the Relief, for these would be an offence to the Seceders; but, as these documents must have the appearance of being still held in honour, they unite in order to show that there is no real union, by *separately*, or, if they will, *severally*, recommending their respective documents. And it seems this is the kind of union that would delight the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod of Nova Scotia.

Even after this Article had been agreed to, Mr. Renton is reported, in the Scottish Guardian of Oct. 9th, 1846, to have said, "It was plain that up to this hour a large majority of the Secession Church had manifested no desire for this union. He held this to be unsatisfactory." "He adhered to the conclusion, that a union without the heart of the people was not a safe nor a right union; and that, unless a feeling in its favour be manifested by the people, the union had better be delayed. But he would also ask, were the two churches at one in their doctrines? He knew they were at one speculatively and upon profession. On making inquiry upon this subject lately, he had been told that the booksellers' shops were open—to go to the Confession of Faith, and judge from it whether they were at one. But that was not enough. If they were to judge of the orthodoxy of any Church by its Confession and Catechisms, he would say this Church had no right ever to have existed as a Secession Church—no right to lift up its voice against the Established Church. Whatever may have been the defects of that Church, it never denied the Confession and formulas to which they (the United Secession) adhered. Besides, he was ignorant of the doctrines of the Relief Church; he did not know what were the doctrines preached from their pulpits on various subjects, such as the atonement.—He was not prepared to acquiesce in the opinion that if they were only ignorant of ill, they must take it for granted that all was right. Another reason for objecting was, that there was such a diversity in the state of discipline between the two Churches, that there was not only on this account no confidence in a union, no desire for it, but that there was amongst the congregations a positive disinclination to it." An elder also is reported to have said, that "he could not agree with the principle of free communion on any account, and he believed many of the congregations of the Secession Church held the same views which he did on that subject." It is true, a Mr. Thomas is reported to have explained to the worthy elder "that all that the Relief Synod asked was, that this should be made a matter of forbearance, which it was already to a certain extent in the Secession Church. The Relief brethren deserved the recognition of this principle at their hands. The only difficulty was in the regulation of the principle." But that was a difficulty; for where the principle is recognised restricted communion is at an end. However, let the rules of Christ's house be what they might, Mr. Thomas thought that the Relief brethren deserved that the point should be yielded at their hands. It was accordingly yielded, in the terms of an Article which took its place as the sixth in point of order.

When the Articles had been agreed to on both sides, a deputation from the Relief Sy-

nod attended the Secession Synod to present for their acceptance an official document on the subject. On that occasion, Mr. McDougall of Paisley, one of the deputation, as reported in the Scottish Guardian of Oct. 16th, 1846, said "The first thing which struck him during these discussions was that there was sincerity on all hands in the desire for union; and this remark he founded on the fact that at the very first there was a little *coming and going* on both sides. The Relief Synod being very well aware of the circumstances in which the United Secession Church stood in regard to the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, came to the conclusion of allowing these Catechisms to occupy the place which they had hitherto occupied—feeling that it was better for them to receive than for the Secession Church to reject them; *believing at the same time that these books, along with the Confession of Faith, would yet be* ABRIDGED AND REVISED by those who came after them. On the other hand, they felt assured that the United Secession, in agreeing to receive the doctrine of free communion, had conceded a little to the views of the Relief body." Do the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod really profess to know to what extent these men hold by the Catechisms and Confession of Faith which they mean to revise and abridge?

Dr. Marshall and a majority of his congregation having, in the course of these proceedings, renounced their connection with the Synod, in consequence of what they considered the disregard of sound doctrine manifested in the terms on which it was proposed that the union should be effected, a process was raised before the Court of Session to secure the property of the church to the United Presbyterian Synod. Judgment was given in favour of the congregation. In delivering his opinion on the case, the Lord Justice Clerk said, "He considered the argument as unworthy of observation, that this was not a union with another sect, but a mere extension of the same sect. If this had been so, there would have been no need for a union or basis of union. Not only however, were there negotiations about matters of difference before the union, but, curiously enough, there were stipulations for matters of difference after the union—a thing unknown in ecclesiastical history." There is a strong tendency at present to effect coalitions of this kind. But although multitudes, and too many even of high name in the Church, may be ready, for the sake of such coalitions—miscalled unions—to hold in abeyance, as something which they are better without, truth to which the Head of the Church has attached so much importance that, in order to make it known, he sent his Holy Spirit miraculously to reveal it through his inspired servants; it is nevertheless true that it involves unfaithfulness and backsliding in the case of all,

whether individuals or Churches, who, having once received this truth, deny it, or act inconsistently with its requirements, or fail in maintaining it as a part of their testimony for Christ. The conclusion therefore to which the Free Synod is shut up by the authority of God's word is, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

