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THE BLUNDERS OF GEOLOGISTS.

BY ROBERT PATTERSON, D. D.

“How does a man become a Freemason?” we asked, after gazing with amazement on the prodigious beard of the patriarch, listening to the conversation of men familiar with Hiram, king of Tyre, capable of discussing the details of Solomon’s temple, and learned in the pyramids. If such mysteries might be hinted at in fireside discourse, what incomprehensibilities must be included within the mystic triangle! what untold ancient lore locked up in the ark of the covenant! And again we asked with wonderment, “How does a man become a Freemason?” Unhappily, the process was performed in the town. Several of our good, honest acquaintances, were duly initiated; and after a brief probation, and liberal potations, were advanced to the degree of masters of that ancient craft. From which we learned that a man might lawfully display a white sheepskin apron covered with all manner of hieroglyphics, without any midnight perusals of the Rabbins, or any very profound acquaintance with grammar, arithmetic, or history, sacred or profane. The Grand Masters, of course, knew all these, and all other sciences.

A similar state of incredulity is produced in the minds of readers of geological works, by the discovery of the incongruity between the lofty pretensions of the science and its slender performances; and still more, by the discrepancy between its very proper demands on its students for universal knowledge, and the very moderate amount of second-hand information possible for men engaged in the common business of life, (as most geologists are,) on any subject beyond the range of their own profession. The impression is still farther deepened by an extending acquaintance with the works of professed geologists, in which the reader inevitably discovers their ignorance of matters of grave importance, their mutual contradictions, and the folly of accepting either the facts or theories of geology upon such unreliable testimony. We were once greatly impressed with admiration of the discourse of geologists concerning the subsidence of continents, the elevation of mountains, the plication of rocks, and the in-

This "offence of the cross of Christ" has ceased. They can now take it up, and bear it with the utmost assurance that no one will reproach them. They will not be called to endure the hardness of the veterans in this sacred warfare for the right of man to possess himself. Abolition is now on the surface of the popular current; and they can glide away so smoothly and so gently, that not a ripple will disturb their equanimity.

We extend a most cordial greeting to the General Assembly, O. S. We "join hands" in prosecuting the same glorious cause, until every slave, who breathes our air, shall stand forth a man, emancipated and disenthralled.

CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE.*

BY REV. W. W. BARR.

"But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—HEB. xiii. 16.

The Christian religion is the least expensive system of belief and worship in the world. Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light. It must be admitted, however, that the majority of professing Christians make their religion less costly and laborious than the divine Author intended;—they give less, and do less to promote it than its laws require. The exhortation to do good, and to communicate, is forgotten, or its appeal is not heeded; its force is not felt.

It is strange that there should be so much inactivity in the performance of the duties of a religion, which teaches its professors that they are not their own; that they are bought with the blood of the Son of God. It is wonderful, that that gospel which brings life and immortality to light, which sweetens existence here, and sheds the true light on the life to come, has made so little progress in the world. After more than eighteen centuries of teaching and exhortation, its chariot wheels still roll heavily. This feeling of wonder heightens into astonishment at the present time. Formerly the way to the progress of the gospel was blocked up. Gigantic hinderances arose and said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther." Formerly, too, the appliances for spreading the truth were not many or effective. But now, in the providence of God, obstacles have melted away, and the gospel may go freely through the nations of the earth. The press can scatter the word of life like leaves from the forest. The railway on land, and the steamer on ocean, can carry the missionary across continents and seas in a few hours or days; while the "telegraph, swifter than angel choir, may announce the 'glad tidings to all people.'"

