

Wm. George Catt

[No. 18.]

WONSTON TRACTS.

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GENERAL UNION

FOR PRIVATE PRAYER.

If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.—Matt. xviii. 19.



THIRTY-SEVENTH THOUSAND.

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MAY God, for Christ's sake, give the Holy Spirit, to lead many of His people to join this Union, for the promoting of His glory ; and may all those who thus unite, be blessed with a spirit of earnest, persevering, and faithful prayer.

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It is suggested to the reader to consider whether those who join this UNION FOR PRIVATE PRAYER may not thereby be assisting in communicating blessings to others, and procuring blessings for themselves—

“ My prayer returned into mine own bosom.”—Ps. xxxv. 13.

Let all who consider this to be the case, determine at once to be members of the Union ; and let them be careful not to allow trifling matters to hinder their joining regularly on every Saturday, in the spiritual assembling for this object, which a great number of christians have already agreed upon.

## GENERAL UNION FOR PRIVATE PRAYER.

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WHILE it is a plain and acknowledged duty to be earnest and frequent in prayer, for the great general blessings promised to the church of Christ, it is to be feared that the infirmity of sincere christians too often concurs with the engrossing nature of their personal necessities to produce much omission in this respect. This omission is equally confessed and regretted by a great number of persons, who, though they really desire to exercise the privilege of prayer for the wide-spreading mercies offered in the word of God, frequently find that much time passes without their acting out the desire in a manner which satisfies the conscience. It is obvious that vast results might be expected from a real and persevering combination amongst the whole body of spiritual christians, for the purpose of pleading (individually, but unitedly in one spirit) the promises of Christ to his church, in earnest supplication for their fulfilment; and it has been thought, that by the help of some systematic arrangement, much may be done towards the attainment of this object. When the mind is awakened to the conviction that a certain neglected duty ought to be done, arrangement should be made, to render the general duty more specially

definite, and ensure its performance. Some attempts have already been made to apply this principle for the purpose of promoting the exercise of prayer; and these have been attended with a very encouraging measure of success. The yearly concert for prayer, proposed by the Rev. J. H. Stewart, of Liverpool, has been acted upon to a great extent, and it will not be denied that a blessing has resulted from the plan. Many combinations have been formed amongst private christians, who have pledged themselves to engage separately in prayer for special objects, or for particular persons; and the testimony of some who have joined such little bands of friends for prayer is of the most encouraging nature, both as regards the general effect upon themselves, and the special answers they have received.

It is this view of the subject which has produced the formation of **THE GENERAL UNION FOR PRIVATE PRAYER**; which is a voluntary combination of christians, for the purpose of appointing to each a definite, distinct, occasion to engage once in each week in private prayer, for those objects which must be interesting to the whole church of Christ, under the special encouragement which may legitimately be drawn from the assurance, that a considerable number of other christians are also privately engaged in the same way at the same time. To this end, the essential point which unites the members is an understanding, that on a given day each will, as far as in him lies, devote some portion of time, (more or less, as circumstances may permit), to pri-

vate prayer upon appointed subjects concerning which there is a general agreement amongst christians. As a distinct *promise* of this kind has sometimes been found to burthen the conscience, when its fulfilment may have been prevented, the professed intention is not stated in the form of a promise certainly to perform a future act, but the formation of a *present serious intention* to join in the prayers of the Union is all that is required: and this has been found in practice to answer the purpose of exciting to punctual conformity, without ensnaring the conscience into an uneasy and difficult bondage. The subjects for prayer are arranged under short heads, concerning each of which every member may enlarge privately, as much or as little as he may feel enabled and disposed; while unity of object on the main points being thus obtained, each may consider himself warranted in pleading that promise of our Lord, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xviii. 19.

## REGULATIONS FOR THE MEMBERS.

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1.—Each Member of the Union forms a serious intention, by the help of God, to occupy some portion of time during the course of Saturday, in every week, in private prayer upon the subjects, the heads of which are arranged at the end of these Regulations, his circumstances and frame of mind permitting.

N.B.—The hour from seven to eight in the morning is suggested ; but any member may adopt another, according to his circumstances.

2.—If any Member be hindered from fulfilling this intention on the day appointed, the first proper opportunity afterwards may be taken for the purpose, in order that the object be attained some time in the course of the week ; that is, before the return of the next Union Prayer-day.

## HEADS FOR PRAYER.

*Agreed to be used by the members of the General Union for Private Prayer; together with some texts of Scripture which may help to direct the mind upon the subjects.*

I. For an abundant gift of the Holy Spirit, and of his gracious influences.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?—Luke xi. 13.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.—Zech. iv. 6.

Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.—Acts ii. 38, 39.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.—Matt. xxv. 29.

II. For the unity and purity of the Church of Christ.

Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with

the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.—Eph. v. 25-27.

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.—John xvii. 11.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.—John xvii. 15—17.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.—John xvii. 21—23.

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and



compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.—Eph. iv. 13—16.

III. For Her Majesty the Queen, and all in authority under her; and for a blessing upon our Country.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.—1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will.—Prov. xxi. 1.

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.—Prov. viii. 15, 16.

IV. That God would raise up, in great numbers, fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of His Church.

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.—Matt. ix. 38.

I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.—Jer. iii. 15.

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in

whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?—Rom. x. 13—15.

And he gave some, apostles: and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.—Eph. iv. 11, 12.

V. That a blessing may accompany the ministrations of the word of God, in order that it may have free course, and be glorified.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.—2 Thess. iii. 1.

So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase,—1 Cor. iii. 7.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.—Is. lv. 10, 11.

Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.—Matt. xxviii. 20.

## VI. For the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the heathen.

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.—Psa. ii. 8.

Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy: as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles: and laud him all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles: in him shall the Gentiles trust.—Rom. xv. 8—12.

This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.—Matt. xxiv. 14.

## VII. For the fulfilment of God's promises to his ancient people.

Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.... God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew.—Rom. xi. 1, 2.

Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away

ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.—Rom. xi. 25—27.

In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion.—Isa. xviii. 7.

Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.—Isa. xlv. 11.

VIII. For a special blessing upon all the members of the Union.

Pray one for another.—James v. 16.

The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.—Job xlii. 10.

The members should have the same care one for another: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.—1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

*Price 1d.; or 7s. a hundred.*

J. Shayler, Printer, Wonston, Andover-Road.