

EXPLANATORY NOTE ON I. TIM. iv. 14.

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery."—This passage is relied on by Presbyterians as proving that Timothy received ordination at the hands of a body of Presbyters, that Timothy's ordination was in fact Presbyterian ordination. In another passage, however, St. Paul claims that Timothy's ordination was performed by himself. II. Tim. i. 6.: "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands."

How are these two passages to be reconciled? Does not the mode of the Ordination of a Presbyter in the Church of England, followed in other branches of the Church Catholic, supply the reconciliation? In the service for "The Ordering of Priests," before the act of Ordination, we have this Rubric. "When this prayer is done, the Bishop with the Priests present, shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the Order of Priesthood: the Receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees, and the Bishop saying, 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands, &c.' " The Bishop ordains with the concurrence of the Presbyters present; they signify their concurrence by uniting with the Bishop in the laying on of hands. Might not this have been the mode of Timothy's Ordination?

It is to be noted that two different prepositions in the Greek, indicate the share respectively of the Ordaining Apostle and the consenting Presbyters. Timothy was ordained, St. Paul said, "By (dia) the putting on of my hands;" and, "With (meta) the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Dr. Macknight, a Presbyterian commentator, when discussing I. Tim. iv. 14, says: "Since it appears from II. Tim. i. 6, that the Apostle, by the imposition of his own hands, conferred on Timothy the spiritual gift here mentioned, we must suppose that the Eldership at Lystra laid their hands on him only to show their concurrence with the Apostle in setting Timothy apart to the ministry by prayer."

For a further discussion of the subject briefly handled in this Sermon, see Little's "Reasons for being a Churchman," Chapters IX. to XIII.