

ness was to be declared only by them, or from them. That it is not known in any other method will appear, if we consider the strict regard which God has ever paid to the office of the ministry. Thus, when Cornelius was heard in his prayer and accepted in his alms, and an angel was sent to him, *this angel*, instead of instructing him, commanded him to call Peter, who was then distant several days' journey, and to hear from him his duty.

From the Apostles only, and from Luke who labored with them in the ministry, have we an account of the life of Christ, and of his doctrines, and of the duties which were incumbent on his Apostles and *their discourses*.

Every one who is called to preach the Gospel has authority to declare, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." *This is an absolution or condemnation* which each one must have read for himself, who has perused the Scriptures. It is an absolution or condemnation which is *ever passed upon each individual person*; and the whole world is either acquitted or condemned by it, since the Scriptures *have gone out, or will go out into all the earth*, and their voice unto the ends of the world, and the message of Preachers of the Gospel *is that only* which the Scriptures declare.

If the doctrine of positive absolution cannot be supported upon the passage of Scripture which has been considered, it is *impossible* that it should be vindicated from any other. This the partisans of the doctrine will allow. And that it cannot be supported upon that Scripture is, I think, as evident as the light. "And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had done sacrifice unto them."

As a conclusion of the subject, I would call your attention to a few brief remarks:—

1st. It is an erroneous opinion of the ministry to suppose that any order of men now in the Church of Christ are successors of the Apostles. What then shall we say of those who pretend to be in the place of the Apostles?

When a person pretends to be superior to those who are equal to him in the sacred office, and claims the right to control those who are not more fallible, and perhaps, not more illiterate in Scripture than he, then he exalts himself