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## The Two Monks.

By A. A. BRADTON.

A worthy monk, an ancient legends say,  
Planted, with care, a tender tree one day,  
Thinking with joy how it would grow anon,  
And yield him profit from the fruit thereon,  
Pleased with his task, upon the spot he bound,  
And to himself with pious pride he vowed:  
"Now I will pray each day, and God will give  
Whate'er I ask to make the sapling live."  
And to his credit be it written now,  
Not even once did he forget his vow;  
But morn and eve he came to view the tree,  
And asked for what he saw its needs to be.  
He prayed for rain, and gentle showers fell;  
He prayed for sun, and sunshine came as well;  
And when asked for dew, there came the dew;  
For winds to blow, then grateful breezes blew.  
For storm to strengthen, or for heat or cold,  
Whate'er he craved not once did God withhold;  
And yet in vain the selfish plan he tried:  
For all his prayers, the sapling drooped and died.

Another monk his tree had planted, too,  
And day by day its spreading branches grew  
Above the way, to shelter as they pass  
God's weary children going up to mass;  
And travellers off, aside their burdens laid,  
Sat there and rested in its peaceful shade.

One day they met among the shadows there,  
Just as the convent bell had called to prayer.  
"Now tell me, Brother John," the first monk said,  
"Why your tree thrives, while mine, alas! is dead?  
I pruned it well and tended it with care,  
And twice each day I told its needs in prayer."

The other monk in meekness bowed his head,  
While with sweet humility he said:  
"My simple mind could not presume to know  
Just what was best to make a sapling grow.  
And so I put it in God's care, and left the rest.  
To Him who made the tree, and knows the best,  
I never asked for sun or rain or frost,  
I only prayed: 'Give what is needeth most.'"

—Zion's Herald.

## Some Things a Layman Should Avoid.

By W. L. PICKARD.

Not long ago there appeared in the columns of *The Standard* "Some Things a Pastor Should Avoid," by "A Layman." It was suggestive I used it as a plumbline and tried to square by it. But it set my mind going—you must know it was a good article—and, as the result, three articles may see the light. The following is acutely the first, logically the last. A layman should avoid:

Staying away from church at the hour of worship, Sunday or other days. He has a place in the church building, and should be in it. There are preachers who can preach better to men and women than to empty pews—strange as this may seem to some.

Coming into the church building late. He should be exactly on time. If he is five or ten minutes late a hundred people may turn and look at him (although he may not be very handsome) and lose the choicest strain of music, or word of scripture, or of exhortation, or exegesis. Nor should he leave the building till the service is over.

Using the time before the preaching begins to carry on a general conversation with friends. Layman often spoil a good sermon by creating a spiritualless atmosphere in which the sermon dies.

Discussing business matters with friends and arranging for meetings of various kinds to be held during the week following. What is not done by layman before coming into the church should be left undone, at least, till after the benediction.

Finding fault with the preacher's sermon because a godless, disrespectful, talking, note-writing choir sits in the choirstand, and a

thoughtless janitor fails to "decide on ventilation." It is not sermons every time that put people to sleep. I have seen people asleep when John A. Broadus and George C. Lorimer and P. S. Henson were preaching. Yet these brethren did not preach Rip Van Winkle sermons.

Haste in listening to a sermon. Haste to run through a service "makes it perfunctory." A deliberate listener gives "tone and character" to the worship. All layman who can sing, should sing, and all should welcome strangers at the proper time. Then the preacher who is trying to make the church a place of warm-hearted worship instead of an ice-house will not have to give exhortations.

Pew conversations by two or more layman. The pew is expected to be a pattern to the pulpit. Complaining because the minister announces four stanzas of a hymn which has seven, or because all the stanzas are sung. The minister is supposed to know whether some or all the stanzas are in keeping with a theme which he wishes to impress.

Hearing against time. If there is one thing worse than a preacher placing his watch before him, it is a layman snapping his watch before the sermon is over.

Rebuking, or criticising a pastor in presence of others. This is not especially helpful to an intelligent, faithful pastor.

"Bringing up new matters" before the pastor knows anything about them. The pastor should know the probable result of every question before a layman brings it before the people.

The use of the personal pronouns "ours" and "my" with reference to imperative duties of the pastor, as if a layman owned the pastor.

Shoving responsibilities on the pastor, which the layman ought to meet. A just division of responsibilities is good for pulpit and pew.

Frequent absence from the pew because of business or otherwise. A faithful pew makes a faithful pulpit.