But even in these circumstances, there are multitudes around us, who have not been brought under the influence of the gospel, and there are millions in the world to whom it has not been preached. The presumption is that there is something radically wrong. If we inquire into the reason for this state of things, we shall, doubtless, conclude that it is owing, humanly speaking, to the want of decided effort on the part of professing Christians, and of liberality in contri-

* A Sermon preached before the Synod of New York, at its meeting in Beulah, N. Y., October, 5d, 1864. Published by request of Synod.

butions of property for the support and diffusion of the gospel. The spirit of benevolence needs to be awakened and intensified. The church's labours must become more abundant, her contributions must be increased by multiplication; and then, and not till then, the Saviour's ascending command will be fulfilled; the gospel preached for a witness to every creature, when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

It has been taken for granted, in attempting to fulfil the appointment which you have given me, to preach on the subject of "Christian Beneficence," that it is your judgment, that the church is not up to the measure of her duty in this regard; that she needs to be reminded of it, and exhorted in reference to it; that she needs to be told by the authority of her ministry, from the word of God, to do good, and communicate forget not, and to be assured that with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

It would be a presumption in me to attempt to instruct you, my brethren, on a subject which has been so much discussed. This you must not expect, and I assure you that it is the height of my aspiration now, to explain, as I understand it, the system of beneficence as taught in the Scriptures, and to lay bare before us the appeal that is thus made to our hearts and consciences to practise its duties. No original discussion of the subject will be attempted. I offer only a plain presentation of the well-known Scriptural argument.

I. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN BENEVICENCE? Benevolence, as the word teaches us by its derivation, is doing good. It is the result of a feeling in the heart, and that feeling is benevolence. This exists, to some degree, we suppose, in every human breast. It would be, perhaps, impossible to find a human being, who would not, in certain circumstances, desire to do good to his fellow-man. Benevolence is not confined to the Christian; the men of the world have this feeling, and they exercise it in a multitude of instances. But in them it does not spring from proper motives; nor are their aims directed to the proper end. In their benevolence they want the love of Christ, and in their beneficence they do not aim at the glory of God. In the Christian, this feeling becomes a grace. It is a divine favour, a means of spiritual advancement, and a fruit of God's Spirit working in the heart. The change in this feeling being wrought by the Spirit of God, there is of necessity a change in the moving power which prompts it, and in the end which is aimed at. This constitutes the distinction between *benevolence* and *Christian benevolence*. Before conversion, the man, in doing good, looks only at the body and the outward wants. His beneficence is restricted to temporal things, and confined by selfishness. It is not animated by the love of Christ; it flows not through the divinely-appointed channel, the church; and it aims not at the glory of God. After conversion, the same man views the wants of the body and soul together. The love of Christ inspires him. He aims at the glory of God. The church becomes the divinely-appointed channel, through which his beneficence flows out to the world. The feeling in his heart expands. His good deeds take a wider range, and every man becomes a brother. I could not, perhaps, better illustrate my meaning, than by referring you to the two grand beneficent institutions* in our country at the present

* The Sanitary and Christian Commissions.

time, through whose channels the bounty of the nation is flowing in upon the suffering defenders of our liberties. The one has respect to the body alone. It is animated by the common feeling of our humanity, namely, sympathy with the suffering, and by the common selfish motives, that, in a greater or less degree, inspire us all. The other is inspired by love to Christ. It aims at the glory of God; while it ministers to the body, and chiefly to the soul. In the former we have an exemplification of beneficence; in the latter, an illustration of Christian beneficence.

It is of Christian beneficence that the apostle here speaks. Those whom he was addressing were changed in heart; they were born again. Among other changes, this natural feeling of benevolence was changed into the *grace* of benevolence. It is as Christians that he tells them to do good, and to communicate. Assuming that the grace of benevolence existed, he exhorts them to "forget not" to exercise it. His language literally is, Forget not well-doing, and communicating. They were first to *do good*; and as this must be distinguished from what follows, this part of the direction must evidently be limited to good actions in behalf of the bodies and souls of men. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick, to minister to them that are in prison, would be doing good, in the sense of this injunction. But in addition to this, the apostle directs these Christians to *communicate*. The original word means, literally, participation, communion, or fellowship; but in the New Testament it is frequently used figuratively, to signify a contribution, or collection of money. Paul says, in Romans xvi. 26, "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain *contribution*" (the word that is employed in the text) "for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." In the second epistle to the Corinthians, (ix. 13,) the same word is rendered "distribution." But without insisting on the evidence, (for we judge it is not necessary,) the word here clearly means the contributing of money or property for charitable purposes; and, accordingly, the direction of the apostle is, that they should not forget to do good, and to contribute of their substance. Beneficence, then, includes both of these ideas—doing good, and giving; and Christian beneficence may be defined to be, *the exercise of the grace of benevolence, in doing good to the bodies and souls of men, and in contributing of our substance for charitable and benevolent purposes*. On looking, however, more closely at the text, we will find that this definition is not exhaustive; for the apostle intimates that doing good, and communicating, are *sacrifices*. We must add, therefore, to our definition, that Christian beneficence is also a *part of divine worship*.

