

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace." "Blessed [happy] are the poor in spirit," is the first word of our Saviour's longest discourse, and it is the word that is found oftenest there. We are then to be heralds, and talkers, and reasoners, and publishers of good things.

Constantly connected with these terms, which are all translated "preach," are other three. One means to "testify, or bear witness"—from Scripture, and especially from our own experience ; another means "to teach ;" and a third "to exhort, or entreat." Thus, at Pentecost, Peter testified and exhorted, saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Thus Christ sent His disciples to teach all nations : thus the apostles ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ ; the word suggesting that the truths which we announce we are also to explain and apply. Thus also, wherever Paul went, he exhorted and entreated ; his own summary of his ministry is "As we go, we beseech men in Christ's stead. Be ye reconciled unto God."

Here, then, we have in brief the inspired description of our calling. We are to proclaim the truth with the authority of ambassadors and in God's name ; we are to announce it in quiet talk ; we are to enforce it by argument, by explanations, by appeals to what we have ourselves felt, by earnest entreaty. There is a preaching that never speaks with authority, but questions and doubts on all things. There is a preaching that never reasons, but is always dogmatic or emotional. There is a preaching that never "talks," but is ever stilted and formal. There is a preaching that is cold discussion, or bare announcement, and never entreats. Apostolic preaching was a combination of all these processes, saturated with prayers and tears.

These statements of the work of Christian evangelists are, I hope, familiar to all our readers. It is part of their glory that they contain nothing new ; and yet they rebuke theories and practices which are found on all sides. They tell us that it is the Gospel we are to preach—not science, or art, or ethical duties ; not what we think on public questions, or even on subordinate points of theology, but what we know of essential truth. This Gospel we are to preach—not to discover, or to manufacture, or to excogitate from our own consciousness. We are to preach the Gospel—not become pastors of the churches which our preaching may form ; not exhibit a gorgeous ritual, or repeat a solemn litany. We are simply to preach it as men who feel its power, are convinced of its truth, and know that they have a Divine authority for all they are saying. To this work we are to restrict ourselves when carrying out our Lord's commission. This is the command that is embalmed in the tenderest feelings of true disciples ; the one legacy which, besides His peace and the promise of His presence, He bequeathed to His Church until He come again.

2. But the second part of my theme may create difficulty. The words of the text not only tell us what our work is, but what its limits are—to