Careless hearing of the scripture readings. God's word merits the most careful listening on the part of the layman.

Complaining of pastoral duties without first prayerfully going over the whole question at issue with the pastor.

Doing outside work to the detriment of the pastor who ministers to him.

Manifestations of displeasure. Overcome in a quiet, pleasant manner any unexpected difficulties.

Remaining in a church and fighting the pastor when the large majority wish the pastor, and when he, layman, can get a letter and walk a few blocks away to another church, where the new church will rejoice over his coming as much as the old one will over his going. The cause of Christ has often been hurt by a good preacher's going, when a fighting layman should have gone.

Taking a position that will result in a division of the church. No layman can afford to defend himself at such a cost—unless the layman is right.

Sending into another "parish" to get some pastor to come and perform duties or honors that properly belong to the pastor who ministers to his own church. It is not elegant to have your pastor do all the service, and send for a stranger to do the honors, as laymen often do. Don't make your pastor simply a packhorse, give him the honors, too. He has many burdens of which you can never know by experience. "Layman" in this article may "embrace" women. Preachers may not.—*The Standard*.

Cleveland, Ohio.

As the swiftly diverging channels of life bear wider and wider apart from us the friends who hoisted sails with us as fellow mariners, when we cast off for the voyage, and as some, even, who are yet side by side with us, no longer send back to us an answering cheer, we are drawn the more closely to those that remain.—Lowell.

## Would You Be a Christian?

THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

I wish to say a few plain affectionate words to those who are agitating the vital questions: "Ought I to become a Christian? And if so, how shall I become one?"

Yes, you ought to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and for three good reasons.

It is your duty; for God both commands and invites you. It is for your interest; if you choose Jesus Christ as your Saviour and guide, you will be better, stronger, happier, and more useful in this world. You will secure the salvation of your immortal soul.

Whether you become a Christian or not depends upon your own choice; no one else can decide for you.

A loving God says to you in his word, "I set before you life and death; choose life." When Joshua submitted the alternative, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," he addressed his hearers as free mortal agents, and such are you. When Christ said to James and John, "Follow me," he talked to them as rational beings; for if they could not follow him, why did he ask them?

You have the power of choice; choose life! By that expressive word, in the Bible, is meant—the favor of God, the pardon of your sins, the sustaining strength to do right; it is the union of your heart with Jesus in this world and an unending heaven beyond the grave. "Death" is the absence of all these; it means the dominion of sin in this world, and the punishment of sin in the world to come.

But you may say, "I am not choosing death; it is inconceivable that any sane person should deliberately decide to be eternally wretched when he or she might be eternally happy." I admit that people do not usually set success and happiness on the one hand, and ruin on the other hand, and then deliberately choose to be ruined. Yet it is equally true that multitudes are selecting and pursuing courses that inevitably lead to ruin.

Here is a young man setting out in life. Of course his preference would be to become rich and prosperous. But he chooses to lead a career of indolence and thriftlessness, which inevitable brings him to poverty and keeps him there.

Again, no man voluntarily chooses the disease, disgrace and horrors of drunkenness. Yet tens of thousands do choose to tamper with the seductive, intoxicating glass, and their own free choice brings them to the drunkard's self-damnation. Did that foolish girl who gave her heart and hand to the showy rake who stole her affections choose to become a wretched wife? Yet she did choose to marry him; and dearly does she pay the consequences of her choice.

In like manner, my friend, when you decide to refuse that loving Saviour who is even now knocking at the door of your heart, you choose to risk the consequences. When you choose to continue on in sin, to follow the devices and desires of an unconverted heart, to refuse to be all that Christ would make you, and to grieve away the Holy Spirit of love, you are deliberately choosing eternal death; for you choose the path that leads to death.

You are not and you cannot be in a position of neutrality. Not to accept Jesus Christ is to reject Jesus Christ, and thus throw away all the infinite advantages and blessings which he offers you. Instead of asking yourself the question, "Ought I to become a Christian?" you had better face the question, "Have I refused to be a Christian?"

Some persons may tell you that it is a very easy thing to become a Christian—as easy as lifting your hand. Yes; it is an infinitely easy thing for the omnipotent Spirit of God to renew your heart in answer to honest prayer; and it will be a very simple and possible thing for you to become a Christian if you are willing to cut loose from your old sinful self and to fasten your heart hold on the Divine Saviour.

Do not ask for any easier salvation than that;