I make this addition to the definition with modesty. I hesitate, not because I am in doubt as to its correctness, for I am persuaded that this text, and the Bible throughout, affirm this position; but because the teaching of the Bible has not generally been understood in this sense. It is true, that while our Confession of Faith does not enumerate this among the parts of worship, yet it does say "saints, by profession, are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification, as also relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities."

(Conf., chap. xxvi., sec. 2.) In this language the Confession affirms that Christians are to maintain a *holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, in relieving each other in outward things*; and this is the doctrine of the Scriptures. Our Form of Government, and also the Directory for Worship, in specifying the ordinances of a particular church, include, "*making collections for the poor, and other pious uses.*" But, while this is the teaching of our standards, it has not been the teaching of our pulpits generally, if we may judge of this from what meets the public eye. Much has been written on the subject, and published in our periodicals. We have had prizes offered, and paid for the best productions, yet I do not remember to have seen it more than remotely hinted at, that beneficence is an act of divine worship. I know that it has been otherwise in a few pulpits, but I speak now of that which is common and public.

Other branches of the church have been slowly coming up to the Scripture teaching. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, which met at Nashville, Tenn., in 1845, declared that "*liberality is a grace of the Spirit, almsgiving an office of Christian worship, and collections for the poor and the spread of the gospel an ordinance of God. Giving, in the Scripture, is put upon substantially the same basis as prayer*; the one is the sacrifice of the lips, and the other of the substance." In 1858, the Assembly again resolved that "*contributing of our worldly substance, for religious purposes, from religious motives, in a Scriptural way, is a part of true piety as fully and completely, as prayer, praise, the sacraments, or any other religious duty or exercise.*" The Assembly at Lexington, was still more plain in its action. It declared that "*liberality in giving for the support and propagation of the gospel, is a grace of the Spirit.*" It also reiterated the testimony of former Assemblies, "*that offerings of money for the service of the Lord, are acts of worship, which ought to be systematically and solemnly performed by all our churches, and by every Christian.*" (See Danville Review, September, 1863, pp. 512, 513.)

But it matters not how silent some branches of the church are, or how outspoken others may have been; the great question is, What do the Scriptures teach? Are we warranted from them in affirming that beneficence is a part of worship? Let our appeal be made to the law, and to the testimony. We presume here, that there will not be much difficulty in proving that the first part of beneficence that the apostle mentions, namely, doing good, is an act of devotion to God. When Christ tells those that have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, ministered to the sick, and visited those that were in prison, that inasmuch as they had done these things unto one of the least of his brethren, they had done them unto him, we cannot doubt that he regards these deeds as acts of devotion terminating on himself; in other words, as acts of worship. But when you are told that your contributions of property for the relief of the poor, and for the spread of the gospel, partake of this character, it may not be quite so clear to you that such is the case. We shall, therefore, discuss the question in the more difficult sense, by taking the second part of Paul's direction here, and shall endeavour to show that communicating, or contributing of our substance for benevolent purposes, is to be performed as a part of divine worship.

And, that the argument may not be misunderstood, let us, in advance, see clearly what is meant by *worship*. It is defined to be, "the cherishing in the heart, faith in God, proper sentiments of love and veneration for him, and the appropriate expression of these sentiments by outward acts or forms." (Dr. Junkin.) There may be worship without the outward expression by acts or forms; but in praise and audible prayer, in reading and preaching, in baptism and the Lord's Supper, these forms are necessary, and they are parts of the worship. Now we affirm that in beneficence, if rightly performed, there is faith in God, there are proper sentiments of love and veneration for him; and these sentiments are appropriately expressed by the outward act—by the giving of our substance. And when worship is thus understood, we think that the task is not a difficult one to prove from the Old Testament and from the New, that beneficence is a part of worship.

