

contentedly while he is preaching, and he will be more careful and thorough in his preparation, since so much is depending upon what the sermons contain.

Not long ago a sermon was preached by the writer in which something was said on the return of Christ to this earth as "King of kings and Lord of lords." One who heard the sermon met him during the week, and began a discussion of this point. Ideas were exchanged, the hearer's inner religious life drawn out, and an opportunity presented for helpful, personal instruction and counsel. Others who heard the same sermon, and had conversation with the preacher during the week or soon after, made no reference at all to anything it contained. Perhaps it was a helpful sermon to some of those who said nothing as well as to the man who openly criticized; yet there was a degree of satisfaction felt after this occasion, and the conviction born that it would be better for all concerned if sermons were more generally subjected to some such criticism as that mentioned. Almost the worst state of affairs there could be is one of indifference. "A living dog is better than a dead lion." I am inclined to think that it would be better to have adverse criticism than none at all. It was probably better in the days of the Great Preacher that certain of His hearers only listened that they might "catch Him in His words" than that they should not have listened at all, for some were silenced by those "words," and others were even convicted. Better the criticizing spirit, whatever its nature, than indifference and inattention altogether.

I have heard a young woman remark concerning the sermons of a clergyman of my acquaintance that she never missed going to his church, because there was "always something fresh" in what he had to say. What did she mean? Not that his remarks were either crude or sensational, but that, though adhering to the old truths, he threw fresh light upon them, applied them to present needs and conditions, brought in new and modern illustrations, and was all alive, both in preparation and delivery, to make his sermons interesting, intelligible, and practical. What an enviable congregation would be one composed altogether of critics of this sort! We clergymen could not but raise the standard of our sermons many degrees, and continually. Therefore let it be said to all hearers, "Criticize (in the true sense) the sermon," and to all preachers, "Invite and welcome criticism." Is it not written, "Quench not the Spirit; despise not

prophecies (i.e., things preached); prove all things; hold fast that which is good"? M.

THE SONG OF THE OLD DECANTER.

There was an old decanter,
and its mouth was
gaping wide; the
rosy wine had
ebbed a way
and left
its crystal side;
and the wind
went humming,
humming
up and
down the
sides it flew,
and through the
reed-like
hollow neck
the wildest notes it
blew. I placed it in the
window, where the blast was
blowing free, and fancied that its
pale mouth sang the queerest strains
to me. "They tell me—puny conquerors!—that Plague has slain his ten
and War his hundred thousands of the
very best of men; but I,—twas thus the
bottle spoke—"but I have conquered more
than all your famous conquerors, so feared
and famed of yore. Then come, ye youths
and maidens; come, drink from out my cup
the beverage that dulls the brain and
burns the spirit up; that puts to shame
the conquerors that slay their scores
below, for this has deluged millions
with the lava tide of woe. Though
in the path of battle darkest waves
of blood may roll, yet while I
killed the body I have damned
the very soul. The cholera,
the sword, such ruin never
wrought as I, in mirth or
malice, on the innocent
have brought. And
still I breathe upon them,
and they shrink before my breath;
and year by year my thousands
tread the dismal road to death."

—Selected.

ABOUT BOYS.

It is the greatest delusion in the world for a boy to get the idea that his life is of no consequence, and that the character of it will not be noticed. A manly, truthful boy will shine like a star in any community. A boy may possess as much of noble character as a man. He may so speak and so live the truth that there shall be no discount on his word. And there are such noble, Christian boys, and wider and deeper than they are apt to think is their influence. They are the king boys among their fellows, having an immense influence for good, and loved and respected because of the simple fact of living the truth.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

It came and went so quickly,
My sluggish soul saw not
The Master stand and beckoning
Toward one of humble lot.

And I rose not up to follow,
So slow was I to see,
That the help I might have given
Forever fled from me.

And often I am grieving,
And longing all in vain,
For a blessed opportunity
That will not come again.

Dear Lord, give Thine anointing
And make mine eyes to see;
And make me swift in doing
The work Thou givest me.

—L. Adda Nichols, in S.S. Times.

POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

AFTER all had eaten of a feast prepared by the Indians, the chief, Wah-bon-a-quot, arose, and, addressing the bishop, said, "Would your friends like to see us as we were before the white man came?" Suddenly there appeared a tall, athletic Indian, with a painted face, and dressed in a robe of skins ornamented with porcupine quills, and by his side a pleasant-faced woman in wild dress.

Then, turning to his guests, the chief asked: "Shall I tell you what the white man did for us?" Then stepped out a poor, ragged wretch, with tattered blankets, and face covered with mud; and by his side a more dreadful specimen of womanhood. At the sight, the chief lifted his hands as if in amazement, and inquired, "Are you an Ojibway?" The Indian nodded. Sadly the chief asked, "O Manitou, how came this?" The Indian raised a black bottle, and spoke one word: "Iskotah wabo!" (Fire-water.)

Then, after a pause, the chief added, "A pale-faced man (meaning Bishop Whipple) came to see us. I am sorry to say he has seen me and my people drunk. He told a wonderful story of the Son of the Great Spirit coming to save men. He told us his fathers were wild men; that this religion had made them great, and what it had done for them it would do for others. We did not hear; our ears were deaf; our hearts were heavy. He came again and again. At last we heard! Shall I tell you what this religion has done for my people? You must see." There stepped out a young Indian in a black frock coat; and by his side a woman neatly clad in a black alpaca dress. "There," said the chief, "there is only one religion which can take a man in the mire by the hand, and bid him look up and call God his Father!"—Selected.