

many individuals of those Churches, both of the clergy and the laity, raise their voices against the evil. According to the best authorities of the prelatical Churches themselves such priestly functions were not assumed by the Christians of at least the first two centuries. According to Lightfoot, Tertullian was the first to put forth openly such a claim as may be called priestly, and he was not converted until the last decade of the second century. The same writer ascribes the evil leaven to Greek influence, in other words, to heathen importation, but Jacob is inclined to think "it was in part, at least, Jewish in its origin." Wherever it came from, it was subversive of the true spirit of Christianity as it is now when taught and practised by those of the ritualistic school. All who hold Christianity dear should be careful to resist in every way in their power the introduction of a priest between the soul and the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a leaven is fatal to the New Testament idea of salvation, and to the teaching that all the people of the Lord now are a spiritual priesthood. If the priesthood be sanctioned, the confessional and absolution are not far off; and, indeed, in some quarters are not in any way disguised. Where is the man that has anything of the man in him, that will for a moment think of having his wife or daughter or sister pass through the cesspool of a confessional? You will all hold up your hands in protest against such a practice. The apostolic succession, the priesthood, the confessional are never far apart from one another. Let each be treated as a part of an organized whole that embraces all and a great deal more than I have mentioned above.