Turning to the Old Testament, we find that all the costly offerings of property were presented to God, as appropriate expressions of the sentiments of the heart;—they were acts of worship. The idea of *giving*, in approaching to God, is fundamental in the offerings for sacrifice. The first offering that was made, namely, that of Abel, was of this kind. We are assured that he offered in faith, and with pious sentiments; and the outward expression of these was by means of a portion of his property. Cain had the outward expression; but his act was not worship, because he wanted faith, and the inward feelings. Abraham's great sacrifice, that of his son, was an act of the very same kind. When the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness, at the invitation of Moses the people brought their property as the "*Lord's offering*," or as an "offering to the Lord." The same word is used in the original that is employed to designate certain other offerings, which were prescribed in the worship of God. Just as well might we deny that any offering ever brought to the temple was an act of worship, as to deny that these contributions of material for the building of the tabernacle were acts of worship. When David would provide for building the Temple, he assembled the elders of Israel; and, addressing the people, through them, inquired, "Who, then, is willing to consecrate his service this day to the Lord?" Literally, Who is willing to *fill his hand* this day to the Lord? A comparison of this language with other Scriptures, will show us that the meaning of the phrase, "fill his hand," is to fill it with an offering. So that David's inquiry was, Who, then, is willing to make a liberal offering to the Lord?—or, plainer still, Who, then, is willing to worship the Lord, by a liberal contribution of material for the building of the Temple? In Proverbs iii. 9, the command is given, "*Honour* the Lord with thy substance." A more accurate rhetoric would give us the rendering, *Worship* the Lord with thy substance. In the prophecies of Malachi, iii. 10, God directs the people, by the prophet, to bring all the *tithes* into the storehouse, and to *prove* him therewith, if he would not open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing until there would not be room enough to receive it. This passage cannot mean less than that God would recognise the bringing of their property, on the part of the people, as an act of worship, in answer to which he would pour out his Spirit, as he would in answer to prayer.

We cannot dwell longer on the argument from the Old Testament. We are well assured, however, that all the costly sacrifices, offerings of first-fruits, &c., were contributions of property as part of the divine worship. Indeed, gifts of property were the chief outward form of worship under that dispensation.

But, admitting that beneficence was regarded as a part of worship under the former dispensation, the question meets us, Is it to be so regarded now? We reply that it is, for it cannot be shown that it has been abolished. It may be made clear that the outward form has changed, in some respects; but the principle remains, and is recognised as passing over into the New Testament worship. It would not be difficult to show that the synagogue worship is essentially retained in the new dispensation. It passed over, in its simplicity, into the gospel church. In it, beneficence was incorporated as a part of the worship. As Dr. Junkin, in that excellent little volume, *The Good Steward*, clearly shows, they had their officers (deacons) to attend to the collection and distribution of alms. These gave instruction in regard to this part of worship, and presided over it. In this, as in the Temple service, "offices of beneficence were so completely a part of their worship, as to be inseparable from it. Their offerings were not matters which might be omitted, and the worship of God be still carried on. Stop this, and the entire system of their public solemnities ceased." (See the *Good Steward*, by Dr. Junkin, p.57.)

We now pass from this to the opening of the church under the new dispensation; and without stopping to show that it had been declared in prophecy, that beneficence would form a part of worship in gospel times, we come directly to the history. Here we see that the first act of worship of which we have account, was accompanied with an offering of property. The wise men came where the infant Jesus was, and, bowing down, worshipped him, "presenting," or as it should be rendered, *offering* "to him, gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh." We turn forward to the Sermon on the Mount, and there we hear Christ linking *almsgiving* with prayer and fasting in the bonds of worship. In his life, too, he sanctioned this, in the costly offerings that were made to himself, accompanied with other acts of devotion. And when his apostles came to organize, and give form to the ordinances of the Christian church, we find that communicating was a part of the ordained worship, brought over from the synagogue. To preside over this part of the worship, and attend to its duties, became too laborious for the apostles; and we find them, in consequence of this, ordaining *deacons* to have charge of it. These were ministers of alms, ordained by the laying on of hands, as the apostles were ministers of the word. These officers were designed to be perpetual, and to have charge of this part of the Christian worship.

