

ently observes, its own end and highest good ; while the laity derived their chief value from the fact that they were conceived to exist simply for the aggrandisement of the hierarchy. The questions involved in this discussion are no mere external and subordinate ones, relating simply to Church polity and order. They penetrate to the inmost core of saving and essential truth. By the sacerdotal error not only is the doctrine of the Church perverted, but the Gospel itself in its most fundamental teachings, is changed and corrupted.

It is not to be wondered at that the corruptions of Christendom, and the false exaltation of the ministry, should have opened the way to a reactionary depreciation of its claims and value, disclosing itself in two opposite tendencies, both of which are alien to the spirit of the Reformation and the teachings of the Reformed Churches. On the one hand, we have a false Protestantism, unspiritual and external, intellectually, or often merely socially and politically, liberated from sacerdotal thralldom, but still destitute of the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. And on the other hand there was developed a false spiritualism, manifesting itself in various forms, but always tending towards an exaggerated individualism, and subversive of constitutional order in Church government and of harmony and co-operation in Church work. But both these errors carried within themselves strong counteractive tendencies, and neither of them has been productive of such deplorable and destructive mischief as has been wrought by sacerdotalism.

For all these misconceptions and perversions there is but one remedy. We must take our stand upon Reformation ground, and make our appeal as did the Reformers to those fundamental Church principles which are revealed in the Divine word, and illustrated and vindicated in the Divine workings ; and

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