

PEACE

AT the birth of the Lord, the earth was saluted with words of peace. "Peace on earth," the angels proclaimed in the fields of Bethlehem.

This, however, was but salutation. It was not the authoritative pronouncement of peace. It was like the word which the Lord afterwards put into the lip^s of His twelve, or rather of the seventy, in Luke x., when sending them out, for He then told them, into whatsoever house they entered, first to say, "Peace be to this house." This was a salutation, a wishing well, the proclamation of a good-will towards the house, not an authoritative pronouncement of peace: *that* would rather follow on its being found, that the Son of peace was there.

Upon the resurrection of the Lord, however, we have the other thing. "Peace be unto you," the risen Saviour said to His disciples, thus returned to them—and when He said that, He showed them His hands and His side. He gave them to read their title to peace. Peace was now, not merely wished, but authoritatively pronounced, conveyed to them on a warrant of the cross. Jesus now gave peace to them, because he had already made it for them. And this the peace that we, who are in it, may testify to our fellow-sinners. We do not merely, like the commissioned seventy, say, "Peace be to this house," as saluting it, or wishing it well, but we proclaim to it the sure, settled, purchased peace, which sinners have title to, in the blood of the cross.