

the second "peace" was the preparation for work (Westcott). He now gives them their definite commission as His ambassadors. Their task is the carrying on of His own revelation of God. He *breathed on them*: the symbol of imparting to them His own spiritual life. (Compare Gen. 2 : 7, where the same emblem is used of the natural life.) *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. There was nothing mechanical about the gift. The Holy Spirit has to be *received*. A living, eager faith is required in the recipient. It is worth noting that the word "spirit" literally means "breath". *Sins ye forgive . . . forgiven* (Rev. Ver.) . . . *sins ye retain . . . retained*. As His representatives in the world, and possessing the Holy Spirit who would reveal to them the truth, they would have the power of declaring who would be forgiven, and who were shutting themselves out from forgiveness.

II. Doubt, 24, 25.

Vs. 24, 25. *Thomas . . . called Didymus*. "Thomas" (in Hebrew) means "a twin". "Didymus" is the Greek equivalent. *Was not with them*. There is no use in speculating why he was not. *The other disciples . . . said* They were full of their joyful experience, and must have met Thomas with these words of exaltation. *Except I shall see, . . . put my finger, . . . thrust my hand, . . . I will not believe*. Unless he could verify by his own senses the reality of that body which he had seen nailed to the cross, Thomas felt it impossible for him to believe in a risen Jesus. But often, when men's assertions of unbelief are at their strongest, they are upon the verge of faith.

III. Worship, 26-31.

V. 26. *After eight days again*. The disciples saw Jesus' bodily Presence only at intervals. This was the first day of the second week. *Thomas with them*. Although he felt unable to share their wonderful conviction, Thomas was still in the company of his brethren. *Jesus cometh* (Rev. Ver.); a sudden appearance, as before, and with the same independence of material conditions, for again the doors were shut. He gives them the usual greeting.

Vs. 27-29. *Saith he to Thomas*. He knew His disciples through and through, and so He answers Thomas on the very ground which he had taken up a week before. *Not faithless,*

but believing. Literally "become not faithless, but faithful". Faithlessness, as well as faith, is really a process. Thomas must check his disastrous course. *Thomas answered . . . said . . . My Lord and my God*. It is not for a moment to be supposed that Thomas actually put the matter to the test. He was perfectly convinced that this was his risen Master. Just because his difficulty in believing in the resurrection of Jesus had been so great, does he now clearly recognize all that the resurrection, which he sees to be a fact, must mean. He finds none other than God in the risen Christ. *Seen . . . believed . . . not seen . . . yet have believed*. Faith that rests on sight can be, of course, a genuine faith, and Jesus fully accepts Thomas' eager confession. But there is a higher quality of faith, which does not demand the evidence of sight and touch. That kind of faith, Jesus calls "blessed", the same word which He applied to Peter's great confession of His Messiahship, Matt. 16 : 17. Thomas, who had identified himself, like the others, with that confession, ought, on the ground of it, to have seen that the Messiah of God could not have His world-embracing purpose interrupted by death.

Vs. 30, 31. *Many other signs*. All that Jesus was and did is regarded by John as an index of His true character and mission. *Not written in this book*. Apparently this was at first intended to be the conclusion of the book. *These are written . . . life through his name*; a remarkable statement of the express purpose of this Gospel. It is not written as a biography of Jesus, but as a sermon. It has the practical aim of calling forth faith in Jesus as the Messiah, who is the Son of God, and thus of bringing its readers into that contact with Him which is life eternal.

Light from the East

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PEACE—Some set form of salutation must begin all intercourse in the East. It is counted discourteous to deliver a message, ask information, or begin any business, without some formal expression of good-will, or a prayer for the prosperity of the other. Even a beggar expects a salutation along with the copper, or the piece of bread; and even if he be refused alms, he claims to be dismissed with a