

and the regularities of nature but part of the vast resources of God, 'who doeth wondrous things.'

I do not set forth this view as a proof of miracle that might avail to convince one who has not yet taken the Christian attitude to Christ. I do not feel that any such convincing proof is possible. But I suggest that for a believer there exist immediately known facts in his own experience which are to him a clear proof that miracle is real. And this necessarily has a bearing on his conclusions as to alleged supernatural events in the past. If a God of redeeming love is working now and here, in ways that we can test, that is at all events a fact not to be overlooked in our estimate of the amazing things recorded in the New Testament.

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*HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST  
EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.*

XXV. CHARACTER OF TIMOTHY'S POSITION AND DUTIES.

THE passage iv. 6-16 mentions the chief kinds of duty in the congregation which will have to be performed by Timothy. These are (1) Reading of the Scriptures; (whether in public or in private or both is not stated); (2) Exhortation (together with reproof of faults); (3) Teaching. To these may be added, as primarily personal, but as indirectly affecting the Church, (4) Cultivation of the gift of inspiration. Elsewhere it is in many passages mentioned or implied that he (and so also Titus in Crete) had a leading part to play in the selection and appointment of Church officials, Bishops or Presbyters, Deacons, Deaconesses, Widows.

Reading of the Scriptures of course implies much in the way of explanation and interpretation and comment. Exhortation and reproof are often referred to, e.g. iii. 15,

iv. 1 f., vi. 17, and clearly Timothy was intended to keep an attentive eye on the conduct, the life, and the development of all members of the congregation, so far as possible. Teaching is closely related to both reading and exhortation. The three kinds of work go naturally together, and each helps the other; exhortation and teaching must be based on the Scriptures. Inspiration, cultivated by attentively listening for and expecting the Divine revelation, is the condition through which alone these duties can be rightly performed.

None of these partake in any degree of sacerdotal character. All are incumbent on every Christian in the congregation: the difference being that Timothy was to devote his entire time to work in the congregation, whereas ordinary members had other work which required much of their time and attention. That it was a prime duty for every Christian to work and to make a livelihood is not explicitly stated in the Pastoral Epistles, but it is tacitly implied<sup>1</sup> throughout; and these Epistles are in perfect agreement with Paul's teaching in his other letters, and with his practice as regards the obligation to work. Further, the duties of Bishops and Deacons were in a sense the duties of every Christian, but were incumbent specially on the officials as being more free to give time and attention to them. Those duties, then, were equally incumbent on Timothy, so far as lay in his power; that is to say, he was expected to exercise a general supervision of and responsibility for their performance by the officials. In this way the supreme direction of the organisation of charity and of Church business generally must be supposed to lie ultimately with Timothy at Ephesus and with Titus in Crete.

Is it, therefore, safe to conclude that Timothy had no-

<sup>1</sup> For example, v. 4, 8.

thing in the way of duties of a more priestly type ? It would only be safe to make that inference if we could be sure that the Epistle was intended to be a complete treatise on the duties of a person in Timothy's position, and that it mentioned every department and class of duty which he would be called on to perform. But that is diametrically opposite to the nature of this letter and of every one of Paul's letters. He has no thought of composing a complete treatise on Timothy's duties. He aimed at giving certain useful counsels, without any thought of completeness.

It is not justifiable, then, to infer from this Epistle that Timothy would not be expected to perform any duties which we should regard as priestly. But we must remember that to the author of Hebrews every Christian is a priest, and that (as the present writer believes),<sup>1</sup> that Epistle was written in strong sympathy and frequent communication with Paul, and was approved by him. Every Christian was a teacher, and much more so was Timothy. Every Christian was a priest : much more was Timothy a priest. When a Deacon or Bishop was appointed, Timothy laid hands on him. So doubtless did the whole Presbytery ; but Timothy is specially singled out in v. 22, as if he stood out above the others ; so Paul sometimes mentions himself, sometimes the Presbyters, as laying hands on Timothy : he was above and apart from all, and what they did in association he did as the head of all.

Similarly we must infer that over the whole ritual and order of the Church (which is partly described in chapter ii.) Timothy was in charge and acted as the one vested with supreme authority. That seems to be implied in iii. 15. We can hardly doubt that, if Timothy were present at the Eucharistic meal, it would fall to him either to take the leading part or to delegate it to another. Yet the Eucharist

<sup>1</sup> *Luke the Physician and Other Studies*, p. 304.

is never mentioned explicitly in the Pastoral Epistles, though I cannot doubt that iii. 16 contains a veiled allusion to it, and iii. 15, 16 clearly allude to knowledge needed by Timothy in his Church work.

In short, we must conclude that the silence of the Epistle furnishes no negative evidence regarding the extent or character of Timothy's duties. The subject of the priesthood must be treated on other grounds; and the present writer is not competent to discuss it further than the general statement in the last paragraphs. In any such special treatment, it would have to be kept clearly in mind that the organisation of the Church was still in an incipient stage, and that no hard distinctions had as yet come into existence, such as were enforced in the struggle for existence during later times.

#### § XXVI. THE ORDER OF WIDOWS IN THE CHURCH.

The passage v. 3-16 refers to the widowed women, who have no longer the regular family circle of duties, and who are therefore in an exceptional position. They were naturally so numerous that their position needed some consideration. In the narrow restrictions of ancient social life, it was not easy for them to maintain their children after the earning member of the family had died, and they stood in need of special consideration and help.

