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## Men and Young Men

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Suits Usually Selling for \$20. & \$22.  
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Suits Usually Selling for \$22.50 & \$25.  
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Suits Usually Selling for \$30. & \$35.  
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**LADIES' and MISSES' SPRING SUITS**  
Suits Ordinarily Selling At \$20. to \$30.  
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Peaslee-Gaubert Co., Louisville, Ky.

## Why Go To Church?

### SOME PLAIN REASONS.

By the Rev. Charles Baird Mitchell, B. D., Rector of Christ Episcopal Church.

(By the Rev. C. B. Mitchell.)  
The flame of religious interest is the most difficult of all to keep burning at steady and constant rate. There may be reasons and good ones why this or that person cannot go to church, at least regularly. I am not discussing real reasons, but excuses.

We have become quite accustomed to the excuses of men; they have been telling us for years of the great strain that prevents them from attending church, but in a recent number of a woman's magazine the club women took up the parable, and one of them explains why women do not go to church as follows:

"With few exceptions the great number of clergymen I have met or known, have been men of mediocre ability, without training to fit them to deal with real problems of life. In too many of the preachers' sermons, the God whom they preach is the God of fear, incapable of inspiring love or unselfish devotion to duty. I do not attend church because I receive no benefit in any way."

This assembles most of the excuses in a perfectly frank and womanly fashion, and no minister who reads them is likely to be afflicted with that "pride which goeth before destruction."

There is no sentiment in this paragraph, and the writer probably would have no sympathy with those people who so often say to the minister: "I am with you in spirit; my heart is there." She would not be there in spirit or any other way, for the minister is stupid, and is lacking in charity, and preaches a God of fear, and she has no respect for him at any rate. I should much rather she said all this and said it

honestly than to have her say "I am with you in spirit," when the facts are otherwise. That expression sounds like cant and pretense. The cant of some of those who go to church is bad enough; the cant of the person who does not go, is a great deal worse. The difficulty is that we cannot preach to your spirit, unless your body brings it around. Your spirit may be in church, but not being gifted with "second sight" and having no occult faculties whatsoever, all the minister can see is an empty pulpit.

If I should send word some Sunday morning: "Dear friends I cannot be with you in flesh, but I am there in spirit, as usual preaching to you," all you could see would be an empty pulpit. Your spirit is where your body is.

Life is a Habit.  
Other people say, "O, church going is a matter of habit. That is all there is to it." Many tell me that, just as if it excused everything. But nine-tenths of life is a habit, and while you are about it, why not form good habits? No one would contend, except the writer of the woman's magazine article, that church going is a bad habit. I really think she has reached that conclusion. But you have not. So I say, "Get the habit. Cultivate it."

If a boy got into the habit of playing truant, or staying away from school and tried to make it all right with his parents and teachers by saying: "Why, this is only a habit," how long do you suppose that excuse would last?

If a bank clerk got into the habit of slipping out a few dollars now and then, and trying to cover up the facts in his books and should say to the directors when discovered, "Why, gentlemen, I am surprised that you take this thing so seriously; this is only a habit; that is all"—would you expect them to treat that excuse as you expect the minister to treat it?

Worshipping Out Doors.  
There are others who say: "I do not need the church. Why should I shut myself up in a room, when I can worship out with Nature?" Certainly, one can worship with Nature, out by the lake, amid the forests, under the tranquil stars. I think I have sometimes worshipped thus myself. But we learned that sort of worship from the Hebrew prophets and after the Founder of the church. On the other hand, not one in a thousand who stay away from church does worship with nature. It is a sham and a pretense. Those who make the excuse know it. They are not fooling themselves, and they could only fool the kind of a minister to whom the club woman refers in the magazine.

Good Book An Excuse.  
Another objector says: "I can sit at home and read a good book." Yes, you can do so. But you do not in the great majority of cases this is all just that sort of hypocrisy which you denounce when you find it in the church. Many say "I can stand anything but a religious hypocrite." I go further, I can stand anything, but a hypocrite fooling themselves and others. But if you could stay at home and enjoy your book, you ought not to do so, and I will tell you why. Let me say first, that I respect the rights of the individual, and that I believe in his fullest development. The highest phase of that development is when he recognizes his obligation to the society which surges about him.

That is why you ought not to stay at home and read or go out into the fields with nature, other things being equal.  
If we admit the validity of these excuses, then we must close the churches. They must cease. If we admit one excuse we must admit all; and then we must stop our preaching and our work. If there is good reason, upon the ground we have discussed, why no one should come to church, "Nail up the doors! Tell the old story of the Gospel, no longer! Abandon the world-visit of the Minister! Give up the dream of a Kingdom of God!"  
The church is here for the mightiest work in the world. It is not right for one to consider simply his individual preferences when the interests of others are involved. If one believes in the church at all, he admits a duty in regard to it.  
If we work for merely what we can get, and not for what we can give, the resulting benefits are poor and meager.  
The central idea of the church is a world-idea—the lifting of a race to the heights of God.  
This cannot be done by worshipping out with Nature in the fields or forests, or by reading good books at home. It can be done only by association. It can be done only by

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