

of religious speculation all round us to-day. What the world needs is the example of *Christ-like lives*; the witness of men who believe in Christ and His teaching, not merely as an intellectual conclusion for which they are ready to argue, perhaps even with bitterness; but as a moral conviction, for which they are ready to live, and if need be to die.

An earnest life, not a brilliant argument, is the force by which the world is to be converted to-day, as it was converted in the early ages of Christianity.

How are we to bear witness? Surely by comparing our lives with the pattern put before us by our Blessed Lord, and striving to conform ourselves more and more to His example.

Let us not read the words of the text (Acts i. 6-9), and try merely to estimate their effect upon the Apostles; but let us consider them as addressed to ourselves, and strive to show forth their power in our lives. After that we have received the gift of the Holy Ghost, we must be His witnesses.

We have received the power in Baptism, in Confirmation. How are we fulfilling the charge of bearing witness to Christ? The words of the last charge of our Blessed Master should ring in our ears. The power throbs, as it were, in our souls. The Vision of His Ascension, with His arms upraised in blessing, should be present to our sight; and then how changed our lives would be, how great their effect upon the world in which we live.

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF THE S.P.G. SOCIETY.

IN reviewing the Annual Report of the Society, the *Spirit of Missions* (the official organ of the American Church) is impressed with "the marvellous growth and magnitude of the work" of the Society. "That institution" (it says) "to-day has organized missions in all the great divisions of the world—in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Islands of the Sea, and in North and South America." The great spiritual needs of the colonists at the close of the seventeenth century "started a flame in the English Church that to-day shines with internal effulgence on both continents through the agency of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Through all the years of its past history this Society has maintained a unique position, acting, not as a Society, but as the handmaid of the one Christian Society, gathering in one the many members, that each may do his or her part.

ASSOCIATE MISSIONS IN THE COUNTRY.

[A paper read at the Milwaukee Missionary Council by the Rev. Richard F. Sweet, D.D., Rock Island, Illinois.]

I THINK I may say, without fear of contradiction, that the population of the city is largely recruited from the country; therefore, the need of insuring the purity of the city in faith and life by the Christian education of the suburban peoples. Then, again, we hear a great deal of the wickedness prevailing in the city, which no doubt has its foundation in fact; but after years of observation and inquiry I am convinced that the immorality of the smaller cities, villages, and hamlets, and even the purely country districts, is quite as bad as that of our great cities.

We believe the Church to be the divinely appointed agency for the teaching and guidance of the people. Therefore the Church should occupy the country districts of our land with the strongest forces she can put into the field. As a rule we have not done this, no doubt largely for want of men and money, and so when we do attempt what we may call country work of evangelization, we find the field already occupied by various denominations of Christians, who naturally do not desire to see a Church advancing the claims that we do, intrude upon the ground which has been exclusively the field of their occupation.

The question has often been asked, Should the Church intrude upon ground already pre-occupied by one or more denominations of Christians? If we have nothing more to offer than they are giving—and we must admit they are in good faith giving the best they have to give of time and Christian devotion—then let us refrain from intrusion; under those circumstances, intrusion would be worse than folly, it would be downright sin; but if we have a fuller, more perfect Gospel to present, one which we know has been revealed in all its completeness in order that we may extend its gracious message to all mankind, then the question of intrusion cannot enter into our calculations.

Further, in all villages, hamlets, and even country districts there are many who, having been trained under the denominational systems, have quite given up all connection with any religious body. In dealing with these people there certainly can be no intrusion on any denominational pasture. Their previous training has failed to keep them within the fences, and as a rule they are ignorant of any other religious system of faith and life than that in which they have been trained. A large portion of them, both the more learned and the less wise, are longing for some religious system which shall bring them nearer to their ideal of