

church soon acquired grave errors, wandering from the truth, and 'bringing in damnable heresies'; read of them in the Epistle of *Jude*; 2 *Peter* ii. 1; *Acts* xx. 29, 30; from these passages we learn what true Apostolical Succession really is, and as it was foretold that it should be by the Apostles themselves: we have only to look around and see the terrible preponderance of unconverted men assuming to be ministers of the Gospel, having no "unction from the Holy One,—knowing not the truth" (1 *John* ii. 20, etc.), to see how truly the words of Paul are fulfilled in these days,—'grievous wolves have entered the flock,'—'men speaking perverse things,' are everywhere, while 'false teachers' abound. This is truly a melancholy succession to that power and energy of the Holy Spirit possessed by the Apostles of old, with all those gifts of ministry that they enjoyed, which shine forth in their Epistles, and which power, energy, gift, it is the fashion to preach now (under the name of Apostolical Succession) as being inherited by certain orders of men, ordained to a ministry by, and receiving gifts from, *one another!* instead of from Him who alone distributes gifts and power to the saints of God (not unconverted men), "severally as He will" (see 1 *Corinthians* xii. 11). Such pretensions to power accord well with a human priesthood, and they are the more necessary for them to assert, in proportion as the reality of the power is lacking in them.

It is more folly to call unbaptized children—heathens, when God calls all the unconverted, *be they baptized or not*, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel", in other words heathens—those that are "afar off" from God, not having been "brought nigh" by the blood of Christ, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (*Ephesians* ii. 12, 13). This was said of those who were Pagan idolators, a fearful description of whom is given in