

house whenever ordinary respectability will permit them to stay away they are giving utterance to a falsehood which they know is a falsehood. We wonder that it never occurs to them to be ashamed of their actions in this regard. We are very familiar with the arrogant claim, "I know what is right, I have no need to go to church to be told my duty." Why can't the man who utters such a claim see where it leads him? The one who knows what is right knows he ought to worship God, that he ought to go daily into His presence, and by the side of his wife or sister or mother, whose more sensitive and probably purer soul his silly self-pride seems to try to condemn, confess in deepest contrition his sin in neglecting God and living only for this world; or if this is a stronger self-condemnation than his conscience demands, at least humble himself before God because of many a failure to do Him honor, and many a thoughtless disobedience of His holy will. Surely arrogance is not more manly than humility. It is very far from being as manly. But it is not arrogance and self-conceit that make most men neglectful of the worship of God. We are sure of that, for we are sure it is worldliness. It is absorption in business or other occupations that makes a man indifferent about his relations to God and the cultivation of the divine life that is in him, and often makes worship an uninteresting and irksome thing to him. This is no more than we expect in the case of those who are professedly worldly and unspiritual. But it is not what we have a right to expect of men who are members of Christ's Church by baptism and confirmation. And it is a very serious obstacle to the progress of the Lord's kingdom in the world that even men who are communicants in the Church make apparently no systematic attempt to attend the week-day services with any regularity—not even in Lent. The excuse is the demands of business. If it is sometimes a valid one, everyone knows that oftener it is not, for a little care in adjusting one's work, a little thought in making engagements, a little courage to let our associates know that attendance upon church services is regarded as both a pleasure and a duty—

in short, a little of just such carefulness as men exercise in arranging to do what they really want very much to do would nearly always enable the busiest of men to attend most of the Lenten services. What can any of us expect but that God will judge our care for His worship just in that degree in which we make effort to be participators in it, and will bless us or condemn us accordingly.—*Parish Visitor.*

GOD'S WISE PROHIBITIONS.

"THOU SHALT NOT."

If you open your Bible, and in the first chapters of Genesis read about the creation, you will see that after God had made the world, filled it with everything of wonder and use and beauty, and handed it over to man to enjoy, he yet fastened on to that enjoyment this stern command, "Thou shalt not," in one particular, and because man could not or would not understand its meaning, and obey, sin came into the world, and all its consequences.

From that time forward, in all the record of God's dealing with men, in all His plans for bettering them and drawing them towards Himself, the expression is constantly used. Of the ten commandments written upon the tables of stone by God for the guidance of His people, and constituting what we know as the moral law, no less than nine contain the injunction "Thou shalt not." And so we find it in many forms scattered throughout the teaching of the Bible. There must be some deep reason for this. The God who made us knows what is in us. He knows the human heart, its weakness, its dangers, and its needs, and if "Thou shalt not" is so often repeated we may be sure it is because there is need of its repetition. I think you will all see, when once it is put to you, that our own knowledge of life helps us to the explanation.

As little children we had to meet these words, "Thou shalt not," at the very threshold of life. In its ignorance of the physical world and its laws, a little child is ready and eager to do a hundred things which will do him harm—play with fire or

hot water, eat noxious things, handle edge tools, go into dangerous places. All the activity and watchfulness of parents or nurses is required to protect the child from hurting himself. "Do not do this—do not do that" is the constant and necessary language of the nursery. Nature, with its steady and certain laws, constantly reinforces the injunctions or warnings which the child gets. The burnt or scalded hand, the cut finger, the bitter physic which follows unwise eating or drinking, the broken arm or the bruise which results from a fall, gradually compel the child to see that there is reason behind the commands he receives and the restrictions imposed on him.

Notice that all this training is necessary for the child's own happiness. As soon as he learns the simple laws of nature, that fire burns, that knives cut, that tumbles bruise, he soon begins to find a world of happy enjoyments and pleasures within the limitations imposed on him. He has learned to refuse the bad and accept the good. As the child grows older the same great law of discipline must go on in other ways. He is as ready, through ignorance or wilfulness, to injure himself morally or intellectually as the small child was physically.

So "Thou shalt not" must be as steadily enforced on other lines as he advances in years, in the school-room as in the nursery. The boy must not steal, he must not lie, he must not be profane, he must not indulge natural laziness, he must not give way to violent passions or depraved tastes. Nor does the restriction cease with boyhood. When we grow up to be men we find that it is still the same. Pick up any volume of the laws by which we are governed, and everywhere you will find regulations defining what people shall not do. They must not trespass on the rights of others, they must not injure their neighbors, they must not do what harms the community. The "Thou shalt not" of these laws is enforced by a whole body of police or constables, by magistrates and judges, backed up by all the force of the community. It is the weapon with which society finds it necessary to guard itself