

the communicants from seeing the ceremony of breaking the bread in the consecration prayer. It would be curious, had we the space, to note at length how circumstances and prejudices change, and even reverse the significance of ritual customs. The eastward position, and in particular the breaking of the bread in that position, is now thought by the Low Church party to symbolize the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist. Time was when the High Church party in England condemned the eastward position and adopted the northward, because the former was supposed to obscure the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The extreme section of the Non-Jurors published a prayer book of their own in 1718, in which the eastward position is forbidden and the northward prescribed, because the interposition of the celebrant's body between the act of consecration and the people was supposed to hinder them joining "either in the sacrificial or sacramental part of this office"—a "shocking" notion to divines who held such high views on the sacrificial aspect of the sacrament. In explaining this rubrical direction, Brett, one of the most eminent of the High Church Non-Jurors, says: "I desire that the priest may still be directed to stand at the north side of the table, and not at the place which we at this time call before the table—that is, the west side, with his back to the people." This proves two things—how the eastward position was once a common, if not the prevailing, custom; and it was the extreme section of the High Church party who objected to it on the ground that it obscured the very doctrine which the Low Church party now declare it teaches.

R.

Sunday School Lesson.

2nd Sunday after Christmas. Jan 4th, 1891.

MISSIONS.—PRAYER FOR ALL CONDITIONS OF MEN.

Our Prayer-Book, in obedience to St. Paul's command (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2), provides prayers and thanksgivings for all men, as well as for kings and those in authority. In the Litany the "sorts and conditions of men" are mentioned separately, *e. g.*, all nations, the sick, travellers, orphans, etc. When this is not used, its many petitions are grouped together in the "Prayer for all Conditions of Men."

In the "General Thanksgiving," thanks are offered for all men.

I. THE PRAYER FOR ALL CONDITIONS OF MEN.

This prayer may be called *new*, although it is more than two hundred years old. It, with the "General Thanksgiving," was added to the Prayer-Book when it was last revised in 1662. Originally it is supposed to have been longer, containing petitions for the King, clergy, etc. These were thrown out by the Convocation. The length of the original accounts for the word "*finally*," which seems rather unnecessary in such a short prayer. It may be divided into five parts.

(1) *The Address.* It is reasonable that God should be addressed as the "Creator and Preserver," when asked to preserve all whom he has created.

Prayer for all Men. All sorts of men means all races—English, French, African, Chinese, etc. God made us all of one blood (Acts xvii. 26). All are children of Adam. Christ died for all (1 St. John ii. 2). We belong to one great family, and should, *to-day*, pray particularly for the heathen, that they may know "God's ways." As a means to this end, let us obey our Lord's command, and pray that "labourers may be sent into the vineyard." Do not let the "Epiphany Appeal" fall upon deaf ears.

All conditions of men are prayed for—rich and poor, high and low, strong and weak. All conditions meet together (Prov. xxii. 2), and all may profit by the prayers offered. The rich need help as much as the poor, or *more* (Eccles. v. 12; St. Matt. xiii. 22). So in the Litany we asked to be delivered "in all time of our wealth."

(3) *Prayer for Universal Salvation.* That all men may know "God's way," and all nations obtain "saving health" from the Good Physician.

(4) *Prayer for the Church.* Even in the general prayer the Church must take the first place (Gal. vi. 10). In these days of clashing doctrines and varying creeds it is indeed necessary to pray "that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth." Instead of quarreling with those who differ from us, let us pray that all may "hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." This threefold cord of unity, peace and righteousness, cannot be easily broken (Eccles. iv. 12).

(5) *Prayer for the Afflicted.* It is well to pray for these (St. James v. 14, 15), but only God knows what is best; so they are commended to His fatherly care for comfort, relief, patience, etc.

II. THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

Thanks, as well as prayers, must be made for all

men (1 Tim. ii. 1); this is done in the "General Thanksgiving." The "Confession" which is also called "*General*," is repeated aloud by the congregation. In some churches the people join audibly in the "General Thanksgiving" also; this is not according to the rubric. Notice that the "Amen" is printed in italics, while in the "Confession" it is in Roman letters the same as the prayer.

(1) *The Address.* God is called "The Father of all mercies," then thanked for His mercies to us.

(2) *Thanks for all God's goodness.* For His love in creating us, for His thoughtful care in preserving us, and for the countless blessings of this life. But far more thanks are due for His "inestimable love" which passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 19) in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. How wonderful is that redemption. That the great and mighty God should become man, and die on the Cross to save sinners (Rom. v. 8). Is it possible to measure the length and breadth and height of His love? Let us receive in wondering gratitude "His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15.)

We thank God also for the "*means of grace*." Grace ("favour" or "help") may be obtained through the means provided. Prayer, sacraments, study of the Bible, are all intended to help Christians on their way.

Then there is the "*hope of glory*" which brightens the dark paths and makes suffering seem as nothing (Rom. viii. 18).

