HE DECLINE OF CHURCH GOING, ITS CAUSE AND ITS REMEDY.

DESPISE YE THE CHURCH OF GOD?

Absurd Reasons Advanced Why Men Do Not Go to Church-Don't Understand Certain Parts of the Bible, Some etc., Brushed Away by the Simple All-Powerful Truths of the Gospel.

Entered According to Act of Parliament of Can-ada, in the year 1902 by William Baily, of Te-ronto, at the Dep't of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Chicago, Aug. 17.-In this discourse, the decline of church going, its cause and its remedy, are discussed by Rev. Frank De Witt Talmage with characteristic vigor and directness. The text is I Corinthians "Despise ye the church of

While rummaging through a bookstore the other day I purchased a volume with this suggestive title. "Why Men Do Not Go to Church." In it the author gives many blunt statements. He asserts that in New York city alone not more than 3 per cent. of all the male population are members of the Protestant He makes this charge against New York city, with its millions upon millions of dollars invested in church architecture, with its millions of dollars every year lavishly expended for evangelistic work. He makes this charge against New York city, which is not a heathen town, but which claims to be not only the wealthiest but the most enlightened city in our Christian land. The author of that book further declared that not more than one-half of all the inhabitants of this country ever attend church. By that the author means the vast majority of Americans seldom set foot in any church building, because the most of the half who do attend church do so occasionally only.

With the startling statements of that book still fresh in my mind I would like to ask you the question which Paul asked the nonchurchgoers of Corinth. The world needs precisely the things that the church was organized to supply. It needs strength to resist temptation, it needs rules for the guidance of life, it needs support under affliction, solace in bereavement and a hope of heaven after death. All these blessings come by Christianity. It is therefore worth while inquiring what are the obstacles that keep men from coming into the church.

'Well," says some one in answer to the words of my text, "the reawhat I cannot comprehend.' Now. my friend, such a statement is simply absurd. From such talk one might suppose that the only inexplicable things in the whole universe are those recorded between the lids of holy writ. Why, there are whole realms and cycles and universes of facts in every direction yet untraversed and unexplained. You cannot focus the whole heavens with one telescope nor span infinity with the You might as well try to build a range of mountains from Long Island to England by pitching pebbles into the Atlantic ocean or try to empty the Pacific by dipping up the waters with a sewing girl's thimble as to attempt to build up a system of science or to develop a belief in the Bible unless you are willing to accept some things which you

cannot explain. "My young friend," said an elderly Christian gentleman to a young college student whom he met in the train and whom he had overheard making some such remark as yours-"my young friend I thought I heard you say in reference to the Bible that you would not believe anything you could not explain. Now, in yonder fields are some pigs, sheep, horses and geese, all eating grass. Can you tell me why the same grass makes bristles for the pigs, wool for the sheep, hair for the horses and feathers for the geese?" There are things innumerable in nature and all around us which we fail to understand, yet we accept them without question. You have no more right to despise the church of God because you cannot understand all of the Bible than you have a right to despise electricity or deep sea soundings or the centrifugal power of specific gravity or the natural laws of growth and decay simply because you cannot comprehend everything about them. The mysteries of the natural sciences piled up about us are quite as inexplicable as the great mystery of god-

But, though statements may be made in the Bible which you and I cannot understand, the salient truths, the Calvary truths, the converting truths, are all simply told truths. I defy any unbiased man to read the simple words of the four gospels and remain blind to their meaning. man can read the story of the prodigal son and fail to realize that God s represented by the aged father, that his own sinful life is represented by the sins of the younger son, that repentance and peace are represented by the return home and the divine love and forgiveness by the ring and the fatted calf and the father's kiss. Spiritual light and deeper faith will come later. So, my brother, as you believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost; as you believe that Jesus suffered and died upon the cross for our sins, as you believe that Christ has gone to heaven to prepare a dwelling place for those who are cleansed by his blood you believe all that is needed to qualify you to come into the church he established on earth. This was the saving belief of the Philippian jailer, to whom Paul said, "Be lieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." A man is not necessarily barred from the church of Jesus Christ because he does not fully understand all the Bible. He is received and welcomed

QUERY OF A PASTOR loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever leveth on him should not perish, but

have everlasting life." "Well," remarks another man, do not join the church because of the inconsistencies of its members. Some profess one thing and practice an-other. They say Christians ought to be kind and loving and gentle and helpful to their fellow church mem-Then they demonstrate that some of the worst fights on earth are church fights. The elder who prays the loudest in prayer meeting may be the farmer who never comes out second best in a horse trade, and the gossip of the sewing society is just as merciless as the gossip at the club or in a ballroom. As long as the church is filled with hypocrites I do not want to join it.'