The Church from the first had recognised that it was bound, as a community, to look after and provide for widows. In Acts vi. 1 it is evident that special provision was made to feed such families, and that difficulties were arising as the congregation grew larger and more varied in character: to meet this difficulty the Board of Seven was appointed. In Acts ix. 39 it is apparent that the widows had certain charitable duties which they performed, and thus something like a rudimentary Order of Widows,

such as was in full vigour during the second century, had come into existence, not merely in Jerusalem but also in Joppa and doubtless universally, in the very earliest stage of the Church development.

In this Epistle the Order of Widows is still in a fluid and uncertain condition, and Paul lays down certain principles according to which Timothy should treat these cases.

In the first place, it is assumed as self-evident that all widows must be provided with subsistence (i.e. for themselves and children); but Paul insists that, where they have children or grandchildren able to help them, it is the duty of these descendants to provide for their parent or grandparent; and it is a sin of the deepest dye to neglect this duty. Church help is given only where private help fails.

In the second place, an Order of Widows is implied who had foresworn the world and devoted the rest of their lives to Church work and charity. Paul is convinced that it would be a bad thing if such Widows returned to the ordinary life of the world: they had been admitted to a position of honour and influence on certain conditions, and they must not fall from the performance of those conditions. To prevent such lapse, he would admit no one to the Order of Widows who was less than sixty years of age, when she presumably had no longer in Paul's estimation any temptation to resume the ordinary social life.

Younger widows he would not admit to the Order, but would advise to enter into a second marriage and to devote themselves to the life of the family.

The qualifications of the Order of Widows are described in v. 9-10. In the first place each Widow must have been "a woman of one man." It is clear that this does not mean that she must not have been married a second time, for Paul advises all young widows to marry again; and it is

impossible to suppose that he regarded the early death of a husband as a practical disqualification for the Order, however good and noble the life of the woman might be. The meaning is exactly similar to the similar expression used about Bishops and Deacons, and discussed already in another place.

We have already referred to the signs in v. 11-13 of Paul's old dislike and depreciation of marriage, which he showed in his first letter to the Corinthians, as being merely a second-best way of life and a concession to the weakness of human nature.

Then the other qualifications are summed up in the words "well reported of for good works." Like the male officials, the Widows must be free from reproach, having a good standing in the congregation, so that their appointment should command general approval.

The qualifications summed up in the brief term "good works," are enumerated more fully in the following words, "if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the Saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work." The person selected for the Order must already have proved in her life a tendency to perform the duties of the Widows; and this enumeration may be taken as a fair statement of the purposes which the Order of Widows was intended to fulfil.

Finally, Paul reiterates that not merely male descendants and relatives, but also female, were under the duty of providing for any widow of their family, and not leaving her to become a burden on the charity of the Church.

With regard to the age of sixty, at which widows begin to be eligible for the service of the Church and for devotion to the Divine life and separation from the family cares, a question arises. Was this a point selected by Paul purely

from his own judgment and experience, or was it generally recognised as marking an epoch in life, at which retirement from active life and devotion to religious duties might become suitable and proper ?

While it is not possible to attain certainty, the second supposition seems much more probable and more in accordance with Paul's principles of administration. Probably those who are better acquainted with ancient Oriental ideas about periods in life will be able to quote examples of a belief that the age of sixty was a turning point, where a new life might suitably begin. It is said that the old Hindu law contained the rule of life for men, twenty years a boy, twenty years a fighter,<sup>1</sup> and twenty years head of a household : thereafter one might wisely abandon the life of the world and of business, and devote oneself to the Divine life (which to the Hindu meant contemplation and retirement).<sup>2</sup> In the *EXPOSITOR*, December, 1908, p. 547 f., it is pointed out that about A.D. 341 Bishop Eugenius of Laodiceia thus retired from active life and adopted the life of a recluse. He must have been not far from sixty years of age then, as is evident from the facts of his career.<sup>3</sup>

Sixty was recognised among the Greeks also as an age when life changed. One who was devoted to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, like Mimnermus, wished to die when he reached that age. The more vigorous and manly Solon, a true Western in spirit, rebuked Mimnermus and desired to live till he was eighty, and to maintain his activity to the end.

There was evidently some general belief that sixty was

<sup>1</sup> This second period, from twenty to forty years of age, corresponds roughly to the Greek conception of youth, *νεότης*, as has been shown in a previous Section. So in Latin *juvenis* often means a man of military age.

<sup>2</sup> I take this from Kipling's story "The Miracle of Purun Bhagat" in the *Second Jungle Book*, a story which appears to me to be the finest piece of Oriental work that he has done.

<sup>3</sup> *EXPOSITOR*, November, 1908, pp 385-419.

the age for entering on the religious life ; and this belief was probably not without influence on Paul when he fixed that term for the order of Widows. But of course the age was merely permissive, not a regulation of duty.

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### *THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.*

#### IX. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, AND THE LAST SUPPER.

WE will now pass to consider the account given in the Fourth Gospel of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It is often said that this Gospel exhibits an obvious exaggeration in the matter of miracle. It may be well, then, to point out that here at any rate there is a very marked absence of anything of the kind. There is nothing said of the prevision of Jesus in the matter of the finding of the ass's colt. Our Evangelist merely says that Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon. The writer does not say whether or not the Synoptic account of the finding of the ass is correct. Further, there is something very natural about the whole incident as it is told in his Gospel. The impression we get from the Synoptists is that Jesus was accompanied by a great crowd of people as He travelled towards Jerusalem, these having been with Him all the way. We learn from St. John that the multitude that had come to the feast in Jerusalem hearing that Jesus was coming to the city went out to meet Him and greeted Him with "Hosanna ; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." In regard to the use of this greeting Edersheim writes :<sup>1</sup> "It must be remembered that, according to Jewish tradition, Psalm cxviii. 25-28, was also chanted antiphonally by the people of Israel, as they went

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, ii. p. 368.