Looking forward from this, we see Ananias and Sapphira laid low in death, not simply for deception in contributing, but for lying unto God in an act of worship. As the gospel first goes out to the Gentiles, we hear the angel say to Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God,"—thus linking prayer and *alms* equally and inseparably in the bonds of worship. And when churches were established, we discover the apostles giving directions in regard to this part of the divine service. Addressing the Corinthians, Paul or-

dains, that on the first day of the week, (the Sabbath,) they should lay by them "in store as God had prospered" them. But is not the Sabbath consecrated to the worship of God? Could this direction be sustained as enjoining either a work of necessity or mercy? If beneficence be not a part of worship, there is no way in which we can escape from the charge of profaning the Sabbath, if we perform its duties, or make collections on that day. Admit it into the worship of God, and Paul's direction becomes plain, and obviously proper. In regard to the duty itself, he exhorts the Corinthians to "abound in this grace also;" that is, to make effective by their acts, this operation in their hearts, wrought by the Spirit of God. He assures them that their Christian graces and character would not be complete without this. He tells them, too, that they have fellowship, or communion in alms deeds, as they have in the other parts of worship. He gives similar directions to the church at Galatia, and to these Hebrews he says, "But to do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices," with such *worship*, "God is well pleased." Here doing good, and contributing, are joined with praise and thanksgiving, in the preceding verse, as parts of God's worship.

But I must forbear. I might go on, and show conclusively, that it was the practice of the members of the primitive church, from the days of the apostles, to bring offerings in connection with their worship. I might show, too, that beneficence is worship of the highest order, terminating, like praise, directly on God himself. But time will not admit of the farther prosecution of the argument. If I have not made it evident that *Christian beneficence is doing good to the bodies and souls of men, the contributing of our substance for the support of the poor, and the propagation of the gospel, and that it is a PART OF THE WORSHIP OF GOD*, it must be attributed to my want of ability, or to the lack of time for the discussion of a subject so extensive. I am persuaded that beneficence, as I have defined it, is the beneficence that is inculcated in the Scriptures, and that in abler hands, and with longer time, the demonstration can be made complete. If, however, I have satisfied you that the position which I have taken, and endeavoured to maintain and substantiate, is correct—if beneficence be a part of the worship of God, then consider with me—

II. SOME THINGS THAT NECESSARILY FOLLOW FROM THIS POSITION.

1. *This settles the question as to the duty of giving.* Beneficence is a part of the worship of God. Is it a duty to pray, to sing praise, to be baptized, to observe the Lord's Supper? It is equally a duty to practise beneficence. This principle settles at once the obligation of giving, and sweeps away every possible excuse for withholding. It brings the members of the church under the control of her discipline in this respect. If a man refuse to give, admonish him privately. If he still refuse, take with you one or two others. If he persist, tell it to the church. For neglecting this part of worship, professing Christians should be disciplined, as they are disciplined for neglecting any other part of worship. Is it objected, that this will take away liberty in giving? It is replied, that no member of the church is at liberty not to give. As well might it be argued that liberty in praying is taken away, when men are admonished for neglecting that duty. No professing Christian is at liberty

not to pray, and no more is he at liberty not to contribute of his property for the promotion of the cause of Christ.

2. *This principle settles the question as to the PERSONS who are to give of their substance.* There can be no doubt that all Christians are required to perform the various acts of worship. Beneficence is one of those acts, and no professing Christian can neglect it. Are we, then, required to teach all Christians to sing praise? We are just as much bound to teach them to give. Are parents required to teach their children to pray, to say the Lord's Prayer? They are just as much bound to teach them to be beneficent. The principle once admitted, duty becomes so plain, that no one can possibly miss its path.

3. *This principle fixes the AMOUNT of our beneficence.* Is it asked how much Christians should give? As well might it be asked how much they should pray, or praise. Benevolence is a grace, which is to be cultivated by exercise, and performed for the glory of God. The Christian must determine, when, by practice he has cultivated this grace enough, and has glorified God as he is required. This much is settled, that the more he gives, in proportion to his ability, the better will it be for his soul, and the more will God be glorified. And it is just as consistent to hear him complain that he is called upon to pray too much, as to give too largely. If, however, beneficence is worship, we must leave the amount of it, as we leave the other parts of worship, with the Christian's conscience.