Stop, my brother! You know that some of the very best men in every community are members of the different Christian churches. You know, as well as I know, that though some of the church members may be hypocrites the vast majority are men and women who have banded themselves together for the purpose of prayer and communion with God and of trying to make their fellowship better arm furer and truer and more Christlike. There are thousands and tens of thousands of church members who are no more hypocrites than your Christian father and mother, who were also members of a Christian church, were hypocrites.

To demonstrate how much you re

ally respect the Christian church,

though you may not know it, I would like to ask you a question. If you were stranded as a young woman in a distant city, without money or friends, to whom would you go for help? To the saloon keeper? To the rich brewer? No, no! Without doubt you would go straight to some Christian minister's home. would go to him, just as many young men and women have come to me, and you would say, "My father and mother are members of Dr. Soand-so's church, in such and such a town. I have no money. I want to get home. Will you help me?" have you realize how much you respect the church of the Lord Jesus Christ I would picture you stranded as a shipwrecked sailor upon a strange coast. What would you most prefer to see-a fortress, a king's palace, an army encampment or the steeple of a Christian church? You know as well as every intelligent man or woman knows that the community which lives under the shadow of the church spire is a God fearing The community which community. does not protect the Christian church is an unsafe community in which to dwell, and there is no exception to

What did you do when your little son I despise the church of God is because there are certain parts of the Bible I do not understand. Theremaster pronounce the eulogy over he dead body? Did you have her music teacher sing a song? No; you took her to the church. You took her into the church where many prayers had been offered. You did not have a dancing master pronounce a eulogy over her white, still form. You called in the Christian minister for the last reverent offices for your beloved

> When you criticise the sincerity of certain church members, you should not forget that the church of Christ was instituted for the imperfect as well as the perfect, for the moral cripples as well as for those who are spiritually whole. church there are to be found members like a man whom a friend of mine was one evening defending. Howard Crosby came to this gentleman and said: "Doctor, how can you like such a man?. You know he is not what he ought to be." My friend turned and said: "Dr. Crosby, if you had a little child who had lost an eye or who was deaf or who was born lame, would you despise him on account of his infirmity? Well, my friend is a moral cripple. I do not like him because he has lost one eye and one leg and one arm, but I do love him, because by the grace of God, he is trying to struggle against his daily temptations, and his spiritual deformities. So you will find in the church of God to-day moral crip-They are struggling every day of their lives against sinful temptations; they keep on struggling; keep on praying; keep on reaching up to God; keep on staying in the church because they know that Christ did not come to institute a church for perfect men. He came to heal the sick and not the well. The church of God is the great earthly spiritual hospital, where Christ, as the sur geon, loves to set the crooked limbs where Christ, as the spiritual opthal mologist, loves to open the eyes that are blinded of sin.

"Well," observes another hearer 'the reason I do not join the church s because I believe a man can be jus as good a Christian outside church as inside." Now, I would no ssert that all men who are non churchgoers are unchristian mer John Newton used to say: "When get to heaven, I shall have three meat surprises. One great surpris vill be to find so many people there did not expect to see. surprise will be to find so many people absent, whom I expected to see and 8che third great surprise will b to find that I got to heaven myself. Like John Newton, when most of u reach heaven-I pray we may all b there-I believe we will be very muc surprised to find there some people who never entered the church doc and never publicly confessed their faith at the church altar.

But, though there may be Christian men and women living outside of the church fellowship, I for one do not believe I could be a Christian and not be a professed member of the church of Christ. I do not believe that I could turn my back upon my church and still love my Christ as I love him to-day, and, my brother and sister, neither do I believe you can turn your back upon the church of God and yet give to Christ your true and fervent love, because I believe that, as Christians, we should look upon the church as a collection of God's children. Therefore we of God's children. because he believes that "God so I should accept and love its members as

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sick, follow her advice.

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spiritual brothers and sisters, en of God, and we ourselves should long to be of the spiritual

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use of delicate women.