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T. P. Norton	7 6	Norman McLean, col.	3 2½
Wm. B. Aitken	3 9	John McKenzie	2 6
Alex. Robertson	3 0	Murdoch McGregor	1 3
John Ross	3 9	Friend	2 6
Wm. McKay	6 0	Donald Morrison	2 7½
		Murdoch McDonald	5 0
	£1 13 9		£0 19 1
P. E. I. Currency	£8 13 3½	Finlay McCrae, col.	
Less ¼	1 8 10¼	John McKenzie	1 6
		Hector McLean	1 3
Halifax Currency	£7 4 5	Arch. Livingston	1 6
		Donald Campbell	2 6
Boufarderie, C. B.		Norman McLeod	1 10½
Mrs. Munro, col.		Roderick McLeod	1 3
Fraser, senr.	£0 1 3	Donald McKenzie	1 10½
Fraser, junr.	3 1¼	Finlay McCrae	5 2½
Norman McDonald	5 7½	John Campbell	7 2
John McCrae	2 6	John McGregor	2 9½
Murdoch McDonald	2 9	Roderick Morrison	1 3
Donald McDonald	1 3	Alex. Livingston	1 3
Hector McLennan	2 2	Hector Fraser	2 6
Alex. McDonald	2 2		
Norman McDonald	2 2	Duncan McDonald, col.	£1 11 11
Mrs. McAulley	2 2	Widow McKenzie	10 0
Donald McNeil	5 2½	Alex. Grant	2 4
Duncan McLennan, Tailor	1 3	John McLean	2 6
A. Munro	5 2½	George Patterson	1 3
		John McLeod	2 0
	£1 16 10		
Deduct for 3 butter tubs	2 4		£1 0 7
	£1 14 6	Donald Stewart, col.	
Miss Janet McLeod, col.		Mrs. McDonald	1 4
Roderick McKenzie	2 6	Fraser	1 4
Roderick McKenzie, junr.	1 3	M. McKenzie	2 0
Wm. McKenzie	1 3	Donald Gun	1 10
Frank McCrae	2 2	John Stewart	9
John McLeod	2 6	Mrs. Stewart	1 4
Angus McLeod	1 10½	M. Leod	1 4
Donald McLeod	2 6	Stewart	1 3
		Murdoch McDonald	1 4
	£0 14 0½	Mrs. Campbell	1 4
Miss Jane Ross, col.		Murdoch Morrison	2 0
Mr. John Ross	5 2½	Mrs. Smith	1 4
Mrs. Ross	2 0	Smith	2 0
Kenneth McKenzie	2 0	Donald Stewart	2 0
Donald McKenzie	2 0	Mrs. Stewart	2 0
Alex. McKenzie	1 10½	Miss Stewart	1 6
Wm. McKay	1 3	Donald Stewart	2 0
Christina McKay	1 3	Mrs. Stewart	2 0
Roderick Corbett	5 0	Widow McLeod	2 0
		Mrs. McLennan	1 0
	£1 0 7		
Mrs. Battleman, col.		James Sutherland, Esq., col.	£1 11 8
John Smith	2 8	Colin McKenzie	5 0
Murdoch Battleman	4 0	Murdoch McKenzie, senr.	2 6
Donald Morrison	2 8	Alex. McKenzie	2 6
Donald McDonald	2 0		1 10½
Widow McLean	1 3		
Murdoch McDonald	2 8	Roderick Campbell, col.	£0 11 10½
Roderick McAskel	2 3	Flora Bethune	1 3
Widow Morrison	2 0	Mrs. John McKenzie	1 0
John Campbell	2 0	Alex. McKenzie	7½
Murdoch Morrison	12 0	Wm. McKenzie	1 3
		John McLeod	6
	£1 13 0	Mrs. Angus Smith	6

Murdoch Smith	3
Duncan Smith	1 2
Wm. Urquhart	1 3
Norman McDonald	5 0
Norman Morrison	5 0
Mrs. Duncan Munro	1 3
John McDonald	1 10½
Kenneth McDonald	1 10½
Wm. McAulley	1 10½
Mrs. Malcolm McDonald	2 6
Mrs. Donald McLeod	1 10½
Wm. Fyfe	1 10½
Roderick Campbell	2 2

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A. MUNRO, Treasurer.

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