Lastly, we pray that thankfulness may be shown, not in words only, "but in our lives." A sad, dismal religion is *wrong*. Christians are commanded to "rejoice in the Lord always." See also 1 St. Peter i. 8; iv. 13.) Cultivate a joyous disposition, for joy stands second only to love (Gal. v. 22). Those who stand in the light of God's favour should reflect it, as the moon reflects the light of the sun.

"The moon above, the Church below
A wondrous race they run,
But all their radiance, all their glow,
Each borrows from its sun."

Family Reading.

Second Sunday after Christmas.

FORMED BY A MOULD.

Did you ever see a brickmaker at work? I dare say you have. He takes a mass of wet clay, puts it into a mould, turns it out, and behold! there is a brick.

The mould forms the brick, makes it the shape of itself. And if it is a good mould, the bricks come out a good shape; but if there is anything wrong about the mould, if it is crooked or bent, of course the bricks are crooked and bent too, as is quite to be expected.

I wonder if people are ever at all like clay. I think they are in one way. They are very apt to be formed by those near them and about them, just as soft clay is shaped by the brick-mould.

They are *soft*; they don't think for themselves; they don't try and get *right* ideas about things and doings, but just get hold of the notions of those about them.

Now that is exactly what you must *not* do, for St. Paul says plainly enough—"Be not conformed to the world." That is, don't get shaped or formed by the ideas of the world.

The world is wrong very often, and that is why it is called "*wicked*" in the Catechism.

Yet we needn't think of particular people as "*the world*." Don't say "Mr. So-and-So belongs to the world, but Mr. So-and-So is a true Christian."

How can you see into hearts?

Nobody can settle who is on the right side and who on the wrong but God.

But for all that, you can be quite clear about *opinions and views of things*.

"Everybody thinks so," is often said; just as if "everybody" must be right.

Don't take up an opinion because it is held by somebody you know. For instance, there is that well-known saying, "Take care of Number One." That sounds almost as if it were a proverb (which is a short, pithy saying).

Now it is that very thing which makes it so dangerous. For it is really low, and bad, and selfish. As much as to say, "Take care of *yourself*" (that is Number One), and never mind other people."

Get the best thing yourself, the warmest seat by the fire, the really good view of the procession in the street, the best apple on the plate.

Never mind if other people get a draughty seat, or are pushed out of seeing the procession at all, or if they get the over-ripe apple, which is too sweet and not at all nice.

"Clever," the world says, to look out for yourself, and—you're half inclined to think so too. It's so comfortable to take care of one's self, the fire is so nice and warm, and it is just what "everybody" does, to make a push for himself.

Only that text will come into your head, "Be not conformed to this world."

So is the world right after all?

Right! No, I should think not. You want to be noble and unselfish, don't you? You want to be like Christ, Who never pleased Himself, Who was as unlike as possible to the selfish, grasping world.

And what happens if a boy does what the world tells him—goes on taking care of Number One? Why at last he *can't* be noble and unselfish; he is incapable of it.

The other day some little boys were sliding, the ice broke, they slipped into the water and were drowned. A big lad was only one or two fields off, and when he was asked why he didn't plunge in and try to save them, he said, "He thought he should be drowned too." So he let them sink and die, the cowardly lad! Ah! I dare say he had followed the world's advice, and taken care of himself so long, that he couldn't change all at once.

What else does the world say?

"Get on in life by fair means or foul."

Yes; boys think they must get up in the class, and so they copy a little bit slyly in school, and just glance at another boy's paper, and get an idea that helps them a good deal by looking (without *seeming* to look) at the exercise, which is always right.

And the other boys think there is no harm in it; its always been done, and so on. Ah! that's the world again, the boy's world that has its false opinion about right and wrong!

Now you know very well that cribbing and not doing work honestly, all yourself, is wrong. Shut your ears then to what the world says, and listen to God.

"There shall no deceitful person dwell in My house."

"He that is *faithful* in that which is least, is *faithful* also in much."

So you will not be "conformed to the world," will you? Do keep in mind the fact that "everybody" thinking a thing does not make it right.

Or when you are older, the world will very likely say to you something like this—"Get rich, that is the chief thing."

And if you believe the world, what will happen? Several things might happen. A situation might be offered you where there's a good deal of work on Sunday. The world will say—

"Never mind that. You must live. Business comes first. A man must attend to business if he wants to succeed. (The world, you see, often puts the matter in a way that sounds very sensible!) What do Sundays matter just for a few years?" Ah! but there's another view of the matter altogether, if you look into the Bible.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." And what then? "All these things shall be added unto you."

As much as to say, "Do what's right, and trust God for the rest." God prospers those who seek Him, even on earth. They get on in the main, that is, taking things altogether, not a little bit at a time.

So I do hope you will be brave, and not mind the world.

"No, I won't give up my Sundays for the sake of a good place. I won't run the risk of getting worldly by giving up my greatest helps—Church, a quiet time on Sundays, and Holy Communion."

Once a lad was offered a well-paid situation. But where was it? In a gin distillery. "You needn't touch a drop of spirits yourself," the manager said to him. "But how about the people who do?" said the boy. He thought of the thousand homes reduced to misery and want by the fatal habit of gin-drinking. He thought of the sodden face of a drinking woman he had passed that very morning. So he said "No," because he