4. *The same principle holds good in regard to the FREQUENCY of giving.* We cannot determine how often a man should pray: that must be left with himself. We can give directions and advice; we can tell him that prayer should be frequent; but how frequent, he must determine. His convictions of sin, and his need of grace—his love, and desire for the glory of God, will determine how often he is to go to the throne of grace. And these must determine the frequency of the part of worship which we are now considering. Christians ought to give frequently, is the doctrine of Scripture; and as they will not complain when you enjoin it upon them to pray often, so they should not complain when you direct them to be frequent in their deeds of beneficence. Contributing of property is a part of worship; and it should be performed in connection with, and as frequently as the other acts of devotion. The services of the sanctuary are never fully performed, until the people have been given an opportunity to present their offerings. There should be the same system in this, as in the other parts of worship.

5. *This doctrine fixes the TIME for giving.* Beneficence should be practised when the other parts of worship are performed, and life is the time for attending to its duties. Men do not devise and bequeath prayers and praises, to be distributed after their death. It is true that good may be done by legacies; but to use our property as long as we can, and then magnanimously resolve to give it to God, when we are done with it, is at least doubtful beneficence. And, moreover, by this practice the good that would otherwise result to the soul of the donor, is mainly lost. He should give in his lifetime, that his soul may enjoy the sanctifying influences of his beneficence. Life is the time for the performance of all these acts of worship.

But, dear brethren, this discourse must close. I have stated, in plain words, what I conceive to be the teaching of the Scriptures on this mo-

mentous subject, and have hinted at some of the practical conclusions resulting from this view of it.

Now, how plain is this question of beneficence, as thus stated! Beneficence is worship—a part of Christian worship. Admit this, and every other question connected with it is settled, just on the grounds on which we settle matters connected with the other parts of worship. Assume the position that beneficence is worship, and then you need no long essay to prove that it is a duty incumbent on all; no lengthened argument is required to show that beneficence should be willing, abundant, frequent, systematic, according to every man's ability, and continued through life. Adopt this principle, and what a powerful appeal can you make to the consciences of men! Here, by dropping beneficence out from her worship, the church has been shorn of her strength in this regard. She has thus laid down a mighty moral lever. Let her take it again, put it in its proper place, restore it to the services of the sanctuary: let her handle it aright, and she can move the world. "How vast a change in all our benevolent operations would the adoption, by every Christian, of the simple system which we have been discussing produce! What good would be done to the bodies and souls of men! No more pastors' salaries would be unpaid. Weary hearts of unrewarded labourers would be gladdened. Ministers and missionaries would be lifted above anxiety. And how swiftly would the wheels of the gospel chariot roll!" How sublime would the life of Christians be in doing good, and in contributing of their substance! They would live in the worship of God. Every life would be "a continued act of adoration!" O, is it any wonder that the apostle exhorted "to do good, and to communicate forget not?" and that he added, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased?"

Ecclesiastical Record.

CALLS.

Mr. D. M. Gordon, from the 4th Church, Philadelphia. Accepted.

Rev. James Rodgers, from Cannonsburgh and Leipsic, in the Presbytery of Sydney. Accepted.

Rev. T. F. Boyd, from Laurel Hill and connections, in the Presbytery of Westmoreland. Accepted.

Rev. O. Katz, from Apollo, in the Presbytery of Westmoreland, for one-third time. Accepted.

Mr. W. C. Dunn, from Burnett's Creek, in the Presbytery of Michigan.

Mr. T. B. Atkins, from Wurtemburgh, in the Presbytery of Allegheny.

Rev. S. M. Hutchison, from East Liverpool and Calcutta, in the Presbytery of Steubenville.

STUDENTS RECEIVED.

Mr. M. M. Pollock, by the Presbytery of Westmoreland.

Mr. Richard Turnbull, by the Presbytery of Monmouth.

Mr. D. W. McLane, of the third year, by the Presbytery of Monmouth.