Mark you well my statement. I did not affirm that there were no Christian men outside of the church of Jesus Christ, but I did affirm that a man cannot be as good a Christian outside of the Christian church as inside. There may be good Christians who prefer the society of Sabbath desecraters and worldly pleasure ekers to the society of those who delight in God's house

'Well," answers another man, "I will tell you frankly why I despise the church of God. The reason I do not join the church is because it is too straightlaced for me, and I am not willing to give up my own way My brother, I believe you have told me the exact truth. I believe ninety-n'n hundredths of those who scoff at the church scoff cipally because they are not eady to surrender some secret sin. But as you have given me one honest answer I want you to give me another to a question just as important. If you are not ready to surrender your secret sin and join the church, where is that sin going to

My unrepentant brother, as you are unwilling to join the church because you are reluctant to give up your se cret sin, I ask you where will that secret sin ultimately send you? You need to be aroused from your spiritual lethargy, and to realize your I would specially In the awful danger. plead with you to surrender sins and dedicate your life to Jesus Christ by joining the church, be cause, in your heart, you know well what you ought to do. I have always shrunk from the thought that people who were born in sin and igporantly reared in sin, and unrepent ant were totally lost. It has always been a question in my mind whether some of those poor loa hsome creatures who were reared in the slums of a great city and who had never heard the name of Jesus except in blasphemy, might not in God's mercy be made as fit for the celestial city, as some, who, having been born in Christian homes, have led a different Christian life. God will never condemn one who is born blind because he cannot see. He will never destroy one who is born deaf and dumb because he cannot speak or hear; but, my brother, though there may be some excuse for those born in the sinful slums of a great city for not renouncing their sins and oining the church, there is no excuse for you. You were born in a Christian home, and you were reared

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were started out amid Christian prayers, and the mere fact that you proves that the Holy Spirit is mightily striving with you to-day to confess Christ and join the church Japan Tea. the Saviour founded on earth.

But there is one answer yet to the question of my text. This answer comes from many a troubled heart You say to me: "Mr Talmage, I do not despise the church except by my actions in a public way. The reason I do not join the church is because I have so many home duties that I cannot do my share in church work, if I should join. In a few years I expect to take my place as member of the church altar." Now, my friend. I want you to realize this great truth; God never ordained that one duty should conflict with other duties. He never wants a moth r to leave the bedsid; of her sick child in order to attend a missionary meeting. He never compels a man to do for the church more than he can conscientiously do. But Christ does demand this: He does demand that you profess and confess his love before men. And you cannot do that in a better way than at the church altar. Then let the most imminent Christian duty decide what

you ought to do hereafter. And I would especially plead with you to confess Christ in the church before men, because, as you have others depending upon you, your present actions will probably decide how your loved ones will act and feel toward the church of Christ's establishment. This fact was demonstrated some years ago in Smyrna. Two sailors for some weeks had been attending the mission services. One night, in answer to the invitation to come forward and confess Christ and join the church, one of the sailors turned and said "Well, I will come if Bill will." But Bill would not come. But the night before the ship was to sail the two sailors came forward and gave their hearts to Christ and joined the church Then the Christian workers in Smyrna asked Bill how it was that he came to join the church. In rough sailor fashion he said: "Well, I liked to attend your meetings because they made me feel good. I used to think of the old times when on Sunday afternoons in the old home at New Bedford we used to sing the same songs. Mo her was there and my sisters and brothers and father were all there, and I really wanted to join your church; but when Tom said he would come if I did, it made me mad. What had I to do with Tom's actions? But a couple of nights ago Tom was sick. I sat up with him, and as he was tossing around in his bunk I heard him muttering some-thing, and as I put my ear down to his mouth I heard him say: Bill, won't you come, Bill? It's my last chance for heaven, Bill. Oh, Bill, won't you come? Won't you come And then and there I said to myself 'If my actions are going to keep Tom out of heaven, why, I'll come.' And here we are, sir, Tom and Bill!" So to-day the loved ones in your home and in the store, and those who are dependent upon you are pleading with you to come into the church for their sakes as well as for your own sake and for Christ's. "Despise ye the chirch?" Nay, nay! In your heart you feel that it is in the church you ought to confess Christ. You know is into the church you will want

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DEFERRED FOR CONSIDERATION. Buckingham Post.

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with great Britain left legacies of hatred long preserved. Many years were needed to soften the bitterness engen cored between the sections by the civil war in the United States. More than thirty years after Sedan, Frenchmen dream of revenge, and of the recovery of the lost provinces. But the English receive with open arms the leadwill want to go forth when you meet him when you shall dwell with him ers against them in the most costly in heaven forever and ever and ever. and dangerous struggle which ever afflicted the empire. It is rather hard to understand making all allowance for chivalrous notions as to what is due to a gallant foe who has made an en-

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