&c.’ (Luthardt.)   
  
Further: this giving  
of the Spirit was not the Spirit’s personal  
imparting of Himself to them, but only a  
partial instilling of His influence. He  
proceeds forth in His work (as in His  
essence) from the Father and the Son:  
this breathing of His influence was an  
imparting of Him from the Son in His  
risen Body, but that Body had not yet  
been received up, without which union of  
the God-manhood of the Son to the glory  
of the Father the Holy Spirit would not  
come.   
  
*What* was now conferred is  
plain from our ver. 23—whereby authority   
to discern spirits and pronounce on  
them is re-assured (see Matt. xviii. 18)—  
and from Luke, ver. 45, by which a discerning of  
the mind of the Spirit is given  
to them. We find instances of both these  
gifts being exercised by Peter in Acts i.,  
in his assertion of the sense of Scripture,  
and his judgment of Judas. Both these  
however were only temporary and imperfect.   
  
That *no formal gifts of Apostleship   
were now formally conferred, is  
plain by the absence of Thomas*, who in  
that case would be no apostle in the  
same sense in which the rest were.  
  
  
**he breathed on them**] The very same  
word in the LXX version is that in Gen.  
ii. 7, expressing the act of God in the  
original infusion of the spirit of life into  
man. This act is now by God Incarnate  
repeated, sacramentally (so we have the  
words “Take, Receive” [they are the same in  
the original], in Matt. xxvi. 26 and the   
parallels) representing the infusion of the new  
life, of which He is become by his glorified  
Humanity the source to his members: see  
Job xxxiii. 4; Ps. xxxiii. 6; 1 Cor. xv.  
45.   
  
**23.**] The *present* meaning of  
these words has been spoken of above.  
They reach forward however beyond that,  
and extend the grant which they   
reassure to all ages of the Church.   
  
The  
words, closely considered, amount to this :  
that with the gift and real participation   
of the Holy Spirit, comes the conviction,   
and therefore the *knowledge*, of  
*sin*, of *righteousness*, and *judgment* ; —and  
this knowledge becomes more perfect, the  
more men are filled with the Holy Ghost.  
Since this is so, they who are pre-eminently  
filled with His presence are pre-eminently  
gifted with the discernment of sin and   
repentance in others, and hence by the Lord’s  
appointment authorized to pronounce   
pardon of sin and the contrary. The Apostles  
had this in an especial manner, and by the  
full indwelling of the Spirit were enabled  
to discern the hearts of men, and to give  
sentence on that discernment: see Acts v.  
1—11; viii. 21; xiii. 9. And this gift:  
belongs to the Church in all ages, and   
especially to those who by legitimate   
appointment are set to minister in the Churches  
of Christ: not *by successive delegation*  
from the Apostles,—*of which fiction* *I  
find in the New Testament no trace*,—but  
by their mission from Christ, the Bestower  
of the Spirit for their office, when *orderly  
and legitimately conferred upon them by  
the various Churches*. Not however to  
them exclusively,—though for decency and  
order it is expedient that the outward and  
formal declaration should be so:—but in  
proportion as *any disciple* shall have been  
filled with the Holy Spirit of wisdom, is the  
inner discernment, the “*judgment*,” his.  
  
  
The word **retain** here corresponds to  
“*bind*” in Matt. xvi. 19 (see the   
distinction there); xviii. 18, and the word **remit**  
here to “*loose*” there.   
  
**24—29.**] *He  
proves Himself to His own to be Lord and  
God, to be believed on by them, though not  
seen. Thomas’s doubt, and its removal*.  
Peculiar to John.   
  
**24.**] **was not with  
them**—for what reason does not appear.  
Eutbymius says, “It is probable that he,  
since the scattering of the Apostles,....  
had not yet joined them.” But I incline,  
with Stier, to think that it could not have  
been accidentally (Lücke), nor because he  
was, as Grotius supposes, “occupied by  
some engagement.” On such a day, and in  
such a man, such an absence must have  
been *designed*. Perhaps he had abandoned  
hope ;—the strong evidence of his senses  
having finally convinced him that the  
pierced side and wounded hands betokened  
such a death that revivification was   
impossible.   
  
**25.**] He probably does not  
name the Feet, merely because the Hands  
and Side would more naturally offer themselves